

This narrative history of a Residential School was researched and produced by the Government of Canada as part of its response to litigation and the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation has not verified the content of this document. It is provided here for reference purposes only. Documented incidents of sexual and physical abuse are based on the documentary record and do not take into account survivor testimony.



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Akaitcho Hall
Residence Narrative
November 8, 2005

This School Narrative summarizes documents that provide an over-view of the history and administration of the school.

NAME OF SCHOOL AND VARIANTS

- 1958 Akaitcho Hostel (AHU-000016[002-002])
Yellowknife Hostel (AHU-000014[000-000])
1959 Akaitcho Hall (AHU-000004[000-000])

RELATED DAY SCHOOLS

Sir John Franklin Federal Day School and Vocational School
Variant Names: Yellowknife Federal Composite High School and Vocational School
(AHU-000013[000-000])
Yellowknife High School (AHU-000014[000-000])

The school consisted of grades 10-12 and a vocational program (AHU-000022[000-000]). The school was built and managed co-operatively with Akaitcho Hall. Akaitcho Hall was the residence for all grade school and vocational students attending Sir John Franklin who were in need of accommodation. The Principal of the school was the general overseer of operations at the school and Hostel while the Hostel Administrator directly managed the hostel. (AHU-000014[000-000]; (AHU-000012[002-015])

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

- 1958 Yellowknife School and Hostel completed July 7, 1958. (AHU-000017[000-000])
- 1958 Akaitcho Hall opened for the 1958-59 school year. The first student resident arrived on August 29, 1958. Services offered in the hostel included: Student Council, guidance and counseling, and gym activities. (AHU-000005[000-002])
- 1959 The document titled "Sir John Franklin School, Yellowknife Statement of Duties" states the following about the role of the hostel in relation to the school:

The hostel is an essential part of the composite arrangement in Yellowknife. It is, however, not an integral part of the school. It exists for one purpose only: to provide a place where out-of-town students can live; and generally afford a "home" while they are attending school. It is not designed for and would not be provided for Yellowknife students and their relationship to it must be governed at all times by the interests solely of the out-of-town students. (AHU-000012[002-015])

- 1960 Inspection of Food Services Report details the condition of the kitchen and dining facilities as well as commenting on food preparation, diet, hygiene, and living conditions. The report states that there are four students residing in each room. Recreational activities provided in the residence are basketball, pool, ping-pong, and hockey. At this time there were two boys' supervisors and one girls' supervisor. (AHU-000002[001-001])
- 1965 The Food Services Report states that there is a staff of approximately 20 at Akaitcho Hall. The hostel received a favourable report on diet and food preparation with some recommendations. (AHU-000011[001-002])
- 1965 Seven dormitory supervisors, classified as Teachers' aides, were employed at the hostel. (AHU-000006[000-000])
- 1966 The Food Services Report delivers a favourable report on the diet and food preparation at the hostel with minor recommendations. (AH-173218G)
- 1969 Akaitcho Hall has a Residence Student Committee appointed by the Residence Superintendent, Mr. Boxer. The committee consists of "30 boys and girls of which 14 are white, 8 are Indian, 4 are Eskimo, and 4 are Metis." There is also a sub-committee on rules review which consists of "3 boys and 3 girls which are as follows: 2 Indians and 4 Whites." (AHU-000009[000-000])
- 1970 Letter indicates that the residence in Yellowknife is still operational.¹ (AH-00531)

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL

Dates managed by Church

This residence was not managed by any religious organization.

Dates managed by Federal Government

Circa 1955 An undated article details the plans for the 1955 student residence construction program in the NWT. In reference to the planned construction of hostels in communities including Yellowknife it states:

At Yellowknife the plans call for a non-denominational hostel to be operated by the Government to accommodate children from outlying areas who will attend the Federal vocational school and high school."

¹We do not have specific information indicating the closing date of this institution. This document is the latest dated document in our current collection indicating that Akaitcho Hall was open at this time. Further research is currently in progress.

