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# Tradition to Acculturation: A Case Study on the Impacts Created by Chemawa Indian Boarding School Upon the Nez Perce Family Structure From 1879 to 1945

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LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

TRADITION TO ACCULTURATION: A CASE STUDY ON THE IMPACTS  
CREATED BY CHEMAWA INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL UPON THE NEZ  
PERCE FAMILY STRUCTURE FROM 1879 TO 1945

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO  
THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE SCHOOL  
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF ARTS

PROGRAM IN CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY STUDIES

BY  
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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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ne'elam'ayn kaa poxpoqc  
(For my paternal grandmother and my great-grandparents)

## ABSTRACT

As a member of the Nez Perce Tribe, I have developed an interest in education of Native Americans and in particular those students who attended Chemawa Indian Government Boarding School from 1879 to 1940. For many centuries, the Nez Perce have played an integral role in the history of the American Indian Columbia River plateau people, as well as, in the history of the United States. As Manifest Destiny spread across the western frontier, there was a tremendous amount of pressure to adapt to a new white culture and to become a part of mainstream society, although the Nez Perce maintained their relatively nomadic and traditional lifestyle. As time progressed, the United States government realized the tribes were not going to fully relinquish this traditional way of life. As a result, the government developed a policy recognizing the only way to fully convert the American Indian children into mainstream society was to remove them from parental control for a period of time in order to educate and assimilate them in the white mainstream culture. Although through assimilation would never fully be realized while the children remained in their family homes. The United States developed an educational policy to remove the children from the reservation and place them in off-reservation government boarding schools.

One such government off-reservation boarding school was Forest Grove Indian Boarding School, originally located in Forest Grove, Oregon, until a fire forced the relocation of the school to its present day site in Chemawa, Oregon. The new school then

became known as Chemawa Indian Boarding School. Although the Nez Perce Reservation is located approximately 401 miles from Chemawa, the children were removed from the reservation, often by force, and sent to Chemawa via train. Once at the school, the children's long braided hair was cut, their traditional clothing was burned, and they were forced to wear military uniforms. They had to adapt to a new lifestyle and learn how to begin living in a world that they never knew existed with a new appearance similar to those in mainstream society. This presented numerous obstacles for the Nez Perce children. Learning how to socially interact with new tribal people, marching to and from all meals and classes, learning new skills and trades, some of which did not exist on the reservation became the routine for these new government boarding school students.

There is an increasing need to tell the stories of the children and families of the Nez Perce whose children were either removed to or sent by other means to Chemawa Indian Boarding School. There is a great deal of information yet to be explored at NARA in Seattle, Washington, and being able to tell the story of the Nez People as they became learned how to assimilate and were forced to become educated citizens. As important stories, they should be told by someone who is familiar with the subject and who has the traditional knowledge of the People. Currently, the Nez Perce Tribe has not conducted any studies on the impacts of Chemawa and how it impacted the tribal membership. This type of documentation does not currently exist; however, I believe it is appropriate to begin researching these types of personal family stories and begin to tell of how our Nez Perce families attended Chemawa and under what circumstances. It is not only important to me, but to an entire tribe of Nez Perce who need to begin to understand their family

histories and how forced government education has impacted the lives of the Nez Perce family today.

## **Review Of Existing Literature**

Currently Chemawa is the oldest government boarding school still in operation. In an article published by Lehman L. Brightman in the *Journal of Non-White Concerns*, the author conducts an investigation on the conditions of Chemawa Indian Boarding School and concludes that Chemawa resembled a “concentration camp.” Michael C. Coleman synthesizes many student accounts and retells of experiences at schools run by the government and the missionary organizations. This autobiographical material is used to highlight and validate the treatment of the students on their path to assimilation. Other historians have investigated how the government used their boarding schools for assimilation and David Wallace Adams uses his research to propose the last “Indian War” was fought against the Native American children. Despite the difference in tribes, culture, religion, and languages, the children had much in common. Margaret Connell Szasz explores the differences and commonalities among the children and how their lives were shaped by the boarding school experience.

Rhonda Barton wrote an article titled “Native Students Balancing Two Worlds”, investigating the emotional and psychological abuse the children endured while attending government boarding schools. She concentrates her investigation and research on Chemawa Indian Boarding School and writes about the clash in cultures the children experienced and the results of these conflicts. Also, it is proposed that some of these emotional and psychological abuses continue today within Chemawa and other off-reservation boarding schools. In an article titled “Looking at Discipline, Looking at



Labour: Photographic Representations of Indian Boarding Schools,” Eric Margolis investigates the hidden meaning and coded messages behind photos taken during the boarding school era. As the families were forced to give up their culture and language, they were also forced to give their children to the government for assimilation purposes.

Despite multiple articles written about government boarding schools, there is a lack of specific articles written about Chemawa and the experiences of the children who attended the school in the early years of the school's existence. Chemawa Indian School was created to serve many different tribes within the Pacific Northwest; however, many tribes from around the United States were forced to send their children to this school in Oregon. My research further indicates there is a need to tell the stories of the families who were forced to relinquish control over their children and see them off to become educated. Personal letters and other means of communication between the school, parents, and the local at the Northern Idaho Agency have provided much insight in the lives of the children, as well as family dynamics.

My research has taken me to the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) at Sand Point Naval Station located in Seattle, Washington. While conducting research at NARA, I have read many descriptions of Chemawa and learned what this school has meant to the children who attended the school and to their families. After many years of forcing the children to attend Chemawa Indian School, the families realized the necessity in educating their children. A paradigm shift in thought, the sentiment of students begins to move in favor of Chemawa and how education can be instrumental in the development of Nez Perce families. As an example, a letter written in 1944, from the of Education to

the Northern Idaho Agency states the children Frank and Alice Johnson were unable to take care of themselves; parents were separated, and the grandmother was unable care for the children so their applications to Chemawa were being considered.

In another letter, Agnes Thompson states the importance of Chemawa in the education of her children and to remove them from their father, who was an alcoholic and had no means to care for his children. The social instability of the Nez Perce families during this time often instigated the need to remove the children from their homes and deliver them to a safe place; Chemawa served that specific purpose.

Tribal members have expressed their desire to learn more about our history, culture and language. As a result of education, we have almost lost our native language. The tribal membership would like to understand this period in our history and at what point our language began to disappear; therefore, we have a need to retell the stories of the children and families of Nez Perce whose children were either removed to or sent by other means to Chemawa Indian Boarding School. There is a great deal of information yet to be explored at NARA in Seattle, Washington, and I look forward to exploring and being able to tell the story of the Nez Perce people as they entered the assimilation phase and were forced to become educated. These are important stories to tell, they should be told from someone who is familiar with the subject and who has the traditional knowledge of the People. Currently, the Nez Perce Tribe has not conducted any studies on the impacts on Chemawa and the tribal membership. These types of documentation do not currently exist; however, I have been in a contact with a member of the tribe who recently has completed her dissertation on the Carlisle Indian Boarding School located in

Pennsylvania. This dissertation explores her family history and how Carlisle has directly impacted her great-grandfather. This has lead me to believe that it is appropriate to begin researching these types of personal family stories and begin the journey to tell families how and under what circumstances their ancestors attended Chemawa. It is not only important to me, but to the entire tribe of Nez Perce who need to know this historical account.

### **Background**

For many centuries, , the Nez Perce People have lived throughout the region known as the Columbia River Plateau of Northwest America which extends from the Cascade Mountain Range up north to the Frazier River in Canada and east past the Bitterroot Mountain Range and extended to the Rocky Mountains. Specifically, the Nez Perce lived in the interior region of the Plateau which consisted of flat prairies, grasslands, rolling hills, high mountain valleys, and meadows between the Cascades on the west and the Bitterroot Mountains on the east. This interior plateau region is the homeland for many tribes, which are related by intermarriage, traditional religion, language, and traditional cultural practices.<sup>1</sup> Although in the past, the tribes within this region were numerous, today, they are combined into the four main Columbia River treaty tribes: the Nez Perce, the Confederated Tribes and Bands of the Yakama Indian Nation, the Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs, and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation. All of the Columbia River Indigenous peoples lived in

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<sup>1</sup> Stephen Douglas Shawley, "Nez Perce Dress: A Study in Culture Change" (MA Thesis, University of Idaho, May 1974), p. 15.

close proximity with each other, shared resources, traded and depended upon each other for survival.

