

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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**Lower Post IRS
School Narrative
03 31 2005**

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

NAME OF SCHOOL AND VARIANTS

Name	Item No.	Date
Lower Post Indian Residential School	LP000495	11/03/1950
Lower Post School	LP000506	01/22/1951
Lower Post Indian School	LP000506	01/22/1951
St. John's Indian Residential School- [Unapproved proposal by RC Church]	LP000510	02/06/1951
Nahanni Residential School - [Unapproved proposal by RC Church]	LP000510	02/06/1951
Lower Post Catholic Indian Residential School	LP000332	01/28/1952
Lower Post	LP000839	04/06/1955
Lower Post Indian Day School	LP000067	02/25/1958
Lower Post Provincial School	YS007439	01/25/1960
Lower Post Public School	YS007820	01/13/1961
Lower Post Residential School	YS008535	06/29/1962
Lower Post Roman Catholic Residential School	YS005118	11/21/1967
Lower Post Elem. School	YS007345B	10/31/1969
Lower Post Residence	LP002565	04/25/1970
Lower Post Hostel and School	YS005099	08/03/1971
Lower Post Day School	LP002608	06/13/1975
Lower Post Student Residence	LP002608	06/13/1975

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

Opening Date

September 1951

Construction of the new school buildings at Lower Post was completed and the buildings inspected in March 1951. [LP000352]

The buildings were then officially turned over to the Government on March 12, 1951. [LP000360]

Students were not admitted to the school until September 1951, when one classroom was in session. [LP000324]

Closing Date

June 30, 1975

Lower Post IRS was officially closed on June 30, 1975. [LP000993, LP000993A]

A Government memo, c.1975, refers to alternative uses for the Lower Post IRS buildings following closing in 1975. [LP002351]

Grades at Lower Post IRS

1953	Grades 1-8	(two Grade 9 students in residence)
1954	Grades 1-7	(one Grade 8 and two Grade 9 students in residence)
1955-1960	Grades 1-8	
1961	Grades 1-7	
1962-1964	Grades K-6	
1965	Grades K-5	
1966	Grades K-6	
1967-1968	Grades 1-6	
1968	Grades 1-6	
1971	Grades 3-7	(six Grade 8 and 9 students in residence)
1972	Grades 1-6	

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL

Dates Managed By Church

March 1951 - June 1975

The Lower Post IRS was managed by *Les Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée (du vicariat de Whitehorse, Yukon)* [the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Vicariate of Whitehorse, Yukon]. [LP003000]

Dates Managed By Government

Teachers were paid by the Federal Government. [LP002752] In 1957, staff at Lower Post IRS consisted of: principal, assistant principal/bursar, matron, assistant matron, cook, assistant cook, kitchen helper, baker, nurse, night watchman, engineer, second engineer, boys' supervisor, girls' supervisor, laundress, laundress helper, seamstress, seamstress helper, and maintenance man. [LP003003]

In 1963, staff consisted of: principal and assistant principal, matron, two engineers, baker, cook and assistant cook, two kitchen helpers, laundress and helper, janitor, night watchman, seamstress, maintenance man, five supervisors, and three lay teachers. [LP000683]

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

1950-1951

School buildings were first constructed in 1950-1951. [LP000527]

Construction was completed in March 1951. [LP000171]

The construction plans of 1950 indicated that the capacity of the school buildings were for approximately 120 pupils, plus a staff of 20 adults. [LP000496]

The school was heated by wood-fired, low pressure steam boilers. [LP000113]

1955-1956

A new four-classroom block was added to the school in 1955-1956. [LP000112]

Two of the classrooms in the main building were converted into dormitories. [LP000114]

1957

A new garage was built at the school in 1957. [LP000126]

Two new staff residences were constructed at the school in 1957. [LP000100, LP001009]

1958-1959

The laundry room was extended [LP000458]

1958-1960

A new chapel and gymnasium were added to the school buildings in 1958-1960. [LP000130, LP000138]

1964-1965

Two new three-bedroom teachers' residences were constructed at the school in 1964. [LP000292]

