

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.



You are welcome to contact the NCTR if you wish to add, comment on, or challenge any versions of the history presented herein.

**Shubenacadie Indian Residential School
IAP School Narrative**

NAME IN THE SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT (Schedule E/F)

Shubenacadie

OTHER NAMES KNOWN AS (AKAs)

None found

LOCATION

The Shubenacadie IRS was situated on a hill overlooking the village of Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia, located in the Municipality of East Hants on 147 acres of Crown land [SRS-000187, pg. 2; SRS-001139].

PROVINCE/TERRITORY

Nova Scotia

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 1, 1929 to June 30, 1967

OPERATING DATES CONTEXT

The federal government constructed the Shubenacadie IRS in 1929 for the 1929/30 school year [SRS-000380; SRS-001781]. Staff for the IRS was secured during the early portion of the year, and pupils arrived in February 1930 [SRS-000048; SRS-001280, pg. 3; SRS-000539, pg. 13]. The IRS closed on June 30, 1967 [SRS-001436; SRS-000180; SRS-001139].

RELIGIOUS AFFILIATION

Roman Catholic Church

1929 to 1956 Archdiocese of Halifax [SRS-000048; SRS-000542, pg. 2; SRS-000539, pg. 13; SRS-002050].

1956 to 1967 Oblates of Mary Immaculate, and later the Oblate Indian and Eskimo Commission (INDIANESCOM) [SRS-000106; SRS-002050; SRS-002088; SRS-000237].

1929 to 1967 Sisters of Charity [SRS-000048; SRS-000143; SRS-002331].

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Date	Event	Document Reference
1929	The Shubenacadie IRS was constructed by the federal government for the 1929/30 school year. The IRS was operated under the auspices of the	SRS-000380 SRS-001781 SRS-000542, pg. 2

	Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Halifax, with the assistance of the Sisters of Charity.	SRS-000539, pg. 13 SRS-000048, pg. 2-3 SRS-000143 SRS-001280, pg. 3-5
February 1930	The first residents arrived at the IRS.	SRS-001280, pg. 3 SRS-000539, pg. 13
November 19, 1936	A fire broke out in the boiler room of the IRS causing damage to the floor and walls of the chapel, which was located on the ground floor of the IRS.	SRS-001500 SRS-001501 SRS-006531
December 1943 to 1944	The barn at the IRS was destroyed by fire on December 21, 1943. The barn was rebuilt in 1944.	SRS-001574-0001, pg. 2
September 1956	As of the 1956/57 school year, the IRS was operated under the auspices of the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate.	SRS-000539, pg. 13 SRS-002050
1957 to 1964	Students from Grade 4 to 8, then Grades 6 to 8 as of 1962, were transported to the Shubenacadie Indian Day School on the Micmac Reserve for Manual Training and Industrial Arts courses for boys, and Home Economics courses for girls. By August 1964, these courses were no longer taught to IRS students.	SRS-000571 SRS-001654 SRS-000569 SRS-005717 SRS-000558 SRS-000109-0001, pg. 6 SRS-005720-0000 SRS-001646 SRS-000576
January 1, 1959	Farm operations were discontinued at the IRS.	SRS-001144 SRS-000211
September 25, 1962	The federal government and Oblate Indian and Eskimo Commission (INDIANESCOM) signed an agreement for the operation of the IRS.	SRS-002088
June 30, 1967	The IRS closed, and the buildings and land were turned over to the Crown Assets Disposal Corporation.	SRS-000180

EDUCATION OF STUDENTS

Grades Taught at the Indian Residential School

School Years	Grades Offered	Document Reference
1929/30	No information found	
1930/31	1 to 8	SRS-000481
1931/32	1 to 9	SRS-000482
1932/33	1 to 8	SRS-000483
1933/34	1 to 7	SRS-000484
1934/35	1 to 6	SRS-000485
1935/36 to 1937/38	1 to 7	SRS-000486 SRS-000487 SRS-000488
1938/39	1 to 8	SRS-000475
1939/40	1 to 7	SRS-000490
1940/41	1 to 8	SRS-000491
1941/42 to 1942/43	1 to 9	SRS-000492 SRS-000493
1943/44 to 1945/46	1 to 8	SRS-000303, pg. 3 SRS-000304 SRS-000297
1946/47 to 1947/48	1 to 9	SRS-000497

