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# Indian and Eskimo Residential School Commission

of the

Missionary Society of the Church of  
England in Canada

(35-43 The Bible House, 184 Alexander Ave., Winnipeg, Manitoba)



ST. JOHN'S INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL. (BUILT 1920)  
(Diocese of Moosonee)

CHAPLEAU

ONTARIO



THE SCHOOL CREST

The School colours are black and gold.

*With the compliments of A. J. Vale*

The Chapleau School has been selected by the W.A. for the final training of their candidates for the Indian and Eskimo Residential School work. So far as possible all women candidates are sent here for a period of three months in order that they may have some actual experience in the routine duties of various departments of the Residential School activities before being given staff appointments.



REV. A. J. VALE  
(Principal)

### LOCATION

St. John's Indian Residential School at Chapleau, Ontario, is located about two miles south of the town of that name on the main line of the C.P.R. Approximately two thousand one hundred and forty-two acres of land, mostly bush and sandy soil, are attached to the School, and through this the railway and the Kabesquasheshing River run, both of them quite near to the School buildings. While the railway solves the problem of contact with the outside world, the river is also very useful in many ways. Not only does it provide water for the stock and gardens, and boating and bathing facilities for the staff and pupils, but electric light and power and water for the main school building have been made possible through the construction of a dam and power-house almost within a stone's throw of this building by the Chapleau Electric Light and Power Company.

### EARLY DAYS

The first Indian Residential School at this centre was located on one hundred and fifty-three acres of land much nearer to the present town of Chapleau.



BISHOP HOLMES

In 1906 Bishop Holmes raised in England the sum of \$4,000.00 for this purpose, and when he returned, he entrusted the task of purchasing the necessary materials and supervising the work of building to the late Mr. G. B. Nicholson, and Mr. Banting, who was at that time Missionary-in-Charge of Bisectasing.



MR. G. B. NICHOLSON

The Indians themselves also contributed the sum of \$150.00, in addition to the help they gave in labour. The work began in August, 1906, and the building was opened in January, 1907, with twelve children in residence.

The first Matron of the School was Miss Sutherland, and her assistant was Miss Ruttell. These two ladies arrived at Montreal from Liverpool on September 22, 1906, and reached Chapleau on October 27th of that year. As the ice on the river was not sufficiently strong to enable them to cross, they had to remain in Chapleau until November 15th before they could see the building which was to be their future home for some years. When they crossed on the date mentioned, accompanied by Mr. Banting, they found the building under construction

was 32 feet square on the ground floor, with one long room, which was to serve as a classroom and children's dining room, separated by a hall from the staff sitting room and kitchen. There was an upstairs with five bedrooms, three of which were for children and the other two for themselves.

At the end of the first year the number of pupils in residence had increased from twelve to eighteen, and the attendance at the Christmas party given that year was fifty-six. The children gave a service of song in the Town Hall, and the proceeds, which amounted to \$36.00, were used to purchase a Chancel Chair for St. John's Church in the town of Chapleau, which was then under the Rectorship of the Rev. P. Soanes, who was always ready to lend a helping hand when needed at the School.

Miss Sutherland continued as Head Matron for over seven years, and during that time the pupilage varied, sometimes dropping as low as thirteen. However, at the time of her retirement there were forty-eight pupils in residence, due, in large measure, to the interest she took, not only in the active life of the school, but in the welfare of the Indians in the settlement for whom she conducted a Bible Class in the town of Chapleau.

In those early days the W.A. members in Chapleau gave active assistance to the staff of the School in sewing and mending, and they have continued to take a keen interest in the school all through the years, and to share in the outfitting of the children. Every Christmas the Bible Classes have provided gifts and good cheer for their entertainment.

The appreciation of the Indians themselves for the work which was being done for them was clearly manifested in 1908 when the Brunswick Chief visited the School and declared that he could place fifty children in residence at once if accommodation were available for them.

