



Archival Research in Support of Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh: Taking Care of Our Children

Investigating Unmarked Graves at Multiple Sites Associated with Three Former Residential Schools and Coqualeetza Indian Hospital in the Fraser Valley, S'ólh Téméxw

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National Gathering on Unmarked Burials:
Affirming Indigenous Data Sovereignty and Community Control
over Knowledge and Information, Vancouver, BC

January 17, 2023



Background



Stó:lō First Nations and Organizations Connected to XYs

Stó:lō Nation Chiefs' Council

Aitchelitz First Nation
Leq'á:mel First Nation
Matsqui First Nation
Shxwha:y Village
Skowkale First Nation
Squiala First Nation
Sumas First Nation
Tzeachten First Nation
Yakweawkwoose First Nation

Stó:lō Tribal Council

Chawathil First Nation
Cheam First Nation
Kwantlen First Nation
Kwaw-Kwaw-Apilt First Nation
Seabird Island First Nation
Shxw'ōwhámél First Nation
Soowahlie First Nation
Scowlitz First Nation

Independent Nations

Sqwá First Nation
Sts'ailes First Nation

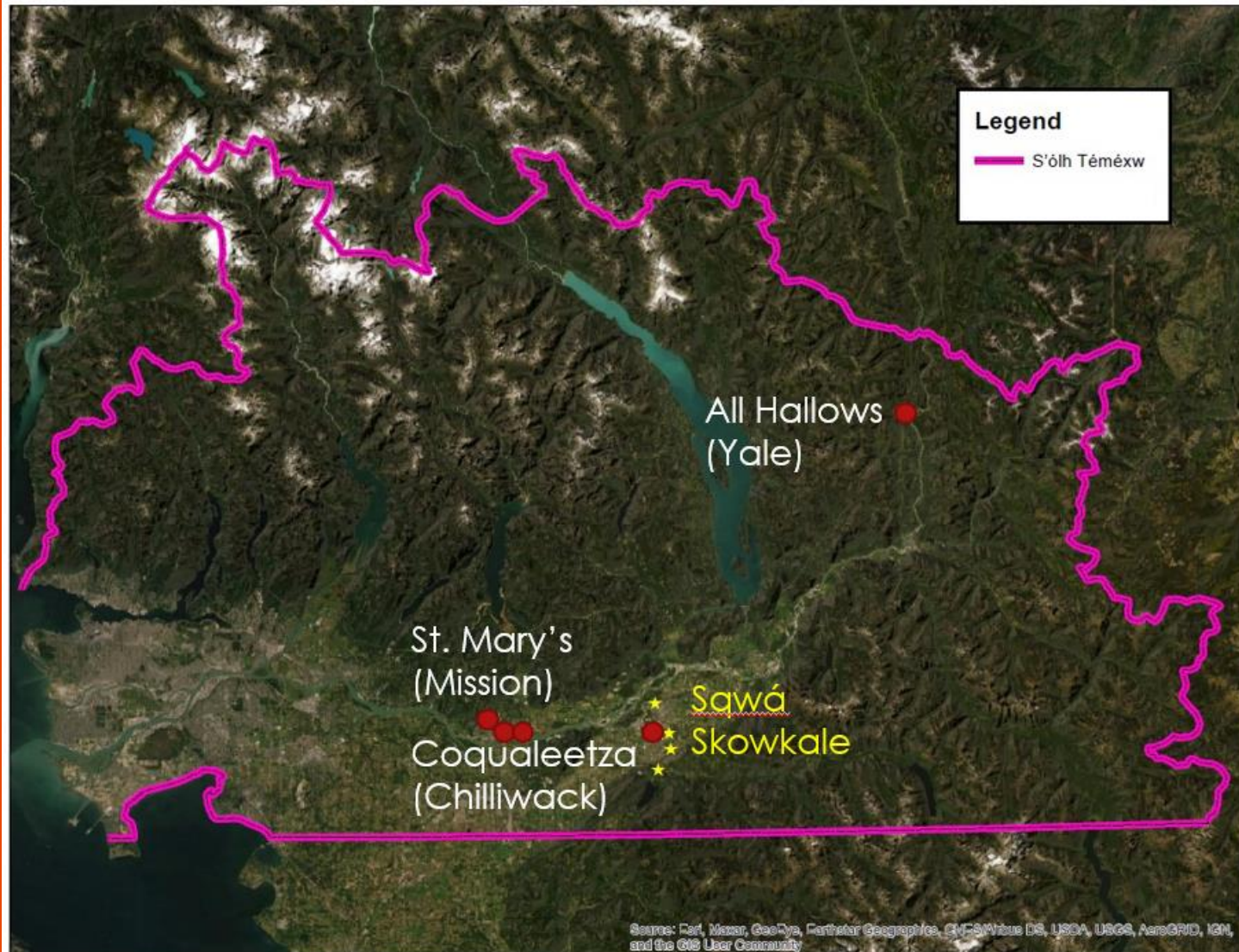
S'ólh Téméxw Stewardship Alliance

Chawathil First Nation	Seabird Island Band	Sumas First Nation	Aitchelitz First Nation
Cheam First Nation	Shxw'ōwhámél First Nation	Yale First Nation	Shxwhà:y Village
Kwaw'Kwaw'Apilt First Nation	Skawahlook First Nation	<i>and</i>	Skowkale First Nation
Scowlitz First Nation	Skwah First Nation		Soowahlie First Nation
			Squiala First Nation
			Tzeachten First Nation
			Yakweawkwoose First Nation
			<i>as represented by Ts'elxwéyeqw Tribe</i>



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh





Institutions in S'ólh Téméxw – Stó:lō Traditional Lands -

St. Mary's Residential School
(Roman Catholic | Mission | 1867-1984)

**Coqualeetza Industrial
Institute/Residential School**
(Methodist | Chilliwack | 1889-1940)

Coqualeetza Indian Hospital
(Chilliwack | 1941-1969)

All Hallows Residential School
(Anglican | Yale | 1885-1920)

