

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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## **St Albert IRS [Youville IRS] DR School Narrative**

November 4, 2004

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

### **NAME OF SCHOOL AND VARIANTS**

1877	Indian school at St. Albert [Item 00337]
1882	the "Asile Youville" [Item 00323]
1885	St. Albert Mission School [Item 02155]
1887	The School of Industry at St. Albert [Item 00352]
1887	The Industrial School at St. Albert [Item 00353]
1891	St. Albert Industrial School [Item 00030]
1894	St Albert Orphanage [Item 00047]
1895	St. Albert's School [Item 00299]
1896	St. Albert Boarding School [Item 00050]
1911	Indian Boarding School at St. Albert [Item 00075]
1920	St. Albert Indian Boarding School [Item 00103]
1923	St Albert Indian Residential School [Item 00466]
1923	Indian Residential School [Item 00834]
1937	Youville Indian Residential School [Item 00222]

As of December 1937, the name of "St. Albert Residential School" was officially changed to "Youville Residential School", to avoid confusion with the Edmonton Residential School, which was nearby and was sometimes called "St. Albert" also. [Item 00512]

### **CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY**

The school appears to have opened in 1859 as the Asile Youville. [Item 00323]

The school and the land were both owned by the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) [Items 00404, 00075].

The Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) at St. Albert / Youville IRS had a relationship with the Provincial Department of Welfare during the time they accepted Indian pupils. The Sisters also housed other individuals: it is reported in September 1948 that the institution "has always accepted old people and feeble-minded people requiring institutional care and assigned to it by the Provincial Department of Welfare." [Item 00282]

In 1930, the government considered purchasing St. Albert / Youville IRS. [Items 00170, 00190] The issue was raised again in 1937, at which time the government stated that "we have not considered the purchase of this property and it is not likely that we will do so in the near future." [Item 00221]

In January 1938, Sister V.M. Corriveau, Superior, St. Albert / Youville IRS, reported that “we no longer keep white boarders since two years, and ... our Institution is now solely an Indian Residential School.” [Item 00523A]

The school, through its Principal, broke off its relationship with the government in 1948 [Item 00276].

- In June 1948, the government “obtained the impression” that the Grey Nuns “were not prepared to accept Indian children for the academic year 1948-49 unless we [the government] could guarantee per capita grant for eighty pupils.” The government did not feel they could guarantee this number of pupils for St. Albert / Youville IRS. [Item 00275]
- The Principal of St. Albert / Youville IRS replied that “due to the uncertainty of attendance of the small number of pupils available, and with present regulations of payment per capita for the pupils in attendance, it is inadvisable for us to accept your proposal. In severing relations with your Department may we thank you for your courtesy and kindness in the past...” [Item 00276]
- Effective September 1, 1948, St. Albert / Youville IRS was removed from the list of institutions that received grants and benefits from the government related to the education of Indian pupils. [Item 00284]
- As of September 1948, the government planned to construct a Day School on the Alexander Reserve, to accommodate those children from the Alexander Reserve who had previously attended St. Albert / Youville IRS. [Item 00278] Two other Day Schools had reportedly been built recently, and would take in other children who had attended St. Albert / Youville IRS. [Item 00282]

The Sisters may have started, in 1948 or later, a relationship with the Alberta Provincial government to use the buildings [Item 00269].

## **MANAGEMENT OF SCHOOL**

### Dates managed by Church

The school was managed throughout its life by its owners, the Sisters of Charity of the General Hospital (Grey Nunnery) [Items 00323; 00276]. The government first supported the school with a grant of \$300 in 1875 [Item 00316], authorized by an Order-in-Council in 1873 [Item 00322].

