

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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**Cristal Lake Indian Residential School
IAP School Narrative**

NAME IN THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (Schedule E/F)

Cristal Lake High School

OTHER NAMES KNOWN AS (AKAs)

1976 to 1986 Cristal Lake School [CLS-000001-0001; CLS-000051;
CLS-000105-0000]

LOCATION

The Cristal Lake IRS was located in Cristal Lake, Ontario, and the mailing address was a post office box in Pickle Lake, Ontario [CLS-000045-0000; CLS-000051; CLS-000043].

PROVINCE/TERRITORY

Ontario

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.

September 1976 to June 1986

OPERATING DATES CONTEXT

The Cristal Lake IRS opened in September 1976 to provide high school education for fifteen Indian girls [CLS-000001-0001; CLS-000045-0000; CLS-000051; CLS-000015, pg. 3; CLS-000023, pg. 4]. The Cristal Lake IRS closed in June 1986, with the last day of classes being held on June 12 [CLS-000105-0000].

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Mennonite

1976 to 1986 Northern Youth Programs Inc., a branch of the Mennonite Northern Light Gospel Missions [PHD-000222; CLS-000001-0000; SLS-000171-0003; SLS-000169-0001]

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Date	Event	Document Reference
September 1976	The Cristal Lake IRS opened for the 1976/77 school year and offered grades 9, 10 and 11 to fifteen Indian girls.	CLS-000001-0001 CLS-000045-0000 CLS-000051
May 28, 1979	The Northern Youth Programs Inc. submitted a proposed budget contract to the federal government for tuition and administration for 48 male and female Indian high school students at the Cristal Lake IRS	SLS-000014-0000 SLS-000014-0001 SLS-000014-0002 SLS-000014-0003

	and the Stirland Lake IRS for the 1979/80 school year.	
June 1980	A forest fire near the Stirland Lake IRS led to the evacuation of pupils to the Cristal Lake IRS. The girls from the Cristal Lake IRS had been moved to Beaver Lake. The boys from the Stirland Lake IRS stayed at the Cristal Lake IRS for five days.	SLS-000056, pg. 2
June to August 1981	Officials from the Ontario Ministry of Education visited the Cristal Lake IRS to determine if its curriculum met the required provincial guidelines for private schools. The federal government had requested that the program at the IRS be reviewed with an emphasis on its provincial accreditation as a private school.	SLS-000030-0000 SLS-000008
January 11, 1982	A tuition agreement and addendum were signed between the Northern Youth Programs and the federal government for the period September 1, 1981 to August 30, 1982. The agreement was for secondary school education, pupil maintenance and special cultural courses for 20 female Indian students at the Cristal Lake IRS.	SLS-000171-0000 SLS-000171-0001 SLS-000171-0002 SLS-000171-0003
May 26, 1983	A tuition agreement was signed between the Northern Youth Programs, the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, and the federal government for the period January 1 to December 31, 1983. The agreement was for secondary school education, pupil maintenance and special cultural courses for 57 Indian students for both the Stirland Lake IRS and the Cristal Lake IRS.	SLS-000170-0000 SLS-000170-0003 SLS-000170-0004 SLS-000170-0005
November 22, 1984	A tuition agreement was signed between the Northern Youth Programs, the Northern Nishnawbe Education Council, and the federal government for the period January 1 to December 31, 1985. The agreement was for secondary school education, pupil maintenance and special cultural courses for 58 Indian students for both the Stirland Lake IRS and the Cristal Lake IRS. The Northern Nishnawbe Education Council was to provide the Northern Youth Programs with lists of qualified students to be enrolled at each IRS.	SLS-000169-0000 SLS-000169-0001 SLS-000169-0002 SLS-000169-0003
June 1986	The Cristal Lake IRS closed at the end of the 1985/86 school year. The last day of classes was held on June 12, 1986.	CLS-000105-0000

EDUCATION OF STUDENTS

Grades Taught at the Indian Residential School

School Years	Grades Offered	Document Reference
1976/77 to 1977/78	Grades 9 to 11	CLS-000001-0001 CLS-000015, pg. 5-7, 14-17
1978/79	Grades 9 to 12	CLS-000016, pg. 7-12
1979/80	Grades 10 to 12	CLS-000017, pg. 9-14
1980/81	Grades 9 to 12 An elementary teacher was also employed at the IRS.	CLS-000018, pg. 9-15, 20
1981/82	Grades 9 to 10, and 12	CLS-000019, pg. 9-16
1982/83	Grades 9 to 11	CLS-000020, pg. 11-17
1983/84	Grades 9 to 12	CLS-000078-0001 CLS-000021, pg. 9-16

1984/85	Grades 9 to 12; Elementary grades for children of staff.	CLS-000022, pg. 9-17
1985/86	Grades 9 to 12; Kindergarten, Grades 3, 5 and 7 for children of staff.	CLS-000023, pg. 10-15,18

Other Schools Attended by Residents

There is no indication that residents from the Cristal Lake IRS attended any other schools.

GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

Please note that for 1977/78 to 1985/86, the number of residents is based on the number of students who appear on yearbooks since the IRS was a residential institution and no day pupils were located.

School Years	Number of Residents	If applicable, day scholars	Document Reference
1976/77	15	No information found	CLS-000045-0001
1977/78	20	No information found	CLS-000015, pg. 5-7, 12-18
1978/79	26	No information found	CLS-000016, pg. 7-13
1979/80	24	No information found	CLS-000017, pg. 9-15
1980/81	27	No information found	CLS-000018, pg. 9-16
1981/82	25	No information found	CLS-000019, pg. 9-17
1982/83	28	No information found	CLS-000020, pg. 11-18
1983/84	25	No information found	CLS-000021, pg. 9-17
1984/85	28	No information found	CLS-000022, pg. 9-17
1985/86	29	No information found	CLS-000023, pg. 10-17

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School Years	Special Programs Offered	Document Reference
1977/78	Extra-curricular activities included track and field, special theme suppers, volleyball, softball, hockey, and several interest clubs (guitar, oil painting, macramé, knitting, woodwork, orienteering, organ, cake decorating, embroidery and decoupage).	CLS-000015, pg. 8-10, 19, 27
1978/79	At the IRS there were clubs for beadwork, leather work, string art, photography, carpentry, folk guitar, furniture upholstery, crocheting, spoken Cree, a newspaper and a yearbook committee. Sports included track and field, canoeing, volleyball and skating on the local bay. Special events included a box social at the Stirland Lake IRS, a restaurant night, a freeze-up festival, and a hockey tournament. The Stirland Lake IRS boys visited the Cristal Lake IRS.	CLS-000016, pg. 24-30 CLS-000033, pg. 2-5
1979/80	Sporting activities included hockey, track and field, broomball, snowmobiling, snowshoeing, tobogganing, baseball, ping-pong, and fishing. Other activities included guitar, decoupage, string art, crocheting, singing group and the yearbook committee. Special events included a restaurant night and the freeze-up festival.	CLS-000017, pg. 24-26, 33-36
1980/81	Students played hockey and broomball, and	CLS-000018, pg. 17,

	participated in "winter Olympics," the yearbook committee and singing group.	25, 28
1981/82	Sports played by students included hockey, broomball and volleyball. Other activities included the yearbook committee, restaurant night, visits from the Stirland Lake IRS students, and singing group.	CLS-000019, pg. 30-32, 35
1982/83	Extra-curricular sporting activities included hockey, broomball, tubing behind a skidoo, the winter Olympics, volleyball and ping-pong tournaments. Girls from the Pelican School came to play floor hockey and volleyball. Other activities included restaurant night, the freeze-up festival, and a backwards day. Interest clubs included calligraphy, cake decorating, typing, cooking, piano, guitar, leather crafts and a gospel team.	CLS-000064-0000 CLS-000065-0000 CLS-000020, pg. 30-34 CLS-000066-0000
1983/84	Students played hockey, volleyball, track and field, winter Olympics, and went snowshoeing. Broomball matches and tournaments were held against Savant Lake and other teams. Other activities included the yearbook committee, an IRS newspaper, a restaurant night, a mystery night, a "Daffy" supper, film showings, and a talent show. Students from the Stirland Lake IRS spent a day at the Cristal Lake IRS playing soccer, volleyball and table games. The Cristal Lake IRS students met with the Stirland Lake IRS students monthly for activity days.	CLS-000077-0000 CLS-000079-0000 CLS-000021, pg. 29-36 CLS-000080-0000
1984/85	Sports at the IRS included hockey, broomball, softball, volleyball, skating, track and field, and winter Olympics (snowmobile racing, tree chopping, tea making, ice obstacles, puck shot, log sawing, and skiing). Other activities included restaurant nights, a freeze-up festival, a foreign food night, the student newspaper and the yearbook committee.	CLS-000022, pg. 29-32
1985/86	Student activities included banquets, the freeze-up festival, restaurants nights, eat-out suppers, concert night, film night, socials with students from the Stirland Lake IRS, the student newspaper and the yearbook committee.	CLS-000023, pg. 32

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Date	Event	Document Reference
1976	The IRS buildings consisted of a student dormitory, a classroom building, a Home Economics classroom and several staff residence buildings.	CLS-000001-0001
1979	The girls at the IRS decorated the newly paneled gym walls. The paneling work had been done by the "Cristal Lake men".	CLS-000033, pg. 3
1979/80	The Lakeview Dorm was depicted in the IRS yearbook as a separate building. The classroom building was detached from the dorm.	CLS-000017, pg. 29, 31
1983/84	Work crews from Maryland, Ohio, Indiana, and Pennsylvania spent a week each at the Cristal Lake IRS undertaking remodeling, small carpentry projects, repairs to the buildings and grounds and cutting wood.	CLS-000021, pg. 23

