

The Forum

OF FARGO-MOORHEAD

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SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2022

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32nd Avenue project delayed by a year

City will have to restart the bidding process, pushing back the project

By Barry Amundson
The Forum

FARGO — With the lowest bid coming in 42% over the City of Fargo engineering department's estimate, the 32nd Avenue South project scheduled to start this spring will be delayed a year.

State law requires that if a bid is 40% or more over the engineer's estimate, the bids have to be rejected because there are special assessments to property owners involved.

The estimate for the first phase of the scheduled project from 32nd Street near the Interstate 29 interchange to 22nd Street by the Sanford Southpointe facility was \$11.7 million.

The lowest bid submitted on Feb. 11 was \$16.6 million from Dakota Underground Co. of Fargo. The other bids were \$18 million from Park Construction of Minneapolis and \$19.1 million from Northern Improvement Co. of Fargo.

City Transportation Engineer Jeremy Gorden said the late bidding this month probably affected the price. The tight working conditions — the city only has a 100-foot right-of-way on the four-lane roadway instead of some major city roads with 200 feet — could have also played a role.

"We'll be reexamining what we can do," he said, saying options to free up working space for the contractor are being considered.

The bid rejection is on Tuesday night's City Commission agenda and the department said it would look at options and bring another report to the commissioners in a month, then rebid the work in October with construction starting in the spring 2023.

32ND AVE: Page A8

'Bringing them home'

Boys' remains could return from notorious Native American boarding school

Editor's note: This is the first story in an occasional series on Native American boarding schools and their impact on the region's tribes.

BURIED WOUNDS

By Jeremy Turley
The Forum

Hankinson, N.D. On Nov. 6, 1879, four boys and two girls from the eastern edge of the Dakota Territory stepped off a train in Carlisle, Pennsylvania — more than 1,000 miles from the rolling plains they had called home all their lives.

The Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux children numbered among the first students to arrive at a boarding school explicitly designed to assimilate Native American youth into a white man's world by stripping them of their culture, language and family ties.

By May 1881, three of the boys — Amos LaFromboise, Edward Upright and John Renville — were dead, all before the age of 17.

Amos and Edward, both sons of influential tribal leaders, are still buried near the site of the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School. Their graves are marked with white military-issued headstones containing glaring spelling errors and no biographical information other than the day they died.

But after more than a century away from their native lands, the boys may soon find a final resting place in the Dakotas.

Officials and elders from the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate and Spirit Lake tribes met at the Dakota Magic Casino in Hankinson on Saturday, Feb. 19, to take a crucial step in bringing the boys' remains back home.

In a ceremony that included prayer and storytelling, relatives of Amos and Edward signed affidavits attesting their familial bonds to the boys. Submitting the documents to the U.S. Army, which maintains the cemetery in Carlisle, will set off the process of exhuming the boys' remains and returning them to the tribal nations as early as this summer.

Spirit Lake resident Marva Tiyouwakanhdi said she almost started crying as she watched her aunt Helena Waanatan sign the affidavit affirming her relation to Edward.

"I felt so much honor and respect and love," Tiyouwakanhdi said. "It's almost like she brought him home in the spirit, like she was welcoming him back."

If all goes according to the families' plans, Amos will be buried beside his father Joseph in the St. Matthew's Cemetery on the South Dakota side of the Lake Traverse Reservation, and Edward will lie next to his father Chief Waanatan II in St. Michael's Cemetery on the Spirit Lake Reservation in North Dakota.

The successful return of the boys' remains would add to the running total of 21 repatriations that tribal nations have completed from the Carlisle cemetery since 2017. The Rosebud Sioux Tribe has spearheaded repatriation efforts in South Dakota, reburying the remains of nine children on reservation land last year.

For Sisseton Wahpeton tribal historian Tamara St. John, repatriating the bodies of Amos and Edward is a long time in the making. She undertook the cause six years ago, pouring hundreds of hours into historical and genealogical research to connect the boys to their ancestors and modern-day relatives.



Glass plate photo taken by John Choate in 1879 and published online by the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center

Six Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux children arrived at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in November 1879. The group from the eastern Dakota Territory included (pictured from left) Nancy Renville, Justine LaFromboise, Edward Upright, John Renville and George Walker. Amos LaFromboise, the first child to die at the school, is not pictured.



Photo provided by the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center. The gravestones of Amos LaFromboise and Edward Upright contain spelling errors in a cemetery near the site of the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania.

St. John said "a maternal feeling" compels her to fulfill a promise she made to the boys to bring them back to tribal land.

"We can only imagine how deeply they were missed. And the loss of each as a future leader or chief is still felt today," St. John said. "We are committed to them and to bringing them home like the chiefs that they are."

Buried in a foreign land

Just a few years removed from his service to U.S. forces in the waning American Indian wars, Richard Henry Pratt had a new idea. The military man wanted to start a school where the children of Native Americans he had recently viewed as adversaries could learn to blend into a white-dominated society.

During an 1892 speech in Denver, Pratt stated in no uncertain terms the objective of the American Indian boarding school he had helped establish 13 years earlier on a former Army base in southern Pennsylvania.

"Kill the Indian in him, and save the man," he said.

"It is a great mistake to think that the Indian is born an inevitable savage. He is born a blank, like all the rest of us. Left in the surroundings of savagery, he grows to possess a savage language, superstition, and life," Pratt continued. "Transfer the savage-born infant to the surroundings of civilization, and he will grow to possess a civilized language and habit."

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LIFE: Opera on Tap offers taste of FM Opera's Young Artists.
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\$1,000 bonuses on table for caregivers

By Dana Ferguson
The Forum

ST. PAUL — Minnesota Senate Republicans on Thursday, Feb. 17, introduced a \$322 million plan to help stabilize the state's caregiver workforce after the COVID-19 dealt a blow to staffing at nursing homes and group home facilities around the state.

Long-term care industry leaders have said they face a workforce shortage of 23,000 or roughly 20% of the staff needed to fill positions around the state.

And delays to providing additional state and federal aid are causing "irreparable harm" to the industry, caregivers said Thursday.

Under the proposal, current workers at care facilities would receive a \$1,000 retention bonus, and new hires would receive \$750 for signing on along with another \$750 if they stayed in their positions for six months. Those interested in becoming caregivers could also get \$1,500

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BURIED

From Page A1

Pratt was superintendent of the Carlisle Indian Industrial School from its founding in 1879 until 1904. The federally funded school under Pratt's leadership operated with "zero tolerance of all aspects of Indian culture," according to author Jacqueline Fear-Segal's book "White Man's Club."

