

# Missionary Classrooms in a Northern Indian Agency

by

George Mallett Kaufmann

Bachelor of Arts (History) Simon Fraser University 2004  
Bachelor of Arts (Archaeology) Simon Fraser University 2004  
Bachelor of General Studies Simon Fraser University 2004

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# APPROVAL

**Name:** George Mallett Kaufmann  
**Degree:** Master of Arts  
**Title of Thesis:** Missionary Classrooms in a Northern Indian Agency

**Examining Committee:**

**Chair:** Robin Barrow, Professor,  
Faculty of Education

---

**Suzanne de Castell, Professor,  
Faculty of Education  
Senior Supervisor**

---

**John Welch, Associate Professor,  
Department of Archaeology  
Committee Member**

---

**Annie Ross, Assistant Professor,  
Department of Archaeology  
Committee Member**

---

**Dolores van der Wey, Assistant Professor  
Faculty of Education  
External Examiner**

**Date Defended/Approved:**

DECEMBER 18, 2009.



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## **Abstract**

The Twentieth Century ushered in an era of progressive education for urban British Columbian students. For Indians living in the Stikine Indian Agency, education meant a seasonal missionary classroom or a distant residential school, and almost certain exposure to deadly communicable diseases or other forms of abuse. During their compulsory attendance at these schools, Indian cultures and languages were aggressively attacked. Half-days spent in the classroom channelled young Indian students towards the bible, minor trades, the farm, and domestic services, none of which prepared them for life after residential schools, neither in the bush nor in the urban environment. The echoes of this failed mission school education policy still reverberate through contemporary schools, in the form of poor educational outcomes and abysmal skills assessments for the students of the Stikine. Heritage stewardship and place-based education projects in the local community offer brighter horizons for future students.

Keywords: Ethnohistory; Stikine; Tahltan; curriculum

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# Missionary Classrooms in a Northern Indian Agency

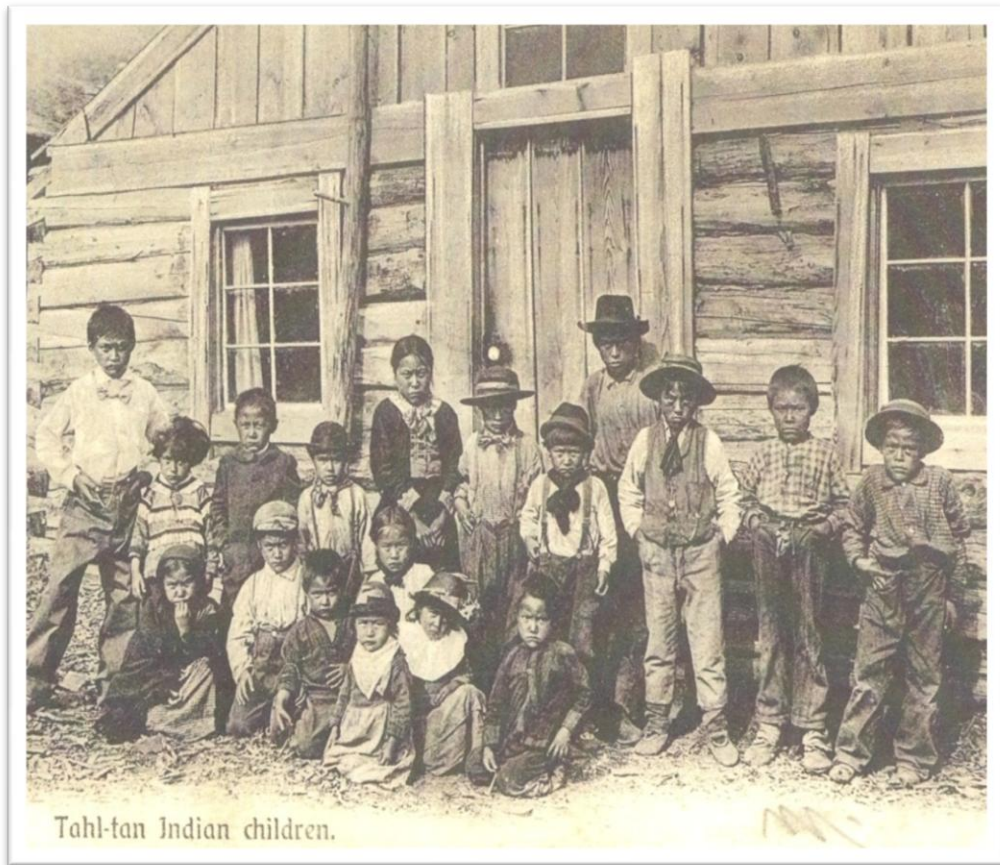
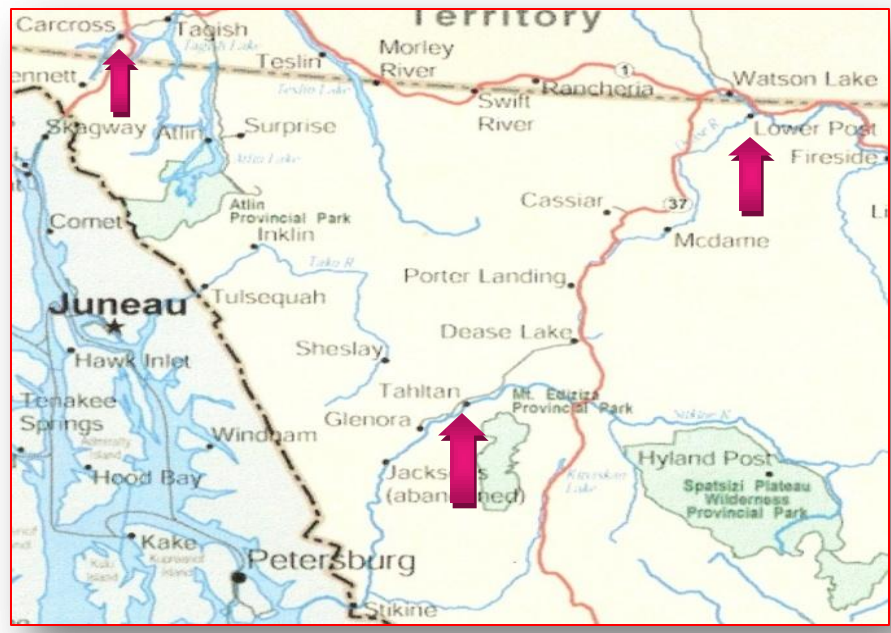


Figure 1: Anglican mission day school at Tahltan 1910



Figure 2: Study Area



## Introduction

This thesis examines the ethno-history of Indian classrooms in northwestern British Columbia and in the southern Yukon during the last century. Today, most of this area falls within the jurisdiction of the Stikine School District in northwest British Columbia. Indian children first attended seasonal missionary day schools beginning in the early 1900s. When larger residential schools were constructed, children who were baptized as Protestants were sent to Carcross, Yukon after 1911 to attend Chooutla Residential School and those children baptized as Catholics were sent to the distant Lejac Residential School at Fraser Lake, British Columbia. It was not until 1951 when Lower Post Residential School opened that Tahltan children attended a Catholic Residential school closer to home. When the federal government finally closed Chooutla in 1969 and Lower Post in 1975, the remaining students entered the public school system where most struggled to meet Ministry of Education academic expectations. The education they received in the mission schools system, and possible curricular directions for the future of education in the Stikine School District are discussed.

Of interest to this research on the school life of the Stikine children in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century is the parallel development of the modern public school system in the province for young British Columbians, while mission schools in the Stikine

languished in the dreary rote repetition of religious mantras. The mission schools that existed within the segregated Indian system at the turn of the century were the direct result of federal policies that were guided by racist documents such as the 1879 *Davin Report*. This report recommended that the responsibility to educate Indian children should be relegated to the religious denominations. Even as this symbiotic relationship between the missionaries and the federal government blossomed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, there were those within the hierarchy of the church that questioned the effectiveness of the missionary effort to educate Canada's Indians. Abrupt change comes hard for any entrenched bureaucracy, and the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada was no exception, as calls for reform from within the religious bureaucracy fell on deaf ears. Early missionary narratives and public school textbooks presented images and narratives that personified the racist attitudes towards Indians in this province in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

Those Indians who attended missionary schools confronted more than an inferior learning environment. They also faced grim mortality rates as infectious diseases ran rampant through the missionary institutions. Those in authority remained unmoved by the warnings from local and international scientific bodies on tuberculosis, and did little more than act as accountants concerned mainly with their bottom lines. The missions themselves often operated as economic enterprises based on per capita funding agreements that insured interdenominational friction, as well as poorly funded and poorly delivered education services. As elsewhere in Canada's dark past, those who survived the residential school experience told tales of neglect and abuse.

Since the closing of the residential schools and the entry of Indians into the public education system, another sad tale of poor outcomes in education for Indian children emerges, and is illustrated in the latest provincial *Foundation Skills Assessments* (FSA). The dismal statistics that testify to the poor performance by today's First Nations students are the creation of successive generations of government curriculum planners and the evangelical church bureaucracies. Together they shaped the educational world of Indigenous peoples for most of the last century, and reaffirmed Superintendent Sifton's designs for Indian education. To this end, this thesis reminds the reader, and the school administration of School District #87, that a rich cultural history exists just beneath the surface of their local landscape.

The area under study and peoples who have lived here share a complex origin and irregular geographic parameters. Soon after the turn of the century, the Vowell Commission in 1905 established two small reserves for the Tahltan peoples, and in 1906 the first Indian agent arrived on the Stikine. He presided over the new Cassiar Indian Agency from his Telegraph Creek Office. Soon after the agency name was changed to the Stikine Indian Agency, and when demographic patterns shifted, the scope of the agency jurisdiction broadened to include the Kaskas from the Dease and Liard Rivers, the Atlin, the Teslin Lake Tlingits, as well as the Nelson River and Fort Grahame Indians. As a result of the McKenna-McBride Commission visit to the Stikine in 1915-16, the once-vast Indian lands were divided into a package of small reserves. Although officially anchored in name to their new reserves, the people continued to live as semi-nomadic hunters and trappers, frequently crossing back and

forth between the Yukon and northern British Columbia. After the completion of the Alaska Highway in 1943, new corridor communities drew populations closer and lessened the relevancy of an Indian Agency Office in Telegraph Creek. In 1954, the Stikine and Yukon Indian Agencies merged into a new Yukon Indian Agency with an Indian Agency's office in Whitehorse, which now serves the interests of the Indians of the Stikine School District. In terms of the realms of the religious denominations, our study area also comprises the northern section of the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia, the southern Yukon Diocese and the Vicariate of British Columbia for the Roman Catholic Church.

The demographics of this area are also complex. The March *1912 Annual Report* of the Department of Indian Affairs listed four distinct bands residing here. The Tahltan with 222 members, the Kaskas at McDame Creek held 49 members; the Frances and Lake Thicketies at Liard and Frances Lake had 60 members and the Atlin peoples (Tackoos) at Atlin Lake totalled 80-90 members. Because of my previous two years of field research centred at Tahltan village, which falls within the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia, this research will focus primarily on the Tahltan and the district schooling efforts of the Church of England, later evolving into the Church of England in Canada (CCE) and finally in the 1950s, an independent Anglican Church of Canada (AC). There were Catholic schools in the Stikine Indian Agency as well, and they suffered from the same operational problems as Anglican schools. The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) *1914 Annual Report* listed among the Tahltans 160 Anglicans, 30 Presbyterian and 42 Roman Catholics. The principal



villages were listed as Tahltan, Drytown (adjacent to Telegraph Creek), Kaska and Atlin. Today, the study area comprises the Stikine School District #87, with schools at Lower Post, Atlin, Telegraph Creek and Dease Lake. This is the largest school district in British Columbia, comprising 188,034 square kilometres of rivers, mountains and boreal forests, and is one of several underachievers on the Ministry of Education's FSA.

## **Research methods**

The methods of data collection used in this thesis project were necessarily wide and varied to capture the essence of missionary education in the Stikine Indian Agency in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. By employing both document research of government and church records, the holdings of public libraries and archives as well as my personal experiences as an archaeologist on community-based archaeology projects over the last two decades in the rural British Columbia, this thesis seeks to gather and assess objective information to determine the failures of 20<sup>th</sup> Century education in the Stikine School District, and to suggest alternative curricula for the next century based on the cultural heritage of local archaeological sites.

A considerable volume of material available in the public libraries and archives, and from internet sources, provided a large database for this research. This data base was supported by a patchwork of sources that included not only articles, texts, journals and documents, but also maps, photographs, drawings, videos and DVDs that, when

viewed as contributors to the larger narrative of Stikine Indian schooling, take on added depth of meaning, not possible when viewed as single sources. Ethnographic and contemporary academic texts and journal articles on Stikine Indian culture, church history and residential school experiences in Canada provided a baseline of data of the social history of Indian education in the west. Although mission school operations in the Stikine Agency have, until more recent times, received scant attention (Miller 1996, Milloy 1999), church newsletters were an alternative source for mission schools information from the early 1900s.

The Anglican archives at the Vancouver School of Theology provided access to their bound copies of the Chooutla School monthly newsletter, *Northern Lights* from 1913. Subtitled, “*published in the interests of the Chooutla Indian School,*” and printed in the school print shop, the *Northern Lights* newsletter contained old photos of the staff, school and students, as well as supportive articles written by missionaries and their staff about the toil and pleasantries of Christian work in the wilderness. While Chooutla and Lower Post Residential Schools are little more than brief footnotes in the mainstream academic literature on Residential schools, information was available from other sources. The University Of Alberta’s, Rare Books holdings of early missionary autobiographies and biographies, such as Bishop Bompas of the Yukon and Bishop Ridley of Diocese of New Caledonia yielded a missionary mindset identical to the prevailing missionary/colonist attitudes of other missionary adventure writers in the Canadian west. Indians were viewed as sick and dying patients by the missionaries who maintained a racist, cultural superiority that justified their attitudes

towards Indian education. The Church Missionary Society files at Simon Fraser University provided private letters from Tahltan's first missionary residents and memoranda from church officials on the future of missionary work in the diocese. Access to the Department of Indian Affairs *RG-10 Series* and *Annual Reports* provided an avenue to files on both Lower Post and Chooutla Indian Residential Schools that included communications between religious officials, residential school principals and administrators and their counterparts, colleagues, inspectors and sympathizers at Indian Affairs.

A visit to the provincial archives in Victoria yielded "miscellaneous materials" on Tahltan language and culture from early missionaries in the early 1900s, F. Palgrave and T. P. Thorman. The Yukon Archives in Whitehorse provided me with a copy of J. Krieger's 1971, *Tabl-Tan Mission Historic Site Project*. This was an interesting report since he, and his three-man crew spent several weeks conducting an inventory of the mission buildings at Tahltan Mission. During my research, I became aware of the existence of the *Palgrave Journal* that was kept at the Diocese of Caledonia archives and contained the personal entries of Tahltan Mission's first missionary. I first read this journal in the Prince Rupert archives of the Diocese of Caledonia during the winter of 2008 and spent the next 6 months trying to obtain a second look, which I was only able to do with the assistance of the Archivist at the Vancouver School of Theology. Palgrave was the first missionary at Tahltan Mission and his diary was a rich source of primary data on the social pressures facing the Stikine Indians in the early 1900s, and illustrates what role the Anglican mission had in abetting that social

change. The Public Library in Prince Rupert held bound copies of the *North British Columbia News: a Journal of Missionary Endeavour in the Diocese of Caledonia, British Columbia* and I was able to obtain photocopies of the relevant editions that featured news, missionary adventures and pleas for donations from the Tahltan Mission from 1910 to the 1940s.

Internet sources such as the Union of BC Indian Chiefs web site held information on the Stikine Indian Agency in the early 20th Century and *The Homeroom* ([records.viu.ca/homeroom/](http://records.viu.ca/homeroom/)), British Columbia's history of education web site posted a number of relevant links to administrative, legislative and curricular issues in BC's school history. The web site for the Toronto area's Boyd School of Archaeology and the many place-based education websites all yielded interesting data on education and teaching beyond the institutional classroom. The three-part video series, that begins with the 1993 *Mission School Syndrome*, the 1995 *Healing the Mission School Syndrome* and the 2002 *Mission School Syndrome* sequel (Istchenko 1993;195;2002), as well as the 2008 autobiographical DVD *My Own Private Lower Post* (Aucoin and Loverin 2008), provided compelling human testimony from the survivors and casualties of the residential school system in my study area. This series provided a valuable limb of fieldwork that was already in the public domain, which is important since it is unlikely that these highly personal narratives involving sexual misconduct and lawsuits would have received ethics approval from any university without great difficulty. The three-part video series on the residential school experiences of young Yukon and north B.C. Indians, comprised eye witness accounts and provided very

compelling testimony to the extent of the cultural and spiritual destruction that permeated the walls of the missionary school rooms at Chooutla and Lower Post Residential Schools. Because the academic world is only waking up to the missionary school experience in Northwest British Columbia, the narrative of these victims in these videos and DVDs have rarely been cited in the academic literature on the residential school experience.

My own personal archaeological fieldwork added another perspective to the database of this thesis. Throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s, I worked each summer as an archaeologist with the Barkley Sound Archaeological Survey, on the west coast of Vancouver Island. These summer projects were collaborative research efforts between Douglas College/SFU archaeologist A.D. McMillan and Nuu-chah-nulth ethnographer/educator Denis St. Claire and the First Nations of Barkley Sound with a goal to add archaeology to their traditional knowledge base and to establish their heritage stewardship over these traditional territories. One component of these community-based archaeology projects was to introduce the First Nations trainees to the methods of recovery of the material culture from their ancient traditional villages on the many islands in Barkley Sound, and to assist them, whenever possible, in the rediscovery of their own culture history.

During the 2004-2005 field seasons, the University of Victoria archaeology field school attended our excavations on the island of Huu-ay (Diana Island) near Bamfield, B.C. These students were able to earn academic credits for the completion

of their field projects and written assignments over the course of the 7-week field seasons. During the winter terms of 2005 and 2006 at Coyote Creek Elementary School in Surrey, BC, a colleague and I taught a week long field seminar on archaeological field techniques using a 2 x 2 meter excavation unit we constructed in the school yard, adjacent to the portable classroom, rather than inside the classroom. I was able to obtain unwanted faunal remains and lithic detritus from SFU's archaeology lab, and along with our own collection of old metal bits, clamshells and charcoal, we were able to reconstruct the stratigraphy of an ancient, multi-use archaeological site. Thirty Grade 7 students were involved in small group projects to establish a site datum and develop concepts of three-dimensional measurement of provenience for the artifacts and features excavated in the unit. Student groups screened the excavated materials, catalogued the finds from their assigned quadrants and wrote interpretative reports of the artifacts and features they recorded, and how people might have lived at this site in the past. The teacher was able to assigned credit for the group projects. Although this project was considered experimental and not continued in following years, it appeared to be worthwhile and was very popular with the students.

My introduction to the archaeology of the Stikine area came in 2005 when I participated in the Galore Creek Project archaeological impact assessment of a road and pipeline right-of-way, stretching 140 km through the traditional territories of the Stikine Indians in Northwest British Columbia. In 2008 and 2009, I returned to the proposed access road to the Galore Creek mine site. At several locations, several

Tahltan trainees and I excavated the remains of small hunting camps and rock quarry activities along the Iskut River, which is a large tributary of the Stikine River. The SSHRC-funded Tahltan Archaeological Project 2007-2008, based at the traditional village at Tahltan, on a bench of flat land above the Stikine River near Telegraph Creek, British Columbia further fuelled the research of this thesis. Working with Dr. John Welch, Canadian Research Chair (tier 2) in Indigenous Heritage Stewardship with the Department of Archaeology and the School of Resource and Environment Management at SFU, and Vera Asp, Tahltan PhD. student at SFU, we were able to gather primary data on Tahltan village life through our excavations. My field notes and photographs at Tahltan village, and my recollections over the last 5 years on the Stikine, as well as my collection and documentation of the material culture recovered from Tahltan and adjoining areas provided another source of inspiration for alternative curricular horizons in the Stikine School District.

Throughout this thesis, the demeaning language of the colonial narrative is repeated, not to offend those targeted by the vernacular, but to inform readers who are unaware of the frequency of its use in the ethnohistoric record. The pejorative language of *uncivilized, savage, heathen, squam, Half-Breed, sorcerer, and cannibal* that often are cited in this project have been essential elements of the curricular narrative in the public schools for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The frequent use of the term *Half-Breed* during the course of this narrative is particularly vague. Western Civilization has always been quick to assign genetic labels of partial purity to those peoples who are not lily white, yet there have been no pure blood lines in European history since the

hewing of the Romanov family tree in 1917. Some of the place names in the study area require an explanation. Fort Liard was a Hudson's Bay trading post in the 1870s and became Lower Post to distinguish itself from the trading post on the north Liard River. Caribou Crossing in the southern Yukon was renamed Carcross by Bishop Bompas, and the new residential school built there in 1911 was called, in most documentation, Carcross Residential School. It was also routinely called Chooutla (laughing waters) Residential School in church and government documentation.

## **Objectives**

This thesis seeks to contribute to the history of Aboriginal education in Northern British Columbia over the last century in order to understand the contemporary realities of Stikine School District students who have consistently underachieved, and who today occupy the lowest rungs on the educational ladder, as indicated by the provincial "foundation skills assessment".

At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the Superintendent of Indian Affairs assured the public that Indians would not be schooled to replace White men in the job market. This thesis will investigate the education system established for by missionary groups in the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. How did the White classroom differ from the mission schoolhouse?

A study of literature concerning Indigenous education the early 1900s makes evident the widespread conviction that Indians were not seen as being on par intellectually or



morally with Whites. What were the contributions of the early missionaries and curriculum planners to these racist philosophies?

This thesis will also review the extensive body of evidence that suggests that infectious diseases and White indifference abetted the decimation of Indian populations in the Stikine district well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. This decline in demographics made it easier for the missionary establishment to operate unrestricted in the northwest. This thesis will demonstrate that the partnerships established between the federal government and the main religious denominations ensured the continued failure of Indian education.

The focus of this study is the Tahltan mission and the Anglican missionaries who stood at the front of the classroom. What was education like for the school-age Indian children in this region? As well as Anglican missions, there were many active Oblate mission houses in the study area, so this thesis reviews the efforts of both the Anglican Residential school at Carcross and the Oblate Residential school at Lower Post to Christianize and moralize Aboriginal students.

The thesis concludes with a critical examination of the abrupt social change in Aboriginal society that followed the advance of White encroachment into the Stikine as the 20<sup>th</sup> Century advanced, and asks about implications for educational reform in this region. The argument is advanced that the failures of British Columbian Aboriginal education policy and the relentless economic incursions into this once-pristine country by multi-national conglomerates offer ample justification for a

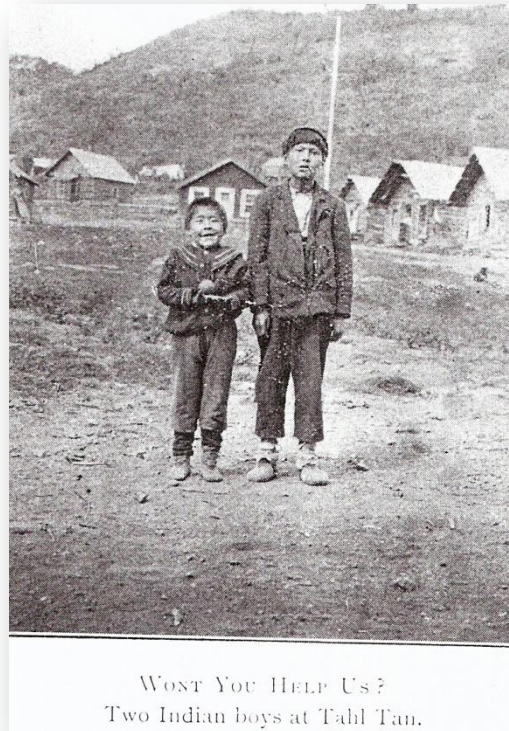
place-based education that fosters heritage stewardship through community-based archaeological projects in the Tahltan and regions like it. As this thesis demonstrates, a new and far more promising curriculum for students in regions such as this one can be discovered just beneath the surface of the local landscape.

## Chapter One:

### Indian Education: A Lasting Legacy from Indian Affairs

*“Do not worry, we are not going to educate Indians to compete with White men for their jobs.”*

Clifford Sifton, Superintendent of Indian Affairs circa 1900



**Figure 3: School age children at Tahltan  
(North British Columbia News 1910)**

A review of the Ministry of Education's skills assessments of the Stikine School District is a necessary beginning to this thesis in order to understand the present condition of educational achievement for Stikine students. Understanding how these students perform and compare to their contemporaries in British Columbia makes clear the importance of tracing the way such spectacular educational failure was arrived at.

More than a century after Superintendent Sifton's assurances that Indigenous peoples would not be educated to compete with their colonizers, the BC Ministry of Education reported the results of the 2008 FSA. These tests are administered annually to each school district, to assess the standards of student performance for reading comprehension, writing and numeracy for Grades 4 and 7. The results of these most recent tests indicate that the Superintendent of Indian Affairs was apparently correct in his prognostications concerning the "competition" between Indians and White men. Indians have not been trained to compete with their neighbours. In the four public schools in the Stikine School District #87 ([www.sd87.bc.ca/](http://www.sd87.bc.ca/)), dismal results are posted for the 2009 FSA for both 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grades. Atlin School and Denetia School (Lower Post) did not report tests results, because their small student populations in Grades 4 and 7 produced non-representative statistics. At Dease Lake, 100% of the Grade 4 test group did not meet expected standards of performance. Declining scores of all three categories (reading,

writing and numeracy) were recorded from the previous test year. At the Tahltan School (Telegraph Creek), 80% of the Grade 4 test group did not yet meet expectations in either writing or numeracy. On the District level, the results are equally grim. Throughout the district, not one student exceeded expectations for reading comprehension, writing or numeracy. Declining test scores from previous years, particularly in numeracy, were noted. Of the Grade 4s in the Stikine School District, only 12% satisfied expected numeracy standards, while this declined even further to 8% in 2009. Of the Grade 7s tested, 92% did not meet expected standards of performance for numeracy ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/08787002.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/08787002.pdf)).

For 2008/09, the 17 teachers and 4 administrators of the Stikine School District reported 264 students, of which 215 students (81.4%) were Aboriginal. As the economy of the region experienced a sharp downturn, the combined student population declined 7.7% from the previous year. The student grade distribution was as follows; 15 kindergarten, 152 Elementary and 87 High School students, plus 10 others in ungraded categories in 4 schools that received a 2007/08 operating grant of \$5,546,169. Of those students meeting or exceeding expectations in the FSA reading scores, the Stikine School District ranked last for both Grades 4 and 7. In both writing and numeracy scores for both Grades 4 and 7, the district shared the bottom-three rankings with other First Nations communities on the Central Coast and Vancouver Island West ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/keyinfo/pdfs/ski09.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/keyinfo/pdfs/ski09.pdf)). Statistics from the 2007-2008 FSA, indicate the Aboriginal students underachieve in each of the core categories. Aboriginal (Ab.) and Non-Aboriginal (Non-Ab.) student scores

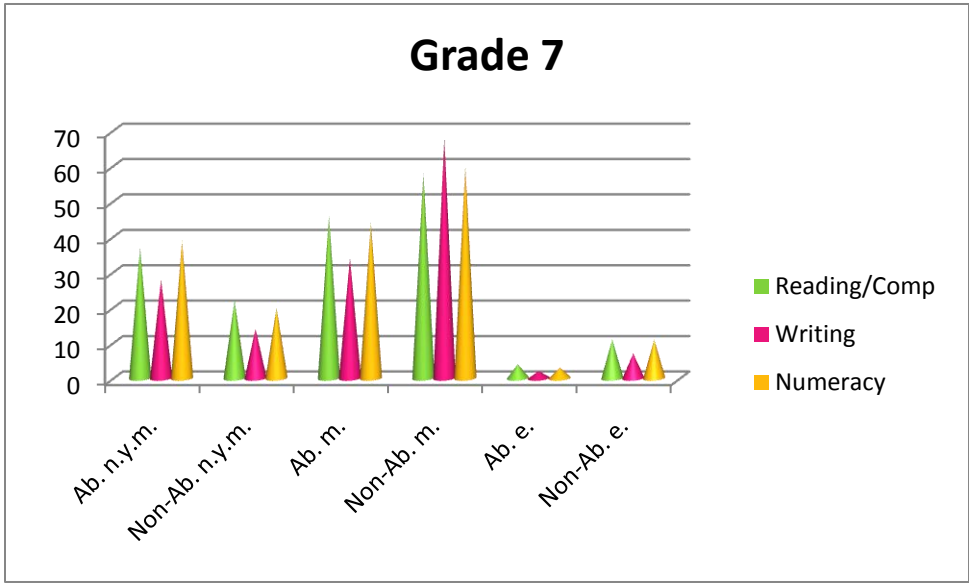
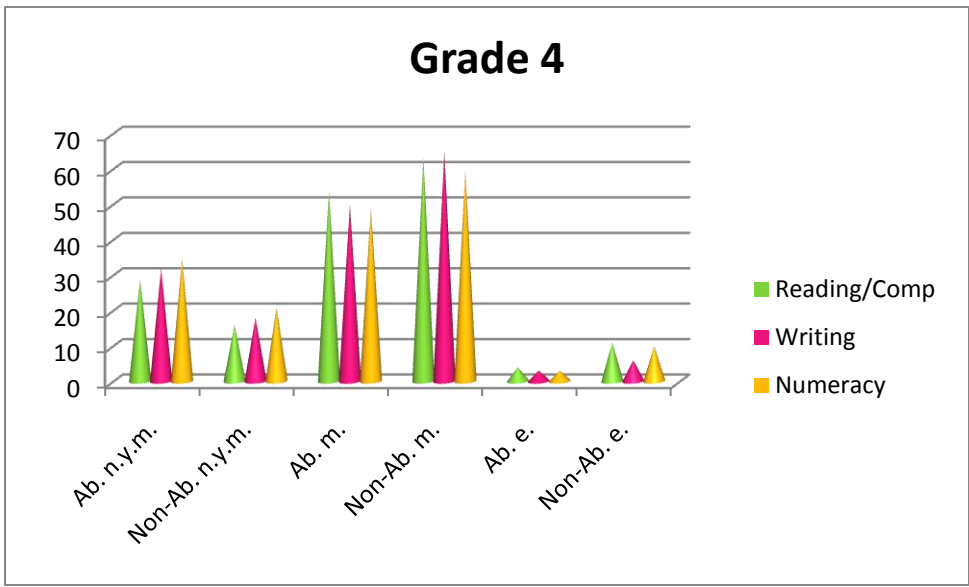
for Grades 4 and 7 on the Provincial FSA are compared over the three core areas; reading comprehension, writing and numeracy. Students are rated on an *expected standard of performance*, and according to their test scores are categorized as; not yet meeting expectations (n. y. m), meeting expectations (m.), or exceeding expectations (e.).

As in previous years, the elite independent schools in the south of the province continue to exceed expected standards of performance on the 2009 FSA. York House, Saint George's and West Point Grey Academy all scored #1 in the Fraser Institute rankings for 2009. Crofton House ranked #4, down from its usual first ranking while Vancouver's Public Schools fared considerably lower in the rankings. Britannia, a school with a large Aboriginal student population (48%) ranked 288, while King George (1914) and Gladstone (1950) both ranked 238. Vancouver's first Junior High School which opened in 1928, Kitsilano ranked a respectable 45 out of 316 participating schools. The schools of the Stikine School District were not ranked by the Fraser Institute (<http://www.vancouver.sun.com/maps/schoolrankings>). In the FSA results for Crofton House Grade 4s, only one student of 40 failed to meet expectations in numeracy, while 20 students exceeded expectations. Even more successful were the Grade 7s, with most students exceeding expectations in all three categories ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/03996004.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/fsa/03996004.pdf)).

"How are we doing?" (2007/2008) reported Aboriginal student performance in public schools. Over 60,000 students self-identify as Aboriginal. This is 10.3% of

BC's student population. Comparisons between Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal school populations reveal equally depressing results, with Non-Aboriginal students eclipsing Aboriginal students in every category of skills assessment. In both Grades 4 and 7, a third or more of the aboriginal students do not meet the expected standard of performance in any of the three core categories. Many of the schools in neighbouring districts also have large Aboriginal student populations. Nisga'a High School at New Aiyansh was ranked 313 out of 316 according to the Fraser Institute. Watson Lake in the Yukon, a few short miles from Lower Post, ranked 306 out of 316, while 23.3% of all exams at the school earned failures. This school enjoyed a Fraser Institute overall rating of 2.1 out of 10 ([www.vancouver.sun.com/maps/schoolrankings](http://www.vancouver.sun.com/maps/schoolrankings)).

Aboriginal students throughout the province underachieved when compared to Non-Aboriginal students. In the requisite secondary school courses, *Principles of Mathematics 10*, 58% of Non-Aboriginal students scored C+ or better, compared to 37% for Aboriginal students. *English 12* produced test scores of 69% of Non-Aboriginals, and only 50% of Aboriginal students attaining a C+ or better. Even in *First Nation Studies 12*, only 48% of Aboriginal students scored a C+ or better, compared to 61% for Non-Aboriginal students. Since 2003, Aboriginal graduation from BC's high schools has hovered around mid-40%, peaking at 50% during the 2006/2007 test year. During this period, Non-Aboriginal graduation rates remained in the mid-70% range ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/perf2008.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/abed/perf2008.pdf)).



**Figure 4: 2007-2008 FSA results**  
 (www.bced.gov.ca/abed/perf2008.pdf)

The Stikine School District #87 was the recipient of only one Dogwood District/Authority Award (\$1000) of the 3000 awards distributed to students throughout BC's school districts. Other Districts with Aboriginal majorities, such as



the Central Coast District #49 received one award, Vancouver Island West District #84, received two Dogwoods, Haida Gwai/Queen Charlottes District #50 was awarded two Dogwoods, while Nisga'a District #92 received none ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/dawards/prov.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/dawards/prov.pdf)). In 2006-2007, of the 18 first-time Grade 12 students, only four graduated resulting in a 22% graduation rate. During the 2007-2008 school year, there were 19 first-time Grade 12 students in the district and only 2 graduated. This resulted in an 11% graduation rate. ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/graduation/087.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/graduation/087.pdf)). The Dogwood Completion rate tracks a set of first-time Grade 8 students to their graduation from High School in a six-year period. Considering this 6-year completion rate, in the Stikine School district only 36% of all students completed High School in the allotted time. This is the lowest rate the in the province ([www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/exams/comp rate/prov.pdf](http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/reports/pdfs/exams/comp rate/prov.pdf)). The competition in education between Indians and Whites that Sifton foresaw yielded some results that did not completely favour the children of the colonizer. As a group, Indians have a higher rate of absenteeism and dropout rates than other student groups. Why today's Indian students of the Stikine underachieve in comparison to other student groups in this province can best be illustrated in the events of the past century.

## Chapter Two:

### One province, several education systems

Because the primary focus of this research centres on missionary education in the Stikine, it is important to examine in some detail, the early decades of the century, when it first gained a solid foothold in the area. It was during these times that the table was set for the future of a separate and inferior Indian education. The provincial FSA have placed all the provincial schools on the same scale of expectations, yet not all schools have been provided with the same opportunities. This was particularly evident in the development of the public school system, where an expensive bureaucracy of professional educators and modern school buildings delivered a superior education to the White communities of British Columbia by the early 1900s.

Unlike eastern Canada which had already been claimed, conquered and colonized for several centuries, it was not until the early 19<sup>th</sup> Century that the outside world knew of the remote northwest corner of this continent, or of the Indigenous peoples who lived on, or near the Stikine River. Norse settlers and Basques fishing fleets visited Canada's eastern shores by 1000 A.D. John Cabot's visit to present-day Newfoundland in 1497 and Jacques Cartier's voyages on the St. Lawrence River in 1534 ushered in the early colonization of Canada. Historical events on the Northwest Coast unfolded at a much slower pace. Only around the late 1790s, did Russian

trading ships visit the Stikine River estuary to trade for the fine otter pelts in great demand by the fashion salons of Paris and St. Petersburg. Soon after these maritime contacts, a series of brief land forays towards the Stikine were initiated by Hudson's Bay traders coming from the river systems west of the Rockies. In 1834, John McLeod "discovered" Dease Lake while travelling from the Liard River to the headwaters of the Tuya River. Four years later, Robert Campbell wintered at Dease Lake in 1838 and like his predecessor, left little impression upon the land. An influx of gold miners and fortune seekers, beginning on some tributary creeks of the Stikine in the early 1860s, and in 1874 with the Cassiar gold strike, brought opportunities for economic gain through trade and services for the local Indians. Alarmed by the influx of American miners in the Alaskan panhandle, the British created the Stikine Territories, that later became amalgamated with the new province. According to early ethnography (Emmons 1911: 31) by 1875, the Tahltan built a modern village near the confluence of the Tahltan and Stikine Rivers. It featured some European-style log houses constructed by the remaining Tahltan peoples who had survived the last wave of small pox. By the turn of the century, the older villages were deserted as Tahltan and Telegraph Creek became the centres of human activity.

By 1876, small Hudson Bay trading posts were established at McDames Creek on the Dease River and further north at Fort Liard, (later Lower Post), at the Liard and Dease Rivers confluence. In the late 1890s, the Klondike Gold Rush caused another, much larger influx of outsiders to pass through this territory on their way to the gold fields of the Yukon. Gold fever arrived with the paddle-wheeled steamers that

struggled up the Stikine River from Wrangell, Alaska, loaded with supplies and with an army of miners and assorted fortune seekers. As the Stikine became too treacherous to travel further upriver, all river traffic offloaded at Glenora, near the western edge of Tahltan/Tlingit territory for the inland journey to the Yukon gold fields. Soon to follow the gold miners were the missionaries. An Anglican missionary, Reverend F. Palgrave directed the initial construction of the mission church at Tahltan Village around 1898 and soon began to lead the people in the Lord's Prayer; their first exposure to a missionary education. As the 20<sup>th</sup> Century commenced, Indigenous populations of the Stikine Plateau, as elsewhere on the west coast had been decimated from repeated epidemics of small pox, whooping cough, influenza and the deadly tuberculosis. These diseases crept along the rivers and footpaths, horse trails and trading routes that brought white men into their country, and set upon defenceless Indians whenever they were contacted. It was from under these conditions of catastrophic demographic loss that the mission school system built its foundations for an evangelical curriculum of cultural replacement (Albright 1984; Boyd 1994; Duff 1997; Fisher 1992; Thorman n.d.). One of the central themes of this thesis, if the provincial FAS scores are an important barometer of how many contemporary Stikine students fail to achieve curricular expectations, I think it is also important to know how their educational world evolved, and under what conditions did Indian children learn during the past century. At the same time, what were the past conditions of learning in other school districts in the urban centres where the

schoolchildren of today exceed the academic expectations of the Ministry of Education?

