

Red Deer Indian Industrial School

Residential Schools have left a lasting damaging history of trauma, and accessing archival records and history may be harmful to some people. If you are a Survivor or intergenerational survivor of the Residential School System and would like emotional support, a national crisis line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week:

Residential School Survivor Support Line: [1-866-925-4419](tel:1-866-925-4419)

Please note that the name “Indian Industrial School” is used throughout this research guide to reflect the request of the Remembering The Children Society to accurately record the name given to the institution and to identify the children impacted by it.



General view of the Indian Industrial School. Red Deer Archives, P10890

Search terms/key words/parallel names:

- Red Deer Residential School
- Red Deer Industrial School
- Red Deer Industrial Institute
- Indigenous

History:

Red Deer Indian Industrial School (1893-1919)

The Red Deer Indian Industrial School opened as a residential school in 1893 in the District of Alberta, Northwest Territories. It was located west of Red Deer, across the river from Fort Normandeau. It was the first Methodist residential school to operate in the area. While the school was roughly the same size of similar institutions, it was unique in that it was located a significant distance from the Indigenous communities it was supposed to serve, with the nearest reserve being 65 kilometers away.

The school closed in 1919 due to the distance from Indigenous communities and deadly Spanish Flu and smallpox outbreaks. Five years later, the Methodists opened Edmonton (Poundmaker) Residential School. The Red Deer school site temporarily housed Hebridean settlers (from Scotland) but was otherwise abandoned for years and is now on private property.

For a more detailed history please visit:

<https://thechildrenremembered.ca/school-histories/red-deer/#ftn33>

Citations:

- “Local News.” *The Red Deer News*. May 2, 1923. <https://www.newspapers.com/> (accessed September 18, 2024)
- “Red Deer Industrial Institute.” The Children Remembered. <https://thechildrenremembered.ca/school-histories/red-deer/#ftn47> (accessed September 18, 2024)

Key dates:

- **1893** Red Deer Indian Industrial School opens
- **1897** Expansion to accommodate 90 students
- **1919** Red Deer Indian Industrial School closes
- **2008** Archeological survey

Primary Records in Red Deer Archives:

Restrictions:

Due to the fragile nature of some of these records access to original records may be limited, whenever possible digital access copies have been made. We continue to work on identifying related records. **Please contact the Archives to learn more about the records you are seeking to access. Our intention is to provide access whenever possible.**

The Red Deer Archives holds very few records directly from or about the Indian Industrial School.

- MG 593 Alfred Hives collection

- Copy photographs created by Alfred Hives who worked at the Indian Industrial School
- MG 472 Lawrence Tippie's Red Deer collection
 - Photograph album found by a cousin of Lawrence Tippie in an antique shop in Fort Scott, Kansas and sent to him because of his connection to Red Deer
- Accession 1996-058
 - Fragments of a scribbler found at the site that is from the school's era
- Red Deer Archives Red Deer Indian Industrial School digital collection
 - https://reddeer.access.preservica.com/uncategorized/SO_11f204ad-7ff0-4135-8641-5e1c52f39ede/
 - Video and audio interviews talking about the school and the site.
 - City Council records discussing the history, people, and location of the Indian Industrial School
 - Red Deer Indian Industrial School webpage
<https://reddeer.access.preservica.com/red-deer-industrial-school/>

Related books in Reference Library:

- Garrett, Brenda. *City of Red Deer Convent Hill context paper*.
- Dawe, Michael. *Red Deer: The Memorable City*.
- Gaetz, Annie L. *The Park Country: A History of Red Deer and District*, page 111-113.

External and online sources:

- [Remembering the Children Society](#) was formed to identify, honour, and remember the children who attended the school through hosting events and sharing information.
- [Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery](#) holds some artefacts from the site and has the story of the school incorporated into the permanent exhibits. You can contact them [here](#).
- [United Church of Canada Archives](#) holds the school records, as their church grew out of the Methodist church.
- [The Children Remembered website](#) (created 2010) showcases some images and the story of the school.
- National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) contains records from or [about the school](#) and from the [Truth and Reconciliation Hearing](#) hosted in Red Deer in 2013. View Red Deer School related records [here](#).
- The [University of Alberta Institute of Prairie and Indigenous Archaeology](#) is assisting organizations and Nations in locating unmarked graves tied to the residential school system across western Canada, along with challenging cultural heritage policies such as through the [Uncovered: Truths About Indian Residential Schools](#) series.