1975

The Lower Post facility consists of the following: one 150-bed dormitory block; one 4-classroom block; one chapel/gymnasium block; one warehouse; one 5-car garage; one tool shed; one green house; five staff houses; and one skating rink. [LP041301]

Three group homes were constructed to assist in the replacement of the Lower Post facility. Four staff members were employed to maintain and protect the school buildings. [LP041300]

Four former staff houses were transferred to the Upper Laird Band for the use of residents on the Reserve. In addition, three trailers were transferred to the Band. [LP041300]

Dates owned by Government

The Lower Post IRS buildings were owned by the Government from the original construction in 1950-1951 to school closing in 1975. [LP000360]

Date turned over to Band or other aboriginal group

The Government funded the Liard Band to maintain the residence from April 1, 1977 to June 1, 1978. This was based on the agreement that the facility would become the property of the Band on May 31, 1978. The band would then be able to manage or dispose of as the residence as it saw fit. [LP001024]

LAND

Located at Lots 5461 and 5463, Liard Post, Lower Post Indian Reserve #3. [LP000515, LP000173]

S.E. corner of Lot 5463, lying between the Alaska Highway and the Liard River. [LP001056]

PHOTOS, PLANS AND OTHER MEDIA

Item #	Date	Description
LP000173	Undated	Map showing location of school at Lower Post in relation to Dease and Liard Rivers
LP041927	Undated	Floor plan of kitchen at Lower Post Student Residence
LP042366	Undated	Site plan of Lower Post Indian Residential School
LP002642	Undated	Photograph of children climbing on outdoor playing equipment
LP002643	Undated	Photograph of children lined-up beside outdoor playing equipment
LP002650	Undated	Photograph of children and adults seated at a dining room table
LP002654	Undated	Photograph of a boy's hockey team posing on

		the ice
LP002656	Undated	Photograph of children in a room with a man playing guitar
LP002658	Undated	Photograph of a man seated in an armchair in front of bookshelves full of books
LP002659	Undated	Photograph of buildings
LP002660	Undated	Photograph of a man and children seated at a table in a library or classroom
LP002661	Undated	Photograph of children at play in the snow with several buildings visible in the background
LP002665	Undated	Photograph of a man posing in front of a building
LP002666	Undated	Photograph of the inside of a room
Item #	Date	Description
LP002667	Undated	Photograph of tables and chairs in a room
LP002668	Undated	Photograph of a church
LP002669	Undated	Photograph of buildings and a wire fence
LP002670	Undated	Photograph of a boy on a bicycle in front of a building with a staircase entrance
LP002671	Undated	Aerial photograph of buildings, roads, forest and a river
LP044505A	circa March 1957	Sketch layout of Sr. Boy's Dormitory and Supervisor's Room
LP001009	October 1, 1957	Sketch layout of school buildings
LP000910E	December 16, 1961	Sketch layout of kitchen and bakery
LP042591	September 11, 1964	Site plan showing chapel and gym
LP042866	July 1965	Photographs of a house
LP002626	December 19, 1968	Photographs of children performing a concert and gymnastics in a gymnasium
LP002628	December 19, 1968	Photographs of children performing drills and dances in a gymnasium

LP002629	December 19, 1968	Photograph of adults seated and standing at a dining room table
LP002623	1969	Newspaper Article with photographs of "Operation Reindeer" Christmas festivities, including children in a gymnasium performing gymnastics and a pageant
LP002635	May 14, 1969	Photograph of Lower Posts's pet goat "Nanny" and her three newborn kids
LP042456A	circa September 1973	Sketch of staff house
LP042376B	circa January 1976	Site plan of Lower Post Indian Residential School
LP042365B	circa April 1976	Photographs of identified buildings
LP042365C	circa April 1976	Sketch and floor plans of classroom block
LP042365E	circa April 1976	Photograph of a building

GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

Year	Number of Students
1951	93 children in residence
1952	79-90 children in residence
1953	111-133 children in residence
1954	131-133 children in residence
1955	131-137 children in residence
1956	130-169 children in residence
1957	158-170 children in residence
1958	167-182 children in residence
1959	179-187 children in residence
1960	160-187 children in residence
1961	176-185 children in residence
1962	142-181 children in residence

