

ALASKA
NATIVE
HERITAGE
CENTER

BOARDING SCHOOL RESEARCH PROGRAM

Indigenous Research Program

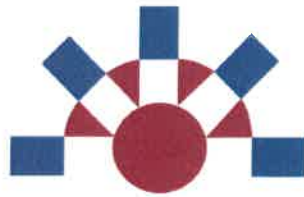
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

- I. Alaska Native Heritage Center Boarding School Research Program
- II. Various Primary Source Information

**I. Alaska Native Heritage
Center Lach'qu Sukdu
(True Story in Dena'ina
Dene/Athabaskan)
Program Overview**



ALASKA
NATIVE
HERITAGE
CENTER

Alaska House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs
Alaska State House of Representatives

To the House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs,

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) is pleased to provide this letter of support for the passing of Alaska House Joint Resolution (HJR) 17 referencing H.R 7227-Truth and Healing Commission on Boarding School Policies Act of 2024 Bill. Within the State of Alaska, the boarding school, which were both ecclesiastically and federal operated, were created to forcefully assimilate, many times forcibly removed, Alaska Native children for assimilative purposes. The destruction of cultural identity is one of many realities from the boarding school era which still effect the Alaska Native population today and is revealed in such statistics as the suicide rate amongst the Indigenous population.

ANHC is a statewide 501(c)(3) educational and cultural organization located in Anchorage, Alaska, whose mission is to preserve and strengthen the traditions, languages, and art of Alaska's Native peoples through statewide collaboration, celebration, and education. Following ANHC's vision for "Thriving Alaska Native peoples and cultures respected and valued," we have implemented a robust research program titled *Lach'qu Sukdu*. As ANHC is the cultural representative of all Native peoples of Alaska, this program has focused on detailing the history and impact of both government-run and church-run Boarding Schools.

Although this history walks with all Alaska Natives, the call to healing is the reason why this work is so important. Yet, in order to understand the role of healing, we must first understand the truth of this history.

In line with ANHC's work and vision, we fully support the passing of HJR17.

Quyana,

Emily Edenshaw, PhD abd
President/CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center

Alaska Native Heritage Center's Lach'qu Sukdu Research Program

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) is a statewide 501(c)(3) educational and cultural organization located in Anchorage, Alaska, whose mission is to preserve and strengthen the traditions, languages, and art of Alaska's Native peoples through statewide collaboration, celebration, and education. Following ANHC's vision for "Thriving Alaska Native peoples and cultures respected and valued," we have implemented a robust research program titled *Lach'qu Sukdu*. As ANHC is the cultural representative of all Native peoples of Alaska, this program has focused on detailing the history and impact of both government-run and church-run Boarding Schools.

We are humbled to share that ANHC has gained access to church-run repositories which have remained hidden for more than 140 years. To our knowledge, no other organization or federal entity in North America has successfully accessed, indexed, and interpreted these records, which have been uncovered through the operation of Lach'qu Sukdu. The primary element discovered in this endeavor is that ecclesial institutions have served a previously uninterpreted and substantial role in government-run and church-run Boarding Schools. For example, our research shows ecclesial entities designed the system, which was implemented through a joint effort executed by governmental and ecclesial institutions. Lach'qu Sukdu is advancing ANHC's mission and vision by bringing truth to our communities seeking education and healing through truth-telling. Ultimately, our goal for this research has been to bring healing to Indigenous communities, for truth is the first step in knowing what needs to be healed.

Through the interpretation of this previously unknown past, *Lach'qu Sukdu* has identified how structures of violence were created through government-run and church-run Boarding Schools. These structures still exist today and have been instrumental in the continual oppression of Alaska Native peoples directly linked to the MMIWG crisis. Our research has also shown that the experiences of Alaska Native peoples and our communities played a significant role in the broader context of the colonization of Indigenous peoples in North America. Alaska was ground zero for colonization which utilized educational and ecclesial systems. Our research also shows that Sheldon Jackson (Secretary of Education for Alaska) was working closely with Carlisle Industrial School, who, as you know, housed thousands of Indigenous children.

