



HASKELL CULTURAL CENTER & MUSEUM

2026-2027
VISITOR GUIDE

CONTENT

WELCOME

ABOUT

HISTORY

COLLECTIONS

GALLERIES

HASKELL
WETLANDS

MEDICINE
WHEEL



WELCOME

We're glad you're here! Since our establishment in 2002, it has been the focus of the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum to preserve and share our unique history with visitors from around the world.

As you view our exhibits, we invite you to step into the stories of our ancestors who were forcibly removed from their homelands and brought to these grounds.

Our museum is a place of remembrance, healing, and education, where we honor the resilience and strength of our communities who endured the trauma of boarding school erasure. As you explore, we ask that you approach with respect and humility, acknowledging the pain and suffering that occurred here. We also invite you to celebrate the revitalization of our languages, cultures, and traditions that continue to thrive today.

We hope that your visit will be a meaningful step towards understanding and reconciliation.



Travis Campbell
Director
Haskell Cultural Center & Museum





ABOUT

MISSION

The mission of the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum is to preserve the unique history of Haskell Indian Nations University and to raise awareness of the truth about the American Indian boarding school experience in the United States. This is accomplished through exhibitions and programming that center exploration through the themes of history, art, ideas, and experiences.

VISION

The vision of the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum is to further its mission by preserving Haskell's history, inspiring visitors by sharing stories of perseverance, and to educate by accurately presenting Haskell history. The Haskell Cultural Center and Museum is committed to serve as a place for meaningful experiences, conversations, and connections.

OUR HISTORY

INDIAN BOARDING SCHOOLS

The establishment of American Indian boarding schools, including the prominent Carlisle Indian Industrial School which opened in 1879, was driven by a federal policy aimed at assimilating Native Americans into mainstream American society. Prior to Carlisle's opening, the U.S. government and religious organizations operated a limited number of mission-based schools that sought to Christianize and educate Native children. These early efforts were motivated by the belief that Native cultures were inferior and that assimilation was necessary for Native peoples to "civilize" and integrate into the expanding American economy and society. Many of these schools were established on reservations or in remote locations, often using religious teachings and vocational training as tools for cultural eradication.

Before Carlisle's founding, Native children were often forcibly removed from their families and communities and placed in these early schools, where they faced harsh discipline and cultural suppression. These efforts, however, were sporadic and lacked the centralized strategy that Carlisle would later embody. The federal government's approach was inconsistent, with some tribes resisting or evading the schools altogether, and others sending children voluntarily or under pressure. The limited scope of these early institutions meant that the full-scale, systematic policy of forced assimilation through boarding schools was still developing. Carlisle's opening marked a turning point because it became a model for the federal Indian boarding school system, emphasizing military discipline, Christianization, and the suppression of indigenous languages and customs—an approach that would be expanded nationwide in the decades to follow.