Also included in our work is research and field investigations for four on-reserve cemeteries with graves associated with Coqualeetza residential school and hospitals.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwíqwélh

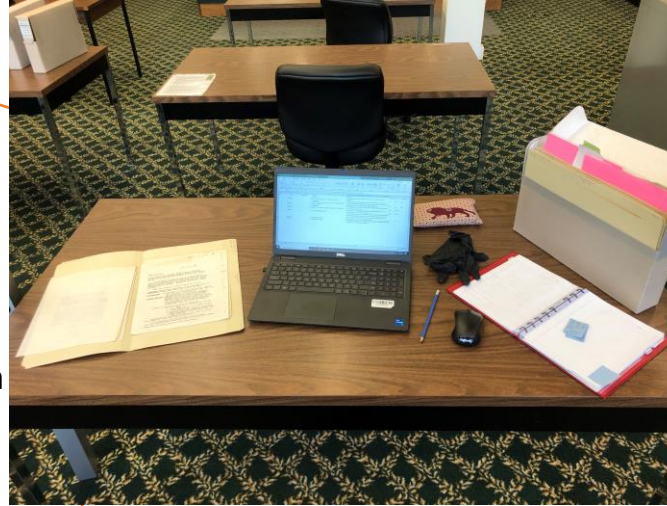


Overview of Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh: Taking Care of Our Children

Archival & Community Research

Documentary and oral history research to:

- **locate cemeteries** associated with these schools. This also serves to inform the grounds investigations.
- **identify deaths** of children occurring at or related to attendance at these schools.
- **develop a “Lost Stó:lō Children Registry”** recording family members who attended any residential school and did not come home.



Grounds Investigations

Follow **established protocols for field work**, developed with cultural advisors.

Work with, and pay respects, to the ancestors.

Follow established principles in the **Stó:lō Heritage Policy** which provide guidelines for heritage-related work.

Ensure associated **ceremonies and cultural work** is supported.

Develop **reporting and communication protocols** that are rooted in confidentiality and cultural sensitivity.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Overview of Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh: Taking Care of Our Children



Siyémches with St. Mary's Memorial Pole



Coqualeetza Memorial Pole and the relocated "Coqualeetza Hospital Monument"

Commemoration & Memorialization

Memorial Posts carved by Siyémches (Chief Terry Horne, Yeqwyeqwí:ws First Nation) in 2021, acknowledging those who attended and those who did not come home.

Relocation of former Coqualeetza Residential school and Hospital corner stones from the last remaining hospital building. It now sits in dialogue with the Memorial Post.

Potential **future memorials** related to associated cemeteries.

Additional cultural work to care for the spiritual needs of children who lost their lives at the schools and the families and communities who love them.

