

May 20, 2022

TESTIMONY REQUESTED FROM INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL SURVIVORS AND THEIR DECENDENTS

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To: HOUSE NATURAL RESOURCE SUBCOMMITTEE for INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

The legislation called: "Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act."

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Both of my parents were Odawa or Ottawa Indians. Both were born in Michigan and lived their all their lives. My mother (Shirley Mae Shomin Crampton – 4/18/22) and father (Robert Jacques Crampton – 08/03/06 was listed as being born around 1906 and is listed on the Durant Roll of 1910. It is suggested that he was born in the Hart Michigan area. But some have stated he was from another area. BIA states he was full Ottawa or Odawa Indian as was my mother.

My father was taken from his home and enrolled in Mount Pleasant Indian Boarding School. His Nokomis did not want him put in there, so she would go and get him. This went on for a few years and finally they gave up. Dad only went to the third grade and Mother went to ninth grade.

Dad taught himself to read and write and was quite successful with only the skills he had established.

My mother's situation was a little different, her mother was a widow and worked as a maid for the Perry Hotel in Petoskey, Michigan. Because of her circumstances, she was unable to care for her children and work. She took the children, my mother, her brother and sister to Harbor Springs Indian Boarding School, Mi which was just across the bay. (my Grandmother went to Harbor Springs Indian Boarding school back when she was young). She sat them on a bench and told them she would be back for them, they were 4 – 2 - 6 years of age. My mother said they sat there almost all day and then a nun came and took them to wash up and change their clothes.

As far as treatment at the Harbor Springs, Mi Indian Boarding School, they did indeed get three meals a day and clean clothes, and clean beds to sleep in. But my mother could not speak English and she was punished often until she slowly picked up the English language. The nuns had very strict rules and the punishment was severe.

They continued to go there and then one year, there was no room, so Gramma took them to Mount Pleasant Indian Boarding School – they were enrolled. Not sure how many years they were at this school.

My father was not a welcome addition at the school because he was constantly running away or his Nokomis would sneak him out. But he did get three meals a day and clean clothes, and they worked at teaching him skills.

My family went to Harbor Springs, when they were tearing it down. Sad time. My parents preferred to not talk about this.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Theresa Crampton Goodwin

