

Oblates of Mary Immaculate - Piegan Reserve, Brocket
School of the Sacred Heart and Mission of the Conversion of St. Paul
Codex (Volume I), 1943 to 1945

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September 1, 1943

The children are almost all arriving today; a few have permission to help their parents for a week.

September 6, 1943

Labor Day. Leave for the children.

September 11, 1943

Today, our engineer, Frank Schlueten, notices that the water is missing. [... ...] The Indian Agent, Mr. Faunt, comes to examine the situation and immediately refers it to Ottawa. He is of the opinion, and Ottawa confirms it, that the school be closed temporarily.

September 12, 1943

A good number of Indians at Mass this morning. After Benediction, parents take their children home. We have only a few left who have nowhere to go.

September 19, 1943

Almost all our children and their parents are coming to mass today, but we have to send the children home as there is no water yet.

September 26, 1943

A very good number of Indians and children are still coming today. The children are still going home.

October 3, 1943

Quite a few Indians are coming to mass, but there are a few more missing than the previous two Sundays. No water yet - the children are going home.

October 5, 1943

Fr. Crépeau has to make a trip to Cranbrook School to return three girls who had escaped from there and ended up stranding and causing a scandal here. He returns the next day.

October 12, 1943

Fr. Crépeau goes to Calgary to see Mr. Pantaleon Schmidt, Inspector of Indian Reserves, to try, if possible, to activate the search for water ... not much success, the reports are being studied in Ottawa and we must wait for decisions and action. He returns Wednesday at supper time.

October 17, 1943

This morning, autumn weather, grey and cold. Attendance at mass was affected, many arriving late. No news yet about the water. The children are going back home for the sixth week. Let's hope it will be soon!

October 17-24, 1943

Indian Department Agent, Mr. J. Faunt, tried to contact a well digger in Lethbridge, but was unsuccessful.

October 28, 1943

Telegram from Fr. Plourde saying that Ottawa is sending an engineer, asking to do everything possible to keep the school open.

October 30, 1943

This morning an engineer from the Hydrography Department comes to take further measurements on the proposed location of a deep well. His report is to be sent to Ottawa as soon as possible. According to him, it appears that the work will be done soon. We continue to pray and hope. We are getting a reservoir and will probably be able to take our children back soon.

November 3, 1943

Retreat of the month at Pincher Creek. Brother Tom Morkin was unable to accompany Fr. Crépeau as he was alone to do the work at the school as the children were not there to help him.

November 6, 1943

Frank Schlueter goes to Cardston School with a load of wood. He brings back a tank that we can probably use to haul water.

November 7, 1943

Today we take the children back after 8 long weeks. The situation is not yet settled but we hope to be able to deal with it until Ottawa decides to do something.

November 8, 1943

The normal program resumes. The first 1000 gallons of water we manage to get here cost us a day full of mishaps, but we manage and believe it will get better in the future.

November 9, 1943

Frank Schlueter manages to make three trips today and consequently brings us about 3000 gallons of water.

November 14, 1943

Sunday. A number of Indians at mass. Most of the boys are going home this afternoon; a few girls also. All come back on time as requested.

November 17, 1943

This morning Mr. Pantaleon Schmidt, Inspector of the Alberta Indian Agencies and our Agent, Mr. F. T. J. Faunt, arrived at the school. A letter from Ottawa, accompanying a report from the

Department of Engineers, leaves us no hope that the Government will do anything about the water before 1945. We must therefore continue to haul water as long as it is possible - unless the Province wants to do something...

November 21, 1943

Sunday. A few Indians come to mass, not as many as one would expect given the ideal weather. This afternoon, Fr. Crépeau goes to visit some Indian families in the hope of getting the children of school age to come as soon as possible. Three Sisters accompany him.

November 23, 1943

This morning the children go to Pincher Creek for the annual X-ray examination. The last ones return at 4 o'clock this afternoon.

November 25, 1943

A letter from the Superintendent of the CPR in Lethbridge tells us that we will have to pay .50 for every 1000 gallons of water we take from Brocket and on condition that it is only a temporary arrangement. The situation is not very rosy by any means.

November 29, 1943

Two children, Matthew and Colette One Owl arrive at the school.

December 4, 1943

This morning we begin a novena to St. Joseph to get a digger first, water second. This novena will end just before Father Provincial comes to settle the matter here.

December 5, 1943

Sunday. Mass at 11 a.m. Those Indians who come, arrive on time. All the children, except for 5 boys and a dozen girls, go to spend the afternoon at home or with other relatives. All of them come back early.

