



The National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition

Locating Relatives at U.S. Indian Federal Boarding Schools Research Pathfinder

Introduction:

This Pathfinder – a reference resource – is intended to assist boarding school descendants in their individual pursuits to conduct their own primary source research in **locating relatives who attended known U.S. Federal Indian Boarding Schools**.

Unfortunately, NABS does not currently provide research assistance to families or individuals seeking to locate relatives in the historic record. **You are venturing down a profound and, sometimes, exhausting pursuit.** Given the nature of how the historic record about Native communities were created and are currently curated, you will often see that primary source records and other archival collections are 1) held at repositories far removed from those native communities; 2) only available in-person; 3) languishing in storage either not accessible or not well described. So we have to get creative and figure out ways to triangulate our efforts to illuminate these truths for ourselves and our relatives. In conducting this particular boarding school research, sometimes a student’s last name coupled with the school name is adequate enough to locate our relatives; while other times more information is needed (e.g. known years attended; known classmate names; school location; and many more).

NABS asserts no control or ownership over the archival records, materials, documentation, or information featured in this research pathfinder. For more information about these featured archival collections, please visit the source institutions’ websites included in this pathfinder. This Pathfinder is for informational purposes only and may include subscription-based websites and services for which NABS does not endorse its commercial, content, or subscription parameters.

In negotiating these pursuits, **you may encounter content that can trigger secondary trauma or PTSD**; we encourage individuals to seek counseling or healing if you experience any stress related to boarding school history. Please see “Trauma Resources” section of this document for more information.

We have compiled this document to assist you and [please reach out to us if you have additional questions about the information shared in this resource at: info@nabshc.org](mailto:info@nabshc.org)

Table of Contents:

- **Content Warning & Trauma Resources**
- **Research Questions & Where to Start?**
- **U.S. Indian Boarding School List by State**
- **Repositories, Catalogs, and Directories**
 - National Archives Records Administration (NARA)
 - Riverside, CA
 - San Francisco, CA (in San Bruno, CA)
 - Denver, CO
 - Chicago, IL
 - College Park, MD
 - Kansas City, MO
 - Forth Worth, TX
 - Seattle, WA
 - Washington, DC
 - Locations of North American Native Nations and Cultural Institutions by ATALM
 - National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers
 - National Congress of the American Indian Tribal Nation Directory
- **Boarding School Digital Projects – Archival Collections**
 - Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center
 - Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project
 - Indigenous Digital Archives
 - Remembering the Children – Rapid City Indian School
 - Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum
 - Sherman Indian Museum
- **Other Resources Note**

CONTENT WARNING & TRAUMA RESOURCES

In negotiating these pursuits, you may encounter content that can trigger secondary trauma or PTSD; we encourage individuals to seek counseling or healing if you experience any stress related to boarding school history. Indigenous peoples are warned that this pathfinder may lead to other external resources that contain images, names, and references to deceased persons.

RESOURCES THAT ALLOW YOU TO SPEAK WITH SOMEONE NOW:

All of these resources are free, confidential, and available 24/7.

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** | 1-800-273-TALK (8255) | Support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals
- **Crisis Text Line** | Text HOME to 741741 | Text with a Crisis Counselor, a real human trained to bring texters from a hot moment to a cool calm through active listening and collaborative problem solving.
- **Veterans Suicide Prevention Hotline** | 1-800-273-TALK (8255), Veterans Press 1 | Text 838255 | Chat online at: <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net> | Connect with caring, qualified responders with the Department of Veterans Affairs
- **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration National Helpline** | 1-800-662-HELP (4357) | For individuals and families facing mental and/or substance use disorders
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline** | 1-800-656-HOPE (4673) | You will be connected with a trained staff member from a sexual assault provider near you
- **Domestic Violence Hotline** | 1-800-799-SAFE (7233) | Chat online at: www.thehotline.org | For anyone experiencing domestic violence, seeking resources or information, or questioning unhealthy aspects of their relationship

More healing resources for self-care and trauma can be found at: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/self-care-resources/>

RESEARCH QUESTIONS & WHERE TO START?