		SRS-000305
1948/49	1 to 7, 9	SRS-000311, pg. 5
1949/50 to 1950/51	1 to 8	SRS-000479, pg. 3 SRS-000501
1951/52 to 1952/53	No information found	
1953/54	1 to 9	SRS-002332
1954/55 to 1955/56	1 to 8	SRS-002333 SRS-006007
1956/57 to 1957/58	No information found	
1958/59	1 to 8	SRS-002310
1959/60	1 to 7	SRS-000414
1960/61 to 1962/63	1 to 8	SRS-000601 SRS-000605 SRS-002288
1963/64	1 to 9	SRS-000606-0001
1964/65 to 1966/67	1 to 8	NCA-005248 SRS-000611-0001 SRS-000624-0001

Other Schools Attended by Residents

School Years	Name of School	Location	Administration	Grades	Document
1941	Local High school	Shubenacadie	No information found	9 to 10	SRS-002290, pg. 2
1942 to 1944	(Village, Town) Continuation/ High School	Shubenacadie	No information found	9 to 11	SRS-008043 SRS-000126
1949	High School, Village	Shubenacadie	No information found	Not specified	SRS-000441, pg. 2, 7
1957/58 to 1961/62	Shubenacadie Federal Indian Day School, Number 260	Shubenacadie/ Micmac Reserve	Federal government	4 to 8 (Industrial Arts - Boys; Home Economics- Girls)	SRS-001654 SRS-000569 SRS-005717 SRS-000558 SRS-000109-0001, pg. 6 SRS-005720-0000
1962/63 to 1963/64	Shubenacadie Federal Indian Day School, Number 260	Shubenacadie/ Micmac Reserve	Federal government	6 to 8 (Industrial Arts and Home Economics)	SRS-001646 SRS-000576

GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME

School Years	Number of Residents	If applicable, day scholars	Document Reference
1929/30	95	No information found	SRS-004993
1930/31	146	No information found	SRS-000481, pg. 2
1931/32	160	No information found	SRS-000482, pg. 2
1932/33	162	No information found	SRS-000483, pg. 2
1933/34	159	No information found	SRS-000484, pg. 2
1934/35	158	No information found	SRS-000485, pg. 2
1935/36	148	No information found	SRS-000486, pg. 3
1936/37	165	No information found	SRS-000487, pg. 2
1937/38	175	No information found	SRS-000488, pg. 3

1938/39	169	No information found	SRS-000475, pg. 3
1939/40	167	No information found	SRS-000490, pg. 2
1940/41	164	No information found	SRS-000491, pg. 2
1941/42	160	No information found	SRS-000492
1942/43	146	No information found	SRS-002297, pg. 2
1943/44	153	No information found	SRS-002301, pg. 7
1944/45	153	No information found	SRS-002305, pg. 7
1945/46	156	No information found	SRS-002284, pg. 7
1946/47	161	No information found	SRS-000428, pg. 7
1947/48	151	No information found	SRS-000437, pg. 7
1948/49	158	No information found	SRS-000441, pg. 8
1949/50	166	No information found	SRS-000479, pg. 3
1950/51	168	No information found	SRS-000501
1951/52	159	No information found	SRS-000502, pg. 2
1952/53	150	No information found	SRS-002332
1953/54	133	No information found	SRS-002333
1954/55	152	No information found	SRS-000505, pg. 2
1955/56	136	No information found	SRS-006007
1956/57	159	No information found	SRS-000507, pg. 2
1957/58	143	No information found	SRS-000508
1958/59	151	No information found	SRS-002310
1959/60	133	No information found	SRS-000414
1960/61	152	2	SRS-000601 SRS-000600
1961/62	141	1	SRS-000605
1962/63	137	No information found	SRS-002288
1963/64	122	No information found	SRS-000607-0001, pg. 1
1964/65	111	7	SRS-000609-0001
1965/66	117	No information found	SRS-000611-0001
1966/67	56	No information found	SRS-000624-0001

