Abstract

This work is an intricate history of an Indian Day School located at Listuguj on Mi’gmaq territory of Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi, present-day Gaspé Peninsula (Québec). The dissertation assembles living oral memory of former students together with finely detailed archival research. The Indian Day school (and its many forms) operated at Listuguj (formerly Restigouche), from 1856 until 1969.

The dissertation makes a real contribution to our understandings of the genocidal ‘education’ of Indigenous peoples in Canada, complicating the dominant narrative about residential schools and also introducing Québec into this history. Is it possible to conceptualize deeper forms of reconciliation on the basis of a more complex story of colonial schooling as well as the affirmation of Indigenous knowledge systems? If so, how?

The historiography assembles fragments from archival records together with living oral memories to create a picture, with the hope that others will take what is needed to create other stories, new memories. The dissertation works with Indigenous concepts of relationality and storywork and uses Western analytics as a webbing in its analysis. There are also moments of settler self-reflexivity necessary for deeper forms of reconciliation. The dissertation animates the concept of “trans-systemic knowledges”. The concept of “ethical space” is brought into play to facilitate the active relationship sense of trans-systemic knowledge building.

The research on day schooling exposes how state violence operated from the inside out: Indigenous children did not necessarily need to leave their families or their ancestral lands to feel
(or experience) the harms of “white possession”. The storying approach, centering the voices of former students, seeks to ethically honour Mi’gmaw knowledges, which continued, changed, and adapted, while settler institutions (and logics) encroached and attempted to take root on the territory. Beneath (beyond, despite) the dominant narrative depicting reconciliation as a ‘national’ and ‘big hug’ there are possibilities. Standing still, hearing the difficult history of day schooling, the dissertation balances the demonstration of pain and harm with an insistence on survivance and resistance. Attending to the history of a particular place, there are possibilities for transformative reconciliation.
Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge and thank the following people who contributed to this project, and who have helped me to undertake this research:

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I would like to express my deep appreciation to my committee. To my supervisor, Dr. Jennifer Henderson (Carleton University), for her support, her encouragement, and her guidance mentoring me during my years at Carleton. Jennifer helped me to push out the deeper meaning of this work and see its broader implications. Her positive mindset and constructive feedback helped me learn and to grow. I thank Dr. Sophie Tamas (Carleton University) for her ongoing support, for mentorship, and for responding to the writing as an invitation. I thank Dr. Paula Sherman (Trent University), for reminding me to start with beauty, while also holding settlers to account for harms that have been ignored. I would also like to thank Dr. Brenda Vellino (Carleton University), for joining the committee near the completion.

I would like to recognize the School of Indigenous and Canadian Studies (SICS) at Carleton, Drs. Eva Mackey and Peter Hodgins for having welcomed me as a student. And, to Lori Dearman and Donna Malone (SICS department) for their patience and positive energy attending to the administrative details. I would also like to recognize the assistance that I received from archivists, André Ruest (Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec), as well as the archivist of the Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary (Rimouski).

I am also grateful to the Listuguj Council of Mi’gmaq Educators: Sandra Germain, Michael Isaac, Fred Metallic, John Martin (of Gesgapegiag), and Darcy Gray. I acknowledge their advice when this project started, which contributed to my understanding of the importance of incorporating the spirit of OCAP into the methods, and to keep the needs of former students at the center.

I am deeply grateful, and I give many thanks, my family and good friends for their emotional support: My parents, my late father, David, for humour, love, and guidance, still today; my mom, Marolyn, for her creativity and teaching me to feel stories in life. My siblings, Kathryn, Beth, and Jim, for love, even from afar. I thank my father-in-law, the late Ike (Isaac) Metallic, for his strength and the love he had for the land, for a way of life. I thank my mother-in-law, Eunice, for teachings about, and her passion for, the Mi’gmaq language.

I am home: To my three children, Emma, Je’gopsn, and Erika Wasueg, you live in my heart, you are my teachers who help me to understand what matters in life. Njijnmum, Fred, for your unwavering presence, your patience and support: for keeping all of us moving forward, all these years.
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Preface

It is important to acknowledge participants, by name, in your research on the Indian Day School. These are their stories; this is our history – Donna Metallic Director of Health (Listuguj Mi’gmaq First Nation).

I acknowledge, and give thanks to, all those who took part and shared some of their memories with me for this project, “Storying Living Memories about Indian Day Schools: Transforming Reconciliation.” From October of 2018 until April of 2019, I held semi-formal interviews (e.g., reminiscing and conversations) with 19 former students of the Restigouche Indian Day School (and its iterations): 12 women and 7 men. With consent, former students who took part in this project are acknowledged, by name, in the opening of this dissertation. Throughout the dissertation, also with consent, I have included individuals’ names with stories that they shared. I sought to hold a sufficient number of conversations, over a period of several months, to provide a sufficient amount of ‘data’, or individual and collective stories, by which to understand, and to produce a rich and nuanced picture of experiences at the day school.

Listuguj First Nation, located in Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi (present-day Gaspé Peninsula, Québec) has an estimated total population of 4,058 members, with 2,108 people living ‘on reserve’ and 1,950 living off reserve.¹ The Listuguj Community Health Services, which records and tracks population, indicates that there is a total of 226 people (registered band members) aged 65 and older (129 women and 97 men) presently living in Listuguj, as of November 2020.²


² Personal Communication (e-mail) with Donna Metallic, Director of Health, Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government. November 10, 2020. This figure differs from Statistics Canada, 2016, Census of Population, which indicates that there are 145 people (registered band members) aged 65 and older living in Listuguj (85 women and 60 men).
I sought to invite participation from approximately twenty (20) people, aged 65 and older, men and women, presently living in Listuguj who spent all of their formal schooling at the Restigouche Indian Day School, and its many forms (e.g., including the ‘Joint’ School, which operated from 1961-1969). I did not seek participation from individuals who are part of the official integration period, after 1969 when Listuguj First Nation entered into an agreement with the province of New Brunswick allowing Restigouche (present-day Listuguj) students to attend the public school system in that province. The memories and experiences associated with the integration era (post-1969) is an area of research that could be investigated further. Also, I did not include non-Indigenous former students who attended either the local (white) school (‘l’école des blancs’) situated in Listuguj or the ‘Joint’ School (after 1961). These memories, too, of non-Indigenous former students who attended these institutions could be investigated in other research projects.  

This project did not, of course, include all former students of the Restigouche Indian Day School. The project participants, former students of the Indian Day who took part in this research were between the ages of 63 and 88, when the research took place (born in 1955 or earlier). All the participants are fluent Mi’gmaw speakers; however, all the interviews were conducted in the English language. Of these participants, 8 attended the Indian Day school, exclusively, while 11 attended the Indian Day School and, after 1961, attended the Joint High School (federally funded and provincially controlled). All the participants reside in Listuguj, except for one person who is from Listuguj, but now lives at a distance. The research design involved a relational approach, using semi-structured interviews (conversations and storying) as a method of data gathering,

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3 The Sisters of the Holy Rosary were still in Restigouche from 1969 until 1971, further research is required to determine if they continued to teach and whom.
along with a Wela’lioq supper, to close off the gathering of stories. Because the research involved establishing and building relationships, trust, and conversations in an ongoing manner versus research methods that privilege anonymity or data collection methods designed for larger numbers of potential respondents and with less of an emphasis on personal interactions (e.g., perception surveys), I did not actively solicit participation from individuals living at a distance from the community.

During the research, I encountered former teachers of the Restigouche Indian Day School. I completed the necessary steps for ethical clearance, and I expanded my interview pool to include those participants in this project. With consent, I interviewed three former teachers, women, all of whom were between the ages of 77 and 94, and of whom reside at the Mother House of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary in Rimouski (Québec).

During the research, some participants expressed an interest in having former students gather to continue to share with one another, and in this way “more stories” could be remembered, documented, and shared in a collective manner. Research begun for academic purposes can take on a life of its own either while the formal research is being conducted or when completed. My research does not record former students’ words or stories in Mi’gmaw, further initiatives, including those organized by the community itself, might do so. These stories, recorded in the language, I believe will also contribute to deeper understandings of Mi’gmaw values and principles in education, including ways of sharing and building knowledge.
In this project, conversations and reminiscences were based on a set of semi-structured questions. I used these questions as a guide in my conversations with former students. Using narrative connections to build relations, create and share knowledge is called a storying method by Margaret Kovach (Nêhiyaw and Saulteaux ancestry). Storying as methodology is in keeping with Indigenous practices of collective knowledge-building where there is an emphasis, and even an expectation of, relationship building. Before the research formally started, the leadership and some Elders from the community of Listuguj observed that an informal semi-structured conversational approach is not only culturally appropriate but, potentially, can mitigate potential harms to participants choosing to take part. Using semi-guided research questions, along with sharing of stories with one another, both myself and participants held onto some degree of decision-making about what to share, and, to some extent, the focus and flow of the conversation. I used the questions as a guide and answered questions about my intent for the research and, other times, about my connections, as a person married into, a family system, in the community of Listuguj. In my research and writing of this dissertation, I explored concepts and principles of relationality, respect, and listening: these principles guided my approach. The dissertation is comprised of four Sections: the first establishes the context for the research; the second shares my methodology; the third presents the findings; and the fourth offers closing remarks.

More specifically, Section III is divided into two parts: Chapter 6, which draws primarily on print archives, and Chapter 7, which draws primarily on Indigenous oral reminiscences. However, I have also endeavored as much as possible to soften this hard division: I have

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included oral reminiscences of former students in the ‘archives’ chapter whenever possible, and
also through the two passageways in poetic language, one appearing as the hinge between
Chapters 6 and 7, and the other appearing in the middle of Chapter 7, as the oral memories
presenting shift from an emphasis on the school to the home, showing how Euro-western
knowledges travelled from school to the home.

In Chapter 6, I start the story by examining the origins of the Restigouche Indian School,
designated as a Poor School in Lower Canada. I follow the school’s records, after Confederation,
tracing its shift into an Indian School. Drawing on print archival records, I focus on the arrival
and departures of teachers: Mary Isaac, a certified Mi’gmaw teacher of Restigouche taught at the
Restigouche School from 1895 to 1903 and the Sisters of the Holy Rosary (St-Rosaire), the
religious order responsible for formal schooling, to varying degrees, at Restigouche, starting in
1903 until their departure, in 1971. Then, the story shifts, in Chapter 7, when I enter the oral
community recollections about schooling. This Chapter is built from the oral conversations and
memories of former students who attended the Indian Day School during the late 1940s through
the 1960s. This time period also saw the school’s transition from being a federal day school to
the provincial joint school. Chapter 7, stories about the Restigouche Day School built from oral
memories of former students, also includes fragments and traces from the print archival records
as a type of bleeding over from, and oral in conversation with, the archival records.

I have also produced two poems, as textual passageways, as metaphors connecting the different
knowledge systems. The first passageway is built from archival records, and includes voices and
memories from letters, from correspondence, from petitions of nuns, of Indian Agents, and
Indigenous elected leadership, while the second passageway functions as an interruption: showing how Euro-western knowledges travelled ‘from school’ to ‘home’. My hope is that these poems function in the narrative like an echo of the “passageway” (literally built between the ‘convent’ and the ‘Indian school’), connecting the archival material and the oral reminiscing of former students who attended the day school in the 1950s and early 1960s. The poems also, in a way, allow for a more intimate, uncertain, kind of voice to come in. In my reading of some of the nuns’ records, I was struck and unsettled by the beauty of their handwriting: curved strokes on the page; their flourishes caught me off guard; and I could (almost) forget the role of these institutions (state and religious) in the genocide of a People, and Indigenous systems of knowledge systems. I wanted to create these poetic sequences – in an attempt for more air for the chosen words to breathe in, so they could echo out and produce connotations in multiple, different directions. I wanted the poems to figure the passageways, from one space to another. In the poetic sequences I hope that the words may speak in a different way from when I quote them within the analytical sections. In presenting the findings, in this manner: as two ‘parts’, written and oral, held together with poetic sequences, my objective was not to create a full, total picture; but rather, to attend to different knowledges, print and oral, to recognize and attend to gaps, to silences, in the archives and in the oral reminiscing in relation, and in conversation between one and the other.

I am not working with a binary understanding of written archival records versus oral, reminiscing and story. Nor do I present the findings as ‘coded’ themes versus (whole) story. Rather, in Section three, both the print (archival records) and oral reminiscing about colonial schooling are brought together in (hopefully) an ethical space. At the outset, I sought to
intervene on dominant representations of Indigenous colonial schooling and animate Indigenous knowledge systems. I envision this dissertation as a collaborative work between positionalities: my 'self', as a settler living in Listuguj; my 'self' as a settler speaking with other settlers from the 'outside'; my 'self' listening and working with others: listening, hearing. In the dissertation, these critical reflections seep inside, between and outside the dissertation body. An italicized voice that pauses, interrupts, creates and registers gaps in the remembering.

The dissertation project took place over several years. I spent time gathering archival records, reading, and analyzing, interviewing and holding conversations, and participating in community events, getting to know people, learning and working. In other words, the end goal – producing (and defending) the written dissertation – is important, but so too are the relationships formed through the research process.
Section I: Context for the Research

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

1.1) ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Land and waterways – Listuguj (Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi)

Fig. 1: Listuguj Sipu (Restigouche River)
– Photo by Emma Metallic (May 2020)
Opening remarks

[Restigouche Indian Day School]

Some people liked [the Indian School] and maybe some didn’t …
I can’t remember the good things.
I learned to write and read.
That’s about it.

To me, I left it behind when I left.
And they [my children] like to hear what happened
To them it’s just like a story
I said, ‘it’s true’.

It is sad, you know,

made us feel so low
because you’re an Indian.
You know what I mean?
I think that was what mostly that hurt us
more than the strap.

Some of them fought back
Believe me.

_Gladys Germain_ (Former student of the Restigouche Indian Day School)
Acknowledgment of participants

For this dissertation I draw on archival records and oral testimony about a particular school, the Restigouche Indian Day School, located on Mi’gmaq ancestral territory, at Listuguj First Nation (formerly Restigouche), in Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi (in the province of Québec). For this project on day schooling, I spoke with people who attended, or taught, at the Restigouche Indian Day School (and its iterations) from the 1940s to 1969. The project participants were not, of course, all of those who attended or taught at the school, but those with whom I was able to speak. I acknowledge and thank all the participants who took part in this project on the Restigouche Indian Day School. I hope that this work will contribute to formally documenting, and sharing, this history with others.

Participants and former students of the Restigouche Indian Day School:

Sandra Germain
Victor Germain
Gladys Germain
Madeline Germain
Rita Germain
Patsy Gray
Gordon Isaac, Sr.
Maggie Isaac
Blanche Martin
Mary Ann Metallic
Eunice (Wysote) Metallic
Gail Metallic
Roger Metallic
Kenny Mitchell
Diane Mitchell
Janice Vicaire
Joseph Wilmot
Patrick “Sonny” Wysote
Joe Noel Wysote

Former teachers of the Restigouche Indian Day School:

Auréla Cyr (Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary) [D.O.B 1936/08/08] Years taught: 1959 -1961
Fabienne Cyr (Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary) [D.O.B 1941/11/21] Years taught: 1963-1968
Agnès Gallant (Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary) [D.O.B 1924/11/02] Years taught: 1951-1955; 1959-1969
Timeline: Restigouche Indian Day School

- 1856 – Schoolhouse built in Restigouche on Mission Land for Mi’gmaq children with funds from the Province of Canada. School designated as a Poor School by Education Bureau of Canadas. Over the next several decades, schooling in Restigouche is administered by Catholic Missionaries and salaried teachers (certified and lay) provide instruction. The Mission Land, the south and then the north side of the Restigouche River, have been used for missionary purposes, in varying ways, from the early 1600s.5

- 1867 – Under the British North America Act (1867), (now Constitution Act, 1982), the Dominion government inherits jurisdiction over Indian Affairs from the British Crown. Indigenous children educated at “segregated federally-funded church administered schools until the mid-twentieth century,” while provinces maintain authority over non-Native schooling.6

- 1895 -1903 – Mary Isaac of Restigouche is the first formally certified Mi’gmaq teacher to teach at the Restigouche Indian Day School. School funded by Indian Affairs, Canada. Administered by priests with involvement of the elected Mi’gmaq leadership.

- 1903 – Sisters of the Holy Rosary brought in by the Capuchins of Restigouche to teach at the Indian School. The Restigouche Roman Catholic Indian Day School is overseen by the Capuchin Fathers, operated by Sisters of the Holy Rosary, along with the Indian Agent. Indian Affairs continues to fund the school’s operations. The Capuchin Fathers arrange for the building of a convent with an “interest free loan” from the Sisters of the Holy Rosary after the Department refuses to fund a teacher’s residence (convent) for the Sisters.7 Classes for White (non-Indigenous) students begin in October 1905 under the direction of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary.8

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5 Joseph Meagher, School Inspector to Hon. P. J.O. Chauveau, Superintendent of Education Hon. T.Lee Terrill, Montreal in Canada (Legislative Assembly, Report on Public Education in Lower Canada for 1856, Appendix C, Extracts from the Reports of the School Inspectors for the year 1856). A letter from the Capuchin Fathers, in 1951, indicates that the “first school” was established in 1857 (see footnote 10). In the late 1600s, Wicken notes that the banks of the Restigouche were a central gathering place, or “village”, of Mi’gmaq; and, at this time, “the village also became the centre for French missionary activity in the region” (in “The Restigouche River,”7). The 1737 census mentions that at “Restigouche or Baye de chaleurs …there is a church and a presbytery” (Ibid, 7). The churches and, in time, the day schools inserted themselves, and in time, became ‘fixtures’ on Indigenous homelands.

6 Raptis, What We Learned, 28; Raptis and Bowker, “Maintaining the Illusion of Democracy,”1.

7 Correspondence from Sister of the Holy Rosary to Reverend Pere, 19 August 1903 (Pacifique Fonds_1981-05-001-17, Personnel enseignant_1899-1910, BanQ, Gaspé). The Sisters offer an “interest free” loan of 500$ for one or two years as a deposit toward building their Convent in Restigouche; Correspondence from Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs to Indian Agent (J. Pitre), 3 June 1903 (Pacifique Fonds_1981-05-001-17-Personnel enseignant_1899-1910, BanQ, Gaspé).

8 Holy Rosary Chronicles (Chronique de la maison de Risitigouche), Notes, 1975, Restigouche histoire_308.720_C.1_49, Holy Rosary, Rimouski.
- 1909 – A new Restigouche Indian Day School and Teachers’ Residence [Convent] built with funds from Indian Affairs. The first ‘White School’ (“Ecole des blancs”) is built, one year earlier, in 1908 on church lands in the Reserve. Funds to construct the White School provided by Chaleurs Bay Mills Co. (“Champoux Mill”).\(^9\) These schools (“Indian” and ‘White’) instill and replicate racialized segregations and are shaped (and fabricated) by the industrialization of natural resources (e.g., the mill) in this region.

- 1936/37 – Indian Day School and Teachers’ Residence rebuilt in Restigouche with funds from Indian Affairs.

- 1943– Repairs made to the Indian School to provide classroom space for domestic science and manual training.

- 1951 – Federal integration policy resulting from revisions to the Indian Act to promote the education of Aboriginal children “in association with other children.”\(^10\)

(Fig. 2: Letter: ‘Use of Land for Restigouche Roman Catholic Indian Day School’ in 1951)\(^11\)

- 1961 – Regional High School (Grade 4 to Grade 12) built at Restigouche as part of the integration policy era. School is built on “neutral” church lands: Indian Affairs pays for half of the construction and the Province of Québec pays for the other half. (Participants of this project called this the “new school”, the “high school”, Saint Anne’s High School, and Department records refer to this school as the Joint School). The new, or joint, school is attended by Mi’gmaq and non-Mi’gmaq students, and classes are offered in English and French; however, the slotting and segregation (by race, by language) is

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\(^9\) The Capuchin Fathers and the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, oversaw and/or provided instruction, from 1905 to 1971 for the children of families who moved onto Mission lands (on Reserve) to work at the mill, also located on Mission lands; lands for the mill (built in 1902), the homes, and the ‘White’ school were all leased out by the Capuchin Fathers to non-Indigenous peoples. The province of Québec (Département de l’Instruction publique) provided funds to the commission scolaire catholique de Restigouche under a special Poor School municipality fund for teachers’ salaries. A handwritten document, in this collection (not dated) affirms that the first “white” school (école des blancs) was built in 1908 for children of employees who worked at the mill starting in 1902; Correspondence from John Champoux, President, Chaleurs Bay Mills to Rev. Pere Pierre, Capuchins, Ste. Anne de Restigouche, 5 février 1908, where Champoux discusses terms of an agreement between the company and the Capuchins for a White School in Restigouche. (Pacifique Fonds _1981_05_001_17, ecole ste-anne, constructions, subsides, BanQ, Gaspé.)


\(^11\) Correspondence from Pere Armand, Capuchin Father, to Major D.M. MackKay, Indian Affairs, 11 June 1951 (Pacifique Fonds _1981_05-001-17, ecole indiene, construction amenagement, BanQ, Gaspé). This letter indicates that the first school was established in 1857; however, Pennefather Commission indicates that the school was built one year prior, in 1856.
dictated by the church and state. Indian Affairs continues to fund Mi’gmaq tuition, however, education is administered by the Commission Scolaire (provincial school board). Sisters of the Holy Rosary continue to work as the principal and teachers at the Restigouche Regional High School (“Joint School”). Holy Rosary operates teachers’ college in Restigouche from 1962 until 1967.

- 1968/69 – Restigouche Band Council (Chief William “Je’gopsn” Wysote) advocates for, and receives approval from then Minister of Indian Affairs, Hon. Jean Chretien, for the transfer of children to provincial public schools in Campbellton, N.B. In the fall of 1969, schools in NB receive Mi’gmaq students.


- 1972 – Indigenous peoples, through the National Indian Brotherhood (present-day Assembly of First Nations) release a policy framework Indian Control over Indian Education. This policy countered the view that integration was desirable and set forth a pathway for education based on Inherent and Aboriginal Treaty rights. In 2010, the AFN renewed this policy framework with the release of its First Nations Control of First Nations Education – It’s our Vision, It’s our Time. These policies give expression to Indigenous peoples’ interests, concerns, and aspirations in education.

- 1981 – June 11 and 20, the Surete de Québec, Ministere des Loisier, chasses et peches, and Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) raid the community of Listuguj, at issue were salmon-fishing rights of Mi’gmaq. In the aftermath of this violence, Mi’gmaq of Listuguj created their own law on fisheries: a framework for governance outside of the Indian Act. The raid reflects the mounting tensions and resistance, as well as Mi’gmaq assertions of their inherent rights to their territory.

- 1992 – Elected leadership of the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government, with direction from community, initiates process to bring children back home to Listuguj for schooling as part of reclaiming Mi’gmaw ways of knowing and being and language.

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12 Correspondence from Chief of Restigouche, William Wysote, to Mr. Arsenault, Board of School Trustees, December 6, 1968, Education General_Acc.2000-00946-8_Box:13_File: 25-1, LAC, Ottawa).


14 Assembly of First Nations (AFN), First Nations Control of First Nations Education (2010). Key elements of this strategic framework include: “language immersion, holistic and culturally relevant curricula, well-trained educators, focused leadership, parental involvement and accountability, and safe and healthy facilities founded on principles that respect First Nations jurisdiction over education,” (Ibid, 3). Others have described this period as a “devolution” of services, with an emphasis on the federal government “passing control” of schools to bands themselves. (Hamilton, The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes, 19.

15 LMG, Education Governance, 2021.
• 1997 – Alaqsie’w Gitpu School (elementary, band-operated and federally funded school) opens at Listuguj. Alaqsie’w Gitpu means “the eagle will soar.”

• 2006 – Era of Reconciliation: In May of 2006, the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) is approved by all parties to the agreement. The community of Listuguj sought to be, but was not included in, the IRSSA claim.

• 2008 – As mandated by the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, the Federal Government issued an apology to former students of the residential school system. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission formed on June 2, 2008 and dissolved on December 18, 2015. The purpose of the TRC was to gather testimony (at public and private events) to create a historical record of the legacy and impacts of the Indian residential school system in Canada. The TRC hearings ran from 2008 to 2014. The TRC did not collect testimony from former students of Indian Day Schools as part of its truth-seeking mission.

• 2009 – Day Schools Class Action (McLean Class Action) lawsuit initiated. Listuguj is included in the list of Federal Indian Day Schools: Schools operated at “Restigouche/Mission Point Micmacs of Restigouche before 1864 to June 30, 1961.”

• 2015 – Truth and Reconciliation Final Report and 94 Calls to Action released by the TRC.

• 2019 – Federal Government approves Indian day schools class action settlement. The schools at Listuguj are included in this settlement for the years “[b]efore 1864 until June 30, 1961.”


17 The IRSSA is an agreement between the Government of Canada and an estimated 86,000 Indigenous peoples who had been students in Canada’s Indian Residential School system. Requests to have educational institutions added to the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) could be made pursuant to Article 12. Listuguj sought to have the federal school (under the name ‘Residential School Listuguj’ and ‘Ristigouche Indian Day School’) included in the IRSSA agreement. The Restigouche Day School was not added to the IRSSA agreement. Canada’s stated reason for this decision was that the school was “operated by a religious organization.” (Residential Schools Settlement. Court website); Canada, “Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement.”

18 Gowling WLG, “Federal Indian Day School Class Action” [documents].

19 Ibid.
1.2) SITUATING THE RESEARCH

Searching for Indian Day Schools

In the wake of Indian residential and day schools, in the present age of apologies, inquiries and commissions, settler Canada, it seems, is committed to a project of achieving reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples. This reconciliation-seeking project has produced dominant representations of the Indian Residential School system which, while acknowledging past violence, oftentimes frame the process of reconciliation as a ‘national’ ‘big hug’ intended to restore relations after acknowledgment of past harms.20

This dissertation asks whether it is possible to conceptualize deeper forms of reconciliation based on a more complex story of colonial schooling as well as the affirmation of Indigenous knowledge systems? If so, how? I assemble the story of a particular Day School, working with oral reminiscing and written archival records to show the nuances, gaps, violations, resistances, and relations in the fabric of formal, segregated, assimilative schooling for Indigenous children. By critically examining the historical context of Indigenous schooling in a particular place, bringing attention to colonial relations of power and privilege, as well as attending to memories of former students who attended the school, I investigate possibilities to articulate, and put into

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20 This project was originally titled ‘Remembering Indian Day Schools: Looking Beyond Reconciliation as a ‘National’, ‘Big Hug’ investigates the potentialities for deeper and more lasting forms of reconciliation, in education. The wording ‘national hug’ is from Henderson, in “Incomprehensible Canada,” where he asserts: “[r]ather than rendering the concept of reconciliation as vague and amorphous as a national hug (as it tends to be in forms such as conflict resolution or state apologies for past wrongs), constitutional reconciliation grounds the process for reconciliation between Aboriginal peoples and the Canadian state in the juridical recognition of Aboriginal and treaty rights,” (115, emphasis added). Similarly, in “150 Years and Waiting,” Ladner argues that: “[r]econciliation is not a great big hug.” For Ladner, reconciliation is not (and cannot) be understood (or end at): education, land acknowledgments, cultural awareness training, or an apology. Meaningful reconciliation, for Ladner, needs to be “transformative”, which means changing the relationship between “treaty nations” and so doing transforming the “day-to-day lives of Indigenous peoples,” 407.
practice, an understanding of reconciliation that moves beyond rhetoric and symbolism for deeper ‘societal change’.

This project is intended to be both an intervention in the Canadian discourse focused on residential schools as historical injury, which complicates that dominant and somewhat generic narrative, as well as (and more centrally) research with, and for, a particular community of Listuguj: honouring, recollecting, and hearing the experiences of Listuguj community members. There is a difficulty, perhaps an impossibility, of doing both. Quite simply, the project is also guided by questions associated with ethical research practices: how do we (settler society) learn/practice respect? How do we (settler society) learn/practice care? In this work, ethical research practices involved learning, listening, reflecting, analyzing, and storying connections and relations with peoples, places, and experiences rather than seeking to extract (or preserve) memories about schooling to form a ‘complete’ picture for the sake of settler atonement. Paying attention to place, to particularities are important for intervention and critique as well as affirming, honouring, and attending to Indigenous knowledge systems while remembering. This dissertation project is part of something different: it is about unlearning to think about reconciliation as “the ultimate goal” and to instead focus on a decolonizing-processes guided by principles of respect and care.

Canada’s official national memories of Indian residential schooling identify over one hundred Indian Residential Schools (IRS), which operated throughout the nation from 1876 until the mid-

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21 With the release of the Calls to Action by the Commission of the Truth and Reconciliation, in June of 2015, Craft and Regan assert the theory and concept of reconciliation has been debated by Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples (“scholars, activists, artists, and community members”). In Pathways of Reconciliation, Craft and Regan posit that critics “reject a liberal model” of reconciliation that perpetuates colonialism in that the Canadian settler state is only required to “recognize” and “accommodate” Indigenous peoples into existing structures (xiii). Craft and Regan argue that if reconciliation – and societal change – is going to go beyond “rhetoric or purely symbolic” there needs to be “concrete actions”; and these actions are even more pressing in that context [of formal schooling for Indigenous peoples] is one of “recognized cultural genocide,” xi and xiii.
National official memories about Indian residential schooling have emerged from Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a national inquiry in place from 2008 until 2015. For over one hundred years, the Canadian state funded, and churches implemented, a school system with a “targeted program of assimilation” of Indigenous children into mainstream settler-colonial society. In the present-day era of reckoning and reconciling colonial Canada, instruments such as commissions, public state apologies, and education campaigns have created space for a production of awareness in the settler public about the residential school system.

There are many stories circulating in the settler public about residential schooling. Indian Day Schools have received less attention in the academic and the public than residential schooling. The slow recognition of Day Schools, to some extent, is connected with the public messaging

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22 Milloy, A National Crime, 2017; Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, viii and 4. Indigenous and Northern Affairs recognize a total of 130 Indian Residential Schools in its Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), with seven additional institutions added through Article 12 (by Canada) and two more institutions added by the courts: thus, there are a total of 139 recognized schools (Canada. “Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement,” Feb. 21, 2019.)

23 Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) was created from the IRSSA. The TRC had a five-year time frame, and 60$ million-dollar budget to (amongst other things): host seven national TRC events; issue a final report; establish a National Research Centre; collect documents; oversee a commemoration fund; host community events; statement gathering/truth sharing; and establish an active research agenda.

24 Capitaine and Vanthuyne, Power Through Testimony, 5

25 For example, the Legacy of Hope Foundation, established in 2000, is an Indigenous-led charitable foundation with a mandate to “raise educated and raise awareness” about the “history and long-lasting intergenerational impacts of the Residential School System, Sixties Scoop, and other means cultural oppression against Indigenous (First Nations, Metis, and Inuit) survivors, their descendants and communities.” The foundation has created a national online presence about the Residential School System. (See: Legacy of Hope Foundation, “Education”.)

associated with the Federal Indian Day School Class action lawsuit initiated in 2009 and approved on August 19, 2019, by Federal Court.

As one example, the Federal Indian Day School Class Action (printable) Claims Process Poster is promoted as something to “share with Survivors throughout your community.” The generic poster does not include names of people, nor images of places or institutions. The messaging is directed towards those who attended Indian Day Schools, and might be eligible for compensation, versus those who taught at or funded the schools. (Fig. 3: Federal Indian Day School Claims Process Poster) 27

The state and settler society are excluded from this messaging, which minimizes settler accountability and responsibility in the history of day schooling. The messaging goes right to the discourse of claims-making. There is no mention about broader gathering of knowledge and memory, nor is there mention of a broader story of accountabilities.

From the 1920s onwards, based on its own representations, the Government of Canada established and operated 699 Indian Day Schools throughout Canada, in every province and

27 Gowling WLG, “Documents, Forms & Notices, Claims Process Poster.” The Indian Day School Class Action Settlement Agreement was approved on August 19, 2019. The Court Order approves, and closes, the list of eligible Federal Indian Day Schools contained in Schedule K.
territory except for Newfoundland, and at which an estimated 200,000 Indigenous children attended. This figure is about five times “more than the number of residential schools.” An estimated 65 of those schools were located in Québec (of which two were on Mi’gma’w territory), while throughout Mi’gma’gi, and Wolastoqiyik territories, (in the Maritimes), there were an estimated 30 Indian Day schools in operation, collectively, pre-Confederation until 1997. In these territories, the school at Restigouche, which opened in 1856, is one of the earliest formal Indian day schools to open and the day school that operated at Sipekne’katik (Indian Brook), which closed in 1997, is amongst the last of the Indian Day Schools to close or transfer control. In other Indigenous territories, the Oka Country School, in Kanestake, Québec, is considered one of the “last” schools to transfer control: this happened on September 1, 2000.

Yet, even with this recognition of federal Indian day schools, there are silences and gaps in dominant imagining, which seem to fit with settler colonial habits and normalization of ‘not’ seeing colonial violence and domination. Formal schools opened for Indigenous learners before 1920. And, by the 1960s, as this project shows, some schools continued to operate not as federally operated Indian Day Schools but as ‘joint schools’ where Indigenous students received


30 Deer, “120 years of Indian Day Schools,” May 12, 2019. In The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes (1986), Hamilton notes that were 28 federal Indian day schools in the Maritimes, and with the schools at Gesgapegiag and Listuguj First Nation, bring this number to 30. There were 24 federal Indian Day Schools located on Mi’gma’w territory.

31 Gowling WLG, “Schedule K– List of Federal Indian Day Schools”. The Shubenacadie Residential School, the only residential school of the Maritime region, (and where some students from Mi’gmaq communities of Québec attended) was located at Sipekne’katik. The residential school operated from 1930 until 1967.
federal funding and *provincial* school boards were tasked (by the federal government) with operating the schools.

There is some awareness about Indian Day Schools, but there is less understanding in settler society that the residential and day schools of the late 19th and 20th centuries “shared a mandate,” as Wolastoqiyik scholar Andrea Bear Nicholas has argued, “of eradicating the cultures of Aboriginal people.”32 Although mandates were similar, there has been little research conducted on how the schools operated, with even less focus on how students themselves experienced day schooling.33 This study, which focuses on the experiences at the particular schools in Listuguj, from 1856 until 1969 calls to question seamless transitions, exposes gaps and silence in the dominant narrative and imaginings, and illuminates how these representations can prolong and contain violence and violations (oftentimes for settler comfort and futurity). Archival records and oral reminiscing about experiences at the Restigouche schools illuminate understandings not only about experiences with colonial imposition and attempts at dispossession, but also with Indigenous desires, resistances, presences, adaptations, and assertions over knowledge and systems of knowledge (or schooling).

Of the academic literature on Indian Day schools that does exist, there has not yet been a “systemic study” of the Indian day schools in Québec, which operated from 19th to mid 20th centuries, despite the fact that, as Anny Morissette points out in her work on the day school at

32 Andrea Bear Nicholas quoted by Walls in “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 39; Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System’,” 362; Morissette, “Il connaît le chemin de l’école,” 126.

Kitigan Zibi, there were (at least) thirty-one day schools operating in the province “to teach Indigenous children how to become little Canadians.” In Atlantic Canada, on Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik (Maliseet) territories, there have been studies of day schooling, yet Listuguj – falling in Québec – is precluded from these regional studies. There have been studies of particular initiatives or teachers at day schools, but there has not been a drilling down into the history of one particular school, nor has there been a broad study about day schooling, generally. This is not only a gap in the literature, but this is a large omission in public memory.

Just before Confederation, in 1856, the first formal schoolhouse for Mi’gmaq children opened at ‘Mission Point’ in what was then called Ristigouche. Over one hundred years later, in 1969, the elected leadership of Restigouche, the federal government and the province of New Brunswick reached a formal agreement for schooling, and Mi’gmaq students ‘left’ Ristigouche and integrated into the New Brunswick provincial school system. Two years later, in the fall of 1971, two institutions, educational and religious, burnt to the ground. Two decades later, in 1992, the community reclaimed its schooling, when classes opened for primary children in Lisutugj.

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34 In “Il connaît le chemin de l’école, il peut y aller s’il veut,” Morissette draws on the words of Senator Murray Sinclair, Commissioner of the TRC, who stated that the day schools and residential schools were two parallel systems that treated children in a similar manner during class time; “[t]es deux avaient le même programme: enseigner aux enfants comment être des petits Canadiens, tout en dénigrant leur langue, leur culture d’origine,” 126.


36 The name of the community appears as Ristigouche and Restigouche in early documents. In 1994, Restigouche formally changed its name to Listuguj. I have used Restigouche throughout the dissertation, except when speaking about the community in the present-moment, where I use Listuguj. I have also used Ristigouche in the first mention of the school, in keeping with records from that period (mid-1800s).
I work, live, have raised my family, and – over the past few years, I conducted portions of this dissertation research in the community of Listuguj. I am not from here: I am a guest, a participant, a learner. There are voice-shifts in this narrative. These moments, interludes, I hope, capture some of the internal work necessary for decolonizing and (as a settler) seeking to respect and put into practice principles and protocols with Indigenous (Mi’gmaw) ways of knowing, sharing, and building knowledge. These interludes may also illustrate a complicating of the main storyline of this dissertation, and a relational and story-work approach for the ‘building’ of knowledge.

At the archives of the Holy Rosary Mother House, in Rimouski, I examine a photo album with newspaper clippings of articles (about the fire), which were saved by nuns, and then (the data) transferred and preserved under the stewardship of the SHR archivist (former teacher at Restigouche). The story, published in Le Soleil (Québec City) on September 28, 1971, reports that two children, (“deux jeunes Indiens”) were playing a game (“un jeu”). They made a torch to explore dark crevices of the abandoned education buildings, and from there the fire started.37

I am digging and learning about what is not usually seen in and by settler-colonial society. When I started, I thought that this was simply a story about Indigenous schooling. I am learning how Indigenous schooling is also a story about excavating the roots of benevolent settler expeditions.

37 Media stories about the incident note that: “Il semble que les enfants se livraient alors à un jeu …En effet, il était courant pour les jeunes Indiens d’aller se promener dans ces vastes édifices en se servant de bouts de papier allumés comme torche, pour visiter les coins obscurs.” Louis Tanguay, “Le double incendie de Restigouche n’est pas d’origine criminelle,” Le Soleil 28 septembre 1971 (308.720.c.2 05, Decoupures de Journaux_1971, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski).
This incident at Restigouche, the double burning of the school and the convent was officially deemed an “accident”, by experts and in media reporting. Speculations (according to media accounts) that someone was trying to make the two institutions “disappear” remained unfounded. The Québec City newspaper, Le Soleil’s, framing of this story – sensationalizing the double incident, followed by the use of the word “jeu” function together with an implied trivialization of what it might have meant for these boys to explore the site of colonial schooling of their parents and grandparents, and extended family relations. The newspaper account assumes that for the boys the ‘game’ was about playing in a haunted, Gothic, site: the “coins obscurs” of “ces vastes edifices.” From this positioning, the schoolhouse could have been any old ‘spooky’ abandoned building. Yet, as Jennifer Henderson argues in her interpretation of Rhymes for Young Ghouls (2013 film by Jeff Barnaby of Listuguj, which recognizes and critiques the Gothic rendering of dominant residential school representations), this type of Gothic interpretation may be partially true, but it is also inadequate and filters the schools through a Western narrative lens. Le Soleil does not report that the boys could have expressed an interest in (or desire for) community experience and memory, as a possible way of reading their actions. This would not imply that the boys set the fire deliberately. The newspaper, however, cannot conceive of the possibility that the boys may have been acting to reassert sovereignty and take back and reclaim that space, at the center of their own community.

38 I acknowledge the many incursions and intrusions on Mi’gmaq territory over centuries, and the ways Indigenous Peoples have resisted these impositions and continue to live by their own worldviews, ways of knowing and being on the territory. I am mindful of Alanis Obomsawin’s documentary about police raids on Listuguj, Incident at Restigouche (1984), National Film Board of Canada.

39 Media reporting at the time that: “Les résultats de l'enquête policière mettent donc un point final aux spéculations voulant que l’incendie ait été allumé de propos délibéré par des Indiens décidés à faire disparaître des deux institutions” (Tanguay, Louis. “Le double incendie de Restigouche n’est pas d’origine criminelle,” Le Soleil. 28 septembre 1971 (308.720.c.2 05, Decoupures de Journaux_1971, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski).
In the community, there are oral memories and stories that still circulate about the non-Indigenous guard hired by the provincial School Board to protect the school; some people remember the name of the Mi’gmaw man shot (by the guard). Before the school and convent were destroyed by fire, there were acts of vandalism (for some), resistances and ‘everyday resurgences’ (for others). These stories and oral histories cut against the grain of the dominant narrative. It is as though the police investigation and the newspaper story reporting on it collaborate to say: Nothing more to see here. Keep quiet. And they add: look how close you came to being prosecuted as criminals. That type of colonial haunting runs deeper, a noose ready if – you/they/someone – decides to make noise. This framing (of nothing to see, of deep haunting) goes with the moment of the early 1970s: Canadian nationalism, the idea of progressive Canada, 1969 White Paper, federal government assumption that the way forward for progressive Canada was to terminate Indian Status and fold Indigenous peoples as individuals into Canada, and – in Québec, the Quiet Revolution. Move along, the paper suggests: Nothing more to see here.

This dissertation uncovers the almost forgotten, omitted, or ignored (by some) history of a particular day school showing the wider assemblage, beyond IRS, comprising the fabric of formal, segregated, assimilative schooling for Indigenous children. The memories, from documented written records and oral histories, clearly show the violence and violations of schooling used as a vehicle of assimilation; the documents and oral history also animate Mi’gmaq desires for and interests in formal schooling as part of their own practices of self-determination and knowledge building. The project is not only about ‘what’ is being researched, Indian day schooling and representations of reconciliation, however. I also endeavour to focus
my attention on *how* my research is conducted, produced, and presented, as I want to carry out the project in a manner that supports broader goals of decolonizing and adheres to ethical research practices. I ask, in this project, is it possible to acknowledge harm of experiences at schooling, such as Indian day schools, and *affirm* and *animate* Indigenous, and in particular Mi’gmaw, knowledge systems? If so, *how*?

This particular history about Indigenous schooling is important, former students affirm in their remembering, because these stories about schooling – about experiences of state racism, gender and moral regulation, segregations, slotting, resistances, relations, and resurgences – need remembering: for the benefit of Indigenous peoples, and for settler Canadians to take on civic responsibilities to better understand and to address the impacts, the denials, and the ignoring of an assimilatory system of education. A generic broad-brush stroke Indian Residential School story does not serve Indigenous peoples so much as it serves a settler public interested in recognizing clearly defined historical harm and then moving on. That type of settler denial, minimal acknowledgement or very limited responsibility-taking is facilitated by the more generic kind (that is, ‘poster style’, key dates and pictures of buildings) of representation of the IRS. This type of settler-serving project *informs* the (settler) audience *about* the schools but the (settler) audience is not expected to self-reflect about their own positionality or cultural location; nor to cede privilege or institutional space.

I assemble a story, building on memories (print and oral) with and for an Indigenous, Mi’gmaw, community first and then secondly for non-Indigenous Canadians. Learning about, and telling the particular, and complex, story of the school at Listuguj can force a deeper settler reckoning
and accountability. The story about a particular school is the story of the disruption of a relation to a particular place, the partial erasure of a particular language and epistemology (ways of knowing and being). Atonement of these ‘disruptions’ will require thinking about, deep commitment, and working towards re-building and restoring: Indigenous languages and knowledge systems; Indigenous sovereignty and self-determination. These aspects are threaded alongside questions and concerns about land. The less generic the story/memory and knowledge production, in this instance, about schools and Indigenous schooling, the deeper the threads of accountability.

Thinking about relationships in association to people, to place, to land, is important. Relationality has to do with rebuilding relationships in the process of remembering and re-storying. Relationality is also about asking, requiring, or demanding accountability and change on the part of settler people and their institutions. Day schools disrupted place-based knowledge systems, and at the same time, Indigenous knowledges (practices, protocols, and languages) continued, adapted, and changed in, around, and outside of formal Day Schools. The schools, in a sense, were both imposed and absorbed by place, by people, by the lands. How do we remember? What stories do we tell? What memories live and which ones are ignored? How can fragments and stories be brought to the surface, shared, and recalled, so that the work that is going on today (in First Nations communities, for instance) can be informed by what has happened (the colonial impositions), and recall the stories of strength, persistence, affirmation, and desire for schooling, ways of learning and knowing?

My hope is that paying attention to the stories of former students at this day school will
acknowledge and honour their truths and provide the community with a record that is largely in their voices, as well as to support the reclaiming of records and history about their schooling. My hope is also that this project will contribute to the complication of the dominant narrative focused on residential school experience, which does not make room for the memories of a day school on reserve. How the work will benefit both Indigenous peoples and settler society is a difficult and complicated question that needs to be asked. The narrowness of the dominant residential school narrative, temporally and spatially, serves the ‘national big hug’ style of liberal reconciliation. In this type of imagining, residential schools are in Canada’s past: the temporal distancing means that current issues in education are not being addressed. The emphasis on geographical distance in the dominant narrative about residential schools, where we are taught that colonial educational happened through child removals, means that other forms of colonial interferences may not register as ‘harms’: daily interferences, daily breaking down – over decades and between generations – of the boundaries between home and school. By attending to the local it is possible to see beyond a generic framing. The ‘crime’ of colonial schooling is less localized, less contained by time or place: this type of slow colonial violence engendered during the day, at schools where children could still ‘go home at night’, is challenging for settlers to come to terms with. The narrowness of the dominant narrative in some ways serves the narrowness of liberal models of reconciliation where ‘harms’ are acknowledged without the deeper actions required to make societal changes or transformation.

I followed a pathway of decolonizing, as expressed by Mi’gmaw scholar Marie Battiste, and many other Indigenous scholars and allies, that involves both critique and unsettled countering of violence and violations towards Indigenous Peoples through formal schooling, and also learning,
engaging, participating, and “animating” resurgences and Indigenous presences.\textsuperscript{40} Relationality has to do with remembering, envisioning, and working in a way that is informed by Indigenous agency and knowledge, and – for myself as settler – remaining mindful of the need for “settler unsettling”, that is countering the ways in which abstract, dominant narrative of residential schools does not hold settlers to account in quite the same way that an account of a particular school does. Relations with people and with place matter because these are the relations that settler colonialism sought to destroy, and which many are working diligently to reclaim, to strengthen, and to rebuild.

\textbf{A pause, barely a flicker}

\textit{Listuguj (Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi)}

\textit{Spring, 2016}

In the lobby of the community school (band operated, federally funded), where all three of my children spent (or are spending) their elementary school days, there is an orange and grey poster that fills most of the space of the wall at the entrance: ‘100 YEARS OF LOSS’. The poster is part of the 100 Years of Loss education program of the Legacy of Hope Foundation (LHF). This education piece appeared (at this band-operated federally funded school) in the spring of 2016. As early as 2011, the Foundation introduced its Edu-Kit (mobile exhibition designed for teachers); however, by 2020, the LHF maintains that “high production and shipping costs” have resulted in the “transfer” of content into “a smaller more economical model, the Teachers’ bundle”.\textsuperscript{41} Well-intentioned responses to colonial injury can diffuse accountability and histories

\textsuperscript{40} In \textit{Decolonizing Education}, Battiste, observes that the term “animating” is used to “express an active, affirmative, ongoing focus of change needed for our work in the arts, humanities, and education,” 111.

of resistance by naming and ‘taming.’ Harms, histories, and accountabilities are compressed, packaged, and possibly, diminished. Is the settler-public appetite for change, for reconciliation (as a product) diminishing? Or are other gaps, possibilities, particularities, and desires opening up?

I scanned the timeline on this poster (going back to 1620, and the arrival of Recollects from France); federal school buildings (1831 the Mohawk Indian Residential School, an imposing brick school is the first school in the lineup). I picked out federal legislation, commissions, and reports. I looked at photographs of children and youth, posing (with nuns), outside of schools, or seated (dutifully) at desks. I stopped, inhaled the timeline, the photographs, particular messages (of loss, of sorrow), then I moved along to wherever it was I had been going. In the literature on reconciliation, Ronald Niezen observes that the biggest challenge faced by the Commissioners of the TRC has been “overcoming public ignorance and apathy.”

Settler colonial peoples’ ability to pause, momentarily, move along and continue to ‘not’ see.

I paused, for just a moment, and pushed my finger against the orange and gray framed poster: What was it like for my own – Mi’gmaq – children to encounter this poster as they went to their school? Would they ask themselves, why school was connected to ‘loss’? Would they see the stories of their own grandparents in the narrative they are asked to imagine?

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42 Niezen, *Power through Testimony*, ix.
Awareness about residential schooling

In Canada, by the 1960s, the experiment of residential schooling as a ‘well-intentioned’ vehicle to support the assimilation of Indigenous peoples into settler-society was unravelling, in part coinciding with post-war emergence of human rights.\(^43\) At this time, there was some attention paid to the injustices of the residential school system in dominant Canadian society by bureaucrats and journalists.\(^44\) Yet, despite reporting of the injustices, the dominant representations about residential schooling as benevolent remained more-or-less intact. Some assert that those attempting make the violence of residential schooling visible did not have enough “power or leverage” to elicit change.\(^45\) Another difficulty with countering the dominant narrative was that the critiques of residential schooling were published before the first residential school memoirs were published. In other words, storylines about residential schools were emerging and perspectives of former students themselves were in the background.\(^46\) Finally, the narrative of a misguided but well-intentioned approach to ‘Indian education’ in the past, now recognized by a supposedly progressive Canada, was difficult to disrupt because the state was shifting its policy for Aboriginal education from an overtly assimilationist framework to less-overtly violent policies of integration.\(^47\)

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\(^45\) Ibid, 4.

\(^46\) Ibid, 4.

\(^47\) In 1951, following revisions to the Indian Act, there was a shift from segregated residential to integrated schooling (Milloy, *A National Crime*, 2017; Raptis, “Exploring the Factors Prompting British Columbia’s First Integration Initiative,” 519. The federal government’s Hawthorn Report (1966-67) officially recommended integration into the public-school system to meet Indigenous peoples’ educational needs (Barman, Hebert, and McCaskill, “The Legacy of the Past,” 14-15.)
the new path forward towards a better future for the Indigenous person (and culture), now seen as incorporable within a progressive settler-nationalist identity. The incorporation is a signifier of the progressive *settler* identity and culture. The absorption (integration) of a now ‘celebrated’ Indigenous identity (and culture) did not necessarily recognize Indigenous peoples’ agency or jurisdiction over lands, systems of knowledges, and worldviews.

In Indigenous territory, in the 1960s and 70s, political activism was gaining momentum, including in education. The state set forth policies of integration as a solution to the (so called) ‘Indian Problem’ (for example, policy shifts in 1951 meant that Indigenous children could now enter, or integrate into, provincial school systems); at the same time, Indigenous peoples continued to advocate for greater control over, and autonomy within, education. In 1972, the National Indian Brotherhood (present-day Assembly of First Nations) released its policy paper ‘Indian Control of Indian Education.’48 This policy statement, and subsequent assertions thereafter, by First Nations’ peoples, communities, and organizations, articulated assertions of an Indigenous right to control education as part of an “Inherent right to education affirmed in Treaty Negotiations.”49

In the 1980s, the voices of former students entered the settler-public realm with the publication of memoirs documenting their own, as well as their classmates, experiences at residential

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schools: Anishnabe Basil Johnson’s memoir, *Indian School Days*, was published by the University of Oklahoma Press, by arrangement with Key Porter Books (Ontario, Canada) in 1988, and Mi’kmaw Isabelle Knockwood’s *Out of the Depths – The Experiences of Mi’kmaw Children at the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia* was published by Fernwood Publishing, in 1992. Shortly thereafter, in the late 1980s and 1990s, non-Indigenous academic allies added their voices to the growing body of knowledge about the IRS system. In the early-1990s, a public narrative of violence at residential schools started to emerge through the media coverage of civil suits launched against former teachers and administrators of residential schools.

In 2008, the TRC created space for “much needed dialogue” about residential schooling. Yet, in official reconciliation and knowledge production processes (e.g., the TRC and its pedagogies) there are still gaps resulting from the focusing on officially defined residential schools and, more broadly, from a colonial desire for closure and positioning of residential schooling in Canada’s past. In its final report, the TRC presents reconciliation in hopeful terms as an opportunity for “establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal peoples.” For hopeful relations to happen, the TRC maintains “there has to be awareness of the past.” However, the history of Indigenous schooling – runs much deeper than

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50 Capitaine and Vanthuyne, *Power through Testimony*, 4; Woods contends that Celia Haig-Brown’s *Resistance and Renewal* (1988) is one of the first academic studies focusing on former students, while social historians J.R. Miller (1996) and John Milloy (1999) provided comprehensive historical research and analysis of the residential school system (“On the Making of a National Tragedy,” 40).


53 Ibid, 6.
the formally recognized residential schools. Awareness of the past needs to include other formal schools, such as day schools, as well as deeply and conscientiously working with Indigenous practices, knowledges, languages, and ways of being that have continued, adapted, and expanded ‘outside’, ‘inside’, and despite Euro-western derivatives (and impositions) of colonial schooling.

**Entering the residential school at Shubenacadie**

In Mi’gmag territory of Mi’gma’gi, Knockwood’s memoir *Out of the Depths* (1992) is amongst the first public voices giving light to former students’ experiences at residential school. Speaking generally, Knockwood’s text has shaped the public’s understanding of residential schooling in the Maritimes. In her memoir, Knockwood draws on official archival materials as well as her own, and other former students, recollections, and memories, at the residential school at Shubenacadie to produce a history about the residential school at Shubenacadie. The memoir documents Knockwood’s own experiences with formal schooling, with a brief recollection, at the opening, of her memories learning from family relations. As well, the narrative is built from the stories and recollections between Knockwood and other former students, Survivors of the Residential School. The memoir builds or co-creates an understanding of the history of residential schooling in Atlantic Canada in a collective manner in keeping with a Mi’gmaw tribal, or kinship, consciousness. Some have observed how the opening and closing of Knockwood’s narrative animates Mi’gmaw protocols of family, land, language, and responsibilities to take action and use of the text as a “talking stick,” so doing building her own story in a collective manner. To build this history of residential schooling, Knockwood worked with Gillian Thomas, as editor. The narrative, in part, was shaped by Thomas who stated that she
was “ever conscious” of the audience, and, her words imply, settler audience expectations. The text functions, as Knockwood’s intent, like a talking circle, where the narrative embraces a collectivity of many voices and expectations – Mi’gmaq and non-Mi’gmaq, Indigenous and settler, relating, responding, colliding, and co-producing knowledge.

Because Knockwood’s memoir was one of the early ones to be published, and because it tells a story about a residential school, it has been given a prominence that does not correspond to the details of schooling for most Indigenous children in the Atlantic provinces and Gaspé Peninsula. There is a lack of awareness that the school at Shubenacadie was the ‘only’ residential school in the Maritimes for both Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik students; that Mi’gmaq children from Québec attended the school; and that in Québec, and throughout Canada, until the mid-twentieth century, “the majority” of Aboriginal children attended federally funded day schools. In the wake of the TRC, there have been many public awareness education initiatives and campaigns that have contributed to meaning making about residential schooling, generally. There is an emerging awareness that while ‘only’ one residential school operated in Nova Scotia, there is nevertheless a long history of formal colonial schooling on Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik territories in other Atlantic provinces. Yet, the continued focus on residential schooling both frames and

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54 Fullerton, “Notes and reflection on reading Out of the Depths,”160. Fullerton points out that for Knockwood, audience was less of a consideration (which she suggests implies that writing was more of a personal process), whereas for Thomas, intended audience was at play in her role as editor (or, listener) helping to bring the story to life on the page. The difference, however, may be more about recognizing diverse audiences: Knockwood, in her use of a talking stick, “on the page”, evokes a collective and Indigenous audience, whereas Thomas, in being “ever conscious”, is responding more to the unsettling of the dominant narrative long held by a non-Indigenous, settler (white) audience.

55 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed”, 39; Morissette,“Il connaît le chemin de l’école,” 2016.

56 For instance, Nicole O’Byrne, associate professor at University of New Brunswick’s law faculty is researching the early day schools in New Brunswick, notably the Sussex Vale Indian Day School, established in the late 1700s, in
reinforces a singular monolithic understanding, limited in its conceptualization of time and space, about, and hence settler-society’s responsibilities for, Indigenous experiences of the many forms and fabrications of formal (colonial) schooling, which shared a mandate of assimilation and elimination of Indigenous knowledge systems, languages, and ways of being.

This history of ‘schools’ designed to eradicate requires exposing. In his work on the Indian Residential School at Shubenacadie Simone Poliandri asserts:

I never met a Mi’kmaw individual – whether a former residential school student, a family member of a former student, or a member of any Mi’kmaw community – who did not speak of the Shubenacadie Indian Residential School as one of the instruments of the Canadian government’s assimilation policy that has had the greatest emotional, physical, and psychological impact on the lives of this First Nations people.57

Acknowledging harms is necessary to open the door in the present-day and start to address the ongoing colonial violence and violations engendered at institutions such as residential schools. Poliandri’s quotation demonstrates how Shubenacadie continues to cast a shadow over other experiences of colonial schooling. Poliandri’s chapter is in the collection Power Through Testimony: Reframing Residential Schools in the Age of Reconciliation (2017). This chapter is the only chapter on the experiences in the Atlantic provinces and the focus is primarily on the legacy of residential schooling, in particular its impacts on language loss and family disruptions.

Sussex, N.B. These early schools began with the ‘Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in New England (“the New England Company”). The company was created, in 1649, in England, as part of the effort to “convert people in the New World to the Protestant form of Christianity”. After the American Revolution, in 1787, and the arrival of loyalists in New Brunswick, a board was set up on behalf of the New England Company; the Company provided funds for the Board to “purchase lands” for schools that were attended by settlers and Indigenous children as ‘joint ventures’, albeit with differing educational objectives. (Frazer, “New Brunswick’s long and little-known history of assimilating Indigenous children,” June 6, 2021).

57 Poliandri, “Surviving as Mi’kmaq and First Nations People,” 113.
Even in the discourse of reckoning with painful history can produce exclusions. Residential schools were not the only formal institutions attended by Indigenous, or Mi’gmaq, school children. This is not to deny the history of violence and violations, or to argue that residential schools did not harm Indigenous people, communities, or collective knowledge systems. Rather it is to point out that this type of positioning overshadows and subsumes other experiences and histories with and of formal schooling, including the history of Indian day schools, and can also constrain memories of Indigenous knowledge systems, cultural teachings, resistances, and accommodations that continued, albeit differently. This dissertation is a critique of that monolithic narrative; this dissertation is also (hopefully) a generative rebuilding – outside, inside, and despite, which I hope will come through, in the story of the Restigouche Indian Day School.

At the same time, Poliandri contributes to the conversation about residential schooling by providing Mi’gmaw understandings about historical trauma. He counters child victim tropes, which frame and “collapse” full history into a singular event by emphasizing the formation of collective survivor identities of former students who attended the residential school at Shubenacadie. Poliandri argues that the “collective gathering” of former students has fostered an identity that actively contributes to mitigating the damage of being robbed of a “collective [tribal] identity.”

Poliandri pushes dominant IRS representations and imaginings beyond child-centred victimhood to the sense of how a collective survivor identity is re-formulated, adapts, and is re-expressed – in adulthood and through relation-building with others who have shared similar experiences.

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Remembering and reminiscing about difficult histories, however, involves self-reflection, pauses, and mindfulness of stories and histories that continue to ‘not’ be heard or seen. In her work on counter-stories to the dominant narrative about residential schooling, Arie Molema observes that: “those whose memories are marginalized carry the burden of remembering and inhabiting the remainders of national memory’s unacknowledged pasts.”

Dispelling one trope (child-victim, harms connected to a singular even) and creating another one, as Poliandri does, related to a collective survival, still seems to proceed through the memory of a particular kind of school related to the national memory-making project and thus only certain survivors can collectively repair/mourn/gather.

For Battiste, the “most destructive aspect” of residential schools was the “destruction of tribal cohesion and replacement with peer group allegiance.” A tribal cohesion, from Battiste’s positioning, emphasizes a collectivity that is intergenerational and place-based. The idea of destruction of tribal cohesion also applies to Indian day schools and the attempt at destroying relations and knowledges, and where an individual may understand themselves as belonging to a collectivity that is woven from relations with land, waters, human and other-than-human beings.

Enlarging or countering the monolithic IRS frame is not so much about adding on to the dominant narrative, or learning about schooling from an objective distance, without paying

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59 Molema, “‘National Memory’ and Its Remainders,” 137.

60 Ibid, 137.

61 Battiste, “Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation,” 36. During the residential school era, Indigenous students did not have access to Indigenous thought systems (as Battiste asserts), nor did they access the ideals of modernity (individual freedom, progress, choice (as John Milloy argues). In other words, formal schooling, from either Indigenous or Euro-western standpoint, failed families (in terms of kinship systems) and failed children (in terms of the development of a unique individual).
attention to settler implication or the relevance of particular Indigenous knowledge systems; rather – in keeping with Knockwood’s teachings about the use of writing as a talking circle – there are important possibilities in gathering and assembling what Molema calls marginalized and unacknowledged recollections and written materials. There are risks, too, in gathering stories and recollections that have been ignored by non-Indigenous settler public, that in the gathering settler interests and objectives and needs will be centered (again) in the story.

En/countering reconciliation

As part of an age of reconciliation, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, in place from 2008 through 2015, had a mandate to document difficult truths about residential schooling in a manner that would “do no harm” and, at the same time, educate a settler Canadian public about the Indian Residential School (IRS) system and its harms. In the wake of the TRC, there has been focused attention and conversations about reconciliation, and – in varying ways – some heeding of the TRC’s 94 Calls to Action. As of 2018, the government of Québec had not taken any action with respect to changing curriculum to include mandatory education on Indigenous history and cultures, particularly in response to the TRC Final Report. There was no content in

62 Niezen, Power through Testimony, ix.

63 In the fall of 2016, Ian Mosby started tracking the status of Canada’s progress on TRC Calls to Action on an annual basis. In 2019, Mosby partnered with Ryerson colleague and Yellowhead associate Eva Jewell to conduct a “more robust” joint analysis of the Calls to Action. They have determined that, as of 2019, a total of nine out of 94 Calls to Action have been completed. In their analysis, Mosby and Jewell assert that barriers to the lackluster completion rate include: “the public interest” (defined as the interests of non-Indigenous public); paternalism (attitudes and behaviours by politicians and bureaucrats); structural racism (and fundamental refusal to address institutions built on foundation of anti-Indigenous racism). Jewell and Mosby, “Calls to Action Accountability,” Dec. 17, 2019.

64 In a brief prepared for Québec’s Minister of Education, Recreation and Sports by the Advisory Board on English Education, Indigenous Education: Walking on Both Sides of the River (2018), notes that McGill University developed a Graduate Certificate program of five courses for non-Indigenous teachers planning to teach in Indigenous communities. The report highlights the in-community Bachelor of Education Program developed by McGill University that was “implemented for Mi’kmaq students in Listuguj”; this program was the “first such
pre-service teacher education programs, specifically tied to the calls to action of the TRC.\textsuperscript{65} There has been some movement (on the part of Québec) on education for Indigenous students and for teachers who will be teaching Indigenous students, but nothing more broad-based for the education of non-Indigenous people in Québec. Transformation and change is happening, albeit slowly. “Glacial progress,” Mosby and Jewell observe in their analysis of the status of the TRC calls to action; nevertheless, they retain “hope in Indigenous communities to force that change.”\textsuperscript{66} In his analysis of settler understandings of reconciliation, post-TRC, David Macdonald argues that some settlers “view reconciliation through a liberal frame, mediated through civil rights and multicultural tropes.”\textsuperscript{67} Macdonald asserts that there continues to be little awareness about a “transformative model of reconciliation.”\textsuperscript{68} A transformative model of reconciliation where – as I explore through the concept of trans-systemic knowledges (in Chapter 4) – there are possibilities for Indigenous knowledge systems (languages, governance, and aspirations) to thrive, and to change.

\textsuperscript{65} Canadian School Boards Association, Indigenous Education Committee. \textit{Indigenous Education Structure, Initiatives and Promising Practices}. January 2018. This report sheds light on activities, programs and initiatives associated with Indigenous education in the provinces and territories throughout Canada, including the province of Québec.


\textsuperscript{67} Macdonald, “Paved with Comfortable Intentions,” 14.

\textsuperscript{68} Ibid, 14.
Indigenous institutions, peoples, and settler allies are actively engaged in countering the continuances of colonial framings and logics that persist in present-day systems of education. In November of 2020, the First Nations Education Council (FNEC), in collaboration with the Assembly of First Nations Québec-Labrador (AFNQL), and Institute Tshakapesh, unveiled its recommendation for a 15th Competency – in the province of Québec – “for teachers and teacher education programs,” in response to calls to action expressed in the Viens Commission, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and the National Inquiry into Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG). As part of the FNEC and AFNQL’s collaborative effort to fight systemic racism and take up calls to action from public inquiries, knowledge systems –Indigenous and Western – are conceptualized as “two rivers merging into one.” The two knowledges, like rivers, are distinct yet can learn to work together:

[These two rivers represent two different worldviews on learning, understanding, and education: Indigenous and Western. Both ways flow at their own place towards their own outcomes and understanding of what learning is.]

En/countering reconciliation there is a need to recognize and respect “two rivers” flowing into but not absorbing, one another. The FNEC and AFNQL emphasize that while centering Indigenous knowledges, there is also a need to deliberately speak about biases and “eliminating racism and discrimination.” Reconciliation – as a concept and process – “carries different

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meanings” across and within “diverse geographic and political locations.”\textsuperscript{72} Paulette Regan asserts that there are very different understandings between Indigenous and settler peoples about the meaning and \textit{intent} of reconciliation.\textsuperscript{73} Despite statements of openness and desire for change in official state descriptions, projects and events, there remain differences, gaps, and mis/understandings about reconciling, and reckoning with, the history and legacy of residential schooling.\textsuperscript{74} The Canadian state is oftentimes searching for closure, legal certainty and a limiting of responsibility for events from the past, including the violence at Indian Residential Schools; on the other hand, Indigenous peoples, and their allies, are looking at the violations of the school system advocating for reparations – of land, of resources, and beyond.\textsuperscript{75} The TRC recognizes that reconciliation denotes a conciliatory (or amicable) state that “has never existed” between Indigenous and settler-colonial peoples.\textsuperscript{76} Some academics point to dangers of Commission narratives and the focus on injustices that oftentimes represent Indigenous peoples as victims defined in relation to colonialism.\textsuperscript{77} Others assert that reconciliation cannot take place until “Euro-Canadians understand the legacy of colonization and the rationales used to justify it.”\textsuperscript{78} More directly, there is a need to come to terms with the specificity of settler colonialism where settler society is built on the land, more specifically, on and from Indigenous lands.\textsuperscript{79} Formal

\textsuperscript{72} Marom and Rattray, “On the land gathering,” 1.

\textsuperscript{73} Regan, \textit{Unsettling the Settler Within}, 2011; Craft and Regan, \textit{Pathways of Reconciliation}, 2020.


\textsuperscript{75} Henderson. “Residential Schools and Opinion-Making,” 8.


\textsuperscript{77} George, “Inclusion is Just the Canadian Word for Assimilation,” 54.

\textsuperscript{78} Marom and Rattray, “On the land gathering,” 2.

\textsuperscript{79} Ibid,1.
schooling – residential and Indian day schools – as a vehicle of settler colonialism was instrumental, in overt and covert ways, in removing, displacing, segregating, or marginalizing Indigenous peoples from their own homelands in the making of settler-colonial Canada.

The flattened truth-telling visible in reconciliation talks, Paulette Regan observes, is more in keeping with Canada’s self-image as a peace-keeper, functioning as a salve that eases (white) “settler guilt” about colonial education practices.80 Present-day Canada’s sense of itself as a progressive nation (reconciling and moving on from its colonial past) is very much in keeping with Canada’s sense of itself as “peacemaker”, which has a history.81 For example, pre-Confederation, in the early 1800s, there were reports and recommendations for residential schools that would “separate Aboriginal children from their parents and territories”82; these reports portrayed “immersive” forms of schooling for Indigenous children as part of a “benevolent enterprise.”83 The separation (or attempt at elimination) of Indigenous peoples/bodies, as well as Indigenous knowledge systems was perceived as part of the “White man’s moral duties” of bringing Indigenous peoples into the “fold of Western civilization.”84 For British authorities, missionary activity was portrayed as a sign of benevolence, and as a more “humane alternative” to the “cruelties” of American policies towards Indigenous peoples.85 This

80 Regan builds her argument drawing on Alfred and Corntassel’s critique of Canada’s peacekeeper image in Unsettling the Settler Within, 61; Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” 1–40.

81 Alfred and Corntassel quoted in Regan, Unsettling the Settler Within, 61.


84 Ibid. 304.

85 Ibid. 304.
identity – of benevolent and peacemaking settler Canada – is one that needs unsettling for there to be true or lasting reconciliation.

I assembled print records and oral memories and recollections from a particular school. Attending to local, to particularities, interferes with the abstraction of the dominant narrative. Working with the abstraction (residential schooling in broad strokes) is more conducive to Canada’s updating of its ‘peacemaker’ myth through an exercise in apology that does not actually involve commitment to the restoration of knowledges, languages, lands, or the recognition of sovereignties. The wide spectrum of the TRC’s differing goals, as Niezen observes, from documenting difficult histories to educating settler Canadian society, has meant that complex and difficult histories (and ongoing impacts) have been simplified and flattened for public messaging in the process of being exposed. Niezen, to recall, spoke about the challenges that Commissioners faced during the lifespan of the TRC inquiry: apathy and ignorance. There is also deliberate ignoring, omission, or lack of engagement, at the institutional and individual levels with the residential school history and present-day truth seeking. The slow pace of change in Québec is a reminder of the importance of searching out, and listening for, stories, from particular Indigenous lands.

**Teachers’ recollections**

**Mother House (Rimouski)**  
**November 2018**

Not long after the TRC concluded and released its Calls to Action, in the fall of 2018, I spoke

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with former teachers who had taught at the Indian Day School at Restigouche, collectively between 1951 to 1969, and I asked them about their understanding of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The former teachers observed:

No, I have never heard [about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission]. This is the first time that I ever heard of that name, of that Commission.\(^87\)

The interview took place in Rimouski, at the Mother House, in the bedroom of a former teacher. Three of us sat together that day, for about thirty minutes. I rephrase my question, and instead of asking about the TRC, I asked if they had heard about ‘Residential Schools’; one former teacher replied:

Between the two, White and Indians? Indians and English? You mean, with the Indians, way out West? When they were taken out of their homes? [This didn’t happen] in Restigouche. The children were not taken out of their homes, they stayed at home.\(^88\)

I pressed again, trying to get beneath the answer to see if they saw, or understood, or would reveal any connection between the schools, day and residential. I sat on black chair, recorder in hand. The former teacher, in her own chair, on my left. Across from us, the archivist, my guide for the day. We are assembled into an ad-hoc triangular formation: I focus my attention on the frame of her bedroom door. This time, the former teacher answered:

I don’t understand what you mean – ‘Residential School’. What is a Residential School? For us, it is a school. They [Mi’gmaq] had their own school. It was paid for them by Ottawa, for the Indians. They were the ones who were responsible for the schools: the Indian Affairs.\(^89\)


\(^88\) Ibid.

\(^89\) Ibid.
After this reply, I posed other questions. Their responses, far from apathetic, seemed to be based in an energetic ignorance used to protect their separateness from the connotations of ‘Residential Schools’, and to place blame at the steps of Indian Affairs.

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There are, however, possibilities associated with confronting difficult truths. The concept of “difficult knowledge,” articulated by Simon, can be used to examine how cultural institutions (museums and galleries, as well as cinema, television, books and internet websites) as “institutions of memory” are critically engaging “a past that is both inspiring and despairing.” Simon suggests that difficult knowledge (histories of violent conflict and traumatic loss, and their aftermath) can be curated in a manner that is “anchored in responsibility” that is not only about “identification or culpability”, but also contending with how such difficult knowledge “might inhabit the present.” Simon observes that “affect” can function to “acknowledge the pain of another and begin the thought required to come to terms with the felt presence of that pain in the present.” Difficult knowledge, far from being simplified, can complicate narratives of the past and function to alter understandings of (and responsibilities for) the present.

There is a need to pay attention to the lack of nuance and complexities in the narratives about residential schooling, because this lack upholds settler avoidance of a fuller reckoning with

90 Simon, “A Shock to thought,” 432 (emphasis added).
91 Ibid, 432.
92 Ibid, 440.
complicity in this difficult history and its ongoing impacts. In her critique of the concept of reconciliation and dominant representations of residential schooling, Jennifer Henderson observes that the lack of attention to nuance and difference enables settler-society to avoid ways in which the schools operated as “institutions of elimination,” not just sites of violent acts and events, committed by individuals against individuals.93 Roland Chrisjohn and Sherri Young assert that settler-Canada’s self-image as a “Good World Citizen” is only possible through a deliberate “studied ignorance” of atrocities, including Canada’s treatment of Indigenous peoples and the legacy of residential schooling.94 That national self-image may be cultivated through reconciliatory practices which, while perhaps widely understood to be about facing up to atrocities, are a complex way of practicing studied ignorance. That is, glossing over reconciliatory practices can allow dominant settler society to evade the “full implications of Indian Residential Schooling.”95 Simon examines the potentialities of difficult knowledge, and he also advances the argument that some residential schooling pedagogy has been turned into a spectacle enabling the settler public to “feel good, about feeling bad.”96 Some reconciliatory expressions of “sorrow” or “sympathy” are less about addressing present-day impacts of colonial education and are more about showcasing settler-colonial “humanitarian” character.97 In other words, simplified truths, easing settler guilt, spectacles or ignorance reproduced in new forms, are not accidental or incidental to dominant reconciliation narratives; rather, various forms of

94 Chrisjohn and Young, The Circle Game, 1997.
95 Chrisjohn, et. al., “Genocide and Indian Residential Schooling,” 8.
96 Simon, “Towards a Hopeful Practice of Worrying,” 133.
97 Ibid, 133.
state violence and violations are masked, and continued, under screens of benevolence, peacekeeping, and humanitarian good citizenship.

The dominant narrative about residential schooling has allowed the focus to be more on harms, that is the physical and sexual violence at the schools, with less focus on the assimilatory aspects of schooling, and the epistemological violence: the attempt at elimination of languages, or the denigration and constraining of Indigenous knowledge systems and ways of knowing and being (complex worldviews diminished, constrained). My contention is that assembling the narrative of a particular school, as well as the narrative of a day school with a complex history that does not correspond to the conventions of the dominant narrative of residential schooling, can better foreground the work of restoration that is required in the wake of colonial schooling. Non-Indigenous Canadians are accountable in ongoing ways to a present and future of educational autonomy (assertions, aspirations, decision-making) for Indigenous peoples.

Some of the central elements of the dominant narrative about residential schooling, include: temporal distance (the schools are situated in a very removed historical period) and spatial enclosure (the schools are associated with distinct spaces, all the violence that there is to speak of occurred only within the walls of these imposing institutions). Framed in this way, as a fixed and solid structure located in the past, there is no way of conceiving of the permeability of the

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“school”, such as the school at Listuguj, where nuns and teachers (at times) entered homes; where school rules were brought home (or were shoved aside), in either case affecting home life and understandings towards formal schooling. The dominant narrative focused on residential schools does not promote critical conversations about the experiences, and lasting harms, of segregation and integration. There is no way of talking about adaptations and continuances of Indigenous forms of education in spite of colonial impositions. The story of the Restigouche Day school is also a story about this adaptation and continuance because this story is about agency, educational autonomy, and – possibly – animating Indigenous knowledges.

The requirements or conventions of the dominant narrative make it difficult to tell a story (complicated and nuanced), which is more conducive to the reanimation of Indigenous knowledge systems, including ways of building and sharing knowledge. Indigenous knowledges relate to Indigenous relations with territory, with the lands and waters from which those worldviews are derived, live, breathe, change, and inform lifeways. The dominant, abstract, and generic narrative, about the history of residential schooling shuts out memories of (and meaning making about) other kinds of formal educational experience. In their collaborative work, Helen Raptis and members of the Tsimshian Nation assert that experiences of day schooling not only show colonial assimilatory practices, but also illuminate how Indigenous forms of educating continued, adapted, evolved alongside (within and through) “Western-style” practices.100 Day school narratives are important. The dominant residential school narrative serves settler society’s need to atone more than it serves Indigenous needs to locate the seeds for resurgence. Day school narratives, potentially, are more threatening because of their ubiquity: they point to the

100 Raptis, *What We Learned*, 4.
lasting threads and forms of colonial violence that remain possible/common/invisible, still breathing within our present (public) school system.

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One of the stories that stands out, gathered while conducting this research, is the story about Mary Isaac. Mary Isaac, a Mi’gmaq woman from Restigouche, who was put forward by the community for training, and to work as a teacher, in 1895, at the Restigouche Indian Day School, before the arrival of the Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary.101 This particular story stands out because this memory traces Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) interests, adaptations, desires, and uses of colonial schooling. The story is also about settler colonial impositions, control, and efforts to contain Mary Isaac, in 1903, is pushed out of Restigouche. She moved away but continued to teach at other Indian Day Schools located on Indigenous territories.

**Ignoring and rejecting while truth-seeking**

From the outset, the TRC had a particular mandate about ‘which’ stories would be gathered, and from whom, as part of its truth-seeking. The TRC did not include those testimonies and experiences from former students who attended institutions that, for one reason or another, did

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101 The Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary (originally referred to as the Sisters of the Little Schools) was founded in 1874 by Élisabeth Turgeon. The Institute’s goal was to “form strong teachers and to maintain small schools in places that demonstrated the most urgent need.” Women received training at Normal Schools, run by the Institute, and then taught at small schools, at ‘Indian Day Schools’, in parishes in both Canada and the United States from 1874 until approximately 1970, when the teacher’s college (Normal School) was integrated into the provincial CEGEP system (conversation with R.S.R Archivist, Nov. 2018). In July of 1982, the Centre for Christian Education was established in Rimouski to offer “activities in Québec and beyond”. (Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Quebec. “Congregation of the Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary,” 2021.) During my appointments at the archives at the Mother House (November 2 and 8, 2018) I spent the afternoon with the archivist of the Holy Rosary. I was told that this Institution is the retirement residence of former nuns (teachers) of the Holy Rosary, and – in the same building – there are still education classes offered for “troubled youth” as well as activities (for instance, literacy) for young children.
not meet the formal definition of a federal residential school. Many colonial institutions set up to educate Indigenous children into settler society, and out of Indigenous territories and knowledge systems, were omitted or ignored: “convents, seminaries, schools for the deaf, orphanages, prisons, and colleges.” Of all the institutions, the Indian Day School holds the dubious distinction for being the institution “most commonly rejected” by the TRC despite the similarity in experiences of former students at both day and residential schools. In the words of a former student I spoke with, a Mi’gmaq Elder who attended an Indian Day School in Gesgapegiag, a Mi’gmaq community in Québec: “the Indian day school was the same as the residential school, the only difference was that we went home at night.” Niezen reminds us, the “narrow range of institutions” that fell within the TRC’s mandate has meant that memories from colonial education institutions falling outside the range of official truth-seeking have been quieted or ignored. Former Indigenous students of the many other colonial education institutions have pushed for a broader definition of residential schools beyond those investigated as part of Canada’s TRC.

102 In Truth and Indignation Niezen asserts that: “1,532 institutions were unsuccessful in their claim as a residential school,” 72. The federal government responded to each claimant listing the institution and ‘reason for rejection’ under “Schedule F” of the Agreement.

103 Niezen, Truth and Indignation, 72.

104 Ibid, 73.

105 Informal conversation with a Mi’gmaq Elder, Pn’nal Jerome, at meeting hosted by the Coalition of English Speaking First Nations Communities in Quebec. February 6, 2018 (Montreal, Quebec). The Day School at Gesgapegiag operated from 1864-1963, under the Sisters of the Holy Rosary (the same religious order in Restigouche). In conversations for this project with former students, variations of the ideas “going home at night” signaled the main difference between day and residential schooling. Sometimes, this was followed by a sense of ‘being lucky’, that ‘things could have been much worse’; in some ways this falls into a settler framing of “studied ignorance” that does not allow for a full accountability of the wider harms of residential and day schools as systems of genocide and linguicide (Chrisjohn et. al, “Genocide and Indian Residential Schooling,” 2002.

106 Legacy of Hope Foundation. “‘Where are the Children?’” 2020-201.
The Mi’gmaw Elder’s stress on the fact that he, and other students who attended Indian Day schools, ‘stayed at home’ speaks of the nature of the settler-public’s interest in residential schooling: the emphasis is on horrific abuse and violations at residential schools (in secret, under the cover of night, in what Henderson calls the narrative conventions of “Residential School Gothic,”107) and the separation from parents and from territories. These are devastating and brutal experiences and I in no way wish to diminish their harms. However, the way that survivors’ experiences have been filtered and shaped by settler society interests may not, at least not on its own, constitute the kind of “difficult knowledge”, to recall Simon’s words, that may “inhabit the present” creating space for responsibility and accountabilities.108 The dominant narrative focuses on distance, and excludes the experiences of day school students from the process of historical reckoning. These students went to school during the day ‘like’ non-Indigenous students and yet the stakes of ‘going to school’ were very different for them. Their experiences speak to routine and normalized racial classification and segregation, to settler occupation and infiltration of reserve land, to the injustices of an assimilative education that was part of a genocidal policy program.

The acknowledgement, by the Elder, that “we went home at night” is part of a statement that insists on the connections between residential and day schools as elements of one colonial assimilatory school system (“it was the same”). It is also an expression of continued Mi’gmaq autonomy and relationality (“we went home”) to family, in our territory. The phrase “it was the same, except we went home at night” captures the importance of having been able to return to


family, to remain on home territory. The phrase points in two directions: both processes are happening, even if the two assertions are seemingly pulling in different directions. For some of the participants in this study, the sense that “we went home at night” also seemed to be a form of acknowledgement and recognition of differences and variations in experiences at day and residential schools. The phrase acknowledges and recognizes “difficult knowledge”, as Simon writes, of this difficult history. Memories of schooling, I have come to understand through this project, are associated with language loss, denigration of knowledge systems, segregations, and divisions, attempts to eliminate, or reconfigure, relations with place, with family. This difficult knowledge is part of the fabric of residential and day schooling intended for Indigenous peoples.

In the literature, scholars have asserted that both residential and day schools served the Canadian state’s efforts to assimilate Indigenous children. Muting memories about day schooling, relative to the attention focused, currently, on residential school experiences, gives the message that those histories, those experiences somehow do not count. Calling attention to the limitations around which institutions have been included in the TRC’s inquiry, however, is not only about expanding the truth-seeking net to include more institutions in Canada’s official memory-making. This is not about ‘filling in gaps’ by adding experiences at day schools, as a type of addendum, to the residential school narrative. The issue or problem with filling in gaps in the dominant narrative is that there is a sense that there is nothing wrong with the dominant narrative about residential schooling, other than its incompleteness. The dominant narrative about residential schooling, however, is not neutral. The dominant narrative about

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109 The Canadian state’s efforts to “assimilate Aboriginal people was served by both Indian day and residential schools” in Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System’”, 361.
has been constructed in ways that oftentimes serve settler interests, as a cathartic salve to ease
guilt, or to showcase an informed and now enlightened settler society. In addition, focusing on
the limiting of which institutions were included, and which were left out, by the TRC may entail
a risk of reifying, as Taiaiake Alfred and Jeff Corntassel point out, settler colonial narratives of
‘victimization’ and ‘grievances’ rather than attending to “grassroots dimensions of Indigenous
mobilization” as a means of supporting and engaging Indigenous presences, resurgences, and
knowledges as part of the aftermath of this history.110

Investigating possibilities for societal change involves learning about the violence and violations
of a colonial system of education designed to eliminate, segregate, or contain Indigenous
peoples. Learning about this institutionalized violence means grappling with the notion that
settler Canada was not, and is not, as peaceful, nor as good or equitable, as national peace-
making myths, produced by (and in many ways for) settler society, suggest. Seeking deeper
forms of reconciliation means recognizing how, and why, reconciliation needs to mean more
than a ‘big hug’ following the circulation of generic narrative of distant harms, to return to the
words of Sa’ke’j Henderson and Ladner. As Simon asserts, settler society needs to move beyond
“feelings of outrage” in response to the assimilative schooling to not only transform national
narratives, but to also transform a settler-public’s sense of “civic responsibility.”111 Pushing aside
the veil of constrained conceptualizations and practices of reconciliation can potentially show
(“recover”) Indigenous presences, resilience, ways of knowing and being.


1.3) THE PROJECT: STORYING LIVING MEMORIES ABOUT INDIAN DAY SCHOOLS

Description

This work, “Storying Living Memories about Indian Day Schools: Transforming Reconciliation,” is an intricate history of an Indian Day School located at Listuguj on Mi’gmaw territory of Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi, also known as the present-day Gaspe Peninsula of Québec. The Restigouche Indian School (and several of its forms) operated, from 1856, at Listuguj (formerly Restigouche) until 1969. The dissertation assembles living oral memory of former students together with finely detailed archival research. I gathered print archival records, which are housed at public and private institutions in Gaspé, Rimouski, Moncton, and Ottawa. I interviewed and spoke with former students (and some teachers) who attended (or taught) at schools in Restigouche during the 1940s through 1960s.

This research disrupts the dominant narrative about residential school history and the narrow concept of settler-Indigenous reconciliation that goes with that flattened account. Indian day schooling has received less scholarly and public attention than residential schooling, even though more students attended day schools as compared to residential schools up until the mid-twentieth century.112 The dissertation contributes to an understanding of the genocidal ‘education’ of Indigenous peoples in Canada, complicating the dominant narrative about residential schools and also introducing Québec into this history. The dissertation involves acknowledging, learning, participating, animating, and building knowledge with, Indigenous peoples, through Indigenous

\[112\] Walls “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 39.
knowledge systems and (possibly) supporting the building of ethical settler relations with Indigenous peoples (communities and lands).

I have used the concept and process of trans-systemic knowledge building, as articulated by Sa’ke’j Henderson and Marie Battiste. In a legal context, Henderson argues that trans-systemic analysis and approaches are those that seek to “honourably converge and reconcile” Indigenous Knowledges and Eurocentric knowledges creating a method for “sharpening, deepening, and expanding the lenses” for every person to “perceive and generate justice.”\(^\text{113}\) Trans-systemic knowledge building, with its emphasis on interconnections and relationality, can provide a framework for diversity, plurality, and multiple worldviews. There is a risk that I am framing this project in a ‘settler-Indigenous’ binary. I am mindful that the settler-Indigenous binary that I am dealing with, and dealing in, (even while trying to work the trans, across knowledge systems) is what the history of this place we call Canada has dealt us. This social division was (and still is) very real (rendered concrete in the ‘fence’, by the Indian Act) and very urgent to address when it comes to justice-seeking and transformation of education.\(^\text{114}\)

Throughout I have drawn on ideas associated with \textit{relationality} and \textit{storywork}, as articulated by Shawn Wilson, Margaret Kovach, Jo-ann Archibald, Sylvia Moore, to name a few. Working in a relational manner has pushed me, as a researcher and person, to consider \textit{and} work beyond a

\(^{113}\) Henderson, “Trans-Systemic Constitutionalism in Indigenous Law and Knowledge,” 68.

\(^{114}\) The settler-Indigenous binary is one that oversimplifies, especially given that there are very great differences in positionality amongst settlers, and more than two cultural-epistemological traditions. This research is situated in a field of experience that has been constructed according to the binary, and so that is what in this dissertation I am working with/in, countering, and complicating. Correspondence with Sophie Tamas and Jennifer Henderson, September 2021.
binary us/them, settler and Indigenous framing. This project is situated in the wider conversation about decolonizing and unsettling long held oftentimes invisible beliefs about settler-Canada as benevolent, as a peacekeeper, as a “perfect stranger”, or a neutral arbitrator\textsuperscript{115}. As part of my approach, I sought to ethically and carefully “animate” (as worded by Battiste) Indigenous, in particular Mi’gmaw, worldviews, practices, and concerns, as a settler-colonial researcher. I have carefully used Western analytics as a webbing in my analysis of experiences and memories (written and oral) associated with the forms of day schools at Restigouche, in place for over one hundred years. I am working to actively hear this difficult history, as well as Mi’gmaq assertions, resistances, and interests over their worldviews, languages, and schooling.

**Purpose**

This project is about disrupting but it is not only about disrupting the dominant narrative about residential school history and the ensuing narrow conceptualizations of reconciliation that serve settler interests. My primary commitment has been to former students and their descendants in Listuguj but attending to their stories, and to the particularities of the history of day schooling in this particular place, necessarily disrupts, and offers material for examining, the constraints of the dominant narrative of residential schools.

This research on a particular day school aims to produce an expansive understanding of the fabric of formal, segregated, assimilative schooling for Indigenous children. I seek to carefully hear, and acknowledge, the lasting harms. This project is also about Indigenous (Mi’gmaq)

\textsuperscript{115} Susan Dion, Potawatami-Lenape educational scholar introduced, and disrupted, the concept and positioning of “perfect stranger” oftentimes used by settler-colonial peoples: the familiar mindset of “not knowing” about Indigenous histories, worldviews, or concerns, that allows for a distancing from the issues and works to let people “off the hook” for accountabilities and for relations that they do have. Dion, “Introducing and disrupting the “perfect stranger,” [2013]. I discuss the concepts perfect stranger and neutrality in Chapter 4.
interests, aspirations, and uses of formal schooling: I seek to trace potentialities and possibilities of recognizing and affirming Indigenous thought-systems, presences, connections, and relations, which have also continued, adapted, and shifted beyond (before and after) in the wake and the shadow of residential schooling.

The question, like rivers, that I followed in this research was can (and if so how) dominant representations of reconciliation be altered by considering a more complex and nuanced history, recollecting, remembering, and storying about Indigenous schooling? Is it possible to put into practice, and conceptualize reconciliation in ways that recognize harms, and support Indigenous thought systems? Attending to the history, drawing from oral recollections and written records, about Indian Day Schools can inform a re-conceptualization of reconciliation, to correspond with a more complex history, towards a concept that leans more on the importance of claiming, strengthening, and expanding Indigenous education and knowledge systems as the essential prelude or accompaniment to a rebuilt relationship with settler Canada. A re-conceptualization of reconciliation is needed to address (ongoing) settler colonial violence against Indigenous peoples and to support and to center Indigenous resurgences and rebuilding of knowledge systems, ways of knowing and sharing.

Other questions surface: What if there is another way of producing, gathering memories not as testimony before inquiries or a truth commission, and meant for a broad and abstract ‘public’ but more as a project of assembling memory from different sources (written and oral) to construct the story of local particularities and places? What would public knowledge look like by including a whole ‘other way’ of knowing? How does one begin to engage (as a settler) with a history that
is not (and so much part of) one's own? How do I do this respectfully, ethically, carefully, critically, creatively? Learning through conversations (individual and collective, built from one another); moving outward (collecting written fragments from private and public institutions) and (re)turning to a particular place: seeing and hearing difficult knowledge; creating timelines; stitching bits and pieces together; separating (words), placing (pictures) side by side: Is it possible to transform reconciliation beyond a narrow framing, and create ‘new’ stories? Can these stories witness the ‘harm’s’, and affirm the beauty of teachings, that never left?

Post-card snapshot: Restigouche Indian Day School

The Mi’gmaq school-house of Restigouche, the first iteration established in 1856, was situated on Mi’gmaq territory, in the middle of the community, on Mission Property, which was part of the disputed 100-acres of land granted to the Catholic Diocese in 1820 by the Gaspé Land Commission. Missionary presence in Restigouche dates back to the mid-seventeenth century, with the Recollects, and the arrival of Father Chrestien Le Clercq, in 1676, in Restigouche, and other Indigenous territories. Le Clercq’s missionary work in Restigouche included the production, or expansion, of Mi’gmaq forms of symbolic literacy, such as Mi’gmaq hieroglyphics, wampum, and petroglyphs. Le Clercq worked intermittently in Restigouche, for

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116 Contested Mission Property lands were settled between Canada and Listuguj, in 2015, as part of a Specific Claims’ Settlement Agreement. Settlement Agreement signed on April 29, 2015, between the Listuguj Band and Her Majesty The Queen in Right of Canada. Information about the Specific Claims Litigation Settlement Agreement (SCLSA) is available at: LMG, “Specific Claim – Transcript from Webinar,” Feb. 19, 2013

117 “Amerindien, Micmacs, Ristigouche,” BanQ, Gaspé. (I talk about Le Clercq in Chapters 2 and 7).

118 In” Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation,“ and over the decades, Battiste has advancing the argument that Mi’gmaq used “pictographs, petroglyphs, notched sticks, and wampum” as a form of “written communication” serving their “social, political, cultural, and spiritual needs” to describe the “ideal and material world” (25). Europeans, Battiste asserts, “adapted aboriginal symbols and designs found on earlier Native texts and developed hieroglyphic characters” used for ‘teaching prayers,” 24, emphasis added.
one decade until 1686, when he left permanently and returned to France. Missionary work by priests and nuns, however, continued for centuries, from the 17th through 20th centuries, with various arrivals and departures into Gespe’gewa’gi, colliding and coinciding with state and with Mi’gmaq desires.

By 1859, just before Canada’s Confederation, a petition was signed by Mi’gmaq signaling and asserting their willingness to receive a formal schoolhouse on their territory in Restigouche, at Mission Point. (Fig. 5: Postcard of the educational institutions at Restigouche, circa 1910) 119

This willingness could have been a desire to absorb new knowledge, it could have been an assertion of Mi’gmaq interests to make decisions in a collective manner for their own well-being, and in thinking of generations coming. The willingness, too, could indicate an Indigenous approach where relations, including with newcomers, are centered. For the next four decades, until 1903, various lay and certified teachers taught at this schoolhouse funded first by Lower Canada and then, after Confederation, by Indian Affairs; the land on which the school (and all

119 Image of the school institutions from the personal collection of Joe Wilmot, former student of the Restigouche Indian Day School. Joe shared this picture of the school building, along with other pictures related to schooling, when we spoke about this project in January of 2019. Several of the participants shared items associated with the school, for instance: class pictures, post-cards of the schools, or religious leaflets. The sense that I had about the preservation of these documents was that of a mixture of pride and ownership, on the one hand, and pain, on the other. There was a sense that this was and was not our school.
schools thereafter) stood was considered Mission Land, to be used (as records indicate) for mission purposes and for ‘Indian’ education.

The Sisters of the Holy Rosary arrived, having been invited by the Capuchins, and approved by the Indian Agent, in 1903. Yet, the archival records also carry traces of the lesser-known fact that the Sisters of the Holy Rosary were preceded by Mi’gmaq teacher, Mary Isaac, who was the first certified Mi’gmaq teacher (and from a family of Mi’gmaq teachers) to teach at the Restigouche Indian Day School between 1895-1903. The priests built a convent for the Nuns; yet, it was the Sisters’ Order that provided a loan (interest free) from the Mother House for the Capuchin Fathers to build the residence enabling the Sisters to enter the community to work as teachers of Mi’gmaq children. Indigenous kinship families were, in the process, reconfigured, reworked and partially wired into a colonial project of assimilation and missionary civilization. Three Sisters arrived in August of 1903: two were retained as teachers and the third one hired to clean the church and wash the priests’ clothing. In exchange, the priests agreed to provide fuel for their fire, to heat their home.¹²⁰

A contract was made between the priests and the nuns, and in one letter – written by a nun – it is noted that the Chief at the time, “the feared Isaac Isaac” (and father of Mary Isaac), paid her a visit in Rimouski. The written contract between the priest and the nuns supported and benefited settler-society; however, Indigenous-thought systems, ways of knowing and being, did not disappear with such contracts. While the letter that speaks of the Chief’s visit to Rimouski does

not reveal the contents of their discussions, nevertheless what this action (traveling, visiting, his oral presence) affirms is that elected Indigenous leadership engaged, participated, and asserted its own interests and desires for formal schooling at that time. At the same time, the written records also show the ways that church and state were involved in the emergence, and assumed jurisdiction, of the Indian Day School at Restigouche.

In 1908, on the other side of the Convent, another school was built, a “White School” (“Ecole des Blancs”) attended by French-speaking settler children whose families worked for the mill, also situated on Mission Property (in the middle of Restigouche), and leased out to John Champoux, president of the mill, by the Capuchin Fathers. Funds to construct the White School provided by Chaleurs Bay Mills Co (“Champoux Mill”). The school for non-Indigenous children was built in 1908; however, classes started a few years earlier, in around 1905. And, in 1909, a new Indian Day School (or, “Ecole des Sauvages”) was built to replace the old schoolhouse with funds from the Department of Indian Affairs. For over one hundred years, forms of these three buildings – ‘Ecole des Blancs, Couvent, Ecole des Sauvages’ – stood side by side one another, their respective yard spaces demarcated by the many faces of colonial fences.

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121 Chaleurs Bay Mills Co. (or “Champoux Mill”) was built in 1902, for an estimated cost of 50,000$ United States Department of State. Commercial Relations of the United States, 330. That same year, in 1902, a mill was constructed in Athol (present-day Atholville, N.B.), along the south side of the Restigouche River, and almost directly across from present-day Listuguj. The mill at Atholville was run by Shives Lumber Company and cost an estimated 70 to 80,000$ to build. In Mi’gmaw, this site is called Tjjigog, and is a long-time ancestral place for Mi’gmaq (personal conversation with Alfred Metallic, September 2021).

122 Archives of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary (See: Timeline). And those classes, begun before the separate school was constructed, took place in the Indian Day School.
‘The Flat’ – A settler island (encroaching) on Mi’gmaq territory

In the early 1900s, a settler community, a predominately French community, formed and took presence, near the school, in an area still known locally as “the flat” (or “platin”, in French), and, in Mi’gmaq, this area is referred to, by some, as ‘Gutang’, which means ‘at town.” In a newspaper article, “Memories of ‘the flat’,” printed in The Tribune (Campbellton, N.B.), on April 10, 1996, former resident of the flat, Bennie Audet, observes that there were an estimated 23 homes, occupied by 38 families in this (white) settler island in the middle of the Reserve. At the flat, there were homes for the mill manager, the store manager, and the doctor. There were sheds, and barns, and each family home “was provided with a parcel of land for gardening purposes.” There was a store, on the flat, built by the Champoux Mill Company and then sold, in 1927, and operated (under the name the Atlantic Trading Company), until 1971. The store closed the same year that the Nuns left the community.