Lach'qu Sukdu has started the process of detailing this history through analytical writings. ANHC has also engaged with Tribal entities to help elucidate sparsely detailed histories. These activities have led to ANHC serving as a leader in church-run and government-run Boarding School research in North America. Lach'qu Sukdu also held the first Indigenous Boarding School Research Convening, wherein the organization displayed our work and shared information with key stakeholders. The long-term impact of this work will reverberate through an international community of Indigenous peoples impacted by colonization. In these early stages it has been identified that there are significant connections between Indigenous boarding schools, resource extraction, missing and murdered Indigenous peoples, and clear partnerships between church and governmental institutions.

In addition to our research work through Lach'qu Sukdu, ANHC is leading multiple boarding school projects, such as construction and raising of the first Alaska Native Boarding School Healing Totem, developing the first Alaska Native Boarding School Infographic, and distributing the first community-wide survey focused on the utilization of social services by boarding school survivors and descendants.

Guided by the understanding that Alaska Native people are the closest to the work in Alaska, ANHC has engaged with a variety of stakeholders in this process, including but not limited to the Alaska Federation of Natives, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) the Presbyterian Church (USA), the American Baptist Church, the World Council of Churches, National Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition, Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies, The Alutiiq Museum, Senator Murkowski's office, First Alaskans Institute, and more. Current tribal partners include Chickaloon, Knik, Skagway Tribal Council, Sealaska Heritage Institute, Kawerak, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, Kenaitze, and Eklutna.

II. Various ANHC Timeline,& Boarding School Primary Sources

TIMELINE



“Those Who Came from the Sky”-Our Future

- Age of healing where our peoples can and will thrive

Revitalization Era (1945-Current)

- 1945-Elizabeth Peratrovich Anti-Discrimination Bill
- 1969-Boarding School Policy is Disassembled
- 1973-ANCSA
- 2024-Boarding School Truth and Healing Bill Comes to the Senate Floor

American Era/Boarding Schools and US Colonization (1867-Current

- 1867-Alaska Purchased by the United States
- 1877-Ft. Wrangell school taken over by Sheldon Jackson (First off reservation boarding school)
- 1880-Comity Plan occurs in NYC
- 1885-Jackson becomes secretary of Education (language becomes restricted, children forced to attend, etc.)
- 1932-BIA Takes over education of the Alaska Native population

