

The Fallen Feather

Indian Industrial Residential Schools and Canadian Confederation



Author
Randy N Bezeau

Publisher
Jannica R Hoskins

Fallen Feather Productions Photography

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Fallen Feather Tribute

This book is dedicated to the many children, survivors, and relatives that have been touched by the Indian (Industrial) Residential School System in Canada.

We would like to thank our families for their strength and support.

With appreciation and admiration we would like to honour the memory of Secwepemc First Nation Elder Dr. Mary Thomas, beloved teacher and ethno botanist.

The Fallen Feather

Indian Industrial Residential Schools and Canadian Confederation

Between 1879 and 1986, upwards of 100,000 children in Canada were forcibly removed and placed into Indian Industrial Residential Schools. Their unique culture was stripped away to be replaced with a foreign European identity. Their family ties were cut, parents were forbidden to visit their children, and the children were prevented from returning home.

First Nations children were the *only children in Canadian History*, to be singled out by race and forced to live in institutions; generation after generation.

ND Rosiers - President, Law Commission of Canada, 15 August 2001, Sydney, Australia



The Indian Agents and RCMP removed the children from their families and placed them within these schools as wards of the state.

Why were these walls built? Why were so many children corralled behind these bricks so far from home? Tens of thousands died of Tuberculosis and other ailments brought on by the grossly inadequate living standards. Families

destroyed, generations lost. All to further the official policy of achieving a '*final solution*' to what had been perceived as an '*Indian problem*'. Department of Indian Affairs Superintendent D. C. Scott to B.C. Indian Agent-General Major D. McKay, 1910 April, DIA Archives, RG 10 series.

Pick up a paper today and the chances are there will be some reference to the First Nations condition. Tens of thousands of cases of sexual and physical abuses. The Government has assumed partial responsibility for this historical wrong and has agreed to pay out Billions in damages.

The abuses that occurred within these Residential Schools were only symptoms of a greater problem. To focus on the obvious crime of physical and psychological abuse is to divert attention away from the real story.

Land. This land.





When I was young my family never talked of our native heritage. My passed denied, tucked away. Who were my ancestors? I was left with only stereotypes two dimensional characters, all my relations without memory.

Can I move forward without my past?
How did it all go wrong, and why?

In my search for answers I asked survivors elders and political leaders for their insight and their experiences. The stories they shared with me are both sad and uplifting, cultural memory that needs to be recognized.

You know it was always about food
Richard Jules

But the greatest damage to my psyche, if you want to put it that way, is the separation from my family, my mother.
National Chief Phil Fontaine, AFN

Again getting back to the Residential School it took away the ability for parenting and that becomes kind of intergenerational.
John Jules

The broader legacy in the contexts of the community impacts and the family impacts as a result of peoples experience at Residential Schools
DG Shawn Tupper, IRSRC

That's playing quit an important role in this very sad history of our country, all the abuses that occurred in Residential Schools.
Hon. Ted Hughes, ADR

Well and again I think that the Residential Schools were part of a larger sort of Nation Building policy of the federal government at the time.
Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

It has long been understood by some aboriginal people that here was a larger plan behind the intent of taking children away from their families to go to Residential Schools.
Chief Bob Joseph, IRSRC

I put the owe-ness on the Government, because the schools were paid by the government to run the schools.
Dr. Mary Thomas

Before European settlement of North America, First Nations had a strong and vibrant culture. Their faith, systems of education, and trade were radically different to European traditions of commerce and institutionalized religion.

With confederation, Canada was preoccupied with securing its borders and interior lands. European settlers, who once relied on the indigenous population for survival and trade, now viewed the First Nations as dangerous rivals.



The First Nations understood the growing threat of encroachment on their lands by Europeans. And in the late 1800s attempted to fight and hold their traditional territories.

In response to these challenges, Sir John A MacDonal, as Canada's first Prime Minister, developed an aggressive Indian policy and wage a *Silent War* with the clear objective of ending the Indians legal claims to the land. The question as to who owned the territory would be settled by ending the Indians as unique and definable peoples.

This Policy would see Indian Children taken from their families and isolated behind these brick walls. Through aggressive assimilation into a European culture, they would cease to be Indian.

No Indians, no Land Claims.

Building on existing Religious Schools, these new Indian Industrial Residential schools were to become critical tools in land settlements.

The trauma that these institutions caused to an entire race of people, is still felt today.



Aboriginal communities obviously were thriving and what not before Europeans and other non aboriginals settled Canada. And as Canada expanded or as the non aboriginal communities expanded, different economies were replacing aboriginal economies or in some areas competing against aboriginal economies. You have aboriginal culture and religious traditions and institutions that were alternatives to the dominant cultural religious institutions brought by the Europeans and by other non aboriginals. And they were seen as dangerous rivals.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA



It's important for us to be reminded that the Residential Schools were all about the eradication of Indian-ness in the country. They were designed to do away with the Indian fact in the country. And to mould us into something that obviously we could never be.

National Chief Phil Fontaine, AFN

Let's think this thing through.

Why would the MacDonald Government want to eliminate an entire culture?

And, what role did the Indian Residential Schools serve in this policy.

To answer this question, we have to look further back to see how changing relationships, and competition for resources, caused these two cultures to collide.

Up to the late 18th century, First Nations and Europeans had either tolerated or cooperated with one another.

Both the French and English depended on the Indians intimate knowledge of nature.



As well, while the new world was being contested by the French and British, Indian alliances were critical to both sides of this conflict. After nine-years of war, England secured control of the Americas, with their win at the *Plains of Abraham* in 1759. However, though the French had laid down their weapons, the Indians had not.

The Ottawa nation in particular had little fond feelings for the English. Lead by a great warrior, Chief Pontiac a new Indian war was waged. The British continued to lose men and settlers by the hundreds.

The Royal Government recognized that there was an urgent need to form military alliances with the First Nations, who at that time greatly outnumbered European settlers.



After the defeat of Pontiac, the British held out an olive branch in the form of a formal understanding, the Royal Proclamation of 1763. This document was to set a new Indian Policy that would dictate common political standards to be applied to all aboriginals across the British Empire.

The Royal Proclamation formalized the treaty process, recognizing for the first time that aboriginals were self-governing nations.



Treaties are military documents. The Act of Treaty making is the act of two sovereign states agreeing to the terms of peace. And this was nothing new to the Europeans, who had been making treaties with one another for centuries. The Crown recognized that the First Nations had legal rights to the land. These titles

would have to be signed over to the crown through a formal treaty process with due consideration for the Indians. This British law became Canadian law after the British North America Act and Canadian Confederation, and is still legally binding today.

However, with Confederation, Sir John A MacDonal'd attentions were focused squarely on unifying Canada from sea to sea. His requirement to negotiate with the Indians would have been viewed as a road block to his national dream.



The treaty process takes time. Time that Macdonald felt he didn't have. The wild-west was wide open. The United States was competing for influence in Western Canada. British Columbia wasn't convinced that joining Confederation was the best idea. A train would bind this new country together. Trains run on rails, and rails need land.

And we're talking a lot of land. Most of Western Canada was administered through the North West Company, and Hudson Bay Company, and this land was populated with Indians.

In 1868, MacDonal's Government had concluded a land deal with Britain and passed the Rupert's Land Act, which in effect purchased the rights to what is today, most of Canada.

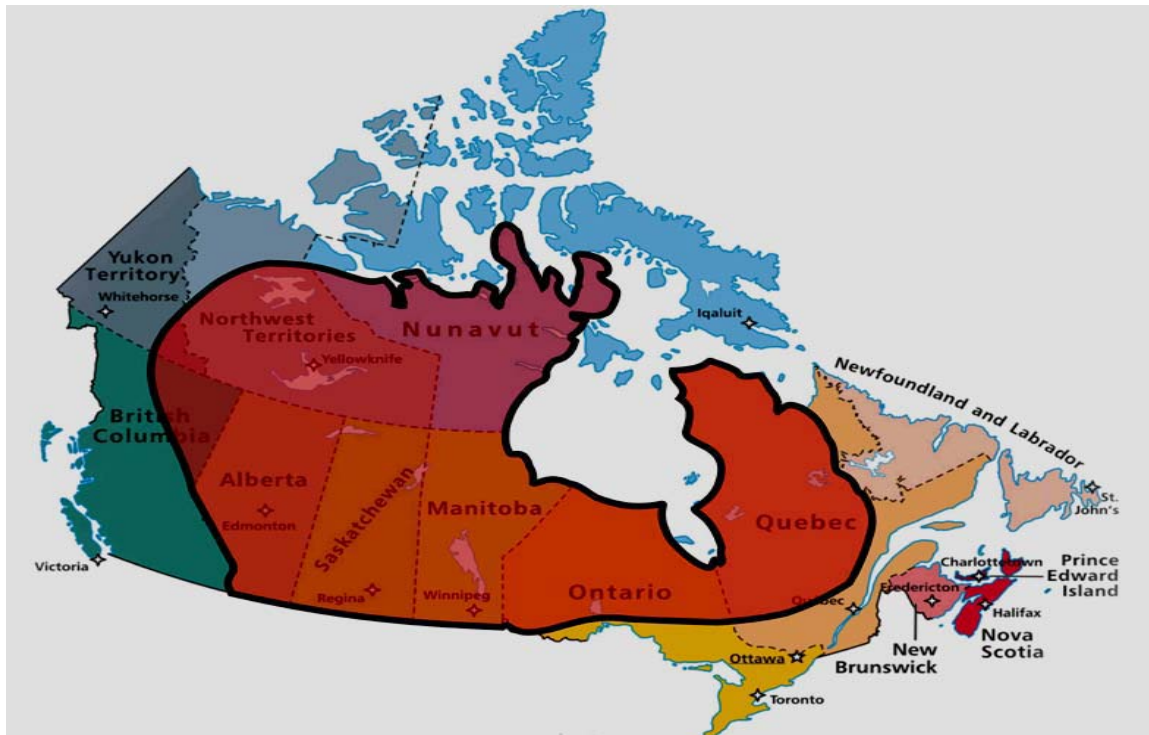
The Rupert's Land act was negotiated in about a year for 300,000 lbs and 5% of the most fertile lands being set aside for the Hudson Bay Company. In today's dollars this would be a multi billion dollar deal, negotiated in one year.

