



New NCTR research identifies 140 Oblate priests and brothers who served in residential schools, aiding Survivor research

TREATY 1 TERRITORY, WINNIPEG, May 29, 2025 – The National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) and the Oblates of OMI Lacombe Canada (the Oblates) continue their collaborative efforts to ensure residential school Survivors, their families, and communities have access to critical historical Oblate documents.

For several years, the NCTR has worked in collaboration with OMI Lacombe to acquire Oblate residential school records from various archival sources and expedite access to critical historical documents, including personnel files of Oblate members who worked in residential schools in Canada. These records are vital for families and communities as they continue their research on residential school Survivors and the children who never made it home.

Through research, agreements and dialogue with the Oblates of OMI Lacombe, the NCTR has created a list of Oblate priests and brothers who participated in the administration and/or operations of these schools. Many of the Oblate priests or brothers listed worked in residential schools, such as the Muscowequan Indian Residential School located in Lestock, Saskatchewan.

This research will soon be available online through the NCTR Archives with personnel profiles and links to the schools where the Oblate members served. This crucial work continues, and the list of identified priests and brothers will be updated on an ongoing basis.

The Oblate Order played a fundamental role in Canada's residential school system, particularly in the West and North, operating 48 of these institutions starting with the [Dunbow \(High River\) Industrial School](#) in southern Alberta in 1884. While locating records related to residential schools can be a complex process, it is a positive step that these additional records will soon be in the care of the NCTR.

This research is part of an ongoing collaboration between the Oblates and the NCTR to support the NCTR in collecting and reviewing all available historical records to help ensure the full truth of the residential school system is brought to light.

Quotes

"I have been present at many of the discussions to access these files and their release is a milestone in the relationship between the Oblate Order and residential school Survivors. For Indigenous peoples across Turtle Island, residential schools do not represent education and learning, but hardship and trauma. Many communities continue to struggle with the difficult legacy of these schools. Knowledge, honouring the truth, is the first step to overcoming the difficult childhood experiences suffered in these institutions. We can use these records to better understand our experiences at these schools, to heal, to build relationships of love and respect, free of colonial judgement."

- Elder Dr. Harry Bone, Elder-in-Residence, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

"These personnel files supply a human measure to a story that is too often only institutional. Until now these records were dispersed in many unique repositories across Turtle Island. We are creating a central source to examine, understand and heal from one of the longest serving and least understood colonial social programs in the history of the country."

- Raymond Frogner, Head of Archives and Senior Director of Research, National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation

"The Oblates of OMI Lacombe Canada are deeply grateful for the work of the NCTR to memorialize the experiences of residential school survivors. The eventual release of this

research and the initial list of Oblate members who worked in the schools marks a meaningful step forward, that follows directly from our conversations with the NCTR about accelerating access to personnel files. We recognize that this is only one part of a long and painful journey, and we remain committed to continuing this important work in partnership with the NCTR.”

- Fr. Ken Thorson, Provincial, OMI Lacombe Canada

Associated Links

[NCTR and Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate Sign Supplemental Agreement for Strengthened Collaboration on Residential School Records](#)

[NCTR to work with the Oblates to access residential school records](#)

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About the NCTR

The NCTR, created by the Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement, is an Indigenous-led national centre dedicated to preserving records related to the history and legacy of Canada’s residential school system. It holds the records from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and other relevant documents, guided by Indigenous protocols and values.

It is the responsibility of the NCTR to steward and share the truths of Survivors’ experiences in a respectful way and to work with Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators, researchers, communities, decision-makers and the general public to support the ongoing work of truth, reconciliation, and healing across Canada and beyond.

About the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate

The Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate were founded in 1816 by St. Eugene de Mazenod in Aix-en Provence, France. The community arrived in Canada in 1841. After their arrival, Oblate priests and brothers worked across Canada and throughout the Far North in a variety of areas, including residential schools, parish and retreat ministry, and hospital and prison chaplaincies. OMI Lacombe Canada Province is based in Ottawa, ON

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