

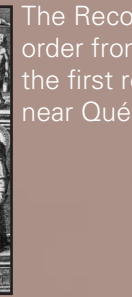
# 100 YEARS OF LOSS

## THE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL SYSTEM IN CANADA

From the early 1830s to 1996, thousands of First Nation, Inuit, and Métis children were forced to attend residential schools in an attempt to aggressively assimilate them into the dominant culture. Many of the major events of the residential school era are shown here. Visit [www.legacyofhope.ca](http://www.legacyofhope.ca) for a comprehensive timeline and to learn more about the history and legacy of the Residential School System.

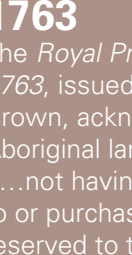
1620

The Recollets a religious order from France establish the first residential school, near Québec City.



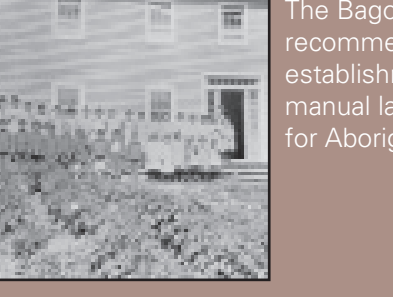
1763

The Royal Proclamation of 1763, issued by the British Crown, acknowledges Aboriginal land rights as "...not having been ceded to or purchased by Us, are reserved to them."



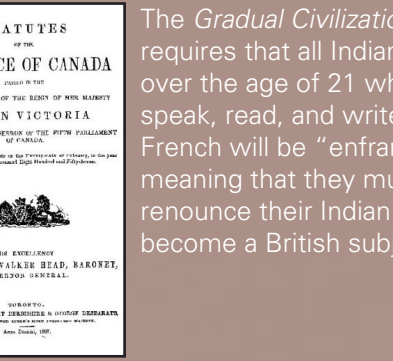
1844

The Bagot Commission recommends the establishment of manual labour schools for Aboriginal children.



1857

The Gradual Civilization Act requires that all Indian males over the age of 21 who can speak, read, and write English or French will be "enfranchised," meaning that they must renounce their Indian status and become a British subject.



1872

The Dominion Lands Act encourages European settlement in the prairie provinces by giving 160 acres of land away to any settler who will build a homestead on the land and cultivate at least 40 acres.



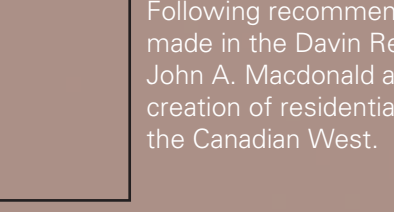
1876

The Indian Act is enacted and gives government exclusive right to create legislation regarding Indians and Indian lands. This act identifies who is an Indian and establishes related legal rights.



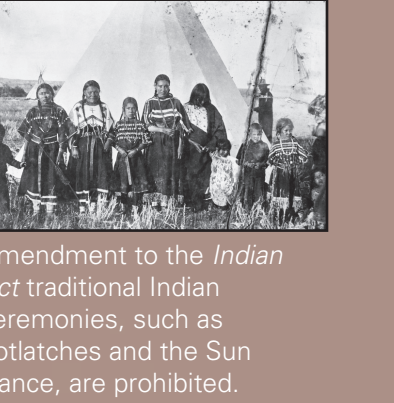
1883

Following recommendations made in the Davin Report, Sir John A. Macdonald authorizes creation of residential schools in the Canadian West.



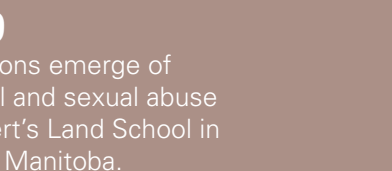
1884

Amendment to the Indian Act traditional Indian ceremonies, such as potlaches and the Sun Dance, are prohibited.



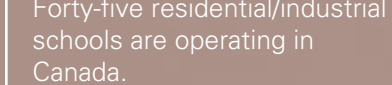
1889

Allegations emerge of physical and sexual abuse at Rupert's Land School in Selkirk, Manitoba.



