

Chronicles of the Sisters of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin
Delmas, Saskatchewan
August 1938 to July 1959 (second book)

[The notes below go up to the burning of the school in January 1948.]

[PAA - PR1973.0080/SASV/2/1](#)

September 1, 1938 - page 2

Go, teach! It is indeed the call of the Master of the yellowing harvest that we hear this morning and guide each one to her respective post. Only the day school teachers are worthy of admiration from the very first hour and find themselves in front of about sixty students who do not seem at all to sulk about the reopening of classes. The number of entries will not exceed sixty-seven in the course of the year.

For the staff of the Indian school, it is the immediate preparations. You have to see the piles of laundry lined up. For those who are not accustomed to the spectacle, it is not a trivial sight to see the various manifestations of real joy of the companions employed with the Indians at the arrival of each truck taking the children from the various reserves. The laymen remain moved in front of so much supernatural charity which makes the Jesus of the poor and the little ones smile, because these dear children certainly have not only captivating charms for them.

September 3, 1938 - page 3

One hundred and fifteen students are registered at the reopening of classes. During the course of the year, the number will rise to one hundred and twenty-seven.

In a unique event in the history of the two schools, four Indians headed for the high school to begin their ninth grade: Kate Tootosis, Stella Sipikweskan, Madeleine Sipikweskan and Fred Merastie. Our best wishes go out to them.

September 20, 1938 - page 3

The doctors employed in the Department of Indian Affairs made their appearance. If their arrival does not bring the staff any appreciable happiness, it is not so with their departure. This joy was not long in coming as they passed quickly and expressed their satisfaction.

October 30, 1938 - page 5

[Feast of Christ the King] The Indians have prepared a very nice program, full of the spirit of this beautiful feast to acclaim Christ the Chief!

Songs, talks, spoken chorus, everything was applauded and greatly appreciated by the listeners.

The students of the village tried to revive faith and love in the souls by a spoken choir performed during low mass and repeated instead of the sermon during high mass. The congratulations received give hope that the goal was not completely missed. The emotion of the students was visible. May their convictions be felt in a lasting way.

October 28, 1938 - page 5

Medical reports assure us that the health of the students is very good. However, we regret to see one of the girls leave for the sanatorium. May God bring her back to us before the influence of a Protestant environment has done her too much harm.

December 23, 1938 - page 6

The traditional meeting at the village school brings together Sisters, parents and children to offer the parish priest the wishes of the season as well as Christmas wishes. The pupils perform the roles entrusted to them with such enthusiasm that the audience seems charmed and compliments everyone.

January 31, 1939 - page 7

Saint John Bosco, pray for us! The name of this great friend of youth is floating in the air today: it is a feast day for the boys who have chosen him as their patron saint. A most educational performance brings together the staff in the boys' recreation room, who know how to interest and entertain us in a very Salesian spirit.

March 19, 1939 - page 8

St. Joseph's Day is doubly important here since it is the feast of the Father Principal. The children offer their wishes in an interesting performance where they are warmly applauded.

April 23, 1939 - page 9

Can we ever celebrate you too much!

O you, the most valiant and tender mother. It is Sister Superior's day. The students have, as always, a beautiful program that deserves our congratulations.

May 10, 1939 - page 10

There is a general uproar: the doctors announce their visit to vaccinate the children. Everything is going as well as can be expected, but how welcome is the end of the day!

June 1, 1939 - page 10

It is the baptism of two children of the Indian school. The students will remember for a long time this ceremony which was attended by all and which was explained to them in Cree as it took place.

June 2, 1939 - page 10

This is the big day. Twenty-seven little Indians made their First Communion this morning. The ceremony is truly touching in its simplicity.

June 29, 1939 - page 12

Today we hear the tender call of the infinitely good Master. "Come aside and rest a while." It is not without regret that we see the students to whom we have, during these ten months, given the best of our soul, depart. O sweet Friend, with gratitude rest, but you, Lord, keep them from all harm.

September 5, 1939 - page 14

The household is now complete. However, the regular year does not begin to the great displeasure of the workers: barely ten Indian students are back on the date set. We are told that this disappointment must be attributed to the new Agent who would have made propaganda, on the various reserves, against the boarding schools. This is an infernal ruse which would like to remove these poor children of the woods from the civilizing influence of religion.

September 17, 1939 - page 16

There are still a lot of students missing, all the same, the classes of the Indian school will open this morning. Teachers and students are overjoyed. May the general application help to recover the lost time.

September 19, 1939 - page 16

Today is the interesting visit of the doctors from the Board of Health. The work of X-rays will be quite reduced due to the small number of students.

September 27, 1939 - page 16

Brief visit of the new Agent. His attitude, cold at first, changes as he makes contact with the staff. He does not hide his surprise at the sight of the good organization of the school; he leaves satisfied and we believe to guess that he leaves behind him certain prejudices. He announces his monthly visit: here is something new. His predecessor came only very rarely.