High-ranking federal officials targeted Sioux children from the Dakotas for recruitment in the early days of the school because their parents and grandparents had proven more resistant to signing away their lands, St. John said. The government gained leverage in negotiations by holding the offspring of tribal leaders in a faraway boarding school, she noted. "(The children) were essentially being used as a tool," St. John said. "It was a way to get (tribal leaders) to come talk about ceding their land. It was a way to get them to the table in Washington."

As the first government-run, off-reservation American Indian boarding school, Carlisle became a model for similar institutions across the country during an era when officials favored a strategy of forced assimilation for Native Americans. Scrutiny of American Indian boarding schools and their mission has greatly intensified over the last year following the discovery of mass graves containing the bodies of Indigenous children at the sites of former residential schools in British Columbia, Canada.

More than 400 American Indian boarding schools are known to have existed in the United States, according to author Denise Lajimodiere. But Carlisle sticks out as a symbol of the institutions, said Jim Gerencser, an archivist at Dickinson College in Carlisle.

Many Americans only recognize Carlisle as the alma mater of legendary athlete Jim Thorpe, but Gerencser and a team of researchers have uncovered a much darker side of the school's history over the last decade. At least 233 students, nearly 3% of the 7,800 who attended Carlisle, died while enrolled at the school. Amos LaFromboise was the first to perish. On Nov. 26, 1879, just three weeks after the 13-year-old arrived at Carlisle, his body was laid to rest in a government-owned plot in the town cemetery. His cause of death remains unknown, but documents refer to him as being ill shortly before he died.

The Carlisle Herald, a local newspaper, referred to Amos' fate as "the first and we sincerely hope ... the only death in the school."

But Pratt knew Amos wouldn't be the last student to die. The day after the boy's funeral, Pratt wrote to his bosses in Washington to ask if burying Native American children in the city's cemetery was allowed. In response to Pratt, a military judge wrote that "the premises shall be used for the burial of White persons only," according to correspondence detailed in Fear-Segal's book.

Shortly thereafter, the superintendent had Amos' body disinterred and reburied at the school next to a Cheyenne boy, Abe Lincoln, who died in January 1880.

John Renville was the next to die of the Sisseton-Wahpeton boys. The 16-year-old contracted



Jeremy Turley / The Forum

Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate tribal historian Tamara St. John speaks during a ceremony on Saturday about the repatriation of two boys' remains from a cemetery near the site of the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School.



Glass plate photo taken by John Choate in 1879 and published online by the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center. John Renville, middle, sits for a portrait with other Sioux boys in 1880 at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School. John, the son of Sisseton Wahpeton Chief Gabriel Renville, died later that year.



Jeremy Turley / The Forum

Helena Waanatan signs an affidavit on Saturday affirming that she is related to Edward Upright, a boy who died at the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in 1881.



Jeremy Turley / The Forum

The Sisseton Wahpeton tribe's Kit Fox Society, a group made up of U.S. military veterans, performs a flag ceremony on Saturday at the Dakota Magic Casino in Hankinson, North Dakota.

typhus after taking a sip of water from a stream during a hike and succumbed to the illness on Aug. 10, 1880, according to contemporary newspaper articles.

Unlike the vast majority of students who died at the school in its first 27 years of existence, John is buried in his homeland on the Lake Traverse Reservation.

Gabriel Renville, John's father, served as the longtime chief of the Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate, and due to his dignitary status, he was permitted to retrieve his son's body from the school.

Gerencser said it was extremely rare for a family member to claim the remains of a child at the school.

Edward Upright died less than a year later on May 5, 1881, after coming down with measles, and later, pneumonia. A doctor at the school didn't bother to fill out Edward's age in a letter notifying Pratt of the boy's death, but he was no older than 14.

Despite being the son of well-regarded Spirit Lake Chief Waanatan, Edward was buried in the school cemetery.

Tuberculosis and pneumonia were the main causes of death among students, but others fell ill with measles, mumps and other diseases, Gerencser said. The close quartering of children from all over the country mixed with the stress of being taken far from home and a dramatic change in climate and diet contributed to student fatalities, the archivist added.

The 233 deaths at the school don't account for sick students who "were sent home to die," Fear-Segal notes. After receiving fierce criticism for the high rate of death among students in the school's early days, Pratt decided to send more students with potentially fatal illnesses back to their communities, the author writes.

St. John thinks that's what may have happened to George Walker, the fourth Sisseton-Wahpeton boy who arrived at Carlisle in 1879. Walker, who came to the school at age 15, was discharged in April 1883, according to school records.

Pratt had written a letter to an American Indian

ABOUT THE 'BURIED WOUNDS' SERIES

In May 2021, the remains of 215 children were discovered in unmarked graves on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada. This disturbing finding drew attention to the United States' role in forcibly assimilating thousands of Indigenous children through its own boarding school policies. From 1819 and through the 1960s, the U.S. Department of the Interior oversaw policies for more than 400 American Indian boarding schools in the nation, including at least 13 in North Dakota. Many of the children who attended these schools were taken from their homes against their will, stripped of their culture and experienced physical, sexual, spiritual and psychological abuse.

Little research has been done on exactly how many schools existed in the U.S. and the extent to which the federal government knew about the conditions of each school. For the first time, the Interior Department is investigating boarding schools and why many children experienced abuse.

While it's unknown when the Interior Department will release its findings, The Forum has launched its own investigation into some of North Dakota's known boarding school sites by interviewing survivors, reviewing public records and exploring the impact these schools still have on North Dakota's Indigenous population today.

reservation agent earlier in the month recommending that Walker be sent home because he was "exceedingly anxious" and his mental state was "having quite an influence on his health."

The paper trail on Walker returns to the Dakotas. Even in death, Amos, Edward and the more than 180 others buried in the campus cemetery did not remain undisturbed for long.

In 1927, nine years after the school's closure, the Army, which had taken back the property, decided to disinter the bodies in the cemetery to make way for a new officers building, according to Fear-Segal. The Army's online description of the cemetery where Amos and Edward currently lie portrays the site as more of a quaint tourist attraction than a burial ground for children who died far from home: "Small, orderly and historical, the Carlisle Cemetery offers visitors a glimpse into the unique past of the United States and Native American history."

Just the thought of burying Amos and Edward next to their fathers on tribal land is enough to make St. John emotional. The archivist, who also serves as a legislator in South Dakota, said she's used to dealing with difficult history, but she can't remember working on something that became so intensely personal. The mother of four knows repatriating the boys' remains will be challenging for the two tribes as well.

