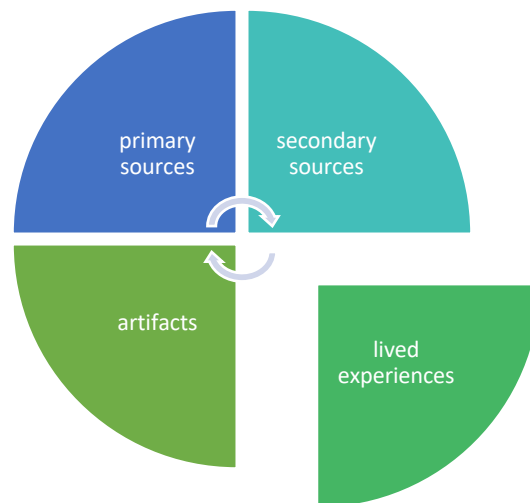


Kitayánán: We are Still Here

Between 1831 and 1996, residential schools operated in Canada through arrangements between the Government of Canada and various Christian church organizations. Over 140 residential schools existed nationwide and an estimated 150,000 children were forced to attend.

One common objective defined this era– the assimilation of Indigenous children and the resultant eradication of Indigenous cultures, languages, and traditions.

Today, we can learn about the experiences of the students in these institutions using a variety of sources. Primary sources include the school documents such as attendance registries, photographs, and Survivor diaries; secondary sources like books and films about residential schools; and artifacts like farming tools and children’s uniforms. These sources speak on behalf of both living and dead students.



While residential schools are very much part of Canada’s past, they are not relegated solely to the annals of history. Residential schools form a very real part of our present. By several estimates, there are currently 80,000 Survivors alive in Canada today. The chances are high that you know a Survivor, have sat next to one in a public space, shared a work or school environment, or know someone whose family has been affected by intergenerational trauma as a result of residential schools. Their lived experiences and personal testimonials provide us with the fourth type of source for learning about residential schools. They speak for those Survivors who are no longer with us and provide us with a direct account of their experiences. Their stories are a breathing connection between the past and the present and a tangible gift to the future.