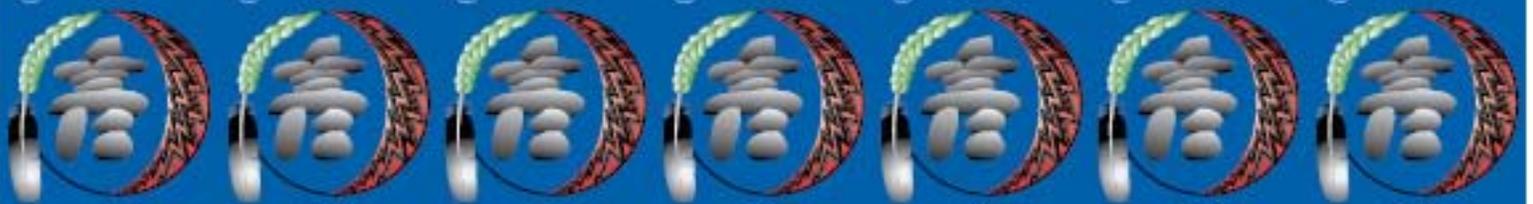


# Métis History and Experience and Residential Schools in Canada



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# **Métis History and Experience and Residential Schools in Canada**

Prepared for

**The Aboriginal Healing Foundation**

by

**Larry N. Chartrand  
Tricia E. Logan  
Judy D. Daniels**

**2006**

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## Introduction

Despite direct assimilation attempts  
Despite the Residential School Systems  
Despite the strong influences of the Church in Metis communities to ignore and deny  
our Aboriginal heritage  
Despite not having a land base  
And despite our own diversity in heritage  
We are still able to say we are proud to be Metis  
We are resilient as a weed, and beautiful as a wildflower  
We have much to celebrate and be proud of

(Christi Belcourt)

The story of the Métis and residential schools is not new; it is, though, a story that has been underemphasized for a long time in the realms of both residential school and Métis history. Throughout the twentieth century, the collective lives of the Métis have often been disconnected from other dominant community structures in Canada. The policies that were created for the Métis and residential schools acutely reflected how administrators felt about where they thought the Métis' station in society should be. The Métis, in the eyes of the administration, were either to be considered Indians or assimilated as non-Aboriginal Canadians. Any future the Métis had as a nation was not given consideration by the dominant Euro-Canadian society at that time.

The history of the Métis and the residential schools is interrelated with many other segments of Métis history. However, in stories of the road allowance, resistance, family life, urban/rural movements, Métis political history and, in the accounts of Métis veterans, the stories of residential school life were sometimes only given passing mention. A part of Métis life that may have only been mentioned before as a portion of the larger story is now becoming the central narrative. Attention directed towards residential school experiences of the Métis is growing. Our Métis Elders have so many parts of their lives to share; it is now becoming increasingly more common to hear stories of their school days and the school days of their parents. For those Métis who were given the opportunity to go to school in the early half of the twentieth century, those stories often include the residential schools.

The fact that the Métis attended and survived the residential school experience has been left as a side-note in the past. However, in the past decade or so, residential school Survivors and intergenerationally impacted people are finding an open and safe venue for their stories that they never had before. New healing projects across Canada are providing a support network for Survivors that never existed in the size and scope that exists today. The large majority of residential school Survivors are First Nation people and much of the emphasis still falls on the body of narrative that surrounds their experiences. As the minority in the number of total attendees at residential schools, the Métis voices often fell silent. Government manipulation of residential school records often hid the numbers of Métis attendees. Social currents that worked against Métis voices at the time, as well as the voices of generations of First Nation people who did not come forward, each contribute to the reluctance on the part of the Métis. For many clear and unavoidable reasons, the Métis voices were not heard.

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Until now.

The following three reports on the Métis and residential schools point to the various circumstances that make up what is considered the general experience of the Métis and residential schools. More importantly, the three reports give a great deal of insight into why Métis voices may have been silent in the past and why they are starting to be heard today.

The story of Métis attendance at residential schools is unique. It is clear that the government did not continually support their attendance. The government did not want to take responsibility for the Métis, yet at the same time, they did not want their efforts towards full assimilation of Aboriginal people into the dominant society to lapse.

Residential schools and the Métis also fall into an interesting place in Métis history. In many cases, during the early twentieth century, as common as it was for a Métis person to be taken to residential school, it was also just as common to be not taken to school at all. The Métis who lived on the road allowance or in a non-Aboriginal community were often left out of opportunities for consistent education.

All of the personal accounts and histories of course are not stories that ended with the closing of these schools. The intergenerational impacts of these schools affect all generations of Métis today. Credit is due to the generation of people who stepped forward and had the courage to tell their stories about their experiences as a Métis Survivor. Carving out a unique niche in the legacy of the residential school system will help the future generations of Métis who still want to know.

For the Canadian government, the residential schools were going to be the ultimate tool of assimilation. One distinguishing feature of these assimilationist policies is the Canadian Eurocentric concept of exclusion. If the objectives of these schools were to “turn all the little red children into little white children,” then these objectives would inevitably mesh into the delivery of the education in an interesting way. The school system was built on the foundations of a heightened Eurocentric mentality. Concepts of the heathen/savage being “saved” by the dominant culture of Euro-Canadians were amplified in the administration of these schools. The administrators and staff of these schools were attempting to make “little white children out of little red children,” but at no time were they going to be creating equals in their “white” society. Overwhelming evidence from school policies and procedures has proven that the Eurocentric concept of the “weaker race” and “heathen/savage” dominated these schools. Class, race and Eurocentric values seeped into daily life and the long-term education provided by these schools. An accepted, yet relatively unspoken, class structure was created. Impoverished conditions and life on the road allowances often left Métis in the lower class structure created, in part, by the schools.

Stories of the residential school experience are as individual as the people who share them. There is a wide range of how residential school touches the life of a Survivor and the lives of the generations that surround that Survivor. In mapping the destructive paths of these schools, it is easy to overlook the fond memories that remain. Many Survivors had pleasant, even enjoyable, experiences; they remember their friends and school memories quite warmly and feel that they are better off for having spent time at residential school. The collective experience of the Residential School Legacy is not something that can be generalized into one “standard account” (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997). Both students and staff considered the Métis outsiders during their years at the schools. They were considered to be in a different class than everyone else and

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they were treated as such. There was a lack of consistency in the attendance policies that would surround the Métis and, in turn, there was no consistency on how they were treated at the schools. Perceptions of racial characteristics, poverty, religion, social rank and cultural attributes could all be used to influence the quality of education that a Métis student could receive. A Métis child was judged by the colour of his or her skin, the community he or she originated from, his or her kinship ties and health condition when he or she arrived at school. In the eyes of staff and administrators, a Métis child in one instance could be seen as better off than an Indian child and, in the next, could be seen as worse off.

These three reports on the Métis and residential schools come from three relatively different perspectives but converge on many central issues. In many cases, the stories of the Métis indicate their treatment was neither better nor worse than that of their First Nation classmates, but indicate they did have unique experiences. There are distinct aspects to the admittance, discharge, treatment and location of the residential schools that would have Métis children in their charge. Each report opens new doors to this collective history and explores different aspects of the Métis Nation and how it has dealt with the Residential School Legacy.

In the summer of 2001, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation requested Larry Chartrand, from the Faculty of Law, University of Ottawa, to do a nation-wide literature review on Métis and residential schools. Professor Chartrand did a thorough search of provincial and national archives, government documents and various literary texts on residential schools and the Métis. After he found little compiled information on the Métis and residential schools as a single topic, he relied on the two general segments of the history. Chartrand's report makes the suggestion that these histories are only a start and more research must be done to get a more final and accurate record of Métis experiences. Professor Chartrand provides an invaluable annotated bibliography of published, unpublished, archival and internet sources that key departure points for this merge of two major histories. The literature review provides a clear cross-section of the body of work that exists on Métis histories, anthropologies, literature and oral accounts in Canada. In combination with the residential school histories provided, great encouragement is given to those searching for answers to the Métis and residential school history.

The Southwest Region Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. started its "Lost Generations Project" in February 2000. At that time, the project was one of the first Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) Métis-specific projects in Canada and one of only eleven other projects in Manitoba. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation itself was in its starting stages and the search for sources on Métis and residential schools proved to be challenging at first. It became evident early on that little had been recorded from Survivors of residential schools and even less so on Métis life at these schools. Later in 2000 and into 2001, the numbers of AHF healing projects multiplied and, thus, also the body of material on Métis experiences. More voices started to be heard, as there was now a large, more supportive venue for their stories in the various healing programs starting up.

The Lost Generations Project of the Southwest Region Manitoba Métis Federation Inc. (MMF) was originally intended to be a report primarily for MMF membership and Métis Survivors. As the project progressed, it became clear that interest in the Métis experience was growing. More Survivors were starting their healing journey and sharing their residential school experiences with their children and grandchildren. Major questions surrounding how the Métis were admitted, how many attended and how their experience compared to First Nation students' experiences still stood unanswered. A combination of archival searches and personal interviews would answer many of these questions in the report "Lost

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Generations: The Silent Métis of the Residential School System.” By doing so, the 2001 report would not only serve the Métis of Southwest Manitoba, but it would also contribute to the growing body of knowledge on the subject.

The third report, completed in 2003 by Judy Daniels and the Métis Nation of Alberta entitled “Ancestral Pain: Métis Memories of Residential School,” makes another significant contribution to the collective history of Métis and residential schools. Like Chartrand’s work, Daniels’ report places the residential school experience into the context of Métis history from a Métis perspective. The report is an inclusive investigation of the history of Métis involvement in the schools in Canada and, in particular, Alberta. It is also an investigation into the *ancestral pain*, the unexpressed pain of our parents and grandparents (Daniels, 2003). The report provides enlightening evidence regarding the significant number of Métis students who did attend these schools, illustrating that Métis made up a majority of the attendees at certain schools in the West. The *ancestral pain* associated with this significant number of Métis attendees is also addressed in a very proactive manner. The report suggests constructive steps for Métis people to take towards building more healthy communities. In dealing with this *ancestral pain* and in working to decolonize many aspects of their lives, the damaging effects of the schools may be undone.

Tricia E. Logan

**Métis Residential School Participation:  
A Literature Review**

*Prepared for*

**The Aboriginal Healing Foundation**

by

**Larry N. Chartrand**

**2006**

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I would also like to thank the President of the Métis Nation of Alberta (the MNA), Audrey Poitras, who helped arrange meetings with others in the MNA that have been working on Métis residential school issues. In particular, I would like to thank Carol Carifelle-Brzezicki and special thanks to Arthur L. Knibbs, a Survivor of the residential school system, who was very open and forthcoming about his experiences. I would like to thank Gail Duiker who worked for the Alberta Provincial Museum and provided me with detailed information on certain schools in Alberta.

I would also like to thank professors Brenda Macdougall and Jim Miller from the University of Saskatchewan for taking the time out of their busy schedules to discuss research issues on Métis residential school experiences. Finally, special thanks to Susan Haslip who provided invaluable last minute research support and editorial services.

## Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of Métis participation in residential schools based on published and unpublished archival materials. The synthesis begins with a historical overview of the people of the Métis Nation of the Canadian prairies, focusing primarily on the Manitoba experience. What follows is an examination of the social and policy rationales behind Métis participation in residential schools and, to some degree, the impact of residential schools on the Métis. The report concludes by offering some suggestions for future research, followed by an annotated bibliography.

The historical overview includes an examination of how a mixed-blood people of Aboriginal and European origins came to identify themselves as a separate and new nation of people – the Métis. Also included are the educational experiences of the Métis during the earlier period. The historical overview is primarily more concerned with Métis education of Métis communities apart from their participation in residential schools. Métis education was not formal until the Catholic Church began to instruct Métis children in the Red River area by the 1800s. Prior to this time, formal education was rare and, if they received it, they did so by being sent to Canada or Europe for their education by their European fathers. Education was largely controlled by the Catholic Church, which dictated curriculum based on European values and beliefs. It was not until the 1960s that Métis communities began to demand their educational experiences be more relevant and meaningful to Métis culture and lifestyle and future aspirations.

There is considerable evidence that Métis attended residential schools in considerable numbers. Available statistics indicate at least nine per cent of those who attended residential schools identified as Métis. In the early period, Métis were often accepted by church authorities into residential schools for various reasons and with little resistance from government authorities. As long as they were seen as culturally Indian, it made sense that they should attend residential schools to assimilate them into mainstream society. However, as the federal government began to develop its official policy vis-à-vis the rights of the Métis, official tolerance of Métis attendance at residential schools dissolved. Since Métis rights were extinguished and Métis were not legally considered Indians, they were therefore not the responsibility of the federal government that funded residential schools and were not allowed to attend. There were, of course, exceptions even after the government's policy of not accepting Métis that became clear. Some churches, without federal funding, set up schools for the Métis, such as St. Paul's in Saskatchewan. Still, other churches included Métis in existing Indian residential schools where room permitted or by ignoring official policy altogether. Nonetheless, by the 1930s, most Métis were excluded from formal education because of federal government policy. They were also often not included in provincial-operated schools due to social, racist and economic reasons until well after formal education in provinces became entrenched and freely available to all residents without cost or discrimination.

The impact of residential schools on Métis children who did attend was similar to the experiences of Indians who attended such schools. In some cases, those Métis who did attend residential schools would sometimes be treated as “second class” since the church did not receive any sponsorships for Métis students.

It is reasonable to conclude after reviewing the literature on Métis and residential schools that it is completely unacceptable to hold the view that Métis were not part of the residential school legacy and that they were not affected in any significant way. Such views simply are not true. However, Métis attendance

at residential schools and their impact on this Aboriginal community remains largely unexplored in the research. More Métis-specific research attention is needed in this area.

## Introduction

The objective of this review was to locate as much written information (published and unpublished) about the participation of Métis in residential schools in Canada. This report contains an annotated bibliography of resources on Métis residential school experiences and a brief synthesis of materials researched and provided to the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. The materials reviewed indicated that many Métis participated in residential schools and experienced the negative impacts of the Legacy and, in some cases, treated more harshly because they were Métis who did not officially belong in such schools.

The report begins by outlining the method of research followed by a synthesis of materials found relevant in published and archival materials. The synthesis is divided into three parts: a general historical overview of Métis education; an examination of the social, legal and policy backgrounds regarding the issue of Métis involvement in residential schools; and a brief overview of the impact of the residential school system on the Métis who attended. The report concludes by providing some comments on further research needed.

## Methodology

An exhaustive search of published materials at the University of Ottawa and Carleton University was conducted that proved generally unproductive. As anticipated, existing materials in published form relating to Métis participation in residential schools were references in books or articles about Indian residential schools or Indian education generally. There is no one book that deals with Métis education or participation in residential schools. References to Métis participation was generally very brief, however, the annotated bibliography does summarize these findings.

In addition, an Internet search was conducted which revealed modest results. There are a number of Internet sources that contain references to Métis generally, but few make reference to Métis schooling.

Travel to Edmonton, Saskatoon, Brandon and Winnipeg were also undertaken. Interviews were provided by the Métis Nation of Alberta. In particular, helpful advice and information was provided by Carol Carifelle-Brzezicki, senior advisor for Family and Social Services. Productive interviews were also conducted in Saskatoon. For example, Professor Miller, author of *Shingwauk's Vision*, was asked if he had more information on Métis participation than was included in his book. He stated that his book was on Indian participation and that he, therefore, generally ignored any material on Métis experiences. In Brandon, I met with Tricia Logan of the Manitoba Métis Federation. She is one of the few, if not the only other person in Canada, who has done serious research on Métis participation in residential schools.

Archival search in Edmonton had limited success, however, the Ottawa archives proved to have considerable unpublished information, including an entire file that deals with the admission of "Halfbreeds to Residential Schools 1894-1938." Copies of this file are held at the Aboriginal Healing Foundation's Resource Centre.

## Synthesis

Before addressing the findings of the literature search, it is appropriate to address a point regarding terminology. Much of the literature, particularly the more recent studies, tend to use the term “Aboriginal” rather than the more specific term “Indian” or “First Nations” to describe the group that attended residential schools. In one sense, this use is appropriate since residential schools were not solely restricted to the status Indian population. Based on the Aboriginal Peoples Survey in 1991, nine per cent of those Aboriginal people that identified as Métis had attended residential schools.<sup>1</sup> However, the tendency of these reports is that, although they use inclusive language, they go on to describe the residential school experience from the viewpoint of status Indians. Furthermore, such reports generally make no distinctions between the experiences of these different groups during the residential school era. The Métis, although included in the terminology, are not specifically identified in the substantive content of the various accounts of residential schools. A good example of this approach is the recently released report *Restoring Dignity: Responding to Child Abuse in Canadian Institutions* (Law Commission of Canada, 2000). The report uses the broad language of Aboriginal, but no reference is made to the distinct experiences of the Métis or the Inuit. This is unfortunate since there are important and distinct differences between the Métis and Indian residential school experiences as the following literature search has documented.

### Historical Background

The Métis, whose roots in Western Canada date back to the eighteenth century, were acculturated in their society under the influence and direction of both their maternal and paternal ancestors. For the most part, neither the foreign civil or religious authorities showed much interest in the formal education of Métis children in the early stages of evolution of the Métis Nation. By the end of the eighteenth century, there were two distinct groups: the *Red River Métis* who occupied the Red River/Assiniboine basins and the Great Northern Plains of what is now the northern United States and the prairie provinces; and the *country-born* whose ancestries were essentially Cree and Anglo-Saxon.

From that period on, there was a smattering of interest in the formal education of children of the country-born by Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) employees who fathered children mostly among the Cree of the Woodland area. These initiatives were in violation of the formal policy of the company, which did not want to be burdened with the children of its employees. While few children were given the opportunity to receive an education, some were quite successful. Two of the most prominent ones were A.K. Isbister who received a law degree from England and William Kennedy who became a medical doctor.

The persistent influence of the HBC employees, along with the need of the company to respond to the independence of the Native people and other trade pressures, enabled them to have the rudiments of a

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<sup>1</sup> Statistical information received from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation has not been verified. Anecdotal evidence from case studies supports the conclusion that a significant number of self-identifying Métis attended residential schools. See Hansen, Carol and Trygve Lee (1999). *The Impact of Residential Schools and Other Institutions on the Métis People of Saskatchewan*. Ottawa: Law Commission of Canada [unpublished]. Also, see the accompanying annotated bibliography for a summary of this report’s findings.

formal education for their children on an ad hoc basis. As more and more country-born became employees of the company or remained near trading posts for a good part of the year, it became easier to provide the children with an education. The children were treated much the same way as any other children were — discipline was harsh and pedagogy was often weak due to the lack of training of teachers.

At Red River, the situation was quite different. The first generation of offspring of the Cree or Ojibway women and their French spouses were raised by both parents for the most part. For one thing, the main traders who were from the Montreal area tended to encourage men to live among the Natives to solidify their trade with them. The Métis, who had their home base in the Red River region, soon spread their influence northward, west to the Rockies and south to the southern Plains. As the people hunted and travelled extensively, there were few opportunities for the children to receive formal education. It was not until the Métis solidified their nationhood at the turn of the nineteenth century when the local European authorities, under the direction of the Hudson's Bay governor, addressed the issue of formal education for Métis children.

After the defeat of Governor Semple at the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816, Lord Selkirk<sup>2</sup> decided to invite the Catholic Church to set up missions among the Plains Métis. This was the beginning of the intellectual colonization of the Métis people in western Canada. The educational system was highly hierarchal with no input from the people regarding control, development, administration and curriculum of the educational system. This was a completely new approach to enculturation of the Métis who, until then, had taught their children by example and experience.

The main intent of the European authorities at Red River was to subjugate the Métis through the work of the Catholic Church. Bishop Plessis stated the objectives of the priests sent to Red River to work among the Natives in these words: "their sole object will be ever to work for the maintenance of peace between brothers and for the sanctification of souls redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ" (Rempel, 1973:82). This was a direct reference to the hard line that the Métis took against the colonists and the HBC who tried to interfere with their hunting and commerce. Abbe Joseph-Norbert Provencher goes on to say in his instructions to the priests:

1. They are to consider the first object of their mission to be to reclaim from barbarism and the disorders that result from it the Indian nations scattered over that vast country.
2. The second object is to carry assistance to delinquent Christians, who have adopted there the customs of the natives and who live licentiously, forgetful of their duty.
3. Persuaded that the preaching of the Gospel is the most certain means of obtaining these happy results, they will lose no occasion for inculcating its principles and maxims, whether in [their] private conversation or in their public offices ...
6. They will apply themselves with particular care to the Christian education of the children, establishing for that purpose in schools and catechisms in all the settlements that they shall have occasion to visit ...

---

<sup>2</sup> Thomas Douglas, Earl of Selkirk. Lord Selkirk was given a grant of land from the Hudson's Bay Company to set up a colony in the Red River area for Scottish settlers.

8. They will repeat often to the people to whom they are sent that the religion strictly prescribes peace, good behaviour and obedience to the laws both of the state and the church (Rempel, 1973:82-83).

According to Rempel, the main function of the priest was to convert children and expose them to the Catholic religion to create family units based on Christian principles. "They were always about their business, preparing the children for their admission into the church and instructing the Indian women with a view to baptizing and marrying them" (1973:86). Provencher was particularly hopeful for the Métis children: "Our Bois Brules ... give us great hope, they are easily taught, they are generally intelligent, they will learn to read in a short time" (Rempel, 1973:87).

The authorities were particularly interested in indoctrinating the Métis at Pembina who lived mostly through the commerce of the fur trade and buffalo hunt. The priest working there stated that "the little bois brules are extremely intelligent; some of them are proving to be very apt pupils; need is already felt here of having some sisters, or nuns; Mr. Edge is putting himself to a great deal of trouble for the instruction of everyone" (Rempel, 1973:91).

The priests were more interested in indoctrinating the Métis than in providing an education that would prepare them for some kind of new life. Provencher states: "we must be thinking of producing candidates for the priesthood and you know how long the road is from the alphabet to the study of theology. I am banking heavily on the intelligence of the little bois brules, not only for the catechism but also for later teaching" (Rempel, 1973:94). Provencher and his teachers were anxious to get a supply of books sent to them from Quebec on the subject of grammar, history or devotions in particular.

In 1822, the church, through pressure from the governor, felt obliged to vacate Pembina because the boundary between the United States and Canada fell north of Pembina. The church was also reluctant to send more workers among the Métis and Plessis suggested that action ought to be taken to prepare local Native people to carry out the work of the church for the next generation. The governor also felt that the school should be in St. Boniface.

The missionaries often described in glowing terms the potential of Native education. Selkirk writing to Plessis stated: "Mr. de Lorimier ... informs me that the inhabitants and especially the old Canadian voyageurs and their Métis families, evidenced an excellent disposition to profit by the instructions of the missionaries; and that the Indians also showed that respect that causes one to believe that they also will be disposed to listen" (Rempel, 1973:107).

Provencher was convinced that education could benefit the Natives and he wrote: "If we had some nuns for the instructions of the girls they would already find work to do" (1973:108). The first two students to study at St. Boniface School, which later became St. Boniface College, were a Métis (Chenier) and a French Canadian (Senecal). The curriculum was described as follows: "[They] have thus far studied all of the Epitome, De Viris Illustibus, Cornelius Nepas, the four Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles and half of the Imitation; and have covered a summary of geography and are now copying belles-lettres" (1973:111). This indicates the rather narrow education being offered and was to continue for the future of the Native children. For the most part, the schooling failed in the early to mid-nineteenth century among

the Catholics because education offered by the priests and nuns was not compatible with the way of life of the Métis and the curriculum was rather irrelevant.

In the early 1830s, there was a clear departure from the traditional approach to teaching the Natives under the direction of Father Belcourt and the teacher, Miss Nolin, who was a Métis. At Baie St. Paul some thirty miles from the Forks (the joining of the Assiniboine and Red rivers), Belcourt began his missionary work by emphasizing the teaching of agriculture and the creation of farm plots for the Ojibway and Métis. He firmly believed that it was necessary to help the Natives lead a sedentary life before missionizing could be effective. Provencher, his superior, was completely opposed to Belcourt. Father Belcourt learned the Ojibway language and taught the people in their own language, quite a departure from the Catholic approach to Native education for generations to follow. In 1834, Belcourt claimed that his experiment was successful as he said that the Indians could sow grain and later harvest it. Nolin was good at working with the Natives and spoke their language fluently. The type of education provided by Belcourt did not become the norm among the Catholic missionaries who worked among the Métis of the Great Northern Plains.

The first order of Catholic nuns to work among the Métis were the Grey Nuns who came to Red River in 1843 and were followed by several other orders in western Canada. One of the most noted was the Sisters of Notre Dames Des Missions. The Catholic Church effectively denied the Métis parents a meaningful role in the education for their children by establishing mission schools in Métis communities. This meant that control remained in the hands of the church. The parents had no say in how the schools were administered or what the curriculum would include. One of the most controversial education practices of the church-run schools was the attempt by the church to obliterate the culture of the Métis by substituting their Michif language for that of what is now the French Canadian language. They deemed the Michif language inferior to the formal, universal textbook French taught in schools throughout the world. While the Métis people saw the need to educate their children, they resented the cultural conflicts the church imposed upon their people and most of them did not like the heavy emphasis on the teaching of a French-based curriculum and the prominence of religion in school.

Rempel (1973) points out that the nuns saw their work as being successful by regularly assisting the officials of the parish. The nuns would distribute the rosary to those who could not read in order for them to understand the Mass. This was hardly pedagogy of the highest order.

The second school by the Grey Nuns was established at Granttown or, as the priest called it, St. François Xavier. In 1850, the teachers arrived there to provide the children with a French confessional type of education. According to the resident priest, the nuns taught the children: “they learned therefore to speak, read and sing in French since most of them knew nothing but the Cree and Sauteaux” (Rempel, 1973:140). This was not quite accurate because most of the residence of the St. François-Baie St. Paul area spoke Michif prior to the turn of the century. Even the mother superior of the Grey Nuns, Marie Louise Valade, makes a distinction in her correspondence when she stated: “our sisters went to take possession of the school of White Horse and started the task of teaching the Métis and savages from around” (Rempel, 1973:140). Rempel concluded “that from a missionary standpoint the Catholic Church was to a certain extent successful in their endeavours at Native education. The majority of the Natives, however, who were exposed to the Catholic religious indoctrination and teaching would likely disagree” (1973:145).

The educational patterns established by the Catholic Church supported by the civil authorities were to continue among the Métis for succeeding generations. Control of education was beyond the influence of the parents, contrary to common, democratic practices in the provinces and territories for non-Native students. The total disregard of parental input under the hierarchical system of the Catholic Church placed education squarely under the control of parish or missionary priests throughout the west. Howard Adams, a well-known Saskatchewan Métis leader and author, saw this control as part of the colonization process imposed on the Native people by the church in collaboration with the federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments. As an example, the Manitoba government in the 1960s established Frontier School Division for Métis students in northern Manitoba, a school which was totally devoid of any input from the parents. Van Camp, a superintendent of that division, lauded the centralist system in his doctoral thesis on the history of Frontier School Division, but essentially the school followed the pattern established by the early educators for the Métis at Red River by maintaining control of education, by determining the curriculum and by controlling funding and the administration of the system including the hiring of the teachers.

The non-participation of parents in the education system left children vulnerable when emotional and physical abuse occurred or when students were exposed to incompetent teachers. Several treatises deal with these themes. As discussed in the following sections of this report, these abuses did not differ materially from those suffered by Indian or Inuit students.

The study of formal education of the Métis people in Canada illustrates the impact that the system had upon the children and ultimately upon the societies they shaped in their homeland. The curriculum content and presentation by teachers foreign to the Métis students proved to be damaging. Many students were often ridiculed by their mentors and classmates. For several generations, virtually nothing was done to redress this wrong. It was not until the second half of the twentieth century that educators began to question their system as it had failed to meet the needs of students who showed poor results and often left school prematurely. The Métis people questioned the merit of the educational systems for their children. Among scholars who questioned the integrity of social programs for minority groups including the Métis in Canada was Garnet McDiarmid in *Teaching Prejudice: A Content Analysis of Social Studies Text Books Authorized for Use in Ontario*. His analysis of the content and methodology of social studies programs in Canadian schools struck at the very heart of the problem as felt by the majority of Métis students who could do very little about their shame in studying their past as described by their teachers.

In perpetuating insidious comparisons between groups, the textbook merely reflects the widespread tendency for groups to seek conformity to their own standards and at the same time to establish their own superiority by finding, and if necessary creating, outside groups that fail to conform, even if this means shielding the young from reality. For these reasons, prejudice is endemic (McDiarmid, 1971:107).

Other writers such as Balness agree. Balness (1980), in his thesis *Perceptions of Parents in Selected Communities Concerning the Composition of a Desirable Social Studies Program*, addresses several key questions that affected the education of Métis children in Manitoba. Balness's study came after the province of Manitoba had instituted a committee to develop a social studies course about Native people. The committee, which consisted mostly of non-Native people, had no mandate to directly influence the school boards in Manitoba and no legislation was ever passed to make their courses compulsory, including

the Frontier School Division that was developed mostly to serve Métis students in northern Manitoba in the 1960s.

The social studies program in the public school system used sources that were primarily racist and biased when it covered themes about First Nations and Métis people. Most teachers studied writers such as W.L. Morton and George Stanley who portrayed the Native people as uncivilized and incapable of achievements in the white world (Coutt and Stuart, 1994). These portrayals were detrimental to the children who were often ridiculed by non-Native students and made to feel that they were inferior. It was this type of literature and teaching that prompted Balness to study this problem. He quotes Howard Adams on this matter as follows: "In addition, the answers from the interviews show that native people desire social education, such as civil rights information, welfare laws, courtroom knowledge, etc. These are the practical issues that affect them in their daily lives" (1980:22). In other words, Adams, a Métis, understood the real need for a meaningful education for Native children. Adams also made an observation that addressed the suffering children felt in school and factors that caused children to drop out of school or to underachieve. He stated: "On the one hand, Métis and Indian children are drawn towards white society by the force of the white-ideal, but on the other hand, from experience and reality they know they will be prevented from integrating into it. In their answers [to the interview questions] nearly 100% stated that the (whiteman's) education system was very important yet nearly 100% wanted native teachers and native history" (Balness, 1980:22).

The developments at Camperville, Manitoba, in the 1970s exemplifies the concerns and solutions the Métis were considering in the education of their children. Métis students at the Winnipegosis Collegiate held a sit-in because they felt victimized due to the alleged racism of non-Métis students and the town people. This type of action was important in the improvement of education for Métis students in western Canada. Central to the interests of parents were questions of curriculum, local control, funding and provision of native teachers. The aftermath of the Camperville sit-in was the hosting of "Métis Days" held at Winnipegosis in 1975. Balness states that "power figures among the Métis of Manitoba were present and were readily identified. The impression gathered from the participants during those days was that the Métis people were undergoing a growing awareness of themselves, that they were excited about the educational, social and economic issues facing them, and that solutions were finally going to be found" (1980:137).

While some communities have achieved a degree of autonomy in education, there are still many Métis children who face abuse in schools and who need a revised curriculum that will portray their history, culture and way of life in a more realistic and positive way.

Despite the unwarranted harsh punishments and the racist content of history and other courses, many Métis children overcame those factors and managed to get through high school. This was due to a number of reasons such as some teacher were good and sympathetic, many Métis who attended post-secondary education referred to certain teachers who had very positive effects on their days in public school, and others referred to family support as a positive factor in their endeavour to continue their education despite the fact that most of the generation who attended university in the 1960s and 1970s had parents who were non-literate. While a good part of the curriculum was irrelevant to students, some of these individuals found their program of studies interesting and challenging; however, for most of them, it was an uphill

battle and almost overwhelming. The same prejudice they encountered in their youth was there at the post-secondary level in departments such as anthropology, history and political studies.

Balness (1980), in discussing this point, made the finding that “half-breeds” were not respected despite their actual abilities. This was often the attitude faced by Métis in their affairs with European colonists. Later, they faced the same attitudes and prejudice by white taxpayers. In fact, because of this prejudice, white taxpayers refused to assume any responsibility for the education of Métis living in their area.

In the 1960s, changes were brought forward to improve education as a result of Métis requesting better opportunities for their children and a greater say in education. Emma LaRocque points out that colonization needed to be addressed: “While the devastating effects of poverty cannot be belittled, the confusion between physical and cultural needs must be questioned. This confusion is best revealed within the specialized language: in particular the indiscriminate use of three phrases: educationally retarded, economically impoverished and culturally deprived” (1975:56). The jargon belied an underlying assumption that failure in school must mean poverty at home, which usually meant cultural deprivation.

In northern Manitoba, provincial authorities rationalized that a central government was better than a local one so it chose to operate the Frontier School Division under an official trustee who was also the superintendent. There was very little room to effect changes by the parents or community. Under colonization of people in the southern part of Manitoba, most Métis people in the region had little influence in the schools. In St. Eustache, Manitoba, one of the oldest Métis communities in Canada, there was no input by community members in administering the curriculum as the school was, for all intents and purposes, controlled by the priest who was superior to the teaching nuns and local school committees in all aspects of education. In that community, not one Métis person was on the school board in over half a century. Yet, at times, at least half of the school population was Métis. Local farmers and businessmen, mostly of French origin, have been effective in keeping the Métis parents on the outside. In addition, very few Métis people are hired by the board as teacher’s aides or as support staff.

The above is a general portrayal of Métis schooling. The historical context provided is one that deals with education of the Métis as Métis communities rather than about their participation in residential schools. It is included here to contrast that part of Métis history with their historical participation in residential schools. What follows deals more directly with the experiences of Métis in residential schools.

### **Métis Participation in Residential Schools: Social and Policy Rationale**

The educational experiences of Métis youth were varied and the experiences depended much more on perceived identity and lifestyle than it did on any formal legal classifications. Métis that were identified as having much in common with their Indigenous relatives (i.e., Cree) would arguably be more negatively effected by residential schools than Métis who identified more with their European relatives. Like their Indian relatives, they likely spoke an Indigenous language and came from cultural and religious backgrounds similar to their Indian relatives. Thus, for such Métis, they would have also experienced the policy of banning their languages, culture and religious beliefs. They would have suffered equally with their Indian relatives in terms of the impact of such colonial policies on their self-esteem and identity. This would also be true for those Métis that identified and belonged to a distinctly Métis culture and lifestyle different

from both their Indian and European heritage. To the extent that such Métis also attended residential schools, their language (Michif), culture and lifestyle would also no doubt be perceived by missionaries and government authorities as a threat to colonial “civilization” efforts.

Furthermore, Métis with similar backgrounds and appearance to status Indians were also more likely to be “drafted” by school authorities when room was available to continue receiving funds from Indian Affairs by fulfilling the school quota. Métis that identified more with their European relatives (French/Scottish) or did not appear “Indian” enough were not as readily targeted by school authorities for admission.

Churches tended to pressure the government to accept all Métis into their schools. The federal government, however, refused to allow for *carte blanche* acceptance of all Métis. There are two reasons for this resistance. First, the federal government argued that it did not have the resources to extend schooling to all Métis. Second, the purpose of residential schools was to “civilize” Indians. Thus, inclusion of Métis would only be allowed to the extent their schooling was consistent with this purpose. Many Métis were excluded not because the government thought, as is often mistakenly assumed, that Métis were not within the jurisdiction of Indian Affairs, but because they were already regarded as “civilized” enough. Over time, however, the federal policy that the Métis were not the responsibility of the federal government became increasingly more entrenched, particularly after the turn of the century (Miller, 1996). It is apparent from the historical sources that the realization of this policy was a gradual phenomena reaching the point today where the federal government denies any legal responsibility for the Métis. The legal classification of Métis eventually replaced the cultural classification. If a person identified as Métis, that person would not be allowed/required to attend residential schools even if the person was culturally and linguistically Indian. However, there are many instances of schools not following the “official” policy.

The interim report by Tricia Logan entitled *The Lost Generations: The Silent Métis of the Residential School System*<sup>3</sup> provides an excellent overview of how the Métis were divided up into various classes to measure their level of “civilization” prior to making residential school admission decisions. The operation of the policy resulted in the inclusion of Métis to the extent that government thought the Métis were similar enough to Indian communities “in a geographical or societal sense” (Logan, 2001:10-20) and were viewed as in need of civilization. Thus, Métis can be seen on a continuum from Indigenous identity to European identity and the associated values that pertain to each identity. Education of the Métis was often due to the vagaries of how Métis people were perceived in terms of characteristics similar to the stereotypical image of Indians.

In general, Métis went to residential schools either because they were poor and it was a charitable act or they were identified as living the Indian mode of life. In some cases, it was because the school itself accepted Métis and Indians alike (or more often if room was available). There were schools specifically for Métis that included the famous St. Paul des Métis residential school operated by Father Lacombe, the Ile a La Crosse school in Saskatchewan and the St. Paul residential school in the Yukon.

Miller (1996) writes that separate residential establishments for the education of the Métis were envisioned due in large part to the “mediatory role” played by Métis. One of three industrial schools was to be run

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<sup>3</sup> A summary of the report is included in the annotated bibliography.

by the Anglican Church at Battleford and was to have used existing facilities. Material obtained from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation, however, suggests that the school was operated by the Roman Catholic system. The school was opened in 1883 and closed in 1943. The other two schools were to operate under the auspices of the Roman Catholic Church and required new facilities. One was the Qu'Appelle Indian Residential School (also known as Lebret Indian Residential School), which served as both an industrial and residential school. This school opened in 1884 and closed in 1969; and eventually came under Indian control in 1973. Miller (1996) notes this school was run as a boarding school in the early 1990s. The other school, located within Treaty Number #7 was the St. Joseph's Industrial School (also known as Dunbow Industrial School, St. Joseph's Dunbow Industrial School and High River Industrial School) in High River, Alberta. It was operated by the Roman Catholic school system from 1888 and closed in 1939. Métis and non-status Indian students attended the Methodist's Red Deer Industrial School (also known as Red Deer Boarding School) in Red Deer, Alberta, from 1889 and closed in 1944 (Miller, 1996). Anecdotal accounts in Métis case studies suggest that other schools were exclusively for Métis or that the majority of the student population were Métis (Hansen and Lee, 1999).<sup>4</sup>

Even before residential schools became a major phenomena, Métis communities often encouraged and asked the Catholic Church to come to a community. Invariably, the church would also establish a school (mission school). However, over the years and due to financial reasons, the churches were increasingly persuaded to provide education to reserves on behalf of the federal government. This "reality" had the effect of redirecting resources to reserve communities from Métis communities, which resulted in the Métis falling between the cracks and given fewer educational opportunities. This development was consistent with the federal government's increasing efforts to relinquish all responsibility for the Métis. This may not have been problematic for the educational needs of the Métis if the provincial governments stepped in to provide the financial resources for the Métis to attend school. Ironically, as provinces clarified their mandates and responsibilities, Aboriginal people also began to increasingly deny responsibility for the Métis as a distinct population requiring special considerations.

Hansen and Lee report that the province of Saskatchewan removed children from the communities instead of building schools within Métis communities. Many parents thought they could not object to such removal because of the *Truancy Act* that existed at the time (1999).

Findings of the 1936 *Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Conditions of the Half-breed Population in Alberta* confirmed that the Métis were characteristically without educational services or were provided in residential schools (Government of Alberta, 1936). The report also verified the fact that most Métis children were not attending any educational facility because they lived in areas where no provincial schools were located. Many tended to live alongside Indian reserve communities, road allowances and the outskirts of small towns. The federal government was becoming more restrictive in letting Métis children go to Indian schools; hence, most were receiving no education in Alberta during this period. The chairman of this commission stated that as a result of the federal government scrip policy, "large numbers of the Métis population are at this time, in this Province, destitute, and their health is jeopardized, their education neglected, and their welfare in the worst possible condition" (Ewing, 1935:11). A Métis "is an

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<sup>4</sup> The authors report that their Métis interviewees believed that St. Patrick's in Prince Albert had all Métis students. It is also reported that Métis children attended Duck Lake (St. Michael's) and Montreal Lake residential schools.

outcast, and he is in far worse plight than the Indian, the Indian is far better treated than the Half-breed” (Norris, 1935:17). The commission noted that those Métis who did attend school were usually accepted by church-administered schools on a charitable basis if resources permitted. The report mentioned that, in some cases, a significant number of Métis attended such schools for various reasons due to the particular circumstances of the locality. The commission was silent, however, in describing the experiences such Métis children had in residential schools.

