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Indian Industrial Schools at St. Ben's, 1884-1898, and White Earth

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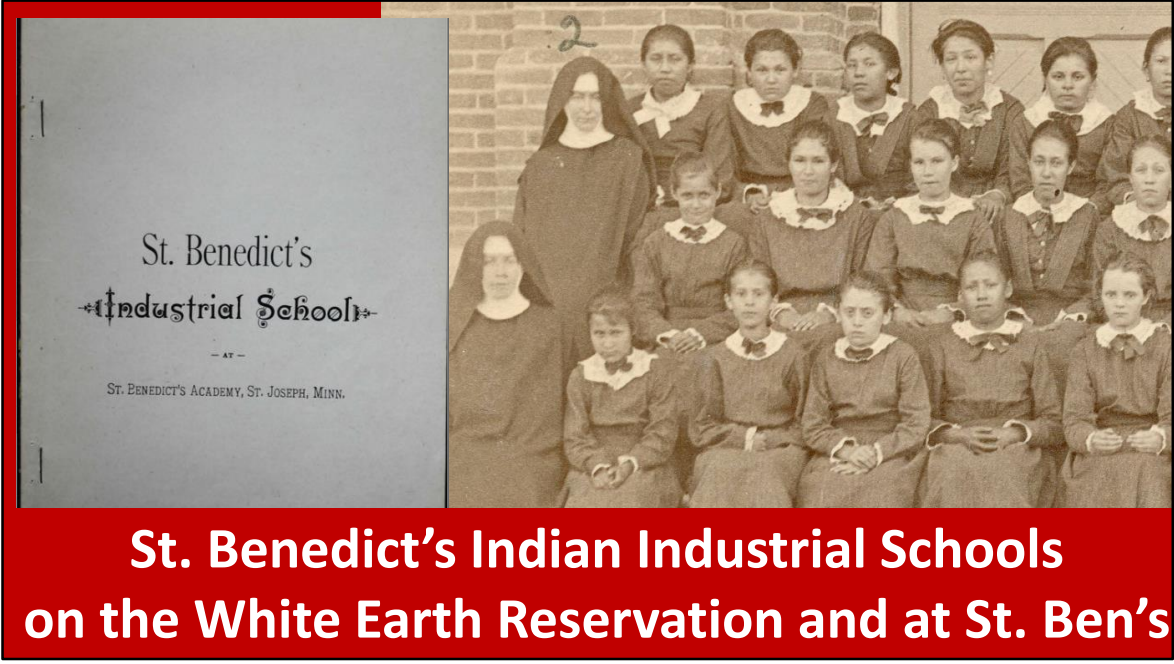
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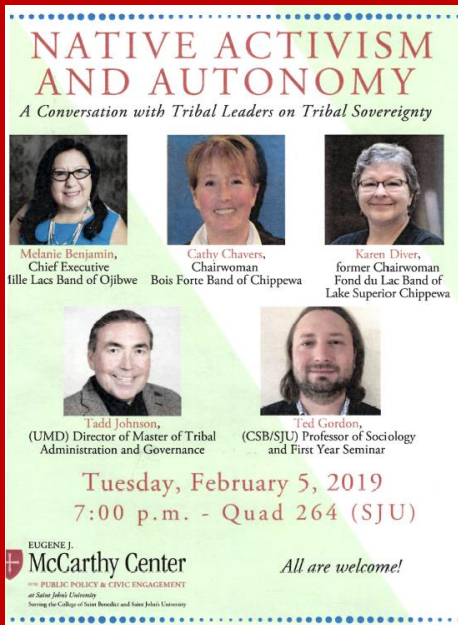
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O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Abbey documents scanned 2016\Industrial School\St. Benedict's Industrial School.pdf – p. 1 & 3
Photo: SBM.02j Thirty students from the White Earth Reservation attending St. Benedict's Industrial School (c. 1884), St. Joseph, MN.



There is a lot of current interest on this topic among students, faculty and others.

Goal:

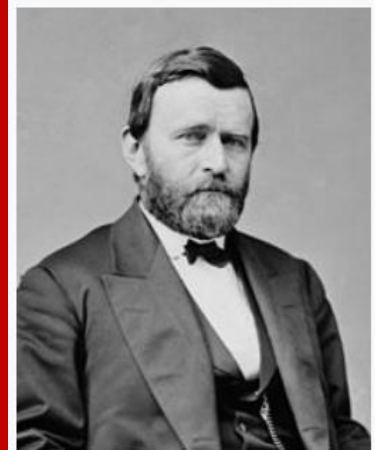
To be culturally sensitive and historically accurate on a subject for which written records are scarce.

Event poster & 2019 02 05 Tribal Sovereignty panel handout (map)

the Sioux uprisings brought General Sherman's advice: "We must act with vindictive earnestness against the Sioux, even to their extermination, men, women, and children,"²

² Lloyd Lewis, *Sherman Fighting Prophet* (New York, 1932), p. 597.

President Grant took a different view of the problem and significantly called his plan for the American Indian a "Peace Policy."



March 4, 1869 – March 4, 1877

[ST. JOHN'S INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL -- HISTORY -- 1885-1896](#) *Scriptorium* 1957 04 p.112

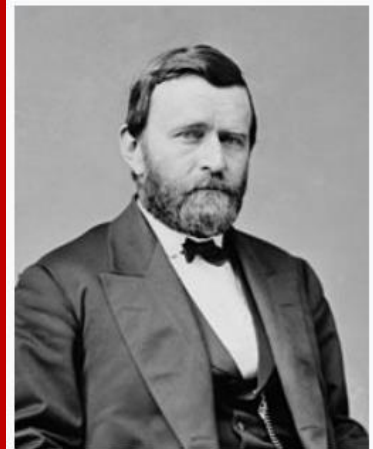
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/26385/rec/29>

Image from https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulysses_S._Grant

Grant's 1868 campaign slogan, "Let us have peace," defined his policy toward... relations with the western Indian tribes.