1896

Forty-five residential/industrial schools are operating in Canada.



1892

The federal government and certain Christian churches enter into a formal agreement to operate residential schools.



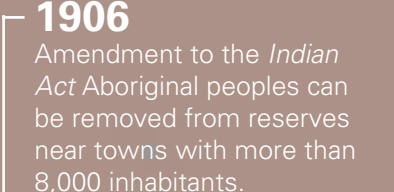
1914

Amendment to the Indian Act western Aboriginals must seek official permission before appearing in Aboriginal "costume" in any public dance, show, exhibition, stampede, or pageant.



1906

Amendment to the Indian Act determines that Inuit are to be "classified" as Indian and governed by the Indian Act.



1907

Medical Inspector for Indian Affairs, Dr. P.H. Bryce, reports that health conditions in the residential schools are a "national crime."



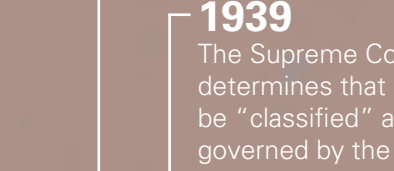
1927

Amendment to the Indian Act soliciting funds for Aboriginal legal claims without permission is made illegal.



1939

The Supreme Court of Canada determines that Inuit are to be "classified" as Indian and governed by the Indian Act.



1940s

The federal government begins to apply provincial curriculum standards to residential schools and to integrate Aboriginal students into regular schools.



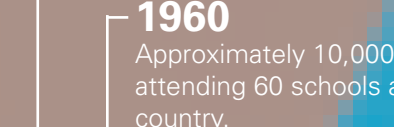
1958

Indian Affairs regional inspectors recommend abolition of residential schools.



1960

Approximately 10,000 students are attending 60 schools across the country.



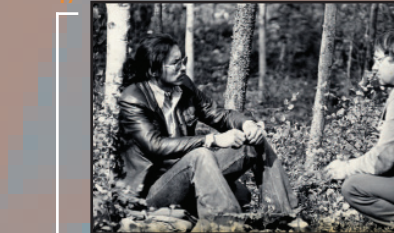
1961

Amendment to the Indian Act Aboriginals can vote without having to give up their Indian status.



1977

The Berger Inquiry final report recommends no gas pipeline be built until land claims are settled, setting a new precedent for relations between Aboriginal Peoples and the federal government.



1982

The Constitution Act is amended and now recognizes and affirms the rights of "Indian, Inuit, and Métis peoples of Canada."



1990

The Oka Crisis, between the Mohawk Nation and the town of Oka, Quebec, began on March 11, lasted six months. It was the first in a series of violent conflicts in the late 20th century between Aboriginal Peoples and the Canadian government.



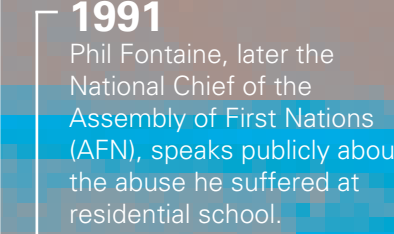
1995

Arthur Henry Plint, former supervisor of the Alberni Indian residential school pleads guilty to 16 counts of indecent assault against students, and is sentenced to 11 years in prison.



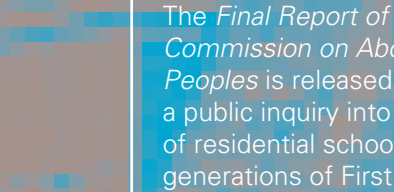
1991

Phil Fontaine, later the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations (AFN), speaks publicly about the abuse he suffered at residential school.



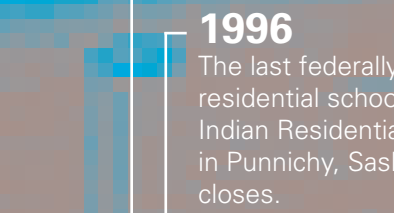
1996

The Final Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples is released. It calls for a public inquiry into the effects of residential schools upon generations of First Peoples.



