

**Testimony of Janine Pease, D. Ed.**  
**In Support of the**  
**“H.R. 5444 - Truth and Healing Commission**  
**on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States**

**May 12, 2022**

Shoodaagii. Itchik Daloom. Balusshe Ukchiiwaagideeiitshitcheesh. Apsaalooke Biia.

Good Afternoon. Honored Chair of the House Committee on Natural Resources' Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States (SCIP) and distinguished committee members,

I am honored with this invitation to present before this august body; my testimony is in support of this proposed legislation to establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies for the reasons that:

- Many children and youth voices of Indian people have been silent, despite their significant and impactful experiences in the boarding schools of the Bureau of Indian, from the most negative across the spectrum to the positive; and to be inclusive of Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools and those schools conducted by various churches for the education of Indian children; and,
- Some students sent to boarding schools did not survive, due to loneliness, disease, even disorientation; their legacy needs full disclosure and recognition of their lives lost and the intergenerational loss to their families and communities; and
- For there to be reconciliation and healing, stories of all those who experienced the boarding schools, both public and sectarian, must be told, listened to and understood; and,
- The American Indian boarding school stories in the telling give power to the survivors, the survivor's children and their precious succeeding generations.

Honored Chairperson:

**Introduction.** I am Janine Pease, an Apsaalooke educator from Montana, my Crow Indian name is “One Who Loves to Pray.” As an American Indian educator, my professional career has been in tribal colleges and universities administration and instruction, and most recently as a professor of Crow Studies, Humanities and Social Sciences. My doctoral research on the tribal colleges act history involved oral histories of Indian Educators, which I found to be compelling and vivid. The lives of early reservation Apsaalooke women and children have led into research of the stories of Crow Women Chiefs and Leaders, a study of health conditions for infants and children by decade, and the story of the Crow students who attended Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Through the Little Big Horn College Crow Oral History Project I met movers and shakers in the 1940's, 1950's and 1960's through oral history interviews, written memoirs and official documents review.

In the 1940's, a Crow Women's Federated Club in Crow Agency and Wyola had members who were Carlisle alumni. A photo in the *Crow Calendar* of the club members sparked my curiosity in the Crow Indian Carlisle students. Thus began my intensive research of the Crow Indian Carlisle Indian Industrial School students. Through the use of the Carlisle Indian School Resource Center online I began a detailed records review, conducted oral history interviews of their children, and reviewed memoirs by alumni.

**The Crow Indian Students Experience at Carlisle Indian Industrial School.**

**Crow Indian Health and Education in 1890 to 1920.** A glimpse of the period 1890 to 1920, the boarding school era for the Apsaalooke people, finds dire health conditions for children and youth. According to the Bureau of Indian Affairs census', during the decades 1890 to 1920 the Crow tribal population went from 2,500 to 1,800 due to the diseases of smallpox, tuberculosis, whooping cough, respiratory and gastric conditions. The population ages 0 - 18 dropped in number by half.

The treaty conditions made education mandatory on the Crow Indian Reservation. The Crow children were coerced, even forced, to attend the Bureau of Indian Affairs Boarding Schools and the contracted sectarian schools:

- **Crow Agency BIA Boarding School** was opened in 1886 and closed in 1920. The students were in grades 1 to 6. The school served up to 160 students at a time. The school was co-educational and followed the half day academics and half day trades curriculum.
- **Pryor BIA Boarding School** was built and opened in 1903 and provided grades 1 to 6. This was a coeducational school. The school closed in 1919. The school had a smallpox outbreak shortly after its opening when 9 girls came down with the life-threatening disease. The school had 50 to 75 students during its operation.
- The BIA contracted with the **Catholic Church for the St. Frances Xavier Catholic Boarding School**. This boarding school was operated by the Jesuits from 1887 to 1918. The school had teachers from the Ursuline Sisters, for grades 1 to 6. Their student population varied from 70 to 110 students. Chief Pretty Eagle negotiated with the school to have Sunday evening family time, and organized for the boys to be out of the school during the summer. The girls were sequestered throughout the calendar year, in the school. Students participated in daily mass, and conversion to Christianity was mandatory. Karen Watembach, local historian conducted extensive interviews with students and parents during the 1970's and 1980's. These records are at the LBHC Archives.
- The **Unitarian Universalist Church** contracted with BIA for **The Montana Indian Industrial School** in the northern portions of the Crow Reservation near Custer, Montana. The school followed the half academics and half school trades curriculum related to the self-supporting school operation. Citizenship and patriotism were stressed. The Crow people called this school Bond's Mission. The enrolled between 1887 and 1897 averaged 50 students. (This school is fully documented in *The Montana Indian Industrial School: A Worthy Work in a Needy Time*, by Margery L. Pease.)
- **American Baptist Day Schools** began when the Lodge Grass Crow Indian district leaders partnered with the Sheridan (Wyoming) American Baptist Church to meet, negotiate, agree, build and open a Day School in 1904 in Lodge Grass. The school was opened from 1904 to 1920. The Baptists opened additional day schools at Wyola, Reno Creek and Pryor over the next ten years; each served up to 10 students.
- **Catholic Day Schools** were opened by the St. Frances Xavier Catholic Mission and School at Lodge Grass Creek and Fort Smith. The teachers were Catholic Mission graduates, Crow Indian language speaking teachers. These schools had up to 20 students each.