In a major address, Grant stated that the settlers and the Indians "do not get on together, and one or the other has to give way in the end...I see no remedy for this except in placing all the Indians on large reservations...and giving them absolute protection there."

It was a double-edged responsibility that the government took on, for in justice the nation owed the Indian restitution and the opportunity, both for his own good and the good of the country, to become an active citizen instead of a ward of the government. The plan was highly idealistic, and the United States is still attempting to realize the ideal. Indian schools, to be placed in charge of religious groups, were a prominent part of the program, but in many regions education remained inadequate.

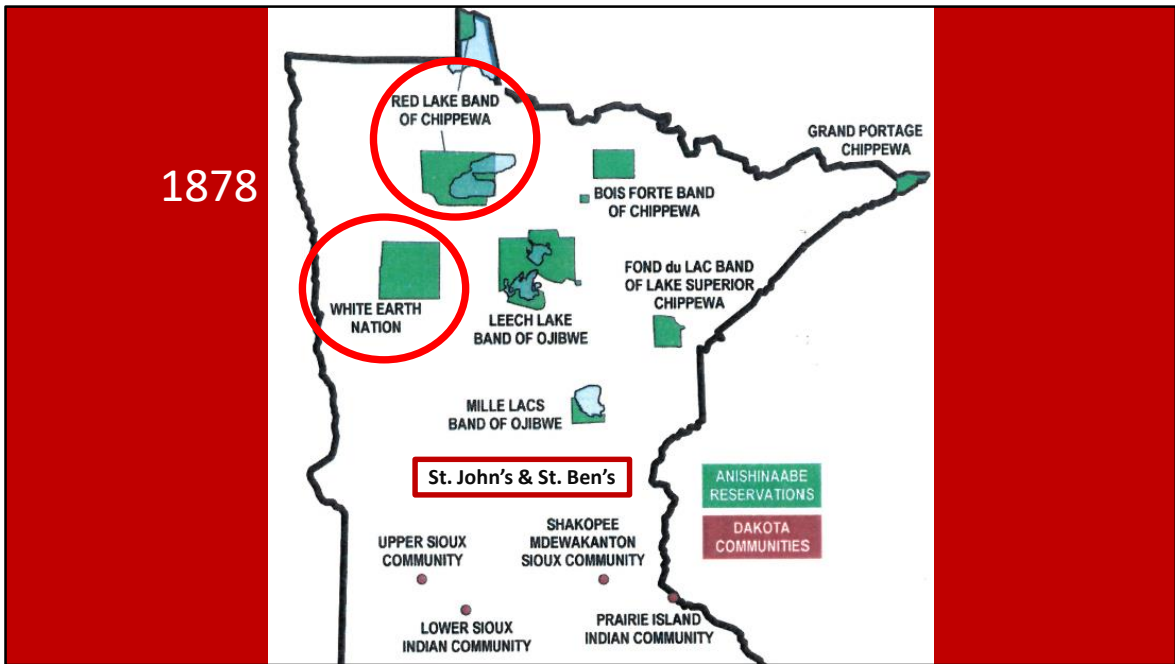


March 4, 1869 – March 4, 1877

Top text: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ulysses_S._Grant

[ST. JOHN'S INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL -- HISTORY -- 1885-1896](#) *Scriptorium* 1957 04 p.112

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/26385/rec/29>



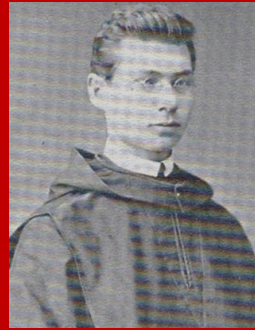
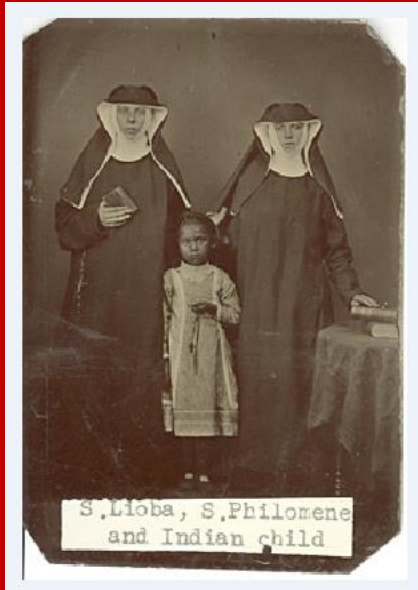
2019 02 05 Tribal Sovereignty panel handout (map)

1875

*White
Earth
Indian mission*



SBM.06a Sketch of White Earth Mission in 1875



Bishop Rupert Seidenbusch [former St. John's Abbot] asked for Benedictines to minister to the Indians at White Earth. Fr. Aloysius Hermanutz volunteered to be the monastery's first Indian missionary.

"Abbot Rupert asked...St. Benedict's Convent to provide teachers for White Earth... Sisters Philomena Ketten and Lioba Braun were sent to meet the challenges."



SBM.06b Sisters Lioba Braun and Philomena Ketten with an orphan girl at White Earth Mission

Quotation from description of SBM.06a Sketch of White Earth Mission in 1875.

McDonald, pp. 227-232

Other text paraphrased from *Worship & Work*, p. 138.

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/11064>

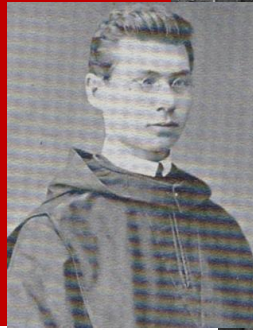
Monks' images from

O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Images\SJP\People\Headmasters\Seidenbusch, Rupert

And O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Depts&Programs\Indian Boys' Industrial School\SBM scans IndianInd&WhiteEarth\pg mn white earth-13 Hermanutz.jpg

The sisters and Fr. Aloysius arrived at White Earth with Bishop Seidenbusch on Nov. 5, 1878.

