

File

INDIAN OFFICE.

FILES.

Nicodemus Billy, 8-13-08 9-2 .

Asks to re-admitted to CARLISLE SCHOOL as a
pupil.

64841-1908. Sy E.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,

WASHINGTON.

Education

64841 - 1908

59891 - 1908

F.I.P.

October 5, 1908.

SUBJECT:

Reconsideration of former
request to return to Carlisle
after graduation
and dismissal.

Nicodemus Billy,

Akron, New York.

My Friend :

I have read your letter of the 22nd ultimo and considered all that you set forth in argument for another trial at Carlisle.

Your evident ability in English composition, the fact that you are a citizen of the State of New York, and the further fact that you have already had much benefit from the Government, in my mind overbalance the weight of your arguments. I do not look on you as a skilled workman; but your opportunities have carried you, or should have carried you, to the point where practice and perseverance will do for you more than instruction could. You have doubtless made some money since you left the school, and should have something to apply toward tuition and support in a trade school if you are really in earnest regarding the ambition you profess to have. If the pupils of the Carlisle School or any other nonreservation school are not fitted to help themselves in one way or another after graduation, especially those living in surroundings such as Western New York affords, the schools do not do what should be expected of them. In your case I

am satisfied that the school does not owe anything.

On the other hand, it seems to me that a strong realization of your "failure" at the school, as you term the conduct which led to your dismissal, and a determination to retrieve your reputation, should father some self-help, and I am surprised that you have failed thus far to grasp the idea. What you accomplish by your own individual effort, unaided by further Government gratuity, will be to your personal credit; and your success in the large, open field, into which you emerged from the school, will more effectually wipe out your disgrace at the school than a return to the narrow school field. There your struggles would necessarily be under conditions already familiar to you and with competitors over whom you already have an advantage. You need the stimulus which will come from such necessities as are met in the busy, wage-earning white communities. You must have saved a little money since you left the school. Habits of saving and thrift will help you to success as much as anything else, and if you put in practice the best that has been brought before you your chances for a satisfactory industrial or business career are good.

Very respectfully,



Acting Commissioner

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Bring to attention
of Council

Akron, N. Y.
Sept. 22, 08.

59891/08

Hon. Francis E. Leupp,
Washington, D. C.



Dear Sir;

I am in receipt of your letter replying to my request to be allowed to reenter Carlisle. I note with much regret your refusal to let me go back to school. At the same time the advice you therein gave as to working out my own salvation, I agree to; yet, I feel that I ought not to give up my efforts to get back to school, at least before making one more trial.

It seems that my age which is twenty-one and such I said it was in my letter to you is less than

appears on the record book at Carlisle. Allow me to explain why it is so. When I first went to Carlisle in 1899, I was only eleven years old and the requirement for entrance into the said school as you know is twelve years. My father having such a desire for my going and not wanting to wait another year to meet the requirement gave my age to be twelve years. I went to school and hence the inconsistency of the records of my age between that on the books of our Agent at Salamanca, N. Y., and that on the books at Carlisle. It is needless to say that it was not my fault that such a mistake was made. If necessary I can get the affidavit of the Agent

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which would settle all doubt in regard thereto.

Now while I cannot dispute your reasons for refusing to allow me to go back to Carlisle, I want to lay before you clearer reasons of desire to go back. True it is I have a fairly good education — common school education of course — all or most of it gained at Carlisle; and what more am I seeking? To begin with let me tell what I have been able to do since my return to the reservation after my graduation from Carlisle. I have worked on the farm as a day laborer and then only when work was to be had — I have gone into the gypsum mines to work but I look to a long life and therefore quit — I have travelled

with bands following shows but the life with such I felt to be degrading.

All this I have been doing, a Carlisle graduate;— others who had hardly any education or not so much as I, could and did the same things just as well, and no doubt better, than I. I could down any one in a clash of brains. in common subjects but what is that if it was not netting me larger wages for efforts made with the hands. To be brief, it remains to be seen, and easily, that my training at Carlisle has been mostly with the mind; and to get back to our subject, this is what I am wanting and seeking— training of the hands in certain channels to enable me not only to be

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a blowhard but a bread earner. While
at Carlisle I did not finish my trade
or music but it was conceded that I
was a good scholar. To be a good worker
to finish my trade and better myself
in music is my aim in wanting to go
to school. It is true that as regards music
I could develop myself to an extent in
my own state, you make me to say, and
with discomfort, that if ^I ~~was~~ ^{was} able financially
I would get my music in schools other
than Carlisle - also, that if there was that
Carlisle advantage in music some where
else I would not ask to go to Carlisle; but
because the things that I want are at
Carlisle is why I ask to go back there.
I have an ambition to be able some day

6.
be able to play with the best musical organizations and nowhere could I get the training therefor that would best enable me to attain my aim than what Carlisle could give. A certain degree of advancement is possible outside but the perfection to which I aim is impossible - without money I mean. It is conceded by those who know that the musical training Carlisle gives is such that it ranks with the best of music schools. And then to get in with the musical swim at Carlisle is a saving of time. I judge it would take three or four times as long to get somewhere else the equivalent to Carlisle training. The fact is I could never get it; and so I ask for the advantage of the good at Carlisle.

