

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.

**Birtle Indian Residential School
IAP School Narrative**

NAME IN THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (Schedule E/F)

Birtle

OTHER NAMES KNOWN AS (AKAs)

1888 to 1893	Birtle Industrial School [BIR-060000, pg.4; BIR-060004, pg.22]
1894	Birtle Boarding and Industrial School [BIR-000008]
1899 to 1911	Birtle Indian Boarding School [BIR-000012]
1912 to 1923	Birtle Boarding School [BIR-060023, pg.4, BIR-002303]
1924 to 1970	Birtle Indian Residential School [BIR-000062; BIR-000428]
1933 to 1968	Birtle Residential School [BIR-001871; BIR-006183]
1968 to 1970	Birtle Student Residence [BIR-006181; BIR-000452-0001]

LOCATION

1888 to 1893	The Birtle IRS was in a rented grey stone building located approximately half a mile from the town of Birtle, Manitoba [BIR-000412; BIR-000477].
1893 to 1970	The IRS was located on the west bank of the Birdtail River, in the town of Birtle, Manitoba [BIR-000049].

PROVINCE/TERRITORY

Manitoba

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 3, 1888 to June 30, 1970

There is no indication from documents that Birtle IRS became a residence/hostel only.

OPERATING DATES CONTEXT

The Birtle IRS opened on December 3, 1888 with federal government support [BIR-060000, pg. 4-5; BIR-060006, pg. 28; BIR-000012]. In 1927, the residence was reported to be in very bad condition and in need of replacing [BIR-000093]. New IRS buildings were built between June 1930 and March 1931, at the same site in the town of Birtle [BIR-000114; BIR-000109; BIR-000131; BIR-000137-0000; BIR-000138; BIR-060042, pg. 9; BIR-000177]. The IRS closed on June 30, 1970 [BIR-000455; BIR-000449; NCA-001847, pg.1].

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

- 1888 to 1963 The Presbyterian Church in Canada [BIR-060006, pg. 28, 30; BIR-001538]
- 1911 Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada [BIR-000022]
- 1925 to 1927 The United Church of Canada, Board of Home Missions [BIR-002332-0001; BIR-000096]
- 1920 to 1969 Women's Missionary Society of the Presbyterian Church in Canada [BIR-000053; BIR-000417]

Please note that the Methodist, Congregationalist and two thirds of the Presbyterian Churches in Canada amalgamated in 1925 to create The United Church of Canada. The Home Mission properties of the Presbyterian Church were divided between the United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1927, and Birtle IRS was assigned to the Presbyterian Church for management by April 1, 1927 [BIR-000096].

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Date	Event	Document Reference
December 3, 1888	The Birtle IRS was opened by the Presbyterian Church with Federal Government support. The IRS was conducted in a public school building leased from the town of Birtle until about the summer of 1893.	BIR-060006, pg. 28 BIR-060000, pg. 4-5 BIR-000012 BIR-000049
October 1893	Since the first stone building was not well suited for IRS purposes, a new stone building was constructed at the expense of the Presbyterian Church in the summer of 1893. The building was occupied by October 1893 with an average of thirty pupils.	BIR-000412 BIR-000008 BIR-000049 BIR-000012
April 1911	An agreement was signed between the federal government and the Foreign Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for the operation of the Birtle IRS.	BIR-000022
September 1924	A new two classroom building was near completion.	BIR-000061 BIR-000062 BIR-002322-0002 BIR-000081-0000
1924	Students attended class half of the day and worked on the farm or in the residence for the other half day.	BIR-002314-0001
1930	Authority was granted for the federal government to purchase a total of 655 acres of land for the Birtle IRS from the Presbyterian Church, the town of Birtle, and private citizens. The portion of land purchased from the town of Birtle comprised Blocks 211, 212, 213, and 214, Plan M. in N.E. 1/4 Sec. 6, and totalled approximately 20 acres. This parcel was the building site for the new Birtle IRS. The land was adjacent to the N.E. 1/4 Sec. 6 comprising 30 acres that was being purchased from the Presbyterian Church Missionary to be used for playgrounds, garden, and pasture.	BIR-000164 BIR-000162 BIR-000163
1930 to 1931	A new Birtle IRS building was built between 1930 and 1931 and occupied by the 1931/32 school year.	BIR-000114 BIR-000109 BIR-000131 BIR-000137-0000 BIR-000138 BIR-060042, pg. 9