Historically among other tribes, the Nez Perce were considered to be brave in battle and as a result were a highly influential tribe along the Columbia River and into Buffalo country; the territory of the Nez Perce extended well over 17 million acres of ancestral lands, which stemmed from the southeastern corner of Washington, the northeastern corner of Oregon and all of north-central Idaho. After three subsequent treaty negotiations beginning in 1855, the Nez Perce were left with a reservation of approximately 770,000 acres. The current reservation boundaries were determined through negotiation between Nez Perce leaders and the United States in 1868; however after the discovery of gold within the boundaries of the reservation, there was outside pressure from the United States Government to open the boundaries of the reservation. As a result, a portion of land was allotted to the tribe and to its members; however, the remaining acreage within the reservation was opened for settlement and exploration for precious metals and the exploitation for other important resources quickly ensued.

The first major contact period between the Nez Perce and the white visitors to the Nez Perce homeland began in 1805 with Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery. Prior to initial contact with these new and strange looking visitors, Nez Perce prophets had envisioned and warned the tribal membership that one day these new and strange looking people would visit the Nez Perce homeland and that one day many more people

would soon follow. Despite the warnings, the Nez Perce decided to help these visitors and provided them food, goods, and items to assist them on their journey to the Pacific.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of the visit by Lewis and Clark and the Corps of Discovery, the Nez Perce were made aware of the bible and Christianity. Nez Perce leaders were encouraged to send representatives east to St. Louis, Missouri in order to learn more about the bible. Therefore, it is assumed that Lewis and Clark or one of their men “gave to the Indians the first idea of the white man’s religion.”<sup>3</sup> Subsequently, two members of the Nez Perce and two members of the neighboring Flathead tribe were sent to St. Louis as a part of a delegation. The delegation arrived into St. Louis, Missouri the fall of 1831 and quickly became the showcase of St. Louis, where they were put on display as recent Christian converts. Despite this newfound fame, one Nez Perce and one Flathead member of the delegation become very ill. Eventually these two members of the delegation died from their respective illnesses and were buried in St. Louis. Despite the deaths, the two remaining members of the delegation continued the mission to bring the white man’s religion back to their respective tribes and awaited confirmation of the soon arriving Presbyterian missionaries.

On November 29, 1836, the Spalding party arrived at their destination.<sup>4</sup> Shortly after their arrival to Nez Perce country, Henry H. Spalding, his family, and members of his congregation began construction on a school thus beginning his mission to

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<sup>2</sup> Cliff Merrill Drury, Ph.D., *Henry Harmon Spalding*. (Caldwell, Idaho: The Caxton Printers, Ltd., 1936), 75.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 162.

Christianize the Nez Perce. On January 27, 1837, Mrs. Spalding opened a school to educate the Indians. There were approximately one hundred Indian students comprising of mostly women and children. The missionaries wanted the women to become literate in the Nez Perce language so they could learn to read the bible. The Christian educators placed an emphasis on moral values, teaching household arts, and if a woman was living in adultery, the missionaries would not place a Bible in her hands.<sup>5</sup> The role of Euro-American education was to provide the women domestic household skills, provide them the ability to care for their families, cook and make clothing. The English language was introduced shortly thereafter through literacy education and later it would become forced upon the Nez Perce as the medium in the school. Pupils who conversed in the Nez Perce language were beaten and made to feel ashamed of their culture.<sup>6</sup>

With the passage of time, the emphasis began to shift from the education of women to the education of the young children. While education of the young children moved forward as a priority with the end goal to make literate the Nez Perce; the efforts of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the missionaries, and the United States Government was to begin dealing with the terrible epidemics of European-introduced diseases.<sup>7</sup> The Bureau of Indian Affairs opened their first school during the fall of 1868 in Lapwai, Idaho. A smallpox scare in a local town forced the school to close for a short period and reopened a few short months later. During the winter of 1871, the tuberculosis epidemic

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<sup>5</sup> Caroline James, *Nez Perce Women in Transition, 1877-1990*. (Moscow, Idaho: University of Idaho Press, 1996), 167.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 169.

appeared and as a result the Bureau of Indian Affairs was forced to open the Fort Lapwai Sanitarium in 1879 in the buildings that were once used by the United States Army.

Tuberculosis forced the relocation of the on-reservation boarding school from Spalding, Idaho up to Lapwai. The curriculum of the Sanitarium was modified to fit the medical needs of the children. The children attended school in the outdoors except in very bad weather. While some children required more rest occasionally a “patient” passed the eighth grade. Those cured were discharged and “out of embarrassment, they never returned to school after they left the Sanitarium.”<sup>8</sup> The children realized once they were home, they were behind in school and looked for alternative sources of education.

According to a story of a woman from the Kamiah, Idaho, located on the eastern side of the Nez Perce Reservation:

So I was in the sanitorium at Lapwai until I was about twelve. We had strict bed rest and a strict diet. I was twelve years old when I came home. By that time, the kids had gone on in school, and I was behind so I went to Chemawa. I went to school there one year, seventh grade. Then, I came back and started eighth grade here, and I was older than the rest of the kids, so then I never did finish going on to high school because they thought I was too old for my classmates.<sup>9</sup>

Despite some success in curing tuberculosis and providing an education to many of the students at the Fort Lapwai Sanitarium, there were a significant number of deaths associated with tuberculosis. The Fort Lapwai Sanitarium began receiving many children with tuberculosis from the surrounding states such as Montana, North and South Dakota,

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 171.

and Alaska; all of the children were Indian and there were no white children in attendance at the school.<sup>10</sup>

### **Forest Grove Indian Boarding School**

During 1880, an intensive education system was implemented in order to assimilate Indians; this educational system consisted of day schools, boarding schools, missionary schools, and federal schools. These new schools were located on or very near the reservations as an effort to educate the local Indians. The effort to educate and “civilize” the child was defeated during the evenings when the children were at home with family. According to an Indian Agent, “to place these wild children under a teacher’s care but four or five hours a day, and permit them to spend the other nineteen in the filth and degradation of the village, makes the attempt to education and civilize them a mere farce.”<sup>11</sup> The proximity of the reservations and tribal communities became the demise of the reservation day schools and thus the effort to remove the Indian children further away from their tribal ties. Therefore, the government off-reservation boarding schools provided the needed isolation from the tribal influences and as a result, Forest Grove Indian School, located in western Oregon, became increasingly popular for Indian Agents and other United States government officials located on the reservations.

One reason why children attended an off-reservation boarding school was simply because the school opened up after the defeat of the Nez Perce during the War of 1877 and there were many displaced families located in Idaho, Montana, Canada, and

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 180.

<sup>11</sup> David Wallace Adams, *Education for Extinction: American Indians and the Boarding School Experience, 1875-1928*. (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1995), 28-29.



Oklahoma. The Nez Perce exiled in Oklahoma following the War of 1877, petitioned the United States Government, and after many years were finally given permission to return home to the northwest. Considered prisoners of war, nearly all Nez Perce prisoners remained in the Indian Territory until May 1885. During 1880, thirty-five of the seventy children began attending the Oakland Day School, located in Oklahoma, with seventeen boys and eighteen girls attending the school which was taught by the Nez Perce minister James Reuben, who traveled back and forth between Idaho and Oklahoma and served a vital role as interpreter, minister and teacher.<sup>12</sup>

When the Nez Perce prisoners reached Fort Leavenworth (en route to Oklahoma), General Samuel C. Armstrong attempted to relocate fifteen Nez Perce to Hampton Normal and Agricultural Institute in Hampton, Virginia. A school for African American students, Armstrong wanted to use the celebrity of the Nez Perce resistance to garner more publicity for his school. In the end, the proposal was denied, although the issue of educating the Nez Perce exiles resurfaced when Lieutenant Richard Henry Pratt recruited four Nez Perce children to attend Carlisle Indian Industrial School on February 20, 1880, while on a visit to Oklahoma Indian Territory. The four children selected to attend Carlisle were Harriet Mary, Jesse Paul, Luke Phillips, and Samuel Johns. A fifth child named James Porter was sent to Carlisle in 1882 to join the others.<sup>13</sup> Several groups of Nez Perce children, throughout the years in exile, were sent to Carlisle, as well as,

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<sup>12</sup> Wm. Whiting, "Nez Perce." ARCIA 1880, 85, 244.

<sup>13</sup> R. H. Pratt, "Carlisle Indian Training School, 1<sup>st</sup> AR," October 5, 1880, ARCIA 1880, 178-79; James Reuben's Record Book, 34: line 3; Clark, "The Nez Percés in Exile," 228 Wortman, Wortman, and Bottorff, *The Indians*, 322.

Chilocco Indian Industrial School, located in Oklahoma. These children remained at Carlisle and Chilocco for many years and although some Nez Perce children would eventually travel back to the northwest when the exiled families returned to their homeland, while a few older Nez Perce students preferred to remain their locations and settle into life far removed from their tribal communities.

