

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.



You are welcome to contact the NCTR if you wish to add, comment on, or challenge any versions of the history presented herein.

**Alberni IRS**  
**School Narrative**  
March 25, 2004

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

**NAME OF SCHOOL AND VARIANTS**

- **Alberni Girls Home** [# 01113] 1893 - 1896  
**Indian Girls Home, Alberni** [# 02058]  
(Documents are unable to confirm the name of this school between 1897 and 1898)
  
- **Presbyterian Boarding School** [# 00737] 1899 - 1966  
**Alberni Boarding School** [# 00783]  
**Alberni Industrial Home** [# 07030]  
**Indian Residential School, Alberni** [# 00696]  
**Alberni Indian Residential School** [# 10121]  
**Alberni Residential School** [# 01811]  
**Alberni School** [# 00762A]  
**Alberni Indian Boarding School** [# 01814]
  
- **Alberni Indian Student Residence** [# 10020] 1967 - 1973  
**Alberni Student Residence** [# 00310]

**CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY**

- |                    |                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|--------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1893               | Alberni Girls Home was open at least as early as 1893 [# 01113]<br>(Some educational activities appear to have occurred in Alberni prior to 1893 but documents are unable to confirm this) |
| 1917, June 2       | Alberni Boarding School destroyed by fire [# 00689]                                                                                                                                        |
| 1920, December 1   | Opening of re-built Alberni Boarding School [# 00694]                                                                                                                                      |
| 1937, February 21  | Alberni Residential School destroyed by fire [# 00701]                                                                                                                                     |
| 1937, September 1  | One-room Alberni Indian Day School opened [# 06959]                                                                                                                                        |
| 1940, September 23 | Alberni Residential School re-opened [# 02056]                                                                                                                                             |
| 1940               | Coqualeetza IRS closed, transferring to Alberni IRS some staff, pupils and equipment [# 02987, # 00719, # 02057]                                                                           |
| 1940               | Alberni Indian Day School closed [# 01800]                                                                                                                                                 |
| 1941, February 18  | Classroom building of the AIRS destroyed by fire [# 02970A, # 00982]                                                                                                                       |

- 1941, February 21 Official opening of the re-built Alberni Indian Residential School [# 02057]
- 1947 Alberni Indian Day School re-opened [# 06951]
- 1950 Alberni Indian Day School closed [# 06947]
- 1950 Alberni school board agreed to provide room for senior high school students from AIRS [No document #, letter dated June 23, 1958]
- 1957, September Grades 7, 8 and 9 from AIRS admitted to A.W. Neill Junior High School [# 01862]
- 1964 Grades 4, 5 and 6 transferred to provincial schools [# 10121]
- 1965 Grades 1, 2 and 3 transferred to provincial schools [# 00383]
- 1973, August 31 Alberni Student Residence closed, building and land transferred to West Coast District Council of Indian Chiefs [# 01079A, # 00438A, 07364]
- 1975 West Coast District Council of Indian Chiefs stops use of land and buildings as their administrative office [# 06372]
- 1980 Land and buildings transferred to the Tsahaheh Indian Reserve No.1 at request of Sheshaht Band Council Resolution [# 10200]

## **MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL**

### **Dates managed by Church**

From its inception in at least 1893, until March 31, 1969, the Presbyterian Church and then the United Church managed the Alberni Indian Residential School.

- 1911 Agreement for the Operation of a School, between His Majesty the King, represented by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs of Canada and the Reverend R.P. MacKay, D.D., Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. April 1, 1911 [# 00614]
- 1962 Agreement for the Operation of Alberni Indian Residential School, between Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and the United Church of Canada. June 22, 1962 [# 00333]

### **Dates managed by Government**

From April 1, 1969 until its closure in August 1973, the school was administered by the government.

