

Portrait of a Teacher:
Anthony Walsh and the Inkameep Indian Day School, 1932-1942

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ABSTRACT

As part of the federal government's assimilationist policies during the 1930's, Canada's residential schools aimed to erase Indian culture. Another initiative existed for the education of native children: the day school. Located on the reservations, day schools shared more in common with the rural schools of the Province. From 1932-1942, in British Columbia's Okanagan valley, Anthony Walsh taught the children of Inkameep Day School. The focus of this thesis is on Walsh's educational career; his endeavour to integrate indigenous knowledge into his lessons, alongside the provincial curriculum; his promotion of native culture in the classroom; and his efforts to instill pride in his students' native heritage. This paper was conducted using conventional historical methods, and draws on archival sources.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Literature Search

Introduction

On October 23, 1989, Ernest Joseph Anthony Walsh was appointed Member of the Order of Canada¹ for his work as the founder of Benedict Labre House, shelter for the aged and homeless men of Montreal. As a recipient of one of the nation's highest honours, Walsh officially received the Order of Canada "for voluntarily dedicat[ing] himself to a life of poverty in the service of others. . . his compassion and wisdom, helping the needy regain a sense of dignity."² Inspired by the Hospitality Movement of American depression era social reformer, Dorothy Day,³ Walsh rejected social convention and embraced poverty. Living for much of his life off the generosity of others, he worked to eliminate a social fear of the poor and to instill hope in people living on society's margins.

The Order of Canada was but one of a long list of honours Walsh earned for his humanitarianism. In 1975, Concordia University awarded him the degree Doctor of Laws *honoris causa* for his "love and concern for his fellow human beings."⁴ In 1978, Assumption University in Montreal presented Walsh with the Christian Culture Award⁵ for being an "outstanding exponent of Christian ideals"⁶ and, in 1981, the Archdiocese of Montreal celebrated Walsh's contribution to humanity by making him a recipient of the Ignace Bourget Award.⁷ These academic and ecclesiastical awards, all presented in Eastern Canada, celebrated Walsh's work with the poor, his dedication to the service of

others, and his personal commitment to peace, poverty, anonymity, and celibacy. Nothing, however, in these honours alluded to his earlier and, arguably, his most profound work, in Western Canada with the Okanagan indigenous peoples of British Columbia during the depression era.⁸

In keeping with the dictates of federal policy, Indian education in the residential schools during the depression years aimed to erase indigenous culture by converting native students to the religion, language, and culture of the colonizing people. In contrast to objectives of the Dominion Government's residential school system, Walsh attempted to educate Indian children on the Inkameep reservation in ways that were far more pedagogically sensitive and that were directed toward reviving the pride of aboriginal youngsters in their own culture and traditions. His primary goal: to revive Indian pride and to pursue this in the context of a one-room Indian day school.

Although Walsh is primarily known for his later work as a humanitarian and social activist, this investigation is directed toward reconstructing the accomplishments of Walsh's earlier life as a teacher in a one-room day school at Inkameep, and toward understanding the social and educational philosophy that prompted him to teach aboriginal children in ways considered uncommon at the time.⁹ The purpose of the following discussion is to examine Walsh's work as a teacher at the Inkameep day school in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley between 1932 and 1942, and to investigate the nature of his relationships with aboriginal people. In other words, the focus of this thesis is Walsh's educational

career; his endeavour to integrate indigenous knowledge into his lessons, alongside the provincial curriculum; his promotion of native culture in the classroom; and his efforts to instill pride in his students' native heritage, and, in the process, to cultivate and bring public attention to some of Canada's finest aboriginal artists of the depression era. This study of Walsh's career will provide a more comprehensive and detailed portrait of Walsh's early life and his educational work with aboriginal children than the historical record currently provides, as well as a fuller understanding of how aboriginal day schools functioned in British Columbia prior to the early 1950s, when the education of Indian youngsters became the responsibility of the provincial authorities.

Three simple questions have guided this research:

1. What was the character and condition of aboriginal education in British Columbia between 1932 and 1942?
2. What were Walsh's classroom practices and how did they differ from the common educational practices in aboriginal schools of this era?
3. What were the social and intellectual foundations of Walsh's approach to teaching Indian children and what were the factors that prompted him to teach in the way he did?

Methods

This investigation was conducted using conventional historical methods. Primary and secondary sources were identified, examined, and analyzed for content. The basic facts of Walsh's life were established, organized in

chronological order, and confirmed by the triangulation of sources. The writings and papers of Walsh's friends and associates were analyzed to establish the context in which he worked, the nature of his relationships, and the origins of his ideas and motives. Records from federal and provincial governments were reviewed to establish government policies, procedures, and objectives in aboriginal education, the conditions of government-supported schools, the practices of government school inspectors, and the general character of life in aboriginal communities in the 1920s and 1930s. A constellation of secondary sources were likewise examined to determine the nature of Indian education before, during, and after the depression era; the place of aboriginal peoples in provincial and national life in the early decades of the twentieth century; the extent of social awareness of aboriginal life and culture in the 1920s; and the educators, artists, and anthropologists who first advocated a greater appreciation of aboriginal traditions in British Columbia.

Sources

Writings that refer directly to Anthony Walsh and his educational and social work are fragmentary in nature. Scholarly literature pertaining to Walsh's time at Inkameep consists mainly of three journal articles published by the Okanagan Historical Society,¹⁰ two of which address his work on the Inkameep reserve, and the third chronicles the development of the Okanagan Society for the Furtherance of Indian Arts and Crafts.

Other written records of Walsh's life are considerably more informative. Lucien Miller's biography, *Alone for Others*,¹¹ based on a series of interviews with Walsh's former students and friends, deals principally with Walsh's later involvement in establishing shelters for homeless people in Montreal. Dr. John Buell's tribute *Travelling Light: the way and life of Tony Walsh*, draws on interviews and the unpublished papers of Anthony Walsh to chronicle Walsh's life (from 1898-1994).

The British Columbia Archives (BCA) holds a handful of "memoirs" that Walsh tried unsuccessfully to publish in 1937.¹² These and other reminiscences of times past may be found in Steven Hagarty's collection of private papers.¹³ In particular, chapter three of Walsh's writings in the Hagarty's papers, entitled "Pioneering," provides assorted details of life on the Inkameep reservation between 1932 and 1942.¹⁴

Walsh's extensive travel in Canada, the United States and Europe is poorly documented. Likely, his modesty and desire for "a private life" explains why he wrote surprisingly little about himself. He did, however, record his years at Inkameep in brief essays that he wrote for *WAMPUM* (1942), *Ensign* (1949), the *Osoyoos Times* (August 1994), and *Compass* (March 1995)¹⁵ Along with these writings, he also published a small series of newsletters ("Letters Five"), in some of which he looks back on his years at Inkameep (see February 1989, May 1989, June 1990, March 1993, May 1993, and July 1994). Together with these writings, Walsh also left a small body of assorted correspondence, along with a report

“Addressed to the Royal Commission”¹⁶ in 1946 and “Suggestions Furnished by Anthony Walsh and Noel Stewart on successful Methods for Stimulating Latent Artistic Abilities in Indian School Children, Both Boys and Girls, With Mutual Encouragement and Benefit,” which he co-authored and submitted with Noel Stewart, a teacher at the residential school in Lytton, British Columbia in 1946 to the Dominion Government's Senate chambers.

Albeit scattered in character, a substantial collection of secondary source material about Walsh's life exists. The BCA also serves as the repository for a scrapbook (Add.MSS 2629) of the Society for the Furtherance of BC Indian Arts and Crafts (SFIAC), which contains news clippings that relate to Inkameep and Walsh's contributions. This is singularly the most complete collection of writings on Walsh's educational career at Inkameep. In chronological order, the collection includes an assortment of articles¹⁷ including: Toronto Globe and Mail September 30, 1933; reproduced paintings in the Vancouver Province March 28, 1936; “Animals Play Tug of War,” The Daily Mirror, London, March 27, 1936; The News Chronicle March 29, 1936; “Indian School Produces More Work Worth of Highest Merit,” (c1940)¹⁸; “Inkameep is a monument to one man” Penticton Herald, May 2, 1940¹⁹; “They too have something to offer,” The Calgary Herald, Saturday November 22, 1941, p.3; A.J. Dalrymple “He Plays the Roles of Humans, Beasts, Spirits,” Saturday February 28, 1942 Winnipeg Tribune, p. 5; A.J. Dalrymple. “Schoolmaster Revives Pride of Race Among Talented Indian Near Oliver,” Vancouver Daily Province, Saturday March 21, 1942²⁰; “Young

Indians Art on Display," Victoria Daily Times, Saturday May 2, 42 p. 24; "It is the first exhibit in B.C. of illustrations of entirely original paintings by Indian children in the Province," Times Colonist, Sunday June 7, 1942; "BC's Ancient Indian Songs to be Revived," The Vancouver Sun, Saturday January 3, 1942²¹; Victoria Daily Times May 4, 1942; The Daily Colonist, Victoria, May 2, 1942; "He Works to Restore Indian Pride of Race," The Calgary Herald, Tuesday September 8, 1942.²²

Literature Pertaining to Indian Education

The Public Schools [Annual] Reports (hereafter PSR), published by the British Columbia Department of Education since 1873 (today the Ministry of Education), as well as records from the BCA, help provide portraits of what British Columbia teachers knew and taught from the 1920s to the 1940s. In their entirety and comprehensiveness, the PSR remain the most authoritative and complete source of information on provincial educational life and contain the most accurate reporting on school conditions, curricular changes, class sizes, and teachers' salaries. The Report of the Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology (RPM), published annually, also contains useful source material on the organizational contexts in which Walsh worked, especially information on the activities of other cultural workers, such as British Columbia artists and anthropologists, along with the names of funding agencies and voluntary associations interested in aboriginal development. From the RPMs, it was possible to establish that Victoria Normal School students in the 1930s received a

small measure of formal instruction about the native tribes of British Columbia through museum-sponsored lectures and museum tours.

Discussions of Walsh's relationships with other British Columbia teachers and school administrators can also be found in the SFIAC files (BCA, Add.MSS 1116). Much of this material consists of correspondence from the years 1940 to 1954 between Walsh's colleague, well-known BC writer Alice Ravenhill, who maintained the Society's records, and leading British Columbia aboriginal art educators. Data from these holdings is supplemented by visual information drawn from numerous photographs (BCA, visual records 1990-09-06, BCA, #98501-3), as well as several dozen articles from provincial newspapers celebrating the artistic accomplishments of Walsh's students at Inkameep.

Although far less comprehensive, but still informative, are Walsh's own autobiographical scrapbooks, archived at the BCA (MSS 2799 and MSS 2629 respectively). Other valuable documentary records relating to Walsh's work at Inkameep are held at the University of British Columbia's Special Collections and Archives (UBCSCA). The Anthony Walsh file at UBCSCA contains letters received by Walsh while teaching at Inkameep between 1936 and 1941. Also, the Alice Ravenhill collection at UBCSCA contains letters outward to Walsh from 1939 to 1949, as well as her letters to members of the House of Commons, her correspondence with the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts, and a 1947 address by Walsh to the *Royal Commission of Senators and Members of the House of Commons Appointed to Inquire into all Phases of the Affairs of*

Canadian Indians in May and October, 1946 on behalf of the British Columbia Art and Welfare Society. Among other things, this submission contains Walsh's insightful suggestions for stimulating latent artistic abilities in aboriginal children.

Overall, likely the best sources of information about aboriginal education, in general, during this period remain the annual reports from the Dominion Government's Department of Indian Affairs (ARDIA). These documents provide a wealth of information about teachers and teaching in British Columbia's federal residential and day schools, including the names of Inkameep teachers prior to World War II, the salaries they earned, and the religious affiliations of both the day and residential schools. Such sources also provide statistical information about residential schools, in general, as well as other Dominion Government initiatives in aboriginal education, notably day schools, hospital schools, and vocational programs. Unfortunately, due to the limits and uncertain nature of archival preservation in the 1930s, not all of these federal files are complete. However, other details of Walsh's life at Inkameep can be found in the correspondence of the Indian agents and Indian school inspectors. Their reports on day schools under their care illuminate Walsh's educational and organizational connections in the 1930s and 1940s. Chief among these records are the Dominion Government's Department of Indian Affairs (DIA) RG-10 files, pertaining to Inkameep during the 1930s (reels C-8744 and C-8745), at the National Archives of Canada, and reels C-9703 and C8016, located at the BCA.

Significance of the Study

This historical reconstruction of Walsh's life, as a schoolmaster of aboriginal children at Inkameep, is intended to inform educational historians about a previously unwritten chapter in British Columbia's educational past. It is the first historical study into the nature of indigenous education in the day schools of British Columbia and the first to document the unique teaching practices Walsh employed with first nations students. Walsh's success with indigenous children also stands in sharp contrast to a large historical literature on aboriginal education, which is marked by failure, deprivation, and sometimes, abuse. By contributing this portrait of a teacher's life in an aboriginal day school to a historical literature, in which such a portrait has long been absent, this study is historically significant to the social, cultural, and educational history of British Columbia.

Walsh's story may also be significant to modern day educators who still search for effective ways to teach aboriginal students and, sadly, who appear to lack positive historical examples. Walsh's experiences provide practical examples of a teacher who respected his students' culture, and who collaborated with community leaders on the Inkameep reservation to educate children in their own artistic traditions. Overall, it is the argument of this thesis that Walsh's attempts to regenerate indigenous culture in the Okanagan were significant educational initiatives. In salvaging songs and legends of the Inkameep community, and reviving traditional art forms and promoting indigenous knowledge within the

classroom, Walsh played a central role in the revival of aboriginal culture in British Columbia.

Problems and Limitations

Collecting data for this research was a task that was sometimes as much archeological as historical in nature. That is to say, assembling the documentary record required to support this research meant piecing together small shards of information gathered from various sources in several archival collections. Conventional finding aids to access information were, for the most part, unavailable. This meant rummaging through voluminous records, surveying thousands of pages in the hope of finding references to materials long lost or without references, tracing through countless letters and papers in order to confirm even simple chronological facts, and finally, cataloguing information previously undiscovered. Such activities were made labourious and complex by working in collections where many depression-era records were un-catalogued or sometimes, according to government and university archivists, destroyed, as in the case of Victoria Normal School Summer Session files.

Data collection was also made onerous by changes in the federal bureaucracy. Since the 1920s, the DIA has come under the auspices of several different federal ministries, each of which has assembled records in inconsistent ways. Such practices complicated the collection and comparison of data. Furthermore, the DIA library, although extensive, provides a computerized catalogue of holdings limited to on-site access only. This necessitated a visit to

Ottawa to confirm the availability of sources on Walsh and the day schools in British Columbia. Data collection was also made more difficult by the movement of sources. As this study began, an anthropological study on the Inkameep children was also taking place. This meant that documents were unavailable for long periods of time, or requests for information were temporarily denied, as in the case of requests for documents from the Osoyoos Archives, which were un-catalogued or in transit to the Vancouver Art Gallery and the BCA.

