

INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL CEMETERIES AS AN ONGOING SOURCE OF TRAUMA
FOR NATIVE COMMUNITIES: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH UTILIZING
GEOPHYSICAL SURVEYS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE METHODS

by

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Tistsistah

Northern Cheyenne

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DEDICATION

To all the stolen and kidnapped children remaining in the Indian boarding school cemeteries and the families who continue to experience the slow death of necropolitics. We, the Ancestors, The People, and I, dedicate this to you. We have heard your screams, your pleas, and we are going to do all we can to find you and bring you home.

There are parfleches of gratitude that span across influences of space, acknowledgements in my academic and life journeys. Everything in my medicine journey, this area of healing, this research, has led me to this space of being, this ontological immersion into the river of healing. The following have all helped. Some as picker-uppers because there were times, I was so low I could not pick myself up from the dark depths of negativity, the rape of the innocents whose testimonies I not only dwelled in, but dreamed multiple times, through multiple night through the children's muffled screams, day and night. There were extents of times in which I solely relied on my little family in Oregon, and my extended family, friends, and communities from Montana and beyond. All together, these souls have nudged me forward and put up with my race around the hills (hallowed halls), climbing the mountains (ivory towers), and forging the turbulent waters (lateral oppression) of colonial manifestations. Waters that wanted to drown me, however, there were those waters that kept me in the river in a good way (Cheyenne language advisors, my graduate committee, communities, and family).

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I am fortunate to understand the relational construct to the ameo'o, the Milky Way, and the Ancestors who hold space there. They above all have pulled, pushed, and prodded me into helping to open the gates of Indian boarding school cemeteries, and address the diabolical institutional behaviors that were constructed to annihilate and silence the Original Inhabitants voice; mandates deliberately constructed to kill the Original Inhabitants.

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GLOSSARY or NOMENCLATURE

The invisibility of the Original Inhabitants has long been constructed through various social, political, economic, spiritual, and historical narratives through a western lens. In this area of healing and research, I primarily use terms such as Indian, Native, Tribal, and Original Inhabitant, depending on the context. However, when referring to a specific group, I will utilize the specific Nation or Tribe name of which they identify. This approach acknowledges the unique identities and experiences of each community, highlighting their sovereignty and the importance of self-identification and self-determination. This also applies to specific individuals who have citizenship of, or are affiliated with a Tribe, through documentation or kinship tendrils. Not all Tribes have the requirement of the blood quantum, but they may require ancestral lineage documentation.

In the Healing chapter interviews, to avoid any complications to communities or individual Tribal members, I do not mention Tribal groups, methodologies, or any associative factors that could identify individuals or Tribes. In addition, years ago, Brent Florendo (Wasco), Southern Oregon University, Ashland, Oregon reaffirmed my memories of oral tradition methodology. How to hold the integrity of the stories, in this case, interviews. It is to write the person's narrative exactly as I heard it, basically in my ears and out my mouth the exact way I heard it. For the interviews, I only deleted minor repetitiveness. As the Elders emphasized, we do not correct the personal narratives, but rather to let their words flow in the truths of their narratives. In this context, the conventional Western rules of writing do not apply.

I utilize the word rematriation in lieu of repatriation in this work. While both address the bringing home the Indian boarding school children, the utility of the word rematriation better fits the mission of this research, which is to restore the balance of Tribal communities. In addition, you will find that I capitalize words not normally capitalized, such as Tribal. I ask for latitude from the western reviewer/reader/editor. The emphasis on the terms is because this is a Tribal work. The comparison would be capitalizing United States.

This work is interdisciplinary. There are multiple occasions that I appear repetitive in narrative. My objective here is to show correlation of how this research has relationality. What the nexus is to each other. There is a caveat. I have missed edits. In Indian Country, we do not consider perfection as a goal, as a metric, rather we intentionally insert a different color bead into our works, or we leave an opening in the sand stories. This is to let people know the world is not perfect. For myself, I will always be a work in progress.

ABSTRACT

This research addresses the socio-economic, political, and spiritual impacts of federal Indian boarding school policies forced on Native communities, between 1800 and 1940. Untold numbers of Native children in the United States were kidnapped and stolen, placed in government or religious-run institutions. Hundreds died there and are now lost in the Indian boarding school cemeteries. The unknown and neglected children's graves are an ongoing legacy of colonization; today, the horrific Indian boarding school policies negatively permeate the lives of the Original Inhabitants. The disconnections from epistemological foundations have created an epidemic of impacts that stem back to the diabolical policies placed upon the Original Inhabitants by the United States government.

Thousands of Indian children died while incarcerated at these Indian boarding schools (Tsestoo'ehevose ka'eskoneho-where children are jailed), and it is unknown how many remain in the cemeteries. The lack of data regarding the location of children in these cemeteries requires immediate remedy, as they are evidence of the ongoing legacy of colonization. I argue that current remedial constructs highlight the lack of trust and treaty responsibilities (contracts) that are obligated to the Original Inhabitants by the United States of America. I discuss how Indian boarding school cemeteries remain sources of ongoing trauma for Native communities and explore how geophysical surveys may empower healing in these communities.

Constructed into five chapters, I start with positionalities. The positionalities of the worldviews I encountered. Methodologies used for the project is the second chapter. Next up is a presentation of the utility of geophysical and geospatial instruments to show the extent of missing relatives in the cemeteries. I explore whether these numbers are sufficient to reform the outdated federal Indian policies which currently restrict access to the records of the stolen and missing children who remain partially hidden in government archives, institutional, and religious sects. In the fourth chapter, I explore through interviews how the dislocation of core values and disconnection from individual homelands have negatively impacted urban Tribal communities, as well as on- and off-reservation communities. This research constitutes a glimpse into the rematriation processes from one Tribal member's perspective.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This research brings together multiple disciplines to document the realities of Indian boarding school cemeteries and Indian boarding school legacies. The Original Inhabitants children died while confined in Indian boarding schools (Tsestoo'ehevose ka'eskoneho-where children are jailed) and are buried in the cemeteries at these schools. The missing children number in the thousands, and the relatives of the descendants, because of the brutal disconnections, currently continue to experience collective health traumas (Brave Heart, 1998; Duran and Duran, 1995; John-Henderson, et al., 2022). The atrocities must be acknowledged and meaningful remedies developed by the U.S. Government and the churches to assist in healing of The People.

The children remaining in the Indian boarding school cemeteries have created abysses in the Original Inhabitant's communities and these dark spaces link traumatization to Tribal populations, on and off reservations, and in Native urban environments. The exact number of who were forced into these schools remains unknown (McBride, 2020) as well as, the number of children buried in the school cemeteries. The absence of data regarding the children's graves requires immediate attention, as these cemeteries stand as evidence of the intentional genocide under the rubric of colonization. The children were forced into United States government Indian boarding schools with the beliefs that the disconnections through assimilation would foster their entries into the refined structures of colonialism. Loaded onto wagons, trains, or boats, children were taken to schools thousands of miles away from home with no notice, some as young as two. This violent severance from their epistemological roots has resulted in lasting consequences,

deeply rooted in the harmful policies forced on the Original Inhabitants by the United States government.

Critical to healing The People is to find out who the children are in the Indian boarding school cemeteries, where they are buried, how they died, and how many children remain in the cemeteries. The most direct and definitive way to do this is excavation; however, excavation is not in alignment with many cultural protocols (Kvamme, 2003). Another option is geophysics, a non-invasive and non-disturbing technique often used for identifying graves (Doolittle and Bellatoni, 2010). In this complex journey, I utilized a geographic information system, a global positioning system, magnetometry, and ground penetrating radar under the rubric of Indigenous methodology. The geophysical and geospatial information provided by these combined methods resulted in a solution-oriented recommendations which may assist in the repatriation of Native children who continue to be kept as prisoners in the Indian boarding school cemeteries. Archival research assists in establishing accurate spatial references for each grave that holds a child or a community member. The data analysis, geophysical and geographical methods may assist others who are interested in repatriating children from Indian boarding school cemeteries. Finally, the data analysis adds emergence to the stories of these children who have been frozen in time.

Geophysical surveys are compatible with multiple Tribal beliefs in that energy interactions with an individual in a grave do not cause harm. However, for some Tribes, even geophysical surveys are considered disturbing, extremely invasive and as such, have a high cultural sensitivity (Sutton, et al., 2013). There are Nations who believe the energy emitted from some of the instruments disturbs the souls - for these cemeteries, I was denied entry.

It must be noted, working with Sovereigns, is a whole new framework for most geo-archaeologists, most surveyors. The Sovereigns are not just clients. They are one of the three entities in the United States that have a one-to-one government relationship.

CHAPTER TWO

POSITIONALITY

Personal Positionality (Vonâhe'xa'e-medicine bag)

In multiple disciplines, terminology can have similarities. As an Indigenous Researcher with foci, I have encountered terms with correlative stances for collective units of identities, which is to say, an interdisciplinary address depending on which field of research I am navigating. In Indigenous relationships, these definitions can range Nation to Nation, and they are critical avenues of processes (Smith, 2005). For the Northern Cheyenne, in my individual analysis after extended research in informal and formal settings, the recognition of relationships (Killsback, 2019) is communicated at the beginning of community appearances or presentations (Hallet, et al., 2017).

In Indigenous Research Methods (IRM), at Montana State University where I received my Master of Arts in Native American Studies, positionality can be referred to as a standpoint. However, description can vary (Chilisia, 2019; Huaman and Martin, 2020; Smith 2005; Windchief and San Pedro, 2019). In the Community Based Participatory Research methods structure at the same institution, a different program, it is actually termed positionality. Earth Sciences, in geospatial analysis, positionality is a spatial reference, one with accuracy and precision. Within disciplines, positionality can have familiar bearing and can have associative meaning. It is relational (Wilson, 2008) and this research is relational; it is not necessarily braided or woven, rather it travels along correlative pathways.

My Cheyenne name is Otata'vee nova'e. It means Blue Tipi Woman, or Blue Wings as I was named by my maternal grandfather. His Cheyenne name is Ho'honahke meaning Stone (American name is Martin Roundstone, Sr.). I am named after his mom, my great-great grandmother. Her American name is Alice Blue Wings. Grandfather was a Northern Cheyenne ceremonial man whose epistemological foundations were based on cultural integrities, past and present, of the Cheyenne. He not only practiced the old-time ways, but he lived them. My grandmother was named Mohenoo'e, Gathering Stands Woman (American name is Mary Grasshopper) who followed the old ways of the Cheyenne. Dusenberry (1956) states that Northern Cheyenne women are "keepers of technology...". Grandmother was a technology keeper of the old quilt designs which are connected to the sacredness of traditional knowledge, with intent to keep intact the cultural value systems. My mother was Voestaa'e, White Buffalo Calf Woman, (American name is Victoria Roundstone). Both my mother and grandmother were instrumental to me as stewards of Northern Cheyenne epistemologies and axiology's. My mother named my daughter after Mohenoo'e (American name is Amber Jackson). My grandson is called Taa'eva'htamehehnestse or Walks at Night (American name is Caleb Jackson). I named him after previous generations on Ho'honahke's side. We are from the Painted Faces Clan. We are descended from Chief Grasshopper, the People's Chief, not the "government-recognized Chief" (Liberty and Wood, 2011). This research part of the family tendrils was provided by Sharon Hert-Small (Typed document April 23,1999; personal discussion, 2015; 2019).

My father is Clinton Small. He was a well-known horse trainer and is listed in the Montana Cowboy Hall of Fame. At the age of ninety, he was still riding horses and helping to gather cows. Dad came from a family of ten brothers and three sisters, with two sisters dying in early

childhood. Aunt Josephine, the remaining sister, attended Chemawa Indian boarding school in Salem, Oregon—one of the schools in which we researched data and facilitated several cemeteries. Several of Dad’s brothers, also, attended Chemawa. While researching through the digital archives on Genoa Indian boarding school, I noticed that three of my uncles on the Small side entered the institution in 1922, with uncle Max at seven years of age, uncle Edward at nine, and Uncle Vick at 11. I cannot imagine the magnitude of loss felt by the rest of the siblings for the Smalls are a close family. My paternal grandfather was Thomas L. Small, one of the last cowboys to bring a cowherd into Montana. He was married to two women. Josephine Rondo (Rondeau), with whom he had 10 boys and three girls. Later in life, he married Julia Spang Cooley. These family tendrils are from the research of Christine Pilkington-Small and Lemuel (Butch) Small, (personal discussion, 2006).

Relatives on all sides of my family attended Indian boarding schools. My great-great grandfather, Fred Roundstone, was born in 1886, son of Louis Roundstone and Sharp Nose (Sipes Collection, 2004). He graduated from Carlisle with eight years or more in Indian Government Schools (Sipes Collection, 2004). I provide these sources as part of the relational core research that is rooted to my personal discovery as a descendant, and recognition of the intergenerational trauma cultivated by the Indian boarding school systems and federal Indian policies.

I am a descendant of the federal Indian boarding school policies in which Colonel Pratt, the engineer for the Indian Boarding schools, believed for America’s genocidal policies to work, the intent was to “kill the Indian in the man, but indeed, keep the man” (Adams, 1995; Pratt, 1892). Most Tribal members are descended from Ancestors who attended the Indian boarding

schools. Those that were not, are in single digits. Many of the initial captures of the children were all *by force*, facilitated *by colonial fabrications*, *by* representatives of the United States government, and delegated to various religious sects, primarily culminating in not just cultural genocide, but out right genocide and assimilation—and it continues (NARF, 2015).



Figure 2.1-Blood Quantum, Marty Two Bulls, 2008

Positionality of Pedigree (Ve'ho'e e-ohke-he'se-ho'estoxe'oheo'o,
Xamaevo'estaneo'o)

I am an enrolled Northern Cheyenne of 15/16s total 'Indian' (in colonial terms) blood. Under the federal enrollment exclusionary, to be defined as a Tribal member, it means you must have a certain amount of Indian blood. This pedigree fabrication is based on a genocidal template created by the United States government in the early 1700s; however, it was not fully implemented until after the 1934 Indian Reorganization Act (Pearson, 2017). There are complexities to this metric, this Indian blood percentage. While final decree of Tribal enrollment is dependent on the sovereign Nations' policies, as should be the rights of all sovereign Nations, legal agreements between the United States and federally recognized Tribes require specific blood quantum to receive federal funding (Pearson, 2017). The pedigree metric is a control mechanism for the federal government over the Tribes. It is an instrument geared to reduce or eliminate the Original Inhabitants of their lands, resources, and sovereignty and it is evidence of the continued colonial oppression by the United States (Teves, et al., 2015).

The Northern Cheyenne think of the coyote as a trickster. It is said that the coyote is put here to inform us of the way of the future. Depending on the direction the trickster travels, the coyote is said to signal either a difficult or a favorable path (Voestat, 1998, personal communication). Federal funding is a coyote, a trickster. For example, Tribal Sovereigns must navigate the shifting landscape of each new U.S. administration (Mann, 1997). Each new regime interprets for itself the trust and treaty status with the Tribes and realigns the language and contract deliverables geared toward their political agency (Ablavsky, 2015). This dynamic can lead to a reworking of the terminology and framework of treaties, often resulting in misinterpretation and manipulation by the new administration, or an outright countermand. For

example, Executive Order 14112, Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations to Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities and Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination, December 6, 2023, was revoked on March 14, 2025. It had only been in effect for three months (www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/03/additional-recissions-of-harmful-executive-orders-and-actions). These Executive Orders for Native American Programs regarding federal funding exemplify the pendulum swing between the U.S. government and the Original Inhabitants of these lands, along with the treaty and trust responsibilities that are held in sacred trust.

A massive portion of federal funding for individual Tribes is tied to treaty status; however, this funding can be reduced based on blood quantum, further deepening the "schizophrenic relationship" between the U.S. government and the Tribes (United States v. Lara, 2004). The U.S. Congress asserts plenary power over the Tribes while simultaneously recognizing their sovereignty to govern their own citizens—saying, we have authority over you as a people and your resources, but we grant you the power to govern yourselves. Though treaties are revered and are considered binding contracts between sovereigns (Tsosie, 2000), Congress maintains it has plenary power to terminate Tribes, and or the right to abrogate treaties if said treaties become an obstacle to progress for the current regime's objectives (Ablavsky, 2015). Pure coyote trickery.

The manipulation of treaties between the U.S. and Indian Tribes constitutes a breach of contract. This violation disregards the trust, sacredness of the agreement, and reflects a blatant arrogance from the U.S. In any other part of the world, in any other court of law, if a contract is violated or not upheld, it is either deemed invalid or leads to litigation until a remedy is reached

by all parties involved. Therefore, these covenants should be recognized for the flawed way in which they are utilized by the U.S. government. If not, and there is abrogation of treaties, then that road goes both ways. It is not a one-way road. If one party fails to uphold the compact, then those rights to resources are also null and void. It is a two-party system dependent on promises made by each sovereign. Therefore, the U.S. government must acknowledge its harmful role in creating genocidal policies that continue to affect both on-reservation and off-reservation communities because those caveats are in the treaty language.

Hundreds of these treaties, which are revered by Tribes as sacred, are considered the “Supreme Law of The Land” (Pommersheim, 2009; Tsosie, 2000). The constitutional foundations of the federal trust status with the Tribes dictate only the federal government can have a one-to-one relationship with the Tribes (Skibine, 2020). Depending on the political regime in power, these documents of sacred trust have migrating boundaries and definitions (Wilkins, 2001). Other legal instruments, such as the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, add credence to the relationship, declaring that,

“The utmost good faith shall always be observed towards Indians; their lands and properties shall never be taken from them without their consent; and, in their property, rights, and liberty, they shall never be invaded or disturbed, unless in just and lawful war authorized by Congress; but laws founded in justice and humanity, shall from time to time be made for presenting wrongs done to them, and for preserving peace and friendship with them.” (<https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/northwest-ordinance>)

Within that statement is an avenue of process for reconstruction of guidelines, policies that can be the mechanisms for rectification of genocidal federal policies. The caution to these procedures is that they are set in a mercurial trust relationship with the U.S. that was first established under the General Allotment Act of 1887 (Ruppel, 2008). The General Allotment Act

allotted 320 acres of grazing land, 160 of arable land to the heads of households, less to others with the remaining land sold to settlers or left vacant. The lack of consistency and transparency continues to create and exacerbate inequalities and inequity in Indian Country (e.g., Cobell v. Babbitt, 1999; United States v. Mitchell, 1983).

The relationship between the U.S. government and sovereign Native Nations in the U.S. is, and has been, exclusively siloed in colonial structures and intents (Fletcher, 2006). Indian laws and policies were designed and executed with minimal input from the Original Inhabitants of these lands (Pommersheim, 2009). If there was a ‘voice’ from the Native, it was by a mark of a thumbprint, or an X mark, and true to colonial *modus operandi*, the documents they signed were not written in a Tribal language (Lyons, 2010). Face-to-face communications were one-sided as well, with usually non-Native interpreters hired by the government, oftentimes misconstruing the documents’ language and meetings into personal ideologies and gains (Lyons, 2010).

