

Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe RE: National Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) H R Bill 5444

Testimony on behalf of the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama

Submitted by Vice Chief Nancy Carnley

The National Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS) H R Bill 5444

My ancestors attended boarding schools starting with the arrival of the Europeans to present-day Georgia by the Spanish and English. Also, we experienced boarding schools in Florida by the Spanish, and in Alabama from the Spanish, French, and English then by the Methodist, Baptist, and Catholic denominations. Then it progressed to the federal Indian Boarding School at Fort Mitchell, Alabama, and numerous locations in the state of Georgia. Also, we had to endure the “Creek Indian factories” operated by Indian Agent Benjamin Hawkins. The boarding schools, and Indian factories, have caused a great amount of grief and generational trauma to the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama Tribal people. Even today our children are singled out in public schools,

The Spanish missions in Georgia comprise a series of religious outposts established by Spanish Catholics to spread the Christian doctrine among the local Native Americans. The Spanish chapter of Georgia's earliest colonial history is dominated by the lengthy mission era, extending from 1568 through 1684. Catholic missions were the primary means by which Georgia's indigenous Native American tribal people were assimilated into the Spanish colonial system along the northern frontier of greater Spanish Florida.

- Mission San Pedro y San Pablo de Puturibato (1595–1597), on Cumberland Island
- San Buenaventura de Guadalquini (1605–1684), on St. Simons Island
- Mission San Diego de Satuache (c. 1610–1663), on the mouth of the Ogeechee River
- Mission San Joseph de Sapala (c. 1605–1684), on Sapelo Island
- San Lorenzo de Ibihica (c. 1620–1656), near Folkston
- San Pedro de Mocama (1587–c. 1660), on Cumberland Island
- Mission San Phelipe de Alava (c. 1610–c. 1670), on the North Newport River
- Mission San Phelipe II (c. 1670–1684), on Cumberland Island
- Santa Catalina de Guale (1602–1702), on St. Catherines Island, Sapelo Island, and Amelia Island
- Mission Santa Clara de Tupiqui/Espogache (1595–c. 1670), on the Sapelo River
- Mission Santa Cruz de Cachipile (c. 1625–1657), near Lake Park, Georgia
- Santa Isabel de Utinahica (c. 1610–c. 1640), at the forks of the Altamaha River
- Mission Santa Maria de los Angeles de Arapaja (c. 1625–1657), on the Alapaha River

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- Mission Santiago de Oconi (c. 1620–1656), on the Okefenokee Swamp
- Mission Santo Domingo de Asao/Talaje (1595–1661), at the mouth of the Altamaha River
- Mission Santo Domingo de Asao/Talaje II (1661–1684), on St. Simons Island
- Mission Talapo (1595–1597), on the mainland near Sapelo Island
- Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Tolomato (1595–1597), on the mainland near St. Catherines Island

Florida Missions:

- Apalo
- Santa Ana de Potano
- San Antón de Carlos (Calusa)
- San Antonio de Anacape/Enacape (Agua Dulce/Utina)
- San Antonio de Bacuqua (Apalachee)
- Asunción de Puerto (Chatot)
- San Agustín de Ahoica
- San Agustín de Urihica
- San Blás de Avino (Acuera)
- San Buenaventura de Guadalquini (moved to St. Johns River as Santa Cruz y San Buenaventura de Guadalquini)
- San Buenaventura de Potano
- San Carlos de los Chacatos
- San Carlos de Yatcatani
- Santa Catalina de Afuerica (Northern Utina)
- Santa Catalina de Guale (St. Catherines Island, Sapelo Island and Amelia Island, in succession)
- Santa Clara de Tupiqui (Sapelo River)
- Cofa (mouth of Suwannee River)
- La Concepción de Ayubale (Ayubale)
- Santa Cruz de Ajohica

