Michigan Radio | By Stateside Staff
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Above: Holy Childhood students circa mid-1900s. These may have been the "day students"—the children who went to the school but did not board there. Day students and boarders

You have probably heard the phrase "school of choice" used when describing public education options in Michigan, but what about a "school of no choice?" That was the case for many native Michiganders for over a century.

With November being Native American History Month, Stateside welcomed **Eric Hemenway**, director of archives and records for the Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians in and around Harbor Springs, and **Sandra Clark**, director of the Michigan History Center.

On the creation of Indian boarding schools

During the westward expansion of the United States, in which large populations of American Indians were killed, the government decided to establish a number of Indian boarding schools around the country to force the adoption of American culture. More importantly, the schools tried to erase the American Indians' cultures.

"The idea is to found these Indian boarding schools where Indian children will basically not be allowed to be Indian children anymore," says Clark.

"The boarding schools varied from community to community, but we had one here up in Harbor Springs," says Hemenway. The school, Holy Childhood, "started out as a mission school that was in conjunction with the tribe and the local Catholic Church. But as federal policies dictated Indian education into the 1880s, the policy said that Indian language was forbidden, Indian dress was forbidden."

At the boarding schools, Indians were generally taught to be laborers, not any higher professional aspiration like doctors or lawyers, says Hemenway. The students were taught to read and write, but the schools also aimed to "uneducate them on being Odawa." Students were reprimanded, adds Hemenway, for practicing their culture.

On the schools' closings

Most of the schools closed in the 1920s, but almost certainly not for moral reasons. The U.S. government didn't think of the American Indians as much of a threat, and World War I led the U.S. government to reconsider funding the schools because "they were very, very expensive," says Clark.

"But what makes Holy Childhood an anomaly is that it keeps going for another 60 years," says Hemenway. "It doesn't close until 1983 and it's the last Indian boarding school to do so."

On impacts on American Indian communities

The large-scale forcing of American Indian children into abusive schools undoubtedly had massive impacts on those communities.

"Loss of language I think is one of the biggest impacts," says Hemenway. "When these kids were at the school they were forbidden to speak their language, and [there was a] loss of culture, tradition, spiritual beliefs, community ties, family skills."

Repercussions are still felt today.

Hemenway explains, "We hear devastating stories of kids who survived the school and they grow up to be our elders and, you know, they talk about the situations they went through and how that affected their ability to raise children and develop relationships with other people because of what happened to them at the boarding schools."

Top: Myles McDougall, the author's grandfather, at age 13, in a 1939 school photo. Above, left to right: the author's sister Meghan Hawksworth, her grandfather, and the author on Myles' 90th birthday, 2016.

COMMENTARY :: *Elizabeth Hawksworth*

MY GRANDFATHER GAVE ME HIS TRAUMA— AND HIS HEALING CULTURE

My grandfather used to say that he'd never attended an Indian residential school. He'd shrug off his abuse in school, as if it was no big deal. After all, everyone he knew was abused by White teachers. They were all beaten for speaking Ojibwe, beaten until they forgot how to speak it altogether.

The Methodist-run residential school for Native children my grandfather likely attended was called Mount Elgin Industrial Institute. It was known on the reserve by another name: Mount Elgin Residential School. But he wouldn't call it that.

He wouldn't name that school or his trauma, but it was still there. And I inherited it, even if I spent my early years not realizing it.

I grew up away from the reserve, in a middle-class, White-passing family in Ontario. Being Native was not a way of life for me. In fact, I didn't know that I was Ojibwe until I was in the first grade. It just wasn't something my family spoke about.

Once I learned, little things poked at my sense of worth—things like regular, everyday anger and racism toward Native people in Ontario. Clashes between Natives and White communities made headlines there regularly while I was growing up. I was constantly told by the adults in my life that the Natives were "causing trouble." That they were "bringing it on themselves." It was easy to believe this racism. After all, I was surrounded by it.

At the same time, I was surrounded by family and friends who denied my Indigeneity. The racism and denial took a toll. I was constantly anxious, especially around authority. I flinched when people moved too quickly or raised a hand around me. And I was hyper-vigilant, something that continues to this day.

PHOTOS FROM ELIZABETH HAWKSWORTH

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The mental illness diagnoses began racking up, and I turned to addictive behaviors—cutting, self-hating, and starving myself. And though I sat through therapy and popped anti-depressants, I continued to feel displaced and angry.

