

INDIAN OFFICE.

FILES.

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By order of

**E. B. MERITT,**

*Asst. Commissioner.*

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GARIBOLDI

File No.

870

Ed. Schools  
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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
UNITED STATES INDIAN SCHOOL

CARLISLE, PA. Feb. 12, 1916.



The Honorable  
Commissioner of Indian Affairs,  
Washington, D. C.

FILED BY G. P. F.

No Carbon

Sir:

I am in receipt of Office letter dated Feb. 11th regarding the alledged 8,000 Indians of the Croatan or Cherokee Tribe in Robeson County, North Carolina, whose children are said to be without school facilities. It is suggested that since there is room at the Carlisle School for more students, a number of them might be enrolled here.

We have received a number of applications during the past year from Robeson County Indians for enrollment at Carlisle. These applications have been consistently turned down for the reason that we have been advised by the Office that the status of the Indians of Robeson County is undetermined and that it is a question to be decided by Congress and, also, for the further reason that we understand Supervisor Charles F. Pierce some years ago made a very thorough investigation into the claims of these Indians for recognition by the Government and it was his opinion that it would be a great mistake for the Government to step in and assume guardianship over them even to the extent of giving them school privileges in Government schools. I am also informed that the state provides school facilities for these people and furthermore it is understood that nearly all of them

*Handwritten initials*

have considerable negro blood, for which reason there is considerable prejudice against them in our Indian schools. We have one student here now from that tribe who has been here for a number of years. Last year another young man from that tribe came to Carlisle and as we supposed he was too poor to get away, we allowed him to remain until the end of the year. It developed, however, that the boy's father is evidently very well to do and this year he is sending his son to Conway Hall, a preparatory school here in Carlisle, paying all of his expenses including board, tuition, etc.

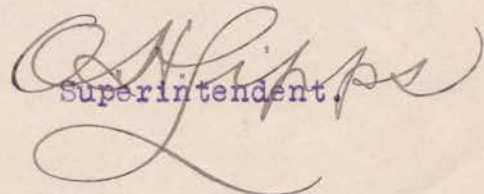
We have room at Carlisle for about one hundred students. Our enrollment is a little less than seven hundred including the Outing students and the actual capacity of our sleeping quarters is about six hundred. We might possibly crowd in a few more. In my opinion there has not in recent years been more than six hundred students at the school. They may have been on the rolls, but they could not be counted. Just recently we have thought of enrolling some real Indians from reservations where there are not sufficient school facilities. Since the burning of the Mission schools on the Rosebud and Crow Creek Reservations, South Dakota, it has been thought that a number of full-blood Indians of these reservations will be without school privileges. I have written to the superintendents of these reservations to find out whether or not they can cooperate with me in transferring a number of these students to Carlisle.

If we have to fill the Carlisle School by going out and finding Indians such as those that live in Robeson County, North Carolina, in my opinion the time has come to abandon this school. I have been doing the very reverse of that very thing. I have sent out of Carlisle almost one hundred students, since I have been here, who were frankly speaking ineligible. They possessed a very small degree of Indian blood and were living in towns or communities where they could attend public schools and this I judged to be the real desire of the Office. If we are ever going to solve the Indian problem, it will be by the process of elimination. We could go to Louisiana, and to Texas, and to Mississippi and find any number of Indians that are even more worthy than the Robeson County Croatans, but the question is, should we continue to hunt up Indians who have for all these years been self-supporting and add them to our burden and really pauperize them by giving them something for nothing and thus adding more dependents to the list and thus continue the Indian problem? I feel satisfied that we have enrolled in our large non-reservation schools at least five or six hundred children who have no business being in Government schools. What we should do is to adhere strictly to the law and the real spirit of our oft repeated Indian policy and cease enrolling Indian students at Government schools who have the privileges of public schools and especially those

who are living in towns and villages and have never been affiliated with any Indian tribe. I know that we still have a few of these at Carlisle and I know that practically every other large non-reservation school in the Service, with possibly the exception of Riverside and Phoenix, have a lot of this kind of students. Of course our enrollment will drop down, as it has done at Carlisle, just as soon as we attempt to weed out this class of pupils, but this weeding will have to be done before we can properly make an effort to get in full-blood Indians and those most in need of Government aid in securing an education. I should like very much to secure one hundred more students for Carlisle, but I want real Indians and those from reservations where they do not have adequate school facilities. It will take some time to select this class of students, but in the long run, <sup>we</sup> will be doing a real service for that class of Indians which the Government schools are intended to reach.

In my opinion it would be a great mistake to allow Robeson County Croatans to be enrolled in any Indian school.

Very respectfully,

  
Superintendent.

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Mr. O. H. Lipps,

Superintendent, Carlisle School.

My dear Mr. Lipps:

FILED BY C. P. F.

I have your letter of February 13 in regard to enrollment of Indians of the Croatan or Cherokee Tribe from Robeson County, North Carolina. I have noted what you say in regard to these Indians and as to your plans for enrolling a sufficient number of pupils before the beginning of another school year. In view of the large number of Indian children without school facilities, it is believed that our Indian schools should be kept filled to their capacity with Indian children entitled to Indian school privileges.

Very truly yours,

(Signed) E. B. Meritt

Assistant Commissioner.

2-LP-34