

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.

Spanish IRS School Narrative

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

NAME OF SCHOOL and VARIANTS

| | | |
|-----------|---|----------------------|
| Name: | Wikwemikong Industrial School | [AGA-0001; AGA-0007] |
| Variants: | Wikwemikong School | [AGA-1395] |
| | Wikwemikong Industrial School, Boys' Department | [AGA-0021; AGA-0022] |
| | Wikwemikong Industrial School, Girls' Department | [AGA-0021; AGA-0022] |
| Name: | Spanish Indian Residential School | [AGA-0040; AGA-0069] |
| Variants: | Spanish River Industrial School | [AGA-0014] |
| | Spanish Industrial School | [AGA-0027] |
| Name: | Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys | [AGA-0244a] |
| Variants: | Spanish Residential Boys' School | [AGA-0109b] |
| | <i>Religious Names for Boys' School Before 1947*:</i> | |
| | St. Peter Claver Indian Industrial School | [AGA-0016] |
| | St. Peter Claver Indian School | [AGA-0163] |
| | St. Peter Claver School | [AGA-0242; AGA-0397] |
| | St. Peter's Boys' School | [AGA-0312a] |
| | S.P.C. | [AGA-0407; AGA-0397] |
| | <i>Religious Names for Boys' School After 1947*:</i> | |
| | St. Charles Garnier Residential School | [AGA-0775] |
| | Garnier Residential School | [AGA-0389, AGA-0407] |
| | Garnier Residential School for Indian Boys | [AGA-0436] |
| | Garnier Indian Residential School | [AGA-0724] |
| | "The College" | [AGA-0436] |
| | Garnier College | [AGA-0586; AGA-0772] |
| | Garnier School or Garnier High School | [AGA-0641] |
| | G.R. | [AGA-0436] |

*The May 1947 school paper, *The Club Star*, declared that the religious name of the school would henceforth be known as "The Garnier Residential School," in honour of one of the Canadian Martyrs [AGA-0407].

| | | |
|-----------|---|--------------------------------|
| Name: | Spanish Indian Residential School for Girls | [AGA-0243a] |
| Variants: | Spanish School for Girls, St. Joseph | [AGA-0109g] |
| | St. Joseph's Residential School | [AGA-0078] |
| | St. Joseph's Convent | [AGA-0168; AGA-0182; AGA-0985] |
| | St. Joe's | [AGA-0572] |

CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY

Opening Date(s):

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Boys' Department, opened in the fall of 1878 [AGA-1012, AGA-0016, AGA-0021].

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Girls' Department, opened in 1862 [AGA-0021. See also AGA-0022; AGA-0040].

Note regarding Wikwemikong Industrial School: One document suggests there was no residential component at Wikwemikong. A 1950 promotional booklet explained the children returned home each evening and were, therefore, not improving in their learning. To remove the impediment, the Jesuits decided to move off-reserve, to Spanish, Ontario [AGA-0565]. The majority of documents agree the children were resident at the industrial school.

Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys was officially opened on or around August 15, 1913 [AGA-1414; AGA-0014; AGA-1039].

One document states the boys' school was built in 1914 [AGA-1033].

Spanish Indian Residential School for Girls was officially opened on or around August 15, 1913 [AGA-1414; AGA-0014; AGA-1039].

At the time of transfer to Spanish, the girls' school was not ready to receive pupils. They either rented buildings around Spanish for the girls [AGA-1414] and/or used a portion of the boys' building partitioned off for the girls [AGA-0016]. The actual date of opening is unclear, but it appears to have been as early as November 1913 or as late as 1915 [AGA-1414; AGA-1033].

Closing Date(s):

Wikwemikong Industrial School (Boys' and Girls' Department) was closed by August 15, 1913 [AGA-1414; AGA-0014; AGA-1039].

Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys was closed June 30, 1958 [AGA-0850; AGA-0850a; AGA-0817; AGA-1039].

Spanish Indian Residential School for Girls was closed June 30, 1962 [AGA-0973].