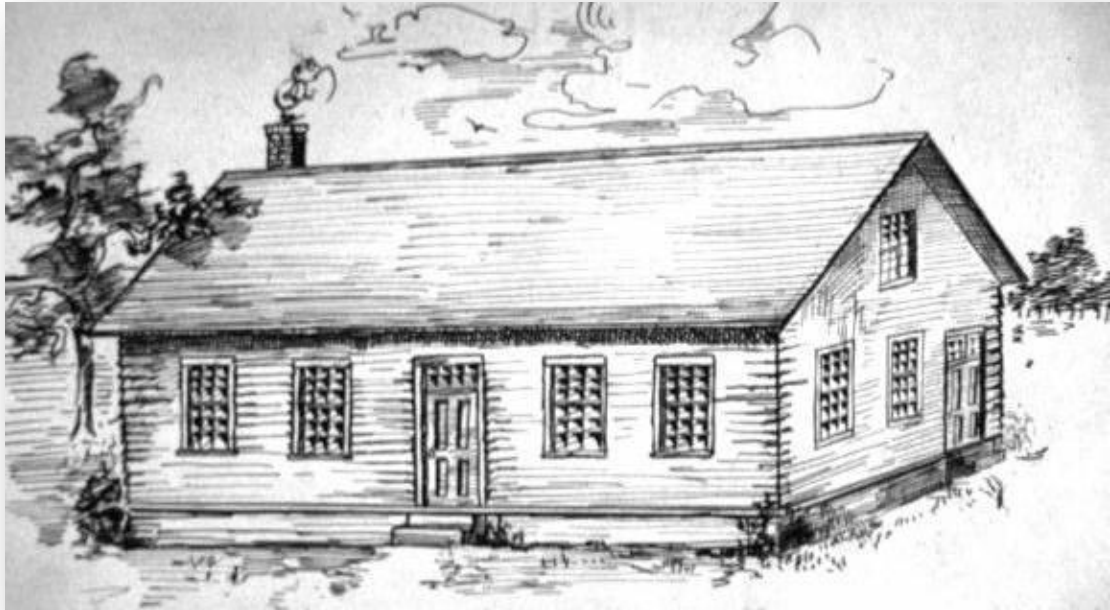


Figure 5: British Columbia's first public school in Victoria, 1853-1870s (<http://records.viu.ca/homeroom/content/Schools/Public/colsch.htm>. From a 1917 sketch in the Daily Colonist. In 1903, Victoria College offered high school courses on this site. Victoria College evolved into the University of Victoria in 1963)

While the missionary education system centered on the evangelical hymnbook and rote recitals of the Lord's Prayer reached the Stikine only by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, a modern public education system was already firmly established in southern British Columbia. Even before the last log had been cut for the Tahltan Mission schoolhouse, the provincial public school system had been operating for three decades. It began as, and continued to be, a parallel government-funded system of public education that was vastly superior to the half-hearted missionary education

received by the Indians in British Columbia (Johnson 1964; Tomkins 1986). By 1872, the new province of British Columbia legislated its first public school system and over the next several decades, in the urban centres at least, the local classroom was shaped by demands of the British immigrants that arrived in great numbers, drawn to British Columbia's fishing, mining and lumbering assets. The completion of the Pacific terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the expanded port facilities in Vancouver encouraged westward waves of immigration from the European Continent and from eastern Canada. The province opened an office in London, much like a tourist board, to inform potential emigrants of the benefits of settling here. A pamphlet titled, *British Columbia. Information for Emigrants*, by G. Sproat (1873) informed the prospective British emigrant that "Public Schools are in the hands of the people-free to all, without distinction of race or creed-attendance not compulsory yet-strictly non-sectarian-highest morality inculcated-no religious dogmas or creeds taught-uniform texts." For those emigrants of the higher social classes Sproat added, "There are very good church schools and private schools, for both sexes, in several of the larger towns. An education befitting the children of gentlemen can be obtained for both boys and girls at Victoria and New Westminster on reasonable terms" (Sproat 1873). Sproat also included a very short paragraph concerning the Indigenous peoples upon whose land they were proposing to colonize. He listed the Indian population as, "Probably about 30,000, quite quiet, over the whole mainland and island; rather saucy on west coast of Vancouver Island and in Queen Charlotte Island; useful as common labourers, and not without

capabilities as artisans.” For some unknown reason, as a positive Indian trait perhaps, Sproat added, “They use large quantities of flour” (Sproat 1873: 7). Apparently, Sproat did his job well. According to Barman (1984:16) over 175,000 English, Scots, Welsh and Irish settlers flooded into the new “Britain on the Pacific” during the first years of the 20th century. Over 24,000 of these immigrants came from the middle and upper classes of British society.

To ensure that British Columbia remained “British,” a series of head taxes beginning in 1885 attempted to restrict entry of Chinese immigrants to the province. By the beginning of the First World War in 1914, rapid immigration had pushed the provincial population to over 400,000. Vancouver had surpassed Victoria as the major population centre, growing from just over 24,000 at the turn of the century to over 120,000 ten years later, and with this expansion came the need for a mass education system.

The provincial education bureaucracy was also undergoing rapid transformation as it struggled to meet the challenges of unbridled immigration and urban growth, and what curriculum would meet the needs of this newly- industrializing society. The Public School Act of 1872 permitted municipal corporations to collect taxes for the construction of centralized schools, to set a standard curriculum that, by 1900 was less classical and more suited to the needs of an industrializing society. Researchers S. de Castell and A. Luke (1986: 87-109), identified three distinct education paradigms of literacy that have taken place in North American schools in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In

the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup>, a classical approach to literacy brought students face to face with Latin and Greek culture and a familiarity with the aristocratic ideals of the controlling elites of British Columbia. While the children of the landed immigrants recited Keats prose and Latin verse from texts from the Ontario School Board, the Indians on the Stikine and adjacent waterways received missionary day school instruction that included the rote recital of religious materials and a version of the three Rs. Soon into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, an era of progressive reform threatened to turn North American pedagogy on its ear with Deweyan notions of a child-centered, socially useful curriculum. Soon after the Second World War another major shift in pedagogy occurred, under the cloud of the McCarthyism and the fear of un-American, “red-scare” threats that swept through the national psyche in the 1950s. While growing up as a child in southern Ontario, I can still remember the commotion in the newspapers and television when the first Russian “Sputnik” circled the earth. Soon after arose a clamouring for more math and science classes for North American students. They (and I) had fallen behind the “little Ivans” in Moscow in science and math. An obsession with everything scientific resulted in a “technocratic paradigm” hallmarked by homogenized curricula in expensive, mass marketed texts, circulated by American corporations.

However, back at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century events were less frenetic while the only “red scare” that existed was when local Indians entered a public schoolroom. Under the Public Schools Act of 1901, attendance of the urban child aged 7-14 at school became mandatory. By 1921, mandatory attendance was extended to the



entire province. A number of child labour laws were enacted to protect the child under 14 from the unscrupulous demands of labour, unless the child was enslaved in a family-business. Truancy officers were hired to enforce the mandatory attendance laws and fill the desk seats of new schools. These schools were constructed of fireproof stone and reinforced concrete “...to secure abundance of light, plenty of fresh air at a uniform temperature, and sanitary conveniences of the most modern kind” (Dunn 1980: 37). The curriculum was now taught by more qualified and better-trained teachers since they were, after 1909, certified in specialized subjects at a new Vancouver Provincial Normal School (Calam 1984: 30). It was clear to the provincial educators that the great wealth creator of Industrial Capitalism was not without its victims and that the populace would have to develop the skills beyond the “three R’s” to become useful and patriotic citizens. The adherence to the “Classics” and the liberal arts that had been imported from the Ontario school system in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century began to weaken, as demands for vocational and technical courses entered the chorus for change. In 1920, Vancouver’s King Edward High School became the first in the province to offer three-year technical classes. By 1924, Vancouver had over 18,000 students enrolled in 30 elementary schools and over 2,700 students in six high schools. Domestic sciences, bookkeeping and home economics were offered to train young women to be good homemakers. Boys were offered industrial arts to better prepare them for the working world. Agricultural sciences also were encouraged, partly through the Agricultural Education Act of 1913, and several schools in the Fraser Valley and in Victoria had introduced school

gardens. Physical education, music, botany, zoology, English grammar and literature as well as writing, spelling, arithmetic, geography and general history were also part of the standard curriculum in British Columbia in the first few decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

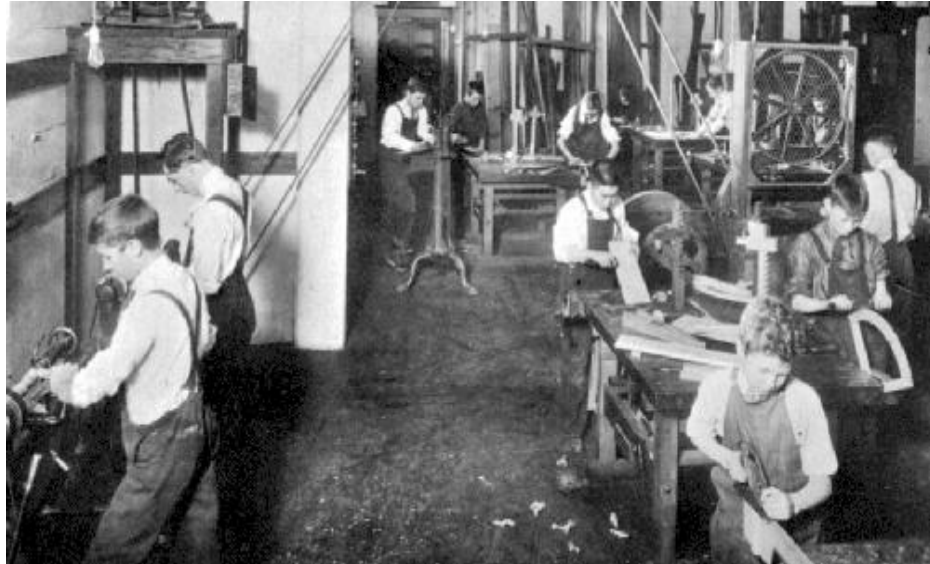


Figure 6: Woodworking shop at King Edward High School in late 1920s ([www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca](http://www.bcarchives.gov.bc.ca))

Since school budgets depended upon the collection of taxes and matching provincial fund agreements, rural school levies were much harder to collect and the rural schoolhouse was often a pale comparison to its urban counterpart. Rural schools were often ungraded and used curriculum that bore faint resemblance to that offered in Vancouver. By 1926, there were 574 one-room schools in the province (Wilson and Stortz 1995: 210). Due to the harsh and unforgiving living conditions in many of the provincial backwater towns, it was difficult to employ suitably talented teachers,

since the rural school teacher was often paid less than the wages of the local manure-cloaked farm hand. As Putnam and Weir noted (1925: 132), "...it should be remembered that a large proportion of the weak members of the (teaching) profession tend to gravitate towards the rural areas of the province. Were a pension act in force, some of these teachers might, to the benefit of all concerned, be persuaded to gravitate out of the profession." Of the many private schools that sprung up after 1900, the common educational goal was to build character, enhance the innate qualities of leadership in their pupils, and to turn young boys into fine English squires. Some schools consisted of a single room and several students, while others were larger, like University School founded in 1910 in Victoria that had a large campus and over 100 students. Most of these private schools were distinctly British and Anglican in their educational philosophies. The elite independent school for girls, Crofton House opened the same year as Reverend Palgrave's 1898 Tahltan Mission. In the eyes of the today's provincial skills assessments bureaucracy, Crofton House School is the polar opposite to the achievement levels of the public schools throughout the Stikine. As well as Fine Arts, Languages, Sciences, Mathematics and Social Sciences, this elite private school offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Crofton House, a spacious tree-lined campus in trendy Point Grey is among several independent schools that hold top rankings by the Fraser Institute for its performance on the annual Foundation Skills Assessments. The Indian schools of NW British Columbia and the southern Yukon, and Crofton House School at Point

Grey sit at opposite ends of the provincial assessment outcomes

(<http://www.croftonhouse.ca/>).

To manage the growing education bureaucracy at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, an administrative structure of provincial authority was created where policy flowed from the Ministry of Education down, by way of the Superintendent of Education to the civil service of administrators and teachers that followed their directives. This authority was clearly demonstrated through its control of the prescribed school curriculum. Teachers in BC were required to use provincially designated textbooks, upon which school examinations were based. By 1908, with the creation of the Text Books Branch of the Department of Education, most elementary school textbooks and some high school texts were provided free of charge. School texts portrayed the British Empire as a uniquely moral enterprise that ruled to the benefit of all the subject peoples.

The survey of the public school system of British Columbia in 1925, otherwise known as the *Putnam/Weir Report* (1925), was an attempt to assess the state of provincial education in matters related to academics, finance, administration and professional conduct aiming at “the possible improvement of a provincial school system.” It is a useful report to this thesis because it provides a window into the workings, and the mindset, of the educational bureaucracy that governed the public school system in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. The report began with a brief cultural history of the province that unfolds with the first European arriving on our shores. No

mention is made of the complex First Nations cultures already living on the west coast when Captain Cook sailed into Nootka Sound in 1778. The report placed the indigenous population of this province on the same low end of the racial scale as the Chinese labourers whose contribution to the economic development of this province was also erased from the historical record. On the other hand, the Hudson Bay traders were described as "...a superior class of people, handy, intelligent and possessing great initiative." The miners and fortune seekers that followed were "...an adventurous lot of men, ready to take a chance and undergo hardships. Such was the nucleus of British Columbia." The first reference to an aboriginal culture only appeared when the authors described a population growth from Confederation as "10,000 white settlers, 4,000 Orientals and 35,000 Indians, the Province has gone steadily forward until 1924 the total population is estimated at 600,000." There was no mistake as to who the authors thought occupied the lowest rungs on the social class ladder of the province. "Today the population -omitting Orientals and native Indians- is more cosmopolitan than any other part of Canada" (Putnam and Weir 1925: 13-14). The report called for a significant curriculum revision throughout the education system, with a modernization of both subjects and methods of instruction. The report suggested four streams of high school programs; university, commercial, pre-normal and high school general course work. Putnam and Weir felt that the subject of Canadian history should have an important place in the curriculum of elementary, middle and high schools of the province. "In Canadian history more stress should be placed upon civics, current events, and projects" (Putnam and Weir

1925: 42). Addressing the issue of rural education, the report called for action to be taken to raise the quality of education services offered in the more remote areas of the province to a level offered in urban and municipal schools. It was evident that throughout the province, the ungraded rural schools suffered from a lack of trained teachers. It was recommended that future teachers should be hired through the Department of Education and not through the local school boards, as was the current practice. To entice the better teachers to work in remote, often isolated districts a rural school grant was to be paid to each teacher, in addition to their regular salary.

While it is true that the *Putnam/Weir Report* specifically addressed the provincial public school system and not the federal Indian system, the importance of the project recommendations for future learners should have necessitated a simple assessment of residential schools in the province. Instead, the wretched condition of many Indian children was reduced to a brief statement that confirmed, “There are many schools for Indian children, directly or indirectly under the control of the Federal Government. Probably in all these schools contain some six or seven thousand children. Roman Catholics maintain private schools in large urban centres. In one or two places groups of Orientals maintain schools for their own children” (Putnam and Weir 1925: 39). In reality neither Putnam nor Weir had any idea how many Indigenous students were educated in federally funded institutions in British Columbia. By 1900 (Barman et al 1984: 7) over 3,000 Indian children attended 22 Industrial and 39 Boarding schools with another 6300 in 226 Day schools across

Canada. This segregated system continued to grow, as the public school system did. According to Barman (1995: 62) by 1920, there were 17 residential schools and 46 day schools in British Columbia alone that enrolled over 2300 aboriginal students.

## Chapter Three:

### Missionary and Educational Pulp Fiction

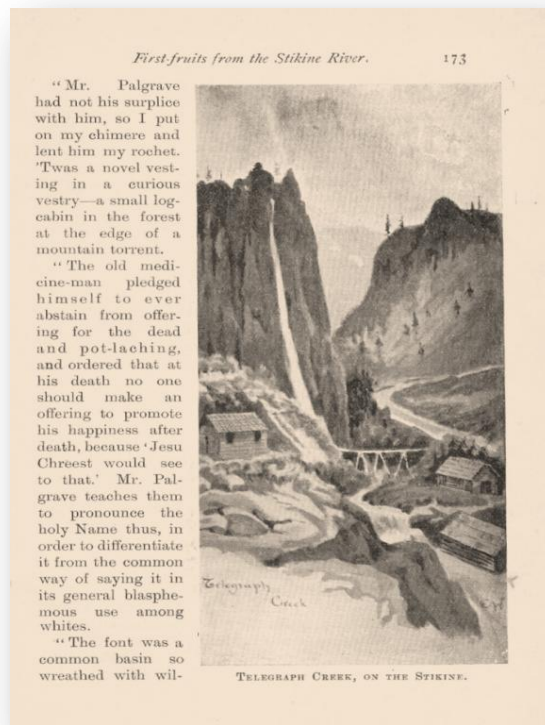


Figure 7: Snapshots of the North Pacific (1904)

The early images from the pages of the first missionary novels that spread the word about godless savages, and the curriculum texts that flooded the public school classrooms with images of Anglo-heroes and near extinct heathens served to justify the segregation of Indian children from mainstream education in British Columbia.



## a) Missionary images

Much of the first published material about Canada's Indians, in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries, came from the pens of the missionaries who wrote for their various denominational magazines, books, pamphlets and publications, and later began to publish their observations as anthropologists, ethnographers, linguists and pulp adventure novelists. In Western Canada, frontier missionaries such as Maclean (1889), Young (1897), Ridley (in Janvrin 1904), Morice (1978), Bompas (in Cody 1908) and Collison (1915) did much to contribute to the image of the superstitious, heathen savage that was implanted in the minds of the colonial and continental readers on Indian life in Western Canada. Many of these early literary descriptions of the "heathens" echoed the negative images that have been repeated in church literature and in North American popular culture throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Although they were guided by the evangelical light, missionaries were also authors who sold books, and many hit the lecture tour back in England and retold their narratives in the fund-raising Church Missionary Society (CMS) newsletters, such as the *Church Missionary Intelligencer and Record* and the *Church Missionary Gleaner*. It is important to remember that the CMS, the funding raiser for the overseas missions had its own publishing company managed by a Board of Governors who directed the fund-raising and sponsored many missionary accounts, diaries, pamphlets, dictionaries and other translations. Missionary tales of naked savages howling in the

forests, were eagerly purchased by the God-fearing British middle and upper classes. These missionary tales all related the usual tales of Christian salvation and something of the hardships and adventures facing missionaries in the field, but these narratives always contained passages that affirmed the missionary belief that their religion and society were far advanced from the flocks of near-extinct savages that they tended.

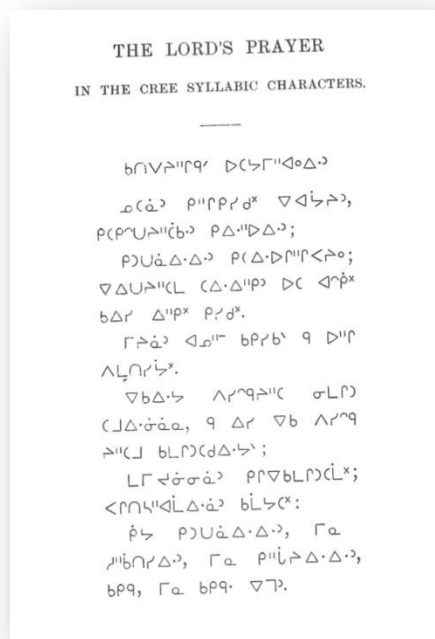
The earliest of the missionary authors in this province found their literary subjects in the interior of Northern British Columbia, where A.G. Morice, the Oblate Priest, historian and linguist who devised a hieroglyphic language called the Dene Syllabary to teach the Indians to read, write and understand the word of God. Morice noted the treachery, murder and heathenism of some of the local Indians. With the establishment of the first Catholic missions in what was called New Caledonia in the late 1840's, Morice (1978: 274) noted that the "heathens" began to imitate the teachings of the missionaries, in combination with their own forms of superstition and black magic. "These would-be prophets claimed supernatural powers, made people dance when they did not know how to pray, gave new names to their adherents, and otherwise counterfeited the work of the missionaries."



**Figure 8: “Evil” shamans opposing Christianity were common in missionary novels (Morice 1978: 11)**

Another religious academic of the late 1800’s was the Methodist Reverend John MacLean, who was the first President of the University of Manitoba in 1877. Published in 1889, MacLean’s work described the Plains Indians as stationed lower on the evolutionary scale than the rugged white missionaries, and as a culture they were doomed to extinction. Lamenting on the state of these “backward” peoples, MacLean stated that “...the days of the Indian scare are gone. The people are gradually settling down to agriculture and in the near future there will be seen the

results of civilization, namely the decrease of the red men, and the elevation of the survival of the fittest” (MacLean 1889: 135). The author touched upon the issue of funding that challenged the nature of missionary work among the Indians of Canada at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. “Comparisons are made between missionary work in Japan and India with missions to the Indians, and because they are quicker returns, the answer is given to all questions on the matter by a wholesale condemnation of the work. It is urged that the money should be expended on promising fields, rather than wasted on the Indians” (Maclean 1889: 289).



**Figure 9: Teaching Indians to pray was an early lesson plan for Indians (Maclean 1889: 286)**

Methodist Egerton Young's stories of missionary work in western Canada among the Cree and Saulteaux in the late 1890's described in some detail the "primitive's love" for the *Holy Bible*. During his travels among the Indians he saw much in the Indian that paralleled the customs and appearance of the ancient Hebrews. Of the Indians of the Nelson River, he wrote that they were a fine group, with the few exceptions being "...some old conjurers and medicine men and polygamists" (Young 1897:91). The Indians were highly superstitious and even the fiercest of hunters could be frightened after dark. However, once "...they had given up their pagan and idolatrous surroundings, the love of the Christian Indians for their Bible is most gratifying" (Young 1897: 88). In his preface Young portends "Romantic missionary work among the red Indians will soon be a thing of the past. Civilization is reaching these people, and the iron horse rushes and shrieks where the Indian trail was once the only pathway" (Young 1897: 11).

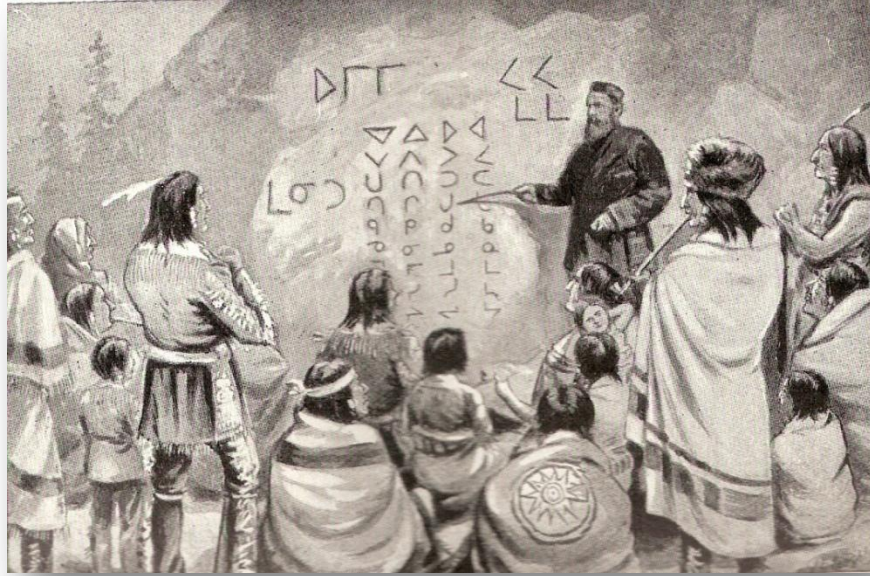


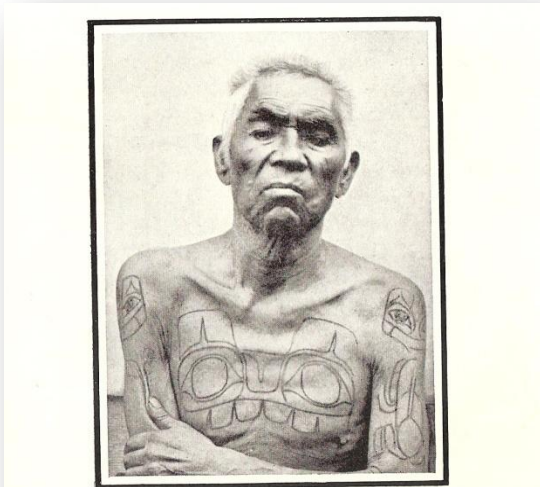
Figure 10: The first Indian classrooms in the B.C. interior were community-based (Young 1897: 95)

Not to be outdone, Reverend Collison in the Diocese of Caledonia in northwest British Columbia, joined in the chorus of pious missionary authors who repeated the same worn phrases of murder and revenge among the savages. The venerable Collison related, *40 years of adventure and peril amongst savage Indian tribes and piratical head-hunting Haidas of the Queen Charlotte Islands* to the 1915 London reader in the form of a hard cover book with 24 illustrations and a detailed map. In the preface, the Bishop of Derry warned that the natives were “...absolutely barbarous in many respects and ready for murder and piracy on the slightest provocation.” Tales of slavery, warfare and treachery by savages are documented throughout the book. Even human cannibalism is noted, when Collison described war canoes “...curiously

studded with human teeth, particularly on the bow and stern” (Collison 1915: 246).

These were times of *Social Darwinism*, when racial theories that justified social stratification were finding scientific validation among elite western circles.

Intellectual discussions about the ‘noble savage’ that enlivened the dinner table in London were now, in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century falling on less than receptive ears down at the Empress Hotel in Victoria as the British immigrant and colonizer sipped gin and viewed current events like the Indian Mutiny 1857, the Jamaican slave uprising of 1865 and the bloody Maori conflicts ending in 1872 as examples of what could happen if the Indian problem in Canada wasn’t dealt with properly. What Canadians were reading not only entertained, but stirred embers of racial intolerance as well.



A HAIDA INDIAN  
Showing the characteristic figures used in tattooing.



A HAIDA CHIEFTAINESS  
Clad in a blanket, and wearing nose-ring and labret. A gaudy silk handkerchief serves as a bonnet.

Figure 11: A dying race from Collision's "In the wake of the War Canoe" (1915: 120)



## b) Curricular texts

British Imperialism, Canadian Nationalism and the hierarchy of a superior white Christian race governing the inferior Indian race were popular themes in the provincial school curriculum. A random sample of school readers and textbooks listed in the collaborative website *The Homeroom* (<http://records.viu.ca/homeroom/>), that were intended for use in British Columbia's schools from 1870 to 1930 revealed a common theme in the school curriculum of colonization and social control over inferior indigenous populations.

In, *The Story of the Canadian People* (Duncan 1904), a historical reader used in the BC classroom from 1924-1929 for grades 5-7, children learned a nation-building story that omitted any contribution from First Nations peoples to the narrative of Canadian history. This story began with the blunders of the French Crown and the greed of the charter companies. The heroic deeds of the devoted missionaries and freedom-loving immigrants overshadowed any actions of the local Indians, who appeared more as a backdrop in the wilderness than actual human beings (Duncan 1904: 4). The author acknowledged that on this continent there was evidence for an advanced civilization of ancient *Mound Builders* in the eastern Mississippi drainages. These peoples lived in large communities and practiced sedentary agriculture. However when America was first discovered by Europeans, "...the people who were then found in possession of the country were not its first inhabitants." Eskimos and Indians were labelled as later occupants of this new land because, in the minds of the

colonizer, these heathens were incapable of anything as grand as mound building and village agriculture. Some Canadian Indian groups like the Algonquians were considered cannibals on the brink of starvation as they wandered about in the wilderness scavenging in the forest, while others treated their “squaws” like pack mules (Duncan 1904: 4). One can only imagine the wide-eyed attention of the elementary school students in the late 1920s as their teacher related tales of a vanishing breed, “...this untamed savage of the forest could not bring himself to submit to the restraints of civilization, and as the newcomer pushed inland from the Atlantic, he withdrew further and further west rather than part with his freedom.” Always ready for violence, these savages made the Canadian frontier a dangerous place in the early years. “The early pages of Canadian history are filled with the records of Indian warfare with all its horrors, and, most hideous of all, the ravages of the scalping knife” (Duncan 1904: 17). A brief reference is made in this text to the efforts of the early missionaries to educate young Indians. “Not satisfied with attending the needs of the colonists, the Jesuits founded a seminary for Huron boys.” Due to the wild nature of the local Indians, their effort was met with little success since “...one ran away and two ate themselves to death, a fourth was carried away by his father” (Duncan 1904: 68).

Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, public school students have been enthralled with the story of the building of the transcontinental railway, which brought Canada together as a nation. Another Canadian history reader used during 1927-29 in the BC Grade 8 classroom, *Canada's Great Highway*, was written in 1924 as a “...true narrative” of a

civil engineer, J. H. E. Secretan who worked on the Canadian Pacific Railway. The author assured both the teacher and pupil in his introduction of his book that “...with all its faults, it has at least the audacity to be authentic.” As with other texts in the BC classroom, the author avoids any contribution that Canada’s First Nations might have made to the history of this nation. His personal encounters while railway surveyor included observations that Indians were “too lazy to breathe” and whose acts of gallantry included permitting the dogs and squaws to carry their heavy loads. The Indian was little more than “...a lying son of the forest.” Apparently, the author was also disgusted with anyone who might portray Indians as otherwise. Referring to James Fenimore Cooper’s somewhat noble portrayal of North American Indians, Secretan stated, “All of Cooper’s fairy tales fade into oblivion when you encounter the real child of nature, so different from the tall, lordly savage portrayed by the novelist.” In an attempt to soften his racist slurs, the author acknowledged “...Horse Indians are invariably superior to the other decaying specimens.” According to Secretan’s history lesson, the end to the Indian way of life was the near.

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CHAPTER XX

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE

THE formation of this magnificent force, modelled somewhat upon the lines of the Royal Irish Constabulary, was due to Sir John A. Macdonald's Government. For many years it has protected the Western country, patrolling the vast plains and even penetrating the sombre solitudes of the Arctic Circle. A small force originally carefully recruited from a high class of men, now largely increased, it has never been allowed to deteriorate, either in physique or efficiency. There are many gentlemen, particularly Englishmen, in the ranks, the wild Western life, in the early days, no doubt inducing them to join in search of adventure. Splendidly uniformed in scarlet, well horsed and equipped,

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE. A TYPICAL TROOPER.

Figure 12: Images of racial dominance were a prominent feature in Secretan 1924.

First Nation and Métis land grievances, their “list of rights” and their near starvation that led to “rebellion” on the Prairies in the later 1880s, are untold stories in early history school texts. Their rebellious frustrations were described as the thoughtless acts of Half-Breeds and Indians who were “...threatening and troublesome, burning houses and generally pillaging the community...” (Secretan 1924: 224). On the other hand, the noble and brave deeds of the North West Mounted Police were extolled in Canadian school texts during the last century to such an extent that even today the

force still wears the traditional regalia at public ceremonies. The rebellious leaders of this insurrection, such as Riel, and Plains Indians Big Bear and Poundmaker were denigrated as not civilized beyond the state of savagery. According to the author, after the release from prison of Poundmaker for his treasonous deeds against Canada, he "...went back to his reserve, where they gave him such a gorgeous reception, including a roast dog banquet, that he died of acute indigestion" (Secretan 1924: 228). Documented factual history has since described Poundmaker as a man of great courage and wisdom. His death was the result of pulmonary lung disease, contracted while imprisoned at Stoney Mountain Penitentiary and not, as the school text implies, from a deadly attack of gout after a frenzied dog meat orgy. A similar history text used in grades 5-8 during the late 1920s, *Early History of the Province of British Columbia* tells how British Columbia became a province without any First Nation contributions beyond the anecdotal shadow. One particular chapter, titled *Indian Troubles* chronicled the hostilities between miners and hostile Indians during the 1858 gold discoveries on the Thompson and Fraser Rivers. Alerting the reader that another evil force was a threat to white society, the author noted, "It was reported that the Indians were being supplied with arms and liquor by Chinese, but whether this was true was not definitely established" (McKelvie 1926: 71). Another chapter told tales of "...the superstitious nature of the Indians gave the medicine-men an almost complete control over them-indeed the shaman held the power of life and death over members of the tribe." This made difficult the pious work of the missionaries, whom the author described as a "race of noble men and women." While the missionaries

and mounted police brought salvation and civilization to the Indians, “unscrupulous men took advantage of the weakness of the Indians and introduced firewater, kindling again the fires of savagery and destroying much of the work of the good priests. According to this author’s elementary school narrative, the missionaries were a race of noble men, “teaching the children to read, and the older ones the elementary laws of sanitation; battling against evil, and attending the sick” (McKelvie 1924: 75-76).

Mangan’s (1993) analysis of the role of British Imperial education in the transmission of racial images of colonial dominance and deference in Africa after 1850 also has meaning in British Columbia, because the same blueprint was effectively applied in both public school and mission house. Provincial school texts throughout much of the last century contained a package of “redcoats and redskins” images that included rugged Hudson’s Bay traders, railroad builders and prospectors, pious missionaries, bush pilots as well as uniformed authority and military figures. Mounted policemen in red tunics galloped across the pages of school texts for most of the last century, in pursuit of rebellious savages and whiskey traders. School children were told that they always got their man. Without them, where would civilization in Canada be today? The history of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police has become a somewhat successful tourist draw over the years. “The Force” has maintained its position as a trusted protector in society as result of the ever-present images of the red tunic heroes in the school texts. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century missionary narratives, there were persistent mirror-imaged stereotypes of inferior, near extinct Indians who practiced

polygamy, infanticide and cannibalism. These images contrasted with the superior missionaries, in buckskin or in uniform, teaching Christianity as a replacement to Indian belief systems riddled with sorcery and evilness. Missionary newspapers employed this same blueprint of Christian goodness over Indian madness. As Mangan (1993: 8) reported, this Imperial discourse in colonial schools contained an entrenched set of images that, over time became implanted in the cultural psyche of the colonized, making them submissive and easy to control while their natural resources were being exhausted. It is a theme with a continuous thread throughout British Imperial history wherever the Union Jack has been unfurled. The economic, social and religious elites from Britain that flocked to colonize British Columbia brought with them a structure of ethnocentric epistemologies and evangelical symbols that were internalized and incorporated into the psyche of Western Civilization over several centuries. Once schools were built and the process of mass education began, approved school texts reinforced British Imperialism through a series of carefully contrasted verbal and visual images that created positive and negative stereotypes of colonizer and colonized. Students were required to stand in reverence each morning to *God Save the King*. Invariably the heroes of the colony were white, god-fearing, wilderness-conquering men of great courage. Images of the Indian portrayed the cruel, superstitious, cannibalistic, depraved, devil worshipping, and infinitely lazy dark-skinned forest dweller. The uncivilized character traits of the inferior heathens were the justification for their continued exploitation. This was the burden that Christian civilization had the self-appointed duty to bear; and for many

missionaries, the Christianization of the Indians was a holy crusade. Battiste and Henderson (2000) viewed this Eurocentric public school curriculum as a culturally damaging tool that was created and employed to perpetuate imaginary cultural myths about Indigenous knowledge and culture. Tenuous generalizations and false assumptions about Indigenous cultures in the school curriculum served to strengthen Eurocentric beliefs that Indigenous peoples were a withered species on the evolutionary vine.

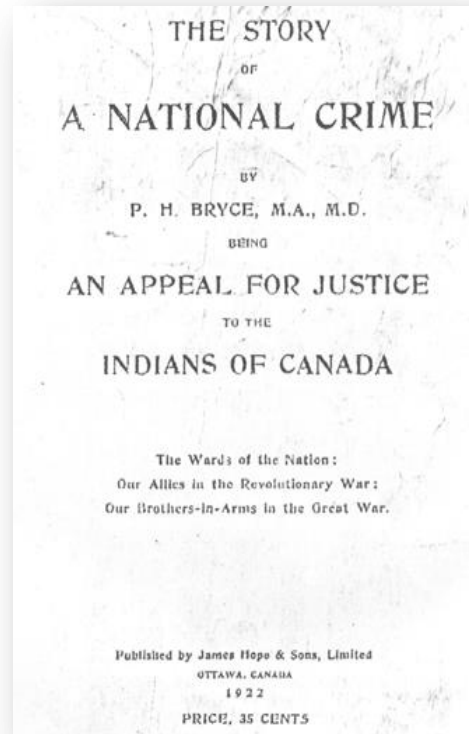
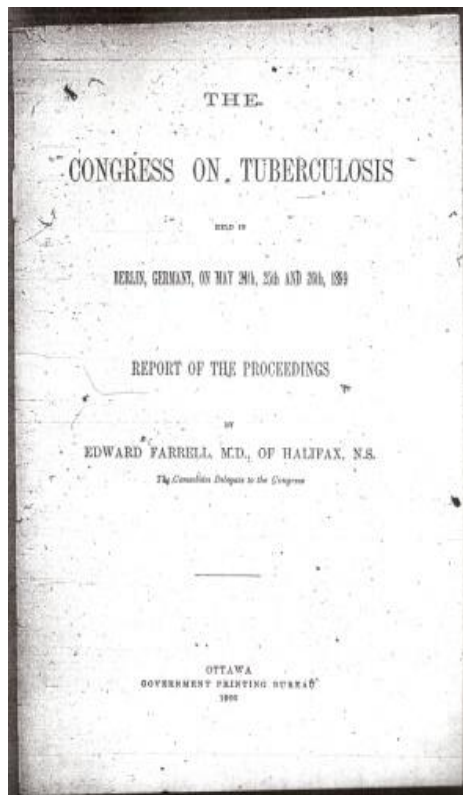


## Chapter Four: White

### Plagues

*“In doing nothing to obviate the preventable causes of death, brings the department within unpleasant nearness to the charge of manslaughter.”*

S.H. Blake 1906



Figures 13 and 14: International and national publications on the dangers of tuberculosis in the early 20th Century

The inferior system of health care and disease prevention for Indians mirrored the education system that segregated them from the provincial mainstream society. This system allowed infectious diseases to flourish within Indian communities and in their missionary Residential and Day schools.

