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“Kill the Indian, save the man”: Historical and generational trauma
associated with the Indian boarding schools

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Abstract

This is a timely response to the discovery of unmarked graves on sites of Indian boarding schools and Residential schools across North America. This dissertation sets out to provide a deeper understanding of what really happened at the schools, especially those in the United States. Less research has been conducted and until recently the United States government has acknowledged their role in the assimilation of the Native American people, in response to this the Department of Interior have begun to conduct research about the Indian boarding schools and have launched “The Road to Healing” in which the Department of the Interior will gather oral accounts from survivors. The trauma experienced by the children who attended the Indian boarding schools has been felt across many generations. The name given to this intergenerational trauma is historical trauma. The Indian boarding schools have left a legacy that carries on impacting Native American families and communities. The loss of cultural identity and self-identity has resulted in cycles of family violence, high rates of substance abuse, and disproportionate rates of suicide.

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Introduction

This thesis will be looking into the trauma caused by the Indian boarding schools, the trauma that has been passed down from generation to generation and to what extent this has affected Indigenous communities today. The Indian boarding schools are just a small part of Native American history, but it has caused a significant amount of trauma to their communities. My argument will be that the Indian boarding schools have left a significant and long-lasting effect on the Indigenous population both mentally and socially. The Indian boarding schools changed the traditional family structure and kinship of Native communities and has led to a continuing cycle of abuse and social issues such as adverse childhood experiences, child abuse and neglect, intimate partner violence, drug and alcohol abuse, and suicide. These effects influence the everyday lives and the future of the Indigenous people of the United States and Canada. Although this thesis takes a North American approach, the work focuses on the indigenous experience of boarding schools in the United States, which has not been examined in the same depth as Canadian residential schools. The quote “Kill the Indian, save the man” which has been used in the title, is the most commonly used quote about the federal Indian boarding school system.¹ This quote distills our 21st-century image of the federal Indian policy and practices against the Native Americans that spanned over a century.

This thesis examines the historical and intergenerational trauma that is associated with Indian boarding schools. Historical trauma refers to a complex and collective trauma that is experienced over time and subsequently across many generations. The theory of historical trauma was first applied to Native Americans by Maria Braveheart in the late 1990s, she defines historical trauma as “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma”.² Additionally, Peter Menzies has defined intergeneration trauma as “trauma that is passed down behaviourally to the next generation”.³ This includes passing on the trauma to other generations through stories or silently projecting fears, anxieties and other psychological scars that have been left unacknowledged.⁴ Other scholars such as Martin Brokenleg have described how this trauma is passed down through the lack of healing “if one generation does not heal, problems are transmitted to subsequent generations”.⁵ The Historical and intergeneration trauma can be experienced as depression, substance

¹ Lomawaima, Tsianina. K; Ostler, Jeffrey, “Reconsidering Richard Pratt: Cultural Genocide and Native Liberation in an Era of Racial Oppression”, *Journal of American Indian Education*, vol. 57, No.1, (spring 2018), p81

² Heart, Maria Yellow Horse Brave et al. “Historical trauma among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: concepts, research, and clinical considerations.” *Journal of psychoactive drugs* vol. 43,4 (2011), p283

³ Menzies, Peter, ‘Intergenerational trauma from Mental Health Perspective’, *Promising Practices in Mental Health: Emerging Paradigms for Aboriginal Social Work Practices*, vol 7 (Nov 2010)

⁴ Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla, ed. ‘Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition: A Global Dialogue on Historical Trauma and Memory’ (1st ed. Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2016),p1

⁵ Brokenleg, Martin, ‘Transforming cultural Trauma into Resilience’, *Reclaiming children and youth*, vol 21, no 3, (fall 2012), p10

abuse and intimate partner violence. Mohatt et al has suggests that “the trauma is experienced by a group of people who share an identity, affiliation, or circumstance.”⁶ This term has been applied to many colonized Indigenous people as well as African Americans. For example, Ron Eyerman found that the experience of first-hand traumatic events can embed a collective memory in the life of the individuals and societies in which experienced the trauma. Collective memory shapes how individuals and groups understand themselves and affects their understanding of who they are and why they act as they do.⁷ Some current studies have examined the effect historical trauma has had on genetics. Epigenetics research suggests that the long-term consequences of trauma may be passed on to succeeding generations via experience-induced changes to human DNA resulting in higher risks of chronic disease and mental illness.⁸ Exposure to trauma or stressors is more common among groups who have suffered from historical oppression, which can lead to the development of poor health “by epigenetic alterations that shape physiological functioning and disease risk.” Conching and Thayer argued that the epigenetic changes caused by trauma and stressors can be transmitted onto offspring resulting in an elevated risk of disease and poor health.⁹ Hackett et al, discusses how changes in the epigenome, can affect how an individual’s experiences trauma and stressors. The Epigenetic transmission of parent experience and coping skills can explain how even before conception, environmental exposure of parents is a determinant of risk and coping in the following generations.¹⁰ Although epigenetics is not the focus of this work it is important to understanding historical trauma, as it can be transferred genetically and psychologically. For example, cycles of abuse can be passed down from parents to children.

Chapter one will focus on providing a study of the United States Native American education system and the government’s desire to assimilate Native Americans into Anglo- American society. This chapter will examine what the policy of assimilation was and the motivations of the United States government and the church to “kill the Indian and save the man”. The Indian boarding schools implemented several ways to force the children to assimilate, traditional clothing and shoes were replaced with western military styled clothes and hard soled shoes, hair was cut, and names were changed to more European names, which had an impact in terms of cultural identity and self-identity. Through the use of written and oral accounts of the Indian boarding schools compiled by Michel Coleman and David Adams this chapter will set out to recognises the motive of the policy makers in the U.S. to use education as a means to solve “the Indian problem”, and was

⁶ Mohatt, Nathaniel. Vincent, Thompson, Azure. B, Thai, Night, D., Tebes, Jacob, Kraemer, “Historical trauma as public narrative: A conceptual review of how history impacts present day health”, *Social Science & Medicine*, vol 106, p128

⁷ Eyerman, Ron, *Memory, Trauma, and Identity*, (Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2019), p163

⁸ Burke Heather, Barker Bryce, Wallis Lynley, Craig Sarah, Combo Michelle, “Betwixt and Between: Trauma, Survival and the Aboriginal Troopers of the Queensland Native Mounted Police”, *Journal of Genocide Research*, vol 22, no 3, (September 2020), p320

⁹ Conching, Andie Kealohi Sato, Thayer, Zaneta, "Biological pathways for historical trauma to affect health: A conceptual model focusing on epigenetic modifications", *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 230, (2019), p76

¹⁰ Hackett, Christina, David Feeny, Emile Tompa, “Canada’s Residential School System: Measuring the Intergenerational Impact of Familial Attendance on Health and Mental Health Outcomes.” *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* (1979-), vol. 70, no. 11, 2016, p1097

designed to “kill the Indian, save the man”. This chapter will also examine how the schools’ curriculums attacked Native culture, through the teaching of English and other subjects such as geography, and through the vocational courses that were also taught. To understand why the Indian boarding schools have had a lasting impact, it is important to look at the environment of the schools, which includes exploring the corporal punishment that was administered and why, the extent of abuse including sexual abuse (survivors of the Canadian Residential schools have reported being sexually abused by the priest and nuns who ran the schools), I will also be looking into the death rates at the schools. In 2021 almost 1,000 unmarked graves were discovered in Canada,¹¹ and in 2022 the United States Government identified 53 marked and unmarked cemeteries throughout the country.¹² Throughout this chapter firsthand accounts will be used to help analyse the initial impact the experiences had on the children who attended the schools. The voices of the Native American students are often missing or muted, working with oral histories and autobiographies are limited by the motivation of the teller, these memories can also be remembered in error or with embellishments. The Meriam report (1928) was the first government survey that highlighted the issues that the Indian boarding schools were facing, in chapter one the Meriam report will be used to examine the poor conditions of the Indian boarding schools. Meriam report will also be used in chapter two. Chapter one examines the trauma caused by an education system designed to “kill the Indian, save the man,” which has resulted in a cycle of trauma that is present in Native American communities today.

Chapter two will set out to explain why there was such slow progress in improving the conditions of the schools and this lack of progress enabled the trauma of the schools to be felt by further generations. This chapter will consider why the Indian boarding schools were not closed until the late 1970s and 1980s, even though the government had been aware of the issues that faced the schools back in 1928 when the Meriam report was published. This chapter will begin with discussing what changes the Meriam report had recommended to help improve the schools’ curriculums and teaching practices, and whether it had an impact on policymaking in the 1930s and into the 1960s. Throughout this chapter, the changing attitudes toward Native American education will be explored, the 20th century saw attitudes drastically change from more integrative attitudes of the 1930s to the assimilation during the Termination Era of the 1940s and 50s and then an era of self-determination during the 1970s. Throughout the 1970s the American Indian Movement called for the return of ancestral lands and for the government to return to making treaties with the Native American tribes, these demands were made through a number of protests such as the occupation of Alcatraz and ‘The Trail of Broken Treaties’, I will demonstrate what impact these events had on Native American education and whether they influenced the policies that would be introduced in the 1970s by Richard Nixon, such as the Indian Education Act of 1972.

¹¹ <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/canada-residential-schools-unmarked-graves-indigenous-children-60-minutes-2023-02-12/#:~:text=Archeologists%20detected%20what%20they%20said,the%20Cowessess%20reserve%20in%20Saskatchewan.>
[19/08/23]

¹² United States Government, Indian Affairs, “Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report”, (May 2022), p9

Chapter three will set out to investigate the link between the Indian boarding schools and health and social issues that face Native American communities today. During the boarding school period (1860s-1980s), the family system was destroyed, Native languages and religions were prohibited, and many of the children who attended these schools were abused mentally, physically, and sexually. This experience of the schools has had lasting effects such as being unprepared for parenting, and confusion over their identity, which have resulted in further consequences. While the Native American population make up a small percentage of the U.S. population, they experience higher rates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), drug and alcohol abuse, and poor mental health leading to higher suicide rates than any other group in the U.S. to effectively highlight the residual damage the Indian boarding schools have caused this chapter will feature a number of important statistics. The theory that impact of historical experiences can be seen today is called historical trauma. This theory was first applied to the Native American experiences by Maria Braveheart in the late 1990s. Since then, the research on the topic of historical trauma in Native American communities has increased especially the studies written regarding the Canadian residential school experiences. Due to the number of Canadian studies available I will be using these alongside U.S. studies to help explore the link between the Indian boarding schools and current issues within Native American communities.

In this study, I will determine that Indian boarding schools removed the control Native Americans had to protect themselves and others, through the removal of traditional clothing and cutting of their hair resulted in humiliation and questions regarding their culture and identity. The violent punishments and abuse endured by the survivors of the Indian boarding schools is still ongoing today with many Native children being victims of child abuse. Walker, explores the possible consequences of childhood abuse in adulthood, looking specifically at how childhood abuse affects their parenting and the child of the abuse survivor. It is important to examine what effects the abuse had on the survivors in adulthood, thus helping to explain how trauma can be passed down from parents to children. I will also explore whether victims of childhood abuse more likely to become a victim of other forms of abuse in adulthood, such as intimate partner violence.

This study will also set out to examine how alcohol and drug dependency within Native American communities are a direct result of cultural assimilation and a loss of cultural traditions and ceremonies such as healing ceremonies. Alcohol and drugs are used as coping mechanisms for the trauma sustained as a result of the Indian boarding schools and their lasting effect on the community. Which has subsequently impaired parenting causing children and Native youths to be at a greater risk at developing dependence on drugs and or alcohol. Emotional implications of historical trauma have resulted in a deep-rooted sense of hopelessness and despair that has resulted in high suicide rates among Naive youths. Suicide is the second

leading cause of death among Native American youth between the ages of 15 and 24, with “young people between the ages of 15 and 24 make up 40% of all suicide deaths in Indian Country.”¹³

In May 2022 the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) and the US Department of the Interior released the ‘Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Report’,¹⁴ this report was the first time in 200 years that the United States government has formally reviewed and acknowledged the Indian boarding school policies, as well as acknowledging the legacy impacts of the Indian boarding schools. The Department of the Interior and the NABS are continuing their work to review the scope of these policies and have requested that a Truth and Healing Commission be established. The discovery of unmarked graves at multiple Residential school sites in Canada, brought this aspect of North American history into the international eye. This thesis is an attempt to highlight the trauma and residual damage to indigenous ways of life that may help explain the current social and cultural position of Native Americans in contemporary America.

¹³ U.S. Department of health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, ‘American Indian/Alaska Native Behavioural Health Briefing Book’, (August 2011), p11

¹⁴ Newland, Bryan, ‘federal Indian Boarding school Initiative Investigative Report’, (May, 2022)

Chapter 1: Indian boarding schools. The cause of the trauma?

The following chapter will discuss how Native American education evolved throughout the 19th century and how the failures of the Day schools and on-reservation boarding schools led to the creation of the Indian boarding school system. To fully understand why the education system evolved, it is important to look at the motives of the federal government and missionaries that led to the establishment of the Native American education system. Throughout the 18th and 19th century, many settlers believed that the Native Americans were vanishing. It was this theory that led to a change in policy between settlers and the Native Americans the vanishing race theory was a belief that Native American cultures, customs and heritage were vanishing, this theory was aligned with the wider belief of Manifest Destiny. Brewton Berry argues that part of this theory also includes the literal extinction of the Native Americans as a race.¹⁵ Both Berry and Brian Dippie claim that the Vanishing Indian theory evolved from the vanishing of Native American culture to their extinction, this is where the similarities in their arguments end. They disagree on when this shift occurred. Dippie suggests that the change in attitudes from civilization to extinction came about after the War of 1812 when many tribes fought alongside the British.¹⁶ While Berry has shown that sentiments of extinction were heard as far back as the 1700s.¹⁷ English Historian Robert Mackenzie claimed that Native Americans progressed their way towards extinction due to their drunkenness and gradual limited access to land to hunt on, and as a result, the population of the Native Americans decreased.¹⁸ Mackenzie wrote his analysis in 1897, the Native American population had indeed declined since the first contact with Native Americans. The pre-contact population is estimated to have been between 1-10 million, by 1800 the population had been reduced to approximately 600,000 and continued to decline in the 19th century.¹⁹ While the decreased access to land to hunt on did contribute to the decline in the Native American population, modern historians explain that diseases such as smallpox and tuberculosis, and other disease factors such as warfare, land expropriation and removal had also contributed the vanishing of the Native Americans. The following chapter will explore the evolving efforts to eradicate Native American cultures, customs, and heritage through education. Civilizing Native American children through education to “kill the Indian, save the man.” Through the use of written and oral accounts of the Indian boarding schools compiled by Michel Coleman and David Adams, this chapter will set out to recognise the motive of the policymakers in the U.S. to use education as a means to solve “the Indian problem”, and to give detail of the day-to-day experiences of the Indian boarding schools. With an emphasis on the strangeness of the unfamiliar environment to the

¹⁵ Berry, Brewton, “The Myth of the Vanishing Indian”, *Phylon*, vol. 21, no. 1, (1960)

¹⁶ Dippie, Brian. W, *The Vanishing American: White Attitudes and U.S. Indian Policy*, (University Press of Kansas, 1991), p9

¹⁷ Berry, Brewton, “The Myth of the Vanishing Indian.” *Phylon*, vol. 21, no. 1, (1960), p52

¹⁸ Mackenzie, Robert, *America: a history*, (Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1897), p47

¹⁹ <https://www.cairn.info/revue-Annales-de-demographie-historique-2005-2-page-17.htm> [24/02/2024]

Native American children and their exposure to the curriculum at the schools. Which was designed to “kill the Indian, save the man.” As well as placing an emphasis on the disciplinary procedures and abuse that the pupils were subjected to. The purpose of the Native American education to “kill the Indian, save the man,” and the exposure to harsh discipline and abuse has resulted in a cycle of trauma that is still present in Native American communities today. Historical loss through disease, intentional killing, loss of land and forced civilization have all been linked as a cause of historical trauma among Native American communities. I am arguing that the Indian boarding schools are the most significant cause of historical and generational trauma. The forced civilization and institutional abuse were experienced by multiple generations.

The Policy of assimilation: What was it and what were their motivations?

The relationship between Britain and the Native Americans fluctuated before the American War of Independence. After the War of Independence in order to keep national unity, white Americans were willing to ignore the cultural differences.²⁰ However, this changed by the 18th and 19th centuries when treaties began to emphasize the differences between the races. Most notable are the Removal Act of 1830 which displaced Native Americans from their tribal lands, and the Civilization Act of 1819. Acts such as the Dawes Act and the Civilization Act drew upon the mythology of the vanishing Indian, they used very different methods to reach extinction.²¹ Native Americans were viewed as uncivilized because of their nomadic lifestyle; they did not follow the Christian religion and due to the colour of their skin. Euro-Americans believed that the fact that Native American culture was so different from theirs, must mean that the Native Americans were inferior and savage. It was argued that the Native American way of life was inferior because they lacked civilization. It was believed that the best way to civilize the Native Americans was through education. Between 1790 and the 1820s, there was increased interest in assimilating Native Americans by reformers and missionaries. The central ideas of assimilation were education and Christianisation (Christianisation and civilization were believed to go hand in hand). Throughout the 18th and 19th century, many settlers believed that the Native Americans were vanishing and were becoming “extinct” if they did not learn how to read and write.

One of the strongest arguments for educating Native American children was that the “older generations are incapable of becoming civilized.” David Adams provides a quote by the agent (someone who worked for the Bureau of Indian Affairs) of the Lakota “it is mere waste of time to attempt to teach the average adult Indian the ways of the white man. He can be tamed, and that is about all.”²² And so, it was concluded that they needed to educate the youth. In 1819 the Federal government created the Civilization Fund, which gave

²⁰ Bolt, Christine, *American Indian Policy And American Reform*, (Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1987), p38

²¹ Ostler, Jeffrey, “Nonvanishing Indians on the Eve of Removal, 1815–1830.” *Surviving Genocide: Native Nations and the United States from the American Revolution to Bleeding Kansas*, (Yale University Press, 2019)

²² Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p22

\$10,000 annually to civilizing the Native Americans,²³ along with these funds the government gave the church full responsibility for the education of the Native Americans. These missionaries were unpopular and regarded with hostility as some missions demanded a total change in lifestyle. Evangelicals believed that knowledge of the English language would help the Native Americans. However, many were reluctant to learn tribal languages which prevented them from teaching.²⁴ By the 1860s missionary schools had improved significantly, with some schools such as Baptist schools which were ran by the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions translating texts into the tribal languages and lessons were taught in the local language.²⁵

A year prior to the creation of the civilization fund the Congressional House committee declared ...

