

Indian Residential Schools:

Truth Be Told

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Abstract

The Canadian Indian residential school system, introduced in 1879, was brought into existence in a final attempt 'to get rid of the Indian problem'. The larger goal was always not only "the control of native peoples, but the 'consensual' –i.e., 'legal'-theft of their properties" (Churchill, 2003, p. xiv). Through a last re-formulation of the civilizing system that came to an end in 1860, "the Department envisioned increasing numbers of graduates abandoning their communities through enfranchisement and being placed on their own land, assimilated into the colony" (Milloy, 1999, p. 19). It was a grand attempt to 'break them to pieces'. This was attempted through aggressive assimilation. The children suffered through cultural disconnect, self-hatred, constant fear, hunger, physical and sexual abuse, malnutrition, disease, death, and loneliness to name a few.

This narrative paper will take on a historical perspective as it was created to inform the reader of the many atrocities that befell Indigenous peoples in Canada. These atrocities occurred throughout the government's feeble attempt to assimilate through the use of formal education and religious legalism. The inter-generational legacies that plague a now broken culture can be read after this paper. It is my intention that this paper will birth a realization that Canadian residential schools were not just the product of several unfortunate accidents. "Rather they were elements of a calculated policy of cultural genocide. To destroy the Indians as a people was a precondition to gaining control of their land" (Chrisjohn, 1997).

A Convenient Relationship No More

Interracial cooperation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries encouraged good relations between Indigenous and newcomer. The newcomers "in the northern part of the continent were dependent on the Indigenous population for the conditions that would allow them to harvest fish, furs, and souls" (Miller, 2006, p. 62). However, with the eighteenth century came the shift to diplomacy and military alliance. "It was precisely Natives' skills in transportation, diplomacy, and warfare that made Aboriginal warriors valuable to the various European and colonial leaders who contended for control of North America" (Miller, 2006, p. 61). The fact remains, when protection was a necessity, Indians were valuable and accepted for who they were. The end of the War in 1815 and the arrival of an age of peace rendered a convenient relationship inconvenient.

All Indigenous peoples were now an "obstacle to the newcomers' achievement of their economic purposes" (Miller, 2006, p. 62). British colonies expanded their farms in the vary forests the Indians called home. This began the war over the now coveted land "that hitherto had been the exclusive preserve of the Indian, the fur trader, the priest, and the soldier" (Miller, 2006, p. 62). "The point of view of the European, [was that] the Indian had become irrelevant" (Patterson, 1972, p. 72). In 1830, "jurisdiction over the management of Indian affairs shifted from military to civil authorities" (Miller, 2006, p. 63). Britain and its Upper Canadian administrators came to the conclusion that the metamorphosis that they desired for Indigenous peoples would be done through "residential schools, institutions under the benevolent, and of course inexpensive, care of the church" (Churchill, 2003, p. 63).



Pre-Residential School Period

In 1842 the Bagot Commission reports that 'Indians ought to acquire industry and knowledge' and recommends agriculture-based schools far away from parental influence. Egertson Ryerson in 1847 reported to Indian Affairs and suggested a partnership between government and church. Schooling was to be government funded and religious based. In 1857, the Gradual Civilization Act was passed to assimilate all Indigenous peoples. Canada then became responsible for Indigenous and their lands in 1867 under the Constitution Act. The Indigenous individual was "not to be any part of the future as Canadians pictured it as the founding of their new Nation...one of settlement, agriculture, manufacturing, lawfulness, and [what they considered] Christianity" (Milloy, 1999, p. 4).

The final constitutional position of First Nations was expressed in Indian Acts 1869 and 1876. This determination of the constitution took form in the first decade after Confederation. These acts and the imperial policies before them "constituted part of the most extensive and persistent colonial system—one that marginalized Aboriginal communities within its constitutional, legislative, and regulatory structure, stripped them of the power of self-government, and denied them any degree of self-determination" (Milloy, 1999, p. 9). After the establishment of the Indian Act of 1876, which was a consolidation of existing legislation, Nicolas Flood Davin was commissioned by the government to travel to the United States to report on their industrial schools. "Out of this [1879] report came the strong recommendations which resulted in the establishment of many residential schools across Canada" (Haig-Brown, 2006, p. 30). The policy behind the system would be one of "aggressive civilization" (Davin, 1879, p. 1). Davin also mentions that "if anything is to be done with the Indian we must catch him very young. The children must be kept constantly within the circle of civilized conditions" (Davin, 1879, p. 12).

The Silent Holocaust

The Residential School

"All children [will] be boarders, divorced from the impediments of 'savage' existence, plainly clothed and simply fed. They [will] be taught the precepts of religion, the social manners of a polite settler, and the basic skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic...the graduates [will] be models of industry and correct deportment, enthusiastically and efficiently taking up their responsibilities in a new Aboriginal society" (Milloy, 1999, p. 15) that they will help to create. This purpose statement sounds a bit aggressive but not one that would raise alarm in the general public. The system was designed however "to educate and colonize a people against their will" (Erasmus, 2004, p. 4). "By 1920, amendments to the Indian Act included compulsory school attendance of Indian children and industrial or boarding schools for Indians" (Haig-Brown, 2006, p. 31) and the Indian Act, Deputy Superintendent General Duncan Campbell Scott state clearly the ideal that "Indian cultures as such were to be eliminated...Our object 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, that is the whole object of this bill" (Cairns, 2000, p. 17). This comment from a very influential member of the Canadian government is

nothing short of intentional cultural genocide. The end of the War in 1815 marked the arrival of an age of peace and the start of the silent holocaust against the Indigenous peoples. The concept of residential schools being modeled after total institutions was no mistake.