Macdonald could deal easily enough with those who owned the land on paper. As long as the shareholders of HBC turned a profit, everyone was a winner.

For the tens of thousands of First Nations people who called this territory home, this would be a different matter entirely. Would they want 5% of the land as well?

It has long been understood by some aboriginal people that there was a larger plan behind the intent of taking children away from their families to go into Residential Schools. And of course that intent from the beginning has always been that the newcomers who were coming into this land recognized the abundance of the resources in our territories and needed to access those without impediment. And so because we were here we were seen as part of that impediment.

Chief Bob Joseph, IRSRC.





Around the time of Confederation - the government had a clear choice. Honour British law and the Royal Proclamation; or railroad through the country.

Well, the government was obligated to negotiate with the Indians. However, back in the late nineteenth century, treaty making, if you can call it that, was more about the art of deception. Stall them, starve them, and lock them up.

After suffering decades of abuses the Tribes of Western Canada were growing extremely impatient with their white neighbors. Throughout the region, First Nations challenged the Government's assertion of land ownership. And so, Canada entered the dark decades of Indian Wars.



In British Columbia near Butte Inlet First Nations revolted in the Chilcoten War of 1864, a conflict which influenced Joseph Trutch BC's Chief Land Surveyor and future Governor. Trutch expressed directly to the Macdonald government his militant views of land claims during confederation talks between Ottawa and British Columbia.

In central British Columbia the Shuswap (Secwepemc) threatened to burn down Fort Kamloops in response to the Government's broken promises and unilateral reductions to their native lands. They apposed the "Trutch Roll Backs" to the pre existing Douglas Land Agreements in BC. Native runners were sent down to the United States to meet with Chief Joseph of the Nez Pierce Nations, with the intent of gaining an alliance to consider whether to settle grievances with the Government over land claims through war. Though the Central BC Indians remained peaceful, settlers and the government assumed the worst. The provincial Government sent letters to Ottawa stressing the need to bolster the Militia to ensure that the native population would not revolt. M. V Bezeau



The most noted challenge to confederation was felt further east. In the prairies, the Cree and the Métis revolted in the Red River Rebellion followed by the Northwest Rebellion of 1885. The Métis, whose concerns over land issues were largely ignored, refused to recognize the Canadian Government's newly imposed authority. They along with the Cree considered the prairies as their independent land. Macdonald had neglected to consult with them while negotiating the Rupert's Land deal with the Hudson's Bay Company.



Louis Riel formed an independent Métis Government, and took control of Upper Fort Gary. He then held Government representatives as prisoners and refused permission of Canadian officials to enter the territory. Like the Chilcote War in British Columbia, the central Government's assumption that it controlled the land was being challenged. Riel's friend and fellow Métis leader Gabriel Dumont and the Métis supporters posed a direct threat to Macdonald and his vision of a unified Canada.

It is important to understand the effect that war has on the mind set of a government. And we will see that the Indian Residential School Policy was specifically designed to address this military problem.

There are many contributing factors to the political unrest during this time: the railway scandal (CPR); changes of Government; British Columbia threatening to pull out of confederation; social Darwinism; greed; bigotry. All of these had a part to play in the creation of Indian Residential Schools.

But, of all these factors, the military threat is the most significant. In times of war morality becomes simplified. You have good guys and you have bad guys.

The Government would not be able to hold the land unless it was first able to enforce its boundaries. To prevent further rebellions among the native population Macdonald worked toward establishing the North West Mounted Police in 1873, now the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). This paramilitary force would enforce new laws and pacify the Indian population.

With the threat of war, it was clear to the Government that the First Nations of Western Canada were not going to easily give up their land.

So in the interests of Nation Building, Macdonald's government formulated a new Indian policy that would put an end to the land question. This policy would pacify First Nations adults through rigidly enforced regulations, while aggressively assimilating First Nations children into the European culture.



The RCMP would control the parents, but what about their children. Left untouched, they would grow up into adults, and then the Indian problem would continue.

Well and again. I think that the Residential Schools were part of a larger nation building policies of the federal government of the time. And you know, as apposed to a pure altruistic educational policy it was very much of dealing with aboriginal populations in particular areas in particular ways. And the Indian Residential Schools and the institutions of Residential Schools could be used in those different areas as suited the needs of the Government of the day rather then necessarily the educational needs of the aboriginal population.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

And this policy was constructed so that we were removed from our families, from our communities, we were denied our culture our languages and there was little, no positive reinforcement of who we were as a peoples. So the schools were really designed to confine our people, to keep them in one place. And unfortunately this particular policy had tragic consequences.

National Chief Phil Fontaine, AFN

You know, people justify horrible acts during times of war. And for Macdonald, this would include the taking of children as hostages.

Toward this end, Sir John A MacDonald commissioned a friend and ally Nicholas Flood Davin to study and then prepare a report on American Indian residential Schools. The Davin Report is formally called the "Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds." The United States had a well established Indian Residential Schools program and Davin was convinced that isolating Indian children away from their parents would be the most effective way to end the Indian land question.

By stripping Indian culture from the child, not only would the child cease to be Indian, but just as importantly, the whole community would break down. Eventually the Indian problem would die out.



And I think that when they started to arrange programs they recognized that children were very, very precious to aboriginal people. One of the things that I always heard when I was a young child going to the potlatch was old Chiefs saying, "But for our children what would our purpose be." So the whole world revolved around these children. And I think there was recognition by government and

other officials that if you could take these children away, from these communities and their families that, it would essentially weaken the aboriginal society to a large degree. And that's not talked about very much but I think that it's very true.

Chief Bob Joseph, IRSRC

Residential Schools were to become a fundamental tool of assimilation and pacification.



This fact is still denied by the Federal Government to this day. The Conservative Government will not issue a public apology. *"The Indian Residential School chapter of our history was one that was a difficult chapter but, fundamentally the underlying objective had been to try and provide an education to aboriginal children."* Indian Affairs Minister Jim Prentice March 2007

There was a darker truth that was made clear in letters sent to the Macdonald government.



Edgar Dewdney, now an Indian Commissioner of the North West Territories in 1885 wrote to the MacDonald government saying:

"...the Indians would regard them, their children, as hostages, given to the whites and would hesitate to commit any hostile acts that would endanger their children's well being..."

Edgar Dewdney, 1885



Further to this, J. A. McCrae an Indian agent and future department superintendent stated. *"It is unlikely that any tribe or tribes would give trouble of a serious nature to the government whose members had children completely under government control."*

To prevent further Native unrest, the Government believed that it had to take hostages.

Now land could be expropriated, treaties could be rolled back, and the railway could be built.

What could the Native parents do while the Government held their children?

A firm Indian policy was now in place, a policy that would strengthen the Governments hand while negotiating land settlements. Though Ottawa's relationship with its indigenous population would change and adapt as time went on. Its genesis and fundamental purpose was set original by the Macdonald government. Claims to who owned the land would be settled by ending the First Nations as a unique and definable people.

We now have today a Nation that was built at a horrible price. A price paid by Indian Children. And the effects from which is still suffered today.



I learned how to cope with all this hard part of my life. And I know other people of my age and even younger, have gone through the same thing, feel the same way. Our children, our young people come first. And all this turmoil we went through at the hands of people that were running this. I don't blame any church group. I just put the oweness on the Government. Because they're the ones that I feel were ahead of all this turmoil that we were subjected to. It was the Government that used the churches.
Dr. Mary Thomas

To ensure that assimilation was successful eventually attendance to Residential Schools would become mandatory for all aboriginal children between the ages of 7 and 15. And this would be enforced by the Indian Agents and RCMP.



And in the broad experience of many, many students, the RCMP and Indian Agents actually went into the communities and in the worst cases from stories that I have heard, herded people onto trains and boats, all manner of transportation to get them to residential schools.

Chief Bob Joseph



Children were rounded up and forcibly removed from their families.

I was six and half, my sister was a year older than me. Just out of the blue they picked us up and took us to Residential School in Kamloops. And I can remember my mother would get us all dressed up and ready to go back to school, what a horrible day. We would be all crying we don't want to go back, don't want to go back. We would all wait at the church. And here comes the cattle truck, cow poop and all. They would just put the home made benches on the side. They would have the high racks. They wouldn't even bother to scrub the floors. Truck would pull in, all the kids would just get packed in there, and it was rough going. And that was to be our joy ride all the way to Kamloops.

Dr Mary Thomas



First Nations people had no choice but to give up their children to the Government.

Remember, that the Government would create its own rules and then enforce them without first nations input.

Indian Children could be treated very differently then non First Nations children and their parents had no power no say and no legal recourse. They were denied the right to vote. And it was against the law for them to seek legal council. Help from lawyers was forbidden.

First Nations fell into a legal limbo status were laws would be passed that suited the needs of the Government, laws that would only apply to Aboriginals.