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

School Years	Special Programs Offered	Document Reference
1929/30 to 1958/59	Farming and domestic chores were a large part of the curriculum at the IRS.	SRS-000063 SRS-002021, pg. 44-47 SRS-000539, pg. 13 SRS-000211
1944 to 1949	Pottery-making classes were offered at the IRS.	SRS-001280, pg. 6 SRS-000865 SRS-000126, pg. 1 SRS-001281 SRS-002021, pg. 34, 46 SRS-001317
1946/47 to 1959/60	Sports and activities played at the IRS included: baseball, football, soft ball, soccer, volleyball, skiing, skating and hockey. IRS residents sometimes played games with the other children around the town.	SRS-001280, pg. 7 SRS-002021, pg. 47-48 SRS-001682 SRS-001675
1948/49 to	Female residents took Home Economics/Domestic	SRS-000654-0000

1963/64	Sciences courses. These courses were eliminated by August 1964.	SRS-000651 SRS-000352 SRS-000571 SRS-000558 SRS-001728 SRS-000576
1949/50 to 1963/64	Male residents took Manual Training and Industrial Arts courses. These courses were eliminated by August 1964.	SRS-000155 SRS-001285 SRS-006502 SRS-000352 SRS-000570-0005 SRS-000571 SRS-000576
1956/57 to 1962/63	Activities for pupils included games, sports, movies, picnics, and swimming.	SRS-000570-0001 SRS-000570-0002 SRS-000570-0003 SRS-005717 SRS-000583 SRS-001675 SRS-002068
1956/57; 1961/62	IRS expenditures included Boy Scouts equipment.	SRS-001950-0011 SRS-001802-0004

INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

Date	Event	Document Reference
1928 to 1950	The basement and first floor of the IRS contained store rooms, kitchens, laundry services, a boiler room, coal storage, and the girls' and boys' recreation rooms. The second floor, or the "ground floor", contained the main entrance, offices, classrooms, living rooms (parlor), and bedrooms, a manual training room, an "Indian Room", as well as the chapel that was at the rear of the building and connected by a corridor. The third floor contained single staff bedrooms, offices, and store rooms. The fourth floor contained dormitories for boys and girls.	SRS-006530 SRS-006531 SRS-006532 SRS-001574-0001
March to August 1930	A blacksmith shop, implement shed and root cellar were constructed at the IRS.	SRS-001354 SRS-001355 SRS-001396 SRS-001365 SRS-001398
September 1932	The construction of a pig house and dairy building at the IRS was authorized by the federal government. A list of surplus Crown property at the IRS shortly after it closed in 1967 included a dairy barn and piggery.	SRS-001388-0001 SRS-001401 SRS-001139
1935	A cottage for the assistant farmer at the IRS was constructed during the summer of 1935, with IRS staff providing the labour and the federal government supplying the building materials.	SRS-001404 SRS-001405 SRS-001406 SRS-001415 SRS-001417 SRS-001477
1936	The IRS property consisted of 150 acres and it was surrounded by vegetable gardens. The boys' playground was located on one side from the main IRS building, and the girls' playground was located	SRS-000539, pg. 13

	on the other.	
November 19, 1936	A fire broke out in the boiler room of the IRS causing damage to the floor and walls of the chapel, which was located on the ground floor of the IRS.	SRS-001500 SRS-001501 SRS-006531
December 21, 1943 to 1944	The barn at the IRS was destroyed by fire on December 21, 1943. It was rebuilt in 1944.	SRS-001574-0001, pg. 2
1936 to 1962	Three bungalows, or cottages, on the IRS grounds were occupied by male staff members.	SRS-001485, pg. 2 SRS-001820-0000 SRS-001820-0001, pg. 2 SRS-006526
1949	Funding was provided in the federal government Supplementary Estimates for the construction of a manual training shop at the IRS. A list of surplus Crown property at the IRS shortly after it closed in 1967 included a manual training shop.	SRS-000155 SRS-001580 SRS-001139
January 1, 1959	The federal government discontinued the farm operations at the IRS. At the time, the farm consisted of approximately 150 acres of land, two large barns, one large equipment shed, farm machinery, 45 cattle, and 32 hogs.	SRS-001144 SRS-000211
1959	A see-saw was ordered for the outdoor playground at the IRS.	SRS-001676
1959	The kitchen, dining rooms, laundry, store rooms and playrooms were located in the basement of the main IRS building. On the ground floor were offices, classrooms and quarters for the Principal. A corridor opposite the main entrance led to the Chapel. On the second floor was a Convent for the Sisters of Charity, and dormitories. The third floor of the main IRS building also contained dormitories.	SRS-000445-0001
1964	The St. Anne's Convent associated with the Sisters of Charity was listed as being located in the "Indian School" in Shubenacadie.	SRS-000537, pg. 7
June 1967	At the time of closure, the IRS buildings included the main IRS building, a manual training shop, a storage building, a dairy barn, a piggery, a creamery, three residences, a pump house, a summer house, and a garage.	SRS-001064-0000