September 29, 1939 - page 16

Enthusiastic exclamations are heard in the girls' recreation room. What is going on? It is the accents of gratitude that rise so high and for good reason: the Father gives them a portable radio. The joy of our students is easy to imagine.

October 25, 1939 - page 17

True to his word, Mr. Ostrander, the Indian Agent, returns for the class visit. He spends part of the day there. Doubting the sincerity of the compliments addressed to the teachers would be contrary to charity: he is very happy with the work that is done here. God be thanked for it!

December 8, 1939 - page 18

It is the beautiful feast of the Immaculate. May the all-white Virgin give us a passion for the truly beautiful, so that the students will naturally be imbued with it when they come into contact with us and that we will raise them irresistibly above human ugliness.

The traditional banquet brings together the Children of Mary at the foot of the grotto set up on the stage. A game of bingo ends the day pleasantly.

December 21, 1939 - page 18

The pupils of the village school received congratulations from their parents and friends on the occasion of their Christmas performance. May these successes glorify the divine Master and advance his reign.

January 30, 1940 - page 20

It is comical to see the important air of the small little men who form the great majority of the boys' group. It is the vigil of St. John Bosco. We don't regret having accepted their invitation to attend the presentation. It is amazing what patience can achieve with such young children.

February 8, 1940 - page 20

The dedication of the nurses is put to the test by the illness of the students. The little ones seem to be more strongly affected. Jaundice and pneumonia make their presence felt and even cause our good Sister Superior some concern. A new treatment puts everyone back on their feet.

February 28, 1940 - page 20

Another acquisition, this time to the advantage of the boys. From now on, an electric clipper will make all the boys look good. What a boon for the "barber lady" of all these people.

April 4, 1940 - page 21

The Agent's visit brings all concerned to their feet for the rehearsal of the performance program. His surprise was evident and his satisfaction true, since he immediately asked that the students go to Battleford to perform for the soldiers. The Reverend Father having accepted, the Sisters had to continue the rehearsals which they had been so happy to believe were finished. This extra fatigue is accepted by each one with generosity since it is a means of procuring the glory of the good Master while contributing to the success of the works of our Institute.

May 11, 1940 - page 22

A big tralala. Teacher and students of the Indian school are preparing to go to Battleford to give the performance requested by the Agent. The children are thinking more of the picnic than of the embarrassment that might nail them in place in front of a foreign audience.

October 9, 1940 - page 24

Retreat of our Indian children. The preacher is none other than the Reverend Father Angin.

October 31, 1940 - page 24

Performance organized by grades 5, 6, 8 of the Indian school with the aim of favoring the embarrassed students, especially those who have had no opportunity to appear in public.

December 25, 1940 - page 25

Indian students, endeavor to perform the mass "Fons. Bonitatis" during the midnight mass. In the afternoon, distribution of Christmas gifts. Everyone returns with a happy heart.

February 11, 1941 - page 26

The students of Sister Calixte-de-Rome's class, wanting to do their part to win the war, are in full bazaar. Great success, since the receipts surpassed all expectations: \$63.00 in four hours!

March 18, 1941 - page 26

Great performance at the Indian school. It is the eve of S. Joseph's day, the patronal feast of our Reverend Father Principal. Our children do us proud and Reverend Father seems happy.

April 25, 1941 - page 27

At the invitation of Mr. Innes, "Inspector", our Indian children will present their play at Battleford in the Connaught School. Grades 7 and 8 of St. John Baptist de la Salle School also accepted the invitation. According to those present, our students did well.

June 20, 1941 - page 28

Picnic for the older students of the Indian school. All of them go to the Battle River and come back to us happy with the beautiful day of pleasure.

June 1941 - page 29

[Statistics]

Students at the boarding school: 56 boys, 68 girls. Total: 124.

Day school students: 38 boys, 40 girls. Total: 78.

September 1, 1941 - page 30

Today, we greet our students; unfortunately, 45 out of 120 listen to the entrance bell.

Our white people of the village are more faithful to arrive on time and our only two good Sisters start to work.

September 2, 1941 - page 30

Big picnic for the Indians who made it to school on time.

October 12, 1941 - page 31

The doctor from Prince Albert arrives to take the X-ray of all our children. The future will tell us the condition of each one.

January 31, 1942 - page 35

Bazaar in honor of Don Bosco. This year, as there was no time, our boys organized a short performance and preferred to have fun by making a bazaar.

March 18, 1942 - page 36

Great performance of 2 hours given by our Indians in honor of Father Principal. Each one performed his part wonderfully and all were also very satisfied with the progress.