Chronology of School:

- 1838 The Jesuit Order operates a day school at Wikwemikong [AGA-0040].
- 1862 Wikwemikong Industrial School, Girls' Department, opens [AGA-0022].
- 1868 Jesuits receive a government grant to build two new schools at Wikwemikong [AGA-1012].
- 1877 Boys' school is equipped to become an industrial school, with assistance from government funds [AGA-1012].
- 1878 Opening of the Wikwemikong Industrial School, Boys' Department [AGA-0022].
- 1879 Building new boys' school; the government assists financially [AGA-0022].
- 1880 Addition to girls' school begins in order to join existing building to the sister's new house. Sisters occupy their new building and boys' school partly inhabited [AGA-1012].
- 1885 Both schools are destroyed by fire and rebuilt [AGA-0040; AGA-0022, AGA-0015].
- 1886 Inauguration of new boys' school [AGA-1012].
- 1911 Fire destroys girls' school [AGA-1039]. Rebuilding of girls' school is interrupted and not resumed at Wikwemikong [AGA-0195; AGA-0015; AGA-0016; AGA-0005]. Spanish site plans are approved by the government [AGA-0009]. The Jesuit Fathers purchase the original school site (133 acres) from John Lapointe [AGA-0016] .
- 1912 The Jesuits, through Fr. Paquin, purchase about 900 acres east and west of the original school site [AGA-1399; AGA-1400; AGA-1401; AGA-1402; AGA-1410].
- 1913 Wikwemikong Industrial School (Boys' and Girls' Department) closes. Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys, and Spanish Indian Residential School for Girls, officially open [AGA-1414; AGA-0014; AGA-1039].
- 1917 Principal Papineau asks the government if they would buy the schools [AGA-0018]. The government increases the per capita grant, but refuses to purchase the schools [AGA-0019] .
- 1920 The government's inspection report is generally favourable, although the poor, boggy location of the schools is noted and the high number of graves in the cemetery is questioned [AGA-0023].

- 1931 Superintendent of Education urges the boys' school to adopt the half-day system [AGA-0059]. Shortly thereafter, the boys in grades six to eight are in the half-day system, while the smaller boys receive manual training [AGA-0135; AGA-0136; AGA-0195].

The Jesuits transfer 29.7 acres to the Corporation of St. Joseph's Residential School; part of the Northeast broken quarters of section 39 (Parcel 1007) is sold for \$690.00 [AGA-1020].

- 1933 Water supply problems for both schools are fixed; a new septic system is installed with some financial assistance from the government [AGA-0081; AGA-0082; AGA-0087].
- 1938 Jesuits express interest in constructing an arena [AGA-0162; AGA-0162a].
- 1941 Grist mill and bakery, built by the Jesuits on the school site, operates [AGA-0204].
- 1942 Boys' school is overcrowded and contains other poor conditions [AGA-0216; AGA-0216a]. About one year later, conditions somewhat improve [AGA-0242].
- 1946 Training Division reports that there is a definite fire trap in the boys' school, and recommends an outside closed stairway and a nightwatchman [AGA-0329].

Complaints regarding clothing, food and cleanliness at the boys' school are denied [AGA-0351].

The High School Department opens and the government begins providing the high school tuition grant for boys and girls [AGA-0355].

- 1947 The half-day system is discontinued [AGA-1064, pg. 8, 11; AGA-0424].

"La Corporation du College Ste. Marie à Montreal" transfer all the remaining lands to The Jesuit Fathers of Upper Canada Holding Corporation for \$1.00 [AGA-1020].

- 1948 The exceptional quality of teaching and condition of the building at the girls' school is noted [AGA-0567].
- 1950 Girls' school very overcrowded [AGA-0552].
- 1951 Arena opens [AGA-0586. See also AGA-0560].
- 1956 The government's Educational Survey Commission Report reports very favourably on conditions at the girls' school. Report is critical of the boys' school, but refers to a good "esprit de corps" in the school [AGA-1033].
- 1957 Feasibility of operations at Spanish questioned [AGA-0765; AGA-0766; AGA-0767].