## SCHOOL BUILDINGS

- 1893 A building which accommodated 10 boarders existed [# 01104]
- 1894 A "School House" was constructed to function as a classroom [# 01124]
- 1895 A larger building was constructed to accommodate more students in residence [# 00733]
- 1904 An addition to the school was built [# 00738]
- 1917, June 2 The school was destroyed by fire [# 00689]
- 1919/20 A new school was constructed [# 01962, # 00749]
- 1923/24 A barn was constructed and completed at Alberni Boarding School [# 01033], as was a recreation hall building [# 01038C, # 01048]
- 1926 Old Classroom building converted into Manual Training Workshop [# 01055]
- 1928 Fire Escapes installed in June [# 06888]; in September the manual training workshop moved to the school basement and the former workshop building was converted into a third classroom [# 06898]
- 1935 The water supply pipeline washed away in February and water was shipped in to school [# 06784]; repairs to water supply completed in November [# 06786A, # 06792]
- 1936, April A storage room was converted into additional girls' dormitory space [# 06639]
- 1937, February The recreation hall collapsed in a wind storm [# 06632]
- 1937, February 21 The school was destroyed by fire [# 00701] and there was no immediate intention to rebuild [# 06610]
- 1937, June It was decided to operate a Day School in the classroom that did not burn down [# 06960]; this Day School was in operation by February 1938 [# 00701]
- 1939/40 A new residence and separate classroom building were constructed on the same site as the former Alberni Residential School [# 02975, # 02056]
- 1941, February 18 A fire destroyed the classroom building [# 02970A, # 00982]. After the fire, classroom work was conducted in the main building and in the old classroom building [# 01807]
- 1942 The barn was refurbished and used as a manual training workshop

[# 01776]

- 1947 A new classroom block was completed, containing 4 separate classrooms [# 06951]; the old classroom was moved to function as an Indian Day School (IDS) [# 06951] and was later given to the Sheshaht Band in July 1953 [# 06948]
- 1949 AIRS had no indoor play area because all space was being used for classrooms until a new classroom block could be built [# 06921]; the auditorium was partitioned into additional classroom space [# 06918]. In October, the conversion of the barn into a gymnasium was undertaken [# 06908]
- 1950/51 An additional 4 room classroom block was constructed [# 09741, # 09259]
- 1953/1954 A new dormitory block for high school students was built [# 09907]
- 1963 Urgent need for recreation facilities as the barn was in disrepair [# 00702]
- 1964 One of the classroom blocks was converted into a dormitory for approximately 48 students [# 07975]
- 1965/66 Kitchen and dining room renovations were done [# 08850]. A redecoration allotment was used for painting and fencing [# 10579] and a new fire alarm system was installed [# 08905]
- 1967/68 Gymnasium construction project [# 11694, # 09394 [I]]
- 1969, December The sewage disposal field at AIRS flooded, it was bypassed into the river as a solution [# 09417]
- 1975 Sheshaht Band Council details how each building of the former Alberni Student Residence would be used by the council and confirms their "...total responsibility for the operation and maintenance of the complex" [# 10116]
- 1976 Describes the 5 types of buildings that comprised the Alberni Student Residence [# 10214]
- 1980 Land and buildings transferred to the Tsahaheh Indian Reserve No.1 at request of Sheshaht Band Council Resolution [# 10200]
- A 1974 appraisal report of property generally known as Alberni Student Residence has been located. [# 07361]

## **LAND**

- 1892 Presbyterian Church purchased a parcel of land joining the Tseshahht Indian Reserve for the purposes of a boarding school [# 01102]

- 1893 Presbyterian Church in Canada purchased the easterly 16 acres of Lot 81 [# 02564]
- 1903 Presbyterian Church in Canada purchased a 160 acre parcel of land adjacent to the Tsahaheh Indian Reserve from the Province of British Columbia, this was known as "Lot 81", AIRS was on this land [# 00778]
- 1920 Government purchased a 16 acre parcel of Lot 81, which was known as "Lot 1", from the Presbyterian Church of Canada, on which AIRS was situated [# 00778, # 02555, # 02563]
- 1973, December 1 Licensee Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and West Coast District Society of Indian Chiefs. Provides a licence to the West Coast District Society of Indian Chiefs to use and occupy the Alberni Student Residence buildings and land (Lot 1, subdivision of Lot 81) for a period of one year [# 06380A]
- 1980 Land and buildings transferred to the Tsahaheh Indian Reserve No.1 at request of Sheshaht Band Council Resolution [# 10200]