December 7th, 1943

It is the first Vespers of tomorrow's feast. We have decided to celebrate Sister Superior on this day of the Immaculate Conception. It is also a great feast for the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. At supper - Frs. Panhaleux and Girard from Pincher Creek. After supper, a very successful performance. Welcome song, recitation, rhythm band, action song, dialogue, action song (by the little ones), orchestra, and address to Sr. Superior read by Florence Little Mustache and offering of spiritual bouquet by Doris Rabbit (5 years old). Fr. Crépeau thanks the children on behalf of Sr.

December 8, 1943

Feast of the Immaculate Conception. This morning, the boys go skating for the first time. Great joy. At mass, quite a large number of Indians. Most of the boys and a few girls will spend the afternoon at home. The others have a free bingo.

December 14, 1943

A new one: David Small Legs.

December 15, 1943

Then in the afternoon Mr. P. Schmidt, Inspector of Indian Agencies, our Agent, Mr. J. T. Faunt, the well digger Mr. Bush, come here to confer. We arrive at the more or less final terms of a contract.

December 16, 1943

Fr. Crépeau goes to the reserve, accompanied by two Sisters, and brings back a new student, daughter of Eugene Many Guns Jr., and receives promises for a few more soon.

December 18, 1943

We are forced to take David Small Legs, who has been in school only a few days, to the hospital. It is pneumonia.

December 19, 1943

2 new girls: Bernadette Strikes With the Gun, Catherine Plain Eagle.

December 25, 1943

Noel! Christmas! The celebration was beautiful, and pious. At the midnight mass, a little more than 100 communions, including our children. A first communion: Mrs. Charles Provost, Jr. At the Dawn Mass, the Christmas carols were performed with gusto. At 11 a.m. a low mass with Christmas carols. Then the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The Indians seem to be satisfied with the reception - the meals they are served. At 1:30 p.m. stripping of the Christmas tree. In spite of the war, we tried to find something for the children to enjoy. Let's hope we succeeded. Then the children will spend the rest of the day at home. They will come back tomorrow for the mass. Can't do much more because of illness and Ottawa regulations.

December 29, 1943

Fr. Crépeau, accompanied by two nuns, went to the reserve and returned - after two and a half hours of arguing - with three newcomers (Florence Buffalo, Catherine Crazy Boy, Violet North Piegan) which brings our number to 64. Not bad at all for our little school in Brocket!

December 31, 1943

It was the end of a year marked by the great ordeal of the lack of water, but also by great blessings: a great number of children, very few illnesses.

January 2, 1944

Very few at mass, probably too many Sundays in a row. All our children return, except three who cannot afford it and one who goes to the hospital - a new one, Patritia Provost, daughter of Nap - which makes 65, counting the three who work (Julia Paid, Clara Smith, Cecile Henault).

January 3, 1944

One more student - Hilda Blood. There is only one boy of school age left who is not in school. We have 66 children. Our school is getting very small!

January 9, 1944

Sunday. Better attendance than usual today. Many even take communion. The weather is perfect - most of the children go home for the afternoon.

January 21, 1944

Today our bread oven is not working as it should. Frank is breaking it down and many of the pieces are burned. We will have to buy bread at Pincher Creek for a while. Another inconvenience!

January 26, 1944

Visit from Rev. Greene, Anglican School with Mr. Hartwell North Piegan who, he says, has changed his mind and wants his daughter back. Fr. Crépeau lets her go, but demands that she go home until Ottawa decides.

February 3, 1944

Bad news about the water. A letter from Mr. Jackson says that the Government does not have the money to dig a well... After the encouraging letters received, this is a disappointment.

February 4, 1944

First Friday. [... ..] Everyone prays for the great intention: water.

February 6, 1944

Sunday. Quite a good attendance at mass. More than half of our children are going home for the afternoon. Willie Little Plume is not coming home tonight.

February 8, 1944

Tonight, Cecile Henault, who was working in the kitchen, took off without saying a word to anyone. Another one who is in a hurry to taste the world!

February 11, 1944

Father Crépeau is on the road all day with children to take to the dentist - and the doctor - then goes to see several families this afternoon. Two Nuns accompany him. He tries to find Willie Little Plume who has been missing since Sunday, but he cannot be reached.

February 14, 1944

It snowed all morning. This afternoon, the children take advantage of it to take out the toboggans. This evening, bingo game in both recreation rooms to celebrate Valentine's Day.

