

## Exploring the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center

### by Name, Nation, Time, and Place

#### Student Worksheet College/University level and AP

*Tens of thousands of children were sent to the Carlisle Indian School from all across the county as the era of the “Indian wars” were ending. Established in 1879, the school was intended to “civilize” and assimilate Indian children into the dominant Euro-American society. In order to do so, young people were deliberately sent far from home in order to break ties with their Native communities and traditions.*

*Student Experiences: Who were these students? Where did they come from? How and Why were they sent here? How did they get here? What was their experience like? What was life like at the school? What was health care like? The food? Sports? The Dorms? Were they able to stay in contact with their families back home? Imagine yourself here – what might you have felt/thought/gained/missed? What happened to them after they left the school? Where did they go and what did they do? There are so many question to be asked and answered – over time and from multiple perspectives.*

*Institutional Goals and Structure: What was the mission of the school? What did it mean to Pratt to “civilize” the children? What were the school’s goals and how successful was this “experiment in assimilating Native American young people?” From the school’s (Pratt and the administration) point of view, what and who were some of the successes and failures? What strategies or methods were used by the school to educate, train, and assimilate the children? What were students taught? What was the curriculum like? How was life at the school structured? What forms of discipline were used? Why were students sent out on “outings” and what kind of work did they do? Who did they live with? How did the time at Carlisle affect students’ lives after they left the school? What legacies remain?*

*While you will not be answering all of these questions, they give an indication of the range of questions that can be addressed. For this particular assignment:*

- I. Read: “Kill the Indian, and Save the Man”: Capt. Richard H. Pratt on the Education of Native Americans. Source: *Official Report of the Nineteenth Annual Conference of Charities and Correction* (1892), 46–59. Reprinted in Richard H. Pratt, “The Advantages of Mingling Indians with Whites,” *Americanizing the American Indians: Writings by the “Friends of the Indian” 1880–1900* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973), 260–271.

#### [Excerpt from Pratt’s Speech](#)

- a) What were Pratt’s goals? Provide your initial perceptions of the goals and aims of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School:

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- II. [Read: Excerpt from “Intro”](#) to *The Carlisle Indian Industrial Indian School*, edited by Fear-Segal and Rose, University of Nebraska Press, 2016.
- III. Keep in mind these readings and go to the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center [www.carlisleindian.dickinson.edu](http://www.carlisleindian.dickinson.edu) and go to explore student files.

**Questions:**

- 1) When was the Carlisle Indian School (CIS) established? And where?  
(see map - [Locations of Off-Reservation Indian Boarding Schools in the U.S.](#))
- 2) When did the first students arrive at the Carlisle Indian School – give date. Where were they from?
- 3) What does this suggest about the flagship school (located in the East near the end of the era of the Indian wars)?
- 4) When did it close? How many years was it in operation?
- 5) How many children were sent to CIS? And from where?
- 6) Peruse 2 of the following student files– what can be gleaned about their life at CIS from their files? List their names here – and under each, provide a brief summary and record any particularly interesting details or quotations. This should take about 30 minutes. Be ready to share information about this student with your classmates.

Name of student	Arrival Date	Nation/Place	Notes:

1. What stands out to you about this student file?

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2. What does this tell you about this student's' experience at CIS?

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3. What would you like to know more about after interacting with this file?

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4) Optional: Research one of the Indian nations that sent students to Carlisle. Where were they located geographically? How far were they from Carlisle?

5) For further independent research: What do you know, can you find out about this Nation? Origin stories? World view, cultural beliefs and values? Relationship to nature? What was their political economy – the basis of most people's livelihoods? Gender norms and relationships?

6) Analyzing what you found in the student files and your research on one of the nations, how did students' experience at Carlisle differ from what they had likely been accustomed to at home?

7) Imagine yourself as a child sent to the Carlisle Indian school. How do you think you may have felt? What may you have thought? What questions may you have asked?

8) In order to get more out of this assignment, you may want to read one or more of the following books or articles to gain a better understanding of how and why these young people were sent to CIS and what they encountered there. [View Selective Bibliography](#)