



**Catholic Indian Mission School Reports at Marquette University  
(Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions Records, Series 2-1 School Reports, 1877-1975)**

The reports are arranged alphabetically by state, then under by locality and mission school, and chronologically within each folder. The bulk of the reports are quarterly attendance reports for schools in 15 states (Arizona, California, Idaho, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oklahoma, Oregon, South Dakota, Washington, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) as well as there are annual statistical summaries for these schools plus those in five other states (Alaska, Maine, Nebraska, New York, and Pennsylvania). For schools with both types of reports, the annual reports are inter-filed chronologically among the attendance reports. For most schools the files are incomplete with at least a few reports missing of one type or the other; for some schools, there are substantial reporting gaps with many reports missing. The folder-level listings, <http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/BCIM/BCIM-series2-1-paper.shtml>, provide further information about the files for each school.

From the 1890s through the 1970s, the United States government dispensed tuition payments from tribal trust accounts for pupils from these tribes who attended private schools, e.g. Catholic, Protestant. To be eligible, pupils were required to be enrolled members in federally recognized tribes with trust fund accounts and the pupils' parents were required to sign annual petitions granting permission for their children to attend that private school, most of which were located on or near reservations in the 14 states noted above. The practice began with a few schools and expanded greatly following the landmark 1908 U.S. Supreme Court ruling in *Quickbear v. Leupp*. Then, as the tribes' accounts became depleted, the practice declined accordingly during the 1910s through the 1970s. They ceased in California by the 1930s; in New Mexico, Oklahoma, Oregon, and Wyoming by the 1960s; and in all remaining states by the 1970s.

To calculate payments, the government further required the schools to submit the quarterly attendance reports of its eligible pupils. Typically the reports did not include all pupils. However, schools occasionally listed ineligible ones, e.g. non-enrolled Indians, non-Indians. One school official estimated that the lists from his school included approximately 90% of its past pupils.

Administrators of the Catholic schools created their attendance reports in triplicate. The schools retained the first copy; they forwarded the second and third copies to the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions (BCIM) in Washington, D.C.; the BCIM retained the second copy and forwarded the third to the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). Today, Marquette University holds the BCIM copies within the Series 2-1 School

Reports of the Bureau of Catholic Indian Missions Records and the regional branch repositories of the U.S. National Archives and Records Administration hold the BIA copies, which are interfiled within the respective BIA agency records. (Marquette's **Guides to Catholic-Related Records about Native Americans**, <http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/teaching.shtml>, provide more information about the BIA copies.)

The reports follow a list format, which include information on several pupils on each page. Typically they list the pupils' dates of attendance, related comments, ethnicity, and degree of Indian blood. The names of school staff and their occupations and statistical summaries are often included as well. However the content and completeness of the reports vary widely. Many are arranged first by gender, ethnicity, and lodging status, i.e. boarders, and there under alphabetically by surname. Occasionally students are noted as non-Indians or orphans.

Marquette University has compiled an alphabetized master list of the surnames found in the attendance records. For each surname the entries note tribal affiliation (according to Library of Congress subject terms), school location (state), and box number of the original records. Click on the following links to view the master list and more information about what the lists do and do not contain (e.g. notes states where the list is still incomplete):

<http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/BCIM/documents/BCIM-series2-1-indexintro.pdf>

<http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/BCIM/documents/BCIM-series2-1-indexA-D.pdf>

<http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/BCIM/documents/BCIM-series2-1-indexE-L.pdf>

<http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/BCIM/documents/BCIM-series2-1-indexM-R.pdf>

<http://www.marquette.edu/library/archives/Mss/BCIM/documents/BCIM-series2-1-indexS-Z.pdf>

Besides quarterly attendance lists, the school reports include annual statistical summaries prepared by the schools for use by the Catholic Bureau. They note whether the school was a boarding or day facility, the numbers of its lay and religious employees and names of affiliated religious orders, the amounts and sources of financial support, the number of total pupils with breakdowns by sex and average attendance, the numbers by religious and ethnic affiliations, and the number of times various sacraments were administered.

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