		BIR-000177 BIR-000457 BIR-002403
September 1959	Beginning in September, grades one to eight were taught at the Birtle IRS and residents in grades 9 to 12 were sent to the Birtle High School in town. There were five classrooms in operation at the Birtle IRS.	BIR-001241
May 1962	An agreement was signed between the federal government and Women's Missionary Society (Western Division) of the Presbyterian Church in Canada for the operation of the Birtle IRS.	BIR-000406
September 1968	By the 1968/69 school year, the IRS was referred to as the Birtle Indian Student Residence or the Birtle Student Residence, though two classrooms for grades 5 and 6 were still in operation at the IRS	BIR-000773-0001 BIR-001141-0001
July 1969	Due to the enrolment of younger pupils in the IRS, it was determined in February 1969 that the farm would not be worked during the year. By July 1969, all farming operations had ceased and the farm land, equipment, and livestock had been sold to private interests.	BIR-000418 BIR-000417 BIR-001545 BIR-000959-0001, pg. 5
June 30, 1970	The Birtle IRS closed after the 1969/70 school year due to low admission.	BIR-000455 BIR-000449 NCA-001847, pg. 1

EDUCATION OF STUDENTS

Grades taught at the Indian residential school

School Years	Grades offered	Document Reference
1888/89	Grades 1 to 3	BIR-060000, pg. 4-5
1889/90	Grades 1 to 5	BIR-060001, pg. 18-19
1890/91	Grades 1 to 3	BIR-060002, pg. 2
1891/92	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060003, pg. 4-5
1892/93	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060004, pg. 22-23
1893/94	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060005, pg. 22-23
1894/95	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060006, pg.19
1895/96	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060007, pg.12
1896/97	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060008, pg. 28-29
1897/98	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060009, pg. 8
1898/99	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060010, pg. 2
1899/00	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060011, pg. 7
1900/01	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060012, pg.13
1901/02	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060013, pg. 14-15
1902/03	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060014, pg. 25-26
1903/04	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060015, pg. 28-29
1904/05	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060016, pg. 21-22
1905/06	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060017, pg. 6
1906/07	Grades 1 to 4	BIR-060018, pg. 13-14
1907/08	Grades 1 to 5	BIR-060019, pg. 16-17
1908/09	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060020, pg. 17-18
1909/10	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060021, pg. 9-10
1910/11	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060022, pg. 22-23
1911/12	Grades 1 to 5	BIR-060023, pg. 15-16
1913/14	Grades 1 to 5	BIR-060025, pg. 36
1914/15	Grades 1 to 5	BIR-060026, pg. 3-4

1915/16	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060027, pg. 3-4
1916/17	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060028
1917/18	Grades 1 to 5	BIR-060029
1918/19	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060030
1919/20	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060031
1920/21	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060032
1921/22	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060033
1922/23	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060034
1923/24	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060035
1924/25	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060036
1925/26	Grades 1 to 8	BIR-002343-0001
1926/27	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060038
1927/28	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-060039
1928/29	Grades 1 to 9	BIR-060040
1930/31	Grades 1 to 9	BIR-060041
1931/32 to 1934/35	Grades 1 to 8	BIR-002403 BIR-060044 BIR-060045 BIR-060046
1935/36 to 1936/37	Grades 1 to 5, 8	BIR-060047 BIR-060048
1937/38	Grades 1 to 7	BIR-060049
1938/39	Grades 1 to 8	BIR-060050
1940/41 to 1942/43	Grades 1 to 7	BIR-000601, pg. 6 BIR-000605, pg. 6 BIR-000609, pg. 6
1943/44	Grades 1 to 8	BIR-000613, pg. 6
1944/45	Grades 1 to 6	BIR-000617, pg. 6
1945/46	Grades 1 to 7	BIR-000621, pg. 5
1946/47 to 1948/49	Grades 1 to 8	BIR-000625, pg. 6 BIR-000629, pg. 6 BIR-000335
1949/50 to 1950/51	Grades 1 to 8, High School	BIR-000637, pg. 7 BIR-000641, pg. 12-13
1951/52	Grades 1 to 9	BIR-005161
1952/53	Grades 1 to 8, High School	BIR-000648, pg. 14-15
1953/54 to 1954/55	Grades 1 to 12	BIR-000975 BIR-000983
1955/56	Grades 1 to 10	BIR-000993
1956/57 to 1958/59	Grades 1 to 9	BIR-001001 BIR-001011 BIR-001021
1959/60 to 1961/62	Grades 1 to 8	BIR-001031 BIR-001041 BIR-001050
1962/63	Grades 4 to 6	BIR-001059
1963/64	Grades 4, 5, 7	BIR-001070
1964/65	Grades 4, 5, 8	BIR-001080
1965/66	Grades 5, 8	BIR-001090
1966/67 to 1967/68	Grades 4 to 6	BIR-001100 BIR-001110
1968/69	Grades 5 to 6	BIR-001141-0001
1969/70	No information found	

