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Att. Bettina Boxall Los Angeles Times Staff Writer.
Dear Bettina.

These are my views and mine alone on these issues.
I read with interest the story in the Los Angeles Times on Monday April 26th. 1999.
Titled "Somber Reunion at Manzanar". There is always something being written on the
"Internment" of the Japanese during World War 11. So it is never forgotten. As is the
"Holocaust" story is told on the devastating crime perpetrated against the Jewish people
during World War 11. This story is what inspired me to write my story on the Indian
Residential Schools.

This is not just another typical John Wayne cowboy and Indian War movie story.
This is my "Personal Anguish" on how the Indian Children of Canada and the United
States were treated in the Indian Residential Schools in both Countries. We need and
want our story to be told. As the Japanese Internment story is told, which lasted only a
few years. I am not trying to belittle the fact that they were interned only a few years this
not my intent. I do and understand their "Anguish", it should be told and retold, same as
the "Holocaust" story should be told over and over.

If I had one "Wish" it would be to see Canada and the United States have the same
prevailing attitude on the Indian Children who were in the Indian Residential Schools of
both countries. And tell our story year after year in the newspapers as they do on all the
other stories, so that the history of what happened in the Indian Residential Schools of
Canada and the United States is never "Forgotten".

Some of the older interned Japanese people didn't want there stories told, how can the
Japanese and the American public really for-get these stories, it's published in the
newspapers every year on the anniversary. I agree and these stories should be told.

Audrey Tawa's statement she finds it difficult to grasp, "It seems almost unimaginable
to me that something like that could happen in the United States".

It's unimaginable to me why Audrey and the American or the Canadian public can't
read and know and learn on what happened to the Indian Children in the Indian
Residential Schools of Canada and the United States. Why were the Indian Children
taken from there parents and put in these Residential Schools, "Why is my Question". It
was just as prevalent in both countries, "Why". All though I was not taken, I was sent by
my aunt because of the poverty that was so prevalent on the Reservation at the time. I

have to believe she thought she was sending me to a place, where I would be treated right.

So I was sent to "Shingwauk Indian Residential school" in Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Canada, 350 miles from my home. As far as I'm concerned it was a School of "Hell", I just don't know else to put it, I will have no one tell me otherwise, as bad as most of us were treated. And what I can't really comprehend or understand is, why were a few treated so well. By these so called missionaries and the rest of us were treated so terribly bad, and yet we were all in the same school, very mind boggling.

As bad as the Japanese feel about being interned for a few years, again I'm not belittling that fact, I feel they were more fortunate than we were for what we as children went through in these Residential Schools. My school Shingwauk I.R.S. was in Canada, I spent 11 years there, and there were still others who were there longer than my 11 years.

Our story goes back well before the turn of the century. The last Indian Residential School in Canada was closed in the 1980's. Most people will never know the effects on the Indian Children of Canada that was so immense and so devastating to them as Children and later as adults.

The Indian people including my self never told anyone what we went through. We were too ashamed and so humiliated we kept it in our hearts. We felt no one would ever believe us. Because these were Church people who did these terrible things to us. That's why so many people don't want to believe us to this day. These people keep insisting were making these stories up.

These were Government Indian Schools run by the Catholic, Anglican, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches. Now that the Indian people and myself are now speaking out on what happen to us in the Residential Schools, in Canada they call it "Breaking the Silence". My "Silence" lasted 52 years before I started writing and talking on my experiences. Through some 40 years of marriage I Told my wife a couple of incidents of my school life, she never said anything she just listened, it was after our first reunion she confessed to me, I really didn't believe you when you told me those things, I thought you were making those things up, after the reunion she told me I really believe you now.

We may not have had guard towers or barbwire around our schools, none the less we were not allowed to leave or go away, the girls were penned in all the time except for their supervised walks. The boys were allowed to roam the bushes except when the bell rang then we had to come back. The only time we left was when we ran away, when we got caught we were brought back and severely punished [Beaten, Whipped] is more like it, then they shaved our heads ball to remind the people that we were the ones who ran away, that didn't stop us from running away, my two attempts ended in failure I guess I just wasn't meant to escape from Shingwauk. There were no guards with guns as there were with the Japanese people in the camps. This is what's been so hard for me to understand and comprehend all these many years. These were suppose to be Christian Church Missionaries who were doing the beating and the whippings. This is why people don't want to believe us because were talking about church people, they think were lying and making these horror stories up.