A total institution is "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time together, lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life." See Appendix 1 for the requirements for total institution life and a personal story to reinforce this notion. Upon entrance, the children are immediately stripped of the support they are promised to receive through the Treaties and in the accurate language of some of our oldest total institutions; the student begins "a series of abasements, degradations, humiliations, and profanations of self. His self is systematically, if often unintentionally, mortified" (Chrisjohn, 1997, p. 57). This is not what Indigenous leaders negotiated.

Indigenous leaders wanted schools to educate and provide skills for their people so they too could live and strive in the new world. "Native leaders were firm in not wanting to assimilate their children into white culture in order to receive that education; nor was the intent to surrender their lands and to deliver their children into forcible confinement far

away from their families and traditional cultures their goal. In other words, they made it very clear they desired only education for their offspring, not a fundamental change in their way of life" (Thunderbird, 2009). See Appendix 2 for story. These desires were negotiated in return for sharing their own territories. The Canadian Government gave them an education system but it would be nothing like what the 'white' children would experience. Indigenous children received a system based on coercion, not consent, a system based on institution life.

During 1879 to 1986, over 130 residential (boarding, industrial) schools existed. The number of active schools at one period of time peaked at 80 in 1931. By the 1940's about 8,000 Indigenous children were enrolled in 76 residential schools across Canada. This was half of the Indigenous student population. Some communities such as the Prairie communities had all their children forcibly removed. See Appendix 3 for a story of such incidents. The Aboriginal Justice Inquiry of Manitoba noted that "for the first time in over 100 years, many families are experiencing a generation of children who live with their parents until their teens" (The Aboriginal Justice Implementation Commission, 1991).

On April 1, 1969, the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development assumed full management of the residential school system. "In 1970, Blue Quills residential school became the first residential school managed by Aboriginal people" (Erasmus, 2004, p. 4). The transfer of education management to Indigenous peoples occurred soon thereafter through the help of the National Indian Brotherhood.

Life as an Indigenous Student

“As early as 1907, the residential schools were noted by inspectors as places of disease, hunger, overcrowding, and disrepair” (Erasmus, 2004, p. 4). See Appendix 4 for stories of disrepair. The climate of Residential Schools alternated between being emotionally overwhelming (on one extreme) and emotionally barren (on the other). Many have testified (to the Royal Commission and elsewhere) that they did not feel safe, or loved, or cared for; that they were or felt they were exposed to the predations of school staff or older, stronger students; that no one was there who was there for them. Children vied for the positive attentions of their custodians, who played favorites and set the children against one another with extra food, privileges and other inducements. “The potential for emotional devastation was built into the residential schools in terms of such regular features as: initial separation from parents and family; prolonged isolation from parents, family, and peoples; the period of adjustments to institutional rules; and the constant fault-finding and racial slurs addressed to them by staff (Chrisjohn, 1997, p. 48)”.



Increasingly, many Indigenous therapists and front-line workers describe the abuse that occurred at residential schools as ritual or “ritualized” abuse. “Contemporary trauma literature defines ritualized abuse as repeated, systematic, sadistic and humiliating trauma to the physical, sexual, spiritual and/or emotional health of person that may utilize techniques, including but not limited to, conditioning, mind control and torture” (Chansonneuve, 2005, p. 47). See Appendix 5 for a look at Biderman’s Chart of Coercion. He identifies eight conditions or tactics of power and control that, together, characterize ritualized abuse. Using these eight characteristics as a framework, participants at an Eastern Ontario retreat for Indigenous front-line workers, counselors and Elders generated the following examples to illustrate the ritualized nature of abuse in residential schools. Taken from (Chansonneuve, 2005, pp. 45-47).

Examples of Isolation

Children were taken away from family, community, extended family, from spirit of place and familiar language, from the land and their natural environment, and placed in a foreign environment. Children were separated by gender at the schools. Siblings were either sent to different schools or separated within the same institution. Family contact through letters or visits from family or siblings was forbidden. Isolation rooms or solitary confinement were forms of punishment for children. Emotional needs of children were seen as evidence of “sickness”. Some parents died while their children were away at the schools and the children were not told or allowed to return for the funeral ceremony. Children were left alone to deal with bullies or victimization. If the nuns did not like a child, it further isolated that child. Uniform clothing, haircuts and language fostered feelings of anonymity, and children who were assertive or showed independence were a “pariah” to nuns and students.

Examples of Monopolization of Perception

The priests, sisters and their spiritual symbols became your foes—you had to believe in their god. Children were given continual messages of either damnation or “saving the savages”. Authority was their god and the school was their world. There was continuous degrading or “shaming” of traditional/cultural ways, as well as of individual children and their “heathen” families. Children forgot the concepts embedded in their own languages and religious practices. There was mental, physical, spiritual and emotional suppression. Sexually abused children were made to pray after the abuse for the abusers “lost souls”. Children were taught everything about native culture is wrong/bad (symbols, songs, dances medicines, Elders, toys)— only non-Indigenous culture is good. Children were punished for individuality or self-expression. Children were forced to believe the abusers’ version of right and wrong. Children were made to look “not-Indigenous” by being scrubbed with iron brushes, dark hair cut off and dressed in “white” clothes. Girls were made to feel ashamed of their maturing bodies through binding of breasts. Children saw things that even a child knew were wrong, but were helpless to do anything about them, and choices did not exist.