Contact/ The Russian Era

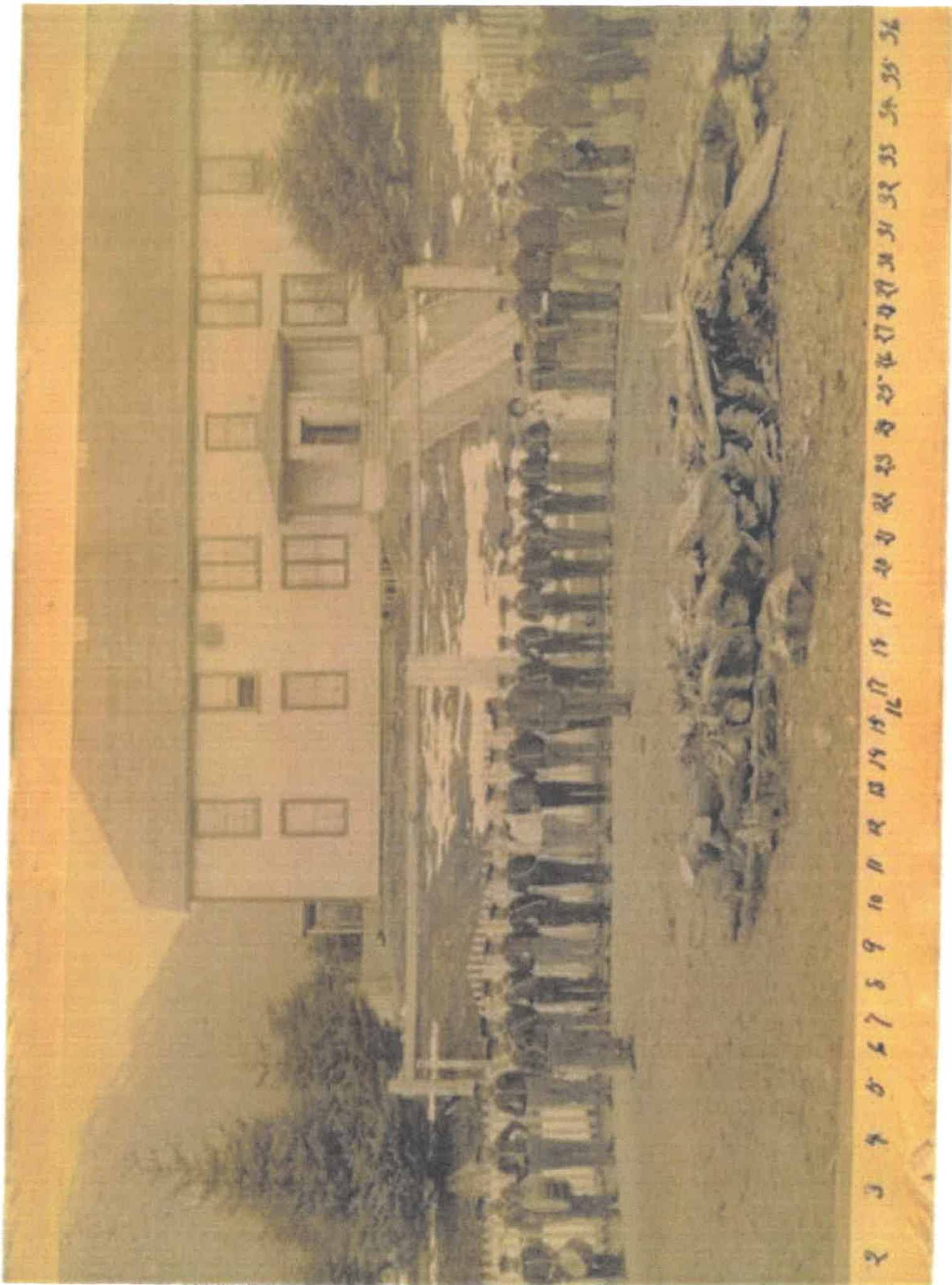
- 1732-Mikhail Gvozdev made contact with Alaska and Alaska Native Peoples/Right to Discovery
- 1741-Right of Occupation Established by Vitas Bering
- Birth of Furtrade-Wrecked havoc on Alaska Native peoples, cultures, and traditions
- 1786-First School opened in Kodiak by Grigori Shelikhov, considered the “founder of the Russian Colonies” in AK

The Roots (Since Time and Memorial)

- Who we are and our history as Alaska Native stretching out for over 10,000 years of knowledge and being
 - Deeper than colonization or it's effects
 - Defined by the land and our Ancestors

EARLY PHOTO OF SITKA INDUSTRIAL INDIAN SCHOOL WITH CHILDREN IN MILITARY UNIFORMS

-Jackson, Sheldon (1893) *Sheldon Jackson Papers*. Sheldon Jackson Collection. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.



2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36

**1878 DOCUMENTATION
CONCERNING FUNDING
OF FORT WRANGEL
BOARDING SCHOOL
THROUGH THE
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

\$

Shares.

BEHOLD,
I bring you good tidings
of great Joy,
For unto you is born
A SAVIOR,
which is Christ, the Lord.



AS
Ye have done it unto
one of the least
of these
Ye have done it
unto Me.

ALASKA BUILDING ASSOCIATION.

This Certifies, That

has contributed *for the erection of a*
Presbyterian Mission Chapel and Home at Fort Wrangel, Alaska.