In the case of Harriet Mary, a product of Carlisle, she returned back to Idaho hoping to rejoin a tribal society rich in culture and custom. What she found was discontent for living back with a people she no longer understood and eventually married another Carlisle graduate James Stuart.<sup>14</sup> At the request of their families, Carlisle students such as Luke Phillips never returned back to his family in Idaho. At the age of thirteen, he was sent to Carlisle to receive an education; however, he fell into the trap of the anti-Indian propaganda and began to profess that Indians needed to live and work like white society. He died of tuberculosis in 1888 and was buried at the Carlisle Indian cemetery.<sup>15</sup>

Other Oakland students such as Tom Hill learned to read and write as a captive in Indian Territory. After becoming educated, he worked for the United States as a lieutenant and assisted the Indian agency in working with the Nez Perce exiles. Hill continued his education and had hoped that once the exiles were allowed to return back to their homeland; he could continue his education as a student at Forest Grove.<sup>16</sup> It was the

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<sup>14</sup> Harriet Mary, "Letter from the Country." <http://home.epix.net/~landis/mary.html> (accessed August 15, 2009).

<sup>15</sup> Luke Phillips, "Letter, School News, November 1882." <http://home.epix.net/~landis/phillips.html> (accessed August 16, 2009).

<sup>16</sup> J. Diane Pearson, *The Nez Percés in the Indian Territory, Nimiipuu Survival*. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2007), 229.

students who had experienced off-reservation boarding schools; they strove to achieve a better life or perhaps it was the propaganda they learned with a much larger picture within their sight. Despite this, the students were forced to learn and become a part of mainstream society or society would consider them uneducated and uncivilized.

An off-reservation government boarding school located in Forest Grove, Oregon located some 390 miles from the Nez Perce Indian Reservation was established by Lieutenant M.C. Wilkinson in February 25, 1880 with a total of eighteen students enrolled.<sup>17</sup> In March of 1885, David E. Brewer and a party of young Indian boys left Forest Grove to begin clearing the site for the present day Chemawa Indian Boarding School location. Forest Grove Indian School was abandoned on October 1, 1885 and Chemawa Indian Boarding School opened its doors for the first time with an enrollment of 750 students, 60 faculty members, and 70 buildings of modern type.<sup>18</sup>

Archival research indicates the first group of Nez Perce tribal members to arrive at Forest Grove Boarding School was April 18, 1883. This group numbered twenty six and included the following:

Osias Hinmet (Lawrence)	Lydia Conner	Minnie Allen
Mary Wilson (#122 on record)	Ella Wilson	Amelia Lindsley
Amy Connor	Mariah Moffitt	Lydia Condit
Amelia Allen	Daniel Boone	Joseph Craige
Jack Allen	Silas Whitman	Warren Corbitt
Jacob Maxwell	Henry Edwards	Caleb Charles
Albert Moore	James Maxwell	James Louis
Nathan Parsons	Charles Thompson	Jesse Applegate

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<sup>17</sup> RG Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Decimal Files, 1911-1951, Box 0016, Files 137: *Chemawa Handbook 1929-1930, Salem Indian School History.*

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

Phoebe Nelson (Catherine)

Homer Condit  
(Jason)

These Nez Perce students would become the first Nez Perce group to attend Forest Grove School<sup>19</sup> and would later transfer to Chemawa when Forest Grove ceased to operate.

Although this appears to be a general list of students, interestingly these students have English sounding first and surnames, which may indicate these students or their parents had some outside influence to take English names. Perhaps this was due to the influence of religions such as the Presbyterian or Catholic missionaries which existed on the Nez Perce Reservation since 1836. Some of these students are brothers and sisters or very closely related to each other, which may have been another influence to attend school.

On a personal note, my great-grandfather James Maxwell is listed as student and his background was of mixed blood (white and Indian) and this may have attributed another influence to attend Chemawa school. The brother of James is Jacob Maxwell and he would later become known as Starr Jacob Maxwell a well known minister, medicine man, judge, banker, and a well respected Nez Perce man within our tribal society.

When the children first arrived on campus at Forest Grove, they were immediately inspected for diseases, given a medical exam in order to determine whether or not they would be permitted to remain at the school. After examination, the students were assigned to dormitories and provided new garments to be used while they were in attendance at the school. At the beginning phase of this assimilation process, students were quickly deloused and provided a haircut in order to make them appear similar to other students at school and were provided instructions on marching to and from

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<sup>19</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs Chemawa Indian School Register of Students 1880-1928, 115.

classrooms, the cafeteria, and the dormitories. Younger students learned from the older students and often times admired how the older students learned to march. Some students would eventually transfer from the Lapwai Sanitarium to Chemawa and already knew and understood the message of assimilation and of marching to and from various activities on campus. “We watched the boys practicing their march; we were just like soldiers. Chemawa was just as bad. They marched them. There were really kept so they could not run away.”<sup>20</sup> The distance, discipline, and structure of the school kept the students busy and running away presented itself as daunting as the distance to get back home. Nonetheless, students were allowed to return home after completion of their studies, while others chose to remain on or near the school premises. Some students were assigned to farms or taking care of family households, while students at Chemawa. It was the “working” off-campus students who were often idealized by the school teachers and administration as they were role models for the other students. Although the students were taught to strive for this type of work and obtain their education, in the end, this would complete their assimilation into mainstream society.

The second group of Nez Perce students arrived at Forest Grove on May 14, 1883 with three students admitted: James Stewart, Titus Gutherie, and Andrew Whitman<sup>21</sup> This group was soon followed by sixteen more Nez Perce students on July 21, 1883 including the following students.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> James, 179.

<sup>21</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs Chemawa Indian School Register of Students 1880-1928, 115.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 115.

Spence Cowley	Jacob Norman	Samuel Orson
Jacob Norman	Charles Lindsley	Charles McConville
Levi Jonas	Lucy Jonas	Julia Jones
Rosa Price	Ellen Price	Jeanette Stephens
Delia Parnell	Hattie Corbett	Lillie Thomas
Charlotte Whitman	Mary Wilson (#192 on record)	

From the beginning, there appears to be no method that demonstrates why these particular students were selected to attend Chemawa and why small groups or large groups were selected in these short time frames. In 1883, there were three groups of Nez Perce students one group arrived on April 13, 1883, a second group on May 14, 1883 and last group in July 21, 1883. However, there was only one class admitted to Chemawa on June 5, 1884 with four students: Ellen Craige, Nancy Amos, Darwin Corbett, and Frank Jacob.<sup>23</sup> With familiar sounding surnames, these four students were selected as their older siblings were also attending Chemawa. Perhaps this was due to the older siblings enjoying their experiences at Chemawa or there was an urgent need, on the part of the parents, to educate their children. Of the four initial classes of Nez Perce students, three died while attending Chemawa: Charles Thomas died while attending the first school Forest Grove on March 13, 1885, while Daniel Boone and Samuel Orson both died at Chemawa. Charles Thomas was buried at Forest Grove School Cemetery, while Daniel Boone and Samuel Orson were both buried at the Chemawa Indian School Cemetery.<sup>24</sup>

After the 1883 and 1884 initial groups of Nez Perce students were sent to Chemawa; there is a four year absence of Nez Perce students being sent to Chemawa.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 115.

This may be due to the fact that Nez Perce bands still being relocated in Oklahoma Indian Territory or the students were attending the Tuberculosis Sanatorium due to illness. Also there remained opportunities to attend other educational facilities during this time. The students also had a choice to enroll at the St. Joseph's Mission school located in Slickpoo, Idaho. There were options and different opportunities for education on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation and despite the hardships; the heads of families sought to ensure their children were being fed and healthy due to tuberculosis being prevalent on the Nez Perce and nearby reservations. Appendix A contains the information for the Chemawa Class of 1885 and some personal data pertaining directly to the students admitted during this time. The information on the Nez Perce students admitted to Chemawa Indian School begins in 1885 and concludes with 1889 Nez Perce class of students. The complete listing of Nez Perce students admitted to Forest Grove and/or Chemawa Indian School is contained with Appendix B. The list of student names begins in 1880 and ends in 1928; the information is limited to the names followed by the student numbers assigned to the students as they were admitted to the school.

During 1888, two small groups of Nez Perce sent to Chemawa, the first group arrived on April 14, 1888 and included Thomas Jacob and Samuel Tilden arrived at campus and November 25, 1888, witnessed the arrival of Lee Phinney and Richard Fogarty to begin their education at the Chemawa Indian School. Of these four latest arrivals at the Chemawa School, Samuel Tilden, the nephew of Chief Joseph, was perhaps the most well known student arriving at Chemawa after being allowed to return back to Idaho from Oklahoma Indian Territory. As a very young child, he participated

directly in the Nez Perce War of 1877, holding horses for the warriors as they fought against the United States cavalry. Within tribal society; he was highly regarded for his acts of bravery and courage. During the latter part of the 1960's or early 1970's, he would become known as the last survivor of the Nez Perce War of 1877 and would often recant stories of famous Nez Perce warriors and would leave a legacy of important Nez Perce history.

