

NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS FUND JUSTICE

NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS FUND STANDING FIRM FOR JUSTICE FOR OVER 40 YEARS



Letter from the Executive Director

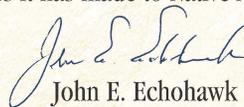
Every day NARF participates in projects and cases important to changing history. I am proud to report that we have worked hard in a ground-breaking effort to create the space

for our native nations to begin to heal from the boarding school policy.

With over a century of documented human rights violations in federal Indian boarding school, the mission of the **Boarding School Healing Project** is to secure a meaningful response from the U.S. government and churches as well as healing and reconciliation among Native American individuals, families, communities, and tribes. The Project is conducting education and outreach in Indian country and with churches, with the goal of developing a proposal to the U.S. Congress for response by the federal government. NARF also compiles research on historical trauma and healing.

The Native American Rights Fund is the oldest and largest nonprofit National Indian Rights organization in the country devoting all of its efforts to defending and promoting the legal rights of the Indian people on issues essential to their tribal sovereignty, their natural resources and their human rights. NARF believes in empowering individuals and communities whose rights, economic self-sufficiency and political participation have been systematically eroded or undermined.

We ask for nothing more, and will accept nothing less, than the U.S. government keeping the promises it has made to Native Americans.


John E. Echohawk

In this issue:

- History of the Boarding School Policy
- Carlisle Indian School
- The Legacy of the Boarding Schools
- Indigenous Peacemaking Initiative [IPI]

Brief Account of the Boarding School Issue

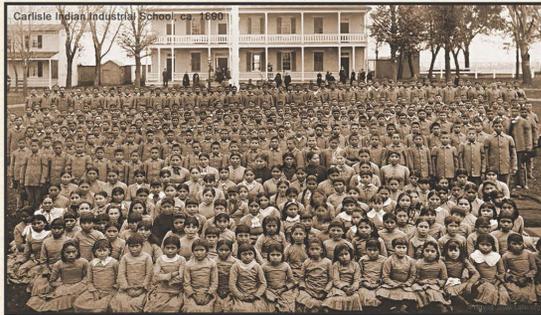
With the adoption of the President Grant's Peace Policy of 1869, Native American children were taken from their homes and sent to Christian and government-run boarding schools. The purpose was to "civilize" the Indian and to stamp-out Native culture. It was a deliberate policy of ethnocide and cultural genocide. Cut off from their families and culture, the children were punished for speaking their native languages, banned from conducting traditional or cultural practices, shorn of traditional clothing and identity of their native culture, taught that their culture and traditions were evil and sinful, and taught that they should be ashamed of being Native American. Placed far from home by design, they were frequently neglected or abused physically, sexually and psychologically.

These generations of children became the legacy of the federal Boarding School Policy. They returned to their communities, not as the Christianized farmers that the Boarding School Policy envisioned, but as deeply scarred human beings with none of the acculturated skills – community, parenting, extended family, language, cultural practices – gained by those who are raised in their cultural context.

CARLISLE INDIAN SCHOOL

The Peace Policy and the Congressionally created Board of Indian Commissioners were established to fulfill two important goals: (1) to replace corrupt government officials, called the "Indian ring," with religious men nominated by churches to oversee the Indian agencies on reservations, and (2) to Christianize the native tribes, primarily through removal of the children from reservation settings to stop the cultural influences of their families and communities. Second Lieutenant Richard Pratt founded the first remote Boarding School, the Carlisle Indian School, in 1879 on the principle that Native Americans must be taught to reject tribal culture and adapt to white society, famously saying "Kill the Indian, save the man."

continued...



Between 1879 and 1918 Carlisle reported 293 deaths and another 1135 were sent home because they were too sick to remain – likely to die at home, or on the way. Comparisons of Carlisle student deaths to national averages reflect that in 1880 the U.S. death rate was 15.09 per 1,000, at Carlisle it was 67.86 per 1,000 (4.5 times the national average). In 1890 the U.S. rate was 14 per 1,000, at Carlisle 49.26 per 1,000 (3.5 times the national average).

The Legacy of the Boarding Schools

There were 500 boarding schools in 18 states. An estimated 100,000 children passed through the boarding schools between 1879 and the 1960s. As late as 1973, there were 60,000 American Indian children enrolled in off-reservation schools.

These children were intentionally and systematically inculcated with shame for being Indian through ridicule of their religions and their life-ways. The shame became internalized as self-loathing and emotional disenfranchisement for their own culture. These children passed on the legacy of the boarding school policy, and the effects of this policy continue today. Too many Native Americans carry undefined and unremitting anxieties that drive them to alcoholism, drug abuse, violence against their own families and communities, and suicide.



The "wholesale removal of Indian children from their homes . . . is perhaps the most tragic aspect of Indian life today. . ."

– 1974 Senate Committee Hearing on adoption of the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA).

And yet, the United States has never offered a meaningful apology.

INDIGENOUS PEACEMAKING INITIATIVE (IPI)

The mission of NARF's Indigenous Peacemaking Initiative (IPI) is to promote and support Native peoples in restoring sustainable traditional dispute resolution (peacemaking) practices. This project provides NARF with an opportunity to support traditional peacemaking and community building practices as an extension of federal Indian law, principles and tribal sovereign rights.

Indian nations have had ways of dealing with disputes since time immemorial. But as western-model court systems have been unable to handle all the disputes in our communities, tribal nations are reviving their own traditional ways of dealing with disputes. Since these models almost always involve healing relationships rather than just punishing wrongdoing, the result is that we are also healing our communities by reviving our Peacemaking traditions. Guided by an Advisory Committee consisting of traditional peacemaking experts and practitioners, the IPI supports these efforts through:

- Maintaining a collection of tribal peacemaking laws
- Facilitating training
- Engaging in advocacy
- Providing technical assistance

Revitalizing tribal traditions helps undo the damages caused by the Industrial/Boarding Schools.



Indigenous Peacemaking Initiative

**Our Simple and Critical Purpose:
Healing and Reconciliation.**



www.narf.org
1506 Broadway • Boulder, CO 80302
(303) 447-8760 • (303) 443-7776 fax

Visit us online at www.narf.org
to see how your membership is helping
to promote justice for tribes and indigenous peoples and
to learn more about recent news and upcoming events.