The tragic human population loss and the weakened condition of the surviving Stikine Indians in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century became a window of opportunity for the missionaries to unfold their promises of hope and salvation from the living hell that was Indian life in proximity to White men. While the causes and treatments of tuberculosis were well known to those in authority, many missionaries stood helpless or indifferent on the sidelines while death walked the dormitories of their residential schools. The realities behind Dr. Bryce's *The Story of a National Crime* had been part of the public domain long before it was published in 1922. Tuberculosis was a known killer wherever human conditions paralleled poor levels of sanitation, poverty and crowded conditions. The *Congress of Tuberculosis*, which convened in Berlin in 1899, was one of many conferences held in the western world on this deadly disease. It was attended by medical academics and health care professionals from England, the United States, Russia, Germany and Japan, countries which had large standing armies that experienced frequent outbreaks of this contagious disease. The British Empire was represented by Australia, New Zealand and Canada, all of which had large Indigenous populations that were threatened by tuberculosis. This convention of

medical experts discussed the causes, spread, prevention and treatment of this disease and as a result recommended a plan that required open air and sunlight, good food and proper feeding, proper methods of hygiene, medication and medical supervision. The *Congress of Tuberculosis* called upon affected nations to build special sanatoria to house the afflicted. In Canada, public health institutions, such as the *National Sanatorium Association* 1896 and the *Canadian Association for the Prevention of tuberculosis* in 1901 formed with the intention of educating the public of the dangers, prevention and treatment of this disease. The resulting memorandum from Canada's Indian Affairs Department (see Appendix D: 1) was not greeted with open arms by many Indian Agents and mission school directors, who saw this directive as another needless expense for a dying cause. The Secretary for the Department of Indian Affairs, J. D. McLean had to later explained to his agents that, "I beg to say that this report was sent to you merely for your guidance in the sanitary precautions to be taken to prevent the spread of the disease. The Department has no intention of going to any expense or unnecessary labour in carrying out these regulations, and all that will be required of you is to see that the sanitary precautions of the circular and report are complied with, as far as you are able to do so" (McLean to Rev. Lawrence, March 22, 1901. IARG 10, v. 3957, f. 140, 754-10, part 1).

The squalid health conditions and unacceptable death rates at Canada's Indian Industrial schools had been reported annually since 1905 when Bryce was appointed General Medical Superintendent for the Department of Indian Affairs. While gathering statistics on Indigenous mortality rates, Bryce found that cancer and kidney

disease were rare and the alarmingly high death rates were due to tuberculosis, exacerbated by the difficult conditions of climate, income and dietary access. For reasons not yet explained, these facts were ignored by the Department of Indian Affairs. For each year until 1910, Bryce compiled annual reports on the health statistics on several hundred Indian Bands scattered across Canada. In 1907, he personally inspected 35 Indian schools in three Prairie Provinces. According to his findings, 24 % of all children in the schools had perished, mostly due to tuberculosis. At one particularly vile hellhole, File Hills Industrial School, records revealed a 75 % fatality rate over the 16 years of school operation (Bryce 1922: 4). Two years later, on another medical inspection of seven boarding schools in southern Alberta, Bryce found that tuberculosis had decimated the school age Indian populations although evidence for the disease in the parent population was widespread as well. Of those children who attended the Sarcee Boarding School between 1894 and 1908, nearly 28% succumbed to tuberculosis (Tittley 1986: 84). Bryce reported that it was the active opposition of D. C. Scott, then Superintendent of Indian Affairs who prevented any real effort regarding the improvement of the outrageous mortality rate at the federally sponsored schools. Scott's first concern was fiscal restraint. The federal government's commitment to alleviate the appalling conditions at many Indian schools was brought into question by the stark discrepancies in funding levels between White and Indian societies. As Bryce noted, \$10,000 was spent annually to control tuberculosis among the approximately 100,000 Indians in 300 bands scattered across Canada. A similar sized population, the city of Ottawa was served by three

general hospitals and spent \$33,000 annually on its tuberculosis patients (Bryce 1922: 13). To eradicate the tuberculosis that plagued these Indian schools, Dr. Bryce made numerous expensive proposals to the federal government, such as an improved diet and clean living quarters at the schools. All of which, of course, raised bureaucratic eyebrows in Ottawa and caused considerable irritation among the religious denominations who received a federal stipend to manage these disease infested factories, since any improvements might come from their funding.

Then as now, those who follow God's mission do not take well to criticism. Bryce eventually shared the fate of other federal government whistle-blowers throughout the course of history. His position as medical inspector was made redundant in 1919 by D.C. Scott and his research findings were forgotten with his forced retirement from public service in 1921 (Titley 1984: 86). In 1922, three years before the completion of the Putnam and Weir survey of BC schools, the now-retired Dr. Bryce wrote a scathing report on the dire health threat of contagious diseases as tuberculosis facing First Nations children upon entering federally funded Indian schools in western Canada, including British Columbia. He cited a "trail of disease and death [that] has gone on unchecked by any serious effort on the part of the Department of Indian Affairs" (Milloy 1999: 51). This well publicised report, and its charge of manslaughter against the Department of Indian Affairs, was ignored the federal government. It was a matter of public record in 1918 that Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent General for Indian Affairs accepted the fact that the unsanitary conditions at Indian Schools were a contributing factor to the high death rate among

Indian students, although he did little to stop this genocide (Tittley 1986). Instead, Scott abolished the medical inspector's office, claiming budgetary constraints, while the 1918 *Spanish Flu* raged through Canada's residential schools. A cloak of secrecy surrounding the state of Indigenous student health was maintained by the official agencies and it was these actions that allowed the high mortality rates associated with residential schools to persist well into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century.

By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, alarming statistics had been gathered and distributed throughout the province's readerships, from local newspapers to international academic symposia, while the terrified urban populations clamoured for action against deadly glandular and pulmonary tuberculosis. To centralize disease control efforts the province formed a Board of Health in 1899 and by 1907, a fully functional British Columbia Anti-Tuberculosis Society developed strategies to establish branches in major cities and local societies in every small town. To expand facilities to reach more people in need of treatment, the Society obtained funding to build new sanatoria and hospitals at strategic locations. Information on the disease and its treatment became available through local health clinics and in local schools that introduced public health issues to their students. With large numbers of tubercular soldiers returning from the Great War 1914-1918, the treatment of veterans centered on the healthy and dry climate of the Okanagan Valley, and the opening of a new treatment sanatorium at the Tranquille facility, near Kamloops. By 1917 major cities such as New Westminster, Victoria and Kamloops all had special wards at their public hospitals for the treatment of tuberculosis. A mobile clinic of doctors, nurses and x-

ray technicians travelled the gravel roads throughout rural BC, to reach remote communities and provided medical consultation services to the rural patient, much of it funded by Christmas Seal Funds (Wherrett 1977). The state of health and the treatments available to British Columbia's Indigenous peoples in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century remain clouded behind columns of tired statistics that were tilted one way or another by small sample sizes and inadequate data collection strategies. G. J. Wherrett (1977), the executive secretary of the Canadian Tuberculosis Association published a detailed report on the state and treatment of tuberculosis in Canada, including a chapter on tuberculosis in native races. Much of his data focused on the Plains Indians, where there was readily available data on the devastating effects of communicable diseases in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Chapters on individual provinces were even less illuminating. Wherrett's eight-page review of tuberculosis in British Columbia contained a 4-sentence synopsis on Indian tuberculosis services that began with "In the early 1940s the tuberculosis services for Indians in the province were improved" (Wherrett 1977: 177). Before this time, apparently the Indians of British Columbia did not exist.

The dizzying array of communicable diseases that preyed upon both aboriginal and settler populations seems unimaginable in today's world of modern hospitals, walk-in clinics and community health centres, yet a century ago many Indigenous families were ripped apart by infectious diseases that originated in the home countries of the settlers that immigrated to this province. These diseases were long established on the European continent and for the most part, no longer deadly to the average disease-

carrying European. For the unsuspecting immune system of the aboriginal inhabitants of North America, there was no defence against these new invading viral organisms. Deadly European-origin small pox arrived early on the scene in eastern Canada and found reference in the journals of the Jesuit missionaries where Huron communal villages were laid to waste by the disease. After ravaging the eastern Indigenous tribes on this continent, the disease eventually made its way west onto the Plains in the covered wagons of white settlers, and much later, on the west coast with the crews of European sailing ships. While White communities in the late 19<sup>th</sup> Century had small pox vaccination available to them, this was not the case for the unfortunate Indians when the first epidemic swept through Victoria in 1868 (Graham-Cumming 1967: 143). As the disease moved into northern B.C., the Alert Bay peoples were decimated by small pox in 1870 and much of northern BC was affected by 1876. Some of these epidemics were referred to in traditional stories, many of which lost with the sudden deaths of the Elders. Thorman (n.d.) stated that the Tahltan referred to small pox as the “Great Sickness” after the devastating effects of the first epidemic that reached Tahltan country in 1832. It arrived in time for the seasonal spring salmon run when all the tribes gathered at communal fishing spots along the Stikine. The “Great Sickness” lingered until 1838, killing widely and indiscriminately among the Tahltan. Thorman reported that another epidemic arrived at 1847 and did considerable harm to already weakened communities for two more years. Emmons (1911: 12) believes that small pox arrived from the coast in 1864 and again in 1868 and reaped particular vengeance on the defenceless Tahltans. In



southern British Columbia, the Sechelt peoples were nearly wiped out in the 1860s and there were smaller outbreaks in Cowichan Indian Agency in 1895. First Nations reserves across Canada suffered through sporadic occurrences of small pox throughout the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Poliomyelitis appeared to strike all victims equally, both Indian and White although the peoples of the both east and west shores of Hudson Bay suffered serious outbreaks of the crippling disease in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. During a 1948-1949 epidemic north of Churchill, Manitoba some communities suffered a 100% rate of infection. At Chesterfield Inlet 5% of the population were killed and an additional 14% were paralyzed (Graham-Cumming 1967: 144). Measles was another recent introduction into North America that had devastating effects on Indigenous populations, sweeping back and forth across Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Measles struck hard on British Columbia's First Nations communities twice during a 1913-1917 cycle. This marked the beginning of periodic appearances of the disease throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Pertussis, a lung ailment, hit the Cowichan Reserve in the late 1880s and marked a period of epidemics passing through First Nations communities across the country (Graham-Cumming 1967: 147). Influenza was another serious threat to First Nations communities as it readily developed into pneumonia. Many deaths were reported in the Shuswap and Okanagan Valley during 1887-8, while Fort Steele in the Kootenays reported 70 deaths. In 1900 the Babine Band, west of Prince George, reported nearly half of their 27 members were dead from influenza. Typhoid Fever and Diphtheria were usually not fatal but were two more weapons in the arsenal of infectious

diseases that came over in the suitcases, and the lung sacs of the new British Columbian immigrants. Another affliction, Trachoma, which attacked the nerve tissue of the eye causing severe deformities and blindness, was believed to have originated in the Chinese immigrant worker and found its way into indigenous communities where cultural contact between Chinese and Indian occurred. Of all these infectious diseases, perhaps the most devastating to indigenous culture were the glandular and pulmonary tuberculosis epidemics that cut the most deadly swath through First Nations communities across Canada.

Over the years, history has not looked kindly on the decisions made by the army of bureaucrats who mismanaged their responsibilities regarding the education of First Nation children. Chrisjohn and Young's (1997) charged that the federal government colluded with the religious denominations to commit a hidden Canadian holocaust at Indian residential schools. It is one in a series of condemnations that have surfaced in recent years and have received widespread attention. According to former United Church Minister K. Annett's (2001) six-year investigation, around 50,000 First Nation children died in residential school death camps, a fact that was covered up by the church with falsified records, and secret gravesites. Annett believes that these deaths were part of a conspiracy to rid the country of a dying race, through a "final solution." As an example, he cites a 1910 correspondence between Superintendent Scott and B.C. Indian Agent-General D. McKay, where Scott states, "It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness by habituating so closely in their schools, and that they die at a much higher rate than in

their villages. But this alone does not justify a change in the policy of the Department, which is towards the final solution of our Indian problem” (Annett 2001: 6). The author presented evidence that the incidence of tuberculosis skyrocketed among B.C. First Nations once D.C. Scott abolished the office of Medical Inspector for Indian agencies and residential Indian schools in 1919. One year after the dismissal of the medical inspector, attendance in these infected institutions was made compulsory through the Indian Act of 1920.

## **Chapter Five:**

### **Colonial Classrooms:**

### **Government and Missionary Partnerships**

*“Kill the Indian. Save the man!” R. H. Pratt 1892 (as cited in Niezen 2000:46)*

How the segregated and inferior Indian education system evolved is a question of central importance to this research. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were alternative paths to follow when devising an educational system for Canada’s Indigenous peoples. Perhaps most obvious among these was that Indian children in this province could have entered the public school system. Instead, the federal government and the religious denominations strengthened their existing partnership to provide a custodial school system that was intended to drive the spirit and the

By 1900, the direction of Indian education was already shaped by the misguided and ill-informed policies of past decades, whereby the government shifted responsibility to educate a segment of its population to the churches. As a result, Indian education suffered for most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. In 1879, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald dispatched his friend Nicholas Flood Davin to visit the United States Commissioner of Indian Affairs and report on the operation of the American Indian boarding schools and the theories of Indian Fighter and ex U.S. Cavalry Officer, Richard H.

Pratt. From Davin's visit came the backward thinking, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half Breeds* (1879). Evidently impressed with the strict regimentation and isolation associated with trades training in a segregated Indian school system, this report recommended the continued use of existing Industrial schools and the immediate construction of additional Industrial schools in the Canadian northwest for the purpose of training Indians, to transform them into contributing members of White society. Segregated training schools for Indians were not a recent innovation for Canada. Previous reports, such as the *Bagot Commission* of 1842 recommended that Indian children should receive an agriculture-based education in schools away from the influence of the reserve. Egerton Ryerson's 1847 report on Indian education suggested that Indians should not only be trained in the industrial arts, but also weaned from their past cultural practices and languages. However, Davin's report gave the government the justification to formulate an Indian school policy that could be applied across the Dominion. The report, coming three years after General Custer's death at the 1876 Battle of Little Big Horn, called for a system identical to the American aggressive assimilationist policy of industrial schools, strictly aimed at young Indian children, since "...as far as the adult is concerned, little can be done with him. He can be taught to do a little at farming, and at stock raising, and to dress in a more civilized manner, but that is all" (Davin 1879: 2) According to Davin, the best example of the rewards of the Industrial school system, came from the *Five Civilized Tribes* who were making such good progress in agriculture and in education on their new reserves in Oklahoma. After much guidance, these Indians now ran

their own schools, although still under the watchful eye of the Indian Agent. There is no mention in the *Davin Report* of the infamous 1838-39 “Trail of Tears” that claimed 17,000 Cherokee lives during their forced relocation with the other “civilized” tribes from their traditional territories in the southeast, to their new reservations in Oklahoma.

This forced relocation of the Civilized Tribes is viewed by many historians as another example of American genocide towards Indians in the last century. Using the survivors as evidence for the wisdom of Industrial schools as an education strategy, Davin cited the testimony of several “reformed” Indians from the Five Civilized Tribes who thanked the white man most kindly for his efforts at educating them. According to his highly dubious report, the Indians believed, as far as educating Indians was concerned, the best thing to do was to “...separate the children from the parents.” Davin believed that if the education of the young Canadian Indian was to take place, it must take place far away from the corrupting influences of the child’s parents. “If anything is to be done with the Indian, we must catch him very young.” (Davin 1879: 12). His report recognized that Indians, no matter what the level of education, would never be equal to white men. Davin cited another Indian who believed that, “...they never could, in his opinion, cope with the white man in either cunning or industry.” Davin noted that the “Five Nations are themselves a proof that a certain degree of civilization is within the reach of the red man, while illustrating his deficiencies” (Davin 1879: 7). Underscoring a future relationship that would spell misery for thousands of Indian children, Davin suggested that contracts

should be drawn up between the federal government and the religious denominations to operate the Industrial schools. Attendance at these schools should be compulsory and non-compliant parents should be coerced to send their children wherever directed by the Indian Agent. While the bulk of Davin's report was accepted, his recommendation that the teachers of these new Industrial schools be well paid for their demanding services was, of course, ignored. The federal government already knew that members of the various religious orders would willingly do the teaching for a lot less money. By 1900 when this research begins, of a total of 20,000 First Nations children between the ages 6-15, there were 3,285 children who were enrolled in 22 industrial schools and 39 boarding schools, as well as another 6,349 children in day schools in operation across Canada (Barman et al 1986:7). Following the racist mindset of the *Davin Report*, the Canadian government decided to expand the existing Industrial school system, and flung itself headlong into a segregated education system, comparable to anything seen elsewhere in history where Aboriginal populations have been suppressed by their colonial masters.

There were other options available to Canada besides following the American example of trades and farm-training Boarding schools for Indians; a policy devised and practiced by a country that was still involved in a war of extermination against its own Indians. Other education options existed in several centuries of public discussion and debate about education, originating from major universities and institutions of learning on both European and North American continents. In the early 1900s, not everyone in the church bureaucracies wanted to continue down the

path of big missionary Industrial schools. Prominent Anglican layperson, provincial judge and social philanthropist Samuel Hume Blake submitted a “Highly Confidential” memorandum to the upcoming Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC) general meeting. This rather remarkable collection of documents was prefaced with, “For some time past various questions connected with the welfare and education of our Indian brethren in Manitoba, the N.W.T. and British Columbia...have been presented to and have received the most earnest consideration of Indian Committees, the Board of Management, and the Synods of our Church” (Blake 1905-1907, I: 1).

Blake collected opinions and questions from the Anglican community over a two-year period, essentially an airing of the laundry, for consideration to address a number of issues that appeared to challenge the effectiveness of their evangelical field mission work. Since the *Davin Report*, the Church Missionary Society had invested heavily in the federal partnership to Christianize and educate the Indian. In London, an Indian Committee meeting (October 1905) asked if the church could claim success for their extensive and expensive network of industrial and boarding schools across Canada, when the roaming bands of Indians hardly embraced the gospel in great numbers and appeared to be on the road to extinction anyway. The matter of regular attendance at Indian schools was another issue because funding from the federal government was allowed only for each Indian in attendance. Many of the church-run schools operated at half capacity, and with no legal means to compel Indian children to attend, things were lean in the missionary school business. The report also noted that the mission



field had somehow strayed from its initial strategy of the travelling evangelical missionaries who successfully, and inexpensively delivered the gospel to the heathens in the remote wilderness of Canada's northwest provinces. Instead, by the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the MSCC was funding a sprawling, expensive bureaucracy, administering 14 dioceses each with its own Bishop, and a pyramid of personnel beneath, operating in a world of shrinking donations. The report asked the Board to consider why there were so many schools when they had difficulties in filling the desks, and accomplished little in the way of assimilating the Indian. Each diocese maintained a Bishop and a paid bureaucracy with mission outposts and schools that required considerable financial support. Might not the word of God be more economically spread by the travelling missionary, rather than by a stationary religious garrison? Blake's memorandum questioned why the Church was in the business of education when it should confine itself to the teachings of the gospel. It was also suggested that it should be the Federal Government to assume the role of teaching Indians to be good citizens (Blake 1905-1907: II 2-7).

Also included in this memorandum was a series of questions and suggestions arising from a 2-day 1906 conference involving representatives from the Church of England, Methodist and Presbyterian Churches, which resulted in the *Winnipeg Resolutions*. The Roman Catholics declined to participate in this conference, believing itself to be in an exclusive club. Addressing issues of the ineffective education policies of the past, the group called for a special educational advisory committee in which all the churches and organizations involved in Indian education could nominate representatives.

Other recommendations to the MSCC outlined a system where once pupils had reached the age of 18 they were discharged from the school, with exceptional cases given additional attention. Teachers working at Indian schools should be adequately trained and paid. Until the government finally enforced their regulations, attendance at the Indian schools had always been a contentious issue. The Industrial schools in the late 1800s certainly suffered from lack of attendance. Because of ill treatment, bad food and disease, as well as the distance from home, parents were reluctant to part with their children, knowing that they may not see them for years, if ever. According to most clerics, compulsory education served the best interests of parents, children and the government and, as long as school funding was based on a per-head basis, compulsory attendance insured an acceptable bottom line on their operational expenses. While suggesting a “firm but gentle enforcement of the law,” the backside of this firm hand should also withhold any money beyond treaty obligations from parents that were unwilling to part with their children. Furthering earlier murmurs that the federal government should assume more responsibility for the operation of the Indian Schools, this document suggested a cost-sharing strategy where the Church could assume the costs associated with religious instruction while the government could be responsible for costs related to the secular education of their pupils (Blake 1905-1907, III: 12-13).

Another common call for action concerned the suppression of “evil tribal customs” such as the Sun Dance and other regressively heathen ceremonies, particularly those held at public gatherings. Just as with the Potlatch on the west coast, the legal and

moral authorities of the church were never able to fully eradicate these bad behaviours. This is particularly true of Plains Indian ceremonies that have held a magnetic draw for tourist dollars at public events in western Canada throughout the last century. Variations of Indian ceremonial dances and colourful displays involving blasting guns and buffalo hunts have been a mainstay at the Calgary Stampede and other provincial exhibitions for many years. In British Columbia, the Potlatch ceremony drew the ire of both church and state until the Indian Act of 1951 removed it from its sanction list. The Blake memorandum also referred to the growing problem of school attendance and half-empty Industrial schools in Alberta. Reverend Bishop Montgomery wrote "...a confined life in a large building is not necessarily the best training for an Indian child brought from the reserve. But waiving that, it would appear that the only hope of success with such a pupil is to take him away altogether from the parents, to educate him, and to put him into business far from his own people-in fact, to make him forget his father's house." Bishop Montgomery's theories on child rearing evidently mirrored those of Davin and his model-citizen Cherokees. He concluded, "An Indian Boarding school, therefore, if it is to succeed, would appear to be a place full of children taken away forever from their parents" (Blake 1905-1907, IV: 15-16).

Other recommendations within the Blake memorandum called for a situation where some residential schools be allowed to operate as little more than co-op farms to make up for operational funding shortfalls. As one correspondence noted, "should not the expense of a properly conducted Industrial or Boarding school be now much

diminished in many parts where wheat, meat, milk, butter, eggs, potatoes, etc., can be raised and sold” (Blake 1905-1907, IV: 19). The issue of disease seemed to be never far from the surface in the document discussions and many writers voiced concern to the Board of Management. Another writer asked of Indian education, “Should not education, looking at the ravages of tuberculosis, be given much more out of doors...?” Another idea that was never fully explored, but if implemented, could have resulted in something reminiscent of the Soviet prison gulags that were contemporaneous with Canada’s residential school policy. In a short question directed at the Minister of the Interior asked, “What do you think of ex-pupil colonies, their working, and the increase in them?”

The Blake Memorandum included a number of communications between Blake and the Minister of the Interior F. Oliver surrounding outstanding matters of concern that the religious denominations held over the continued operations of the Indian school system (Blake 1905-1907, IV: 19-26). Blake remarked what many believed at the time, that many of the schools were “utterly inefficient” and that the teachers employed in the Indian school system were “incompetent for the work given them. Some of them should be pupils, in place of pretending to instruct.” One workable suggestion that went unheeded throughout the sad history of church-sponsored residential schools, outlined a system where Indian children were brought into the system, not through compulsory law, but rather by offering an improved educational system. This included “...first-class teachers; up-to-date equipment-maps, pictures, globes, a Kindergarten, methods and materials-wood carving, woollen sampler work,

and the like. Teach habits of industry in matters which can be carried away from and practised outside of the school” (Blake 1905-1907, IV: 21). Oliver believed there was no advantage to compulsory attendance at residential schools and equally saw no merit in hiring trained teachers. As Oliver put it, “I do not consider that the certificate of the teacher is material. His influence for good over the pupil is very much more important than any certificate as to this educational standing.”

Regarding the issue of ex-pupil colonies for refugee residential school graduates, he remarked, “...it will first have to be demonstrated that there is an advantage in establishing such colonies, which can only be demonstrated by time” (Blake 1905-1907, IV: 24).

Perhaps the most striking narrative comes from Blake as he implored an otherwise occupied government minister to act upon the deplorable health conditions at Canada’s residential schools. As he pointed out to Oliver in a letter dated 27 January 1907, “The appalling number of deaths among the younger children appeals loudly to the guardians of our Indians. In doing nothing to obviate the preventable causes of death, brings the Department within unpleasant nearness to the charge of manslaughter” (Blake 1905-1907, IV: 21). Blake’s letter spanned three pages and outlined a myriad of church concerns, yet Oliver’s eventual response contained nothing beyond the typical government doublespeak that has come to characterize the responses of Canadian political servants over the last century. He responded, “I have not yet been able to take up the question you discuss as I hoped and therefore cannot deal with it as fully as I would like...I am getting special information on the

subject at the present time, which will have an important bearing on any decision which may ultimately be reached” (Blake 1095-1907, IV: 24).

To ensure that the Board of management understood the seriousness of the tuberculosis problem, Blake included a synopsis of Dr. Bryce’s report, as Chief Medical Officer from Indian affairs, on the appalling mortality rates due to tuberculosis in their mission schools. The report called for treatment centres to provide refuge to the student from the infected Indian home village or school dormitory. Blake asked, if large cities in England had for many years assigned public health nurses to instruct the urban masses in the necessities of hygiene, would it not be a reasonable idea to assign the Victorian Order of Nurses to the task of Indian hygiene in their villages? Blake also cited a letter from the Dominion Superintendent of Forestry who wrote that the important mission post at Fort Simpson was being decimated by tuberculosis. Their population had declined from 800 in 1887 to less than 300 in 1906, and there was no physician within 1,500 miles (Blake 1905-07, V: 29).

The alarm that Blake and others raised about the ravages of tuberculosis in Canada’s residential schools went unheeded for many years. By the end of the decade it was clear that the opinions of reform-minded MSCC board members like Blake were not in the majority in the church hierarchy. The insightful resolutions about the continued missionary role in education were ignored, along with the author of the “Highly Confidential” 1905-1907 memorandum. The bureaucracy of mission schools

was too firmly entrenched in the mindset of the church officials to be replaced by a federal education system, and God-forbid an integrated school system that would diminish the church's role in the Indian's life. Regardless of the Blake recommendations, none of the religious denominations were willing to dismantle their missions school systems. In November 1910, a new agreement was drawn up between the federal government and the religious denominations that stated that expensive Industrial schools would be replaced by Residential schools, which in turn would be better funded and held to a higher standard. The expansion of the once highly-touted Day schools system received no special consideration. To oversee this residential school system, the federal government created an office of Superintendent of Indian Education, and posted the son of a Methodist Minister to administer it, Duncan Campbell Scott (Grant 1984: 195).

# Chapter Six: Early missions in Northwest British Columbia

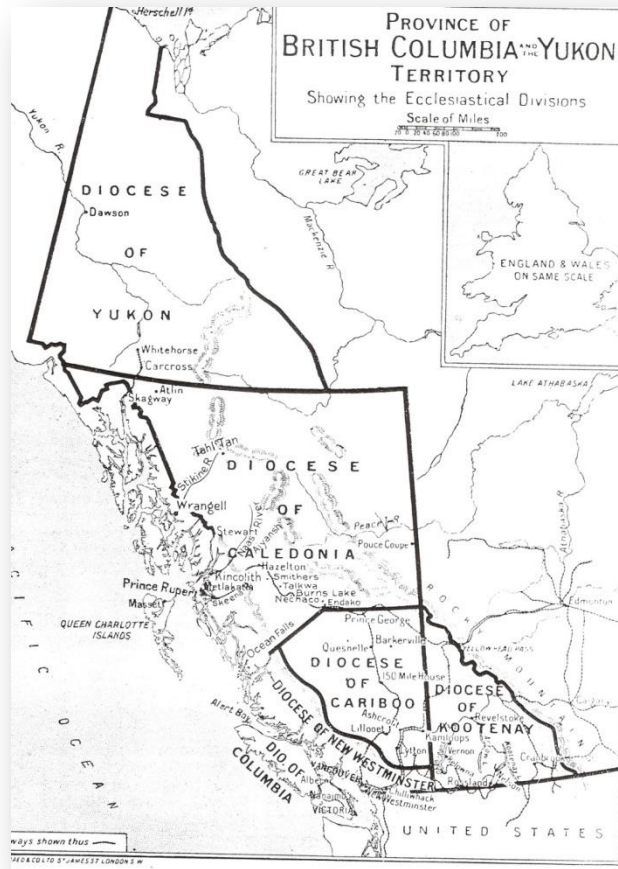


Figure 15: Stikine Indians on an Anglican map (North British Columbia News, January 1924)



When Blake and others within the missionary society saw the diminishing worth of expensive Industrial and Boarding schools and proposed a return to the business of saving souls, rather than educating them, they were up against an immovable force. Missionary teachings included separating the Indian from the rest of society in model villages where they could be Christianized far from the debilitating effects of the dark side of White society. Missionary societies enjoyed a tremendous amount of control over their Indian flocks through their mission houses and their Day schools, and this system was not about to be dismantled because of a few disgruntled suggestions from those lower down the ladder of the church bureaucracy. The missionary template for colonization and Indian education had been established by the religious bureaucracies long before Blake's 1903-05 memorandum, and would remain in place for at least another half century. How these Day schools functioned and what influence the missionary held over the Indian communities is a vital component to this story.

### **a) The Anglican missions**

As they did elsewhere in Canada, the Church of England, through their overseas Church Missionary Society (CMS) infiltrated the cultural fabric of the Indigenous peoples of northern B.C., replacing traditional customs with more pious missionary practices. Through their good relations with the Hudson's Bay Company, for whom they provided teachers and chaplains for their trading posts, missionaries were able to travel on the pack trains and in the canoes of the company traders. The English gospel first arrived on the west coast in the form of the aptly named Herbert Beaver

in 1836 at the Hudson's Bay Company trading depot at Fort Vancouver. He held positions as both chaplain and school teacher to the children of the company employees (Peake 1959: 2). When the company shifted headquarters to Victoria, Reverend R. J. Staines became the first missionary in the new colony in 1849. The Church of England had a great deal of experience with mission work due to the vastness of the British Empire, and the hordes of uncivilized subjects in Asia, Africa and Australia. Missionary societies such as the Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge 1698, the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts 1701, and the Church Missionary Society (CMS) 1799, all took aim at the unharnessed souls of indigenous peoples in the British Empire. The CMS was first on the scene on the north coast in 1856 with the arrival of William Duncan who travelled to Fort Simpson and established a mission among the Tsimshian people in the Anglican Diocese of Caledonia. As well as the usual spiritual duties of replacing local belief systems with his CMS evangelical teachings, Duncan also held a Day school for children and an adult Night school by 1859. According to Fisher (1992: 129), the curriculum included reading, writing, counting, singing and religious knowledge, "...coloured by Duncan's peculiar theological views." Not satisfied with the duties as a chaplain and schoolteacher of his flock, Duncan wished to create a Christian colony; a utopian retreat away from the evil influences of godless behaviour and intoxicating liquors. This strategy to separate Indians from the more harmful influences of White society was an accepted theory that persisted for most of the next century. Duncan's divine plan became a reality with the building of the village of

Metlakatla in 1862, not far from Fort Simpson, on the site of an old traditional village, a place “...from which the Native evangelists might go forth and Christian truth radiate to every tribe around” (Peake 1959:16).

While Duncan’s community of over 300 Tsimshian people thrived economically, his relations with the church hierarchy were on shaky ground. Visiting church officials were often greeted with a chilly welcome upon arrival. In 1879, on a visit to Metlakatla by Bishop Ridley, he noted that community members were compelled to attend religious services by the village police, rather than voluntarily float to Sunday services on a cloud of religious ecstasy. “A couple of policemen, as a matter of routine, are in uniform, and this is an indication that loitering during service hours is against proper civil order” (Peake 1959: 17). According to his observations from his journal, Ridley saw the presence of authority figures to keep the Indians in line to be a “wholesome restraint” (Janvrin 1904: 11). Several months later his tone had changed. In a letter to the CMS, Ridley had now become alarmed at the “...unexpected absence of Christian instruction and privileges in the settlement (Metlakatla)” including bible classes and an interest in worldly possessions (Peake 1959: 91). While Duncan’s spiritual intransigence would eventually earn him an invitation to vacate his missionary assignment, the creeping advance of the missionaries continued into northwest B.C.

As noted above, this land mass was virtually unknown to most southerners until gold seekers flooded into the region, for the 1862 Stikine gold strike, in the mid 1870’s for

the Cassiar Gold Rush and in the late 1890's with the Klondike Gold Rush in the southern Yukon. By following on the heels of this influx, Anglican missions had eventually gained a presence in the northwest of the province. Before 1900, the Indigenous peoples of the Stikine were left, to a large degree, as an untended flock. However, to the southwest on the Queen Charlotte Islands the CMS sent Reverend Collison to open a mission at Masset in 1876. By then, the Haida had been decimated by an earlier small pox epidemic and had little patience for evangelical speeches although they recognized the power that followed these white men. Of missionary education, one chief spoke, "Yes, you can lead our children in the new way, but we do not desire to abandon the customs of our forefathers." As an experienced missionary, Collison knew the importance of learning local language in order to subjugate the local savages. "If they permitted me to teach their children I knew I should be enabled through their children to influence them also" (Collison 1915: 104). Particularly offensive to the CMS were the Haida practices of slavery and the potlatch, as well as the challenges of the local medicine men, witches and sorcerers to Christian church authority. Writing in 1877 to the CMS, Collison noted, "the Medicine Men (whose orgies while I write are ringing in my ears) now oppose the truth openly, and are exhorting the people not to believe the book" (Krueger 1973: 16). By 1890, Reverends Harrison and Keen had finally established a foothold in the Queen Charlottes and translated the gospel prayer book into the Haida language. On the Skeena River, Reverend Gurd built a mission at Kitkatla and a missionary presence was established at Hazelton. Reverend McCullagh brought

evangelical Christianity to the Nisga'a at the settlement of Aiyansh in the Nass River Valley in 1884. After the bright star of Metlakatla had waned by the turn of the last century, Aiyansh was regarded by most Anglicans as the CMS's most successful northern Indian mission. According to the granddaughter of Reverend McCullagh, he was an authoritarian, who inflicted "wholesome restraint" on his flock, in the manner of the disowned, Reverend Duncan from Metlakatla. McCullagh personally inspected every home in the village on Saturdays before the Sunday services to ensure their cleanliness before worship. The village business was overseen, like at Duncan's Metlakatla, by his handpicked cohorts who performed roles as village police (Krueger 1973: 16). By 1900, the Church of England had 12 missions operating on the northwest coast. Metlakatla and Aiyansh were two of their shiniest stars.



**Figure 16:** Tahltan Mission (North British Columbia News 1912)

## **b) Tahltan Mission school**

The Diocese of Caledonia newspaper, *North British Columbia News* was published from 1909 to 1958, and contained biographical narratives and personal journal entries of the missionaries and members of the church bureaucracy in the diocese. The important and influential Anglican Nisga'a mission at Aiyansh was a regular contributor to the newspaper, but smaller missions such as Tahltan also found an audience among the diocese newspaper readers with tales of Christian servility. The newspaper presented a narrative that expressed the political, religious and economic policies of missionary domination over the local Indigenous peoples and provided good primary documentation on the mindset ruling the mission in the ethnographic past of this underreported area. The church and the school were perfect vehicles for their strategies of religious and political domination. In front of the church chancel or the mission school blackboard, the cultural practices and spiritual beliefs of the local Indigenous peoples were belittled, or defined as witchcraft and idolatry by the missionaries. To the savage Indian, there was no other avenue for salvation except to follow the guiding light of Christianity.

According to the author of *History of the Anglican Church in British Columbia*, "In 1897 a new mission was opened at Tahl Tan, far up the Stikine River, by the Reverend F. M. T. Palgrave who stayed for four years and then, it is said, made himself responsible for the stipend of his successor, the Reverend T.P.W. Thorman" (Peake 1959: 94). This very brief statement on the history of Tahltan village from a former archivist at

the Vancouver School of Theology did little to convey the cultural narrative that defined the early village life at Tahltan. The implication that village life began only after 1897 was the usual missionary interpretation, yet it is the usual beginning for the published, mainstream colonial history of British Columbia. From the archaeological excavations at the village during the past two years (Tahltan Archaeological Project, 2007-2008), it appears that people camped and lived at this locality seasonally for at least two hundred years. This opinion is based on unpublished Atomic Mass Spectrometer (AMS) dates obtained from organic materials in the lower strata of the site, as well as the wide range and large sample size of both historic and prehistoric artifacts recovered from the mission village site.

The Bishop of the Diocese of Caledonia, W. Ridley was the first Anglican missionary to travel to this remote country, during 1897-1900 and he was fully aware that Presbyterians and Roman Catholics were already in the region converting Indian souls and undermining the missionary efforts of the Church of England. He was also aware of the limitless opportunities for mission work once this land was opened up for economic development. Since the beginning of the Klondike Gold Rush, Minister of the Interior, Clifford Sifton had actively supported an all-Canadian route up the Stikine River to Glenora, and then overland to the Yukon gold fields. In 1898, Sifton entered into a short-lived agreement with private investors to build a railway from Telegraph Creek to Teslin Lake, straddling the Yukon/British Columbia border, nearly 150 miles to the north. Knowing that railways encouraged new towns, Bishop Ridley indulged in land speculation while he scouted for new Indian converts in the

north. “To avoid the expense of buying land for churches and parsonages when town sites have become costly, I have been securing land in likely places so as to be able to work as soon as towns spring up” (Janvrin 1904: 11).

Interdenominational rivalries have always been apparent in missionary writings, and Ridley’s biographical observations were no exception. After visiting a Presbyterian mission at Wrangell, Alaska at the mouth of the Stikine River in 1900, he found the Indians to be backward when compared to Anglican mission Indians, “...and the reason is, I think, that the missionaries are not required to learn the vernacular, and do not. They have no school under their direction. The (American) Government is supposed to teach both whites and Indians, and there is no place for religious instruction in their system. The missionary staff is not inferior to ours, but because of the divorce between schools and religion the results are plainly inferior” (Janvrin 1904: 171).

According to Ridley, the mission at Tahltan represented an important Anglican outpost. “Now we have a chain of flourishing mission stations from the mouth of the Skeena River to Gishgagas, 250 miles to the eastward...” adding that, “... only to the north on the Stikine River is Satan’s reign undisturbed,” referring to the Roman Catholic missions on the Mackenzie River and Great Slave Lake (Janvrin 1904: 141). Ridley also believed that the new mission school at Tahltan was the chief barrier against the creeping Roman Catholicism that threatened to undermine the good work of Reverend Palgrave. Not far from Tahltan in the northeast, a Catholic priest had



visited the Liard River and had converted some of the heathens, but their inroads were yet modest in the area. “The Romans do not, so far as I have seen, educate their Indians, and therefore the Heathen eventually see the difference and value our efforts the more” (Janvrin 1904: 171). The first work of Ridley and other missionaries upon meeting new Indian prospects was to perform baptisms and marriages, thereby staking claim to the heathen’s soul before the Papists could seduce them away. Ridley also held little regard for the White miners and fortune seekers that wintered in Telegraph Creek, noting their “drunkenness and debauchery are so established by long usage that no one seems to see the sin of it. Young Indian men ape the manners of the whites. The only sober and grave Indians are those who refuse to associate with the wicked crowd. It is among these separated ones Mr. Palgrave has been successful” (Janvrin 1904: 171). According to Ridley’s biography, Reverend Palgrave tried to teach his Tahltan faithful to pronounce the name of the son of God as “Jesu Cheest” in order to differentiate it from the common blasphemy heard in every mining camp, village and town throughout the north (Janvrin 1904: 173). Missing from the biography is an acknowledgement that Palgrave was an accomplished linguist who was able to phonetically-translate the Tahltan language into English so that the people could learn the Lord’s Prayer. The Tahltan people learned little of educational value at the mission except the religious catechism of the Church of England during Palgrave’s residency at Tahltan (Janvrin 1904: 149). The results of his short tenure as mission schoolmaster were assessed by Bishop Ridley who remarked,

“I was surprised at the progress made. It testified to the successful toil of the missionary during his three years spent among rude barbarians” (Janvrin 1904: 171).