The hostels would be built and owned by the federal government who would pay all costs for the education of Native and Inuit students as it is stated that “they are a federal responsibility.” (NWT 000539[000-000])

Dates taken over by Government of the Northwest Territory

1969 A government memorandum states: “On November 15 you were advised of the seven Northern Administration Residences would be transferred to the Territorial Government by April 1, 1969.” [NWT-000221[000-000]]

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

1957 The contract for the construction of the school and hostel in Yellowknife was awarded to Burns and Dutton Concrete and Construction Co., Ltd. from Edmonton, Alberta. (AHU-000023[000-000])

1957 A Memorandum from the federal government details the construction program for the student residences intended to replace the Church-owned residences. A list of hostels that are in various staged of planning and construction states:

Yellowknife-1 hostel, non-denominational, for 100 children of all racial groups in the northern part of the Territories, requiring high school or vocational training. (NWT 000023[000-000])

1958 Akaitcho Hall consists of two buildings. The Dormitory (90'x140') is of one-storey construction and has 37 rooms facilitating 120 resident students, an infirmary, and staff quarters. Thirty-five rooms, the dining room, playroom, and staff quarters are housed in the Hostel (60'x180'). (AHU-000014[000-000])

1958/59 The proposed school program for Sir John Franklin (Yellowknife Composite High School and Vocational School) includes a description of the hostel facilities:

Hostel - This is in two different buildings (service building and dormitory) with connecting corridors. The hostel service building has the following facilities:

- Kitchen and refrigeration space
- Dining room and recreation room (These rooms are separated from each other by movable folding partitions to enable these two rooms to be combined or to vary in size)
- Staff dining room and lounge (These 2 rooms are separated by folding partitions to enable them to be used as one large room)
- Medical examination room

- Quiet study room
- Nurse's office
- Hostel Supervisor's office
- Laundry and sorting room
- Janitor's workshop
- Sewing room
- Staff bedroom
- Staff common room

The hostel dormitory building consists of twenty-six bedrooms for students and trainees (4 to each room). There are movable partitions in the corridors to enable separation of the students' rooms by sex into different areas in this dormitory. A typical student's room has four maple bunk beds, clothes closets with metal folding doors, individual built-in study desks with individual book shelves and lamps. Areas of the dormitory include:

- Girls' and Boys' infirmary
- Girls' and Boys' lounge
- Bedrooms for male and female supervisor

Standard facilities such as boys' and girls' washrooms, staff washrooms, heater rooms and locker rooms are provided in each of the different buildings. (AHU000013[000-000])

1959 The plaque on the entrance of the schools reads:

Akaitcho Hall

Built by the Government of Canada in co-operation with the Government of the Northwest Territories. (AHU-000004[000-000])

1959/60 The Education Program for this school year states this about "The residence - Akaitcho Hall (Yellowknife)":

This consists of a Service Building with hostel offices, recreation rooms, medical rooms, laundry, kitchen, dining room, staff bedroom, staff common room and student study room - together with boys' room and girls' dormitories each with washrooms, infirmaries, lounge and supervisor's room.

It is also states that it is capable of accommodating 100 pupils. (NWT 000416[000-000])

LAND

- 1958 The Federal Hostel in the town of Yellowknife is in the Mackenzie District of the Northwest Territories. (NWT 000714[000-000])
- 1958 The Yellowknife High School and Hostel (Sir John Franklin and Akaitcho Hall) were constructed on the same property and in close proximity to each other. (AHU-000014[000-000])

PHOTOS, PLANS AND OTHER MEDIA

Item #	Date	Description
AHU-000002[001-001]	1960	Sketches of Girls' Dormitory, Kitchen, Dining Room and Recreation Area
AHU-000014[000-000]	1958	Photographs of Hostel and School construction

GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

Year	Number of Students
undated	200 residents
1959	65 residents
1960	enrollment number limited to 104
1961	114 residents: Indian:31, Eskimo:39, Other:44
1965	170 residents, ages 15-21
1966 - March	170 residents
1966	average number of residents 297, capacity 250

STUDENTS FROM OTHER RESERVES

Students from, at least the following bands and/or locations resided at Akaitcho Hall student residence:

Aklavik
Eastern Arctic
Fort MacPherson
Fort Norman
Fort Resolution
Fort Simpson

Good Hope

Hay River
Fort Smith
Yellowknife "B".
Tuktoyaktuk

There may be alternate ways of spelling these names.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

1965 A Memorandum, from the federal government, on a training program for administrators and supervisors of pupil residences states:

The staffs of all the large pupil residences in the Mackenzie District, except Akaitcho Hall, are employees of the churches, Roman Catholic and Anglican.

