

AHOUSAT INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL

13 students were listed on the NCTR website in 2021 as having died at the former Ahousat Indian Residential School:

<https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/british-columbia/ahousaht/>

Name	Date of Death (Year/Month/Day)
Arthur	1913-07-01 – 1913-07-31
Bella Peter	1910-05-30
Carrie George	1916-04-06
Dora Noshkepy	1908-03-13
Edward Arnold	1909-06-28
Emil Howard	Not known
Frank Ubaldus	Not known
George Quisot	1906-01-28
Katie Manulth	1910-08-10
May Harris	1910-03-04
Sophie Noothlenu	1910-09-03
Tillian Mckay	1908-06-15
William Maquina	1906-11-11

The above-referenced 13 students are not ‘missing’. Deaths at the school were regularly reported on (see excerpts from DIA reports below), and students who died at the school were almost certainly buried in the Ahousat Band cemetery since the school adjoined the Marktosis Reserve.

THE TYPES OF RECORDS CONSULTED

(1) Provincial Government Death Certificates

The letter [C] following a name indicates that a microfilmed copy of the provincial death certificate is available online at the BC Archives at:

<http://search-collections.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/Genealogy>

An asterisk following a name indicates that the microfilmed copy of the provincial death certificate is not available online, but can be accessed free of charge at the BC Archives and at major BC public libraries.

(2) Inquiries Into Student Deaths

The Department of Indian Affairs mandated, on Form No. 414, that there be an inquiry into the death of any student who died at a residential school:

When a pupil of an Indian Residential School dies, the Principal is required to inform the Indian Agent at once.

On receipt of the Principal's notice the Indian Agent shall convene a Board of Inquiry, consisting of himself as Chairman, the Principal of the Residential School, and the Medical Officer who attended the deceased pupil. These members of the Board shall, in each other's presence, complete this memorandum, which shall then be forwarded to the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, in one copy.

The Board of Inquiry shall, if at all practicable assemble within 48 hours of the pupil's death.

The parents or guardians of the deceased pupil shall be given notice of this inquiry and be permitted to attend it or to send a representative. They or their representative shall be asked if they wish to make a statement. In the event of their so wishing, their statement shall be attached to the report. The inquiry, however, shall not be delayed more than 72 hours after the time at which it would otherwise be held to enable them to attend it. . . .

This inquiry is not designed to take the place of, or prevent, any other inquiry including an inquest, which may be required by law.

If the pupil died as the result of an accident, the Indian Agent is required to take the statements of the witnesses of the accident and attached them to this memorandum.

Although Library and Archives Canada microfilmed inquiries into student deaths for other residential schools, unfortunately none were microfilmed for the Ahousat Indian Residential School.

(3) Quarterly Returns

A unique register number was used to meticulously track every student from the time the student was admitted to a residential school until the time the student ceased to attend and was formally recorded as 'discharged'. In the entries below the student's unique register number at the Ahousat Indian Residential School has been added from microfilmed records where available.

Quarterly returns which included student names, register numbers and attendance data were sent to Ottawa by school principals via the local Indian Agent every quarter in order for the school to qualify for the per capita grant paid by the federal government for each eligible status Indian student.

Although Library and Archives Canada microfilmed quarterly returns for other residential schools, unfortunately none were microfilmed for the Ahousat Indian Residential School.

(4) Application Forms Signed By Parents

The local Indian Agent was required to submit an individual application form signed by a parent to the Department of Indian Affairs in Ottawa for each student for whom

admission to a residential school was requested, and each application was then formally approved or rejected in writing by Department officials in Ottawa.

Similarly, the Indian Agent was required to submit an application to Ottawa before any student could be discharged from the school, and each discharge was also formally approved in writing by Department officials in Ottawa. In addition, a form summarizing the applications for admission and discharge of students was sent to Ottawa by school principals through the Indian Agent every quarter along with the quarterly returns.

Although Library and Archives Canada microfilmed applications for other residential schools, unfortunately none were microfilmed for the Ahousat Indian Residential School.

(5) Department of Indian Affairs Annual Reports

Until about 1915, annual reports by principals, which included information on school health conditions and student deaths, were printed in the Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report. DIA Annual Reports can be accessed at the Library and Archives Canada website at this link:

https://recherche-collection-search.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/Home/Search?DataSource=Library|IndAffAnnRep&q_exact=for%20the%20year%20ended&DateBucket=%7C1864-1969&

See also:

<https://publications.gc.ca/site/eng/9.846380/publication.html>

In the Department of Indian Affairs Annual Report for the fiscal year ended 31 March 1911, the principal updated the Department in Ottawa on 16 ex-students, 6 of whom had died after leaving the school:

*No. 81, **George Quisot**, deceased, January 28, 1906.*

*No. 43, **Edward Arnold**, deceased, May 3, 1909.*

***May Harris**, No. 030, deceased, March 4, 1910.*

***Bella Peter**, No. 037, deceased, May 30, 1910.*

***Katie Manulth**, No. 029, deceased, August 10, 1910.*

***Sophia Noothlenu**, No. 032, deceased, September 3, 1910.*

*General Remarks. - All the ex-pupils who have died since this school was opened in 1903, died of consumption. From the number of young people outside of the school who have died of consumption or tubercular diseases, **the death-rate is much higher on the reserve than in the boarding school.** The relations between the school and the*

reserve continue to be friendly. The parents show some desire to have their children educated and are more reasonable than formerly.

