

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.

**Battleford Industrial School
IAP School Narrative**

NAME IN THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (Schedule E/F)

Battleford Industrial School

OTHER NAMES KNOWN AS (AKAs)

No information found

LOCATION

The IRS was situated on the south bank of the Battle River, one and a half miles south of the town of Battleford, on Old Highway No. 4 [BFI-000008, pg. 1; BFI-000005, pg. 4].

PROVINCE/TERRITORY

Saskatchewan

OPERATING DATES AS AN INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

These dates represent the time during which the Government of Canada was responsible for the operation of the Indian Residential School, excluding any periods of closure.

December 1, 1883 to May 31, 1914

OPERATING DATES CONTEXT

The IRS opened in December 1883 as a federal government owned institution [BFI-000001, pg. 6; BFI-000004, pg. 7]. The IRS was affiliated with the Church of England, but it was not a Church operated IRS initially [BFI-000004, pg. 7; BFI-000016]. During the North-West Rebellion in 1885, the IRS was damaged, evacuated, then temporarily re-established in a private rented building. The IRS re-opened at its original site in September 1885. In October, as the North-West Rebellion continued, the IRS buildings were occupied by Canadian soldiers. The IRS was situated temporarily in two vacant houses owned by the federal government. The original IRS building was re-opened in October 1886 [BFI-000003, pg. 2-5; BFI-000011; BFI-000004, pg. 3]. The Church of England, through the Diocese of Saskatchewan, assumed responsibility for the operation of the IRS on July 1, 1895 [BFI-000016; BFI-000017]. By 1910, the IRS was in a state of disrepair with a rapidly declining enrolment. The IRS closed on May 31, 1914 [BFI-000006; BFI-000007; BFI-000021].

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Church of England

1883 to 1914 Church of England and later the Diocese of Saskatchewan [BFI-000001, pg. 6; BFI-000016; BFI-000017; BFI-000022].

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Date	Event	Document Reference
December 1883	The IRS opened on the site of "Old Government House" in Battleford.	BFI-000001, pg. 6 BFI-000010

		BFI-000008, pg. 1 BFI-000002
1885 to July 1886	During the North-West Rebellion, the IRS was damaged, evacuated, then temporarily re-established in a private rented building. The IRS re-opened at its original site in September 1885. In October, as the North-West Rebellion continued, the IRS buildings were occupied by Canadian soldiers. The IRS was then situated temporarily in two vacant houses owned by the federal government. On July 30, 1886, the IRS was still located in the federal government houses.	BFI-000003, pg. 2-5 BFI-000011
October 1886	The repairs to the original IRS building were completed and it re-opened.	BFI-000004, pg. 3 BFI-000003, pg. 2-5
December 1890	The IRS was owned and operated by the federal government. Staff salaries and other operational expenses at the IRS were paid directly by the federal government.	BFI-000012
1892	The IRS continued to be entirely supported by the federal government.	BFI-000014, pg. 2
July 1, 1895	A federal Order-in-Council placed the IRS on a per capita grant system effective July 1, 1893, but Church authorities refused to take over the IRS at that time. The federal government continued to pay all the IRS expenses until the Diocese of Saskatchewan assumed responsibility for the operation of the IRS on July 1, 1895.	BFI-000016 BFI-000017 BFI-000005, pg. 2
1910 to 1911	The IRS was no longer used as an industrial institution. It instead functioned mainly as a boarding establishment with regular classroom instruction, and instruction in housekeeping and a limited amount of farming and care of livestock.	BFI-000006
1910 to 1911	Enrolment was in decline at the IRS as some Indian parents, particularly those from Montreal Lake, were unwilling to send their children away from home for an education. Due to the enrolment decrease, the funds raised through the per capita grant was insufficient to maintain the IRS, leading to a deficit at the end of the year. The main IRS building was in need of repairs, but the cost to improve the safety of the building would exceed the building's worth.	BFI-000006
1911 to 1912	The enrolment at the IRS decreased from 67 pupils in January 1911 to 42 pupils in March 1912. Students from the "hunting bands" of Montreal Lake and La Pas were no longer recruited to the IRS.	BFI-000021
May 31, 1914	The IRS closed.	BFI-000007