These laws were combined formally into the Indian Act of 1876. Authority over Indian life, property, culture and land was placed solely with the Superintendent of Indian Affairs. These laws were designed to limit the Indians ability to challenge the government. All public gathering were outlawed. The Potlatch and Sun Dance ceremonies were banned.

This Special Legal status still goes on today. With unique rules that apply just to First Nations.

I just want to jump back, you defined wrongful confinement according to Indian Residential School Resolution, I just question, I've read a lot of definitions of wrongful confinement throughout the legal system and I'm just wondering why this one is so specific in the way that it was written.

Jannica R Hoskins



I guess I really can't answer why this was drafted the way that it was, we were given this to work with. But it says that the claimant was confined alone in a space where both the space and the duration was inappropriate for a child of their age.

Hon Ted Hughes, ADR

Would it be safe to say that the definition was written around what happened within Residential Schools?

Jannica R Hoskins

Oh, it was written totally for Residential School situations, this wasn't, whoever did the drafting in Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, that department of the federal department, was drafting solely for this process, and you wont find that definition as far as I know in the criminal law or statues of Canada.

Hon Ted Hughes, ADR



This policy of forcibly removing Indian children from their homes continued through much of the 20th century. And children continued to be scooped up by the police or social services and placed into residential schools or non-native foster homes up until the 1980s. The most traumatic of these times is known as “The 60’s Scoop.”

This calculated move from the Government had devastating consequences for Aboriginal communities.

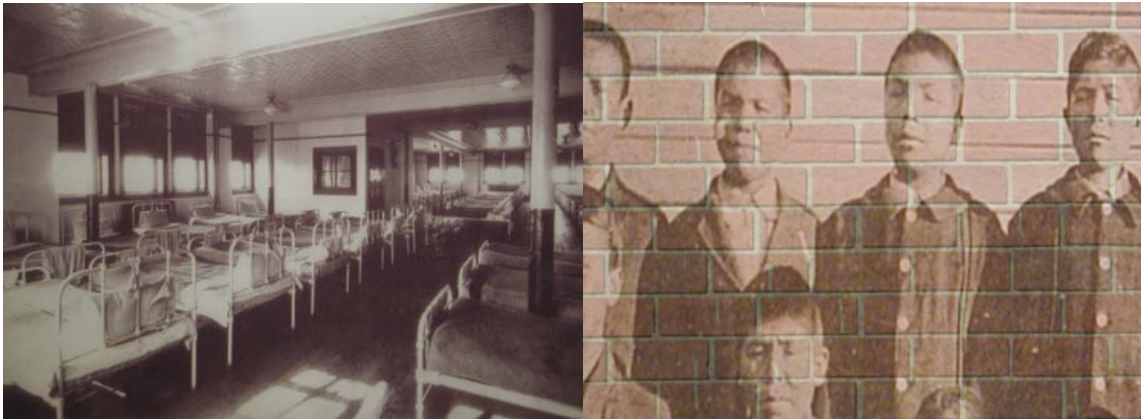


If you were to look at my situation, yes I suffered abuse, physical and sexual abuse. But the greatest damage to my psyche, if you want to put it that way, was the separation from my family, from my mother, because our father died in my first year at Residential School. That caused me the most distress, anguish, pain, hurt, then anything that was ever done to me in the two schools that I attended for 10 years. And I don't know

if I will ever be able to overcome that.
National Chief Phil Fontaine, AFN.

I can remember when I first came in this school, this is where we were put we as juniors. Many a night I cried for my grandma. It was so lonely. Not having her to help me fall asleep. It was really hard on a child growing up. And often times with our grandma, if I had hurt myself during the day and it's still hurting I would tell her, Grandma I fell and I hurt my, whatever, my leg or my arm. She would rub it and rub it. And just rubbing it felt so good that it would help ease the pain. But you didn't get that here. So there was a big difference in the culture that we were subjected to. As apposed to being raised at home and learning the way the culture was. You know, you had to learn to be hard inside. And when you grow up with that hard feeling inside you have no feelings for anybody, not even for your self. And it's tough, it's really hard. I went through it.

Dr Mary Thomas



Just imagine what it would be like to be torn from your parents. To be boarded up in this cold oyster barrack environment. Your whole world turned upside down.

Along with the physical abuse, through beatings, hunger and sexual assaults, there was also psychological abuse. Through separation anxiety, and Christian indoctrination, Aboriginal faith and culture was ridiculed and demeaned; with the purpose of replacing native ontology with catholic or protestant rituals. Consider that they had been ripped away from their family. They were punished for speaking their native language, forced to reject their community faith while having an alien religion forced on them. They were ridiculed and neglected. As there was insufficient funding they suffered from hunger and deplorable health care. Clearly, there was institutionalized abuse for all children.





We had to go to chapel, we had to get up at five in the morning, and you had to have your bed made all cleaned up ready to go. You had to be in chapel by seven. Right after chapel one hour we had to go down eat breakfast; perfect silence from the time you get up in the morning. We would go to the chapel and there we would be interrogated how evil our parents our grandparents were. They were evil people; their way of living was the work of the devil. And we were just really subjected to a terrible picture of our families.

I remember we had to file in here every day of the week first thing in the morning. We would come in here. The girls had their benches, here the boys. We had to come in here every day. And over were it says exit on the right hand side, that's were we had to go to supposedly confess our sins. You know, when you're a child you tend to want to obey and some times you have to make little white lies to please them. We had to go in there and whisper to the Priest that we committed how many times we told a lie or how many times we cheated in the classroom. And I think what did I do that was a sin, and I would make up my sins. I would pretend; oh this many times I did this, which was a lie. And I was telling a lie on top of a lie.

And over on the other side, I've never been in the back since I left, that's were

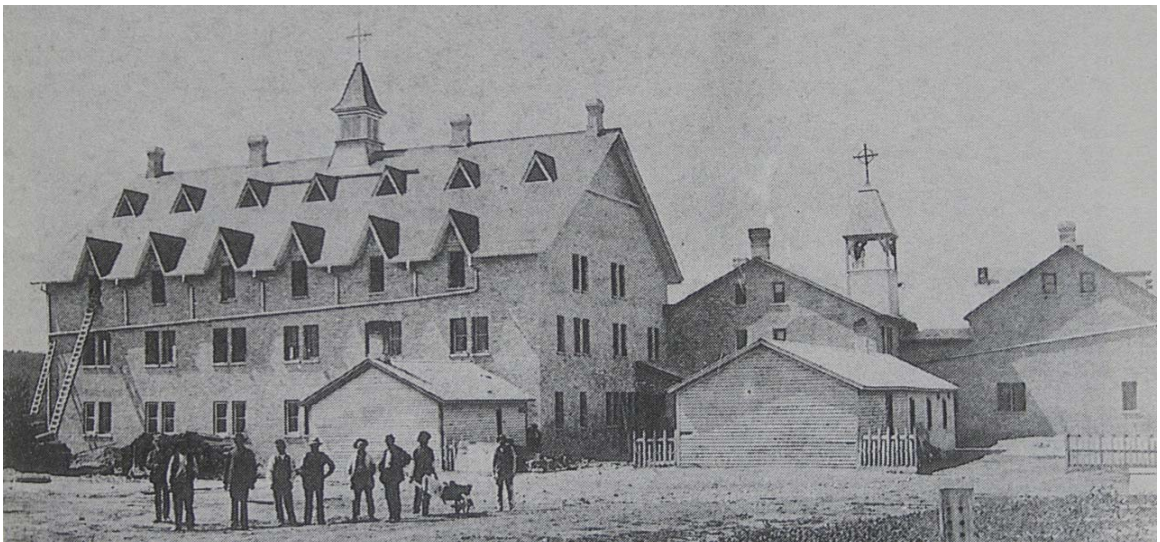
the Priest used to go and change and put on his garments for saying mass. The Priest use to have an alter rail there. He would punch on it and tell us that you get away from it you forget about all the spirituality all the teachings of your grandparents. Forget it. Don't listen to them. You listen to what were teaching about God and all the sins we committed. It just made you feel that small.

Dr Mary Thomas



The Governments policy of native assimilation was taken very seriously. And the Mounted Police was a ready tool used to ensure that the children remained isolated.

Superintendent General of Indian Affairs E. Dewdney in 1891 Threatened *"To authorize the employment of the Police to keep the (Parents) off the (school ground)"* of the Qu'Appelle Residential School if the principal could not himself handle the problem NC p.30



The Indian Affairs Department believed that the schools should provide firm persuasion, forbidding children to speak their Native language.

The clergy did not uniformly support the government's insistence that the children should be prevented from speaking their native tongue. After all, what did language have to do with religion? The Government, however, was firm. Only French or English would be spoken. Miller p 428

Good people that worked in these schools. Well intentioned, dedicated, committed. But they were also caught in a terrible situation, because they were expected to manage these schools in a way that were hurtful to people. The Schools were designed to undermine the integrity of our people. And that's a difficult situation to be in. And there was too few of those people.

National Chief Phil Fontaine, AFN

I don't think that there is any question that there was racism were they were abused and that there was a tacit license to abuse Aboriginal children more then there would have been non Aboriginal children.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

You know, I refer to blood was drawn as a result of their punishment. My job is, and it's not an easy job for me and nor is it for the adjudicators, its even tougher for them to hear this, but some really dreadful things went on. And it wasn't uncommon where there were injuries where blood was drawn.

Hon Ted Hughes, ADR

You know I'm just looking at this hear, it talks about runaways. There is a whole section on runaways and it being a reoccurrence. Do you remember a lot of that happening when you went to school?