1996

The last federally-run residential school the Gordon Indian Residential School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan closes.



1999

Formerly part of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, meaning "our land" in Inuktitut, becomes Canada's third and largest territory.



2005

AFN National Chief Phil Fontaine announces a class action lawsuit against the Government of Canada over the legacy of the residential schools.



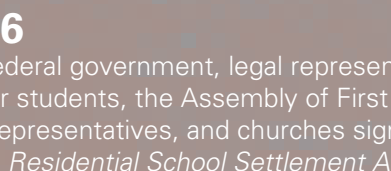
2006

The federal government, legal representatives of former students, the Assembly of First Nations, Inuit representatives, and churches sign the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). The IRSSA is contentious to some, and does not represent Survivors of all schools.



2008

Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologizes on behalf of Canada to Survivors of the Residential School System.



2008

Formerly part of the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, meaning "our land" in Inuktitut, becomes Canada's third and largest territory.



2009

Pope Benedict XVI expresses "sorrow" about the abuse of residential school students during a private meeting with Phil Fontaine, National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations.



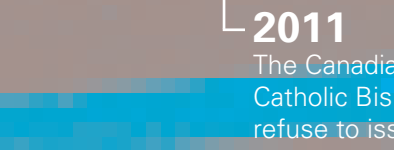
2010

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission hosts its first national event, in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



2011

The Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops continues to refuse to issue a formal apology.



"We want to take back our education and teach our history, our language and our culture. We have begun to tell our story our history and we want to tell it in our own words to the world, so that this will never happen to any of the other nations in the world."

Shirley Williams, Survivor





## For over a century,

beginning in the mid-1800s and continuing into the late 1990s. Aboriginal children in Canada were taken from their homes and communities and placed in institutions called residential schools. These schools were run by religious orders in collaboration with the federal government and were attended by children as young as four or five years of age. Separated from their families and prohibited from speaking their native languages and practicing their culture, the vast majority of the over 150,000 children that attended these schools experienced neglect and suffering. The impacts of sexual, mental, and physical abuse, shame, and deprivation endured at Indian Residential Schools continue to affect generations of Survivors, their families, and communities today. Remarkably, in the face of this tremendous adversity, many Survivors and their descendants have retained their language and their culture and continue to work toward healing and reconciliation.

## Why It Matters

Why is this issue important to all Canadians?  
Why should it matter to those who didn't attend residential school?

**IT MATTERS** because it continues to affect First Nations, Inuit and Métis families—people from vibrant cultures who are vital contributors to Canadian society.

**IT MATTERS** because it happened here, in a country we call our own—a land considered to be a world leader in democracy and human rights.

**IT MATTERS** because the Residential School System is one of the major causes of poverty, homelessness, substance abuse, and violence among Aboriginal people—devastating conditions that are felt and experienced by our neighbours, friends, and community members.

**IT MATTERS** because Aboriginal communities suffer levels of poverty, illness, and illiteracy comparable to those in developing nations—conditions that are being perpetuated through inaction.

**IT MATTERS** because we share this land. We may not be responsible for what happened in the past, but we all benefit from what First Nations, Inuit, and Métis have had to relinquish. We are responsible for our actions today.



## Warning

This document contains subject matter that may be disturbing to some readers, particularly Survivors of the Residential School System. Until March 31, 2013, Health Canada will provide a 24-hour National Crisis Line for former residential school students at **1-866-925-4419**

## The Residential School System

as defined by the federal government is limited to 139 schools that operated across Canada between 1831 and 1996.<sup>1</sup> This definition is controversial and excludes provincially-administered schools, as well as hostels and day schools. Residential schools existed in almost all provinces and territories, and in the North also took the form of hostels and tent camps. The earliest recognized and longest-running Indian Residential School was the Mohawk Institute, in Brantford, Ontario, which operated from 1831 to 1962. The last federally-run Indian Residential School, Gordon's School in Punnichy, Saskatchewan, closed in 1996, and was subsequently demolished, marking the end of the residential school era.<sup>2</sup>