Fr. Aloysius' ministry covered almost 5 million square miles – traversing the 80 miles between the White Earth and Red Lake reservations.



During the first two years, Father Aloysius gained sufficient mastery of the Chippewa language to preach to the Indians, while visiting numerous small Indian settlements where he began to make large numbers of converts. The Benedictines and their flocks desired to have churches and schools. There was an existing government school on the reservation directed by non-Catholics, but the Catholic Indians wished to have their children instructed in the Catholic faith.

Fr. Aloysius remained at White Earth until his death on Sept. 4, 1929

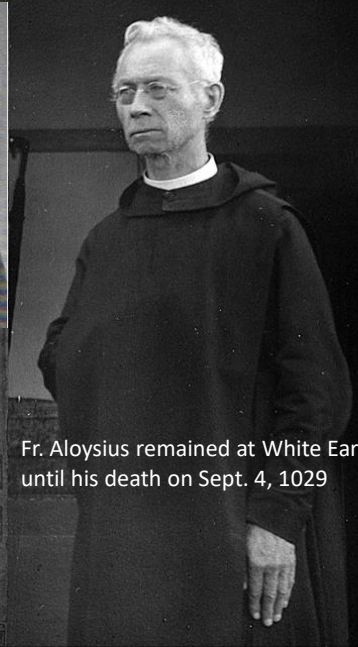
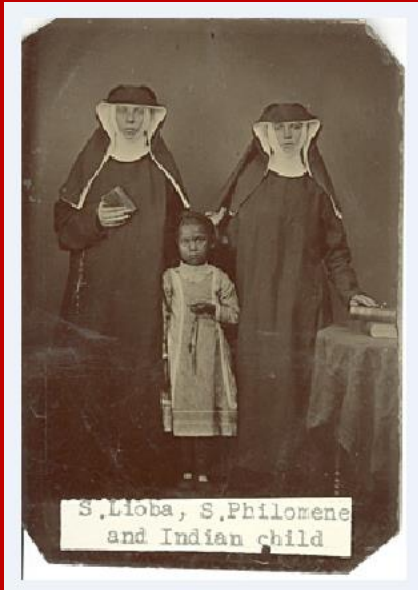


Image: SBMA pg mn white earth-2 Hermanutz, Aloysius OSB

Snipped text from *Worship & Work*, p. 139.

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/11065>



Six days after they arrived, the sisters opened a day school for 15 pupils (12 girls and 3 boys), which increased to a total of 40 during the following week.

Eventually the sisters had over 60 pupils, and opened another school of 40 pupils near Buffalo River. Sister Philomena rode horseback 16 miles round trip to teach them every day.

SBM.06b Sisters Lioba Braun and Philomena Ketten with an orphan girl at White Earth Mission

Quotation from description of SBM.06a Sketch of White Earth Mission in 1875.

McDonald, pp. 227-232

Remaining text paraphrased from Reichert, 2005, p. 20.



SBM.06d S. Philomena Ketten and Ojibwe at Buffalo River (Callaway) near White Earth Mission (Sister's black pony at the right)



Church, parish house, convent, and school, St. Benedict's Mission, White Earth

SBM.06g New church, parish house, convent, and school, St. Benedict's Mission, White Earth, MN



Sister Lioba Braun

SBM.06j Sister Lioba Braun at the organ, St. Benedict's Mission, White Earth, MN



Ojibwe
posing in
their
traditional
festive
attire at
the mission
school

Early 1880s

SBM.06f White Earth - Ojibwe posing in their traditional festive attire at the mission school - early 1880s

Boarding School
Workroom, St.
Benedict's
Mission,
White Earth



SBM.06m Boarding School Workroom, St. Benedict's Mission, White Earth, MN

Meanwhile, in Pennsylvania:

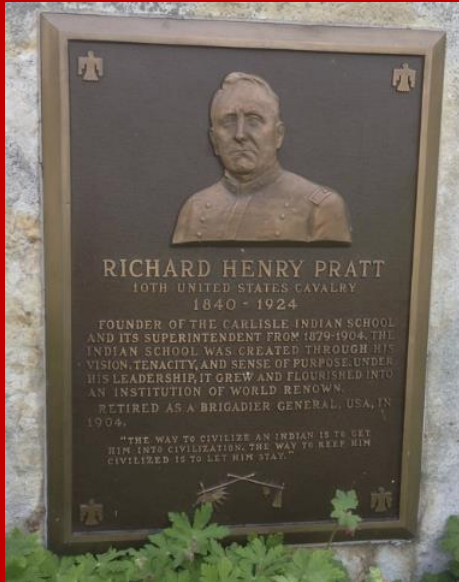
Richard Pratt founded the first Indian Industrial school in 1879 in Carlisle, PA, informed by his experience running an education program in an Indian prison.

At a convention of Baptist ministers in 1883, Pratt stated, "I believe in immersing the Indians in our civilization and when we get them under, holding them there until they are thoroughly soaked."



Pratt thought he was helping American Indians.

Text: <https://upstanderproject.org/firstlight/pratt/>
Carlisle Indian School - Images of the Carlisle Indian School held by the Archives and Special Collections | by Dickinson Library
Richard Henry Pratt, Superintendent, Carlisle Indian School
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/dickinsonlibrary/2497927178/in/album-72157605091893725/lightbox/>



In his oft-referenced 1892 speech, Pratt stated, "A great general has said that **the only good Indian is a dead one**, and that ...has been an enormous factor in promoting Indian massacres."

"I agree with the sentiment, but only in this: that all the Indian there is in the race should be dead. **Kill the Indian in him, and save the man.**"

Speech, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians With Whites"
by Captain R. H. Pratt, 1892.

Speech, "The Advantages of Mingling Indians With Whites" by Captain R. H. Pratt, 1892.
<https://upstanderproject.org/firstlight/pratt/>.