### **Twentieth Century Chemawa Indian Boarding School**

At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the Nez Perce were becoming more familiar with the Indian Agents, who arrived from Washington, DC, and other locations in order to “deal” with the issues of the Indians. As the Indians became more settled within mainstream society and assimilation tactics had taken their toll, the Nez Perce began to seek ways to educate and/or remove their children from outside influences such as alcohol and other abuses. In a letter dated, December 2, 1926 from O.H. Lipps, Northern Idaho Agency to Mr. J.H. MacGregor, US Indian School Chemawa, he indicates a young Nez Perce male named Eddie James had agreed to enroll at Chemawa. Further in the letter, it states “Eddie is a homeless lad and has never had a fair chance in life. He is a bright boy, polite and courteous; I hope he will not disappoint us.”<sup>25</sup> In a response letter from McGregor, he indicates that Chemawa is not in the habit of taking boys with criminal records such as Eddie James; however, he would make an exception if recommended by O.H. Lipps that the boy would yield to authority in order change his

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<sup>25</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Boarding Schools, Box 26, Chemawa 1924-1926 file, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.



waywardness.<sup>26</sup> A duplicate of the letter similar to the one regarding Eddie James was sent on behalf of James Spencer from James H. McGregor, Salem Indian School to O.H. Lipps, Nez Perce Indian Agency. James Spencer a young Nez Perce man, who had a criminal record and the only reason he was accepted into school was due to yielding to authority and if he could pay for his trip down to Chemawa.<sup>27</sup>

Chemawa Indian School was becoming increasingly popular with the many tribes from the Pacific Northwest and Alaska and the school often times had a limited number of openings where they could send students in dire need of a safe and secure place. As the school became over-crowded with students; they were often sent back home to their tribal communities for many reasons or rule violations such as running away from school. This allowed room for additional students who really wanted to be at Chemawa. In a letter dated February 13, 1929 from O.H. Lipps, Salem Indian School to O.C. Upchurch, US Indian Agency Lapwai references Doris Wilson and her desire to attend Chemawa Indian School. According to Lipps, "I wish to advise that if this girl will willingly come to Chemawa at her personal expense, we will be glad to give her a trial and do the best we can for her here."<sup>28</sup>

With many outside influences or different circumstances happening on the reservations and often times the Indian agents were cognizant of tribal members who would turn out better or have a better life; if the young people would leave the reservation

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid, letter dated June 10, 1926 from James H. McGregor to OH Lipps Nez Perce Indian Agency.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Boarding Schools, Box 26, Chemawa 1927-33 file, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

in search of an education. One such instance occurs in a letter dated July 23, 1929 from O.C. Upchurch, Fort Lapwai Agency to O.H. Lipps, Salem Indian School; the application was received from Florence Paul who was a ½ blooded Nez Perce and ½ blooded Flathead Indian. Her parents were separated and her mother Mary Mox Mox Paul had no permanent home of her own; therefore, Florence was left with her older half sister Matilda Maxwell Taylor. Florence was a patient in the tuberculosis sanatorium and released as an arrested case. The letter indicates that Florence is a good girl with no income to help with expenses; however she does not have the habit to run around. However, if she were allowed to remain on the reservation, she would pick up the habit and become unruly; she will make a good student.<sup>29</sup>

Since the development of the off-reservation boarding schools during the 1870's, each reservation began seeing an increase in students who had either attended or graduated from one or two of the boarding schools; families began to grow from relationships that developed while the young adults were attending school or when the students went back to the reservation. One such family was the Paul family, the father Jesse Paul, a survivor of the Nez Perce War of 1877 and was subsequently sent to Indian Territory in Oklahoma along with the other survivors from the battle campaign against the United States Government. In 1880, Jesse Paul and three other Nez Perce were sent to Carlisle with Lt. Henry Pratt. Jesse would eventually return back to the Nez Perce Reservation after the completion of his education and would marry a Nez Perce woman and a graduate of Chemawa. The Jesse Paul family consisted of the husband Jesse, wife,

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

and six children; however, the family would later be significantly reduced due to deaths from tuberculosis. During this time, son Richard Paul was sent to Chemawa due to his status as a student who parents were role model boarding school graduates. After being sent to Chemawa, there developed some concern for the health of Richard and in a letter from O.H. Lipps, Northern Idaho Agency to Mr. Harwood Hall, Salem Indian School, Chemawa, Oregon that Alex Paul would travel down to Chemawa in order to check on the health of his brother Richard. Upon arrival, Alex found Richard to be quite ill and made the necessary arrangements for the brothers to return back to Lapwai. The letter further indicates that Alex did in fact return with Richard and that Richard passed away three weeks later of tuberculosis. Within the span of one year, Jesse Paul would lose five children and his wife with only one son and himself surviving on the reservation.<sup>30</sup> The children sent to Chemawa were often times sick and letters were sent to the Indian Agents on the reservation in order to keep parents up to date on the health of their children. If the child was ill, the families often times would make arrangements to send a family member down to the school and verify the health of the child or sometimes bring the child back home for traditional medical care. This was the case with the Jesse Paul family and son Alex being sent to Chemawa to verify the health of his brother.

In a letter dated February 5, 1925 from O.H. Lipps, Northern Idaho Agency to Harwood Hall, Chemawa School, a Nez Perce student named Lyman Scott had written a letter to his mother on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation indicating that he was sick. As a result, his mother contacted O.H. Lipps at the Northern Idaho Agency to inquire about

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<sup>30</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Boarding Schools, Box 26, Chemawa 1924-1926 file.

the health of her son and to ask him to write a letter to Mr. Harwood Hall at Chemawa to verify the health of her son.<sup>31</sup> It was these types of letters that were often times exchanged between the superintendent of Chemawa Indian School and the Northern Idaho Agency on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation.

James McGregor sent a letter O.H. Lipps, Northern Idaho Agency regarding Myra Frank and the status of her health. In the letter McGregor states “I believe it would be well for her to return home, as she has pulmonary tuberculosis and does not improve as we wish she might.”<sup>32</sup> The mother Rachel Frank received a letter from Myra indicating that she was to return back home due to her health not improving; she went to speak with O.H. Lipps regarding her daughter and the status of her health and when to expect the return of her daughter back to the reservation. Parents often times were very concerned over the health of their children as tuberculosis and other illnesses had swept through the reservations and often times leaving parents childless or children as orphans.

In a letter dated May 22, 1922 from O.H. Lipps, Fort Lapwai Indian School to Mr. Harwood Hall, Salem Indian School he indicates that two female Nez Perce students should be kept at Chemawa over the summer. “Both of these girls were running wild here as you can remember when Probate Court told them of their choice of going to

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Records Concerning Non-Reservation Boarding Schools, 1924-1950, Box 261, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

Chemawa or reform school.”<sup>33</sup> In a return letter, it indicated Alex Williams, Hattie Ellenwood, and Lucy Carrel (Carl) should be “governed thereby” and kept at the school during the summer while another student Joseph White has sufficient funds to play for this transportation back home.<sup>34</sup>

During the 1920’s, there was other letters exchanged between James McGregor, Salem Indian School to W. N. Sickels, Assistant, Fort Lapwai Indian Agency or O.H. Lipps, Fort Lapwai Indian Agency. In a letter dated August 6, 1926 regarding Lucy Paul indicating that she was well satisfied with Chemawa and has never considered running away or caused any trouble with the matrons. However, she left school and returned back to her family on the reservation.<sup>35</sup> In a response letter dated September 11, 1925 regarding Lucy Paul, “this girl has been about from place to place and has no suitable home so that she can attend public school with regularity. Her mother does not stay at home but wanders around and I think the girl should not be permitted to return home for the vacation period next summer.”<sup>36</sup> While on December 29, 1926, James McGregor received a letter regarding the mother of Chemawa student Levi Frank and her being worried about her son. He arrived home unannounced with a bag and baggage a few days ago and he was sent home for a reason; he is a runaway. She wanted him to return

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<sup>33</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Chemawa Indian School Records Concerning Enrollment 1903-1950/ 1931-1932 Box 104, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Records Concerning Non-Reservation Boarding Schools, 1924-1950, Box 261, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

back to school, if he is in poor health she wants to know so that she can seek proper medical treatment for him.<sup>37</sup>

In a December 2, 1926 letter from Edward James to O.H. Lipps, Edward indicated his arrival at the Chemawa School and that he was getting along fine and liked the place. However, he would like to get some pants sent to him. Lastly, he indicated “good-bye and don’t forget me.”<sup>38</sup> In response, O.H. Lipps encouraged the Edward to stay in school and graduate so that you will be able to grow up, be somebody, and make a living.<sup>39</sup>