### Dates managed by Government / Province / Band

There is no evidence of the school ever being transferred to a Band or Bands or to the Federal or Provincial government. There is no evidence of any Band or of either the Federal or Provincial government ever being involved in the administration or management of the school, or having any role in the selection of the Principal or the staff, although the government did approve the appointed Principal on several occasions. [Items 01201, 00196, 00729]

## **SCHOOL BUILDINGS**

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| 1859       | The original school appears to have been built as the Asile Youville [Item 00323].   |
| 1887       | A new building (4 stories, 35' x 180' [Item 00373] at a cost of almost \$40,000 [Item 00354].  |
| 1908-9     | A new brick building (100' x 50', 3 stories and a basement). The girls were in the main building with dormitories on the upper floor. [Item 00373].            |
| As of 1911 | As of February, 1911, there were 335 acres of land, 200 of which were farmed. [Item 00373]   |
| 1920       | In January 1920 a new brick building was being constructed, completed sometime between June and December, at a cost of \$180,000. [Items 01868, 00114B, 00171] |
| 1921       | Cess pool built at a cost of \$7000 [Item 00171]   |

- As of 1926 A report of September 17, 1926 indicates that St. Albert / Youville IRS had six classrooms: “Three of them are used by Indian children, and three by whites.” [Item 00160]
- 1928 Septic tank built at a cost of \$10 000 [Item 00171]  
Ice house built at a cost of \$2100 [Item 00171]
- 1928-29 By February 1929 a new laundry building had been completed at St. Albert / Youville IRS, at a cost of approx. \$10 000. The government provided a grant toward the cost of the laundry and “the equipment of the same”. [Items 01933, 01004A]
- 1929 In September 1929, the hog house at St. Albert / Youville IRS burnt down, causing the loss of the building and 30 hogs as well as other animals. [Item 00176]
- 1930 Hog pen built at a cost of \$5100 [Item 00171]  
Pump house built at a cost of \$500 [Item 00171]
- 1938 Flour Mill burned down. [Item 00675]

It is not known whether any or all of these buildings were subsequently demolished.

### **LAND**

The School was located on c. 335 acres of church land in the town (later City) of St Albert, fairly close to the Youville Convent. It had attached to it a large farm of c. 200 acres [Item 00373]. The School lay inside the boundaries of Treaty 6. From the creation of the school in 1859 to its closing as an Indian Residential School in 1948, there is no evidence that it was ever located elsewhere, that it was ever owned by other than the Grey Nuns, or that it was ever turned over to the government. Its final disposition following its closure in 1948 is unknown, though there is some documentary evidence that the Grey Nuns considered an agreement with the Alberta Provincial government to continue the building’s use as an institution, perhaps for the purpose of housing seniors.

### **PHOTOS, PLANS AND OTHER MEDIA**

- Blueprint of the area surrounding proposed memorial to Father Lacombe, 1929. Plan shows convent, church, residence and school and grid of adjacent streets (St. Vital Ave., Chibeault St., Youville St., St. Alphonse St., St. Hippolyte St.) [Item 00467]

**GENERAL ENROLLMENT STATISTICS OVER TIME**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Authorized enrollment</b>	<b>Actual enrollment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1875		70-80	
1876		60-70	
1876		>25	"...obliged to maintain 40 orphans of whom 30 are Indians..."
1876		60-70	Per unsigned attachment to doc
1877		>60	
1877		>50	
1882		60	
1887		52	
1890		99	
1894		57	
1894	50	53	
1896			"...provision is being made in next year's Estimates to increase... to 85..."
1911	80		Agreement
1913		90	"... 90 orphans..."
1914		83	"...and a great deal more who are not receiving support..."
1914		87	On roll
1918		81	QR Dec 1918
1919		80	QR Mar 1919
1919		80	QR Dec 1919
1920	80		Request for grant for 90