**Crow Indian Students Enrolled at Carlisle Indian Industrial School, Research of Janine Pease, D. Ed., March 2021.** Among the 10,000 students who enrolled at Carlisle School, ninety-three were Crow Indian. Although Carlisle opened in 1887, the Crow Indian Agent sent a group of students in 1883. The Crow students took the train, and they would get to Iowa, then Chicago and on to Pennsylvania. At Carlisle, they were made to walk to the school, a distance of two miles.

**Graduates.** The Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center online indicates there are twelve Crow Indian students who completed the Carlisle graduation requirements. These are eight male students and four female students, starting in the Class of 1890 with George Means and the Class of 1907 with Christine Childs. In the Class of 1897 there were two Crow students: Frank Shively and Alexander Upshaw. Vocational certificates are not available, and several Crow Indian Students records note vocational certificates.

**Crow Student Demographic Data.** In an analysis of the 96 students files for Crow Indians, several data sets reveal who the students were, their enrollment at age, groups sent, and their choice of trades:

- Gender: 58 males, 38 females
- The student enrollment age begins at age 12 (15 students), age 13 (8 students), age 14 (13 students), age 15 (16 students, age 16 (a11 students), age 17 (9 students, age 18 (11 students). Just four students entered Carlisle at an age younger than 12; and nine students were older than age 18.
- Students' previous schooling ranged between 24 to 72 months, in reservation boarding schools.
- The trades students were taking included: housework (all girls), carpentry, blacksmithing, harness making, tin working, nursing, engineer (boiler operation), farming, wagon-making, and sewing.
- Seventeen students were discharged due to illness (type of illness not available). Ten of these students were girls, and seven were boys. All of these were reported dead by the Agent in 10 years time.
- There was a group of students from Greycliff, Montana (near Bozeman), the location of the first Crow Indian Agency, and from Custer, Montana, where the Unitarian Montana Indian Industrial School was located.
- Sibling groups were represented with the last name of Cooper, Stewart and Geisdorf.

**Crow Students Who Died and are Buried at Carlisle.** From the Carlisle Indian School Cemetery records, there are three Crow Indian students who died while attending the school: Charles Fisher of Crow Agency who died in September 1886, Katie Helen Adams of St. Xavier was enrolled for three years and died in August 1903, and Ernest Iron "Little War Shield" of Crow Agency, who was enrolled for 1.5 years and died in March 1910.

**Crow Carlisle Students Married to Other Carlisle Students.** Crow student William White married Josephine Williams, and Carlisle expelled them for this marriage. William White was enrolled for 5 years in the Engineer vocational program, and upon return, he worked at the Crow Agency as an operator of the Agency boiler for 5 years. Wife Josephine was Simshian and came to Carlisle from the Salem Indian School (Chemawa Indian School). She was enrolled for four years and took the trade of sewing and laundry. Rosa LaForge graduated in 1904 with the trade of seamstress. She was enrolled for six years and had become a Carlisle employee as an Assistant Matron. She married Charles Dillon, a Crow Creek Sioux, who was enrolled for 4.5 years, in the trade of blacksmith. The Dillon family lived in the Wyola district of the Crow reservation. Julia Hawks married Thomas Medicine Horse, and both were expelled from Carlisle for the marriage. Julia had a record of completing five outings in the summers, while Thomas Medicine Horse was enrolled for four years in the carpentry trade. Together the Medicine Horse couple lived in Crow Agency.

**Nurses Training and Graduates.** Susie Farwell of Custer, MT, went on an outing placement to Elliot Hospital in New Jersey, in 1896. Ida Towns of Crow Agency was sent to German Hospital in Brooklyn New York where she completed Nurses Training . Following her nursing training, in 1913, Ida became employed at Fort Lapwai Sanitorium in Lapwai, Idaho, on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. Ms. Towns

was featured in the Carlisle publications for her graduation from German Hospital. Margaret Picket was a nurse trainee placed in the Carlisle Hospital (treating primarily tuberculosis victims).