PHOTOS, PLANS AND LAYOUT

Date	Description	Document Reference
1979/80	The IRS yearbook featured a picture of the exterior of the classroom building, and pictures of students at their desks. The exterior of the Lakeview Dorm building was also featured.	CLS-000017, pg. 29, 31
1983/84	The IRS yearbook featured pictures of "dorm life" at the IRS, including an exterior picture of a side of the dorm and several interior pictures.	CLS-000021, pg. 35

The IRS yearbooks from 1977 to 1986 contain numerous photographs of students, staff, activities, and facilities at the IRS [CLS-000015; CLS-000016; CLS-000017; CLS-000018; CLS-000019; CLS-000020; CLS-000021; CLS-000022; CLS-000023].

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

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

Incidents (Sexual)

No information found.

Incidents (Physical)

No information found.

Incidents (Student on Student)

No information found.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1977/78 The IRS students took class trips to Toronto and Niagara Falls, [CLS-000015, pg. 23-25].
- 1978/79 In October and November, students travelled to Pickle Lake to go shopping. A class trip was also taken to Chicago, Indiana, and Ohio [CLS-000016, pg. 31-32; CLS-000033, pg. 4].
- January 1979 The Pehtabun Chiefs issued a Band Council Resolution resolving that children would not be allowed to attend the Cristal Lake IRS, the Stirland Lake IRS or the Poplar Hill IRS for the 1979/80 school term unless school officials met with the Northern Anishinabie (Nishnawbe) Education Council to discuss IRS programs and operations. The Resolution was initiated by complaints from two Stirland Lake IRS students regarding mistreatment. An official from the Northern Anishinabie Education Council followed up the complaints by visiting the Cristal Lake IRS and the Stirland Lake IRS. No information was found concerning complaints about the mistreatment of students at the Cristal Lake IRS [NCA-001734-0000; NCA-001734-0001; NCA-001734-0002; NCA-001721].
- 1979/80 The IRS students travelled to Regina, North Battleford, Calgary, Edmonton, and North Dakota [CLS-000017, pg. 27-28].

- October 1979 Some parents from North Spirit Lake raised concerns and made complaints about the Cristal Lake IRS at a Band Council meeting. The complaints were regarding the opening of letters, a student activity fee, and requests parents had received from their daughters for money for school supplies and winter clothing. A reply from the IRS listed the clothing provided to a particular IRS student, and noted that letters known to be from family members of the students were not opened; that a student activity fee helped support film showings, student interest clubs, and personal projects; and a pen and necessary paper were provided at the beginning of the term but girls could buy more supplies themselves if the supplies were needed [CLS-000029-0001; CLS-000029-0002; CLS-000029-0003; CLS-000029-0004].
- February 1980 A staff member who tried to prevent a student from leaving her dormitory was threatened with a carving knife by the student [CLS-000025].
- 1980/81 The IRS singing group travelled to Weagamow, Sioux Lookout, Armstrong, Savant, Bearskin, Sachigo, and Sandy Lake. The class trip was to Minnesota [CLS-000018, pg. 28-30].
- 1981/82 The IRS singing group travelled to Kingfisher Lake, Bearskin Lake, Sachigo Lake, Poplar Hill Village, and the Poplar Hill Development School. During October to December, the singing group travelled to the Stirland Lake IRS, Savant Lake and Pickle Lake. Between February and June the group travelled to Hudson and Sioux Lookout. In the Spring the class trip was to Toronto and Niagara Falls [CLS-000019, pg. 32-34].
- 1982/83 In the fall, several students went to the Beaver Lake Camp in Dryden for a youth retreat. The whole IRS went to Dryden one weekend to have their eyes examined. Students went Christmas shopping in Pickle Lake. The gospel team travelled to the Stirland Lake IRS, as well as to different churches to sing. The IRS students took trips to Minnesota, North and South Dakota, and Winnipeg [CLS-000064-0000; CLS-000065-0000; CLS-000066-0000; CLS-000020, pg. 30, 35].
- 1983/84 In October, several students from the Cristal Lake IRS went to Dryden to have their eyes examined. Some students attended a youth retreat at the Beaver Lake Camp in Dryden. In December, the IRS students went Christmas shopping in Pickle Lake. The Cristal Lake IRS students travelled frequently to the Stirland Lake IRS to watch the boys play hockey [CLS-000077-0000; CLS-000079-0000; CLS-000080-0000].
- 1985/86 The IRS "Cristalaires" singing group/class trip travelled to Iowa and Toronto [CLS-000023, pg. 36-37].

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
Orval Zehr	Principal	September 1976 to June 1978
David J. Hertzler	Principal	September 1978 to June 1981
Myron M. Wengerd	Administrator	September 1981 to June 1984
Marland D. Miller	Administrator	September 1984 to June 1986

Narrative Completed: August 24, 2012
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The original school narrative document produced by Canada also contains a number of records that have been separated pending review.