<b>Date</b>	<b>Authorized enrollment</b>	<b>Actual enrollment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1920		80	QR Mar 1920
1920	80	80	15 others being provided for; Principal wants grant for 40 more
1920			Request for grant for 90; "...there would be no difficulty in getting the pupils."
1920	80	86	
1920		80	QR Jun 1920
1920		80	QR Sep 1920
1920		80	"...290 pupils... of whom 80 to 83 are Indians."
1920		80	Request for grant for 100
1920	80	>80	Request for grant for 100
1920	80		"Provision... is being made in the estimates... to increase... to 90."
1920		79	QR Dec 1920
1921			Disappointment that increase is not to 100
1921			Archbishop of Edmonton supports 100 figure
1921		89	QR Mar 1921
1921	90		As from 1 April 1921
1922	100		
1924		80	Indian children
1925	100	>100	"... and some to be admitted."
1925			"our wards comprise 5/12ths of the pupilage..." (if 100 = 5/12, whole = 240)
1926	100		Request for grant for 120

<b>Date</b>	<b>Authorized enrollment</b>	<b>Actual enrollment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1926	100	93	Request for grant for 120
1926	100	100	
1928		104	QR Mar 1928
1928		101	QR Jun 1928
1928			Could take 100 more, then able to “discontinue their white work”
1928		92	QR Sep 1928
1928		120	QR Dec 1928
1929		105	QR Mar 1929
1929	100	88	Building could accommodate 250 boarders
1929		121	QR Jun 1929
1929		128	QR Sep 1929
1929		130	QR Dec 1929
1930		136	QR Mar 1930
1930		96	Accommodation for 250 boarders
1930		136	QR Jun 1930
1930		139	QR Sep 1930
1930		125	QR Dec 1930
1931		104	
1931			Suggestion to increase pupilage from 130 to 160
1931		127	QR Mar 1931
1931		126	QR Jun 1931
1930-1			Undated document notes pupilage at 130 with a \$170 per capita

<b>Date</b>	<b>Authorized enrollment</b>	<b>Actual enrollment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1931-2			Undated document notes pupilage at 160 with a \$180 per capita
1931	160		
1931		105	QR Sep 1931
1934		106	“only 20 white children”
1936	160		
[1936]			“... we no longer keep white boarders since two years...”
1937		147	141 in class
1938		139	30 more of school age still out
1941		171	162 in class
1941		167	QR Sep 1941
1941		141	QR Dec 1941
1942		138	QR Mar 1942
1942		138	QR Jun 1942
1942		139	QR Sep 1942
1942		129	QR Dec 1942
1943		130	QR Mar 1943
1943		94	QR Jun 1943
1943		123	QR Sep 1943
1943		118	QR Dec 1943
1944		120	QR Mar 1944
1944		118	QR Jun 1944
1944		123	QR Sep 1944



<b>Date</b>	<b>Authorized enrollment</b>	<b>Actual enrollment</b>	<b>Comments</b>
1944		117	QR Dec 1944
1945		118	QR Mar 1945
1945		119	QR Jun 1945
1945		136	QR Sep 1945
1945		139	QR Dec 1945
1946		142	QR Mar 1946
1946		135	QR Jun 1946
1946		144	QR Sep 1946
1946		139	QR Dec 1946
1947		140	QR Mar 1947
1947		138	QR Jun 1947
1947		134	QR Sep 1947
1947		90	"... compared to 145 last fall."
1947		127	QR Dec 1947
1948		109	QR Mar 1948
1948		127	QR Jun 1948
1948		73	"last term they had 73 in attendance"
1948		65	QR Aug 1948 [last QR]

## **STUDENTS FROM OTHER RESERVES**

The school drew its students in the main from the reserves in the Edmonton Agency, as follows:

- Paul's Band, from the Wabamun Reserve [Item 00590]
- Alexander's Band, from the Alexander Reserve [Item 01258]
- Enoch Band, from Winterburn [Item 01269]
- Alexis Band, Alexis Reserve, Lac-Ste-Anne [Item 00110]
- Michel Band, Michel Reserve [Item 00088]
- Callihoo Band [Item 01293]

Over the course of time, children from other Bands were enrolled at the school: perhaps 5 out of an enrollment of 120 at any one time.

## **RELIGIOUS GROUPS**

Diocesan Group: Archdiocese of Edmonton

Name of Oblates: The area in which the St. Albert / Youville IRS was located was known as the Vice Province of Alberta-Saskatchewan until 1986 when it merged with two other Vice Provinces to comprise the Oblate Province of Grandin.