**PHOTOS, PLANS AND OTHER MEDIA**

- #01118A 00/00/1894 Plan for new girls boarding school (circa dated)
- #10098 01/05/1920 Subdivision plan of Lot 81 and Lot 1
- #01053B 00/00/1926 Plan of Alberni Indian Boarding School (circa dated)
- #06782 00/00/1935 Sketch showing pipeline across Somass River in relation to the Alberni Indian School (circa dated)
- #03057B 04/06/1939 Plan of site, Alberni Residential School
- #06837A 05/00/1939 Proposed residential school, Alberni, site plan
- #06837B 05/00/1939 Proposed residential school, Alberni, basement plan
- #06837C 05/00/1939 Proposed residential school, Alberni, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor plan
- #06837D 05/00/1939 Proposed residential school, Alberni, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor plan
- #06837E 05/00/1939 Proposed residential school, Alberni, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor plan
- #06805A 05/15/1940 Set of 15 photographs of Alberni IRS during construction
- #02965A 00/00/1941 Set of 6 photographs of Alberni IRS (circa dated)
- #00982 02/19/1941 Newspaper article "Fire Razes Unit of Indian School" (circa dated)

#01010H	01/21/1945	Plan of conduit, boiler room and classroom, Alberni IRS
#01010F	01/22/1945	Plan of Alberni IRS, showing boiler room and classroom block
#01010G	01/22/1945	Plan of boiler room in the classroom building of Alberni IRS
#01010[I]	01/22/1946	Sketch plan of pipes & valves to classroom building, Alberni IRS
#09262H	00/00/1951	Plan showing location of laundry equipment (circa dated)
#11605A	06/12/1958	Sketch plan showing domestic water supply, fire protection and sewage for Alberni IRS
#07975A	03/25/1964	Alberni IRS, Basement floor school building
#07975B	03/25/1964	Alberni IRS, Main floor school building
#10574	00/00/1965	Plan of the proposed gymnasium (circa dated)
#10562A	00/00/1965	Sketch of proposed gymnasium
#10513A	00/00/1965	Map showing location of proposed gymnasium (circa dated)
#09767A	00/00/1965	Plan for storage in new gymnasium (circa dated)
#10416	07/00/1965	Proposed site plan for new gymnasium, Alberni IRS
#11762B	08/11/1965	Plan of renovations to dishwashing room, Alberni IRS
#11734	00/00/1966	Newspaper article "Residential School Gets Face-Lift"
#10412A	00/00/1967	Plant Additions at Alberni IRS (circa dated)
#01346	09/08/1968	Newspaper article "Hearing Ills Afflict Indian Youth"
#09408A	06/24/1969	Map of Alberni School lands, showing areas to be blacktopped
#09432A	00/00/1970	Map of school and surrounding lands (circa dated)
#09429A	04/00/1970	Plan for proposed administration building, Alberni IRS
#07818	11/13/1972	Newspaper article "Seven-year old dies in wreck"
#03530	00/00/1973	Map of the arrangement of the AIRS buildings, approaching road and surrounding lands (dated after 1973) (circa dated)
#07800A	02/01/1973	Newspaper article "Scouting"

#06708	08/19/1974	Sketch of Port Alberni Indian School, Residence and surrounding buildings
#07374A	00/00/1976	Map showing buildings at Alberni Student Residence (circa dated)
#10183	11/30/1978	Subdivision Plan of District Lot 81, Alberni District

### **GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME**

1893	13 children in residence	1950	239 children in residence
1900	41 children in residence	1953	252 children in residence
1901	35 children in residence	1954	296 children in residence
1904	48 children in residence	1962	273 children in residence
1920	50 children in residence	1965	273 children in residence
1934	122 children in residence	1967	329 children in residence
1940	200 children in residence	1969	300 children in residence
1947	231 children in residence	1970	187 children in residence
1948	237 children in residence	1972	120 children in residence

### **STUDENTS FROM OTHER RESERVES**

Students from, at least, the following bands attended Alberni IRS:

