

ST MARY'S INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL, MISSION, BC

21 students were listed on the NCTR website in 2021 as having died at the former St Mary's Indian Residential School:

<https://nctr.ca/residential-schools/british-columbia/st-marys-mission/>

Amy Abraham	ca. 1939-01-01
Anastasia William	ca. 1934-01-01
Bradley Thomas Smith	1959-10-14
Catherine Williamson	1929-03-13
Clara Mae Rush	1966-03-12
Daniel Harry Billy	1928-07-28
Earl Paul	1978-06-29
Edward Cassabalt James	1965-12-26
Francis Johnson	1924-01-01
Harry Frederick James	1965-12-26
Harry James	1966-02-04
John Rayfiel Peters	Not known
Kenneth Mallaway	Not known
Lena (St. Mary's Mission)	Not known
Leonard Julian	1935-05-18
Lloyd Leon	1936-01-06
Mabel Paull	Not known
Myrtle Richardson	1928-10-19
Robert Wells	1934-02-12
Virginia Fidele	1931-01-16
Mary Jane Indian	1907-02-14

The above-referenced 21 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 the federal and provincial government and residential school records which have information 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.

Inquiry reports for deaths which occurred at St Mary's Indian Residential School in the years 1935-1936 were microfilmed by Library and Archives Canada. To access them, go to this link for LAC c-8788, and insert the page number 666:

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=2534577>

(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 St Mary's Indian Residential School has been added from extant quarterly returns and DIA inquiries into student deaths.

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.

Quarterly returns for St Mary's Indian Residential School for the years 1943-1952 were microfilmed by Library and Archives Canada. To access them, go to this link for LAC c-8787, and insert the page number 6:

<https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/mass-digitized-archives/school-files-1879-1953/Pages/item.aspx?PageID=2532547>

(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.

Unfortunately Library and Archives Canada did not microfilm any application forms for St Mary's 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>

STUDENT BIOGRAPHIES COMPILED FROM THE ABOVE RECORDS

Amy Abraham (ca. 1939/1/1) [NB: See Maass, Alex, 'Finding the Missing Residential School Cemeteries for Indigenous Children in Canada: A National Strategy for Identification, Recording, Preservation and Commemoration', Ph.D

thesis, University of Southampton, 2018, pp. 101-2,
<https://eprints.soton.ac.uk/422128/>:

Although the majority of residential school graves are unmarked, Figure 4 shows a rare marked grave in a well maintained Oblate cemetery in British Columbia. The grave of a young girl, a student at St Mary's IRS who died in 1938 at the age of eight, it shows her name and age inscribed by hand in the wet cement. The edges of this homemade headstone have been inset with children's marbles.

[NB: headstone states Amy Abraham died **1 March 1938**]

Anastasia William* (ca. 1934/1/1), 14 yrs old; Pemberton Band; born Pemberton; parents Martin Williams, Julia Ann Jim, both born Pemberton; d. Mission Hospital; meningitis (staphylococcal); death certificate signed by doctor; buried Pemberton [NB: death certificate states name was Anastasia **Williams**] [NB: death certificate states date of death was 1934/3/30]

Bradley Thomas Smith (1959/10/14), [C]; 11 yrs old; Mount Currie Band, Samahquam Indian Reserve; born 7 September 1948, Vancouver; parents Joseph Smith, Bibiana Frank, both born Mount Currie; d. Mission City Hospital; acute meningomyelitis; autopsy; inquiry held; death certificate signed by coroner; buried Mount Currie Band Cemetery

[NB: parents' marriage certificate states Joseph Smith, rancher and labourer, residence Samahquam Indian Reserve, Creekside, born Samahquam, Portage (father Baptist Smith, born Samahquam, mother Rosalie), bachelor, aged 21, and Bibiana Frank, born Pemberton Reserve, Creekside (father Victor Frank, born Pemberton, mother Virginia Wells), spinster aged 16, were married 27 April 1943, Pemberton Reserve, Creekside (consent of parents obtained in writing), witnesses Nicholas Joe, Mrs Chief Paul, Reverend Theo J Fahlman, OMI, officiating]

Catherine Williamson* (1929/3/13), 16 yrs old; Katzie Band; parents unknown; d. St Mary's Hospital, New Westminster; pulmonary tuberculosis; death certificate signed by Indian Agent (informant Indian Office, New Westminster), and doctor; buried Mission City]

Clara Mae Rush (1966/3/12), [C]; 18 yrs old; residence Kildonan; born 11 February 1948, Refuge Cove, Sidney Inlet; parents Warren Rush, born Ucluelet, Clara Thomas, born Tofino; d. St Paul's Hospital, Vancouver; encephalitis; autopsy; death certificate signed by father, Warren Rush, 400 Bute Street, Port Alberni, and doctor; buried Port Alberni (name of cemetery unknown) [NB: death certificate states name was Clara **May** Rush]

[NB: parents' marriage certificate states Warren Rush, fisherman, residence Uchucklesaht Reserve, Kildonan, born Ucluelet (parents James Rush, Ellen Billy), widower, aged 24, and Clara Thomas, cannery operator, Ahousaht Band, residence Kildonan, born Ahousaht (father Hippolite Thomas, born Ahousaht, mother Aggie), widow, aged 21, were married 22 April 1942, Ucluelet Mission, witnesses Charles E. Horton, Philip Mask, (illegible) officiating]