Other Schools Attended by Residents

School Years	Name of School	Location	Administration	Grades	Document
1953	Birtle High School	Birtle, MB	No information	Grades 11	BIR-000356

			found	to 12	
1956	"High School"	Birtle, MB	No information found	Grades 10 to 12	BIR-000382
1958 to 1959	Birtle High School	Birtle, MB	No information found	Grades 10 to 12	BIR-000491, pg. 2, 6-8
1959 to 1960	Birtle High School	Birtle, MB	No information found	Grades 9 to 12	BIR-001241
1962	Birtle High School	Birtle, MB	No information found	Grades 9 to 12	BIR-103202
1963 to 1964	"town school"	Birtle, MB	No information found	Grades 6 to 12	BIR-001294
1968 to 1969	"Elementary School in Town"	Birtle, MB	No information found	Grades 7 and 8	BIR-001141-0001
1968 to 1969	"Collegiate"	Birtle, MB	No information found	Grades 9 to 12	BIR-001141-0001

GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

School Years	Number of Residents	If applicable, day scholars	Document Reference
1888/89	20	No information found	BIR-060000, pg. 4-5
1889/90	16	No information found	BIR-060001, pg. 18-19
1890/91	28	No information found	BIR-060002, pg. 3-4
1891/92	17	No information found	BIR-060003, pg. 4-5
1892/93	21	No information found	BIR-060004, pg. 21
1893/94	20	No information found	BIR-060005, pg. 22-23
1894/95	25	No information found	BIR-060006, pg. 19
1895/96	24	No information found	BIR-060007, pg. 15-16
1896/97	34	No information found	BIR-060008, pg. 28-29
1897/98	44	No information found	BIR-060009, pg. 8
1898/99	41	No information found	BIR-060010, pg. 2
1899/00	41	No information found	BIR-060011, pg. 6-7
1900/01	45	No information found	BIR-060012, pg. 13
1901/02	34	No information found	BIR-060013, pg. 14-15
1902/03	43	No information found	BIR-060014, pg. 25-26
1903/04	43	No information found	BIR-060015, pg. 28-29
1904/05	50	No information found	BIR-060016, pg. 21-22
1905/06	45	No information found	BIR-060017, pg. 6
1906/07	52	No information found	BIR-060018, pg. 13-14
1907/08	51	No information found	BIR-060019, pg. 16-17
1908/09	51	No information found	BIR-060020, pg. 17-18
1909/10	56	No information found	BIR-060021, pg. 9-10
1910/11	53	No information found	BIR-060022, pg. 22-23
1911/12	56	No information found	BIR-060023, pg. 15-16
1912/13	56	No information found	BIR-060024, pg. 16-17
1913/14	48	No information found	BIR-060025, pg. 3-4
1914/15	58	No information found	BIR-060026, pg. 3-4
1915/16	59	No information found	BIR-060027, pg. 3-4
1916/17	53	No information found	BIR-060028, pg. 3-4
1917/18	66	No information found	BIR-060029, pg. 3-4
1918/19	71	No information found	BIR-060030
1919/20	66	No information found	BIR-060031