**Enlistment in the U.S. Armed Services in World War I.** The emphasis on citizenship as Carlisle curriculum content promoted the enlistment of many Carlisle students. Five Crow Indian students enlisted in the armed services: Russell Whitebear, George Pease, George White Fox, Horace Long Bear and Hugh Leider. All survived the WWI and returned to the Crow Reservation.

**Four Mystery Students.** In the review of Crow Indian student files, the district of origin on the Crow Reservation for four students was Fort Snelling. Fort Snelling is the prison where the Crow men involved in an incident named “The Wraps Up His Tail Rebellion” were incarcerated; Fort Snelling, Minnesota. These men served a brief time there and then were sent to Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Moses Knows His Cows and Julian Carries His Food were at Carlisle only briefly in 1888. However, Egbert Big Hail and Theron Looks With His Ears or Lears stayed for two years. Theron Lears became a political activist once he returned to the Crow Reservation. (Material on the rebellion can be found in *Parading Through History: The Making of the Crow Nation in America 1805-1935*, by Frederick Hoxie.)

**Outstanding Carlisle Graduates and Alumni.** Based on digital resources, descendant interviews and autobiographies, nine profiles of Carlisle alumni were developed, five are provided here, to indicate their position and influence in the Crow Indian community upon their return from Carlisle School.

**Alexander Upshaw.** Alexander Upshaw’s father was Plenty Bear. He studied at Carlisle for ten years and went on five outings, all in Pennsylvania. He graduated with the Class of 1897. He was an excellent writer, and was published several times in the *Carlisle Indian Helper*. He attended Bloomsberg Normal School in 1897-1898, and completed a teaching certificate. His first assignment was an GENoa Industrial School where he was the Industrial Teacher for 2 years. He met and married his wife Emma Young and they had three daughters. Upon his return home to the Crow Reservation, he became a political activist. He became the Assistant/Interpreter to Edward S. Curtis, the renowned photographer of American Indians. Upshaw collaborated with Curtis on the Crow and Hidatsa research, setting up scenes and strategizing designs. Curtis and Upshaw met with President Roosevelt, where Upshaw discussed the conditions of the Crow people.

**George Washington Hogan.** At the tender age of 10, George Washington Hogan request of his parents Bear Before and Emma Chein Frazier to attend Carlisle. He was enrolled at Carlisle from 1898 to 1904. His daughter Mardell Hogan Plainfeather wrote about her father. “He was a part of a group of young men who attempted to spread their wings of “intellectual protection” over matters of political importance to the Crow.”<sup>d</sup> About the relationship with the elder statement and Crow Indian chiefs, Ms. Plainfeather said, “They joined the Chiefs “with a weapon that the old chiefs did not have — a Whiteman’ education. The chiefs eventually learned to rely on them to convey their words to the whites especially to the Great White Father. Plainfeather recounts that “as interpreters, they worked for missionaries, anthropologists, local traders and Crows themselves, in matters that required reading, writing and orator skills.”<sup>1</sup>

**Lois Pretty Scalp.** A student at Carlisle Indian School from November 1883, a student in the first group sent by the Crow Indian Agent to Carlisle. Lois stayed at Carlisle for seven year, even though she arrived at the age of seventeen. From the Black Lodge District, her Indian name was Two Medicine Rocks. The reason for her discharge was that her time expired. Carlisle enrolled students for five years, with

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<sup>1</sup> Hogan-Plainfeather. Unpublished manuscript. “Biography of George Washington Hogan.” 1987. Little Big Horn College Archives, Crow Agency MT.

extensions. Lois married Louis Bompard. In a graduate survey Lois responded about their family: "We own our home and it is white with 2 rooms and a porch. We have 50 chickens, 5 turkeys, 3 geese, 10 pigs, 7 doves and 13 horses. I worked at the school as a laundress for 1 month. My husband, a full blood, is a Boss Farmer. We take a leading role, the Agent relies on my husband.