Lord's Prayer

Achdigi Dachta: llan munes'egliu  
 nzyhyi etiá. Slan munes'egliu dide  
 nenke dene so'gwa nene. Duda armin  
 -yini dene nge ode daga, achdigi  
 nenike dene ade hogi. Dregitsenes  
 onadel dachdia dachgana jada  
 asidin edinbull dachuni sha  
 gagi dene jada adawhedi de  
 edu ed'elita audli. Edu ja'lude  
 hotsi nedawhenta enlin jada cad  
 so'gwa dachuni nene je dahdenetia  
 enlin ne je nandihí. Nene inchoe,  
 uweda, uweda.

So'gwa.

Figure 17: According to Usher (1971: 49) in the early years CMS missionaries were required to speak and teach in native languages in order to translate the Scriptures for the new Indian converts to memorize (from Palgrave 1902)

The social controls of missionaries over their “flocks” in the Diocese of Caledonia could go beyond gentle persuasion and biblical example, to more heavy-handed actions to rein in the mission malcontents. Reverend William Duncan at Metlakatla deputized his moral constables to ensure that his Tsimshian mission flock attended

church and abstained from immoral behaviour, particularly alcohol consumption. Metlakatla was a model Victorian village with streets, a sanitation system and a company store. His community adhered to a strict code of rules and regulations that were enforced through community watch groups, that included both hereditary leaders and church-appointed policemen. Unwanted visitors to Metlakatla were greeted with an unfurled black banner on the community flagpole to alert Duncan's followers that an interloper had appeared on the docks. A chilly reception usually followed.

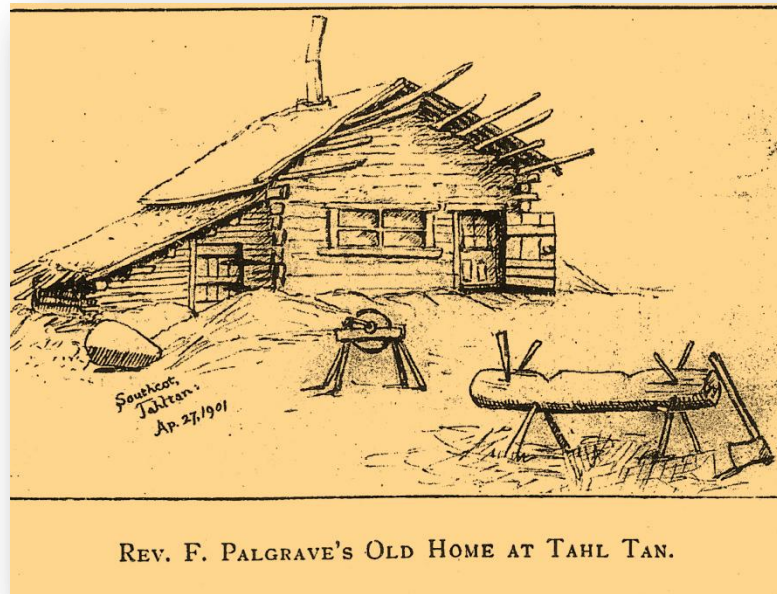
Reverend McCullagh also deputized his gospel police at Aiyansh to keep his Christian Nisga'a villagers on God's narrow path. Minor infractions of church rules meant a summons to the village court, a fine and public repudiation. Following an identical philosophy to eradicate anything considered heathen behaviour, Palgrave acted as both missionary and informant to the Indian Agent in Telegraph Creek. He was ever vigilant to eradicate heathen practices or intercede during "immoral" ceremonies at Tahltan. Palgrave's journal entries on October 11, 1898 appeared to be those of a police agent as well as a kindly old missionary teacher, as he related the story of the local magistrate Mr. Webster and Reverend Appleyard, who rescued a Taku Indian orphan under a death sentence at Tahltan for having bewitched Kulahan's daughter and caused her death. Through Palgrave's intervention, the boy was rescued and sent down to the school at Metlakatla. In 1900, Palgrave described an incident at Sucker Lake where ten Indians approached his camp, "...including the chief with his son's corpse on a sleigh, Sam's little boy being in the same coffin. Chief Eneita camped

with me and we sat up all night while I tried to disabuse his mind of the idea that a witch (Ecizo) had caused the death of his son.” Later that year, Palgrave visited the Liard Indians and after a Christmas dinner, “...there was a great deal of palavering as the chief discussing the payment of skins to the Tahltans in compensation for the murder committed by one of his own people, and I haranguing them on the witchcraft question.” These social practices associated with shamanism were always the target of evangelical scorn and contempt since these behaviours challenged the authority of the implanted belief system of the colonizer. Although Palgrave held considerable influence in the village, there were consequences for some of his actions. After the arrest of Johnny Desgall'ta in 1900 for murdering an Indian suspected of witchcraft, Palgrave's church was “boycotted by most of the Indians in consequence, it being thought that I had some hand in the arrest.” While the missionaries routinely interfered with harmless social practices that they considered immoral or un-Christian, by eradicating some of the more brutal aspects of these local practices, the missionaries were able to draw people towards their church for protection and to expand their own spheres of influence over the Indians by suppressing witchcraft.

Other social practices also fell under the harsh light of missionary scrutiny, particularly potlatching, funerary practices and celebratory drinking. After informing the Indian Agent of an “illegal” potlatch at the village in late January 1899, “next morning at a crowded meeting in Jackson's house, I made a long speech explaining my actions and by giving up my two bottles of brandy to the police in order to be clear in the matter and silence all complaints.” Several weeks later, Palgrave wrote

that, “I interrupted and stopped an Indian funeral performance [for] Overcin’s wife in Nass Dick’s house this evening, which gave great offense to the party assembled.”

After the police were notified by Palgrave, One-Eyed Charlie was arrested for having whiskey in his cabin. This caused a revolt in the village as an angry group of Tahltans relieved the arresting police officer of his gun and handcuffs. All the offending Indians were later arrested, briefly jailed and fined. Palgrave’s position of authority at Tahltan was reinforced by his apparent good relations with the village headman, Chief Nanock. In 1900, when another potlatch interfered with church attendance, Palgrave had his friend Chief Nanock ban all future potlatching at Tahltan. This was an important victory for the church to convince the local chief to ban a social practice that had been an important weave in their cultural fabric for centuries. Both Nanock and his wife were later baptized. By doing so, spiritual leadership of the village was surrendered to the Anglican Church.



**Figure 18: Rev. Palgrave's romanticized accommodations  
(North British Columbia News 1910)**

From Reverend Palgrave's journal, a feeling of contempt for Catholicism was evident, including a notation at 1900 concerning a Catholic convert, "Bear Lake Charlie" who opposed the Anglican efforts to convert the Tahltan Indians into Anglicans. On a trip up the Dease River towards the Liard River, Palgrave found a camp of Kaskas, and Nelson River Indians whose Catholic chief was also a medicine man and a polygamist with two wives. Another diary entry noted that the chief of the Indians near Liard Post had been converted and baptized ten years before by a French Bishop who visited the area. Since then, they had been without the spiritual guidance of a Christian mission. Palgrave's July 4 entry stated, "These Indians promise to build a house for free for a missionary, and will keep their children in school and will help

the man who teaches them, with grub for himself and for the children entrusted to his care.” Palgrave failed to note that he was the only source of small pox vaccine to a people already under siege from European diseases. The Indian longing for a white missionary was likely linked to this medical reality rather than some need for Christian spiritual guidance. According to Palgrave’s journal entries, the remoteness of the Tahltan mission and the harshness of the local conditions did not encourage an eager list of missionary hopefuls to replace him. Until Reverend Thorman and his family appeared, mission activities continued to be Palgrave’s job. Education at Tahltan mission school comprised memorizing the Lord’s Prayer and singing from Christian hymn sheets. In a class for “big” boys, there were reading and writing lessons after singing and bible classes every night at the chief’s house. According to Palgrave, this missionary education included, “frequent practice of Indian and English hymns...sometimes preached twice...repeated sermon or address... first in pigeon English, then in Chinook, lastly in more or less correct Indian from notes prepared beforehand” (Palgrave Journal, n.d.: 6).

Reverend T.P. Thorman, fresh from his religious duties in the British West Indies arrived to replace Palgrave at Tahltan in 1901, bringing along his wife and five young children, two of which would later become missionary teachers at Tahltan. Their only avenue of arrival at Tahltan, the Stikine River was accessible for only a few months during the year and treacherous during those brief windows of opportunity.

Thorman’s first years at Tahltan, 1901-1903 produced notes that eventually found their way into the CMS Archives (Thorman 1905). When he first arrived, Thorman

believed there were about 200 Tahltan who continued to travel about their traplines but returned to the main village several times a year. Thorman described the Tahltan as less advanced than their neighbours, the coastal Tlingit who possessed basketry, totem poles and wooden-planked longhouses. At the village, Thorman noted, there was no deeded property and the local inhabitants possessed the “rudest system of picture writing” while practicing polygamy, slavery and devil worship. His living quarters consisted of a 12x10 foot shack that stood as a windbreak from the subzero temperatures. Hardships aside, Thorman still managed a “daily school for about 20 to 30 men, women and children per day, and daily prayers and instruction” (Thorman 1905: 7). It is a normal event to read in the diocese newsletters and personal journals of large numbers of Indians in attendance at any missionary church event. Whether or not these numbers were based on reality is another question. Humankind has been publishing inflated attendance rolls ever since the invention of the printing press. Why would Thorman be any different, particularly when donations flowed to successful missions, not failed churches with empty pews? In 1903, Thorman retired as minister at Tahltan, due to a death in his family, leaving behind unfinished buildings and unfulfilled expectations.

Thorman’s 1905 letter, written after he had returned to England, appeared to be an inventory for the next missionary at Tahltan and hardly seemed an encouraging document for any missionary family looking for new evangelical horizons in northwest British Columbia. The document also revealed much about missionary attitudes towards their Indigenous congregations and, as a narrative it could easily



have been mistaken for one of the many popular missionary adventure novels that documented and denigrated “savage” life in the late 1800s and early 1900s in Canada. In his ten-page letter, Thorman gives an account of life at Tahltan Village: how to get there, the cost of living at the mission, the physical state of the mission, the buildings and mission assets, the services offered by the mission and the requisite skills required by his missionary successor. The village was described as a gathering of log cabins that housed up to 200 Tahltan Indians who came and went in a nomadic fashion according to the season and the resources they wished to harvest. Due to the remoteness of the village from the civilized world, it was a difficult journey to make and an expensive place to live, as the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898 had inflated the price of everything. Thorman, for all his evangelical brotherly love, still saw the Tahltan as his biological and social inferiors. According to his observations and objections, the Tahltan participated in polygamy, slavery and the ultimate deed of savagery, cannibalism. Although Thorman had spent only three years at the mission, he felt confident enough to comment that the Tahltan were on the lowest point of the evolutionary scale, and certainly shorter than their Tlingit neighbours and far less artistic. Although they were recent contacts with European civilization, the Tahltan had made some progress towards salvation. While those Tahltan who were in most contact with the “rough” elements of White society tended to be immoral and lacking in restraint, there were also 40-50 baptized Tahltan in the area that had recently abandoned their barbaric practice of cremation in favour of White Man’s burial customs. At the end of his document, Thorman warned that although the

Tahltan had a desire to learn, they lacked the mental capacity to succeed in the modern Christian world. Reverend Thorman also related lurid tales of murder at Tahltan Village. Written in his almost illegible scrawl, Thorman noted that, “It is only within the last five or six years child murders have been stamped out among the Tahltan” (1905: 10).

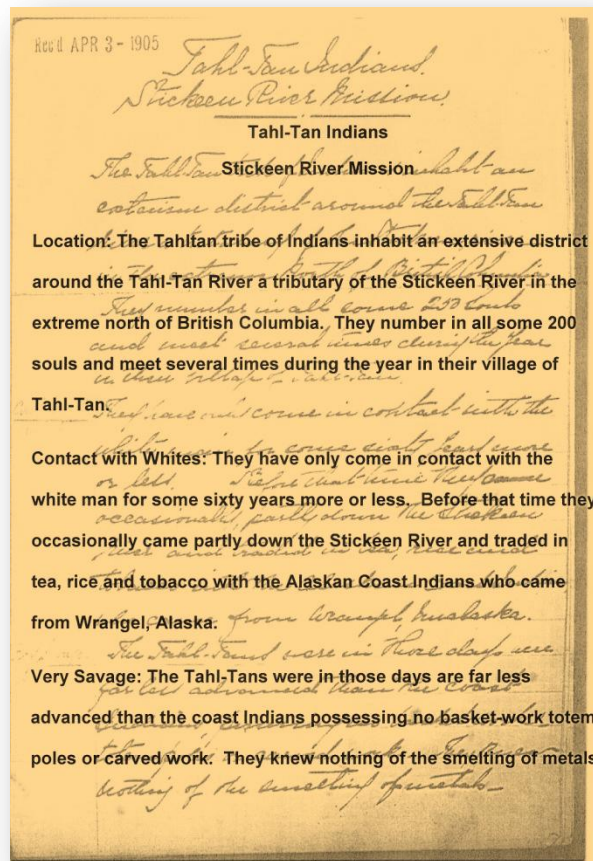


Figure 19: T. P. Thorman's 1905 letter

Thorman failed to relate in this letter the devastating results of infectious diseases on the Tahltan since the first small pox epidemic arrived on the Stikine during the 1832 fishing season, and the acts of cremation that the missionaries so abhorred would have been the only possible way to dispose of the many dead caused by an epidemic. Thorman also failed to relate to his replacement that the Tahltan were devastated by a rapid population loss. The Hudson's Bay Company trader Robert Campbell noted in a July 1838 journal entry after visiting the Stikine that, "Such a concourse of Indians I have never before seen assembled. They were gathered from all parts of the western slopes of the Rockies and from along the Pacific Coast. These Indians camped here for weeks at a time, living on salmon which could be caught in the thousands on the Stikine"(Campbell 1967: 42). By 1850, there were not enough Tahltans left alive to maintain their elaborate fishing stations, traps, ladders and scaffolding that comprised their traditional fishery on the Stikine River. Infectious diseases brought from Europe produced high mortality rates among the Stikine Indians, particularly among the Elders who were the storytellers of the Tahltan legends that gave meaning and grounded the people to their culture. Thorman noted in other documents that small pox had quickly exterminated most of the Daksh Khit (storyteller's guild) in the later 1800s and this resulted in a severing from the traditional past (Thorman n.d.; Harris 1997-1998: 68). The premature deaths of these Elders, who were the living archives of their culture, was devastating for an oral society that passed down important stories, legends and social mores from one generation to the next through storytelling. This vitally important knowledge for Talhtan culture, particularly for the

young people who had never heard these stories, was now lost forever. The loss of these Elders also inflated the value of the missionary storytellers, who were able to dismiss these old Indian stories as sorcery and witchcraft, essentially substituting these oral histories with their own missionary fables.

According to the Diocese records (1956) from 1903 to 1910 in the absence of Thorman, colonial guidance was under the direction of a Presbyterian, Dr. Inglis, a medical missionary who operated a day school from Telegraph Creek, abandoning Tahltan except for the rare visit. During this missionary seven-year hiatus, the Tahltan mission stood unattended. In the spring of 1910, the record states that Reverend T. P. Thorman, along with his son Robert Thorman returned to Tahltan to finish building the mission church and operate an Indian school. The elder Thorman planned to remain at Tahltan for two years until his missionary replacement, another son, F. Thorman could travel there. According to T. P. Thorman's letters to his Bishop upon his 1910 return to Tahltan "I started school with 6 scholars, which number soon went to 20, some days more, by a fortnight 15 attended-10 on a regular basis" (*North British Columbia News* 1910, May 10, Vol. 1, No. 3: 31). Complacency turned to anger when the Tahltan learned that all of their traditional territories outside of their meagrely allotted reservations now belonged to the federal government. This highly charged land tenure issue resulted in the *1910 Tahltan Declaration* that reminded the government authorities that the Tahltan had not ceded

their land through treaty or war and did not intend to give up their land rights. For T. P. Thorman's son Fred Thorman, who replaced his father as missionary in August 1912, this was the beginning of the end of mission work at Tahltan as church popularity sagged thereafter. The missionaries held some of the blame for this schism by denouncing the *Tahltan Declaration* and within a few years the Tahltan would hardly remember the Thorman family efforts at their village.

After a field inspection of the Stikine Indian Agency, the March 1910 *Annual Report* noted that the Tahltan were the only band settled in a fixed location, but because of the transient nature of the people only 50% of the school age Indian children were attending school at any given time. The report noted that in 1907, a \$300 grant was made towards a teacher's salary for the public school in Telegraph Creek, with the provision that Indian children could attend the school. The McKenna/McBride Commission recorded at the time of their 1915 visit to Telegraph Creek, the presence of ten Tahltan children in this public school. Because of the draw of a growing Telegraph Creek community with the economic opportunities such as packers, hunting guides and labourers, most Tahltan families began to move away from the mission thereby undercutting Thorman's efforts to re-establish his father's mission school at Tahltan.

As T. P. Thorman lamented on the social unrest that had fallen upon the Stikine Indian Agency, "My school has fallen from 30 down to 4 of school age; what the department will say I do not know." Attendance levels were an important reality

for any assisted school that had to depend on per capita grants for operating expenses. Not only were the Tahltan not interested in the White man's education, his religion had also turned bad. Written in July 1912, T. P. Thorman remarked, "They have done but little to the church this year, that madness about the land seemed to seize them all, and caused them to have a brain storm, I think. It has left them most unsettled in mind and not as wise as before" (*North British Columbia News* 1912, Vol. 8, No. 10: 6).

On a visit to the mission on October 1912, Bishop Du Vernet noted that Reverend T. P. Thorman was "fond of children and has a gift for teaching. In two years time he had brought these children on most wonderfully. They could read and write and do difficult sums in arithmetic. He had taught them also to find places on the map, sing children's hymns, and be respectful in their manners. One of the most striking features of the mission is the way the people assemble in church every night and morning for prayers." This narrative from a high-ranking official of the Anglican Church rings with the usual colonial attitudes towards a perceived racial inferior, and oozed with the literary ambience of Kipling's *White Man's Burden*. "Rev. Thorman has a powerful influence for good over them. They are children, easily led one way or the other. Family prayer is out of the question, and so the church bell with its daily call to prayer helps teach them regular habits, and in the House of God a hallowing power is felt-in the presence of Christ" (*North British Columbia News*, July 1912).

The Tahltan Mission school suffered from the same ailments as other Indian Day schools across Canada. Irregular attendance made it difficult to maintain the eligibility for federal disbursements paid to these schools. In the *1912 Annual Report* of the Stikine Indian Agency, the agent reported that, "...they are all advancing, those fortunate enough to be in regular attendance are fully up to the standard of white children under similar conditions. The same remarks apply to the assisted (public) school at Telegraph Creek." After reviewing the available documents and contradictory statements from various sources, it is difficult to assess exactly what mission school students received in the way of an education or how the Indian education could be at the same academic standard as non-denominational public schools. There were no school lesson plans, or yearly examination booklets from the school to be found in the Anglican archives, but the musings of the latest reverend for the mission hint strongly at repetitive oral exercises. Fred Thorman, son of T.P. Thorman, and successor to his father at Tahltan after 1912 noted in a letter, "the daily repetition of the primers grows somewhat monotonous to the ears. However, this must be borne [sic] with until some definite method of teaching the Indian youth has been decided upon. I have petitioned for an Industrial school, but until the land question is settled, nothing of this sort will receive consideration at headquarters" (*North British Columbia News*, 1913, Vol. 11, No. 16: 53). According to the March 1913 *Annual Report* of the Stikine Agency for Tahltan Day school, "This school is in the charge of Rev. Mr. F. Thorman, who reports that during the past winter the attendance has been much lower than formerly, owing to the fact that the

Indians and their families had moved to the hunting grounds. As a result of this, conditions at this school have not been very satisfactory.” The school closed that year when federal funds were withdrawn due to low attendance.

Struck with a wave of patriotic fervour even more powerful than his Christian duty to his “flock” or his declining popularity at the Tahltan mission, Fred Thorman abandoned his Stikine post for England to become a padre in the Great War. F. Thorman was one of many missionaries who returned from the colonies to enlist in the armed forces. When the 1912-1916 McKenna-McBride Commission investigated new Indian reserve boundaries in the Stikine Agency, they recorded a population of 217 in 51 families living at Tahltan during their 1915 survey visit. Reverend F.

Thorman’s mission school was “at present closed on account of alleged irregularity of attendance.” They also recorded that, “Good school at Tahltan much desired; ten Indian children now attending Provincial Public School at Telegraph Creek” (*Report of the Royal Commission on Indian Affairs for the Province of British Columbia 1916*, Vol. 4: 749).

From the Union of BC Indian Chiefs web site, the narrative between the Land Commission and the Tahltan elders revealed a much greater level of concern about education. The dialogue was also an indicator of Reverend F. Thorman’s lack of popularity as an educator at Tahltan village. At the interview between the Tahltan Chief Charlie Squash and Commissioner McKenna at Telegraph Creek on June 7th, 1915 the issue of education arose when McKenna asked,

Q. What about your schools?...We have practically none, our children learn nothing.



Q. Have you not a fine school right here at Telegraph Creek?...Yes, we have a fine school here.

Q. You are satisfied with the school here....Yes, this is a good school and the teacher is a fine young man - he teaches our children well and treats them well.

Q. How many Indian children attend this school?...I think about 10.

Q. Have you any other children who could attend this school but don't?...No, children of families that live in this vicinity attend this school.

Q. Then what did you mean by saying that you had practically no schools and your children were not learning anything?...I spoke then of the Tahltan Reserve where I live.

Q. Is there no school there?...No.

Q. I have been told that there is a school house and a school teacher there.... Yes, but the school is not run steadily and the children learn nothing.

Q. Is that school open now?... No.

Q. How long since it has been open?... About 5 months.

Q. And how long was it open before that?...It's only open once in a while - it is not kept open regularly.

Q. How many children have you at Tahltan of school age?...About 15.

Q. How long is it since the school was started there?...Before I can remember.

Q. Who was the first teacher?...Mr. Pargrade.

Q. The next?...Mr. Thornanby.

Q. The next?...His son, the present teacher, Fred Thornanby.

Q. Was the school ever kept regularly open within your memory?...No.

Q. Is it a church school?...Yes.

Q. Is the teacher a clergyman?...I don't know.

Q. Have you any missionary or clergyman who holds service for you here or at Tahltan?... At Tahltan we used to have services but lately we have had none. What I want the Government to provide is a good school for the children at Tahltan.

Q. Would you prefer having a boarding school for all the Indians of this district instead of day schools?...No.

Q. Then what you want at Tahltan is a school as good as the school here (Telegraph Creek)?...Yes.

Additional testimony before the 1915 McKenna/McBride Commission came from Indian Agent Porter who found reason to question the taste of the water at the agency when he stated, "...but I know this, that I have lived close by Indians all my life and I know they are filthy people; they don't seem to think that there is any harm at all in urinating in any stream that they know supplies water to white people. They are a very, very careless lot of people and whether they could be made to keep away from the creek and all that sort of thing that would be another question"

(<http://www.ubcic.bc.ca/Resources/ourhomesare/testimonies/>).

The above conversation with the Tahltan Elders could hardly be considered a heart-warming testimonial to the efforts of the Anglican Church to educate the young people at Tahltan, who "learned nothing" at the mission school. Reverend Thorman's accounts revealed a life seen through the coloured glasses of an evangelical missionary who believed the Tahltan people were his "spiritual flock." By the above account, the provincial public school provided the better educational choices for Tahltan parents. Like Reverend Palgrave, Thorman split his missionary

efforts between Telegraph Creek and Tahltan Village and after the village “madness” over the land question, Thorman began spending more and more time at Telegraph Creek. His letters to *North British Columbia News* become less frequent after 1913. According to the Tahltan Elders, he was little more than an unpleasant memory at Tahltan when the McKenna/McBride Commission appeared on the Stikine. During the winter of 1916, Reverend Thorman admitted that he hadn’t been photographed in three years and he looked, “uncommonly rough just now,” when he abruptly informed the readers of Diocese of Kootenay newspaper, (*Across the Rockies* 1916, vol. 7: 58-59) of his intentions to answer the call to duty in the Great War. “I fear I shall not be this way again for some time but if there is a successor I am sure you will find him as you did me.” Since those Tahltan Elders who spoke before the Land Commission had less than fond memories of Fred “Thornanby” or his vocation, Reverend Thorman’s replacement should not expect, nor deserve, any better. According to the March 1916 *Annual Report*, the Telegraph Creek provincial school was attended by both Whites and Indians. It was noted that, “The majority of the Telegraph Creek band speak English and dress in the garb of White men.” While attendance was poor, Constable Cullen has received instructions to see that the children of Drytown attend the school regularly, and we are looking for better attendance in the future.” The Tahltan mission school had closed owing to attendance problems and, “the former teacher Rev. F. P. Thorman has gone to the front.”

According to Thorman's patriotic narrative in the *North British Columbia News* in 1918, after a brief taste of trench warfare and three months rest at a military hospital, the young reverend had time to reflect on his newly discovered piety since his last unremarkable departure from Tahltan. "After two years with the colours in the ranks and as a Padre, I am persuaded it is my duty to now return to the Lone Mission of Tahl Tan." If one is to believe his self-serving autobiographical account, the dear reverend, who fought in "the ranks" as well as preached in the trenches, was not perturbed by the exploding munitions and rain-filled trenches. On the contrary, this "battle-hardened" Thorman only sought release from the army for purely spiritual reasons, because Tahltan Village "cannot for year after year be abandoned without disastrous results to the spiritual welfare of my flock" (*North British Columbia News*, May 1918, Vol. 5, No. 33: 85). Thorman's delusional assessments of his own self-worth at Tahltan do not stand well against the comments of "his flock", the Tahltan people who spoke before the McKenna/McBride Reserve Commission and thought little of Thorman's mission school or the memory of his name. While the Great War was still raging, the young war hero F. Thorman was granted a discharge from his military service. He returned to Tahltan Mission in 1918 after a two-year absence, including his three-month hospital stay and an early release from the army, now with a "much younger" wife. His divine efforts to defeat the German army now complete, Thorman had a mission to resurrect, and a heathen nation of Tahltans to Christianize. Over the next five years, his truncated military service was injected into the diocese newsletter at every opportunity to spruce up the constant appeals to the

readership for donations. After all, who can refuse charitable donations to a “war hero” in a uniform? A May 1918 issue of *North British Columbia News* described F. P. Thorman as a volunteer for the “front” who had seen “service” in France, “which resulted in a three months’ hospital case in London.” After Thorman’s post-war appeal to the diocese readers for “an engine to drive a saw” for a mill at Tahltan, the editor remarked “he has done his bit, let us all show that we appreciate him and his ‘bit.’ ” Certainly absent from Thorman’s narrative are any reference to the 150 mm to 220 mm German Howitzers that rained artillery shells down upon Canadian positions at the front, nor was there any mention of the phosgene, chlorine and mustard gases that poisoned the Allies trenches. In fact, while Thorman shopped for a new bride during 1917 back in London, thousands of Canadian troops were being reduced to cannon fodder on the battlefields of France, at Vimy Ridge and Paschendale (Berton 1986).

Another issue in April 1919 reminded the readers of just how patriotic Anglican missionaries were, and to donate generously to the missionary cause. “The return of Reverend F. P. Thorman to resume his work at Tahl Tan [sic] after his army campaign resulted in a revival of interest in the work there, £61 being subscribed for an engine and saw.” Thorman described his return journey in a letter that, “There were eight Chaplains all told returning from the war.” During the North Atlantic crossing from Liverpool, there had been “no submarine scares” but one afternoon, gun practice had raised a general alarm. Nothing was ever written in the diocese newspapers of the hundreds of First Nations volunteers and decorated war veterans

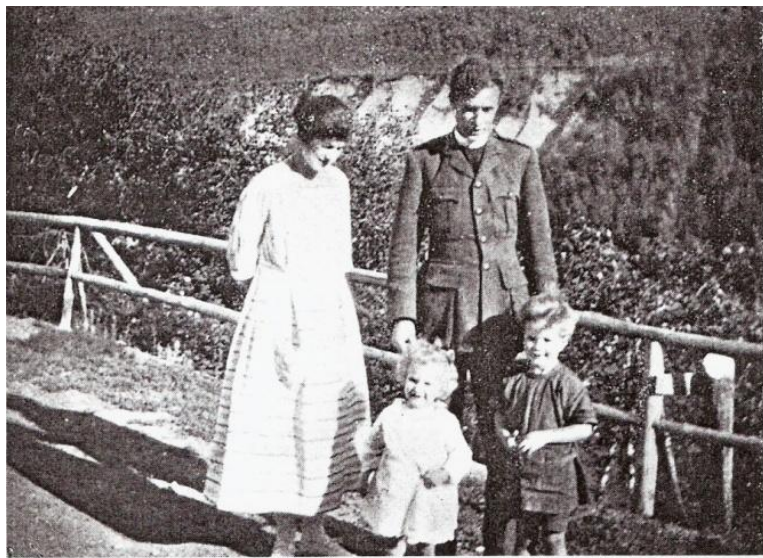
who served bravely overseas in the same war (*North British Columbia News*, May 1918, Vol. V, No. 33).



**Figure 20: Recruits from Saskatchewan's tiny File Hills Reserve with elders, family members and D.I.A. officials before departing for the Great War in 1915. National Archives of Canada/PA-66815.**



REV. F. P. THORMAN, C.F.



REV. F. P. THORMAN, MRS. THORMAN, AND FAMILY, AT HOME.

**Figure 21:** In a May 1918 issue, 6 months before Armistice Day, North British Columbia News announced Thorman's return to Tahltan. Below, Rev. F. Thorman still in uniform five years after the war. (North British Columbia News, January 1923)

F. Thorman introduced his new wife, “who is considerably younger than myself” to the diocese reader as “a reward” for his service, “...to share the joys and hardships of the life in the wild” (*North British Columbia News*, May 1918, Vol. V, No. 33: 84). Her role would be, not as an additional missionary staff member to the Tahltan Mission, but rather as a new housekeeper. As her “considerably older” husband stated, “The culinary arrangements at the Mission will no doubt improve.” His expectations for Elsie Thorman’s duties were summed up briefly. “Under her supervision the windows will have curtains and there will be other dinky little drapings about the house to make the place home.” His appeal for a new engine for a sawmill to ease his life at the mission was much more convincing than his description of his new wife’s assets. However, one reality that escaped Thorman and many of his male readers was that women in the missionary field in northern British Columbia were as active as their male counterparts. In the early years of CMS field work, women were not generally welcomed, except as the wives and sisters of male missionaries. However, by 1879 the first Anglicans women’s society was formed in Toronto and by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, there were 253 single women working aboard for the CMS. In the early 1900s, the Toronto Women’s Auxiliary began to recruit, train and send women missionaries to Canada’s north to assume roles as teachers, nurses, aid workers and deaconesses. While Thorman may have believed the role of missionary women was to attend to “dinky little drapings,” according to CMS records in 1899, a total of twenty-nine missionary staff in northern British Columbia included nine male



clergy and three laymen, but also nine wives and eight other women missionaries (Rutherford 2002: 4).

For her part, Elsie Thorman appeared to have little time for “dinky little drapings.” Her descriptive narratives in the *North British Columbia News* indicate her participation in the Tahltan Mission was much more informed and vital. “I find life among the Indians very interesting and intensely busy. I think my husband and myself have had something like 200 cases of sickness this winter” (*North British Columbia News*, July 1919, Vol. VI, No. 37: 27). Nor did it appear that there were many moments of hand-holding around the woodstove, as one narrative described a mid-winter hunting trip into the bush with a young baby in tow, and the mountain of physical tasks that had to be accomplished before two slain moose could be butchered and brought out of the bush. From their published accounts, it is clear that the Thormans spent some time apart, with Reverend Thorman spending part of his time at Tahltan and the other part ministering at Telegraph Creek, a day hike away, leaving Elsie Thorman to deal with missionary business at Tahltan. On another occasion, when Reverend Thorman worked his mission circuit at Tahltan and Telegraph Creek, Elsie attended the annual Synod in Prince Rupert in his place (*North British Columbia News*, October 1919, Vol. VI, No. 38: 37). Also interesting is that in her narratives at Tahltan, the reader of the diocese newspaper is never given the idea that Elsie Thorman endured a pregnancy and child delivery, yet by 1921 she has her own two children to raise in addition to her duties at Tahltan. During the winter of 1921, she travelled the long journey to Europe to visit her family, only to return to Tahltan by the April river

thaw to resume her duties. While both Reverend Thorman and Elsie Thorman wrote to the *North British Columbia News*, the skills of narration between the two are clearly in the corner of Elsie Thorman.

From the frequent mission narratives, it is quite apparent that fund-raising and donation requests were a large part of the diocese newspaper dialogue; a narrative that was distributed by coastal freighter, canoe and dogsled to faithful subscribers throughout the Anglican domain. These requests were targeted across a broad spectrum of evangelical worshippers, from requests for donations in the form of letters and lecture tours to academic societies, to friends, relatives and colleagues back in England, to fellow Anglicans in Canada and throughout the Empire, and to fellow diocesans and their neighbours in the mission towns. One social group that was heavily targeted for donations, both cash and labour, was the local mission Indians. This is particularly true at the Tahltan mission, where the people of the village were constantly harangued for aid throughout the life of the mission. In 1910, the Tahltans were induced to raise a collection to pay for the lumber for the new day school. A diary entry in Palgrave's journal noted that "Ntsilita collected cash and tickets for the schoolhouse lumber and gathered \$16 in the (Tahltan) village, then went to Telegraph Creek and raised \$14 more to buy 600 feet of lumber (Palgrave journal n.d.: 4). In the early 1900s, \$30 would have been a considerable sum of money for a small Indian village to collect.

In an effort to reopen the Tahltan Mission in 1910, the Bishop of Caledonia in Prince Rupert wrote to the Lord Bishop of Lichfield, with a thinly veiled request for donations, asking the Lord Bishop to grant leave of the elder Thorman to attend the neglected Indians at Tahltan. “With the growing White work and decreasing CMS grant, I am sore pressed financially. It is going to be a strain to pay Mr. Thorman and his son their travelling expenses and salary, but it seems as though God were pointing us to this work” (*North British Columbia News*, May 1910). All evidence seems to suggest that even after 1910, the villagers at Tahltan were also being tapped for donations on a regular basis, although there existed no overflowing cornucopia of wealth at Tahltan. As Bishop Ridley acknowledged in his biography that, except for small grants and donations from the mission field, “the churches and church halls are built and maintained entirely by the great liberality of the Indians” (Janvrin 1904: 188). It is an often overlooked fact that missionary services were provided with a price tag. Missionaries were paid employees of the mission societies. The construction of the mission, the maintenance costs and miscellaneous bills at Tahltan were paid by diocese donations or by the villagers themselves.

The diocese newspaper was also an avenue to funnel contributions from the pockets of the believers into the coffers of the church. The May 1918 *North British Columbia News* featured its usual page-long list of parishioners’ quarterly donations to the special funds and projects throughout the diocese. The Aiyansh Flood Fund held an impressive list of Anglican faithful that contributed £262 19s to the relief fund when the Nass River flooded their jewelled Anglican mission town. During this same

period, Tahltan received a comparatively paltry £55, 5s from two benefactors, one of whom was the old missionary Palgrave who helped build the first mission. He donated £50. The generosity of the British, even their children, knew no bounds according to one “delightful” and likely fabricated story, as told by the diocese newspaper. “On Wednesday last, a sweet child (it being her 7<sup>th</sup> birthday) brought me a little packet containing half-a-crown, saying, this is for your Mission for the Indians. I have been saving up my money for them first: Auntie shall have the next for the Mias in China; and then the dear blackies shall have the next” (North British Columbia News, May 1918, Vol. V, No. 33: 88).

On the verge of his mission’s closure, Reverend F. P. Thorman pleaded for money in an August 23, 1923 letter, even though it was a stable school attendance that he required. “If only that help be given us, as in former years, we shall pull through. We are weak at present, and never know day to day whether the mission will be closed.” The never-ending demands from Anglican missions for contributions from their local Indians must have been a burden on a people whose lives depended upon the success of the seasonal cycles of hunting and fishing. When they were able to scrape together a few shillings for the mission bell or sawmill, or contribute their labour to mission building projects, their generosity went unrecorded and nor was it publically acknowledged in the diocese newspaper. While the benevolent largesse of the English were duly enshrined, the identities of Tahltan contributors to their village projects remained as invisible as the nameless “informants” to the early ethnographers. Demands for donations came in many forms and sizes. One of F.

Thorman's 1920 requests for donations in the *North British Columbia News* (Vol. VI, No. 42) reminded the reader, "Dogs are indispensable to the Missionary at Tahl Tan, but to feed them is an expensive matter, and now there are two babies also claiming attention, your very generous help is sought." In a July 1924 letter to the *North British Columbia News*, F. Thorman lamented on his departure back to England, again leaving his flock at Tahltan Mission, but this time due to his father, T. P. Thorman's illness. In the letter, F. Thorman's war record had lengthened considerably, along with the depth of his devotion to his mission. "It is twelve years since I came here. I had two and a half years "holiday" on active service in the War, and with the exception of this period, and two weeks in Prince Rupert, have never left my parish." Once safely back in England, Thorman shed further light on his rather sudden departure from his spiritual flock at Tahltan Mission. "Tahl Tan could never be what Reverend Palgrave and my father hoped for. Tahl Tan was done, the timber (so necessary), the fur-bearing animals, and water were all getting scarce, and the attractions of Telegraph Creek as the mart for pelts, were luring the Indians there, often to their moral undoing" (*North British Columbia News*, October 24, 1924: 143).