Connections to the **St. Mary's (Mission, BC) Survivors Oral History Project** coordinated by Stó:lō Tribal Council. For more information contact Grand Chief Clarence Pennier: kat.pennier@stolotribalcouncil.ca



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Overseeing the work

Leadership Advisory Council

- Stó:lō Nation Chiefs' Council
- Stó:lō Tribal Council
- Independent First Nations

Survivors
Elders
Knowledge Keepers

Stó:lō Xyólhmet S'olhetawtxw Sq'éq'ip
*Stó:lō House of Respect Caretaking
Committee*



Xyólhmet ye Syéwíqwélh



Our Team

Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre

Dr. David Schaepe (Director and Senior Archaeologist) - Project Lead

Amber Kostuchenko (Manager, Language, Archives, Cultural Education and Tours) – Project Manager

Dr. Naxaxalhts'i (Albert “Sonny” McHalsie) – Cultural Advisor/Historian

Cara Brendzy (Manager, Heritage Stewardship & Archaeology) – Field Work Lead

Lisa Davidson (Genealogist, Stó:lō Genealogy Office, and GIS Specialist) – Genealogical Research Lead

Remy Benoit – Project Coordinator/Researcher

Kathleen Bertrand – Project Coordinator/Researcher

Kristina Celli – Archival Research Supervisor

With additional support from:

Colin Green – GIS Manager and Analyst

Stephen Shurgold – Archivist-Librarian, Stó:lō Library and Archives

Heritage Stewardship and Archaeology Unit Staff – field staff, drone operators, repository

University of the Fraser Valley

Dr. Keith Thor Carlson, Canada Research Chair in Indigenous and Community-Engaged History, and Director of UFV’s Peace and Reconciliation Centre

Additional archaeological advisors

Dr. Andrew Martindale (University of British Columbia)

Dr. Kisha Supernant (University of Alberta)

Dr. Bill Angelbeck (Douglas College)

Dr. Colin Grier (Washington State University)

The Canadian Archaeology Association will provide further technical advisory and other support.



*Coqualeetza Memorial Post,
Coqualeetza Longhouse, Chilliwack BC*

*Carved by Siyémches, Chief Terry
Horne, Yakwekwwoose First Nation*



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh





Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre

Origins



The Stó:lō Resource Centre, home of the SRRMC, was purpose-built in 2010.

Since at least the 1980s, many First Nations of the Stó:lō have been working together on issues related to Aboriginal Rights and Title, as well as a modern Treaty.

The Stó:lō Research and Resource Management Centre (SRRMC) has its origins in the mid-1990s as the Aboriginal Rights and Title department of one of the Stó:lō tribal organizations, with funding provided through Treaty Negotiations.

In 2004, the SRRMC was re-formed as a self-sufficient research centre following a break in Treaty-related funding.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



S'ólh Téméxw te íkw'élò. Xólhmet te mekw' stám ít kwelát.

'This is our land. We have to look after everything that belongs to us.'

The mission of the SRRMC is to assist the Stó:lō community in practicing the philosophy and values embodied in this statement:

- Protect, preserve and manage Stó:lō heritage in a manner consistent with Stó:lō values, beliefs and traditions.
- Cooperate with other organizations – both Stó:lō and non-Stó:lō – in the protection, preservation, and management of Stó:lō heritage and environment.
- Protect and preserve Stó:lō religious freedom in all its expressions.
- Maintain the integrity of the Stó:lō spiritual world.
- Maintain healthy relations between the contemporary Stó:lō community and the Stó:lō ancestors.
- Maintain the integrity of Stó:lō history and heritage through the respectful treatment of Stó:lō knowledge, heritage objects and sites.
- Advance knowledge and understanding of Stó:lō heritage.
- Maintain continuity in Stó:lō heritage, and the practice of cultural traditions, in forms both old and new, to advance Stó:lō cultural revival.



Naxaxalhts'i (Dr. Albert "Sonny" McHalsie) educating about place names within S'ólh Téméxw.



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SRRMC Mandates



2017 University of Saskatchewan and University of Victoria Ethnohistory Field School participants, with Naxaxalhts'i and Dave Schaepe, at the Thank You Potlatch.