1920/21	70	No information found	BIR-060032
1921/22	73	No information found	BIR-060033
1922/23	70	No information found	BIR-060034
1923/24	73	No information found	BIR-060035
1924/25	96	No information found	BIR-060036
1925/26	89	No information found	BIR-060037
1926/27	90	No information found	BIR-060038
1927/28	92	No information found	BIR-060039
1928/29	89	No information found	BIR-060040
1929/30	88	No information found	BIR-060041
1930/31	83	No information found	BIR-060042, pg. 22
1931/32	126	No information found	BIR-060043
1932/33	132	No information found	BIR-060044
1933/34	123	No information found	BIR-060045
1934/35	122	No information found	BIR-060046
1935/36	116	No information found	BIR-060047
1936/37	121	No information found	BIR-060048
1937/38	121	No information found	BIR-060049
1938/39	125	No information found	BIR-060050
1940/41	114	No information found	BIR-000601, pg. 6
1941/42	109	No information found	BIR-000605, pg. 6
1942/43	115	No information found	BIR-000609, pg. 6
1943/44	118	No information found	BIR-000613, pg. 6
1944/45	116	No information found	BIR-000617, pg. 6
1945/46	108	No information found	BIR-000621, pg. 5
1946/47	119	No information found	BIR-000625, pg. 6
1947/48	121	No information found	BIR-000629, pg. 7
1948/49	125	No information found	BIR-000633, pg. 6
1949/50	142	No information found	BIR-000637, pg. 7
1950/51	155	No information found	BIR-000641, pg. 12-13
1951/52	164	No information found	BIR-000645, pg. 14-15
1952/53	153	No information found	BIR-000648, pg. 14-15
1953/54	161	No information found	BIR-000652, pg. 14-15
1954/55	168	No information found	BIR-000656, pg. 12-13
1955/56	178	No information found	BIR-000660, pg. 12-13
1956/57	163	No information found	BIR-000664, pg. 12-13
1957/58	164	No information found	BIR-000668, pg. 16-17
1958/59	162	No information found	BIR-000672
1959/60	159	No information found	BIR-000676
1960/61	175	No information found	BIR-000677, pg. 10-11
1961/62	161	No information found	BIR-000749
1962/63	131	No information found	BIR-000753
1963/64	125	No information found	BIR-000757
1964/65	135	No information found	BIR-000761
1965/66	131	No information found	BIR-000765
1966/67	112	No information found	BIR-000769
1967/68	107	No information found	BIR-000772
1968/69	90	No information found	BIR-000600

1969/70	41	No information found	BIR-006056
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SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School Years	Special Programs Offered	Document Reference
1924	Students attended class half of the day and worked on the farm or in the residence for the other half day.	BIR-002314-0001
1938	Boys were taught a several farm tasks including milking, feeding, and caring for horses, cattle, hogs, and poultry. In addition boys as young as ten handled or drove horses. Tasks undertaken in teams included ploughing, harrowing, discing, seeding, raking, mowing, binding, and threshing. Gasoline engines were used for crushing grain and sawing wood. Other farm related tasks that boys undertook included slaughtering and butchering livestock at the IRS slaughterhouse. Students also worked in the IRS blacksmith shop and shoed horses. Over 400 acres were under cultivation.	BIR-002444 BIR-002442-0000
1938	Music lessons and Boys' hockey were offered to IRS residents.	BIR-002436-0001 BIR-002444
September 1946	Boys at the IRS were responsible for threshing and worked on two shifts, afternoon and morning groups. The afternoon group worked until 7 pm and the remaining boys milked the dairy herd and performed evening chores. IRS students were taken out of class in the afternoon to pick and bag sacks of potatoes of which 300 were expected that season. Other root crops harvested included carrots, beets, onions, turnips, and cabbage. Extensive canning and preserving of vegetables and fruits was also undertaken.	BIR-000527
1959	Activities at the IRS included Canadian Girls In Training (C.G.I.T.), piano, music festival, Ice Carnival, hockey, student council, Sports Day, Church Sunday school and choir	BIR-001241 BIR-000491, pg.17
1960	Older IRS boys were employed to work on the farm in the summer and were paid 'the going farm wage.'	BIR-002383
1962	Students from Birtle IRS attended the Indian and Métis Conference in Winnipeg. Other recreational activities included participation in a hockey tournament, Carnival, boys' choir, and an all-girls hockey tournament.	BIR-102112-0001 BIR-001343
1963	Recreational and sporting activities available at Birtle IRS had included film rental, pool playing, hockey, skating, parties, games, and tobogganing.	BIR-102113-0006
February 1969	Due to the enrolment of younger pupils in the IRS, it was determined that the farm would not be worked during the year and would to be disposed of by June 1969.	BIR-000418 BIR-000417 BIR-001545
1969	Students from Birtle IRS had played in the Elphinstone High School hockey tournament.	BIR-005135