"It can be scary having to acknowledge and feel things that maybe we've only read about in books," St. John said. "You're actually feeling what their father felt in losing a precious, precious son — one they've invested so much in."

For Robert LaFromboise, Amos' deadly experience at

Carlisle evokes traumas he has carried almost his whole life as a survivor of South Dakota boarding schools. He still can't shake the mental image of his sister screaming and hanging onto the bumper of a car because she didn't want to stay at the school.

After signing his name to the affidavit verifying his blood link to Amos on Saturday, Robert said he felt great relief in knowing his relative will be returning to Lake Traverse after so many years away.

The process of repatriating the boys' remains would start with the Sisseton Wahpeton tribe's Kit Fox Society, a group of veterans, heading out to Carlisle.

But the next step involving the disinterment of the graves worries St. John. She knows that, given the lack of care that went into previous burials, there's a possibility the plots supposedly belonging to Amos and Edward do not actually contain their remains. Amos in particular has been buried in three different places, increasing the chances his body was lost or interred incorrectly, St. John noted.

If the boys' remains are in the right graves, the Kit Fox Society would bring them back to Lake Traverse where they last saw their homeland before departing for Carlisle, St. John said. From there, the remains can be taken to the boys' respective family cemeteries, where Amos and Edward would receive the traditional burial ceremonies they never got at the school.

St. John said burying the boys for a final time is going to be sad and hurtful for the tribes, but "it will be healing when we as a people are able to understand more of what our ancestors went through."

"The best thing I can say is we will be addressing this all together," St. John said. "It's not going to be one family doing this on their own — it's going to be all of us."

Contact Jeremy Turley at jturley@forumcomm.com or on Twitter at @jeremyturley.



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SETTING THE STANDARD

Fargo heart attack victims benefit from speedy ambulances

By Barry Amundson
The Forum

Fargo

Sanford Ambulance paramedic Jason Eblen says he'd be happy to have a heart attack in Fargo. Of course, he doesn't want to have one, but the local ambulance service averages 57 minutes from when the ambulance arrives at a patient's door to when vessels are opened in a hospital cardiac catheterization laboratory.

"That's unheard of in most of the United States," Eblen told the Fargo City Commission this past week in an annual report.

The "gold standard" set by the American Heart Association is 90 minutes, so they are beating the average by about 33 minutes.

Eblen said one way they do this is by having ambulance staff do initial treatment, similar to what would be done in the emergency room, and then taking the patient directly to the cath lab to save time.

Eblen and Ambulance Director Tim Meyer had many other positive reports on the service, which was renamed



Tim Meyer, Sanford Health's senior director of EMS Operations, at Sanford Ambulance in south Fargo on March 9. He is responsible for F-M Ambulance Service and for the medical staff of Sanford AirMed. Chris Flynn / The Forum

'My heart feels so heavy'

Young men from western ND tribe never returned from boarding school

Editor's note: This is the second story in an occasional series on Native American boarding schools and their impact on the region's tribes.

By Jeremy Turley
The Forum

BISMARCK — The white marble headstone marking Thomas Suckley's burial plot in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, is all wrong.

His last name is missing an "e." His tribe is spelled "Mandau" instead of "Mandan." Even his date of death is off by five days.

Across the cemetery, George Bears Arm's grave marker isn't much better. His tribal affiliation is represented as "Grosvontre" — a misspelling of Gros Ventre,



a Montana-based tribe of which Bears Arm was not a member. He was Hidatsa.

Darren Lone Fight, an American studies professor at Dickinson College in Carlisle, believes the location of the young men's graves is also wrong: They never should have been buried in Pennsylvania at all.

Suckley and Bears Arm hailed from the Fort Berthold Reservation in western North Dakota, home of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation. Both men fell ill and died around the turn



Photos provided by the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center

The gravestones of Thomas Suckley and George Bears Arm contain spelling and factual errors in a cemetery near the site of the former Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Carlisle, Pennsylvania.

of the 20th century while attending the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, an institution designed to assimilate Native American youth into a white man's world.

Lone Fight, who belongs to the same

tribal nation and grew up in North Dakota, thinks Suckley and Bears Arm's remains should be brought home from the cemetery near the site of the former school.

WOUNDS: Page A3

Bismarck takes war on drugs to ER

Program aims to break the cycle of addiction, curb drug cravings

By Patrick Springer
The Forum

BISMARCK — Overdoses have skyrocketed in recent years as opioids flood the area and addicts play a lethal lottery by using street drugs with unpredictable potency that are claiming more and more lives.

Bismarck police reported 22 overdoses and one drug-related death in 2017. By 2019, Burleigh County jumped to 34 overdoses and four deaths, increasing to 74 overdoses and eight deaths in 2020.

Last year, the toll

exploded to 134 overdoses and 19 deaths — and the pace so far this year, if it continues, could again double, suffering 270 overdoses and claiming 40 lives.

"That's unacceptable to me," said Bismarck Police Chief David Draovitch, who added that there would be an uproar from the public if Bismarck saw 19 homicides in a year. "It's crazy what opioids are doing in this town."

Bismarck police and fellow law enforcement officials vow to crack down on dealers and are advocating tougher prosecutions and sentences to act as a deterrent. But Draovitch and his colleagues know their efforts have limits.

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20°

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Hutterite colony seeks rule change for housing

By David Olson
The Forum

MOORHEAD — The Clay County Planning Commission will hold a hearing on Tuesday, Feb. 15, to consider a request from the Spring Prairie Hutterite Colony to make "intentional" communities a permitted use in agricultural general zoning districts.

According to a report prepared for the planning commission by Matt Jacobson, Clay County's planning director:

The Spring Prairie

Colony, known officially as the Spring Prairie Hutterian Brethren, is an "intentional community" that has existed in Clay County since the 1970s and over that time has grown to an estimated 260 members.

Because the colony has living arrangements characteristic of a communal system, the county's development rules as they stand today do not accommodate the colony's needs, particularly when it comes to housing.

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BUSINESS:
Fargo candle company hopes to spark goodwill.
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WOUNDS

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“When we see someone who was taken from us and we have the opportunity to bring them back and treat them with the respect they deserve and were denied, I think that’s good for Suckley and Bears Arm, but also good for the people as part of the grieving process,” Lone Fight said, noting that he does not represent the views of the tribe.

The U.S. Army, which now occupies the site of the former school and maintains the cemetery, has overseen the return of 21 students’ remains to American Indian tribes since 2017.

The Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate and Spirit Lake tribes held a ceremony last month in Hankinson, North Dakota, where tribal members signed documents attesting their familial ties to two boys buried in the Carlisle cemetery, according to previous Forum reporting. If the Army approves the documents, the boys’ remains could be returned to the two tribal nations as soon as this summer.

MHA Nation Chairman Mark Fox said the tribal government was not aware of Suckley and Bears Arm before being approached by Forum News Service in January, but the leader recalls elders during his childhood speaking about “students that went away to school and never came back.”

“My heart feels so heavy to think of little ones so far away and then suffering and then dying — no parent there, no loving and support,” Fox said.

Earlier this month, Fox appointed a historic preservation officer to coordinate with Carlisle cemetery officials, but the tribe has not yet decided what it will do in the case of Suckley and Bears Arm.

Traditionally, the MHA Nation does not disinter the remains of tribal members unless their graves were disturbed by people or nature. However, the tribe would support the families of Suckley and Bears Arm if they wish to bring their relatives home from Carlisle, according to a statement from the chairman’s office.

At a minimum, Fox said the tribe will pay to correct their headstones, though he thinks the federal government should pick up the tab.

Doing right by Suckley, Bears Arm and other boarding school victims will be a complex process, but Fox said he’s committed to “bringing peace to the souls of our relatives that were caught up in being misplaced so far away.”

A painful history

More than 400 American Indian boarding schools are known to have existed in the United States, according to author and researcher Denise Lajimodiere, but Carlisle was a pioneer in the mission to assimilate. Carlisle opened in 1879 as the nation’s first public off-reservation boarding school specifically for Native American children, and about two dozen similar schools cropped up across the Midwest and West in the decades that followed.

An extensive propaganda operation managed by the school’s first superintendent, Richard Henry Pratt, aimed to convince the country that Carlisle was effectively “civilizing” American Indians and turning them to the white man’s ways, writes researcher Molly Fraust.

In Lone Fight’s words, Carlisle was a “reprogramming camp” that carried out acts of cultural genocide on Native American students by robbing them of their traditions and languages.



Photo provided

Darren Lone Fight is an American studies professor at Dickinson College in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and a member of the Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara Nation.



Photo via the Carlisle Indian School Digital Resource Center
Thomas Suckley arrived at Carlisle Indian Industrial School with five others from the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation, including three young Arikara women (pictured) Rose Wilde, Mary Wilkinson and Ella Rickert.

About the “Buried Wounds” series

In May 2021, the remains of 215 children were discovered in unmarked graves on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada. This disturbing finding drew attention to the United States’ role in forcibly assimilating thousands of Indigenous children through its own boarding school policies.

From 1819 and through the 1960s, the U.S. government oversaw policies for more than 400 American Indian boarding

schools in the nation, including at least 13 in North Dakota. Many of the children who attended schools in North Dakota and elsewhere were taken from their homes against their will, stripped of their culture and abused physically, sexually and psychologically.

Little research has been done on exactly how many schools existed in the U.S. and the extent to which the federal government knew about the conditions

of each school. The U.S. Department of the Interior under Secretary Deb Haaland is investigating the history and legacy of federally run boarding schools.

The Forum has launched its own investigation into boarding schools in North Dakota and other parts of the country by interviewing survivors, reviewing public records and exploring the impact these schools still have on North Dakota’s Indigenous population today.

The school and its targeting of Native children still represents a “deep wound,” he said.

About 7,800 Native American children and young adults from across the country attended Carlisle during its 39 years in operation. They ended up at Carlisle for a variety of reasons, but most were coerced to attend through active recruitment or a lack of alternatives at home, said Dickinson College archivist Jim Gerencser.

In the school’s early days, high-ranking federal officials ordered Pratt to pluck students from Sioux tribes in the Dakotas that had proven more resistant to signing away their lands.

Thirty-seven Chiricahua Apache prisoners-of-war from Geronimo’s band became students after arriving at the school from a fort in Florida in 1886.

Other students were orphans, possibly because the U.S. military had killed their parents. They didn’t have much choice in attending boarding school, Gerencser noted.

Some families chose to send their kids to Carlisle, perhaps because of financial struggles or poor living conditions on American Indian reservations. With job opportunities scarce back home, a number of older students self-registered.

At least 233 students, nearly 3% of those who attended, died while enrolled at the school, Gerencser said.

But the odds were even worse for Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara students. About 60 students from Fort Berthold attended Carlisle. At least three and possibly four

perished while enrolled at the school.

Suckley, a member of the Mandan tribe, and five others were the first to arrive at the school from Fort Berthold on Feb. 23, 1890.

At 21, Suckley was older than most of his peers, but since the school emphasized the teaching of trades over academics, it was common to have students in their 20s on the enrollment list, Gerencser said.

By the time he got to Carlisle, Suckley had attended several boarding schools, including the Hampton Institute, a predominantly Black school in Virginia that began taking Native American students in 1878. It was there his Mandan name Kawhat was changed to Thomas Suckley, according to scholar Nancy Jones-Oltjenbruns.

Suckley died from tuberculosis at Carlisle on April 16, 1892, at the age of 23, according to school records. A paragraph in the school newspaper said Suckley’s death “takes from the rank of the Y.M.C.A. one who was ever ready to welcome strangers, and to use the musical talent God had given him, in any way he could.” He was buried in the school cemetery.

Bears Arm arrived at Carlisle on Nov. 3, 1901, at the age of 17.

Like every Hidatsa student, his tribal affiliation was erroneously logged as Gros Ventre. (Last year, Lone Fight noticed this persistent mistake in the records — the product of “non-Indigenous people running around calling stuff whatever they wanted” — and notified Gerencser who helped change Dickinson

College’s digital Carlisle archives. The Gros Ventre Tribe, also known as the Aaniiih, is based on Fort Belknap in north-central Montana.)

Bears Arm died of appendicitis at the age of 19 in a Philadelphia hospital on Jan. 8, 1903, shortly after an operation at the school hospital. The school newspaper referred to him as “a most patient sufferer” and noted he was buried at the school cemetery in a Catholic ceremony.

Both men’s bodies were later disinterred in 1927, when the Army, which took back the property after the school closed, decided to relocate the cemetery to make way for a new officers’ building, according to author Jacqueline Fear-Segal.

While Suckley and Bears Arm are the only MHA members known to be buried at the school, they’re not the only students from Fort Berthold who died in Pennsylvania.

Charles Packineau, a 21-year-old Hidatsa student, was killed when he fell under a train he was riding while attempting to run away from Carlisle in April 1912, according to contemporary newspaper articles.