Countersigned by

Sheldon Jackson,

Superintendent Presbyterian Missions for Colorado, New
Mexico, Montana, Wyoming and Utah.

Ladies' Board of Missions of the Presbyterian Church.



HEATHEN DANCE. ALASKA.

**1893 MAP OF
AUTHORIZED BOARDING
SCHOOL LOCATIONS BY
THE GENERAL AGENT OF
EDUCATION IN ALASKA,
SHELDON JACKSON**

-Jackson, Sheldon (1893) *Sheldon Jackson Papers, Reports Concerning the Introduction of the Reindeer into Alaska - "Report on Introduction of Domestic Reindeer into Alaska."*
Sheldon Jackson Collection. Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

**“A PRISONER” DRAWING
BY UNANGAX GIRL
JESSIE LEE HOME,
UNALASKA**

-United Methodist Church (2000) *A great physician who loved and served The Great
Physician: Albert Warren Newhall, M.D.* United Methodist Church:Unalaska.

How did their classmates evaluate Bert and the rosy cheeked maiden?

Then comes the next one, like her there is none.
 She is stout and fresh as a rose.
 You've but to say "blush" and the blood it will rush
 From the roots of her hair to her toes.
 She is quite healthy looking and good on the cooking,
 And she washes and hangs up the clothes.

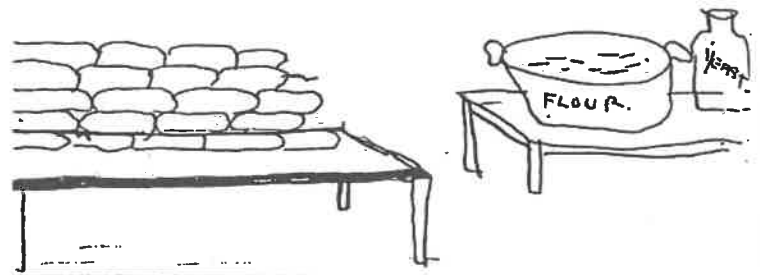
(Agnes L. Sowle)

The "professor" in "tonic"; he's dead set upon it.
 He has patience and faith to be sure,
 For squeaking and squalling and dread catawalling
 Are the things he has to endure.
 But to conquer he means on the strength of baked beans
 For he is a Boston man pure.

(A. W. Newhall)

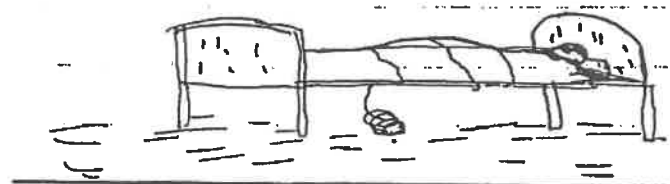
Having read several anecdotes which Bert recalled quite clearly,
 what memories might Agnes have? A few include:

Too much yeast in her attempt at making bread, ending with
 21 loaves.



"BREAD ENOUGH AND TO SPARE."