See also excerpt below under the year 1911.

STUDENT BIOGRAPHIES COMPILED FROM THE ABOVE RECORDS

Arthur (1913/7/1 – 1913/7/31) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Bella Peter (1910/5/30), register #37; DIA Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1911: ‘Bella Peter, No. 037, deceased, May 30, 1910’.

Carrie George (1916/4/6) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Dora Noshkepy (1908/3/13) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Edward Arnold (1909/6/28); register #43; DIA Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1911: ‘Edward Arnold, deceased, May 3, 1909’. [NB: date of death on NCTR list differs from date given in DIA Annual Report]

Emil Howard (date of death unknown) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Frank Ubaldus (date of death unknown) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

George Quisot (1906/1/28), register #81; DIA Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1911: ‘No. 81, George Quisot, deceased, January 28, 1906’.

Katie Manulth (1910/8/10), register #29; DIA Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1911: ‘Katie Manulth, No. 029, deceased, August 10, 1910’.

May Harris (1910/3/4); register #30; DIA Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1911: ‘May Harris, No. 030, deceased, March 4, 1910’.

Sophie Noothlenu (1910/9/3); register #32; DIA Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 1911: ‘Sophia Noothlenu, No. 032, deceased, September 3, 1910’. [NB: DIA report states name was **Sophia**]

Tillian Mckay (1908/6/15) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

William Maquina (1906/11/11) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

REPORTS ON STUDENT HEALTH AND DEATHS AT THE SCHOOL

Besides providing periodic updates on students who had left the school, the principal reported annually on the health of students who were currently at the school.

Excerpts follow from annual reports for the years 1905-1916, the period comprising all student deaths on the NCTR list above:

June 30, 1905

Attendance. - There are at present thirty-five pupils on the rolls: twenty boys and fifteen girls. Eleven pupils were admitted during the year and **one girl died**.

June 30, 1906

Attendance-There are 38 children on the roll, 22 boys and 16 girls. Four boys were admitted during the year and **one boy died**.

March 31, 1907

Health and Sanitation. - The health of the children is generally good. Some sickness was experienced from an epidemic of grippe, but all recovered. Cleanliness is carefully observed, and drainage is excellent. Our distance from medical assistance and only a monthly steamer in winter is partly relieved by the presence of **a trained nurse on the staff**, who gives very careful attention to the health of the children. **A sick-room is provided**, thereby giving isolation and privacy when required. During the year **one boy died in the school, and another while visiting at his home**.

March 31, 1908

Attendance. - The enrolment during the year has been 45. Of these one boy was discharged in November, having reached school age. **One boy died in December** of tubercular trouble, and **one little girl died in March** from tubercular trouble excited by an attack of measles. The attendance at the close of the year was 42: 24 boys and 18 girls.

Health and Sanitation. - The health of the children has been fairly satisfactory during the year. An epidemic of measles in February taxed the strength of the children somewhat severely. **One little girl, whose health had not been good for some time previously, died** a couple of weeks after recovery from the measles. **One boy died in December** from tubercular trouble. The drainage of the school is good. Cleanliness and ventilation are well attended to. A suitable room is provided for isolation in cases of sickness.

March 31, 1909

Attendance. - The enrolment during the year has been 48. Of these, 4 were discharged during the year, having reached school age, 2 were discharged on account of health not being satisfactory for school life, **1 girl died** from complications following a severe attack of measles and **1 boy died** from tubercular disease. The present attendance is 40 pupils, 23 boys and 17 girls.

Health and Sanitation. - The health of the school for the greater part of the year has been satisfactory. Following the epidemic of measles at the close of last year **one girl died** from complications resulting from the disease and **one boy** from tubercular

trouble. **Two were dismissed on account of health being unsatisfactory for school life.** Cleanliness and ventilation are well attended to. **A room is provided for isolation in cases of sickness.** The drainage of the school is good.

Inspected in August, 1909

Forty-one children were enrolled, **two were waiting for medical examination.** All were present at inspection.

All the pupils were in good health, well fed, and suitably clothed.

The windows of the dormitories are on the sunny side of the building and can be kept open all the year round, which is a great advantage, and gives **splendid ventilation.**

I visited some of the ex-pupils at their homes, they were working and respectable.