In April, 1909, Bishop Holmes was transferred to the Diocese of Athabasca, and Bishop Anderson, the present Bishop of Moosonee, was consecrated to take his place. Under his direction plans were made for enlarging the School and a new classroom was built. A bridge was constructed across the river in 1911, and the Rev. G. Prewer (now Canon) was appointed Principal in 1913 and remained in charge until April, 1923. During his Principalship such splendid progress was made that further accommodation became absolutely necessary, and the present building, provided by the Indian Affairs Branch of Govern-

ment, was begun in 1920 on the new site already mentioned, and completed in 1921. In 1923 the management of the School was transferred from the Diocese to the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada, and the Rev. J. H. Gibson (for some time Canon in the Diocese of Keewatin) filled the Principalship until he retired on account of his health in 1927.



REV. J. H. GIBSON

During the years 1925-7 Mr. G. Snowdon, M.A., filled the combined positions of Vice-Principal and Teacher. In 1927 he was appointed Principal, but only occupied this position for a short time before retiring, after ordination, to take charge of a parish. He was succeeded by the present Principal, the Rev. A. J. Vale, who had served for many years as Principal of the Hay River School in the Diocese of Mackenzie River, and whose long and faithful services there were recognized by his Bishop by his appointment to a Canonry in that Diocese.

#### SCHOOL PROPERTY

Of the 2,142 acres of land attached to the School only 42 are under cultivation, the remainder being covered with poplar, birch, tamarack, pine and spruce trees from which the wood fuel required is secured.

The buildings, in addition to the main school building, and a detached residence for the Principal, are as follows:—a stock barn with a spacious hay loft above; an implement shed; piggery; and poultry house.



The Stock Barn

The School is supplied with five horses and a credited herd of Holstein cattle, several pigs and 50 hens.



Part of the School Herd

While most of the land attached to the School is sandy and in other ways not very suitable for farming or gardening, the School management makes the best possible use of it, and generally succeeds in securing the greater part of the vegetables required for the staff and children, as well as a considerable quantity of hay and green feed for the stock.



A School Boy Ploughing



Mowing on the School Farm



Boy People at Work in Haying Time

While wood, as already mentioned, is used for cooking and heating purposes, a good deal of coal is also required to supplement this, especially during the winter months.



Off to Haul Coal for the School



Vegetables Growing in the School Garden

#### THE MAIN SCHOOL BUILDING

The main School building is of stucco, resting on a stone foundation and it has an official capacity of 100 children.



Children's Dining Room

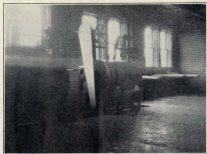


The Kitchen

In the basement of this building are located a large dining room for the children, recreation and wash rooms for the boys and girls, the kitchen, bakery, dairy, two store rooms, the laundry, the pump and boiler and furnace rooms.

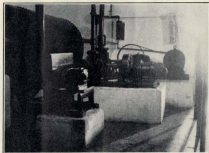


The Bakery



The Laundry

The Laundry is provided with a cylindrical washer, an extractor, and a drying tumbler, all operated by electric power. The bakery has an electric dough mixer.



The Pumproom

In the Assembly Hall there are two interesting memorials: (1) a beautiful two manual reed organ with pedal attachment, given by the W.A. of the Diocese of Moosonee. (2) a brass Tablet given by the Diocese of Moosonee in memory of Bishop Holmes, third bishop of that Diocese, and in memory of the graduates of this School who fell in the Great War of 1914-18. These memorial gifts were accepted on behalf of the Society and dedicated by the Rev. T. B. R. Westgate, at that time Field Secretary of the Society, at a public service held in the Hall on December 8th, 1933.



Memorial Tablet

There is also a Hymn Board in the Hall which was made and presented by the Church Boys' League of the School. The large table in the staff dining room was given by the W.A. of the Diocese of Moosonee.

On the first floor are located four dormitories for the children, two washrooms, two staff bedrooms and two staff bathrooms. On the second floor there are two large furnished rooms for clothing, a storeroom with additional sleeping quarters and four unfurnished rooms for storing screens and storm windows, etc.