During 1927, there were two students were interested in attending the Chemawa School. One student was Joseph George who was a homeless boy and that O.H. Lipps was sending him to the school in order for him to have a home and an education. This boy has been abandoned by his parents and drifts from place to place; his father has been enticed to buy him some clothes to attend Chemawa. “He should be kept there until he graduates as he has no home here. He is not a bad boy and I believe he will make you a good student.”<sup>40</sup> The other was a Nez Perce girl named Rebecca who was a patient at the Sanatorium and an orphan. She has been asking for a vacation from the treatment facilities. “I do not like to have her go out off the reservation, and when I suggest that it might be possible to let her attend the commencement exercises at Chemawa, she was

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<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

delighted.”<sup>41</sup> She is in good health, has ample funds for travel and if you have objections, I will let her come down and spend time with the girls there.<sup>42</sup>

On September 4, 1926, O.H. Lipps, Northern Idaho Agency sent a letter to tribal member Bessie Wilson regarding her health and possibly being transferred back to the reservation, if her health became an issue. Bessie expressed loneliness and had a desire for her cousin Esther Lott to join her at Chemawa. O.H. Lipps indicated that a group of Nez Perce were leaving for Chemawa next week and that Esther Lott may be on the train with this group. Lipps states in a response letter; “There is nothing here that you can do and it is your advantage to remain in school as long as you can.”<sup>43</sup>

Meanwhile Abbie Henry, age 15, filed an application to attend Chemawa and in a letter from District in Charge to J.H. McGregor on September 28, 1926 it indicates that Abbie will make an excellent student, if her application is approved. However she is unable to pay for her own expenses as her parents are “Patent in Fee” Indians and they have disposed of their tribal allotted property.<sup>44</sup> As side note, a Patent in Fee means this family did not file the proper paperwork in a timely manner and their property was confiscated in lieu of payment of taxes, which was a common occurrence in many tribal families during this time.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

In a letter dated August 21, 1930 from O.C. Upchurch, Northern Idaho Agency to O.H. Lipps, Salem Indian School from Alice Henry Jackson regarding her son Jacob Jackson; it indicates that her son has been attending the St. Joseph's Mission School. He is a bright child of twelve years of age and is in the fifth grade and he wishes to learn a trade and is anxious to join his brother Sam at Chemawa. The mother is unable to pay for his education due to being a widow with no income.<sup>45</sup> A letter from O.H. Lipps to Mr. O.C. Upchurch, US Indian Agency Lapwai indicated that Clara Davis came into the agency office to ask about her cousin Celestine Seth attending Chemawa along with her. She is the daughter of Connolly Seth and desires to be at Chemawa despite currently attending public school. The letter questions if she would be better off attending Chemawa then room would be made for her.<sup>46</sup>

While other students decided to attend Chemawa as a result of tuberculosis and other illnesses on the reservation. A letter from Paul T. Jackson, Salem Indian School dated March 12, 1936 regarding applicant Ada Mae Miller. The letter indicates that Ada Miller was interested in attending Chemawa and that she would be accepted, if she was a patient in the sanatorium located in Lapwai. In response, the letter states "we will accept this girl if she is a trachoma case or suspect. If she does not have trachoma or is not suspected of having it; we will be unable to accept her as she does not have high school

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<sup>45</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Boarding Schools, Box 26, Chemawa 1924-1926 file.

<sup>46</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency Records Concerning Non-Reservation Boarding Schools, 1924-1950, Box 261, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.



standing.”<sup>47</sup> However, there appeared to be much confusion on who really wanted to attend Chemawa from this family. In a letter from AG Wilson, United States Indian Agency, Moscow, Idaho to Dr. George Gaignard located in Culdesac, Idaho regarding the identity verification of Ada Mae Miller. On a hand written note, it states that Ida Ann Miller (Ada May Miller) was interested in the Chemawa School for her brother Gilbert and it further states that she has no trachoma and currently attended school. However, Ada Mae Miller’s sister Esther Miller has trachoma and Esther will think it over whether to submit an application to Chemawa or not.<sup>48</sup> The Northern Idaho Agency on the Nez Perce Reservation continued to search for ways to educate the young members of the tribe despite the illnesses running rampant through the tribal communities.

On March 20, 1932, the Northern Idaho Agency sent a letter on behalf of Cora Burke whose son Bruce was in need of Chemawa. The letter indicates that her son Bruce needed “to attend Chemawa Indian School for the discipline and he needs to learn things that he can make a living from...he is undisciplined.”<sup>49</sup> The response letter from Chemawa Indian Boarding School indicates that permission will need to be granted from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs because they were unable to enroll her son due to the mother being white and living in a town near a public school. The letter further indicates that this has been more of a common practice to deny enrollment to Nez Perce children

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<sup>47</sup> RG Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency, Decimal Files, 1911-1951, 137 files Salem School, 1936-47, Box 0016, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs Chemawa Indian School Records Concerning Enrollment, 1903-1950 (1903-1906) Box 104, 1931-1932 By Agency A-Z 1926-27 file, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

based upon their proximity and access to a public educational institution. Also contained with the letter, it indicates a new change in philosophy at Chemawa:

If the boy is disposed to be unruly I would not advise you to put him in an Indian school. Conditions have changed materially in our schools during the past few years so that now corporal punishment is not permitted and at Chemawa we have done away with military training and unless a student comes here determined to take advantage of his opportunities there is not much we can do for him.<sup>50</sup>

In a letter A.G. Wilson, United States Indian Agency to Miss Isabelle Edwards in Kamiah, Idaho on February 7, 1936 informed Isabelle Edwards that her application for enrollment into Chemawa has been returned unapproved. This is due to the availability of a public school close to home as the non-reservation boarding schools are restricted in accepting such cases.<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, students often left campus and school for many reasons; however permission was needed prior to leaving campus. A letter was written to Mrs. Christine Albert in Lapwai from Paul T. Jackson, Chemawa Indian School regarding her son John McConville. He requested permission to leave campus; however he left without obtaining further word or permissions.<sup>52</sup>

During the 1930's, there were several letters exchanged back and forth between the Northern Idaho Agency and the Chemawa Indian School pertaining to students and other events happening on campus. A letter from Paul T. Jackson to AG Wilson, United States Indian Agency on January 14, 1936, indicated that Martha Woods made to it

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid, 1931-1932 By Agency A-Z 1926-27 file.

<sup>51</sup> RG Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency, Decimal Files, 1911-1951, 137 files Salem School, 1936-47, Box 0016, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

Chemawa and the cooperation of the Northern Idaho Agency was very much appreciated for assisting and getting the students to school.<sup>53</sup>

A letter written by Joseph Blackeagle, Fort Lapwai Sub-Agency on February 10, 1936 to AG Wilson indicated that Clara Ramsey and Elizabeth Allen had received his letter regarding their acceptance into Chemawa. The letter further states the girls were very excited and anxious to leave anytime when you grant permission to leave for Chemawa.<sup>54</sup> In a letter from Paul T. Jackson, to Mr. John Ramsey, Fort Lapwai on April 25, 1936 indicated that Clara Ramsey was suspended from Chemawa Indian School on the night of April 24, 1936. The justification for the suspension indicated in the letter states “permission not being granted they took a screen out of a window and went to a dance. Upon their return Clara refused to be separated from the girls and they spend the night in the Salem YWCA. Clara is leaving for home this evening.”<sup>55</sup>

During 1936, a celebration to honor the 56<sup>th</sup> Birthday of the Chemawa School, Paul T. Jackson, Superintendent, Chemawa Indian School wrote a letter to AG Wilson, United States Indian Agency, indicating they are trying to give the festivities as much color as possible. They are asking for the students to bring their beads, weaving, and other handiwork, as well as, their special regalia such as robes, blankets, and war bonnets. “Prizes will be given to the most uniquely dressed Indian man and Indian woman in Indian costumes, to the oldest alumni present and the visitor who comes the

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

farthest for this occasion.”<sup>56</sup> There was an effort to focus and have the alumni from the school present at this celebration and asked them to join the school on this occasion.