EDUCATION OF STUDENTS

Grades Taught at the Indian Residential School

School Years	Grades offered	Document Reference
1883/84 to 1885/86	No information found	
1886/87	The half-time system was used at the IRS, with instruction in farming or trades (carpentry and blacksmithing) for half of the day depending on the season, and classroom	BFI-000003, pg. 5

	instruction for the other half. During the winter, before the blacksmith and carpenter's shops opened, class instruction was held twice a day.	
1887/88	Girls studied housework, sewing, knitting, washing, ironing and cooking. Younger boys attended classes twice a day; the rest of the boys combined classes and training in a trade (carpentry, blacksmithing or farming).	BFI-000004, pg. 3-4
1888/89	No information found	
1889/90 to 1891/92	1 to 5	BFI-000012, pg. 2-3 BIR-060002, pg. 3-4 BIR-060003, pg. 4-5
1892/93	1 to 5; Half-time system: trades (with carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking, printing and farming) for half of the day and class for the other half.	BFI-000014, pg. 4-5 BIR-060004, pg. 22-23
1893/94 to 1894/95	1 to 6	BIR-060005, pg. 22-23 BIR-060006, pg. 30-31
1895/96 to 1896/97	1 to 5	BIR-060007, pg. 15-16 SMD-002323
1897/98 to 1900/01	1 to 6	BFI-000018 PLD-009029, pg. 6 BRS-003107, pg. 18-19 BRS-003108, pg. 19-20
1901/02	1 to 5	BRS-003109, pg. 6-7
1902/03 to 1912/13	1 to 6	BRS-003110, pg. 21-22 BRS-003111, pg. 5-6 BRS-003112, pg. 19-20 BRS-003113, pg. 9-10 BRS-003114, pg. 6-7 BRS-003115, pg. 12-13 BRS-003116, pg. 12-13 BRS-003117, pg. 3-4 PLD-007422, pg. 2 PLD-007426, pg. 5
1913/14	1 to 2, and 4 to 5	PLD-007430, pg. 3

Other Schools Attended by Residents

There is no indication that Battleford Industrial School pupils attended other schools.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

School Years	Number of Residents	If applicable, day scholars	Document Reference
1883/84	24	No information found	BFI-000001, pg. 6
1884/85 to 1885/86	17	No information found	BFI-000003, pg. 5
1886/87 to 1887/88	44	No information found	BFI-000004, pg. 3
1888/89	45	No information found	PLD-009007, pg. 2
1889/90	50	No information found	GDC-006559, pg. 6
1890/91	54	No information found	BIR-060001, pg. 18-19
1891/92	109	No information found	BIR-060003, pg. 4-5
1892/93	109	No information found	GDC-006563
1893/94	113	No information found	BIR-060005, pg. 22-23

1894/95	120	No information found	BIR-060006, pg. 30-31
1895/96	114	No information found	BFI-000005, pg. 6-7
1896/97	116	No information found	SMD-002323
1897/98	109	No information found	BFI-000018
1898/99	107	No information found	PLD-009029, pg. 6
1899/00	104	No information found	BRS-003107, pg. 18-19
1900/01	98	No information found	BRS-003108, pg. 19-20
1901/02	97	No information found	BRS-003109, pg. 6-7
1902/03	93	No information found	BRS-003110, pg. 21-22
1903/04	90	No information found	BRS-003111, pg. 5-6
1904/05	83	No information found	BRS-003112, pg. 19-20
1905/06	77	No information found	BRS-003113, pg. 9-10
1906/07	64	No information found	BRS-003114, pg. 6-7
1907/08	67	No information found	BRS-003115, pg. 12-13
1908/09	69	No information found	BRS-003116, pg. 12-13
1909/10	72	No information found	BRS-003117, pg. 3-4
1910/11	67	No information found	BFI-000021
1911/12	42	No information found	BFI-000021
1912/13	42	No information found	PLD-007426, pg. 5
1913/14	30	No information found	PLD-007430, pg. 3