It is recommended to focus on common pieces of information that are found in the historic record. These common pieces of information can be gleaned from doing your best to answer the following questions:

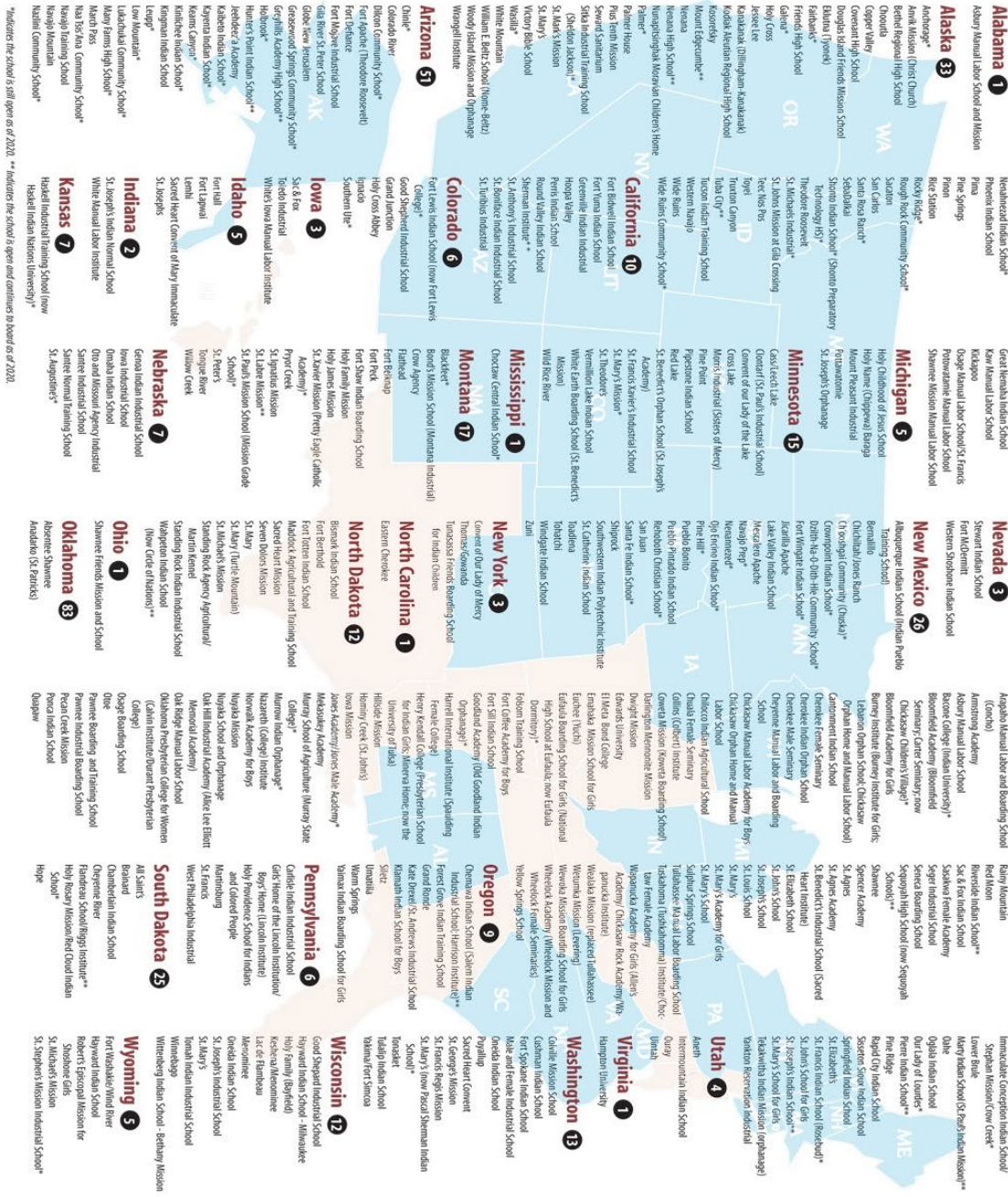
- ***What is my relative's name and did they have any aliases or traditional names?***
 - Very early on in the historical assimilative period (approx. 1870-1970), incoming students were given common Americanized names to replace their traditional Indigenous names. Sometimes these traditional names were documented and so this may serve to identify/verify your relative.
 - Students typically received nicknames throughout their time at the schools and these at times are documented in the historic record and may carry over into various catalog information.
 - Sometimes, schools maintained "Student Case Files" which are arranged by student name. Dependent on the level of description and arrangement of the catalog records, a list of students may be available by the holding repository.
- ***Do I know which State my relative went to boarding school at?***
 - If you know the state, seeing the schools list by state may get you fast tracked to your research as one of them may sound familiar. (See Section: "U.S. INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL LIST BY STATE")
 - The records for each school also get transferred to various National Archives facilities in different states dependent on the region. (See Section: "REPOSITORIES, CATALOGS, and DIRECTORIES")