Examples of How Debility and Exhaustion Were Induced in Children

Children lived in continual fear of complete denial of rare privileges. Children spent their whole childhood in continual fear of further punishment and abuse. Children were deprived of food, sleep, warmth and other basic human necessities as a form of punishment. Children endured cold buildings and “disgusting” food. Hard labor and religious regimes were hard on children, such as early morning mass, standing or kneeling in corners or on hard floors for hours. Children were used as “slave labor” and given adult-level chores, constantly working and cleaning to the point of exhaustion. Children were stressed out; forced to endure long hours of work and study regardless of their state of health. Children endured years of emotional deprivation— received no love or comfort. Talk, touch and interaction were forbidden—kids were put together who could not speak a common language. Children endured years of sensory deprivation. The environment was completely regimented, time schedules were very structured. There was little free time and no time to slow down or process what was happening or form opinions. Children were used in experimentation with various diets to determine effects. When children became ill, their form of “health care” was to be put in isolation. Room

checks were conducted during the night and early in the morning. Children were forced to bury the bodies of other child residents who had died. All forms of abuse were perpetrated on children: sexual, physical, emotional and spiritual abuse.

Examples of Threats Against Children

If you tell anyone about the abuse:

You will never see your family again, you will lose visitations/mail, you will not be fed, you will be hurt even worse, you will die, you will go to hell, and no one will believe you. Children were threatened with torture disobedience, such as having mouths scrubbed out with Ajax. Children were threatened that if they did not do chores satisfactorily, they would get even more or worse chores. Children were threatened with further degradation, such as shaved heads or removal of clothing in front of peers. Children were threatened with losing day trips, and the threat of punishment was constant.

Demonstration of Omnipotence

There was blind obedience within a chain of hierarchy—a pecking order. Even the manner in which the priests and nuns walked around was intimidating. Children were taught Aboriginal people have no voice in anything and no choice because whites are the best and natives are the savages. The teachers have all the power and control so they eat and dress better. Children did the labor (i.e., knitting) and the children's work was sold, but no money went to the children. Everyone had to stand up when the priest walked in the room. Priests and nuns were role models, so the goals and dreams of some children were to become clerics. No one could escape without consequences and punishment, and they (priests and nuns) could see everything we did.

Examples of Degradation

There was name-calling and put-down of kids, parents, culture and language. Children were forced to wear dirty or soiled clothes as punishment. Sick children were forced to eat their own vomit. Children were hit while eating. Children were forced to crawl at the feet of nuns and priests. Children were forced to wear diapers for bed-wetting. Children were taught women were below men in all things. The lighter-skinned kids got more positive treatment. Children were physically beaten in front of the whole school, held down by the hands and feet with pants pulled down, and there was different food for children from what the nuns ate. For a more in depth list of abuses please see Appendix 6

Schooling – Structural Failure or Success

The half-day system that operated in most institutions until the 1950's ensured that Indigenous children would be at a disadvantage in learning. Only a couple of hours a day were dedicated to academic study and work-related skills. The rest of the day was manual labor in an effort to keep the schools and their grounds and slave labor to make the school money. Some examples of the administrative abuse of this system would be "taking the whole student body out of class for long periods at critical time such as harvest, or consigning some students whom they had decided incompetent or marginal or simply unprotected to full-time work" (Miller, 2006, pg 157). "Children made and repaired harnesses at Flandreau until 1936, for example, long after the internal combustion engine had displaced the horse on both road and farm" (Churchill, 2004, p. 46). This had no relationship to the prospect of their future employment. Also, "how many pillow cases did a girl have to make to become proficient at making pillowcases...how many shirts to become expert at shirtmaking" (Churchill, 2004, p. 46)? Cases like this were plainly for production rather than education. Students worked for money that they never saw whether it was better clothes or better food, they did not benefit. This gave the saying 'bleeding the children to feed the mother-house' a whole different meaning. To maintain 'white' dominion, the education aspect of the schools was structured so that "they could not succeed pedagogically" (Miller, 2006, p. 419).

The Circle of Civilized Conditions

To begin to understand the question why, a firm understanding of education's purpose must be established. "Education aims, first, to explain to the individual members of a community who they are, who their people are, and how they relate to other people(s) and to the physical world around them" (Miller J. , 2006, p. 15). The teachings also include the collectivity of certain races in which you belong, and the rules, government and human behavior that drives cultural systems. The education system chooses, according to the culture, what purpose it should bring collectively, individually, and spiritually. "Second, an education system seeks to train young people in the skills they will need to be successful and productive members of their bands, city/states, countries, or empires in later life" (Miller J. , 2006, p. 15).

These skills are set out to educate by culture and include the ability to procreate, to shelter, protect emotional and physical well-being, and to communicate. "All human instruction is essential to their developing into properly socialized adults who share the collectivity's values, provide for its needs, and defend its existence" (Miller J. , 2006, p. 15). Education as a whole aims to satisfy these objectives. Culture ends up being the deciding variable.

Indigenous cultures in most cases have polar opposite approaches to education. Education within the Indigenous cultures was taught through

social learning. "It considers that people learn from one another, including such concepts as observational learning, imitation, and modeling" (Bandura, 1986). The educational system of Indigenous peoples were suited to the structures and values of their communities. They "operated in a largely non-coercive way, relying on the use of models, illustrations, stories, and warnings to convey the information that was considered essential" (Miller J. , 2006, p. 35). These ways were far from the dominating brute force through systematic instruction that the system imposed through control and manipulation.

The stories that have been told in the last couple sections of this essay are proof that cultural assimilation was to be accomplished by all means. Physical punishment, public humiliation, and loss of privilege would enforce and drive Scott's vision. The dominant Euro-Canadian mindset refused to acknowledge the Indigenous population as anything more than insignificant and unworthy of an education fashioned after their own needs. Scott and many other Canadian government members demanded death to the undesirable culture whether it killed the individual or not. To the creators of the program, either way, the program would be successful.