The government offers to take over the school, make necessary repairs and improvements, integrate with the local day school and shut down the High School. The Jesuits propose to develop a private school (day and residential combined) with equal numbers of Indian and white boarders. Classes would be reserved for a majority of non-Indian pupils. The High School would continue as a joint school [AGA-0785].

The Jesuits wanted their counter proposal considered, only if the government was willing to cooperate on an integrated, joint High School whereby enrolment, school programs, new construction and new equipment were a combined effort [AGA-0788].

Both schools start taking white boarders. Operations divide into two divisions each: the Residential School for Indian Boys and Garnier College [AGA-0804a] and the Residential School for Indian Girls and St. Joseph's Residential School [AGA-0803a].

- 1958 The Jesuits inform the government that due to expansion of the government's day schools, activities of the Children's Aid Societies, and the use of bus transportation facilities, the elementary boys' school is no longer necessary. Jesuits are willing to continue the high school under certain conditions, but the government cannot guarantee that all of these conditions can be met [AGA-0799; AGA-0800].

Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys closes. Garnier College also closes [AGA-0850; AGA-0850a; AGA-0817, AGA-1039].

The girls' school reports a deficit of \$13,628.20 [AGA-0844].

1959 The Sisters end farm operations [AGA-0877].

Grades eleven and twelve are temporarily discontinued due to low enrolment [AGA-0849].

1961 Enrolment at the girls' school continues to drop, and grades nine and ten are discontinued. The District School Superintendent blames the low enrolment on boarding home arrangements, a closer supervision of admissions and doubt in the minds of parents regarding the academic standards of the school [AGA-0932].

The Sisters approach the province regarding the conversion of Spanish into an old age home. The Regional Supervisor recommends the closing of the school [AGA-0945].

The government sets June 30, 1962 as the date to sever connections with the school [AGA-0947].

1962 Spanish Indian Residential School for Girls closes. St. Joseph's Residential School for white girls also closes [AGA-0973].

MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Boys' Department, and Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys was managed, at all times, by the Roman Catholic religious order commonly referred to as the Jesuits. Known officially as the Society of Jesus (*Societas Jesu*), abbreviated "S.J." or "s.j."

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Girls' Department, and Spanish Indian Residential School for Girls was, at all times, managed by a Roman Catholic teaching order, the Daughters of the Heart of Mary. At Spanish the Order was also known as the Sisters of St. Joseph [AGA-0109g] or the Sisters of Mary [AGA-0565]. Their residential school assets were owned and managed by the corporation of "St. Joseph's Residential School" [AGA-1020; AGA-0243a].

SCHOOL BUILDINGS

Dates Owned by Church

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Boys' Department, and Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys was owned, at all times, by the Roman Catholic religious order commonly referred to as the Jesuits [See "MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL"].

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Girls' Department: Ownership of the girls' school building at Wikwemikong is unclear, although documents suggest the Jesuit Fathers may have owned the Industrial School buildings [see chronology and further details in this section].

Spanish Indian Residential School for Girls: School buildings were, at all times, owned by the Daughters of the Heart of Mary [see chronology and further details in this section].

Dates Owned by Government

Wikwemikong Industrial School and Spanish Indian Residential School: School buildings were not owned by the government.

One exception is worth noting. The Jesuit mission diary noted on January 11, 1915 that the laundry of the girls' school became the property of the government to serve as a council house [AGA-1012].

LAND

Location

Wikwemikong Industrial School: “unceded portion of Manitoulin island, ten miles north of Manitowaning agency in the Wikwemikong village, on the hillside which forms the west shore of Smith bay” [AGA-1385].

Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys and Girls: The off-reserve school site comprised approximately 1,000 acres on the north shore of the North Channel, at the mouth of Spanish River, abreast of the middle part of Manitoulin Island, one mile from the CPR Sault Line Station and 100 miles east of the city of Sault Ste. Marie. The school site included approximately 300 feet of bathing beach on Spanish River [Documents agree, eg. AGA-0586; AGA-0007; AGA-0016].