March 19, 1942 - page 36

This morning, at mass, our students performed once again and made us hear some beautiful singing in parts. Then, during the rest of the day, each one takes his romp and enjoys the sweets that the good Father Principal distributes in each room.

May 19, 1942 - page 38

Mr. Doucette had been expected for a long time. We finally have the pleasure of greeting him. Having only one day to spare at Delmas, we immediately proceeded to visit the house, followed by a short visit in each class. In the evening, at 4:30 p.m., Mr. Ostrander, the Agent, Mr. Bell, his clerk, Rev. Father Principal, Dubuc, Paradis and all the Sisters gathered to hear a conference on the new program that would be introduced in the Indian schools.

May 27, 1942 - page 39

There is no lack of "brouhaha" in Delmas. Great musical festival at the village school. This year, our Indians do not perform, because the terrible flu which ravages us since March does not leave us any respite.

June 9, 1942 - page 39

The workshop so much requested by the Indian Dept. is being built. Let us hope that our boys will benefit from it in September.

June 19, 1942 - page 40

Dept. exams begin. Each Sister is praying in particular for one student. With the help of God, we hope for good results.

June 21, 1942 - pages 40-41

Meeting of the children for the promotions. Some learn with sorrow of their failure, while the majority rejoice at their change of grade. Then comes the distribution of the cash prizes. The surprise of some of them amuses us greatly, but all feel that effort is always rewarded.

September 1, 1942 - page 43

Date of arrival of the children. We register only sixty for the first day. The other sixty will undoubtedly come back when they want, even until December.

September 4, 1942 - page 43

As in the past, the month of September sees the day when we take the children who arrived on time after the vacations on a big picnic.

There is also the day of the potato picking done by all the children of the school. The harvest is abundant and the Father Principal is so happy with the work of the children that he considers it appropriate to pay them a small salary in candy.

September 28, 1942 - page 44

The health authorities of Prince Albert have all our students undergo a lung examination. The X-ray discovered some cases of tuberculosis and six of our children had to go to the Sanatorium.

Juliette Tootosis was taken to the North Battleford Hospital. She is thought to be suffering from pneumonia.

November 23, 1942 - pages 45-46

Almost all the boys, in turn, go through an illness that looks very much like pneumonia. The doctor doesn't know what to think. Three or four of them are taken to the hospital. The Sisters do their best to help the others.

December 18, 1942 - page 46

Our girls are performing a little concert this evening that they prepared themselves. They have a right to be proud, because it was very well done.

February 1, 1943 - page 47

Once again, we are without water. The men dug the ground in eight different places without finding the pipes. The prayers went up fervently and intensely to Heaven and after six weeks we regain this indispensable element. Once again, this ordeal showed us the devotion, the patience and the virtue of the Sisters in such a situation; the children are also admirable and give in to everything that is asked of them.

March 27, 1943 - page 48

Our children are celebrating their Principal tonight. They had to delay until today because of the children's illness. They did fairly well in their little concert and will repeat it on Sunday for the parish.

March 30, 1943 - page 48

One of our older girls, Florence Kiskotagan, is leaving for the hospital, her case is rather worrying.

May 22, 1943 - page 48

Thank God! After studying all year, between classes, and taking a final exam on April 24, Sr. St. Gemma received her permanent diploma.

June 1943 - page 49

In addition to the hardships of illness, lack of water and all that follows, there is a series of desertions among the boys. More than twenty of them try to distinguish themselves. Most of them come back, however; some of them desert again. It is a sad Spiritual Bouquet to end a school year.

June 29, 1943 - page 49

Departure of our poor children for their "home". We entrust them to the Blessed Virgin so that she will protect them and that they will not offend the Good Lord. Twelve of them stay with us because there are contagious diseases in their neighborhood. They will make this long sacrifice of fifteen days.

September 1, 1943 - page 51

Reverend Father Dubuc is the first to bring us eight of his Indian students from Jack Fish and Red Pheasant. The Sweet Grass and Pound Maker reserves are also represented from the first day. Opening of classes at the French school.

September 12, 1943 - page 52

Father Allard brings seventeen students from Meadow Lake.

September 19, 1943 - page 52

Almost all the students have arrived, so Father comes to distribute the prizes won by their work shown at the 1943 exhibition.

September 28, 1943 - page 52

Our missionary, Rev. Fr. Paradis, returns from Meadow Lake with nine students.

September 30, 1943 - page 53

The potato digging employs all the Indian personnel and five to eight Sisters. Two days will be spent at this dusty work...

October 2, 1943 - page 53

Our devoted sewing teacher, Sr. Lucie des Anges, sees her first project finished. Isn't that a record? Look at these 50 beautiful dresses ready to be worn by all our little girls. Only a month ago, we would have found only one piece of blue drill and some old pink aprons.

October 6, 1943 - page 53

The Rev. Father Principal opens the series of moving pictures that he will give to the students every Wednesday until May.