In summary, a significant number of Métis attended residential schools.<sup>5</sup> The federal policy allowed such inclusion if certain criteria were satisfied; however, there were many instances where federal policy was not followed or was manipulated by school authorities so that Métis could be included. Regardless of whether the Métis were included with the blessing of official policy or were “secretly” admitted, they were regarded as expendable and were seen as second-class beneficiaries of residential schools. For example, they were often used where schools were low in numbers; Métis from schools with sufficient enrolment would be relocated to schools that needed more students (Logan, 2001).

## **The Impact of Residential Schools on the Métis**

Because of the quasi-official acceptance of Métis children in residential schools, their experiences often differed in terms of quality of services than “official” Indian students. In cases of abuse, however, their status would not seem to be a relevant factor. If abuse was a part of the school’s culture, Métis children did not escape its clutch. The study by Hansen and Lee (1999) described instances of cultural and physical abuse experienced by Métis individuals in Saskatchewan institutions.

Abuses that occurred were similar to those documented in other sources dealing with status Indian experiences. One informant described the experiences of Ile a La Crosse school that was set up for Métis children. Physical and sexual abuse was common in the school: older boys molested younger boys at night in the dormitory and priests and supervisors molested their “favorite boys.” In addition to physical and sexual abuse, cultural abuse was also prevalent. Ile a La Crosse is a Cree-Michif speaking community and this language was banned in the school. The informant stated that much of the loss of traditional culture and language was a direct result of the residential school and its treatment of Métis communities.

Maria Campbell (1978), in her book *Riel’s People*, noted that when Métis were faced with the question of sending their children away to residential school or to keep them behind, many opted to keep them because of the importance of maintaining the family unit. She also noted that those children that remained were provided a culturally relevant education in terms of learning the history, songs, dances and values of their people. These Métis were the ones that stood tall and were proud of who they were.

The above-mentioned informant stated that he was one of the few lucky survivors since he has not suffered from alcohol and drug abuse and other forms of mental or social dysfunction. However, he links much

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<sup>5</sup> A report suggests that this number was approximately nine per cent. However, anecdotal evidence suggests that, in many instances, this figure seems to underestimate the number that actually attended (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1998).

of the social problems experienced by northern Métis communities directly to the abuse suffered in such schools. The informant also noted differential treatment between the Ile a La Crosse school for Métis with the Beauval residential school for Indian children that was located nearby. He recalled that the Ile a La Crosse school could not afford what the treaty kids received, such as new sporting equipment, “whereas the Métis kids received used equipment and hand-me-downs from southern benevolent societies donating to the Ile a La Crosse Mission.” The Métis in North Slave Lake were required to pay for their children’s education at residential and boarding schools operated by the Catholic school system in Fort Resolution and Fort Providence (North Slave Métis Association, n.d.). Both the Fort Providence Indian Residential School (also known as the Providence Mission Indian Residential School) and the Fort Resolution Boarding School opened in 1867 (Miller, 1996). The Fort Providence school closed in 1953; however, no closure date could be found for the Fort Resolution school.

Tricia Logan’s report on the Métis experience in residential school devotes a chapter to the experiences of Métis children. The chapter explains how many Métis were culturally abused in a way that emphasized their differences from both Indian and white children alike in a negative way. She states that, “in mainstream Canadian society and in the school system, the Métis were made to feel they were lesser than either of their halves, not Indian enough for benefits or Aboriginal rights, but not “white” enough to be seen as equal to the dominant society” (2001:30). Thus, there is some evidence that differential treatment existed between treaty and Métis children in some institutions and within mixed treaty and Métis institutions. Additional examples are described in the annotated bibliography below. Some anecdotal evidence suggests that Métis children had to work longer and more often at jobs to maintain the school’s upkeep. The accounts of disproportionate discriminatory treatment of Métis vis-à-vis Indian children is consistent with the theory behind residential schools as a means to civilize. For example, if the Métis were regarded as already halfway to being civilized, then there was less need to formally educate them. Thus, the educational authorities could justify putting them to work more often and for longer times to maintain the school than was required of Indian children. There was also the justification that since the federal government did not support their education, they should also work to earn their way. As Logan states in her report: “it is not possible at this stage to determine if they, as a group, suffered a greater or less amount of abuse in comparison with their First Nations classmates but just that their experiences were unique” (2001:26).

Where there is some evidence of disproportionately negative effects of residential schools on the Métis, further research is needed to fully appreciate and compare such experiences with Indian children. One area where there was clear evidence of differential treatment is in the kinds of “healing” services that were available to them as opposed to First Nations. Hansen and Lee note that one Métis interviewee said he had difficulty obtaining counselling for his childhood sexual abuse. In the case of status Indians, the Medical Services Branch of Health Canada provides this type of non-insured health benefit. Thus, for status Indians, access to counselling services is not an issue; however, for Métis people, they do not have such benefits (Hansen and Lee, 1999).

Métis people have been disadvantaged over the years (along with non-status Indians) by being denied access to programs such as the Non-Insured Health Benefits Program (which provides free medical services to status Indians and Inuit that are not covered by provincial health insurance plans). In her report, Dianne Kinnon noted that the Medical Services Branch of Health Canada delivers many programs to status Indians and Inuit such as health centres, federal alcohol and drug abuse programming, initiatives for at-risk children, healthy babies program, etc., amounting to millions of dollars annually. None of these

programs benefit the Métis, “many of whom live in communities adjacent to the Indian reserves being served and face identical social and health problems. None of the provincial or territorial governments has yet to offer specific programs for Métis people” (Kinnon, 1994:11).

The problem of inequality of services for the Métis is due to the distinction of responsibility at different levels of government. As the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996) noted, federal programs, with all their faults, typically are the only ones adapted to Aboriginal needs. Thus, they have long been the envy of Métis people. For Métis communities, change is impeded by the policy vacuum. “Provincial governments continue to resist developing or financing Aboriginal-specific programs, and the federal government declines to exercise its authority concerning off-reserve services” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996b:257). Additional research is necessary to determine if the lack of counselling and related health services has been a negative effect and has compounded the impact of residential schools on the Métis.

## **Conclusions and Future Research**

One can conclude from this synthesis that Métis attended residential schools in Canada. In many cases, they attended as minorities in largely Indian residential schools. Their experiences were equivalent to Indian student experiences and, in some cases, because of their minority status and lack of “official” sponsorship were discriminated against. There were also several situations where Métis were the majority of students and, in some cases, the only students that attended residential schools. St. Paul’s residential school for the Métis created by Father Lacombe is perhaps the most well-known example. Although some literature was uncovered that is specific to the Métis and their attendance at residential schools, little is known about their experience in residential schools.

Based on research conducted thus far, it is possible to make some tentative recommendations for future research. First, there is material on Métis participation in residential schools in Canada. This material is largely in the form of unpublished and inaccessible historical documentation. Considerable time and resources would have to be set aside to adequately find all materials. It is hard to tell if most have been uncovered by this research effort and that this review only scratched the surface of what exists. For some, like Professor Miller, it could take up to 15 years to gather necessary documentation. In short, more research will likely reveal more information on Métis participation. Second, there is a need to conduct individual or workshop format sessions with Métis people about residential schools and the issues that are relevant from a Métis perspective. Some informal discussions with certain Métis who attended residential schools were conducted during the course of this review. Their perspectives are unique and offered Métis-specific issues regarding their experiences in residential schools as well as issues that are very much consistent with those of status Indians.

## Annotated Bibliography

The following are summaries of published materials where Métis experiences were discussed:

**Adams, Howard (1975). *Prison of Grass: Canada from the native point of view.* Toronto, ON: General Publishing.**

No annotated bibliography is provided for this source. See the historical background section of this report for consideration of relevant references by the author of this report.

**De Tremaudan, A.-H. (1982). *Hold High Your Heads (History of the Métis Nation in Western Canada)*, translator Elizabeth Maguet. Winnipeg, MB: Pemmican Publications.**

This text illustrates how social life of the Métis, like all nations where Christianity ruled, owed its character in good part to the missionaries. In 1817, Lord Selkirk asked Monseigneur Plessis of Québec to send missionaries to Red River. His request, supported by a petition signed by 24 people (20 French and 4 Scots) was granted and Abbes Joseph-Norbert Provencher and Joseph-Nicholas-Severe Dumoulin were chosen to go and establish what was to become the Church of St. Boniface (36). The Bishop of Québec sent a letter to all the priests of his diocese soliciting financial contributions to ensure the financial future of St. Boniface (36-37). Abbe Provencher was invested with all the powers and rights of vicar-general. Among other recommendations, the bishop enjoined the two missionaries to regularize all unions between Canadians and their Indian wives. Before, the Jesuit missionaries had encouraged marriages between white and red.

The governor-in-chief of the two Canadas and Captain-General Sir John Cape Sherbrooke gave Monseigneur Plessis a document in both English and French to help the priests win the confidence of the white population in the West. At Lord Selkirk's suggestion, Sir J.C. Sherbrooke provided, as escort, an officer of the Indian Department, Chevalier Jean-Baptiste de Lorimier. The two priests started out on 9 May 1818, along with seminarist Guillaume Edge. On 16 July 1818, the missionaries arrived at Fort Douglas. A dwelling place and chapel were built and, within two weeks, 72 children had already been baptized while catechism was taught to children and adults who wished instruction in the Catholic faith. A month later, 20 French Canadian settlers arrived whose work would contribute towards settling the still nomadic Métis.

Between 1818 and 1823, the colony experienced famine and misery. For four consecutive years, wheat crops were ravaged by grasshoppers. The French Canadians had to do without bread, a food until that time unknown to Natives. Their existence became dependent on the buffalo hunts organized by the Métis.

At this time, Monseigneur Provencher, who became a bishop on 12 May 1822, became the schoolmaster. In 1822, Mr. Harper took charge of the school in St. Boniface and the bishop supervised students of classical studies. He continued to set up missions in various places where the population was large enough to warrant the ministry of a priest (37).

The principal mission outside St. Boniface was Pembina, located in the best hunting area and closest to the western American cities. A chapel and rectory were built and a village was later established.

Lord Selkirk died in France in 1820 and in the spring of 1822, his brother-in-law John Halkett, executor of his estate, came to Red River to check on progress being made at the settlement. He did not approve of the division of the colony's strength by the formation of settlements outside the limits of the area that Selkirk had chosen. In response, Halkett took steps to see that the settlement at Pembina, located in the United States, would be discontinued and people would be compelled to live at the forks of the Red and Assiniboine Rivers. The Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) was supportive of Halkett's efforts. This support was attributable to the fact that the Métis, the premier fur trappers, were essential to the HBC. If the Métis continued to reside at Pembina, however, the Métis would be able to escape the authority of this company and spread emancipation ideas among the Red River settlers through contact with the Americans.

Monseigneur Provencher, out of respect for Lord Selkirk, acceded to Halkett's wishes and informed the religious Métis that he would no longer be able to leave a priest resident among them at Pembina. As a result, the Métis followed them back to St. Boniface and Pembina was abandoned (38). Monseigneur Provencher had little trouble in convincing the Métis that it was easier to live in groups and for their children to go to school. By living in groups, the Métis became better in "religious truths" for which they had shown great eagerness from the day the missionaries first arrived (39). By 1824, the Métis lifestyle was formed by the routine of settled life, complete with houses and fences. As a result, the Métis renounced their nomadic way of life, but not without regret (38). However, it took the absolute disappearance of the buffalo for the Métis to abandon a life dependent on the buffalo hunt.

The Scots settled downstream from Fort Douglas. The Canadians formed groups here and there, the two principal centres being at St. Norbert and the Whitehorse Plains (St. François-Xavier). This division of land was made without friction or religious fanaticism. Catholics and Protestants lived as brothers/sisters, each having their own school and church, trying to learn the other's language.

The merger of the North West Company into the Hudson's Bay Company on 26 March 1821 contributed greatly to the strengthening bonds between the English and French people of the Red River Settlement (39).

In 1835, the HBC bought all the land that Lord Selkirk had acquired in 1811 for \$82,000, which confirmed ownership and legal government of the country (41). The company fixed all their prices for furs; for example, a skin worth 20 shillings to a white or Métis was only worth one shilling to an Indian. Indians then began to trade through their Métis cousins. When the company learned of this, it issued orders forbidding anyone to exchange furs with the Indians under threat of imprisonment (41-42).

On 21 June 1844, the first Grey Nuns arrived to open a school for girls at Red River. They had many pupils from all social classes and nationalities, including Métis children (44). The Indians surrounding the Red River Settlement were made up of Sioux and Saukteaux tribes. The Saukteaux were a people of gentler customs and related mostly with the Métis (45).

**Fournier, Suzanne and Ernie Crey (1997). *Stolen From Our Embrace: The Abduction of First Nations Children and the Restoration of Aboriginal Communities*. Vancouver, BC: Douglas & McIntyre.**

Since the seventeenth century, many Québécois intermarried with Aboriginal people, usually people from nations (*Kanien'keha* (Mohawk), Huron and Onondaga) comprising the Six Nations Confederacy (12). Fournier's paternal family resided in Québec for many generations. Her father considered himself white and did not believe in mixed blood; however, Fournier was raised in Alberta and labelled Métis (12-13). She and her sister preferred Aboriginal children from the nearby Morley reserve as friends.

By 1821, Aboriginal people were no longer essential trade partners needed by the fur-trading companies to facilitate trade; rather, they had begun to directly employ their own people, including Europeans and an increasing number of Métis (53).

During the 1820s, the Canadian government was being pressured by British homesteaders who demanded that Indians be somehow neutralized or removed from the land. This political and economic imperative was a direct motivation for the colonial government's support for religious-run boarding schools for Indian children. In 1846, at a meeting in Orillia, the government committed itself to Indian residential schools.

The interests of the church and state merged for convenience in order to carry out this commitment (53). Catholics, Anglicans, and Methodists launched schools for Indian children as far as Manitoba and Alberta. Protestants and Catholics launched schools in British Columbia. The earliest schools were located at Metlakatla in northern British Columbia in 1857 and St. Mary's Mission in the Fraser Valley in 1861.

The churches received more official support with Confederation in 1867, when the national government became charged with constitutional responsibility for Indian education. Day schools were not sufficient to sever the tie between Aboriginal parent and child. In 1876, all Aboriginal children became legal wards of the Crown. In 1889, an Indian Affairs department was created and Indian agents were scattered throughout the country. The Indian agent could threaten to withhold money from destitute Aboriginal parents if they did not send their children away to school or could even throw them in jail (54).

**Haig-Brown, Celia (1988). *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving The Indian Residential School*. Vancouver, BC: Arsenal Pulp Press Ltd.**

George Manuel, Secwepemc leader and author, writes: "All areas of our lives which were not occupied by the Indian agent were governed by the priest" (28). The government sought assimilation of Indians through Christianization and civilization and left the task to the religious orders—priests and teachers.

"The Oblates of Mary Immaculate was founded in 1812 by Eugene de Mazenod in France ... Original involvement with North America came in response to a request from the Bishop of Montréal ... a small group of Oblates [arrived] in Oregon in 1847" (29) and they were determined that the only way to ensure Natives would abandon their migratory lifestyle would be to insist natives abandon their own religious beliefs and pursue Christianity.

Fort Kamloops, a North West Company trading post, became a logical site for the establishment of a mission (33). Although the Oblates had been operating a school for children in a different location, they took control of the permanent residential school in 1893 (33-34).

In British Columbia, the missionaries and governments worked together to deal with the “Indian problem” (34). Governments used missionaries to convince Native people to curtail their movements, take up an agrarian lifestyle and abandon their culture.

The particular section of the book reviewed then discusses the Kamloops Residential School (33-37).

**Harrison, Julia (1985). *Métis People Between Two Worlds*. Vancouver, BC: Glenow-Alberta Institute.**

The educational experiences of the Métis were fluid depending upon their “legal” classification, which itself was very fluid. The author notes, for example, that when treaty and scrip commissions were being conducted in the West, clergy would often encourage people to take treaty rather than scrip, “partly because missions received government grants based on a per capita enrolment in their schools, which were exclusive to Treaty Indian children” (76).

Métis were discouraged from attending public schools because of racism and abuse inflicted on them by white children. For example, the author quotes Dorothy Miller from Amisk, Alberta, who recalls: “Our children go to school well dressed and well fed. The reason some drop out of school is because the whites turn their noses up and call them names over their nationality” (133).

**Lussier, Antoine S. and D. Bruce Sealey (1978). *The Other Natives: the-les Métis, volume 2*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Métis Federation Press.**

This annotation focuses on chapter six, specifically, “Alberta’s Half-breed Reserve Saint-Paul-des-Métis 1869-1909.” This chapter notes that Riel’s success in 1869-70 was only temporary. The delegates of the Métis Provisional Government had succeeded in obtaining a promise that 1,400,000 acres of land would be set aside for the use of the mixed-blood population. In 1885, the Half-Breed Claims Commission recommended the issue of scrip for 160 acres to each family head and 240 acres to each child born prior to the acquisition of the Hudson’s Bay Company Territories by Canada (75-76). Children born between 1870 and 1885 were later included in this right to scrip. The granting of scrip was never intended by Ottawa as a measure of relief for indigent or victimized Métis; rather, it was simply a means of extinguishing whatever theoretical title the Métis may have possessed to the land by virtue of Indian origin (76). The use of transferable scrip as the legal instrument of entitlement to land in the reserved areas virtually nullified whatever benefits might have accrued to the Métis as a result of the concession made by Sir John A. MacDonald (75).

Métis found themselves in destitute conditions after the North West Uprising of 1885. Métis were distrusted by many whites because they had taken up arms and were despised by others for clinging to a world that no longer existed. Furthermore, since Métis had renounced all claims to Indian status to qualify for scrip, they were no longer accepted by Indians. Métis had no means of earning a living except

by hunting, trading or freighting, but these yielded little more than a bare subsistence. The animals were driven out by settlers and the railways were doing the same to the Red River carts (76).

From time to time, the mounted police officers wrote to Ottawa about the destitution of the Métis population. The clergy was also concerned about the Métis (76). The Métis suffered from unemployment and starvation, both of which were bound to break down their moral stamina in the long run.

Reverend Father Albert Lacombe was one of those most sympathetic to the plight of the Métis. He was one of the first Oblates to be sent to the Canadian northwest and was called "The Man of the Good Heart." Reverend Lacombe wrote from 1884 onwards about the sad conditions of the Indians and Métis and wanted to do something for the Native peoples (77). He envisaged more than a reserve for the Métis, something more closely approximating a special area set aside for them. The reverend drafted a document entitled *A Philanthropic Plan to Redeem the Half-Breeds of Manitoba and the North-West Territories* and presented it to the Department of Indian Affairs (78-79). In this document, the reverend asked the federal government, in view of the bleak times ahead for the Métis, to set aside four townships in the Buffalo Lake area of Alberta to be divided into 40 acre lots and distributed to poor Half-Breed families. Furthermore, each Métis occupant was required "to promise and sign a contract by which the title of the said land shall not be sold or alienated, but remain for ever vested in the Crown" (79) so as to ensure the land would not be bartered, mortgaged or sold. Lacombe also insisted the federal government supply "furnishing seed and agricultural implements." The majority of Métis, estimated to be between 7,000 and 8,000, were in a critical condition, but there were others who were more desperate and who had no homes at all. It was this latter group that Lacombe hoped to put on his proposed reserve. He also said that no alcohol would be allowed on the reserve since it was largely responsible for the destitute condition of the Métis. According to Lacombe's vision, both prohibition and the exclusion of the whites were vital to the reserve's success. However, Métis were not compelled to settle on the reserve (79).

The Department of Indian Affairs had no interest in the mixed-blood population, but the Department of the Interior did. The Honourable T.M. Daly, then minister of the Interior, was in complete agreement with Reverend Lacombe and passed an order-in-council on 28 December 1895 setting aside Townships 57 and 58 in Ranges 9 and 10 west of the fourth meridian for the Métis (80-81). The administration of the project rested with a management board comprised of the Roman Catholic bishops of Saint-Boniface, Saint-Albert and Prince Albert, and two lay trustees. The order also provided four sections of leased land to the Episcopal corporations of the three Roman Catholic dioceses to build and maintain an industrial school for Métis children (81).

The reserve was actually located in the vicinity of Egg and Saddle Lakes (82). Lacombe obtained the land on a 21-year lease at the nominal rate of one dollar per year and was called Saint-Paul-des-Métis (83).

No whites or Indians were permitted to settle in the colony "with the exception of those who will have received from the missionaries permission to do so" (84) and no hunting, cutting hay or wood by outsiders would be tolerated. No alcohol would be tolerated on the reserve as well. Reverend Lacombe distributed a circular inviting Métis families to live there.

One weakness in Reverend Lacombe's plan was the lack of funds to support it. He only received a one-time grant of \$2,000 from the federal government for seed and machinery (85).

From time to time, efforts were made to convince both the federal and the territorial governments that they had some responsibility for helping this reserve. While Lacombe did succeed in getting then Minister of the Interior Clifford Sifton to make a small grant to purchase seed grain after the crop failure of 1903, the minister was still unconvinced. Frederick Haultin, the territorial premier, came up with \$300 for school purposes for 1902-1903 and another \$450 for 1903-1904 (86). The only substantial funds came from private individuals. Lacombe, for example, convinced the Canadian Pacific Railway to deliver freight to the mission free of charge.

While Lacombe devoted his time to raising money, Father Therien devoted his time to managing the day-to-day life of the colony. Métis families came from Battle River, Medicine Hat, Saint-Albert, Lac des Brochets, Battleford, Duck Lake, Beaver Lake and Strathcona (South Edmonton) (87). Each family received 80 acres and the families were able to cultivate one or two of the acres for seeding the following spring. The majority of Métis, however, preferred to hunt and fish.

In 1897, a farm was established on the reserve and steps were taken to establish a day school. Both Lacombe and Therien knew that if real progress was to be made, a proper school building and teachers were necessary.

Lacombe continued to send reports to the Department of the Interior, but officials wanted to see for themselves the progress made in the colony. The department sent their own inspector, A.A. Ruttan of the Dominion Lands Office at Edmonton, into northern Alberta. Prior to Ruttan's departure to the colony, the department's mind was clearly made up: the deputy minister had written that there was no chance at all for the establishment of an industrial school (91).

Ruttan arrived in Saint-Paul on 3 January 1899 and held a meeting with the resident families who all spoke Cree. Métis families actively supported the establishment of the school. Ruttan gave top priority to the supply of adequate farm machinery, which was arranged immediately by the mission authorities and delivered to the colony by the first of April. Ruttan, however, realized that by prioritizing farm machinery, there would likely be no funding for the school. As a result, Ruttan recommended funding for the school. He also recognized the value of having the Roman Catholic Church run the school in which their best services were given voluntarily without monetary reward and simply as a religious duty, and recommended that the school should be provided to the colonists on a cost-free basis for a period of five to ten years. This recommendation, however, was not what Ruttan was supposed to recommend and was completely opposed to what the deputy minister had written (92).

The school officially opened its doors in 1903 (93). The school was still without any public support from Ottawa at this time. Federal aid to schools applied to Indians only and Métis were not Indians. The building later burned down to the ground in a fire on 15 January 1905 (96). Some Métis boys had planned the fire the previous autumn (97). The school was rebuilt after the Christmas holidays, but was burned down again and the old day school was restored (98-99).

One of the fundamental rules Lacombe insisted upon was the exclusion of all white settlers from the colony, regardless of whether they spoke French or English (99). Only those whites with the express permission of the manager could remain inside the reserve boundaries. There was outside pressure from settlers to settle there. Father Therien, however, wanted to open up the reserve to French Canadian homesteaders

and had been championing this cause since 1905 (102). Once Therien successfully convinced Bishops Langevin and Legal including Father Lacombe to open up the reserve to French Canadian homesteaders, consent from remaining board members followed (101-102).

**Lussier, Antoine S. and D. Bruce Sealey (1980). *The Other Natives: the-les Métis, volume 3.* Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Métis Federation Press.**

The history of educating Métis people is a tale of epic struggle between two opposing schools of thought on the purpose of education: traditional culture versus the impressed upon teachings of European culture (1). Various churches and governments tried to set up buffers between the two contradictory cultures: education and religion (4).

Prior to 1800, a European-type education for people of Native ancestry was developed to meet the needs of half-breed children of HBC employees. Later, the needs of white settlers in Red River necessitated the development of schools. Only later was the European education system extended to Indian children of Manitoba. These education systems had definite religious and moral overtones. The effort to develop educational and religious institutions as a means of social control brought an alliance of economic and religious elements that made a determined and combined effort to subvert Native cultures and, by so doing, moved the people from the Stone Age to the Iron Age (5).

The number of half-breed children grew so rapidly that teachers were sent to northern forts to ensure their education was not neglected (6). In 1808, the HBC sent the first recorded teachers to the area now called Manitoba at an annual salary of 30 pounds sterling. These educational efforts on the part of the HBC toward their employees' half-breed children were humanitarian in nature and made good economic sense since the educated boys played important roles as interpreters, clerks and post managers, while the girls were much sought after as wives (6-7).

Manitoba was first encroached by French traders and followed by English-speaking traders in 1763. No consistent, organized effort to govern the lives of employees in the West was attempted until the small companies combined to form the North West Company. In 1805, the enlarged North West Company tried to control the economic costs of Métis families by passing a resolution (7).

The introduction of a formal school system was largely under the influence of the Anglican and Catholic churches. Prior to this time, the HBC focused on the education of the half-breed for whom the London committee of the HBC felt responsible. The arrival of the Selkirk settlers in 1812 had a profound effect upon education in the northwest. In 1819, education began to involve Indian people – albeit on a peripheral basis.

In 1819, Reverend John West, company chaplain, began a boarding school primarily for Indian and half-breed children (8). However, the transition from a nomadic lifestyle to a regimented boarding school was too dramatic a change for most Indians. The Métis students were successful largely because they were partially use to a settled way of life.

Catholic missionaries Provencher, Dumoulin and Edge arrived in Manitoba one year prior to Reverend West. The missionaries were tasked to convert the Indians, reclaim delinquent Christians, learn Indian

languages, prepare grammar, perform baptisms and marriages, establish schools, mark Christian territories with high crosses and emphasize that religion makes people obedient to the laws of both church and state. During the first decade, the missionaries worked primarily with Métis.

As a result of the union between the Hudson's Bay Company and the North West Company in 1821, there was a subsequent lack of competition that caused almost half the fur-trading posts in Rupert's Land to close (9). The London committee was determined to move the large masses of unemployed fur traders and servants to Red River.

In 1823, a survey determined that Pembina was in the United States territory and the majority of Métis residents were persuaded to move north. Some settled in St. Vital and others established a new settlement, under the leadership of Cuthbert Grant, along the Assiniboine River at Grantown (now known as St. François Xavier).

By 1823, several thousands of people, mainly Métis, were settled at the Red River Settlement. Both the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches were firmly established and prepared to evangelize and educate the population. Religious orders worked closely with the HBC to use the churches and schools to convert, civilize and assist in the agricultural settlement of Métis people. It was through these means that social control of the semi-nomadic people might be established. These efforts proved quite successful.

In 1829, Bishop Provencher extended education to girls when he engaged two Métis, the Nolin sisters from Pembina, to teach at Red River. By 1845, Provencher was operating five schools: three in St. Boniface, one in St. François Xavier and the other run by an itinerant teacher who worked with children who followed their parents to the plains to hunt buffalo.

In 1832, a decision was made to close John West's school at Red River and relocate the Indian students to a new school close to St. Peter's. Prior to this, the school had enrolled some Indians, but had primarily served as a boarding school for the half-breed sons and daughters of fur traders at isolated posts.

The Reverend David Jones felt the children should be isolated from their families so that the Indian way of life could be more easily extinguished (11). He felt the key to their acculturation was to force them to use English at all times (11-12). Enrolment flourished at the school.

There is little evidence as to whether coercion was used to recruit these students, but apparently the wandering bands in the Red River area were not receptive to leaving their children in boarding schools.

In 1844, the Grey Nuns arrived in Red River and assisted two Oblate fathers, Aubert and Tache. The extension of missions to smaller settlements was now possible. Emphasis was placed on extending the Christian missions and schools to the nomadic people of the plains and woodlands (10). In most instances, the new missions served both Indians and Métis.

The Catholics attempted to extend their influence to the Indians thirty miles up the Assiniboine River from the Forks and established a combined Indian and Métis settlement known as Baie Saint Paul; however, the settlement was not a success (12). The mission was abandoned in 1848 with only Métis remaining. Later, these Métis established a new settlement ten miles away and named it St. Eustache (13).

Following Confederation, there was a need for government to define who was an Indian. Consequently, it was necessary from 1870 onwards to consider the education of the Métis and Indians separately.

The 1869-1870 disturbances resulted in the *Manitoba Act* (16). The act set out the denominational school provisions pertaining to the Métis and set aside 1,400,000 acres “towards the extinguishment of the Indian Title to the lands,” a recognition of the Aboriginal right to the land inherited by Métis people through their maternal ancestors (17).

The generation of Métis families following the creation of Manitoba left the province to establish new settlements. Métis families moved into areas where the population was largely Indian and tended to intermarry and adopt much of their culture. The churches followed the Métis and, when possible, established schools in the settlements. The schools were able to operate only for a few months each year due to lack of funds. The result was that each succeeding generation of Métis tended to have less formal education than the preceding one:

At first the Federal Government had accepted the responsibility of providing education for all persons of Indian ancestry and in 1878 commissioned Nicholas Flood Davin to study and submit a report of the progress of Industrial schools for ... the education of Indians and mixed-bloods in the United States and on the advisability of establishing similar institutions in the North-West Territories of the Dominion (18).

Many half-breeds, particularly those residing on or near reserves, attended industrial and boarding schools until 1910. A new agreement was then negotiated between the churches and the Department of Indian Affairs. The agreement specified that only children belonging to Indian bands could attend residential schools and management was to disallow “the entrance of half-breed children into the Boarding Schools unless Indian children could not be obtained” (19). The Department of Indian Affairs stipulated that it would not pay a grant nor any part of the maintenance or education costs of any half-breed children admitted to the schools. As a result, those Métis allowed to enter the schools did so as objects of charity of the churches because few parents were able to pay the fees. Some Métis were in attendance in almost every school.

A similar situation existed in day schools located on reserves. Those Métis who lived on reserves or on the outskirts of the reserves could send their children if there was room in the schools. Half-breed children would be allowed to attend for one term, but could not be assured there would be room later in the year. Education of Métis children was sporadic since they could not afford their own schools (19).

In 1912, the boundaries of Manitoba were extended and the local school system was expanded to include isolated northern communities.

Most Métis children in The Pas were accommodated by the Sacred Heart Private School organized in 1913. The Manitoba Department of Education opened a public school for Métis children in 1912, but closed it in 1915. In 1920, Manitoba said they would pay \$300 per year to the Indian school as tuition for Métis children. The Indian school closed in 1940 as there was no teacher for the school, but reopened in 1943 on a part-time basis where Reverend Archdeacon Faries, a resident Métis clergyman, taught when

he had the time. The school eventually closed in 1945 when the part-time teacher was no longer able to teach due to his advanced age (20).

As white settlers poured into the southern part of Manitoba, the remaining Métis became the minority. In 1870, there were 9,800 Métis and, by 1880, there were 5,314 Métis who claimed land under section 31 of the *Manitoba Act* (21).

The French-speaking Métis were Catholic and when the church encouraged the immigration of French-speaking Catholics to Manitoba, immigrants settled in established Métis communities with church facilities (21-22). As a result, assimilation was rapid.

**Sawchuk, Joe, Patricia Sawchuck and Theresa Ferguson (1981). *Métis Land Rights in Alberta: A Political History*. Edmonton, AB: Métis Association of Alberta.**

This text concerns the St. Paul des Métis: The first Métis colony during the period 1896-1909.

While the church was dependent upon the state for patronage and the Métis were dependent upon the church for patronage, both the state and church regarded the Métis in a paternalistic manner. The church, however, particularly Father Lacombe, felt some real responsibility for the Métis (159). The federal government recognized the West as a provider of natural resources and as a market for manufactured goods. To realize this economic hinterland, both rapid settlement and an effective transport system were needed in the West. Before policies to effect these aims could be implemented, however, it was necessary to establish a federal presence in the West and to extinguish Aboriginal rights to the land. Once this was accomplished, large land grants were given to railway companies. In 1880, the transcontinental Canadian Pacific Railway was chartered and began construction. By the late 1880s, the Department of the Interior began surveying in the North West Territories in order to establish the free homestead system under the *Dominion Lands Act* of 1872.

By the 1890s, the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church was being challenged. Most treaty Indians were nominally Catholic. Settlers migrating to the North West Territories were mostly protestant. Correspondence of Bishop Grondin of St. Albert states that from 1889 onwards the Catholics were being threatened by the Protestants for government funds, particularly for schools (160). Grondin proceeded to increase the population of Catholics through the immigration of French Canadians. They were, however, unable to get Quebecers to immigrate. In 1890, Grandin tried to encourage Belgians, non-French-speaking Irish Catholics and Ruthenians to immigrate (161).

The major reason for the impoverishment of Métis in the West was the loss or inadequacy of traditional subsistence patterns. In addition, the government was insensitive to the dependency of Métis on "country foods." In 1890, a law was passed that forbade the hunting of ducks and partridges in the spring.

In a report by the Committee of St. Albert Métis, four causes of poverty were identified: the destruction of last year's crop by frost; the decrease in fur-bearing animals and the low price for furs; the nearly total failure of the fisheries and the high price of food in the area that compelled farmers to kill their cattle and sell their horses and farming implements to avoid starvation (162).

The efforts of the Oblates were now focused on treaty Indians because the Department of Indian Affairs was committed to support a religious education program on the reserves. The state felt that their obligation had been fulfilled with the issue of scrip in the 1870s and again in 1885-1887.

From the North West Mounted Police reports, it can be seen that the condition of Métis was a cause for concern for two reasons only: it did not reflect well on the government to have citizens in a state of destitution; and that discontent among the Half-breeds might give rise to another rebellion (163). Father Lacombe felt a farming colony would be the best solution, although this idea was not a new one. Therien who was to become the manager of the colony wrote in his journal that if it did not succeed he would induce French Canadians to come and form catholic parishes (165).

In 1895, Albert Lacombe began lobbying in the East and wrote a proposal entitled "A Philanthropic Plan to Redeem the Half-breeds of Manitoba and the North West Territories." Lacombe proposed a farming colony be established at Buffalo Lake, where four sections would be granted to the Episcopal Corporations of St. Boniface, St. Albert and Prince Albert for the construction of a church and school. Four townships would be leased to them at a nominal rent and subsequently allotted to destitute half-breeds in 40 acre lots. The government would survey the land, provide seed and agricultural equipment and organize a patrol so that neither non-Métis nor liquor sellers would be allowed to settle on the reserved area. The Oblates would run the colony and raise funds to build an industrial school.

At that time, Deputy Minister of the Department of the Interior A.M. Burgess was very interested in the plan as it was an inexpensive alternative to scrip. However, he did recommend a new area of land as the area that was selected was too close to white settlements. The new selected site was situated in the eastern part of the province north of North Saskatchewan.

On 28 December 1895, an order-in-council passed that resulted in the creation of the St. Paul des Métis colony owing to a 21-year lease on Townships 57 and 58, Ranges 9 and 10 west of the fourth meridian (166). A management board was formed to oversee this initiative. Father Lacombe printed a circular in English, French, and Cree announcing the project.

With the coming of a new government around 1896, the patronage formerly extended to the Board of Management of St. Paul des Métis project was withdrawn (168). Father Lacombe never received any funds from the Department of the Interior to build the school; rather, the funding was raised from a tour through Québec and the eastern United States. Most of this money went to the diocese which was on the verge of bankruptcy. A certain amount was used to finish building the school and \$5,000 was left to build a church.

With the crop failure in 1903, the government had intervened with a supply of oats and barley, and later with loans toward the purchase of seed grain. When the government changed around 1905, benefits of patronage from the state resumed and the department picked up the bill for debts stemming from the purchase of seed grain (170).

In January 1905, a fire that was deliberately started by Métis children destroyed the school. Therien pursued his original idea of turning the St. Paul des Métis into a French Canadian parish, which took him four years to accomplish.

In 1902, Therien argued that the stability of the colony and the extent to which the Métis had relied on their own resources to make the colony a success were indications that early permission had not been well-founded. After the fire, Therien referred to the lack of growth of the colony instead of its stability and represented the Métis as non-industrious, lazy and discontent. Therien next convinced then Minister of the Interior Frank Oliver that the area surrounding the colony should be surveyed and opened up for homesteads. He encouraged Métis to take homesteads outside the colony during this time. Therien assured younger Métis that if they built outside the colony they could later sell and use the money towards a claim on the reserve. It was claimed that once people began to do this, Therien used this as evidence that the Métis were no longer interested in the project and were leaving the colony (172).

**Miller, James R. (1996). *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.**

Miller looks at the residential schools from three perspectives: the government officials who authorized the schools, the missionaries who taught in the schools and the students who attended them. Miller begins his story with a consideration of the historical foundations of residential schooling in seventeenth century New France. This historic understanding is followed by a consideration of the "modern" version of residential schooling created in the 1880s, with a description of the phasing out of the schools in the 1960s. References to the instruction received by students in the residential schools, work and recreation, care and abuse, and the resistance on the part of students and their families within the residential school system are included. The analysis is based on Native accounts of their experiences within the school system and archival research, and includes a map of all the schools and a list of the missionaries who taught in those schools in Canada.

Miller's consideration of the 1880s residential school is in relation to the Treaty # 6 area. "Ottawa was in the process of shifting from its treaty commitment to establish a school 'on the reserve ... whenever the Indians' wanted one, to the provision of residential schools, off reserve, instead" (100). According to Miller, economic and social factors motivated the shift. By 1879, for example, with the virtual disappearance of the buffalo, both government and Natives realized "that immediate action would be required to assist Plains Indians in making a transition from a hunting economy to an agricultural one" (100). Following the collapse of the buffalo economy, David Laird, a superintendent of the North West Territories, noted in 1878 that Ottawa's choices were "to help the Indians to farm and raise stock, to feed them, or to fight them" (100, citation omitted). It was believed that this transition would best be achieved through a two-pronged approach: teach Indian children to become sedentary farmers at well-equipped "industrial" schools, preferably away from the reserves; and, with the aid of government farming instructors on reserves, encourage fathers of these Indian children to aspire to similar agrarian goals (100-101).

Some government officials and most of the missionaries that Ottawa depended upon to inexpensively deliver its treaty promises, also preferred off-reserve residential institutions to the day schools promised in the western treaties. The preference for off-reserve schools was due to a racist attitude that Native people were incapable of making sound decisions and, therefore, needed to be controlled and have decisions made for them. Edgar Dewdney, a Conservative cabinet minister and supposed "expert" on western Indians, noted the poor attendance of Indians at the day schools and attributed this to Indian indifference and absolute refusal on the part of parents to allow their children to attend school. One Presbyterian missionary on

the Wasieleski reserve in Saskatchewan told a superior that although there were 47 children of school age, an average of only 15 children attended the day school.

Dewdney proposed a number of initiatives to improve the day schools and concluded that, where no suitable schools were in operation on a reserve, as many children as possible should be taken from such a reserve and placed in industrial schools where government objectives would be successfully achieved. The missionaries tended to support such initiatives in view of their uncertainty that the day schools could be sufficiently improved to achieve government educational objectives.

In preparing a plan for off-reserve residential schools, Nicholas Flood Davin of Regina was appointed by Sir J.A. Macdonald's cabinet in 1879 to carry out an investigation of residential schools in the United States and to recommend steps to create "Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds." Davin was impressed with American schools enacted under the American policy of "aggressive civilization" implemented in 1869 by the Grant administration. Davin attributed the inclusion of mixed-blood people in these schools as an important element of the success of these schools. He noted that "the mixed blood is the natural mediator between the Government and the red man, and also his natural instructor" (101). This approach necessitated that Davin understand the "Indian character."

Davin's recommendation that education for Indian and Métis children should be in residential establishments was influenced by the Indians' potential and the perceived critical mediatory role of the Métis. "Existing mission schools, including boarding establishments, should be used wherever they existed, and up to four 'industrial boarding schools'" (102) were to be added in the prairie region. Two key reasons in support of the denominational character of residential schools were: the belief that Indians should be given something positive to replace their own Indian mythology as part of the process of civilization; and the reliance on churches would more readily provide for teachers that possess the essential combination of learning and virtue. It was also known that reliance on church teachers was less costly than bringing in teachers with pedagogical qualifications.