¹ According to the citation on the Order of Canada web site, Walsh received the C.M. designation, which "recognizes outstanding contributions at the local or regional level or in a specialized field of activity" *Order of Canada Web Site* (2001 [cited June 4 2001]); available from <http://collections.ic.gc.ca/order/intro/htm>.

² *Governor General of Canada Web Site* (2001 [cited June 4 2001]); available from http://www.gg.ca/cgi-bin/oc_details.pl?lang=e&rec_id=4146.

³ Publisher of *The Catholic Worker* with Peter Maurin, Ms. Day espoused voluntary poverty and service to the poor. For additional information, see William D. Miller, *Dorothy Day: A Biography*. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1982).

⁴ John Buell, "Convocation Address, June 8, 1975," in *Concordia University Archives* (Montréal: 1975).

⁵ Michael Power, *The Christian Culture Award (1941-2001)* (Windsor: Assumption University Press, 2001), 5.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 5, 75-6.

⁷ Anthony Walsh, "Walsh Papers in the Personal Files of Esther Jedynack," (Victoria, BC).

⁸ I have chosen to use the words: indigenous, aboriginal, First Nations and native to describe Canada's first peoples. Although each of these words has distinct political meaning, I am following the recommendation of Taiaiake Alfred that "All are quite appropriate in context and are used extensively by Native people themselves." Taiaiake Alfred, *Peace, Power, Righteousness* (Don Mills: Oxford University Press, 1999), xxvi.

⁹ Records of Walsh's later life as a figure in the humanitarian movement may be found in Anthony Walsh, "Daniel and Philip Berrigan Collection, 1880-1995, Collection #4602, Series G, Box 145," (Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library), which serves as the repository for letters sent from Anthony Walsh to American social activist and anti-war crusader, Father Daniel Berrigan, 1957-1976.

¹⁰ See *Okanagan Historical Society* vol.12, 38, 41 and 55.

¹¹ The small, independently published biography of Walsh, Lucien Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh* (Toronto: Community Concerns Associates Ltd., 1987), lacks annotations and a bibliography.

¹² Anthony Walsh, in *BCA Add.MSS 2629, Box 1, File 12*.

¹³ Stephen Hagarty is the keeper of Lucien Miller's data, collected in 1987, for *Alone for Others*.

¹⁴ This manuscript is in transit to the Provincial Archives of BC at the time of writing.

¹⁵ Anthony Walsh, "Tolerance through Art," *International House Quarterly* xv, no. 3, Summer (1951).

¹⁶ "Addressed to the Royal Commission of Senators and Members of the House of Commons Appointed to Inquire into all Phases of the Affairs of Canadian Indians in May and October, 1946 (Chiefly Educational) are submitted in the hope of Contributing to the Rehabilitation of the Indians of British Columbia." Alice Ravenhill, "Alice Ravenhill Papers 1939-1951," (UBCSCA).

¹⁷ These articles were assembled in the collection without full citation of sources.

¹⁸ *Society for the Furtherance of Indian Arts and Crafts, Add.MSS 1116, Box 3* (BCA).

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., scrapbook, 22.

²² Ibid.

Chapter 2

The Written Record

Introduction

Little information about Walsh's life and the nature of aboriginal day schools in British Columbia can be obtained from the broad and varied secondary literature on aboriginal education, or from historical studies of teachers and teaching in British Columbia. A keyword search using "WorldCat" (an international library database) reveals a scarcity of sources on day schools in Canada. A search of "Indians of North America" and "education" for contemporary and historical periods across geographic locations and human groups produced records for 6,817 catalogued works. Narrowing these listings to Canadian subjects, the search revealed 559 publications. However, once the term "day school" was added to the "WorldCat" keyword search, not one catalogued publication could be found that referred specifically to British Columbia, although the "day school" descriptor resulted in a small number of findings for other Canadian provinces.¹ As such, most of what we know about the day schools in British Columbia is found in articles and books not expressly devoted to the topic.

Although the secondary literature does not refer to Walsh's experience at Inkameep, it contains a large number of writings about the negative consequences of residential schooling in British Columbia and other Canadian provinces.² This literature is strongly critical of the Dominion Government's

historical practices in aboriginal education; it highlights, in particular, the tyrannies associated with assimilation policies in culture and schooling, as well as the long-term and negative consequences of separating aboriginal children from their families and communities. Amid such writings, few records may be found of initiatives in aboriginal education, such as the ones Walsh conducted, where the experiences of native children were positive.

A separate database search combining keyword descriptors “Indians of North America,” “education,” and “British Columbia” produced the titles of 161 books held in libraries around the world. Again, once the term “day school” was introduced to the search, no listings were found, despite the important role day schools played in federal government initiatives to educate aboriginal children across the country from the 1920s to the 1940s. Noteworthy also is the fact that British Columbia received greater funding for aboriginal education than any other province during the interwar period.³

Helen Raptis’ 2003 doctoral dissertation reviewed multiculturalism’s historical development in British Columbia. In this study, she explored “minority education” in British Columbia, a subject unexplored since Mary Ashworth’s 1979 study, *The Forces Which Shaped Them*. Raptis’ research noted Walsh’s positive educational initial with aboriginal children, raised questions about the historical role of the day school experience in British Columbia, and generally pointed the way to Walsh as a subject for further research.

From the brief mentions in the DIA's Annual Reports, we know that day schools were not as popular as residential schools with governmental and educational leaders. Poor attendance at such schools, coupled with continued familial influence, ensured that day schools were less effective than residential schools for re-socializing native youth. Writings on day schools, however, do not record the experience of the day school teachers in British Columbia, nor their role in educating First Nations students.

As Gloria Jean Frank reminds us, "It is shattered times. The bad times, that dominate the mainstream public historical record of First Nations lives."⁴ It is the bad times of the residential schools that continue to dominate the history of First Nations education in British Columbia, in spite of the glimmer of hope some day schools may have offered.

Early Initiatives

Missionary-run day schools were popular instruments for aboriginal instruction even before Confederation, and native children often attended these integrated schools. By 1871 British Columbia joined Confederation and assumed its responsibilities under the British North America Act, which included education. Newly elected Premier John Foster McCreight had many issues to attend to, of which education was secondary,⁵ and Indian education was a lesser concern. The schools in the province were continued as a product of missionary activity during these formative years, thereby giving the churches a foothold into the business of education in the new province.

Lester Ray Peterson suggests that the province of British Columbia was just “not prepared to undertake the task of Indian education in 1871, and the effect of this clause left the management of Indian schools under the control of the Christian church denominations⁶ which started education of the natives.”⁷

In British Columbia, the earliest education initiatives by non-native peoples began in 1849 with the Hudson’s Bay Company’s sponsorship of Anglican minister Reverend Staines. Missionary organizations in eastern Canada, including the Sisters of St Ann⁸ from Quebec and the French Oblate brothers soon followed. As the fledgling colonial government struggled to establish law and order under the guidance of Governor James Douglas, the churches took ownership of Indian education—a natural extension of their work with settler’s children.

One of the earliest and most significant educational programs for native students was started by William Duncan; his work in the 1860's in the community of Metlakatla centered on the reconstruction of a Victorian village. Duncan’s goal was to teach Indian students the culture of Victorian England. By removing the Indians from their own communities, Duncan introduced an immersion program, which taught British culture and religion (Christianity) through a training program that stripped native youth of their prior culture, in order to re-shape them as white men. According to historian Wilson Duff, the lifestyle at Metlakatla required the abandonment of class structure and adherence to 15 “laws of conduct” which prescribed regular church attendance,

schooling for the children, taxation, cleanliness of home and person, and the abandonment of “many features of the old life, such as native dances, potlatching, shamanism, gambling, face-painting, and alcohol...”⁹ And because of his “success,” Duncan’s work became the standard to which other missionary educators in British Columbia aspired.

As the demographics in British Columbia shifted, largely in response to the gold rush, settlers demanded non-sectarian¹⁰ free educational opportunities for their children. In doing so, they protested against the integration of aboriginal children. Initially, the settlers met with resistance from John Jessop, the Superintendent of Education, who supported native education,

You are doing perfectly right in admitting Indian children so long as they are not taken [by force] & conduct themselves properly. . . If they are troublesome or dirty the trustees must prohibit their attendance – Personally I am glad to hear of their attendance wherever circumstances will admit it.¹¹

By 1893, however, a new provincial superintendent, S.D. Pope, declared “if a single parent objects to the attendance of Indian pupils, they cannot be permitted to attend.”¹² This attitude was symptomatic of much greater forces at work. Imperialism, colonialism, assimilation and racial discrimination based on social Darwinism created the foundational values which shaped the intellectual and political landscapes in British Columbia. Indian educational policies were part of the plan to “whiten” the province. In this, the public schools were also included.¹³

Provincial and federal governments both inherited the legacy of imperialism from the British, for which settling the west and asserting the superiority of British culture was central. According to historian Tim Stanley, “imperialism and racism went hand in hand.”¹⁴

At the federal level, Deputy Minister Duncan Campbell Scott¹⁵ set the tone for the DIA saying, “Our object is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question and no Indian problem.”¹⁶ Scott further maintained,

Passing on the advantages of white civilization to the Indians would be a slow and tedious process. This was inevitable since they harboured primitive instincts that would take generations to eradicate. Education would be a key element in the cultural transformation. While still young and impressionable, the Indian child would be introduced by the school to a superior set of behaviours and values. One outcome would be Indian adults who had internalized the work ethic and a sense of civic responsibility...¹⁷

Looking back on the transitional years, Stanley labelled British Columbia’s provincial policies as “white supremacist” because these policies, in addition to limiting educational opportunities, ensured “an individual’s ‘race’ defined his or her political and civil rights and potential areas of economic activity...”¹⁸ He further asserts that provincial schools were significant promoters of “white supremacist concepts” saying,

... it was in school that many of those who believed that B.C. was and should be the White man’s province were first indoctrinated, and systematically so, in racist ideology. It is certainly evident that by 1925 schooling was part of the ‘organization of an entire texture of life according to an ideology.’ Racism in B.C. was not an

aberration. It was a sustained reality, part of the air that people breathed.¹⁹

In *The West Beyond the West*, historian Jean Barman counters the prevailing view that assimilation was the primary goal of the DIA. She suggests, “. . . in the case of British Columbia, its policy was primarily intended to ensure that the native peoples did not challenge the dominant society.”²⁰

In the new province, the ultimate goal of the government was to settle the land with immigrants who would uphold English values, the Christian faith (and protestant work ethic), and remain patriotic to Great Britain (in essence, to keep the social structure close to that of England’s).

In 1883, Prime Minister John A. MacDonald affirmed the work of the clergy in the administration of schools:

Secular education is a good thing among white men but among Indians the first object is to make them better men, and, if possible, good Christian men by applying proper moral restraints, and appealing to the instinct for worship that is found in all nations, whether civilized or uncivilized.²¹

Policy Shift

Changing public sentiment towards indigenous peoples from 1885 to 1888 caused educators and government officials to re-examine what constituted “native education” and the roles of students and administrators. A significant shift in public opinion continued through a series of legislated policy changes (federal and provincial) between 1885 and 1925. These initiatives solidified the church’s educational work among indigenous people, the Dominion

Government's responsibility to its Indian wards and marginalized the position of indigenous peoples. The DIA summarized the development of these policy initiatives in the 1935-1936 Annual Report.²² Of the many changes, the following pieces of legislation were the most significant to the education of aboriginal students in British Columbia. The Indian Act (1876) granted the federal government official control over Indian education; in 1879 the Davin Report invited missionaries to carry out the "civilizing [of] Canada's Indians;" and the Indian Advancement Act (1884) banned cultural and religious ceremonies. Ten years later, in 1894, an Order of Council hammered out the fiscal responsibilities of the churches and the federal government, with respect to Indian education. The 1894 legislation, under the mandate of the Governor-in-Council,²³ made school attendance compulsory for native students between the ages of seven and sixteen years. Education was deemed the most expedient way to assimilate the Indian children of British Columbia. Initially this meant attendance at public schools; they were "allowed to attend the regular provincial public schools 'where, by their good behaviour, neat appearance, cleanliness and attention to their studies, they give general satisfaction and cause no little surprise.'"²⁴ By 1889, Indian children were "considered wards of the Dominion Government and are not presumed to be entitled to attend the Public Schools of the Province."²⁵ In 1895, the School Branch of Indian Affairs was created and, in 1920, an Amendment to the Indian Act decreed that every child aged seven to fifteen years must attend school.

After this date, day schools and residential (industrial) schools became the primary means of educating aboriginal students in British Columbia.

The Residential Schools

At their most basic, the residential schools were established for the purposes of assimilating native students into mainstream society. Government perceptions of native peoples were shaped by prevailing Victorian imperial and colonial themes. Former Indian and Northern Affairs Supervisor, and now assistant professor at York University School of Social Work, Hugh Shewell, describes the prevailing attitudes towards indigenous peoples: Indians were perceived to be primitive, the “noble savage” was a romantic figure doomed to extinction, and Indians were “degraded and corrupted by commerce and progress, and to be despised for succumbing to European ways.”²⁶

According to historian Brian Titley:

[Duncan Campbell] Scott firmly believed in the great civilizing mission of the British Empire, and he saw Canada’s international role as an integral component of that entity...If the Indian in the past had been prone to savagery and superstition, what of his future? Scott was convinced that aboriginal economic activities such as hunting, trapping, fishing, and food-gathering would have to be abandoned. The Indian should learn how to cultivate soil or prepare himself for employment in the ‘industrial or mercantile community.’ This economic transformation would have to be accompanied by ‘the substitution of Christian ideals of conduct and morals for aboriginal concepts of both.’²⁷

From a vantage point more than 100 years later, the elements that shaped these intentions are easily blurred. Popular literature suggests that the church and government shared racially motivated objectives for educating aboriginal

children, but this may not have been the case. Stanley asserts that the church was motivated out of a desire to convert the “savages.”²⁸

If he is correct, the church, once effectively contracted out to the government, served as handmaiden to provincial and federal ideology. And church historian John Webster Grant suggests “...it had always been assumed that effective Christianization would require a measure of assimilation to Western culture.”²⁹ As such, the church missionary attempts did not conflict directly with the government objectives and their alignment was such that the religious workers were effectively used by the government to support the transformation of native communities. The representative churches were initially motivated by religious rather than racial intolerance.