Jannica R Hoskins



Oh yes there was lots of runaways and what would happen they would send the police after them, these little kids, to bring them back. They would shave their heads, starve them, beat them up just become they ran away. And that was a

punishment. It was a public statement saying that if you do this, this is what's going to happen to you. But, there was still more runaways, people just wanted to get out of here so bad.

Dan Saul



The Strapping I got when I was absent, when I run away. That was the first one. Kids count it; I didn't count it because it was so painful. I got 50 lashes on my back. And that Reverend Father O'grady, it's OK if I say the words because it's true. It happened. See. And he became a bishop later. But that man gave me 50 lashes

on my back. I couldn't sit down for three weeks maybe more. It hurt. Right in the dormitory, in front of everybody, just lay over my bead, took my night shirt up and give it to me.

Ernie Philip

And if our children are listening to me talking about how cruel they were in the Residential School. You know we got strapped with a wide strap like that on our hands until it bled up here if we spoke our language. We got a real good strapping on each hand. And if that didn't work you got it on your backside. You couldn't even sit for days; just blue. And then, my ear this one I was never able to hear, I must have been around 7 or 8 years old when the Nun hit me. And I heard a loud pop in my ear. And that night it just ached and ached and she came and she start hitting me saying 'your keeping the kids awake'. She thought I was lonesome and crying to go home. I said my ear is aching, she through an aspirin at me and put the pillow over my head. And I cried and cried and I guess I finally fell asleep. But it started festering inside. And they didn't do nothing about it until it turned into impetigo, my whole ear was infected and up into my hair. And I landed in the hospital for a month. And the Nun started yelling at us. 'Stop, stop!' But we didn't know what stop meant. We didn't know a word of English. All we spoke was our language. And they told us that we had to speak the English language, we were not allowed to speak our own language.

Dr Mary Thomas



It's significant that the Government would intervene to ensure that Native Children abandon their language, but cared very little about the health or wellbeing for these children.

Yeah that's right, it's a lot easier to have the Aboriginal people subscribe to the dominant institutions, linguistic and economic when their children have been severed from their own aboriginal heritage. By removing children from families you destroy the family as a unit and also in most aboriginal communities the extended family structure that existed. You take them away, you beat them if they speak their language, you beat them if they observe any sort of cultural or religious practices, and you reward them when they speak the dominant language, English or French. You reward them when they become altar boys or whatever in the dominant religion. And then you give them a deficient education and you send them back into their communities and they can't go hunting anymore with their grandparents because they don't speak the language that their grandparents speak. They can't go hunting because they haven't done that since the age of 5 or 6 they've been in some cold austere barrack.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

Without their traditional language, Children could never go back to a traditional Indian life style. The links to the past would be broken. This cultural and spiritual alienation would accelerate their assimilation into Canadian society.

Today we are aware that a common response in children to unpredictable punishment or an inability to avoid punishment is internalized feelings of anxiety and fear. These feeling of abandonment create low self esteem as well as other medical conditions that still continue to plague the Native populations to this day.



It seems that there was little concerns over providing proper education. The emphasis was squarely on cultural indoctrination and physical labour.

Is it correct to even call this a school?

When you attended Residential School, what was a typical day?
Jannica R Hoskins



By the time I attended school there was already a shift taking place where there was a greater emphasis on the academic side of the education program. Up until my time and to a lesser extent to my older brothers, it was half a day school half a day work. And in the early days even a greater emphasis on work
National Chief Phil Fontaine, AFN

This was the senior, this was the senior classroom. I remember I used to have my desk way over there. Half of the school would come in here... We would have one whole hour in the morning relating to Catholic faith. And we were lucky if we had two hours a day, like I went here half a day in the morning and the other half a day was to the sewing room or the laundry or the kitchen. So if we had two hours of reading and writing that's all the education we got. You know how much do you learn in two hours.
Dr Mary Thomas

In 1883 Dewdney, in his instructions regarding the construction of the first three western schools, stated that they be of the “*simplest and cheapest construction.*” Schools were built on the cheap and maintained on the cheap. Like industrial prison of the day. A good example of this was the Kamloops school, which was, on the surface, a model institution that had been built under the supervision of the Dominion Government Engineer of the Public Works Department. NC p. 78

Despite this supervision, in 1899 Father Lacombe complained that the Kamloops Industrial School was built without much thought toward the kids. “*The Architect and contractors, I suppose, never saw or never heard about an institution of the kind. It is a pity to see the inside. For instance consider that there is not a little space for a chapel, not a small room for laundry, for bakery when the matrons are obliged to bake three times a day in the cooking stove and imagine what kind of temperature it will be during summer, no place for a stove, no bathroom for girls!*”

Government agencies agreed with Lacombe's assessment. The Inspector of Schools JA Mcrae wrote the government and informing them of this problem.



"All the emanations from the cellar which is unventilated now flow into dining room and main building." Foreshadowed the illness to follow. NC p.79

"The Building have been put up without due consideration for the purpose for which they would be required, hurriedly constructed of poor materials, badly laid out without due provision for lighting, heating or ventilating." Martin Besnon, Indian Affairs, NC p.78

With poor ventilation, clean air became polluted in a matter of minutes. NC p.90

To ensure that schools were built within a limited budget, funding was granted on a per capita basis.

Further more, this under funded per-capita system led naturally to abuse.

The system paid on the number of children that were enrolled in the school. Recruiting and retention became critical factors in receiving the dearly needed funds. This would either lead to under attended under funded schools, or over crowded schools that were bursting at the seams and yet still under funded for the number of children shoehorned into the walls. Either way, the meager per-capita system failed the children, and was apposed by the church. This per capita system of limited funding toward Aboriginal children in education is still used today.

It was all basically the same model, right. And they all got funding from Government to run these things based on the numbers. So, that's why they wouldn't send them to hospital, they would have their own infirmaries, because if they would stay at the school they wouldn't loose a student. Right, and as long as they could keep the student alive for the year they would get more funding.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

1907 The Archbishop of Caledonia complained that:

"The per capita grant system encourages the taking in of those physically and intellectually unfit simply to keep up numbers." NC p. 88

The more children enrolled in class, the more money the government would release to the church.

All food, building maintenance, teacher, and administrative salaries, school books, children's health care, all would have to be maintained within this limited budget. This amount was much less than the average Canadian child and so the schools had to implement cost cutting business practices to help make ends meet. SV p 126, 292

Many of the schools ran farms for profit. In the guise of industrial education, children would labour tending to crops and livestock for half of the school day. This meat and produce would then be sold in the market, or ended up on the plates of the teachers and staff. The children would only receive the minimum amount of food.



The senior boys we had to work outside. But the seniors from about 12 years old to 16 they use to work all afternoon like two or three hours in the afternoon and that it. Then they would go early in the morning; then they would go to milking cows. Early in the morning they would go milking cows by hand and I was one of them. I'd milk cows. Even some kids worked in the piggery. And I see kids eating right from the slop, big 45 gallon we use to haul it. You know, a few nibbles here and there.

Ernie Philip

Was it because they were so hungry?

Jannica Hoskins

Yep, and some people used to cook to, potatoes because they had a fire there were they use to cook the slop for the pigs. And the kids use to put potatoes under the fire to eat. Potatoes half raw, some of them were pretty burnt.

Ernie Philip



But like I say there was a lot of hard times you know, here. You talk to the elders and that and they will tell you about how they went hungry and how they learned o steal. They taught them bad things.

Richard Jules

It's really hard. I think that to me its harder then the actual strapping I got in school. The hunger we were subjected to. There were apples in there. There use to be an orchard down below were they have the Kekulies (earth lodges) now in Kamloops. They had an orchard down their. Crab apples, mackintosh, you name it. And the apples would fall on the ground. Oh, we were so hungry, if only I could get some of them apples. We would sneak down the river. Go down and come up. Fill our aprons with apples. If we got caught boy, Brother Joseph use to have a stick as thick as your thumb, big long one. He would grab that and boy he could whack you across the legs. Be welts all over black and blue. 'Drop it drop it!' You would have to let it all go. But you know, we learned to be smarter then them.

Dr. Mary Thomas

The kids were surrounded by food. Orchards full of apples, barley, asparagus, and wheat. Yet they went hungry. But as always, kids will find a way.

This area you see over here. That's all ploughed under. This is where the cellar was.

Richard Jules

What would be stored in the cellar?

Jannica Hoskins

The cellar well they would have stuff like potatoes and apples you know the vegetable that were stored because they did have a vegetable garden. Like in some areas over there, they would have carets, potatoes stuff like that. And the

boys would have to go and pick them and store them in the cellar. And we will go exactly where the cellar was. But this here was the site of the cellar.

Richard Jules

They had a cellar, great big cellar and it was full of apples. Nice big mackintosh. And it was padlocked. But up on the top there was a whole. The air vent, you look down there boy you can see them apples, and the aroma.

Dr Mary Thomas



But here is where the guys use to steel apples, and they were pretty good at it.

Richard Jules

What would they do?

Jannica Hoskins

First of all, let's use this stick as an example. They would get a stick, and you would get a nail.

Hammer the nail in the end and leave it out a good size. You would then go to the steps. The steps were concrete. You would go and take the head off the nail. File off the head of the nail. You would then get a string and tie the string on the other end. You would then come over to the cellar and they would have these air holes. You couldn't go through there because they had barb wire. But it was big enough for an apple to go through. You would aim it and bang. It would stick in the apple and you would pull it out.

Richard Jules



Sometimes it would make a hole but it wouldn't stick, the nail would come out. And the Nun use to wonder how come these apples are full of holes, couldn't figure it out. Here it was us, we were, boy if we got an apple up there that was like a pot of gold. And we would share it among each other if we only got one. We would have to cut it up and share it. You know when you get hungry you learn how to steal.