With the final departure of the Reverend Thorman from the Stikine in 1924, the Day school option for Tahltan disappeared, as the local Indians had already begun to shift their permanent residences to Telegraph Creek. Once safely back in England, the reasons for the Thorman's shift in missionary efforts away from Tahltan to Telegraph Creek became apparent. During his tenure at Tahltan, the young people left the village, "only to be contaminated by the evils prevalent in Telegraph Creek." When

he returned after the 1918 conflict, our war hero F. Thorman found Tahltan was deserted except for a few families while the Indian children at Telegraph Creek had turned into “Godless hooligans.” According to his Darwinian views that echoed elsewhere at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, “The Indians had now fallen into that suicidal tendency which comes upon people knowing themselves to be a dying race, to hasten the end” (*North British Columbia News*, October 1925, No. 62). Within a few years, Tahltan was a deserted shell of its former self. According to the new missionary who resided at Telegraph Creek, “Very few people stay there now, it is in a bad state, no good water and the houses are in a dreadful condition, in fact, one authority says they should be burned” (*North British Columbia News*, July 1926, No. 65: 211). In 1933, another of the Thorman sons arrived to restart the mission school effort at Tahltan. By 1934, W. Thorman related that, “I have spent most of my summer at Tahl-Tan, where I conducted a day school for the Indians as there were quite a number of children in the vicinity of the old village.” He added that, “In working a day school at Tahl –Tan I am hoping to compel the attention of the Department of Indian Affairs and demonstrate the necessity of establishing, at least, a summer school there, where we can do so much more for them in instruction of a desirable nature, than when they go to the mixed school at Telegraph Creek where they receive no religious instruction” (*North British Columbia News*, October 1934). After receiving a grant from the Department of Indian Affairs, a school operated for the summer of 1935. The following year, “a building of some size had been erected

and school desks made for use within. As the building was to serve the dual purpose of church and school, the chancel area was to be screened off during school hours.”



**Figure 22:** Chancel in W. Thorman’s 1936 Tahltan mission schoolhouse, seen in 2007, and T. P. Thorman’s 1910 St. Mary’s Church, still standing in the background, in 2008. Photos by author.

In May 1943, news from Tahltan revealed a story heard far too often on the Stikine. “Since April I have lost every head of my families at Tahl-Tan. Twelve of our most respected and helpful church people have gone, all good men.” Measles, followed by a “Flu” and pneumonia arrived with the onset of winter. According to W. Thorman, “Only three families in the native village escaped. All this after a splendid summer, well-attended school and church, and a good prospect of freedom from want” (*North British Columbia News*, May 1943, Vol. IV, No. 130). The fate of the Day school after this catastrophe was sealed and by the mid 1950s, the old mission schoolhouse stood empty. Most people by then had moved on to Telegraph Creek or beyond to the traditional territories to join their clan relatives to the north and east. The last of the Anglican missionary brothers, W. Thorman left Telegraph Creek for good in 1952. His ashes returned to Tahltan village in a funerary urn ten years later. In 1956, our war hero, Reverend F. P. Thorman, brother of the deceased and the Tahltan missionary from 1912-1915 and from 1918-1924, returned to visit the village site once more. He noted that “The church building has wonderfully withstood the ravages of time, but the mission house had been so long neglected that it is in bad condition. Of course, as a sick man, I could do no more than just look at the place and stand aghast at the fallen glory of a great Christian endeavour” (Krueger 1973: 102).





**Figure 23: Tahltan Mission: not fallen and still glorious in 2008**



Figure 24: Stikine Indians on a Roman Catholic map  
 The Catholic missions in the Stikine District were administered  
 by the Vicariate Apostolic of Whitehorse between 1944-1967  
 (IARG 10, v. 6403, f. 830-1, part 1).

Co-existing with the Anglican missionaries were the Oblate Catholic mission schools. Their contribution to the system of Indian education in the Stikine was as great as their rivals, and for this reason a review of their efforts contributes to the research objectives of this project.

### **c) Early Roman Catholic mission work**

The missionary arm of the Catholic Church, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI), also saw much promise on the west coast and sought the invitation of the Hudson Bay Company to establish Catholic missions in the area directly north of the Columbia River in present-day states of Oregon and Washington. In 1837, two Quebec priests Nobert Blanchet and Modeste Demers arrived in the Oregon territories. After the 1846 Oregon Treaty and the establishment of the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel as the northern border, the Catholic Church created the Diocese of Victoria, which included all of British North America west of the Rockies to the Pacific Ocean, and from the 49<sup>th</sup> parallel north to Alaska. In 1849, the first Oblate priest in the Diocese, Father Lempfrit taught at Fort Victoria for the French Canadian children of the Hudson Bay employees. He is credited with baptizing hundreds of Indian children on Vancouver Island and on the mainland (McNally 2000: 25). In 1859, another Oblate, D'Herbonez preached and performed baptism ceremonies on the Saanich Peninsula to the local Indians. He baptized over 400 infants and convinced another 2,000 adult Indians to renounce their evil ways of “gambling, shaman medicine, murdering and drinking, etc” (McNally 2000: 46).

As the 20<sup>th</sup> Century approached, the Roman Catholic empire in British Columbia gradually increased. The Oblates travelled up the Columbia River drainage to Christianize the Okanagan by 1859, as well as the Fraser River valley after first establishing themselves in New Westminster in 1860. By the 1870s, there were a

number of small Catholic missions established near Indian villages throughout the area. By the end of the decade, there were seven major Oblate Missions in British Columbia; beginning in Kamloops and the Okanagan (1859), New Westminster and Mission (1860), Williams Lake (1867). By the early 1860s the central interior of the province was colonized by the Catholic missionaries. Most northern Shuswap villages had churches, which hosted marriages, baptisms and daily religious masses. The local peoples fell under the influence of the Oblate-inspired Durieu system, a code of moral standards and rigidly, strict missionary guidance on village matters. The church appointed local band leaders, who were given extraordinary powers to punish and repress those Indians who violated church and government policies concerning drinking, gambling and potlatching. The Durieu system, named after the first Bishop of New Westminster has been touted as a successful model for segregated Indian villages to escape the ravages of heathenism. The Indian settlement at Sechelt has been cited as a successful model for the Durieu System, but as McNally (2000: 130) noted, the system succeeded because the Sechelt Indians were devastated by small pox soon after the Oblates arrived. Their population of 5,000 in 1862 declined to 167 band members in 1876. In this weakened condition the Sechelt likely had no choice but to follow the orders of the Oblates, who had access to White man's medical treatments.

Oblate missions continued to move northward to Stuart Lake (1873), and west to Kootenay (1874). Catholic missionary influence spread northwards along the river drainages and travelling routes that marked the landscape. German-born Oblate

Gottfreid Eichelbacker lived for more than 20 years in the north, building churches and mission houses from Dawson to Whitehorse. Father E. Allard spent the decade 1925-35 in charge of missions at Telegraph Creek, McDame's Post, and Lower Post. Described as the first Oblate to obtain a pilot's licence, he later drowned in the Stikine River in 1935 (McNally 2000: 297-298). In his 1929, *Notes on the Kaska and Upper Liard Indians* Allard wrote that the Kaska Indians were very numerous until the Cassiar Gold Rush in 1878 brought disease and whiskey into the region, but now the Kaska comprised 150 members living in an area from the Dease River to the Upper Liard River. He believed his 1925 visit was the first for a Catholic missionary to the area, although Reverend Palgrave noted in his journal that a French Bishop had been to Lower Post in the 1890s, and his journal entries noted French Catholics among some of the Liard Indians. Allard's "informants" advised him that these people, like their Tahltan neighbours, practiced polygamy and were strongly influenced by witchcraft. According to Allard, the Upper Liard Indians stopped going to trade at the Hudson Bay Post at Liard (Lower) Post because they were treated badly by the White manager. Allard reported that there were about 100 Catholics among the Tahltan peoples at Telegraph Creek that originated from the Catholic mission to the south at Bear Lake (Allard 1929).

#### **d) Roman Catholic Day Schools**

All but invisible to the Anglican readers of the *North British Columbia News* were the Catholic missionaries who were also active in the northwest of the province after



Indian Agent H. Reed's inspection of the agency schools in 1935 offered a review of Catholic schools in the Stikine Agency. Since the Oblate missionary Allard's arrival on the Stikine in 1925, the Catholics had done much to overshadow the authority of the Anglicans in the region. Telegraph Creek became the administrative headquarters of their Cassiar District, serving the spiritual and education needs of the Indian townspeople, as well as the Indians from nearby Klappan and Shesley that arrived here for the summer fishing season. The Indian Agent conceded however, that the Klappan Indians "had not much improved in their ways of living, and that the less they are around the town site, the better for them all. Two sample cases spoken of, i.e. those of Isobel Reid and Ida Quock's girl-Mary Ann" (IARG-10, vol. 6038, file 158-3-1, part 1). One can only imagine what these two young girls endured by getting too close to the town site. As Bishop Ridley noted years earlier in 1900, "The trail leading to the mines passes nearby Tahltan, and the miners after a season's work is done, decoy from their homes the young women, and provide them with the tawdry finery dear to their hearts" (Janvrin 1904: 171).

After many years in the backcountry with the local nomads in the Stikine Indian Agency, in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century the Oblates opened day schools at strategic places along the watercourses north of Dease Lake. Liard (Lower Post) Post was an old Hudson Bay fort at the confluences of the Dease and Liard Rivers, a few-days travel from the recently resurrected Tahltan Mission that was now under the direction of the Anglican, Reverend W. Thorman. The August 1934 visit to the McDames day school by the Indian Agent H. Reed brought good reviews of the Indian children's

progress at the school, noting that, “their copy books were neat and tidy. Much good drawing was seen, whilst the elder ones could read and write, sufficient to use an Eaton’s catalogue” (H. Reed to DIA, November 13, 1934. IARG-10, vol. 6403, file 830-1, part 1). The following 1935 school season was a difficult one for the Oblate mission schools. Their Telegraph Creek school did not open for unspecified reasons and was nonexistent in the winter months. Due to attendance problems and the exclusion of Half-Breed children from the day school, the Lower Post day school did not open. Father Allard had intended to teach at McDames Creek, on the Dease River, but due to other commitments of Father Allard, the school was only operational in the later summer months (H. Reed to D.I.A. May 30, 1935. IARG-10, vol. 6038, file 158-3-1, part 1).

On inspection of the Lower Post day school in the late summer months of 1939, Indian Agent Reed found that most of the people had moved on for the fall hunt, “yet we were able to see the work accomplished during the period they were at school. Some of these nomadic children do surprisingly good work, and are fast at learning and especially in all sorts [sic] of colour work.” He concluded, “on the whole good work is being done...” (H. Reed to DIA, August 1939. IARG-10, vol. 6482, file 942-1, part 1). Maintaining a Day school at Lower Post was as difficult for the Oblates as it was for the Anglicans at Tahltan. In 1940, the money was received to pay the resident Oblate father at Lower Post and the school supplies were requisitioned, but the Indian people did not come. As Father Plourde relayed to his superiors, an outbreak of influenza at the post had kept the Indian families away.



There were other problems as well. Since the Provincial Game Department had encouraged the white trappers from Fort Nelson to move into this area, the once dependable moose, fish and other food sources had become scarce. Traditional trap lines were not respected by these outsiders. Trees were cut down indiscriminately and the land was disturbed as more white people moved into this area. The McKenna-McBride Commission of 1916 which reduced the Tahltan lands to the size of postage stamps, also reduced the local Indian lands around the Liard-Dease Rivers confluence to four small reserves in the area. Just as with the Tahltan people, this official mapping of their lands created a new White world from the homeland of these nomadic peoples who were constantly on the move according to their seasonal cycles of hunting and trapping. Under the provisions of Section 15 of the B. C. Game Act, to hunt game here, the hunter must be a resident of British Columbia; however, many Liard Indians wintered in the Yukon and visited with their relatives and their families at Lower Post each summer. Although they and their forefathers had come to hunt here seasonally each summer for many generations, it was now as illegal for them to hunt a moose, as it was to attend a potlatch, even if an animal could be found in the area with so many white hunters around. Scarcity of game aside, there was an even more apparent reason for the absence of the Indians from the local Day school. Indian Agent Hayter Reed's 1940, "*Report of the Liard Post R. C. Mission*" described the post as a place where White trappers and "a rough White element... have banded together to have the Indians remain away in the bush" (H. Reed to DIA, November 18, 1940. IARG-10, vol. 6403, file 830-1 part 1). This was

a reality for Indian parents if they wished to remain near the post so that their child could attend the Day school.

As discussed earlier, operating a day school for the nomadic populations of the Stikine Indian Agency was not an easy task, no matter how holy the missionary intentions. Federal funding for Indian day schools was based on a 15-pupil minimum of Indians, and not Half-Breeds, in attendance. The new, and unsympathetic, Indian Agent in 1942 wrote that his inspection of the school in July 1942 found only six Indians in attendance. The rather discouraged teacher was found to be employed transport passengers and goods down the Liard River for the U. S. Army Engineering Department involved in the construction of the Alaskan highway. “If conditions amongst the Indians at Lower Post remain the same next year I cannot recommend that this school be re-opened. The Indian parents show a distinct lack of interest in the school although the reason for this is not easily discernable” (IARG-10, vol. 648333, file 830-1, part 1). Evidently the new Indian Agent did not read his predecessor, Harper Reed’s reports on the “White element” that were determined to keep unwanted Indians away from Lower Post.

The issue of who would pay to educate Half-Breeds was tackled by missionaries in the Yukon by Bishop Bompas years before, but change came slower in northern British Columbia. The problem for these children was that as Half-Breeds they did not qualify for federal support under the Indian Act. However, most of these children lived as Indians with their families in the bush and therefore did not pay

local taxes. Because their parents did not pay school taxes or town levies, they were not welcomed in the provincial schools. Oblate Bishop E. M. Bunož wrote to Ottawa complaining of his lack of success in obtaining funding from the provincial government to support a Summer school for Half-Breed children living in the vicinity of Lower Post. He had been abruptly turned down by the Hon. G. Weir, Minister of Education and co-author of the 1925 *Putnam/Weir Report* on education in British Columbia. That often-cited document all but ignored the existence of Indians and Half-Breed children or made any evaluation of the education they were receiving in the province. A decade later, Weir continued to ignore the existence of non-white children. Weir stated in reply to the Bishop's requests for assistance that the Department of Education, "has no authority to make a grant for a Summer school for Indians and half-breeds." This of course was nonsense. The language Bishop Bunož used in his communications with federal officials contained a tone not witnessed in most church communications with the federal government. In response to Weir's indifference, Bunož wrote that, "this answer is no surprise to me, for I have watched for long years the policy of the B. C. Government with regard to Indians, even half-breeds when they are mingled with Indians. Victoria has never contributed a cent towards their welfare, so far as I know. Now it is up to the Indian Department to provide a summer School at Liard Post. Abandoned by the Provincial Government, these poor people should not be also by the Federal Government" (Bishop Bunož letter to R. Hoey, Superintendent of welfare and Training, Indian Branch. Ottawa, April 24, 1938. IARG-10, vol. 6403, file 830-1, part 1).

Until Lower Post Residential School was completed, Indian schooling in this area was often problematic. In his 1940 report to Indian Affairs, the Indian Agent stated, “it has been reported that our Indians down this way are being crowded and that fur resources were being “gobble-up.” Today a very jumpy state of affairs exists, and the Indians-having no areas set aside for them in the Yukon, and little or no protection, are more nomadic than ever.” He went on to wonder if it would be possible if the Catholic mission could re-establish itself at McDames Creek Post (near the 1870s Cassiar gold finds) so that the Indians might gather at this location for their summer visits to the trading post there. He added, “Perhaps it would be possible to issue some rations to the families whose youngsters attend school at this point, in an effort to keep them away from Liard Post” (H. Reed to DIA, November 18, 1940. IARG-10, vol. 6403, file 830-1 part 1).

The Indian agent wielded considerable power over the Indian Day school operations, since his reports allowed or denied the meagre flow of grant money. To qualify for federal funding, missionaries had to adhere to a considerable list of regulations that, on the surface at least seem impossible to follow for a bush Day school in northern British Columbia. These regulations included minimum days of operations (200), holidays (the Catholics were allowed five extra Holy days) and hours of operation (9-12 and 1-4), with two 15-20 minute breaks during each session. Teacher’s salaries were paid each quarter, for ten months with two months unpaid holiday each year. The regulations noted, “all questions relating to the day school should be referred to

local Indian agent” (*Indian Day School Regulations*. IARG-10, v. 6038, f. 158-3-1, part 1), (Appendix D4).

The qualifications of many school staff at residential schools were seen to be lacking, however the 1947 application for employment as teacher for the Catholic day schools at Shesley (winter) and Lower Post (summer) indicated that the former R.C.A.F. Chaplain, Father Forget had spent 14 years at the University of Ottawa (B.A., L.Ph. and L.Th.). His previous teaching experience was at the Catholic day schools at Lower Post (summer 1945), Klappan (winter 1946) and Shesley (fall 1946). The required “*Monthly Day School Return*” for the Indian Affairs Branch for August 1948 at Lower Post Day School cited average monthly student attendance at 9.25 out of 17 summer students. Included in the long list of categories requiring a numerical entry were truancy and tardiness of pupils, as well as the frequency of corporal punishment of pupils. Indian schools produced their own bureaucratic paperwork that can tell the researcher some things about school life. The *Order Form for Standard School Supplies* included a subheading, perhaps to warn the public school teacher that a better supplies list existed elsewhere, that “These supplies are for Indian children only.” There were separate book categories for Catholic and Protestant schools (Appendix D2-D3). Protestant schools used the *New Basic Readers Curriculum Foundation Series*, and romped through the adventures of *Fun with Dick and Jane*, while Roman Catholic schools used the *Canadian Catholic Corona Series* to introduce Indian pupils to, *Our First Book* and *Happy Days* (IARG-10, vol. 6403, file 830-4, part 1). The rote recitation of English passages that F. Thorman found so tiresome and monotonous came from

the pages of these books. Of course, Thorman's monotony was likely related to his lack of interest in Indian education in general. Indian Agent H. Reed reported to DIA (January 31, 1934. IARG-10, vol. 6403, file 830-1, part 1), that the Anglican Mission did not exert much influence or interest beyond the district of Telegraph Creek, while the Roman Catholic missionaries "seem to be more suited for the "wild interior districts."

## Chapter Seven: The Residential School Experience



Figure 26: Staged recess frolics at Chooutla Indian School  
([www.anglican.ca/rs/history/schools/chooutla-carcross.htm](http://www.anglican.ca/rs/history/schools/chooutla-carcross.htm))

### a) The Anglicans and Chooutla Residential School

The most damaging component of the Indian educational strategies of the missionaries was the Residential school system. Although most literature on the subject comes from the southern reaches of Canada, the Stikine has its own sad story.

The Church Missionary Society entered the missionary field much earlier in the Yukon than on the Stikine, making Fort Yukon the centre of CMS activity along the

Yukon River in 1862. The story of education in the north begins again with another missionary adventure narrative. William Carpenter Bompas was immortalized in yet another “Great Man” missionary biography (Cody 1908) as a saintly wanderer in the heathen wilderness who endured countless hardships to preach the word of God to the local Indians. This biography echoed the tiresome tone of many of the adventure biographies and school texts of the day that were discussed earlier, featuring the White knights of western civilization who conquered the wilderness, and brought light to the near-extinct subhuman Indians that dwelled in the darkness of paganism. According to the Bompas missionary narrative, life before Christianity in the southern Yukon was filled with tales of “the darkness of heathenism.” At gospel gatherings held by Bompas in the Yukon wilderness, men stood up and confessed to the many murders they had committed, “ and no fewer than thirteen women confessed to having slain their infant girls, some in the most cruel and hideous manner” (Cody 1908: 367). Mrs. Bompas added her own tales of the unspeakable abomination of savage life in the north, peppering her narratives with familiar descriptions, “one hears terrible accounts...all starving...are said to be eating each other on Peace River... 200 dead there of measles” (Cody 1908: 242). According to this laudatory biography written not long after his death, the apostle-like Bishop Bompas was a “fine scholar, steeped in Hebrew and Latin lore, as well as the commoner studies of the clergy.” Bompas was designated Bishop of Selkirk, later of the Yukon Diocese in 1891 (Cody 1908: 294). The first schoolhouse in the Yukon was an old bunkhouse and as his biographer noted, the scene inside a Bompas



mission classroom could be a place of exasperation because, “to teach Indians was a very difficult task. Like writing in the sand, instead of graving in the rock, yet he never gave up, but went bravely on till the last” (Cody 1908: 302). His biographer pointed out that Bompas loved to teach Indian children, but apparently not with complete devotion since only “...part of each morning was given over to it.” Another part of his day was assigned to his letter writing which “...seemed to be his love and seldom did he pen less than six or seven missives a day” (Cody 1908: 303). From this text, it is difficult to gain any sense of the quality of education that the young Indians received at the turn of the century, although it appears that the classroom coursework was not a standard curriculum in the urban sense. To the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century reader of missionary narratives, Bishop Bompas must have seemed a person much larger than life itself. Biographically emblazoned with such grand accolades as “Apostle of the North,” “Straight and Venerable Hero,” and “Septuagenarian of grace and culture” one can only wonder why Bompas did not walk on air even before his death in 1903.

These early missionary writings rarely strayed far from road of pious devotion, but Bompas’ observations revealed a world of racial inequality, a lack of education opportunities for Half-Breed and orphaned Indian children and the economic exploitation of local resources that defined much of Indian realities a century ago. In a letter to the Indian Commissioner in Regina, dated in September 1896, Bompas addressed the issue of financial aid for his missionary boarding school for Indian and Half-Breed children, “in which from 8 to 10 children have resided from about 4 years past.” He reminded the government that since the Americans had sent a teacher out

to establish a school for Indians nearly 200 miles north of Bompas' Buxton Mission on the Upper Yukon, "I do not think the Canadian Government would wish their own Indians to be left behind in education to those across the border" (W. Bompas to Indian Commissioner in Regina, September 5, 1896. IARG 10, v. 3962, f. 147,654-1, part 2). A sympathetic Bompas also wrote about the issue of racial prejudice that would constantly rear its ugly little head throughout Indian/White relations in North America. He noted that there were gold mines on both sides of the Yukon/American border yet most of the miners were Americans who had little tolerance for the anything aboriginal. This racism manifested itself in the exclusion of Indians and Chinese "coolies" from employment in the mines, even those mines on Canadian soil. Attempts by some companies to employ Indians were violently resisted by the white miners because, "it would have reduced the wages of the Whites, which have been 10 dollars a day." A steady encroachment of Indian lands and resources followed this exclusion from the white economic system. Fishing privileges were granted to White colonists to operate a commercial fishery on the Yukon River. This had the effect of driving the Indians from their traditional fishery so vital to their existence, and also undercut their business of selling fish to the Whites, which was one of the few ways that Indians could participate in this market economy that had been forced upon them. Considerable tracts of forests were cut down for commercial timber and agricultural lands were granted to White farmers, all of which without any sense of providing compensation to the Indians for these lost resources.

Archival records show that the D.I.A. directed the Indian Schools to remove Half-Breeds from the school rolls whenever they were discovered. When the diocese headquarters was established at Caribou Crossing, Bompas and the CE pressured the federal government for funding for a boarding school to house the Half-Breeds and other hardship cases. The large numbers of Half-Breed children were a result of the Klondike Gold Rush when thousands of White male fortune seekers flooded into a region which possessed very few women, except Indian “squaws.” However, the federal government had been reluctant to invest money into educating Yukon Indians since the official view was that they were not obliged by a treaty agreement to assist the Indians of the Yukon and, “if left as Indians, earn a better living” (Coates 1991: 138). The issue of the education of Half-Breed children was a thorny issue for the D.I.A. since they were not covered by treaty, and in the minds of the bureaucrats in Ottawa, were not really Indians anyway. In a letter to the successor to Bompas, Bishop Stringer, the D.I.A. wrote that it “does not consider that it is in any way responsible for the education of Half-Breeds, and it is thought that the Government of the Yukon should give material assistance...” (Maclean to Stringer, February 1913. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1). By the 1920s, this policy, for the Yukon at least, shifted somewhat when the D.I.A. who acknowledged that because of the peculiar circumstances in the Yukon, the agency declared that it, “only considers itself responsible for the education of Half-Breeds who are not in treaty, who live the Indian mode of life on reserves. Other Half-Breeds, non-resident on reserves, we consider ordinary citizens of the province in which they reside, and the obligation for

their education rests upon the province” (Memorandum to James Lougheed at D.I.A. May 1921. IARG-10, vol. 6481, file 941-1, part 1). The growing numbers of mixed bloods or Half-Breeds in the Yukon finally forced the hand of the federal government in 1920, when they funded church efforts to open St. Paul’s Hostel in Dawson City for those who were excluded by law from attending Indian residential schools. While the hostel served as a residence for Half-Breed children throughout the Yukon, the students attended public school in Dawson City, much to the displeasure of the local White people. As the Yukon Indian Agent remarked to his superiors at Indian Affairs, “it is not denied that these children are not welcome here” (Coates 1991: 88).

The diminished opinion in Ottawa of the large Industrial schools concluded that they produced few positives for the money invested. They were expensive to operate and the education in the manual trades did little to teach Indian children the necessary skills to integrate into Canadian society. As a result, Industrial schools in the south were phased out while the federal government expanded the residential school system throughout most of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Of course, there were other reasons besides expense for discontinuing Industrial schools, although it would appear that that the cost of educating Indians was always a major concern. According to Frank Oliver, who was Clifford Sifton’s successor as Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs (1905-1911), “we are educating these Indians to compete industrially with our own peoples, which seems to me a very undesirable use of public money...” (Barman et al 1986: 7). Unable to escape their federal responsibilities and the constant missionary

requests for funds, the federal government endorsed a Day school program in the Yukon involving five Day schools in 1910, and expanding to nine schools in 1916. Due to the cyclical nature of the seasonal hunting and fishing activities, seasonal closures and erratic attendance were realities that constantly challenged the operation of the mission Day schools. The effectiveness of these schools is perhaps best summarized 25 years later by the Bishop of the Yukon Diocese who said, “We may not have been able to take them very far on the Educational Highway but they are learning to read and write, a little arithmetic, and perhaps more important, the elements of Hygiene, Sanitation and Health habits” (Bishop Geddes letter to H. McGill, Indian Affairs Branch. November 11, 1942. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).

In 1911, the newly built Carcross Residential School opened its doors to thirty students from the southern Yukon and Northwest British Columbia. Over the years, the Carcross School dormitory would be home to many young Indian children from the Stikine Indian Agency (Coates 1984-85: 37; Coates 1991: 151). An early letter to the *Northern Lights* of the Diocese of Yukon (February 1927) provides a good example of the church propaganda that circulated among the congregational readers. Mostly self-congratulatory and usually pitching the need for school operating funds, these pamphlets spoke the patronizing language of a superior White society and religion. There was also an undercurrent of social engineering throughout, as the need to establish breeding colonies of superior Indians was strongly suggested. The pamphlet described a travelling Bishop Stringer of the Yukon Diocese “...continually watching

for suitable children. His aim is to get the best in health and intellect so that the graduates of the school may form in their camps a foundation on which the missionaries can build, in their endeavours for the physical and spiritual benefit of the natives.” The unspoken reality was that local Indians who knew of the conditions of the school were reluctant to send their children there, and the Bishop had no choice but to recruit Indian children from distant villages.

One of the common themes in the school life of students at Chooutla was infectious diseases, particularly tuberculosis. As discussed earlier in this thesis, the *Congress of Tuberculosis* in Berlin in 1900 called international attention to this deadly disease. In Ottawa Dr. Bryce, Chief Medical Officer for the Department of Indian Affairs had given public lectures on the horrendous conditions at many Indian residential schools. To some extent at least, Carcross Residential School was no exception. In the September, 1913 issue of *Northern Lights*, it was announced that Bishop Stringer had given another in his series of Lantern Lectures at the Whitehorse, Moosehide and Fortymile Missions on the prevention of tuberculosis. He warned of the dangers of infection through poor ventilation, unhealthy food and a lack of cleanliness and exhorted everyone, Indian and White man alike, to join in this “crusade against the white death.” These conditions had already been documented in the Industrial and Boarding schools in the North-West in 1907 by Dr. Bryce, who found that with few exceptions, “no serious attempt at ventilation of dormitories or school rooms has hitherto been made” (Bryce 1907: 3). It is interesting that these same conditions that Bishop Stringer wished to eradicate, existed at his own residential school at Carcross.

A 1912 inspection of the Chooutla dormitory by the Inspector of Indian Affairs found, "...the pupils had not been receiving sufficient nourishment, and from that cause they were developing tubercular troubles..." and noted that, "...the children suffered physically from confinement in overheated rooms and lack of ventilation..." (McLean at D.I.A. to Bishop Stringer. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1).

Miller (1996) cited the appalling health conditions at Carcross including a 1927 report of a kitchen helper working in food preparation areas while suffering from tubercular sores. Healthy and sick children were not segregated at the school and otherwise mingled freely throughout the day. However, in another 1927 article in *Northern Lights* authored by Principal Grant, he described the invigorating effects of a Christian classroom education on Indian children and how this education will "uplift them and their friends at home to something near to the Christian standard of cleanliness and industry." Evidently, Grant's school had not yet reached that "Christian" standard. In 1929, the medical establishment continued to point to the primitiveness of the nomadic Indians for the high incidence of sickness in their households, which was owing to "ignorance and carelessness" and the self-descriptive "indiscriminate disposal of infected sputum," a practice that ran amok through the Indigenous populations. The medical officer cited the case of a Liard Indian family that lost 17 family members in 2 years to infectious disease. He repeated the same recommendations featured in Bishop Stringer's *Lantern Lecture* series 16 years earlier, although the question remained, did these recommendations apply to residential schools? Although the diocese newspaper was intended as "...a valuable medium for

the school and for the whole diocese” this was not extended to informing the public of the rates of mortality of its residential school inmates, save for the frequent announcement that, “We are sorry to have to chronicle the death of little Eunice, who spent a while in the school” (*Northern Lights*, September 1913: 3).

A 1931 issue (*Northern Lights*, February 1931: 7) announced that a chicken pox epidemic had resulted in a four-month quarantine of the school. On the same page, the editor added, “We regret to have to report the death of Charlie Johnson. Charlie was admitted to the school in October and in late November developed chicken pox. A tubercular condition followed and quickly claimed this lad of ten years, patient and bright in disposition. His body was returned to Carcross for internment.” The *Annual Reports* on inspections of Indian schools by the D.I.A. were usually consistent with the government attitude of indifference towards Indigenous issues, particularly health issues. Former R.C.M.P. Inspector, G. Binning reported that his 1939 visit to Carcross Residential School produced positive results. There had been no epidemics that year and a resident school nurse and D.I.A.-supplied medicines kept death at bay for that year. He concluded that, “the principal and staff are to be congratulated on their work in this school” (IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2). A few short years later, a somewhat different picture emerges from the diocese newspaper. During a 1942 epidemic of measles and dysentery the school administrator, Reverend Grant, acknowledged that the school buildings were unsuitable for a healthy environment. “Poor conditions at the school did much to hinder recovery” (Miller 1996: 302). The medical officer for the Yukon wrote to the Yukon Indian agent, expressing his



concerns for the epidemic of measles at the school “in which every child was affected with but one exception. There has been one fatality due to the epidemic.” He cited the over-crowded dormitories, where 16 boys slept in a 16 X 22 foot room equipped with an oil drum heater and no ventilation. With very inadequate toilets and no resident nurse, the Yukon district medical officer deemed the institute unfit for habitation. The building was allowed to reopen with a reduced enrolment from 40 pupils to 20, to alleviate the overcrowding that caused much of the problem, and then quietly increase enrolment again with permission from DIA. Students continued to live in these squalid, temporary conditions until a new Choooutla school was built in 1953 (Indian Agent J. Gibben telegram to Secretary of Indian Affairs. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).

The curriculum content of residential schools was often noted in the literature. In 1896, the DIA issued a *Programme of Studies for Indian Schools* that appeared to be a well-rounded course of study for Indian schools, but certainly a curriculum that was not taught in Indian Day schools or Residential schools. The book order form (Appendix B2-3), from the Lower Post day school noted a request for twelve copies of the Grade One readers, *Catholic Corona* and *Jolly Numbers* series, but there were no texts to assist in the teaching of geography, ethics, writing or history as required from the DIA curriculum outline (<http://records.viu.ca/homeroom/content/topics/programs/Curriclm/dia1896.htm>). This programme was divided into Standards I through VI, covering 12 core study subjects. These ranged from English, General Knowledge, Writing, Arithmetic, Geography,

Ethics, Reading, Recitation, History, Vocal Music, Callisthenics (misspelled) and last but not least, Religious Instruction. It is clear from the prospectus that the aim of the program was to remake the Indian into an upstanding and obedient citizen. In Ethics, Standard I, the Indian student learned the practice of cleanliness and a respect for order, and obedience. At Standard VI, they learned about Indian and White life, patriotism and the “evils of Indian isolation.” In History, Standard III related the story of the Indians of Canada and their civilizations, while Standards IV, V, and VI focused on the more important Canadian historical events. The arithmetic course included an equally challenging Standard VI, which required an understanding of factors, measures, multiples and vulgar fractions. The daily practice of square and cubic measures as well as percentages ensured the graduating Indian was well prepared for the economic lower rungs of White society. Vocal music was defined as patriotic songs and inspirational hymns. The academic mainstay of any missionary school, Religious Instruction, meant scripture reading, the Lord’s Prayer, the Ten Commandments and the Life of Christ. The D.I.A. programme was doomed from the beginning because it had an opt-out avenue. It stated at the head of the document that, “the programme of studies herein prescribed shall be followed by the teacher as far as the circumstances of his school permit.” Since few missionaries had all of the qualifications to teach 13 subjects through six Standards in a one-room schoolhouse, and if their main goal was to convert heathen souls to their field of worship, where was the incentive to follow government guidelines? In the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century at least, the reality of school life for Indian children in

residential missionary schools was not learning vulgar fractions and discovering Indigenous cultures in Canada, but rather rote recitation of religious mantras and the obligatory half-day of manual labour on the mission farm. The Indian day schools in the Stikine district would have been even further removed from the DIA's suggested curriculum strategies. The first Standard in English comprised word recognition and sentence construction. This included, "simple sounds of letters of the alphabet." The highest standard of English (VI) required, "analysis of simple sentences." The prospectus noted that, "every effort must be made to induce the pupils to speak English, and to teach them to understand it; unless they do, the whole work of the teacher is likely to be wasted"

(<http://records.viu.ca/homeroom/content/topics/programs/>).

The issue of Indian languages spoken in the residential schools was an important one for both Indian and missionary. Particularly in the early years of residential education, Indian languages were suppressed violently in many schools. The missionaries and their federal paymasters knew the importance of language for oral societies in order to transmit their culture from one generation to the next. Their collected stories of human experience, mythology, traditional knowledge systems were contained in the repository of their languages and to eliminate the language was, to the missionary, a way to eradicate Indian culture. Indian children usually arrived at the schools with few, if any English skills, but by the end of their "education" very few children could relate to their families in the manner of their ancestors.

The Yukon Diocese quarterly newspaper, *Northern Lights* was first published at Chooutla School in 1913 as “a valuable medium of information for the school and for the whole diocese” (*Northern Lights*, September 1913, Vol. I, No. II: 1). An article in *Northern Lights* described the typical school day for the “Busy Bees” at Chooutla School. The day begins with the 6 a.m. wake up bell. At 6:30 work was assigned to each student, including the youngest pupils who were required to complete their work of dusting, sweeping and other chores before the 7:15 am breakfast bell. Breakfast was followed by morning prayers and more chores until the 9:00 am school bell. Classes provided “an ordinary common school education” until 12:00 for the juniors when lunch was served. The seniors spent their mornings working in the fields, the wood lot or the kitchen. At 2:00 pm, the seniors went to classes while the junior girls assembled in the sewing room just like “busy little bees.” The girls learned all manner of housekeeping and domestic arts while the boys learned gardening, rough carpentry and blacksmithing. Dinner was served at 5:30 pm followed by evening prayers at 7:00 pm. According to the author, “And so ends one of the many busy, happy days at Chooutla Indian School” (*Northern Lights*, September 1913: 2).

One former student from those “happy” times remembers days that were not so joyful. Angela Sidney described her school days at the new Carcross School as a place where “we learned some reading and a little writing.” For rest of the day “we packed wood, packed water, sewed patches, darned socks-things like that.” Soon upon entering school for the first time students soon found that “...we couldn’t even talk to our own brothers! We got punished if we did. And we weren’t supposed to

talk Indian” (Cruikshank 1985: 70-71). In the late 1920s, the Chooutla school curriculum was described as an ordinary common school education, “whenever possible” for half a day, while during the other half day “they are taught the things most necessary to uplift them and their friends at home to something nearer the Christian standard of cleanliness and industry.” These “uplifting” school subjects included “gardening, rough carpentry and blacksmith work” while the young girls could look forward to housekeeping and sewing, skills “...that will be useful in the kind of life they will likely lead” (*Northern Lights*, Volume XV, 1927: 4-5). The half-day school routine was really little more than a disguise to cloak the real intentions of the churches, to fuel agricultural production with the free labour that offset government-funding shortfalls. Until the federal government phased out per capita funding and wrested control of Indian education from the religious denominations, beginning in the 1950s, a type of quasi-indentured labour force was allowed to exist for the sake of Residential school operations. In the mid 1920s the Indian pupils of the school were being “uplifted” by a blend of ordinary common education, manual labour and Christian religious doctrine. In the civilized school districts of urban British Columbia, the 1925 *Putnam/Weir Report* had other ideas and recommendations for the education of white children living in their domain. The report discussed the length of the public school day in which, “Our suggested programme requires of the pupil for actual study, recitation, or activity 320 minutes or five and one-third hours every day and leaves him with little or no freedom between 9 am and 4 pm” (Putnam and Weir 1925: 92). Indian Day School Regulations (Appendix B4) also required a

9am to 4pm regime, something that likely could never be adhered to, with seasonal families living in these harsh wilderness environments.

The *Northern Lights* entry for August 1931 projected images of the rigid religious indoctrination of the students at Chooutla, which was “...first and foremost a religious institution.” The daily routine under Principal Grant’s evangelical helm resounded mightily with a regimentation that compares to anything we have witnessed with modern-day cults, such as Jim Jones in Jonestown, Guyana. The half-day system was described in the vaguest of details, as usual, but the “thorough and comprehensive training” was detailed as, “Morning and evening prayers, including a hymn and scripture reading, take place in the schoolroom every day except Sunday. On Sunday morning all the children attend service in St. Saviour’s Church in the village at Carcross. In the afternoon Sunday school is held at the school. The children are divided into five classes. Scriptural work is taken in the schoolroom by the teacher and the children are encouraged to say their prayers at their bedside in the dormitories night and morning” (*Northern Lights*, August 1931: 14). In the *Annual Report March 31, 1938*, Superintendent Binning found that “All the children were found to be well and warmly clothed and the pupils receive good training in manual work, the girls being taught cooking, laundry work, knitting and sewing, while the boys are taught farming, care of stock, carpentry and shoe repair. The training in school is good, a good average of marks being obtained by the pupils in the various subjects.” Superintendent Binning’s reports were crafted by an experienced bureaucrat who made no waves on the federal government’s lake. Binning

concluded, “The principal and staff are to be congratulated on their work in this school, everyone appears to have the welfare of the children at heart and are trying to instil the idea of good citizenship into the minds of the children.”