At the time Ottawa was considering Davin's recommendations, there were no less than 12 boarding schools in Ontario, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories and British Columbia. They were operated by various Christian denominations that provided results sufficient to prove the superiority of boarding establishments over ordinary day schools (102). In 1883, the government enacted the residential program under then Prime Minister Sir J.A. Macdonald. Parliament provided \$44,000 for three industrial schools in the North West for distribution amongst an Anglican institution at Battleford under the principalship of Thomas Clarke, a Roman Catholic institution "at or near" Qu'Appelle (St. Boniface), and a Roman Catholic industrial school in Treaty #7 (St. Albert). The Anglican establishment used the facilities formerly used by the territorial government before it relocated to Regina and the Catholic schools would require new buildings (103). It would be up to the Indian commissioner in the region to determine whether students could be taken from one tribe or from all the bands in a given area. While Davin recommended the recruitment of Métis students and the employment of Métis staff, these recommendations were not addressed. "Although some Métis and non-status Indian children were quietly admitted in the early years of the new residential system, by the 1890s Ottawa was insisting that it would provide grants only for the children of status Indians, for whom the federal government had constitutional responsibility" (103-104).

In addition to these schools, St. Paul's Hostel was set up in Dawson City, Yukon, by the Anglicans in 1920 under Bishop W.C. Bompas (144). It was common for schools that were located in remote regions to resort to game as part of the students' diet (296). The Anglican's St. Paul hostel in Dawson City was mainly for Métis and non-status Indian children and made considerable use of fish and moose meat. Over time, however, reliance on country provisions was discouraged by Ottawa (297).

Although residential schooling emphasized the importance of work to obtain needed skills, the reality in most schools up to the 1950s was that work was a means of supporting the institution rather than a form of instruction. Certain classes of students were assigned more work than others. Methodist officials in 1909, for example, tried to retain a number of Métis and non-status Indian students that Ottawa wanted discharged from the Red Deer school because "many of the halfbreed children are the stay of the Institute as far as the routine work is concerned" (288). Both at that time and later, it was common to keep grown students around just to maintain the school.

**Milloy, J.S. (1999). *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System: 1879-1986*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.**

Milloy does not address Métis participation in residential schools specifically. However, some of his discussion talk about schools in the Arctic where distinctions among Indian, Inuit, Métis or white children were not always made. For example, Milloy states:

Certainly, with the construction of the large and small hostels, a new and improved infrastructure was created, and it can even be argued that small hostels represented an advance on previous models. There was also a continuing interest in tailoring school terms to hunting seasons and in that way to do "everything in our power to maintain the native way of life, provided it did not jeopardize our educational programme." And the system was multicultural. In 1964 there were, in the eight large hostels, 957 Indian and Inuit children and 195 white and Métis.

But, in the operation of the system, no effective balance was struck between cultural preservation, the rather ill-defined idea of modernization, of producing "better Indians and Eskimos," and assimilation – between the goals of making Aboriginal children "true Canadian citizens while at the same time maintaining their racial pride." Within the northern system, in its classrooms and residence halls, assimilation was the norm. The rhetoric of cultural sensitivity and preservation was not in the end matched by the reality of the system, itself, nor could it ever have been given the wider policy and developmental context in which the system functioned and that it served (250-251, citations omitted).

The above reference to Métis participation does indicate that good records were maintained in northern schools that identified Indian, Inuit and white children. It is interesting to note that the Métis were lumped in with the white children.

**Shore, Fred. J. and Lawrence J. Barkwell (1997). *Past Reflects The Present: The Métis Elders' Conference*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Métis Federation Inc.**

This is an edited version of the words of a group of Métis Elders recorded on audio tape at the National Métis Elders' Conference held at the Holiday Inn in Winnipeg, Manitoba, 28 November to 1 December 1991.

Eugene Desjarlais is from St. Laurent, a French/Métis bilingual community. The nuns were in charge of the school and the community. According to Eugene, the white kids and the Métis kids did not get along (141). Métis children did not learn as much as the white children. Eugene only went as far as the seventh grade, was taught in French and went to work at age thirteen. According to Eugene, the community did not do anything when the nuns went too far. The nuns were also hard on the Métis people and called them names such as "Indians" or "bannock-eaters." They also said Métis were just drunkards and not worth anything (142).

Elizabeth Isbister was taught the ways of her culture before going to residential school. According to Elizabeth, Métis people had to live like Indians in the North. The Métis traded with the Hudson's Bay Company and went trapping in the fall and spring. Her father then sent her to residential school in Norway House for "book-learning" (172). Norway House was a Methodist school but Elizabeth really wanted to go to the Catholic school. According to Elizabeth Isbister, school was only half a day and the other half was spent doing laundry or working in the kitchen (173).

Joe Major attended St. Joseph's Boarding School and Orphanage in Thunder Bay (173). According to Joe, he was placed in residential school because his dad was overseas and his mother was unable to take care of him. Don Roulette went to the residential school in Cranberry Portage from 1967 to 1974 (174).

Lloyd Spence recalls referring to himself as Indian in those days. All the Métis called themselves Indians in Camperville, those who were mixed with the French (148). There were lots of Métis in Camperville then. Some Métis even referred to themselves as white. He never heard them refer to themselves as Métis, "usually it was half-breed or something like that" (149).

According to Senator Elsie Bear and Martha Chartrand, the word "Métis" did not appear in use until about the time the Métis Federation began to process memberships (150-151).

**Widder, Keith R. (1999). *Battle for the Soul: Métis Children Encounter Evangelical Protestants at Mackinaw Mission, 1823-1837*. East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press.**

In October 1823, William and Amanda Ferry opened a boarding school for Métis children on Mackinac Island in Michigan (xiii). Most children who came to the Mackinaw Mission were Métis, but were perceived as Indians (25). For 14 years, children raised in the fur-trading society of the western Great Lakes region lived at school with evangelical Protestant missionaries from New England and New York (xiii). This book concerns evangelical Protestantism in the United States during the nineteenth century.

There was open conflict between Protestant Christianity and Roman Catholicism (43). The Métis reaffirmed their identity when they renewed their devotion to the Roman Catholic Church, which was itself becoming an American Church (47).

The first wave of Americans to settle at Mackinac and its surrounding area needed the Métis to bridge the gap between themselves and Native people (61). The Métis spoke French, Odawa or Chippewa.

Through their cultural biases and ridicule of the half breeds, the Protestants probably increased the Métis' awareness of their group identity. The evangelical attitudes toward the French Métis only helped to solidify existing divisions in the fur-trade society (81).

Mixed marriages between recently converted men and their Native wives represented an important accommodation between evangelicals and members of the fur-trade society. Through marriage, the husband could bring both the children and wives under the church's influence and teaching without removing them from their own society (87).

As part of their attempt to Americanize both Métis and full-blooded Indian children, the Ferrys gave them English names (108). At Mackinac, the school ran for most of the year, except for a few weeks in the summer when classes did not meet. Despite resistance to the use of English, Métis children wished to learn it as part of their curriculum (113). Teaching English was a central feature of the Ferrys' effort to Americanize their Métis students, but the children resisted these attempts.

## Summary of Unpublished Material

### **Provincial Archives of Alberta, AN, 82.197, File 1. Selected extracts of a research study of Métis student attendance in schools in Alberta.**

This material includes data sheets on Métis pupils for a research project conducted for the Province of Alberta in 1960. Data sheets containing commentary or suggestions from teachers and principals that cared to express an opinion about Métis students and Métis lifestyle in general are included and attached to this study. The opinions range from those that are clearly racist to those that have rather positive ideas that do not assume the superiority of the white culture.

### **Provincial Archives of Alberta, AN 82.197, File 16. Correspondence concerning the attendance and tuition paid for non-Indian pupils attending federal Indian schools.**

This letter clearly indicates that in 1955 and 1956 a considerable number of non-treaty Indians were accommodated in residential schools in Alberta.

**Provincial Archives of Alberta, AN 75.75 Files 5, 7, and 9. Report of the Royal Commission Appointed to Investigate the Conditions of the Half-Breed Population of Alberta, 1936 and associated documentation.**

A comprehensive report that examined the social and economic circumstances of the Métis population in Alberta during the early 1930s. Much of the report is devoted to the issue of education. For example, the report makes the following observations:

The evidence is, that in all these settlements where there are no white schools large numbers of children are growing up without any education. Certain church or denominational schools are doing splendid work on a purely voluntary basis. Bishop Guy points out that 100 half-breed children are being educated in the Grouard district without cost to the parents or to the Government. It was stated that 80 per cent of the half-breed children of the Province of Alberta receive no education whatever. Even those Metis children who live within an area served by a public school are averse to going to such school because they are ridiculed and humiliated by the white children (7).

Also included in the appendix is the evidence of the proceedings of the “Half-breed Commission.” This evidence contains a considerable amount of material dealing with the extent of Métis education at the time and the participation of Métis children in residential schools in northern Alberta. The evidence supplied by witnesses such as Bishop Breynant describe the circumstances of the Métis in the North and the ability and willingness of church-run boarding schools to accommodate the “half-breed” children (128).

**National Archives of Canada. RG 15, Volume 708, File 360530, MR T-12437, Rev. A. Lacombe, Episcopal Corporation of St. Albert Destitute Half-breed, Industrial School For Half-Breed Children 1894-1906.**

This source contains correspondence regarding the Half-Breeds of the North West Territories and Manitoba. It includes a proposal by Father Lacombe that a tract of land be set aside for an industrial school for half-breed children and was approved by then minister of the Interior. Also included is a proposal submitted on behalf of Roman Catholic Episcopal Corporations of St. Boniface, St. Albert and Prince Albert. The lease pertained to land north of the North Saskatchewan River that was known as the “St. Paul des Métis Reserve” at a rate of one dollar per year for a period of 21 years. Father Lacombe only asked for a seed grant and few implements at the inception of the scheme. However, a half-breed on a farm in the proposed reserve was not tantamount to placing him on the same footing as an Indian, nor did it alter his status as a subject. Father Lacombe later submitted a proposal for funding to build the industrial school.

**National Archives of Canada. RG 15, Volume 708, File 360530, MR T-12438, St. Paul des Métis Reserve 1906-1909.**

The proposed reserve was not under the control of the department but in the hands of trustees appointed by government. Father Lacombe was one of those trustees. Lands were given to build the school and, before final approval was given, the proposed tract of land was changed to another location because it was too close to a white settlement.

**National Archives of Canada. RG 15, Volume 709, File 360530, MR T-12438, St. Paul des Métis Half-breed.**

Part 2 contains correspondence concerning the reserve opening up to white settlers for homestead use. Squatters on land set aside for the industrial school were ordered to move, but were given land elsewhere. Part 3, which dates from 1909 to 1969, contains correspondence regarding monies spent on the industrial school, church, mission and farm. The school was a success.

**National Archives of Canada. RG 15, Volume 643, File 256322, MR T-13890, Destitution Among Half-Breed at Batoche, Duck Lake, Prince Albert 1891-1892.**

This file contains correspondence regarding the living conditions of half-breeds in this area.

**National Archives of Canada. RG 15, Volume 6031, File 150-9, MR C-8148, Headquarters - Correspondence Regarding Admission of Half-breeds to Residential Schools 1894-1938.**

There is a list of different schools where Métis may have attended and periodic reference is made to the numbers or estimated numbers of children attending those schools. Reference is also made to government policy and admission procedures for Métis children at that time.

**National Archives of Canada. RG 15, Volume 736, File 422558, MR T-12486, RE Distribution to Half-breed Children Attending Indian School 1897.**

This file contains correspondence regarding funds for biscuits for the half-breed children attending residential schools. The department refused to give them funding to purchase the biscuits. The administration of half-breeds in schools is kept separate from the administration of Indians.

**National Archives of Canada. RG 10, Volume 3867, File 87125, MR C-11063, Correspondence regarding the presence of half-breeds on different Reserves in British Columbia 1892-1913.**

Various reports referred to the circumstances of the half-breed and why they should not be removed from the reserve, what their general character was, reputation for morality, reference to their drinking habits and the provision of alcohol to Indians.

One letter from the assistant deputy and secretary on 19 February 1912 inquired what is encompassed by the term "half breed" in British Columbia, in order to determine which Métis children are eligible for funds to go to residential schools. In British Columbia many half-breeds were full members of Indian bands. The secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs responded to the writer and assumed that the inquiry was written by a person of Indian blood who did not belong to any band, who did not live on an Indian reserve or follow the Indian mode of living and sought to confirm this. The response provided that it was difficult to answer this question because the *Indian Act* is silent on the matter. Section 18 of the act declared that no half-breed in Manitoba who shared in the distribution of half-breed lands be accounted an Indian. Only under special circumstances could the superintendent general allow a half-breed to be

counted as an Indian or admitted in an Indian treaty and also provide for a half-breed to withdraw from a treaty. This reference showed that it was possible for half-breeds to be counted as Indians. The principal guide in this matter must be a definition of an Indian in the *Indian Act*.

The child of an Indian mother by a white man, or by a half-breed not counted as an Indian, had no legal right to membership in the band of the mother. However, if the child was on the band's reserve since infancy, then the child belonged to the band, shared in the band's privileges and, in most cases, counted as an Indian. Although a letter from an Indian agent in British Columbia stated that the law always regarded such half-breeds as those descended and located according to the description in the preceding paragraph as being on the same footing as those who did not reside on reserves. Similarity in treatment between half-breeds and those not residing on reserve included the ability to purchase alcohol and to vote. As a result, there was a notation in the file that those half-breeds who claimed and exercised these privileges had no just right to be counted as Indians or to live on an Indian reserve. Also, they could not live on Indian lands and interest monies or escape the operation of the sections of the *Indian Act* with respect to intoxicants.

**National Archives of Canada. RG 10, Volume 3788, File 43510, MR C-10138, Manitowapah Agency – Proposed attendance of Half-breed Children at the Water Hen River Indian School 1887.**

This file contains correspondence regarding half-breeds who cannot benefit from the same advantages given to Indian children. The half-breeds, for example, cannot support a school of their own. There is a notation that an Indian agent inquired into the possibility of a joined school for both Indians and half-breeds. The school would be run by the same teacher but as two different schools, with one register for non-treaty people and one for the Indian children. The returns for each portion would be sent to the proper authorities in each case. Reference is made to the creation of a school district to extend school facilities and funds to the half-breed students.

The response letter lists 13 children of half-breed families discharged from their treaty in 1886, five or six of whom would be able to attend the school. The superintendent general wrote there was accommodation for them in the building and the children were given permission to attend as proposed at a cost of 25 cents per month per pupil.

**National Archives of Canada. Volume 6031, File 150-9, Headquarters – Admission of Half-breeds to Residential Schools. 1894-1938.**

This file contains records of Métis attending Indian day schools. One letter contains correspondence of the unauthorized attendance of non-treaty children at the Mistowasis and Attakakoops schools. The letter from the deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs (Ottawa, 25 April 1894) provided that due to the small attendance of Indian children at these schools and the fact that the presence of the half-breed children would not interfere in any way with the progress of the Indian children, the Department did not object in this instance to their attending the schools, provided their parents would deliver a few loads of wood at the school for the winter.

Another letter contains correspondence from Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Hayter Reed to the bishop of Saskatchewan and Calgary (Ottawa, 30 July 1896) concerning whether or not children of Half-breeds who have been permitted to leave the treaty can be admitted to Indian boarding and industrial schools in Saskatchewan.

A further letter contains an inquiry from Reverend Father Hugonard concerning the admission of half-breed children whose parents have withdrawn from treaty (Ottawa, 25 July 1899). Hugonard inquired into the admissions of children under the charge of treaty half-breeds, specifically orphans—not being treaty half-breeds nor having been wrongly thrown out of treaty. He further stated how they were uneducated and becoming a perpetual danger for educated Indians and the community. As the schools were unable to fill the vacancies, it was felt that the admission of half-breeds would not injure the Indians. The Métis remained in a far worse position than Indian children.

In another letter, Superintendent General Clifford Sifton wrote (Ottawa, 18 October 1899) that he did not approve of the absolute rule laid down by then Indian Commissioner Laird that none but treaty children are to be admitted into Indian schools. He did not agree that children of half-breeds of Manitoba and the Territories should be admitted into Indian schools paid for by the department. He was, however, of the opinion that all children, including mixed blood, whether legitimate or not, living upon an Indian reserve and whose parents on either side lived as Indians upon a reserve, even if they were not annuitants, should be eligible for admission to the schools. He also wrote that boarding and industrial schools were not established for the purpose of carrying out the terms of the treaty or complying with any provision of the law. Rather, they were instituted in the public interest so that the half-breeds would not grow up on reserves uneducated and barbarous. He further notes that the North West Government cannot provide for the education of non-annuitants upon reserves, but noted that if the government excluded them from the schools they would practically be debarred from all means of obtaining an education.

In a letter to the deputy superintendent general (Ottawa, 11 January 1904) reference was made to the fact that a half-breed whose Indian title was extinguished other than by treaty cannot be considered an Indian, as defined by the *Indian Act*, so as to give him all the advantages of the treaty.

A letter from the assistant deputy and secretary (Ottawa, 26 January 1911) stated that it was decided, in future, not to permit the admission of half-breed children as grant earners in industrial schools conducted by the department for the education of Indian children. Furthermore, no half-breed children shall be admitted to any of these schools unless Indian children could not fill the positions for which a grant is provided. The department, however, would not pay any grant for such half-breed child nor any part of the cost of the maintenance of the child's education whatsoever.

This was later acknowledged/confirmed by the Elkhorn Industrial School (30 January 1911); Mohawk Institution in Brantford, Ontario (30 January 1911); Wikwemikong School (4 February 1911); Algoma Indian School, Sault St. Marie (February 1911); Battleford Indian Industrial School, Saskatchewan (2 February 1911); Indian Industrial School, Qu'Appelle (2 February 1911); and Kamloops Industrial School. The principal inquired into the status of illegitimate offspring between white men and Indian women who were left with their mothers for support and who lived on a reserve, and those children with known but dead fathers, and others with unknown fathers who were adopted by the Indian husband of their mothers. The principal also inquired into the status of children of a half-breed father and a half-breed

mother who lived as Indians on an Indian reserve. He also inquired into the status of children of a half-breed father and an Indian woman, or of an Indian father and a half-breed mother. This is acknowledged by: St. Eugene Mission in Cranbrook, British Columbia, where no half-breed children attended the school at that time (2 February 1911); superintendent of the Methodist Indian Orphan and Hospitals in Canada (6 February 1911); Indian Industrial School at the Cowichan Agency in Kuper Island, British Columbia (6 February 1911); and the Coqualeetza Industrial Institute in Chilliwack, British Columbia where one student was in attendance for which no grant was paid by the government and no more children were to be admitted without the consent of the department (6 February 1911).

One letter from the assistant deputy and secretary to the principal at Kamloops Industrial School (Ottawa, 16 February 1911) provided that a child of a half-breed or white father and an Indian mother is not an Indian and not eligible for admission as a grant earner to an Indian industrial or boarding school. The letter was acknowledged by St. Joseph's Industrial School in Davisburg, Alberta (11 February 1911). The principal also inquired into the admittance of full-blood non-treaty Indians. The assistant deputy and secretary responded that the children of non-treaty Indians were eligible for admission to Indian residential schools, but that the department reserved the right to make the fullest inquiry when applications for such children were made and noted that the department's decision was final (Ottawa, 22 February 1911).

William's Lake Industrial School in William's Lake, British Columbia (12 February 1911); Christie Indian Industrial School in Kakawis, West Coast Vancouver Island, British Columbia (16 February 1911); Clayoquot Industrial School in Clayoquot, British Columbia; and Alert Bay Industrial School in Alert Bay, British Columbia (10 May 1911), acknowledged the letter.

The Indian agent's office at Onion Lake, Saskatchewan responded that there were a number of children other than Indians attending each boarding school on the Onion Lake reserve. Nineteen students at the Church of England School were half-breeds and six attended the Roman Catholic School (6 April 1911). The assistant deputy and secretary responded to the Indian agent that white children in boarding and industrial schools would have the same status as half-breeds (Ottawa, 8 May 1911).

A list of schools where half-breed children attended was detailed in a letter: Battleford, Qu'Appelle, Cowessess, Crowstand, Duck Lake, File Hills, Gordon's, Keeseekoose, Lac la Plonge, Lac la Ronge, Muscowequan, Onion Lake (2), Round Lake and Thunderchild (Ottawa, 15 June 1911).

In another letter, children of a half-breed who married an Indian woman and took up residence bordering on a reserve were eligible for admission to industrial and boarding schools. Until such time as the Crown granted him patent to his new land, he still had an interest in the reserve and, while in this stage of transition, his children would be eligible to attend the school (Ottawa, 28 November 1921). Only half-breeds who were *bona fide* residents on reserves and who followed the Indian mode of life were entitled to have their children admitted to residential schools (2 December 1921).

Also included in the file is correspondence concerning individual cases of admission of half-breeds into the schools. One letter provided that when half-breeds were not under the jurisdiction of the department in any way, their education was a matter for the municipality of the province (Ottawa, 22 April 1932). In a letter dated 14 April 1938, the *Indian Act* definition of an "Indian" is detailed and included: any male person of Indian blood reputed to belong to a particular band; any child of such person or any woman

who is or was lawfully married to such person. Persons of Indian blood transmitted through the female line were not considered Indians and usually referred to as “half-breeds.”

**Hansen, C. and T. Lee (1999). *The Impact of Residential Schools and Other Institutions on the Métis People of Saskatchewan: Cultural Genocide, Systemic Abuse and Child Abuse*. Ottawa, ON: Law Commission of Canada [unpublished].**

This report illustrated that Métis and non-status Indians were present in the residential schools and other institutions in Canada and focused on residential school-related experiences in the province of Saskatchewan. The Royal Commission of Aboriginal Peoples stated that Métis people and non-status Indian people were in attendance at residential schools (2-3). A definition of “Métis” used by the Métis Nation of Saskatchewan in its constitution is included (3). The report takes the view that “Aboriginal people” includes all First Nations, Inuit, Métis and non-status Indians (4).

The history of the Métis is given from a Métis perspective (4-5). The Métis cultural worldview and the role of Christianity is discussed (5-8). The famous political leader Louis Riel and his influence among Métis people and culture is also discussed (6-8).

The Seven Oaks and early Aboriginal laws, the terms of the first treaty that asserted the rights of the Métis as a free Aboriginal people and the laws of the Buffalo hunt are outlined (9-12).

“The Laws and Regulations Established for the Colony of St. Laurent on the Saskatchewan” (12-20) and the “Laws for the Prairie and Hunting” are discussed (18-20). “A Brief Chronology of Significant Events Affecting Self-Government and Aboriginal Justice in Saskatchewan” from *Continuing Poundmaker & Riel’s Quest* is discussed (21-31). This chronology does not include reference to the laws of St. Laurent.

Case studies on abuses and losses within the residential school system on Métis people are detailed (32-57). The studies focus on persons currently living in central and northern Saskatchewan; however, their experiences appear to be similar to those Métis from communities across Canada. Profiles of eight former students are included (37-55) and discuss racial status, institution attended, the reason for placement at that facility, experiences while there, what the government should do about the abuses suffered by the children and their communities, the types of abuse experienced and a list of short and long-term effects as a result of attending that facility. General comments as they pertain to community impact, Elders’ comments and a summary of the case studies and comments of the Elders are provided (57).

A discussion of the “Abuses of Laws Past and Present” (58-59) where four areas are considered: the *Constitution Act, 1982*; the Declaration On the Rights of Indigenous People; the *Indian Act*; and the *Manitoba Act*. A chart on the “Continued Discrimination Against Indian Women” is included and section “a” sets out the status of three generations of brother’s descendants (a non-Indian woman and an Indian brother), while section “b” sets out the status of three generations of sister’s descendants (an Indian sister and a non-Indian man). A conclusion is provided (60). The document also includes the following items:

- ✦ a Saskatchewan Historical Atlas of Aboriginal Settlement that includes a map of Indian treaty areas and a map of the Red River Settlement in 1870 listing the geographical areas of Métis French and English parishes;

- a map of Métis dispersal from 1870 to 1880 and a map of Métis settlements for 1885;
- a map of Métis dispersal from 1885 to 1890;
- a list and map of Saskatchewan Indian Bands and Reserves;
- a map of Indian treaty areas; and
- a map of regions for associations of Métis and non-status Indians of Saskatchewan.

**Logan, Tricia E. (2001). *The Lost Generations: The Silent Métis of the Residential School System, Interim Report*. Brandon, MB: Southwest Region Manitoba Métis Federation.**

This report was designed to investigate the role of Métis in the residential school system and contains a record of Métis experiences at residential schools.

According to the Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP), while the federal government assumed no responsibility for Métis people, children from every Aboriginal culture, including Métis children, were registered (2). A common intergenerational impact of those who attended these schools is the disintegration of parenting skills. One way Métis children came to attend the schools was when one parent had treaty funds to draw upon, even if the other parent was not of Aboriginal descent, in which case their children would still be admitted to the school.

Métis did attend the schools and feel the same impacts today as their First Nations and Inuit classmates. Some sources, however, still deny their attendance. Constance Deiter (1999), for example, in her book titled *From Our Mothers' Arms* wrote that:

It should be made clear that the effects of the Indian residential school system are found only in the Indian and Inuit communities of Canada. The Métis did not have restrictions placed on them by the Indian Act and were not affected by the residential school system (3).

Both First Nations students and non-Native staff considered Métis students at the schools to be outsiders (4).

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation defines “residential school” as:

The residential school system in Canada, attended by Aboriginal students (and sometimes by non-Aboriginal students). It may include industrial schools, boarding schools, homes for students, hostels, billets, residential schools, residential schools with a majority of day students, or a combination of any of the above (6).

The term also includes convent, Indian, mission and Catholic schools. These terms are a reflection of where the schools were located and what different communities surrounding the schools called them. Government policy regarding Métis at the time these schools were opened was different from that of other Aboriginal groups.

Government interest in the Métis grew following the insurrection at Red River in 1869 and the creation of the *Manitoba Act* and the new province of Manitoba in 1870 (10). This was a period of resistance for Métis people in the West. Government policy consisted of assigning scrip for land for Métis and Métis children. Under the *Manitoba Act* of 1870, the Métis were to receive 1.4 million acres of land distributed by way of land scrip. However, deception, delaying procedures and fraudulent practices by land speculators, lawyers and government ensured the Métis would not retain the scrip promised to them. During this time period, First Nation children were entitled to an education by way of treaty grant money and treaty settlement agreements. The Métis did not receive the same treatment (11).

Schools were a government initiative and used government funds, but the school was based on church standards and run by church staff (12). This developed into a race between the different churches and denominations. The Métis were drawn to the Roman Catholic faith in an attempt to find support and guidance for their societal structure (11).

There was debate on the possibility of admitting Métis students. Indian Affairs policy at the time is captured in the following quote:

It must be remembered that boarding and industrial schools were not established for the purpose of carrying out the terms of the treaty or complying with any provision of the law, but were instituted in the public interest, so that they should not grow up upon reserves an uneducated and barbarous class (Ottawa, 18 October 1899) (12).

This policy encompassed both the First Nations and Métis students.

Since funding was dependent upon attendance numbers and Indian agents were in charge of the mandatory removal of all children from their communities, filling the schools was a primary concern for both church officials and Indian agents. Schools needed to have a high level of attendance in order to receive further funding and to remain open (12). These numbers, however, were often manipulated by Indian Affairs, Indian agents and church officials. There are many accounts of Indian agents taking First Nations children as young as three years old, sick children and Métis children in the place of First Nations simply to increase school attendance figures (13). This explanation accounts for how the first Métis found themselves in residential schools. A government statement on the Métis reads as follows:

There is no more unfortunate class in the country ...What is to keep them from becoming outcasts and menaces to society if they be not taken to Indian Schools, schools established and maintained, be it remember, not for the mere purpose of fulfilling the conditions of Indian Treaties but in the interest of the commonwealth (9 November 1911) (13).

Some attention was drawn to the destitute condition of the Métis in the 1880s and from movements in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, leading the government to establish a half-breed commission to monitor dissension in the West. Indian agents were asked by Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney to list all the half-breeds in their respective areas and to note whether they were loyal or disloyal to the Commonwealth. On a notice dated 6 May 1885, the commissioner wrote:

[I]t is the intention of the troops to arrest and punish such runners wherever the same may be found and it will be necessary for them, in order to accomplish this, to arrest all Indians, or any suspicious persons whom they may see in order to ascertain whether or not they are runners from Riel. And whereas, it is expedient that all good and loyal Indians should know how to act under the present circumstances so as to secure their own safety and the good will of the Government (6 May 1885) (13).

The residential schools that had Métis attendees became tools of the Half-Breed Commission, which monitored Métis families and the movement of the Métis. The Qu'Appelle Industrial School, located in a community with a high Métis population, complied with this. The school opened in 1884 and most records indicated a high percentage of Métis children in attendance compared to other similar institutions and locations. The school was Roman Catholic and had a history of positive concern for the First Nations and Métis children, which added to the church's influence on Métis attendance at the school. Several factors may have influenced the Half-breed Commission to use the schools to monitor the Métis and First Nations communities. In order to keep the number of potential troublemakers down, for example, they prevented parents from moving to problematic areas by keeping their children in the schools (14).

The Métis were rapidly dispossessed of their lands after 1885, in which this period has been termed the "forgotten" years (15). Métis were stripped of land, money, hunting and trapping rights, as well as access to basic citizenship rights such as proper health care and education. They were trapped between federal and provincial jurisdictions, leaving them unable to maintain self-sufficient communities. The government of Canada acknowledged Métis rights through dealings of scrip, but also wished to extinguish those rights as seen by the extent of their attempts to get rid of the Métis:

The Government of the Dominion never took the position that it had no obligation at all as to half-breeds. It recognized them as possessing, in a degree, an Aboriginal title to the land of this country; and took measures to extinguish it (15).

Under this premise, Indian Affairs developed guidelines for the schools to follow in admitting half-breed students to residential schools. Principals, nuns and teachers made frequent requests to allow Métis children to be admitted into their schools. Many church officials did out of concern for the many Métis families living in poverty (15). In other instances, arrangements were made between individual Métis families and the schools. For example, when one parent of a Métis child had settlement money to draw from, that child was admitted to a school (16). Métis families also arranged for their children to be admitted to schools in exchange for working at the school, on the farms or performing general maintenance.

As the number of requests made to government concerning school admission of Métis children increased, there were corresponding changes in government policies pertaining to the residential school system. In the late 1890s, Hayter Reed, superintendent of Indian Affairs, opposed making any funds available for Métis students. Another policy arose where Métis students would be admitted only when there were not enough Indian children available to keep enrolment numbers high. Métis students were also the first to be transferred to other schools where low attendance threatened closure (17).

The Elkhorn School had low attendance. As a result, the school closed for several years due to fires and the high cost of education. As Métis numbers increased, the Department of the Interior, under the

administration of Superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott, developed a class system to judge the quality of the Métis that would be allowed entrance into the schools. A team of school officials from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta classified the Métis as follows:

Halfbreeds may be grouped into three fairly well-defined classes:

1. Those who live, in varying degrees to conditions, the ordinary settled life of the country;
2. Those who live, in varying degrees, the Indian mode of life;
3. Those who - and they form the most unfortunate class in the community - are the illegitimate offspring of Indian women, and of whom white men are not the begetters (18).

Those in the first class were required to make a claim to the government of the Dominion for the education of their children. Those in the third class were entitled to participate in Indian schools and, in so far as when Indian treaties were made, the illegitimate children of Indian treaty women were excluded and payment of annuity money on their behalf was denied. This policy was developed to discourage "illegitimate breeding." Those in the second class, however, may be divided into three groups: those who lived apart from Indians but followed somewhat an Indian mode of life; those who lived in the vicinity of Indian reserves; and those who lived on reserves:

What is so readily and so often charged against people of mixed blood is the result, not blood, but of environment ... for such schools were established to meet treaty obligation towards Indians, but as a means of preventing, in the public interest, a race of wild men growing up whose hands would be against all men and all mens hands against them (19).

This letter was signed by Emile J. OMI of St. Albert, Albert Pascal of Prince Albert, Adilard OMI of St. Boniface, Olivier Elizard of Regina and Emile Grouard of Athabaska.

The closer the government thought the Métis were to First Nations communities in a geographical or societal sense, the lower class of persons they were deemed to be (19). This lower class had priority over other Métis when being considered for admission to residential schools – the rationale being that such schooling was necessary to ensure these Métis would be "civilized." When the question of distinguishing these classes came into question, the evaluation of physical appearance of Métis children would affect their admittance:

There are difficulties in this matter - I had two boys in school - one grey eyes - hair lighter than Indians in texture and colour - very fair skin - the other Indian in all appearances - both of the same mother - the same father, acknowledged with (7 February 1911) (20).

Indian agents judged children by phenotypic attributes such as skin and hair colour, which influenced their decision to bring certain children to the schools. It is not known, however, how frequently such judgments or classifications were manipulated to suit the needs of officials of the schools and Indian Affairs (19).

Métis children were admitted in the place of First Nation children if the attendance number in that school was low in order to help influence enrolment-controlled funding to various schools. As a result, Indian agents were willing to move children relatively far from their home communities to maintain higher attendance and consistent funding for the schools. The Qu'Appelle school consistently had high attendance and always had a percentage of Métis children. Métis children would be the first ones to be relocated to a school with lower attendance. The Elkhorn school is one such school.

Roman Catholic schools were more likely to have a higher percentage of Métis students than their Protestant counterparts. The location of the school may have had some influence as well. Furthermore, the location of a school in close proximity to larger and well-established Métis communities may have had an influence on the number of requests from both parents and teachers who wanted Métis children to be enrolled in that school (21).

The Department of Indian Affairs did not want to take financial responsibility for the education of Métis children by allowing their admittance to residential schools. Métis children that were not included in a treaty were not to be granted tuition. However, where arrangements were made owing to their parent's/parents' treaty arrangements the children would be allowed to attend. Treaty arrangements depended upon the Métis family history and location.

Church requests and policies on the Métis influenced many of the decisions and outcomes that were made on behalf of the Métis. The churches often recognized the Métis families that were dispossessed of their land and living on road allowances. In return, the churches offered charitable admissions for Métis children to attend school (22).

Several factors contributed to the likelihood that Métis children would be admitted into residential schools. One factor supported the inclusion of Métis children in the residential schools, the mediatory role the Métis were perceived to play was outlined in the 1879 Davin Report with respect to creating industrial schools for Indians and Half-breeds (27). The most common remark from Métis students is that they were "outsiders" (28).

The last section of the report covers the future of residential school issues and focuses on Métis involvement and the intergenerational impacts of those schools.

## **Bibliography (not annotated)**

**Barkwell, Lawrence, Leah Dorion and Darren Préfontaine (1999). Resources for Métis Researchers. Winnipeg, MB: Louis Riel Institute and the Gabriel Dumont Institute.**

This source is an excellent and comprehensive bibliography of material dealing with the Métis. Unfortunately, it is not organized by topic. There are, however, a number of sources that deal with education, several of which have been addressed in this report.

**Friensen, John and Terry Lusty (1980). *The Métis of Canada: An Annotated Bibliography*. Toronto, ON: OISE Press.**

This bibliography is organized by topic and there is a section that deals with education. There are a number of potentially relevant material that may be worth further research.

## Appendix A

### Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Research Reports Extracts

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation has access to text of relevant research reports in the *Seven Generations* CD-Rom. As a result, rather than summarizing the documents that are relevant, included below are the actual texts where Métis participation in residential schools are specifically addressed.

**Dunnigan, Cynthia (1994). Three Generation Life History Study of Métis Women in Alberta.**

Adele had memories of experiencing prejudice in elementary school. Adele attended two schools in St. Albert. One was St. Albert public school and the other was the residential school at the St. Albert convent. Adele attended St. Albert public school for grade one, two and five. It was at this school that she and her Native and Métis cousins were called 'Les Petites Sauvages'. Even though Adele was fair skinned the other children knew she was Métis because the White children's parents told their children which families were Native and Métis. When Adele was in grade one it was obvious that she was Métis despite her fair skin because she spoke only Cree fluently. The English that she spoke was broken English.

**Milloy, John S. Suffer the Little Children ... A History of the Residential School System 1830-1992.**

That common representation has stood neither the test of time nor, in the pages that follow, of historical research. Indeed, it exists in sharp contrast to the historical record etched in the memories of students and set out in church and Indian Affairs files. By 1939, thousands of children, Indian, Inuit and Métis, had come to the schools and thousands more would follow in the four and half decades after 1939 that the system continued to operate. They came, or, more accurately, they were taken from their parents and communities, and they suffered: the system did not provide without exception either the education or the care that was the promise of Christ's call 'to come unto me' nor of Canada's self-imposed 'responsibility' for Aboriginal people. Instead, the system's history is marked by the persistent neglect and abuse of children and through them of Aboriginal communities in general. Residential schools have been, arguably, the most damaging of the many elements of Canada's colonization of this land's original peoples and, as their consequences still echo through the lives of Aboriginal people today, they remain so.

The Davin report of 1879 was the first to make a link between the anticipation of disorder and the utility of a residential school system. During his stay in Winnipeg, Davin was briefed on the situation among the western Indian First Nations and Métis. He reported that the Métis were 'thoughtful if not anxious regarding the Government's

intentions regarding them,' that 'among the Indians there is some discontent' and that the disappearance of the buffalo would cause extensive damage to Indian and Métis economies. It was the case, he continued, that '[n]o race of men can be suddenly turned from one set of pursuits to another set of a wholly different nature without great attendant distress' and danger he could have added. The whole situation Davin warned in conclusion, required the 'serious consideration of the Department.'

Indian interventions during the Joint Committee hearings were the culmination of the remarkable nation-wide development, beginning in the late 19th century, of modern Indian political organizations. These had a resolute de-colonizing purpose, an 'Indian agenda' aimed at regaining 'control and authority' over their communities' affairs (889). More immediately, the submissions to the Committee that argued for the replacement of church-run residential by day schools, and, despite Davey's recollection, only about half of them did, (890) were an extension of a wartime campaign which was often powerfully frank about the residential school experience. In June, 1940, for example, the *Indian Speaking Leaf*, the journal of the Indian Association of America, published an article by the Métis organizer Malcolm Norris which traced the historic refusal of the government to respond to requests from Cree communities in Alberta for day schools. Instead, he wrote, they had gotten subsidized Religious Institutions as Boarding Schools. The conditions prevailing in these Schools are common knowledge throughout the Province. Inferior staffs, inadequate food, constant overwork, military and religious routine, together with genuine cruelty, have caused those who have attended them to term these schools 'Penitentiaries.' This is the manner in which the provision of Treaty re Education has been provided, and it is to such schools that Cree children are compelled to attend FOR THE CRIME OF BEING BORN AN INDIAN.

Funding for the northern schools came in the form of per capita grants provided not only by Indian Affairs but by the Department of the Interior, responsible for the Territories. In the 1930s, it paid \$200 per annum 'for Eskimo children who are taken into residential schools' (1154) and for Métis children who were destitute or orphaned.

There was a second notable departure from the southern pattern. These residential schools drew students from Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. The Department of the Interior, and its Northern Affairs successors, paid a per capita grant not only for destitute Métis but for white children between the ages of seven and 15 who were placed in a school because, as the admission form attested, 'said child is a bona fide resident of the North West Territories, that he or she is an orphan, destitute or neglected child and not eligible for admission under the Indian Act.' Children could be so assigned, having been 'declared destitute by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police' (1160).

Unfortunately, Lesage's plan shared the fate of many of the southern schemes for reforms in residential education. In important ways, it was to be no more than an insightful intention. Certainly, with the construction of the large and small hostels a new and improved infrastructure was created and it can even be argued that small hostels represented an advance on previous models. There was also a continuing interest in tailoring school terms

to hunting seasons and in that way to do 'everything in our power to maintain the native way of life, provided it does not jeopardize our educational programme' (1200). And the system was multicultural. In 1964 there were, in the eight large hostels, 957 Indian and Inuit children and 195 white and Métis (1201).

**Lost Generations:  
The Silent Métis of the Residential School System  
Revised Interim Report**

*by*

**Tricia E. Logan**

Prepared for

**Southwest Region of Manitoba Métis Federation**

**2001**

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To Aunt Tillie, before you left us you gave me your copy of *Halfbreed*, your faith and pride touched everything; your contributions truly live on.

Tricia E. Logan

## Introduction

The Métis are people who have always had strong traditional values on the subject of education for their children. These ideals were seriously altered with the introduction of the residential school system. The evidence of the wide range of impacts these schools had on Métis people and their further generations is undeniable. The Southwest Region of the Manitoba Métis Federation has taken the initiative to look into the history and impacts that the residential school system had on Métis people in order to gain an insight into the number of Métis people affected and in what ways they continue to be affected today. From this initiative, the Lost Generations Project was created to investigate the *Lost Generations: The Silent Métis of the Residential School System*.