PHOTOS, PLANS AND LAYOUT

Date	Description	Document Reference
Undated	A diagram of the land and buildings surrounding the IRS shows various buildings including a gymnasium adjacent to the cow barn, a piggery, a creamery, a hose and the hydrant house, a store house, and the houses for the farm staff.	SRS-000168
1928	A plan of the IRS first floor.	SRS-000023
1928	An architectural drawing of the front elevation and a cross section of the IRS.	SRS-006527
1928	An architectural drawing of the left side and a rear elevation of the IRS.	SRS-006528
1928	An architectural drawing of the right side elevation and a roof plan of the IRS.	SRS-006529

1928	An architectural drawing of the floor plan of the IRS basement. The plan included the girls' and boys' recreation rooms and the Sisters' dining room, as well as a main dining room and various other service rooms and bathrooms.	SRS-006530
1928	An architectural drawing of floor plan of the IRS main floor. The plan included classrooms, a manual training room, a clothing room, various bedrooms, an "Indian Room", a sitting room, a parlour, the Matron's office, the Principal's sitting room, the Principal's bedroom, and the chapel.	SRS-006531
1928	An architectural drawing of floor plan of the IRS second floor. The plan included the boys' and girls' dormitories.	SRS-006532
1929	A plan of the electrical wiring for the IRS basement.	SRS-007441
1929	A plan of the electrical wiring for the IRS ground floor.	SRS-007442
1929	A plan of the electrical wiring for the IRS first floor.	SRS-007443
1936	A photograph of the front of the IRS.	SRS-000539, pg. 14
1960	Diagrams of the IRS kitchen, refectory, dishwasher, and bake shop.	SRS-000109-0002
1961	A map of the bus route taken to transport IRS residents to the Shubenacadie (Micmac) Indian Day School for Manual Training and Home Economics classes and pupils from the Shubencadie Reserve to the Hants East Rural High School bus stop. The Hants East Rural High School is not depicted on the map.	SRS-005720-0000 SRS-005720-0001 SRS-005720-0002
1962	A diagram of the IRS grounds showing the location of the IRS, paved and dirt roads, workshop, store house, and IRS farm and staff homes.	SRS-006526
1963	A diagram of the IRS roof.	SRS-007445

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse at the Shubenacadie 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 (Sexual)

No information found.

Incidents (Physical)

1930 The Cambridge Reserve Chief complained to the federal government that the students at the IRS were overworked, and alleged that one male student was so severely beaten by the IRS Principal that the boy was laid up for seven days. The federal government investigated the complaints regarding the alleged overworking of the students [SRS-000185; SRS-000063; SRS-000064; SRS-000065; SRS-000066].

1934 A newspaper reported an RCMP Constable witnessed the beating administered to several male students at the Shubenacadie IRS while at the IRS to investigate a theft. The Constable did not report the beating incident to superiors at that time. A Commission investigated the flogging of 19 male students by the IRS Principal and Carpenter, and resolved in September 1934 that the floggings were not excessive and that the punishment was "reasonable and adequate under the circumstances" [SRS-004180; SRS-000277; SRS-000187; SRS-002331, pg. 3].

