

Statement by Lynette Chong-Tautz:

Can you share how learning about the story of your relative who attended Greenville School impacted you?

“Growing up I had only heard fragments of my grandmother Aelouise Stonecoal’s time in residential school. Learning about the traumatic details of Aelouise’s time at Greenville made her real somehow and brought her back to us. My mother Lila along with her siblings Sally, David and Alice grew up without their mother Aelouise for most of their childhood and were placed in foster care. They were taken from their families, and separated from their Pit River and Maidu culture. In learning about Aelouise’s time in Greenville, it became clear that everything was taken from her and that she didn’t have many choices in the direction of her life. When we learned that she was taken away against her will and then tried to run away and go back to her family, it was validating and heartbreaking. She loved her family and she loved her children. Aelouise didn’t abandon her children because she didn’t love them, they were taken from her because the life she had after Greenville was so scarred and damaged. Learning the heartbreaking details of her life has changed my life. In learning her true story, I’ve met so many amazing people in the Maidu and Pit River communities. And now I have been enrolled in the tribe. We have our community and family back. We have been able to come “home” just as Aelouise was trying to do so many years ago.”

Lynette Chong-Tautz (2024)
Maidu, Pit River
Descendent of Aelouise Stonecoal

Statement by Ruby Chong-Tautz:

Why is it important to learn about residential schools?

“I think it is important to learn about residential schools and their effect on the Native American communities because learning their stories and their hardships makes them real, and tells the story of someone who has gone through horrible situations and survived. It also helps us better understand why our country is in the state it is in now. We can’t fix the present if we have forgotten the past. Nowadays people don’t even know or understand what residential schools did to Native communities, making it so we will be predestined to repeat it. We have seen this time and time again, with constant genocide and mistreatment of others. As a descendant of a residential school survivor, I believe it is important for everyone to understand the appalling situations forced upon Native Californians and their children. That’s why we have to teach this crucial part of American history to the next generation, no matter their political standings, culture, or race.”

Statement by Sam Chong-Tautz:

What strengths do you believe you have inherited from your ancestors?

“I believe out of all the many strengths and qualities my Native ancestors have given to me, resilience is the one that comes to mind the most. I often think about my family’s history and the history of indigenous people in the Americas as a whole. The brutality of colonization and assimilation often overshadows the other aspects of the current state of the Native people. Despite everything, despite 500 years of hate and violence, they still exist, they are still here. We are still here; I am still here. My great grandmother Aelouise’s survival of the horror of the residential schools inspires me to this day. I am grateful for the resilience her and my ancestors have bestowed upon me.”

Sam Chong-Tautz (2024)
Maidu, Pit River
Descendent of Aelouise Stonecoal

Statement by Ben Chong-Tautz:

What qualities of this relative do you want people to remember?

“The quality I want people to remember is resilience. The girls who escaped were strong enough to make the decision to get away. They showed great bravery in how they chose to escape. And when they were caught in the snowstorm, they were ready to meet their end as free women, at least for a moment. My great grandmother remained with her friend. The bond they shared didn’t break. What I take away from their story is resilience, bravery, and devotion.”

Ben Chong-Tautz (2024)
Maidu, Pit River
Descendent of Aelouise Stonecoal

Discus:

- Pick one statement and describe your Initial response to this statement.
- Describe some ways you noticed children resisted mistreatment, from the script of primary sources.
- Describe evidence of native resilience you gathered from the content of this unit.