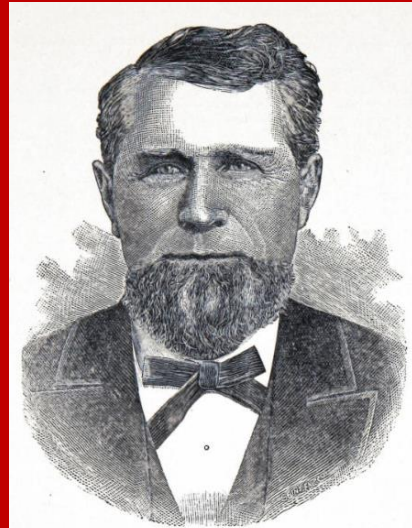
["The Advantage of Mingling Indians with Whites,"](#) in *Proceedings of the National Conference of Charities and Correction*, ed. Isabel C. Barrows (Boston: Press of Geo. H. Ellis, 1892).

<https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=dpJIAAAAYAAJ&printsec=frontcover&output=reader&hl=en&pg=GBS.PR1>

With the condition of the Chippewa Indians of northern Minnesota and the limited number of schools in mind, Congressman Knute Nelson of Minnesota asked Abbot Alexius Edelbrock, O.S.B., of St. John's Abbey to help in the education of Indian boys and girls of the White Earth Reservation.

The consensus was that if the children's education was to be effective, schools should be provided off the reservations because the parents interfered too much and caused irregularities in procedure.

In July of 1884 Abbot Alexius wrote to the Reverend Joseph A. Stephan, director of the Catholic Indian Bureau, and requested him to arrange a contract with the government, under Grant's Peace Policy, for students for the Abbot's proposed school.



The Honorable Knute Nelson, Governor of Minnesota.

1957-04 *Scriptorium* Volume 16 Number 01 124,

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/26384/rec/29>

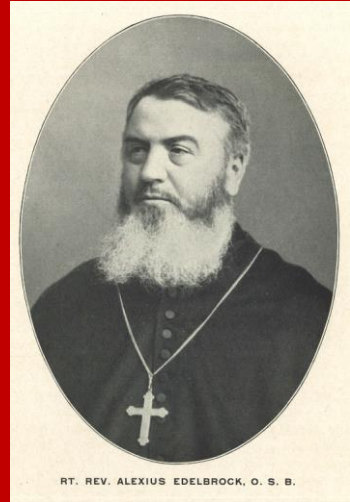
[ST. JOHN'S INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL -- HISTORY -- 1885-1896](#) *Scriptorium* 1957 04
p.112

Nelson image from *The Record* June 1894, p. 137

<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchNews/id/7881>

There could be no better place for educating Indian boys, and White Earth has plenty of Chippewa Indian boys who would embrace the opportunity with pleasure.³

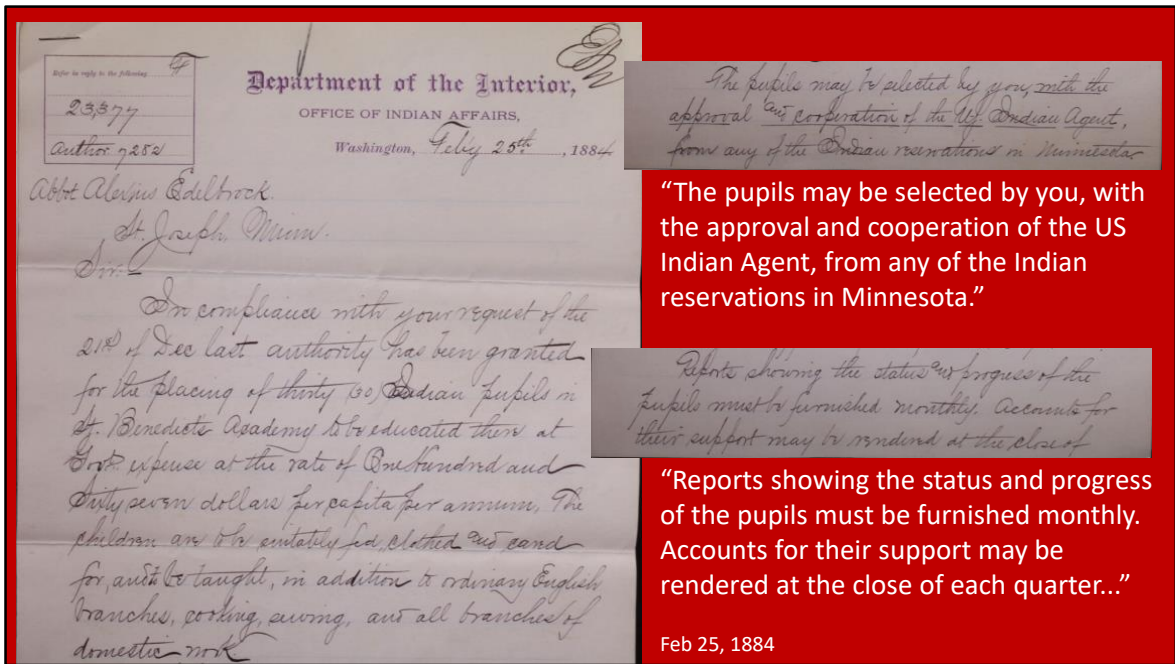
After Congressman Knute Nelson had obtained permission from Secretary of the Interior Hiram Price for Abbot Alexius to enter the field of education of Chippewa Indians, a contract⁴ was made between the Catholic Indian Bureau and the government.



RT. REV. ALEXIUS EDELBROCK, O. S. B.

³ July 14, 1884 letter from Abbot Alexius to Rev. Joseph Stephan

1957-04 *Scriptorium* Volume 16 Number 01 124,
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/26386/rec/29>



Indian Schools\Industrial School\Department of Interior\Department of the Interior, Feb 25, 1884.pdf

1
MIA

Page 1 of 1
076
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Department of the Interior,
OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS,
Washington, Dec. 16th. 1884

Abbot Alesius Edelbrock,
Collegville Minn.