Name of Nuns: The Order of the Grey Nuns of Montreal (also known as the Institute of the Sisters of Charity of Montreal (Grey Nuns) was involved at the St. Albert / Youville IRS, as owners, as managers and as teachers and other staff.

## **WRITTEN AGREEMENTS**

- 1911: Agreement regarding the St Albert Boarding School, signed by H. Leduc for Right Rev. Emile J. Legal, OMI and by Sister M.A. Diquiere. [Item 01654] Bishop Legal noted in a letter in July 1911 that the Agreement "would have been better executed in the name of the Rev. Sisters themselves, as they are the owners of the property...." [Item 00075]

## **DOCUMENTS REFERRING TO SCHOOL INCIDENTS**

- A complaint was made to the government by "A citizen of the Province of Alberta" in November 1929 regarding the treatment of children at St. Albert / Youville IRS. According to the complaint, pupils of St. Albert / Youville IRS "are treated name of dogs, pigs etc. and moreover the sisters use them very roughly, as much as to use heavy sticks on them and striking them on the back. A short while ago a child through weakness of the kidneys was put to sleep in a cold bathtub, so as not to destroy the mattress, the child was mostly frozen as it was a very cold time of the year when the coincidence [sic] occurred." [Item 000168]
- A complaint was made prior to February 8, 1941 that a staff member "had ill treated one of the boys." In response, it is reported that "the Principal of the Youville School is dispensing with the services of [the staff member] and that he will be replaced by [another individual]. In view of the latter's past experience at this school there should be no further trouble." [Item 00730]
- An undated document refers to an allegation by two students and other witnesses that the same staff member attempted to choke two male pupils. The staff member admitted the

charge to the Indian Agent, who stated that the Department could not tolerate punishment of the kind. It appears that the staff member was dismissed and replaced. [Item 00726]

### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

#### **Tuberculosis Preventorium at St. Albert / Youville IRS**

- In November 1937, a government letter mentions a number of children from Blue Quills IRS who have been recommended for observation for tuberculosis and requests that the Sister Superior of St. Albert / Youville IRS be asked to take in these children. [Item 00514]
- By December 1937, the Sister Superior of St. Albert / Youville IRS had agreed to set aside part of a school building for use as a Preventorium, but informed the government that she needed to consult the Reverend Mother Provincial in Edmonton, who in turn consulted the Mother House in Montreal. [Item 00519]
- By January 1938, the Sisters of Charity (Grey Nuns) were willing to accept the plan presented by the government. Sister V.M. Corriveau, Superior, wrote about St. Albert / Youville IRS that “We actually can convert the second story in the west wing of our building into a Preventorium, and as circumstances may require, we could affect to the same purpose also, the flat beneath the above mentioned one.” The proposed institution is described by the government (E.L. Stone, Superintendent of Medical Services) as “not a sanatorium but a special school where weak children may be made strong and from which must be removed any who come to require sanatorium care.” [Items 00523A, 00523B]
- The Preventorium opened on January 19, 1938. [Item 00535]
- Despite the intention to operate only a preventorium – not a sanatorium – at St. Albert / Youville IRS, the Sisters suggested, in March 1938, that they also offer sanatorium care, saying that they could house 100 sanatorium patients, if the government paid the Sisters the tuition fee provided to other sanatoriums. [Item 00553B]
- Tuberculosis clinics were held at St. Albert / Youville IRS [Item 02472]

#### **Non-mandatory financial assistance provided by the government**

- The government occasionally provided financial assistance to the Sisters at St. Albert / Youville IRS, for building materials, repairs, appliances, etc... that were not for the exclusive benefit of Indian pupils. [Items 00435, 00870]
- The church ownership of the school is cited on various occasions as a reason for the government not to provide financial assistance, beyond the grant and materials for Indian pupils. [Item 01277]
- The fact that the school served many children who were not Indian wards of the government is also given as a reason for the government not to provide money to the school, beyond amounts used exclusively for Indian pupils. [Item 00149]