Initially, this project's primary focus was the collection of information respecting experiences at residential school by Métis from the Southwest Region of Manitoba, but also encompassing any Métis areas or communities where the residential schools affected Métis life. Finding any accurate numbers or records about school attendance has been difficult and this research will take longer than the first year of this project to complete. For this reason, project focus has been shifted to the gathering of oral histories of these schools. Gathering stories and information from those who attended or who were impacted by the schools has proven to be a valuable resource. This is especially important considering that information specific to the subject of residential school attendance by Métis people is scarce. In *Resources for Métis Researchers* on the subject of residential schools and the Métis it is stated:

This compendium reveals that Métis issues such as residential schools, health, justice, economic development, natural resources and human services such as child welfare are under-represented in the literature and in some cases references are almost non-existent (Barkwell, Dorion and Préfontaine, 1999:1).

Some government records on residential schools are often unreliable or nonexistent at times (Sealey, 1980).

As the investigation into residential school abuse expands across Canada and with the issue of legal challenges increasing, the protection of church files and records becomes a primary concern ahead of historical research and healing developments. The number of lawsuits directed towards churches and the government is growing (Lamirande, 1999).

For these reasons, keeping a focus on the collection of oral histories and traditional ways will be considered the body of knowledge that the project can start to draw from in working to create and compile a part of Manitoba Métis history that has largely been ignored before now. Due to the nature of many of the stories from residential school Survivors and the past treatment of residential school issues, the Métis have just recently entered a point in time in the legacy of residential schools where a proper venue has been created to deal with them appropriately.

The most recent official statement on the subject of Métis attendance in residential schools was included in the *Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*:

They registered children from every Aboriginal culture – Indian, Inuit and Métis children too – though the federal government assumed no constitutional responsibility for Métis people. While Métis children would be invisible, rarely mentioned in the records, they were nevertheless there and were treated the same as all the children were (1996a:335).

This statement outlines the government's general position on the subject of Métis attendance at the residential schools. Most of the information and correspondence the project has found regarding government policies and support to the Métis has helped to explain why so many Métis children slipped through the cracks, and why some attended residential schools and others did not.

This has been revealed through the examination of government and church records and files, literary sources, archival sources, personal interviews and also from the collection of oral histories and traditional knowledge. A common intergenerational impact of those who attended these schools is the disintegration of parenting skills. Many residential school attendees did not have the skills to raise their own children later in life because they were removed from their homes at such a young age and, subsequently, lost respect for their own parents (Miller, 1996). One way Métis children came to attend the schools occurred when one parent had treaty funds to draw upon, and even if the other parent was not of Aboriginal descent, their children could still be admitted to the school.

The Lost Generations Project, to this date, has considered as many factors as possible that led to the admittance of Métis students and, more importantly, the impacts that their admittance had on future generations of Métis individuals and Métis communities. These impacts on Métis Survivors and their families are undeniable, and are recognized by this project and several other organizations. Métis did attend these schools and feel the impacts today in the same way as their First Nation and Inuit classmates felt. It is unfortunate that, even today, some sources still deny their attendance and, thus, do not paint a complete picture of Aboriginal history. In a book by Constance Deiter, she states:

It should be made clear that the effects of the Indian residential school system are found only in the Indian and Inuit communities of Canada. The Métis did not have restrictions placed on them by the Indian Act and were not affected by the residential school experience (1999:5).

Métis people have been forgotten in too many areas of Canadian and Aboriginal history. They are a First People of Canada with Aboriginal rights entrenched in the *Canadian Constitution*, 1982. It is unfortunate that the battle for recognition continues today.

Many factors contribute to the misunderstandings and misconceptions that exist about Métis people and their history. An aim of this project is to help explain parts of their history and, thus, to change some of the misconceptions that exist about Métis people by focusing on their experiences at residential school. At these schools, Métis children lived under the same conditions and rules as the First Nation children and suffer from many of the same intergenerational impacts but, in addition, the Métis children had experiences and stories unique from those of the First Nation students. Both their fellow First Nation students and non-Aboriginal staff considered Métis students at the schools to be outsiders (Blondeau, 2000).

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (1999) believes there is a step that can be taken to stop the cycle of abuse. This step seeks to rebuild and honour the history of the Survivors of the residential school system. The Lost Generations Project developed from this vision, which involves the sharing of history of the residential schools with the Survivors, their families and communities. This project seeks to acknowledge history by recording the legacy of abuses at residential schools, thus helping to facilitate healing efforts. Objectives of the Lost Generations Project include focusing on the principles of honour and history and the recognition of the Survivors and the intergenerational impacts, as well as the recording of this part of Aboriginal and Canadian history. Recording and recognizing the Métis experiences will hopefully encourage more Métis people to identify with these experiences. For Survivors of the residential school system, the knowledge that other people share similar experiences from the school system could be recognition enough to deal with some of the impacts or to start on a healing journey.

Another project objective seeks to gain a general idea about the numbers of Métis students who may have attended residential schools, where they attended and what approximate percentage of attendance were Métis students at certain given times. Compiling accurate records about numbers of Aboriginal children who attended these schools is, for good reasons, very difficult:

It is impossible to determine the number of Aboriginal children who attended the schools over the life of the system. Estimates have been given.... In fact, the extant school records for the system as a whole are not complete enough to allow useful calculations to be made. Given that fact, this text relies on annual enrolment lists found in NAC RG10 files, INAC files and the tabular statements in annual reports. These give only total enrolments per year, however, and cannot be used to determine the number of children who had a residential school experience.... The impact of the system was felt not only by the children who attended schools but by the families and communities that were deprived of their children and had to deal subsequently with children who returned damaged from the schools. In that sense, communities, parents and, indeed, children later born to former students of the residential schools were all 'enrolled' (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a:388-389).

After considering the seemingly impossible task of creating accurate records or databases of the numbers of Métis students, the Lost Generations Project focus has changed to concentrate on the collection of stories, experiences and oral histories, rather than numbers and statistics. In addition to the creation of a general picture about the number of Métis impacted, time will also be taken to consider the intergenerational impacts that residential schools had on further generations of Métis families and communities. These impacts influence a wide range of individuals, from Elders to youth, from parents to children and grandchildren, and cast a shadow over Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities. By gaining knowledge of the intergenerational impacts that residential schools continue to have, more people can recognize a number of the problems and but, in addition, the Métis children had experiences and stories unique from those of the First Nation students. Both their fellow First Nation students and non-Aboriginal staff considered Métis students at the schools to be outsiders (Blondeau, 2000).

Creating culturally appropriate services for Métis people with the emphasis on healing and coming to terms with the intergenerational impacts is then another goal of the Lost Generations Project. The most

accessible and reliable foundation for learning about healing resources for the Métis is Métis Elders and teachers. Using Métis resources to help Métis people is the greatest accessible strength to create a culturally appropriate healing model.

An approach this project has taken to stop the cycle of abuse and deal with the impacts of the residential school system is to initiate a system of *de-washing* the result of government and church efforts to *brainwash* generations of Aboriginal children. One of the most common impacts experienced by Métis, First Nation and Inuit children who attended these schools is, without a doubt, the fact they were made to feel ashamed. Generations of children were essentially brainwashed (Milloy, 1999) into thinking they were a lesser class of people and the only good people were non-Aboriginal. They were also ridiculed for being associated with traditional Aboriginal cultures and beliefs. So, by focusing on a way of *de-washing* people with the aim of helping them reclaim some of their language, culture and traditions, there is hope of rescuing important parts of Métis and Aboriginal culture that were stolen by the residential school system.

## Use of Terms

The Aboriginal Healing Foundation defines “Residential School” as:

[T]he Residential School System in Canada, attended by Aboriginal students [and sometimes by non-Aboriginal students]. It may include industrial schools, boarding schools, homes for students, hostels, billets, residential schools, residential schools with a majority of day students, or a combination of any of the above (2001:5).

The term *Residential School* is all inclusive of all types of church-run, government-funded institutions designed to educate primarily Aboriginal students under non-Aboriginal standards. *Residential School* also includes the terms convent school, Indian school, mission school and Catholic school (Manitoba Métis Federation, 2000). The various terms used are a reflection of where the schools were located and what different communities surrounding the schools called them.

*Intergenerational impacts* is the term used to include a broad range and number of continuing effects that the residential school system had and continues to have on generations of Aboriginal people and their communities. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation defines *intergenerational impact* as:

[T]he effects of sexual and physical abuse that were passed on to the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren [the descendants] of Aboriginal people who attended the residential school system (2001:5).

The Lost Generations Project has expanded this definition to include all impacts from all abuses, including emotional, psychological, spiritual and cultural, and the effects of general neglect on generations of Aboriginal children (see Appendix A). There is no complete list of the intergenerational impacts; it is a dynamic concept open for additions and changes as the investigation into the legacy of residential schools continues.

The project also uses the term *Survivor*, which is also outlined by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation: “means an Aboriginal person who attended and survived the Residential School system” (2001:6).

## **Métis History**

The number of communities exploring the impacts of residential schools is growing and expanding all over Canada today. As projects start to focus on the Métis role at these schools, history will start to be written on a part of Canadian and Aboriginal history that has been only touched on in the past. The historical model that the Lost Generations Project follows and from which it has developed the residential school history of Métis experiences, are the epochs of Métis history developed by Dr. Fred Shore, Professor of Native Studies at the University of Manitoba and other authors. These epochs are as follows:

- [\_\_\_\_-1750] Origin of the Métis People in Central and Atlantic Canada
  - [1750-1800] Origin of the Métis People in Western Canada
  - [1800-1821] Birth of Métis Nationalism
  - [1821-1870] The Golden Years
  - [1869-1885] Resistance and Dispersal
  - [1885-1900] The Forgotten Years
  - [1900-1950] The Road Allowance People
  - [1930-1960] Struggle and Rebirth of the Métis
  - [1965-1980] Emergence of New Political Organizations
  - [1980-1990] The Search for Self-Determination and Self-Government
  - [1990-\_\_\_\_]
- (Shore and Barkwell, 1997).

This report will outline how Métis education falls into the general foundation of Métis history according to this historic model.

## Chapter 1

### The Métis and Residential Schools: An Historical Overview

Residential schools were instruments of the government and were developed and maintained with the interests of the Canadian government in mind. These schools sought to eliminate the “Indian Problem” (Dyck, 1991) by attempting to assimilate generations of Aboriginal children into what government officials thought was the proper view of Canadian society — a view they thought would be best for people they knew nothing about (Milloy, 1999). There were hopes that the new government could diminish the costly land and treaty agreements they were settling with Aboriginal people by eliminating Aboriginal people’s identity (Miller, 1996). They would do this by attempting to change Aboriginal children into a model of a Canadian identity that was idealistic, unrealistic and, as it turns out, extremely harmful to the children. At the time of the opening of these schools, Aboriginal people were viewed as heathens/savages (Birtle Industrial School Fonds), an economic and political burden on the new Canadian commonwealth and a hindrance to expansion in the West. In order to alleviate some of this burden, the residential school system attempted to Christianize, civilize and assimilate generations of Aboriginal children (Milloy, 1999). With these objectives in mind, the schools were created for the First Nation children. Government policy regarding the Métis at the time these schools were opened differed from that of other Aboriginal groups.

Government interest in Métis affairs increased following the creation of the *Manitoba Act* and the new province of Manitoba in 1870 by the Métis. This became a period of dispersal for Métis people in the West (Shore and Barkwell, 1997). The government’s method of dealing with Métis issues was the policy of assigning scrip for land for Métis and Métis children. The proper management of the allocation of this scrip is still questionable and continues to be a contentious issue between Métis and the federal government into 2001 (Barkwell, Dorion and Préfontaine, 1999).

Regardless, government policy toward the Métis was to grant scrip, which was the extent of government support for people who were watching their golden years vanish under the new Canadian government control. As a condition of the *Manitoba Act of 1870*, the Métis were to receive 1.4 million acres of land distributed by way of land scrip. Deception, delayed procedures and fraudulent practices by land speculators, lawyers and government officials ensured that Métis were unable to retain the scrip promised to them.

First Nation children were entitled to an education at the time by way of treaty grant money and treaty settlement agreements (Shore and Barkwell, 1997). Why were the Métis not considered in the same respect? If money was allocated to help settle First Nations’ demands by treaty and land settlements and tuition to residential schools, why was scrip the only option considered for the well being of Métis children? It appears the same forces that moved so many Métis to the road allowance, moved the Métis children out of mainstream education (AMNSIS, 1979). Many Métis slipped through the cracks of federal, provincial and local bureaucracies and there were few decided policies on education for the Métis. This was in steady debate between the governments and churches and policy seemed to change whenever the government or church could benefit from a change (Miller, 1996).

The Métis and the Roman Catholic Church have close ties that lead back to the time of the earliest missionary work and the roots of the earlier French settlers (Sealey and Lussier, 1975). Despite the dispersal that seriously changed the life of Métis communities, they still drew to the Roman Catholic faith as support and guidance for their societal structure. Further research may uncover the fact that Métis ties to the Roman Catholic Church had more influence on location of what were termed residential, boarding or industrial, mission and day schools than was originally thought. There were close ties to the schools and in missionary histories in certain areas and, as a result, various religious denominations may have had an influence on where certain schools were located. The relationship between the Métis and the Roman Catholic Church is a key factor in Métis attendance at residential schools. Further research into this relationship may help answer some of the questions being raised about Métis attendance at residential school.

These schools were a government initiative, using government funds but with church-run standards and staff. The government handed over responsibility of the education of these generations of Aboriginal students to various religious denominations and missionaries of Canada. This soon developed into a race between the different churches and denominations to save the souls of the unfortunate savages/heathens (Milloy, 1999).

Debate started on the possibility of admitting Métis students and government officials were reminded of Indian Affairs policy at that time, which stated:

It must be remembered that boarding and industrial schools were not established for the purpose of carrying out the terms of the treaty or complying with any provision of the law, but were instituted in the public interest, so that ... [they] should not grow up upon reserves an uneducated and barbarous class.

Ottawa 18<sup>th</sup> Oct 1899  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

This policy managed to encompass both the First Nations and Métis students (PAM, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Filling up the schools was a primary concern for both church officials who needed to keep the schools full to increase funding and the Indian agents who were in charge of the mandatory removal of all children from their communities. In order for schools to receive more funding and stay open, they needed to have a high level of attendance. Indian Affairs, Indian agents and church officials manipulated several of these attendance numbers (Miller, 1996). There are many accounts of Indian agent manipulation, illustrating they had taken First Nation children under school age, sick children and Métis children to increase school attendance (Milloy, 1999). This is how the first of the Métis children may have found themselves in these schools. A government statement on the Métis reads:

There is no more unfortunate class in the country ... What is to keep them from becoming outcasts and menaces to society if they be not taken into Indian Schools; schools established and maintained, be it remember, not for the mere purpose of fulfilling the conditions of Indian Treaties but in the interest of the commonwealth.

(November 9, 1911)  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Some attention was drawn to the plight of the Métis through the early 1880s to 1885, and movements in Saskatchewan and Manitoba lead the government to establish a Halfbreed commission to monitor dissension in the western Métis (PAM, RG10, vol. 3584, file 1130). Indian agents were asked by Indian Commissioner Edgar Dewdney to list all of the Halfbreeds in their areas and list them as either loyal or disloyal to the commonwealth. In an Indian Affairs notice dated May 6, 1885, the Indian commissioner requested:

[I]t is the intention of the troops to arrest and punish such runners wherever the same may be found and it will be necessary for them, in order to accomplish this, to arrest all Indians, or any suspicious persons whom they may see in order to ascertain whether or not they are runners from Riel. And whereas, it is expedient that all good and loyal Indians should know how to act under the present circumstances so as to secure their own safety and the good will of the Government.

May 6, 1885  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 3584, file 1130).

As the search for loyal Indians and Métis continued during the Halfbreed Commission and throughout the events of 1885, Métis movements were monitored by Indian agents and land surveyors who followed closely behind these Indian agents to keep an eye on land dispossessed from the Métis. As a result of the events surrounding the insurrection at Batoche in 1885 and of the commission, the residential schools that had Métis attendees soon became tools of this same Halfbreed Commission, which had a desire to watch Métis families and the movement of Métis. A letter from the principal of the Qu'Appelle school in Lebret, Saskatchewan, Father Hugonard, outlines his compliance with the Halfbreed Commission:

Sir,  
I have the honour to inform you that on the demand of the half-breed commission I have considered advisable in order to facilitate matters, to allow them to stay here, as business [?] will detain them. I was unable to get your authorization for this before they came. By helping this commission as much as possible it will tend no doubt to keep the half-breeds quiet and thereby the Indians also.  
I have the honour to be  
Sir  
Your obedient servant  
J. Hugonard  
Principal

Industrial School  
Qu'Appelle April 11<sup>th</sup> 1885  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

The Qu'Appelle school was located in a community with a high Métis population. Most records indicate that from its opening in 1884, there was a high percentage of Métis children who attended this school in comparison with Métis attendance at similar institutions (PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1). The school was located near a Métis community, it was a Roman Catholic school that had a history of positive church concern for the First Nation and Métis children alike (Miller, 1996). Along with several other factors, this added to the higher incidence of Métis attendance at this school. Due to its location, it was an area of interest for the Halfbreed Commission. Several factors may have influenced the Halfbreed Commission to look to the schools for monitoring the Métis and First Nation people in these communities. First, they wanted to try to keep the number of potential troublemakers down by keeping tabs on them and to prevent parents from moving to areas in northern Saskatchewan by keeping their children in the school. In addition, this kept the numbers of Métis on the move to a minimum (Shore, 2000). The effects of the schools were far from meeting the interests of the Métis. These schools were maintained as an instrument of the government, where the welfare of the children and the future of generations of Aboriginal people took a back seat to government interests.

After the creation of Manitoba in 1870 and the events of 1885, the Métis were rapidly being dispossessed of their land base in the West and, in due time, many Métis found themselves entering the period of Métis history that has been termed *the forgotten years*. They were stripped of land, money, hunting and trapping rights, as well as access to many basic citizenship rights, such as proper health care and education. They were trapped between provincial and federal jurisdiction in many areas and had lost any ability to be self-determinant or to have self-sufficient communities (Sealey and Lussier, 1975). There was a general disregard of Métis rights through the dealings of scrip and complying with conditions of the Manitoba Act (Association of Métis and Non-Status Indians of Saskatchewan, 1979). However, the government of Canada did acknowledge the existence of these rights through their attempts to get rid of them:

The Government of the Dominion never took the position that it had no obligations at all as to Half-breeds. It recognized them as possessing, in a degree, an Aboriginal title to the land of this country; and took measures to extinguish it (PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Under this premise, the Department of Indian Affairs developed guidelines for the schools to follow regarding the admission of Halfbreed students to residential schools. There were frequent requests from principals, nuns and teachers to allow Métis children to be admitted to the schools, along with the First Nation children. Many church officials saw that many Métis families were living in poverty on the road allowances and they made several requests to the government to allow admittance of Métis children to the schools:

I want to ask you if, in this Northern part of the Northwest where Indians are bound to remain in their reserve and are living side by side with the Halfbreeds in the wilds, the children of those Halfbreeds can be admitted in Indian Boarding Schools.

O. Charlebois  
Bishop of Keewatin

The Pas, Manitoba  
19 Feb 1917  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

In some instances, arrangements were made between individual Métis families and the schools if one parent of the Métis children had settlement money to draw on. Métis children could be admitted provided that the parent could pay for them from those settlement funds (Blondeau, 2000). Métis parents and families would also arrange with the school in order to provide for the attendance of their children, for instance, working at the school, on the farms or doing general maintenance. One agreement reads:

[T]he Department will not object ... to their attending the schools, provided their parents will, as suggested by the Agent deliver a few loads of wood at the school for the winter.

Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs  
25 April 1894  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

As requests from the churches and Métis families to allow the entrance of Métis students increased in number, school policy gradually changed, but not without government opposition. In the late 1890s, Hayter Reed, superintendent of Indian Affairs, opposed to making any funds available for Métis students. His stand on the Métis was outlined in several correspondences, the first is a response to the following letter to the Department of Indian Affairs from representatives from the Saskatchewan and Calgary school division:

[W]hile recognizing with thankfulness the support given by the Indian Department of the Dominion Government to the Boarding School and Industrial Schools, established for education and training of Indian children hereby ... [expresses?] the deepest concern and regret that there are so many children in different parts of the province whose parents have been allowed to leave treaties and are now in a worse off position than the Indians on the Reserves. These children are growing up in utter ignorance without any opportunities of receiving any education whatever. The signed would hereby request the Bishop to communicate with the Department and endeavor to attain their sanction to the education of Métis children to the boarding and Industrial schools on the same or on as [Indians] footing as the children of Treaty Indians.

Saskatchewan and Calgary, July 21, 1896  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

A response to this correspondence from Hayter Reed states:

The Department has no power, even were it deemed advisable in the face of the large and always increasing demands on the limited resources available for education of the children of Treaty Indians to divert its funds in the direction indicated, and matters affecting the class referred to are not within its jurisdiction.

Hayter Reed, Indian Affairs  
July 30, 1896  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

There seemed to be little consistency between decisions being made on behalf of Métis interests. Another policy arose that said Métis students would be admitted only when there were not enough Indian students available to keep enrolment numbers high (PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1) — policy was constantly changing to suit the needs of the government. As more Métis were allowed to attend the schools, numbers soon rose too rapidly in some schools and the Department of Indian Affairs would request that Métis students be moved to schools where low attendance threatened the closure of those schools.

I worked hard and got every child out of the Qu'Appelle school who had no right to be there ... if it is decided by the Department that we should admit half-breeds living as Indians, off the Reserve and if this is the class of persons you want to admit to our schools, I can fill the Elkhorn school in three weeks.

W. Graham  
Indian Commissioner  
April 17, 1924  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

The Elkhorn School had a history of low attendance and financial troubles after the school was damaged by fire. The school was closed for several years as a result of both the fire damage and “the high cost of education” (Miller, 1990:C-7). As the department started to work with an increasing Métis attendance, they expanded the number of guidelines for Halfbreed admittance and created a class system in order to judge the quality of the Métis that would be allowed entrance into the schools. The guidelines were created under the administration of Department of Indian Affairs Superintendent Duncan Campbell Scott. Scott held the position of superintendent for the longest period of time and, during that time, he gained the most notorious record for Indian relations (Titley, 1986). His views of the “tragic savage” are outlined in his poetry as much as they are in his style of administration of Indian Affairs. During these years, a letter signed by a team of school officials from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta classified the Métis:

Halfbreeds may be grouped into three fairly well-defined classes.

1. Those who live, in varying degrees of conditions, the ordinary settled life of the country.
2. Those who live, in varying degrees, the Indian mode of life.
3. Those who – and they form the most unfortunate class in the community – are the illegitimate offspring of Indian women, and of whom white men are not the begetters.

Those of the first class make no claim upon the Government of the Dominion for the education of their children; nor has any such claim as far as the knowledge of the undersigned goes been made on their behalf. The third class are entitled to participate in the benefits of the Indian schools; and in so far as the afore quoted ... [w]hen Indian Treaties are made the illegitimate children ... of Indian treaty women were

excluded and payment of their annuity money for them on their behalf was refused. That policy appears to have been adopted to discourage illegitimate breeding. As to the second class of Halfbreed the undersigned at once admit that they present a difficult educational problem, but the very difficulty effects a strong reason against drawing a hard and fast line such as it drawn. This second class of Halfbreeds may be divided into three groups:

1. Those who live apart from Indians but follow somewhat Indian mode of life
2. Those who live in the vicinity of Indian Reserves
3. [Those who] [l]ive on the Reserves

What is so readily and so often charged against people of mixed blood is the result, not blood, but of environment ... [f]or such schools were established to meet treaty obligations towards Indians, but as a means of preventing, in the public interest, a race of wild men growing up whose hands would be against all men and all mens hands against them.

Signed,  
Emile J. OMI, St. Albert  
Adilard OMI, St. Boniface  
Olivier Elizard, Regina  
Emile Grouard, Athabaska  
(PAM, RG10, vol. 6039, file 160-1, part 1).

The Department of Indian Affairs created a class system to judge the Métis under their terms. The closer the government thought the Métis were to First Nation communities, in a geographical or societal sense, the lower class of person they were thought to be. This lower class had priority over other Métis when being considered for admission to residential schools to ensure that the *outcasts and menaces* of society, living like Indians, were civilized. After these guidelines were considered, the question of distinguishing these classes came into question. This included the evaluation of the physical appearance of Métis children and how these physical appearances affected their admittance.

There are difficulties in this matter – I had two boys in school – one grey eyes – hair lighter than Indians in texture and colour – very fair skin – the other Indian in all appearances – both of the same mother – the same father, acknowledged with.

Feb 7, 1911  
(Shore and Barkwell, 1997:2).

An issue of simple heredity that occurs often in Métis families soon became a question for this school classing system. Indian agents judged children by phenotypic attributes, such as skin and hair colour, and influenced the agent's decision to bring certain children to the schools. A judgment could then be made, of not only the type of lifestyle the Métis were living, but the physical attributes of the children. At this time, it is unknown how often these judgments or classifications were manipulated to suit the needs of school and Indian Affairs officials. It is important to emphasize the ambiguity that existed in admissions policies and how easy it was for Métis students to slip through the cracks of school administration.

The schools were a microcosm of society at the time they existed. The class system that existed in Canada, from its creation to the time of the closure of the schools, was mirrored in the opinions expressed at these schools. The model of Euro-Canadian society, as a religious, pious, respectable society, was in charge of the tragic, heathen savage; those who needed saving. In between, there was a third class of Halfbreed, a class too large to be ignored but regarded to be in a class low enough to be manipulated to the best interests of the class in power. The admission of Halfbreeds to residential schools fits into the Shore model of Métis history (PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1), in which they saw their *golden years* followed by the introduction of Canadian government influence bringing them the *forgotten years* and *road allowance years* that stood as a challenge to this cohesive and resilient group of people.

## **Métis Attendance Factors**

Several factors have influenced Métis attendance at residential schools at certain times and locations. The presence of these factors may have increased the likelihood that Métis children were admitted or attended various schools at certain times. Considering the low number of sources currently available on Métis attendance at residential schools, this list of factors will undoubtedly change and grow over time. Presently, these factors include school attendance numbers, school denominations, school location, family history, social class hierarchy and church charity.

To help influence enrolment-controlled funding to various schools, Métis children would be admitted in the place of First Nation children if the attendance number was low. The Department of Indian Affairs did not originally intend for Métis children to be admitted at all, but faced with several opposing factors, changes to their original policy had resulted (PAM, RG10, vol. 6032, file 150-14, part 2; vol. 6254, file 575-10, part 3 and 4; vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Indian agents were willing to move children relatively far from their home communities to certain schools, in order to maintain higher attendance and consistent funding. The Qu'Appelle school consistently had high attendance and always had a considerable percentage of Métis children. As many Department of Indian Affairs officials preferred not to admit Métis children, they would be the first ones to be relocated to a school with lower attendance, like the Elkhorn Indian Residential School.

When questions concerning the percentage of Métis attendees arise, the religious denomination of the school must be considered. Further research will have to be completed before a complete picture of church involvement in school policy and enrolment emerges. After a review of archival records of residential school attendance, some of the early numbers that have been gathered reflect that Roman Catholic schools were more likely to have a higher percentage of Métis attendees than their Protestant counterparts (PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1). Future investigation into missionary historical records on the subject of past Métis relations with the Roman Catholic Church will help explain the level of Métis attendance at certain residential schools. Further, the location of residential schools may have influenced the percentage of Métis attendees. The location of a residential school in close proximity to larger and well-established Métis communities had an influence on the number of requests from both parents and teachers who wanted Métis children to be enrolled at that school. The relationship between the location of large Métis communities, First Nation communities and residential schools is an area considered for future study to help compile a more complete history of Métis at residential schools.

The Department of Indian Affairs did not want to take financial responsibility for the education of Métis children by allowing their admittance to residential schools (PAM, RG10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1). Children that were not included in treaty areas were not to be granted tuition to these schools, but if arrangements were made with their parent's treaty entitlement, the children would be allowed to attend. These conditions depended on the Métis' family history and family locations and they did influence Métis attendance at residential schools.

In order to regulate attendance levels, the Department of Indian Affairs created a class system to judge the Métis for consideration for admission. As previously mentioned, the lowest class Métis, orphans and illegitimate children, would be admitted first and those living an *Indian mode* of life would also be considered for admission; but those living the *settled mode* of life would not be admitted unless some of the other factors mentioned were present. The greatest influences on all these factors of Métis attendance were the individual churches and dioceses. Church requests and policies on the Métis influenced many of the decisions and outcomes that were made on behalf of the Métis. The churches often recognized the Métis families that were dispossessed of their land and living on the road allowances. In return, the churches offered charitable admissions to Métis children.

When considering all these factors, it cannot be emphasized enough that they are still in a developmental stage and much more research in this area must be done before complete accounts of Métis attendance are made available. Vast collections of oral histories from Métis Survivors and review of archival and missionary records are ongoing by several Métis organizations in Canada, and compilation and consultation will contribute to a more complete Métis residential school history.

## Chapter 2

### **The Experiences of Métis Students: “We Were Outsiders”**

The legacy of the residential school system has left many deep-rooted impacts that encompass a wide range of people. It is difficult to say how long this legacy will follow Aboriginal communities before a balance is restored (Aboriginal Healing Foundation, 1999). In response to this, a growing number of groups across Canada are attempting to create a reasonable balance where the healed and secure will outnumber the hurt and disillusioned. The key to finding a logical end to the legacy of hurt and abuse resulting from the residential school system, lies in the knowledge contained in the personal accounts of the people who were most directly impacted by these schools. The Survivors, their families and their communities are to be at the centre of any long-term solutions to the residential school problems of today. The root of residential school issues involved the treatment of children at these institutions and how detrimental the abuse of even one student is on a whole community. Students of these schools may have experienced serious sexual and physical abuse and encountered highly Eurocentric and racially discriminatory treatment. No child in his or her most formative years should have had to experience this (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997).

Generally speaking, all students at these schools shared the same daily activities, church ceremonies, rules, disciplines and living conditions. However, to stay consistent with any set of recorded accounts regarding residential school experiences, it is fair to say that there is no one story from this experience that is universal. There is a very wide range of individuals from a diverse number of communities who were enrolled during the years of the schools' existence. Some residential school Survivors have completely negative memories of their school years, while others possess some positive memories and believe they benefitted from their experiences. For example, two sisters from the same family, when asked about their time spent at residential school shared opposite views. One recalled several positive memories and the other sister remembered only negative (Blondeau, 2000). In addition, research has revealed both positive and negative experiences shared by First Nation, Inuit and Métis attendees. There are differences between the experiences of the First Nation students and those of the Métis; some of the experiences Métis students had were unique to them. The Métis students had various factors influencing their experiences, including religious beliefs, social structure, language, and school admittance policies different from those of the First Nation students. For instance, when the schools were first opened, many Métis attendees were familiar with the Roman Catholic Church and Catholicism, unlike their First Nation classmates who were, at this point, introduced to a religion and spirituality foreign to them. The Métis experiences were not strictly exclusive of those of the First Nation students. There is, however, a unique nature to the Métis stories. It is not possible at this stage to determine if they, as a group, suffered a greater or lesser amount of abuse in comparison with their First Nation classmates, but only that their experiences were unique.

Several different factors contributed to the increasing likelihood that Métis children would be admitted to residential schools. One such factor is outlined in the 1879 report by Nicholas Davin on creating “Industrial Schools for Indians and Halfbreeds,” which reported that, due to the mediatory role the Métis were seen to have led, they should be included in education through the residential school system (Miller, 1996). Métis children were admitted over the years by school administration in several different ways but,

in general, usually their admittance reflected the financial capabilities of the schools or the families at that time. At times, there was no education available for the Métis at all because of the lack of government funding. As one Métis Elder stated:

We never got one cent from the government ... That's why we cannot teach—you cannot hire teachers, you know, good teachers to teach ... The nuns had to go teach the kids (Johnson:R-831).

At the same time, some Métis children had no option to attend these schools as they had no government support; in other cases, children had no choice in whether or not they wanted to be removed from their communities to attend a school away from their homes and families. One Métis woman recalls the removal of Métis children from her community:

[A]s I grew up I discovered that we had a white man as an Indian Agent. I guess I was about six years old when I discovered this and I hated the bugger because he was a white man and I was supposed to be the Indian. He was always trying to tell us what to do and he would take our young kids away to Elkhorn or Brandon to school and the kids weren't allowed to talk in their own language. As a result there aren't many of our people in Hodgson that know how to talk our own language, Cree. I used to fight with this white Indian Agent when he would come...to take me and my brothers to school (Harcus, 1997:42).

Métis children ended up in these schools for several reasons and were not prepared for the experiences they would have at these schools and the impacts these schools would have on their lives.

The most common remark from Métis residential school Survivors is that they were outsiders. When asked to reflect on, not only their experiences in general, but on being a Métis in an “Indian school,” the most consistent response is that they were considered outsiders (Blondeau, 2000). In a school system in Canada where generations of children were judged by their beliefs and physical appearances, Aboriginal children in the school who had a slightly lighter complexion or had an easier time speaking English or French stood out from the other students (Miller, 1996). They were set apart from both fellow students and the school staff, as people that did not belong or did not quite fit in.

But I started to hate the Métis people growing up there, because if you were Métis, you were separated, and I didn't want to be separated. Most of my friends were white. I tried to be white for a long time (Anonymous, 2000).

On being Métis at a residential school, former student of the Qu'Appelle School Tillie Blondeau (2000) recalls: “the Métis were different, we were outsiders. I didn't like it there.”

The aim of educating the children at these schools was always overshadowed with racially discriminatory overtones, such as making judgments on children based on skin colour. Unfortunately, the assimilation of the children affected the development of their lives, as many were learning about the world for the first time in a setting where they were always looked upon as the lower class of people. When asked what the worst part of going to school was, one former Métis student who attended the L'Ecole St. Lazare answered:

Trying to be better than them, trying to be better than the others, Métis kids, so you could go farther. I thought you had to study harder than the white ones, you had to get better grades (Lepine, 2000).

An Elder from St. Laurent, Manitoba had a similar remark about the treatment of Métis children by the nuns who ran the schools:

The nuns did go too far sometimes. They were hard on the Métis people and they called us names ... "Indians" or "bannock-eaters." They also said that we were just drunkards and not worth anything. That's the way we were treated when I was going to school (Desjarlais, 1997:142).

It seems easy to blame many of these schools' shortcomings, such as poor living conditions and the poor treatment of children, and on the mismanagement and underfunding of the institutions. It is hard to determine, though, to what extent much of the poor treatment of these children was also derived from racist and Eurocentric attitudes instead. No matter what the reason was for the negligent and dishonourable treatment of these children, this treatment still impacts their lives as adults today and the lives of their children tomorrow.

Religion was a major concern for the Métis entering these schools; many of their societal customs drew from Roman Catholicism. One Elder offered this on the schools and religion:

[W]e were sent to a school, it could have been an Anglican, and a Presbyterian school, or no matter, Methodist, or whatever, Roman Catholic – well, I was sent to a Roman Catholic. And of course, I was Roman Catholic anyhow, but there were others I knew who were Protestant, who were Anglican in religion, when they first entered the school, the Church, the Catholic Church shoved them there. In fact the religion was driven down their throats, you may say (Ledoux:R-830).

To many Métis, the fact the Roman Catholic religion was the denomination taught at their school was a comfort. This was something familiar in a new school community that was regimented and unfamiliar.

I remember singing. I remember a lot of the songs. It was comforting ... men from the seminary would go out on the lake and would sing and chant hymns. It was beautiful (Logan, 2000).

Many Métis social controls with regard to family and community customs came from the Catholic faith. Marriage, divorce, family disputes, births, deaths and legal issues in Métis communities traditionally sought some form of guidance from the Roman Catholic Church (Shore and Barkwell, 1997).

The way Métis were treated in their communities was somewhat mirrored in the ways they were treated in the residential schools. These schools were a microcosm of Canadian society at the time, which had a dominant upper class of Euro-Canadians with a lower stratum of the Aboriginal people in their charge. Both in mainstream Canadian society and in the school system, the Métis were made to feel they were lesser than either of their halves, not Indian enough for benefits or Aboriginal rights and not "white"

enough to be seen as an equal to the dominant society. Métis were made to feel ashamed of who they were and who their parents were.

I didn't play with the Métis kids. Only in the country or on weekends. My dark relatives, I wouldn't play with cause I was scared I would be, get caught or [inaudible] ... they used to call you Metisse or Sauvage, French word for Metis or savage they'd call you (Anonymous, 2000).

My kids, they didn't like school because they were mistreated. Probably could be because they were halfbreeds. They would laugh at them and things like that ... The other kids, yeah. They would laugh at them, especially the way they dressed. They weren't well dressed and they would laugh at their lunches, what they would take to school to eat. I would give pretty good lunches, bread and bologna, not bannock. It was probably to hurt them. I don't know why (Vandale:R-805A).

Many Métis at the time of the residential school legacy lived in poverty during their road allowance years and were looked down upon because of their lower income lifestyles. They were made to feel ashamed of the conditions they lived under despite the fact there were few options for them at that time. The schools and the Church, through steady reinforcement of class structure and social standings, perpetuated these ideals. One Métis individual remarks about their treatment in comparison with First Nation individuals:

Well, I just think that, well, they are treated a lot different because there are so many reasons. Well, Métis people and Indian people in my opinion, there is no difference. Because if you look at some of the treaty people and you look at some of the Métis people, you can't tell whether they are treaty or Métis and they are classified as, well, they are Indian people. And then the only difference you can tell is by their treaty card which they don't stamp on their forehead or anything. But the Métis people have it rougher, I think, because the treaty people are looked after by the government with their treaty card.... A Métis person, they don't have the treaty card but then still they look Indian so the white people still look at them that way (Youens:R-805A).

Aboriginal children were learning to feel embarrassed that they were Métis or First Nation; learning to be ashamed of who they were. They were made to feel ashamed of both or one of their parents and, although they may have learned to live with these feelings at that time, few of them had the chance to recognize the lasting impact that their school days would have on them today. At the same time, though, some people have fond memories of their school days at the residential school; they generally had a good experience at these schools and they feel the experience benefitted their life:

I was treated well, I remember it fondly, some of those memories are the happiest of my life.... I was asked to teach some of the classes when I was older, and the teachers were sick or something. Those were happy times for me (Logan, 2000).

Whether positive or negative, these schools have had lasting effects on Aboriginal people in communities in all parts of Canada. As residential school issues gradually come to the forefront of Canada's agenda, more Métis Survivors need to come forward in partnership with the First Nation and Inuit Survivors to

have a Métis voice in movements for healing and reconciliation, so they are not lost in the future as they were in the past.

## Chapter 3

### **The Future of Residential School Issues: Métis Involvement and Intergenerational Impacts**

Since the closure of the residential schools, Aboriginal people in Canada have experienced a period of resurgence and rebirth. They have made political and social gains across all parts of Canada. The regaining of strength, balance and structure in many Aboriginal communities has become a major objective. If economic and community developments in Aboriginal communities are to achieve their goals, they must first have a healthy base on which to rest (Lane, Bopp and Bopp, 1998). If generations of community members are still negatively impacted by the effects of years of cultural genocide resulting from residential schools and of the general impacts of colonization, the treatment of Aboriginal people under Euro-Canadian patriarchy must first be dealt with. In order for Aboriginal communities to become strong economic and political contenders, care must be taken to ensure the strength of their various programs is rooted in a healthy community. A high number of negative statistics is related to Aboriginal communities, especially with respect to addictions, family breakdown, abuse, inadequate housing, high drop-out rates and suicide (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997). One major source of these negative statistics is the residential school system. This is not the only source but a major one that is found in many areas across Canada.

Métis Survivors of the residential school system share many of the same intergenerational impacts as those of First Nation Survivors. Long-term impacts, such as the loss of parenting skills, the inability to express feelings, as well as the effects of the loss of language, culture and self-esteem, are, unfortunately, impacts that affected attendees, despite the fact Survivors may recall both positive and negative memories of their school days (see Appendix A). In some Métis communities, the intergenerational impacts of residential schools may vary in their frequency in relation to other Métis or Aboriginal communities. This may be due to the fact there was no consistent policy regarding the admittance of Métis to the residential schools. Further, the Métis consisted of only a small percentage of total residential school attendees at certain given times. Regardless, the descendants of Métis Survivors or Métis children with First Nation parents who attended the schools must each deal with the impacts of the residential school system. It is difficult to estimate the number of these Survivors in any given Aboriginal group; but, through increased research and healing initiatives, hopefully, more people can be reached.

