

Between Two Worlds: Indian Boarding School Experiences

An Annotated Bibliography

"An Indian Boarding School Photo Gallery." An Indian Boarding School Photo Gallery.

http://www.english.illinois.edu/maps/poets/a_f/erdrich/boarding/gallery.htm

(accessed March 3, 2013).

This website has a multitude of photographs and illustrations that show students at Indian boarding schools. There are some before and after photos, some with students in the classroom, and others showing students at work. These visuals would work well with students of any age to show what image was presented to the outside world with respect to boarding schools. Students could examine each image and discuss or write about what they see. The two before and after photos of the Apache children would be a great topic for conversation. Asking students why these photos were shared with the public would bring up interesting thinking, as well as what was not shared.

Fellows, Corabelle. "The Indians: Extract from Letter of a Teacher." *The American*

Missionary Volume 0039, no. 5 (1885): 145-147.

<http://digital.library.cornell.edu/cgi/t/text/pageviewer-idx?c=amis;cc=amis;rgn=full%20text;idno=amis0039-5;didno=amis0039-5;view=image;seq=00158;node=amis0039-5%3A1>

(accessed February 12, 2013).

In 1885, Corabelle Fellows wrote a letter about her teaching experience at an Indian school in Nebraska. As a teacher myself, I wanted to hear from a teacher during this time period. In many boarding school memoirs, the teacher is the villain, and deservedly so. It made me wonder if there were not some teachers who really did want to teach and who really did enjoy her students despite the language and cultural barriers. This letter shows a teacher that cares about her students just as I do. There is offensive language used in the text, but her concern for the students is obvious. Students would gain from hearing from another perspective on this topic. Allowing students to take on the persona of Miss Fellows former students and writing letters back to her would force them see through a different perspective from their own and think about how one of Miss Fellows students may see her.

La France, Daniel. "An Indian Boy's Story ." *Independent* 55 (1903): 1780-1787.

communitybooks.ebooklibrary.org/.../an_indian_boys_story.pdf (accessed March 2, 2013).

In this autobiographical short story, Ah-nen-la-de-ni (renamed Daniel La France) recalls his boarding school experience in Pennsylvania. He describes the shared struggles of cropped hair, forced English, and authoritarian rule over the students. What makes this text surprising, and the reason I selected it, was that despite his struggles, La France, views his experience as, if not a positive, a necessity for advancement. He shares his career successes as connected with his education. In reading this text with the students, they could compare the positive and negative impacts attendance at the boarding school had on La France's life. This text would also provide an interesting contrast to "The School Days of an Indian Girl."

Reel, Estelle. *Course of Study for Indian Schools*. Washington DC : Government Printing Office, 1901

As a teacher, I am bound by my curriculum, my daily teaching guide. It is the course of study for both the literacy and industrial instruction. It begins with a letter from Estelle Reel, the Superintendent of Indian Schools, in which she hopes that the outcome of the following curriculum will be "better morals, a more patriotic and Christian citizenship..."(5). As evident in the table of contents, more time is devoted to the industrial curriculum, than academic. Students beginning in grade 3 would enjoy examining a variety of the "subjects", from both the academic and the industrial, in the Course of Study and in groups summarize the main points of instruction. Discussion points would include how the curriculum could have been improved and was the inclusion of so much menial labor a positive or a negative.

Richard, Pratt. "'Kill the Indian, and Save the Man": Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans." *History Matters: The U.S. Survey Course on the Web*. <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4929/> (accessed March 3, 2013).

Colonel Richard H. Pratt said in a speech in 1892, "kill the Indian, and save the man." This quote has become infamous in connection with Indian boarding schools. In his speech, Pratt clearly articulates his thoughts about how to best civilize the Indian. His idea was to completely remove the children from their tribal connections and their language and take them to an off-reservation boarding school. He felt this forced assimilation would be the path to civilization for the Indian children. I selected Pratt's speech because he is so connected with boarding schools, as founder of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School and as a major advocate of their effectiveness. In reading excerpts of his speech, students could reflect upon Pratt's goals and his method. Discussing what

assimilation is and why it was the federal government's policy. For older student, it would be interesting to have a discussion of giving federal funds to Christians to convert Indian children to Christianity seems a violation of freedom of religion.

