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St. Alban's Indian Residential School in Prince Albert, ca. 1946, The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, MSCC/P75-103-S7-291

Lorena Fontaine's story about intergenerational effects of residential school. Her mother attended residential schools from the age of 3 until 16. Two of the schools were in Saskatchewan: St. Albans and All Saints.



St. Alban's School, Cadets, ca. 1945, The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, MSCC/P75-103

Young students at St. Alban's School, Prince Albert, Sask. ca. 1946, The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, MSCC/P75-103-S7-292



Read former student stories

ST. ALBAN'S INDIAN R

St. Alban's Indian Residential School in Prince Albert (Treaty 6), managed by the Anglican Church of Canada, was a replacement school for students from St. Barnabas Indian Residential School (Onion Lake) after it was destroyed by fire in 1943. The girls were quartered at St. Alban's and the boys at the military camp (All Saints). The church-owned building had formerly been a private college (St. Alban's Ladies College).¹ In 1951, the students were moved to All Saints in Prince Albert, which was officially named Prince Albert Indian Residential School in 1953.

Principal Strikes Student

In 1945, Principal Ellis admitted to striking "one student who would not submit to being disciplined for attempting to gain access to the girls' dormitory. Principal Ellis told Indian Affairs official J. Bryce, 'When Leslie put his dukes up and squared away to fight, I hit him, and under the circumstances I would do the same thing again. There is one thing I must have in this school, that is discipline. If I fail to maintain it, my staff and myself might as well quit.'²

¹ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 306; <http://www.anglican.ca/tr/histories/prince-albert/>

² The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 374

Parental Resistance due to Ill-Treatment of Children

"In August 1945, parents from the Little Pine Reserve in Saskatchewan refused to send their children to St. Alban's school. In a letter of protest, three of the fathers wrote that children from the community had returned home 'for the holidays in ragged cloths [sic] and some with shoes not fit to wear and many sizes too large for them. One of the girls had sores all down her legs and could walk only with difficulty. Our children had told us that the food is very poor at times and not in sufficient quantity, and being compelled to eat [whether] they wanted to or not. Further, our children tell us that Rev. Ellis says some very bad things to them—one time telling all the students that they 'don't you know that I could kill you all and throw you into the ash pit—and not even bother to bury you' and that he has kicked and abused them.'³

"John Tootoosis and other First Nations leaders visited to investigate the conditions of the school." To manage parental resistance, Indian Affairs official C. A. F. Clark recommended "that parents should be restricted 'to visiting their children in a place appointed therefore, and anyone other

³ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, pp. 359-360

than a departmental official who wants to do any investigating should first have the permission of the Superintendent.' The *Indian Act* of the day stated, 'The chief and council of any band that has children in a school shall have the right to inspect such school at such reasonable time as may be agreed upon by the Indian agent and the principal of the school.' However, the amended *Indian Act* adopted in 1951, three years after Clark made his recommendation, ... [had removed the] provision for school inspection by chief and council.'⁴

In response to parental complaints, Indian agent J. Bryce also visited the school. "He concluded that the students were well-fed and well-clothed, and showed no sign of 'fear or resentment.' Indian Affairs official C. S. Bell then went out to the Little Pine Reserve, where he 'warned the parents that the children were to return to school! When he was told the parents would not send their children back, he returned with the Mounted Police and 'rounded up eight absentee children.' [However,] the show of force did little to address the truancy problem at the school.'⁵

⁴ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, pp. 360-361

⁵ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, pp. 360-361

AMALGAMATIONS CREATE PRINCE ALBERT INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL



St. Barnabas, Onion Lake (1892-1943)
destroyed by fire
(The General Synod, Anglican Church of Canada MSCC/P75-103-S7-103)



All Saints, Lac La Ronge (1907 - 1947)
destroyed by fire
(The General Synod, Anglican Church of Canada, MSCC/P7538)



St. Alban's, Prince Albert (1943-1951)
(The General Synod, Anglican Church of Canada, MSCC/P75-103-S7-291)



Prince Albert (All Saints) Indian Residential School
(1947 - 1997) (Prince Albert Historical Society and PA Herald)
All Saints Lac La Ronge moved to Prince Albert in 1948. Students from
St. Alban's moved to Prince Albert (All Saints) school in 1951. The school
changed its name to Prince Albert Indian Residential school in 1953.

This chart illustrates how schools were amalgamated into the Prince Albert Indian Industrial School, the largest residence in the province. (Full photo credits on school profile pages)

RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

Overcrowding

In 1945, parents had also "pointed out that the school was overcrowded and that some of the students got 'only a half a day's schooling in order to make room for the rest.' Their preference was for their children to attend the day school on the reserve."⁶

In 1946, Indian Affairs official, J. P. B. Ostrander also "complained of low ceilings and cramped dormitories." He reported that "in one dormitory sixteen of the thirty-nine boys had to sleep two to a bed. Ostrander wrote: **'There seems to be no thought about the health of the children when such a large number are permitted to sleep in crowded quarters.'** A year and a half later, the school was still overcrowded."⁷

Running Away

In 1948, "Bernard Neary, the superintendent for education for Indian Affairs, asked J.P.B. Ostrander ... to investigate why so many children were running away from the Prince Albert school. A report from a local Indian Affairs official that fall stated, 'Two-thirds of the staff are old and decrepit. Organized games and sports have been lacking, which

has resulted in a steady stream of children, boys and girls, running away.' In October [that year,] Principal F. W. Fisher wrote, 'Since September 5th, my car has travelled 2400 miles, two thirds of which at least, were in connection with trying to get children back to school. I am really in despair. Many of these runaways have been off four or five times.'⁸

Fire Hazard

"Commenting on the risk of fire at the aging and dilapidated St. Alban's school ... in 1946, Indian agent J. P. B. Ostrander wrote: 'More than one disastrous Indian school fire has been started by the pupils themselves in an effort to obtain their freedom from a school which they did not like. The number of truants in this school would certainly indicate much dissatisfaction.'⁹

Ostrander also wrote that if there was a fire at the school, "there would be a great probability of considerable loss of life because of narrow corridors filled with dry inflammable material and not easy access to fire escapes or the stairway."¹⁰

Principal Dies Due to Over Work

In 1949, "G. W. Fisher, the principal of the St. Alban's school in Prince Albert and the All Saints school (which had been relocated from Lac La Ronge to Prince Albert after its destruction by fire) died. According to his physician, the cause of death was 'heart strain due to over work.' He had been principal of the [All Saints] school for twenty years."¹¹

In 1951, all the students living at the St. Alban's school moved into the military camp (Prince Albert All Saints).¹² See *amalgamations* above.



St. Alban's School Girl Guides, ca. 1946, The General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, MSCC/P75-103

⁶ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 359

⁷ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 186

⁸ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 360

⁹ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 322

¹⁰ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. iv

¹¹ The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 517

¹² The History, Part 2: 1939 to 2000, Vol. 1, p. 306