

**CULTURAL COMMISSION
STAFF REPORT**

MEETING DATE: March 17, 2015

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 3D

STAFF: Sherry L. Rupert, Executive Director of the Nevada Indian Commission
Vern L. Krahn, Senior Park Planner

REQUEST: Presentation and discussion only on the history of the Stewart Indian School and future plans for a Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Welcome Center.

GENERAL DISCUSSION: The Stewart Indian School served as an off-reservation boarding school from 1890 through 1980, and its stone buildings are icons of education and life for many American Indians in the West. After the school closed, the buildings were emptied and many became home to state offices. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is comprised of 83 buildings (Exhibit A). ✓

Also, this facility has played an important historic role in the State of Nevada and Carson City's heritage. As a result, the State of Nevada is planning to develop a Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Welcome Center at the facility located in South Carson City.

Ms. Rupert, Executive Director of the Nevada Indian Commission will be at this meeting to present a PowerPoint presentation on the history of the Stewart Indian School and future plans for the Stewart Indian School Cultural Center and Welcome Center.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: This agenda item is for informational purposes only. No formal action can be taken at this time.



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STEWART INDIAN SCHOOL HISTORY

For ninety years, Stewart Indian School fulfilled a federal commitment to pursue Native American education in Nevada. Located three miles southeast of Carson City, the school grounds encompassed 240 acres. The school opened on December 17, 1890 with 37 students from local Washoe, Paiute and Shoshone tribes and three teachers.

In 1888, the Nevada Legislature passed a bill that authorized the sale of bonds to purchase land for an Indian boarding school. Once purchased, the land was conveyed to the Bureau of Indian Affairs who established the boarding school to train and educate Indian children with the ultimate goal of assimilation. The campus opened with a capacity for 100 students and included a Victorian-style wood framed dormitory and school house. As enrollment increased, new buildings included shops for training, a hospital, and a recreation room. A Virginia and Truckee Railroad stop was established by 1906 to deliver supplies and facilitate transporting students to and from the school. By 1919, 400 students attended the school. During the next 16 years, students learning stone masonry from their teachers, including Hopi stone masons, constructed over 60 native stone buildings.

Student curriculum included classes in reading, writing, and arithmetic but focused on vocational training in various trades, agriculture, and the service industry. Classes offered for boys included ranching and farming, mechanics, woodworking, painting, and carpentry, while girls attended classes in baking, cooking, sewing, laundry, and practical nursing. Much of the school's basic needs were supplied by students' products or fulfilled by their newly acquired skills. Vocational training remained the school's principal focus until a shift to academics occurred in the late 1960's. The school closed in 1980 due to federal budget cuts and earthquake safety issues with the masonry buildings.

The State of Nevada acquired the campus through several transactions during the 1990's and is now used by the State for classes, training, and agency offices, including the Nevada Indian Commission located in the former Superintendent's home. The Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California established the Stewart Community on much of the former school's land where they also occupy some of the buildings.

Today, the Stewart Indian School is listed on the National Registrar of Historic Places and the Stewart Indian Cultural Center is to be established in the former Administration Building. Memorabilia from the former Stewart Indian School is currently displayed at the Nevada State Museum's Under One Sky exhibit and in the Nevada Indian Commission office.

[CLICK HERE](#)
to download
the Stewart Indian School
Trail brochure

For additional information call (775) 687-8333 | Info@StewartIndianSchool.com | Stewart Indian School 5500 Snyder Avenue, Carson City Nevada 89701
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STEWART INDIAN SCHOOL TRAIL MAP

Please click on map for a downloadable .pdf file (3.6mb)



Guide by Collie Avelo Tour

How it works:

1. Call 775.566.1400 on your cell phone.
 2. When you see the **100** on the trail sign, enter the **audio stop number** followed by the **#key**.
- Signs with audio stop numbers are located near each building indicated on the map. You may remain connected throughout your visit or hang up and call back as desired. You can listen to the stories in any order. We welcome your feedback to improve our tour, so please press 09 to leave a comment on this tour.

Note: This audio tour is free, but you will need your cell phone ready and you are expected. The trail will last approximately 45 minutes.



5 4 Auditorium
Daisy Smith, six years old when she arrived at Stewart, shares her memories of the Auditorium and her first Christmas pageant.

1 0 0 The Quad
A third generation employee of Stewart William Overman shares his life at Stewart as a Graduate Counselor of the Quad and one student who came all the way from Japan just to attend the Stewart Indian School.