Ahousaht, Aiyansh, Arrandale, Beecher Bay, Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Boston Bar, Campbell River, Canyon City, Cape Mudge, Capilano, Chemainus, Clayquot, Cowichan, Gilford Island, Gitlakdamix, Glenn Vowell, Greenville, Gwinaha, Hagwilget, Hartley Bay, Hazelton, Helvikum, Hesquiaht, Kemano, Kilpaulus, Kilsemaht (Keltsomaht), Kincolith, Kingcombe, Kispiox, Kitasoo, Kitimat (Kitimaat), Kitkatla (Kitkatlah), Kitlakdamix, Kitlope, Kitsegukla, Kitselas, Kitsumkalum, Kitwancool, Kitwanga, Klemtu, Koksilah, Kwawkeweth, Kyoquot, Lakalsap, Lake Cowichan, Malahat, Mammalillikula, Masset, Metlakatla, Moricetown, Musqueam, Nanaimo, Nanoose, Neskainlith, Nimpkish, Nishga, Nitinat, Nootka, Ohiat (Ohiaht) (Ohiet), Opetchesah, Opitsah, Oweekano, Pachena (Pachenaht), Pauchauchin (Pauquachin), Penelakut, Port Essington, Port Renfrew, Port Simpson, Quamichan, Quawshelsh, Saanich, Saanichton, Sarita, Shaousaht, Shesah, Skeena Crossing, Skeena River, Skidegate, Skulkayn, Skuppah, Sliammon, Somenos, Songhees, Soowahlie, Stony Creek, Sweetgrass, Sumas, Tanakteuk, Terrace, Tsawataineuk, Toquaht, Tsawataineuk, Tsawout, Tsyecum, Turner Island, Tzeachton, Uchucklasah, Ucluelet, Weiweikum

There may be alternate ways of spelling these band names.

### **RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

Presbyterian Church [# 00733]

United Church, Board of Home Missions [# 02055], including the Women's Missionary Society [# 06590]

In, or around, 1925/26 the Presbyterian Church joined with the United Church of Canada.



## WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

- 1911 Agreement for the Operation of a School, between His Majesty the King, represented by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs of Canada and the Reverend R.P. MacKay, D.D., Secretary of the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada. April 1, 1911 [# 00614]
- 1962 Agreement for the Operation of Alberni Indian Residential School, between Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada and the United Church of Canada. June 22, 1962 [# 00333]

## DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO ABUSE

We are aware of the following convictions for abuse at Alberni IRS:

In 1995 Arthur Henry Plint pleaded guilty to 18 counts of indecent assault against a male, relating to 18 victims at Alberni IRS.

In 1997 Arthur Henry Plint pleaded guilty to 10 counts of indecent assault against a male, relating to 9 victims and 3 counts of assault causing bodily harm, relating to 3 victims, at Alberni IRS.

In October 2003, Donald Bruce Haddock pleaded guilty to four counts of indecent assault which occurred at Alberni IRS between 1948 and 1954. [See article dated January 24, 2004]

In November 2003, Michael Dennis Flynn and David Henry Forde were charged in connection with the allegations of sexual abuse at Alberni IRS. [See RCMP news release dated November 14, 2003]

### Physical Abuse

A series of correspondence in 1918 notes that a male student at the Alberni Indian Boarding School was subjected to a "...most brutal beating" at the hands of an employee of the school. [# 00742, # 06971]

Another series of correspondence, this in 1922, indicates that an employee of the school whips, hits and chokes the boys. [# 00750, # 00751, # 00752]

### Student on Student Abuse

Letters dated August 21, 1922, September 9, 1922 and November 6, 1922, indicate that several girls became pregnant by other students while attending the Alberni Industrial School. [# 00750, # 00751, # 00752]

An Inspector's Report dated October 19, 1941 notes "...a big boy hit a little boy several times and even kick [sic] him to get him to stand at attention." [# 02059]

A letter dated June 11, 1965 notes that a male student has a "Tendency to sexual delinquency - plays with little girls, has exhibited himself on two occasions. Needs constant care and surveillance." [# 01279B]

