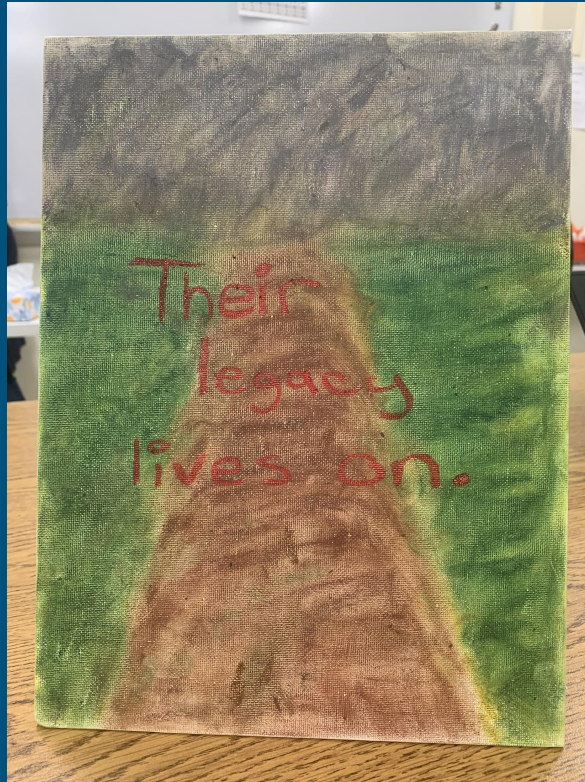




The Native American Genocide



Their Legacy Lives On



Artists Commentary

The Native American Genocide is one that unintentionally shaped our world today. It is also one of the least talked about genocides because it occurred in our own country. After the discovery of the Native Americans in 1492, the Europeans used them as a resource for trade and the places that they lived as natural resources. The relation between the Native Americans and the Europeans were civil, especially between the Natives and the French. However, the English were not so friendly. The English brought disease. Disease that the Native Americans were not used to dealing with. In the span of three years (1616-1619), 90% of the North East Native population was destroyed. Furthermore, after the establishment of the original 13 colonies, the English people were hostile and forceful in taking over land and resources. When the US was established, the Natives were seen as outsiders, complete opposites of the growing American population. Native American "boarding schools" were established where Native children were forcefully taken from their tribes and sent to be assimilated into society. They were stripped of their religion, their native language, and their way of life. They were forced into christianity and could not speak of their old lives. Other tribes were forced to migrate west from the south, and the trail of tears was established. The trail of tears was a result of forced displacement and ethnic cleansing of the Native people. My art piece is an oil pastel painting depicting the trail of tears. It shows a dirt path with grassy plains on either side of it. The sky is gray and there are footprints in the dirt. Over the piece written in red paint, "Their legacy lives on" provides a jarring contrast to the muted colors of the background. The symbolism in this piece is subtle yet also easy to see. The footprints in the path show that the Natives traveled that stretch of land against their will. This pairs with the writing over the landscape because although the US Government attempted to make them assimilate with the rest of society and lose their traditional ways, they failed. Native Americans today practice their native religion and speak their native language more freely than ever, hence the words "their legacy lives on." My intention with this art piece is to let viewers see that although the Native American people were constantly harassed and they were forced into assimilation, their culture was never erased and they lived through it. The piece sends a message of hope to viewers and shows that though you may feel hopeless, the legacy and flame of your beliefs is still there and you just have to be brave enough to reignite it.

Works Consulted

[Indian Boarding Schools « World Without Genocide - Making It Our Legacy](#)

[Unspoken: America's Native American Boarding Schools](#)

[Native Americans « World Without Genocide - Making It Our Legacy](#)

[Trail of Tears: Indian Removal Act, Facts & Significance - HISTORY](#)