Métis people, in ever increasing numbers, are identifying with the intergenerational impacts of the residential school system. Whether or not they were direct Survivors, many are able to identify with the impacts that the attendance of their family members at these schools had on their lives. This identification is the first step in the healing journey. In light of this, it is understood that healing is a process that is as individual as the person in need of healing. Healing is a very personal and distinct venture and must be respected as such. When healing programs for Métis communities are considered, the individuality of these communities and their people must be observed. First Nation communities that are dealing with these same residential school impacts have traditional and cultural sources to draw on when creating healing programs. They have several traditions regarding healing and many traditional beliefs that can contribute to form specific healing programs for their First Nation communities. Resources and traditional knowledge about Métis traditions on healing methodology are harder to find in recorded literature. The

Métis have social devices to deal with community and individual healing needs, but these are somewhat unique to the regions and communities where the Métis reside. Métis communities look to their Elders and their fellow community members for healing needs and have a considerable amount of strength to draw upon within their own communities. Healing programs for Métis communities would, therefore, be better designed according to regional needs and community profiles. These communities vary in size, history and location; all major factors in determining the best route for the healing journey. Métis communities with long traditional histories that have Elders available for consultation may receive healing guidance from them. Métis Elders are key to these healing initiatives and hold the answers to many of the questions left unanswered on the residential school issue. Regardless if the community is rural or urban, there exists a desire for Métis people to help Métis people and this fact connects them to each other. In both the traditional and contemporary sense, Métis community members seek help from fellow members. Métis strength is drawn from unity and cohesion in their communities and this principle is both a traditional belief and current doctrine (Shore and Barkwell, 1997). Further work with the residential school and colonization issues with specific reference to the Métis must look at community profiles and the individuality of these communities. Their histories in relation to their current situations hold the key to the kinds of social programs that will be most effective. As well, any type of contemporary program development must encompass both the traditional and modern beliefs of that Métis community.

One of the most widespread impacts on any community is the fact that the cultural and traditional heritage was stolen from generations of Aboriginal people. Colonizing effects, including residential schools, systematically removed this heritage from Aboriginal communities. All Métis people can participate in the reclaiming of traditions and history that was stolen from previous generations. Whether it is through the promotion of Métis issues and events or through the quest to reclaim history, traditions and culture, the past damage created by the residential schools can be remedied. This is something all Métis can do in reclaiming the part of their past that was stolen.

The term “stolen” is used in contrast with the term “lost” because this term could possibly be misinterpreted to the effect that some believe that many of the things Métis and First Nation people valued were misplaced by their own irresponsibility. “Stolen” may be a more accurate term because the many things that were stripped from Aboriginal people, such as dignity, self-respect, language, culture, as well as their children, were taken against their will (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997). Other things stolen during the residential school years include respect for parents and Elders, as well as respect for education and the Church. Other things these schools took included family connections, control over their own affairs and, the most important of all, their life. Children lost siblings in these schools and friends lost playmates. In addition, parents would arrive in the summer to pick up their children only to find out their child had passed away sometime in the months they were separated (Grant, 1996). Each school, even though few of the buildings are still standing, leaves a physical legacy. There are cemeteries filled with tiny graves, some of which have no coffins or have multiple children sharing the same grave (Miller, 1996). The most precious thing the schools have stolen were the lives of these children. Years of underfunding and mismanagement greatly contributed to the detrimental living conditions these children had to endure. Foreign diseases, such as tuberculosis and pneumonia, as well as malnutrition and general neglect, all contributed to the many deaths at these schools (Miller, 1996). One aim of this project is to honour the children who did not make it home from school and to remember the children who are still at these institutions.

Government goals to cut costs and eliminate funds originally earmarked to go to First Nations and Métis by way of treaties and scrip agreements were reached by cutting costs at the residential schools. However, the people who implemented these cuts at the institutions could not have forecasted the millions of dollars the government of Canada would have to put forth to try to help alleviate some of the trauma previous governments had created. Further, class-action suits with huge dollar amounts against churches and church officials are increasing in number all over Canada today (Conrad, 2000).

If it is sickness you seek, look into the minds and hearts of the men who conceived, implemented and maintained these institutions, not at its victims (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997:226).

Government focus today should be on inquiring into ways that can restore Aboriginal communities. More initiatives should be undertaken. A call for a government inquiry is a reasonable request. An important result could be the beginnings of a common understanding or resource for those researching residential schools. An inquiry could create this unified resource and will facilitate understanding between Aboriginal groups, the governments and the various churches. Too many misconceptions about the residential school legacy exist. Too many Canadians do not understand what happened to generations of Aboriginal people. The road to healthy Aboriginal-Canadian government relations in the future starts in the past.

When residential school issues are moved closer to the forefront of Canada's agenda and there is more national attention drawn to residential school issues, Métis people should be represented. According to the latest findings of this project, there is no formal Métis representation at this time with reference to the issue of residential schools. The Aboriginal Healing Foundation has Métis individuals representing the Métis at the board level and in the many Aboriginal Healing Foundation funded projects across the country. Recognizing this, major Métis organizations should begin gathering information to help create a unified Métis stand on residential school issues. The time for national attention on these issues is approaching rapidly and the Métis should be prepared to join other organizations in having a strong voice with a view to finding appropriate long-term solutions.

## Appendix A

### Summary of Effects of Residential Schools by Elders at the 1993 Conference\*

Participating Elders have identified these to be the effects of residential schools:

Loss of language  
Loss of teachings  
Loss of respect  
Loss of trust  
Loss of parenting and parenting skills  
Loss of dignity  
Loss of sexuality  
Loss of mother/father and extended family  
Family break up  
Loss of sobriety  
Loss of independence  
Loss of spirituality  
Loss of self-respect  
Loss of self-love  
Loss of ceremonies  
Did not learn how to deal with anger  
Denial  
Learned how to be stubborn  
Developed shame to ourselves and to our people  
Became self-centred  
Learned to hate, blame  
Learned greed  
Learned to fear God  
Stress reduced immune system  
Anxiety  
Loss of discipline  
Loss of traditional food source  
Loss of personal power, always blaming others  
Loss of self-discipline  
Negative statistics of jails, mental health institutes, child care  
Loss of control of our own planning, we are controlled by the system, programs and projects  
Loss of unification  
Loss of planning for family (i.e., life insurance); dreams interpretation; medicine; hunting and sharing skills; traditional hunting and trapping ground  
Loss of creativity  
Loss of visiting and relationship

Loss of genealogical counselling  
Control by communities and boards

\* Manitoba Joint Committee on Residential Schools, "Proposal - Manitoba Healing Resource Centre for First Nations Affected by Residential Schools," Winnipeg: 1994, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Appendix E.

## Appendix B

### General Discussion on Residential Schools at the Southwest Region Manitoba Métis Federation Regional Meeting, June 24, 2000

**On residential, mission, convent, industrial and day schools, regarding terms and general statements:**

- ✦ Foster homes were just as bad and in many cases much worse
- ✦ “Indian” Schools
- ✦ “Catholic Schools”

**On religion and churches:**

- ✦ Church takes more responsibility for people’s lives than they have the right to. Churches have turned people against religion. Church is not the only place where God is. Church is not flexible enough to recognize “individual” beliefs. The church imposes their beliefs and does not allow a personal perspective on their relationships with God and their own personal beliefs
- ✦ Many of the religious upbringing was automatic part of our upbringing
- ✦ Religion was brought down through our parents
- ✦ Churches at one time had a great influence on the ways and traditions of the lives of people, where as today religion is too commercialize
- ✦ Children not knowing or letting parents because may be punished – Priests could do no wrong
- ✦ “She” would go to hell if she didn’t learn it [things]
- ✦ Something we were just taught to do
- ✦ So you wouldn’t think about it
- ✦ When young you were taught to pray etc. without meaning, as adult our perception is different
- ✦ To go to church it was like you had to dress properly
- ✦ Strict Catholics [raised]
- ✦ Forced to go – everyone needs religion
- ✦ Younger years were good but as you grow older you learn the bad things about church [history]
- ✦ Each generation, less religion

**On the government:**

- ✦ Crooks then, crooks now. In respect to the schools, the idea was to end Métis and the more that died there, better for the government
- ✦ The government is for the government. Not for the people, first and foremost. In those days the church was a great deal stronger than the government
- ✦ The government was taking away from us – taking scrip
- ✦ Government – Monetary Motivated – trying to eliminate Aboriginal people
- ✦ Scare tactics in families
- ✦ Ethnic Cleansing

- ✦ Forced Education
- ✦ I believe they are willing to talk more [they have to become accountable]

**On the impacts residential schools had on communities:**

- ✦ All participants of residential schools didn't have bad experiences
- ✦ While they were trying to put us down, in many ways they made some of us stronger. People were affected differently. Those that broke, did, those who didn't walked away strong
- ✦ In many of our communities it did not effect us [Métis] because it was not in our areas. It effected the First Nations families, because the children forces and taken from them and the parents had no choice of the matter
- ✦ Hurt our community. Residential School people often just claimed as treaty, if they looked "Indian enough" and spoke a Native language. Children were taken from parents without parental permission
- ✦ Still prejudice today in our school systems
- ✦ One Métis child had his hair cut by a teacher. This was in the 1990s
- ✦ From one perspective, we thought they [Métis] were lucky to stay in those schools
- ✦ We make due with what we have
- ✦ Yes, it affects us – taking away from the family setting, you're institutionalized
- ✦ Once you've taken away from that [?] you can never get back to it – family
- ✦ Lost language, culture
- ✦ It helped. Was a form of education available [good or bad]?
- ✦ Yes, half and half [it affected the community and individuals]
- ✦ Yes, [the schools had] a short-term effect – education available. Long term, some people had a bad time of it
- ✦ Kept it quiet, different for individual but generally negative we don't know this effects because of lack of knowledge of who attended these schools. We believe it split and divided communities and contributed to abuse of all kinds

**On admitting Métis children to residential schools:**

- ✦ If you had money, you were there
- ✦ Child and Family paid for some
- ✦ Parents were convinced it was going to benefit their children
- ✦ Kids were taken by Child and Family
- ✦ Should have been a choice
- ✦ Free will – come and educate yourself
- ✦ Stayed [allowed to be educated in your own community]

**On the treatment of Métis people in Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities:**

- ✦ First Nations rejected Métis kids then and now
- ✦ Non-Aboriginals reject Métis. Just as years ago, degree of skin colour determines acceptance by both Aboriginal and for non-Aboriginals
- ✦ When growing up many First Nations people called "Métis" people "half-half" or "apples" (red on

the outside, white on the inside) and (half white, half Indian). Not a good experience. Then on the other hand also there are Métis people had good responses

- ✦ In our own community, my children have been taunted and teased for being “Indian”
- ✦ Shunned by own people – put out side of the ridge
- ✦ Discriminated by Aboriginal people, called “apple”
- ✦ Métis people were looked down on by First Nations people
- ✦ Discriminated against as a youngster in both First Nations and white communities
- ✦ You educate the people of the ways of Métis
- ✦ Historically they were friendly and respected but the young Natives are very prejudiced, they are a lot more militant, they have no respect for anyone
- ✦ Very [non-Native] prejudice historically but there is more respect recently [judged more as individuals, now jealousy]

**On government attempts to Christianize, civilize and assimilate “Indians and Halfbreeds”:**

- ✦ Cut the hair of only dark-skinned kids
- ✦ Not allowed to speak their languages
- ✦ Any time any organization tries to C[hristianize], A[ssimilate], C[ivilize] people without understanding their customs or beliefs, it doesn’t work
- ✦ Lost a lot of history and culture as a result [loss of identity]

**On any other impacts from residential schools not already mentioned:**

- ✦ Effects – people are still dealing with – they’re getting counseling
- ✦ Priest and nuns should get counseling who were involved in Residential Schools
- ✦ Passed on to children – parenting skills
- ✦ Trust – The role of affection and intimacy plays in the family structure
- ✦ Being ashamed of who or what you are
- ✦ Passing on feelings of shame
- ✦ Inability for employment

**On what kind of services that should be made available to deal with these impacts:**

- ✦ Awareness of resources and where they are
- ✦ Cannot sell us – should be free
- ✦ Some people don’t know they’re impacted by schools – library resources
- ✦ Services are available right now, and it is up to the individual and the family to take the steps to heal. There are programs already there, now it is up to the person to be able to take that first step and go for help. The programs are there.
- ✦ Suggesting - Parenting Skills Workshop
- ✦ Self-Esteem/Assertiveness training
- ✦ Social skills – interaction and appropriate actions in a community setting
- ✦ Traditional counseling, both individual and groups for sharing
- ✦ Sharing between Elders and youth
- ✦ Documenting real experiences

- ✦ Family counselors and services be educated on Residential [Convent] etc. experiences
- ✦ Service etc., have to develop a compassionate ear to be open enough to listen to the stories
- ✦ Family supports in place
- ✦ Services – counseling, access to funds, public education about history of Residential Schools
- ✦ Counseling and resources and facilities [for addiction], Métis helping Métis

**On educating people about residential school impacts:**

- ✦ Posters – advertised in paper – local advertise in Aboriginal newspapers
- ✦ Word of mouth
- ✦ Write stories [personal] and compiled together
- ✦ Take all avenues available
- ✦ Education – meetings and forums, face to face
- ✦ It should be taught in the schools, brought up in church – sermons – maybe once month it is discussed with the congregation
- ✦ Meetings, such as today
- ✦ To educate people all these venues should be used [the public in general, somebody who lived through it should be called upon to speak, so it is first hand]

**On changing misconceptions and attitudes about residential school:**

- ✦ Society blames the victim
- ✦ Create awareness through advertising
- ✦ Role and responsibility of the church
- ✦ Education and getting the true fact across to public

**On connections between individual and community impacts:**

- ✦ Everybody is unique in their own way
- ✦ Educate local leaders – mayor and council
- ✦ Educate
- ✦ Not only the Residential School
- ✦ Sometimes we're our worst enemy - we don't give support
- ✦ Its up to the individual to change the people's outlooks. If you have a positive outlook people notice this
- ✦ Residential School effects are far-reaching what behaviour and attitudes learned in one generation is passed on to the next
- ✦ One community maybe all or mostly Métis. In this community it may be the blonde fair-skinned kids who feel low or less accepted. Another may be predominately white, and it's the Métis kids that are not accepted
- ✦ Yes you can it is easier to influence on a community than an individual or family [violence, alcohol abuse etc.]

**On filling the culture/age gaps:**

- ✦ Have some Elders participate in youth groups to give their ideas and perspective
- ✦ Communication and respect
- ✦ Parenting skills affect adult mental states and community values
- ✦ More mix of all generations
- ✦ At one time being Métis was considered not such a good thing. Traditions and cultural pride may be lost. Elders and youth sharing experiences and rebuilding cultural pride and knowledge
- ✦ Financial support
- ✦ Education and strong family ties [communication], keep family unit intact

**Recommendations for this project:**

- ✦ Advertising of Métis stories in newspapers
- ✦ Make contact with the individuals who went to the Residential schools and families
- ✦ Contact the principals, priests and nuns of Residential schools and get their perspective
- ✦ Talking to Elders
- ✦ More public awareness

**Summary comments:**

- ✦ Time is running out for the people who've been hurt by Residential Schools
- ✦ Need more education about the facts, counseling and facilities for treatment, keep family involved, have first-hand speakers. Get the facts out there so people are aware of them. Make sure that people are aware you are talking about Métis and not other Aboriginals
- ✦ Loss of trust – loss of trust in family
- ✦ Need for self-esteem training/social skills, parenting workshops



**ANCESTRAL PAIN**

**MÉTIS MEMORIES OF RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL  
PROJECT**

**Prepared by Judy D. Daniels**

**On behalf of the Métis Nation of Alberta**

**April 3, 2003**

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This research paper is dedicated to all Métis Survivors of residential schools.

## Introduction

The focus of this research paper is on how Indian residential schools have impacted the Métis Nation. Effects on the Métis Nation have occurred in two ways: firstly, because a significant number of Métis students attended Indian residential schools; and secondly, there has been a great deal of intermarriage between the Métis and First Nations and, consequently, there has been an impact on the children of such unions. There is little documentation regarding Métis students attending Indian residential schools and, as a result, the Métis have been omitted from most accounts of this chapter in Canadian history. This lack of documentation may suggest that the devastating effects of Indian residential schools only impacted First Nation and Inuit people, and that the Métis community was not affected at all. This view is incorrect.

This research paper was compiled for four key reasons: firstly, to document the attendance of Métis students in Indian residential schools; secondly, to give a voice to Métis Survivors of Indian residential schools; thirdly, to provide an opportunity for Métis families and communities to recognize the multilayered and multifaceted impacts that Indian residential schools have on virtually every aspect of the Métis Nation; and finally, will provide a resource to help Métis communities continue the healing process.

The Métis experience has been denied or brushed off as being inconsequential. For example, one First Nation author acknowledges that a few Métis students attended Indian residential schools, but went on to add:

It should be made clear that the effects of the Indian residential school system are found only in the Indian and Inuit communities of Canada. The Métis did not have restrictions placed on them by the Indian Act and were not affected by the residential school experience (Deiter, 1999:5).

This statement is not true. Métis students *did* attend many of these schools and, in certain schools, in large numbers. If there was abuse in the institution, they also experienced it.

It is difficult to generalize how each school impacted various Métis students: all schools were somewhat different from each other and changed over time as the Indian Affairs education policy changed. Recent authors on Indian residential schools describe the diversity of experience that Aboriginal children encountered:

The schools were run by very different denominations; the character and style of any school changed along with changes in personnel; in any one school, the children encountered personnel with very different dispositions toward them in particular, and Aboriginal Peoples in general; the policy, curriculum, and philosophy of Residential Schools changed over time; the qualifications of the teaching staff changed over time; some children attended Residential School on their home reserves, while others were sent hundreds (thousands?) of miles away; some attended Residential Schools with more or less culturally-consonant and homogeneous children, while other attended Schools with a culturally heterogeneous group; some attended a year or even less, while other attended for over a decade; and on and on (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997:140).

Métis families and Métis communities are still experiencing the horrendous effects of Indian residential schools even several generations later. One educator eloquently described this phenomenon of unexpressed pain and anger of Métis parents and grandparents as their “ancestral pain” (L’Hirondelle, 2003). Yet, many in the Métis communities are still unaware of how every facet of the Métis Nation has felt and continues to feel the impact of this ancestral pain. The depth and extent of this ancestral pain is not yet known. It is crucial that Métis know and understand this aspect of their history, particularly, because Indian Residential Schools and the federal government’s assimilative policies are at the root of many social problems experienced by the Métis Nation today. Specifically, if Métis communities are to be completely healthy, Métis people must decolonize their minds. Why? Because, as Métis scholar and former political leader of the Métis Society of Saskatchewan, Dr. Howard Adams, has explained: “the colonized’s perception of himself is that of the oppressor submerged in his consciousness” (1975:161).

It is widely accepted that the treatment children had received in Indian residential schools caused grievous multigenerational harm. Through a process of forced learning, Indian residential schools attempted to systematically strip away Aboriginal languages, values, cultures, spiritual beliefs and identity of students. In essence, the ultimate aim of the government’s policy was to eradicate Aboriginal people completely (Tobias, 1976:13-30). Métis and Aboriginal communities are still dealing with these systemic attempts to eliminate Aboriginal people from the Canadian societal landscape.

One cannot consider the government’s eradication policy without discussing accountability and responsibility for it. Canadian scholar J. R. Miller wrote a groundbreaking book on Indian residential schools. His view, and one shared by many, is that:

[I]n a fundamental sense the party that bears most responsibility for the residential school story is the people of Canada. Churches and federal bureaucracy no doubt were the instruments that carried out specific acts or neglected to do what needed to be done in particular cases. But behind both the churches and the government stood the populace, who in a democracy such as Canada ultimately are responsible.... If the Canadian people were not the direct agents of these events, they were complicit in them, and in a democratic society that amounts to much the same thing (Miller, 1996:434-5).

Well over a hundred years after the inception of the first Indian residential school, the federal government and most churches finally recognized the effects of the assimilative policy carried out by Indian residential schools. By 1992, most of the churches had issued apologies to the Aboriginal people of Canada. The federal government issued a *Statement of Reconciliation* in 1998 (Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, 2003). However, the federal government still refuses to establish a formal inquiry, even though it has been requested numerous times.

It is estimated there are 90,600 Survivors alive today who attended these schools. To date, 5,000 claims naming 12,000 individual claimants have been filed in Canada with allegations of cultural genocide and sexual and/or physical abuse (Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada, 2003).

Recently, the Ontario Court of Appeal ruled that descendants of the students who attended Indian residential schools have the ability to sue the federal government for “intentionally eradicating their culture” (Makin, 2003:A16). The plaintiffs’ lawyers, Mr. Griffiths and Russell Kronick (who represent

189 descendents of Indian residential school Survivors), said: “we are saying that the children of the residential school students suffered their own type of harm – especially to the transmission of their culture and heritage” (Makin, 2003:A16).

One effect caused by the litigation filed in Alberta against the churches and the federal government is that it was difficult to receive unfettered access to church files regarding the schools they operated. For example, in 1980, Diane Persson completed her dissertation on the Blue Quills School in St. Paul, Alberta. She cited a document housed in the oblate archives at the Provincial Archives of Alberta (“provincial archives”) entitled *Trait Survey of the Educational Facilities and Requirements of the Indians in Canada*. When this writer requested access to the document, the request was denied because the document was now “restricted.”

Many oblate records are kept at the provincial archives and most are in French. The writer attempted to review the other archival material referenced by Dr. Persson in her Blue Quills study. Unfortunately, most of the oblate archival material could not be located as the numbering system appeared to have been changed. The chief archivist for the oblates was unable to locate the referenced documents and further advised that most of the Blue Quills School records were destroyed during the 1970 sit-in (Lamoureux, 2003). However, this is rather a questionable statement given that many Blue Quills School records located in the oblate archives at the provincial archives were reviewed by Dr. Persson in 1980.

Another unexpected problem occurred when a French translator was finally identified, and it was discovered that the oblate archives at the provincial archives had been closed for three days and was scheduled to be closed for several months due to an impending relocation. Even though an explanation was given of the critical importance of this project to the Métis Nation, a request to view the archives for one day was denied.

Some of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of McLennan-Grouard records were reviewed. An overwhelming majority of the archival records were in French, which made access difficult. This was a particularly unfortunate problem given that the Archdiocese operated several Indian residential schools in communities with large Métis populations. Further, the records made available were censored, such that no documents were allowed to be photocopied and the researchers were not allowed to be alone in the room with the documents. Other material was restricted because personal information and protection of privacy was a concern for the Archdiocese.

The writer was then advised that most oblate and archdiocese school records could not be located and possibly were with the Northland School Division. The school division had taken over the operation of a number of schools in the Peace River country and the area north of Lesser Slave Lake. A request was made of the Northlands School Division to search their records for the missing school records. Their initial response was that they received no records from the Archdiocese other than school registers. They did agree to search their records, but no response was received at the time of writing this report.

A request was made to the Grey Nuns for permission to search their records. To date, no response has been received. A request was also made to the Diocese of McKenzie (for the Fort Chipewyan Holy Angels School records), but the writer was advised that their legal counsel was in the process of assembling their documents for the discovery process and the records were currently unavailable.

There were other difficulties encountered in researching this subject. For example, an overwhelming majority of records refer to Métis as “half-breed” or “non-Treaty.”<sup>1</sup> It is possible, but not likely, that non-Native individuals are also lumped in the category “non-Treaty.” Often, though, non-Aboriginal individuals are referred to as “white.” Further, it was noticed that the “non-Treaty” students identified in some reports have last names that are frequently identified as long-standing Métis family names.

As such, if most documentation exists in inaccessible files, it is difficult to paint a full picture of the events that took place. For the future, it is recommended that the following records be reviewed: the Grey Nun archives, the Sisters of Providence archives, the oblate records at the provincial archives and the Diocese of McKenzie records. Additionally, there was an Industrial School at Red Deer (run by the Methodists, now merged with the United Church) and those records should be located and reviewed. Few records were found for the Lac La Biche schools. There is a large Métis population in this area, therefore, there should be records of Métis students attending the schools – including those Indian residential schools in Saskatchewan. One member of our project advisory committee from Lac La Biche advised that two of his brothers attended the Delmas School in Saskatchewan that burnt down in 1948. The provincial government departments that may have relevant information include: Municipal and Aboriginal Affairs and Alberta Learning and Children’s Services.

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Appendix A for the report regarding the Onion Lake Agency.

## Who Are The Métis

The Métis National Council, the national representative body of the Métis Nation, utilizes four distinct traits in its definition of a Métis citizen. These are: a person who can trace their lineage back to the traditional territory of the Métis Nation (area of land in west central North America); a person who is distinct from other Aboriginal people; a person who is accepted by the Métis Nation; and a person who self-identifies as a Métis citizen. At its 2002 Annual Assembly, the Métis Nation of Alberta adopted this definition in principle. Through the Métis National Council, each of the provincial Métis governments are in the process of agreeing on a Métis definition that is most appropriate for the Métis Nation.

A person may have Aboriginal ancestry but chose to identify only with his or her First Nation or European ancestry, such as the case with Johnny Callihoo, a founder of the Indian Association of Alberta, or former Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed. These two individuals would not, on the basis of self-identification, be considered Métis (Boisvert and Turnbull, 1992).

Although the term “Métis” refers to the Métis Nation, many other terms were also employed over time and in different geographic areas. In nineteenth century Western Canada, the term “Half-breed” usually referred to people of mixed Aboriginal and British descent, while “Métis” usually, but not always, referred to those of mixed Aboriginal and French ancestry (Boisvert and Turnbull, 1992).

Historian Sylvia Van Kirk points out that the unions between Europeans and Aboriginal women were very important in early Canadian history: “Widespread intermarriage between European traders and Indian women and the development of extensive kinship networks had been fundamental to the growth of fur trade society” (Van Kirk, 1980:240). The women also enabled the traders to stay alive through the harsh winters by teaching them survival techniques. These relationships frequently resulted in offspring and, in the fur trade, they came to be known as “Natives of Hudson’s Bay” (Brown, 1988:138). Often, the children were raised among their mother’s relatives, and the marriages were sanctioned “according to the custom of the country” (1988:138). There were some marriages officially sanctioned by the Church; however, most interracial marriages were officially discouraged.

The children of the fur trade were indispensable to both the fur trade companies and the various First Nations for enhancing trade. Many Métis had knowledge of both cultures and language and, thus, would often become middlemen of the trade. The Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) had a charter issued by Charles II, giving the company exclusive rights to Rupert’s Land and, in effect, a trade monopoly. By 1784, the North West Company was created, which then fought a bitter war with HBC until their merger in 1821. Jennifer Brown wrote that the Métis worked for both companies: “By 1810 they had established roles as buffalo hunters and provisioners to the North West Company” (1988:139-140). The HBC also relied heavily on middlemen to transport furs and goods. The Métis played a key role in this freighting industry: “By 1856 trains of two hundred to three hundred carts, mostly owned and driven by Métis, were busy transporting about half of the goods sent from St. Paul to Red River” (Harrison, 1985:35).

Some male Métis children were sent to be educated in Europe, such as Cuthbert Grant. He was educated in Scotland and returned to live in Red River. However, many were employed by the HBC primarily in

its lower ranks, which resulted in the development of a separate population, not fully assimilated into European culture, yet not fully Indian (Brown, 1988).

The Métis population continued to grow rapidly into the nineteenth century as trading posts gradually made their way into the interior of Rupert's Land. Important to the growth and organization of the Métis population was the establishment of the Red River Settlement in 1811, a place for HBC men to retire with their families (Brown, 1988).

The Métis were highly dependant on the buffalo for survival. A trademark of Métis history was the organized massive buffalo hunts in the summer and smaller hunts in the fall.

Another important industry to the Métis was the making of pemmican. Their livelihood depended on being able to sell it to all the trade areas. However, the governor of Red River, Miles Macdonnell, forbade the Métis to export pemmican and from running the buffalo, both of which seriously affected the Métis (Sawchuk, 1978). The Métis decided not to comply with this prohibition and their decision ultimately culminated in the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816. During this battle led by Cuthbert Grant, Governor Semple and twenty of his men died. This battle was important for two reasons: it was the first time the Métis had united to militate against a common threat; and secondly, it was the first time the Métis flag was flown (Lussier, 1973).

By 1840, the Red River summer buffalo hunt was an enormous endeavour and continued to require the assistance of women to make pemmican, dry meat and tan buffalo hides. In the summer of 1840, the hunt consisted of over 1,200 Red River carts: "in addition to the 620 hunters, there were 650 women and 360 children in the caravan" (Ens, 1996:39). During the winter months, Métis families would often disperse to areas where game was more plentiful, or they would fish and trap near the forts.

The political strength of the Red River Métis was again demonstrated in 1849, this time, in response to the incredibly restrictive conditions of the HBC. Dr. Howard Adams found that:

After 1821, [the merger of HBC and Northwest Company] it became standard practice for Hudson's Bay clerks to break into native trappers' homes with the assistance of Bay police and search for furs held for private use. If any were found, they were seized immediately, without payment, and never returned (Adams, 1975:50).

Adams also charged that, in one search, the HBC burned the trapper's house to the ground and imprisoned the trapper. In 1849, four Métis, including Pierre-Guillaume Sayer, were charged with illegally trading furs. Louis Riel Sr. led 300 armed Métis people to surround the courthouse, calling for free trade. While Mr. Sayer was convicted, no sanction was imposed. He was released and charges against the other three were dropped. The Métis took this as a sign that the monopoly of the HBC was broken and free trade reigned (Friesen, 1984).

In 1869, the Dominion of Canada purchased the HBC territory for 300,000 pounds sterling. Well-known Métis author and historian Antoine Lussier noted that Canada wanted Rupert's Land because of fear about possible United States annexation and as raw resources for products (Lussier, 1973). However, prior to Canada's purchase, "[n]egotiations, which had been proceeding since 1857, were held among three

governments: the British, the Hudson's Bay and the Canadians. At no time were the people of the old northwest ever consulted" (Lussier, 1973:47). Harrison (1985) reports that, during this period, there was an estimated 10,000 people in Red River (the only area of Rupert's Land that was actually settled) and only 1,600 of these were white settlers. The reality was that not one of the three governments recognized the legal rights of the Métis. This refusal by the federal government to recognize the legal rights of the Métis Nation continues today.

Métis political strength was demonstrated again when the Métis chose to establish a provisional government at Red River to fight for the recognition of Métis rights. In 1869, Canadian government land surveyors were sent to Red River in anticipation of the Rupert's Land transfer from the HBC to Canada. The surveyors measured out the land using the English square lot system—completely ignoring the Métis river-lot system already in place and being used by the Métis. Upset by fear of losing their land, the Métis formed the National Committee to block the Canadian takeover of Red River until Métis land rights were recognized.

On November 2, 1869, armed Métis stopped Canadian government officials from entering Hudson's Bay territory. HBC had relinquished control of the lands, but Canada was not yet legally able to take possession. Shortly thereafter, Louis Riel, secretary of the National Committee, headed the establishment of a provisional government to negotiate the entry of the Red River settlement into the Canadian federation.

Although complicated by violence, including the Métis court martial of an obnoxious orangeman named Thomas Scott, the Canadian government negotiated with the provisional Red River government to form the small province of Manitoba (just 13,500 square miles) (Barkwell, Dorion and Préfontaine, 2001). The Métis were guaranteed to receive title to their current lands, plus an additional 1.4 million acres of land for their children under the *Manitoba Act, 1870* (Friesen, 1984).

But, for Louis Riel, it was a different story. The Orangemen of Ontario demanded his execution for the court martial of Thomas Scott, but Prime Minister MacDonald banished him to exile instead (Harrison, 1985).

The government then sent a military expedition to Red River to terrorize the Métis. Upon their arrival, soldiers murdered two members involved with Thomas Scott's court martial, and racism and violence against the Métis became common (Purich, 1988). With the presence of the military, white settlers quickly moved in and claimed title to Métis lands while the Métis were waiting for their land grants. This politically charged situation, coupled with the decline of the buffalo, forced many to move west (Giraud, 1956). The government delayed the land grants for several years and, in fact, was still distributing land grants in the 1890s. Additionally, the federal government passed eleven amendments between 1873 and 1884. These amendments effectively reduced the number of people eligible for land grants. In fact, most of the land ended up in the hands of speculators, with the government's full knowledge and assistance (Sprague, 1980). Purich found that, by 1885, "less than 7 per cent of the [Red River] population were of mixed-blood origin" (1988:64).

Riel fled to the United States and, in 1884, returned at the request of Métis and white settlers to once more protest their grievances of the government (Boisvert and Turnbull, 1992). The government failed

to listen and the Métis again took up arms, based on a rumour that the government was sending troops. Riel was hopeful that the government would negotiate with him as it had in 1870, but he was losing local support. A resistance ensued; but, as troops were transported very quickly with the Canadian Pacific railway, it was quashed within a few months. Riel was later executed for treason (Stanley, 1963).

In the years after the 1885 Resistance, it was a difficult time for the Métis Nation and its citizens became scattered throughout the West. However, even in the face of extreme adversity, the inherent strength of the Métis emerged and they persevered. In 1897, the St. Albert Métis Association was formed and was in operation until 1901. The organization's main concern was, of course, the issue of Métis land claims. They sent several petitions to Ottawa regarding scrip issues (Sawchuk, 1978). The organization also dealt with poverty concerns. One 1888 report of the St. Albert Métis Association listed four causes of poverty:

[T]he destruction of the previous year's crop by frost; the decrease in fur-bearing animals and the low price of furs; the nearly total failure of the fisheries; and the high price of food in the area which compelled families to kill their cattle and sell their horses and farming implements to avoid starvation (Sawchuk, Sawchuk and Ferguson, 1981:162).

In an attempt to alleviate the poverty, the Association requested the government institute a number of public works to employ Métis men; thus, submitted five different proposals to this effect. Two years later, the government agreed to fund at least one of the five projects, but it was "too little and came too late" (Sawchuk, Sawchuk and Ferguson, 1981:163).

In the 1920s, a number of other Métis communities were beginning to become politically active. In 1929, led originally by Charles Delorme and Dieudonne Collins, a small group of Métis people in the Fishing Lake area began to organize meetings and decided to petition the government for their own land (Dobbin, 1981). In 1930, Joe Dion, an enfranchised Indian and school teacher, was invited to attend one of these meetings and decided to assist the Métis. By the time the Métis Association of Alberta was formally established in St. Albert on December 28, 1932, it had "at least 31 active locals" (Sawchuk, 1978:53). The first members of the executive were: Joe Dion, president; Malcolm Norris, first vice president; Felix Callihoo, second vice president; Henry Cunningham, third vice president<sup>2</sup> and Jim Brady, secretary-treasurer. One of the first actions the association took was to abolish the term "Half Breed" and adopt the term "Métis." A key goal of this new Métis association continued to be the issue of land for Métis people (Dobbin, 1981).

After intensive lobbying by the Métis association, the Alberta government agreed to study the issues affecting Métis people and, as a result, the Ewing Commission was struck in 1934. The Ewing Commission report led to the passing of the *Métis Betterment Act* in 1938. The provincial government also established a land base for the Métis in the form of ten colonies in central and northern Alberta. The Ewing Commission is discussed in detail further in this report.

For many years after the colonies (now referred to as settlements) were established, the Métis association was not very active; however, "in the early 1960's Adrian Hope and others began to restructure the

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<sup>2</sup> At the next annual assembly held in January 1934, Cunningham stepped down and was replaced by Pete Thomkins. See PAA accession 75.75, box 2, file 5: *History of Métis Association* written by Joe Dion.

organization” (Sawchuk, 1978:57). It was not until the mid-1960s when the Métis association received government funding, which enabled others to become involved in the association. This helped to revitalize the Métis association and sparked further initiatives. In 1975, Adrian Hope helped to found the Federation of Métis Settlements to focus solely on Métis settlement issues and governance (Sawchuck, 1978; Barkwell, Dorion and Préfontaine, 1999).

In the early 1990s, the Métis Association of Alberta changed its name and became the Métis Nation of Alberta (MNA) to more accurately reflect its ideology and view of itself. The MNA continues to be an active and vital organization and is one of Alberta’s largest landlords through its wholly-owned company, Métis Urban Housing. In addition, the MNA owns Apeetogosan (Métis) Development Inc., a multi-million dollar financial institution that lends money to Métis and non-status entrepreneurs. The MNA has also developed several other companies and non-profit institutions to meet the needs of its citizens. Under its current leadership, the MNA plays a key role in providing services and advocating for Métis citizens in Alberta.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> See Appendix B: Key Aspects of Métis Tradition.

## A Brief History of the Indian Residential School System

“Indian residential schools” is a term used to describe establishments developed by churches and the federal government. Additionally, the Aboriginal Healing Foundation takes the broad view that the term “residential schools” includes student residences, boarding schools, billets, hostels, industrial schools and residential schools. In order to better understand the Indian residential school phenomenon, one needs to understand some of the historical background of Indian residential schools.

There are several rationales advanced for the establishment of the Indian residential school system and how they were operated. One was that education was a means by which Christianity could be delivered to Aboriginal people (Huel, 1996). Another rationale advanced was that the government wanted to satisfy its constitutional obligations to “Indians.”<sup>4</sup> Canada’s Constitution divides responsibility for a number of areas between the federal and provincial governments. The federal government’s responsibilities include, amongst other things, responsibility for Indians and lands reserved for Indians. The federal government, mindful of its responsibility to Indians that flowed from its jurisdiction over these people, wanted to ensure it took positive steps in the area of their education. The result was the development of the Indian residential school system.

Another line of thinking, however, and one that is more persuasive, is that the federal government used its constitutional jurisdiction as a means by which to exert control over First Nations to assimilate them into settler societies (Chrisjohn and Young, 1997). Education became a vehicle to accomplish this goal, which some have termed the silent cultural genocide of Aboriginal people. At the end of the day, it does not really matter what the motivation was; what does matter is the impact of Indian residential schools on Aboriginal people.

The government’s involvement in the development and administration of the Indian residential school system can be traced back prior to Confederation (Sealey, 1980). Indian residential schools were established in all provinces (except for New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island) and territories (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 2004). Government policy was articulated as far back as 1767, when William Johnson, superintendent of Indian Affairs, wrote:

“[I]nstruction in religion and learning would create such a change in their [the tribes’] manners and sentiments” as to “promote the safety, extend the settlements and increase the commerce of this country” (as cited in Milloy, 1999:14).

This notion was continued in 1820, when the idea of Indian residential schools was first introduced by Peregrine Maitland in a proposal he made to the Colonial Office “for ameliorating the condition of the Indians in the neighbourhood of [the Colonial] settlements” (as cited in Milloy, 1999:15). In 1830, responsibility for relations with First Nations was moved from the military to the civil department. Duncan Campbell Scott who dominated Indian Affairs for almost thirty years was, in 1893, an accountant with Indian Affairs. By 1909, he had become the superintendent of education for Indian Affairs and then deputy

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<sup>4</sup> The term “Indian” (as defined in the *Indian Act*) is used throughout this paper.

superintendent general of Indian Affairs in 1913 (Milloy, 1999). Scott summarized the department's position regarding this change:

The year 1830 may be fixed as the limit of the first regime in Indian Affairs. Before that date a purely military administration prevailed, the duty of the government being restricted to maintaining the loyalty of the Indian nations to the crown and almost the sole object of preventing their hostility and of conserving their assistance as allies (as cited in Shortt and Doughty, 1914:695).

This change in departments clearly marked the government's change from viewing First Nations as allies, to viewing them as problems to settlement (Miller, 1989). Additionally, the government wanted First Nations educated, but only to a limited extent. In 1905, Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior (responsible for Indian Affairs) bluntly stated:

Only the certainty of some practical results can justify the large expense entailed upon the country by the maintenance of these schools, [to] educate children above the possibilities of their stations, and to create a distaste for what is certain to be their environment in life would not only be a waste of time but doing them an injury instead of conferring a benefit upon them (Perley, 1993:120).

