

## St. Mary's

*Indian Residential School* Kenora, Ontario Treaty #3 (1873) Territory

# FOR RESEARCH PURPOSES OF BOOK 2 BOOK 2 December 2008

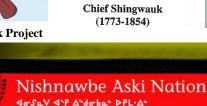




Aboriginal Healing Foundation



The Shingwauk Project



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#### The Shingwauk Project and Residential School Research, Archive and Visitor Centre

The Shingwauk Project is a cross-cultural research and educational development project of Algoma University College (AUC) and the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA). It was founded in 1979 by its current Director, Professor Don Jackson, in collaboration with Dr. Lloyd Bannerman of AUC, Chief Ron Boissoneau (1935-2000) of the Garden River First Nation and Shingwauk Alumnus and Elder Dr. Dan Pine Sr. (1900-1992) of the Garden River First Nation. Along with many others they recognized the profound importance of the commitment to the Shingwauk Trust and the relationship with First Nation Peoples that Algoma University College assumed upon its relocation in 1971 to the site of the former Shingwauk Indian Residential School.

The Shingwauk School, or "Teaching Wigwam", was originally envisaged by the great Ojibway Chief Shingwaukonse (1773-1854) as a crucible for cross-cultural understanding and synthesis of traditional Anishnabek and modern European knowledges. Commissioned in 1832 in co-operation with Canadian Government and Anglican Church partners as part of St. John's Mission to the Ojibway, the first Shingwauk School was opened in Sault Ste. Marie in 1833, relocated to Garden River (1838-74), and to the current site as the Shingwauk (1874 - 1935) and Wawanosh (1900 - 1935) Industrial Homes and the Shingwauk Indian Residential School (1935-70). As part of a new Anishnabek strategy of Indigenous Peoples rights, self-determination and modern community development, the cross-cultural project of the Teaching Wigwam was also regarded as essential to the restoration of cosmological balance and of social harmony between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians generally.

Inspired by Shingwauk's Vision, the Shingwauk Project and the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (former students of the Shingwauk School, and staff, descendants, families and friends) are partnered with AUC, the Anglican Church, the Dan Pine Healing Lodge, the National Residential School Survivors' Society (NRSSS) and others to research, collect, preserve and display the history of the Residential Schools; develop and deliver projects of *"sharing, healing and, learning"* in relation to the impacts of the Schools, and of individual and community cultural restoration; and to accomplish *"the true realization of Chief Shingwauk's Vision"* through the establishment of Shingwauk University.

#### The Shingwauk Project and Residential School Research, Archive and Visitor Centre

Recently, the Shingwauk Project, CSAA, AUC and NRSSS have partnered to expand their Residential School work through the creation of the Residential School Research, Archive and Visitor Centre. The work of the Centre addresses the Residential School legacy not only regionally but also nationally and internationally. The Shingwauk Project undertook many activities since its founding including reunions, healing circles, publications, videos, photo displays, curriculum development and the establishment of an archive, library and heritage collections, as well as a Shingwauk Directory and website (www.shingwauk.auc.ca). The Centre combines the resources and networks of all of the partners to work to accomplish more broadly and comprehensively what has been done locally.

The Shingwauk Project and the Residential School Research, Archive and Visitor Centre are very grateful to all of the Indigenous and non-Indigenous governments, churches, organizations and individuals that have been so generous in their support. They hope that the circle of "*sharing, healing and learning*" continues to grow until happiness, harmony and health are enjoyed by all.

Donald A. Jackson Director, The Shingwauk Project and Residential School Research, Archive and Visitors' Centre







#### **Introduction and Acknowledgements**

This *"Remember the Children"* pilot project is an initiative of the Children of Shingwauk Alumni Association (CSAA) and the Residential School Research, Archive, and Visitor Centre that is attempting to identify the individuals and events that are depicted in historic photographs of First Nations, and Indian and Inuit Residential Schools.