...put into the hands of their children the primer and the hoe, and they will naturally, in time, take hold of the plough; and, as their minds become enlightened and expand, the bible will be their book, and they will grow up in habits of mortality and industry, leave the chase to those whose minds are less cultivated, and become useful members of society.²⁶ (Originally found in *US American state papers 1815-1827*, 15th congress, 1st session vol 2 no 151 Indian affairs)

Along with the need to assimilate the Native American population through education, Margaret Szasz argues that the removal of land was used by assimilationists to help civilize Native Americans. According to Szasz, Native American values were expressed in their education and their attitudes towards the land.²⁷ In 1830 Congress passed the Indian Removal Act, which saw the removal of all the Native tribes in the eastern states, including the Hurons, Miamis, Shawnees, Ottawas, Choctaws, Chickasaws, Seminoles, and Creeks, all made their way west of the Mississippi River. The Cherokee were forcibly removed in a journey that is now remembered as the Trails of Tears, where “one in every four Cherokees died from disease, exposure, or starvation.”²⁸ It is important to note that the Cherokee had been adapting to white civilization for years prior to removal. In the following decades other events led to the further displacement of the Native Americans. The government now turned their attention to education. By 1871 Congress altered the status of the Native American population, they were now wards of the government. It was now the federal government’s responsibility for Native American education. In 1851 the Indian Appropriation Act was passed; this established the creation of reservations in present-day Oklahoma, which kept Native Americans off the lands that white settlers wished to settle on. By 1879 the U.S. military had successfully relocated most Native tribes onto reservations. In 1887 the Dawes Act was approved; this act saw the breaking up of

²³ Hagan, T. William, *American Indians*, (University of Chicago Press, 1961), p87

²⁴ Bolt, Christine, *American Indian Policy And American Reform*, (Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1987), p52

²⁵ Ibid, p214

²⁶ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928*, (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p6

²⁷ Szasz, Margaret, *Education and the American Indian; The Road to Self-determination Since 1928*, (University of New Mexico Press, 1979), p8

²⁸ Keating, Jessica. *The Assimilation, Removal, and Elimination of Native Americans*, p5

the reservations and tribal lands through granting individual Native Americans allotments to allow them to farm.

A further argument presented by Adams as a motivation for assimilation focuses on the economy. This line of argument took numerous forms. First, educating the Native Americans would allow the government to relieve them of their responsibility to feed and clothe the Native Americans, as schooling would prepare them for economic self-sufficiency by teaching them skills and trades. One of the biggest arguments presented by Adams was that it was “less expensive to educate Indians than to kill them,”²⁹ Carl Schurz, the former commissioner of Indian Affairs wrote in 1881, “it costs little less than a million of dollars to kill an Indian in war. It costs about one hundred and fifty dollars a year to educate one at Hampton or Carlisle.”³⁰ Between 1776 and 1789 “the confederate government spent \$580,103.4 ... on conducting relations with tribes.”³¹ The Federal government began to build schools on the reservations.

The first approach toward Native American education came in the form of the reservation day schools. These schools were often located on the outskirts of the reservation, by the 1860s there were 48-day schools.³² These schools were cheap to operate and there was little opposition from parents. The schools primary focus was the teaching of English and occasionally maths, these subjects were often taught up to grade 6. With the introduction of the Dawes Act Industrial training, became a focus, for boys this meant working in the garden, working with hammers and saws. For girls meanwhile, it meant sewing, cooking, and cleaning. According to Andrews “15-20 percent” of Native American children attended school in any given year between 1880s and 1920s received their education at day schools.³³ One of the hopes for the day schools was that when the children returned home at the end of the day, they would take back the civilized ways to their parents. However, this was not the case, policymakers argued that the attempts to civilize the children during the day were destroyed by the realities of camp life when the children returned home. The secretary of the Interior Carl Schurz said in 1879 “[the day schools] do not withdraw the children sufficiently from the influences, habits, and traditions of their home life, and produce for this reason but a ... limited effect.”³⁴ This became the main argument for the development of the reservation boarding schools.

Reservation boarding schools started to appear in the 1860s, with the first starting to operate in 1860 on the Yakima Indian Reservation in Washington State. There is evidence to suggest that the idea of reservation

²⁹ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p20

³⁰ Schurz, Carl, “Present Aspects of the Indian Problem”, *The North American Review*, July, 1881

³¹ Bolt, Christine, *American Indian Policy And American Reform*, (Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1987),p39

³² Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928*, (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p28

³³ Andrews, Thomas.G, ‘Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakota and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889-1920s’, *Western Historical Quarterly*, winter, 2002, vol.33, No.4, (Winter, 2002), pp408

³⁴ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928*, (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p30

boarding schools was first propositioned as early as 1820 with Reverend Cyrus Kingsbury proposed to the government the first system of boarding schools and day schools, and around \$17,000 was set aside to help build and equip 4 boarding schools and 23 day-schools among Choctaws to accommodate 80-100 students.³⁵ By 1868 there were 109 schools across the United States with the enrolment of more than 4,600 students.³⁶ These were usually located at agency (Bureau of Indian Affairs) headquarters on the reservations and were under the supervision of the agent. The reservation boarding schools provided clothing, food, and lodging to the students.³⁷ The curriculum consisted of lessons dedicated to English and basic academic subjects, the other half to industrial training, such as, farming, stock raising, blacksmithing, carpentry and harness making for boys and housekeeping for girls. The boarding school often had considerable control over the students' lives as the students were only permitted to go home during the summer and sometimes for the Christmas holidays. These early schools began to try to "Kill the Indian save the man" through the school curriculums. However, Officials did not believe that this was occurring fast enough and so, it was decided that to achieve this then the children needed to be isolated from their families, tribes, and culture. This isolation was a key aspect of the assimilation process. The practice of tribal religions and speaking tribal languages was prohibited at the schools. However, officials argued the schools failed to influence the children fully. The agent to the Wichita Tribe observed in 1879 that it was surprising "how soon they seem to forget all they have been taught, after they return to camp."³⁸ The influence of the parents and the community was not just isolated to the school holidays, visits by parents made the students homesick and affected the schools' operation. Schools that were located at the agency Reservation headquarters experienced issues when members of the tribal community would gather to collect their rations, even with fences around the school it would not stop communication between the students and members of the tribe. It was concluded by agents that assimilation would never be successfully achieved if the student's parents and friends could visit them. Adams argues it was these issues that led to some agents deciding that the best way forward was to isolate the schools completely from the influence of tribal life.³⁹ These discussions ultimately led to the creation of Indian boarding schools. As Iverson and David described "Isolation was necessary to remove children from harmful, counterproductive influences of their homes and communities."⁴⁰ The next step to achieve assimilation, was to remove children from their tribal lands, and isolate them physically from their families and tribes. In order to save the children from tribal influences and ultimately, "kill the Indian, save the man."

³⁵ Noriega, Jorge, 'American Indian Education in the United States: Indoctrination for Subordination to Colonialism', *The State Of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, (South End Press, Boston, Massachusetts, 1992), p377

³⁶ *Ibid*, p379

³⁷ [Albuquerque morning journal. \[volume\] \(Albuquerque, N.M.\) 1903-1926, July 08, 1922, CITY EDITION, Page Page Four, Image 4 « Chronicling America « Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

³⁸ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995),p31

³⁹ *Ibid*, p32

⁴⁰ Iverson, Peter, David, Wade, *We are still here: American Indians since 1890*, (John Witley & sons Inc, 2015), p19

One of the first Indian boarding schools, the Carlisle Indian School opened on the 1st November 1879, in Pennsylvania by Captain Henry Pratt. Pratts aim was to assimilate Native American children through immersion in white society and rejecting anything that was considered “Indian.” The quote “kill the Indian save the man”⁴¹ helps to encapsulate his objective, as well as highlighting his belief that Native American culture was inferior not them as a race. He expressed his views in an “Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Corrections” in 1892. Lomawaima and Ostler claim that today the quote “kill the Indian, save the man” distils the 21st-century image of the federal policy and practices against the Native Americans that spanned over a century.⁴² Pratt was able to establish an educational system that isolated children from their families, culture, and language. Ultimately, killing the Indian. Carlisle served as a template for the federal Indian system that was organized across the United States and Canada.

The second Indian boarding school was Hampton (Oregon), opened in 1880. In 1884 four more Indian boarding schools opened in Chilocco, Oklahoma; Genoa, Nebraska; Albuquerque, New Mexico and Lawrence, Kansas. By 1902 there were 25 schools across the mid- and south-west.⁴³ When Carlisle opened in 1879, they had 158 students and by the early 1900s, the number of students enrolled was around 1000.⁴⁴ The number of children who attended Indian boarding schools by 1889 was 10,500 children out of 36,000 Native children of school age.⁴⁵ With the increase in the number of students enrolled at the schools, the annual appropriations for Indian education rose from “\$75,000 to over \$2 million between 1880 and 1895”.⁴⁶ Approximately 94% of federal funds allocated for Native American education was spent on the boarding schools.⁴⁷ According to the United States Government for Indian Affairs “Between 1819 and 1969, the United States operated or supported 408 boarding schools across 37 states (or then-territories), including 21 schools in Alaska and 7 schools in Hawaii.”⁴⁸

Reasons for how the students ended up attending the Indian boarding schools vary. Some children were coerced to go by government officials, tribal police or by missionaries. Some were sent by tribal members and for some their reason was a personal choice, after attending day schools and on-reservation boarding schools some students “got the habit, accepting or insisting upon further schooling.”⁴⁹ Some parents sent

⁴¹ ["Kill the Indian, and Save the Man": Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans \(gmu.edu\)](#)

⁴² Lomawaima, Tsianina. K; Ostler, Jeffrey, “Reconsidering Richard Pratt: Cultural Genocide and Native Liberation in an Era of Racial Oppression”, *Journal of American Indian Education*, vol. 57, No.1, (spring 2018), p79

⁴³ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p56

⁴⁴ Fischbacher, Theodore, *A Study Of The Role Of The Federal Government In The Education Of The American Indian*, (Arizona State University, 1967), p104

⁴⁵ Noriega, Jorge, “American Indian Education in the United States: Indoctrination for Subordination to Colonialism”, *The State Of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, (South End Press, Boston, Massachusetts, 1992), p382

⁴⁶ Hoxie, Frederick, “The Reservation Period, 1880–1960,” *The Cambridge History of the Native Peoples of the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p199

⁴⁷ Fischbacher, Theodore, *A Study Of The Role Of The Federal Government In The Education Of The American Indian*, (Arizona State University, 1967)

⁴⁸ United States Government, Indian Affairs, *Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report*, (May 2022)

⁴⁹ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p61

their children, so that they were better fed and clothed, while for other parents their motivations differed. For example, Joseph La Flesche was sent to school by his father, because he recognised that the world was changing.⁵⁰ Others sent their child to help benefit the tribe, by learning to read and write English, they could be able to understand treaties and documents and “use the club of the white man’s wisdom against him”.⁵¹ For others there was no choice in attending the schools and many remember attempts by the police and agents to drag them off to school. For example, the Hopi sometimes hid their children from Mormon missionaries who were taking children to Intermountain school in Utah. The missionaries took 15% of all Hopi youth.⁵² In the 1890s Congress brought in new regulations regarding Indian boarding school attendance, designed to force students to the schools. On March 3rd, 1891, Congress gave the commissioner of Indian affairs permission “to make and enforce by proper means such rules and regulations as will secure the attendance of Indian children of suitable age and health at schools established and maintained for their benefit.”⁵³ In 1893 Congress gave the Indian Office the authority to withhold rations, clothing and other supplies from parents or guardians who refused to send their children to the schools. In 1896 Congress passed a law that prohibited the removal of Native American children to another state without the written consent of the parents. In 1894 there were 818 students from 53 tribes enrolled at Carlisle.⁵⁴

The assault on Native American traditional culture began as soon as the children arrived at the schools. This assault started with the appearance of the children. Upon arrival, they were washed, and their clothes were replaced with uniforms. For the boys, the uniform consisted of either a military uniform or a suit and trousers in military style, the girls were given dresses, skirts, and white blouses. Moccasins were replaced with hard-soled shoes (the size of these shoes did not always fit the children). Their old clothes would be sent back to their parents or burnt in the school furnaces; this was a symbolic rejection of the past and their heritage.⁵⁵ Luther Standing Bear, who was one of the first boys to attend the Carlisle School when it opened in 1879, recalls that his clothes were replaced with high collars, stiff-bosomed shirts, trousers, suspenders, and leather boots.⁵⁶ He described all of these as being uncomfortable, and in the winter, they were given red flannel undergarments. With these “discomfort grew into actual torture”.⁵⁷ Many former students have written about their difficulties getting used to their new garments, particularly taking the clothes off to use the bathroom; Frank Mitchell wrote, “a lot of us did not know how to work the buttons in the front, and

⁵⁰ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid, p65-66

⁵² Noriega, Jorge, “American Indian Education in the United States: Indoctrination for Subordination to Colonialism”, *The State Of Native America: Genocide, Colonization, and Resistance*, (South End Press, Boston, Massachusetts, 1992), p382

⁵³ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p63

⁵⁴ Reyhner, Joh; Eder, Jeanne, *American Indian Education: A History*, (University of Oklahoma Press, second edition, 2017), p 142

⁵⁵ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p83

⁵⁶ Standing Bear, Luther, *Land of the Spotted Eagle*, (University of Nebraska Press, 1930), p234

⁵⁷ Ibid, p234

many just wet themselves”.⁵⁸ This added to the humiliation already felt by having their traditional clothing removed. Gram describes the boarding schools as a

...continuation of the former American Indian Wars. Would be “soldiers” once again—now assimilated Indian children dressed in the pseudo[-]military uniforms provided by boarding schools— who would carry out this final campaign against “barbarism.”⁵⁹

Their cultural identity was further stripped by the cutting of their hair. In autobiographies written by former female students, they did not record their experience of the forced cutting of their hair, when their hair was cut it was often cut to shoulder length. Zitkala Sa recalls her experience “I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit.”⁶⁰ Long hair holds both a cultural and religious significance for Native Americans and many religious traditions teach that hair should only be cut when in mourning of a close relative.⁶¹ Daklugie (Apache) recalls his first days at Carlisle.

“[...]I lost my hair. And without it how would Ussen [chief deity of the Chiricahua Apache] recognize me when I went to the Happy Place? [...] Whiles we were bathing our breechclouts were taken and we were ordered to put on trousers we’d lost our hair and we’d lost our clothes; with the two we had lost our identity as Indians.”⁶²

Along with their new appearance, the children were given new “civilized” names. These new names were given to a child in a number of ways, usually by their teachers because their Indigenous names were deemed too difficult to pronounce and remember. Missionaries also considered their names as ‘heathenish’ and thus needed to be eradicated. It was common for names to be translated if and when possible, and Kiowa surnames were often anglicized and combined with new first names.⁶³ For example, the teachers of Ah-nen-la-de-ni La France insisted that he would be known as Daniel, who describes that “it made me feel as if I had lost myself [...] Daniel La France was to me a stranger with no possibilities. It seemed as if my prospect of a chiefship had vanished”⁶⁴. At some schools the students chose their new name; at Carlisle, names were chosen from a list written on a blackboard and included names such as George Washington, Ulysses. S. Grant and Philip Sheridan. This practice implicated the children in the destruction of their

⁵⁸ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p

⁵⁹ Gram, John R. *Education at the Edge of Empire: Negotiating Pueblo Identity in New Mexico’s Indian Boarding Schools*, (University of Washington Press, 2015), p4

⁶⁰ Sa, Zitkala, ‘The School Days of an Indian Girl’, (University of Virginia, 1996), p187

⁶¹ Cusack, Carmen. M, “Hair and Justice: Sociolegal significance of Hair in Criminal Justice, Constitutional Law, and Public Policy”, (Charles C. Thomas Publishers limited, 2015), pp110-111

⁶² Stout, Mary, “Native American Boarding schools”, (Greenwood, 2012), p36

⁶³ Trafzer, Clifford. E; Keller, Jean A; Sisquoc, Lorene, “Boarding School Blues: Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences”, (University of Nebraska Press, 2006), p73

⁶⁴ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993),p83

culture.⁶⁵ The traditional way of naming children varied among the different tribes, and many names were passed down through generations, with slight variations. For example, Little White Bear might become Walking Bear⁶⁶. For some like the Kiowas (of the Great Plains), children would not be named after a recently deceased relative, as a sign of reverence, and sometimes the entire family would change their names. Ellefson suggests that the name of the recently deceased would not be used or spoken for several years as it was considered sacred.⁶⁷ For other tribes names were gifted based on the children's characteristics and personality, for example, the Nanticoke-Lenni-Lenape (of southern New Jersey and Northern Delaware), often gave names based on an event that happened to the person or by them, or characteristics that define the person. It was common for a person's name to change over their lifetime, equally, it was common for a person to live their life without being named.⁶⁸

English was among the first things that was taught across all three types of schools. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs in 1887 John DC Atkins observed "This language, which is good enough for a white man and a black man, ought to be good enough for the red man."⁶⁹ Both government and missionary-run schools forbade the use of tribal language, meaning that English became the sole language used by students. Andrews argues that the Native languages were symbolic and used to "conceptualize and communicate their ideas of the physical, social and spiritual realms."⁷⁰ By eradicating Native American languages, they began to break down the bonds between the native people and their culture and "shackled Indian individuals to savage a doomed way of life."⁷¹ Other subjects that were taught included math, history, geography, and biology. Few narratives provide details about any other subjects. One exception was Francis La Flesche who recalls one history lesson where a visitor asked a student called Abraham Lincoln "who discovered America?" One student answered "George Washington," another student then answered "Columbus."⁷² According to Coleman few subjects shocked the students except geography, as it contradicted some tribal beliefs. An account from Charles Eastman described how the new information he had learnt in his geography class made him start to doubt his tribal philosophy and beliefs, "...I felt that my foothold was deserting me. All my savage training and philosophy was in the air if these things were true."⁷³ Through his study of hundreds of Native American autobiographies, Michael C. Coleman was able to determine that in