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Date	Event	Document Reference
1888 to 1893	The Birtle IRS was situated in a large public school building leased from the town of Birtle until around the summer of 1893.	BIR-000477 BIR-000049
1893	Since the first stone building was not well suited for IRS purposes, a new stone building was constructed at the expense of the Presbyterian Church in the summer of 1893. The building was occupied by October 1893 with an average of thirty pupils.	BIR-000412 BIR-000008 BIR-000049 BIR-000012
1899	The Presbyterian Church began construction on an upstairs dining room, and more classroom and dormitory space for the boys.	BIR-000012 BIR-000014 BIR-060010, pg. 5 BIR-060012, pg. 5
1901	A fire took place in March that caused damage to the IRS building, but it was repaired. The fire was caused by an overheated furnace pipe which ignited a floor joist.	BIR-060012, pg. 13 BIR-000015
1903	The IRS barn burnt down in the fall but was replaced before the winter.	BIR-060015, pg. 16
1914	A new 58 x 28 classroom / gymnasium building was constructed.	BIR-060025, pg. 6, 17
1924	<p>In April 1924, the Presbyterian Church discussed with the federal government the conversion of classrooms in the residence building into dormitories and the building of a separate classroom building not far from the main IRS building.</p> <p>The construction of the new classroom building would be undertaken by the federal government but the Church would be responsible for the alterations to the residence that would add more dormitory space and increase the IRS accommodation. A two-classroom building would be constructed.</p> <p>By September, the new two-classroom building was almost completed.</p>	BIR-000061 BIR-000062 BIR-002322-0002 BIR-000081-0000
1925	Fire caused damage to the boys' dormitory floor in February. The damage was repaired by the end of March.	BIR-000070 BIR-002328-0001 BIR-002329-0001
1927	Arrangements were made for a cottage to be used as a laundry facility. The playroom formerly used by the girls was turned over to the boys. A partition was put in the hall leading to the outside entrance of the building so that the boys had direct access to their playroom from outside. The dining room was used as a playroom for the girls. The Inspector of Indian Agencies noted that the residence was old and should be replaced, and that the only decent IRS building was the new classroom building.	BIR-000089 BIR-000093
1930 to 1931	In 1930 the federal government negotiated for the purchase of lands required for the new Birtle IRS. The purchase included approximately 30 acres of land from the	BIR-000164 BIR-000162 BIR-000163 BIR-000114