Coates’ (1991: 205) research on missionary education in the Yukon indicate that, until the end of World War Two (1945) the school curriculum offered at Residential schools had been left to the church management of each individual school, where religious catechism was the primary concern, directly before patriotism to the British crown. In the north as elsewhere, schoolbooks and supplies were provided by the Indian agency. Typical curriculum texts included *Morang’s Modern Phonetic Primer*, *Ontario Public School Arithmetic*, *High School History of England*, *the Ontario Public School Grammar*, and for those students who were interested in why they lived on reservations and attended segregated residential schools, *How Canada is Governed* (Coates 1991:143). By the 1960s, the school curriculum at Chooutla was guided by two documents, the *Programme of study for elementary schools*, which stated the basic curriculum strategies to be followed by the schools, and the *Manual for Teachers*, that included an annual statement of classroom conditions, inspections and reports (King 1967: 48). Neither of these documents contained any specific reference to Indian children and schools in the Yukon.

At Chooutla, as with many residential schools in Canada, testing procedures, examinations and even basic bookkeeping of the child’s school progress were largely ignored by the school administration. According to King (1967: 50), the report card

that measured the student's progress contained sparse and confusing data, while none of the prescribed diagnostic and achievement tests were administered to the students. Other students had gaps in their records, where students were allowed to disappear into the system and resurface after several years of missing documentation. Other students repeated the same grades several times. According to King's experiences as a teacher at Chooutla School in the 1960s, "A single numerical entry per subject per year is the total information available about the children in the school in regard to both their academic performance and classroom behaviour" (King 1967: 50).

Another recurring theme of Canada's Residential schools is also evidenced at Carcross School. The students were often hungry. In the 1920s while the school struggled to meet acceptable student enrolment levels, Bishop Stringer admitted that the under enrolment was due to the numerous outbreaks of contagious diseases at the school and the fact that "for some time the idea has gone abroad that the children have not been well fed" (Miller 1996: 353). Many former students concurred with the honourable Bishop, such as one ex-student who lamented "But did we ever get decent food? Hah!" The student also recalled that the Principal of the school would buy lard pails full of bacon drippings for 50 cents a pail, "that's what we would spread on our bread" (King 1967: 37).

Questions were raised about the qualities and quantities of food available at Carcross School soon after it opened. A November 1912 school inspection by the Auditor General's Office found the school to be woefully lacking in a number of areas.



(Stockton to D.I.A. November 12, 1912. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1).

Evidence had surfaced that the principal, E. D. Evans was selling milk and eggs from the school livestock to the townspeople at Carcross, and “skimming” the profits. Evans related to Inspector Stockton that the children did not care for milk and eggs, so the products were sold in town and the profits were used to buy other items for the children. The Inspector was not taken down the garden path with this explanation. “This however was not borne out by my investigation, as I found that the children were given to understand that they could not have these things, and that they must say that they did not care for them.” This criticism was particularly embarrassing since the *Indian Affairs Annual Report March 1912* from the Indian Agent at Telegraph Creek stated that, “The new boarding school building at Carcross is completed and during the year the enrolment was as high as 34. This is a modern building and it is expected that the school, under the guidance of Mr. E.D. Evans, who has been appointed principal, will perform good work among these Indians. Mr. Evans is an experienced man and is highly recommended.” Contrary to official explanations, Inspector Stockton found Mr. Evans, “prior to his engagement by the school, was employed on Indian work in Alaska, and it is doubtful whether he has had any experience in Industrial school” (Stockton to Auditor General’s Office, November 29, 1912. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1). The stinging criticisms about the management of the school from within the government could not be as easily quelled as the complaints and concerns of ill-treatment by Indian parents were stymied. Indian parents were compelled to send their children to these schools. The

federal government held the purse strings. Bishop Stringer, the head of the Yukon Diocese, felt it necessary to defend the school and its administrator against the “exaggerated stories that were in circulation” in a lengthy correspondence with the D.I.A. on March 31, 1913. The Bishop rather self-righteously pronounced, “I do not believe the children suffered from lack of nourishment. I always gave emphatic instructions that the children should be well fed, no limit was put on the amount of food that was to be supplied to the children, and there was to be no motive for starving them. To me and to others whose opinions I obtained, the children appeared to be well nourished.” After reviewing each criticism of the school management in detail, the dear Bishop added, “However, it is now a thing of the past. Mr. Evans resigned his position as Principal and has given up his work at the school.” In the second edition of the newsletter *Northern Lights*, printed at the school (Northern Lights, No. II, September 1913, Vol. 1) the official story was announced, that Principal Evans and his wife had resigned, because of “the Doctor’s advice that their little girl Cora, on account of her health, should not be kept in the school.” Mr. and Mrs. Evans quietly moved on to inflict their brand of school administration to another Indian institution (Bishop Stringer to DIA, March 31, 1913. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1).

Even with Evans ushered out the door, the hunger and scarcity appeared to continue. Another student from the 1920s remembered, “They didn’t feed them kids so good you know, and I used to take my girl an orange now and then or something special, and he (the Principal) didn’t like it.” Another student from the 1920s declared, “They

starved us in there! We got one egg a year-at Easter. The rest of the time we got dogfood [sic] mush [corn meal] and skim milk. Them [sic] in the staff dining room though, they got bacon and eggs every day” (King 1967: 37). This practice of separate dining rooms and menus for staff and children appeared to continue right into the 1950s. Miller (1996: 191) cited the case of Indian workers at Choooutla who wrote to the Bishop of the Yukon complaining that the Principal of Choooutla School required them to eat inferior food, likely the student food, apart from the other white staff in their dining room. Even with these reports, there is no indication in the Diocese newspaper that the children at Choooutla School were complaining about their daily fare. Although I could find no lengthy descriptions in the *Northern Lights* of the sumptuous student meals served at Choooutla, one issue (February 1924, Vol. XII, No.1: 1-3) described a Christmas “where all enjoyed the good things which the matrons prepared for them.” Christmas dinner was described as “all of the very best,” although the very best is never defined. Rumbings about the shortages of food supplies occurred not just in the dormitories at night when hunger kept children awake. One principal complained (July 22, 1930) to the School Inspector that, “I requisitioned for 12 barrels of flour for the quarter, June to September, I have received only 7 barrels. I asked for 150 pounds of rice and the same amount of white beans, I received only 50 pounds of each.” By 1931, reports again came from Indian Affairs that, “the children of the school are not taken proper care of, are poorly clad, deprived of sufficient food, neglected as to their health and not properly supervised

as to their moral conduct” (W. Ditchburn, Indian Commissioner to DIA, February 5, 1931. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1).

In response to these accusations, the new Indian Superintendent J. Hawksley, a former Principal of Carcross School, appeared to be more of an apologist for the system, certainly more so than his predecessor E. Stockton who caused the removal of the Carcross School Principal in 1913. According to Hawksley, he found that rumours of children going hungry were patently false. These complaints originated from students who had simply grown tired of the cuisine. Granted, there was still room for improvement in the quantity and variety of the supplies sent to the schools by the Indian and Eskimo Commission but, “The staff can hardly be blamed for that!” In a letter dated March 27 to A. Mackenzie at the Department of Indian Affairs, Hawksley included a copy of the children’s menu for departmental perusal.

CHOCOMA INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL.

MENU (children's)

(Effective from March 16th. 1931 and until further notice.)

MONDAY.

Breakfast:- Cream of Wheat, Jam and Tea.  
Dinner:- Roast with Potatoes or Peas, Sage Pudding.  
Supper:- Rice with Raisins, Mollases or Syrup, Tea.

TUESDAY.

Breakfast:- Cream of Wheat, Jam and Tea.  
Dinner:- Stew with Dumplings, Cornstarch.  
Supper:- Soup, Fruit and Tea.

WEDNESDAY:-

Breakfast:- Rolled Oats, Peanut Butter and Cocoa.  
Dinner:- Mince with Macaroni, Baked Pudding with Sauce.  
Supper:- Cream of Wheat, Jam and Tea.

THURSDAY:-

Breakfast:- Rolled Oats, Jam and Tea.  
Dinner:- Roast with Potatoes or Beans and Rice Pudding.  
Supper:- Lard, Fruit and Tea.

FRIDAY:-

Breakfast:- Cream of Wheat, Jam and Tea.  
Dinner:- Fish or Meat with Peas, Boiled Pudding with Sauce.  
Supper:- Fish or Meat Soup, Molasses or Syrup and Tea.

SATURDAY:-

Breakfast:- Rolled Oats, Peanut Butter and Tea.  
Dinner:- Stew with Rice and Bread Pudding.  
Supper:- Cream of Wheat, Jam and Tea.

SUNDAY.

Breakfast:- Rolled Oats, Lard and Cocoa.  
Dinner:- Beans, Fruit and Tea.  
Supper:- Jelly with Cornstarch, Jam (1), Cake and Tea.

.....

*Bread is served at all meals.*  
*J. H.*

Figure 27: Residential school menu (IARG-10, v. 6479, f. 940-1, part 1)

In a letter to the DIA, Indian Superintendent Hawksley wrote, “I have the honour to enclose herewith a copy of the menu of the daily meals served to the pupils of the Carcross Indian Residential School.” Hawksley assured Ottawa that, “There is a noticeable improvement in the variety of the meals.” To this prison-like menu, Hawksley added with his own handwriting, “Bread is served with all meals!” Given the quality and quantity of the sustenance described above, one would hope so. It is difficult to imagine what the meals consisted of, before the “noticeable improvement” in the above menu. These children were required to work half days during their “school” years. The heavier tasks, such as chopping cords of wood, digging drainage ditches and postholes, farm and dairy work fell on the shoulders of the older boys who, I guarantee, would find the menu completely inadequate to replace the number of calories burned during the day by growing children. After a half day (or more) of chopping wood and other farm work to earn their room and board, these children had a government-approved suppers of lard and bread on Thursdays, cream-of-wheat for Saturday, and jelly and cornstarch on Sundays. From later reports to the DIA, it is apparent that the stinging bureaucratic criticism of the residential school menu plan was a thing of the past. In 1935, Superintendent G. Binning wrote to the Yukon Office that the children at Carcross were well fed. “The meals served appear to be wholesome, varied and well cooked. I was present when meals were served and all the pupils appeared to enjoy their meals.” It is interesting that he wrote “appear to be wholesome...” because it is obvious he didn’t get too close to the children’s plates. Three years later, Binning continued to use the proper

words and phrases to produce positive reports for his government superiors. In his *Annual Report March 31, 1938*, he glowingly reported that, “I found the food supplied at the school to be good and wholesome and the meals varied so that the children do not get the same food too often. An ample supply of fresh vegetables are grown at the school every year.” As a contrast, in 1945 one Chooutla schoolteacher from South Carolina wrote to her local newspaper that “One surprising thing about the Yukon is that there is no rationing. You can get plenty of anything if you have enough money.” She cited the cost of transportation as a reason for the high prices, since the Alaska Highway was not open to the public until February 1948. Judging from her comment to her local newspaper, it would appear the children at Carcross were eating army rations; “much of the food we get is dehydrated. Powdered milk, dried peas, prunes, apples, apricots and anything else that can be dried.” (*Local Girl Up in Yukon Tells of New Chooutla School for Bright Indian Children*. Letter to the Willow Beach newspaper, South Carolina, February 15, 1945. IARG-10 vol. 6479, f. 940-1, part 2).

By the 1960s, radio and television were changing the route of the information highway from a slow mail delivery system to the instant electronic freeway. The images of underweight children eating mush in residential school dining rooms could now easily find their way into the boardrooms of the corporate donors to the yearly Anglican fund drives. Once the federal government assumed full control of the residential school system, including the budget strings things began to change. The shortcuts and budget restrains from D.I.A. that often found expression in the

Residential school kitchen, and then in the empty stomachs of the children were now a thing of the past at Chooutla School. According to King (1967: 45), “no limit is imposed on the amount of food available.” King described the Chooutla dining room where “...no child moves from his place during the meal, and each is encouraged to eat his fill, particularly of milk, fruit and protein foods.” In the video series *The Mission School Syndrome* (Istchenko 1993;1995;2002), Dr. King also remembered an institution ruled by the police whistle outside, and the hand-bell inside the school. The children were “treated like good stock cattle. They were fed, deloused and provided with a basic shelter.” Perhaps because King was a Stanford University doctoral student who worked for a school year at Chooutla School, his observations of the many failings of this school hold more credibility. King found, not surprisingly, that a segregated Indian school system such as Chooutla was a failure and did little more than reinforce negative Indian stereotypes that resulted in low academic outcomes for Indian students. King noted in his survey of ex-students that woeful tales of abuse often overshadowed any positive experiences at the school.

According to King’s research, “Dishonesty, cruelty, and sexual deviance or promiscuity are recurrent themes in the memory of former students.” One worker who was once employed at Carcross school 1910-1915 remembered, “the principal was a crook...he’d been paying all us guys a dollar a cord and putting the other dollar in his pocket.” Another staff member from the mid-1920s recalled of the principal “he couldn’t keep his hands off the girls!” A former student remembered that “when my kid was there, and they beat her up, that was too much. I finally took her out of



there and got my franchise and sent her to town to school” (King 1967: 37). One Elder from Whitehorse, Mrs. Clara Tizya recalled “Many years ago, in the early 1920s, a girl had died at Carcross (Chooutla) Indian Residential School and when they sent the body back (to Old Crow) there were many rumours about children receiving bad treatment and this scared the parents or gave them an excuse for not sending their children to school. And so, for the next 25 years, no children were sent out to Carcross Residential School (from Old Crow) and it was for this reason that we decided to bring our children out to where they could become educated” (Davey 1965: 104).

Incidences of theft, often involving food, were common at residential schools that housed groups of hungry children. Retribution in the form of corporal punishment was often mandatory. A February, 1940 letter from Principal H. Grant to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs reported that an “epidemic” of theft had necessitated severe punishment, in this case strapping for either boys or girls who, if apprehended “would be laid across the classroom desk in the presence of the whole school, clad only in their night attire, and strapped on a different part of their anatomy than their hands.” In one case, Grant recalled, the strapping was so severe that “...the child had to be held down by the Head Matron and Farm Instructor.” Cutting off the hair of offenders was considered a very effective remedy for theft. In Principal Grant’s letter, incident #11 on February 1, 1940, “the Head Matron phoned me up to say that two school girls had been caught red-handed by the Kitchen Matron stealing bread. The amount they were in the act of stealing was

approximately one loaf. Both these girls had their hair cut off.” To this Grant added, “as quite a bit of resentment has risen amongst the Indians regarding this form of punishment it would be appreciated if you would advise whether such a procedure meets with your approval.” Rather than accept the fact the children were driven, at least partly, by hunger, Principal Grant has his own twisted logic to answer parental concerns. “Some of the Indians claim that if the children were given enough to eat they would not steal.” To this he assured the Superintendent, “The absurdity of this claim of the Indians is shown by the fact that food is by no means the only articles stolen.” Punishments for theft could follow a former student after discharge from mission schools. One boy, aged 16 was designated a “confirmed thief” by Principal Grant at Carcross and quite likely the “ringleader” of the recent spate of food thefts at the school. To this information, an agent from Indian Affairs remarked, “Advise me where this lad’s home is so that an eye can be kept on him in future” (IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-2, part 2).

Assaults on the young students could also take on different forms beyond official sanctions of haircuts and leather straps. They were also targets from the outside world, as one notorious case revealed. The construction of the Alaska Highway came dangerously close to the town of Carcross, and some people at least, were aware of the potential dangers lurking ahead. In a letter to the Commissioner of the R.C.M.P. in Ottawa, an official within the Indian school administration searched for a new location for the school, for this very reason. “Recently a large number of American troops have arrived in Carcross and the Church of England authorities consider it

advisable for us to move the school. They advise us that buildings in Dawson City, Y. T. formerly occupied by the R.C.M.P. have been standing idle for the past four years” (R. Hoey to R.C.M.P. Commissioner, June 4, 1942. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2). That these efforts were to no avail are not unexpected, since old Bishop Bompas wrote that Indians were not treated fairly in this locality about these injustices over 40 years earlier. In a letter from Yukon Bishop W. Geddes to Indian Affairs, he commented, “I know there was considerable opposition on the part of the authorities to having the school in the town of Dawson...” and he complained that because of “antipathy to the Indian” the church had been “unjustly refused” a lease on available buildings in Dawson. For some unstated reason, the Dawson RCMP did not want a temporary residential school for Indian children in their town. (Bishop Geddes letter to Dr. H. McGill at Indian Affairs. November 11, 1942. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).

Less than six months later, according to the R.C.M.P. report, “On the night of 22-12-42 two coloured United States soldiers named Cpl. A. Jones and Pvte. J.L. James of the 93<sup>rd</sup> Engineers, feloniously entered the Indian residential school at Carcross, Y. T. with the assistance and connivance of three Indian female children who are residents of the school. In the early morning of 25-12-42 they were detected by the Principal of the school. He informed the R.C.M.P. who arrested the two men and turned them over to the United States Military Authorities. It has come to light that these two men have done the same thing in the school on previous occasions.” Although the documents concerning this incident on file with the IARG-10 series are in bad shape,

in fact in some critical areas the documents appear to be deliberately mutilated, what remains displays a narrative of exploitation against Indian children. (Appendix B: 6)

The two soldiers charged at their court martial were found guilty only of being disorderly in uniform in a public place, a relatively light sentence of four months at the guardhouse in Whitehorse. One can imagine the sentence these two “coloured” soldiers would have received had they visited the Crofton House School for girls in Point Grey on some dark night during 1942. There is an interesting comparative case to measure the social value of rape victims during the war years. According to Coates and Morrison (1992: 140) in June 1942 another Private James, from the 388<sup>th</sup> Engineers of the U.S. Army was charged with assault with intent to commit a felony on a non-Native woman, the local schoolteacher at Fort Nelson. He was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years hard labour at the Federal Penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas.

However, this offense took place at the girls dormitory at Carcross Indian Residential School, not against the white schoolteacher in Fort Nelson. As the Commanding Officer of “G” Division remarked, “The sentence imposed by the U.S. Court Martial upon Private Jones and James are light but you will note that the reason for this is that it was impossible to get straightforward stories from the three Indian girls.” (Appendix B: 7) These soldiers must have felt unlucky, after several night visits to the girl’s dormitory, to be discovered in the act by the old school Principal. As the R.C.M.P. noted in their report on the two culprits’ earlier visits, “They usually stayed in the building until about 6:30 a.m. when the dormitory was unlocked again by Mrs.

Davis, and the girls had gone to breakfast. They would then leave the dormitory, walk through the bush and across the bridge, first making sure that there was no one around who might see them.” The court martial ruled that the only infraction that was proved was that the soldiers were in uniform at a place they knew to be out of bounds. The serious charges of intent to commit rape and assault were dismissed. The statements of the pre-teenage girls were discounted. Although it was on the record that these soldiers had visited the dormitory before, no questions were put to these children as to who was visited, and by whom. The girls stated that they were afraid to undress for bed. Whom did the girls fear that night? In his statement, when Reverend Grant inspected the girl’s dormitory during his rounds as night watchman (the regular man was ill) he discovered that some of the girls had gone to bed wearing their day clothes, which was strictly against the rules, so it seems logical that the other girls were clothed because they were afraid it might be their turn for a “night visit” from members of the American Army. Reverend Grant also stated that when he discovered the assault, he was afraid of the soldier as well, “thinking that he might be armed” and left the dormitory, locking the intruders inside with the children until the R.C.M.P. arrived. The evidence of fear should have been obvious to an Army investigator but was not investigated. The fact that the document is mutilated at the most explicit areas of the victims’ statements also leads one to suspect that a cover-up had taken place. After all, they were Indians, and even lower down the evolutionary scale than the American Negro on a road-building gang in Alaska. Instead, it was questioned if these girls were of the acceptable moral character to be in residential

school, as there is a clause in the application to attend residential school in which the Indian agent must certify that the applicant is of good moral character. As Indian Affairs stated, "the point that strikes me in connection with the report is that the deceitfulness and guile shown by these very young Indian children is a sad commentary on the effectiveness of the work of the school." A reply from Indian Agent J. E. Gibben stated that, "with regard to Indian children, one would say that they were unmoral rather than immoral. It might be argued, of course, that this little girl had not been subjected to school teaching and environment long enough to have benefited there from." There may have been other reasons why the soldiers, shown by the evidence of their repeated night visits to the school, to be repeat offenders of sexual assault upon preteen girls, were sentenced to a brief 4-month stint of jail time at the Whitehorse barracks. The Canadian government likely felt it was in no position to upset the construction timetable of the Alaskan Highway, or to annoy an American army already positioned on its soil. Good relations between the Canadian and American governments was crucial during the early years of the World War II, two years before the liberation of Europe when the German Reich remained at the height of its power. In the South Pacific, the British forces in Singapore were about to surrender to the Japanese army. Armed vessels from the Imperial Japanese navy were plying the waters north of Hawaii. After the Rape of Nanking in 1937 when thousands of Chinese women were sexually assaulted by the Japanese occupation forces, this incident at Chooutla Residential School was considered by the U.S. Army to be more of a tryst than a sexual assault and was really small potatoes in the grand

scheme of things. Neither government, particularly the American military, was about to let a harmless indiscretion by two of its coloured soldiers against the bodies of some cunning savage girls get in the way of the Alaska Highway, which would service the front lines of any invasion on North America by way of Alaska.

Eventually, the abusive foreigners left town, but it was not until 1953 that a new Chooutla Residential School was constructed on the site of the old school on the outskirts of Carcross. The Yukon Diocese newsletter *Northern Lights* described the Chooutla School, as a “spacious and modern” new residential school at Carcross where, “The 120 pupils, and staff, will appreciate the many facilities when this three-story edifice opens in September, 1953.” At this new school, pupils were taught “...reading, writing, arithmetic, religion, and wholesome recreation.” The descriptive narrative of the newsletter is reminiscent in its precise efficiency of an Anglican school where, “Kindly supervisors guide these children in their daily routines and capable cooks prepare the wholesome food needed to produce and maintain healthful bodies. The laundry department keeps the clothing clean and the sewing section keeps it altered and mended. An engineer cares for the heating, lighting and water systems, so necessary to all the sections. Chooutla is one of the 13 schools, under Anglican direction, found throughout Canada. Rev. Canon H. Cook, Superintendent of the Indian School Administration directs these schools, while a clergyman has

direct responsibility for each school. Reverend Stranger is the principal at Choooutla”  
 (Northern Lights, October 1953: 5).



Figure 28: Northern Lights Spring 1954

There was another side to the freshly painted façade of the Choooutla Residential School so gleefully described in the diocese newspaper. After the 1960s, federal policy makers could no longer maintain the absurdity of residential schools and these schools happily went the way of the dinosaur. Years later, the *Globe and Mail* (September 16, 1999: A9) reported that three women and eight men filed a lawsuit



against the Anglican Church and five former employees at Carcross Residential School. In their lawsuit they claim, that they were “strapped on the bare ass” and beaten for speaking their language or talking to their siblings. The ex-students claimed they were sexually assaulted by older students who learned their behaviour from the school staff. Most recently, in 2007 a plaintiff, identified as “D. J.” filed a claim in Yukon Supreme court against the federal government, the Anglican Yukon Diocese and the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada and a person identified as Jane Doe. The claim stated that the student was sexually assaulted many times during his 1956-1962 stay at Chooutla Residential School. In his statement of claim, D.J.’s plight rings as a dark tribute to the educational collaboration between the federal government and the religious denominations. “His native culture and heritage was disparaged and he was mentally, emotionally, physically and sexually harassed and humiliated when he attempted to practice his religion or any of his native customs, speak his native language, behave in a traditional native manner or contact his extended native family” (*Whitehorse Star*, May 4, 2007: 9). The suit argued that since the federal government used the Indian Act to force Indian children into residential schools and turned them over to the religious denominations, both of these bureaucracies assumed the fiduciary duty to care for the children.

## **b) The Roman Catholic Church and Lower Post Residential School**

Compared to the dearth of archival data on the Anglican residential school at Carcross, the ethno-historic record for Lower Post Residential School is, from 1951 to 1975, rather brief. The available data on the Oblate mission at Lower Post is not enriched by a school newsletter, missionary biographies or personal journals, or even a lengthy history of recorded events residing in D.I.A. files. While there is information on the Catholic day schools in the Stikine District, most of the correspondence on the Lower Post Residential school in the D.I.A. files concerned the more mundane issues of purchase of building materials, schools supplies and denominational hostilities and turf wars between Anglican and Oblate missionaries at Chooutla and Lower Post residential schools.



**Figure 29: Lower Post Residential School 1951-1975**  
([www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/exhibits/tbird-park/html/fr/present/stann/images/map/m18a.jpg](http://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/exhibits/tbird-park/html/fr/present/stann/images/map/m18a.jpg))

Lower Post was the last of the Oblate residential schools built in Canada. The Quebec Oblate A. Fleury was the first principal and his teaching staff were nuns from the Sister's of Saint Anne. In 1958 a new annex was built that contained a gymnasium, classrooms and, of course, a new chapel. A number of issues affected the Catholic Indian families and the children at Lower Post Residential School, all of which were not remotely comparable to the privileged life of the economic elites in their sprawling mansions in Point Grey, where their white daughters lounged while reading Homer's *The Iliad* on the lawn of Crofton House School. One problem for the Indian family was the often long distance of travel required for the children's visits or trips back home in the summer. Prohibitive transportation costs could result in not sending children home to remote districts for the summer. For children whose parents lived far away in the bush, it often meant long separations lasting many years.

Excessive travel expenses for school teachers and government inspectors as well as the transportation costs for needed supplies presented problems for the school management. At Lower Post on the north end of the Dease River, five children from the Bob family were accepted from Telegraph Creek in late May 1951, but their attendance at the school was delayed until the following September because of the \$180 transportation charges from their homes to the school. As the Superintendent remarked, "The Department is prepared to bear this expenditure and it is felt that the children should not be placed in the Lower Post School until September. In that way, it would not be necessary to bring them home for summer vacation." The problem for the Indian parents would be related to where they would earn an extra \$180 in the 1950s to bring their children home. The location for the new Catholic residential school was also decided upon with cost savings factoring into the equation, rather than basing their decision on what would be best for the people directly involved. The building of the Alaska Highway, connecting Edmonton to Whitehorse, through nearby Watson Lake, was a deciding factor in locating the school at Lower Post. The Catholic Church officials were mindful that before Lower Post School was opened, many Catholic children from the Telegraph Creek, Dease Lake and Atlin areas were sent out of necessity to distant Lejac Residential School at Fraser Lake for their Catholic educations, "partly at our own expense and partly at the expense of the Department." Once Lower Post opened, 20 Tahltan and Atlin children attending the Lejac School were flown from nearby Prince George to Watson Lake, about ten miles from Lower Post and transported from there to their

new Residential school (Phelan to Clark, Telegraph Creek Indian Agent 1952. IARG-10, vol. 6482 file 942-10, part 1).

Denominational rivalries began long before Protestants and Catholics vied to fill the empty seats in their Residential schools with the aboriginal peoples living in the Stikine Indian Agency in the 1900s. This squabble first erupted when Henry VIII's voracious marriage appetites "sparked" in 1533, a severing of diplomatic relations between the Tudor King and the Vatican Pope. After four centuries of acrimonious relations, this angry spat was still being played out in the recruitment strategies to fill the missionary schoolrooms in a distant Indian Agency of British Columbia and the Yukon Territories. The per capita financing of these schools by the federal government guaranteed these hostile relations would continue. Since Bishop Bompas established a mission house on the Yukon River in 1891, the Anglicans had enjoyed a virtual religious monopoly on the local Indian populations there. Catholic missionaries and their papist converts occasionally were at odds with Anglican efforts in the Stikine Agency, and the Oblate fathers had no problem with opening schools right under Anglican missionary noses, as they did in Telegraph Creek in the 1930s. This tension increased when the federal government built a new Residential school in northern B.C. for the Roman Catholics at Lower Post, a few miles south of Watson Lake in the Yukon in 1951. The new Anglican Chooutla Residential School at Carcross, when completed two years later, would not be the only Residential school in the region.

Some historians, such as Miller (1992) viewed this interdenominational rivalry as a competition that strengthened the position of Indian parents in making demands from the churches. He cited Anglican efforts to combat the overtures of opposing Baptist missionaries who had opened a hostel in Whitehorse in the early 1950s, Chooutla School offered to pay transportation costs to send Indian children home to the more remote camps for their summer holidays (Miller 1992: 147). This is at odds with Indian Affairs files that showed that Indian parents were for the most part, defenceless pawns. Federal officials were more concerned with transportation costs than Miller (1992) might have thought. In a May 1952 letter to the Telegraph Creek Indian Agency, the Superintendent of Indian Education advised the Indian Agent that, “the Department will not be able to pay transportation charges for these children when returning for the holidays in future years, consequently he (the father of the children) should be advised to keep in mind this fact and save sufficient money to bring the children home for vacation in the future” (IARG-10, vol. 6482, file 942-10, part 1, 1952). This fact condemned the children of parents from remote areas to the solitude of separation from their families for many months, if not years.

For those Indian parents who wished to have their children closer to home, there were other roadblocks to be cleared. Under Section 118 of the Indian Act, “every Indian child of mandatory school age shall attend the school assigned by the Superintendent. Children of Protestant parentage shall be assigned to a school conducted under Protestant auspices and children whose parents are Roman Catholic shall be assigned to a school conducted under Roman Catholic auspices, except by

written direction of the parent.” Although this implied that the Indian parents have some sort of control of their child’s school, through “written direction,” the real control was held by the missionaries that were inspired by the per capita funding, rather than any parental wishes. Whether through improper census recording by the Indian agent or through some parental subterfuge to have their children closer to home, residential institutions occasionally found opposing Catholics or Protestants hidden away on their school rosters. The enrolment of Catholic children in the Anglicans’ Chooulta Residential School and that of Anglican children at the Catholic’s Lower Post Residential School was not tolerated. Each denomination protected their home territories like junkyard dogs. An angry missive from the offended denomination could sound alarm bells all the way from the Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa to the Indian Agent’s office at Telegraph Creek, resulting in the loss of the federal grant for the student and a series a bureaucratic inquiries to answer in order to satisfy the offended church bureaucracy. In one case among many, Elizabeth Johnson attended Carcross School from 1948-1951 when the parents decided to remove their child from the grasp of the Protestants and send her to Lower Post, to receive a Catholic education and to be closer to home. This set off a firestorm of protest and resulted in some testy exchanges between the various parties concerned, all prompted when Anglican school officials in the Yukon learned that the Johnson child had defected the ranks to join the evil Romanists at a new residential school at Lower Post in British Columbia. In a 1952 letter to the Superintendent of the Yukon Indian Agency from the Superintendent of Education in Ottawa, P.

Phelan stated, “Principal Stanger (from Chooutla) also reports hearing that Elizabeth Johnson of Teslin (pupil #0185 of Chooutla report of June ’51), entered Chooutla 15/9/48 is now a pupil at the R. C. Residential School at Lower Post. Could you, from Lower Post school report let me know if this report is correct?” (IARG-10, vol. 6481, file 940-1, part 6. Phelan to Indian Agent Meek).

To the Anglican Canon Cook, who further advised the Superintendent of Education of paperwork irregularities that caused the discharge of three children from Chooutla School because their father had once declared himself a Catholic, Phelan replied, “You are advised that the department is reviewing these three cases along with some fifty similar cases...” (Phelan to Cook. IARG-10, vol. 6481, file 940-10, part 6).

Another child with Catholic parentage, who had once attended the Whitehorse Mission day school, had difficulties in enrolling at Chooutla Residential School. The Superintendent, Phelan remarked, “we are not clear why he should now be admitted to the Carcross School. Furthermore, even if there was a necessity for admitting him to the Carcross School his admission could not be approved due to the fact that he is a Roman Catholic” (Phelan to Meek 1952. IARG-10, vol. 6481, file 941-10, part 6).

There was an avenue of recourse for those pupils who found themselves in the wrong entrance line for the Garden of Eden, and this was for the students and their parents to switch allegiances and swear an oath to their new religion. Elizabeth Johnson, cited above, raised the eyebrows of both Catholics and Protestants when her parents sent her to Lower Post School. Because Oblate officials had concerns about the religious background of the family, the young girl had “to be properly



received into the Roman Catholic Church.” Catholic baptism certificates had to be sworn and signed by the family; the mother’s baptism came only a few days before the start of the fall school term in 1952. The young child was required to complete a full summer of religious instruction in order to become a Catholic. She and her father both had to swear on the bible to an imposing-sounding “Brevior Professionis Fidei Formula Pro Locis Missionum,” better known as a “Profession of Truth.” This was required because a Russian priest in the Eastern Orthodox Church in Juneau originally baptized the father of the girl around 1900. Once this oath was sworn, the family became Roman Catholic and now that their child was a legitimate member of the Lower Post School, the per capita grant could be issued. The point to be made here is that White families in the urban middle class of Vancouver’s “British” neighbourhoods could move their children to another school without raising smoke signals from an angry diocese office. Their children were not enslaved to a denominational school because the father had once been friendly with a Russian Orthodox Priest, nor were their children barred from an education if they did not satisfy the religious requirements of an offended missionary. The sense that I obtained from reading these ethnohistoric documents is that the missionaries maintained an air of entitlement concerning the souls of the Indian child. Once baptized, these children could not easily switch teams.

The three-video series of *The Mission School Syndrome* (Istchenko 1993), the sequel *Mission School Syndrome* (Istchenko 2002) as well as the *Healing the Mission School Syndrome* (Istchenko 1995) and the most recent *My Own Private Lower Post* (Aucoin and

Loverin 2008) revealed the other side of the coin of residential schooling for Indigenous peoples in northern British Columbia and the southern Yukon. These videos provided an important primary source of data not found elsewhere about the residential school experience in the north. The voices of the victims of Lower Post and Chooutla remained hidden in the government files and missionary papers, but those once silenced, are now heard. These videos spoke of the monumental failure of both churches and the federal government in the education of Canada's First Nations. It also uncovered another dark strand that joined the two institutions, which was the systemic failure of either party to end the sexual abuse of the children at Chooutla and Lower Post Residential Schools. One former student, Dan Porter remembered his state of shock in the early 1960s at being in the bush with his dogs and family one day, and the next day stuck in an institution at Lower Post and ordered about in a strange language by men in black robes. Porter survived the experience intact but others were not as lucky as he remarked, "I only have to take a walk through downtown Whitehorse to see some of the kids I went to school with... collecting bottles so they can buy a bottle of "Villa." The video narrator informed the audience "...the people you see drinking down by the tracks, or sitting around on park benches in Whitehorse are those people from the residential school system that didn't make it." When the children left school at 16, many did not know their parents or their past way of life. They neither fit in at home with their parents, nor could they be accepted into white man's world. Another victim from Lower Post, who identified himself as #85, remembered that all the boys had to line up after

showers for a penis inspection from the supervisor. The victim prayed that this supervisor would not visit his bed that evening. There were many young victims who “serviced this guy for cigarettes.” Most of his victims were now dead, many drinking themselves to death. Robert Lee Jackson’s vivid memories upon arrival at Lower Post included the short haircut and delousing that each child received. He also remembered that the supervisor always found reasons to discipline students during the 1950s. Jackson’s dark lines under his eyes from lack of sleep were interpreted by his supervisor as evidence for masturbation, which he would then force Jackson to perform on him. It was not only the supervisor, but older boys as well who followed the example of their dorm supervisors. *My Own Private Lower Post* (Aucoin and Loverin 2008) related the story of Vicki Bob at Lower Post Residential School, who remembered as a child of 8 years being brought to Lower Post in 1954 in a big cattle truck with the rest of the kids. Anything they brought with them, such as their Indian clothes and personal belongings and keepsakes, were taken from them. They were given instead a uniform and a number. Anyone caught speaking their language could expect a slap in the face from an angry matron from the Sisters of Saint Anne. Once the schools were finally closed, the religious orders and the federal authorities could no longer keep a muzzle on the dark rumours that swirled around the survivors of their residential schools.

The Lower Post Residential School case in 1996, involved 12 former students who were abused by school staff in the 1950s and 1960s by Oblate brother Ben Garand, and a non-cleric supervisor Jerzy George Maczynski. While Garand died in jail

awaiting trial, Maczynski was sentenced to 16 years in prison for sex crimes against the children of the school, including buggery and gross indecency (*Star Phoenix, Saskatoon*, November 26, 1996). A mediated settlement avoided a court case and unwanted publicity for the church. The settlement came soon after another financial settlement involving ten former students who were abused at St. Joseph's Residential school, another Oblate facility near Williams Lake (*Vancouver Sun*, December 14, 1998: B8). *The Prince George Citizen* (September 7, 1999: 3) reported that a lawsuit was filed against the federal government and the Roman Catholic Church by former students in the 1950s at Lower Post Residential School. The 17 Aboriginal men involved in the lawsuit say their lives were thrown into turmoil by the abuse at the school built by the federal government and run by the church.

A curious statement of blame shifting from a Catholic Church devotee is included on the *catholiceducation.org* web site. In an article from the *Vancouver Sun*, December 5, 1996, by J. Fraser Field, Managing Editor of The Catholic Education Resource Centre titled, "*The Other Side of the Residential School Question*," it was stated that the residential schools were a response to the serious social problems of alcoholism, violence, and a welfare mentality that were already destroying native people before they entered the residential school system. "Painting all residential schools, and by implication all who ran them, with the same brush as those schools where abuse occurred, neither serves the truth nor does justice to the memory of the many — and there were many — who served the native people in good faith and with much love."

“Tragic problems existed at some of the residential schools and, for the most part, they failed in their purpose of “elevating” the native people. Nevertheless, many natives have fond memories of their residential school experience and have an image of the residential school as a happy, loving place. A number have even told me that their time at the residential school was the happiest of their lives.”

In a more recent article from the same web site, in the May 30, 2008 *National Post* titled, “*For many aboriginal children, residential schools were a positive experience*” by Anglican Church apologist and University of Manitoba education professor R. A. Clifton, the church also attempted to answer some of the nagging accusations of abuse by some of its religious workers and missionaries at their Indian residential schools. Rather than acknowledge the wholesale abuse that occurred at some schools, Clifton stated, “Aboriginal children had been physically and sexually abused in their home communities, and residential schools actually saved some of them from continued abuse.” In a classic example of avoiding responsibility by claiming church behaviours were common and accepted practice, the article states that, “Attempts have been made to charge and convict (Anglican Church) paedophiles, but little attempt has been made—so far at least—to charge and convict teachers and administrators who gave corporal punishment to students in non-aboriginal schools. Surprisingly, aboriginal people are being compensated, in part, for receiving corporal punishment which, at the time, was a standard—but brutal—practice in virtually all schools.” When the author claims, “virtually all schools,” I am certain he does not include the

occasions of sexual assault on young students in the dormitory of a Point Grey school, or the physical punching and slapping of pampered Crofton House girls.