⁶⁵ Ibid, p84

⁶⁶ Ellefson, Connie, *A Genealogist's Guide to Native American Names: A Reference for Native American First Names*, (F+W Media, 2012), p n.a

⁶⁷ Ibid

⁶⁸ [Native American Naming Ceremonies – Nanticoke Lenni-Lenape Tribal Nation \(nlltribe.com\)](http://nlltribe.com) [8/02/22]

⁶⁹ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875 -1928* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p21

⁷⁰ Andrews, Thomas.G, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakota and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889-1920s", *Western Historical Quarterly*, winter, 2002, vol.33, No.4, (Winter, 2002), p411

⁷¹ Andrews, Thomas.G, "Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakota and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889-1920s", *Western Historical Quarterly*, winter, 2002, vol.33, No.4, (Winter, 2002), p411

⁷² La Flesche, Francis, *The Middle Five: Indian Schoolboys of the Omaha Tribe*, (University of Nebraska Press, 1963), p99

⁷³ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p110-111

none of the accounts did a student ever object; “They accepted without question [...] with its deliberate rejection of “savage” knowledge.”⁷⁴

The teaching of English was to be supported with “practical” or vocational knowledge. This meant gendered education where the boys and girls were taught separate practical skills and trades. Boys were taught farming and livestock care. At Albuquerque and Santa Fe Indian Schools in the 1930s the options for boys expanded to include carpentry, blacksmithing, tailoring and auto repair.⁷⁵ Girls, meanwhile, were taught how to sew, cook, laundry and other forms of housework, some schools later on also included nursing. This vocational aspect of the curriculum was intended to help the students become self-supportive and to help them become “individualized,” tribal life valued community rather than individual interests. John Oberly the superintendent of Indian schools in 1888 argued that the primary objective of the schools was to discourage the students from “the degrading communism of the tribal reservation system” and to instil them “with the exalting egotism of American civilization, so that he will say I instead of We”.⁷⁶ Pratt believed that for the students to become civilized, part of their education needed to focus on preparing students to live and work among Anglo-American families, and thus the outings programme was created. Students would be sent out to families during the summer to work on farms or in households. The outings programme supplied cheap labour for local farms. *The Arizona Republic* 1890 wrote that the off-reservation school in Phoenix added an additional \$50,000 a year to the city’s economy.⁷⁷

The central ideas to assimilation were education and Christianisation (Christianisation and civilization was believed to go hand in hand), to “kill the Indian, save the man” also included eradicating traditional native American religions, rituals, and ceremonies. Scholars often depict Native Americans have to choose between Traditional religions or Christianity.⁷⁸ During the late 19th Century federal officials were determined to eradicate Native American religions. Through the Dawes Act 1881, the U.S. government prohibited Native American religious ceremonies such as the sun dance, it was believed that ceremonies such as the sun dance were preventing Native Americans from assimilating.⁷⁹ While Protestant and Catholic missionaries challenged Native American spiritual practices. In some instances, Christian churches serving Native communities chose to incorporate Native American languages and symbols.⁸⁰ The schools had an aggressive Christianisation campaign. It was believed that an essential part of the education included Christian training. With a typical weekly routine included attending three services on a Sunday, daily morning, and

⁷⁴ Ibid, p111

⁷⁵ GRAM, JOHN R. *Education at the Edge of Empire: Negotiating Pueblo Identity in New Mexico’s Indian Boarding Schools*, (University of Washington Press, 2015)

⁷⁶ Adams, David, *Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928* (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p22

⁷⁷ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p111

⁷⁸ Pesantubbee, Michelene, “Native Americans, Christianity, and the Reshaping of the American Religious Landscape”, (University of North Carolina Press, 2010), pxii

⁷⁹ Iverson, Peter, Davies, Wade, ‘We are still here: American Indians since 1890, (John Witley & sons Inc, 2015, p28

⁸⁰ Ibid

evening prayers and on a Wednesday, students would attend an evening prayer meeting.⁸¹ Students at the school had a varied religious backgrounds, some students were already converted; the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole had been converted to Christianity before the introduction of the Removal Act of 1830. While others came from tribes which still practised their traditional religion. The young students who entered the boarding schools from tribes that still practises their traditional religions, only a partial understanding of their tribal belief system and ceremonies. The boarding schools cut these students off from traditional religious experiences as they were not permitted to go home during the autumn, winter, and spring. By tradition, these were the times of the year that certain religious ceremonies were performed.⁸² This would have contributed to isolating the children from their family and tribe, as they were unable to understand the rituals and ceremonies of their tribe. This does not mean that every student would have experienced this. Students had different reactions to the Christian teaching that they were being taught. Some children's language presented as a barrier. While for others, they struggled to understand the meaning and value of the bible stories. For example, Coleman briefly shows that students would interpret stories from the Old Testament using their own experiences. Mary Little Bear Inkanish thought that Judith, who cut off a man's head "was a real mean woman [...] as mean as a Sioux."⁸³ Students such as Zitkala Sa rejected Christianity, however many students were open to the new religion. While the government and the church had set out to "kill the Indian, save the man" by Christianising them, it had not been completely successful as, students either rejected Christianity altogether, embraced parts of Christianity but fused them with ideas from their traditional religion or, embraced Christianity as a whole.

Corporal punishment was often administered to enforce school rules and to motivate students to adapt to the school environment. Punishments were harsh and humiliating. The types of corporal punishments student were exposed to while attending Indian boarding school varied. Frank Mitchell remembers that runaways from Fort Defiance, Arizona would have to stand in the corner from carrying a heavy log around the shoulder.⁸⁴ At the Rehoboth Christian School, Rehoboth, New Mexico, Paul Blatchford claimed that returned runaways would receive 25 straps each⁸⁵; according to Tsianina K. Lomawaima and Jeffrey Ostler, around 1,850 students ran away from Carlisle⁸⁶ because of illness, homesickness, and corporal punishment. Traditionally, Native parents and the community saw children as individuals who could make their own decisions. Native parents allowed their children to develop at their own rate and with minimal rules, it was deemed disrespectful to guide or control the behaviour of another individual. However, this does not mean

⁸¹ Adams, David, 'Education for Extinction: The American Indians and the Boarding school Experience 1875 -1928 (University Press of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas, 1995), p187

⁸² *ibid*

⁸³ Coleman, Michael. C, 'American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930', (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p117

⁸⁴ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p89

⁸⁵ *ibid*

⁸⁶ Lomawaima, Tsianina. K; Ostler, Jeffrey, "Reconsidering Richard Pratt: Cultural Genocide and Native Liberation in an Era of Racial Oppression", *Journal of American Indian Education*, vol. 57, No.1, (spring 2018), p92

that discipline did not exist.⁸⁷ Paul Blatchford relives the punishment given to those who had wet the bed, “the boy or girl had to carry the mattress around in the square... for a whole day”⁸⁸. At Phoenix Indian school boys would be forced to wear dresses, and runaways would be jailed (this seems to be a common punishment, and many schools had a “jail,” the use of jails have been well documented in Albuquerque Indian school). The use of jails as punishments was not abolished until 1927.

However, in 1930 a new commissioner of Indian Affairs was appointed by President Hoover, Charles J Rhodes who released a statement repealing the ban on jails as a punishment, Rhodes said: “Superintendents are authorized to adopt such emergency measures as may in their judgement be thought necessary.”⁸⁹ Superintendents of the schools could then punish students by any means they saw fit. One Albuquerque Indian school student recalled the punishment for being caught talking in class “they tied a piece of rag around the mouth and back of his head”⁹⁰. Other students were, on occasion forced to participate in the punishment of other students, as demonstrated by a testimony given by Willie Curran detailing how he participated in a mass flogging of 80 boys, who had run away to play on a merry-go-round at a nearby playground.⁹¹

Sexual abuse was common in the Indian boarding schools, the full extent of sexual abuse in the boarding schools in the U.S. is currently unknown. In Canada, the Independent Assessment Process (IAP) which had been set up under the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) had received 37,951 claims for injuries resulting from physical and sexual abuse at the residential schools, which resulted in the awarding of \$2,690,000 in compensation.⁹² According to a *New York Times* article published in 2011, the Roman Catholic church agreed to pay \$166 million to more than 500 victims of sexual abuse.⁹³ Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart argues that boys experienced more physical and sexual abuse at the Indian boarding schools.⁹⁴ For example, Howard Wanna, a former student at Tekakwitha Orphanage and boarding school open between 1940-1970 in South Dakota and ran by Father Pohlen recalled his experiences.

“Father Pohlen sat me down, unzipped his pants, took his penis out, and began to wipe it on my face and lips. I was terrified. I didn’t know what was happening. In later sessions, sometimes behind the altar and sometimes at his house, suddenly I’d be choking and something would be running out

⁸⁷ Newcomb, Tamara, *Parenting Characteristics In Native American Families*, (Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 2001), p12

⁸⁸ *ibid*, p90

⁸⁹ Gessner, Robert, *Massacre: A survey of Todays American Indian*, (New York, Da Capo Press, 1972), p112

⁹⁰ Coleman, Michael. C, *American Indian Children At School, 1850-1930*, (University Press of Mississippi, 1993), p90

⁹¹ Gessner, Robert, *Massacre: A survey of Todays American Indian*, (New York, Da Capo Press, 1972), p119

⁹² “Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada”, (2015), p106

⁹³ [Northwest Jesuits Reach Settlement With Sexual Abuse Victims - The New York Times \(oclc.org\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2011/05/01/us/politics/northwest-jesuits-reach-settlement-with-sexual-abuse-victims.html)

⁹⁴ Brave Heart, M Y. “Gender differences in the historical trauma response among the Lakota.” *Journal of health & social policy* vol. 10,4, p14

of my mouth. He'd also turn me around and rape me, hurting me badly as he used his hands to grip my hair, neck, or shoulders."⁹⁵

Another former student of Tekakwitha May Catherine Renville described how she was sexually abused by nuns, "The nuns there would take us to their private quarters and do things to our bodies that even at that young age I knew were not right."⁹⁶ Severyn Zephier a former student at the St Paul's Mission School in South Dakota during his interview with *ICT* in 2011 stated,

"The child-molesters would come and go, as the Church rotated them among the Indian missions. We children stood by each other as best we could, but for a child, it was a disturbing, sickening place to be. I have often wondered where did the nuns and priests learn those things?"⁹⁷

In 2022 the United States government identified 53 marked and unmarked cemeteries throughout the country.⁹⁸ At Carlisle alone "at least 293 students died between 1879 and 1918 with the death rate highest in 1880s when 125 [students] died"⁹⁹. The mortality rate in 1890 was "49 students for every 1000 students",¹⁰⁰ when the mortality rate for the whole of the United States was "14 per 1000 people".¹⁰¹ It is important to stress that it is currently unknown how many children died at the Indian boarding schools. A report released by the United States government in 2022 stated that "approximately 19 Federal Indian boarding schools accounted for over 500 American Indian, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian child deaths. As the investigation continues, the Department expects the number of recorded deaths to increase."¹⁰² Diseases such as tuberculosis, measles, and pneumonia are thought to have been the leading cause of death within the Indian boarding schools. At Carlisle, Richard H. Pratt began to send sick children home and under-report the number of deaths in order to help keep a positive public image.¹⁰³ He also began refusing to send the bodies of the deceased back home to their families.¹⁰⁴ Some students sadly died while running away from the schools trying to get back home. Charlie Fiester was shot when attempting to break into a store.¹⁰⁵ Other children died due to weather conditions, in 1968 Ronald Yazzie aged 9, Willie Yazzie, 13 and

⁹⁵ [South Dakota Boarding School Survivors Detail Sexual Abuse - ICT News](#)

⁹⁶ *Ibid*

⁹⁷ *Ibid*

⁹⁸ United States Government, Indian Affairs, "Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report", (May 2022), p9

⁹⁹ Lomawaima, Tsianina. K; Ostler, Jeffrey, "Reconsidering Richard Pratt: Cultural Genocide and Native Liberation in an Era of Racial Oppression", *Journal of American Indian Education*, vol. 57, No.1, (spring 2018), p92

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid*

¹⁰² United States Government, Indian Affairs, "Federal Indian Boarding School Initiative Investigative Report", (May 2022), p9

¹⁰³ Lomawaima, Tsianina. K; Ostler, Jeffrey, "Reconsidering Richard Pratt: Cultural Genocide and Native Liberation in an Era of Racial Oppression", *Journal of American Indian Education*, vol. 57, No.1, (spring 2018), p92

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid*

¹⁰⁵ 'The chemawa American', April 26th, 1907, p8

their brother Ray Yazzie, 12, ran away from the Crownpoint boarding school in New Mexico. On the 13th of January Ronald and Willie were found frozen to death.¹⁰⁶

In 1928 the 'Miriam report: The Problem of Indian Administration' was released. This was a survey of the conditions of the reservations and the Indian boarding schools. For the survey, Lewis Meriam visited 78 government-run Indian boarding schools and 52 mission boarding schools,¹⁰⁷ and it was found that the design and capacities of the dormitories were inadequate for the most part. At the Pipestone school the surveyors found that one dormitory had 1 window for 35 beds,¹⁰⁸ thus causing issues with ventilation. They found that heating facilities were limited, with the radiator surfaces inadequate for the space. Dormitories were often overcrowded with one case having 30 children accommodated in 15 beds (2 students to a bed). The report also investigated the fire safety of the buildings and found that numerous doors were locked at night and windows were nailed shut to girls' dormitories to keep the sexes separated.¹⁰⁹ An article in '*The Tomahawk*,' January 24th, 1918, reported that a fire killed 13 boys between the ages of 9 and 17, and it was believed that the boys were trapped in their rooms.¹¹⁰ The Meriam report criticised the lack of space to keep personal items such as lockers.

“The Indian is often criticized for not accumulating possessions. His lack of this trait is cited as an indication of his general improvidence and unquestionably his lack of desire for possessions is one of the factors in making him content with a low standard of living. Certainly, the boarding school is making no attempt to change this condition.”¹¹¹

The Meriam report argued that the children did not possess enough clothing because they had no place to keep other things.¹¹² The Meriam report found that the average food allowance for per child was “11 cent a day”.¹¹³ At the Rice School (Arizona) they found that it spent on average “9 cent a day”.¹¹⁴ The report called for it to increase to “35 cent”,¹¹⁵ to allow for a balanced and nutritious diet to help combat against malnutrition and disease. Students diets often consisted of meat and starch, with a limited amount of fruit and vegetables and in some cases, students did not receive any. While the Meriam report highlighted some of the fundamental issues with the Indian boarding schools, it did not break away from the idea of

¹⁰⁶ [50 Years Ago: Boys freeze after running away from boarding school - Navajo Times](#) [2/03/2023]

¹⁰⁷ Meriam, Lewis, “The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey made at the request of Honourable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and submitted to him, February 21, 1928”, (The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1928), p314

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p316

¹⁰⁹ Ibid

¹¹⁰ [The Tomahawk. \[volume\] \(White Earth, Becker County, Minn.\) 1903-192?, January 24, 1918, Image 1 « Chronicling America « Library of Congress \(loc.gov\)](#)

¹¹¹ Meriam, Lewis, “The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey made at the request of Honorable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and submitted to him, February 21, 1928”, (The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1928), p320

¹¹² Ibid

¹¹³ Ibid,p330

¹¹⁴ Ibid

¹¹⁵ ibid

assimilation as its primary concern was that Native American children being ill-prepared for independent citizenship. And thus, by default supported the aims to “kill the Indian and save the man.”

The vanishing race theory provides the basis of the idea that the Native Americans were vanishing as a race but also that their culture was also disappearing. The decreased access to land, disease, land exploitation and forced removal led to the rapid decline in the Native American population, the Indian boarding system sought to eradicate Native American culture, language, and religion. Historian Szasz argues that the removal of land can also be included as an effort to wipe out Native culture as much of Native values were expressed through the land. This chapter has explored the evolving efforts to eradicate Native American cultures, customs, and heritage through education, with the motive to “kill the Indian, save the man.” While disease, intentional killing, and loss of land have been linked to historical trauma, the multi-generational attendance of Indian boarding schools and the subsequent institutional abuse are the leading causes of the historical and generational trauma in Native American communities. Children were forced to attend these schools often being forced to move hundreds of miles away from their family and community, resulting in issues in developing and maintaining lasting relationships. The Indian boarding schools stripped children of their physical Native identity through the removal of their traditional clothing and the cutting of their hair. Along with the removal of their physical identity, Native culture was further attacked when children were forced to change their names to more ‘civilized’ ones that held no meaning to the child. This implicated the children in the destruction of their own culture and traditional naming practices and for some this act further distanced the child from their Native identity and broke their connection to their family and tribe. These experiences and acts of “killing the Indian, and saving the man,” are a cause of the trauma, trauma that has resulted in many present-day issues within the Native American communities today. These acts of assimilation altered how the children viewed their own culture and themselves. Ultimately, killing part of the Indian. Native American identity and traditions were further eroded through the schools’ curriculums. Bonds between tribal culture and its people have been permanently broken through the teaching of the English language coupled with corporal punishment, and Christian training. Today only half of the 300 Native languages are in use today, around 50 of the remaining languages are spoken by less than 10 people.¹¹⁶ With the illegalization of Native rituals and Christian teaching children restricted their understanding of their tribal ceremonies and rituals, today many of these rituals have been lost. Other parts of the curriculum aimed at making the children question and reject their Native American knowledge and vocational courses aimed to break down the importance of community and promote individualism, these gendered courses have disrupted the traditional gender roles, and the impact of this disruption can be seen today and will be further explored in chapter 3.

¹¹⁶ Grantt, Amy, “Native Language Revitalization: Keeping the Language Alive and Thriving”, *Native Leadership Past, Present, and Future: Proceedings of the Eleventh Native American Symposium*, (2016), p13

Corporal punishment and sexual abuse were widely experienced by the children who attended the Indian boarding schools. The scale of sexual abuse in the United States Indian boarding schools is currently unknown, however in Canada around 40,000 Native and First Nations people have made claims to the Canadian government for the compensation for the abuse they suffered at the schools. These experiences have had an equally disastrous impact in Native communities as the acts of assimilation have had. These actions against the Native American children who attended the Indian boarding schools have had lasting impacts and consequences within the Native American communities and survivors' families. While these acts are not acts of assimilation like the removal of clothing, hair, and names, these have also aided the aim to "kill the Indian and save the man." Families of the children who died while attending the schools were unable to perform ceremonies and rituals that took place when a member of the family or community died, these ceremonies often provided spiritual healing to the family and community, without these ceremonies' families were unable to heal from the loss. These historical experiences are important to understanding the current-day issues that Native American communities face. The release of the Meriam Report highlighted health and safety issues within the schools, the report investigated issues from the lack of ventilation, access to fire exits and lack of a balanced diet. Even with the publication of this report Indian boarding schools remained open, and further generations of Native American children were subjected to acts that were designed to "kill the Indian and save the man." This historical loss of culture has resulted in multiple generations of Native Americans being raised in between two worlds; the trauma caused by these experiences has had intergenerational effects.