Akaitcho Hall was owned and operated by the federal government and was not under the operation of a religious organization. (NWT 000546[000-000])

1966 Otto Tucker's report on the relationship of the Church and State summarizes the history of discussions between the federal government and Bishop Piche regarding Piche's desire for a Roman Catholic wing in the hostel. The correspondence reveals the reason that Akaitcho Hall was non-denominational and not operated by a religious group:

...church operated hostels were simply to be those which in effect replaced residential schools that had previously existed; as Yellowknife did not have a residential school at the time the new program was introduced and since the churches had agreed to the non-sectarian principle for Akaitcho Hall, Bishop Piche's request could not be granted. (NWT 006010[000-000])

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

There are no written agreements for this residence as it was owned and operated directly by the federal government and was later transferred to the territorial government

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse at Akaitcho Hall or of any convicted abusers present at the residence.

The following suggestions of abuse, listed chronologically, comprise all known identifiable complaints and/or allegations received by government officials and all available information regarding the follow-up and outcome.

Incidents (Sexual)

1962 A federal government memorandum states that a claim of sexual abuse had been made against a boys' supervisor at Akaitcho Hall. The document states:

Several months ago Mr. Templeton [a government administrator] received a verbal warning from a prominent Yellowknife citizen. One of the boys' supervisors at Akaitcho Hall was reputed to be guilty of Immoral conduct towards or with boys at Akaitcho Hall dormitory. Did the Administration know about this and if so what would be done about it? ...

Mr. Templeton took this matter up with Mr. McBeath, the School Principal [of Sir John Franklin School] and with Mr. Boxer [the Hostel Administrator]. Both men were much shaken and taken completely by surprise. After carrying out checks and an investigation, which I understand was done as discreetly as possible, a report was made to Mr. Templeton. The report completely exonerated the supervisor in question.

During a recent trip Mr. Gillie [Administrator of the Mackenzie] heard a further rumour regarding the same supervisor at Akaitcho Hall. Reference was made to a police investigation, and this reference came from Mr. McCowan [a government administrator] in Hay River. Mr. Gillie made further checks in Yellowknife and on return to Fort Smith mentioned the matter to me. In reviewing all information we had it appeared that the flare-up of rumour in Hay River could possibly have emanated from the questions which Mr. McBeath and Mr. Boxer would have been forced to have made last spring. On checking with Inspector Doey, R.C.M.P., I verified that no such situation had come to the attention of the R.C.M.P. in Yellowknife and that no police investigation has been made.

The supervisor in question is not named in this document. (AHU-000001[000-000])

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Medical Information

1958 Medical and dental examinations were performed. The Hostel Superintendent, was given the authority to arrange emergency medical and dental treatment. (AHU-000021[000-000])

Policies

1959 The Hostel Superintendent is authorized to provide a weekly allowance of \$2.00 to students who are indigent and in need. (AHU-000018[000-000])

1959/60 The Akaitcho Hall Regulations manual details the roles and responsibilities of each staff position and the rules and regulations to be followed by the resident students. The regulations include student work duties, dormitory and cafeteria conduct and rules, and general personal conduct guidelines. The weekday and weekend daily schedules state the programs and required tasks for each day of the week. (AHU-000020[000-000])

1965 All students in residence at Akaitcho Hall are over the age of 16 and therefore are not “legal children”. The hostel administration recognizes that it does not have the legal authority to force students that want to remain in Yellowknife for the summer to return to their home communities. The hostel also does not have the legal authority to force students to remain in residence at the hostel. (AHU-000007[000-001])

Other

1966 Akaitcho Hall had problems recruiting and keeping staff to such an extent that it threatened the operation of the hostel. “During the past two years we have been plagued with a steady turn over of supervisory staff at Akaitcho Hall and for long periods have operated without adequate staff.” (AHU-000010[000-000])

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

1959 The Superintendent has immediate and direct control of the operation of the hostel and of its internal management in all respects. He is to report to the Chief Superintendent of Schools through the Principal (of Sir John Franklin School), and the Principal has general overview of the hostel operation. (AHU-000012[002-015])

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
A.J. Boxer	Administrator/Superintendent	1958, 1959, 1961, 1965, 1966, 1969

Documentary evidence gives no indication that Mr. Boxer’s tenure as hostel Superintendent was not continuous from the opening date of Akaitcho Hall until the latest document in which his name appears. Almost no documents are available for Akaitcho Hall after 1969.

The original school narrative document produced by Canada also contains a number of records that have been separated pending review.



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