

Boarding School ERA

“Kill the Indian, Save the Man”

- Richard Pratt

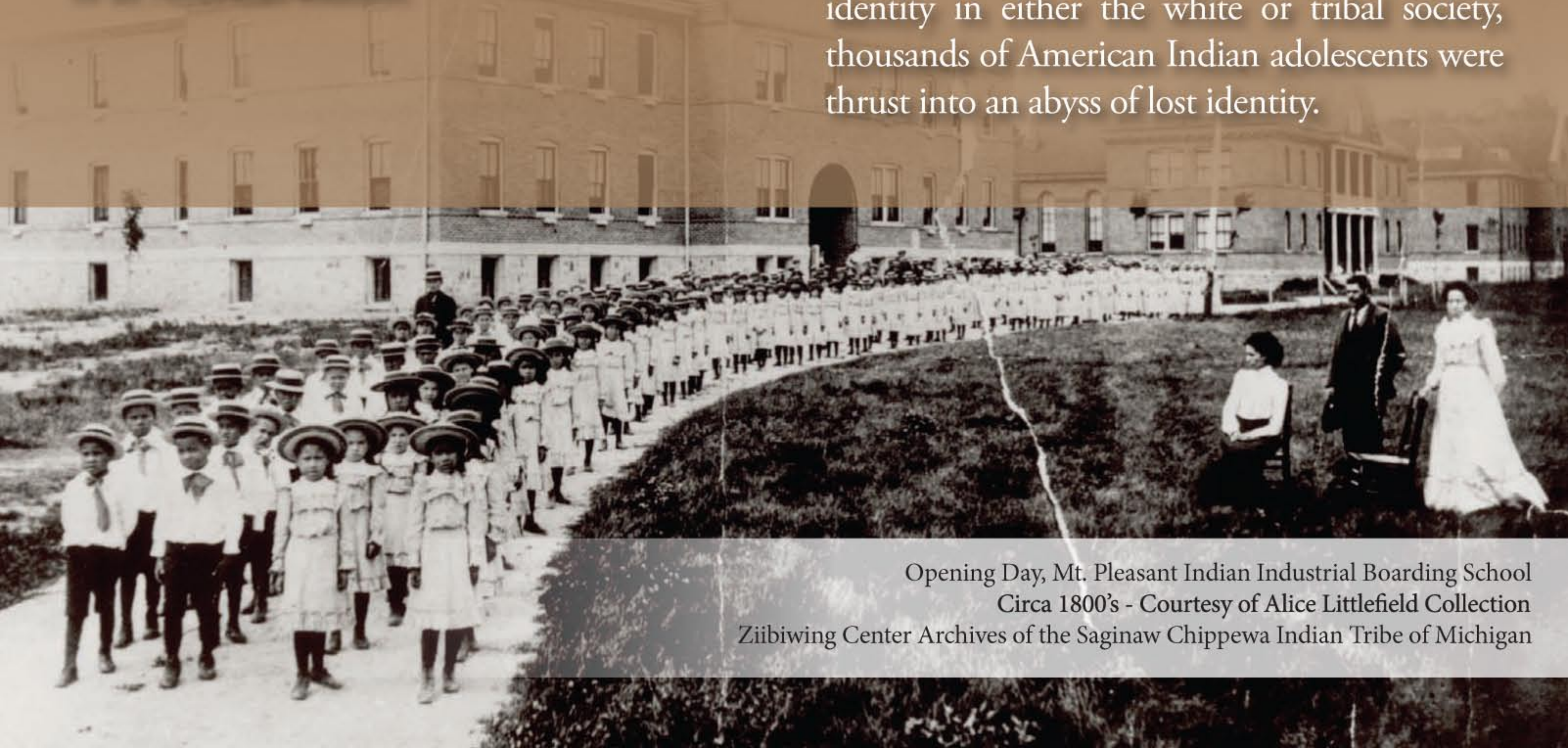
Indian Schools were designed to destroy American Indian cultures, languages, and spirituality. Students had to accept white culture, the English language, and Christianity. The first, and most well-known of these schools, was the Carlisle Indian Industrial Boarding School. The school was established in 1879 by an Army officer named Richard Pratt, and was located in an abandoned Army post in Pennsylvania.

