

Anti-Catholic Statement

Good evening. My name is Noel Manley and I am a resident of Darien, Illinois. I was in attendance at the Library Board's August 2023 board meeting and was saddened and troubled about an action the Board took. Specifically, the Board chose to approve unanimously the addition of a biased and misleading anti-Catholic and anti-Protestant statement to the library's questionable Native Land Acknowledgement. The addition reads as follows.

*"On March 3, 1819, the U.S. Congress enacted the Civilization Fund Act to promote "education" for Native Americans and to stimulate the "civilization process." This legislation ushered in an era of boarding schools, institutions created to destroy and vilify Native language, culture, and practices. **The federal government and officials from Catholic and other Christian churches coerced Native families into sending their children to live and attend classes at boarding schools without visitation** ([The National Native Boarding School Healing Coalition](#))."*

FIRST

As a man of native descent (Annishinabe/Ojibwe) and as a Catholic I am here tonight to challenge this taxpayer funded anti-Catholic statement. You will note that the statement follows in a long and sad tradition of anti-Catholicism that predates the founding of our nation. Instead of naming names or providing concrete examples, the statement speaks broadly and deceptively of unnamed and unidentified **"Catholic Officials"** conspiring with the federal government to perpetrate **cultural genocide** against native people. This could not be further from the truth. To challenge this nonsense, I have with me a book entitled, the **Dictionary of the Ojibwe Language**. This book, along with its companion grammar, was first published in the year 1850. And interestingly, the author of these books was a "Catholic Official," an immigrant, and a priest by the name of **Father Frederic Baraga**. Now, Father Baraga immigrated to the United States from Slovenia in the 1840's to serve and advocate for the Ojibwe

people, and as such, was motivated by love and dedication to the Ojibwe people to write these seminal works. It is interesting to note, that these groundbreaking books were so impactful that they continue to be acknowledged in modern Ojibwe language texts to this day. So the question I have for our head librarian, her staff, and this Board is simply, “How do you reconcile the charge that ‘Catholic Officials’ participated in cultural genocide of native people, while at the same time authorizing a series of books designed to protect and propagate the Ojibwe language?”

SECOND

There is a link in the anti-Catholic statement that takes you to the web page of the left wing **National Native Boarding School Healing Coalition**. On this web page is listed a series of native schools throughout the nation that they assert participated in this cultural genocide. This list includes the school that my nokomis, that is grandmother, **Jennie McCauley**, and her four sisters attended, the **Haskell Indian Institute** in Lawrence, KS. My grandmother attended this institute between 1902 and 1908 and was trained to be a stenographer. The education she received enabled her to secure a position with the **Federal Bureau of Indian Affairs** in Washington, D.C. in 1911, eight years before she was granted the right to vote by the 19th Amendment. She worked for the Bureau until the early 1950’s.

It's also worth noting that her sisters Helen and Alice were trained as teachers, and her sisters Drucella and Dora were trained as secretaries. It should be noted that these sisters all spoke Ojibwe when they entered this school, and they all spoke Ojibwe when they graduated. In fact, I have a photo of my Aunt Dora taken for a native event at Haskell in 1906. You will note that the young women in the photograph are all wearing native outfits, and my aunt and the women sitting next to her have Ojibwe motifs embroidered into their outfits. So the question I ask the head librarian, her staff and this Board is, “How do you reconcile the charge that ‘Catholic Officials’ participated in cultural genocide when a school identified by your source did not beat or restrict the Ojibwe language out of my ancestors while at the same time encouraging and conducting native events?”

CONCLUSION

Sadly, we are faced again with a politically motivated library staff who is pushing an anti-Catholic narrative to advance a far-left agenda with tax-payer funds. This statement is *intellectually dishonest* and follows an established Marxist pattern of applying a broad negative generalization to a group of people designed to belittle and destroy their standing in the eyes of the community. All you have to do is look at recent history to validate this point. The purges of political opponents and kulaks in Soviet Russia by Josef Stalin, Mao's Cultural Revolution, Pol Pot's killing fields and the Holocaust are clear examples of where state supported bias can lead. And to note that this board voted unanimously to support this statement, with the exception of Mr. Nienburg who was not in attendance in August. So I respectfully request that this statement either (1) be removed from this land acknowledgement, or (2) the acknowledgment provide clear unambiguous examples of those they allege to have committed these acts.

Thank you.

