

## **The First 11 years (1904 – 1915)**

The Wahpeton Boarding School was provided by Congress, early in 1904. At that time, one of North Dakota's Senators was from Wahpeton, **Porter James McCumber**. He served many years in the Senate, and was quite prominent in that body. It is probably safe to say that Wahpeton would never have had an Indian School but for the influence of this man. There was already such a school at Morris, Minn. That school could have served the same territory Wahpeton would serve.

In the second session of the 58th Congress, December 7, 1903, to April 28, 1904, Senator McCumber with the support of Senator Henry Hansbrough of Devils Lake, introduced Senate Bill Number 197, titled "To establish an Indian, Agricultural School at or near the City of Wahpeton in the State of North Dakota." In Volume 38, Part I of the United States Congressional Record, the text of the bill and Senate action reads as follows. Mr. McCumber (a member of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs): "I ask unanimous consent for the present consideration of the bill (S.197) "To establish an Indian Agricultural School at or near the City of Wahpeton in the State of North Dakota."

There being no objection, the Senate, as in Committee of the Whole, proceed to consider the bill. It provides for an Indian Agricultural School at or near Wahpeton, North Dakota for the purchase of a suitable site and necessary farming land to be selected by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs with the approval of the Secretary of the interior for the erection of buildings and other improvements to adopt said school for the purpose of an Indian Agricultural farm and livestock raising school, and appropriate \$100,000 therefore but only eligible Indian boys shall be admitted to the school, and the course of instruction shall include principally practical instruction in farming, stock-raising, and kindred pursuits.

The bill was reported to the Senate without amendment ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, read the third time and passed.

The House of Representatives passed on the same bill without any amendments. President Roosevelt signed the bill into law.

### **Chapter 1402**

**Apr. 21, 1904. [H. R. 12684.] | [Public, No. 125.] 33 Stat., 180.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department and for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and five, and for other purposes.**

### **WAHPETON INDIAN SCHOOL.**

That for the purpose of establishing an Indian agricultural school at or near the city of Wahpeton, in the State of North Dakota, for the purchase of a suitable site and necessary farming land, to be selected by the Commissioner of Indian Affairs with the approval of the Secretary of the Interior, for the erection of buildings and other improvements to adapt said school to the purpose of an

Indian agricultural farm and stock-raising school, the sum of one hundred thousand dollars be, and the same is hereby, appropriated: *Provided*, That the course of instruction shall include principally practical instruction in farming, stock raising, and kindred pursuits.

The Department of the Interior was, of course, responsible for this major project. The Department of Indian Affairs was given the task of implementation and coordination. This included the land acquisition and building construction.

In August of 1904, a committee was appointed by the Wahpeton City Council to act with Senator McCumber in locating the Indian School. A site on the North edge of the city was selected. 178.48 acres of land was bought in March 1905, from Caroline E. **Rich**, F. B. and Mary (Boynton) **Townsend**, and Beriah, Beriah Jr., & Lucy **Magoffin**. By the year 1929, additional land was purchased which increased the school's land holdings to 261.61 acres. As of 2002 the only property (about 53 acres) still part of the original (1905) purchases is that purchased from the Magoffin family.

The Minutes Book of the City of Wahpeton, From July 1898, to September 1905.

The City Council Minutes of August 30, 1904 contains the following action:

"Special meeting of the City Council held August 30, 1904, called at the request of Mayor **Charles G. Bade**, for the purpose of considering matters relative to the location of the Indian School.

Meeting called to order by Mayor Bade.

Members present: Hull, Patterson, Richard, Connolly and Hintgen.

Motion carried that the Mayor appoint a committee of five citizens, he being the Chairman of said committee for the purpose of working in conjunction with Senator McCumber in selecting a suitable site for the Indian School.

The Mayor appointed the following persons to act as such committee: Charles G. Bade, J. J. Hull, Fred Falley, Aaron Stern and Theodore Albrecht."

F. B. Schneller, City Auditor

The construction of the original buildings was the responsibility of **John B. Brown**, Superintendent of the, Indian School at Morris Minnesota. The original group of buildings was constructed during the calendar years of 1905 and 1906; warehouse, Boys and Girls' dormitories, mess hall, laundry, schoolhouse, water and sewage. The contractor who had worked under Mr. Brown's supervision transferred the buildings to the government; rather the government accepted them on August 4, 1906. Because Wahpeton Sioux stood for "peace, justice, and progress," Wahpeton Indian School was officially designated as the name of the school by authority of the Secretary of the Interior. The student enrollment capacity was set at 100.

The schoolhouse had two classrooms and an auditorium, built at a cost of \$10,000. By 1913, increased enrollment made it necessary to convert the auditorium space into two classrooms. The classrooms were used until 1925.