In short, the residential school (and the earlier industrial school) system administered by religious leaders and zealous laity would prove to have a powerful impact—beyond just educating its students with rudimentary reading and writing skills.³⁰ Residential schools promoted the government ideology, and the churches benefited from the exposure to a new and captive audience for their proselytizing attempts. According to Miller, the common social beliefs were “...Aboriginal peoples had to be controlled and have decisions made for them because they were incapable of making what non-natives considered sound choices on their own.”³¹

Historian Celia Haig-Brown blames residential schools for “...introducing a way of life in which their family identity was obscured, their language became

useless and even despised and their personal identification was a number written in purple ink on their wrists . . . ”³² Haig-Brown’s interviews with former residential school students testify to the brutality inflicted on the children in their school environment. Public humiliation of the children among their peers was used as a means of social control,³³ with corporal punishment, head shaving and hair cutting³⁴ as methods commonly employed. The use of traditional aboriginal languages was forbidden in the schools and children from the same family were separated from each other because of gender or age distinctions enforced by the supervising church authorities; these methods were not congruent with the indigenous ways of education. As such, children endured foreign methods of education, discipline and religion without family support.

First Nations researcher Agnes Grant’s *No End of Grief* and historian J.R. Miller’s *Shingwauk’s Vision* also describe living conditions at the residential schools that were for the most part abysmal. Poor ventilation, lack of appropriate bathroom and bathing facilities, and nutritional deficiencies in the school diet all contributed to the health challenges faced in every residential school. Tuberculosis contributed to high mortality rates among students in schools that did not have enough nursing staff to care for the ill, nor to teach and enforce sanitary practices.

Barman also criticizes government efforts to educate native students in British Columbia and their failing to meet their own objectives of assimilation. In “Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal

Students,” she argues the residential schools marginalized students from both “the Canadian mainstream and from home environments.”³⁵

Recent residential school literature holds that education was one tenet of a government plan aimed at the cultural annihilation of the Indian population. This is based in part on the early policies of the DIA as led by Duncan Campbell Scott who advised,³⁶ “I want to get rid of the Indian problem. That is my whole point. Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question.”³⁷ But even Scott’s contemporaries began to recognize the injustice done to indigenous peoples. P.H. Bruce wrote in 1929 of the “‘criminal disregard’ of the responsibility placed on the government by the British North America Act and by ‘treaty pledges to guard the welfare of the Indian wards of the Nation.’”³⁸

Peterson’s 1959 thesis on Indian education in Canada is an example of an intermediary theory, which made excuses for poorly administered Indian policy, claiming it was an “accident” rather than maliciously and racially determined.

Peterson asserts:

Indian education in British Columbia has from its beginning been the result, not of any carefully conceived over-all program, but of an historic accident which brought sporadic bursts of interest by various denominational sects in the Indians’ spiritual welfare. Denominational teachers, from the beginning of what might be called Indian education to the present day, have been hostile to the Indians’ way of life. The Indian has been traditionally taught, then, by persons inimical to whatever vestige the Indian student retained of his own culture.³⁹

Haig-Brown, Miller, Devrome and Shewell support the most recent view that Indian education was part of a government plan to assimilate Indians into the dominant “white culture.” And Barman suggests that early day schools “had only limited success in keeping the young away from the old ways. Therefore the emphasis was placed on boarding schools, where children would be separated from their families for months and years on end.”⁴⁰

Day schools were also administered in a joint arrangement between church and the Dominion Government, but were soon dismissed as a less effective means of educating the Indian students. In his 1878 comments on education, I.W. Powell, Indian Commissioner in Victoria wrote:

Day schools requiring no excessive outlay have been tried in a few localities, for it is manifest that barbarism can only be cured by education, but in several instances they have been given up as failures. In such examples, however, Indians have not been isolated from the corrupting influence of bad associations, nor is it possible under such circumstances to interfere materially with irregular habits and customs incident to life in the wigwam, the destruction of which is so necessary ere the much desired higher life can be obtained.⁴¹

Some indigenous leaders had their own misgivings about the value of day schools, and expressed their desire to see their own children educated at the residential schools.

Emergence of the Day Schools

The day schools were a hybrid of the two existing educational models: the residential school and the rural school. Because of their isolation and small classes, the day schools had more in common with Canada’s rural schools—and

the rural schools of British Columbia—than with the residential schools attended by most native youngsters. Nevertheless, day schools were an instrumental institution in the education of aboriginal students. In the 1932 Annual Report for the DIA, day schools were described as “centres of Indian Educational activity”⁴² and during the interwar period, British Columbia became the site for 49 day schools and 16 residential schools, making the province responsible for the largest number of Indian schools across the Dominion. In addition, the province served what was arguably the most ethnically diverse population of aboriginal students in the country.⁴³ Annual Reports by the DIA confirmed that more money was sent to British Columbia in the 1930s for the purpose of educating Indian children than to any other province or territory.

Although day schools were clearly not the favourite vehicle for DIA policy makers, the DIA could confidently report by the early 1930s, “Day schools on reserves, where our wards are permanently settled, quite properly are becoming increasingly important.”⁴⁴ Barman argues that both the day and residential schools served to marginalize native youth from their own communities and from the mainstream as they prepared these students for inequality.⁴⁵ Yet these one room school houses located on the reservation were truly unable to compete with the residential schools in the area of socialization, and thus were treated as a second-rate educational experience. The ARDIA suggest that day schools were a cost cutting measure, and projects of last resort.⁴⁶

Because day schools operated much like the rural schools, day school teachers also had much in common with their rural school counterparts. These teachers faced isolation, culture shock, inadequate funding for supplies, and lack of administrative support.⁴⁷ In most cases, the day school teachers were the only non-aboriginals on the rural reserves and, were possibly, the only people for whom English was their mother tongue.

As agents of the federal government, however, day school teachers were expected, like their residential school counterparts, to re-socialize their students to prevailing social norms; in this, day school teachers faced an exceptional challenge. Unlike the residential schools, day school teachers worked within a context where students could go home to their families, continue to eat familiar foods, speak their own language and learn from the elders in their community. In other words, many of the control elements available to residential school educators were simply not present on most remote rural reserves where day school teachers worked alone, without the support of co-workers.

¹ The literature on "Indian Day Schools" in Canada, as indexed by AMICUS at the National Library of Canada consists of 21 references. These are limited to initiatives in Eastern Canada (primarily Ontario and the Maritime provinces). No listings can be found when the search terms "British Columbia" and "day schools" are combined.

² See for example, Agnes Grant, *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada* (Winnipeg: Pemmican Publications Inc., 1996).; C. Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School* (Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988).; Mary-Ellen Kelm, "'A Scandalous Procession': Residential Schooling and the Reformation of Aboriginal Bodies," in *Colonizing Bodies: Aboriginal Myth and Healing in B.C., 1900-1950* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998).; J.R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of the Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996).

³Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports consistently report more money spent on native education in British Columbia than any other Province in spite of lower attendance figures. In

1932 BC total expenditure on native students: \$434,534.91 which provided for 3,531 students (day and residential schools), while Ontario spent \$387,525.47 on 4,464 students [see 1932 Annual Report, 11,59]; by 1941-42 total expenditure in BC was \$398,442.62 for 3,048 students and Ontario spent \$371,140.33 on 3,438 native students in the province [see 1941-42 DIA Annual Report, 136,155].

⁴ Gloria Jean Frank, "'That's My Dinner on Display': A First Nations Reflective on Museum Culture," *BC Studies*, no. 125/126 (2000).

⁵ For more information on the shifting political leadership in British Columbia, see Jean Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, Revised ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996; reprint, 2001).

⁶ Ultimately, three religious groups would shape indigenous education in British Columbia: Roman Catholic, Anglican and Methodist.

⁷ Lester Ray Peterson, "Indian Education in British Columbia" (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1959), 76.

⁸ In the summer of 1858, the French-speaking sisters of St. Ann left Quebec for the purposes of ministering to French-speaking children of fur trappers on Vancouver Island. By the time they arrived on the west coast, the gold rush had transformed the linguistic make up of the community. As such, the sisters were forced to quickly acquire their own English speaking skills in order to establish the first schoolhouse in Victoria.

⁹ Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia*, 2 Ed., Vol. 1: The Impact of the White Man (Victoria: British Columbia Provincial Museum, 1969; reprint, 1977), 93.

¹⁰ The Public School Act of 1872 reaffirmed non-sectarian education in BC.

¹¹ John Jessop to [J]ane E. Trenaman, Victoria 30 October 1876, in BCSE, Outward Correspondence [OC], BCA, GR 450 cited by Jean Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children," in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J.D. Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 60.

¹² S.D. Pope to H[arriet] Young, teacher at Pavilion, Victoria, 27 March 1894, in BCSE, OC cited by Jean Barman, *Ibid.*, 61.

¹³ See Hugh Shewell, *'Enough to Keep Them Alive': Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004).

¹⁴ Timothy J. Stanley, "White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Educational Indoctrination: A Canadian Case Study," in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J.D. Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 40.

¹⁵ Scott held the position for nine years: 1913-1932.

¹⁶ D.C. Scott 1920, cited by Peelman, 21, 22 See Michael Asch. *Home and Native Land. Aboriginal Rights and the Canadian Constitution*. Toronto: Methuen, 1984, 62-63.

¹⁷ E.Brian Titley, "A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada. Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986, 33 cited in Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive': *Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, 15.

¹⁸ Stanley, "White Supremacy and the Rhetoric of Educational Indoctrination: A Canadian Case Study," 39.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 39, 51.

²⁰ Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, 154.

²¹ Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of the Native Residential Schools*, 102, see footnote 39.

²² See 19 for details.

²³ See Peterson, "Indian Education in British Columbia," 78.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 81., citing A.W. Vowell, Indian Superintendent for British Columbia.

²⁵ Pope to Hopkins, cited by Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children," 61.

²⁶ Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive': *Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, 12-3.

²⁷ Brian E. Titley, *A Narrow Vision: Duncan Campbell Scott and the Administration of Indian Affairs in Canada* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), 33., cited by Shewell, 'Enough to Keep Them Alive': *Indian Welfare in Canada, 1873-1965*, 15.

²⁸ Brian Stanley, *The Bible and the Flag: Protestant Missions & British Imperialism in the Nineteenth & Twentieth Centuries* (Leicester: Apollos, 1990; reprint, 1992), 162-3.

²⁹ John Webster Grant, *The Church in the Canadian Era* (Burlington: Welch Publishing Company Inc., 1988), 180.

³⁰ The details of residential school abuses are beyond the scope of this paper. See Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of the Native Residential Schools.*, Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children."; John S. Milloy, 'a National Crime': *The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986.*, 2000 ed., *Manitoba Studies in Native History XI* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999).; *Breaking the Silence: An Interpretive Study of Residential School Impact and Healing as Illustrated by the Stories of First Nations Individuals*, (Ottawa: Assembly of First Nations, 1994).

³¹ Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of the Native Residential Schools*, 101.

³² Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*, 43.

³³ *Ibid.*, 77.

³⁴ Ibid., 48.

³⁵ Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children," 57.

³⁶ More commonly recognized for his poetry, Duncan Campbell Scott served as Deputy Superintendent of Indian Affairs 1913-1932.

³⁷ Duncan Campbell Scott, "The Poet and the Indians," cited by Grant, *No End of Grief: Indian Residential Schools in Canada*, 273.

³⁸ John S. Milloy 52 citing P.H. Bryce (1922), *The Story of a National Crime being an Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada* Ottawa: James Hope and Sons, Ltd., 14.

³⁹ Peterson, "Indian Education in British Columbia," 130-1.

⁴⁰ Barman, *The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia*, 161.

⁴¹ M. Ashworth, *The Forces Which Shaped Them - A History of Education of Minority Group Children in British Columbia* (Vancouver: New Star Books, 1979), 12.

⁴² Annual Report of the DIA for the Year ended March 31, 1932. Ottawa: F.A. Acland, 10.

⁴³ In 1932, on average, 1,864 residential school students and 825 day school students were attending such institutions in the province of BC.

⁴⁴ Dominion of Canada, *Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs* (1931-32).

⁴⁵ Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children," 57.

⁴⁶ In 1935 the DIA introduced another "last resort" project in the form of hospital schools for children suffering from chronic illness and were consequently unable to maintain attendance at day schools or residential schools. DIA annual report 1935/36; see page 10 for details.

⁴⁷ See Thomas Fleming and Carolyn Smyly, "The Diary of Mary Williams: A Cameo of Rural Schooling in British Columbia, 1922-1924," in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J.D. Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995) and Thomas Fleming, Carolyn Smyly, and Julie White, "Beyond Hope and Past Redemption: Lottie Bowron and the Rural School Teachers of British Columbia, 1928-1934," (1990).

Chapter Three

Anthony Walsh

Introduction to Inkameep School

The day school at Inkameep, founded in 1916, was unique from inception. Established solely through an Indian initiative, Inkameep was the first Indian day-school in the Okanagan Agency. According to Inspector McGraw's July 21, 1919 letter to the DIA, Indian leaders from other villages had voted down proposals for other schools in the Agency,¹ but the Chief of Inkameep was insistent on having his children educated on the reservation, and did not want them to attend residential school. In his November 5, 1914 letter to Mr. D.C. Scott, Secretary, DIA², Robert Brown, Indian Agent, reports that the Inkameep Chief requested a school be established on the Osoyoos reserve as the provincial schools did not want to admit Indian students.³ Chief Baptiste George indicated that he was willing to use the church as a schoolhouse and, if necessary, to move the building to a more suitable spot.⁴ In 1922, the band paid \$1,000 to procure a building for the use as a school⁵ and the new non-denominational school opened April 1, 1915.

Inkameep's first teacher, John J. Norwood, was hired by Chief Baptiste directly, and his salary was paid for by the Inkameep community of roughly 100 members. This first appointment, however, proved disastrous. Norwood resigned seven months later in October 1916, allegedly "owing to unpleasantness with the Chief and members of the Osoyoos Band."⁶ According to a July 19, 1919

communication from Indian Agent, F.J.C. "Fred" Ball: "The school made a bad start by employing a negro named Norwood as its first teacher, and the children were learning English with a decidedly negro accent, but acquired nothing else in the way of education."⁷ According to Walsh, Norwood "was the only person who was willing to take on a job in such a remote area at that time."⁸

Government files show that Miss Christina McLeod of the Colville reservation succeeded Norwood in 1918 as the next Inkameep teacher. McLeod struggled with some of the community elders, who did not want to accept education from the Federal Government, in fear they might have to give up their land in return.⁹ Refusing to live with the Indians that she found so difficult to deal with, McLeod opted to live year-round in a tent on the banks of Inkameep Creek during her tenure in the 70-member community.

In spite of the challenges to hiring an English-speaking teacher, in 1921, the DIA procured the services of Miss Gertrude Hozier, of Fairview, British Columbia. Having earned a high school certificate, she was deemed "well qualified to teach this school which only has primary courses" and the school was re-opened under her care in December 1919.¹⁰ The 1923 Annual Report of the DIA shows that Hozier was replaced by Miss Helen McDonald and, for the first time, the Report designates the religious affiliation of the school as Roman Catholic. In 1925, McDonald was replaced by Alice Lakeland, who remained for only one year. Her tenure was followed by Miss Mary Waddell in the fall of 1926.