More than 190 years later, federal Indian policy and law rooted in the structures of colonialism remains the mechanism in the relationships between the Tribes and the United States government (e.g., Littlefield v. Mashpee Wampanoag Indian Tribe, 2020; Fletcher, 2006; United States v. Kagama, 1886). The United States Government usurped the voice of the Native with the very phrase coined by Chief Justice John Marshall, “domestic dependent Nations” (*Worcester vs Georgia*, 1832). As quasi-sovereign, domestic dependent Nations, Tribes were cemented under the United States’ jurisdiction. Marshall based his concept of "domestic dependent Nations" on the Commerce Clause of the Constitution (Article I, Section 8, Clause 3), which states that Congress has the power to regulate commerce among the "foreign Nations, [...] states, and with

Indian Tribes." Marshall reasoned that since all three were mentioned in the Commerce Clause, then Tribes could neither be "foreign Nations" nor could they be "states," so they must be something else. This is how Marshall produced the concept of 'domestic' (i.e., not foreign) Nations (i.e., not states) that were --in actuality-- dependent on the U.S. federal government for protection against the states. In Cherokee Nation v. State of Georgia, 1831, the Marshall court ruled that the U.S. Supreme Court had no authority in the case (because of the Commerce Clause--which states that Congress is the only authority to have a relationship with Indian Tribes). The very next year, in Worcester vs Georgia, 1832, Marshall makes it very clear that states have no authority in Tribal affairs, because constitutionally and by treaty, the relationship is between Tribes and the federal government. While this affirmed government-to-government relationship, the trilogy delegated the Original Inhabitants as mere occupants of their own lands, and the U.S. government as a landlord (Fletcher, 2006). This ambiguous agency continued, as observed under the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) of 1978. It is the policy of the United States:

[T]o protect and preserve for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites (Public Law 95-341, pg. 469).

This is good ideology, but it is limited in recourse for the Tribes (Pommersheim, 2009). As it stands, AIRFA is negligent; it fails to provide legal foundations that would compel government action or prevent interference with those trespassing on ceremonial traditions. These confining policies have long burdened Tribes and Tribal members, on and off reservations.

According to the U.S. Census of 2020, the Indian Health Service reports that 87% of American Indian, Alaska Native live in urban areas, with 13% of them living on their homelands, or defined Tribal Lands (minorityhealth.hhs.gov). Many of these individuals were part of the Indian Relocation Act of 1956, which aimed to force assimilation and destroy Native communities. They relocated to urban areas with the promise of a better life—a law that was never fulfilled (Walls and Whitbeck, 2012). These inland island populations, who left reservations due to high unemployment, substandard housing, and lack of education and other social services, face monumental challenges. They have limited access to their traditional languages, grounded cultural events, socio-economic and political advancements, and most critical, access to traditional healthcare medicines (Hill and Artiga, 2023).

There are 574 federally recognized Tribes in the U.S. These are the only Tribes that are recognized to have a one-to-one relationship with the federal government and as such, treaty benefits. There are 63 Tribes who do not have federal recognition but hold State recognition, thus receiving State allocations and contractual agreements. Of those State recognized Tribes, only ten have reservations in those states. Within each of these, there are stories and methodologies that can be recognized and potentially shared across a spectrum of epistemological perspectives. (Bronin, 2024).

For each of these Nations, the time immemorial standard is that children are to be held sacred (Tistsistah Elder, 2025; EagleWoman, et al., 2016; Bigfoot and Funderburk, 2011). They are to be the oral historians, the knowledge keepers in the Native family and in the community. This is the crux of this research in which the children hold a critical place within the Nations (Coleman, 2008). Without them staying in specific Tribal communities to hold, retain, and pass

on the teachings, centuries-old knowledge bases have been impaired or lost. Littlewolf (2025) in personal communication states, “like beads on a string, the children hold the stories. They are the refined bindings, collections that are transmitted through the generations. There is knowledge of stories that are connected to the older and younger generations throughout time.” With the theft of their children and the loss of the ability to pass down priceless knowledge, Tribes were thrust lower on socio-economic, spiritual, and political ladders (Child, 1998).

The loss of trust between the United States and the Tribes in the neophyte America has developed into a quagmire of issues in each community. The United States through federal Indian policy continues to be guilty of nefarious intent and of subjugating the original frameworks derived from the treaty-based relationship. The health, wealth, welfare, and spiritual well-being of the Original Inhabitants continue to decline, demanding immediate remedy and healing. This is a slow, ongoing crisis in which Tribal communities gradually lose their ability to sustain themselves. It is a slow death (Berlant, 2007).

Positionality of the Children Remaining in Indian Boarding School Cemeteries

Necropolitics (Notse-ho’manestôtse Naéstóva-Foreigner laws regarding death): Necropolitics – defined as when the dominant paradigm dictates the narrative over another demographic’s health, wealth, and welfare, and as where in the more extreme instances, contributes to genocide (Mbembe, 2006) and can even extend to controlling the sovereignty of a child who died more than century ago. This is the United States relationship with the Original Inhabitants of these Lands. Necropolitics is the driver of colonialism (Bakshi and Sharma, 2024). It is the main mechanism to retain power. Western frameworks hold a plethora of examples, “where the

authorship is contributory, warped towards an author's ideology, and/or that regime's principles” (Mbembe, 2020), which then, continues to perpetuate the stereotypes, creating invisible histories of Original Inhabitants. Those who write the narrative control the future (e.g., Marshall Trilogy, U.S. Constitution). The power of colonial authorship lies in its ability to perpetuate falsehoods long after formal education ends (Altbach, 1975). It represents the initial interpretive paradox—through which authorship becomes convoluted. This is the educational foundation of necropolitics of America. It is ingrained. For example, under the rubric of necropolitics, Native American Studies is a misnomer. It should be called Original Habitants of these Lands Studies. All irony aside, imagine a demographic so powerful that it controls not only the present lives for hundreds of communities, but it also directs the narrative of the deaths in those communities—a methodology so authoritative that it controls the histories, policies, and the future of the marginalized populations (Bakshi and Sharma, 2024). This hegemonic structure conducted through the power of authorship and following policies which have created long standing impacts. It is long overdue to bring the silenced voices of trauma to the forefront, shedding light on the hidden, one-sided narrative of the United States' history.

One of the mechanisms by which necropolitics manifests its genocidal impacts on the Original Inhabitants is through necroviolence. The U.S. Government impacts the lives of the living Original Inhabitants through policy structure; failed trust and treaty contracts, but they continue to inflict harm through actions (necroviolence). For instance, even the repatriation of graves in the Indian boarding schools is dictated by the U.S. government. The Nations are still plagued with stringent policies on how the Tribes can bring children home from each cemetery.

There are current loopholes built into U.S. Government policy that will not let Tribal

nations rematriate the children to their Homelands. Tribal leadership and members continue to face significant bureaucratic obstacles, such as excessive paperwork and outdated policies, in efforts to rematriate their children. For example, the Rosebud Sioux, the Burnt Thigh Nation, were finally permitted to bring their children home 140 years later, on July 14th, 2021 (Newland, 2024). Similarly, the Hochunk, known as the People with a Big Voice, requested that the U.S. Army allow them to bring two children home. The U.S. Army responded by saying no, citing the need for more documentation and emphasizing that they were not required to adhere to the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) of 1990 (Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska v. Department of the Army, 2024). This is an example of necroviolence because this is control of a person's body after death. Walters, et al., 2011 state "Bodies don't just tell stories, they tell histories". In recognition of the child's story, so families can have closure with recognition and respect, and heal. This has been the gut punch of this research.

Positionality of the Indian Boarding Schools - (momoonemaheo'o
- Slave Schools Cheyenne Language Advisors)

Boarding schools and the General Allotment Act of 1887 are inseparable (Jacobs, 2006). Both are integral to the U.S.'s patriarchal civilization policy, imposing Christianity, language, and private land ownership on Natives for their own good. Both were and are aimed at terminating Native American epistemologies, axiologies, and ontologies; ways of knowing, ways of doing, and ways of being (Wilson, 2008).

Boarding school curricula and genocidal execution was the vehicle to eradicate the core identity of the Original Inhabitants, indeed the very soul of Native American children. This method of control was to teach the Original Inhabitants how to forget the sacredness of Tribal

identity and become docile to accept the U.S. government as the lead authority in all matters, including the welfare of the people's children. If Native American parents did not adhere to the mandate that all the children, some as young as five, attend the boarding schools (www.greatfalltribune.com/story/news/2017/08/16/montanas-reservations-were-dumping-grounds-predatory-priests-suit-alleges/504576001/), then delegated U.S. authorities would come and forcibly take them, withhold rations, or imprison the parents (Tuck and Yang, 2014). Thousands of Indian children were brought to Indian boarding schools (momoonemaheo'o-slave schools) by the federal government and Christian churches where many of the children were horribly abused. Colonel Pratt's boarding schools' sole objective was to destroy any resemblance to the Original Inhabitant's natural ways of identification. His mantra was "kill the Indian, save the man" (Pratt, 1892), and the method included "immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under, holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked" (Pratt, 2023). These slave schools taught only assimilative western frameworks (Stout, 2012). During this drowning of indigeneity, many of these children died, and today many are still unaccounted for (McBride, 2020). The children who survived and returned home faced numerous obstacles. Within their souls lived the horrific memories of mental, physical, spiritual, and sexual abuse inflicted by priests and nuns—memories steeped in shame, too heavy to share. That shame was compounded by a silent, internalized guilt, as if they were somehow responsible for the ugliness they endured. Upon returning to their Homelands, many found that the lower ladder rung education, the skills they learned in the Indian boarding schools had no application in their areas (Lajimodiere, 2012; Warne and Lajimodiere, 2015). This increased the poverty of self, increasing

community disconnections, confidence, wealth, and eventually affecting their health of mind, body, and spirit.

By finding the locations of the children in Indian boarding school cemeteries, I bring to the decision-makers' executive buffet, impacts of those enforced disconnections. With each voice there is an avenue of redress and resolution, a remedy for the families and Tribes of the children, the "soul wound survivors" (Duran, et al., 1998). As there are caveats in traditional remedy and healing, there are red flags in the rematriation of the children. It must be noted that in the facilitation of IBS rematriations of Indian children from the cemeteries, there are Tribal people and church organizations whose intentions may be honorable, but they may not have traditional protocols. For example, in one rematriation of a child at an IBS cemetery, there should have been a person from that child's Tribe there to perform the traditional ceremonies and direct the proceedings. There was not, and ultimately the child's Tribal community at home decided through a consensus to have a western church facilitate the ceremony, as there was not a trained cultural practitioner at the rematriation to conduct the traditional protocols. It must be noted however, if this is the specific Nation's mind frame, then that is what should be recognized. Ultimately, this is about bringing the stolen and kidnapped children home. It is about establishing Tribal sovereignty for that child, post-mortem (Littlewolf, 2025, personal communication). It is giving the power back to the Original Inhabitant's to bring their children home to be with their people in a good way. If possible, it should involve traditional ceremonies. This may be difficult for some Nations because many Nations do not have reburial protocols. Not only because of the Relocation Act of 1956 and other U.S. policies such as the Indian Termination Act of the 1950s -

1960s, but because historically, Tribes did not have to dig up their children to bring them home to rebury them.

In my first visit to Carlisle, the first Indian Boarding School in the U.S., I witnessed rematriations of children who were in the process of rematriation. During this ceremony, I noticed U.S. flags being placed on top of each box. Each box, or casket, is about 22 inches long, 6 inches wide, and 6 inches tall. I requested that those flags be removed. The Army personnel, themselves a member of a Tribal Nation, refused. I stated, “if any flag should be there, it should be the Tribal flag.” They replied that this is all we have to offer. When I returned the following year, to help rematriate a little boy, I noticed that the U.S. flags were now placed to the side, not on top of the casket. This tells you that policy reconstruction can happen, and it can happen fast.

According to White Plume, of the Lakotah Nation, we are only in the stage of ‘wiping of the tears’ (White Plume, 2022). Before healing can truly begin, there needs to be recognition from the U.S. and religious institutions of the past atrocities, and critical to the horizon, a plan of action to address the ramifications of the genocidal intent in the Tribal communities. It is time for the U.S. government and the religious institutions to accept that they are responsible for the loss of our children, the children’s innocence and their life. In conversation with a Northern Cheyenne Elder (2025), I was told that when someone takes a child’s innocence, it is considered a murder because the person committing the atrocity has killed the innocence of that child.

Multiple Tribes do not have land to return their children back to. One proposed solution was to put the rematriated children onto lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Putting them on BLM land may be a solution for some cemeteries, but those lands may not always remain in BLM stewardship, therefore, that may not be a solution. Putting them in the

Catholic church yards or other western religious areas is not a solution. The U.S. should return land to the Tribes, allowing each Tribe to acknowledge their stolen and kidnapped children using their own methods of rematriation. The loss of the stolen and kidnapped children, many of them still buried in these war camps, may still be asking to come home. Many of them were buried without proper ceremonial protocols and may still be waiting for the ceremony to move beyond the ameo'o. Bringing home the children – rematriating – is instrumental to each Tribe's healing, including those in urban settings. However, if we do this for each individual, it will take critical time to get everyone home. This will impede the immediacy of healing that needs to happen in these communities. This is one of the reasons why the U.S. must appropriate funding to the Tribes to bring their children to their Homelands (or other selected areas, hopefully not in church graveyards). The U.S. stole these children and many of them died while in the trusted care of the United States and the churches, and the cost burden should not be on Tribes to bring their family home.



Figure 2.2- Photograph of children before School at the Lower Cut Meat District. From left to right-Cora Search the Enemy, Good Kill, Lucy Kills Plenty, John Under the Water, Willie Good Bird, Paul Grey Eagle Tail, and Allen Otterman. 1847. Credit: Jesse H. Bratley_Rosebud Reservation. Researchers: SallyMT and Emily Levine (Facebook_2023)

In 2021, Deb Haaland was appointed the Secretary of the Interior. A directive from her to Bryan Newland, the deputy director, was to investigate the atrocities and the realities of what happened at the IBS's (www.bia.gov/sites/default/files/media_document/doi_federal_Indian_boarding_school_initiative_investigative_report_vii_final_508_compliant.pdf). This report was generated by reviewing millions of historic documents related to Indian Boarding Schools. While they do not attend every facet of the IBS impacts and the actual numbers of the children who remain in the IBS cemeteries and other cemeteries where they buried IBS children, the document provides instruments of healing. For example, they state eight recommendations on

how to move forward towards remedies, including: “1) Acknowledge, Apologize, Repudiate, and Affirm, 2) Invest in Remedies to the Present-Day Impacts of the Federal Indian Boarding School System, 3) Build a National Memorial, 4) Identify and Repatriate Children who Never Returned from Federal Indian Boarding Schools, 5) Return Former Federal Indian Boarding School Sites, 6) Tell the Story of Federal Indian Boarding Schools, 7) Invest in Further Research, and 8) Advance International Relationships.” The barriers to progress are not merely economic—they are deeply rooted in restrictive policies. I liken these policies to a nest of snakes: coiled within the same structures, each serpent intertwined, each one related. To unravel them, we must separate them—examine each snake individually. Though distinct, they are all bound by a shared intent: the systemic erasure of the Original Inhabitants from their Homelands. It is, in every sense, a snaky construct.

Positionality within the Academic Journey (Vovestomosanestove -
with Regards to Teaching

I was brought to this area of healing by my Ancestors through Robert Kentta, of the Confederated Tribes of the Siletz Nation. In 2013, Robert asked me to look for how many children might be in the Chemawa Indian Boarding School cemetery. He said, "why don't you get one of those machines that can look underground and see graves, then go to Chemawa Indian Boarding School cemetery and see how many kids are in that cemetery.” The gates opened. What would be the possibility that I could help to find our relatives, assist in the repatriation of the children in Indian boarding school cemeteries, and in the process, assist in deconstructing the colonial mindsets? I grappled with the reasons why I should because it would not be easy. It would be very complex. I would have to learn how to walk slowly in the siloed western halls of

academia. I would encounter confrontation and bigotry. There was a plethora of reasons, even ego being a consideration. I would have to navigate many cultural committees and specific cultural epistemologies. Did I have the time? Would this take me from my life goal to watch my grandson grow? I wanted to be where my grandson is located and be with my family there. All life-challenging questions. In the end questioning of self as a Tistsistah researcher and as a somewhat traditional Northern Cheyenne and non-traditional student, I committed to the journey of locating our stolen and kidnapped children who did not make it home from the Indian boarding schools cemeteries. The geophysical journey started with an internship with the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Tribal Historic Preservation Department, headed by amazing people, bought a ground penetrating radar system and then offered me an internship the following summer. It was their instrument and personnel who introduced me to the world of geophysical instruments.

Over the years, I attended countless conferences, workshops, and retreats. More importantly, I engaged with numerous Elders, Olders, and Youths from all walks of life. From these experiences, I gained a deeper understanding of the negative impacts in their communities, their concerns, their ways of knowing. I learned the extent of these impacts, health, economic, spiritual, and political disparities. Then, I shared what I could without violating confidences, the struggles they faced. In conversations with multiple peoples, I stated that what was happening to the Original Inhabitants of these Lands would eventually echo in their own communities. I likened the Original Inhabitants to the “canary in the coal mine” (Cohen, 1953), warning of the broader consequences to come.

The issues I continuously encountered in the hallowed halls were the siloed processes and ideologies. I experienced everything from outright ageism and genderism to professors informing me that I did not have the aptitude for a science platform. That was a direct quote from one of my professors. Not only in the hard science of geophysics, but those in social science tendrils relating to current socio-economic and political disparities. I was consistently corrected to speak or write a certain way.

Since there is not a program at Montana State University that teaches geoarchaeology, I created my own path. I started in Earth Sciences but eventually sought support elsewhere. There are multiple reasons why I exited Earth Sciences as the solo discipline, but the overall concern was that my spectrum was too broad. To move us forward, I went to geophysical workshops, every workshop that I could afford or raise funding for. It took years and an extreme level of financial obligation, but that is the commitment I agreed to with the Ancestors. It is what I promised the little children and their families. There is nothing like having your sweater tugged on, and looking to see who it is, to find that it is an Elder in a wheelchair asking me to help her find her uncle. She says, I heard from my mom that he never came home. Can you help me find out what happened to him? There were so many of the people asking how we could help find out where their relative(s) ended up.

Following the examples of my Ancestors, I have learned how to work across the aisle. The most valuable skills I have learned is how to listen and communicate. While I have geophysical and geospatial skills, and other useful skills in my arrow quiver (knowledge bank), all were less critical than what I needed to know to work with IBSs survivors and multiple Tribal sovereigns while working in Indian boarding school cemeteries. Learning how to be silent; listen

and communicate with honesty, compassion, transparency, respect and recognition of protocols with many entities – institutional, Tribal, state, and federal – was and is of extreme importance.

I do not represent the totality of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. I represent myself as a member of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. I speak only to this journey as a citizen of the Northern Cheyenne Nation. I cannot emphasize this enough. There may be many Cheyenne people who think I am overstepping the traditional boundaries of a Northern Cheyenne woman. Or there may not be. They may all recognize the importance of bringing our children home to be on the lands where their relatives can regularly visit them. It is hopeful that they do recognize that I have done this work for so long that I became an Older with platinum hair. Yes, even here, we must have humor. It is one of our natural responses as Northern Cheyenne, as an Original Inhabitant of these Lands.

Another consideration is Kirkness and Barnhardt's four 'R's (1991): respect, responsibility, relevance, and reciprocity. I refer to these four 'R's in nearly every presentation or gathering I attend or facilitate. They are essential for fostering meaningful and productive dialogue, and they are reflective of multiple Tribal epistemologies. I sought to learn of other impacts, positive and negative, in every area I could reach. I presented at local, national, regional, and global events. I zoomed and visited with people from multiple countries. It created a nexus of strength for me. In this, I would learn how to develop an instrument for people to consider when facilitating IBS cemetery surveys. It could be foundational, a construct for remedies toward 'community sourced healing' (Lajimidoire, 2012). Or people may not read it at all.

