Truth and Reconciliation in Canada

100 YEARS OF LOSS

THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN CANADA

From the early 1830s to 1996, thousands of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis children were forced to attend residential schools in an attempt to aggressively assimilate them into the dominatnt culture. Many of the major events of the residential schoo lera are shown here. Visit www.legacyofhopehope.ca for a comprehensive timeline and to learn more about the history and legacy of the Residential School System.

1620

The Recollets—a religious order from France—establish the first residential school, near Quebec City.

1763
The Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued by the British Crown, acknowledges Aboriginal ownership of, "...not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them."

1831

Mohawk Indian Residential School opens in Brantford, Ontario.

1844

The Bagot Commission recommends the establishment of manual labour schools for Aboriginal children.

1857

The Gradual Civilization Act requires that all Indian males over the age of 21 who can speak, read, and write English or French will be "enfranchised," meaning that they must renounce their Indian status and become a British subject.

1867

The Constitution Act (also known as the British North America Act) creates the Dominion of Canada which includes Ontario, Quebec, Nova Brunswick, and Nova Scotia.

1872

The Dominion Lands Act encourages European settlement in the prairie provinces by giving 160 acres of land away to any settler who will build a homestead on the land and cultivate at least 40 acres.

1876
The Indian Act is enacted and gives government exclusive right to create legislation regarding Indians and Indian lands. This act identifies who is an Indian and establishes related legal rights.

1879

The Davin Report recommends the creation of a system of industrial schools where children are intentionally separated from their parents to reduce the influence of the "Indian."

1883

Following recommendations made in the Davin Report, Sir John A. Macdonald authorizes creation of residential schools in the Canadian West.

1884

Amendment to the Indian Act—traditional Indian ceremonies, such as the potlatches and the Sun Dance, are prohibited.

1889
Allegations emerge of physical and sexual abuse at Rupert's Land School in Selkirk, Manitoba.

1892

The federal government and certain Christian churches enter into a formal agreement to operate residential schools.

1896
Forty-five residential industrial schools are operating in Canada.

By 1905

Manitoba, British Columbia, Prince Edward Island, Alberta, and Saskatchewan had joined the Dominion of Canada. Newfoundland joins in 1949.

1906
Amendment to the Indian Act—Aboriginal peoples can be removed from reserves near towns with more than 8,000 inhabitants.

1907

Medical Inspector for Indian Affairs, Dr. Fri. Bryce, reports that health conditions in the residential schools are a "national crime."

1914

Amendment to the Indian Act—western Aboriginals must seek official permission before appearing in Aboriginal "costume" in any public dance, show, exhibition, stampede, or pageant.

1920

Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, makes residential school attendance "compulsory for children between the ages of 7 and 15."

1927
Amendment to the Indian Act—soliciting funds for Aboriginal legal claims without permission is made illegal.

1939
The Supreme Court of Canada determines that Inuit are to be "classified" as Indian and governed by the Indian Act.

1940s

The federal government begins to apply provincial curriculum standards to residential schools and to integrate Aboriginal students into regular schools.

1951
Major revisions are made to the Indian Act—women are allowed to participate in band democracy, prohibitions on traditional Aboriginal practices and ceremonies are removed.

1955

The federal government expands the system of residential schools and hostels for Inuit students in the North.

1958

Indian Affairs regional inspectors recommend abolition of residential schools.

1960
Approximately 10,000 students are attending 60 schools across the country.

1961
Amendment to the Indian Act—Aboriginals can vote without having to give up their Indian status.

1969
The government of Pierre Trudeau presents a policy statement—the "White Paper"—that would end the special relationship between Indians and the federal government.

1979
Roughly 3,200 children are enrolled at 12 residential schools across Canada.

1977

The Berger Inquiry (final report released in 1977) into the proposed Mackenzie Valley pipeline recommends a new precedent for relations between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian governments.

1982

The Constitution Act is amended and now recognizes and affirms the rights of "Indian, Inuit, and Métis" peoples of Canada."

1986-1994

The United Church, the Catholic Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate, the Anglican Church, and the Presbyterian Church issue formal apologies for their participation in the Residential School System.

1990

The Oka Resistance (or Siege of Oka, Quebec, began on March 11, based on records. It was the first in a series of violent conflicts in the late 20th century between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian government.

1991
Phil Fontaine, later the Regional Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), speaks publicly about the abuse he suffered at residential school.

1991
The Canada Indian Council publishes "The Circle of the Residential School" which contributes to the framework for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

1995
Ashley Henry, First Nations survivor of the Alberta Indian Residential School system, receives $12,000 in damages against students, and is sentenced to 11 years in prison.

1996
The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples releases a 4,000-page report calling for a global inquiry into the effects of residential schools, called "generations of Lost Peoples."

1996
The last federally-run residential school in the Gordon Indian Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan closes.

1998
The federal government issues "Gathering Strength: Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan which is "designed to renew the relationships with Aboriginal peoples of Canada." The Aboriginal Healing Foundation is established to manage a $350 million healing fund over ten years.

1999

Formerly part of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, meaning "our land" in Inuktitut, becomes Canada's third and largest territory.

2005
Cindy Blackstock, Chief Executive Officer of the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society of Canada, launches a class action lawsuit against the Government of Canada over the funding of First Nations child welfare.

2006
The federal government, legal representatives of former students, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives, and churches sign the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). The IRSSA is contentious in some, and does not represent Survivors of all schools.

2008
As part of the IRSSA, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) is launched.

2008

Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologizes on behalf of Canada to Survivors of the Canadian School System.

2009

Prime Minister Kevin Rudd of Australia issues an apology to residential school students during a private meeting with Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

2010
The Truth and Reconciliation Commission hosts its first seven national events in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

2011
The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops continues to refuse to issue a formal apology.

"We want to take back our education and teach our children, our language and our culture. We have a right to tell our story—our history—and we want to tell it in our own words to the country. We have never given up hope that we will one day see the Spirit of Reconciliation and Healing touch the hearts of all Canadians."

Legacy of Hope Foundation

Timeline used with thanks to the Legacy of Hope Foundation's *100 Years of Loss - The Residential School System in Canada project.*
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a place of mind
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