F.G.M.Grist, a specialist in agriculture and stock, took over the teaching position in 1928 after substitute teaching at the Okanagan Day school (also called the Six Mile Creek school; located at Six Mile Creek, this school served the needs of Okanagan Band families living at Whiteman's Creek, Siwash Creek, Six Mile Creek and Blacktown). In 1932 Grist was transferred to the Shalalth Indian Day School (also called Seton Lake School) of the Lytton Agency and Anthony Walsh took his place as the teacher of 17 students (with an average of nine students attending). Walsh arrived at the Inkameep School in 1932 following a two-year appointment to the younger Okanagan Indian Day School (Six Mile Creek)¹¹. Documents suggest the move was precipitated by existing tensions between the Indian agents and the Indian leaders.

Almost a Conventional Teacher

According to a memorandum printed by the SFIAC, "Inkameep Indian day School was just like any other "Reserve" School until 1933, in that it gave curriculum equal to Grades 1 to 5.¹² No pupil had advanced beyond grade 5."¹³ The British Columbia provincial curriculum was followed with an emphasis on: reading, arithmetic, language, geography, nature, and health; and the students were subject to the standard Indian day school regulations: classes were held during weekdays from 9 a.m. to noon, and 1 to 4 p.m., with a recess in each session.¹⁴ Teaching sessions were September 1 to December 22, and from January 3 to June 30 annually.¹⁵

Like other rural school teachers in British Columbia, Walsh was responsible for teaching the provincial curriculum to students in the junior grades. In many respects, Walsh's classroom setting appeared entirely conventional and, as a day school teacher, his work mirrored the classroom practices of the thousand or so British Columbia teachers in the early 1930s who were responsible for teaching all grades, one through eight, in rural schools throughout the province.

British Columbia's day schools, like rural schools of the interwar era,¹⁶ shared little in common with the province's urban schools, insofar as they were poorly supported and scattered across thinly populated areas. In 1925, the Putman-Weir report described the conditions besetting rural schools:

Many are remote and lonely places beside a lake, under a towering mountain capped with snow, or on an arid plateau where all vegetation is brown and dusty. Some are on beautiful but lonely islands in the Pacific, where the settler is part farmer, part fisherman and part lumberman. Some are on steep mountain sides in 'Company Towns' where tall chimneys of pulp mill or smelter from the center of a busy industrial life. Some are close to the water on an arm of the sea, which is an outlet of a salmon river and the site of a canning factory and some stand on ground over coal mines. Some have ideal surroundings, but the school buildings themselves are primitive and very small. Many are built of logs. Some are not larger than 15 by 18 feet with a ceiling just above your head. Some have attractive grounds, some have bare and unattractive attractive yards, and some are built on rocks. Some of these buildings are tidy and clean inside and some sadly in need of paint, whitewash and soap.¹⁷

Day schools were situated on Indian reserves across British Columbia, many of them reflecting the diversity of particular indigenous communities.

These small one-room school buildings, in remote settings, looked similar to the

rural schools but were isolated from non-indigenous communities. Walsh's schoolhouse was typical of such schools.

The greatest initial hurdle for teachers at Indian day schools was the language barrier in the classroom. Although many rural school students in British Columbia did not speak English as their first language, most schools could boast of some English-speaking children. At Inkameep, Walsh faced a decidedly more severe linguistic barrier as none of his aboriginal students could speak English. Moreover, the aboriginal community at Inkameep was still wary of the schooling that the Federal Government could provide.

Historian Penelope Stephenson¹⁸ has described some of the challenges faced by rural school teachers. In addition to language barriers, she also describes cultural differences, fluctuating attendance, poor health of students, and the physical chores required to keep the schoolhouse clean, warm in the winter and supplied with water. Day school teachers faced similar challenges and government records attest to the teacher transience that resulted in the face of such obstacles: teachers were difficult to attract and hard to maintain. Rural school teachers sometimes faced cultural and geographic isolation from their own people. Settler communities maintained the language of their homeland whenever possible. Unless they were indigenous, and returning to their home community, the day school teachers were teaching children whose parents did not share a common language with them, and students learned to speak English

in the classroom. In essence, the day school teachers were dropped into a cross-cultural setting and the homeland of a particular indigenous people.

Day School Administration

Administration of the day schools relied on the coordinated efforts of various authorities, and British Columbia's situation was unique to the DIA. In British Columbia, every reserve was theoretically entitled to a teacher of the same religious persuasion as the majority of aboriginal band members¹⁹. This teacher was appointed by the local church leadership, and confirmed by Diocesan approval. In Walsh's case, he received the invitation to teach from his local priest, and also obtained the Bishop's approval before commencing his teaching duties. Unlike the residential school teachers, day school instructors did not report to church leaders, nor did church officials administer the educational programs of day schools. In British Columbia, the day schools were managed by DIA agents, and official classroom inspections were conducted by the Dominion Government's Indian school inspectors.²⁰ In instances where attendance was problematic, the RCMP would serve as truant officers,²¹ and DIA agents controlled other administrative issues on the reserves. Some department records show that Indian school inspectors made monthly visits to the schools; but the scarcity of surviving reports within the RG-10 files suggest that this frequency was unlikely.

Background of Anthony Walsh

Little is known about Walsh's early years or the history of his family. A long-time friend, Dorothy Amor, observed that "Tony's earlier years were . . . a closed book"²² Another claimed that Walsh "had a desire to keep private, to have a secret life."²³ What is known is that he was born in 1898 in Paris, France, baptized at St. Antoine de Padoue, to an Irish-Catholic family headed by Joseph and Lucy Walsh.²⁴ His father trained horses for the landed gentry in Great Britain and Europe, a vocation requiring extensive travel. By all accounts, Joseph Walsh was a stern character who treated his children with a discipline similar to that imposed on the horses he schooled. Much of Walsh's childhood was a vagabond affair spent travelling with his parents and his sister, Annie²⁵, throughout Ireland, England, Scotland and Wales.²⁶

By all accounts, Tony's and Annie's childhoods were pastoral and unregulated by formal schooling. It is likely that they both learned to read and write under their mother's tutelage in a Rousseau-like setting free of the harsh restraints imposed by schools of the day. The gentle spirit for which he would later be known seems to have developed during this time in spite of his father's attempts to toughen him. His aunt Agnes Walsh predicted that he "would become a priest or a doctor"²⁷ and championed the "gentle and somewhat delicate son [of her brother], who was more interested in helpless, injured animals than in fine thoroughbreds."²⁸ Of his carefree youth, Walsh later recalled: "I was given a very unusual opportunity of sharing for a time the lives lived by

shepherds, crofters, fishermen, grooms and fishwives-people who were illiterate but poets at heart . . . They were my tutors who opened a life to me that is unknown to most people."²⁹

This carefree existence was a gentle precursor to a wartime service far more brutal in nature. At the age of sixteen, Walsh enlisted in the Irish guards. His memoirs, fragmentary though they are, credits this war service with making him emotionally weary, in need of the solitude that he eventually found in Canada and, more specifically, in the Okanagan Valley.

In 1923, following the death of his last relative, Walsh immigrated to Canada. Landing at St. John, New Brunswick, Walsh made his way westward working at the Garland Ranch in Alberta for two years, then for a spell raising foxes with Bob Fanning in Kelowna, an extension of the agricultural studies he briefly pursued at Reading University following the Great War's end.

An Accidental Teacher

Like many male teachers of his generation across Canada for whom teaching became a second or, even, third career choice, Walsh came into the teaching profession by accident. Like many rural schools at the time, the school at Six Mile Creek in the Okanagan was beset by the problem of finding a competent teacher who would stay for more than a short period of time. The severity of living conditions in many of British Columbia's hinterland schools deterred well-credentialed teachers from applying for such postings. Schools set in remote geographical locations were customarily a hard post for single

teachers. Beset by isolation, loneliness, and long cold winter days, few teachers could endure more than a year or two in the shanty-like living quarters that commonly served as rural teacherages. Only the most inexperienced young teachers, those with a chequered professional past, or those who were inadequately trained or educated could ordinarily be recruited to teach in such schools. Even then, most stayed, in what was often referred to as “hardship” schools, for no more than the 10-month school year. Walsh began his teaching career in 1929 by serving two years at Six Mile Creek.

Life at Inkameep

In response to his request for another teaching assignment away from Six Mile Creek, a request roundly supported by District Inspector of Indian Schools, Captain Gerald Barry, Walsh took his post at the Inkameep Indian Day School on September 1, 1932 at the wages of \$90 a month,³⁰ “less 10% for the current fiscal year.”³¹ Known at the time as the Osoyoos Indian Day School,³² this small “Roman Catholic school” operated under the jurisdiction of The Most Reverend Gerald Murray, C. Ss. R., Bishop of Victoria.³³ Because he was a Roman Catholic and, now, a teacher with some experience and a decent reputation, Walsh was deemed suitable to fill the vacancy recently left by Grist,³⁴ another Catholic teacher who had recently transferred to Shalalth Indian Day School.³⁵ Because it was a “Catholic” school, Walsh was expected to teach Bible stories and the catechism class, in addition to other elementary school subjects.³⁶ Arriving at the Inkameep reserve, Walsh described his first impressions this way:

The only word that could describe the school room itself is “tiny.” It had three windows on the west side, five double desks for the pupils, a table and chair for the teacher, and a pail to fetch drinking water for all. There was also a small wood stove which I later discovered gave out good heat...Adjoining the schoolroom was the tiniest of kitchens with a little stove, a table, chair and cupboard. The bedroom was equally small with a bed and simple chest of drawers, and that was all. In neither of these rooms could I have swung a cat with ease.³⁷

The most momentous event in Walsh’s career as a teacher was his decision to focus instruction at Inkameep around aboriginal arts and crafts. The decision itself was serendipitous in its origin; it began inside the school, as Walsh later recounted:

Once I tried to illustrate a point by drawing on the blackboard, and they howled with ridicule at my clumsiness. I invited volunteers to come forward to show what they could do. Their originality was startling. ‘You see,’ I pointed out, “how much better you can draw than the white man!’ From then on I encouraged them to express themselves wherever possible through drawing.³⁸

Inspiration for his approach was also grounded by his discovery of ancient Indian artifacts. Walsh later explained:

One day, while hiking through the surrounding hills, I came upon some pictographs that had withstood countless summer suns and winter blizzards. These crude illustrations depicted a hunter shooting a deer, a fish, a few birds, some stars and a sun. Then the idea came in a flash—I’d attempt to bring about an improvement in racial relationships through the medium of art.³⁹

The Inkameep children used their own legends and stories as inspiration. Students were encouraged to draw anything that was in freeform (no still life drawing), and found inspiration in many sources. It was the Christmas story that provided the foundation for their first

commercial endeavour: the 'Okanagan Nativity' Christmas cards and subsequent booklet of the same name. In this experiment, Walsh asked the children to describe, and then draw the nativity as it might have if it occurred in the Okanagan. The children depicted Mary wearing buckskin and a papoose board with local animals attending the baby Jesus. A teepee stood in place of the inn, and there was no manger. These pictures were printed onto Christmas cards and sent out to friends in Oliver and abroad.

Drama and dance provided another important outlet for the Inkameep children. Initially, a series of dramatic plays, based on Okanagan legends, were performed like wordless dance⁴⁰ with an Okanagan style sign language and choreographed by the students themselves. Later, as the children became more comfortable speaking English, Walsh provided them with lines to memorize and more formal choreography.⁴¹ Walsh started drama experiments in November 1938, with two non-indigenous students from Oliver, Elizabeth Renji⁴² and Isabel Christie.⁴³ These girls helped Walsh to create little plays for the Indian children based on Okanagan legends. Some plays such as "Why the Ant's Waist is Small" and "Why the Chipmunk's Coat is Striped," were titled to reflect the content, and contained a moral lesson. Once the children grew accustomed to performing these plays, they began to create their own dramatic works.

Before the tryouts I explained to them that, as this play was their own work, I wanted them to assign roles to those who gave the most realistic portrayals, a task that would be carried out by secret ballot. After the tryouts there was some disappointment on the

part of those who received secondary roles, but once rehearsals got underway their sadness was forgotten because there was a cooperative spirit that all shared. I felt that saddling the children with the additional responsibility of delegating parts involved risks, but they were worth taking, for they grew in their own self-esteem and in developing critical standards.⁴⁴

To better showcase the dramatic talents of his students better, Walsh also organized costume and mask making. Due to the shortage of supplies caused by Depression rationing, Walsh and his students improvised and substituted materials, using flannel instead of buckskin for costumes and creating their own *papier maché* masks. Later, parents of the Inkameep students contributed by making costumes for their children out of buckskin, and Walsh educated both students and their parents in the traditional techniques for making paint and fabric dye, as taught to him by the Inkameep elders.⁴⁵

Walsh developed another teaching experiment to instill confidence in the students' ability to speak English in public. To do this, Walsh introduced a daily "radio show" to the classroom. By encouraging the students to make school announcements on station "I.N.K.," he created additional opportunities for them to practice speaking English in front of an audience and to develop poise and confidence while public speaking. Walsh said "...more than anything else, participation in the INK helped children to gain confidence and discover themselves."⁴⁶ These skills enabled them to perform live for the CBC radio in Vancouver during their 1941 visit to Victoria for the opening of Thunderbird Park on the grounds of the Royal British Columbia Provincial Museum.

Learning the music of their own people also changed the children's classroom behaviour.

Within a month, students were singing native songs in unison and Walsh was faced with the problem of stopping them from singing as they broke into song on every possible occasion. As their respect for their own heritage grew, they were no longer afraid to share their melodies and lyrics openly in front of non-Aboriginal individuals such as Walsh.⁴⁷

In addition to Walsh's initiative to develop aboriginal arts and crafts, he was also interested in improving the students' agricultural interests through gardening. Before he came to Canada, Walsh had studied agriculture for a year at Britain's Reading University. The idea of school gardens as a vehicle for agricultural training was not new, of course. British Columbia's director of secondary school correspondence in the 1930s, J. W. Gibson, had pioneered a school gardening program in the province's schools at the end of World War I.

Unfortunately, the highly mobile character of the province's teaching force, along with a 10-month school year, made it impossible to keep gardens alive during the summer season when teachers and students were on holidays. And, so, Gibson's experiment failed. Nevertheless, the dream of providing agricultural instruction through school gardens remained for Walsh and for many other educators.

