

Pre-Court Case Years

1849 – *Roberts v. Boston*: The first school desegregation case filed in the United States

1874 – *Ward v. Flood*: California Supreme Court allows “separate but equal” schools, setting precedent for segregation.

1879 – The Carlisle Indian Industrial School, the country’s first off-reservation federal boarding school, was created. The goal, according to its founder Richard Henry Pratt, was to “kill the Indian, and save the man.”

1885 – *Tape v. Hurley*: California Supreme Court rules that San Francisco Public Schools needs to admit Mamie Tape, a Chinese-American student, but recommended that legislation be changed. State law was amended to allow for separate schools for Chinese students.

1887 – The Dawes Act (aka General Allotment Act), named after Senator Harry Dawes of Massachusetts, is passed. While it is mainly known for breaking up tribal reservation lands, it also had language related to assimilation and citizenship. If Native Americans “adopted civilized habits,” they could be considered a U.S. citizen. This meant, among many things, that they would be required to abandon tribal customs and traditions, own land privately outside of reservations instead of communal tribal lands, live separately from their tribe, and not be affiliated with any tribe.

1896 – *Plessy v. Ferguson*: U.S. Supreme Court upholds “separate but equal,” reinforcing segregation nationwide.

Early 1900s – Many California Indian children were sent to underfunded federal Indian day schools instead of public schools.

1918 – Carlisle Indian Industrial School was closed, beginning the closures of several boarding schools across the country. This resulted in many Native children returning to their homes and needing to attend either reservation schools or public schools.

1921 – California Political Code amended, requiring Indian children living near federal Indian schools to attend them rather than public schools.

Big Pine, CA: Trustees encouraged Native families to support a bond measure for a new school, promising inclusion of Native children, but later relied on §1662 to exclude

them.

Alice Piper (Paiute, age 15) and her peers were forced to attend the federal Indian school, which was not under state oversight and offered fewer educational opportunities.

August 1923 – Alice Piper (15, Paiute) and six other Indian children are denied enrollment at Big Pine grammar school because of their heritage