- Dependent on the relevant State, you may reach out to State repositories, historical societies, and museums for further assistance with locating your relative as some relevant collections are stewarded by these institutions. Please see a full list of these institutions at: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_U.S._state_historical_societies_and_museums
- ***Do I know the name of the boarding school? What about the name of the agency?***
 - There are 367 known U.S. Indian Boarding Schools. (*See Section: “U.S. INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL LIST BY STATE”*)
 - Records of specific boarding schools were often transferred to centralized local or regional offices where they were retained and filed. The Name Authority Files that the National Archives manages can often lead you to agency records when looking for boarding school documentation. Please see NARA Catalog Advanced search, click on “Authority Records” at: <https://catalog.archives.gov/advancedsearch>
- ***Do I know any classmates that my relative attended boarding school with? What are their names?***
 - Sometimes, student case files do not yield much documentation and thus leave a lot to be desired in gaining a better understanding of your relative’s experiences.
 - Documents about related individuals can offer more insights into your relative’s experiences wherever they attended.
- ***Do I know any years of when my relative attended boarding school?***
 - For years of operation, please see NARA Organization Authority Records: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/bia-guide/schools>
- ***Do I know if the school my relative attended was a Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) school?***
 - Historically, there were several different entities who operated boarding schools. These operators included various church denominations as well as the Federal government.
 - ***Boarding Schools*** are defined as educational institutions where American Indian or Alaskan Native students resided away from their families (does not include day school institutions, orphanages, or sanitariums).
- ***Do I know what my relative looks like? Do I have an image to reference if I should come by photos in my research?***
 - Photographs or images of students may be present in archival collections. If you should come by an image of your relative, this may trigger strong emotions (*See Section: “CONTENT WARNING & TRAUMA RESOURCES”*).
- ***Do I know what heritage groups or historic communities my relative belonged to?***
 - The information in the historic record can be heavily anthropological and may not reflect the modern names Tribal communities use to refer to themselves.
 - The records typically are not arranged by Tribal communities. Boarding Schools typically received students from communities within proximity to their location.

U.S. INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL LIST BY STATE

This list can be found at: <https://boardingschoolhealing.org/list/>

American Indian Boarding Schools by State



367 Schools remain open today
15 still boarding

29 States
 The top five states with the most boarding schools were:
 Oklahoma (83)
 Arizona (51)
 Alaska (33)
 New Mexico (26)
 South Dakota (25)

14 Denominations
 Catholic (80)
 Presbyterian (21)
 Quaker (15)
 Episcopal (9)
 Methodist (12)
 Baptist (4)
 Jesuit (4)
 Dutch Reformed (2)
 Evangelical (2)
 Mennonite (2)
 Protestant (2)
 Anglican (1)
 Unitarian (1)



Originally compiled by Dr. Denise Lajmondere for the National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), this list also includes considerable contributions from Dr. Rose Wilson, Dr. Samuel S. Torres, and Ellie Heaton. This list may not be complete.

REPOSITORIES, CATALOGS, and DIRECTORIES

National Archives and Records Administration (NARA)

(Homepage: <https://www.archives.gov/>)

The National Archives (NARA) maintains historically significant and permanently valuable records created by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and its predecessor agencies from as early as 1793. Tasked with federal oversight of American Indians, the BIA interacted with many individuals and families. Most American Indian-related records held by the NARA primarily relate to administrative matters and the management of tribal and individual resources by the Federal government. U.S. Indian Boarding Schools fell under the jurisdiction of the BIA and its predecessor, the Office of Indian Affairs.