The Shingwauk Project has been collecting photographs and documents about Indian and Inuit Residential and Day Schools for a number of years. Recently, originals and copies of photographs and documents regarding First Nations and Indigenous Peoples were made available to the Project Archive. The Project Archive has put together a series of Photo Albums that attempt to represent a photographic history of these Indian and Inuit Residential and Day Schools once located in the Bond Head Treaty (1836), Robinson-Huron (1850) Treaty, Robinson-Superior Treaty (1850), Manitoulin Island Treaty (1862), Treaty #3 (1873), Treaty #5 (1875), and the James Bay - Treaty #9 (1905 - 1930) Territories.

These photographs are just a small part of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN) Collection. The information and photographs contained herein are constantly being updated and revised. Every attempt was made at the time of publication to ensure the accuracy of the information that is being presented in these Photo Albums. Please contact us if our information contains any errors or omissions. If you have additional information or photographs that you would like to add to the "*Remember the Children*" project, please do not hesitate to contact us:

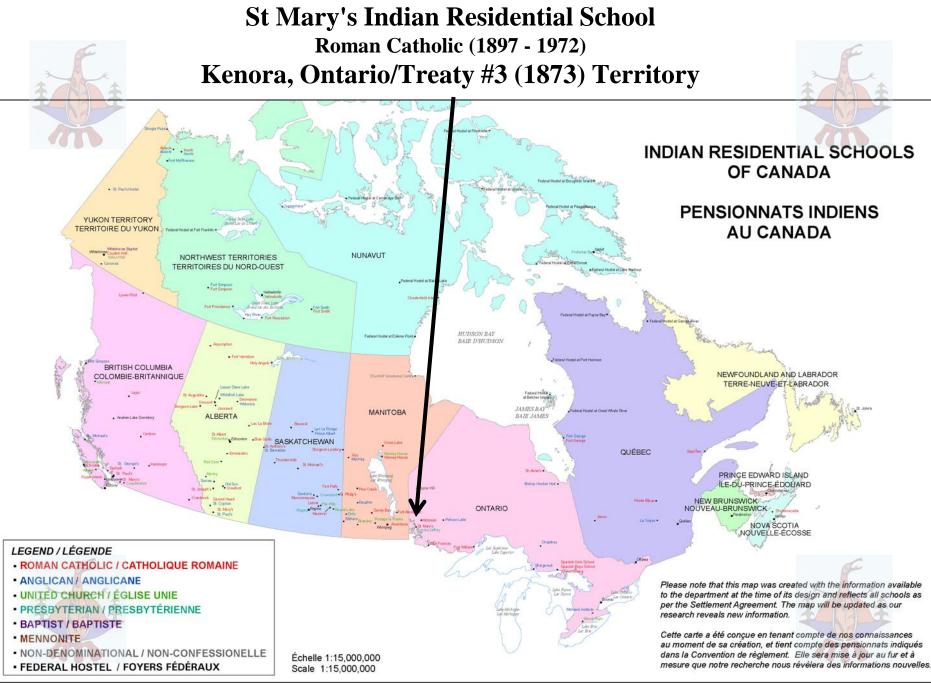
The Shingwauk Project Residential School Research, Archive, and Visitor Centre Algoma University 1520 Queen Street East Sault Ste Marie, Ontario P6A 2G4 Robinson-Huron (1850) Treaty Territory 705.949.2301 Ext. 4622 705.949. 6583 (fax)

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We gratefully acknowledge the financial assistance received from the Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the site and administrative support provided by Algoma University. Photos are courtesy of the Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN). Chapters 1, 2, and 4 of *Indian Residential Schools in Ontario* by Dr. Don Auger has been reproduced with permission from NAN.