**Oscar H. Lipps, the first regular superintendent appointed to take charge of the Wahpeton Indian School, served from August 4, 1906 to Dec. 6, 1906. Mr. Lipps was afterward very prominent in Indian Education. He was at one time the Superintendent of Carlisle and later became the director of Indian Education.**

**Instructions from the Office of Indian Affairs advised the Superintendent that he could accept Indian children from the states of Minnesota, North and South Dakota and adjoining states if properly authorized.**

#### **Chapter 3504**

**June 21, 1906. [H. R. 15331.] | [Public, No. 258.] 34 Stat., 325.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and seven.**

#### **WAHPETON INDIAN SCHOOL.**

**For the support and education of one hundred Indian pupils at the Indian school at Wahpeton, North Dakota, sixteen thousand seven hundred dollars. For pay of superintendent on said school, one thousand five hundred dollars. For minor improvements, five thousand dollars. For purchasing livestock and equipment of building, six thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary. In all, twenty-nine thousand two hundred dollars.**

**James C. Clifford came to the school as, the next superintendent on Dec. 7, 1906 and remained until Jan. 10, 1909. The carpenter shop and Superintendent's cottage were built in 1908 while Mr. Clifford was here. Their total cost was over \$10,000. The cottage was \$7,800 and a shop for \$3,000. The delay in the school opening was caused by an impure water supply and lack of equipment for the school. There was also a lack of getting a sufficient number of employees. In one instance Mr. Clifford wrote he was the only male employee on the place. It was not until February 8, 1908 that school opened. Several months passed without any students and soon after the first children arrived he was transferred or dropped. By June 82 students had enrolled.**

#### **Chapter 2285**

**Mar. 1, 1907. [H. R. 22580.] | [Public, No. 154.] 34 Stat., 1015.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and eight.**

**WAHPETON SCHOOL.**

**For the support and education of one hundred Indian pupils at the Indian school at Wahpeton, North Dakota, sixteen thousand eight hundred dollars, and for pay of superintendent, one thousand five hundred dollars; For general repairs and improvements, two thousand dollars; For sinking and constructing a well and necessary machinery or apparatus for supplying said school with water there from, fifteen thousand dollars, or so much thereof as may be necessary, said sum to be immediately available; In all, thirty-five thousand three hundred dollars. For general incidental expenses of the Indian Service in North Dakota, including traveling expenses of agents at three agencies, one thousand dollars.**

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**Chapter 153**

**Apr. 30, 1908. [H. R. 15219.] | [Public, No. 104.] 35 Stat., 70.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and nine.**

**WAHPETON SCHOOL.**

**For the support and education of one hundred Indian pupils at the Indian school at Wahpeton, North Dakota, and for pay of superintendent, eighteen thousand two hundred dollars; For general repairs and improvements, two thousand dollars; For purchase of live stock, seed, equipment of farm, and machinery, five thousand dollars, to be immediately available; For construction of concrete walk, driveways and grading, two thousand five hundred dollars; For the erection of a school hospital, six thousand dollars; For equipment of laundry, workshop, and school buildings, three thousand dollars. In all, thirty-six thousand seven hundred dollars.**

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**"GREAT PROSPECTS AHEAD"**

**(Wahpeton Globe News Paper, September 24th, 1908)**

**"Miss Estelle Reel, Superintendent of all of the Indian Schools of the United States was in town last week for one day, looking over the Wahpeton School. Miss Reel impresses one as a very capable woman. During a short interview she expressed very great satisfaction with the plant here, stating that it was at present just about the most up-to-date in the entire country. This is partly because the buildings are all new, and constructed upon the latest approved designs. The location near town, the excellent water system, good lighting**

facilities, and sanitary arrangements in general all appeal favorably to her. They actually leave little, if anything more, to be desired."

Superintendent Reel went on to say: "The general tendency in the federal executive department favors this plan, as eastern schools, like Carlisle, are likely to be discontinued before many years pass, and other schools at or near the reservations themselves are to be built up instead. The institution here is excellently located for the furtherance of that plan, located as it is, near at hand to many reservations of the Dakotas and Minnesota. It is expected the school at Morris, Minnesota, will be changed over soon into one of a different character, and that the Indians there will then be transferred to Wahpeton. Within three or four years there should be 300 or 400 Indians attending the Wahpeton school."

"Moreover the buildings and equipment will be made more valuable. The school may not become actually the very largest in the United States, but undoubtedly will take rank among the first, and possibly have 600 or 700 student within ten years."

Watson C. Randolph arrived on Jan. 11, 1909. The records show that there were only 2 teachers then, and there were many changes among the employees because of low salaries and a shortage of housing. Enrollment records show 108 students in 1911.