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Some former students shared memories about going into this store, adjacent to the Day School and across the street from the church. Diane Mitchell recalls how:

You went in [to the store] and they did have some aisles that sold things like clothing. I remember clothing stuff: men’s pants, and checked shirts, and woolen socks. When you walked into the store, on the right side of the store, almost the whole length was the counter. And the clerks stood behind it. You told them what you wanted, and they wrote it down, and went to get it. They had a warehouse in the back. And, at the back of the store was another counter and that was the butcher, and meat was displayed there.

Diane spoke about shopping at the store, for her mother when she was girl, and I asked her about

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123 Bennie Audet, “Memories of ‘the flat’,” April 10, 1996.

124 Gutang means town or village, and the suffix ‘g’ refers to location at/in town. (Mi’gmaq-Mi’kmaq Online. “Gutang,” accessed May 2, 2021. https://www.mikmaqonline)
that experience, about whether or not the store on the Flat felt like a ‘community space’. She said:

It didn’t feel like community space at all. We were customers. I never felt any warmth! Like none. Not that I found it hostile, either. Not that I didn’t want to go in there, I didn’t care. It was a matter of fact thing, you were just going there to buy groceries. If you had money at recess, back then chips cost a nickel! You could buy penny candy.

In his 1996 article, Audet shares his memories about the Flat, he spoke about the “[t]wo schools” built: “one for the Micmac children and one for the French children.” These groups were “separated”, he contends, because a “prominent ‘gentleman’ had decided that the kids should not intermix”. The prominent ‘gentleman’ remains unnamed in this article. The gentleman is likely Father Pacifique (Mission priest at Saint-Anne’s Church). Or others could be substituted:

Duncan Campbell Scott (Deputy Superintendent, who oversaw the formalization of the Indian Residential School System), or Sir John A. Macdonald (Canada’s founding prime minister, and an architect of the residential school system.)\(^{125}\) The memory written by a settler person, and former resident, recalls the rigidly-practiced separation and segregation amongst the children: “fences went up around the schools. At recess, if the ball fell over the fence, the game was over.”\(^{126}\)

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Indigenous and non-Indigenous lived side by side in a state of segregation, the two schools were ‘joined’ by a passageway, the Convent, a space for the Sisters (but not, it would seem, the

\(^{125}\) In 1883, Canada’s first prime minister, Sir John A. Macdonald, stated to the House of Commons: “Indian children should be withdrawn as much as possible from the parental influence, and the only way to do that would be to put them in central training industrial schools where they will acquire the habits and modes of thought of white men,” TRC. Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, 2.

\(^{126}\) Audet, “Memories of ‘the flat’,” April 10, 1996.
students) to travel back and forth between these worlds. There were aspects of closeness and
distance in schooling for Indigenous and non-Indigenous children in Restigouche. Women from
the same order of nuns taught at the schools; the Capuchin priests oversaw operations of all
schooling; and, each year when the School Inspector made his rounds, students from the ‘White’
school (in later years, the ‘French’ School) and the ‘Indian’ Day School each passed annual
exams, and the inspectors produced brief comments about the respective groupings, sometimes
about curricula, the teachers, or attendance in the visitor registries maintained by the Sisters.
These written documents provide textual evidence that could be searched further to better
understand the overlaps and differences in schooling – curricula, regimes of discipline, and
teacher expectations for the ‘White’ Settler and the ‘Indian ‘Mi’gmaq children.¹²⁷

This was an ad-hoc arrangement specific to the history and configuration of Restigouche: lands
set aside, in 1851; the Mission at the center; and settlers working at the mill, and living on
contested Mission lands, with two schools built in such a way as to both assemble and segregate
the populations residing at Restigouche. This particular school – the Restigouche Indian Day
School (the ‘Ecole des Sauvages’) – unlike residential schools, at least as dominant
representations imagine them, placed at a geographical distance from both Reserve and Settler
communities, did not exist hidden from sight or at least at an inaccessible remove. The ‘flat’ (as

¹²⁷ The focus of this project was to gather, compile, recover, document, and analyze experiences and memories, oral
and written, about and from the Indian Day School; it was not the intent to examine the two schools (non-Indigenous
and Indigenous), at Restigouche, in a comparative side-by-side manner. Some archival records that could be
examined include the Inspectors notes in the ‘Registre Visiteur Ristigouche’ 1 and 1b (Indiens). (308.760_1 and
308.760_1b, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski); and Notes des Eleves Ristigouche (1914-1941), Holy Rosary
archives, which provide insight into similarities and differences in pedagogy, curriculum, and assessments for the
school children at Restigouche (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), and to shed light on wider issue about how state
sanctioned violence and segregations were (and continue to be) normalized and ‘not’ seen either at the time of
production and into present-day public memory and history.
it is still called today) was a settler island in Listuguj where a settler community grew, for just over seven decades.\textsuperscript{128} Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and peoples, and \textit{children}, lands and waterways, overlapped (seemingly, without touching), places and peoples defined, produced, targeted, and separated by ‘fences’, in place and in policy.

With respect to residential schooling, it is important to keep in mind that not all residential schools were distant from settler communities (for example, the Brandon Indian Residential School, was located five kilometers northwest of Brandon, on the north bank of the Assiniboine River.) Residential schools were not hidden in their time, they were photographed and publicized through that official photography. There were representations of residential schools circulated. There are differences, however, between this official residential school photography and the postcard of the Restigouche set up. A settler-public of today has been trained to imagine residential schools as distant, separate spaces. The postcard image of the Indian Day School at Restigouche points towards another conversation in both the form and the content of the photographs. This image of the Restigouche Day School was produced by the church, likely for fundraising and promotion purposes. There are differences, also, in how the three buildings are positioned: nestled together, for different populations of children, but joined by the ‘heart’ of the Couvent du St. Rosaire. The Capuchin priests produced the series of postcards, in the early 1900s. In 1960, that time period, is remembered by school officials – in a historical pageant played by Mi’gmaq and settler children – as the “golden age for education.”\textsuperscript{129}

\footnotetext[128]{Audet, “Memories of ‘the flat’,” April 10, 1996.}

\footnotetext[129]{In a “Historical Pageant for the 350\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of the conversion of the 1\textsuperscript{st} Micmac Chief Membertou on the 24\textsuperscript{th} of June 1610,” the text of the school play, performed in 1960, describes the arrival of the Sisters of Holy Rosary as part of the “golden age for education”, with commentary that: requests for the Sisters had been made “[f]or 50 years [by] different parish priests” (Pacifique Fonds_1981_05_001_1; historique de Ristigouche, BanQ, Gaspé).}
The postcards constitute part of the making of white settler worlds and the writing over of Indigenous lifeworlds and knowledge systems.\textsuperscript{130} To some extent, postcards, such as that of the three institutions, with the Convent at the center, the White School, in the foreground, and the Indian School at the edge, in the back, shed light on the production and normalizing of racialized spaces (the buildings, the bodies and populations \textit{not seen} within). As J.R. Miller has argued, visual representations of institutions, (such as the postcards of the schools at Restigouche, as one example), along with other forms of evidence, including oral history, are “vital components in the multidisciplinary research strategy that is necessary to tell the story of residential schools.”\textsuperscript{131} The use of multiple sources and methods is needed to more fully show (and to understand) what happened at residential and day schools.\textsuperscript{132} Yet visual materials must be approached carefully. As Naomi Angel and Pauline Wakeham observe, images of the residential school system can support the “persistent disavowal” of “gross human rights violations” not only through what is omitted in them, but also through “how residential schooling is \textit{made visible}.”\textsuperscript{133} Angel and Wakeham argue that the “specificity of the IRS image”, notably the absence of gross violence,

\textsuperscript{130} In their collective work, Battiste, et. al. argue that visual culture (e.g., “paintings, photographs, post cards, built forms) has played an instrumental role in building the “provincial imaginary” while simultaneously “concealing Indigenous humanities,” in “Thinking Place: Animating the Indigenous Humanities,”8. Visual representations of schooling, such as the Couvent du St-Rosaire postcards hide, as Battiste et. al argue, the violence of Eurocentric schooling (and its provincial and federal curricula and objectives) in plain view in that segregation is normalized through mechanisms such as post-cards that could be bought at the church gift shop. Hiding violence in plain view supports the notion of “studied ignorance,” where the full implications of such schooling are not revealed, thus those who delivered the schooling (state and religious institutions) are not held accountable. Further, those who benefited from these systems (settler population then and today) can continue to swim in a “sea of whiteness and colonial violence” (Battiste, \textit{Decolonizing Education}, 2016).

\textsuperscript{131} Miller quoted in McCracken,“Archival photographs in perspectives,”165; Racette, “Haunted: First Nations Children in Residential School Photography,” 49-84.

\textsuperscript{132} Miller quoted in McCracken, “Archival photographs,” 2017.

\textsuperscript{133} Angel and Wakeham, “Witnessing In Camera,” 95.
needs to be considered to understand the “responsibilities of witnessing colonial genocide.”\textsuperscript{134} That is, part of the responsibility of witnessing colonial violence involves disrupting normalized ways of “(not) seeing colonialism in Canada” and finding “new” methods by which to read “shadows and absences” of the IRS system, and as with this project, of the wider assemblage of schooling for Indigenous children.\textsuperscript{135} The post-card image of the three institutions – ‘White’ school, Convent, and ‘Indian’ school – illuminates how segregation and assimilation were normalized and sanitized making it difficult (then and now) to see the violence of (settler) colonialism. The Restigouche image does not show the (slow) removal of Indigenous language, or the attempt to erase families from territories, or the erosion of knowledge systems.

**My Location as researcher**

My interest in this topic of education and my approach to research has to do with my background and position as a white settler person residing, working, and raising my family on unceded Mi’gmaq territory in the community of Listuguj, Gespe’gewa’gi. Listuguj is also situated in the province of Québec, in the south-western portion of the Gaspé Peninsula. The Restigouche River borders the community, and to the south, also within Gespe’gewa’gi, is the town of Campbellton, New Brunswick.

I am not Indigenous, nor am I part of the fabric of Atlantic Canada. My lived and personal experiences, as a non-Indigenous person residing and making my “home” on Indigenous lands are nuanced and complex. In terms of my positionality, my cultural location, I am socialized, and recognized, as part of “dominant” and “mainstream” Canadian society. My ancestors (from

\textsuperscript{134} Angel and Wakeham, “Witnessing In Camera,” 96.

\textsuperscript{135} Ibid, 96.
Scotland, from Wales, and from Pomerania), came to Canada, and settled on Algonquin or Omâmiwinini territory (present-day Ottawa region), from the mid-1800s onwards. I was raised with the understanding that Canada was a tolerant, peaceful nation; and that I, and my ancestors, had contributed to creating a just and fair society. The Canada of my childhood was formed from woods parcelled into farmland. Schooling supported this particular vision of Canada formed by two founding nations, French and English, and a sense of ‘newly’ arrived multiculturalism. Indigenous peoples, in the Canada that I grew up in, were located in the past, a side note in the history books that concluded with the fur trade. This particular version of Canada, the Canada of my formative years growing up, is very much part of what Dawn Zinga and Sandra Styres describe as the “unexamined colonial myth of ‘Canada the good’.”

This version of Canada started to come undone in the summer of 1990 with the Oka Crisis. Like many other settler Canadians, I watched this crisis at a distance, on television, in settled settler comfort. A few years later, in 1993, I headed to Trent University, in Peterborough, Ontario, where – for the first time in my memory – I learned about, and with, Indigenous thought-systems, for instance reading (and writing on) Thomas King’s *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993) or attending Trent’s annual Elders’ Gathering. At one such gathering, I heard people, who I now understand would have been Survivors of residential schooling, speaking about experiences for which I had no frame of reference (I thought) by which to understand or to process what I heard. I do remember one statement: “this was genocide.” I remember this experience, how stories (and emotions) were shared, and, for myself, how the word, the concept of genocide voiced by a person, infiltrated, shifted, shattered, and pried into my understanding of...

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tolerable and tolerant Canada. Taken for granted assumptions and biases, my “officially defined ‘world’ split open”, into a “plurality of unexpected truths”. These moments – particular and individual – are important; they can be held onto, reflected upon, re/turned to in the moment (or later, even decades) as part of decolonizing the “mind”, and becoming “critically aware of the biases and assumptions that have been embedded through Canadian education systems”, and dominant mainstream systems and institutions, more broadly.\(^{137}\)

As a non-Indigenous white settler researcher, I approach this project on Indian Day Schooling, as a “guest”\(^{138}\) living, working, learning, and raising my family on Mi’gmaq territory and in an Indigenous community. I have married into a Mi’gmaq family, and over years I have learned about kinship relations from celebrations, from the land, from stories about the land, from trying (and continuing to try) to learn skills and seasons, and words for places, months of the year that teach about (\textit{when the animals are growing fat; sounds of animals in the seasons}). I have learned about introductions, and how to say: \textit{Ni’n wigi Listuguj, aq tla’eiwi Ottawa}. Along with my partner, we have raised (are raising) three children on his territory, where he has grown up. And so, on the one hand, I am learning about the responsibilities of being a family member, a non-Indigenous one. On the other hand, I am a university researcher. Navigating the requirements, the expectations, of both can be challenging. I am learning about slippage into appropriation,

\(^{137}\) Zinga and Styres draw on Battiste’s position that to effect change “educators must help students understand the Eurocentric assumptions of superiority within the context of history and to recognize the continued dominance of these assumptions in all forms of contemporary knowledge’.” (\textit{Decolonizing Curriculum,} 34). As Zinga and Styres argue, Battiste emphasizes the importance of recognizing the “dominance of Eurocentrism” at play in institutions, and also at an individual level, as part of identifying “cognitive imperialism”. Thus, critical awareness involves recognizing, challenging – and hopefully – \textit{transforming} (shifting or changing) the dominance of Eurocentric thinking at both levels – institutional and individual (self). (Battiste in Zinga and Styres, \textit{“Decolonizing Curriculum,”} 35.)

misinterpretations, and misunderstandings. I am not the first to navigate these types of difficult terrain. Julie Cruikshank, for instance, articulated an ethical approach to listening and to learning from Indigenous peoples, in careful, critical, truthful ways in *Life Lived Like a Story* (1990). I hope to remain accountable to those who have shared their stories with me, for this project. I hope, too, to co-produce a narrative that will be recognizable to, and respectful of, Mi’gmaq, Nn’u, and of their teachings, knowledges, and standards. And, at the same time, this research is also conducted according to the requirements of a doctoral degree set by the academic institution. I hope that my dissertation will push (against) some of these requirements, in conversation with other standards.

In his writing on locating ourselves in a relational way with place Daniel Heath Justice, of the Cherokee Nation, living in shíshálh territory and working on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Musqueam people, observes that the position of “guest” means “to listen, learn, and walk gently.”¹³⁹ This positioning, suggests Justice, counters an unquestioned sense of belonging, of entitlement. There is a risk. Perhaps, I am attracted to this idea of being a guest (of listening and of learning) so that my presence (as a white settler woman) will remain unobtrusive, unoffending in keeping with being a good Canadian. This positioning – as a (polite) guest – possibly maintains and serves white settler comfort, possibly slides into the sense of being a helper, thereby easing white guilt, and hence privilege and interest.

Justice speaks of seeking to deeply understand, and to “work through” the complexities of our

present-day relations. He speaks also about belonging and associated “responsibilities and obligations.” In other words, being a guest is not only about listening politely, being agreeable or helping (in accordance with Euro-centric standards) but involves obligations such as acknowledging a shared history that is both inspiring and despairing, as Simon observes. Being a good guest, from this standpoint, means that action and engagement are not optional choices but are standards that are expected (and need to be) upheld for transformation in our institutions and in our relations with one another, as settlers and Indigenous peoples.

As a white settler-colonial researcher, there is also a risk that in doing this research, in seeking to attend to marginalized memories, that I will unintentionally yet problematically uphold the long-legacy of appropriation and systemic oppression of Indigenous peoples’ histories and experiences. There is a risk that the research will continue to serve state and settler interests, including a desire for catharsis (or distancing from) dominant IRS narrative. Working on the margins in the spaces between different ways of knowing, I risk stepping into a colonial desire not just to know, but to contain and to continue to control the narrative for settler futurity. For this project, this risk is exacerbated by the fact that my assembling the stories of the Restigouche school is with and for community members but is, at the same time, a project carried out in the context of the requirements for a doctoral degree at a settler institution.

Research on/about Indigenous-related issues cannot fall solely on Indigenous peoples. To me,

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this means that in my role as researcher, I understand my position in this project as that of learning, of becoming an ally, which involves, in part, learning to question the veneer of comfortable settler-colonial narratives even when those narratives are about settler wrong-doing. It means being uncomfortable, and not always looking outward (learning about or even with), but also reflecting on settler experiences, and our role as perpetrators in having designed, and ultimately benefited from, segregated and assimilative colonial schooling. There are other incomparable losses. Loss of opportunity to learn (languages, histories, law ways); loss of opportunities for children (cooperation that might have been possible). Loss of opportunity to have built where trust and respect are cultivated rather inhumanity and ignorance. These are the unsaid words, the underside of ‘privilege’.

In working towards renewing relations of trust and building (settler) civic responsibilities, I seek to engage, slowly and carefully, in practices of “deep learning.” I seek to be mindful of, and render visible, colonial violence and violations, expropriations and appropriations, and, at the same time recognize, honour, and learn alongside, Indigenous presences, ways of knowing, and being. In making norms visible, is it possible to see/hear/feel those who have been positioned as ‘outside’ established norms? In seeing the limits of one’s thinking, is it possible to imagine

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142 Aveling, “‘Don’t talk about what you don’t know’,” 2013.

143 I am drawing on Celia Haig-Brown’s analysis of cultural appropriation versus deep learning. Drawing on her fieldwork (as a Euro-Canadian ethnographer committed to deep forms of reconciliation and respect for Indigenous knowledge systems). In “Indigenous Thought, Appropriation, and non-Aboriginal People,” Haig-Brown observes that: “[i]nteracting with Aboriginal people for whom persisting deeply held beliefs and knowledge structures continue to shape their discourse, non-Aboriginal people may begin the process of learning what for them are secondary discourses, even eventually finding their fundamental worldview affected. Over time, a secondary worldview may be unconsciously acquired, sometimes leaving the primary one fundamentally and irrevocably altered, even alienated … non-Aboriginal people may find themselves talking of their dream while doing fieldwork. They may cautiously begin to speak of living life in a good way and see relationships as fundamental to all that they do. They may ponder what other dimensions of a new epistemology are shaping their thoughts,” 937.
“other ways that two societies might behave and be in one place?”

Rather than approaching knowledge production as a search to uncover ‘new’ or “universal truths,” I deliberately searched for methods to center relations and responsibilities in ways that are less oppressive, and to envision, as expressed by Eva Mackey and others, paths towards “alternative frameworks” for being/living/knowing, or for ‘knowledge production.’

Acknowledging place, working with, and through, story, centering relations, I hope to shift from a position of “detached knower” to that of an engaged participant – researching, reminiscing, writing, and storying. As a person living and working within the place about which I am writing and researching, it would be difficult to be a “detached knower”. Yet, at the same time, I am aware that I am connected with the ‘other side’ of this history: with the settler colonial teachers, administrators and colonial architects who designed the policies (and laws). I listen aware that I relate to the recollection of lived stories and memories about schooling in ways that are quite different from those who are speaking. I read the archival material, I trace the handwritten and remark on the beautiful penmanship, I lose sight of the violence and violations. Perhaps, the main problem with detached knowledge is what one lays claim to, based on what one does with it. I encounter stories and material, from which I am detached (temporally, culturally/socially); I engage with both archivally-based knowledge and knowledge shared by community members,

144 Mackey, *Unsettled Expectations*, 37.


146 In *Unsettled Expectations*, Mackey argues that “embracing uncertainty” can be productive in allowing for “deep and conscientious engagement” (37) between and amongst Indigenous and settler peoples. Mackey is careful to note that she is not embracing uncertainty to foster “resilience” and “manage risk”; she suggests that by refusing “settler entitlement and certainty” it may be possible to open space for “alternative frameworks” for “making of a decolonized world” Ibid, 38.

avoiding placing one ‘above’ the other. I lean towards the space in/between; a trans-systemic approach, where it is possible for both/and to exist, to live, to breathe together, differently. This is not about ‘one’ or the ‘other’ but creating space – respectfully, honourably – for both/and plurality. Drawing on ideas articulated by Sa’ke’j Henderson, Roger Simon emphasized the need to consider creating public spaces that are less about “high interest” personal narratives (where ‘difficult knowledge’ is glossed into spectacles) but are more about creating “trans-systemic” plural spaces whereby “differing” conceptions (worldviews, norms) can come to life.  

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Nogojiwanong, (the place at the end of the rapids)

October 1996

We sat together in the kitchen of the house that I rented with friends, other students who, like myself, had barely left our childhood homes. The house is situated on Nogojiwanog. Although, at the time, I only knew this place by another (English) name, Peterborough.

- So, (I said).

- Yes? (He asked).


149 In As We Have Always Done, Simpson observes that: Nogojiwanog is in “the heart of the Michi Saagiig part of the Nishnaabeg nation,” 2. As travelers, Nishnaabeg have responsibilities to care for relationships with lands and with peoples. These relationships and responsibilities, Simpson reminds her listeners, are recalled through ceremonies and in wampum belts (treaties) (Ibid). I share the story about a personal encounter because my own formal schooling and relations with Indigenous peoples and on Indigenous territories began, formally, in my early twenties, first as an undergraduate and then as a graduate student at Trent University. This project on Indian day schooling is conducted through the School of Indigenous Studies at Carleton University, a program offered jointly with Trent University’s School for the Study of Canada. The first year of the Ph.D. program involved travelling between the two institutions, from Ottawa to Peterborough, for day-long seminars held each month. This experience also required that I travel from my own residence, in Listuguj, to either Ottawa or Peterborough, which brought home an awareness of challenges facing students pursuing studies from rural locations.
What/where/are you/from? (I asked)

His laugh filled the kitchen, pushing aside the awkwardness.

You mean, ‘what type of Indian am I?’ (He said)

Laughter left. I shifted.

Sorry. (I said).

Mi’gmaw. (He said)

Silence spilled across the linoleum. The house stood still. The land beneath opened.

– You’ve probably heard the English name: Micmac. (He said).

I remember how his voice affirmed his presence in the room. The way he stopped. I remember what I didn’t say. That I hadn’t heard of either Mi’gmaw or Micmac. That I had no idea that the home where I was living had been built on territory, as Leanne Simpson reminds us, that forms the “heart of the Michi Saagiig”, part of the Nishnabeg nation.

It’s a deliberate ignorance, this settler not-knowing. It’s silence and silencing. It’s deeply personal, individual and, at the same time, collective and beyond ourselves stretching deep inside the tangled roots of segregation, of violence, of racism, of genocide, and of overlapping and separated histories, systems of knowledges, and complex present-day relations: as Settler Colonial, as Indigenous Peoples.
CHAPTER TWO – ENTERING AN AGE OF RECONCILIATION

2.1) Opening Remarks

Over the past four decades, since 1974, at least 40 truth commissions have been established in nations around the world.\(^{150}\) Canada’s initiation, in 2008, of its Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), is considered to be the first truth commission from an “established democracy”.\(^{151}\) The TRC itself was a product of the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA), which was signed on May 8, 2006, and is the largest class action settlement in Canadian history.\(^{152}\) Three years later, in 2009, Gary McLean, and others, stepped forward initiating legal action associated with the forced attendance of Indigenous children at ‘Indian Day Schools’ located across Canada. The case of former students who attended federal Indian Day schools, however, remained in “legal limbo” for seven years. In 2016, legal proceedings for Indian Day Schools began; three years later, in August of 2019, the federal court approved the settlement for individuals “forced to attend Indian Day Schools and excluded from the IRSSA.”

In January of 2020, the implementation and claims process for former Indian day school students opened up.\(^{153}\) In the Indian Day School settlement process, compensation is provided for all persons “who attended an Indian Day School that was established, funded, control and managed

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\(^{150}\) Nagy, “Truth, Reconciliation and Settler Denial,” 349.

\(^{151}\) Henderson and Wakeham, Reconciling Canada, 3; Angel and Wakeham, “Witnessing In Camera,” 94.

\(^{152}\) Implementation of the IRSSA began on September 17, 2007. The IRSSA had five components: the Common Experience Payment; Independent Assessment Process; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission; Commemoration; and Health and Healing Services. (AFN, “Indian Residential Schools,” Accessed June 4, 2020.)

by the Government of Canada from January 1, 1920, until the date of its closure or transfer from Canada’s control and suffered harm as a consequence of their attendance.”¹⁵⁴ Federal Indian Day Schools did not ‘begin’ in 1920; rather, in 1920 (almost sixty years after the first school at Restigouche was established), the Indian Act was amended making attendance compulsory at either Residential or Day school.¹⁵⁵

The Indian Day School settlement, unlike the residential school settlement process, did not include a period of ‘testimony gathering.’ Mainstream media reports observed that the rationale for not including testimony gathering was to “prevent re-traumatization of living through their experiences, or of their testimony being challenged.”¹⁵⁶ Others have asserted that the agreement – and the emphasis on settling the claims “quickly and cheaply” is a move away from both “reconciliation and …adequate compensation,” as stated by Montreal-based lawyer David Schulze, in August of 2019, representing Atikamekw of Manawan, the Atikamekw of Opitciwan, and the Council of Innus de Pessamit, three First Nations in Québec who opposed the proposed settlement agreement.¹⁵⁷

As part of the Indian Day School settlement process, claimants are required to fill out a 15-page form where they identify the Day School attended and the years attended. Claimants identify the ‘types’ of harm, along with the ‘levels’, which range from ‘Level 1’ (verbal abuse or harm,

¹⁵⁴ Canada, “Are you part of the Federal Indian Day Schools class action?” 2020.

¹⁵⁵ In A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott, Titley describes how in 1920, Duncan Campbell Scott advocated for, and passed, an amendment to the Indian Act that made school attendance compulsory “for all First Nations children under 15 years of age” (91-92).

¹⁵⁶ Pauls, “‘Just get it done:’ Indian day school survivors divided over proposed settlement,” May 13, 2019.

physical abuse, or harm) to ‘Level 5’ (sexual abuse/harm or physical abuse or harm), with compensation ranging from 10,000$ to 200,000$. Finally, as part of the claims’ process, former day school students are “collectively identified as Survivor Class Members.” The settlement process identifies, sorts, classifies, and names those who attended federal Indian Day Schools. Other iterations and experiences with formal schooling, for example federally funded yet provincially run ‘day’ schools, like latter day Joint School in Restigouche, are omitted or ignored, with some students still present on the margins, left off the class list. Paying attention to those gaps, marginalized “counter-stories”, as Molema reminded us, are important to countering the recreation of a monolithic seamless narrative.

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In an age of reconciliation, mechanisms such as settlement agreements, truth-seeking commissions, apologies, commemorations, and public awareness campaigns have been linked with the emergence of the “human rights revolution.”158 In the decades following the first and second world wars and the Holocaust, nation states in the West turned reflexively inward.159 At the same time, decolonizing Indigenizing global movements resurged and continued; Indigenous peoples (and their allies) continued their long fight against colonial violence and domination. In their collaborative work, Henderson and Wakeham point out that present-day reconciliation initiatives have emerged from decades of negotiations and government responses, notably the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996); the Statement of Reconciliation (1988); and

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the establishment of the Aboriginal Healing Foundation.\textsuperscript{160} Other scholars point out that for decades – and centuries – Indigenous peoples have en countered settler colonial violence and violations and engaged in “sustained Indigenous activism.”\textsuperscript{161} In other words, while reconciliation discourse and events may be ‘new’ for the settler-colonial public (scholars, allies, and activists), this much needed conversation is far from new for Indigenous peoples.

The first public national hearing for the TRC took place in Winnipeg in June 2010, on territory comprising Treaty No. 1 (an agreement signed on August 3, 1871). The hearings continued on the traditional lands of Anishnabe (Ojibway), Ininew (Cree), Oji-Cree, Dene, and Dakota, and on the homelands of the Metis nation. The hearings began on territory comprising Treaty No.1 (an agreement signed on August 3, 1871). Among the stated goals of the TRC, in place from 2008 through 2015, were to:

- Acknowledge Residential School experiences, impacts, consequences; Provide a holistic, culturally appropriate and safe setting for former students, their families and communities; Witness, support, promote and facilitate [national and community TRC events]; Promote awareness and public education of Canadians about IRS system and its impacts; Identify source and create as complete an historical record as possible of the IRS system and legacy; Produce and submit a Report and recommendations; Support commemoration of former Indian Residential School students and their families.\textsuperscript{162}

For four years, the TRC gathered more than 6,500 statements from Indigenous peoples in

\textsuperscript{160} Henderson and Wakeham, \textit{Reconciling Canada}, 4.

\textsuperscript{161} Molema, “‘National Memory’ and Its Remainders,” 138.

more than 300 communities. As part of its mandate, the TRC released its six volume Final Report, in December of 2015, including 94 Calls to Action. The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation was established and is responsible for storing and maintaining the testimonies gathered, as well as continuing to research and educate the public about the IRS history and its legacy. In the present moment of reckoning with difficult history, there is a pressing need for such public memory institutions. What happens, then, if there are gaps: if memories of some experiences, such as Indian day schooling, are omitted (or ignored) in the present moment of public memory, truth seeking and reconciling? Raptis, together with members of the Tsimshian Nation, have produced a regional inquiry into schooling that “reconsiders residential schools as the absolute forms of schooling to a more diversified view of education that includes traditional teaching and learning as well as language and culture,” as expressed by Michael Marker. Raptis’ research on day schooling not only pushes at the seams of the dominant narrative, but also opens into a completely different patterning where it is possible to see continuances of Indigenous, Tsimshian practices (languages and culture) still at work not only in the schooling, but also in the manner by which Raptis produces research, in an Indigenous framing, through relationships.

Raptis, along with members of the Tsimshian Nation, bring together stories and storytelling, asking listeners to “look more carefully at integrated schooling and ‘beyond the shadow of the

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residential school’.” As Marker observes, “[c]learly, residential schools were only one component of a totalizing system of cultural genocide – at times venomous and monstrous indeed, but not the exclusive location of racism and colonial domination through education.”

This work on day schooling grounds itself in place, and focuses on the Restigouche Indian Day School is positioned similarly: storying involves oral and print records; the Day School is ‘part of’ (as Martha Walls asserts), residential schooling, and it is still possible to ‘hear’ continuances of Mi’gmaw language and practices. There are other similarities in that the research has been conducted with an acute awareness of the overshadowing (and almost) totalizing presence, and representations, of the residential school system.

2.2) Schooling on Mi’gmaq Territory Before Canada’s IRS System

For over hundred years, from 1876 until 1996 (and late 1980s for Day Schools), the Canadian government funded, and churches administered, schools designed to educate and assimilate First Nations, Inuit, and Metis children into settler-colonial Canadian society. As affirmed by the Final Report of the TRC, residential schools were amongst the measures and “coherent policies” imposed by the federal government to “eliminate Aboriginal people as distinct peoples and to

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167 Ibid, 153.

168 Shiann Wahéhshon Whitebean quoted by Deer in “120 Years of Day schools,” May 12, 2019. Whitebean is researching the legacy of Indian Day Schools in Kahnawake Mohawk territory. She has exposed how 11 of the 65 Indian Day schools that operated in Quebec, from 1868-1988, were in Kahnawake (Quebec).

assimilate them into the Canadian mainstream against their will.”

By the late nineteenth-century, after Canada’s release of the Davin Report, in 1879, residential schooling versus day schools was promoted by the Dominion Government as the preferred colonial vehicle for Indigenous schooling. The use of formal schools, either with-or-without residence, as a vehicle for assimilation, however, was not a new feature in the settler-colonial landscape. Before Indian day or residential schools were built, there were other forms of colonial schooling on the territory. I imagine these schools fossilized into the territory. Colonial ideas and logic pressed inside of stone, seeped into the ground, feeding rivers of what settler Canadians know today as Atlantic Canada and the Gaspesie.

In the seventeenth century, the French administration sought to secure its hold over the territory by increasing the French population in North America through Francification, which has been described by historian J.R. Miller as an “aggressive” and “assimilative” policy framework through which schooling was used to convert Indigenous populations into “French men and women.”

David Macdonald observes that a dominant myth is how “fair and just” French settlers were in comparison to British. He asserts that French colonial policies (to convert and to assimilate) have been “downplayed” in settler narratives. The narrative of ‘less invasive’ fits


171 Milloy, A National Crime, 7-8 and 27; DIA Annual Report 1876 quoted in Barman, et. al., “The Legacy of the Past: An Overview,” 6. Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 39; Raptis, What We Learned, (2016). The emerging scholarship on day schooling is adding to the conversation about the history of Indigenous schooling by countering the claim that the IRS was a totalizing system: there were (and are) other forms of colonial school for Indigenous learners.


173 Macdonald, The Sleeping Giant Awakens, 176. Poliandri argues that Mi’gmaq living in Cape Breton were able to retain their language because of their “geographic isolation” (from the mainland, and Shubenacadie Residential School), and because of their “stronger ties with the less invasive French colonists” (“Surviving as Mi’kmaw and First Nations People,” 121).
in with a “settler desire to be made innocent”, as Eve Tuck and K.Wayne Yang assert, where innocence is a type of story that provides “relief in the face of the relentlessness of settler guilt and haunting”. In the seventeenth century, the educational programme at this time involved four aspects or phases, including: education of children in the mission field; education of a Native elite in France; day schools on reserves (a type of closed settlement of ‘converts’ where missionaries obtained title to seigneur); and establishment of boarding schools. In the French regime, Cornelius Jaenen observes that the schools established on ‘reserve’ communities was an attempt to “educate the young in a controlled environment”; moreover, this was an attempt at “total education, acculturation of not only the children but also the adults”. There are echoes of ‘total education’ in the type of schooling established in Restigouche, three centuries later, when the Capuchin Missionaries and the Sisters’ of the Holy Rosary, along with the Federal Government, attempted the “total education” of Mi’gmaq through a system of education that centered around religious instruction aimed at both children and their parents. The downplaying of the influence and impacts of earlier versions of formal colonial schooling, on Indigenous lands, intended for children are minimized, almost made to disappear.

The first mission field school in Mi’gmaq territory operated as early as 1632 at the mission station at La Heve in Acadia. This mission school was operated by the Capuchins (the same

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174 Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” 9.

175 In “Education for Francization,” Jaenen provides a detailed analysis of education in the seventeenth century. He observes that Francification was signaled by “conversion to and practice of Catholicism”; the acquisition of the French language (through which Indigenous peoples would acquire “French heart and spirit”, and the adoption of an “agricultural way of life” (46 and 47). Jaenen argues that Francification was a population policy, by both the church and state, developed in part to deter mass emigration from France to Acadia, and to secure the French claim to territory (Ibid, 59).

religious order to operate the Indian Day School at Restigouche). Missionaries also lived and worked amongst Indigenous peoples, including with the Mi’gmaq nation and peoples. In 1675, a Recollect missionary, Father Chrestien Le Clercq, arrived and entered Mi’gma’gi. By the summer of 1676, he lived and worked with Mi’gmaq of Restigouche. In addition to producing *Nouvelle Relation de la Gaspesie* (1692; 1758, and an English translation in 1910 by William Ganong for the Champlain Society), Le Clercq has been credited in dominant settler narratives with having invented hieroglyphic characters to facilitate the spread of religious knowledge. In contrast to this representation of European knowledges moving into a perceived ‘empty’ landscape of illiteracy, Battiste has advanced the argument that missionaries in the late 17th and 18th centuries simply adapted existing Indigenous symbols (“pictographic writing on rocks, birchbark, and animal skins”) and then purported to have “developed” (or, invented) “hieroglyphic” writing systems to teach religious knowledge. Battiste counters a Eurocentric conceptualization of European knowledges moving into and filling up empty spaces by arguing that Mi’gmaq themselves “incorporate[ed]” Catholic rituals into their own “existing symbolic literacy and the oral traditions.” Battiste has advanced the argument that the use of symbolic literacy, shared amongst families throughout the nation, is less about conversion or enlightenment via European knowledges (and methods), and is more about expansiveness, adaptations, and the “incorporation” of Catholic rituals into existing Mi’gmaq ways of knowing and being (or knowledge production). In other words, Battiste draws out the position that Mi’gmaq, collectively and individually, in their social and cultural contexts, had (and have) agency, and ways of sharing, building, and expanding their knowledge systems.

In his work, Len Findlay turns a critical lens back on the writing produced by missionaries about Mi’gmaq, noting that Le Clercq oscillates between “sympathetic observation” and “rigid, racialized hierarchy.” As Findlay points out, Le Clercq’s observations say less about Mi’gmaq and more about Eurocentric thinking and sense of superiority in response to Indigenous Peoples, thought systems and ways of being. These contestations of the received narrative of Le Clercq ‘bringing literacy’ to Mi’gmaq are important to remember for this project where I am researching and writing about the Restigouche day school. This practice – of Mi’gmaq adapting and incorporating European technologies to their own ends – long predated the establishment of the school.

Prior to missionary entry into Mi’gmaq territory of Gespe’gewa’gi, an alliance had been formed between Mi’gmaq and the Holy See, the Church of Rome. In 1610, Grand Chief of the Santeoi Mawa’ioni (Sante Mawiomi, or Grand Council) Membertou, along with 140 Mi’gmaq, “voluntarily entered into a spiritual and political alliance with France” in ceremony, which included baptism and the gift of the wampum. Battiste asserts that this exchange, baptism and wampum, illuminates Mi’gmaq ways of knowing, being, and governing as expansive and relational. In her words, Battiste affirms: “Micmac spiritual culture and sacred view of nature were broadened, not altered, by the Catholic theology … Micmac society embraced the two spiritual worlds as one, enlarging the rituals but not changing the ideological foundation.”

178 In “From Smug Settler to Ethical Ally,” Findlay turns a critical eye on Le Clercq’s 17th century writing about Mi’gmaq, critiquing Le Clercq’s observations: “[t]he Gaspesians do not know how to read nor how to write. They have nevertheless, enough understanding and memory to learn how to do both—” 76.


181 Battiste quoted in Benjamin’s Indian School Road, 9.
What Battiste reminds us is that unlike Western approaches that sought to claim and subsume the Other (land, People, beliefs), Indigenous thought systems place an emphasis on ‘process’ and ‘relations’. From this perspective, of exchange and expansiveness, the act of baptism is less of an acceptance of a singular (Christian) belief system but is one part of an expansive relationship that is welcoming (not threatened by) this ceremonial element.

Treaty protocols and wampum relations, in the seventeenth century, oftentimes emphasized “truth, honesty, and integrity.”182 Paula Sherman (of Omàmiwinini heritage) argues that “[o]ver centuries, however, these understandings have faded from memory.”183 Wampum relations changed, and so too did understandings of territory from “living breathing entities” (or, lands as teachers) to objectified and exploitable resources. For Sherman, this ideological shift not only contravened Indigenous wampum relations, but also Indigenous peoples’ own “collective responsibilities” (including the sharing and building of knowledges) in (and from) their homelands. There is a risk, as Andrea Bear Nicholas points out, that narratives of exchanges, reliance, equality, and sharing can slip into romanticized notions of friendship and peacemaking as the base of Indigenous and Settler relations.184 Yet, the risk of not including wampum and treaty relations can uphold settler colonial logic that perceives treaties in an objectified manner,

182 Sherman points to examples of wampum relations, including: the Mi’kmaq Concordat in 1610; the Two Row Wampum in 1613; and Friendship Agreement in 1701. The Concordat between the Vatican and Mi’gmaq nation is significant to this project. The agreement not only established relations based on ‘respect’ and ‘trust’, but also engenders Mi’gmaq consciousness steeped in kinship with all beings and an expansiveness of relations in “Picking Up the Wampum Belt as an Act of Protest,”114. Also see: Battiste’s Visioning a Mi’kmaw Humanities: Indigenizing the Academy, 2016.

183 Sherman, “Picking up the Wampum Belt,” 2010.

as Sherman points out, that is, as mechanisms to separate Indigenous peoples from their ancestral homeland and knowledge systems versus an understanding of treaties as ‘relational,’ expansive, and as emphasizing principled and ethical relations between Indigenous and settler peoples attempting to live together in distinct ways on shared territories.

By 1680, the French colonial administration “abandoned” its assimilative approach in schooling, in part because of Indigenous resistances to European style education systems. Mi’gmaq did not comply with the assimilative approach in schooling and were considered, by French colonists, as ‘unschoolable.’ As Jaenen points out French colonists did not recognize Indigenous forms of schooling. Similarly, Miller contends that in part the ‘failure’ of these early assimilationists projects was because Europeans failed to understand Indigenous knowledge systems, that is Indigenous peoples’ relations and attachments with their children, pedagogies and ways of sharing knowledge through methods that were “integrated with the rhythm of the adult community.”

Two centuries later, in the 19th century, on Mi’gmaq territory of Gespe’gewa’gi, a ‘Poor School’ was set up in Restigouche, by the French Catholic Order, with support of the British colonial administration. Memories from the territory – of long-standing Indigenous adaptations, incorporations, and resistances – are not usually ‘heard’ in the dominant narrative about

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185 Miller, Shiingwauk’s Vision, 60.


187 Miller, Shiingwauk’s Vision, 55 and 57.
Canada’s IRS system, which tend to portray colonial schooling as a totalizing system of cultural genocide, and yet one that was limited and contained. The IRS system of the 20th century was not the first, nor was it the sole location of “racism and colonial domination through education.” Moreover, beyond the fabric of segregated formal schooling, Indigenous practices (relations and attachments with family, with land) continued, albeit responsibilities, as Sherman observes, were trampled upon.

2.3) Victim-Centred Approach and the trope of “Residential School Gothic”

In the aftermath and light of the TRC, activists and scholars have raised difficult critical questions about how residential schooling is portrayed in dominant reconciliation narratives. Some scholars have drawn attention to ways that the presentation of Canada’s ‘dark past’ produces a type of sympathetic listening in which settler colonial society may see (or learn about) residential schooling, without understanding its own implication in the system. Without this understanding, present-day settler society negates, as Niezen argues, its own social responsibility for the ongoing impacts of residential schooling. Dylan Robinson points out that a lack of settler social responsibility was visible in the lack of “public engagement” (during the TRC national events), including inequities between truth-telling expected of “survivors and the general Canadian public.” Robinson argues that the “near complete lack of knowledge” on the part of settler-Canadians about the history of residential schooling allows for an “abrogation” in

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189 Niezen, Power through Testimony, ix-x.
190 Isabelle Knockwood quoted in Robinson’s “Intergenerational Sense, Intergenerational Responsibility,” 60.
settler society (and institutions) of the responsibility to “understand this history” – and the ongoing issues and concerns, “as their own.”¹⁹¹ Scholars have pointed out that if settler society does not see its own complicity in the history being recognized, that it will listen in voyeuristic ways, and thereby risk not seeing ways that settler-society has benefited from those “inequities and injustices.”¹⁹²

In his work, Matt James noted that the TRC took a “victim centred approach” (gathering statements from former students, survivors, of residential schools) versus state or expert directed focus (for instance, produced by professional historians or forensic archeologists) primarily to ensure that survivors’ voices and experiences remained at the centre of the inquiry. Yet, as James points out, because the TRC centred on experiences of former students versus the action and decisions of the perpetrators of those harms, this meant that the experiences and memories of colonial agents – teachers, Indian Agents, Superintendents, priests, and nuns – are silent in a ‘victim-centred’ truth-seeking inquiry. James acknowledges that victim-centred approaches can support “grassroots processes of rebuilding,”¹⁹³ however, he also points out that these approaches can make it difficult to uncover “individual and institutional” decision-making that led to systemic injustices and violence and violations at residential schools.¹⁹⁴ He argues that focusing on personal experiences of former students has produced a type of reconciliation that is more

¹⁹¹ Robinson’s “Intergenerational Sense, Intergenerational Responsibility, 60.
¹⁹² Paulette Regan quoted in Nagy “Truth, Reconciliation and Settler Denial,”351.
¹⁹³ James, “A Carnival of Truth?”183.
¹⁹⁴ Ibid, 184.
about “interpersonal understanding and forgiveness” versus a political reconciliation involving governance systems. James advances the argument that focusing on interpersonal understandings and forgiveness (with an emphasis on healing through truth telling) neglects addressing the structural oppression and inequalities of the system, and its decision makers.\textsuperscript{195}

Scholars Roger Simon and Garneau have challenged the view that listening will naturally lead to empathy and change social relations between Indigenous and settler peoples. To recall, Simon points out that the emphasis on “testimonials” can turn stories of pain and loss into a “spectacle.”\textsuperscript{196} Garneau argues that to overcome ‘pain turned into spectacle’ there is a need to pay attention to “irreconcilable spaces” of Aboriginality: where gatherings or ceremonies, or email exchanges and conversations take place without ‘settlers’ (or a settler gaze), not as a “show for others but a site where people simply are, where they express and celebrate their continuity …with one another without the sense that they are being witnessed by people who are not equal participants.”\textsuperscript{197} Garneau points out how complex experiences can be altered (as a type of “inhibition or conformation”) aligned with settler expectations.

Generic stories (distilled and aligned with settler expectations) not only shift away from Indigenous understandings and worldviews, but these flattened versions can produce a type of victimhood narrative in which the listener dissociates from stories of pain and trauma (or, “too

\textsuperscript{195} James, “A Carnival of Truth?” 195.

\textsuperscript{196} Simon, “Towards a Hopeful Practice of Worrying,” 132.

\textsuperscript{197} Garneau, “Imaginary Spaces of Conciliation and Reconciliation,” 27.
bad, so sad”, to use Simon’s words). This type of dissociated listening enables settler society to not see its own implication in the story being told, thus negating opportunities for social responsibility. Jennifer Henderson points out that settler public “opinion making” in mainstream media about residential schooling created a form of “bounded empathy.” That is, long lasting intergenerational experiences at residential schooling were transformed into recognizable (by a settler public) stories of “personal injury.” Containing the violence and violations in this manner meant that a settler public conceiving of itself as “humanitarian” could listen to, even empathize with, experiences about residential schooling without needing to consider links between assimilative forms of schooling and settler expropriation of Indigenous lands and resources. Not only are deeply rooted and complex harms across generations reduced to individualized pain, but this type of “humanitarian empathy” of settler society does not have to address or come to terms with treaty relations.

198 Simon, Towards a Hopeful Practice of Worrying,” 132.
200 Ibid, 9.
201 Henderson, “Residential Schools and Opinion-Making,” 10. In “Tracing spectres of whiteness,” Madden, argues that some teachers’ sense of themselves is informed by the “spectre” of being a “rescuer” whereby “white women can see antiracist work as an act of compassion”, a type of ‘project’ (and hence a choice) without necessarily recognizing the connections with their/our “own lives”. Drawing on Dion, Madden argues that a focus on empathy and humanitarianism can “reproduce” the conditions where non-Indigenous teachers and students can overlook their “connections to and privilege accrued from” colonial relations (654). These approaches can continue to uphold settler-colonial and Aboriginal power-relations: Aboriginal peoples are positioned as “victims” (perceived as ‘lacking’) and provided with “solutions and support” from an “all-knowing’ non-Aboriginal ‘rescuer’ (654).
202 Henderson, “Residential Schools and Opinion-Making,” 10. In her work on the emergence of the concept of collective trauma, Allison Crawford observes that collective trauma describes experiences of violence and violation as experienced by particular “social groups”. Crawford explains how collective trauma and historical trauma are “linked” and “describe the experiences of communities and ethnic groups exposed to large scale or repeated traumatic events and accompanying stresses” (in “The trauma experienced by generations past,” 340). In the mid-1990s, Dr. Maria Yellow Horse Braveheart linked the idea of ‘collective suffering, trauma, and memory’ with “historical trauma experienced by American Aboriginals” as a result of “colonial conquest and assimilation” (quoted in Crawford, 342). Around the same time, Eduardo Duran and Bonnie Duran introduced the term “soul wound” to
Over the past three decades, a particular genre has emerged in public discourse about residential schooling, which Henderson calls “Residential School Gothic.” The Gothic trope emphasizes the temporal distance between an (unenlightened) “feudal, Latinate past and the enlightened present,” and in terms of spatial organization, the trope uses the familiar opposition of “‘inside’ space of entrapment and ‘outside’ space of freedom.” Henderson argues that the genre of Residential School Gothic (with its labyrinths and hidden, dark spaces) is a culturally familiar trope (for Euro-Canadians) that is being used for the purpose of both “making sense” and “making tolerable” the genocidal violence of Indian residential schools.203 There is an emphasis on sexual crimes, perpetuated by ‘individuals’ (or at particular schools), which are contained within this trope; other violence and violations (language and knowledge suppression) are rendered invisible (neither within nor outside the labyrinth), and are instead woven throughout the very structures of the gothic. This points to institutional prejudices embedded in policies and practices of the church and state. The genre of Residential School Gothic produces effects of both “distance and containment,” which limit what settler Canadians (and Indigenous peoples) must (or are able to) address in past and present relations with one another, and in the foundations of the settler “nation-state.”204

capture the “sense of grief” and the lasting imprint of “cumulative trauma” on Indigenous identity and cultural cohesion” (quoted in Crawford 342).


204 Ibid, 44.
Victim-centred approaches, testimony turned into spectacle, dissociated listening, the genre of Residential School Gothic, have, to some extent, limited and constrained, both temporally and spatially, multiple truths, differences, and nuances in experiences associated with schooling for Indigenous peoples. The IRS system locked and contained (safely) in the past functions as a type of reminder of those ‘other’ settlers versus enlightened and informed present-day settlers who can learn about IRS systems, without necessarily seeing, as settlers, our own complicity in, and benefits from, segregated and assimilationist schooling. Reconciliation, then, requires a type of unlearning, as settlers, to see oneself in those ‘other’ settlers and seeing how that past continues in the present moment. Deeper forms of reconciliation require centering Indigenous thought systems and recognizing the endurance of Indigenous peoples and taking their knowledge systems seriously as the vital and necessary basis for rebuilding relations.205

2.4) Critiques of Truth-Seeking Inquiries and Testimonies

As part of reconciliation, truth-seeking inquiries oftentimes rely upon testimonies gathered from those who experienced the harms. There are questions and concerns that the methods and approaches can engender harms, even while seeking to shed light on violence and violations. In her work on British Columbia’s Missing Women Commission of Inquiry (2010 -2012), Allison Hargreaves asserts that public truth-seeking inquiries oftentimes use “extractive method”

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205 Simpson’s Noopiming: The Cure for White Ladies (2020) centers Anishinaabe life, worldviews, and concerns. Through stories and storytelling, Simpson’s work creates a space for readers/listeners to ‘enter’ and (possibly) momentarily glimpse an understanding of worlds steeped in, built from, Anishinaabe thought systems, humour, relations. These stories show us, for instance, deep meanings of consent, where ‘our’ relatives are the trees, with whom respectful relations can be made, and from these (and other) teachings it is possible to live in a way less focused on the individual (‘me’, human) and with more concerns on the collective well-being (‘human’ and other-than-human). Simpson acknowledges settler society (a glances at Susanna Moodie’s memoir Roughing it in the Bush (1852), and then Simpson turns away and builds another world.
research approaches whereby non-Indigenous researchers enter Indigenous communities with the intent to produce knowledge “about” peoples and experiences versus producing knowledge from “within and for the benefit” of Indigenous peoples and communities.\footnote{Hargreaves, \textit{Violence Against Indigenous Women}, 48.} Hargreaves argues that extractive approaches to research are characterized by pre-determined questions that follow a “question and answer” format, which are supposed to identify key issues.\footnote{Ibid, 48.} Although identifying key issues sounds as though there is room for participants to determine issues, or expand on their concerns, pre-determined “question and answer” formats can limit the scope of issues or concerns around the questions that have already been determined, and also in terms of time allowed for each question and answer. Hargreaves points out that extractive research methods position participants as “objects of research” as opposed to being “co-creators of knowledge.”\footnote{Ibid, 48.}

There are also issues that testimonies gathered can be further exploited for the benefit of settler-society. Many testimonies (or \textit{data}) have been collected through exercises like the TRC or the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. Hargreaves notes that personal stories and “disclosures of colonial violence” can be appropriated (versus resisting or countering) by colonial strategies of power.\footnote{Hargreaves, \textit{“Compelling Disclosures,”} 108.} Hargreaves argues that this usurpation of personal testimony (and storytelling) to serve state interest does not just happen in the “halls of parliament” but also in “anti-oppression movements”, and front-line agencies, themselves. She
shows how liberal education initiatives, notably the concept of cultural competence, relies on the idea that countering racism means “learning more about racial ‘others,’” and oftentimes leans heavily on one-sided storytelling. In other words, the storyteller remains hyper-visible, whilst the listener remains in the position of privilege, not necessarily disclosing or revealing their truths, their experiences, their responses, or understandings about that which they hear. Like James, Hargreaves suggests that storytelling methods can “individualize conflict,” moving the focus away from “systemically maintained inequitable conditions.” Recognizing that personal experiences are part of (white) feminist methods and discourses, notably around gendered violence, Hargreaves argues that for Indigenous women, and women of colour, there is a risk that in the sharing of personal experiences the storytellers narrating their own life experiences are objectified as “authentic” purveyors of cultural knowledge, whose experiences (and stories) are transformed into consumable educational items benefiting “white interlocutors.”210 Hargreaves points out how voyeuristic listening and ‘pain turned to spectacle’, as Simon and Garneau also caution, is not only risky for Indigenous peoples, but is particularly risky for Indigenous women who are ‘trapped’ within certain narratives. There are some continuities between the harms themselves and the harm caused by the situations (including settler expectations) where they are asked to narrate those harms. One sided storytelling can prolong and perpetuate inequities amongst peoples and leave harmful systemic barriers intact. One-sided storytelling that is disconnected from the systems and the peoples that perpetuated the harms means that those systems – residential and day schools, for instance – as well as those who created the systems are not held to account. The onus is placed on the individual, or the teller, without having to address that settler dominance.

I turn these concerns about one-sided storytelling towards this project. Can the stories from former students, together with print records (fragments) from institutions, be assembled to counter ‘one-sided’ storytelling? Can print records from the archives associated with Indian Day Schools be held up to the light, placed in the window, so that their/our settler reflection is visible, momentarily, halting the privilege of remaining ‘unseen’? Can those records be held to show settlers’ roles, to evoke accountability, in this (ongoing) history? In her critical work on Canada’s culture of redress, Pauline Wakeham argues that in an age of apology there are linkages between “reconciliation initiatives and discourses of terror”, which operate in a distinct but complementary manner to uphold contemporary settler colonial power. In state apologies, past wrongs are presented as “historically delimited, specific injuries” versus an acknowledgment of “systemic and ongoing practices of colonialism.” According to Wakeham, on the one hand, the state uses apologies as a strategy of containment to “manage Indigenous peoples’ calls for social change” and invoke a ‘moving forward together’ for a better Canada. In this reconciliatory framework, there are limits on Indigenous sovereignty. Moreover, Wakeham argues that there are limits placed on reconciliation because territory and resources are not part of discussions or reconciliatory expressions; at the same time, she argues that the rhetoric of terror is used to “discipline Indigenous resistance” by treating a range of anticolonial practices (e.g., expressions of sovereignty-protests, resistances-that extend beyond state reconciliation initiatives) as “threats” that require (and justify) state intervention, or the state’s “repressive apparatus.” In other words, beneath the apologies and expressions of atonement there are colonial currents at play that move the narrative in a particular direction, “moving forward” to build a “stronger Canada for all.”

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Questioning or raising concerns about *who benefits* from the reconciliation initiatives (for example, social justice movements or expressing “aspirations for self-determination”), according to Wakeham, are perceived as threats to national “cooperation,” “national healing,” and “national security.” Wakeham argues that these critical questions are perceived (by the state) as threats to narratives of cooperation, but also positioned within, and contained by, a “rhetoric of terror” requiring silencing in a cooperative Canada.\(^{212}\) Deeper forms of reconciliation require, as Ladner argues, “settler society to acknowledge and accept really uncomfortable truths” about acquisition of privilege and to also “cede privilege” denied to Indigenous peoples.\(^ {213}\)

### 2.5) Possibilities for Reconciliation in Storytelling Practices

There are risks associated with testimonial knowledge projects. There are also possibilities in the uses of stories. Storytelling offers possibilities to move between, within, and extend beyond, the generic dominant reconciliation narrative. Storytelling, “speaking from the heart” – where the mind, body and emotions are connected, as expressed by some Indigenous scholars and Elders, can counter settler colonial traps of dissociated listening or bounded empathy, for instance. Storytelling can move beyond, for example, identifying structural inequities to the deeper roots that sustain, and are connected with, those inequities: “attitudes and feelings.”\(^ {214}\) James cautions that “interpersonal and affective” approaches can depoliticize deep structural racialized approaches, drawing on Dale Turner’s work, yet he concedes that ‘victim centered’ approaches

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\(^{212}\) Wakeham, “Reconciling ‘Terror’,” 1.

\(^{213}\) Ladner, “150 Years and Waiting,” 407.

\(^{214}\) James, “A Carnival of Truth?” 196.
can draw attention to those invisible roots and threads (attitudes and feelings) within the structures (including education systems).\textsuperscript{215} James emphasizes that in the use of stories there is a need to show both “destructive elements” and “resilience,” which are both needed for “better relations.” Understanding built through the sharing of personal (affective) testimonies can then be a component leading to “co-existence of governing systems.”\textsuperscript{216} While this reasoning seems to follow narratives of a co-operative Canada, or an emphasis on Indigenous healing (evoked by the term \textit{resilience}) what is also important is the emphasis placed on \textit{relationship building}. That is, it is not only balancing different kinds of stories (trauma and resilience) it is also that the learning (or, storying) takes place in (and for) “better” relationship building. These relations are both \textit{interpersonal} and \textit{structural} (governance, systems, policies, laws). The \textit{practice} of storytelling (not only the stories or testimonies being collected) can be conceptualized as the threads that connect the ‘individual’ and the ‘structural’. What is important is the act of storytelling, attending to the individual and, which can contribute to overcoming, or at least interjecting and interrupting, the dominant generic reconciliation narrative. Critical \textit{en/counter}ing of ‘grand’ or meta narratives is not, of course, the sole possibility of storying approaches. Storytelling, as Margaret Kovach argues, is linked with Indigenous rebuilding in its potential to support collective knowledges and associated responsibilities.\textsuperscript{217} Stories can overturn the dominant narrative, and, as Leanne Simpson argues, they can be the “seed” placed long ago (by Indigenous ancestors), for the future, the present moment that is now.\textsuperscript{218} Storytelling practices can

\textsuperscript{215} James, “A Carnival of Truth?” 196.

\textsuperscript{216} Ibid, 196.

\textsuperscript{217} Kovach, \textit{Indigenous Methodologies: Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts}, 97.

\textsuperscript{218} These ideas are discussed by Simpson in her text \textit{Dancing on our Turtle's Back}, 2011.
contribute to “hopeful worrying”, as Roger Simon puts it, beyond a spectacle where empathy can contribute to creating action.

Attempting to re-tell and share lived experiences in very different contexts and – possibly – with very different audiences, there are risks and limitations. As a settler researcher, I am gathering and assembling fragments, parts, and pieces, from print archives and oral memories. I am stitching these together, trying to make sense of experiences that differ from my own personal and social location. There are risks of misrepresentation, appropriation, and exploitation. There are risks that stories connected with lived experiences, with roots in oral knowledge systems, with particular ways of sharing, will be distorted in/by ‘expert’ frameworks (expectations and requirements) that extract and pin down stories as “certainties.”219 In working towards deeper and lasting forms of reconciliation, Sarah de Leeuw and Margo Greenwood, for instance, have turned to the use of creative arts (visual, dramatic, literary works), which they describe as “creative critical interventions,” to build empathy and understanding required for culturally safe practices.220 Attending to stories is needed not only as a critical intervention on the dominant narrative, but to intervene on practices (distancing, neutrality) that prolong settler colonial logic, and inhumanity. Creative and critical cultural interventions to foster empathy are not necessarily about constraining difficult histories or producing consumable cultural pieces for settler-society about Indigenous histories or cultural practices. The concept of an “Ethical Space” of engagement between societies (and worldviews), which I borrow from Cree legal scholar, Willie

219 Tamas, *Life After Leaving*, 139.

Ermine, and develop later in this dissertation, underpins my methodological approach for this dissertation, including decisions about knowledge sources and re-presentation of the findings.  

The acts of telling and engaged ethical listening can contribute to building respectful relationships. Structural change requires this kind of patient careful relationship-building not only as a starting point, but as an ongoing component in reconciliatory processes intended to lead to transformation and change. If acts of telling and listening are only included at the outset, or only expected of one (but not both or many) parties, then the potentiality for lasting and sustainable structural change will likewise be limited or constrained. This is not about one approach (interpersonal, affective, or structural) being more (or less) challenging; neither do I mean to suggest that one necessarily or always leads into the other. Rather, both elements, of inter-personal connection through storytelling and critique of structural changes, are required to build healthier relations, accountabilities, and institutional transformation between Indigenous and settler societies.

**Storytelling as expressions of Indigenous resurgence**

Stories, and storytelling, are also connected with Indigenous resurgences and rebuilding. Leanne Simpson argues that present-day discussions about reconciliation are far from new. “Indigenous Peoples,” Simpson asserts, “have attempted to reconcile our differences in countless treaty

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221 Cree legal scholar Willie Ermine advanced the concept of “Ethical Space”. (I work with the concept of “Ethical Space” in Chapter 5.)
negotiations.”  These negotiations with settlers, however, did not produce relationships as envisioned by Indigenous Peoples. Simpson remains skeptical about the hopeful or easy possibilities offered by the dominant reconciliation narrative given that most Canadians lack awareness and understanding about “historic and contemporary injustice of dispossession and occupation.” Simpson turns to resurgence, as a concept and a practice; she observes that she is careful not to “define ‘resurgence’”; rather, her hope is that readers who encounter this concept in her writing will take the ideas and return “to their own communities, teachings language and Elders or Knowledge Holders” to build both individual and collective understandings of resurgence. Simpson advances an understanding of resurgence that is not about reconciling past harms or building healthier relations between Indigenous and settler peoples. Instead, through the use of stories, songs, and ceremonies Simpson gives expression to animating connections with “our Ancestors… singing encouragement to the generations coming.” While Simpson unapologetically counters settler colonialism, her focus is less on critique and more on rebuilding, and in particular intra-Indigenous relationships.

Others are exploring how storytelling practices (including the uses of testimony) can be used in

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222 Simpson, Dancing on our Turtle’s Back, 21.

223 Ibid, 21.

224 Ibid, 25.

225 Dorries and Ruddick take up Simpson’s conceptualizations and ideas, illuminating how taking up Nishnaabeg knowledge (for example, encountered within a text) also involves “responsibilities” both to understand the project of resurgence in different contexts and places, and for diverse audiences, Indigenous and non-Indigenous. The authors argue that reading practices can be fostered “respecting the sovereignty of the text” by this they mean that readers may need to approach the text in ways that “acknowledge the limitations they bring”, that further reading may be required, and that aspects of the text may remain “inaccessible” in Dorries and Ruddick, “Between concept and context: reading Gilles Deleuze and Leanne Simpson,” 628.
dominant (Euro-Western) institutions yet remain grounded in Indigenous epistemologies. In her exploration of storytelling practices within dominant (settler) institutions, Hargreaves turns to the work of Sa’ke’j Henderson, who theorizes storytelling as a “communal practice imbued with responsibility.” In this argument, the critical focus moves away from the story and instead attends to the storyteller. The storyteller, argues Henderson, “determines the best way to tell a story or convey the teaching” regardless of “what information” the listener may have requested. Even at events that are highly organized or orchestrated, such as truth-seeking inquiries, information (or stories) shared that were not requested shed light on how information (or testimony), even when produced from within spaces organized by the settler state, can operate to “work against it” and so doing can “open up space” animating (and generating) ‘other’ knowledges, insights, ways of seeing or understanding. In the research, I have tried to remain open to insights and ideas generated when the paper I held with carefully sequenced questions was turned over. I paid attention to those (rare) moments when I was asked to turn the recorder off. I attune myself to times when I was called into the story (sometimes with a gesture, or the use of my name), like a reminder: pay attention, you are part of this now.

Storytelling can be used to support “hopeful interventions” ways of remembering, including difficult topics of gendered violence. For example, Hargreaves analyzes different approaches to, and uses of, storytelling inquiries (focusing on the British Columbia Commission of Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous women and girls, established in 2016) and the National Film


228 Hargreaves, “Compelling Disclosures,” 110.
Board documentary, *Finding Dawn* (2006), by Métis filmmaker Christine Welsh. Hargreaves asserts that storytelling methods can be used “to seek and assert hopeful interventions into the issue of gendered colonial violence and its remembrance.”

Because of the film’s focus on process (relations and doing), Hargreaves argues that *Finding Dawn* purposefully “re-members” missing and murdered Indigenous women, their territories and familial networks. The film uses story methodology as a way of re/membering showing the historical removals and also affirming missing women’s relations with one another, with their communities and their “ancestral lands in the present”. Story is used to affirm relations and connections versus positioning Indigenous women as objects (as within an inquiry or extractive model) that can be known, require saving, or constraining. Testimonies and storytelling— from families, about the lands and women missing from those lands, as well as stories of women engaged in education and activism to counter gendered colonial violence provide “pathways” that show “hope, resilience, and transformation.”

Storying in this context illuminates Indigenous resurgences, animating (as observed by Simpson in her practice) ancestors, descendants, lands, and the unborn. In her critical analysis, Hargreaves suggests that stories, and practices of storytelling, can animate remembrances connecting Indigenous relations with one another and with their ancestral lands. Stories and storytelling— testimonies, recollections, and reminiscing— can contribute to hopeful interventions into the dominant narrative of settler violence and violations.

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229 The film *Finding Dawn* (2006) traces and follows a family-led search for three missing Indigenous women: Dawn Crey, Ramona Wilson, and Daleen Bosse; and the self-reflective journey of its film-maker, Christine Welsh, to document anti-violence activism of author and scholar Janice Acoose and activist Fay Blaney. In *Violence Against Indigenous Women*, Hargreaves argues that the film models Indigenous research methodologies of storytelling, which “honour communal expressions of agency, activism, and resistance” and, more particularly, she shows how the film performs gendered decolonization with an analysis that examines both gendered and racialized forms of violence (31 and 36).


231 Ibid, 51.
including experiences at schools, such as the Restigouche Indian day school. When I tried to
stitch the story together about Mary Isaac, a memory almost drowned out by the Sisters of the
Holy Rosary, I thought about gendered violence: I thought about the forms of violations,
including how within the ignoring and omission of particular histories (such as Indian Day
schooling), there are other cracks, (gendered) violations, other traces of memories that are still
resurfacing, which also need remembering.

CHAPTER THREE – EXISTING SCHOLARSHIP ON DAY SCHOOLS

3.1) Opening Remarks

There is a growing awareness that there is only a “small body of research” on Indian day schools.
There is also a growing awareness that more Indigenous students attended day schools, as
compared to residential schools.232 In her work on the history of day schooling in Mi’gmaq and
Wolastoqiyik territories, Martha Walls examined archival records produced by the Department
of Indian Affairs to build an argument that the federal government allowed day schools in
Atlantic Canada to “languish” through diminished funding. In diminishing funding, Walls argues
that the federal government “coercively ‘encouraged’ Mi’gmaw and Wolastoqiyik families to
enroll children in the residential school” at Shubenacadie, which operated from 1929 until
1967.233 Recollections and memories of schools outside of residential schools are likewise

Fleming, Smith, and Raptis “’An Accidental Teacher’,,” 2007; Raptis, “Exploring the Factors Prompting British
Columbia’s First Integration Initiative,” 2011; Walls “,[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should
not be allowed,” 2011; Morissette, “Il connaît le chemin de l’école,” 2016. (I have introduced some of the emerging
scholarship on day schools in Chapter 1.)

233 Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System’,” 369.
‘languishing’ in official state narratives. This languishing in a very real sense parallels the
languishing-through-diminished-funding of the day schools, in the sense that government funds
have not been committed to gathering the memories of day school students as part of its
settlement process despite the fact that there were more day schools, and more students, who
attended poorly funded day schools than the (also poorly funded) residential schools during the
late 19th and mid-20th centuries.\textsuperscript{234} Obscuring the history and experiences at day schools, similar
to containing the violence and violations temporally and spatially (in the past, at residential
schools) is connected with the ongoing colonial violence and violations of not seeing. Yet,
positioning day schooling in the foreground as the object of study is not necessarily going to lead
to transformed or less-oppressive relations simply by leading to yet another study and acquiring
(or accumulating) more knowledge about missed or ignored aspects of formal schooling geared
for Indigenous children. Over the past three decades, although much of the scholarly attention
about formal schooling for Indigenous children has focused on residential schools, slowly, and in
different locations and regions of Canada, researchers have investigated Indian day schooling,
paying attention to the day-to-day operations and pedagogy; some have attended to living
memories, while others have focused on print archival records. Attending to memories and
recollections about day schools (print ad oral) can expose the fabric and threading of colonial

\textsuperscript{234} The TRC’s Final Report affirms that in 1895-96, there were a total of 239 Day schools and 49 industrial and
boarding schools, with 7,112 students at the former and 2,602 students at the latter. By the end of the 1930s, there
were 79 residential schools and 288 Day schools, with an enrolment of 9,027 at the former and 9,369 at the latter.
With almost the same number of students enrolled at the respective forms of schooling (residential or day), the
TRC’s Final Report affirms that the government spent approximately “$1,547,252 on residential school operations,
versus $404,821 on day school operations.” Residential schools were not just an ill-conceived ‘failed’ experiment
by settler-society, the IRS system, which received most of funding geared for Indigenous schooling, was an
expensive failure for settler society and the state. In present-day era of reconciliation, the state (and by extension
settler society) is not only reckoning with violence and violations at the schools, but the focused attention on
residential schooling in the present-day era of reconciliation seems to replicate the funding patterns of the
assimilation and segregation eras of the late 19th and mid-20th centuries.
schooling. The memories about day schooling also voice Indigenous practices, resistances, adaptations, resilience, and resurgences.

Questions are the stones carefully gathered

What happens if Indigenous (more particularly, Mi’gmaq) children and youth learn about colonial education history and experiences that are detached from their own family, or community’s history, with formal education? What happens to these local stories and histories not only of colonial violence and violation, but also of resistance and resilience and of the continuance of cultural values and beliefs whilst at day schools? What happened, as expressed at the opening, when Indigenous (or, Mi’gmaq) children and youth ‘went home’ at night? Did their own, Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) language, values, beliefs continue to be shared, expressed, lived, and taught? If so, how and in what ways? Were family kinship systems practiced? Were Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) children taught about relations with land, with place, with one another? Were these ways of knowing erased, eradicated, altered by and through day schooling? Is it possible (and if so how) for two knowledge systems (Indigenous and Western) to evolve, interact, and influence one another? Did Mi’gmaq children attending the Restigouche Day School, and going home at night to be with their families, navigate a daily course through two very different worlds? And, if so, how did they understand their situations, how did they make sense of conflicting lessons, codes for relationships, ways of being, learning and speaking? The following is a brief overview of academic investigations and conversations on federal Indian day schools organized in keeping with Indigenous territories: Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik (in present-day Atlantic Region); Okanagan and Tsimshian Nation (in present-day British Columbia); and, in Ojibwa | Anishinabeg territories (in present-day Ontario and Québec).
3.2) Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik Territories (Indian day schools in the Atlantic Region)

After Confederation, state and religious authorities assumed greater control over the formal education of Indigenous peoples. Legislation, notably the Indian Act of 1876, granted the federal government control over education for ‘Indians’, while the Davin Report, in 1879, recommended missionaries carry out the “civilizing [of] Canada’s Indians”, as observed by Lisa-Marie Smith. W. D. Hamilton’s *The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes* (1986) investigates archival records providing a comprehensive study of the 28 federal Indian day schools, which operated between 1868 until the 1980s on First Nations communities throughout the Maritime region, on Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik territories. In the first part, Hamilton provides an overview of the Maritime picture, of educational initiatives, policies, and trends before and following Confederation. The second part draws on archival materials to mount a history of the individual schools in the Maritimes: their locations, dates of operation, roster of teachers, and a few samples of student work. Hamilton limits his history of day schools to the Maritimes, which means that Mi’gmaq communities that are not located in this region are excluded from the picture. For example, the schools that opened at Restigouche and at Gesgapegiag (a Mi’gmaw community in Québec) for Mi’gmaq children, in the mid-1800s, in then-Lower Canada, are not included in this historical narrative. To some extent, research on schooling, which follows colonial jurisdictional boundaries, replicates colonial patterns of displacing Indigenous peoples from their homelands, in this instance of Mi’gma’gi, which encompasses provinces of the Atlantic region (portions of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island, Newfoundland & Labrador), as well as the Gaspé Peninsula in present-day Québec. The ancestral lands of Mi’gma’gi also includes land that falls within present-day Maine.

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in the US.

While Hamilton’s history of the schools maintains regional Maritime boundaries, the history of Indigenous teachers who taught at day schools illuminates connections amongst kinship relations in their movement across provincial boundaries. Hamilton observes that “[a]lmost forgotten on the Indian reserves of the Maritimes today are the Indian teachers who taught in the day schools between 1900 and 1920,” as well as before and after that period. Hamilton affirms that an estimated 22 Indigenous teachers, including both certified and lay, men and women, taught at Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyyik Indian Day Schools in the early part of the twentieth century. Of those 22 teachers, six were Mi’gmaq women from the community of Restigouche. The Mi’gmaq women: Mary, Margaret, Martha, and Rebecca, were licensed teachers, of the Isaac family, who taught (amongst one another) at Big Cove, Burnt Church, Eel Ground, Red Bank, and Kingsclear, New Brunswick between the years 1903 and 1923. A fifth sister, Alma, also “assisted” at a school in Eel Ground; and, Rita Gideon, another Mi’gmaq licensed teacher from Restigouche, taught at Big Cove. In his historical work, Hamilton indicates that their collective teaching career begins in 1903, at schools in New Brunswick; however, Mary Isaac’s story starts earlier, in 1885, when, at the age of 17, she began teaching at the Restigouche Indian Day School, on Mission Land of Québec, on Mi’gmaw territory, of Gespe’gewa’gi.

More recently, Martha Walls has contributed to the study of day schooling by focusing on

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237 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 36.
Indigenous teachers, including Mi’gmaq women from Restigouche. Like Hamilton, Walls focuses her historical study from 1903 until 1923, and on schools located in the Atlantic region. Walls asserts that the Issacs family, as well as Rita Gideon, as “young, unmarried, and provincially certified” teachers, were typical of federal Indian reserve day schoolteachers; yet, the women, coming from Restigouche, differed from other teachers at this time because they were Mi’gmaq and “thus were ‘Indians’ under federal law.” Walls argues that in Canada (unlike the United States) Indigenous peoples were “rarely” and “reluctantly” hired by the state.

Walls contributes to the conversation about day schooling by showing how Mi’gmaq teachers were “complicit” in, and at the same time countered, the state’s assimilative agenda. Drawing on archival materials, Walls demonstrates that Mi’gmaq teachers insisted on “Mi’gmaw-language instruction,” which countered Canada’s assimilative colonial project, and “school regulations and protocols.” Walls draws on written records, produced by Department of Indian Affairs officials, and a few from the teachers themselves, to mount an argument that Indigenous female teachers, at the turn of the twentieth century, “complicated” the colonial agenda, and Indigenous people and communities used formal schooling for their own purposes. As early as 1885, as Walls observes, the DIA insisted on the “use of the English language” in the classroom, and teachers were to “make effort … to induce pupils to speak English and to teach them to understand it.” The focus on English-language was part of the colonial project to both “control

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238 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 36.

239 Ibid, 36.

240 Ibid, 35.

241 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 39.
the way colonized people perceived themselves” and to “undermine Aboriginal political sovereignty.”

Walls points out that hiring the teachers from Restigouche coincided with DIA policy of hiring women as teachers: women were regarded as “better suited” to nurture school age children, and this practice fit well with DIA frugality because female teachers were paid less than their male counterparts. In the case of teachers for Indigenous children, however, gender was inflected in particular ways by ideas of race. Walls observes that race factored into DIA’s decision-making in their hiring of female Mi’gmaq teachers. Poor conditions – of the schoolhouse and the teacher’s boarding residence – led to “frequent” assertions by local officials that “no white woman would work under such circumstances.”

Walls asserts that the idea that Indigenous women, “more than Anglo-Canadian ones, were “equipped to cope” with the harsh conditions of work and living shows the “contradictory” place that Mi’gmaq women as school teachers held: as formally educated individuals, they were the “uplifting force of civilization” on reserve, and as Mi’gmaq women, they were perceived from within racialized and gendered stereotypes associated with ‘savagery’ that rendered them capable of “withstanding uncivilized conditions” considered “intolerable” for non-Aboriginal (white

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242 In “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” Walls draws on Ruth Spack’s (2002) analysis of the focus on English-language training, as part of ‘American Indian Education’, 1860-1900 (39).

243 The sense of women being ‘better suited’ as teachers touches on ideas of moral rectitude associated with femininity. In her article, “At Normal School: Ernest Thomson Seton, L.M. Montgomery, and the New Education,” Henderson speaks about this modeling of correct behaviour in Lucy Maud Montgomery’s Anne of Green Gables (1908), set in Prince Edward Island [or, on Epegwitg (“lying on water”), a district of Mi’gma’gi]. Henderson contends that in this novel, the lecherous male teacher is replaced by Miss Stacy a white woman teacher deemed appropriate for settler school children, all of whom are constructed as poised, eager, and ready to take their places, in the newly born nation of Canada.

244 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 41.
female) teachers. The hiring of Mi’gmaq teachers, however, not only shows a settler-colonial mindset at the turn of the century: Walls also locates community petitions and letters from Mi’gmaq leadership. These archival records provide a glimpse into Indigenous desires and views on the potentialities of the federal Indian Day Schools. In one letter, written in 1923, Noel Augustine, an elected councillor at Big Cove, asserts, “‘[t]he teacher that cannot understand their [the children’s’] language should not be allowed’ to teach.” Attending to archival records, hearing Indigenous assertions, it is possible to see how day schools were used by Indigenous peoples for their own purposes of cultural transmission and knowledge building.

In her work, Battiste points out that day schools, for the federal government, were considered “ineffective” due their inability to “transform Indians” who attended the schools. What did this "ineffectiveness" look and feel like, to students? In other words, was schooling partly a kind of cultural preservation, was it experienced as continuity rather than disruption? For almost two decades in the early 1900s, some Indigenous children not only attended day schools in their own community, but they were taught by Mi’gmaq, and with some instruction in their own Mi’gmaw language. Walls’ historical research on Indian Day Schools complicates a singular hegemonic narrative of colonial schooling in that some communities used day-schooling for their own purposes and desires, including providing some instruction in their own Indigenous language. What is missing, and is yet needing to be re-imagined, are the experiences, feelings, sensations

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245 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 41.

246 Ibid, 47.


248 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 2011; Battiste, “Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation,” 35.
and memories of the students, and their descendants, who attended the day schools.

3.3) Okanagan Valley and Tsimshian Nation (Indian day schools in British Columbia)

In the West, in the province of British Columbia, just under fifty Indian day schools for Aboriginal children established between the first two World Wars. In their investigation on Indian day schools, Thomas Fleming, Lisa Smith, and Helen Raptis, focus on schools located in the Okanagan Valley. Fleming et al., assert that the day schools, one at Six Mile Creek and the other at Inkameep, similar to other schools across the province, were a “hybrid” of two existing educational institutions – the Indian residential school and the rural (one-room) school. Although the day schools’ physical structures resembled non-Aboriginal schools, their administration differed: since Confederation, both residential and day schools were the responsibility of the federal government, which, through the DIA, delegated day-to-day operations to church authorities. There were other differences, too, between Indian day and rural schools. The Indian day school, although less costly than a residential school, was (in some jurisdictions) the “less popular” educational choice by government officials because day schools “failed to isolate Aboriginal children from their family and tribal influence.” In other words, Indian day schools may have physically resembled one-room rural schools, however, the objective of assimilation and civilization meant that day schools had much more in common with their residential school counterparts.


250 Their investigation draws on the 2004 master’s thesis of one of its authors, Lisa-Marie Smith, titled “Portrait of a Teacher: Anthony Walsh and the Inkameep Indian Day School”.

In their inquiry into the Indian day schools at Six Mile Creek and Inkameep Fleming et al. draw on official correspondence and other sources, which provide details into the experiences of the Irish-born schoolteacher, Anthony Walsh, who taught at the Indian day schools in the Okanagan Valley from the late 1920s to early 1940s. Their investigation shows that even as Indian day schools functioned as a type of hybrid of rural and residential schools, they also supported Indigenous cultural continuity and knowledge sharing. Their work, based on written archival records, focuses on the pedagogy and teaching career of Walsh. Although there are few “recorded observations” of teaching from the late 19th to early 20th centuries, nevertheless, they show how Walsh achieved success “as a teacher and promoter of Aboriginal arts and crafts” by attempting to “create a place for Indigenous knowledge in school” and to “promote Aboriginal culture outside the classroom.” In addition to highlighting Walsh’s “uncommon work” as a type of “light” in the history of Indigenous schooling, the authors assert that the DIA records provide insight into the colonial bureaucracy that governed the schooling of Indigenous children: this system was marked by “a suffocating sense of cultural superiority”; its “lack of accountability to those it allegedly served”; and the “general myopia of DIA and religious authorities to the harsh realities on reserve.”

252 Fleming, et al., “An Accidental Teacher, 10 and 2. The authors analyze Walsh’s practice as a teacher, including how he focused on “educating the whole child” and “character education” through experiential learning utilizing the arts (18). In their work, they show how Walsh utilized ‘art’ – songs, legends, mask making, and drawing – to “bridge differences” between Okanagan traditions and spiritual elements of Catholicism that were part of the Catholicism taught at the school (11). The authors observe that the teacher’s own sense of cultural sensitivity (and empathy) derived from his own childhood experiences in Ireland and his “distaste for Britain’s ‘suppression of an indigenous culture in Ireland,’” (9). His temperament – as a person comfortable with his own solitude, his patience, and non-coercive teaching style – they suggest also enabled his success as a teacher. While the authors focus on inter-cultural competency at an individual level there would also be a need to consider the degree to which this transformation can happen institutionally to counter the general “myopia” of DIA (or settler society and institutions), more broadly.

253 Ibid, 2.

254 Ibid, 19.
The authors highlight the desires and interests of Osoyoos members at Inkameep. The school, established in 1916, was established through “[Indigenous] initiative”, and at the request, in 1914, by Chief Baptiste of Inkameep the community which had “vigorously expressed its opposition” to any educational institution other than a day school. The “uncommon work” of the teacher, along with members of the Osoyoos nation, illuminate possibilities and ways that formal Western-style education can support cross-cultural, non-violent learning and exchanges between non-Indigenous teacher and Indigenous students, as well as between the teacher and Indigenous communities. This example shows how schooling does not have to be a case of either/or (assimilation or cultural continuity). There are possibilities for schooling to incorporate both/and (Western and Indigenous knowledge) forms of knowledge. At the same time, this case also shows the colonial bureaucratic logic that permeated day schooling, and the state’s ‘suffocating sense’ of cultural superiority and its lack of accountability to Indigenous learners. These experiences and memories are important to better understand present-day aspirations of Indigenous peoples, and communities, to reclaim and reimage Indigenous systems of education.

Moving into the northwest coast of British Columbia and working with Tsimshian Elders on day schooling in Port Essington, Helen Raptis delves deeply into Indian day schooling by weaving together documentary (print) evidence with oral history animating two educational worlds, that of traditional Tsimshian education and that of experiences at the Port Essington Indian Day School (prior to 1950) and at an integrated setting in the Port Essington Elementary School (post 1950).

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1950). In *What We Learned – Two Generations Reflect on Tsimshian Education and the Day Schools* (2016), Raptis, together with members of the Tsimshian nation, co-create a case study about Indigenous schooling that moves the conversation beyond limited notions of formal schooling, which tend to focus on residential schooling.\(^{256}\) This historical study draws on archival documents and elders’ oral histories from two different generations to illustrate that Tsimshian former students experienced both “broad, holistic notion of Tsimshian education as well as the more restricted Western concept of formal schooling at the Port Essington Indian Day School.”\(^{257}\) In his review, Michael Marker observes that these recollections on schooling illustrate Tsimshian forms of education, which involved the nurturing of “spiritual, emotional, intellectual, and physical” capacities of the child by family. The stories also show Western approaches to education, notably the “separation of the mind and the body.”\(^{258}\) Raptis argues that members of both generations spoke about how Western-style schooling (at the Indian Day School and the elementary school) and their “broader Tsimshian education” (learning from family, on the land, for instance) played “important, albeit unequal” roles in their adult lives.

Significantly, Raptis argues that recollections of the younger generation, who attended integrated public-school systems, focused more on the impact of formal Western schooling. Raptis suggests that the shift in focus to formal schooling illustrates how the broad Tsimshian understanding of education “gave way,” in a single generation, to a “more limited concept of schooling.”\(^{259}\) She

\(^{256}\) Raptis, *What We Learned*, 4.

\(^{257}\) Ibid, 5.

\(^{258}\) Marker, “Helen Raptis – What We Learned,” 153.

\(^{259}\) Raptis *What We Learned*, 5.
illustrates how assimilative aspects continued in the integration era, in public streams. The recollections of schooling, co-created by Raptis with members of the Tsimshian nation, give voice to difficult themes: “cultural loss, disconnection, and discrimination,” whilst also animating “resilience and triumph.” There is Tsimshian “resistance and adaptation” in relation to formal schooling – at day schools and public schools, and then in relation to their entry into the paid labour force.\(^{260}\) This work illuminates, as Marker points out, the struggles of Tsimshian people, and their experiences adapting to “complicated conditions” of colonization, including forced relocations and the “dilemmas and paradoxes” of day schooling.\(^{261}\)

Raptis and the Tsimshian Nation’s co-created study pushes against the grain of dominant and limited imaginings of residential schooling and shifts the conversation into Indigenous paradigms, ways of knowing, building and sharing knowledge. In the epilogue, Raptis asserts that:

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\text{[C]ritical evaluations of the federal government’s historical role in educating Indigenous peoples in multiple broad historical settings have been hampered by historians’ almost singular focus on residential schooling.}^{262}\]

The singular focus on residential schooling has likewise produced a singular and narrowly defined understanding of reconciliation. My project in the East, similar to this work in the West, also pushes past a “singular focus” on residential schooling, not only by historians, as Raptis

\(^{260}\) Raptis What We Learned, 5.

\(^{261}\) Marker, “Helen Raptis – What We Learned,” 153.

\(^{262}\) Raptis, What We Learned, 154.
notes, but in turn by policy makers who have tended to focus on the “negative legacy” of residential schooling.

The situation at Listuguj, however, differs from that at Port Essington Day School because unlike Port Essington where teachers were not only secular but also certified, the school at Restigouche, from 1903 until 1969, was operated almost exclusively by teachers from the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, and overseen by priests and Indian Agents. In my research, I was able to draw on archival records about the school not only from the federal government but also from the religious order responsible for teaching. During my research, I also encountered former teachers who had taught at the school, and who agreed to be interviewed about some aspects of their time teaching and living in Restigouche. While the record and voices of teachers are not central to this study, nevertheless the stories of Indian Day School teachers are important to record and to document as part of the official public record of colonial schooling. The stories of the teachers and administrators enter the colonial heart of this genocidally-intentioned school system. In the words, bodies, and memories of the (mostly female) white teachers, for example, it is possible to carve out their/our role, as white settler women, the “subordinate bloody-end of an oppressive machine”, purveyors of colonial violence, and the “human interface required to grind difference down”.263 It is the part of the story ‘we’ (non-Indigenous, white settlers, white women) normalize, that we don’t like to see: our complicity and ways we (as white, settlers, women) are

263 Sophie Tamas and Jennifer Henderson, personal correspondence (e-mail), July 9, 2021.
implicated in the subordination and domination of Indigenous peoples, Indigenous women, and Indigenous ways of being and knowing.\textsuperscript{264}

3.4) Ojibwa | Anishinabeg territories – in Upper Canada, Dalles 38C Indian Reserve
(Indian day schools in present-day Ontario) and Kitigan Zibi (in present-day Québec)

On Ojibwa territory, in the early 19\textsuperscript{th} century, formal schools were opened by Methodist missionaries for Indigenous students. In her research on Indigenous education, Hope MacLean analyzes experimental Methodist day schools in Upper Canada (present-day Southern Ontario), including the partnerships between missionaries and Indigenous peoples, through which the schools formed. Described by Brittany Luby and Kathryn Labelle as an “outlier,”\textsuperscript{265} MacLean’s research overturns the dominant narrative of colonial schooling as “unmitigated experience of horror” with the question “was it always so?” MacLean argues that prior to the establishment of residential schools, other forms of formal schooling (briefly) flourished illuminating potentialities of positive forms of Indigenous schooling within a settler-colonial context. She illustrates how Methodist missionaries used day schools to facilitate the conversion of Indigenous peoples beyond professions of faith to include demonstrated knowledge of the Scriptures through alphabetic literacy.\textsuperscript{266} MacLean asserts that Methodist missionaries

\textsuperscript{264} In “Decolonization is not a Metaphor,” Tuck and Yang discuss ways in which “white people maintained and (re)produced white privilege” in various institutional ‘anti-racist’ settings. Personal stories of exclusions or subordination function as a type of ‘move to innocence’ supporting a process whereby “a woman comes to believe her own claim of subordination is the most urgent, and that she is unimplicated in the subordination of other women” [the authors draw on Janet Mawhinney’s 1998 Master’s thesis, which builds on the work of Mary Louise Fellows and Sherene Razack], 9.

\textsuperscript{265} Luby and Labelle, “‘The New Generation’ – Cooperative Education at the Day School,” 91.

\textsuperscript{266} MacLean, “A Positive Experiment,” 36.
encouraged conversion so that, in turn, Indigenous peoples would serve in their own communities as teachers and as missionaries.\textsuperscript{267} Day schooling was fundamental to the Methodist project of conversion; however, MacLean illustrates how schooling, its pedagogy and curriculum, changed and “adapted to Native needs.”\textsuperscript{268} Drawing on written documentation, she argues that Methodist day schools, established in 1820s to early 1830s, were a “positive experiment” that supported: systemic bilingual instruction and the publication of written materials in Indigenous languages; teaching pedagogies in keeping with Indigenous practices; and the inclusion of a “wider range of academic subjects,” notably geography and natural history. In other words, these schools allowed for a wider than the usual missionary emphasis on Christian morality. MacLean argues that Indigenous peoples worked as translators, as writers, as teachers, and as community leaders (oftentimes selected by Methodist missionaries).\textsuperscript{269} Students at the day schools took up materials reading fluently in both Ojibwa and English. Finally,

\textsuperscript{267} MacLean, “A Positive Experiment,” 38.

\textsuperscript{268} Ibid, 40.

\textsuperscript{269} MacLean observes that Indigenous peoples were recruited as missionaries and teachers, who engaged in “missionary tours”; taught at schools or worked as interpreters. She also argues that Methodists “singled out and developed” Indigenous leadership on Reserves (“A Positive Experiment,” 45). For instance, MacLean discusses how Kahkewaquonaby (or, Reverend Peter Jones) and his brother Tyentennegen (or, John Jones) are Indigenous leaders who advocated and worked for their nations (producing translations of religious materials, as well as Ojibwa spelling and grammar texts) (“A Positive Experiment,” 39 and 44). Peter Jones is a ‘historical person’ credited with “helping his people survive European settlement” (Canada. Parks Canada, “Kahkewaquonaby,” accessed July 16, 2020. MacLean’s research on day schools illustrates, in part, how Peter Jones supported the continued resurgence and wellbeing of his nation through active involvement, adaptation, and engagement with multiple knowledge systems, both Western and Indigenous. See also: George Copway (Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh), Life, History, and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh (1847) (its expanded republication in 1850, under the title Recollections of a Forest Life,), and its publication, in 2020, with an Afterward by Deanna Reder. This autobiographical account of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh’s life speaks of his experiences, the land, Ojibwa knowledge and practices, as well as a critique of settler society. This text is considered the first book published by an Indigenous author in Canada. Reder’s Afterward offers compares the various publications offering critical analysis and questions associated with editing, culturally relevant reading strategies, and Anishnaabe-specific worldviews. (George Copway (Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh) and Deanna Reder. Recollections of a Forest Life, The Life and Travels of Kah-ge-ga-gah-bowh.)
MacLean asserts that the documentation illustrates that Ojibwa parents and leaders supported and showed interest in the day schools.

MacLean’s research suggests that day schools were not only requested or used by Indigenous peoples, but that Indigenous peoples adapted, flourished, and excelled in a bilingual formal school system where the pedagogy and curriculum was changed to meet Indigenous needs. This argument adds nuance to representations and understandings of the history day schools. The research shows potentialities for the day school system and pushes past emerging representations of Indian day schools as the lesser-known cousin of residential schools: for example, as feeder schools into residential schools; as ‘the same as’ residential schools, except for going home at night; or akin to rural (settler) schools. MacLean advances an argument that not only were there other forms of school besides residential schooling, but that some of these day schools were used by Indigenous peoples – albeit briefly – creating, asserting, and claiming spaces for Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies in formal colonial schools.

Part of the shadow of the residential school is that these adaptations and accommodations (that is, formal schooling that in some ways worked for the benefit of Indigenous peoples and their respective communities) have been ignored by settler society and that society’s self-serving penchant for the genre of “Residential School Gothic” has, arguably, prevented former day school students from telling their stories. The legacy of the IRS is that these (albeit limited and experimental) positive aspects and potentialities of formal schooling have been marginalized, neither seen nor remembered (by settler society) in the history of Indigenous schooling. This is
not to minimize the collective trauma of colonial schooling. Rather, it is to point out that what sustains historical trauma is the continued reliance on and promoting of tropes of victimhood and ‘lesser-than’ deficit thinking (in turn fed by tropes such as Residential School Gothic). Settler society not only built a school system to sever ties and connections between Indigenous peoples and their homelands, but also limited and constrained (potentially) healthier school systems, including a brief “experiment” in the early 1800s (as MacLean shows) and, for Mi’gmaq, the precedent of the expansive symbolic literacy in the 1700s (as discussed by Battiste). Pushing beyond the limiting shadow of residential schooling there exist Indigenous presences that, to draw on ideas expressed by Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, are (always) disrupting, affirming, creating, generating, and refusing.  

Working on Anishinabeg territory north of Georgian Bay (Ontario), Brittany Luby and Kathryn Labelle explore the possibilities and potentialities of Indian day schooling at the turn of the 20th century, in the years before the establishment of residential schools in this territory. More particularly, they work with, and re-imagine, memoirs of Ogimaamaashiik (Matilda) Martin about her experiences at an Indian day school on Dalles 38C Indian Reserve (now Ochiichagwe’babigo’ining (Ojibwa Nation). The authors assert that at the turn of the century, federally employed Indian agents were establishing and implementing educational policies

270 Simpson, As We Have Always Done, 2017.

271 The two residential schools in this region (north of Georgian Bay, Ontario) were: St. Mary’s Indian Residential School (1897) and Cecilia Jeffrey Residential School (1902) (See: Luby and Labelle, “‘The New Generation’ – Cooperative Education at the Day School,” 91 and 92).

272 The authors, Luby and Labelle, work with the transcript of an interview conducted with Ogimaamaashiik, in 1972, by George Beatty, an “Anishnabek enthusiast” who worked as a journalist. Ogimaamaashiik, born in 1885, was aged 87 when the interview took place in Kenora (Ontario).
known as “aggressive civilization”; the centerpiece of this policy framework was the replacement of the day school by the residential school.\textsuperscript{273} Luby and Labelle work with Ogimaamaashiik’s oral testimony illustrating that Indigenous ways of knowing worked alongside Western instructional methods in the day school.\textsuperscript{274} They argue that Ogimaamaashiik’s personal reflections disrupt, acting as a type of refusal, of a settler mindset that views “Euro-colonial ways of educating and living” as both benevolent and inevitable.\textsuperscript{275} Ogimaamaashiik’s memories of her childhood bring to life a moment at the age of six when:

he built a school …

a big log school … for me to go [learn English].

Her recollections centre around her grandfather, who went to see the Indian Agent, to see about getting an “Indian teacher.” Ogimaamaashiik recalls her grandfather returning home, saying:

If he [is going] to give me a teacher … I’m

[going] to have to [build a school].\textsuperscript{276}

In their re-telling of, and reflections on, these recollections, the authors observe that her perspectives provide a rare glimpse into Indigenous desires for “English language training” as

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\textsuperscript{273} By 1920, under Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Indigenous children between the ages of seven to fifteen years of age were required to attend “residential school”; parents who did not send their children faced penalties, including jail-time (“‘The New Generation’ – Cooperative Education at the Day School,”’90).

\textsuperscript{274} Luby and Labelle, “‘The New Generation’ – Cooperative Education at the Day School,” 93.

\textsuperscript{275} Ibid, 92.

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid, 99 (the authors discuss their re-working of the interview to animate an oral conversational voice in writing).
\end{flushleft}
well as “initiatives of local leaders” to engage with European style education.²⁷⁷ Luby and Labelle argue that Treaty relations, notably Treaty #3 signed in 1873, formed the context in which education initiatives emerged in this territory. As “land-sharing” agreements, treaties set forth guidelines for “interactions” and partnerships. Education, from this lens, was less about ‘diminishing’ or eliminating knowledge systems (as understood from within an ‘aggressive civilizing’ settler-colonial mindset) and was more about ‘adding on’ and ‘engaging with’.

Moreover, the memories contain a glimpse into Anishnabeg kinship relations: “he built a school” (she recalled) for me to learn [English]. This memory engenders a relationship of trust – between child and parent/grandparent – and of belonging (‘he built the school’ for her). This vision of an Indian day school – a log school built by/for Anishnabeg in a context of partnerships (settler and Indigenous) and relations (kinship families) – stands in contrast to the historical reality and present-day legacy of residential schooling’s “aggressive civilizing.” The oral memories re-imagined in the text animate holism, presence, desire, expansiveness, and possibilities of what existed, and what exists.