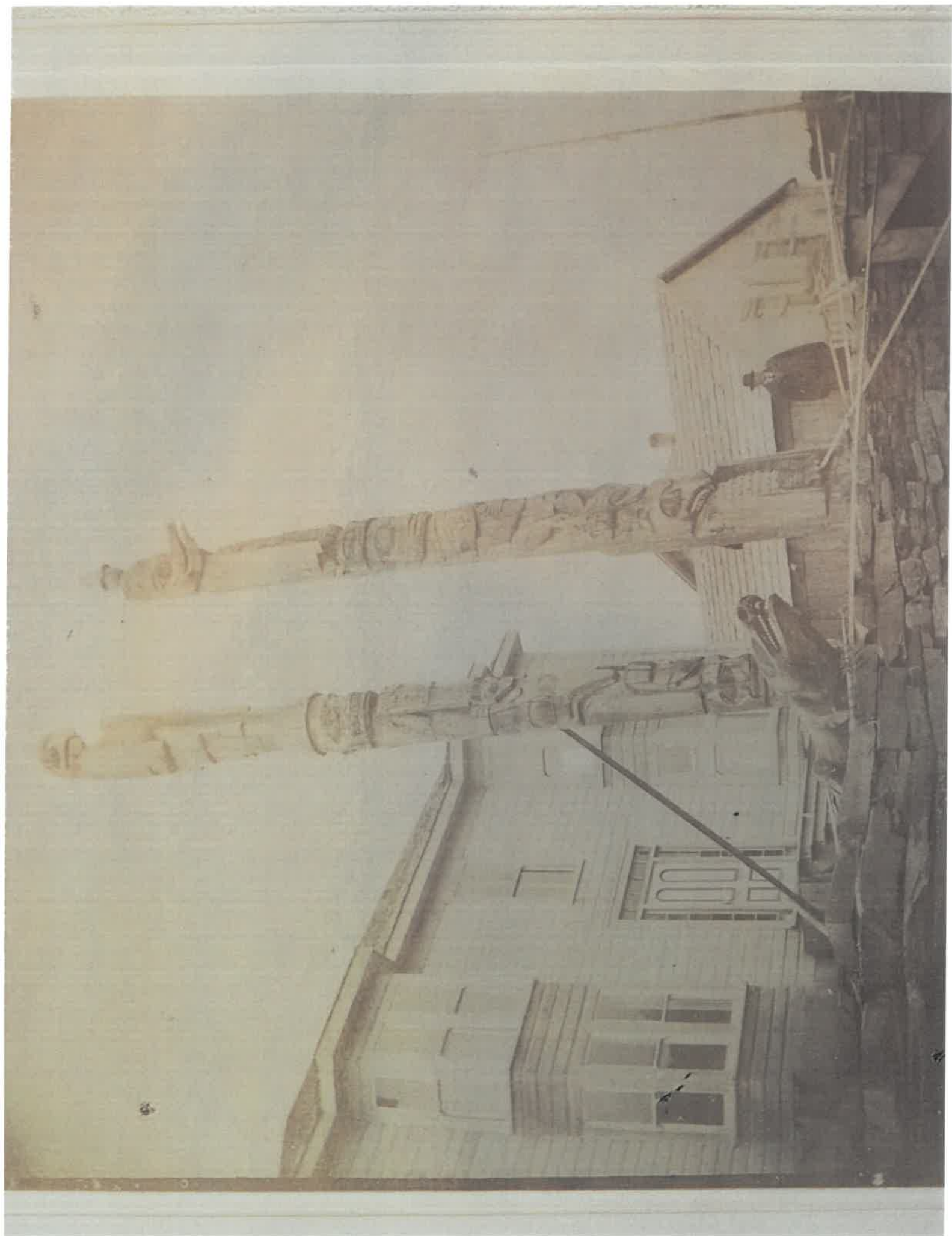
Awakening to find herself tied to the bed so she wouldn't
 start her Saturday washing chores as early as 3:30 a.m.



"A PRISONER."

**RICHARD H. PRATT
(CARLISLE INDUSTRIAL
INDIAN SCHOOL) VISITS
FT. WRANGEL BOARDING
SCHOOL**

-Pratt, Richard *Richard Henry Pratt Papers WA MSS S, 1174, Box 37.* Yale Beinecke
Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: New Haven.



**ALASKA NATIVE CHILD
BROUGHT TO CARLISLE
BY RICHARD H. PRATT
(POTENTIAL)**

-Pratt, Richard H. *Richard Henry Pratt Papers WA MSS S, 1174, Box 37.* Yale Beinecke
Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: New Haven.



