

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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Hay River (St. Peter's) Residential School
School Narrative
January 8, 2007

This School Narrative summarizes documents that provide an overview of the history and administration of the school.

NAME OF SCHOOL AND VARIANTS¹

Hay River Boarding School (St. Peter's Mission) [HRU-000254[000-000]]

Protestant Episcopal Mission School [HRU-000199[000-000]]

Protestant School at St. Peter's Mission [HRU-000202[000-000]]

St. Peter's Mission [Boarding] School [HRU-000226[000-000]]

Hay River Indian Boarding School [HRU-000001[000-000]]

Hay River Indian Residential School [HRU-000019[000-002]]

Hay River Indian School [HRU-000017[000-001]]

Hay River Protestant School [HRU-000201[000-000]]

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

The following points comprise a general time line for the Residential School and associated educational and medical facilities in Hay River.

- 1893 Mr. (later Rev.) T.J. Marsh journeyed to Hay River on June 29, 1893 to construct a log cabin for use as a Mission building. Day schooling was provided in Marsh's temporary personal quarters for at least five students commencing October 11, 1893, and instruction continued there until the Mission was completed [ANGDC-87477²; ANGDC-87480].
- 1894 The Mission building was completed on May 31, 1894 and day schooling moved to this location [ANGDC-87477; ANGDC-87480]. A general document reviewing the history of education in the North indicates that the Anglican Church opened a boarding school in Hay River in 1894; however this likely refers to the opening of the Mission itself and associated Day School [NWTG-002943[000-000]].
- 1895 The boarding school at Hay River opens on July 5, 1895. Seven students and various staff from the Anglican Mission Day School at Fort Resolution transferred to St. Peter's at that time [ANGDC-87477; ANGDC-87480].
- 1899 The Hay River School received Government grants for its operations from [at least] the quarter ending June 30, 1899 [HRU-000204[000-000]].

¹ The Anglican Mission in Hay River was referred to as St. Peter's, and this Mission ran the Residential and Day Schools that existed there. Many incidental combinations of the terms St. Peter's, Hay River, Indian, Eskimo, Boarding School, and Residential School were used to describe the Mission Residential and Day School institution complex. Consequently this list is representative rather than exhaustive; other name variations may be encountered. The first [bolded] name on the list provided is the name that appears on the signed operating agreement from 1911.

² Documents with the prefix ANGDC are from the Anglican Church Other Party Documents collection. These are not Crown-sourced documents.

- 1911 The only known/identified Operating Agreement was signed between the Department of Indian Affairs and Bishop Stringer (on behalf of the Anglican Church). This document formally spells out the operational parameters and management/funding structure of the Hay River Residential School [HRU-000254[000-000]].
- 1917 Construction of a new Residential School building is completed [HRU-000744[000-000]].
- 1925 A Government-funded hospital is added to the Residential School facilities [HRU-000397[000-000]; HRU-000398[000-006]].
- 1936 All Saints Residential School opens in Aklavik and becomes the focal point of Anglican residential schooling in the far north. Shingle Point Residential School (Yukon) simultaneously closes and its students and staff transfer to All Saints.
- 1937 Hay River Residential School closes officially on August 31, 1937. All but local Hay River students were transferred to All Saints Anglican Residential School in Aklavik. The decision to close St. Peter's as a residential school was based on enrolment: 15 of 23 students were to be discharged/transferred at the end of the school year, and the remaining 8 were not sufficient in number to recover operating costs through federal grants [HRU-000719[001-002]; ANGDC-90345].
- 1937 After closure of the residential school, St Peter's Mission operated a Government-funded "Indian" Day School for local Hay River students, which officially opened September 1, 1937 in a classroom adjacent to the residential school building. The main residential school building is vacated [HRU-000744[000-000]; HRU-000748[000-000]; HRU-000750[001-001]; HRU-000751[000-000]].
- St. Peter's Day School comes under the management of the Diocese of Athabasca rather than the Indian and Eskimo Residential School Commission of the MSCC [ANGDC-90422].
- 1944 The Anglican Mission at Hay River is indicated as "vacant" [ANGDC-92241], implying that the Day School was no longer in operation.
- 1950 Hay River Indian Day School (a Federal Day School) opens [HRU-000764[000-000]].
- 1952 The Hospital initially associated with St. Peter's Mission is noted as open. It is not clear if the hospital operated continuously since the closing of the Residential School in 1937 [ANGDC-82549]. No closing date for the hospital has been ascertained.

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL

The Hay River Residential School was a venture owned and managed entirely by the Anglican Church through St. Peter's Mission in Hay River [HRU-000345[001-001]].

