

Oct. 19 to Powell & Carlisle.

LAW OFFICES OF
W. H. POWELL,
OLD TOWN, ME.

820

FILE

Hon. F. E. Leupp,
Com. of Indian Affairs,
Washington, D. C.

Carlisle



Dear Sir:

The representative from this district, Hon. Llewellyn Powers, has referred me to you relative to a matter concerning which I made inquiry of him.

We have here in Old Town an Indian Reservation with the remnant of a tribe numbering about four hundred. All of the younger members are educated first in a parochial school on the Island, and afterwards many of them attend our high school and some of them have graduated from college, one or two going to Harvard, some of them have graduated from the Carlisle School, Carlisle, Penn.

Last summer a lady teacher came here from Carlisle and induced some of the girls from the Reservation to go there to school. I think she had a written consent from their parents for them to remain at the school for a certain length of time. One of the girls wishes to return and attend the public schools here and her parents are much more concerned about her return than she is herself. Her mother is not well and it is a constant source of worry to her that the girl is away. The officials at Carlisle deny to the child the right to return home. The parents have come to me.

From my point of view they have no right to exercise any such restraint over the child. I cannot conceive how the school authorities at Carlisle can hold one of these children there against her will. The parents are perfectly able and willing to remunerate the school for what they have done, but they want the child home.

(F. E. L. -2)

I wish to be enlightened in the matter as I may not fully understand the rights which our constitution guarantees to Indian children. I wish you would kindly write me in relation to the matter, and also I wish to enlist your assistance if possible in bringing about an arrangement whereby the girl can be returned to Old Town.

Respectfully yours,

P/W.

W. H. Powell

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

82074 - 1907

File 820

WASHINGTON.

October 19, 1907.

Subject:

Return of pupil
from Carlisle.

W. H. Powell, Esq.,

Old Town, Maine.

Sir :

Your letter of the 11th instant has been received, in which you say that last summer some of the girls from the Old Town Indian Reservation in Maine were induced to go to the Carlisle School; that you think a written consent from the parents was obtained for them to remain at the school for a certain length of time; that one of the girls wishes to return and attend the public school at home; that her parents are much more concerned about her return than she is herself; that her mother is not well; that the officials of the school deny to the child the right to go home, and that you wish to know whether the Carlisle School authorities have the right to hold the child against the wishes of her parents.

The United States Government has appropriated in the past, and is still appropriating, large sums of money for the education of Indian children. It is a pure gratuity on the part of the general Government to assume this heavy expenditure for Indian children who, necessarily, must hereafter be cared for by the individual States. This Office is charged with the expenditure of this appropriation and has

endeavored to safeguard it as far as possible, in order to give the greatest good at the minimum of expense. For this reason its regulations provide that where Indian children are enrolled in a nonreservation school they must be enrolled with the consent of the parents for a definite period. You will readily see that this requirement is in the interests of economy, enabling the Office to know how much money is needed for a given time and to save transportation to and from the school.


Although there may be some question as to the legal right of the school authorities to decline to return the child to the parents before the contract period of enrolment has expired, they certainly have a moral right in the premises. In view, however, of the fact that the Old Town Indians are not charges upon the bounty of the General Government, but are being cared for either by the State or by their own funds, I am not disposed to stand upon any legal or moral rights in this case; hence, the Superintendent of the Carlisle School will be directed to return this girl to her home on the payment to the school of a sum sufficient to reimburse it for the expense incurred in returning her to her home.

Please inform the parents that they may take up the matter again with the Carlisle Superintendent.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) G. F. Larrabee
Acting Commissioner.

J.H.D.(P)

Compared. 

Enclosure

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Education
82074 - 1907
File 820

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
WASHINGTON.

Subject:

October 19, 1907.

Request for re-
turn of pupil.

Superintendent,
Indian Industrial School,
Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Sir :

For your information I enclose a copy of a letter this day addressed to W. H. Powell, Esquire, of Old Town, Maine, concerning the return home of an Indian girl taken from that place to your school.

You will observe that Mr. Powell has been informed that if the parents write you again, asking her return, you will comply with their request on receipt of the money to pay her transportation expense home.

In this connection, the Office prefers not to use the Government gratuities for the education of Indians in taking children from Indian settlements in Maine or elsewhere who are not under the care and control of this Office, but who are admitted to the schools conducted at or near their homes, as appears to be the case at Old Town. The Carlisle School should be filled with such Indians as are not cared for by their States, and who have not the privileges of white schools.

Very respectfully,

(Signed) C. F. Larrabee.

Acting Commissioner.

Compared.

J.H.D.(P)

Compared