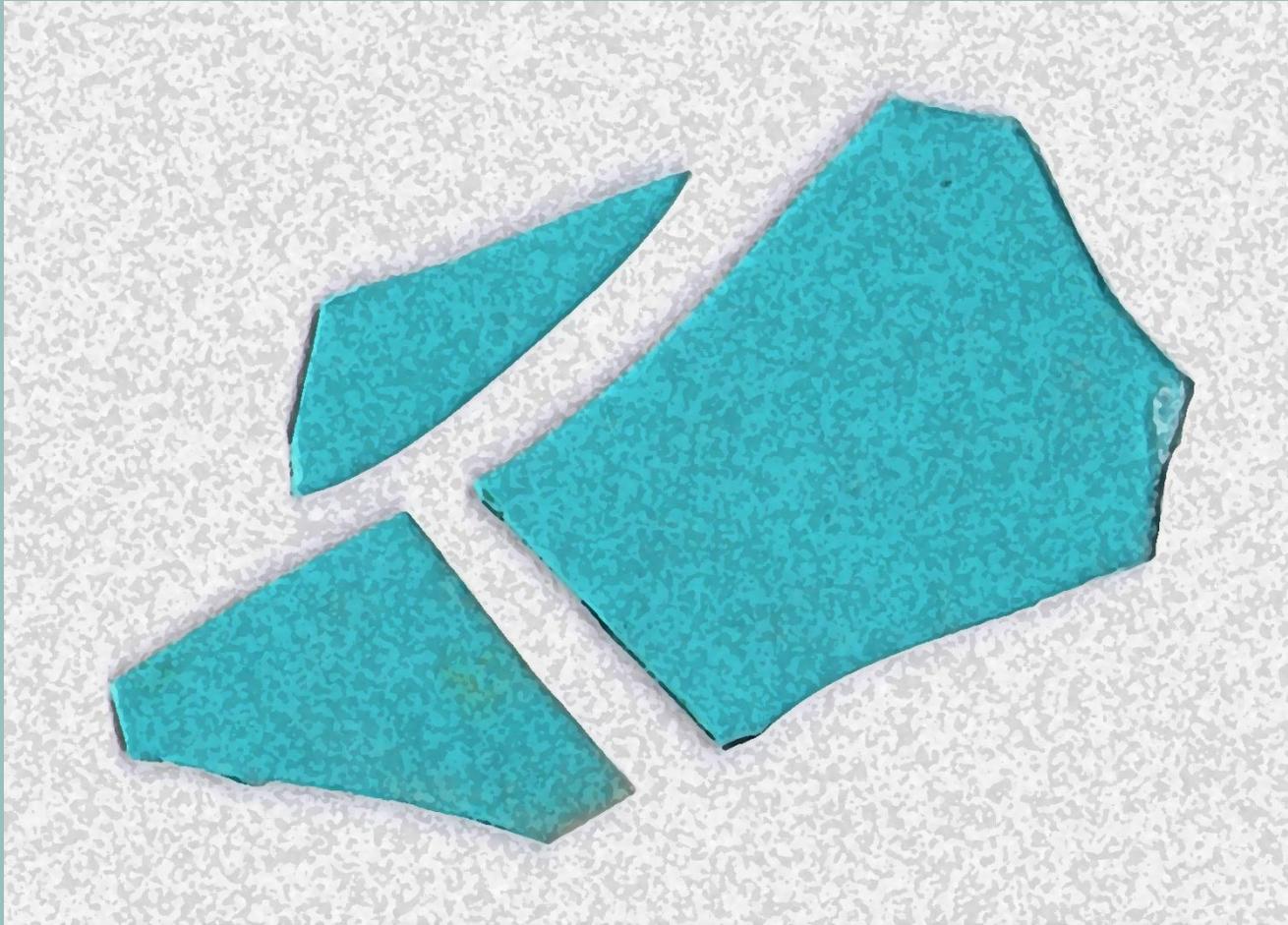


Witness: Pieces of History

A National Indian Residential
School Commemorative Project

Inspiration



Strewn in the wake of the Indian Residential Schools are an immeasurable number of broken or damaged pieces



Kuper Island Industrial School, B.C.

These fragmented cultures, crumbling buildings, segments of language, and grains of diminished pride are often connected only by the common experience that created them.