### **Staff and standards of education**

- In July 1924, the Principal of St. Albert / Youville IRS informed the government that “Knowing yours and the Department’s desire of wanting diplomed [sic] teachers for our indian classes ... for the next term, we shall be able to supply one of our sisters, a diplomed teacher of Alberta, to teach the senior indian class.” [Item 00140]
- In 1930, it was noted that 35 Sisters were employed at St. Albert / Youville IRS. [Item 00171]

### **Medical staff for St. Albert / Youville IRS**

- The government appears to have employed medical staff to attend to students at St. Albert / Youville IRS.
- In 1914, the medical officer was required to visit St. Albert / Youville IRS “once a month at least”, and to “give particular attention to tubercular pupils and instruct the principal with regard to isolation of the same”, and to provide advice regarding sanitation. [Edmonton Hobbema District Item 2051A]
- As of 1938, the duties of the assigned doctor were: “to make a weekly visit to the school and examine all the pupils, to attend at any time any sick child when called by the Principal of the school, to examine all children when admitted into the school as pupils and ... be responsible to the Department for the health of the children.” [Edmonton Hobbema District Item 2444]

### **Government grants for school employees**

- The government provided a grant for a night watchman at St. Albert / Youville IRS [Item 00550]
- The government reimbursed St. Albert / Youville IRS for wages paid to Care Taker for three months, employed sometime prior to January 1936. [Item 02268]

### **Approval of Principal by Government**

- On several occasions, the government expressed approval of the Principal appointed by the school management to be in charge of St. Albert / Youville IRS: January 26, 1916 [Item 01201]; October 30, 1931 [Item 00196]; February 6, 1941 [Item 00729].

### **Non-Status children at St. Albert / Youville IRS**

- Until at least approximately 1936, St. Albert / Youville IRS was not an “Indian-only” school. The pupils attending were variously classed over the years as “white”, “orphan”, “Indian”, “non-Treaty”, “Half-breed” and “Metis”. Various documents refer to residents of different types who were not Indian grant-earning government wards. [Items 00386, 01868, 00956, 01013]
- The presence of “whites” as residents at St. Albert / Youville IRS is first mentioned in 1895. [Item 00299]
- In 1908, Indians were being taught in a separate classroom. reportedly because it was felt that “the rate payers object to this association” [between “whites” and Indians] and the presence of the Indian pupils in the classroom slowed the progress of the others.[Items 00069, 00074]
- “Whites” were still being taught in separate classrooms in 1926. [Item 00160]
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- The Collection does not indicate that any “white” child was ever a “grant earner”.

- The possibility of abandoning “the keeping and tuition of white children” was first considered in 1911, and again in 1928 and 1930 [Items 00373, 00165, 00176]
- St. Albert / Youville IRS took in “orphans”. It is not clear whether the “orphans” were “white”, “half-breed”, or “Indian”, and, if the latter, then “Treaty” or “non-Treaty”. [Items 00354, 01083]
- A 1914 letter from the Principal of St. Albert / Youville IRS implies that all pupils at the school who were not Indian were orphans (that is, the “whites” were orphans), [Item 01083] However, later documents suggest that this is not necessarily the case [Item 01145]
- St. Albert / Youville IRS took in “half-breeds” and “Metis” children. The government policy on paying grants to the school for such children changed over time. Also, the policy was enforced at times, and not at others [Items 02508, 02341]
- Following 1914, evidence exists that children were admitted as grant-earning pupils in spite of the fact that they were “half-breed”. [Item 02341]
- Located instances in which the government was asked to give a bounty (often a sewing machine) to an ex-pupil, or to provide a grant for any type of higher education, where the student was non-Treaty, were refused by the government. [Items 01145, 01147, 01926, 01970, 02008]
- As of approximately 1936, St. Albert / Youville IRS seems to have accepted only Indian children. [Item 00523A].

