

# Prairie Talks examines recent historical trauma, current issues

July 21, 2017

Pierce County Tribune

[Save](#) | [Post a comment](#) |

Melissa Olson and Lynn Braveheart, daughters of Native American women adopted by white families as part of the federal Indian Adoption Project, will present a Prairie Talks program, "Erased Histories," at 2 p.m., Sunday, July 23, at Prairie Village Museum, Rugby.

In place between 1958-1967, Olson and Braveheart say the Indian Adoption Project isn't well known, but a tragic period of history with a traumatic legacy that still affects people today.

The Indian Adoption Project became U.S. policy during the phasing out of Indian boarding schools, first established in the mid-1800s with the intent to "kill the Indian and save the man," in the words of Capt. Richard Pratt, founder of the flagship Indian boarding school.

## Article Photos

---



Olson



Because the government "still didn't trust Indian families to raise Indian children," Olson and Braveheart say the Native American Adoption Project was a "new, more subtle plan" to assimilate Indians by removing children from their families.

Both women work as Indian Child Welfare Act Guardians ad Litem for the 4th Judicial District of Hennepin County in Minneapolis advocating for and representing the interests of Indian children in ICWA Child Welfare Court proceedings. In the audio documentary "Stolen Childhoods," which Braveheart co-wrote and Olson co-produced, they share stories of how their mothers were adopted out of their Ojibwe and Oglala Lakota tribes by white families under the Indian Adoption Project.

Prairie Talks events are free and open to the public. Attendees are invited to tour Prairie Village Museum at no cost on the days of Prairie Talks events. Friends of the Museum co-sponsor the Talks and donations are welcome to help defray expenses. The 2017 Prairie Talks events are supported in part by the North Dakota Humanities Council.

Since it was founded in 2012, Prairie Talks has hosted 10 events, attracting more than 500 people and a range of co-sponsoring organizations from the community. Speakers have included journalists, authors, human rights advocates, Native American leaders, public health advocates, and artists.

Prairie Talks will present its second program of the season, "North Dakota Drug Court & F5 Project: Helping Offenders Hit the Reset Button," on Sept. 17 at Prairie Village Museum. Cass County Assistant State's Attorney Leah Viste will talk about how North Dakota Drug Courts are helping non-violent drug offenders and F5 Project founder Adam Martin will share ways his program is supporting Cass County offenders as they transition out of incarceration.

Visit [www.prairietalks.org](http://www.prairietalks.org) for more information. "Stolen Childhoods," can be heard at: [soundcloud.com/minneculture/stolen-childhoods](https://soundcloud.com/minneculture/stolen-childhoods)

- Prairie Talks