As to blacksmith trade I want to finish it and get a certificate therefor. To finish it would not now take me long as I have already been given the grade of apprentice. To have a certificate showing my completion of the trade is a requisite to getting jobs. I know this by experience during the last winter while the Erie Canal near here was being repaired. I applied for a position and on being questioned as to fitness I said I had learned what I knew at Carlisle. On demand of a certificate in proof thereof I had to say I did not have any, much to my mortification. I could have got in as an "organization man" but this^{is} irrelevant to the question in hand. What I wanted to show was the necessity of a certificate for any work done in a

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trade school. To get this certificate is one
of the things I am after in asking to go
back to school.

I have learned too that a business course
has been added to the curriculum of studies
at Carlele. Now while as you have hinted
I have a fairly good common school
education, of business and business methods
I know nothing, and of business and its
methods I want to know something. It
is necessary for me to know. My time
could be arranged so that one half day I
would devote to my trade and the other
half day to learning business ^{methods} and business
while music need only occupy spare
moments.

I have set forth my practical reasons for my desire to go back, and thus far it seems that I have not kept in mind the awful fact that I am an expelled student. Let me say however that I have kept that in mind - in truth I have never been able to rid my mind of it, as much as I have made efforts to do so.

Now Sir, while the foregoing reasons set forth are to me important let me lay before you one more - one that eclipses all other reasons - one that if after you throw all my other reasons to the winds, I would ask you to dwell on one moment longer than on any other - The one in which I will ask your sympathy because it concerns myself, my honor.

"P."

I have read in your Bible these words:
"A good name is rather to be chosen than
great riches." Herein you can see what it is
that is the trouble with my peace of mind
and heart, that my good name is stained.
After spending all the years at Carlisle
in the endeavor to build a foundation
for the moulding of a good character and
the carving of a good name to know that
I have failed is a cause of much remorse
sorrow and self condemnation. I chide myself
much for my failure in spite of my ability
to have succeeded. My good name is spoiled
and all through my own fault. Time
only increases my grasp of vision of the
enormousness of my failure and it has come
to the point now where I can't mourn

my mistake now but that a resolve comes
 to me to right my own wrought wrong.
 The remembrance of my sin harasses me
 into action to do something. The thought—
 that on the record book at Carlisle on
 the page devoted to myself the last thing
 that is a record of my life at the school
 is "Expelled with disgrace",— is an awful
 one. It makes the blush of shame to come to
 my face, it makes me to hang my head down,
 it makes me to feel that I am in disgrace.
 Now I want to put myself on record at Carlisle
 the opposite to that which already is. Once
 more Mr. Leupp, as man to man, I plead
 to be allowed to go back. I lay at your feet
 my sorrow and my penitence and beg
 your forgiveness, ask of your kindness

and merely await the holding out to me of the sceptre signifying to me the finding of favor and giving me thereof. All I ask is that I enroll or stay long enough to show the sentence of disgrace has been atoned for.

If you could only believe me, I am deserving of another trial at Carlisle for my mind is set firmly to one thing and that one thing I purpose to attain. On the battlefield where I fell, let me there arise and continue the fight, let me win the victory. And when again I leave there I want it to be put on the record that I was "Discharged with honor".

Pity me in my state of mind it cannot be that you have none. To your heart I make an appeal for forgiveness and plead to go back to Carlisle.

Discipline shall not suffer by my return
there for the reason of the purpose I have
in asking to back. And if expense is anything
to you I shall pay my fare there only tell
me that I shall be received there and I am
gone.

Will you consider well ^{more} once my request
and look with favor upon it. Know too that
prayer and tears go with this. My last words
are supplications to let me get right with myself
with you and the school and with the
father, in the manner I have hereinbefore
set forth.

Very respectfully yours,

Nicodemus Billy.

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Education
59891 - 1908

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
WASHINGTON.

Handwritten initials

F.I.P.

September 9, 1908.

SUBJECT:

Request to return
to Carlisle.

Nicodemus Billy ,

Akron, New York.

My Friend :

I have your letter of the 31st ultimo and note both your penitence for bad conduct while enrolled at the Carlisle School and your plea for permission to return there to continue your industrial training and music.

I have looked up your record a little, and find that you had four or five years training at Carlisle before you were graduated from its academic course in the spring of 1907 ; that your work was in the blacksmith shop ; that after graduation you were continued as a pupil but expelled for drunkenness in September last, and that you are now past 21 years old.

Your resolve to correct the faults which brought you into disgrace is one step upward ; your next step must be a resolve to do this corrective work yourself and not to look to anyone else for it. If you do that I shall have faith that you will succeed for, from your letter, I judge you to have ability. From all I can gather without

closely investigating your case you made pretty good use of your advantages at the school, at any rate until the last few months of your term. Your failure then speaks strongly to me of a desire on your part to get away from the proper restraints of school life. I therefore do not think well of your request to go back. You have a fair start in your trade, and can keep up your music by practice. As you know, the Carlisle School is intended particularly for Indians whose homes are remote from industrial centers. I much prefer that you take advantage of the opportunity you can find in your own State to perfect yourself along the lines you speak of. The benefit to you will be much greater than if you throw yourself back on the Government for support. Beside this, the discipline of the school must be considered. In the great world school you have no rules or restrictions other than the general laws of the country and community and your own sincere desire to improve, and you can follow or reject, as seem to you fit, such examples of success and methods of attaining it as your reading and observation bring before you. Your future must be of your own building.