The Bagot Commission report, published in 1844, recommended manual labour schools. Reverend Ryerson, Superintendent of Education for Upper Canada, supported the Commission's report. He carried further the themes of learning, religion and industry, but through industrial schools. Ryerson was less than enthusiastic about teaching trades, believing that Indians were best suited to being "working farmers and agricultural labourers" (Milloy, 1999:16). Aboriginal leadership did respond positively to the setting up of manual labour schools with even some initial band support.

These few early attempts at church-run, federal and band-sponsored manual labour schools were deemed to be failures by both the church and state. John Milloy, who wrote a well-researched book on Indian residential schools, explained that: "On returning to their communities, supposedly re-socialized as non-Aboriginal people, they became cultural backsliders. They were not infected with industriousness, and they did not take a leading role in community development" (1999:17-18). The shift from manual labour day schools to Indian residential schools signaled a shift by churches and government as both "edged steadily from protection to compulsion and from cooperation to coercion" (Miller, 1989:113).

In response to these perceived failures, the Department of Indian Affairs returned to its previous concept of creating motivation via the allocation of individual land ownership, rather than community land ownership. To this end, in 1857, *The Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes in the Province* was passed. This act illustrated very clearly the government's relationship with First Nations. Milloy asserts:

The impact of the act was profound. "Civilization" was redefined. The goal of community self-sufficiency was abandoned in favour of the assimilation of the individual. Tribal dissolution, to be pursued mainly through the corridors of residential schools, was the Department's new goal. Progress toward the goal was to be measured in the reduction of the size of First Nations through enfranchisements (1999:19).

Nicholas Flood Davin was commissioned by Prime Minister John A. MacDonald's cabinet in 1879 to report on the American system of segregated Indian industrial residential schools. Davin was impressed with what he saw. He wanted Métis students to be enrolled in these schools as they would make an important contribution to their success, claiming: "the mixed blood is the natural mediator between the Government and the red man, and also his natural instructor" (as cited in Miller, 1996:101).

While there were already four Indian residential schools in operation, Davin reinforced the idea that the key to success was to separate First Nation children from their parents. He recommended utilizing mission schools because the clergy staff were essentially volunteers, would be efficient, and the day-to-day administration would be passed to the churches to save the government money.

Thus, Indian Affairs was responsible for the financial costs, but initially, the schools were managed and run by various religious groups. At the same time, these religious groups were left free to impart religious instruction to students. The government bureaucrats and the church clergy who ran the schools held very ethnocentric views. In essence, they believed they were more advanced than the Aboriginal children in their care and their colonialist mentality allowed them to devalue Aboriginal cultures. These views may even have allowed them to believe they were helping Aboriginal students by imposing their European language, values, culture and religion on them.

Additionally, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution in the late 1800s and early 1900s were misused to justify racism. Social Darwinism provided the rationale for colonial enterprises aimed at subjugation and indoctrination of those who were considered to be inferior. One very effective example of a colonial enterprise was the residential school system.

In 1897, Frank Oliver (Minister of Interior, with responsibility for Indian Affairs from 1905 to 1911) argued that educating Aboriginal children was self-defeating: "we are educating these Indians to compete industrially with our own people, which seems to me a very undesirable use of public money, or else we are not able to educate them to compete, in which case our money is thrown away" (as cited in Hall, 1983:126).

By 1910, Indian Affairs had revised its educational policy to "fit the Indian for civilized life in his own environment" (Hall, 1983:9). By 1923, Indian Affairs had abolished the category of "industrial schools." Any industrial school in operation and the boarding schools, together, became known as Indian residential schools (Titley, 1986a).

Attendance at Indian residential schools involved more than the forced separation of children from their homes, families and traditional territories. The Indian residential school system was designed to accomplish assimilation by forcefully separating Aboriginal children from family, home, culture, spiritual practices, tradition, language, values and political institutions. Further, the Indian residential school curriculum included efforts at brainwashing Aboriginal children into adopting the dominant society values, while trivializing and discounting Aboriginal people.

The curriculum also provided some training opportunities for Aboriginal children to learn a skill or trade. In the early years, the school curriculum typically required a half-day spent on lessons, while the balance of the day was to be spent on learning a skill or trade (Buti, 2001). The apparent rationale was that, by

learning such skills or trades, an Aboriginal child would be better able to assimilate into settler society. This half-day system was not very effective, as discussed later in this report.

The compulsory education policy later became entrenched in legislation by amending the *Indian Act* in 1920, to force all First Nation children to attend an Indian residential school for a minimum of 10 months per year. Later, in 1945, the federal government linked family allowance to school attendance as yet one more way to compel school attendance (Persson, 1986).

Assimilation, however, posed a huge challenge to both churches and the federal government. By the 1950s, the federal government was acknowledging that the residential school system was not achieving its purpose as a mechanism for assimilation; nor were Aboriginal children and their families disappearing as quickly as the federal government had envisioned. About this same time, rumours of the abuse of Aboriginal children attending Indian residential schools started to be more common.

Huel, who wrote the third volume in the *Western Oblate History Project*, remarks: “post WWII era was characterized by declining church influence, increased government control, and growing Indian involvement” (1996:280). By 1951, the federal government made it legal for First Nation children to attend provincial schools (Perley, 1993). As late as 1954, the churches still owned five residential schools in Alberta (PAA, accession 82.197, box 2). Author Robert Carney commented that residential schools started to die out in the late 1960s because “Indian criticisms of residential schools and the government’s policy of integrated schooling combined to put an end to these church-run institutions” (1993:105).

Thus, by the early 1950s, First Nation children began integration into the provincial school system and the federal government began turning over the operation of its schools to various provinces. The federal policy then became assimilation through integration.

However, it was not until 1969 that the federal government finally ended its partnership with the churches, “effectively secularizing Aboriginal education” (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a:350). In many communities, Métis and First Nations people not only criticized the residential school system, but also began to seek an increase in control over both their communities and the education of their children (Battiste and Barman, 1995). One such school was the Blue Quills Indian Residential School in St. Paul, Alberta, discussed later in this report.

## Métis Education in Canada and the West

To understand Métis involvement with Indian residential schools, one must understand the history of Métis education in Canada. The first attempts by Euro-Canadians to provide educational services to Métis people came during the fur-trading era in Western Canada. By the early nineteenth century, the Métis had become a distinct cultural group in the West. Prior to the 1800s, the Hudson's Bay Company reluctantly decided to provide the children at its posts with education in reading, writing, arithmetic and religious instruction (Van Kirk, 1980). Métis historian D. Bruce Sealey summarizes early education efforts of the Métis as follows:

A European type of education for people of Native ancestry developed prior to 1800 to meet the needs of the halfbreed children of employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. An attempt was made to help the employees educate their "children of the country" by sending out school teachers and encouraging individuals to select their favorite sons and transport them to Canada or to Britain for formal education (1980:ii).

However, in the 1820s, this soon changed. As Sylvia Van Kirk points out:

The arrival of the missionaries placed the question of schooling in Rupert's Land upon a whole new footing, and the Colony of Red River provided the centre for their educational activities. The missionaries considered a sound Christian education to be the key to the salvation of the rising generation – a means of erasing barbaric and heathen notions from the minds of the children (1980:146).

The introduction of the clergy, twinned with education, was to have a profound impact on the Métis in the area. This approach to education was to have a long-lasting and damaging legacy. Professor Larry Chartrand explains:

Lord Selkirk decided to invite the Catholic Church to set up missions among the Plains Métis. This was the beginning of the intellectual colonization of the Métis people in western Canada. The educational system was highly hierarchal with no input from the people regarding control, development, administration and curriculum of the educational system (2002:3).

Additionally, several orders of nuns were involved in the education of Métis children. Huel noted that in 1882, "Sister Charlebois [Grey Nuns] stated that four institutions in St. Albert, Île-à-la-Crosse, Fort Providence and Fort Chipewyan were responsible for the care and education of 164 Métis and Indian children" (1996:112). Two of these institutions, St. Albert and Fort Chipewyan, were in Alberta.

The Métis in the west became increasingly impoverished due to the settlement advances of Euro-Canadians, the loss of their land, the buffalo and their freighting industry. The Métis generally fell outside any plans or provisions made by the federal government for either the new settlers or the First Nations people included in the treaties. For much of Canadian history, Métis status as outsiders has greatly influenced

any attempts by the Canadian government to provide educational services to Métis people. This resulted in Métis people having less involvement with residential schools than First Nations.

The first teachers were priests and nuns and this started the tradition of importing European teachers rather than recruiting from the Métis themselves. One brief exception to this trend was the early mission work during the 1840s of Father Belcourt near the Red River settlement who, together with two Métis teachers, Miss Angelique and Marguerite Nolin, taught the Métis and Ojibwa people agriculture and used their own language as the language of instruction (Peers, 1994; Freeman, n.d.). However, most Roman Catholic missions provided a largely religious curriculum and delivered in formal French (Sealey, 1980). This focus on French was also an attack on one of the most distinct aspects of Métis culture – Métis language. Professor Chartrand comments: “One of the most controversial education practices of the church run schools was the attempt by the church to obliterate the culture of the Métis by substituting their Mechif language for that of the French Canadian language” (2002:5).

Although this focus served the needs of the Church, it alienated the Métis from involvement in, and control of, their education from the beginning; thus began a pattern of Métis education in Western Canada. The government was to continually support education that was irrelevant, alien and devastating to the Métis culture. This pattern has continued right up until recent times.

## Indian Affairs Admission Policy for Métis Students

It has long been known that Métis students attended various Indian residential schools in Alberta. However, as discussed earlier, a number of problems have been encountered in attempting to document and confirm the accuracy of these reports.

One estimate of the percentage of Métis children who attended Indian residential schools comes from the document entitled *Indian Residential Schools (IRS) Data Project* (the “Data Project”) completed by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in 1998. This document based its conclusions on the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey undertaken by Statistics Canada for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, and adjusted by the 1991 Indian Registry Canada and projections of population with Aboriginal identity in Canada.

The Data Project found that 9.12 per cent of Métis people in Canada who self-identified as Métis had attended Indian residential school. As the three Prairie provinces are the traditional homeland of the Métis Nation, it is no surprise to discover that, of all the Métis students who attended residential schools, the majority attended schools in the three Prairie provinces. The Métis in Alberta lead the way with 18.75 per cent of those attending Indian residential school (see the chart below). While in Manitoba, 15.69 per cent of students who attended Indian residential schools were Métis. In Saskatchewan, 8.05 per cent were Métis, the third highest enrolment of Métis in Indian residential schools in Canada.

If one were to take into consideration the non-status Indian students, the numbers would be even higher. In Alberta, for example, if one were to combine the Métis and the “non-status” groups, the results would be approximately 25 per cent. In other words, approximately one-quarter of the total population of Indian residential school students in Alberta are defined as Métis and non-status Indians. Clearly, Indian residential schools had an impact on the citizens of the Métis Nation of Alberta.

### Alberta Attendees at Indian Residential Schools (Estimates 1991)\*

Identity	Number	Percentage	Identity	Off-Reserve	On-Reserve	Total
Status	9,950	73.2%	Status	4,750 47.7%	5,200 52.3%	9,950 100.0%
Non-status	950	7.0%	Non-status	900 91.7%	50 5.3%	950 100.0%
Métis	2,550	18.8%	Métis	2,500 98.0%	50 2.0%	2,550 100.0%
Inuit	150	1.1%	Inuit	150 100.0%	0 0.0%	150 100.0%
Total	13,600	100.0%	Total	8,300 61.0%	5,300 39.0%	13,600 100.0%

Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1998:6.

\* Data has been rounded to the nearest decimal.

With the exception of one residential school in the Métis farming colony of St. Paul des Métis, all residential schools in Alberta were focused on the recruitment and retention of First Nation students. The St. Paul des Métis School was officially established with the active involvement of Métis parents in 1903. However, Indian Affairs steadfastly refused to fund the school. In January 1905, the residential school burnt down and, after a second fire a short time later, the old day school was restored (Stanley, 1978).

Initially, this land was set aside solely for Métis, but it did not remain in Métis hands for very long. Within a few short years, Father Thérien, the manager of the colony, began recruiting and admitting French-Canadian Catholics to the colony. By 1909, the colony was officially opened to other settlers and, by 1912, most Métis had left the area (Sawchuk, Sawchuk and Ferguson, 1981). There were several reasons for the Métis to leave St. Paul, including the fact that “Métis children were being harassed in school” (Sawchuk, Sawchuk and Ferguson, 1981:178).

The Lac La Biche Mission was established in 1857 by the oblates and closed in 1898. The operations were then transferred to the Saddle Lake Indian Reserve (Persson, 1981). In 1892, Indian Affairs reported that the Lac La Biche Industrial School enrolled “15 white and half-breed pupils ... as boarders” (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1892]:196). The 1896 Indian Affairs annual report indicated that the Lac La Biche Boarding School had “a daily attendance of twenty-nine Indian children of Treaty No. 6, besides a number of half-breed pupils who receive a free education” (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1896]:200).

While Indian residential schools were operated by churches, they needed federal funding to stay open, even though Indian Affairs desperately underfunded the schools. A student registered as Métis usually did not receive federal dollars to pay for his or her keep, unless they fit the ever-changing criteria of Indian Affairs.

For example, in the 1898 Indian Affairs annual report, it was reported there were 42 boarders at the Ermineskin Boarding School in Hobbema and “twelve of them are half-breeds or non-treaty Indians. The charges of these last are borne by the reverend sisters” (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1898]:294). In the 1905 Indian Affairs annual report regarding the Onion Lake Church of England Boarding School, it was reported there were “thirty non-treaty children, for whom no grant is drawn. These come from various parts of the surrounding country, and from farther west, from St. Paul de Métis, Moose Lake, Victoria, Edmonton, Wetaskiwin and Beaver Lake” (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1905]:409).

Sometimes, the Métis students would simply not be officially enrolled and consequently not reported to Indian Affairs. The 1900 Indian Affairs annual report stated: “of the forty-four children inmates, one boy is not yet enrolled, and there were four half-breeds not eligible for official entrance. These half-breeds – one girl and four boys had been several years at the school” (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1900]:388). The 1901 Indian Affairs annual report discusses the Peigan Roman Catholic Boarding School and reports there were: “present in the class-room ten girls, ten boys and three half breed children not on the roll” (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1901]:398).

Indian Affairs policies regarding the admission of Métis students changed continually. A 1906 memorandum by Duncan Scott, then accountant for Indian Affairs, is instructive as it considers the admission of “half-breeds” to Indian schools:

[T]hose of mixed blood ... even, if they are not annuitants, should be eligible for admission to schools. It should be remembered in this connection that boarding and industrial schools were not established for the purpose of carrying out the terms of treaty, or complying with any provisions of the law, but that they were instituted in the public

interest, so that there should not grow up upon reserves an uneducated and barbarous class ... being admitted to the schools yet is takes into consideration the fact that there are circumstances under which in all justice half-breed children should be admitted to such institutions (NAC, RG 10, volume 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Debate and confusion regarding the eligibility of Métis children to attend Indian residential schools went on for many years. In January 1911, J.D. McLean, the assistant deputy and secretary of Indian Affairs, wrote a definitive letter in response to a principal's inquiry concerning Métis entrance to industrial schools. The letter stressed no admission of Métis students unless they were needed to fill up space in the institution if a treaty Indian child is unable to do so.

A few years later, on October 16, 1913, the Department of Indian Affairs drafted another memo, thus changing their policy once again. The memo affirmed the eligibility of "half breed" children to attend residential schools but exhorted against "abuse" of the policy. The memo did not discuss any payment of attendant costs:

Previous to January 26, 1911, half-breed children were admitted to these schools under certain conditions. While it was not considered that the children of half-breeds proper of Manitoba and the Territories [which then included Alberta] should be admitted into Indian schools and paid for by the Department, it was conceded that all children, even those of mixed blood, whether legitimate or not who live upon an Indian reserve and whose parents on either side live as Indians, even if they are not annuitants, should be eligible for admission to the schools.

It has been decided to revert to this rule. Abuse, however, must be guarded against and every application for admission should be accompanied by satisfactory evidence that the applicant is a half-breed to whom the rule applies, and not a person who has been adopted by or otherwise brought into association with Indians with the express purpose of gaining admission to our schools [emphasis added] (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Some evidence that Métis students were admitted to residential schools in Saskatchewan comes from a letter dated October 29, 1921 to Duncan Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, from the Indian commissioner for Saskatchewan. He clearly did not believe that the federal government had any responsibility for the education of Métis children. His racist tone is evident:

I am afraid the privilege granted has again been abused, and we are practically in the same position now as we were seven or eight years ago, by having our schools over-run by non-treaty breeds [emphasis added] (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

On occasion, a residential school would attempt to persuade Indian Affairs to admit Métis students because it was charitable to do so. One letter written by Duncan Scott shows the futility of that plea. In a letter dated May 31, 1930, he instructed that the children be discharged "without delay" and stressed the costs of their admission. He also reminded the principal that: "I note that you make a plea on their behalf because it is charitable to admit them to the school. But I have to remind you that the Indian Department

is not conducting charitable institutions ... and principals of our schools must not take in children for sympathetic reasons” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

The 1913 Indian Affairs directive stated the criteria for Métis students was that they must “live as Indians” in order to be eligible for admission to the nominal roll. There were many cover letters for student applications from across Alberta that focused on this characteristic. For example, in a letter dated November 23, 1937, relating to the St. Henri’s school in Fort Vermilion, the Indian agent spoke of three Métis students: “half breeds from a family we may well consider destitute, living the Indian mode of life, I recommend their admission as grant earning pupils” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6377, file 76-10, part 1).

Several letters focusing on the required criteria were located in the Wabasca-Desmarais area. A letter dated February 26, 1936 from the St. Martin’s Roman Catholic Indian Residential School in Desmarais explains that the mother married “a non-treaty Indian; both the man and woman are living the Indian mode of life on the Indian Reserve” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6379, file 768-10, part 1). A September 1, 1937 cover letter for an application written by the principal of the Wabasca Roman Catholic Residential School refers to the Métis father stating: “he just passed in front of my house with three packed dogs and is on his way to his trap line at Trout Lake; that is real Indian mode of living, is it not?” Another letter from the Wabasca School, dated May 15, 1936, was in regards to two Métis children. The principal explained that the Métis father, “although he had an English name, was not a White man, but a Cree Half-Breed, who lived the Indian mode of life at Wabasca” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6379, file 768-10, part 1).

The Jousard School was another school that admitted Métis students. The Jousard School principal wrote a letter, dated October 1, 1937, to the Indian agent seeking admission for a Métis student “whose sisters and brothers have been admitted to our school and whose mother live [sic] according to the Indian way” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6368, file 762-10, part 3).

It appears that several Métis students were admitted if their mother was a treaty Indian. A number of applications were found where the father was Métis and the mother was a treaty Indian and, consequently, the children were enrolled as grant-earning pupils at a residential school. Another October 1937 cover letter and application written by the principal for the Jousard School indicate that the Métis child’s widowed mother is a treaty Indian and lived according to the Indian way. The Indian agent followed up with his own letter to the Indian Affairs office explaining: “I must say that [the child] has been in school one year already at the expense of St. Bruno’s Mission. I recommend her admission as a grant earning pupil” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6368, file 762-10, part 3).

In a circular dated December 6, 1937, the admission policy regarding Métis children was changed yet again. The circular repealed the earlier policy and explained:

In the future, per capita grants will be made only in the case of Indian children of paternal descent. In the case of children about whom there may be a dispute, such cases and the claims of such children should be submitted to the Department through the local Indian agent and a departmental decision obtained before such children are permitted to enter our institutions (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Not infrequently, especially after 1937, an attempt was made to link those Métis (usually referred to as “half-breed”) children to a nearby Indian band list. For example, a letter to Indian Affairs dated October 14, 1938 from Indian Agent Laight seeking admission of students whose father “is a half-breed and their mother is still in Treaty, this family have lived on the Alexander’s Reserve No. 134 for the past 10 years and were voted on [to] join the Alexander’s Band with the other half-breeds last July” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6365, file 760-10, part 2). In another letter to Indian Affairs dated November 9, 1938, Laight attached three applications for the Youville Indian Residential School in Edmonton. He advised that the father of the children was “a half-breed living on the Wabumun Reserve ... [and was recently accepted into the] Paul’s Band last July” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6365, file 760-10, part 2).

Indian Affairs was diligent in ensuring that the children met the criteria. A memo from the Indian agent on October 5, 1938 wrote that he returned to the Fort Vermilion school principal who had student applications for five children “who are half-breed children with the request that he prepares and submits an history [sic] of their family and his reasons why they could be admitted as grant earning pupils” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6377, file 766-10, part 2). The principal later justifies the applications with: “Marian his wife has Indian blood being descended from ... and the family lives in real Indian fashion.” Another letter from the same principal sought admission for students who had a “close relationship to full fledged non-treaty Indians.” These latter applications were denied and it was recommended that the principals “carefully review circular letter of December 10, 1937 and confine their recruiting effort to treaty Indian children” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6377, file 766-10, part 2).

It appears, however, that exceptions were made. There were four applications found for the Jousard School from 1938 to 1941, which indicated that the fathers were either half-breed or non-treaty and their mothers were listed as being treaty Indians. All four students were accepted by Indian Affairs as grant-earning pupils. No accompanying documentation from the principal could be located that justified their admission.

## **Grouard, Jossard and Fort Vermilion Residential Schools**

The missionaries sent a number of missives to Ottawa seeking funds for the education of Métis youth. Author Raymond Huel admitted that: “The presence of the Métis on or near reserves provided the Oblates with an opportunity to satisfy their moral obligations as missionaries and to balance their budgets as school administrators by admitting Métis students to maintain pupillage authorized by the Department of Indian Affairs” (1996:160). In 1913, Oblate Bishop Grandin sent a letter to the deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs and requested that Indian Affairs “help us as much as possible in our efforts to educate the half- breed children, and to make them useful citizens” (Huel, 1996:161). The following pages refer to some of those schools operated by the oblates in Alberta.

### **Grouard - St. Bernard’s Indian Residential School**

The oblates administered several northern Alberta schools, an area where the vast majority of the Métis lived. However, the Grey Nuns or the Sisters of Providence supplied most of the teachers. The superior attitude and prejudice of the nuns was captured very well in a document written by the Sisters of Providence for their golden jubilee 1894 to 1944. The document described using a wooden barge to travel along the river to gather children for the St. Bernard School: “What treasures were carried upon this barge – thirteen small ignorant, filthy, raggedy children – thirteen precious souls whose lives would now belong to God and baptized in the name of Christ” (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, 1944).

Beginning in the 1940s, the province began providing maintenance to Indian residential schools for children apprehended by the provincial child welfare authorities. However, records do not specify how many of these children were Métis nor how many were non-Native. It is highly likely that the vast majority would have been Métis children, rather than non-Native children. Additionally, records were kept by the various Indian residential schools regarding the child welfare wards of the province. For example, in a letter to Father Beugeot from Father Joseph Habay dated December 15, 1943 regarding the St. Bernard School in Grouard, Beugeot stated there were 64 treaty Indian students and 47 “neglected children” (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files). From September to December of 1945, a full three-quarters of the 123 students were Métis; in other words, approximately 100 of the pupils present in school were Métis.

The Church continued its involvement with orphaned Métis children. In a letter dated March 25, 1945, Father Tessier sent a request to Superintendent Charles Hill, Alberta Department of Neglected Children, for an orphanage for Métis children ages 2 to 6 years and funds for two sisters to care for them because the number of treaty Indian children attending school in Grouard was diminishing each year. The request was granted (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files). The idea of development of residential schools becoming orphanages had its roots beginning in the 1940s and continued into the 1960s. This development assured there would be children to keep the numbers in the schools at a sustainable financial level.

On May 2, 1946, W.E. Frame, chief superintendent of schools for the province, sent a letter to Bishop Henri Routhier regarding the St. Bernard School. He advised that the provincial Department of Education would pay maintenance for pupils only, not wards of the mission or treaty Indian students. The oblates

had requested a per capita grant for 123 students, but the province agreed to pay a per capita grant for only 97 children (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files). This disagreement on which students should be funded created or contributed to the financial funding problems experienced by residential schools during this period of time.

A letter dated November 20, 1946 from L.J. Giguere thanked Bishop Routhier for getting permission from the provincial government to allow other students to attend the Indian residential school. Giguere went on to claim that the Métis parents at Peavine and East Prairie settlements had been waiting impatiently to hear whether their children would be accepted to the St. Bernard's mission in Grouard (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files) even though the East Prairie settlement school was built in 1945.

Bishop Routhier sent a letter dated May 8, 1950 to H. Balfour, director of school administration for the province, wherein he reported there were 210 pupils at the school of which 130 to 140 were non-treaty children. (It is unknown how many of this number were Métis.) He advised that the increase was owing to the influx into Grouard (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files) presumably of Métis people. Due to the number of Métis residents in the vicinity of Grouard, it is likely that Métis students comprised at least 100 of these students. At that point in time, the Métis were mostly trappers, fishers and labourers.

At the Grouard Mission in 1950, there were 57 "white/Métis" children that were funded at a rate of \$18 each. The oblates requested family allowance to compensate for the small per capita grant. Some parents were able to furnish clothing for their children to help with the costs of caring for the children, while other families paid \$20, \$22 or \$18 per month. There was no documented reason for the variable rates (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files).

There were several references in the archdiocese records regarding payments for children who were wards of the province. For example, in a letter dated April 27, 1951 from Ray Hagen, Department of Public Welfare, to Father Tessier, he advised that payment would be \$20 for maintenance charges, plus \$3 for family allowance, for each child that was a ward of the provincial government (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files).

By July 27, 1951, there was evidence that numerous Métis students were in attendance at this school. A letter from Superintendent Phelan to Reverend H. Routhier stated there was a "shortage of readers due to attendance of non-Indians for whom no free supplies are obtained from the Dept." Phelan went on to complain that "Grouard school is developing into an orphanage for Métis and white children. The Indian population is now less than one third and may be less next year if the Yukon Indians return home" (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan Archives, Grouard files). By the 1950s, a Catholic residential school was built in the Yukon Territory.

Several years later, it appears that the Métis student population had increased yet again. For the 1952 to 1953 school year, there were 77 residential students and 78 day pupils that were "non-Indian;" however, there was no clarification as to what numbers were Métis. One document noted that, on January 16, 1954, there were 15 Métis student boarders and an additional 2 were non-Native. One AHF-funded project advisory committee member attended the Grouard School between 1954 and 1959 and she recalled only

one non-Native student in attendance who was a day pupil. A 1954 letter written by Waller, Indian Affairs inspector of schools, indicated there were 75 boarders and 79 day pupils that were “non-Indian” students at this school and sought reimbursement for these students from the province (PAA, AN 82.197, box 2). By September 1955, there were 66 child welfare students, 11 local (Métis and non-Native) and four treaty Indian students at the Grouard school. It is unknown how many of the child welfare students were Métis (PAA, AN 82.197, box 2).

In May 1957, a document entitled “List of Pupils” reported that the child welfare department paid maintenance for 67 children, while two students were Métis and four were treaty Indian children. Once again, it is unknown how many more of the 67 child welfare wards were Métis. What is abundantly clear is that few treaty Indian students were being served by this particular residential school (PAA, AN 82.197, box 2).

Métis student costs were not only covered by the child welfare department, but also later by the provincial department responsible for Métis people. One letter, dated November 13, 1958, stated that the Alberta Métis Rehabilitative Branch paid per capita grants for six Métis students (PAA, AN 82.197, box 2).

The number of years that Métis students dominated the Grouard school was quite prolonged. A document from the Grouard School District #3722 (undated, but likely written in 1959) indicated there were 281 students at the school and, of this number, 137 were boarders, 122 day pupils and only 22 were treaty Indian students.

The last letter located in the archdiocese archives regarding this school was dated August 27, 1961 and was sent from Father Tessier to R.F. Davey, Department of Education, Indian Affairs, where he reported on the attendance for the 1961 school year. He also advised that, for grades 9 to 12, there were 23 treaty Indian students and 31 non-treaty pupils. Again, how many of the “non-treaty” students were Métis is unknown. However, a survey completed by the principal at the Grouard school in 1960 for the Chalmer’s survey<sup>5</sup> indicated there were 246 Métis children in attendance.

## **Fort Vermilion - St. Henri Indian Residential School**

The St. Henri Indian Residential School was located in Fort Vermilion, a community approximately ten hours north of Edmonton. This community was inhabited primarily by Métis and First Nation people and continues to have a large Métis population.

L’Heureaux, an Indian agent, wrote to the principal at the Fort Vermilion School on January 24, 1940, regarding the admission of a non-Indian child. He complained there were many Indians who were treaty and not in school and was of the opinion that the school should be limited to treaty Indians. L’Heureaux finished by demanding the principal discharge an eight year old girl from school solely because she was not a treaty Indian (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, Fort Vermilion file).

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<sup>5</sup> See the section *Métis Education in Alberta: A Study* for further details.

This policy of excluding Métis children from the Indian residential school in Fort Vermilion clearly changed over the years and, by September 18, 1959, it was reported there were 205 students at the school of which 91 were treaty Indian and 114 were “white” and Métis. One AHF-funded project advisory committee member advised that, until the 1970s, non-Native people were rarely seen in Fort Vermilion. For the following year, a report dated September 26, 1960 states that, at the separate school, there were 103 non-treaty students and 12 treaty Indian students; at the “Indian School,” there were 68 boarders and 18 day pupils for a total of the two schools of 201 students (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, Fort Vermilion file).

The last document at the archdiocese archives on Fort Vermilion is a memo dated August 27, 1963 from Reverend Tessier to R.F. Davey, Department of Education, Indian Affairs Branch. The memo reports on attendance for 1962 and states that, for grades 9 to 12, there were 23 treaty Indian students and 31 non-treaty students. In 1972, the St. Henri School transferred to the Fort Vermilion School District and Separate School District.

## **Joussard – St. Bruno Indian Residential School**

Joussard is located approximately 300 kilometers northwest of Edmonton. It is a community close to several First Nation and Métis communities. The Joussard file contains an undated letter, likely from the 1940s, that states: “a great many of Mr. Hall’s charges are Half-breeds and will not go on with their school work” (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, Fort Vermilion file).

A September 20, 1950 letter to Bishop Routhier from P.G. Tessier indicates the following information: 52 boys and 57 girls, of which 60 were treaty Indian students: “12 less than last yr.” Therefore, 49 children were non-treaty students. It was also noted that children from Kinuso, a Métis community, now had permission to go to public school. The Joussard school was moving to integrate Aboriginal children into provincial schools.

The St. Bruno school also accepted Métis and non-Native children who were in the care of the provincial child welfare department. On April 27, 1951, Ray Hagan, Department of Public Welfare, sent a letter to Father Tessier at St. Bruno’s advising that payment for each child who is a ward of the government was \$20 maintenance charges per month plus \$3 from family allowance.

During the early 1960s, Indian Affairs policy for Métis students was to limit their admission as much as possible. A 1961 letter from Indian Affairs laid out new criteria for Indian residential schools. Such schools were limited to children from broken homes, migrant hunters and trappers and where there was no other school available for the children. However, this policy clearly created a problem because the schools would not be full without Métis students; hence, there would not be enough money to run the school. A letter dated November 17, 1961 from G. Gooderham, regional supervisor of Indian schools, noted receipt of a letter from Father Sauve, principal at Joussard, regarding Sauvé’s request for more children at the residential school (Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan, Fort Vermilion file).

The oblates were also involved in some of the schools located on Métis settlements. For example, in 1939, families began arriving at the newly formed Fishing Lake Métis Settlement and the oblates arrived very

soon after. The oblates provided \$500 and, with logs supplied by the Métis, a school and church were built (Huel, 1996).

Beginning in the 1950s, the province began paying for Métis students to attend Indian residential schools. In a letter dated April 7, 1952, Waller, Indian Affairs inspector of schools, sent a letter to Frame, the provincial chief superintendent of schools, reporting that he completed his investigation on three Métis children living on the Whitefish Lake Reserve and advised that the children would leave the reserve as soon as the “snow has gone.” He later adds that “their exodus from the reserve will clarify their position as far as schooling is concerned” (PAA, AN 85.197, box 2). By July 14, 1952, Racette, superintendent of schools for Alberta had written to Frame advising that the three children in question were not attending any school. A few weeks later, a letter dated July 29, 1952, was sent from Balfour, the provincial director of school administration to Indian Affairs asking whether it was possible for “children who are not Treaty Indians” to attend Indian day schools if his department paid tuition fees. Balfour added that this arrangement is now in place at Hobbema and his department pays \$30 per pupil per year. The response from Indian Affairs was that the schools were full (PAA, AN 85.197, box 2).

Finally, in April 1953, Waller wrote to Frame urging that a formal provincial policy be developed regarding the inclusion of Métis children attending Indian residential schools. He wanted to discuss:

[The] recurring question of Metis enrolment at our Indian schools. The time has arrived, judging by the pressure now exerted on me by my Department, for the formulation of a specific policy on this matter.... The question arises; does the Department of Education want these children in our schools and under what circumstances? (PAA, AN 85.197, box 2).

In response, Frame sent a letter in June 1953 to Dr. Swift, the education deputy minister regarding “non-Treaty Indian and Metis children.” He quoted from Waller’s letter, explaining: “the Department of Indian Affairs would be willing to co-operate with us to the extent of sharing the cost of providing buildings and instruction for these groups of children and its own Indian children” (PAA, AN 85.197, box 2).

The issue of schooling for Métis children who resided on Indian reserves continued to concern Frame. The real issue appeared to be who had jurisdiction for these children. The province had jurisdiction for schooling, but no jurisdiction on Indian reserves. Indian Affairs had jurisdiction for Indian reserves, but denied any responsibility for anyone not legally a treaty Indian. In response to a letter sent from the County of Vulcan regarding tuition fees for children who live on the Blackfoot reserve and attend school off reserve, Frame sent the following response on October 21, 1953:

Some little time ago I learned, to my sorrow, that there are two kinds of Indians in so far as the Dominion Government is concerned – Treaty and Non-Treaty. If these are Treaty Indians I would suggest that you discuss the matter with the Agent at Gleichen ... If these are Non-Treaty Indians, and there is always a fringe of them around a Reserve, then they are nobody’s children. Usually the Dominion Government refuses to take any responsibility but sometimes they are accepted at the Indian schools ... However, there is one thing that I can assure you of, and that is that the Dominion Government will disclaim all responsibility (PAA, AN 85.197, box 2).

Finally, on January 7, 1954,<sup>6</sup> at the recommendation of Dr. Swift, deputy minister of education, a committee comprised of four individuals from Indian Affairs and the provincial education department met to discuss the issue of “non-Indian children attending 18 Indian Day Schools.” A form of application for admission of the children was approved. The committee also passed a resolution to amend section nine of the *Alberta Schools Grants Regulations*, such that a grant would be paid to Indian schools “on account of non-Indian children, in the amount of the fees which would be payable under section 318 of *The School Act, 1952*, if the said schools were operating under this Act.” In a follow-up letter dated March 5, 1954 to Dr. Swift, Frame recommended the motion to amend the *School Grants Regulations*. By April 1, 1954, Waller sent the following letter to the Department of Education, advising:

It has taken me a long time to gather together the information from our scattered schools on the attendance of non-Indians at Indian schools, but I am now able to provide you with the information requested by certain resolutions contained in the minutes of the meeting held on January 7<sup>th</sup> in Edmonton to discuss this matter. The attached forms show the following enrolment of non-Indians:

<u>Day Schools</u>	<u>Pupils</u>
Alexis	2
Atikameg	12
Beaver Lake	7
Cold Lake	2
Fort McKay	11
Goodfish Lake R.C.	5
Goodfish Lake Prot.	2
Hobbema	7
Louis Bull	2
Long Lake	3
Michel	3
<b>Sovereign</b>	<b>20</b>
Steinhauer	7
Wabamun	1

Residential Schools Government Owned

Blood R.C.	1
Ermineskin	4
Wabasca Anglican	12

Residential Schools Church owned

<b>Grouard – Boarders</b>	<b>75</b>
<b>Day Pupils</b>	<b>79</b>
<b>Holy Angels – Boarders</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Day Pupils</b>	<b>33</b>

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<sup>6</sup> This letter is misdated and actually states the date as being January 7, 1953.

Joussard Boarders	23
Day Pupils	3
Sturgeon Lake Boarders	14
Day Pupils	18
Wabasca R.C. Boarders	9
Day Pupils	19

[emphasis added] (PAA, AN 85.197, box 2).

From the above list, it is obvious that church-owned schools admitted far more “non-Indian” students than the government-owned schools. Additionally, it is apparent that the Grouard school had a significant “non-Indian” population. The second largest group of “non-Indian” students was at the Holy Angels Indian Residential School in Fort Chipewyan, opened by the Grey Nuns in 1874. A large Métis community in Fort Chipewyan existed during the early years and, today, the community is still primarily Métis and First Nation. Carney wrote that, in 1899, there were two groups in Fort Chipewyan:

[O]ne headed by Catholic missionaries with most of their supporters in subordinate positions in the fur trade and nearly all of them Métis or French and French-speaking, the other composed of Protestant clergy and senior employees of the Company [HBC], Presbyterians and Anglicans, Scots, English and English-speaking Half-Breeds (1993:110).

Holy Angels was the last Indian residential school in Alberta, closing its doors in 1974.

The day school with the most “non-Indian” attendance was the Sovereign School, located in Atikameg. During this time period, Atikameg was a small, isolated northern community dominated by a Métis and First Nation population.

During this time period, it appears that the trend was to focus on day pupils. There were 14 day schools in existence and the residential schools also had day pupils. With some exceptions, it appears that most Indian residential schools had more day pupils than boarders.

The provincial school grant was to cover only two types of situations: day schools for those children whose families did not reside on an Indian reserve; and mission schools for families not resident within provincial school district boundaries. Even though Alberta became a province in 1905, several school districts were not formed until much later. For example, the Northland School District, responsible for most of northern Alberta, was not formed until December 31, 1960.

One completed application form for “Admission of Non-Indian Children to Indian Schools” was located in the Provincial Archives of Alberta. This form was dated March 17, 1954 and was in relation to the Fort McKay Indian Day School, reporting there were three families consisting of eleven “non-Indian” children attending the school. Further research revealed that the three families still reside in the area; two of the three are Métis. The third family was apparently enfranchised at the time and now has Indian status.

By 1955, the two Indian schools that continued to have a significant “non-Indian” population (very likely Métis students, rather than non-Native students) were Holy Angels Indian Residential School at Fort

Chipewyan and St. Bernard's Indian Residential at Grouard. However, while both schools continued to have a large number of students as boarders, the Grouard school had the largest number. In fact, the Grouard school had more boarders than day pupils.

The following report was submitted by Waller to the Department of Education on February 3, 1955, regarding the attendance of non-Indian children at Indian schools (there is no reference to the Fort Vermilion School as it is very likely the province had taken over the school by this time):

<u>School</u>		<u>No. of non-Indian pupils</u>
Fort McKay Day School	Day	10
Holy Angels, Fort Chipewyan	<b>Boarders</b>	<b>15</b>
Holy Angels, Residential School	<b>Day</b>	<b>45</b>
Alexis Day School	Day	4
Beaver Lake School	Day	7
Janvier Day School	Day	8
Michel Day School	Day	1
Stony Plain School	Day	9
Ermineskin Residential School	Day	4
Hobbema Day School	Day	4
Atikameg Day School	Day	12
Grouard Residential School	<b>Boarders</b>	<b>92</b>
	<b>Day</b>	<b>85</b>
Joussard Residential School	Boarders	27
	Day	6
Sovereign Day School	Day	22
Sturgeon Lake Indian Res.School	Boarders	15
	Day	16
Wabasca Anglican Residential School	Day	9
Wabasca Catholic Residential School	Boarders	5
	Day	7
Cold Lake Day School	Day	1
Frog Lake Day School	Day	1
Goodfish Lake R.C. School	Day	3
Goodfish Lake Prot. School	Day	7
Long Lake Day School	Day	5
Saddle Lake Day Schools	Day	2
Steinhauer Day School	Day	6
Bighorn Day School	Day	1
Morley Residential School	Day	1
Sarcee Day School	Day	2
Horse Lake Day School	Day	2

[emphasis added] (PAA, AN 82.197, box 2).

By 1955, the original form must have changed because a “Claim for Grant Under Section 9 (3)” Form was submitted for ten students in the Jousard Indian Residential School for the period ending June 30, 1955.