- 1936 A female student alleged that one of the Sisters on staff at the IRS had physically assaulted her by beating her over the head, pulling her hair, striking her on the back of the neck with a ruler and beating her on the back with her fists. Another student also complained of “unnecessary hard punishment” [SRS-000280-0000; SRS-000280-0001; SRS-000280-0002; SRS-000280-0003; SRS-000280-0004; SRS-000282; SRS-000283-0000; SRS-000283-0001; SRS-000283-0002; SRS-000328; SRS-000329; SRS-000087].
- 1937 A male student alleged that he received beatings at the IRS. The IRS Principal denied the allegation [SRS-006080-0000; SRS-006080-0001; SRS-006080-0002; SRS-006080-0003; SRS-006080-0004].

Incidents (Student on Student)

- 1955 In November, two boys were discharged from the IRS for “reasons of immoral conduct and gross misbehaviour.” The boys had been caught entering the girls’ dormitory and had allegedly committed “indecent assault” on some of the girls during the summer [SRS-000396].
- 1956 The Principal reported to the federal government that a student had admitted to engaging in homosexual acts with the smaller boys at the IRS and had been caught at least half a dozen times. The Principal asked that the student be discharged or placed in a reformatory. Admonishment by the Principal had not worked and he therefore requested that the student be sent to Halifax for observation by the Child Guidance Clinic [SRS-006504; SRS-000387].

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- 1929 to 1949 Water for the IRS was drawn from Snide Lake, located approximately a quarter mile from the IRS. The lake was also used for recreational activities such as swimming and for practical purposes, and for obtaining ice blocks in winter for refrigeration of perishable goods [SRS-000705; SRS-001262-0000].
- February 1937 The Principal reported that sixteen cases of tonsillitis were treated and the IRS had its share of flu and two cases of pneumonia [SRS-001686].
- February 1939 A physician reported that the IRS was admitting children with advanced tuberculosis and cases of syphilis. The physician asked the Principal to impress upon the federal government that the IRS was not a tuberculosis clinic and syphilitic home, and that it was important to protect the health of the other children [SRS-001698-0001].
- April 1939 The Principal reported that a mild diphtheria outbreak had occurred at the IRS [SRS-001702].
- Early 1943 An outbreak of diphtheria was reported at the IRS [SRS-000303, pg. 2].
- August 1943 Two girls left the IRS to go berry picking but instead took a row boat out on a small lake. The boat overturned and both girls drowned [SRS-004211-0001].
- December 1945 A diphtheria outbreak occurred at the IRS and was quickly brought

under control [SRS-000424].

June 1947 Two months short of being eligible for discharge from the IRS, a student went truant; the IRS authorities and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police were unsuccessful in locating him [SRS-006501].

April 1950 A farmer at the IRS threatened to “knock [a student’s] block off” for tricks he was playing at the barn. The boy was discharged from the IRS when he stole underclothing belonging to the girls [SRS-006502].

February 1955 A female student attempted to commit suicide at the IRS. The federal government recommended she be sent home for the summer and not return to the IRS thereafter [SRS-000346-0000; SRS-000346-0001; SRS-000347].

1961 to 1962 A hepatitis epidemic occurred at the IRS during the winter months [SRS-001194; SRS-000225; SRS-000580].

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Name	Position	Tenure Dates
Reverend (Monsignor) Jeremiah P. Mackey	Principal	September 1929 to December 1943
Father Joseph William Brown	Principal	December 1943 to August 1948
Reverend (Monsignor) Jeremiah P. Mackey	Principal	August 1948 to August 1956
Father Myles Power, O.M.I.	Acting Principal	May 1955 to September 1955
Reverend Father Robert E. Lauder	Acting Principal	September 1955 to June 1956
Reverend Collin Campbell	Acting Principal	June 1956 to August 1956
Reverend Patrick J. Collins, O.M.I.	Principal	August 1956 to August 1966
Father Michael D. Kearney, O.M.I.	Principal	August 1966 to June 1967

Narrative Completed: August 7, 2012
Narrative Updated: April 24, 2013

EXTERNAL CONTEXT

1958; 1960; 1962 Boarding homes were provided for students discharged from the IRS for the summer for whom home conditions were deemed unsuitable or for those who had no home to which they could return [SRS-006329-0000; SRS-006367; SRS-006353].

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