Staffing, both administrative and teaching, was arranged, provided, and managed by the Anglican Church [NWTG-000093[000-000]]. Salary for one teacher was reimbursed by the Federal Government [HRU-000237[000-000]].

At various points during the operation of the school facilities administrative control over its operations shifted:

- 1920 Power of attorney is granted to the Imperial Bank of Commerce (by Bishop Lucas) to allow grant payments from the Federal Government to be made directly to the bank [NWTG-004539[001-002]].
- 1923 Responsibility for the administration and maintenance of the Hay River Residential School is passed from the control of the Diocese of the Mackenzie River to the Indian and Eskimo Residential Schools Commission of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada [HRU-000345[000-001]; HRU-000385[000-000]]. This change did not affect pre-existing arrangements between the Federal Government and the Anglican Church, and operating agreements already in place continued in effect [HRU-000359[000-000]].
- 1937 The Day School that commenced operations from September 1937 (that is, after the Residential School component closed) came under the direction of the Diocese of Athabasca rather than the Indian and Eskimo Residential Schools Commission of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada [HRU-000748[000-000]].

The Role of the Federal Government

Prior to 1955 the Government's authority to administer education in the N.W.T. was divided: the Indian Affairs Branch (of Mines and Resources, then of Citizenship and Immigration) was responsible for Treaty Indian education; the Northern Administration Branch was responsible for Inuit education; and the Territorial Government (as it then existed, the Commissioner and N.W.T. Council) was responsible for non-aboriginal education (as administered on behalf of the Commissioner by the Northern Administration Branch) [HRU-000390[000-000]; NWTG-000093[000-000]].

The role of the Federal Government for the early (pre-1955) residential schools in the N.W.T., including Hay River Residential School, appears to have been largely financial. Documents from the era indicate that there was ongoing correspondence between the school administration, the Church and various officials of the Federal Government. This correspondence indicates that while the government did not automatically assume the responsibility over costs and supplies, it would often reimburse the Church for these items when presented with prior requests and formal requisitions. With respect to St. Peter's, it appears that the government assisted primarily with arranging (and possibly with the payment of) the transport of supplies directly related to school operations.

While the Federal Government took no active or direct role in the operations or management of St. Peter's Residential School, the government did retain some control over admissions. The government approved student grant payments, and, particularly in cases where the student was to be admitted on "destitute" grounds, funding would only be provided if the Government was satisfied that the student was indeed destitute [HRU-000704[000-000]].

Student Admissions and Funding

The Hay River Residential School was within the region covered by Treaty 8, and the residential school was intended to school Treaty Indian children primarily. Treaty Indian children were supported financially by the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). DIA had a stated policy that they would also take on as wards of their Department “[non-Treaty Status] half-breeds living an Indian mode of life within Indian communities”, though this policy seems to have been inconsistently pursued in practice [HRU-000390[000-000]].

Non-Treaty Indian pupils (Inuit, whites, “half-breeds”) were admitted to the school only under unusual circumstances, typically when proven to be destitute [HRU-000254[000-000]; HRU-000390[000-000]; HRU-000492[000-000]]. Destitute status was only granted if the student’s situation had been thoroughly reviewed and certified by the RCMP, School Administration, and N.W.T. Branch officials. Destitute students were funded by Department of the Interior, Northwest Territories Branch (essentially the Northern Administration Branch), which was responsible for all non-Treaty-based education in the N.W.T. [HRU-000390[000-000]].

Because of the complex funding structure, various grants were paid simultaneously to the School for the maintenance and instruction of pupils and for the overall operation of the school, including:

- The Department of the Interior provided a \$400/annum operational grant to defray the cost of housing the white and “half-breed” students, conditional upon a minimum enrollment, typically an average of 10 students [HRU-000606[000-000]; HRU-000690[000-000]].
- Prior to 1925, DIA provided a flat grant of \$300/annum for Treaty Indian Pupils (or \$400/annum if overall average attendance for the year exceeded 15 pupils). After 1925 Treaty Indian pupils were compensated at the rate of \$180 per annum per pupil with an additional flat payment of \$400/annum for the maintenance of destitute non-Treaty Indian pupils [HRU-000606[000-000]; [HRU-000364[000-000]].
- Non-Treaty Indian students (i.e., white, Eskimo, or “half-breeds”) admitted as destitute cases were funded by the Department of the Interior at a rate of \$80 per annum per student if less than seven years of age or \$135 per annum per student from seven years of age until the age of 16 (at which point they were no longer eligible for support). These rates were increased circa 1930 to equal DIA Treaty Indian Pupil payment rates (\$180 per annum per student) for all students less than 16 years of age [HRU-000339[000-001]; HRU-000339[001-001]; [HRU-000574[001-004]].
- Hospitals in the North, including the Anglican Hospital associated with the Residential School at Hay River, were paid 50 cents per day per patient treated, along with an additional \$1.50 per day for each destitute patient that received medical attention [HRU-000606[000-000]].

