



REMEMBERING THE CHILDREN

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION WEEK 2022

CANADA'S
HISTORY

Stories behind
the history



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA

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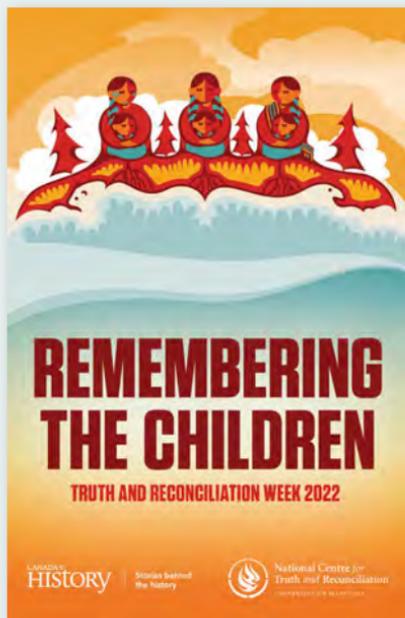


The Journey Continues

Laurie McDonald

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The cover illustration is about healing and nurturing your inner child through reconnection to the land and culture. The characters are built into the landscape as trees, referencing the concept of seeds in the Survivors' Flag. Including the three characters, seven trees represent the schools that we will discuss in the publication. Within the landscape, there are also references to Muskrat and Eagle. In the Weesakayjack creation story, Muskrat sacrificed their life to find soil to bring up to recreate the world, and Eagle was the Creator's messenger. The Muskrat, a humble water creature, plays a massive role in many creation stories. They represent renewal, resilience and compassion. The Eagle, a symbol of love, is thought to be the messenger bird that connects human beings to the Creator out of love and faith in us." – *Leticia Spence*



FROM OUR ELDERS

Hope for the future starts with respect

By Elder Harry Bone and Elder Florence Paynter

At Residential Schools they tried to erase us, erase our culture. We were punished for speaking our languages. And even outside Residential School, the government outlawed our culture — it was illegal to practice our ceremonies.

During this time when our ceremonies were banned, our cultures went underground. People protected our cultures and ceremonies — they kept them alive. The ceremonies were still practiced, but not in public where people could see them. Now our ceremonies are done in public. They are big celebrations. As Elders, our work is to support the young people learning these traditions, our Indigenous languages and our ceremonies. Understanding Indigenous languages is really important to know who you are as an Indigenous person.

The news about the graves at

Kamloops Indian Residential School in May 2021 really spoke for us. Residential School Survivors were sharing about these experiences for years, but people didn't believe us. They said the schools were run by churches and good people. But now people are beginning to see what really happened at Residential School.

We wish for everyone to experience Indigenous ceremonies one day. It would really touch their heart and their spirit. Connecting with the spirit is key to experience the good things. Spirit can help us override the negative stuff.

As youth, you are the future leaders and decision makers in this country. It's important to never forget what happened at Residential School. We hope this publication empowers you to start taking action now. There's so much you can do to help Canada work towards reconciliation.



Elder Harry Bone (Hons LLD, Order of Canada) (Treaty 2, Kee-seekoowenin Ojibway Nation)



Elder Florence Paynter (M.Ed, 4th Degree Anishinabe Mide Kwe) (Sandy Bay First Nation)



THE SACRED FIRE IS LIT

An awakening of hearts,
minds and spirits

Nicola Campbell

As I write this, one year has now passed since the announcement of the 215 unmarked graves. Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc is one of five Interior Salish linguistic groups in the southern interior. There are 34 Indigenous languages with over 90 dialects spoken in British Columbia, and, there are 18 Residential School sites. As the original people of British

Columbia, many of our grandparents and Loved Ones attended the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

Many of us were raised with stories from Loved Ones who attended — the St. George's Indian Residential School in Lytton, Kamloops Indian Residential School, Coqualeetza Indian Residential School in Chilliwack and St. Mary's Indian Residential School in Mission. If I could name all the



schools, I would, because every school in Canada has its stories.

As hard as it has been for non-Indigenous communities to publicly accept and believe, this is not news for our communities. Our grandmothers and grandfathers have been identifying the location of unmarked graves for as long as they have been speaking about the atrocities locked in their memories.