The 1940's brought a set of different problems to Chemawa and presented some different circumstances that precipitated the Nez Perce children being sent to school. As a result of illnesses or alcohol abuses on the reservations some of the Nez Perce children were orphans and needed a place to relocate or rather a safe place to live. Frank Royale Johnson, Jr., was living in Kamiah, Idaho, and was not attending school as the highway he walked on was simply too dangerous; he had attended the Slickpoo Mission School but moved away from that area. The parents were separated and he was living with his grandmother in Kamiah, who was unable to care for herself. Frank also had a sister named Alice Jean Johnson and she was living in the same household and circumstances as her brother. Both children were not attending public school simply because the grandmother could not ensure the safe arrival of the students every morning, despite these extenuating circumstances; both children were not accepted into Chemawa. Within the rejection letter, R.M. Tisinger, Superintendent of Education sent a letter to AG Wilson, Northern Idaho Agency explaining the specific circumstances of these two children. The letter further states “the children seem to be very young to be removed from a home situation; however if no other arrangements can be made, and other sources of care considered, Chemawa will be in a position to consider their applications.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> RG 75 Bureau of Indian Affairs, Northern Idaho Agency, Boarding Schools 1924-1950, Chemawa Enrollment, 1919-50, National Archives and Records Administration, Pacific Alaska Region, Seattle, Washington.

Native American people were known to be nomadic and living a subsistence lifestyle. Such was the case with the children of Agnes K. Thompson as she was picking cherries in The Dalles, Oregon and saw her children Curtis, Kenneth (known as Scottie), and Louise (known as Christine May). The father of the children Henry W Thompson (son of Celilo Village Chief Tommy Thompson) and he was a resident of the Celilo Fall Indian village and each year made considerable sums of money fishing for salmon at Celilo Falls, Oregon. In a letter dated June 20, 1944 from Agnes Thompson to Indian Agent C.G. Davis, she indicated that the father drank too much, abused and beat her while the children were attending Chemawa Indian School and they would need clothing for school and the father of the children should be made to purchase clothing for them after fishing season was over and before he purchased any alcohol.<sup>58</sup> The Chemawa Superintendent Myrthus W. Evans wrote a letter to C.G. Davis, Field Aid on June 21, 1944 indicating the Thompson children were already at Chemawa and enrolled in school. One concern of Superintendent Evans during previous years, the children didn't stay for the entire school year and they would be allowed to re-enroll in the school, if they are willing to remain in school for the full school term. On June 15, 1944, a letter from CG Davis, Field Aid, was sent to A.G. Wilson, Superintendent Northern Idaho Agency notifying him of a verbal argument between Henry, father of the Thompson children, and Chemawa School Superintendent Evans. As a result, Henry Thompson removed his children from the school against the rules and the children would not be allowed to return back to school that year. In an effort to re-enroll the children back at Chemawa, Kenneth

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<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

(known as Scottie) was asked to submit an application for re-enrollment into school. His application was recommended and approved for the following reasons “this child has no opportunity in life if he remains with his father.”<sup>59</sup>

In a June 15, 1944 letter from A.G. Wilson, Superintendent Northern Idaho Agency to Samuel Slickpoo with the notification that he would not be accepted to attend Chemawa Indian School due to the close proximity and access to public school. While some students were not accepted others applied and were selected to attend Chemawa and chose not to remain there. One such instance was Levi Wilson who couldn't keep up with the pace of Chemawa and chose to go back home to the Celilo Indian Village and eventually Lapwai.<sup>60</sup>

### **Summary**

Although education, in a non-mainstream sense, was not a new concept for the Nez Perce as tribal elders provided the young members a traditional and continual education since the time of birth. The Nez Perce format of providing a cultural education was not sufficient, for the United States. In order to remove the “Indian” out of the individual, the United States authorized what could be considered the transference of culture in 1819 when the U.S. Government established what was known as the “Civilization Fund.” This fund was designed to fund the Christian missionary schools as

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<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

they began to move out west towards Indian Territory.<sup>61</sup> Presbyterian and Catholic missionaries used this to fuel and fund their new found mission to begin eradicating the native from the Indian, which lay the groundwork for forced education and assimilation. The next wave of influence became the different sects of Christian missionaries spreading their influences across the United States in order to extinguish the native people only to be followed by the United States with forced education and assimilation.

As the government boarding schools became the new policy to assimilate the Native populations, the Nez Perce were not exempted. There were several different missionary schools within the confines of the reservation, a day school located in Spalding, Idaho, and a tuberculosis sanatorium, which included a school for the patients. The Nez Perce had recently fought a war against the United States and the remnants of the Nez Perce Bands that participated in this war were sent to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. The constant struggle to return back to the Idaho or the Pacific Northwest was continuously in the mind of all people trying to survive their new living surroundings. As the hope of returning back to their families appeared to dim; they learned how to adjust and befriended the local tribes within their area of captivity. The Nez Perce learned to interact with these tribes, grew to understand their customs, and even participated in numerous religious and cultural ceremonies with the local tribesmen. As developing new relationships grew with the local tribes, the children were sent to a day school located at the Oakland Sub-Agency in Oklahoma, therefore, with the day school in operation and the missionaries providing an education the tribal people were

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<sup>61</sup> Jana Noel, "Education Toward Cultural Shame: A Century of Native American Education." *Educational Foundations*. Winter 16 (2002): 19-32.

quickly becoming accustomed to their new surroundings. What were the influences that would drive the tribal people to becoming amenable to a climate and culture and develop relationships with other tribal people in Indian Territory? Captive populations, the Nez Perce were willing to give in the hope of returning back to their homeland and families in Idaho.

Although deemed a failure by Colonel Samuel Leavenworth to send some children to Hampton Normal Agricultural Institute, it did leave a door open for other opportunities for the Nez Perce children to be forced to attend other schools, which had recently began to accept Native American children. When the Nez Perce arrived at the Oakland Sub-agency in Oklahoma, a school was opened for the school aged youngsters on their new reservation.<sup>62</sup> The health of the children and the weather often times made it difficult for the children to regularly attend school. The school was successful with the education of the Nez Perce children and subsequently, they learned to read and recite in English and were also exposed to other courses at this time.<sup>63</sup>

Despite the success of the Oakland Day School, I think the children were successful in their education because there was an underlying goal in their minds. This goal was the possibility of one day being allowed to return back to their homeland someday and if it meant the children had to assimilate and become a part of mainstream society; they would complete their education and live within mainstream society. The Nez Perce would become model citizens where the children learned to read and write

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<sup>62</sup> Pearson, 223.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid, 225.



while attending the Oakland Day School and one course, of particular interest, was geography. In this course, they learned how to read maps and found out where their ancestral home was located. I believe some children may have learned to read and write so that they could learn where and how to return to their homeland. This tool could also be used to assist runaways with finding their current location and providing a trail back to their families in Idaho.<sup>64</sup>

The exposure to the different tribes within Indian Territory, allowed the Nez Perce War survivors to envision how much was going to change within their immediate future. The power and control of the military and how many tribes had been placed within one Indian Territory at the hands of the United States. The Nez Perce recognized this and knew they needed to continue to educate their young, while lobbying for the return back to their homelands. The education of the young men and women would later become an asset for the tribe and allow them to gain knowledge particularly with how the outside world functioned and become the conduit to help the people survive and maneuver through society.

Upon the return of the Nez Perce war survivors back to their homeland in Idaho, there was much joy and celebration for the return of the prisoners. These people had been separated from their families for many years and it was a reunion of many sorts to visually verify the health status of the men, women, and children returning and to witness the changes within the returnees. Within two weeks of the return of the prisoners back to Idaho and Washington; the Lapwai agent Charles Monteith and Nez Perce Indian James

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 255.

Reuben took nine of the former Oakland school children to the Forest Grove Indian School. The students enrolled on July 21, 1883 were: Levi, Lucy, and Julia Jonas; Rosa Price (Mattie Rose, Tuck-te-we-ta-la-sha); Ellen Price; Jeanette Rachel; Mary Wilson (Kool-luts-tah); and Delia Parnell (Tuk-tu-lats).<sup>65</sup> The agent and school superintendent agreed to have at least six of the students remain at the school for thirty-six months; although Ellen Price died during this time period and Mary Wilson died of tuberculosis in 1887. From these nine students, two of them assisted with the preservation of the Nez Perce history and culture. Mattie Rose would later rescue James Reuben's record books from an attic in California; while Levi Jonas graduated in three years and served as the Sunday school superintendent at the First Presbyterian Church located in Kamiah, Idaho. He would later help to publish a songbook written in the Nez Perce Language for use in the church.<sup>66</sup>

The conditions upon which these children left the Nez Perce Indian Reservation, either by choice or force, are important qualities to understand within all Nez Perce children. Due to the treaties and being forced to live within the boundaries of the reservation and only allowed to leave for periods of time for gathering, hunting, or fishing purposes. It is an important teaching, to this day, you must learn our history and in particular the details of the 1855 Treaty between the United State and the Nez Perce Tribe, which designated facilities and teachers for the purpose of educating the Nez Perce. According to the Nez Perce Treaty of 1855, Article 5:

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 273.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