“LABOR CAMP” EKLUTNA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

-Everett-Bragaw *Labor Camp, Everett-Bragaw and Anchorage Museum Collections nd,
folder 6. Anchorage Museum Collections, Anchorage, AK.*



**“CHEAPER TO CONVERT
THE INDIAN THAN IT IS
TO SHOOT HIM”-
METHODIST
REPRESENTATIVE, JOHN
REID**

-Jackson, Sheldon (1875-1884) *Sheldon Jackson Papers, Series V: Scrapbooks, 1875-1884.*
Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

that it is cheaper on the single ground of dollars and cents, it is cheaper to convert the Indian than it is to shoot him. We have found that it costs less money to enlighten, convert and civilize the Indian than it does to improve him off the face of the earth. We have been trying it there with what we call the "Mounted Police." We send them out into the northwest territory. And, now, I do not wish to be misunderstood. I suppose that you probably suppose that we send them to keep down the Indians. We did not need to do anything of the kind, because the missionary had been there twenty years before, but we had to send the mounted police force out there to protect the Indian against the mischievous, rascally whisky dealer, and I can endorse what Dr. Reid said this morning, that one faithful missionary among the Indians is worth a whole regiment of troops. Now, there were a few occasions out in our northwest territory when things did look a little uncertain. Now, as long as everything is smooth and pleasant, and there is no difficulty in getting along, you will always find in my country the politician to the front, but when there was trouble threatened with the Indians, the politicians took a back seat and sent for the missionary to see what he could do, and sent him out where no politician dared to go to try to settle the difficulties which were looming up. There was no difficulty in doing that, because the Indian knew that he was his friend and he could trust to what he said.

There has been a blessed work of converting grace among the Indian tribes of that part of the country, both east and west of the lakes and mountains. Away out on the Pacific coast there was a mission organized among the Shishin Indians, by a man whose name is Thomas Crosby. There is now there a native church of over three hundred members. But the point I want to touch upon is this: That good brother came home on a visit from that distant coast a few years ago, and he did a very wise thing: He took back a good wife, a young lady of great accomplishments and personal beauty, fitted to shine in any society. Hearing the call from that distant post, she went with the missionary to labor with him there in that glorious work, and there, six hundred miles from the nearest white woman and from the nearest physician, she labored—I will not merely say without a murmur or complaint, but in all her letters were expressions of joyfulness and gratitude that she was permitted to labor up among that people.

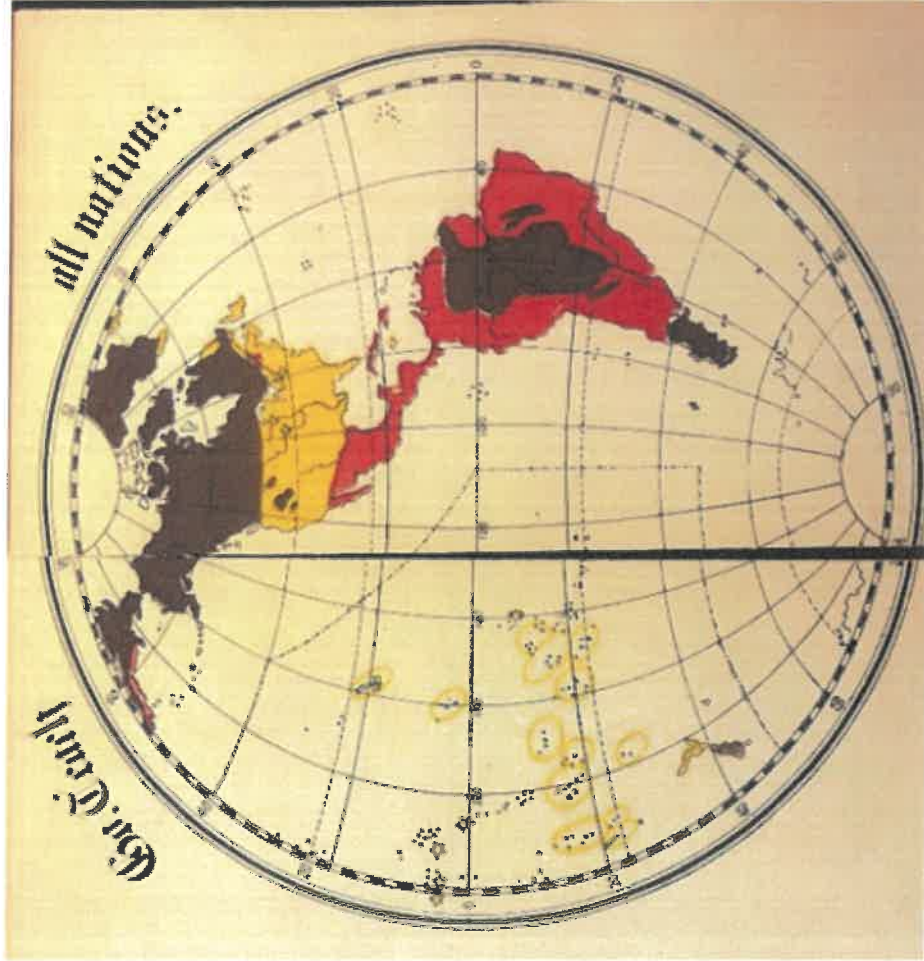
Those Indians might set an example in some things. They are expected to be at service just at the right time in the morning, or in the afternoon, as the case may be. When the time comes for the service they lock the door, and no one can enter until the whole service is concluded.