**Minnie Reed Williams.** Minnie was a child of a Gros Ventre/Crow woman and a trader. She and her siblings suffered a tragedy when their father was killed in an altercation at the Agency, and the Agent sent them to St. Frances Xavier Boarding School at St. Xavier in the Big Horn District of the Crow Reservation. At an early age, according to her autobiography, Minnie aspired to read many great books. She eventually went to Fort Shaw Indian School in western Montana, where she gained an even greater appreciation of learning and reading. She completed her education at Fort Shaw and returned to teach at the Crow Agency Boarding School. She taught Crow Indian children just long enough to earn the cost of a one way train ticket to Carlisle Indian School. So on her own dime, Minnie went to Carlisle in 1897 at the age of 18, and stayed until 1901. She had five outings in Pennsylvania, with Quaker families, all of them teachers. Upon her return to Crow Agency, Minnie uncovered her mother's and grandmother's allotments, and along with her own, put together a landbase for a ranch near Custer. She purchased additional plots for the cattle and horse ranching business with her husband Owen Blue Williams. Due to the BIA Horse Kill of 1923, Minnie and Owen had their livestock slaughtered, leading to bankruptcy and the loss of the ranch. Minnie moved to the Agency where she took up political activism. She was tribal secretary three times in the 1920' and 1930's. She organized the Crow Federation Women's Club, and advocated for women's and infant's health, sanitary conditions in the Crow Jail and for clean water to tribal members. The club has several Carlisle Indian School Alum as members.

**Frank Shively, Graduating Class of 1897.** Braided Scalp Lock or Frank Shively enrolled in Carlisle Indian School in 1890 and graduated in 1897. He was the son of a Union Civil War Veteran Samuel Shivley and a Crow woman Girl Sees the Weed. The mother died in childbirth and the father was killed in an ambush by the Sioux in 1875. While at Carlisle, Frank played football and ran track. After graduation, Frank became an Agency stenographer at Lapwai, at the Nez Perce Indian Agency. In a *Big Horn County News* article by Andrew Turck, the family recounted how Frank Shively became the first football coach at Washington State Agricultural College and Schools of Science, now Washington State University at Pullman, Washington.<sup>2</sup> Frank split his week into two parts, working three days at the Nez Perce Agency and two days a week at the College coaching football. In 1910, Frank Shively was an interpreter for Chief Plenty Coups, in the writing of the famous biography by Linderman. The Crow Council authorized Joe Cooper and George Washington Hogan, both Carlisle alumni, and Frank to meet with Crow tribal attorneys and Senator Dixon to make and execute an agreement on opening the Crow Reservation. He was inducted into the Montana Indian Athletic Hall of Fame in 2018.

**Unintended Consequences.** A master's theses by Peter Holman entitled "Unintended Consequences: How the Crow Indians Used Their Education in Ways the Federal Government Never Intended, 1885 - 1920." Holman stated: "Crows who returned from the boarding schools used their education, not only to meet the standard set forth by the government, but also in ways that reformers, government officials, and even themselves did not expect. The U. S. Government's expectation was to use education to prepare the Indian for particular limited lifestyles. Farming was the occupation intended to further the new cultural direction of the Indian after allotment of Indian lands. The curricula of boarding schools focused on industrial education, preparing the Indian child to a limited future without choice. Instead of following the

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<sup>2</sup> Turck, Andrew. "19th Century Football Coach, Track Star Gains Hall of Fame Placement." *Big Horn County News*. November 1, 2018.

path chosen by others, certain Crow opted to use their education in alternative ways: ways that startled agents and commissioners.”

**Conclusion.** The legacy of the Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools is bitter-sweet. The bitterness comes from the extreme distance Indian students had to endure from their homeland, their esteemed loved ones, their culture and language. The bitter experience includes the loss of classmates and fellow tribal members who were students at Carlisle and other boarding schools, who succumbed to diseases so debilitating that they were life-taking. It was bitter for the students whose stay at Carlisle was cut short due to severe illness, who found themselves passengers on the train heading home, and once at home, often unable to recover their health, and to lose their chance at life. The sweet aspect of the boarding school legacy and experience is the acquisition of skills, trades, athletics, rhetoric, writing and knowledge that assisted their conduct of life and living on the Reservation. Perhaps the brilliant youth whose qualities became recognized and known would have been bright and shining no matter what or where the circumstances. Perhaps, in some way, the boarding schools staff, teachers, fellow students and the individuals themselves coalesced to give these achievers a strong resilience in life. Doubtless, the story of Bureau of Indian Affairs boarding schools, whether directly administered by the Indian Service or contracted by churches, Catholic, Protestant or non-denominational (Unitarian) must be told, be reckoned with, be recognized, to reconcile the bitter with the sweet, and to heal the damages and injuries suffered by the American Indian children and youth.