It is central to acknowledge a key factor in the scarcity of data on the Indian boarding school experience: those who attended these schools still carry emotional scars, scars that are thinly covered, and when the traumatic memories resurface, many find it difficult to heal the “soul wound” (Duran, et. al, 1998), to put the trauma back under the scab. As Littlewolf (2025) personal communication reflects, "Elders of the old don't talk about the apocalyptic era."

This research highlights the challenges in accessing comprehensive documentation on the atrocities of the Indian Boarding Schools. Much of the available documentation is protected by the Freedom of Information Act of 1964 or the Privacy Act of 1974. FOIA says that the Government should have transparency and not silence the voice of disclosure, whomever may be embarrassed or even guilty of crime. Truth of errors or atrocities must be revealed and those who committed those acts must be held accountable. The Privacy Act of 1974 can restrict access to the records of IBS children as well as their Tribal affiliation. Upon visiting a cemetery, one can see the name of a child on a marker, but with the Privacy Act, they may not be able to access the child's records. In order to have access to the child's records, policy dictates that the person who is requesting access must be directly related and able to provide valid documents.

To continue in these siloed paradigms of colonial construct, those hegemonic siloes tend to silence (or not recognize) the Indigenous voice. This is the equivalent of the outdated and historic federal policies between the United States and Indian Country. In development of these policies, the Tribes had limited seating at the executive tables of policy construction, and their voice is marginalized, or absent, or ignored (Lyons, 2010). This is one of the major concerns in the emergence of the Indian boarding school trauma and rematriations. The lack of Tribal presence or voice at the executive buffets of policy reconstruction. The original policy structures

are based on the constructs of the Marshall Trilogy, 1823-1834 (after U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall). With those titles in hand, the edict to the Original Inhabitants of these lands must recognize their place in the line-up as a ‘child to its father’, or in the words of (Lewis, et al., 2020), “as a slave to its master”.

CHAPTER THREE

INDIGENOUS RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES
(XAMAE'EVO'ESTANEYSTOTSE - INDIGENOUS
LIFEWAYS)

There are unique Indigenous methodologies throughout Grandmother Earth and within the United States of America that relate to sacred sites and sacred places. Each maintains a sphere of sacredness relative to only that place and its distinct significance. Take, for example, the practice of smudging, which is a ceremony practiced by multiple Nations. The commonality could be that one is making an offering to those beyond the stars, to their ancestors. However, these traditions are not all the same. Other Nations might not utilize smudging as a ceremony, but instead might have other offerings (e.g., rice and fish). Each one of these is a methodology for how a Nation recognizes the sacredness of place and event. There is specificity to the sacredness of the proceedings. Each will always remain specific or distinct to its Nation (Bronin, 2024). It is well-known in Tribal communities that Indigenous methodologies are factored in the cyclic foundation as a part of the interrelation and interaction of all things (Liberty and Wood 2011; Kovach, 2010; Wilson, 2008; Walter and Andersen, 2013).

Nation to Nation, federally recognized Tribes theoretically hold the same legal standing as the U.S. Government, with the notable exception of maintaining standing armies, which Tribes relinquished through peace treaties. In exchange for laying down their arms against the U.S., the government committed to protecting these federally recognized Tribes. Foundational legal principles such as the Canons of Construction recognize this relationship. The Canons of Construction situate the U.S.'s commitment to the Tribes. The Supreme Court has long

recognized the Canons as the foundational principles of federal Indian law. In short, these Canons require that (1) treaties be interpreted as the Indians would have understood them; (2) treaties are liberally construed in favor of the Indians with all ambiguities resolved in their favor; and (3) abrogation of Tribal sovereignty or property rights be expressed by Congress clearly and unambiguously (De La Hunt, 1983). With that standing there should be recognition of trust status between Nations (Skibine, 2022). Nations that are federally recognized have a governing body, a system of laws, spiritual and sacred practices, and land bases where all these elements are held together through languages and cultural practices. Language relates to specific places and time, giving a distinct definition of traditional knowledge for an individual Nation. They are not generic.

Languages of Indigenous Peoples are set in spatial holdings, the very spirit of the land, air, and water is tied to the description, the identification of that particular space during a specific framework. In English, descriptive words apply minimally in spaces with ambiguous relativity. Description in English can have a defined spectrum; however, it loses the animations, it loses its spirit in confusing dualistic conclusions. Consider the homophones of the English language; hear, here; there, their; I, eye; and so on. Tribal languages are set in a structure of life events that have happened in those exchanges of timeframes. The description includes spatial, spiritual, cultural, political, and seasonal elements for exactness of relationality to event. This is Indigenous language. It describes the space in relation and responsibility to the event. For example, the Northern Cheyenne word otah'ta'voo means blue sky space. But it means more than just blue sky. It is a space in which there are sacred associations with Maheo, the Creator; the sun, our grandfather; the 'night sun' (moon) and the journey to beyond the stars, which in

western frameworks is the Milky Way. The stars, the winged ones and other unseen ones that live in otah'ta'voom are brothers and sisters of the Northern Cheyenne; they are relatives. Tsististas have respect and responsibility to them. This is a core relation and when a Northern Cheyenne says otah'ta'voom to say sky, it comes with relevancy and intent (Liberty and Wood, 2011; Coleman, 2008). The Indigenous methodology that comes from these connections between languages, space and land, is the knowledge that fuels the ceremonies.

Within these areas of healing, research is referred to as “a ceremony” (Wilson, 2008). In these spheres of influence and methodologies, terminology has had to be developed, recognized, and discussed with ultimate responsibility by Tribal communities. The reason for the terminology construction is that Tribes have never had to retrieve their children from cemeteries. As such, they had no songs, no ceremonies, let alone a language that attends to such atrocities. There are groups of people I call language keepers, advisory boards, tribal knowledge holders, who are scrabbling for Cheyenne relational words to bring their children home. It takes extreme amounts of time and energy. They understand the magnitude of accountability with which they are entrusted. They converse at length with each other to be able to provide a translation. Some words they cannot easily translate. They put up with my never-ending requests, as does Dakota Littlewolf, who has been instrumental in providing translation and maintaining the Northern Cheyenne language integrity.

Within these communities, specific terms are in process of development with recognition and respect to the Indian boarding schools, in correlation with the traditional languages and American languages through axiological trusts. The Cheyenne Language Group constructed a name for the Indian boarding school cemeteries. They have called it where the children are

buried together, “tsehmamoheveahto’hohevose ka’eskoneho voxeva”. When they shared these words with me, it took a long time to crawl away from the abyss of anger and hate, the darkness that is Indian boarding school cemeteries. It was the little ones who came to me in my dreams and patted my shoulder, telling me everything would be okay, as I heard the heavy footsteps coming from through the darkened tunnel. This dream was not the first dream visit I have had of the Ancestors.

Legault, et al., (2024) emphasizes dreams need context, when and where the dream occurred, who helped with the interpretation, and other relational aspects. I reached out to several people, Olders and Elders, who I thought might be able to help. The common theme throughout the conversations, the visits, were that the children were reassuring me, to not be afraid to continue this journey. Other visits occurred during this journey that confused me. In researching Fort Marion, the first prison school in St. Augustine, Florida, I bought several books, one of which was written by Diane Glancy (2014), who stated that she had several “after-visions”. I experienced them too right in broad daylight. My mind continues to contemplate those awake times of dreaming. Again, it was my family, friends, and community, and the Ancestors who wiped my tears because the stories and dreams were a reality of itself.

The Northern Cheyenne now have some words that refer to the Indian boarding school tragedies. I am not sure about songs. I do know that they have always had honoring songs, but as for welcoming home songs for the children returning from Indian boarding school cemeteries, I am not sure. I do know we have honoring songs from Conrad Fisher that they used for the reburial of the Anzick child. Language belongs to place, and as such, traditional methodologies may not incorporate the ‘new’ ways of knowing and language transition. As known Cheyenne

language keeper and Elder, and our uncle, Dr. Richard Littlebear (2024) stated, “we need to coin new words, because if we don’t, if our languages don’t keep up with the current phenomena, we are contributing to the death of those languages.”

Dr. Littlebear states that language is the basis of sovereignty (Littlebear, 2024; Littlebear, 1999). Without Tribally specific language in the research journey, valuable components of identity are lost (Wilson, 2008). The lack of Tribal vernacular presence in Indigenous research stimulates disconnection between “thought and language” and does not allow Indigenous research to holistically manifest. Kovach (2010) states that “language is a central component of Indigenous epistemologies” and without Tribal languages in Indigenous research, the ways of knowing are blurred. It is thus critical that utility of Native languages is integrated into research and the resultant policies determining preservation of sacred sites and sacred places and rematriation of the children, the people who are missing. With integration of Native languages into future policies, the sacredness may be preserved along with a rematriation of epistemological structures and empowerment for the horizon (Anderson and Daigneault, 2022). This sets the foundations for a principal research methodology that I apply throughout my dissertation.

Interdisciplinary in nature, this dissertation consists of healing (research) accomplished through both a quantitative (geophysical data) and a qualitative (social science) study. The western methods will include field instrument surveys, geophysical data analysis, a geographical information system that correlates historical and current cartographical information, and pedestrian survey. The Chemawa Indian boarding school surveys are both Native and non-Native facilitated, requiring methodologies that include western practices and Tribal epistemologies.

To bridge the mental health disparities created by the loss of relatives in Indian boarding schools and cemeteries, the narrative focus presented in Chapter 4 will be how do all the parts have relationality, what is the nexus? I create a metric from anonymous community testimonies through similarities and noncomparative responses (e.g., coding the responses). While literature is limited on IBS cemeteries' impacts, it is the objective of this research to create a solid foundation of comparable terminology, similarity in impacts and events. It is a qualitative analysis involving cross-cultural research covering various time frames, different Indian Boarding School cemeteries, and individual stories from multiple Tribal representatives, all culturally involved in their communities.

There are examples where the Department of Interior went into multiple communities and attempted to assist in healing from Indian boarding school impacts and intergenerational trauma through holding testimonies. They performed a version of a ceremony, allowing space for people to share their trauma. However, there were aspects of the ceremony that were missed, that did not allow for closure of the ceremony.

CHAPTER FOUR

INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL CEMETERIES: HAESTOHE-
 XAMAE-KA'ESKONEHE, EVA-HOO'OHTSEO'O- NAA
 OVAHEE E-MA'XE-NETEHEVEOTSEO'O

You want to eradicate a people, do it through the education of the children (Smith, 2005; Adams, 1995). Indian boarding schools were the genocidal vehicle geared toward erasing everything that was Indian in the child, a colonial-era mechanism that continues to destroy Native American lives through the intergenerational degradation of Indigenous epistemologies, axiology's, and ontologies (ways of knowing, ways of doing, and ways of being) (Lewis et al., 2018; Wilson, 2008; Adams, 1995). With the loss of these traditions, Tribal members continue to experience disconnections from Tribal foundations, ancestors, and communities; the outcome creating a miasma of complex issues in Indian Country (Braveheart & DeBruyn, 1998). Furthermore, children who attended the Indian Board Schools died there and never went home.

Chapter four explores further details related to the mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual health disparities in Indian Country resulting from the Indian Boarding School trauma. It also presents an approach—non-invasively locating and mapping graves in Indian Boarding School Cemeteries—that I argue is an important step in healing the intergenerational trauma caused by Indian Boarding Schools.

Locating the children lost to boarding schools has challenges, including identifying the missing relatives and locating their graves. One obvious place to start the search is through an examination of archival records and other materials related to the students and schools. There are vast government and religious institutional archives regarding the children who remain in the

cemeteries. They are extremely difficult to access, most classified with multiple restrictions. Most Indian boarding school documents remain confidential; a few have been ‘unclassified’. Indian boarding school records are held under U.S. Privacy Laws (www.archives.gov/research/native-americans/schools/headquarters-records). This means the records are sealed unless the boarding school is closed, or the individual dies, or a student reaches seventy-five years of age (Beverage et al., 1974). In the case of students who have died, only family members with documented relationships to the student can access their records (McMahon, 2021).

The Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is a vital tool for transparency and accountability in government, but its principles can also extend to the various constraints imposed by authorities, including those from the U.S. government, the Catholic Church, and other religious institutions. This act allows individuals to request access to federal agency records, thereby shedding light on operations and decisions that may otherwise remain obscured. The gatekeeping actions of these institutions can hinder the pursuit of truth, especially regarding sensitive historical contexts—such as the legacies of Indian boarding schools and their impact on Native communities. Through the lens of FOIA, there is a call for greater openness to confront and dismantle these systemic barriers, ensuring that the voices of affected communities are acknowledged and that the historical traumas are addressed more openly. Such efforts are essential for healing and for promoting justice in long-overlooked narratives. Sadly, the gates are not opening with full truths. In 2020, the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition (NABS), Native American Rights Fund (NARF), International Indian Treaty Council (IITC), Indian Child Welfare Association (ICWA), and the Rosebud Sioux Tribe (RST), wrote a letter to

the U.S. requesting access to both church and government archives. There was no response. The petitioners took the request to the United Nations Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances (UN WGEID 118th session). It was not until the UN sent a letter of concern to the United States government that there was a response. The federal government stated there were no such records, and if research was necessary, it was best left to the specific petitioners, notably family members. In other words, the United States government and delegated religious institutions refused to open their archives (UN WGEID 118th session).

The intent of these schools, based on federal policies, was to train the Indian students for occupations on society's lower ladder rung. Trades taught the young Indian males included farrier and agriculture worker (planting and sowing); for the girls, training focused on home servitude (Reddick, 2000). There were few training options available for "upper society" professions farther up the ladder, such as law, engineering, or medicine. When the children returned to their homelands, if they survived, the occupations that they learned had little or no place in their societies, leaving them without means to survive.

Poor living conditions and diet in the IBSs, along with neglect and close living quarters, spread diseases such as tuberculosis, cholera and the dreaded Flu (in 1918-20), which led to high mortality. This was not just a problem for those in the schools. When the students went home for break or were sent home due to illness, they spread these diseases to family members and others in the community. Many family members died, and some were also buried in the boarding school cemeteries. Some have no marker, and their families may have no idea where they are located. Many may have crossed without proper Tribal ceremony (Fear-Segal, 2010). This is worth repeating. Not so much for the sake of redundancy but because words have power. This research,

this area of healing is a holistic work.

In addition to archives, the cemeteries themselves also contain a wide range of information that can help locate missing children and advance the healing process. For this project, we developed a non-invasive approach to gather information from things visible above ground (e.g., marker stones, paths, fences) and those that are detectable below ground (e.g., graves). This research will reveal the realities of how boarding schools, and the U.S. government and prescribed churches treated the burials of the Native students.

One of the objectives of this research is to provide a menu of how to conduct surveys in the IBS cemeteries. The intent is to provide information that can be used by the families, as well as Tribal, federal, and state agencies, if needed. As the recognition of impacts and reconstruction of outdated Indian policies moves forward, it is the hope that IBS researchers establish a cemetery data archive showing how many Native children remain in the cemeteries. It is instrumental that not all data be siloed at one organization. Much like National Records and Archives, to be better accessed by families, perhaps, it is best to have multiple organizations in various regions where the burial records are archived. Buried without traditional ceremonies, or often without any ceremony at all (Sphenia Jones, Haida Gwaii, B.C.; 2018; Eddie Hands, Haida Gwaii, B.C., 2018), thousands of the children are waiting for the right, and the rites of passage to go home.

Two cemeteries were examined using geophysical survey and mapping techniques to search for graves and other features that might indicate the locations of Boarding School-related graves: Anonymous Indian Boarding School Cemetery and Chemawa Indian Boarding School Cemetery.

Fieldwork associated with cemetery documentation began in 2018 at the “Anonymous Cemetery.” The name and location of this cemetery must remain anonymous here because of a request from members of the Tribe’s Elder’s Council. Nevertheless, the results of the survey work at this cemetery clearly demonstrate the illustrative power non-invasive mapping can have. This cemetery is located in the United States, and it is on reservation land. However, it is not a working cemetery.

Two geophysical survey instruments were used to identify grave locations, a magnetometer and a ground penetrating radar. Before collecting the data, it was not known how many graves were present in the cemetery or if the instruments would even be able to detect them. As these results are meant as illustrative, details on the method are further described below in the writeup about the work at Chemawa.

Figure 4-1 presents an image generated from the ground penetrating radar data collected over an area of about 1 acre. This “Radar Amplitude Slice Map” is a horizontal plan map of the survey area (about half of the cemetery) showing how well the ground reflects radar energy at 32-37 cm (about 13 inches) below surface. Areas of strong radar reflections are darker, and areas of weaker reflections are lighter in color. Note the rows of small rectangular areas of lighter color. These are graves. More specifically, they are places where a grave was excavated through a strongly reflective layer of sediment.

The map at the bottom of Figure 4-1 is an interpretation map based primarily on the radar data. The outlines of probable graves as detected by the radar are indicated in yellow. They appear to occur in two orientations—some are aligned east-west, and others are aligned north-south. An east-west orientation is a typical Christian methodology; orientations north-south are

typical for other spiritual standpoints. If you were assimilated, then you were buried east-west. Are the graves oriented north-south children that had yet to be considered “Christian”? Or perhaps these differences simply highlight changes in burial patterns through time. Today, graves with east-west orientations occur in almost all cemeteries in the United States.

The graves at the Anonymous Cemetery also vary in size, with notably smaller graves in the middle area, where north-south orientations are common. The structure of the cemetery, including grave alignment and arrangement, is very compelling and likely encodes important information about how and when these graves were excavated. For example, an east-west alignment for graves is common to a Christian belief system that was enforced on the burial of Native students. But what of those graves aligned north-south. It is complex patterns like this that could benefit greatly from additional archival data.

The magnetometer survey results are presented in Figure 4-2. The results are shown in grayscale—a traditional display technique—and in color to help highlight the locations of possible graves. The color version of the data includes an overlay of grave locations as indicated in the radar data. With these interpretations we can see that the graves do in fact appear in the magnetic data as small, less magnetic features. However, the results are a lot less clear than the radar survey results. As shown below, this is opposite to what was found at Chemawa, where the magnetometer survey produced the clearest indications of graves.

Presenting these results demonstrates how geophysical survey can be used to (1) locate graves and (2) identify the layout of graves within a cemetery. Far more graves were detected at the Anonymous Cemetery than was known by local community members.

Several lessons were learned at the Anonymous Cemetery—including the importance of using two survey techniques to provide complimentary geophysical data. The Anonymous Cemetery survey area was initiated in the year 2017. In 2018, half of an on-reservation school cemetery was surveyed using ground penetrating radar and magnetometry. I received approval to do the survey from the Elder's Council Committee leadership, with one member dissenting. At the time, due to funding scarcity, I could not raise adequate funding for the survey. In between, the COVID pandemic hit in the United States causing ramifications in Tribal communities; many reservations shut down entry to their Homelands. In May of 2021, I received authorization from the Tribe's Tribal Historic Department Director to complete survey in the northern half of the cemetery. I continued to struggle to raise funding, to no avail. By June, the Tribal Historic Preservation officer contacted me to say that they were no longer interested in our team doing the cemetery survey. In January 2023, I put in a request to the Elder's Council to see if the data garnered in 2018 could be utilized anonymously. In late February, the Director wrote back to say yes, I could, but he would need to see how I would include the data in the narrative. In early March 2023, I provided a letter stating exactly how it 'would look on paper'. In June of 2023, the Director of the Cultural Department approved my request to include the data anonymously in my dissertation.