Dr Mary Thomas

So that's how we ate.

Richard Jules

Because you were so hungry.

Jannica Hoskins

Oh yeah, but I would like to show you were the apple trees are.

Richard Jules



Now over here, we have a few of these trees left, but they cut the majority of them down. But all along here right to the end was all orchards. But anyway, with these trees along time ago we would sneak out; this was out of bounds too. You could come over here because they new you would be stealing apples. So what we do is you would take your shoe lasses off your running shoes. Then you would tie them up right there on both sides, tie them up. Then you pick all the apples and stuff them into your pants. Then your walking like this, and they wouldn't notice right) no you would hide away, you would have your own little secret places to go. And then you would make a little cache some where and hide them. Underground, but somebody would be watching. Some other kid would be watching. And as soon as you left bang he would be there and dug it up. And went some were else and hid it some were else. And you would come back and hey where's my apples where's my cache? It's all gone. So you would have to partners with somebody else; hey chummy give me an apple. So you created a lot of friends through food. If you had food you had lots of friends.

Richard Jules

Kids have a keen sense of justice. They know what is fair and what is not. They worked the farms, milk the cows, gathered the fruit and vegetables and they cooked the food. Then they sat down to their porridge, baloney sandwiches, and skim milk. While just a few feet away, the Priest Nuns and Teachers filled their bellies on beef, cream, and sweet deserts.



This was the dinning room. The staff the teachers had a dinning room in here. But this was the girl's side over here. And our food in the morning, they had great big vats like that. We would have to make porridge the day before. We had porridge every morning, a piece of bread, no toast, just a piece of bread, and a little chunk of butter

with a glass of skim milk. That was our daily breakfast every morning. Once in a blue moon, like on a holiday, we would get a dish of corn flakes. And that was a big treat. .

Dr. Mary Thomas



And you could smell their food. The principle use to have his table right here. And they would come in with trays with roast beef mashed potatoes, you name it. The apple sauce, they had an orchard of apples, we never even got a taste of apple sauce. And you could see their table, just full of every good thing to eat. Then in comes the cake. I would say to myself, "I'll get a chunk of that cake, don't you worry." Before they would take it back into the kitchen you made sure you walked a little bit too close to the table (Mary takes a scoop with her finger).

Dr Mary Thomas

But it was always about food. Like if you were playing marbles and you would have a lot of marbles. Well marbles was like a currency. Were you could give somebody five marbles for a slice of bread. You know, that's what you did. If you were a good marble player, you would have a lot of marbles you could buy somebody's apple, buy somebody's piece of bread. You kept in pretty good shape that way. I wasn't too bad. I use to bull-fudge quite a bit. But you had to eat so, yeah so you had to gamble.

Richard Jules

So, Indian Residential Schools taught you how to gamble for food, how to steal food, and that you need food!

Jannica Hoskins

That's right. I remember that.

Richard Jules

One of the facts that I think about those schools, early on and maybe later on as well, was that they were always under funded. And if the key motive for bringing children to school was to educate them, they never had the appropriate amount of resources to hire fully qualified teachers and others.

Chief Bob Joseph

The children were always hungry, they were poorly clothed, and they were chronically sick.

Prime Minister Macdonald was informed of this inadequate situation directly in 1886 yet nothing was changed. SV p.291



It was clear that the Macdonald policies were not directed toward the building of responsible native schools.

Still, shall we be forgiving toward Macdonald and his government. Was his heart in the right place? Did he mean well?

Macdonald's Indian Policies were not founded on misguided utilitarian kindness. Make no mistake, the federal governments involvement in Residential Schools was never about doing the right thing.

Macdonald did not wake up every morning and ponder how he could better help the native children. He woke up, pulled on his boots, and said, "How can I build this nation?" His government, his Department of Indian Affairs (now the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, INAC) and subsequent department leaders all ignored the suffering of these children.

Consider this:

- If the Indian policies were benevolent, it would not have chronically underfunded the Residential Schools, knowingly leaving the children hungry and poorly clothed.
- If the Indian policies were benevolent, it would not have constructed schools that were well below accepted building standards of that day.
- If the Indian policies were benevolent, it would not have ignored the deaths of tens of thousands of children from tuberculosis.

This disregard for the children's health continued as a matter of government policy well after Macdonald's death in 1891. The great bureaucratic wheel was set in motion.

Duncan Campbell Scott, who started his civil service career working for Sir John A MacDonald, continued to advance the government policy of Indian assimilation. As Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Scott influenced every facet of native life. Indian Residential Schools would continue to be the critical tool in controlling Canada's First Nations.



Over years of neglect, these poorly constructed over crowded farms were to become the breeding ground for tuberculosis.

I look at the history of these schools and recognize that because of the overcrowding and substandard conditions in which many, many students had to live under, that it was a breeding ground for tuberculosis. And many, many kids got tuberculosis. My mother had tuberculosis, a brother of mine had tuberculosis, and a sister and a foster sister of mine had tuberculosis. And there are from time to time students who come and say when are we going to take about that abuse. They considered it a form of abuse as well, that we had to be in these crowded conditions and substandard living situations were tuberculosis was rampant.

Chief Bob Joseph

1903 Dr. Ian McRae, the BC Inspector-General of Indian Affairs, wrote to Superintendent Scott: *"I have before pointed out that the Indian death-rate is*

terribly high, that our medical advisers attribute the frightful mortality largely to tuberculosis... and that, in my opinion, we are taking no effective steps to reduce the death-rate. Frankly, if matters are allowed to proceed, as they are proceeding today, it will be but a short time before the Indians are wiped out of existence by this disease. I therefore appeal to you to have some action taken, so that the spread of Consumption from the Indian population to the white people will be checked." Letter of Dr. I. McRae, Regional Inspector-General, to Superintendent of Indian Affairs D.C. Scott, Ottawa, February 6, 1903

1907 January 27, The Honourable S.H. Blake, characterized the state of the schools to Minister, Frank Oliver: *"The appalling number of deaths among the younger children appeals loudly to the guardians of our Indians. In doing nothing to obviate the preventable causes of death, brings the Department within unpleasant nearness to the charge of manslaughter."* NC p. 77

"In 1909 Dr. Peter Bryce of the Ontario Health Department, was hired by the Indian Affairs Department in Ottawa to tour the Indian residential schools in western Canada and British Columbia and report on the Health conditions there.

Bryce's report so scandalized the government and the churches that it was officially buried, and only surfaced in 1922 when Bryce, who was forced out of the civil service for the honesty of his report, wrote a book about this tragedy.

The Story of a National Crime." Rev Kevin D. Annett The Truth Commission into Genocide in Canada for additional information visit www.hiddenfromhistory.org



"In his report Dr. Bryce claimed that Indian children were being systematically and deliberately killed in the residential schools. He cited an average mortality rate of between 35% and 60%, and alleged that staff and church officials were regularly withholding or falsifying records and other evidence of children's deaths." K Annette After visiting 35 schools Bryce submitted his report in November 1907 to members of Parliament and to the churches, detailing this health crisis. NC p. 90

Bryce charged that this was a “*Criminal disregard*” of responsibility. “*(In the schools, a trail of disease and death has gone on almost unchecked by any serious efforts on the part of the Department of Indian Affairs.*” NC p 51



Though the Department buried the report, news this big can't be contained. The Government scandal hit the papers.

The Saturday Night wrote: “*Indian boys and girls are dying like flies... Even war seldom shows as large a percentage of fatalities as does the education system we have imposed on our Indian wards.*” Nc p.90

Bryce later calculated that on the average, 42% of children had died as a direct result of their school experience. Though attendance records were sketchy, he estimated that in 1907 alone, upward of 1,614 children had died. Nc p. 92

Imagine the staggering figures of 4 out of 10 children dead.

Would you enroll your kids in a school with that record?

With the department's failure to address the good doctors concerns. He could only draw one conclusion.

“I believe the conditions are being deliberately created in our residential schools to spread infectious diseases... It is not unusual for children who are dying from consumption to be admitted to schools and housed alongside healthy children. This is a national crime.” Dr. Bryce, Genocide p. 16

“Recommendations made in this report followed the examination of hundreds of children; but owing to the active opposition of Mr. D.C. Scott, and his advice to the then Deputy Minister, no action was taken by the Department to give effect to the recommendations made... 1910.” The Story of a National Crime, by PH Bryce, MD;Ottawa, Ontario 1922, p.4-6

Bryce would later estimate that based on the evidence the government spent 34 times more on preventing TB among the white children.

Bryce concluded that the Government allotted \$3.40 to prevent TB for white children vs. the .10 cents allotted to prevent TB for native children. Some communities lost up to 80% of their native population from the TB epidemic.





Though Scott ignored Bryce, he did accept the figures stating:

“Fifty per cent of the children who passed through these schools did not live to benefit from the education which they had received therein.”

