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Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point
IAP Hostel Narrative
[08 05 2009]

This IAP Hostel Narrative summarizes documents that provide an over-view of the history and administration of the hostel and associated school.

NAME OF HOSTEL AND VARIANTS

Eskimo Point Pupil Residence [EPS-000002]
Eskimo Point Hostel [EPS-000003]
Buildings 7, 8, and 9 at Eskimo Point [EPS-000322]

Years during which the hostel was operated solely or in part by the Federal Government as a residence for school age students

February 16, 1962 to June 1967 [EPS-000002] [EPS-000039]

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

1954: A government report notes that some semblance of education had been available to children in and around Eskimo Point since 1924, when the Roman Catholic mission was established. An Anglican Mission was built sometime in the 1930s, and the Eskimo Point Evangelical Mission opened about 1950. All three missions had day school facilities that operated intermittently and the government provided them with small subsidies to offset costs incurred while providing schooling, as per the Northwest Territories Act. However, it had not been possible to systematically educate children who passed through the mission schools for at least three reasons: because schooling was not the chief priority of missionaries who were in the North to win converts; because very few Inuit lived year round at Eskimo Point; and, because the missionaries were often away from the community for lengthy periods. [RCN-001610] [RCN-004643] [EPS-000449]

1958: In April of 1957 the Sub-Committee on Eskimo Education recommended that a Federal Day School be established at Eskimo Point as soon as possible. During March of 1958 the planning for the school was completed and construction was slated to begin when the weather became favorable. By November construction had proceeded and then stalled with the principal's house, a powerhouse, and the school itself at various stages of construction due to a lack of material. An engineer onsite reported that it was unlikely that the project would be resumed before the coming spring. [RCN-005800] [RCN-008388]

1959: Government correspondence states that three 8-pupil hostels would be constructed at the Eskimo Point Federal Day school to accommodate students who lived in camps on the land in the general vicinity of Eskimo Point and students at Eskimo Point whose parents periodically left the community to go hunting, fishing or trapping. Funding would be made available for construction during the 1961/62 fiscal year. [FGR-000004]

The Eskimo Point Federal Day School (FDS) opened in September 1959. [RCN-005887]

A Government Report notes that there were about 50 school age children living in hunting and trapping camps in the general area, but too far from Eskimo Point to attend the Federal Day School regularly. "There is no doubt", it states, "concerning the need for small family type hostels here if regular attendance is to be secured. The classrooms and a staff of new teachers are, of course, already available." [FGR-000020]

1960: Eskimo Point lacked a water reservoir and had no water distribution system. Water for drinking and washing at the school was drawn from a nearby lake and sterilized by boiling prior to use. Most of the school aged children in the community lived with their families in snow houses or tents that had no bathing or clothes washing facilities. Government correspondence notes that the children were being bathed regularly at the homes of the principal and a teacher from the FDS, and that a communal washing machine would be put at the school and utilized in home economics classes. [EPS-000254] [EPS-000255]

A group of Inuit from the Padlei area were moved from their camp on the land to Eskimo Point in the second week of May. Ten of them were children who were subsequently enrolled at the FDS. [EPS-000258]

A Report by the principal at the FDS states that the school had been converted into a temporary hospital during a measles outbreak in the last week of May. Sixteen Padlei Inuit who had been "living in canvas tents along the ridge west of the school", all of whom had measles, were moved into the school and treated there by two nurses. No classes were held at the Federal Day School between May 25 and June 1. [EPS-000261-0001]

In December several Inuit families were evacuated from camps on the land to Eskimo Point. Most were malnourished and many required medical attention. The school was temporarily converted into a triage centre where people were fed and housed until they could be placed with local families or returned to their camps. A pregnant woman experiencing abdominal pain and her three children remained housed in the school and in a nurse's care until early January 1961. [EPS-000250-0000] [EPS-000250-0001]

1961: Service Agreements identify two sets of hostel parents who were hired to operate two of the 8 pupil student hostels at Eskimo Point. The contracts run from December 15, 1961 to August 15, 1962. [EPS-000285] [EPS-000297]