Edward G. Sadowski Editor Sault Ste Marie, Ontario (November 2008)

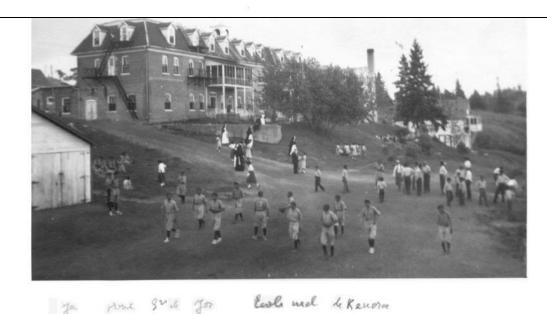




PREPARED FOR INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS RESOLUTION CANADA BY PUBLIC HISTORY INC. (VERSION: 2007-12) PRÉPARÉ PAR PUBLIC HISTORY INC. POUR RÉSOLUTION DES QUESTIONS DES PENSIONNATS INDIENS CANADA (ÉDITION DU: 2007-12)

### ECOLE ST. MARY'S DE KENORA St. MARY'S INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL Kenora, Ontario





#### **Courtesy of The Nishnawbe Aski Nation.**

Religious Affiliation Operated by Assisted by

: Roman Catholic: the Oblates - Oblats de Marie-Immaculee: the Grey Nuns (Soeurs Grises de Montreal)

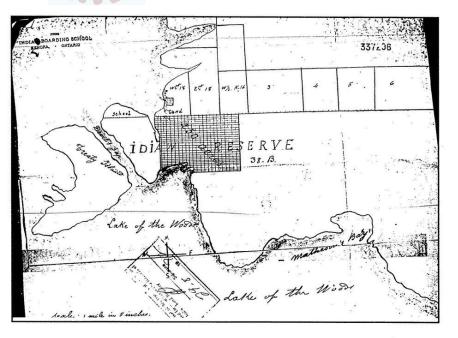
Period of Operation : 1897 - 1972

Chapter 4

Chapter 4 of Indian Residential Schools in Ontario by Dr. Don Auger has been reproduced with permission from NAN.

#### Location

The school was situated on the Lake of the Woods two miles south of the town of Kenora. The school buildings were on fifty-one acres of land, owned by the Oblate Order, on a point adjacent to a channel known as Devil's Gap. The lands were adjacent to the Rat Portage Indian Reserve and known as the East part of Lot 1.8 and a part of Lot K. 16.



Establishment of the School

The Oblate order of Immaculate Mary founded the residential school at Kenora in 1897. In order to provide the funding for a residential school at Rat Portage, the Department of Indian Affairs found it necessary to close three day schools on Indian Reserves in the area namely, Grassy Narrows, Whitefish Bay and Stangecoming. Originally called the Rat Portage Indian Residential School, the name was changed to the Kenora Indian Residential School at the beginning of 1906<sup>1</sup>, and later to St. Mary's. The St. Mary's Indian Residential School was established to provide an education to the Indian children from reserves around Kenora. In later years, students from remote reserves were brought in to live and

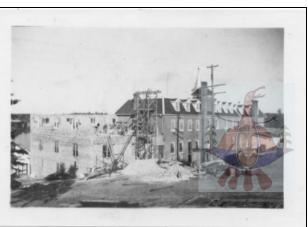
study there during the school year, returning home in the summer.

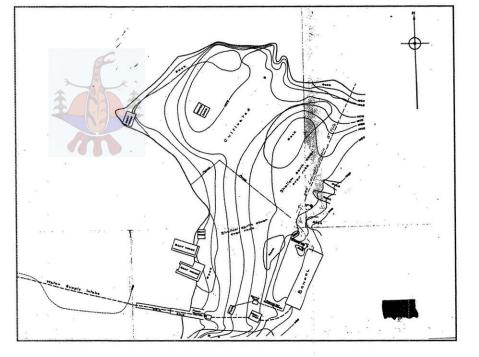
The original school and residence were built near the lakeshore. Construction of the school commenced in the fall of 1896 and was completed in the spring of 1897. The Department Estimates for 1896-97 included an amount of \$2,500.00 to assist with the construction of the school and the Department expected the Oblate Order to cover the remainder of the costs of construction. The school and residence building was 36 feet long and 30 feet wide and was three storeys high with a partial basement under it. The basement was made of stone and it lay on bedrock. The building was of frame construction with brick veneer<sup>2</sup>. An extension had been added to the school before 1900 which was 36 feet by 26 feet, making the school 36 wide and 56 feet long. The addition, however was only two storeys. At the back of the school (east side) was a lean-to kitchen (14' x 16'). By 1922 the school was an imposing, three-storey landmark on the waterfront which measured 100 feet by 108 feet. Other additions and repairs were completed at the school in subsequent years. For example, in the fall of 1938 fire destroyed the staff residence and it was replaced by a 60' x 34' wing added to the school in 1939. This wing consisted of a basement and one floor. And in the early 1950s a four room classroom was built just north of the school.