Dominion officials applauded this idea as it conformed to the doctrine of the interwar years that the education of aboriginals should be, first, practical in character. Despite the fact that a well was not dug for the school until 1936⁴⁸ and all water for the garden had to be hauled by hand for over a mile, Walsh

soldiered on with the gardening program, a move that obviously impressed George Pragnell, Inspector of Indian Agencies:

The teacher at this school has a system of allotting gardens to the various children, and though early in the season, I found the gardens all planted and the children taking a great interest in each individual garden. The children themselves had built their own irrigation system very credibly indeed, and I strongly recommend that a small sum of money, say \$5, be allotted for prizes when these gardens are judged by the local government Agriculturalist...⁴⁹

A Broader Cultural Agenda

Drawing, though central to Walsh's teaching, was not the only art form he employed to help students express their creative talents. Walsh used many forms of artistic expression to attract the interests of his students. Long before the idea of integrated learning became fashionable in modern educational circles, Walsh aimed to weave together the information from different school subjects and demonstrate the interconnectedness of the information. In doing this, he sought to promote and preserve indigenous knowledge.

Looms were made by the boys on which the girls learned to weave. Experiments were made with native dyes and the use of herbs such as their ancestors had used. An excellent clay was found with which the children did modelling [sic] in the building which was meant for the teacher's garage or stable, but since Mr. Walsh had neither horse nor car it became the Studio. Notations were made of the music of the Indian songs and the call of birds. Dolls were made and dressed in the replica of native costumes. These were then mounted on miniatures of native activities. Birds and animals in action were carved from wood.⁵⁰

Walsh wanted to teach aboriginal children to be successful in a variety of ways and foundational to Walsh's teaching philosophy was the revival of native pride. He attempted to restore the interest of his students

in their own cultural heritage, and to promote indigenous knowledge in the classroom. To do this, he experimented with the methods that he employed in the classroom, and he sought the advice of community elders, and their perspectives on education during his tenure at Inkameep.

Walsh thought of indigenous knowledge and native achievement as something to celebrate with his students, and of significant impact to society beyond the reserve. He saw traditional Okanagan indigenous knowledge as contributing to the fields of engineering and construction, botanical science, mechanics, cartography, and trade.⁵¹ Walsh's unique approach also allowed for a distinction to be made between traditional women's knowledge and traditional men's knowledge in order to celebrate the importance of each. In the appendix (co-authored with Noel Stewart) to Ravenhill's 1947 Suggestions to the Royal Commission, Walsh suggests that girls cultivate their skills in knitting, needlework, weaving, beadwork, and basketry; and the boys learn woodworking, *papier maché*, doll making, and leatherwork.⁵²

And in his self-deprecating way, Walsh gave credit to his students for their own achievements, and for contributing to his later occupational therapy work during the Second World War.

Hence these Indian children have unconsciously assisted in helping fellow Canadians become rehabilitated and live fuller self-supporting lives, and the two experiments should also point the way to benefit many of their fellow Indians in B.C. hospitals for T.B. and other chronic cases, to bring stimulus, and in due course,

lucrative and enjoyable varied artistic occupations in a variety of forms, to the disheartened and lethargic patients.⁵³

A Teacher's Success

Walsh also had an innate sense for drawing people into his work and for motivating them to embrace a social cause. In 1977, Jean Webber, a friend from Oliver, for over 40 years, wrote in *The Okanagan Historical Society 41st Annual Report*, that "Anthony's genius was in his ability to induce others to discover and develop hidden talents rather than being an artist himself."⁵⁴ People responded to him, in part, because he could read their character and fit them to roles that matched their personalities. Again in 1994, Webber attributes this to Walsh's success:

It was characteristic of Anthony Walsh that his championing the cause of the disenfranchised involved not only his untiring efforts, but also engaged the energies of those well established in society who had the skills and the will to be useful but who may not have found the way by themselves.⁵⁵

Much of Walsh's success was grounded in the solid relationships he maintained with the aboriginal community. Walsh was attentive to the elders and wanted all community members to share in the children's successes. During one performance before a mixed audience, he noted the response of the elders,

I asked the old people to come and a few whites. Something was born anew in the eyes of the Indian elders as they saw the fervor and skill of their children. How amused they were ...they showed a great love for their own legends...⁵⁶

Jane Stalkia, former Inkameep student, in a 1980 interview recalled the daily lesson as follows:

Before classes began he would line up the children, check their fingernails and give them each a dose of cod liver oil. The school day opened and closed with a prayer. In the course of the day, Tony would teach the children hygiene, along with their regular subjects, and simple rules of the white person's etiquette—such things as where to place a knife, fork, spoon and serviette and how to use them...Tony was a bit of a disciplinarian himself, and occasionally a naughty child would have to stand in a corner or write 100 times some promise of good behaviour. But always there were surprises and treats, like the daily noontime drink of hot cocoa which Tony gave the children.⁵⁷

Although few recorded observations of Walsh's teaching style have survived, Martha Lundley Hall reported her opinions in the November 1939 *Journal of Education* article "Closing Day at Inkameep School" (subsequently reprinted in the December 1939 *Education Digest*). She reports that Walsh was generous with his attention to the students and honest and direct in his appraisal of them. Consider this most telling excerpt from her article,

Another unique part of this closing was the teacher's address to the audience. Here is an example: "Mary, stand up please. Mary hasn't done much this year. She has found nothing as yet that inspires her to application. In fact, she doesn't care whether she works or not – mostly, it seems, she would rather not. But she is fond of play and has a strong sense of humor, real Indian humor. I am not expecting much of Mary just yet. She may surprise me though, quite suddenly some day. Meanwhile, she and I are quite happy together, aren't we Mary?"

One could but wonder what the parents made of such frankness. Complimentary or otherwise, the children invariably beamed at the attention bestowed on them. Some were praised. Records were compared with previous years. Evidently the teacher had a conviction that the tribe, as well as the parents, were entitled to the truth about these children. Prizes were distributed, each child receiving something, though, as in Mary's case, it was not always for scholastic attainment.⁵⁸

Success on All Fronts

Certainly, Indian agent James Coleman and his superiors were pleased with the artistic progress the aboriginal youngsters were displaying:

I consider that this pupil is worthy of congratulation on his success and the teacher of the school, Mr. Anthony Walsh, for his keen interest in the children's work, and sacrifice of a good deal of his spare time to the development of this talent in his pupils. Practically all of the children of this school turn out excellent art work and would quite easily develop work of commercial value.⁵⁹

Walsh's attention to Okanagan traditional culture did not go unnoticed. The local newspapers began to report his activities. The *Family Herald* and *The Weekly Star* described his peculiar habits:

Anthony Walsh himself is collecting the old songs and legends of the Okanagan Indians, the "Can-ooz-sez" or Animal People who once populated the Okanagan Valley and the Interior of British Columbia. . . The children learn these from their parents, who search their memories for old songs and stories told them in the past. They bring their findings to their teacher who makes a record of them and dramatizes the legends for presentation by the children. Sign language plays an important part in this presentation. The mothers make the buckskin costumes for the young actors and the children design and make their own masks, assisted by their teacher.⁶⁰

Indian agent James Coleman also recognized his promotional abilities, calling Walsh "an outstanding publicist" for his efforts.⁶¹

The students of Inkameep eventually received international recognition for their distinctive artwork. At the initiative of Walsh and his friends in the BC Indian Arts and Welfare Society, the student drawings were sent to the Royal Drawing Society in London, England, for a Commonwealth-wide children's art competition. The multiple awards

earned by the children established their reputation throughout the British Commonwealth as outstanding Canadian artists, and they were, in fact, the first Canadians to win this honour.

Three years ago a collection of the children's work was sent to an Exhibition of the Royal Drawing Society in London, England. They won the Bronze Star, Honourable Mention, and several first prizes. The success has been repeated and added to each year since. Last year the Royal Drawing Society bought one of the pictures for their permanent collection.⁶² The first time such a signal of honor has been done to Canada,—and through the work of an Indian artist. The selection was made from some six thousand pictures from many parts of the world.⁶³

From a 1936 report in the *Education Digest*, we also know that, in addition to a silver medal "from the Guild Hall in London," the children won "certificates from Paris, Vienna, and Leland Stanford [University]."⁶⁴

The original art submission to London was made possible by the assistance of Mrs. Bob Alison, a friend of Walsh and recipient of one of the 1936 Christmas cards. On viewing the artwork of the children, she sent the sample to her uncle Adrian Stokes and his friend, the artist Alfred Munnings. Mrs. Alison recalled,

And he [Walsh] always sought advice as a young man, he was wonderfully humble like that. So he came to me and said, 'I know you have people in your family who have astuter judgment than I. I wonder if you could ask them what they think of these children's drawings.' My uncle, Adrian Stokes, was an R.A., Royal Academician in England. And there was Leonard Stokes, President of the Royal Society of Architects, and Wilfred Stokes who designed the great gates on the sewage canal. So I sent the drawings to England and asked my uncle for his opinion.⁶⁵

This award from the Royal Drawing Society finally established Walsh's credibility with the Elders of Inkameep:

When mention of the award was carried in Canadian newspapers and the news reached the Reserve, there was much rejoicing. A few of the older Okanagan people who formerly had been very reticent now came forward and offered valuable information about the customs of their forebears.⁶⁶

To further the publicity of Inkameep art, in 1938, Walsh took a collection to Europe. Galleries in London, Paris, and Dublin, and at the Glasgow Fair exhibited the works. Later in 1938, the Canadian Junior Red Cross organized another European exhibition of these works. Although proud of their achievements and grateful for the "letters of appreciation," these successes were diminished for the children by losing access to their own creations. In a 1980, while being interviewed by Lucien Miller, Maggie Stalkia, a former Inkameep student, wistfully remembered that she did not have her work returned to her.⁶⁷

In addition to their awards for artistic merit, the Inkameep students gained notoriety for their dramatic skill. In April 1940, the Inkameep students earned the British Columbian Oskenonton Cup for their interpretation of Okanagan legends.

Major L. Bullock-Webster, organizer of community drama, presented the players with the Oskenonton Cup at the conclusion of the concert. The Oskenonton Cup was given to the Indian drama group doing the most artistic work and is challenged annually. It was decided by the judging committee that no other group in the province is doing such good work as the Can-Oos-Sez Shay-Loo Players.⁶⁸

As Inkameep students achieved greater popularity, opportunities for further performance took the student dramatic group "Can-oss-seez skay Loo"⁶⁹ off the

reserve. Of particular interest is the May 1941 trip to Victoria whereupon, receiving special permission from the DIA to leave the reserve, Walsh and his students attended the opening of Thunderbird Park. Due to a 1941 amendment to the Indian Act, members of Indian communities were not free to perform their dances off reservations.⁷⁰

The *Victoria Daily Times* reported the participation of the Inkameep students in the event,

Victoria's new outdoor museum of Indian work, Thunderbird Park, was officially opened on Empire Day by Mayor Andrew McGavin and Premier T.D. Pattullo. Hundreds of spectators, who had just witnessed the dedication of the Torch of Freedom being sent to Prime Minister Churchill, attended the opening of the park...Following the Premier's address, children of the Can-oss-seez Skay-Loo Drama Club of the Inkameep Indian Reserve at Oliver presented three short plays in the park, wearing masks and buckskin costumes made by themselves. The plays, it was explained, had been written around local Okanagan legends by Okanagan people. Anthony Walsh, teacher at the Inkameep Reserve, directed the presentation. The children taking part were Frank Stalkia, Raymond Baptiste, Edith Kruger, Bertha Baptiste, Irene Baptiste and Gertrude Baptiste, ranging from nine to 13 years. Mr. Walsh was introduced by the provincial director of school and community drama, Major L. Bullock-Webster...⁷¹

Following this performance, the children were invited to perform their drama live on CBC Radio in Vancouver. Unfortunately, CBC recordings are not catalogued for the years prior to 1942, and these recordings may be lost.

The Inkameep children were also invited to perform at the American National Folk Festival in Washington, DC of the same year. In spite of the petition by Miss Sarah Knott, President of the festival; this time the Inkameep students were refused permission by the Canadian Government to travel to Washington to

attend the event for the purpose of performing their dances, allegedly because of the gas rationing for the war effort. In spite of war rationing, Inkameep students continued to cultivate international recognition for their art work, while Walsh and the Society members continued to send samples for competition.

Testimony from Students and Teachers

In his memoirs, Walsh describes the transformation of his students in the following terms:

At Inkameep the whole process of developing creativity took time and trust. For the first two years I let the children as [sic] be themselves and encouraged them to share something of thier [sic] culture, and as they became interested in their own background, their creativity became spontaneous. The old people never showed their interest in their culture to me, but did to their children, and it would emerge in an art form at school.⁷²

More revealing than the international accolades is a letter from March 8, 1941 to Captain Gerald Barry expressing the views of Canadian art experts at the National Art Gallery in Ottawa. Prevented by Gallery policy from producing a solo exhibition of any living Canadian, the National Gallery tried to organize a collective exhibition of Canadian aboriginal art. To do this, the director requested work from indigenous artists across the country, but no one else was producing work of similar quality. "Some day Canada will wake up to the fact that he [Sis-Hu-Lk] is a genius."⁷³

Walsh's success as a teacher also rests on the testimony of former students. In 1936, the *Toronto Mail and Empire* cited one of the Inkameep students,

Through being a [Red Cross] 'Junior,'" writes Ernest Batiste, a brother of the artistic Francis, in a recent issue, "I have improved my English. I have also learned how to . . ." And he enumerates many accomplishments. He says that since the members of the junior society have started to drink milk and cod liver oil during the Winter months, they have all gained and are now the proper weight. But the statement which impresses most of all is this: "I have also learned how to be a good sport when playing games. I always try to win, but I do not get mad if I lose, because if I did I would spoil the game for other players."⁷⁴

In November 1941, the *B.C. Teacher* featured a book review by Miss Mary Elizabeth Coleman on *The Tale of the Nativity*. In her assessment, "British Columbia, and indeed all of Canada, is the richer for the devoted work of this gifted man, Anthony Walsh, who has recognized and encouraged the talents of his pupils without attempting to Anglicise them."⁷⁵

While researching his biography of Walsh, *Alone for Others*, Lucien Miller interviewed some surviving of the surviving Inkameep students during his 1980 trip to the Okanagan. Jane Stalkia shared her experiences:

I really didn't talk much in school, but when I'd get outside with the other kids in a play I was different. I really thought I was needed or wanted or something like that. And he did the same to all the other kids. I don't know how to say it, but the kids felt that they were wanted. They mattered... I think it was his teaching that put me where I was and where I am. So I think he's a great man, as far as I can see. He touched all our hearts, and I think anyone that you talk to is going to be very grateful, the same as me. The older people are mostly gone now, but the ones that he taught are all pretty good people. Like I say, the ones he had anything to do with still think of him.⁷⁶

According to his friend John Buell,

... from 1932 to 1942 he was the teacher at the small school – which was also his house-on the Inkameep Reserve in the Okanagan Valley. There besides teaching the three Rs and the faith, he

encouraged the children in the arts of their own people: the masks, the dances, the songs, the poems, the drawings. It was illegal at that time for Indians to sing and dance. He had his "white" friends organize exhibits of children's art, he even held one in London, England. He wrote children's plays with Christian and native themes and put them on before audiences (as far away as Vancouver) made up of whites and Indians, the first occasion they had ever come together. He was a pioneer in helping the Indians recover their own culture. (The teachers who came after him destroyed his work, burned the masks, and condemned it all as non-Christian. How easy it is to suppress the human as pagan).⁷⁷

Although George Clutesi came under Walsh's guidance in 1943 and technically wasn't an Inkameep student, his recollections of Walsh may be the most telling,

That was really the beginning," said George, "of the coming back of our own singing and dancing. I traveled all over Canada lecturing, and always the name of Tony Walsh was with me. I know without a doubt that it was Tony who lent me that courage, not my Indian courage, but the courage to go before that Royal Commission or the courage to face you, for instance and say 'no' if I wanted to. And it was Tony, too, who made us realize there were many wonderful white people in the world eager to make friends."⁷⁸

Walsh recognized the influence of the friends who supported his work at Inkameep, and in his self-deprecating way, did not take credit for his success as a teacher. Walsh attributes his success to his group of friends,

For my part, I doubt if I would have proceeded as far as I did were it not for the encouragement that I received from these Europeans and those from Britain. Their knowledge of the theater and the performing arts proved very helpful. And their sincere appreciation brought about among themselves an awareness that Indian culture had the power to amuse and deepen human sensitivity. An understanding was fostered of a people who had forged their life in the Western valleys and mountains long before the advent of the White race.⁷⁹

¹ Dominion of Canada, *Okanagan Agency - Okanagan Day School - General Administration - Teacher's Salaries*. RG 10, Volume 6405, File 833-1, Part 1 (BCA, 1909-37).

