

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS HISTORY: FACT SHEET

The Anglican Church of Canada

- At various times between 1820 and 1969, the Anglican Church of Canada administered about three dozen residential schools for Indigenous children. At its peak involvement in the late 1920s, the Church concurrently operated 24 schools situated mostly in northern regions of central and western Canada.

Our diocese

- The Alert Bay Mission was established by the Rev. A.J. Hall in 1879 on Cormorant Island off the north-east shore of Vancouver Island.
- On June 8, 1912, an agreement was signed between His Majesty, the King, represented by the Superintendent General of Indian Affairs of Canada and the Right Reverend John Charles Roper, D.D., Bishop of Columbia, Victoria, for the management and operation of the Indian Residential School in Alert Bay.
- From 1929-1974, The Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC), in collaboration with our diocese, was involved in running one of the largest residential schools in the country – **St. Michael's Indian Residential School** located in 'Yalis (Alert Bay, Cormorant Island).
 - The school was located on the 'Namgis First Nation, which is part of the Kwakwaka Speaking Peoples.
 - It had space for 200 live-in students.
 - Children were taken from the northern island communities, as well as the north coast, including Bella Bella, Bella Coola, the Nisga's territories, and Haida Gwaii.
 - Past students report on their lives at St Michael's:
 - staff referred to the children only by an assigned number
 - they were prohibited from speaking their language
 - they were beaten for speaking their language, crying or showing weakness
 - they experienced constant hunger
 - they were isolated from their families
 - In 1949, two dozen children ran away from the school in a mass escape. The subsequent investigation into conditions at the school led to the resignation of both the principal and vice-principal.
 - The federal government took over the management and operation of the IRS on April 1, 1969.

- When the school closed in 1975, the 'Namgis First Nation was given control of the building.
- In February 2015, the school was demolished. Bishop Logan attended this event.

Residential schools in Canada

- At the height of the system, more than 100 residential schools operated in Canada.
- An estimated 6,000 students died while at residential schools (the risk of an Indigenous child dying at a school was higher than a Canadian serving in World War II)
- Most of these deaths were from illness (Tuberculosis was very common) that went untreated or which the child could not survive due to malnutrition.
- Former students have reported:
 - beatings that resulted in broken limbs
 - being placed in isolation such as in dark closets (often for days)
 - needles being pushed through their tongues as punishment for speaking their own language
 - being hit with whips, switches, rulers and other objects
 - sexual abuse

Residential schools on and around Vancouver Island

- There were five "Indian Residential Schools" on Vancouver Island:
 - St Michael's Indian Residential School, Alert Bay (Anglican church)
 - Kuper Island Residential School, Penelakut Island near Chemainus (Roman Catholic church)
 - Christie Indian Residential School, Meares Island near Tofino (Roman Catholic church)
 - Alberni Residential School, Port Alberni (Presbyterian church)
 - Ahousaht Residential School, Flores Island near Tofino (Presbyterian church)
- Using numbers painstakingly compiled by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, there were 202 students who were sent to a Vancouver Island residential schools and never came home.