

Battleford Industrial Residential School

Battleford Indian Industrial School (1883-1914) was located at Battleford, on Treaty 6 land. The school was set up in the Old Government House, which previously served as the residence of the lieutenant-governor (Edward Dewdney) when Battleford was the Territorial capital of the North-west Territories in what is now Saskatchewan. During the Northwest Resistance, the school was damaged and evacuated (1885-1886). Battleford Industrial School was operated by the Anglican Church of Canada and later, in 1895, the Diocese of Saskatchewan took over operations.



*After the rebellion in 1885 those taking part were brought to trial. Some, such as Poundmaker and Big Bear, were sent to jail. Eight were hung. **The day the hangings took place all the Indian students at the Battleford Industrial School were taken out to witness the event.** The reason for this was to remind them what would happen if one made trouble with the crown and to provide a lasting reminder of the white man's power and authority...Click to read more (Source: SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN JULY 1972)*



A cairn erected at the Battleford Industrial School was placed at the cemetery in 1975 after a total of 72 graves were excavated at the school by Archaeology students and staff from the University of Saskatchewan during the summer of 1974. (Ben Feist)

Gazette reports that parents don't want to send their children to Battleford Industrial School owing to ill treatment of a boy from Onion Lake at that institution. Hayter Reed November 13, 1886

September 30, 1886.

In a report dated the 18th instant your interview had by a correspondent of the Montreal Gazette with Farming Instructor Mann at Onion Lake the following appears ...

p. 2

I have to request that you will, if the facts are not already known to you, make careful inquiry into the [—] and refute what foundation, if any there is for the allegation that an Indian boy from Onion Lake was treated in the manner alleged by the Indians and the reasons for the same.

September 25, 1886

“Have you got a school here?": No, but the Indians are anxious to get one. Owing to the alleged ill-treatment of an Indian boy at the Battleford Industrial school a few years ago, parents here object to sending their children to Battleford.

“What is the treatment you referred to?”

“The Indians say the boy alluded to, not conducting himself to the taste of the master's fancy, he was turned out of doors to live as best he could or die. The boy roamed about Battleford for months and finally got here.”

Statement of Charles No 20, a pupil of Battleford

“I left the Industrial School at the time of the outbreak of the late rebellion and joined Poundmakers [sic] band. After the Rebellion was over I returned to Battleford and worked for a Halfbreed for a time, and when I left him I worked for Smith the baker and this summer I went up to Fort Pitt and stayed there nine days and returned to Battleford, and have been here since last fall, the Rev. Clarke wanted me to return to the School but I did not return, during the time that I was at the school I was never ill treated by the teacher. I did not see Mr. Mann the Instructor at Fort Pitt nor did I ever state to him that i had been illtreated [sic] during my time at the school. I am now working for the Hudsons Bay Company, and getting \$35.00 per month and board. I am now eighteen years of age.”

A letter of acknowledging receipt of letter regarding Agent Mann's interview with the Gazette correspondent and his request to Mr. McKay to procure a statement from the young man in question. October 26, 1886

Explanations form the Acting Indian Agent

...It will be noticed that while Mr. Mann makes the statement he does so on Indian authority. If we are not mistaken in the identity of the youth referred to—and we are pretty sure we are not—there is another and very different side to the story. Charlie, whom we take to be the lad spoken of, was one of those who deserted from the school just before the outbreak and joined Poundmaker in his picnic on the plains. At the time of the surrender he came into town and took employment as a teamster—an occupation that he might yet be following had he not, Indian like, got tired of steady work and wandered off to his former home. He was then between seventeen and eighteen years of age—altogether too old to enter the Industrial School.

[HISTORY OF BATTLEFORD INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL FOR INDIANS \(https://ecommons.usask.ca/handle/10388/etd-03132008-114104\)](https://ecommons.usask.ca/handle/10388/etd-03132008-114104)

A Thesis by Walter Julian Wasylow (1972)



*Truth and Reconciliation Commission in North Battleford Sept. 10 and 11 – See more at:
<http://www.newsoptimist.ca/news/local-news/truth-and-reconciliation-commission-in-north-battleford-sept-10-and-11-1.1555279#sthash.JnPWoFMu.dpuf>*



Principal Clark, Archdeacon McKay, Rev. E. K Matheson

*Canon Rev. Edward K. Matheson,
Saskatchewan's first graduate:
Being a history of the development
of the Church of England in north-
western Saskatchewan. Battleford,
Sask.: Canadian North-West
Historical Society, 1927. Click to
read*



Alexander "Alex" Decoteau



Rev. Thomas Clarke

I consider it highly important that a proper system of protection be adopted, similar to that at Le Appelle and St. Pauls. The cost will be about \$700. and I enclose memorandum giving the items of the equipment necessary to carry out the design, and request authority therefor.