Cultural Genocide

Policies, such as those in Canada that supported the aggressive assimilation of the children through residential schooling, are now characterized as examples of genocide. The Fourth Geneva Convention of the United Nations (1948) describes genocide as follows. "...acts committed with the intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnic, racial or religious group" (United Nations, 1948:1). "The convention bans a number of acts of genocide including taking group members' children away from them and giving them to



Photo: The Shingwauk Project - Jane Mundy Collection

members of another group" (Chansonneuve, 2005). "Genocide has two phases: one, destruction of the national pattern of the oppressed group; the other, the imposition of the national pattern of the oppressor. This imposition, in turn, may be made upon the oppressed population, which is allowed to remain, or upon the territory alone, after removal of the population and colonization of the area by the oppressor's own nationals (Churchill, 1997, p. 68). The "systematic process of dislocating indigenous peoples and /or destroying the economic basis of their survival" (Churchill, 1997), was well on its way before the first residential school came into existence. The goal of this silent holocaust was connected with stealing what the Indians owned, their land.

Cultural genocide is the destruction of the specific characteristics of a group. Biological genocide restricts births, and enforces sterilization. See story in Appendix 7 for a count of sterilization. Physical genocide is killing, whether quickly as by mass murder, or slowly as by economic strangulation. For the sake of this paper, although separate acts of biological genocide occurred, "cultural genocide was the policy embarked upon and residential schools

were a formidable part" (Chrisjohn, 1997, p. 35). See Appendix 8 to see how the program operated and Appendix 9 for a detailed time-line of how the system came into and out of existence.

Conclusion

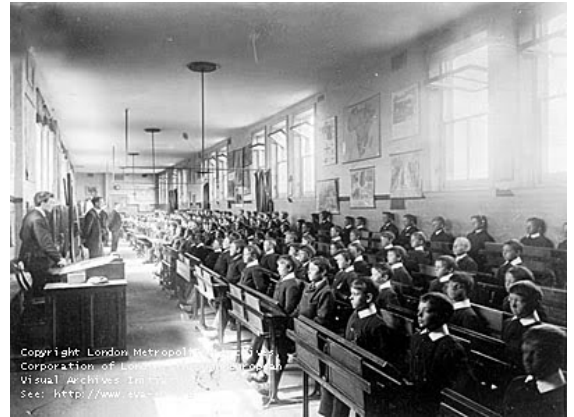
From the Indigenous point of view, the 'Indian Problem' consists in the fact that Indigenous peoples, given the choice, prefer to be Indigenous. They were not created Indigenous by mistake. From the government's point of view, the problem was that the land that they so coveted was already occupied. A strong people that were able to stand on their own, occupied the land and their descendants soon thereafter. According to Euro-Canadian laws, the only way to extinguish Indigenous title was by war or legal agreements. A war had just ended and an age of peace was established...this way was not an option. Indigenous peoples, would not willingly sign over their land so manipulation and deceit was needed. The final attempt to terminate the legal line of descendants was recalculated and strategic plans adjusted. Underfunding of the churches along with the failure to provide proper education and health care, as specified in the numbered Treaties, was a start. The people who established the residential school system knew exactly what they were up to. They were modeled after successful institutions and mechanisms of social order. These total institutions governed the behavior of Indigenous children all across Canada. The system was identified with a social purpose and permanence that had already been found to be successful in bringing about particular results. Thus, accounts affirming the unintentional consequences wrought by residential schools are downright irrelevant and disrespectful to us Canadians who can see right through the deception. From a historical point of view, the residential school system was a deliberate systemic effort to break the generations to pieces. The children were severed from family, language, culture, and their own self. A nation was victim to a social experiment that was imposed on them because of 'white' greed, arrogance and superiority.

Nonetheless, the residential school system in itself is remembered for the damage wrought by the apathetic, the numb, the hostile, and the downright evil. What one must remember is the traumatic suffering that was allowed to continue without action. Children as young as four were taken from their parents and committed to a barren lonely existence without love. They either experienced or witnessed first hand, unspeakable abuse physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The students saw classmates dying from disease or other ailments. They lived in despicable living conditions that you would not even want an animal to live in, dressed in clothes and shoes that you would not even give to a homeless person. The constant hunger experienced by the children was a reminder everyday that no one loved them. All this for an education that would prove in the long run, inadequate. Therefore assimilation was a failure but the goal of 'breaking them to pieces' was successful...let us all together, Indigenous and non-Indigenous, begin to pick up the pieces. We all have a part to play...what is yours?

Please read Appendix 10 in what is a collection of stories from/ about the students and system workers. Share their stories and be an agent of change rather than a stumbling block to those around you.

Speak up against racism.

Tell someone you don't like their joke or share some of your new found knowledge with them...this is the least you can do.



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Appendix 1

COMMON CHARACTERISTICS OF TOTAL INSTITUTIONS

Asylums: by Erving Goffman

Chapter 17 from *Classic Texts in Health Care* by Macka, Soothhill, and Melia.

All aspects of life are conducted in same place and under same single authority

1. Carefully structured activities
2. Explicit formal rulings govern structured activities
3. Activities serve ultimate goal (economic profit; control over men/women)
4. Strict demarcation of roles; hierarchical
5. Social mobility between the two strata (inmate, "staff") is grossly restricted
6. Even TALK across the boundaries may be conducted in special tone of voice such that inmates' verbal behavior reflects their place in system of dominance
7. Just as talk across boundaries is restricted, so, too, is passage of information – especially about staff's plans for inmates.
8. Little choice in this total institution
9. In some institutions, there is a kind of slavery with inmate' full time placed at convenience of staff; here inmates' sense of self and sense of possession can become contaminated
10. Total Institutions are incompatible with family; hard to maintain; constraints on family formations.