Imagine those pieces, symbolic and tangible, woven together in the form of a blanket.



WOOD



BRICK



GLASS



SHINGLES



METAL



BOOKS

A blanket made from pieces of residential schools, churches, government buildings, and cultural structures.



A blanket where the story of each piece is as important to its construction as the wood and screws that hold it together.



A blanket with the sole purpose of standing in eternal witness to the effects of the Indian Residential School era ...



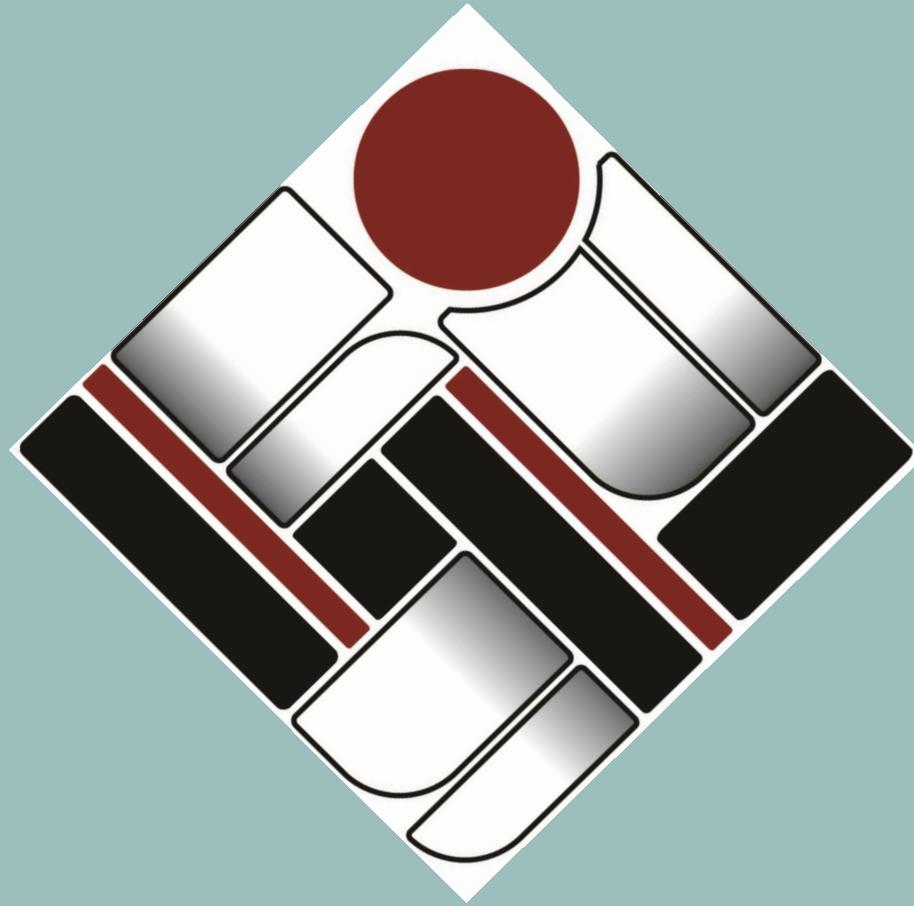
...the system created and run by churches and the Canadian government to “take the Indian out of the child”.



Left alone, these pieces may be forgotten, lost, buried, or worse – be uncomfortable reminders that leave painful impressions on the minds and hearts of those who recognize what they represent.



Individually, they are paragraphs of a disappearing narrative...



Together they are strong and formidable, collectively able to recount for future generations the true story of loss, strength, reconciliation and pride.

The Project

Inspired by a woven blanket, we are creating a large scale art installation, made out of items reclaimed from Residential Schools, churches, government buildings and traditional and cultural structures including Friendship Centres, band offices, treatment centres and universities, from across Canada.



The Witness Blanket







Legacy Website

Alongside the creation of the physical Witness Blanket, we are also working on a legacy website that will not only contain a virtual version of the Blanket but also provide curriculum for all age groups.

Through this website individuals will be also be able to access background information, photos, videos and voice recordings linked to specific pieces

Pieces of History

People from all parts of Canada, of all faiths, ethnicities and generations, are called upon to participate.



We are hoping to collect pieces from every Residential School site in the country as well as churches, government buildings and traditional and cultural structures including Friendship Centres, band offices, treatment centres and universities, from across Canada.