I find that a proper system of drainage from the main building is indispensable in order to obviate the possibility of an epidemic. This can be effected at a cost of about \$200. Memo of estimate herewith.

The children are in need of a house where they can assemble in wet or inclement weather. At present when they have to remain indoors, they must be kept in their class rooms and the noises they make are intolerable and the wear and tear to the floors and stairs excessive. I would urge that authority be given me to expend a sum approximating to \$800. in the erection of a detached building to be used as a recreation and play-room, with a small gymnasium at one end.

It is still my idea to build a detached dwelling for the Principal at a cost, I find, of \$200 less than I at first estimated.

The total expenditure on the above will be well under the amount granted by Parliament.

I have the honor to be,
 Sir,
 Yours etc. Tennant,
 Hayter Street
 Comm^r

Poor drainage – risk of epidemic.

Posted by Ron C. Johnston to SASKATCHEWAN MEMORIES Facebook page

Residential school graveyard may become heritage site. Battlefords Now

History of a building (submitted by Frank Korvemaker):

The transformation of Government House into a residential school saw an enlargement of the building, plus the conversion of the roof into a series of bedrooms on the second floor. Here is a quick visual evolution of the building from its construction in 1876-77 until its destruction by fire in 2003

Gov. Hse in 1876-77 (Parks Canada photo)

Indian Residential School, 1880s



Indian Residential School, 1890s, with major addition to the left of the arrow. (Sask. Archives photo.)

Renovated by Seventh Day Adventists (photo c1930); most of the windows were repositioned at this time



Destruction by vandals, 7 June 2003 (photos by Menno Fieguth)

Destruction by vandals, 7 June 2003 (photos by Menno Fieguth)

Stabilized ruins of the 2003 fire. Government of Saskatchewan, Photo by Calvin Fehr, 2004

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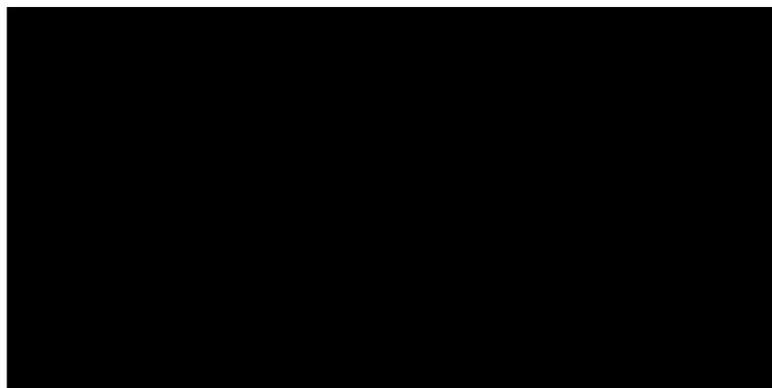
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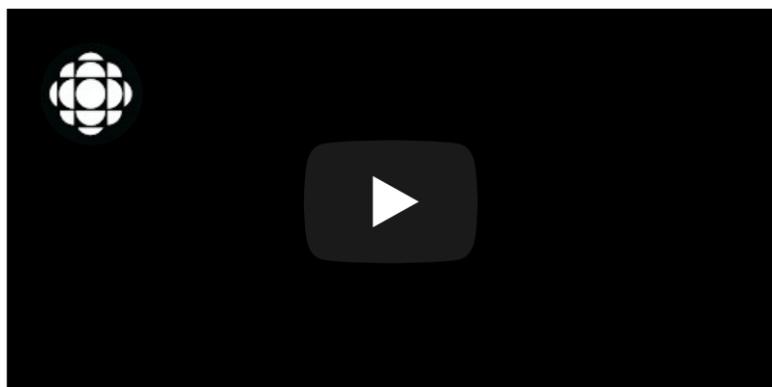
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SASKATCHEWAN INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS

WE WERE CHILDREN (NFB)



STOLEN CHILDREN | RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SURVIVORS SPEAK OUT



“There is no concept of justice in Cree culture. The nearest word is kintohpatatin, which loosely translates to “you’ve been listened to.” But kintohpatatin is richer than justice – really it means you’ve been listened to by someone compassionate and fair, and your needs will be taken seriously.”

– [Edmund Metatawabin](#), [Up Ghost River: A Chief's Journey Through the Turbulent Waters of Native History](#)

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