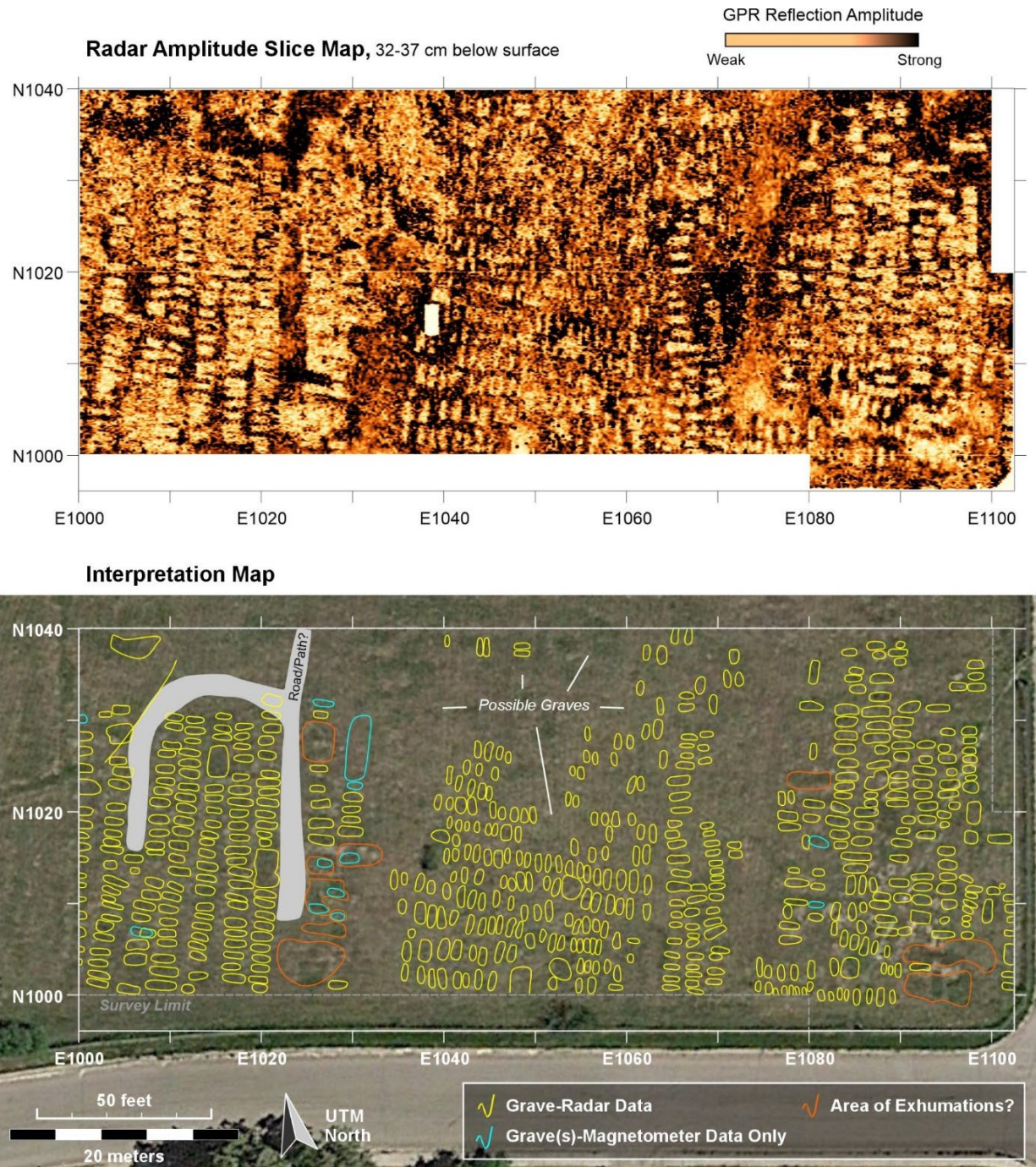


Figure 4.1 – Anonymous Cemetery survey results. Top image is an amplitude slice map made from ground penetrating radar data. The bottom image is an interpretive map showing the locations of graves detected in the radar and magnetometer surveys. Note the alignments of the graves, with patterns that go E-W and N-S, as well as distinct groupings/rows in various configurations.

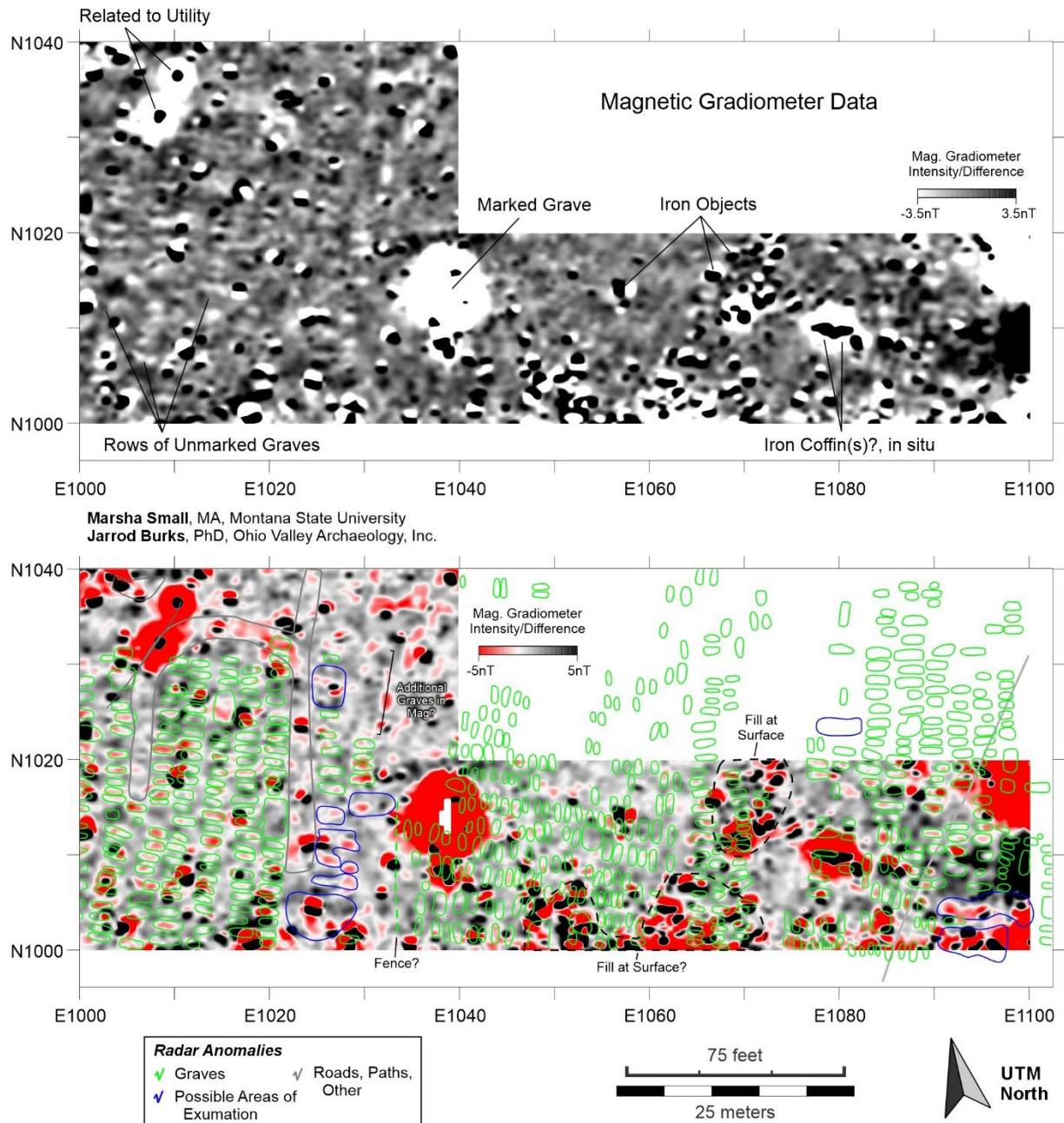


Figure 4.2-Magnetometer survey results shown in grayscale (top) and colorized bottom to help identify possible graves. An interpretation of the radar data is overlaid on the colorized magnetometer map to show where graves are located.

Chemawa Indian Boarding School

During the late 1800s and early 1900s, there were 357 federally funded Indian boarding schools in the United States, with 25 of them located off-reservation (Adams, 1995). In recent works facilitated by the Native American Boarding School Coalition, and researchers such as Robbie Paul (Nez Perce), Preston McBride (Choctaw), Denise Lajimidoire (Ojibwe),

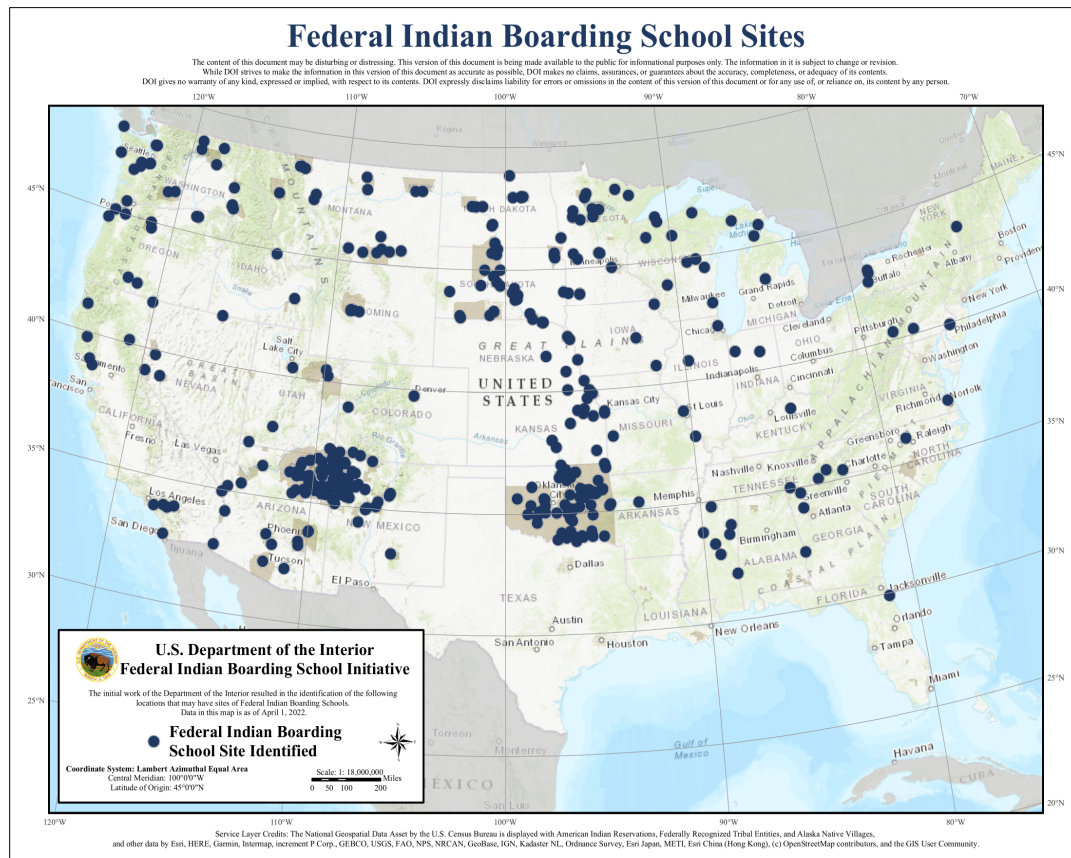


Figure 4.3-Map of Indian Boarding Schools in the United States-2023.

Christine McCleave (Turtle Mountain Anishinaabe), Lauren Peters (Agdaagux Tribe), Farina King (Navajo), and Desi Small-Rodriguez, as well as the Secretary of the Interior's 2021 and 2024 reports, knowledge of the number of the schools has increased. Data garnered has opened avenues of redress for families to find their relatives.

Chemawa Indian Boarding School opened in 1885. It is one of the first off-reservation Indian boarding schools and is the oldest operating Indian boarding school in the United States. As with most Indian boarding schools in the United States, it has a cemetery (Figure 4.4). The cemetery is a square area measuring about 210 ft. by 210 ft. (64 x 64 meters), and it is located in Marion County, Oregon, at the south end of the Willamette Valley (44.9984528, -122.9942626). To be buried at Chemawa, which is still possible today, you must have or had a relationship with Chemawa at a nuclear level. In other words, you and Chemawa must already know each other.

Pure Indigenous Methodology.

The Kalapuyans were an inland People (Suttles, 1990). These are the people who lived in the valley where Chemawa Indian School is located. The word Chemawa is said to mean many things from 'Happy Home' (Reddick, 2000) to the Santiam Central Kalapuya language /ame'wi/ meaning of a "place of low-lying, frequently overflowed ground" (Wood, 2015, personal conversation). As you can tell from the Figure 4.5 map, one can see how the 'place of low-lying, frequently overflowed ground' got its name. Chemawa is situated between two peat bogs, near the end of Willamette Valley and close to the end of the Bretz Floods, or Missoula Floods, reach (Bretz, 1969; 1925). It is important to know the land formations and the soils for survey considerations and outcomes.

In 2019, the methods utilized to locate the children and other community members buried

at Chemawa were ground-penetrating radar, magnetometry, and a global positioning system under the rubric of Indigenous protocols. I will go more into the 2021 survey later in this chapter.



Figure 4.4- House of Tears Journey. Totem Pole made by Jewell James and gifted to Chemawa.

The methods to locate the unmarked graves are non-disturbing and non-invasive; they mirror Northern Cheyenne (Tistsistah) epistemologies. It is important to recognize that each Tribe is distinct, with their own time-immemorial protocols (Gone, 2009).

To ensure that this survey did not create cultural conflict either within myself or our other survey partners, or most important of all, the Ancestors, I follow my mom, Voestat's teachings, in cohesion with what other Tribal protection peoples' have offered me. Before any survey

commences, we ask a Tribal Elder to offer up healing energies and other time-immemorial protocols, such as smudging. As I smudge, I ask the Ancestors for protection, for allowance for me to be there. I place offerings of respect. I ask the Ancestors to teach us, treat us gently, and to help us find those that wish to be found. As I enter the cemeteries, I ask for forgiveness for any arrogance, and state that with entry to cemetery grounds, we (I and my team) mean no disrespect.

Siltezi team members followed a slightly different protocol. The Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, with their own specific ways of knowing and ways of doing, are not bound by Northern Cheyenne protocols. For their methods, they sing their song of honor and respect before entry. We enter and leave with good hearts and with good intentions to locate the children in the cemeteries. Some of these children were brutally taken away from their families and all they had ever known; some were not. Some voluntarily entered the boarding school system but died there and are now lost. Our goal is to find as many as possible and help to rematriate them to their Tribes.

In every survey, we have adhered to protocols developed in a white paper by Small, King, & McBride (2021). A copy can be found in the appendices. This white paper provides a suggested set of guidelines for organizations working with Tribes, or if the Tribes wish, a ghost outline to follow when working with other entities to rematriate their relatives. In the protocols, it is stated that all survey data is owned by the Nations. This is critical data, and it belongs with the Tribes (Small-Rodriguez and Akee, 2021). In addition, for companies holding the data because they feel it is necessary, that company should recognize the legal implications of dealing with a sovereign Nation and the possibilities of data leaks. I would suggest that those companies return the sacred data, all of it to the Tribes to alleviate any future legal redress. Leaving the data

with the Sovereigns is fast becoming the standard for any research or data gathered on Tribes.

This is a safety net because we know data can be stolen by those with dangerous intent.

If anyone in the community has trepidations, the survey in motion will cease. It will then be up to the Nation to have final decree of data utilization or extended survey, anonymously or not. This is the responsibility due to a sovereign Nation in the United States, and as such, a one-to-one governmental relationship based on trust, and treaty status, a sacred responsibility. As stated, there are 574 federally recognized Nations (<https://www.congress.gov/crs-product/R47414>), and in addition, 63 Nations in the United States that are only state recognized (<https://connect.springerpub.com/content/book/978-0-8261-2985-7/back-matter/bmatter2?implicit-login=true>). There are stories and methodologies to be shared across a spectrum of epistemologies (Saugee, 1996).

It must be noted that in the facilitation of IBS rematriations of Indian children from the cemeteries, there are people and organizations whose intentions are honorable, but they are absent in protocols. For example, in the rematriation of a child at an IBS, there should be a person from that child's Tribe there to perform the ceremonies and direct the proceedings. One rematriation at an IBS cemetery, a child who was in process of rematriation was buried without Tribal protocols. In lieu of traditional methods and methodology, a colonial structure was applied and accepted as protocol by the Tribal community whose child was in rematriation process. This was the community's choice. This is what that specific Tribal community agreed upon as ceremony and thus, is recognized. That is sovereignty in action. Rematriation takes extreme planning and funding, and the economic burden should not be placed upon the Tribes.

Methodology (Exacting Path - Vovohpone-meo'o)

Accessing the cemeteries requires navigating complex federal, state, Tribal, and private entities' rules, laws and regulations, which means that it can take years to acquire cemetery access. Multiple attempts from 2012-20 to access Chemawa Cemetery through federal channels were met with complications, including personnel promotions, demotions, retirements, and terminations, which often delayed surveys. Protocols and guidelines can change when there is a new lead at an institution or organization, and when a surveyor or researcher introduces themselves and submits a new proposal. I did this several times throughout the years to secure access into the Chemawa cemetery. Fortunately, for this research I temporarily had clearance from the Confederated Tribe of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, Chemawa Indian School, and the United States Bureau of Indian Affairs, and through them the U.S. Bureau of Indian Education, to conduct several surveys at the Chemawa cemetery.

The Chemawa Indian Boarding School cemetery is surrounded by a chain link fence, with a formal gate and name plate on the east side, near the southeast corner. A side gate faces south toward the parking lot (Figure 4.6).

Inside the cemetery there are ten north-south rows of markers—thought to be associated with graves—with the most eastern row closest to the totem pole and east entrance of the cemetery (Figure 4.4). As discussed below, the markers are significantly displaced from the actual grave locations.