Chapter 2: The Meriam report and evolution of Native American education until 1973

This chapter aims to uncover why it took the United States government until the late 1970s to the 1980s to close down the Indian boarding schools and provide Native American communities the means to set up their own tribal schools. This chapter will not necessarily discuss the trauma caused by the Indian boarding schools it will provide another aspect of the development of Native American education. This chapter will highlight almost 40 years of federal failures regarding the Indian boarding schools. Four years after the Indian Citizenship Act, the Meriam report was released in 1928. The report was a survey of the economic and social conditions of Native American communities, it included a detailed survey of the Native American education system and highlighted the issues within the education system and brought forward recommendations for improvement. The report made it clear that the Native American policy had left the Native people without access to wealth and opportunities that were available to the Euro-Americans, the policy had left “Native peoples either poor or dead.” The Meriam Report called the Indian boarding school system as “grossly inadequate” and argued that Indian education should no longer be segregated from the majority culture.¹¹⁷ Andrew Woolford suggests that the Meriam report does not break away from the idea that government intervention in the lives and governance of Native Americans was necessary,¹¹⁸ and that the way in which the “Indian problem” was addressed now moved away from force or faith to the modern techniques of administration.¹¹⁹ While the Meriam report accepts that education is important for integrating Native Americans into American society it is concerned that the education that Native American children received did not prepare them to be independent American citizens.¹²⁰ One of the recommendations regarded the routinization of the Indian boarding schools, suggesting that these routines should be eliminated as it prevented students from developing initiative and independence.¹²¹ Even though the Meriam report had influence over the government during the 1930s, its influence did not last long as during the 1940s and 50s saw a U-turn back to a policy of assimilation, resulting in another generation of Native American children being exposed to the traumas of the Indian boarding schools. It was not until Richard Nixon’s presidency (1969 – 1974) that there was a return to policymaking to help improve the lives of the Native American communities. The efforts of the American Indian Movement through protests such as the occupation of Alcatraz and ‘The Trail of Broken Treaties’ brought the social issues facing the Native

¹¹⁷ <https://www.colinmustful.com/meriam-report/> [20/04/2024]

¹¹⁸ Woolford, Andrew, *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States*, (University of Nebraska press, 2015), p81

¹¹⁹ Ibid

¹²⁰ Ibid

¹²¹ Meriam, Lewis, “The Problem of Indian Administration: Report of a Survey made at the request of Honourable Hubert Work, Secretary of the Interior, and submitted to him, February 21, 1928”, (The John Hopkins Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1928), p32

American communities to the attention of the rest of the country. This chapter will explore the initial impact of the Meriam report on the BIA and how throughout the 20th century government attitudes towards civilization changed, allowing further generation of Native American children being exposed to an education system that was designed to “kill the Indian, Save the man”, along with being exposed to emotional, physical and sexual abuse at the hands of the Indian boarding school staff. The following chapter will also focus on how the American Indian Movement influenced politics, and how this movement helped influence policy changes during the ~~that would be introduced in the~~ 1970s by Richard Nixon.

In chapter 3, I will use sources based on the experiences of Native American and First Nations peoples in Canada. I have included this to provide some background knowledge, as the Canadian and USA experiences are similar. However, the Canadian government were slower to act to improve the schools as many were ran by the church with very little government intervention. The following paragraph will briefly explain why the Canadian residential school system. The Meriam report seems to have had no influence on the Canadian residential school system. In 1879 Nicholas Davin was sent to the United States to study the Indian boarding schools, Davin felt that the state ran school system was impractical and decided that Canada should build its Indian boarding schools (known as residential schools) through the Christian missions that were already living within Native communities. The Canadian government depended on Protestant, Methodist, Presbyterian, Anglican, and Catholic missionaries to operate their schools. The Churches influence over educational policies meant that there were very few changes made in regard to First Nations education policies. A. Muller described that the schools were “defined by a regime of monastic discipline oriented first and foremost toward shaping the souls of the students”.¹²² The Indian Act of 1920 claimed that First Nation children belonged to the Christian denomination that was assigned to their community, so children were sent to the schools ran by these denominations, children were often sent to the residential school at the age of 5 years old.¹²³ The Canadian government provided minimum funds, which resulted in the residential schools suffering from the same issues that had been reported in the Indian boarding schools in the U.S. In the U.S. there was a shift towards a welfarist-administrative model of indigenous control in the 1930s. However, this did not occur in Canada until the 1950s. Few changes were made to the residential school policy in Canada partly due to the fact that there had been little changes to the bureaucrats who ran the school system. For example, Duncan Campbell Scot was the deputy superintendent of Indian affairs from 1913-1932.¹²⁴ I do believe that it is important to include that, prior to the release of the Meriam Report, a Canadian doctor Peter Bryce published the “Report On The Indian Schools Of Manitoba And The North-West Territories”. Much like the Meriam report it highlighted the issues of the schools. This 1907 report found that the sanitary conditions of many schools were deficient, especially in the matter of ventilation. Dr

¹²² A.Muller, et al, “Digitalizing Suffering, Actual Healing: Empathy, reconciliation, and Redress Through a Virtual Indian Residential School”, *Alleviating world Suffering: The Challenge of Negative Quality of Life*, (Springer, 2017), p306

¹²³ Ibid

¹²⁴ Ibid

Bryce argues that the lack of ventilation leads to the spread of disease such as tuberculosis.¹²⁵ From numbers gathered from 1,537 pupils from 15 schools, 7 percent of pupils are ill or in poor health and 42 percent are reported to be dead.¹²⁶ The Canadian government never published the report, in 1922 Bryce published it himself under the title “The Story of a National Crime: Being a Record of the Health Conditions of the Indians of Canada from 1904 to 1921”. Bryce’s calls for improvement were ignored.

Five years after the Meriam report the federal government brought in the Indian Reorganization act of 1934, this policy began to overturn many assimilation policies and restore land and mineral rights back to the tribes. Szasz argues that in the years following the publication of the Meriam report, it became a symbol of a definitive response to the failure of the assimilation policy.¹²⁷ Charles J. Rhoads the commissioner of Indian affairs from 1929 to 1933 was the first commissioner that tackled the recommendation mentioned in the Meriam report. One change was that the curriculum would no longer be standardized and localized educational programmes were created to allow recognition of differences among Native American tribes. Donald Critchlow argues that historians have missed the central message of the Meriam report. He believes that the report calls for the improvement in administration and better personnel in the Indian service, would also lead to better conditions among Native Americans. Lewis Meriam and his associates were interested in ensuring that existing policies were implemented efficiently through an organised administration that was run by well-trained specialists.¹²⁸ One of Meriam’s associates was John Collier, the director of the American Indian Defence Association, which had pressured the government to conduct the Meriam Report. In 1933 John Collier became the commissioner of Indian Affairs (1933-1945), during his tenure as commissioner the Indian Reorganization Act was introduced, this act would overturn the Dawes Act allotment system and according to Woodford, this paved the way for self-government.¹²⁹ The New Deal era provided a space for reformers to bring about change as funds were now directed towards social welfare. During the New Deal era, Collier called for the closing of boarding schools and opening more day schools. A recommendation that was made in the Meriam report to reduce overcrowding in Indian boarding schools was to introduce additional grades to day schools, allowing children to attend day school until they were 11-12 years old. This would allow children to remain with their families until they were 12 years old rather than being sent hundreds of miles away from home as young as 5 years old. This change would allow children to be surrounded by their family and culture for

¹²⁵ Bryce, Peter, *Report On The Indian Schools Of Manitoba And The North-West Territories*, (Government Printing Bureau, Ottawa, 1907), p17

¹²⁶ Ibid

¹²⁷ Szasz, Margaret, *Education and the American Indian; The Road to Self-determination Since 1928*, (University of New Mexico Press, 1979), p24

¹²⁸ Critchlow, Donald T. “Lewis Meriam, Expertise, and Indian Reform”, *The Historian*, vol. 43, no. 3, 1981, p327

¹²⁹ Woolford, Andrew, *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States*, (University of Nebraska press, 2015), p83

longer. Around 20,000 children attended boarding schools.¹³⁰ According to Woolford the "boarding schools ate up approximately 80 percent of the educational resources of the BIA" (Bureau of Indian Affairs).¹³¹ The yearly cost per child for boarding school is estimated to have been around \$500, in contrast, the yearly cost for a child to attend day school was \$125 this figure included transportation, lunch and clothing at each location.¹³² During Colliers 12 years as commissioner, 16 boarding schools were shut down and 84 day schools were opened.¹³³ This allowed students to remain at home and still be surrounded by their family and culture. As part of Franklin D Roosevelt's New Deal, the Public Works Administration (PWA) was created. This was designed to help reduce unemployment which was a result of the Great Depression. \$1.5 million of the PWA money was spent to build 40-day schools.¹³⁴

The Meriam report called for changes to be made in teaching, it suggests that teaching methods need to be adapted to meet an individual's needs, interests and abilities.¹³⁵ It also recommended that curriculums should not be standardized, and teachers must be free to use materials of Native American life so, "children may proceed from the known to the unknown."¹³⁶ Doing so would allow children to build off their pre-existing knowledge. Changes were made throughout the 1930s to create a more culturally inclusive curriculum. Gabriella Treglia argues that the new inclusive curriculum remained primarily assimilationist with a "safety zone" of Native culture that would be allowed to be taught.¹³⁷ The BIA deemed history, art, songs, stories, and language as areas of Native American culture that were worthy of being introduced into the curriculum, while tribal scientific and ecological beliefs which contradicted Bureau land and health policy were disregarded.¹³⁸ Native arts and crafts, history and lore were introduced into most schools. However, Treglia stresses that history and lore were reduced to "mythology".¹³⁹ An effort to create a culturally inclusive curriculum had also been attempted in 1901, by the superintendent of Indian schools Estelle Reel, who created a guide titled "Course of Study for Indian Schools", which mirrored much of Richard H. Pratt's approach. However, Reel advocated for a revival of Native American crafts such as basket weaving. While this can be seen as an attempt to revive cultural traditions and identity, Slivka argues that Reels focus on cultural traditions was in reality trying to make Native cultural craftwork a commodity. ¹⁴⁰

¹³⁰ Ibid, p85

¹³¹ ibid

¹³² ibid

¹³³ Edward, Kennedy, "Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge", Report of the Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate Made By Its Special Subcommittee On Indian Education, (91st Cong, 1st Session, 1969),p13

¹³⁴ Reyhner, Jon, "Progressive Education and the "Indian New Deal", (Native Education research Symposium, National Indian Education Association Annual Meeting, Rapid city, South Dakota, Oct 13th, 1996), p5

¹³⁵ Ibid, p32

¹³⁶ Ibid, p33

¹³⁷ Treglia, Gabriella. "Cultural Pluralism Or Cultural Imposition? Examining the Bureau of Indian Affairs" Education Reforms during the Indian New Deal (1933–1945)." *Journal of the Southwest* , vol 61, no. 4 (2019), p821

¹³⁸ Ibid, p849

¹³⁹ Ibid, p824

¹⁴⁰ Slivka, Kevin, "Art, Craft and Assimilation: Curriculum for Native Students during the Boarding School Era", *Studies in Art Education*, Vol, 52. No 3 (Spring 2011), p237

Part of this new flexible curriculum that placed a positive value on the Native American lifestyle, it also introduced the freedom to practise traditional religions. The Dawes Act of 1888 prohibited the practice of Native religious ceremonies, rites, and rituals. This remained the case until 1978 when the American Indian Religious Freedom Act was passed. However, in 1934 the BIA released the following statement concerning religion.

“No interference with Indian religious life will be hereafter tolerated. The cultural history of Indians is in all respects to be considered equal to that of any non-Indian groups. And it is desirable that Indians be bilingual—fluent and literate in English and fluent in their vital, beautiful, and efficient native languages.”¹⁴¹

In effect this meant that Native American children in federal schools could no longer be forbidden to practise their traditional religions. While some schools enthusiastically accepted this change, the change in attitudes toward Native religion was slow as there was a strong belief that Native American religion held no inherent value.¹⁴² Some schools embraced the bicultural approach, for example Santa Fe school allowed students to return home to participate in ceremonial training. Other schools resisted it. Teachers were able to produce their own lesson plans, which resulted in a range of results, some teachers continued teaching in a Euro-American model, while others embraced and were inspired by tribal elders.¹⁴³ The different ways of teaching can be seen in the teaching methods of Ester Horne and Marguerite Bigler Stoltz. Ester Horne taught at Eufala Indian boarding school in Oklahoma, and Wahpeton Indian boarding school in North Dakota. In Wahpeton Stoltz introduced Native dances as the true folk dancing of America, she brought in local dancers as instructors to the students.¹⁴⁴ Non-Native Marguerite Bigler Stoltz taught at five government-run Indian boarding schools between 1928 and 1937 and found that her students at Carson Indian boarding school in Nevada had mixed responses towards the cultural lessons. She discovered that her students were enthusiastic about a weekly assignment to write “a story of long ago, one that perhaps their grandmother had told them.”¹⁴⁵ These stories told family and tribal histories. Unfortunately, the Meriam report and the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, could not make up for the century and a half of mistreatment that preceded it, nor could it prevent some of the detrimental policies that followed in the 1940s and 50s.

The 1940s and 1950s saw a shift towards assimilation, this era of Native History became known as the Termination Era. This policy sought to re-establish assimilation and to make Native Americans subject to the

¹⁴¹ Iverson, Peter, David, Wade, *We are still here: American Indians since 1890*, (John Witley & sons Inc, 2015), p87

¹⁴² Szasz, Connell, Margaret, “Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928”, (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1979), p67

¹⁴³ Treglia, Gabriella. "Cultural Pluralism Or Cultural Imposition? Examining the Bureau of Indian Affairs" *Education Reforms during the Indian New Deal (1933–1945)*. *Journal of the Southwest* , vol 61, no. 4 (2019), p849

¹⁴⁴ Ibid, p826

¹⁴⁵ ibid

same laws, privileges and responsibilities as other citizens of the United States.¹⁴⁶ Throughout the 1950s legislation was brought in that terminated the protection of the federal government and the legal recognition for 109 tribes.¹⁴⁷ The progression that had been made with the Indian New Deal was destroyed partly by the war budget. As a result, many schools were forced to close on the Navajo reservation and twenty-day schools¹⁴⁸ had closed by 1944. In 1944 the total budget, including both federal and tribal funds, was \$28,843,902, this was even less than the 1932 budget which was \$30,445,092.¹⁴⁹ In 1944, day schools began to be condemned by the House Select Committee condemned day schools for adapting education to the Native Americans and the Native way of life and argued that children should be placed in off-reservation boarding schools.¹⁵⁰ The House Select Committee argued that “the goal of Indian education [...] should be to make the Indian child a better American than to equip him simply to be a better Indian.”¹⁵¹ While the U.S. government was pushing for Native children to attend the boarding schools enrollment at all schools had declined.

Between 1942 and 1945 reservation day schools lost almost “two thousand students or 25 percent of their enrolment”¹⁵². In total enrolment declined by “three thousand [children] or 12 percent”¹⁵³ for all types of schools. World War II brought about its own set of issues, boarding schools began to lose students and staff members who left school to enlist. Over 24,000 Native Americans served in the U.S. armed forces during Second World War.¹⁵⁴ With the U.S. entrance into the Second World War Indian boarding schools began to participate in defence preparations by offering courses for the war industry. Courses included machine shop work and aircraft assembly and manufacturing.¹⁵⁵ After 1945 Indian affairs leaders began to focus on student employment, as more jobs became available in urban areas.¹⁵⁶ However, Margaret Szasz highlights that around 40,000¹⁵⁷ Native Americans moved off the reservations for new employment in ship building, mining, and railroading.¹⁵⁸ Many jobs that had been available during the War disappeared after 1945 due to the lack of jobs available, many parents sent their children to Indian boarding schools as a last resort.¹⁵⁹

¹⁴⁶ <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/self-determination-without-termination> [27/07/23]

¹⁴⁷ <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/self-determination-without-termination> [27/07/23]

¹⁴⁸ Szasz, Connell, Margaret, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928*, (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1979), p109

¹⁴⁹ibid, p111

¹⁵⁰ Edward, Kennedy, “Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge”, Report of the Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate Made By Its Special Subcommittee On Indian Education, (91st Cong, 1st Session, 1969), pp13-14

¹⁵¹ Ibid,p14

¹⁵² Szasz, Connell, Margaret, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928*, (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1979), p110

¹⁵³ ibid

¹⁵⁴ Ibid, p107

¹⁵⁵ Ibid, p110

¹⁵⁶ Woolford, Andrew, *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States*, (University of Nebraska press, 2015), p92

¹⁵⁷ Szasz, Connell, Margaret, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928*, (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1979), p107

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, p108

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p118

During this period it became common for Indian boarding schools to operate as welfare institutions for the federal government. Some facilities became orphanages this was a way in which the federal government could promote fostering and adopting Native American children as alternatives to institutionalization as a form of assimilation.¹⁶⁰ The 1950s saw the closure of all federal boarding schools in Idaho, Michigan, Washington, and Wisconsin and in 1953 Native American students began to be transferred into public schools.¹⁶¹ The attendance of Native students was not new, in 1930 “over 53 percent”¹⁶² of Native children were enrolled in public schools. Throughout the 1940s and in particular the late 1940s there was a growth in Native American leadership and their political awareness. In 1946 the Navajo led a delegation asking for adequate educational facilities for their tribe. In 1946 “20,000 to 22,000 children, some 12,000 to 14,000 were not in school.”¹⁶³ There were more children not attending school in 1946 than in 1928.¹⁶⁴ In Autumn 1946 the Navajo Special Education Program was created. This program was responsible for educating “4300 Navajo overage students” between 1946 to the early 1960’s.¹⁶⁵