Isabelle Knockwood's account flawlessly demonstrates this:

Right off, Sister Mary Leonard began to explain that speaking Mi'kmaq was not permitted in the school...I found myself serving Father Mackey a three- course meal...but I never did get to eat off the fancy dishes or taste the gourmet meals that the priest enjoyed...Our home clothes were stripped off and we were put in the tub. When we got out we were given new clothes with wide black and white vertical stripes. Much later I discovered that this was almost identical to the prison garb of the time. We were also given numbers. I was 58 and Rosie was 57. Our clothes were all marked in black India ink-our blouses, skirts, socks, underwear, towels, face-cloths-everything except the bedding had our marks on it. Next came the hair cut... Sometimes the little girls would get thirsty during the night and go to the bathroom for a drink of water. If they were caught, they were dragged out of the room by the hair or ear and sent back to bed... Even those of us with families who lived nearby were sometimes not permitted to go home for Christmas. But it was the one day in the school year when we were allowed to be with our brothers and sisters...We played with our toys all during vacation until Little Christmas, January 6th, when school resumed and the toys would be gathered up and packed in boxes under the tables or locked in the cloak room. Sometimes, we never saw the toys again but our dolls would be hung on nails on the walls of the recreation hall. Once day, coming down from the class we found an empty space where the dolls had been...Nothing more was said about the dolls until next Christmas and the process was repeated again for another year and after that another year and on and on for forty years of Indian children. On the boys' side the identical ritual was performed, only with gun holsters, cowboy hats, and hockey sticks (Chrisjohn, 1997, p. 48).

Appendix 2

In 1873 the Chief of the Lac Seul Nation sought a treaty that would bring a teacher so their children could learn the white man's ways, including agriculture. He told the government representative that "the time may come when I will ask you to lend one of your daughters and one of your sons to live with us: and in return I will lend you one of my daughters and one of my sons for you to teach what is good and after they have learned, to teach us. If you grant us what I ask, although I do not know you, I will shake hands with you" (Miller, 2006, p. 99).

Appendix 3

Taken.....

“The Indian Agent - we called him the overseer, lived on the reserve. He went around and told parents which children had to go to school. And the priests arrived with their little black cars. This older woman still stands out in my mind. She was crying because her daughter Marie was getting into the car. She tried to pull her back out of the car and the RCMP took a hold [of] her and flung her away from the car and she landed in the ditch and just lay [there] crying.”

(Assembly of First Nations, 1994: Executive Summary)

It is near the turn of the century. Indian agents, RCMP constables, and non-Native farmhands encircle a Manitoba reserve. One of the Indian agents and an RCMP constable approach the house of an Indigenous family, bang on the door, and soundly demand he parents give up their children to them. The Indian agent instructs the RCMP constable to break down the door. They rush into the house, pry the frightened, screaming children from their parents' arms and rush them to a holding area outside. The constable and agent go to the next house and the next and in the ensuing few days this scene is repeated many times on this reserve and on most reserves in Southern Manitoba. All children captured during the 'Fall round-up' are marched to the nearest CPR station, assigned a number and unceremoniously herded into cattle cars for transport to the residential school in Winnipeg. (Miller, 2006, p. 287).

Appendix 4

“We are not meeting requirements as we should.”

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration
Indian Affairs Branch
Norlyn Bldg.,
309 Hargrave St.,
Winnipeg Manitoba

October 21, 1953

Memo to Mr. R.S. Davis

I visited the school on October 19th and 20th and found the following situation:

From the front entrance to the corridor of the basement one was subjected to an unbearable odor. The floor of the boiler room was covered with a liquid from the sewage system to a depth of 6 to 8 inches; some of this liquid was seeping into the boys' recreation room. At the other end of the building, in the girls' recreation room, there are a number of trap openings on the floor. Upon opening these traps one could see the same kind of liquid containing raw sewage, direct from toilets, almost to the level of the floor.

It looks as if the entire sewage piping under the floor had collapsed and that the sewage piping leading to the outside has been blocked by some obstruction.

On Monday, October 19th, the smell in the building was unbearable and no human being should be asked to live under such conditions. There is no doubt in my mind that such drastic action must be taken to remedy the situation and make sure it does not re-occur in the future. I, therefore, strongly recommend that they school be closed until such time as the necessary repairs are made. Should this condition continue or happen again at a later date, the health of the pupils and the members of the staff can be seriously affected. Furthermore, should there be an outbreak of disease in a school like this one, the Indian parents would blame the school and refuse to send their children there. This would be a ten year set back in the education plan.

This is respectfully submitted in the hope that the Department be advised of the situation and that immediate appropriate action be taken.

G.H. Marcoux, Regional Inspector of Indian Schools.

Appendix 5

Biderman's Chart of Coercion Identifies.