In the days and months following the Tk'emlúps media announcement, thousands of people, Elder Survivors and intergenerational Survivors from across Tmíxw-Turtle Island — the homelands of Indigenous people — arrived on the grounds of the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

The grief was palpable. The sacred fire was lit. The air heavy with

sorrow, tears that had gone unshed for many years touched the ground. The rhythmic heartbeat of drums was constant. The smoke of sacred medicines from our homelands: sage, cedar, sweetgrass, moved like ancestral spirits through the air across the grounds. This vigil represented a time of truth. This awakening of the hearts, minds and spirits of the people had to happen. It is time to return the spirits of these children to their homelands.

On the fourth day of the sacred fire following the announcement, the Pil'alt Canoe Family, Coastal Salish Loved Ones from Stó:lō Temexw (Chilliwack) arrived at Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc. A total of eleven Pil'alt children did not make it home from Kamloops Indian Residential School. The family made a decision

People from the Stó:lō Nation carry a canoe after a ceremony to lead their late ancestors from an unmarked, undocumented burial site back to their home, outside the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, in Kamloops, B.C., on May 31, 2021.





Jonny Williams (Xotxwes), of the Stó:lō Nation, holds an eagle fan as he helps guide his late ancestors from an unmarked, undocumented burial site to a canoe so they can travel home, outside the former Kamloops Indian Residential School, in Kamloops, B.C., on May 31, 2021.

to travel upriver and gather the spirits of their loved ones. Grandparents, parents, grandchildren wearing sacred regalia, carrying hand drums, singing the songs of their ancestors. On their shoulders they carried their six-person cedar canoe, *Xwe Xwos*, as their children danced traditional dances, lifting the hearts

of the people as they simultaneously gathered the spirits of the children who came from Stó:lō Temexw. Drums, representing a living drumbeat-heartbeat, echoed across tmíxw-temexw, radiating love. The spiritual ways of Salish people recognized by our ancestors, invoked healing within everyone present.

Normally our protocol for the death of a Loved One in Salish Territory is a four-day process. That four-day vigil turned into a week, and in turn became months. We have now faced wave after wave of truths. Each announcement of unmarked graves has brought Indigenous nations across Tmíxw-Turtle Island to our knees. Unmarked graves outside every Residential School in Canada means 130 sites that cradle the beloved bodies of children, coast to coast to coast. This is Canada.

Sacred traditional ceremonial practices normally commemorate



People gather at the Centennial Flame in Ottawa on May 30, 2021. Shoes were placed there to honour the children who never came home from the former Kamloops Indian Residential School at Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation.

death and bereavement. While attending Residential Schools, Indigenous children were not allowed to cry, nor were they allowed to express their grief. Grief and loss practices are important for healing and recovery. We must take time to allow the tears to fall. People want instant healing; however, the grief for these stolen children went on for generations. As a people, we cannot assign a timeline to healing from genocide. We must honour this journey and continue to do the work.

The Canadian government's purpose in creating Residential Schools was to "kill the Indian in the child." This was implemented by severing the ties Indigenous children had to their family, languages and cultural lifestyles. Love, affection, a safe home life sustained within multi-generational families and communities with Indigenous forms of governance and land stewardship practices. An abundance of traditional food sources, including salmon, berries, deer and moose, various types of plants including medicinal ones, all of which sustained the nutritional needs and well-being of Indigenous children. All was taken away.

The first law of our ancestors, across Tmíxw-Turtle Island, is unconditional love. Love gave our ancestors strength and courage to take care of and protect our traditional homelands. This reciprocal relationship is based in reverence for our waters, all living things including the ones that walk,

crawl, swim and fly. Traditional foods: the rooted ones, the berries, the plants and trees. The stones as ancestors and soil of the land all are significant to the well-being of past and future generations. These are intertwined within our sacred life's teachings. Love is the centre point from which our teachings radiate, honouring our families from one generation to the next, from one season to the next. Love is embodied in the lives of our children.

Resurgence represents a return to the abundant experience of joy, safety and wellness. As a people across Tmíxw-Turtle Island we are tirelessly working towards this. To experience love, to walk on feet unburdened by overwhelming memories of trauma, to create safe and nurturing homes for our families. The work being done today is towards this beautiful vision of cultural resurgence. This vision represents the invocation of healing joy and well-being for our children, ancestors and future generations.





REMEMBERING THEIR JOURNEY

Lisa Jane Smith

ILLUSTRATIONS: ROSALYN BOUCHA

As we journey through Residential School experiences, it is important to realize that these were not schools in the way you know them. Canada's Department of Indian Affairs controlled the country's relationships with Inuit, Métis and First Nations (which the government referred to as "Indians").