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- Santa Cruz de Cachipile (Arapaha)
- Santa Cruz de Capoli
- Santa Cruz de Tarihica (Northern Utina)
- San Damián de Cupaica (... de Cupahica) (... de Escambi)
- San Diego de Helaca/Laca, later moved to San Diego de Salamototo (on St. Johns River)
- San Diego de Satuache (Guale)
- Santo Domingo de Asao (Guale)
- Santo Domingo de Talaje (Altamaha River)
- Santa Elena
- Santa Elena de Machaba (Yustaga)
- La Encarnación a la Santa Cruz de Sábacola (Chatot)
- Santa Fe de Toloca/Teleco/Toloco
- San Felipe de Athulutheca
- San Francisco de Chuaquin (Arapaha)
- San Francisco de Oconi
- San Francisco de Potano (Potano)
- San Ildefonso de Chamini/Chamile (Arapaha)
- Santa Isabel de Utinahica
- San Joseph de Escambe (San José de Escambe) (Apalachee)
- San Joseph de Ocuya (San José de Ocuya)
- San Joseph de Sapala (San José de Zapala) (Sapelo Island)
- San Juan de Aspalaga
- San Juan (de) Guacara (on the Suwannee River)
- San Juan del Puerto
- San Lorenzo de Ibihica
- San Lorenzo de Ivitachuco (Apalachee)

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- Santa Lucia de Acuera
- San Luis de Apalachee (Tallahassee), a U.S. National Historic Landmark
- San Luis de Eloquale (Acuera)
- San Luis de Talimali (Apalachee)
- Santa María
- Santa María de Ayubale (Apalachee)
- Santa María de Loreto (Tequesta)
- Santa María de los Angeles de Arapaha
- Santa Maria de Sena, on Amelia Island
- San Martín de Asunción de Puerto (Chatot)
- San Martín de Timucua/Ayacutu/Ayaocuto
- San Martín de Tomole (Apalachee)
- San Matheo de Tolapatafi (Yustaga)
- San Miguel de Asile (Yustaga)
- San Miguel de Potano
- San Nicolás de Tolentino (Chatot)
- Nombre de Dios
- Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de Tolomato
- San Pedro de Mocama (Cumberland Island)
- San Pedro do los Chines
- San Pedro y San Pablo de Patale (San Pedro de Patali)
- San Pedro y San Pablo de Potohiriba (San Pedro de Potohiriba) (Yustaga)
- La Purificación de Tama
- San Salvador de Mayaca
- Santiago de Oconi (near the Okefenokee Swamp)
- San Sebastian

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Alabama: The Spanish missions were located in the southern part of Alabama no specific location for these sites has been identified. However, we know that the French had sites near present-day Wetumpka and Montgomery.

Georgia Sites: The first Indian Boarding School was operated above Savannah at Irene which was operated by the Moravians, Due to the War between Spain and England it was closed. Today it is buried under the Savannah port.

The others were at the various forts in Georgia. The majority of the education and training was done under the Methodist. The Georgia forts are as follows: Fort Hawkins was a fort including an Indian factory was located near present-day Macon, Georgia.

Fort Lawrence site is exactly unknown however researchers place the site near present-day Francisville, Georgia.

Fort Wilkinson on the Oconee River, near Milledgeville, a fort along with the Indian factory

Florida Forts was primarily used for defense against the Creeks and Seminoles.

Alabama Forts:

Fort Mitchell was a military fort and was a boarding school known as Asbury Indian School. The Methodists provided the education and training.

The next site is located in Henry County, Alabama near present-day Edwin Community. The name has always in our oral history has been Asbury. Levin Wright attended this school became ill returned home and died

Thank you for embarking on the important task of gathering information on the tragedies created by the Indian Boarding Schools, a darkly misguided policy aimed at destroying culture, assimilating children, and, ultimately, erasing tribal existence in the United States. While the program may have fallen short of its ultimate goal, the damage it inflicted lives with us today, even if the original young victims do not.

The effects stay with us today, in broken family ties, losses of language and culture, and, ironically, continued erasure. The Eastern Tribes (Creek, Cherokee, Choctaw, Lumbee, and others) were the first to receive the impacts of colonization, domination, and forced assimilation. Because we are first contact tribes, the earliest governmental interactions were with colonizing powers, given to state oversight and a more generalized federal neglect. Our tribal people have struggled for decades to renew relationships with the federal government and to invoke the continued federal trust responsibility. In the past decades, some of our first contact tribes have secured federal acknowledgment through Administrative or legislative action, but many of us are still waiting. As a result, the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama and other tribes are not invited to participate directly informal consultation with the Department of Interior. As a state tribe, we continue to object to this exclusion of many of our tribal governments. Indeed, we are disturbed that our tribe itself has not been invited to participate, as it was

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during the Obama administration. In this instance, based on the violation of the human rights of indigenous children and their families, we find the injustice to be particularly outrageous.

