



We Have Found Death Certificates for the Missing Children

March 18, 2022

1.0 Introduction

For years there have been constant references to the death of Aboriginal children.

It has been said that the death rate in residential schools was much higher than the death rate on the reserves, and that the schools were deathtraps.

When the Truth and Reconciliation Report was released in 2015 it was claimed that children were [ripped from their parents' arms](#), forced to attend residential schools, and never seen again.

Shortly thereafter 2800 children, widely proclaimed in the media to be 'missing children', were listed on the National Centre For Truth and Reconciliation Memorial Register and on the [blood-red banner unveiled in 2019](#) at the Canadian Museum of History.

A more recent claim is that thousands of students were murdered at residential schools. This narrative began with a press release on May 27th, 2021 stating that the remains of 215 children had been found using ground-penetrating radar (GPR) in an apple orchard at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Since then there has been a steady stream of press releases announcing the finding of more and more unmarked graves at former residential schools using GPR. None of these alleged burials has been excavated, and it is well established that GPR can only locate soil disturbances and cannot locate human remains or burials per se. Nonetheless, claims of the discovery of human remains and unmarked graves at former residential schools are treated in the media and by the federal government as proven.

As a result, residential schools have been condemned as places of death and genocide, assertions which have understandably shocked and outraged Canadians and the entire world.

2.0 Children Found to date and Evidence of their Deaths and Burials

The need for fact-based research and evidence as opposed to speculation and opinion is thus more important than ever.

Researchers associated with the Frontier Centre for Public Policy have investigated these claims which have had such an impact on our understanding of Canada's history and Aboriginal policy.

Because British Columbia death records are available to the public, researchers have been able to find death records for students at BC residential schools.

Of the 2800 names on the [NCTR Memorial Register](#), 416 are the names of children who died while registered at BC's 18 residential schools.

So far, death records have been found for 225 of these 416 former BC residential school students.

There are [51 names on the NCTR list](#) for the former Kamloops Indian Residential School.

Death records have been found for 35 of these 51 former students of the Kamloops Indian Residential School.

Thus, to date Frontier researchers have found death certificates which prove that 225 of these children are not missing at all. Most did not die at residential schools, and most were buried on their home reserves. This should come as a great relief to the families of children named on the Memorial Register, and to all Canadians.

Researchers are continuing their work in a determined effort to find the remaining children, and Frontier Centre believes that there is a high likelihood that they can be located if provincial death records are made public. [Over 4000 death records and other documents](#) were released to the NCTR by the BC government in 2014. Other provinces have released death records to the NCTR as well. Regrettably, the NCTR has declined to make these records available to the public.

3.0 Recommendations for Action

Release of Records to the Public

Firstly, the Frontier Centre calls on provincial governments and the NCTR to release all relevant death records so that children on the NCTR's Memorial Register can be identified. The Frontier Centre is convinced that knowing the truth about residential school deaths is vital for our country, including our shared goal of reconciliation with Aboriginal peoples.

Review of the NCTR's Research Methods

Secondly, Frontier calls on the federal government to ensure that a review of research methods and standards at the NCTR be undertaken by a third party.

Transparency, and a Protocol for Maintaining the Memorial Register

Thirdly, Frontier calls for a definitive public list and associated protocol for future additions to or subtractions from the NCTR's Memorial Register. It is disturbing that there appears to be no process in place for maintaining the integrity of this list. In order to inspire credibility and confidence, the NCTR Memorial Register needs to be public and transparent, and consist of specific names cross-referenced to band lists from the Indian Register among other specific protocols.

Excavation of the sites of claimed unmarked graves

In a [Fifth Estate program](#) aired on January 13th, 2022, the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation announced its decision to excavate the site of the alleged burials in the apple orchard at the former Kamloops Indian Residential School. Given the inability of GPR to locate human remains or burials per se, the excavation of this site should take place at the earliest possible opportunity in the spring of 2022 to definitively establish whether there are in fact any human remains or burials there.

4.0 Attached Backgrounders and Death Records

Articles by Frontier Senior Fellow Brian Giesbrecht providing a detailed overview of this issue:

[Are There Really Thousands of Missing Indigenous Children?](#)

[We are Finding the 2800 Missing Children](#)

Death Certificates – Three PDF files of BC death records as proof that most children on the NCTR's Memorial Register for the former Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, BC, as well as St. Joseph's Residential School in Williams Lake, BC, and St. George's Indian Residential School in Lytton, BC, did not die at the schools, and are not missing since they are buried on their home reserves. These three pdf files are representative examples of the 225 death records found to date.