Eight conditions or tactics of power and control that, together, characterize ritualized abuse:
(Russell,1982)

1. Isolating victims by depriving them of their usual social supports and the ability to resist, making them completely dependent upon the captor;
2. Monopolizing the perception of victims by eliminating any stimuli not controlled by the captor and punishing non-compliance;
3. Inducing debility and exhaustion in victims by weakening their mental and physical ability to resist;

4. Continual threats against victims to induce anxiety, helplessness and compliance;
5. Granting occasional indulgences as positive motivation for compliance and to prevent complete adjustment to deprivation;
6. Demonstrations of the omnipotence and power of the abuser by demonstrating the futility of any resistance;
7. Degradation and humiliation, making the costs of resistance more damaging than compliance; and,
8. Enforcing trivial demands to ensure that total compliance becomes habitual

Appendix 6

Chrisjohn, R. Y. (1997). *The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada*

Physical Abuses

- Sexual assault, including forced sexual intercourse between men or women in authority and girls and/or boys in their charge;
- Forced oral-genital or masturbatory contact between men or women in authority and girls and/or boys in their charge;
- Sexual touching by men or women in authority of girls and/or boys in their charge;
- Performing private pseudo-official inspections of genitalia of girls and boys;
- Arranging or inducing abortions in female children impregnated by men in authority;
- Sticking needles through the tongues of children, often leaving them in place for extended periods of time;
- Inserting needles into other regions of children's anatomy;
- Burning or scalding children;
- Beating children into unconsciousness;
- Beating children to the point of drawing blood;
- Beating children to the point of inflicting serious permanent or semi-permanent injuries, including broken arms, broken legs, broken ribs, fractured skulls, shattered eardrums, and the like;
- Using electrical shock devices on physically restrained children;
- Forcing sick children to eat their own vomit;
- Unprotected exposure (as punishment) to the natural elements (snow, rain, and darkness), occasionally prolonged to the point of inducing life-threatening conditions (e.g., frostbite, pneumonia);
- Withholding medical attention from individuals suffering the effects of physical abuse;
- Shaving children's heads (as punishment);

Psychological/Emotional Abuses

- Administration of beatings to naked or partially naked children before their fellow students and/or institutional officials;
- Public, individually directed verbal abuse, belittling, and threatening;
- Public, race-based vilification of all aspects of Aboriginal forms of life;
- Racism;
- Performing public strip searches and genital inspections of children;
- Removal of children from their homes, families, and people;
- Cutting children's hair or shaving their heads (as policy);
- Withholding presents, letters, and other personal property of children;
- Locking children in closets (as punishment);
- Segregation of the sexes;
- Proscription of the use of Aboriginal languages;
- Proscription of the following of Aboriginal religious or spiritual practices;
- Eliminating any avenue by which to bring grievances, inform parents, or notify external authorities of abuses;
- Forced labour; Enforcing Unsuitable Living Conditions
- Starvation (as punishment);
- Inadequate nutrition (e.g., nutrition levels below that of needed for normal growth and subsistence);
- Providing food unfit for human consumption;
- Exploiting child labour;
- Forced labour under unsafe working conditions;
- Inadequate medical services, sometimes leading to children's deaths;

OMISSIONS OF ACTION

Church Inaction

- Failure to bring local incidents of abuse to the attention of higher church authorities;
- Failure to bring local incidents of abuse to the attention of federal and appropriate provincial governmental authorities;
- Failure to protect children under their care from the sexual predations of older children also attending Residential School;
- Failure to remove known sex offenders from positions of supervision and control of children;
- Acquiescence to federal funding levels below those the churches themselves believed necessary for operation;
- Starvation (as a cost-cutting measure);

- Neglect of their educational mandate;
Governmental Inaction
- Failure to adequately inspect or otherwise maintain effective supervision of institutions into which their legal wards had been placed;
- Failure to fund churches schools at levels sufficient for maintaining the physical health of their legal wards;
- Failure to live up to the spirit of treaties signed promising education for Aboriginal Peoples;
- Collaboration with church officials in covering up the criminal behavior of officials, both governmental and ecclesiastical;
- Removal or relocation of internal personnel critical of Residential School conditions.

Appendix 7

I couldn't have anymore children after Dr. Darby got to me...He made an announcement in our village that anyone who wasn't in church on Sunday had to report to him for a special procedure. I never went to his United Church since they did so much harm. But Darby was the missionary so his word was law...so the Mounties came and got me and brought me to Darby and he gave me a shot. Next thing I knew I was in bed, all bruised and hurting. I was missing all my gold teeth. Something didn't feel right inside me. I never could conceive after that. Later another Doctor had told me that I'd been sterilized...George Darby, he did that to hundreds of our women.

Ethel Wilson, June 13, 1998

Testimony against G. Darby, United Church Missionary and Director of the R.W Memorial Hospital, Bella Bella, B.C. 1929-1962