The department wanted to assimilate the children. Assimilation is when a group of people is absorbed into the main culture. The federal government usually provided the money for Residential Schools, which were run by Anglican, Mennonite, Methodist, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic and United churches.

Picture a sponge absorbing water. The water is still present and intact, but it remains trapped in the sponge. When the sponge is wrung out, the water is freed and independent. Like a sponge, Residential Schools were a tool that the Canadian government used to assimilate Indigenous Peoples. Instead of water, it was Indigenous languages, ceremonies, traditions and family relations that were absorbed. Indigenous children were

"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 Dept."

Duncan Campbell Scott, head of Canada's Department of Indian Affairs from 1913 to 1932

ripped away from their families and taken to a school where they did not speak the language.

It was very scary for the children. Thousands of them did not make it home.

Think of those children as shining stars in the sky guiding us through this cruel part of Canada's history. Those shining stars will guide us in reconciling our relationships with Indigenous Peoples. We all have a part to play. Let those stars guide us now, as we learn about seven Residential Schools from coast to coast to coast. There is a rich variety of Indigenous cultures. There is also great variety in the experiences of Residential Schools.

ABOUT THE PHOTOS

Often the pictures we see of Residential Schools look like schools that we think of today. But pictures can't tell the whole story. As you look at the images of children at Residential Schools, remember that they were taken from family to an unfamiliar place. Think about what the children might be feeling. Think about the strength they needed to get through each day.



Kamloops Residential School

Location:	Kamloops, B.C.
Opened:	1890
Run by:	Roman Catholic Church
Closed:	1978 (residence)

Keep in mind, students lived at these schools instead of going back and forth to home. Although they lived under the same stars, their lives were changed forever.

Kamloops was the largest Residential School in Canada. In its early days, the principal said that there was not enough food to properly feed everyone. This meant students were hungry and not properly nourished.

In 1924 a fire destroyed the entire girls' wing. Forty girls escaped in their nightclothes in

temperatures of 10 below zero. Your classroom is warm in the winter, but Kamloops was so poorly built that several students fell sick in the cold winters.

In the 1960s, the principal thought that the way to deal with older boys who fought and refused to apologize was to put them in a boxing ring. The boys would fight each other until they were too tired to care any more. Can you imagine that happening in your school? How would you feel if you had seen one of these fights?



Top left: Kamloops Indian Residential School. Top middle: Inside a classroom. Top right: The Roman Catholic Oblates who ran the school recorded no information about the people in this photo. Bottom right: A Grade 1 class. Bottom left: Children and staff in front of the school, around 1935. None of the other photos are dated.

In 1969, the Canadian government started running the school. By that time the school did not teach students. They lived there while they attended schools nearby.

In 2021, the Tk'emlúps to Secwépemc First Nation, with the help of a researcher from Simon Fraser University, identified more than 200 burial sites at

Kamloops Residential School. The community said some of those children were as young as three years old. It expressed love and respect for those lost children and their families.

Have you ever heard of a graveyard at a school where you or your friends go?

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: DESCHÂTELS-NDG ARCHIVES IN QUÉBEC; DESCHÂTELS-NDG ARCHIVES IN QUÉBEC



Shubenacadie Residential School

Location: Shubenacadie, N.S.
Opened: 1929
Run by: Roman Catholic Church
Closed: 1967

In April 1948, a researcher outlined plans for a five-year study of the effects of vitamin C and other vitamins on the physical, dental and mental health of children aged 7 to 16 in six Residential Schools across Canada. It was referred to as a “dietary survey.” In three of the six schools, children were not given dental care.

A controlled experiment is when you compare two groups. In Shubenacadie Residential School one group of students was given vitamin C tablets and the other group was not. The researchers studied the effects on the students’ gums and blood. It is also important to note that the experiment was completely unnecessary. Scientists already

knew how crucial good nutrition and vitamins were for growing children.

Consent is when you say yes or no. The students were not asked to say yes or no (give consent) to the experiment. They did not even know they were being experimented on! Would that ever happen at your school?

The Shubenacadie building was also not physically safe. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, federal and provincial fire marshals were worried that overcrowding created fire hazards at Residential Schools. In 1950, the Nova Scotia fire marshal recommended that a sprinkler system be installed in the Shubenacadie school, but the government said no.