A letter dated January 5, 1956 was sent to Waller from A. Bredo, a provincial education accountant, regarding payment of student grants. The accountant reported that provincial grant monies were being paid for the Morley Indian Day School, the Atikameg Indian School, the Fort McKay Indian Day School, the Ermineskin Indian Day School and the Hobbema Indian Day School. Bredo refused to pay grant monies to the Saddle Lake Indian and Peigan Indian schools, as the students were resident on the reserve, and asked for further information as to the type of school the Jousard Indian Residential School was (PAA, AN 82.197, box 2).

By December 1958, Dr. J. Chalmers, director of school administration for the province, reported to Dr. Swift, deputy minister of education, regarding “attendance of Non-Treaty Indians and others at Indian schools” and the “schools operated for the Department of Indian Affairs.” At that point in time, there were three schools with “non-Treaty Indian” students in operation; these were the Sturgeon Lake Indian Reserve, Atikameg and Wabasca. At Sturgeon Lake, there were 26 children; at Atikameg, there were 25 children; and at Wabasca, there were 50 children. Chalmers discussed sections 10 (1) and 10 (2) grants (formerly section 9 of the regulations) and reported that Indian Affairs thought the provincial grants provided were “far below the costs of educating the children.” He discussed the possibility of organizing new school districts or entering into tuition agreements for the education of these children at Indian schools. He had two concerns about this proposal: firstly, a number of the children resided on reserve and provincial policy usually did not “include an Indian reserve in an organized school district;” and secondly, the qualifications of the teachers in Indian schools were a problem. He noted their qualifications were “below what we regard as the minimum for teachers in our own schools.” Chalmers did not make any recommendations about how to address this matter (PAA, AN 82.197, box 2, item A).

By July 13, 1959, the province reported the following for grants paid under the *School Act* regulations: in 1955, payment was made for 34 day pupils; in 1956, payment was made for 34 day pupils; and in 1957, payment was made for 2 day pupils (PAA, AN 82.197, box 3, item 16).

A 1960 Indian Affairs report looked at the numbers of children attending Indian residential schools in Canada. The report broke the data down by administrative regions and included all children attending the schools, not only First Nation children. The report defined non-Indian children as “children of government employees, Métis and others who live in areas where provincial schools are not available.” It was found there were 438 Indian male students in residential schools in Alberta and 132 non-Indian boys; and 492 Indian female students and 137 Métis and non-native female students. In other words, approximately 30 per cent of the male students were Métis and non-Native and approximately 28 per cent of the female students were Métis and non-Native (PAA, GR 1982.197, box 2, file E).

Generally speaking, Métis children at Indian residential schools received the same treatment as other students – with certain important exceptions to be discussed later. This report provides an overview of prevailing conditions in Indian residential schools in order to describe what Métis children most likely experienced. Oral accounts by Métis Survivors gathered in the second phase of this research will confirm the accuracy of these reports.

## **St. Joseph's Industrial School (also called Dunbow Industrial School)**

In 1883, the federal government approved funds for three industrial schools in Western Canada. One of these schools was Dunbow, which opened in 1884 under the direction of the oblates (Huel, 1996) and closed in 1924. The first principal was Father Albert Lacombe. Indian Affairs admission policies for Métis students changed continually, but Métis students appeared to be regular attendants. Jules Le Chevalier, O.M.I., wrote the following about the Dunbow School:

[O]n May 25, 1885, when Rev. Father Claude, O.M.I. arrives and becomes acting Principal, there are only three Blackfoot boys left at the school. Two of them had to be expelled a few days later on account of their rebellious character and frequent desertions from the school. All half breed and white boarders had to be exceptionally allowed to fill the vacancies (PAA, AN 71.220, box 245, item 9177).

The 1893 Indian Affairs annual report indicated there were 14 pupils admitted that year and, of the fourteen, were "six Half-breeds" (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1893]). The 1897 Indian Affairs annual report indicated that, of the twenty students enrolled at Dunbow, eight were "Half-breeds and Crees" (National Archives of Canada, 1864-1990 [1897]).

On February 11, 1911, Reverend J. Riou, principal of St. Joseph's School, questioned a prior circular dated January 1911, regarding "Half-Breed" students, by inquiring about "the wishes of the Department in regards to full-blood non-treaty Indians" (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, 150-9, part 1). The assistant deputy minister responded with a conciliatory letter, stating that full-blooded non-treaty Indians were eligible to attend Indian residential schools; however, the department had the right to question applications and to make final decisions on who attends.

On September 30, 1911, School Inspector J.A.J. McKenna wrote on behalf of St. Joseph's Industrial School the following statement of appeal urging Indian Affairs to admit more Métis students into Indian residential schools. He went on to describe the large amount of "charitable work" on behalf of "half-breed" children. In the letter, he lists and describes a number of Métis children in the school, populating his letter with comments to fit the "charitable work" description.

On October 17, 1911, Indian Affairs responded by stating that the former admission policy Riou referred to was amended. The letter quotes a January 1911 letter stating the new policy of no "admission of half-breed children as grant earners to industrial schools unless Indian children cannot be obtained ... but the Department will not pay any grant of any half breed child." The assistant deputy minister went on to add that it was the duty of the province to provide an education for "half-breeds" (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1). A few months later, on November 9, 1911, J.A.J. McKenna wrote another letter regarding eligibility of Métis students to residential schools. His letter to the secretary of Indian Affairs reads, in part, as follows:

It is all very well to say, as you say in your letter, that “it is the duty of the Provincial Governments to provide education for Half-breeds”; but it is well known that there are no Provincial institutions in which the same can be provided, and that our Indian residential schools are the only existing agencies for the proper up-bringing of the unfortunate class of children referred to in my letter of the 30<sup>th</sup> September, last, and in other communications (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

McKenna goes on to make a case for “illegitimate off-spring of Indian women” who, very frequently, were Métis:

**What is to keep them from becoming outcasts and menaces to society if they be not taken into Indian schools** – schools established and maintained, be it remembered, not for the mere purpose of fulfilling the conditions of Indian treaties, but in the interest of the commonwealth. The Indian Act, under which the Department itself exists, presupposes membership in Indian Bands for such children [emphasis added] (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1, ).

The use of so called “civilizing” education to defuse or pacify potential “menaces to society” is central to Métis/ Indian residential school history. Not long after this letter was drafted, St. Joseph’s Industrial School and Inspector McKenna were chastised for enrolling 66 Métis students as grant earners in the school. In a very long letter dated May 2, 1912, Frank Pedley, then deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs, complained about the admission of Métis students to residential schools and, in particular, the admission of the 66 Métis students to St. Joseph’s Industrial School:

Educational institutions established and maintained by the Indian Department are certainly for the Indians, and if the door is opened to allow the admission of a section of the population legally classified as whites, and who in no other way are sharers in the work of the Indian Department, to make use of these schools, when their education belongs to an entirely different jurisdiction, we are face to face with a pretty large and serious problem. The wholesale admission of the 66 half-breeds to one Indian school is an indication of how extensively this work may be carried on if allowed to apply to the 19 industrial schools and the 54 boarding schools (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1).

Pedley later adds that, while St. Joseph’s Industrial School at that time had an “authorized attendance” of 225, the paper “returns from the school” indicate an attendance of 240, of which 16 were “non-grant earners” and, further, that the actual school inspection “found 290 pupils, or 66 non-grant earners. This discrepancy is certainly one which calls for an explanation on the part of the school authorities” (PAA, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1). It is clear that the school was populated well beyond its authorized limit. This level of substantial overcrowding was directly related to the large number of documented health issues and problems at many Indian residential schools.

A 1959 Alberta Album article on St. Joseph’s Industrial School shows how the 1950s accounts of the schools could be extremely sugar-coated. This article, which was typical of widespread and long-term treatment of the subject, made little mention of loss of language or culture and completely overlooked the unhealthy conditions that led to many students dying. A recent Alberta Government News Release (the “Release”)

indicates that at least 73 students died at the school. One can notice the extreme differences between the reality of the schools and the glossy rhetoric of the day that the average Canadian encountered.

## Edmonton Agency and Onion Lake Agency

As discussed earlier in this report, some of the documents located appear to show an attempt to link certain Métis children to Indian bands. For example, a document dated February 16<sup>th</sup>, 1914 from the deputy superintendent general of Indian Affairs to George H. Race, an Indian agent in Edmonton, Alberta, lists ex-pupils of boarding or industrial schools of particular Indian bands in the Edmonton Agency. In this document, no pupil is indicated to have been registered as “non-Treaty” or “half-breed.” However, there are common western Métis family surnames listed in the document. These include such names as Gladue, “Lirondelle,” Cunningham, Gaucher, Savard, “Courtpatte,” Delorme, Perraud and Bruno. Students with these names were registered as belonging to either the Michel Band or the Alexander Band.

Confirmation that, in fact, many ex-pupils were not treaty Indian was found in the return letter from Indian Agent Race received by the Department of Indian Affairs on March 31, 1914. Race’s list and comments indicate that former students bearing the above-mentioned Métis last names were given the “not in Treaty” designation. The time lapse between when the ex-student attended school and Mr. Race’s letter was short, roughly a year or two. It is possible that these students lost their treaty status in those intervening months; however, it is also possible that it was in the school’s best interest to have the student appear affiliated with a band upon registration.

Another document that lists ex-pupils is from the Onion Lake Agency, dated March 14, 1914. By 1914, Indian Affairs regularly began requesting follow-up information on ex-pupils, likely to gauge the effectiveness of the schooling provided. The list contains a number of students who are listed as “non-treaty;” one is clearly identified as being from Alberta; and two students were identified as being married to “white settlers.” As a result, the drafter of the list thought they were “doing well.” For example, one student is noted as being: “Married to a white settler and apparently living very comfortably with him. Is a superior specimen of ex-pupil.”

## Blue Quills Indian Residential School

The macrocosm of the Indian residential school system in Alberta, as well as the experience for students within that system, are well-represented in the microcosm of the Blue Quills Indian Residential School ("Blue Quills"). In 1980, a detailed history and analysis of Blue Quills was completed by Diane S. Persson (1981), a Ph.D. student. Persson's dissertation throws light on the experience of students at Blue Quills and is examined in this section.

The exact numbers of Métis who attended Blue Quills is not known. A senior member of this project's advisory committee, Sam Dumais, attended Blue Quills between 1944 and 1946. Another venerable senior member of the Métis community, Francis Dumais, also attended between 1944 and 1947. Both Dumais say that roughly 15 to 20 per cent of their classmates were also Métis. At least five of the former students who were interviewed for the Persson study were Métis. It is likely that a substantial number of Métis students attended Blue Quills because the school was located just a few kilometers from St. Paul, Alberta, where a large number of Métis settled in the 1890s.

Persson found that, although Indian Affairs had the final say about who was granted admission, the Church played an important role in the admission process: "the church often controlled the situation by admitting students upon the family's request or in spite of the family's wishes. In cases where parents were reluctant to sign the application, the priest would sign for them" (1981:258). The admission form required at least one reason for admission and Persson found that: "Occasionally children were admitted because they "needed the discipline," and by the mid 1960's the boarding school was used as a correctional institution because of the department's attempts to change the role of such schools" (1981:258).

Persson analyzed the school in terms of "a total institution." She found several ways in which the school could be accurately described as a total institution. Clearly, the school was designed to be isolated from mainstream society, and indoctrinate and transform the students. There was absolutely no opportunity for individualism or allowances for being different. The indoctrination process started immediately upon entering the institution:

Upon entering the residence, the child's clothes were removed and after being bathed and deloused he or she was issued a set of school clothing. After acquiring a uniform, which was the same as that worn by others of the same sex and size, the child was given a number. All her/his clothing, towels and eating utensils were marked with the number (Persson, 1981:259).

Persson documented the numerous and detailed regulations imposed on the children. Every single minute was regimented. Every aspect of life was regimented. One former student she interviewed recalled:

After dinner everybody would line up to go to the bathroom. You couldn't go to the bathroom in the meantime. You darn well had to piss yourself. You learned to hold it. You trained yourself to go to the bathroom certain times of the day. You went after breakfast; you'd line up and the nun was there with the sheets of paper. She'd sit in front of the door and hand out six of them (as cited in Persson, 1981:261).

Several project advisory committee members recall having to wait for the certain times of day when they were allowed to go to the washroom in the various residential schools they attended. They also recall waiting for toilet paper to be meted out.

Many students resisted the relentless acculturation process inherent in the school system and, for others, they were unable to resist the almost inevitable force:

What they were trying to do, I really believe, is to make something of us that we weren't really. Cause they taught us all the things that were pertaining to white culture, without any input of our culture at all. What I mean to say is that they eliminated our culture altogether, as far as the spoken language was concerned, and as far as any part of the cultural things that we learned to value as children in the summer. That was eliminated altogether, silently (as cited in Persson, 1981:277).

Persson found that resistance took many forms: "from running away from the school to hoping to return to the reserve and negating whatever the residential school had tried to accomplish" (1981:272). Some parents resisted because, while their children were in boarding school, they were denied access to them. The parent-child bond suffered greatly and, sadly, in some cases, the bond was broken irrevocably. One former student said:

I think residential schools caused a lot of mental anguish between parents and children. It developed to the state where there was a breakdown in the relationship. Education was a colonization of Indian people (as cited in Persson, 1981:274).

Some parents became aware of abuses experienced by students and complained to Indian Affairs. While most complaints by parents were ignored, especially in the early years of Indian residential schools, on occasion they were not:

A disciplinarian had hit a young boy in the face, and rubbed another small boy's face in feces when the child lost bowel control. The department investigated the complaints and replied that they had been exaggerated. The continued abuse of children by this disciplinarian resulted in the parents' refusal to return their children to the school while the individual was still employed there. He was dismissed when the parents withheld their children from school (Persson, 1981:273).

Persson found that it was common for many children to run away from school. She confirmed that students ran away due to the physical punishment inflicted at school, but "punishment was often the child's reason for "deserting" in the first place, [and] punishment was always meted out when the students were returned" (1981:274-275). Resistance even took the form of arson as three boys attempted to burn down the school. A twelve year old girl also made the same attempt.

However, perhaps one of the main reasons that Indian residential schools eventually were discontinued was because the federal government's goal of assimilation was simply not accomplished through residential schools, in spite of every effort being exerted. As Persson wrote:

Perhaps the ultimate form of resistance occurred when the individual students would experience all that the residential school had to offer, indeed would acquiesce to it, and then return home to become an active member of reserve life. This is not to say that the person was unchanged. Five or more years at Blue Quills inevitably resulted in change (1981:277).

Eventually, the First Nations and Métis people of the area decided that Blue Quills Indian Residential School was simply not meeting the needs of its children and decided to do something about it. They staged a peaceful sit-in until Indian Affairs agreed to meet with them. Eventually, on July 27, 1970, Indian Affairs officials met with school committee members, local chiefs, the Alberta Métis Association, Voice of Alberta Native Women's Society, the Indian Association of Alberta and the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (Persson, 1981). As a result of the discussions, Blue Quills made history by becoming the first federally-funded Indian residential school in Canada operated by a First Nation. It was the beginning of a new and much more positive trend in the history of Aboriginal education in Canada.

## The 1936 Ewing Commission Report

The Ewing Commission, initiated because of the Métis Association of Alberta's vigorous lobbying, focused on the financial and social state of the Métis people of Alberta. The Commission gathered information from open forums held throughout Alberta and received written submissions. Malcolm Norris, Jim Brady and Adrian Hope presented much of the Métis Association of Alberta's position. The Commission reported that only a small percentage of Métis children were receiving an education, claiming poverty and a nomadic lifestyle contributed to non-attendance at school. The report also discussed the ill treatment of Métis students by the white students, the unofficial numbers of Métis children attending certain mission schools and refers to the racism prevalent in Alberta:

The evidence is, that in all these settlements where there are no white schools large numbers of children are growing up without any education. Certain church or denominational schools are doing splendid work on a purely voluntary basis. Bishop Guy [an oblate] points out that 100 half-breed children are being educated in the Grouard district without cost to the parents or to the Government. It was stated that 80% of the half-breed children of the Province of Alberta receive no education whatever. Even those Métis children who live within an area served by a public school are averse to going to such a school because they are ridiculed and humiliated by the white children (PAA, AN 75.75, box 2, file 8:7).

Malcolm Norris, a Métis Association of Alberta leader, spoke on the issue of Métis children residing on Indian reserves but not receiving an education:

There are of course various denominational schools who have done what they can for the Half-Breed children, but under the Department for Indian Affairs they are subsidized for the Treaty Indian children. At Fort Chipewyan they had eleven children for whom they receive no remuneration at all, just taking them out of charity. It should be an easy matter to get information for the Commission as to the number of children who are on reserves – Métis children who are not receiving education (PAA, AN 75.75, box 2, file 8:22-23).

Norris also pointed out that Métis children were being ignored by the provincial education authorities:

I have always understood that it was against the law not to send the children to school, and Inspectors are maintained for that very purpose, but unfortunately our people have been discriminated against, and to such an extent, that even though they may pay taxes, no steps are taken by the authorities to see that their children are sent to school, apparently the Half-breed is not worth caring about (PAA, AN 75.75, box 2, file 8:23).

The Commissioners also heard testimony regarding the number of Métis children taken into mission schools as "acts of charity." In May 1935, Mindy Christianson, Inspector of Indian Agencies testified:

At Fort Chipewyan they have 40 half-breed children. They had when I was there last winter and at Wabasca there were 115 children and 85 of them were Indians. That would

be 30 half-breed children who were in there when I was there. At Fort Vermilion when I was there, there were only two or three half-breed children and 65 Indian children (PAA, AN 75.75, box 2, file 8:167).

Bishop Breynat discussed the presence of large numbers of Métis children in Indian residential schools. He also remarked upon the Fort Chipewyan school:

[It] is only approved by the Indian Department for 40 children. Sometimes we have 45 and only paid for 40. Besides that we have managed for the last 30 years, at least, to accommodate 80 boarders in that boarding school and sometimes over half are Half – breed children. They want an education and want to pay for it but they haven't the means so we have to see what we can do [emphasis added] (PAA, AN 75.75, box 2, file 8:134).

Clearly, the anecdotal information gathered by the commissioners show that Métis students were attending certain Indian residential schools in significant numbers. Specifically, testimonies showed there were many Métis students in the Grouard and Fort Chipewyan schools. Unfortunately, this information was difficult to verify through the available and accessible church and oblate records.

## Métis Education in Alberta – A 1960 Study

In 1960, Dr. Chalmers, Director of School Administration for the provincial Department of Education, completed a study for the department to better understand the educational issues of Métis students. Among other things, the study wanted to ascertain how many Métis children were registered in schools, what number or percentage of children were not in school, and how well the enrolled children were doing academically in terms of grade attainment. Chalmers claims the study was made “with respect to the 4,000-odd Métis children in Alberta schools” (1962:6). However, it is clear the study was incomplete and, therefore, skewed because he chose to utilize an unusual and extremely narrow definition of Métis people:

For the purpose of this study, a Métis is a person

- a) other than a treaty Indian, but wholly or partly of Indian ancestry, and
- b) adhering to standards of conduct and systems of values—cultural, economic, social, moral, ethical, etc.—different from generally-accepted white standards and values, and probably
- c) in depressed economic circumstances, below what would be regarded in your community as a minimum acceptable level for whites.

Thus, only Métis families who held values that were “different from generally accepted white standards and values” and were more impoverished than their non-Métis neighbours were included in the study. Chalmers attempted to explain his definition by claiming: “Children who did not meet these criteria were not counted in this survey, because they did not seem to present any educational problems” (1962:5). This makes little sense because he makes an assumption that only children with educational problems are included in his survey even before the survey is complete. Clearly, at least one superintendent in the St. Paul School District agreed with Chalmers’ view that one could not be Métis unless one was poor. He responded to the Chalmers’ study by composing this letter to his supervisor:

As far as can be ascertained, there are no metis children registered in St. Paul School No. 2228. There are some eighty (80) treaty Indians and some white children with Indian or metis ancestry; however, these two groups, I feel, should not be considered in making the survey. The Indian pupils are wards of the Dominion Government, and the second group has become fully integrated with the white population (as cited in Chalmers, 1962:5).

One principal from the Grande Centre School may have had some difficulty with Chalmers’ definition. He wrote the following statement on the survey document:

Note: There are no pupils in our school who meet your definition of Métis. There is one family here of part Indian ancestry, and they are in depressed economic circumstances. However, their standards of conduct are essentially the same as white people (PAA, AN 82.197, file 1).

Chalmers summarized his findings:

Most of the Métis who meet these criteria live in the northern part of the province, particularly in the area north of the Athabasca River and east of the Peace. Educationally, they have two characteristics which particularly stand out; these are:

1. They are extremely retarded,<sup>[7]</sup> as compared with white children in the same areas.
2. They leave school, almost universally, at the age of fifteen or even sooner.

About three-quarters of these children are in the following school divisions or counties: Fort Vermilion, Peace River, High Prairie, East Smoky, Edson, Athabasca, Lac La Biche, Bonnyville and St. Paul. Until the beginning of 1961, most of the remainder attended school in small isolated schools in the same area, some of which were public schools, but many were in mission schools. The schools, particularly of the last group, commonly were very poor buildings, with a minimum of books, furniture and equipment, and frequently with poorly qualified or quite unqualified teachers. Attendance at these schools were erratic. One mission school in particular had an average attendance each month of only about 60%; this was not an extreme case, but might be regarded as typical. Even in the divisions and counties, the school services were very substandard, although not as bad as in the independent districts and mission schools [emphasis added] (Chalmers, 1962:6).

The individual school that, by far, had the highest Métis enrolment was Grouard, a community that is heavily populated by Métis families. In 1960, Principal L.P. Lachance indicated that 246 Métis children were in attendance, eight of whom were in grade 8 and 20 were in grade 10. However, in the High Prairie School District, (which includes Grouard) there were 19 schools and 1,056 students, by far the most students in any school district in Alberta. The second largest enrolment of Métis students in Alberta was in the Lac La Biche School District, which had 17 schools and 494 students. The Lac La Biche area continues to maintain a large Métis population. The survey requested comments and suggestions from school staff or administration. Comments from some principals who responded to the Chalmers' survey reflect the prevailing racist attitudes toward Métis. Some of these remarks are as follows:

As for the mission schools, they had a good influence on the children and instead of supplanting them they should be encouraged ... while these children are subtracted from the very depressed environmental influence of the kind of home life we have around here the good work of the (mission) school is more lasting.... we cannot teach these children properly ... when they are bodily starved or hungry. This cannot be corrected by assisting their parents materially because this would be wasted in liquor or gambling. The parents are beyond help (PAA, AN 82.197, file 1).

Principal, Keg River

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<sup>7</sup> By the term "retarded," Dr. Chalmers meant academically behind non-Métis children in specific curriculum areas.

The following comment was written by the principal of North Vermilion School who had 19 Métis children in his school with the overwhelming majority in the lower grades and just 2 students in grade 8:

Métis children or people are inclined to be expressive more of heart or sentiment or like or dislike more than the average white person ... Partly as a consequence they are influenced considerably by drink, smoke and promiscuity (PAA, AN 82.197, file 1).

There were 10 Métis children in attendance at the Wapiti Mission School. The highest grade attained was grade five. Three students aged 14, 16 and 17 were in that grade. The principal's comments and her students' apparent lack of academic progress raises one question of the qualifications and ability of the teachers. It seems that this principal felt compelled to comment on Canadian social policy. She wrote:

When working amongst people of a depressed economic status there is always the temptation to "give" too much, too soon of material things. This develops and encourages to a point of no return the philosophy "the white world owes me a very good living." It is a difficult problem. It would appear unwise to move ahead too fast in the matter of "providing" material comforts ... at least, not until these people appreciate the need of doing something in return (PAA, AN 82.197, file 1).

At least six principals responded regarding the poverty of the Métis students and its effect both on the teachers and the children's success in school. The St. Albert School Principal wrote:

Majority of parents are labourers, a minority of parents are semi-skilled, a few parents are skilled tradesmen. Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the homes have a relatively low socio-economic standard compared to the average St. Albert resident. Few children from this large group go beyond Grade VII ... Children from stable homes do well at school and are accepted by the other children (PAA, AN 82.197, file 1).

Here is one example from the Stony Plain principal with six Métis students in the school. It appears that he could barely contain his contempt:

Under one roof – 3 families, 19 persons, 5 at a sanatorium, no furniture except broken down beds, chairs and table. House – old abandoned homestead, deplorable ... Under one roof – 1 family related to above, 5 persons same condition as above except no chairs. Father spends a good part of time in jail ... All receive some municipal assistance – men work "brushing" (PAA, AN 82.197, file 1).

A few principals had positive things to say, including the two other principals from Stony Plain (together, these two schools educated 39 Métis students):

Métis children here are no problem. Their parents, of Iroquois stock, own their farms, are enfranchised, and are quite progressive. Many have graduated from high school and hold responsible positions in hospitals, navy, air force and industry ... Parents are working. I think their standard of living is probably as high as that of the whites. The children of school age fit in well and are treated the same as others (PAA, AN 82.197, file 1).

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In spite of its obvious shortcomings, the research did shed light on the topic of Alberta's Métis children in mission and residential schools and directly related topics. The research also, likely unintentionally, documented and exposed the bigotry against Métis students and their families that seemed to be ingrained in the fabric of the educational system. Chalmers' study contributed to the creation of the Northland School Division in 1960. The division's stated mandate is to serve the special needs of the Métis and Indian children of Alberta's north.

## Pedagogy of Indian Residential Schools

Just as First Nation people were perceived as requiring “civilizing” via education so that immigrants desiring agricultural development of Indian lands would be safe in their settlement endeavours, so too the Métis people were perceived as a threat to peaceful settlement. This threat, due to poverty of the Métis, had been sounded earlier in a letter dated February 1, 1901, by Father Thérien (who later played a key role in the demise of St. Paul des Métis) to the minister of Interior:

A day will come and this day is nearer at hand than one would fancy, when the Government shall have to spend a large amount of monies to build jails and assure the security of law-abiding citizens against the lawlessness of the poor, destitute half-breed rendered remorseless by the continuous spectacle of his poverty (NAC, RG 15, vol. 708, file 360-530).

The 1888 North West Mounted Police reports note concerns about Métis impoverishment and stressed: “it did not reflect well on the government to have citizens in a state of destitution; and that discontent among the Half-breeds might give rise to another Rebellion” (Sawchuk, Sawchuk and Ferguson, 1981:163)

Prior to 1911, Métis children had easier access to the Indian residential schools. After that year, with the explicit directive from Ottawa about severely limiting access to residential schools for Métis students (discussed earlier in this report) their Métis status needed to be more disguised in order for school fees to be paid by the department or their fees had to be covered by the churches. Métis people were also then subjected to the government’s policy of assimilation.

The racist attitudes held by mainstream society influenced how the schools were operated. Miller contextualized the pervasive racism of the day as follows:

Ambivalence about Natives’ innate ability manifested itself in the attitudes towards schooling Native children held by both missionaries and government officials ... Such attitudes about the innate intelligence and dubious morality of Native peoples were tied to primitive notions of intellectual development, a kind of crude evolutionary dogma that recognized that particular societies often went through successive stages of economic and social organization ... These ominously fuzzy notions of human development usually made quixotic use of historical evidence to sustain themselves and to assist in predicting future developments (1996:153-154).

Miller also discussed the widespread acceptance of scientific racism and the effect on the people who operated and taught in the missions and schools. He wrote:

Christian thinking in Canada, as in the United States and Great Britain as well, had become suffused with racist preconceptions, partially as a result of ‘scientific racism’ and partly as a consequence of the domination of the world by countries that were primarily Caucasian. For the people who operated missions and schools, it was simply taken as

'scientific fact' that the Aboriginal people to whom they ministered were inferior to them culturally, morally, and economically (1996:414).

Until the early 1950s, Métis and Indian students in residential schools only spent half their school day, at most, on academic subjects and spent the remainder of the day doing manual work and on religious instruction (Persson, 1986). Instruction was supposedly available in residential schools to the grade nine level, but very few students went that far. Miller completed a full assessment of the "half-day system" and its use to take advantage of Métis and Indian children. He concluded that the real purpose was to gain free labour, not to actually provide the children any vocational training. He wrote:

Pernicious forms of this involuntary servitude were the apprenticeship programs and the 'outing system' that prevailed in many schools, particularly from the 1880s until the 1940s. Making male students available during the summer to work on farms owned by non-Natives, or putting a young woman out at service with a family in town, resembled a method of furnishing cheap, semi-skilled labour to Euro-Canadian homes more than it did a system of advanced training (1996:253).

What is astonishing is that many school officials seemed only dimly aware of the impact such demands on child labour were likely to have on academic performance. Miller comments that:

An Oblate brother at Lestock, Saskatchewan, seemed oblivious to the fact that he was not recording a coincidence when he reported in the autumn of 1923 that the harvest had required extra hard work and that the school inspector had not been impressed with the classroom performance of the students (1996:259).

There is some evidence that certain Métis and non-status Indian students worked particularly well and, as a result, were valued by their institution; thus, reluctant to let them go. It is not known how wide-spread this phenomenon was. Miller remarked that:

It was also clear that certain classes of students found themselves assigned unusually heavy amounts of work. Methodist officials in 1909, for example, tried to retain a number of Métis and non-status Indian students that Ottawa wanted discharged from Red Deer school, because 'many of the halfbreed children are the stay of the Institute as far as the routine work is concerned' (1996:288).

Not only was the so called "training" of little educational value, the time used by these "chores" frequently swelled to consume even more than a half-day of schoolroom time. When schools, in effect, became more workhouses than places of learning, the effects were bound to show in the academic performance of students.

A study on the educational attainment of Indian children by Barman, Hebert and McCaskill (1986) found that students acquired no more than a "very basic literacy education" for the first 60 years of their existence. Their study concluded that between 1890 and 1950, at least sixty per cent failed to advance past grade three. Also, for the period from 1890 to 1930, over eighty per cent of children in federal schools,

day and residential, failed to advance past grade three (Barman, Hebert and McCaskill, 1986). It was not until 1951 that the half-day system was eliminated (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, 1968).

A study completed in 1968 by R.F. Davey, director of educational services for Indian Affairs found that, in 1945, there were 9,149 Indian residential school students and that the departmental annual report stated there were “slightly over 100 students enrolled in grades above VIII” (as cited in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a:345) and with no record of any students above the grade IX level. He also found that the vocational training “contained very little of instructional value but consisted mainly of the performance of repetitive, routine chores of little or no educational value” (as cited in Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a:345).

The reality is that high school simply was not accessible for students in these schools until much later. As a result, few students in any residential school attained that level until the 1960s and the 1970s.

Despite numerous suggestions by school inspectors in Western Canada, and others, the pedagogical methods and educational curriculum materials in residential schools never made attempts to adapt to the needs, interests and acute cultural differences that Métis and First Nation students presented. For example, Indian school Inspector J. Boyce commented in 1923 that, in the first part of the twentieth century, First Nation children were coming to schools from an oral tradition and a non-literate culture (Milloy, 1999). This observation did not change teaching methods one whit.

Pedagogical issues revolved around issues of forced assimilation of Aboriginal people into vocations such as animal husbandry, homemaking or even working-class labourers. Mainstream school systems were overwhelmingly becoming more concerned with post-secondary education and good citizenship during this period. These options were not open to Métis and First Nations for quite some time. In fact, it was not until Métis and First Nations became involved in the education of their children that schools began to address the specific needs of Métis children.

## Quality of Teachers

Initially, the federal government paid all the costs for the operation of industrial schools. The government then became extremely cost-conscious and, instead, began paying an annual per capita grant for the operating costs (Huel, 1996). The per capita grant system was utilized until 1957. The poor funding and chronic neglect of residential schools had an impact on several key aspects of school life (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples, 1996a). This included the quality of teachers, food and health of students.

During the Depression in 1932, the Indian Affairs per capita grant was reduced by 10 per cent and it was further reduced by 5 per cent in 1933. In April 1935, Indian Affairs restored 5 per cent of the per capita grant. In October 1958, Indian Affairs decided to pay \$235 for each student per year (Archdiocese of McLennan-Grouard Archives). When Aboriginal students began integrating into the provincial school system, the government was then able to save capital expenditure costs for school buildings.

In 1946, the Province of Alberta paid \$500 per year for each group of 35 children and \$200 per semester for each group of 25 children (Archdiocese of McLennan-Grouard Archives, St. Bernard School file). The Province of Alberta was reluctant to recognize its responsibility for the education of Métis students. This policy of refusal to accept responsibility was echoed in several documents.

Abundant documentation attests to the conclusion that Indian residential school teachers, at least between 1874 and 1948, were poorly trained or not trained at all and, therefore, ill-prepared to educate. Indian Commissioner Laird found, in 1903, that Indian day schools had “a good number of indifferent teachers and that it was often impossible to secure anyone to take on the job” (Titley, 1986a:89). The study completed by Davey in 1968 found that, even in 1950, “over 40 percent of the teaching staff had no professional training. Some had not even graduated from high school” (Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1986).

A chart prepared by the Province of Alberta indicates that, in 1937, the total number of Indian schools in the province was 21, the total number of teachers was two, but the total number of “qualified teachers” was zero (PAA, AN 82.197, box 1).

By 1949, the number of Indian schools was 25 and the total number of teachers had increased to six; all were apparently qualified. As late as 1962, the number of teachers was 216 and only 189 were actually qualified.

Much earlier, a 1908 survey had concluded: “churches could not, within the restrictive limit of their per-capita grants, easily secure qualified people” (Milloy, 1999:176). The situation changed very little over the years. Other factors that inhibited recruitment were: the isolated location of the schools, the availability of other forms of employment for the teachers and, most important, the low pay as compared to provincial-run schools.

All of this conspired to create staff shortages, rapid turnover of teachers and unqualified staff. This problem of shortages was worsened by the Department of Indian Affairs, which “[refused] to train or

hire Aboriginal teachers, men and women who might well have had an affinity for staffing these schools” (Milloy, 1999:176).

In 1914, Martin Benson, superintendent of education for residential schools, responded to a request from the administration to have Reverend Louis Laronde, a Métis graduate of a residential school, appointed as principal of a residential school:

So far as his educational attainments go Mr. Laronde is fully qualified, but it is a question for you [Scott] to decide whether you would be willing to intrust [sic] the success of a new school to a half-breed. I think our past experience goes to show that we would be taking great risks in putting a school of this class in charge of a half-breed (as cited in Milloy, 1999:177).

Duncan Scott appointed Laronde because the Church had already told Laronde he had the job on a trial basis. Later, the Church let Laronde go because the school ran up a deficit which “even Benson admitted” (Milloy, 1999:177) was more attributable to the insufficiency of the per capita grant to cover expenses than to Laronde’s lack of ability.

Recurrent proclamations of the poor quality of teachers stand out in school inspection reports. In 1886, J.A. Macrae, the first trained departmental school inspector, complained in his first report on western schools that teachers, often untrained, were additionally “illiterate persons, ignorant of the first elements of teaching and powerless to impart any ideas that they may have possessed regarding the most simple subjects” (as cited in Milloy, 1999:177).

An even more strident statement flowed from the pen of School Inspector L. Hutchinson, who, in 1922, wrote these words to describe conditions at the St. Mary’s school on the Blood Reserve:

These Indian schools are the biggest farce to be called schools I have ever seen. They appear to be all pretty much the same. The teachers who are about the poorest of their class are in charge, and the waste of time is painful to witness ... Any good teacher should teach these children as much in half an hour as under present conditions they are taught all day (as cited in Milloy, 1999:178).

Unfortunately, it was the Métis children who paid the price for the retention of these so-called “teachers.” Many of these ex-students were functionally illiterate and yet blamed themselves because they went to residential school and still did not know how to read. The damage to their self-esteem is incalculable.

## Residential School Food

There are three generalizations about food in Indian residential schools that one can make with a high degree of certainty. First, Métis children were not treated any differently than First Nation students; generally speaking, all students at the same school had the same diet. Secondly, while each school was different, there was one commonality – that is, there was never enough food. Most food for students in most residential schools was scarce, of poor quality and monotonously the same. The staff, however, usually ate better than the students. The third generalization that is normally unquestioned is that children need food in order to be able to learn; but hunger was a common refrain.

One former student and author, George Manuel, first president of the National Indian Brotherhood, recalled:

Hunger is both the first and last thing I can remember about that school. I was hungry from the day I went into the school until they took me to the hospital two and half years later. Not just me. Every Indian student smelled of hunger (1974:65).

Manuel went on to say:

The only time I did not feel hunger during those two years was when my grandparents came.... When they came they brought deer meat and bannock and other real food you could get full on. Nobody thought to want candy when we had not seen meat for so long. For weeks before they would come I could not think of anything besides the food they would bring with them. The food always crowded out the people. It was not my grandfather who was coming. It was meat, dried fruit, and roots. Hunger like that numbs your mind (1974:66).

John Tootoosis, a Cree leader of great renown attended the Delmas Residential School in Saskatchewan beginning in 1912. His recollection was that:

Sometimes some children did not want to eat ... [as] there were these big iron pots on the stove, that's where they boiled clothes before washing ... This one spring the meat was probably thawing and about to get bad. Didn't they go and boil the meat in these pots and that's what they tried to feed us. It was very difficult to eat the food (as cited in Goodwill and Sluman, 1984:100).

Agnes Grant, a Métis scholar, wrote that when school inspectors showed up, it was a different story:

Schools were inspected at intervals and inspection meant that food would temporarily improve. The children viewed these inspections with considerable cynicism as corn flakes, oranges, toast, and eggs would suddenly appear at breakfast time, and thick, wholesome stew appeared for lunch and supper (Grant, 1996:116).

As discussed earlier, for many years, the children were only in school for half of their day and the rest of the day was spent on various labour. With arduous weekly routines, it would be easy for them, without ample nutritious meals, to slide from malnutrition into ill health. They did not, as a rule, receive sufficient meals, much less nutritious ones. Many fell sick in large numbers. Author John Milloy describes the food situation as follows:

Rising early, the boys and girls were to spend half their day in the classroom and the rest of the day in barns and coops or field and wood lots, in the laundry and bake house. The daily grind was ... exhausting. Benson calculated that the school day was fifteen hours long ...

There was, unfortunately, no guarantee in any of this that the children would be fed adequately at the end of the day and considerable evidence that the commercialization of the school operation contributed to malnutrition. The sale of dairy products, milk, cream, and butter was common throughout the system and a good revenue source. It meant in many cases, however, that the children were denied these important foods (1999:120).

Even if they had properly trained teachers, with such a small quantity of food, it was no wonder that students did not do well academically. It is not a great leap to jump beyond the poor funding rationale for lack of a proper or adequate diet to also see a glimmer of systemic racial or class discrimination.

There is little wonder that malnutrition, scarcity of food and poor diet contributed to the students' susceptibility to disease and it is known that poor health was rampant in many of the schools, and that children died in unusually large numbers. This aspect of Indian residential school life, which Métis and all other Aboriginal children experienced together indiscriminately, will be examined in the next chapter.

## Health in Residential Schools

The topic of health lies at the heart of residential school history in Canada and pertains equally to Métis and First Nation Survivors. For over one hundred years, Métis, Indian and Inuit children were the wards of the Canadian government who had legal guardianship over them. The government had a legal and moral responsibility for what happened to these children. The mental health of students was equally as important as their physical health.

Sometimes, parents would take their children to the residential schools. At the turn of the century to the 1960s, if the community was isolated, clergy would arrive via various means to round up the children to send to residential schools. The records indicate the children usually did not speak English and, undoubtedly, they did not understand what was actually happening to them.

Almost universally accepted in psychiatry is the view that abandonment inflicts some of the worst trauma a child can endure. Understandably, if abandonment occurs in early or mid-infancy, it has a different effect than at six or seven. Abandonment issues can lead to core-level insecurity, distrust of authority and other maladaptive symptoms that can last a lifetime.

The following is a student's account of her anguish when she realized that her parents were leaving her at the residential school:

[I]t dawned on me that something was happening. I gave out a type of scream that I had never ever given out in my life. I learned that there is a name for that kind of scream. It's called a primal scream. That is a cry that a person gives, a cry of distress from the centre of the soul. I was watching a movie and apparently slaves gave that kind of cry too when they were captured and put into slavery. After that I heard that cry a few times when I happened to be in the hallway and other children were being dropped off at the residential school (as cited in Jack, 2001:21).

Another Survivor remembered:

I was throwing a fit and screaming and I was hanging on the bottom of my mother's pants and I didn't want to leave with anyone. I didn't want them to send me to school (as cited in Jack, 2001:18).

This former student recalls:

You didn't dare cry either, but I'd watch Moma and Poppa until they were out of sight, just turn, just go on from there. Yes, that was so hurtful, especially getting to the school you didn't know anything. Who hurt the most? Our parents or us? (as cited in Jack, 2001:33).

