



Handout 2 - "Documents 2 and 3 - Native American Students Write Letters Home from Boarding School"

Document 2 - Excerpt from School Days of an Indian Girl

Late in the morning, my friend Judéwin gave me a terrible warning. Judéwin know a few words of English; and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. In spite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit.... In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

Document 3 - Letter from Harry Shirley (Caddo Tribe) to His Father, September 1882, from "Carlisle Indian Industrial School History." Barbara Landis, 1996.

My Dear Father: - I thought I would write you a few lines and I like the place very much... and we have a very nice farm and cold water to drink and would send my Bow and arrows and how is my little pony getting along I would like to know how are you getting and would please send me some money and we have a great many boy and is great many girls and the boys have a small house I wish they play the band and I have a bed to myself. And I am coming home in two years from now if Capt. Pratt will let me and how are you getting along with the big house and will you tell me in your letter when you write and we got at Carlisle on Thursday and when we got here I did not like the place but since I have being here two or three days I have got used to the place and I like very well but when we got I felt very home sick and be sure and send my bow and some spike arrows. And we go to church every Sunday. And I have a blue suit to where and there was one Shyenne boy shot himself with a pistol... the boys have a nice green lawn in which play Kicking a football and how are you getting along with your stock."



Student Tom Torlino, "Before and After"