Note that much confusion existed in relation to the specific amount of the grant to be paid for non-treaty pupils, since very little was recorded initially (circa 1899) concerning the amount of and conditions under which grants would be provided [HRU-000364[000-000]]. The transfer of

authority over St. Peter's from the Diocese of Mackenzie to the MSCC in 1923 generated additional discussion and confusion concerning agreements for grant payments [HRU-000385[000-000]; HRU-000389[000-000]].

Transportation Funding

The funding of transportation of pupils to and from their home community to Hay River was a topic of recurrent discussion and contention that was tied to varying interpretations of the financial responsibilities of various Departments to the school. Student transportation costs were often borne by the government (and, rarely, the Anglican Church), though funding was handled differently and at times inconsistently by the various Government departments involved.

On numerous occasions, ambiguity in the responsibility of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA), the Department of the Interior, the Church, and parents with respect to destitute pupils resulted in the exchange of extensive correspondence concerning which party should fund specific cases of destitute student transportation [for example, HRU-000546[000-000]; HRU-000589[002-002]].

In general, the following practices obtained:

- The 1911 operational agreement set out that it was the responsibility of DIA to fully fund Treaty Indian student education, and, consistent with their broader policy, DIA funded the transportation of Treaty Indian students to and from Residential School [HRU-000254[000-000]].
- The funding for transportation of non-Treaty Indian students was not typically provided by the Department of the Interior, though they were responsible for non-Treaty Indian pupil educational expenses generally. Some case-specific funding of pupil transportation did occur, though typically only under unusual circumstances and when petitioned forcefully by the Church to provide financial support [HRU-000732[000-000]].
- Transportation funding for non-Treaty Indian students was made unavailable as a matter of policy by the Department of the Interior in 1931 owing to “the necessity for strict economy” brought on by the Great Depression [HRU-000594[000-000]]. Subsequent to that decision they did, however, provide funding for the return of 11 [destitute] Eskimo students that had been brought to Hay River from the Mackenzie Delta prior to 1931 [HRU-000636[000-001]]. A later document (1936) includes the seemingly contradictory statement that it had “never been the custom of the Northwest Territories administration to pay any part of the cost of transporting children to residential schools” [HRU-000735[000-000]].

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Limited information is available concerning the specific buildings that comprised the Residential School. On aggregate, documents suggest that the Mission Residential School complex included the following buildings over its operational lifespan (though not all necessarily existed simultaneously):

Early Constructions:

- The Mission Church
- A Residence for the Missionary-in-Charge
- The Mission “Boarding School”, including residence and classrooms (used up to 1917)
- Miscellaneous outbuildings and sheds functioning as workshops and storehouses

Subsequently constructed:

- A Multi-story student residence/school (replaced earlier structure circa 1917)
- A Hospital Building (completed after 1917)
- A ‘Separate building’ (used for the post-1937 Day School)

Available information on the chronology of construction and use of these buildings is summarized below:

1895 The Boarding School at St. Peter’s (a log cabin structure) was completed. Work on a residence for the Principal/Missionary was in progress [ANGDC-87480].

1907 Indications are that four buildings had been completed by the time of departure of T. J. Marsh (school founder) [ANGDC-87480].

1917 A new school building designed in 1914 [HRU-000033[000-000]] was built, and opened [that is, was dedicated] on June 29, 1917 [HRU-000744[000-000]]; [ANGDC-87480]. This structure is pictured on stationary generated by the Mission during the 1920s [HRU-000389[000-000]].

In the same year a separate hospital building was under construction but apparently not yet completed [ANGDC-87480]. Draft plans of the residential school indicate basic infirmary facilities (likely solely for pupils) were incorporated into the first floor of the 1917 residential school building [HRU-000033[000-000]].

1925 A proposal was submitted by Rev. Canon Vale, Principal of the Hay River Residential School, to physically move an existing Mission site building so that it would be situated in close proximity to the Residential School and could function as a Mission-run/Government-funded hospital. The move of the building was completed by October 1925, and presumably the Hospital commenced operations shortly thereafter [HRU-000397[000-000]; HRU-000398[000-006]].

1937 The St. Peter’s Residential School main building was vacated. No information is available concerning its subsequent use and/or ultimate disposition. The Day School that operated after the closure of the Residential School operated in a “separate building” immediately to the west of the residential school [HRU-000744[000-000]].