Caretaking responsibility for collectively acquired Stó:lō resources and holdings

- Stó:lō Library and Archives
- Stó:lō Material Culture Repository
- Stó:lō Genealogy Office database
- Stó:lō Publications (past and future)
- S'ólh Téméxw Geographical Information System (GIS) data

Administrative responsibility for collective Stó:lō research and resource management permit authority

- Stó:lō Heritage Investigation / Archaeological Permitting
- Stó:lō Research Registry

Facilitation of the Stó:lō Xyólhmet S'olhetawtxw Sq'éq'ip (House of Respect Caretaking Committee)

- Administration of Stó:lō Heritage Policy
- Repatriation and care of ancestors
- Liaison with museum community

“Occupy the Field” – Engage in research and resource management within S'ólh Téméxw – interacting with the community of academic researchers and institutions according to the principles and guidelines of Stó:lō worldview and policy

- Heritage
- Land use and development planning
- Field School programs
- Environment and resource management



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Units within the SRRMC

Heritage
Stewardship
&
Archaeology

Land
Stewardship

Language,
Archives,
Cultural
Education &
Tours

Geographic
Information
Systems
&
Geomatics

Research &
Special
Projects

People of
the River
Referrals
Office

*Stó:lō Material Culture Repository,
located at the Stó:lō Resource Centre.*

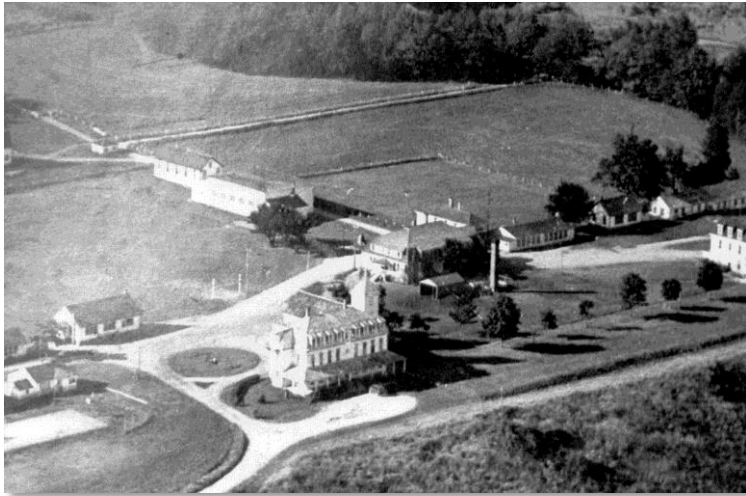


Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Institutions Under Research

St. Mary's Residential School (Mission, BC)



1863-1984 (relocated 1882 and again in 1962)

Operated by the Catholic Church

Longest period of operation in BC.

The substantial remains of the second St. Mary's institution is located within the City of Mission's Fraser River Heritage Park and includes the still-active Oblate Cemetery.

*Buildings at the second location for St. Mary's institute, now currently part of Fraser River Heritage Park in Mission, BC.
Photo: Stó:lō Library and Archives*

In 2004 the 1962 residential school grounds were created into a Reserve jointly held by 21 Stó:lō First Nations.

Today, the site is managed by the Stó:lō Service Agency. Parts of the buildings have been renovated over the years and rented to a number of small businesses.



*St. Mary's "New School" built 1963.
Photo: Stó:lō Library and Archives*



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Coqualeetza Residential School and Hospital (Chilliwack, BC)

1886-1940

United Church of Canada (initially Methodist Church)

After the school closed, the buildings were converted into the federally operated **Coqualeetza Indian Hospital (1941-1969)**.

The school cemetery was removed in the 1940s and the loved ones reinterred in cemeteries located on local reserves, including Skwá, Skowkale, Tzeachten, and possibly also Soowahlie First Nations.

The site is currently part of the Additions to Reserve Process and is managed by the Stó:lō Service Agency, which uses the site and buildings for its operations.

Building 1, the purpose-built Hospital building was demolished in spring 2022.



Coqualeetza grounds, 1940.

Photo: Stó:lō Library and Archives



Coqualeetza Hospital (Building 1).

Photo: Stó:lō Library and Archives



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



All Hallows (Yale, BC)



All Hallows

Photo: BC Archives E-00707

1884-1917

Anglican Church of Canada

Segregated residential school for Indigenous and non-Indigenous girls.

Associated cemetery/cemeteries currently unknown.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh





Developing a Plan: Research Questions

What are the questions we need to gather information to answer?