1 1 4 Old Gym & Athletic Fields
Judge Robby Willis shares fond memories of being the boxing coach and the assistant football coach for Stewart. He vividly describes some of his favorite moments in both the old gym and on the football field.

1 5 4 Band Room
Earl T. Laird, Jr. tells the story of his father, Earl Laird, the beloved Band Director of the Stewart Indian School Band who named the Band in 1933 and dedicated 28 years of service to the students of Stewart.



1 6 4 Wa Pa Shore
Tom McDivide, local anthropologist, shares how the first Wa Pa Shore Trading Post was established at the Stewart Indian School. He explains how the Great Basin Native Americans sold their art and how progressive the cooperative was in its early days.

1 1 4 Welcome Message
Executive Director of the State of Nevada Indian Commission, Sheryl L. Peplet, gives a welcome and brief history of the boarding schools and the Stewart Indian School.



2 7 Administration Bldg.
The former Administration building, built in 1923, had many uses in its long history. Hear details for the Stewart Indian Cultural Center to be established in the building and how you can help.

3 4 Small Girls Dorm
Hear how Alpha, first alumna of Stewart, came to the school on a bus from the Moapa Indian Reservation in Southern Nevada when she was 12 years old. The first time away from her mother and the reservation, she talks of her life in the Small Girls Dorm and the strict rules she had to follow.



4 4 Small Boys Dorm
Events Williams shares his memories of working at Stewart in the Boys Department as the Boys Dorm Attendant and the Dorm Supervisor. Hear him describe in detail the strict daily routine of the boys and the duties they were assigned if they didn't comply.



7 4 New Gym & Classroom Bldg.
Buck Simpson, Stewart alumnus, describes how the new gym was the center for boxing in the Western United States. Buck states, "Just like New York had Madison Square Garden, we have Mesquite Square Garden." Buck also describes his controversial American Indian history class that was taught in the two-story classroom building.



4 6 Infirmary
Only 12 years old, and the first time away from the reservation and her family, Patricia Mahon shares her vivid memories of work at the infirmary and her personal struggle against loneliness.



9 4 Agriculture
Though his primary interest at the Stewart Indian School was in sports, Andy Adams recalls his memories of working in the campus butcher shop and dairy.

1 2 4 Shops (Carpentry)
Students in the carpentry shop learned how to build various items such as dressers, fences and tables. Hear Hilson Tabey describe his experiences in the early years (1925-1937) of the Stewart Indian School.



1 3 4 Bakery/Post Office
The Stewart facility was in many ways a community to itself, it even had its own Post Office. Pamela Foster Clark, David Haines shares interesting facts about the Post Office and the campus and surrounding community it served.



1 3 4 Dining Hall
Bernice Goshorn, the first woman cook at the Stewart Dining Hall, shares how she overcame adversity and the difficulty of preparing three meals a day for 600 students - and the little secret that helped her.

1 7 4 Older Girls Dorm
Thelma DeLorne, alumna of Stewart, arrived at the Stewart Indian School from the Puro Sparks Indian Colony when she was 15 years old. Thelma recalls to her invaluable experiences in the Older Girls Dorm.

1 8 4 Employee Cottages
Born at Stewart in 1934, Earl Laird, Jr. shares his special memories of growing up in the employee cottages at Stewart. Hear Earl's emotional account of caring for one orphan American Indian boy.

1 9 4 Superintendent's Home
Alma Mahon Anderson recalls a Christmas memory from years ago spent at the Superintendent's home.

2 0 4 Stone Buildings
Who were the architects that built the stone buildings on the campus and where were they born? Bonnie Weygman Goshorn answers these questions and more.

Stewart Indian School Trail Assessment
About half the trail is concrete and half asphalt, all paved. The total distance is 0.6 miles. The average grade is 1.4%. The maximum grade of the trail is 10.2% for only 2 feet. There is 27 feet of the trail between 1.0% and 10.0%. The average cross slope is 1.3%. The maximum cross slope of the trail is 7.6% for only 22 feet. There is 26 feet of the trail between 5.0% and 7.6%. The typical road width is 78' inches. The narrowest part of the trail is 42'. There are several 12' cracks on the sidewalks, but nothing of significant concern. Please use 1 mgps, 30' stop and 55' cell. (All assessment conducted by the Stewart Indian School.)