Gerencser said young men between the ages of 12 and 25 frequently ran away from the school, which forced a strict military-like regiment onto students.

Packineau’s younger brother David, who was also a student, brought his brother’s body home to North Dakota and did not return to the school.

An 11-year-old Arikara boy, Oliver Duckett, arrived at Carlisle in 1898 with a group of eight

other children from Fort Berthold.

Duckett’s student information card indicates he left the school in May 1901 due to poor health. However, a note in red ink at the top of the record reads, “Died 5-22-1902 at Carlisle.”

The circumstances surrounding Duckett’s death remain a mystery to Gerencser who cannot think of a reason he would have died at the school a year after he was discharged. Duckett isn’t listed anywhere in cemetery records, and Gerencser said he’s not sure whether the boy was buried in Carlisle, Fort Berthold or somewhere else.

A ‘black eye for the US government’

Lone Fight felt called to Carlisle.

The young professor liked the idea of the MHA Nation being back in the Pennsylvania town on the teaching side rather than the receiving end of education.

Lone Fight knew when he arrived for his job interview at Dickinson College in 2019 there were two members of his tribe buried in the Carlisle school cemetery, and one of the first things he did was visit them.

“I was able to go and pray. I brought some corn from back home, from Fort Berthold, and left that for them,” Lone Fight said. “I try to make sure to visit them periodically just to let them know that I’m here, and that I know they’re there.”

This summer, Lone Fight plans to research the stories of MHA students who attended the Carlisle and Hampton

schools. He hopes to present his findings to the tribe later this year, but he understands not everyone will want to talk about boarding schools.

It’s difficult to look back on a recent era in history when the federal government tried to eradicate the tribe’s culture through its youngest generation, Lone Fight said. Learning about Carlisle and other boarding schools shouldn’t be “compulsory education,” but Lone Fight said he feels a responsibility to tell stories of former students and reveal the lasting effects of the institutions to tribal members who want to know more.

Fox called boarding schools a “black eye for the U.S. government” and said he hopes more information about the institutions comes to light so people across the country begin to “understand the tragedy and the terrible-ness of the actions taken by the United States government toward Indian people and be committed to stopping it from happening in the future.”

U.S. Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland, the first Native American to hold the position, announced an initiative last year that aims to review “the troubled legacy of federal boarding school policies.” A final report on the investigation into boarding schools is due to come out next month.

Lone Fight said he’s eager to see the report, but he thinks there needs to be significant pressure on the federal government to investigate and recognize its complicity in the damage caused by boarding schools.

“You shouldn’t ask the victim to have to advocate for themselves and pull you by your hair to at least address a problem that you caused,” Lone Fight said.

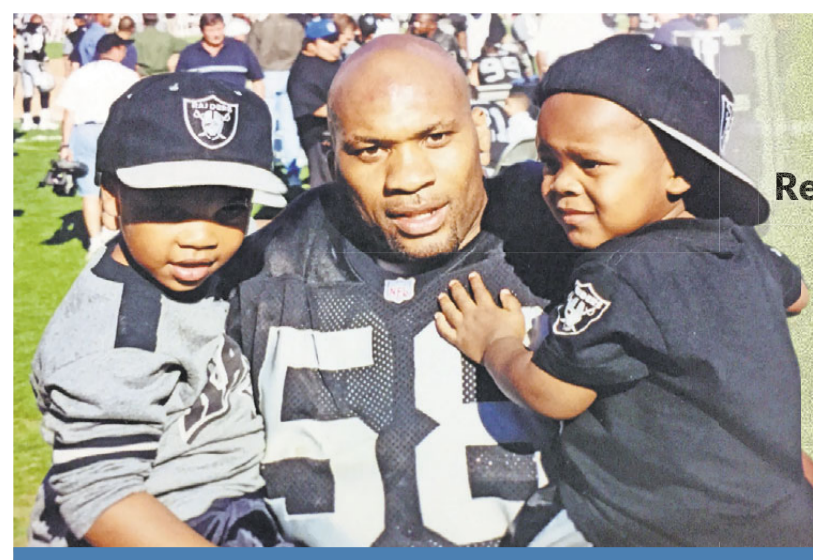
At a minimum, Lone Fight said the government could make research grants available to scholars wanting to study boarding schools.

Fox said the federal government forced boarding schools onto Native Americans for so many years, and Congress should pass legislation to provide funding for tribes trying to rectify mistakes made by the institutions.

Boarding schools like Carlisle inflicted lasting traumas that members of the MHA Nation are still battling generations later, Fox said. As a father, Fox said he can’t imagine sending his young son to a boarding school and then learning he won’t be coming home.

“That’s a sorrow and an emptiness and a grief that no parent could ever get beyond,” he said.

Contact Jeremy Turley at jturley@forumcomm.com or on Twitter at [jeremyturley](https://twitter.com/jeremyturley).



FAMILY CONNECTION

RedHawks CF has ties to controversial Tom Brady 'tuck rule' game. B1

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Officer fatally shoots driver of stolen van

By David Olson
The Forum

FARGO — A Fargo police officer fatally shot a man after officers were called to a garage

at an apartment complex on Friday, July 8.

Police received a report about 8:07 a.m. regarding individuals slumped over in a vehicle in the garage near

the 3400 block of 15th Avenue South and that the windshield had a bullethole in it, according to Fargo Police Chief David Zibolski.

Officers arrived at about 8:13

a.m., and a couple of minutes later there was a report of shots fired and a foot pursuit.

Zibolski said the officers had encountered a van in the

garage that had three people inside, at which point the van quickly accelerated and left the garage.

SHOOTS: Page A11

I-94, I-29 work begins next week

New median barriers are part of Vision Zero

Fargo

Construction of barriers designed to prevent the most deadly type of vehicle crashes begins next week at the busy Interstate 94 and Interstate 29 interchange in Fargo.

The North Dakota Department of Transportation project, delayed by more than a year, will start with a temporary lane closure on Sunday, July 10.

The barriers to be installed between westbound and eastbound lanes of I-94 are meant to keep vehicles from crossing the median and striking oncoming traffic, a key component of North Dakota's Vision Zero traffic safety strategy aiming to eliminate deaths and serious injuries from motor vehicle crashes.

The Forum has documented the progression of median barrier installation in the state, including the Fargo project's delay last year due to funding being used up by other priority projects.

A concrete median

Robin Huebner reports



barrier will go in on I-94 from I-29 west to 42nd Street, and a high-tension cable barrier will be installed from 42nd Street west to Sheyenne Street.