Travelling east, on Anishnabeg territory in the province of Québec, Anny Morissette observes that the research on residential schools is only beginning to emerge, and systematic studies on Indian day schools from the end of the 19th to mid-20th centuries do not exist in this province.²⁷⁸ In the context and wake of the TRC, Morissette argues that given the state’s mandate to investigate the history, the objective and the implementation of Indian residential schools, as

²⁷⁷ Luby and Labelle, “‘The New Generation’ – Cooperative Education at the Day School,” 100.
²⁷⁸ Morissette, “Il connaît le chemin de l’école, il peut y aller s’il veut,” 125.
well as the consequences for former students and their descendants, there is a parallel obligation to investigate Indian day schools to advance an understanding of “guérison et la réconciliation” [healing and reconciliation].  

While acknowledging this difficult history, Morissette argues that before investigating the consequences (or harms) of the schools, there is a need to retrace the history of establishments to better understand their underlying motivations. She argues that in Québec both residential and day schools had at their base “civilizing, Christianizing, and assimilating” (similar to other parts of Canada); however, in the province of Québec there were particularities, notably in how children were schooled with cultural references to French and Québécois origins. Moreover, she notes that around the 1950s, the cultural origins of Indigenous children (at residential schools) were taught as part of cultural ‘folklore’; she suggests that it would be difficult to ascertain whether missionaries were aware that in so doing, they ridiculed children’s identity. Morissette’s research on day schooling, based on archival print records, focuses on a particular school and so doing shows the broader Indian day school system of which the school was part:

[t]he history of school life and its actors in each given community, there are documents relating to the management of these establishments, which reveal a portrait, unpublished in the province, of infrastructure, decision-making, staff recruitment, curriculum and school calendar, annual inspection and attendance at these institutions by Aboriginal, Métis, illegitimate and white children. [translation]

Her historical research draws on documentation about day schools, notably the school of Anishnabeg (Algonquin) community of Kitigan Zibi produced by Indian Affairs from the years

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279 Morissette, “‘Il connaît le chemin de l’école, il peut y aller s’il veut’,” 126.

280 Ibid, 126.

281 Ibid, 126.
1879 to 1953. As well, the author draws on written documents from the region to contextualize
the development of the Indian day school at Kitigan Zibi, noting that while her research relies on
written documentation, the oral history of the former students who attended this school “restera à
faire” [has yet to be completed].

The written documentation about the formal school paints a familiar picture. Around the same
time of the creation of the Kitgan Zibi reserve, in 1853, a schoolhouse was installed in the
community. School teachers taught both Algonquin and Euro-Canadian children. The school
calendar was adapted to meet Indigenous needs: the school closed during the months from
November to February, when children went with their parents into the woods to hunt, and the
school opened from March to November. In 1870, the Soeurs grises de la Croix were called to
teach by the “pères oblats de Maniwaki … pour mettre fin à “l’ignorance.” The “couvent-
école” (mission school) classes were delivered in the summer months, and in the Algonquin
language. Based on Indian Affairs reports from the late 1800s, Morissette points out that
Indigenous languages were taught at Indian day schools in the province.

In 1887, the Sisters left the mission school and began their work as instructors of teachers and
commercial courses. At this time, lay teachers (primarily women) took on the role of teaching at
the Kitigan Zibi Indian day school, from 1888 to 1948. Drawing on the documentation,

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282 Morissette, “Il connaît le chemin de l’école, il peut y aller s’il veut,” 127.

283 Ibid, 128.

284 Ibid, 128.
Morissette draws out themes associated with day schooling: teacher selection; low attendance rates (attributed to seasonal activities, poverty (lack of clothing, especially during the winter months); DIA incentives for attendance (prizes, hot lunches); and parental involvement ('indifference' from the DIA’s point of view, an attitude which was seen to need correcting). As other scholars have observed, changes to the Indian Act in 1894 meant that parents could be punished if children did not attend school. Starting in 1948, parents were ‘encouraged’ to send their children to school in that Family Allowance was distributed to parents whose children attended.285

In her review of teacher selection, Morissette notes that, unsurprisingly, Indian Agents and the Department of Indian Affairs played a role in teacher selection. However, she observes that the correspondence, for example from the late 1800s, illustrates that the Indian Agent paid attention to the opinions of the leadership and band members concerning teacher selection.286 In keeping with Hope MacLean’s analysis of the Methodist Indian Day Schools in Upper Canada, the active involvement and engagement of Indigenous leadership (and community members) illustrates their interest, desire, and involvement in Indian day schooling.

Morissette’s analysis adds texture and nuance to the narrative about Indigenous schooling by focusing on the story about a particular Indian day school. She advances an argument that

285 Morissette, “‘Il connaît le chemin de l’école, il peut y aller s’il veut’,”, 135 and 138.

286 Ibid, 132.
Anishnabeg of Kitigan Zibi were never passive with respect to the education of their children. Morissette draws on band council resolutions, noting that band members oftentimes brought their concerns (and desires) in person to Ottawa. She observes that seeing, and following, the differences between Anishnabeg and Indian Affairs’ officials (for example, band council resolutions) is a “road” that can be followed to shed light on Anishnabeg desires with respect to schooling. This is important because Morissette shows how Western methods (such as band council resolutions) were used (and adapted) by Indigenous peoples to voice their desires and interests; these resolutions were brought forward (in person) to Ottawa, and together – the written and oral forms of meaning making, give expression, animate, a worldview that is expansive.

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Despite the long history of formal day schooling on Indigenous lands, and the research on day schools on Mi'gmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Okanagan Valley and Tsimshian, and Anishinabeg territories, which I have summarized here, there is a marked absence of research and scholarly attention on Indian day schooling. The long-standing absence and ignoring are problematic on

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287 Morissette, “Il connaît le chemin de l’école, il peut y aller s’il veut”, 141.

288 Morissette highlights the lack of official power held by the community, with respect to education, in the context of Indian Act governance. This analysis of day schooling prompts Morissette to self-reflect on the present-day situation in education, asking: “is Indigenous control over Indigenous education still marginal today?” [my translation] Morissette highlights that in 1980, the band took charge of schooling in Kitigan Zibi and children returned ‘home’ with the opening of Kitigan Zibi Kikinamadinan. Since that time – and before – Anishnabeg of Kitigan Zibi have asserted their desires for schooling: in 2013, Chief Gilbert Whiteduck spoke about schooling as Inherent Right effectively moving the conversation into Indigenous resurgence rebuilding, and sovereignty: “Nous affirmons que nous avons des droits inherents qui comprennent le droit a la jurisdicction complete sur l’éducation pour la communauta. Nous avons la ferme conviction que nous avons un travail important à faire dans l’éducation de nos enfants au sein de notre communauta et que nous sommes pleinement en mesure de le faire! (Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation 2013) We affirm that we have inherent rights which include the right to full jurisdiction over education for the community. [We firmly believe that we have an important job to do in the education of our children in our community and that we are fully able to do it! Translation] (Ibid).
many fronts. Ignoring day schooling in the conversations about reconciliation continues to support the colonial logic of constraining and containing difficult histories that speak about settler violence and violations. Indigenous peoples in the present day are further restricted from accessing, interpreting, analyzing, and sitting with portions of their own history; instead, another difficult history, that of residential school stands in, like an omnipresent shadow, and cuts into other experiences and recollections.

In the small amount of research that has been conducted on day schools, there are possibilities and potentialities. The research conducted by Walls reminds us that Mi’gmaq women, including those from Restigouche, worked at day schools for two decades during the first part of the 20th century; whilst in the Okanagan Valley, a settler colonial teacher worked with Indigenous peoples, carving out, literally and figuratively, space for Indigenous knowledges, through the arts, songs, and stories. In Anishnabeg territories, in the early 19th century, Methodist day schools were established, briefly, and although these were not unproblematic, as an experiment in pedagogy and curriculum they may be returned to in the present-day to affirm ways of teaching and learning in a trans-systemic manner, as Battiste and Henderson discuss. Trans-systemic teaching and learning recognizes differences not as problematic, but as enriching and expansive, in terms of ‘adding on’ versus being threatened by the newness in encounters. This is not to present day schooling through an idealizing or utopic lens, but to consider potentialities that can be created, carved out, considered for generations ahead, from lived experiences of those who have already been here. In her look at the Mission and Indian Day School in Kitigan Zibi, Morissette reminds us of resistances, of inequities, of the increasingly dominating role played by
Indian Agents and the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa, and of a community countering, acting on its desires, mounting resistances, and making use of formal schooling.

Indian day schools have been built, opened, and closed, burnt down, built again. In the present-day era of reconciliation, in countering Gothic framings and disinterested settler-colonial listening, the stories about, the resistances for and against formal schooling, open a pathway to trace and build an understanding, not simply about the harms of schools, but about relations between and amongst Indigenous and settler-colonial peoples in an era of continued resurgences and – potentially – of transformation.

Section II: Methodology

CHAPTER FOUR: TRANS-SYSTEMIC METHODOLOGY

4.1) Opening Remarks

This dissertation involved uncovering, assembling, interpreting, analyzing, and sharing a story (or stories), from written documents and oral history, about Indian day schooling. The research started with a question about the absence (of day schools), silences, and ‘missing pieces’ in the dominant narrative about Indian residential schooling. This research about day schools emerged, in part, from a brief conversation that I had, years earlier, with a former student of the Restigouche Indian Day school: in talking about residential schools, he was firm in his position that “we had our own school, in Listuguj. It was a Day School.” Research can grow in those chance meetings and “in-community” conversations and experiences. To learn about this history of colonial schooling, I stood still and attempted to build an understanding and connection with a
particular Indian Day School (or, *schools*, as I quickly learned) located on Mission lands, on Mi’gmaw territory, along the Restigouche River.

Beneath (and beyond) silences in the dominant narrative about colonial schooling, there are other questions and observations: About ‘how’ to build understandings, and processes, for deeper, more lasting forms of reconciliation. About settler role and responsibilities in the ongoing, and evolving, reconciliation project. About decolonizing research, in a settler colonial context, its potentialities, possibilities, risks, and limitations. This project is part of the ongoing wider project of decolonizing, which involves, as Linda Tuhiwai Smith argues, “centering Indigenous concerns and worldviews.” In the context of Canadian settler-colonialism, decolonizing involves asking critical questions about settler-colonial and Indigenous relations, and examining biases and taken-for-granted colonial assumptions about land, resources, governance, sovereignty, and self-determination. Decolonizing is not only about being able to identify, assess, or critique colonialism: decolonizing also involves change, movement, and transformation.

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289 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 41. In her path-breaking work, Smith asserts that decolonization does not mean a “total rejection” of Western theory or knowledge, but rather decolonization means challenging the “invasion of their [Indigenous] communities by academic, corporate, and populist researchers”, and, on the other hand, to “carry out research on their own concerns” (40-41). Drawing on Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), Smith articulated a decolonizing methodology showing how centering Indigenous concerns and worldviews also involves critical examination of ‘the West’ (as an ideology and its institutional structures): overturning, challenging, and actively questioning its authoritative gaze and singular “objective truth” regimes.

290 Zinga and Styres argue that anti-oppressive pedagogies within higher education contexts involves recognizing and examining oppression, and seeking to mitigate its effects, while decolonizing involves focusing on “colonial relations and how examining those relations confronts biases and taken-for-granted assumptions and stereotypes, as well as our own implications in those relations,” (“Decolonizing Curriculum,” 37). In “Decolonizing Research Paradigms in the Context of Settler Colonialism,” Held draws on Smith to advance the argument that decolonization is “a long-term process involving the bureaucratic, cultural, linguistic, and psychological divesting of colonial power,” 8. Drawing on Styres, Held argues that decolonizing requires “undoing ‘the privileging of dominant Euro-centric cultural values and beliefs in education, scholarship, knowledge production, the legitimization of intellectual capital, and the networks and systems of power,’” 8.

291 Mackey argues that scholars in the field of settler colonial theory have been “more successful” on the “critique” front, yet less so in terms of the “constructive” side, for instance “documenting resistance and imagining alternatives” (*Unsettled Expectations*, 23). Mackey argues that there has been a shift, in recent years, from
(2000) asserts that decolonization is “social process” involving five distinct and interconnected phases, which are: “(1) rediscovery and recovery, (2) mourning, (3) dreaming, (4) commitment, and (5) action.”

Scholars have raised concerns, however, about the ways in which the term ‘decolonization’ is being used to denote any or all forms of oppression. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang advance the argument that decolonization has been usurped by theories of liberation (e.g., Freirian ‘free the mind’ discourses) and social justice movements, generally. The term ‘decolonization’ they argue, is being used as a “metaphor for oppression.” As a metaphor for oppression, the central issue of colonization – “stolen Indigenous lands and life” – is thus “subsumed” by a myriad of oppressions (e.g. racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, and settler colonialism).

While they acknowledge these forms of oppression need to be countered, Tuck and Yang assert that ‘critical consciousness’ raising about such issues does not address the “underlying root causes” of oppression: stolen lands and life. Thus, while this project on Indian Day schooling generates a critical narrative about the many oppressions experienced at formal colonial schools, as Tuck and Yang observe, there is a need to remain mindful of the root causes of this specific oppression, the ways that the schooling upheld settler values, devaluing Indigenous ways of being, and were ‘part of that whole system’, stealing ‘life’ and stealing ‘lands.’ The history of Indian Day Schools shows this story of dispossession, and the ways that Indigenous peoples were uprooted without having to leave their homelands. Paying attention to the stories, too, is

‘dismantling’ towards that of “(re)build[ing] our own house” (Simpson quoted in Unsettled Expectations, 23).

292 Laenui quoted in Zinga and Styres, “Decolonizing curriculum,” 34

293 Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” 20.

possible to hear memories inside colonial silences, and continuances of Indigenous forms of knowledges and meaning making.

More questions emerge when working towards decolonizing research practices and conceptualizations: How does one center Indigenous concerns and worldviews? What would centering Indigeneity look like in theory and practice, in a settler colonial context? The research, and the writing, of this dissertation on Indigenous schooling has to do with silences, ignoring, and ‘missing pieces’ of dominant reconciliation narratives. How research is conducted on sensitive and complex histories, in this instance on Day Schooling, will affect how reconciliation is understood and put into practice. At the core of this project, attention is paid to both analysis and action, as well as purposeful and mindful recognition that this work reflects my perspective, and positionality as a non-Indigenous settler researcher. In paying attention to how research is conducted it is possible to both see oneself in relation to and connected with, rather than focusing on the final product, or outcomes. In other words, there is no ‘what’ without a lot of thought and care given to how, as I have conceived this project. The dissertation animates the concept of “trans-systemic knowledges”. The concept of “ethical space” (Chapter 5) is brought into play to facilitate the active relationship sense of trans-systemic knowledge building.

4.2) Trans-Systemic Knowledge Building and Relating

In this dissertation I am using a trans-systemic approach, but for now, it is not primarily in the

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295 As one example, in her work on Anishnaabe nibi inaakonigewin (our water law) Craft observes that the methodology she used evolved from relationships amongst people and with place, which was “gifted” to participants through the “process of working together, sitting together in ceremony, and reflecting on purpose” (in “Giving and Receiving life from Anishinaabe nibi inaakonigewin (our water law) research,” 105. Craft emphasizes that working in non-harmful ways is important; methodology involves paying attention to “how space was made for all these forms of knowledge and knowledge transmission [ceremony, song, language, and story] to come together for a variety of purposes (teaching, accessing, legal thought, disseminating knowledge)” 116. 

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interests of rebuilding relations between Indigenous peoples and settlers. Rather, I am constructing a trans-systemic approach that is in the interests of the hearing of Indigenous paradigms (nature of reality, understanding of knowledge, and values), supporting (as a settler) the recovering and reclaiming of Indigenous knowledges at individual and collective levels. At the same time, this dissertation is about seeing (the invisibility) of settler colonial logics and critically drawing them out. In this project, I work towards acknowledging and interrogating ways that colonial oppression has manifested through vehicles such as Indian Day Schools, which targeted Indigenous children. Just because one uses a trans-systemic approach does not mean that it is ‘for’ both sides or ‘for’ reconciliation. The reclamation of Indigenous knowledge frameworks can – somewhat surprisingly – occur through an approach that centres Indigenous knowledges, but also makes use of critical concepts from the Western tradition of social theory, which have been useful as tools and lenses for me in this project. The question is how to work with these at the same time as I try to stay centered in, respectful of, Indigenous knowledge systems.

Over the past several decades, scholars have articulated and generated understandings about the “intersection” of the liminal space between distinct knowledge systems. In her work, Jo-ann Archibald (Q’um Q’um Xiiem) of the Stó:lô Nation, turned to practices of oral storytelling. In Archibald’s re-telling of “Coyote’s Eyes”, she shows how Coyote learns difficult lessons about – desire, curiosity, self-pity, asking for help, (sometimes) staggering, and (possibly) balancing.  

296 In “Indigenous and Trans-Systemic Knowledge Systems,” Battiste and Henderson observe that scholars are “interweaving and intraweaving an entanglement of knowledge systems, languages, concepts and feelings” and so doing they “create a liminal space,” vii. They argue that this liminal space has been interpreted through concepts and practices such as: “two-row Wampum belt, the concept of two worlds (Eastman, 2011), double-consciousness (Du Bois, 1903), cognitive métissage (Donald, 2012), split headedness (Cajete, 1986), jagged worldview (Little Bear, 2000), two-eyed seeing (Bartlett, et al., 2012), ambiculture (Nicholson et al., 2019),” (Ibid, vii).
Through story, Archibald shares an understanding about walking in “balance”, as a type of wholeness achieved by learning to “switch back and forth” amongst many “eyes” (in this story, not only between the eyes of “Mouse” and “Buffalo”, but with “all the animals”). Similarly, animating a trans-systemic approach and analysis also requires learning to “switch” back and forth between worlds, between ways of knowing and understanding. Archibald’s emphasis on movement as the centering force of balance and wholeness amongst worldviews is important to recall because centering Indigenous knowledges and concerns does not mean a rejection of Western but a ‘switching’ amongst and between systems of knowledge. Through story, Archibald helps us to see (feel, sense) the idea of movement in the prefix ‘trans’ in trans-systemic knowledge-building. The prefix ‘trans,’ means (from the Latin) ‘across, over, beyond’ and so is inherently about movement. In her work on residential schools and reconciliation, Paulette Regan, a settler scholar, argues that critical dialogue involves creating spaces of “encounter” where participants can “share” with one another without minimizing (or normalizing) harms, and at the same time learn “new decolonizing ways of working together that shift power and perception.” Relationship building, from this position, is not so much about movement but carefully and mindfully creating spaces for critical and creative conversations and encounters between (within, alongside) Indigenous and Settler peoples. Mi’gmaw Elders Albert Marshall and Murdena Marshall, along with settler allies, have advanced an understanding of


298 Regan quoted in Simon’s “Towards a Hopeful Practice of Worrying,” 137.
knowledge production involving Indigenous and Eurocentric systems using the concept “etuaptmunk” (two-eyed seeing).

The concept and practice of etuaptmunk “draws together strengths of mainstream, or Western, and Mi’kmaq knowledges.” Etuaptmunk uses the metaphor of ‘seeing’ the world through both ‘eyes’ (Western and Indigenous) and to “respect the differences between the two perspectives and to focus on, and work from, a position of shared strengths.” In her reading, Sylvia Moore observes that two-eyed seeing articulates a careful weaving together of “deep meanings” from knowledge systems in a “balanced” and “respectful” manner, with and through dialogue. The concept of etuaptmunk, in many ways, reflects Indigenous, in this instance Mi’gmaq, understandings that seek to order and understand ones’ world through relationships underpinned by a desire towards balancing (versus eliminating, identifying, or measuring) differences. In other words, etuamptmunk reflects a particular (Indigenous) worldview, way of seeing, understanding, and relating. Two-eyed seeing, Albert Marshall and Murdena Marshall assert, is not about “merging” or ‘piecing’ “bits of Indigenous knowledge onto Western”. Instead, etuamptmunk involves “bringing different ways” together, “weaving” these understandings in a manner that “motivate[s]” and considers all understandings for future generations. Two-eyed

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301 Moore, Trickster Chases the Tale of Education, 116. In “‘Two-eyed seeing’ supports wildlife health,” Kutz and Tomaselli observe that “[r]ecognizing the legitimacy of multiple ways of knowing is the first step in bridging knowledge types,” 1136. The two-eyed seeing principle, in their research on ‘wildlife health and conservation’, they argue, is achieved by using “triangulation, or corroboration of information by using multiple methods, and sources,” Kutz and Tomaselli, “‘Two-eyed seeing’ supports wildlife health,” 1136.

302 Iwama, et. al.,4-5.
seeing, as a concept, conceptualizes the overlapping space of “shared strengths” as potentially being the place from to resolve concerns in Indigenous communities. This positioning is important; however, what my research is also interested in investigating ways that “two societies” may come together, to recall Mackey, and move apart.

Scholars Marie Battiste and Sa’ke’j Henderson are amongst those scholars who are advancing an understanding of the concept and practices of trans-systemic knowledge building. Battiste and Henderson assert that although research on Indigenous Knowledges is growing nevertheless “little is still known about the methods needed to blend two distinctive knowledge systems” (emphasis added). Battiste and Henderson argue that trans-systemic knowledge production “needs to be based on the belief that knowledge systems need to learn from each other to create a new vocabulary that transcends the existing categories.” The “interweaving” of distinct knowledges systems open into “convergence points that respect the divergence points.” Similarly, in his discussion about decolonization and Indigenization, David Garneau recognizes that this work is “collective” and also requires “occasions of separation – moments where Indigenous people take space and time to work things out among themselves, and parallel moments when allies ought to do the same.” Trans-systemic knowledge building, as a conceptual framework, can allow for that convergence and divergence. Battiste and Henderson argue that trans-systemic analysis is an “attempt to weave differences and similarities” into a

305 Ibid, viii.
method by which to understand “the distinct knowledge systems and languages.” 307 The emphasis in this approach seems to be the recognition of the distinctiveness of the two systems, their convergence, and their divergence.

I use a trans-systemic approach to open beyond limited forms of reconciliation that seek closure about past harms, or absorption of Indigeneity for the benefit of settler society. I am seeking to more deeply understand methods that will generate diversity, understandings, in which different kinds (and sources) of knowledges can respectfully, and ethically, converge, reconcile, and stand apart. Trans-systemic approaches can offer an alternative to logic of elimination, absorption or containment. 308 Battiste and Henderson assert that trans-systemic analysis is not a quest for a “grand theory of everything” (this is not about ‘missing’ pieces to make the whole complete, nor about seeking solutions to a ‘common’ problem), rather, they argue that “[trans-systemic knowledges] seeks a living, regenerating field of inquiry,” 309 where the focus is less on defining and measuring and leans more on processes that are “interconnected and relational”. 310 What is significant in Battiste and Henderson’s analysis is not only the emphasis on wider lenses, but the


308 The dangers of a bad sort of (not truly) trans-systemic knowledge can be understood from Patrick Wolfe who theorized ways in which the Western/legitimate absorbed the Indigenous into itself to reap new kinds of value. Settler-colonialism, Wolfe argued, is marked by the logic of elimination and absorption of Indigenous presences (lands, bodies, knowledges). The absorption of Indigeneity (people, culture, knowledge systems), however, is not for the benefit of Indigenous peoples (for example, as a type of recognition of limited Indigenous rights or authority over their lands or knowledges, nor an honourable convergence or reconciliation of knowledge systems). Instead, as Wolfe points outs, the absorption of Indigeneity is referring to the incorporation of Indigenous culture by settlers for the purposes of signaling a ‘new’ national culture (for settlers) that is of the place Wolfe, “Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native,” 387–409.


310 Ibid, viii.
recognition of unique sources for knowledges, Western and Indigenous, and the affirmation of diversity.

There are critical questions about responsibly (and responsively) working with differing knowledge systems. Western knowledge has been associated with power, with a particular type of power that doesn’t sit well alongside other knowledge systems, without (attempting to) incorporate them in diminishing and containing ways. There is a tension at play in that while Indigenous Knowledges recognize (and partially adapt to) settler logics, there is still a risk. There is a danger because although Indigenous thought systems may recognize settler logics, this does not (and has not) meant that Indigenous systems have been respected by them, in turn. Or, if Indigenous Knowledges are respected (recognized or acknowledged) it is those aspects ‘most like’, settler colonial knowledges that tend to be recognized. Critical Indigenous scholarship points to the importance of incongruities (gaps and differences, disagreements) to affirm Indigenous knowledge systems.311 Battiste asserts that there is a need to critically attend to inequities between how worldviews are understood, and how knowledge is produced, lived, and articulated. She advances an argument that in education differing worldviews (e.g., Euro-western and Indigenous) cannot be brought together unproblematically, in a utopic balanced way. Differing frames of reference (or worldviews) are not juxtaposed in a power vacuum. Battiste reminds us that too often tensions between frameworks will tend to be resolved in favour of the more institutionally powerful one absorbing and cancelling out the challenges of the less

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311 If Indigenous thought systems are buried or concealed by settler colonial logics then, as Borrows asserts, worldviews (thought systems, principles, and laws) can be ‘found’ or recovered and animated from Indigenous stories and practices. (Borrows, Recovering Canada, 13).
powerfully positioned framework, if one is not careful. The legacy of colonization, Battiste argues, has created a “deficit (education) model” whereby formal (settler) education systems have privileged Euro-centric norms and beliefs, and excluded Indigenous knowledge systems. Battiste asserts that the pressing challenge is to balance “colonial legitimacy, authority and disciplinary capacity with Indigenous knowledge and pedagogies.” Battiste is critical of an unquestioned bridging, or synthesis, of Indigenous and Euro-Western worldviews that does not also address the long-standing “deficit model” in education (and other) institutions and practices. Thus, as part of trans-systemic knowledge building, there is still a need to expose, interrogate, and push against how some knowledges are privileged, while others are subordinated.

In Listuguj, on Mi’gmaq territory, former students who took part in this project shared memories associated with learning their history, outside of formal schooling. Kenny Mitchell, for instance, spoke about the learning that took place, with family, extended relations, and in his language. Kenny observed that:

I know my history. I was taught by the elder people. They are all dead, the ones that taught me. They would be over one hundred years old the ones that taught me. And I know the language really good, I think. The history, I think I know more of the history than a lot of people in the community because my grandparents, bringing them along to their friends’

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313 Battiste quoted in Moore, Trickster Chases the Tale of Education, 113.

314 Battiste, “Decolonizing and Indigenizing the Academy,” 2017; Critical educators, such as Henri Giroux, assert that “exposing and interrogating” dominant ideologies are a necessary part of discussion about “education, pedagogy, and teacher preparation,” (quoted in Bartolomé, “Beyond the fog of ideology,” xv. In the 1980s, Giroux advanced the argument that teachers “emerged from teacher education programs” having internalized and absorbed “white supremacist, and deficit views of nonwhite and low-income students,” (Bartolomé, “Beyond the fog of ideology,” xv). Moreover, in teacher education programs, teachers are “not typically required to reflect critically on their ideological orientations”: this means that teachers may “unconsciously” hold racist and xenophobic views, which in turn would influence their teaching and their relations with students. (Bartolomé, “Beyond the fog of ideology,” xv).
houses on Friday nights. It was all gravel roads then, no lights. We went to see them, and it was all in Micmac. We went to see them.

This recollection shows how knowledge production (sharing, learning, and teaching) continued “in the community” despite, in and around, formal schooling. This is not to create a simplistic framing of community life “back then,” but it is to acknowledge plurality and diversity of knowledge systems and the learning and knowledge building at play in the daily lives of Indigenous youth, their parents, and relations, that has always taken place. When constructing a trans-systemic frame, in considering the how of trans-systemic knowledge production there must be a commitment to centering the Indigenous knowledge framework and to selectively and critically incorporating what can be useful from the Western one, in my critique of the national ‘big hug’ version of reconciliation. Storywork, relationality, and working with memories (print and oral) from places and lands, are ways, I suggest from this research, that can support the centering of Indigenous knowledges, the careful inclusion of Western analytics, potentially a form of ‘trans systemic’ production of ethical and respectful understandings, and knowledges.

There are dualities at play in my approach, which are part of what has made the research into a dynamic process, questioning itself, opening itself (being open to) difference. I have included pauses in the narrative, moments of (settler) self-reflexivity and as a way of thinking-through-story. The pauses, I argue, are necessary to learn ways of attuning oneself to difference not as problematic (the issue to be ‘resolved’, avoided, or dismissed), but rather as that which one learns to hear. There are dualities at play in ways that I have attempted to bring together conversations and archival research. There are dualities at play in ways that I have come to
understand abstraction/placelessness and embodiedness in place. Learning to recognize and live within dualities can feel, at times, like a carving away of one’s own body, the stories and history and relations and sense of familiarity and belonging peel away. There is a sadness that comes with recognizing that the familiar (dominant) narratives of belonging, for settlers, is related, directly, with violence and violations of Indigenous ways of being and knowing. Yet, seeing this violence is important to then recognize, and learn to appreciate, worldviews of cultures that are not one’s own.

**Relational research – accountabilities and responsibilities**

My intent has been to uncover the history and lesser-known stories about Indian day schooling through a trans-systemic approach, where many worldviews are honoured. Yet, because a history has been muted in the dominant narrative, this does not mean that former students, or their descendants will want the history ‘told’ or remembered, generally, and more particularly in an academic context, by a non-Indigenous researcher. The concept of relationality contributed to my understanding about ‘how’ to take a trans-systemic approach, including how to work with difficult and sensitive histories, in an ethical manner. In her analysis of relational research methodologies, Kahente Horn-Miller observes that because ideas are understood in a relational manner, they cannot be “owned or discovered”. For Horn-Miller, what this means is that from an Indigenous methodological standpoint, “rather than asking questions about validity or reliability”, the researcher would ask questions associated with responsibilities.315 For instance, a researcher can ask: “how am I fulfilling my role in this relationship?” What are my

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“responsibilities” in this relationship as I gain ‘knowledge’? The idea that research is understood from within a constellation of relationships differs from, and counters, research positionalities where a researcher is ‘outside’ the frame, observing from an objective distance. In a relational approach, a researcher’s subjectivity and positionality is not only included, but a researcher is also brought into a kinship type of ordering where there are responsibilities and accountabilities.

Opaskawayak Cree scholar Shawn Wilson’s Research is Ceremony (2008) articulates (and shows) a relational approach to conduct research and represent findings. Wilson discusses how relationships (with the audience, with researchers, with relatives, with place, and with ideas), as part of an Indigenous paradigm, can allow for research that “emanates from, honours and illuminates [Indigenous researchers] worldviews.” Some academics observe that this type of ethical ordering involves looking inward, at intent, and also outward, at potential impacts and benefits to be derived from research. Using a relational approach in my research supported, as Wilson argues, not only ‘what’ but also how: it meant that I was less concerned about ‘getting the whole story’ and paid attention to the relations fostered along the way. Wilson asserts that research is ceremony. As a ceremony – living, changing, evolving – Wilson observes that ‘how’ research is conducted needs to be considered in addition to ‘what’ is being researched. For

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316 Wilson's Research is Ceremony (2008) uses two distinct narrative voices: a formal academic voice and a personal ‘relational’ voice in the form of personal letters addressed to his children. In blending these two narrative voices, Wilson observes, responds, and shows differences and overlaps in concerns and desires of multiple registers (or audiences).

317 Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 54.
Wilson, relationships *with* (an object, a person, a place) are more important than the object itself.\textsuperscript{318}

Staying grounded and accountable in the relationships I was forming, with individuals, with families, at events and through work relations in the community, meant that I sometimes decided to forego asking for more information or pushing for clarification. Sometimes, it meant not releasing stories ‘too early’ because it was apparent that some of the details that emerged in conversation were too vulnerable, and there was an agreed upon expectation that the stories would be shared, formally, in a public record. I had the sense that some of the stories were shared with me, as a non-Indigenous researcher, primarily for other settlers to hear. What I mean by that, is that it is not my role to share these stories as part of ‘oral’ and living memory in the community, as a reflection of the community, rather it is my role, and it was agreed upon, to share these stories, told together in the dissertation, as part of a project of shifting or reconstructing ‘public memory’. Staying grounded in relationships meant, too, that as a non-Indigenous, settler researcher I needed to spend time, at the archives, encountering and feeling the discomfort about ‘my own’ settler history, and settler society’s role in imagining, teaching, assessing, and archiving ‘Indians’ at colonial day schools, which were instrumental in the attempts at assimilation and genocide of Indigenous peoples. Relationships are not only with

\textsuperscript{318} Wilson, *Research is Ceremony*, 81. Wilson’s work underscores the need to critically examine ‘how’ research is being conducted, and how Indigenous societies (institutions, peoples) are oftentimes still asked to collaborate in research, yet the collaboration may involve being at a table, not as an equal partner. In other words, focusing on relationships, from the outset, can illuminate the social orderings between researcher and participants. There is a spectrum and range of possibilities (from ‘co-researchers’ to ‘sources’ of knowledge; from research ‘with’ to research ‘on’). It is not always possible (or perhaps even desirable) to work collaboratively as co-producers of knowledge. Regardless of the level of participation – respect and ethical spaces of engagement – are important and much needed principles that can function to guide research and relations in a good, or noncoercive, way.
people but also with place, and with the living and print histories of those places, and the lands, upon which ‘we' are situated, where homes are made, and where schools are built.319

In her discussion about research with (not on) salmon, Moore asserts that “[l]iving in relationship with others … [involves] taking responsibility for every aspect of your life because everything you do in your life affects other entities in the Web of Life.”320 Moore shares this ‘teaching’ (or, interpretation) through the voice of Crow, a trickster voice in her narrative, who affirms: “You need to think about how you accept your responsibilities to salmon, then you will begin to live in a relationship with them. Responsibility is inherent in relationship.”321 Relational accountability involves recognizing that individuals do not “travel in isolation” and emphasizes that we are “connected to all things – both animate and inanimate.”322 Margaret Kovach notes that there is a connection between ‘relational’ approaches and ‘qualitative research’ approaches, in that both are built from relations and rely upon observations. A nuance, between the two, however, rests with ideas about animism and non-animism, as articulated by Vine Deloria Jr., where humans are but one clan in a family where relations include plants, rocks, water, wind.323

When listening to stories from different kinds of knowledge, and in sharing, or representing the

319 In “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” Walls builds an argument for the shared mandates of day and residential schools drawing on the work of Andrea Bear Nicholas; also see: Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System,’” 362.

320 Moore, Trickster Chases the Tale of Education, 25.


322 Wilson quoted in Brophey and Raptis, “Preparing to be Allies,” 240.

findings I tried to translate theory about relational accountability into specific research practices. I tried to ensure that the voices, recollections, memories of former students were not subordinated to the authority of the print record. Building the story from these records, and then ‘fitting’ lived experiences of former students into that structure, in a sense would be to narratively recreate the Day School experience. The living memories filter by, ‘caught’ and contained inside, print archival records. I wanted to center the living memories of the former students who attended the school; and print records would enter this framing, with living memories (like a fire) at the centre. Other times, I tried to position oral memories as complicating and opening up what the archives recorded. Self-reflexivity, for example with the inclusion of my own life writing, is about the ‘why’ and ‘how’ of relational accountability. I put myself in the picture; as a researcher I am a specific person, with worries, feelings, intimate entanglements, and social positionality. The inclusion of life writing meant that I would not take, or give myself, the privileges of universal point of view and objective distance. I would try to write into the narrative moments of uncertainty. I am conscious that these moments of self-reflexivity are still a ‘choice’ for some, to be made or not. And I am conscious that the inclusion of self-reflexivity is considered the norm, for others, a holistic way of thinking/being.324 My intent was not to create a seamless narrative to show the whole, total or now complete picture of experiences, memories, and impacts of Indian day schooling. I can only present what I have been able to learn, from my position, within these relationships, in this place, at this time.

Preparing for a relational approach as part of trans-systemic knowledge building

Some scholars describe the internal work that is necessary to relational methodology. Kovach describes “silent time/work” as critical to Indigenous research practices. Kovach observes that reflection inward allowed her to consider the purpose of her research: ‘why are you doing this research and why are you doing it this way?’ Being able to understand personal motivations, writes Kovach, matters in research because it encourages a researcher to consider the intellectual rationales, as well as the “spirit and heart.” Moore describes research practices to foster internal “silence.” Drawing on Battiste’s work on decolonizing education, Moore asserts that these responses (of silence) can be particularly important when working to confront “oppressive historical and contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples in Canada.” It is important to note that Kovach and Moore are talking about Indigenous researchers in the face of colonialism. Nevertheless, internal work is necessary when undertaking research: looking at why one selects a topic, and how one goes about the research; spending time (within) to reflect on internalized beliefs (in a settler colonial context) is important and necessary work for researchers to transform not only ‘how’ but also the invisible values and beliefs – white privileges – that have long sheltered, masked, or ignored colonial oppressions. Sometimes, this internal work meant to stop reading, to spend time outdoors, walking or running on trails; sometimes, this internal work meant spending time at community events, celebrations or commemorations or ceremonies.

326 Ibid, 179.
327 Ibid, 179.
328 Moore, Trickster Chases the Tale of Education, 80.
329 Battiste in Moore, Trickster Chases the Tale of Education, 80.
learned what it could mean to see through storying, to change some narratives, in the stories that we live.

There are characteristics that can support “respectful, long term research relationships” in particular between non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous communities. Brophey and Raptis discuss “values, skills and knowledge” that can contribute to forming lasting research relationships with Indigenous communities including: “responsibility and trust, respect, humility, flexible worldviews, reciprocity, relational accountability, and self-identity.” Building on Wilson’s work, Brophey and Raptis observe that relational accountability means that researchers must ensure that “no harm” comes from the research. When working with communities, and with an intent of fostering long-term relation-based research practices, they assert that no harm means learning to “listen deeply” to know and understand the community with whom one works. Their work supports practices of doing no harm on an individual level, which can serve as necessary steppingstones to making changes at an institutional level (e.g., through agreements or protocols). In my own social positionality, I am resident within the community, and I am “part of”, an extended family in the community. I have also worked for organizations in the community over the years. In some ways, the long-term nature of my relationships was already in place; I had previously conducted community-based research, and so I had previously

330 Brophey and Raptis, “Preparing to be Allies,” 237.


332 Ibid, 240. Similarly, Celia Haig-Brown asserts that practices of self-reflection and building relations (with people, with place, with more than humans) can encourage “deep learning” as distinct from surface engagement that can lead to cultural appropriation and exploitation (see: “Indigenous Thought, Appropriation, and non-Aboriginal People,” 2010.)
navigated some of the ethics involved working as a ‘researcher’ in/with the community. What differed, however, is that for those projects I had worked directly for the First Nation’s organizations. With the dissertation research, I now had multiple accountabilities – to family and personal relations, to organizations in the community, and to the academic institution. I entered new territory, also, in writing ‘myself’ into the narrative: of critical reflexivity. I worried, too, that in using Western analytics, more as a lens rather than a webbing, that the analysis would distance people, from their own history, from interpretation of their own history.

Mela Sarkar discusses the importance of conversations, listening, and participating in events as part of “relationship-building” and fostering trust when gathering data or co-building knowledge. To mitigate against shallow forms of knowledge building Kim TallBear (Sisseton Wahpeton Oyate) argues that “students” (or researchers) need to be taught “to love and to care”

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333 Some researchers have spoken about the importance of building trust and relationships when conducting qualitative research involving personal testimonies. In Makeda Silvera’s preface to a collection of testimonies from Caribbean domestic workers in Canada (first published in 1983), she asserts that in her experience “working with and helping to organize” domestic workers that she developed the “anger and persistence” to write her book; and, that it was the “warmth, and courage” of the women that inspired her to complete the work. Silvera describes how her research unfolded and emerged from relationships, between herself and those with whom she ‘listened’. Out of these relationships, built on trust (along with anger, persistence, warmth, and courage) she brought forward their stories contributing to countering societal ‘silencing’ that excludes “non-white and poor people from decision making and participation.” Silvera, Silenced, 14.

334 Sarkar, “Ten Years of Mi’gmaq Language Revitalization Work,” 500. Sarkar discusses some of the challenges working on language revitalization in Gespe’gewa’gi in her self-reflection on ten years “building research relationships”, as a non-Indigenous person of colour, and university researcher working with a First Nation’s community. For over a ten-year period (from 2006 to 2016), more than a dozen “faculty and graduate students” from McGill University worked in the community of Listuguj First Nation with language speakers who are also involved in teaching and revitalizing Mi’gmaq. In her retrospective writing on the language revitalization initiative, and some “uncomfortable soul searching,” Sarkar concluded that “as a non-Indigenous university researcher” it was “inappropriate” to speak for the community (about the development of the language revitalization method) unless invited by the community to speak. This position raises (ongoing) issues with ‘ownership’ over knowledge production, and intellectual property rights. Sarkar observes that she can speak about her own “reflections” on some of difficulties, as well as the importance associated with “breaking down barriers of misunderstanding and mistrust,” (491). Sarkar observes that over time, because of funding requirements, she was named the principal researcher, which led not only to asymmetrical decision-making, but also eroded trust between partners.
about that which they are studying.\textsuperscript{335} TallBear argues that an ethic of care, when we are “invested in the knowledges and technologies that we critique” can spark “intellectual and ethical benefits”, and when we resist the urge to “critique for critique’s sake.”\textsuperscript{336} TallBear’s assertions are important in particular when working with sensitive and difficult histories. I have been trained, in an academic institution, to critique: I am expected, and required, to discuss a concept or idea, at length, to hold a thought up like a prism to capture its possibilities, its limitations, its applications. I am not taught, necessarily, to care emotionally about the idea (or concept investigated); I am not necessarily required to consider how placing a concept on the table, to slice it open, to see its parts exposed, can be vulnerable. Harmful. The ethic of care is a reminder that although reconciliation may not mean much to me other than a concept I investigate, I am responsible, I am committed, if I enter a positionality of “love and care” to consider that this word (like so many others), has not only been emptied out of possibilities, and is full of limitations, but is a stark reminder of abuses, of impositions, of endless inquiries that parade into (and then back out of) peoples’ lives. The parade (the lights and celebrations, the national hug) may pack its suitcase and take the sleeper train back to Ottawa; but the people stay. They stayed. And, for the most part, they still remember. All the promises (not) made.

Relational approaches to research can contribute to moving beyond what Jennifer Henderson calls “bounded empathy”\textsuperscript{337} towards the “hopeful worrying” in which, as Roger Simon puts it, settler society not only feels bad, but is also ready to take action that is necessary for

\textsuperscript{335} Using the metaphor of a lover, TallBear, in “Dear Indigenous Studies,” argues for an ethics of care to counter how Indigenous Studies has increasingly become a “parody – fueled too much by anger,” 74.

\textsuperscript{336} TallBear, “Dear Indigenous Studies,” 74.

Relational methodologies are important given the history of ‘detached observer’ research practices, which are part of ongoing settler colonialism. In her collection of essays, *A Mind Spread out on the Ground* (2019), Haudenosaunee writer Alicia Elliott emphasizes the need to move beyond empathy by encouraging relations and research that foster ‘love’ (or care), and responsibilities to move beyond impartial listening or imposing of “shallow standards” to co-creating knowledge with respect. In this research, the principle of co-creation was put into practice with my attempt to keep Mi’gmaq knowledges, and the histories of former students, alive at the centre of this narrative.

**Limitations to a Relational Approach**

In this research, a central concept guiding the analysis was that of *kinship relations*, for instance ideas and principles built from Mi’gmaq stories, including creation stories and relational practices. (The issue of limitations about relationality and homogenous conceptualization of community are discussed further on in this dissertation). I carefully sought out advice and guidance, for the in-community portion, not only from elders, but from Mi’gmaq women Elders, as ‘grandmother mentors’, helping to guide how I work in a good way mindful of my own position and remembering the generations ahead. There is a risk, however, that in attending to differences within the community, my centering – holding up Mi’gmaq women, Elders as

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339 Elliott, *A Mind Spread out on the Ground*, 177. In this collection of narrative essays, Elliott re-tells the story of a non-Indigenous white photographer, Aaron Huey, who spent four years at Pine Ridge. During this time, he re-examined his own beliefs and thought systems. While he thought he was going to photograph poverty, he realized that he was witnessing ongoing history of genocide. Huey also learned ceremonies and protocols, when to photograph and when not to. Questions he was asked about those he photographed pushed him to consider intent. Elliott uses this story to illuminate deeper forms of relationship building between Indigenous peoples (their lands and knowledge systems) and non-Indigenous people that are akin to a “ceremony”, “prayer” or a “poem” versus an impartial or shallow ‘documentary’ (177).
Grandmothers – could constitute yet another settler glossed-over innocence in its lack of acknowledgement of the violence and violation experienced by Indigenous women in the context of settler colonialism. This is a risk of erasure in the sense that I might be positioning myself as a kind of white feminist saviour (i.e., of ‘oppressed Mi’gmaq women’), not acknowledging the highly problematic kinds of relations there have been between settler and Indigenous women (the former as self-appointed exemplars, guardians, teachers, nurses, and the latter as those needing to be saved).

In this sense, the white woman saviour could be analogous to the Mountie Myth,\(^{340}\) where the white woman as saviour (nun, teacher, nurse, educator, researcher) enters the community to ‘help’, to ‘save’ without critically examining the ways in which she entered the community. Did she enter the community on (and hidden by) the coats of others (Priests, Indian Agents)? In occupying these positions, is the ‘white saviour woman’ let off the hook of for her/our/my role and involvement in, and hence responsibilities for, the long legacy of violence, including schooling, and the ways in which a desire to help, to save, to contribute can be linked with the dismissal, denial, denigration of the values, the principles, the ways of knowing and being of those they are ‘saving’? In turning to Elders, and in particular to women Elders/Grandmothers, I too may be papering over the long history of colonial oppression and domination, in particular of Indigenous women, by unproblematically seeking assistance from Elders/Grandmothers as guides, without acknowledging the particular ways that white women as ‘saviours’ have been complicit in, and directly benefited from, colonialism, including formal school schooling.

\(^{340}\) In “Becoming Indigenous,” Mackey discusses the Mountie Myth (Canada as peacekeeper), which has served to erase a history of “dispossession, erasure and cultural genocide,” 158. Mackey argues that settler society covers up “brutal domination” and then worships “that which it destroyed,” Ibid.
Critical and self-reflective questions need to be asked: from whom did she obtain permission? What protocols allowed her to take on roles/responsibilities? Did she work (involve and connect) with Indigenous women? In asking these types of questions, it may be possible to counter silencing and erasure, and to hear many differing concerns, interests, and desires of Indigenous women.

The decision to ask Elders, to actively seek advice from Indigenous women, is about acknowledging leadership, decision-making, and extended kinship connections that continue to exist (despite) and beyond colonial patriarchy. In the wake of the TRC, research on sensitive or difficult histories – such as Indian day schooling – cannot fall solely on Indigenous peoples (or their institutions). Non-Indigenous, settler researchers have a role to play in decolonizing, critiquing, acknowledging how we have harmed (e.g., Mountie Myth, White Women Saviour Myth), and also how we may work in relational ways and so doing contribute to re-building (as allies) inclusive and equitable institutions, including systems of education (at all levels, elementary, secondary and post-secondary). Conducting this research, writing the dissertation, working in a particular place (along the Restigouche River, in Listuguj (Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi): I listened for stories, for reminiscing, for desires and concerns, for connections to and differences from written records. I sought to center Mi’gmaw knowledges and to put into practice trans-systemic approaches to knowledge production.


342 See: Nova Scotia House of Assembly. Standing Committee on Human Resources (re: The Achievement Gap). Oct.27, 2020. Deputy Minister Cathy Montreuil affirmed: “there is a need for awareness of systemic issues in school system” and to ensure that issues are not actualized in the form of barriers.” Montreuil spoke about “opportunity gaps” versus “achievement gaps” to move the focus away from ‘individual deficits’ towards the system as a whole.
4.3) Centering Indigenous (Mi’gmaw) Knowledges

Untangling stories about Indian day schools, centering Indigenous (Mi’gmaw) knowledges, I sought to work in a ‘good way’: that is in an ethical and respectful manner. Starting this way is in keeping with Karina Walters’ observations about the need for “starting with beauty” when responding to historical trauma. Walters describes colonial impact as a “disruption” to original instructions and to relational ways of being.\textsuperscript{343} This approach of starting with beauty can evoke settler “moves to innocence”\textsuperscript{344} with a glossed over return to a (presumed) peaceful pre-settler past; yet this instruction to begin with beauty, with original teachings and questioning, allows for a re-imagining of Indigenous thought systems in the present. Walters observes that when intervening it is important to start with the vision of what is precious and essential, and was harmed, not with the harm itself.\textsuperscript{345} Beginning this way, I suggest, can support decolonizing practices to “create”, to “restore”, to “repair” relational ways of being (with one another, with

\textsuperscript{343} Walters describes the colonial impact as follows: as a dis\textit{ruption} (to original instructions; to relational ways of being to ancestors and to future generations; to spatial obligations and relationships); as \textit{breakdown in boundaries} (physical, mental, spiritual, and with land) and as creating systems of dependency on the colonial nation state. Walters asserts that decolonizing practices involve how to \textit{restore or reconnect} with original instructions; how to \textit{create relational restoration and repair relational ways of being} (boundaries), relationships to one another, land and ways of life; and \textit{transformation} (in terms of transformation of [colonial] narratives) in “Embodiment of Historical trauma and Microaggression Distress,” 2018.

\textsuperscript{344} Tuck and Yang, “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” 1. Tuck and Yang argue that “moves to innocence” are a way to reconcile settler guilt and complicity in colonial violence, and to secure “settle\textit{r} futurity” (Ibid, 1). Discussed further ahead in this chapter.

\textsuperscript{345} Kanien’keh:ka educator, Fran Beauvais, spoke about the Haudenosaunee Thanksgiving Address (also called Thanksgiving Prayer) as a way of setting the tone and preparing listeners for what is to come. (Beauvais, “Haudenosaunee ways,” November 6, 2020). In her remarks, Beauvais explained that for her Nation, this address is used to open, for example, discussions and negotiations to bring participants together “in a good way,” to use Beauvais’ words. The Address was given as part of teachings for post-secondary educators to put into practice the many recent calls to and for action and justice, including: the TRC’s \textit{Calls to Action} (2015); Calls to Justice in the Final Report of the National Inquiry for Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women and Girls, and the Supplementary report: Québec (2019); and, in the Québec context – Calls for action in the Final Report by the Inquiry Commission on Relations between Indigenous Peoples and Certain Public Services in Québec: Listening, Reconciliation and Progress (2019). Opening and beginning in this manner is part of a conscious and overt effort towards decolonizing research practices and mitigating ways that “academia has almost exclusively been focusing on Western paradigms and approaches to research” (Held, “Decolonizing Research Paradigms,” 1-2).
land, with ways of life), and to “transform” colonial narratives. In the research and dissertation writing (gathering, assembling, reflecting, traveling, listening, and analyzing), I have tried to learn about, work with, and reorient myself as much as possible with conceptualizations of kinship relations, Mi’gmaw language, and treaty philosophy.

*I feel a wave, like a current, pulling progressively forward. I feel others (Michel Foucault, Sarah Carter) waiting to get in. They’ll arrive later. I set aside the more institutionally expected order in which they would come first. I start with stories, kinship relations, language, and finally, treaties. This is my interpretation of starting with beauty, and opening with teachings, from literature and from Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi, as I have come to understand them.*

**Learning through (and with) story**

Through stories, and practices of storytelling, a person can learn about, and animate, understandings of the world. Stories can serve, as Nishnaabeg theorist and writer Leanne Simpson observes, as a theoretical basis for Indigenous thought systems. In her work on Indigenous law, Aimée Craft writes that the “[t]he existence of every person and every being is framed in the context of its environment and story (or stories) of Creation.” Drawing on Anishnaabeg teachings as a source of knowledge, Craft reminds us that: “humans were the last to

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346 In *As We Have Always Done*, Simpson asserts that: “[a] “theory” in its simplest form is an explanation of a phenomenon, and Nishnaabeg stories in this way form part of the theoretical basis of our intelligence. But theory also works a little differently within Nishnaabeg thought. “Theory” is generated and regenerated continually through embodied practice and within each family, community, and generation of people. Theory isn’t just an intellectual pursuit. It is woven within kinetics, spiritual presence, and emotion. It is contextual and relational,” 151.

be placed on the earth and the most dependent of all the beings in creation.” 348 As the most dependent, our existence emerges from within a “complex web of relationships in order to live well.” 349 Similarly, Simpson writes about (and shows) how learning through story is holistic (kinetic, spiritual, and emotional) and also “contextual and relational.” 350 Simpson illuminates how story-as-theory allows for transformation of meanings “over time and space within individual and collective Nishnaabeg consciousness.” 351 Stories, and storying, can allow for a reclaiming of Indigenous worldviews, and because stories transform (that is, stories change over place and time; they are contextual and relational), it is possible to gain an understanding of differing and changing Indigenous concerns, norms, and desires, as articulated through stories. This is not so much about seeking truths from the stories but learning how to ‘relate to’ stories and storytelling practices.

Story as methodology is linked with Indigenous resurgence because of its potential to support collective knowledge production and associated responsibilities. 352 Drawing on Leslie Marmon Silko, Laguna Pueblo poet and storywriter, Jo-ann Archibald observes that “remembering stories” allows for continuance of orality (and communal connections with ancestors), and can “help one continue in a healthy way.” 353 Archibald contends that stories shared through research

350 Simpson, As We Have Always Done, 7.
351 Ibid, 7.
353 Archibald, Indigenous Storywork, 27.
(or other conditions) are not so much “owned” but involve the “principle of reciprocity” and expectations that “if given authority”, one is expected to “share the story” with others.\textsuperscript{354} Perhaps, there is an expectation to share because this principle is part of an expansive, kinship and relational consciousness. Archibald introduces the concept of “storywork”, as a form of knowledge production, which involves principles of “respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy [interaction between storyteller, listener and story].”\textsuperscript{355} Julia Emberley expands on Archibald’s concept of storywork observing that “Indigenous storywork” is understood as an “interactive process” that brings together “people” and “story” to “accomplish comprehension.”\textsuperscript{356} Emberley explores how “meaning making” in storytelling practices, “unfolds” in place, with people and over time. Meanings are produced in a layered “spatio-temporal” ‘unfolding’. Emberley pays attention to the use of the verb \textit{unfold}, which she states implies the multiple, layered, and differing meanings and possibilities open up with story. Emberley seems to be talking about silence as a type of energy space for meaning making. Individual stories are part of a “collective repository of knowledge” that is akin to a web of interconnected threads, with “spaces between the nodes of interconnection”. The emphasis on collective meaning making is important to oral knowledge production where meaning is born from relationships, in the silences and spaces \textit{between} the parts. “Silence,” observes Emberley, “is respectful and can create good thinking.” Emberley draws on Archibald’s analysis about the role of ‘silence’, which can function as a moment for reflection, for connection, for purposeful questions and, in turn, responses between the teller and the listener.

\textsuperscript{354} Archibald, \textit{Indigenous Storywork}, 27.

\textsuperscript{355} Ibid, 3 and 33.

\textsuperscript{356} Emberley, “Epistemic Heterogeneity,” 149.
The practice of storywork is at play in Indigenous literatures, including memoirs. Richard Wagamese voiced Indigenous reclaiming – as an individual and collectively (‘tribal consciousness’) – of his identity and relationships with humans and other than humans. In his memoir, *One Native Life*, Wagamese speaks about the “Animal People” as “*teachers*” for Human Beings to learn “how to relate to the world and how to treat the earth.” In the telling of his personal story, he illuminates practices of reclaiming Indigeneity at an individual level; however, the reclaiming and rebuilding of his personal identity: as a “human, as a man and as an Ojibwa”, emerges and evolves in a web of interconnected relationships with people, with land, with ideas and memories, and with ceremonies. Put another way, Wagamese shows “holistic practices,” to use Simpson’s words, of coming to know. The stories are structured in four parts – Ahki (earth), Ishskwaday (fire), Nib (water), and Ishpiming (universe).

Wagamese’s narrative begins in childhood, after his separation from his biological family and land of his birth. Through the telling of his life story, he animates individual and collective rebuilding, claiming one cannot happen without the other. In the final pages of the memoir, the story returns (to beauty) in a circular manner to the land and place of Wagamese’s birth, to the memories of his experiences of trauma, violence, and separation from his extended kinship family system. These difficult memories, too, are reclaimed and shared in a manner where separation (violence and violations) is acknowledged and connections (with self, with family, with place) are rebuilt in a regenerative manner. This dissertation, too, is built from a web of connections, of relationships with place and families, that I have tried to acknowledge, work

357 Wagamese, *One Native Life*, 143 (emphasis added).
within, and respect. Some stories provided a glimpse into everyday interactions where it is possible to feel knowledge systems at work. For example, one participant remembered learning to fish, with her sister, from her father who guided her:

Another time, my mother told me, “Go and get your father, supper is ready”. I went down to the beach, and he was fishing. He said, “watch my line” and then he left. The line pulled, and I got a fish. I was so excited, I wanted to fish too! … Then, my father showed me how to peel it, and sharpen the end … my father guided me. Mary Ann Metallic

What is striking about this story is how learning takes place in the moment, nested in relationships. Learning does not happen in a set of hierarchical relations, steeped in rewards or punishments, but in the context of desire, curiosity, and the willingness, of a parent, to take time to teach his daughter to make her “own pole”, to become a fisher. What this story reminded me, is that my research is not only about forming relationships between myself (as researcher) and former students (as participants), but also about trying to create spaces for sharing memories about experiences with schooling where beauty (and teachings) can be heard. It is about learning what it means to be a researcher, about trust and guidance, and to share those stories that I have heard. Learning about day schooling, it is important to remember (and recognize) family connections amongst siblings, between parents and their children, and relations with the land; these teachings (values and principles) create a foundation by which to then speak about the harms of colonial schooling that dismissed, contained, ignored, or denigrated these forms of knowing, of being, of living (as ‘lesser than’).

I turned to stories, oral and archival, and to a sense making (knowledge production) that involved gathering, assembling, analyzing, and sharing. Some of the stories provide deeper
understandings into what happened inside of one particular Indian Day School in present-day Listuguj, while other recollections speak of resistances, and some affirm connections amongst families, or with the territory. As a researcher, I learned from travelling to the archives (in Ottawa, in Rimouski, in Gaspé and in Moncton) and retrieving written records stemming from the school; I learned from the oral recollections of participants; and I learned by imagining the relations between these sources of knowledge, these ways of remembering.

John Borrows asserts that stories express principles, or laws. Borrows observes, that through millennia has emerged (was born from) regions and territories all throughout Turtle Island. Borrows argues that this wisdom (Indigenous connections and understandings) was not destroyed by the arrival (and staying) of settlers; rather, he asserts that this wisdom (worldviews, concerns, and laws) has been “built over” by settlers. Borrows uses terms such as “buried and submerged”, “concealed” and “muted” to describe the violence and violations of colonization. This conceptualization does not deny the impacts of settler-colonialism, but rather imagines a type of permeable boundary. Borrows recognizes, without being contained by settler colonial logics and infrastructures. He reminds us that Indigenous knowledges have not been wholly buried or displaced by Western forms of knowing.

Linda Tuhiwai Smith and Graham Smith, Maori educators, have theorized that “any Indigenous movement is going to be necessarily unique to each area, to its nations, to the colonial encounters

358 Borrows, Recovering Canada, 13.
359 Ibid, 3.
360 Ibid, xii.
in its territory, because context with colonialism has not been alike, and these diverse histories and experiences would need to be addressed.”³⁶¹ Paying attention to the local, to the particular, to those particular stories from particular lands, is a critical and necessary part of decolonizing and resurgence because each nation’s experiences, their desires, resistances, and aspirations, are unique and emerge from relations with particular lands, and with peoples on those lands.

Turning to Creation stories (and the importance of Land)³⁶²

Indigenous nations in what is now called North America, and in what some call Turtle Island, have their own unique stories about their creation, their coming into being, and their birth on (or from) the land. There are many versions (print and oral) about aspects of Mi’gmaw Creation, about the birth of Glusgap, as nnu, the first person, born on (from) Mi’gma’gi (the land). I will draw on a Creation story as told by Elder Stephen Augustine and as responded to by Sa’ke’j Youngblood Henderson.³⁶³ As settlers, part of our ethical responsibility in re-building non-coercive relations is to unsettle settler narratives, including histories that begin, or center around, settler-colonial concerns, interests, and making of place. It is important to see/feel/hear how of the violence and violations in the making of home on Indigenous lands, and the ways in which this making is intimately connected with Indigenous dispossession. It is important to pause, to

³⁶¹ Smith and Smith quoted by Battiste in Decolonizing Education, 111.

³⁶² Here I use the word ‘land’ rather than ‘place’ to recognize the centrality of land for Indigenous peoples, on their territories. I draw on ideas expressed by Ranjan Kumar Datta, who expresses his relationship with land, learned from his own familial experiences in Bangladesh, as a newcomer to Canada, and working with Dene First Nation. From Elders, he speaks about the differences between ‘land’ and ‘place’, where the former, land, includes “everything visible, invisible, lights, darkness, sky, stars, sun, moon, plants, and animals”, whereas place refers to “everywhere and nowhere”. Land can be felt and imagined, land is that which one relates, and is “our first teacher”, from within an Indigenous, in this instance Dene, worldview. (Datta, “Rethinking environmental science education from indigenous knowledge perspectives,” 54).

³⁶³ I have drawn on Augustine’s, “Mi’kmaw Creation Story,” 2016 and Henderson’s “L’nu Humanities,” 2016.
quiet settler narratives, and – possibly – open ourselves to narratives that can question settler truths, values, ways of being and knowing. It is possible to see/feel/hear narratives about relations, ways of relating, that are different and distinct from settler understandings. Starting this way is to understand not so much the ‘harm’ itself, as Walters encourages, but recognize the beauty and knowledges that have been harmed, stolen, by settler logics, and settler societies.

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In his re-telling of the Mi’kmaw Creation Story, Augustine speaks about Glusgap’s (our first teacher) formation from the bolts of lightning (or, possibly, the sun) which struck (awakened, interacted with) “Wskitaqmu”, mother, the earth. Glusgap is formed from the interactions in the environment, of the sky world with the earth world, our mother (earth) capable of sustaining life. In Mi’gma’w, words used for “creator”, for instance “kisu’lkw” are verb-based and the suffix is “we inclusive,” as noted by Trudy Sable and Bernie Francis. From within this worldview, creator is not ‘who’ or ‘that’ (person or object), but rather an activity, an ongoing process. Furthermore, from within a Mi’gmaq perspective, creator can be “male or female or a sentient object.” Sable and Francis point out that the words used for creation, in Mi’gma’w, are not nouns that point to “one central being as a source of creation.” Rather, what is referred to are processes of creation (or the “role or roles in the process of creation”; further, terms are often in the present tense indicating that “Creator’ or ‘God’ is ongoing”. In Mi’gma’w, it would not make sense to speak of “creation” in the past (e.g., ‘When God created the world’) because ‘God’ (Creator) is “a process, a continuously manifesting, creative force,” of which we are a part.

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365 Sable and Francis, The Language of this Land, Mi’kmaki, 31.
The Mi’gmaw Creation Story – as a living, oral story, in print and in ceremony – is relevant to the way I have approached the research for this dissertation, as organic, collaborative, and processual. I have tried as much as possible to avoid taking pre-formed theoretical concepts and placing them down on data gathered. Rather, concepts (kinship relations, verb-based language, treaty philosophy) have guided ‘how’ the primary research was conducted, and the concepts formed a type of web through which I tried to understand and analyze recollections and written records, stories about and from, the Restigouche Indian Day School. Concepts also emerged from the interviews. I saw my role as listening for them, learning from them, and connecting with them.

In Mi’gmaw stories, or teachings, about “the people”, Henderson observes, “rays of sun, the sparks of the stars and the breathing earth shaped the people and related life forms.” Glusgap, as first teacher, emerges (is emerging) from the earth (as mother) with lightning, writes Augustine, “rays of sun” and “stars”, says Henderson, and their interactions with the “breathing earth,” affirms Augustine. The processes of creation, of creator, are ongoing, always happening, in the present. Through conversations and reminiscing, co-participants are recreating for themselves and the community in the process of sharing.

In other Mi’gmaw Creation stories, Glusgap lies on the earth for each of the seasons: watching, learning, breathing, listening. In some stories, Glusgap, along with a twin, Mals’m, walks on the land, learning to balance (live with) flux, with changing and differing energies, and uses, of the plants, animals, and water worlds. In her rendition, Battiste writes:

Let me begin the story where Mi’kmaq begins. On the other side of the Path of the Spirits, in ancient times, Kisukwl, the Life Giver, originated the first born, Niskam (the sun), who was brought across sk-tiekmujuawti (the spirit path or Milky Way) to light the earth. Kisukwl also sent across the sky a bolt of lightning that created wsitqamuk (the dry earth) and united the life-forces out of wsitqamuk to form the keeper of life known to the Mi'kmaq as kluskap. Legends recount that this guardian spirit lay naked on wsitqamuk, his limbs pointing in the four directions.\(^{367}\)

In the story told by Augustine, after Glugap’s birth, Nugumi (Grandmother) arrived and spoke of her sense of being in connection with the land: “I owe my existence to this rock on the ground.”\(^{368}\) The story shifts into relational ways of being. In their observations about relationships – human and more than human – embodied within Mi’gmaw Creation Stories, Alfred Metallic and Robin Cavanaugh affirm: “For many of the Mi’gmaq people their relationship to Mother Earth is sacred, imbued with the understanding that they are of the earth as descendants [sic] of their ancestors who came before them.”\(^{369}\) Similarly, as other Indigenous scholars have stated: the earth (land) is their mother.

In his reading of the Creation Story, Henderson asserts that Nugumi (Grandmother) symbolizes the “privileged role of an Elder woman among the people”; some of the principles she teaches include: “sharing,” “balancing”, “wisdom and guidance of elders” and the “importance of language.”\(^{370}\) These principles (or law ways) are learned through interactions with the Earth Lodge world and animal life forms. After her arrival, Nugumi instructs Glusgap to “call upon the

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\(^{367}\) Battiste quoted in Henderson’s *The Mikmaw Concordat*, 13.

\(^{368}\) Augustine, “Mi’kmaw Creation Story,” 22.


pine martens (apistane’wj) with whom Glusgap then negotiates everything that is required to “survive.” The negotiations are affirmed with the offering of tmawey (tobacco) by Glusgap to Apistane’wj (Marten); tmawey is offered to acknowledge that apistane’wj has given up life (earth and animal worlds) so that Glusgap and Nugumi (Nnu, of human worlds) can live.

After the birth from a stone (interacting with water, dew) and fire (sunlight) of the grandmother, the next “knowledge keeper” to arrive is Netawnsum (nephew) of the Water Lodge world embodied by wlima’qewe’lmsigu (sweetgrass, or holy grass), along with the abilities of dreaming and mjijamij (visioning). Henderson writes that Netawnsum brought “covenants and comprehension” about the samqwan (water) realm, including the “use and importance of spiritual energy”, including dreams and visions, which produced a “treaty covenant” with water animals and “guardian spirits.” In teaching L’nu about mjijamij, Netawansum supported understandings of the “various lodges of the earth” and finding their “personal gifts.” These words suggest that L’nu have a sense of individuality – in the sense of knowing one’s personal gifts – which emerge collectively through interactions with various worlds and lodges (earth, water, for instance), with visioning, by dreaming.

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372 Augustine, “Mi’kmaw Creation Story,” 22.
374 Ibid, 38.
Stories change; they are created in the relationships amongst the teller, the listener, and the place (like an entity that is alive, listening).\footnote{For example, Thomas King speaks about the role of stories within Indigenous knowledge systems, including teachings about how the earth was/is formed, through the interactions amongst all beings (human and non-human): storyteller, audience, and the earth (Turtle Island) in \textit{The Truth About Stories}, 2003.} When I spoke with former students some of the stories hung heavily. Some stories entered the conversation, unannounced like sadness. Schooling – some reflected – is regret.

For me, it’s regret. Thinking about this now. I regret our schooling. It was as though they thought we weren’t capable. … The priests had absolute power …. Parents taught children to be obedient … [this] allowed for conditions for abuse to occur. \textit{Mary Ann Metallic}

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The Creation Story is relevant to understanding Mi’gmaq views of education, and to ‘what’ formal colonial schooling for Indigenous children disrupted: worldviews, gifts, in the sense of belonging as part of a collective, and gifts, in the sense of knowing one’s personal gifts, as part of that collective. This is part of the regret and sadness that Mary Ann spoke about, the ways in which Indigenous children were ‘deliberately kept down’ and prevented from accessing knowledge, from either Western or Indigenous systems of knowing.

The Creation story also shows collective responsibilities associated with, and emerging from, an understanding about how one is connected, part of, (as opposed to separate, unique or distinct from) the broader environment. In her work, Battiste points out that the role of extended family (in the position of teachers) is to observe and to “nurture” and “foster” this learning spirit.\footnote{Battiste, \textit{Decolonizing Education}, 2013.}
Learning (and individual development or growth), from this standpoint, is cyclical and relational; in a relational manner, learning also involves trust. Storying involves self-reflection. It is important to ask: What stories (if any) do I (we), as settlers, know about the land, about Indigenous peoples, where I (we) are living, learning, and where ‘our’ (most often colonial) institutions are built? How did I (we) come to know, understand, and hear stories differently, for their difference? How do I (we) connect (or not) with these stories? Do I (we) consider stories (and storying practices) as ‘legitimate’ sources and forms of knowledge? Do I (we) connect with how stories can function differently within, as Simpson reminds us, Indigenous individual, and collective consciousness? I ask these questions, from my own positioning, as a settler person. These conversations and knowledge sharing are taking place in Indigenous communities, with and amongst Indigenous peoples, their friends, and allies.

Elsewhere, Battiste and Henderson have spoken about the importance of extended family kinship connections observing that: “[i]t is unconceivable to a Mi’kmaw that a human being could exist without a family or a kinship regulation. There are no strangers in Mi’kmaw thought. ‘Guests’ within their territory were typically assigned to a local family or clan for education and responsibilities.” The emphasis on kinship regulations, including those born into, or as guests within, the territory illuminates how “everyone and everything” are part of a whole. Relationships are vital to support, to maintain, to renew, and to regulate as part of personal identity and as a “member of a community” with responsibilities to the whole. In other words, as part of a web of relations there are responsibilities, which are connected, Battiste and Henderson

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argue, with “Indigenous peace and good order.” Lastly, *Nikanaganimquisiwsq (giju’)* (mother) arrived. The stories teach about how *giju* shared the knowledge of the breathing plant world, as well as *netugulimg*, which Henderson states is a concept that refers to the protocols (laws) and kinship relations among animals and humans. The Creation story is not only about the first family. As Augustine, Henderson, Battiste and others have shown, creation stories (told, claimed, remembered) also give expression to kinship relations. *Ms’t no ’gmaq* embodies extended human family systems (Glusgap, Grandmother, Nephew, Mother), who in turn are shaped and transformed by their connections and interactions with their environment, the earthworld and animals; the water world; and the plant world.

These stories have been submerged. Not quite (but almost) destroyed. Stories are being re/claimed. Revitalized. Re/membered. Re/imagined. In this dissertation, I have tried to work from within an understanding of kinship relations, of respecting Mi’gmaw language, and of treaty philosophy. These concepts and practices reminded me that there are other forms and other purposes of knowledge production. As a researcher I entered a dialogue with participants about their individual memories and experiences, and also with a collective oral history that may be submerged but still exists. Individual experiences, sometimes presented as ‘stories’, were shared with me for the research, while some experiences (it seemed) were shared beyond the present moment for generations coming, or beyond this particular place to include others who need to think more deeply about this history, less as Indigenous history and more so as settler history,

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378 Battiste and Henderson observe that “[i]nstead of a state, the Mi’kmaq recognize a web of reciprocal relationships among individuals” (*Heritage*, 551bid, 55).

and (possibly) what it can mean to work/live as guests in the territory learning to be part of, (a story) taking up responsibilities, learning about ‘storywork’.

**Kinship relations: Ms’t No’gmaq**

In his retelling of a Mi’gmaw Creation story Augustine opens by speaking about *ms’t no’gmaq* (extended family and kinship relations). Augustine observes that the first extended family illuminates an understanding of tribal (or kinship) consciousness amongst human and more than human beings. As well, creation stories animate connections and responsibilities for those connections, which are embodied in practices such as acknowledgments, feasts, and in the offering of tobacco (for example). Ms’t no’gmaq (Kinship Relations) is both a process and concept in that relationships are understood as living, changing, and rooted in the land, or in place.

In their work on Mi’gmaw worldview, tli’uti (language), and ancestral land (Mi’gma’gi), Trudy Sable and Bernie Francis discuss the term “*weji-sqalia’timk*”, which they state expresses Mi’gmaq origins as “rooted in the landscape”. Weji-sqalia’timk describes how Mi’gmaq “sprouted from” the earth, from this place, and “nowhere else.” When speaking about Mi’gma’gi, Sable and Frances affirm: “[m]emories reside here.” Their words evoke a sense of memories as living beings inhabiting the land, and those who reside on the lands.

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380 Sable and Francis, *The Language of this Land, Mi’kma’ki*, 17.

Similarly, Henderson observes that the connection between human forms and earth forms animates the teaching that “everything is alive” and “related”. Relational ways of being and understanding the world are not unique to Mi’gmaq as many Indigenous thought systems are based on theories of relationality. Relational ways of being are a central distinguishing difference between Indigenous and Euro-Western knowing, being, and thinking. In her discussion of a global Indigenous ontology Makere Stewart Harawira (Maori) observes that “[a] central principle in indigenous peoples’ relational ontologies and cosmologies is the inseparable nature of the relationship between the world of matter and the world of spirit.” Simpson reminds us that stories are contextual and relational. This teaching, or argument, is a reminder that it is important (or necessary) to pay attention to the stories that emerge from place, especially if the place (for some) contains memories of those ancestors who (still) reside here.

Participants in this study spoke about their experiences at the Indian Day School, individual and collective, as part of Ms’t No’gmaq; at the same time, the Indian Day School in Restigouche is also ‘part of’ the fabric of colonial assimilative schooling, an imposition (or an insertion) onto existing Indigenous knowledge, family, and education systems. Memories from place are important and participants spoke of school experiences in connection with place. In her recollections, former student Gail Metallic spoke of the reasons for, and difficulty of, gathering stories associated with formal schooling. Gail’s comments underline the way that remembering the day school is seen as a way of maintaining connection to grandparents’ knowledges and competencies, which speak of adaptability and trans-systematicity. Gail affirmed:

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I think [The Indian Day School] should be remembered. Just like residential schools should be remembered. I am repressing, some memories I don’t want to think about them now, and that’s not right. I think it should all be remembered …

I’ve always wanted to sit down and do something on my grandmother’s life, you know, her stories. For Old People, for Elders to be remembered because it would be so nice to have their memory live on. ... My grandmother learned everything that she needed for the rest of her life [at the Day School]. She learned to sew, to knit. And these were things that she already knew at home. She also learned how to read [in Mi’gmaw] … They were fluent speakers, and they would use Father Pacifique’s (Mi’gmaw) writing system. … Would be nice to gather that. … I think it’s time to gather the stories.

Gail’s words are a reminder, a teaching, an encouragement to go out, to gather stories about the complex history of education. These memories (oral and written) can contribute to creating ‘new’ pathways in education.

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In his reflections on the Creation story, Henderson observes that the account of the first family reveals concepts and ideas that would sustain and nourish L’nu’g – about asking permission to “consume other life forms”; about cycles of reincarnation, forgiveness, and gift giving; about treaty covenants; and, finally about the “force of love (gesalueg) in nature and humans” as a “sacred gift” to Mi’gmaq. Henderson argues that from this understanding of relatedness, humans (expressed in Mi’gmaw as L’nuug) learned about the “loving, respectful, caring and interrelated” way of living within the lands and waterways of Mi’gma’gi. Sparks from the sun (or lightning) interacted with earth, and from this relationship – the first family was/is born. Extended kinship gives expression to an understanding of connectedness, of relations, and of inter-dependence amongst human and other-than-human (e.g., “animals, birds, fish, trees, and medicines”). These land-based, ecological relationships served as the foundation to an extended family system,
which in turn is a source of knowing and being, or Indigenous Knowledge System.\textsuperscript{383} The stories about schooling are important sources of memories to understand the experience of the colonial insertion into the Mi’gmaw fabric. The sharing of these stories, for some participants, was described as a way of renewing kin relations to those in the past, in the present, and for those coming.

\textbf{Mi’gmaw language}

In this research on day schooling, I reflected and engaged, although in a limited way, with the ancestral language of this territory, Mi’gmaw. Mi’gmaw language reflects, animates, and is a vital cord with a world in flux. The Mi’gmaw language is verb-based, and as a verb-based language Mi’gmaw is capable of reflecting and animating a world of “interdependent relationships, a world in constant motion … filled with the potential for new patterns, new shapes.”\textsuperscript{384} Sable and Francis point out that in Mi’gmaw, the verb is the central focus: “with prefixes, infixes and suffixes added to determine gender, tense, plurality, animacy and inanimacy,” as well as relations (inclusive, exclusive).\textsuperscript{385} Because the focus is on the verb (versus a noun-based language, such as English or French) the language is “adaptable, able to forge new expressions to meet life’s shifting and unpredictable realities, reflecting the nature of the universe as being in a continuous state of flux, ever changing and non-static.”\textsuperscript{386} This understanding about Mi’gmaw language is relevant to a trans-systemic approach, as well as to

\textsuperscript{383} Ecological place-based knowledge systems that support ‘extended kinship family systems’ (human and more than human) are discussed in Metallic’s “Strengthening our Relations in Gespe’gewa’gi,” 59-71.

\textsuperscript{384} Sable and Francis, \textit{The Language of this Land, Mi’kma’ki}, 28.

\textsuperscript{385} Ibid, 29.

\textsuperscript{386} Ibid, 29.
my project’s orientation to, not recovering static memories, but recreating, animating, engaging with Indigenous Knowledge systems.387

An understanding of Mi’gmaw language is important because all the participants who took part in this project are fluent Mi’gmaw speakers. While some participants spoke about re-learning Mi’gmaw as an adult, others recalled their role as translators both inside and outside of the classroom. Some participants perceive that their own lack of memories at schooling has to do with the imposition of the English language, and the sense that “English was a foreign language.” For some, Mi’gmaw was retained because English-language was forbidden at home, while others spoke about not speaking Mi’gmaw with their own children to protect them from the pain that they had experienced at school learning the English-language. As mentioned, all the participants in this project are nevertheless fluent Mi’gmaw speakers. The significance is that language was held on to, sometimes through the determination of their parents, sometimes despite their own personal determination to keep the language to themselves in order not to pass on the pain colonialism had attached to it, sometimes as something to which they returned,

387 In their work on Mi’gmaw worldview and language, Sable and Francis observe that the ancestral land of Mi’gma’gi is comprised of seven districts, with an eighth, modern-day district, Gtaqmuk (Newfoundland) from the mid-nineteenth century (The Language of this Land, Mi’kma’ki, 19). In his analysis of Mi’gmaq territory, Henderson asserts that the names of the districts, in Mi’gmaw, enact and articulate Mi’gmaq Knowledge systems in that the names describe processes and sounds composing the districts, geographic features, and relationships amongst peoples: Sikniktewaq (“name of the low grinding sounds of the glaciers of the ice age as it turned a river into a gulf”); in turn, this movement created Epekwitik (“land floating above the water”); Epekwitk and Piktukeway (“explosion”) comprise another district. Piktukeway is named for the explosion that created the harbour, finished the gulf, and separated Epkwit from the mainland. Kwapekewaq (“last land of the people”), is named for the treaty with Mohawk. Sipeknekatik is known for the wild potatoes; Eskikewag district or “skin dressers’ territory is named for its green lands, large animal population, and for its fur skinning activities”; Kespukw [the name of the district where this story is taking place] (“lands’ ending, or end of territorial boundaries”); and Unamakik (“the place of fog”) (Henderson, (1997) quoted by Metallic and Cavanaugh, “Mi’gmewey ‘Politics’,” 9-10). The naming of the ancestral lands of Mi’gma’gi animates and reflects Mi’gmaq worldview and systems of knowledge, which are “predicated on the idea that the word is alive” (Metallic and Cavanaugh, “Mi’gmegey ‘Politics’,” 10). The territory is comprised of districts formed from sparks, from relations. “Mi’kmaw view of creation,” observe Sable and Francis, is one where they “experienced the universe as fluid and transforming, as was the concept of a creator” (Sable and Francis, The Language of this Land, Mi’kma’ki, 31). From this standpoint, in the creation of the world, and in how the world is to be understood, there is an emphasis on fluidity, ongoingness, and relationality.
through adult-and elderhood. In all cases, there is a holding, but different kinds of holding Mi’gmaw.

The verb-based thought system, a way of understanding and seeing, did not disappear even when the language was in dis/use, or under attack from colonial policies aimed at its eradication. Some scholars are presenting research confirming that Indigenous understandings and ways of knowing continue in other languages, such as the English language. In her work, Celia Haig-Brown points out that “[m]any Indigenous people in Canada are within one or two generations of having a First Nation language as their first language and primary discourse.”

This articulation of thought systems transforming English is significant in that beliefs, values, knowledges, and worldviews underpinning language evolve, change, adapt, and continue, and in doing so transform Euro-languages. This point about living on through European languages is not to counter present-day efforts to revitalize Indigenous languages themselves. It is also important to remain mindful of contemporary assertions by many Indigenous peoples that Canada’s ‘official’ languages (English and French) even if these are the primary languages spoken, are considered, nevertheless, imposed languages: their first language being the Indigenous language “of the land.”

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388 Haig-Brown, “Indigenous Thought, Appropriation, and non-Aboriginal People,” 934. Drawing on the work of linguist John Dunn (working with Tsimshian people in northern British Columbia), Haig-Brown points out that these “primary discourse structures persist even in second and third generations of people who have moved from a First Nation language to English,” (Ibid, 934).

argument adds to the conversation in its recognition of thought (or knowledge) systems that can continue, evolve, and animate many languages. I am attempting to recognize thought systems that continue in many languages, as a way of life. I am doing this to respect and try to understand the beauty of Original Teachings, as expressed by Walters, and to bring to life the many and diverse ways that Indigenous peoples are adapting, resisting, and being, not as ‘less than’ an authentic (original) form, but in the present moment. All the conversations that I had with former students took place in the English language, although all the participants are fluent Mi’gmaq speakers. Although the story gathering took place in English, this does not mean that Mi’gmaq thought systems, beliefs and values were precluded. Some experiences and memories were shared and some, including the language, will be held back to be shared with other listeners.

Treaty philosophy

In Mi’gmawei, treaties are sometimes referred to as “ungugamgewe’l”, which means “adding to an existing group or collective.” Alternatively, the term “gisiagnutmatimgewe’l” is used in association with treaty processes; this term speaks about “what we have agreed upon in the treaty-making process.” These terms give expression to Mi’gmaq treaty philosophy as reflecting expanding relations and of remembering “what has been agreed upon” in the negotiations. This understanding of treaties, as expansive and ‘adding on’ seems to have informed the way that Mi’gmaq saw formal schooling. Treaty philosophy illuminates Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) practices and protocols for decision-making and governance, including decisions associated with education.

Literacy in Aboriginal Communities,” 4-12.

390 Gespe’gewa’gi Mi’gmawei Mawiomi, Nia’tugwaqanminen, 97.

Some of the early records from the written archives, for instance, petitions and letters from the elected leadership, attest to and affirm Mi’gmaq continuous involvement in and assertions of a demand for education that was not about demanding assimilative education, but rather about accessing Euro-Canadian education as a tool that could be added to Mi’gmaq forms of education.\textsuperscript{392}

For Mi’gmaq (similar to other Indigenous nations) kinship-relationships, responsibilities, and remembering of treaty-making was (is) imparted through protocols and ceremonies such as: wampum, gift giving, feasts, songs, and annual mawiomi’l (or, gatherings).\textsuperscript{393} The gift of

\textsuperscript{392} In \textit{Nm’tginen}, a Statement of Claim to the Seventh District of the Mi’gmaq national territory of Mi’gma’gi (2007) outlines the position of the Mi’gmaq of the Seventh District of the Mi’gmaq Nation concerning their “unequivocal Rights and Title to Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi”. The \textit{Nm’tginen} is an assertion for a nation-to-nation relationship, as expressed in the covenant chain of Peace and Friendship Treaties that Mi’gmaq, including Mi’gmaq in the territory of Gespe’gewa’gi, entered with the Crown during the eighteenth-century. The Statement is an unequivocal statement that “[Mi’gmaq] have never abrogated, surrendered nor ceded our title to our lands and resources,” 4. The Peace and Friendship Treaties affirm peaceful co-existence, and for Mi’gmaq their authority to use and care for their ancestral lands and waters “the rivers, fish, woods, animals, and birds, here in Gespe’gewa’gi … comes from the Creator” 45.

\textsuperscript{393} Gespe’gewa’gi Mi’gmawei Mawiomi, \textit{Nta’tugwaqanminen}, 97. In the 18\textsuperscript{th} century, beginning in 1725/26 through to 1779, Mi’gmaq and British Crown negotiated and entered a series of treaties called the Covenant Chain of Peace and Friendship Treaties. These treaties were not land cessation treaties, but rather were about affirming “peace and friendship” between Mi’gmaq, as well as Wolastoqiwyik, Passamaquoddy, and the British Crown. British interest was to secure their “political hold” over the territory, by “harmonizing” their relationships with Mi’gmaq, Wolastoqiwyik, and Passamaquoddy, respectively, and to ensure that Mi’gmaq (and other Indigenous nations) did not align with the French Crown (Wicken, “Fact Sheet on Peace and Friendship Treaties in the Maritimes and Gaspé”. In his historical analysis of Crown/Aboriginal treaty relationships, William Wicken advances an understanding of the terms of the Covenant Chain of Treaties. Of particular interest for Mi’gmaq of Gespe’gewa’gi is his analysis of the 1779 treaty where he demonstrates that the Treaty clearly indicates that the “Miramichi Mi’kmaq” signed the treaty on behalf of communities located along the “Baye des Chaleurs”, which “implicates” the present-day communities of Listuguj, Gespeg and Gesgapegiag. Moreover, in reference to the 1761 Treaty, Wicken asserts that those same communities more than likely “delegated the Miramichi Mi’kmaq” to treaty “on their behalf” (Ibid). What this tells us is that Gespe’gewa’gi Mi’gmaq, in communities located in the province of present-day Quebec, are ‘part of’ the Covenant Chain of Peace and Friendship Treaties negotiated throughout Mi’gma’gi between Mi’gmaq and the Crown. The reason why this is significant is that Mi’gmaq in the province of Quebec are most often not included in present day representations of the Peace and Friendships Treaties, which focus on the Atlantic Region (see: “Pre 1975 Treaties Map in Atlantic,” produced by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development (AAND) Canada, which shows a map of the Peace and Friendship Treaties (Feb. 2014) highlighting communities in the Atlantic region only. The argument clearly implicating the province of Quebec, and Mi’gmaq living in Quebec, is discussed at length in Gespe’gewa’gi Mi’gmawei Mawiomi, \textit{Nta’tugwaqanminen}. 168
tobacco (as shown in the Creation story) is a mechanism that affirms and solidifies the negotiations and covenant agreed upon in treaty making, including those treaties made between the human realm and the animal realm. For this reason, as an example, tobacco is offered when picking medicines (e.g., sweetgrass); at the start of seasons (e.g., fishing, berry picking); or, as part of asking for assistance and support, for instance, in research or knowledge building.

Treaty philosophy thus, is expansive and denotative of negotiations, relationship-building, requesting (or giving) permission. The mechanisms associated with treaty philosophy (tobacco, gifts, feasts, songs) speak about understanding these relationships, including recognition of ‘rights’ and seeking to understand responsibilities. When I started the research, the gathering of stories in the community, I offered tobacco (tmawey) to two Elders, and I asked them to assist me in this work. This was not so much about asking permission or even to initiate the research. Instead, over time, I have realized that some of what the offering has meant to me is about learning about my responsibilities as a settler researcher seeking to document, to amplify and to create space for, many stories. I am learning, too, how my responsibilities involve recognizing, tracing, and paying attention to duality, gaps, overlaps, variations, and nuance. I am tracing patterns and connections, seeing (feeling and hearing) the different, and difficult, ways that settler and Indigenous histories are connected one with the other.

Through stories (such as the Mi´gmaw Creation story) it is possible, as Borrows argues, to recover understandings about the Mi´gmaq processes (e.g., story-as-theory, protocols, principles, and laws), as well as concepts, such as: Ms’t No’gmaq, Mi’gmaw language, and treaty philosophy. Indigenous processes, principles, laws, and concepts did not disappear with the
arrival of settlers (as Borrows reminds us), but they have been buried, muted, silenced, and –
oftentimes– quite deliberately ignored. But, the stories, like the land, still exist; concepts are still
remembered; processes are still lived. Part of my responsibilities, too, are to try and respect these
protocols, to share what I have learned, from my own position and location even as (especially
as) a settler-colonial researcher. To do otherwise would be to continue the Euro-Western colonial
tradition of operating from the location of “perfect stranger” versus taking up responsibilities as a
non-Indigenous learner working with and alongside Indigenous peoples, knowledges, and on
their ancestral lands.394

My turn: unsettling the “settler within” as an ongoing practice

As a white settler researcher, I remain aware of the limitations, problematics, and constraints
around my role and work as a researcher attempting to work with/within, and as an outsider to,
Indigenous knowledge systems, as well as Indigenous political, legal, and social identities. In the
conceptual design and framing, I try to be mindful of my settler-colonial inheritance, including
how conscious and unconscious beliefs and attitudes, for example about what is considered
legitimate and what has been subordinated, continued to shape my work as a researcher working
with/in an Indigenous context. I approach this work carefully, as expressed earlier, as a learner,
and as a guest – living and working – on Mi’gmaq ancestral lands. This positioning (as an

394 In “Witnessing (halted) deconstruction,” Higgins, Madden, and Korteweg draw on the concept ‘perfect stranger’
in their analysis showing how the ‘perfect stranger’ position functions as a “significant barrier to white teacher’s
engagement in Indigenous education reform” 252. Characteristic of perfect stranger include holding onto teaching
practices or approaches as “all they know, want to know, or feel comfortable knowing”; “denial of the role that
whiteness plays in shaping white educators’ lives as well as claims of knowing little to nothing about Indigenous
peoples or cultures”; Higgins et. al. show how this positioning can function as a “protective ‘colonial cloak’” that
serves the interests of educators (or institutions) by protected them from “difficult knowledges” that is associated
with ‘why’ there is a need to deliberately include Indigenous knowledge and perspectives into the curriculum in the
first place, further teachers are ‘protected’ from having difficult conversations associated with systemic racism,
including “the ways in which colonialism and racism are reproduced in their own teaching and within schools” 252.
outsider, as a guest) does not mean that I avoid missteps or whitely colonial endeavours to know, to contain; or “settler moves to innocence”\textsuperscript{395} and desires to remain ‘neutral’ or dissociate from colonial violence and violations (e.g., different from those ‘other’ unenlightened settlers of the past). As storywriter Tommy Orange (Cheyenne and Arapaho) astutely observes (in the interlude) of the novel There There (2018):

[i]f you were fortunate enough to be born into a family whose ancestors directly benefited from genocide and/or slavery, maybe you think the more you don’t know, the more innocent you can stay, which is a good incentive to not find out, to not look too deep, to walk carefully around the sleeping tiger.\textsuperscript{396}

My positioning – as a white, settler researcher pursuing a doctoral degree at a non-Indigenous institution – serves as a reminder that the lens through which I come to understand, the position from which I speak (learn and research) is a particular standpoint, with a particular inheritance of (white) privilege, oftentimes unquestioned authority, and legitimacy, which together comprise aspects of colonial logic and thinking. Preserving innocence, as Orange writes, is a good motive not to find out more, not to dig too deeply, to leave the “tiger” sleeping, and walk away. Making these invisible norms visible, countering the “sea of whiteness,” as expressed by Battiste, is an important part of decolonizing and untangling historical (and ongoing) Western (colonial)

\textsuperscript{395} In “Decolonization is not a metaphor,” Tuck and Yang define “settler moves to innocence” as actions that aim to “alleviate settler guilt without doing anything meaningful to undo harm to Indigenous communities” (quoted in Grundy, Jiang, and Niiya, “Solidarity as a Settler Move to Innocence,” 2019. Tuck and Yang push for decolonizing projects that involve the “repatriation of Indigenous lands and life”. Examples of settler moves to innocence include claiming ‘long lost’ Indigenous ancestry; homogenizing various experiences and forms of oppression by insisting they are analogous with Indigeneity in the context of settler colonialism; and “adopting Indigenous practices and ways of life”. These types of positionings can distance an individual (or institution) from their settler identity (and responsibilities), and prolong white settler privilege (Grundy, Jiang, and Niiya, “Solidarity as a Settler Move to Innocence,” para. 7. On a slightly different path, in “Indigenous Thought, Appropriation, and non-Aboriginal People,” Haig-Brown speaks about “deep learning” which she argues can be a way for settler peoples to learn and to put into practice aspects of Indigenous knowledges systems in a respectful manner.

\textsuperscript{396} Orange, There There, 139.
As a settler researcher, this is part of my responsibility when attempting to conduct research in a manner that is ethical, critical, and – hopefully – contributes to transformation in settler beliefs and attitudes, and to make visible how ‘not knowing’ is a form of white privilege. Settlers (beliefs, ideologies, knowledge systems, and settler schools) are very much part of the problem; as settlers, we too need to be able to properly identify colonial assumptions, hierarchies, and exclusions in settler thinking, structures, and systems for there to be transformation in settler and Indigenous relations and (possibly) co-building of knowledge, and relations.

At the same time, my position is also that of partial belonging: I live and work on Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) Nn’u territory; I am married into a Mi’gmaq family; and my day-to-day life world and work relations are primarily in and with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous communities. These relationships, with people, with place, and with knowledge systems, inform my thinking and ways of conducting myself. I am guided by principles and ethical research practices articulated by Indigenous academics and allies working with, within, and across from, many knowledge systems to develop respectful ways of working together, and apart. I am guided by my own experiences – learning from, working with, Indigenous friends, family members (my in-laws and my own three children, two young adults and a youth), Elders, speakers, and work colleagues. I am learning what it means to live by an “ethic of incommensurability” through conversations,

397 Battiste discusses the invisibility of whiteness in Decolonizing Education; she observes succinctly: “[w]hiteness and privilege are less evident to those who swim in the sea of whiteness and dominance” 25.


399 In “Unsettling Settler Colonialism,” Snelgrove, Dhamoon and Corntassel argue that: ‘ethics of incommensurability’ can support those engaged in various struggles (e.g., anti-racist, anti-capitalist, decolonization). ‘Relationships’, they argue, are essential to maintain” accountability” and to resist repeating colonial and other
reflections, missteps, desires, and experiences both ‘here’ and ‘away’ (as both/and outsider, insider, guest). An ethic of incommensurability speaks to a practice of accepting and learning to live with differences rather than controlling, eliminating, or trying to make familiar that which is incommensurable. Tuck and Yang included “adopting Indigenous practices and ways of life” as a move to innocence. An ethic of incommensurability supports building relations with one another, while still recognizing differences and ways that are incompatible or irreconcilable. These differences are not areas to be smoothed over, ignored, eliminated, or depicted as ‘similar to’ but rather it is these differences that breathe life into trans-systemic knowledge production. A trans-systemic approach and analysis, attempting to centre Indigenous concerns and worldviews, as Smith reminds us, requires careful, respectful, and ethical approaches. Tuck and Yang’s cautions are very important, but these cautions do not necessarily pursue the question of how to hear and participate, or simply be part of difficult conversations (as a settler) and listen to recognize the change required in settler thinking, structures, and institutions.

For settler colonial peoples, part of relationship building (for example, conducting research with/in Indigenous contexts, and respecting and using Indigenous practices) involves self-reflexivity as a type of ongoing and continuous decolonizing practice. Self-reflexivity involves “unsettling the settler within,” to use the words of Paulette Regan. Regan is a settler academic and researcher who worked as an IRS claims resolution manager for the federal government between 2002 - 2004. Regan worked with residential school survivors, church representatives and lawyers. She then worked as the director of research for the Truth and Reconciliation

relations of domination … and to support “each other’s resistance” 23.

Commission of Canada. These experiences, Regan observes, propelled her to continuously question how settlers can “confront” the residential school narrative as part of decolonizing work without replicating “colonizing attitudes and behaviours.” As a way to counter colonizing attitudes that tend to go unquestioned, Regan uses critical personal narratives or “auto-ethnographic vignettes” as part of decolonizing and “unsettling the settler within.” For Regan, self-reflexivity through the practice of storytelling is about risk, about learning to “interact” differently, less as an outsider but rather with “vulnerability, humility, and a willingness to stay in the decolonizing struggle of our own discomfort.” Regan points out that personal vignettes and stories can contribute to ways that settlers can focus less on learning about (Indigenous) others and to instead pause in (moments) of discomfort, to make our own colonizing attitudes, biases, and behaviours visible. At the same time, there is a need to be mindful that unsettling silences do not need to be filled (again) by a settler story.

Is it possible, for instance, to picture oneself in the stories one hears about residential or Indian day schooling? Is it possible to listen, to observe, and to respond without necessarily consuming, taking over, or narrating? Can we, as settlers, picture a ‘white’ school built alongside an ‘Indian’ day school, occupying the same, but at the same time very different, frames? As a settler, can one learn (and listen) to stories about day schools in such a way as to reframe settler stories, in terms of how one has been in relation to Indigenous peoples, perhaps without realizing it, or embedded in structures that deny this relationship? Unsettled listening and speaking can mean

401 Regan, *Unsettling the Settler Within*, 13.
403 Ibid, 13.
working through colonial privilege, as observed by Kiera Ladner⁴⁰⁴; and (possibly) allow for a *hearing or participating* in Indigenous practices and normative values (or laws), as Craft points out, so that ethical dialogue is possible amongst societies (and peoples) with differing worldviews. Ethical listening is also about acknowledging and interrogating oppressive and normalized practices that too often remain beneath the surface, at least for those who benefit from them, like an invisible current.

4.4) Naming State Violence

A central question that guided this research involved putting into practice, and conceptualizing reconciliation in ways that recognize harms, but also support Indigenous worldviews, knowledges, as part of decolonizing. In the academic literature, decolonization has been conceptualized as two distinct yet related “fronts” involving reclaiming, rebuilding, and centering as well as critique and deconstruction.⁴⁰⁵ I draw on a similar concept of trans-systemic knowledge systems to conceptualize the two fronts of decolonization as a research practice, and focus on critique (using Western analytics) and rebuilding (centering Indigenous paradigms), without one consuming or taking over the other.⁴⁰⁶ As a critical lens, as a *webbing*, I draw from a repertoire of Western concepts (or analytics) to expose, critique and analyze the dominant narrative. By first centering Indigenous knowledge systems (for instance, the retelling of the Mi’gmaw creation story) it is possible to see how state violence was not just a question of human

⁴⁰⁴ Ladner, “150 Years and Waiting,” 407.