Appendix 8

Program for Cultural Genocide

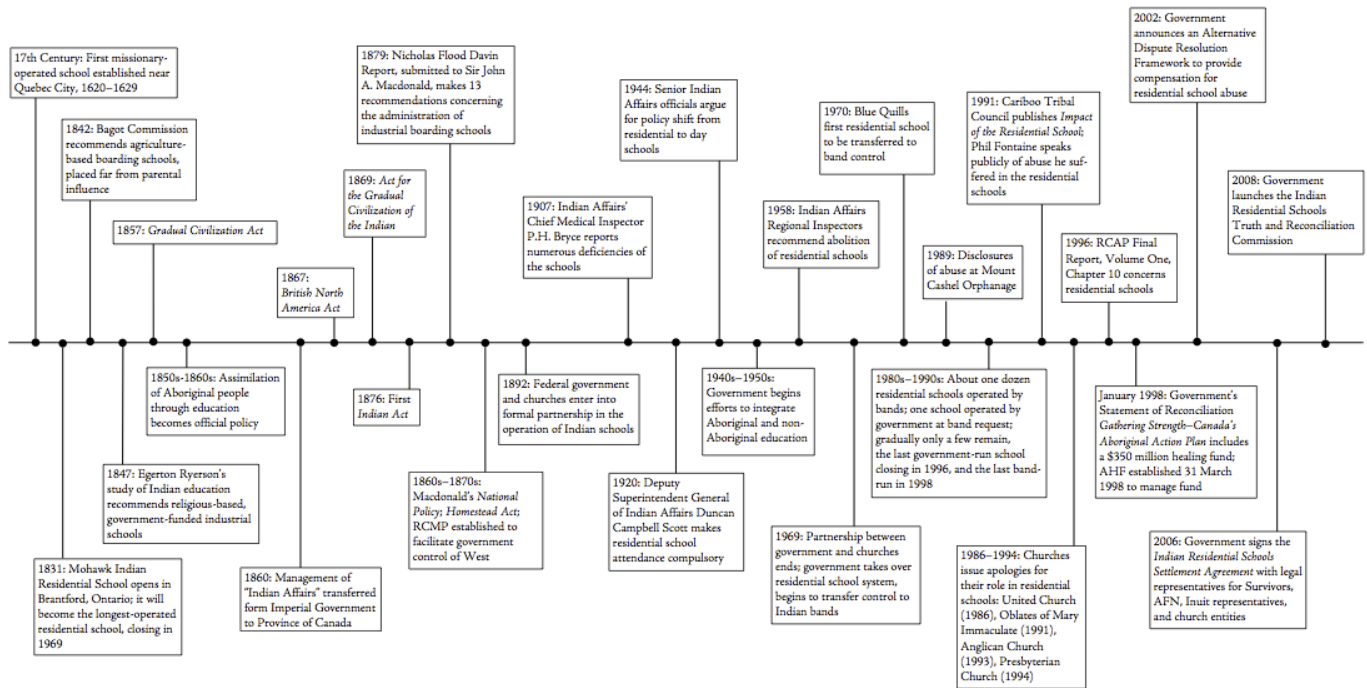
The Circle Game: Shadows and Substance in the Indian Residential School Experience in Canada.

Chrisjohn, R. Y. (1997)

1. Create means for systematically reducing the number of people who could "legally" claim status as a descendent of those holding Aboriginal title. Enfranchisement procedures and inducements, marriage statutes, and "status" disputes were and are aspects of this policy. As well, this tactic explains what Residential School attendance provisions were doing in a bill "legitimizing" involuntary and unilateral termination of status: Residential School and enfranchisement had the shared purpose of obliterating Aboriginal Peoples.
2. Eliminate as far as possible any external sign of difference between Aboriginal titleholders and Eurocanadian-Come-Lately's. For one thing, a people's form of life is part and parcel of their ability to resist oppression and affirm their existence. For another, homogenization strengthens the governmental fiction that Aboriginals are "another part of Canadian society," and that "It is ridiculous for one part of a society to have a treaty with another part." Residential Schools were, again, prominent in this particular ploy, as were tactics such as legislated prohibition of Aboriginal cultural and spiritual practices, destruction of their political, legal, and social institutions, and linguistic imperialism.
3. Make life as difficult as possible for those who still assert their Aboriginal identity. If everyone who stands up with pride as an Aboriginal person is cut off at the knees, the reasoning goes, people will eventually stop standing up. Then the government can claim that there is no one left with whom to negotiate Aboriginal title, and no one to pay off for what has already been stolen. Here, misdirection, such as racism (both institutional, as in the criminal "justice" system, and individual) and the public portrayal of Aboriginal Peoples (which encourages personal racism and permits other institutions to warp and misinterpret Aboriginal grievances), and physical ploys, such as the state of Aboriginal housing, health care, and employment, are called into action. The Residential School had the function of inculcating the self-hatred, feelings of inferiority, and actual second- or third- rate education needed to create the necessary atmosphere as early as possible in the lives of Aboriginal Peoples.
4. Make a "safe" place for Aboriginal Peoples in majority society, a place where there is little chance of significant numbers of them becoming cognizant of what has been done and/or making common cause with other Aboriginal groups, or similarly aggrieved parties. Once again, the Residential School system plays an important role by preparing Aboriginal children to "accept their place," convincing them to wait for justice until the "next" world, and teaching them to be properly grateful for the crumbs thrown them.

Appendix 9

A CONDENSED TIMELINE OF EVENTS



Appendix 10

STORIES

We Were Not the Savages: First Nations History - Collision Between European and Native American Civilizations

By Daniel N. Paul

In 1936 a fifteen-year-old girl from the nearby Shubenacadie Reserve refused to return to the school and gave the following statement to the agent and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police: "I have been going to Indian school for the past five years.... Before my holidays this year I was employed in kitchen for eleven weeks.... In the eleven weeks ... I spent a total of two weeks in school. The Sister has beaten me many times over the head and pulled my hair and struck me on the back of neck with a ruler and at times grabbed a hold of me and beat me on the back with her fists. I have also been ordered to stand on the outside of the windows with a rope around my waist to clean windows on the fourth floor with a little girl holding the rope. When I told the Sister I was afraid to go out the window she scolded me and made me clean the window and threatened to beat me if I did not do it. This is being done to other children. After we get a beating we are asked what we got the beating for and if we tell them we do not know we get another beating. The Sisters always tell us not to tell our parents about getting a beating."

In 1920 Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs (1913 – 32) in a presentation to a House of Commons Committee to amend the Indian Act to give the Indian Department the power to enfranchise Indians compulsorily...

I want to get rid of the Indian problem. I do not think as a matter of fact, that this country ought to continuously protect a class of people who are able to stand alone. That is my whole point. I don't want to pass into the citizens' class people who are paupers. This is not the intentions of the Bill. But after one hundred years, after being in close contact with civilization it is enervating to the individual or to a band to continue in the at state of

tutorage, when he or they are able to take their position as British citizens or Canadian citizens, to support themselves, and stand alone. That has been the whole purpose of Indian education and advancement since the earliest times. One of the very earliest enactments was to provide for the enfranchisement of the Indian. So it is written in our law that the Indian was eventually to become enfranchised...Our object 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, that is the whole object of this Bill (Cairns, 2000, p. 17).