By the late 1960s and early 1970s saw a push for self-determination in Native American education and the beginning of the Red Power Movement. In 1969 Edward Kennedy presented the “Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge” to Congress. The report critiqued the Native American educational system. It found that many of the findings that had been reported in the Meriam Report in 1928 still remained in the 1960s. The Committee On Labor and Public Welfare found that Indian boarding schools had overcrowded dormitories, lack of privacy, and unappealing meals. It found that “approx. 16,000 children are not in school”,¹⁶⁶ dropout rates were twice the national average, and Native Children were more likely than any other group to believe that they are below the average in intelligence.¹⁶⁷ It found that 12,000 students attended 19 off-reservation boarding schools,¹⁶⁸ and described these as being “dumping grounds” for Native children who had been sent to the schools by social workers.¹⁶⁹ For a child to be granted admission into an off-reservation boarding schools they had to meet one of the following criteria: a) There had to be no day school or locally; b) The child had Learning difficulties or have “pronounced bilingual difficulties”. The Social criteria included the following; a) the students belonged to a large family with no suitable home,

¹⁶⁰ Woolford, Andrew, *This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States*, (University of Nebraska press, 2015), p92

¹⁶¹ Edward, Kennedy, “Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge”, Report of the Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate Made By Its Special Subcommittee On Indian Education, (91st Cong, 1st Session, 1969),p14

¹⁶² Szasz, Connell, Margaret, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination since 1928*, (University of New Mexico Press, Albuquerque, 1979), p89

¹⁶³ Ibid, p115

¹⁶⁴ Ibid

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

¹⁶⁶ Edward, Kennedy, “Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge”, Report of the Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate Made By Its Special Subcommittee On Indian Education, (91st Cong, 1st Session, 1969),p3

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, p71

¹⁶⁹ Ibid

b) behavioural issues, or c) a family member was in poor health.¹⁷⁰ Under these social criteria, 50 percent of the students were enrolled in Albuquerque Indian School.¹⁷¹ At Busby, Montana 98 percent, at Chilocco 75 percent, 90 percent at Flandreau and 80 percent at Stewart.¹⁷² The report provided some recommendations for Indian boarding schools, it suggested that some schools should be turned into therapeutic treatment centres administered by the Public Health Services. Another suggestion was that the distribution and location of the federal Indian boarding schools needs to re-examine, as the report brought to light that the boarding schools contributed to the mental health of the students.¹⁷³ During their survey on Native Education the Committee on Labor and Public Welfare worked with doctors such as Dr Thaddeus Krush, who argued that the

“Frequency of movement and the necessity to conform to changing standards can only lead to confusion and disorganization of the child’s personality. The frequency of movement further interferes with and discourages the development of lasting relations in which love, and concern permit adequate maturation.”¹⁷⁴

Dr Robert Leon stated in the report that it “does more harm than good, they do not educate; they alienate.”¹⁷⁵ A further recommendation was that guidance and counselling programs need to be expanded and improved. During Nixon’s first term, the Indian Education Act was passed in 1972, providing financial assistance to public schools and Native American community schools to help them plan, develop and carry out elementary and secondary school programmes designed to meet the educational needs of Native American children.¹⁷⁶ The act also gave financial help to Native American tribes and organizations as well as to state and local education agencies to allow them to improve educational opportunities for Native American children and adults.¹⁷⁷ It allocated not more than 10 percent of funds to Native American controlled schools, the total amount of funds was “\$17 million, only \$1.7 million was allowed to be used to fund schools controlled by Native American tribes”¹⁷⁸. In 1973 “\$ 11.5 million was awarded for projects based on some 135,000 Indian students enrolled in 435 public school districts in 31 States”¹⁷⁹. In 1973 there were “10 Indian-controlled schools”¹⁸⁰ that were located on or near reservations that received \$547,618¹⁸¹ in total. And by 1975 there were 25 Native American controlled schools that were awarded \$2,272,727.¹⁸² The

¹⁷⁰ Ibid, p72

¹⁷¹ Ibid, p73

¹⁷² ibid

¹⁷³ Ibid, p77

¹⁷⁴ Ibid

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, p78

¹⁷⁶ “The Indian Education Act of 1972: Answers to Your Questions”, (United States: U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, 1976), p1

¹⁷⁷ Ibid

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, p3

¹⁷⁹ ibid, p6

¹⁸⁰ ibid

¹⁸¹ ibid

¹⁸² ibid

Office of Indian Education in the U.S. Office of Education was established, and a National Advisory Council on Indian Education was created to provide guidance in policy making and to advise the Commissioner of Education regarding any program where Native children or adult would participate or benefit from.¹⁸³

The 1960s saw a new generation of radicals. The American Indian Movement (AIM) was established in 1968. This group gained media attention and became the best-known Native activist group. This time of “civil disobedience” was called the Red Power movement. They aimed to assert their rights to self-government, revitalize their culture, protect natural resources, have tribal control of education and to develop reservation economies.¹⁸⁴ One may believe that the Native Americans were supportive of the Civil Rights Movement as it would help them to achieve their own equality. The Civil Rights Movement demanded policies of integration such as equal rights, Voting rights and equal protection under the law. However, Katherine Osburn argues that the Choctaw did not embrace the Civil Rights Movement as they wanted their campaign to be “Indian”.¹⁸⁵ A member of the Association on American Indian Affairs (AAIA) said “if we wait long enough, we will have to face the fact that the Negroes won our rights for us”.¹⁸⁶ Osburn argues that the majority of Choctaw leaders believe that Native American Civil Rights issues were different and that their campaign needed to be centred on the integration of their Native American identity.¹⁸⁷ Native Americans rejected the integration goal of the African American Civil Rights Movement and many embraced Nixon’s efforts of Self-determination. In 1970 Richard Nixon denounced the Eisenhower-era policy of termination. Nixon introduced a policy aimed at Native American Self-Determination. In a message to Congress Nixon presented the following in 1970

“The goal of any new national policy toward the Indian people to strengthen the Indian’s sense of autonomy without threatening this sense of community. We must assure the Indian that he can assume control of his own life without being separated involuntary from the tribal group. And we must make it clear that Indians can become independent of Federal control without being cut off from Federal concern and Federal support [...] The Indians of America need Federal assistance – this much has long been clear. What has not always been clear, however, is that the Federal government needs Indian energies and Indian leadership if its assistance is to be effective in improving the conditions of Indian life.”¹⁸⁸

¹⁸³ Ibid, p1

¹⁸⁴ Kiel, Doug, “Rebuilding Indigenous Nations: Native American Activism and The Long Red Power Movement”, *Expedition*, vol 55, Number 3, (2013), p11

¹⁸⁵ Osburn, Katherine M.B., *Choctaw Resurgence in Mississippi: Race, Class and Nation Building in the Jim Crow South*, (University of Nebraska Press, 2014), p183

¹⁸⁶ Ibid

¹⁸⁷ Ibid

¹⁸⁸ PRESIDENT NIXON, SPECIAL MESSAGE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS JULY 8, 1970 [Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States: Richard Nixon, 1970, pp. 564-567, 576-76], p2

In 1969 Native American students began an 18-month-long occupation of Alcatraz Island, Native Americans throughout the country had become frustrated by the lack of civil liberties and the loss of control over ancestral land.¹⁸⁹ The Alcatraz proclamation was drawn up to announce the groups' intentions and hopes for the future of the Native American people, the proclamation was a creative response to the legacy of American colonialism. The group claimed the island by the "right of discovery" creating a parody of the European conquest of North America.¹⁹⁰ The second section of the proclamation lists the reasons why Alcatraz Island is a more suitable place for a reservation, as it lacked running water, sanitation, agricultural land, and educational facilities this was done to make the government and American public to take note of.¹⁹¹ The occupation of Alcatraz changed Native American activism by creating an image of the Native American activists seizing land from the federal government. Paul Chaat Smith argues, the occupation of Alcatraz, transformed the rules of Native American activism as the occupation showed that the Native Americans were angrier than anyone thought and more willing to use militant forms of protest that had previously thought to be 'un-Indian'.¹⁹² Between 1970 and 1972 Nixon signed a number of laws that restored land back to their Native Tribes. In December 1970 Nixon signed H.R. 471 into law which restored 55,000 acres of land in New Mexico including Blue Lake to the Taos Pueblo people.¹⁹³ A year later the Alaskan Native Claims Settlement Act was signed into law, the act transferred 40 million acres of land and \$1 billion in payouts to Alaskan aboriginals.¹⁹⁴ This act was the largest piece of Native American legislation enacted during Nixon's presidency it was also the largest land claims settlement in United States history at the time. In 1972 Nixon returned the land around Mount Adams to the Yakima people of Washington State.¹⁹⁵ However, tensions rose due to Nixon's failure to reform the BIA. While the Era of self-determination saw a return of Native land which demonstrated a more progressive move against past acts of assimilation and colonialism, the BIA still held great power over the Native American communities, especially in regard to a tribe's ability to enter mining and other commercial abilities.¹⁹⁶

'The Trails of Broken Treaties' in 1972 was a protest walk from the West Coast to Washington D.C. The participants planned on presenting a twenty-point position paper to the federal government. The document outlined the groups goals and included demands for the government to restore treaty making with Native American nations, to set up a commission to review treaty violations and to receive the appropriate

¹⁸⁹ Burling, Alexis, "Occupying Alcatraz: Native American Activists Demand Change", (Abdo Publishing, 2017), p7

¹⁹⁰ Kelly, Casey Ryan. "Détournement, Decolonization, and the American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island (1969-1971)", *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (January 1, 2014), p169

¹⁹¹ Johnson, Troy R, "The Occupation of Alcatraz Island: Indian Self-determination and the Rise of Indian Activism" (University of Illinois Press, 1996), p54-55

¹⁹² Kelly, Casey Ryan. "Détournement, Decolonization, and the American Indian Occupation of Alcatraz Island (1969-1971)", *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 44, no. 2 (January 1, 2014), p169

¹⁹³ <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/self-determination-without-termination> [27/07/23]

¹⁹⁴ Kotlowski, Dean J, "Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and Beyond: The Nixon and Ford Administrations Respond to Native American Protest", *Pacific Historical Review*, vol 72, no. 2 (2003), p209

¹⁹⁵ Ibid

¹⁹⁶ Whitaker, John C. "Nixon's Domestic Policy: Both Liberal and Bold in Retrospect." *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, vol. 26, no. 1, 1996, p145

compensation for these violations. Along with demands revolving around treaties, the group urged for land reforms and the return of Native land to the Native Americans, they also called for the abolition of the Bureau of Indian Affairs by 1976.¹⁹⁷ When the protestors arrived at Washington D.C. the activists were told that they could stay in the Department of Interior which was across the street from the BIA, but they found that the doors were locked. They decided to occupy the offices of the BIA. A week later a compromise was reached a panel would study the groups demands and the protestors were sent home. Kotlowski argues that after this event Nixon refused to help the Native Americans as he felt his efforts were unappreciated.¹⁹⁸ However, 6 years after the Trail of Broken Treaties another group of protestors were welcomed into the capitol and by a government that was ready to begin to acknowledge the wrong doings of the past. In 1978 more than 300 Native Americans gathered on Alcatraz Island, 24 of the protesters walked from California to Washington DC. Where they would engage in an 8-day demonstration, protests, religious ceremonies, and educational workshops. The Longest Walk was both a spiritual and political demonstration, as it protested against legislation that was being considered by Congress. The passing of these 11 legislation would result in the violation of various treaty rights, especially those concerning Native American land, fishing, and rights to mineral. The Longest Walk was intended to symbolise the forced removal of Native Americans from their lands, and to bring attention to the continuing problems faced by the Native American communities.¹⁹⁹ These demonstrations were also an opportunity to educate Euro-Americans about Native American culture and spirituality. The reason for the different response was due to the work that had been conducted by the AIM and other Native American activists raising awareness and working to address the problems facing the Native American communities.²⁰⁰

The trail of broken treaties secured national attention; however, the methods were not universally welcomed particularly by tribal leaders who believed in the use of less confrontational methods of protest and activism. The Pine Ridge Reservation (Wounded Knee) reflects this division, when a partnership was established between the tribal and federal authorities and conflict arose with tribal members who opposed BIA supported reservation governments.²⁰¹ With the help of the American Indian Movement they began a 71-days siege of Wounded Knee on the site of the 1890 Massacre of Lakota Ghost Dancers. The United States Federal Marshals and the National Guard blocked off all the routes into Wounded Knee, electricity and water was shut off to the town. The occupation ended when an Oglala man was shot by a government sniper. The Nixon administration had been hesitant to use this amount of firepower in more urban areas such as San Fransisco and Washington DC. While the occupation of Wounded Knee proved to be a disaster in some respects it did produce an outpouring of sympathy for the cause, mainly due to the large media

¹⁹⁷ [Trail of Broken Treaties 20-Point Position Paper - An Indian Ma \(usu.edu\)](#) [05/04/24]

¹⁹⁸ Kotlowski, Dean J, "Alcatraz, Wounded Knee, and Beyond: The Nixon and Ford Administrations Respond to Native American Protest", *Pacific Historical Review*, vol 72, no. 2 (2003), p210

¹⁹⁹ Champagne, Duane, Nagel, Joane, Johnson, Troy R. "Alcatraz to the Longest Walk", (University of Illinois Press, 1997), p37

²⁰⁰ [The Longest Walk, 1978 \(U.S. National Park Service\) \(nps.gov\)](#) [10/04/24]

²⁰¹ Smith, Sherry L, "Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power", (Oxford University Press, USA, 2012), p183

coverage and increased support for Nixon's legislation.²⁰² The siege marked the last major showdown of the 1970s.²⁰³

While the American Indian Movement is known for the organisation of the occupation of Alcatraz, Trail of Tears March, and the Longest Walk. They were also incredibly instrumental in the decolonization of the Native American communities through the creation of the survival schools. The creation of survival schools was a response to the long history of the federal boarding schools. Clyde Bellecourt a founder of the American Indian Movement voiced that the design of the survival schools was to confront the federal government, Christian church, and euro-American education system, which had worked hand in hand, to strip the Native Americans of their language and culture; the three institutions remove them from their land and home and relocated them to large urban areas.²⁰⁴ In 1972 two alternative schools were founded, the first was the American Indian Movement Survival School in Minneapolis, followed by the Red School House in St. Paul. The aim of the schools was to repair the cultural losses caused by the Indian boarding schools and to regain the ability to determine their future.²⁰⁵ This was achieved through helping Native youth to discover and take pride in their tribal and Indigenous identities. The schools taught students Native languages as well as ancestral knowledge, skills, values, and beliefs. School founders educated their youth to become community minded. Survival schools were an anti-colonial project, Julie Davis argues that the survival schools were able to further the reconstruction of Native American culture that was necessary for indigenous decolonization.²⁰⁶ The survival schools helped pave the way for other urban and reservation Indian schools, as well as cultural programs in public school systems, and they helped lay the groundwork for the network of tribal colleges such as the Deganawidah-Quetzalcoatl University.²⁰⁷ This led to the creation of the first Native American Studies course, Jack Forbes and David Risling created the which was one of the first tribal universities to be established.

The Meriam report in some aspects can be viewed as a symbol of a definitive response to the failure of the assimilation policy as it highlighted that the Indian boarding school did little to prepare the Native American children to be independent citizens. However, its influence was limited. With the only significant changes appearing in the 1930s with the appointment of John Collier. These changes allowed children to remain with their family, and to be surrounded by their cultural traditions. The introduction of a culturally sensitive curriculum allowed children to be able to build upon their pre-existing knowledge rather than being taught that their cultural traditions and knowledge is wrong. With the lack of positive changes from 1928, it is somewhat unsurprising that the Kennedy report in 1969 highlighted the same issues that had been

²⁰² <https://www.whitehousehistory.org/self-determination-without-termination> [27/07/23]

²⁰³ Smith, Sherry L, "Hippies, Indians, and the Fight for Red Power", (Oxford University Press, USA, 2012), pp183-184

²⁰⁴ Davis, Julie L, "Survival Schools: The American Indian Movement and Community Education in the Twin Cities", (University of Minnesota Press, 2013), p4

²⁰⁵ Ibid, p241

²⁰⁶ Ibid, p242

²⁰⁷ Ibid, p244

reported some 40 years earlier. The influence of the Meriam report ended with John Collier. With further research could it be claimed that the Meriam report had sole influenced John Collier rather than the federal government as a whole? Collier period as commissioner ended in 1945, and the termination era began. Indian boarding schools began to operate as welfare institutions such as orphanages, the federal government began fostering and adoption programs of Native American children into white homes as a form of assimilation. This exposed more Native American children to the assimilation methods used at the schools as well as mental, physical, and sexual abuse.

Real change began to appear in the 1970s were there was a rise in Native American political activism and a real reversal in Native American policy was seen. The Nixon administration brought in practical reformers regarding Native American rights, most of the reforms were shaped by the protests by Native Americans such as the occupation of Alcatraz Island, the trail of broken treaties and the longest walk. All of these protests drew in massive amounts of publicity, which rallied support for Native American rights resulting in greater influence over national policy. The protests throughout the 1970s sought changes to policies. Other efforts by the AIM such as the survival schools sought to bring changes from inside the Native American communities and returning pride in tribal identity, knowledge, and skills. Ultimately, setting a trail of indigenous decolonization. All of these events and efforts led to the creation of Native American Studies university courses and the establishment of the first tribal university in 1971. In 1970 Nixon denounced the Termination policy and introduced a policy of Native self-determination calling for Native Americans to be independent from federal control and for Native Americans to help the Federal government improve conditions of Native American lives. The passing of the Indian Education Act in 1975 provided financial assistance to public and tribal schools to develop educational programs that meet the needs of Native American children. As a result of these changes, today there are 7 Indian boarding schools in operation, three of which are tribal run. The other 4 are funded by the federal government. Even though all but a few government and church ran Indian boarding schools have been shut down, the impact of the Indian boarding schools has been intergeneration.