NC p. 51 Duncan Campbell Scott

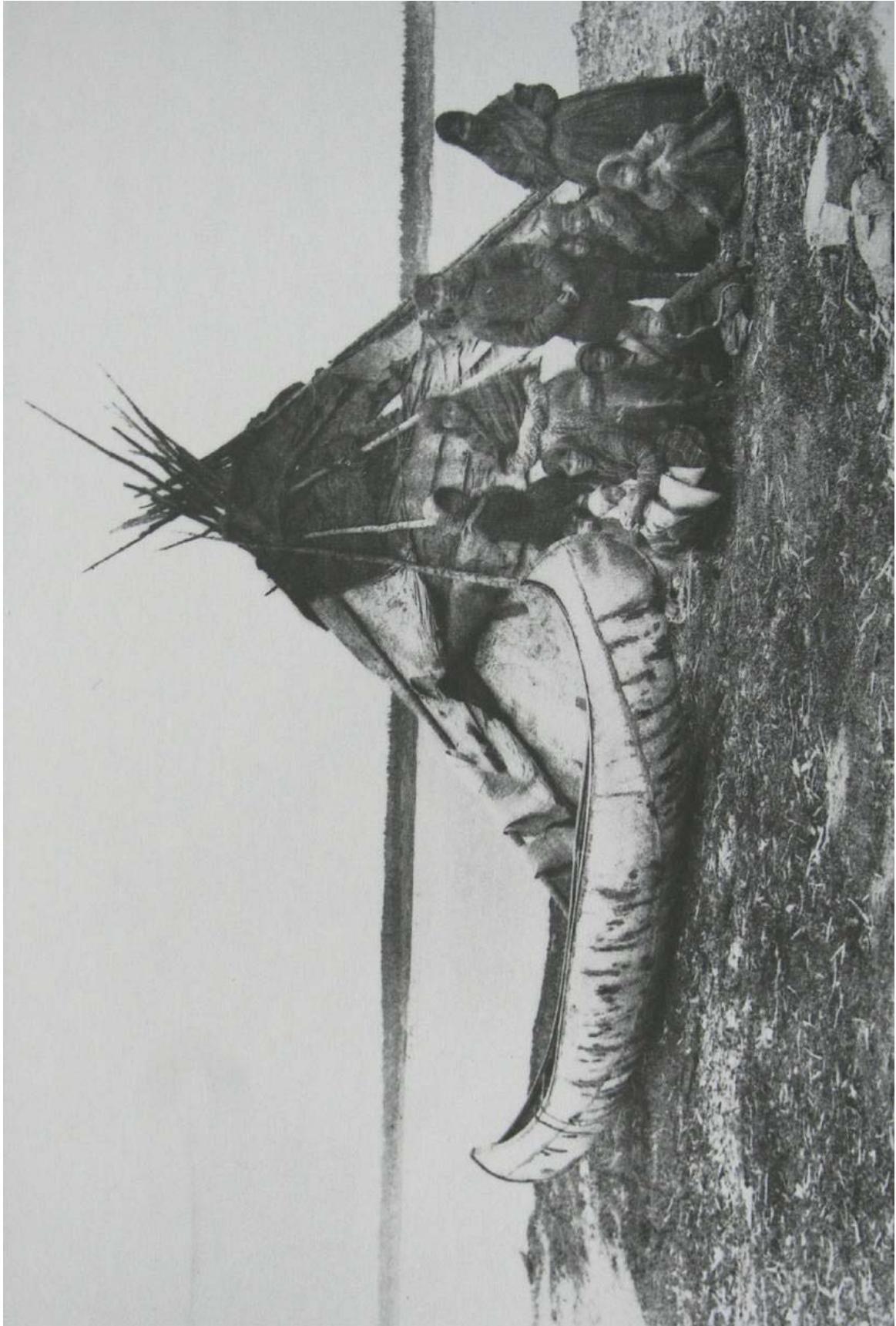
1910 April 12 Scott wrote:

“It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness by habiting so closely in these schools and that they die at a much higher rate than in their villages.



But this alone does not justify a change in the policy of this Department, which is geared towards the final solution of our Indian Problem.” Department of Indian Affairs Superintendent D. C. Scott to B.C. Indian Agent-General Major D. McKay, DIA Archives, RG 10 series. – Genocide p.6

Did he say final solution?



There was a period were there was up to 50% at a given time were children died. And that's as tragic as it can get. But nobody talks about it too much or nobody knows about it. I don't know, it saddens you to know that so many young minds and young lives passed away in these schools and never had the full... never had the experience of growing older.

Chief Bob Joseph

What stories would you hear about your grandparent's generation? I know at that time there must have been lots of TB. There was a major epidemic.

Jannica R Hoskins

Oh yes. Our people had TB too, the same as other people. And our people were segregated. They were put off into little huts and that's where they stayed until they were cured. There was a place called Tranquille. But it wasn't for our people. It was for other people. And the only way that a native could get treated



there, was allowed into that place, was if he was a Canadian Soldier. And we have a TB hut right over here. And of course with malnutrition, I guess with malnutrition it brought about diseases.

Richard Jules

And when your malnourished your more susceptible to contagious diseases.

Jannica R Hoskins

So like this building here. This was brought around to the different houses where some one in the house had TB. They would bring this to their house and they would take that person and put them in here. This is where they resided.

Richard Jules

When I first came here lots of people said that this must have been a shed because they couldn't imagine kids or anybody staying in here that had TB, segregated from the rest. So what would be the life style from some one who lived in here from what you know?

Jannica R Hoskins

From what I know there would probably be a bed, a coal oil lamp, stove, a little table. Not much else. It wasn't until later on the 1960's that there were places built for natives like in Sardis, down around the Chilliwack area. Before that, this was the answer.

Jannica R Hoskins

What's this?

Jannica Hoskins

That's the chimney. It is the chimney for this place because they had a little stove inside here. Up on top there, so you can see how small it is.

Richard Jules

Let's see if we can touch the edge.

Jannica R Hoskins



So that's not even ten feet long. So it's about the size of a jail cell I would imagine.

Richard Jules

That's also true of aboriginal people in prisons. Historically aboriginal people once their in prison they would die very quickly. And so, no different then imprisoning children, the kids are going to die very quickly too. The shift from eating traditional foods, and living a traditional life style, and having a traditional level of fitness, to being confined and incarcerated and being given substandard. I mean, Europeans were use to being confined and imprisoned and given substandard nutrition and they had adapted. They could survive on crappy food and cramped conditions for long periods of time. Aboriginal people couldn't. The minute you put them behind bars and gave them their gruel every day, they would die. They just couldn't survive in school.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

In 1920 Before a Parliamentary Committee Scott defended his decision to forcibly remove Indian children from their families and place them into residential schools saying,

"I want to get rid of the Indian problem..."



"Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic, and there is no Indian question, and no Indian Department." NC46 or Mental Health Profiles 6 + cited in Titley, 1986, p. 50

By 1930s the aggressive Indian policies first initiated by the Macdonald government were alive and well. Superintendent Scott almost succeeded in accomplishing the departmental primary goal, to do away with the Indian fact.





Dr. Mary Thomas often relished in her memories with her daughter Sharon Jules.

I'm just remembering my sister Mini, who was a year and a half older than me. You know that still hurts. She was so sick. Cough, cough. Yet they made her work along side of us. It was steam in that laundry room. And then their hands all wet they had to go out and put sheets on the line to dry. And she had this terrible cold, and yet she had to go out there. And it got to the point where she blacked out. She fell on the floor. And they packed her up to the infirmary. The last time I seen her was that evening, during supper I went in. And the Nun broke up bread and put in a glass of milk. And told be to go and give it to Mini for her supper. Just milk and broke up bread. She couldn't even eat it. Just cough, cough, and cough. Next morning I went to see her, she was gone. And the Nun said we had to bring her to the hospital last night. Well after that, I think she was in there for about two or three weeks and they sent her home to die. And she just went so fast. She had pneumonia on top of tuberculosis. And she died at home.

Dr. Mary Thomas



Assimilation never was successful. Well over a century later, First Nations people are still demanding that their legal rights be recognized. With the Governments attempts to end the Indian land question by ending the Indian people, all that has been accomplished is that this issue has been delayed until today. The cost for this delay was paid dearly by the Indian Children.



I have to go right back to what happened. Present social and economic conditions of aboriginal people now and how there's lots of causes for it but it's just implausible to think that the Residential Schools and the legacy of the Residential Schools are not a big problem of a lot of the social dysfunctions for aboriginal people.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA



The abuses that individuals experienced at Indian Residential Schools but also highlighted and helped us to understand the broader legacy in the contexts of the community impacts and the family impacts, and made us aware of the intergenerational nature of this issue. The cycles of abuse and dysfunction that are occurring and existing in communities as a result of peoples experiences at the Indian Residential schools.

Shawn Tupper, DG-IRSRC



But in some instances, again getting back to the Residential Schools, it took away the ability for parenting, at some points. And that becomes intergenerational. One set of parents doesn't know how to parent it becomes dysfunctional within the society.

John Jules

I entered Fort Alexander Indian Residential School in September 1951. Before I started Residential School all of my older siblings had been to the same school. In fact there were four that were still resident, or still students there. And before us, our parents, our mother, and father had been students at that school. And before father and mother, my grandmother on my father's side had been a student at an Industrial School. So we have a long personal history.

National Chief Pill Fontaine, AFN



But when the Grand Chief was talking about how he comes from a family of survivors. And he went to school, but then he said, "because we have little boy and he is not even two." And he said, "My

mother having attended the Residential Schools, suffered Residential Schools, and had to watch us be taken by an Indian Agent to the same school to

experience the same abuse that she experienced.” And as a parent, I thought no wonder you have the generational problems. And the systemic problems within the families, I mean, how do you live with the guilt as a parent. You have the shame of what happened to you and the guilt.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

And you feel responsible when you shouldn't.

Jannica R Hoskins

And you have no power. Your right, you couldn't prevent it and yet you think as a parent you should have. You shouldn't allow your children to come to harm. And, no wonder, there's alcoholism and drug abuse and suicides.

Christopher Devlin, LP-CBA

And this is the true tragedy - the lasting effects of Indian Residential schools. The Pain that was felt by over 100,000 children's lives on in their children and grand children to this day.