Madam Chair, I testify today in support of the Bill under consideration: [H.R. 5444](#) (Rep. Sharice Davids), To establish the Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies in the United States, and for other purposes. *“Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act.”*

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## Addendum on **Bureau of Indian Affairs Off-Reservation Boarding Schools.**

**The Off-Reservation Boarding Schools.** The Bureau of Indian Affairs started off-Reservation boarding schools for the older students who had attended and finished the local on-Reservation boarding schools. Captain Pratt's innovation of Carlisle Indian Industrial School developed following his 3 year assignment to Fort Marion in Florida in 1875 - 78 guarding imprisoned leaders and warriors from the Cheyennes, Kiowas, Comanches, Apaches and 1 Caddo. He made the conclusion that education was a solution to the "Indian problem" He took this group to Hampton Institute, a school for the children of Freedmen. He requested to start his own school for Indians, which he said would be much less expensive than to wage war on their nations.<sup>3</sup> His oft quoted philosophy was "Kill the Indian, save the man" and "all the Indian there is in the race should be dead." As the first off-Reservation boarding school, it was the blueprint for the federal Indian school systems to be organized across the UniMadam Chair, Ahoo, thank you for the opportunity to share this research and these thoughts with you today. ted States. In all, twenty four military style off-reservation boarding schools were established.<sup>4</sup>

The journey to Carlisle Indian Industrial School was a long journey on the train, over land or by river boat for the Indian students who attended the school. Most children were taken directly from their families, although for the Crow Indian children, most had many months of local on-Reservation boarding school experience.

Fear-Segal and Rose tally that 758 of the 10,600 Indian students who attended Carlisle graduated, to finish a high school equivalent education. Some students begged to go home or ran away. Others completed schooling but lived with stress and disturbance for the rest of their lives. But since Carlisle students were for the most part older, they made friendships among the students of many tribal and splayed sports, participated in vocational training, oratory, Native arts, and speech and debate. National leaders visited Carlisle as the distance between the school and the capital was small. Pratt documented the students using photography; a visual proof of the school's success. He had publications that featured student writing, prose and poetry.

David Wallace Adams, in *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience 1875-1928* listed the enrollment by tribe. For example there were 370 Cherokee, 249 Cheyenne and 998 Chippewa. The Creek had 104 attend Carlisle, and Adams lists 97 for the Crow Tribe.

Luther Standing Bear said he learned of Carlisle from a tribesman Long Chin, who said the shites had come to collect children for a school in the East. Luther, a Dakota student, decided he wanted to go: "When I went to the East (to Carlisle) I went there thinking I would die...I could think of white people wanting little Lakota children for nother reason than to kill them, but I thought here is my chance to prove that I can die bravely. So I went East to show my father and my people that I was brave and willing to die for them. Standing Bear narrated about the cutting of his hair: "The fact is that we were to be transformed, and short hair being the mark of gentility with the white man, he put upon use the mark." "It hurt my feelings to such an extent that the tears come into my eyes. None of us slept well that night; we felt so queer. Cutting off hair was associated with mourning."

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<sup>3</sup> Fear-Segal, Jacqueline and Rose, SusanD. "Carlisle Industrial School: Indigenous Histories, Memories and Reclamations." University of Nebraska Press. 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Zitkala-Sa, a Yankton Lakota, attended a Quaker boarding school at age 12. She said “On the first day, a large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. I struggled for my lost freedom, but all was useless.” She recalled “Once I lost a dear classmate. I remember well how she used to mope along at my side, until one morning she could not raise her head from her pillow. At her deathbed, I stood weeping.” She had lost a friend and classmate, so tragic.<sup>5</sup>

David Wallace Adams describes the regulation dress of the off-Reservation boarding schools. He said there was a changing from tribal clothing, that was taken and destroyed, to uniforms that met the school’s regulations. Boys had 2 plain suits with an extra pair of trousers and girls had three dresses. Off-Reservation Schools had better clothes. At Carlisle the boys had red shoulder stripes on their coats, and Carlisle girls had cloaks with red braid, and some ruffles and lace were allowed. The students’ individuality was stripped away, and they became carbon copies of “the White Man”. The before and after photos were a common part of the arrival to Carlisle ritual.

The meals were a part of the civilizing experience. The school food included fruits, vegetables, dairy products, beef, port and poultry. Rules were made and enforced about services; no seconds. Carlisle has “army rations” amounts of food, which was unusual for boarding schools. But students’ relatives sent the papa and wasna - the traditional dried foods. Adams states there was excessive regimentation at the table with rituals and rites.

The student recruitment process was a responsibility of the Reservation Agent. It was not until 1893 that parental consent was required to attend off-reservations schools. Prior to that year, the selection to attend was compulsory with or without parents agreement. The schools and the local Agency funded the train fare. Adams notes that some Agents kept the best students for the local boarding school, others sent “the poorest material away to boarding schools to get rid of them.” Some Agents did not send any students to Off-Reservation schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Zitkala-Sa/Bonnin, Gertrude Simmons. *American Indian Stories, Legend and Other Writings*. Penguin Classics: New York. P. 89-91.