Wood



Wood block from the Newfoundland Colonial Building
(former Legislative building)



A fleur de Lis from the St. Peter and St. Paul church, Esquimalt, BC

Brick



A fragment of Brick from St. Mary's Residential School on the Blood Reserve in Southern Alberta



A brick from the Marieval Residential School in Saskatchewan

Metal

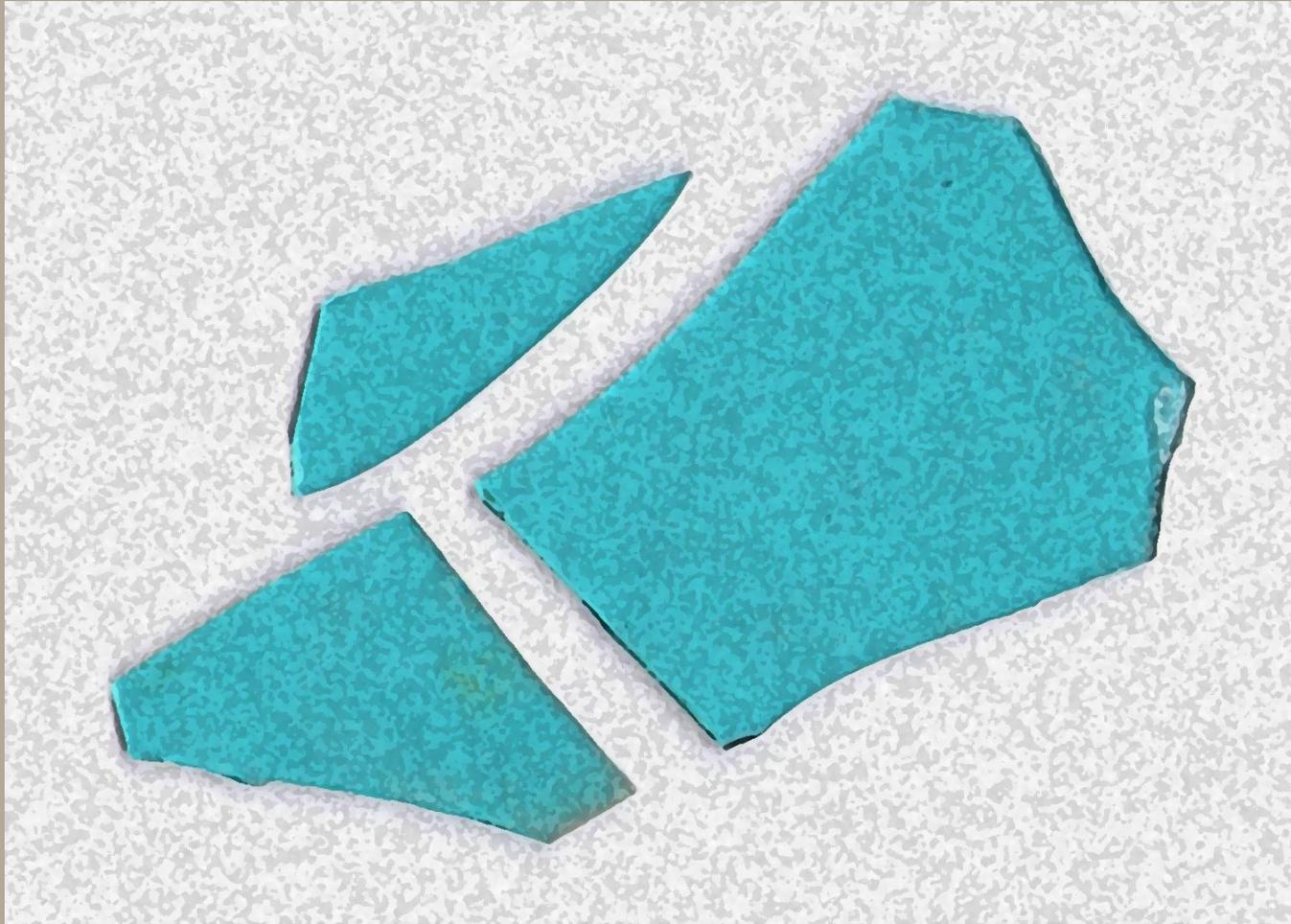


A metal flooring bracket from the Battleford Residential School in Saskatchewan

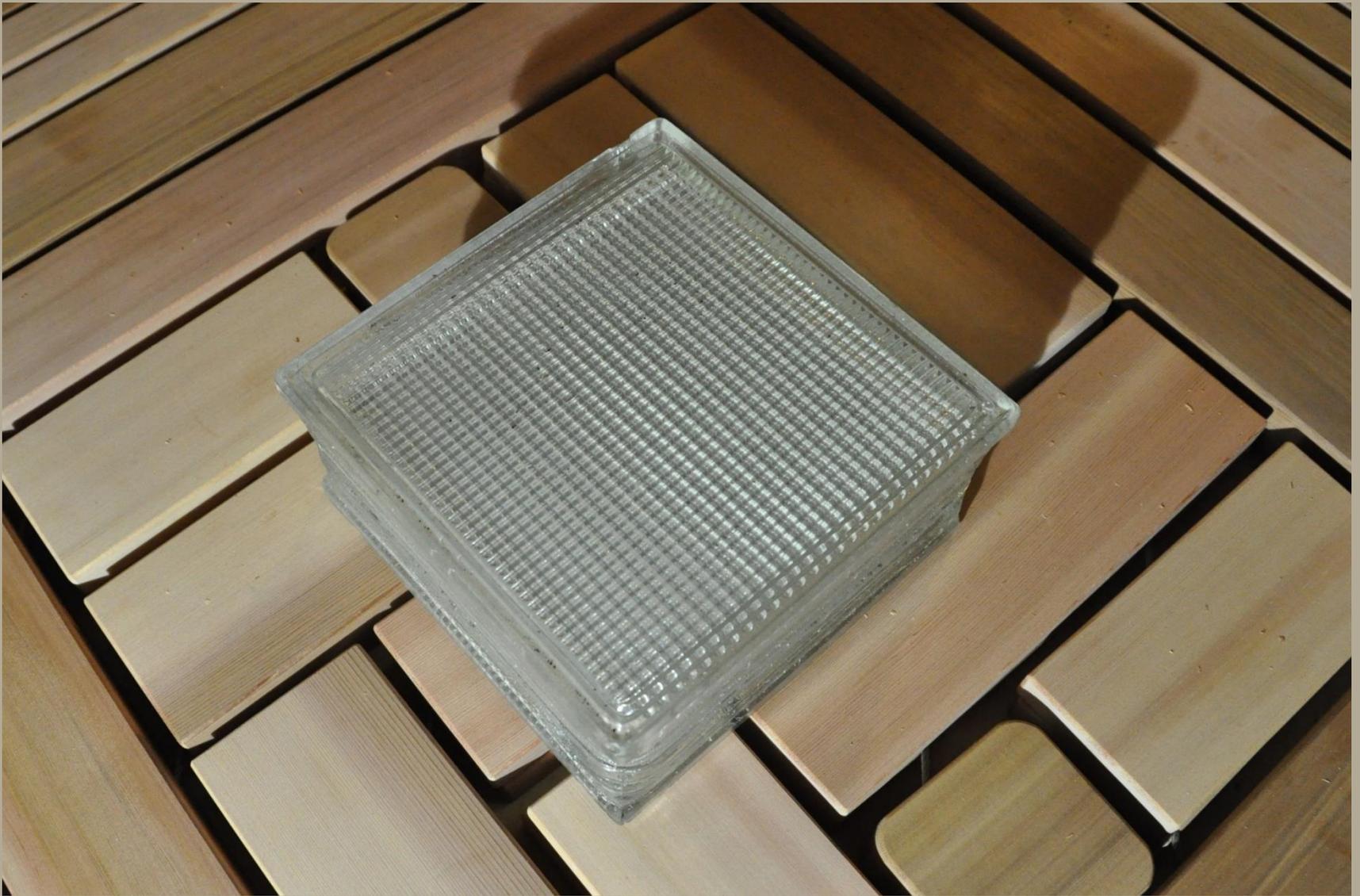


A baking sheet from the Ermineskin Residential School in Alberta

Glass



Italian Stained Glass from the St. Eugene Mission Church on the St. Mary's Indian Band in B.C.