Sir—

I enclose herewith contract in quintuplicate for the education of twenty five (25) girls at St. Benedict's Academy, St. Joseph, Minnesota. Please execute & return the same. The rate is fixed at one hundred and ten dollars (\$10) per capita per annum with the understanding that the office is to be at no expense for the transportation of pupils from their homes to the school.

Yours respectfully
St. Price
Commissioner.

cook.

"I enclose herewith contract in quintuplicate for the education of twenty-five girls at St. Benedict's Academy, St. Joseph...

The rate is fixed at one hundred and ten dollars (\$110) per capita per annum..."

Dec. 16, 1884

Indian Schools\Industrial School\Department of Interior\Department of the Interior,
Dec 16, 1884.pdf

2432
ARTICLES OF AGREEMENT

BETWEEN
N. Price,
Com's Ind. Off.

AND
Alouis Edelbrock,

For School at *St. Joseph, Minn.*
 Dated *Dec. 29/84.*
 Expires *June 30/85*
 No Bond, \$ _____

Registered Contract Book No. _____ p.

To be made in quadruplicate: one to be retained by agent, one to be delivered to contractor, two to be forwarded to Office of Indian Affairs, and one to "Return Office."
 *All contracts must be sealed by wax or other adhesive substance.

Department of the Interior,
 WASHINGTON, *Dec. 31st*, 1884.

The within contract is hereby approved
H. M. Teller,
 Secretary.

OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS
 RECEIVED DEC 30 1884
 CLAIM NO 27039

(All the contracts for St. Ben's went through the Abbot at St. John's)

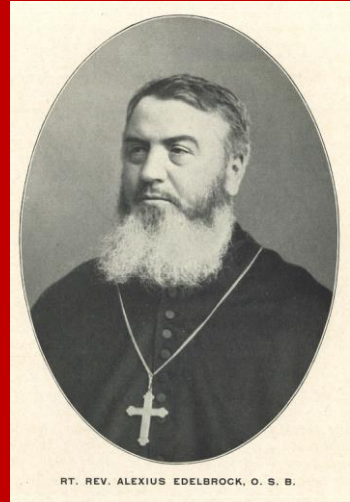
13 ARTICLE 1. The said party of the second part, in consideration of the compensation hereinafter
 14 named, agrees to carry on and conduct, under his own supervision, during the *seven months* ending
 15 *June 30th*, 1885, with such vacations as may be mutually agreed upon, the Industrial Boarding
 16 School at *St. Benedict's Academy, St. Joseph, Minn.*, for the benefit of such Indian
 17 *girls not under six years of age* children of both sexes as may be induced to attend, it being understood that the average attendance shall be
 18 maintained at *twenty five (25)* if practicable; and the terms of this contract
 19 shall be construed as operative from *Dec. 1st 1884.*

Dec. 14, 1884

Indian Schools\Industrial School\Department of Interior\Agreement December 29, 1884.pdf

If the St. John's Industrial School for Chippewa Indian boys was a new experience for the Fathers and Brothers connected with its administration, the reaction of the first students, whose ages ranged from ten to seventeen, showed that leaving home for three years of boarding school life was not accepted by all the boys and their parents with the pleasure that Abbot Alexis had anticipated.

That's an understatement...
(and also applied to the girls coming to St. Ben's)



³ July 14, 1884 letter from Abbot Alexis to Rev. Joseph Stephan

1957-04 *Scriptorium* Volume 16 Number 01 124,
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/26386/rec/29>

From a 2003 article in *Minnesota History* by Linda LeGarde Grover,
["The Vermilion Lake Indian School: from assimilation to termination"](#):

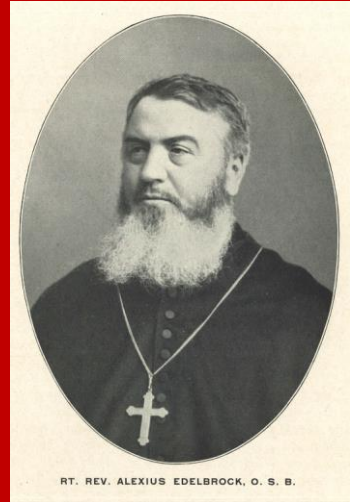
"Educating children has always been of prime importance to the Ojibwe. At the time of western impact—as now—education was a holistic and lifelong experience..."

"Children learned from their parents, other relatives, and members of the community, particularly the elders, whose wisdom and experience ensured the survival of the culture.

But the Ojibwe tradition of training by observation, modeling, experience, and oral tradition was not acknowledged or validated— perhaps not even seen— by missionaries and policymakers in the 1800s."

[The Vermilion Lake Indian School: from assimilation to termination](#)

After being here for a few days, three boys ran off and returned to White Earth, spread a lot of lies, stirred up the old folks. Soon most of the parents came down to inspect. They found everything O.K. and returned. Another came down and took his two boys and two girls from St. Benedict's Academy along. Yesterday several parents came down from White Earth and took their children home. We have yet twenty-four boys here, and I hope they will soon clear out. I have enough of this business.⁵