 THE OBLATES OF MARY IMMACULATE
 INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS
 F = CHWENEGWAGINE N. S. *Yellowknife*
 1.5.1
 June 8, 1967
 Mother Marie Gertrude,
 Dear Mother,
 The children are still exclaiming over yesterday's visit from the Novices and Postulants. It was certainly a happy and memorable day for all of us especially for Brother Samson, our

Office of Charity of St. Vincent de Paul, Halifax, Conceptional Archives



Top: Students in the school dining room with a nun from the Sisters of Charity. Right: A note from a nun to her superior. "The children are still exclaiming over yesterday's visit from the Novices and Postulants. It was certainly a happy and memorable day for all of us especially for Brother Samson".
 Bottom: Older students working in the kitchen. There are no dates on the photos.

A former Shubenacadie student, Rita Joe, shines bright through her writing. She was celebrated for her poetry about her time at Residential School. Her work continues to inspire storytelling. In her poem "I lost my talk" she writes about being forced to speak English instead of her own language.

I lost my talk
The talk you took away.
When I was a little girl
At Shubenacadie school.





Amos Residential School

Location:	Amos, Que.
Opened:	1956
Run by:	Roman Catholic Church
Closed:	1973

Like so many Residential Schools, Amos's purpose was to destroy a rich existing culture and replace it with something foreign. Its goal was to take the starlight from children's eyes.

According to Survivors who went to Amos, priests picked the children up from their homes in the bush. The children were usually transported in trucks, which would have been scary for

them. They could only see their families at Christmas and in the summer.

Before arriving at the school, the children had lived together with their families in tents or log cabins. Now they were divided by age and gender, forced to live in a huge building, sleep in European-style beds and eat unfamiliar food. School staff gave students a number to identify them instead



Opposite page: Students on the school's playground. Above left: Amos Indian Residential School. Above right: Beds in one of the school's dormitories (sleeping areas). The photos are all undated.

of using their names. The children were made to wear a uniform, stripping their connections to family and culture.

The children's hair was washed with anti-lice shampoo and then cut. Hair often signified a connection to their family, tribe and Mother Earth. There are accounts from Survivors where the children thought someone in their family had died because their hair was being cut, symbolically severing their relation.

At Residential Schools, the people in charge did not know the children's Indigenous languages, so the children had to learn either French or English. In Amos the children learned French.

During playtime, sports such as hockey were important.

Survivors of the school remember the pressure on them to win. If they lost, they would be hit with a ruler. Competition to get on sports teams was so fierce, students sometimes hurt each other. Sports, even though they were not part of their own culture, gave some children a way to escape their fears and worries for a while.

The priests also created theatre and dance troupes. Photographs show children playing "Indian" by wearing feather headdresses or acting the part of missionaries bringing Christianity to the "Indians." Can you imagine being forced to make fun of your culture and traditions? This is harmful for the students since its purpose is to internalize a bad feeling towards their own culture. It is demeaning.



Beauval Residential School

- Location:** various sites in northern Saskatchewan, including Île-à-la-Crosse
- Opened:** 1897
- Run by:** Roman Catholic Church
- Closed:** 1995

Indigenous Peoples in Canada are either First Nations (which the government referred to as Indians), Métis or Inuit. Although we often talk about “Indian Residential Schools,” many Métis and Inuit children were also forced to go to these places. Let us journey to Saskatchewan, where some of the students were Métis.

Imagine being seven years old. Now imagine being put on a small red plane and watching your mom cry, on the shore, as you taxi off in the air. Imagine the fear and loneliness. That is what happened to Alphonse Janvier, a Survivor of the Île-à-la-Crosse location in a fur trading post.

Métis children were beaten for speaking Cree to each other.

School staff tried to force them to learn English but later switched to French. The goal was to destroy the children’s language and their ability to communicate with their families.

The federal government often didn’t provide money. It said the province or territory should pay for schools for Métis students. That didn’t always happen, nor were Métis children encouraged to attend public schools.

The strict schedule went from 5:30 in the morning to 8:00 at night. There was little room for play. Children did chores and religious duties, with some class time in the afternoon.

The routine also included punishment. A Métis student who attended the Fort Chipewyan





Top left: In this 1935 photo, the two nuns are named but the children are not.
 Top right: Roman Catholic church at Île-à-la-Crosse, undated. Bottom: A 1978 survey of the school lands.

location recalled that children who wet their beds were placed in tubs in the centre of the washroom floor. Staff poured iced water over their heads while everyone watched. At the Île-à-la-Crosse location bedwetters had to wear a diaper all day long.