The Principal's residence was a 16' by 20' structure with a 12' x 14' lean-to attached to it. The other buildings consisted of a stable and carriage shed (18' x 46'), workshop (16' x 22') a woodshed (12' x 20') and two boathouses on the shore of the lake which housed a 36' boat with a cabin, a 20' boat, rowboat and two canoes. There was also a log house (14' x 18') which was used by Indian families who came to visit their children at the school. The school was heated by two wood furnaces and there was also a box stove in the boys hall. In 1922 a steam heating plant was installed at the school. The water supply was obtained directly from the lake and hauled up to the school by horse and cart. Later a water intake was placed out into the lake and the water was pumped up to the school.

The livestock at the school consisted of a team of horse, four cows, fourteen

goats, one hundred laying hens, three turkeys, four geese and nine pigs. The Oblate priests had cleared two acres for a garden when the school was built and by 1922 they had cleared fifteen acres. Mostly potatoes, were grown in this garden.

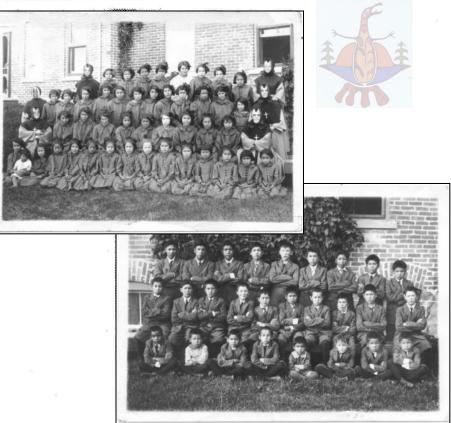




#### Students

Students at the school came primarily from communities in Treaty No. 3, but there were also a number of students from reserves in Manitoba and the Robinson Treaties area. Students came from the following communities in Treaty No. 3: Assabaska, Big Island, Dalles, Eagle Lake, Grassy Narrows, Islington, Lac des Milles Lacs, Northwest Angle, Rat Portage, Red Gut, Seine River, Shoal Lake # 39, Shoal Lake # 40, Wabigoon, Whitedog and Whitefish Bay. Manitoba students came from the following communities: Brokenhead, Fort Alexander, Notre Dame du Nord, Poplar River, St. Peters and Sandy Bay. Students from eastern communities included: Bear Island, Caughnawaga, Cutler, Dokis Bay, Fort William, Manitowaning, Maniwaki, Port Arthur, Sturgeon Falls and Wikwemikong. In later years (1950s) many students from Nishnawbe Aski attended this school.

The school could accommodate up to forty pupils. When the school was first opened to students on May 15, 1897 five girls were admitted and several boys were admitted in June<sup>3</sup>. By the end of 1897 there were twenty students living at the school and by 1898 there were thirty students. In correspondence to the Department in 1915 the Indian Agent at Kenora forwarded a letter from the Principal requesting an increase in the number of grant earning students at the school to 70 as the school had ample room for them. The Indian Agent recommended this increase<sup>4</sup>.



