

## An all-Indian boarding school

How do Indian teenagers feel these days about the boarding schools they go to? To find out, Arthur Sirdofsky travelled to the Riverside Indian Boarding School just outside Anadarko, Oklahoma. There he talked with students about their school. This is what they told him:



### REGINA BEGAY

I'm seventeen and I come from the Navajo reservation in Tuba City, Arizona. I've been at this school for two years. I spend more time here than at the reservation. I go home for Christmas and in the summer-but that's all.

There are a lot of reasons why Indian teenagers come here to this boarding school. Some just want to get away from the reservation. They get bored. They want to see a new place. Some don't get along too well at home. People on the reservation are poor. There are many problems. I guess a lot of us see the boarding school as a way to get away from these problems for a time.

Some of us could go to a public school. But sometimes the white kids look down on us. Here, we are all Indians. So we know we won't be discriminated against.

This school is run by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. But they don't try to make us white.

A lot of us don't know too much about our background when we come here. But our history courses give us a much better idea what it means to be a Navajo, Blackfoot or Apache.

### SHIRLEY CHARKNE ICEMAN

My dad is a fisherman. He can work only in the summer. So he is at home a lot of the time. We have a big family and a small house on the Red Lake reservation in Minnesota. We get on each other's nerves a lot. We fight over small things.

I think it was good to get away from the reservation. Here, I'll be able to draw and paint. At home, there wasn't room.

### ROSS TALBOT

I'm an Apache. I've never been off the reservation before. My brothers and cousins were always around. We felt very together back home. Here, I don't know anybody. I must speak English, because very few Indians can understand Apache. I find it a bit hard to adjust.

But I had to choose between the public school with Indians and whites and this all-Indian boarding school. I chose the boarding school. I'm sure I'll like it better in time.

### MINNIE HORSECHIEF



Riverside has a lot to offer us. We have our own radio station with student DJ's. We have a student lounge with a colour TV and card tables. The dorms are all really modern. They really work with us here to make this school a good and friendly place.

Not all boarding schools are like this. I've been to some where the rules are terrible. You'd think you were in prison or something. You know, Indians grow up differently from most white people. Our

world is close to nature, close to the things we can see and touch. The teachers here know that. They try to make us proud of being different.