1962: A memorandum notes that the work crew had been unable to complete the construction of the three hostels owing to an incident whereby the HBC cargo ship had been forced to jettison a large amount of construction material while shipping it north. [EPS-000288]

By mid February two of the three hostels were complete. The first 11 students were admitted to residence on February 16, 1962. [EPS-000002]

Classes at the FDS were suspended for an unspecified number of days in May when the school building was pressed into service as a temporary hospital owing to a community wide epidemic of mumps that was followed by measles and then chicken pox outbreaks. [EPS-000145]

At the end of June there were 2 children living in the hostels. [EPS-000003]

By October the third hostel remained not built. Government correspondence notes that the construction of welfare housing at Eskimo Point had reduced the need for hostel beds by making possible a home boarding program. Government officials preferred for the children brought to Eskimo Point for schooling to be placed with families in the community rather than at the hostel. At the Area Administrator's suggestion, the third hostel was erected near the school and was utilized as government office space. While it seemed unlikely that the building would ever be required as a hostel, it was built at the school site so that it could be used as a classroom when enrolment at the FDS increased. [EPS-000315] [EPS-000319-0001]

Only one of the hostels was used as a student residence during the 1962/63 school year. [EPS-000322]

A Service Agreement identifies one pair of hostel parents at Eskimo Point. The contract runs from November 1, 1962 to March 31, 1963. [EPS-000330]

The December Quarterly Return identifies two children in the hostel. The first child was admitted to the hostel on November 9 and the second on December 11. [EPS-000006]

1963: In January a medical team arrived in Eskimo Point to conduct a community wide chest x-ray survey. The survey resulted in a massive evacuation of people from Eskimo Point to the Clearwater Lake Tuberculosis sanitarium near The Pas, Manitoba, between January and April. [EPS-000347]

A community report indicated that the 1960-1963 tuberculosis epidemic at Eskimo Point saw approximately 70% of the population removed to the south for long periods of medical treatment. [EPS-000400]

A doctor's report notes that Eskimo Point had "in the past 6 months produced 80 cases of active tuberculosis involving 55% of households, half the children under 10 years of age and 24% of the whole population." [EPS-000347]

Records from the Eskimo Point Federal Day School identify 33 students as having been sent to Clearwater Lake Sanitarium with active tuberculosis. [EPS-000070] [EPS-000071] [EPS-000072]

The March Quarterly Return notes that one of the four residential pupils living in the hostel had been "evacuated to Clearwater" after spending 77 days in residence. [EPS-000007]

A Service Agreement identifies one pair of hostel parents at Eskimo Point. The contract runs from April 1, 1963 to June 30, 1963. [EPS-000331]

The June Quarterly Return identifies one pupil in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000009]

A Service Agreement identifies one pair of hostel parents at Eskimo Point. The contract runs from September 2, 1963 to July 15, 1964. [EPS-000340]

Government correspondence states that two of the hostels at Eskimo Point would function as student residences during the 1963/64 school year, one for boys and one for girls. The third hostel

would continue to be utilized as office space by the area administrator and, as necessary, sleeping quarters for people passing through Eskimo Point. [EPS-000343] [GWR-000201] [RCN-009195]

The September Quarterly Return identifies 15 pupils in residence at the hostel. Seven of those students are noted as being from Repulse Bay. This document also notes that two pupils had been admitted to the hostel on July 23, on welfare grounds, and that they remained in the hostel when the school year started. [EPS-000014]

The December Quarterly Return identifies 17 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000015-0001]

1964: The March Quarterly Return identifies 17 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000017]

A Service Agreement identifies one pair of hostel parents at Eskimo Point. The contract runs from April 12, 1964 to June 30, 1964. [EPS-000359-0001] [EPS-000359-0002]

The June Quarterly Return identifies 14 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000019]

During the 1963/64 school year, the government purchased an unspecified amount of clothing for seven children from Repulse Bay who were living at the Eskimo Point hostel. [BLS-000487]

The September Quarterly Return identifies 19 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000021]

In October three children returned to Eskimo Point from the Clearwater Lake Tuberculosis Sanitarium. Although their parents were living at inland camps, they were enrolled at the FDS and placed in the hostel for the remainder of the school year. [EPS-000023]