⁴⁰⁶ Mackey, *Unsettled Expectations*, 23.
rights abuses or the exercise of a regime of power/knowledge working through Western concepts of race and population, but also how violence and violations were (and are) about the wrenching out of kinship systems, out of relatedness as an understanding and a practice.

The concepts discussed in the following section: population and governmentality; state racism; white possession and cognitive imperialism; gender and moral regulation (as an aspect of the wider hetero- and patriarchal structure) are intended to contribute to a critique and challenging of the dominance of (Western) Eurocentric culture and ideas in the “defining and shaping” of formal schooling, which are visible in the fabric and fabrication of Indian day schools.

**Population and governmentality**

I draw on the concepts of population and governmentality as lenses to analyze the role of Indian day schooling in producing segregated populations. In his critical body of work, Michel Foucault, and others, investigated, critiqued, and illuminated the “conditions under which modern societies operate.” (Further on in this Chapter, under “White Possession”, I will work with theorists who join Foucault’s ideas to settler-colonial contexts.) Foucault asserts that modernity can be characterized in part by the “governmentalization of the state” (a process he sometimes also calls “governmentality” or “biopolitics”) by which he means European states becoming centralized entities drawing their legitimacy from claims to reason and science as their

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409 The term governmentality combines the terms government and rationality. In this sense, the term government not only refers to the “political structures or to the management of the states”, but also refers to the “way that the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed – the government of children, of souls, of communities, of the sick” (Foucault quoted in Sokhi-Bulley’s “Governmentality: Notes on the Thought of Michel Foucault,” 2014.)
basis for overseeing the ‘natural’ processes in a population, rather than simply ruling over a territory.\textsuperscript{410} The concept of population is nested within this process of governmentalization, as Bruce Curtis argues: population is the “essential object” of modern forms of government.\textsuperscript{411} Put another way, governance by a secular, centralized state that is concerned with the life and productivity of its populace and the very idea of a ‘population’ are linked: state governance emerged with the “development of the phenomenon of population”: that is, knowledges of births, deaths, health, productivity, conducts, etc.\textsuperscript{412}

In \textit{History of Sexuality} (1978), Foucault asserts that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries European “[g]overnments perceived that they were not dealing simply with subjects, or even with a “people” but with a “population.”\textsuperscript{413} The state could understand its population through its particularities, for instance: “birth and death rates, life expectancy, fertility, state of health, frequency of illness, patterns of diet and habitation.”\textsuperscript{414} Moreover, states could maximize their strength by aiming to know, to keep track of, and to govern populations. “Governmentality” refers to ways that states could assert power by tracking and controlling the people living in a national territory. Governmentality also denotes rationality, the thought system, or the thinking behind the methods of governance. Governmentality concerns how a state (and state apparatuses,

\textsuperscript{410} Foucault, \textit{History of Sexuality}, 21.

\textsuperscript{411} Curtis, “Foucault on Governmentality and Population,” 510.


\textsuperscript{413} Foucault, \textit{History of Sexuality}, 25.

\textsuperscript{414} Ibid, 25.
including schools) ‘conduct the conduct’ of people from a distance. Indian day schools impacted communal and individual life (e.g., infiltrating students’ lives, their bodies, habits, and minds, affecting relationships within and between families). The schools functioned as part of a wider colonial governmentality that saw Indigenous peoples as remainders of the past and as obstacles to ‘progress.’

Before the emergence of the concept of population, Western forms of governance and the economy centered around a patriarchal family model. In the mid-eighteenth century, the increasing number of people coupled with changes in agricultural production (e.g., mechanical inventions) resulted in a shift in human affairs in that the “management of individuals” could not fall solely on the family unit. Instead, the family became an “instrument” (as a type of point of entry) in terms of monitoring the larger group, or the population. In turn, population groups could be “constructed, defined, and counted” through techniques such as “statistics keeping.”

Governmentality illuminates the role of the state as: “definer, watcher, and manager of difference.” Put another way, populations were not only observed (e.g., through variables such as birth and death rates) but could be “managed”, as Baker observes, categorized, and segmented for different treatments. For this project on Indian day schooling, the concept of population is

415 Jennifer Henderson, personal communication. In “Foucault on Governmentality and Population,” Curtis observes that by mid-1970s, Foucault argued that “parallel to and in relation with techniques of the individual body were biopolitical techniques aimed at the collective body, population,” 510.


417 Foucault quoted in Baker, “‘Childhood’ in the Emergence and Spread of U.S. Public Schools,” 131.

418 Baker, “‘Childhood’ in the Emergence and Spread of U.S. Public Schools,” 131.

419 Ibid, 132.

In the memories of those who attended in Restigouche, it is possible to hear how the rules of the Indian Day School, as a form of biopower, extended into bodies, into families and homes, the daily lives and (eventually) across generations. A prominent image in the recollections of former students was “the fence” that separated student populations. One former student, Gladys Germain, who attended the Indian Day School in the 1940s, spoke about the separation, which segregated populations, creating hierarchical orderings. In her recollections, Gladys spoke about the division, and the awareness of being treated differently, as ‘lesser than’:

They had another school right beside our Indian Day School, it was a French school. There was a fence, but anyway, we were separated. They were taught differently than us … they were treated better. They called us savages. …We were looked down on a lot, really.

What this recollection shows is how Indigenous dispossession (from land, from relations, from knowledge systems) did not only or always require the physical removal of children from their homes or families. Gladys Germain’s words illuminate the spatial divisions corresponding to, and reinforcing, a conceptual division between ‘types’ of humans. She attended school in her own home territory, on Mi’gmaq territory, but it was reorganized according to a racial scheme that was materialized in the fence. The constant, normalized, and repetition of the colonial slur worked to rationalize the separate treatment. The state operated at a distance, constituting a racially segmented school population (‘white’ and ‘Indian’ school children). School rules, to some extent, were absorbed into bodies and colonial logic carried into homes where they could
impact daily interactions. Some of the memories and recollections stemming from Indian Day Schools, understood through the lens of governmentality, show how dispossession—the estrangement of Indigenous children from their own homeland and the language, pedagogy, and epistemology connected to it—took place without Indigenous children ever having to leave their home communities. This (almost) invisible dispossession is also a form of settler violence and violation that needs to be acknowledged, critically examined, and reflected upon by the settler public to understand how school systems created and normalized segregated populations, centered and privileged some knowledges (Euro-Western knowledges), and disallowed and marginalized Indigenous knowledge systems and languages. Day Schools were fixtures on Indigenous homelands, with the church and the state, broke up families and eroded Indigenous sovereignty.

State racism

State racism describes the rationality of government (the “governmentality”) of which formal schooling for Indigenous children was a part. State racism functioned like an invisible current attempting to produce particular kinds of bodies and a particular kind of population. In his analysis of the functions of a racialized state, Feldman draws on the work of David Theo Goldberg who argues that the main functions include: “1) Define populations into racial groups; 2.) Regulate relations of different types between these groups so defined; 3.) Govern populations in terms of their ‘race’; 4) Manage the economy and economic life and labor of racially defined groups; 5.) Mediate relations as neutral “adjudicator” in addition to regulating them.”

Feldman argues that this mechanical – and racialized – state is characterized by “oppression and

“coercion” versus a “shared ethical life.”

In other words, the characteristics of a racialized state differ from those that define a kinship based family system, as analyzed by Henderson and Battiste (examined earlier in this chapter), and where a person learns their responsibilities as an individual and as “part of” a collective web of relations, inclusive of human and other-than-human. Foucault introduced the term “biopolitics,” to conceptualize how state apparatuses (hospitals, prisons, and schools) could “control” individuals less by “ideological manipulation” and more “by and through the body.”

There are two distinct dimensions to this state racism: biopower, targeting population and discipline, targeting bodies. State racism uses both, and both are at work in the Restigouche Indian Day School.

### Biopower – targeting population

In his work, Alex Feldman shows how racism permeates institutions as a style of practice versus being an “individual prejudice or belief.” Feldman draws on Foucault to discuss how the emergence of state racism depended on the technology and use of biopower as a means of deploying the “political significance” of race and controlling the assignment of bodies to ‘races’. Biopower sets in motion a pattern that is about making a population live a certain way and letting another way, and people who persist in that other way, die. What the state seeks to regulate through biopower is how a population lives and how to “maximize and extract forces”

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422 Curtis, “Foucault on Governmentality and Population,” 512.


424 Ibid, 279.
from that living.\textsuperscript{425} The sciences or knowledges relevant to the exercise of biopower include knowledges (categorizations, measurements, distinctions) of ‘race’ as well as hygiene, health, and productivity. These knowledges underpin ways of governing that aim, as Foucault put it, to “regularize” at the level of the population.\textsuperscript{426} The modern State’s right “to make live and let die” signified the “entrance of State racism.”\textsuperscript{427} It was not that the State introduced racism, rather, as Sam Holder points out in his reading of Foucault: “[r]acism helped the State unearth its lost right to kill by categorizing the “subrace(s)” from the rest”\textsuperscript{428} and, discipline and regulation were the means by which the State exercised its control. The State was not only interested in control (“protected from”), rather, for the modern State, norms circulating between ‘discipline’ and ‘regulation’, were the means for, and rationale by which: “[subrace(s)] were to be eliminated, to ‘make life in general … healthier and purer’.”\textsuperscript{429}

I analyze the relevance of biopower in and around the school by looking at how schooling was organized with a view to changing how generations would live: the implanting of different family arrangements where children, boys and girls, were instructed to “learn to love the family circle,”\textsuperscript{430} where “family circle” meant the patriarchal nuclear family unit; the interference with

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\textsuperscript{425} Foucault, Society Must Be Defended, 246.
\textsuperscript{426} Ibid, 253.
\textsuperscript{427} Holder, “Revising Society Must be Defended,”84.
\textsuperscript{428} Ibid, 84.
\textsuperscript{429} Ibid, 84.
\textsuperscript{430} This phrase is used by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary in their 1946 submission “Report of the Teaching Staff of the Restigouche Indian Day School to the Honourable members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee Delegation behalf of the Welfare Indian Act. Oct. 25, 1946 (Pacifique Fonds_1981-05-001-17_Divers, BanQ, Gaspé). This Special Joint Committee was established to review the relationship between “Indians and the Government” and to make recommendations for revising the Indian Act and Canada’s Indian administration. The Joint Committee
\end{flushright}
seasonal practices of drawing a living from the land, in some instances, or restrictions placed around Indigenous families, and leadership, in their ability to fully engage and participate in the decision-making around formal schooling, curriculum, pedagogy, teachers, and language of instruction. The concept of biopower comes into play in recollections and memories of students who attended the school who recalled the discipline (at the level of the body) being applied (being made to stand for hours and hours; the sound of the “clapper”; the sense of being ‘unclean’, ‘uncared for’ and regularized at the level of the (school) population (rituals of prayers, attendance at church, rote learning of basic English instruction, the denial of their own language). These recollections show state racism operating at the Day School, felt by individuals and at the level of the ‘collective’ student body, or population. Recollections about the school, written and oral, show how generations of Mi’gmaq were impacted from the ‘inside out’ by state racism. Indigenous children and families, collectives (or, individuals and populations), including ways of being, knowing, learning (Indigenous Knowledge systems) were the target of biopower.

Discipline – targeting bodies

Foucault’s discussion of discipline is about the way that power targets the individual body through techniques such as surveillance, regulation, management, rewards, and punishments. I analyze the relevance of discipline at the Day School by looking at the rules, punishments, and rewards within the school at Restigouche by drawing on memories and stories about schooling shared by former students, and also from archival records. In her recollections about her time at the Indian Day School, Patsy Gray spoke about a common form of punishment: the clapper.

examined a total of eight elements, including the operation of Indian Day and Residencies schools. (Johnson, “Helping Indians to Help Themselves,” 1984).
Patsy Gray attended school in the late 1940 to 1950s. When asked about what stands out about the school she spoke about the sounds (of the clapper) and the scent (of cedar oil). Patsy stated:

I remember “the clapper”. The “clapper” is a piece of wood that nuns would use to get students’ attention. The clapper was a weapon used by the nuns. … I saw students beaten up by the nuns with a ruler or with a clapper. Those are the memories that stand out: wooden floors and the smell of cedar oil, the sound of the clapper.

The clapper became a “weapon” that targeted not only the body (of differentiated “bad” children), but also the bodies and minds of all children: in the sounds and scents held by the body, carried over into adulthood in memories. The treatment at the school, and techniques of disciplining, illuminate how populations were produced (as ‘Indians’ at the ‘Indian’ Day School), and then managed, some children were “bad” (and punished), while others were “good” (and rewarded) with prizes. The “good” children, some participants recalled, were those who attended church – on Sundays, where attendance was taken by nuns/teachers – and then commented on at school. The system brought in was one of divisiveness and control, reward and punishment, which worked to erode and displace Indigenous ways of learning with the environment, with extended family, with a sense of belonging. These ways were recalled by some participants; they are also evoked through stories and teachings, such as the Creation Story.

The school, however, did not evoke a sense of belonging or safety. Many who spoke with me recall experiences with dentistry. Many participants spoke about this experience akin to torture, and recalled their own, or their classmates’, strategies to avoid or pre-empt the visiting dentist. A few recalled the visit from the dentist as an occasion differentiating between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, with only the former being assigned to the school “dental clinic”.
Gordon Isaac Sr., for instance, spoke about his memories with the mobile dental clinic; his memories from childhood illuminate how some children recorded these experiences like watchful witnesses (recording, remembering). Gordon Isaac Sr., said that:

Every fall the dentist used to come in. And there was other ones come in for TB and all that stuff, X-rays and all that, like a bus coming in. And when the dentist came in, I remember one time they were pulling teeth out and there was nothing wrong with them. ... And after a while when the dentist comes over, nobody goes to school ..... The visits from health professionals (dental clinics, or X-Rays for TB) were part of the overall Indian Day School regime. Health ‘care’ was an occasion where school populations (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) were differentiated. Indigenous children were “all lined up” to receive a brutal form of ‘health care’, without parents’ present. Gordon Isaac Sr.’s reminiscing also captures strategies of resistance: Mi’gmaq children would “head for the woods.”

Finally, many participants who took part in this project spoke about how the teachers, Sisters of the Holy Rosary, instilled order and regulation in the classroom through a daily routine that was marked by prayers and praying. All participants who shared memories and stories about their experiences at school recalled the praying that functioned as a schedule for their learning and was the central component around which other learning revolved: to fail Catechism, meant to fail the school year. Other forms of knowledge (either secular or fluency in Mi’gmaw) were marginalized, omitted, denigrated, or ignored.

The prayers, the praying. Always, if you ask anything about the prayer it was ‘mystery’. You couldn’t ask ‘why is this, why is that’. It’s a mystery, everything was a mystery. But if you didn’t pass your religion you weren’t going to pass. You’re not passing the class; I don’t care

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how smart you were with the rest of the stuff. It went the religion, and to speak their English, their language. *Kenny Mitchell*

And, kneeling, they make you kneel and kneel for hours [when you were at school]. They pounded it into us. *Maggie Isaac*

Prayers not only regulated the day, instilling order, but were also used as a form of punishment: homework not done, “you’d kneel half a day.” Religion, participants recalled, was “pounded into us”, like an assault, says Maggie Isaac, along with the speaking of “their English, their language,” says Kenny Mitchell. Children’s bodies targeted by colonial policies, in education *and* in health. Stories about day schooling are persistent reminders of the ways that a racial state functioned, and the lasting imprint of that treatment.

In contrast to a shared ethical life, or system defined by complex patterns of kinship relations, responsibilities, and accountabilities, the racial state not only defined, regulated, and managed racially defined groups (as populations), but did so from a position as (self-appointed) ‘neutral’ mediator. The nuns as teachers, health care professionals, were the various faces of the colonial state. From the position of ‘neutral mediator’, to recall Goldberg’s fifth function of the racial state, those who occupied these positions remained comfortably invisible, dispatching orders, enforcing rules and regulations, without appearing to be a perpetrator of violence and violations. The state defines, enforces, and adjudicates and mediates, on the rules. And the state does so from a protected position of neutrality. From this (taken for granted) position of neutrality, it is difficult (for the state or agents of the state) to recognize or see the need for oversight and accountability. The racialized state functions from a position of perfect stranger and neutrality, never having its own racialized privilege named as such or seeing itself implicated in the...
violence. At the Restigouche Day School, this self-appointed mediator position was occupied, over the generations, by various agents of the state: priests and Indian Agents (sometimes one and the same), teachers and nuns. In different ways these agents defined, regulated, governed, managed, and mediated relations along a spectrum of colonial positioning, from benevolent, zealous, neutral, or righteous.

Religious and Biological Senses of Racial Otherness

Racism is what allows the unacceptable to become ‘acceptable’. Feldman argues that “racism” is what makes the “recoding of enmity acceptable.”

State racism is a type of blending of “political adversary with [the idea of] biological danger”; that is, it is not only that some populations ‘should’ be put to death or let die, but it is that some can be put to death with “impunity.” Foucault, writing about European nation-states, writes that “discourses” within institutions classified and regulated populations along two “separate registers”: those which fall within ‘natural’ laws and those that belonged to a “world of perversion.” In other words, within the logic of biopower (to make live and let die), it is important to note the persistence of a “second function”, that of elimination (to let die), which is founded on the logic of race and racism and the acceptability of abandoning that which is considered a “biological danger.”

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433 Ibid, 282.

434 Foucault, History of Sexuality, 40.

The Indian Day School at Restigouche was not at all secular, and so what was implied in the term “savage” was a religious other, as well as a racial, in the sense of biological, other. The two meanings overlapped. In the nineteenth century, this dual racialized logic was at play in the inquiries and commissions, and eventually Acts and policy framework, established by Indian Affairs officials. One such inquiry, the Pennefather Commission, established in 1856, investigated ways that the colonial state’s civilizing agenda could be achieved. In a report made to the commissioners specifically about the mission at Restigouche, the priest in charge of the mission, F. Dumontier, P.P., is “happy to say” that: “there is much improvement in the moral and religious character of the Indians as well as their habits of industry”. Mi’gmaq are making “much progress” in Christianity, and “none are pagans”. Generally, “in good health”, reports Dumontier, but the “Tribe has decreased”. This report not only shows what is ‘made to live’ (progress as Christians), but also what it is seen to be acceptable to ‘let die’ (the observation that the “Tribe has decreased,” a thread of neutrality in the midst of an enthusiasm about “much improvement”).

The report illuminates the ideas in settler societies about Indigenous peoples as ‘waning’ (the “Tribe has decreased”), or as a slowly disappearing ‘race’ because they are unwanted/they stand in the way of settler appropriation (framed as progress), and so they are coded as belonging to the past, not meant for the modern world. The school at Restigouche had these contradictory functions built into its foundation: to convert to Christianity and to save souls, allowing for the “improvement” of the “children” (Dumontier to Pennefather); and, at least by the turn of the

Leslie, The Report of the Pennefather Commission: Indian Conditions and Administration in the Canadas in the 1850s., 1983. Leslie observes that between 1823 and 1858 there were six major investigations into Indigenous conditions and the department administration, in the Canadas. The last of these Royal commissions, launched in 1856, was chaired by Richard T. Pennefather; Restigouche is included in this inquiry.
twentieth century, to partition Indigenous children off from the white children (to keep the local white children ‘white’ and separated from those children who were seen to be part of a naturally decreasing population.)

In its final, 1858, report, submitted to the Governor-General of British North America, the Pennefather Commission recommended a “more aggressive policy” that promoted “assimilation” rather than civilization, and individual land tenure to replace traditional land holding patterns.437 Many of the recommendations in this report were already being implemented, one year prior, with the enactment of An Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes of the Canadas, also known as the Gradual Civilization Act 1857.438 The report about Mi’gmaq of Restigouche can be found in the Appendix to the commissioners’ report. Yet, the observations, including commentary about the ‘first’ formal school at Restigouche, pointedly show settler logic at work in the desire to eliminate Mi’gmaq lifeways, which are ‘allowed’ to die. This understanding (that some populations and, to extend further, some knowledge systems) can be allowed to die is relevant to understanding the spectrum of violence and violations at colonial schools, residential and day. The violence and violation are not only physical removal of children from their families and their territories but also the ways that Indigenous knowledges and practices were restricted, contained, dismissed, or allowed to be ‘put to death’.

In their reminiscing and memories about the school at Restigouche, many of the participants spoke


438 The Gradual Civilization Act, 1857, and the Gradual Enfranchisement Act, 1869, were consolidated into the Indian Act of 1876 (Horn, “Reconfiguring Assimilation,” 27-33).
about the racist verbal abuse, the teaching of shame about Indigeneity, and physical violence that took place in the classroom, in the hallways, and even after school hours. In one conversation, Sonny Wysote and Maggie Isaac, spoke about this treatment; Sonny recalled:

And like I said, every once or twice a week, if it was the auditorium, then the nun goes up there and just asks the Natives, while the rest of the people stay in their class [they’d] call us names and ‘uncivilized Indians’, and how bad we are, ‘you are bad people.’ … And I think that’s why the school was burned down…I didn’t have no feeling because you didn’t want to learn, you know, your [desire for] learning is gone.

Children, as individuals, experienced the treatment but the violence and violations were aimed at eradicating and erasing their own history, their collectivity, and knowledges. Their knowledges and practices – rooted in place, in kinship relations, in principles of ‘balance’ and flux, are in the way of the settler world. The whole point of the school is to replace those knowledges, but not even very effectively. Participants not only spoke about the violence, abuse, and mistreatment but many also spoke about realizing – as they grew older, and when they looked back – that the education that they were receiving, as Indigenous peoples, was not the same Western education as those labelled ‘white’.  

One former student, Gordon Isaac Sr., spoke about the different expectations for students, remembering that:

And all the scribblers, the Government of Canada. Big scribblers like, you know yellow ones, they’re all like about this size. The French students, they got all the nice ones like that and we got half of that. … As you grow older you will remember that. It wasn’t very nice.

Gordon Isaac’s words are a reminder that the teachers did not expect Mi`gmaq students to

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439 In her work on Day Schools (in the Maritimes) and the Shubenacadie Residential schools, Walls observes that the “academics” at day schools were substandard: “federal Day Schools ended at sixth grade, compared to provincial government schools for non-Indigenous students which continued to grade eight,” in “The Complex Truth,” Nov. 15, 2019.
‘succeed’ in Canadian society. There were contradictory programs or rationales at work in the school. In one sense, the ‘enemy’ was the Mi’gmaq of Restigouche (their whole community was in the way of settler development). In another sense, the racial enemy was seen to be within them as individuals: it was what was seen to be both immoral/unchristian (“pagan”) and unhygienic, disorderly about their way of living, things which could be changed (it was thought) through schooling. The Day School at Restigouche did not invent the categories of “savages” and “white” but these racial categories were mobilized at the school to structure space, groups, and education standards. The Indigenous children at the school were both made to live a certain way and ‘let die’ (as “bad people”) insofar as they were Mi’gmaq, living (using, sharing, learning, adapting) on their ancestral lands for thousands of years.

The Fence and Its Aftermath

The process of governing a population (that is, defining, measuring, regulating, tracking groups) normalizes certain characteristics as being associated with particular groups, and thereby fosters and protects settler privilege. Settlers come off as blameless because the idea of ‘letting die’ (populations or knowledges) is framed as rational, reasonable, not a decision but an inevitability according to the dominant knowledges. The experience in Restigouche shows clearly the concern

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440 The rationality of governance builds on the premise of ‘defining’, ‘regulating’, ‘governing’, ‘managing’, and ‘moderating’ the “assignment of bodies” to ‘races’ (Goldman); yet this governance structure itself rests on preconceived (and unquestioned) ideas and hierarchical values associating bodies (populations and subjectivities) with ‘races’ (Feldman), and within this hierarchy some are perceived as worthy of being made to thrive and others allowed to die.

441 Baker, “‘Childhood’ in the Emergence and Spread of U.S. Public Schools,” 131. Foucault argues that over time socially constructed characteristics (e.g., ‘racial characteristics’) appeared as “natural attributes.” (Foucault quoted in Baker, 131). The historical and cultural specificity that produce a population sub-group are rendered invisible; the “criteria” is naturalized, and reinforced, through “scientific techniques” built around, for instance, data gathering about a population (Ibid, 131).
to distinguish between populations that were meant to have a future in settler Canada, to become property owners, on the one hand, and those who were supposed to be at best the objects of benevolent charity, possibly future low-wage labourers and domestics, and in the meantime require especially rigorous discipline around hygiene and the ‘domestic circle’ (because of racist ideas) so that they did not ‘pollute’ (or corrupt) the others. For these reasons, it was necessary to have the fences separating school populations. In the words of former Chief William (Je’gopsn) Wysote, in 1971, the division is remembered this way:

I remember when I attended the all Indian Day School here in Restigouche. There was a French school next to us and we were divided by a fence between us. Both of the schools were run by the nuns of the same order. They reminded us of our savage ways and the superiority of the non-Indians or French-speaking people … I worked around here and in the States as a laborer. I realized that not everyone thought of me being an Indian was bad, but rather a person who had special privileges.\(^4\)

Chief Wysote’s statement, published in the local newspaper, in 1971, in the days following the burning of the Indian Day School and the Convent, illuminates not only the long-standing discrimination, but also voices resistances and direct challenges to those forms of state racism and biopower. The image (and associated memories) of the fence were a constant theme in the recollections of former students who attended the Indian Day School(s) in the late 1940s to 1960s. The ‘fence’ is both symbolic of differential treatment of populations, and not only symbolic but is an index of policy, of practices, of treatments associated with settler colonial agenda to control and manage Indigenous peoples (and their lands), and the historical and

\(^4\) Newspaper article collected and saved by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Chief William Wyoste, “Micmac Chief: Indians Want Better Way of Life And Equal Opportunity,” The Tribune. Oct. 6, 1971. This statement was published in the local newspaper two weeks after the school and convent were destroyed by fire. (Decoupures de Journaux_1971_308.720-c.2, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.)
ongoing colonial violence to ‘civilize’, ‘assimilate’, ‘integrate’, and – in the present moment – ‘reconcile’ settler and Indigenous peoples, societies, systems, and knowledges. In some ways, the fence between the schools (like the Indian Act), is a reminder (both symbolic and real) of settlers’ desire to remove (contain or constrain) Indigenous peoples from the land (and systems of knowledge), to create “more room for settlers.” The fence is part of the way that schooling tried to remove the Mi’gmaq peoplehood (as a collective or kinship-based society), and to reconstruct them as a segment of the ‘population’ (‘stay over there’, but not here).

With respect to state racism practiced through and in educational institutions, Foucault argued that nineteenth-century schools “initiated” young children into a system of discipline and biopower involving: “surveillance, classification, and normalization”, all of which ultimately served the power interests of government and settler society more generally. Scholars in the social sciences have extended Foucault’s arguments about the role of schooling in producing populations by establishing (ab)norms through which we “come to know and are known.” As an example of state racism at work in schools, in the early to mid-twentieth century (coinciding with the period under study for this dissertation on Indian day schooling), Mona Gleason uses a Foucauldian analysis to show how “modern compulsory state schooling” represents a network of “technologies of surveillance and observation,” which disciplined children’s bodies producing


444 Foucault quoted in Gleason, “Disciplining the Student Body,” 191.

some bodies as ‘different’ and ‘inferior’ reproducing and legitimizing “traditional [racialized and
gendered] hierarchies of power in schools.”

Returning to the concept of governmentality, drawing on Métis writer Maria Campbell’s memoir
Halfbreed (1973), Gleason shows how racialized populations were created, measured, and
managed at public education institutions. This is significant to this dissertation on day schooling
because Campbell shows how the violence and violations of education were not restricted to
residential schools, but the violence and violations (disciplines, segregations, categorizations)
took place at institutions that were not hidden from settler eyes. In her memoir, Campbell speaks
of classmates, specifically Metis students, who were “singled out in class and made the centre of
unwanted and hostile attention.” Gleason argues that children were forced “to submit to the
educational priorities of the Anglo/Celtic Protestant majority in Canada.” Gleason shows how
“white priorities” were woven into the fabric of public education systems subjugating (and
producing) Indigenous populations as lesser than their white (settler) counterparts.

Gleason, “Disciplining the Student Body,” 199. In contrast, Gore argues that techniques of power (e.g.,
surveillance, exclusion, classification, distribution, totalization, and regulation) are commonly used in the classroom. Gore suggests that the techniques, however, do not have an inherent harm/productive quality; rather, the central issue rests in how techniques are used in the classroom by educators, which determines their harm or productiveness. Gore argues that educators have a responsibility to examine how techniques of power (to dominate, to “create”, as forms of (self)/discipline, (self)/control) are used in the classroom (and, arguably, more broadly at work in the development of education systems). What is not clearly articulated, in this argument, is how educators will engage in practices of self-reflexivity. Nevertheless, it is important to pay attention to the uses of techniques of power. In the era of reconciliation, settler-colonial society, speaking more broadly, (e.g., educators, teachers, administrators, boards, councils, policy makers) has a responsibility to engage in self-reflective practices to make visible, to unsettle the ways in which techniques of power are used to support or reflect one’s own cultural and social norms, and oftentimes are in keeping with codes (rules, expectations) of the particular fields in which they operate (Bourdieu) in Gore’s “Disciplining Bodies: On the Continuity of Power Relations in Pedagogy,” 231-251.Self-reflective practices are discussed earlier in this Chapter under “unsettling the ‘settler within’.

Campbell quoted in Gleason, “Discipling the Student Body,” 199.

Gleason, “Discipling the Student Body,” 190.
As some research participants detailed in their accounts, there were not only divisions and segregations between Indigenous and settler populations, but also between Catholic students (Indigenous and settlers) and all ‘others’. Children’s bodies, and families, were targeted and hierarchies within hierarchies took hold producing (and reproducing) Indigenous populations as different and then different again. A participant of this study recalled that: “You had some families that were ostracized. First of all, they weren’t Catholic. [At the Joint School] the teachers, nuns, made them out to be dirty, unkempt”. Another participant spoke about how students were ‘set against’ one another: “there was one student, too, she didn’t follow our religion …We had to call her pagan because she didn’t follow the church, the laws. That’s not right. The nuns used us against her. And, today, maybe she has memories, too, of that.”

Throughout this dissertation, Western critical concepts allow me to talk about the school in terms of what it was designed to do in the context of settler-colonial Canada and its apparatuses of Indigenous dispossession. The participants’ recollections show the finer grain, and the experiences of, being recategorized from Mi’gmaq to “sauvages.” Eventually, the Day Schools ran their course and then, they too, needed to be erased, for different reasons, from the land and from settler-memory. There is the community’s need to erase the school structure’s presence (its impact, its ambivalence as ‘ours and not ours’), which is different from the need for settlers to conveniently forget the extent of their (our) assimilative educational structures.

**White possession and cognitive imperialism**

I use the concept of white possession to critically examine the difficult history (and experiences) associated with why Indian day schools were established. Some theorists assert that there is a
need to understand how “the making of place” is both a “human imperative” and a “deadly destructive force.” In her work, Jo-Ann Episkenew (Métis), drew on the work of feminist scholar Peggy McIntosh, to argue that anti-racism strategies may create awareness of a disadvantaged other, yet less well understood are racism’s “corollary aspects” and the ways that ‘White privilege’ creates advantages for others.

Episkenew pointed out that an “enlightened” Canada, built from 1960s and 1970s social consciousness movements and “supported by human rights legislation,” may address overt forms of racism; however, there is less acknowledgment of covert forms of racism, the way that “structures and systems” are founded and support White privilege, including, as Aileen Moreton-Robinson argues, property as a form of white possession. Moreton-Robinson, of the Quandamooka nation, shows how the nation state’s “possessive logic” is underpinned by an “excessive desire to invest in reproducing and reaffirming [its] ownership, control, and domination.” She draws together Foucault’s concept of biopower with “critical whiteness literature.” Moreton-Robinson articulates how, as part of modernity, “whiteness” became an

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449 Decter and Taunton, “Addressing the Settler Problem,” 33. In their work, Decter and Taunton examine their own family histories, which are linked with broader Canadian social and political forces. The authors address the tension of attempting to honour their own, personal family history while remaining cognizant of the destruction and violence in a settler colonial making of place. In this project, the making of the dual, segregated school system (white school and Indian Day School) has this type of violence and violation at its core: the making of the ‘one’ (segregated system) involved the attempt at unmaking (or dispossession) of the ‘other’ (Indigenous knowledge systems, relations, connections).

450 Episkenew, Taking Back Our Spirits, 7.

451 Ibid, 7.

452 Moreton-Robinson, The White Possessive, xii.

453 Ibid, 130.
“invisible norm through the universalization of humanness.” In this particular form of humanity, humans were cut out of their relatedness and dependencies with non-human life forms. As whiteness was rendered universal, its racial character was “erased” along with the specificity of its logic of possession. A logic of possession underpins racialized discourses of “classification, order, value and hierarchy; differentiation and identity, discrimination and identification; exclusion, domination, subjection, and subjugation as well as entitlement and restriction.” As Moreton-Robinson observes, “to dominate” one needs to possess; to exclude, there is an assumption that “you already own.”

Whiteness is seen as the legitimate possessor of property; whiteness and property are seen to coincide naturally, to use Elizabeth Strakosch’s words. In this formulation, racialized persons are coded “as property” and Indigenous persons (their lands, their knowledges) must be “made to disappear,” or are rendered “propertyless.” From this standpoint, Indigenous peoples are ‘in the way’ of white possession, without necessarily being (and certainly without possessing) property themselves. What is omitted (or attempted to be eliminated) in white possessive logic are other forms (or ways) of relating to the external (e.g., land, resources, or knowledges) not as

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455 Ibid, 130.
456 Ibid, xxiv.
457 Ibid, xxiv. Moreton-Robinson speaks about the hyper visibility of whiteness asserting: “For Indigenous people, white possession is not unmarked, unnamed, or invisible; it is hypervisible” (Ibid).
458 Strakosch, Neoliberal Indigenous Policy, 45.
an object that can be owned or possessed but as a sentient entity with whom one relates, with whom one is connected, to whom one owes one’s existence.

Through discipline and the imposition of norms, colonial schooling worked to ‘ghost’ Mi’gmaq as Mi’gmaq, in other words, as a people with a history, with knowledges, with their own understandings of place, of land, and of the making of home.⁴⁶⁰ These ‘ghost like’ absences are evoked to dispossess Indigeneity and affirm (or uphold) settler-colonial white possession.⁴⁶¹ For instance, one former student of the Restigouche Indian Day School recalled how, on one rare occasion, students were all gathered because an important visitor, the bishop, was coming to see them. They were asked “if anyone remembered Native songs, prayers.” And one girl did. In telling this story, the former student who was present recalled, “it was incredible to hear her sing” and, at the same time, this student recalled feeling “shocked.” What this incident evoked was a sense of how students were asked to perform their Indigeneity at the school, when visitors came. Their presence, in a way, was evoked, as spectacle, and then made to disappear, as unwanted. The students were deprived of the ability to decide when and how their “songs” and “prayers” could appear. Indigenous children were subjugated and trained into taking up

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⁴⁶⁰ The concept of white possession illuminates the logic of domination, of control, and encoding – lands, bodies, and knowledges. In this formulation, Strakosch articulates how Indigeneity is evoked not as a presence, but as an absence, transformed into “ghosts” to legitimate settler-colonial subjectivity as the “legitimate” citizen in the settler colonial state (and its systems, including schooling) (Strakosch, *Neoliberal Indigenous Policy*, 46).

⁴⁶¹ Segregation is also very much part of the school experiences and history of people of colour. In the current context of Black-Indigenous alliances, Maynard discusses the issue of segregation in Nova Scotia and in Canada West. In *Policing Black Lives. State Violence in Canada from Slavery to Present*, Maynard demonstrates that: “The disinvestment in Black schooling attempted to confine Black communities to a subjugated role in society. Nova Scotia's "Africans' schools" existed from 1816 to the 1850s and were intended to instill the values of obedience and submission in the Black populace so they might better accept their role as menial labourers (Black Learners Advisory Committee [BLAC] 1994). In Canada West segregation was justified by the need to protect white children from the perceived dangers of proximity to Black children. Formalized less than a decade after slavery's abolition, the Act of Union of 1840 legally endorsed the concept of separate schooling. This endorsement informally blocked Black children's access to school in Canada West” (33).
particular ghost-like dispositions contained by, yet eliminated from, the emerging nation-state.

Education involved a two-pronged strategy of Canadianization for some school populations (the sons and daughters of the nation-state) and ghosting (containment and attempt at elimination) for others. What this memory of ‘ghosting’ that took place at the Indian Day School shows is how Indigeneity was something like a commodity (put on display) possessed by others.

The Sisters arrived, having been invited by the priests and approved by the Agent, to instill discipline and order, to maintain moral regulation. At the Indian Day School in Restigouche, when the teacher-nuns from the Sisters of the Holy Rosary were ushered in at the day school, in 1903, they not only ‘replaced and displaced’ Mi’gmaq female teacher, Mary Isaac, but they were brought in to model a particular type of gendered moral self-regulation. As stated in a letter from a School Inspector to Superintendent of Indian Affairs, J.D. McLean: “a nun makes an impression by her costume, by her devotions, and by her abnegation.” The space could not be

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462 In his historical research on formal schooling in settler society, Axelrod observes that public education, in the early 1800s, was about supporting goals of the state, which centered around establishing and securing social control and building the moral character of the (white, settler) population. The training at these early schools emphasized “recitation, memory work, and religion,” along with “manners, morals and good taste” (The Promise of Schooling 21-22). Post-Confederation, by 1871, compulsory elementary education was implemented for settler children of the newly minted nation (Gleason, “Disciplining the Student Body,” 190). At this time, educational objectives were not only about “proper” socialization, but increasingly linked with “Canadianization” efforts of the state (Gleason, “Disciplining the Student Body,” 190).

463 In “At Normal School: Seton, Montgomery, and the New Education,” Henderson analyses what she terms “nation-tinged” narratives. She advances the argument that in its early formative years, settler-Canada was concerned with the question of “how to cultivate a healthy and productive national ‘stock’” 462. Henderson argues that the “feminization of the classroom” (466) brought a particular “sanitized” and “sentimentalized” type of “mother love” into the classroom (466). Female teachers were seen as ‘naturally’ possessing particular nurturing qualities, which in turn were expected to be used as the basis of their pedagogical methods in the classroom. An emphasis was placed on the emotional bonds (mimicking mother child bonds), and justified the “moral role” of the state in separating the child from parents. Increasingly, the teacher (and education system, generally) stood for the parent as the “legitimate authority over the child’s growth and development” (467). Canada’s settler children were perceived as “raw material,” which could be nurtured and shaped into “obedient sons and dutiful daughters” under the “mother love” of female teachers.

occupied by Mi’gmaq women, nor could it be occupied by young secular white settler women teachers (who, the letter states, would be at risk in the case of: “a young girl”, “alone among these Indians”, “morality would suffer” and “disastrous results would follow”). Nuns were seen to be required because of their sexual abstinence, as if their religious vows would provide a kind of wall of protection against a perceived moral and sexual threat from Mi’gmaq students (and Mi’gmaq teachers, Mary Isaac).

One former student, Gladys Germain, evokes what the strategy of ghosting felt like for a child at school, as well as how it felt as an adult to have left that behind, having made her own life “educating herself”, and working hard. Gladys Germain recalled:

That’s the way I remember my growing up days. Grade Six, I made it. [Then] I quit., ... those nuns thought about us like if we were not humans, I guess. Made us feel like we were (silence) ashamed of ourselves. [Today] I don’t feel ashamed of myself or anything. … Make your own lives, as long as you educate yourself and work.

The concept of cognitive imperialism has been important to my understanding of how education systems have “white-washed” the minds (knowledges and thought systems) of Indigenous peoples. Over the past four decades, this concept has been discussed and advanced, in different ways, by Marie Battiste, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, and many others, in academic and grassroots contexts, working towards decolonizing in schooling specifically, and in the humanities more broadly. The concept of cognitive imperialism is significant because it sheds light on how dispossession also involves the other-than-physical (minds, thoughts, dreams). Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples’* [1999], (2012), advanced the argument that colonialism not only imposed control over peoples’ lands and resources, but
colonialism also permeated the “mental universe of the colonized”, their knowledge systems, ways of being and knowing. Working to decolonize and Indigenize education, Battiste argues that within public (state) schooling the minds of all individuals are “marinated” (in a manner akin to being possessed or dominated, to use Moreton-Robinson’s words) – in a system steeped in imperialism. In her work over the decades, Battiste has advanced the idea that decolonizing involves building critical awareness of, and deliberately calling attention to, “experiences of whitewashing” in education. Battiste argues that:

when Indigenous knowledge is omitted or ignored in the schools, and a Eurocentric foundation is advanced to the exclusion of other knowledges and languages, these are the conditions that define an experience of cognitive imperialism. Cognitive imperialism is about white-washing the mind as a result of forced assimilation, English education, Eurocentric humanities and sciences, and living in a Eurocentric context.465

In this research, participants did not use the term cognitive imperialism to speak about the conditions or experiences where their knowledge systems and languages were excluded from schooling. Some words and phrases that participants used to speak about this experience include: “repressed memories”, “blocked memories”, “brainwashing”, “brainwashed”, “they must know better than me’, ”. Others recalled the physical experiences: “you always had a knot in your stomach” or “your heart is pounding.” Some spoke about feelings “I felt I was stupid because I couldn’t learn” and “[w]e were constantly on guard. We were just constantly bowing down to them, bowing to them [the nuns].” Many participants spoke about the experiences of cognitive imperialism in their minds and bodies: some recalled kneeling (“prayers, prayers, prayers”); they remembered their hunger, and being fed “hard tack cookies” and “powdered milk”, at the

465 Battiste, Decolonizing Education, 26. In “Enabling the Autumn Seed,” Battiste argues that “[c]ognitive imperialism is a form of cognitive manipulation used to discredit other knowledge bases and values and seeks to validate one source of knowledge and empower it through public education (Battiste, 1986),” 20.
same time the scent of food – meant for the nuns – travelled from the Convent (where the nuns lived) to the school building. The experiences of cognitive imperialism were not always in the form of negative discipline (or punishment); some former students recalled receiving prizes (pictures of saints, for instance) and, in retrospect, a sense that: “It was more important to be a good little Catholic child than it was to be a student.” The process of cognitive imperialism, however, did not stop at school: some recalled the nuns’ visiting their homes, in the evenings at certain times of the year, with a statue of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the entire family would gather with the nuns to recite prayers and the rosary.

There was a sense from the participants that in this difficult and sensitive history, it is important to remember, not only what happened, but also to understand why. The experiences were felt individually, but some former students are voicing the need for a collective memory of these injustices. In the words of Blanche Martin:

I think for our own history we should remember it - what happened to the kids. Why, why it was happening to them and why they sent them there because it was just control and for them to try to kill our spirit and have us become different people and stuff like that.

Similarly, some participants asserted that simply being in the classroom and witnessing what was happening had an impact on their wellbeing. Participants spoke about this form of injustice as a type of “second-hand brutality”. Their words and memories illuminate their individual and particular experiences in the classroom, which – for some – carried over into adulthood, over generations. Memories of many former students shed light on the wider settler-colonial policy and project that the Day School was part of, the subterranean (invisible) governmentality, which burnt inside the school, during the day and afterhours.
Battiste argues that the exclusion of Indigenous knowledges from school systems creates conditions by which Indigenous peoples continue to experience forms of cognitive imperialism. She describes cognitive imperialism as the systemic destruction of “the mind, body and soul,” of an individual. At the same time, she recognizes the need to address that this internalized racism (experienced at an individual level) is part of the broader systemic racism embedded in formal schooling. The individual experiences the ‘loss’; however, Battiste is careful to point out that the deficit is not located within the individual. Rather, for Battiste, the deficit is in the mainstream (formal) education system, which has repressed Indigenous knowledges, including Mi’gmaw knowledges, languages, and ways of being.

Focusing on the concept of cognitive imperialism illuminates how reconciling in the wake of colonial violence and violations is not simply a matter of adding or integrating Indigenous perspectives into schooling or reversing the binary by privileging Indigenous forms of knowing. There is a need to address the ways in which the logics of white possession, including the concept of cognitive imperialism, upholds particular (white) settler colonial institutions, knowledge systems, and bodies as legitimate and positions Indigenous institutions, knowledges systems, and bodies as illegitimate Others, as ghostlike presences in their own ancestral territories.

For a deeper settler-Indigenous reconciliation, and transformation of schooling, there would be a need to attend to the particular experiences felt and remembered by individuals; and there would also be a need to trace those experiences to the systems (and conditions) that enable them to
exist. The experiences extended outwards, rippling into families, and their descendants. The memories of those who attended Indian Day Schools, such as the school in Restigouche, can, for settlers, be a mirror by which to ask ourselves – in what ways has education shifted and transformed? And, in what ways is cognitive imperialism still taking place in the here and the now?

**Gender and moral regulation: Wider hetero- and patriarchal structure**

There is a growing body of Indigenous feminisms, grassroots and in academe, articulating and analyzing how gender, and conceptions of gender, have shaped the lives of Indigenous peoples. Gender (and conceptions of) is embedded in broader power relations: sexism, racism and colonialism are structures of oppression that operate together.\(^{(466)}\) Put more directly, “settler colonialism has been and continues to be a gendered process.”\(^{(467)}\) Maile Arvin, Eve Tuck, and Angie Morrill assert that argue that taking a gendered approach to examine settler colonialism can “expose” the ongoing-ness of settler-colonization, its structures and its effects.\(^{(468)}\) Others assert that because of the ways that hetero-patriarchal norms are embedded within the logics of settler colonialism, there is an pressing need to focus specifically on gender and sexuality or the

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\(^{(466)}\) Arvin, Tuck and Morrill distinguish ‘heteropatriarchy’ and ‘hetero-paternalism’. The former refers to “social systems in which heterosexuality and patriarchy are perceived as normal and natural” (and all other forms are seen as “abnormal, aberrant, and abhorrent” and the latter refers to the presumption that “heteropatriarchal nuclear-domestic arrangements, in which the father is both the center and leader/boss” and that this conceptualization should serve as arrangements for the state and its institutions in “Decolonizing Feminism,” 13. The Indian day school at Restigouche re-threaded Mi’gmaw kinship relations into hetero-patriarchal and hetero-paternalism arrangements: the Priests and the Indian Agents at the center as ‘fathers’ and the nuns playing into (and benefitting from) their subservient role as ‘mothers’. The nuns’ records, for instance their letters sent to the Department of Indian Affairs in contrast to the letters sent to the Mother Superior at the Mother House further analyzed to expose the role of ‘white women’ and ‘white women’s institutions’ in settler colonization. Also see: Aguirre, “Telling Stories: Idle No More Indigenous Resistance and Political Theory,” 2015.

\(^{(467)}\) Ibid, 9.

\(^{(468)}\) Ibid, 9.
risk is that research, even that which aims to decolonize, can unwittingly reproduce colonial power relations at the level of gender and sexuality.\textsuperscript{469} Attending to gender, and constructions of gender, is necessary to expose the roots and faces of settler-colonization. At the Restigouche Indian Day School, schooling not only brought in European religion (Catholicism) and secular knowledge (reading and mathematics, for instance), but the Sisters of the Holy Rosary also ushered in particular norms and ideas around a patriarchal nuclear family circle, in so doing attempting to reconfigure kin relations and connections, and ways of knowing and being functioning in a changing, fluid, and evolving ‘set of responsibilities’ and extensive relations (with people, with place, with other-than-human).

The dominant narrative about residential schooling has shown how Indigenous kinship systems were harmed because of residential schooling where children were removed from their homelands, and their families, oftentimes from a young age and for long periods of time. What is less clear is the impact of schooling on family systems in situations where children and youth “went home at night”. To analyze the impositions regarding gender and sexuality, I talk about the ushering in of nuclear heteropatriarchal, Christian marriage, or the “love of the family circle,” as described by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary.\textsuperscript{470} In listening and reading about the school, I have been attentive to the question of whether or not (and, if so, how) Indian day schooling shifted Indigenous relations with, and understandings of family, thus impacting Mi’gmaq conceptualizations of kinship relations. Day schooling left its imprint at an individual

\textsuperscript{469} Starblanket, “Complex Accountabilities,” 1-20.

level but schooling also influenced and attempted to re-shape relations at a collective level. Family connections could be severed, changed, fragmented without the physical separation or distances.

Focusing on the violence and violations, without also acknowledging resistances or speculating on how these relations were understood by Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) themselves, can (unwittingly) contribute to narratives of victimization where researchers, in the semblance of modern-day missionary nuns, inhabit the role of ‘white savior’ rather than working to either support Indigenous peoples’ own aspirations or critically attend to the structural change required for decolonization.471 I try to be mindful of complexity and nuance, reading against the grain, as I make use of the critique of the ways that gender and moral regulation functioned within the wider hetero-patriarchal structure of settler-colonial society. The rules, regulations, and roles learned (and performed) at the Indian Day School, prepared Indigenous children for gendered roles that sustained and fueled settler-colonial Canada. But it needs to be remembered that this did not mean that those roles and activities associated with them were experienced as meaningless either by the students themselves or by their extended kinship families.

**Indian Day School: where children “learn to love family circle”**

In her work on the concept of monogamous marriage in settler-colonial Canada, Sarah Carter investigates how, in the late nineteenth century, “marriage,” took hold as “part of the national

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471 Arvin et al., “Decolonizing Feminism,”19. The authors assert that: “allies who are settlers [need] to become more familiar and more proactive in their critiques of settler colonialism” 19. The authors emphasize the long-term commitment required to counter and move away from the “‘savior’ complex of heteropaternalism” 19.
agenda in Canada”. Carter shows how the “marriage ‘fortress’ was established to guard our [settler colonial] way of life.”472 Marriage – monogamous and lifelong– as a “sacred institution” supported the “social fabric” and was fundamental to what was said to be the maintenance of “peace, order and good government” in Canada.473 Carter contrasts the Christian, monogamous, heteropatriarchal marriage model with the diverse other forms of marriage that existed amongst Indigenous peoples and some minoritized settler groups. Focusing on Western Canada, Carter observes that varied types of marriages, including – monogamy, polygamy, and same-sex marriage existed.474 Marriage was not necessarily (although could be) life-long because divorce was easily obtained and less stigmatized amongst Indigenous societies.475

In the newly emerging settler society, the monogamous marriage model, sanctioned by “colonial law and the Christian church,”476 allowed the state and the church to shape gender orderings and meanings for men and for women. In a settler-colonial marriage model, the husband stood as “family head and provider” and his wife held the position of “dependent” and “submissive” partner.477 The institution of marriage upheld property relations and an order of ‘legitimacy’ that tied together on the one hand, heteropatriarchal organization of sexuality and, on the other hand,

472 Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous, 4.

473 Ibid, 4.

474 In The Importance of Being Monogamous, Carter explores how the ideal of monogamous marriage was considered an institution that “elevated rather than enslaved” women. (132). In this framing, (white) women were placed on a “pedestal” that allowed for “liberty” versus a model of polygamy, which was considered to “subordinate” women. Carter argues that this construction of ‘freedom’ through monogamy versus a “caged” ‘Other’ was necessary for the construction of the English woman as being “free and happy” in the home (132).

475 Ibid, 5.

476 Adele Perry quoted by Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous, 4.

477 Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous, 26.
Indigenous dispossession. Married women were not able to own property; by law, they and their children, became the property of their husbands, and children produced outside of Western legal/Christian marriage were ‘illegitimate’ in the eyes of the law: all of these aspects limit the transfer of private property and legal identity, and these are connected to land ownership and Indigenous dispossession. So, legitimate, approved domestic and sexual arrangements worked in tandem with the laws that removed land from Indigenous peoples.

In Restigouche, some of the earliest written records associated with the school, trace out a pattern for the configuring of hetero-patriarchal norms: a petition requesting a schoolhouse, dated May 1, 1859, was signed by forty-five Mi’gmaq men “of Ristigouche”, along with School Commissioners of Lower Canada. Questions surface for me: Did the petition carrying Mi’gmaq names originate from religious authorities? Or does the petition reflect what was in fact a settler-state desire to implement public instruction and reforms in schooling as part of nation-state building? Or does the petition affirm Mi’gmaq desire for a schoolhouse? I read the petition, and notice the absence of women’s names, Mi’gmaq women, already missing in official documents. Gaps, absences, inequities, and ambiguities are already stitching themselves into the Indian day school system.

In my analysis of the findings, I draw on Carter’s analysis of the settler marriage ideal to discuss how particular Euro-Canadian gender roles and norms were brought in, instilled and reproduced at the Restigouche Indian Day School. In reading Carter’s study, I asked: Can some of these

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478 Carter focuses on Canadian land settlement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. She demonstrates how land policies, in turn, “constructed an ideal of marriage that was used as the vehicle for the domestication of Western Canada by white Christian families.” Some portions of my study coincide with the same time period (mid-
ideas, for instance the construction of an *ideal marriage*, be used to understand the inner workings at, and influence of, Indian Day Schools? In what ways did hetero-patriarchal norms and values shape and influence decisions about *teachers* (their resignations, invitations, and departures)? In what ways did hetero-patriarchal values and norms permeate the curriculum and day-to-day experiences at the school, in terms of not only racialized, but also *gendered* instruction?

In the records produced by the Indian Agents, the priests and nuns associated with the Indian Day School it is possible to trace how formal “Indian education” was about socializing individuals into a decollectivized existence and into a conception of public/private: into nuclear families, male wage-labourers, female wives (housekeepers) and mothers. It is also possible to hear the influence of these values, in the recollections of some former students who attended the school in the late 1940s to 1969. The (attempt at) reconfiguration into nuclear family systems was (and is) very much at odds with a Mi’gmaq vision of wellbeing, associated with extended kinship ties, with connections with place and with land, which together comprise “belonging” and “home” and *ms ’t no ’gmaq*. In the recollections of former students, it is also possible to hear their own understandings of these norms and values. For instance, women remember classes – knitting, sewing – in positive terms, where language was not a barrier to learning, and where they produced something that could be shared, brought home, and extended into their family. Some participants, Mi’gmaq men who took part in this project, recall “woodwork” class: working with their hands, they spoke about a particular teacher from Listuguj, Mr. Jimmy Moffat, who spoke with them in Mi’gmaw. Domestic Science (sewing and cooking) and Shop

nineteenth and early twentieth centuries); however, I focus on the *eastern* region of the newly formed Canada, and my study extends over a long period of time, from mid-nineteenth century until its closing, in the late 1960s.
Class (manual labour) seemed to provide a space where children could learn in ways that were less harmful; these classes may have offered a type of relief from religious instruction, prayers, and mundane and rote learning, to which all students were subjected.

The colonial heart beating at the centre of the school had objectives: civilization, segregation, and assimilation. The colonial body standing in the middle, at the front (“clapper in hand”), carved out two pathways, two lines, one for the boys (on the left) and one for the girls (on the right), and both groups together (the ‘Indian population’, distilled again as ‘good’ and as ‘bad’) were separated by a fence (“it was wire, like, a chicken fence” said some; “it was a fence about eight feet tall,” said others) from the other population (non-Indigenous, white). The “love of the family circle,” was part of the rationalization, the sanctioning, that functioned as the nails holding the fence(s) in place, the norms and roles being prescribed, taught, instilled, learnt, resisted (by some), and omitted (“I have no memories”), by others. In this research, there was a strangeness to learning about the history of a school system that existed in a place for over one hundred years; to hearing memories from former students who attended that school; and that among many memories and thoughts, the best thing that some people recall is the day that the school burnt to the ground.

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It’s humbling. The unsettling is a feeling, sensing (seeing, hearing), the failings of settler-colonial Canada’s school project that’s been saved, like a prize, in a drawer.

“And you get angry,” said Maggie Isaac, a former student of the Day School. Speaking to me, to someone else.
We’re talking about the school, about their memories, and about the ways that children were taught to not feel. To not remember. As children, in the schoolyard, did they run their hands along the fence? It’s a deliberateness, that some recall. The way the nuns would walk along the fence, at recess, like guards.


I want to transformation to be gentle. But there was (is) nothing gentle about the violence and violations of settler-colonialism.

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In large numbers, in the West, “single, white” women were “imported” to the region to work as domestics and to serve the role as “wives and mothers of the ‘race.’” Carter argues that, by the late nineteenth century, monogamous marriage gave expression to racialized state violence in that:

intra-racial, indissoluble, monogamous, heterosexual, sanctified Christian marriage was to be the cornerstone, foundation and building block of Western Canada, the key to future stability and prosperity.  

Drawing on Sylvia Van Kirk’s work, Carter illuminates how a lack of tolerance grew from the mid-nineteenth century onwards regarding marriages between Aboriginal women and non-

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479 Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous*, 5.

480 Ibid, 59.
Aboriginal men. Carter argues that “powerful social mores” stigmatized marital relations between Aboriginal women and (white) men. Calls of “immorality” rationalized policies that established boundaries between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. In the late nineteenth century, the “monogamous white husband-and-wife” team was held up as the ideal, the “economic and social” building block of a Western region, in the process of being rapidly ‘cleared’ of Indigenous nations and social formation through violence, epidemics, policing, deliberate starvation and other forms of coercion.

The context for Carter’s work is the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The relatively recent Indigenous dispossession in the prairies differs from the situation around Restigouche, where there had been intermittent European contact with, and relations between (and, among) Mi’gmaq of Mi’gma’gi (and including the district of Gespe’gewa’gi) from 1610 onwards. As discussed in the first part of this chapter, for Mi’gmaq, contact and relations with ‘newcomers’

481 Carter, The Importance of Being Monogamous, 2008.

482 Ibid, 6.

483 Ibid, 151. Ann Stoler argues that in a colonial context, at the turn of the twentieth-century, “méthissage (interracial unions) was “[c]onceived as a dangerous source of subversion, it was seen as a threat to white prestige, as an embodiment of European degeneration and moral decay,” (in “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers,” 515. Stoler shows how the essence of the community (with its interior and exterior borders) was maintained through the “multiplicity of invisible ties”; in the late nineteenth-century, “méthissage emerges as a powerful trope for internal contamination and challenge conceived morally, politically, and sexually” (Ibid. 516). The colonial authorities’ fears (of internal collapse) meant an increasingly scrutiny over the youngest and amongst the most vulnerable: children. Stoler argues that “Colonial authorities with competing agendas agreed on two premises: Children had to be taught both their place and race, and the family was the crucial site in which future subjects and loyal citizens were to be made,” Ibid. 521. In a settler-Indigenous context, where Indigenous peoples were not subjects or citizens of the colonial state, rather conceived as “wards” under the Indian Act, meant that not only children and families, but also ‘the community’ was targeted by colonial authorities. In other words: “going home at night”, for Indigenous children who attended the Day School, did not necessarily translate into cultural safety or belonging.

484 See: James Daschuk, Clearing the Plains: disease, politics of starvation, and the loss of Aboriginal (2013). Settlers in the West sought to produce not only “crops,” but would secure the future ‘race’ of Canadians. Racial and social ‘purity’ needed to be maintained against deviant forms (e.g., mixed marriages), which signified the “decline and pollution” the family, of the nation (Stoler, “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers,” 2002). The encoding as impure and polluting was associated with anything perceived to be a threat to a regime of land as white property.
(French, British, and others) can be understood from within a kinship and treaty consciousness where the relations are more about expansiveness and connectedness. But by the late nineteenth century, in Restigouche, settler-colonial policies, values, and ideals were encroaching on territories and school systems. And so, while there were (and are) treaty relations and consciousness, this history was very much impacted by settler-colonial Canada’s aggressive agenda to acquire lands, settle, and dispossess Indigenous peoples from their territories and knowledges.

In the East, a similar, yet differently playing form of ‘clearing’ and ‘purifying’ took place to settle lands and dispossess Indigenous peoples from their territories. The story of Mary Isaac, I suggest, shows how the logics of colonialism played out differently, in the territories of different Indigenous nations, in the same period. In Restigouche, the situation had been more fluid, with Mi’gmaq involved in decision-making and authority over education, not only attending colonial schools, but also being trained, as teachers, taking on roles and responsibilities well-beyond the prescribed colonial vision. Firmer boundaries, the story of Mary Isaac tell us, from the point of view of the settler colonizer, needed to be drawn to secure settler-colonial authority over, and ability to penetrate, ‘the community’.

The story of Mary Isaac is a stone like prism that I felt in this dissertation. I sought to understand the nuances of having a certified Mi’gmaq teacher of Restigouche, in the Indian Day School classroom, from 1895 until 1903. I sought to understand whether or not the eventual claims against her (‘consorting with white men’, writing letters for her father, the

485 I remain mindful of Starblanket’s conceptualization of a heterogenous (flexible, fluid) Indigenous community.
Chief), her dismissal (and her own resignation) speaks of the surveillance and scrutiny of the “moral fibre” of women, at this time, and even more so of Indigenous women.\footnote{Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 44.} At the same time, Mary Isaac’s story gives voice to resistances and Indigenous presences that continued, and changed, despite colonial impositions. After Mary Isaac tendered her letter of resignation from the Restigouche Indian Day School in April of 1903, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary arrived, in the fall of the same year, and stayed until 1971. The chronicles of the Sisters of Holy Rosary include transcripts of their letters sent to the Department of Indian Affairs. One letter, dated Jan. 15, 1905, just two years after the arrival of the Sisters, notes how Mi’gmaq women of Restigouche “come one day every week at the convent and, in a room specially given up to them for the purpose, with the sister’s help they mend their old clothes and sew new ones bought with the sum you so generously granted for that.” Following these praises to the Department, a request is made for a spinning wheel and a loom, by which to teach “‘indian’ women” to be “more sparing and industrious.” And, if the request is to be granted, “proof” could be had of the department’s “true intent” towards the “welfare of the inhabitants.” This was not the same settler colonialism of the West (with starvation, policing, and coercion); yet, a reconfiguring, realigning, and restitching into a (different) settler colonial fabric still took place in the East, in Mi’gma’gi: at Indian Day Schools such as the one at Restigouche, and others across present-day Québec, Atlantic Canada, and Ontario. The process penetrated homes, drawing women from their families, “into a room in the Convent specially given to them” for this purpose where they could learn to become “housewives,” sparing and industrious, rather than, the letter implies, wasteful and lazy.\footnote{Chronique scolaire. No.14. Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.} The Sisters
evidently could not see or appreciate the role and responsibilities of Mi’gmaq women within their own extended kinship (political, economic) systems. The stories about the Restigouche Indian Day schooling are also about resistances and continuances, animating and remembering ways of being that have not been taken, and which never left.

CHAPTER FIVE – BUILDING AN “ETHICAL SPACE” OF ENGAGEMENT

5.1) Opening Remarks

This research project stems, in part, from a conversation with a community member of Listuguj held many years ago, in about 2006. We were speaking about residential schools, at the Education Complex, in Listuguj. I learned through this conversation that Listuguj ‘had its own school’, an Indian day school. I learned that although some people from Listuguj had attended the Residential School in Shubenacadie, Nova Scotia (the only residential school in Atlantic Canada) most people from Listuguj attended the Restigouche Indian Day School. There are no pictures of this school hanging on the walls. There aren’t any plaques, or posters, or leaflets or print narratives. There are stories, however; stories that circulate: about the nuns, about the teachers, about the ‘White’ (then, later the ‘French’) School, and the fire.

Years later, when I read and studied about residential schooling formally for graduate coursework at university, the memory of that conversation, and a particular firmness of those words, that ‘we had our own school,’ returned. I read about residential schools, and I looked for stories and testimonies about day schooling. That conversation, held many years before the research began, shaped the questions that I would ask, influenced the direction and approach that I would eventually take. This project was intended as both an intervention in the discourse on
residential schools as historical injury and as research with and for the community, that honours experiences and helps to preserve memories. However, is intervening and honouring experiences and preserving memories sufficient for deeper forms of reconciliation? Perhaps, some memories and experiences call for something other or more than being preserved since they are living, thriving, evolving? What I suggest this research shows is why ethics, and principles need to be embedded into reconciliation processes and conceptualizations. It is not so much, or not only about, having a less generic rendering, but rather it is about the principles and ethics, of care or respect, for instance, which are required for these nuanced engagements. The conceptualization of “ethical space” of engagement, articulated by Willie Ermine, supported a mindful and purposeful creation of ‘space’, by which to imagine, and put into practice, ways of conducting research about experiences and memories (oral and written) associated with the Restigouche Indian Day School in a relational manner.\textsuperscript{488}

\textbf{An interruption: conversations beyond, inside, the text}

The stories collected, assembled, and shared about the Indian Day School in Restigouche won’t capture the entirety of students’ experiences. I remain hopeful, however, that the reminiscing, the assembling, and retelling will create pathways that others will pick up, reflect upon, and expand with their own understandings. I remain hopeful that new narratives can form about schooling that will reckon with “how low” some were made to feel, “just for being an Indian,” as expressed by one former student, Gladys Germain, whose words open this dissertation. Can occasions for remembering and sharing like the reminiscence sessions, which formed part of my research process, provide the needed supplements to the compensation package that a settlement of the

\textsuperscript{488} Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 2008.
Federal Indian Day School class action suit may bring, through its one-time compensation for ‘levels’ of abuses? And, what about the ‘gaps’, the omissions, the exclusions that are ever present in the claims, in the settlements? How can Indigenous desires, resistances, repeated efforts to accommodate change and/or rebuild also be remembered in the narratives composed? People shared their stories voluntarily. I explained the purpose of the work, that I was conducting research for a dissertation, and most often people had their own questions. *What would happen to the stories once they were gathered? About me, the researcher: How long had I lived in the community? Who were my children?*

At one point, I met with a former student at a coffee shop where other former students happened to be present. We were there to identify the names of students from a collection of class pictures, taken in 1961, the year that the ‘new’ school opened. We placed the pictures on the table, and looked at photographs and post-cards, of the schools, of former students, from the early 1900s through the 1960s. School buildings and the faces of students, it seemed, looked back at us. I sat in a comfortable chair, with a notepad, trying to keep up with the pace of the recollections, with the names (and nicknames), shouted out (it seemed), “who was who”, being remembered. Pictures passed between our hands, and the conversation widened. Stories entered the room, situated themselves amongst us.489 This project is only one thread, a part of remembering.

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489 I acknowledge those present at this informal reminiscing. I thank Kenny Mitchell, Joe Wilmot and others for sharing photos associated with the school for this project.
5.2) Why Ethical Research Matters

Over the past several decades, Indigenous peoples (and their allies) in academic institutions and in grassroots contexts have articulated Indigenous desires and concerns associated with all aspects of research. Kahente Horn-Miller asserts that in academe this resurgence was “ignited” in the late 1990s, coinciding with, and illuminated by, the publication of Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (1999). Tuhiwai Smith shifts, and deepens, the critique away from the harms of settler colonialism against that which can be measured (e.g., raw resources) to include harms to more intangible, non-material other than human forms that have been ‘extracted’, fragmented, collected, or dispossessed as part of colonial cognitive imperialism. Tuhiwai Smith illuminates how from within a colonial mindset – *discovering, extracting, disappearing, forgetting, and ignoring* – fragments of Indigenous knowledges were (and continue to be) collected, gathered, sorted, assessed, measured, and then ‘represented’ to the West; in turn, these representations were (and continue to be) used to “colonize” Indigenous peoples as part of the “colonization ‘of the mind’”, in the words of Ngugi wa Thiong’o. Horn-Miller asserts that Smith’s pathbreaking work gave expression to decolonizing methodologies for “re-engagement” with Indigenous peoples in ways that are ethical and that acknowledge Indigenous knowledge systems and

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490 Concept of Cognitive Imperialism is discussed in Chapter 4.

491 Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies*, 61.

492 Ibid, 62.
research practices. She asserts that empowerment is not granted or distributed by those in authority, but rather an “ethical order” is fostered through “listening and participation”.

There are challenges, however, to creating ethical spaces where Indigenous knowledge systems may thrive. In her discussion about Anishinaabe nibi inaakonigewin (our water law), Aimée Craft draws attention to “radically differing worldviews” (of Indigenous and settler peoples), which ideally come together in an “ethical space” that fosters “innovative, cross-cultural and respectful process of inquiry.” Yet, Craft approaches the creation of an ethical space carefully, asserting that colonial understandings and power dynamics continue to influence research and relations. She contends that although there can be “genuine desire” to learn (or to create an ethical space), the “settler colonialist agenda” (control over land and resources) is most often privileged (and thus influencing or shaping) conversations or negotiations. Craft emphasizes that these inequities can be prolonged because of continued settler desire to “control” the resource, including knowledge and the benefits of the knowledge produced. To mitigate the pressure of settler colonial desires, Craft argues (and shows) that research (methodological approach and concerns being addressed) needs to emerge and evolve from within Indigenous paradigms.

The concept and practice of ethical space of engagement can – with care and purpose – function

as a foundational touchstone in the design and implementation of decolonizing research. In
decolonizing research methodologies, the concept of ethical (re)engagement is both foundational
to, and an ongoing component of, research design and implementation. An “ethical space” of
engagement was advanced by Cree legal scholar Willie Ermine in the early 2000s. Ermine
articulated how an ethical space can be formed when “two societies, two world worldviews, are
poised to engage each other.” Ermine pointed to the conceptual space between the two
(Indigenous and Western) and, pointedly, asserted that “an agreement to interact must always be
preceded by the affirmation of human diversity.” The nuance – that an agreement to engage is
“preceded” by an acknowledgement of “diversity”– is important. Recognizing diversity before
entering into dialogue affirms the respective autonomy of the two societies agreeing to engage
with one another. Subsequent to this affirmation of diversity, Ermine argues that an ethical space
is brought to life through “engagement”, “cooperation”, and “dialogue” between “contrasting
perspectives of the world.” An ethical space, however, is not only about dialogue, but also
entails space for observations and critique. As Ermine observes, an ethical space is “a way of
observing, collectively, how hidden values and intentions can control our behaviour, and how
unnoticed cultural differences can clash without our realizing what is occurring.” In other
words, an ethical space is neither about flattening differences between two societies (or two
worldviews) nor is an ethical space about superficial engagement between two societies. Rather,
an ethical space is about recognizing diversity, dialogue and engagement, and critique. This type

499 Ibid, 202-203.
of ethical space for engagement is necessary, writes Ermine, to shift from an “asymmetrical social order” towards a “partnership” model.\textsuperscript{500}

Some researchers who engage the concept of ethical space have observed that “[n]ew possibilities exist because of our differences, thus ethical space is co-created together as we retain our autonomy and respect our differences.”\textsuperscript{501} There is an emphasis on new possibilities co-created because of (not despite) differences: an ethical space is a zone of creativity. Previously, in section 4.3, I started by centering Indigenous (Mi’gmaw) Knowledges (and worldviews) and in 4.4, as part of Naming State Violence, I discussed Western concepts. In this next section, as I turn to “ethical space”, I am talking about the how of bringing those together.

Some questions associated with ethical space and ethical engagement, and in working towards inclusivity and equity in research design, include (but are not limited to) the following: Who is included? How can people participate? What sources of knowledge will be considered legitimate? Will findings be shared with participants, and if so, how? Critical questions that can support building an ethical space of ‘engagement’ (or dialogue) in research include: In what ways does the research enable researchers and participants to ‘listen’ to one another? For example, does the research share stories (how and why)? Can (and, if so how) do participants take part in various aspects of research (from conceptual design, data gathering, analysis, and sharing of findings)? Does the methodology create space to support, and meaningfully use,

\textsuperscript{500} Ermine, “The Ethical Space of Engagement,” 203.

Indigenous (Mi’gmaw) framing and processes? And, if so, are there limits and constraints to the use? What, how so, and why?

Ethical space, I suggest, is a kind of ethical guideline or principle, which helps trans-systemic knowledge production stay connected to ethical questions as it proceeds. In the research I sought to create an ethical space of engagement, for instance, by using the ethical research standards and protocols from both Carleton University and Listuguj First Nation (as I discuss below). Some of the concerns that the CUREB board had in response to my proposal centered around privacy and confidentiality of participants, with an emphasis on anonymity. In contrast, concerns in Listuguj centered around acknowledging participants who took part in the research, ensuring that the stories shared could be traced by future generations. There were also concerns about ownership of the data – stories and archival records – and wanting to ensure that those whom this research is about would continue to have access to the information gathered, the stories and reminiscing produced. A concern for an ‘ethical space’ allowed me to consider these differences and discrepancies in dialogue and in relation with one another, keeping in mind shifting away from the asymmetry of the social order (e.g., an unquestioned valuing of practices such as ensuring anonymity) towards a partnership model (where participants’ concerns, such as future traceability), are recognized. In the research, I considered these differing concerns as part of informed consent, and where participants had several options to make their own decision about traceability.

Following the ethical clearance and acceptance of this project, and its approach, by the respective institutions, I also sought to create an ethical space of engagement in my interactions with
participants through my methods (reminiscing, conversations, and sharing). At the end of the reminiscing (or, interviews) held in Listuguj with former students, I hosted a Wela’lioq Supper, held on February 28, 2019, to honour, to recognize, and to thank all the participants who shared some of their memories with me for this dissertation. I held this small gathering to celebrate and to acknowledge participants’ contributions. At the same time, this gathering served as a reminder, to me, as a university researcher that their individual memories and recollections also exist as part of their own collective history, meaning making, and Mi’gmaq knowledge systems. Some recollections are re-represented in the dissertation, and others will continue to be shared in a collective manner, through conversations, in other writings and kinds of meaning-making.

5.3) Paying Attention to the ‘how’ of Research Practices

In the design and implementation of research, there was a need to consider several layers of ethical guidelines stemming from the Tri-Council®; Indigenous research principles, such as the principles of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession)®; and local research protocols

® In Canada, the overarching national research ethics policy used at post-secondary institutions is the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS2). The central value espoused by this policy statement is “Respect for Human Dignity,” which means that research involving humans must be “sensitive to the inherent worth of all human beings.” The core principles embedded throughout the TCPS2 that guide respect for human dignity include Respect for Persons, Concern for Welfare, and Justice. Accordingly, researchers must balance the desire to ‘produce knowledge’ with an obligation to respect “human dignity.” (Canada. TCPS2 Chapter 1: Ethics Framework. The TCPS2 includes guidelines for research involving First Nations, Inuit, and Metis Peoples of Canada. These guidelines are offered in the spirit of “respect”, and they are not intended to “override or replace ethical guidance offered by Indigenous peoples themselves.” (Canada. TCPS2, Chapter 9.)

® In the 1990s, the First Nations Information Governance Centre put forth the principles of OCAP when undertaking health research with Indigenous communities. These principles are rooted in “self-determination, nationhood, self-governance, and nation re-building.” The principles of OCAP, which stands for Ownership, Control, Access, Possession, links the rights of First Nations communities to own, control, access, and possess information about them, which in turn relates to “self-determination and to the preservation and development of their culture” (First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC), “What is OCAP?” 2). In her work, Horn-Miller draws on the principles of OCAP to build an argument that these principles provide a “framework and standards” by which to conduct research with Indigenous communities and peoples’ in an ethical manner. Horn-Miller argues that OCAP principles can counter inequities in research relationships (e.g., between post-secondary
stemming from the territory of Mi’gma’gi, for instance, the Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch principles and protocols. 504 Research ethics matter because of the long history of ‘extractive research’ that not only largely benefited the building of settler society, but also the dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their own homelands, and systems of knowing.

At the community level, I presented the project proposal to the Listuguj Council of Mi’gmaq Educators, in August of 2018, and, as requested, I completed the Mi’kmaw Ethics Watch protocol. 505 The Listuguj Council of Mi’gmaq Educators (LCME), is an advisory committee to the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government’s education directorate. This committee, established by an Order-in-Council, in 2013, is composed of recognized community knowledge holders. The mandate of this committee was to “codify the rules” pertaining to education in Listuguj. Since 2013, the LCME has been involved with different aspects of education, in an advisory capacity,

and Indigenous ‘communities’) because Indigenous communities can “have a say” in how research will be conducted, notably in a way that respects Indigenous autonomy. The FNIGC observes that the principles themselves are not “a doctrine or a prescription” but they reflect a set of principles that reflect “First Nations commitments to use and share information in a way that brings benefit to the community while minimizing harm” (FNIGC, “What is OCAP?“ 4). For some, underpinning these principles of OCAP is the ethic of doing no harm: this serves as a reminder of what is needed in the moment, respectful and ethical relation building and knowledge production, and a reminder that research practices have – in the past and still today – been harmful for Indigenous peoples, their systems of knowledge and ways of knowing and being. (Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 62).

504 In Mi’gmaq territory, researchers can follow the Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch principles and protocols established, in 1999, at Potlotek by the Sante’ Mawio’mi. The Mi’kmaq Ethics Watch protocol outlines responsibilities of researchers (and institutions) to conduct research involving Mi’gmaq peoples, and their systems of knowledges and territories, in a ‘good way’. More directly, the Mi’kmaw Ethics Watch requires that researchers conducting research with/and or among Mi’kmaw people complete an application form, including outlining potential risks to participants and to the Mi’kmaw People collectively, and to indicate potential benefits for individual Mi’kmaw or to the Nation as a whole. (Cape Breton University. “Mi’kmaw Research Principles and Protocols” and “Application Form”, 2021). The principles and protocols require researchers to consider how knowledge production, that is research with/and or among Mi’gmaq, relates to individual and collective harms and benefits. In other words, a researcher may consider potential risks and benefits to individual participants, but these protocols also push researchers to think about (and clearly outline) these same considerations on a broader collective level. Research is conducted both with individuals and with collectivities, with nations.

505 I met with the Listuguj Council of Educators, in Listuguj, about this dissertation project, on August 2, 2018.
including the review of some (but not all) proposed graduate research projects taking place with, and among the community of Listuguj. At the initial stages of my research project, I presented and spoke with the committee about the proposed research on Indian Day Schools: the development of the project, intent, scope, and proposed methods. The Council gave its approval for this project, provided that I follow the spirit and intent of OCAP, and that I have measures in place to ensure “no harm” to participants in the case that anyone would be triggered as a result of participating. (I discuss details of the Council conditions below as part of ‘Observing (local) Mi’gmaq Research Protocols.’)

In the community, ethics protocols are an ongoing part of the research process, involving formal and informal discussions, including paying attention to potential impacts of research, remaining flexible (for instance, about how best to gather research, decision about whom to speak, closing research, and being willing to answer questions about intent and potential harms.) Some of this learning takes place at formal training and courses, while other learning is more subtle, sometimes direct, through experiences and sharing of stories, and self-reflection. Sometimes, the learning requires returning to the person, clarifying assumptions and ideas, owning up to

506 LMG, Education Governance, 2021.

507 Before engaging with community, I completed the requirements for the ethics protocols in place at Carleton University, and this research project was granted ethics clearance by Carleton University Research Ethics Board-A (CUREB-A) on September 11, 2018 (and subsequent years thereafter) (Certification of Institutional Ethics Clearance, Project #109294). I completed the Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Course on Research Ethics (TCPS 2: CORE) in July of 2019 (as required by Carleton University’s Office of Research Ethics). In June of 2020, I completed the Fundamentals of OCAP offered by the First Nations Information Governance Centre in collaboration with Algonquin College in June of 2020. There are expectations at academic institutions (e.g., measures such as: protocols are renewed on an annual basis; changes to research (e.g., methods or participants) need to receive clearance from the ethics’ review board). At the community level, in keeping with principles of OCAP, when asked, I made formal presentations about this research at in-community post-secondary programs; and where possible I made available archival records with individuals. The consent form included questions and permission about ‘who’ could access the qualitative data produced through this research.
potential harms, and willingness to let go of ideas, of ways of doing, of seeking the right way to do something, and instead work towards a better, less harmful approach, keeping respect at the centre. For me, learning about, and applying Indigenous research protocols and approaches, including ongoing historical trauma associated with research on/with Indigenous peoples, as a non-Indigenous settler researcher, is something that is ongoing, changing, and always in process.

**Observing (local) Mi’gmaq research protocols**

The guidelines for ethical research, both at the academic institutional level (e.g., *TCPS 2* and OCAP, for example), encourage the use of local protocols when conducting research. In the following, I describe the path (river or waterway) that I used for this research project. If I were to start this research over, there would be similarities in the (local) protocols followed; there would also be differences. The protocols will change depending on the needs, desires, conversations and dialogue amongst peoples, and also with particularities of ‘place’, with lands and waters, with those ‘other than’ human.

Early on, as part of local Mi’gmaq (research) protocols, I met in person with Chief Darcy Gray and with Donna Metallic, then Executive Director of the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government (LMG). At these meetings, I explained the proposed project, the work schedule, and the methods that I planned to use to gather stories from community members about their experiences at the Restigouche Indian Day School in the 1950s and 1960s. I also received feedback and guidance about ‘*how*’ to ask questions and gather testimony from former students in an ethical and
When speaking with Chief Gray and Donna Metallic, I saw that both affirmed that a conversational, reminiscing approach would be a suitable method to gather testimony about peoples’ experiences at the Day School. Chief Gray felt that participants would be more comfortable if they could “reminisce with their buddies” as opposed to engaging in a talking circle model, due to that model’s associations with a healing or therapy framework approach. As noted by Chief Gray, “people will be able to reminisce about things that might be difficult if they are with other friends, or people they went to school with; it won’t be so difficult because they can talk and laugh together at the same time.”

In conversations with Elders with whom I worked (discussed below) they, too, affirmed that informal conversations versus a talking circle approach would be preferred because the former has the potential to produce a range of responses, whilst in the latter responses may not be “as wide” because of the protocol that individuals are required to “listen” and respond in turn throughout the circle. Further, it was reiterated that informal reminiscing would be a preferred way to discuss an already sensitive history, rather than using a narrower approach that tends to be associated with individual healing or therapy. This project differs from an attempt to organize or initiate healing or therapeutic recovery. I do not see myself as mobilizing knowledge for the purposes of a therapeutic recovery, but rather in the interest of broader understandings of health.

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508 Meetings about this project with Chief Darcy Gray and Donna Metallic took place, respectively, at the administration office of the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government on June 29, 2018.
that would include the regeneration of Mi’gmaq approaches to education.509

In addition to affirming a reminiscing and conversational approach, I was also encouraged to recognize and name the participants, with their consent, who agreed to take part in this project. Donna Metallic spoke about the importance of “acknowledging participants” in the representation of the findings, in the retelling of these stories. Recognizing research participants by their name, and if given permission, was associated with recognizing and honouring. The idea seemed to be about retaining a connection with the stories and the people from whom they came. Donna elaborated, too, stating that “years from now” young people reading these stories will be able to connect with “their grandmothers, with their grandfathers,” or family members who attended the school. In other words, for knowledge sharing, it is important to retain connections, including kinship relations, that may be formed with/through past and future generations. In naming research participants, I acknowledge, too, that I am not the authoritative holder of knowledge: research participants are co-creators, and the memories shared do not belong to me, as researcher. I am responsible for gathering (in an ethical manner), for assembling, for analyzing, and for sharing what I have learned, in this instance, through the written product of the dissertation. From what I have learned, too, about Indigenous ethics and protocols, if a story is shared, in the context of research, there is an expectation that I – as a researcher – am expected to “do something” with what I have heard. In this way, research is conducted in a web of relationality, which includes responsibility and accountability: What did you learn from what I told you? How does this story resonate (or not) with what others are saying? Are there patterns, differences, gaps? If a story has been shared, if others have given their time, then what will you

509 Million, Therapeutic Nations, 2013.
do with what you have heard, what you have learned from the experience? These were some of the questions that wove their way around this work, pushing me to consider many audiences, contexts, and uses for research findings.

As a researcher, I see my role in keeping with a facilitator approach, and fostering an ethical order for non-hierarchical relations, built on dialogue, participation, and a desire to learn.\textsuperscript{510} In speaking with elected leadership, education leaders, and administrators of the community, prior to conducting interviews (or reminiscing), community representatives (the chief and senior managers, for instance) emphasized that they did not hold the “green light” to give me the go ahead to speak with potential participants. Each person would need to be informed, and they too would need time to decide whether they would participate. What this guidance encouraged me to keep in mind was not only ‘informed consent’ (a key principle of TCPS2), but also of ‘ethical orderings’ where authority is not top down, as Horn-Miller suggests, but the autonomy of each person is respected and recognized.

“The safety and wellbeing of participants needs to come first,” the Council of Educators asserted, when we met, in August of 2018. The research principles and methods learned formally and informally, through conversations and from doing, influenced how I entered the community, as a guest, to learn, to gather, and to listen. The Council reminded me about the sensitive nature of the history of the Indian Day School. At the meeting, a few people spoke about their own memories and difficult experiences at the Restigouche Indian Day School (and its iterations). I

\textsuperscript{510} In “Decolonizing Curriculum,” Zinga and Styres discuss decolonizing practices where “the instructor [or, researcher] is more of a facilitator of learning versus the position as ‘sage on the stage’,” 41.
was reminded that while there is a recognized “gap” in the written documentation about the history of the school, some former students have shared their experiences with family members or friends, in other words, in keeping with Indigenous practices of knowledge building; while others have never spoken about their experiences at school, even with their own family. The gaps (in the dominant narrative), the silences (across generations) are reminders of participants’ autonomy, and of the sensitivity of this history about Indian day schooling. This history is individual and personal—those who attended these schools have their own memories, their own experiences. This history is also collective, part of First Nations collective history and also, in a different way, settler-Canada’s history.\(^{511}\) Part of the question of ethics, for both trans-systemic knowledge building and ethical space building, is the need to consider “whom is this research for”. In other words, a trans-systemic knowledge building approach is conceptual, and embedded in the conceptualization is the aspect of ethics: key to the ethics, is the question of ‘who benefits’. Some of the concerns that I came up against (for instance, considering sources (print and living memories), framing, and presenting findings) revolved around difficult questions of: Whom is this for (multiple audiences)? And how to produce research that imagines different kinds of audiences? These are not questions that I resolved, but these are questions that need to be considered (each step, and all throughout), sometimes as difficulties to be negotiated and other times, as possibilities for change.

While gathering oral reminiscing, in some conversations, I followed the semi-structured path (interview questions) that I had prepared in advance. With others, before I even started, I was stopped. “Before you ask any questions,” one person said, “I’m going to speak.” And so, I

\(^{511}\) Brophey and Raptis, “Preparing to be Allies,” 237-252.
listened. Sometimes, I turned the recorder off. Sometimes, we paused for coffee or tea. For those who chose to participate in pairs, they self-selected with whom to participate, for instance with a family member (sibling) or with their partners. A few participants had support people sit with them. These semi-formal conversations lasted anywhere from one to three hours. We met in their kitchens, in living rooms, in my dining room, or at their places of work. With consent, I recorded the majority of the conversations, or I took notes. All the conversations were transcribed, and I returned the transcripts to each participant so that they could make any changes, corrections, deletions, or additions to the transcript.

From these initial conversations, and later with participants who took part in this project, I was reminded that though I may seek advice and guidance from some, or ask for a recollection or memory about experiences, that as the researcher/investigator/writer I am responsible for gathering the stories, for assembling them onto the paper. I am responsible for interpreting the guidelines and conducting the work, as best I can, in a manner that is respectful, or ethical. In other words, I too am part of the picture, I am not absent (or positioned outside of) the telling of this story. In conceptualizing an ‘ethical space’, I am not in some neutral space above or beside that space of engagement, I am a specific person in the midst of it. What this means, to me, is that I can only speak about my own understanding, which involves laying out the concepts and relationships which have shaped that understanding; as well, people shared as much, or as little, as they chose. These teachings are part of my responsibilities. Throughout, many participants spoke, in different ways, about honouring their continued relations, their connections with family and with place, and the need to bring these stories of strength forward. As observed by one participant,
I want the story to be told, but I want them [the next generation] to come away from it. ... I don’t want them to get angry when they read these things, see these things, and talk about these things. Yes, get angry … Don’t let it consume you. ...tell them the stories but be ready to provide them with the supports that they need to deal with their feelings. ... I would want them to say ‘you still came out alright? You did this, you went to school, you got an education. You are one strong woman!’ …Don’t just look at the negativity behind it. Look at how resilient we are, and how far we have come. ... That’s probably the story that I want to come out of this. Sandra Germain

As part of an official record of this history, part of what I hope my dissertation will be is one medium through which this message of resilience can be communicated. And, for me, within the critical frame that I set up (deconstructing the national hug), there is an element of critique of the dominant representation of residential schools and by extension day schools to make space for this message of hope, as Sandra Germain reminds us. The flattened, totalizing view of colonial education (as something in the past, as something constrained and contained at institutions, something that left lasting ‘damage’) is not so interested in memory as a living and animating force affirming stories of resilience and strength.

**Consent and accountability**

As part of informed consent, and in keeping with principles of OCAP, all participants were asked to provide (in writing) their consent (or not) to leave a copy of their transcript with the community (e.g., the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government) for the use of future researchers, and for the benefit of Listuguj, and the Mi’gmaq Nation. Some participants provided their consent; others asked, “where would the data be left?”; these questions reminded me of the importance of considering, more deeply and with care, who and how their ‘stories’ (transformed into data as transcripts) would be taken care of, after the research is ‘completed’. One participant, who

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refused to give her consent to the storage of a copy of the transcript with the LMG, observed “I am sharing this with you. This is your work. You did it, and you can use it.” This statement brought home the responsibilities of being a researcher, and of trust building. I was not expecting this response, as I had thought “leaving this” with the community was my part of fulfilling a responsibility. Her words reminded me that there are other ways to give back, and that participants had their own reasons for sharing, speaking, or choosing not to. These conversations about informed consent reminded me, too, of the need to work with a diverse understanding of community, as observed by Gina Starblanket (Cree/Saulteaux), and of differing needs, desires, and considerations with respect to building an ethical space of engagement that is responsive, inclusive, diverse, and attentive to differences.512

Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and if they decided to participate, their responses could be either anonymous or include their full name (with their consent). One participant chose to take part in the conversation; however, they stated that they would only give their permission to ‘participate’ at the end of the conversation: “how can I give consent to something that I have not yet said?” This response reminded me about autonomy and that we (researcher and participants) were engaged in a type of exchange, where respect and trust are central and foundational. Participants’ wellbeing came first, before the need to ‘document’ this history, these living memories, about Indian day schooling. This comment also points to the tension between spontaneity that draws out memories and personal truths, and the permanence of the form – a dissertation – in which this material is being framed. The spontaneity and trust of reminiscing-together-conversations could be abused precisely due to the casualness and

informality of the set-up which elicits ‘more’ from participants. (Appendix C: ‘Letter of Invitation and Informed Consent’ Form)

Inviting participation from former students

I began with advisors and used what is called respondent-driven (or snowballing) method to invite participation in this project. I worked with Elders, in this advisor role, to identify a group of five former students who reflect ‘community diversity’ (e.g., gender, age range within the target group, language fluency, kinship relations). From there, I asked participants for names of others with whom they would suggest that I speak. When recruiting participants, I was careful not to work with a homogenous idea of ‘community’.

In her work, Starblanket critiques “dominant conceptions” of accountability, which she argues focus on the relationship with “‘the community’, “ where ‘community’ refers to a singular body or individual. Although relational accountabilities can guide researchers in making ethical and culturally respectful choices (e.g., for data collection, presentation of findings, safeguarding of knowledge), the tendency to homogenize Indigenous peoples (their multiplicities and diversities) into a “singular unit” can also limit critique and transformation. What she advances is the argument that accountability and relationality do not necessarily include strategies by which to ensure diversity of experiences, notably “experiences of colonial violence and oppression felt by Indigenous women, girls, and LGBTQ2 people.” What this means is that ‘harms’ of colonial violence and oppression, the researcher needs to be very deliberate and mindful in their


515 Ibid, 3.
methodological choices. In this research, I moved from ‘seeing’ day schooling in wide strokes, as schools for Indigenous peoples: as I spoke to former students, however, nuances and differences in their experiences, sometimes associated with gender, came to light and allowed for deeper analysis of the impacts of colonial schooling.

Starblanket argues that researchers need to use a “multi-dimensional understanding of identity and relationship” so that approaches and practices avoid this type of homogenization and erasure. Yet, even when using a methodology that seeks to respect relational accountabilities and being attentive to mitigate “homogenization and erasure of differences”, I am aware that I bring particular ideas of diversity (e.g., age, gender, on/off reserve) that create filters, just as much as working with a blanket assumption of a homogenous community. I tried to address these problems through a relational approach that was accompanied by storying practices, which can support and create narrative space for diversity of voices, including giving room for internal differences and response to experiences. Relational approaches can contribute to building an ethical framework for research, which in turn support trans-systemic knowledge production; and storying practices potentially can support a wide spectrum by which to ‘hear’ internal differences, nuances, and varying responses and memories about Indian Day Schooling (storying approaches are discussed further ahead in this chapter).

**Inviting participation from former teachers**

During the interview and reminiscing stage of this research, I was invited to expand my interview pool to include a few former teachers who taught at the Restigouche Indian Day School (and its iterations). Speaking with the former teachers was not part of my original
research plan but this opportunity arose, and I decided to accept. While conducting archival research in Rimouski, Québec at the Sisters of the Holy Rosary archives (the religious order responsible for the delivery of education in Listuguj during the time period under study), I encountered former teachers who shared some of their experiences while teaching at the Indian Day School. The former teachers invited me to speak with them about some of their experiences teaching at the school. After receiving clearance from the Ethics Committee at Carleton, I set about interviewing and speaking with three former teachers about their memories teaching at the Indian Day School in Restigouche.

The former teachers are part of an ageing demographic (late 70s to mid 90s). There were risks that the former teachers, for very different reasons than the former students, could be triggered (emotionally or psychologically) from taking part in this study. I explained the purpose of the research, and that they might answer, or not, any questions as per their comfort level. I asked general questions about their experiences at the school, mirroring those general questions asked of the former students. Some of the former teachers preferred to speak about a single event, their memories and feelings associated with “the fire” when the school and convent burnt down, and the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, themselves individually and their institution, packed up and “had to leave”, as one former teacher observed. I did not ask any specific questions that could expose the former teachers to legal repercussions. I provided the former teachers with information about my dissertation project and the forms detailing the nature of the consent being obtained (to record the interviews, photographs, and level of anonymity agreed to, information about withdrawing, and contact information for myself and Carleton’s Ethics Committee). All three gave consent to use their full names in the acknowledgements; however, they asked for
anonymity in the body of the narrative. While conducting this research, I didn’t anticipate the extent to which I would be pulled by the nuns, and their experiences. Documenting their living histories, I have come to realize, is important to decolonizing work: their living memories push the past into the present, allowing us (present-day, ‘enlightened’ researchers) to look into a settler mirror like an unravelling, or encountering, and seeing of one’s own-settler-self. The nuns can be portrayed as the Other, but the rationale of ‘improving’ Indigenous peoples still exists today, albeit in other forms, and different (‘close the gap’) discourses, or shallow reconciliation gestures that fail to consider the deeper roots of colonial logic.

5.4) Research Methods – Community Advisors, Semi-Structured Conversations, and Wela’lioq

Community advisors

In addition to my consultation with community leadership, as part of the project design, I approached two Elders at the outset with whom I could work, as guides and advisors, for my work in the community. Specifically, I asked Elders to provide advice on who and how to approach potential participants; guidance on community protocols to document sensitive histories (e.g., individual conversations, small groups). I also sought guidance about mitigating potential harm (individual and collective) and whether (and if so how) cultural protocols could be used throughout the project (e.g., smudging, songs, opening/closing words). I also sought advice from Elders about hosting the closing wela’lioq supper to acknowledge and thank those who had taken part in this research project.
I approached two Elders individually to ask if they would be willing to support this project, as advisors and as participants. In keeping with Mi’gmaq practices, I offered tobacco and Elders Patsy Gray and Eunice Metallic, who is my mother-in-law, accepted the invitation to work with me, and provide guidance, as required. During one conversation, we spoke about who, and how best, to approach different people from the community for this project. As former students at the school, they shared stories, too, about their memories and experiences while at the school. This conversation launched the reminiscing and interviews in the community. The Elders reminded me of the importance of asking participants ‘when would be best to meet’, where they would like to meet, and to make certain that the person felt ‘at ease’ and to “make time for tea.” As a researcher coming into a community, there is a need to be mindful of participants’ time, and their energy. Their guidance contributed to my growth as a researcher, and reminded me of responsibilities and principles of sharing, giving back. My thinking is influenced by participating in community gatherings, events, and ceremonies.\footnote{For example, March 21-23, 2019, the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government led a three day-event called “Honouring our Land – Mawiomi”. This event brought together members of the Grand Council (Sante Mawiomi), elected leaders, Elders, academics, community members, and youth. The event focused on moose harvesting protocols in the territory and involved many different ways of building and sharing knowledges with one another, including stories, songs, keynote talks, and facilitated discussions. The event culminated in an oral and written acceptance of a written Proclamation. What needs to be remembered, to recall the words of Aimée Craft, is the context through which the Proclamation came to life: the mawiomi brought together participants in ceremony, with feasts, and songs, and stories.} I am working with accountability to the academic institution (including to its slowly evolving protocols for ethical research with Indigenous communities) and a community resident with already-existing relationships and accountabilities not related to my work as a researcher. There are overlaps but also tensions and distinctions in this positionality that are necessary to navigate.
I built awareness about the project in the community by informally speaking with participants about the research (project goals, risks, and benefits). I prepared a poster to invite participation, which I displayed at community buildings throughout Listuguj. I spoke informally about the project at community events. And I reached out to people who expressed an interest in participating in this research.

**Semi-structured conversations**

I used a semi-structured conversational approach to document participants’ experiences and memories of the day school, as noted previously. The conversations were either ‘one-on-one’ or in a small group of 2 to 3 people of their choosing (already formed pairings) as opposed to researcher-constructed groups. The intent was to create a ‘safe space’ for the interview/conversation; as Chief Gray observed Elders might “*speak about things that might be difficult, if they can also laugh and reminisce with their buddy.*” The conversations were ‘semi-structured’ to allow for flexibility and consistency in the conversations. The conversations/interviews were approximately 1 to 2 hours, depending on whether the conversation is one-to-one or in a small group (of 2 to 3 people). (Appendices D and E: Interview Guides, students, and teachers)

**Wela’lioq Supper**

As part of the research methods, at the conclusion of ‘data gathering’, when the conversations ended, I hosted a supper for all participants (and, their support persons) to say “wela’lioq” (all participants were invited, and over half attended the supper); share next steps in the research; and

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to discuss any issues, comments, or concerns. Together, these measures (working with local protocols; awareness building; informed consent; conversational approach) I hope helped to significantly mitigate potential harm, and foster threads of trust and accountability between myself, as researcher, and those who shared some of their memories and recollections about the Restigouche Indian day school. The Wela’lioq supper took place on February 28, 2019, at the Listuguj Elders’ Lodge. At this feast, Eunice, as an Elder and Advisor for this project, and, more personally, as my mother-in-law, offered words, a prayer, to open the feast, marking (in some ways) the closing of the reminiscing.

