

# The History and Psychology Behind Racism in Pennsylvania

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## William Penn

- When the US was first being formed, Penn established Philadelphia, the city of Brotherly Love.
- Although his peaceful beliefs were shared by many, racism was, and still is, very much alive.

# Psychology

- Racism is not to be associated with mental illness, however there are proven mental factors.
- These include, but are not limited to: fear, projection, and the need for love and belonging.
- Although these themes are few of many, they are present in many cases of racism throughout history, and are still present today.



# The Walking Purchase

- The Walking Purchase is a perfect example of racism, because it involves the mistreatment of Natives benefiting the colonists.
- After his death, Penn's sons wanted more land, so they bargained with the Delaware tribe.
- The tribe agreed that they could have the land a man could walk in a day and a half. This seemed fair, however the Penn brothers had mapped out land prior and had hired runners.
- This caused the Delaware to lose around 1,200 square miles in land.
- The Natives later joined the French in the French and Indian War to fight against Pennsylvania.

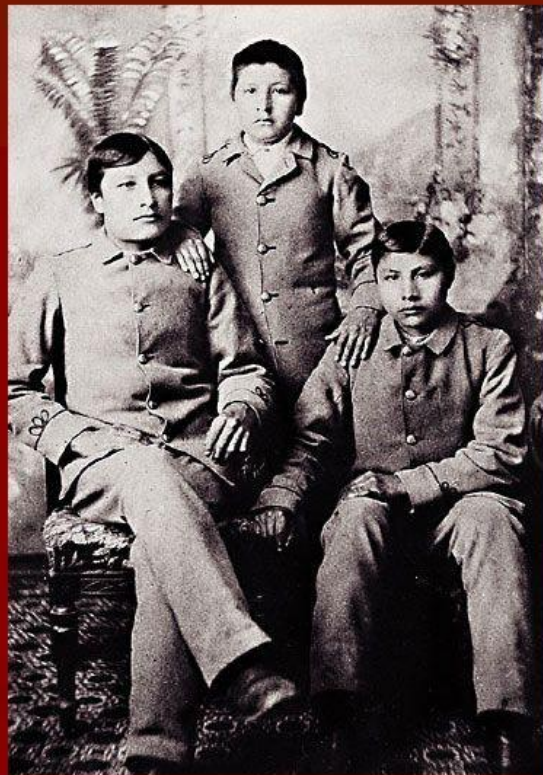
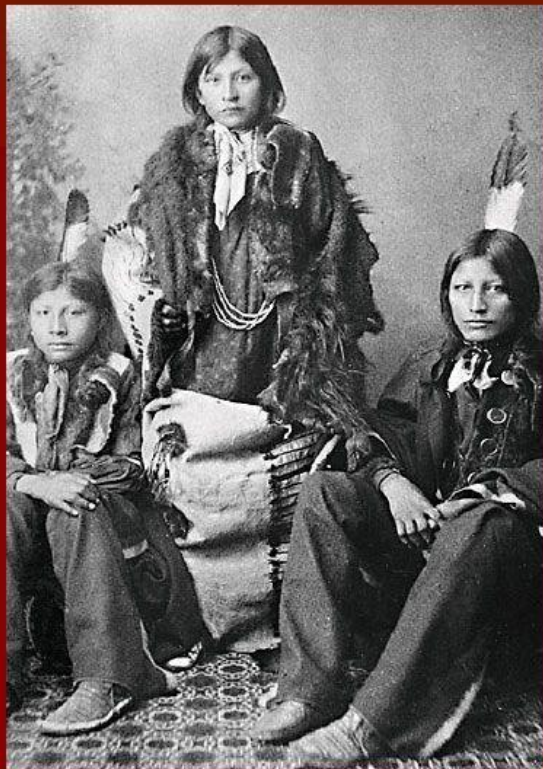