Some of that began to change after I reconnected with my grandfather. It was after I graduated from college, and I mentioned that I felt myself in a constant struggle, trying to figure out where I belonged. I was resentful, I said, feeling like I had no religion, no culture, and nowhere to go to find those things.

"That's what being an Indian is," he replied, touching for the first time on our shared blood and culture. "You're an Indian woman, so it's no one's place to tell you anything, but you're not going to find it easy. It hasn't ever been easy for us."

Then his voice turned serious.

"You're the storyteller in the family. You need to listen to me. It's your job to keep our culture going. Smarten up now."

Returning to culture is a duty my grandfather believed elders had to their communities. And he passed this on to me.

Around this point, I began learning about intergenerational trauma. While Native people have experienced it for years, researchers are just beginning to learn about how trauma is stored and passed on at the cellular level in the emerging field of epigenetics. A 2014 study showed that trauma altered gene expression in mice, and that these changes were passed down to their offspring. Knowing this is helpful for me. It helps me understand why I, and other family members, have experienced psychological issues that appear to have no trigger. Trauma changes the way our genes are expressed. It lives in our cells and becomes a part of who we are.

But that doesn't mean my trauma has to define me, my community, or my family. As Native people, we are no less resilient when we admit that colonialism has had lasting effects on us. And it starts with naming the trauma.

In his final years, my grandfather returned to culture and used storytelling as a way to heal from the trauma he experienced as a child and adult. By choosing me to tell his stories to, we both found a way to heal.

Using traditional practices has been shown to have a positive effect on mental health for Native people. Natives celebrating who we are, even in the face of erasure, has helped bring many of us back to our cultures, readying us to fight harder for what is ours. It makes sense that activities that are culturally affirming would build mental and emotional resilience. And while trauma can be passed down generations, so can healing.

In his final years, my grandfather returned to culture and used storytelling as a way to heal from the trauma he experienced as a child and adult. By choosing me to tell his stories to, we both found a way to heal.

Connecting back to culture has been one of the hardest things I've done. Without my grandfather, I would not have known where to start my own journey. Sometimes I feel like an imposter or like I'm letting down my grandfather and the legacy he gave me, but then I realize that I'm doing exactly what he told me to do.

I am telling our story. I am healing my family's trauma by being exactly who I am—a Native woman who belongs, and has belonged, all along.

Elizabeth Hawksworth is an Anishinaabe writer with a focus on social justice and her experience as a queer Native in Canada. Web: lizhawksworth.wordpress.com

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INDIAN COUNTRY TODAY
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Ugly Precursor to Auschwitz: Hitler Said to Have Been Inspired by US Indian Reservation System

Hitler's concept of concentration camps only modeled the Indian reservation system of the United States, a system the "greatest nation" is unable to recognize about its past.

SIMON MOYA-SMITH • UPDATED: SEP 13, 2018 · ORIGINAL: AUG 27, 2017

It was 72 years ago that the imprisoned and starved and viciously battered victims of Hitler and his Nazi thugs were liberated by Soviet troops.

Hitler – the coward, who'd later commit suicide rather than face the music – was incontrovertibly one of the world's most brutal and bloodthirsty bastards to ever walk the globe.

Yet, little is it known that he was also a plagiarist.

The idea of a prison camp – specifically Auschwitz, in Òwięcim, Poland – where Hitler's soldiers would shoot, hang, poison, mutilate and starve men, women and children en mass was not an idea Hitler, the bigot, came up with on his own. In fact, the Pulitzer-Prize winning biographer John Toland wrote that Hitler was inspired in part by the Indian reservation system – a creation of the United States.

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"Hitler's concept of concentration camps as well as the practicality of genocide owed much, so he claimed, to his studies of English and United States history," Toland wrote in his book, *Adolf Hitler: The Definitive Biography.* "He admired the camps for Boer prisoners in South Africa and for the Indians in the wild west; and often praised to his inner circle the efficiency of America's extermination—by starvation and uneven combat—of the red savages who could not be tamed by captivity."

Now, of course, it is not in the best national interest of the U.S. to recognize such a realization as presented by Toland. As I've said time and again, you cannot be the greatest nation in the world if you're guilty of genocide – and especially if your country's policies were the inspiration that engineered one of the world's most devastating genocides.

And, of course, the evidence is readily available to those who'd seek it that European settlers (i.e. invaders who would later divorce themselves from their motherland, renaming each other "Americans") did, in fact, set into motion a detailed template – justifications (Divine Right), policies (Indian Removal), procedures (Wounded Knee) – for Hitler to follow.