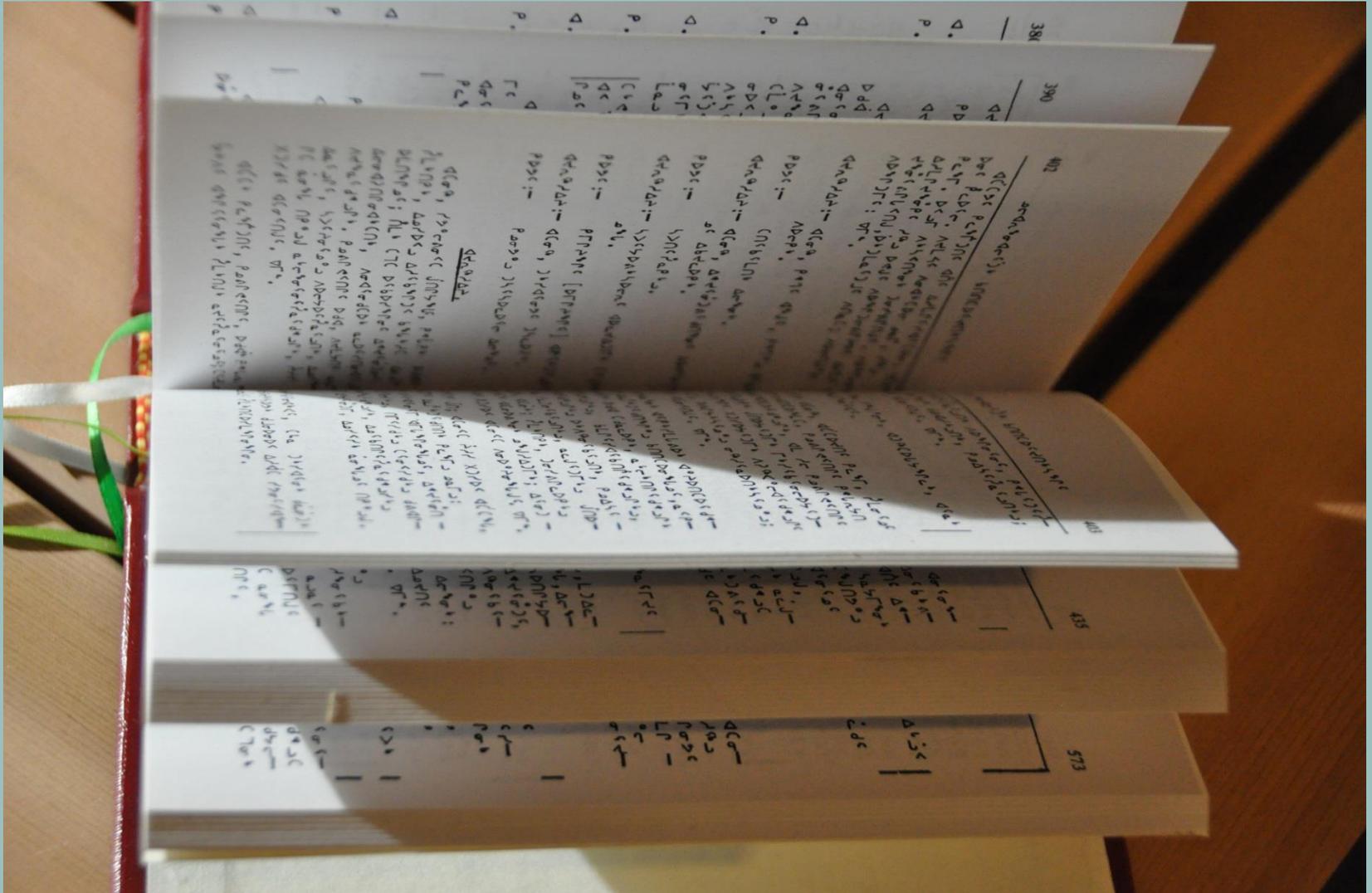
A glass block from the Chooutla Residential School in Carcross,
Yukon

Stone



Stone foundation from Coudert Hall in Whitehorse, Yukon and
marble flooring from the National Archives

Books



A prayer book from St. Jude's Anglican Church in Iqaluit, Nunavut



“We were so far away” published by the Legacy of Hope Foundation

Photographs



Girls gardening at the Assumption Residential School in Alberta



The Coqualeetza Residential School in B.C.