The first step in beginning the planning for our research was to determine what our main *research questions* (the “big questions”) related to the institutions (St. Mary’s Residential School, Coqualeetza Industrial Institute/Residential School, and All Hallow’s Residential School and at Coqualeetza Indian Hospital) whose history we are researching.

1. **Who are the children who died at or after being sent home from one of these institutions and under what circumstances?**
2. **Who are the people whose actions (or inactions) resulted in the deaths of these children?**
3. **Where are the cemeteries and marked or unmarked graves associated with deaths of children at/connected to these institutions?**



Painted rocks left at St. Mary’s Residential School, summer 2022.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh

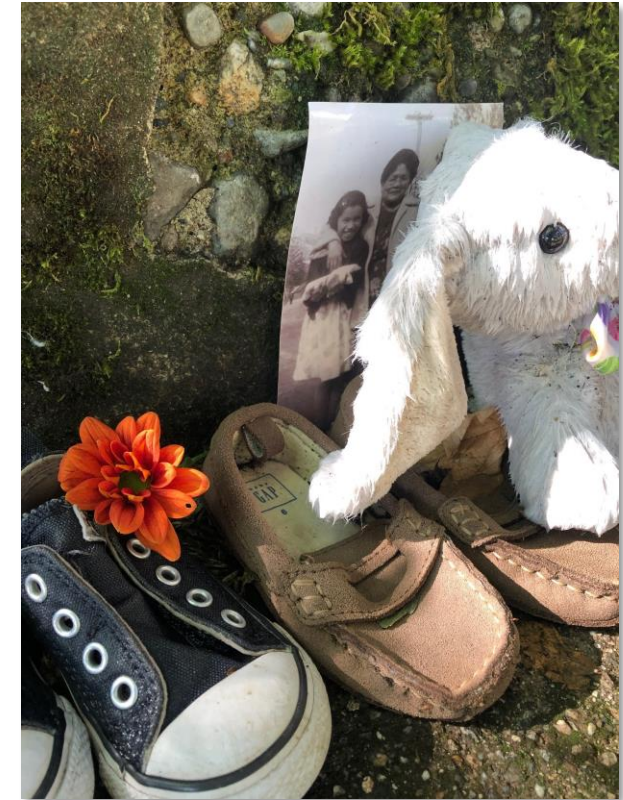


What are the questions we need to gather information to answer?

In addition to looking at the history of the institutions located in S'ólh Téméxw, we also want to support Stó:lō families and communities whose children were taken out of the territory.

Who are Stó:lō children who attended *any* Residential School and/or hospital and did not return home? What happened to them?

The XYS team will be developing a **“Lost Stó:lō Children Register”** to record as much information about Stó:lō children who attended institutions not being researched by the team. This will be gathered through interviews with Stó:lō families and communities.



Memorial on the foundation of the Boys' Dormitory at the second St. Mary's institution with a photograph of a young girl. Information on the back of the photo indicates that she had died at St. Mary's in 1957.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



BC Lead Communities on Unmarked Graves and Missing Children



Gathering of Lead Communities, Coqualeetza Longhouse, May 2022

To try and understand what happened to these loved ones, and to share information about loved ones from non-Stó:lō communities who lost their lives at these institutions, we will be **connecting with the other Lead Communities in British Columbia** conducting similar research.

Since 2021, the BC Ministry of Indigenous Relations has been organizing regular meetings of the First Nations who are the leads for undertaking investigations into unmarked graves and missing children associated with Residential Schools and Indian Hospitals located in BC.

Leadership and Technical Advisors for the Nations have been attending.


A **Technical Working Group** has been formed for Lead Communities to connect with and support each other through this work.

Protocols for sharing information between nations and community-sensitive approaches to sharing information with families will need to be developed.



