

Joanne Faulkner

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Dear Committee-

John Tiaoksan

Baptise Gabe

Louis Agard Jr,

Frank Black Hawk

Joseph Archambault

Fidelia Walking Medicine

Rosa Bear Face

Jennie No Ears

Josephine McCarthy

Frances White Cow

The names above are the original children sent to the Hampton Normal and Agricultural School in October 1881 from the Standing Rock Reservation

My name is Joanne Faulkner, my great grandmother Pta Siu, also known as Frances White Cow (1866-1936) was one of the original children taken from the Standing Rock reservation and assimilated at The Hampton Normal and Agricultural School in 1881 in Hampton Virginia. Today this school is known as Hampton University, a historical Black college.

Frances and the others chosen to go to Hampton were chosen according to my grandmother because James McLaughlin, the Indian Agent, thought they were potential scholars. To my horror in my research of this topic the more likely answer was because the government chose the students based upon their parents standing in the tribe and could hold them hostage if they needed to.

Educated at Hampton from 1881-1884, Frances returned to Standing Rock and is the first schoolteacher at Ft Yates, teaching with Rosa Bear Face in a little white schoolhouse with a belfry located on the camp of a sect of Sitting Bulls band. Here she began to teach the English language to members of her tribe. According to my grandmother, "She taught men and women taller and older than she was. Her students were eager to learn, that was the beginning of her students to speak English."

Frances also participated in “outings” and was sent to the Berkshires, hosted a family in Tyringham, Massachusetts. According to the oral history Frances’ experiences were positive. My grandmother writes, “Mother and other girls were placed in wealthy homes in the summer months. She was with a family in Boston. She like the nice people and they corresponded for years after she came home. She used to tell us about her interesting experiences with this family.” Any negative experiences have been lost to silence.

Abuse and death happened from the beginning at the Hampton Normal and Agricultural School. Take the example of James Knocks Them Down and John Standing Cloud. According to Josephine McCarthy’s book “Witness: A Hunkpaha Historian’s Strong- Heart Song of the Lakotas” Hampton placed them with a former slave owner. They escaped and arrived back in the Fall 1882 to Sitting Bull’s camp on the Standing Rock reservation.

My grandmother, the daughter of Frances, Doris Murphy Faulkner passed away in 1999 at the age of 95. Her oral history that I discovered after her death talks about Frances’ experience at Hampton. This oral history is the only information I have passed down about Indian Residential Boarding Schools. This topic was never spoken about with my father. I had no idea that this what part of our family history (or that of American history) until I read her oral history and began to look into it. The irony of this is that I have lived in Chesapeake Virginia, 27 miles from Hampton University for 30 years. In addition, my father was stationed nearby in Norfolk Virginia while he was in the US Navy. My father recently stated to me that he had no idea where Frances was educated, how he was so close to Hampton University for so many years or the topic of abuse at Indian boarding schools until I started to research it and started asking questions. I guess my grandparents were successful in shielding/protecting their son. What was the result of Indian Residential Boarding Schools to our family? SILENCE. It was not spoken about.

My father recalls that his parents did not want him educated on the reservation. They saved their money and cut expenses to send him to boarding school at Wasatch Academy in Utah. My grandmother, Doris Murphy Faulkner, had the ability to see what the future held for her Indian son in the 1950’s. When he finished Wasatch Academy and joined the Navy, she told him to never come back to the reservation, there was nothing there for him. This **selfless** act changed the life of him and his future generations. My father, an enrolled member of the Standing Rock reservation at 86 years old is now starting to speak of the prejudices that followed him thru the US Navy. My father who is light skinned passed as white. Documented in his USN personnel jacket when I questioned him why he was listed as white. He response was “I don’t know” I am sure it was much easier to be listed as white.

I never asked my grandmother why she told my father to never come back, but my father says it was because of the times. And I have discovered that she was not the only mother to tell her children that. But with that decision possibly there was something that she did not think of in 1955. Amongst her papers I found a letter to him. This letter had enrollment papers she had sent him to enroll us in the Standing Rock reservation. Part of her letter, which included the papers and an addressed envelope stamped said “your children should know who they are” The paperwork was never sent. We currently do not meet the blood quantum requirements, but it appears he never tried. This course led us to be severely limited to the culture something I do not know my grandmother thought would happen. I must credit my grandmother for trying, but she lived in Wyoming and we lived in New Jersey so there was only so much that could be taught. We were given Indian names, beaded items and we knew/know we were American Indian..

When I began this genealogical journey, I knew quickly on that I could not change the past. I could only affect the future. I have learned this is not an American Indian problem, it is an American problem. The outings that the children were sent to include the Berkshires, rural Virginia, and the sea shore towns of NJ. Most likely the families involved in the outings have not passed this on in their family histories just as I assume the towns in rural Virginia, the Berkshires and the shore towns of NJ have little documentation of the students being part of the community.

Had Frances not gone to Hampton where would my family be today? Who knows? My father has always impressed on us to give back. This is my giving back, to not be silent on this topic, most citizens of the United States have no idea that this ever happened.

Hopefully this will soon be different.

Let the silence end and the healing begin.

Let us never forget