Pratt conducted a social experiment with Apache prisoners of war. The captives were shackled and sent by train to a camp in Florida thousands of miles from their home. He cut the men's long hair, put them in uniforms, forced them to learn English, and subjected them to strict military protocols. During the course of this experiment, some of the men were severely traumatized by the experience and committed suicide. Most of the prisoners survived and learned the English customs and language. Using this social experiment as a model, Pratt went to Congress and requested funding for the similar education of all American Indians.

The Pratt/Carlisle Model Sweeps Across North America

By 1900, most American Indian children were taken from their families. They were transported by train and later by bus to American Indian Boarding Schools where they would be put into uniforms, have their hair cut, and be forced to act and speak like white people. Many spent their entire childhood in the American Indian Boarding School system, without seeing their parents and families for many years.

Upon graduating, these young American Indians still retained certain aspects of their traditional culture yet acted, spoke, and thought like English-speaking, white Americans. They would often return to their families and communities feeling like outcasts and in most instances, their families and communities treated them as such. No matter how much time, money, and effort was made to assimilate American Indians, white society still did not readily accept them. No longer finding an identity in either the white or tribal society, thousands of American Indian adolescents were thrust into an abyss of lost identity.



Opening Day, Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School
Circa 1800's - Courtesy of Alice Littlefield Collection

Ziibiwing Center Archives of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan

Mt. Pleasant Industrial Indian Boarding School Historical Event Time Line

- 1855 Land set aside for school by Treaty
- 1866 Land ceded and Congress agrees to spend \$25,000 for new school
- 1875 General Pratt takes Indian POW's to Florida for social experiment "Save the Man and Kill the Indian"
- 1891 Act of Congress establishes Boarding Schools
- 1893 Boarding School is in Operation
- 1898 One building burned down
- 1900 Burnt building was rebuilt Time capsule included in the building
- 1928 Merriam Report Published
- 1934 Boarding School Closed Governor William Comstock Agreement Property is transferred from the Federal Government to State of Michigan Through a Congressional Act of Congress
- 1970 Boarding School reunion hosted in Hart, Michigan
- 1991 School Days Reunion w/Paul Johnson Hosted at Saginaw Chippewa Tribe Interview questions asked and Recorded for historical purposes.
- 2003 Curriculum from SCIT Behavioral Health Department to address historical trauma
- 2004 Boarding School Era Presented at Ziibiwing Cultural Society Museum
- 2009 Journey for Forgiveness March From Isabella Reservation to Boarding School with White Bison
- 2010 Land Conveyance offered to the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan from State of Michigan
- 2011 Tribe Accepts Land Conveyance – Six buildings and cemetery Honoring, Remembering and Healing Day Tribal Council sanctions MIIBS Committee Ziibiwing releases Boarding School Curriculum Guide