The Boarding School policy of assimilation and erasure was not fastidious about the federal status of the Tribes of the children and families it victimized. For decades, children from our Tribes and others (recognized only in the past two decades) attended boarding schools from the European dominance to the United States and the passage of the Indian Civilization Act of 1819, which did not lead to civilizing our ancestors, this led to destroying our families, and culture. They attended State schools and church schools, alongside the children of other tribal communities. They were subject to dehumanizing efforts aimed at the erasure of tribal culture and identity. They arrived bearing blood quantum labels and ties to communities that were already in crisis from years of governmental pressure and neglect. When they returned home, our children learned that the tribal ties they cherished were wholly devalued by the United States and continue so to this day. Over time, the federal government sought to improve some of the worst elements of the boarding schools. At the same time, the doors of those improved schools were closed to our children. We are grateful the Department of the Interior has begun the Indian Boarding School Initiative, to compile the truth about the continuing effects of the shameful policy of consigning generations of tribal children to prison-like conditions in institutions purposefully designed to obliterate language, culture, and traditions, including the systematic mistreatment many children that whose injuries, deaths, and burial places are only now being counted. As that Initiative continues, we urge the Department to ensure that it addresses the effect on all the children. Our children went to those schools from Tribal communities that bore and still bear years of struggle against assimilation. For them, the school experience was an official continuation of policies intended to erase what remained of our identities. If they returned, they did so to rejoin a struggle that continues, to this day, to defy erasure. Excluding non-federal tribes from the consultation process myopically limits the focus of the investigation and silences the voices of an entire class of children and their families

The Department's Initiative has only recently begun, including the recent listening sessions and current opportunity to submit written comments. The investigation must reach as broadly as the original apparatus did to collect children. We urge the Secretary to ensure that the scope of the inquiry is adequate to encompass our ancestors, our children who were victims of this process, and the continuing effect on our communities. Although the Department of the Interior has not yet included some of our tribes on its list of federally recognized entities, the United States surely considered our children fair targets for its boarding school program, and we are the ones who must speak for those children now.

Story: My Maternal side of the family has told me where they were kept in what they referred to as Reynolds Penitentiary on the Dale and Henry County lines. Many died from diseases cleaning the Indian out. None of the elders would go into details except that their ancestors said it was a living nightmare around the clock. My father spoke of going to school in Covington County and would get a paddling every day for not speaking plain English. The Covington County Board of Education has no record of this school, but through research, it has been narrowed down to Thompson or Lime Creek School. As recently as 1995, the White students and the School administration were assaulting Indian children

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would not stop until the United States Justice Department Civil Rights Division Department of Education investigated and stopped the harassment.

In conclusion, The Federal Boarding School initiative is an ambitious undertaking, and should not, through arbitrary distinctions, exclude the experiences of hundreds of affected indigenous children. For all federally and non-federally recognized tribes who have achieved federal acknowledgment, their children count, even if they might have been officially overlooked while their status was less clear. Regardless of the delays in achieving tribal acknowledgment, all of our children count. The acknowledgment process is a conversation for another time. Our children endured the shameful federal policies designed to erase our present existence. Their treatment, as indigenous children, subject to the misguided assimilation program of the federal government, is no less a breach of the federal trust than it was for their schoolmates. The Boarding School Initiative should not exclude them now. Please ensure that the ongoing inquiry seeks out and includes input from all affected children and their communities. All tribes regardless of recognition status should be included in the fact-finding mission. Also, religious organizations and foreign countries should be held accountable for their transactions. The current educational systems need to be evaluated for fairness toward our children.

On behalf of the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama, we would like to thank the task force committee and the Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States,” for having the hearing and reading our inputs.

Submitted on behalf of the Ma-Chis Lower Creek Indian Tribe of Alabama

By Vice Chief Nancy Carnley'

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