

KITIMAT INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, KITIMAT, BC

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

<https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/british-columbia/kitimaat-elizabeth-long-memorial-home-for-girls/>

Name	Date of Death (Year/Month/Day)
Arnot Robinson	Not known
Grey	1921-01-01
Hanna Grant	1922-05-08
Mary Elliot	Not known

The above-referenced 4 students are not ‘missing’. They are listed below in the order in which they appear on the NCTR website with the following indications as to source material concerning the date of death, cause of death, and place of burial for each student.

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 Kitimat 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 Kitimat Indian Residential School has been added from applications for admission.

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.

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(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.

Applications for admission and discharge as well as the quarterly summaries for the Kitimat Indian Residential School for the years 1936-1939 were microfilmed by Library and Archives Canada. To access them, go to this link for LAC c-8773, and insert the page number 1817:

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=2501914>

(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>

STUDENT BIOGRAPHIES COMPILED FROM THE ABOVE RECORDS

Arnot Robinson* (date of death unknown), 11 yrs old; Kitimat Band; born Kitimat; d. Kitimat; influenza; death certificate signed by Indian Agent (informant Field Matron, S.E. Alton) [NB: death certificate states date of death was **1918/11/12**]

(first name unknown) Grey (1921/1/1) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED] [NB: Edward Grey's daughter appears to have died at the school in 1921. See:

<http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IRSR10-CaseStudy2.pdf>

Hanna Grant* (1922/5/8), 9 yrs old; Kitimat Band; born Kitimat; d. Kitimat Village; death certificate signed by Indian Agent (informant Sarah Alton: 'I believe this child died from Spinal Meningitis. was ill 11 days Sarah E. Alton, Field Matron Kitamat B.C.') [NB: death certificate states name was **Hannah Maitland** Grant] [NB: See report at:

<http://www.fnesc.ca/wp/wp-content/uploads/2015/07/IRSR10-CaseStudy2.pdf>

Mary Elliot (date of death unknown) DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Compiled by Nina Green 29 November 2021, updated 14 April 2023.