The December Quarterly Return identifies 21 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000023]

1965: The March Quarterly Return identifies 15 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000025]

In March and April two children from the Eskimo Point hostel tested positive for tuberculosis and were evacuated to the Clearwater Lake Tuberculosis Sanitarium. A report by the principal notes that eleven pupils from the school at Eskimo Point were being treated for tuberculosis at Clearwater. [EPS-000168-0001] [EPS-000138]

The Federal Hostels at Eskimo Point lacked bathtubs and shower stalls. Departmental correspondence states “the lack of these facilities is apparently causing the medical staff at Eskimo Point some concern and when [the doctor] was made aware of this fact he was quite disturbed and wonders how or why this Department can operate institutions without the proper bathroom facilities. [The doctor] has stated that proper bathroom facilities are essential for the health of the children maintained in these small hostels and would like our assurance that these deficiencies will be rectified. ” [EPS-000372]

The June Quarterly Return identifies 12 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000026]

The September Quarterly Return identifies 12 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000028]

The December Quarterly Return identifies 13 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000030]

1966: The March Quarterly Return identifies 13 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000032]

The June Quarterly Return identifies 14 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000033]

The September Quarterly Return identifies 9 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000036]

The December Quarterly Return identifies 9 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000037]

1967: A Government Report states that over the winter of 1966/67 there had been outbreaks of meningitis in communities across the Eastern Arctic and that Eskimo Point had been among the hardest hit. Two children enrolled at the FDS had died and two others were hospitalized for extensive periods of time. One of the hospitalized children was the son of a teacher at the FDS.

Regarding the likelihood of further outbreaks of disease at Eskimo Point the Report states:

“Tuberculosis is a far greater problem and threat to Eskimo Point than meningitis. Twenty-five people have been evacuated from Eskimo Point for treatment of T.B. from September 1966 to date. A close survey of the community has been carried out and an additional thirty people have reacted positively to T.B. testing. The situation at Eskimo Point now has all the earmarks of an impending T.B. epidemic similar to that which occurred in 1962-63 – just four years ago.....Consideration was given to the idea of closing down the school and cutting out all public gatherings to reduce the possibility of further contagion. [The doctor] had a number of very logical reasons for not closing the school. For one thing, conditions in the school are less crowded than in the house. It is also easier to detect the early symptoms of meningitis in the school which the nurse visits daily.” [EPS-000402-0001]

The March Quarterly Return identifies 9 pupils in residence at the hostel [EPS-000038]

Overcrowding at the FDS was problematic and a report by the principal notes that the school’s kitchen and the home making cabin were used as classrooms during 1966/67. [EPS-000398-0003]

The June Quarterly Return identifies 9 pupils in residence at the hostel. [EPS-000039]

The hostel did not re-open after the 1966/67 school year. By November 1967 two of the former hostel buildings were serving as classrooms for the FDS and the third was being used as staff housing. [EPS-000040] [EPS-000243] [RCN-012258-0003]

MANAGEMENT OF HOSTEL

The Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point was conceived, developed, funded and operated by the Northern Affairs Branch of the Federal Government until 1966 and by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs after a merger of government departments in 1966. As with other Small Hostels, the Federal Government hired and trained the people who worked in the Eskimo Point Hostel and provided food for its occupants. People who worked at the Eskimo Point hostel were contractors rather than employees of the Federal Government. [RCN-003483-0000] [RCN-003483-0001]

"In connection with small hostels, our policy may be briefly stated as follows: small hostels with

accommodation for 8 children in the 6 to 10 year age group will gradually be constructed at centers where day schools are already in operation, provided local boarding facilities are inadequate to take care of the children in this age group. The children admitted to these hostels will be those who normally reside beyond daily commuting distance of the school but within a radius of 50 to 100 miles. For this purpose 'daily commuting' means that the child cannot attend school at least 70% of the time with or without local transportation. As far as possible these hostels are to assimilate family units with the normal house atmosphere. Standards are to be as close as possible to those prevailing in the area and supervision, including cooking, laundry and so on is to be carried out under contract by an older Eskimo couple or widow who might otherwise require some form of government assistance. Local food resources are to be utilized to the greatest possible extent. Provision is made in the 1960-61 estimates for the construction of family type hostels at the following locations: Baker Lake, Great Whale River, Port Harrison. Several more are planned for 1961-62." [RCN-004411-0000]

Dates managed by Church

The operation and management of the Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point was entirely secular with no Church Involvement.

