

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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## **Crowfoot IRS School Narrative**

11 08 2004

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

### **NAME OF SCHOOL AND VARIANTS**

St. Joseph Residential School [04656, p.9]

St. Joseph (Crowfoot) School [03854, p.1]

Roman Catholic Indian Boarding School on the Crowfoot Reserve [00121]

Crowfoot Boarding School [00109]

Crowfoot Indian Residential School [03854, p.1]

### **CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY**

1900	January 25; boarding school formally opened at Blackfoot Crossing [00044; 00071; 00028A <sup>1</sup> ]
1909	Boarding School now at Cluny [00109]
1912	New residence built [04685] at Cluny [00132B, p.1; 2137A]; land and school are considered property of the government [00144, p.1]
1948	A few students attend public high school and board at Crowfoot, with board paid from Band funds [02900]; students subsequently moved to private home [02934]
1950	Blackfoot Indian Day School operates as part of IRS [04709]
1951	Grades 9, 10, 11 added [01925]
1952	Blackfoot Indian Day School built on the reserve [00668]
1957	The farm was operated as a school project until it was transferred to the Mission in November, 1957 [03991A, p.2]
1960	Grade 12 operating at IRS [01498, p.1]
1965	September 1; Kindergarten teacher=s position created [01101]
1967	Grades 10, 11, 12 discontinued [04337]
1968	Residence building closed as a dormitory [00966]; pupils requiring residence facilities are boarded on reserve in homes and school continues in operation as day school, grades K - 9 [02052, p.1]
1975	Residence building slated for demolition; land retained by government [02063]

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<sup>1</sup> Although the map is dated 1883, the location of the school was likely over-written at a later date.

### **Integrated education program**

- 1947 2 students attend Cluny High School; 2 in Gleichen High School [BSS<sup>2</sup> 00665]
- 1958 16 students in integrated education program [BSS 00400, p.8]
- 1962 123 students in integrated education program; 152 students in residence; 300 attending day programs [BSS 00400, p.8]
- 1966 100 places purchased for Indian students at Strathmore High School [04344A, p.2]
- 1968 141 spaces contracted with Wheatland County; 50 spaces with Newell County; 85 spaces with Vulcan County [BSS 00424, p.2]

### **MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL**

#### Dates managed by Church

Jan. 25, 1900 - Mar. 31, 1969 [00044, 01079A, pp. 1, 2]. The residence closed on December 31, 1968, but the school continued in operation as a day school.

#### Dates managed by Government

after March 31, 1969 [1079A, pp.1, 2]

### **SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

- 1900 The government contributed \$2500 toward the establishment of the school at Blackfoot Crossing [00041]
- 1912 New residence built [04685] at Cluny [00132B, p.1; 02137A]; land and school are considered property of the government [00144, p.1]
- 1938 Addition to the school built, including 2 classrooms and a playroom [04685; 00664A]
- 1942 School uses 8 dormitories, approximately 6,000 cubic feet; more than 500 cubic feet per pupil. [03830]
- 1943 New piggery constructed [02778]
- 1948 2 additional classrooms opened by Principal, for a total of 5, plus 1 room for day pupils rented from the Church by the government, and a sewing room [04685]
- 1949 Government funds a new root cellar [02483]
- 1952 Day school built [00668]; teacherage built [03524A, p.2]
- 1953 Chapel modified by Principal to create dormitory space without government=s authorization [00656]
- 1954/1955 Two-classroom block plus teacherage constructed [00674; 00670A; 00672A, pp.1, 2; 00676]

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2 Documents cited with the prefix BSS are from the *Blackfoot/Stony/Sarcee District* collection.

- 1956 Additional Teacherage built [02034A, p.2]  
2 classrooms rented by the government from the church, in church-owned buildings on church property [04712]
- 1959 Government rents 3 classrooms from the Church due to lack of space at IRS [BSS 00538]
- 1960 Old rectory renovated by church to create classrooms, staff accommodation and dormitory space [00691; 00691A]
- 1963 Confirmation that government-owned buildings include Main Building, Gymnasium, 1954-Teacherage, 1956-Teacherage and other smaller buildings; all residences belong to Church, although the Main Building also sleeps 100 students [02034A, p.2]; 6-room teacherage built by the government, associated with the day school [04141, p.1]
- 1964 8 classroom school and teachers= residence built [04447, p.1]
- 1965 Electrical renovations and minor structural renovations completed at a cost of approximately thirty thousand dollars [04573]
- 1967 Construction of new fire escape system approved [02206]
- 1968 Crowfoot has 8 classrooms in a separate block and 3 classrooms in the main building, although two of the three are attached to the main building by a corridor. The government rents space from the Oblate Fathers for Home Economics. [04518]; Crowfoot to be closed because of poor state of repair and poor sanitary conditions maintained by principal [04319]
- 1968 December 31; Residence building closed as a dormitory [02044] but continues to offer lunches to day pupils, Home Economics classes, laundry facilities [00849]
- 1969 2 classrooms, gymnasium, dining area still in use [02248B, p.1]
- 1970 5 old classrooms in the residence still in use [BSS 03444, p.1]
- 1971 Portable classrooms transferred to Band [03496A]
- 1972 6-room teacherage still in use [04141]
- 1975 Residence building no longer in use and slated for demolition [02063]