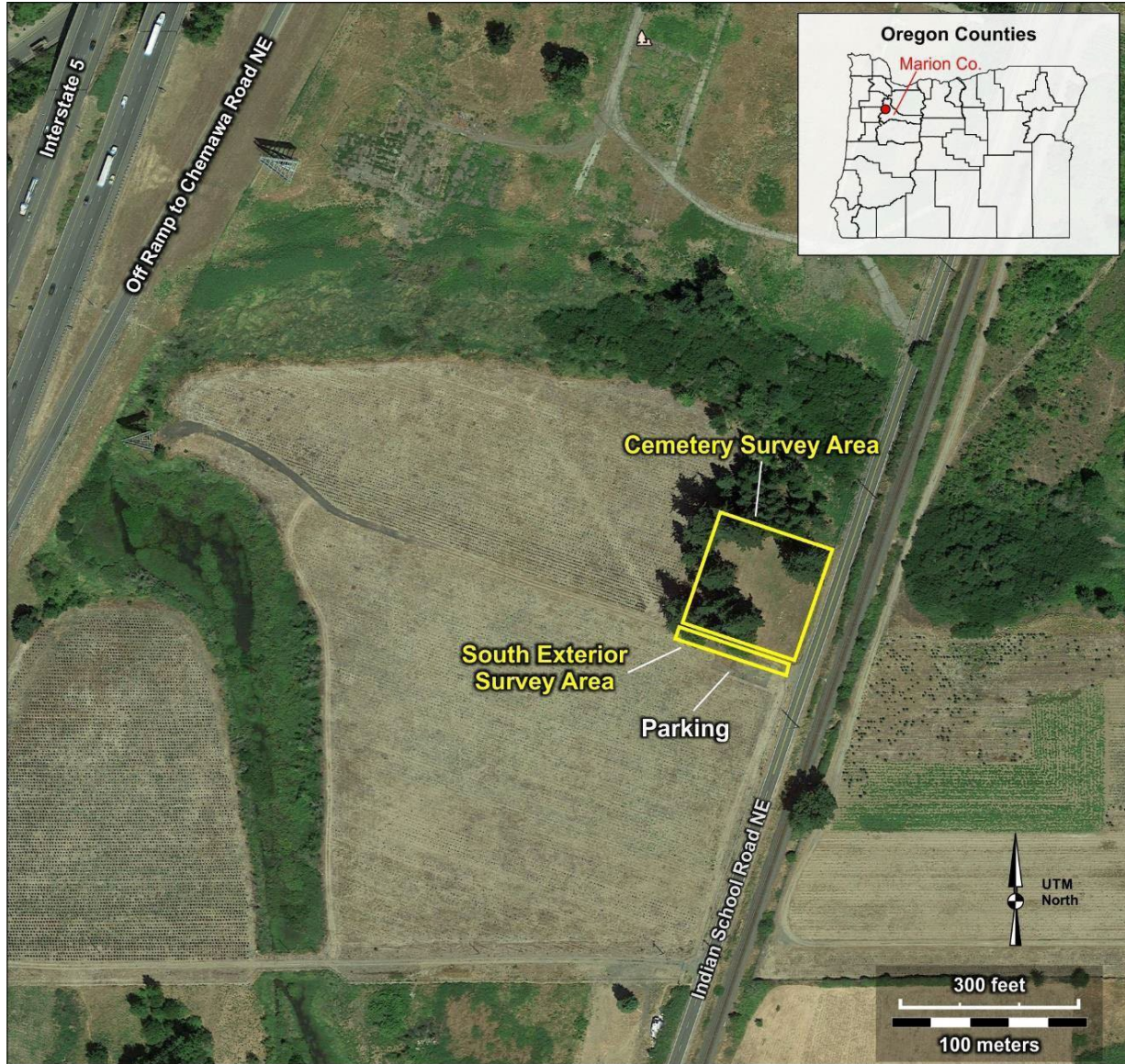


Figure 4.6- Location map showing where the Chemawa cemetery survey was completed.

In each of the graves in the cemetery are people who have had an existing relationship with Chemawa Indian boarding school, or those in the community. The identifying rectangular name plate is made of copper embedded in cement. They are for the most part, set flat on the ground surface. However, through time with soil upheaval from tree roots and other ground

disturbance, some markers have shifted (Figure 4.7). There are two eastern rows which are of old and new graves.



Figure 4.7. Photograph of the displaced marker.

On the periphery of the cemetery in the northeastern corner are the Van Tassel boys, who moved camps in 1913 and 1914 (Figure 4.8). They were children of an employee at the Chemawa school. The boys died one year apart with the eldest moving camps (dying) before the baby.

Finally, several older grave markers of different shapes are also located within the cemetery. These appear to be more traditional markers for the end of the late 1800s/early 1900s. They have been removed from the bases and laid flat on the surface. Today the cemetery is covered in regularly mowed grass and has large Douglas fir trees in the southwest, northwest,

and northeast corners (Figure 4.9).



Figure 4.8. Photograph showing the area of the Van Tassel boys. Arrow points to where they may be located.



Figure 4.9. Photograph depicting a Douglas Fir Tree with an animal burrow in the foreground. To the right of the tree is another marker, and Jarrod Burks is to the left (for scale).

The geophysical research objectives used in these surveys are multi-faceted. Survey goals are 1) to correlate geophysical signatures of burials with geographical precision to known markers of the children remaining in the Chemawa Indian Boarding school cemetery; 2) to assist Tribal, state, and federal authorities by providing documentation, cartographical instruments, and geophysical and geospatial data metrics of the children remaining in the cemeteries; and 3) to

provide awareness about the lingering associated trauma prevalent in Native communities (discussed in Chapter 5).

Ground-Penetrating Radar

Ground-penetrating radar (GPR) is often associated with cemetery surveys (Conyers, 2004). It works by moving a radar antenna along the ground as it transmits thousands of pulses of radar energy per second. For the Chemawa Indian Boarding School Cemetery survey, a Sensors and Software Noggin Plus 500 MHz system was used to collect the radar data (Figure 4.10). It is a mid-range frequency system that is ideally suited to most archaeological and cemetery applications. Fifty traces, essentially “readings,” per meter were collected along transects spaced at 25 cm intervals. Collecting data at this density with a single channel antenna system is a very time-consuming process, but it increases the odds that subtle features such as graves can be detected and discerned in the data. A 54-nanosecond time window was used to “listen” for return reflections from the transmitted radar pulses.

As these waves of energy travel into the subsurface and encounter objects and layers, especially those with distinctly different electrical properties (or different dielectric permittivity), some of the energy is reflected to the surface and received by the antenna (Conyers, 2012; Gaffney and Gater, 2003; Witten, 2006). An odometer on the radar cart, articulated with one of the wheels, measures the distance travelled and triggers the radar antenna pulses at specified distance intervals. This linear series of pulses creates a radargram, providing a profile view of the ground below the surface along the transect (Conyers, 2012). The instrument records the strength of the reflections and how long it takes the energy to travel away from and back to the antenna. GPR can provide high-resolution images of subsurface materials. This can assist in quality data

analysis depending on the antennae, surface material, and operator (Conyers 2012; Schultz and Martin, 2012; Jones, 2008). The data can be used to delineate graves, their position and size, and is useful for estimating depth (Doolittle & Bellatoni, 2010; Utsi, 2017;). Many things can influence or cause strong and weak radar reflections, including tree roots, abnormal vegetation influence, soil layers, pipes, larger rocks/bedrock, distinct soil layers, foundations, shaft-type features (e.g., graves, pits, old cisterns, and outhouses), seasonality, and disturbances to the natural soil layers (Utsi, 2017).

Antennas for GPR vary in frequency and range, making them suitable for detecting a variety of features below ground, including graves. Lower frequency antennas such as those that transmit at 20, 150, and 250 MHz are geared toward providing resolution at greater depth; the moderate frequency antennas, the 350, 400, and 500 MHz are more suitable for shallower survey providing clearer resolution and more definition (Watters and Hunter 2004). High-frequency antennas, such as 800-1000 MHz, can detect small objects like individual gravel-sized rocks, but they cannot penetrate the ground very deep.

GPR is utilized in a range of burial and archaeological contexts to identify the location and nature of subsurface features (Nelson, 2021; Wadsworth et al., 2021). Most notably, it is now regularly employed in the search for missing children and unmarked graves on and around the grounds of Indian Residential and Boarding Schools (as well as other institutions where the Indian children were buried) in Canada and the U.S. (e.g., Wadsworth et al. 2021).

It can be difficult to interpret what has been found in radar data based on the radargrams alone. Radargrams can be turned into a three-dimensional (3D) block of data by stacking them side by side and having the computer software estimate the missing data between the radargrams.

The resulting 3D block of data can then be “sliced” horizontally and looked at from the top rather than the side—making it seem as if one is excavating down through the data, and the ground, one layer at a time. Time slices of horizontal data, also referred to as amplitude slices, show a horizontal plan view of radar reflections at certain depths. Graves should appear in the slice images as small anomalies, about 2x7 ft (for adult graves), and they often occur in rows. The graves can be positive anomalies, where the graves themselves are what is causing the reflections or graves can appear as gaps (i.e., negative anomalies) in an otherwise reflective layer. In some cases, the graves are obvious in the radar data, and in others they are more subtle. Sometimes, even when graves are detected, they do not show up well in the time slice maps; therefore, it can be important to thoroughly inspect all the radargrams for the telltale signs of a grave. There are multiple factors to consider when reading data, two of which are tree roots and animal burrows. Several other soil characteristics also factor into grave shaft detectability. Because the soil properties (porosity, compactness, etc.) of grave shaft fill differ from the undisturbed soil that surrounds them, grave shafts tend to hold and drain moisture differently than their surroundings. Thus, differential soil moisture plays a key role in grave detectability. Recent heavy rains can make the tops of grave shafts (i.e., at and just below the ground surface) easier to detect in radar and electrical resistance surveys. Interruptions or disturbances of soil layers, which are common to all graves, can sometimes be detected by geophysical instruments, especially ground-penetrating radar (Conyers, 2006). In these cases, the instruments detect the intact soil layers that surround graves, and the graves appear as gaps in these reflective layers. Finally, many graves, especially older ones lacking burial vaults, experience subsidence as the grave shaft fill settles. Often, the soil brought in to fill the subsided grave is obtained from a

different source than the original grave shaft fill. This different soil is sometimes detectable to magnetometers and GPR, especially if it is subsoil from other recently excavated nearby graves.

Many individuals in the past were not buried in containers, they were simply laid to rest in their clothing, wrapped in a blanket, a buffalo hide, or a shroud (sheet). Except in exceedingly rare soil conditions, organic materials such as clothing or wrappings will have disappeared from most graves. Nevertheless, there is still a good chance that the geophysical survey instruments will be able to detect the distinctive fill or differential moisture levels within graves lacking coffins.

Magnetometry

Magnetometers are a second kind of geophysical survey instrument used to locate graves. They are passive geophysical survey instruments. They do not transmit energy, create radio waves, or require any kind of ground disturbance to detect things buried in the ground. They work by detecting subtle changes in the earth's magnetic field caused by the magnetic properties of things close to the instrument—in other words, things that are in the ground but close to the surface. They can detect the presence of objects with high magnetic properties, (e.g., iron objects) and subtle changes in the soil, especially if these soil changes involve the local accumulation or removal of topsoil or other distinctly magnetic sediments (Aspinall et al., 2008; Clark, 2000; Gaffney and Gater, 2003; Kvamme 2006). While small objects in the ground such as coffin nails (if they are iron) have high magnetic properties, their distance from the magnetometer will affect their detectability. Nevertheless, most iron objects larger than the average nail and located in the top several inches of soil can be detected. Old wire, iron pins used to mount or repair headstones and iron fencing, the flower arrangements left as memorials, all

can have impact.

Magnetometry can detect a broad spectrum of archeological and cemetery-related features, but like GPR, effectiveness depends on multiple factors. Soils are especially important for a good magnetic survey outcome. Graves, for example, tend to be magnetically invisible in sediments with low magnetic susceptibility, such as sediments rich in sand. But if a more magnetic material is used to fill in the depressions caused by graves in sandy sediments, then the graves will be visible in the magnetic data. Many other variables are important, as well. Impediments to good magnetic survey results can be inconsistent data collection and sites that are highly magnetic (e.g., those with volcanic rocks and bedrock that overwhelm a magnetometer).

Geophysical surveys not only detect graves, they also reveal patterns in the arrangements of graves that can help tell important stories, especially in cemeteries. Geophysical survey data can show where graves are located, what direction they may be oriented (instrumental in church burial grounds), whether they contain burial items, and other cemetery protocols. There are several types of geophysical instruments that produce useful results in cemeteries, such as ground penetrating radar, magnetometry, earth resistance, and electromagnetic conductivity. Using multiple methods is important and can increase probabilities of discovery and identification of subsurface material and/or objects (Hansen et al., 2014; Jones, 2008; Kvamme, Johnson, and Haley 2006). Each technique uses a different approach to create imagery of buried features, such as graves, evidence of land use, tree roots, burial goods, and other elements. In addition to detecting someone's child (anomalies), the results of the geophysical surveys provide data for understanding the layout of cemeteries (Jones, 2008). The caveat is while geophysical

tools work well together, none can detect burials one hundred percent of the time (Buck, 2003; Ciampoli, et al., 2019).

In summation, three main aspects of graves determine their detectability in geophysical surveys: the grave shaft and the soils within and around it, the presence of burial vaults, and the type of coffin used and whether it is still intact. Except in cases of very recent or very shallow burial, it is unlikely that any of the instruments will detect the individual at the bottom of a grave, especially given that in most cases a skeleton is all that remains. In fact, the radar is the only instrument that can penetrate deep enough into the ground, and with sufficient resolution, to even reach the depth necessary for detecting the human occupants of most graves (certain resistance meters can detect down many feet into the ground, but their resolution drops off with depth). But even when the radar can penetrate deep enough, bones and dirt have a similar radar signature. Furthermore, the detection of very subtle features or objects, such as bones in dirt, is complicated by the presence of other, more easily detected things in most cemeteries. For example, tree roots can be very distinctive in radar data, and they can obscure any subtle radar reflections next to and below them.

Global Positioning System

Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are a type of mapping equipment. For GPS to work efficiently, a minimum of four satellites must be visible to the instrumentation to deliver quality coordinates. In reality, the equipment needs to detect many more satellites to maintain good geometry for measurement. Establishing a spatial reference at each marker, grave, or burial will provide accuracy in location. However, there are multiple barriers to good data collection: 1) operator error 2) quality of instruments 3) inclement weather, and 4) signal reduction or loss

(Pas-Soldan et al.; 2014; Buck, 2003). Most historic, stand-alone maps are of low spatial quality (Liebens 2003). The employment of a good cemetery map, with high spatial resolution, is key to Indian boarding school research and for the intricacies due the federal initiative of 2021. If, after geophysical survey and mapping, rematriation is the next step in bringing the children home, accuracy in the locations of geophysical features and graves is primary.

Geographical Information System

In concert with MAG, GPR, and GPS, Geographic Information Systems (GIS) can be important in providing accurate location data in a plane coordinate system. Utilizing modern cloud-based web applications, interactive fact-based data can be open to Tribal communities, federal and state agencies, and families who may wish to pay their respects to their relatives in the cemetery. GIS platforms such as ESRI's ArcGIS and QGIS are commonly used with cemeteries.

GIS is most useful for revealing spatial data showing clustering and patterning of burials, such as during specific period (Sayer and Weinhold, 2013). In a GIS, patterning in the timing of children's deaths can be established and reveal spatial clues about the structure of a cemetery. Other patterns that might emerge include the causes of death, Tribal affiliation, and other factors critical to an Indian boarding school cemetery survey. For example, in the Chemawa cemetery, there are multiple Tribes who have children/people in the cemetery. Parameters can be based on categorization of Tribal membership, proximity of reservations or reserve from which the children were taken from, the clustering of the burials during a specific time frame, and other factors, for example, the impact of the 1918 pan epidemic.

By providing cohesive and collective geodatabases in GIS, other entities can utilize the layers of information and data showing incongruencies and similarities within a cemetery. Low-tech mapping methods, such as topo maps showing cemetery locations, contour lines showing hills, valleys, water resource relationality (is it close to a riverbank, does it intermittently flood?), and historic maps also can be georeferenced and brought into a GIS. Information derived from geophysical data through post survey analysis, can also be integrated into a GIS, such as burial depth, which can be instrumental in categorizing causes of death, year by year. While the use of GIS is relatively new in cemetery surveys, it is an important platform for data analysis, storage, and the management of spatial information specific to projects (Lisek and Nieścioruk, 2015).

Chemawa Indian Boarding School Survey

We surveyed the Chemawa Cemetery in 2019 and 2021 with multiple instruments during various seasons. In 2019, our objectives were:

- (1) Determine the relationship between detected graves and markers on the surface,
- (2) Identify the presence of unmarked graves,
- (3) Determine if the number of detected graves matches the number of markers and/or archival records of burials known to be present, and
- (4) Determine if any grave-like anomalies are present outside the cemetery, specifically at the south end of the cemetery where the parking lot is located.

In 2021, our objectives were:

- (1) Accurately map the existing grave markers in the cemetery,
- (2) Record names, death dates, and other information on the grave markers,
- (3) Conduct an electromagnetic induction meter survey of the cemetery, and

- (4) Assess two variables that affect the detectability of graves in cemeteries—data density and soil moisture level, as well as determine if radar frequency influences grave detectability.

Two geophysical instruments in the 2019 survey were used in the Chemawa Indian Boarding School cemetery: a ground-penetrating radar and a magnetometer (Figure 4.10). The radar, a Sensors and Software Noggin 500 MHz system was used to collect 50 radar traces per meter along lines spaced 25 cm apart. A Geoscan Research FM256 fluxgate gradiometer was used for the magnetometer survey. It is a handheld instrument, and it was used to collect eight readings per meter along lines spaced 50 cm apart.

For both instruments, the data were collected in 20x20-meter blocks that were assembled into composite maps of the entire cemetery using various software packages. The radar data were assembled with Sensors and Software's GFP_Edit and Ekko Mapper software packages, while the magnetometer data were assembled and processed with Geoscan Research's Geoplot software.

Figure 4.11 presents a summary of the Chemawa geophysical survey results. The image in the upper left shows the magnetometer data, where darker areas are more magnetic and lighter areas less magnetic. Very clear rows of low-magnetism (i.e., white) anomalies are visible. These are marked by red arrows and numbered R1-R10 (R=row). The locations of grave markers on the surface appear in orange, and these are numbered MR1-MR10 (MR=marker row). Note how Marker Row 1 is shifted to the west (left) relative to the location of R1. In fact, the results of the magnetometer survey show that the subsurface indications of rows of graves are not aligned to the surface grave markers. There is a considerable spatial offset between the surface marker locations and the actual grave locations.

The other three images in Figure 4.11 are various displays of the radar data. Two slice depths are shown with a grayscale color scheme: 10-50 cm below surface and 30-70 cm below surface. In the shallow slice map, from 10-50 cm below surface, the roots associated with the large Douglass Fir trees are readily visible—the trees are located in the white rectilinear gaps in the radar data, with the tree roots emanating out from them. Graves are not visible in this image, except perhaps where tree roots appear to outline them in the southcentral part of the cemetery. The graves become somewhat more visible in the deeper radar slice map from 30-70 cm below surface, but it is difficult to see them with the grayscale color scheme. The image in the lower left in Figure 4.11 is the deeper radar slice map with a rainbow color scheme. The outlines of the graves from the magnetometer survey are shown in white. In this image we can see that the graves are somewhat visible in the radar data as less reflective areas (in red).

Figure 4.12 shows a final interpretation map of the magnetometer and radar survey results at Chemawa. The surface marker locations are indicated as blue dots, while trees are shown as gray circles scaled to the approximate diameters of the trees. In this map we can see that the magnetometer detected most of the graves, but the radar was able to fill in some locations where the radar (a) did not produce clear indications of graves or (b) where the magnetic signature of the steel chain link fence overwhelmed the magnetometer at the north and south edges of the cemetery.

The geophysical survey work at Chemawa Indian Boarding School Cemetery has located indications of 222 graves, 210 of which are older (pre-World War II) graves related to the boarding school era, including one grave that contains an iron burial container. Not all graves are boarding school students. Accurate mapping of the grave markers present at the surface shows

that none of the below ground grave locations is indicated at the surface with a marker. Instead, it appears that the markers were put in place in the 1960s (based on newspaper accounts), as part of a cemetery cleanup project. At that time, the graves may not have been marked any longer, so the markers were created from burials lists and then installed in the cemetery in evenly spaced rows in an order and layout determined from earlier burial lists. Clearly these results show the importance of geophysical survey results in what appears to be a well-marked cemetery. While graves do not move in the ground, unless exhumed, surface markers can disappear or be moved multiple times in the history of a cemetery. These Chemawa results are a very important lesson for the rematriation process. Furthermore, they also show that ground penetrating radar is not always the best geophysical survey tool for locating graves.