Quick Links:

- “Navigating Record Group 75, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Records”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/tips>
- “American Indian Records in the National Archives”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans>
- “[Researching] An Individual or Family”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/research-individual>
- “Resources for Genealogists”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy>
- “Using the National Archives Catalog”: <https://www.archives.gov/research/catalog/help/using.html>
- NARA Organization Authority Record Search at: <https://catalog.archives.gov/advancedsearch>
 - **How to Steps (see images below):**
 1. Type School Name into “Search Term” Field
 2. Check “Authority Records” to limit Search
 3. Click “Search” Box to run the search; results will be shown at page redirect

The screenshot shows the National Archives Catalog website. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the text "NATIONAL ARCHIVES CATALOG" and a "MENU" icon. Below this is a dark blue navigation bar with links for "ARCHIVES.GOV", "LOGIN", "REGISTER", "VETERANS' SERVICE RECORDS", "HELP", and "API". A "CONTACT US" link is also present. Below the navigation bar, there are links for "About Us", "Privacy Policy", "Accessibility", "FOIA", and "USA.gov".

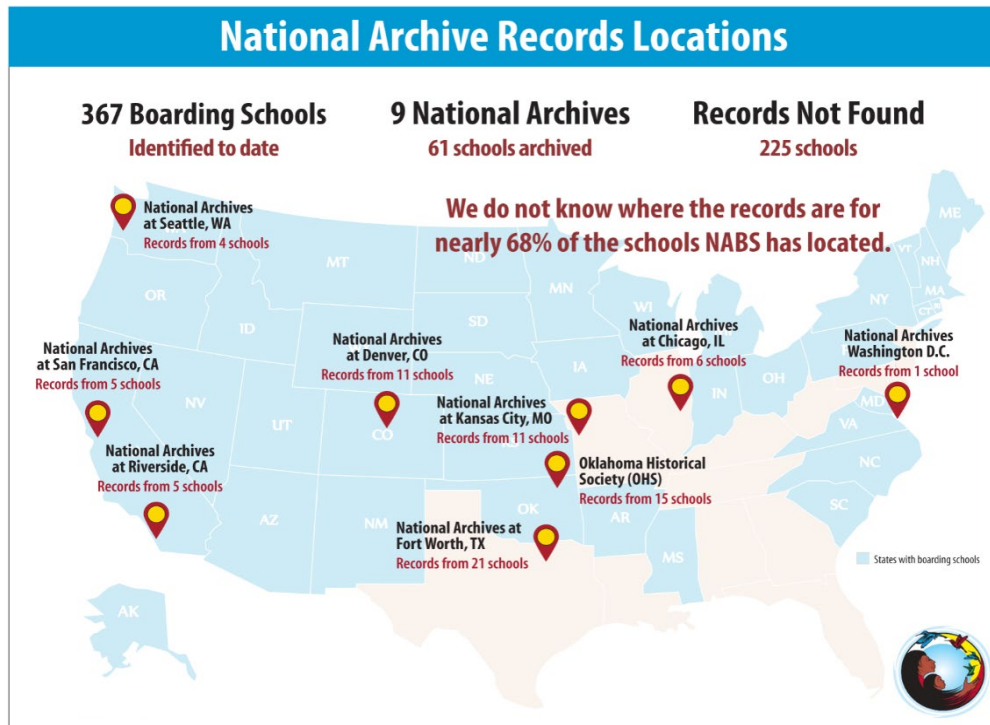
The main content area is titled "Advanced Search" and includes a "Return to new basic search" link. There are "Share" and "Login" buttons. The search form has several fields and options:

- Limit search to:** A row of checkboxes for "Archival Descriptions", "Archival Materials Online", "Authority Records" (which is checked), and "Web Pages". An annotation "Check 'Authority Records'" points to this row.
- Search Term:** A text input field containing "Pipestone". An annotation "Type school name" points to this field.
- Record Group Number / Collection ID:** An empty text input field.
- Person or Organization Name:** An empty text input field.
- Tags:** An empty text input field.
- Dates:** Radio buttons for "Search by Date Range" (selected), "Search by Exact Date", and "Search by Recurring Date".

A "Search" button and a "Clear" button are located at the bottom right of the search form. An annotation "Click to Search" points to the "Search" button.

