

My name is Augustina Warledo-Rodriguez. I am a full blood of The Seminole Nation Of Oklahoma. I am 79 years old.

In the summer of 1948 A black government car pulled up to my home, A woman came to our door, her name was Ms.Walkingstick.

She told my parents they were to send me to Carter Seminary, located in Ardmore, Oklahoma. I had no knowledge of the english language,

but I seen her point at me while engaged in conversation with my father, after she left he told me I would be attening Carter Seminary

along with my siblings, a sister and a brother who were already at the school. In Septemeber we were taken to the bus station in Seminole

and put on a bus to Ardmore. I remember my parents just watching as the bus pulled away from the staion, their faces, emotionless.

I on the other hand had mixed feelings, the excitement of riding a bus and also being afraid of my destiny.

During the bus ride my sister told me, you must try to learn english as fast as you can or you will be in trouble, also to stay out of trouble

and listen to the matrons and do as they say. The school had rules we had to obey or face consequences, I had no idea what she was telling me,

but I was to find out later.

My grandmother had given me a little doll to take with me, when I got to Carter Seminary I placed my doll on my bed. I shared a dormitory

with other six year old girls, we all came from different tribes of the five civilized tribes, some not many knew the english language.

The bed that I was assigned had a box hinged on top of it to keep our personal items in, and the matron showed me how to make the bed.

Then my lesson began on how to fit in. Every morning when the bell would ring we had to be ready to go to breakfast, our beds made,

dressed ready to go in a single file. No talking, it was quiet and orderly. After breakfast we came back in a single file. This became my life,

marching in a single file through the rest of the school term. It was always quiet, no kids laughing or playing, or acting like normal children.

We had to say a prayer every night as we knelt at the end of our beds with our hands together and our heads bowed. To this day I can't remember that prayer.

To me it was just words to say and get over with, and my body was stressed because of the environment filled with strict rules. We went to class

in a single file passing by our teachers as they stood at the door. They never smiled or greeted us, their faces stoic and their eyes cold.

After class we marched again like little soldiers, we went to the playground and although there were swings and slides we did not play or laugh,

we were afraid to be loud. Then it happened. One day after lunch when I went back to my dorm, I found my little doll on the floor, it's head was damaged.

I became enraged, this was the only connection that I had to my grandmother, who I loved dearly. In my language and English I blurted out, "who did this".

The matron heard me and took me to her office, once there she told me to put out my hands, she took a thick ruler out of the drawer and began to hit my hands.

I tried to hide my hands but the hitting continued so I just gave up and took the punishment. My hands were swollen and bruised, I layed on my bed and cried

myself to sleep. Another incident i recall is when we were marching to class I overheard a girl behind me getting in trouble, I saw the matron pull her out of line and threw her, she landed against a tree, I didn't know her name, but I never saw her again. During my time at boarding school we were shown no love nor affection, we were like empty vessels. In 1954 my father withdrew us from school, we then began to attend public school, he never told us why he withdrew us. By that time I forgot how to speak my language but once I got home I began to pick up my language again being around my parents and my elders who still spoke our language. My sister said "no more rules" you can speak the language. I never told my parents about my punishment, my siblings and I never talked about Carter Seminary. Five of us went to Carter Seminary, and two of my older brothers were sent to Euchee boarding school in Sapulpa, Oklahoma. I also attended Chilocco Indian boarding school in Newkirk, Ok in 1957 for a short time. One memory that always stayed with me was overhearing my parents talking, my father asked my mother if she remembered when their oldest daughter ran away from Carter Seminary, it was during the winter and he said she came home with ice on the hems of her skirt, I did not interrupt my parents, but I often wondered why she ran away from Carter Seminary, my sister never talked about it. My parents and my older siblings are all gone. There is much more to say but I have summarized this statement as best as I could. I want to Thank The Natural Resources Subcommittee for Indigenous Peoples of the United States for allowing me to give a brief description of the time that I spent in boarding school and I look forward to start the healing process. Mvto