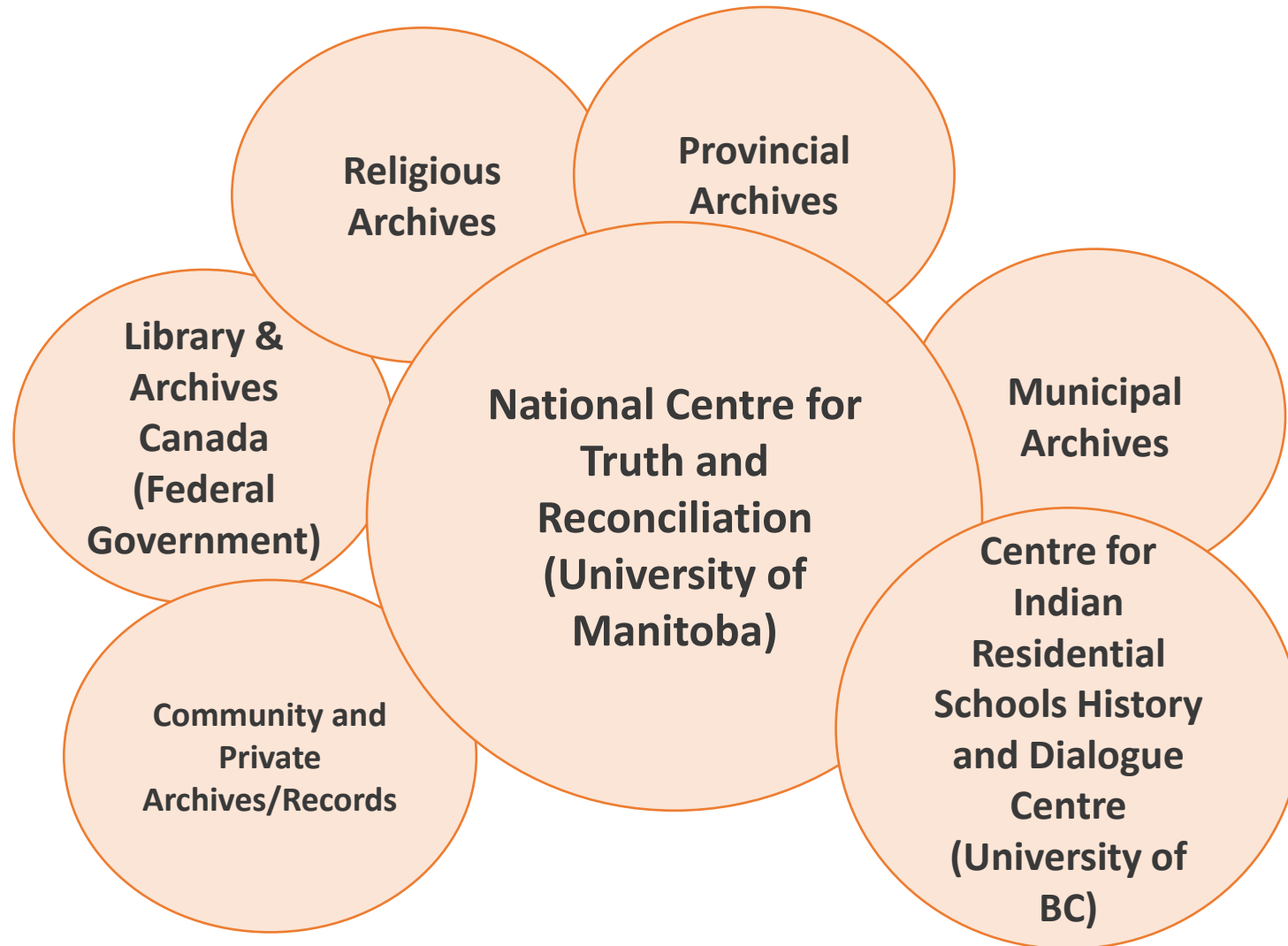
Xyólhmet ye Syéwíqwélh



The background features a solid orange vertical bar on the left side. In the bottom right corner, there are several parallel diagonal stripes in shades of orange, yellow, and grey, extending from the bottom edge towards the right.

Developing a Plan: Where are the documents?

Sources for records about residential schools



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Why are there so many places with residential school records?

Research into residential schools, the deaths of Indigenous children at these institutions, and the location of graves associated with those deaths *is not a new research topic*. In the last 30 years, a number of bodies have looked into these matters; each time, records were collected. ***There are multiple record repositories which hold copies of the same documents!***

Starting in the late 1990s, the Federal Government began collecting documents related to Residential Schools from LAC, semi-active file centres, provincial archives, and religious archives in order to respond to litigation, Alternative Dispute Resolution, and the Independent Assessment Process. ***Over 1 million of these records*** were eventually provided to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and ***today are held by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation***. Some of these same records may also be accessed through UBC's Residential School History and Dialogue Centre.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission conducted research into missing children and unmarked graves at Residential schools prior to the release of its final report in 2015.