Chapter 3: The continuing cycle of trauma

Towards the end of the 20th century, the Indian boarding school began to close. Today there are approximately 7 Indian boarding schools. The historical impact of the schools has had a long-lasting intergenerational impact on the Native American community today. This chapter will investigate the long-lasting mental and social effects the Indian boarding schools have had on the Native American population. During the boarding school period, the family system was destroyed, traditional gender roles were disrupted, native languages and religions were prohibited, and many of the children who attended these schools were abused mentally, physically, and sexually, all of these have resulted in long-lasting issues that we see in Native American communities today. Survivors were deprived of positive parental role models causing survivors to be unprepared for parenting. Today there are over 500 tribes that are recognized by the federal government of the United States and roughly 2 percent of the United States population (5.2 million) self-identifies as being Native American and Native Alaskan.²⁰⁸ Even though the Native American population make up a small proportion of the United States population. They often experience the highest rates of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV), drug and alcohol abuse, and poor mental health leading to high suicide rates. This chapter investigates whether there is a link between these rates and the Indian boarding schools. In this chapter I will be using sources written from the Canadian perspective as well as the United States as the Indigenous people across North America have similar experiences of oppression, the experiences written about in Chapter 1 were also experienced in the Canadian residential schools. The schools will be referred to as residential schools when discussing Canadian figures, this is the official name of the schools in Canada. In Canada, the Native population are referred to as First Nations and Metis. Where appropriate I will use these terms when Canadian sources are used. While the experiences faced by the students are similar, there are a few differences. The first residential school opened in 1879, the schools began to close in the late 1980s. A welfarist model was not introduced to the residential schools till the 1950s; 5 decades after Dr Peter Bryce report on the failure of the residential schools. In 2007 the Canadian government set up the Truth and Reconciliation Commission with the purpose of documenting the history and lasting impacts of the residential schools. This has led to a larger number of research and reports detailing the lasting impact of the residential schools. The United States government has only just begun their research into the Indian boarding schools and their impacts, the number of studies on the impacts of the Indian boarding schools are few in number compared to the number of articles regarding the residential schools. This is another reason why I will be using some Canadian sources. Once students returned home from the

²⁰⁸ Grigorenko, Elena L.Garcia, Jessica L, 'Historical Trauma and American Indian/Alaska Native Youth Mental Health Development and Delinquency', *New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development*. Jan 2020, Vol. 2020, Issue 169, p42

Indian boarding schools, students struggled to readjust to tribal life as they had been taught to despise it. They also found that they did not fit into mainstream society, thus feeling caught in between two worlds.²⁰⁹ Mental health issues as a result of the Indian boarding schools have been highlighted as early as 1969 in the Kennedy Report.²¹⁰ However, it was not until the 1990s that the concept of historical trauma gained more attention due to the work of Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart, who defines historical trauma as “cumulative emotional and psychological wounding across generations, including the lifespan, which emanates from massive group trauma”.²¹¹ Historical trauma connect the collective history of traumatic events to current individual and community experiences. These traumas have been passed down from parent to child through stories or silently through fears, anxieties and other psychological scars that have been left unacknowledged.²¹² Martin Brokenleg has described how this trauma is passed down through the lack of healing, by saying “if one generation does not heal, problems are transmitted to subsequent generations”,²¹³ often causing internalised oppression, anger, depression, guilt, anxiety, and impaired parenting.²¹⁴ Cindy Ehlers, et al have also claimed that the original victims of the trauma experience PTSD-like symptoms, and the data suggest that the children of the victims may also suffer from PTSD-like symptoms.²¹⁵ Many elders believe that current-day issues such as substance and alcohol abuse are connected to historical trauma.²¹⁶

A subsequent impact of the Indian boarding schools resulted in the loss of traditional parenting practices, disrupted family ties and traditional gender roles. Braveheart argues that parents who survived boarding school lack a positive traditional Native role model of parenting “within a culturally indigenous normative environment.”²¹⁷ It is this that creates a risk for “parental incompetence”, as one result of the Indian boarding schools was a loss in identity and family connection leading many school attendees to be unable to form healthy relationships.²¹⁸ The Kennedy report in 1969 attributed this to frequent relocation which

²⁰⁹ Andrews, Thomas.G, “Turning the Tables on Assimilation: Oglala Lakota and the Pine Ridge Day Schools, 1889-1920s”, *Western Historical Quarterly*, winter, 2002, vol.33, No.4, (Winter, 2002), p41

²¹⁰ Edward, Kennedy, “Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge”, Report of the Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate Made By Its Special Subcommittee On Indian Education, (91st Cong, 1st Session, 1969),p77

²¹¹ Heart, Maria Yellow Horse Brave et al. “Historical trauma among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: concepts, research, and clinical considerations.” *Journal of psychoactive drugs* vol. 43,4 (2011), p283

²¹² Gobodo-Madikizela, Pumla, *Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition: A Global Dialogue on Historical Trauma and Memory*, (1st ed. Verlag Barbara Budrich, 2016),p1

²¹³ Brokenleg, Martin, ‘Transforming cultural Trauma into Resilience’, *Reclaiming children and youth*, vol 21, no 3, (fall 2012), p10

²¹⁴ Weaver, Hilary, *Trauma and resilience in the Lives of contemporary Native Americans: Reclaiming our Balance, Restoring our Wellbeing*, (Routledge; 1st edition, April 2, 2019), p15

²¹⁵ Ehlers, Cindy L., Yehuda, Rachel, Gilder, David A., Bernert, Rebecca, Karriker-Jaffe, and Katherine J., "Trauma, Historical Trauma, PTSD and Suicide in an American Indian Community Sample." *Journal of Psychiatric Research* 156, (2022), p215

²¹⁶ Weaver, Hilary, *Trauma and resilience in the Lives of contemporary Native Americans: Reclaiming our Balance, Restoring our Wellbeing*, (Routledge; 1st edition, April 2, 2019), 13

²¹⁷ Brave Heart, Maria Yellow Horse, “The Historical Trauma Response among Natives and Its Relationship with Substance Abuse: A Lakota Illustration”, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, vol 35, no. 1 (January 2003), p9

²¹⁸ Richard, Tara N. Schwartz, Joseph A. Wright, Emily. “Examining adverse childhood experiences among Native American persons in a nationally representative sample: Differences among racial/ethnic groups and race/ethnicity-sex dyads”, *child Abuse & Neglect*, (2021), p2

discouraged the development of lasting relationships.²¹⁹ Additionally, it has been suggested by Evans-Campbell that Indian boarding school experiences not only interrupted healthy child-rearing practices but also instilled new and negative behaviours.²²⁰ As Braveheart says, “a lack of effective Native parenting role models and the lack of nurturing as well as abuse in boarding schools have resulted in uninvolved, non-nurturing, punitive, and authoritarian parents to varying degrees”.²²¹ Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), range from physical, to sexual, to emotional abuse. These types of abuse were extensive in the Indian boarding schools and having ACEs can negatively impact a parent’s ability to raise their own children. Adults who have had ACEs are at a greater risk of depression, substance abuse, and antisocial behaviour.²²² Substance use can negatively impact a parent’s ability to be capable, emotionally available, supportive, and involved in their child’s life.²²³ ACEs in parents have also been linked with high parental stress, poor parent-child attachment, and harmful parenting practices such as corporal punishment during infancy. All of these can create a cycle of intergenerational ACEs. Among Native American females the most prevalent ACEs were emotional abuse with 33.82 percent reported and parental substance abuse at 33.96 percent, while Native American males reported the highest rates of physical neglect at a rate of 35.17 percent.²²⁴

The Indian boarding schools disrupted traditional family roles and gender roles. Male gender roles became ambiguous; men who had traditionally protected their family and community were now taught vocational skills at the schools’ such as farming, which had been traditionally a role fulfilled by women in some Native American societies. Masculinity was further stripped away as fathers were unable to protect their children when they were removed and placed in boarding schools. Furthermore, the boys themselves lost the ability to protect themselves and their siblings from the physical, emotional, and sexual abuse. In a study conducted by Braveheart, Lakota men reported more harsh treatment at the Indian boarding schools, with 85.7 percent of men reported being hit and 28.6 percent reported being sexually abused compared to women at 17.7 percent.²²⁵ Similarly, attendance at the Indian boarding schools left many boys growing up without a positive father figure. The 2020 U.S. census shows that around 125,325 children currently live in a

²¹⁹ Edward, Kennedy, “Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge”, Report of the Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate Made By Its Special Subcommittee On Indian Education, (91st Cong, 1st Session, 1969),p77

²²⁰ Evans-Campbell, Teresa, “Historical Trauma in American Indian/Native Alaska Communities.” *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, vol. 23, no. 3, (2008), p326

²²¹ Brave Heart, Maria Yellow Horse, “The Historical Trauma Response among Natives and Its Relationship with Substance Abuse: A Lakota Illustration”, *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, vol 35, no. 1 (January 2003), pp9-10

²²² Brockie, Teresa, Haroz, Emily E., Nelson, Katie E., Cwik, Mary, Decker, Ellie, Ricker, Adriann, Littlepage, Shea, Mayhew, Justin, Wilson, Deborah, Wetsit, Lawrence, Barlow, Allison, “Wakǰányeža (Little Holy One) - an intergenerational intervention for Native American parents and children: a protocol for a randomized controlled trial with embedded single-case experimental design”, *BMC Public Health*, vol 21, no. 1, (2021), P2

²²³ Nutton, Jennifer, Fast, Elizabeth, “Historical Trauma, substance Use, and Indigenous Peoples: Seven Generations of Harm from a “Big Event”, *Substance Use & Misuse*. Vol. 50, (June 2015), p842

²²⁴ Richard, Tara N. Schwartz, Joseph A. Wright, Emily. “Examining adverse childhood experiences among Native American persons in a nationally representative sample: Differences among racial/ethnic groups and race/ethnicity-sex dyads”, *child Abuse & Neglect*, (2021), p7

²²⁵ Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, “gender Differences in the Historical Trauma Response Among the Lakota”, *Journal of Health & Social Policy*, vol. 10, no.4, (1999), p10

single-mother household with no spouse or partner present.²²⁶ While we cannot determine whether the fathers are present in the children's lives, many Native American and Alaskan Native children grow up with absent fathers. Porter a Mohawk elder said "to make babies is great, but if you can't feed them and can't give them spiritual [grounding and well-being], then that's criminal", adding that they do not do it on purpose and that it is learnt behaviour.²²⁷ Many elders believe that there is a link between absent fathers and misguided masculinity, as these men often brag about fathering children but hold no responsibility as a father. One author stated, "our people are hurt, many of our men are not present, and our roles as men have been stolen, leaving us incomplete and feeling unnecessary."²²⁸ However, some parents have the inability to be emotionally available to their children. A study conducted by Jessica Ball, of 72 First Nations fathers found that 22 fathers reported that engaging with their children brought back painful childhood memories of abuse or family violence; the death of a parent; or quick changing circumstances such as being taken away to Indian boarding school or apprehension by child protection services.²²⁹ Brave Heart concluded in one of her studies that after intervention men increasingly avoided discussing their boarding school trauma. Braveheart wondered whether this was because of the stigma and shame associated with sexual abuse victimization and failure to live up to the legacy of Indigenous warriors, which may have led to a higher degree of stress resulting in more avoidance.²³⁰

However, one traditional family role has almost stayed the same. Grandparents and elders have the responsibility of passing down cultural norms and traditions to the next generations. However, by attending Indian boarding schools children had little to no contact with their grandparents. Along with this loss of contact, the prohibiting of tribal languages and being punished for doing so, many school survivors did not pass on their languages to their children.²³¹ With the loss of their language it also meant that grandchildren could not talk to or understand their grandparents, and this prevented grandparents being able to pass on traditions and beliefs, resulting in a loss of cultural and traditional knowledge. Children continued to feel culturally disconnected as they were taught at the schools that their culture and traditions were wrong. This led to a feeling of unresolved grief which manifested as silence, mental health issues, relationship issues and substance abuse in adulthood.²³² Today, elders and grandparents stress the concern to pass down the

²²⁶ [PCT10C: FAMILY TYPE BY PRESENCE AND ... - Census Bureau Table](#) [22/06/2023]

²²⁷ *Indigenous Masculinity: Carrying the Bones of the Ancestors*, (Canadian Scholars' Press Inc, Toronto, Canada, 2012), p279

²²⁸ Weaver, Hilary, *Trauma and resilience in the Lives of contemporary Native Americans: Reclaiming our Balance, Restoring our Wellbeing*, (Routledge; 1st edition, April 2, 2019), p75

²²⁹ Ball, Jessica, 'Fathering in the Shadows: Indigenous Fathers and Canada's Colonial Legacies', *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 624 (July 1, 2009), p38

²³⁰ Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, "Gender Differences in the Historical Trauma Response Among the Lakota", *Journal of Health & Social Policy*, vol. 10, no.4, (1999), p15

²³¹ Gantt, Amy. M, *Native Language Revitalization: Keeping the Languages Alive and Thriving*, (Southeastern Oklahoma State University), p14

²³² Weaver, Hilary, *Trauma and resilience in the Lives of contemporary Native Americans: Reclaiming our Balance, Restoring our Wellbeing*, (Routledge; 1st edition, April 2, 2019), p45

traditional ways, although some were educated in the boarding schools.²³³ Some grandparents have taken the role as sole care provider for their grandchildren for a number of reasons which include, substance abuse, mental illness, incarceration, death of a parent, child abuse and neglect, teen pregnancy, domestic violence, parental immaturity, divorce, and unemployment.²³⁴ Of a study of 31 Native American grandparents, all participants whether they had attended boarding school or not, all wanted to keep their grandchildren out of the welfare system, which for them has parallel features to the Indian boarding school system.²³⁵

In contemporary America child abuse and neglect are a serious issue in many Native American families and communities. Data collected between 2002 and 2004 found that 28.54 percent of Native Americans reported physical abuse, 32.05 percent reported emotional abuse, 17.96 percent of Native Americans reported being victims of sexual abuse, 32.05 percent reported physical neglect and emotional neglect.²³⁶ Native Americans participants reported a greater frequency of all ACEs examined in the study. Native males reported the highest rates of physical neglect, while Native American females; reported a higher rate of emotional abuse and sexual abuse. According to Joe Apryl et al, in 2015, there were 623,219 reported child abuse and neglect cases reported in the USA and of these cases, 8379 were related to Native American children. The rate of Native American child abuse and neglect, 14.2 per 1000 children, is the highest in the country, closely followed by African Americans.²³⁷ Highlighting the ongoing significance of this data, two years later at a hearing on the Native American Child Protective Act in 2021, it was stated that 89.3 percent of Native American and Alaska Native children in the child welfare system were there due to parental neglect, in comparison to the nationwide average of 78.3 percent.²³⁸ Is it possible to attribute some of these rates of neglect to the differences between Native American child-rearing practices to Anglo-American ones?

Traditional Native American belief systems did not view children as their parents property, they were seen as gifts from the Creator, and children should be respected.²³⁹ Native American child-rearing methods were centred around patience and tolerance, and children were brought up with freedom and without severe

²³³ Robbins, Rocky, Scherman, Avraham, Holeman, Heidi, Wilson, Jason, "Roles of American Indian Grandparents in Times of Cultural Crisis", *Journal of Cultural Diversity*, Vol 12, no 2, (2005), p66

²³⁴ Cross, Suzanne L, Day, Angeliq G, Byers, Lisa G, *American Indian Grand Families: A Qualitative Study Conducted with Grandmothers and Grandfathers Who Provide Sole Care for Their Grandchildren*, (17th sept, 2010), p372

²³⁵ Ibid, p377

²³⁶ Richard, Tara N. Schwartz, Joseph A. Wright, Emily. "Examining adverse childhood experiences among Native American persons in a nationally representative sample: Differences among racial/ethnic groups and race/ethnicity-sex dyads", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, (2021), p6 -7

²³⁷ Joe, Apryl, McElwain, Cora, Woodward, Kayla, Bell, Stephen, "A Call for Culturally-Relevant Interventions to Address child Abuse and Neglect in American Indian Communities", *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, Vol. 6, No.3, (June 2019), p448

²³⁸ Senate Committee on Indian affairs, 'Hearing On Native American Child Protective Act – H.R. 1688', Testimony of President Gil Vigil Representing The National Indian Child Welfare association, July 14th, 2021, p6

²³⁹ Cross, Terry A., Earle, Kathleen A., Simmons, David, "Child Abuse and neglect in Indian Country: Policy issues", *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, vol 81, no 1, (2000), p49

physical punishment.²⁴⁰ As there was no tradition of harsh punishment and parental ownership of children scholars have had to consider whether the concept of child abuse and neglect has been a 'learned' response to traumatic histories.²⁴¹ One possibility is that through government policies of assimilation, many Native children were brought up outside their tribal communities in Indian boarding schools or in foster homes.²⁴² Discipline at the Indian boarding schools was harsh and lacked nurturing, meaning that children were deprived of the opportunity to develop positive and cultural parental behaviours, which in turn affected their self-esteem and sense of identity. Consequently, when these children became adults, they were unprepared to raise their children in traditional or positive ways.²⁴³ Indian boarding schools taught them detrimental behaviour such as abusive behaviours, which may have affected the quality of interaction between parents and children. The theory of learnt abuse patterns argues that negative behaviour is learnt, in this case, the behaviour has been taught and passed on to the next generation. Apryl et al, argue that without culturally appropriate healing methods, the psychological impacts of historical trauma are passed onto future generations, so a cycle of child abuse and neglect in some Native families continues.²⁴⁴ Another attribution to the issue of child abuse and neglect is that Native American parenting practices may be viewed or interpreted as neglect due to cultural differences. For example, a parent's non-interference; and permissiveness with their children may be wrongly interpreted as emotional neglect when in fact it is a traumatic response.²⁴⁵ The willingness of Native American mothers or fathers to allow their child to live with a relative is often viewed as abandonment,²⁴⁶ it is not uncommon for parents to ask their own parents to care for their children while they attend college or seek employment by relocation long distances. This allows the child to remain in their cultural environment and be able to continue their relationships with family members and the community.²⁴⁷

Many studies such as Brownridge et al have found that people who were abused as children were likely to be abused in adulthood.²⁴⁸ For some child abuse victims in adulthood may unconsciously try to re-create the original abusive relationship.²⁴⁹ A 2017 study of 20,446 Canadians examining personal histories of Child Maltreatment and the risk of intimate partner violence, it was discovered that the Indigenous respondents

²⁴⁰ Ibid, p50

²⁴¹ Ibid, p52

²⁴² Ibid

²⁴³ Joe, Apryl, McElwain, Cora, Woodward, Kayla, Bell, Stephen, "A Call for Culturally-Relevant Interventions to Address child Abuse and Neglect in American Indian Communities", *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities*, Vol. 6, No.3, (June 2019), p449