#### **Elderly and infirm housed at St. Albert / Youville IRS**

- St. Albert / Youville IRS appears to have housed seniors and “feeble-minded” people:
- It is reported in September 1948 that the institution “has always accepted old people and feeble-minded people requiring institutional care and assigned to it by the Provincial Department of Welfare.” [Item 00282]
- One report states that: “This building now accommodates some 150 old folks” [Item 02222]

#### **Laundry and engine room**

- In May 1927, the Indian Agent reported that the “laundry at the St. Albert Boarding School is not at all what it should be. ...it is in connection with the engine room and thoroughfare to the engine room. In the laundry room is much machinery which altho protected by iron rails is not sufficient for safety.” Report also mentions the “undesirable fact that the engineers and other work men have to pass forwards and backwards when going to or coming from the engine room when the girls are at work in the laundry.” [Item 00976]

#### **Injury of St. Albert / Youville IRS student**

- A pupil of St. Albert / Youville IRS was injured when her hand was caught in a mangle. A lawyer contacted the school regarding settlement of the issue. [Item 00226A]

### **Parent complaints regarding manual labor by pupils**

- In September 1939, a lawyer acting on behalf of parents of children enrolled at St. Albert / Youville IRS contacted the government asking: “Has a Convent any right... to teach the child one-half day according to curriculum and the balance of the day to put the child to work at whatever work he or she may be directed within the Convent walls?” [Item 00230]
- The government replied that “It has always been the policy of the Department to make provision at these schools whereby approximately half of the day is spent in regular classroom work and half in what one might term vocational or semi-vocational instruction...” [Item 00231]

### **Attempt by pupil to burn down St. Albert / Youville IRS**

- In 1916 or early 1917 a pupil attempted to burn down the school. [Item 00088]

### **Consideration of housing Japanese citizens at St. Albert / Youville IRS**

- In 1942, the government considered using the St. Albert / Youville IRS buildings to house Japanese citizens suffering from physical disabilities. This plan was not pursued. [Items 00804, 00827]

### **Family visits to students**

- In June 1932, the government issued instructions regarding the visits of family members to students at St. Albert / Youville IRS and Edmonton IRS. These instructions were: that only one or two visits should be made per term; that overnight visits should not be allowed; that visiting family members had to supply their own food and food for their own horses; that children could not be taken out of school due to sickness; and that if a parent is sick, a child may only be called home once the doctor has issued a certificate. [Edmonton Hobbema District Item 2679]

### **Age of admission for pupils**

- In December 1917, the government instructed that children under age seven should not be admitted to St. Albert / Youville IRS except in exceptional circumstances. [Item 02391]

### **Provincial inspections**

- Some time prior to February 1920 a provincial school inspector appears to have visited St. Albert/ Youville IRS. The federal government commented at that time that “Provincial Inspectors have no jurisdiction over Indian boarding schools, and have not as yet been asked to make any inspections of either the boarding or day schools in the province.” [Items 00103, 00104]
- By 1933, provincial inspectors were visiting St. Albert / Youville IRS with the knowledge of the federal government. [Item 02213]

### **PRINCIPALS / ADMINISTRATORS**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
Reverend Sister St Roch	Director	1887
(Sr Brassard: appears to have acted in this role)	Unknown	1892

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position</b>	<b>Tenure</b>
Mother M.A. Carroll	Provincial Superior	Unknown - 1910
Reverend Sister M.A. or (M.M.) Diquiere, 1910	Principal	1910-1913
Sr. M.A. Leduc, 1913	Principal	1913-1915
Sr. M.O. Briault, 1915	Principal	1915-1921
Sr. Gosselin	Principal	1921-1927
Sr. M. A. Proulx	Principal	1927-1931
Sr. M.A. Surprenant	Principal	1931-1934
Sr. V.M. Corriveau	Principal	1934-1940
Sr. St. Sabine	Principal	1940-1943
Sr. Rose Vincent	Principal	1943-1946
Sr. Angelina Letarte	Principal	1946-1948

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



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