Indeed, people are wont to argue that plague and disease killed Native Americans in great numbers, which is true – Native Americans did die in mass numbers as a result of European pestilences and our biological inability to fight off these foreign microbes. But that argument inherently ignores the well-documented extermination policies set forth by the United States.

In fact, President Thomas Jefferson himself famously said (well, famous throughout Native America) that the "(American Indian has) justified (their own) extermination." And it was George Washington who thought the only way to kill Native Americans was to rage war on their crops.

"Linguistic Genocide in Education – Or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights?" Tove Skutnabb-Kangas

There are many similarities in the United State's attempt to exterminate Native Americans and Hitler's attempt to exterminate the Jews. Both groups were – and in many ways remain – dehumanized. Both are and were considered to be in the way of so-called progress. In the U.S., officials and citizens even coined it the "Indian problem," and Hitler famously considered Jews exactly that, his problem, and he charged himself – much like President Andrew Jackson – with the responsibility of eliminating that problem.

Another similarity: there are the deniers of both genocides. In 2012, Colorado Republican State Senator Ellen Roberts would not support a resolution recognizing the genocide of Native Americans because, she said, Indians were not rendered extinct.

"When I look up the word 'exterminate' it is to destroy totally," she argued. "And my problem with this resolution is I thank God that we have not destroyed totally the Native American people. And one of my challenges ... is (the) wording; that is as if they are extinct, because they are not."

The irony here is days prior she signed her name to two resolutions recognizing the Jewish Holocaust and the Armenian genocide.

RELATED: Senate Republicans Reject 'Genocide' to Describe Treatment of American Indians

Steven Spielberg, director of the Holocaust film *Schindler's List*, said in a speech that the Jewish people are once again threatened by "the perennial demons of intolerance," Joanna Berendt of *TheNew York Times*reported. "People want to, all over again, strip you of your past, of your story and of your identity," he said.

Spielberg's statement applies to Native Americans as well, who are now 1.7-percent of the total U.S. population (new estimates argue that the population of Indigenous Peoples in North American was as high as 123 million prior to European contact).

Oh, and one more thing: Hitler would refer to the Russians as "redskins."

(This story was originally published January 27, 2015.)

Simon Moya-Smith, Oglala Lakota, is the Culture Editor at Indian Country Media Network. Follow him on Twitter @SimonMoyaSmith.

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Negation

Author: Warren Petoskey Born - Nov. 3, 1922

Book title: Dancing My Dream

It was obvious to me that Great Auntie loved my father. Her visits to our home were more spiritual in nature than social.

Dad was long removed from his culture—angry, frustrated and in pain—and he was medicating himself with alcohol. He had been stripped of his language, his land, his cultural origins and a loving relationship with his own father because of the boarding school syndrome. He was haunted by the feeling of having been "exiled" from a life that should have been his—and all of ours.

As a boy, I knew none of this. It was much later that I discovered that both my grandfather and his sister, Great Auntie, had attended and graduated from Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

My grandfather came away from Carlisle not knowing how to be a father or a husband. He had been raised by the staff of the boarding school and had not been taught our traditional ways or experienced a traditional upbringing. He and my father did not get along. Dad had worked and saved money for college and his father had taken it. Dad would not talk about his father at all: if the subject was broached, he reacted with anger.

I also discovered that my father's older brothers and sisters had attended Mt. Pleasant Indian School, a government boarding school in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

My father said that the only reason that he, his brother Wayne and his youngest sister, Elaine, weren't taken was a lack of bed space. But he may not have wanted me to know the truth. I have a picture of him on the grounds of Mt. Pleasant with a group of young friends. Whether my father attended or not, he exhibited all of the dysfunctions mirrored in other boarding school survivors.

(Today, there is a display on the school at the *Ziibiwing* Center of *Anishinabe* Culture & Lifeways in Mt. Pleasant.)

The experience of being separated from his family was so traumatic that another of my father's brothers, Alvius, and a friend named Elmer Minor ran away from Mt. Pleasant: they jumped a passing freight train to try to escape. It was the middle of winter, and by the time the train reached its destination—Traverse City in northern Michigan—my uncle and his friend had nearly frozen to death. They were hospitalized and sent back to Mt. Pleasant.

Both men returned home damaged. Uncle Al would later spend two years in prison for robbery, although he was able to enter the service after his incarceration and distinguished himself as a member of the 1st Cavalry at the Battle of the Bulge in World War II. He retired from the military as a top sergeant.

