

wikáʕin ḥasiik (We are not done)

Alberni Indian Residential School (AIRS) | 1892 – 1942



čišaaʔath
(Tseshaht)
First Nation

1892

Rev. John A. MacDonald establishes a day school in the Tseshaht Reserve.



AIRS
BLUEPRINT

1892

1892

Presbyterian Church in Canada (PCC) funds the construction of residence and school. A grant is submitted for 10 pupils-in-residence, with a proposal to open the school the following year.

1893

The Women's Foreign Mission Society takes over the administration of the "Alberni Girls' Home." A new schoolhouse is built on 16 acres of Tseshaht land.



1903

PPC purchases the 160-acre parcel adjacent to the Tseshaht IR from the B.C. government.

1899

A boarding school grant request is submitted by the PCC and approved. At this time it was able to accommodate 40 to 50 pupils. Alberni Indian Residential School is reclassified as a boarding school.

1896

R.P. MacKay submits a request for a per capita grant for 35 boarders. The school has 18 to 20 children in attendance.

1896

The first time deaths are reported to the Department of Indian Affairs, two girls and a boy, one from chicken pox and the others from tuberculosis.

1895

The Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) provides a \$1,500 grant towards a new building for the Girls' Home.

1904

A request is submitted to increase the grant from 30 to 50 pupils, as the administration has insufficient funding "for the maintenance of 43 children" enrolled.

1910

The 'Indian Problem' was said many times, and formed the foundational ideology of Duncan Campbell Scott (Superintendent of Indian Affairs) amendments to the *Indian Act*.

1913–1941

No attendance records are available.

1920

Amendments to the Indian Act made April 1 by Duncan Campbell Scott made it mandatory for all First Nations children to attend Indian residential schools from ages 7-16.



LOT 81 SKETCH
FROM FIELD NOTES

1937

AIRS destroyed by fire again. Enrolment is 115 pupils. A recommendation is made to rebuild the school to accommodate 150. Closure of Ahousaht AIRS is also recommended.



1927

The hospitalization of one student and death of another are reported following an outbreak of influenza, pneumonia and measles afflicting as many as 32 pupils.

1925–1969

The United Church takes over the school.

1922

Dr. Bryce published "The Story of A National Crime – An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada".

1942–1952

Nutrition experiments are conducted by the Government of Canada, with support of the United Church of Canada.

1942

An Indian Agent notes "the health of the school is not good" while it is under quarantine due to five students suffering from the mumps. It was also noted 22 pupils stayed home over the summer holidays for various reasons.



1942



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1943

A measles epidemic affects 75 students, some of whom became very ill.

1945

An inspection report notes a nurse at the infirmary at AIRS is unqualified.

1948–1954

Donald Bruce Haddock is a dorm supervisor at AIRS. He would later be convicted and charged with four counts of indecent assault.

1949

AIRS is under quarantine for two months with a mumps epidemic affecting roughly 100 pupils. There are also 38 moderately severe cases of measles reported.

1951

An influenza epidemic affects 184 students and half the staff.

1957

A severe influenza epidemic affects 85 students, and a few cases of German measles are recorded.

1943

1966

All boarding students are integrated into the Alberni and Port Alberni school system and classrooms are converted into additional boarding space.

1964

One of the classroom blocks is converted to a residence for 48 boarders.



1959–1961

David Henry Ford is a dorm supervisor at AIRS. He would later be convicted and charged with four counts of sexual assault.

1957

AIRS boarding students in Grades 7-9 attend school at A.W. Neill Junior High School.

1968–1969

Michael Dennis Flynn is a dorm supervisor at AIRS. He would later be convicted and charged with sexual abuse.

1969

The Government of Canada takes over management of AIRS.

1973

AIRS closes its doors in response to the dissatisfaction of the West Coast District Council of Indian Chiefs.

1992–1994

The Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council conducts research to highlight the words and stories of the Nuuchah-nulth people who were affected by residential schools.

1994

First AIRS Memorial Gathering (3 day healing event hosted by NTC).

2009

Tseshah First Nation hosts Survivors to witness the demolition of Peake Hall, a former AIRS dormitory.

2005

A case brought forward by Survivors of AIRS (Blackwater v. Plint) determined that because both the Government of Canada and the United Church operated the school, they were both "vicariously liable" for the abuses experienced by students.

1996

RCMP E Division investigated allegations of abuse at B.C. residential schools.

1996

The Nuuchah-nulth Tribal Council publishes a book following the residential school research.

1995

Arthur Henry Plint, a supervisor at AIRS from 1948-1968, is sentenced to 11 years in jail for the abuse of 16 student boys.

2013

Dr. Ian Mosby exposes in his 2013 research article detailing the unprecedented nutritional experimentation of Indigenous communities and residential schools.

2014

Sculpture by artist Connie Watts is unveiled. The art installation ensures people will never forget, or deny, what happened at AIRS.

2019

Tseshah First Nation invites 203 B.C. nations to the Reclaiming of Lost Souls healing event for AIRS Survivors.

2021

The ʔuuʔatumin yaqckʷiimitqin (Doing It for Our Ancestors) project team is formed. Tseshah First Nation-led Missing Children and Unmarked Graves research project begins.

2023

August 2023 is the 50th anniversary of the closure of AIRS.