

# Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School (MIIBS)

## Historical Timeline

- **1856** U.S. government makes provisions for Indian education in the 1855 Saginaw, Black River, and Swan Creek Chippewa Treaty. Treaty with the Chippewa of Saginaw, Etc., 1855, Art. 1 and Art. 4.
- **1866** Indian land ceded, Congress agrees to spend \$20,000 for Indian education. Treaty with the Chippewa of Saginaw, Etc., 1864, Art. 4.
- **1875** Captain Richard Pratt takes Apache POW's from Red River War to Fort Marion, Florida for social experiment "Kill the Indian, Save the Man."
- **1891** Act of Congress established funding for American Indian boarding schools, including MIIBS. 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 Year Ending June Thirtieth, Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-Two, and for Other Purposes, 26 Stat. 989, 9891044 (1891).
- **1893** Mt Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School opens on June 30, 1893.
- **1899** June 14, Martha Shagonaby set fire that destroyed the main school building (no deaths).
- **1900** The main school building was rebuilt, time capsule included in the building.
- **1928** Merriam Report published outlining abuses, neglect, and failed educational practices in U.S. boarding schools.
- **1934** MIIBS closed. Governor William Comstock Agreement ratified, property is transferred from the Federal Government to the State of Michigan through a Congressional Act. An Act Granting Certain Property to the State of Michigan for Institutional Purposes, 48 Stat. 353, 342 (1934).
- **1934 - 2009** State of Michigan used property for a regional center for developmentally disabled children and adults.
- **1970** MIIBS student reunion held in Hart, Michigan.
- **1991** "School Days Remembered" documentary film, produced by CMU, with Paul Johnson (hosted by the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan/SCIT) of former MIIBS students interviewed and recorded for historical purposes through a grant from the Michigan Humanities Council and the SCIT.
- **2003** "American Indian Boarding Schools: An Exploration of Global Ethnic and Cultural Cleansing" curriculum guide developed by SCIT Behavioral Health Department and Ziiibwing Center. Funded by a Sappi Ideas that Matter Grant.
- **2004** Boarding School Era presented in the Ziiibwing Center's permanent exhibit, Diba Jimooyung, which means "Telling our Story," and Effects of Colonization gallery.
- **2009** White Bison's 2009 Wellbriety Journey for Forgiveness, a 5-mile walk from SCIT Isabella Reservation to MIIBS site.
- **2010** Land conveyance offered to the City of Mt. Pleasant from the State of Michigan of approximately 304.62 acres of former MIIBS property.  
Land conveyance of former MIIBS property offered to the SCIT from the State of Michigan consisting of 8.86 acres of land, 6 historic buildings of MIIBS and the Mission Creek Cemetery.
- **2011** City of Mt. Pleasant accepts land conveyance of approximately 304.62 acres from the State of Michigan.  
Feasibility Study conducted by SCIT to accept or reject the proposed land conveyance of approximately 8.86 acres of land, 6 historic buildings of MIIBS and the Mission Creek Cemetery from the State of Michigan.  
Tribe accepts land conveyance of approximately 8.86 acres of land, 6 historic buildings of MIIBS and the Mission Creek Cemetery from the State of Michigan.  
The inaugural "Honoring, Healing, and Remembering Day" is hosted by the MIIBS Committee on June 6th.  
SCIT Tribal Council sanctions MIIBS Committee.  
Ziiibwing Center releases printed copies of "American Indian Boarding Schools: An Exploration of Global Ethnic and Cultural Cleansing" curriculum guide developed by SCIT, Behavioral Health Department and Ziiibwing Center. Funded by a Sappi Ideas that Matter Grant.
- **2012** MIIBS Committee implements strategic plan goals and objectives. The City of Mt. Pleasant, SCIT and Central Michigan University (CMU) enter into an initial Interim Memorandum of Understanding in May for archaeological survey.  
Archaeological research initiated by CMU and MIIBS Committee on SCIT property at the MIIBS Main Grounds (201B43) and the Mission Creek Cemetery (201B31). Archaeological research initiated on City of Mt. Pleasant property in three locations.