The children were taught to be ashamed of their Métis culture. They were taught that all “Indians” did was raid farmhouses, kidnap women and burn houses.

Illness was common, and a lot of children were physically mistreated. Some were made to stand holding books above their head or to stand at the blackboard, pressing their nose within a chalk circle.

The teachers were all non-Indigenous, which led to a Métis graduate, Thérèse Arcand, deciding to go into teacher training and to return to the school to help her people.



Federal Tent Hostel at Coppermine

Location: Kugluktuk, N.W.T.
Opened: 1955
Run by: Anglican Church (owned by the federal government)
Closed: 1959

Let the stars guide our journey to the north, as we visit an Inuit experience. In what is now known as Nunavut, this hostel usually operated from March or April through to August or September.

There were up to 30 students, most of whom were from the Coppermine area near the shores of the Arctic Ocean. The children lived in wood-framed field tents that were not appropriate for the Arctic weather, making them drafty and difficult to heat. The tents were also easily damaged by high winds.

Smaller hostels were established near settlements in the Northwest Territories and northern Quebec, known as Nunavik. At these, children lived with Inuit adults, who were often (but not always) family members. One former student remembers her hostel mother at Kuujjuarapik giving the food and clothing intended for the hostel children to her own family.

At home with their families, children had eaten what's known

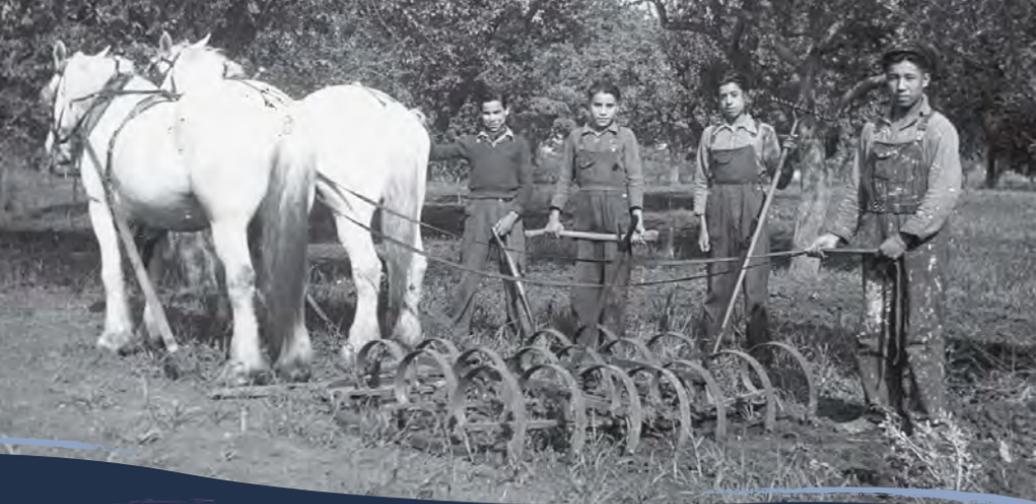
as country food — things like fish, berries and caribou, whale and seal meat. At first the school allowed some of these traditional foods, but later forced the children to eat an unfamiliar diet their bodies weren't used to. A boy who was very sick with measles got better after a local Inuit woman brought him some frozen caribou meat.

Parents were concerned about the children who attended the Inuvik hostel. The parents worried that the children learned gambling, drinking alcohol and other adult activities that are inappropriate for children.

Where your school likely has fountains and clean bathrooms, the Tent Hostel at Coppermine didn't always have fresh water to drink. To make matters worse, the hostel was located on a swamp area with poor drainage, so sewage (bathroom waste) was not always carried away quickly by currents and winds. This often made people sick.



Top: Maria, an Inuit woman, doing a drum dance in front of a group of students and adults, 1959. Bottom left: Students and adults outside the tent hostel. Bottom right: Saying goodbye to the Anglican bishop, 1955.



Mohawk Institute

Location: Brantford, Ontario
Opened: 1885
Run by: Anglican Church
Closed: 1970

Unlike a true school where children are encouraged to learn, the Mohawk Institute was an industrial school where children were forced to work. Boys were taught trades like carpentry and tailoring. Older boys received training in wagon-making and blacksmithing. Girls were taught housekeeping, sewing, spinning and knitting.

When you learn things at

school, it helps you choose what you want to do with your life. But the children at the Mohawk Institute had no choice. They did not have the chance to dream or to choose a profession. The people who ran the school believed they weren't suitable for anything other than the hard work they were forced to do.