## Background

For over 300 years, European settlers and Indigenous peoples co-existed in a harmonious, if sometimes precarious, relationship. In war, colonists and First Nations formed alliances, and in trade each enjoyed the economic benefits of co-operation. By the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, however, expansionist policies increased westward settlement, and alliances of the early colonial era gave way to direct competition for land and resources. In the face of ensuing conflicts, the confederation government of Sir John A. Macdonald came to view First Nations and Métis as serious impediments to nation-building. Even as treaties to make large tracts of land available for settlement were being negotiated with First Nations, a national policy was being developed “to do away with the tribal system and assimilate the Indian people in all respects with the other inhabitants of the Dominion, as speedily as they are fit for the change.”<sup>3</sup> The Residential School System was to become a key feature of this endeavour.

In 1844, the Bagot Commission produced one of the earliest official documents to recommend education as a means of assimilating the Indian population. The commission proposed implementing a system of farm-based boarding schools situated far from parental influence—the separation of children from their parents being touted as the best means by which to sustain their civilizing effects.<sup>4</sup> The Nicholas Flood Davin Report of 1879 recommended the establishment of a residential

industrial school system as the means by which to “aggressively civilize” First Nations children. Davin's recommendations reflected the widely-held opinion that “Indian culture” was a contradiction in terms, Indians were uncivilized, and the aim of education must be to destroy the Indian in the child.<sup>5</sup>

A number of industrial schools were established in this era, laying the foundation upon which the broader Residential School System emerged. At its peak in the early 1930s, 80 residential schools operated across Canada with an enrollment of over 17,000 students. Children as young as four and five years of age attended the schools and parents were often discouraged from visiting or bringing their children home for vacation. Many students did not return home for long periods of time (some for many years) and found themselves strangers to their communities upon their eventual reunion.

Very gradually, beginning in the 1940s, the residential schools were shut down and Aboriginal students began to attend mainstream day schools. Day schools had existed for Aboriginal children in tandem with residential schools, but policy shifts favoured the integration of Aboriginal children with their non-Aboriginal peers. Despite this, residential schools continued to be established in the North during this period. Throughout the 1970s, at the request of the National Indian Brotherhood, the federal government undertook a process that saw the eventual transfer of education management to Aboriginal peoples.<sup>6</sup>

Anglican Mission School Aklavik, N.W.T., 1911  
Photographer: M. Meikle  
Library and Archives Canada, PA-101771.

## Conditions and Mistreatment

Through an amendment to the *Indian Act* in 1920, attendance at residential schools was made mandatory for Indian, and later Inuit and Métis, children seven to fifteen years of age, and failure to send children to residential school often resulted in the punishment, including imprisonment, of parents.<sup>7</sup> Many Aboriginal children were taken from their homes, often forcibly removed, and separated from their families by long distances. Often, even those children who attended residential schools near their communities were prohibited from seeing their families outside of occasional visits.

Broad occurrences of disease, hunger, and overcrowding were noted by government officials as early as 1897. In 1907, Indian Affairs' chief medical officer, Dr. P.H. Bryce, reported a death toll among the schools' children ranging from 15%-24% and rising to 42% in Aboriginal homes where sick children were sometimes sent to die. In some individual institutions, for example the Old Sun school on the Blackfoot reserve, Bryce found death rates significantly higher.<sup>8</sup>

In the early 1990s, Survivors came forward with disclosures that included sexual abuse; beatings; punishments for speaking Aboriginal languages; forced eating of rotten food; widespread hunger and thirst; bondage and confinement; and forced labour. Students were forbidden to speak their language or practice their traditional culture and were often punished for doing so. Other experiences reported from Survivors of residential schools include mental abuse, severe punishments, overcrowding, use of students in medical experiments, illness and disease, and, in some cases, death.

Although some students have spoken of the positive experiences of residential schools and of receiving an adequate education, the quality of education



## Intergenerational Impacts

First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children were often separated from their parents for long periods of time, living in an institutional rather than a family home environment. This impeded the transfer of valuable parenting skills. The isolation of children from their families and communities also thwarted the transmission of language and culture, resulting in significant cultural loss.