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School Years	Special Programs Offered	Document Reference
1892/93	A brass band for boys was active at the IRS.	BFI-000014, pg. 5
1894/95	Pupils enrolled in carpentry, blacksmithing, shoemaking and painting programs had their work displayed at the Territorial exhibition. Girls also had their work judged at exhibitions.	BFI-000015
1895/96	Recreational activities included playing cricket, tennis and football. Tobogganing was a winter activity.	BFI-000005, pg. 5
1897/98	Recreational activities included playing on swings, lawn tennis, football and going for walks.	BFI-000018
1910/11	Recreational activities included playing football, swings, indoor games and "plenty of outdoor exercise."	PLD-007422, pg. 4

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Date	Event	Document Reference
1882	The IRS was established in the house and premises formerly occupied by the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories. Known as "Old Government House," the building had previously served as the seat of Government when Battleford was known as the Territorial capital of the Northwest Territories. The IRS was located 1.5 miles south of Battleford on Old Highway No. 4.	BFI-000010 BFI-000008, pg. 1
1885 to July 1886	During the North-West Rebellion, the IRS was damaged and evacuated. The IRS was then located temporarily in a private rented building. Repairs to the IRS were completed and it re-opened at its original	BFI-000003, pg. 2-5 BFI-000011

	<p>site in September 1885. However, in October, the North-West Rebellion continued and the IRS buildings were occupied by Canadian soldiers. The IRS was then situated temporarily in two vacant houses owned by the federal government.</p> <p>Six hundred forty acres of land had been set aside by the federal government for the IRS for farming and the pasturage of cattle. Sixty acres of this land had been enclosed by a wire fence built by a staff member and the boys at the IRS.</p>	
October 1886	The repairs to the IRS building were completed and it re-opened.	BFI-000004, pg. 3 BFI-000003, pg. 2-5
1894 to 1895	A storeroom on the upper floor of the main IRS building was converted into a dormitory for girls. A kitchen and dining room were added on to the hospital building. The new carpenter's shop built on the second floor of the hospital building had room for shoemakers and printers. An implement shed and addition to the warehouse building were also constructed. A cottage for married staff members had almost been completed.	BFI-000015
1897 to 1898	<p>The main IRS building contained the dormitories, classrooms, dining-room, kitchen, staff rooms, bathrooms, sewing room and a "sorting" room. Other buildings detached from the main IRS building included the Principal's residence, a hospital, carpenter's shop/printing office, blacksmith shop/paint shop, implement shed, recreation room, stable, piggery, cottage, laundry, bakery, coal shed and other outbuildings.</p> <p>Five hundred acres of land were available for use by the IRS, but only a small portion was suitable for farming purposes. Thirty acres were under cultivation.</p>	BFI-000018
1911	The main IRS building was in need of repairs, but the cost to improve the safety of the building would exceed the building's worth.	BFI-000006

PHOTOS, PLANS AND LAYOUT

Date	Description	Document Reference
Undated	Picture of the exterior of the main Battleford IRS building, also known as "Old Government House."	BFI-000008, pg. 1

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse at the Battleford Industrial School or of any convicted abusers present at the IRS.

Incidents (Sexual)

No information found.

Incidents (Physical)

No information found.

Last updated: January 17, 2013

Incidents (Student on student)

No information found.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1894/95 During the year there was a “good deal of sickness” at the IRS; several pupils were in hospital and four pupils had died.

Female students were responsible for doing all of the baking for the IRS [BFI-000015].

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
Thomas Clarke	Principal	December 1883 to December 1894
Archdeacon John A. Mackay	Principal	January to April 1895
E. Matheson	Principal	May 1895 to May 1914

Narrative Completed: September 19, 2012

Narrative Updated: January 17, 2013

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



National Centre for
Truth and Reconciliation
UNIVERSITY OF MANITOBA