February 17, 1944

Big party today at the Oblates everywhere. Anniversary of the approval of the Holy Rules. Here, things are going rather simply. Canticles at mass. Fathers Girard and Duhaime come here for dinner. Benediction at 2:30. Then the children go sliding. Unfortunately, there is not much snow and two of our girls get hurt. Louise Bad Eagle broke her ankle and Cecile Paid hurt her nose.

We got the X-ray results a few days ago - no active cases. Eight (6 girls & 2 boys) under observation, with special care. Clara Smith, Josephine Sharp Adze, Delphine Little Plume, Joan of Arc No Chief, Hilda Big Swan, Jenny Stump, Dennis Paid, Aloysius Grier.

February 23, 1944

Mr. Faunt comes to check out the proposed expansion of the bakery, then makes a quick tour of the classrooms.

March 13, 1944

This morning it is quite cold. Fr. Crépeau still has to go to Pincher Creek to get bread. He also brings back two children who had not returned yesterday.

March 24, 1944

This afternoon Mr. Faunt, our Agent, visited us accompanied by Mr. Morris, head of the Welfare Division of the Indian Department, Ottawa, and Mr. Pantaleon Schmidt, Inspector of Indian Agencies for Alberta, from Calgary. Mr. Morris comes to try to organize the ladies ... he visits the school and the outbuildings and sees the work we are trying to do. He was favourably impressed, but found the place much too small.

We finally succeeded in repairing our bread oven.

6th April 1944

Holy Thursday. High mass at 9 o'clock. 14 of our children make their First Communion [the list follows].

April 13, 1944

Clara Crow Eagle, who is 16 years old today, is leaving school. She will return next Wednesday for her wedding.

April 19, 1944

Tonight, is an early celebration of the patronal feast of Father Principal, "St. George's Day". The children gave a very successful performance, including an orchestra, declamations, presentation of flowers and a spiritual bouquet, rhythm band (with costumes due to the generosity of Sr. Superior), acted song, and patriotic picture, then address and reply.

May 1, 1944

This morning we begin a novena to St. Joseph to obtain water in abundance.

May 16, 1944

Today the government auditor of books comes to examine the school books.

June 14, 1944

This morning, the inspector of classes, Mr. Hinman, arrives unexpectedly. He visits Sr. Lewis' class and will probably have to come back to visit Sr. Lévesque's class.

June 17, 1944

Father Crépeau, after his return from Calgary, has to take a child of Simon Provost to the hospital.

June 18, 1944

Sunday. Simon Provost's child, very sick last night (over 106 fever) is better this morning. A number of Indians are coming to mass, but many are still only coming for dinner and Benediction. This afternoon Nelson Small Legs cracked a bone in his wrist. Fr. Crépeau takes him to Pincher Creek Hospital for an X-ray.

June 25, 1944

Simon Provost's child falls ill again and Fr. Crépeau has to take him to the hospital.

June 26, 1944

It has been raining since late last night or early this morning. We were supposed to have the distribution of prizes tomorrow morning before leaving; we put it on tonight so that the Indians would not dirty the house too much tomorrow. [The long list of prize winners is given].

September 3, 1944

The children return to school. 34 of them come to mass. By evening, very few are missing.

September 4, 1944

All of them come back, except two: Doris Rabbit who is only 5 years old and David Small Legs, who is sick, it seems. It's Labor Day and a holiday. We are getting organized to start tomorrow.

September 9th, 1944

Sister Levesque received news last night of her admission to the Normal School in Edmonton for a 7 ½ month course. The question is whether she will have a substitute here. Finally, at 8:30 this evening everything is arranged.

September 17, 1944

Sunday. Good number of Indians at mass. Most of the children go home for the afternoon. Unsuccessful attempt to get Albert Pard's boy.

September 19, 1944

Arrival of Walter Smith, Peter's boy.

September 24, 1944

Sunday. Large number of Indians at Mass. Nearly all the children go home this afternoon. The Indians have been very generous with their donation to the Diocesan Seminary – nearly \$20.00.

September 25, 1944

The diggers are at 393 feet. We continue to pray and hope.

September 28, 1944

Quick visit from Mr. MacMillan, Indian Agent. He seems pleased with what he sees.

October 13, 1944

Father Crépeau drove Fr. Girard back to Pincher Creek. Tonight, he will look for Delphine Little Plume who ran away last Wednesday.

October 14, 1944

Unsuccessful attempt to bring James Provost's boy to school. The latter is more or less separated from his wife and the child is almost left to himself.

October 15, 1944

Sunday. Good attendance at mass. Very few of our children remain here this afternoon. Everyone arrives early tonight.