Dates managed by Government

February 16, 1962 to June 1967 [EPS-000002] [EPS-000039]

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

1959: When it opened in 1959, the Eskimo Point 'school plant' consisted of a one room school with accommodation for staff. [RCN-008035-00003]

1962: Authorization was given to add new playground lighting at the Eskimo Point Federal Day School. This was deemed necessary in order to improve playground safety as in the north the daylight hours are much shorter during the fall and winter. [EPS-000295]

1964: By 1964 the school facility was made up of a three classroom schoolhouse, a home making cabin, two 3 bedroom houses, one 2 bedroom house, and three 8 bed hostels. The home making cabin was generally utilized as a classroom. [RCN-002205-0007] [EPS-000163]

In September a 10' x 24' porch was added on to the northeast end of the main school building to prevent snow from drifting through the front door into the school, and to give the children a place to change out of their winter clothing after arriving at school. [EPS-000312]

1966: A letter discusses plans to construct two classrooms, an office and a kitchen for the Eskimo Point Federal Day School. The construction was to take place over the course of the summer months. [EPS-000389-0001]

LAND

Eskimo Point is located in the Keewatin Region at 61 deg. 07'N x 94 deg. 03'W, approximately 160 miles north of Churchill on western coast of Hudson Bay. The settlement was described as

being flat, treeless and spread along two miles of a narrow, sandy peninsula, or point. [EPS-000414]

The Federal Hostel buildings at Eskimo Point were an addition to the existing Federal Day School facility and located within close proximity to the Federal Day School. [EPS-000395]

PHOTOS, PLANS AND OTHER MEDIA

Docid #	Date	Description
EPS-000395	9/00/1966	This document is a drawing of the Eskimo Point school facility and includes the three hostels as well as the Day school building. The unlabelled building in the drawing is the homemaking instruction cabin.
EPS-000250-0002	00/00/0000	This document shows the location of Inuit camps on the land around Eskimo Point.

GENERAL ENROLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

Year	Number of Students
1961/62	11
1962/63	4
1963/64	17
1964/65	21
1965/66	14
1966/67	9

STUDENTS FROM OTHER RESERVES

Students from, at least the following communities attended the Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point:

Eskimo Point
Repulse Bay
Whale Cove
Sandy Point
Rankin Inlet
Padlei

There may be alternate ways of spelling these band names.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Please note: The management of the Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point was entirely secular with no Church Involvement.

Up until the opening of the Eskimo Point Federal Day School, various religious groups were actively educating children in the Eskimo Point area. These groups included the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Evangelical churches. As was the case in most northern communities, the mission run schools in Eskimo Point were closed by the time the government day school opened in 1959. [EPS-000449] [RCN-005915]

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

As a result of the Government running the Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point directly with no Church involvement, no operational agreements were signed with religious organizations.

Contracts were signed with various community members to act as “Hostel Parents” or “Hostel Mothers” to manage the residences. [see ‘Chronological History’ section of narrative for all individual contracts located for hostel parents of the Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point].

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse at the Federal Hostel at Eskimo Point or of any convicted abusers present at the school.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1959: In late December 1959 two groups of Inuit who had been living in camps several miles outside the community were evacuated to Eskimo Point following an inspection tour by the area welfare officer. Lacking a place to stay, and in need of food, clothing and medical attention, several were housed at the school for an unspecified period of time. [EPS-000250-0001]

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
Maurice P. Walsh	Acting Principal	1959 to 1961
David M. Davies	Principal	1961 to 1965
Menno Schultz	Principal	1965 to 1967
Stanley Beckett	Principal	1967

Narrative Completed: January 27, 2009

Narrative Updated: August 5, 2009

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



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