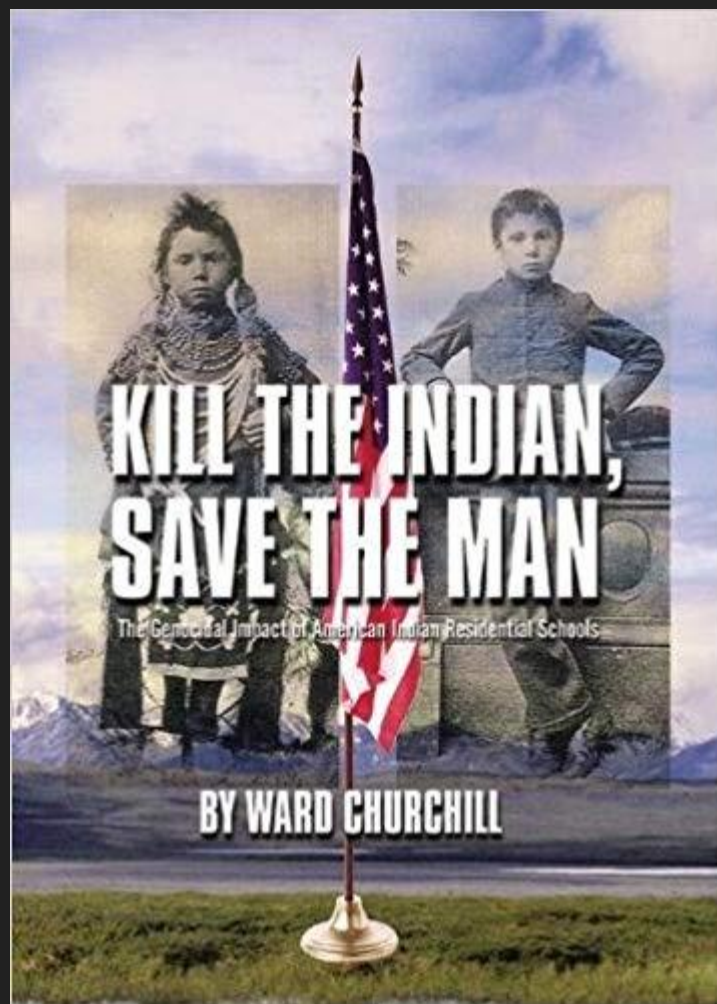
## “Kill the Indian, Save the Man”

- Racism is a term first coined by Richard Henry Pratt in 1902.
- This man founded the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, a Pennsylvanian boarding school designed to convert Native Americans to behave as though they are white.

# “Kill the Indian, Save the Man”







# Factor I: Fear

- This comes from the primitive survival mechanism of avoiding danger, or fearing anything that appears different.
- When someone feels fear in response to a different race group they will create exaggerated images or beliefs to justify their own actions in attempt to secure their own safety.
- Some evidence to support fear as a factor is the white genocide theory.
- Many white supremacists believe a Jewish conspiracy is to blame for trying to destroy the white race.
- Fear is a natural instinct that humanizes us, however it's no excuse to act in hate or violence.

## Factor II: Projection

- Projection is another natural instinct. It distracts us from our own flaws by allowing us to project them onto others.
- Often times, the things people hate about others are things they fear within themselves.
- The main thought process here is, “I’m not terrible, you are.”
- Some scholars argue that much of the dominant white community alleviates itself of the shame about the history of slavery by projecting self-perceptions onto the African-American community.

## Factor III: The Need for Love and Belonging

- Ironically, some of Penn's ideals are carried out today, but not in the way he would have wanted or predicted.
- For people who have difficulty forming genuine social relationships, joining extreme hate groups, such as Neo-Nazis, is a way to do so.
- Members begin to have an “us-versus-them” mentality, making them feel closer to their fellow group members.
- This is obviously an extremely skewed view of what healthy social support should look like, however it is a view shared by many.

# The Valley Swim Club Incident

- The camp leaders of the Creative Steps Daycare signed a contract with the Valley Swim Club to have a private swim.
- The students of the Daycare consisted of forty-six African-Americans and ten Hispanics.
- Upon arriving at the club for their swim, the students report to have been harshly criticized, and say they could even hear racial slurs being used.



## The Valley Swim Club Incident *continued*

- The Swim Club asked the students to leave and refunded their money.
- Three months following the incident the Pennsylvania Human Resources Commission found probable cause that the club's actions were motivated by racism, although the club argues otherwise.
- They said the reason for this was not having enough lifeguards on duty.
- The Creative Steps Daycare won \$1.1 million in the case and it was to be split between all students and teachers.



# Skewed Samples

- While the findings are obviously important, they aren't always exact.
- Individuals from Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and Democratic societies make up about 80% of research participants.
- These people only make up about 12% of the world's population.

# Significance

- Upon reading facts like this, one can get a feeling of hopelessness, almost like racism will never be abolished.
- Perhaps that is true to an extent, but there are things we can do not only as a nation, but as individual citizens to make the world a better place.
- For example, one easy solution is to just think before we act. The act of hating is human, however we don't need to project these feelings.
- It is important to acknowledge that different doesn't always mean bad, we as people should be more open to change.

# Sources

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