	<p>Presbyterian Church Missionary Society, for playgrounds, a garden and pasture; approximately 20 acres of land from the town of Birtle for the actual building site; 160 acres from the town of Birtle for pasture and access to a creek; approximately 445 acres belonging to private citizens for farm and pasture lands, for a total of 655 acres of land.</p> <p>The new Birtle IRS classroom building was built between June 1930 and March 1931.</p> <p>The building was occupied by the 1931/32 school year.</p>	<p>BIR-000109 BIR-000131 BIR-000137-0000 BIR-000138 BIR-060042, pg.9 BIR-000177 BIR-000457 BIR-002403</p>
1934	The poultry house that had recently been built from materials salvaged from the old IRS building was destroyed by fire.	BIR-000200
1935	Farm operations comprised 840 acres of which 300 acres had been cropped. Livestock on the farm included 42 shorthorn cattle, 16 horses, 26 sheep, 40 pigs, and 100 chickens.	BIR-000208
1936	Birtle IRS staff included a farmer and an assistant farmer responsible for the 24 pure bred percheron work horses. In addition there were 46 head of cattle (14 milking), 60 pigs, and 200 hens. A total of 600 acres were under cultivation and the federal Inspector of Indian Agencies indicated that the farm was far larger than was required for an IRS and therefore restrictions should be placed on farm size and the quantity of livestock.	BIR-002431, pg. 3-4 BIR-002432
1945 to 1946	Extensive grain and other agricultural crops were harvested as well as root vegetables for use by the IRS. The dairy herd consisted of 20 cows that were milked. Other livestock included brood sows, 250 laying hens, and a flock of geese. Work animals included a four horse team, and two pairs of teams. A tractor was also used for farm operations.	BIR-000531, pg. 5 BIR-000325
1949	Two former hospital wards at the IRS were being converted into living quarters for six high school-age students.	BIR-000508
1950	IRS farm land totalled 880 acres utilized in various manners including 15 acres for gardening, 521 acres of bush and pasture, 135 acres of hay, 50 acres of barley, 25 acres of wheat, 34 acres of oats, and 100 fallow acres. Livestock included 18 milk cows, 36 cattle, 1 bull, 7 horses, 39 swine, 250 hens, 300 pullets, 19 roosters, and 16 geese. In addition the IRS owned all manner of mechanized farm equipment.	BIR-000960-0004
1953	A new classroom was being built in August and was expected to be completed in ten days.	BIR-000496-0000
1957	IRS farm land totalled 880 acres utilized in various manners including 20 acres for building and garden, 456 acres of bush and pasture, 145 acres of hay, 86 acres of summer fallow, and 173 seeded acres. Livestock 1 horse, 84 cattle, 41 swine, and 350 poultry. The IRS owned mechanized farm equipment.	BIR-000964-0001 BIR-000964-0008

1959	The federal government built a single-residence and duplex at the IRS for staff accommodation.	BIR-002493
1968	The classroom building was no longer used for IRS purposes in November 1968.	BIR-005185
1969	Plans were made to dispose of farm land associated with the IRS including the livestock and agricultural machinery.	BIR-000418 BIR-000417 BIR-001545

PHOTOS, PLANS AND LAYOUT

Date	Description	Document Reference
1893	Rough plans - Birtle IRS	BIR-000007-0001
1900	The main building was solid stone, and three stories high, not including the basement. There were six rooms on the top storey; one room was used as a clothing store room and the others were dormitories. The second storey consisted of ten dormitories, one classroom and a library. On the first floor were nine rooms containing the kitchen, grocery storeroom, clothing storeroom, sewing room, dining room for children, staff dining room, office, parlor and boys' recreation room. The basement consisted of eleven rooms – the laundry, girls' washroom, vegetable cellar, bathroom, bakery, wood room, girls' recreation room, furnace room, boys' washroom, boys' storeroom, and boys' recreation room. There was also a barn, stable for the horses, three water closets (lavatory), a log milk house and hen house.	BIR-060011, pg. 6-7
1914	Sketch of IRS land and other lots under consideration for purchase	BIR-000032-0001
1927	Sketch of proposed supports for water tank at Birtle IRS	BIR-000078-0002
1929	Diagram of the location of properties considered for new IRS.	BIR-000117-0001
1929	Diagram of the location of various properties in relation to Birtle IRS and farm	BIR-000106-0001
1930	Diagram of the location of properties considered for new IRS.	BIR-000137-0001
1930 to 1931	Plan for the new Birtle IRS building illustrating rear and front elevation	BIR-001117-0000
1930 to 1931	Plan for the new Birtle IRS building illustrating right side elevation	BIR-001117-0001
1930 to 1931	Plan for the new Birtle IRS building illustrating left side elevation	BIR-001117-0002
1930 to 1931	Plan for the new Birtle IRS building illustrating the basement	BIR-001117-0003
1930 to 1931	Plan for the new Birtle IRS building illustrating the ground floor	BIR-001117-0004

1930 to 1931	Plan for the new Birtle IRS building illustrating the first floor	BIR-001117-0005
1930 to 1931	Plan for the new Birtle IRS building illustrating the second floor	BIR-001117-0006
1932	Sketch showing location of town and municipality of Birtle, Birtle IRS and surrounding properties	BIR-000166 BIR-000184-0001
1956	Photograph of Birtle IRS	BIR-000380-0001

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse at Birtle IRS or of any convicted abusers present at the school.