October 13, 1943 - page 54

Short reception by the students to Mr. Christianson, Inspector of Agents for Indian Schools.

October 14, 1943 - page 54

There is a bazaar at the parish hall; our students are going to do their share with the fishing game which is provided by us. Tomorrow they will have a snack paid for by their good Father Principal.

November 22, 1943 - page 55

Our five musical students, helped by the singers and the rhythmic band, seem to interest the Sisters and the students present at the concert in honor of Saint Cecilia.

January 9, 1944 - page 56

As soon as the vacations were over, three of the older boys ran away this evening.

January 10, 1944 - page 56

Three more desertions.

January 31, 1944 - page 56

St. John Bosco's Day, celebrated here for some years by the boys, is marked only by a better served meal and some seasonal pleasures.

March 15, 1944 - page 57

In the middle of the holiday activities, Doctor Head comes to pick up our students to take them in turn to the dentist.

May 14, 1944 - page 59

Mother's Day brings our students to the theater where they perform songs to honor their mothers.

June 4, 1944 - page 60

Another ball game between the students of the two schools, but this time the innocent pleasure was paid for by an accident: Frankie Merastie fell while running and broke his arm.

September 2, 1944 - page 64

Only a few Indians answered the call for the opening of classes. Every time an O. M. I. missionary goes to a reserve, he brings back those who want to come; the others preferring their freedom, will come during the month.

December 25, 1944 - page 66

Christmas! About twenty Indians hear midnight mass in our chapel. The songs in English and in Cree are really beautiful and pious.

December 28, 1944 - page 66

It is the turn of our little Indians to perform their traditional concert. The parents of several of them attend in spite of a very cold temperature. The whole thing is perfectly successful thanks to the tireless dedication of those who helped practicing songs, play and rhythmic band.

January 3, 1945 - page 66

The children return to their studies. It is preferable to occupy them thus; the long days of games and leisure are not much favorable to them.

January 10, 1945 - page 67

Mr. Inspector visits the classes.

February 5, 1945 - page 67

The loom attracts attention. Our tall pupils of the third year of sewing worked on it today for half an hour each on honeycomb towels.

All new and beautiful! Let's hope the enthusiasm lasts and that later on these young Indian girls will weave warm clothes on their reserves.

February 20, 1945 - page 67

A rich roll of towels is taken from the loom: 23. Teachers and students are very happy with their work.

March 18, 1945 - page 68

Big concert this evening on the occasion of the patronal feast of Rev. Father Angin, Principal of the school. In addition to the duets and songs, there was a sketch by the little altar boys, offering of flowers, a scout play by the big boys. The final sketch, "Mary's Choice", was perfectly performed by the big girls.

May 7, 1945 - page 69

Our Indian students sing at church for the month of Mary.

May 26, 1945 - page 69

It was a great joy for the school staff to witness the baptism of two little girls. They were given the names Marie and Joséphine. These two children are taken from Protestantism. Praise be to God!

September 4, 1945 - page 74

The students who have arrived since the first day of September now number 78. They seem to be well disposed.

June 25, 1946 - page 77

This is the list of the promotions. The house is emptying. The children are happy to return to their homes.

July 2, 1946 - page 77

We received students from Waseca, Paynton, Maidstone and Lashburn for Sunday school.

July 7, 1946 - page 78

Picnic for Sunday school students.

July 14, 1946 - page 78

The fortnight of catechism ends today with the First Communion ceremony for nine of them. Let us hope that the seed of truth sown in these souls will bear fruit for eternity.

September 3, 1946 - page 81

Opening of the village classes. A little class also with the Indians, twenty-four in number. There is measles on the reserves, the cause of the delay of the others.

October 25, 1946 - page 82

About twenty students have measles.

March 16, 1947 - page 83

The flu spreads among the children and the Sisters. All week long, the nurses multiply themselves with about sixty sick boys and girls occupying different dormitories.

May 19, 1947 - page 84

Miss Locke is our guest for two days, sent by the Department to visit the kitchen and its outbuildings.

June 25, 1947 - page 84

During these three days, Father Principal will take the children to the various reserves.

July 7, 1947 - page 85

The children who will attend the catechism classes begin to arrive.

15 October 1947 - page 87

Our kitchen is given a new look by receiving a coat of cream paint, a linoleum of the same shade will cover the floor of the room. The tables in the boys' refectory are also covered with linoleum which will replace the sheet metal that covered them.

January 13, 1947 - pages 88-90

[The school was destroyed by fire, which was discovered at 7:30 in the evening.]

The sisters and girls took refuge in the families of the village; the boys spent the night in the village school under the supervision of a man. The children returned to their families the next day. The Sisters went to our convent in Battleford. Our kind and sympathetic neighbors are doing everything in their power to ease our ordeal.

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