5.5) Institutional Records – Archives Consulted

As part of this research project, I also gathered archival records associated with the school from public and private institutions. The research trips took place in the summer and fall of 2018. The archival records associated with this Indian day school are in three provinces: Québec, New Brunswick, and Ontario.

In Rimouski (Québec), I gathered documents and records at the Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary – R.S.R. Archives Department. These records were produced by, and at the time of the study were still in the possession the institution responsible for delivering education in Restigouche from 1903 until 1971. At the archives of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, alongside

518 To recall, the Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary (originally referred to as the Sisters of the Little Schools) was founded in 1874 by Élisabeth Turgeon (See: Chapter 1, footnote 101).

519 At the time of this study, when I visited the Mother House, in November of 2018, the documents concerning teaching and education in the parishes where the Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary operated were in the possession of, and maintained by, the Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary at the Mother House in Rimouski. In August of 2019, “all of the documents concerning teaching and education in the parishes where [they] were operating were transferred” to the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec (BanQ) of Rimouski. (Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Québec. “Congregation of the Sisters of our Lady of the Holy Rosary. R.S.R. Archives
the archivist (and former teacher at the Restigouche Indian Day School), I examined school records associated with the Restigouche Indian Day School. One by one, I requested each record, which was passed to me by the archivist. I photographed excerpts from: The Sisters’ Chronicles (a collective ‘school journal’ maintained by the nuns); letters (from Sisters to their superiors at the Mother House); correspondence with Indian Affairs Officials, to name a few. We sat together at a table, the records between us. I had the opportunity to view photo albums containing pictures and newspaper clippings about the school that had been assembled by the Sisters. The records span seven decades, from the early 1900s until the 1970s. In terms of language, most of these records are in the French language, some are in English, and a few (from the early 1900s) included the use of Mi’gmaq. Having access to records produced by the nuns, responsible for teaching and operating the school in Restigouche from 1903 until 1969, contributes not only to the particular story about schooling in Restigouche, but also provides insight into the institutional memories of ‘nuns’, which – for the most part – are not included in dominant imaginings about formal colonial schooling for Indigenous students.

In *Indian School Road – Legacies of the Shubenacadie Residential School*, Chris Benjamin asserts that, for the residential school in Shubenacadie, there is “little to go on in understanding the story of the nuns who taught at the school.”520 The majority of school records, produced by the Sisters of Charity (SOC) (who taught at the only residential school in the Maritimes, and where most (but not all) of the students were Mi’gmaq), Benjamin observes, were destroyed, Department.

either deliberately or by accident, by fire or flood. Benjamin notes that there is a book of Annals, a “sort of collective journal of the goings-on at the school, kept by the Sisters who taught there”; however, the SOC refused to provide Benjamin with access to this journal. 521 Instead, Benjamin relied on interpretation of the journal by Marilyn Thomson-Millward, as part of her Ph.D. research, undertaken in 1997, called “Researching the Devils”. As well, Benjamin worked with the SOC to interview three active Sisters to “obtain their thoughts on the Shubenacadie school and the reconciliation process”. Of the sisters who taught at the residential school in Shubenacadie, only three (as of 2014) were still alive; however, the two approached by Benjamin refused to be interviewed for his book. Benjamin notes that over the years, “none of the Sisters who taught at the school spoke with researchers from the media or academia”. Instead, their communications were filtered to the public through “various professionals” who acted as their spokespersons. 522 Thus, the willingness to speak with me, of the three Sisters of the Holy Rosary who had taught at the Restigouche school, was rare and constitutes a unique opportunity to hear from those directly responsible for teaching at a particular Indian Day School. These lived experiences, memories, and accounts of the teachers at Indian residential and day schools have been omitted from, or heavily constrained within, the dominant narrative. Yet, the experiences of those who played such a fundamental role at formal colonial schools, need remembering as part of public memory. The experiences of the teachers at residential and day schools are part of the fabric of Indigenous education. Assembling and analyzing these experiences, from oral history and, where possible, from their own written records, is part of not only understanding this history, but also holding ourselves accountable, as settlers. This is not about villainizing the

521 Benjamin, Indian School Road, xiv.

522 Ibid, xiv and xv.
nuns, the teachers: there is a need to unpack the experiences of the many people involved in this long colonial ‘experiment’, the at times ad hoc arrangements, the piecing together and falling apart, of formal Indigenous schooling. This research on day schooling in Restigouche articulates experiences, from a particular place; there are echoes, however, in these school records produced by nuns who taught at the school, which will resonate with experiences of former students who attended the residential school, such as the one in Shubenacadie.

In visiting what is called the Mother House, I worked with the archivist, who is in her early 80s, and who herself taught, at the Indian Day School. She introduced me to two others, still living (including the former school principal), who had also taught and administered at the Indian Day School (and its iterations). I was given access to their correspondence, their journals, their photo album collections. As much as possible, I have included photographs of the records produced by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary in this dissertation so that future generations can walk inside these records, and decide, and interpret, for themselves their meaning and significance, in our ‘collective’ history, as Settlers, as non-Indigenous, and/or as Indigenous peoples.523

It may be important to have the day school records, produced by nuns, available to former students and their families because the written records may confirm that there was a systemic effort to ‘civilize’ and to ‘assimilate’. The records certainly confirm that there was (and is) a separate aspiration for Indigenous peoples that does not consider their own worldviews, languages, and desires. In reading the records produced by educators of the past, there may potentially be resonance with present-day teachers who are involved with continuing to

523 In November of 2018, I spent two full days at the Mother House with the archivist as my guide.
marginalize Indigenous ways of knowing and being. I hope that the records will help to produce critical self-reflexivity about the ‘past’ and its ongoingness in the present. The story of the day school is not just about Listuguj, and, in the same way, the story of residential schooling should also say something to Canadians about themselves. The records related to the day schools carry connections to residential schooling, yet are also similar, in some ways, to public education systems today, which continue (in ways both unwitting and deliberate) to silence, omit, dismiss, or ignore Indigenous history, understandings, ways of knowing, and being. This reckoning with our respective histories (as Indigenous, as non-Indigenous, as Settler peoples), and with our respective roles and responsibilities, is part of the ongoing conversations that need to continue so that true or deeper forms of reconciliation, or transformation, are possible.

In Ottawa, I sifted and gathered archival records associated with the formal Indian Day School in Restigouche, which are stored at the Library and Archives Canada (LAC). When I visited these archives, in Ottawa, in 2018, I recall the archivist asking questions about this research, not having heard of “Indian Day Schools”. Three years later, in 2021, the Indian Day School Class Action is the top item listed in the homepage for information most requested. There is a need for the circulation and interpretation of this data, for this evidence that has been acquired, processed, preserved by the LAC and which provides access to “documentary heritage” part of the “memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions.”

I examined records associated with the school over a one-hundred-year time span, from 1856 to

1969. The records were produced by (or sent to) Indian Affairs officials (e.g., Indian Agents, Priests, Superintendents). The institutional records illuminate institutional memory. Some of the documents are associated with the ‘building’ (e.g., its construction, and associated costs). There are records from teachers, pertaining to some of the day-to-day operations and decision making about what happened inside the schools: what food was served; who cleaned (and repaired) the school; when the ‘first’ hair clippers were purchased, along with reasons ‘why’. These records reveal how colonial thinking and logic functioned ‘inside’ Indigenous places, on Reserve lands, where it was necessary to contend with the proximity of families, the daily existences still organized to some degree around seasons and different rhythms, the persistence of the Mi’gmaw language, the resistances of children, sometimes supported by their parents. The Restigouche Indian Day School (and its iterations) is but one formal Indian Day School: there were others (similar to, different from), which operated throughout pre-and-post Confederation Canada, on Indigenous lands. In terms of language, these records were primarily written in English.

I also travelled to Gaspé where I viewed school records kept at Québec’s provincial archives (the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec Gaspé) housed at the Musée de la Gaspésie. I spent the day at the museum, working at a desk, directly across from the archivist, who willingly carted out box after box of folders and files, and later – emailed documents that he came across, associated with the school. These documents are from the Fonds Pacifique-de-Valigny. Father Pacifique (Henri Buisson d’Valigny) was a missionary who was part of the Capuchin Order, which replaced the fathers of the Recollects, for the Mi’gmaq of the Gaspésie starting in 1894. Father Pacifique worked as a missionary at Sainte-Anne-de-Restigouche for just under four
decades, from 1894 until 1931, at the church that is/was on the Reserve in Listuguj.\textsuperscript{525} Pacifique’s fonds are extensive and associated with a range of subject areas: the mission itself, schooling, Mi’gmaq language (including, a grammar text, and dictionary), historical events (e.g., the Battle of the Restigouche). Pacifique worked on an orthography, which was used as part of the pedagogy at the Indian Day School, until the 1930s. Finally, I conducted a research trip to the archives at the Université de Moncton, Centre d’études acadiennes anselme-Chiasson in Moncton, New Brunswick. The archives in Moncton contain some records produced by Father Pacifique. However, for the most part, I drew on archival records that are stored in Gaspé. These records were written in English and French, along with some records in the Mi’gmaq language.

5.6) Archival Materials and Oral Memories in Conversation

As part of this project, I have assembled and combined recollections and documentation from two different kinds of knowledge, different forms of discourse. Archival materials and oral memories are brought together in conversation sometimes with, sometimes just impinging on, one another. When I reflect on these two knowledge systems (orality associated with Indigenous, and print records with European settler, society), I am not trying to bring together two kinds of knowledge production, or meaning making, in a perfect fusion that denies or attempts to resolve in a single project the ways in which orality, generally, and Indigenous forms of knowledge production, more specifically, have been marginalized and positioned as ‘lesser than’ in academe. There is much institutional and cultural change that has to occur before the

\textsuperscript{525} Saint Anne’s Catholic Church, the first church in Listuguj, was built around 1740. The most recent church was built in 1912/13. The interior burnt in 1926; and, on April 26, 2021, the church was destroyed by fire. Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government. “Saint-Anne’s Church Burns,” April 27, 2021,
kind of oral story gathering, the processes and, of course, the oral testimony, that I centered in
my research, can be heard as having the same kind of authority as the written record (and its own
form and process of knowledge production). The textual work that I do, in this dissertation, to
produce a type of trans-systemic pattern of knowledge, is only part of the broader changes that
have to happen as part of transformation, in relations and structures.

I stood still (rooted, routed) in a single place. I am non-Indigenous, standing on Indigenous,
Mi’gmaq, lands. Sometimes, I travelled, moved around, collected bits and pieces located in
different places. Then, I returned (here) to this place. I tried to build a story. I tried to make sense
of the pieces that I collected. I sought to observe the patterns of change from within a single
place, extended over many years, to illuminate and shed light on aspects of colonial eras (or
movements) that are more like a type of colonial wave interacting with, engaging, attempting to
eliminate and absorb, territory, peoples’ and knowledge systems, which remain firmly ‘rooted’ in
place, not as a type of static relic from the past, but as a presence: persistent, living, observing,
changing, and shifting.526

While conducting the research, I, too, shared stories and copies of archival records with some
participants. I shared written documents that I had gathered, like fragments of colonial memories,
as a way to hold myself accountable, as a settler researcher, to step inside the webbing of

526 Eigenbrod examines how colonial discourses have attempted to keep Indigenous peoples “in their place” (rooted
— local, tied to land) as a form of “intellectual genocide” (quoting Emma LaRocque) in Travelling Knowledges, 24.
Eigenbrod explores the homophone ‘routes’ (e.g., of travelling, of canoes) to illuminate Indigenous
conceptualizations of place. For settler colonial peoples, the connotations of ‘staying rooted’ in place are associated
with appropriations and dispossession of Indigenous peoples from their own homelands. To be ‘rooted’, as a settler,
non-Indigenous person, in a particular place, can quickly slip into nationalist narratives, as Mackey points out,
where “images of the land” have been used to portray ‘oneness’, where most often the Canada portrayed (nature,
wilderness, and the ‘north’) is part of an “exclusionary ‘white settler identity’,” (“Becoming Indigenous,” 151).
relations and, other times, to sit with unsettling settler discomfort. Sometimes, I questioned whether or not this practice of collecting is any different, and how so, from any other collecting, appropriating, taking of materials, of stories, that has been going on in Indigenous lands, feeding settler appetites, for centuries. Those thoughts, those gaps, those awkward moments of questioning, of judgement, filter in. I have deliberately included those moments, to make the dissertation processual, halting, uncertain, and to keep the self-reflexivity in and therefore the necessary return to questions of accountability and to experimentation with the ‘trans’.

The power dynamic at play in sensitive Indigenous and Settler histories needs to be considered in the documenting and sharing of research. Mary Jane McCallum (Cree heritage), in *Indigenous Women, Work, and History: 1940-1980*, draws on interviews as well as written records in her study of Aboriginal women’s history in the mid-twentieth century. McCallum does not conceptualize either interviews or archival records as isolated from one another, but rather sees them as interrelated. McCallum is pointing out how the binary oppositions of ‘oral’ and ‘written’ constructs or reinforces a false opposition, as if one were, by definition, the opposite of the other. There are overlaps between oral and written, the distinction is not quite so clearly defined. For example, I used some print forms (photographs, postcards), from the archives and from former students themselves, to help elicit reminiscences. Sometimes, the print photo or document sat on

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527 In part, some of the discomfort comes from wanting to fix or smooth things over: to ignore, or dissociate, from the many examples of settler colonial superiority and rightness in the printed archival records of Indian Agents and priests (which I expected) and from the nuns, the teachers, women with whom I can (partially, unexpectedly) relate.

528 In *Indigenous Women, Work, and History*, McCallum observes that: “Oral history is often considered by disciplinary historians as the reverse of the written record: either false and subjectively adulterated hearsay, or the only method of documenting ‘true’ experience and conducting ‘responsible’ research. Likewise, the use of oral history has been a central subject of methodological debates about the nature of our work as historians: is our job to locate truth about the past or is it to examine how our past is understood in the ways we can and cannot speak about it?” 15.
the table between us, or held onto, a semi-permeable boundary. The former students’ reminiscences also gave me direction, as to how to orient myself, what to listen for in the print-based archives.

Historians are engaging critical questions associated with the archive. Black feminist theorist Jennifer Nash observes that “critical fabulation” involves “imagining what cannot be verified”; this method seeks to respond “to what is not in the archive, what could never be in the archive, and even to who is not in the archive, by listening differently and writing otherwise.” Critical fabulation, imagining what is ‘not’ in the archive, is emerging as a way of “doing justice to systemic absence” in the archives, shaped by “race, gender, class, sexuality.”

There is an absent presence at the center of this research on the Indian Day School in Restigouche. There are traces of Mary Isaac, in the print records at the archives. She taught at the Restigouche Day school from 1895-1903; and her sisters also taught, although not at the school in Restigouche. I imagine another potential story if Mary Isaac had not submitted her resignation. I trace the contours of colonial violence in her departure, in the nuns’ arrival.

From Nash, who writes about the archives as a site of possibilities and trauma, requiring learning to listen differently, I move to, and draw upon, the work of Sa’ke’j Henderson. He contends that

530 Ibid, 106.
531 For instance, in “Writing Black Beauty,” Nash asserts that the archive is a location of “historical possibility and violence, potentiality and trauma,” 107. The work of the historian, asserts Nash, is to “develop strategies for writing, and strategies of writing that attend to this paradox” – engaging the historian’s own “longings” and one that considers the “ethics of historical research” (Ibid).
understanding the past requires the centering Indigenous systems of knowledge and involves a “distinct method of learning” from “oral processes or ceremonies”. These methods of learning are distinct and involve ways of thinking about time. Henderson asserts that temporality, from an Indigenous paradigm, means:

a way of thinking about time that is different from the Eurocentric linear extension of the past to the present and a discernable future. Aboriginal traditions are not comprehensive [in the sense of totalizing]; open and ongoing, they are always in the process of becoming. They have never been static forms of social order, as the disruptive concept of “the trickster” reveals in Aboriginal traditions and literature.532

What this tells us, is that the two kinds of ‘sources’ – involving oral reminiscing and history and written institutional archives, also involve two kinds of conceptualizing and documenting, ‘time’: as open and ongoing, and as a linear extension proceeding as past, present, future. Henderson uses the concept of trans systemic to discuss the respective sovereignty of each ordering of temporality, as part of the distinct systems of knowledge. Trans-systemic knowledge building, as discussed previously, aims for the convergence and divergence of Indigenous knowledge with Eurocentric knowledge.533 This possibility is significant because a trans-systemic analysis is not about a total picture, but recognizes the distinctiveness of each knowledge system interacting with one another. This is more about an expansive understanding versus a total or singular truth-seeking endeavor.

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533 Ibid, 68.
Throughout the dissertation, I have intentionally included photographs of archival documents. One reason for doing this, is that I am not just treating them as ‘texts’: their materiality matters. In some ways, I am incorporating European textuality ‘into’ more of an Indigenous knowledge, where the process and the product are understood in a relational way versus a Euro-Western way of knowing that distinguishes between word and thing, abstract and material. The form, and context, matter. I display settler cultural “artifacts” (like ‘curios’) in a way that estranges them, by showing their materiality. In some ways, putting settler colonial artifacts on display, seeing settler words highlighted – hung, pinned – is like a reversal of the anthropological collecting and display of Indigenous cultural artifacts.

I travelled (back) in the archives, to pre-Confederation Canada. I traced historical records, followed names on petitions, asking for a schoolhouse, by families whose descendants still live in Listuguj. I visited people in their homes; I listened to stories and memories about their childhood, about experiences that happened sixty, seventy years ago. I didn’t realize, when I started out, my own settler desire for (comforting) linearity and timelines around which I could frame the building and hold the people inside. I am not saying that I have reconciled these uncertainties and questions. Perhaps, as Mackey reminds us, paying attention to that discomfort is part of decolonizing and making space for ‘new’ stories, for alternative ways of making stories that are (possibly, hopefully) less harmful. If I had looked only at settler archives, that might have led to a critical historical account, but it would not necessarily have worked to reanimate Indigenous knowledge and practices, in an expansive manner, which is what I hope my work will contribute to. It is not that together the two sides will make a coherent whole. It is only to

be expected that there will be incommensurabilities, pieces that do not fit together smoothly, there will be some incoherence. An “ethical space” of engagement, trans-systemic approaches, can open possibilities beyond a shallow national hug that seals over, or ignores, past harms.

5.7) Storying Approach in Practice: Encountering Limitations

Many fields of study recognize, explore, and draw on narrative inquiry and storying practices as a method and form of investigation. In her work on emotional geographies, Sophie Tamas interweaves insights from auto-ethnography (life writing), feminist theory and Indigenous approaches to explore, to show, and to challenge hegemonic silencing in status quo narratives. Tamas observes that in writing ‘about’ events and experiences of violence and violations, and in an effort to create spaces for transformation, the writing may need to move outside of a comfortable, “tidy” and reasonable ‘scholarly voice.’ Life-writing and the inclusion of storying practices can counter omissions and erasures by implicating the ‘listener’ (or researcher) as an active and potentially engaged participant in the narrative. Ruth Behar writes that “writing vulnerability” involves as much skill and nuance as does writing “invulnerably and distantly” according to scholarly norms. Both forms of writing – vulnerability and distance – involve working through complicated ideas. Yet, writing vulnerability, Behar points out, involves a “willingness to risk”, and it is this willingness (of exposure, of vulnerability, of not knowing)


536 Tamas, “Writing and Righting Trauma,” para.14

that makes this writing “politically and ethically useful.”\textsuperscript{538} This methodology, the inclusion of my own experiences and memories in the dissertation, of attempting to think-feel-engage-through-story is important to countering white settler tendencies of distancing ourselves from the narrative. Storying practices can counter the conditions (of distancing, of neutrality, of objectivity) that tend to reproduce settler-colonial views of Indigenous schooling. Writing vulnerability can be a reciprocal part of the research that involves intangible aspects of trust, of willingness, of openness, and of care. It is also a recognition of a way of seeing, of being, of living – as part of a web of relations and accountabilities.

Storywork, which can be conceptualized as a type of webbing (Chapter 4), with pauses and silences and gaps, guided the process of assembling individual parts and pieces, less as a way to create a whole or total picture of day schooling, and more to form stories, narratives, in and for the present through living memories and paper (archival) records. Sylvia Moore draws on Anishnaabe educator Deborah McGregor who writes that ‘silence’ is an “important part of storytelling methodology.” Silence, observes Moore, “allows me to learn from those who do not speak in words” that is: “the water and wind and trees and the moon and the seasons.”\textsuperscript{539} I worked with silences in this project in the sense that I tried to imagine the stories that were not captured in the archives, in oral stories shared.

\textit{I imagine the meetings amongst the elected leadership held at the schoolhouse; I try to picture}

\textsuperscript{538} Nash, “Writing Black Beauty,” 103.

\textsuperscript{539} Deborah McGregor quoted in Moore, \textit{Trickster Chases the Tale of Education}, 5.
what Mary Isaac looked, or sounded like, teaching (as she did) in the classroom at the Day School. I imagine the nuns, working and living (year after year) in the community, part of and not part of this place. I imagine moments of connection, deep laughter or learning Mi’gmaw (I can’t imagine otherwise); and, in those silences I hear/see/recognize violence (the sound of the clapper hitting a body). The smell of the dentist. The scent of cleaning. The rustle of the nun’s habit, swaying, walking through the passageway, protected from the wind or snow, while children walked to school, and “got to go home, at night.”

A story emerges from a relationship, or possibly several visits, between the participant and the researcher. In Indigenous Methodologies – Characteristics, Conversations, and Contexts, Margaret Kovach contends that conceptualizing data-as-story means interpreting what has been shared, and then re-presenting the data “in story form” by the researcher. Kovach asserts that re-presenting the findings as story implies that others may have their own interpretation and respect the autonomy (the voice) of the teller who shared their story with the researcher. This understanding does not necessarily mean that each ‘story’ shared by an Indigenous participant necessarily contains a teaching (or element of instruction, guidance) but rather ‘data-as-story’ may emerge depending on the context, and the relationship between the teller and the listener, the participant, and the researcher. Kovach also shares the teachings from the stories, grouped together as thematic bundles. These themed groupings, she observes, are sometimes taken as her “research findings” as opposed to both the “condensed stories and the thematic groupings or the stories alone.” Kovach argues that this bias towards thematic groups as findings demonstrates

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that there is “still work to do” by Indigenous researchers (and their allies).

I spent time thinking about how to present the findings. Some, but not all the memories were shared as stories, in the sense of containing teachings from which I could better understand the situation or gain insight into ways of living. Yet, I did not feel comfortable analyzing, or coding and bundling together memories, devoid of the speaker, or the context, from which they were shared. I wanted to make certain that the speaker’s own words, their own voices, were maintained in the text, so that they, and others, could turn to these stories, like webs to thread their own patterns, make visible their own meanings. At the same time, I was pulled by the narrative, by my own sense making of oral memories that were shared, which echoed or touched some of the print materials that I gathered from the archives. I began to imagine the story of the history of schooling, first focusing on the building of the schoolhouse, its ‘insertion’ into the territory (how, and when, and why, and how much), drawing from the print archives. At a certain point, these print memories encountered oral history, and in the second portion I brought together memories, trying to figure out patterns, themes, and nuances that, to me, thread their way through the interviews and conversations. I analyzed and interpreted these stories, these memories, and included large excerpts from the conversational interviews, so that others can make their own meanings. Building and sharing knowledge through storytelling – as method, as interpretation, and as re-presentation of findings – can contribute to centering Indigenous concerns and world views, without negating ‘conventional’ qualitative approaches.\footnote{A similar research design is ‘qualitative descriptive’ research. Vicki Lambert and Clinton Lambert note that the goal of qualitative descriptive design is a “comprehensive summarization” (albeit not total or complete) “of specific events experienced by individuals or groups of individuals,” in “Qualitative Descriptive Research,” 255-256. This type of study, qualitative descriptive, is not ‘grounded theory’ because it does not “produce a theory from the data that were generated”. Rather, the focus of qualitative descriptive study is to illuminate the nature of specific events.
There are limitations, however, when using storying practices as method. Tamas points out that there are risks of mis/representation, appropriation, exploitation, and diminishing of lived experiences in/by expert frameworks seeking to pin down stories as “certainties.” Some scholars argue that if researchers engage Indigenous methodologies and methods (such as story as methodology) then researchers need to be properly trained in protocols of the particular nation to ensure that methods of inquiry do not replicate colonial violence and violation. Jo Ann Episkenew discusses the importance of including context. Episkenew observed that the social, political, cultural norms also need to be included in the analysis of the text or the risk is that the academic conversation will be about the “critical thoughts of the academics” (ideas and responses to one another), and the subject of analysis (the text) is once again objectified, as “mere examples” to illuminate one theory, or another. The critic, Episkenew argues, is in a position of privilege, able to interpret and analyze, with the potential to influence and shape peoples’ perceptions of Aboriginal peoples, and also perceptions that “Aboriginal people have of themselves”.

The stories should not be gleaned for convenient teachings or simplified compressed truths but complex, difficult, overlapping, and sensitive histories, and contemporary realities, also need to

under study. Additionally, the data collection can include “an examination of written records, reports, photographs, and documents.” The presentation of the data can include time of occurrence to understand events (e.g., timelines), categories and sub-categories. While a qualitative descriptive research design has similar characteristics to the Indigenous approach described by Kovach, a central and key difference rests with paying attention to Indigenous principles in the methodology, for instance balance, sharing, responsibilities, and reciprocity, and decolonizing approaches and processes, which involves “two fronts”, as Jennifer Henderson observes, of critique (intervention) and of rebuilding (or animating).

542 Tamas, Life After Leaving, 139.

figure into the analysis. There are risks that come with reading against the grain, writing vulnerability, attending to silences. There is no guarantee that my presentation of these memories will not produce a certain aura of certainty or finality, a fixedness that will function like the so-called ‘absence’ or colonial silencing of this history. In his work, Wilson observes that when using a method that relies on narrative or stories (such as talking circles) that being mindful of “relational accountability” can counter potential harm of using methods in “hurtful ways,” where oppressions continue, and silencing occurs.

It was important to have some structure as a way to guide conversations because I did have questions and ideas that I was exploring and seeking to understand. Because the topic, on day schooling, and the method, storytelling, both potentially could trigger participants by evoking memories or experiences that could be difficult, the methods used – explaining the research, obtaining consent, similar and semi-structured questions, and the closing, wela’lioq supper, functioned as a type of porous barrier, for both of us – researcher and participant – to come together, semi-formally, and to also close off, in a ‘good way’, with conversations with one another, and in community. The final conversation, for me, was an important reminder that as important and significant as this dissertation is, “the community”, itself has its own spirit, its/her/their/our own values and beliefs, memories and understandings. Most of these, I acknowledge, remain out of view, for me, something I glimpse now and then. There is a space. Silence. (Eyes open) Silencing (then close again).

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544 Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 39.
Dusk moves in quickly along Chaleur Bay, in northern New Brunswick. I am heading north on Highway 11. My youngest daughter sits in the back, it’s just the two of us.

– Did you know, mom, about the schools, mom? Did you know? (My eight-year-old daughter asks.)

In the East, the sun drops behind the Appalachian Mountains, with barely a pause. Maybe, in that moment, in that place, when the sun left, the earth forgot to breathe. In the car, her questions keep falling.

– Did grandma know?

Outside, lights of homes flicker along the shoreline, and Sugarloaf Mountain comes into view. Inside, my youngest daughter is untangling a story of violence. I am aware that she is entering the moment when the tides are shifting. She is beginning to see, to feel silence and silencing of Indigenous knowledges, peoples, and lands. She is seeing/feeling elimination where “some [are] left standing while others are washed away in torrents of progress.”

– Why did the parents send their children? (Her voice is rising)

Her world, my world. When I was eight years old, my mother brought me to a church basement, in Rockland, outside of Ottawa. We travelled along the highway and made our way to a makeshift shop in the basement of a church. A dimly lit place, mothers rifled through racks of

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545 De Leeuw, Where it Hurts, 62.
discount clothing while kids played hide-and-seek. I picked a baby blue sweat suit with Snoopy on the front. A (white) sheltered world.

– Did dad go? Did you go? (Her questions keep coming). Would you have sent me there, mom? Mom?

They say that in the community where I now live, the kids attended an Indian day school (that or they went to Shubie) right up until 1961, or ’69, depending on which narrative you follow.

– The Day School was better, right mom?

A generically named (Restigouche) Indian School. Some say that the Restigouche Indian Day School closed in 1961, others say, in 1969, that’s when the kids from Restigouche were sent to town. But there is agreement: the school burnt (they burnt the school), after it closed.

– It was better, right? (At the Day School, at the school in town): Because the kids got to go home.

In Listuguj, on the wall of the new school, built in 1997, someone hung a poster, just after TRC came out. That poster stayed on the wall, for a few years. An orange background, black and white photographs of children, and a timeline of events chronicling (official) history of the Residential School Era. Pictures and particular dates marking particular times when the doors opened, and settler eyes’ closed. In the car, our conversation bumps along the highway in northern New Brunswick. I imagine my daughter’s hand touching the window, her brown eyes reflecting: she is showing me settler violence and violation, segregation and displacements; and the sheltering world of whiteness. In my mind’s eye, I pause at the place where the Indian Day
School stood, across the street from St. Anne’s Catholic Church, now burnt to the ground. Memories of that school (it seems) covered up, papered over, (seeping out), or rolled into a singular hegemonic (sensational? tragic? sellable?) storyline of residential schooling. She is teaching me what it means to move beyond “bounded empathy.” She is showing me how to care.  

Section III: Findings

CHAPTER SIX – STORIES FROM THE ARCHIVES

A few years ago, in 2006, I looked at a map. I stood in a room, on the location where the Restigouche Indian Day School had been, with someone (I would interview years later, for this project) who had attended that school. (Fig. 6: Map of Mi’gma’gi, Listtuguj Mi’gmaq Government (2019))

– Look (he said). That’s Gespeg (Land’s End).


547 These ideas, moving beyond gestures of empathy, build on Simon’s “Towards a Hopeful Practice of Worrying” (2013) and I was influenced by Leanne Simpson’s poem “leaks”, where she amplifies colonial violence felt in the liminal space between a child and her mother in Islands of Decolonial Love, 21.
– *See that* (he said, pointing to a map of Mi’gma’gi). *That’s what we call ‘Grandmother’s Point’. Can you see the Grandmother?

I had never noticed how Gespe’gewa’gi (territory as settlers we have called Gaspé Peninsula and northern New Brunswick) resembles the form of a woman, a grandmother. Words stepped out from the map.

### 6.1) Seeking Origins of Formal Schooling in Restigouche: Substitutions, Petitions, and Making-do

In this Chapter, I start by tracing the origins of the Restigouche Indian School, designated as a Poor School in Lower Canada⁵⁴⁸, and I follow its shift, after Confederation, into an ‘Indian School’. Then I focus on the arrivals and departures of teachers at this school: Mary Isaac, certified Mi’gmaw teacher who taught at the Restigouche Indian School from 1895-1903 and the Sisters of the Holy Rosary (St-Rosaire), the religious order responsible for teaching and administering, in varying ways, formal schooling in Listuguj from 1903 onwards. In the center, I create a passageway in the narrative, through poems composed of fragments from the archives and oral memories about the school. These poems lead from one place to another, from print archival records to the oral community reminiscing. I then pick the story back up from the collective memories shared with me by former students who attended the Restigouche Indian Day Schools. Throughout, I include responses from my own lifeworld.

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⁵⁴⁸ In 1840, Upper and Lower Canada were joined to form the Province of Canada and were then referred to as ‘Canada West (Upper Canada, present-day Ontario) and ‘Canada East’ (Lower Canada, present-day Québec). The two regions comprising the Province of Canada were governed jointly until Confederation. In this paper, I will mainly use ‘Upper’ and ‘Lower’ Canada Pre-Confederation and Ontario and Québec post-Confederation. These regions are situated on Indigenous ancestral lands. ‘Lower Canada’ (Québec) falls within Gespe’gewa’gi, the Seventh District of Mi’gma’gi.
In the fall of 2018, I drove to Gaspé, to the eastern edge of the point where the land ends, to explore Québec’s provincial archives located at the Musée de la Gaspésie. Finding aid, like a map, I worked with the archivist, and compiled a sub-set of records maintained by the long chain of mission priests at Restigouche, since the early 1600s.

At the museum, I spent the day working at a desk directly across from the archivist. He rolled out boxes with the priests’ records, and I took notes and photographs of letters, petitions, requests. Amongst the papers, I came across a yellowing document dated 1er mai, 1859. I paused my collecting, and read the petition: ‘Nous, soussignés, permettons … tenir l’école parmi nous’. I read family names, men’s names, heads of (Mi’gmaq) families, handwritten in cursive ink: Samuel Sook, John Barnabé, Joseph Bernard, … Pierre Dédam, Thomas Metallic, Xavier Métallic, William Morrisson. Mi’gmaq family names on the paper petitioning for, as well as, notably, giving permission for the establishment of a school, on Mi’gmaq ancestral territory, reach forward, establish their presence, out of an absence, in the present-day.

One of the early traces of Mi’gmaq assertion of a desire for official forms of education, from the archival records, can be found in a petition, amongst Capuchin parish records, signed on May 1, 1859, in Restigouche. The archival document carries the names of forty-five Mi’gmaq men “of Ristigouche”, along with School Commissioners of Lower Canada, affirming Mi’gmaq interest
in establishing a “School-house.” Mi’gmaq names preserved in the written records provide evidence of conversations about schooling between Mi’gmaq and school commissioners of Lower Canada who (along with School Inspectors) were tasked with implementing legislation to “foster public education in this Country” in part contributing to state formation. The Indian School Project has ambiguity at its core. From these documents, it would be difficult to know with certainty whether or not the request for a schoolhouse in Restigouche for Mi’gmaq children’s schooling stem from Mi’gmaq themselves. Or did the petition carrying Mi’gmaq names originate from religious authorities who had long standing relations with Mi’gmaq.

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549 Petition for School house” by Mi’gmaq (Pacifique Fonds_1981-05-001/01, [P9, S9, SS2, D1, School Permission] dated 1 mai, 1859 at Ristigouche, BAnQ, Gaspé.


551 In 1855, J.B. Meilleur, Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada articulated a particular vision of education in Lower Canada linking education with “strong” state formation: “The aim of education is to render men perfect, and to qualify them to fulfill their duties towards God, towards their families, towards society, and towards themselves. Every system of education having a different object would be subversive of the great principles on which society is based, and without which a nation could never become strong, or great, or prosperous,” addressed to the Hon. G.E. Cartier, Provincial Secretary (Québec) (see: Legislative Assembly, Report on Public Education in Lower Canada for 1854. (28 April 1855),4; In his work on the emergence of formal schooling in settler society, social historian Bruce Curtis observes that public education, in the early 1800s, was more about supporting goals of the state, which centered around establishing and securing social control and building the ‘moral character’ of the population to secure young (settlers) peoples’ future place in the colonies. (Curtis, Building the Educational State, 1988). In The Promise of Schooling, Axelrod asserts that the training at these early schools emphasized rote memory and particular sensibilities: “recitation, memory work, and religion,” (21), along with “manners, morals and good taste” (22). Some scholars note that settlers in the colonies were provided with basic literacy skills so they could be held “liable” for “legal violation of the written law” (Collins, et. al., “A Synergy of Understanding,”56.) In the early part of the nineteenth century, speaking generally, formal schooling prepared settler children to become acquiescent settlers of the state. A shift took place in the colonies in the mid-1880s. For settler colonials, the ‘promise’ of mass public education was that by “producing” character (Curtis, Building the Educational State, 28), likewise one’s place in society could be improved. Public schooling was perceived as a way of “encouraging progress” (Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling, 42). The argument advanced by officials at the time was that with mass schooling, social status would be less dependent on “birth or inheritance” (Curtis, Building the Educational State, 28), and instead could be cultivated at formal institutions. As such, one’s place in society could be perceived as having been earned from effort and hard work. Settler children received training, albeit unevenly (Gleason), at institutions designed to instill “attitudes” by which to make civil society “both productive and governable” (Axelrod, The Promise of Schooling,43). In her work, Mona Gleason examines the inequities, because of race, gender, class, built into mass formal public systems of education in settler Canada. (Gleason, “Disciplining the Student Body,” 189-215.
throughout Mi’gma’gi, including at ‘Mission Point’? Or, does the petition reflect state desire to implement public instruction and reforms (including taxation) in schooling as part of nation state building?

From the petition, a list of names, it is difficult to determine Mi’gmaq people’s reasons or motivations for requesting formal schooling and agreeing to contribute financially to the amount “imposé par les Commissaires de cette école”. It does not appear that Mi’gmaq signed the petition themselves, which could mean that they themselves were not formally schooled. Yet, beside some names is a mark, a cross or an ‘x’, indicating that they were present, evidence of an agreement, and possibilities associated with discussions and negotiations, creating a foundation for formal schooling between state agents responsible for schooling in Lower Canada with Mi’gmaq people, and on Mi’gmaw themselves.

I read these names as evidence of individuals. I noticed the absence of women; I observed the name of the Mission Priest, Cure Dumontier. If the petition, however, is read in accordance with concepts of kinship relations and tribal

552 In 1610, Mi’gmaq entered into a Concordat with the Holy See, which signifies the Mi’gmaq nation’s formal alliance with a European power (discussed in Chapter 2). In Gespe’gewa’gi, missionary presence documented by Father Chretien Le Clercq, recollect father who worked as a missionary in this part of Mi’gma’gi (spending much of his time in Restigouche) (Mersereau, “Early Missions along Bay Chaleur,” 26. Father Chrestien LeClercq lived in different parts of Gespe’gewa’gi from 1675, for just over one decade. In 1691, LeClercq published an account of his experiences and observations in the New Relation of Gaspesia. Two hundred years later, in 1910, Dr. William Ganong translated and edited this book for publication by the Champlain Society of Canada under the title “The New Relation of Gaspesia – with customs and religion of the Gaspesian Indians” (Annett, “New Relation of Gaspesia,” 2019).
consciousness then perhaps the list of names is less about individuals putting their names forward and more about Mi’gmaq collectivity, kinship relations and the inter-Indigenous negotiations and talks required to come to an agreement putting forth the request for the establishment of a school-house in their midst, “parmi nous”, on their lands, in the middle of the community, at Mission Point. (Fig. 7: Petition for Schoolhouse in Ristigouche, 1859). 553

Perhaps, Mi’gmaq names (preserved, animated) in the written records are evidence not so much of lack of formal schooling (and, connotations of illiteracy) but rather a collective gathering, and agreement for schooling. This reading of the petition as providing some evidence of collective decision making, tribal consciousness, and kinship-based systems, runs counter to legislation in the mid-1850s crafted by the Department of Indian Affairs. Historian John Milloy observes that the concept of “civilization”, at this time, was being redefined from “community self-sufficiency” to assimilation of the individual.”554 In 1857 (just two years prior to the petition from Mi’gmaq of Restigouche for a school), the Department passed the Act to Encourage the Gradual Civilization of the Indian Tribes of the Canadas, also known as the Gradual Civilization Act, 1857.555 Milloy contends that Indigenous peoples recognized the implication of voluntary enfranchisement (introduced in this Act) on tribal existence, with some Indigenous peoples asserting that the Act was trying to “break them to pieces,”556 and destroy their collective identities.

553 “Petition for School house” (Pacifique Fonds_1981-05-001_01 [S9, SS2, D1;1981-05-001/29], BanQ, Gaspé.
554 Milloy, A National Crime, 19.
555 Ibid, 18.
556 Ibid, 19.
There is another petition contained in this folder. This one was written a few decades later, October 16, 1899, and written in English. The school was already built: the petitioners “Indian Chief and Councillors of Ristigouche” write that they are “willing that a convent of Sisters or Nuns be established here to keep our school and educate our children”. This petition, signed in the presence of the missionary, holds the names of Alex Marchand, Chief; Noel Sewell; Noel Dedam; and Noel [last name illegible].

I try to make sense of this request for a Convent, for the Sisters, for the Nuns that is coming from the petitioners, Mi’gmaq of Ristigouche, under the watchful eye of the missionary. Who was teaching at the school? Who would the nuns (and the convent) displace? The day school introduces, or functions as a type of ‘facilitator’ of disruptions and divisions amongst Mi’gmaq families.

Still, there is the petition in Restigouche for schooling, in 1859. There is the listing of names and the willingness to provide a portion of funds to support the schoolhouse, on Mi’gmaq territory. Far from denoting acceptance of assimilation (“gradual civilization” or enfranchisement) instead may point towards a position that schooling on the territory would strengthen, or at least maintain, tribal cohesion during change. Kin representation on the petition suggests an expectation of continuance. There is a catch: the schoolhouse built on Mi’gmaq territory was constructed on Mission Lands, a type of civilizing, assimilating island in the midst of Indigenous (tribal) kinship-based practices, consciousness, and relations.

At my makeshift desk, a table at the archives, in Gaspé, I return to government reports on
schooling looking for more traces of Mi’gmaq presence, interests and motivations for schooling.

Just a few years prior to the petition, in reports produced by the Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, I located appendices, submitted by School Inspectors of the emerging school municipalities in Lower Canada. For the year 1853, the School Inspector in Gaspé and Bonaventure, Peter Winter, observed that:

The number of Indian (Micmacs) families in this municipality [township of Mann] is about 130. Few (if any) of them can contribute towards the maintenance of schools. … [t]heir zealous Missionary (Rev. Mr. Béland) has been exerting himself much to prepare a building for a school-house in the Indian village.\textsuperscript{557}

The School Inspector concludes that it should be “strongly recommended” to the Superintendent of Indians and the Provincial Government that there be a “special grant” for the purpose of schooling.\textsuperscript{558} The story of collective consciousness and survivance falters. The paper archive appears to tell a story in which the efforts for a school are attributed to the zealous missionary working with Mi’gmaq.

Two years later, in 1855, the School Inspector, Joseph Meagher, noted that in the Township of Mann – along the Restigouche River – the chiefs of a “tribe of Micmac Indians” invited him to a meeting. Another shift: this time Mi’gmaq presence is made visible with leaders and chiefs, extending an invitation. At this gathering, a meeting along the Restigouche River, the chiefs

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\textsuperscript{557} P. Winter, School Inspector to J.B. Meilleur, Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada (Copies of, and Extracts from, the Reports of School Inspectors for 1853) in J.B.Meilleur to Hon. P.J.O. Chauveau, Provincial Secretary, Québec. (Legis\textsuperscript{3}lative Assembly. \textit{Report of the Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada for 1853}, 135).

\textsuperscript{558} P. Winter to J.B.Meilleur in Canada. Legislative Assembly. (Legis\textsuperscript{3}lative Assembly, \textit{Report of the Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada for 1853}, 135).

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asked the Inspector to write a letter “to Colonel Napier, Superintendent of Indian Affairs praying
for assistance to build a schoolhouse.” And, having received “‘favourable reply’ from Indian
Affairs,” said the Inspector, “[t]hey intend commencing to build a school house immediately”
with the hope for more funds, from the same government, to “support” a teacher.559

The next year, in 1856, the same School Inspector observed that under the direction of their
missionary, l’Abbé F.X. Dumontier, “the Indians have a school in this locality” attended by 65
young children “who already exhibit proof of success”560. The children, like cultivated soil (these
words imply) are already ‘progressing.’ And, in 1856, the first formal school for Mi’gmaq
children of Restigouche, funded in part by the Department of Indian Affairs, and operated under
the direction of the Catholic order, opened at Mission Point.

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In the emerging Canadas, other changes were happening. That same year, in 1856, the
Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada passed an Act empowering commissioners to
inquire into Indian Affairs in Canada. The objective of the Inquiry was two-fold: first, to
understand the “best means” of securing the “future progress and civilization of Indian Tribes in
Canada”; and second, to investigate “the best mode of managing the Indian Property” to “secure
its full benefit to the Indians, without impeding the settlement of the country”. The inquiry
ignores the tension between those goals of securing benefits for Indigenous peoples, without
impeding settlers’ settlement of the country. Settlement of the country was underway; forward


looking inquiries were stitched into the newness of Canada’s colonial fabric. This Royal Commission, chaired by Richard Pennefather, Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, was the last of six major investigations in the Canadas that took place from 1823 and 1858. Many of the recommendations were already being implemented in the Gradual Civilization Act, 1857. In other words, although the *inquiry* into the conditions of Indigenous peoples and department administration was not yet complete, the recommendations, as articulated in the Gradual Civilization Act, were already being implemented.\(^{561}\)

In the evidence provided to this Inquiry, contained in the appendices of the report, the missionary at the Restigouche Mission affirmed, among other items, that “the Indians under my charge are erecting a new school house.” In a benevolent tone, the missionary continued: “they are grateful for the aid” from the government and “much pleased at the improvement made by the children” who attend the school, with the “annual grant of 50 [pounds] per annum.”\(^{562}\) In the body of their report, the Commissioners note that at the Restigouche Mission the School-house was “partially raised by a contribution from the Parliamentary Grant for Lower Canada” and the School Master also received a “salary of $200” from Lower Canada.\(^{563}\)

Beyond the frame of the inquiry into the “future progress and civilization”, of Indigenous

\(^{561}\) Horn, “Reconfiguring Assimilation,” 27-33.


peoples, at this time, in the mid-nineteenth century, mass public schooling, for settler society, was taking shape in the two regions of the Province of Canada (present-day Ontario and Québec) as part of nation building.\textsuperscript{564} For the most part, however, Indigenous populations were precluded from such public schooling efforts. In other parts of Mi’gma’gi and Wolastoqiyik territory, in the Maritime region, the pre-Confederation era is considered, as historian Martha Walls shows, a time of “limited [formal] educational opportunities for Mi’kmaw and Wolastoqiyik children.”\textsuperscript{565} With the exception of the “failed New England Company scheme”, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, colonial officials “ignored” Indigenous populations and provided “no colonial funds” for Aboriginal schooling in the Maritime region until after Confederation.\textsuperscript{566} Yet, as Walls points out, Indigenous peoples in the Maritime region, similar to Mi’gmaq of Restigouche, petitioned the government to provide formal schools. Schooling is connected with colonial insertions, ignoring, the making of place, and the ‘breaking of Indigenous families’ into pieces. Schooling also traces resilience and interests, in the meetings and gatherings, in petitions submitted, worldviews continued.

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I return to the Capuchin records housed at Québec’s national archives in Gaspe. Government reports, produced, in part, with evidence from the missionary at Restigouche for the Inquiry into

\textsuperscript{564} Curtis, \textit{Building the Educational State}, 1988.

\textsuperscript{565} Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System’,” 363.

\textsuperscript{566} In “‘Part of that Whole System’,” Walls discusses how the “London-based New England Company” had a “civilizing” educational agenda that used “English-language” day schooling to provide “apprenticeship-based vocational training and Conversion to Protestantism”, administered by Anglicans. Starting in 1787, the plan was to establish a “series of schools”; however, by 1791, a single school operated in Sussex Vale, New Brunswick. This school closed in 1826 because of opposition from Aboriginal peoples and due to concerns from company officials about colonial administrators’ misuse of company funds (363).
Indian Affairs show that, in 1856, a schoolhouse was built on the territory. I sift through copies of reports and letters, digging for traces about the origins of formal schooling at Restigouche. I trace an outline of its bones in the margins of

Inquiries that led to Acts designed to assimilate, civilize, and enfranchise. The work (of building a schoolhouse) is thorough: I locate evidence of separations and segregations, restrictions and revisions to the accessing of school funds. In one report, dated 1857, the Attorney General noted that Mi’gmaq could not access funds through the “Common School grant” because of the “[Mic-mac Indians on the Restigouche] not being organized into a school municipality”. (Fig. 8: “Copy of a Report of a Committee of the Honorable the Executive Council,” 1857)

Thus, the Attorney General recommended that: “said Indians to be organized into a separate school municipality”; and, so doing, the Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada would

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567 The Indian Act, enacted in 1876, consolidated previous colonial legislation intended to ‘eradicate’ Indigenous Peoples (cultures and nations) to ‘assimilate’ into Canadian society. The Indian Act imposed the ‘band council’ electoral system undermining Indigenous systems of governance. European style elections were introduced previously, in 1869, under An Act for the gradual enfranchise of Indians. Indigenous governance systems were viewed as “irresponsible” and an “impediment” to advancement (Joseph, 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, 17). Joseph argues that “[i]mposing European-style elections was designed for assimilation – to remake traditional cultures in the image of the colonizer” (Ibid, 16).

be authorized to provide an annual amount of 50 pounds, the amount set aside for “Poor School municipalities”\(^{569}\) versus accessing funds through a Common School Grant. The Superintendent of Education, P.J.O. Chauveau, informed the missionary at Restigouche that he needed to organize Mi’gmaq into a Poor School municipality, and that the previous grant (under the Common School fund) was being “rescinded”.\(^{570}\) Classified as a Poor School, Mi’gmaq would be exempt from contributing as a “rate payer” (taxation) to support the school on their territory, yet would still receive a grant of 50 pounds.\(^{571}\)

The schoolhouse, shifted, almost settling into place: not eligible to be a common school, instead it is re-positioned, ever so slightly, as Poor School. The Restigouche Schoolhouse inserted itself on Mi’gmaq homelands. Formal schooling took shape in a wood “frame building”\(^{572}\) with government grants for a Poor School situated in the middle of the Reserve, and with priests involved, overseeing the delivery of education.\(^{573}\) There is a crack, something slipping through.


\(^{571}\) Superintendent of Education for Lower Canada, P.J.O. Chauveau elaborated on the rationale for Poor Schools stating that “poor and isolated communities” need to ‘produce’ a certificate of poverty to access a grant and be exempt from taxation. This “indulgence” is founded on the principle that excepts “indigent from all taxation”, Christian maxim “state owes children of the poor the education necessary to make them honest citizens; he added that this principle is also “utilitarian” because it “saves from cost of repressing crime more than it spends in works of charity” (Chauveau to Honourable G.E. Cartier, Provincial Secretary 28 February 1856 in Legislative Assembly. Report on Public Instruction in Lower Canada for the Year 1856, 21.

\(^{572}\) One of the few descriptions of this school in a letter, July 27, 1903, from Frank Pedley, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to the Indian Agent in Restigouche (C-8182, LAC, Ottawa).

\(^{573}\) Priests’ motivation to serve as Indian Agents and building schooling: seigneurial system being dismantled; sums of money from Jesuit Estates were used for the Colleges and Academies (34) Priests had been the ‘main teachers’ during the French Regime. Their position and role were not secure, nor a given. See: J.B.Meilleur. Earlier traces from the 1840s –In a report to His Excellency the Right Honourable Charles Poulet Thompson, the first Governor General of British North America about ‘acquiring land’ notes that Mi’gmaq of Restigouche were “building a new place of worship”, but that have “no school and no means of obtaining instruction, so that few if any of them can
This is not the dominant image of schooling for Indigenous children at ‘Indian residential school’. This history is about substitutions, poor (literally “Poor”) approximations: where a Poor School is the closest approximation for school for Indigenous children (whose parents are not ‘citizens’ or ‘taxpayers’ of the settler state); there is also a sort of substitution, ‘make-do’ arrangement with priests serving as the proto-Indian Agents, and their overt involvement in formal schooling. This is also a story about Indigenous aspirations, requesting a school-house, signing petitions. This is also a story of divisions and differences, with petitions sent requesting a Convent, that would (in time) displace the Mi’gmaw teacher, Miss. Mary Isaac, of Restigouche.

**Populations forming**

The church was also involved in collecting ‘statistical data’ about ‘extended families’, which would create a picture of the ‘populations’ on the territory. Governance involves establishing ‘norms’ by which to target (discipline) individuals and regulate populations. In the province of Québec, the Cures and Missionaries were required to make annual statistics reports in compliance with the XV decree of the first Council of Québec. Some of these records are located at the archives in Gaspé. For Restigouche, these reports consisted of a series of questions (from 40 to 80, depending on the year) tracking data about: the population (how many Catholics, read or write …”) It is recommended that the government provide a “school house and an efficient school master” so that “the children of the Indians might acquire elementary branches of knowledge and also to be taught some knowledge of agriculture”. Moreover, it is noted that the missionary employed among them “receives from Government a sum of seventy-five pounds per annum and for this he devotes to them but a short period of his time”. Thus, if there is ‘no funds’ to establish a school, the suggestion is made to “appropriate a portion or the whole of the [missionary’s] salary” for the purpose of supporting one. (June 1, 1840, to Right Honourable Charles Poulet Thompson, Governor General of British North America from John [Helkes] (Archives de la Paroisse Ste-Anne de Ristigouche. Ref. 1-3 Addition, Universite de Moncton, Moncton). What this points to is the need by religious authorities to ‘reinvent’ and reposition themselves in the unified province of Canada or risk being made redundant, an unnecessary expenditure that can be appropriated by the government. Thus, their (latter day) ‘zealous’ involvement in schooling is, to some extent, about their own (fiscal) self-preservation in the emerging nation state.

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how many Protestants; how many French Canadian, Irish, English, Scottish, and other origins (response, Micmaques); Religious observances (at Easter); Catechism and First Communion; Number of Schools; Parish Library; Affairs of the Parish; State of the buildings; Religious Objects; Associations and Good Works; Retreats, Sacraments, Sundays and Religious holidays; Revenue of the Cures; Episcopal Orders; Diverse; and Special Remarks. These statistical records, for Mi’gmaq of Restigouche, date back to 1825, and for the “blancs de Ristigouche”, the records date back to 1880.

In this research, I focused on extracts of the statistical reports between the years 1891 until 1966, focusing on the categories ‘Populations’, ‘Schools and ‘Special Remarks’. In terms of ‘population’, the members of the parishes were classified by religion, as ‘Catholic’ or ‘Protestant’; by cultural origins, as either French-Canadian, English (at times these two are grouped together as ‘White’), or ‘Other Origins’ (Micmaque, Sauvage, or Indian). The descriptions of the parishioners, Mi’gmaq, produced by the missionaries between the years 1891-1903 illuminate how the populations were produced by the questions, and the responses, in these annual reports. For example, in response to the question “Do parents neglect to send their children to school?” the reply is generally affirmative, along with the comment “in particular by the ‘Sauvages’ (reoccurring pattern for the years 1899 -1903). Under ‘Diverse’, in response to questions about the “principal disorders,” the answer: “l’ivroguerie (drunkenness) chez les sauvages” appears repeatedly in the annual reports, along with “insubordination towards religious authorities” (circa 1900). Missionaries also report on whether they were consulted in the choice of teachers. Responses between 1899-1903 (when Mi’gmaq teacher, Mary Isaac, taught at the school) range from “not always to no”, and in the years after 1903 (when the Sisters
of the Holy Rosary were brought in), the cures indicate that “yes” they had been consulted in the choice of teachers at the school.

The archival records about the formation of the Restigouche Indian School shows something is being worked out in a kind of piecemeal fashion. The distinctions are not firm (i.e., priest/Indian Agent, Poor School/Indigenous school). What kind of school was petitioned for by the Indigenous community? Is a schoolteacher the same thing as a missionary? The Indigenous population is not the same as the ‘Poor’, and yet, it is as if, that categorization, that approximation, can ‘do’ or be ‘borrowed’ and applied for now. Populations are tracked, and statistics support the logic of ushering in the nuns as teachers to instill order in the perceived (and produced) disorderly conduct of “neglectful” parents. There are competing logics at work: utilitarian, missionary. Yet, at the same time, within and outside these logics, Indigenous peoples, Mi’gmaq, had their own reasons, their own motivations, their own understandings about what the schoolhouse meant, and reasons why they may have decided to send (or not send) their children to the school on their territory.

At the same moment that Mi’gmaq were being organized and shaped into a Poor School municipality within the emerging educational system of Lower Canada, the Inquiry into Indian Affairs (as noted earlier) was also taking place. In their report, the Commissioners affirm that the “Micmacs of the Restigouche” are part of the “Micmac Nation” and can be “found” along the
north shore of New Brunswick, throughout Nova Scotia,575 and “along the coast of Maine.”576

The assumptions of the report are assimilationist, with Commissioners noting that: “the band has made great progress in civilization” attributing much credit not to Mi’gmaq themselves, but to the “exertions of the missionary” whose efforts (they say) are “praiseworthy.” The Commissioners affirm that in Restigouche, school-age children “are taught in English and are stated to be making satisfactory progress”. The Commissioners add that some Mi’gmaq exist in a “very denigrated state”, while others “cling to their old mode of life” (living in “Wigwams or bark camps”). These observations coincide with state policies (e.g., Gradual Civilization Act 1857), where desired outcomes of ‘progress’ and ‘civilization’ focused less on parents and more on the molding of Indigenous children.577

The archival records also carry traces of Mi’gmaq collectivity. The Pennefather Inquiry describes, and in so doing recognizes, the “Micmac Nation”, including their territory and their way of life. Mi’gmaq, write the Commissioners, continue to gain a “livelihood” from “hunting, fishing” and manufacturing of “rude articles”. Mi’gmaq are building schools; children are learning new languages; and families are continuing (evolving, adapting) to govern and gain their livelihood (fishing, hunting, manufacturing) on their ancestral lands of Mi’gma’gi. The Commissioners observe that Mi’gmaq of Restigouche have not received “any presents”; only a “scanty share of the Provincial Parliamentary Grant”; and no visits by anyone “on behalf of the Canadian Government”. The commissioners take note of their “desire to improve” and their

575 Legislative Assembly, *Report of the Special Commissioners Appointed on the 8th of September 1856, to Investigate Indian Affairs in Canada.* (Appendix No.21), A21-31.


“industriousness” despite the limited relations or provisions from the government. How do we read and re-interpret these observations? Does the ‘desire to improve’ denote that Mi’gmaq of Restigouche are not considered a potential threat to settlement? Can the desire to improve signal Mi’gmaq abilities to adapt, accommodate, and absorb Euro-Western knowledges into their own worldviews and ways of being? Does the mention of presents (although not received) signify linkages with treaty-making and nation-to-nation relations or even continued Mi’gmaq protocols and relations with one another, with their ancestral lands, and with those arriving? The print archive suggests that Mi’gmaq were not in a position of inferiority or weakness but rather operated from a position of strength and as collective.

The story about schooling moves out of the narrative as ‘Poor-School’ and enters into treaty consciousness, collective consciousness, and nationhood. This is a story of resurgences, and of those knowledges that never left.

In 1842, three Mi’gmaq – Micmac Chief Joseph Malie, Captain (Geptin) Francois Lebauve, and Captain (Geptin) Pierre Basque – travelled to England to request “financial assistance for the building of a church” and for “amelioration of certain laws concerning their fishery”. Although they were not granted a meeting with the Queen, they were given medals “in token of her interest in their welfare”, and told that “further grievances” should be made to “the Governor General of Canada or the Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick.”

Mi’gmaw leadership, these memories

578 Legislative Assembly, Report of the Special Commissioners Appointed on the 8th of September 1856, to Investigate Indian Affairs in Canada (No.21), A21-32

579 Letter from Lord Stanley, Secretary of State for British Colonies, 1842 to Joseph Malie (Micmac Chief). (Pacifique Fonds _1981-05-001/14 Localisation 1A 010 03-02-002A-01, BanQ Rimouski)
tells us, travelled to England, asserting their position (as Treaty Peoples) with the Queen, and their desires for relations with newcomers (building of a church) and to continue their own practices (laws, in this particular instance, concerning fishery) on their ancestral lands and waters, on Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi.

The narrative that I am piecing together from the archives travels beyond the commissioners’ (limited) inquiry into Indian Affairs and moves into Mi’gmaw ancestral territory towards the Covenant Chain of Peace and Friendship Treaties signed between Mi’gmaq and the Crown in the eighteenth century. Annual presents, medals from the Queen: these practices signify Treaty relations and Crown obligations. In the archival records about schooling there are traces that illuminate Indigenous persistence, adaptability, and authority. This is significant because of what the school will eventually become: assimilative and restrictive. What is important is that there are competing visions for the school, as well as Indigenous memories (residues and potentially seeds) of treaty relationships in the inspector’s accounts. There are traces in archival records that might animate Indigenous thought systems (collective decision making, kinship relations) and the use of many instruments (petitions, letters, meetings) that Mi’gmaq used to protect, continue, and add onto their way of life.

580 Under the British colonial regime, after 1763, and as part of Peace and Friendship Treaty making in Mi’gma’gi, a series or what Sa’ke’j Henderson refers to as a chain of treaties was signed, between Mi’gmaq and the British Crown, from 1725 until 1779. The principle guiding the Chain of Friendship treaties was not one of ceding or surrendering land, but rather one of expansiveness. A Mi’gmaq concept used for treaty is angua’tmgewei, which denotes “adding on/to, and building” (Gespe’gewa’gi Mi’gmawei Mawiomi. Nta’tuqwaqwanminen, 2016).
6.2) Emergence of the Ristigouche Indian School: Searching Indian Affairs’ Records

With Confederation, and the British North America Act of 1867, the federal government assumed authority over “Indians and lands reserved for Indians”, including “responsibility for Indian education.”581 As observed by Martha Walls, the federal government funded, built, and staffed on-Reserve Indian Day Schools, which – similar to residential schools – were aimed at “transforming Aboriginal people.”582 (Fig. 9: Class list, 1863-1864)583

In Restigouche, school-age children attended the ‘Ristigouche Indian School,’ which received its funding from the federal government and continued to be administered by religious orders. In 1864, just a few years prior to Confederation, the Mission Priest, P.I. Saucier, took note of the number, gender, ages, and names of children attending the school: a total of 52 children attended the one school in operation on the Reserve at this time. *I hover over the class list. Amongst this early cohort, I notice that the third child listed is ‘Isaac Iseck’, quite possibly the same ‘Isaac

581 Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System’,” 377.


Isaac’ who would become chief, at the turn of the century, and whose daughter, Mary Isaac, would become the ‘first certified’ Mi’gmaq instructor to teach at the Indian School. I follow the names, trying to trace kinship patterns from early Nominal Roll data.

I take note, too, of the ages of children. Some were as young as five years of age; others were sixteen years of age; and most children were between the ages of 7 to 14. There are more boys (total of 33) than girls (total of 19) at the Restigouche Indian School. I read the class list: the boys lined up on one side of the page, and a row of girls on the other. I wonder about their descendants (seven generations ahead), who may still live, in the present moment, at Listuguj.

The national archives in Ottawa also contain evidence, from Indian Affairs, about formal schooling, in Restigouche, from 1872 onwards. The records capture some of the ways that schooling functioned to manage Indigenous populations, with schoolteachers and priests, as colonial agents, providing reports to Indian Affairs. In the early records (1870-1889), there are letters to the Department Officials from Quéc’s School Commissioners, from the Mission priests and Schoolteachers themselves. The correspondence holds memories of those responsible for delivering, along with observations about those who accessed day schooling in Restigouche. (Fig. 10: Annual Return for Indian School at Mission Point, 1873.)

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584 Indian Affairs. RG10, 1891, File 1578, C-11106, MIKAN No. 2067249, LAC, Ottawa.
As one example, Miss. Isabella Mctomny, in 1872, taught ‘Micmacs’ at the ‘Indian School’ at Mission Point (previous page). She was paid by the Department an annual salary of 160$ and a total of 30 students were registered at the school. The following year, 1873, in the annual return submitted by the same schoolteacher, the number of students more than doubled: the schoolteacher recorded a total of 64 children on the nominal roll. Like earlier years, there are still more boys (total of 40) compared to the number of girls (total of 24) recorded as attending school. The schoolteacher commented on the students’ irregular attendances, overall, stating that: “children come very irregularly therefore she could not learn them as she would wish”.

Inferences can be made about the schoolteacher’s need to manage the Mi’gmaq school-age population. The teacher interprets poor attendance as an impediment to her agenda. From the teacher’s observations, the narrative produces and normalizes a sense that the schoolteacher (and, more broadly, formal schooling) are not at issue, rather it is the students, their irregular attendance, that is interfering, acting as an impediment to the teacher’s abilities to teach and to “learn them as she would wish.” The problem is the students, and not the teacher, who need to change, to fit the school’s standards. The remark hints at present-day deficit thinking and ‘education gaps’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous populations that will be (over time) framed as needing to be closed and targeted at so-called problematic individuals and populations.585

Other archival records, however, point to Mi’gmaq uses of schooling and ways in which the schoolhouse was inhabited to suit Mi’gmaq needs, concerns, and worldviews. In a series of letters to the Department, in 1872, there is a discussion about the school being closed and occupied by a tenant of Restigouche and a request by the School Commissioner to have it reopened. In a response to the Department about this allegation, the parish priest noted the customary practices and reasons why the school was closed, and during its closure used by an individual, an “Indian” whose house had burnt down. “[The school]”, the priest stated, “was closed until Christmas” but only because of “measles” which carried off “a number of Indians young and old”. In addition to closing the school because of sickness, the priest stated that it was “customary” to close the school on account of the “inclement of the season”; the “scattering of families to the woods” and the “[poverty] of clothing on the children”. For these reasons, the vacation was held “during the winter” rather than the “summer season”. There may be evidence here of formal schooling being forced to adapt to a community’s lifeways; however, instead of representing this adjustment in terms of Mi’gmaq decision-making and resistance, the priest’s letter emphasizes Mi’gmaq weakness. Elsewhere, the letter notes that “some Indians are being led” by “white people”. Those with “business interests”, the priest writes, “are pushing the Indians to rebel against myself.”

The letter stresses the priest’s view of Mi’gmaq as easily manipulated. There seems to be a tug of war between those with ‘protection’ and assimilation agendas and those who stood to benefit from Indigenous knowledge, skills, and (possibly) labour, either in the woods or on the rivers. In both instances, Mi’gmaq resisting schooling is framed as not being about them making decisions for themselves; rather, the idea is that they are

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easily manipulated, hence the need for investments in schooling, and for the priests’ continued management of Mi’gmaq affairs.

In the correspondence, there are glimpses that can be imagined about Mi’gmaq, about seasonal practices, and ways of living. There are old and young people falling ill and dying; there are families moving into the woods, living in accordance with the seasons; and there is poverty, a lack of clothing that prevent some children from attending school. There is the repurposing of the schoolhouse, being used as a temporary dwelling for a person whose home has been destroyed. There are conversations, negotiations, and adaptability visible in the “customary practice” of holding vacation in the winter and attending school in the summer months. Beyond the written text, there is the presence of People on the land, of expansiveness, and traces of knowledge systems that continued along (and inside) the building of the formal schoolhouse designed by others to ‘civilize’, and to produce neat rows of Mi’gmaq children lined up for school. Between the lines, it is possible to feel principles and values at play, of ms’t no’gmaq (All My Relations), and ways of protecting, of supporting that are not about oppression or punishment but are based more on care, on recognizing needs, and (potentially) on principles of love. This type of love is different from the “love of the family circle” espoused by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Instead, this principle of love is associated with holistic ways of knowing and being (heart, mind, body and spirit) rooted in the spiritual realm and connected with all life forms.  

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Mass public schooling emerged as part of nation building in pre-Confederation Canada. At the roots of early public mass education, separate school streams were envisioned to civilize and assimilate Indigenous children. Close to thirty years after Confederation, in 1895-1896, there were a total of 239 Indian day schools in operation throughout Canada, twenty of which were in Québec. It was at this time, in 1895, that Mary Isaac starting teaching at the Day School in Restigouche. In other parts of Mi’gma’gi, there were eight such schools in Nova Scotia, five in New Brunswick, and one in Prince Edward Island.

Present-day narratives about the Indian Residential School system note that around this time the federal government was moving away from day schools towards residential schooling except for those instances where “bands had been for some time associated with settler communities,” notably in southern Ontario and Québec. (Fig. 11: “Restigouche Schools. Photos Taken by Duncan Campbell Scott, 1911”)\(^5\)

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\(^{591}\) Photos labeled by LAC. (RG.10, Vol. 3125, File 338, 100. MIKAN No. 2073555, LAC, Ottawa).
In his historical research, Milloy observed that the Department gave several reasons why day schools were considered impractical; for instance, ‘sparse’ populations did not warrant the expense of building such schools as there might be problems with irregular attendance. The central “impediment”, however, for officials at this time was “the Indian ‘race’ itself.”\(^{592}\) The concern, for department officials, was that the “influence of the wigwam was stronger than the influence of the school.”\(^{593}\) Thus, in some regions of Canada, there was a push towards residential versus day schools. (Fig. 12: “Restigouche School Children,” 1911”)\(^{594}\)

Despite the official push in policy, in 1895, there were “no industrial or boarding schools in the Maritimes or Québec.”\(^{595}\) Instead, most of the effort (funding and building) industrial and boarding schools took place in the provinces “west of Lake Superior” as part of the “colonization of territories.”\(^{596}\) Even with the shift in policy towards residential schooling, most Indigenous

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\(^{593}\) Ibid, 24.


students (even in the western provinces) attended day schools. The exclusion of day schools from the dominant narrative, to some extent, also functions as an extension of early twentieth-century thinking, which promulgated the belief that those Indigenous communities, in proximity to (white) settler society, were ‘civilized’ and considered sufficiently ‘progressive’ such that the removal of children from the territory was not necessary. Regular interaction with settlers in the case of such communities was already seen to be producing the necessary disruption of, and absorption of the threat posed by, Indigenous lifeways. Day schools, “where children went home at night”, mirrored and fit within the settler-public’s own frame of reference for, and experience of, schooling: nothing more to see here.

6.3) Archival Fragments at Rimouski, Gaspé, and Ottawa: tracing disruptions

Archival records often depicted Mi’gmaq in racialized ways as ‘lesser than’. For example, in some records, dating back to 1840, colonial agents described Mi’gmaq as “scattered remnants” of a tribe that had “once been numerous”. Their “lingering” presence is hardly a threat to the “more populous settlement of the whites”. Populations, as governable entities, are produced in the discourse of official state records: the white settler population is healthy, more “populous”, while the Indigenous population lingers, framed like an (unwelcome) guest, on the periphery of their own homeland at the edge of the newly formed, growing, and normalized white settlements. Sovereign peoples are configured as populations of individuals to be governed (and the

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598 June 1, 1840, to Right Honourable Charles Poulet Thompson, Governor General of British North America from John [Helkes] (Archives de la Paroisse Ste-Anne de Ristigouche. Ref. 1-3 Addition, Université de Moncton, Moncton).
population thus produced will be reframed again, under the Indian Act, as wards, not citizens, not only governed by but produced as incapacitated adults, under the ‘protection’ of the state.)

As I have observed, the concept of population is an invention of a particular European approach to governing that is very much at odds with kinship, tribal collective consciousness. The description of the two populations, one ‘lingering’ and the other, ‘populous’, illuminates the logic of governmentality concerned with, as Bruce Curtis argues, the “life and productivity” of its populace. The records reveal how racism permeates and percolates institutions as “a style of practice”, as Alex Feldman contends, drawing on Michel Foucault’s work. Foucault introduced the concept of biopower, which targeted populations. Biopower is about making a certain population live a certain way (the populous settlement of the whites), and letting another population, and people who persist in that other way, die. Those populations once produced, only to be scattered (like ashes), remnants (of a tribe).

This research on day schooling shows how colonial elimination worked by transforming community spaces and family systems, producing, and targeting populations, ‘from within.’ In some places, such as for the Mi’gmaq of Restigouche, the removal and cutting off of children from their homelands, from their families, from their knowledge systems took place at day schools, built on their ancestral lands. Removal could be an intellectual, cultural, and affective function occurring on ‘site’ and through the disruption, occupation, and re-organization of


community space, ways of interacting, along with ‘what’, ‘how’ and ‘who’ produced knowledge, and managed the population.

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Opening up the conversation to include evidence and memories from archival records and oral testimonies interrupts a dominant storyline that tends to position on-Reserve day schools at the beginning of the timeline only to be replaced by a much more invasive and violent form of schooling: the Residential School. Both forms of schooling – residential and day – operated throughout Canada; and, both forms of schooling are ‘part of’ that whole system of genocide. In her work, Walls shows how the federal government deliberately allowed some day schools to “languish” (withholding funds for the maintenance of schools, as one example) and in so doing Indigenous children were coercively streamed from their communities into the residential school at Shubenacadie. In other parts of Mi’gma’gi, such as at Restigouche, day schooling continued and children attended schools intended to suppress or eradicate their knowledge systems, while still living in their own home communities, in their own ‘homes’.

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I return to the national archives in Ottawa where the distance between the day and residential schools diminishes. I find photographs of a tour taken by Duncan Campbell Scott, circa 1911. The different schools on the reserve (‘Indian’, ‘White’) are close to one another. The same D.C. Scott, who, in 1920, infamously wrote: “I want to get rid of the Indian problem … Our objective

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602 Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System’”, 2010; Walls, “‘[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed’,” 2011.
is to continue until there is not an Indian that has been absorbed into the body politic, and there
is no Indian question, and no Indian Department...”

There is a collection of photographs with the heading ‘Maritime Provinces – Photos Taken by
Duncan Campbell Scott during his Maritime Tour’. This catches me by surprise. The Indian
Day School and Residential Schools, too, feel in close proximity, they can almost touch one
another. My breath leaves: I feel heat, in my throat: it is summer, end-of-July, but still: I pull my
sweater around me and imagine Duncan Campbell, greeting the children, at Restigouche.

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Are there ripple effects on relationships at home, within (and between) communities in that some
Day Schools languished, while others (such as the one in Restigouche) continued to expand?
Was there a sense of ‘not complaining’ or asserting a desire for anything other than what was
being offered (or imposed) because the alternative could have been much worse?

In 1909, Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, and his wife,
visited the Restigouche Indian School. The Sisters of the Holy Rosary (in charge of the Indian
School) comment about his visit in letters to their Mother Superior at the Mother House in
Rimouski. The Sisters write: “Monsieur Scott d’Ottawa … Il a pris deux poses de petits Micmacs

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605 Duncan Campbell Scott visited Restigouche and photographs are included in a series titled ‘Photos Taken by Duncan Campbell Scott during his Maritime Tour, 1911.’ Photographs were taken of schools located at several Indigenous communities, including Restigouche.
In this scrapbook of Scott’s Maritime Tour, dated 1911, there are images from communities throughout the Maritimes, and across Mi’gma’gi: Burnt Church, Wagmatcook, Malagawatch, Whycobagh, and, lastly, Restigouche. The final four pictures in this collection feature the school buildings, and Restigouche School Children and their teachers (Sisters of the Holy Rosary) at Restigouche. These are photographs taken of the ‘new’ school and Teachers’ Residence (convent) at Restigouche, built with federal funds in 1909, the buildings and the children spilling out (or into) the doorway: the photo taken just a few years after Mi’gmaw school teacher, Miss Mary Isaac’s, departure.

At the archives in Gaspé, more institutional memories surface. Amongst the records, there is a letter, dated July 19, 1920, from Duncan Campbell Scott to Father Pacifique, mission priest at Restigouche. In the letter, Scott declines a proposal put forth by Father Pacifique to build an industrial school for the “Micmac Indians of the maritime provinces.” Scott writes: “[W]ith reference to the establishment of an industrial school for the Micmac Indians of the maritime provinces…I regret to say that this is a question to which we will not be able to give consideration …” (Fig. 13: Letter from Duncan Campbell Scott to Father Pacifique, 1920.)

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The proposed industrial school cannot be built (in Listuguj) because of “lack of funds” for Indian education and, Scott adds: “our programme of establishing new schools for the Indians in the western provinces is far in arrears”.

The Department’s focus on residential schooling, thus, was for the western provinces; in the east, day schools continued. There was a sense of the relative urgency of residential schools in the Western provinces, which had been recently settled by non-Indigenous peoples. Just over three decades before there had been violent conflict, with the federal government forcing the numbered treaties and movement onto reserves on Indigenous nations. The systems, Indian Day and Residential Schools, touch, overlap, and (dis)connect. Proposals, funding, and school projects: colonial visions for assimilative schooling spread, were pieced together, and grew differently on Indigenous lands. In 1937, at Restigouche, the Indian School was torn down and yet another Indian School, along with a teacher’s residence, was built with federal funds. This time, some funds were transferred from Project No.5, Berens River School (Manitoba) and Project No. 6, Island Lake (Manitoba) to Project No. 2, Restigouche (Québec). Day Schools and Residential Schools are “experiments”, as Milloy reminds us, in human transformation, in settler-colonial genocide. There are mutually impacting relations between the two kinds of school but not necessarily systematic ones. Because of federal, rather than provincial, oversight (as for public schools for settler children), funds for Indigenous schools in Québec are obtained only at the expense of funds for day schools in Manitoba. By the late 1930s, seven decades after

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609 See: Daschuk, Clearing the Plains (2013) to better understand the conditions in the late 19th century prairies; and Maria Campbell’s memoir HalfBreed (1973). The publisher, McClelland & Stewart re-published this memoir, in 2019, with a foreword by Metis scholar Kimberley Anderson, an afterword by Campbell herself, as well as “recently discovered missing pages from the original text” detailing the author’s “account of being sexually assaulted by an RCMP officer when she was 14”. (CBC Radio. As It Happens, “Maria Campbell’s Halfbreed to be re-released with author’s account of rape by Mountie,” Dec. 19, 2018).
Confederation, there were a total of 288 Indian Day schools encroaching and operating on Indigenous lands throughout Canada, of which 31 were located in Québec (a figure that remained constant until 1950).\textsuperscript{610} Decisions about funding of schooling, about which schools will languish created conditions for discrimination, with long lasting consequences, both for those children living in communities (‘on Reserve’) and those removed to residential schools.

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**Intervention**

In 1961, as part of the dismantling of assimilation and the move towards integration, a Joint School intended for both ‘White’ and ‘Indian’ children opened in Restigouche on (so-called) neutral Mission Land with funds from the federal and provincial governments.\textsuperscript{611} The federal government continued to fund tuition for ‘Indian students’; however, the federal government unilaterally handed over the management of schooling from religious orders to the province: the keys to the school switched from the federal Indian Agent to the provincial School Board. In both cases Mi’gmaq (elected leaders, parents, children) are left out of the decision-making, and the administering, of the schools.

During this time, doctoral candidate Philip Bock, while conducting field research in Restigouche, commented that the integration at this school was “more administration than actual”. Bock affirmed that: “[i]n all, there are 444 students, in grades kindergarten through 11\textsuperscript{th}. … of the 444

\textsuperscript{610} Morissette, “Il connaît le chemin de l’école, il peut y aller s’il veut”, 141.

\textsuperscript{611} Correspondence from Pere Armand, Cure, to Hon. Bergeron, Sous-Minister de la Voirie, 1 mai 1969, attests to the racialized divisions in the parish: “d’un cote les Blancs veulent cette ecole sur le terrain des Blancs et les Indiens ne veulent pas y aller … de l’autre les Indiens la veulent sur leur Reserve ou pres de leur Reserve, et les Blancs ne veulent pas y venir”. The Cure states that federal government is forcing the province to build the school, and that the church land, as the only neutral land (“terrain neutre”) would be the most suitable for the “grande Ecole secondaire.” (Pacifique Fonds_1981-05-001-17, “ecole publique_ecole secondaire-restigouche,” BanQ, Gaspé.)
students, 238 are Indian and 206 non-Indian; of the latter, the vast majority are French speaking.” As part of his research, Bock interviewed the school principal, Sister Mary of the Holy Eucharist, pointing out to her that “since the French and English-speaking classes are completely segregated … the ‘integration’ is more administrative than actual.”

"That is not true” (Sister Holy Eucharist must have thought) because Bock recorded her response in his journals as follows: “The integration has been completely successful, with only one fight at the start of the year which she [Mother Holy Eucharist] chose to ignore.”

The principal sees only physical violence between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students as a sign of failed integration, not their continued physical segregation into different classes. In the annual report produced by the Indian Affairs Branch, for the year ending March 31, 1961, confirms that:

School integration is progressing steadily. A joint school was completed at Restigouche providing education for the Restigouche Indians from grades four to 12.

If the new joint high school started in grade four, what does this mean for the primary grades? Does this mean that Mi’gmaq students, during the integration period, started their schooling at a type of non-integrated school with Mi’gmaq students only? It is possible to speculate that the

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613 Bock, Philip K (Ibid).


615 For the year ending 1961, there were a total of 20 Joint Schools throughout Canada, serving a total of 1,116 Indigenous (First Nation) students. A total of twenty agreements were reached between the federal government and local [provincial] school authorities. In Québec, there were two such schools, with a total of 225 students enrolled at both schools. (Canada. Department of Citizenship and Immigration. Indian Affairs Branch. Report for the Fiscal Year Ended March 31, 1961. (Indian Affairs Annual Reports, 1864-1990. ID. 34547). Joint School Accounts –
integration policy meant, in practice, a transition period where some students continued to attend a school that was under the direction of the Sisters, for the primary grades, and entered the integrated high school in grade four onwards.\textsuperscript{616}

From the archival records, I learn that in Restigouche, the demolition of “l’école ‘jaune’” school started on June 3, 1960, at 4 o’clock.\textsuperscript{617} The destruction of one school allowed for the building of another: “afin de permettre la construction du High School”. The new school, the Sisters note, is named by the Superintendent of Indian Schools, Mr. J.A. Jolicoeur, who decides that the High School will be named: “Ecole secondaire regionale de Sainte-Anne.” Then, in May of 1961, Jolicoeur visited the school to announce the integration of Mi’gmaq students starting in grade one, provided that: “ils restent dans leurs classes de l’école verte.”\textsuperscript{618}

During one of my interviews with former teachers, I asked about the administration of the schools. One former teacher spoke about when the commission scolaire took over “the whole thing”, at Restigouche, by which she meant all the Holy Rosary’s responsibilities associated with administering schooling. She recalled this transition happened, in the mid-1960s, when the Normal School was integrated into the CEGEP; she stated:

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\textsuperscript{616} In the register maintained by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary for the ‘ecole indienne’, at least for 1960-1961, notes: “Ouvertures des classes, ces dernieres sont reduites a quatre cette annee, par suite de la constructions de l’Ecole Regionale Sainte-Anne ou iront maintenant les Indiens a partir de la quatrieme annee”. The notation also included the name of the principal (Sister M de Saint-Michel des S.R.), along with the teachers for each of the classes: 3e, M.de. Ste-Helena, 2e, M. de Ste-Roseline, 1e, M. de St.Michel des S, and Maternelle, M. de St-Jean. There was a total of 135 students on the Nominal Roll. (Chronique classes indiennes Ristigouche_no14_1943-1961, Holy Rosary, Rimouski).

\textsuperscript{617} Chronique classes indiennes Ristigouche_no14_1943-1961, Holy Rosary, Rimouski.

\textsuperscript{618} Chronique classes indiennes Ristigouche_no14_1943-1961, Holy Rosary, Rimouski.
There was a Mother General for all the schools, she would oversee the sisters. At the schools, there was a Directrice, or a principal. In Restigouche, there was [a principal] for the Indians and one for the White. The Mother generale des classes used to visit us once a year, and tell us what to change, and how to teach. For the Indians, everything was from Ottawa. Everything for the Indians came from Ottawa and for the White ones, it was the commission scolaire. But I don’t know when they took over the whole thing. I don’t know exactly when they took that, maybe in 1965, probably when all the changes were made, of the school. When CEGEP came in, and we lost the Normal Schools, probably at that time.\textsuperscript{619}

The oral recollections, along with the archival records, indicate that the integration of schooling – for Indigenous students, and for the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, from the federal authority (of the former) and the Holy Rosary (of the latter), into the provincial system was a gradual transition that took place over several years versus an “overnight change”, to use the words of former student, Joe Wilmot, when he shared some of his recollections about the integration era. Colonial logic and thinking did not disappear with the building of the new high school. Some former students acknowledged that the ‘fences’ between Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, and between Indigenous students and teachers, did not vanish because of the federal government’s integration policy changes. This is significant because the dominant narrative about IRS tend to depict the change to integrated schooling in fixed terms both temporally and spatially. A nuanced account, built from archival records produced by teachers at the schools, and oral recollections of both former students and some teachers, shows how there were overlaps between the eras of assimilation and integration. Yet, those periods of transition and shift are not often documented, theorized, or analyzed in terms of the impacts, or even possibilities, as part of

\textsuperscript{619} The Sisters of the Holy Rosary moved the English section of its Normal School (St. Joseph teachers’ college) from Mont Joly (where it had opened in 1956) to Restigouche, in 1962. The college operated at Restigouche until 1967, when it was transferred to Gaspé. In 1970, the church-run college integrated into Québec’s provincial CEGEP system. (Interview with archivist at the Holy Rosary. November 8, 2018. Sisters of the Holy Rosary (Mother House), Rimouski, Québec). See the ‘Timeline’ in Chapter 1 of this dissertation.
the colonial legacy, and also Indigenous resurgences and rebuilding. The porous, in/between spaces also need remembering as part of lessening the hold of the overshadowing colonial presence, Gothic structures or fences built to produce, segregate, and manage populations or discipline individuals. The building of the high school, however, did bring about some positive changes. Some students emphasized that the high school signified greater access to formal schooling beyond that which had been available at the Indian Day School. The Sisters, on the other hand, have very different recollections of this period. In their memories, some of the former teachers recalled that the 1960s was when “all the troubles” began: before that, they asserted, everyone got along just fine.

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Tracing the emergence, petitions, transitions, and changes in schooling at Restigouche shows the structures, the policies, the logic for, and give pause to speculate at the impacts of, formal colonial schooling for Indigenous children. As part of countering colonial logic and practices, it is important to name and identify the practices and policies at schools for Indigenous children as part of making the normalized oftentimes invisible threads of white possession visible. Mi’gmaq students attended: Poor Schools, Residential, Day Schools, and Joint Schools, all underpinned, differently, by colonial thinking and logics to assimilate, to civilize, to integrate. The ad hoc arrangements and different forms of schooling comprise different threads, nuances in the narrative, which are ‘part of’ a ‘benevolent’ enterprise: a genocidally-intentioned, assimilatory school system.
6.4) Conversations with Former Students: recording (some of) the harms

The thing with Indian Day Schools, on the scale of good and bad, there’s a heavy weight on the bad stuff. They reinforced all sorts of negative stuff. They took up space in our community. They took up resources in our community. And they labeled us. They made decisions in our lives that they had no place making decisions about. All those things are extremely negative to me. Those are not legitimate and positive things. But, in this sense I guess, that is colonization, too.

*Diane Mitchell, former student.*

In conversations and recollections with former students who attended the Indian Day School at Listuguj some spoke about the importance of acknowledging sensitive and difficult histories, including the long-lasting impacts of the legacy of colonial schooling. Some spoke of the importance of remaining sensitive in the acknowledgment of this difficult history, in terms of its ongoing-ness, and – at the same time – acknowledging that Indigenous Peoples, values, protocols and knowledges are still very much alive, very much in the present moment, being imagined, from the past, and for generations coming. (Fig. 14: Sketch for the Restigouche Indian Day School submitted by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, 1937)*\(^{620}\)

The state-funded colonial school system – which includes schools built before Confederation (such as Poor Schools) and after (such as Residential, Day, Joint Schools, and provincial schools) shaped (and shape) students’ lives, and decisions were made by people who had, as

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\(^{620}\) RG 10, Vol.6101, file 326-5, part 6, LAC, Ottawa.
Diane Mitchell reminds us, “no place” in making those decisions. The harm of such schooling is not only the overt and horrific violence that took place at ‘total institutions’, but also the ways in which decision-making was removed from people, whilst living on their own ancestral lands. This is also about the ways that Indigenous peoples were dispossessed from their homelands, without having to physically remove them from their territories. The Restigouche Indian Day School was built on Mission Land, if the children would have been removed from the territory the church, and the state, would have lost its ‘hold’ not only over Indigenous populations, but also over their access to the territory. Settler access to land relied upon their access to, management and disciplining of Indigenous children. The Day School allowed for that access to Indigenous children, whose bodies functioned as a doorway for settler society to occupy and settle the territory.

The issue is also about who gets to imagine, design, and create spaces for all aspects of schooling, not only the building but also the pedagogy, curriculum, objectives, and assessments. The issue is also about accountabilities, about ‘who’ is accountable, and for what and how are the accountabilities established and maintained. There is a need to uncover the practices, logic, and policies (systems, curriculum, pedagogy, assessments) to inform critical reflection about the legacy of colonization, and present-day transformation and re-imagining of schooling. In other words, the story about residential and Indian day schooling is not only about what happened in the past, or at the schools; it is about making certain, as the TRC recommends, that this history is taught, and in teaching this history there are possibilities to centre Indigenous stories, approaches, and knowledges.621 The issue, too, is about the centrality of land: the Restigouche

621 Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies, 41.
Indian Day School was built on Mi’gmaw territory, on lands claimed by the church and the state for the building and settling of settler society. The Day School history shows the patterns and logics of settler colonialism working ‘from the inside out’, and like residential school history, children are vessels for this violence and violation. Children’s memories caught by their bodies, living, and breathing in the oral memories and collective consciousness. Children’s mind and bodies and spirits recorded: sights/sounds/scents/touch, visceral memories not easily forgotten, even if deliberately blocked as a form of resistance, of continuance; or, by settler society, as a form of oppression through ignoring and deliberate silencing. Conversations and oral story-work thread memories about Day Schooling to the present day, creating and holding space for other imaginings, other possibilities beyond settler time, beyond settler spaces and settler time.

6.5) Indigenous Presence and Resilience: Miss. Mary Isaac’s Story

In 1895, Miss Mary Isaac – a certified Mi’gmaw teacher – took the keys, and entered the ‘old school-house’, (a “dilapidated and cold” building\(^{622}\)), in her home community of Restigouche, of the twenty Indian Schools in operation in Québec at this time. In turning the key, Mary Isaac became the first ‘certified’ Mi’gmaw teacher to teach at the Indian Day School in Restigouche; she is among the first of a few Mi’gmaw teachers to teach at Indian Day Schools located throughout Mi’gma’gi in the early twentieth century.\(^{623}\)

In her work, Walls points out that the Restigouche family of Isaac women: Mary (b.1878), Margaret (b.1889), Alma (b.1895), Martha (b.1897), and Rebecca (b.1899), along with Rita

\(^{622}\) Report by School Inspector, April 1883 (RG 10, Vol.2214, File 43, 118. MIKAN No. 2072125, LAC, Ottawa).

Gedeon (b.1898), all became teachers. All six women, with the “possible exception of Alma”, were ‘convent-educated’ certified teachers. Yet, of all these trained Mi’gmaq teachers, only Mary Isaac took on a position as teacher at the school in Restigouche. This is because starting in 1903, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary took over the teaching at Restigouche. Mi’gmaq women went to school at Restigouche, and then left and taught in other Mi’gmaq communities. Collectively, from 1903 until 1923, the Isaac sisters, along with Rita Gedeon, taught at federal Indian Day Schools, on Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik territories, in communities of Kingsclear, Esgenoopetitj (Burnt Church), Eel Ground, Elsipogtog (Big Cove), Gesgapegiag (Maria), and Restigouche.

Eight years after Mary Isaac took the keys, in 1903, Chief Isaac, along with two councilors and sixty-nine others of the community, sent another petition to Ottawa, at his daughter’s departure and the arrival of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, voicing concerns about decisions being made in schooling that would lead to the “gradual obliteration” of their tribe, in present-day language, they raised concerns about the assimilatory and genocidal underside of formal schooling for Indigenous children.

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624 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 36; and Hamilton, The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes 41.

625 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 41.

626 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 36 and Hamilton, The Federal Indian Day Schools of the Maritimes, 15, 56, and 80.

627 Petition to the Honorable Clifford Sifton, Minister of Interior, from “Indians of the Indian Reserve of St. Anne de Restigouche” Isaac Isaac, Chief and Nicholas Jerome, Councilor along with undersigned band members. Dated 20th July 1903 (C-8182, LAC. Ottawa).
But first, this is a story about Mary Isaac, daughter of Chief Isaac Isaac, and her formation as a teacher in Restigouche.

**Ottawa (Library Archives Canada)**  
**July 2018**

I’m sitting at a cafeteria style table on the third level at the Library Archives Canada located at 395 Wellington Street. Personal items have been stowed away in a locker. This is a federal institution, the “fourth biggest library in the world” with a mandate to “preserve” and “make accessible” Canada’s documentary heritage. In the church-like quietness, I filter through and gather digital documents.

School buildings come into view on the screen: records describe funding for ‘construction’, ‘enlargements.’ I take penciled notes of records I plan to access. At the end of the day, I open a file of a petition, from Restigouche, putting forward the name of a teacher for the school. *The buildings recede, drawings crumple, the story shifts, and Mary Isaac, “a young woman of our tribe”, moves herself onto the page. I wish someone had taken her picture or sketched her portrait. I’d hang her image on a wall.* (Silence opens this narrative.)

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628 Here, I acknowledge Moore’s *Trickster Chases the Tale of Education*, and her work with silences as spaces where understandings are gained through conversations, self-reflection. She inserted ‘blank space’ into her written narrative to signify these types of “ethical spaces” (Ermine). Emberley, drawing on Archibald, also speaks of the role of silence as a moment for reflection, for connection, and for “storywork” (Archibald).
In 1894, Hereditary leader and ‘elected’ Chief Pollycarp Martin and Noel Basque, Second Chief, along with others of Restigouche, submitted a petition to Indian Affairs recommending Mary Isaac “a young woman of our own tribe” to take on the position of teacher at the school in Restigouche.629

(Fig. 15: Excerpt of Petition sent by Chief and Indians of the Micmac Indian Reserve, Restigouche to Hayter Reed, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, August 8, 1894.)

With pride, the petitioners affirm: “her father, Isaac Isaac, sent her out” (out, to be educated); she has an “advantage over other teachers knowing her mother tongue and can be the better understood by our young children by explaining to them what they study in the English language”; and that this appointment would be both a “source of pleasure to her parents” and a “great satisfaction to this mission”.630 One year after this petition was sent to Ottawa, in 1895, the Indian Agent, Dr. J.A. Venner, writes a letter to Deputy Superintendent, Hayter Reed, in Ottawa advising the Department that the “missionaries” had

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629 In Restigouche, the first Indian Act band council election, by way of consensus, took place in 1894. Chief Pollycarpe Martin was a traditional hereditary chief under the Sante Mawiomi system, and he was elected by acclamation, as the chief, along with second chief Noel Basque and others. (Alfred Metallic and Amy Chamberlin, Re-conceptualizing Mi’gmaq Governance. 2004. Research Report. Mawiomi Secretariat.) In 1898, the election for chief took place “by majority vote”, at which time Alexis Marchant (Alex Marchand) was elected by majority vote of the electorates over the age of 21. Alexis Marchant was chief from 1898 until 1904, and Isaac Issac was chief of Restigouche between the years 1904 to 1907. (Bock. Micmac Indians of Restigouche (1966). Trent University. Internet Archive 2020.

630 Petition of the Chiefs and Indians of the Micmac Indian Reserve to Hayter Reed, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, August 8, 1894 (RG.10, Volume 2765, File 152,641, LAC, Ottawa). The use of the terms “Chief” and “Second Chief” points to Mi’gmaq governing practices, as discussed further ahead, in keeping with the Sante Mawiomi protocols.
asked him to “recommend Miss. Mary Isaac” as teacher at the Restigouche Indian School.\footnote{Letter from Agent J.A. Venner, 28 June 1895, to Hayter Reed, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs advising the Department that the “missionaries of the Ristigouche Reserve” had asked him to recommend “Miss. Mary Isaac an Indian of Restigouche” as teacher at the Indian School. The recommendation letter highlights similar skills and attributes present in petition (sent the previous year): Mary Isaac’s qualifications (‘first class for elementary teaching’); her ‘belonging’ to the tribe; and her language skills: “speaking French & English fluently & naturally speaking Micmac” … “naturally with already belonging to the tribe speaking [her own] language she is able to explain English reading calculations better than another who cannot understand the language of the pupils.” (RG 10, Vol. 2765, File 152, 641, LAC, Ottawa).} Venner misrepresents (or only takes note of) the request as coming from the missionaries. The voices of Mi’gmaq leadership are re-stitched, re-positioned, by this colonial framing. Nevertheless, the Mi’gmaq petition that was sent to Ottawa, in 1894, attests to Mi’gmaq governance, decision-making, agency and involvement in the governance of schooling.

The petitioners, in 1894, describe Mary Isaac’s formal schooling (at the Mission School in Restigouche and then at convents in New Brunswick and Québec) emphasizing her qualifications and her readiness to take on the position as teacher at their school. After describing her formal qualifications, the petitioners’ assertions align with a confident sense of expansive Indigenous kinship systems or ‘tribal consciousness.’\footnote{Battiste, “Micmac Literacy and Cognitive Assimilation,” 1986.} That is, the petitioners note that Mary Isaac had been sent out to be trained and affirm that her language skills (Mi’gmaq, English, and French) would be advantageous in that she could be “better understood” by the Mi’gmaq children “who study English”. Formal schooling, these statements suggest, was not only welcomed, and supported by Mi’gmaq, but could also be used to their advantage. The petitioners saw advantages in a teacher fluent in three languages. From the standpoint of some, Mary Isaac had not been sent out to be educated “to enter” into settler Canadian society, but rather the petition highlights expectations that she could return and teach Mi’gmaq children, using both English and
Mi’gmaw, for the benefit (pleasure and satisfaction, the petitioners observe) for both her family and the mission.633

In this petition, language acquisition and the mission are not presented within a colonial ‘displace/replace’ or binary framework, but rather in a both/and expansive understanding of knowledge acquisition in keeping with a Mi’gmaq (and Indigenous, generally speaking) understandings of knowledge systems that are relationally-based.634 Drawing on understandings of Indigenous knowledge systems, as articulated by scholars such as Battiste, Coulthard, Simpson, and Wilson, we can see that the petition not only puts forward the name of an ‘individual’ qualified for the position, but also denotes expectations, at least of the petitioners, that Mary Isaac would return and take on responsibilities in her community by teaching and working. Is this reading of the petition as evidence of Indigenous kinship systems a smoothing over of colonial violence? Is this a way to distance myself, as a settler, from an assimilatory and genocidally-intended system?635

In his work on colonization and missionary presence in Mi’gma’gi, Len Findlay observes that in the writing of missionaries, such as Chrétien Le Clercq (who worked amongst Mi’gmaq in Mi’gma’gi in the mid-1600s) and the re-publication of this work, in the early 1900s, there is

633 In L’nu Humanities,” Henderson discusses Mi’kmaw thought observing that “nkamlamun” denotes how “learning is the gift of each person and the emotional intelligence of loving, caring and interconnected responsibility for relatives and others” 30.