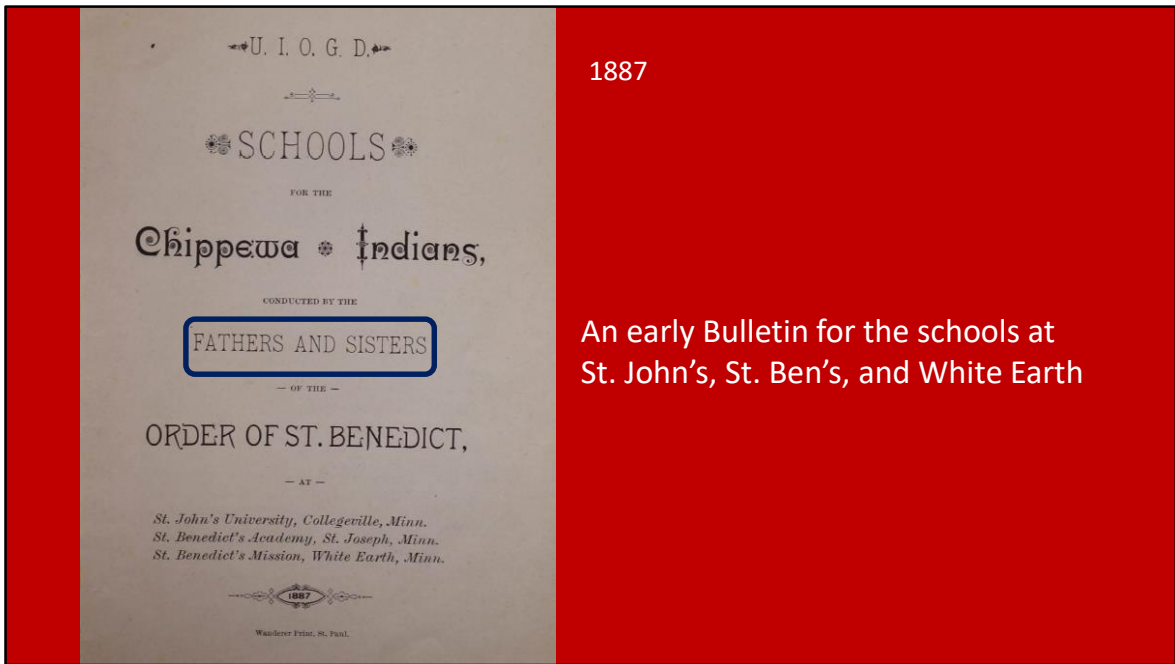
RT. REV. ALEXIUS EDELBROCK, O. S. B.

⁵ Abbot Alexius to Joseph A. Stephan, February 8, 1885 (SJAA)

[ST. JOHN'S INDIAN INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL -- HISTORY -- 1885-1896](#) *Scriptorium* 1957 04

p.113

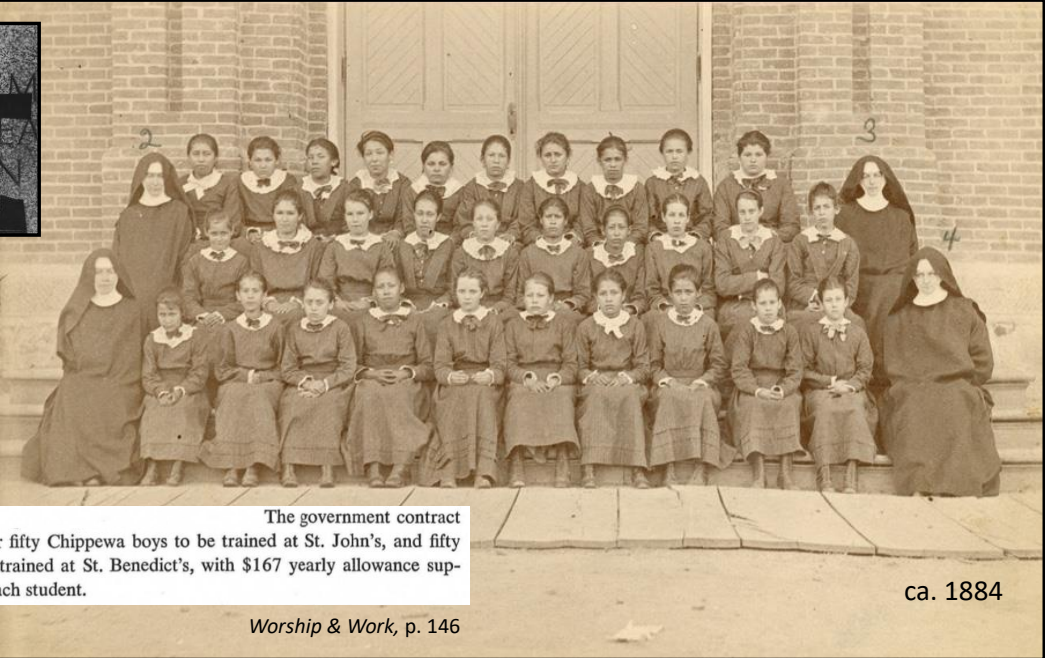
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1887

An early Bulletin for the schools at St. John's, St. Ben's, and White Earth

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p. 2, p. 3



The government contract allowed for fifty Chippewa boys to be trained at St. John's, and fifty girls to be trained at St. Benedict's, with \$167 yearly allowance supplied for each student.

ca. 1884

Worship & Work, p. 146

SBM.02j Thirty students from the White Earth Reservation attending St. Benedict's Industrial School (c. 1884), St. Joseph, MN
Worship & Work, p. 146
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/11072/rec/1>

A fire in 1886 destroyed the complex that had housed the Industrial School. The sisters temporarily provided room and board in the convent for them. Immediately, the construction of Marmion Hall, the new Industrial School, was begun between the St. Joseph Church and St. Benedict's Convent & Academy. It was ready for the fall term of 1886.



*Industrial School
St. Joseph, Minn.*

SBM.02k notes, SBMA

Image: SBM.02k St. Benedict's Industrial School, St. Joseph, MN, built in 1886 for girls from White Earth, MN

Because of the new quarters and the inspector's good report of the St. Ben's Industrial School, the Indian Commissioner expanded the contract, permitting the sisters to take any number of pupils from any reservation.

However, even though the enrollment in the school increased to 100, only 25 were paid for by the government.

Later this building was renamed Marmion Hall.



*Industrial School
St. Joseph, Minn.*

SBM.02k notes, SBMA

Image: SBM.02k St. Benedict's Industrial School, St. Joseph, MN, built in 1886 for girls from White Earth, MN

because the government opened the contract for any number of students to attend St. Ben's Industrial School, an addition was constructed on the west end of Marmion Hall so that the building could accommodate 150 students.