1963	146-169 children in residence
1964	140-170 children in residence
1965	130-140 children in residence
1966	134-146 children in residence
1967	100-136 children in residence
1968	107-111 children in residence
1969	53-142 children in residence
1970	114 children in residence
1971	99-106 children in residence
1972	93-99 children in residence
1973	99 children in residence
1974	34-109 children in residence
1975	34-77 children in residence

STUDENTS FROM OTHER RESERVES

Students from, at least, the following bands attended Lower Post IRS:

Aishihik Atlin Atlin-Teslin Burwash Carcross	Carmacks Casca Cassiar Champagne Finlay River	Fort Nelson Fort St. John Fort Ware Frances Lake Hudson Hope	Johnson's Crossing Kluane Liard River Mayo Muskowekan
Nelson River Pelly Lakes Ross River Scotty Creek Selkirk	Sekanni Slavey Snag Squanga Lake Steward River	Stikine Tahltan Teslin Teslin Lake Upper Liard	Watson Lake White River Whitehorse Non-status Non-Aboriginal

There may be alternate ways of spelling these band names.

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Les Missionnaires Oblats de Marie Immaculée (du vicariat de Whitehorse, Yukon) [the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate of the Vicariate of Whitehorse, Yukon]. [LP003000]

Sisters of St. Ann [LP000510]

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

1962 Indianescom Agreement for the Operation of Lower Post IRS [LP000177].
"Indianscom" stands for Oblate Indian-Eskimo Commission, a corporate entity which, in 1962, signed agreements with the federal government for the operation of all Roman Catholic government-owned residential schools.

1970 Chaplaincy Agreement for Lower Post Student Residence [LP041640]

1973 Chaplaincy Agreement for Lower Post Student Residence [LP002814]

1974 Chaplaincy Agreement for Lower Post Student Residence [LP002812A]

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

Convictions

Jerzy MACZYNSKI, Lower Post Residential School. Convicted in 1995 - 16 years in jail. Died in prison. [RCMP News Release, April 23, 2003 - No Item Number]

Ben GARAND, Lower Post Residential School. Convicted in early 1990's and died in prison. [RCMP News Release, April 23, 2003 - No Item Number]

Incidents

In a letter dated June 17, 1955, the Vicariate Apostolic of Whitehorse writes to the Provincial Father in Montreal, P.Q. regarding a Brother who has been working "since his debut" at the "Indian School of Lower Post" and whom "has always shown a disturbing familiarity to the children everywhere he went". He goes on to say that the Brother "constantly ushered children in his room, in spite of our repeated remarks to him" and that when the Lower Post Principal's "more serious complaints came to our attention" the Brother "denied having done anything wrong". He adds that "I had presumed that at the boarding school of Lower Post, where children are always closely watched over, it would be easier to stop him from abusing anyone, by allowing him at the same time to maintain daily contacts with the children whose company he certainly enjoys. Because of

that we never assigned him the duty of watching over the children; but, despite of that, he always has managed to usher some in his room, to bring them along in the trucks, giving all kinds of excuses.” [IRC-43000]

In a letter dated August 5, 1955, the Vicariate Apostolic of Whitehorse writes to the Provincial Father in Montreal, P.Q. regarding the same Brother, noting how the Brother “stayed only one day in the new position I had assigned to him, at Fort Nelson...leaving behind a letter in which he clearly expressed his intention of not coming back any more.” He goes on to describe how it was later learned that the Brother “had been hired as a truck driver by a Transport Company on the Alaska road, between Dawson Creek and Whitehorse” and how the Brother “came here yesterday in order to fill up the tank with gasoline for this company; one of the children from the Lower Post mission was with him in the truck.” [IRC-43001]

In a letter dated November 15, 1955, a Reverend Father in Whitehorse, Y.T. writes to the Vicariate Apostolic of Whitehorse in Edmonton, Alta. regarding the same Brother. He states that “it’s not that I am opposed to him returning. On the contrary, I believe we should hold our hand out to him.” He notes that another Father shares this opinion and “seemed to be in favour of a return to Lower Post, but not before September, 1956.” He comments that he mentioned the return of the Brother to the Principal of Lower Post who “immediately” indicated that he would not take the Brother back any more than the previous Principal would have. [IRC-43004]