The United States further agrees to establish at suitable points within said reservation, within one year after ratification hereof, two schools, erecting the necessary buildings, keeping the same in repair, and providing them with furniture, books, and stationary, one of which shall be an agricultural and industrial school, and to employ one superintendent of teaching and two teachers; to build two blacksmiths' shops, to one of which shall be attached a tin shop and to the other a gunsmith's shop; one carpenter's shop, one wagon and plough maker's shop, and to keep the same in repair, and to furnish with the necessary tools; to employ one superintendent of farming and two farmers, two blacksmith's, one tinner, one gunsmith, one carpenter, one wagon and ploughmaker, for the instruction of the Indians in trades, and to assist them in the same;... The said buildings and establishments to be maintained and kept in repair as aforesaid, and the employees to be kept in the service for the period of twenty years.<sup>67</sup>

The language within this treaty is the sole means at providing access for an education guaranteed to the members of the Nez Perce Tribe and in particular the young men and women who would one day lead the tribe. While the nine students who recently returned to Idaho from the Indian Territory were now enrolled as students at the Forest Grove School; other students who were sent to Carlisle Indian School and Forest Grove would later help to preserve the Nez Perce culture, language and most importantly the stories passed down for generations. This is exemplified by the numerous volumes of texts and recordings completed by our tribal scholars such as Elizabeth Penney Wilson and other boarding school graduates. While access to an education changed the mindset of these children; it is important to realize that it helped them see the world from different perspective. This perspective was not theirs culturally; however, some students

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<sup>67</sup> Allen P. Slickpoo, Sr. and Deward E. Walker, Jr., *Noon Nee Mee Poo (We, The Nez Percés)*. (Nez Perce Tribe of Idaho, 1973), 287.

understood the need to help the tribe to begin preserving and protecting what was known as traditional knowledge before it was lost to an imperialistic educational system. Nez Perce students who attended the Carlisle Indian Boarding school also played important roles within tribal society once they returned back home to the tribal community. For example, Elizabeth Penney Wilson would often recall the visit made to the school by the famous Nez Perce, Chief Joseph and the address he would convey to the school at the commencement exercises on May 13, 1904, just prior to his death. According to Penney Wilson:

I am very glad that I have children here from my tribe going to school to get an education, I am very happy about it. It is good for them to get an education just as far as they can go. I am very glad to see my children. When I am back home again, I am going to encourage my children to go to get an education. I am glad that I am here with you...<sup>68</sup>

I believe the thought behind these comments made at the Carlisle Indian School was in line with the way the Nez Perce leaders were now viewing education. As I have indicated, there was a new vision that members of the tribe grasped, particularly those in leadership or members who had exposure to the outside world. They full well understood the onslaught of the white people and how this was going to dramatically affect the future of the tribe. In order to survive, they viewed education as a way to gain acceptance or pull those nearby toward the cause of keeping the Nez Perce People in one location and not rounding them up to be sent down to Indian Territory in Oklahoma. I believe the members feared they would be forced to move again.

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<sup>68</sup> Harou Aoki, *Nez Perce Texts*. (University of California Press, Berkeley, 1979), 126.

As time passed, students began to see Forest Grove/Chemawa Indian Boarding School as an alternative solution to an on-reservation Christian or public education. It was a chance to meet other Native American students and perhaps learn from others in the same situation. I feel this allowed the students to see within themselves and understand their own circumstances with a different perspective. While the government boarding school experience was responsible for providing assimilation and a mainstream military education; it also helped to instill, within the students the desire and knowledge on how to best protect our cultural knowledge. There are many instances, such as Elizabeth Penney Wilson, of students who attended boarding schools and came back home with enough educational tools to help the people live and protect our Indigenous Knowledge. Nez Perce students who learned to read and write at this time may not often times have been viewed as an asset.

Boarding schools were painted to be places that snatched up the Indian children and ran off with them in order to make them more like white society. However, this bleak and savage like picture doesn't always prove to be true and it may be somewhat of an opposite to that idea. Was there some type of redeeming value in this education and if so, how did the students respond to their education and new surroundings? In his essay entitled *Beyond Bleakness*, David Adams indicates that "it is important to remember that although Indian agents often resorted to force to fill school enrollment quotas, some Indian children came to boarding school willingly."<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Clifford E. Trafzer, Jean A. Keller, and Lorene Sisquoc, *Boarding School Blues*. (University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, 2006), 37.

Just like so many Nez Perce students who attended Chemawa Indian Boarding School, there are many more stories that exist on different Indian reservations throughout the United States. Children who begged their parents and grandparents to allow them to attend school and perhaps be exposed to a different learning environment. Adams tells a story about a young Hopi girl wanting to visit the “land of oranges,” whereby, the young girl hid away on the wagon till she was discovered and her parents were finally forced to sign the documents allowing this young girl to attend school. It is this type of story that indicates there were some favorable attitudes towards attending boarding schools; whether the schools were located on-reservation or off-reservation.<sup>70</sup>

According to Adams, there are several important factors that could have been used to persuade Indian children to want to attend boarding school. It was the possibility of trying to escape the desperate social and economic conditions that existed on the reservation during this time. The need to earn a living or wages could have been another factor, while at the same time having an opportunity to see a different part of the world outside the reservation. Once the students acclimated to their new surroundings and learned different skills; they thrived on extracurricular activities such as the debate team, drama, or music programs. The students learned to appreciate and enjoy their surroundings and often times jokes, laughter, and smiles filled the dormitory hallways and bedrooms into the evening hours. The enjoyment of their new surroundings included practical jokes on one another to create some solidarity among the students, even if it was for cultural purposes. This solidarity would help them survive the homesickness and

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid, 38.

perhaps the loneliness the students felt while being away from home.<sup>71</sup> The students grew together and learned from each other the means by which they would succeed at boarding school. Without a doubt, I believe there are great stories about boarding schools only to be followed by many tragic and horrific stories. However, it is these experiences at boarding school which provided insight or guidance on the need to retain tribal culture and languages. These students were exposed to many different experiences in the outside world and perhaps they clearly understood the need to begin to protect what survived of their tribal cultures.

Today, I view these early boarding school students as tremendous tribal scholars who were generous with their knowledge and desire to protect our Nez Perce way of life. From their sacrifices, we have our own stories told in our language, we have learned how our ancestors gathered and preserved our traditional foods; but mostly importantly we have a culture that is alive and thriving today within the Nez Perce Reservation and beyond and it these ancestors who we have to say Thank you. Today, the traditional Nez Perce families remain intact today, although we have had to regain some of our knowledge and language lost to the boarding schools. The mission of the boarding schools was to eradicate the language and destroy any semblance of culture the tribal nations maintained. The schools managed to complete some of their mission; however, as determined as the United States was to rid the country of the Indian nations, the Nez Perce had as much or more determination to survive with our culture intact.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid, 38-57.

APPENDIX A

BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS – CHEMAWA INDIAN SCHOOL



**Bureau of Indian Affairs – Chemawa Indian School  
Descriptive Records of Students Admitted 1880-1890  
Discharges & Deaths 185-1889**

Class of 1885:

Samuel Orson (age 19/both parents living/arrived '85)  
Rosa M Price  
James Stewart  
Jeanette Stephens (age 20/arrived 4/25/86)  
Charles Whitman  
Nancy Amos  
Charles Lindsley (age 22/both parents alive/arrived unknown)  
Lydia Conner (age 10)  
Charles McConville (age 22/both parents dead)  
Levi Jonas (and '86)

Class of 1886:

Osias Hinnett (age 14) (runaway 3/89)  
Jacob Norman (age 16/fa:alive/ma:dead/arrived 8/26/84)  
Lucy Jonas  
Julia Jonas  
Titus Gutherie  
Andrew Whitman  
Delia Parnel  
Ellen Craige (age 18/arrive 6/11/87)  
Hattie Corbett (age 14/parents alive/arrived 3/16/86)  
Lillie Thomas (age 15/parents living/farmers/full-blooded/5'4"/130/Forced  
Inspiration: 34/Forced Expiration: 31/arrived 4/25/87)  
Joseph Craig  
Jack Allen  
Albert Moore  
Homer Condit (age 18/both parents alive/runaway 3/9/89)  
Jesse Applegate (age 16/both parents alive)

Class of 1887:

Oliver Lindsley (age 20/both parents/ alive/dad: farmer/full  
blood/5'7"/161/Forced Inspiration: 38/arrived 10/19/87)

Class of 1888:

Cowley Spence (age 19/parents alive/arrived 10/8/85)  
Ellen Price (age 18/parents both dead/arrived 6/11/87)  
Mary Wilson