I just recently met two ladies who went to the Indian Residential Schools of Canada, one went to Shingwauk where I went, but many years after I left, She told me when the girls wet their beds they shove their faces into the wet bedding, the other girl told me she got sick at the dinner table and threw up into her food, the nuns made her eat the food and

her vomit, she was not alone on this they also made any other girls who got sick at the dinner table eat their food. This girl wrote a book called "Out of the Depth's", the food incident is documented in her book also bed wetting punishment in her school is mention in her book. There are so many other horror stories that can be told from all the other Indian residential Schools of Canada. A few of these stories are now being told in Canada.

You never read year after year in the newspapers about the Indian Residential Schools of Canada or the United States. You will how ever read about the Japanese internment, the Holocaust, World Wars 1 and 2 and all other wars since then and before. Also on all other natural disasters on their anniversaries. I also understand and sympathize with the Japanese Americans who lost all their Possessions, at their internment during World War 11. I am not faulting these annual news stories in the news papers.

How ever what you do read on the American Indian is how they "Massacred" this wagon family and Gen. George Armstrong Custer and the seventh cavalry, why wasn't it ever a great Indian "Victory" instead of the "Massacre" of Gen. Geo. Custer and the seventh cavalry. Also the great John Wayne gunning down fifty Indians with one six shooter.

I still can not comprehend what the United States army did at Wounded Knee, to me that incident was a 100 times worse then the killing of Gen. Custer at the Little Big Horn. As I see it they were two armies fighting a war to see who would win. The Wounded Knee incident was and out right "Massacre" and Slaughter of Immense proportions by the United States army against Indian men, especially against the "Women and Children" of the "Sioux Nation". How very sad and tragic for all the Indian people.

My story and my intent is to try and make the public of the United States and Canada aware of what happened to the Indian Children in the Indian Residential Schools. My personal story has to do with the Canadian Residential Schools. It was cultural genocide in both countries. I can attest to Canada what we as children went through in the Residential Schools, we were subjected to "Physical,Sexual,Cultural and Emotional" abuse. The abuse was so very horrific for those of us who were abused as children.

Why does it always have to be so "Hush, Hush" on the Indian Residential School problem. When everything else is printed in the newspapers year after year as a constant reminder. Or is the shame so great it can't be reported or repeated in our newspapers.

My shame was done in Canada, it is now being printed in the newspapers because of the many Law Suits being filed in Canada against the Churches and the Canadian Government.

We as "Survivors" of the Residential Schools need and want our story to be told, in the same professional manner as the other stories are told. Our numbers are also dwindling as with the Japanese and the Holocaust Survivors. Again I say their stories are not asked to be told, they are told annually so no one will ever forget what was done to these people. As a survivor why can't the Indian Residential School story be told just once, I would hope our story can be told annually, if not let it be told semi annually

I have written my Memoirs of my life and Time spent at Shingwauk Indian Residential School, between the ages of five and sixteen during the years of 1933 and 1944. At Sault Ste. Marie Ontario Canada, and other related stories I have written, I will also add this letter to the Los angeles Times to my portfolio.

I will also send you my letter I have written to the Honorable Jane Stewart Minister of Indian Affairs of Canada. It has good information on how I feel and think. It also contains Several stories I have written on different people. It also has the story I wrote on the Japanese Canadians on their internment on page four.

I hope I hear that my story will be told and printed in the Loa Angeles Times, so that future generations can read and learn and know on how the Indian Children were treated in the Indian Residential Schools of Canada. It was just as prevalent in the American Indian Residential Schools. I have met one person who was in an Indian school in Wisconsin, She told me those Nuns use to beat them all the time, she was also forced to forget her language, like I was too. Maybe the real reason our stories are not or won't be told is because of the Church people that are involved. I just don't know how else to put it. This inhuman and calamitous treatment perpetrated on the Indian children of Canada and the United States. As my former nemesis Bernice Logan called these Residential School workers "Missionaries" [Missionaries Hell????]

With that in mind I will end my letter to you Bettina Boxall.
May the great "Spirit" for ever watch over us and guide us on the road to "Remembrance"
Yours Truly Meegwetch [Thank you]

Donald H Sands