October 20, 1944

This evening Fr. Crépeau has to rush Ann Mary Weasel Bear to Pincher Creek Hospital where she is operated on for appendicitis 1½ hours later. The operation was very successful.

October 22nd, 1944

Sunday. This afternoon, Fr. Crépeau and some Nuns went to see the little sick girl at Pincher Creek. She is very well.

October 25, 1944

This afternoon, a short visit from Miss Barnes, director of the physical training class for girls. She came to see how things were going. She attended part of tonight's lesson and then left for Pincher Creek.

October 31, 1944

This morning Frank picks up two loads of bran for our milk cows. This afternoon he drives the children to Pincher Creek for X-Rays.

November 2, 1944

Frank is having trouble carting water and the drillers find it too cold and messy to work. What will become of us with our famous water problem?

November 3, 1944

First Friday of the month. In spite of the weather, a few dozen Indians came to take communion. Father Crépeau went to pick up Ann Mary Weasel Bear at the hospital. She is fully recovered after only 13 days.

November 5, 1944

We have to discharge Martin McDougall who is sick.

November 19, 1944

Sunday. A good number of Indians at mass. Felix Crow Eagle is worse and is recommended for prayers. Some of the children went home for the afternoon. All of them come back, except for Felix Crow Eagle's two little sisters and Delphine Little Plume.

November 20, 1944

The x-ray results are very satisfactory. From 8 last year, there are now only 3 cases under observation: Josephine Sharp Adze, Delphine Little Plume and Jenny Stump.

November 22, 1944

Tonight, those who are sick have a high temperature. We try to reach the doctor, but impossible.

December 4, 1944

The girls are a little better this morning.

December 5, 1944

This morning, the doctor comes to check the situation. It is smallpox. We have to cancel our Forty Hours next week and our annual retreat. We are in quarantine until the last one has finished getting pimples.

December 15, 1944

Two more boys are sick today. Hopefully they will be the last and be better by Christmas.

December 23, 1944

The doctor will allow us to have the Indians for Christmas, but would prefer that we wait a while before sending the children home.

December 25, 1944

Christmas! Christmas! The celebration was religious and everything went well. A hundred communions at the midnight mass, with the Sisters and the children. High mass with "Merry Christmas" and a sermon, then low mass with Christmas carols.

At 11 o'clock, another low mass followed by the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. Then we served dinner to the Indians present. All declared themselves satisfied. Then the Christmas tree was stripped - a song - and Fr. Crépeau spoke of his reasons for being as generous as possible with the gifts. Bob Crow Eagle speaks for the Indians first in Blackfoot and then in English. He thanks the staff and then says that every Christmas he is glad to see that there is a good God who helps the Indians year after year.

No one notices much about the absence of "Santa Claus" and that is a good sign.

We can't send the children home because of the so recent quarantine; they will go on New Year's Day. Besides, the weather is not very nice: cold and big wind from the West.

December 26, 1944

This evening, we were told by the hospital in Cardston that Gloria White Cow had just died of tuberculosis. She was a student at the Protestant school and was converted and baptized by Fr. Lavern.

January 3, 1945

Then he [Father Crépeau] left for Calgary to begin again the search for drillers and a more powerful machine. Useless efforts on that side.

January 6, 1945

Feast of the Epiphany. Many of our children arrive for mass. However, many are absent... some of our girls, who arrived during the sermon, go to the hall and miss the mass. Two arrive in the afternoon - two do not. A new one: Teddy Provost.

January 7, 1945

Sunday. Too many Sundays in a row, apparently! It is true that it is cold and snowing a little. In any case, there are only 5 Indians at mass and 3 others come afterwards. Only a dozen children go home after mass.

January 9, 1945

A new one: Paul Dexter Smith, Paul's boy.

January 10, 1945

We have to discharge Delphine Little Plume who stubbornly refuses to return to school.

February 27, 1945

Brother has to go and get the truck fixed. He could not cart any water yesterday and is only making one trip today.

Alfrida Yellow Face comes home from the hospital after five days with a bad cold and a high fever.

February 1, 1945

We take Jenny Stump, who has been sick for a few days, to the hospital.

February 2, 1945

First Friday. Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. First Communion of 10 of our girls and 1 of our boys [names given]. In the afternoon, we imposed the Scapular on the first communicants.

February 4, 1945

Not many Indians at mass. Fr. Levern does not dare to preach in Blackfoot. About thirty of our children go to spend the afternoon at home. David Small Legs returns to school after a year's absence.