### Chapter 263

Mar. 3, 1909. [H. R. 26916.] | [Public, No. 316.] 35 Stat., 781.

An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Indian Department, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and ten.

### WAHPETON SCHOOL.

For the support and education of one hundred Indian pupils at the Indian school at Wahpeton, North Dakota, and for pay of superintendent, eighteen thousand two hundred dollars; For general repairs and improvements, two thousand dollars; For improving the heating and lighting plant, five thousand dollars; In all, twenty-five thousand two hundred dollars. The Commissioner of Indian Affairs is hereby authorized to expend in behalf of said Indian school at Wahpeton, North Dakota, the unexpended balance of the item of five thousand dollars appropriated by the act of April thirtieth, nineteen hundred and eight, for the purchase of live stock, seed, equipment of farm, and machinery; and also to expend for said school the unappropriated balance of the appropriation of two thousand five hundred dollars made in said act of April thirtieth, nineteen hundred and eight, for the construction of concrete walk, driveways and grading, and the unexpended balance of said two appropriations is hereby appropriated out of any money in the Treasury not otherwise appropriated.

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**Chapter 140**

**Apr. 4, 1910. [H. R. 19028.] | [Public, No. 114.] 36 Stat., 269.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and eleven.**

**WAHPETON SCHOOL.**

**For the support and education of one hundred Indian pupils at the Indian school, Wahpeton, North Dakota, and for pay of superintendent, eighteen thousand two hundred dollars; for general repairs and improvements, two thousand dollars; for new buildings, twenty-five thousand dollars; for purchase of seed, stock, and machinery, five thousand dollars; in all, fifty thousand two hundred dollars; and the Secretary of the Interior is hereby authorized and directed to pay to the treasurer of the city of Wahpeton, North Dakota, the sum of one hundred and thirty-two dollars and sixty-eight cents, in full payment of all claims for water furnished to the Wahpeton Indian School by the said City of Wahpeton, to be paid out of the fund for waterworks now available for the use of said school.**

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**Chapter 210**

**Mar. 3, 1911. [H. R. 28406.] | [Public, No. 454.] 36 Stat., 1058.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and twelve.**

**WAHPETON SCHOOL.**

**For support and education of one hundred Indian pupils at the Indian school, Wahpeton, North Dakota, and pay of superintendent, eighteen thousand two hundred dollars; for general repairs and improvements, two thousand dollars; additions to dormitories, thirty thousand dollars; in all, fifty thousand two hundred dollars.**

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**James B. Royce 1912 to May 1915. During the following three years under the leadership of Supt. James B. Royce, the school flourished, attendance increased and many new employees were added to the staff. The main office, gymnasium, and hospital were erected, and additions were built to each of the dormitories. The school plant grew and many repairs were made. The buildings and equipment were kept in better condition. During this part of our school history most of the students were 14 years of age or older. Some of the boys ranged in age from 20 to 25 years old. Large boys were much desired because they could do lots of work for the school and give the school winning athletic teams. During Mr.**

**Royce's administration the school was famous for it athletics, particularly baseball. Older citizens in Wahpeton told about the wonderful baseball teams the school had and the big fellows who played.**

**In 1915 Mr. Royce was given a promotion. He was sent to Carson City, Nevada, where he had a larger school. During the big war flu epidemic in 1917 or 1918 he contracted the disease and died.**

**Chapter 388**

**Aug. 24, 1912. [H. R. 20728.] | [Public, No. 335.] 37 Stat., 518.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and thirteen.**

**WAHPETON SCHOOL.**

**For support and education of one hundred and fifty Indian pupils at the Indian school, Wahpeton, North Dakota, and pay of superintendent, twenty-six thousand five hundred dollars; for general repairs and improvements, including fencing of building grounds, three thousand dollars; for erection of silo and purchase of ensilage cutter and other farm machinery, two thousand dollars; for purchase of milk cows and other live stock and poultry, two thousand dollars; for erection and completion of hospital building and equipment of same, twelve thousand five hundred dollars; in all, forty-six thousand dollars.**

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**Chapter 4**

**June 30, 1913. [H. R. 1917.] | [Public, No. 4.] 38 Stat., 77.**

**An act making appropriations for the current and contingent expenses of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, for fulfilling treaty stipulations with various Indian tribes, and for other purposes, for the fiscal year ending June thirtieth, nineteen hundred and fourteen.**

**WAHPETON SCHOOL.**

**For support and education of two hundred Indian pupils at the Indian School, Wahpeton, North Dakota, and pay of superintendent, \$35,200; for general repairs and improvements, \$5,000; for addition to barn, \$2,500; for dairy cows, \$1,000; in all, \$43,700.**