The children didn't always get enough to eat, and were frequently

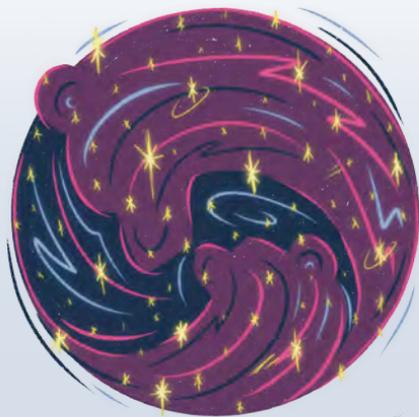


Opposite page: Boys working on the school's farm, 1943. Above left: Girls in the school's sewing room, around 1940. Above right: Boys doing chores, 1943.

fed bland porridge, which is why the institute was nicknamed the Mush Hole. Staff often whipped children they felt were misbehaving. The head of Indian Affairs, Duncan Scott, was made aware of the abuse but refused to investigate.

Attached to the institute was a farm of 250 acres. The boys and girls were taught for two days and then were forced to work on

the farm on the third day. The children were told what to do but were not taught why. That meant that they could not use their farming skills when they left the institute. The Mohawk Institute didn't educate Indigenous children the way other children were educated, and it didn't even teach them the skills it said it was providing.





Blue Quills Residential School

Location: Lac la Biche and Saddle Lake Indian Reserve near St. Paul, Alberta
Opened: 1898
Run by: Roman Catholic Church
Closed: 1990

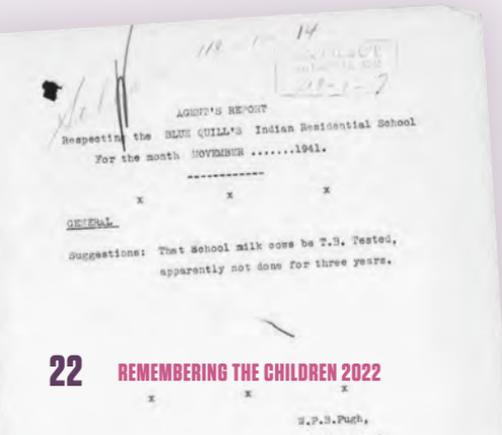
No child was safe from being hit by the adults who ran Blue Quills. It was also overcrowded, and parents were not informed when their children were sick. A lot of students tried to escape. In the early years of Blue Quills, three girls ran away. One girl's parent refused to return her. Staff locked another in an outside toilet as punishment and strapped the third with a rawhide whip. The stars must have felt very far away.

In 1970, parents of the children protested the government's assimilation attempts. They entered the school and refused to leave. The occupation ended when

the government agreed to turn both the school and the residence over to an Indigenous education authority. When Blue Quills reopened in September 1971, the school had a new purpose.

Indigenous teachers were hired. Non-Indigenous religious symbols were removed, and supplies were bought from First Nations communities. The children were to be successful in non-Indigenous education, while continuing to retain their self-respect as Indigenous Peoples. Students learned the Cree language and took subjects like math and science in Cree. They learned Indigenous arts like moccasin-making and beadwork.

In 2015, Blue Quills became the Indigenous-run University nuhelot'ine thaiyots'į nistameyimàkanak Blue Quills. It is the first of its kind. It even offers a Bachelor of Arts in Cree!





Above left: Students and a nun at Blue Quills, 1940. Above right: An undated photo of Blue Quills Residential School. Bottom: A 1905 map of the area around Blue Quills.

TOP LEFT: SISTER ANNETTE POTVIN FOUNDS, PRODUCTIONS, 2015. TOP RIGHT: THE SISTERS OF CHARITY (ORIE RUINS) OF MONTREAL. BOTTOM LEFT: NATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION (NCTR).

This journey into Residential Schools shares the truth of some students' experiences. It also demonstrates the strength and determination of Indigenous Peoples. Resilience means the ability to recover from difficult situations. Indigenous Peoples are resilient.

As we remember the children who did not survive Residential Schools, let us honour them and feel their guidance as we all journey to reconcile this sad history. Let us also remember that this legacy is still present. Intergenerational trauma means that what the children endured at Residential Schools often affects Survivors' children and grandchildren. Let us all work together to be kind and compassionate. Let us say no to assimilation. Let us all wring out the sponge and watch the water escape, exist and flourish as an essential part of life.

Residential School Survivor Support Line 1-866-925-4419

THE BIG LAND, THE KAJAK AND RECONNECTION!