Currently, only a grassy strip separates heavy traffic along the approximately 3-mile stretch.

To the east, concrete median barriers have been in place on I-94 between I-29 and Fargo's border with Moorhead for years.

A crash between a pickup and a tow truck south of Fargo in January, in which one person was seriously injured, is an example of a head-on crash that would have been prevented by a median barrier.

Had a barrier been in place, only one vehicle would have been involved, not two, North Dakota Highway

WORK: Page A11



Dave Samson / The Forum

Denise Lajimodiere, author of a leading book on Native American boarding schools, uses old photos possibly depicting the graves of soldiers to orient herself in a forested area near the Fort Totten State Historic Site, which formerly served as a boarding school for Native American youth.

'Their spirits are still here'

Tribe, state to search for remains at ND boarding school

Editors note: This is the fifth story in an occasional series on Native American boarding schools and their impact on the region's tribes.

By Michelle Griffith and Jeremy Turley
The Forum

Fort Totten, N.D.

On a cloudy October morning, Denise Laji-

BURIED WOUNDS

modiere walked through brambles and tall grass with her eyes to the ground.

Consulting a photo from the 1980s, the scholar scanned the

prairie terrain near the Fort Totten State Historic Site for small, tan boulders that could mark graves long hidden from view.

After stumbling across one, she grabbed a plastic baggie of tobacco from her coat pocket, held a pinch tight in her left fist and said a prayer for the bodies

that may have been buried under her feet more than a century ago.

Historic site employees believe the boulders could be the vestiges of a cemetery

WOUNDS: Page A6

Minn. cities, counties to call shots on THC law



Dana Ferguson / Forum News Service

Minnesota Rep. Heather Edelson, DFL-Edina, speaks with reporters Tuesday outside of Indeed Brewing Co. in Minneapolis about a law allowing hemp-derived THC products.

Law allowing sale of THC gummies and other edibles took effect on July 1

By Dana Ferguson
The Forum

ST. PAUL — The Minnesota lawmaker who crafted legislation allowing people 21 and older to buy food and drink products that contain hemp-derived THC — the component in marijuana that can cause a high — said it will large-

ly be up to cities and counties to enforce compliance.

The move comes after Minnesota legislators approved the policy in a broader health policy bill in May and the governor signed it into law. Customers flocked to tobacco and hemp shops over the weekend after owners started selling the THC gummies and other edibles on July 1.

"This law is absolutely a positive step for Minnesotans to access products in a safe and legal

way," state Rep. Heather Edelson, DFL-Edina, said on Thursday, July 7. "That said, with every law we pass at the state level, issues will arise throughout the year when the Minnesota Legislature is not in session."

"The ability for municipalities to offer important guidance and clarity on day-to-day operations and compliance within a city is vital," she continued.

LAW: Page A12

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Contagious strains spark high summer COVID-19 numbers

By Patrick Springer
The Forum

FARGO — The coronavirus pandemic continues to simmer through summer as infections are heightened by a new omicron variant that is five times more infectious than the original strain of the virus.

The North Dakota Department of Health in its most recent weekly summary reported 1,583 new cases and 93 COVID-19 hospital

admissions for the week ending Thursday, July 7.

On July 8, 2021, there were 96 new cases in the week prior, and on July 2, 2020, there were 433 new cases in the week prior, according to the Department of Health website.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention now estimate that the BA.5 omicron variant accounts for more than half of cases — a sharp

COVID: Page A12

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BUSINESS:
Brewhalla Market makes 'a leap of faith.'
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WOUNDS

From Page A1

for U.S. soldiers buried in the mid-1800s. Lajimodiere thinks the gravesite may also contain the remains of Native American children who died while attending a boarding school at the former military post.

“We know their spirits are still here,” Lajimodiere said solemnly while walking the site on the Spirit Lake Reservation in northeast North Dakota.

Following last year’s discovery of graves likely belonging to Indigenous children who attended Canadian boarding schools, the United States has begun to reckon with the idea that the remains of students could be buried in unmarked graves near former American boarding schools.

Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Chairman Jamie Azure is almost certain that’s the case at Fort Totten.

Azure has heard dozens of stories about children from his tribe who died or disappeared under uncertain circumstances at boarding schools like Fort Totten. He hopes an investigation into the site will bring closure for families still looking for answers generations later.

The Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa and the State Historical Society of North Dakota recently agreed to partner in a search for the remains of former Fort Totten students. Spirit Lake Chairman Doug Yankton said he welcomes the investigation on his tribe’s land.

“Everything just adds up in my mind that we will find unmarked graves, and we will find tribal members,” Azure said.

The U.S. Department of the Interior released a report in May that identified 408 federal boarding schools and examined the government’s role in forcibly taking Native American children away from their families to boarding schools aimed at assimilating them into white culture.

The department’s investigation found “marked or unmarked burial sites” at 53 boarding school sites but did not disclose their locations to prevent grave robbing. The agency expects to find more burial sites at boarding schools as its investigation continues.

Lajimodiere, an enrolled Turtle Mountain citizen whose father and grandfather attended Fort Totten, found evidence that at least 13 Native American boarding schools existed in North Dakota.

Religious orders including the Catholic Church ran some of the schools, but the federal government operated Fort Totten and a handful of other institutions.

Fort Totten was by far the largest in the state, and at its peak enrollment of more than 500 students in the 1910s, was one of the biggest on-reservation schools in the country.

Interviews, internal documents and Lajimodiere’s findings reveal Fort Totten was a school with a culture of systemic abuse and neglect of children, but no direct evidence has been found to suggest students who died at the school were buried on or near the property.

If the search locates graves at the site and identifies the remains as former students, it may allow the tribe to give



Dave Samson / The Forum

Author and scholar Denise Lajimodiere looks at the remnants of a building that housed one of her relatives at the former Fort Totten Indian Industrial School on Oct. 27, 2021. The Native American boarding school operated from 1891 to 1959 before the state of North Dakota turned it into a historic site.

its members the proper burials they were denied so long ago, Azure said.

“The end goal is just to make sure that if we have any Turtle Mountain members that have been lost along the way, we make damn sure that we’re able to bring them home in a cultural and traditional and respectful manner,” Azure said.

From elimination to assimilation

For longer than North Dakota has been a state, 16 brick buildings have stood in a neat rectangle not far from the southern shores of Devils Lake.

To some, the enduring structures at the Fort Totten State Historic Site represent the proud legacy of the nation’s military and the region’s early frontier settlers.