#### Operation of the School

The St. Mary's Indian Residential School was run by the Oblate Order through its Indian Welfare and Training Oblate Commission, which provided teachers and principals. Among the Principals at the school were Charles Cahill (1897 - 1903), Mathias Kalmes (1903-06), Paul Bousquet (1906-12), Joseph Leonard (1912-13), Jean Dorais (1913-14), Conrad Brouillet (1914), Conrad Brouillet (1921), De Grandpre (1922), Herve Kerbrat (1922), Camille Perrault (1925), Eugene Baillargeon (1927-38), Jean Lemire (1938-39, 1941), Charles Comeau (1942-46), Camille Perreault (1947), St. Jacques (1950), Charles Ruest (1958) and Lafleur (1961-62). The teachers included Stanislaus Heytens and Brother Apolinaire D'Amour (1908-25). The Oblates operated the school primarily from the per capita grants received from the Department of Indian Affairs. The per capita grant from 1896 to 1899 amounted to \$72.00, thereby giving the priests about \$2,160.00 to operate the school for the thirty students in attendance. The operating budget was supplemented by small amounts of vegetables that were grown at the school, milk from the cows kept there, eggs and meat from the chickens, and meat from cattle.

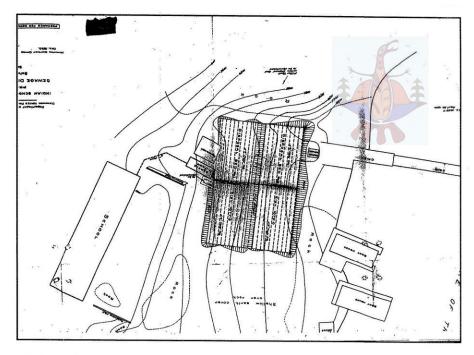
In 1923, the Department of Indian Affairs purchased the school, all of its buildings, equipment and furnishings although the Oblates continued to operate the school<sup>5</sup>. In 1969, the Department, through an agreement with the Oblate Fathers, completely assumed the operation of St. Mary's. Most of the classes at the residence had ceased by 1969, with the exception of early elementary grades. By 1972 St. Mary's had classes in Grades one, two and three, and the rest of its students were sent to Catholic elementary schools and public high schools in town<sup>6</sup>.

#### Safety at the School

The water supply at the school was drawn directly from the lake. The septic system at the school drained into the lake. In March 1927 the Indian Agent reported that

Dr. A. D. Ferguson, Medical Officer of Health, has this day made a report on the water supply at the Kenora Indian residential School, showing the smallest amount of water in which colon bacilli were found as being 20 C. C. for both taps tested. We have accordingly forwarded to the principal of the school directions for the sterilization of the water<sup>7</sup>.

Therefore everyone who drank the water at the school would be ingesting colon bacilli. The sewage run-off became worse because the septic system ceased to function and effluent could be seen running out into the lake and giving off a very obnoxious odor. Since the school was located about a half mile from the water intake of the town of Kenora, that water supply was also affected. The town's water supply was "being chlorinated to such a degree as to render it <sup>8</sup>very disagreeable to drink". The Report of the Department Engineer sent to determine the best septic system for the school indicated that the town was taking steps "to prevent the pollution of the water of the lake and this Indian School is considered to be a very great offender in this respect". A new sewage disposal system was installed at the school in 1931.



#### School Program

In July 1928 the Chiefs and Councillors of the various Bands in the Kenora and Savanne Agencies held a conference on Indian Education in Kenora. During the conference Chief Gardner of the Wabigoon Band complained about the education received by members of his family

But he has a grievance against the Roman Catholic School. His wife and three of his sons have been in school but he does not feel that they have learned anything and what little the boys know he has taught them, particularly as regards hunting and trapping, and he has had hard work to teach them to trap as they were fairly old when they left school and should have learned this when they were young, but they were in school and there the children did not learn anything about hunting. The children could not read or write well when leaving school. The youngest one of the boys went to school when he was 7 and he is now 17. Surely he should have been able to read and write now.



#### Overcrowding

In March 1927 Inspector Bennett submitted a report on the school. One of the items he stressed was that the Junior classroom was overcrowded:

Junior classroom is 26 ft., 5 in. long x 18' 8" wide and 11 ft. high. This gives about 143 cu. ft. of air space per child. This condition is real bad. The Cleveland Survey now considered as a standard, says that 170 is bad. 230 cu. ft. of air space per child is necessary for health. Indians especially need pure air<sup>9</sup>. Ventilation is from windows only. Lighting is satisfactory. Junior room too crowded.