- **2013** City of Mt. Pleasant conveys an additional 5.94 acres of land including the Small Girls Dormitory to the SCIT. The SCIT now owns 14.8 acres of an original 321.05 acre parcel. City of Mt. Pleasant now owns approximately 298.68 acres after deeding additional acreage to the SCIT. The Mt. Pleasant Public Schools owns approximately 7.57 acres of the original 321.05 acre parcel.  
City of Mt. Pleasant and SCIT agreed upon a Discovery Plan for Cultural Resources and Human Remains during building demolition on City property.  
On April 9, the National Park Service approved the proposal of the SCIT to assume certain State Historic Preservation Office duties within the Tribe's reservation and on tribal lands in Michigan. A primary responsibility of the SCIT's Tribal Historic Preservation Office is to nominate eligible properties to the National Register of Historic Places. The former MIIBS is within the boundaries of the Isabella Indian Reservation.  
Archaeological research by CMU and MIIBS Committee continues on SCIT property at the MIIBS Main Grounds (201B43).  
MIIBS Committee presentation entitled Confronting the Legacy of the Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School: A Community-Driven Movement for Healing, Truth-Telling & Decolonization at the Historical Society of Michigan Annual Meeting held on March 22-23 in Livonia, Michigan.  
MIIBS Committee organized session entitled Confronting the Past, Engaging Current Publics, & Transforming the Future: An Interdisciplinary Community-Based Project at the Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School for the 112th American Anthropological Association Annual meeting held on November 22 in Chicago, Illinois.
- **2014** The MIIBS FY2014-2015 Strategic Plan is created.  
MIIBS Committee Presentation entitled The Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School: Transforming a Landscape of Authority & Assimilation into a Place of Healing & Education at the Michigan Historic Preservation Network 35th Annual Conference held on May 15 in Jackson, Michigan.
- **2015** The City of Mt. Pleasant, SCIT and CMU entered into a 2nd Memorandum of Understanding for archaeological study on City of Mt. Pleasant property.  
The SCIT THPO submits the MIIBS National Register for Historic Places (NRHP) Application form to the State of Michigan NRHP Coordinator for review.  
Archaeological research by CMU and MIIBS Committee on SCIT property at the MIIBS Main Grounds (201B43) and a portion of the City of Mt. Pleasant property.
- **2016** City of Mt. Pleasant updated the Discovery Plan and contracted with archaeological firm for monitoring during demolition.  
A Mt. Pleasant Center Community Workshop with 60 attendees to obtain input into further conceptual design took place on April 18.  
The SCIT Tribal Council approves Dr. William T. Cross' contract to serve as the MIIBS Project Manager on May 23.  
Governor's Award for Historic Preservation awarded to the SCIT, CMU, and City of Mt. Pleasant "For documenting the history of the Mt. Pleasant Indian Industrial Boarding School through an ongoing program of archaeological research. The outreach initiatives based on their work promote healing and an understanding of the lives of the boarding school students."  
The SCIT Tribal Council approves Dr. Mary Senter of CMU's Center for Applied Research and Rural Studies to design, disseminate, and compile data of survey to gage the SCIT Tribal Membership about the future land use for the MIIBS.
- **2017** The Michigan State Historic Preservation Review Board approved a nomination of the former MIIBS to the NRHP at its January 13, meeting in Lansing, Michigan.  
The National Park Service (NPS), United States Department of the Interior, notified the SCIT that it listed the MIIBS, Mt. Pleasant, Isabella County, Michigan in the NRHP. The property encompasses extant former buildings, the grounds associated with them and the Mission Creek Cemetery, including agricultural and woodland areas that historically formed parts of the school campus. The Keeper of the National Register listed the property on February 28, 2018.