Junior Dormitory



Boys' Washroom



While the School has chosen at its chief motto "Truth our Guide," two supplementary mottos have also been adopted, namely (1) "A place for everything and everything in its place," and (2) "A time for everything and everything on time." These mottos are considered essential to the successful management of so many departments of work.

#### THE STAFF

The staff comprises the following agents in addition to the Principal: the Head Matron, Boys' Supervisor, Girls' Supervisor, Kitchen Supervisor, Assistant Kitchen Supervisor, Laundry and Sewing Supervisor, two Teachers, a Farm Instructor and an Engineer. During the winter months an additional agent in the capacity of Night Watchman is provided.

#### THE PUPILS

The pupils are recruited from a large area extending from Fort Albany on James Bay in the North, to Fort Francis Reserve in Quebec in the East, and from the Six Nations Reserve, near Brantford, Ont., in the south, to Nipigon, on the main line of the C.P.R. in the West. The Indian Affairs Branch of Government helps to meet the cost of their transportation to and from the School.

#### DAILY ROUTINE

This School, like all the others of the same class, is a busy place during the week days as well as on Sunday. On week days the rising bell rings at six o'clock; at six-thirty another bell calls bigger girls to help with the work in the kitchen and dining-room, and the bigger boys to help with the work at the barn; at seven o'clock the bell is rung again to call all to breakfast, and at seven-thirty prayers are conducted. While the bigger boys and girls are helping in the way indicated, the younger ones are engaged in looking after their respective beds and the dormitories. After prayers the children assist in washing the dishes, sweeping floors, dusting furniture, and on wash days a certain number of them are assigned to the Laundry Supervisor to assist her in that work. At eight forty-five the warning bell for classroom work is rung, and at nine o'clock all who have not been assigned to some special duties enter their respective classrooms. Bells are rung again at recess, at noon, and at various times in the afternoon, each ring having a definite meaning, well understood by all, until the final bells of the day are rung for evening study, choir practice, lights out, and go-to-bed.

On Sundays the day begins an hour later. The chief bells of the day being rung for Morning Prayer at eleven, Sunday School at two-fifteen in the afternoon, and Evening Service at seven o'clock. While the girls receive a thorough training in all branches of housekeeping and the boys in farming and gardening and animal husbandry, special emphasis is laid on their spiritual development. Confirmation classes are held for the older pupils and the Bishop of Moosonee visits the School every year on Palm Sunday for a Confirmation service.



Confirmation Class at the School

#### GRADUATE PUPILS

Since the School was established three hundred and sixty-six pupils have passed through it, and a goodly number of these have continued their studies at the Chapleau High School. Some of them are now filling positions of trust and responsibility, while others are succeeding well in their native environment. Of those who have specially distinguished themselves mention may be made of the following:—Emily Donald, who qualified as a teacher, and after teaching for three years on an Indian Reserve held a position on the staff; Ella Green, who graduated with honours from the McDonald Training School for Nurses, and is now on the staff at the Hospital for Incurables in Toronto.



Ella Green



Emily Donald



Three boys are now attending the High School in Chapeau and one of these, John Jeffries, who attended the Coronation in London in 1937, purposes reading for Holy Orders. Redfern Louttit, another graduate of this School, is at present (1939) reading for Holy Orders at Wycliffe College, Toronto.



John Jeffries



Lieut. Redfern Louttit



## RECREATIONS

Plenty of time for recreation is provided for the children and every day arrangements are made for them to have quite long walks and plenty of exercise and play. In the summer time the girls play soft ball and their team has made a good record in competition with teams from the town of Chapleau.



Girls' Baseball Team

Tennis and swimming are greatly enjoyed by all in the summer while skating and hockey are their favourite winter sports. In the spring and early summer the children love to gather pussy willows and May flowers and later on they find great delight in gathering blueberries.



The School as Seen from beyond the Railway

## ORGANIZATIONS

The Church organizations at the School are a branch of the Junior W.A. for girls and the Church Boys' League for boys.



The Church Boys' League



Boating on the River near the School