EARLY PERIOD 1879-1900

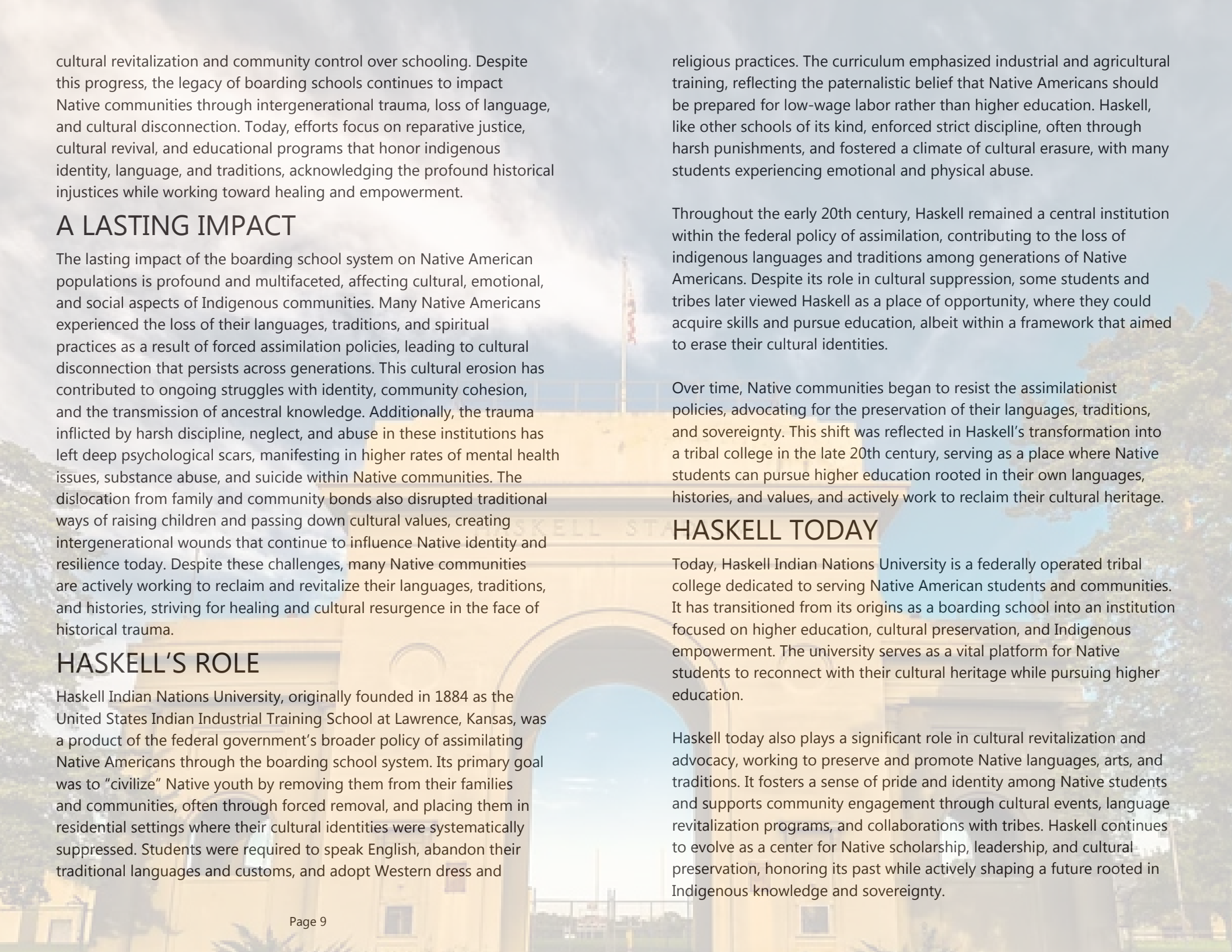
Between 1879 and 1900, the American Indian Boarding School experience was characterized by policies aimed at assimilating Native American children into Euro-American culture, often through forced removal from their families and communities. These schools, established by the U.S. government and religious organizations, sought to erase indigenous languages, traditions, and identities, emphasizing English language instruction and Christian values. Children faced harsh discipline, cultural suppression, and often neglect or abuse, leading to profound psychological and cultural trauma. Despite some efforts to provide education and vocational training, the overarching goal was cultural eradication, which has had lasting impacts on Native communities and their cultural heritage.

ASSIMILATION PHASE 1900-1950

From 1900 to 1950, the American Indian Boarding School system continued its efforts to assimilate Native children, with an increased emphasis on industrial education and vocational training to prepare students for low-wage labor. Schools remained largely oppressive, enforcing strict discipline, and further suppressing indigenous languages and traditions. During this period, federal policies also shifted towards relocating Native children to urban areas, often through boarding schools, aiming to assimilate them into mainstream American society. Despite some Native resistance and efforts to preserve cultural practices, the schools contributed to significant cultural loss and intergenerational trauma, effects that persist in Native communities today.

TRANSITION AND LASTING IMPACTS 1950-TODAY

From 1950 to the present, the American Indian Boarding School system gradually declined due to changing federal policies, increased advocacy, and legal challenges recognizing the harm caused by assimilation efforts. The Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975 marked a shift toward Native-led educational initiatives, promoting

The background of the page is a faded, light-colored photograph of the Haskell Indian Nations University building. The building is a large, multi-story structure with a prominent central archway and a flagpole in front. The text is overlaid on this image.

cultural revitalization and community control over schooling. Despite this progress, the legacy of boarding schools continues to impact Native communities through intergenerational trauma, loss of language, and cultural disconnection. Today, efforts focus on reparative justice, cultural revival, and educational programs that honor indigenous identity, language, and traditions, acknowledging the profound historical injustices while working toward healing and empowerment.

A LASTING IMPACT

The lasting impact of the boarding school system on Native American populations is profound and multifaceted, affecting cultural, emotional, and social aspects of Indigenous communities. Many Native Americans experienced the loss of their languages, traditions, and spiritual practices as a result of forced assimilation policies, leading to cultural disconnection that persists across generations. This cultural erosion has contributed to ongoing struggles with identity, community cohesion, and the transmission of ancestral knowledge. Additionally, the trauma inflicted by harsh discipline, neglect, and abuse in these institutions has left deep psychological scars, manifesting in higher rates of mental health issues, substance abuse, and suicide within Native communities. The dislocation from family and community bonds also disrupted traditional ways of raising children and passing down cultural values, creating intergenerational wounds that continue to influence Native identity and resilience today. Despite these challenges, many Native communities are actively working to reclaim and revitalize their languages, traditions, and histories, striving for healing and cultural resurgence in the face of historical trauma.