LAND

The Hay River Residential School was located within the Treaty 8 District [HRU-000254[000-000]].

The Mission grounds encompassed at least 8 acres of cleared Crown Land, which “has been acquired by what is known as settlers’ possession, and is property of the mission”³.

There is currently no information concerning the ultimate disposition of lands upon which St. Peter’s Mission and Residential School stood.

PHOTOS, PLANS AND OTHER MEDIA

Item #	Date	Description
HRU-000033[000-000]	July 1914	Architectural plan for new school and residence building, completed 1917
HRU-000389[000-000]	July 21, 1925	Letterhead with photograph of school

GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

Numbers provided below are taken from Quarterly Reports, Returns, and figures cited in general correspondence when available. Additional attendance information was derived from DIA Annual Reports⁴. Note that reported numbers often vary; those provided below reflect the best available estimates of enrolment.

The 1911 operating agreement stipulates that no more than 25 Indian pupils were authorized to reside at the Hay River Residential School. However, actual enrolment appears to have often exceeded that number [HRU-000254[000-000]].

In later years of operation, enrolment was increased from an allowed⁵ 30 students to 40 in 1935, and 10 more places again were added for the 1936-37 school year [HRU-000688[003-005]].

The number of Non-Treaty (non-DIA funded) students enrolled in the school averaged seven, but increased to a high of 11 pupils in 1929. This figure remained near 10 until 1933, at which time a cohort of Eskimo students were returned to the Mackenzie Delta. Subsequent to 1933, the non-treaty contingent numbered between two and six students [HRU-000649[001-003], HRU-000649[002-003]; HRU-000675[000-000]].

Note that the Anglican Church Mission took in more students than those for which they received grants, likely on compassionate grounds [HRU-000708[000-000]].

Enrolment

School Year	Number of Students
1895-96	7 in residence
1896-97	No information available
1897-98	No information available

³ Dominion of Canada Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs [“DIA Annual Report”] for the Year Ended March 31 1911, page 568.

⁴ DIA Annual Reports reside in the public domain and are accessible at www.collectionscanada.ca/indianaffairs.

⁵ In this context, “allowed” refers to the number of students the Government agreed to fund, rather than the number stipulated by the original operating agreement.

1898-99	No information available
1899-1900	10 children in residence
1900-01	30 children in residence
1901-02	36 children in residence
1902-03	33 students in residence
1903-04	28 students in residence
1904-05	30 students in residence
1905-06	17 students in residence
1906-07	25 students in residence
1907-08	30 students in residence
1908-09	31 students in residence
1909-10	33 students in residence
1910-11	35 students in residence
1911-12	39 students in residence
1912-13	33 students in residence
1913-14	32 students in residence
1914-15	34 students in residence
1915-16	31 students in residence
1916-17	28 students in residence
1917-18	34 students in residence
1918-19	44 students in residence
1919-20	44 students in residence
1920-21	39 students in residence
1921-22	46 students in residence
1922-23	54 students in residence
1923-24	56 students in residence
1924-25	51 students in residence
1925-26	49 students in residence
1926-27	18 students in residence ⁶
1927-28	11 students in residence
1928-29	29 students in residence
1929-30	21 students in residence
1930-31	19 students in residence
1931-32	14 students in residence
1932-33	18 students in residence
1933-34	11 students in residence
1934-35	30 students in residence
1935-36	8 students in residence
1936-37	14 students in residence

⁶ It is not clear whether the significant drop in enrolment for the 1926-27 school year reflects an actual reduction in student numbers or is an artifact of changes in how student enrolment was reported and/or incomplete documentation. There is no indication in general correspondence that enrolment dropped by over half circa 1926.

STUDENTS FROM OTHER RESERVES

In general, attendance in N.W.T. mission residential schools was not reserved-based and enrolment was not ethnically segregated (both aboriginal and non-aboriginal children lived in residence and attended the associated schools). Attendance was typically though not always based on geographic proximity to the residence, and the associated schools were usually attended both by non-local students in residence and children living in the local community.

In the case of Hay River, it was established primarily as a school for Treaty Indians, though, as described in the management and enrolment sections, non-Treaty Indian students did attend, mostly in the later years of the school's operation.

In the case of Hay River RS, non-Treaty students were often brought from great distances. Because Hay River was the only Anglican Residential School in the N.W.T. prior to the opening of Shingle Point (Yukon) in 1929, Eskimo students from the Mackenzie Delta – 1000 miles to the North – were enrolled in the Hay River residential school. Specific instances and circumstances of non-local student attendance are listed below:

1927 The practice of sending [Eskimo] students from the Mackenzie Delta to Hay River commenced. This practice was confined primarily to students classed as “destitute” or otherwise without family or financial support in their community of origin [HRU-000531[000-000]; HRU-000632[001-001]].