There were forty students in this classroom. For the size of the classroom and the recommended air space, the classroom was only large enough for twenty-four students.

#### Illness

In December of 1913 there was an epidemic of what was thought to be chicken pox at the school. Many of the children became sick and several were sent to the hospital. The local doctor, after examining the students with another doctor, indicated that the disease was the more serious smallpox:

On Tuesday the 16<sup>th</sup> Dr. Ferguson reported to me that there was several cases of Chicken-pox at the Kenora Boarding School. I requested him to keep a good look-out and see that all possible should be done to brake it up, and that all Pupils who were effected should be isolated which was done, but yesterday the Dr. got suspicious and again reported to me that he was very much afraid that it was Small-pox and that he would like to have a consultation with one of the other Doctors. [The two doctors] pronounced it small-pox and they placed the whole institution in quarantine as quite a number of the children are effected<sup>10</sup>.

Following the outbreak, the children who were not affected were vaccinated.

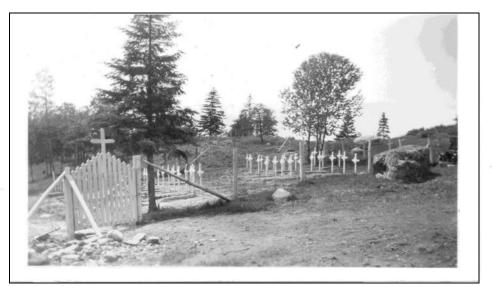
In November 1939 there was an influenza epidemic at the school. the Indian Agent reported it to the Department :

Doctor A. D. Ferguson informs me he has been to the Kenora R. C. Indian Residential School, and there are twenty six cases of intestinal flu at the school and two pupils taken to the Hospital. He is not yet sure how bad these cases are, but in any case the sewage disposal bed is overflowing and a quantity of the matter running out into the lake. This is a matter that should be attended to at once<sup>11</sup>.



#### A murder

On February 12, 1925 a murder occurred at the school. Two French men who worked at the school were engaged at their duties in the stable and after milking the cows, one of them named Francois Selou, left with two pails of milk, headed for the school. When the other man, Yves Bernicott looked up from his chores, he saw Selou pointing a gun at him and then he was struck in the face by the discharge from the gun. Bernicott ran up the hill to the school, closely followed by Selou. When they entered the school, Brother Apolinaire D'Amour, came out to see what the commotion was about. Selou shot the Brother in the head and immediately killed him. Selou then left the school. The police found him dead in the bush – he apparently turned the gun on himself. Yves Bernicott was taken to the hospital and treated for the wound on his cheek. Brother D'Amour had been at the school for over seventeen years at the time of his death.



### Complaints

In the summer of 1922 a new Principal was appointed at the school, Rev. Father Herve Kerbrat<sup>12</sup>. Following his appointment, there were numerous complaints from parents. The Indian Agent indicated the nature of these complaints in a letter to the Secretary:

On 2<sup>nd</sup> instant after the payments, I had a long conference with the Indians and asked their complaints against this School. The main points

PRINCIPALS AT ST. MARY'S INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

1897 - 1903	Charles Cahill
1903 - 1906	Mathias Kalmes
1906 - 1912	Paul Bousquet
1912 - 1913	Joseph Leonard
1913 - 1914	Jean Dorais
1914	Conrad Brouillet
1921	Conrad Brouillet
1922	Fr. De Grandpre
1922	Herve Kerbrat
1925	Camille Perreault
1927 - 1938	Eugene Baillargeon
1938 - 1941	Jean Lemire
1942 - 1946	Charles Comeau
1947	Camille Perreault
1950	Fr. St. Jacques
1958	Charles Ruest
1961-1962	Fr. Lafleur