²⁴⁴ Ibid

²⁴⁵ Cross, Terry A., Earle, Kathleen A., Simmons, David, "Child Abuse and neglect in Indian Country: Policy issues", *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, vol 81, no 1, (2000), p52

²⁴⁶ Ibid

²⁴⁷ Cross, Suzanne L, Day, Angelique G, Byers, Lisa G, *American Indian Grand Families: A Qualitative Study Conducted with Grandmothers and Grandfathers Who Provide Sole Care for Their Grandchildren*, (17th sept, 2010), p372

²⁴⁸ Brownridge, D., Taillieu, Tamara, Afifi, Tracie, Chan, Ko, Emery, Clifton, Lavoie, Josee, Elgar, Frank, "Child Maltreatment and Intimate Partner Violence Among Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Canadians", *Journal of Family Violence*, vol 32, no. 6, (2017), p607

²⁴⁹ Walker, Moira, "The Inter-Generational Transmission of Trauma: The Effects of Abuse on Their Survivor's Relationship with Their Children and on the Children Themselves", *European Journal of Psychotherapy, Counselling & Health*, vol 2, no 3 (1999), p283

had a greater risk of experiencing both child maltreatment and intimate partner violence.²⁵⁰ Those who were exposed to violence and; physical and sexual abuse had increased chances of becoming a victim of intimate partner violence. Catherine Burnette argues that colonization undermined the traditional gender roles within Native American communities, which have traditionally protected Native American women. In female-centred communities, women fought in wars and held leadership.²⁵¹ These roles were stripped by colonialism. Oppressive tactics used at Indian boarding schools are believed to have been internalized by many Native communities which gave rise to the violent treatment of women and intimate partner violence.²⁵² Men in Native American communities could have likewise internalized the patriarchal belief of the European colonizers, who believed in the man's right to dominate and exploit women. This may have led to the breakdown of female-centred communities that kept women safe in many Native American communities.²⁵³ On average, 46 percent of Indigenous American women experience IPV compared to a national average of 36 percent.²⁵⁴ Native American women experience more crimes of violence, sexual assault and rape, and aggravated assaults than non-Native women in the U.S. 15.9 percent of Native American women reported being victims of intimate partner rape, 30.7 percent experienced physical assault, 10.2 percent were stalked, and overall lifetime intimate partner victimization was 37.5 percent.²⁵⁵ A 2022 study reported that some survivors of intimate partner violence had been exposed to violence within their family system which had resulted in violence becoming normalized.²⁵⁶ This sadly also meant that many victims found it difficult to speak up against their abuser. Their family and community had been exposed to intergenerational violence which had resulted in a normalization of violence.²⁵⁷ This shows that there is a two-fold traumatic response from the abuse and the victim. Another study found that participants who had attended Indian boarding school reported that the segregation of boys and girls caused difficulties in being able to relate to members of the opposite sex later in life, which in some cases manifested in difficulties maintaining healthy domestic relationships and intimate partner violence. In this small study it was concluded that the residential schools have had an intergenerational impact, residential school survivors were either victims of abuse or witnessed the abuse of other students. Participants of the study identified

²⁵⁰ Brownridge, D., Taillieu, Tamara, Afifi, Tracie, Chan, Ko, Emery, Clifton, Lavoie, Josee, Elgar, Frank, "Child Maltreatment and Intimate Partner Violence Among Indigenous and Non-Indigenous Canadians", *Journal of Family Violence*, vol 32, no. 6, (2017), p607

²⁵¹ Burnette, Catherine, *Historical Oppression and Intimate Partner Violence Experienced by Indigenous Women in the United States: Understanding Connections'* (2015), p532

²⁵² ibid

²⁵³ ibid, p534

²⁵⁴ Jock, Brittany Wenniser, iostha, Dana-Sacco, Gail, Arscott, Joyell, Bagwell-Gray, Meredith E, Loerzel, Emily, Brockie, Teresa, Packard, Gwendolyn, O'Keefe, Victoria M. ,McKinley, Catherine E., Campbell, Jacquelyn. "We've Already Endured the Trauma, Who is Going to Either End that Cycle or Continue to Feed It?": The Influence of Family and Legal Systems on Native American Women's Intimate Partner Violence Experiences", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 37 Issue 21/22, (2022), p2

²⁵⁵ Bohn, Diane K., "Lifetime Physical and Sexual Abuse, substance Abuse, Depression, and Suicide Attempts Among Native American Women", *Issues in Mental Health Nursing*, vol 24, (2003),p336

²⁵⁶ Jock, Brittany Wenniser, iostha, Dana-Sacco, Gail, Arscott, Joyell, Bagwell-Gray, Meredith E, Loerzel, Emily, Brockie, Teresa, Packard, Gwendolyn, O'Keefe, Victoria M. ,McKinley, Catherine E., Campbell, Jacquelyn. ""We've Already Endured the Trauma, Who is Going to Either End that Cycle or Continue to Feed It?": The Influence of Family and Legal Systems on Native American Women's Intimate Partner Violence Experiences", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 37, Issue 21/22, (2022), p12

²⁵⁷ ibid, p18

this exposure to violence at the schools and the lack of parental role models, contributed to their perspective that violence was an acceptable way of interacting with others. This violence was brought back into the home by survivors, where their children became exposed to violence. Participants of the study have attributed their exposure to violence and abuse for their difficulties in domestic relationships including domestic violence victimization. The continued exposure to violence has resulted in the normalization of abuse and violence, creating a cycle of abuse that is passed down from one generation to another. For some, the use of drugs and alcohol has become a coping mechanism for the trauma.²⁵⁸

Bombay, Matherson and Anisman argue that the descendants of Indian boarding school survivors are more likely to be exposed to new stressors later in life such as discrimination which can trigger a sense of loss or be a reminder of historical traumas. Alcohol may be used to numb these negative feelings or other self-destructive behaviours may present.²⁵⁹ Historically, alcohol was not part of Native American culture and was only used during certain ceremonies. Through acts of oppression, traditional ways of healing were lost due to the banning of indigenous mourning ceremonies and the loss of cultural knowledge through the Indian boarding school system. Some of these ceremonies helped to cope with the loss of a community member. This loss of traditional ceremonies left many vulnerable to turning to substances to help cope with the traumas they had experienced.²⁶⁰ In 1969 the Kennedy Report documented that out of 1000 students enrolled at the Phoenix Indian School, in Phoenix Arizona, over 200 students came from broken homes, and at least 60 students were enrolled due to drinking problems within the family. At the same school, between September and December 1967, there were 16 reported cases of serious glue sniffing.²⁶¹ According to Nutton and Fast alcohol and drug misuse is associated with the loss of control over their land, culture, and way of life as well as a response to internalized aggression and ongoing inequalities.²⁶²

Native Americans experience the highest rates of alcohol-related fatalities. Richard, Schwartz and Wright noted in 2021 that the rate of alcohol use between Native Americans and Whites was at a similar rate. However, Native Americans have a higher rate of alcohol induced deaths.²⁶³ According to the Indian Health Service, Native Americans and Alaska Natives are five times more likely to die from alcohol-related causes

²⁵⁸ Hoffart, Renée, Jones, Nicholas A, "Intimate Partner Violence and Intergenerational Trauma Among Indigenous Women." *International Criminal Justice Review*, vol 28, (2018), p39 - 40

²⁵⁹ Bombay, Amy, Matheson, Kimberly, Anisman, Hymie, "The Intergenerational Effects of Indian Residential Schools: Implications for the Concept of Historical Trauma." *Transcultural Psychiatry* 51, no. 3 (2014)

²⁶⁰ Nutton, Jennifer, Fast, Elizabeth, "Historical Trauma, substance Use, and Indigenous Peoples: Seven Generations of Harm from a "Big Event", *Substance Use & Misuse*. Vol. 50, (June 2015), p842

²⁶¹ Edward, Kennedy, "Indian Education: A National Tragedy- A National Challenge", Report of the Committee On Labor and Public Welfare, United States Senate Made By Its Special Subcommittee On Indian Education, (91st Cong, 1st Session, 1969),p73

²⁶² Nutton, Jennifer, Fast, Elizabeth, "Historical Trauma, substance Use, and Indigenous Peoples: Seven Generations of Harm from a "Big Event", *Substance Use & Misuse*. Vol. 50, (June 2015), p841

²⁶³ Richard, Tara N. Schwartz, Joseph A. Wright, Emily. "Examining adverse childhood experiences among Native American persons in a nationally representative sample: Differences among racial/ethnic groups and race/ethnicity-sex dyads", *Child Abuse & Neglect*, (2021), p3

than white people.²⁶⁴ However, in 2018 Park-Lee, Lipari, Bose and Hughes estimated that about 49.3 percent of Native American adults did not use alcohol in the past month, 26.4 percent engaged in binge drinking and 8 percent engaged in heavy drinking. In addition to these figures, they also found that those living off reservations had a higher rate of alcohol use at 53 percent, while those living on reservations had a rate of 39.7 percent.²⁶⁵ The international boarding school experiences have negatively impacted protective factors against substance abuse such as parental competence, emotional availability, support, and involvement. However today, it seems as though this trend of Native youth substance abuse may be declining. Park-Lee, Lipari, Bose, and Hughes found that most Native American adolescents had not used alcohol in the last month and about 9.1 percent reported binge drinking and 2 percent reported heavy drinking.²⁶⁶ Along with alcohol abuse, abuse of illicit drugs is also a common issue within Native American communities.

Although alcohol remains prevalent there has been a rise in the abuse of drugs such as methamphetamines and IV drug use which can increase the risk of needle sharing, resulting in illnesses such as HIV, AIDS, and hepatitis C.²⁶⁷ While drugs can be used as a coping mechanism, they can also increase the risk of high-risk sex, and violence. In a study conducted by Nutton and Fast, they found that Indigenous youths are more likely to misuse substances than any other youth in the general population, they found that among children aged 12 and above the rate of illicit drug use for Native Americans was 12.7 percent while for whites it was 9.2 percent.²⁶⁸ According to Indian Health Service data, the Native American and Alaska Native rate of drug-related deaths has increased by 206 percent since it began reporting on the issue in 1979.²⁶⁹ The Covid 19 pandemic saw an increase in the number of people dying from overdoses, in 2021 more than 100,000 Native American people died from overdoses.²⁷⁰ At least 75 percent of these overdoses were associated with a drug combination of methamphetamine and fentanyl.²⁷¹ Among Native Americans and Alaska Natives there is a traditional value of other, nature, and spiritual communication that ties them to being part of something greater, all of which was disrupted with the Indian boarding schools. It is the loss of this

²⁶⁴ U.S. Department of health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, ' American Indian/Alaska Native Behavioral Health Briefing Book', (August 2011), p8

²⁶⁵ Park-Lee, Eunice, Lipari, Rachel N., Bose, Jonaki, Hughes, Arthur, "Substance Use and Mental Health Issues among U.S.- Born American Indians or Alaska Natives Residing on and off Tribal Lands", Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), (July 2018), p14

²⁶⁶ Park-Lee, Eunice, Lipari, Rachel N., Bose, Jonaki, Hughes, Arthur, "Substance Use and Mental Health Issues among U.S.- Born American Indians or Alaska Natives Residing on and off Tribal Lands", Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), (July 2018)

²⁶⁷ Brave Heart, Maria Yellow Horse, Chase, Josephine, Elkins, Jennifer, Altschul, Deborah B. Historical "Trauma Among Indigenous Peoples of the Americas: Concepts, Research, and Clinical Considerations", *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, vol. 43, no. 4, (2011), p283

²⁶⁸ Nutton, Jennifer, Fast, Elizabeth, "Historical Trauma, substance Use, and Indigenous Peoples: Seven Generations of Harm from a "Big Event", *Substance Use & Misuse*. Vol. 50, (June 2015), p841

²⁶⁹ U.S. Department of health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, ' American Indian/Alaska Native Behavioral Health Briefing Book', (August 2011), p8

²⁷⁰ A Conversation About Drug Use and Addiction for American Indians and Alaska Natives | National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) (nih.gov) [06/07/2023]

²⁷¹ [A Conversation About Drug Use and Addiction for American Indians and Alaska Natives | National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\) \(nih.gov\)](#) [06/07/2023]

sense of being part of something greater that makes people feel a sense of hopelessness and distress which puts them at a higher risk of taking drugs.²⁷² In a study of 10,030 First Nations people found that among those who reported opioid misuse, 91 percent reported attending a residential school, 67 percent reported that a friend or family member had attempted suicide, and 61 percent reported trauma from the suicide deaths of family and friends.²⁷³ Those whose parents attended residential school were 3 times more likely to use illicit substances or to abuse prescription drug, and those whose grandparents attended residential schools were 1.9 times more likely to use illicit drugs.²⁷⁴ The use of methamphetamine and opioids has also contributed to the increase in suicide rates in Native American Communities a rate which was already disproportionately high compared to other groups within the U.S.

The Indian Health Service stated that between 2002 and 2004, the suicide rates for Native Americans and Alaska Natives are 1.7 times higher than the U.S. rate for all races and ages.²⁷⁵ Between 1980 and 2004 the suicide rate amongst Native Americans and Alaska Natives seems to have stayed at the same rate. The suicide rate for Native youths is disproportionately high compared to other races in the U.S. In 2011 suicide was the second leading cause of death for Native youth between the ages of 15 to 24, with a rate that is 3.5 times higher than the national average. People of this age group make up 40 percent of all suicide deaths in Native American communities.²⁷⁶ Today the suicide rates among Native Americans remain disproportionately high, according to an article published in 2022 the suicide rates for Native Americans and Alaska Natives have increased around 45 percent over the past 5 years.²⁷⁷ There have been some studies, such as Mason et al have investigated what factors have contributed to such high suicide rates, these risk factors include unresolved grief, family instability, depression, substance use and dependence.²⁷⁸ Some U.S. studies that were conducted among Indian boarding school students found that the poor quality of boarding schools, isolation from families and the rejection of Native American identity might have contributed to high suicide rates among students.²⁷⁹ A survey of 188 Indian boarding school students in the Southeast of the U.S. in 1987 found that Forty-four students (23.4 percent) reported having attempted suicide at some time. Almost 30 percent had thought about suicide, 9.6 percent would have liked to kill themselves, and 2.8 percent

²⁷² *ibid*

²⁷³ Toombs, Elaine, Lund, Jessie I., Mushquash, Aislin R., Mushquash, Christopher J., "Intergenerational Residential School Attendance and Increased Substance Use among First Nation Adults Living Off-Reserve: An Analysis of the Aboriginal Peoples Survey 2017", *Frontiers In Public Health*, vol 10, (2022), n.p

²⁷⁴ *ibid*

²⁷⁵ U.S. Department of health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, ' American Indian/Alaska Native Behavioral Health Briefing Book', (August 2011), p11

²⁷⁶ U.S. Department of health and Human Services, Indian Health Service, ' American Indian/Alaska Native Behavioral Health Briefing Book', (August 2011), p11

²⁷⁷ Fetter, Anna Kawennison, Wiglesworth, Andrea, Rey, LittleDove F., Azarani, Michael, Prairie Chicken, Micah L.,Young, Amanda R., Riegelman, Amy, Gone, Joseph P., "Risk factors for Suicidal Behaviours in American Indian and Alaska Native Peoples: A Systematic Review", *Clinical Psychological Science*, vol 11, no. 3, (2022), p529

²⁷⁸ Manson, Spero M., Beals, Janette, Dick, Wiegman, Rhonda, Duclos, Chrstine, "Risk Factors for Suicide Among Indian Adolescents at a Boarding School", *Public Health Report*, Vol 104, no. 6, (Nov-Dec 1989), p609

²⁷⁹ Elias, Brenda, Mignone, Javier, Hall, Madelyn, Hong, Say P., Hart, Lyna, Sareen, Jitender, "Trauma and Suicide Behaviour Histories among a Canadian Indigenous Population: An Empirical Exploration of the Potential Role of Canada's Residential School System", *Social Science & Medicine* 74, no. 10 (May 1, 2012), p1561

would have killed themselves if they had the chance, in the past month.²⁸⁰ Current studies looking into the connection between suicide and Indian boarding and Residential school attendance tend to agree that there is a connection between parental or familial Indian boarding school attendance and suicide in the younger generations. However, it only presents itself through a history of abuse that contributed to poor parenting. A study of trauma and suicide behaviour histories among a Canadian Indigenous Population linked to the role of Residential schools, found that having a history of suicide attempts and suicidal thoughts was more apparent among younger age groups.²⁸¹ Brenda Elias et al also found that there was an association between multigenerational exposure and a history of abuse with suicidal thoughts and suicide attempts, it was suggested that poor parenting or transmission of trauma may have occurred.²⁸² Of the First Nations population who did not attend Residential school, 30 percent reported a history of suicidal thoughts, and 16 percents reported a history of suicidal attempts.²⁸³ Both the figures for suicidal thoughts and attempts had a strong association with multigenerational residential school exposure and a history of abuse. on-residential school attendees were more likely to report multigeneration residential schools' exposure and it is speculated that poor parenting contributed to the history of abuse.²⁸⁴ 26 percent of Residential school attendees reported a history of suicidal thoughts and a history of abuse,²⁸⁵ and 14 percent reported having a history of suicide attempts, in this figure a history of abuse was associated with it.²⁸⁶ There is a link between the rates of suicide attempt and thought with Residential school attendance, and those had have a history of exposure to abuse are more likely to have a history of suicide attempts. Bombay et al found that 63.7 percent of participants had at least 1 parent who attended Residential school, 10 percent of this group reported having suicidal thoughts in adulthood.²⁸⁷ There is a connection between parental Residential school attendance and a greater risk of attempted suicide. However, among Native American youth aged 12 to 17, there was no significant connection between parental Residential school attendance and attempted suicide. As parental attendance at Residential schools was associated with a greater risk of suicide attempts and thoughts during adolescence, this risk increased during adulthood.²⁸⁸ The data collected on Native youth with a parent who attended residential school indicates that there is a risk of early onset of suicidal thoughts and behaviour due to possible exposure to ACEs which is a key contributor to the transferring intergeneration boarding school and Residential school trauma.