SBMA; McDonald, p. 122

Image: O:\Archives\csbarchives\Photos\Buildings Photos\Monastery\Marmion Hall from CSB IA Smugmug 0632.jpg = Smugmug version of:

SBM.021 Addition to St. Benedict's Industrial School, St. Joseph, MN, built in 1887

THE INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL was established in 1884. It is beautifully and healthfully located in the village of St. Joseph, on the spacious grounds belonging to the "Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict".

The building, 48x60 feet, three story high and of solid brick is comfortable and commodious, admirably adapted, in every respect, to the end in view at its erection. The object aimed at in the opening and conducting of above school, and which is never lost sight of, is the mental and moral training of Indian girls for that position in life, which they will be required to fill, namely, to give them a christian and polite education and to teach them all that is necessary for a woman to know of house-keeping and such like female duties.

It is supported partly by Government Contracts made by Abbot Alexis Edelbrock and partly by Contracts with Rev. Jos. A. Stephan of the Catholic Indian Bureau: The first contract was issued by the Government for thirty (30) girls March 19th 1884. An additional Contract for twenty (20) girls was granted Jan. 1st 1885. August, 1886 the number was increased to one-hundred-and-five (105) by a contract with the Government per Catholic Indian Bureau.

1887

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The girls are taught Reading, Orthography, Grammar, Arithmetic, Penmanship, Geography, History, Plain Sewing and Dress-making, different kinds of Ornamental Needle-Works. Cooking, Baking, Laundry and some Gardening and Dairy-work.

The school is divided into three departments : Senior, Intermediate and Primary. They are carefully trained to make practical application of what they are taught. They do all the sewing, knitting, mending, darning, washing, baking and cooking for the entire number of girls at school and occasionally make neat pieces of fancy work to present to their relatives or friends.

1887

When the government dropped the contract system of Indian education in 1896, the school remained open for two more years, when it was forced to close due to lack of funds.

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Text: SBMA; McDonald, p. 122

After the closing of the Industrial School, the west end of Marmion Hall was converted to a school for little boys (age 6-12), often referred to as "Bethlehem School for Boys."

The east end of Marmion was used by the sisters.



SBMA; McDonald, p. 122

Photo: SBM.02m St. Benedict's (Bethlehem) Boarding School for Little Boys, St. Joseph, MN. 1st floor porches added in 1905.

There were 7 boys the first year; the maximum number of boys per year was set at 36.

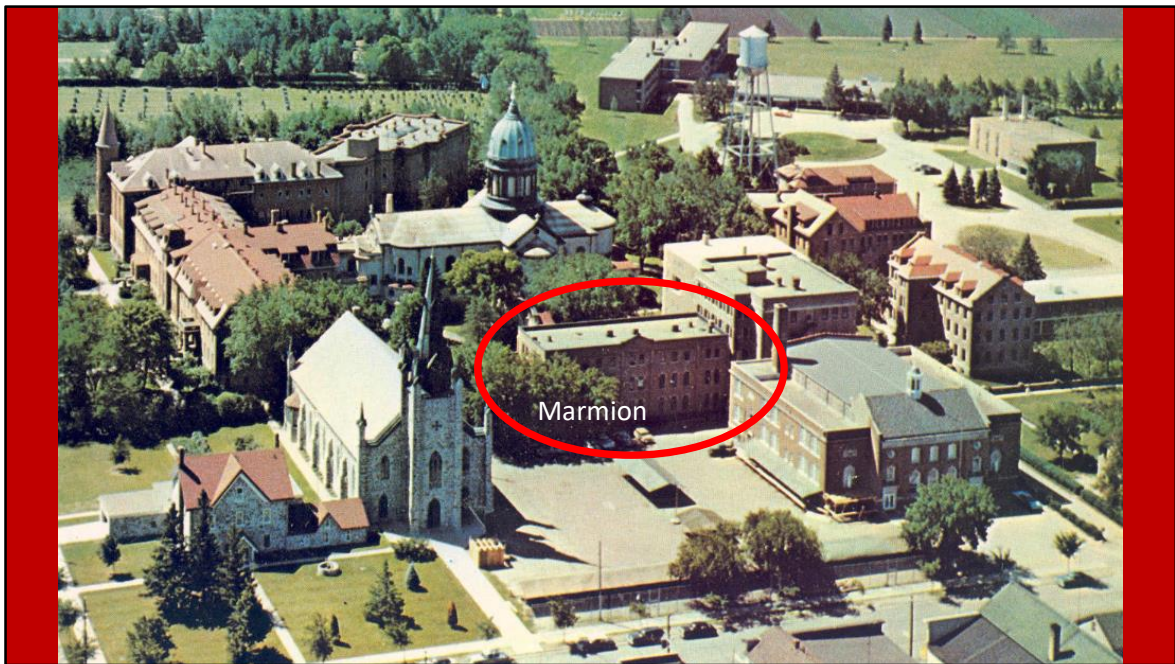
A total of 715 boys attended during the next 40 years

In 1938, it transferred to Altoona, WI.



SBMA; McDonald, p. 122

Photo: SBM.02m St. Benedict's (Bethlehem) Boarding School for Little Boys, St. Joseph, MN. 1st floor porches added in 1905.



1959 Aerial Photo of the College of Saint Benedict, looking SW, with part of campus visible beyond the St. Joseph church and school
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/CSBArchives/id/11>

A landmark falls



Photo by Dennis Dalman

June 5 was a sad day in St. Joseph as one of its oldest landmarks had to be torn down. Marmion Hall, right next to the Lab School, had been used for many years as a residence for Sisters of the Order of St. Benedict. However, the building had become so rickety it was next-to-impossible to insure. More than 100 years old, it was at one time an industrial school for Native American boys and later used as a boys' elementary school. A new residence for the Sisters will be built on the site.

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(The top of the St. Joe Catholic School is visible at left.)