² Dominion of Canada, *Okanagan Agency - Okanagan Day School - General Administration*. RG 10, Volume 6405, File 833-1, Part 2 (BCA, 1938-49).

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid., letter from Robert Brown; no date.

⁵ The school was initially called the "Osoyoos School," later named the "Inkameep School".

⁶ Letter from Robert Brown, Indian Agent to The Secretary, DIA, Ottawa, October 16, 1916. Dominion of Canada, 1914-36. *Okanagan Agency - Inkameep [sic] Day School - General Administration*. RG 10, Volume 6405, File 843-1, Part 1. BCA.

⁷ Fred Ball Indian Agent letter July 10, 1919. Ibid.

⁸ Anthony Walsh, "Memoirs," in *Walsh Papers in the Personal Files of Stephen Hagarty* (Montréal, QC), Chapter 3 "Pioneering," 20.

⁹ Dominion of Canada, *Okanagan Agency - Inkameep [Sic] Day School - General Administration*. RG-10, Volume 6405, File 843-1, Part 1 (BCA, 1914-36).

¹⁰ Letter from file 470825, date stamped Nov 27, 1919; Ibid.

¹¹ By 1924, the Six Mile Creek School, which had been founded in 1920, had been entrusted to a former architect, William Marsden, and his wife. Until 1929, the Marsdens held sway over the Okanagan Day School. But, from the beginning, Marsden was plagued with ill health. After Marsden gave very short notice to the local priest, Father Aelred Carlyle OSB, the school was left without a suitable teacher. Carlyle contacted Walsh at the Fanning farm and asked him to consider teaching for a few weeks, until a real teacher could be found. Walsh stayed two years in the community, serving as teacher, nurse and community judge.

¹² In September 1932, the BC Provincial Department of Education initiated a reorganization of curriculum for rural school teachers and a regrouping of grades 1-8.

¹³ *Reasons for Starting the Association*, author unknown. *Society for the Furtherance of Indian Arts and Crafts*.

¹⁴ Dominion of Canada, *Department of Indian Affairs*. RG-10 Vol. 6405, File 832-11, Part 1 (BCA).

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Fleming and Smyly, "The Diary of Mary Williams: A Cameo of Rural Schooling in British Columbia, 1922-1924."

¹⁷ J.D. Wilson and Paul J. Stortz, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You': The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s," in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J.D. Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 211., citing J.H. Putman and G.M. Weir, *Survey of the School System*. (Victoria: King's Printer, 1925), 20.

¹⁸ Penelope Stephenson, "'Mrs. Gibson Looked as If She Was Ready for the End of Term': The Professional Trials and Tribulations of Rural Teachers in British Columbia's Okanagan Valley in the 1920s," in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J.D. Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 241.

¹⁹ No allowance was made for religions other than Christianity, or for expressions of Christianity that were not Roman Catholic, Anglican or Methodist (Presbyterian).

²⁰ New Brunswick is the only other province in the Dominion to have maintained its own Indian School inspectors.

²¹ DIA records show that, on average, almost half of day school students did not attend school on a regular basis.

²² Dorothy Amor, cited by Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh*, 51.

²³ Dr. Paré, cited by Miller, *Ibid.*, 138.

²⁴ Jean Webber's biography of Walsh in the November 1, 1977 Okanagan Historical Society Report. In a letter from Walsh to Father Daniel Berrigan, June 20, 1972 Cornell University, Files of Father Dan Berrigan #4602 Walsh confirms that he was baptized at the church St. Antoine de Padoue, in Paris.

²⁵ Annie took orders and became a Sister of the Good Shepherd. She died at age 28 of the Spanish Flu.

²⁶ Two other boys born to the Walsh family died in infancy and were buried in Belgium.

²⁷ 'Become Healers of Hurt, Wounded' Warm Welcome for Dr. Anthony Walsh. *Oliver Chronicle* Thursday, April 7, 1976, Add.MSS box 1, file 13, BCA.

²⁸ Jean Webber, "Dr. Anthony Walsh: The Gentle Revolutionary." *Okanagan Historical Society* Nov.1, 1977, 41st Report, 130.

²⁹ Hagarty, Stephen. "Tony Walsh: A Saint for Our Time: Gentle Man who Challenged Others" *Compass* March/April 1995, 39. From the private collection of Esther Jedynak.

³⁰ According to the Public Schools Report, 1932-33; the salary range for a public school elementary teacher in Kelowna was \$84 - \$261. See M19; and according to Inspector R.T. Hall where economic cuts were necessitated by the depression (M32) Salaries were reduced.

³¹ A.F. Mackenzie, Secretary, to C.C. Perry, Esq. Assistant Indian Commissioner, August 10, 1932. Canada RG 10 vol. 6405, file 833-1, part 1, Department of Indian Affairs National Archives of

³² The school was referred to as the Osoyoos Indian Day School, until January 24, 1933.

³³ The Right Reverend the Bishop of Victoria, and His Grace the Archbishop Duke.

³⁴ F.G.M.Grist took over the teaching position in 1928, after substitute teaching at the Okanagan Day School. He specialized in Agriculture and Stock. (December 30 1928 letter). In 1932 Grist was transferred to the Shalalth Indian Day School and Anthony Walsh took his place.

³⁵ Gerald H. Barry, District Inspector of Indian Schools, BC to C.C. Perry, Assistant Indian Commissioner July 31, 1932; Department of Indian Affairs RG 10 vol. 6405, file 833-1, part 1 National Archives of Canada.

³⁶ See extract from Inspector Barry's report regarding his visit to the Osoyoos Indian Day School on January 24, 1933 original on file 164-11-6 (old system), extract listed now as RG-10, volume 64-5, file 834-1, part 1. Exact date of his report is unknown due to smudging.

³⁷ Tony Walsh. Manuscript memoirs, Chapter 3, "Pioneering," 18.

³⁸ Tony Walsh, manuscript memoirs, Chapter 3, "Pioneering," 12.

³⁹ Anthony Walsh, "An Art Experiment among Indian Children," 76-78 Publication unknown. Add.MSS 2629 Box 13, BCA.

⁴⁰ According to the Indian Act, Indians were prohibited from performing ceremonial dances.

⁴¹ Walsh honed his dramatic skills at the Banff Summer School of Performing Arts, under the direction of Professor Koch of the University of Carolina.

⁴² Of Oliver, BC. Immigrant from Hungary. Renji had written & performed her own plays at Oliver Public School (See Inkameep and the Drama).

⁴³ Of Okanagan Falls, BC. Friends with Josephine Shuttleworth (an old Indian woman who shared her stories through an interpreter. "Inkameep and the Drama," Add.MSS 2629 Box 1 File 12, BCA.

⁴⁴ Anthony Walsh. Unpublished Memoirs from the collection of Steven Haggarty, 60,61.

⁴⁵ Anthony Walsh, "Tolerance through Art," *International House Quarterly* xv, no. 3, Summer (1951), 161.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 70.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 56.

⁴⁸ Water was piped to the school in 1944 from a spring 1,000 yards away.

⁴⁹ Geo S. Pragnell, Inspector of Indian Schools "Okanagan Agency Inspection Report No. 9" , May 1934 Department of Indian Affairs National Archives of Canada page 4 RG-10, vol.6405, file 833-1, part 1 Also note: There was no water at the Inkameep School—they did not dig a well in the area until 1936 (See July 24, 1936 of same file), Walsh had to carry the water by bucket for over a mile (see letter July 21, 1936; RG-10, v6406, file 834-5 National Archives of Canada), in June 21,1944 Indian Agent Alfred H. Barber was still trying to procure the necessary galvanized pipe to run 1,000 feet from the nearest creek to the school (same file).

⁵⁰ Stella Gysin, "Indian Art" The Canadian League[The Catholic Women's League Magazine, national executive offices- 1117 St. Catherine St. West, Montreal]. May 1939. Add.MSS 1116 Box 3 BCA.

⁵¹ He further recognized the work of the Inkameep students as contributing to his later wartime work in the field of occupational therapy.

⁵² Alice Ravenhill, "Addressed to the Royal Commission of Senators and Members of the House of Commons Appointed to Inquire into All Phases of the Affairs of Canadian Indians in May and October, 1946. The Following Suggestions (Chiefly Educational) Are Submitted in the Hope of Contributing to the Rehabilitation of the Indians of British Columbia.," (January 1947, Ravenhill Papers, box 1, file 20, UBCSCA), appendix.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁵⁴ Jean Webber, "Dr Anthony Walsh: The Gentle Revolutionary," in *41st Annual Report of Okanagan Historical Society* (Vernon: Wayside Press, 1977), 132.

⁵⁵ Jean Webber, "Beloved Teacher Dies," *Osoyoos Times*, Wednesday, August 10, 1994, 16.

⁵⁶ Walsh, *Memoirs*, 59.

⁵⁷ Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh*, 23.

⁵⁸ Martha Ludley Hall, "Closing Day at Inkameep School," *Education Digest*, December 1939, 19.

⁵⁹ James Coleman, Indian Agent to The Secretary of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, June 12, 1934; Department of Indian Affairs National Archives of Canada RG-10, vol. 6405, file 834-1, part 1.

⁶⁰ Edna Kells, "Ancient Culture Lives For B.C. Indian Children" Family Herald and Weekly Star, October 2, 1940 Add.MSS 1116 Box 3 BCA.

⁶¹ James Coleman, RG-10, vol. 6405, file 834-1, part 1

⁶² The picture was Francis Baptiste's study of "Indian Boys in Training".

⁶³ Stella Gysin, "Indian Art" *The Canadian League*[*The Catholic Women's League Magazine*, national executive offices- 1117 St. Catherine St. West, Montreal]. May 1939. Add.MSS 1116 Box 3, BCA.

⁶⁴ Hall, "Closing Day at Inkameep School," 18.

⁶⁵ Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh*, 41.

⁶⁶ Walsh. *Memoirs*, 34.

⁶⁷ Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh*, 22; Miller makes note of this, but does not cite her directly.

⁶⁸ "Indian Group of Inkameep Cup Winners: Major Bullock Webster presents trophy following unique concert at Oliver. The Penticton Herald, Thursday April 25, 1940. Add.MSS 1116 Box 3.

⁶⁹This means "animal people."

⁷⁰ "Any Indian in the Province of Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia, or in the Territories who participates in any Indian dance outside the bounds of his own reserve, or who participates in any show, exhibition, performance, stampede or pageant in aboriginal costume without the consent of the Superintendent General or his authorized agent, and any person who induces or employs any Indian to take part in such dance, show, exhibition, stampede or pageant or induces any Indian to leave his reserve or employs any Indian for such a purpose, whether the dance, show, exhibition, stampede or pageant has taken place or not, shall on summary conviction be liable to a penalty not exceeding twenty-five dollars, or to imprisonment for one month, or to both penalty and imprisonment."—This amendment extended the application of the subsection and made it apply to an Indian whether he was in aboriginal costume or not. 1933 Annual Report DIA, 11.

⁷¹ "Indian Legends Dramatized as Park Opened" Victoria Daily Times, Monday May 26, 1941. Add.MSS 1116 Box 3, BCA.

⁷² Walsh. *Memoirs*, 75.

⁷³ Add.MSS 1116, Box 1, file 2, BCA.

⁷⁴ Iris Naish. "Canadian Wins R.D.S. Star Indian Lad of West Uses Buckskin to record his own idea. All Nature Bows" The Mail and Empire. Toronto, Friday May 1, 1936. Add.MSS 2629 Box 1, file 13, BCA.

⁷⁵ Mary Elizabeth Coleman. "What We are Reading" The B.C. Teacher November 1941, vol. 21, September 1941-June 1942.

⁷⁶ Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh*, 23-24.

⁷⁷ John Buell. "The Man who was poor: Tony Walsh (1899-1994)" The Canadian Catholic Review November 1994, 15-19. From the Private Collection of Sister Rose Dorothy.

⁷⁸ George Clutesi in Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh*, 28.

⁷⁹ Walsh. *Memoirs*, 62a.

Chapter 4

Network of Support

Without question, the most influential figure in Walsh's work at Inkameep was Alice Ravenhill, a former Cambridge University lecturer and a leading authority on British Columbia native art. In 1939, a fortuitous meeting with Alice Ravenhill moved Walsh from the rank of kindhearted teacher to agent of social change. Miss Ravenhill organized a public reading at the Windermere Hotel,¹ Victoria, BC, where Anthony Walsh presented a selection from "The Story of the Nativity."

Starting in 1926, as a retirement project, Ravenhill had informally studied Indian arts and crafts under the direction of W.A. Newcombe, son of noted anthropologist Dr. C.F. Newcombe. She specialized in reproducing northwest native designs into needlepoint, and had gained popularity as a speaker amongst women's groups. In 1935, a Carnegie Fund gift allowed her to make a public presentation on the subject of native arts, at the BC Provincial Museum. Following this public reading of "the nativity," Ravenhill became one of the keystones to establishing Walsh's reputation in British Columbia—both as a teacher and a visionary.