In my case, I'm not an old person. When I was growing up we knew nothing about suicides. You never heard of someone committing suicide. Well that's become a fairly common occurrence in too many of our communities. I was just at a meeting in Thunder Bay, A fellowship meeting. And the Nan communities, there are some 50 First Nations communities in that region; they have had 286 suicides in the last fifteen years.

National Chief Phil Fontaine



The suicide rate I'm telling you. It just still hurts me today, the suicide rate of our youth. Was in the area, (wipes tears) out of all suicide cases, 74% were of native ancestry across Canada that committed suicide. 64% out of them were children that were taken away from their home and placed into non-

native foster homes. They came home, they felt empty, they didn't know who they were, and they didn't know anything about their identity. They didn't know who their parent, who their relatives were.

Dr. Mary Thomas



The federal governments desire to do away with the Indian fact left deep scars leaving behind generations of disposed people. Separated from their culture and separated from their land

We would be putting our heads in the sand if we were to argue that there was no prejudice or that there has been no discrimination or that there has been no racism. We have had all of those in Canada. And we still experience that today. Even though we have a more tolerant country than most in the world we still suffer from discrimination and prejudice. In jails, detention centres, youth detention centres that are filled with our people. Provincial jails, in some provincial jails 100% of the inmate population are First Nations. Federal penitentiaries; we are only 4% of the Canadian population, in some penitentiaries it's up to 50%. And that's by-product of poverty. There's no question about that. And if you go back a little further, it's Residential Schools that created this or caused this dysfunction in our families and in our communities.

National Chief Phil Fontaine, AFN

I hoped I could find some advice on how we could all move forward and bring closure.



I'm just hoping that you can shed some light on this. I believe that's its all about better exposure.

Through education?

Jannica R Hoskins

For sure, but in terms of... here I'm referring to what Canadian are exposed to. They ought to be exposed to the facts; the true story about aboriginal people or First Nations people here; the conditions, the intolerable conditions that exist in First Nations communities. And to bring closure for many of us its about telling our story. And that's always been my biggest and strongest desire. Was to have someone recognize what was done to us. Accept responsibility for what was done to us. Apologies for what was done to us. And then most importantly, is to be able to

tell the story so that all will know what the Residential experience was all about. What it did to people. The consequences of those actions, and its place in our history because we all have to contend with that now.

National Chief Phil Fontaine



I watched Texas Henry, a nine year old from the Little Shuswap Indian Band, connect with his native culture by capturing on film survivor and world fancy dancer Ernie Philip perform at the Squilax Pow wow. The words of these Elders and survivors echoed in my mind, *“But for our young people...this is not just for you to know, this is for you to teach.”* Chief Bob Joseph and Dr. Mary Thomas

We’ve talked about how many survivors have identified to you clearly that what they want is their story to be told. Is there going to be any emphasis in regards to that with in Provincial educations systems?

Jannica R Hoskins

You know that’s... in some ways that gets lost in all of the debate. And I think in large part that’s probably the most important thing that we can do. We are hoping that we can see the development of an appropriate curriculum with respect to Residential Schools. One that doesn’t duck the hard issues. The reality of what happened in Canada over the last 150 years. I think survivors need to know that people understand that it wasn’t their fault.

Survivors need to know as well that this wont happen again. So public education is a really important thing, we don’t do enough of it.

Shawn Tupper



You cant escape the fact that people were harmed and were hurt. And if they new, they would be appalled they wouldn’t accept that for a moment. And it would compel government through pressure form their citizens to do something about this.

National Chief Phil Fontaine



First Nations identity was suppressed over multiple generations with devastating results. I know. My family suffered and lived in denial.

The Powwow, once outlawed, is now one of the best ways to reclaim these traditions.

I was very fortunate to be welcomed by Margaret August-Sjodin who introduced me to native dance.

This regalia belonged to my daughter Tracy. She made this herself in her last year of school. She was runner up princess for the Chase Secondary School. And she made this herself to dance in the powwow. This is the last one she made. She's now passed away. I'm letting Jannica wear it because this is her first time she's dancing in the powwow also. So I thought that it would be very special because she also reminds me of my daughter to.

Culture is a way of life, it's a way of believing. And me and Tracy use to go to the river in the mornings. We would go in and do our prayers in the four directions. Its like a new beginning in the morning because of the rebirth and purity of the water. It teaches us good things and helps us through the bad times. She use to go to the powwow and it was a spiritual growth for her. Something that really meant something to her. Having the culture throughout her life it helped her realize that there is a direction that she could take. No matter whether it was going to be a bad day, or if she was sad. She knew that in her heart that she could fall back on these beliefs of the swimming and the prayer in the four directions.

Margaret August-Sjodin







We are not a people who were defeated. We can choose to remember the truth about our past. And we can choose to embrace the future. And from what I have learned, it is in the act of embracing our culture that we can heal ourselves. I asked John Jules about the spiritual powers of dance. And the words he spoke changed me forever.

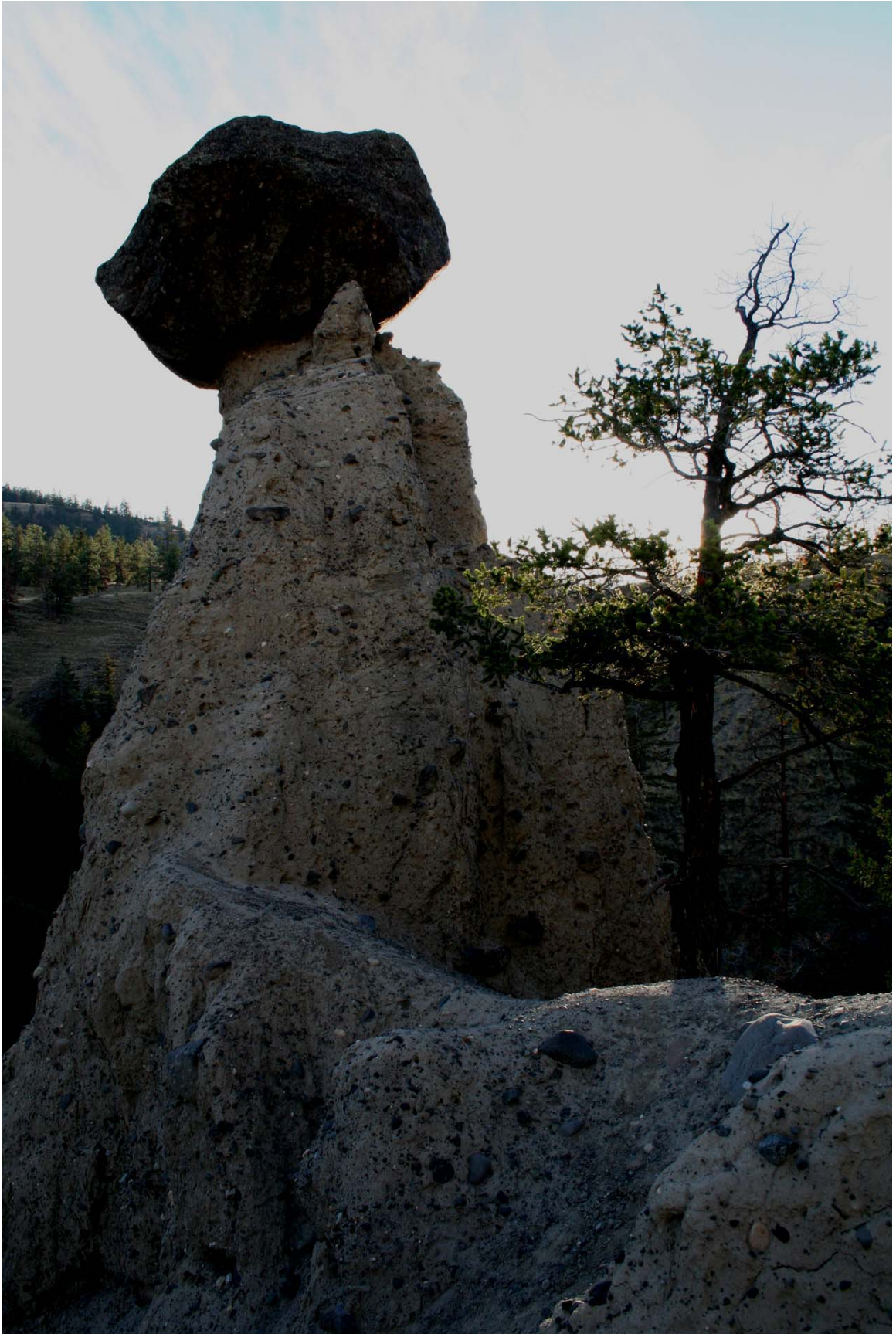


We have here what is called the plateau style feather pick up. And what we do within that, if a dancer drops a feather or a plume then we immediately bring everything to a halt. And we call out the warriors, a veteran who has actually seen battle and has drawn blood as its called. They are the only ones in our minds that has the ability to pick that feather up. The feather in our minds is connected to the eagle, the highest flying of all birds. And thus in our minds the ones nearest to the creator. And it's the Golden Eagle that actually carries our words to the creator. And his helpers, the eagles, are carried in very high esteem, that when we where them, it becomes sacred.



And when that feather falls its taken as a spiritual connotation. That it could mean one of our members has fallen. And by that, all the red children of Turtle Island. Or it may mean that the hope of our people is such at a low level that we need the ability to pick that up. To rise it back up to where it should be so that it stands in equality to all of us standing here around so that we have ability to give back the power not only within the meaning of the feather but to the dance and to one another. Because we are all witness to that. Even if we don't actively take part in the dance, we actively take part as being witness. So we are all part of a ceremony that ties us together. So all of these things come together in relation to that single feather. Falls down to the earth. That we as people pick that up. So we pick up our own spirits. And all the people around are helping in their own way to make that happen. Giving that recognition to spirit.