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)

1965 Allegations were made that the Principal went into the girls' shower room while the girls were taking showers [BIR-000588]. These allegations were again made by a female student in 1966. The student also claimed that the Principal "tore a girls (*sic*) shorts off her as she was coming out of the dining room" [BIR-005112].

Incidents (Physical)

1949 In a November letter, the Principal reported that he physically disciplined students who ran away from the IRS by giving them "...the usual tanning." He also physically disciplined students planning to run away. The Principal also noted that he had "thoroughly spanked" two girls who had run away on another date [BIR-000507].

1953, A complaint was made by a parent regarding the Principal's punishment of two students. The father stated that the Principal punished his two sons by strapping them on a table and bruising them. The boys ran away from the IRS and returned home. An examination of the boys by a doctor confirmed that one boy had "blue marks" over his buttocks, thighs and the back of his legs. The other boy had injuries to his buttocks [BIR-000434-0001; BIR-000434-0002; BIR-000433-0001; BIR-000435; BIR-000432; BIR-000357 BIR-000434-0000; BIR-000433-0000].

1959 In February, a male student left the IRS complaining about being forced to work. The Principal also noted that a teacher at the IRS tried to strap the boy and that the boy "refused to take the strapping" [BIR-000392-0000; BIR-000392-0001].

1959 In May, the Principal wrote to an Indian Agency Superintendent in reference to a letter written by a parent to a student at the IRS about the student's truant brother. The mother refused to let her son go back to the IRS. The Principal admitted that the boy "...may have and no doubt he did get the cut from my flashlight but I was doing that in self-defence and I did not wish to injure the lad but I certainly did not feel like being tossed around and poked by any student at 2 A.M. in the morning" [BIR-000396].

1965 A former student of the Birtle IRS wrote about experiencing "cruel disciplinary measures, often for no reason, such as being tied to a flag

pole, sent to bed with no food, literally beaten and slapped by staff, extra work duties on the farm in crudest conditions” [IRC-041367].

Incidents (Student on Student)

1926 In February, younger students told the Indian Agent that the older boys abused them. In September, parents of a few runaway pupils told the Agent “that the bigger pupils are in the habit of abusing the smaller ones” [BIR-002336-0002; BIR-002340-0001].

Other incidents:

1915 Two female pupils at the IRS gave birth and claimed that they had become pregnant by other pupils while at the IRS. Members of the Keesekeewenin Reserve complained about immoralities at the IRS and sexual conduct amongst students. The Principal notes that it was difficult to “safeguard” girls at the IRS, especially since there was so much cover. It was also noted that a potential solution was to further separate the boys and girls, including enclosing the girls playground in a fence to make supervision by the Matron easier [BIR-000033; BIR-000035; BIR-000041].

1931 In a report, the Synodical Missionary Superintendent of the Presbyterian Church noted that the Principal of Birtle IRS was acquitted of “charges of immoral conduct” and that at the trial “there was not a shred of evidence in support of any of the charges” [BIR-000526-0000; BIR-000526-0001]. The report does not elaborate on the details surrounding the charges and from whom the complaints were made.

1948 In August, parents from the Waywayseecappo Reserve complained about the behaviour of the Principal and signed a petition for him to be replaced. One parent wrote that he “was told by pupils that they were given cigars, tobacco, snuff, as punishment for smoke, and chew the stubs as well...These boys and girls were given 20 minutes to chew and smoke a given amount such as 2 box of snuff for one person.” [BIR-000517-0001; BIR-000333-0000; BIR-000333-0001; BIR-000333-0002; BIR-000333-0003; BIR-000517-0000]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1913 The federal Indian Agent reported that IRS students had been allowed to speak their own language and that the matter had to be remedied. Local Indian Bands had also noted something “was radically wrong” since too many pupils were running away and that IRS management had to be improved [BIR-000029].