Lisa Jane Smith

Welcome to Labrador, or the Big Land, as we call it. Picture this — northern lights are dancing in the sky against a backdrop of rugged landscapes. You never know if you will encounter a black bear, a polar bear, a lynx, a fox or a coyote. The land is sculpted by the Torngat mountains; the northern winds whistle tunes as sea ice packs the shores.

The Indigenous Peoples in Labrador are Inuit and the Innu First Nation. The Big Land inspires many stories. Therefore, storytelling is a way of life. In fact, according to Inuit oral tradition the kayak (or Kajak as it is spelled in Labrador Inuktitut) was a way to hunt, fish and travel for more

than 2,000 years. The land and water are a part of the people.

The Big Land has big connections for Indigenous Peoples.

Sadly, Residential Schools (known as boarding schools in Labrador) attempted to disrupt this connection, forcing students to abandon their ways of life and learn settler culture in buildings. There were five boarding schools in Labrador and northern Newfoundland when Newfoundland and Labrador (NL) joined Canada in 1949.

Attempt as the schools did, the Indigenous Peoples in Labrador continue to connect with the Big Land. This may be referred to as land-based healing. For example, picking berries, hunting and

ISTOCK IMAGES



Above: The kayak is shown from inside. It was created through a wooden kit sent to the school and made with synthetic skin. In the old days, kayaks were made with animal skin, such as seals.

Left: Noah Nochasak runs the Kayak Revival Program in Nunatsiavut, Newfoundland and Labrador (NL).

fishing are all ways to connect to Indigenous culture.

In the traditional Inuit world, the Labrador kayak was very important. It was strong and seaworthy. In fact, it was the largest of those made in the eastern Arctic. Often, they measured more than six metres long! Big kayaks for the Big Land.

Labradorians are tough like the landscapes that surround them. For example, there are hard-working community members who replicate the traditional Kajak to help people reconnect to their culture. An Inuk (one Inuit person) named Noah

Nochasak has been busy since the fall of 2017 running a Kayak Revival Program in Nunatsiavut, which is providing opportunities for Inuit people to learn how to build and use kayaks for the first time in almost 50 years.

Under the program, youth and young adults are trained to build kayaks with their own hands, and to use them. This means that young people are given the tools to access land and water. This may lead to a hunt and other traditional ways of life — a good example of a big connection to land-based healing on the Big Land.

A student paddles toward Noah Nochasak on the pond in Nain, NL. The student said it's important to ensure knowledge of the kayak is not left behind.



MAKING RECONCILIATION REAL

Lisa Jane Smith

Imagine a Canada where true reconciliation exists! Imagine a Canada where healing is the centre of attention. There are numerous ways to journey towards that goal. Here are examples of what some students have been doing across Canada as part of the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation's "Imagine a Canada" program.



Beurling Academy students Gabriel Brideau-Chalmers, Maryana Boyko and Monserrat Redonet Mestizo work on their moccasins.

Beurling Academy Verdun, Quebec

Since learning about truth and reconciliation, students were inspired to do something to help. Jessica Hernandez and Kateri Oesterreich of Kahnawà:ke helped teach students the importance of beading as a cultural art form. Beading is also healing since it can be therapeutic and rewarding to create with your hands. The students helped make beautiful beaded Orange Shirt Day pins.

Hernandez discussed Project 215+, which began as a small dedication to all the babies and children who never made it home

from Kamloops Indian Residential School. Its purpose was to make 215 pairs of moccasins for these children, each with a brightly coloured beaded piece (a vamp) on top.

Inspired, the students decided to learn to make moccasins. Rebekah Elkerton, an Anishinaabe

beadwork artist from Chippewas of the Thames First Nation, ran a workshop over three days. The students put together a memorial in the school with their finished moccasins so that the community can remember and honour the children who did not make it home.

École St. Joseph Yellowknife, Northwest Territories

Sebastian Bernabe was in Grade 2 when he created the artwork on the left, called *Hope*. His sister Elizabeth did her picture, called *Forgiveness*, when she was in kindergarten. Both take part in the Bushkids Program, an on-the-land initiative based in Yellowknife, where they and others learn about healthy relationships with oneself, each other and the land.

Elizabeth's artwork shows a girl growing up happy with her mother, before being sent to Residential School. Sebastian's picture represents the N.W.T. and



Canada in the girl's hair. Her nose represents water, with a raven in the nostril. He shows strong links with all the elements of Indigenous life. The red hand represents missing Indigenous girls. Can you find other symbols hidden in the picture?