But for many Native Americans with roots in the upper Midwest, Fort Totten serves as a physical reminder of the abuse they and their ancestors endured as children.

American soldiers founded the outpost in 1867 — the same year Sisseton and Wahpeton Sioux leaders signed a treaty establishing the Fort Totten Indian Reservation (later renamed the Spirit Lake Dakota Reservation). A flood of white settlers in the 1800s forced the two Sioux bands from their ancestral homelands in modern-day Minnesota.

The federal government tasked the troops stationed at the fort with settling and policing the reservation and protecting travel and trade routes, according to historian Michael McCormack.

At the time, officials in Washington including President Ulysses S. Grant had begun to shift their strategy on Native Americans from elimination to assimilation — a mission that had to start with the youngest generation.

The reservation’s federal Indian agent, William Forbes, recruited the Grey Nuns, an order of Catholic sisters from Montreal, to run a “manual labor school,” historian James Carroll writes in the book “Fort Totten Military Post and Indian School.”

The institution opened in 1874, and had more than 50 Sioux students by the end of the school year. In addition to hard labor, the curriculum included some basic academic and religious instruction — a combination that aligned with the U.S. Office of Indian Affairs’ philosophy for “civilizing” Native American children, Carroll writes.

On New Year’s Eve of 1890, the military turned over Fort Totten to the Office of Indian Affairs for the purpose of creating an on-reservation Native American boarding school in the image of Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania — an institution that

aimed to strip Native Americans of their language, culture and family ties.

The Fort Totten Indian Industrial School opened at the former military outpost on Jan. 19, 1891, under Superintendent William Canfield’s leadership.

Indian Affairs officials allowed the Grey Nuns to continue teaching as a semi-autonomous department within the federally run school in what Carroll describes as “an unusual arrangement.”

Federal Indian agents withheld rations and financial aid from parents who didn’t willingly enroll their children at the school, Carroll writes.

Most members of the local Devils Lake Sioux Tribe (now the Spirit Lake Tribe) preferred to send their children to the Grey Nun department and rejected the fort school, Carroll writes.

The majority of the students at the fort school in the first 20 years came from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa’s reservation, which lies about 70 miles to the northwest. Canfield’s 11 years at the helm of the school were marked by staff brutality, rampant disease, frequent runaways and excessive manual workloads.

And while it remains a mystery whether children were buried on or near the site of the school, there is no doubt students died while attending Fort Totten.

School officials reported three to five student deaths each year between 1891 and 1902, with causes including measles, meningitis and smallpox, according to Carroll and contemporary sanitary records. The whole reservation suffered from high mortality rates at the time, but the deaths at the school gave many parents a reason to keep their children from attending.

In a 1900 meeting with a federal boarding school supervisor, adults from the reservation reported appalling abuses inflicted on Fort Totten students by Canfield’s administration.

Children were mercilessly whipped, denied meals for days, handcuffed or put in straightjackets for tardiness and other minor rule violations, according to meeting records. An observer also referred to the Grey Nuns as being overly strict and “using a wooden snap to give signals,” Carroll writes.

Though a school in name, Fort Totten under Canfield more closely resembled a work camp for Native American youth. Reservation residents complained that the backbreaking labor of carrying rocks, cutting ice and chopping wood came with no educational value and risked harming the children.

Students frequently ran away — a commonality shared



State Historical Society of North Dakota photo

Female students at Fort Totten Indian Industrial School pose for a photo sometime between 1890 and 1901.

ABOUT THE “BURIED WOUNDS” SERIES

In May 2021, an anthropologist discovered unmarked graves likely belonging to 200 children on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada. This disturbing finding drew attention to the United States’ role in forcibly assimilating thousands of Indigenous children through its own boarding school policies.

From 1819 and through the 1960s, the U.S. government oversaw policies for more than 400 American Indian boarding schools across the nation, including at least 13 in North Dakota. Many of the children who attended schools in North Dakota and elsewhere

were taken from their homes against their will, stripped of their culture and abused physically, sexually and psychologically.

Little research has been done on exactly how many schools existed in the U.S. and the extent to which the federal government knew about the conditions of each school. The U.S. Department of the Interior under Secretary Deb Haaland is investigating the history and legacy of federally run boarding schools.

The Forum has launched its own investigation into boarding schools in North Dakota and other parts of the country by interviewing survivors, reviewing public records and exploring the impact these schools still have on North Dakota’s Indigenous population today.

with boarding schools across the country — and two boys drowned in Devils Lake while fleeing Fort Totten, Carroll writes.

Federal officials stood by Canfield despite finding evidence of abuse. The superintendent didn’t lose his job until 1902 when he attempted to install his wife as the school’s head matron, an act of nepotism that upset other staff.

Under the direction of a replacement superintendent, Fort Totten became the largest on-reservation boarding school in the country with more than 340 students, Carroll writes.

A local Indian agent reported that the condition of the school had greatly improved after Canfield departed, but students still suffered through measles outbreaks from 1904 to 1906.

Amid financial difficulties, school officials looked to increase enrollment, which brought in higher federal allocations and more children to work manual labor jobs that sustained the institution.

By 1917, more than 530 students mostly from the Dakotas and Montana attended the school. The extremely tight living quarters had a negative impact on the students’ health, Carroll writes.

The school temporarily shut down from 1917 to 1919 due to money troubles, but a few years after it reopened, national

curriculum changes put a greater emphasis on classroom and vocational learning.

A 1928 federal report brought to light the major deficiencies of Native American boarding schools, and eventually led to the shuttering of the fort school in 1935. For the next five years, the site became a sanatorium for children with tuberculosis.

Many of the students transferred to day schools or the Grey Nuns’ Little Flower boarding school, which opened several miles from the fort in St. Michael in 1929. Former students of the Catholic institution recall that the nuns were mean and abusive to students.

Alvina Alberts, who attended the school from the age of 5, said in a 1993 interview with University of Mary researchers that the nuns hit students with the sharp-edge of a ruler, adding “I had broken bones in my hands that I didn’t know about until I was in my 50s.”

The fort later became a day and boarding school for Native American children in 1940. By then, the curriculum reflected that of most public schools in the state, Carroll writes. The school closed for good in 1959, and the federal government turned over the site to the state.

Today at the Fort Totten State Historic Site, tourists can take self-guided tours through some of the old buildings and buy

souvenirs at a gift shop.

By far the most well-maintained buildings are a prairie-themed bed and breakfast and a memorial-like museum dedicated to the Lake Region Pioneer Daughters.

A handful of display boards and plaques describe the Native American boarding school that once operated at the fort, but the site’s military history is presented as the main attraction.