Figure 4.10. The geophysical survey instruments used in the cemetery survey. On the left is an example of ground-penetrating radar, and on the right is an example of a magnetometer.

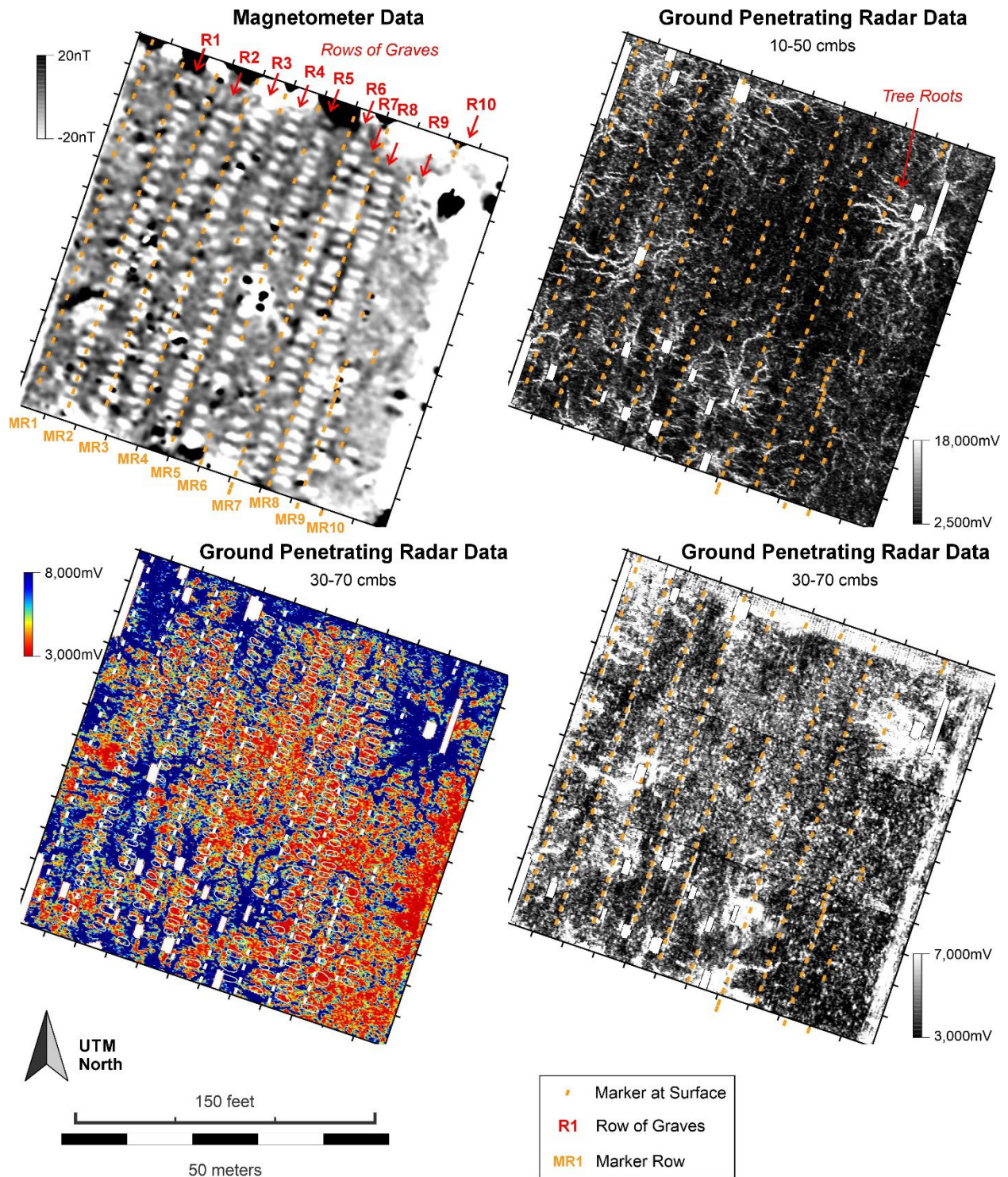


Figure 4.11. Geophysical survey data from Chemawa with surface markers. Note the difference in grave location between the magnetometer anomalies and the mark locations.

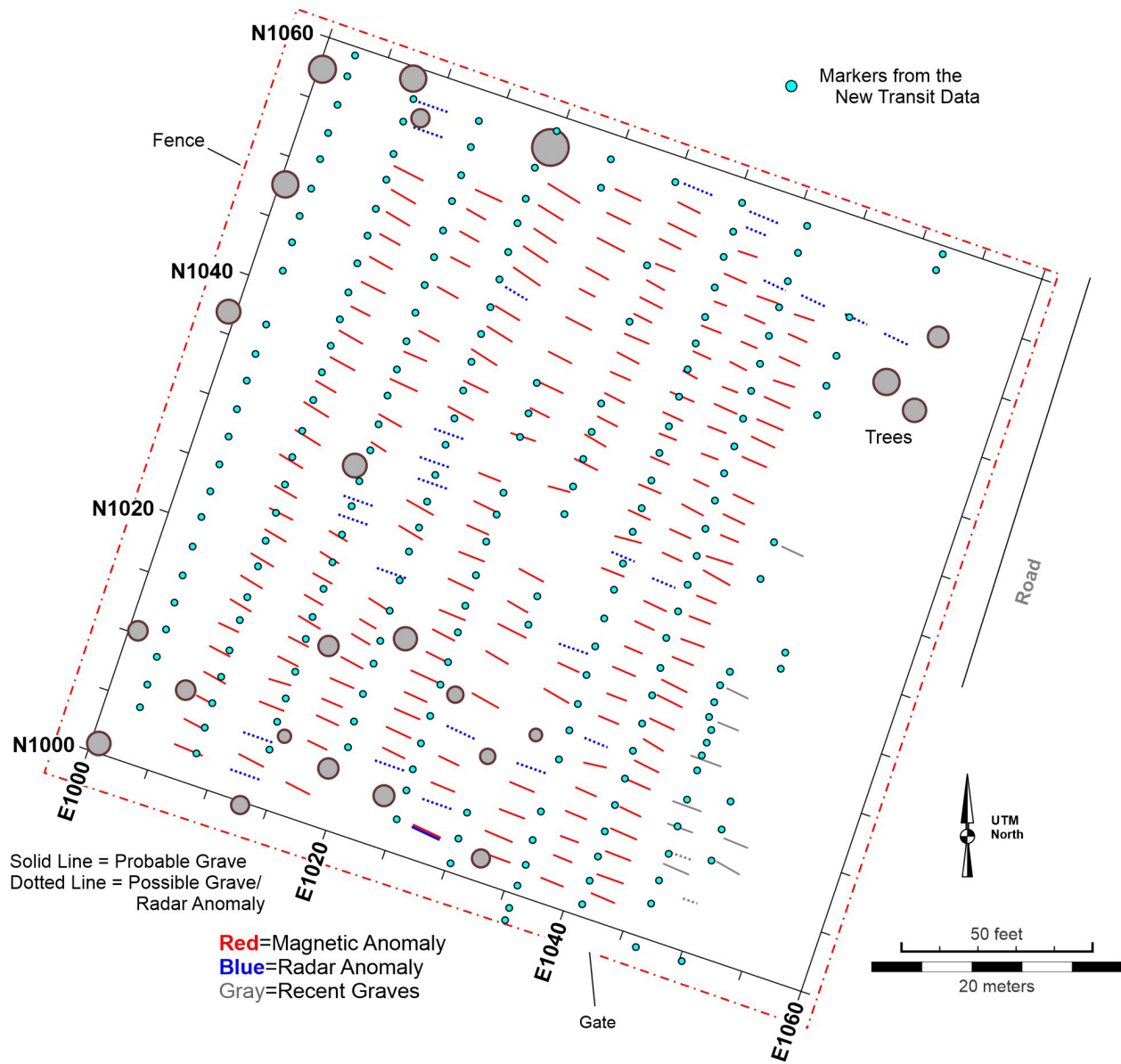


Figure 4.12. Final interpretive map from Chemawa showing grave and marker locations.

CHAPTER FIVE

HEALING: TSEHOO'OOHEVOSE HE-
HOSESTOONOTSEHOVO, NAA TOONEETO

Tsehoo'oohevose he-hosestoonotsehovo, naa tooneeto - Their stories are still alive and being told to the younger generations

Constellation of Impacts

This work is centered on the trauma caused by the Indian boarding schools, the children remaining in the cemeteries, and the exponential impacts created by historic and current government policies. The resulting negative impacts along with antiquated policies and mandates carry epigenetic stressors, the soul-wrenching pain of intergenerational trauma (Duran, et al., 1998) into the lives of the Native American, on-reservation and off-reservation, and in urban Native American communities. The U.S. government has a self-imposed responsibility to the Original Inhabitants by treaty, executive order, and statute (Skibine, 2021; Jaimes, 1997) and included is the protection of rights, which include physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, and economic health.

Work conducted by teams of Indigenous researchers nationwide estimate the missing children in this country in the tens of thousands (McBride, 2020). Young children were forcefully taken from their parents and sent hundreds of miles away from home. Many never returned home. For those that made their way home as young adults, they returned knowing nothing of their Tribal ways. Haestohe-xamae-ka'eskonehe, eva-hoo'ohtseo'o, naa ovaah e-ma'xe-netehevotseo'o (Many children returned home, they were greatly different-minded). In

complete erasure of self, their core identity was severely impacted (King et al., 2009; Durie et al., 2009). Some grave markers have names, many have none, either there was never any sort of marker in place or the marker is no longer there. The unknown and neglected children's graves are an ongoing legacy of colonization. The horrific Indian boarding school policies continue to permeate the lives of the Original Inhabitants.

This trauma has created generational stressors that Original Inhabitants experience daily, the effects lasting generations (Brown-Rice, K., 2013; Brockie, 2015). The Indian boarding school policies of the United States government and selected church institutions and representatives have created groups of people, who on respective Homelands, live just to survive the day (Whitbeck et al., 2004). The depth of their living memory has no metric. In other words, the level of pain they experience through the IBS trauma cannot be measured. How can one measure another's life pain? trauma may be acknowledged through methodological research and on-the-ground surveys. Will all the children be found? The answer is no. However, it is highly possible with the US government and the Churches cooperation, a large percentage of the stolen and kidnapped children remaining in cemeteries will be located, identified and rematriated.

Current State of Health in Indian Country

There are severe health disparities in Indian Country (Brockie et al., 2013; Fast & Collin-Vezina, 2010). According to the National Congress of American Indians (2020), Natives have a life expectancy that is 5.5 years less than any other population. Suicide among Native youth is 3.5 times higher than any other race which is the highest suicide rate in the United States (Indian Health Service, 2019). It is these impacts that link today's Indigenous communities to past Indian boarding school policies and the children remaining in their cemeteries (Leavitt et al., 2018;

Mignone et al., 2012). Tribes are declaring a state of emergency to plead for mitigation of the ‘epigenetic stressors’, or as Dr. Bonnie Duran (ICT.2015) says, the “colonial health deficit”. It is paramount that decision-makers and stakeholders initiate policy reconstruction without further delay (Jiang, et al., 2015).

Epigenetic stressors are cell-structure memories that have an impact on individual response to trauma be it generational or intergenerational. There have been considerable studies showing the relationality of response genesis. Studies have shown substantial findings of trauma impacts on DNA causing methylation. Methylation is epigenetic signaling which can trigger the fight, flight or freeze reaction. Three ‘f’s which I have termed fragmentation response. It does not change the structures of the cell but the response factors (Brockie et al., 2013). Hegemonic entities (such as the United States federal government) create political and legal structures that harm certain populations, eliciting emotional and physical responses from the impacted populations (Membe, 2008; Duran, 1997) or a lack of response by the proverbial ‘stoic’ Indian. These are behavior memories that can be held at the intergenerational cellular level (Yehuda et al., 2016; Ehlert, 2013; Sotero, 2006). Without redress or healing, violations are passed down through cell structure memories to the following generations, who then pass those learned behaviors to their descendants (Braveheart & DeBruyn, 1998). As such, the United States and complicit religious institutions are directly responsible for the disconnection between the children, people and the land that has held them through time (Trafzer et al., 2006; Grinde, 2004). With the current complacency and denial, the cognitive dissonance by the United States government and the churches continues to create exponential impacts in Native communities.

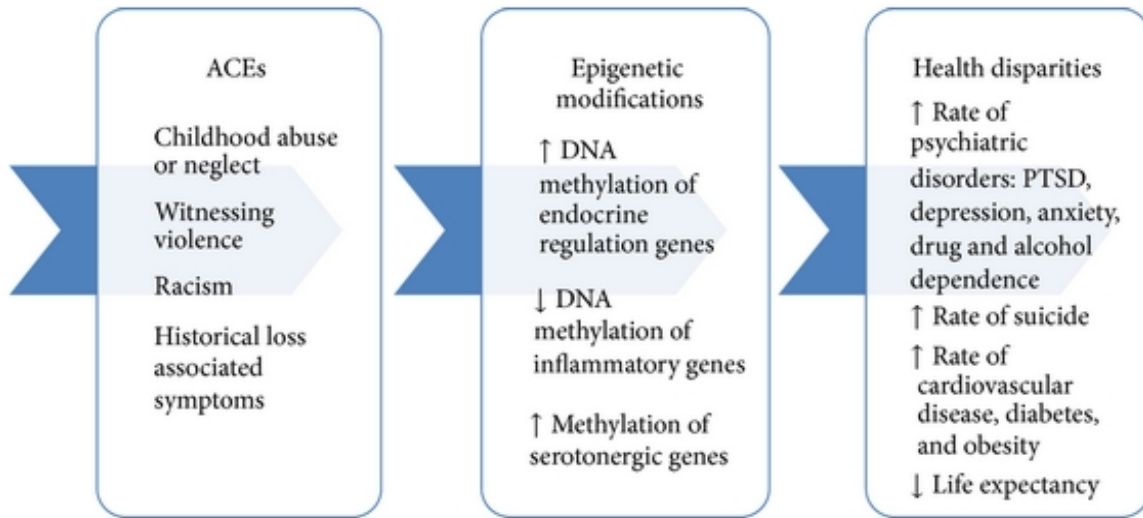


Figure 5.1: Demonstration of the relational impacts (Brockie et al., 2013)

Methodology

Indigenous researchers have discussed the importance of building relationships when working with research participants and communities (Kovach 2010, Smith, 2021, Wilson 2002). One such example is Kovach's relational method which in of itself holds integrity under Indigenous Methodologies. Dr. Kovach (2010) relates her conversational method with research participants to storytelling in a classic oral tradition format. Instead of grounding relationality in a predominantly siloed Western perspective, the value of the conversational method as an Indigenous approach lies in its foundation of trust. Rather than base relationality from a predominantly siloed western view, the utility of the conversational method as an Indigenous method becomes based on trust (Kovach, 2010; Terry et al., 2017; Wilson, 2002).

Many Elders, and/or Native people from closed communities (e.g., reservations), do not trust researchers (Davis & Reid 1999) even if the researcher is a member of the community. As a Cheyenne, I reintroduce myself to community members during preliminary visitations. I state who I am, where my responsibility lies, where the relevance of my research lies, what is the respect of the research to my community, and what is the reciprocity for the community. This follows the four R's of (Kirkness and Barnhardt 2001; 1998). I make time to help them before I request help. I help them in their day-to-day activities. In that space, there is no time frame. Some introductions, or re-introductions can take months. After a respectful time has passed, usually the community member will sit down with me and offer me dinner or begin to chat about Tribal epistemologies on which my ontology is based, my responsibility and our world view. This is usually supported by who they learned it from. When that protocol is done, I follow the ceremony procedure to the person I have requested help from. If they accept protocol, then we move forward. However, in one incident, at an anonymous Elder's Council, in the initial meeting, I did have one dissent. The Elder accused me of wanting to survey the cemetery for profit. They did not accept my offering of a sweet grass braid, and they left the meeting. Fortunately, the rest of the Council saw the survey as a positive and agreed to it. This is an example of protocol denied.

As I was doing this work to find the children, I began a journey to hear the stories from those affected. The first set of interviews were conversations with boarding school survivors who shared with me the impacts of boarding schools on their mental and physical health. The first interview I conducted began with a boarding school survivor who was speaking about her experiences with the media. She was a beautiful person, not afraid to talk about her tragedy and

experiences in the boarding school system. She then led me to speak with another boarding school survivor. These interviews with two survivors led me to search for that tendril related to mental and physical health. The themes related to language loss and impacts on mental health that I heard inspired me to conduct additional interviews with Tribal leaders in 2025 to hear about the impacts of boarding schools on our communities

Methods

Developing relationships in Native communities is critical to creating the trust (Simonds and Christopher, 2017; Deloria 1991). I utilized methods which were based in community cohesion, meaning that these individuals were people whom I had already established Tribal and work relationships. Interviewees (co-authors) were centered on the exponential effects culminating from Indian boarding school impacts. I contacted Tribal members to share their knowledge about this issue only as Tribal members with professional experience in their communities, not expecting them to represent their Tribe. They represented themselves in their membership capacities and professional experiences.

I conducted interviews with three leaders who hold the pulse within their specific Indigenous communities. These individuals have all worked in their specific communities for five or more years as Tribal representatives. These individuals are largely trusted by their communities and well-versed in their Tribal cultures. They understand the limitations of community healing.

Although the ‘n’ may be small, I argue that it is sufficient for comparative analysis to show the impact of IBS in these communities. It has been stated that a large ‘n’ (sample size) may not be necessary to achieve research purpose, or many participants can lead to a skewed majority or minority in the analysis (Ritchie, 2022). If processing is keyed into a defined response, the operation may be skewed by data misinterpretation. Meaning an overly weighted sample can enhance error probabilities leading to an overstated increase or decrease of data analysis leading to potential for data inaccuracy (Pasolli, et al., 2009). It could be debated that repetitive data or diminishing return are rarely important in the context of qualitative analyses that seek to answer not the ‘what’ of the research but rather answers the ‘why’. The sharing of these stories is emotional requiring relationship, time, and trust to adequately share these difficult topics. To complete the interviews with individuals across Montana, I attempted to do one interview by zoom and believe in hindsight that was a mistake. I was unable to connect to the participant and did not recognize their pain with the discussion at first and would not recommend that method for these types of sensitive conversations.

Data Collection

For the second set of interviews, I asked Tribal leaders about the ways that Boarding schools have impacted their community’s health. We developed open-ended questions that, while being open-ended, could also serve as triggers for both the co-authors and the interviewees.

Questions:

1. In what ways has the loss of children at Indian Boarding Schools affected the health of Native communities? [*Probes: How has the experience of losing children at boarding*

schools impacted community members' mental health? How has the experience impacted family members?]

2. In what ways have Indian Boarding Schools impacted language loss in Native communities?
[Probe: how has language loss affected the health of Native communities?]
3. In what ways have Indian Boarding Schools affected the relationship between the people and the land?
4. In what ways could reclaiming the children from Indian Boarding School cemeteries impact the health of Native communities today?

At any time in the interview, I stated the visit, and that the interview could end at any time. At any time, the interviewee had the option to close the interview with no further contact. These interviews lasted about an hour, where length of interview was dependent on level of participant/co-author zone of safety. The entire process, including pseudo names (e.g., Interviewee 1) and the name of Tribe/community will be kept confidential. Primary consideration is the confidentiality agreement, it is stated that only Dr. Simonds and me, will have access to the data.