<image>

St. Mary's Indian Residential School Communities students were from : 1943 - 1952

Nishnawbe Aski Nation	Saugeen (1950)	****
Treaty # 3	Assabaska	Big Island
	Dalles	Eagle Lake
	Grassy Narrows (1951)	Islington
	Lac des Milles Lacs (1949)	Northwest Angle
	Rat Portage	Red Gut (1948)
	Seine River (1947)	Shoal Lake # 39
	Shoal Lake # 40	Wabigoon
	Whitedog (1946)	Whitefish Bay
Robinson Huron	Bear Island (1950)	Cutler (1950)
	Dokis Bay (1950)	Manitowaning (1950)
	Sturgeon Falls (1950)	Wikwemikong (1950)
Robinson Superior	Fort William (1948)	Port Arthur (1951)
Association of Iroquois and Allied Indians	Caughnawaga (1950)	e.
Manitoba	Brokenhead (1949)	Fort Alexander (1949)
	Notre Dame du Nord (1950)	Poplar River (1949)
	St. Peters (1946)	Sandy Bay (1951)
Quebec	Maniwaki (1950)	1



were that the New Principal was too rough with the Children and would not listen to the Indians when they came to the School. he went to the Indian houses with a gun, and frightened them, that he carries a knotted bootlace with him for the purpose of hitting the pupils. . . . the Principal informed me that he was not too rough with the children, but that the discipline was so bad he had to be very strict, he did not take the gun to frighten the Indians, and he did not often use the bootlace.

On questioning the Children it appears they all ran away because they were afraid of being punished for something wrong they had done<sup>13</sup>.

The Indian Agent reported that the Indians were "very indignant and do not like this man", and suggested that "another Principal in his place might help matters". On October 12 the Indian Agent wrote to the Department that five of the boys (aged 15, 16 and 17) had run away because "they were afraid of being punished by the Principal, and he was always blaming them for things". The Principal refused to take three of the boys back and insisted that they be sent to the LeBret Industrial School as he could not manage them. Since the boys would soon be discharged due to their age, they were allowed to return to the school. The Deputy Superintendent General of the Department informed the Manitoba Provincial of the problem and asked him to "talk to the Principal".

Another letter of complaint from a woman at Sabaskong indicated: Chief pines grandaughter from Big Island and another girl Mary Robinson and another whose name I have not got were first whipped and beaten by the Priest and then their hands teid together and their feet tied together and four of them put in the cellar and kept there for 4 hours. And the one Chiefs grand-child was shut up in the toilet (an outhouse) with her hands and feet tied together. And this kind of humiliation was continued for 4 days. This happened in May last<sup>14</sup>.

The woman thought there should be "some investigation into the management of the Institution as the mode of punishment was "inhumane and barbarous and should not be tolerated in any civilized community". Another complaint related to a different kind of punishment used to correct student behavior:

Chief Jim Williams informed the Agent that it was reported to him that at the Kenora school [Roman Catholic] the children are made to kneel sometimes for hours at a time. This is called "sitting punishment" but is not really sitting but kneeling. The Chief thinks this is cruel and should not be allowed. Agent Edwards promised to put this in his report and make inquiries<sup>15</sup>.



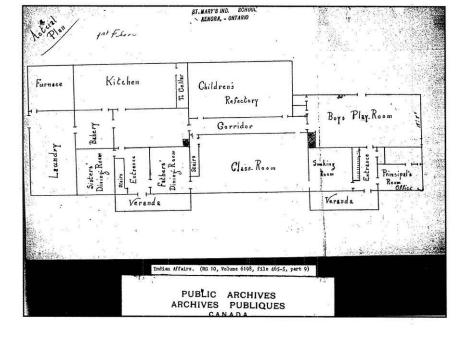
#### Closure of the School

KENORA, Ont. - St. Mary's Indian Residential School here, founded by the Oblate Fathers in 1898 [sic] and since then a residence for thousands of Indian children from reserves around Kenora, will be closed permanently in June [1972] by the department of Indian affairs. Gordon Mullin, superintendent of education for the department, said the residence was being closed because it is "economically unwise" to carry out massive repairs needed. ... The Indian affairs department has decided to find alternate accommodation for the students, rather than rebuilding the residence, explained Mr. Mullin, because it wishes to get away from the residential-home concept 16.