²⁸⁰ Manson, Spero M., Beals, Janette, Dick, Wiegman, Rhonda, Duclos, Chrstine, "Risk Factors for Suicide Among Indian Adolescents at a Boarding School", *Public Health Report*, Vol 104, no. 6, (Nov-Dec 1989), p611

²⁸¹ Elias, Brenda, Mignone, Javier, Hall, Madelyn, Hong, Say P., Hart, Lyna, Sareen, Jitender, "Trauma and Suicide Behaviour Histories among a Canadian Indigenous Population: An Empirical Exploration of the Potential Role of Canada's Residential School System", *Social Science & Medicine* 74, no. 10 (May 1, 2012), p1566

²⁸² *ibid*

²⁸³ *ibid*

²⁸⁴ *ibid*, p1564

²⁸⁵ *ibid*, p1562

²⁸⁶ *ibid*, p1563

²⁸⁷ Bombay, A., McQuaid, R. J., Schwartz, F., Thomas, A., Anisman, H., Matheson, K., "Suicidal Thoughts and Attempts in First Nations Communities: Links to Parental Indian Residential School Attendance across Development," *Journal of Developmental Origins of Health and Disease*, 10 (2019), p125

²⁸⁸ *ibid*, p126

Currently, the rate of suicide amongst Inuit male youth is approximately 500 per 100,000, which is 40 times greater than the rate for age matched men in the rest of Canada.²⁸⁹ Between 2014 and 2018 there was a 300 percent increase in suicides, 84 percent of these deaths were young Inuit males under the age of 25.²⁹⁰ The researchers argue that the most predominant explanation for the high suicide rate amongst Inuit male youth is historical trauma.²⁹¹ Inuit's traditional beliefs have been eroded, this includes family life and child-rearing practices which have had serious implications for personality development, especially concerning youth suicide.²⁹²

The Inuit community has experienced overlapping historical trauma, like many other Indigenous groups in North America. The intergenerational and historical trauma caused by the residential schools which altered the parenting practices, language loss and substance misuse, has also overlapped with other events that have led to the destruction of Indigenous way of life. One such event is the “Dog Slaughter”. This event is a perfect example to help contextualize the gendered dimension of both historical and intergenerational traumas. The “Dog Slaughter” occurred between the 1950s and 1970s. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) killed around 1000 Inuit sled dogs were considered to be a threat to public safety as it was believed they carried diseases. These dogs were essential for the day-to-day function of the community and an integral part of Inuit Identity and culture. Inuit masculinity was based upon respect, health, and contribution to the community. However, this changed with the deliberate killing of sled dogs by the RCMP. This event was deeply humiliating and emasculating as they were no longer able to provide for their family and community.²⁹³ The trauma of the event created emotional and psychological distress, and many turned to alcohol and violence.²⁹⁴ Participants of the study describe how the trauma of this event has been intergenerational. One participant a 33-year-old suicide prevention worker explained,

“Men here are all fucked up. It's not just the suicides, it's the crazy drinking, the violence against women, their morals are fucked because they had nobody to guide them ... It's a learned thing. They were raised by broken men who were also raised by broken men.”²⁹⁵

Along with emotional and physical violence, participants described how some men had turned to sexually abusing children as a means of asserting their masculine dominance.²⁹⁶ Willaim Affleck et al suggest that Inuit masculinity was destroyed by the Dog Slaughter. According to this study child abuse continued for

²⁸⁹ Affleck, William, Oliffe, John L., Inukpuk, Martha Malaya D., Tempier, Raymond E., Darroch, Francine G., Crawford, Allison F., Séguin, Monique, “Suicide amongst young Inuit males: The perspectives of Inuit health and wellness workers in Nunavik”, *SSM- Qualitative Research in Health*, vol 2, (2022), p1

²⁹⁰ *ibid*

²⁹¹ *ibid*

²⁹² *ibid*

²⁹³ *ibid* p3

²⁹⁴ *ibid*

²⁹⁵ *ibid*

²⁹⁶ *ibid*

generations afterwards, and the traumas are contributing to the high suicide rates.²⁹⁷ Some participants described how talking about child abuse trauma is discouraged by masculine norms as it is a sign of emotional vulnerability.²⁹⁸ A 24-year-old male youth worker commented “Inuit guys are all about being tough. They don't talk about feelings. It's drilled into them. They get a lot of shit when they try to talk about stuff like that.”²⁹⁹ Consequently, many Inuit boys and men deny their childhood trauma, and in some cases downplay the impact their childhood trauma has had on their lives, causing them to suffer alone and in silence.³⁰⁰ This event shows how a singular event can have lasting implications for current and future generations and how the loss of culture and way of life contributed to the health and social issues experienced by many males in many Native populations of North America.

Although the Indian boarding schools closed almost 45 years ago in the United States and 27 years ago in Canada, they have had an intergenerational impact on the Native American/Alaska Natives, First Nation, Inuit, and Metis people of North America. The loss of cultural traditions, including parenting practice, the lack of positive role models and the exposure to abuse as a child is linked to the inability of some survivors to form healthy relationships with their children. Parents who have experienced adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) find that their experiences can impact their ability to raise their child including neglect. This can have a negative effect on the child creating a cycle of intergeneration ACEs. Native Masculinity became ambiguous as, schools taught boys vocational skills such as farming, roles that were traditionally fulfilled by women. In addition to this, fathers were unable to protect their children and boys were unable to protect their siblings from abuse at the Indian boarding schools. The loss of their traditionally masculine roles has led to men feeling incomplete and unnecessary, leading to many children growing up today with absent fathers.’ This has also been linked to the lack of positive male role models, and for some fathers’ interaction with their children brought back traumatic memories of their childhood,³⁰¹ resulting in a cycle of boys who have grown up without father figures and possibly creating a cycle of absent fathers.

However, the traditional role of grandparents has stayed somewhat the same, today elders and grandparents continue to pass down the traditional ways. However, some grandparents have become the sole care providers to their grandchildren for them to remain out of the federal welfare system. Indian boarding schools also altered traditional Native child-rearing practices. Prior to the boarding school era, child-rearing methods were centred around patience and tolerance. However, today child abuse and neglect have become serious issues within the Native American communities, with reports highlighting that they

²⁹⁷ *ibid*

²⁹⁸ *ibid*

²⁹⁹ *ibid*

³⁰⁰ *ibid*

³⁰¹ Ball, Jessica, ‘Fathering in the Shadows: Indigenous Fathers and Canada’s Colonial Legacies’, *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 624 (July 1, 2009), p38

experience the highest rates of child abuse and neglect in the United States.³⁰² As there was no tradition of harsh punishment within Native communities prior to the forced attendance of Indian boarding schools,³⁰³ a link can be made that these behaviours have been learnt from the schools, as children grew up in a harsh environment that lacked nurturing. The negative behaviour was used by the survivors in adulthood, giving rise to a cycle of abuse. This cycle can be continued into adulthood. Native American women are at a greater risk of becoming victims of intimate partner violence, physical assault, stalking and rape. Acts of assimilation, such as Indian boarding schools led to female tribal roles being compromised and gave way to the normalization of violence. The exposure of abuse and violence in childhood resulted in a greater risk of experiencing intimate partner violence in adulthood. This is a cycle that has likely been passed down from one generation to another.

Indian boarding schools disrupted spiritual communication, traditional values, and loss of the sense of being part of something bigger. This loss of traditional ceremonies has left Indian boarding school survivors and their descendants vulnerable to turning to alcohol and drugs to cope. As a result of intergenerational transmission of historical trauma, Native Americans have the highest rate of alcohol-related deaths and Native American youths are more likely than any other population in North America to use illicit drugs.

Historical trauma associated with the Indian boarding schools presents itself as unresolved grief, family instability, depression, and substance use. All of which are the main causes of high suicide rates within Native American communities. transmission of abuse trauma, poor parenting and exposure to ACEs has caused disproportionately high rates of suicide rate among Native American communities. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for Native youth between the ages of 15 and 24, over the last 5 years figures have increased. One group in particular the suicide rate has been linked to historical trauma caused by the “Dog slaughter” (1950s-1970s). The “Dog Slaughter” is one example how of an event can have lasting implications for current and future generations. Without healing these cycles of intergenerational trauma, the trauma will continue to affect future generations of Native Americans/Alaska Natives and First Nations of North America.

³⁰² Senate Committee on Indian affairs, ‘Hearing On Native American Child Protective Act – H.R. 1688’, Testimony of President Gil Vigil Representing The National Indian Child Welfare association, July 14th, 2021, p4

³⁰³ Cross, Terry A., Earle, Kathleen A., Simmons, David, “Child Abuse and neglect in Indian Country: Policy issues”, *Families in Society: The Journal of Contemporary Human Services*, vol 81, no 1, (2000), p52

Conclusion

By the mid 1600's relations between the settlers and Native had deteriorated. The majority of settlers in the Americas held a strong belief in their own civilization's superiority which led to the development of a negative view of Native society and culture. The notion that the Native Americans were the enemies of the colonisers developed. Soon enough there was a wide belief that the extinction of the Native American population was both inevitable and justifiable.³⁰⁴ This destined extinction moved towards assimilation with the influence of the Enlightenment. Churchill argues that the Indian policies created by the United States government were a coordinated plan that fit right into the myth of a "civilizing" conquest. It was not just the U.S government who played a part in killing the Indian, saving the man.³⁰⁵ Tinker claims that the European missionaries were blinded by the belief that white culture was superior. Religious organisations such as the Christian Churches were in a position to implement the official Indian boarding school policy. The creation of the Indian boarding schools led to a "continued bondage to a culture that is both alien and alienating and even genocidal against American Indian peoples."³⁰⁶ Indian boarding schools have had a long-lasting intergenerational impact on the Native American and First nations population of North America. In order to fully examine how and why the Indian boarding schools have had such a large and ongoing impact within Native American communities it is important to look into the history of the schools to gain a full understanding of their aim of assimilation, what methods were used to achieve assimilation and what the daily life at the schools looked like. This study has examined the impact of historical trauma associated with the Indian boarding schools. Such as family violence, substance abuse and mental health issues. Historical trauma has also been found to have an impact on health,³⁰⁷ with epigenic research discovering a link between trauma and epigenetic changes that have altered stress responses and increased the risk of disease and poor health.³⁰⁸

The Indian boarding schools stripped students of their traditional clothing and replaced them with military uniform and dresses, causing humiliation as some children did not know how to undo the buttons to go to the toilet. Hair was cut, disconnecting children from their culture and beliefs. Names were replaced with European names and in some instances the children chose their new names, involving them in the destruction of their culture. The physical connection to their culture was severed resulting in a loss or confusion about their identity. This loss of identity was further exacerbated by the banning of tribal

³⁰⁴ Davidson, Lawrence. "CULTURAL GENOCIDE AND THE AMERICAN INDIANS." *Cultural Genocide*, Rutgers University Press, 2012, pp21-22

³⁰⁵ Silburn, Catherine. "KILL THE INDIAN, SAVE THE MAN: THE GENOCIDAL IMPACT OF AMERICAN INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS Ward Churchill." *The Radical Teacher*, no. 74, Oct. 2005, pp. 41-42

³⁰⁶ Neylan, Susan L. "Missionary Conquest: The Gospel and Native American Cultural Genocide." *The American Indian Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 2, Mar. 1995, p. 262

³⁰⁷ Paradies, Yin, "Colonisation, Racism and Indigenous Health." *Journal of Population Research*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2016, p86

³⁰⁸ Conching, Andie Kealohi Sato, Thayer, Zaneta, "Biological pathways for historical trauma to affect health: A conceptual model focusing on epigenetic modifications", *Social Science & Medicine*, Volume 230, (2019), p76

languages and the teaching of English, which broke the bond between Native Americans and their culture. The loss of tribal languages caused a disconnect between the children and their family especially with their relationship with their grandparents. Due to the consequences of using tribal languages at the schools many survivors did not pass on their languages to their children. The loss of the tribal language disrupted connections with traditions and beliefs. With the loss of their language grandchildren could not talk to or understand their grandparents, preventing the passing down of traditions and beliefs. Resulting in a loss of cultural and traditional knowledge. Today grandparents and elders stress the importance of passing down their knowledge. Some grandparents have become the sole care provider to their grandchildren in order for them to remain out of the welfare system. Child abuse and neglect are serious issues within the Native American communities with reports highlighting that they experience the highest rates of neglect and child abuse across the U.S.

The rate of alcohol related deaths and illicit drug use is a direct result of cultural assimilation and a loss of cultural traditions and ceremonies such as healing ceremonies. Alcohol and drugs are used as coping mechanisms for the trauma sustained as a result of the Indian boarding schools and their lasting effect on the community. It would appear that the rate of alcohol use and abuse among Native American youth is on the decline, further research needs to be conducted on a larger scale to determine if this decline is nationwide or purely localised. However, the Emotional implications of 'historical trauma' have resulted in a deep-rooted sense of hopelessness and despair that has resulted in high suicide rates among Native Americans especially among Native youth, where suicide is the second leading cause of death. A rate in which has increased over the last 5 years.

Vocational courses were taught alongside the other subjects. Boys were taught trades such as farming, and girls were taught domestic skills such as cooking and laundry. The lasting impact on gender roles have briefly been discussed in chapter three. The aim of these gendered vocational lessons was to create self-supportive members of society and ultimately damaging the tribal value of community, they also disrupted the traditional roles of men and women. Today there is a large population of Native children growing up with absent fathers, this has been attributed to the loss of traditional role of men partly due to the fact that they lost their ability to protect their children and boys were unable to protect themselves and siblings to from abuse at the schools. The loss of traditional masculine roles has led men to feel incomplete and unnecessary, leading to many children growing up with absent fathers. This absence has also been linked to the lack of positive male role model, and for some fathers' interaction with their children brought back traumatic memories of their childhood. Resulting in a cycle of boys who have grown up without father figures and possibly creating a cycle of absent fathers. Some grandparents are the sole care provider to their grandchildren, indicating that there are also instances of absent mothers. The "Dog slaughter" contextualizes the gendered dimension of both historical and intergeneration trauma, highlighting how the

loss of traditional ways of life and gender roles have contributed to a continuing cycle of substance use, mental health issues and violence.

Corporal punishment was humiliating and forced students to adapt to the school's environment. All of these were intended to "Kill the Indian, save the man." The impact of these decisions and actions caused considerable trauma to those who experienced the Indian boarding schools, and consequently the impact of these traumas have caused a transmission of trauma onto other generations of the family. The harsh punishment, sexual, mental, and physical abuse received by the children who attended Indian boarding school has contributed to the present-day issues that face Native American families and communities. Sexual, mental, and physical abuse experienced at the schools has also contributed the killing of the Native culture and traditions. Prior to the forced attendance of Indian boarding schools there was no tradition of harsh punishment within Native these behaviours have been learnt. The exposure of abuse and violence in childhood resulted in a greater risk of experiencing intimate partner violence in adulthood. This is a cycle that can be passed down from one generation to another. This learnt violence has caused violence to become normalised in some Native American households, causing the disproportionate rates of intimate partner violence within Native communities. As some survivors of intimate partner violence had been exposed to violence within their family system which had resulted in violence becoming normalized.³⁰⁹ A lack of Native parenting role models and the lack of nurturing as well as physical, sexual, and mental abuse in boarding schools have resulted in parents who are uninvolved, non-nurturing, punitive, and authoritarian. Which has resulted in a cycle of adverse childhood experiences, as the children of survivors grew up without a positive parental role model, lack of nurturing and possibly abuse.

By 1928 the United States government was made aware of the issues with the boarding schools. The Meriam report highlighted areas within the schools that needed improving, such as what changes were needed to be made to dormitories to prevent illness and called for better and more balanced diets. Even with the knowledge of the failures of the boarding schools, the United States government were slow in making the required changes, exposing further generations to the boarding schools. Whiles during the 1930s there was a small period of change however, this was quickly reverted back to a policy of assimilation and consequently a return to "kill the Indian, save the man". During the Termination Era the schools began to operate as welfare institution such as orphanages this allowed the Federal government to foster and adopt out Native children into white families as an alternative to institutionalized assimilation. 41 years after the release of the Meriam report the Kennedy report was published. in 1969 revealed how little change and how few improvements had been made. With the passing of the Indian Education Act in 1972

³⁰⁹ Jock, Brittany Wenniserí:ioatha, Dana-Sacco, Gail, Arscott, Joyell, Bagwell-Gray, Meredith E, Loerzel, Emily, Brockie, Teresa, Packard, Gwendolyn, O'Keefe, Victoria M. ,McKinley, Catherine E., Campbell, Jacquelyn. ""We've Already Endured the Trauma, Who is Going to Either End that Cycle or Continue to Feed It?": The Influence of Family and Legal Systems on Native American Women's Intimate Partner Violence Experiences", *Journal of Interpersonal Violence*, Vol. 37, Issue 21/22, (2022), p12

brought funding to public and tribal schools to develop education programs that met the needs of their Native American students. Within 3 years there were 25 Native American controlled schools. As a result of these changes, today there are 7 Indian boarding schools in operation, three of which are tribal run. The slow response to make changes to the Indian boarding schools and the Native American education system resulted in generations of children being brought up in a system that was designed to assimilate and was built under the idea of “Kill the Indian , save the man.” The schools have left scars and continuing issues within Native American communities and families which have been passed down through the generations, resulting in a cycle of trauma.

This dissertation has provided a snapshot of the historical and intergenerational trauma suffered by north American Indigenous populations. With more time and research the next step in the research would be examine the methods in which Native American, Alaska Natives, First Nations, Inuit, and Metis communities are using to start healing process and stopping the cycles of abuse and trauma ~~continuing~~. How healing can be achieved through a variety of ways, through continued government recognition of the Indian boarding schools, revitalising traditional healing methods, community healing programs, combining western counselling and traditional healing methods. Academics such as Ball and O’Neill have argued that Historical trauma could potentially be the answer to the indigenous problem.³¹⁰ Through collective memory a group can attempt to control how they are collectively remembered,³¹¹ Native Americans are using popular culture such as Hip-hop music, films, and television programs to regain control over their public image and bring about healing. This is also being done through social media platforms, influencers like James Jones (@notoriouscree) are trying to educate people and bring awareness about Native American culture and history. These attempts to preserve their history and cultural values can be explored in a way that draw upon Gerald Vizenor’s ideas of survivance. Social media platforms are allowing Native American to express themselves, their nations and educate people about contemporary issues.

³¹⁰ Ball, Tom, O’Neill. Theresa D, “Square Pegs and Round Holes: Understanding Historical Trauma in Two Native American Communities.”, *Culture and PTSD: Trauma in Global and Historical Perspective*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), p335

³¹¹ Eyerman, Ron, *Memory, Trauma, and Identity*, (Palgrave Macmillan Cham, 2019), p163

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