‘I will not talk in school’

When Ramona Klein, 74, thinks back on her time attending Fort Totten from 1954 to 1958, two feelings stick out in her mind: loneliness and hunger.

Klein, when she was about 5 years old, lived in a two-bedroom home without electricity in Belcourt on the Turtle Mountain Reservation. Neither of her parents had a steady income, and Klein remembers her belly was constantly empty.

Then in 1954, she was sent to Fort Totten along with five of her siblings.

Klein’s not sure if her parents were coerced into having their children attend boarding school or if it was her parents’ last-ditch effort to care for them. She also doesn’t know whether they were aware of Fort Totten’s poor reputation.

“I don’t really know if I could say it was a choice for us to go to boarding school in that

WOUNDS: Page A7

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WOUNDS

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way. It wasn't my choice. I was a child," Klein said. "But even for my parents, is it really a choice if your kids are going to starve and freeze?"

Klein left her Belcourt home for the first time in her life when she was 6 years old. She and five of her siblings boarded a green school bus and journeyed southeast to Fort Totten.

"All the buildings seemed so big and strange," Klein recalled.

The children were brought into a room where the girls were given new clothes. A matron cut off her long black hair, making it into a bowl-like cut.

Klein recalls being led in a line — the mandatory formation for the children to go from building to building — and walking across the military square to the girl's dormitory.

Looking out the window from her dormitory, she remembers yearning to see her parents walking toward the school to bring her home.

"I would say, 'Maybe tomorrow.' There was always, always that longing," she said.

Klein recalls her education being almost nonexistent. She doesn't remember the subjects that were taught, only the punishments she received.

She recalled multiple occasions when she had to write the phrase "I will not talk in school" 1,500 times in a row for talking out of turn in class.

Whenever students misbehaved or took food from the kitchens because of hunger, staff beat the children with a wooden paddle crudely named "the board of education," she said.

Klein now has a doctorate in educational leadership and has worked across all 50 states. She often talks about Fort Totten, recalling how her time there more than 65 years ago affects her life today. She still has flashbacks after she speaks about her boarding school experience.

Her knees are stiff and ache occasionally, which she believes stems from being forced to kneel on a broomstick handle whenever she spoke out of turn or misbehaved.

Klein is used to getting incredulous looks when she tells people about her experiences as a child. She said many believe that those who attended Native American boarding schools died long ago.

"People tend to think that those of us who experienced it are not living, but it's living history," Klein said.

The search for closure

The tribal and state officials committed to searching the area around the fort for possible gravesites understand it's a long and expensive process with little precedent in North Dakota.

The state Historical Society approached Turtle Mountain about inspecting the site for unmarked graves within the last two months, and the search remains in its nascent stages.

Andy Clark, the Historical Society's archaeology and historic preservation director, said the investigation of the Fort Totten site will



State Historical Society of North Dakota photo
Ramona Klein, right, stands with her brothers Earl, left, and Damian, back, at the Fort Totten boarding school in approximately 1956. Six of the eight children in Klein's family attended the school on the Spirit Lake Reservation in northeast North Dakota.



Jeremy Turley / Forum News Service
Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Chairman Jamie Azure sits at his desk on Oct. 22.

loosely follow a model set at Kamloops Indian Residential School in British Columbia, Canada, where an anthropologist discovered about 200 potential graves.

State researchers and archaeologists must first narrow down the vast area around the fort, Clark said.

This preliminary step will lean on old maps and documents and the oral histories compiled by Lajimodiere to pinpoint the most likely locations for burial sites, Clark said.

Historical aerial photos give archaeologists a chance to see what the ground looked like decades ago — potentially as far back as the 1930s. Observing how land use has changed over time allows them to see areas where humans may have disturbed the earth.

Clark said archaeologists will then use "non-destructive methods" like drones to capture high-resolution images of the land that might reveal any "anomalies," including depressions in the ground.

If the drone shots reveal areas worthy of further investigation, the next steps would be performing surveys at ground level and attempting to recover any remains, though Clark expects there would have to be extensive discussions before shovels hit dirt due to the "sensitive nature" of excavation.

Identifying any remains would be another major challenge, Azure said.

For now, the state will handle the costs associated with the investigation, said Historical Society Director Bill Peterson.

Azure said he plans to reach out to North Dakota's congressional delegation about the federal government taking on some of the financial burden of the investigation and any possible repatriations, but he said the tribe won't "be held up with bureaucracy" if it doesn't find willing partners in Washington.

Turtle Mountain and the Historical Society have recently begun discussing timelines for completing steps of the investigation, but they have not yet established a firm schedule, Clark said.

Azure said the tribe is in a strange position where it hopes to find no unmarked graves near Fort Totten, but it wants to bring a feeling of finality to families with relatives who never came home from boarding school.

If the tribe does locate the remains of Turtle Mountain children as Azure expects, the chairman said he wants to bring them back to the reservation and give them a traditional burial with a spirit fire that would allow them to "go onto that next level in their journey."

"A lot of these children were not given that opportunity to go onto that next level, so it's not only the families getting closure, but it's the Turtle Mountain members who are lost that need to be brought back," Azure said.

In May 2021, an anthropologist discovered unmarked graves likely belonging to 200 children on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Canada. This disturbing finding drew attention to the United States' role in forcibly assimilating thousands of Indigenous children through its own boarding school policies.

From 1819 and through the 1960s, the U.S. government oversaw policies for more than 400 American Indian boarding schools across the nation, including at least 13 in North Dakota. Many of the children who attended schools in North Dakota and elsewhere were taken from their homes against their will, stripped of their culture and abused physically, sexually and psychologically.

Little research has been done on exactly how many schools



State Historical Society of North Dakota photo
Adolescents sit for a photograph at the Fort Totten Indian Industrial School in 1926.



State Historical Society of North Dakota photo
An aerial photograph from the mid-1950s shows Fort Totten.



Dave Samson / The Forum
Author and scholar Denise Lajimodiere uncovers a rock she believes could mark the burial places of children who died while attending the Fort Totten Indian Industrial School on the Spirit Lake Reservation in northeast North Dakota.

existed in the U.S. and the extent to which the federal government knew about the conditions of each school. The U.S. Department of the Interior under Secretary Deb Haaland is investigating the

history and legacy of federally run boarding schools.

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survivors, reviewing public records and exploring the impact these schools still have on North Dakota's Indigenous population today.

Contact Michelle Griffith at news@forumcomm.com and Jeremy Turley at jturley@forumcomm.com.



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