February 10, 1945

Jenny Stump returns to school after eight days in the hospital.

February 16, 1945

Friday. We have to take little Catherine Stump to the hospital tonight. She has been sick since last Monday.

February 21, 1945

Quick visit from Mr. P. Schmidt, Inspector of Indian Agencies and our agent, Mr. MacMillan.

February 27, 1945

This morning a blizzard. The Brother who had gone to get a water trip has an accident on his way back; he misses the road and spills his tank outside the truck. Luck is definitely running out for us! Fortunately, he was able to get to Pincher Creek and get it fixed right away, as we were about to run out of water completely.

March 2, 1945

Tonight, we take two of Guy Yellow Wings' children - a 7-year-old boy and a 4-year-old girl.

March 3, 1945

A semblance of a "blizzard" again today. Brother doesn't dare venture to cart water.

March 14, 1945

We have to take 2 of our boys to the hospital in Brocket - Dexter Smith and Joseph Yellow Wings.

March 19, 1945

Dexter Smith is very sick this afternoon; the nurse has his parents notified.

March 20, 1945

Joseph & Rosaline Yellow Wings and Catherine Stump admitted. Fr. Crépeau takes Joseph Yellow Wings back to school. Dexter Smith is much better. He has been treated with "penicillin" since yesterday.

April 2, 1945

Poor Brother is making the most of the morning by carting water - when all this snow starts to melt, watch out for the road!

April 14, 1945

Mud! but a rather violent wind and a rather mild weather should dry the road! But these two weeks have been terrible for the water and for the Brother. When will this situation end?

April 15, 1945

Sunday. More snow! In desperation, Fr. Crépeau goes to the Agent's house to have the children sent home for a week, but he knocks on her door for 15 minutes and does not succeed in waking him.

Quite a good attendance, because the parents thought they would take their children home at least until tomorrow evening - tomorrow they will be given the "lease-money". A lot of disappointment, because the Agent does not allow them to go out. Most go home for the afternoon and return tonight.

April 16, 1945

Brother, leaving early, manages to make 3 water trips before dinner. Enough to keep the kids in any case. Let's hope that the weather will finally turn nice. Brother made 3 more trips after dinner, despite a little snow that fell almost all afternoon.

April 17, 1945

Brother is able to make a couple of water trips before the snow starts to melt.

April 20, 1945

This afternoon a quick visit from Mr. MacMillan, Indian Agent and P. Schmidt, Inspector of Indian Agencies in Alberta.

April 21, 1945

Half of our children are going home today. Two of our older girls, Louise Crow Eagle and Hilda Big Swan, who had been dissipating in the dormitory last night and were punished accordingly, distinguish themselves by deserting school. Fr. Crépeau finally joined them after a rather eventful race.

April 22, 1945

Sunday. More snow this morning. Spring is definitely taking a long time to come in earnest! Not as many Indians as there should be at mass. A little trouble with Louise Crow Eagle's mother, but she is staying here to pay her back a little for her escapade. A number of our children are going out this afternoon. Others, who went out yesterday, are not coming back until this evening.

It is hard to keep these dear Indians happy and to make them understand the importance of attending mass.

April 23, 1945

Feast of St. George and patronal feast of Fr. Crépeau. [Long program in detail].

April 25, 1945

A boy tries to run away, but does not get very far (Guy Provost).

Real winter weather, cold wind, snow at times. The Brother is carting water anyway, but it is not much fun.

May 8, 1945

V E Day. Some of our children are going to spend the afternoon at home. Tonight, the truck takes about 30 of them to Pincher Creek for a parade and fireworks.

May 24, 1945

"Empire Day" and holiday. All but four of our children go home. But, of course, a few have to come back late. At class time on Friday morning, four are still missing, all girls.

May 25, 1945

Two of our girls come home at supper time.

June 17, 1945

Sunday. Fairly good attendance at mass, but many latecomers, as always. We have the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament after the mass. Then, around 1 p.m. we have the distribution of the prizes. Present for the occasion are Mr. Schmidt and our Agent, Mr. A. MacMillan, accompanied by his lady. [A long list of prizes follows].

June 18, 1945

Mr. Hinman, of Pincher Creek, Inspector of Schools, comes to visit here. He declares himself satisfied, even delighted.

June 20, 1945

Then this evening at 10 o'clock the new drillers arrive. They put their machine near the first place where they have to dig. What will this new test be?

- ♦ Translated by Eloi DeGrâce with www.DeepL.com/Translator (free version)
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