1929 Discussion of the opening of Shingle Point RS on the Arctic Coast makes reference to “a dozen or more” Eskimo pupils in residence at Hay River, indicating that they could (and should) be sent back to their traditional territory for schooling once Shingle Point had opened (this in fact happened) [SPU-000091[000-001]]. Policy stipulated that Eskimo students no longer not be admitted to St. Peter's (Hay River) [HRU-000728[000-000]; HRU-000729[000-000]].

1936 Due to poor weather, four students from the community of Coppermine who were en route by air to Aklavik in the fall of 1936 made it only as far as Hay River. Because of continued inclement weather through freeze-up, they spent the winter in school at St. Peter's. They were transferred to All Saints in the spring of 1937, as soon as conditions permitted travel northward [HRU-000728[000-000]; HRU-000730[001-001]].

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

No specific religious groups are identified as associated with the Hay River Residential School other than the Anglican Church (MSCC) as indicated throughout this report.

Early correspondence (circa 1900) refers to a “Protestant Episcopal Mission School”, which was the same school and presumably affiliation (Anglican) as St Peter's Mission and the Hay River RS [HRU-000199[000-000]; HRU-000201[000-000]].

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

1903 A memorandum dated January 5, 1925 refers to an agreement between made “on the 31st of October, 1903, by the Lieutenant-Governor of the North West Territories with

Archdeacon Geo. Holmes, St. Peter's Mission" concerning grant payments that would be made to the school [HRU-000364[000-000]]. No formal documentation of this agreement has been identified in IRSRC collections.

- 1911 A formal operating agreement between "His Majesty the King" and the Right Rev. Isaac O. Stringer, D.D., Bishop of the Yukon for operation of the Hay River Boarding [Residential] School was signed on April 1, 1911. This agreement was authored by the Department of Indian Affairs.

The duration for which the 1911 operating agreement was to remain in effect is not stated. No subsequent operating agreement has been identified. It appears that established operating and granting practices continued after the 1923 shift of management from the Diocese of Mackenzie to the Indian and Eskimo Residential Schools Commission [HRU-000364[000-000]].

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse specifically at the Hay River Residential School or of any convicted abusers present at the school.

Other incidents that relate to the school include the following:

- 1925 Reference is made to six pupil deaths having occurred at St. Peter's, with no elaboration upon the circumstances or causes of these fatalities [HRU-000385[000-000]].
- 1926 A group of related documents discuss the sexual assault of a 14 year old female former St. Peter's student, by a Fort Providence man (Jack Stamp, a Treaty Indian with no apparent or obvious connection to Hay River RS). Stamp was subsequently arrested, stood trial, and was ultimately incarcerated for two years for the assault [HRU-000420[000-002]; HRU-000420[001-002]; HRU-000420[002-002]].

As a result of the assault, the girl gave birth to a child, and the Hay River Mission authorities petitioned for mother and child to be admitted to the school on compassionate grounds. They also requested that the Government provide a "destitute" grant for the care of the two (which the Government declined to do) [HRU-000422[000-000]]. The assaulted teen girl apparently returned to live with her parents while her child was admitted as a destitute "pupil" to the Hay River RS at the age of 11 months [HRU-000496[000-000]].

- 1928 A brief letter indicates that pupil H.E. Sanfrere died on January 2, 1928. No cause of death is specified and the death is not specifically indicated as having happened at the school [HRU-000518[000-000]].

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

General Conditions

- 1900s In the early years (prior to completion of a new school/mission house in 1917) conditions were very rustic [ANGDC-87474].

1922 The condition of the Mission buildings and grounds created “a favourable impression” upon visitors, particularly with respect to the productivity of the Mission gardens [HRU-000328[000-000]].

Health and Sanitary Conditions

1922 The school received donation(s) of clothing from the “W.A.” (Women’s Auxiliary of the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada) [HRU-000328[000-000]].

1922 The school population was afflicted by a mild strain of “flu”, but apparently avoided a small pox epidemic through “prompt measures taken by the Indian Department” [HRU-00328[000-000]].

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
Marsh, Thomas J., Reverend	Principal/Missionary	1893 to 1907
Vale, Alfred J., Reverend	Principal/Missionary	1907 to 1928
Singleton, W.B., Reverend	Principal/Missionary	1928 to 1937

Narrative Completed: January 8, 2007

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



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