The schools were "designed" to erase all consciousness of Indian language and culture and to "Americanize" their residents. The method used to insure this "training" was a strict military-style regimen. (What happened in the boarding schools had a far-reaching impact: In Germany in the mid-1930s, Nazi leaders who were studying racial purity became interested in—and published articles about—American policies toward Indians.)

Children as young as 6 were removed from their homes and sent to the schools for as long as six or seven years; many stayed through high school. Boys and girls had their hair cut and their clothes confiscated and were issued uniforms. Before they could put on the uniforms, they were made to bathe, were deloused with DDT and examined by a medical

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practitioner. A matron went down the line and extracted any discolored teeth without benefit of an anesthetic.

Many of the young girls underwent sterilization with no explanation of what the procedure meant or how it would change their lives.

Siblings were separated, and children saw their parents only rarely, if at all. They were forbidden to speak their language or practice their traditions, and each infraction was met with a graduating level of punishments, which included beatings. Some children whose ears were boxed developed hearing problems.

In the case of Carlisle, a student who continued to defy the rules was locked in an unheated, windowless building for three days without food or water. Many of these children died. In fact, one of the first students to return from Carlisle reported to his people that more children died at the school than made it home.

Some of the older children were defiant and gathered secretly to speak to each other, to keep their language and identities alive. It was natural for the younger children to develop emotional attachments to staff members and matrons, and in many cases, the attachments led to physical and sexual abuse.

The boarding schools created what psychologists call "intergenerational trauma." My grandfather, his sister and every generation of the Biidassige family since has been affected. Every family has been dysfunctional to a greater or lesser degree.

We have had family members do prison time and lose children to the state because of alcoholism; others joined religious cults in an attempt to "blend" into mainstream culture. Still others are mentally challenged, abandoned their families altogether or were murdered, and a certain level of family estrangement exists, which I now attribute to boarding school syndrome.

I can in no way address all of the syndrome's effects. My story is only one of thousands. There is much more that could

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be said and I know there are others who have their own stories to tell.

Most of the survivors of the Indian boarding schools took their stories to their graves. Most of those still alive—the majority of whom are in their 70s or older—still are unable to talk about their experiences. But some have started to share what has been repressed with other survivors, therapists, their families and, sometimes, even the public. Healing is just beginning. We have a long, long way to go.

Note: In 2006, the Canadian federal government—which for decades funded a system of Indian boarding schools similar to those in the United States—agreed to a reparation package for survivors. The token awards were made available in 2007—too late for most survivors, who already had died. But they were one of the first attempts to acknowledge and address the wholesale abuse of indigenous people in an established democracy. No similar reparations are expected to be made to the last survivors of the U.S. schools.

March 5 1934

Kindly Mother Superior Teaches Harbor Springs' Largest Family

Holy Childhood School Has 193 Students Enrolled; Boy and Girls Lead Happy Lives As They Learn Their Daily Lessons

How many persons in Harbor Springs can name the largest and perhaps the best behaved family in town?

Ask yourself the question and then stop a moment to think. True, you may know most of the families here, because people become well acquainted in a town of this size, but few can answer the question correctly.

The answer is found at the Holy Childhood School, on Main street in the heart of town, where 193 children between 7 and 17 years old make up one great family.

Walk through the building with Mother Superior, see the children in the class rooms, in the dining room or on the playgrounds. Then comes the reality that Mother Superior's words, "We are a big friendly famiily," are exemplified in every way.

Lived Here 45 Years

Then you ask "What is the secret, when some families of four or five are so difficult to manage?" Know Mother Superior and the 13 Sisters who are in charge of the school and find there is no secret.

Forty-five years ago, on Nov. 2 1886, Mother Superior came to Harbor Springs and allied herself wi the Holy Childhood School, wh there were only 50 students and thr Sisters. Nearly a half century de voted to service to children has gi en Mother Superior a deep happine She is gentle and kind and her sm warms the hearts of the children an others who meet her. Her spirit radiated in the lives of the student and in the very atmosphere of the school.

193 In School

Of the 193 boys and girls in th school approximately two-thirds ar Indians, a large number of whom know only their native language an broken English, when they enter th first grade.

Children are enrolled from the firs to tenth grades inclusively. The school is home to 150 of the young sters, while the others live with their families in and near Harbor Springs merely attending classes and taking part in other school activities. A

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HOLY CHILDHOOD HAS 193 STUDENTS ENROLLED

(Continued from page one)

are from Michigan, a great many coming from the Upper Peninsula.