Boarding School(s) by NARA Facility:

Boarding school records referenced in this document include only Federally operated schools. Please contact the corresponding National Archives facility for more information about the records related to your research. Please see **Accessibility, Hours, Directions & Details for Research Facilities** at: <https://www.archives.gov/locations#research-facilities>



National Archives at Riverside, California

- Fort Yuma Indian Boarding School (California)
- Navajo Training School (Arizona)
- Phoenix Indian School (Arizona)
- Sherman Institute (California)
- Theodore Roosevelt School (Arizona)

National Archives at San Francisco, California

- Fort Bidwell Indian Boarding School (California)
- Greenville Indian Industrial School (California)
- Hoopa Valley Boarding Schools (California)
- Stewart Indian Boarding School (Nevada)
- Western Shoshone Boarding School (Nevada)

National Archives at Denver, Colorado

- Charles H. Burke Indian School Fort Wingate (New Mexico)
- Fort Lewis Indian Boarding School (Colorado)
- Fort Shaw Indian Boarding School (Montana)
- Ignacio Boarding School (Colorado)
- Intermountain Indian School (Utah)
- Leupp Training School (Arizona)
- Nenahnezad Boarding School (New Mexico)
- San Juan Boarding School (New Mexico)
- Santa Fe Indian School (New Mexico)
- Shiprock Boarding School (New Mexico)
- Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute (New Mexico)
- Zuni Boarding School (New Mexico)

National Archives at Chicago, Illinois

- Hayward Indian School (Wisconsin)
- Mt. Pleasant Indian School (Michigan)
- Oneida Indian School (Wisconsin)
- Tomah Indian Industrial School (Wisconsin)
- White Earth Boarding School (Minnesota)
- Wittenberg Indian School (Wisconsin)

National Archives at College Park, Maryland

- Genoa Indian School (Nebraska) *special media (photographs)

National Archives at Kansas City, Missouri

- Bismark Indian School (North Dakota)
- Chamberlain Indian School (South Dakota)
- Flandreau School (South Dakota)
- Fort Totten Indian School (North Dakota)
- Genoa Indian School (Nebraska)
- Haskell Indian Nations University (Kansas)
- Hope School (South Dakota)
- Pierre Indian School (South Dakota)
- Pipestone Indian School (Minnesota)
- Rapid City Indian School (South Dakota)
- Springfield School (South Dakota)
- Vermillion Lake Indian School (Minnesota)
- Wahpeton Indian School (North Dakota)

National Archives at Fort Worth, Texas

- Bacone College (Oklahoma)
- Bloomfield Academy (Carter Seminary) (Oklahoma)
- Cantonment Boarding School (Oklahoma)
- Chilocco Indian School (Oklahoma)
- Dwight Mission (Oklahoma)
- El Meta Bond College (Oklahoma)
- Euchee Boarding School (Oklahoma)
- Eufaula High School (Oklahoma)
- Fort Sill Indian School (Oklahoma)
- Jones Academy/Jones Male Academy (Oklahoma)
- Mekusukey Academy (Oklahoma)
- Osage Boarding School (Oklahoma)
- Pawnee Boarding and Training School (Oklahoma)
- Red Moon School (Oklahoma)
- Riverside School (Oklahoma)
- Seger Industrial School (Oklahoma)
- Seneca Boarding School (Oklahoma)
- Sequoyah High School (Oklahoma)
- Shawnee Boarding School (Oklahoma)
- Wheelock Academy (Oklahoma)

National Archives at Seattle, Washington

- Chemawa Indian School (Oregon)
- Cushman Indian School (Washington)
- Forest Grove Indian Training School (Oregon)
- Mount Edgecombe Boarding School (Alaska)
- Salem Indian School (Oregon)
- Wrangell Institute (Alaska)

National Archives at Washington D.C.

- Carlisle Indian School (Pennsylvania)

Locations of North American Native Nations and Cultural Institutions

by the Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, and Museums (ATALM)

Found at: <https://www.atalm.org/node/504>

This map acts as a directory to list all known Tribal archives, libraries, and museums (TALMs) in the United States. In addition, Tribal colleges and cultural centers are indicated. Each plot point in the map can be “clicked” on which opens contact information consisting of address, phone number, and website. These featured institutions may offer research assistance, but this may be reserved for their Tribal membership-only.