Dates Owned by Church

Wikwemikong Industrial School: School located on the unceded portion of Manitoulin Island. The 1901 Annual Report explained “the school is operated in connection with the mission, and the Indians, some years ago, granted us the use of about two hundred acres of land for the support of the mission and of the school together” [AGA-1385. See also AGA-1406; AGA-0016].

Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys and Girls: School lands were owned, at all times, by holding corporations of the Jesuit Fathers and/or the Daughters of the Heart of Mary or Sisters of St. Joseph at Spanish [AGA-0015, AGA-0168, AGA-0182, AGA-1020, AGA-1401, AGA-1402, AGA-1419, AGA-0243a].

Dates Owned by Government

Wikwemikong Industrial School: School located on the unceded portion of Manitoulin Island. The 1901 Annual Report explained “the school is operated in connection with the mission, and the Indians, some years ago, granted us the use of about two hundred acres of land for the support of the mission and of the school together.” [AGA-1385. See also AGA-1406; AGA-0016].

Spanish Indian Residential School: School lands were not owned by the federal crown.

PHOTOS, PLANS and OTHER MEDIA

| Documentation | Date | Description |
|---------------|---------|---|
| AGA-0162a | Undated | Sketch of skating rink. |
| AGA-0561 | 1950 | Floor plan of the 1 st floor of the Garnier Residential School for Boys. |
| AGA-0562 | 1950 | Floor plan of the 2 nd floor of the Garnier Residential School for Boys. |
| AGA-0563 | 1950 | Floor plan of the 3 rd floor of the Garnier Residential School for Boys |
| AGA-1051 | 1975 | Survey plan and notes associated to Spanish lands |

RELIGIOUS GROUPS

Society of Jesus (*Societas Jesu*), abbreviated “S.J.” or “s.j.”.

The Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

Daughters of the Heart of Mary

Sisters of St. Joseph or the Sisters of Mary

WRITTEN AGREEMENTS

1911 Agreement between the Government and the Bishop of the Sault Ste Marie Diocese regarding the maintenance and management of Wikwemikong School [AGA-0001].

1911 Agreement relating to the maintenance and management of Indian Boarding Schools [AGA-0001a].

DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS

To date, we are unaware of any convictions for abuse at Spanish 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)

1924 Complaint that a pupil was being physically abused by the staff at Spanish [AGA-0027]. The allegations were denied by the government, claiming in defence that no child had been asked to perform beyond their strengths [AGA-0029].

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

1932 An incident of a student who lost a finger while operating a sawing machine at the school, documents elaborate on the father's complaint, as well as the response by the government. [AGA-0068, AGA-0069, AGA-0163, AGA-0164, AGA-0166].

1946 A ca. 1946 inspection report by A.J. Doucet for the Chief, Training Division, denied complaints regarding clothing, food and cleanliness. The report claimed the "clothing misunderstanding" was caused when some children wrote home to their parents asking for special clothing, similar to articles of clothing given by visiting parents. The principal wished to discharge the letter-writing children and the inspector refused to accept the dismissal before term-end [AGA-0351].

1948 A 15 year old boy was admitted to Garnier High School on the advice and recommendation of the government in the fall of 1948. The father reportedly wanted his son to attend St. Paul's College in Winnipeg, a Jesuit college, but the local Indian Agent recommended Spanish Residential School where he could acquire a trade, as opposed to matriculation. After the boy's admission to Spanish, the boy's father reported to the Superintendent of Education, that his son's violin and guitar were taken away and locked up and that his son was not learning a trade, but digging a trench for no stated reason. The father also complained that his son was not receiving letters from him, including money, while parcels from his friends were getting through. The father asked the government to transfer his son to St. Paul's. Neary replied that he could not agree with the allegations of poor treatment, as the schools were regularly inspected and he would not transfer the student during the academic year due to the large expenditure involved [AGA-1204, AGA-1204a, AGA-1205, AGA-1207, AGA-1208, AGA-1209].