Adaptation of abusive behaviours learned while attending residential school has also resulted in intergenerational trauma—the cycle of abuse and trauma that passes from one generation to the next. That is not to say that all families and communities were affected in this way. Nor were all Survivors compromised by their experiences in residential schools. Research makes it clear however, that individuals who have suffered traumatic stress generate vulnerability in their children who in turn experience their own trauma. The system of forced assimilation has consequences that persist among Aboriginal peoples and communities today. The need for healing does not stop with the Survivors—intergenerational effects of trauma are real and pervasive and must also be addressed.

By 2008, most of the church denominations responsible for the operation of the residential schools in Canada had publicly apologized for their role in the neglect, abuse, and suffering of the children placed in their care.<sup>10</sup> In June 2008, the Government of Canada also apologized for their historical role in the Residential School System. By saying “we are sorry,” Prime Minister Stephen Harper acknowledged the Canadian government's role in over a century of isolating Aboriginal children from their families, communities, and cultures. Harper called residential schools a sad chapter in Canadian history and indicated that the policies that supported and protected the System were harmful and wrong. For the thousands of Survivors watching from across Canada, the government's apology was an historic occasion, though responses were mixed.

between the social crisis in Aboriginal communities and the Residential School System, the federal government issued a Statement of Reconciliation and unveiled a new initiative called *Gathering Strength—Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan*. A strategy to begin the process of reconciliation, *Gathering Strength* featured the announcement of a healing fund, which was granted to the newly created Aboriginal Healing Foundation, to support community-based healing projects that address the legacy of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools.

## Redress & Reconciliation

Escalating social problems in Aboriginal communities, and conflict between Aboriginal groups and the federal government in the mid-1990s, brought greater attention and focus to the destructive legacy of the residential school experience. Aboriginal leaders also helped to begin a dialogue between Survivors, the federal government, and the Canadian public. In this climate of disclosure and dialogue, the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was created. On January 7, 1998, in response to RCAP's five-volume report that revealed an overwhelming link

A Group of Nuns with Aboriginal Students, ca. 1890  
Photographer: M. Meikle  
Library and Archives Canada, PA-123707.

## Healing Movement and Cultural Revitalization

Many Survivors have turned to a combination of Western therapies and traditional practices to heal. Talking circles, sweats, storytelling, ceremonies, fasts, feasts, and vision quests reconnect Survivors to their cultures and to themselves. On-the-land activities such as trapping, hunting, fishing, and gathering medicinal plants and wild foods also renew the spirit. All of these practices assist in re-enforcing and celebrating Aboriginal identities. Healing is a long-term process that occurs in stages, starting with the individual Survivor and expanding to include the whole community. The intergenerational impacts of the Residential School System—the legacy of poverty, ineffective parenting, abuse, grief, and health issues—can appear throughout the entire community, not just in the lives of the Survivors.

Healing in Aboriginal communities is affected by a community's level of understanding and awareness about the impact of the Residential School System, by the number of community members who are involved in healing, and by the availability of programs and services.

Much progress has been made as a result of the healing movement. It is the result of hard work, dedication, and commitment of thousands of individuals in hundreds of communities. Many Aboriginal people sought out knowledge holders to revive traditional spirituality and to reintroduce healing practices. Holistic approaches to health which emphasize healthy lifestyles, relationships, and communities—together with personal growth programs, traditional spirituality, and healing practices have all contributed to the efforts of healing.

Shade Branson Kaiser of M'Chigeeng, FN in Ontario.  
Photographer: V. Candace Kaiser

## About Us

**WHO WE ARE AND HOW WE CAN HELP**  
The Aboriginal Healing Foundation (AHF) was established in 1998 to manage the distribution of a grant from the Government of Canada to support community-based healing projects that addressed the legacy of physical and sexual abuse at residential schools.