A letter, dated January 12, 1968, indicates that a girl who was pregnant while attending AIRS was discharged from the school due to her pregnancy. [# 06675]

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

In 1922, there was discussion of boys sneaking into the girls' dormitory at night and in 1923 various solutions were discussed to prevent this from occurring. [# 00751, # 00752, #01574, # 01032]

In 1927, the United Church decided that due to the "...trouble and friction..." at the Alberni Indian Boarding School, the entire staff, including Principal Currie, were to be "retired" effective June 30, 1927. [# 01575]

In 1928, the issue of keeping boys' and girls' separate during the night was raised in the context of constructing fire escapes. [# 06888A, # 06888B]

It appears that high school students were permitted in the Alberni Student Residence, but as early as 1933 attended high school classes in provincial schools in Port Alberni. [# 01180B, # 01482]

Upon the destruction of the Alberni Residential School in 1937 by fire, the children in attendance were dispersed to various locations. Specifically, of the 112 children in attendance at the time of the fire 19 returned to the Cowichan Agency, 8 were placed in the Ahousaht School, 17 in the Ucluelet Day School, 37 were sent home "at various points" and 31 remained in Alberni. [# 01640]

In 1941, there was correspondence on the installation of an extra fire door and potential disciplinary problems between boys and girls; the Principal assumed responsibility for proper discipline at the school. [# 00963, # 00959B]

In December 1948, pupils and staff of Alberni IRS composed a Newsletter entitled "The WesternEagle". This newsletter describes the life at the school. [# 01434]

In 1969 a child died at the AIRS, the cause of death was found to be accidental hanging. [# 01984]

An accident involving a van from the Alberni Student Residence in November 1972, resulted in the death of one boy from the residence while another boy lost his arm in the crash. [# 07818]

### **Farming Operations**

As early as 1926, it appears that a farm was in operation at Alberni IRS, that children were being trained in farming and that a herd of cows existed at Alberni IRS. [# 01059A, # 01065]

In March of 1943, it was reported that the school had 26 acres of land under cultivation and "The livestock includes about 20 cattle, 7 hogs and 3 horses. Most of the dairy products and some of the vegetables used in the School are produced on the farm." [# 02679]

It appears that by 1951, the farm operations at Alberni IRS had been greatly reduced and by 1958 stopped all together. [# 00144, # 00283]

### **Health at the school**

It appears there was an infirmary and dispensary in AIRS in at least the 1940s. [# 00102, # 00965, # 00962]

There were numerous outbreaks of influenza, pneumonia, mumps and measles at Alberni IRS. [# 01165, # 00956, # 06567B, # 00121, # 01438, # 00464]

The largest of these outbreaks appears to have been an influenza epidemic which affected 184 pupils and half of the staff at AIRS in March 1951. [# 10047]

In 1966 and 1967 various surveys relating to hearing loss, dental conditions and general health were conducted at AIRS. [# 01342, # 09028, # 07382, # 01346]

### **PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS**

Mr. James R. Motion	Principal	September 1899 to September 20, 1909
Mrs. Motion	Acting Principal	April to May 1909
Mr. W.A. Hendry	Principal	October 1909 to February 1910
Mr. H.B. Currie	Principal	February 1910 to April 1927
Mrs. Currie	Acting Principal	Spring 1921 (3 months)
Rev. F.E. Pitts	Principal	June 30, 1927 to July 1, 1937
Mrs. Pitts	Acting Principal	January to February 1934
R.C. Scott	Principal	September 1940 to June 1944
A.E. Caldwell	Principal	July 1944 to July 1959
John Dennys	Associate Principal	August 1958 to July 1959
John Dennys	Principal	July 1959 to May 1962
A.E. Caldwell	Assistant Principal	July 1959 to July 1960
F.E. Kempling	Assistant Principal	October 1960
John Andrews	Principal / Administrator	July 1962 to August 1973
K.W. Johnson	Vice Principal	July 1962 to March 1966

Narrative complete: March 25, 2004

Narrative updated: April 22, 2005

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



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