Many Religious Organizations have also been doing their own research on deaths at the schools they operated.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Priority Repositories for XYS

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation – access agreement signed April 2022; will be seeking a secondary agreement to repatriate copies of relevant records to the Stó:lō Library and Archives

- Includes survivor stories, documents related to the work of the TRC, and copies of archival records from churches and governments.
- Of particular interest are the ***approximately 1 million records from the Federal Government department known as the “National Research and Analysis Directorate”*** which oversaw research into residential schools to support the settlement of claims. Not only does the NCTR have PDF images of these documents, but it also holds ***“value-added” metadata*** that was inputted by researchers ***for every single document***. The metadata includes:
 - All students named in the document
 - All staff named in the document
 - Any “other names” mentioned
 - A tag for each school listed
 - And for some records, an “issue code,” which tagged the content of the document by subjects such as “death of student” or “health” or “cemetery.”
- Additionally, documents from the National Research and Analysis Directorate also are organized into sub-collections, by school, regional collections, and also national collections such as the Health Collection.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwíqwélh



Priority Repositories for XYS

United Church of Canada Archives

- All records related to residential schools that are held by the United Church of Canada Archives. Upon request by a First Nation, they will provide digital copies of those records.
- We received the records for the Coqualeetza Residential School in November 2022 and will be starting our review of them shortly.

BC Archives / Royal BC Museum

- Holdings include records from the Oblates of Mary Immaculate and the Sisters of St. Ann's, who operated and staffed St. Mary's Residential School.
- We are currently reviewing an access agreement drafted by the Royal BC Museum and hope to conclude the agreement in the coming weeks.



Duncan Campbell Scott, Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs laying the corner stone for the new Coqualeetza building, c. 1923.

United Church Archives, UCCA, 1993.049P/3391



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Coqualeetza Indian Hospital Records

We have not yet turned our attention to locating records related to the Coqualeetza Indian Hospital. It is unlikely that individual patient files would have survived, and if they have, there will be privacy issues to contend with.

In response to our request, the Chilliwack Museum and Archives has provided the XYS team with a list of all their holdings including photos, objects, and documents related to the operations of the Coqualeetza hospital.



*Rose Jones, the last patient to leave
Coqualeetza Hospital upon its closure in 1969.
Stó:lō Library and Archives*



Xyólhmet ye Syéwíqwélh





Archival Research Plan

Archival Research to Support XYS

With the number of institutions, longevity that the institutions were in operation, and the number of religious organizations who ran the schools on behalf of the Federal Government, the archival research we are undertaking is unprecedented in the SRRMC.

Key steps required to begin organizing our work:

- 1) Hire someone dedicated to overseeing the archival research. We were fortunate in September 2022 to bring Kristina Celli, historian, onboard as the **Archival Research Supervisor**.
- 2) Develop an **Archival Research Plan**.
- 3) Develop **templates for recording of research outputs** including file reviews, document reviews, attendance lists, etc.
- 4) Develop a **spreadsheet for interim record-keeping** while a custom-built web-based research portal is being developed.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Archival Research Plan

The Archival Research Plan is a strategic document identifies the research questions and scope of the project and also functions as a schedule, guide and tracking mechanism for the review of records found in a multitude of repositories.

Kristina Celli, Archival Research Supervisor, is responsible for maintaining the plan, training and managing the workload of researchers.

The Plan also sets out processes and procedures for reviewing documents and recording research findings in pre-developed templates including:

- **Archival Records Inventory:** a tracking system delineating which records have been reviewed, and a link to their originating repository.
- **Labeling and Filing System for copies of archival records,** which was developed in consultation with Stó:lō Archivist-Librarian Stephen Shurgold.
- **File Review Form** to document methodology used when reviewing the documents – what information they were looking for, what information was recorded, and in what format – as well as provide a brief summary of information found in the documents.
- **Institution Attendance Lists** for every year the institutions were in operation.
- **Student/Patient Reports** where detailed information about each student will be kept, including home community, date of birth, dates of attendance, any information surrounding their death, if available.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Tiered approach to review of documents

Tier 1 records are those that are considered high priority. These records are the most likely to have information directly answering the four research questions.

Tier 2 records are those that are considered medium priority. These records may not contain enough information in the description to determine if they would be high priority, or they may be documents that are deemed to provide contextual information.