National Association of Tribal Historic Preservation Officers

Found at: <https://www.nathpo.org/thpo-search/>

NATHPO a national non-profit membership organization of Tribal government officials who implement federal and tribal preservation laws. This directory lists all known Tribal Historic Preservation Officers (THPOs) across Indian Country. THPOs may offer guidance on your research but this may be reserved for their Tribal membership-only.

National Congress of the American Indian Tribal Nation Directory

Found at: <https://www.ncai.org/tribal-directory>

This directory is a listing of all 570+ Federally Recognized Tribal Nations of the U.S. Users can search keywords in the directory to facilitate searching or users can filter Tribal Nations by region. Consult with Tribal Nation histories found on Tribal websites to determine historic community and/or group names that are affiliated with the Tribal Nation. The historic record is rife with legacy information that primarily correlates to ethnographic or anthropological terminology. There, unfortunately, is no current method of determining this with a reasonable level of accuracy.

Tribal Nations may have Tribal Historic Preservation Officers or other associated offices that can offer guidance on your research. This may be reserved for their Tribal membership-only.

BOARDING SCHOOL DIGITAL PROJECTS – ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Visionary digital projects across the United States are actively curating boarding school archival collections. These projects include the following:

Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center

<http://carlisleindian.dickinson.edu/>

The Carlisle Indian Industrial School is a major site of memory for many Native peoples, as well as a source of study for students and scholars around the globe. This website represents an effort to aid the research process by bringing together, in digital format, a variety of resources that are physically preserved in various locations around the country. Through these resources, we seek to increase knowledge and understanding of the school and its complex legacy, while also facilitating efforts to tell the stories of the many thousands of students who were sent there.

Featured Schools: Carlisle

Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project

<https://genoaindianschool.org/>

The Genoa Indian School Digital Reconciliation Project is a space for telling the stories of the American Indian children who attended Genoa, the stories of their communities, and the stories of their descendants. To help in telling these stories, we are first digitizing government records of Genoa from various federal and state archives, materials which are often difficult to locate and access. We hope that returning these records to American Indian families and tribes may be an act of archival reconciliation—of bringing history home. Over the longer term, we aim to support descendant communities in telling more complete stories of Genoa and to promote awareness and truth-seeking about the boarding schools among all Americans.

Featured Schools: Genoa Indian School

Indigenous Digital Archives

<https://omeka.dlcs-ida.org/s/ida/page/home>

The Indigenous Digital Archive is here to help you explore the history of US government Indian boarding schools in the 19th and 20th centuries. Explore, annotate and learn from over 500,000 archival documents about Santa Fe Indian School and others, all kinds of boarding school records, yearbooks, and letters.

Featured Schools: Santa Fe Indian School

Remembering the Children – Rapid City Indian School

<https://www.rememberingthechildren.org/>

To honor the lives, memories, and spirits of the children and relatives who passed away at the Indian Boarding School and the Sioux Sanatorium Tuberculosis Clinic. The project is led entirely by local community volunteers.

Featured Schools: Rapid City Indian School

Sherman Indian Museum

<https://calisphere.org/collections/27124/>

The Sherman Indian Museum collection documents the history of the Perris Indian School, Sherman Institute, and Sherman Indian High School as well as the Native American experience in the US and within government-run American Indian boarding schools. The collection spans more than a century and richly documents the experiences of students, representing more than 50 tribal nations, who attended the school since its inception in 1892.

Featured School(s): Fort Yuma Indian Boarding School; Hoopa Valley Boarding School; Perris Indian School; Sherman Institute; St. Boniface Indian Industrial School

Stewart Indian School Cultural Center & Museum

<https://stewartindianschool.com/>

The Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Museum is dedicated to the memories of the first Stewart students from Great Basin tribes in 1890, and all students and their families who were impacted by the Stewart experience. The vision of the museum is to serve as a steward of living American Indian materials and traditions.

Featured Schools: Stewart Indian School

OTHER RESOURCES NOTE

Many subscription-based webservices and social media platforms are available online that can be useful for locating your relative. These webservices typically create and provide to consumers: directories of schools; class lists involving searchable first and last names; digitized yearbooks which are full-text searchable; etc. These services and platforms do have information that pertain to U.S. Indian Boarding Schools, however, and could prove promising to your pursuits.

These services are for commercial purposes and NABS will not communicate or endorse specific webservices or platforms to be used by boarding school descendants or survivors.