HASKELL'S ROLE

Haskell Indian Nations University, originally founded in 1884 as the United States Indian Industrial Training School at Lawrence, Kansas, was a product of the federal government's broader policy of assimilating Native Americans through the boarding school system. Its primary goal was to "civilize" Native youth by removing them from their families and communities, often through forced removal, and placing them in residential settings where their cultural identities were systematically suppressed. Students were required to speak English, abandon their traditional languages and customs, and adopt Western dress and

religious practices. The curriculum emphasized industrial and agricultural training, reflecting the paternalistic belief that Native Americans should be prepared for low-wage labor rather than higher education. Haskell, like other schools of its kind, enforced strict discipline, often through harsh punishments, and fostered a climate of cultural erasure, with many students experiencing emotional and physical abuse.

Throughout the early 20th century, Haskell remained a central institution within the federal policy of assimilation, contributing to the loss of indigenous languages and traditions among generations of Native Americans. Despite its role in cultural suppression, some students and tribes later viewed Haskell as a place of opportunity, where they could acquire skills and pursue education, albeit within a framework that aimed to erase their cultural identities.

Over time, Native communities began to resist the assimilationist policies, advocating for the preservation of their languages, traditions, and sovereignty. This shift was reflected in Haskell's transformation into a tribal college in the late 20th century, serving as a place where Native students can pursue higher education rooted in their own languages, histories, and values, and actively work to reclaim their cultural heritage.

HASKELL TODAY

Today, Haskell Indian Nations University is a federally operated tribal college dedicated to serving Native American students and communities. It has transitioned from its origins as a boarding school into an institution focused on higher education, cultural preservation, and Indigenous empowerment. The university serves as a vital platform for Native students to reconnect with their cultural heritage while pursuing higher education.

Haskell today also plays a significant role in cultural revitalization and advocacy, working to preserve and promote Native languages, arts, and traditions. It fosters a sense of pride and identity among Native students and supports community engagement through cultural events, language revitalization programs, and collaborations with tribes. Haskell continues to evolve as a center for Native scholarship, leadership, and cultural preservation, honoring its past while actively shaping a future rooted in Indigenous knowledge and sovereignty.

1884

Haskell opens as the United States Indian Industrial Training School at Lawrence, Kansas.

1887

The school is renamed Haskell Institute in honor of Dudley Chase Haskell, who was instrumental in the school being located in Lawrence.

1891

A Federal law is passed enabling the government to forcibly remove Native American children from their families.

1893

Haskell's band performs at the World's Fair in Chicago. They would go on to perform at the 1905 World's Fair in St. Louis.

1894

Military-like system was introduced and applied to all aspects of students' daily lives to break any tribal associations.

1896

Baseball becomes the first organized sport at Haskell Institute. The Commercial and Normal Departments are established.

1897

Haskell's student newspaper, The Indian Leader, is first published. Today it is the oldest Native American student newspaper in the world.

1924

The American Indian Citizenship Act of 1924, also known as the Snyder Act, granted full U.S. citizenship to all American Indians on June 2nd.

1926

Haskell Stadium is dedicated in October. The first lighted stadium west of the Mississippi, it was funded solely by Native American people.

1927

The only government-funded school for Native Americans to offer a full four-year high school course of study, Haskell begins offering post high school courses.

1928

The Merriam Report is released, noting the poor conditions at residential schools due to underfunding.

1933

Dr. Henry Roe Cloud became the first Native American Superintendent of Haskell Institute, serving in this role from 1933 until 1935.

1935

Improvements begin within the vocational and technical training offered and agricultural training programs cease.

1942

Students are now attending Haskell Institute willingly and increased numbers of Haskell graduates returning as staff and faculty.

1968

Haskell Institute graduated the last of its high school students.

1970

Haskell is accredited as Haskell Indian Junior College, offering only college-level courses.

1992

The Haskell Medicine Wheel Earthwork is designed and constructed by Stan Herd.

1993

Accredited as a University and name changes to Haskell Indian Nations University.

1998

Haskell graduated its first baccalaureate degree majors in Elementary Education.