The Indians are now all very friendly to the school. The pupils are above the average of those in schools, they appear so willing to work, and do everything so cheerfully. They are a credit both to the school and to their teachers.

March 31, 1910

Attendance. - The enrolment during the year has been 41. Of these **2 were discharged on account of health not being satisfactory for school life,** and 3 were discharged during the year, having reached the limit of school age. The present attendance is 32; 21 boys and 15 girls.

Health and Sanitation. - The health of the school for the greater part of the year has been good. Two girls were discharged on account of their health being unsatisfactory for school life. **One of the girls since discharged died** of consumption. Cleanliness and proper ventilation are carefully attended to, also a room is provided for isolation in case of sickness. The drainage of the school is good.

March 31, 1911

Inspected September, 1910.

The children looked healthy. Their food is properly cooked; their clothing, neat. . . .

The pupils in this school are all making first-class progress in their studies, and the **principal reports that their health during the past year has been good.**

[Principal's report] Health and Sanitation. - The **general health of the pupils during the year was good, no epidemics.** Cleanliness and the proper ventilation are carefully attended to. Two rooms are provided for isolation in case of sickness. The drainage of the school is good.

Ex-Pupils. - No. 81, **George Quisot,** deceased, January 28, 1906.

No. 82, David Zatwash, married and living on Heshquiaht reserve. He is doing very well and since leaving school he makes a living by sealing and fishing. He is a quiet

and industrious young man.

No. 37, Dick Samuel, married and, living on Marktosis reserve. He makes a living at sealing and fishing. Last year he went sealing to the Behring sea and earned considerable money. He is a steady, industrious young man and tries to show a good example to his people.

No. 43, **Edward Arnold**, deceased, May 3, 1909.

Nellie Bishop, No. 021, married and living on Marktosis reserve. She has a good home, keeps a clean house, and in other ways setting a good example to Indian wives.

Mary Ann Opat, No. 022, married and living on Marktosis reserve. Like Nellie Bishop, she tries to be a good housekeeper, and put into practice what she was taught in school.

No. 40, William Little, unmarried and living with his parents on Marktosis reserve. He makes a living by sealing and fishing. He is industrious in his work, and his conduct while at home has always been good.

No. 51, Jeff Noothlenu, unmarried and living on Heshquiaht reserve. When discharged from school, he was provided with a set of carpentry tools by the department. He does some rough carpentry work now and again for the Indians. He is careful and industrious, and will do well for himself. His father and mother are dead, and he lives with an uncle at Heshquiaht.

May Harris, No. 030, deceased, March 4, 1910.

Bella Peter, No. 037, deceased, May 30, 1910.

Katie Manulth, No. 029, deceased, August 10, 1910.

Sophia Noothlenu, No. 032, deceased, September 3, 1910.

Fanny Keitlah, No. 033, unmarried, and lives with her people on Marktosis reserve. She is a strong, healthy young woman, a fair type of her race living in the remote past **before tubercular diseases began to cut off the poor Indian.**

Louisa Kopat, No. 028, unmarried; father and mother both dead. At present she is out at domestic service and doing well for herself. She is strong, very clever with her hands and will make a capable housekeeper.

Hall Mack, No. 60, unmarried, and living with an uncle on Marktosis reserve. His father and mother are dead. He also was provided with a cobbler's outfit by the department on leaving school. He is quite handy with cobbler's tools and made himself quite useful while in school, repairing boots and shoes. He is a steady boy and will do very well for himself.

Alex. Sutherland, No. 62, unmarried and living while at home on Marktosis reserve. At present he is on the sealing schooner Jessie, and signed for the Behring sea. He is a

promising young man, steady and industrious at his work; seems to have some ambition and a worthy aim in life.

General Remarks. - **All the ex-pupils who have died since this school was opened in 1903, died of consumption. From the number of young people outside of the school who have died of consumption or tubercular diseases, the death-rate is much higher on the reserve than in the boarding school.** The relations between the school and the reserve continue to be friendly. The parents show some desire to have their children educated and are more reasonable than formerly.

March 31, 1912

Inspected June 15, 1911.

There had been **two deaths** among the pupils since the beginning of the year 1911, but Mr. Ross reported that **otherwise the children had been in a healthy condition.**

March 31, 1913

Inspected January 25, 1913

The school had also been very fortunate last year, in that the **health of the pupils had been good**, there having been only a slight epidemic of grippe during the past winter. **One pupil, who was discharged in 1911, died in August, 1912.**

March 31, 1914

The building is in first-class condition and is well ventilated and heated. The sewerage system is first-class. . . . There has been **no sickness of any kind** amongst the pupils during the year.

March 31, 1915

Very good health has been enjoyed by the pupils during the year.

March 31, 1916

There has been no sickness of any moment among the pupils during the year, but **there was one death.**

Compiled by Nina Green, 27 September 2021; updated 14 April 2023.