Data Analysis (Methods)

Two of the three interviews were transcribed through Otter ai. One interview was not recorded due to technology malfunction and so notes were taken after the interview. Dr. Simonds and I listened to the interviews separately and then met several times over the spring semester to discuss the interviews and conduct the analysis. We used a modified version of the Indigenous Research Method, described by Hallet et al. (2017), where we listened to the interviews and then developed a construct of correlative relationships; avenues of similarities and differences.

Impact of Indian Boarding Schools on the Health of Native
Communities

We present the main themes for each question along with longer quotes to preserve the context and power of their answer.

The initial interviewees shared how their boarding school experiences had reverberated throughout their life and although they had struggled, both had come through these experiences stronger. In listening to the initial stories, one survivor emphasized his disconnection to language and told me the story of the language. The other survivor mentioned how she had not been the parent she wanted to be at first, but that over time she had become a good parent. The individual impacts on their health and well-being informed the interviews with Tribal representatives who shared about how these types of individual stories ripple out into the rest of the community.

Tribal representative interviewees from the second set of interviews spoke both personally and more broadly about how the boarding school intergenerational trauma had impacted their lives and their communities. One interviewee described how the intergenerational trauma from boarding schools has disconnected generations from the tools that are inherent in Indigenous cultures and the values of children:

Interviewee 1: Well, in my family, we have quite a bit of boarding school history. But I think in my position as a [Redacted Job], I've gotten to see a larger scope of like, how this, this particular topic here, has affected Indian country, not just [Tribe redacted] country, not just [Tribe redacted] but like, I work a lot with other tribes and their struggles are the same. Regardless of what side everyone says that they were on in the past, that it seemed like the outcome was the same for whether you were Ogallala or Crow or Fort Peck or Blackfeet,

it seemed like the result was the same, which was two, the same story of forced assimilation, right? So, but me, what I seen, what I see, and what I think often gets overlooked, the effect of boarding school, we're moving kids from, from their communities, had a profound effect on child rearing, how children are raised, both boys and girls, right? So, you have an entire generation, two, three generations now, of Indian mothers that were not taught how to be Indian mothers because they were, they were removed from the home, raised in the boarding schools, then they turned around, had kids, and then that generation of kids were then taken to boarding schools. And so you kind of had this reciprocal, or this, like repetitive cycle of not teaching in the natural setting on how to be who we are as people, you know... There's a generation of Native people, both men and women, that don't, they lack the tools of being competent parents. And that's, I'm not necessarily even talking about my generation or but it's, it's, there's a real, well, violent kind of way of raising kids, you know, that didn't exist before the boarding schools. The boarding schools literally taught our people how to remove compassion and reverence and the act of raising children. And in the [Tribe redacted] belief, we believe that it's a holy thing right to raise children, to have a child, and they'll say, to love them, you know, the [Tribal Words redacted]. We love our kids. You know, to love our child. You know,

This next quote illustrates the impact on mental health, the concept of devaluing oneself, how Natives were taught to be ashamed of themselves at boarding schools and how that is a root cause of mental health and well-being.

Interviewee 1: Okay, but you know, I, I, there's the common there's the common thoughts about boarding school where, you know, yeah, of course, removing the kids from their

homes is bad. We lost our we lost children at these boarding schools for two, three, in some cases four generations. We lost connection to culture, but that profound impact of a mother raising their children and being in having an uninterrupted line for 1000s of years of Indian mothers raising their kids was interrupted, and that can't be undone. You know, we're doing our best. People are doing their best, but we look around Indian country now, especially in Montana here, you know, like the amount of domestic violence, the amount of drug abuse, the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous people is a result of us not valuing ourselves, because we were never put in a position. In the last 150 years, we were devalued. And then then there became a generation that drank the Kool Aid and bought into it. And we don't talk about that too often, that not only was there generations of people who didn't want the boarding schools, there was one, two, three generations of people that bought into it and said it was a good thing that we've now bought this idea that education now is somehow this gateway to freedom, and this western approach to education is just born out of that. You know, like at no point should we ever have to put down our identity to be successful, and we were taught that to put ourselves aside and we and we believe it. We've gotten to the point where we're afraid of ourselves, you know. And that's all a result. It starts with these schools. These schools indoctrinated us to believe that we were unvalued members of society, and that what we had before has no place now, yeah. And now we're finding that it has all the places, you know, and that, in fact, that we can we finding success in it, so we just wasted 100 years. No, I shouldn't say that, but you know what I mean, but I think, I think, like, I don't want to overlook the typical answers, like, you know about, about boarding schools, but I do think it's overlooked that raising kids that uninterrupted

line enculturation, it was interrupted. And then we were taking Indian mothers, which are supposed to be the most cherished thing, right? [REDACTED]. But that was interrupted that had a profound effect on the way we view our beliefs, our culture, but also how we view women, you know, and, and that's not a that's not a result that fell out of the sky and then we, all of a sudden, were like this, you know, we learned to, not only I. To devalue ourselves, but especially our women, you know, and I think people, they make the connection. I see it, but it's not like outwardly talked about that raising kids [Tribal Nation] mothers raising kids, or [Tribal Nation] mothers raising their kids. Now, if you take that child away from the home when they're six years old, you take them to Flandreau, Carlisle, Bacone, Haskell, and they're raised there in the dorm matron system of impatience and sterilization and then you bring them home, and they have kids. How are they going to raise their children? You know, are they going to raise them in the same sense that was done for 1000s of years, for generations, they're not, and then it was that quick, like, bam, and that impact is, like, catastrophic. The second interviewee also described intergenerational trauma. However, they did not focus on how skills and teaching had been disrupted, instead the discussion focused on epigenetic effects. The trauma that can last through generations. As aforementioned, epigenetic stressors have capacity to carry trauma that can transmit across generations relaying response characteristics

The second interviewee also described intergenerational trauma. However, they did not focus on how skills and teaching had been disrupted but instead discussed evidence for epigenetic effects that are transmitted through generations. As aforementioned, epigenetic stressors have a memory that can last throughout generations. Again, the interviewee discussed how the boarding school

experience is directly connected to the mental health and substance use issues that their community grapples with.

Interviewee 2: So, we now have factual proof that trauma can be embedded into DNA. So, what once used to be a question of if? I mean, we would hear people say, traumatic experiences affect you in the long term. Well, now it's a proven fact, make no ifs ands or buts about it. So, in general, in the area where I preside, which is on the [Tribal Nation] Reservation, still you can see the widespread effects of mental health in the community. I mean, lack of mental health, substandard access to health care, substandard access to mental health care. You could see all of it, and it tends to show itself in many different manners. You have dysfunctionality of the core family value. The constricts of family life aren't what you would see in other areas elsewhere. You see a large degree of grief, standard mental trauma amongst Tribal members, I mean, they're volatile. They're easy to set off. They have the inability to rationally react to a lot of situations in which there shouldn't be issues or that shouldn't affect them in the manners they do. You see it mutate into alcoholism and drug abuse. Of course, alcoholism, the alcoholism is quite rampant. Has been for you know, quite a long time, alcoholism manifests, manifests itself into recreational drugs, drug abuse, and then eventually full-on addiction, which in turn, basically brings in more criminal element than what was previously there, that drug abuse, alcoholism, brings in drug dealers, cartels, human trafficking. It extends itself into the MMIP, you know, missing murders, indigenous people, basically the generational trauma, boarding schools, has probably laid the foundation for damn near every issue that Tribal members have at this time.

Impact of Boarding Schools on Language

In all interviews, language is the foremost impact. Each interviewee mentioned the loss of language as being harmful. The third interviewee noted that one side of his family had lost the language because of the shame that their grandmother experienced speaking the Tribal language. On that side of the family, nothing that was the Indian was recognized and that speaking the tribal language was “the devil”. Another interviewee explicitly noted that the loss of language related to Indian boarding school traumas. For this specific interviewee, the individual was never aware that their grandfather was fluent in the Tribal language. During this interview, this sharing of knowledge, I noticed a distinct discomfort from the interviewee. A long silence. I wondered at that time if we should continue the interview. I did not say anything. I followed Indigenous methodologies and let the respect of silence grow. Eventually, the interviewee stated....

Interviewee 2: Once again, we'll go back to my grandfather who passed away at 95 years old. None of us, including his own kids, knew he was a 100% fluent [Tribal Nation] speaker, until right towards the very end, where he quit speaking English half the time. I always kind of wondered if his long-term life partner in later years, was 100% fluent, and she would sit there and talk to him all day in [Tribal Nation], and he'd just go um hm yeah uhm hm. And I always just thought that was his way, kind of blowing her off. But I guess he knew exactly what she was saying. I kind of feel like a dumb ass, because, as I was kind of raised by him to a fair degree over the years, I spent more than my fair share of time there. She was always trying to teach me [the language] too, and I felt like I was just kind of a rock that she was beating her head off...[I] had no reason to learn a dead language. Didn't realize I missed the opportunity till years and years later, of course.

Another interview stated that the IBS system had negative impacts on the whole Nation because language was not being taught to the youth.

Interviewee 1: Well, I think I kind of started talking about it like with I think, I think where you find the [Tribal Nation] language surviving in these families is where the women speak [Tribal Nation] because you're as a young child, you're spending the majority of your time with your mother, you know and women who speak [Tribal Nation] and interact and raise their kid, they raise them, meaning they don't just have kids, right? They raise them. You. Know, though their cultural competency is stronger, you find these kids that are coming from strong women who are outspoken, because I really do believe a [Tribal Nation] woman should be outspoken. Like, I don't think they're,...we kind of present like they're these modest, little, kind of quiet little things in the corner, but not in my experience. No, they're like, women that are going tell you how they feel. You always know where you stand with them. I don't see anything wrong with that. You find that these kids who are raised in their homes and of course, having both parents is important. But, if you can, if you can have both parents and strong willed culturally competent women, you'll find that those kids are that way too. But because this line has been so eroded, it has affected the language, right? And so, there's less and less [REDACTED Tribal Nation] people speaking [REDACTED Tribal Nation]. There's less and less cultural competency. And because if it doesn't happen in the home, then it doesn't. It's not going to happen outside. [REDACTED culturally specific story]. So, I think that kind of that first question, in a lot of ways, answers why language loss would be for one, they devalued the language too. They made it to where it was of savage people. You know, it was unsophisticated. It belonged to something

archaic. It was old, the old thing, the old languages, oh, that's what they used to. That's old. That's in the past. This is modern. Do this, you know...how we interpret the planet, how we interact with the world, is in that language. And it's proven that any person who speaks two languages automatically smarter than the person who speaks one. And so, I don't I don't know why it's not thought that way. It's always thought like when you hear somebody with a heavy accent, we were taught to think, oh, they're ignorant, or they're not educated, or when we see someone who only wants to speak their language, it's like, that's, that's old people. That's what old people do...The devalue of our language...[it] didn't fall out of the sky, right? It came from somewhere.

Indian Boarding Schools Affected the Relationship between the People and the Land

Interviewee 1 discussed how children today are disconnected from the land and that this relationship the Original Inhabitants had to the land. Land is considered by multiple Nations to be the Earth Mother. It is the land that holds the People, and as such, is considered a relative. Through the enforcement of Indian boarding schools and following disconnections from core selves, the Original Inhabitants relationships with the land were severed.

Two of the interviewees explained how our homeland is associated with landmarks and sacredness.

Interviewee 1: We place our environment first, and our environment is our landscape, this idea that boarding schools put into us industry development, progress, what, what they define as pride, yeah, and all in the pursuit of money and the American dream. So, we set aside our own beliefs, our own world view, to pursue this, and it's done nothing for

us really, like when you really look at what it's provided for us. We've, we've, we have no success in it. We found no luck, you know.

And the Dawes Act was the first major attempt in in in creating the concept of greed in us, in terms of land, right? The concept of greed. Existed before with boarding schools, but this approach, through boarding schools then led to like federal Indian law and policy. So, the Dawes Act fractionated [REDACTED Tribe] lands and gave ownership by individuals which didn't exist before. This idea that we all owned it together, and that even our idea of ownership was different, more of a custodian of something, you know, our job, we're here because we're going to take care of this together, as opposed to, like, this is mine, you know. So, we adopted that first mentality from the boarding schools, which then led into our views of land. And no matter what I try to do and how [REDACTED Tribe] I try to be, that's so indoctrinated in us, and even in me, the pursuit of money, the pursuit of land and things, and it's like, how do I get out of it, it's hard. It's like hard, because even when you try to remove yourself from that way of thinking, you get like anxiety from it, and so we're stuck in this. So, I think the only way to combat that is to interact with land again. So, when you go to the mountains, and you go to these, to our waterways, and it seems like your comfort level, it gets stronger and like you're able to kind of combat problems in life. My grandpa used to say that my mom's dad, his name was [REDACTED Name]. He passed away in 2001, but he said, whenever you're feeling down or you're confused about something, so go to the mountains. He said, spend the day in the mountains. When you go to a spring or you cross a river, wash your face in that water. You know, like, take that water. So anytime you come to new water, wash your

face in it. And I never really understood it, but I do now, there's something about it that makes you like a part of it. Once you like, wash your hands in that water....but it's not something that you can't necessarily explain all the time, but it's meaningful. You know like to o interact, to have an interactive relationship with landscape, because we come from it [REDACTED Tribal Association]. We believe that we say away again, where the people on top of the earth? We come from it. We're made out of it. The Creator, [REDACTED Tribal Affiliation], has said, I'm going to take this mud and I'll breathe into it and I'll make you. You'll go from inside the earth to on top of it, you know. But because of that. Now we have a covenant with the earth. You know, we come from it. We're not apart from it, we're a part of it, and so we're obligated to the stewardship of our landscape. But that connection is hanging on by a thread because of what had happened to us. You know, those lines of belief and respect and reverence for our landscape was cut off through the American education system, and that was the boarding schools. Direct result of the boarding schools is our disconnection to who we are as a people where we come from, and our respect for it, and our urge and our eagerness to preserve it and to perpetuate it is gone. There's no urgency in Indian people. There's select few that are doing their best. They're hanging on by a thread. But when you really look at people, are actively trying to preserve our way of life through land and language and raising our kids. There's not many. There's not like and if you look at your own circle of friends that you say are doing this man, you can count on one hand who's doing real work. There's a lot of people who talk about it. There's a lot of books written about it. But then when you actually go out there and you meet and see people who are doing the work. There's not

many. Everybody else is in this repetitive cycle trying to please the system that was forced on them. They don't even know who they're pleasing anymore, because I don't even necessarily think white people care anymore. It's just the system that was created for us. Now we're trying to please the system, and so they're just stuck in this, this idea, and then it because they don't win in it, because we can't find success in it, we create a defeated attitude in ourselves. So, when you're on the reservation and you run into these communities that are defeated, and you see them, they're living in poverty, they're living in sorrow, they're living in pity and victimization, and you're like, how are they here? You know these? These were once people that came from [REDACTED Tribe], you know what I mean? And they in, they're not that. They're fractions of it. It's because we've allowed this system to eat at us like a cancer, you know? And it all starts from there. Like the Indian wars were one thing, that's one thing. But in some ways, you can say the Indian Wars, we validated some of our beliefs. We stood our ground. At least we were dying. People were dying, but they stood their ground in the boarding schools. It was like a poison that was given to us, you know. And now we have some weird form of like, what is that? Called Stockholm syndrome, where you like, sympathize with the person who's victimizing you, and so we've created a huge mental case for ourselves, where the largest sickness in Indian country is not diabetes, it's mental health, and it's all because of this. You know, just devalued us, and we don't have a connection from the very land we come from, and we purposely stay away from it to the point where we tell our kids that it's dangerous out there. Don't go to the hills. It's dangerous. But you can go drive around Billings and people are shooting each other, you know, you can go to the bar and drink

whiskey, but you can't go into the hills and eat the [REDACTED specific Tribal food] that's in the ground. It's dangerous. You might get sick. Don't eat too much of that. You drink water out of a spring. They'll tell you. Is that clean? Is it clean water? Meanwhile, you can take city water and drink it all day long, you know. But you go through McDonald's drive [through] and then you kill a deer and take it to somebody, and they won't eat it. That gets me sick. Yeah, this is what we believe. It's not true. You know, we don't, we don't get sick from it, but we believe it because we're just taught this. We're going on five generations now, of people teaching us this, everything that means us and identifies to us is less than what we're pursuing.

In contrast, the other interviewee discussed using land to create a livelihood. This individual explained how ranching was essential stewardship, a reciprocal relationship. How families and communities are supported by the ranches who make a living from the land.

Interview 2: "Of course, on the [REDACTED Tribe], there's been long running battles over utilization of the land. There's been long running battles over ownership uses, how it should benefit people and whatnot, what have you. Know [that this will] will continue through eternity. I mean, frankly, um,[sic] there's always been a kind of a running battle, you know, members and ranching members of the community where the ranching members, you have to realize their capitalism, even in societies like that, still kind of rules the roost off sometimes, you know, ranching kind of foots the bill for most of the Tribes activities, and it's not viewed in a real positive light, with quite a bit of the populace, right, because cattle are viewed as The White Man's Buffalo, and I think under the prophecies that you know becomes end of time when your Tribal members begin to

basically run Cattle, white man's buffalo. That's what's been explained to me at times when I've asked, why these guys hate that so much. But on the contrary, the Indian farmers and ranchers are really, truly the only conservators of the land. They're the ones out developing water and springs, regulating forestry, doing a lot of the activities that it takes to have a piece of ground that's productive and in the condition it should be in, versus letting it go to waste. So, it's all a catch twenty-two. The way I'm looking at letting it go to waste would be if we had, say, 50,000 acres of land, and it was in one interconnected block, if there wasn't a piece of water on any of that, it goes to waste. Nothing can live there. Nothing can flourish, right? So has to be developed for it to become useful to wildlife, wild animal, wildlife, domestic lifestyle, wildlife, recreational activities, whatever it wants to be utilized for you have to have water to farm. Even so, with these improvements to the land that many of the farmers and ranchers are making, effectively, you're not stuck with a piece of ground this goes to economic zone that has no economic value. But on the other hand, you're not stuck with a piece of ground that also would have no deer, wildlife or anything else on it. So, prior to conservation of water and land is, you know, whether or not you realize that that's basically what every farmer and ranchers always doing with that ground.”

Impact of Reclaiming the Children from Indian Boarding School Cemeteries

When asked about reclaiming the children from IBS, the interviewees emphasized the importance of bringing children home. All of them talked about closure and repatriation. All interviews discussed closure as paramount to moving forward in the trauma areas. For example, the third

interviewee talked about closure. “It felt like a big old weight had been lifted off my shoulders. Even though not related, I have that responsibility to my community. You could feel it and look around, a big weight lifted off of my shoulders.”

Interviewee 1: “But I do know that closure is important, just that alone, this idea that we should, we should care for ourselves, that means care for ourselves in the living and care for ourselves in the dead. You know, like we should be, the ones that put ourselves, you know, away and we were robbed of that by hundreds, if not 1000s of children that were taken away from us, you know. But on top of that, I'm just a believer that [REDACTED Tribe] items and [REDACTED Tribal Name] people should be with [REDACTED Tribal Name] people and on [REDACTED Tribal Name] land, that just is, whether it's symbolic or not. That's what I believe. And my personal belief is that any [REDACTED] child that was taken away from their home, regardless of where their home was, if they were taken away from their home, they were never given the opportunity to be returned. They should be returned. That's my personal belief. There's a lot of people who believe we shouldn't disturb the dead, and I agree. I agree, but if that was done wrong, we should make it right where we can.”