Tier 3 records are those that are considered low priority. These records are unlikely to contribute any relevant information to the XYS Project.

Indian Affairs School Files	
(RG 10, Volume 6423)	
File 869-5, part 1	New Westminster Agency - Coqualeetza Industrial School - Establishment - Building Maintenance - Accounts - (Plans). 1890 - 1904
File 869-5, part 2	New Westminster Agency - Coqualeetza Industrial School - Building Maintenance - Supplies - Accounts (Report). 1925 - 1932
File 869-5, part 3	New Westminster Agency - Coqualeetza Industrial School - Inspector of Construction. 1921 - 1934



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Specialty Archival Research: Genealogy



Remy Benoit and Lisa Davidson accessing undigitized BC Vital Statistics records at the Family History Department of the Cloverdale Branch, Surrey Libraries

The XYS team is grateful to have access to the skills and knowledge of Lisa Davidson, Genealogist with the Stó:lō Genealogy Office.

Through the research of the Stó:lō Genealogy Office, we hope to connect the names of Stó:lō students of residential schools with their loved ones living today. This will help us share information, when we have it, with the families and communities to which those students are connected.

We have also been reviewing of publicly-available Vital Statistics records to locate the death records of anyone of school age who passed away in association with one of the institutions we are researching.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



How does Archival Research support grounds investigation and analysis?

Providing context for the grounds investigation work.

Finding the location of the Coqualeetza cemetery.

Identifying potential names of students buried in marked and unmarked graves.

“Confirmation” of burials - reducing potential need for ground disturbing activity.

Supports the analysis of data gathered from remote ground sensing methodologies.



Heritage Stewardship and Archaeology staff set up a total station at Coqualeetza, summer 2022.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Final Thoughts

- You are not in this alone. There are communities and individuals who are experienced in this type of archival research and we are willing to help.
- The scope of archival work is daunting, even for an experienced and well-resourced team.
- Research is iterative. As new information is uncovered, new research questions emerge. Archival research plans will need to be flexible and able to incorporate new research priorities.
- The vast numbers of copies of records in multiple repositories has complicated this work. We need a “road map” to understand where the original copies of records are held and which repositories have duplicates of those originals. Without this, we risk reviewing the exact same documents multiple times and wasting valuable resources.
- Access to records is not sufficient – repatriation of records to Indigenous communities is necessary. First Nations need to have copies of these records in their own communities, to support this work and future research into residential schools. Stable, long-term funding is required for First Nations to house these records in a manner that ensures preservation and access to the records and data. This includes training, infrastructure, and the ability to develop cultural-specific and sensitive archival policies and practices.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Final Thoughts



Fergus is wearing his Orange Shirt with the "Eagle Mother" design by Stó:lō artist Jared Deck.

- Communities should be provided with copies *not only* of research outputs (example, list of children who died at a school) from those organizations (TRC/NCTR, Religious Organizations) which have already completed some of this research, but copies of the supporting archival documents on which these outputs are based.
- There is “value-added” information in the metadata for the 1 million records provided to the TRC, now housed in the NCTR’s AtoM database that would be extremely beneficial to communities doing this research. Work needs to be done to consider how to make this value-added information directly to communities, along with the records.
- Good quality archival work requires planning, some level of expertise (though it is easy to train people who have an eye for detail), and time. Current Federal Funding which funds research activities until March 2024, is not enough, and governments should already be thinking about how to continue supporting communities in this work after that date.



Xyólhmet ye Syéwiqwélh



Le hoy!

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(604) 316-9507

We know that this work may be re-traumatizing and can affect the health and well-being of many. It is important to take care of your own wellness and pay attention to the wellness of those around you. If you or someone around you needs support at any time, please reach out to one of the many supports available, 24 hours a day.

Indian Residential School Survivors Society

1-800-721-0066 (toll-free)

National Indian Residential School Crisis Line

1-866-925-4419 (toll-free)

Kuu-U's Crisis Line Society

Crisis services for Indigenous people across BC

250-723-4050 (Adults/Elders line)

250-723-2040 (Youth line)

or **1-800-588-8717** (toll-free)

Hope for Wellness Help Line

Immediate mental health counselling and crisis intervention

1-855-242-3310 (toll-free)

or **hopeforwellness.ca** (confidential chat)

Métis Crisis Line

1-833-MétisBC (1-833-638-4722)