The Legacy of Hope Foundation (LHF) is a national Aboriginal charitable organization that was established by the Aboriginal Healing Foundation. LHF's mandate is to educate and create awareness and understanding about the legacy of residential schools, including the effects and intergenerational impacts on First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and to continue to support the ongoing healing process of Residential School Survivors.

For more than a decade, the LHF has worked with Survivors, Aboriginal communities, researchers, curators, and educators to develop resources to increase public awareness and knowledge of the history and legacy of the Indian Residential School System. Its projects include mobile exhibitions, websites, videos, publications and a bilingual education program called *100 Years of Loss—The Residential School System in Canada*.

**VISIT** [www.legacyofhope.ca](http://www.legacyofhope.ca) for more information, to **ORDER** resources, or to **DONATE** to the Legacy of Hope Foundation.

**CONTACT US**  
Legacy of Hope Foundation  
75 Albert Street, Suite 801  
Ottawa, ON K1 P 5E7  
T: 613-237-4806 or 877-553-7177  
E: [info@legacyofhope.ca](mailto:info@legacyofhope.ca)  
Charitable Registration #: 863471520R0001

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## What You Can Do

**SPREAD THE WORD**  
Talk to others—ask your friends or colleagues what they know about the residential school issue. Let them know they can learn more by visiting [www.legacyofhope.ca](http://www.legacyofhope.ca)

**SHARE OUR RESOURCES**  
Once you've seen our publications, DVDs, or websites, pass them along or let others know about them.

**CONTACT. VISIT. VOLUNTEER** with your local organization centre, community group, national Aboriginal friendship, or Aboriginal health/resource centre.

**ASK A TEACHER** if they include this topic in their classroom. The Legacy of Hope Foundation can provide FREE materials to help educators teach youth about the impacts and legacy of the Residential School System.

**WRITE A LETTER** to elected officials (municipal, provincial, parliamentary). Ask what they are doing about Aboriginal issues and ask them to work to restore funding to community-based initiatives that deal with the intergenerational impacts of residential schools.

**PARTICIPATE** in a Truth and Reconciliation Commission event, visit an exhibition, or join in cultural activities in your community.

*Healing is a gradual process—the legacy of residential schools is still very much alive in our cities and communities and affects Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians alike. We hope you share our belief that as people learn the historical context that forms the roots for contemporary social issues faced by many First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, they can foster an environment that allows reconciliation to take place. On behalf of the Legacy of Hope Foundation, I would like to invite you to join us on the healing journey. Together, we are beginning to heal from 100 years of loss and build a future of hope and recovery.*

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## More Things You Can Do

**VISIT THESE WEBSITES**  
Aboriginal Healing Foundation - [www.ahf.ca](http://www.ahf.ca)  
Legacy of Hope Foundation - [www.legacyofhope.ca](http://www.legacyofhope.ca), [www.wherearethekids.ca](http://www.wherearethekids.ca), [www.missinghistory.ca](http://www.missinghistory.ca)  
Amnesty International: Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples [www.amnesty.ca/topics/indigenous-peoples](http://www.amnesty.ca/topics/indigenous-peoples)  
Assembly of First Nations - [www.afn.ca](http://www.afn.ca)  
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami - [www.itk.ca](http://www.itk.ca)  
Métis National Council - [www.metisnation.ca](http://www.metisnation.ca)  
Native Women's Association of Canada - [www.nwac.ca/act-now](http://www.nwac.ca/act-now)  
Shannen's Dream- [www.fndcs.com/shannensdream](http://www.fndcs.com/shannensdream)  
Truth & Reconciliation Commission - [www.trc.ca](http://www.trc.ca)  
Project of Heart- [www.projectofheart.ca](http://www.projectofheart.ca)