2002

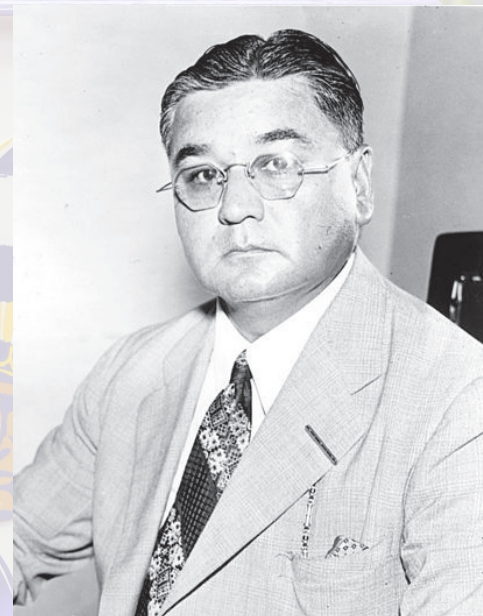
The Haskell Cultural Center and Museum opened on September 14.

2013

Dr. Venida Chenault becomes president, making her the first Haskell graduate to lead the school.



Dudley Chase Haskell (1842-1883)
Namesake of Haskell Indian Nations University



Dr. Henry Roe Cloud (1884-1950)
First Native American superintendent of Haskell Institute

COLLECTIONS

ARCHIVAL COLLECTION

The Haskell Cultural Center and Museum's archival collections consists of thousands of documents, photographs, and film footage related to the school's history.

ART COLLECTION

Consisting of works by both well-known Native American artists and Haskell students, this collection stands as a beautiful testament to the cultural diversity of the tribal nations represented.

ARTIFACT COLLECTION

The collection ranges from priceless original objects to mass-produced replicas and are essential in preserving and sharing Haskell's history.

FRANK RINEHART COLLECTION

The work of Frank Rinehart, while not as well known as that of Edward Curtis, is widely recognized as some of the most important pieces of Native American portraiture of the late 19th and early 20th century. These photographs, Rinehart and Muhr's 1900 work at Crow Agency, Montana, in particular, is of great value to researchers, historians, and tribal people alike due to their candid nature and their representation of Native Americans of the time as diverse people encompassing hundreds of unique cultures spanning the continent.





GALLERIES

MAIN GALLERY

This gallery tells the story of Haskell, from its founding and evolution to the remarkable achievements of its students, alumni, and faculty over the years. Through interactive displays, artifacts, and compelling narratives, discover the struggles and triumphs of Haskell's Native American community, tracing its journey from a government boarding school to the leading institution of higher education for Native American students.

RINEHART GALLERY

This gallery showcases the Frank Rinehart Collection, a captivating series of photographic portraits capturing Native American people, created between 1898 and 1900.

ROTATING GALLERY

Our rotating gallery features a dynamic lineup of short-term exhibits highlighting prominent Native American artists and key individuals associated with Haskell Indian Nations University.