There are the aged ones, and those waiting on the sick that cannot come, and as soon as the service is over, they set out and go from house to house, and before the day is over, there is no one, young or old, in the entire settlement of nearly 1,000 that does not hear the Gospel preached as it was uttered in the morning service by the preacher. Some of the Indians went to Fort Randall, in your Territory of Alaska. They went to work for the Lord, began to hold prayer meetings among their people, and some of them were influenced and brought to Christ. The commander of Fort Randall gave them all the encouragement he could, and placed the largest room at their disposal, and after a time he wrote to Thomas Crosby, at Fort Simpson, saying: "These are wonderful boys of yours that have been out here. Can't there be a missionary sent up here to Fort Randall?" Those boys worked out there during the winter, and in the spring, when they were thinking of returning again to where they lived before, they said: "It will never do to leave this work." They consulted together, and at last the conclusion was reached that one of them would go to another place and work and raise the supplies, and his fellow would stop at Fort Randall and carry on God's work among his degraded countrymen there. He wrote to the Methodist Board, "Can't you send a missionary to Fort Randall?" and the answer was about like this, "We have got all on our hands we can do. We can not send a missionary. The Presbyterians talked it over and they thought they must do something, and they said, 'Yes, we will send somebody to Fort Randall;' but when they found him it was a woman, [Laughter] and Mrs. McFarland went out single-handed there to Fort Randall to hold aloft the banner of Christ, and to gather in those that were degraded and down-trodden.

Now, we are trying in my country to induce the women of our church to take up a certain portion of this work, peculiarly suited to them, and they are beginning to take hold of it. It is somewhat singular that our Women's Missionary Society is just about the same age as that in connection with which we have met

HEATHEN MISSIONARY MAP BY AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS

-Women's Board of Missions (1873-1922) *Life and Light for Women. Woman's Board of Missions 1873-1922*, American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions: Boston.



**SHELDON JACKSON
DOCUMENT
CONCERNING DEGREE
OF ALASKA NATIVE
“CIVILIZATION”**

-Jackson, Sheldon and Princeton Theological Seminary *The Sheldon Jackson Manuscript
Collection (Concerning Alaska)*. Princeton Theological Seminary Library, Princeton.

Unalaska District

Includes all of Alaska not comprised
in the Sitka and Juneau Districts.

Population

Civilized Whites	137
" Aleuts	2145
" Creoles	1526, 2308

Uncivilized

" Inuit (Eskimo)	17617
" Tutch (Chudina)	5913 = 23530
Total	27338.

Total for Alaska 34,708.

Very truly yours

Sheldon Jackson

U. S. Govt. Agent