## **LAND**

- Treaty number/area: Treaty 7  
Location: c.1900 located at Blackfoot Crossing [00028A; 00071, p.1]; by June 14, 1909 on the Blackfoot Reserve, near Cluny, Alberta [00109]
- 1921 Land considered the property of the Department [00144]

## **PHOTOS, PLANS AND OTHER MEDIA**

- 1883 Map showing original location of Crowfoot at Blackfoot Crossing [00028A]. Although the map is dated 1883, documents indicate that the school was built around 1900 [00044] and the location was likely

	handwritten on the map after the school was opened.
1901	Plan of buildings at Blackfoot Crossing [02153B]
1918	Location of school at Cluny [02137A]
1953	Site-plan of buildings and proposed Chapel Hall [00664A]
1954	Detail of part of site-plan showing two classroom block plus teacherage [00670A]
1954	Plan view of Crowfoot buildings [00672A, pp.1, 2]

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

1900	5 pupils at Blackfoot Crossing
1909	30 pupils
1912	45 pupils
1919	47 pupils: Gr 4 - 6 girls, 4 boys; Gr 3 - 3 girls, 6 boys; Gr. 2 - 5 girls, 7 boys; Gr. 1 - 8 girls, 8 boys
1920	30 girls and 40 boys
1936	80 pupils
1942	97 pupils, but authorized pupilage has not been increased to the number admitted.
1943	Authorized enrolment is 75 pupils
1945	More than 100 children (30 over the grant)
1948	Authorized enrolment is 110 but pupilage has increased from 110 to 130
1949	152 children, including 22 day pupils
1953	Residence: 72 boys, 89 girls; Day School: 22 pupils
1958	Residence: 192 pupils; Day School: 49
1961	Residence: 85 boys, 111 girls; Day School: 56 boys, 45 girls; 297 total
1962	300 children; 130 boarders
1964	117 residential pupils; 216 day pupils
1966	83 residential pupils; 285 day pupils; 65 in residence, 300 day students
1967	77 residential pupils; 230 day pupils
1968	Crowfoot enrolment 300; integrated educational program to be implemented with 141 pupils going to Wheatland County; 50 to Newell County; 85 to Vulcan County
1968	May; 65-70 residential pupils; 180 day students
1968	September; 27 pupils in residence
Dec. 31, 1968	Residence officially closed
Jan. 3, 1969	20 pupils remain in residence; only 10 from the Blackfoot reserve

### **STUDENTS FROM OTHER RESERVES**

January 3, 1969	10 students from Peigan Reserve [BSS 00508, p.1]
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## **RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

Diocese of St. Albert [02182, p.2]

Indianscom [01652A, p.2]

Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate [00044]

Sisters of Charity of Providence [04075]; sometimes referred to as Sisters of Charity or as Sisters of Providence

## **WRITTEN AGREEMENTS**

- 1911 School Operating Agreement between His Majesty the King, represented by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs of Canada, and Bishop Emile J. Legal, Bishop of the Diocese of St. Albert [02182, p.2]
- 1962 School Operating Agreement between Her Majesty the Queen in the right of Canada, represented by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, and INDIANESCOM [01652A, p.2]
- 1965 Agreement between the government and Wheatland County School Board concerning integrated education of 100 Indian pupils [03516]

## **DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS**

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse at Crowfoot 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 (Physical)**

A 1921 incident of chaining to benches and strapping leaving marks, referred to in a nurse=s report, led to instructions from the Indian Commissioner and from the Deputy Superintendent General that these forms of punishment would not be tolerated by the government and should be ended. The government intended to issue a circular on acceptable forms of punishment. [04206; 04206A; 00158; 04206B; 04206C; 04206D]

## **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

April 8, 1914 Verbal >agreement= with the government that Crowfoot would always remain a residence on the reserve for the benefit of the Blackfoot people [02229, p.1]

## **PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS**

### **Principals:**

Danis, Rev. C.J., O.M.I.	Approx. 09/26/1900 - approx. 01/31/1901
Riou, Rev. Father J., O.M.I.	Approx. 01/31/1901 - approx. 12/1908B see also second entry for Riou below
Levern, Rev. J.L., O.M.I.	Approx. 12/1908 - at least 10/1913
Doucet, L., O.M.I.	Possibly 10/1913 - 06/1919
Riou, Father J., O.M.I.	Approx. 06/1919 - 08/1941
Lessard, J., O.M.I. (Acting)	6 months from approx. 05/1938
Chevalier, Rev. Fr. (Acting)	Approx. 07/1939
House, Mr. (Acting)	Approx. 06/1940
Forestier, Rev. Fernand, O.M.I.	08/1941 - 07/16/1945
Charron, Rev. Adrian, O.M.I.	07/16/1945 - 07/16/1956 B see also second entry for Charron below
Fortier, Rev. Gerard, O.M.I.	07/16/1956 - 03/13/1962
Michaud, Father Martin	03/13/1962
Latour, Rev. G.M., O.M.I.	03/1962 - 03/1965
Denise-Helene, Sister	1962 - 1964: APrincipal, Level II@
Charron, Rev. Adrian, O.M.I.	03/1965 - 03/31/1969
McMahon, Father M., O.M.I.	01/1969 - 06/1969

### **Administrators:**

Charron, Rev. Adrian, O.M.I. 1968/1969  
Fox, Father (Ass=t Administrator) 1969

Narrative Completed: November 08, 2004

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