Class hours are the same as in the public schools from 8:30 a. m. to 3:30 p. m. The course of study also is the same as in public schools.

On the theory that music induces a happy state of mind which makes learning easier, the children are taught group singing. And they sing with the spontaneity of carefree youth. The first grade particularly likes the song "My Kitty," and the second grade youngsters combine melody and volume in the song of "Rover."

Day Begins at 6 a. m.

For the students who live at the school, the day begins at 6 a. m. Breakfast is served at 6:45 o'clock, dinner at 11:45 and supper at 5:30. From 3:30 to 5 p. m. is play time and again from 6:15 to 7 p. m. From 7 to 8 p. m. is study hour which ends the day.

Girls are divided into the junior and senior dormitories and boys follow the same classification. The dormitories are large airy rooms well lighted and ventilated. Each pupil makes his own bed and puts his own clothes away in his locker. The single beds, freshly dressed in white spreads, neatly made up, are an example of the order and cleanliness that prevails through the entire building.

Boys and girls alike, mend their own clothing and take turns working in the dining room. Girls are taught to cook and make their own house dresses. Mother Superior believes that vocational training holds an important place with text book studies. All the youngsters, when they leave the school go away trained, with well formed habits in neatness and cleanliness and with a proper respect for doing things with their hands as well as their minds.

Time For Play

Some 30 or 40 children, who have no homes, remain at the school during the summer, when there are no classes. They have plenty of time to play but they also follow a definite program of work about the building and grounds.

In the upper grades children are taught music. Extra curricular activities are not neglected. Students give recitals, plays and other school entertainments. On the playgrounds they play the same games that are common in the public schools.

On the first floor are Mother Superior's office, class rooms and the dining room and auditorium. The auditorium has a seating capacity for several hundred persons, with a large stage, adequately equipped for plays. A balcony extends over a portion of the auditorium. More class rooms are situated on the second floor and a beautiful chapel. The third floor is given over to dormitories.

Among the Indian students there are quite a number who come from indigent families, who would not have the opportunity for an education, were it not for the Holy Childhood School.

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LITTLE TRAVERSE REGIONAL HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. Box 162
Petoskey, Michigan

December 9, 1967

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM
At
HOLY CHILDHOOD SCHOOL, HARBOR SPRINGS
MONDAY, DEC. 18 - 7:30 (or 8:00) P.M.

(Send money NOW to help us give the Indian children a fine party.)

For the third year, our group has the unusual opportunity of being entertained by the Indian children of the Holy Childhood School in Harbor Springs. It has always been a delightful affair with the warm feeling of Christmas thick in the air. The children of the school give so generously of their time and talents that anything we do for them seems small in comparison.

The program this year will start at 8:00 o'clock. However, we will be given a tour of the living quarters of the children, in addition to the program. This tour will start at 7:30, and those interested should be on hand at that time.

Our part of the program is to give something to each child, provide a Christmas tree, candy, etc. In order to do this, we need contributions from our membership. Some members have already contributed. We ask, please, that those who have NOT, send their money in at once. Mail it to P.O. Box 162. Please hurry - we need to know as quickly as possible how much we will have to spend.

This has always been a great program. Don't miss it this year--not even if there is a blizzard.

Sincerely,

Jack Wooden, President

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Fr. Francis Pierz was a Catholic missionary, stationed at Harbor Springs in the 1840's. This was the period prior to the treaty of 1855 when the Indians, fearful of being moved West, were buying land and trying to establish permanent home-sites for themselves. We have been fortunate to discover a most interesting article, written by Fr. Pierz in July of 1847, and published in the "Catholic Almanac", Baltimore, in 1848. It concerns the Arbre Croche Mission. We thought you would be interested in reading it, too, and are enclosing a copy of it.

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We study the past to understand the present and predict the future.

Thinking Critically About Print and Film Text

1. **Who was the text written/created for?**
2. **Whose perspective and narratives are omitted or silenced by this text?**
3. **What are the cultural meanings, possible readings, or interpretations that can be constructed from this text?**
4. **What is the text trying to do to me? Or how is the text positioning me as the reader or viewer?**

Adapted from Haddix, M., & Rojas, M. A. (2011). (Re)framing teaching in urban classrooms: A poststructural (re)reading of critical literacy as curricular and pedagogical practices. In V. Kinloch