**MIIBS Baseball Team**

*Courtesy of Alice Littlefield Collection, Ziiibwing Center Archives of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.*



**Girls in Sewing Classroom**

*Courtesy of Alice Littlefield Collection, Ziiibwing Center Archives of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.*



**Students in Classroom**

*Courtesy of Alice Littlefield Collection, Ziiibwing Center Archives of the Saginaw Chippewa Indian Tribe of Michigan.*



**Gravestone of Chief Shaw-shaw-way-na-bee**

*Located in the Mission Creek Cemetery. Photo courtesy of Chuck Butzin III.*

### To view timeline online, please visit:

[www.sagchip.org/miibs/timeline](http://www.sagchip.org/miibs/timeline)

- **2018** The SCIT and Ziiibwing Center were awarded a NPS Tribal Heritage Grant for its MIIBS Initiative Project for the installation of protective fencing, security lighting and a multi-modal survey and evaluation on October 25. The entire 321.5 acres of MIIBS recognized as a Historic District in the National Register of Historic Places.
- **2019** City of Mt. Pleasant and SCIT agreed to a property agreement outlining future potential development of both properties and future archaeological surveys. MOU December 20.  
A MIIBS session entitled A Discussion of Tribally Driven Research and Programs was presented at the American Association for State and Local History's Annual Conference in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Shannon Martin, Director, Ziiibwing Center presented the only tribal session focused on the Native American Boarding School era and the MIIBS.  
The SCIT and Ziiibwing Center were awarded an Institute of Museum and Library Services' Inspire! Grants for Small Museums program grant to implement a week of events for the 200th anniversary of the signing of the 1819 Treaty of Saginaw. The Weaving Our Stories event included a Treaty Summit Day, History of the Three Fires Confederacy Lecture, Basket Makers Gathering and Market and culminated with a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) Education Day held at the MIIBS. Over 300 Middle and High School students participated including informational tours of the MIIBS.  
Archaeological research by CMU and MIIBS Committee on SCIT property at the MIIBS Main Grounds (201B43), including areas to be impacted by fencing.
- **2020** MIIBS Committee gives an update to Tribal Council on October 12.  
EPA Brownfields Clean-Up Grant Submitted (\$800,000 w/\$40,000 Match) but not approved.  
The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) tasked Tetra Tech, Inc. (Tetra Tech) Superfund Technical Assessment and Response Team (START) to conduct a Hazardous/Regulated Building Materials survey at the MIIBS in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan under the Targeted Brownfields Assessment (TBA) program. The Hazardous/Regulated Building Materials survey was conducted to document the presence or absence of asbestos-containing materials and regulated, hazardous, or universal wastes in building materials. EPA also tasked Tetra Tech START to conduct a Phase II Environmental Site Assessment (ESA) at the MIIBS under the TBA program. The Phase II ESA was conducted to document the presence or absence of soil contamination.
- **2021** SCIT Tribal Council approves \$6,000 for dead/dangerous tree removal.  
MIIBS Committee meets monthly and updated Tribal Council on January 12 and on October 12.  
Mannik & Smith did soil and mortar testing for asbestos on outside samples of MIIBS building. Tests were done to ensure workers would be safe when installing metal mesh and/or working closely to the buildings. Results came back that levels were safe.  
Legal Agreement for Scope of Work with Christian Nakarado, Architect and Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of Chippewa Indians Tribal member.  
MIIBS property is used for statewide police K-9 training from many different agencies.  
Six solar surveillance cameras are installed and monitored by the Tribal Police Department.  
A Strategic Planning session took place on June 15, at Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort for future planning of the MIIBS buildings. The MIIBS Committee is tasked with carrying out the goals and objectives of the plan.  
Archaeological research by CMU and MIIBS Committee on SCIT property at the MIIBS Main Grounds (201B43).  
MIIBS Committee By-Laws amended to add Chairperson's duties. It was approved by SCIT Legal Department and SCIT Tribal Council appoints MIIBS executive officers.  
A Waiver of Liability and Request Form was approved for use by SCIT Legal and SCIT Tribal Council.  
Honoring, Healing & Remembering held virtually due to Covid-19 on June 4, with over 6,000 virtual viewers in attendance. Survey results about the future land use of the MIIBS property completed by Dr. Mary Senter, CMU, & presented at HHR. MIIBS "witness trees" logs were transported to SCIT campground with new Sacred Fire Wood sign.  
Michigan Historic Preservation Network Webinar hosted by SCIT's THPO & Ziiibwing Center entitled Following the Steps of Our Ancestors on July 29.  
Community Enhancement Grant awarded to hire paid volunteers for MIIBS security.  
Entrance gates to MIIBS property installed at two entrances and purchased with Tribal funds.  
MIIBS Committee members attend Secretary of the Interior's Boarding School Initiative consultation with Tribal leaders virtually in December.