When language dies, the world dies (broken into pieces)

After a lifetime of beatings, going hungry, standing in a corner on one leg, and walking in the snow with no shoes for speaking Inuvialuktun, and having a stinging paste rubbed on my face, which they did to stop us from expressing our Eskimo custom of raising our eyebrows for “yes” and wrinkling our noses for “no”, I soon lost the ability to speak my mother tongue. When language dies, the world dies, the world it was generated from breaks down too. (Milloy, 1999, p.281).

Finding My Talk

How Fourteen Native Women Reclaimed Their Lives after Residential School

2004

By Agnes Grant, p. 75

Sister Dorothy Moore

She remembers a very cross-looking woman teaching an arithmetic class on division the first day she was there. The majority knew some English, and Dorothy had difficulty keeping up. By the time she was whacked on the head and poked in the back she was incapable of learning anything. Her hands were soon bruised and swollen from being hit with a ruler. Finally she was sent to the blackboard to draw a picture of a jackass. She did not know what a jackass was but drew a stick animal anyway. The teacher told her to stand aside and then said to the class, “See? She has drawn a picture of herself. Laugh at her.” And the whole class obliged with a hearty laugh.

When she went home at the end of June she would not speak Mi’kmaq for fear of losing her English. She was so proud of her ability to speak English that she spoke loudly that first summer, so white people could hear that she knew their language. Her father, however, would threaten her with punishment for not speaking in Mi’kmaq so her confusion and fear increased.

Ida Wasacase

The greatest drawback to the schools for Ida was the loneliness, which increased when the children were sent to Manitoba schools. Visits from their parents became less frequent. The subsequent loneliness greatly increased the psychological stress with which they lived. The extreme that they were often in despair, wondering how they could possibly cope.

One day she forgot about English and spoke Cree. Punishment was swift and gruesome. She was hit over the head with a board. Tragically, there was a nail in the board, which the supervisor had not noticed, and the nail was driven into her head.

Runaways

His foot tracks could be followed into the bush where he had lay down; he then had crawled on his hands and knees for about 15 yards into some willows. Here the snow had been partly scraped out and he lay in the hollow, face down. His hands were held up under his face with his mitts off under his hands. He was frozen solid. He was dressed in a pair of blue bib overalls, black and red sweater, fleece lined underwear, one pair of grey socks, gum rubber boots size six, and no overcoat. The rubbers appeared to be too large for him and the snow had packed in around the tops of them, making his feet wet. (Milloy, 1999, p. 286).
Round Lake School, Saskatchewan

Hunger

We are going to tell you how we are treated. I am always hungry. We only get two slices of bread and one plate of porridge. Seven children ran away because there hungry....I am not sick. I hope you are same too. I am going to hit the teacher if she is cruel to me again. We are treated like pigs, some of the boys always eat cats and wheat. I never ask anyone to give me anything to eat. Some of the boys cried because they are hungry. Once I cry to because I was very hungry (Milloy, 1999, p. 109).

A young boys letter to his parents, Edward B.
Onion Lake Residential School

Disease & Neglect

This skin infection, caused by the itch mite and usually found among children living in overcrowded and unhygienic conditions, had been neglected or unrecognized and had plainly gone on for months.” Corbett noted: “the hands and arms, and in fact the whole bodies of many of the children [were] covered with crusts and sores from this disgusting disease. Two of the girls [had] sores on the back of their heads full three inches across and heaped up with crusts nearly a half inch deep” ...The remedy was simple cleanliness (Churchill, 2004, p. 41).

She was a really good friend. Tattooing your hands [was common]. And she done that, she used a common pin or needle...and wrote her initials on her hand and then it got blood poisoning from the ink. Like her hand was swelling and swelling. Two or three days later...she started getting a fever. So she showed the nun and they just sent her to bed. And when she must have been in bed about two days...she was getting so she wasn't even herself...And she just lay in bed and two days later she died (Churchill, 2004, p. 115).

Told by Linda, a former student

Colbot, a Regina physician commissioned by Scott in 1920 to survey the western boarding schools, went over the same ground Bryce had covered in 1907 and 1909...little had changed.

The condition of one little girl found in the infirmary is pitiable indeed. She lies curled up in a bed that is filthy, in a room that is untidy, dirty and dilapidated, in the northwest corner of the building with no provision of balcony, sunshine or fresh air. Both sides of her neck and chest are swollen and five foul ulcers are discovered when we lift the bandages. This gives her pain, and her tears from her fear of being touched, intensifies the picture of her misery (Milloy, 1999, p. 100).

No Place To Turn

Willie Blackwell pressed charges against Arthur Plint of the Port Alberni School. It was proven that he had practiced some of the worst sexual excesses recorded in residential school history. He was sentenced to eleven years in prison for sexually assaulting fifteen boys over a twenty-year period. The presiding judge called Arthur Plint a 'sexual terrorist' and described the residential school system as 'nothing but a form of institutionalized pedophilia.

Maintained at the level of animals by an oppressive system, they are not [allowed] any rights, not even the right to live, and their condition worsens day by day: when a people's only remaining option is in choosing how to die when they have received from their oppressors only one gift-despair-what have they got to lose? Their misery will become their courage; they will turn the eternal rejection that colonization presents them with into an absolute rejection of colonization.

Churchill, 2004, p. 82