1956 On October 25, 1956, a student of Spanish, wrote to the Chapleau Indian Agent begging to be returned home, claiming he was unable to carry on and handle grade nine. He said he was lonesome and he did not want to be forced to stay. The student stated there was "to much religion", he ate and slept very little and he had lost about 14.5 lbs in about six weeks [AGA-0746; AGA-0747].

PRINCIPALS/ADMINISTRATORS

Principals

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Boys' Department

| | |
|--|--|
| Rev. Father D. du Ranquet founded school | 1878 - ? |
| Rev. Father Th. Couture | [first reference Aug 1908] - Feb 21 1910 |
| Rev. Father Charles Belanger | Feb 21 1910 - Aug 1912 |
| Rev. Father L.N. Dugas | Aug 1912 - [Jan 1917?] |

Spanish Indian Residential School for Boys

| | |
|--------------------------------|---------------------|
| Rev. Father Eugene A. Papineau | Jan 1917 - Jan 1918 |
| Rev. Father T.A. Desautels | Jan 1918 - May 1919 |

| | |
|----------------------------------|---|
| Rev. Father Victor Gravel | May 1919 - Oct 1922 |
| Rev. Father G.A. Artus | Oct 1922 - Sep 28 1923 |
| Rev. Father J. B. Sauvé | Sep 28 1923 -Aug 1924 |
| Rev. Father Charles Bélanger | Aug 1924 -Oct 10, 1930 |
| Rev. Father James Howitt | Oct 10 1930 - Aug 15 1932 |
| Rev. Father Paul Mery | Aug 15 1932 - Aug 24 1937 |
| Rev. Father James Howitt | Aug 24 1937 - Jun 1942 Howitt's appointment may have been Aug 26 1937. |
| Rev. Father Cecil A. Primeau | Jun 1942 - Aug 1945 |
| Rev. Father John Raymond Oliver | Aug 1945 - Jul 31 1952 |
| Rev. Father C.N. Rushman | Jul 31 1952 - [Sep] 1953 |
| Rev. Father Leo Burns | [Sep] 1953 - Jul 27 1957 |
| Rev. Father William J. C. Kearns | Jul 27 1957 - Aug 1958 |

Wikwemikong Industrial School, Girls' Department

A 1914 Jesuit document explained the two schools were under the general supervision of one principal. It is unclear when "general supervision" of the schools was officially separated. The convent/school was run by the "Superior" or Principal who did not, under normal conditions, liaise with the government. After the boys' school closed, it appears the Sisters made some distinction between a "Principal-Superior" who liaised with the government and a "Principal-Teacher" (head-teacher).

| | |
|---|---|
| Miss Lucy | ? - Sep 24 1885 |
| Miss Miller | Sep 24 1885 - [1910?] |
| Miss Louise Bonnot | ? - Dec 1932 |
| Miss Zoe St. James | Dec 1932 - ca. Sep 1938 |
| Miss Chloe Laferriere | ca. Sep 1938 - ca. Sep 1944 |
| Miss Zoe St. James | ca. Sep 1944 - 1951 |
| Miss R. McIntyre | 1951-1952 or 1953 |
| Miss A. Straine | 1952 or 1953 - 1955 |
| Miss M[adeleine]. MacDonald | 1955 - 1956 |
| Miss A. Straine | 1956 - 1957 |
| Miss Louise Gattie | 1957 - 1959 |
| Miss Annie M. Berrigan, (Principal-Teacher) | Aug 1958 - Aug 1960 In 1958, 1959 and 1960 audits she is described as the "Principal-Teacher". |
| Miss M[adeleine?] MacDonald | Aug 1960 - Aug 1961 |
| Miss Louise Gattie | Aug 1961 - 1962 |

In the 1961 audit she is described as "Principal and occasional teacher" and in the the final audit (Jan-Jun 1962) she is "Principal and Teacher".

Miss Gleason, "Superior" or "Supervisor, Nurse"

1961-1962

Her title as "Superior" in 1961 when Gattie was "Principal and occasional teacher" indicates she may have been managing the school for a time.

Research completed: May 21, 2004

Research updated: June 15, 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