1915 A federal Regional Inspector was asked to investigate unspecified allegations concerning the management of the IRS [BIR-000035].

1917 to 1918 There was a “Hospital Department” or “Cottage Hospital” at Birtle IRS. This section of the IRS consisted of a kitchen and wards that were 20 by 24 feet, and a nurse’s apartment that was a one-storey building split into two rooms. Due to the poor conditions of these buildings, the “Hospital Department” or “Cottage Hospital” at Birtle IRS was closed by May 1918 [BIR-000046; BIR-000048].

1927 The federal Inspector of Indian Agencies reported that six children from the Birtle IRS were in hospital, four at home sick, two sick in bed in the IRS and two had recently died. The Inspector also noted that the milk supply at the IRS was insufficient and that the children needed milk badly [BIR-000079]. The Principal wrote the next month that the conditions at the IRS had to be improved immediately or the IRS should be closed [BIR-000081-0001; BIR-000085; BIR-000093].

- 1935-36 Ten students were truant from the IRS during the previous year and therefore discussions were held to determine the cause. No conclusions were reached concerning the reasons for truancy other than poor 'spirit' at the IRS [BIR-000208; BIR-000221].
- 1937 A lack of winter recreational activity and being indoors during the winter contributed to girls attempting to run away from the IRS. In contrast to the girls, boys had access to an outdoor rink for exercise. The Principal promised to obtain toboggans and other winter sport equipment [BIR-000222].
- 1939 Twenty positive cases of Trachoma and many cases of colds and flu. Two new students had tuberculosis and were removed. One student died of tuberculosis in a Sanatorium. Another girl had her appendix removed. [BIR-000547]
- 1939 Two new students had tuberculosis and were removed and one student died of tuberculosis in a sanatorium [BIR-000547].
- 1940 Anti Typhoid serum was given to the pupils as they had been drinking untreated water for two weeks [BIR-000253]
- 1942 Truancy was rife at Birtle IRS and attributed to the numerous staff changes, the lack of a Boys Supervisor, and that older boys were able to obtain waged employment at fair wages due to wartime conditions [BIR-000262].
- 1944 Birtle IRS residents had participated in Achievement Day and the Brandon Provincial Fair [BIR-000540, pg. 3]
- 1945 In April, two ten year old boys ran away, resulting in frozen toes. The boys were found on April 18 and taken to a Doctor who in turn admitted them to hospital. It was thought that some toes might have to be amputated. As of March 21 one boy was back in IRS while the other was still in hospital but expected to fully recover and neither child required surgery [BIR-000307; BIR-000309].
- 1950 Hot water was unavailable at the IRS and the students were washing in mostly cold and tepid water. To bathe, the students carried buckets of boiling water from the boiler to the bath tubs, which the Principal noted was quite dangerous [BIR-000345].
- 1959 A student dropped out of Birtle IRS complaining they had not attended the IRS to become a farm hand. The student expressed that too much time was spent engaged in farm work, including 2 hours of chores from 6 to 8 a.m., at the expense of academic work [BIR-000397].
- 1967 The Principal responded to complaints by former students about farm work at Birtle IRS, indicating that it provided the opportunity to develop skills and to earn spending money by working for local farmers on Saturdays [BIR-002503].

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
G.G. McLaren	Principal	1889 to 1894
Neil Gilmour	Principal	1895
W.J. Small	Principal	1896 to 1901
W. McWhinney	Principal	1902 to 1903
E. H. Crawford	Principal	1903 to 1905

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W.W. McLaren	Principal	1905 to 1914
J.H. Snyder	Acting Principal	1910
Reverend David Iverach	Principal	1914 to 1916
Mrs. S. Marshall	Principal	1916 to 1921
Reverend F.E. Pitts	Principal	1921 to 1927
Reverend H.B. Currie	Principal	June 1927 to September 1933
Reverend E.H. Lockhart	Principal	September 1933 to February 1942
Albert Candy	Acting Principal	November 1941 to July 1942
Roy Webb	Principal	1942 to August 1945
Martin M. Rusaw	Principal / Administrator	August 1945 to June 1970

Narrative Completed: January 18, 2012
Narrative Updated: September 20, 2012

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