Interviewer 2: Closure. Realizing some of these kids were one generation away, maybe two generations away. Some much further than that, right? This was somebody's father's brother, father's sister. This was somebody's uncle, grandfather, whatnot, what have you. As these kids were shipped off, you know, against their will, primarily, they were put in a situation. Where they're going somewhere, where they knew nothing knew, no one could communicate, and were essentially forced to deviate and leave all their customs, traditions,

their own language and everything they knew to be real at that point. So, they were placed into an alternative reality that they had to cope with all of a sudden, that some of them couldn't make it right.

You know, the bad thing about dying oftentimes is it's okay when you're the one dying, because it's everybody else that pays the fiddler around you, so that leaves a lot of broken hearts and healing to do. The reclamation or the repatriation or the bringing home of some of these victims of the boarding school complexes can be a great healing point, I think, for probably still quite a few families, end of a chapter, the closing of a book for many of them.

Discussion

All the interviews had varied responses, but in a correlative avenue address. All of the responses had substance of 'sameness' but varied from the structural platform. Disconnections caused by the IBS and the children remaining in the Indian boarding schools is the crux of this healing. The themes identified have relationality. Some of the responses are brutal. They are very heavy. This is why the relationship between interviewee and listener is important. There is a profound trust that allows for truth and transparency.

From what I have learned, as a listener of the people, in the old ways, one does not interrupt. This is applicable to the 'talking circle' that multiple entities have encompassed without knowing the structure, the integrity. I followed the old school way, the affirmation of 'mmm' or in a 'head nod' of response. When I did explode with thought, I could feel the interruption of flow. That is one hundred percent my culpability; the Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). I will bubble over inappropriately. This method needs to be

attended at the beginning of each interview. A small succinct explanation of self will do. When the sharing of knowledge was over, I, then, clarified my questions.

There were no disagreements, nor did I get cussed out. In Indian Country, if you cross lines of respect, know that you will be reprimanded, almost instantly. In synthesization, with all interviewee's responses, I noticed the interviewees would stop and think about what they wanted to say. There were lengths of time when I wanted to jump in and say something, but I kept quiet. Eventually, they all responded with a well-thought-out response.

There was no spontaneous or quick flash response. Each interviewee took the time and respect for each question and follow-up. In this, I believe they were responding with the four 'R's, the respect, the relevance, the reciprocity, the responsibility of space, and standing as a member of their Nation.

For me the healing is figuring out that story, that narrative, letting people know they are not alone. For too long, not talking about the abuse has silenced a lot of voices that have been ashamed to talk about it. Bringing out these stories through these interviews and talking about the road to healing and not being ashamed of the trauma is a healing in and of itself. The interviewees reinforced that the community had shared trauma; their pain wasn't siloed. They all understood that trauma was from Indian boarding schools, the loss of language, the disconnection from the land, and that PTSD was one of the impacts.

While this study had a small sample that limits conclusions across Tribal Nations, this study provides a basis for healing. Even with a small sample size we saw similarities across the interviews that connected to what I had heard in my initial set of interviews. In addition, the

analysis was conducted by Indigenous women also impacted by the intergenerational effects of boarding schools in their own families and communities.

These interviews emphasized how the disconnection from land and language results in loss of connection to culture and forced values all which damage our health. One thing I would do differently would be to include a question that focused on the ways that communities can connect back to land and to language. As we analyzed the interviews we thought about how these Tribal communities are healing and moving through the same hurt and same issues. There are many communities that are building on cultural strengths to promote health through connecting to language and land (Bryant, et al., 2021). Language provides support for that connection back to identity and can be a basis for interventions that build and strengthen cultural identity to improve health in Indigenous communities (Walters et al. 2020). Another important step towards healing is bringing children home, bringing closure at least and moving forward. The community comes out to welcome the children in their crying and their tears, those tears are put to rest and those children come home.

Conclusion

Native Americans experience insurmountable challenges related to the boarding school era (Walters, et al., 2008; Brave Heart, et al., 2011). These challenges include methodical attempts to extinguish the core of the Native American identity which today has Native people teetering on the edge of existence, continuously feeding intergenerational poverty (Small-Rodriguez & Akee, 2021). This historical trauma and the resulting disparities in Indian Country have created human rights issues contributing to the exponential rise in an escalator of disparities; physical, mental, spiritual, emotional, and political (Schroedel and Aslanian, 2015; Watt, 2023; Brown

2013; *Wanderingmedicine vs McCulloch*, 2012). As a result, thousands of Natives live in abject poverty, and are host to a miasma of life-threatening issues. These extreme issues continue to add to the invisibility of the Original Inhabitant and are directly related to the systemic issues in the relationship between the United States and the Tribes (Akee and Taylor, 2014).

The impacts from yesterday's federal Indian policies are the causal agents in the life of the Native American today. The primary impacts are environmental, educational, and economic (Adler, N. E., and Newman, K. (2002). The Warne and Lajimodiere model (2019) Figure 5.2 shows the interconnections as they have evolved from historical to current agency in Indian Country. The trauma from the boarding school experiences, including epigenetic stressors caused by Indian boarding school abuses and following learned behaviors, are linked to present day adverse childhood experiences which lead to adult stressors and ultimately chronic disease and mental health disparities.

Trauma is a norm in Indian Country. Violence is common and some atrocities are considered rites of passage (Gone, 2009). Events which should be treated as horrific events are viewed and accepted as daily occurrences, and as such, apathy is injected as a community standard. Collective trauma in adverse childhood experiences (ACE) and adverse adulthood experiences (AAE) have a calculated agency (source). They are embedded into the core existence of the Indian child and extend into adulthood. In the Warne and Lajimodiere model (2015), the pathways illustrate the connections to historical trauma created by the Indian boarding schools. From the gestational stressors to the chronic health issues in Native American adult lives, the model shows the bridges between the Indian boarding school brutalities to the chronic disease issues in Indian Country. Indian boarding school policies, land grabs (General

Allotment Act 1887), and the caste system (Wilkerson, 2021) of the United States, were and are, the primary instrument in the destruction of the Native American family. In one interviewee's statement, they stated general allotment saved his family. In another interviewee statement, they said that it destroys the family nexus.

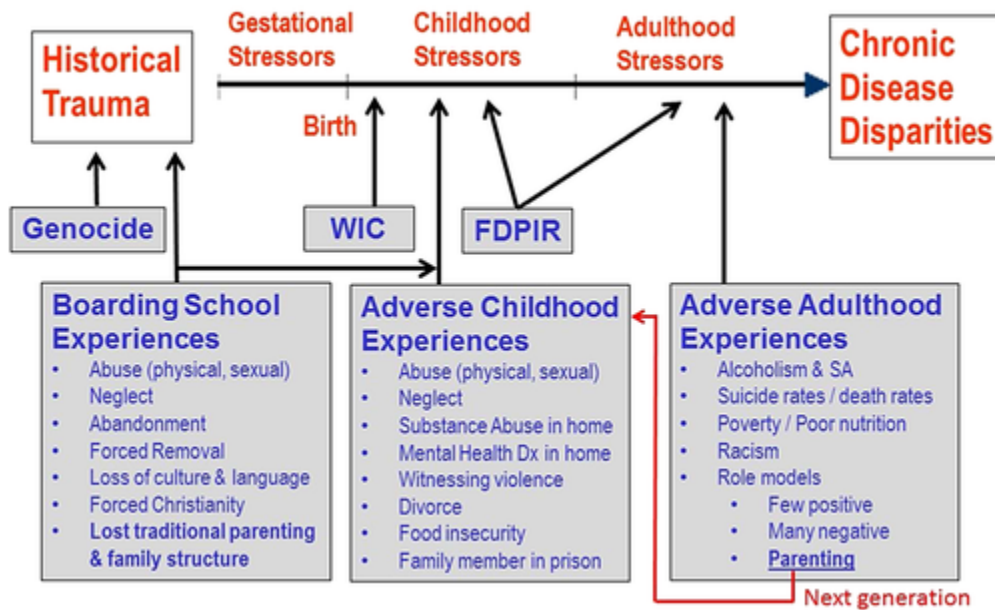


Figure 5.2- Intergenerational basis for chronic disease disparities among American Indians and Alaska Natives (Warne, D., & Lajimodiere, D., 2015)

On and off reservations, the survivors' relatives deal with exponential effects of the continued genocide; suicide, health disparities, sexual deviancy, drug and alcohol abuse, family disconnections, loss of land interconnections and ceremonies (Bergmann & Jucovy, 1982/1990 in Yael, 1998; Solomon, et al., 1988 in Duran, et al., 1998; Kesternberg in Duran, et al., 1998; Walter and Simoni, 2002). As such, stereotyping is rampant, where the Original Inhabitants of these lands are treated as heathens, the intent creating the invisibility of the Native American

dependent on the U.S. government systems (Leavitt, et al., 2015; Barnes, Adams and Powell-Griner, 2010). Heinous federal policies have ‘manifested’ into a slow death for the Indian, dating back to the Marshall Trilogy in which the Indian was considered not only a savage, but a savage child that did not have the rights to determine their own horizon (Johnson v. M'Intosh, 21 U.S. 515 (1832)). Country and communities have the highest suicide rate in the United States. It is 400% higher than the rest of the United States (CDC 2021). Centuries later through intentional genocide the Original Inhabitants are still here, albeit with subsequent survivors’ thoughts of suicide, at-risk behavior, (Brave Heart, et al., 2011) and guilt association response relating to an obligation to be a part of the ancestral suffering.

The Indian boarding schools created an abyss of pain. The trauma of separation from their parents and Tribes killed many of the students, some dying from pure loneliness, separation from their families; the change was too great. Many of these children were buried in the cemeteries, many families never knowing they died, and many families never knowing where they are located. The uncharted journey of rematriating Indian boarding school students was marked by barbed wire fences (difficult areas to navigate), closed gates (closed opportunities), restricted access to U.S. government archives (either limited or entirely closed), and the church's supposedly incomplete inventory of the children's records (which were also not accessible). It is pivotal to finding the children and returning them to respective communities. This is part of the healing processes.

It may be necessary to do stable isotopic analysis to bring the right relative’s home. Liz DiGangi, noted forensic expert, states, “Taphonomy is everything that happens to a body after death,” DiGangi explains, it can help us figure out how long a person has been dead. It can also

help us understand whether this particular mark we see on the bone is from a perpetrator or from a nonhuman animal. ... It can tell us whether a body may have been moved, too.”

(<https://www.binghamton.edu/news/story/1282/sending-the-children-home>). In that are quandaries of ethical research (Smith, 2005) because it not only can violate Tribal protocols, but too, through third-party malintentions, the data can become compromised (Macdonald, et al., 2014).

Major tenants of this research include remedies to heal the Original Inhabitants:

1. Firstly, the churches, especially the Catholic church, need to have transparency in their shareability of church archives concerning the IBS. During this work, the Catholic Church presented many barriers, to flat our denial, to accessing this information. These children's graves often lack markers. In order to bring our children home, improving this access needs to be a priority. Not only does this need to be a priority, the Native Rematriators need to be involved and bring them back. The proper ceremonies need to be performed.
2. With the use of geophysical instruments to locate the children, we avoid digging into the grave. This is the preferred system of excavation. This is viewed as non-invasive and the proper way. However, some Tribes view this as an affront. Some Tribes want to keep their children there. Thus, many voices (community involvement) need to be involved from start to finish in how to proceed in IBS cemeteries.
3. The federal government also needs to open their archives; however, these are currently limited in which are accessible. Some pages are indecipherable. To bring our kids home, which should be a priority of the federal government, every bit of data should be

provided. There needs to be someone leading this charge that understands the experience of the IBS trauma to the Original Inhabitants. This is a non-partisan issue; politics won't get this done.

4. Mental health development - we need to create safe spaces and programs based around healing in these communities. Sustainable programs need to be created. Oftentimes mental health officials are trained in western colonialistic trauma (e.g., domestic abuse) but they have no training in IBS trauma. We need people that understand how we got here, the trauma that comes from being taken from your family, losing your language, losing your connection to the land.
5. Instrumental to the healing processes is ensuring that the Original Inhabitants are provided with the space necessary to rematriate their stolen and kidnapped children. Yes, this would mean returning some land back.
6. Provide funding that every person who wants to learn the language, learn it. Many Original Inhabitants do not have access to Tribal classes. There should be online access of languages available. A word of caution, there may be Tribal controls on who can have access to the language because language data is part of Indigenous Governance.

As was stated in the DOI report (2024), the colonial governmental systems need to put resources into “Investing in Remedies to the Present-Day Impacts of the Federal Indian Boarding School System”. In the United States, funding has recently been allocated for Tribal languages. Languages which were decimated during the Indian Boarding School mandate.

The disconnection from epistemological foundations has resulted in a widespread impact, rooted in the harmful policies imposed on the Original Inhabitants by the United States government. Thousands of Native children perished while confined in Indian boarding schools (Tsestoo'chevose ka'eskoncho—where children are jailed), and the exact number buried in these school cemeteries remains unknown. The absence of data regarding the children's graves requires immediate attention, as these cemeteries stand as evidence of the continuing legacy of colonization. I argue that the need for remedial measures underscores the profound lack of trust and fulfillment of treaty responsibilities owed to the Original Inhabitants by the United States. Here I explored how the presence of Indian boarding school cemeteries continues to traumatize Native communities and consider how geophysical surveys might serve as a tool for healing. Primary responsibilities are to expediently assist in healing programs in the at least the 10 subregions of the United States. With less than 20% of Natives living on specific Homelands, there is a critical need to open urban care centers that deal with the health disparities, not only physical, but mental programs replete with cultural remedies.

The decimation of the Original Inhabitants severed the children's connection to their communities and the ancestral epistemologies that nurtured their core identity (King et. al, 2009). In the Indian boarding schools, the children were not taught how to be good parents. The children were shown limited affection. Much of the contact they received was through harmful physical means. In our traditional epistemologies, parenting was a collective effort led by aunties and uncles. It was a thorough, consistent, and active process. Throughout life, the children were taught how to maintain their pathways leading to adulthood and expected statuses. The trauma of separation from their parents and Tribes killed many of the students, some dying from pure

loneliness, separation from their families; the change was too great. Many of these children were buried in the cemeteries, many families never knowing they died, and many families never knowing where they are located. It is pivotal to finding the children and returning them to the respective communities. This is part of the healing processes.

Similar challenges are being observed in Canada, where the Catholic Church allocated millions of dollars for the Canada's Residential School Survivors and Descendants, however much of that funding went towards remodeling a church. None of the funding went toward healing the survivors or developing programs for vertical impacts related to the cognitive dissonance of the church. As was stated in the Newlands report (2024), the colonial governmental systems need to put resources into "Investing in Remedies to the Present-Day Impacts of the Federal Indian Boarding School System". In the United States, only recently has funding been allocated for Tribal languages, which were decimated during the Indian Boarding School mandate, to stay in survival mode. Granted it is critical that the Nations hold specific languages, but what good is a language when there is no one left to function as a speaker and knowledge holder?

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APPENDIX

NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS PROTOCOLS FOR
SURVEYING INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL BURIAL SITES

NATIVE AMERICAN AND INDIGENOUS PROTOCOLS FOR SURVEYING INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOL BURIAL SITES

MARSHA SMALL, FARINA KING, AND PRESTON MCBRIDE, JULY 2021

This set of Indigenous-centered protocols is addressed with urgency primarily to Tribal nations and Indigenous communities that are beginning to survey Indian boarding school cemeteries and burial sites for their children who never returned home or are lost in the on-reservation Indian boarding school cemeteries. It is a starting place and offers a range of suggestions to take into consideration for those engaging in this work, this area of healing.

There should be Natives always present during the survey. These Natives need to be included in the survey budget at the same scale as the surveyor. Another key approach is respect for other Tribal nations' children who may be in the same cemetery. There are Nations that do not believe in the disinterment of their relatives.

Native elders, of course, must be consulted and familiarized in the ways of geophysical inspection, as should any community members. This connection with elders and communities bridges the healing aspects of the survey. Some communities or elders may consider certain types of survey (for example, those that transmit energy into the ground) as damaging and to be avoided.

These times require both new songs and old ways of honoring. Most Nations rarely disturb or disturbed the final rest of the deceased. As such, protocols addressed by the community should be adhered to with the majority voice with consensus prevailing, if exhumation is the goal.

Steer clear of choosing to commission and work with a company that is there just for the monetary profit, extractive data, and 'notoriety.' It is best to choose a geophysical organization or business that is already familiar with Indigenous protocols. It will decrease the risks and impacts so often accompanied by outside entities that know little of Native American and Indigenous identities and epistemologies.

As a survey is initiated, it is critical that all surveyors and Native representatives meet as a team to go through the protocols of the Tribal nations and Indigenous communities involved. Much attention and consideration should be taken to identify and include respective Tribal nations and Indigenous communities whose children are in the cemeteries.

In addition, it is imperative that surveys consist of at least two instrument types, ground penetrating radar and at least one other instrument, such as magnetometry or electromagnetic conductivity. It is the consensus of cemetery survey experts that using two different types of instruments is key to survey success. What one instrument may miss, the other may pick up,

decreasing the possibility of missing the children or community members' graves. Ground penetrating radar by itself is not sufficient.

As a survey team, be sure to focus on procedures, the timing, reference, depth metrics, receiver capacities, surface, and subsurface inconsistencies (e.g., soil and vegetation differences), burial characteristic definitions, and details such as maintaining the consistency of a magnetometer's height during survey. Cemetery surveys must have high density data. This means for radar, transect spacings of 25 centimeters or tighter and a trace interval of 5 centimeters or tighter. With other instruments such as magnetometry and conductivity, transect intervals should be 50 centimeters or tighter, with 8 or more readings/samples per meter along survey lines. All radar survey products must include the production and analysis of time/slice amplitude maps, in addition to examining radar profiles. The surveyor should also record the locations of existing grave markers and other cemetery features, and these cemetery features should appear on maps of survey results, to show how existing markers and other features relate to detected graves. We are not locating utilities here; we are locating missing children.

Be certain to check that your contracts stipulate closed findings, and that the data belongs only to your respective Tribal nation and Indigenous community. The survey company should prepare you a full survey report. The report should include maps of processed data, separate maps of interpretation, and a table with a list of coordinates related to the detected graves. The surveying company needs to go over their results with you in detail. It will take considerable time. Consider the timeline and commitment of time for these efforts accordingly. The company should turn over copies of all materials associated with the survey to the respective Tribal nation and Indigenous community. The company should sign a document, such as a contract, stipulating that it cannot share any data or images from the survey without Tribal Nation or Indigenous community approval. All data should be Tribally owned. This is critical.

Be prepared to spend hours learning how to read the geophysical survey results if this is important to you. Select those tribal members who have a commitment to finding the Native voice to the surface that the relatives can visit, with non-invasive and non-disturbing Indigenous and tribally specific methods. It must be said indiscriminate digging should not be part of any survey. These protocols apply to those ancestors whose families want them closer to their Homelands. It is part of the healing process.

There should be efforts and ways for Nations and Indigenous communities to connect with one another, and Indigenous professionals who are all committed to this work to survey and find missing Native American and Indigenous boarding school children in the unmarked burial sites. Together, they can and should further develop these specific protocols and recommendations to repatriate their children. Also, each Tribe or Indigenous community will have to decide how they want the graves marked after the survey is complete.

This document is developed as a base metric for Nations and entities who will work together to find the stolen and kidnapped and missing children in the Indian boarding school cemeteries and other burial sites.