

The school code of Fort Bidwell boarding school was intentionally strict, and was created by people with insufficient contact with natives. The administration's attitude reflected Francis Walker, the director of Indian Affairs in the 1870s. Despite limited experience with Natives, he believed he knew best for Native Americans.¹ Both Walker and the school's administration thought themselves benevolent guardians of Native Americans. This attitude allowed the Fort Bidwell's staff serenity as they subjugated Native children to absurd rules, such as marching perfectly, or keeping their hands in the correct positions. All of this begs one simple question: Why have such a regimented schedule? The answer lies in the context of this code. These rules were part of a federal attempt to assimilate Native Americans into Western culture. During this time, the U.S government believed the best way to deal with the issue of Native Americans was to absorb them into their own population, believing the best way to do so was separate these children from their culture. So they created a system designed to eradicate and destroy native culture.² This design allowed disciplinarians to keep a child from the influence of their tribe and culture, which they believed would decrease tribal influence. To white settlers, the less tribal influence, the easier life became.

¹Ronald Takaki, *A Different Mirror: History of Multicultural America* (New York, NY: Little, Brown and Company, 1993), 219.

²Stephen Magagnini, "Long-Suffering Urban Indians find roots in Ancient Rituals," *Sacramento Bee Archives*. June 30, 1997, https://web.archive.org/web/20050829051045/http://sacbee.com/static/archive/news/projects/native/day2_main.html.