In 1936, Ravenhill gave a short course at the Victoria Normal School. Then, discovering "...that an eight weeks' course on our B.C. Indians had been

recently included in the grade school curriculum, without any authentic guidance being provided for the teachers who gave it..."² Ravenhill revised the curriculum, and submitted it to Mr. Francis Kermode, Curator of the Provincial Museum, where it was published in 1938 as *The Native Tribes of British Columbia*. One copy was distributed to each school in the province, and two copies to each of the two Normal Schools in BC—making it the first text of its kind in British Columbia and, quite possibly, one of the first in the country.³

Ravenhill's own considerable body of writings also provides a unique and valuable perspective on Walsh, his work, and the state of aboriginal life and art in the interwar era, 1919 to 1951. Her principal writings include: *The Native Tribes of British Columbia* (1938), *Indian Tribal Arts in British Columbia* (1940), *A Cornerstone of Canadian Culture: An Outline of the Arts and Crafts of the Indian Tribes of British Columbia* (1944), *Memoirs of an Educational Pioneer* (1951), and an article "Indian Arts and Crafts," featured in *The BC Teacher* (1942).

Although the University of British Columbia Archives maintains her early writings, and the University of Victoria Special Collections and Archives serves as the repository for Ravenhill's later records and memorabilia, as well as the records for the Victoria Normal School and Victoria College, no archival records remain in either collection which disclose the curriculum of the summer school programs offered to provincial teachers in the 1930s. From the PSR records, we do know that the Victoria Normal School offered a summer class in "Rural School and Indian School Problems," taught by District Inspector of Indian

Schools, BC, Gerald Barry in 1931-33. The focus of this class was "...the latest approved methods in rural teaching and administration," and to gain "technique in the teaching of non-English-speaking children..."⁴ Summer school classes were the principal means by which rural teachers "upgraded" their qualifications from the early 1920s to the establishment of teacher education at the provincial universities in the 1950s and 1960s. Consequently, it is impossible to determine precisely what British Columbia teachers in aboriginal schools were learning to teach at the time Walsh was active in Inkameep.⁵

It would seem that Ravenhill's sense of moral responsibility initially led her to catalogue the arts and crafts of what she considered the "dying race" of BC Indians.⁶ Ravenhill broadened her cultural work by assuming a close relationship to Walsh and subsequently was instrumental in advancing Walsh's public prominence in the aboriginal arts and crafts movement,⁷ and in promoting the art work of his students. By the mid-1940's, following DIA objectives, she clearly envisioned native success in economic terms sharing the Dominion Government's aim to make indigenous peoples self supporting.⁸

Ravenhill, however, worked from a different set of principles than Walsh:

The crux of Ravenhill's call for policy change was that Euro-Canada had not sufficiently understood and exploited either the potential contributions First Nations peoples could make to the economy or how much it could enjoy First Nations products. The line between assimilation (the replacement of Aboriginal identities with a British worldview) and integration (which would allow aspects of First Nations identities to be commoditized in order to further the modern Canadian economy) was a subtle one.⁹

Consequently, Ravenhill's direct contributions to Inkameep were largely motivated by economic interests. In establishing a close relationship with Walsh, she was able to influence his teaching directly and to use his work as leverage for her own agenda: she wanted aboriginal children to profit financially from their own work, in the hope they would become economically independent. For this reason, she served as art dealer for the Inkameep students, political lobbyist and art promoter.

In her December 9, 1939 letter¹⁰ to Walsh, Ravenhill made arrangements for Victoria collector, Mrs. Catherine Maltwood, to procure one of Sis-hu-lk's drawings, as she did with other prominent Victorians. Ravenhill had the pieces framed and mounted for exhibitions of his work, and worked with the Victoria chapter of the SFIAC in collecting art supplies for the children. Ravenhill also kept the accounts for the Inkameep children in Victoria, managing the funds earned from the sale of artwork, and their Nativity booklet.¹¹

From her experience with the Victoria Normal School, notably revising the curriculum for teachers of native students, Ravenhill knew that day school teachers faced lonely work in the province. Accordingly, she started an informal support network for teachers sympathetic to Indian students (at day schools and residential schools). Letters in the provincial archives attest to the volume of her personal correspondence, especially letters of encouragement to struggling teachers and letters of introduction to link teachers of indigenous students. In doing this, Ravenhill developed a network of supportive people who helped

provide a foundation for Walsh's success. She also arranged for Walsh to visit these teachers and their schools, when possible, and forwarded copies of his articles to teachers in the hinterland.¹²

Noel Stewart, at Lytton's St. George's Residential School, became a regular correspondent with Ravenhill, first as a teacher and then as principal. His own students came to achieve a measure of success with publication of their own booklet titled: "Tale of the Coyote." In letters to Ravenhill, Stewart sent the names of art teachers and other sympathetic staff who included: Kamloops School principal J.M. Kennedy, OMI who also had a sister teaching art; Alert Bay teachers Miss Aitkin and Miss Thick; and principal Mr. Anfield and art teacher Miss Findlay at Alert Bay Residential School (St. Michael's). Stewart was instrumental in co-authoring a briefing that Stewart and Walsh presented to the Dominion Government in response to proposed changes to the Indian Act, and a paper on reviving artistic ability among First Nations children.¹³

As her health permitted, Ravenhill also taught traditional native crafts to these residential and day school teachers. In a letter to Walsh, Ravenhill tells of her instruction to some of the Sisters of St. Ann from Mission and Kamloops in "native methods of dying sheep's wool."¹⁴ And Ravenhill's letter of August 4, 1941 indicates that she also introduced the Sisters of St. Ann to tribal designs for the purposes of teaching children's art classes.¹⁵

Following her introduction to Walsh, Ravenhill organized a small group of Victoria-based supporters to support and complement the work Walsh had started in the Okanagan. And drawing on her extensive social contacts, Ravenhill formalized this group by co-founding SFIAC with Walsh.¹⁶ The agenda for this group was principally to support Walsh with his teaching and to promote native handicrafts in the province.

In 1938 Victoria members of the Society included: Major Bullock-Webster, Director of BC School and Community Drama; Miss Alma Russell, “formerly of the BC archives;” Miss Betty Newton (later the artist for the BC Museum); Victoria Arts & Crafts Society; Madame Sanderson Mongin and Douglas Flintoff. By 1941, William Ireland, Provincial Archivist; Dr. Clifford Carl, Director of the Provincial Museum; and A. Pickford joined the group. Once again, the Provincial Museum favoured Ravenhill’s efforts and Dr. Clifford Carl allowed the association to use the Museum as its formal address.¹⁷

In 1941, Albert and Daisy Millar, Okanagan friends of Walsh, also decided to formalize their relationship to him by creating their own chapter of the SFIAC. Three Okanagan band members also joined this group.¹⁸

Albert Millar and Ravenhill, now 83 years old, served as administrators of the Society (responsible for the Okanagan and Victoria branches respectively) and set out the following objectives for the Society's work:¹⁹

1. To compile a schedule and pictorial records of authentic specimens of totem poles, pictographs and petroglyphs, and other arts and crafts of the Province and to move for their preservation.
2. To compile a bibliography of B.C. Arts and Crafts as a record for reference and for answer to inquiry.
3. To collect new material in the form of drawings, photographs or written records of B.C. Indian Arts and Crafts.
4. To encourage commercial use of these and other authentic B.C. Indian designs.
5. To gather records of B.C. Native Music.
6. To compile a Bibliography of B.C. Native Mythology and of the drama arising there from.
7. To encourage pupils in Indian schools and tribal experts in the revival of their latent talents of Arts and Crafts and Drama with the view to improve their economic position, to restore their self respect [sic] and to induce more sympathetic relations between them and their fellow Canadians.
8. To publish leaflets, books and articles in harmony with the work of the Society.²⁰

In Ravenhill's view, this network of educators, anthropologists, artists and friends formed the nucleus for a "movement" in native educational and social reform in British Columbia. At the suggestion of Captain Barry, Ravenhill wrote to BC Indian Agents and the Indian inspectors of day schools and residential schools. She maintained correspondence with teachers serving throughout the province, targeting the sympathetic ones who she encouraged to learn about the cultures of the native children in their own schools and communities.²¹

Under Ravenhill's leadership, the Society provided a powerful and dynamic foundation for Walsh's interests beyond the classroom. Ravenhill also maintained regular correspondence with Arthur Lismer and Lawren Harris, two members of the Group of Seven, Canada's pre-eminent painting fraternity. By October 1940, Ravenhill asked Lismer to help with the promotion of Sis-hu-ik's work, and to alleviate some of her responsibilities for managing his affairs²² In May 1941, Harris contacted Mrs. Daisy Millar of the Okanagan chapter to arrange a visit to Inkameep in June, 1941.

Always on the lookout for people of influence, Ravenhill sought the support of provincial museum personnel. She managed to recruit University of British Columbia professor Ira Dillworth, and Willard Ireland, provincial archivist, at the approval of his Minister, Dr. George Weir, who was "heartily in accord with my acceptance of your offer"²³ and, by April 1945, the Society in Victoria had seventeen members. In addition, Ravenhill drew the support of several public figures: Reverend J.G. Goodfellow, author of *The Totem Poles of Stanley Park*; Lady Tweedsmuir, wife of John Buchan (Governor General of Canada 1935-40); The Honourable W.C. Woodward, Lieutenant Governor of BC (1941-46); Dr. Diamond Jenness at the National Museum in Ottawa; as well as Nellie McClung.

Despite their lack of interest, Ravenhill also maintained communication with the Indian inspectors, asking for information about the arts and crafts in the regions they served. She did this to catalogue indigenous crafts in BC, a work that provided grist for her subsequent articles on the subject: the 1938 *The Native Tribes of BC*, her 1940 work *Indian Tribal Arts in British Columbia*, and her 1944 article: *A Cornerstone of Canadian Culture: an outline of the arts and crafts of the Indian Tribes of British Columbia*.²⁴

In a May 8, 1941 letter from Harper Reed, Indian Agent at Stikine, Ravenhill learned that Indians in the area made moose skin table covers, but did not make beadwork or baskets. In Reed's estimation, "no Indian has any use for money except as a credit at some local Hudson's Bay Post."²⁵

Disagreeing with this, the Okanagan branch petitioned Inspector Barry at the DIA to let the Inkameep children sell their work as souvenirs for tourists but he denied their request. It is unlikely that the DIA had restrictions on selling student work; it is more likely that Inspector Barry enforced this in his own jurisdiction. We know Walsh had earlier promoted art sales at the Six Mile Creek School, to enable students to pay for their winter clothes, and that he wanted his students at Inkameep to have the same opportunity.²⁶

Ravenhill, conscious of the need to promote Indian handicrafts, contacted the Hudson's Bay store in Victoria in 1941 to promote the crafts of Indian

children. Initially, her request was to simply display the artwork of Inkameep students. Later, during the window displays exhibits, she challenged the local store to sell the crafts of Indian children as souvenirs, rather than promoting Indian designs manufactured in Ontario:

To publicize the aims and objects of the Society for the Furtherance of Indian Arts and Crafts, the Hudson's Bay Store is this week showing a window display representing the last scene of a dramatized legend of the Okanagan Indians. The play, entitled "Chipmunk and the Owl-Woman," was written by Elizabeth Rennie of Oliver, for the children of the Inkameep Indian Day School there...On the store's main floor there is an exhibit of paintings by the talented Indian youth Sis-hu-lk, whose work has been commended by such outstanding artists as Lauren Harris and Arthur Lismer²⁷

Ever fearful that Indian art would become extinct, Ravenhill employed creative and bold steps to popularize West Coast native designs. In 1941, Ravenhill wrote to Cleveland Ball, director of the Manchester Cotton Board, sending him "a large number of BC Tribal designs" hoping to further popularize the West Coast designs around the Commonwealth.²⁸

Ravenhill also hoped the Canadian Pacific Railroad (CPR) would purchase Sis-hu-lk's work for use in advertising and promotional material. As part of their ongoing advertising, the CPR promoted tourism in Western Canada with photos of native villages and totem poles. Ravenhill suspected that Sis-hu-lk's work might fit into their marketing strategy. In his June 19, 1940 letter to J. Harry Smith, Press Manager of the CPR Windsor Station, Major Bullock-Webster,

Director of School and Community Drama, promoted Sis-hu-ik's work as "suitable for folders, post-cards, ships menus, etc."²⁹

Ravenhill served as art agent and critic for the students of Inkameep. Financially unable to procure the art for herself, she organized the sale of Sis-hu-ik's (Francis Baptiste's) artwork to the social and art elite of Victoria. Lismer, in particular, wanted to own a work of Sis-hu-ik, as did Victoria collector, Catherine Maltwood, as well as the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia. Ravenhill took great pride in the promotion of Baptiste's work; she took orders for his work, and introduced him to the concept of "working on consignment."³⁰

In the Okanagan, Daisy and Albert Millar were equally successful in their promotional activities. Whereas Ravenhill focused on the sale and publicity of the art, the Millar's recognized that art was an instrument to reaching the spirit of the children and for giving them confidence, oratory skills and tolerance, all of which were skills they required for survival in Canadian culture. Close correspondence with Bullock-Webster led to increasing awareness amongst provincial educators:

These young actors may be building the first rungs of a ladder that will ultimately bear some of their people to an eminence from which they can command universal respect for themselves and their race. Elementary acting is a stepping-stone on the road to effective oratory. A gift for public speech sets a man or woman, of any race, on an intellectual rostrum from which attention can be gained. Acting gives self-confidence, it widens the outlook of the actor, it broadens his sympathies, and develops his tolerance. As

they grow older these youngsters, when out of the valley, will not be aliens moving in an atmosphere of ill-concealed contempt. They will be the friends of people of culture and refinement. What Disraeli and Booker Washington could do for their people, a Baptiste or a Stalkia may be able to do. I feel that the work you are sponsoring has a much deeper significance than the mere presentations of legends in dramatic form.³¹

University of Victoria archival holdings attest to the long-term commitment of the SFIAC, which formally continued past the tenure of Walsh and Ravenhill into the 1970's. The efforts of Walsh's support network are worthy of their own chronicles. From fund raising for art scholarships to contacting art galleries around the world, they were shameless in their attempt to promote the interests of "their" native children. If Walsh was the evangelist, his followers grabbed the task with missionary zeal.