The issue of rampant disease in the residential schools that was first addressed by Dr. Bryce at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century was also briefly discussed in this article, with the church taking the high ground as the wrongly accused. “Some aboriginal children had terrible illnesses — TB, serious dental problems and ruptured appendixes, for example — that were diagnosed and treated only because they were in residential schools.” Clifton suggested that these schools were actually havens of health and safety for Indian children where, “doctors and dentists were on call to treat children, something that probably would not have happened if they were out on the land hunting and fishing with their parents.” Citing the hostile climate that now exists towards the efforts of the faithful missionaries to educate the godless Aborigines, the article lamented, “Few people will praise the residential schools — their administrators, their teachers or their supervisors. Fewer still will dare publicly admit that their residential-school experiences were positive. If they did, morally, they would need to return their compensation cheques to the Canadian people.”

It is true that there have been testimonials of the good treatment that some former Indian students received at missionary schools. The early publications, of Indians at missionary residential schools in Canada were positive in nature until the 1980s, and quite realistically would not otherwise have been published by the White publishing establishment who had little sympathy for Indian justice in those days. Senator James

Gladstone, the first Indian appointed to the Senate in 1958, attended St. Paul's Anglican Mission School on the Blood Reserve in Alberta 1894 and later at the Calgary Indian Industrial School until 1905. In spite of the documented cases of death due to tuberculosis and other infectious diseases that swept through the western Industrial schools, Gladstone found his nine years of Boarding and Industrial schooling in Alberta to be a character-building experience. "Over the years I have been grateful for the education I received and I have always been impressed about St. Paul's Mission and Calgary Industrial School..." Of those Indians who went to missionary schools before 1905, Gladstone believed them to be, "the backbone of our reserve for many years and were better Christians than any of our younger generations" (Gladstone 1967: 24). Trevithick's review (1998) of the published literature on Native residential schooling in Canada cited several examples of positive student recollections, such as those of Reverend Ahenakew at Little Pine Indian Day School and Louise Moine's experiences at Qu'Appelle Industrial School. According to Moine, "The education I received there gave me a good foundation which gave me strength to face life with its problems, trials and tribulations...Now only pleasant memories return of those childhood days" (Trevithick (1998: 63). The highly lettered Ojibway author and ethnographer, Basil Johnston attended residential school in Ontario in the 1940s and 1950s. He eventually received his high school diploma from the revamped Garnier Residential School for boys and entered Loyola College in Montreal, where he earned a B.A. in 1954. His *Indian School Days* were generally described as positive experiences and when graduation ended his residency at Garnier

School, “Farewell did not come easily or freely” (Johnstone 1988: 243). Paige Raibmon’s (1996) tribute to the “respected and loved” Father George Raley and his tenure as principal, 1914-1934 at the United Church-operated Coqualeetza Residential School in Sardis British Columbia, cited his curricular innovations as well as his concern for the welfare of his students. Raibmon’s research found that many ex-students from the school believed, “Coqualeetza was one of the finer residential schools for Native children.” The memory of Father Raley still is revered within the community of former members of this Residential school near Sardis, B.C. (Raibmon 1996: 69).

This level of affection by former students for their missionary institutions is absent from the existing literature on missionary schools at the Oblate’s Lower Post School and the Anglican’s Chooutla Residential School. There are no fondly remembered narratives by former students of the wonderful times spent in one of these residential schools. There are no hardcover editions of the happy times at Chooutla or Lower Post gracing the shelves of Vancouver’s bookstores. The only existing record is in four DVDs that chronicle the abuses, and the personal failures that followed attendance at either of these two schools in the last century. Acts of physical and sexual abuse appear to be as common as any acts of kindness that occurred at these institutions. These acts were perpetrated by members of the church hierarchy, from the office of the Bishop of Whitehorse, to the mission school priest, the dormitory supervisor, common lay worker, other students and even members of a foreign army. The large numbers of former students of these schools, who have since filed criminal



charges against their former supervisors and spiritual mentors, are a sad testimony to the substandard missionary school experience and the criminal negligence of knowing church officials. That experience cannot be dismissed by the vague accusations of church apologists who claim that abuse was the common thread to both residential and public schooling in the last century and that monetary benefit was the driving force behind Indian demands for compensation. White students in public or private schools were not severely beaten, starved or head-shaved. Their cultures were neither vilified in their school curricula; nor were they forced to labour for half of their school day. They were not forcibly taken from their homes for ten months of the year, nor were they stripped of their clothes and languages upon arrival.

## **Chapter Eight:**

### **The Past, Present and Future for Place-Based Education**

#### **a) Economic exploitation of the Stikine**

The influx of interlopers, intruders and entrepreneurs into northern British Columbia over the course of the last century have invariably resulted in abrupt culture change for the resident Indians who survived on the land. While the procession of Gold Miners and Indian agents into the north in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century resulted in demographic shifts and economic opportunities, there were still places that the White men could not reach the Indian. All this changed when World War Two found the Stikine.

With the arrival of construction crews and heavy equipment for the 1700 mile long Alaska Highway Project in February 1942, an incredible wave of change swept over the land not experienced since the Klondike Gold Rush over 40 years earlier. The new interlopers left few stones unturned; touching the remote campsites and traplines, and small communities of the hunters, fishers and trappers who lived in the north. Thousands of American army personnel and private contractors arrived in transport planes, essentially overnight. In doing so, they transformed Whitehorse from a sleepy seasonal transportation depot into an important urban centre. Work

was divided into road sections and crews were stationed in Fort Saint John, Fort Nelson, Whitehorse, Carcross and Big Delta. The effects of their presence was felt immediately, all over the construction route. This project shifted the cultural and economic dynamics away from the jewel of the Yukon, Dawson City. Whitehorse became the major urban centre, eventually becoming the territorial capitol and home to 15,000 permanent residents today. The project changed more than the urban environment in the Yukon. This massive road construction project also included the *Canol Pipeline Project*, with five separate projects that required 3000 km of pipelines to deliver crude to the newly built refinery in Whitehorse. A huge swath was cut across the landscape that altered the movement of peoples and wild game across the land. The federal government pointed to health care improvements and enhanced delivery of government and private services as positive elements of the building of the highway, but the economic promise and employment opportunities that came with the road construction were short-lived for the local Indians. Coates (1985) believed that this new employment surge was usually part time and seasonal in duration with little long-term benefit to the Indian. The river transportation jobs of barging and rafting that were once dominated by local Indians vanished, as the new highway became the principal transportation route through the north. The highway encouraged a “communities corridor” that drew the young people away from their traditional residences in the bush to the Alaska highway, where towns had schools, hospitals and where social services were available. This was particularly true after the collapse of fur prices in the late 1940s when many trapping families abandoned the

bush life, and the skills needed to survive in the wilderness, for the government services of the new highway towns. A mobile tuberculosis X-ray clinic toured the entire length of the highway between 1947-1949, reaching Indian families that were once inaccessible to all but the most determined missionary. The highway changed the relationship between Indian and missionary, because their distant villages and camps were now more accessible. Any missionary with a drivers licence, a cattle truck and gas money could now reach the Stikine Indian children to bring them to residential school. The highway was also used as a conduit for a number of social problems, including the sale of alcohol and the spread of communicable diseases that resulted in a disruption of traditional Indian society (Cruikshank 1985: 183). When Canada's *Family Allowance Plan* was introduced in 1944, it was considered a useful tool to bring Indian children into the school system, since in order to qualify each child must attend school, if such facilities existed in their localities. However, unlike B.C.'s urban centres where cheques were issued to every family with school age children, the Yukon Indians with children in schools were supplied with monthly allotments "in kind" which included payments with processed foodstuffs. Canned milk and tomatoes, as well as sugar-laced baby foods replaced the more nutritional traditional diet of local game, fish and caribou. The appearance of processed food in the northern Indian diet replaced many of the local foods that had sustained these populations for centuries. The massive amounts of sugars, starches and unwholesome calories that arrived in the tins and cans of the colonizers' food supplies and the pervasive alcoholic beverages introduced new problems into the Indian populations.

The serious health issues that the Alaska Highway underscored are still being dealt with today. Diabetes, hepatitis and alcoholism now take their tolls where once tuberculosis ruled the obituaries (Coates 1985: 159). During highway construction, 1942-43, the local Indians suffered from successive attacks of measles, dysentery, jaundice, whooping cough, mumps and meningitis. There were serious measles and influenza epidemics all along the highway route, which passed very close to both Chooutla and Lower Post Schools. Teslin Lake staggered from successive rounds of measles, mumps, whooping cough, tonsillitis, and meningitis. In 1942, Indian children aged less than one year accounted for 32.8% of all deaths in the Yukon, while the death of white children of the same age only accounted for 2.3% of the deaths for that year (Coates 1985: 158).

As the people of the Stikine move into the 21st Century, even greater catalysts of change than the Alaska Highway face the region, as the international economic markets look again to this locality for their profits. One of the greater threats since the last glaciation to face the environment and local cultures on the Stikine plateau is the Galore Creek Mining Project, where I was employed as an archaeologist working on an archaeologically-based cultural impact assessment of the proposed access route for the mine site during the 2005, 2007 and 2009 field seasons (Galore Creek Project: Executive Summary, June 2006). This mineral extraction project proposed a massive open pit mine, supporting facilities and ancillary buildings, an airfield, an access tunnel, a large tailings dam and a 140 km access road extending from the Porcupine Valley, over several major creeks to the Iskut River Valley and eventually joining

Highway 37 near Bob Quinn Lake. The project also includes a mill facility to reduce the crushed ore to a liquid slurry, and a 140 km-long pipeline to transport this concentrate at a flow rate of 90 tonnes per hour from the mill site at Galore Creek to Highway 37, where the slurry would be transported by truck to the port facilities at Stewart, B.C. The opportunities for an environmental disaster in this difficult terrain are limitless. In 2005, during our inspection of the proposed 140 km access road, adjacent to the proposed pipeline, we found evidence for human cultural activities in the form of obsidian stone tools and stone flakes from the tool manufacture at several locations. During later archaeological projects in the area in 2007 and 2009, excavations along the proposed road access at the Iskut River crossing yielded evidence of human occupation extending back perhaps thousands of years. An ancient quarry site nearby provided endless quantities of suitable raw materials for stone tools. Fire hearths and postholes in the stratigraphy were noted, and large quantities of obsidian microblades and large andesite projectile points were recovered from areas near the river crossing. This narrow stretch of river is now spanned by a steel girder bridge that thousands of trucks will cross during the life of this project. It is evident that this area in the vicinity of the Iskut River was once part of a resource catchment region where the people of the Stikine gathered to hunt local resources. Over the twenty-year life of the Galore Creek project, this area and others like it will be destroyed forever. The grandiose scheme to develop this remarkable landscape have since been put on hold due to project cost overruns and the fluctuating base mineral prices. Unfortunately for the local people and their children in the Stikine

School District, the stalled project means newly acquired house mortgages and vehicle loans in the local communities are now in jeopardy of foreclosure and repossession as massive layoffs followed the suspension of the Galore Creek Project. Once growing bank accounts are now drained by overdrafts. The millions of exploration and development dollars and the hundreds of jobs that flooded the towns throughout the school district have vanished, while the Galore Creek Mining Company restructures its finances and awaits the next inflationary cycle of copper prices on the world market.

Perhaps even more ominous to the environment are recent attempts by Shell Oil to develop a methane coalbed extraction lease at the headwaters of the Stikine, Nass and Skeena Rivers. This land is sacred territory to the people of the northwest and is a vital headwaters source for three major rivers in central and northern BC. Shell Oil's attempts to drill into the water table and ignore the concerns of the local peoples have been met with roadblocks of access routes and court injunctions to halt these potentially destructive explorations on the environment. For the moment, Galore Creek and Shell Oil await more favourable economic opportunities in the Stikine district.



**Figure 30: Galore Creek Exploration Camp  
2007. Photo by author.**





Figure 31: Iskut crossing 2009



Figure 32: Local resistance to Shell Oil coal bed methane extraction at Spirit Camp 2007. Photos by author.

Perhaps most foreboding of all to the ecology of the Stikine, are the recent announcements concerning a new economic initiative from Washington D.C. where Prime Minister Stephen Harper (September 16, 2009) unveiled plans for funding for

the construction of an electrical transmission line into northern British Columbia to the doorstep of the Stikine. His speech contained the usual clean energy dialogue on carbon capture storage and affordable power, and he repeated all the eco-correct statements about the project benefits to remote communities, like those in the Stikine School District. Gushing after his meeting with President Obama at the White House Harper blustered, “Our Government is pursuing joint projects with President Obama and his Administration!” As Harper pointed out, this transmission line has the potential to eventually connect with the Alaskan power grid, and link British Columbia like a daisy chain with North American economic development plans. The plan calls for 330 km extension of the existing grid from Terrace as far north as Bob Quinn Lake on Highway 37, which was part of the original, but now stalled Galore Creek Project strategy for the electricity needs of their mining operations. The BC Ministry of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources announced on the same day, and in the same eco-friendly language from their web site that this project will, “help communities in the region transition away from diesel generation and reduce gas emissions.” The project will also pay the dividend of taking advantage of the vast mineral potential of that region and expand the potential of the Prince Rupert Fairview Container Terminal (<http://www.gov.bc.ca/empr/>). It is interesting to note that the communities of Iskut, Dease Lake and Telegraph Creek, which currently rely on diesel to run their town generators, are beyond the reaches of the transmission route that is currently proposed.

This next wave of assaults on the natural resources on the Stikine district and the social pressures on the people who live here, should inspire the Stikine School District with its poor FSAs, to initiate a suitable curriculum shift for the many students who have already fallen off the provincial assessment radar screens. As the global thirst for the economic resources within the school district heightens, cultural awareness and heritage stewardship of the archaeological sites located in the Stikine School District are of vital importance to the communities that are in danger of having their past, and their futures, stripped-mined off the face of the earth. The irony of these megaprojects is that great wealth is produced, but it is shipped out of the local communities along with the resources being extracted. There is employment for the local peoples, but they are being paid, on the lower rungs, to destroy their own environment. The Galore Creek Project had predicted a 20-year life span, which is not enough time for a young family to pay off a house mortgage. It is neither a sustainable project length for local communities to plan their futures. It is in the interest of those who wish sustainable communities to avoid the “boom and bust” economic policies that emptied the town of Cassiar when their 40-year old asbestos mine closed shop in 1992, leaving behind a devastated environment and a ghost town where a thriving community once existed.

Place-based archaeological projects that focus on the community and the heritage protection of the environment have the potential to reclaim the importance of the local experience from the grasp of the multinational corporations. Although economic development provides employment to remote communities, these jobs are

often short-lived. Unbridled development and globalization may enrich the lives of some, but to most people it results in a disruption of community life, rather than contribute to its florescence.

## **b) Archaeology, Place-Based Curriculum and Heritage Stewardship**

Heritage stewardship is not a new concept to British Columbia. In Barkley Sound on the west coast of Vancouver Island the Tseshah First Nation, another underachiever on the Provincial FSAs, have taken major strides in heritage stewardship to regain all that was lost with the attempted annihilation of their culture during the decades of residential schooling, and to protect and manage the remaining cultural assets in Barkley Sound. The Tseshah, with reserves located at the head of the Alberni Inlet near Port Alberni, are one of 14 member bands of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council that formed in 1978. Several Nuu-chah-nulth groups have sponsored and participated in archaeological research within their traditional territories in Barkley Sound, including the Toqhaht 1991-1996, the Tseshah 1999-2001 and 2007-2008 as well as the Huu-ay-aht 2004-2005. The *Tseshah Archaeological Project 1999-2001*, was a three-year jointly funded archaeological project with the Tseshah and Parks Canada on the island of Ts'ishaa (Benson Island) in central Barkley Sound, now located within Pacific Rim National Park. Ts'ishaa holds an important place in Tseshah culture history as the creation site for their ancestors and home to the nation for several centuries. This project was initiated to identify and protect the heritage sites throughout Barkley Sound from looting and site destruction,

as well as to incorporate Tseshah culture history into Parks Canada interpretive programs in the Pacific Rim National Park. A vital component of this research was to reintroduce the traditional past at Ts'ishaa to the young people of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council and to integrate the archaeology of this large, traditional village site into the existing knowledge base of four centuries of Tseshah culture history. Another aim of this research was to gather data on aboriginal land use for future treaty negotiations. Over the duration of this 3-year project, 20 Nuu-chah-nulth young people were trained in the techniques of archaeological inquiry. In addition to these trainees and the many visiting tribal members, there were scores of volunteers and Parks Canada personnel who also worked on the old village site. Hundreds of tourist kayakers visited the island for the twice-daily interpretive tours, which were guided through the archaeological site by Tseshah band members over the course of this project. In addition to investigating the archaeology of their traditional village site, the Tseshah have revitalized their missionary-suppressed language with educational programs that have sought to maintain and re-energize their language through the teaching of children and adult language programs (McMillan 1996; McMillan and St. Claire 2006).



**Figure 33:** Excavations at Ts'ishaa unearthed evidence for sophisticated harvesting strategies of the marine resources in Barkley Sound. Shellfish, reef fish, deep sea tuna and whale bones were found in abundance. Photos by A. McMillan

As the 21<sup>st</sup> Century begins, the children of the Stikine should be encouraged to explore in their education the place-based interests of their local communities rather

than the academic expectations of a distant, urban school administration. Grunewald (2005: 263) noted that place-based education (PBE) has been viewed by some educators as just another methodology or teaching technique through which to deliver the standard school curriculum. It is however, much more than that. PBE is a methodology for learning, based on the local setting with its own unique environment, history, economy and material culture. The local community becomes the classroom context for learning, while the learner focuses on community interests, and the community members serve as partners in this local place-based pedagogy. These ideas or models for public education have been floating around for several centuries. Knapp (2005: 279) cites the Moravian education reformer, Comenius (1592-1670) who taught that, “We should learn as much as possible, not from books, but from the great book of nature, from heaven and earth, from oaks and beeches.” Nearly four centuries later and public education still struggles to find an effective medium for curricular instruction to prepare its students for our ever-changing world. Our education institutions acknowledge this struggle, and even encourage this disconnection between today’s students’ living experiences and the imposed classroom learning, with the continued obsession with standardized test scores to measure achievements that do not speak to, nor do they contribute to the experiences of the students (G. Smith 2002: 586). From the Ministry of Education’s own assessments, it seems clear that the current system of curriculum study does not serve the people, Aboriginal and Non-Aboriginal of the Stikine School District, nor the interests of their student population. While every school in the province finds its

place on the map of Ministry of Education assessments, Stikine School District #87 remains invisible. For this reason, this thesis suggests a place-based curriculum model for education in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century for the Stikine, or any school district where the material culture of the local peoples can be found within travelling distance of the community schoolyard. Concepts of place-based education have been around for a long time. In fact, until the development of common schooling in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, all education was place-based. As the 19<sup>th</sup> Century progressed, industrialization and the modernization of the West hijacked learning, locality and lived experience, and set education in a direction towards a knowledge set defined by Western principles and measured in government sanctioned texts. Today's unsteady world of economic globalization and Neo-Liberal education policies serve as a guiding light for the business-oriented strategies and their corresponding accountability schemes and assessments, such as the Ministry of Education FSAs that drive our education system.

During the later part of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the discipline of archaeology moved beyond the study of ancient cultures and monumental architectures of the Old World to the assessment of cultural inventories in the modern world. As our industrial/technical society casts an ever-widening net in search of North America's dwindling natural resources, culture resource management has emerged as a means to protect our cultural resources from the destructive impact of unbridled economic development projects, and the often-unpredictable forces of nature. Public archaeology and heritage stewardship have also emerged in the last few decades, bringing a once-staid academic discipline to the forefront of general public awareness. In the past century,



archaeology was seen as a pursuit best suited to the privileged members of the elite, ivy-clad institutions, but today archaeology in elementary and high school curricula is a vital component to the public archaeology and heritage stewardship in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

There are many examples of the successful application of archaeology to elementary and high school curricula in Canada. A Grade 7 Social Studies Unit developed by Langley School District #35, is titled, *Our Shxweli Is All Around Us: Archaeology and Stó:lô Culture* (1998). The program was developed by small group of school district teachers and administrators as well as Stó:lô cultural advisors and respected Elders, with the intention of introducing students to the science of archaeology as it relates to the local prehistory of Stó:lô culture on the Fraser River. The initial lesson plan introduced the reader to the essential concepts of archaeology such as cultural systems and resources, material culture remains and the important concept of heritage stewardship. The lesson plan reminds the student that many destructive forces from natural and human sources threaten our dwindling cultural resources. These resources can be wisely managed and conserved only through an understanding of what and where these resources are found, and a careful weighing of the consequences of human actions when developing the local environment. Another component in the curriculum guide demonstrated how to interpret Stó:lô culture through the artifacts recovered from the archaeological site. The abundance of fish butchering knives, adze and chisel blades as well as heavy stone hand mauls indicated these river peoples fished the Fraser River and lived in big cedar

longhouses. Cedar forests, the availability of suitable lithic materials and predictable salmon runs together fuelled a vibrant prehistoric culture. How these tools were manufactured, through practical demonstration, is the focus of another component. The many archaeological site types and places of human activity are reviewed. The characteristics of these sites vary according to the length of human occupation and the kinds of activities that took place at that location. The ways that archaeological sites are found and what is preserved in the record are discussed and the actual excavation methods at an archaeological site are demonstrated through a slide presentation. Analysing the recovered data, how the materials are catalogued and how they are dated are explained while a glossary of terms and an artifact replica catalogue provided the Grade 7 student with a good introduction to the of science of archaeology and what it might mean for the preservation of local heritage.

Another publication, *The Science of Archaeology: a Learning Guide* (1993), was intended as a pilot project to introduce the science of archaeology into Saskatchewan schools as a means to awaken student curiosity about past cultures. While Miles and Dallin (1998) intended their project as a vehicle for study of Stó:lô cultural expression and the local environment, Lodoen et al (1993), see archaeology as a science curriculum of the future where students are introduced to the scientific methods of observation, hypothesis formulation as well as the testing and interpretation of the recovered data. The interdisciplinary relationship between archaeology and the natural and social sciences is explored. Class and field discussions, preliminary research, daily journals and the final report writing hone students' newly acquired skills of research,

observation, problem solving, co-operative learning, literacy and numeracy. Unlike the Stikine School District, which has archaeological sites as close as the school parking lot, the University of Saskatchewan manual assumes no such proximity for most schools. It has designed a hands-on teaching module around a pre-constructed archaeological site in wood-framed boxes where students excavate the matrices under a controlled environment, over several weeks or months.

The *Boyd Archaeological Field School* is a highly successful Grade 12, three-week long high school credit course that has been in operation since 1975 and is described as Canada's longest running high school archaeology course (<http://www.boydfieldschool.org/>). It provides Toronto area high school students with a unique opportunity to experience the process of archaeology and to contribute directly to the understanding of Ontario's prehistoric and historic pasts through a variety of learning activities in the outdoor environment, beyond the standard classroom setting. Students spend alternating days at an archaeological site and in the classroom. This class work includes the study of Indigenous cultures, artifact analysis and tool manufacture, in addition to lectures on forensics, osteology, historic archaeology and geographic information systems (GIS). In the field, excavation techniques and strategies, as well as methods of analysis are investigated. These methods include floor plan mapping, excavation wall profiling, lithics and faunal inventories and cataloguing of the material culture inventory recovered from the site during the student excavations. A Grade 12 Interdisciplinary Studies credit is awarded to the student upon completion of the course. The Boyd Field School is a

good example of how archaeology can be successfully integrated into the high school curriculum of any school. The Tahltan field school, in these same ways, could also devise an educational template that satisfies the Ministry of Education standards of curriculum for this province.



Figure 34: 2008 Tahltan Field Season Community Poster.  
V. Asp and G. Kaufmann

The archaeological excavations at Tahltan village during August 2007 unearthed a wide array of material culture that could provide future students and their

communities with an understanding of village life during the pre-contact and the historic periods. During the August 2008 field season, PhD student Vera Asp of the Tahltan Nation and I introduced archaeology and the material culture recovered from the 2007 field season to a group of 30 Tahltan children who were attending their 2008 annual Tahltan summer science camp being held at the old village site that year. Each child was given one of the posters that we had printed (over 200) during the previous winter. This poster highlighted some of the findings from the 2007 field season, and invited the community to join the excavations next year. We discussed a collection of the artifacts, archaeological concepts and some of the methods of excavation during the 2007 field season.

It appears very possible for future academic projects and credit-earning courses to utilize the numerous heritage sites and resource locations found within the school district as classrooms for contemporary students. The provincial Ministry of Education's "BC First Nations Studies 12 Curriculum" has five interrelated curriculum organizers, including "Skills and Processes, Land and Relationships, Contact, Colonialism and Resistance, Cultural Expressions and land and Self-determination." This curriculum could be expanded to include the material culture and archaeological resource management of specific localities that are relevant to the students of community-based research projects. A future curriculum could include lessons in social studies, language arts, science and math focused around core topics such as the geology and physical landscape, Stikine plant and animal biology and the

many archaeological and heritage sites that provide a record of the human activities of long distance trade, local manufacture and traditional culture practices.

During three short weeks of the 2007 field season at Tahltan a wide range of cultural material was collected that could provide the foundations for new curricular horizons and much-improved outcomes for today's students in the Stikine School District.



**Figure 35: Stratigraphy at Tahltan. Photo by author**

## **Stratigraphy**

Stratigraphic analysis is the study of stratification, which refers to the deposition of distinct strata, or layers, in visible sequences in an archaeological site. By understanding the sequence of the deposits at a site, we can better understand events that took place at the site. The concept of superposition is a general guide to analysis of site strata. In this concept, the underlying layer that is revealed during excavations

was deposited first and therefore, in terms of relative dating, is earlier than the layer, or layers above it. In an excavated archaeological unit, the lowest or bottom layers in the unit are the oldest, and the layers directly below surface are the youngest deposits on the site. Artifacts that are recovered from a particular layer are associated with other artifacts found within this distinct stratum and therefore were deposited in the site around the same time. The deposition of these artifacts in a visible strata at a site can therefore be assumed to be later than the artifacts found in underlying strata, and earlier than those artifacts found in the above strata. Another important aspect of stratification is to determine whether there has been a natural or human disturbance or intrusion into the sequence of these layers after there were deposited. Within the village at Tahltan there would have been much ground disturbance associated with house construction, the digging of latrines, fence posts and gardens.

### **Faunal remains**

The faunal remains, or animal bones recovered from Tahltan were somewhat limited in number due to the poor preservation of bone in the brown sandy-silts that blanket the landscape of the Stikine Plateau. Most recovered bone from the site was therefore relatively recent, certainly within the last hundred years, and for the most part unidentifiable due to fragmentation. The majority species of the collection was land mammal. Large ungulates, or hoofed animals were represented in the faunal remains by moose, caribou and deer bone fragments, some of which revealed cut



marks from butchering. The largest bone in the collection was a moose foot bone (metatarsus). Smaller animals such as rabbits and birds, as well as a small porcupine mandible, or jawbone fragment were also noted. Several large salmon vertebrae were also uncovered. Several small shell fragments were recovered as well as a possible whelk shell, which is an ocean dwelling sea slug.



**Figure 36: Faunal remains. Photo by author**

This small faunal collection provides a dietary narrative for the past century at Tahltan. In the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, game was still relatively plentiful in the area and the Stikine Indians have always been good hunters. Big game was as important to the people a century ago, as it is now. A visit to the Tahltans from the American ethnographer, G. T. Emmons (1911) noted the importance of hunting and trapping when whole villages would disperse on seasonal hunting trips for the large game

animals such as moose and mountain sheep, deer and smaller land mammals that lived on the Stikine Plateau. Their tool kit included bows and obsidian arrows, and guns in the historic period, as well as knives to skin the hides larger game, and dead fall traps and snares to catch smaller game. Emmons wrote that after the Cassiar gold rush, disease had weakened the nation, who now lived together in western-style houses at Tahltan, wore western clothing and used metal tools instead of the locally obtained obsidian implements.

### **Hunting tool kit**

Evidence of Tahltan hunting activities is visible in both early and late horizons at Tahltan Village. The stone bifaces, hide scrapers, blades and lone projectile point in the early site component that are often associated with land mammal hunting are replaced, or joined by the European grey chert gun flint and a rusted metal gun hammer lock. Spent munitions casings range from one large rifle pellet, a .22 shell casing and a .410 metal shell jacket. They represent the modern component at the site.



Figure 37: Hunting tool kit. Photo by author

### Domestic objects

The common, rusted metal can and container can surrender useful information when excavated at an archaeological site. Not only do they provide information about what was stored and consumed at Tahltan, but also the advancement of canning technologies shown in the manufacture of the containers function as relative time markers at Tahltan. Two hole-in-cap can lids, manufactured between 1820 and 1920 were excavated, as well as a rectangular can wind-key with a thin, coiled metal strip from the original can still attached. These are often associated with the introduction of canned coffee after WWI. A single hole-in-top lid, manufactured post-1900 was often used for evaporated milk, which was first commercially canned and marketed in Illinois after 1885. Another can, and the remnants of several others, had a double-

locking side seam, which was generally popular after the 1890's. Another can revealed a machine-soldered seam, generally available after 1883. Metal fragments of a wood stove, a section of a metal file, a sprocket from a wind-up clock and a heart-shaped metal charm from a necklace or bracelet. Three clay pipe stem fragments similar to the Hudson Bay Company pipes were also excavated in the village site.



**Figure 38: Domestic objects. Photo by author**

Buttons and beads also yield an interesting chronology in the artifact inventory at Tahltan Village. Three shell buttons, possibly abalone, were excavated at 30 cm on surface depth, while two other shell buttons were recovered, along with most of the buttons and beads in the inventory, from the exposed surface areas of two road cuts that dissect the site. Blue Russian faceted trade beads, coloured seed beads, one transparent rectangular glass drawn bead, small tube beads, a drawn orange glass bauble and several metal Levi shank buttons were collected on or near the ground

surface. The presence of coastal shells and Russian trade beads point to the active trade exchanges that thrived along the Stikine River. The small shell button (top left in photograph) was commonly sewn onto ceremonial button-blankets.



**Figure 39: Buttons and beads. Photo by author**

## Obsidian and Mount Edziza



**Figure 40: Mount Edziza. Photo by author.**

Mount Edziza is Canada's highest confirmed volcano at 2,787 meters. It is at least 7.5 million years old and has produced four distinct varieties of volcanic glass that have been used by local Indians to produce the sharpest of cutting edges for knives, scrapers, microblades, macroblades and projectile points. Tahltan is approximately 65 km from Mount Edziza and accessed through a series of well used trails. Obsidian is a well-known raw material that has been collected by many cultures to manufacture tools and traded as a commodity throughout the world, wherever volcanic activity has occurred. It was used to fashion hand-axes in Ethiopia over 100,000 years ago, and traded within and outside the Fertile Crescent from southwest Turkey to Kurdistan Iraq from 16,000 years ago. Obsidian artifacts of every shape and description are found at Mayan sites throughout Central America between 1100

and 1300 years ago. In northwest British Columbia, Indigenous peoples quarried and shaped large quantities of obsidian from Mount Edziza for their own use and for trade sometime after the last glaciation. Obsidian source data reveals that by 9,000 years ago, Mount Edziza obsidian was already established as a valued item of long-distant trade on the northern coasts of British Columbia, and that interior and coastal trade networks supported the regular exchange of obsidian from Tahltan territory. Tahltan archaeologist Vera Asp has cited the occurrence of Mount Edziza obsidian in the 10, 300-year-old soil horizons in her excavation units at “On Your Knees Cave” on Prince Edward Island in Alaska. The predominance of obsidian in the lithic assemblage recovered during the three-week field season at Tahltan reflects the close proximity of Mount Edziza. There were some small stone flakes collected, but not in quantities that would indicate that the village was a primary reduction area for large obsidian cores. The inventory of 212 artifacts contained 92 obsidian microblades, both intact and broken. These are very small and sharp blades that were hafted to a wooden handle and used for skinning and hide-work, as well as being a useful tool in their fishing industries. There were also 31 large obsidian macroblades and fragments, as well as 1 chert macroblade in the collection. The largest intact macroblade was over 55 mm in length and 18 mm in width. The smallest fragmented macroblades fell within the 13-15 mm range in length, but most macroblades were an average 20-30 mm in length and considerable wider than microblades.

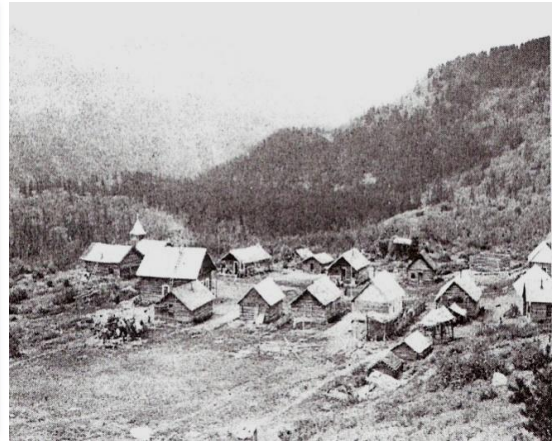


**Figure 41: Obsidian macroblades. Photo by author.**

### **c) Epilogue**

My brief time spent with these Ministry of Education FSA underachievers in late August 2008, participating in the day-long excavations in the shadow of the old mission reminded me of the archival photograph that began this thesis. The apprehensive-looking Tahltan children in the 1910 photograph stood on the location of our 2008 excavation units. Through the archaeology of their ancestors, the young Tahltan children in today's Stikine school District have a chance to rediscover what was once lost and buried through the ignorance and indifference of the missionaries and their federal paymasters. Through community-based education projects such as this, underachieving Tahltan students can once again stand tall without fear of falling behind.





**Figure 42: Then and now. A century of education at Tahltan 1910-2009. (Top left: North British Columbia News, September 1910. Top right: North British Columbia News, May 1910). Bottom left and right photos by author.**

## Conclusions

As this thesis has demonstrated, the chronic underachievement in recent *Foundation Skills Assessments* by Indian students in the Stikine School District has its genesis in the policies of the governmental and religious bureaucracies more than a century earlier. The early 1900s were pivotal in the future direction of Indian education in Canada. The recommendations of Nicholas Flood Davin in 1879, that Canada should copy the American system of exterminating Indian culture while saving their souls, fuelled the growth of an ineffective residential school system. However, as cumbersome and complex as the system was to operate, the voices of rational dissent from within the church bureaucracy failed to halt or curtail its growth. The waves of infectious diseases, beginning in 1834 with the “Great Sickness” that swept across the north that decimated the local Indians, left them with little resistance to the preachings and proselytizations of the Anglican and Oblate missionaries who colonized their lands. The overt racism that characterized Indian/White relations in the later 19<sup>th</sup> Century carried through into the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and was blatantly illustrated in the writings of the newly arrived missionary writers and school curriculum planners in British Columbia. While the children in the public and private school systems received an innovative, “progressive education” taught by a nascent, professional teaching body in modern schools endowed with the latest equipment,

the local denizen of the Stikine Indian Agency were taught by rote memorization to repeat gospel prayers and catechisms in the log-walled mission houses that were their designated schools. Education for the Stikine Indians took an even darker turn when new Residential schools at Carcross and Lower Post began operations in the 1950s. Sexual and physical abuse, hunger, forced physical labour, loss of family support and suppression of traditional languages were hallmarks of the residential school system.

As this thesis suggests, the 2008 excavations at the Tahltan Mission should mark the beginning of a new cycle for education on the Stikine. The material culture excavated from the location where Tahltan children once stood a century ago tells a unique story of the past. This mission school narrative at Tahltan, and the rich cultural history that preceded it, should become components for contemporary Tahltan education; an education that will prepare the local students for the economic and social challenges that loom on the horizon, rather than doom them to unfulfilled potentials and unsatisfied expectations.

Community-based archaeological projects offer further fuel to the newly rekindled interest in community-based education projects that were suppressed in the local schoolrooms after the first missionary arrived at Tahltan. The material culture recovered and catalogued by the young people of the Tahltan Nation can contribute to the incomplete database that has been written by outsiders who have no interest in local concerns. A blending of archaeology and traditional knowledge into the standard school curriculum will, no doubt, result in a drastic improvement in the

provincial assessments of the classroom performances of the students involved. It is true that not every student in the Stikine School District will be imaginatively inspired, nor benefit academically from these community-based projects, but many will, and this is a beginning. It has already been established by the annual FSA that few are interested in the Ministry of Education curriculum as it is delivered today. Community Elders who have their own knowledge bases can also participate in the education processes of place-based projects that inform and encourage the involvement of the entire community.

My own experiences and observations have contributed to my firm belief that the archaeologists employed by the multinational companies serve only the interests of their paymasters. Thorough inventories and critical analyses are all but absent from the “cut and paste” reports that form the basis of the regional knowledge base of the Stikine. The vast mineral deposits and resources found within the traditional territories have drawn the interests of many economic developers to this region. The archaeological impact assessments that are required under current legislation before economic development takes place can provide long-term employment for Tahltan archaeologists and community-based researchers long into the foreseeable future.

# Appendices

## Appendix A: Field Notes 2008-2009

### Searching for the Palgrave Journal: An ethno-historic adventure.

The search for primary data to ground this thesis travelled diverse avenues, along the way gaining insights through personal communications of members of the Tahltan First Nation, and the oral statements of their Elders recorded long ago in published volumes, as well as the works of the early ethnographers, missionaries and adventure writers who had first-hand experiences and published popular narratives in the early 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Many of these old volumes could only be obtained through interlibrary loans from the rare books collections at UBC and the University of Alberta.

Microfilmed materials from the Church Missionary Society and National Film Board of Canada archival film footage provided other streams of data. The search for relevant Federal government documentation inevitably led to the *RG-10 Series* and the *Indian Affairs Annual Reports* of Indian schools. While the material culture that we recovered during the past two field seasons at Tahltan village provide one of several bases for an alternative curriculum, other archival data came from sources wide and varied. For much of the last century the Church of England and the Anglican Church shaped First Nations education in Canada. For this reason, the archival

materials in their diocese holdings were a source of important material for this thesis. Searching for sources for both the southern Yukon residential school and the northwestern BC church mission school, I found good materials in the *Northern Lights* and the Caledonia Diocese newspaper that were published during the years of missionary schooling. The Public Library in Prince Rupert held the early issues of the *North British Columbia News* while the Ecclesiastical of the Province of British Columbia, at the Vancouver School of Theology, was a source for the Chootla School newspaper, *Northern Lights*. From the Yukon Archives, in Whitehorse and the Provincial Archives in Victoria I was able to obtain materials that would have otherwise remained esoteric. Perhaps the most interesting, and certainly the most trying search of all, were my repeated attempts, over a 15-month period, to review the Palgrave Journal extracts, which were housed in the Diocese of Caledonia archives in the Anglican Synod Office in Prince Rupert, under the vigilant safekeeping of the retired archivist, Cliff Armstrong. The *Extracts From Rev. F. Palgrave's: A Brief Account of the Tabltan Mission* was actually a partial copy of two original journals; entries for July 1897 to April 1901, and June 1909 to October 1910 were written by Rev. Palgrave and entries from Aug. 1912 to December 1912 and those between January 1914 and February 1914 were authored by F. Thorman.

