

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 dominant culture. Many of the major events of the residential school era are shown here. Visit www.legacyofhope.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 Québec City.

1844



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

1763

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

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.

1831



Mohawk Indian Residential School opens in Brantford, Ontario.

1867



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

4 **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.

1883

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

1884

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

1889

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

1879

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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 "wigwam".

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First Nations and Métis, including Louis Riel, Gabriel Dumont, Poundmaker, and Big Bear, fight for the recognition of land and treaty rights in Saskatchewan. Riel and other leaders are hanged for treason. Poundmaker, Big Bear and others are imprisoned.

1896

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

1892



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

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.

1906

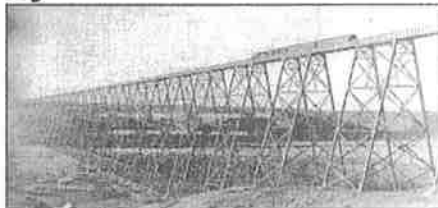
Amendment to the *Indian Act*—Aboriginal peoples can be removed from reserves near towns with more than 8,000 inhabitants.

1907



Medical Inspector for Indian Affairs, Dr. P.H. Bryce, reports that health conditions in the residential schools are a “national crime.”

By 1905



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

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

14



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

1958

16



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.

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

15



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

1969

The partnership between the government and churches ends, and the federal government takes over the Residential School System. Transfer of control of the schools to Indian bands begins.

1979

Roughly 1,200 children are enrolled in 12 residential schools across Canada.

1977

17



The Berger Inquiry final report recommends no gas pipeline be built until land claims are settled, setting a new precedent for relations between Aboriginal Peoples and the federal government.

1982

18



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

1990

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The Oka Crisis, between the Mohawk Nation and the town of Oka, Quebec, began on March 11, lasted six months. It was the first in a series of violent conflicts in the late 20th century between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian government.

1995

Arthur Henry Plint, former supervisor of the Alberni Indian residential school pleads guilty to 16 counts of indecent assault against students, and is sentenced to 11 years in prison.

1991

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

1986-1994

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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.

The Cariboo Tribal Council publishes "The Impact of the Residential School" which contributes to the framework for the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

1999



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

1996

The *Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples* is released. It calls for a public inquiry into the effects of residential schools upon generations of First Peoples.

2005

AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine announces a class action lawsuit against the Government of Canada over the legacy of the residential schools.

1996

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

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 to some, and does not represent Survivors of all schools.

1998



The federal government issues *Gathering Strength: Canada’s Aboriginal Action Plan* which is “designed to renew the relationship with Aboriginal people of Canada.” The Aboriginal Healing Foundation is established to manage a \$350 million healing fund over ten years.

2008

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

2008

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

2009

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Pope Benedict XVI expresses "sorrow" about the abuse of residential school students during a private meeting with Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

"We want to take back our education and teach our history, our language and our culture. We have begun to tell our story—our history—and we want to tell it in our own words to the world, so that this will never happen to any of the other nations in the world."

-Shirley Williams, Survivor

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2010

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission hosts its first national event, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

2011

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



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