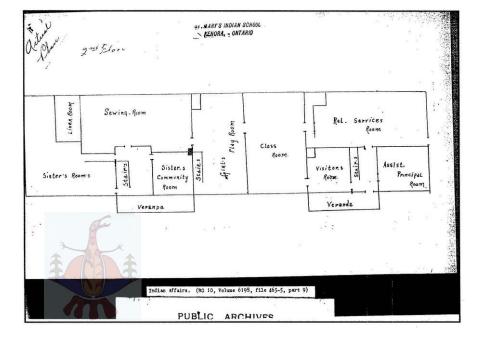
#### Sources

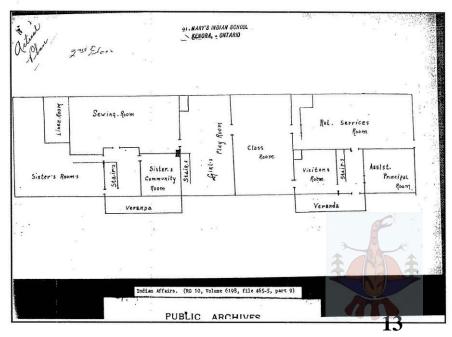
This brief history was compiled primarily from the Indian Affairs School records which are contained in the RG 10 Black Series, Volumes 6197 to 6199, File 465. Additional information was obtained from Oblate publications found in the St. Boniface Archives including, The Indian Missionary Record. 12











#### (Endnotes)



<sup>1</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-5, part 1. Letter, David Laird, Indian Commissioner to Secretary, January 16, 1906.

 $^2$  RG 10, Vol. 6187, File 461-1, part 1. Notes for Annual Report for 1900 re Rat Portage Boarding School.

<sup>3</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6187, File 465-1, part 1. Notes for Annual Report for 1900 re Rat Portage Boarding School.

<sup>4</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-1, part 1. Letter R. S. McKenzie, Indian Agent to the Department, October 26, 1915.

<sup>5</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6187, File 465-1, part 1. Order-in-Council to purchase the school and all of its contents, dated March 14, 1923.

<sup>6</sup> "Kenora School Closes". The Indian Missionary Record. Vol. 35, # 3-4, March-April 1972, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-5, part 2. Letter Frank Edwards, Indian Agent to the Department, March 18, 1927.

<sup>8</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-5, part 2. Report on Proposed Sewage Disposal System for Roman Catholic Indian School, Kenora, Ontario. January 3, 1931.

<sup>9</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-5, part 2. Extract from Report of Inspector Bennett on the Kenora Indian Residential School, March 29, 1927.

<sup>10#</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-1, part 1. Letter, R. S. MacKenzie, Indian Agent, Kenora to The Secretary, December 18, 1913.

<sup>11</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6198, File 465-5, part 7. Letter, Frank Edwards, Indian Agent to The Secretary, November 16, 1939.

<sup>12</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-1, part 1. Letter, G.B. Beys, Provincial, Manitoba to Duncan Scott, Deputy Superintendent General, August 15, 1922.

<sup>13</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-5, part 1. Letter, Frank Edwards, Indian Agent to Assistant Deputy and Secretary, October 4, 1922.

<sup>14</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6197, File 465-1, part 1. Letter Minakijikak, # 83 at Sabaskong, to Duncan Scott, September 23, 1924.

<sup>15</sup> RG 10, Vol. 6187, File 461-1, part 2. Memorandum, Mr. Paget to Mr. Ferrier, Superintendent of Indian Education, August 21, 1928.

<sup>16</sup> "Kenora School Closes". The Indian Missionary Record. Vol. 35, # 3-4, March-April 1972, pp. 1-2.