634 Prins, The Mi’kmaq: Resistance, Accommodation, and Cultural Survival (1996); Henderson, The Mikmaw Concordat (1997); Wilson, Research is Ceremony, 81

635 de Leeuw, Greenwood, and Lindsay, “Troubling Good Intentions,” 382.
“scant recognition” that Indigenous knowledges and understandings existed in their own right. The lack of recognition of Indigenous knowledge systems is underpinned by the “mistaken belief in European superiority.” Thus, seeking out Indigenous knowledge systems in the archives, far from smoothing over colonial violence, can counter the dominant narrative, which continues to suppress Indigenous knowledge systems. Moreover, as Findlay observes, there is also a need to consider these knowledges “in their own right” versus something that is used to counter the dominant narrative. Findlay is referring to the way that Indigenous knowledge and thoughts systems are treated as raw “materials” that can be collected, extracted, contained, objectified and interpreted by and for “modern critical study.” As an example, Findlay affirms that he approaches a Mi’gmaw Creation story, “with a sense of the sacred”, of knowledge holders, and of the “sense of the power of stories to bind people to a particular place.” In other words, what Findlay reminds us is the importance of learning and becoming familiar with particular stories, of particular places, and that these particularities are forms of truths that can “bind”. If the stories are forgotten (dismissed, ignored, under-remembered/presented) then ‘who’ and ‘how’ are we bound?

Other scholars have pointed out that Indigenous peoples used and absorbed instruments, such as petitions, into their own ways of being and knowing. In her work on recovery of Indigenous spaces, Lisa Brooks observes that “[c]ommunication between Native communities and colonial centres was formalized in written petitions.” Although the “form’ of a petition resembled a “legal

636 Findlay, “From Smug Settler to Ethical Ally,” 79.
637 Ibid, 79.
638 Ibid, 79.
639 Ibid, 70.
template that was common in colonial America”, nevertheless, Brooks points out that the petitions “can be viewed as a genre onto themselves, corresponding to formal messages from one nation to another that were delivered with wampum.”

640 In other words, the petition put forward by Mi’gmaq is drawn from and animates Indigenous knowledge systems, including ways of governing in a nation-to-nation manner. Furthermore, from within an Indigenous context, Brooks points out that ‘alliances’ were entered into, and understood within “terms of mutual obligatory reciprocity.”

641 From this position, putting forward the name of a teacher can be read as an expression affirming Mi’gmaq interest in having greater influence over the school, and in further formalizing a relationship with the government. From this standpoint, the petition sent from Restigouche to Ottawa functioned as an instrument of peace and friendship treaty philosophy, which frames relations as extending kinship alliances versus displacing or replacing Indigenous autonomy (or knowledges) by settler colonial logic, practices, or officials.

In the correspondence during the period when Mary Isaac taught at the ‘Indian School’, from 1895 until 1903, there are other examples where forms of writing illuminate and extend Mi’gmaq collectivity. For example, in letters, petitions, and band resolutions between Mi’gmaq leadership and/or the Agent with officials at Indian Affairs in Ottawa, between 1899 and 1902, show the leadership consistently requesting to have school holidays taken in the “hardest of winter”, when it was most difficult for children to attend school due to distance (“being too far from school”) and poverty (“they are too poor to clothe their children to go to school in the


641 Ibid, 225.
Over the next few years, the band council passed several of these resolutions requesting a change to hold the school vacation during the winter rather than the summer months. One resolution, June 3, 1901, signed by Chief Alex Marchand and Agent Jerome Pitre, requests that: “two weeks holidays be taken … in summer and the other six weeks be taken in the hardest of winter as many children can attend school a great deal easier in the summer than winter.” Officials in Ottawa “steadfastly refused” to alter the school schedule.

Far from indifference, the resolutions passed over several years by leadership show how some Mi’gmaq strove to put mechanisms in place, such as an altered school schedule, so that formal schooling could meet their own needs and particular circumstances. In this vision for schooling, students are not coerced to attend, either by punishment or rewards, but rather the resolutions show, as expressed by Sa’ke’j Henderson in his analysis of Mi’gmaq thought, how in Mi’gmaq knowledge systems a central feature of learning and knowledge sharing is “empathy and care for those around us.” The correspondence illuminates Mi’gmaq worldviews, where the central concern is about the well-being of Mi’gmaq children. The band council resolutions show the expectation of adjustment and concern for comfort of students, and their ease of access

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642 Extracts of Minutes of Council of Micmac Band, 12 Sept. 1899. Signed by J. Pitre, Agent. (C-8182_RG. 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa.)

643 The leadership ‘unanimously passed’ a resolution, December 2, 1901, to have the holidays changed, again emphasizing that children cannot attend school during the winter due to the distance (“too far for small children to travel”) and lack of ‘transportation’ (“their parents have not horses to drive them to school”). (C-8182_RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).

644 In her analysis of archival records related to Day Schools in the Maritimes, Walls observes that the September–June school term was “ill suited” to Mi’gmaq and Wolastoqiyik and their ‘season mobility’ (travelling in pursuit of seasonal work and subsistence activities). She also points out that there were challenges with attendance because of poverty and the poor construction of buildings: children needed winter clothing and the buildings were poorly heated. (“‘Part of that Whole System’”, 366.)

to the school. While colonial officials are preoccupied with issues such as low attendance, the resolutions put forward by Mi’gmaq are aligned with non-coercive practices of taking care (of well-being), of adjusting to the seasons, and so doing maintaining balance and harmony amongst Ms’t No’gmaq (All My Relations).

This distinction is important because, for settler colonial peoples, mass public schooling was about managing populations, instilling morality and order, and in so doing supporting the aims and goals of state-building. For Mi’gmaq, however, as Henderson, Battiste, and others have pointed out, knowledge acquisition, or building, is expansive in keeping with principles of kinship relations and peace and friendship treaty making philosophy. A central principle underpinning Indigenous knowledge building, including Mi’gmaq protocols around knowledge building and sharing, is that of holistic learning. Holistic approaches involve personal, spiritual, physical, and social well-being. In her work, Battiste speaks of “nourishing the learning spirit”, which involves connecting inward (understanding one’s own pathway from the spirit realm) and also outward (with family, with community, with nations), both human and more than human. Some scholars link the concept of process with spirit as a recognition of ‘great mystery’, ‘nonhuman relations’, ancestral relations and in connections with all life forms (plants, animals, rocks, water). In her work exploring Métis peoplehood, Jennifer Adese asserts that Peoplehood is not derived from ‘institutional laws or forces’, but more from relations with place,


and all beings. Others argue that locating oneself by way of ‘kinship relations’ and ‘place’ is a form of countering colonial practices of erasure of Indigeneity and makes visible Indigenous practices of knowledge production, which center place/relational ontology.

Mi’gmaq desires to hold schooling during the season that would best accommodate the needs of Mi’gmaq families and the wellbeing of Mi’gmaq children, can be understood as a necessity of survival as Mi’gmaq and as resistance to colonial norms and rigid scheduling. Mi’gmaq petitions and resolutions for formal schooling are not about giving up one way of being for another; rather, they assume that Indigenous lifeways and practices should continue, that schooling be absorbed, integrated, and used for their own “interest and benefit”, to use the words of Chief Isaac Isaac, and others from Restigouche, in a Petition sent, in 1903, to officials in Ottawa. (Fig. 16: Letter from Secretary J.D. McLean to Indian Agent Pitre, 1903)

The responses from the Department of Indian Affairs, however, highlight the federal government’s paternalistic and assimilationist mindset pervasive in the IRS system, including

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651 Petition to the Honorable Clifford Sifton, Minister of Interior, from “Indians of the Indian Reserve of St. Anne de Restigouche” Isaac Isaac, Chief and Nicholas Jerome, Councillor along with undersigned band members. Dated 20th July 1903 (C-8182, LAC, Ottawa).
their management and funding of Indian Day Schools. In response to Mi’gmaq resolutions to change the school vacation time (to best meet the needs of Mi’gmaq families (children and parents), the Secretary of Indian Affairs, J.D. McLean, requested of the Indian Agent a “full report” before making “any decision on this matter.” The hierarchical constellation of colonial relations deepened even further with the Department disciplining the Agent, warning him that failure to provide such a report (this was not their first request for this report) would result in “serious notice” being taken of his “neglect”. While some members of the community (including chief and council) advocated for changes to the school year that would enable “more children” to attend, nevertheless the Restigouche Indian Day School expanded in what Walls describes as a “network of power’ [that is] “a predominately male network linking DIA bureaucrats, field workers, and, to a lesser extent, Aboriginal people.” From this “predominately male network of power”, the community’s request (their reasoning and position) seems to be marginalized. Instead, the Agent is accountable to the Department of Indian Affairs facing consequences for neglecting the colonial duties for which he is responsible. At the same time, because the Agent signs the petition jointly with the chief, there is also the possibility of the Indian Agent acting ‘with’ the chief, not necessarily as a DIA bureaucrat. In other words, the Agent is drawn into an Indigenous kinship (or, relational) network (or, webbing) of power.

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652 Letter from J.D. McLean, Secretary, to J. Pitre, Indian Agent, Restigouche, 10 December 1901 (DIA. RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, C-8182, LAC, Ottawa). In earlier correspondence from J.D. McLean, Secretary to J. Pitre in response to the request to change the holiday term, asks “to be furnished with full information as to whether at any time the Indians of this Band move away from the vicinity of the school” (14 June 1901). (C_8182_RG 10, RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).

653 Dorothee Schreiber quoted in Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 37.

654 Wilson discusses the concept and practice of relationality, while Battiste, and others, discuss Mi’gmaq kinship (or tribal) consciousness where individuals may be ‘born into’ a family (and learn to their roles and responsibilities), and others may ‘enter into’ alliances (discussed in Chapter 4).
The Department rendered its decision about the school schedule based on reports supplied by the Indian Agent, at the insistence of the DIA. The Agent stated that “famil[ies], whether living “near” or “far away” from the school did not generally move away. With this, the Department made its decision seeing “no reason” why the rule of having summer holidays in July and August should be changed. In other words, the DIA (based on the Agent’s reports) that families were complying with a more ‘sedentary’ lifestyle, decided there was no need for changes to the school schedule, despite numerous resolutions stating otherwise passed over several years by Mi’gmaq leadership. In addition to stated concerns expressed by Mi’gmaq about the distance some children would have to travel to the school, it is also possible that Mi’gmaq wanted to participate in seasonal activities (for instance, hunting, trapping, or logging) in the woods, during the winter months. Families may not have been ‘moving away’, yet many people still accessed and used resources on the territory, in the woods and on the waters. While the correspondence between Mi’gmaq leadership, the Agent and the Department of Indian Affairs reveals the colonial network of power it is possible to trace Indigenous (Mi’gmaw) knowledge systems, kinship networks rooted in empathy and care in the petitions, letters, and resolutions that made their way out of the community and are stored at public and private archives. This research on day schooling involved print records and oral testimony gathering. I not only visited archives but also spoke with former students. We met in their homes, places of work, and at my home, too. The stories of former students also push against the grain of what I know and experienced in my own schooling. Their stories enlarge and seep into my reading of the archival records. Their stories bleed into memories of the former teachers, settler nuns and Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) women.

655 In his response to the Department, 16, Dec. 1901, Agent Pitre (from S. Stewart, Assistant Secretary to J. Pitre, Agent, 9th January 1902. (C_8182_RG 10, RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).
6.6) Navigating Kinship, Indian Act Governance, and Surveillances

Returning to Mary Isaac’s Story

The archival records show some of the reasons for Mary Isaac’s departure, in 1903, and the arrival of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary that same year. In conversation with me, a former teacher and Sister of the Holy Rosary affirmed that:

We had two, three hundred schools. They were for anybody, wherever we were asked to go. We went [to Restigouche] in 1903, it was one of the first ones. We only went to two Indian Schools: at Restigouche and Maria. At Saint-Augustine, on the North Shore, the children came from the reservation, they used to cross the river and come to the White school. They used to be taught in English with the White English students and the Indian English students. Wherever we were able to go, we went.

This oral recollection, from a former teacher who taught at the Restigouche Indian Day School, emphasizes that the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, as an institution, only taught “where invited”.

Because of the emphasis on being invited by communities to teach, there is a subtle shift in accountabilities in terms of their role, their responsibilities, and – ultimately – any harms caused by their work in said communities. What is implied is that the Sisters, and their institution, were only doing what had been asked, and they only went, if and where invited.

Walls observes that generally speaking the conditions at the Indian Day schools were “dismal”: schools were poorly heated, poorly built, and poorly attended. With respect to Listuguj, correspondence from the Indian Agent to officials in Ottawa, from the late nineteenth century,

656 Innu community, not a reservation.


658 Walls, “‘Part of that Whole System’”, 366.
and spanning over the decades, mentions similar challenges, including “large class size and lack of space.” The archival records also shed light on particular challenges that Mary Isaac faced as a Mi’gmaw woman working in her home community. First, as a teacher from the community, Mary Isaac navigated multiple and conflicting governance streams: Indigenous (Mi’gmaw) kinship-based systems and the emerging Indian Act band council electoral system. Second, Mary Isaac also navigated gender norms and faced moral surveillance and scrutiny and, as Walls contends, there was even more surveillance for Indigenous women teachers.

**Kinship and Indian Act Governance**

In a band council resolution, put forward in 1899, as reported by the Agent, Jeremie Pitre, the community wanted to “change the teacher” as “people complain too much.” At this time, there is a change from the Indian Agent being the priest (already in residence at the Restigouche mission) to having a secular state agent like Pitre. By this point, Mary Isaac had been teaching at the school for four years, since 1895. Just one month after the resolution requesting her dismissal was sent, Agent Pitre wrote to the Department, in May of 1899, stating that he disagreed with this band council decision; he wrote: “Miss. Isaac is well able to teach them children for some time yet. When I have visited the school, I found everything well kept the scholars answered well in French and English and have also the advantage to be taught in their

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660 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 2011.


662 In about 1870, Rev. J.N. Leonard acted as the Indian Agent. Rev. Drapeau was appointed in 1880 (however, he was already acting in this position in 1877). The first secular Indian Agent, S. Poirier, was appointed in May of 1888. (Matheson,G.M.“Historical Directory of Indian Agents and Agencies in Canada,” [1960]).
own language.” Other community leaders also submitted a petition to the Department echoing the sentiment that “Miss. Isaac’s conduct has been good…” They, too, cite the advantages that came with “possessing her own native tongue” as well as English and French. In this petition, Mi’gmaq requested that the Department “reconsider the dismissal as desired by the Chief [Alex Marchand].” How do I read and understand these differing views about the teacher, Mary Isaac? Is it possible to understand the differing desires for (or resolutions against) as expressions of Indigenous governance and protocols still being practiced? That is, there is less emphasis placed on unity derived from people holding the same (or similar) views and greater emphasis on discussions and consensus decision making whereby differing views would be expected?

The letters sent to Ottawa, and the differing positions and views expressed therein could point to Indigenous governance and consensus-building practices. The letter from the Agent to the Department, however, is underpinned by an assimilationist and paternalistic tone: the motivations seem to be less about consensus decision making or about having a teacher who can be understood by the students, and more about the “proper” way to govern. In another letter, dated May 8, 1899, Pitre writes: “It is also very improper for the new council to ask [for] the dismissal the teacher belonging to the opposite party it will certainly cause ill feeling. I did explain all these things to the council who appears to understand …” Cloaked in neutral ‘proper’ conduct, the Indian Agent assumes the role of the one who must explain and mediate. But we

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663 Letter from Jeremie Pitre to Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, 13 May 1899 (C_8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).

664 Poor Copy of Band Council petition sent to Department of Indian Affairs, 29 [May] 1899 (C_8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).
cannot know whether whose who wished to see Mary Isaac remain saw themselves as the “opposite party”.

The term “opposite party,” which Pitre uses to describe the supporters of Mary Issac may be seen as a reflection of the language, values and practices associated with the newly imposed electoral band system. At the same time, this phrasing could point to large family groupings and possibly Indigenous governance practices still at work. There are possibilities of kinship connections between Isaac Isaac and the hereditary leadership: in 1894, hereditary leader and elected (by consensus) Chief Pollycarp Martin and Noel Basque, second chief, and others had sent a petition to Ottawa advocating and affirming their desire to hire Mary Isaac as a schoolteacher (she took on this responsibility, in 1895). The Sante Mawiomi (Grand Council) is considered the traditional governing body of the Mi’gmaq. The Sante Mawiomi facilitated decision-making amongst the districts, and at the district level, “peace and friendship” was maintained through alliances, negotiations, and discussions amongst “extended families.”665 At the district level, the saqamawoti (district councils) were comprised of “ge’ptin (district captain), saqamaw (chief), saya (heads of families), and gisi’gumimajuinu’g (elders).” Together, Sa’ke’j Henderson asserts, the saqamawoti “managed resource allocation” and disputes that arose amongst “extended families.”666 In recalling such details, Henderson works to animate Mi’gmaq systems of governance: disputes amongst families; processes, for instance, consensus building, diplomacy; and diverse roles and responsibilities (ge’ptin, saya, gisi’gumimamjuinu’g).

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665 Gespe’gewa’gi Mi’gmawei Mawiomi. Nta’jugwaqanminen, 93.

The emphasis on the “opposite party” in the discourse of the Indian Agent could be an indicator of the changes brought in by the Indian Act electoral system, where disputes are managed through tactics of divisive orderings, hierarchies, and majority rulings. At the same time, the “opposite party” could denote ‘saya’ (heads of family). From this positioning, the “opposite party” could point to Indigenous governance systems and practices that the settler colonial government was trying to stamp out, or at least control. The Indian Agent may be using the language of divisive electoral politics with his phrase, “opposite party,” at the same time he is (it would seem, unintentionally) pointing to the continued existence of other sources of authority or voices in governance. And these voices are the ones saying that Mary Isaac should stay. They are also the ones who petition against assimilation when Alex Marchand reportedly requested the Sisters. There is a degree of irony of the fact that through the Western phrasing and assumptions, the Indian Agent underscores Indigenous resistances and, possibly, Mi’gmaq worldviews.

In May of 1899, the Indian Agent recommended retaining Mary Isaac “for another year”, (when a resolution had been put forward by Chief Marchand and his council requesting a “change of teacher”) and the Agent also put forward the suggestion that “the sisters” (from the religious order) could be brought in to teach. Pitre advised: “my opinion is that it is better to keep her one year more, may be within time we may arrange things to have the Sisters, which would teach girls housekeeping, sewing, etc. etc.” Thus, the Agent’s continued involvement with council, coupled with advice to the Department of Indian Affairs on and about their decisions, which I suggest, filtered the persistence of traditional governing as failure to understand electoral politics, ultimately facilitated not only colonial governance, but also diminishment of Indigenous

\[667\] In a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Indian Affairs, the Agent Pitre (8 May 1899) (C_8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa.)
ways of knowing (in the literal sense of having a teacher who speaks Mi’gmaw) and the ushering in of colonial schooling. The emphasis on the fact that the Sisters could teach the girls “housekeeping” and “sewing” does suggest that Mary Isaac was not doing this kind of Western gender-role training of girls in domesticity, and that Pitre saw her “well kept” school nevertheless benefitting from this kind of additional cultural training. It is quite possible, too, that Pitre was drawing on knowledge of how residential/industrial schools worked at this time and this type of gender training, for low-wage work in the settler economy. The request for (and eventually implementation of) this gender training is yet another connection or dynamic relation between residential schools and day schools.668

In the fall of that same year, Mi’gmaq leadership, under Chief Alex Marchand, sent yet another petition to Ottawa this time requesting to have Mary Isaac removed because of issues with her teaching practice: “many others don’t send their children because they learn nothing”; however, the pressing concern was that Mary Isaac “meddled too much about our business, even writing letters against the Chief and his party”(emphasis added).669 Again, the Agent added his own comments stating that he “disagreed” with this request stemming from the community.670 Pitre stated that he had been asked by the Chief to remove Miss. Isaac because she had been writing letters for her father (Isaac Isaac) “against him [Chief Marchand] & his party & such other

668 In “Indigenizing the Structural Syllabus,” Sarkar and Metallic assert that in the 1920s, the Restigouche Indian Day School intended to “train local people to be domestic servants or laborers for the surrounding white settler community” (54), and Mi’gmaw (the language of home) was “still used” at the school (54). (School and home language use is discussed ahead).


670 Extract Letter from J.Pitre to the Secretary of Department of Indian Affairs. 9 Sept. 1899. (C_8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).
nonsense.” In response, the Department affirmed that it would “adhere to its original position” (to retain Mary Isaac), in light of the Agent’s comment that the “Resolution is wrong”. Thus, in this network of power, there is the unmistakably gendered language about a woman who has “meddled too much”; there is also the Indian Agent’s dismissive characterization of the band council arguments as “nonsense,” as he filters the disagreements for the DIA. The Agent’s words and recommendations carry more weight than the petitions and resolutions, the concerns, and desires, of Mi’gmaq.

There are differing, highly contested, positions associated with requests for, or against, the introduction of the teachers from Sisters of the Holy Rosary, who arrived in 1903. Fifty years later, in the archival records of the Holy Rosary, in 1953, on the occasion of their “Golden Jubilee, and the arrival of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary,” praise is given to “A. Marchand” who had written a petition to the Bishop, requesting the Sisters presence in Restigouche. There is an emphasis in the institutional memory and in the oral recollections of former teachers with whom I spoke for this project on the Sisters having been invited by the community to teach. This narrative diminishes the role of the state (Indian Agent) and the church (priests) who had likewise petitioned, planned, and advocated for the Sisters’ to take over education. The narrative also ignores resistances and differing positions in response to the Sisters’ arrival.

671 Extract Letter from J.Pitre to the Secretary of Department of Indian Affairs. 9 Sept. 1899. (C_8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).

672 Letter from the Secretary of Indian Affairs to J.Pitre, Indian Agent (C_8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).

673 Chronique Scholaire_Restigouche, No.14. Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Rimouski. As well, competing interests over land is central in this story about day schooling: In 1902, Alex Marchand and members of Restigouche, were involved in the land negotiations with the Champoux Company to lease Reserve land to the mill owners. The arrival of the mill, as discussed previously, also ushered in non-Indigenous families who settled on “the Flat,” (Bock, Micmac Indians of Restigouche (1966). Trent University. Internet Archive 2020).
Just before their arrival, in July of 1903, Chief Isaac Isaac, Nicholas Jerome, and 69 members of the band, sent a petition to Honourable Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior, requesting that Minister prevent the introduction of the nuns. The Petitioners clearly and firmly outline their reasoning, stating:

That your Petitioners … are desirous of [illegible] remaining without having their Reserve invaded by white people more than is absolutely necessary for our interests and benefit. That we fear if once the reserve is thrown open to white people our band of Indians will be entirely broken up and the remnants of our people scattered.

For many years, the Petitioners write, the school has been taught to their “satisfaction” by Mary Isaac. The petitioners oppose the change, “announced by our priest,” that the school will be taught by nuns for the following reasons: the building of a convent would mean a financial burden; their children’s education would be mostly French, which they oppose “because nearly all our business relations are with the English”. The Petitioners add: “what our people want is a practical English Education.” Finally, the Petitioners assert that the introduction of the nuns meant “bringing into our reserve more white people and the gradual obliteration of our tribe.”

The push against the “gradual obliteration”, through the presence of the Sisters, and the advocating for Mary Isaac, signals the reasoning that Mary Isaac, their own member as teacher, was a way of staving off colonial education.

The archival records, to some extent, show the continued engagement and differing positions of Mi’gmaq, by different leaders: Chief Pollycarp Martin, who petitioned to have Mary Isaac as teacher; Chief Alex Marchand, who requested for a change; or Chief Isaac Isaac, (and Mary’s

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674 Petition sent to Honorable Cliffford Sifton, Minister of Interior, “Indians of the Indian Reserve of St. Anne de Restigouche” Chief Isaac Isaac, Councillor Nicholas Jerome, along with undersigned band members. Dated 20th July 1903 (C-8182, LAC, Ottawa).
father) who advocated for her presence. There are continuances of Mi’gmaq exercising their jurisdiction of education in terms of using band council processes (letters, petitions, or resolutions) to voice their decisions and positions over education in the community of Restigouche. This is important because governance is oftentimes associated with land or resources; however, what these petitions and letters show, is that governance was also practiced in education and in Mi’gmaq interests in having a system of education that would enable them to participate not only in the delivery of education, but also to benefit from the outcomes of having a “good practical” education. And it seems reasonable that Mary Isaac (in her “meddling”) would have been involved in some (not all) of the internal negotiations, writing letters and developing arguments, in the Petitions sent by Mi’gmaq leadership to Ottawa.

**Surveillance of her ‘Moral Fibre’**

In addition to navigating kinship and Indian Act systems of governance, Mary Isaac, as a woman, and as an Indigenous woman, entered a system of rigorous surveillance of her ‘moral fibre.’

The colonial clock of behavior and morality ticked and kept close watch over her affairs. In 1903, elected leadership and band members submitted another petition to Indian Affairs to “remove” Mary Isaac from the position as teacher. There is still concern about her teaching practice, but there is more of an emphasis on her conduct outside of the classroom. The petitions state that Mary Isaac is “careless in her teaching and [she] neglects her duties for the sake of her own pleasures”; “she is in the habit of associating with strangers ‘particularly white men’, especially at night thereby neglecting her duties of teaching our children”. The petition, signed

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675 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,” 44.
by eighty (male) community members, states that “many parents” are “withdrawing their children” because of Mary Isaac’s “bad behaviour.”

The petition highlights the ways the colonial project of schooling targeted women’s “intimate spaces,” as worded by Stoler, their “private family and sexual lives.” As argued by Walls, female teachers at Indian Day Schools were “colonizing agents” brought in to support a particular moral order where the heteropatriarchal nuclear family unit was paramount. What comes through in these petitions is Mary Isaac’s regulation as a racialized woman. That she is in the “habit” of fraternizing with “white men” underscores her regulation as an Indigenous woman who should be mindful of racial as well as sexual boundaries. There are critical questions that can be asked to interpret the band council’s position. Are the community members using European gender norms of proper femininity to shut down her advocacy (or, her “meddling”) and participation in the political life of the community? If parents are withdrawing their children, could this signal to the DIA that Mi’gmaq families continued to practice, outside of the band council, with regards to formal schooling? What was the nature of the split between Mary Isaac’s father, Chief Isaac Isaac, and the “opposite party”, that of ‘incoming’ chief, Alex

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676 Petition, of elected leadership and band members, April 22, 1903, sent to Indian Affairs, Ottawa (C-8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1. Part 1. LAC, Ottawa.)

677 Ann Stoler quoted in Walls “‘[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed,’” 37. Stoler asserts that in the late nineteenth-century, colonial authorities focused on “the domestic domain and the family as sites in which state authority could be secured or irreparably undermined,” (in “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers,” 517. Working a settler-colonial context in Canada, in the early 1900s, Walls argues that for Indigenous women the targeting of these spaces through the imposition of white middle class norms (monogamy and patriarchal nuclear family units) meant reconfiguring and constraining of “expressions of female sexuality and extended kinship networks” (Ibid. 37 and 38). The targeting of Indigenous women – their ways of interacting, building knowledge – imposed Euro-Western norms on their roles and responsibilities as knowledge holders within Mi’gmaq kinship systems. Augustine’s rendition of a Mi’gmaq Creation Story, and Henderson’s interpretation, acknowledges the energies through which ‘the land, plants, animals, and humans’ emerged, as well as Mi’gmaq women’s roles as ‘Grandmother’, as ‘Mother’, as knowledge holders within a webbing of more fluid, changing and lifelong relations, roles, and responsibilities.
Marchand? Was Chief Marchand, in spite of what the Indian Agent had called his “nonsense,” more or less – and, in the long run, favoured by the priest and the Indian Agent, compared to Chief Isaac Isaac, who had resisted the invitation to the Sisters?

Is it possible to understand the differences between the “opposite parties,” not so much as a division (as in, between Indian Act parties) and more a reflection of Mi’gmaq systems of governance, and extended kinship family systems? Was it easier, and more effective, to remove Mary Isaac (as a young, Mi’gmaw, woman) than it was to remove her father, Isaac Isaac (former Chief) from a position of leadership in the community, and in his family? It would be easier to control and remove Mary Isaac (daughter of a chief), than it would be to try and stamp out Indigenous systems of governance steeped in kinship ties, all of which have deep rooted connections with land, with waterways, with territory and knowledge systems.

The story changes shifts, changes shape. The mission priest, Father Pacifique, intervened, sending a “confidential” letter (“you need not reply”, Pacifique stated in the postscript) to officials in Ottawa asking them not to act against Mary Isaac. “In a few days,” Pacifique wrote in his letter, “Agent Pitre will be sending the ‘resignation of Mary Isaac’”. In the end, it was Mary Isaac herself – the teacher at the

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678 „Letter from Father Pacifique to J.D. McLean, Secretary, April 27, 1903. (C-8182, RG 10, Vol. 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).
centre of this moral storm – who tendered her letter of resignation on April 28, 1903. (Fig. 17: Mary Isaac’s resignation letter, April 28, 1903)\textsuperscript{679}

Not long after, Mary Isaac sent another request, this time through the Indian Agent, to the Superintendent of Indian Affairs, J.D. McLean, asking to be paid through the summer until the fall, and stating that she had been “unjustly dealt with” because her resignation had been accepted from the date of the letter instead of the 30\textsuperscript{th} of September. The Department, not surprisingly, denied her request for payment, stating that: “under the circumstances, it is thought that Miss. Isaacs has nothing to complain of.”\textsuperscript{680} Her request is denied with the directive that she ought to keep quiet “given the circumstances”, and Mary Isaac is once again positioned within European codes of what is deemed acceptable and proper in terms of ‘white femininity’.

Neither the Department, nor the religious authorities, nor the band council seem to be concerned with the question of her being able to financially support herself through the summer months. They are effectively putting her in a precarious financial position. Without a salary for the summer months, she would be financially dependent on others who may not have wished or been capable of supporting her or on whom she may not have wished to be dependent. Was she seen by some as being too ambitious? Was there an increasing expectation that Mi’gmaq women at Restigouche go into domestic service? Mary Isaac packed up, headed south to Elsipogtog (Big Cove), where she (and her siblings after her) continued to teach at Indian Day Schools outside of

\textsuperscript{679} Mary Isaac’s resignation letter, April 28, 1903. (C-8182; RG 10, Volume 6100, file 326-1. Part 1, LAC, Ottawa.)

\textsuperscript{680} Letter from J.D. McLean to J Pitre, Indian Agent, 16 June 1903. (C-8182; RG 10., Volume 6100, file 326-1. Part LAC, Ottawa).
Restigouche, in the province of New Brunswick. After Mary Isaac’s resignation, the vacancy was soon filled by Sisters of the Holy Rosary.

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Their arrival (Sisters of the Holy Rosary) – Three Sisters from the Holy Rosary: Soeur Marie de Saint-Philippe de Néri (Antoinette Bélanger), Soeur Marie de Lourdes (Eugénie Rioux) and Soeur Marie de Saint-Germaine (Marie –Laure Deschênes) were invited by the Capuchin fathers to teach Mi’gmaq students and to clean Saint-Anne’s Church at Restigouche.681 The Sisters arrived ready to teach, ready for their ‘humble and hidden task’, ready as missionaries: they arrived in Restigouche on August 26, 1903. For the next seven decades, other women from the Holy Rosary followed, chronicled, modified, and perfected, the imprint of their religious footsteps.682 When the nuns arrived, they said they were greeted by songs sung by (Sagamaw) Pollycarp Martin. Soon after, they met with Mi’gmaq women, with mothers and their babies; and in letters I read written by those first nuns they wrote about the gifts they gave to the women, rosaries, and some candies.

Their Departure – The Sisters of the Holy Rosary left after the school and the Convent were “vandalized” and “destroyed by fire” on September 22, 1971. They never returned. As Kenny Mitchell, former student at the Restigouche Schools, said: “When they left, I think that if they did good, they would have come back. But they never did good.” The Nuns didn’t just swoop in, and they certainly didn’t fly out of the community. Unlike Mary Isaac, they were here, in Listuguj, teaching, living, directing, administering, and recording for seven decades.

681 Letter from Jeanne Desjardins, r.s.r. (Saint Rosaire) to Frere Albert Landry, Fraternité des Capcines. 24 April 1989. (308.720. C.1.50, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski).

682 “Ristigouche Histoires,” 308.720.c.1, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.
[A Passageway between the Convent and Indian Day School]

During the construction, in 1937, of what some former students refer to as the ‘old’ school, the Sisters requested a passageway between the Teachers’ Residence and the new school building. About four feet wide and fifteen feet long, the “narrow passage” would be used by the members of the staff.  

Was the request for the passageway made to ease their travel across such a short space? Were the sisters bothered by the wind and the snow when going from their residence to the school? It seems important to recall the distance that Mi’gmaq children were expected to travel to attend school, and the lack of accommodation or flexibility for their ease, let alone comfort.

EXCERPTS

– Miss. Mary Isaac  
   having handed in her resignation  
   as teacher of the Restigouche School  
   we have thought  
   of replacing her  
   with a Sister  
   of the Holy Rosary.

We have come to this resolution on account of the position that a young girl would occupy alone among these Indians  
   morality would certainly suffer by it and  
   most disastrous results would follow

A nun makes an impression  
   by her costume


684 In Excerpts I have patched together ‘found language’ or quotations from the archives to generate a new text. I wanted to create a narrative bridge between the two ‘worlds’, that of the archives and that of oral recollections. I also hoped to show trans-systemic knowledge systems at work, at play, in the narrative.
by her devotion
by her abnegation

– It would hardly be proper
to ask a teacher
to lodge with the Indians …
The Reverend Fathers have just told me
that they are going to erect a dwelling
near the school-house
because they do not wish to be without these good sisters

Sister Marie du St. Rosaire
has been chosen
as the future teacher.
This is no doubt a very good appointment
these good Sisters
obtain great success
wherever they teach
especially among
our Indians.
They will finish
I hope
by making them
more
moral.

– Your Petitioners
have lived
on the Indian Reserve
for many years
and are desirous of there remaining
without
their Reserve being invaded
by white people
any more
than is absolutely
necessary
for our interest
and benefit

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For years past our school has been taught
to our satisfaction
by Mary Isaac

We humbly
request
that you will be pleased
to prevent
the introduction
of the nuns
into
our Reserve.

The Department fails
to see
how the appointment of a white teacher can mean
the gradual
obliteration
of your tribe.

Sir,
You authorized me to employ
Two hours week in teaching
the Micmac girls
of the Restigouche School
Sewing
Knitting and
Household work.
I am pleased to report
That the trial has met with
Every success.
My pupils
have taken the work
at heart
and they are improving
rapidly.

687 Petition to the Honorable Clifford Sifton, Minister of Interior, from “Indians of the Indian Reserve of St. Anne de Restigouche” Isaac Isaac, Chief and Nicholas Jerome, Councillor along with undersigned band members. Dated 20th July 1903 (C-8182, RG 10, Vol. 6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).


689 Copy of letter sent to the Department of Indian Affairs from Sister Mary of the Holy Rosary. September 14, 1904. (Chronique Scholaire _Ristigouche, No.14. Sisters of the Holy Rosary, Rimouski.)
In a word, although the task be hidden and humble, and the ground wherein we work very hard to till, the remarkable results already obtained give us courage to keep on devoting our whole selves to those Indians who civilization will, at least, render them peaceful and submitted to those who rule over them.

That is why we are firmly intent to pursue our endeavors, sure that steady persistence reaches the goal.  

LIVING MEMORY

— I remember in the month of May, it was the month of Mary.

We said prayers. They would take us outside the classroom and we would line up in rows.

Standing out there, you can’t move, you have to stand like little soldiers. I stood so still for these prayers that a bird sat on my head. Everybody looked. I opened my eyes and I said, “there’s a bird on my head!”

I didn’t move. He sat there for a little bit, and then I went like this [brushing top of head] and it flew away.

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690 Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Copy of Annual Report prepared by the Sisters sent to Department of Indian Affairs. February 27, [1907], [Years: 1907-1936] (308.730.II, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski)
Everybody laughed.

But, again, it was during one of those times –
getting in rows
outside
to pray.

Mary Ann Metallic

CHAPTER SEVEN – STORYING WITH FORMER STUDENTS

7.1) Residential School Comparisons: “What I came to understand was that it wasn’t my fault”

Class of 1910: Gaganigtog Tetli Ginamatimgel (Listogtjg Ecole, Indian School Children). In this school photo, children are positioned in rows, with boys on the left and girls on the right. Have the children been posed in this gender-distinguishing way, with the boys’ arms crossed and the
girls’ hands neatly folded in front? Or might the cross arms of the boys be read as a posture expressing defiance?  
(Fig. 18: “Ristigouche, School Children, 1910”)⁶⁹¹

The picture, taken in 1910, was more than likely taken at the large celebration held in Listuguj on the “third centennial anniversary of the conversion of the Micmac tribe to the Roman Catholic faith,” as observed by teacher Sister Mary of the Holy Rosary. Restigouche, a “metropolis reserve” was “chosen for the celebration of the festival days.” At this occasion, “chiefs of the tribe”, and “Indians from other reserves held large meetings here,” Sister Mary affirmed in a report, dated February 5, 1911, about the Indian School sent to the Department of Indian Affairs.⁶⁹² The anniversary of the 1610 Concordat between the Mi’gmaq and the Holy See would have been an ‘acceptable’ reason, by settler society, state and church, for such a large gathering amongst leaders, and community members, from Listuguj, and from other Mi’gmaq communities. The photo (and the written description from the nuns that sheds light on the context during which it was likely taken) is a reminder of the continued desire to gather and to celebrate. At the same time, the formal positioning of the children in the photo are a reminder of the restrictive constraints of the Indian Act system, and of the ways that Indian Day Schools also positioned children into, assimilatory, settler patterning.

In Listuguj, there are ways of building knowledge. When gathering stories for this project, I wanted to hear about the school. What did it look like? What was taught? Ask a question, write down the answer. Yet, what if stories, knowledge, are built from relations, which emerge and


⁶⁹² Observations about gathering in Restigouche found in “Report of the Restigouche Indian School” by Sister Mary of the Holy Rosary sent to Department of Indian Affairs. February 5, 1911. (308.750.c.12-10, Holy Rosary, Rimouski).
evolve over time? I am trained to take notes, develop timelines, and move in a linear direction. I am less familiar, have less training, in oral ways of consensus building, hearing differences and nuance, and sharing these understandings, on the page.

In the reminiscing about day schooling, former students reckoned with dominant imaginings about residential schools. Some former students spoke, sometimes in a collective positioning, about the ‘lack of acknowledgment’ in public memory about day schooling. For some, it is as though they suffer again from having to see their experiences go unacknowledged.

It had an effect on us because we said, “they may have not have been sent away, but we suffered the same thing.” And we weren’t acknowledged. We weren’t acknowledged of what we went through, the government has not acknowledged Indian Day Schools, they only apologized to the residential schools. And, they said that ‘You guys went home with Indian Day School.’ I know it’s hard for them, too, not going home, but the thing is we went through the same thing, and we were living in fear, fear was instilled. The physical abuse I mean it still went on. The physical, the mental, the verbal, and stuff like that. Like I said, it’s sad to say but I was happy when the school burnt down. There was a lot of bad memories there I don’t know if it was because of the way they did when they came here like authoritative, they’re very authoratizing. They’re in control now, you’re not. You do as I say and to the point of no understanding. Blanche Martin

There is a sense, from the recollections shared, that the dominant settler public imagining does not reflect the experiences of former students who ‘got to go home at night’. That, for some participants, their experience of living with lifelong negativity and fear is not enough or is not comprehensible to then Canadian settler public as ‘harm’. The less overt “slow violence”693

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693 The concept “slow violence” comes from Rob Nixon who uses this concept, in an environmental context, to discuss violence (experienced by people who are poor, disempowered) that takes place “gradually and often invisibly” (i.e., climate change, deforestation, aftermath of wars) versus “sensational, spectacle-driven messaging” that oftentimes underpins dominant forms of public activism and environmental writing. (Nixon, Slow Violence, 2011).
described by participants does not fit with the public narrative genre of what Jennifer Henderson has termed “Residential School Gothic,” which seems to require certain events and scenarios to fit into a particular (overtly violent) scheme, inherited from the Gothic tradition in Western literature.

[Schooling] does [impact me] in a lot of ways. It amazes me, a lot of my mentality is always negative. My age, and a lot of our people are negative. They wouldn’t talk all day with being positive, there has to be some negative in there. They don’t mean it, but it’s in us because of that schooling that we went to. … We don’t look for positive, we see negative and that’s how we were taught with them. If you were good you are going to heaven. But they taught us all the time with the negative stuff, don’t do this, don’t do that. … certain things they teach you and that’s not normal that stuff they were teaching me. But, at the time, everyone thinks ‘they’re coming from heaven’. The priest could molest all the Reserve and they wouldn’t say two words about it. Or just talk to another person of another religion, you were going to get it …Everything that happened to us, the same thing [as residential schools], except we didn’t get raped. That is the only thing. When those other Indian boys and girls got raped, but us that didn’t happen that is the only thing that is different. And they got killed. I had to make sure that I was going to be somebody. Because when I went to school, I was nobody, they taught me to be nobody. I was going to hell, I was bad, I was ignorant, I was bold. After church, they called me ‘moody savage.’ I hit them with a fucking rock. Kenny Mitchell

Kenny’s comment that the “only thing” – the only difference – is that residential school students were raped and killed, is in no way meant to diminish the horror of those patterns at residential school. He evokes those horrific things to underline the continuity of brutality between day and residential schools whilst acknowledging what was different about his experience. The recent public awareness about residential schools is an opportunity to expose what was harmful about his experience of day schooling even as the dominant narrative’s focus on residential schools also marginalizes his experience as ‘lesser than’. The dominant narrative is both an opportunity and a constraint.
In their recollections, some former students spoke about the painfulness of disagreements about one experience being ‘worse’ than the other even though, fundamentally, Day and Residential Schools were part of the same Department of Indian Affairs-funded system.

Yes, the Indian Day School should be remembered. It makes me sad thinking about it now. We never talked about it [residential school]. Even when we heard about residential school, they (survivors) would get mad and say, ‘You didn’t have it bad’. But it was the same thing. I realize, this was real. This really happened to us. Former student of the Indian Day School.

Some of the former day school students spoke about their understanding and awareness of residential schooling emerging, slowly, in adulthood. Some who attended the day school and had a parent who attended the residential school at Shubenacadie, identified with both the residential school experience (as a descendant and survivor of that system), and also as former day school students. Some identified across the difference between ‘residential’ and ‘day’ school, focusing instead on resistance and strength: despite the brutality of both systems, “we [as Mi’gmaq] continue to speak our language”. The schools did not entirely displace and replace Mi’gmaq knowledges, nor did the schools uproot Mi’gmaq from their ancestral territory.

My first day of [Day] school, mom brought me, walked me up to the school and walked across the street, but stopped there, she said, ‘see that black woman, dressed in black over there?’ She said, ‘You go talk to her and she will tell you what to do next, ‘ta’n telimultew ta’n tela’tigetes’. So, I went about halfway, and I turn around, and mom was already halfway across the road heading back home. … I only thought about it years later, especially when the Residential School became such a big subject with her. Nora Bernard, who was a friend of hers, they went to school, residential school, together. … And, then I realized ‘wow’ it took a lot of courage for her to come over, bring me that far. …Yeah, the impact of that only struck me years later. …In 1999, coming in to 2000, the subject of the Residential School tapes came up and we were approached. ‘Joe, there are tapes of your mother’s interview that she had said, specifically, was not to let us kids see them while she was alive.’ That is what I understand, that is what I was told. After she passed, they would, they could be made available to us. … I started realizing what could have gone on. Starting to put a lot of little things mom said together, and you have time to reflect and that’s what I had done. And, then the Residential School subject started getting big for me. But it was more about my mother, not for myself. Then, I started thinking, ‘you know what, I am a survivor of Residential Schools, too’. For her that was the way that you teach (belts, switches) that was the way you had to treat your
I am a survivor of Residential Schools … I got to thinking of myself as a Survivor of Residential School as well because we went through as much hell, except for the other things. But the autocratic way of doing things: ‘do it my way, or this is what you are going to get’. It’s not funny, but that’s the way it was. I grew up with it. Yeah, the nuns were to be obeyed. *Joe Wilmot*

Many spoke about the difference being ‘not having to go away’ and ‘we got to go home at night’. The phrase ‘we got to go home at night’ emphasizes the importance and value of home, of family; at the same time, phrase indicates a sense of ambivalence and, to some extent, a distancing from dominant imaginings of the deep violence and violations that happened at the residential schools, and which have become such a central part of the dominant public narrative about the schools. Some former students have come to interpret their own experience ‘in relation to’, yet different from, residential schools.

They [IRS and Day School] are two totally different things. Here, even if the parents were poor, you always have grandparents to take care of you. The families watched over you, so you weren’t alone, you’re not isolated. Here, everyone knows you. I remember going potato picking with [my sister] and going shopping! We’d get shirts and pants for school. *Joe Noel Wysote*

There’s a lot of stuff that went on in residential schools, you know, the school, the kids are sent over. That’s different than what we had here because we go home every night. See, the other ones stayed there, and what happens I don’t know what’s going on really, you hear a lot of things, a lot of stories. But over here you never hear about that. But we go home after school, four o’clock we’re home, and we’re there at eight o’clock in the morning and stay there all day. … . Residential schools are different, and an Indian day school is different. They stayed there, they eat there, they board there, they sleep there. *Gordon Isaac, Sr.*

Because the Indian Day School was in the community, students retained a sense of ‘home’; at the same time, there was not a sense of complete belonging, at least at school, or ‘tle’iawi schooligtug’.

So, my perception of residential school versus Indian Day School is that I didn’t have to go away. The only thing that occurred to me was ‘I wouldn’t be home’. Home is very important, you know, our perception of home, and our perception of belonging. This is one of the things,
even in our language, tle’iawi, when you are talking about ‘where you are from’, you are actually saying ‘this is where I belong’. This is where I belong. So, our perception of home, how you express ideas and how you feel about things, there is a big connection. … in Mi’gmaw you are saying that, and I think you feel it, you feel that you belong. So, to me, being taken away from where I belong would have been mortifying, not in any way something that I would have wanted. …. But I wouldn’t say tle’iawi schooligtug. No, the sense of belonging with the school was not there. Probably when I was very young, I don’t know. It was our school, we went to it, people I knew went there, it was a common experience, it was common to my peers, but I didn’t feel that I belong there. All the school stuff wasn’t terrible, some of it was fun. Catechism was fun. Diane Mitchell

In conversations and recollecting, participants spoke how the effects of the day school were not confined to the school; the effects rippled and infiltrated family and intergenerational relationships. Many of the practices that we hear about from residential school (the scrubbing and cleaning of bodies, for example) communicated dirtiness, and instilled a sense of racialized shame, at day school as well.

Yeah, yeah. It had an impact because when we started hearing more about residential schooling, it hasn’t been that long, maybe ten or twelve years, that we really started to understand what the residential school was all about. And we didn’t even think that there were any people from here that attended the residential school. Then, we started to find out that, yes, there were. And we can see the impact that it had on the family because it did have an impact depending on whether or not you were the good girl or the bad girl. … In my work [as Director of Education] … I had one parent that said ‘I wasn’t impacted at all. I was a good girl. As long as you did what you were told,’ she said, ‘you had no problems’. And, she said, ‘I’m not dark, so that helped too’. But you could see in how she raised her kids, it reminded me of my mother trying to make sure that we did everything to not get into trouble. We always felt that the Indian Day School did have an impact. Gail Metallic

I do remember everybody being corrected. Just simple things …At Grade 2, you don’t want to know that your mother is wrong. Kids that came in hungry, or kids that came in with clothes that weren’t so clean, they were scrubbed down. They were made to feel less. And I’m not surprised that a lot of kids didn’t stay in school. How can you maintain that relationship between parent and child when someone is implying, and actually saying, that they are wrong? That you are not caring for them well, what is wrong with your mother? Why are you so dirty? I remember hiding my nails. We were always clean, but I mean you get some dirt on them, and you would hide yourself and sit like this (puts her hands behind her), you know. It was all – yeah –(silence). Gail Metallic
Some participants spoke about ‘Shubie’ being invoked as a type of ‘bogeyman/threat’. Some spoke about classmates who ‘just disappeared,’ having been sent away. These memories de/familiarize dominant imaginings in which residential schools are a stable thing. For some former Day School students, Shubie is a shadow, a threat; the Day School on reserve operated in relation to it as an alternative, a potential punishment. The potential punishment of being taken away was also twinned with the imposed expressions of gratitude on both parents and students to their benefactor/father (the Department of Indian Affairs) and to their mother/teacher (the Sisters of the Holy Rosary) for ‘what they have’. Don’t complain, be grateful, and: school could be worse. For some participants, unsettling questions remain, all these years later, about why children were sent away, why residential schools were built, in the first place.

I certainly always knew about Shubie because that was a boogeyman word, here. Because some kids, here, did end up going to Shubie. It was a threat, a boogeyman threat, ‘If you’re not good, you’re being sent to Shubie’. Adults would say that to kids. Presumably not every child heard that. It was a threat, as far as I knew. … Amongst ourselves we knew that was a scary place. I didn’t even know what it was, I didn’t know what Shubie was. It was a known thing, that it was not good, children just went away, and they went to Shubie, and it was not good. I don’t remember any specifics about it. But it was just that we knew it was a bad thing. I don’t know how we perceived it. Anyway. Residential schools. I didn’t know about residential schools. I couldn’t have told you that Shubie was a residential school because I didn’t have the vocabulary. Diane Mitchell

Why were some kids sent to residential school? How did the nuns pick them? They could be in your class and the next year they just disappeared. Roger Metallic

I remember when they took the kids out from the community. I was playing with a few of my friends and when I turned around two men were chasing us and they grabbed at the young fellow and I seen him forty years later. Bobbi Dedam. And I told him about it when I first met him. And, he said ‘Kenny, you are the last guy that I seen.’ And it gets me. Boy, I had a hard time to sleep, I thought ‘they’re going to catch me at school or around the house.’ I kept really quiet after. Stayed away from them places because they were grabbing us like that, without parents knowing. They’d just take you, move you. Parents don’t even know. If you say something ‘Oh, we’ll send the cops over’. And, they’d get scared, they don’t say nothing. They’d threaten them all the time. Threaten our parents, our families, with cops. Kenny Mitchell
The existence of the one residential school in the Maritimes had an effect well beyond its walls. Day School and Residential School were thus part of one regime of fear and discipline, ensuring attendance at day school and participation of parents in seeing that children adhered to the day school schedule.

Seeing my brothers being abused by them and that was another thing. Because you know how boys will be, giggling and stuff, you know you see your brother going home crying, ears all bloody, and red on one side, they ripped his ear. Seeing that and coming back to school the next day because I know my mother telling me I have to go back, ‘go back to school, because they’ll pick you up.’ So, it’s like you don’t realize it, but now you know those were threats. Go back to school or they’ll pick you up. They instilled a lot of fear on you. Going from home to school there was a mentality of fear – because you don’t know what was going to happen. [The Liaison Officer, a Mi’gmaq person] they would come in your house, come right in, they say ‘Oh where’s Blanche? Blanche, you gotta dress up and come to school with me’ and you had no choice because your mother will tell you, ‘If you don’t go to school they’ll come pick you up and if you don’t they’ll send you to Shubie’ Blanche Martin

Gaspé (Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec)
October 2018

In the archival records, May and September 1944, there are visible strands in the text expressing concern about “lack of parental interest” and about student absenteeism. The networks of power are visible in the disciplining of the Indian Agent, and in the reproachful tone against the parents (and their lack of “appreciation” for the education facilities provided). The disciplining and the reproach work to insulate, distance, and protect Indian Affairs from allegations of wrongdoing, and questioning why there
are such “unacceptable rates” of absenteeism, even amongst children as young as 8 or 9 years of age. (Fig. 19: Letter from Indian Affairs to Indian Agent, Dr. A. Richard, May 15, 1944) 694

In its letter to Indian Agent, Dr. A. Richard, dated May 15, 1944, Indian Affairs writes that the attendance at the Indian Day School “cannot be considered satisfactory”; that it is “very discouraging to see the Indians taking such little interest in the education of their children”. And that having been provided with “the best possible facilities at the Restigouche School and the least the Indians can do is show their appreciation by having their children attend school regularly”. The “networks of power,” as Martha Walls terms them, are visible. Disciplining is apparent in the subsequent request from Ottawa to know “what action” the Indian Agent and the Sisters are taking to “ensure a larger and more regular attendance.”

Colonial logic surfaces. (I continue to dig.)

A Band Council resolution was sent from Restigouche to Ottawa in the fall of 1944 about the “non-motivated regular absentees at the Restigouche Indian Day School,” based on an Article in the Indian Act imposing “a fine to the parents of the non-motivated absent school pupils of $2.00 or fourteen days of jail”. School is obligatory, the resolution affirms, for children between the ages of 6 to 15 years of age. With a “devoted constable” in the community, there is no reason why the pupils should be excluded from the law. 695 Yet, whose position does this resolution represent? The Mi’gmaq community of Restigouche, the Indian Agent, or the Sisters? It should


be recalled, too, that just over ten years prior, in 1933, the federal government, through the Indian Act, legally appointed RCMP officers as “truant officers” to enforce attendance and to “return truant children to residential school.”\(^\text{696}\) Similarly, in Restigouche, coercive measures are used to ensure children’s attendance at the Day School, and parents of “non motivated” children can be fined. What can be inferred from this resolution is the expectation by settler society that Indigenous elected leadership is expected to uphold, promote, and adopt “dominant middle class [white] and pro-capitalist values.”\(^\text{697}\) Indigenous resistances (visible through actions such as attendance issues, non-compliant and unappreciative parents) are depicted as a threat to the Canadian society and the federal government’s ‘one-size-fits-all’ settler fabric.\(^\text{698}\) Former students who attended the Indian Day School in the 1950s and 60s, expose how the school used threats, punishment, and disciplining not only of children while at the school but of their parents (of the family system), and – as the band council resolution shows – the impact of this culture of threats extended out into the governance of the community. There is a risk, however, of erasing the Band Council’s capacity to act as something other than puppets to the colonial governance system at play in the community. In the present moment, how do ‘we’ (settler colonial people) interpret these (apparently) anti-Indigenous actions? For instance, having Mary Isaac fired or enforcing attendance at the Day School. Are these actions to be read as solely as (internalized) cognitive imperialism? Threats and coercive measures ripple out and extend into the community with resolutions passed by the Band Council, forwarded to


\(^{697}\) Bohaker and Iacovetta. “Making Aboriginal People ‘Immigrants Too,’” 430.

\(^{698}\) Ibid, 430.
Ottawa, for ‘final approbation,’ and threatening fines and jail time to parents of ‘absentee’ children. The Indian Agent and the Band Council ‘working together’ to achieve this common assimilatory objective. Coercive colonial disciplinary techniques are absorbed by the Band Council, functioning as a form of biopower. Earlier desires (petitions expressing care and concern for the wellbeing of children) seem diminished in this post-war boom of building a particular type of Canada. Subjects can shift in our analysis from being privileged (historically marginalized) knowers to being stigmatized (historically powerful or treacherous) knowers.

Paying attention to ‘the community’, as Starblanket reminds us, means recognizing that community is not a homogeneous entity; there are differences and incoherence around expressions of agency and resistance. The internal politics and instances of lateral violence and hierarchical formations are an important, complicated, and oftentimes untold part of the story.

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For some former students of the Indian Day/Joint School, the dominant narrative about residential schooling has “come as a relief”, as expressed by one former student, Sandra Germain. Her recollections capture the way that some former students related to the residential school experiences quite directly and did not feel excluded from dominant IRS imagining.

On a scale of 1 to 10, I am probably at a ten in terms of having been influenced by the residential school stories, the TRC, the recommendations that came out of that, but more the stories. And I will give you an example of how that helped me cope with that, as a Mi’gmaq woman, the more I heard about what happened in the IR schools the more I realized what kind of an influence the church had on my mother, my grand-parents, my great-grand parents. … And what I came to understand was that it wasn’t my fault. It wasn’t my mother’s fault; it wasn’t my grandmother’s fault. What happens is that you get this real sense of relief! We can name it. And the name of it was residential schools, the name of it was Catholicism. The names were the priests and nuns and people that had such an influence over our lives. And it wasn’t us. It takes away that we are 'less than', or that feeling that 'why was my mother the way she was? Why was my grandmother the way she was? Why weren't they affectionate?
Why did they, why were they so hard on themselves?’ I can go on and to say, ‘why was there so much alcoholism in our families’? and now I can name it. It helps me, and it helps me to see them in a different light. *Sandra Germain*

The reckoning with dominant imaginings about IRS shows the specificity of learning about residential schooling through the lens of having experienced Indian day schooling. Here is someone who assumes the continuity between residential school and the day school before becoming familiar with the dominant imagining of residential school.

When I did begin to learn about what residential schools were, it was more ‘what is a residential school?’ I had to actually ask people, because people were referring to this horrible thing called a residential school. And, then I started asking and finding out that kids were taken away when they were really young. The abuse was assumed, but to me I thought of that in terms of verbal abuse or being punished for misbehaving. I didn’t think of it in terms of sexual abuse or killing people, which is what happened.

I didn’t think of it in those extreme terms. I thought of it in terms that I was familiar with, which is when we were at school people would get strapped, people would get sitting in a corner, I don’t know if they ever did that.

People would get punished for their behavior, that’s how I thought of it, which is not pleasant. It’s just that it was normalized so I couldn’t have an opinion to say, ‘that was wrong’. Because I was socialized to see that as normal. ….. my perception of right and wrong has changed. As a child, certain things were wrong and you deserved to be punished, that’s why it happened, as far as I knew. Nobody ever lifted the curtain to say, ‘why did they do this kind of stuff’.

*Diane Mitchell*

In the context of public reckoning with residential schools, some participants spoke about not wanting to form an association between residential school and day school experiences. For some this seemed to be about respecting, and not usurping or taking on, the experiences of former residential school students. Perhaps some students did not want to form an association that would open unwanted memories. Some participants spoke about dominant imaginings emphasizing harms and narratives of victimhood, which do not necessarily or readily show how former students have not only survived but thrived despite these experiences. At the same time, some
spoke about the need to remember this difficult history, on an individual and familial level, and also collectively, in the community and in settler society as part of public memory. Others spoke about blocked memories, and the deliberateness of *not* remembering:

I remember being dragged into school. I didn’t want to go. I didn’t understand English, and I didn’t want to listen. I hated school and I got low grades. I don’t remember a lot. I don’t remember much about school. I have a lot of blocked memories. This is our history: the boys got a lot of beatings, with the strap, with the clapper. We have to put it out of our minds. I don’t want to remember. We spent six hours there, and then we went home. I’ve lived a good life. All of my family (siblings) have made something of ourselves! Three of us are teachers, we’re all workers. *Former student of the Indian Day School.*

This interview took place in the fall. *Words came out quickly in short quick sentences.* For the most part, we spoke about memories and recollections beyond school once he had left the Indian Day School. *I sat at the kitchen table. We drank tea, and still: I took notes.* There are unsettling ethical questions. If forgetting is a strategic necessity: he clearly stated he doesn’t want to remember, how do we (researchers) ethically continue to produce knowledge for and with him, on the assumption that remembering will be personally and collectively preferable? Is the urge to document and analyze perpetuating colonialism while critiquing it?

Other recollections speak to the intertwining of control and care, harm, and help. Some recalled instances of kindness on the micro-scale, which operated (*like ribbons*) within the macro-colonial institutions, with potential to both sustain and subvert them. One person recalled a total absence of memories from her first few years, and throughout, there was “one nun” – who demonstrated kindness and love, children took turns “holding her hand” walking in the yard with her:

I don’t remember anything about the first few years of school. I think that the absence of memories is due to the fact that I didn’t speak any English when starting school. I remember
being very quiet and not talking at school until about Grade 4. … Maybe it was the association with the language because my experience was (silence). I don’t remember anything once I passed that door. My earliest memory of school is my cousin Vivianne picking me up and leaving me in the classroom: the doors closing behind me and seeing a black nun, a nun dressed all in black … We would go downstairs. We must have been on the basement floor. She opened the door and the nun opened it. And, let go of my hand and closed the door. And I stood there. I didn’t understand English. I just looked around. But, Mother Saint John, yes, she was nice. No reflections on anything else, or anyone else. But, at recess time she used to like holding children’s hands and walking them up and down. So, we would take turns holding her hand and walking up and down the yard, here. I remember Joyce and I speaking the language in the yard. But I don’t remember in the classroom. Nothing. Mary Ann Metallic

I mean, you've really got to sit – you've really got to sit down to remember all of it, like, if you've blocked so much … Because right now I'm trying to remember, I suppose, and I was there for years and years. When you really think about it – and all of it you can't remember, because you tried to block it out as fast as you can, right; that’s just an everyday activity, okay. I --- that they must have - I mean, I was in the principal’s office quite a few times and I didn’t do anything that wrong, that bad, for me to be in there. When you think about it, it was every day, every day, just, you know, mentally and you name it, and that’s what they were doing. There must have been a reason why, why it’s just the natives. I suppose back them, the natives had a hard time back then, hey, I mean, it’s not like now, you know what I mean? There weren't rights back then, there was nothing, it was just ---kind of blocked. Because, like, now, the more you talk, the more it comes out, like, yeah, this is what happened. There’s so much you've blocked of it. A lot of it I blocked, you know. I don’t even remember, grade one, two, three, four. Yeah, but you see, like we said, we all probably blocked it. But everybody out here is the same, when they did that to us, the same thing, as like, on a daily basis. Yeah, because I blocked it all. That’s the only way I can explain it. … You've got to march, like, straight, do, like, the military. It’s got to be a straight line and everything. That’s why it must be a lot blocked – people blocking. I was, I don’t remember, you know. I was there a long time, and I still don’t have the – well, I remember the rough parts, hey. Sonny Wysote

After Grade 2 my memories weren’t very good. I remember some things that happened to classmates. I will remember more as time goes. But do I want to? I don’t know. I repressed; I think. Repressed memories. I remember some things. I remember the strap. You know, it impacts on you whether or not you received it or they did. Everybody brings certain memories with them, and they leave some behind. I think I left a lot behind. Gail Metallic

There is a need to remember ‘why’ Indigenous languages were forbidden, ‘why’ the schools were put in place as part of the whole system of assimilation and genocide. While some former
students spoke about the schools being a negative place without a lot of learning, others spoke about wanting a collective memory of the injustice, with the emphasis on the collective part.

I don’t regret what my parents were, but the school, I was thinking, it could’ve been better you know for us, but it’s because of the language barrier, and sometimes you just have to let it go and stop thinking about it, and that’s why I never allowed my kids to speak in Mi’gmaw. I think for our own history we should remember it - what happened to the kids. Why, why it was happening to them and why they sent them there because it was just control and for them to try to kill our spirit and have us become different people and stuff like that. Blanche Metallic

Teachers’ Assessments

When I sat with the two former sisters, who taught at Restigouche Day School, I asked: “Do you think that these schools should be remembered? What do we want to remember?” One former teacher replied succinctly. She said: “I don’t see any objection [to teaching about the schools]. They were there. They lasted from such a year to such a year. And how did they disappear.” I am struck by the Sister’s brevity, by the choice of her words. That this difficult history can be bookmarked (contained and constrained) between dates marking their start, and their end point. “That they were there” reads (or sounds) like an epigraph on a building. Except, of course, the buildings are no longer there: they (like the nuns, like this history) were made to “disappear”.

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As wards of the state, Mi’gmaq children’s future was shaped by the remarks of Indian Agents, of principals and of teachers. (Fig. 20: Request for Tuition Grant forms.) Their access to schooling beyond the day school was dependent on the (self-proclaimed) benevolence of Indian Affairs. Indigenous children’s place in society was shaped, in part, by those whose interest in their well-being depended on their malleability to the ‘whitening’ of their stubborn selves; or, whose peaceful and industrious character, their family upbringing, already fit a particular mold already prepared by (white) settler society.

Throughout Indian Affairs records (1940s-1960s, notably) there are requests for “tuition grants” from teachers, along with recommendations about which students to “send out” for education beyond Grade 7 and Grade 8, the grade levels at which the Restigouche Indian Day School ended, and the transition point when some Indigenous students could enter ‘white’ institutions. The Tuition Grant Application form included the name of the proposed institution; the reasons for the request; and the amount of funding being requested. These requests did not come from the parents of the students, but rather from the Indian Agent, the School Teachers (Sisters of the Holy Rosary), and, on occasion, from priests. There is no archival trace of consultation with

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699 Letter from Indian Agent, E. Arsenault to Indian Affairs Branch, August 1947. Application for Tuition Grant (C-8798, RG10_Vol.6485, file 42026-3, part 2_, LAC, Ottawa).
parents on these matters.

In turn, the Department required the Agent to fill out a registration form detailing information about the name of the applicant, course, yearly cost of tuition. On the form, there was also space for comments from the principal (or teacher) and the Indian Agent about the character, general fitness, and academic capability of the student in question. In one such application, for a young man aged 16, the remark from the principal notes that: “When the boy left this school, he was stubborn but has changed in contact with white pupils and obtained his promotion” [passed Grade 9 to Grade 10]. On an application form for another student, a thirteen-year-old boy, the principal notes that the boy “has a good peaceful character, very intelligent”, and the Agent adds that he is an “industrious type, good family upbringing supervision, recommend for this course.”

Indian Day Schools, as observed earlier by former student Diane Mitchell, “took up space” in the community. Administrators and teachers at Day Schools – priests, teachers (nuns), Indian Agents, School Inspectors, and Indian Affairs agents in Ottawa – labeled children, and their families, and as Diane Mitchell reminds us: ‘they made decisions in our lives that they had no place making decisions about.’

Starting to unsettle

Ontario, 1996

I remember becoming aware of residential schools while an undergraduate at university. I stood outside of Wenjack Theatre, a lecture hall at Trent University in Peterborough, Ontario. I stood waiting for the lecture to end, for mine to begin. Beside the double doors, I noticed a plaque. I
read the engraved story, about a young boy who left his school, and who had died (in 1963, at the age of nine) while trying to make it home, to his family, in Ogoki Post. His death, I thought then, was the central tragedy of this story. I hadn’t realized the broader system into which Chanie Wenjack had been inserted, or that he resisted by running away. I had little understanding of the depth of his desire to leave (Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School, in Kenora) and to make it home.700

At times, during the interviews with former students, I had an unsettling feeling similar to how I felt that day outside of Wenjack Theatre. The questions about dominant imaginings of residential school fell strangely into the conversation because I realized that for participants ‘coming to know’ residential schools did not happen from a distant or removed position, like my own, as a young adult. Coming to know residential schools seemed to be more of an awareness that these schools were something that they, former students at day schools, had always known about. For some, ‘coming to know’ meant recognizing that the day school that they attended in their own home community was both a part, and not part of, ‘that whole system’ of formal colonial assimilatory schooling. It is as though residential schooling has been (sitting) here all along, like a ghost, vacated chairs at the day school; an ever-present threat that stood guard watching, waiting, and threatening.

700 My recollection of this incident is supplemented by recent dominant imaginings notably the [Gord] Downie & Chanie Wenjack ‘legacy spaces’ (downiewenjack.ca). I also turn to Mi’gmaq imaginings, to the 1971 song “Charlie” by Mi’gmaq songwriter Willie Dunn (whose relations are from Listuguj). Dunn stated that “Charlie” is a song that: “is a microcosm of a very large problem, and a symbol of repressive colonialism” (in Carleton’s “Chanie Wenjack and the Histories of Residential Schooling We Remember” 23 Oct.2018. While some Canadians may be familiar with rendering such as Downie’s Secret Path few heard (or, ignored) earlier assertions that called attention to Canada’s “colonial past and present” (Carleton, 2018).
7.2) Languages – Mi’gmaw at home, and English at school

(Fig. 21: “Ristigouche, Groupe d’Indiens avec le Père Pacifique, 1920”)\textsuperscript{701}

**Class of 1920:** Photographs are a reminder of the privilege of being ‘seen’, of being named,
Father Pacifique surrounded by a ‘group of “Indiens”’, the caption from Holy Rosary reads. Yet,
what are the names of these Mi’gmaw students? Who are their relatives? Who are their
descendants? The girls are in the front and this time, the boys are all in the back, like protectors,
in keeping with Mi’gmaw philosophy, or reconfigured into a ‘nuclear patriarchal family’.

\textsuperscript{701} Ristigouche_f5-72, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.
A central feature of the Indian Residential School (IRS) system was the deliberate suppression of Indigenous languages, severing connections with territory and kinship relations was part of ‘how’ languages were suppressed. In the recollections and conversations with former students at the Restigouche Indian Day School many spoke about the lasting impact of schooling on their use of, and relationship with, their own Mi’gmaw language. All the participants shared memories or recollections related to Mi’gmaw. All the participants who took part in this project are fluent speakers having either spoken, or heard, Mi’gmaw all of their lives. And all the participants have memories of the use of the Mi’gmaw language being limited or severely restricted at the school, despite the school being located in their own home community. (Fig. 22: Setaneoei The Micmac Messenger. No. 254 [June] 1908.)^702

In our conversations, some spoke about a lack of memories associated with schooling, which they associated with the imposition of the English language and the sense that “English was a foreign language”. Some participants spoke about the violations of having the Mi’gmaw language forcefully removed from their minds, through their bodies by the nuns with “clappers” and “reprimands”. Some spoke about inter-generational removal of language as a type of ‘brainwashing’. There were rules, everywhere, about language use: Mi’gmaw forbidden at

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school; English forbidden (by parents) at home. Some participants spoke about the difficult decision “not to speak Mi’gmaw to their children” to spare their children from some of the pain and hurt that they themselves had experienced in not knowing English.

In recollections shared about language some participants, who attended the school at Restigouche in the late 1940s through the 1960s, shared memories of children using Mi’gmaw as a source of resistance in the classroom. Somewhat surprisingly, the print archival records, from the early 1900s, also mention that the elected leaders requested English language, as the language of instruction, in the classroom. The mother tongue of the priests and Sisters was usually French, and Mi’gmaw was learned as part of their missionary work in the community. The archival print records trace Mi’gmaq peoples’ assertion of wanting to access English language instruction to be able to access secular subjects – mathematics, reading, writing – and to learn the “language of business” in this region.\(^\text{703}\)

In our conversations, some participants remembered stories that countered dominant imaginings of the IRS as a place where Indigenous languages were completely shut out. There were a few traces in the oral memories from participants who recalled seeing their own grandparents “reading and writing to one another in Mi’gmaw” and during our conversations participants reflected that “they must have learnt that at the school”. There were a few who spoke about Father Pacifique, a priest in Listuguj “who spoke Mi’gmaw”. Father Pacifique, I also learned, from the archival records, promoted the use of Mi’gmaw in a newspaper that circulated in Restigouche and throughout the Maritimes at the turn of the century. In the archival records,

\(^{703}\) Letter sent from Sister to Mother Superior notes that English is the language of business; Resolution sent to Ottawa by Chief Peter Sewell and Thomas Sr., on May 1, 1906, affirms that English language is “sufficient” and there is a request for “more mathematics”. (308.750.c.12-10, Holy Rosary, Rimouski).
there are requests for funding to use the Mi’gmaq newspaper as part of the school curriculum.

*There is more to this story. There is something else still buried that needs to be remembered.*

Father Pacifique introduced a writing system, but the landscape in which he worked was not empty. Mi’gmaq had long developed practices and methods for sharing and building knowledge, symbolic literacy, treaty making protocols, ceremonies, extended kinship governance systems, deliberations, mawiomi’l (gatherings), petroglyphs and hieroglyphic symbolic literacy. As Mi’gmaq poet, Rita Joe, reminds us, from her interpretation of Christien Le Clercq’s *Nouvelle Relation de la Gaspesie* (1691):

“I noticed children
Making marks with charcoal on the ground,”
Said Le Clercq

The understanding came quickly
On leaflets
They called kekin a’mantin kewe’l
Tools for learning.”

... These were the Mi’kmaq hieroglyphics
The written word of the Indian
That the world chooses to deny” 705

In Listuguj, the archival records indicate that Mi’gmaq hieroglyphic literacy was used in the early twentieth century. This symbolic knowledge system was increasingly depicted, by the church, as “primitive”: an archaic reminder of Mi’gmaq past and something that needed to be stamped out. 706 In their analysis of Mi’gmaq symbolic literacy, David Schmidt and Murdena

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704 Battiste. “Micmac literacy and cognitive imperialism.”, 23-44.

705 Joe, “Mi’kmaq Hieroglyphics” 16.

Marshall observe that in the early part of the twentieth century hieroglyphic literacy declined. They attribute the disuse to several factors: “the establishment of reserve schools” where alphabetic English was the “sole medium of instruction” and the “Catholic Church’s policy of teaching native catechumens to read prayers exclusively in English or alphabetic Mi’gmaw” further marginalized hieroglyphics. Tellingly, Schmidt and Marshall contend that Father Pacifique himself “marginalized the hieroglyphs by publishing a series of native-language prayer books and a monthly newspaper in an alphabet of his own design.”  

What this tells us is that formal schooling for Indigenous children registered the targeting and discipling of knowledge systems where some knowledge could thrive or live (alphabetic Mi’gmaw) and other knowledge was allowed to die (such as symbolic forms). Similar to certain populations that are coded as part of the past, so too are aspects of their knowledge systems. Mi’gmaw symbolic literacy (as observed at a School Pageant, in 1960, to “celebrate” the 350-year anniversary Membertou’s “conversion”) are seen as part of the “primitive way of instruction” said to have been replaced, when the first school opened at Restigouche (by Father Dumontier) in 1856.  

I am unsettled (startled) by this suppression. Pacifique’s work in the language, a grammar text and Mi’gmaw place names, is highly regarded in the community, across Mi’gma’gi. The ushering in of alphabetic Mi’gmaw, evolving and changing tools for learning, and Rita Joe’s assertion of Mi’kmaw hieroglyphics “the written word” denied by the (settler) world show nuances, gaps, and alternative understandings in dominant storylines. Looking closely at the shifts, changes, and impositions of writing systems: what can be accessed and by whom, also

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707 Schmidt and Marshall, Mi’kmaq Hieroglyphic Prayers, 15.

shows how Indigenous knowledge systems, symbolic forms of sharing and building knowledges, such as petroglyphs, wampum, adapted and expanded, as hieroglyphic ‘writing’ were attempted to be put to death “with impunity.” State racism not only targeted bodies and populations, but also segregated and separated knowledges, elevating some and diminishing others, as part of that ‘whole system’ of colonial assimilatory schooling.

In the eighteenth century, the suppression and limited access to knowledge systems unfolded differently. In her work, Battiste argues that in the eighteenth-century Father Pierre Antoine Maillard “expanded hieroglyphic literacy and contributed to the transformation of ideographic literacy to roman script,” but not for the use of the Mi’gmaq themselves. Battiste observes that Maillard feared that if Mi’gmaq learned to read and write alphabetic script, they could gain access to “sensitive political and religious” materials. If so, Mi’gmaq could “incite one another”, threatening French interests in the territory at this time of peace and friendship treaty making. Mi’gmaw alphabetic script, in the eighteenth century, was kept for the priests own advancement, and interests, and during this time, Maillard “chose to teach [Mi’gmaq] only the hieroglyphics.”

Naming (or recognizing) state racism is not only about identifying what (and who) is allowed to live and what (and who) is left to die but there is a need to pay attention to why some are allowed to live, why some are made to die, who benefits and who is harmed. There was a flexibility of sorts in the strategies, by settler colonists, used to contain Mi’gmaq

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resistances. Sometimes, the strategy is to suppress symbolic literacy (as Pacifique did), sometimes, as shown here, it is to encourage their use.

**Rimouski (November 2018)**
Sisters of the Holy Rosary (Mother House)

and

**Moncton (Fall, 2018)**
Université de Moncton, Centre d’études acadiennes anseleme-Chiasson

By the early 1900s, the need for missionaries to learn Indigenous languages as part of the colonial project had, for the most part, diminished. Instead, as historians such as John Milloy point out, for Indigenous Peoples the road to ‘civilization’ included assimilation into English or French languages, and restrictions, including punishment, for speaking their own Indigenous languages.

(Fig. 23: The “Mesgig Nagoeg” Program for the annual celebrations held in honour of Father Pacifique, 1906. The celebration involves students from both schools.)

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713 Of interest is that R. Isaac and Alma Isaac are listed in the program. These students could be Mary Isaac’s younger sisters, Alma, born in 1895 and Rebecca, born in 1899, who, as Walls notes, went on to teach at day schools in New Brunswick. The Isaac sisters were requested to teach at day schools in part because of their language capacity. Their language capacity would have been learned at home; and, as the archival records show, it was also ‘normalized’ to include Mi’gmał, along with English and French, at this day school, in the early 1900s. That some students who attended the Restigouche School (quite possibly Alma Isaac and R. Isaac listed in this program) went on to become teachers who included Mi’gmał in their classroom teaching is critical in terms of understanding the Day School’s complex relation to cultural continuity.
At the Restigouche Indian School, religious indoctrination into the Catholic faith was a central part of the regular school day; however, the language of instruction in the classrooms in Restigouche included Mi’gmaw. Annual celebrations were held at the school, with students from ‘both’ schools (‘Indian’ and ‘white’). For example, in the early 1900s, the annual celebrations were named in Mi’gmaw: “Mesgig Nagoeg”, which means “Big Day”. The name is simple, but the implications are broad. That the event carries a Mi’gmaw name, without a translation, speaks of trans-systemic possibilities, that children (their parents and families) may have had moments of being/learning/working together in those liminal spaces of opportunities as part of Mesgig Nagoeg.

Father Pacifique de Valigny was a Capuchin Missionary at Restigouche from 1894 - 1931.714 Today, he is remembered as the ‘last’ missionary to fluently speak Mi’gmaw. Pacifique’s fluency is interpreted as a sign of Mi’gmaq openness to Catholicism. The relationship with the Catholic church, and with missionaries from the French colonial regime, speaks, for some, of the longstanding acceptance, conversation, or absorption of Mi’gmaq people into Catholicism and the abandonment (or letting go) of Indigenous cultural beliefs, understandings, and knowledge systems. Others consider the acceptance of Catholic faith alongside Mi’gmaq thought systems in an expansive and relational manner, as part of longstanding treaty making signifying nation-to-nation relations. From this position, the Concordat of 1610, the baptism of Membertou, along with many members of his extended family, is less about a conversion into Christianity, and is

714 The Capuchin missionaries were the religious order that served in Listuguj from 1894 until the 1950s. (9_Pere Pacifique de Valigny_9.3-1 to 9.3-14; and 9.4-1 to 9.4-8, Université de Moncton, Moncton). In their records, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary state that his Lordship, Right Reverend A.A. Blais, Bishop of Rimouski confided the mission to the Rev. Capuchin fathers of Ottawa in 1893. (Soeur Marie de Lourdes. “Rapport de la classe des Sauvages” (5 Fev., 1911) (308. 750.c’12. Correspondence), Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski. Other religious orders, including Jesuits and Recollects also spent time in Gespe’gewa’gi, and at Restigouche.
more of an expansion of kinship relations and family systems. From this standpoint, Pacifique’s relationship with Mi’gmaq people is part of this long legacy of interactions, relationship-building, accommodations, and absorptions. In Listuguj, there is a street named in his honour; in the neighbouring community of Point-a-la-Croix, there is an elementary school that carries Pacifique’s name.

In the academic literature, scholars such as Marie Battiste, Sa’ke’j Henderson, Bernie Francis, Christopher Benjamin, Stephen Augustine, and Harald Prins, have turned Mi’gmaw knowledge systems, including conceptualizing of relations, in their analysis. From a relational standpoint, the agreement between the Mi’gmaq and the Catholic Holy See, symbolized by the baptism of Sagaqmaw Membertou along with his family in 1610, is not so much an absorption or conversion, but rather an expanding of Mi’gmaq kinship family systems to include, in a relational way, the newcomers into Indigenous (Mi’gmaq paradigms). Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) and Catholic peoples, and their knowledges have thus evolved and changed, in a relational way, each with its own respective source.715 (Fig. 24: “Miemac Paper Reproduced,” circa 1900).716

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716 “A Micmac Paper,” (9_Pere Pacifique de Valigny_9.3-1 to 9.3-14; and 9.4-1 to 9.4-8, Université de Moncton, Moncton)
This framing carries a risk of a return to a simplified and idealized past: a utopic time when the relations between and amongst Indigenous and settler newcomers were amical. This is not what I am trying to push out; rather, what I am suggesting is that newcomers arrived to a territory and encountered Indigenous peoples who had long-standing relations with their own territories, and had long-standing (pre contact) protocols by which to negotiate the arrival of ‘difference’, of peoples and of their knowledges. This positioning is also an attempt to acknowledge that newcomers entered into land that was not empty or devoid of history, of ways of being and knowing: we – settler colonials – entered other stories as much as others entered into ‘ours’. The story (this history) did not begin with our (settler) arrival.

By the early twentieth century, Father Pacifique, a capuchin missionary, had established himself in Restigouche and was influential in the church, in documenting Mi’gma place names, orthography, and recent history. Pacifique was involved in the political and economic life in Restigouche, of both settlers and Indigenous peoples. Pacifique built relations with people and from these connections he also ‘entered’ into, and learned, the Mi’gma language. In 1903, the same year that the Sisters of the Holy Rosary arrived to teach at the Day School, Pacifique began publishing weekly columns, in Mi’gma, in St. John’s New Freeman (the first column was published on May 31, 1903).717

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717 During his time in Listuguj, in the early 1900s, Father Pacifique learned Mi’gma; developed an orthography (Pacifique Orthography). In 1939, (nine years after the only residential school in the Maritimes opened at Shubenacadie), Pacifique published *Lesons Grammaticales Théorique et pratique de la langue micmaque*. This text is said to “represent a tradition of Mi’kmaw grammatical studies by missionary priests that spans more than 200 years” from the time of abbe Pierre Maillard (ca. 1710 -1762), to Father Pacifique. Bernie Francis and John Hewson argue that the grammar text was intended to be a “guide to other priests” wanting to learn Mi’kmaw: Pacifique was the last missionary priest to speak functionally. The grammar text was updated and republished under the title *The Mi’kmaw Grammar of Father Pacifique, New Edition* (2016) by Bernie Francis and John Hewson, this time for Mi’gmaq themselves. The revised edition includes information “on the exact pronunciation” of each word because the language, the authors write, has been “lost from many communities” (Francis and Hewson, *The Mi’kmaw Grammar of Father Pacifique*, 2016). Pacifique collected Mi’gmaq placenames; and published the *Olsetemamgeoei*
From the archival records, it does not seem that Pacifique himself taught at the Day School, however, he did engage with the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, participated in the annual students’ examinations (at the Indian Day and the non-Indigenous ‘White’ School), which took place annually at the end of the school year, and (as noted earlier), was part of the “Mesgig Nagoeg” [big day], a celebration involving Mi’gmaq and settler children, their families, and three languages: Mi’gmaq, French, and English. By 1907, the weekly Mi’gmaq column had grown and was published on a “separate sheet” under the title ‘Supplement for the Micmacs’. The supplement proved to be too costly, thus its publication discontinued April 25, 1908. Another initiative of Pacifique, a four-page newspaper *Olsetemamgeoei (Micmac Messenger)* was printed monthly at Restigouche from 1906 until 1936, with a circulation of 600 upwards throughout the Maritimes.718 As the Publisher of the *Micmac Messenger*, Father Pacifique, hoped that: “[t]he *Messenger* should be received in every house, tent or wigwam and kept for future reference and good reading, as there are not to be found in it only news, but also instructions and good advice, sometimes hymns and prayers and other matter which can be read more than once.”719 Mi’gmaq language was spoken, read, shared, grew, and circulated in part through the *Micmac Messenger*. The language grew in print, and so too did the reputation of the “talented editor”, Pacifique, and the quest to “reproduce” a Micmac Paper, “a bright little journal” for the “edification of our

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718 Wallis and Ruth Wallis, *The Micmac Indians of Eastern Canada*, 24. Restigouche was one of several Mi’gmaq communities that Wallis visited first in 1911 and 1912; and then, along with Ruth Wallis, in 1953; “Micmac Paper Reproduced” (9_Pere Pacifique de Valigny_9.3-1 to 9.3-14; and 9.4-1 to 9.4-8, Université de Moncton, Moncton.)

719 “A Micmac Paper.” (9_Pere Pacifique de Valigny_9.3-1 to 9.3-14; and 9.4-1 to 9.4-8. Université de Moncton, Moncton.)
Indians”. Mi’gmaq Peoples, and their knowledges, the headline proclaims, ‘improved’ with the pen, and with the efforts of the editor.

In 1905, while the New Freeman was still publishing the “Supplement for the Micmacs,” the Indian Agent, Pitre, Father Pacifique, and the Sisters all requested funding from the Department to purchase copies of the New Freeman, which “has a column in Micmac.” The teacher affirmed that “since many of her children read that language [Mi’gma]” it would be an “advantage” to purchase the paper. The Indian Agent, Pitre, asserted that it would be “encouragement to the Indians” to purchase this paper, and its purchase is framed as a type of “experiment,” that would cost “very little.” The Department authorized trial subscriptions to the New Freeman, and accordingly the newspaper was used in the school to teach reading from 1905 until 1907. However, the Band Council passed a resolution “protesting” against Mi’gma language in the schools, and accordingly the Department did not continue “the subscription” of the newspaper.

There are nuances and complications in the narrative about language acquisition. The conversation about language is also about accessing knowledge systems. Although Mi’gma was taught at the school, and used as a method for teaching print literacy, the language was also how religious instruction was disseminated and other (secular) knowledges were limited and constrained.

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720 Agent Pitre to Department of Indian Affairs 13 Dec. 1905 (C-8182_RG10_Vol.6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).

721 Letter from Indian Affairs. Secretary to Sister Mary of the Holy Rosary, Teacher, Indian School. Restigouche. March 18, 1907 (C-8182, LAC, Ottawa).
The oral recollections and the archival records confirm that despite federal policy encouraging English or French languages, at this school Mi’gma’w was part of pedagogy in the early 1900s.

For example, in 1905, a thank you letter was sent from the “little Micmacs of Restigouche” to “Our Father, the King, Our Main Chief”, and with the names of students written in both Mi’gma’w and in English. The letter thanks the Department for “precious prizes” awarded to students for: Good Conduct, English Writing, Application, Reading, Attendance, Catechism, Arithmetic, and Singing. In the Mi’gma’w version, the word ‘negao geginamatimegou’ (Pacifique Orthography), appears; notably, this word translates into English as ‘A person who is always learning’. 722 This prized standard of conduct seems to fit with the English term ‘Application’ but in Mi’gma’w is associated with connotations of expansiveness and of action, reflective of a Mi’gmaq worldview and language system that is verb-based, which I have discussed. (Fig. 25: ‘Thank You’ letters sent from Mi’gma’w students to Indian Affairs, 1905.) 723

722 In Listuguj orthography this term is written as ‘Negaw gEGINMATiMEGOU[INU]’. I spoke with Jarrett Francis, Principal of Alaqsit’ew Gitpu School (Mi’gma’w Immersion) and Fred Metallic, for the meaning of these terms and translation of Pacifique orthography to Listuguj orthography (March 2021).

723 Thank You Letter from students to Indian Affairs. (C-8182_RG10_Vol.6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).
What did it mean that the “thank you” letter was sent to the Department of Indian Affairs in both languages? What was this demonstration of bilingualism meant to show to the DIA? Was this to show the DIA that he, Pacifique (along with the Sisters) had ‘control’ over Mi’gmaq because of their own fluency in the Indigenous language? It had only been in recent years that secular Indian Agents were being put in place as colonial authorities versus the priests who had functioned in this role. Thus, the thank-you letter may have been less about demonstrating children’s acquisition of language, and more about the priests’ fluency, and, one can infer, influence, in the mind, heart, and spirit, of the ‘mission population’. The letter too conforms to white-settler expectations, demonstrating the children’s acquiescence not only to their teacher but also to ‘Our Father, the King, Our Main Chief’. The letter opens into a space between worlds, where this is both a ‘King’ and a ‘Chief’ at play in the wording, in the fragmented memories retrieved from the archives.

The duality of languages, and more importantly Mi’gmaq concepts, also registers the long history of Mi’gmaq incorporating European forms into their learning and communicating, going back to Le Clercq who used (and expanded upon) Mi’gmaq symbolic literacy (hieroglyphic writing) at Restigouche and gathering places further east, (in present-day Perce), in the late seventeenth century. Thus, the thank you letter, and a close reading of the letters (Mi’gmaq and English variations), shows, in part, the colonial paternalistic and assimilative mindset. At the same time, the differences, and nuances in the English and Mi’gmaq standards for education animate what Battiste and Henderson describe as trans-systemic knowledge systems. There are two knowledge systems at play; the mission priest, and of course Mi’gmaq themselves, moved in

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both worlds in a fluid manner reflective of Mi’gmaq understandings of expansive and relational ways of being and knowledge systems.

Ottawa. (Library Archives Canada) July 2018

At the archives, I locate a petition from elected leadership, Chief Peter Sewell and seconded by Thomas Metallic, Sr. not to have Mi’gmaq taught at school, dated May 1st, 1906. The leadership asserts that “the English language is sufficient” and, second, that there should be “more arithmetic.” The petition is carried unanimously, and the Chief requests that the Department “notify” the teacher. (Fig. 26: Resolution from Chief Peter Sewell and Thomas Metallic Sr., May 1, 1906)\(^\text{225}\)

The Resolution serves as a reminder of Mi’gmaq involvement in education. It is difficult to interpret the statement that “Micmac should not be taught” and that the “English language” is sufficient. The Band Council asks for secular knowledges, notably sciences (e.g., mathematics). The resolution suggests that Mi’gmaq understood they were being denied access to some knowledges. Is the desire to not have Mi’gmaq taught at school a rejection of cultural preservation? Or is the concept of ‘cultural preservation’ a reflection of present-day concerns and issues around language revitalization and continuance? At the time, Mi’gmaq was the dominant language spoken by Mi’gmaq; in other words, the language (at this time) was not ‘under threat’

\(^{225}\) “Extract from Minutes of Council Meeting, May 1, 1906, Ste. Anne de Restigouche” (C-8182_RG10_Vol.6100, file 326-1, part 1, LAC, Ottawa).
or necessarily being denied. Further, the priests and nuns who administered and taught at the school were mainly French speaking. From this position, access to *English* language instruction may have a form of resistance to colonial authorities in the province of Québec. Much of the instruction in Mi’gmaw centered around religion: rejecting Micmac language, it is possible to infer, may have been a safer way to resist religion, and religious institutions, which related to daily life and institutions, gaining prominence in the community: the Indian Day school and the Band Council.

Mi’gmaq elected leaders articulated their own position, desires, and interests for the community. These interests can seem at odds with present day sensibilities. Perhaps, what is important to recognize is the discussions and debates that took place at the local level, which differs from the dominant narrative, which tends to depict colonial impositions, such as language policies, as unilaterally imposed. In Restigouche, Mi’gmaq were engaged, adapted, and adopted languages, strategically, to negotiate and enter on their own terms, with Euro-settler Canadians, both English-speaking and French-speaking.

**Student recollections and memories about languages used at school**

The oral accounts of students who attended the school ‘overlap’, in a sense, with the print records I consulted; memories from both touch one another at certain points, and there are gaps in some places, like spaces between a web, where stories exist. In conversations for this project, some participants spoke about their *parents’* memories of Mi’gmaw being spoken ‘by the priest’, Father Pacifique. However, most participants did *not* have many stories or recollections about their parents’ experiences at the school. Some participants remembered their parents writing
letters to one another in Mi’gmaw and reflected on ‘where’ they would have learned to read and write in the language. There was a sense that reading, and writing may have been learned while at school or in the church, interchangeable places in their memories.

My father never went to school either – my mother either. But they were writing in Mi’gmaq them. They must have learnt something somewhere so they must have gone to school somewhere because they learnt how to write. They wrote prayer books and all that in Mi’gmaq. I could see my mother writing to my father in the States side there in the army, all in Mi’gmaq, nobody couldn’t read that, but them. Nice writing too. But as we go along that disappears a little bit at a time and finally just [claps hands]. Never kept it up. They must have went to school when they were young themselves, you know, to learn to read and write in Mi’gmaq. Somebody must have taught them. There was a priest here named Father Pacifique, that was hearsay; we were told that. He knew how to talk Mi’gmaq and reading and writing. Books, prayer books, and all that stuff all Mi’gmaq and he had a dictionary too, all Mi’gmaq. So, my parents picked that up, and somebody must have taught them, I don’t know who. Gordon Isaac, Sr.

Some participants described how the imposition of English was accomplished through a type of slow violence exacted by the teacher’s lack of interest in the student’s first language of Mi’gmaq. As one participant recalled:

You weren’t given a chance to speak indoors. It was all strictly either all English and then you had a French course and they taught you a few French words. But nobody (other than Mother Saint John) ever showed interest in our language. Nobody. Nobody. Even though there was a priest here that spoke, but that would be my mother’s time. Father Pacifique. But no. Former student of the day school

Former students who attended the Indian Day School in the late 1940s to the early 1960s spoke about learning and speaking Mi’gmaq at home and that they only learned English when they started school. Unlike the early 1900s, when Mi’gmaq was used as a language of instruction, albeit mainly for religious purposes, participants who attended school in the late 1940s into the 1960s (Indian Day and Joint School eras) recall that Mi’gmaq was forbidden and English was the
dominant language of instruction in the classroom, imposed and taught by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, many of whom had French as their own mother tongue.

Some participants spoke about the alienating process of acquiring English and being required to ‘let go’ of their own first language. Some students remembered that they were “warned” and “punished” by the teachers at the school for speaking Mi’gmaw. One participant, Gladys Germain, recalls the role that the Indian Day School played in silencing Mi’gmaq and the forced imposition of English. She observed that this instilled a sense of shame “just for being an Indian,” and this shaming hurt more than the corporal punishment. Recollections of many former students at the Indian Day and ‘Joint’ Schools, located on Indigenous territories, show the purpose of colonial schools as vehicles of assimilation, cultural and linguistic genocide. As Gladys reminds us, the schools left a lasting sense of shame, just for being who she was. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission and Canada’s former Chief Supreme Court Justice Beverley MacLachlin have named this process as “cultural genocide … and linguicide”; and both are linked with the “calculated silencing and stigmatizing of Aboriginal languages within and across generations.”

The lasting harms of ‘calculated silencing and stigmatizing’ of Indigenous knowledges, at times most visible through the denial of Indigenous languages, is part of the legacy of this history of colonial schooling with which the present generation, and those coming, are countering. There is a need to value Indigenous languages, not only for the individual well-being of the student but as a repository for the collective history and knowledges of Indigenous communities. The contribution

and value of Indigenous languages, and knowledges systems, must be protected if reconciliation is to deepen its roots and connections.

In many interviews for this project, including with Gladys, former students spoke about students who “fought back”. This difference in the later decades may have been the effect of the IRS being formalized, and racist attitudes and practices in relation to Indigenous languages at residential school, also flowing to the day school, at Restigouche, via the Department of Indian Affairs.

[The nuns] didn’t like it when we spoke [Mi’gmaw]. They warned us not to use it. They wanted us to speak English. But we didn’t get punished for using it because we were outside playing. In the classroom, we were not allowed to speak our language. You have to talk English. Because the teacher wants to know, the nun wants to know everything that’s going on in the classroom. If you talk Mi’gmaw to your classmate she wants to know what you are talking about, of course.

But when you get home, you speak your own language at home. Because my grandmother that brought me up didn’t know too much English herself. Like, you know, I don’t think she even went to school. She was already old. When she took me, she must have been in her 60s. I don’t know. She never went to school, really. I don’t even know if there was a school. She never talked about a school, but she never went to school, but never talked about if there was a school or not. I don’t think there was one.

It is sad, really. Like, you know, made us feel so low, because you’re an Indian. You know what I mean? Yeah, I think that was what was mostly that hurt us, more than the strap. Really. Some of them fought back, believe me. Gladys Germain

At the Day School, children were expected to learn and to speak English. The children’s own fluency in Mi’gmaw counted for nothing in the environment that the school created; only teachers were allowed to be ‘good’ speakers in any language.

I want to talk about it first before you ask me anything and then if you want to ask me something else, we will, okay. … The first time I went to school, when I started kindergarten, I spoke English very little. My first language was Micmac. And I noticed that the first thing that affected me at school is that my name is Kenny Mitchell, not Kenneth Mitchell, like they forced me to spell it – Kenneth. … That was the first thing that affected me, and I went home and told my mother, but my mother was already brainwashed by them, that is ‘they must know better than me’ so keep [your name spelled] that way …. And, when I was in
kindergarten, I noticed I could only speak Micmac because they spoke really good English. Right from there, I was told ‘not to speak that language, it was no good, you are going to hell.’ Kenny Mitchell

The Restigouche Indian School was located on Mission Land, in the middle of the Restigouche reserve. The proximity of home and school, however, didn’t ‘protect’ students while in the classroom where some spoke about a sense of “meanness” between teachers (nuns) and Mi’gmaq students, especially in the older grades. Some spoke about their feelings of ambivalence about, and their hesitation to assign blame for, the tension and uneasiness between the teachers and students. However, generally there was a sense that students could not be blamed for the negative atmosphere and outright violence in the classroom because “they were too young”. This could be interpreted to mean ‘too young’ to have known what the expectations at school were. And, that children could not be blamed also points to Mi’gmaq values and beliefs centering the well-being of, and looking out for, the child not in an oppressive sense but in terms of encouraging (and modeling) desired behaviours.

At the joint school (beginning of the integration era, in Restigouche, in the early 1960s) former students observed that they were still “forbidden to speak Native” while at school and that the school environment was “discouraging” for Native students. Despite this discouragement, however, some maintained that they “continued to talk”, adding: “they couldn’t stop us”.