The “New
Marmion” at
St. Ben’s
Monastery

(looking NW)



Photo courtesy of St. Benedict’s Monastery.

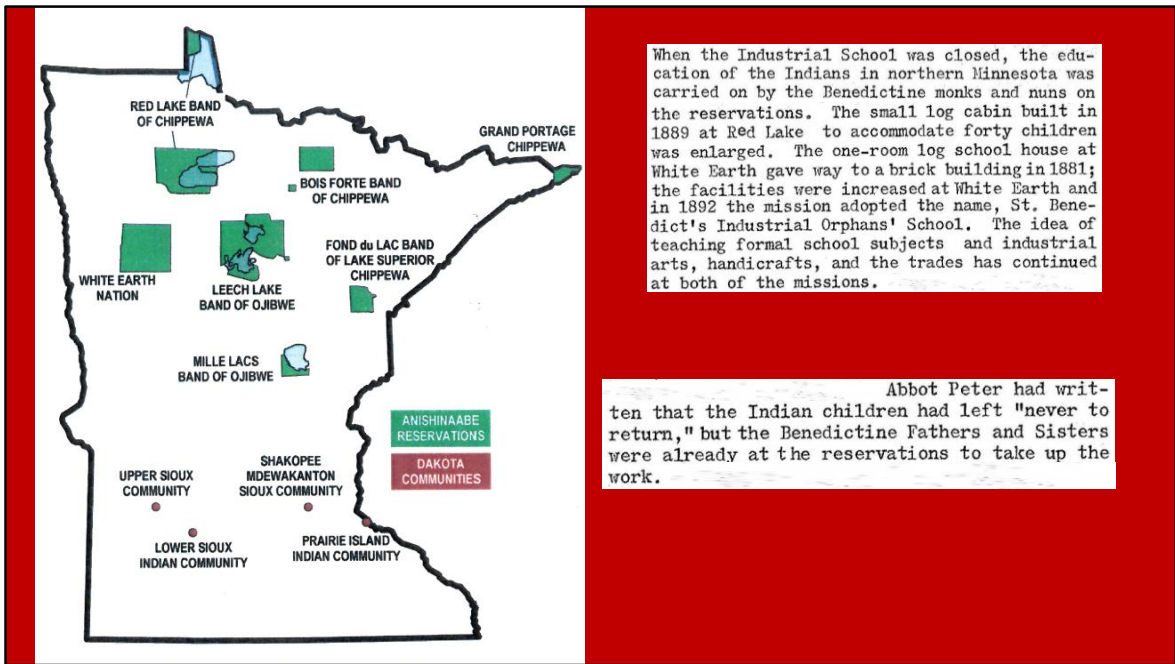


Image: 2019 02 05 Tribal Sovereignty panel handout
 1957-04 *Scriptorium* Volume 16 Number 01 124, p. 122-123
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/26395/rec/29>
<http://cdm.csbsju.edu/digital/collection/SJUArchives/id/26396/rec/29>

The school at White Earth was so successful that it was noticed by Katherine Drexel in Philadelphia, who had devoted her life to working for American Indians and African Americans.



SBMA McDonald, pp. 241-246

Image: SBM.06| Classroom of students in newly-built St. Benedict's Mission School, White Earth, MN



She visited White Earth and was so impressed by the work of the Benedictines there that she made arrangements for the building of a new school that would house 150 orphaned and dependent children.

The school opened in 1892.

SBMA McDonald, pp. 241-246

Image: SBM.06n Boarding School Dormitory, St. Benedict's Mission, White Earth, MN



003\PG MN White Earth-12 White Earth - bathroom

The school
opened in 1892,
became a day
school in 1945,
and closed in
1969.



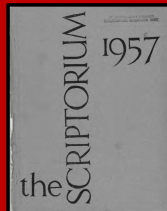
SBM.06h New school (built by Katherine Drexel) at St. Benedict's Mission, White Earth, MN

Berg, Carol, OSB. "Native American Ministry," Chapter 13 in *With Hearts Expanded*, p. 269-296. St. Cloud, MN: North Star Press, 2000.

https://digitalcommons.csbsju.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1004&context=saint_benedicts_monastery_books

Major Sources

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from resources in the archives of
Saint John's Abbey, Saint Benedict's Monastery,
Saint John's University, and elsewhere as noted
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1874 *Illustrated Historical Atlas of the State of Minnesota* –Stearns County, p. 155

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/cdm/ref/collection/mhs/id/1020>

Most of the images in this file were from/saved to O:\Archives\SJUArchives\Digital Archives\Depts&Programs\Indian Boys' Industrial School\SBM scans IndianInd&WhiteEarth.

The complete historical background of the Marmion building:

- 1886 - built (east wing of Marmion) as Industrial School
- 1887-1888 - added west wing for the expanding Industrial School
- 1896 - Government ended funds for Industrial School but Sisters kept it open for 2 more years
- 1887- West wing opened for the Boys School
- 1899 - East wing became the novitiate and was connected by cloister walk to Benedict Hall
- 1905 - 1st floor porches were added
- 1920 - 2nd floor (sleeping) porches added
- 1938 - Boys School transferred to Altoona, WI
- 1938-1969 - West wing became the Juniorate (except for 1956-1959 when the Juniors moved to Loretto and the postulants to the west wing of Marmion)
- 1939 - 3rd floor added for professed Sisters' private rooms and dormitories for the Juniors (building renamed Marmion)
- 1960-1969 - East and west wings became the Juniorate when novices moved to S. Rosamond
- 1968-69 - renovated for administrative offices on 1st floor and residences on 2nd and 3rd
- 1974 - Marmion used for Formation (Sisters in formation lived among the professed on 2-3 floors)
- 1976 - Formation moved to Caedmon and the 1st floor was renovated for small-group living.

Notes from 006\SBM02k.JPG, St. Benedict's Industrial School, St. Joseph, MN, built in 1886 for girls from White Earth, MN.