Another account of separation:

After the summer was gone, a huge truck pulled up with a bunch of school girls standing up in the back. I was put on the truck. I guess I was afraid, I don't know. You know you're put on the truck and you don't know what's going on and I don't know where my mother and dad were and everything was just sort of blank (as cited in Jack, 2001:60).

The frequency and severity of punishment, rather than discipline, at residential schools is well-reported. Punishment usually involved some type of physical pain, most commonly inflicted with a strap. However, what made these penalties even worse was that they were often dealt out in front of everyone so that children suffered the added psychological pain of public humiliation. Shockingly, the above account would not unduly stand out in any records. Often, punishments were totally inappropriate, such as strapping a child for wetting the bed. Far more could be written about how the atmosphere at the schools undermined the students' psychological health and spiritual well-being. The many writings about Indian residential schools are filled with incidences of physical punishment, many bordering on criminal assault. One project advisory committee member said that if one saw someone being abused in the school, you "didn't dare say something" for fear of reprisals. Fear and terror seemed to be common in some schools.

Grant claims that not all student deaths at residential schools were from natural causes. Some were a direct result of being beaten to death:

Not all deaths are believed to be from illness or accidents. The reports of students being beaten and then hospitalized come from all over the country. Little is known about the extent of this brutality, but many informants have memories of unreasonable beating, either their own or others that they witnessed. Not all students survived the beatings (1996:134).

A lot of stresses impinged on the daily lives of children in the schools: loneliness, lack of contact with parents and other relatives, frustration with the new languages, as well as poor instruction, hunger, institutionalization, overwork, excessively stringent routines and rules, bullying, lack of trustworthy counsel, harsh corporal punishment, experiences with or knowledge of physical and/or sexual abuse — the list seems to never end.

Sometimes, the experience simply became too much for these students. The depression and pain could no longer be tolerated and students chose the ultimate escape — suicide. Imagine the pain one must be in to choose such an irrevocable decision:

How many suicides there were is unknown; ... one at file Hills where a boy hanged himself. In another case, RCMP investigations discovered a suicide pact by eight boys at Williams Lake in 1920. They ate poisoned roots (Grant, 1996:137).

Grant found that when children died at the school, which was frequent, the death was often handled in a furtive manner:

Deaths at the schools were not discussed by staff and students. When a child died at a school, most often the child simply disappeared and other children were forbidden to speak of the death or ask any questions. At other times the dead child was quietly buried, prayed over, and forgotten. It could be months before parents were notified (1996:133).

E. Brian Titley, in writing about industrial schools, confirmed that “[s]tudents with contagious diseases were often enrolled merely to secure the per capita grant. Within the institutions, poor ventilation, inadequate diet and little medical attention combined to create the prime conditions for epidemics” (1986b:145).

Clearly, the physical health of students was in jeopardy due to residential schools. Causes for the development of ill health were many: lack of adequate funding to deal with health-related issues, lack of adequate food or clothing, lack of proper ventilation and heating, overcrowding, poor drainage, inadequate building construction, lack of proper medical facilities or supplies, and inadequate staff training. In her book, Grant discussed the 1907 report of Dr. Bryce, a physician hired as a medical inspector for Indian Affairs. He was asked to investigate the health of Aboriginal children in schools in the Prairie provinces.

Bryce discovered a large number of instances in which children with infectious diseases had been admitted to schools and that the diseases were spreading rapidly in the sub-standard buildings. For schools that had been operating for ten or more years, Bryce found that seven percent of the present or former students were sick or in poor health, and twenty-four percent were dead. In one case two-thirds of those discharged died either at school or within a few months of being discharged. He was particularly appalled at the schools’ lack of ventilation. In most schools, windows in the dormitories were sealed for seven months of the year in order to save on heating costs. The air became increasingly more lethal as infected students slept in the same room with others....Bryce also reported that principals and teachers were inclined to minimize the dangers and were reluctant to give him information.

The report caused an uproar. Church officials and principals responded defensively, but Indian agents generally substantiated Bryce’s findings (Grant, 1996:118-119).

Earlier in 1897, Inspector Benson, head of the department’s school branch wrote to Indian Affairs Department Secretary J.D. McLean and later followed up with another report about the deplorable building conditions with extremely poor ventilation system that should have been ameliorated with funding and corrective measures — it was not. Benson wrote:

Outlets for the escape of foul air are provided in some rooms at a few schools but without adequate provision for the admission of fresh air, and it is scarcely any wonder that our Indian children who have a hereditary tendency to phthisis, [tuberculosis] should develop alarming symptoms of this disease after a short residence in some of our schools, brought on by exposure to draughts in school rooms and sleeping in over-crowded, over-heated and unventilated dormitories (as cited in Grant, 1996:117-118).

Influenza and tuberculosis caused most of the serious sickness and death to students at residential schools and also ravaged the country, particularly Indian reserves. The death rates for all Aboriginal people were

high for tuberculosis, partially due to their having less resistance to the disease than non-Aboriginals. In 1910, Duncan Scott introduced some measures to combat the conditions that were exposed by Bryce and others. However, as Titley points out: "The elimination of the worst of the industrial schools and the new regulations introduced by Scott in 1910 did not entirely eradicate the hazards of residential education. Ill-health, for instance, persisted at unacceptably high rates in places" (Titley, 1986a:87).

The federal government's severe underfunding of health-related issues is one direct cause of student illness and death that continued until after 1945. Miller found one report that stated:

Regarding Jesse Williams, she appears to need a lot of hospital treatment, I am inclined to think that the state of her health is such that it might be wise to discharge her, she is becoming an expensive pupil (as cited in Miller, 1996:302).

In 1918, the year the Spanish flu epidemic hit Canada, strangely, Duncan Scott eliminated the medical inspector position "for reasons of economy" (as cited in Titley, 1986a:87). Prairie schools in Alberta were some of the hardest hit by both the flu and tuberculosis epidemics. Miller wrote this about the flu conditions at the Red Deer School:

Not surprisingly, the Spanish influenza epidemic that hit Canada along with most of the rest of the Western world at the end of the First World War proved devastating, particularly in prairie schools. The degree to which residential schools were not equipped to cope with a pandemic can be measured in the words of the principal of the Methodist Red Deer school, who described 'conditions at this school' as 'nothing less than criminal' and 'a disgrace.' Like almost all boarding and industrial schools, Red Deer had 'no isolation ward and no hospital equipment of any kind. The dead, the dying, the sick and the convalescent were all together' (1996:302-303).

Grant stressed that accounts of inhumane treatment of sick children were common:

Staff censure for ill children was so severe that the children usually hid all signs of illness as long as they possibly could. Instances of inhumane treatment while the children were ill came from across the country as reporters interviewed ex-students regarding sexual abuse in 1991.... Example after example surfaced:

*Winnipeg Free Press* Nov. 10, 1990

Pam Sickles can never forget what happened to a sick friend:

She was sick and she threw up in her plate and she was forced to eat it all. I can see the nun pressing the spoon against her lips and she was pushing so hard there was blood on her lips. I can see it still so clearly after all these years. (St. Mary's Kenora [Ontario])

*Winnipeg Free Press* Aug. 6, 1991

Norman Whitford remembers a frail, eight-year old boy forced to sit for days on a pail inside a closet as punishment for having diarrhea:

It was extremely cruel because not only did they punish him for what I believe now was a medical problem, but the other children were expected to look at him and ridicule him. (Fort Resolution) [Northwest Territories]

*Winnipeg Free Press* Nov. 10, 1990

Phil Fontaine said one of his brothers is reluctant to talk about what happened to him when he broke his leg playing soccer and started crying:

Because he was crying he was kicked and forced to walk with a broken leg and he was kept in the school for I don't know how many days before they decided to do something (1996:131-132).

An ugly aspect of Indian residential school life that profoundly scarred many children was a practice that was, as the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) has stated: "the pervasive sexual abuse of the children" (1996a:377). What can be said about innocence stolen, of a childhood brutally stolen from our children?

Many courageous people across Canada have stepped forward to talk about the unspeakable horrors they endured as children. Account after account has surfaced of sexual deviants who preyed on the children in their care. One British Columbia justice, in convicting one such deviant, referred to him as a "sexual terrorist," adding, "[as] far as the victims are concerned, the Indian residential school system was nothing more than institutionalized pedophilia" (Fournier and Crey, 1997:72).

Larry Chartrand (2002) points out in his paper that some children were also abusers themselves. He references an unpublished study completed by Hansen and Lee in 1999. The Hansen and Lee study focused on Métis students in Saskatchewan and detailed the cultural and physical abuse they experienced. The study also documented physical and sexual abuse between the boys and priests and supervisors.

Marie Fortier, a recent author and residential school Survivor, attended school in Ontario and describes the school as being "infested with violations; children were subject to physical, mental, emotional, verbal, sexual and spiritual abuse" (2002:67). In graphic and sickening detail, she exposes the indignities and abuses she and others endured at the school. While this research paper will not focus on the overwhelming abuses suffered by children in residential schools, it is clear that there were many incidents in several schools all across Canada. In fact, RCAP found that "[h]ead office, regional, school and church files are replete, from early in the system's history, with incidents that violated the norms of the day" (1996a:367).

The results of the residential school period have been so devastating that the term "Residential School Syndrome" was created to describe it. This syndrome was described by Alice Carroll of the Prince Albert Tribal Council in a newspaper interview as:

[A]n intense silence and a great fear of feeling. There are two main reasons why those who attended residential schools try to shut off their feelings. One may be that they have undergone experiences so painful that the only way they could deal with them was to block them out.

Another factor is the cultural suppression ... Students learned to be silent, to not express their language, culture or identity because if they did, they were disciplined.

The end result is that people who need to express their pain, feelings, and experiences are unable to do so. Many turn to drugs and alcohol (as cited in Grant, 1996:247-248).

Agnes Grant (1996) devotes an entire chapter in her book to the multitude of problems that stem from attendance at residential schools. The severity of such problems depends on what actually happened in the schools and the length of such activity and other factors. These problems Grant discusses include: inability to express feelings, feelings of inferiority, apathy and unwillingness to work, values confusion and culture shock and, finally, anti-religious attitudes.

## Métis Students – The Outsiders

There is very little written that focuses on Métis attendance and experiences in residential schools. Consequently, much of the Métis story is untold; recently, two different studies have been completed that focused on this topic. Two Métis researchers have discussed the incidence rate of Métis attendance at various Indian residential schools and the differences between the experiences of Métis students at residential schools and those of First Nation students. Both researchers assert that the Métis experience was unique.

Researcher Tricia Logan in *The Lost Generations: The Silent Métis of the Residential School System* writes:

At these [residential] schools, Métis children lived under the same conditions and rules as the First Nations children and suffer[ed] from many of the same intergenerational impacts but, in addition, the Métis children had experiences and stories unique from those of the First Nations students. Both their fellow First Nations students and non-Aboriginal staff considered Métis students at the schools to be outsiders (2001:4).

Logan sees this “outsider” status as being rooted in government policy towards the Métis. Larry Chartrand (2002) also agrees that the differential status of Métis students in the schools was a result of federal policy. He also points out that “[i]f abuse was a part of the school’s culture, Métis children did not escape its clutch” (Chartrand, 2002:12).

The funding of Métis students was always an issue. This was the case when Métis students were included in residential schools for First Nation children and when Métis students had their own schools, such as the one at Île-à-la-Crosse, Saskatchewan or the St. Paul des Métis school.

The inferior funding of Métis students set them apart and helped, along with other influences, to establish their “outsider” status in the schools. This feeling of being set apart remains the common legacy that many Métis students have inherited from the residential school experience. This status has been detrimental to the establishment of a strong and healthy Métis identity.

Métis students often described being socially excluded as devastating. Logan quotes several Métis Survivors of the residential schools who refer to the harmful effects of continually being excluded. One former residential school student, Tillie Blondeau, stated: “the Métis were different, we were outsiders. I didn’t like it there” (as cited in Logan, 2001:28).

Tricia Logan explained how the society of residential schools mirrored that of Canadian society in general: “Both in mainstream Canadian society and in the school system, the Métis were made to feel they were lesser than either of their halves, not Indian enough for benefits or Aboriginal rights but not “white” enough to be seen as an equal to the dominant society” (2001:30). In a Euro-Canadian system that tended to rate people by class and hierarchies and in which race was a dominant issue, the Métis residential school students formed a group of outsiders: “Aboriginal children in the school who had a slightly lighter complexion or had an easier time speaking English or French stood out from other students” (Logan, 2001:28).

Logan suggests that many Métis students might have had greater knowledge and sympathy for the Roman Catholic faith, as they often came from communities where that faith was well integrated into daily life. While this sympathy and familiarity with the ideology within the residential schools could be a comfort to some students, it was yet another factor that set them apart.

In his report conclusion, Chartrand discusses the reality of Métis student participation in residential schools and comments that: "Their experiences were equivalent to Indian student experiences and, in some cases, because of their minority status and lack of "official" sponsorship were discriminated against" (2002:14). It is evident that the Métis treatment by the residential schools, the churches and Indian Affairs has been detrimental to the development of healthy Métis individuals and communities. Métis children were made to feel outsiders in their own land.

## Conclusion

Almost 19 per cent of Métis people in Alberta reported in the 1991 Aboriginal Peoples Survey that they attended residential schools. The 1936 Ewing Commission Report estimates that as many as 80 per cent of all Métis children in Alberta were not in school during the time period of their study. The reality is that it is difficult to know precise numbers. What is known is that the Métis communities are continuing to experience the effects of their ancestral pain.

As discussed earlier, eventually, Indian Affairs started closing down its residential schools. A list of schools in Alberta operated by Indian Affairs (see Appendix D) was compiled in 1964. This list indicates there were only 12 out of 38 schools with “dormitory accommodations.” The other 26 schools were day schools. Thus, although there had been 29 residential schools built in Alberta between 1862 and 1974, only 12 of those remained by 1964. Until 1969, in Alberta, there were other residential schools operated by several different churches but with Indian Affairs paying per capita grants. From the research garnered, it appears that Métis children attended residential schools in Alberta until the 1960s.

Former residential school students from across Canada who do not know and never communicated with each other say essentially the same kinds of things about the long-lasting effects of residential school. While some students do report positive experiences, many were impacted in a very negative way. The impact of residential schools is difficult to calculate, but how could children have emerged unscathed? Linda Bull makes this comment:

All students recalled the homesickness, the loneliness, the aloneness, the lack of family contact, the unfamiliarity of the new environment, the lack of personal freedom, the “cold” atmosphere, or lack of feeling in the institution, the “distance” (social distance) placed between educators and Native children, and the fear – initially of the unknown, but later the fear that developed, and that was instilled in their hearts and minds as little children (1991:41).

The long-lasting effects of residential school on former Métis students and their families have rarely been written about. Yet, the impact of so much indoctrination, abuse, lack of parenting and other factors over so many years on so many generations of Métis parents has had an enormous impact on the Métis Nation. Even if an impact analysis was attempted on a very small Métis community, it would be a large and difficult project. Consequently, one is forced to examine long-lasting effects through the testimony of former students and the people they most likely impacted—their family. There are some who have been able to share these memories, and others who are unable to relive their painful past.

The Métis will not be able to eliminate their ancestral pain, but they can and will lessen its death-grip hold on Métis communities and the Métis Nation. The Métis know they are a strong people:

- ✦ A people who have felt the full weight of the federal government trying to eliminate them.
- ✦ A people who have exhibited strength and fortitude, time and time again.

In the next phase of this project, it is hoped that more stories of Métis students who survived residential schools can be shared.

The Métis will continue the journey of healing their communities.

## Appendix A

### History of Métis in Alberta

1895	The first Métis settlement (St. Paul des Métis) was established by the federal government after lobbying by Father Lacombe.
1905	St. Paul des Métis terminated; land opened for public homesteading, primarily to French-speaking Catholics.
1932	L'Association des Métis D'Alberta et des Territoire du Nord-Ouest formed by Métis leaders to lobby the government on behalf of their people (name later changed to Métis Association of Alberta (MAA)).
1935	The Ewing Commission formed by Alberta government to investigate Métis conditions in response to MAA's numerous requests for government intervention.
1938	<i>The Métis Population Betterment Act</i> passed by the Alberta Legislature, setting aside 1,300,000 acres of provincial land and forming 12 Métis settlements.
1950s	Four settlements are unilaterally dissolved by the Province of Alberta (Marlboro, Touchwood, Cold Lake and Wolf Lake) and residents relocated.
1975	The Alberta Federation of Métis Settlements formed.
1982	MacEwan Committee formed to investigate situation of Métis settlements; recommended that self-determination be recognized.
1989	<i>Métis Settlements Accord</i> adopted; framework for land and self-government. This included a suite of legislation: the <i>Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act</i> , <i>Métis Settlements Land Protection Act</i> , <i>Métis Settlements Act</i> and the <i>Métis Settlement Accord Implementation Act</i> .
1990	<i>Métis Settlements Accord</i> passed by Alberta government (Métis Settlements General Council, n.d.). Found at: <a href="http://www.msgc.ca/GeneralCouncil.htm">http://www.msgc.ca/GeneralCouncil.htm</a> .

## Alberta Métis Settlements Accord

Primarily, as a result of litigation by the Métis settlements, Alberta passed legislation specifically directed at Métis people. The legislation established the only form of legislated Métis government in Canada. On 1 July 1989, the Métis Settlements General Council and the Alberta government entered into a partnership with the signing of the *Métis Settlements Accord* (the “Accord”). The Accord consists of several pieces of legislation and financial agreements between the Métis Settlements and the province of Alberta. The Accord accomplished several things:

- ♦ transferred ownership of land (1.28 million acres) to the Métis Settlements;
- ♦ provided for the constitutional protection of lands transferred by an amendment to the *Alberta Act*, the province’s constitution;
- ♦ created practical and democratic forms of local self-government through legislation;
- ♦ instituted a Co-Management Agreement between the Métis Settlements and the province of Alberta regarding the long-term management of natural resources under the Accord and its finances; and
- ♦ execution of a *consent judgment* resolving the Métis Settlements’ litigation against the province.

The signing of the Accord resulted in the subsequent enactment of the *Métis Settlements Accord Implementation Act*, *Métis Settlements Land Protection Act*, *Métis Settlements Act* and the *Constitution of Alberta Amendment Act* on 1 November 1990 (Métis Settlements General Council, n.d.).

## Appendix B

### Key Aspects of Métis Tradition



#### The Métis Flag

The flag was first used by Métis resistance fighters prior to the Battle of Seven Oaks in 1816. It is the oldest Canadian patriotic flag indigenous to Canada. The Union Jack and the Royal Standard of New France bearing the fleur-de-lis are older, but these flags were first flown in Europe. As a symbol of nationhood, the Métis flag predates Canada's

Maple Leaf flag by about 150 years! The flag bears a horizontal figure eight, or infinity symbol. The infinity symbol represents the coming together of two distinct and vibrant cultures, those of European and Indigenous North America, to produce a distinctly new culture, the Métis. The flag symbolizes the creation of a new society with roots in both Aboriginal and European cultures and traditions. The sky blue background of the flag emphasizes the infinity symbol and suggests that the Métis people will exist forever.

The Métis flag has two variants: the more popular blue flag and the red flag. Nobody knows why the early Métis chose these two colour patterns for their flags. However, conjecture seems to indicate that the Métis created the blue and white infinity flag because these were the colours of the North West Company, the fur trading firm which employed most of the French Michif speaking Métis. The blue Métis infinity flag bears a striking resemblance to the blue and white flag of St. Andrew, the national flag of Scotland. The blue and white colours of the Métis flag are also the traditional colours of French Canada, as seen on the provincial [flag] of Quebec. That the creators of the infinity flag may have had some Scottish and French Canadian input when creating their flag is not surprising, because these two groups dominated the North West Company and had the most Métis descendants. However, the flag was uniquely Métis and was recognized as such.

The red Métis flag may have been created by Métis employees of the Hudson's Bay Company. The traditional colours of the fur trade giant were red and white. Neither the blue and white, nor the red and white flag was used by the Métis during the two great resistance movements of 1869 to 1870 and 1885. During this period the Métis used flags that contained French Canadian and Catholic religious symbols. The Métis infinity flag was temporarily forgotten, and remembered only in oral tradition. With the rebirth of Métis pride and consciousness the flag was brought back. Today the flag remains a potent symbol of Métis heritage.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> With permission of the Gabriel Dumont Institute. Found at: <http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/history/flag.htm>

## The Métis Sash

The Sash is a finger woven belt made of wool approximately three metres long. Traditionally it was tied at the waist to hold a coat closed, including being used as a scarf or rope.



Here are some excerpts from a Metis priest's prayer. *"Metis people, God, have been wearing the sash proudly for many years. When I look at it, I notice that it is composed of many interconnected threads, many strands, many patterns, many colors contribute to the overall design of the sash. Our Metis culture God is like the sash. The lives of the Metis have been woven together from a variety of cultures, traditions and beliefs ... For example, God, we are the descendants of the English, of the French, of the Indian-Cree and Ojibway and Scots to name a few. We speak a variety of languages: English, Canadian French, Michif French, Michif Cree and Mashkegon. Look at the sash: it is a composite. It is a mixture. It is Metis. It is made of a variety of elements, like the lives of the Metis. Look at its pattern, its fabric, its colors. Nonetheless, these disparate elements form an integrated whole. Similarly, the different ethnic backgrounds and different languages to the Metis blend into one another to form a rich tapestry like the lives and culture of the Metis."*

Today, the sash is still worn by the Metis people. Metis women occasionally wear it over the shoulder, while others wear it the traditional way, around the waist and tied in the middle, with the fringes hanging down. The Manitoba Metis Senate started a tradition of draping the sash over the table wherever Metis people are gathered for discussion. The Manitoba Metis Federation at their last Assembly, adopted a new sash with the colour variations of; Red, which is the historical depicted colour for the Metis sash; Blue and White symbolizing the colours of the Metis Nation flag; Green signifying fertility, growth and prosperity and; Black, symbolizing the dark period in which the Metis people had to endure dispossession and repression.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> With permission of Métis Resource Centre Inc. Found at: <http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/history/sash.htm>

## Red River Métis Cart



According to the journal of North West Company fur-trader Alexander Henry (the younger), the carts made their first appearance in 1801 at Fort Pembina, just south of what is now the United States border. Originally the carts were small horse-drawn affairs, with three-foot solid wheels cut from large trees, carrying up to 450 pounds. Later, larger wheels with

four spokes were used and gradually the red river carts with their huge, many-spoked wheels evolved, carrying nearly twice as much. Some had “tires” made of shaganappi (green rawhide).

In 1878, Harper’s Magazine carried a description of the red river cart, written by reporters who visited the territory and left a legacy of interesting information and sketches:

It is simply a light box with a pair of shafts, mounted on an axle connecting two enormous wheels. There is no concession made to the aversion of the human frame to sudden violent changes of level; there is no weakness of luxury about this vehicle. The wheels are broad in the felloes (rims), so as not to cut through the prairie sod. They are long in the spokes, so as to pass safely through fords and mud holes. They are very much dished so that they can be strapped together and rawhide stretched over them to make a boat. The whole cart is made of wood; there is not a bit of metal about it, so that, if anything breaks, the material to repair it is easily found. The axles are never greased and they furnish an incessant answer to the old conundrum: “What makes more noise than a pig in a poke?”

Each wheel was said to have its own peculiar shriek, announcing the coming of a train from a great distance. (Grease or oil would have only mixed with the dust, wearing down the axles.) As it was, a cart often used four or five axles on the trip to St. Paul from the Red River settlement. Harness was made from a buffalo hide, often in one piece. Carts moved single file, except when in danger from Indians and traveled several abreast. Each driver controlled five or six carts strung out behind him, each ox tied to the cart ahead.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>With permission from the Métis Resource Centre Inc. Found at: <http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/history/cart.htm>

## Louis “David” Riel



“Do you know these people of mine are just as were the children of Israel, a persecuted race deprived of their heritage. But I will wrest justice for them from the tyrant. I will be unto them a second David.” Louis Riel

Born on Seine River (a tributary of the Canadian Red River) Louis “David” Riel (history-maker and eloquent leader of the Metis people) fought with words, prayers and total conviction in the cause of the “Half-Breed” people and for the rights of all Western Canadians.

The eldest of eleven children, Riel was born on October 22, 1844 in a log cabin by a gristmill his father, Louis Riel Sr., had built. Riel Sr. believed in free trade and justice, passing these attributes down to his son. In 1839, Riel Sr. helped to break the Hudson’s Bay trade monopoly through an organized resistance. The Metis were then free to trade with their southern neighbours.

As a student in the small river community of St. Boniface, Manitoba; Riel attracted the attention of Bishop Alexander Tache. The Bishop was delighted with Riel; and at the age of fourteen he was sent off to Montreal to study in a seminary in preparation for the priesthood. Both Riel’s mother (Marie Ann) and his father were extremely proud of him.

Louis Riel excelled in English, French, Greek and philosophy; but was described by his tutors as rather moody. Riel did not smoke nor drink, but he did have a very quick temper. After taking stock of himself and with some misgivings; he left the seminary in the final years of his studies.

Riel considered going into law and for awhile clerked in a Montreal law office. There he met a lot of bright, prospective young men - among them junior lawyer Wilfred Laurier. While there he fell in love, but the affair soon died and Riel moved on. He drifted to jobs in Chicago then St. Paul’s. Slowly he made his way west and in 1868, after a ten year absence, he returned to the Canadian Red River settlement.

Rumours that the Hudson’s Bay Company were [sic] planning on selling what was then called “Rupert’s land” to the Dominion of Canada were upsetting the Metis population. The Metis were suspicious of the transaction. They did not know how it was going to affect them and they were angry that they had not been consulted. The Metis believed themselves to be an independent nation of people.

Surveyors led by Colonel J.S. Dennis were sent out in advance of the official transaction. They did not know how to speak French and treated the Metis with a contemptuous attitude. The Metis did not want their land to be surveyed in squares as they like the traditional fashion of strips of land from the river front back.

On October 11, 1869, surveyors refused to listen to the protests of Andre Nault (Riel's cousin) and he rounded up eighteen men (including Riel). Well educated and fluent in both English and French, Riel made the surveyors understand that they had better leave. They left and Riel "Leader of the Metis People" was born.

Riel was of average height with a stocky build. He had a dark complexion and a slightly hooked nose. At twenty-five he was saddled with major responsibilities. He made prompt and firm decisions, but his immaturity revealed a lack of confidence and, like all twenty-five year olds, he was to make mistakes, however, his would be in the public eye.

Riel was asked to run three times in the Federal elections. The first time he declined as feelings were still running high against him in Ontario. In 1872 he accepted and was well into his campaign when the Honourable George Cartier (MacDonald's right-hand man) ran into some political misfortune. Riel withdrew gracefully in favour of Cartier. Cartier won the Provincial seat, but unfortunately died a few months later. A By-election was called and Riel won by acclamation. Riel, with enemies lurking in Ottawa, wisely did not take his seat in Ottawa.

Again in 1874, Riel ran again and won. He journeyed to Ottawa and registered with the clerk in the House of Commons; however, a warrant for his arrest had been issued. Riel was duly elected by the people, but could not sit in the House of Commons. Riel then moved to Montreal.

At this time, Riel was spending a lot of time between Canada and the United States. Prime Minister Alexander Mackenzie granted amnesty to Riel in 1875 with one condition: that Riel stay out of the country for five years. During his involuntary exile, Riel became lonely, frustrated and very despondent. Twice he had to be hospitalized in a mental institution. The first time was at St. Jean du Dieu in Longue Point and then through an order of the Quebec Government he was placed in Beauport, but under an assumed name of La Rochelle. He remained there until January 1878.

Upon his release, Riel wandered throughout the Eastern United States. Riel then moved and settled in Montana where he took a teaching position at a church school. He married Maguerite Bellhumeur. He continued to have problems in Montana. He was accused of helping the Americans Metis contravene voting regulations and assisting them in trading whiskey to the Indians. He did seem happiest at this point in his life however.

It was in Montana where Gabriel Dumont and three members of the Batoche, Saskatchewan community found him in 1884. They implored Riel to come back to Canada and help the Metis fight for their rights once more. He was easily persuaded and again would lead the Metis in the fight - employing the same techniques he had used in 1869. However, this Riel was a different man; he was moody and more irritated by small things. Power seemed to have overwhelmed him causing him to be indecisive and it was this indecisiveness that lost him the battle at Batoche.

On July 6th, Riel was charged with high treason by six English-speaking Protestant jurors. After three days in court they found him guilty, but recommended mercy. Stipendiary Magistrate Hugh Richardson sentenced Riel to hang. After all appeals failed, Riel was hanged on November 16, 1885 in Regina. The body was claimed by friends and buried in St. Boniface, but this was only after souvenir hunters had gone through his personal effects.

In his last few days Riel was calm and almost philosophical. He believed in the Roman Catholic religion to the end. He also believed he was in the right and rejected arguments presented by his defense attorneys that he was insane. He died in dignity and controversy - just as he had lived his life.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Found at: [http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/bios/1\\_riel.htm](http://www.metisresourcecentre.mb.ca/bios/1_riel.htm)

## **Angelique and Marguerite Nolin** **“Misses Nolin” of Red River**

Angelique and Marguerite Nolin came from the Upper Lakes to settle at the new Red River Colony in 1819. The young ladies parents were Jean-Baptiste Nolin and Marie Angelique Couvret, who were married in 1770.

The Nolin family was a prominent one around the south of the Sault, which is where Lord Selkirk first met them. Selkirk became impressed with the family and frequently suggested to the ailing Jean-Baptiste that he move his family to Red River. Lord Selkirk and Father Joseph Provencher expressed the view that the two young women of the Nolin family could make a valuable contribution to the intellectual life of the settlement.

Angelique and Marguerite were not typical young ladies of the time. In addition to a good deal of travel, the young “Misses Nolin” had several years of schooling in Montreal in the 1790’s when their family resided at Sault Ste. Marie. This kind of education was only available to a few children of the wealthy frontier families.

Selkirk and Provencher saw the need for religion and education at Red River and Father Provencher especially wanted an education centre for the Métis. Provencher, in July 1824, wrote to Angelique’s father suggesting that she start a girls’ school in St. Boniface but Jean-Baptiste refused stating that at age 82 he needed his daughters to look after him and it was his wish that his daughters not become servants. Two years later Jean-Baptiste died in August 1826 at the age of 84. With the death of the girls’ father, Selkirk and Provencher furthered their plans for the first school for girls in Western Canada.

The school opened in January of 1829. The students of the school were mostly daughters of French, Cree and Ojibwa parents with some Métis of Scottish background also attending. The “Misses Nolin” stayed teaching at the school for the next 20 years. In the 1830’s they were teaching at Baie St. Paul (St. Eustache). Bishop Provencher then assigned the sisters to assist Father Belcourt in learning the Native languages to communicate with the Indians. Angelique and Marguerite were fluent in French, English, Ojibwa and Cree. Both sisters worked for the next decade with Father Belcourt. At the mission the sisters helped with the children as well as helping Father Belcourt prepare an Ojibwa dictionary along with school texts. Belcourt’s work would have been set back for years without the help of the Nolin sisters.

By 1850 the “Misses Nolin” farmed a few acres with stock of horses, cattle, sheep with carts and a canoe. These two Métis women made a most valuable contribution to the Red River frontier.

Marguerite died in September of 1868. Angelique died in March of 1869 (Freeman, n.d.).

## Appendix C

### Typed Version of Original Documents

Extract from a memorandum of D.C. Scott, accountant, dated December 11, 1906, to the deputy superintendent general, relative to the admission of Half-breeds to Indian schools.

In conclusion I may refer to a letter of the 24th October, 1899 (Fy1e No. 180148/1) written by Mr. Smart [Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs] to Commissioner Laird, in which it was stated that the Minister could not approve of the absolute rule which Mr. Laird had laid down that none but treaty children should be admitted into Indian Schools.

This letter reads as follows ————— “A well defined line can be drawn between half-breeds properly speaking, and Indians, while the Minister does not consider that the children of half-breeds proper, of Manitoba and the Territories [which then included Alberta], should be admitted into Indian Schools and paid for by the Department, still he is decidedly of the opinion that all children, even those of mixed blood whether legitimate or not who live upon an Indian reserve and whose parents on either side live as Indians upon a reserve, even, if they are not annuitants, should be eligible for admission to schools. It should be remembered in this connection that boarding and industrial schools were not established for the purpose of carrying out the terms of treaty, or complying with any provisions of the law, but that they were instituted in the public interest, so that there should not grow up upon reserves an uneducated and barbarous class. The North West Government can not provide for the education of non-annuitants upon reserves, and if we exclude them from our schools, they would practically be debarred from all means of education”.

While the foregoing does not approve of half-breed children, whose parents do not live upon reserves as Indians, being admitted to the schools yet is [sic] takes into consideration the fact that there are circumstances under which in all justice half-breed children should be admitted to such institutions; and I have quoted there from in order that you may have the full facts before you, and also as I consider the ruling in question strengthens my view of the case.

I have been accustomed to deal with cases of this nature upon grounds of humanity and expediency, rather than rules or regulations laid down by law, written or unwritten. It seems to me that this case is one which should be so dealt with. I therefore recommend that these children be taken into Treaty, placed upon the pay-list, and accepted as grant earners at the Kenora School.

(Sgd.) D. C. Scott.

Accountant

(NAC, RG 10, vol. 6031, file 150-9, part 1)

APP'D.

F.P.

11<sup>th</sup> December, 1906.

St. Joseph's Industrial School,

Davisburg, Alberta, 30<sup>th</sup> Sept., 1911

The Secretary Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa.

Sir:

In his first report on Indian Schools, dated 1st June, 1910, the superintendent of Indian Education states:

“Not only are our schools every day removing intelligent Indian children from evil surroundings, but they are very often ministering to a class which would be outcasts without such aid; I refer to the illegitimate offspring of white men and Indian women who are thrown upon their mother's support, and who have no legal status as Indians. This great charitable work, which parallels the efforts put forth by white communities aided by Provincial, Municipal, or private endowment, must be carried on by the Dominion Government, aided by Christian missionaries and missionary societies.”

That statement appearing in a report of a high official, in a report publically published and circulated by the Indian Department, I take to indicate a reversal of the policy, recent when it was written, excluding such children as the Superintendent refers to from Indian Industrial and Boarding schools, for I know not of any other agencies through which the Dominion Government can provide for the education and ethical training of those unfortunates.

I was greatly pleased when I read the statement, and flattered at finding it so much in accord with the views which I hold on the subject and which I have taken frequent occasion to impress upon the Department. But I am equally disappointed at finding that the practice of the Department has not yet come fully up to the Superintendent's view. Perhaps the Principals, who were so emphatically made aware of the Department's determination to keep Indian schools exclusively for Indians of legal status, are waiting for more direct advice of the reversal of policy, while the Department may be waiting for the Principals to move in Half-breed cases before taking particular action in accordance with the Superintendent's view.

It, therefore, occurs to me to suggest that a circular be sent to Principals of Indian schools, embodying the view of the Superintendent as summarized in the statement I have quoted, and requesting the Principals to send a detailed report each as to the Half-breed children in the schools on whose behalf the per capita grant has been refused, or who have been admitted without consulting the Department, so that the sound policy expressed in the Superintendent's statement may be put into full and effective operation without further evitable delay.

I find the following half-breed children at this institution:

Lizzie Muskrow and Lillie George, the illegitimate off-spring of a Half-breed woman leading the Indian mode of life who some years ago abandoned the children on the Blood Reserve and left the country. They were taken into the Catholic Boarding School on the Blood Reserve and cared for by the Sisters there until they were transferred some six or seven years ago to this institution and placed under the care of the Sisters here.

Albert and Sylvester Belcourt, born of Half-breed parents following the Indian mode of life in the Lac Ste. Anne country, and unable to so bring up the children as to make them useful members of the community.

Napoleon, Joseph, Agnes and Louise Caillis, children of Half-breed parents. The mother is dead. The father old and somewhat infirmed, is occasionally able to work, but has a hard enough time to support himself.

Mary and Agnes Hall, from Medicine Hat. The mother was a Half-breed woman named Brasseur. She is dead. The father's whereabouts is unknown.

Albertine McKay, a Half-breed, whose both parents are dead. The mother, Mathilda Bishop, was a regularly authorized pupil of this institution.

I submit those cases for consideration by the Department as to whether they do not form part of the "great charitable work", referred to by the Superintendent of Indian Education, and which, he states, "must be carried on by the Dominion Government, aided by Christian Missionaries".

It might, of course, be argued that the statement's scope is confined to the illegitimate off-spring of Indian women of legal status. But such a narrow and technical interpretation would defeat the object of a policy designed to save from becoming outcasts and menaces to society children of mixed blood for whose proper upbringing there are no other agencies than our Indian Schools. The policy as I interpret it was given a measure of effect to when Inspector Graham, acting under Department instructions, gathered at Medicine Hat and placed in this institution a number of non-annuitant children of mixed blood. I can see no difference between these children and those I have mentioned. They are plainly of mixed blood, indeed in one in particular the white blood has allowed of no external evidences of red. There can be no objection to Principals of Schools being allowed to do what the Department had Inspector Graham do, and I shall be glad to hear that the wise policy referred to is not to be confined in its operation to what was done through him.

There is a case in Lethbridge to which it seems to me the policy should apply. Louise Rabaska, an ex-pupil of this School, and, I understand a treaty Indian, married one Godin, a Half-breed. He is in the Penitentiary. There are three children, I am told, of school age. The mother is unable to provide for their education and proper upbringing. They

are in the way of degradation. I would suggest that the Principal be authorized to take these children into the School.

I should be pleased to be advised of the Department's attitude towards the position taken in this communication.

Your Obedient Servant,

J. A. J. McKenna, LL.D, I.R.C.I.S.  
(NAC, RG 10, vol. 6031, File 150-9, part 1)

Ottawa, January 26, 1911

Rev. Sir,

I beg to advise you that it has been decided not to permit in future the admission of half-breed children as grant earners in industrial schools conducted by the Department for the education of Indian children. Furthermore, no half-breed children shall be admitted to any of these schools unless Indian children cannot be obtained to complete the number of pupils for which a grant is provided in the Parliamentary appropriation; in which event the Superintendent General may permit the admission of any half-breed child, but the Department will not pay any grant for such half-breed child nor any part of the cost of its maintenance or education whatever.

You will be good enough to acknowledge the receipt of this communication.

Your obedient servant,

Asst. Deputy and Secretary  
(NAC, RG 10, vol. 6031, File 150-9, part 1)

## Appendix D

### Schools Operated by Indian Affairs Branch – Alberta Region (1964)

SCHOOL	ADDRESS	NO. OF CLASSROOMS	DORMITORY ACCOMMODATION
Alexander RC	Riviere Qui Barre	5	
Alexis RC	Glenevis	3	
Assumption RC	Assumption	4	100
Big Horn UC	Rocky Mountain House	1	
Blood RC	Cardston	19	230
Blue Quills RC	St. Paul	5	185
Boyer River RC	Rocky Lane	1	
Cold Lake RC	Beaver Crossing	5	
Crowfoot RC	Cluny	14	140
Desmarais RC	Desmarais	3	150
Driftpile RC	Faust	2	
Eden Valley ACC	Longview	2	
Edmonton UC	Edmonton	Hostel	only 140
Ermineskin RC	Hobbema	24	222
Fort Vermilion RC	Fort Vermilion	3	70
Frog Lake ACC	Heinsburg	2	
Frog Lake RC	Heinsburg	2	
Fox Lake RC	Fort Vermillion	3	
Gooderham UC	Duffield	4	
Goodfish Lake RC	Goodfish Lake	2	
Habay RC	Assumption	2	
Joussard RC	Joussard	7	125
Long Lake RC	Hoselaw	1	
Montana Bapt.	Ponoka	1	
Morley UC	Morley	10	59
Nome Lake RC	Calais	3	
Nordeg River Menn.	Rocky Mountain House	1	
Old Sun ACC	Gleichen	5	142
Pakan UC	Goodfish Lake	2	
Peigan ACC	Brocket	3	
Peigan RC	Brocket	7	
Saddle Lake RC	St. Brides	3	
Samson UC	Hobbema	3	
Standoff RC	Standoff	6	
Stony Plain RC	Winterburn	1	
St. Paul's ACC	Cardston	5	200
Sunchild Menn.	Rocky Mountain House	4	
Upper Hay River RC	Meander River	2	
Wabasca ACC	Wabasca	2	63
Charles Camsell Hospital School			Hostel 140
Holy Angels (Church operated)			

Source: Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (1998).

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