Osprey Woods Public School Mississauga, Ontario

James Teng is 11 years old and is going to Grade 6 at Osprey Woods. He used rocks to create a

conversation about reconciliation! He made a spiral out of stones and painted words that represent his



understanding of reconciliation. Since Residential Schools punished children for speaking Indigenous languages, James included words in Anishinaabemowin. He also included words in French, Chinese and English. He left unpainted stones so that others in the community can write what reconciliation means to them.

Westridge Elementary School Burnaby, British Columbia

The students at Westridge Elementary had a great idea. They decided to create an art piece on something people in the community use every day — a crosswalk! The students were successful in getting it approved by city council. This shows how students can help aid in reconciliation and work with their community to make things happen. The students brainstormed the art piece with Nicole Preissl from



the Burnaby Village Museum and Kwantlen Nation artist Atheana Picha. The city ordered a custom-made plastic stencil of her design and applied it to the crosswalk near the school so the students will see it every day.

Other schools made memory gardens under the direction of Indigenous Elders. Students transplanted local plants and learned about their medicinal, spiritual, ceremonial or technological purposes. Other schools mounted plaques to honour the children who survived Residential Schools and those who did not. Land-based healing is a beautiful way for all of Canada to heal together. How do you imagine Canada? What projects can you do to remember and honour the children?



NICOLA CAMPBELL - Writer

Nicola is Nl̓eʔkepmx, Syilx and Métis from the Nicola Valley, British Columbia. She is the author of five children's books including *Shi-shi-etko* and *Shin-chi's Canoe* (recipient of the 2009 TD Canadian Children's literature award) and most recently *Stand Like a Cedar*. Her stories weave cultural and land-based teachings

while also remembering sacred responsibilities and interconnectedness to the land. Her memoir, *Spiləxm: A Weaving of Recovery, Resilience and Resurgence* (Highwater Press) is a deeply moving storybasket of memories that is rooted within the British Columbia landscape. Nicola is new faculty at the University of the Fraser Valley.



LISA JANE SMITH - Writer

Lisa is of settler and Inuit heritage. Her Inuit community is NunatuKavut in southern Labrador. Lisa journeyed across unceded territory from coast to coast. She attended law school at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and returned to the east coast to practice criminal law. Lisa is currently dedicating her career to truth and reconciliation as an advocate.

She is happiest when she is storytelling (especially stories about resiliency in her part of the world).



ROSALYN BOUCHA - Illustrator

An Anishinaabekwe and German American currently residing in Treaty 1 Territory (Winnipeg), Rosalyn is a member of Animakee Wa Zhing First Nation and grew up on the south shores of Lake of the Woods — Kabekanong. A creative communicator, Rosalyn walks with Indigenous-led organizations to support language and culture,

land-based education, climate justice and community empowerment. Her work through Rose & Bee Design is strongly influenced by her rural upbringing, Anishinaabe culture and passion for braiding social, economic and environmental sustainability.



LETICIA SPENCE - Graphic Designer

A graduate of Winnipeg's Red River College, Leticia won praise for their redesign of the Winnipeg Jets and Manitoba Moose logos celebrating Indigenous culture. "Tansi! I'm a Cree graphic designer and illustrator based in Treaty 1 territory and I'm from Pimicikamak Cree Nation and Opaskwayak Cree Nation!"

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Teacher's Guide CanadasHistory.ca/RememberingTheChildren

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James Gillespie

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National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
University of Manitoba
Chancellor's Hall
177 Dysart Road
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2



THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

The Indian Residential School policy of assimilation was a key part of Canada's genocide against Indigenous Peoples. The goal of Residential Schools was to erase us and destroy our way of being, but we are still here. Indigenous culture is thriving, we are healing, and our voice is strong. We must never forget what happened, and every Canadian will play their own part in reconciliation.

When we address current discriminatory policies and racism, trust will be built, and true reconciliation can happen. We can as a nation change our story. Canadians must hear the truth, honour Survivors, and remember the children who never made it home.

– Laurie McDonald, First Nations 2-Spirit Survivor who attended Ermineskin Residential School

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“We must remember the children who never made it home and inspire the youth of today to be the leaders of truth, reconciliation and healing.”

— Kukdookaa Terri Brown, Survivor

For more information on the Survivors' Flag, visit
nctr.ca/exhibits/survivors-flag/