Think the matter over along the lines I have suggested, and I am sure you will come to the same conclusion that I have regarding the course you should take with yourself. I shall hope to hear how your efforts are succeeding after you have made an independent effort to "work out your own salvation."

Very respectfully,

J. E. Camp
Commissioner

Enclosure

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,

Education
59891 - 1908

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
WASHINGTON.

P.I.P.

September 9, 1908.

SUBJECT:

Re-enrolment of pupils
dismissed on account
of bad conduct.

Superintendent,
Indian Industrial School,
Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

Sir :

I am in receipt of a letter from Nicodemus Billy, in which he asks to be re-admitted to the Carlisle School to continue industrial training and music. He makes apology for the conduct which led to his dismissal from the school a year ago, and says : SEPTEMBER 9, 1908.

I have been in communication with the office of administration at Carlisle in relation to this matter and Mr. Friedman advised that according to a ruling of the Indian Department in regard to expelled students I should write and state the facts of the case and my desires in relation thereto to you and leave it to be decided by you. Mr. Friedman after looking into the merits of my case according to the records thereof expressed willingness to allow me to reenter the school, but said that first to obtain your consent was imperative.

A copy of my letter to the young man, which I here enclose, indicates my position in matters of this kind. unless it can be shown that dismissal was without proper cause, it does not seem to be in the interests of good discipline to re-enrol. If their example to less prominent pupils was considered detrimental at the time I see no benefit to be derived by allowing them to come back.

In this connection, you will note that the plea is for permis-

sion to return "to continue industrial training and music." The language suggests to me that possibly the main attraction is not the "industrial training", but the "music", or perhaps the athletic sports. You understand, of course, that, as accompaniments I consider these special features helpful, even excellent ; but as inducements to enrolment they should be guarded against, as the tendency is to let in young men who are desirable from no other standpoint than their ability in these directions. The opportunities for training in mechanical pursuits which you are building up are what I should like the school to be noted for, more than the popular amusement features which have attracted public attention. Where applicants are mature they should have some definite idea as to the industrial course to be taken, and if accepted their main effort should be in that industry.

These suggestions are made simply to put you on guard against possible impositions, and not with any intimation that I have fear of your underrating the practical considerations or allowing the showier features to override the substantial manual arts. The standard for admittance should be the same, whether the applicant has musical or special physical ability, or interest only in developing himself as an artisan. The prominence gained by some pupils in the various Indian bands and athletic games has tempted Indians here and there to enrol for such purposes primarily, and it is this class that I do not wish to encourage.

Very respectfully,

F. E. Lemp.
Commissioner.

Akron, N.Y.

Aug. 31, 1908



READ BY COMR.
Bring to attention of
Commissioner.

Hon. Francis E. Leupp,
Washington, D.C.

Dear Sir;

Know this to be a letter from
a penitent ex-student of the Carlisle Indian
School who, having been expelled therefrom
for drinking after one year realizes his
great mistake the time and opportunity
lost thereby, does now express his sorrow
therefor, craves the pardon of all concerned
and begs to be readmitted to the same school
to continue in the industrial training course,
(that he did not finish) and music.

In a moment of forgetfulness and weakness
I fell from my place in the estimation of

the school authorities by drink. I at the time had an opportunity to apologise for my conduct but refrained from doing so for the reason that I was ashamed to stay there after such action on my part. It was not that I chose rather to be sent home but because I was so upset in heart and mind by my own conduct that I could not and did not say that which would have been the means of keeping me there. After over one year of hard knocking in the world I see my mistake the mistake that I did not at the time see because of dimness of vision by remorse, and now as a prodigal returning unto the good father I do beg your forgiveness and plead to be allowed to re-enter the school again. I promise therefor that in the event of your

consent to allow me to enter my conduct shall be such as to cause no complaint on the part of the authorities concerned.

I have been in communication with the office of administration at Carlisle in relation to this matter and Mr. Friedman advised that according to a ruling of the Indian Department in regard to expelled students, I should write and state the facts of the case and my desires in relation thereto to you and leave it to be decided by you. Mr. Friedman after looking into the merits of my case according to the records thereof expressed willingness to allow me to reenter the school but said that first to obtain your consent was imperative.

My age is 21 years. I want another chance to make insofar as is possible my

past conduct right, to make past darkness
future bright, to remove from ^{me} the remorse
attendant upon the remembrance of
past bad conduct. I want to do right and
I will if you will help me by letting me
go back to Carlisle.

Awaiting anxiously your action, let
me say in conclusion that I beg your
leniency as to the past and pray to help
me to get right with the school and
with the government that supports it
with myself and with my God.

Yours very respectfully,

Nicodemus Billy.