In a letter dated November 17, 1955, the Vicariate Apostolic of Whitehorse writes to a Reverend Father in Whitehorse, Y.T. regarding the same Brother. He notes of the Brother, “as he has always done when he is caught doing something wrong, he goes on the offensive and attacks us on the issue which has long since been decided of his transfer from Lower Post.” He believes that “after running away these three months, [the Brother] will be expelled.” He then states that the “situation” in which the Brother has “put himself now, apart from everything that may have taken place before, is very serious, and he was duly warned of it from the beginning, when I first summoned him to return under the yoke of obedience...his current arrogant attitude, is, in my opinion, much more serious than what he may have done before.” [IRC-43005]

In a letter dated August 14, 1956, the Superior General in Rome writes to the Vicar Apostolic of Whitehorse saying “with respect to the case of [the] poor Brother... My soul is pained by this kind of business. I never would have believed this of the poor Brother, who had given us so much comfort when he was in the Canadian Province. It’s a psychological case, and there are many others like it. On [sic] would say that the devil blinds the eyes of these poor minks who commit reprehensible mistakes.” [IRC-43002]

In a letter dated January 27, 1958, it is noted that the former Brother "is supposed to leave soon for his infamous trip to Europe." [IRC-43006]

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

In August 1956, there were two very extensive cases of impetigo at Watson Lake, with children receiving treatment at Lower Post School and at home. [LP000657]

In December 1956, sixteen children from the Lower Post and Carcross Residential Schools had tonsillectomies performed at Whitehorse General Hospital. [LP000657]

In 1957, a parent of one of the students alleged that there was a lice epidemic at the Lower Post IRS and that the child returned home from the school infested with lice. The principal of the school denied allegations of an epidemic, saying that only 11 of 170 children had been found to have lice or nits, and that the student in question was not taking care of herself and was dirty most of the time. [LP002118, LP002117, LP002119, LP002116]

In 1957-1958, Lower Post IRS added a well and fire escapes amid concerns that the school had been experiencing water shortages since the time of original construction and lacked adequate fire protection. [YS001033, LP000465, LP000463]

In 1961, a letter indicates that the school performance on the quarterly examinations of grade eight students coming from Lower Post IRS was very poor, in comparison with white children. [LP000305]

In 1961, it is noted in a letter that the principal disciplined runaways by giving them a strapping and sending them back to class. [YS000035]

In 1961, it is noted in a letter that the school was breaking B.C. law and providing inadequate accommodation for the pupils. [LP000058A]

In 1963, the school experienced an 80-case epidemic of measles, in addition to the flu and impetigo. [LP001002]

In 1967, a memorandum notes that garbage is dumped in a pit not too far from the school. [LP002326A]

In 1968, "Operation Reindeer", the Prince George Lions Club's annual Christmas event at Lower Post IRS, was in its ninth year. Festivities included a visit from Santa Claus, indoor hockey, gymnastics and Indian dance performances by the school children, a Christmas dinner party and a Christmas concert in the school auditorium. [LP002624, LP002625]

In April 1969, a dance with a live band was held at Lower Post and attended by sixty teens, a few adults and the grade six boys and girls of the Student Residence. [LP002633]

In April 1969, two sports teams from Lower Post traveled to Whitehorse to compete. [LP002634]

In May 1969, the grades 1 through 3 students of Lower Post Public School spent the day at Liard Hot Springs, enjoying a camp-fire and swimming. [LP002636]

In May-June 1972, the Intermediate Boys of Lower Post Student Residence went on a two-week tour of Vancouver, New Westminster, Victoria, Port Alberni, Nanaimo and Prince George. [LP002621]

PRINCIPALS / ADMINISTRATORS

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
A.H. Fleury, O.M.I.	Principal	1950-1956
J.E. Yvon Levaque, O.M.I.	Principal	1956-1964
E. J. Morisset, O.M.I.	Principal / Administrator	1964-1974
Anthony J. Shaw, O.M.I.	Principal	1968-1969
Kenneth Ramgoolam	Principal	1972
Alice Darras	Principal	1974

Narrative Updated: May 03, 2005

Narrative Updated: February 7, 2006

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



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