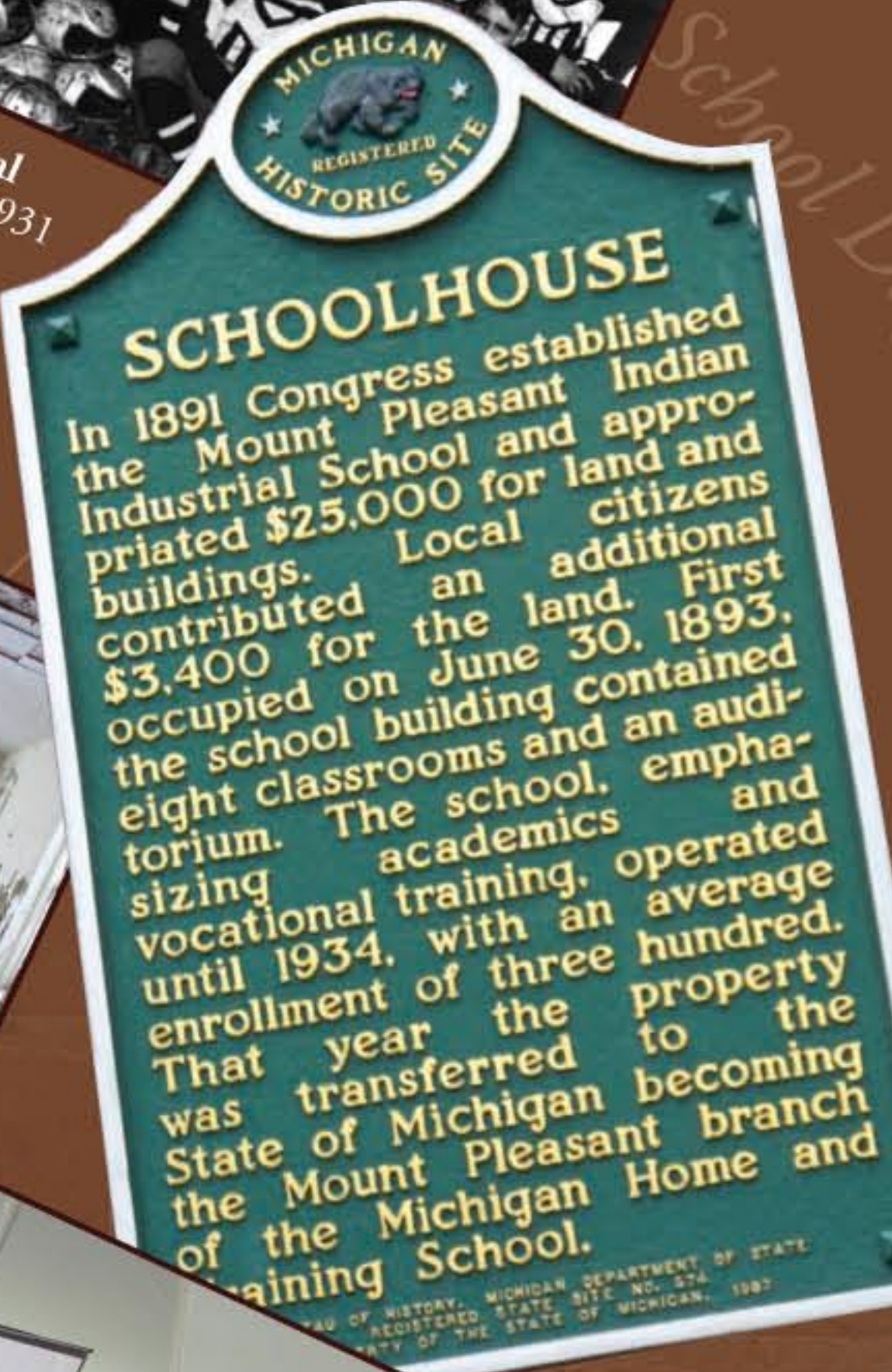
Mt. Pleasant Indian Boarding School Band - Circa 1918
Ziibiwing Center Archives of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan



Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial School Football Team - Circa 1931
Courtesy of Alice Littlefield Collection, Ziibiwing Center Archives of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan



Sitting dormant for several years, after the Mt. Pleasant Center closed, the Boarding School property has been left in ruin from being vacant for several years.



American Indian Movement National Field Director, Co-founder and Boarding School Survivor, Dennis Banks addresses the crowd as a keynote speaker during the June 6th 2011 "Honoring, Remembering & Healing Day."



Gravestone of Chief Shaw Shaw Waw Ney Beece located in the Mission Creek Cemetery. Photo courtesy Chuck Butzin III



The MIIBS property is now owned by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan. The property consists of six buildings including the Mission Creek Cemetery.

Creation of MIIBS Committee



MIIBS Committee

**Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial
Boarding School**

1893 - 1934

On April 24, 2011, via a land conveyance from the State of Michigan, the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan acquired the former Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School including the Mission Creek Cemetery. The MIIBS Advisory Group's findings revealed a majority of Tribal and community members agreed that the land and property should be restored. Tribal Council approved a motion to commence with Phase II of the feasibility study. This phase will encompass the gathering of Tribal and community membership viewpoints on how to best use or develop the property to reflect the historic significance. Methods used will be to host community forums, survey Tribal Membership with detailed options, and summarize the findings for presentation to Tribal Council for consideration, resolution, and potential action.

Commitment/Mission Statement

We are committed to sustaining the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan and our partners' efforts to transform, preserve, and finance the development of the Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School to become a place for healing, education, wellness, and empowerment at a local, national, and global level.

Our Sub-Committees

- Building Community Support Through Education
- Developing Funding Plan
- Researching and Recording the Process
- Creating & Implementing Land Use Plan
- Documenting the Boarding School Experience
- Protecting & Maintaining Tribal Heritage Sites
- Evaluating Financial Benefits and Risks
- Building Partnerships
- Assessing Property Conditions
- Addressing Environmental Responsibilities
- Establishing Tribal Representation in the City of Mt. Pleasant

The Committee was sanctioned by Tribal Council in the Fall of 2011. Our meetings are held once a week at Ziibiwing Center. For more information contact: Ziibiwing Research Center at (989) 775-4248 or email us at MIIBS@Sagchip.org

www.sagchip.org