When I started school, I didn’t speak any English. Not at all. That was the difficult part. I think it was in first grade and I was sitting like this (slouching). And the teacher came along and said, ‘Straighten up your backside.’ I didn’t know what a backside was. And she didn’t wait to explain she just grabbed me by the ear and straightened me up. That’s how they were. You don’t do that to a child. … I thought about it a lot since we started talking, and I thought maybe it was on both sides there was meanness. But I would blame the nuns. They were the ones that initiated the first strike, so to speak. Because just imagine when you are in first
grade you can’t be – you’re more scared than anything, you’re not going to be causing problems. It was the nuns, it was almost like they were trying to discourage you from being in school, I don’t know why. … Students weren’t told directly to “act” or “be white”, but they were told that “they can’t speak Native”. I think this was the government’s idea to tell the kids not to speak the language. It was forbidden (to speak Mi’gmaw). Even in 1966, I was in Grade 10, it was still forbidden. At the time, there were not that many Native students in high school. But we weren’t allowed. Of course, we talked, they couldn’t stop us. Roger Metallic

Some participants spoke about an ‘absence’ or lack of memory formation while in the classroom, which they associated with language: where Mi’gmaw was spoken (in the schoolyard and at home), memories formed; where English was spoken (in the classroom), there was an absence of memory. Former students who attended the schools spoke about the absence of memories associated with schooling as a type of blockage, in their words as “blocked memories”. For some, the absence of memories is associated with the imposition of the English language. Because they did not connect with the English language, in turn this did not allow for a transfer or retention of ‘memories’ from the classroom. Others associated the blocked memories with the negative school atmosphere where physical and emotional abuse were normalized, almost embedded in the curriculum, as an “everyday occurrence”. For others, the absence of memories is deliberate: a way of “leaving [the schooling] behind” and not being defined by narratives of trauma.

Language shaped and ‘disciplined’ spaces, bodies, and minds: at school, in the schoolyard, and at home. Some former students spoke about being forced to speak and to learn in a language that was not the nuns’ own language. English became an ‘inside’ language, while Mi’gmaw continued, amongst the children, occupying outdoor spaces.

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727 Sarkar and Metallic, “Indigenizing the Structural Syllabus,” 54.
[At school] we were taught a little bit of English, but it took me about, oh, about two, three years by the time I could talk English, and I had a hard time with the nuns there … And the nuns they had here, they tried to teach us to talk English and none of them could hardly talk English, they were all French, do you know what I mean? Yeah, the only time we talked [Mi’gmaw] was like recess, outside, a whole bunch of us were outside. But once we get inside it’s all English. We were all talking Micmac, you’d get reprimanded, and you’d get the strap or something like that, or you know, and you were told not to. But when we were outside, we all talked Micmac anyway and when we were inside, we’ve got to talk English. *Gordon Isaac, Sr.*

This memory – about the nun floundering and struggling to teach in her second language – runs counter to, and shifts (slightly) the image of the nun as a powerful oppressive agent. The nuns prohibited Mi’gmaw, their volatility exacerbated by the colonial conditions in which they, too, were subjected. This is not to excuse; rather, it is to point out that the history of Indian day schooling is nuanced; and the conditions in which the school took shape were fed by complex feelings and drives.

Some former students spoke about their home life, and their recollections gave voice to the tenacity of parents, and for some an intentional cultivation of bicultural competencies. Some parents seem to have been modeling/teaching resistance by speaking the language.

If English was spoken it was like a foreign language being spoken here. There was no association. I don’t think our parents liked it because they never spoke to us in English, ever! *Mary Ann Metallic*

There were lasting and inter-generational effects of federal policy on language in the eras of assimilation and integration: “brainwashing didn’t just happen then [1968/’69]. It had taken place over many years.” This observation adds to the understanding and awareness about the role that day schooling played in forcibly removing Mi’gmaw with the forced learning of English.
language at the school. Language loss happened because of the integration into provincial stream schooling, and over several generations. At an Open Parliament Committee Meeting, Professor Andrea Bear Nicholas spoke about the ongoing and “destructive legacies of colonialism.” She spoke about the critical state of Indigenous languages, asserting: “that our language is in such a critical state is not so much the consequence of residential schools, since very few of our children were actually sent to one; it is the consequence of being forced, generation after generation, to send our children to schools conducted in the medium of English rather than our own language.”

During the Day School period, many fluent Mi’gmaw speakers spoke about not speaking to their children in Mi’gmaw to protect their children, Gail Metallic recalled that:

I know the kids weren’t allowed to speak the language [Mi’gmaw] outside of the classroom, during recess, they weren’t allowed to speak the language. And some insisted and some got in trouble and others didn’t. Some weren’t caught and others were caught. And if you were caught, you had a hard time, you were brought to the principal’s office. I don’t think parents were ever brought in for that, you know, because your children spoke the language outside. They weren’t necessarily told. They were busy trying to convince every parent that you’re better off if your child spoke only English: because ‘the other language is holding them back.’ Maybe they’re not doing as well in school because the language is holding them back. And, it happened too fast, in 1968, where people stopped speaking all of a sudden. You had kids who know the language fluently and other kids who understand and that’s the kids who started in New Brunswick in [an English-speaking] nursery. They didn’t understand the language, they understood some of it, but they weren’t fluent like their brother or sister. I think that brainwashing didn’t just happen then. It had taken place over so many years. The kids would be parents now and they started really believing ‘if I want my child to succeed, they have to speak English’. But I know that the change happened in 1968 and 1969, but it had to have been happening over the years. Told that same thing over and over for them to really start believing it. It was so quick, and the language loss so apparent.

Students resisted colonial oppression in the classroom with and through languages. Students’

Nicholas, Andrea, Statutory Review of the Copyright Act, May 7, 2018
multilingualism sometimes allowed for moments when they could turn the tables on the nuns so that it was the teacher’s lack of Mi’gmaq that was important. Some students spoke creating a momentary enjoyment of a community of Mi’gmaq speakers that could exclude the nuns.

In the class, it’s kind of known who will get into trouble and who won’t. Those sorts of patterns are established really early on, and kids know that they figure that code out too. I do remember strapping early on. I remember, ‘taizey-vous’, ‘taizey-vous’, from one nun. I remember one kid, we had a few kids who did come in with no English at all, …. And some kids had never heard it. And this was one of these kids. The nun was saying, I now know she was saying: ‘taisez-vous’, which is a form of saying ‘be quiet’. And, he said, ‘te'sipow!’ He mocked her! He got into a lot of trouble for that! Te’sipow, he’s killing himself laughing, and of course we were all laughing because it means horse! But she’s speaking French to someone who doesn’t speak English or French! So, what does she expect?! Diane Mitchell

That is the most they taught us, and not to speak [Mi’gmaq]. And, later on they wanted to teach us French. French was even harder than [English]. I started counting in French. I would say, and it’s funny, if you told somebody they would laugh about it. This is how it would sound, you’ve got to listen good: ‘un, deux, trois, quatre, cinq, nigmitch gastiomi’ Everybody would laugh in the classroom! And I’d be flying out the door! Just some words! It means ‘one, two, three, four, five, and my asshole is full of molasses!’ But doesn’t it match! (laughter) I got that from an older man in the community! He said, ‘gwis, tell them that!’ I went to school, and I told them that. The teacher, the principal, dragged me out because they all laugh. She said, ‘what does it mean?’ I said, ‘I don’t know!’ Kenny Mitchell

Some participants also shared stories about a few teachers, the exceptions, who treated them ‘kindly’ or who took an interest in them as a person, and as Mi’gmaq.

[Dialogue]

– Not all the teachers were mean, I remember two of them were kind and nice. In Grade Six, that was the first time a teacher talked to me and asked about ‘me’. And Mother Saint John used to visit homes on the Reserve

– That was the type of, she was very …

– Human!

What I found startling, what stood out for me, was that former students did not find it odd that during their elementary schooling they had only encountered a few teachers (or one teacher) who
talked to them, who showed an interest in them, as learners, as persons. Human, physical connections produce a type of knowledge that does not necessarily depend on language. Some recollections – about nuns who were ‘kind’ – push at the limits of this colonial system: were these nuns’ collaborators in anti-colonial resistance? Or were they kind abusers? In being kind, did they continue to exert control: kindness (like punishments) bestowed on some, but not others.

There was a lot of them, although there was one nice one. Yeah, she was just, I don’t know, good, nice. I even went to see her when she got sick in Rimouski. She got old and she had sick, so I took the train, and I went up to see her, to say goodbye to her. I didn’t want to look at anybody else, they’re all over there at the Mother House. I was able to see her, they let me in and I went to see her. I had a good talk with her. I think a lot of that helped me get through the … Yeah, [there was one nun] she was very kind, loving, never raised her voice to you. She’d sit and talk to you, like, instead of making you feel this small, she’d build you up. And it was only one. Former student of the Indian Day School.

I remember, the only nice one was the home economics, she used to do a lot of cooking and stuff and making soup teaching us how to sew and all that, Mother Saint John. I remember her well. Former student of the Indian Day School

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Hearing from former teachers
Rimouski (Mother House)
November, 2018

I interviewed a former nun, a teacher at the Restigouche Indian Day School, in the 1950s. During the interview, she spoke about her first week at the school. Her memory – about a fight between two girls, their rebellion and agency, counters and complicates the dominant residential school narrative that tends to show students as “docile” victims. The former teacher’s recollections, internal worries about how she would succeed, her description of her reaction “I was so pale”, is one that is viscerally relatable: it is possible to connect with the feelings she describes, her uncertainty facing a ‘hostile’ and disinterested classroom. She worried that her veil would be pulled, that she would unravel before the classroom. This memory is only one story, but the story captures the role of non-Indigenous white women, fearful colonizers who perhaps maintained a sense of innocence about their role, protected from being perpetrators of violence because of their own sense of ‘fear’. The former teacher at the Indian Day School recalled that:

My home was about 20 km. from the Indian Reserve. But in Restigouche it was the Pilgrimage Saint-Anne. We used to go down to the Pilgrimage, but we didn’t speak to the Indians, nothing. When I was named to go to the Restigouche, I said: “I don’t know much
about the Indians. How am I going to succeed?” When I arrived the first week that I was teaching, I had 23 students. They were in grades four or five. It was a rainy day, and I gave them recess in my class. The two girls in the front [imitating nonsense words]. I didn’t understand a word. They were talking in Indian, in Micmac. I said: “What am I going to do now?” I got frightened. So, I said: “Recess is over. Go back to your places.” One girl was in the back of the class and the other was in the front. The girl in the back took a book and threw it at the one in the front. They started fighting. They were pulling hair. I said: “What am I going to do?” They will pull my veil. I was so nervous. I thought, “I’m not teaching the Indians anymore”. I went to the teacher who knew the Indians well. I said: “I’m not teaching the Indians anymore. I’m not able, they are fighting, and I don’t understand what they are saying.” She said: “No, no. Go back” I was so pale. But it went well.

This is only one example, yet it illuminates how the discipling or regulation of behaviour is normalized, justified, and masked by the teacher’s own fear as well as her perceived need for security. It seems important to recall that, in the early 1900s, the reason why the nuns were brought in was that:

A nun makes an impression
by her costume

They were brought in 1903
(as the Sisters wrote in their journals) to render Mi’gmaq:

peaceful and
submitted
to those who rule
over them.

7.3) Inside the Walls: Religious Instruction, Gender Training, and Beyond

Centrality of religious instruction

Indian Day Schooling in Restigouche, taught from 1903 onwards by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, was shaped around Catholic religious instruction. Inside the Indian schools (the Day
School, 1856-1961, and the Joint School, 1961-1969) former students spoke about the amount of time spent learning prayers, in prayer, and religious instruction. In their memories, religious instruction was not only confined to cognitive learning, however, but also learning ‘in the body’: time the students spent on their knees; going across the street to attend church. There were difficult recollections, too, of interactions between former teachers (Sisters of the Holy Rosary) and non-Catholic students, and between students themselves.

In the many differing recollections and stories shared about ‘instruction’ a prominent thread amongst the stories was the ‘centrality’ of religion in their school days, and how schooling was shaped around religious instruction. As one participant observed, “it was more important to be a good little Catholic child, than it was to be a good student”.

The education provided was one that worked to suppress curiosity and questioning. Focus was on two things: “religion and to speak their English, their language.” Story after story, from one conversation to the next, people spoke about the centrality of religious instruction at the school. Students were required to pray when entering and leaving the classroom. The school schedule revolved around prayer and catechism. Participants spoke about the endless repetition of the prayers; the rote learning like how other secular subjects (reading or arithmetic) were taught at the school. It is possible that the teachers at the schools sincerely believed that these children would go to hell unless they ‘helped’ enlighten them (as they no doubt believed in their own struggle for salvation). Not to save the child, would be to risk their own salvation. Their faith was the only way to justify what they were doing to the children: reproducing this faith (in the endless prayers students recalled) could have provided a way to defend themselves against the
shame and guilt produced by causing or witnessing suffering. If there are ‘no angels’ or ‘demons’, how do we locate *accountability* in this system? There is an issue of justice (because of harms and instances of abuse); there were also harms because the basic standards of education (being able to read and write) were not being provided; and there is a need to unsettle and come to terms with this history in that the schools ushered in and imposed a different worldview, and so doing negated Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) knowledge systems, and ways of being.

The prayers, the praying. Always, if you ask anything about the prayer it was ‘mystery’. You couldn’t ask ‘why is this, why is that’. It’s a mystery, everything was a mystery. But if you didn’t pass your religion you weren’t going to pass. You’re not passing the class; I don’t care how smart you were with the rest of the stuff. It went the religion, and to speak their English, their [settler] language. That was the focus on those two things. Not to speak our language, to make sure our language didn’t exist. And we couldn’t help speaking. You would go home, and my parents are both Micmac, and my sisters and brothers that’s all we spoke at the house. And, when we would speak English, we would laugh at each other because that wasn’t our language. *Kenny Mitchell*

Not too much of ... I can say about school. You get to school. You get in school, what do we do? We pray. It’s okay for praying and singing. We didn’t do too much of learning, really but I learned to read and write. And I learned to pray. *Gladys Germain*

About 40% of class time was spent on religion, while other time basically followed the Québec curriculum. Prayers at school went on and on. You would get in there and you had to sing a song. Come Holy Ghost. I was scared of ghosts! You prayed a lot. *Roger Metallic*

[Dialogue]

- Pray, pray, pray. Before school starts, you’ve got to pray.
- You got to go to church, too, in the morning, six o’clock.
- Six o’clock in the morning
- If you don’t go to church, you get punished again. ... And, if you miss Sunday, you were a bad person. You were going to hell for sure. And they used to show us pictures. And in fact, I have that calendar still, somewhere upstairs, they used to show us these pictures, people falling into hell or whatever. Yeah, they used to
show us that picture. “Don’t go to church, that’s where you’re going.” They make you visualize all this stuff.\textsuperscript{729}

Former students’ recollections emphasized not only the cognitive displacement of their own worldviews but how this displacement was total – mind, body, and spirit. As Maggie Isaac recalled:

And, kneeling, they make you kneel and kneel for hours [when you were at school]. Yes. If you were punished for something, or your schoolwork wasn’t done, or you're half-done with your homework, you had to kneel, and you’d kneel half a day. You know, that’s hard on the knees. In the classroom. Everybody else is doing whatever, you're kneeling. It wasn’t enjoyable as a child going to school there, you know. Sunday afternoon and Sunday morning, yeah, we’d go to church. On school days, morning ones, the early mass, before school. We would get stars [laughs]. … I learned a lot of Hail Mary’s and every holy thing that I learned at that place, like, just – anything else, we didn’t get that much of. I think it was just more religion. They pounded it into us.

Some perceived that their involvement in the church meant that they were seen to have earned some measure of protection.

I was an altar boy, I didn’t like that either, and that went on for years and years. I didn’t get into trouble at school, more of a “goody-two shoes”, but others did get into trouble. I was an altar boy as soon as I entered school this could have been why I wasn’t hurt (by the nuns) at school. \textit{Roger Metallic}

In 1958, the Band Council passed a By-law to provide a regulation of the activities of boys and girls on the Restigouche Indian Reserve. Essentially, a By-law was passed imposing a curfew for youth aged 16 or under. During the school year, youth were required to be at their homes by eight o’clock at night, and in the summer months (July and August) they were required to be at

\textsuperscript{729} Miller discusses “Lacombe’s ladder” in \textit{Shingwauk’s Vision}, 192. He comments on it by saying: “Missionaries in Europe had used an illustration of a pathway ascending to heaven as an evangelical device for centuries before Catholic missionaries of the Pacific and Father Lacombe adapted one for use in North America….

In the Canadianized version, there were two pathways upwards from the Creation to Judgement Day. On the left-hand side, the Way of Good… On the right, the corresponding Way of Evil (Voie du Mal) made its tortuous path amid many winged devils and evil spirits to Hell” 191.
home by nine o’clock in the evening. In the years ahead, the Band Council also elected to install a siren, on the day school, that rang each night signaling the time that all youth needed to be off the streets, in their houses. The curfew stayed in place until the 1960s. Some participants recalled that the siren was on the “old school” and when the joint school was built, in 1961, the siren was moved to the “new brick building”.

The Band Council was not only complicit in colonialism, but at times seemed to be an active instigator of oppression. This complication is important. Post-1951, there are significant changes to the Indian Act. Parents who did not send their children to school risked losing their family allowance: the Band, perhaps, would have supported the siren to remind parents that their children must go home. At the time, the Indian Agent had the final say over decisions; decisions made by the Council had to be approved by the Indian Agent. The Band Councillors may have agreed to the siren as a type of accommodation and measure to ensure that children went home, and so doing the Agent would not interfere, or would have less ability to interfere with, government payments to families.

Schooling was punctuated by sirens signaling the curfew; rote discipline, with an emphasis on Catholic ritual, kneeling, praying, an endless repeated practice in submission. The siren marked the time when children needed to be home; the curfew stayed in place, as recalled by one participant, until youth resisted, damaging the siren, which wasn’t replaced.

Prayed when I get to school, pray when you go to recess, pray after recess, pray to go home, pray to come back to school, pray to go to recess in the afternoon. And, if you made noise,

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you are standing in that corner; you’re not going home until a few hours later. Because they had a siren on top of the school. It was like Russia, or a communist country, when the siren would ring no kids on the road, not allowed nowhere, we’d all have to run home and hide. And that went on until someone went up there, older guys than us, they damaged it and they never bothered fixing it after. It was a big siren. I couldn’t break it, I was too young. It was a big one right on top of the school, ringing all the time. *Kenny Mitchell*

The Indian Schoolhouse, to recall, was first built, in 1856, on lands that had been leased out to the Catholic Church for Mission purposes. Subsequent iterations of the Indian Day School (rebuilt in 1909, 1937, and, in 1961 the Joint-School) were all built on the same space: across the street from St. Anne’s Church, adjacent to the Convent, on the other side of which there was a ‘White’ School. The Indian Day School “took up space” and its presence reverberated, figuratively and literally, in the sound of the siren. The school reverberated cognitively, spatially, and temporally, in the buildings, in the bodies, in the land.

Religious instruction started early in the day: many recalled walking from their homes to school as early as 6 a.m. to attend church before the school day started. Others recalled attendance being taken, by the nuns, at church on Sundays; on Mondays, they remembered being awarded “stars” (various types of prizes) or being reprimanded, depending not only on whether they had attended church, but also *which mass* they had attended. This form of instruction was not about expansiveness or ‘adding on’ but rather that of restrictions and limitations. It is difficult to know if the same type of regimentation was going on in earlier decades. But as I have noted, the elected leadership, in the early 1900s, requested more instruction in English, a demand that seems to have been linked to a desire for secular subjects such as mathematics. The request implies, too, that access to Euro-Western knowledges was limited or regulated at the school, and potentially, shows differences experienced by Indigenous peoples in the province of Québec in
their navigation of the imposition of two several languages: English, French, and – as this student recalls, Latin. Memories shared by former students illuminate how resistance took place at the physical level as a type of “deliberate” blocking (in their minds, of other languages), and physically, with a type of standstill of children’s senses: “we couldn’t move” or “look”.

Cognitive imperialism is not limited to the mind, but permeates all aspects – body, spirit, and mind; and all senses: sight, touch, taste, smell.

There was a lot of church, going to church and back, even during school days. … There was a lot of Latin at the church. I blocked everything. The Latin, the French. I didn’t want to hear it. I didn’t understand it. At the school, I had to deliberately block out languages – Latin, French. Couldn’t move, or change, or look at one another. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

Prayer in the morning and prayer when you leave. And you would kneel down. I remember my knees were always skinny, and it hurt to kneel that long, yeah. Wow. That’s what I remember. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

[Dialogue]

– And other times you had to go practice our confession. So, we would go to, they would march us to the church, and you had to have a kerchief and what do you call that? A kerchief, yeah. And, if you didn’t, they would take this – a tissue – and they would pin it on your head and the boys would laugh at us! [laughter] But, you cannot go in there, with a bare head, in church. We had to practice our confession. And, when you sit in church you couldn’t move. You had to go like this. And [if you moved] someone would hit your head. You got hit in the head. And I remember those things. And going into that confession box. And they would teach us what to say. The nuns would teach us how to confess. It was always the same things!

– You’d make up sins! (*In the interview, we’re laughing*). I can remember the same sins every month!

– You told a lie, you disobeyed your mother, you stole an apple, you fought with your sister! (*Laughter*) That was it! And, then they’d give you two Our Fathers and three Hail Mary’s and that was your penance.

– Your sense of forgiveness. (*We’re still, in the interview, holding our breath.*)

  Looking back.
  That was awful.
Some participants recalled the disciplining that took place as a reward system: where children were encouraged by the teacher to attend Church each day during the month of May. Those with good attendance were rewarded, some remember receiving a doll, others recall earning pictures of Saints. Participants remember walking to church, in groups with friends, early in the morning, returning home and then walking back to school for the day. Some spoke about being ‘eager to please’, and how upon reflection they realized that the school system was designed in such a way as to encourage certain behaviour: to become “a good little Catholic child” versus being a student or a learner.

One thing that I do remember is that there was a lot of competition to encourage us to go to church. In the month of May, they held a little competition. You would get a doll at the end of May, your name would be in for a draw, for a doll, if you went to school, I mean church, every morning for Immaculate Conception I believe it was. And went to church every morning for the doll, well not for the doll, well for the doll, yes, people went to church for the doll at that time. I remember that. Gail Metallic

Some observations indicate some compassion for the nuns, with recognition that they, too, were contained and restricted by the rigidity of the post-war conservative system, designed to encourage women to stay within the home, as ‘good’, Catholic, wives and mothers.

There was a big emphasis on praying – praying, praying, praying. You have to remember that the nuns had no teacher training, so they were there and just like babysitters, but they had no lessons, nothing to prepare them to teach. Everything was rigid. You couldn’t step out of line. It was more important to be a good little Catholic child than it was to be a student. ... So, someone like myself who was so eager to please, to please my mother, my grandmother, they were very religious. I must have had about fifty Holy pictures given to me! Because you earned them for being a good little Indian girl. Sandra Germain
We lived so far away… we would walk to church. I had to go to church at 6 o’clock in the morning, for the whole month of May, to get that little picture of the saint. And every morning they would wake me up and I would walk to church in the dark, well it wasn’t too dark. And it was me, Ralph Isaac, and Brian Martin always sitting in church till seven o’clock. Walk back home, get your lunch, get ready, and then walk back to school. *Mary Ann Metallic*

Other students spoke less about the rewards or gifts and more about the discipline that took the form of punishment. For some, school was a place for delivery of punishments related to church attendance. This arrangement was facilitated by the location and spatial arrangement of the church and school, in proximity with one another. Some children recall walking across the street to attend church as part of the school schedule. There were overlaps in the staffing, in the sense of nuns working as teachers and priests involved in administration and priority setting at the school.  

The school where I went to, we were taught how to pray, that’s all. And if you don’t pray you get reprimanded. You’d pray, pray, going to church all the time. Get up at six in the morning and you’ve got to go to church. If you miss that you get reprimanded, you get something wrong you know? I don’t know. To me, like today they just want to save our souls never mind the rest of the body and we never learned nothing. Anybody that got to eighth, seventh grade here, they still don’t know nothing...understand, because you got taught nothing, you were there, that’s it: prayer and reprimanding. And I’m not the only one, there’s a lot of people who say the same thing about the school. You just pray and pray … You stand up and read, and then we’ve got to start praying again, then read and then pray again. Always praying. *Gordon Isaac, Sr.*

Well, the nuns always told us to go to church. They would always tell us to go to church and then every Monday morning one of these nuns asked us if we had gone to church. … Anyway, I got scolded by the nun because I didn’t go the High Mass. I did go to mass, but yeah, that didn’t count. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

If there’s something going on, we have to be in church for that. And Sundays we had to be in church, and like I said, Sunday afternoon we had to be there too. You go to school, you’ve got

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731 In the early 1900s, the presence of the priests, the Indian Agent, and the chief, can be traced at the annual year end examinations held at the Indian Day School from the print archival records. That Mi’gmaq leadership attended the year-end examinations traces their continued and ongoing resilience engaging in and with the colonial institutions, governance, and education.
to go to the church. You just go into the rosaries or whatever, but she does the headcount, if you're not there you get a strapping the next day for not going. *Maggie Isaac*

Yeah, and back then, the church was a big thing, and when you don’t go to church and you get strapped on, you know. I always saw it. *Sonny Wysote*

Another participant recalled nuns who took attendance at church, and doled out punishments at school for absences:

If you don’t go to church on Sunday, they’d stand at the door and they’d mark who comes in and who doesn’t, and you’d get punished on Monday. You’d have to stand up in the corner, maybe all day, six, seven hours you’d piss yourself, you’re standing there. …. No one said a word because it could happen to them. Or it already happened to them. No one would say anything. *Kenny Mitchell*

**Something (drops) into the room**

Participants recalled collecting money for missionaries, for ‘pagans’ and being expected to give ‘their pennies’ to give to the “poor” and “hungry” at missions in Africa. Students’ memories of this mandatory giving are edged with anger and defiance, both at the time and in the present: they recalled that they themselves were ‘poor’, were oftentimes hungry, yet they had to give “what little they had”. Some recall the nuns, taking collection from the students, during school hours.

They always took our money. If you had 5 cents, they would say ‘It’s for the poor. We’re sending money to India to feed the poor children. How much money do you have in your pocket?’ Give to the poor.’ And, you had to take out your nickel. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

[Dialogue]

– One thing I didn’t understand was why we had to save our stamps to feed the hungry, the poor in Africa. I wonder why stamps? I wonder why? What did they do with them?
Lent, you had to give up candy. So, that’s when they collected our money. If you were intending to buy candy. The money had to go to the poor. I remember losing my money. I didn’t have too much, maybe nickel or pennies. They wanted us to call one person a pagan, but they said, “we’re sending money to the pagans to feed them they’re poor.” “But her? Can I give her my money?” So, they were instigating us to be mean to somebody else. Sunday collections, Lent collections. School collections. What little money you had, you had to give.

Indian Day School, the school and the church were like one. They were on a mission.

Participants’ words brought to life the netting of the school reaching out and into home lives, with nuns visiting and placing a religious statue in some homes. Students were required to collect and give to missions beyond Canada. As students, they were part of a broader objective involving both being ‘converted’ and ‘converting’. So doing, they, and their families, were folded into an imperialist missionary project.

They used to have the Blessed Virgin Mary statue and they’d go house to house. The nuns. They had a statue, and they’d bring it to your house for one week and you’d pray the whole rosary with them when they come to get it and when they brought it over the whole family has to be there and they’d sit it on the counter, a big statue. Every house. After school, they would come around. And they wanted money. The pagans, they called them. But we’re the pagans already. And we used to give them money. Pennies. We had no money. There was no money on the reservation. Kenny Mitchell

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Gaspé (Bibliothèque et archives nationales du Québec)
October 2018

Saint Anne, the mother of Mary and grandmother of Jesus, is considered patron Saint of Mi’gmaq. Following the Concordat of 1610, in 1628, Mi’gmaq adopted Saint Anne as their patron saint. Each year, and still today, some families hold a “mawio’mi (traditional
gathering)” at traditional gathering places. Restigouche is one such gathering place, as are Chapel Island and Merigomish in other parts of Mi’gma’gi (Atlantic Region).\footnote{In “The Cultural Economy of Survival,” Parnaby observes that the Saint Anne’s Day Celebrations, in 1841, provided Mi’gmaq people with an opportunity to “conven[e] an ‘assemblage’”, a political structure that “resembled the seasonal gatherings used to consider important matters in the 17\textsuperscript{th} and 18\textsuperscript{th} centuries,” 92. Parnaby argues that Mi’gmaq people gathered on this occasion, as “a blend of aboriginal spirituality and Catholicism” and also “refused to provide any information” to settlers attempting to document an “inventory” of Mi’gmaq people (their ‘habits’ and ‘general characteristics’,” 92 (emphasis added). This example shows Mi’gmaq resistances and uses of colonial occasions (census taking) for their own uses and interests: to gather, to assemble. It is possible to speculate that Mi’gmaq of Restigouche also used the early census taking of the church, or the petitions put forward for schooling, for their own interests and concerns.} (Fig. 27: Souvenir postcard of St. Anne and her Blessed Family, 1901)\footnote{Pacifique Fonds\_1981\_05\_001\_001\_36. Amerindiens. Micmacs, Ristigou. Serie Micmaque No. 16, BanQ, Rimouski).}

The missionary activities can be understood as part of the framework of settler colonial assimilation and elimination. At the same moment, it is possible to see glimpses of Mi’gmaq worldview, for whom the adoption of the Grandmother Anne is considered, by some, as in keeping with an expansive worldview, which emphasizes extended kinship relations, including the role of women as knowledge holders. In the Mi’gmaq Creation Story, after Glusgap’s birth, s/he meets Grandmother, Nugami who provides guidance reflective of the “privileged role of an Elder woman among the people,” as Sa’ke’j Henderson observes.\footnote{Henderson, “L’nu Humanities,” 37.} Recognizing the potential for dual understandings is not to dismiss the harms and impacts of colonial logic and practices that sought (and still seek) to eliminate or reorder Indigenous understandings. It is to counter the violence and violations at the Day School, that are part of the history of cultural genocide and linguicide with recognition of how some of the same processes might be seen from the perspective of Mi’gmaq traditions, as expressions of agency.
Some students shared positive memories associated with religious instruction: the pictures and spending time out of doors (for religious ceremonies) served as moments where students could engage imaginatively and physically with teachings. For some students, it seems that the pictures allowed them to suppress the religious content and work imaginatively with the imagery. They have tactile memories of these things. At the same time, this is all in the context of an intimacy with this imagery and participation in religious protocols that was very much imposed on them.

I remember Religion class, first period Catechism it was called. I was entertained by it because it had pictures. They taught Catechism with cards that demonstrated what was going on. I remember a picture of people putting palms on the street, and with Jesus carrying the cross. These are re-imaginings. I really remember that. Honestly, that was my favourite.

There were a bunch of things that I enjoyed, and that I enjoyed because of the drawings. Not because of the messages, necessarily, although I was quite devout at the time, I sucked it all in. The pictures made it compelling. Instead of just reading it, you were seeing it being displayed.

We had these cloths, probably felt, or cotton, I can’t remember what they were called that we wore under our clothing. They were little, 2 or 3 inches, maybe even littler because I was a little kid. They were cloth and they had a Saint, a picture of a Saint, or a drawing on fabric, probably with some words and stuff. And it was attached to a ribbon, and you wore underneath your clothing. I can’t remember if it was at certain times of the year.

We were heavily, we did so much religious stuff back then, right; we had those processions that you see in Québec, in the history of Québec photographs, of people walking along the road with candles and everybody was wearing their Sunday best, well we did that too. But, again, I really enjoyed that stuff, as a child. You know you were walking around with a candle, and not indoors. Diane Mitchell

Gender training at the Day School

In close proximity to religious instruction, participants shared memories of a type of gender training in their learning at the Indian Day (and Joint) School where students received an
induction into European gender roles, with assumptions about the proper gendered division of labour. At this particular school, there was an emphasis, a targeting, of mothers and girls, who were taught to “learn to love the family circle”, as observed, in 1946, by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary in a statement to the federal Parliamentary Committee on Indian Affairs.\textsuperscript{735} At the Indian Day School boys were streamed into ‘manual training’. For instance, by the late 1800s, the Indian Agent was instructed by the Department to “encourage the Indians in the pursuit of agriculture by practical instruction and advice.”\textsuperscript{736}

In practice, this gender training meant a reconceiving of kin relations along the lines of the patriarchal nuclear family. The Indian Act (1876) provision defined women’s status in relation to her father or husband. The policies made women “unequal to Indian men (who did not lose status when they married non-Indian women) and to non-Indian women (who acquired Indian status by marrying Indian men).”\textsuperscript{737} Some participants spoke about being encouraged to become “housewives,” without an expectation of participation in the economy outside of the home. The training was about gender, and it was also about the family in a capitalist economy, with a single wage earner (or participant) in the market. For both, men and women, their entry into the labour market was oftentimes in low paid, manual labour. In the late 1940s and 1950s, however, it was difficult for both Indigenous women and men to participate in the market economy. Many of the

\textsuperscript{735} Report of the Teaching Staff of the Restigouche Indian Day School to the Honourable Members of the Parliamentary Joint Committee Delegation on behalf of the Welfare Indian Act. Oct. 25, 1946. (BanQ. 1981-05-001-17_Divers)

\textsuperscript{736} Letter D.McLean, Secretary, Indian Affairs to Father Pacifique, Missionary, Ste. Anne de Restigouche. 23 May 1898 (Pacifique fonds_1981-05-001-14_pere pacifique _affaires indiennes, BanQ, Rimouski).

\textsuperscript{737} Joseph, 21 Things You May Not Know About the Indian Act, 11.
men of Restigouche went out of the community, and for some out of Canada to the United States (primarily in the northeastern States) to earn a living. Gordon Isaac Sr., recalled that:

Everybody went to the States. When you were old enough to go to the States you’d go to the States. There were no jobs in Québec, or anywhere in Canada you couldn’t find a job them days. And you couldn’t even find a job, so as soon as you were old enough your family allowance ran out, there were 15 of us in the family. When you were old enough to leave you leave. I went to the States, and I got a job and I stayed there until I got married. I went to the paper mill after. And then I was an iron worker after that. … In the States and in Canada here … People I knew from the States, got a job here … they came over here, English people here, and when I’d get over here ‘yeah, I’ll get you a job.’ That’s why I got in. Everybody went to the States. They wouldn’t hire Indians anywhere over here. My father went and worked there 30 years. My mother used to be a cook on a boat over there.

In some of the recollections shared about day schooling, the memories illuminate how family systems, extended Indigenous family systems, were and are impacted not only by the removal of children from their birthplace and family, but rather through a working from the ‘inside’ out. The Indian Day School inserted itself into the community, and from this position attempted to reconfigure extended Indigenous family systems into (settler colonial) nuclear family orderings. In practice, these orderings required many people (especially men) to leave the community, some for months and other for years, to earn a living. The economic structure and vocational training provided by the school required the breakup of family structures and dislocation of workers. The training provided was not meant to build or strengthen the Indigenous community of Restigouche, rather the training was meant to disperse and provided tool that would allow for the successful ‘transition’ (assimilation, integration, and, in the present moment, reconciliation) into (and in present day ‘with’) settler society.
However, many former students expressed positive memories associated with domestic science, sewing, knitting and manual labour or shop classes. When speaking about these classes (domestic science and manual labour), the sense from participants is not so much about being indoctrinated into gendered roles reflective of settler society (as I had expected) but of interludes in which Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) understandings, ways of learning, and sharing knowledges were animated. The positive memories around learning connected with these classes could also be attributed to the sense of boredom that students recalled in other subject areas where the emphasis was on rote learning as they “memorized books” and learned “the same thing year after year”.

In the 1960s, the elected leadership in Restigouche voiced concerns about education, notably speaking out against the streaming of Indigenous students into trades versus college. The issue, however, was not only the streaming of students into one versus the other, as though this was simply a matter of not giving them choice. The issue was how students were looked upon by educators and administrators as lesser than (as incapable of abstract thought, as the teachers at the Restigouche Indian School reported, in 1946, as part of a submission to a Parliamentary Committee to investigate the ‘Welfare
The issue, from the perspective of the Band Council, was Indigenous students’ lack of access and opportunities. Enfranchisement provisions in the Indian Act meant that an Indigenous person would ‘no longer be considered an Indian under the Indian Act’ if they obtained a university degree and met the criteria for ‘fit’ or ‘civilized’, became a priest or minister, or joined the medical or legal profession. A person could lose status for becoming a priest, lawyer, or doctor: the teaching profession, however, was precluded from this net of possible ways to become ‘civilized’ under the Indian Act. Instead, teachers – a field predominately occupied by women, including some Indigenous women (such as Mary Isaac) became what Lisa Emmerich, cited by Martha Walls, terms “certified civilizers.”

There were other issues: as part of its policy framework, Indian Affairs did not fund education programs for individuals who had “lived off of the Reserve for 18 months or more”; there were issues with selection processes, according to Indian Affairs, only ‘one’ child from a family could be selected to go to school, as a matter of “fairness”. As ‘wards of the state’, Mi’gmaq parents and caregivers, Mi’gmaq elected leaders, and Mi’gmaq students themselves had little say when it came to decisions impacting their lifeways.

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738 Discussed further ahead in: (7.4) “Experiencing Cognitive Imperialism”.
739 Education General_2000-00946-8, Box 13, File 25-1, LAC, Ottawa.
740 Walls, “[T]he teacher that cannot understand their language should not be allowed”, 36.
In 1963, Chief William “Je’gopsn” Wysote, and other elected leaders sent a Band Council Resolution to Indian Affairs Branch in Ottawa. The Resolution captures Mi’gmaq visions for education, their desires, and their frustrations; they stated: “[some of] our children are looked upon as slower learners” and that “here in Restigouche, lots of young men have been sent to Trade Schools rather than go to college to achieve higher education”. The Resolution recognizes the systemic barring of access to professions. More than that, it recognizes there are systemic production of underachievement, in turn leading to (and normalizing) so called ‘gaps’ in education between Indigenous and non-Indigenous learners. The Resolution concludes with a statement that echoes voices of earlier generation:

Do we, as Chief and Councillors, have anything to say for the well-being of our children concerning education? We’d like to know; they are our children, and we have to consider their future. 

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In spite of this systematic streaming of Indigenous students into wage labour, it is important to acknowledge that many of the former students had positive memories associated with ‘manual labour’ and ‘home economics’ at the Indian Day School. Some students perceived that in these classes, language posed less of a barrier to learning because instruction was hands on and experiential, and required skills of observation and learning through doing, pedagogies more aligned with Indigenous practices.

(Fig. 29: “James Henry Moffat (right) in his workshop at the Restigouche School, teaching a student plaster

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moulding, circa 1955”\(^{742}\)

Many spoke about the Mi’gmaw teacher, Mr. James Moffat, of Listuguj, who taught carpentry, woodwork, and sculpture at the Day School. In these classes, with Jimmy Moffat, some comments focus on the “relief” they felt – being able to speak Mi’gmaw, inside the classroom.

Downstairs used to be a workshop where James Moffat [Mi’gmaw teacher of Restigouche] used to be a carpenter’s thing there, a shop there. And there was another storeroom in the back somewhere, I don’t know, girls used to go in there and like sewing and all that stuff. So, they had their own workshop. We had our own workshop. And they [the girls] used to cook.

Gordon Isaac, Sr.

When we were in Grade 4, they started what you would call manual labour, but it was a workshop. It was run by Jim Moffat. That was great! It was the only nice thing about the whole thing. We made stuff. It wasn’t forbidden [to speak Mi’gmaw] with him. It was just boys, because the girls were in Home Economics, whatever that was. They had their own stuff to do – knitting, and cooking. But we made bird houses, ash tray stands, even lamps. Standing lamps! I made a beautiful ashtray and I still have it down in the basement. It’s all (damaged) from the dampness, but I should save the pattern and make it. It’s nice, simple. You could use it for a plant stand. This class was sort of a relief, yeah. Jim was very, very nice. Roger Metallic

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\(^{742}\) James Henry Moffat, of Restigouche, attended the Indian day school and then went to the Apprenticeship Centre in Montreal; in 1955, he was hired as teacher of carpentry and sculpture at the Restigouche Indian School. (Photo and annotation: RG10, R216, LAC, Ottawa). In a letter from A.J. Doucet, Regional Inspector of Indian Schools to Mr. James Moffat, Manual Training Instructor (Restigouche), January 13, 1955, the inspector extends his “greatest heartfelt hopes” to Jimmy. As well, Mr. Doucet outlines a “certain number of dangers and how to avoid them”. James Moffat is instructed not to be “familiar” with the students but rather “sincere, honest and firm”; he is cautioned to “stay away from certain meetings, certain places of amusement” that otherwise would have been fine but “due to the fact that you are now a teacher, you must keep away from these places.” Finally, if he experiences any problems, for instance with “controlling” the students, he is advised not to speak to their parents, but rather instructed to seek counsel from the Indian Agent, Mr. S.R. Nadeau, the priests or the Sisters. The letter was not only sent to James Moffat, but a copy was also sent to Father Ephrem, Parish Priest at St. Anne’s Church. What this tells us is that although Jimmy Moffat is a Mi’gmaq instructor at the school, he was also expected to become an agent of the state and re-affirm the authority of the state and church over the population. Nevertheless, the memories and stories shared by former students speak of Mr. Jimmy Moffat’s teaching style, being able to work with their hands, making things, and speaking Mi’gmaw: learning in this environment was described succinctly as a “relief” by some students. (Pacifique Fonds. 1981-05-001-14_Indian Homemakers Club, BanQ, Gaspé)
Some participants spoke about enjoying learning in home economics because you ‘made things’ with your hands: students learned by doing, by observing, and in ways that animate Indigenous methods and ways of sharing knowledges.

I liked learning how to knit and sew and making clothing for siblings. I remember knitting a sweater with a rabbit on the front. *Eunice Metallic*

We used to sew and knit and cook. It was down in a basement, right there [pointing at the picture of the ‘old’ school] that was the Home Economics here, and these were all grade schools. I think the atmosphere [stands out]: I think because you were always afraid and scared and fear because you couldn’t do a lot of stuff that kids do, like fun things to do even at recess or anything, you were always watching. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

Home Economics was a big deal in those days! Not so much cooking, but we were taught to sew, taught to knit, those were the two main things. That was just for girls. The boys had shop. The boys *made* things with their hands. Jim Moffat was the ‘go to guy’ for the trades. And, for the girls, it was very male and female. *Sandra Germain*

I remember, ‘Run, Bill. Run, run, run,’ or something like that. Small books and stuff like that. Most of the times we had a theme going on like Christmas, colour the points. At the school was just like cutting and Home Economics and stuff like that. I liked the knitting part, yeah, making squares and stuff like that and putting it together after to make a blanket because you didn’t have to study. They showed you by hand how to do it and Mother Saint Helena was our Home Economics teacher and she was nice, so you were able to do it. She just showed you how to do it and you just did it, and that was the best part. You had to pray, pray every morning, and sing that O Canada. *Blanche Martin*

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Rimouski (Mother House)
November 2018

One former teacher, interviewed for this project, had positive recollections about “les classes d’enseignant menagier” (or Domestic Science) classes. These classes were not only for the students but also for their mothers. The former teacher highlighted how their objective, as teachers, was for the “education of women”. She recalled how much she herself had enjoyed these classes when she had been a student. This curriculum (sewing, knitting, cooking) is usually
critiqued for the way it trained students to take up particular dispositions in settler society (i.e., lower (or no) wage workers as cleaners, cooks, or homemakers). However, the teacher’s memory, along with the students’ recollections, offer another perspective to this discussion in that the pedagogy seemed to fit well with Indigenous peoples’ cultural practices (what today is considered experiential learning, lifelong, and possibly even holistic education). The teacher, in this instance, also seemed quite at ease with the pedagogy and the content. Although the training may have prepared students for positions and dispositions in settler society, these moments did sometimes allow for positive and deeper engagements and relations between teachers and students. The fact that mothers, too, were included also registers a sharp difference between the day school and residential school experience, since – on some occasions – parents were able to actively participate in the learning. These activities (associated with ‘Domestic Science’) seem to have allowed for knowledge-sharing in many directions, in a less rigid context that allowed for talk, sharing, and – one can imagine – stories and laughter. The joy, too, could have derived from the experience of being actively engaged in the creative process: creating beautiful or useful things. The products made were not only brought back to the home but were also connected albeit in a limited and constrained way, with wage economy (which I discuss further ahead).

This example is presented carefully: my intent is not to whitewash. Rather, it is to acknowledge the wide range of experiences – for learners, for educators, for parents (mothers) – that unfolded, in storying manner (as Emberley observes) at the school, and in the community. Woven throughout the recollection, too, are the ways in which the former teacher seems to overlook any potential differences or conflict, with an emphasis on amicable relations: “we were all together.” And the hierarchy is implicit: Indigenous women and non-Indigenous women may have
gathered, with the ‘White’ mothers still in a role of white saviour ‘showing’ Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) women, in a calculated system of rewards (and punishments), what they considered to be life skills. The former teacher recalled:

We used to have a time for sewing, knitting, woodwork. In Restigouche, there was a Sister named for that. The girls would do that, and also the mothers: knit, crochet, sew. La classe d’enseignant menagier. This was in all the schools [of the Holy Rosary]. We were for the education of women. So, the ladies would participate. Every year, we used to have an exhibit. Each school did that at the end of the year. There was one for the Indians and for the White. They showed them how to cook. The Indians and the White would come together: sewing, knitting, for all the activities. Ladies during the day, during school, when the girls were doing that. The boys did woodwork. We used to love that. That was incentive to listen. To be rewarded at the end of the week: knitting, sewing, needle work, drawing.

This recollection suggests that the training provided at the school focused on skills associated with the home (sewing, knitting, cooking); the mention of ‘drawing’ suggests that some of the training was aesthetic as well as practical.

**Manual Labour associated with disciplining or for remedial purposes**

For some students, however, classes for manual learning were associated with ‘disciplining’ behaviour or a ‘remedial’ purpose. From these recollections there was a sense of being ‘lesser than’. For example, in a letter to Sister Mary of the Holy Eucharist, Indian Day School, dated September 10, 1942, R. A. Hoey, Superintendent of Welfare and Training, noted that: “I should add also that it has never been our policy at any time to assist pupils to take up professional courses such as Medicine, Law, Theology, etc. It would be exceedingly difficult to justify the use of public funds for such
advanced courses.” Indigenous students were systemically prevented from pursuing studies other than vocational or semi-vocational courses at technical schools. (Fig. 30: Letter re: Alphonse Metallic, request for tuition grant)

During the conversations for this project, some former students who attended the Indian Day or Joint school recalled making cultural items; however, these weren’t brought home, instead they recall these items being used by the priest and sold at Saint Anne’s Day celebrations. Some former students voiced the inequities in the classroom, which the elected leadership actively resisted, by the 1960s.

They brought us all together, the bad girls and guys, and they called it a ‘Remedial Classroom’. They brought us in there and taught us – barely any religion – but we would make little bird houses, all of kinds of stuff, but it was, we could never bring it home. They kept it for themselves, or they sold it. I used to make tomahawks, or arrows, for Saint Anne’s Day. Sell it to the priest, and he would sell them to the White folks that came around. Rock throwers, sling shots. That’s all we had was rocks. Kenny Mitchell

It was all mixed. Except in the special class, well, the wild ones, the ones that didn’t want to learn, so they had a class for that. And there was just Natives, they weren't a mix on that one. The troubled ones, they had their own class. They had their own class because I was one of them. (Laughter). It was like, ‘You stupid people stay there,’ Sonny Wysote.

Many students have memories of “not being given a chance”; of ‘repetition’ and of learning from ‘simple books.’ This kind of recollection of phrases from primers comes up several times.

Evidently, at the schools, there was no attempt to encourage reading as a pleasurable pursuit that spoke to interests; it was for limited language learning. Former students spoke about the repetition, just for the sake of it and in a punitive-seeming way. As if they, the students, are being

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punished for being Mi’gmaq as if the objective was to make obedient Catholic ‘Indians’ who knew their place in society. Their place, it seems, was not to imagine, or question, or dream.

They didn’t give you a chance or a special teacher to help us learn, just religion. I had the same book for five years. Zip run up, Zip go down, Zip the name of the dog. That was the book, the same book we read for the whole five years and after a while you don’t want to be there it’s all the same thing. Kenny Mitchell

I moved myself, in different ways. I moved along. There are some things that I am good at. I didn’t speak at all for about four years till about Grade 4. Grade 1, nothing. Grade 2, nothing. Grade 3, I didn’t speak to nobody. But, on the way home I would talk to my friends, in the language. But, in school there was no way I would have spoken at all… But, in the school I was able to read. I said, ‘this book is very silly’. To me it was “See Dick. See Dick run. Run. Run. Run,” Mary Ann Metallic.

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(“It was so simple,” (she said).)

– See Ann Run.
  Run
  Run

  – There was another one at the end it said:

  “Have you ever seen a blue dog?
  A blue that can run and jump and play?
  Have you ever seen a blue dog?”

  (We just memorized it. (She said). For me, it was silly.

  Mary Ann Metallic

We are sitting together in a classroom at the Education Complex in Listuguj. I feel the plastic of the (orange) chair. Life-worlds compress, bodies flattened into a narrow box. Genocide (I am learning) is the net placed around learners’ abilities and desires to imagine, to dream, and to learn.

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Discipline beyond the classroom

Students who attended the Day School spoke about training in a gendered division of labour that extended outside of class time. Some recalled cleaning the school or bringing in wood for heat. In their recollections, former students spoke about the unfairness of being required to clean the school as children, and “for an apple” or for “school supplies” that they would have had access to, regardless. Some spoke about their parents’ generation, and how they too had to clean not only the school, but also the church. The sense from students was that of not being able to refuse, and even when they told their parents, some were met with an unintentional complicity with the colonial system, in the sense that the parents also had been exploited and considered the forced labour normal. Therefore, participants remember their complaints to their parents, sometimes being met with a sense of resignation, perhaps because the parents did not think it was safe for them to condone their children’s rebelliousness or opposition.

We used to wash the windows outside, you had to wash windows. We had to take the screens out and put the windows back in. Oh, we were doing all the work. And we were bringing the wood in down the basement for the furnace. A whole bunch of us would get together to bring all the wood in. We weren’t supposed to do that really, that’s supposed to be done by people that’s supposed to get hired on and … But they’re saving money I suppose we were doing it. They gave you an apple, when you’re all done, they gave you apple. Big deal, you know? And we used to cut the lawn. Sometimes we’d cut the lawn. They’d work and go to classes and all that stuff, mostly we’d just do whatever … saving money I suppose. Better than hiring somebody to do it from outside or something. [This work was] during the school hours.

Gordon Isaac, Sr. (Day School)

The other teachers, especially the nuns, they said, ‘Oh, I need someone this Friday or this Saturday morning to sweep the front yard. And, they said, ‘Oh, can you come?’ And you sort of can’t refuse. They would say, ‘You need to be here Saturday morning, to sweep the front yard, and there will be brooms outside.’ So, we swept the front yard, and for little kids, the back yard, that was hard. She would come in, and open up a closet and take anything, one thing from this supply room. And I took an eraser. And Joyce or somebody else took one other item. But that was how she paid us. We had to do all that work for an eraser. Now, come to think of it, all those supplies were for the children sent from the Indian Agent for our schooling. Former student of the Indian Day School
[Dialogue]

...Yes, I remember where that closet was! It wasn’t a closet; it was a small little room. It was a supply room. The kids would put the chairs on the desk, and we would sweep the floor, and take a rag and wash the legs on the chairs. We would do that every night, and then go there on Saturday and then. And we were so young! We would wash the hallway, the hallway! And one time she (nun) even made us wash the floor, going down the steps! And Joyce (another student) would say, her and I would, I told her, ‘I’ll start here, and you start there, and we’ll meet.’ Well, anyway, our payment was $1 dollar a week. The principal gave us $1 dollar, and then would take us to that supply room. ...And we would take note pads, colouring pencils, and eraser and that’s the first time I saw a math set. I said ‘Oh, I want that!’ That was our payment. And, to me, that was ours to begin with. But that dollar wasn’t.” Former student of the Indian Day School

When I told mom, my mom said ‘Well, at least you got paid!’ They would go to the church, and they would get on their hands and knees and wash every pew, and when they were done, ‘Oh, thank you my children, you shall be rewarded in heaven!’ They didn’t get paid. So, that kind of abuse, I think. I didn’t see them. It was only me and Joyce. But the funny thing is, my mother never made me wash a wall! And, after we looked at that wall that we washed (laughter): you could see the soap, and the streaks, and they told us how to wash the wall. You start at the top to the bottom, and I think we started from the bottom to the top and of course it would drip down and make big stripes. I had never washed a wall! I was too young to wash a wall. That was what she made us do. Former student of the Indian Day School.

“Dear and Kind Sir”: Thank You Letter Sent to Ottawa

It is not uncommon to find ‘student voices’ in the form of Thank You cards sent to the Department of Indian Affairs. These letters reveal the imposed relations: ‘Indian Affairs’ standing in as a type of distant Father, or Uncle, the benefactor to whom “your grateful” student is indebted. As other letters reveal, students were held in contempt if the “Dear & kind Sir” offers
or arrangements for education were refused by the student. For example, in the Thank You' Letter sent from Anna Caplin of Gesgapegiag (Maria) to Mr. R.A. Hoey, Superintendent, Indian Affairs September 14, 1944, shows not only type of vocational training available to Indigenous girls at this time, but also the ways in which Indigenous Peoples, as wards of State, were required to ‘submit’ to their benefactor, the “Dear & kind Sir” who made it possible for “lucky” students to have the “chance of learning,” through a particular mode of address. The schools grew on the Mi’gmaw homelands, taking hold, and putting in place colonial patterns. (Fig. 31: Letter from Anna Caplin to Mr. R.A. Hoey, Superintendent of Indian Affairs, 1944)

744 In a letter (Sept. 8, 1947) from Edgar Arsenault, Agent to the Indian Affairs Branch (Ottawa) he writes: “I am sorry to inform the Department that John Henry Isaac has refused the $250.00 grant which you so benevolent offered him to continues his studies ... he has no reason to give except that he changed his mind ... The Principal of the Restigouche School, myself and more especially the Department have certainly done their share to encourage a better education amongst the young Indians and no one shall have blame to give in the future ... the pupils have been informed ... all what the Dept. has done for them regarding their education and the refusal of John Henry Isaac to accept the $250.00 grant to complete his studies. (RG 10. Vol. 6485, file 42026-3, part 2_C8798, LAC, Ottawa.)

745 The Indian Day School in Gesgapegiag was also taught by the Sisters of Holy Rosary. Gesgapegiag is a Mi’gmaw community (in Quebec), 75 km east of Listuguj.

[Passageway Two: Travelling from School to Home]

In 1911, the Superintendent of Indian Education sent a brief report to the Department of Indian Affairs about the Restigouche Day School. The main body of the report is written by Sister Mary of the Holy Rosary. \(^{747}\) I stitched together excerpts from their report to create another passageway: this one extends from Indian Day School into the homes of the children.

The school now compares favourably with the best school in the province. It is conducted by the nuns who are resident

in an adjoining building and who have, therefore, constant supervision and a strong influence over the pupils.

Sewing is taught in this school.

The institution is a great factor in the civilization of the reserve.

The Micmac tribe is a branch of the Algonquin family extending years ago over half of North America.

Now-a-days, the Micmacs are found in the eastern part scattered here and there.

The most important of their reserves is Restigouche situated on the North bank of the Restigouche River.

(Fig. 32: “Exposition Travaux menagers”, circa 1949. Articles of sewing on display at the annual end of year exhibit involving both Indigenous and non-Indigenous women at the Day School.)

All the Micmacs are Roman Catholic, since their Conversion in 1610

They have remained faithful to their religion and their language although a great number of them can read and write English readily. English, the business language, is taught at school.

A school was built in 1860 and kept by lay teachers till 1903 at which point the Sisters of the Holy Rosary were appointed to obtain more regular attendance, as enticements for the children lessons in Music, Singing, Sewing, Knitting were added to the School Program. The Department supplied necessary materials and prizes for the best workers to assure improvement.

(Fig. 33: Mi’gmaq women and Sister of the Holy Rosary 1949)

A Sewing Circle was soon formed every Friday they assembled in the sewing-room along with their little daughters Learned to use a sewing machine and a loom To knit and mend stockings To make and mend boys’ clothes and girl’ dresses fancy work and crochet

And at the end of the year the pieces of work made by the scholars were exhibited. The parents admitted to the examination and they greatly admired their children’s doings expressed appreciation at the nuns’ devotedness.

It is surely owing to the financial grants and to the encouraging prizes of the intelligent members of the Departmental Staff

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748 Restigouche_groupe d’eleves_1949_F5-73, Holy Rosary, Rimouski.
that so much improvement
is to be stated among
the indian children here.

Noticeable improvement has been given
towards modern
civilization
owing undoubtedly to the work easily afforded to the Indian Men on the reserve.

The careful education and the useful instruction

that the young Squaws receive at their school
have already proved of
consoling results concerning
their personal behaviour,
as well as the improving condition
of their homely fireside

The grown-up folks,

so used to the misdemeanors and ill behaviours of youngsters
now look on their gentle conduct
with wonder and contentment.

Those beneficial result make us hope for future progress, and progress, however slight it may be, is still progress, and progress means
Glory to God and Peace on earth.

Very Respectfully Yours,
Sister Mary of the Holy Rosary, Indian School Teacher.

Looking at the photograph, I wonder at what Mothers and the Sister are holding, posing on the front steps of the Indian Day School. Pillows with flowers, others showing Indigenous headdress.

One woman is holding a small dress, or a gown. Others hold boxes, perhaps with articles of clothing, ready to be sent off.
Sewing Circles: an interruption

At Restigouche, like other First Nation reserve communities across Canada, women participated in Indian Homemakers Club. The Club had “at its disposal a room in the basement of the old school.” The women worked together, “weaving, sewing”. They produced garments – *pajamas, skirts, trousers, windbreakers* – for Indian Services hospitals, in the west. It is possible, too, that some of the clothing would have been sent to Indian Residential Schools; and some were sent to “needy Indians of the reserve”. In one letter, March 19, 1946, from G. Armstrong, Department of Mines and Resources (Indian Affairs Branch) to the Reverend Sisters, notes that the going rate is 60 cents per garment. Payment can be made either in cash or in “kind”: the latter method is preferred, including a list of items (paint, furniture, clothing, day-old-chicks, chick feed). In kind payment versus cash, Indian Affairs writes, is a “procedure” that tends to “improve the living conditions on the reserve more than when payment is made in cash”. In other words, Indigenous people, Indigenous women – are more than capable of sewing thousands of garments\(^{749}\), supplying “much needed” garments used in hospitals, in communities, and (possibly) at schools, yet their ability to participate in a wage economy is partial, restricted by measures put in place to provide payment in “kind”, produced in this manner as incapable of managing their own funds, their own moneys. In Restigouche, the Homemakers’ Club ran from the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s.\(^ {750}\)

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\(^{749}\) For example, one order required by Indian Health Services of the Homemakers Club is for a total of 1,200 pieces of garments. These items were sent to Indian Services hospital at Edmonton, Alberta. (Letter from G. Armstrong, Welfare Division (Indian Affairs Branch) to E. Arsenault, Indian Agent, September 24, 1946). (Pacifique Fonds. Indian Homemakers Club, BanQ, Gaspé.

\(^{750}\) I reviewed Correspondence between Department of Mines and Resources (Indian Affairs Branch) and E. Arsenault, Indian Agent, Reverend Sister M. of the Holy Eucharist, r.s.r., Restigouche Indian Day School, Berthe Fortin (Social Worker), Reverend Father Ephrem (Freres, Mineurs Capuchins). Letters dated: March 5, 1945, March 19, 1945, March 27, 1945, May 11, 1945, September 18, 1945, Sept. 23, 1946, October 17, 1951, November 22,
7.4) Experiencing Cognitive Imperialism

In our conversations, participants shared recollections about the general sense of being ‘lesser than’ in the school environment at the schools in Restigouche. At certain points in the conversation, a silence entered the room. Sometimes, the silence fell into the conversation, uninvited. Other times, the silence is the recorder turned off. *I have a memory of a woman speaking, her face turned upward, looking elsewhere, and then returning.* The following are excerpts from conversations that illuminate what Marie Battiste describes as ‘cognitive imperialism’. I struggled with naming this portion. How do I speak about the wholeness that was invaded by the schools? The schooling infiltrated the mind and the body; yet, to name it as such there is a danger of reinforcing European epistemology in the way it names mind and body separately.

As outlined in Chapter 4.4 of this dissertation, cognitive imperialism is Battiste’s term that captures the way that colonial schooling, as part of colonialism, targeted control over Indigenous minds. Battiste contends that cognitive imperialism denotes the ways in which Euro-Western education systems have “white-washed” the minds of Indigenous peoples. Especially pertinent to this dissertation is Battiste’s argument that cognitive imperialism was not only part of the assimilative and genocidal colonial schooling of Indigenous students, but also that public schooling – as a whole – has been built around and for Eurocentric knowledge systems, whilst

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1954, January 20, 1954. The Indian Homemakers’ Club movement began in Saskatchewan, in 1937. The purpose of the Club was to “improve living conditions in Indian communities by co-operating in all projects which have as their objective a better way of life”. Indian Affairs assisted with organizing new clubs and well-established groups. As policy, the Branch supplied resources required for ‘homemaking’ (*Constitution and Regulations for Indian Homemakers’ Clubs*, circa 1945). (Pacifique Fonds. Indian Homemakers Club. 1945-1957, BanQ, Gaspé).
Indigenous ways of knowing are either “at the periphery, or ignored completely.” There is a need to be critically aware of the conditions of oppression by acknowledging the experiences of whitewashing in schooling. Battiste observes that there is a need to identify, name, and acknowledge the ongoing legacy of colonial schooling because settlers and Indigenous peoples are all “marinated” in this thought system.

Initially, I had thought of cognitive imperialism as the effects of colonial structures and ideologies on the minds of Indigenous students, on knowledge systems and ways of thinking. However, it is difficult to separate thoughts and cognitive processes from the physical experiences, from the body. The experience was total immersion, of the mind and the body. In our conversations, I asked former students about their sensory memories: What did they remember seeing, hearing? What did they recall about the scents at the school? Students at day schools went home at night, however, during the assimilatory ‘residential and day’ school era, Indigenous students entered the day school space as ‘wards of the state’. In this position, they were dependent upon the teacher, on the institution, not only for the instruction and cognitive learning but for all aspects of their well-being, of their sense of safety, and – in some instances – of their basic human needs (clothing, food).

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In Gaspé, I find a report, like a scattered remnant, dated October 25, 1946, of a submission put forth by the Staff, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary, to the Members of the Delegation of the Parliamentary Joint Committee to investigate the ‘Welfare Indian Act.’

In their submission to the Joint Parliamentary Committee, the Sisters conclude with the statement: “Academic course for Indians are too abstract and entirely against their nature …” The teachers’ position speaks about Eurocentric assumptions about what constitutes abstract thinking and illuminates how the teachers did not understand Mi’gmaq abstraction, concepts, symbols, ways of building and sharing knowledge. (Fig. 34: Report of the Teaching Staff to the Joint Committee, 1946) At the Day School, the teachers affirm that students, particularly girls, were

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753 In “Citizenship and Treaty Rights,” Drees notes that in May of 1946, the minister of Mines and Resources responsible for Indian Affairs moved “That a joint committee of the senate and the house of commons be appointed to examine and consider the Indian Act … with authority to investigate and report upon Indian administration in general” including: treaty rights, band membership, disfranchisement of Indians, Indian Schools, and other matters associated with “social and economic status,” (141). Drees contends that the Special Committee (its report and recommendations) are significant in part because the Committee worked with a mandate to investigate a vision for Indigenous peoples “role as workers and citizens in postwar society”. Further, Drees observes that the investigation represents one of the “first opportunities for Indian groups across the country to publicly air their views on their place within Canada.” (141). In the submission from Restigouche, however, Mi’gmaq views about schooling are omitted.

schooled to “love the family circle”. The teachers add that vocational schooling could be expanded in the community to encourage “self-reliance” and to mitigate against the “pitiful” condition when students leave the graded schools. The teachers’ closing remarks are less about Mi’gmaq views about their social and economic situation, generally, or schooling. The remarks show more about colonial logic, ‘white possession’, and the teachers’ unquestioned entitlement to speak on behalf of the students about ‘what’ they would want: vocational courses (for boys) and “the family circle” (for girls).

It is important to make these types of colonial documents from the Indian Day School visible, like artifacts, exposing and drawing out the specifics of settler colonial logic. There is a need to put settler (white) minds on display. It is also important because the Sisters’ views run counter to the wider conversations happening across Canada at that time. In his analysis of federal Indian Day Schools, W.D. Hamilton observes that in post-World War II, there was an increasing awareness developing about human rights, including an awareness that segregated schooling, based on race, was “wrong.”

Hamilton notes that among the recommendations made, in 1946, by the committee reviewing the Indian Act was that “Indian and non-Indian children should attend the same schools wherever possible”. Further, the policy framework that followed was to “close down Indian day schools” where “integration” of Indigenous students into the provincial stream was a possibility. One could speculate that the nuns’ response – pushing for the continued forms of segregated vocational schools for Mi’gmaq students, was that their own

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756 Ibid, 19.
livelihoods (overseeing, delivering, and directing schooling) would be threatened by the
dissolving of these schools, and policies of integration.

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Marginalized memories

The recollections of some former students expressed the sense of structured inferiority, the
intersections of gendered and racialized bodies produced in the classrooms at the day school in
Restigouche. These “marginalized memories”, to use Molema’s words used at the outset, show
how some students recall what it meant to be a child in a system underpinned by a vision to
whitewash their minds, while ignoring, dismissing, or denigrating their own Indigenous ways of
knowing, their family connections, language, and history. These recollections show the harms of
colonial schooling, through the experiences of cognitive imperialism, underpinned by white
possession. Some memories show how religion was used as an enforcer for school rules and
regulations. Using God (“fear of hell”) as an enforcer produces a particular helplessness in
children because how do you protest and fight back if God is on their (the teachers, the priests,
the nuns) side? Either the adults are lying (which would mean that the child is unsafe) or the
adults are right and “I am bad”). If the child resists, talks back to God, then clearly this is the
child’s problem, and the pain experienced is ‘their fault’.

… I always see a nun shuffling around, ‘shuffle shuffle, shuffle’. I see a black board. Crayons.
Brushes that we had to take out and clean every day. It was almost a treat when someone
would say “Sandra, can you take the brushes out?” And you thought you were so special …
We were constantly on guard. We were just constantly bowing down to them, bowing to
them. I think about how brainwashed we all were at the time. There was this fear, I don’t call
it a respect. The fear. The fear came more from the religion than anything else. And this fear
of going to hell. Hell was a big, big thing. They were always throwing that in your face. And,
the fire, and the devil, and the images. Those were the things that when I think about the
school that was what we saw always, always – the devil, the devil. And, then this big, white
man with a beard, sitting on a throne. That was God. … Sandra Germain
Some former students spoke about witnessing unjust and cruel behaviour. These memories attest to powerful and harmful ways of asserting control without having to physically touch a child.

I think when I started seeing things, I didn’t like by Grade 3 and 4, where some kids were treated not very nice. … I have to keep saying that because we were treated differently because we had good English grammar. I think our classmates who had broken English, they weren’t treated well. I remember the Grade 2 teacher and Grade 3, I don’t really remember, but that’s the time when I started to see the unfairness of everything. You know, you don’t think that it has an impact on you because you’re sitting there quietly, and no attention is put on you. But, when you see other kids being mistreated because they spoke out, or they spoke in their language, that continued to have an impact on me over the years without me actually realizing what an impact it had. Gail Metallic

Internalizing shame and inadequacy

Some participants spoke about the shame experienced as a young child when they could not express themselves to meet their basic human needs. Students spoke about school and the sense of going somewhere where they would not be understood. Some internalized the lack of understanding as their own deficiency versus a deficiency in the school system.

For me, going to the bathroom was the hardest part because I kept telling them you know, ‘Getulia bathroom. Getu’sgi, getu’sgi! Amujipa aji’sgi.’ And the most embarrassing part is that everything came out of your body – fluids and whatever, and you had to go home, all the way, filthy, to go home and change your clothes. Now, can you imagine going down, a six-year-old on the road, going home crying, how you felt, walking home, and then you get home and you had to clean up, and those times we didn’t have a bathtub and a sink. You had to warm your water up on the stove to clean yourself and you got to clean your clothes and you clean up. And, then the same thing, repeat it, you walk back to the school the next day and it’s the same thing, you know there’s something in your stomach, there’s something there, and your heart is pounding because you’re going somewheres and they don’t understand you. And I kept telling my parents ‘They’re mean people they don’t understand me, I don’t understand them, I don’t know what’s going on’. Really, I didn’t know what was going on.

You were trying to talk (with other students) because you relate in Mi’gmaw. But they were trying to, I mean hitting you, because you know you’re trying to talk, but they don’t know what you’re talking about, and I don’t know what they’re talking about. I was in Grade three and I realized that’s the nun, Mother Saint John that was her name, she was the only one I noticed in Grade three that she was really nice. But, the other ones, no they weren’t nice.
What I got out of from that experience, I said to myself ‘it’s because I’m stupid’ and that carried me for a long, long time: stupid. Even when I tried, I only made it as far as grade nine, I think, and I had a hard time learning, even when I took my GED a couple years ago. I had it in my mind that I’m stupid and that I’m not going to pass. That’s what they engrained in me was that I was stupid. I never got hit until I was in grade one. In kindergarten, yes, I remember being pulled, pulled by your ears, or yanked at you, but it was when I got into grade one that you started getting slappings on your hand because they ask you to read something, but how can I read? They give you a book, something to write, no clue. I go home I ask my parents and they had no clue how to help me, nope. Tried to learn your ABC’s and they give you homework and it was more of a stress when you go home and then when you go back the next day you still felt something that you know you’re going to get today.

My first day at the school was very traumatizing, because, why it was, was because I was going in there, I was happy to see all the stuff but then it came to the language barrier problem. I didn’t understand what they were talking about, and they didn’t understand me, what I was saying. So, basically you were going in there without a clue, you were scared. If you interacted with another child in your language they would yell at you, but you don’t know why, because you feel so good to connect with the other person that there was no connection, no connection at all. You’d ask, ‘Why are they doing this and why am I going to this place?’ Because it’s like, I was raised just Mi’gmaw, my parents were both fluent in Mi’gmaw, there was no English and at that time there was no bridge that was going across [the river to Campbellton, NB] … So, that was the hardest part, is the language. Because you don’t know what they’re talking about. Until grade 3 or 4, I had only picked up a little bit of English. But you still didn’t know, you still didn’t understand. You always had a knot in your stomach and something here and like you know you’re going in somewhere – you don’t know what it is, it’s not a good feeling. Not a good feeling mentally, too, because like I said I felt I was stupid because I couldn’t learn, it’s like I didn’t understand. Blanche Martin

**Intergenerational effects – school rules continued at home**

The intergenerational effects continued in that some former students did not allow their own children to speak Mi’gmaw at home. These recollections counter the assumption that day schools were ‘not as bad’ as residential schools because children went home at the end of the day. ‘Going home’ was complicated because for some it meant going home to parents who felt that the best way to protect their children was to continue some of the rules of school at home. Rules of the school extended at home, and some children at the Day School absorbed lessons not to speak about violence. In the IRS system, individuals were taken by schools, but in non-residential
contexts, the ‘schools’ (through the missions, established on contested Indigenous lands) took the entire communities, because parents were also directly subjugated. The school/church/state had enormous control over the home, so there was no ‘home free’, for many children, at the end of the day.

So, today I’m so happy that they have Mi’gmaw, and if a kid starts going to school then you slowly integrate them. So, my children, I never spoke to them in Mi’gmaw. I said I don’t want you to go through what I went through, I said with all the mental and the physical abuse and the verbal abuse, I said no. I’m speaking to you in English, and I said ‘well, when you’re eighteen it’s up to you, you can learn it.’ So, when they ask why didn’t you speak to us in Mi’gmaw? I said no because I went through a lot. I never graduated. ‘Blanche Martin

And another thing, the way I teach them in English, and we talk English because what I went through when I was coming up. I couldn’t understand a word of English at all, just as an Indian I used to get beat up for that, get punished for that. And I don’t want my kids, when they start schooling, I don’t want to see that, so I taught them in English. And we both talk English, and the kids talk English. Not an easy thing to do, no [not speak Mi’gmaw to your own children]. As you get older you look at it, and that’s your heritage and everything else, I changed that myself, I did that myself, nobody did that to me. Hey? Just on account of that experience I had when I was very little, I don’t want that experience to happen to my children, because I can’t go to the school or punish anybody or say anything. But that’s all changed now. Now they’re taught everything. The past. Nobody must forget their past. You know what I mean? Canada denies it. Because it was bad. If it was anything good, they would brag about it! Gordon Isaac, Sr.

The internalization of responsibility for genocide is the ultimate injury. The sense that “I did that to myself, nobody did that to me” seems like a better option than being helpless, victimized, or hurt (the agents of colonialism did that to me). Parents were forced to watch their children go to school, knowing what they were experiencing, yet with very little power to protect them. The best way to protect their children was to teach them English at home, so they didn’t get punished at school. This history, however, is still raw; there are crevices and silences in conversations about “all that has changed” (the violence and violations), which cannot be forgotten: “[n]obody must forget their past”.

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Children learned to stay silent about what they experienced at school, or risk being punished again when they went home. This silence may have been fear of extra punishment, and ‘not telling’ may have been a way for the children to protect their parents from feeling the pain and humiliation of being unable to stop someone from harming their child, or to lose face because they knew their parents could not help them.

What happened at school, stays at school. If you were bad, you got the strap, if you went home and said anything because you might get beat again, so everyone kept their mouth shut. *Roger Metallic*

If something happened in school, you didn’t say anything at home. You got strapped at home because it’s ‘your fault’. Parents would ask “what did you do”. We never told our parents what happened at school, about being made to sit in the corner or kneel down [and pray]. *Patsy Gray and Eunice Metallic*

One participant spoke about the impact of seeing others punished for speaking Mi’gmaq as a type of ‘second-hand brutality’. She remembers, too, as a young adult returning to her language, rebuilding, and revitalizing relations.

The impact of ‘second-hand brutality’: It drove us to that need to learn the language. So, it stemmed from Grade 3 and 4, we wanted to know. We wanted to learn to speak Mi’gmaq. And our mother still wouldn’t, she was convinced it had to be in English. Little did I know at the time it was because of her experiences at the Indian Day School, and that really pushed her to try and keep us from speaking the language because she was, when I hear her stories, it really impacts what happened to a lot of our people. She was just shamed into being who she was, she became ashamed of being Mi’gmaq, Nnu. Towards the end she gained her pride in who she was. She started to see things a little differently. That there was a reason why she didn’t like who she was. Inside, she started to get a little more pride back. Because my grandmother was always proud, being Mi’gmaq, being Nnu is what she would say. … It was always Nnu (person). Nnuegati, the land. Ula Nnuegati. Your land. *Gail Metallic*

Many former students recalled that the nuns, their teachers, and the pedagogy devalued and dehumanized Indigenous peoples, knowledge systems and languages. Former students who
attended the school, from the late 1940s through the 1960s, voiced memories about experiences that still carry echoes of being dehumanized, while at school.

We used to sing a little song about Indian Boys. I wonder if you heard it? “One little, two little, three little Indians.” I never liked that song, but they used to make us sing it. I wonder why they made us sing that? I didn’t like it. But I had to sing it, mind you.\textsuperscript{757} Roger Metallic

That’s the way I remember my growing up days. Grade Six, I made it. [That’s when] I quit. My grandmother couldn’t get me to go back because I wouldn’t. It was something that I got out of that school anyway [learning to read, write and speak English]. Probably if it was a good teacher we would’ve learned more, instead of strict and ... those nuns thought about us like if we were not humans, I guess. Made us feel like we were ... ashamed of ourselves. ...[Today] I don’t feel ashamed of myself or anything. I did a bit, but I grew out of it eventually. Make your own lives, as long as you educate yourself and work. Gladys Germain

I worked all my life and all the ones that said I was going to be nobody. And, all the quiet ones that were going to be somebody, well those quiet ones got to be so bad that most of them are dead. And I’m still alive. Because they used to tell me to my face, ‘you’re going to prison, you’re dying, you’re not going to live long, and you are going to be in hell.’ That was pushed on me until I left Listuguj at that school. But I was just born hyper, but you don’t have to kill me for it, beat me for it. Kenny Mitchell

I don’t remember any of the learning. ... I think there are times when it is safer not to remember anything. Especially if something happened to your friends ... I started losing memories after Grade 2. ... The other one, the nun that I remember, I think her name was Mother Queen of the Cape. But they called her ‘poleajiq’ she was in Grade 4 ... I had just come back from my father’s funeral in Maine, and she started talking about ‘If you are not anything but Catholic you are going to be burning in hell when you die’. I was tortured by that for a while because my grandfather was a Baptist and he was a good person, but I could just see him burning in hell and it wasn’t a nice picture. But that’s how they taught the religion at the time. ... you try to look at some and say ‘well, they tried to assimilate you and make you a better person’ in their minds. But some were just mean. Gail Metallic

\textsuperscript{757} Roger spoke about a counting rhyme from the 1860s. This genocidal counting rhyme was written by songwriter Septimus Winner, in 1868, and performed at minstrel shows. The rhyme made an appearance in a 1930s Disney Cartoon. The rhyme was adopted by Frank J. Green and used at “blackface minstrel shows” into the early 20\textsuperscript{th} Century. (Jennings. “The History of ‘Ten Little Indians,’” 2018). For some Indian Day School students, including Roger, they learned to count through a rhyming song that counts down to “none”. The memory of this type of learning names the forced disappearance, the genocide that was being enacted in the day school. Further, numbers in Mi’gmaq worldview are organized according to a whole different cosmology – there are nuances about ‘what’ and ‘who’ is being counted, differences when counting time or based on shape, on being animate and inanimate. This expansive, differentiated, nuanced and specific way of ordering the world is in a sense constrained and flattened by the linearity of a world organized from ‘ten’ to ‘one’; and the constraint is further compounded by relearning numbers through a hateful song.
And all the scribblers, the Government of Canada. Big scribblers like, you know yellow ones, they’re all like about this size. The French students, they got all the nice ones like that, and we got half of that. They cut it in half. And there was one copy that’s got to be just right, and then you know what I mean, it’s like a stock, like they keep that on the side, and they showed that to the superintendent when he comes in, all the good stuff, like Indians. At first you didn’t know what was going on, but as you grow older you will remember that. It wasn’t very nice. *Gordon Isaac Sr.*

For me, it’s regret. Thinking about this now. I regret our schooling. It was as though they thought we weren’t capable. We were deliberately kept down and not given a decent education. The priests had ‘absolute’ power and in these conditions the children had to obey. Parents taught children to be obedient and not to ‘talk back’, which allowed for conditions for abuse to occur. *Mary Ann Metallic*

And like I said, every once or twice a week, if it was the auditorium, then the nun goes up there and just asks the Natives, while the rest of the people stay in their class, we’d get one of the — and call us names and ‘uncivilized Indians’, and how bad we are, ‘you are bad people.’ We were bad people, like, why were they doing that to us? While the rest of the people still up there, they don’t come down. Yeah, in the same, you know, auditorium and if anybody hurts you, you know, it’s just Natives. And they were, like, degrading all of us and putting us down —-. But yeah, I was in there. In this life today, I should be hanging upside down, somewhere —- [laughter]. And I think that’s why the school was burned down, because of all that too. I didn’t have no feeling because you didn’t want to learn, you know, your [desire for] learning is gone. *Sonny Wysote*

— And you get angry. *Maggie Isaac.*

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Targeting Children’s Bodies

To me I always used to say nothing. I was always quiet. I never say nothing or anything, what’s wrong or whatever. I never used to say nothing. I remember the boys getting their hair cut. They would put a bowl on their head and cut their hair. I kept it to myself. I never speak out or anything I kept it to myself. Maybe that’s why it was hard for me to remember, but I never brought it out or anything. Former student of the Indian Day School

(Fig. 35: Letter from Sister Mary of the Holy Eucharist to Secretary of Indian Affairs, Nov. 8, 1941)\textsuperscript{758}

Some of the letters from the Sisters to the Department of Indian Affairs show the nuns’ bodies too. One letter dated November 5, 1941, from Sister Mary of the Holy Eucharist to the Department of Indian Affairs, shows her repugnance, her rigidity, and her very embodied response to the pupils. Sister Holy Eucharist stated:

In spite of being in contact with the Indians for five years and have tried to accustom myself to their ways of doing, there is one thing which I still find hard to overcome. It is the untidiness of unreasonable long hair on the boy’s head, especially when pediculi have to be controlled at school.

In a recollection of a former student, Gail Metallic, she spoke about the effects of the nuns’ rigidity on the students themselves. Gail recalled,

If someone had head lice it was because they were dirty. We know today it has nothing to do with dirt. In large families, it’s more apt to happen because of everybody sleeping in the same

\textsuperscript{758} Letter from Sister M. of the H. Eucharist dated Nov. 8, 1941, to the Department. Sister Holy Eucharist requests funds for hair cutting supplies from the Department for the boys at the Indian Day School. The letter shows the emphasis on cleansing of bodies, particularly the boys, instilling a sense of uncleanness and racialized sense of shame, while simultaneously couching the request as beneficial: the older boys will have an opportunity to learn a trade. (C-6183, RG 10. Vol.6101, file 326-5, part 5, LAC, Ottawa.). The approval for the “expenditure” from the Department, dated Nov.12, 1941, is addressed to the Indian Agent, Restigouche from the Superintendent of Welfare & Training. In the gendered hierarchy of relations, the nuns are below the Agent. (Letter from R.A. Hoey to Dr. A. Richard, November 12, 1941. (C-6183_RG 10. Vol.6101, file 326-5, part 5, LAC, Ottawa.)
bed, but not because they are dirty. I’m trying to think now where the washrooms were. Because they would take a child out of the room, go, and wash them up, and bring them back. But it couldn’t have been in the bathrooms! I don’t remember where it was.

**Hunger**

They used to feed you cookies that were hard as a rock, they were in a barrel and milk was powdered milk. Yup, they fed you powdered milk. They give you cookies – hard as this – (knocking the table) that were in a barrel for snacks and then powdered milk and stuff like that. I remember one time, one time I remember, we had chocolate milk and white milk, one time. I don’t know what the occasion was, other than those hard cookies in the barrel and you would always smell that food because they were always cooking something. [We didn’t get] the food we could smell. That was for the nuns. Their convent was on the side [of the school], and later on it was in the back. *Blanche Metallic*

[The teacher asks the questions]

I remember the teacher asking all of us:
“*What did you have for breakfast this morning.*”
We took turns saying what it was.

I remember, in front of me was Terry Ann Jenny.
She was the Agent’s,
the Indian Agent’s, daughter.
And she said, “*scrambled eggs and bacon,*
*an orange,*
*two toasts*
*and some orange juice.*”

And, then it came, a few rows behind, I don’t remember even eating that morning.
“*What did you have, Mary Ann?*”

“I had two toasts, scrambled eggs, and bacon, and little bit of orange juice.”
(laughter)
Exactly what Terry Ann Jenny said!
And I didn’t eat.
– *Mary Ann Metallic*

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Another recollection, this time from the archival records, in the early 1940s. The Department approved funding to supply midday lunch at the school. A letter from R. A. Hoey, Superintendent of Welfare to Dr. A. Richard, Indian agent, states:

As there is no lack of work at the present time it is felt that the parents should be in a position to supply their children with the food required for their midday lunch.

The tone of the letter carries a trace of reprimand against the parents who, the Department asserts, “should be in a position” to supply food. This assertion is at odds with the memories of children who recalled their parents needing to leave the community because “no one would hire an Indian” at the time. There is an undertone, in the letters, of children ‘being hungry’ whilst at school. Yet, rather than meeting this basic human need, to be fed, the Department chose to place blame and produced the ‘irresponsible’ parents as responsible for this lack. In other words, the wider context, the economic racism facing Indigenous peoples to participate fully in settler society is ignored. The Department provided limited funds for midday meals, which seemed, from the sensory memories of participants who took part in this project, inadequate in terms of meeting the physical needs of the children. (Fig.36: Letter from Superintendent (Indian Affairs Branch) to the Indian Agent, Sept. 29, 1941)759

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759 Letter from Department, Mr. Hoey to Indian Agent, Dr. Richard, Sept. 29, 1941. (C-6183, RG.10, Vol.6101, 326-5, part 5, LAC, Ottawa.). On Feb.11, 1942, Sister M. of the Holy Eucharist sent another request to the Department this time for $10.00 to buy “one more bag of beans, and one bag of peas” from the Atlantic Trading Company (store located on Mission Land in Restigouche) to serve the “midday lunches till the coldest season is over” (C-6183, RG.10, Vol. 6101, 326-5, part 5, LAC, Ottawa.). The Department gave the request “considerable thought” reminding the Indian Agent that “in September” the Department would “only allow $90.00” and that in granting the additional funds the Sister Superior needed to “distinctly understand” that the additional funds could not “form a precedent” in the future” (February 14, 1942) (C-6183, Vol.6101, 326-5, part 5, LAC, Ottawa.). The reprimands and frugal responses from the Department about supplying meals for the children echo previous patterns whereby the
One participant, who attended the Indian Day School, recalled,

Eating watery pea soup,
hard biscuits.
You got two biscuits
if you were lucky. *Eunice Metallic*

Another person spoke about the meals at the Day School,

And they were feeding us for a while there, boiled potatoes and a piece of meat, that’s all it was. We went in the morning, and we stayed there for dinner [noon time], and sometimes we’d bring our own lunch. It wasn’t much anyway because we were all poor anyway, a piece of bread with lard on it and all that and beans. But when we’d get there, we’d get some- well boiled potatoes and a piece of meat, and we got soup; watery soup. And they had powdered milk. And they’d give us tack from their army surplus. Biscuits. They were hard as a rock. *Gordon Isaac, Sr.*

At the Joint School, built in 1961, some participants shared memories about the mealtimes, which they recalled as much improved from the previous years.

The cafeteria. We had a cafeteria! A full-fledged cafeteria, we had that then. The lunch was wonderful. The French women cooked. We would get milk, and hot meals, and a dessert. I believe that the Indian Agent paid for it at the time because we couldn’t afford to do that. We had a cafeteria. *Sandra Germain*

**Mouths, Teeth**

In their recollections, many former students spoke about medical procedures while at school and testing for tuberculosis. Participants who took part in this project spoke especially about the dentist. Most described having their teeth extracted during the school day, at the school; some spoke about the lasting impact of these procedures (almost) normalized for Indigenous school
children. Health care clinics were less of an occasion to strengthen families, let alone provide
dental education, and were more about providing rushed, inadequate treatment and provision of
care.

In their work, Catherine Carstairs and Ian Mosby examine oral health care and Indigenous
Peoples in Canada, from 1945-1971. They argue that during this time “the federal government
made only limited attempts to provide oral health care to Indigenous Peoples despite treaty
promises of health care”. Similar to the memories of many (if not all) the participants who took
part in this research, Carstairs and Mosby argue that the “oral health care services provided were
rushed, inadequate, inconsistent, and sometimes cruel.” The research links the inequities in
health care, which were compounded by “cruel and traumatic experiences” (as this research
affirms), to federal health care policies put in place after 1945. Bodies were targeted, and
managed differently: Indigenous children’s teeth were often brutally extracted.

I asked if they remembered which adults were present in the room: the Dentist, the Nuns, and the
Nurse. “Were your parents there?” (I asked one participant) “No,” he affirmed.

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761 Ibid, 195.

762 Carstairs and Mosby show that during this particular period, oral health care was “improving for most Canadians,
especially in urban areas. Many municipalities invested in water fluoridation, which reduced cavities among
children by as much as 60 percent. Provinces poured money into dental education, significantly increasing the
number of dentists and improving access to care” (“Colonial Extractions,” 196).
Some recall running away from school when the dentist arrived; others said, their parents told them to leave. There was a sense of violation, of distrust, and of fear. Some spoke about the racialization of their bodies – that ‘only Natives’ endured this process, while others emphasized the sense of shame associated with these experiences that marked them as different. For some, the visit from the dentist was an occasion differentiating between Indigenous and non-Indigenous children, with only the former being assigned to the school “dental clinic”. This selection process produced the desire to be included, despite the associated pain, and – later, in adulthood – to take charge of Indigenous identity. (Fig. 37: Notation about the dentist’s visit, Sisters’ Chronicles, 1960)\(^{763}\)

\textit{In their chronicle, the Sisters note that the dentist, J. Michaud, visited the school and examined the teeth of all the students, and made the necessary extraction. The work lasted over a period of two weeks. The nurse in Restigouche, also kept notes of the names of students, the dates and number of teeth taken from their mouths.}\(^{764}\) I wonder at the absence of students’ parents; I am startled by the ways that the schools (located in the community) infiltrated not only the minds and beliefs but drilled down inside students’ bodies.

\(^{763}\)Chronique des classes indiennes, Ristigouche, No. 14, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.

\(^{764}\) Personal Conversation with former student required to supply \textit{documented} print “evidence” of oral extractions as part of the Indian Day School settlement process. February 2021.
Student Recollections – “oral extractions”

Every fall the dentist used to come in. And there was other ones come in for TB and all that stuff, X-rays and all that, like a bus coming in. And when the dentist came in, I remember one time they were pulling teeth out and there was nothing wrong with them. They just put a needle in and pulled the tooth out right way, and after that it gets numb. And I saw that. At the school. And they’re all lined up like this (gestures with hands, making a line), and they get on that chair and even the nun sits right on you there and then, pull [your teeth] out right away. And after a while when the dentist comes over, nobody goes to school, everybody would head for the woods. They’d go hide in the woods. Gordon Isaac Sr.

The worst part, I’ll never forget, it’s in my mind – (silence) – is when they would pull our teeth out. It was – I have a hard time with that today. They would hold me down, put needles in my mouth and take my teeth out, forcefully. And, after that, they took some of my teeth out. There was a store in front, it had no foundation, we would go there, go beneath the building, and we would wait till this guy would leave, maybe two weeks till he would leave. Not only me, but all my friends were there. They would put needles in my friends’ faces, in their mouth, the needle would come out their eyelid, they had a black eye for two weeks. They pulled our teeth out, and our mouth would bleed for two weeks. They said, ‘put salt in it’. The salt didn’t work, the hole was so big. The dentist was drunk. It was on the second floor of the building, and he was so drunk you could smell it off of him, he didn’t speak English. Didn’t have to speak English, he was just here to pull teeth out. After that, I went home and every night I would take pliers and I would try to pull the rest of them out by myself. And it doesn’t go away. I couldn’t talk about it with anyone … Then the X-Ray. The X-Ray came around, they line us up outside girls and guys. Just in our T-shirts. Only the Indians, because we went to school with non-Native people, and they didn’t torture them. Only one or two they abused, maybe they didn’t like their looks. I know I was hyper, but that didn’t give them a right to abuse me like that. My parents didn’t even beat me like that. Kenny Mitchell

Head, Hands, Arms, Fists

I never got into trouble at school, but I remember others who did and the blisters and welts on their hands from the strap. I was very quiet, and I didn’t talk at school until about Grade 4. Mary Ann Metallic

You’ve heard about clappers? Did you ever have clappers in class? It was on a hinge, two pieces of wood, and they would clap, like this (claps hand together). They had signals, two was to kneel down. When the teacher got mad, she could throw that clapper on your head. It happened more than once. Chewing gum. You would get a clap on the head. Roger Metallic

Beat up on our hands till they swell up, that’s when you were deep trouble, I guess. And, a lot of times, we weren’t really bad you know it was just talking, just talking in school or with our
friends you know or if were late we would have to go the principal’s office and explain why we were late. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

Some stories highlight how the children at the Day Schools were surrounded: that anyone in power and authority (nun, priest, Indian Agent) could beat their child whenever they want, and there was very little that parents could do about. In this way, parents became complicit, by training their child to hide and forget. There is a sense, too, of unrelenting and unending violence and cruelty. The violence did not end at or with the school, but extended into all spheres: home, church, and political life, and into all life stages, childhood into adulthood.

Little things, you know if you’d just done something or … then you’d be right wrong like that and, you know, they beat your hands a little bit, you know, with a stick. Write on the board, the same thing, you write, your fingers hit. And me, I was left-handed; when I was writing left hand, they beat my hand to become right-handed because, that’s the devil’s hand, the left hand, you know. All kinds of stuff like that. I will never forget that. … the straps . . . they’d hit you with that, no problem. In a way, sometimes I looked at it and they got frustrated, you know what I mean? Like they get mad, and they take it out on you or something. That’s the way I look at it today. The priest who used to come over for punishment sometimes, and then the Native Agent came one time to give punishment, the oldest ones, because the nuns couldn’t handle them. I learned my lesson once, I got hit once then I won’t go back again. This is what I’m told. I don’t know. We never learnt nothing at all, never did, nobody did. When they leave here, the eighth grade and all of that, but prayers, they could pray. *Gordon Isaac, Sr.*

There were straps. There was a lot of strapping. Mostly the boys. I remember my mother telling me that when she got the strap, they would actually wet her hands first. They would run them under whatever water they had, and then they would strap just so you would get the real impact of it. So, corporal punishment at the schools was very common. *Sandra Germain*

Some memories gave voice to the ‘not thinking’ (because you can’t think about it) and the harms accumulating (of a pressurized collection of unspeakables).

Yeah, when you talk about it now, not too many, it’s not often we talk about it, so when we do this, I mean, we laugh about it now, but when you’re sitting like we were sitting down then, that’s all abuse. I mean, mentally and physical. I don’t know what their mission was but do something to us. … but they owned us, like, I mean, I’ll do whatever I want to do with you guys. Deep inside you’re not thinking about it, but it is building up. *Former student of the Indian Day School*
I remember “the clapper”. The “clapper” is a piece of wood that nuns would use to get students’ attention. The clapper was a weapon used by the nuns. The nuns would swing the clapper at the bad students. I remember students being strapped at the school for speaking Mi’gmaw when they were in the bathroom. I saw students beaten up by the nuns with a ruler or with a clapper. Those are the memories that stand out: wooden floors and the smell of cedar oil, the sound of the clapper. Patsy Gray

Some former students spoke about experiences that highlighted how the project of domination never quite succeeds because there are limits on the oppressor too, which even the terrified child can see. Yet even this clarity of perception of the limitation of the violence is provisional (you never know).

One time when they brought us down five of us, they were going to throw us in the furnace. I didn’t even get scared, but my friends got scared and started crying, because I know that they can’t do that. You know what I mean, reality. But you never know too. I mean, I looked at my friends, they were all crying, and I tried to calm them down, but you know, they were, like, they brought us all the way down in the basement. I mean, that’s a school. Sonny Wysote

Some former students spoke about the feeling of betrayal not from parents or teachers, but from their friends. This feeling of betrayal from friends is perhaps more damaging than the feeling of being punished by your enemy. There is a sense, too, of total control: if your parents, if your friends in your vicinity, ignore your suffering, nobody is going to help you.

When we went to Grade 1, that’s when it started to make sure that we didn’t speak [Mi’gmaw] because every time I spoke it I got slapped in the face. I was a very hyper kid, I’m still hyper today, I was born this way, I’m not going to change. There was a few of us in the class, and the other ones really got scared, or they were already scared before they got there. The kind of kid that sat in the corner really terrified. Anyway, that was Grade 1, and we were starting to get slapped, not kicked around yet just slapped. And now we’re getting into Grade 2, now we’re starting to get into pulling ears. Slapped me, kicked me, no, no kicking yet, I’m too young yet. And that was until Grade 4 and Grade 5, if they were talking about religion you couldn’t go to the bathroom. When you stand in the corner and you would piss yourself, boys and girls. And you would stand in the corner and cry. Stand there as long as you could. Then, they’ll send you home. And most of the parents didn’t speak English to go and argue with them, very, very little. They say, ‘they were sent from God, they were from heaven, they
couldn’t do wrong, like the priests.’ They wouldn’t take my word; they would only take their word. Because they were already brainwashed from earlier before I was born. Our parents would say ‘you did wrong.’ They didn’t care if you got beat up in school, they said it was our fault because they [nuns and priests] couldn’t do wrong. ... There was a lot of slapping, some guys a little bit bigger than I was, the nuns would kick them. The nuns would kick them and kick them all over the hallway and they could hardly breathe and then they would stop. They’d all get around you so they could get you if you tried to jump up.  Former student of the Indian Day School

Mother Holy Eucharist

I remember one time the teacher
made us memorize the poem.
I memorized it.
She didn’t tell me that the principal was going to come in
and wanted to hear one of the students
say a poem.

‘You stand up and recite the poem
for Mother Holy Eucharist.’

Everybody was scared
of Mother
Holy
Eucharist
because she was mean.

So, I stood up
and I didn’t realize
but my fist went like this

(folding hand into a fist)

I said the whole poem with my fist tight.

She stood at the door and she said,
‘do you want to fight me?’
I said ‘no.’

Then I looked down
and my hands
were just clenched
tight
because I was so afraid of her
Not that I wanted to fight her.
I was afraid of her.
The good old days.
See how much we remember?
I don’t think we really got an education.

Mary Ann Metallic

7.5) Resistances: Students, and their Families

“It’s sad to say but I was happy when the school burnt down. There was a lot of bad memories there. I don’t know if it was because of the way they did when they came here like authoritative, they’re very authoritizing. They’re in control now, you’re not.” Blanche Martin. (Fig. 38: The School at Restigouche and Convent were destroyed by fire on September 22, 1971)765

Investigating the history of Indian Day Schools, from both oral and print recollections, there are stories and memories of resistance. Recording and talking about these memories of resistance is important to imagining and practicing resistance in the present. In the stories about residential and day schooling, the violence and violations seep out in the memories and recollections of former students. What comes through in the reminiscing is the collective nature of the violations; all the students, in one way or another, experienced the violence either firsthand, or as a type of

765 The photo album includes pictures of school and convent burning, the aftermath, and photos of “vandalism” of the convent in the weeks leading up to fire. Ristigouche_les troubles d’automne_1971_308.7. Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.
“second-hand brutality”. Some participants said they have “deliberately” forgotten, while others spoke about being unable to remember. It is important to understand resistance to ‘what’ or to ‘whom’ as an active and deliberate decision, but also – for some – resistance through simply being Mi’gmaq, simply speaking and thinking in (or as) Mi’gmaq, in opposition to settler-colonial logic and dominant ways of being. Understanding the many forms of resistances – running away, taking cover in the woods, leaving school, fighting back, complying, following, or simply ‘being’ – is important to understanding how these students managed to become the people speaking to me, about their experiences, in the present. It important, too, to recall that not everyone did survive the day school and its aftermath, and those who did not were resistant too. Finally, some students recollected how fiercely protective parents and extended family members did sometimes intervene and it is possible to understand this resistance as the protection of both the immediate child and future generations.