John Jules



Was this the answer? My culture lost.



The confusion of my identity, this was not for me to suffer alone. We are all witness to this. And we all have a shared responsibility to address this historic wrong.

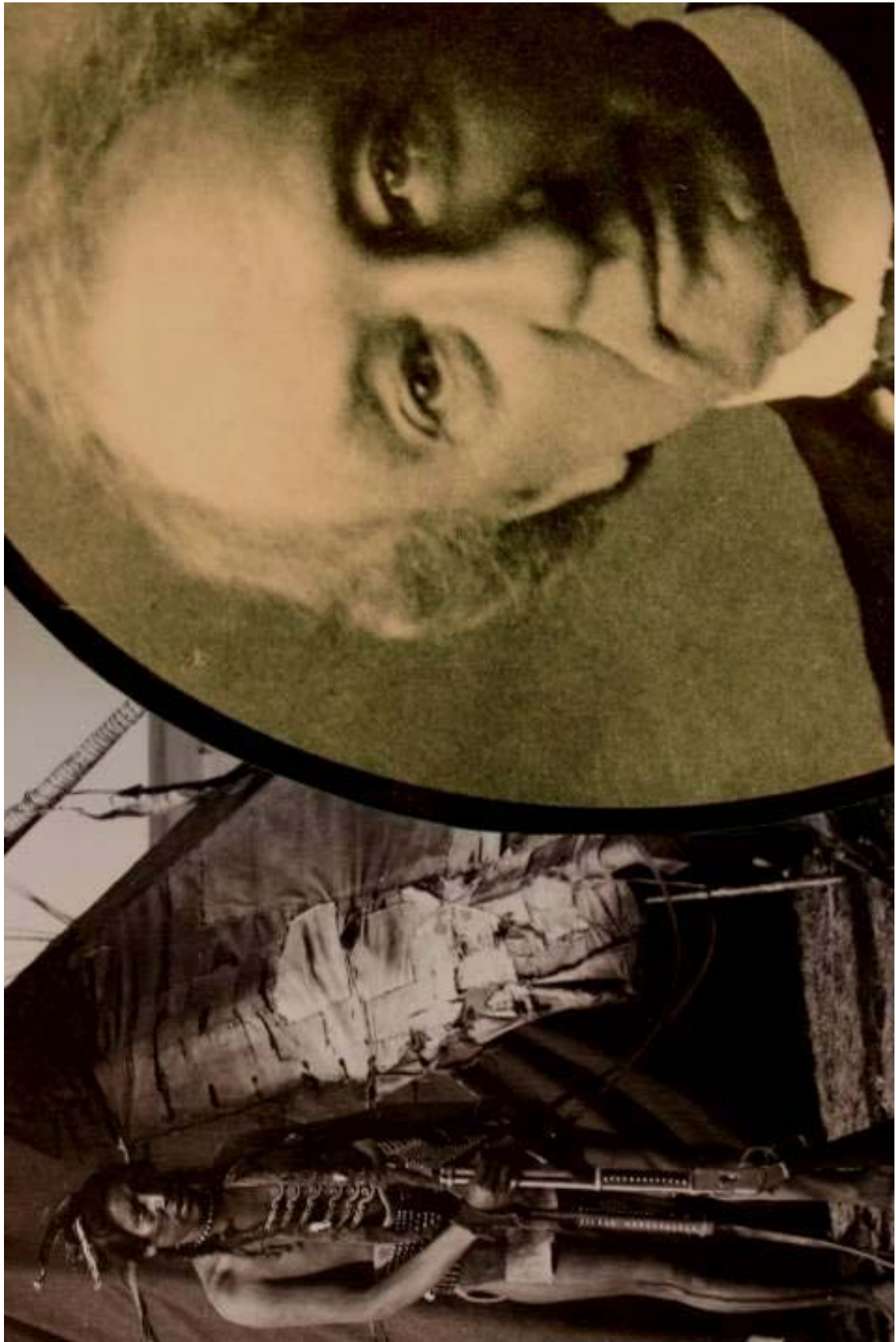


And I remember when I first got here there was a lady from the Anglican Church who came. I didn't know her very well. And we were talking just like this and suddenly in the middle of me trying to say something, she apologized. So I broke down and I cried. So those moments of, those gestures of, asking for forgiveness. Whether we give it or not is not important. But those gestures are real important. They're little steps toward reconciliation by a party who

is willing to enter into some kind of new relationship or dialogue or discussion. And so we should never be angry about the notion that we can talk about reconciliation. It's only a gesture, it's only a beginning. And it's going to take a whole lot of work in any event if reconciliation truly happens between Aboriginals and Canadians. But it will happen, but it's going to take a period of time to achieve it likely, and for survivors, those who get angry when I talk about it. You have to know that it's simply a step. It's simply a moment in time where people can meet and determine whether they have a future together that's kinder, gentler or softer, more loving more caring more compassionate.

Chief Bob Joseph

An aggressive Indian policy inspired by a singular vision can effect generations of people. These policies continue until the *people* decide that its time for a change.





The RCMP gives the final salute to Salmon Arm's guest of honour, Dr Mary Thomas.

We do live a society more tolerant than most. First Nations and non First Nations are trying to revisit their past. And thought you can't blame the son for the sins of the father. We can agree that our joint history needs to be re-examined.

Canada born from conflict with many sacrificed.

With all the pain in her passed, she still gives a warm smile and shares her legends and stories in the hopes of reconciliation; a testament to a people who would not be defeated.

And when you grow up with that hard feeling inside you have no feelings for anybody. Not even for yourself. And it's tough. It's really hard. I went through it. And I had to really work on myself. And it was through my culture that I learned how to let go.

Dr Mary Thomas

It's through our culture that we can learn to let go; knowledge, respect, acknowledgement, and forgiveness.

We as Canadians can all learn from the spirit of the dance. In this circle we become witness to our shared history.

And together we can pick up our fallen feather.

The Fallen Feather

Dec 2007 *Fallen Feather Productions*

*Written, Edited, Researched Produced and Photographed By Randy N Bezeau
Co-Researched, Co-Produced, Photographed, Design and Published By Jannica R Hoskins
Photographed by Texas Henry*

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The Shuswap, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council, 1989

Created by

Randy N Bezeau - President Fallen Feather Productions
Jannica R Hoskins, Cree First Nation - Treasurer Fallen Feather Productions

Co-Owners of The Fallen Feather Documentary

- Dr. Mary Thomas, (1918 - 2007) Secwepemc First Nations, featured guest, (limited copy rights to be shared by her family)
- Richard Jules, Secwepemc First Nation, featured guest
- John Jules, Secwepemc First Nation, featured guest
- National Chief Phil Fontaine, Sagkeeng First Nation, featured guest
- Chief Bob Joseph, Kwakiutl First Nation, featured guest
- Ernie Philip, Secwepemc First Nation, featured guest
- Margaret August-Sjodin, Secwepemc First Nation, featured guest
- Christopher Devlin, LP, featured guest
- Shawn Tupper, featured guest
- Dan Saul, Secwepemc First Nation, featured guest
- Honorable Ted Hughes, featured guest
- Mason Cooper, Third Camera
- Josh Zawacick, Music, This Land
- Mike Collins, on acoustic guitar
- Jerry Bannister, Fourth Camera
- Sage Hills Drummers, as their music is featured in the film
- Morning Star Drummers, as their music is featured in the film
- First Nations Dancers, Squilax Pow wow Dancers as featured in the film
- Texas Henry, Secwepemc First Nation, Photographer'
- Chief Keith Matthews, Secwepemc First Nations, History of Kamloops

Special Thanks

- Chief Shane Gottfriedson, Kamloops Indian Band, Secwepemc Nation
- Chief Felix Arnouse, Little Shuswap Indian Band, Secwepemc Nation
- Bob Joseph, Kwakiutl First Nation, Founder of Indigenous Corporate Training
- Bob Moody, Metis, Shuswap Nation Tribal Council Director
- Drum Keeper Brandon Daniels, Shawnrae Gabriel Adrian Retasket, Joe Meldrum, John Jules, Gordon Cuthbert, Alexis Edwards, Dallas Edwards, Shawn Bottle, Travis Marr, and Aaron Daniels
- Staff and Students of the Sk'elep School of Excellence, Kamloops Indian Band Secwepemc Nation
- Mel and Marlene Jack, St. Mary's Mission Indian Residential School

Kukschem, Thank You - All my Relations



Filmography of Director Randy Bezeau
randy@fallenfeatherproductions.com

Film maker Randy Bezeau brings cultural memory to life with extensive experience filming Canada's First nations. Having lived on Indian Reserve Land, the lives legends and stories of the Secwepemc Nation are brought to life with their unique message preserved and respected. Fallen Feather Productions is a company founded by Randy N Bezeau and Jannica R Hoskins. This cooperative ownership film making model is dedicated to preservation of Indigenous ethos and sustainability.



Photo Journalist and Aboriginal Educator
Jannica R Hoskins
jannica@fallenfeatherproductions.com

Photo Journalist Jannica Hoskins is of the Cree First Nation. Motivated by the truth, Jannica began this personal journey to piece together the puzzle of why her Cree culture was hidden. In exploring the vibrant culture of First Nations, living with the Thomas family on the Neskonlith Indian Band in the Secwepemc Nation, native education became a way of life. Jannica also works as an Aboriginal Educator and Elementary Student Advocate at four Elementary Schools in Revelstoke, BC.