Ella Wilson (age 12)  
 Amelia Lindsley (age 18/both parents alive)  
 Amy Conner  
 Maria Moffit  
 Phoebe Nelson (age 21)  
 Lydia Condit (age 10/FA: Jason Condit/parents alive/farmers/ ½  
 blood/4'5"/86/Forced Inspiration: 30.5/Forced Expiration: 28/arrived 1/3/89)  
 Amelia Allen (age 17/went home 3/26/89)  
 Daniel Boone (age 12)  
 Jack Allen (age 19/both parents dead)  
 Silas Whitman (age 15)  
 Jacob Maxwell (age 18/both parents alive/runaway 3/31/89)  
 Henry Edwards  
 Caleb Charles (age 16/both parents alive)  
 James Maxwell (age 20)  
 Joseph Thomas  
 Nathan Parsons (age 17/both parents alive)  
 Darwin Corbett (age 15/Dad: Pierre Corbett/Ma alive/full-blood/runaway  
 3/31/89)  
 Frank Jacobs (age 14/Fa: alive/Ma: dead/Teamster/ ¾ blood/arrived 6/84)  
 Samuel Tilden (age 18/parents dead/full-blood/5'8"/144/Forced Inspiration:  
 36/Forced Expiration: 32/Arrived April 14/1888/went home 7/26/89)

May 1, 1889 Information:

Agatha Fogarty (age 7/parents living/dad: farmer/1/2 blood/4'2"/52/Forced  
 Inspiration: 26.75/Forced Expiration: 24.25/arrived Oct 1888)  
 Richard Fogarty (age 11/both parents living/farmers/ ½ blood/ arrived 7/87)

APPENDIX B  
BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS CHEMAWA INDIAN  
SCHOOL REGISTER OF STUDENTS 1880-1928

**Bureau of Indian Affairs Chemawa Indian School Register of Students 1880-1928**

Minnie Allen 121  
Amelia Allen 129  
Jack Allen 132  
Jesse Applegate 144  
Nancy Amos 217  
Willie Axtell 3827  
Willie Albert 3852  
Stella Amera 4284  
Minnie Amera 4285  
Millie Andrews 5707  
Michael Ambrose 6510  
Daniel Boone 130  
Hattie Berry 198  
Benjamin James 2169  
Charles Beale 2291  
Abraham Bredell 2952  
Mary Bartlett 2975  
Jefferson Bartlett 2976  
Eddie Bartlett 2977  
Amelia Bronche 5709  
Henry Black Elk 3822  
Joseph Black Elk 3836  
Lydia Conner 120  
Amy Conner 125  
Lydia Condit 128  
Joseph Craige 131  
Warren Corbett 134  
Caleb Charles 137  
Homer (Jason) Condit 139  
Spencer Cowley 182  
Hattie Corbett 195  
Ellen Craige 216  
Darwin Corbett 219  
Cyrus Conner 4013  
James Corbett 4143 ½  
Gilbert Conner 4201  
James Crane 4674  
Agnes Cayuse 4990  
Josephine Corbett 5118  
Frank Corbett 5561  
Lucy Carrel 5597

William Carter 5718  
Willie Davis 4696  
Isaac Davis 4697  
Lydia Davis 4704  
Henry Edwards 136  
Hattie Ellenwood 5711  
Michael E Embro 7799  
Oliver Ezekial 7943  
Richard Fogarty 480  
Agatha Fogarty 482  
Levi Frank 7800  
Myra Frank 7801  
Kenneth Frank 7802  
Titus Gutherie 171  
Abel Grant 2951  
Milton George 3025  
George Grove 3831  
Orsen George 5268  
Charles George 5322  
Isabel George 5846  
Henry George 6302  
Francis Green 7803 (or Francis Jefferson)  
Osias Hinmet 119  
Joseph Hill 2170  
Julia Hoyt 2804  
David High Penney 2840  
Nat Harsche 3106 (William)  
Lucy Hill 3856  
Agnes Hill 4187  
Willie Half Moon 4202  
Martha Hill 5596  
Obed Hoit 5786  
Pauline Hill 6693  
Abbie Henry 7932  
Levi Jonas 187  
Lucy Jonas 188  
Julia Jonas 189  
Frank Jacobs 220  
Thomas Jacobs 434  
Thora Jensen 1614  
Ellen Jensen 1615  
Moses Jackson 5047  
Julia James 5808

Andrew Jackson 5850  
Gilbert Johnson 7559  
Eddie James 7963  
Daniel Kash Kash 3107  
Emma Kotsummer 3855  
Charles Kipp 4389  
Joseph Kipp 4902  
Minnie Kutorlie 5599  
Blanche Kipp 7829  
Lottie Kip 7830  
Jesse Kipp 7867  
Kipp Eastman 7925  
Amelia Lindsley 124  
James Louis 141  
Charles Lindsley 185  
Oliver Lindsley 408  
Paul Lawyer 2242  
Ida Lawyer 2340  
Amelia Lindsley 3611  
Elsie Lawrence 3627 (Ella Lawrence)  
Robert Lindsley 3825  
Iva Lott 5710  
Mariah Moffit 126  
Jacob Maxwell 135  
Albert Moore 138  
James Maxwell 140  
Rosa Maxwell 481  
Sam W Morris 1899  
Simeon Mathews 2841  
Nettie Morris 3188  
Lena Moore 3194  
Annie Moody 3629  
Agnes Moody 3630  
Abel McAtty 5666  
Nellie Marks 5877  
Elias Moses 6061  
John F. Meek 6102  
Rose McConville 6299  
Mathias McConville 6502  
Catherine McConville 7045  
Clarence Mox Mox 7047  
James Moore 3829  
Myra Moses 4142

John Moses 4143  
Phoebe Nelson 127 (Catherine)  
Jacob Norman 184  
Mabel Nesbitt 2806  
Lot Nesbit 7046  
William Nesbit 7972  
Levi Nesbit 7973  
Samuel Orson 183  
Nathan Parsons 142  
Rosa Price 190  
Ellen Price 191  
Delia Parnell 194  
John Pablo 3784 ½  
Sam Pablo 4695  
Alice Parsons 4706  
Rose Paul 5246  
Charlie Perrish 5811  
George Phinney 6064  
Alex Paul 7048  
Ira Penney 7870  
Alex Ramsey 2300  
John Roberts 3148  
Mary Reuben 4079  
Frank Reboin 5784  
Elsie Reuben 7474 (also notes she is Umatilla)  
James Stewart 170  
Jeanette Stephens 192  
Viola Allen Stuart 2805  
Sam Slickpoo 3145  
Albert Spencer 4984  
Caleb Smith 5519  
Titus Samuels 5778  
Frank Smith 6059  
Emma Smith 6304  
Delia Smith 6305  
Lyman Scott 7211  
Irene Smith 7554  
Henry Spencer 3826  
Caleb Smith 4282  
Agnes Spencer 4286  
Viola Spencer 4468  
Charles Thompson 143  
Lillie Thomas 196

Joseph Thomas 218  
Samuel Tilden 435  
James R. Thornton 454  
Herbert T Thornton 455  
Joseph Thompson 3854  
Julia Tealawood 5707  
Mary Wilson 122 (#1)  
Ella Wilson 123  
Silas Whitman 133  
Robert Williams 159  
Andrew Whitman 172  
Mary Wilson 193 (#2)  
Charlotte Whitman 197  
Johnson Williams 1900  
Michael Williams 2324  
Susie Woody 2802  
Henry Wilson 2943  
Charles Wilson 3146  
Agnes Williams 3853  
Amelia Williams 4141  
Nancy Waters 4868  
Alex Williams 5021  
Joe Waters 5720  
Joseph White 5716  
Louise Whitman 5847  
Alex Williams 6713  
Gilbert Weaskus 7049  
Bessie Wilson 7555



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## VITA

Arthur Maxwell Teewispelu Taylor was born in Lewiston, Idaho and raised in Lapwai, Idaho, which is located on the Nez Perce Indian Reservation. Before attending Loyola University Chicago, he attended Washington State University, Pullman, where he earned a Bachelor of Arts in Foreign Languages and Literature in 1993. From 1999 to 2000, he also attended Gonzaga University, where he received a Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership.

Arthur is an enrolled member of the Nez Perce Tribe and from 1996 to 2002; he served two consecutive terms on the Nez Perce Tribal Executive Committee (NPTEC), which is the governing body for the Nez Perce Tribe. In 2002, he was hired as the Assistant Director for the Multicultural Student Programs and Services (MSPS) for the University of Notre Dame, located in Notre Dame, Indiana and served on numerous committees for underrepresented student populations and diversity issues.

Currently, Arthur is the Native American Tribal Liaison for the University of Idaho in Moscow, Idaho. He lives in Lapwai, Idaho and continues to assist his tribe whenever possible in issues such as K-12 education, higher education, and youth initiatives. Today, he is actively involved in Native American education issues in both regional and national arenas.