Sa, Zitkala-. " The School Days of an Indian Girl ." University of Virginia Library.

<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/etcbin/toccer-new2?id=ZitGirl.sgm&images=images/modeng&data=/texts/english/modeng/parsed&tag=public&part=all> (accessed March 3, 2013).

First published in 1900, Zitkala-Sa's work chronicles her boarding school experience in a series of short episodes. As with "An Indian Boy's Story", there are stories of heartbreak and injustice. As a teacher, you could jigsaw the text, and have students in groups share their particular piece of the text. Comparing and contrasting to La France's experience would be a great activity for the students, as would examining the question of whether attending the school helped Zitkala-Sa or Daniel La France in the end or not. Students would have varying opinions on this topic and would have to defend their answer.

Santiago, Chiori, and Judith Lowry. *Home to Medicine Mountain*. San Francisco, Calif.: Children's Book Press, 1998.

I chose this book for its simple way of telling a complicated story with would allow students to have an emotional connection with the topic. It is a beautiful picture book that tells the story of two boys who were taken by train from their home on Medicine Mountain in California to a boarding school hundreds of miles away. The book shows, through both words and beautiful illustrations, the boys' struggles at the school and their ultimate decision to run away back to Medicine Mountain. This book would be appropriate for grades 3-5, though older grades could certainly use it. It is a wonderful interactive read-aloud, as it is rich with topics to explore and discuss. Students could further explore these topics in writing as well. This book would be a great introduction to a study on Indian Boarding Schools, especially for lower grades.

Sterling, Shirley. *My Name is Seepeetza*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1992.

This is a highly autobiographical work of fiction based on the author's experience at Indian residential school in 1950s British Columbia. Seepeetza, whose name has been changed to Martha Stone, describes corporal punishment delivered by the nuns, her hair being cut, constant hunger, and desperate homesickness. There are moments of happiness for Seepeetza while she is at school, just as when she is at home everything is not perfect. This would lead to thought-provoking questions for the students. Told in

diary-format, this would lend itself to students keeping their own journal while reading. This would make a wonderful companion novel to the picture book Home to Medicine Mountain.

The Thick Dark Fog. DVD. Directed by Walter Littlemoon. Colorado: High Valley Films, 2012.

"The Thick Dark Fog" shares the journey of healing taken by Walter Littlemoon, a Lakota Indian, who at the age of five was taken from his village at Wounded Knee to a residential boarding school. Emotionally scarred from the mental, physical, and cultural abuse endured from his time in boarding schools, Walter must confront these memories which he has suppressed for so long in order to heal himself. I chose this Walter Littlemoon's story because it shows many facets of this story; damage done from boarding school system, the Lakota people, the history of Wounded Knee and the Siege in 1973, and poverty on the reservation, and the healing that can come from facing and accepting your past. This documentary would be more appropriate for middle school and older, though it could be shown in parts to younger students. Students would connect with Walter and his struggles to find himself through "the fog".

Trafzer, Clifford E., Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc. *Boarding School Blues:*

Revisiting American Indian Educational Experiences. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006.

I choose this collection of 10 essays because it demonstrates that the Indian boarding school experience is very complex as it affected many children, families, and tribes across a large time period. It is historically presented as the tragedy of assimilation and attempted cultural genocide. While this is accurate for many, not all students shared the same experience, though each battled what the book called "the monster" in their own unique way. This book is not for classroom use, as the content is too difficult, but it does inform the teacher to think more broadly about "the boarding school experience" and in planning a unit of study. It also has very concise overview of Indian boarding schools as part of the introduction that would helpful in the classroom setting.