Documents

NURSING STATION,
FORT MCPHERSON

January 29 1971.

Stringer Hall
Anglican Residence,
Inuvik,
N.W.T. Attention: The Nurse

Dear Madam : Re: Robert Alexie - Age 26.4.56 #233

I have been talking with Robert's parents and they are concerned about Robert.

They state that Robert's grades and sports activities have fallen down this year from last. They also state that he is continually squinting or peering when looking at near or at far away objects.

I wonder if you could check Robert's vision or check into what is going on with the boy. I realize that it might just be his age but if you enlighten me as to how he is doing, I could pass it on to the parents. They are a very reliable couple and it is a good family.

Yours sincerely,

B. Hulsmans.
Nurse in Charge.

Correspondence from Stringer Hall, Inuvik, Northwest Territories



INDIAN SCHOOL DIPLOMA

*This is to Certify that George Kenis pupil
No. 228 of the Coqualeetza Residential School having completed
the prescribed course of study and training creditably and with diligence,
is hereby granted an honourable discharge from the said School.*

*In testimony whereof we have subscribed our names hereto at Ottawa,
this Thirtieth day of June 1938*

W. W. [Signature]
SUPERVISOR OF INDIAN EDUCATION

[Signature] Director



Indian School Diploma, Coqualeetza Residential School, B.C.

Textiles



Embroidery done by girls at the Edmonton Industrial School,
Alberta



Kneelers from the Carcross Anglican Church made by girls from the Chooutla Residential School, Carcross, Yukon

Personal Contributions



Merit Badges from the Blue Quills Residential School, Alberta



Moccasins from the Edmonton Industrial School

Your Piece

If you have a Piece of History that you would like to contribute to the Witness Blanket please let us know and we can collect it from you either in person on a gathering trip or by mail.

Our project will cover all costs associated with mailing pieces to our office in Victoria

Share

Many of us didn't experience the Residential Schools firsthand, but are able to witness through learning and active participation in the reconciliation process.

Spread the word now, by sharing our project to all of your networks and contacts

Facebook Witness Blanket

Twitter @WitnessBlanket

Website www.witnessblanket.ca

Champion

Help us to coordinate a gathering trip by becoming a Community Champion and working with others in your area to collect pieces for the Witness Blanket

Gathering Trips

For the past seven months our project team has been traveling across Canada on Gathering Trips to collect pieces for the Witness Blanket. To date we have traveled to:

- Montreal, Quebec** (April 2013)
- Southern Saskatchewan** (May 2013)
- Winnipeg, Manitoba** (May 2013)
- Southern Alberta** (June 2013)
- Iqaluit, Nunavut** (June 2013)
- Ottawa, Ontario** (June 2013)
- Prince George, British Columbia**, (July 2013)
- The Yukon** (July 2013)
- North Battleford, Saskatchewan** (July 2013)
- File Hills, Saskatchewan** (August 2013)
- Vancouver, British Columbia** (September 2013)
- Inuvik and Aklavik, Northwest Territories** (September 2013)
- Northern Alberta** (October 2013)
- Fort George, Quebec** (October 2013)
- Western Ontario and Southern Manitoba** (October 2013)



B.C. Gathering Trip

Our project team will be traveling through B.C. from November 18 – December 5 and will be visiting the following communities:

Vancouver, Monday, November 18

Kamloops, Tuesday, November 19

Kamloops and Williams Lake, Wednesday, November 20

Williams Lake, Thursday, November 21

Anahim Lake, Friday, November 22

Smithers, Moricetown and Terrace, Monday, November 25

Kitimaat, Tuesday, November 26

Lax Kw'alaams, Wednesday, November 27

Prince Rupert, Thursday, November 28

Prince George, Friday, November 29

Kelowna and Okanagan Valley, Monday, December 2

Vernon and Okanagan Valley, Tuesday, December 3

Aggasiz, Surrey and Langley, Wednesday, December 4

Vancouver, Thursday, December 5

A Gathering Trip is being planned through Vancouver Island and the Sunshine Coast within the first two weeks of December. Some of those stops include:

Alert Bay

Port Hardy

Port Alberni

Nanaimo

Duncan

Sechelt

If you live in any of the B.C. communities that we are planning to visit and would like to schedule a meeting with us while we are there please contact us

Contact Information

General Contact Info

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