ALUMNI GALLERY

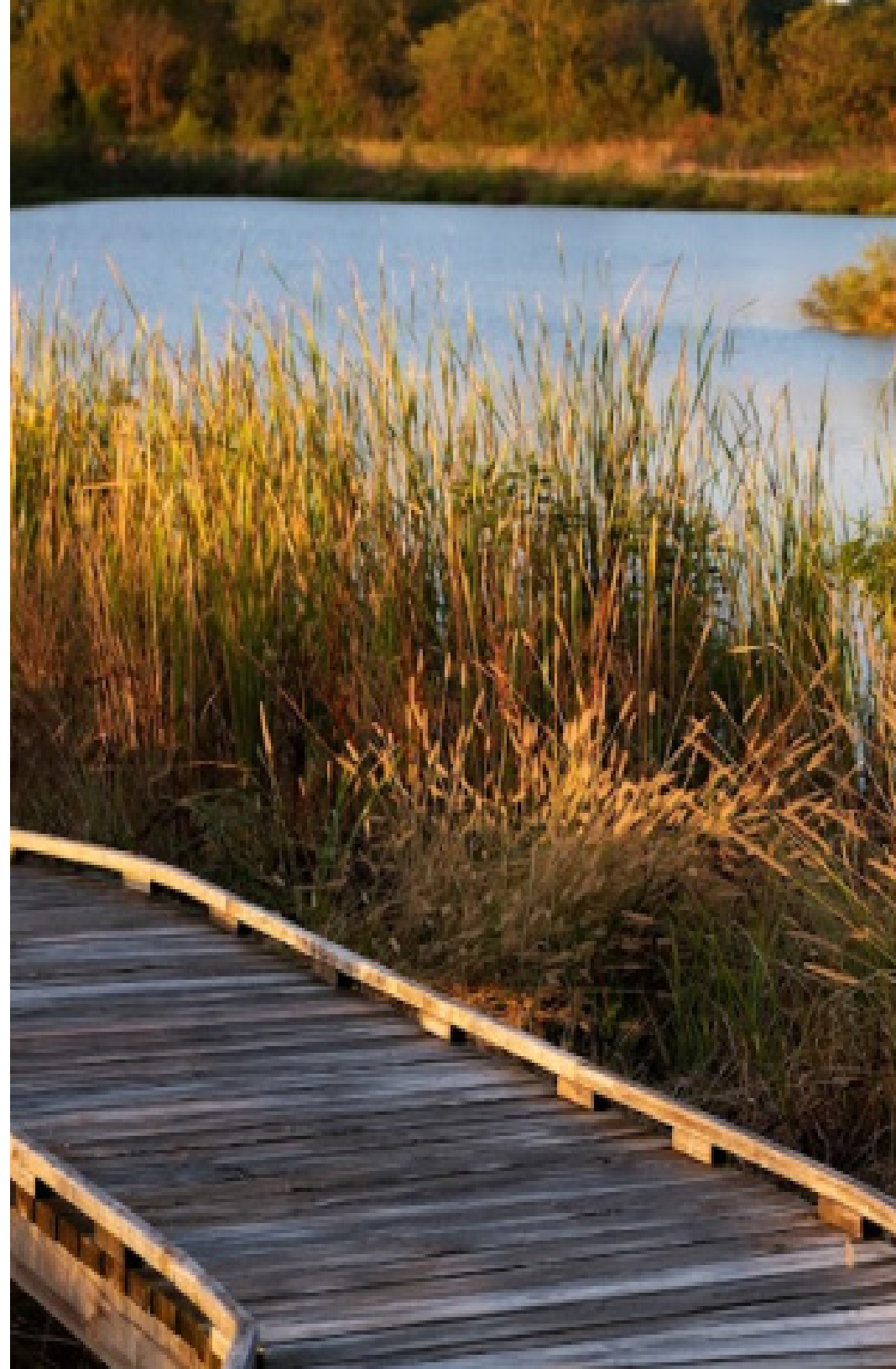
Get inspired by the determination and excellence of these remarkable individuals and learn how their experiences at Haskell helped shape their journeys.

HASKELL WETLANDS

The Haskell Wetlands, is a 20-acre natural area that serves as a vital wetland ecosystem. The site has a rich history dating back thousands of years, with evidence of human habitation by Native American tribes and early European settlers.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the wetlands were drained and used for agriculture in accordance with Haskell Institute's farming program. By the cessation of the farming programs at Haskell in the 1930s, this land encompassed more than 600 acres. In the late 1950 the majority of this land was declared excess property by the Bureau of Indian Affairs and given away to various public entities with Haskell retaining less than 50 acres of the wetlands area.

In the 1970s, efforts were made to restore the site to its natural state. Today, the Haskell Wetlands is a thriving habitat for numerous plant and animal species, including rare and endangered species such as the bald eagle and the wood turtle. Visitors can explore the wetlands' walking trails, birdwatching areas, and educational facilities to learn about the site's history and importance to the local ecosystem.





MEDICINE WHEEL

The Haskell Medicine Wheel Earthwork is located south of the campus and was designed by Haskell professors, students, tribal elders, and crop artist Stan Herd. It was completed and dedicated in 1992 as a response to the 500th commemoration of the "Columbian Legacy."

The Haskell Medicine Wheel Earthwork symbolizes the scope and richness of indigenous cultures, from the beginning of humankind to the present. The circle is symbolic of the perpetual and sacredness of the spirituality of native peoples. The spokes are the four directions. The circle marks the astrological locations of the Summer and Winter solstice and represent the death, rebirth, balance and healing in Mother Earth. The bear claw represents the strength needed for the survival of indigenous people. The thunderbird located to the east represents the spiritual traditions of tribal people and points to the sacred circle and sacred fire contained within the Medicine Wheel Teachings.

A stylized replica of the Medicine Wheel is inlaid in the floor at the Haskell Cultural Center and Museum as a way of balancing the campus with a medicine wheel on the north and south ends of campus.



HASKELL CULTURAL CENTER & MUSEUM

2411 BARKER AVENUE

LAWRENCE, KANSAS 66046

WWW.HASKELLHISTORY.COM