Although my first email to Mr. Armstrong was sent 3 Feb. 2008, he did not respond until the following May, and only did so after I had contacted the Bishop of the Diocese, William Anderson, and asked for his assistance to reach the Diocese archives. My meeting with Mr. Armstrong at the Diocese of Caledonia was by

chance, around Christmas 2008. I was working near Prince Rupert with members of the Metlakatla Band on the proposed Naikun Wind Generation station and after an early morning storm shortened our work day, I had a chance to visit the archives in the basement of the Anglican Church, St Andrew's Cathedral. Here I met the man in person that I had first emailed ten months before, and asked him if I could see the Palgrave Journal. After some hesitation on his part, and assurances on mine, I was allowed to quickly pore over the journal while he stood over my shoulder and peppered me with casual and meaningless questions about unrelated trivia. I believed I would have no trouble in accessing this diary at a later date since it contained no evidence of overt missionary wrongdoing, sexual or otherwise. I could not have been more wrong in my assumption. What follows are the events, as outlined in most of the email transcripts of conversations between myself and Cliff Armstrong volunteer archivist with the Synod of Caledonia, Prince Rupert, that transpired during my lengthy quest to read some of the old accounts at Tahltan

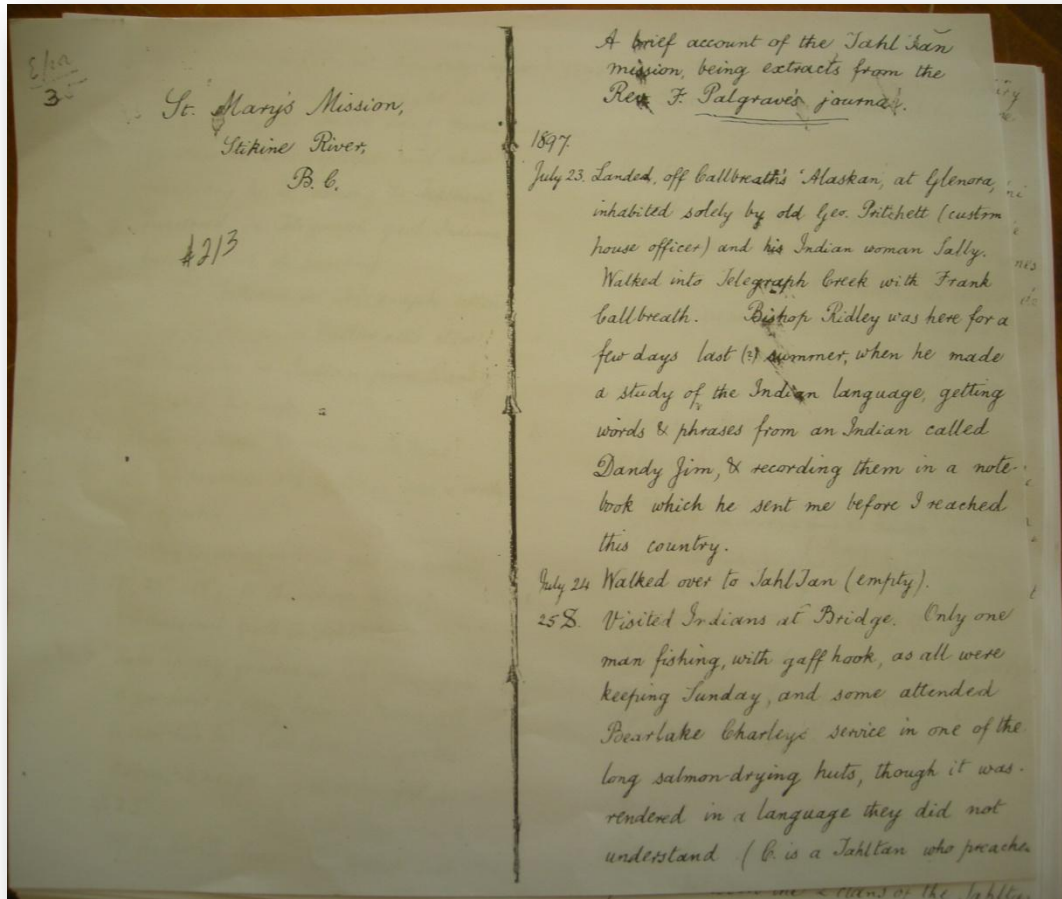


Figure 43: Front page of Palgrave's journal.  
Photo by author.

### In Search of the Palgrave Journal

Sunday, February 03, 2008 7:20: To the Anglican Archives at the Ecclesiastical Province of British Columbia and the Yukon, in the basement of the Vancouver School of Theology (VST) at UBC.



Dear (VST Archivist), my name is George Kaufmann. I am a graduate student with the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University and I am currently researching the material culture remains and historical documents concerning the Tahltan village of Old Tahltan near Telegraph Creek BC. I am working with Vera Asp, A Tahltan Heritage Advisory Group member and PhD student with the Department of Archaeology and Dr. John Welch, Canadian Indigenous Stewardship Research Chair both at SFU. Last August 2007 we excavated twenty test units at the village site (IaTr-2) and mapped the standing structures from the now derelict Anglican Mission. I was wondering if you had in your possession any archival materials concerning the Tahltan Mission. I am interested in daily life at the mission, what curriculum was taught, the students and staff etc, as well as archival photos. If so, could I have access to the materials? The attachments are photos from our 2007 excavations,

george kaufmann

Sun, 03 Feb 2008 22:43. To the office of the Archives of the Diocese of Caledonia, Prince Rupert, BC.

Hi Cliff, my name is George Kaufmann and I am a graduate student with the Faculty of Education at Simon Fraser University. I was part of an archaeological project from SFU that excavated 20 units at the old Tahltan Village and around the old structures of what I believe was called the Upper Stikine Mission (see attachment) last August 2007. I was working with another graduate student, Vera Asp of the Tahltan First Nation and with the permission of Chief Quock and the Tahltan Central Council.

One of our young crewmembers was Jeremy Kuz from Prince Rupert. Our project concerns local heritage stewardship projects and what role archaeology might assume in the local school curriculum. I am inquiring about any information you might have about the old Anglican Mission and school at Tahltan, including archival photos, and if so, how I might access this information. Thank you for your time, george kaufmann

Mon, 12 May 2008 11:26:47 Mr. Kaufmann,

We have a file on Telegraph/Tahltan--if you wish to access the information in you will have to ask the Tahltan/Iskut Band Council for permission to view the file, make notes etc., Please have them write me a letter with the Band Logo on top and send it directly to: Cliff Armstrong, Anglican Archives, Diocese of Caledonia, P.O. Box 278, Prince Rupert, B.C., V8J 32P6. Because of the B.C. Privacy act of January 2004 etc., etc., all researchers into First Nations affairs are requested to seek permission and have it mailed to this office. We have some older materials, none re education, we have partial copies of Thorman and Palgrave's Journal, these are copies, we do not hold the original and as they are or have been given to, we do not copy them, you are welcome to read and make notes. I believe the Provincial Archives has a copy of the Palgrave materials, or else one is housed in the National Archives of Canada, in Ottawa. We have a number of letters that [may](#) be read and notes made as well as accounts

in the Church newspaper, North B.C. News etc. The Birth, Marriage and burial records are not available to researchers unless they have written permission from the individual family members, there are, unfortunately, no exceptions. I believe there is enough in the Palgrave materials and the newspaper accounts to whet your appetite. The Diocese of Caledonia Archives will be closed from Mid [June](#) to Labour Day. There will be no one here to assist during that time period. Cliff Armstrong, Diocese of Caledonia Anglican Archives.

[6-Mar 2009, at 10:31 AM.](#)

Hi Cliff, I visited your office last December inquiring about any material you had relating to Tahltan village on the Stikine. If you will remember, I am writing a thesis which includes the social history at Tahltan during the 20th century. I have been able to locate some materials at the Provincial archives in Victoria and at the Vancouver School of Theology archives, but I have been unable to find a copy of the Palgrave/Thorman journal. Would it be possible to get a photocopy of the journal? I would pay for the copying charges, of course, but I have a few things that you might be interested in adding to your collection. I found a 9-page hand-written letter from T.P.W. Thorman, dated "Rec'd [Apr. 1905](#)" in the CMS records, giving a brief review of life at Tahltan for a successor. I also have the Lord's Prayer, written by Thorman for the Tahltan sermon. I could send you those documents or anything else that might be an addition to your collection. I also have a few photos of the remaining structures at Tahltan if you are interested. If you have a second, drop me a line.

Regards,

george kaufmann

6 March-09

Mr. Kaufmann--regarding your request for copies of the Thorman/ Palgrave Diary/Journals. When I receive a letter from the Tahltan Band Council giving you permission to access their files and materials relating to the Tahltan in our files, I will be pleased to have a copy of the Journals sent to you. Cliff Armstrong, Anglican Archives.

Wednesday 25-Mar-09, at 7:25 AM:

Hi Cliff, I have been in contact with the Tahltan Central Council and they have given their support to my project. Could you send me a copy of the Palgrave/Thorman journal? I would be happy to cover any photocopying and shipping expenses. I also have access to some CMS files on microfiche at SFU and I have other materials I have collected about Tahltan. Is there anything you might want for your archival collection? I have my own digital photos of the village site that I could send to you, if you are interested in expanding your Tahltan holdings. The Yukon Archives has the "Tahltan Mission Historic Site Project" which they are sending to me. Some of

that might be of interest to you. I hope you are well. Drop me an email at your convenience. Regards, George Kaufmann.

15 April 2009 Mr. Kaufmann-

(1) The Tahltan Council sent a letter giving you permission to access "public materials" in our archives. Correspondence between the Bishop and clergy is not available to researchers as well as any materials relating to church problems etc. within a 50-year period. Other information and correspondence that falls within the Privacy act of Jan.2004 is not available.

(2) I note that you have had the reference librarian at SFU contact the reference librarian in Prince Rupert and she was asked to copy materials etc. These copied materials came from our microfilm given to the library dated Sept. 1909 to November 1921. This was for the North B.C. News. All of the Telegraph Creek/Tahltan materials had been previously photocopied and placed in a binder, so if you would like to pay the reference librarian for copying time it would be appreciated. We have the remaining papers photocopied and you are welcome to look through them and make notes. We do not have the staff to photocopy pages for you. From archivist Cliff Armstrong

(3) As for the Palgrave/Thorman Journal extracts copy. This at the moment is a problem as the copy we hold was given to us and made in England from the originals. The originals are in the hands of person or persons unknown, and under

copyright laws etc., the original owner retains the copyright for 50 years and it can be renewed (which in this case was probably not done), however for our protection at the present time until we have the lawyers' comments, we will have to deny you copy however, you are certainly welcome to read through the manuscript and make notes, verbatim copying of the materials are not permitted.

(4) Photographs. We charge \$20.00 per photograph. The secretary will scan the images and send them via e mail. The credit line is to read "Anglican Archives, Diocese of Caledonia. Costs are to be paid in advance. No photographs are to be physically taken from the archives.

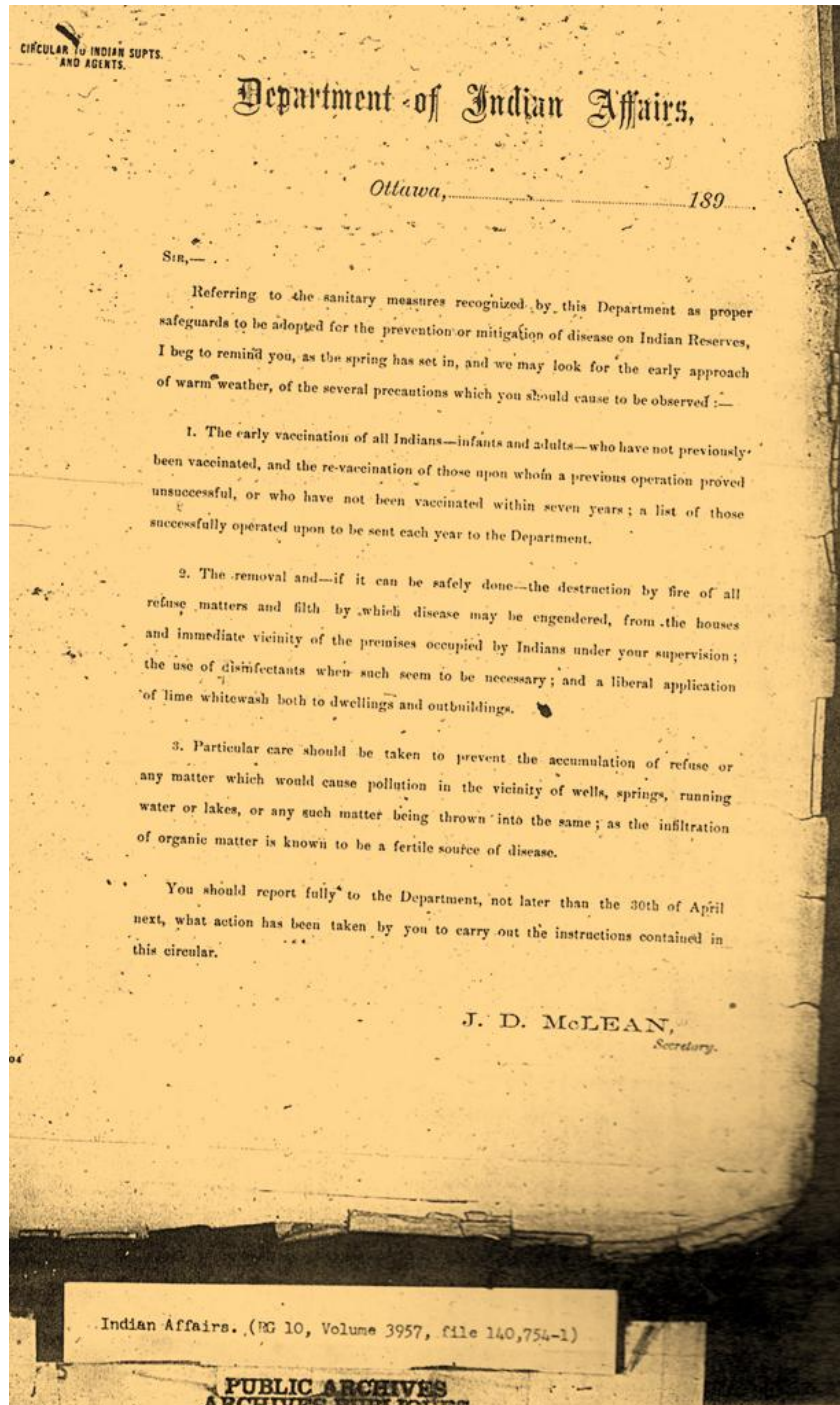
(5) The Archives will be closed all July and August until the second week in September. From April, May and June, I am here from 08:30Am until 11:30Am Tuesday, Thursdays and Fridays. Cliff Armstrong, Anglican archives, Diocese of Caledonia.

Wednesday, 15 April, 2009 14:26:21

Mr. Kaufmann, the secretary told me you were going to phone at 1PM today, I waited--no phone so here is what I did not put in your e mail today. I am not here steady only 3 days a week and usually leave shortly after noon. If you try Google and type in Palgrave and Thorman's names you may come up with something. You could also e mail the British Library and see if they have either of the two journals or diaries.

## Appendix B: Primary Documents

### 1) Circular to Missionaries on Measures for Prevention of Disease



2) Text book and supplies order forms for Indian day schools

*Liond Port*

<p><b>NEW BASIC READERS</b> <b>CURRICULUM FOUNDATION SERIES.</b></p> <p><u>GRADE ONE.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Before We Read  <input type="checkbox"/> We Look and See  <input type="checkbox"/> We Work and Play  <input type="checkbox"/> We Come and Go  <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher's Edition of Pre-Primer Program (Incl. Before We Read and 3 Pre-Primers)  <input type="checkbox"/> Think-and-Do Book for Pre-Primer Program (workbook)  <input type="checkbox"/> Fun With Dick and Jane  <input type="checkbox"/> Think-and-Do Book for Fun With Dick and Jane (workbook)  <input type="checkbox"/> Our New Friends  <input type="checkbox"/> Think-and-Do Book for Our New Friends (workbook)  <input type="checkbox"/> Guide-Book to Grade One Program</p> <p><u>GRADE TWO.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Friends and Neighbours  <input type="checkbox"/> Think-and-Do Book for Friends and Neighbours (workbook)  <input type="checkbox"/> More Friends and Neighbours  <input type="checkbox"/> Think-and-Do Book for More Friends and Neighbours (workbook)  <input type="checkbox"/> Guide-Book to Second Grade Program</p> <p><u>SAFE AND HEALTHY LIVING SERIES.</u></p> <p><u>For Teacher's Use Only.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Spick and Span  <input type="checkbox"/> Health Parade  <input type="checkbox"/> Growing Big and Strong  <input type="checkbox"/> Safety Every Day</p> <p><u>For Pupil's Use.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Health, Safety and Success  <input type="checkbox"/> Your Health &amp; Safety</p> <p><u>JOLLY NUMBERS SERIES.</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Primer  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book One (First Half)  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Book Two (Second Half)  <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher's Manuals.  <input type="checkbox"/> Book One (Beginners' Course)  <input type="checkbox"/> Book Two</p> <p>Name <u>The Teacher</u>          School <u>Liond Port R.C. School</u>          Post Office (nearest) <u>Walton Lake Y.T.</u>          Express Office (nearest) <u>B.Y.N. Liond Port via Whitehorse, Y.T.</u>          Province _____</p>	<p><b>CANADIAN CATHOLIC CORONA READERS.</b></p> <p><u>GRADE ONE.</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Our First Book  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Let's Play  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Come With Me  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Happy Days  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workbook for Happy Days  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Teacher's Manual for Happy Days</p> <p><u>GRADE TWO.</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Playmates  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workbook for Playmates</p> <p><u>GRADE THREE.</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paths of Grace  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workbook for Paths of Grace</p> <p><u>GRADE FOUR.</u></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Tales to Tell  <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Workbook for Tales to Tell</p> <p><u>GRADE FIVE.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Stories for Every Day</p> <p><u>GRADE SIX.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Treasure Trove</p> <p><u>GRADE SEVEN.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Fact and Fancy</p> <p><u>GRADE EIGHT.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Wide Horizons</p> <p><u>HANDICRAFT TEXTS.</u></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Working in Leather  <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Crafts for Children  <input type="checkbox"/> Playing with Clay  <input type="checkbox"/> With Scissors and Paste  <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Projects  <input type="checkbox"/> Projects Through Crafts:  <input type="checkbox"/> Primary  <input type="checkbox"/> Junior  <input type="checkbox"/> Intermediate  <input type="checkbox"/> A Simplified Knitting Guide for Home and School  <input type="checkbox"/> The Art Class in Action</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Natural Science Through the Seasons  <input type="checkbox"/> Opportunity Workbook in English (Grade 8)  <input type="checkbox"/> Answer Book for Exercises in Arithmetic. (Grade 8).  <input type="checkbox"/> Exercises in Arithmetic (Grade 8).</p>
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Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6403, File 830-4, part 1)

PUBLIC ARCHIVES      ARCHIVES PUBLIQUES  
CANADA



3) "These supplies are for Indian children only."

ORDER FORM FOR STANDARD SCHOOL SUPPLIES

These supplies are for Indian children only.

**Note:** Order by exact quantity and not by dozens; e.g., do not ask for "three dozen" but say "36". Check the scale of issue on pages 4 and 5 carefully before ordering.

_____	boxes Chalk, white	_____	Blotters, 4 x 9
_____	boxes Chalk, asst. colours.	_____	Blotters, Desk, 18 x 24, green (Teachers only)
_____	Blackboard brushes	_____	Rulers, 12" plain
_____	Pencils (1917 - H.B.)	_____	boxes Paper clips (medium)
_____	Pencils (Primary #308)	_____	boxes Thumb tacks
_____	Pencils (Checking) Blue #76.	_____	pkts. Stickfast dry paste
_____	Pencils (Checking) Red #77.	_____	Paste Brushes
_____	Erasers (Pencil)	_____	rolls Transparent Adhesive Paper Tape.
_____	Erasers (Ink)	_____	rolls Kraft Gummed Paper Tape 2"
_____	Erasers (Art gum)	_____	pr. Kindergarten scissors, blunt.
_____	Penholders	_____	pr. Teachers' Scissors, 7"
_____	boxes Pen Nibs (fine)	_____	Blank Drawing Books #1, 6 x 9"
_____	boxes Pen Nibs (medium)	_____	Blank Drawing Books #2, 9 x 12"
_____	pkts. Ink Powder, Blue, Qt. size.	_____	boxes Gummed Stars # 22, asst.
_____	pkts. Ink Powder, Red, Qt. size.		
_____	Pencil Sharpener.		

EXERCISE BOOKS, etc.

_____	Loose leaf Note Books, #1937 (Grades 7 and 8)
_____	Loose leaf Note Books, #2933 (Grade 9 and upwards)
_____	Scribblers A, (plain)
_____	Scribblers B, (ruled, pencil)
_____	Exercise Books C, (ruled, Ink)
_____	Exercise Books D 104, (black cover, ruled, Ink)-grade 6 & upwards only

HANDICRAFT SUPPLIES

_____	pkts. Wax Crayons (Primary)	_____	Water colour boxes
_____	pkts. Crayolas (Senior)	_____	Water colour brushes (#5, medium)
_____	lbs. Klean Klay, asst. colours	_____	Water colour refills, asst. colours
_____	tins (8 oz. Dry Tempera, asst. colours.		

PAPER and ENVELOPES

_____	pkts. White Water colour Drawing paper, 6 x 9 (100 sheets to package)
_____	pkts. White Water colour Drawing paper, 9 x 12 (100 sheets to package)
_____	pkts. Construction paper, 9 x 12, asst. colours (50 sheets to package)
_____	pkts. Poster Paper, 9 x 12, asst. colours (100 sheets to package)
_____	pkts. Folding paper, 6 x 6, asst. colours (100 sheets to package)
_____	sheets Kraft wrapping paper (18 x 24)
_____	pkts. Foolscap, single ruled
_____	pkts. Multiscript (Hectograph) Paper, 8 1/2 x 14
_____	pkts. T. Writer Carbon paper, Std. Wgt., black, 8 x 13
_____	Scratch Pads #2, plain (3 x 5)
_____	Scratch Pads #5, ruled (6 x 10)
_____	Kraft Envelopes, 9 1/2 x 12) for reports

R E A D E R S

Protestant Schools (Basic Readers)

GRADE ONE:

_____	Before We Read	_____	We Work and Play
_____	We Look and See	_____	We Come and Go
_____	Think and Do Book for Pre-Primer Program		
_____	Fun with Dick and Jane		
_____	Think and Do Book for Fun With Dick and Jane		
_____	Our New Friends		
_____	Think and Do Book for Our New Friends		
_____	Guide-Book to Grade One Program.		

Indian Affairs. (RG 10, Volume 6403, File 830-1, part 1)

#### 4) Indian Day School Regulations

### INDIAN DAY SCHOOL REGULATIONS

All Indian schools shall be kept open for not less than 200 days in each year.

Schools shall be opened after the summer holidays on September 1, unless this date should be Labour Day, and shall close for Christmas holidays on December 22.

The winter term will commence on January 3, and end on June 30 in each year.

The following holidays will be allowed during the year:—All Saturdays, Labour Day, all local, municipal, Dominion or Provincial, public fast or thanksgiving days, Victoria Day, the King's Birthday, Good Friday, Easter Monday, the remainder of the week following Easter Monday.

In addition to the above, the Roman Catholic Schools will be allowed as holidays a limited number of holy days of obligation, not exceeding five in all, which will be accounted as teaching days and for which payment of salary will be allowed.

Where in the interest of the school work such action may be desirable, the holidays allowed during the summer (two months) may, upon the recommendation of the local Agent, be taken at some other time of the year; but no change is to be made without the express approval of the Department.

The morning session shall be from 9 a.m. to 12 noon, and the afternoon session from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., with a recess during each session of not less than 15, and not more than 20 minutes.

Salaries of teachers will be paid on a basis of ten (10) teaching months in each school year. Salaries will be paid at the end of each quarter, upon receipt of quarterly return. As school is open during one month in the quarter ending September 30 (unless special permission has otherwise been granted), payment of salary for that quarter will be for one month only. During each of the other quarters in the school year—if school is regularly taught—three months' salary will be paid at the end of the quarter.

Summer holidays are not taken into account in payment of yearly salaries. Each school year shall begin and end on the dates mentioned above, and the yearly salary allowed will be paid for the period taught between those dates only, unless, as heretofore stated, special provision has been granted for a change in the holiday period.

All teachers will be required to give at least one month's notice of their intention to resign.

All questions relating to the day school should be referred to the local Indian Agent.

5) Monthly Day School Return

**MONTHLY DAY SCHOOL RETURN**  
**INDIAN AFFAIRS BRANCH**  
 DEPARTMENT OF MINES AND RESOURCES

Report of Lower Post Indian Day School—Month ending August 27 1948  
Stikine Agency Lower Post, B.C. Teacher's P.O. Address \_\_\_\_\_

1. Prescribed school-days.....	1. <u>20</u>
2. Days school was in session.....	2. <u>20</u>
3. Total actual attendance.....	3. <u>185</u>
4. Average daily attendance (to two places of decimals).....	4. <u>9.25</u>
5. Percentage of attendance (to two places of decimals).....	5. <u>54.41</u>
6. Pupils actually attending during month.....	6. <u>17</u>
7. Boys actually attending during month.....	7. <u>8</u>
8. Girls actually attending during month.....	8. <u>9</u>
9. Highest register number in use to date from commencement of school year in September.....	9. <u>23</u>
10. Number of progress reports sent to parents.....	10. <u>0</u>
11. Tardiness of pupils.....	11. _____
12. Corporal punishment of pupils.....	12. <u>0</u>
13. Truancy of pupils.....	13. <u>3</u>
14. Days' absence of teacher (give explanation on back).....	14. <u>0</u>
15. Visits to school by Indian Agent.....	15. <u>0</u>
16. Visits to school by others (specify).....	_____
17. Number of pupils in Grades I. <u>12</u> ; II. <u>3</u> ; III. <u>1</u> ; IV. <u>1</u> ; V. _____ ; VI. _____ ; VII. _____ ; VIII. _____ ; IX. _____ ; X. _____ ; XI. _____ ; XII. _____	

6) Witness Document

1st Lt. T/Cpl. Andrew JONES,  
No. 34108803, U.S. Ar  
Carcross, Y.T. (6)

4072850, & Pte  
Indecent Assault  
SS DETACHMENT

Commanding Officer, Company "B", U.S. Army Engin  
whose Company these two soldiers belonged. This Compa  
that time located about seven miles east of Carcross,  
highway.

4. It was later ascertained that these two soldiers  
in bed with two of the girls at the school, namely Mable  
and Grace SMARCH. In the p.m. of the 22nd, the writer a  
2nd. Lieut. D.W. MOSIER, who had been detailed by Capitai  
as investigating Officer, to the school for the purpose  
viewing the two girls in question. We were accompanied  
ELLSON, Medical Officer for this Company. The girls wer  
by Captain ELLSON, Lieut. Mosier, and myself. The foll  
statements, in connection with this affair, were obtaine

Statement of Mable SIDNEY.  
BEGINS:-  
My name is Mable Sidney. I am 12 years old, and have  
ded the Chooutls Indian Residential School at Carcross for tw  
years. I have knowm and talked to five soldiers since the U.  
Army came to Carcross. Two of these soldiers were coloured.  
two soldiers have been over to see me several times. The last ti  
they came to see me was last night. They came about supper time  
to the girls dermitory. Grace Smarch let hm them in, and they  
in the attic over the girls dermitory. They stayed in the attic  
until about 9.00 o'clock, when Mrs. Davis, the Matron, locked th  
door to the girls dermitory. After the door was locked Grace  
and I went and got them out of the attic. They went to bed with  
Grace and myself, but we told them to stay on top of the  
They would not do so. I removed my day clothes and wen  
with one soldier. The soldier did not remove his clo  
talked for awhile. He wanted to make love to me, b  
want him to. He insisted. I got out of bed but he  
and pulled me back, so I got in bed with him, but  
him do anything, but I finally did let him make  
then put on my night clothes and we went to sle  
came in, and when he had left again the soldie  
The other soldier who had been in bed with Gr  
and then pushed Grace's bed under the trapd  
attic himself. Grace pushed the bed back  
the Police then came in and found the sol  
took them away. These soldiers had been  
with other girls. These girls are not  
the time we were in bed this soldier  
Several times he grasped my legs. He  
legs. He did not remove his clothes  
his pants and loosened his belt.  
moving up and down. He did not

Statement of Grace SMARCH.  
BEGINS:-  
My name is Grace Smarch.  
going to the Chooutls Indian R  
last fall. I knew two Americ  
soldiers. They have been in  
several times, with two of the  
school. The last time they we  
about supper time. Emma Sidna  
all the other girls had gone to  
girls dermitory before we went  
attic over the girls dermitory.  
Sidney and I were washing the su  
attic when we went back to the d  
Mrs. Davis, the matron, had locked  
about 9.00 o'clock. Mable told the  
ed with Mable and I. We told the  
CONTINUED ON

7) RCMP Document

(3)

Re: T/Cpl. Andrew JONES. No. 54078850. & Pte. James L. JAMES.  
No. 34108803. U.S. Army - Indecent Assault (292) CGC.  
Carcross, Y.T.

stopped by Cst. MacDonald. This incident was not mentioned in the original report submitted herein, as being unworthy of note. It was later brought out that JAMES had attempted to trip Cst. MacDonald. The writer did not witness this incident, but Mr. Grant did. There was no mention made of it at the time.

4. It would appear that the lightness of the sentences in these cases was due to the fact that it was impossible to get a straightforward story from Mable Sidney, Grace Smarch, and Emma Sidney, at the time of this Court Martial.

5. The witnesses in this case were, the three above named Indian children, The Rev. H.C.M. Grant, Katharine OKE, Cst. H.J. MacDonald, and the writer.

6. As this case has now been concluded, this file will be considered closed.  
CONVICTED. CONCLUDED.

The O.C., R.C.M.P.,  
"Q" Div., OTTAWA.

(D. Bolger) Reg. No. 12053.  
i/c, Carcross Detachment.

Cst.

Sir:

1. FORWARDED. CONCLUDED. Ottawa D.D. 10-10-43.

(SGD)  
(H.H. Cronkhite), Insp.  
Comdg. Whitehorse Sub-Division.

White, 7-10-43.

"Q" Div. 43 G 625-K 0

The Commissioner,  
R.C.M. Police,  
Ottawa.

1. Sir: FORWARDED 12-10-43. for your information.

2. The sentences imposed by the U.S. Court Martial upon Privates Jones and James are light but you will note that the reason for this is that it was impossible to get straightforward stories from the three Indian girls, namely, Mable Sidney, Grace Smarch, and Emma Sidney.

CONVICTED.  
CONCLUDED.

*D. J. Martin*  
D. J. Martin, Inspector,  
Officer Commanding, "Q" Division.

Indian Affairs (RG 10 Volume 6479, file 940-1, part 2)

## Appendix C: Chooutla Residential School : a visual essay



1911-1939 [explorenorth.com/library/history/choutla.html](http://explorenorth.com/library/history/choutla.html)

November 29, 1912

“Complaints were made that the pupils had not been receiving sufficient nourishment, and from that cause, they were developing tubercular troubles, and I found, upon investigation, that these complaints were, during the winter, well founded, and I found that the pupils were not receiving at the time of my visit, the nourishment to which they were entitled” (Inspector E. Stockton, Auditor General’s Office to Indian Affairs. IARG-10, vol. 6497, file 940-1, part 1).

## Things which Tourists should see in connection with the Church of England in Yukon—

CARCROSS—The Church  
The Indian Industrial School  
The old log residence of Bishop Bompas  
The grave of Bishop Bompas, first Bishop of Yukon

WHITEHORSE—The Log Church erected 1900

LITTLE SALMON—Church and Mission House (Indian Village)

CARMACKS—Church and Mission House

SELKIRK—Church erected 1892 and Mission House

DAWSON—St. Paul's Cathedral erected 1901 (the original log church built in 1897 has been removed)  
St. Paul's Hostel—the home for children living in isolated parts of the Territory

The residence of Bishop Stringer, second Bishop of the Diocese

MOOSEHIDE—Indian Village three miles below Dawson  
The Bishop Bompas Memorial Church

MAYO—Not on the regular tourist route  
St. Mary's Church and Rectory

ATLIN, B.C.—Not in Yukon Diocese but visited by many tourists.  
The Church of England is one of the most prominent buildings in Atlin.

BEN-MY-CHREE, B.C.—Not in Yukon Diocese but visited by many tourists. The home of Capt. and Mrs. Partridge where Church of England services are frequently held.

The Church of England has many other centres of work in Yukon not on the regular routes taken by tourists. Work is carried on at Teslin and Champagne Landing in the Southern part of the Diocese, while in the Northern part missions are established among the Indians of the Porcupine and Peel Rivers, and among the Eskimo of the Arctic Coast.

Northern Lights May 1924 Chooutla Residential school was also a tourist destination

August 26, 1926

“There is a good deal of criticism, both among whites and Indians, regarding the unsatisfactory state of affairs. The Bishop of [the] Yukon visited the school recently, he wrote me saying, you will find things at the school unsatisfactory. I hope you may be able to do something to straighten up matters” (J. Hawksley, Indian Superintendent to J. McLean at Indian Affairs. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1).

July 9, 1929

In June, a visit was made to the above school. The school was on vacation owing to an epidemic of illness which has been prevalent since the beginning of the year, when all the pupils and staff were victims of influenza which has been followed by an epidemic of septic pneumonia resulting in the death of two pupils” (J. Hawksley to Indian Affairs. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1).

February 5, 1931

“Letters received by Agent Reed are to the effect that the children at the school are not taken proper care of, are poorly clad, deprived of sufficient food, neglected as to their health and not properly supervised as to their moral conduct. It is further stated that the older female pupils are allowed their freedom in Carcross where they associate with white lads in the white community” (W. Ditchburn, BC Indian



Commissioner to the Department of Indian Affairs. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 1).



April 17, 1939. ([explorenorth.com/library/history/choutla.html](http://explorenorth.com/library/history/choutla.html) )

February 5, 1940

“I might mention that at the time of the fire a considerable number of articles that were taken out of the burning buildings were carried off by the onlookers....Articles that the men on the staff were sure had been taken out of the buildings could not be found and the only conclusion that could be arrived at was that they were stolen by the Indians.” (H. Grant, Principal of Carcross Residential School to Superintendent of Indian Affairs. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).



**Temporary quarters for Chooutla/Carcross Indian School 1939-1953**

September 30, 1942

“Certain developments have made it clear to me that some action should be taken. These are: The increase incidence of communicable disease due to the large influx of population. The occurrence of an epidemic of measles at the school and in which every child was affected with but one exception. There has been one fatality due to

the epidemic. The lack of skilled nursing personnel and the increasing difficulty of keeping a nurse at the school under the present living condition. Under the present arrangements the school does not remotely satisfy the usually accepted standards of sanitation. The dormitories are overcrowded, the water supply is unprotected and the lavatories and toilets are wholly inadequate [for these reasons] I, Frederick Burns Roth M.D., Medical Health Officer, Whitehorse Yukon, declare that the buildings of the Chooutla Indian School at Carcross, Yukon are unfit for use as a residential school for Indians and notice is hereby given that suitable other arrangements shall be made prior To October 31, 1942” ( Chief Medical Officer F. Roth to Indian Agent J. Gibben. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).

November 11, 1942

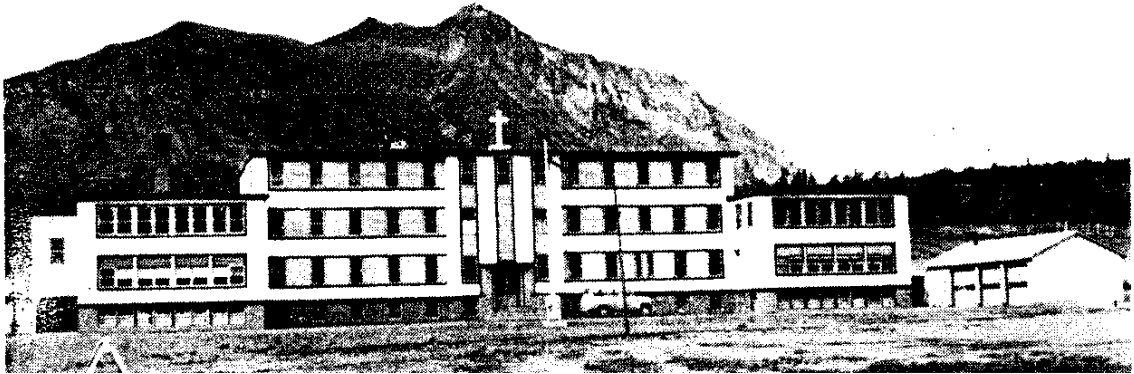
“Nothing can be now done until next summer about moving the Carcross School. By March next we should be in a better position to judge what the year 1943 will be bringing to us in[the] Yukon and I should then like to submit to you a definite proposal regarding this school for the duration of the war” (Bishop Geddes to Dr. McGill, Indian Affairs Branch,. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).

May 10, 1943

“As a result of certain negotiations, however, the medical officer agreed to the operation of the school on the understanding that the pupils would be reduced from 40 to 20, and the enrolment at this school has remained at the lower figure to this date” (Memorandum from R. Gibson, Director of Lands, Parks and Forests Branch. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).

September 1, 1945

“Principal Carcross Indian School advises he has over sixty applications for admission requests departmental authorization to be increased from fifty to sixty for ensuing term recommended advise Barnes Clerk Dawson” (Indian Agent J. Gibben telegram to Secretary of Indian Affairs. IARG-10, vol. 6479, file 940-1, part 2).



The new Chooutla Residential School 1953-1969. (Northern Lights, September 1962)

...a far cry from the simple little school house conducted by William Carpenter Bompas so many years ago! And the aims and objects remain the same...each spring

the children make a pilgrimage to the grave of Bishop Bompas at Carcross Cemetery, bearing wildflowers and their gratitude to the great scholar who was responsible for their opportunities today ( Northern Lights September 1, 1962).

## Appendix D:

### Letter of Approval from Tahltan Central Council



Tahltan Central Council  
P.O. Box 69  
Dease Lake B.C VOC 1LO  
Office: (250) 771-3274  
Fax: (250) 771-3020

Monday, March 23, 2009

Anglican Church of Canada  
Cliff Armstrong, Archivist,  
Prince Rupert, B.C.

Dear Mr. Armstrong;

RE: George Kaufmann access to Anglican Church Collection

The Tahltan Central Council is aware of the project of MA student George Kaufmann of Simon Fraser University Education Faculty. We ask that you make available to George Kaufmann any archival materials that relate to Tahltan peoples from the Anglican Church Collection at Prince Rupert, as well as in other locations.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Arnold Callbreath".

Arnold Callbreath, Vice-Chair  
Tahltan Central Council.

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