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## Timeline Captions

1. Gabriel Sagard, *Légrand voyage du pays des Hurons*, 1632.  
Library and Archives Canada, 2937528
2. Mohawk Institute, Brantford, Ontario.  
Anglican Church of Canada, General Synod Archives.
3. Aboriginal children by a garden at the Anglican-run Lac la Ronge Mission School in La Ronge, Saskatchewan, August 1909.  
National Film Board of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, PA-045174.
4. "It's Mine!" CANADA: The Right Land for the Right Man: Canadian National Railways - The Right Way!  
Library and Archives Canada, 1991-230-1.
5. Fort Providence, [R.C.] Residential school, children and staff, 1921.  
NWIT Inuitwies/Sacred Heart Parish (Fort Simpson) fonds/N-1992-255: 0404.
6. Notman, William. Sir John A Macdonald, 1815-1891.  
Library and Archives Canada, C-030440.
7. T.G.N. Anderson, *Blood children and women at a Sundance*, 1888.  
Glenbow Museum, NA-1388-3.
8. Group of nine taken in the square of the North-West Mounted Police Barracks, at Regina. Poundmaker, Big Bear, Big Bear's son, Father Andre, Father Conchin, Chief Stewart, Capt. Deane, Mr. Robertson, and the Court Interpreter, 1895-1 Regina, Sask.  
0.8. Buel I Library and Archives Canada / C-001872.
9. H. J. Woodside, *A Group of Nuns with Aboriginal Students*, ca. 1890.  
Library and Archives Canada, PA-123707.
10. A Rattan, *Canadian Pacific Railway viaduct Lethbridge, Alberta*, 1910.  
Library and Archives Canada, PA-029691.
11. Baby George was an orphan who was brought to the Carcross Indian Residential School by Bishop Bompas. Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon. Fonds, 86/61, #590.
12. H. W. Gould, "Wanduta" (Red Arrow), *Dakota First Nation, Oak Lake area, Manitoba*, ca. 1913.  
Library and Archives Canada, PA-030027.
13. Charles A. Keefer, *After the treaty dance. Mission schooner GUY leaving; the children are bound for the convent at Fort Resolution*, 1937.  
Library and Archives Canada, PA-073735.
14. Aboriginal children in class at the Roman Catholic Indian Residential School, Fort George, Quebec, 1939.  
Archives Deschâtelets.
15. Piita Imiq (then known as Peter Emerk) is leaning on his left hand on the right side of the photograph and classmates at Sir Joseph Bernier Federal Day School in 1968.  
Photograph provided by Piita Imiq.
16. Bud Gluz, Cree students attending the Anglican-run Lac la Ronge Mission School in La Ronge, Saskatchewan, 1949.  
National Film Board of Canada, Library and Archives Canada, PA-134110.
17. During the Berger Inquiry, Aboriginal people began to re-assert control over their rights to the land. Jim Antoine, Dene leader from Fort Simpson, (left) speaks with Justice Berger in Trout Lake, CP Wire Service.
18. Pierre Trudeau looks on as Queen Elizabeth II signs the new Constitution Act April 17, 1982.  
Library and Archives Canada, e008300499.
19. Sister Liliane (attr.), *Sisters holding Aboriginal babies*, ca. 1960.  
Library and Archives Canada / PA-195122.
20. Pte. Patrick Cloutier and Aboriginal activist Brad Lanoue, face to face in a tense standoff at the Kanesatake reserve, Sept. 1, 1990.  
Shaney Komulainen/Canadian Press.
21. Prime Minister Stephen Harper apologizes to First Nations, Inuit and Metis for the residential school system.  
Tom Hanson/Canadian Press.
22. Fred Catroli, *Former assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine in front of St. Peter's Basilica, Vatican City*, 2009.  
Courtesy of Fred Catroli.
23. Peter Enzoe and his nephew Kohlman listen to the Carcross Indian Residential School by Bishop Bompas. Yukon Archives, Anglican Church, Diocese of Yukon. Fonds, 86/61, #590.
24. Kate Inuktituk teaches her Great-granddaughter, Darla Eyegotlak how to make a fishnet and other string games during an overland and ocean journey from their home in Kugluktuk Nunavut to Ulukhaktok NWT.  
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Background photo: View as seen by Aboriginal students approaching the Red Deer Indian Industrial School, Red Deer, Alberta, ca. 1900.  
United Church of Canada, Archives, 93.049P/847N

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