Recording students’ resistances

I ran away a lot. Nobody hit me, right. They hit me and once, and that was it, because after me, I run. You don’t give them a chance. Once, that was it for me, I didn’t give them a chance. Once I know they’re going to do something, I take off. They’ll never catch me [laughs]. Maggie Isaac

I quit school when I was in sixth grade. … I never looked back. And all I can think about is those nuns beating the shit out of everybody, all the kids. I can’t remember the boy’s name, that the nun pulled the ear so badly that he tore the ear off. Nothing came out of it. Today you can’t touch a kid. But those days, they didn’t care, those nuns. I guess everybody will say the same. And I used to walk to walk to school every morning. There were no buses. Walk back home, as every day, even on stormy days you have to be there. I was brought up by my grandmother. That’s all I can say about that school. I stuck to it until Grade Six. I couldn’t take anymore from them, seeing what they did to the other kids, like the younger ones. I mean, there were … you can’t do anything, you get punished. There was more punishment than learning. … I would go down and visit somewhere else and hang around somewhere else. And when school is out, I go home.

766 Simpson talks about her very existence – living, thinking, speaking, moving as Anishnabeg-kwe – is embodied resistance to settler-colonial dominant norms and values in As We Have Always Done: Indigenous (2017).
My grandmother finds out and she didn’t treat me bad, she just said you have to. I said I’m not going back because I don’t like those nuns. We’re being treated bad. We get strapped for doing hardly anything wrong. You know? *Gladys Germain*

There was a certain group that they abused more than anybody else. And they’re all dead. They just didn’t want to take it, they didn’t want to take the bullshit all the time. Pray, pray, pray. Where am I going? I didn’t come here to be a priest, I came here to learn, to be a student. And, when there was a graduation here, my people there was only one or two who graduated out of hundreds because they hated those people so bad. They couldn’t teach, them people, because when you abuse someone for ten years and the last two years, they treat you well it’s hard to accept because they’ve been treating you so bad all these years. Nobody bothered with graduating, they were so glad to get the hell out of there. I can count the ones that did. … They taught us everything was wrong, wrong. Don’t do this, don’t do that. It was unreal. *Kenny Mitchell*

I didn’t even graduate or whatever, I don’t know what grade I finished school. I think it was around [Grade] six or seven, I think. Yeah, and I never went back to school. I did my housework and learned how to cook so my mom told me that later on when you get older, you’d know what to do. [I left school] because I didn’t. I couldn’t learn, too much punishment and all that stuff. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

Slapped your face. They like to do that, twist your ear. They would even tangle, not just go like that, they would tangle it so it hurts more when they pull. I ran away so much, hide anywhere. Hide down the beach and wait until school was done. They sent out a guy, Gullege Isaac, it was for the kids that didn’t go to school and bring them back to school. I’d hide. I'm not going back there, and I told my mother I'm not going back. They don’t really need a reason or something really bad, it was just that they're probably in a rotten mood or they're on their period or something [laughs]. Yeah, and you’ll get it if you're in the way. At the time it was normal, yeah, it was the normal way to be treated. *Maggie Isaac*

Some had it bad. The boys were defending themselves. They had had enough. *Patsy Gray*

In Grade three, I started catching up with the older students. I think they were bored because they would cause trouble. *Roger Metallic*

The tensions got worse as we got older because we started to realize that we were being treated differently. And, then a lot of our young boys started to confront the nuns. They would have been in maybe Grade 7, when I started to see scuffles in the hallway. I remember witnessing this one particular guy yanking the veil off of one nun’s head. And it was shocking! I couldn’t look! It was like looking at somebody with no clothes on. But these young boys had had enough. They had been pushed and pushed. They were getting older, and they would not let the nuns punish them or treat them like they had years earlier. So, things started to get (silence). *Sandra Germain*
Recording parents’ resistances

In Gaspé, I find a letter, dated November 23, 1945, sent from a Mi’gmaq mother, Mrs. Desbau, about her son Joseph. In her letter, she counters the nun’s power to send a child home, with her own, a Mi’gmaq parent’s, authority to refuse to send her child to school in the first place.

In the letter, the mother states that she will not send her son back to school “no matter what happen”. The mother says that her child is made to “kneel on the floor for three hours” as punishment. She continues saying “I think a lot of them [my children] because they are my own” and, she quotes the sister’s words back at her when she writes: “they are not low as animals as you call them.” She uses sarcasm and defiance, as strategies of resistance. And, at the same time, the mother is using her command of English, and her good letter-writing form, to assert her authority as a parent. (Fig. 39: Letter to ‘Sister’ from a ‘Mother’ in Restigouche about her son, Joseph. Nov. 23, 1945)[767]
Above the text, the sister has written her own denials: “I did not”; “no”; “never”; and again “never”. Her comments look more like she is correcting an assignment rather than responding to a critic. The letter from a parent reveals the specificity of day schooling, or at least this school, where parents seem sometimes to have retained some authority and ability to engage with schooling. In some instances, as this letter shows, parents refused to have their children subjected to what was happening at school by withdrawing them and setting a limit to what would be tolerated.

**Parents setting limits**

Another time it was my boobs, like, my boobs. I developed early, and they didn’t think it was real, and so I told my mum they kept touching my boobs. Oh, she was mad. She tells the teacher, ‘Look, see what I got? She’s got the same thing, and you keep your hands off of her’ [laughs]. That’s another thing they bothered me with, you know. She stood by me all the time. Because if I didn’t have her, they probably would have been at me. Because my father didn’t really care. He wouldn’t be bothered with any of us. But she was good with that. And she had no – I don’t think she ever got mad at them, just talked. She’d go in and they’d talk and then she’d come out and then they’d take me to my class like nothing happened. And they never bothered me. I don’t know that she told them. Maybe she threatened them …

**this is not the first time ... us parent got no right to beat our own kids brutally that way, how come she has the rights to do that at a school, but to me looks like a butcher shop, beating a child on his face and head that against the law even for us parents ... because we are Indians that the sisters will do as they like some people might not notice the way to learn a kid but I do, she should control her temper.”** (18 February 1959). A response, to a mother, (name is illegible), from a person (name has been blocked out) is also available. The response is an apology, of sorts: “I am sorry for having given a slap to [name blocked out]. I did not mean to slap him in the face, but he turned his head so quickly that my hand landed on his face and made his nose bleed. He would not take the Kleenex I gave him but wiped his nose on his sleeves. I am sorry because I know it will mean more work for you. He was not very good today and did not do his work” (no date). (File 3-8. Vol.1. Complaints By Indians. A-2018-00882, LAC, Ottawa.) Document disclosed under the Access to Information Act. The mother’s advocacy, through the instrument of the letter, is a reminder of the petitions from the earlier years and is also connected with ‘treaty relations’ and philosophy. As individuals and collectives, instruments are used to protect and speak out against violence and violations, and to protect and advocate for rights, as a form of social justice and as a “way of life”: as a parent, she voices her inherent right to protect her child. So doing, Mi’gmaw law ways are evoked: her words make visible principles of care and love, embedded in teaching such as the Mi’gmaw Creation story. The response, from the teacher, illuminates settler logic and reasoning: the nosebleed is not necessarily “wrong” but somehow the fault of the child who turned his head too quickly; the apology is sideways, for the messy shirt (and work that the mother will have) but not for the harm caused to the child. The observation that “he was not very good today” serves to maintain the teacher’s authority over the child, implying a rationale for her use of force that (by the mother’s, and potentially, her community and nation’s standards) would be considered “against the law”.

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My mum went to go kick their ass, she went, and she had a long talk with the principal there, and keep their hands off me, so I was lucky in a lot of ways. Yeah, my mother went in there. I don’t know what she told her, but when she left, the nun took me to my classroom and didn’t punish me anymore for anything. I didn’t do anything really, but you were punished for something that you didn’t do. She listened to me, she always did, yeah, and they never bothered, they never tried to hurt me in any way after that, after she talked with them. She said, leave her alone, I don’t want to even ... If you have something that she’s done, you come and tell me and I’ll take care of it, and that was it. My mum went to go kick their ass, she went, and she had a long talk with the principal there, and keep their hands off me, so I was lucky in a lot of ways. Yeah, my mother went in there. I don’t know what she told her, but when she left, the nun took me to my classroom and didn’t punish me anymore for anything. I didn’t do anything really, but you were punished for something that you didn’t do. *Maggie Isaac*

Once, I remember my father went to the school. I knew he was going to beat the nuns up because the nuns had cut my dress: I wore a dress that was too short, and the nun took out the scissors that were hanging at her waist and cut the dress even shorter. But the good thing is, they left me alone after that. It must have been hard for them [nuns] to be nice. They must have been frustrated. When you think about it, they have been afraid. It was so different here with the guns, violence, liquor. *Patsy Gray*

Another lady, next door here, Madelaine Bond, they call her, Metallic, she went because they were beating up the daughter. She went and said, ‘the next time you fight my daughter, you will have to be fighting me. I will come back here’. And they stopped beating on her. *Kenny Mitchell*

When I went home, and my mom asked me why I had gum in my hair. She just blew her top right at that moment. Next thing I know, she was heading down the road. I don’t know what happened. All I know is that she went, they must have known she was coming, or after she made her presence known at the school, they kind of cornered her in and tried to keep her away from that teacher. She took an epileptic fit, sometime in there, I couldn’t give you a timeline, she took a fit and this was when they were able to subdue her and make it safe for everyone else. They were going to arrest her; they might have even taken her out in that way. Threatening. She was threatening. But she went inside that school. Well, I’m sure it represented being back in Shubie. I don’t know that might have caused her a fit. She saw red leaving here, and I think she was still seeing red when she got there. And it was a bad experience for both of us because when it was all over it was my turn to get it. I wasn’t supposed to have gum! I got grounded. *Joe Wilmot*
7.6) Segregation and Integration: Sorted, Sifted, Streamed and Contained by Religion, by Race, by Language

In the 1950s, post-war era, in Canada, policies were shifting from assimilation towards integration. In 1951, with changes to the Indian Act, it was legally possible for Indigenous children to attend provincial schools. The era of segregated schooling, it seemed, was coming to an end; integrated education, the new great equalizer, took shape.

In terms of policy initiatives, in the 1960s, there was a shift from “assimilation by segregation to assimilation by integration” with an emphasis on more “positive images” of Indigenous peoples in the curriculum materials. (Fig. 40: Restigouche Indian School.

The ‘Old School’ circa 1943) In 1964, Canada’s Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, commissioned the University of British Columbia to study the “social, educational and economic situation” of Indigenous peoples in Canada and to offer recommendations. The “Hawthorn Report”, released in 1967, discusses the newly emerging ‘integrated’ schooling. The report notes that there were three basic

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769 Kim, “Neo-Colonialism in our Schools,” 3-4.

770 Photo of ‘old’ Indian Day School. (C-8183_RG10. Vol. 6101, File 326-5, part 6, LAC, Ottawa). Records affirm that the ‘old’ school was built in 1938 (replacing the schools built in 1856/57 and 1908/09, respectively). A memorandum to Mr. Wardle, Director Surveys and Engineering (Department of Mines and Resources) February 15, 1938, affirms that the “construction of the Restigouche Indian Day School, Québec, was completed on February 1st at a cost of “slightly less than $9,250.00.” (C-8183_RG 10, Vol. 6531, File 1A-1256-1, pt.2, 15056 part 2, LAC, Ottawa.) The school was expanded in 1943 when classrooms were added in the basement.
principles that govern integrated agreements between the Indian Affairs Branch and the (provincial) school board concerned: “First principle is that the [federal] government agrees to pay for a portion of the school’s administrative expenses, for each Indian admitted and a portion of the capital invested; second, the school board agrees to admit Indian students to its schools, and to see that they are treated on an equal basis with the other students; and, finally, no joint agreement may be signed without the prior consent of the Indian parents.” In 1964, there were over 200 joint agreements in existence.771

Integration functioned as a type of reversal of segregation pulling Indigenous peoples into (rather than separate from) Eurocentric culture and ways of thinking. While the new approach may have been constructed with optimism and hope (principles of access, equality, and consent), the invisible fences, the memories and lived experiences, of long-term segregation and of racialization, do not shift as quickly as policies penned on paper. Historians John Milloy and J.R. Miller assert that the rationale for the Canadian government’s shift from segregation to integration was based on two factors: “policy makers’ longstanding goal to assimilate Native peoples into Canadian society, and ‘mundane financial considerations.’”772 With integration, there were direct benefits, too, accrued by settler-society: new schools could be built (with federal funds). The classes were enlarged yet educational structures and standards (curriculum and assessment) remained within provincial jurisdiction, control, and oversight. Needless to say, ‘integration’ was far from a trans-systemic education that would have made space for Indigenous knowledge. The memories and recollections of former students, from the Indian day and joint


school periods both show the ways in which schooling reinforced classification, ordering, segregation, and containment along with the social effects of those divisions. The experiences and memories of former students who attended school in Restigouche during the periods of segregation (day schooling) and during the transition towards integration (in Listuguj starting in 1961) illuminate how racialized spaces built around deep-rooted colonial logics persisted in the integrated system.

Listuguj (Gespe’gewa’gi, Mi’gma’gi) Fall and Winter, 2018

When I asked participants about the Indian Day School, the ‘old school’, one former student, Patsy Gray, stated:

“I remember all the hard wood floors. There was a strong smell of cleaning oil at the school. The school was kept very clean.”

Similarly, when I spoke to another former student, Gordon Isaac Sr., he recalled:

It was a clean school, it was. They had people over there cleaning it up all the time. The Natives, they hired them to clean up the place all the time, and the kitchen was that the students cooked on it, they called that Home Economics or something like that. For girls. They cooked and all that stuff.

I spoke with Gordon Isaac at his home, in his living room, in Listuguj in November of 2018. The leaves had already fallen from the trees, and the snow had not yet arrived. I sat on the couch, and he sat in his large brown recliner. The TV, like a friend, stayed on during the interview.
Records maintained by Indian Affairs attest to the employment of Mi’gmaq women who worked cleaning the Indian Day School in the 1940s. For example, one voucher, submitted by the Indian Agent on behalf of the Sister M. Holy Eucharist to the Indian Affairs Branch of the Department of Mines and Resources, lists the names of sixteen Mi’gmaq women who were paid ten cents per hour for “cleaning and scrubbing” the Restigouche Indian School. (Fig. 41: List of Mi’gmaw women hired to the clean the Indian Day School, 1940, previous page.)

The request for reimbursement was denied by the Department because “no authority” had been given for the expenditure, and “this work,” affirmed Indian Affairs Branch, was considered “part of the duties of the caretaker who is paid a regular salary”. In response, the local Indian Agent, Dr. Richard, stated that for the past twelve years the “usual practice” was to hire Mi’gmaq women “to clean the school at the end of the school year”; that the “caretaker comes on duty on the 1st of October till the 1st of May”; thus was not on duty at the time that the work was undertaken; and, that the janitor (caretaker) had “taken sick”, his son had finished his work, and he (the janitor) had “died two weeks” previous. If death was not enough of a rationale to justify the need for the expenditure to employ Indigenous women to clean the schoolhouse, the Indian Agent added: “a man of this kind is not the right person to make a good general cleaning of a house, especially a large building like this indian [sic] school”. Finally, the Indian Agent asserted that with three months of salary saved the profit could be used to “pay the cleaning bill”. In the margins of the letter to the Indian Affairs Branch appears the question, “Is this statement correct? If so, please pay attached [illegible word] P.P.”

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773 List of Mi’gmaw women hired to clean at the Indian Day School. (C-8183, RG 10 Vol., 6101, file 326-5, part 5, LAC, Ottawa.)

774 Letter from Philip Phelan (Training Division) to Dr. A Richard (Indian Agent, Restigouche), July 30, 1940. (C-8183, RG 10 Vol., 6101, file 326-5, part 5, LAC, Ottawa.)
Students’ memories of the scent of “cleaning oil” at the school; of seeing people cleaning “all the
time” mingle with vouchers submitted to, and refused by, the Indian Affairs Branch; the letters
trace rationales and requests for verification of facts. The letters from the local agent show
Mi’gmaq women’s participation in a limited wage economy at the Indian Day School. Present-
day recollections from former students who attended the Day School enter and push against
colonial logic and patterns of racialized and gendered orderings. Their sensory memories give a
life to the other memories and presences beyond the watchful eyes of the church and
Government; through those memories it is possible to imagine the presences of Indigenous
women (as well as students and men), the students mothers, aunts, sons, daughters, fathers,
Mi’gmaw families working (cleaning, scrubbing, cooking, fixing) the school, the church. It is
possible to speculate beyond the church and state’s watchful gaze, and see (hear, feel) extended
family systems, knowledges, and languages beyond (around, inside, despite) the assimilative
colonial logic at work in the schools, in the community. In the scent of the wood, scrubbed and
cleaned, it is possible to feel the work of Mi’gmaq women who not only attended the school as
children, but continued to inhabit the building, as adults.
Transition from Indian Day to Joint (Integrated) Schooling

In 1961, a new (‘joint’) school was built in Restigouche called the Restigouche Regional High School with funding from both Federal and Provincial governments. The archival records illuminate the uneasy transition from ‘Indian Day School’ to ‘Joint School,’ which took place in Restigouche from 1961 until 1968/69. At this time, in 1961, the Federal government agreed to provide funding to pay for “50% of the construction costs plus a certain amount per child each year but will have no say in the running of the school once built since it will be under the direction of the local school board.”

The federal government, in other words, was getting out of the business of residential and day school and moving into an era of integration; the federal government unilaterally passed on its responsibility of providing education to provincial authorities. I am not trying to say that the federal government had been responsibly providing education; rather, the colonial needle re-positioned itself but continued to stitch Mi’gmaq bodies into Canada’s (provincially driven) integrated joint-school fabric.

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776 For instance, in 1959, the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs Branch, Honourable Ellen L. Fairclough (the first woman to serve in the Canadian Cabinet) delivered an address before the Canadian Association of School Superintendents and Inspectors. In this address, she observes that integrated education is carried out in two ways: formal agreement between Indian Affairs Branch and the local school board (to operate a ‘joint school’) whereby the Federal Government pays for “its share of construction costs” as well as “regular tuition for each Indian child” or Indian Affairs pays for the “tuition costs of Indian pupils” where the “local board has room for Indian pupils”. In 1959, there were 57 joint schools “covered by 76 agreements”; there were “22 in British Columbia and the Yukon; 12 in Ontario; 8 in Québec; 6 in Manitoba; 5 in Saskatchewan and 2 each in Alberta and the Maritimes” (7). Of interest, is that the Superintendent concludes by acknowledging that the “degree of integration is determined by the consent of both the parents and the local school boards” (13), along with an emphasis on the “tremendous strides” that have taken place over the past decade for “the Indian” who has long
buildings of the new joint school stretched out, in the community, “like an airport,” said one participant; education institutions, now under provincial jurisdiction, expanded into Reserve spaces, absorbing (integrating) Indigenous bodies into Canadian settler society. (Fig. 42: “Past, Present & Future Integration,” Sisters of the Holy Rosary, 1959. Previous page)\(^777\)

The records of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary about schooling from this time period illuminate their position on integration, in particular their view (framed as “suggestions”, as a “humble opinion, in a typed report) that a “more rapid integration” of Mi’gmaq children and youth could be achieved with the following: “tuition grants for higher studies maintained; vocational training encouraged; resident social worker; exchange English language for French but only gradually; the necessity of a Gymnasium (to “protect lively youths from delinquencies by giving them decent quarters where to spend their unused energies in leisure moments”).\(^778\) While it is not clear to whom the Sisters’ report was sent, nevertheless the report reveals a mindset about integrated schooling as both absorption and containment of a problematic population – now by

\(^{777}\) 308.730.C.1 14, Restigouche affaires indiennes. Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.

the francophone province—and the continued role of religious authorities in terms of setting educational objectives and goals, including the support that French take precedence over English as the language of schooling. The Mi’gmaq language, this suggests, was further suppressed in these school systems in the layering and imposition of colonial languages.

The new joint school (built and rebuilt over time on contested Mission Lands, in Restigouche) provided education not only to on-reserve Mi’gmaq students but also to students from the region, some local and some from a distance around 100 km, both Mi’gmaq and non-Mi’gmaq, and both French- and English-speaking. Schooling was provided in both English and French languages. Thus, language was the new, official dividing line as school classes were divided between English instruction (for Mi’gmaq and a few non-Indigenous English-speaking children) and French instruction (for French-speaking children) (discussed in part 6.3, [Intervention]).

The Joint School divided students into two categories not unlike the ones depicted on the postcard from the early 20th century, “Blancs” and “Sauvages” only here the distinction was named differently, as “French” and English”, with the English-classes being composed mostly of Mi’gmaq children. Moreover, from 1961-1967, the St. Joseph Teachers’ College opened in Restigouche. Thus, in addition to providing schooling for students in the community and the region, the Sisters of the Holy Rosary also trained teachers in (but, not generally from) Restigouche. The teachers’ college, as discussed previously, was transferred to Gaspé (Québec), in 1967, and in 1970 integrated into the provincial CEGEP system.779

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779 Data obtained from photos of the SS Holy Rosary teachers’ college buildings. (Cross-Point_e.n. 308.7, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski) and verified by the Holy Rosary Archivist during my research visit in 2018.
In his field notes on the ‘Restigouche Micmac’ (1961), Philip Bock (as a doctoral candidate in anthropology at Harvard), observed that the new Joint School consisted of three buildings: the new main building (which opened in January of 1961); a kindergarten building behind the main school (the old Indian Day School); and a sort of annex, located at a distance of approximately two miles, a small school building in Cross Point. The main building on the Restigouche reserve had 14 classes, “half in French and half in English”; the school at Cross Point consisted of “six French speaking grades and one (Indian) English grade.” At this time, of the 14 teachers, 10 were nuns and 4 were lay persons. As well, two Mi’gmaq teachers from Restigouche were now employed at the school, Mr. Jim Moffit (manual training) and Alphonse Metallic (recreation director).  

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“A Gentleman from Harvard” Visits Restigouche

Restigouche 1961
Philip Bock’s Field Notes

In 1961, Philip Bock (“a gentleman from Harvard”) conducted field research towards a doctorate in anthropology. He toured the school in Restigouche, met with Principal, Sister Mary of the Holy Eucharist, and observed classes. In his field notes, Bock noted that the students in the classes usually stood up when he and his tour guide (a teacher, the principal) entered the room. He told the students that he was married, that he had two children, and that he was “still studying”. They should remember this (he said) and “go on with their studies as far as possible.”

In his notes, he sketched out the seating arrangements of the students (noting ‘W’ (white) and ‘I’ Indian); he looked at the textbooks, commenting that “without knowing the standard in Québec” he could not evaluate the books. He did notice, however, that science texts had no reference to evolution; that the geography book was “highly assimilationist”; and that one student showed him a pamphlet from the Bureau of Indian Affairs entitled ‘The Indian in Transition’.

Mother Holy Eucharist took Bock on a “standard tour” of the school. The tour showcased the school, and also revealed cracks in the pathway towards integration, of the so-called “Indian in Transition”. In a classroom of English-speaking girls, grades 6 through 9, Mother Holy Eucharist turned to Bock: “Now, which are Indian? Which are not Indian? You see – it’s impossible to tell which is which” (She must have pointed to two girls). Mother Holy Eucharist added: “She looks Indian, and she is white, but (turning to the other student) it’s quite the opposite (speaking to a Mi’gmaq girl) “you have lost your Indian blood, no?” (There must have been silence in the room. A stiffening of bodies). “Considerable embarrassment from both,” Bock himself remarked, in his field notes.

The assimilationist logic of integration exposed itself in the principal’s remark, in the discomfort evidently experienced, observed, and noted by the researcher. Mother Eucharist “realized she had gone too far” (Bock observed). She retraced her steps, remarking (in the hallway): “that the members of the two groups ‘really do love each other’.”
Rimouski (Mother House)  
November 2018

During my interviews with the former teachers, I asked them about how the school should (or could) be remembered. One former teacher emphasized how the curriculum at both schools was “the same” the only difference (she said) was that one was taught in English, and the other taught in French. The other difference noted by the teacher rested in who was responsible for the students: the province of Québec (for non-indigenous and French-speaking students) and Ottawa, for Mi’gmaq students. Although the federal government had passed on responsibility for education of Indigenous students to the province of Québec, the federal government still played a role in the education of Indigenous children because of their fiduciary responsibility.

The former teacher then spoke about the Indian Agent. And, here, her memory became inconsistent. Her words reveal more than negative stereotypes or racialized logics, they also show how, as a teacher, she would have justified taking (or, stealing) supplies from Indigenous peoples:

One man was named for them. [The Indian Agent] stayed on the Reserve. Houses were built for them. Everything. They didn’t have to pay a cent. They were spoiled. After that [in the 1960s], they were together. Québec put the schools together. English and Indian were together. Québec put the school together. The Indians got everything: pencils, copies. The poor little French and English didn’t have anything. So, I used to give that [supplies intended for Mi’gmaq students] to them.

The description of the adults of the community is also telling in the sense that the adults (who at that time were still considered state wards) are positioned and described as ‘spoiled’ (children) who get more than what they deserve, thus, it’s ok to take from them.

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In the 1960s, policy education in Québec was shifting on many fronts. For Indigenous peoples, this time period marked a transition in policy from segregation to integration; and, at the same time, public schooling in Québec was transitioning from denominational (Catholic and Protestant) to linguistic (French and English) divisions, with less religious and increased government control. Thus, for Mi’gmaq, although the federal government was loosening control over education, the provincial system into which they were expected to integrate was oriented around French and English linguistic and cultural divisions and interests.

Locally, at the newly built Restigouche High School (the Joint School) in Restigouche, the provincial School Commission (also called the School Board) had “complete authority to organize their school according to provincial regulations.” For Mi’gmaq parents, this meant that any input had to take place in the context of general “P.T.A meetings” where “all parents” could obtain information about educational matters versus “meeting directly with teachers, the principal, or Indian Affairs,” as had been the case at the Indian Day School. This observation, traced in a confidential report to Indian Affairs, implies that during the previous Indian Day School period, some Mi’gmaq parents and leadership continued to advocate and have a say in the running of the school through their direct (albeit tenuous) relationships with teachers, with the principal, or with Indian Affairs’ agents. The introduction of the provincial school board, coupled with Indian Affairs’ decision to remove themselves from the day to day administering of day schooling, introduced another governing body into the educational mix with which Mi’gmaq

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needed to contend. Now there was no ‘protection’ in place, such as a formal agreement for this newly configured relationship or an acknowledgement or consideration of the previous schooling that had been provided on their territory prior to and after Confederation. Although Mi’gmaq parents could attend P.T.A. meetings, Band Council leadership asserted that they were systemically discriminated against, they were discouraged from participating in the school board because of differences associated with race, language, and religion.783

Throughout the 1960s, during the joint school period, the leadership in Restigouche (under Chief William (Je’gopsn) Wysote) voiced its concerns about inequities in education and desires for a “better way of life”. Mi’gmaq not only expressed their assertions internally (e.g., at band council and general meetings) but also externally with federal authorities (through band council resolutions) and with neighboring settler society (using print media). From the various mechanisms, it is possible to sketch a picture of Mi’gmaq concerns and desires with and for schooling throughout the 1960s and early 1970s. The varied forms and uses of governance and communication strategies – from band council resolutions to articles in the local newspapers – express concerns and desires to protect and continue Indigenous ways of governing, mobilization, and knowledge-building. These concerns involved (and continue to involve) complex relationships and desires in relation to education, Rights, land, governance, and ways of knowing and being that were negotiated, discussed, filtered, and communicated both within and

783 In other jurisdictions, there was some movement in the policy landscape to include Indigenous people in positions of decision making during the integration period. For instance, in Ontario, in 1967, the provincial government “introduced legislation permitting school boards to appoint an Indigenous member to represent Aboriginal students attending provincially funded schools (Gidney quoted in Kim “Neo-Colonialism in our Schools,” 3.
beyond the community of Restigouche. (Fig. 43: Chief William Wysote’s statement in *Tribune* published on Oct 6, 1971)\textsuperscript{784} 

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In the aftermath of the September 22, 1971, fire, which destroyed the Restigouche High School (Joint School) and the teacher’s residence (the convent), Chief William (Je’gopsn) Wysote delivered a statement in the local newspaper on long-standing systemic discrimination and Indigenous desires that went beyond the singular event of the fire as an act of protest; Wysote stated:

> I remember when I attended the all Indian Day School here in Restigouche. There was a French school next to us and we were divided by a fence between us. Both of the schools were run by the nuns of the same order. They reminded us of our savage ways and the superiority of the non-Indians or French-speaking people … I worked around here and in the States as a laborer. I realized that not everyone thought of me being an Indian was bad, but rather a person who had special privileges …

Wysote’s expression of desire for “a better way of life” and “equal opportunity” reflect the language and energy of civil rights and Indigenous Red Power surging at this time; the language also resonates with twenty-first century Indigenous resurgences and a deeply rooted sense of recognizing Indigeneity on Indigenous terms, as something precious (or sacred) and living. Chief Wysote’s statement circulated in mainstream media reaching out and into settler-homes serving

\textsuperscript{784} Newspaper article collected and saved by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Chief William Wysote. “Micmac Chief: Indians Want Better Way of Life And Equal Opportunity,” *The Tribune*. Oct. 6, 1971. This statement was published in the local newspaper two weeks after the school and convent were destroyed by fire. (Decoupures de Journaux_1971_308.720-c.2, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski.)
as a reminder of uncomfortable and unsettling truths that would only surface in the years to come. Chief Wysote’s words continue to resonate in Listuguj, and throughout the territory, in the ongoing movement to reclaim Indigenous history and ways of knowing and being.\footnote{In the late 1960s, William (Je’gopsn) Wysote wrote The History Song, which reminds people of colonization, the importance of reclaiming knowledge systems as a way of getting back what was taken away and that the youth would be critical to this movement. In Listuguj, this song is played daily on the local radio station CHRQ, and a rendition is sung at an annual event hosted by education honouring secondary and post-secondary graduates, as well as their families. The song is about remembering Canada’s colonial past, and a call to action, infused with a strong conviction that the youth then (Elders of today) “would have the strength and confidence to push past colonialism and take their rightful place in their territory”. (Personal Conversation with Fred Metallic about the significance of Jack Wysote’s History Song. (Mi’gmawei Mawiomi and Canadian Heritage, “History Song,” 2019-2021).}

In Rimouski, at the archives of the Mother House, I locate Chief William Wysote’s newspaper article, published on October 6, 1971, in a copy of Campbellton’s The Tribune. The article is one of several media reports about the fire, which have been collected and saved in an album by the Sisters of the Holy Rosary; the scrapbook is presently housed in the archives, at the Mother House, in Rimouski. *I flip the pages of the photo album; I hold the contours of a history clipped, saved, sorted, and stored (by the nuns), and pressed into an album. Memories of other former students gather around the album, pushing against the colonial edges.*

Chief Wysote’s voice reaches out from the article: making the fences of segregation visible; reminding people about the importance of education and knowing your history and not being afraid to use that knowledge to address systemic barriers, racism, and the denial of Indigenous inherent rights. Just as important, his words also speak about hope and belief in the next generation.
In November, I travel to Rimouski to visit the Sisters of the Holy Rosary at the Mother House. I spend the day, with a sister, now an archivist, and who taught – briefly – at the Indian Day School in Restigouche.

After the visit to Rimouski, sometime that fall, I remember dreaming. Not a dream, really. A home had been built near the edge of the Reserve; the nuns were coming back. In this dream world, I am driving in a car, down the main road of Listuguj, towards the Van Horn bridge that crosses over from Québec to New Brunswick. I am driving too fast. It’s dark. Saint-Anne’s church rises up in the middle of the community, in the dream.

In 2018, this church was still the largest and tallest building in Listuguj, you could see the steeple for miles. The Poor School, the old Indian Day School, the Joint School, the present-day Education Complex, were/are directly across the street from the church. You could throw a stone from one to the other. Some students recalled being asked to walk with a nun, across the street, from the school to the church when they went inside for confession. Others remember the nuns walking on the sidewalk, two by two, in pairs “like crows”. Others said, they (the nuns) patrolled the fence built between the two schools.

In the dream, I am spiraling down the road, I try to stop, but it’s too late. I see a face of a child turned towards me, turning just before the car –. And there’s a house. In the dream, the nuns
returned, and they built a house, where they would live, just outside the community. Guilt washes over me because I had brought them back.

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**Countering systemic racism**

With respect to schooling, documents from the 1960s animate Mi’gmaq assertions and concerns centered around governance, around languages, and decision-making, including (but not limited to): the location of the provincial School Board (in 1965, the band passed an Order-in-Council to “voice its objection” to the pending decision to move the regional school from Restigouche-Cross Point to a neighbouring community of Matapedia (Québec)\(^{786}\), the barring of Mi’gmaq from fully participating on the School Board, and their denial of full voting rights because they were not taxpayers\(^ {787}\); and, finally, the School Board’s lack of financial transparency (in 1968, Mi’gmaq requested an ‘independent audit’ of the school board’s books).\(^ {788}\) Additionally,
Mi’gmaq expressed concerns regarding language of instruction in the Québec context, and whether or not Mi’gmaq would continue to readily access English-language schooling. In addition to voicing their desire to be involved in educational governance, the leadership at the time spoke out against systemic discrimination in education they faced as Indigenous peoples by actively questioning the “quality of teachers and curriculum.” At this time, the leadership voiced concerns that despite the official policy of integration (and the sense that access to joint schooling would eliminate inequities), Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) students were being systemically streamed out of an academic route and into manual labour programs. Moreover, Mi’gmaq leaders argued that these inequities continued because of the continued perception that Indigenous peoples were lesser than their non-Indigenous counterparts.

On federal government’s position on integration. The Superintendent expressed concern with the chief’s use of Mi’gmaw (and his own inability to understand), and the feeling that “control of the meeting could be lost at any moment”; he stated that “such meetings” (with the leadership and public) “could be harmful and even disastrous to our integration program”. Indigenous concerns with integration are dismissed through discriminatory language as stemming from a “handful of Jehovah Witnesses”. The general meetings between Restigouche and Indian Affairs are considered a “step backwards” (since the Department was attempting to remove, or distance, itself from administration of schooling). Its position was that the concerns raised by Mi’gmaq at the meeting were “local” in nature, which the Superintendent could not discuss since “by Contract the School Commission has complete authority to organize their schools according to provincial regulations”. Finally, the Department concluded with a statement that unwittingly expressed Mi’gmaq desire; such meetings usually conclude with a resolution to “bring back Indian children in Indian Day schools on the reserve”. (2000-00946-8. Box 13, File 26/25-1 “Education General,” LAC, Ottawa). The memorandum reveals the continuance of colonial logic in the desire to maintain control and distance; at the same time, the document reveals Indigenous differences, desires, and assertions for input into schooling.


791 Also see: Section 7.3: Inside the Walls: Religious Instruction, Gender Training, and Beyond.
The Department of Indian Affairs and school administrators denied such allegations of systemic race-based discrimination. In their official responses, department officials maintained a neutral position by stating that in both populations (Indigenous and non-Indigenous), some students were suited for academics while others better suited for trades. In a confidential memo, dated December 21, 1962, from the Regional Superintendent of Indian Schools, Mr. A. R. Jolicoeur, to the Assistant Director of Education, the former describes having attended a Band Council meeting as well as a “general meeting” at Restigouche and states that he was “pleased” with the outcome:

Indian members understood that all children do not have the same intellectual abilities. Some children are never being able to attend school [sic]. They have to be placed in institutions. Some can go as far as grade 4 or 5. As they cannot go further or because they are too old, it is better to place them in a special class otherwise most of the time they quit as they do not accept to go to school with a group of 10 years old children while they are 15 or 16 years old.  

In sharp contrast, Mi’gmaq leadership expressed concerns about this meeting and, more broadly, about: discrimination they faced as non-Catholics; violations of their parental rights to decide the “educational wellbeing” of their children; and human rights violations. In his letter about that same meeting, Chief William Wysote wrote to Mr. Boulanger, Indian Affairs Branch (Québec), stating:

We never had any satisfaction concerning education with this man [Jolicoeur] for our children. He was in a hurry to leave after our first meeting … Without the consent of the parent they have taken there [sic] children away from school to show them some kind of trade as I stated to Mr. Davey at our meeting in Ottawa. According to the laws of the land and the Indian Act the parents are responsible for the kind of education they wish there [sic] children to have. As of now they are deprived from there privilege, when the Indian Agent goes to the school and influences the children to keep on going to the same school which there [sic] parents object to. This causes trouble to the parent and the pupil also to the governing council.

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Nowhere in the Dominion of Canada or the U.S. or OTHER countries ever put the decision in the hands of a child to decide for himself on education … We have a job to do, and it cannot be done as long as discrimination is being practiced by the Dept. of Education, and some on religion. If they do not know their catechism they will not be graded. Some are not even excepted [sic] because of there [sic] different belief. … If you ignore my request concerning this matter, and if our children are not taken back to school by January or given proper support for there [sic] education, and most of all if we the parent cannot decide for our children’s educational well being, we will send a petition to the Prime Minister Diefenbaker. Seems to me this is a breach of freedom.793

The two letters: one from the regional Superintendent of Indian Schools and the other from Mi’gmaq leadership, both sent to the same recipient (the Branch of Indian Affairs) show the wide gap between their respective positions. The former takes a stance that inequalities and lack of access to schooling are universal, resulting from so-called natural differences amongst learners. The letter from Chief Wysote opens beyond the naturalization of differences to long-standing (colonial) injustices beneath apparently neutral educational gaps, while also illuminating Mi’gmaq continued desire to care for (or govern) the “educational well being” that is cultural, intellectual, and emotional safety, of their own children. Wysote intervenes by translating Indigenous Knowledge systems, including governance practices, and built around principles such as empathy, care, and kinship, into dominant discourses of the time about human rights violations and “breaches of freedom,” discourses that DIA might be able to hear.

In December of 1962, the Indian Agent, Mr. Bourassa, in response to the controversy and following the discussions with the band council, went to the Manual Arts classroom and “asked permission” from the (Mi’gmaq) teacher, Mr. Moffat, “to talk with all Indians attending his class” (13 of the 23 pupils were Mi’gmaq). Of the thirteen, five came forward and “expressed the

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“wish” to continue in the Academic stream, while the others “flatly refused”. The Indian Agent approached the principal, Sister Daniel, who stated she was “calling immediately to Ottawa for I.Q. tests”; on the condition that students passed the tests (she said) “they were to be re-admitted” to Academic courses.794

In January of 1963, Mi’gmaq students were tested. The Department of Indian Affairs, in its official position that it wished to remain ‘impartial’ brought in a “qualified psychologist” from the Campbellton Provincial Hospital to conduct I.Q. tests on the students who desired to be re-admitted into the Academic stream. Based on this testing, along with the individual reports provided by the “outside” expert, evidence was given that “none of the six children are able to attend an Academic course”.795

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Ottawa (Library and Archives Canada)
August 2018

In a blue legal folder titled ‘General Education’, I read letters, pamphlets, and memos about education in Restigouche in the 1960s. Information and fragments of truths surface in these now closed archival records. There are “confidential” gaps inserted inside the records. I locate:

– seven pages withheld from the archival records. “Personal Information.” (No date)


two pages withheld from the archival records. “Personal Information.” (January 2, 1963)

three pages withheld from the archival records. “Personal Information.” (January 30, 1963)

Personal information withheld to protect individual privacy. At the same time, withholding of such information could gloss out the struggle of manual versus academic streams and the violence of labelling children. I am picturing an Indian Agent approaching youth (all boys) in a classroom; of the twenty-three students, six youth come forward. I imagine the psychologist administering a test to determine whether the students are deemed fit for academic studies.

Providing the ‘expert’ ‘proof’ that they should be streamed into manual training.  

The parents are sent a letter from the principal of the school, Sister Saint-Daniel. In the letter, she congratulates them (the parents) for “help given” to keep their son in the ‘TRADE SCHOOL’ (emphasis in the original: it seems important to the Sister to make this absolutely clear). An expert has provided “proof” (the letter states) that their child “cannot go higher in academic studies” but “he has a chance of success” in manual training. And, as “proof” of “kind cooperation,” parents are asked to sign the letter, to show their willingness to keep their son in Trade School for the remainder of the year.  

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797 Restigouche Regional High School. Restigouche. Letter from Sister Saint-Daniel (Holy Rosary) to Mrs. Eddy Martin. January 14, 1963 (2000-00946-8. Box 13, File 26/25-1 “Education General,” LAC, Ottawa). In a confidential Memorandum from A.R. Jolicoeur (Superintendent Regional des Ecoles Indiennes) to the Superintendent of the Restigouche Indian Agency, January 7, 1963, instructions are given to obtain “consentement écrit des parents” (written consent from parents) to prevent any outside influence. Moreover, Jolicoeur states that if there is too much opposition from Mi’gmaq parents it would be doubtful whether the Commission Scholaire de Cross Point could organize these courses exclusively for non-Indigenous pupils, and as such, the employment of the
Racial, linguistic, and religious tensions did not disappear when the Indian Day School was administratively dismantled and the Joint School built to replace it, with a main building on the reserve and an annex several miles away at Cross Point. Although the official distinction was now linguistic, with English and French classes, and although several lay teachers were introduced, a certain religious discipline persisted; educational streaming of Mi’gmaq students into non-academic routes was practiced with the approval of the Department of Indian Affairs; and Mi’gmaq parents were prevented from participating in the governance of their children’s education. The ‘joint’ relationship lasted from 1961 to 1968/69.

In December of 1968, after years of advocating for Mi’gmaq rights to receive non-discriminatory, equitable educational opportunities, the Chief of Restigouche, William (Je’gopsn) Wysote and Council negotiated an agreement with then-Minister of Indian Affairs, Mr. Jean Chretien, enabling Mi’gmaq students to attend provincial schools in the neighbouring community of Campbellton, New Brunswick. On June 12, 1969, the Chief and Council signed an (integration) Agreement with the Province of New Brunswick that allowed Mi’gmaq students of Restigouche to attend public schools across the bridge in Campbellton.

Divisions, containments, segregations, and integration

Invariably in conversations, participants spoke about experiences associated with divisions, segregations, categorizations. Concrete fragments surface: the fence, the yard, French, English, instructor (Mr. Moffat) was also at risk. In other words, the school commission which organized these courses depended upon Mi’gmaq enrollment for its financial viability. This decision to keep Mi’gmaq students in the program was thus far from impartial or neutral because there was a direct consequence to the program (2000-00946-8. Box 13, File 26/25-1 “Education General,” LAC, Ottawa).
Indian, ‘savage’. Sensations of isolation and recollections of the shame of ‘dirtiness’ enter between us (in living rooms, at kitchen tables) as pauses, as gestures, as glances.

Many participants spoke of “the Fence”. In conversations in print recollections, the image of the fence grew in memories between us. The fence evoked words, placed into the ground, signifying segregation and separation.

The other school was a French School on the other side of the [Indian Day] school. There was a fence about eight feet high. They stayed on that side, and we stayed on this side. And over there, all you would hear is “Maudit Sauvage”. But after school we’d meet them people out there, but they had to go home, hey, and then we would leave that way. Fighting. Always, always fight. But as you grow older you, we all get along pretty good. That’s how high the fence was (gesturing) – eight feet. And it goes right along with the [Indian Day] school on this side and the other [French] school on that side.

*Gordon Isaac, Sr.*

(Fig. 4: Restigouche Indian School (building on left) and ‘White (French) School’ (building on right), circa 1943)798

And then the one time at recess somebody called me a Savage I said, “you come over that fence and I’ll show you what a savage is.” But I was just a tiny little thing--- (laughs). Yeah, the Whites were all on the other side of the fence, like, racist. [At the Indian Day School] it was just a wire, like, a chicken fence, you know, and wood... *Maggie Isaac.*

To me, I feel today that they were here to teach us, yes, but they didn’t treat us as their own level, I guess. They were Indians, huh. They didn’t call ... we weren’t called Indians. We were called, like the kids that worked, they had another school right beside our Indian Day School, it was a French school. There was a fence, but anyway, we were separated. They were taught differently than us, I guess. I mean, they were treated better. They called us savages. Is all we hear growing up: savage. They called us names. We were looked down on a lot, really. *Gladys Germain*

We had French on this side and English on this side. We were separated. We were never allowed to mingle, mingle with the French people. The classes were all separate. *Former student of the Indian Day School*

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798 Photo of the Restigouche Indian Day School (Pacifique Fonds. École Restigouche, Négatif_Q2-1, BanQ, Gaspé).
During the period of integration, some students whose families broke away from the Catholic Church recall being ostracized and singled out by their teachers and also by their classmates, inside and outside of the classroom. The experiences of breaking away from the church were not the norm amongst those with whom I spoke.

Our lives changed a lot when my mother decided ‘well, we’re not going to go to (the Catholic) church anymore’. My father and I, for the most part, attended every mass that was ever given for the first 2 years or so. Six o’clock in the morning I’m heading off to church, and then I’m heading back from church, having my breakfast, and going back to school. That went on for at least one year, maybe two. The reaction from the nuns – I went from ‘this good little boy’ who is in church all the time, and then he wasn’t in church anymore, and the nuns picked up on that quite easily. And there was everything in there, Amy. At first it was just comments, then the comments turned to almost ridicule, and I could swear that they were goading, not goading but kind of instigating other children to give me a hard time, myself, and my cousins … That part of my school life changed. Then, that was probably when I decided that I had to show I was better than that, and I would do things. Getting into trouble. … Joe Wilmot.

In our conversations, participants spoke about how they were set against one another, in the classroom. Discourse of ‘dirtiness’, of Otherness, of being ‘lesser than’ applied to non-Catholic Mi’gmaq continued at the Joint School [Restigouche High School].

You had had some families that were ostracized. First of all, they weren’t Catholic. [At the Joint School] the teachers, nuns, made them out to be dirty, unkempt. But it had to do with them not being Catholic. So, everybody started, you were part of a little ostracizing the family. Gail Metallic

One time, [at the Joint School] there was one student, too, she didn’t follow our religion, she didn’t follow the prayers, she didn’t follow the masses. And we were told to call her names. We had to call her a pagan. And she was our friend. We had to call her pagan because she didn’t follow the church, the laws. That’s not right. The nuns used us against her. And, today, maybe she has memories, too, of that. Mary Ann Metallic

The ones (nuns) in the lower classes made sure we didn’t keep our language, our culture. Now we had one Native girl. Her family became Protestants. And they beat on her, it was unreal. And she’s still living, the lady. And, then the rest of us abused her, called her names, because of them teaching us that she was no good. They’d say, ‘Don’t speak to no one that is not
Catholic.’ Don’t speak to no one, don’t marry them, don’t make friends with them, and make sure you don’t go in their church. That was the thing that they taught us for sure. And still today me and my wife were travelling in New York, and I told her, ‘This is the first time that I decided to go in [a Protestant church].’ They brainwashed me so much I never went to another church. Kenny Mitchell

The Indian Day School and the Restigouche Regional High School (Joint School) were not geographically distant from the community. Schooling (Poor School, Indian School, Joint-School) inserted itself into the heart of the community. The schools took up space, rearranged things spatially and socially. Schooling reinforced racial thinking that marked out boundaries and these rippled out socially in the relationships one could have and could not have.

Some participants spent the first few years of schooling at the Indian Day School and their middle and high school years at the Joint School (Restigouche Regional High School) where there was some breaking down of boundaries amongst Mi’gmaq, English, and French-speaking students. When, post-1961, official school policy shifted from segregation to integration, students, to some extent, were all together in the new school building, but in different classes based on French or English instruction.

The kids from the French school had a fence around it and they played in their own yard. There was a lot of racism back then, it was just like extreme, and no one ever objected to it. It was just weird. It was reciprocal. We [French and Mi’gmaq students] were so Other to each other. I don’t remember [the teachers] objecting, I don’t remember them intervening. Whether they deliberately didn’t see, or it happened sneakily, I don’t know. I really don’t know. And, I don’t remember, honestly, this is the thing about the French school is that it must have been there all along, and those kids must have been there all along, but I barely remember them. Most of the time what I remember was it not being there. It’s not that I have these really vivid memories, yah I remember it vividly. I remember the teasing. I remember that they would say ‘oui’ for yes, and we thought that was bizarre and hysterical because ‘we’ means ‘us’. That kind of stuff, but just very childish. It could be perceived as racism, but I don’t think it was. That was just observational humour on the part of the kids, but that’s how Other they were, too. To me it demonstrates such a fundamental misunderstanding of each other. It was just an absolute Otherness to it. There weren’t very many interactions. Diane Mitchell
In our conversations, some participants spoke about the differences between the school space and the Reserve (community) space around the school.

[The school] was certainly different than the way things were run on the Reserve. And of course, you had a lot of non-Native people working there. So, it was more like their school. But, at the time you start to know things and knowing that it was our school built for us. You had little ideas like ‘why are they here?’ I could understand why the Gesgapegiag students were there. … At the old school [Indian Day School] you had the nuns patrolling the fence. [Integration] wasn’t an overnight change. [Segregation] wasn’t gone immediately. Maybe they were trying to keep the school full. Joe Wilmot

I brought an album to many of the interviews with photos gathered from Library and Archives Canada, from Québec’s national library, and from the Sisters of the Holy Rosary. Some participants shared material that they too had kept stored away (postcards and community calendars, for instance). (Fig. 45: Joint school (Restigouche Regional High School) and the St. Joseph Teachers’ College (and Residence) circa 1960.)

We looked at these pictures and postcards of school buildings. Some pointed out which class was held where, placing their stories into (out of) buildings that are no longer there.

Look at the size of that monster! [said Joe]. It was a big school for a little community that we were then! They had elementary, and some high school, and some continued in the Normal School as well. I remember they took us out of that school [in Restigouche] and sent us to that school [a temporary school, located in Cross Point, where students had to attend before being

799 Photo of school structures at Restigouche (Cross-Point_e.n._308.7, Holy Rosary Archives, Rimouski).
transferred to Campbellton\textsuperscript{800}. We talked about it, some of the guys. ‘They’re taking over our school!’ We were displaced, really. \textit{Joe Wilmot}

Students were moved from one site to another, with seemingly no conferral with their parents. There were big disruptions, which changed students’ lives, yet students and their families, and the elected leadership of the community, had little opportunity to participate in the decision-making.

Some students spoke about a sense of an implicit hierarchy at play amongst the students. Groups of students observed one another and understood the unspoken rules in terms of their different relations to the French-speaking, Catholic teachers.

I remember where there was French classes and there was some [non-Native students] that were mixed in with us. Well, it was hard to communicate with them anyway because we didn’t understand them. But I know there was like the French kids would hobble around and First Nations kids would hobble around here. We couldn’t interact with them or one of the sisters would come and stuff like that so. You could feel it, you know you were wrong if you tried to talk with them [French students] or anything like that, I remember that. They would favor them more, they understood each other, but not us. They [French students] weren’t abused like the way we were, yup. But I think it’s because we were picked on because we were First Nation and stuff like that, yea. According to them they had no problems. \textit{Blanche Metallic}

In the 1960s, both Indigenous (Mi’gmaq) and non-Indigenous youth were bused into the

\textsuperscript{800} One participant spoke about the move to Campbellton, recalling how a temporary school was built that students called “Chicken Coop School”: made of plywood, there were cracks in some areas “where the snow would get in”. In addition to the inadequate structure, some participants recalled that when they were transferred to the provincial system, in New Brunswick, all the students had to repeat a grade “without even being assessed”. The sense of ‘lesser than’ was structured, systemic, and brushed over students with a singular stroke. The ‘integration’ into yet another system was framed by a sense, literally and figuratively, that: “We were already knocked down before we even started out.” These memories, about the integration period, from the ‘Joint-School’ into (yet another) provincial system, point to other marginalized memories that could be documented as part of public memory about, and settler accountabilities for, Indigenous schooling. The ‘Chicken Coop School’ (like the fence) standing in for the trappings of colonialism, the felt ways that children remember, record, and \textit{name} colonial insertions on their territories, countering and resisting cognitive imperialism.
community from the surrounding area. Mi’gmaq students from outside the community were billeted in homes on Reserve near the school, while non-Indigenous, English-speaking students, boarded with priests at the monastery adjacent to the church. At this point, the situation was very far from the dominant narrative that would be created in the 21st century about the IRS. The school situation at Listuguj was fluid, somewhat, produced out of piecemeal changes and seemingly ad-hoc arrangements to deal with the costs of schooling different populations.

But what was even more interesting for me was that though we were on the Reserve, we were surrounded by the French who lived down at the Flat: in that area [behind the school, near the church, in the middle of Restigouche] it almost felt like you were leaving your Reserve and going to a French community because, in fact, the school was on Cross Point land. Or [on Reserve] land that the Church had leased to Cross Point [school board].

And they built the [joint] school there [in 1961]. The school wasn’t just for First Nations, for Mi’gmaq, it was for all the surrounding English-speaking students for about one-hundred-mile radius because they came in from St. Jules, they came in from New Richmond, they came in from Murdochville, up in Gaspé, so Listuguj was the central English-speaking school.

English-speaking students boarded here [in Restigouche]. There was a convent, and the nuns took care of them, and the boys stayed with the priests. It’s kind of ironic. Nobody talks about the white kids and their experiences at the boarding schools, that’s what they called them. …. Grade 7 and up is when they started to send them here. And, you can imagine it must have been hard! And the Mi’gmaq kids from Gesgapegiag they were bused over here. They would arrive on Sunday night. But they would be placed in homes. So, they pay the people. People made some pretty good money! And, they would have 2 or 3 students at time. And that went on for years and years too. Sandra Germain

For Mi’gmaq students, rather than an experience of segregation, schooling (at the joint school) was now an experience of partial integration, although boundaries were still at play.

This school here, and our experiences, are very unique from any another Indian Day School because of the politics behind it. The fact that it was owned by a municipality of Cross Point; that it was situated in our community, per say; that non-Native students came in from one-hundred-mile radius to attend school there from September to June, but they went home every weekend. There are so many unique things about it when I look back on it now. We were one school body, but we all stayed amongst our groups. Sandra Germain
There were rules, patterns, and authority, which spilled out from, crossed between, the three main institutions in the community: the Church, the Band (Indian Affairs), and the school. Former students recalled how different divisions, social segregations, and authority played out differently depending on the site. Some former students spoke about the growing divisions between English-speaking (Mi’gmaq and non-Mi’gmaq) and French-speaking students in the 1960s. While at church, there were divisions between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, reinforced by the fact that non-Indigenous parishioners paid for (and sat on) one side (the left), and Indigenous seats were reserved on the other side (the right). Some students recalled how the nuns policed boundaries, telling students where (and with whom) they could and could not associate, both in and out of school.

After a while [at the joint school] we had French kids on this side. We hated them because of them nuns. We didn’t understand their language. I don’t see nobody beating them, only us. [At the new joint school], we used the same door, but not the same classroom. The French was on their own, they’re from St. Conrad, Laverne. If they were English, they were with us. But the French stayed on their other side. At the [joint] school yard, it was fenced off. The English and Indians on this side, and the French on the other side.

Just like at church. When we go in the church the nuns made us –the Indians sit on the right and the Whites sit on the left. Still today a lot of my people won’t sit on the left because they were told once to sit on the right. We couldn’t go down there [to the Flat, where the French people lived on Reserve land leased by the church]. They kept an eye on it, and you couldn’t go. They didn’t speak English and we couldn’t go and play. They paved the whole community, they wouldn’t pave nothing in our community; it was all gravel except them they had pave. And, when you get on the bicycle and go down there, there was a hill, there’s still a little hill, but it was bigger at one time. But we weren’t allowed.

The nuns would walk right there, same property, and tell us to leave. They would say: ‘next time you come here, you are going to get it.’ They owned us no matter where they seen us. They tried to tell us what to do. Kenny Mitchell

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In Rimouski, at the Mother House of the Sisters of Our Lady of the Holy Rosary I spent the day with an archivist, a former teacher who taught at Restigouche between 1951-1961, before moving on to other schools and then, finally, to work as the archivist, at the Mother House.\footnote{Field work with archivist and former teacher at the school. 22 November 2018. Informed Consent was obtained to interview some former teachers who resided at the Mother House for the project. Former teachers agreed to be acknowledged as ‘one participant’, and some agreed to have their full name at the end of some quotations, and some requested to remain anonymous. The archivist preferred to remain anonymous.}

When I visited, the documents concerning teaching and education in the parishes where the Sisters of the Holy Rosary operated were located at the Mother House, on shelves, in files. Since that time, in August of 2019, all their documents concerning teaching and education (including, it would follow, the records concerning the administering of education at the Indian Day and Joint School in Restigouche) have been acquired by, and are now in the possession of, the Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec in Rimouski. Data (like people) integrated into the provincial system.

The Holy Rosary has retained records and letters of their founder (Élisabeth Turgeon), from the bishops of the diocese of Rimouski, and from different religious orders; and about the operations of the Mother House “the farm, the orchard”. The records associated with education, however, have been dispersed, relocated (sealed, packed, cratered, reordered and reorganized) or – integrated – into the provincial (archival) stream.\footnote{Conseil du patrimoine religieux du Quebec, “Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary – R.S.R. Archives Department. 2020,” 2021.}
During my visit – the archivist and I – sat together, in the quietness of the second-floor room where she has worked each day for the past twenty years. She is in her eighties now; she walks with a walker. I held the thick brown index paper on which each file had been typed – numbered, named, dated, and stored.

— “Which one would you like,” she’d ask me. Her voice is soft, light, and when she passes me the paper that I requested, I hear a murmur, like water, beneath her words, “excuse my left hand.”

In the afternoon, we took a break from our work. We walked down the hallway to the end where there is a window that looks out to the property. Much of it has been sold off. The buildings have been re-purposed. She spoke about the Convent, their beginnings: “We had a farm, an orchard, a flower shop!” In the summer months, in the 1950s, she said: “Girls would come from all over. They would live here, at the Mother House.”

They’d sleep on cots on the first floor; they’d eat in the dining hall; and they attended services – “there was a thousand of us all,” she said. Their chapel is spacious. The walls are gold, and blue, and red turned pink. I run my finger along the mosaic when she takes me there. There are paintings of Mary, in her many forms. In the Mother House, there is a quiet (but sterilized) energy that falls around our bodies, reminding me of the proper orderings, ‘to use my right, not my left hand.’

— “We started from nothing, and we’ll return to nothing,” she said, turning away from the window returning to the Archive.
We assembled ourselves back to our work, sorting and filtering the already organized records. Settler innocence preserved in her words of starting, and returning, to nothing. I feel something edging, pulling at me. I’m not all that different. I watch her (like a remnant), lingering. (Fig. 46: Research Trip. Holy Rosary Archives. November 2, 2018)

7.7) Animating Relations with Kinship and with Land

In the interviews and conversations with former students who attended the Indian Day and Joint School in Restigouche, there were oftentimes moments in the conversations where the individual entered particular memories that evoked a sense of deep connection with family, with place, with past, present and future generations. These moments evoked a sense of speculative ‘trans-systemic’ possibilities, that spaces where Indigenous (in this instance, Mi’gmaw) past is evoked, in the present moment, for future possibilities and “world-making”. In the conversations about Indian day schooling, there are recollections that attest to relations with territory, with ancestors, with future generations that speak of sustaining cultural knowledges.

I asked participants about sharing their memories and experiences about Indian Day schooling with future generations. Some spoke about the need ‘for this story to be told’, but in a way that

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speaks of their strength; or, put another way, countering the dominant settler-public residential school narrative emphasizing victimhood.

Yeah, I want the story to be told, but I want them [the next generation] to come away from it. … I don’t want them to get angry when they read these things, see these things, and talk about these things. Yes, get angry … Don’t let it consume you. …tell them the stories but be ready to provide them with the supports that they need to deal with their feelings. … I would want them to say ‘you still came out alright? You did this, you went to school, you got an education. You are one strong woman! That is what I want them to see me as. And I want whoever looks at this later to keep that in mind. Don’t just look at the negativity behind it. Look at how resilient we are, and how far we have come. … That’s probably the story that I want to come out of this. Sandra Germain

For some participants, their childhood was not spent indoors, at the Day School. While administrators wrote about irregular attendance and perennial absenteeism, they recalled spending months in the wintertime, in the woods “cutting timber for pulp”. The condition of Mi’gmaq children’s lives, in which families worked together as part of their social and economic well-being, required children to participate in (wage labour) work. At the same time, Indigenous Knowledge systems, sustained by, and built from, family relations and connections with land and territory, were not recognized by an assimilationist education system designed to eradicate Indigeneity. Instead, students recalled that upon their return to the classroom after months of this different kind of learning they were forced to “start from the bottom”.

There’s a lot of people that moved in woods, teepee in the woods, with their kids, like us, you know. And we missed three months out of the year, every year, like later I spent about four years, off and on, you know, right through Christmas, right until March, April, March … April. So, we’d lose all that education, when you go back to school – tough (silence). I’m not the only one. I’m not talking about myself. I’m talking quite a few people. Because they had to move out. They were cutting pulp for the pulp mills, like the one [mill] across the street here. And the one in Dalhousie. We lived in a camp. We had to make a living. You had to go up. First, I went up when I was seven. For three years. And then again maybe another two years, different place, you know? I must have spent five years in the woods. Not totally straight. But, like three months out of the year. I’m not the only one, there could be a dozen kids like me, doing the same thing. So. the education was … it was hard for us. That’s why. [When you went back], you had to start all over from the bottom. Like, I was in third grade, so far, but every time I go back there, I almost start from the bottom. The reason why we were
slow learners, because when we were down here, even when you were 8 years old, you’ve got to work for a living. You’ve got to ... every five houses let’s say we had a little farm, and the ones that didn’t have any, we shared the food next-door. Well, that’s the reason why we didn’t have good educations, because you’ve got to feed the horse and feed the animals first before you go to school. Sometimes you’re late. At night when you come in you don’t eat until the animals eat first. Then you eat. That takes a lot of time out of your homework because you’re too busy. That has to do with school. You were taught [at home] if you work, you’ll help yourself really when you grow up. Victor Germain.

At this interview, I spoke with Victor and Gladys in their living room. At one point, we stopped the interview, and Victor made us a cup of instant coffee. Water boiled, poured, emptied, and then poured again: “Look at that,” (said Gladys), “He even warmed the cup up for you.” We laughed. This memory stays with me; it’s the beauty of care put into the details. The way they held album after album after album of their children, their grand-children, their great-grand-children. (The way it felt, to be with them both, just that one time: it felt good, welgwijjalpnig).

Some participants spoke about their parents’ attendance at schools: girls were more likely to attend school, while boys spent time with their families, working in the woods. Beyond gender differences in school attendance, these recollections attest to strength-based understandings versus deficit-thinking (absenteeism, lack of formal education). There is humour and teasing in these memories, lessening, and countering the threat and violence of imposed school attendance.

My mother went to [the old school]. Not my father. My father says he only came down to go to school on Sundays, and the school was closed, it wasn’t his fault. And they were brought up in – up at the lake, that’s where the family grew up, so there. Once a week he’d come down on a Sunday [laughs] to go to school. Wasn’t my fault, I couldn’t go! [Laughter] Yeah, I know he would – he never went to school, you know, he just started working right away. Maggie Isaac
A few participants spoke about Indigenous medicines, and the network of relations through which these knowledges were learned and shared. Some of these stories illuminate a bridging of Indigenous and western knowledge systems, with both working together as practices, in an expansive and complementary manner.

We were talking about Indian medicine. Here’s a nice little story. The guy who told me his name is Talbert Barnaby. When he was a kid, they were so poor in those days they had no shoes, and coming from school, he arrived by a Metallic home, there’s a long driveway … someone yelled at him to come in. And, the old lady told him, she was going to write a note and he was supposed to run up the road and give it to another old lady, right in the back of the school, way in the back. Her name was Honey Brown, and she was married to a David Isaac. And he (Talbert) was told why he had to hurry up. There was a little girl and her water had stopped. She couldn’t pee. So, he said he ran up, bare feet, he ran all the way. Nothing hurt because he was used to it. And he went to see the old lady and she wrote down something all in Native, and he ran back down again. And the remedy was – take beans, boil them, and the little girls is supposed to drink the water after from the beans. And it worked.

There’s even a better story about cancer. Our neighbour, Mary Jean that would have been her grandmother and the grandmother brought Mary Jean up, by the way. Somebody had melanoma on their face, cancer on their face. I don’t know who, but somebody went to the school. They got all the girls to go out in the fields and pick up buttercups, butter cup flowers, take the whole flower all that, as many as they could find and bring them to the school. They had to pick the middle part, anyway, they took that and grinded it with spruce gum and whoever it was put it on their face, and it cured them. Amazing. Roger Metallic

Learning was lifelong and took place through everyday interactions, observations, and experiences with family and on the land. For some, learning encouraged curiosity, observation, and hard work.

Another time, my mother told me, “Go and get your father, supper is ready”. I went down to the beach, and he was fishing. He said, “watch my line” and then he left. The line pulled, and I got a fish. I was so excited, I wanted to fish too! My father said, “you need your own pole”. So, my sister and I went to the woods, he gave me an axe, and they went together – All alone! Can you imagine! – and cut a tree. Then, my father showed me how to peel it, and sharpen the
end, and attach a line, and I had to find a good float. I had my own pole. It wasn’t given to me; I had earned it and my father guided me. Mary Ann Metallic

Indigenous ways of knowing are described as relational, where knowledge is shared in the context of extended family systems. Some participants spoke about learning how to relate with others. While these interactions could point to the influence of Catholicism (addressing one’s superior as ‘mother’), the teaching does not seem to be about ‘authority over’, but rather ‘respect for’. Learning, in these stories, encouraged positive and respectful interactions and relationships. Knowledge about the land, about Mi’gmaw names, is carried forward from these deep connections with people, and with place.

I always have a nice friendship with older people. They were very open to kids. If you went and asked, they would tell you the story. I remember, Eunice’s relative, the Wysote’s, their grandmother, at the time she was the oldest resident on the reserve. She died in 1994, or ’92 or something. Her name was Madeleine. And, in the summertime, she always kept her door open. And us kids we could always go in and say hello to her. And one time I went in there and I noticed a nice door stop, this huge rock, and it was all crystal. And, I always addressed her, Mom had taught us, “always address her as mother and you will get a nice response” and sure enough, I said, ‘Giju, taluisit la?’ (Mom, what do you call this?) And, she told me, and it’s very, very close to a star. A star is ‘giqoweyj’, and this one here was ‘giqowapsigal’. And it helped me one day when we were doing our language (focus group), and they didn’t know what to call a crystal. And, I said, ‘I know’. After all those years. Roger Metallic

I know my history, a lot. I was taught by the Elder people. They are all dead, the ones that taught me. They would be over one hundred years old the ones that taught me. And I know the language really good, I think. The history, I think I know more of the history than a lot of people in the community because my grandparents, bringing them along to their friends’ houses on Friday nights. It was all gravel roads then, no lights. We went to see them, and it was all in Micmac. We went to see them. Kenny Mitchell

Participants spoke about the Indian Day School environment, where they learned “one way” of teaching, and their home environments, where – for some – it was different from school in that
they received love from their family. Education and schooling emerged across a spectrum of
differences, of interactions, and of multiple knowledge systems absorbed, integrated, questioned,
remembered, and forgotten, by Mi’gmaq people.

At home, I had a good home. My grandmother brought me up good, in her own way. And she
didn’t believe that ... whatever the nuns and all that, she always taught that it was their way of
teaching. You’ve got to be tough. So, I kept that to myself, and I forget all about it when I get
home, try anyway. I hated going to school, but I went every day. They [nuns] got tougher later
on, the kids, and they fought back. I don’t know. And I had ... like I said, I had a happy home
to go to.

To me it’s getting enough of love from our family. If you do, nothing bothers you that much.
You know what I mean? Like, you’re brought up by a loving family then you’re going to be
okay. … you know, you’ve got to work. You’ve got to fend for yourself. You’re brought up, I
think you were brought up the right way. They [parents] tried very hard, and no education for
them doing all that, they did their best. I think it’s a loving family, that gives you happy in
life, really, you know. Gladys Germain

Section IV: Closing Remarks

CHAPTER EIGHT – CONCLUSION

In reading through the archival records about the emergence of formal schooling in Listuguj, as a
pre-Confederation ‘Poor School’, as an Indian Day School, as a Joint School; of teacher
formation and putting forward of the name of the ‘first’ certified Mi’gmaq teacher in
Restigouche, Mary Isaac; of her resignation, and the arrival of the Sisters of the Holy Rosary: it
is possible to stitch together a narrative that challenges the dominant story that we need to simply
acknowledge what happened at residential schools in order to ‘close’ this chapter of colonial
schooling for Indigenous Peoples.
This narrative on the history of Indian Day Schooling in Restigouche, examines and exposes the networks of settler-colonial power involving church and state, the paternalistic decision-making, the racist logics and feelings, the moral surveillance targeting Indigenous women. At the same time, it is also possible to trace Indigenous accommodation, desire, resistance, and maintenance of their knowledge systems in their kinship connections and decision-making that are visible in instruments – letters, petitions, band council resolutions – used, adapted, and adopted to ‘carry’, expand, and continue Indigenous knowledges and practices.

Day Schooling is not a prominent feature in the dominant narrative about the Indian Residential School System in Canada. However, many Indigenous peoples attended day schools, located on reserves, in their own home communities. Day schools were not more hidden from the view of settler society than the residential schools. In the case of the Restigouche School, this was more the case since there were two schools, one for Indigenous and one for settler students, in proximity with one another, built on mission land, with the convent nestled in the middle. In the dominant narrative, including in the post-TRC discussion about ‘reconciliation’, however, there is hardly a hint offered about the histories, the experiences, the memories, and recollections about Indigenous day schools.

It is possible to enter the archival memories of schooling and feel the history that exists, about colonial encroachment and settler impositions of moral dispositions and settler colonial networks of power. As I have emphasized, from the written archives, there are other possibilities, too: traces that attest to the persistence of Indigenous knowledge systems and kinship relations. These

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804 Residential schools were not as ‘hidden from view’ as is generally thought since many were located in towns.
fragments like stone etches – *petitions for schooling, training teachers, voicing opposition to settler systems, and concerns about the gradual obliteration of the tribe, a letter of resignation* – are stories that can reveal Mi’gmaq relations with place, amongst extended family systems, decisions and conflicts, nuances, and differences in decision-making. Conversations and storywork – listening and learning from former students who attended the Indian Day School – show colonial logics and, at the same time, Mi’gmaq understandings, languages, principles, and ways of being and living. This is how stories work: new memories built from relations.

The stories, from archival records and oral storywork, push back against absences, ignoring and dismissals in the dominant narrative about Indian Residential Schooling. The history of Indian day schooling shows variations, differences, ad-hoc arrangements, and gaps in settler Canada’s (pre-and post-Confederation) state-funded formal schooling for Indigenous children.

The history of the Restigouche day school begins to do what a wider history of day schools holds the potential to do: open the dominant narrative showing how the colonial attempt at dispossession happened on Indigenous lands, without children needing to leave their territories or homes. There is much value in the work that has been done to bring the history of violent and assimilative schooling into settler-public public knowledge, before, during, and after the TRC. I suggest that the history of day schools can complicate the dominant narrative that has been constructed in part based on features of residential schools, that is the schools’ distance from home and community, the removal of children from their homes, the temporal focus on residential schooling as part of Canada’s past.
There is much value in the brave testimony of former residential school students. There is much value in the memoirs and published accounts; in ceremonies and commemorations; and in everyday conversations. I acknowledge this ongoing, and much needed, work; and, at the same time, I acknowledge, and draw attention to, the cumulative narrative that has emerged, which needs to be complicated, because of the way that it is too narrow and works to support settler claims of being distant (and therefore not implicated in) Indigenous schooling. The dominant narrative that has emerged about the ‘wrong’ of residential schooling is that assimilative schooling is ‘over’. This is another reason why it is so important to complicate that narrative with the history of day schools: their histories bleed into the present, into the urgent work of reimagining “day schooling” in the present. There are multiple reasons why it is important for there to be a history of day schooling: among them, to correct the false sense that the era of colonial schooling is ‘over’; to provide more of a place-based history of colonial schooling, including the fact of very different historical and treaty contexts; to draw out collective agency and resistance; finally, to better connect the recognition of the ‘wrong’ of colonial schooling to urgent questions about Indigenous-controlled education in the present.

This dissertation is about day schooling. And this dissertation is about a particular school, at a particular location, on land, over its 115-years of operation, from 1856 to 1971. The story of formal colonial schooling at Restigouche shows how colonial attempts at dispossession happened on Indigenous lands, without children being physically removed from their territories and homes, but nevertheless being removed, conceptually, from culture, kin, land, language, and self through the interruptive work of the school on the reserve.
This story about day schooling also inserts itself inside (beside and beyond) the dominant (linear) narrative: unsettling settler temporality. This is important to understanding not only how colonial schools are not ‘in the past’ but to also speculate on possibilities beyond a singular understanding of temporality, of “settler time” animating collective orality, meaning makings, including expressions of Indigenous sovereignty. Indigenous temporal understandings are evoked, to some extent, as a type of unfolding, as part of storywork, to recall Julia Emberley and Jo-ann Archibald.

The history of the schooling at Restigouche also begins to show how formal colonial schooling required there to be Indigenous children on these lands, as part of legitimizing and supporting the church, and then the state’s, claim to and authority over Indigenous lands in pre-and-post-Confederation Canada. It may be that settler-colonial possession required there to be Indigenous children on these lands to provide the church, and then the state, with a role, and a reason for intimate, daily presence, on unceded Mi’gmaw lands. To physically remove the children would weaken the daily, performative practice of settler-colonial sovereignty over the lands. This is

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805 In Beyond Settler Time – Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination (2017), Rifkin explores the idea of moving beyond “settler time”, asking: “[r]ather than approaching time as an abstract, homogeneous measure of universal movement along a singular axis, we can think of it as plural, less as a temporality than temporalities,” 2. He argues that envisioning multiple temporalities is necessary because the representation of Indigenous peoples as “either having disappeared or being remnants on the verge of vanishing constitutes one of the principal means of effacing Indigenous sovereignties.” 5. Rifkin ask if practices (e.g., “treaties, centralized modes of government, particular forms of infrastructure, kinds of commodification and exchange, etc.”) can be understood, that is “gain meaning and be envisioned” from changing, evolving “Native lifeworlds,” 15. Drawing on Audra Simpson’s “politics of refusal”, Rifkin argues that refusal is not so much about “being unimplicated” in the dominant narrative, but rather it is more about “insisting that Indigenous peoples have an existence not a priori tethered to settler norms and frames.” 14. Rifkin cites Simpson (Mohawk Interruptus) who observes of “contemporary Native ‘feeling citizenships’ that ‘part of their citizenship and political consciousness stems from another time, a past that is very much alive in the present and a past that get pushed forward into the present,’” (Ibid). This understanding of plural temporalities can support ways of envisioning and engaging ‘trans-systemic knowledges.’

important because the lands in question, at least at Restigouche, are part of the eighteenth-century Peace and Friendship Covenant Chain of treaties, and these lands have neither been ceded nor surrendered. In other words, Indigenous children were a type of physical thread anchoring colonial apparatuses (and claims over) the lands. *For much of the school’s history, Mi’gmaq were subject to Indian Act governance and the presence, of course, of the Indian Agent.* These apparatuses are the usual, or dominant, framing through which Indigenous education are understood. Yet, if this framing is understood as a particular construct, from a particular cultural and temporal location, then it is possible to see/feel/hear and reach beyond its dominant (and dominating) presence. *It seems important to recall, that when the Sisters of the Holy Rosary arrived, in 1903, that they were greeted by songs sung by Sagamaw (and former chief) Pollycarp Martin.* It is possible to not only see/feel/hear non-Indigenous settler colonial (pre-Confederation) claims over lands, but to also see/feel/hear Indigenous, Mi’gmaq, worldviews and philosophies beyond settler framing, beyond ‘settler time’, and beyond the performance of settler sovereignty.

At the very same moment that the dominant narrative is ‘opened’, slightly, with the history of a particular school showing Indigenous dispossession from their lands and language (*without the physical removal of Indigenous children*), the history of Indian day schools creates space for opportunities to talk about, *to show, to feel, and to sense* Indigenous, Mi’gmaq, agency and resistances. Stories from residential school survivors also contain these elements, but in the case of day schooling, which was, in a sense, experienced and witnessed by the community, there are opportunities to talk about individual *and* collective agency and resistances, of children, their families, and traditional and elected leadership, of extended Mi’gmaq kinship relations, with one
another, and with all beings, *ms’t no’qmaq*. These beliefs too have continued, have changed; these stories, and storying practices, have created understandings and sensibilities of relations, of ways of relating, and these beliefs have never been surrendered nor ceded. The history of the school at Restigouche shows Mi’gmaq knowledge systems, worldviews, and practices, which continued, changed, and adapted, while settler institutions (practices and logic) encroached, set up, and attempted to take root on the territory.

Sometimes, agency is visible in the petitions sent by Mi’gmaq leaders to officials in Ottawa; other times, agency is traceable in print records that recorded internal differences, divisions, and diversity within the community of Restigouche, pulling at the blanket of colonial homogeneity. Resistance is visible in letters sent from parents, from mothers, fighting back against violence and abuse, experienced by their children at the hands of the nuns, while at the day school. Resistance is audible in the stories shared by former students who left the school, and “never looked back”. Other times, agency and resistance is felt in the memories of former students who recalled their parents refusing to speak English, insisting on Mi’gmaq. Other times, agency and resistance is felt inside the stories about speaking or requesting English, as a form of protection against colonial impositions, regulations, languages, and Euro-western orchestrating (of minds, bodies, souls).

Formal schooling, in most cases, is no longer residential, and federal Indian day schools have closed; however, this does not mean that colonial education is over. The continued focus in the dominant narrative on Indian residential schools, now closed, can permit a false sense of the period of colonial education being over. Questions about decision-making, curriculum,
pedagogy, relation to home life, remain today. For example, in her work on decolonizing education, Battiste argues, “[w]hile several provinces and territories have attempted to articulate standards for teaching Indigenous heritage in the classroom, few have articulated standards for teaching Indigenous knowledge”.\(^807\) As Battiste’s observations show, it is important to consider what is at stake in the difference between Indigenous heritage and Indigenous knowledge. Heritage, like an artifact, can be folded into the provincial curriculum as a special subject (i.e., only a question of content). The issue, as Battiste and others, have argued, is that this approach (‘add and mix’) does not necessarily require any shifts, changes, or self-reflection of (or by) the dominant system.\(^808\) There remains much work to critically, carefully, and ethically question and examine the ways that, and impacts of, schools, including ‘on Reserve’ (federally funded) band-operated schools,\(^809\) having been required to adhere to provincial standards and educational outcomes, of the respective provincial jurisdictions where they are located.\(^810\) A folding into

\(^{807}\) Battiste, *Decolonizing Education*, 169.

\(^{808}\) For instance, a barrier identified to transforming education systems is “underestimating complexity” of decolonizing and indigenizing. Some argue that change cannot involve “add and mix” (i.e., courses or activities offered here and there); rather, there is a need for long-term commitment to learning and growth otherwise attempts at transformation will result in “shallow and ineffectual tokenism” (Bopp, Brown, and Robb, “Reconciliation within the Academy., 5-6).

\(^{809}\) Over the past fifty years, since the release of the National Indian Brotherhood’s (1972) policy paper *Indian Control of Indian Education*, the number of “on reserve band operated schools” has increased. (Orr, Robinson, Borden, and Tinkham, “‘There Is a Difference’,” 55). In 1970, follow grassroots sit-ins and visioning of the Cree Nation, the former residential school, Blue Quills, located at Amiskwacīwiyiniwak in present-day central Alberta, became the “first school to be officially administered by Indigenous representatives” (Facing History and Ourselves, “Blue Quills – The Indigenous Peoples of Canada and the Indian Residential Schools,” 2021.) Since that time, many Indigenous communities (including Listuguj) have regained control, in varying degrees, over the delivery of educational programs and services. For instance, as of 2007, “all but 7 of the 507 schools on reserve are now under First Nation management” (Fulford. *Sharing our Success – More Case Studies in Aboriginal Schooling Band-Operated Schools*, 12). Although band-operated schools have been operating for several decades, “there has been little research that considers the differences that exist between these schools and provincially funded public schools that many First Nations students attend” (Orr, et. al., “‘There Is a Difference’: 55.)

\(^{810}\) There is no national body that accredits curriculum for First Nations schools (elementary and secondary levels). At the post-secondary level, there is a National Indigenous Accreditation Board (NIAB), which certifies post-secondary curriculum, The NIAB is the accreditation body of the National Association of Indigenous Institutes of Higher Learning. As of 2016, there were 12 member institutes (including, for instance, Blue Quills First Nations College, Yellowhead Tribal College, and First Nations University of Canada.) Internationally, the World Indigenous
approach can create conditions for continued segregation (or containment) of Indigenous knowledges within, and by, dominant systems. There is a danger of creating superficial programs of reconciliation and indigenization. And, in Mi’gma’gi, there is a danger of incorporating a packaged Mi’gmaw ‘heritage’ that does not require substantial altering of relationships, methods, horizons. More widely, there is still a need to attend to deeper-rooted questions critically and carefully about how Indigenous knowledges, ways of being and knowing, can flourish and gain voice in formal institutions (elementary, secondary, and post-secondary levels), and to create the necessary educational standards and policies to support the flourishing of those knowledges.

In the community of Listuguj, some youth are actively standing up, creating spaces for diverse and inclusive dialogue. Social media platforms, for example, are opening possibilities for youth

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Nations Higher Education Consortium (WINHEC) has an accreditation process that enables institutions (schools or programs) to examine their goals considering the philosophies and worldviews of the Indigenous peoples whom they serve (WINHEC. “Welcome,” Accessed Sept. 10, 2021. In Mi’gmaq territory, the establishment of the Mi’kmaw Kina’matnewey (MK) school board, in 1997/98, is considered the “first-of-its-kind agreement” with the federal government, which “gave the jurisdiction of Mi’kmaw education back to nine [now eleven] Mi’kmaw communities,” (Battiste and Henderson (2000) quoted by Tinkham in “‘That’s Not My History!’”, 236). Yet, as Battiste and Henderson assert “the mandated provincial curriculum continues to mandate a center that is not Mi’kmaq” (Ibid). In Decolonizing Education (2013), Battiste describes and analyses the significance of the Mi’kmaw Kina’matnewey agreement as part of education reform (87-91). In its policy framework for elementary and secondary education programs, up until 2019, the Government of Canada stipulated that in the case of “band-operated and federal schools”, the band council was responsible to ensure that the programs were “comparable to provincially recognized programs of study”; “only provincially certified teachers are employed”; and that “education standards allow students to transfer without penalty to an equivalent grade” in the province where they reside (Elementary and Secondary Education Program – National Program Guidelines (2015-2016). In other words, band-operated schools were still required to adhere to provincial curricula standards and educational outcomes. As Battiste asserted in her analysis of the situation in Nova Scotia, although some Mi’gmaw communities reclaimed control over education, a key concern was that schools under MK still use provincial curricula. This example is a reminder that in regaining control over ‘education’, there are urgent and pressing questions that need to be asked to attend to those deeper-rooted challenges when attempting to transform and center Indigenous worldviews and philosophies: How can Indigenous knowledges, ways of being and knowing, flourish and gain voice in formal institutions? How can Indigenous and non-Indigenous allies create the necessary educational standards and policies to support the flourishing of those knowledges, worldviews, and philosophies? How can non-Indigenous peoples ‘quiet’ our own understandings and worldviews, long enough to recognize that there are other ways of being, other temporalities and framings and stories that stretch beyond ‘settler time’ and performative acts (and continued rituals) of settler sovereignty?
to hold conversations, to determine for themselves their roles and their responsibilities. In one online panel discussion, Niganpugultieg, held in March of 2021, the six Mi’gma’w youth panelists focused on the topic of leadership and education. In response to a question about how to create “the right dialogue” to understand the “balance” between settler colonial versus Indigenous cultural practices, one panelist, Alexa Metallic of Listuguj (grand-daughter of Donna Metallic whose words opened this dissertation) spoke about “centering” Indigenous knowledge, creating space for knowledge keepers, and using Western knowledge as a support. She also emphasised that this work – decolonizing, indigenizing – is taking place in the context of ongoing colonialism: and that principles of care, of support, of love also need to be recognized when creating spaces. Alexa Metallic affirmed:

[We need to be] centering that knowledge that we do have in communities, and amplifying, creating space for those knowledge keepers in community that have that knowledge, that have been eager to share that knowledge and centering that and then pairing it against Western knowledge as a support (instead of as a framework for everything we do in the community) … We are all very much still in the midst of the effects that colonization has had in our communities. We need to remember, as community members, that the world is already so terrible to us, in so many ways, and as a community we should be holding each other, we should be taking care of each other, we should be loving each other … we should be creating safe and brave spaces for each other.

I include these words, this teaching from a youth, spoken at an online gathering of Mi’gma’w people, focusing on the topic of leadership and education, to acknowledge and “hold the space” for and in the present-moment. These words – spoken individually, and as part of a collective – are a strong reminder of the beauty and strength, and the depth of what is involved in reclaiming, taking back, and working in an ethical manner, with Indigenous knowledges, and with

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Indigenous peoples. What is key in this passage is that Western knowledge is accompaniment but not foundation, not an encompassing structure. What also stands out is the emphasis on relations, on ways of building knowledge in a collective and caring manner.

Relationship-building (as both a process and a concept) conceptually framed and guided the research and the structure of this dissertation project on Indian Day schooling. The research itself grew from a conversation with a person who had attended the Day School, in Listuguj, in the late 1950s and into the 1960s. Relationships, in other words, shaped and guided the conceptual framing of this project, even before I knew that I would delve into this work. As observed in the literature, relationship building, in an era of reconciliation, if that term is not simply to mean Canadian nation-building, should involve creating an ethical space for encounters, for dialogue, for conversations; centering Indigenous paradigms, for some as part of a trans-systemic systems approach, and to mitigate settler colonialist agendas. I have attempted to use a trans-systemic approach that respected an Indigenous paradigm. I made use of colonial archives and certain Western analytics, whilst trying not to allow them to assume a privileged place based on their being print materials or because some concepts (or frames) bear the authoritative stamp of Western institutions. I tried to respect Indigenous, Mi’gmaw, ways of building and sharing knowledge, and did so from my own standpoint as a non-Indigenous person. To respect, in the strongest sense of the word, is to speak about protocols, methods and concepts ethically and responsibly, that do not ‘belong’ to me. To respect, in the strongest sense of the word, means being aware that I am a guest, that I will try to work in ways that are not coercive. To respect, in the best possible ways, means that I am aware of my own locations, as a settler person, as a non-
Indigenous person, as a woman, and as a researcher. And, if respect is held at the center, there are possibilities for learning, being a learner, and contributing to transformation.

I listened for stories about schooling, for reminiscing, for desires and concerns, still visible in written records, felt (and heard) in oral reminiscing, and still taking place in Listuguj (in Gespe’gewa’gi, throughout Mi’gma’gi). Beneath (beyond, despite) the dominant narrative depicting reconciliation as a ‘national’ and ‘big hug there are possibilities for lasting relations. Attending to stories, to print and oral records; paying attention to the ‘how’; to ethical spaces and trans-systemic knowledge systems: it is possible to have some understanding about teachings and memories that never left. Western analytics, too, as a type of webbing can be used to carefully, critically, make the colonial threads of day schools visible. Reconciliation involves learning how to pause, as settler-colonial people, to see (hear, feel, recognize) that we are ‘part of’ this story, that the fabric and fabrication of assimilatory colonial schooling intended for Indigenous peoples, is also our unsettled settler story. There are other stories. Stories that attend to the history of a particular place, there are possibilities for trans-systemic knowledges, for transformative reconciliation.
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Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government
Gespe’gewa’q (The People of the Last Land)

July 20, 2018
Carleton University
Research Ethics Board

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of the Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government, we would like to express our support for Amy Chamberlin’s proposed research project on Indian Day schooling in Canada, with a particular focus on the Restigouche Indian Day School, first established here in the community in the late 1800’s and early 1900’s.

In my capacity as the Chief of Listuguj, I met with Amy about the proposed project. I am aware of the scope of the project and her approach to conducting research. We believe that it is timely to conduct this research, conversations and reminiscing with former students, many of whom are now in their 70s and 80s. Further, we are confident Amy will implement the proposed plan to hold interviews/conversations with Elders from our community who attended this school, in a respectful and ethical manner.

We are fully supporting this work, as well as the proposed method of conversational style reminiscing with our Elders about their experiences at the school. Finally, we request that the materials produced from this work be deposited with the LMG when the project is complete.

In Peace and Friendship,

[Signature]
Darcy Gray
Chief of Listuguj

Peace and Friendship through Unity and Diversity for Prosperity and Progress.

Mi’gmaq Nation
Appendix C: Letter of Support, Donna Metallic (LMG, Senior Director), July 18, 2018.

Carleton University Research Ethics Board

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:  

July 18th, 2018

The Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government (LMG) is aware of Amy Chamberlin’s proposed research project on Indian Day Schools in Canada, with a focus on the Restigouche Indian Day School.

Amy met, in person, with Chief Darcy Gray of Listuguj as well as the Senior Director of the LMG, Donna Metallic to explain this project. The LMG is supportive of this project on day schooling and understands that Amy will be holding conversations and reminiscing with Elders from our community who attended the day school as well as conducting archival research on it history. Our priority is the conversations/interviews are conducted in a safe environment; that Elders are acknowledged appropriately; and that community has access to findings once the research is completed.

The LMG will provide support, for example, by providing space at public office for Amy to meet and interview Elders. The LMG has asked that in the final report those participate be acknowledged in accordance with their wishes (by name or suitable pseudonym). The LMG requests that the research materials (transcripts, audio and pictures) produced from this project be deposited with the LMG provided that consent has been given by participants.

In Peace and Friendship,

[Signature]

Donna Metallic, Senior Director
Listuguj Mi’gmaq Government

CC: Chief Darcy Gray
Appendix D: Letter of Invitation and Consent Form

November 2018

Greetings,

My name is Amy Chamberlin and I am a Ph.D. candidate in the School of Indigenous Studies and Canadian Studies at Carleton University. I am working on a research project entitled “Remembering Indian Day Schools: Looking Beyond Reconciliation as a ‘National Hug’” (#109294) under the supervision of Dr. Jennifer Henderson.

This project investigates dominant representations of the Indian Residential School system, which oftentimes show reconciliation as a type of ‘national hug’. In this research, I am asking whether or not dominant representations of reconciliation can be altered (and if so how) by considering a more complex history of Indigenous schooling, including experiences at ‘Indian Day Schools’.

To investigate this question, I am gathering information about the Restigouche Indian Day School from archival records and I am holding conversations with former students of this school. I have expanded the interview pool to include a few former teachers of the school.

If you would like to participate in this project, I invite you to share stories or memories about your experiences teaching at the Indian Day School. If willing, I will ask you a few questions, which you can answer (or decline) as you wish. With your consent, I will audio record the conversation and take pictures.

This conversation is voluntary. You may withdraw your information at any time until February of 2019. If you agree, and if you provide your consent, I will cite your name as one participant in this study; use your name to go along with specific quotations or you can remain anonymous.

Risks and Inconveniences
While this project does involve some emotional risks, care will be taken to follow Mi’gmaq protocols and to build ethical research relationships.

Possible Benefits
You may not receive any direct benefit from your participation in this study. However, your participation may allow for:

- Better understanding of ways that Indigenous peoples used colonial institutions (e.g., Indian Day Schools) for their own needs, desires and visioning, which can support present-day expressions of Indigenous re/building and resurgence;
- Increased awareness and knowledge about the gap in public knowledge and recognition around ‘Indian Day Schools’;
- Reckoning with a limited concept of reconciliation (e.g., critique of reconciliation as a ‘national hug’);
- Understanding and use of research methods that are non-coercive and non-exploitive and suitable for cross-cultural research.
**Compensation/Incentives**
You will not be paid or compensated for your participation in this study.

**No waiver of your rights**
By signing this form, you are not waiving any rights or releasing the researchers from any liability.

**Withdrawing from the study**
If you withdraw your consent during the course of the study, all information collected from you before your withdrawal will be discarded, unless you provide your express consent to use the data.

After the data collection is complete, you may request that your data be removed from the study and deleted by notice given to the Principal Investigator (Amy Chamberlin) before February of 2019.

**Confidentiality**
- We will treat your personal information as confidential, although absolute privacy cannot be guaranteed. No information that discloses your identity will be released or published without your specific consent. However, research records may be accessed by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board in order to ensure continuing ethics compliance.
- All data will be kept confidential, unless release is required by law (e.g., child abuse, harm to self or others).
- The results of this study may be published or presented at an academic conference or meeting, but the data will be presented so that it will not be possible to identify any participants unless you give your express consent.

Your data will be identified by a coded number so that your identity will not be directly associated with the data you have provided. All data, including coded information will be kept in a password protected file on a secure computer. With your consent, I will acknowledge your participation; ensure that your confidentiality is respected and maintained in the research process and final report. This work is for research purposes; your participation is voluntary; you may choose to end this interview at any time; and you can choose to answer (or not) questions posed.

**Data Retention**
During the study, Data will be stored on a password protected USB key to provide a safeguard for the risks associated with data breach.

**New information during the study**
In the event that any changes could affect your decision to continue participating in this study, you will be promptly informed.

**Ethics Review**
This project was reviewed and cleared by the Carleton University Research Ethics Board A. If you have any ethical concerns with the study, please contact Dr. Bernadette Campbell, Chair, Carleton University Research Ethics Board (by phone at 613-520-2600 [ext. 2517 for CUREB A]) or by email at ethics@carleton.ca. This project was reviewed and approved by Listuguj First Nation (Council of Mi’gmaq Educators) in accordance with the Mi’kmaw Research Principles and Protocols conducting research with and/or among Mi’gmaq People in Listuguj on August 2, 2018.

You can reach me, Amy Chamberlin, at 418-320-9281 or amychamberlin@email.carleton.ca

If you have any ethical concerns with this study, please contact:
Dr. Bernadette Campbell, Chair
Carleton University (Research Ethics Board-A) Tel.: 613-520-2600 ext. 2517 or via email at ethics@carleton.ca.

Wela’lin,
Amy Chamberlin
Statement of consent (print full name and sign name at bottom)

I, ___________________, voluntarily agree to participate in this study ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to be audio recorded (note taking purposes) ☐ Yes ☐ No

I agree to be photographed ☐ Yes ☐ No

Level of Anonymity

Cite your full name as one participant in this project? (e.g. Acknowledgments’ section) ☐ Yes ☐ No

Cite your full name at the end of some quotations? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Remain anonymous? ☐ Yes ☐ No

________________________ ____________________
Signature of participant Date

Research team member who interacted with the subject
I have explained the study to the participant and answered any and all of their questions. The participant to the best of my knowledge understands and agrees. I provided a copy of the consent form to the participant for their reference.

________________________ ____________________
Signature of researcher Date
INFORMATION OF A PERSONAL NATURE
(TO BE COLLECTED AFTER CONSENT HAS BEEN OBTAINED):

Full Name: ______________________
Date of birth: _______________________
Current place of residence: _______________
Contact information: ______________________
Years that you taught at the Restigouche Indian Day School: _________ to ________

COMMENTS:
Appendix E: Interview Guide (Former Students)

1. What do you remember about the Indian Day school – the building, the classroom, the school yard (sights, smells, sounds, or words/images)

2. Tell me a bit about a typical school day – teachers/teaching (Nuns, Priest, Lay People); subjects taught; languages used (English, French, Mi’gmaq)
   a. Students – Do you remember if you spoke (or learned) Mi’gmaq while at school? Tell me more about that
   b. Teachers – Did you learn (or teach in) Mi’gmaq during your time in the community? If so, tell me a bit about learning the language? If not, why not?

3. What are your memories about how children interacted with each other? (Mi’gmaq, White/French) What are your memories about interactions between students and teachers?

4. What are your memories about who was in charge of the school? (nuns, priests, lay persons, chief and council, parents) Do you remember if any parents were involved with the school? If so, how?

5. Interactions outside of school time
   a. With students – Did you find that you had to adjust when you went from home to school and then from school back to home? How so? Was there teaching going on at home, when you think about it now? Do you recall the school being used outside of typical school day for other events (evenings, by chief and council, holidays, or summer months)
   b. With teachers – Did you interact with the community outside of school teaching? What was that like?

6. I would like to turn your attention to recent events. In the more recent years, have you paid attention to the Truth and Reconciliation. Have the stories, images, and conversations circulating about the Indian Residential Schools have affected the way you think about your own experiences with Indian Day schooling? How do you feel talking about your schooling experiences today?

7. Should there be a way to remember the Restigouche Indian Day School? If so, how?

8. Would you like to share a story or memory about your experiences at school, (in the language of your choice) that I can record and leave with the community for others to hear?

9. Do you have any final thoughts, comments or questions?
Appendix F: Interview Guide (Former Teachers)

1. I will begin by asking if there is a particular story or memory about your experiences teaching at the Indian Day School that you would like to share?

2. What do you remember about the Indian Day school – the building, the classroom, the school yard (*sights, smells, sounds, or words/images*)

3. Tell me a bit about a typical school day – academic subjects, language of instruction, religious instruction. Did you learn (or teach in) Mi’gmaw during your time in the community? If so, tell me a bit about learning the language? If not, why not?

4. What are your memories about how children interacted with each other? (Mi’gmaq, White/French) What are your memories about interactions between students and teachers? (in class and in the school yard)

5. Interactions outside of school time – Did you interact with the community outside of school teaching? Can you tell me about experiences that you enjoyed? What about any challenges?

6. What are your memories about who was in charge of the school? (nuns, priests, lay persons, chief and council, parents) Do you remember if any parents were involved with school? If so, how?

7. I would like to turn your attention to recent events. In the more recent years, have you paid attention to the Truth and Reconciliation? Have the stories, images, and conversations circulating about the Indian Residential Schools have affected the way you think about your own experiences with Indian Day schooling? How do you feel talking about your schooling experiences today?

8. Should there be a way to remember the Restigouche Indian Day School? If so, how?

9. Do you have any final thoughts, comments, or questions?