Foes

Contemporary scholarship does not describe the professional difficulties and criticisms Walsh faced. Little is known about the official response of Roman Catholic leaders to Walsh's initiatives in teaching, but Dr. Campbell-Brown, a Quaker and Vernon based pediatrician, viewed Walsh's situation with sympathy,

Tony was a rebel even as I, but he was a rebel who was extremely loyal to the Catholic Church, so he would never admit that he was being blocked by the church. When I suggested such a thing, he always evaded me, but it was obvious to me that he was so blocked, and I knew that as soon as he left his work would be destroyed as far as possible.³²

In his Memoirs, Walsh concedes,

The children's attitude was a result of the repression exercised [sic] by government officials who thought it desirable to bring about a complete break with the past. At the time, the Indian Department debunked anything Indian, for they wanted the Indians to adopt the ways and thoughts of the White Man.³³

Walsh described his relations with the Dominion Government Indian officials this way:

With regards to the Department of Indian Affairs, the first Indian agent we had was not very sympathetic and was rather tough. His concern was the three R's, and he did not recognize the creative work that was going on...The second Indian agent was a first-class man, but all the odds were against him. He was dedicated and concerned, but the Indians misunderstood him and did not realize that he had to deal with the bureaucracy of the Department of Indian Affairs. When the third man came, he just left me entirely alone. I just plunged ahead and did things, like finding the cheapest possible materials, and funding them on my own. But I certainly got a lot of free reign which meant a great deal to me. Had I been criticized and kept under control, I doubt I could have continued on but certainly such was not the case.³⁴

By 1942, following a decade of positive teaching and proven student success, the Inkameep day school had become a legend in Canadian cultural and educational circles; but all was not well with both Walsh and the aboriginal community. Sadly, the heightened publicity only seemed to drive Walsh further from his original work with the Inkameep children. His discontent continued to grow and, in December 1942, Walsh tendered his resignation to Indian Agent A. H. Barber on the basis of his desire to join the Legion War Services.³⁵ As Walsh explained:

I am writing to inform you that I am resigning from the post of teacher at the Inkameep Day School, at the end of December 1942. I expect to take a position with the Canadian Legion War Services early in 1943. After a short training, I am hoping to proceed overseas.³⁶

Walsh had also begun to receive complaints from the DIA and from community members who wanted to see a curriculum that would reflect a more academic approach. According to letters in the government's RG-10 files, the band wanted to have their children educated at the residential schools.³⁷

Had Inkameep's success been due principally to innovative students and to a newly-developed aboriginal initiative, it might have continued to flourish after Walsh's departure, but the void left by Walsh was filled by the teaching attempts of several short-term substitutes, and the community seemed to falter in his absence. One of the subsequent teachers (a Roman Catholic Priest) burned most of the masks and artwork of the Inkameep children, effectively destroying the legacy of Walsh and his students.³⁸

Without Walsh at the centre, the Society began to struggle with the effort of continuing their work. Daisy Millar's April 1947 letter to Ravenhill was highly critical of Walsh and his departure: "In the beginning, and because of your friendship with A.W. there was a certain amount of interest, since then, or rather since A.W. left inkameep [sic], it has all died down. This is a confession that I make to you."³⁹

Despite their sadness over Walsh's decision to leave, the members continued to support native education. Daisy Millar's husband, Arthur,

demonstrated his loyalty to the Inkameep children and teachers, beyond the Walsh tenure, by pestering the government for better housing and teaching facilities. He rejected the suggestion that the children be sent off to residential school, claiming it would be healthier for them to stay at home with their own people. Others, like Mr. Hoey, Dr. Moore, Dr. Tisdall, and Mr. Jenness also gave testimony to the Dominion Government in support of the independence of native citizens.⁴⁰

In his unpublished memoirs, Walsh looked back on his time at Inkameep, summing up his experiences this way:

A whole process of education unfolded in which Whites discovered the creative life of Indians and their concern and support deepened. Had I approached the White community from the point of view of social justice, I would not have gotten to first base. . . . I am quite sure that our many experiments at the Inkameep School were an influence in the development of opportunities for talented native children, especially on the coast of British Columbia and brought in a new trend in Indian education. What we did at Inkameep was no longer thought odd or different, and there came the realization that the fundamental thing was that minorities could be proud of their own background and culture. Because of the exhibitions of children's art that had been sent to Europe and the prizes won in England, we had something of an international reputation.⁴¹

¹ Alice Ravenhill, "Highlights in over Twenty Years' Service for the Uplift of the Native Tribes of British Columbia," (July 1948, Ravenhill Papers, box 1, file 1, UBCSCA).

² Alice Ravenhill. *The Memoirs of an Educational Pioneer* (Toronto: J.M. Dent & Sons, 1951), 211.

³ "The Department is wholly dependent on the provincial normal schools for its supply of teachers; and the normal school graduate is usually unfamiliar with the needs and peculiar characteristics of the Indian pupil. A report of an I.Q. survey of a number of residential schools in Ontario, undertaken by the Provincial Department of Education, suggests that it may be necessary in the future to provide special courses of study for Indian Day and residential school teachers." 1941/42 Report of the Department of Mines and Resources, Indian Affairs Branch, 135

⁴ Public Schools Report, 1932-33, M40.

⁵ For information on the curriculum of the Normal School see Vern Storey, *Learning to Teach: Teacher Preparation in Victoria, BC 1903-1963* (Victoria: Faculty of Education, University of Victoria, 2003).

⁶ Government attempts to catalogue Indian arts and crafts were limited to Eastern Canada. Ravenhill was the first to attempt a Province wide collection of samples and patterns in British Columbia.

⁷ In the 1938/39 Annual Report of the Department of Indian Affairs, the revival of Indian handicrafts is mentioned for the first time. The following year, handicrafts were still identified as experimental and confined to Ontario and Quebec. No credit is given to Walsh for his work in the Okanagan.

⁸ 1931/32 Annual report of the Department of Indian Affairs, 7.

⁹ Ronald W. Hawker, *Tales of Ghosts: First Nations Art in British Columbia, 1922-1961* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2003), 86.

¹⁰ Alice Ravenhill Papers, UBCSCA, Box 1, File 7, 125.

¹¹ Letter from Alice Ravenhill to Mr. Ashbridge, April 10, 1941. Add.MSS 1116, Box 1, File 3, BCA.

¹² Add.MSS 1116, Box 1, Files 2 and 3.

¹³ Alice Ravenhill, "Addressed to the Royal Commission of Senators and Members of the House of Commons Appointed to Inquire into All Phases of the Affairs of Canadian Indians in May and October, 1946. The Following Suggestions (Chiefly Educational) Are Submitted in the Hope of Contributing to the Rehabilitation of the Indians of British Columbia.," (January 1947, Ravenhill Papers, box 1, file 20, UBCSCA), appendix.

¹⁴ Letter from Alice Ravenhill to Anthony Walsh, August 12, 1941. UBCSCA.

¹⁵ Add.MSS 1116, Box 1, File 4.

¹⁶ Renamed British Columbia Indian Arts and Welfare Society in December 1946.

¹⁷ Alice Ravenhill. *The Memoirs of an Educational Pioneer*, 219.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁹ Although only two formal branches existed: Okanagan and Victoria; a small group led by Mrs. Humber wanted to do work in Vancouver. In 1941, another fledgling group in Vancouver also sought to join the BCIAWS. Mrs. Mildren Valley Thornton of *The Sun* tried to get a group to meet in her home, along with Mr. de Lisle Parker of *The Province*. In spite of their continued interest in

Walsh and the Inkameep students, the association lasted only three days. Alice Ravenhill to Anthony Walsh 28 May 28, 1941. Ravenhill file, UBCA.

²⁰ Anthony Walsh "Indian Arts and Handicrafts" Read at the Vancouver Conference on Indian Affairs on April 8, 1942 by Anthony Walsh, 2-3 Add.MSS 2629, Box 1 File 11, BCA.

²¹ Alice Ravenhill to Mr. Laurie, September 15, 1941. Add. MSS 1116, Box 1, File 4, BCA.

²² Alice Ravenhill to Anthony Walsh, Ravenhill Papers, UBC Special Collections, Box 1, File7, UBCSCA

²³ Add. MSS 1116, Box 1, File 3, BCA.

²⁴ Victoria, 1944. Occasional Papers of the British Columbia Museum, No.5.

²⁵ Harper Reed (Indian Agent) to Alice Ravenhill, 8 May 1941. Add. MSS 1116, Box 1, File 3, BCA.

²⁶ James Coleman, Monthly Report for the Month of December 1930. RG-10, vol. 6405, File 833-1, Part 1, BCA.

²⁷ "Displays Scene of Indian Play" The Daily Colonist, Victoria, BC Tuesday July 15, 1941 Add. MSS 1116, Box 3.

²⁸ Alice Ravenhill. *TheMemoirs of an Educational Pioneer*, 219.

²⁹ Letter from Bullock Webster, Director of Community Drama to J. Harry Smith, Esq., Press Manager, CPR Windsor Station, Jun 19,1940. Add.MSS 1116, Box 1 File 2, BCA.

³⁰ Letter from Robert Howe to Alice Ravenhill. April 9. 1941, Add.MSS 1116, Box1, File 3, BCA.

³¹ Report to Albert Millar, Esq., President Of the Okanagan Society for the Revival of Indian Arts and Crafts, Oliver, B. By L.Bullock-Webster, Provincial Director of Community Drama, Victoria, BC. *WAMPUM* no. 3 July 1942, Ed. Rev. E. Joblin. MSS 1116 Box 3, BCA, Victoria: BC.

³² Dr. Campbell-Brown cited by Lucien Miller in Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh.*, 58.

³³Anthony Walsh, "Daniel and Philip Berrigan Collection, 1880-1995," Collection #4602, Series G, Box 145, (Division of Rare and Manuscript Collections, Cornell University Library), 42-43.

³⁴ Anthony Walsh, Unpublished Memoirs, 67.

³⁵ Anthony Walsh to Mr. A.H. Barber, 1 December 1942. RG-10, volume 6405, file 834-1, Part 2, Ottawa: National Archives of Canada.

³⁶ Anthony Walsh to Mr. A.H. Barber, Indian Agent, December 1, 1942. Indian Affairs National Archives of Canada RG-10, volume 6405, file 834-1, Part 2.

³⁷ James Coleman, letter to Indian Affairs. April 21, 1944, RG-10, Volume 6405, File 834-1, Part 2, BCA.

³⁸ Lucien Miller, *Alone for Others: The Life of Tony Walsh.*, 16.

³⁹ Daisy Millar to Alice Ravenhill, April 9, 1947, Alice Ravenhill Papers, UBCSCA, Box 1, File 1.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ Anthony Walsh, "Daniel and Philip Berrigan Collection, 1880-1995," 79.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

Closing Thoughts

In British Columbia, residential schools were undoubtedly the darling of the Dominion Government's Indian education policy. The residential schools educated the largest number of students into the English language, taught them a pseudo-British culture based on rigid theological foundations provided by the contributing church groups, and enforced these "lessons" with aggressive, legalistic, and physical enforcements. In contrast to the accepted practices of the day, Walsh created his own approach within the context of the day school: he used art, music, dance, and language studies to attract his students, and he promoted the indigenous knowledge he absorbed from the elders of the Inkameep community in the classroom.

This portrait of Walsh as a day school teacher is important to the history of British Columbia. Walsh was, by and large, professionally untrained—a veritable stranger to normal school methodology. Yet, the initiatives of this man were significant beyond the community of Inkameep. He was an encouragement to other provincial teachers and, with Ravenhill's support, formed the cornerstone of the SFIAC, which eventually became a strong supporter of First Nations' artists in BC. His influence also extended to Alberta through his association with native leaders, and to Ontario, through correspondence with DIA officials, like Duncan Campbell Scott. Provincial museum and art curators

in British Columbia, Ontario and throughout Western Europe knew Walsh. At least two members of the Group of Seven, Lawren Harris and Arthur Lismer, communicated regularly with Walsh and the SFIAC, and Emily Carr's association was close enough that, in 1942, she was asked to serve as the honorary President of the SFIAC. Newspaper articles were published in Canada and Europe to celebrate the artistic merits of the Inkameep students. In his time, Walsh was well recognized for his teaching initiatives. Perhaps most astonishing, given the strong and sustained historical interest in the BC residential school system over the past two decades, is that it has taken almost 70 years (since Walsh's first initiatives at Inkameep) for Walsh's work to be re-examined.

The current educational literature on First Nations education in BC is depressingly bleak, and the history of residential schools portrays such institutions as places of terror for the children who attended. In Celia Haig-Brown's *Resistance and Renewal*,¹ memories of the school truck (nicknamed the "cattle truck"), which came to the reserves at the end of August to gather up the children for the start of residential school, is hauntingly reminiscent of another mass collection of people... people who also found themselves at the receiving end of a government's policy to "whiten" the populace.

In her 1995 article "Schooled for Inequality," Barman revisits the "whitening" theme. In it, Barman compares the residential schools to the World War I camps for German prisoners of war, saying, "The actual situation on the

ground was that many Aboriginal children fared less well than did prisoners of war.²

The most recent literature blames both national and provincial policy for deliberately introducing racist policies that were designed to “whiten” British Columbia. Nothing in this literature suggests a bright spot in the history of First Nations education.

This portrait of Walsh offers another look at First Nations’ education in BC because it acknowledges the existence of a resistance to provincial and federal assimilationist policies, and to the religious zealots of the churches, who administered the residential schools. Walsh’s work also helped break the state of inertia and lost hope that marked First Nations peoples. With Ravenhill and the SFIAC, Walsh served as an important part of a larger movement to celebrate native culture, and to revive Indian arts and crafts in BC during the depression years.

Initially, this writing sought to explore the work of Anthony Walsh and his remarkable work with the children of Inkameep. As I reflected on the challenges that Walsh and the Inkameep students faced, it was clear that my foundational course work in educational leadership was central to my interpretation of the data. Most importantly, I recognized the competing interests of the government, churches, band administrators, parents, and educators: each group had their own agendas, shaped by their values, interests and preferences.

I observed the collaborative process that Walsh used with the members of the band. Walsh worked with the elders and the chief to learn the values of the community and adopt the community agenda for the Inkameep children. In this, Walsh and the community shared a common vision, and could share their resources to achieve the same end. Walsh's agenda to revive Indian pride fed directly into the chief's agenda to raise children equipped to survive in both the Indian and the white worlds.

Although Walsh could not change the agendas of government or the church, Walsh (and his supporters) did challenge prevailing social views about native children, and attempted to educate the teachers of British Columbia and the local employees of Indian Affairs. In reviving native pride, and teaching aboriginal children about their own importance and the value of the Inkameep heritage, Walsh was enormously successful. As such, he represented a bright spot in an otherwise dark history.

¹ C. Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal: Surviving the Indian Residential School*. Vancouver: Tillacum Library, 1988.

² Jean Barman, "Schooled for Inequality: The Education of British Columbia Aboriginal Children," in *Children, Teachers and Schools in the History of British Columbia*, ed. Jean Barman, Neil Sutherland, and J.D. Wilson (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1995), 68.

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