[NB: death certificate for father, Warren Paul Rush, fisherman; residence Kildonan; born 17 September 1917; parents James Rush, born Kildonan, Ellen; married (wife Clara Thomas deceased); d. 10 June 1968, Tofino General Hospital, aged 50; death certificate signed by son, H. Rush, Opitsat, and doctor; buried Kildonan Cemetery]

Daniel Harry Billy (1928/7/28), [C]; 8 yrs old; residence corner McDonald and Tramner Roads, Agassiz; born 19 January 1950, Seabird Island; parents Raymond Billy, born Pavillion, Helen Thomas, born Seabird Island; d. Maria Slough, Agassiz; drowned; autopsy; coroner's inquiry; death certificate signed by father, Ray Billy, and coroner; buried Seabird Island Cemetery [NB: death certificate states date of death was **1958/7/28**]

[NB: parents' marriage certificate states Raymond Billy and Helen Thomas were married 25 March 1946, Agassiz]

[NB: death certificate for mother, Helen Thomas; residence Ashton Road, Agassiz; born 25 March 1929, Agassiz; parents Daniel Thomas, Matilda Louie; married (husband Raymond Billy); d. 1 October 1964, Mission Memorial Hospital, Mission City, aged 35; autopsy; death certificate signed by husband, Ray Billy, Ashton Road, Agassiz, and doctor; buried Seabird Island Cemetery]

[NB: death certificate for father, Raymond Billy, logger; residence 25-1 Seabird Island Road, Agassiz; born 3 March 1920, Lillooet; parents unknown; widowed (wife Helen Thomas); d. 3 June 1998, 25-1 Seabird Island Road, Agassiz, aged 78; death certificate signed by son, Raymond Michel Billy, 46096 Bole Avenue #1, Chilliwack, and doctor; buried Seabird Island Cemetery, Seabird Island]

Earl Paul (1978/6/29), [C]; 17 yrs old; residence 33742 5th Avenue, Mission; born 4 June 1961, Tofino; parents Tim Paul, Josephine Smith, born Nuchalis; DOA Mission Memorial Hospital; suicide in field ('gunshot wound of skull'); autopsy; death certificate signed by stepfather, E.M. George, 33742 5th Avenue, Mission, and coroner; buried Hatzie Cemetery, Mission [NB: death certificate states name was Earl **James Paul**]

[NB: death certificate for father, Timothy Paul, school janitor; residence Mission; born 3 December 1918, Hesquiat; parents Adolph Amos, Elizabeth Paul, both born Hesquiat; d. 1 July 1971, Campbell River Hospital, aged 52; death certificate signed by wife, Mrs Josephine Paul, Mission City, and doctor; buried Campbell River Indian Cemetery]

Edward Cassabalt James (1965/12/26), [C]; 7 yrs old; residence North Bend; born 28 January 1958, Chilliwack; parents Harry James, born Spuzzum, Mary Margaret Jones, born Keefers; d. North Bend; burned to death, overheated furnace; death certificate signed by father, Harry James, North Bend, and doctor; buried Chaumox Indian Cemetery, North Bend [NB: died in same house fire as Harry Frederick James below]

[NB death certificate for father, Harry James, railroader (CPR); residence North Bend; born 26 December 1909, Spuzzum; father Patrick James, born Spuzzum,

mother unknown; married (wife Mary Jones); d. 26 August, 1976, Fraser Canyon Hospital, Hope, aged 66; autopsy; death certificate signed by wife, Mary James, North Bend, and coroner; buried Anderson Creek Cemetery, Boston Bar]

Francis Johnson* (1924/1/1), 10 yrs old; Katzie Band; d. Katzie Indian Reserve, Port Hammond; death certificate signed by Indian Agent [NB: death certificate states date of death was **1922**/11/13] [NB: not identified as a student in death certificate]

Harry Frederick James (1965/12/26), [C]; 12 yrs old; residence North Bend; born 18 August 1953, Lytton; parents Harry James, born Spuzzum, Mary Margaret Jones, born Keefers; d. North Bend; burned to death, overheated furnace; death certificate signed by father, Harry James, North Bend, and coroner; buried Chaumox Indian Cemetery, North Bend [NB: died in same house fire as Edward Cassabalt James above]

Harry James (1966/2/4) [NB: almost certainly same person as Harry Frederick James above]

John Rayfiel Peters (date of death unknown) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Kenneth Mallaway (date of death unknown) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Lena (date of death unknown), [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Leonard Julian (1935/5/18), Register #364; Matsqui Band; d. Mission Memorial Hospital; pulmonary tuberculosis; DIA inquiry (see LAC c-8788, pp. 669-74) [NB: principal's statement at DIA inquiry: 'When the pneumonia had ended the child did not regain strength as quickly as expected. A special regime of rest & food, while living on verandah resulted in improvement, but a turn for worse was noticed on May 10th, and it was deemed advisable to remove him to hospital on May 12th.'] [NB: Indian Agent's statement at DIA inquiry: 'The parents were, in accordance with your instructions, duly notified of the enquiry, but did not attend.']

Lloyd Leon* (1936/1/6), Register #385; 10 yrs old; Chehalis Band; d. Mission Memorial Hospital; general peritonitis (appendicial abscess); death certificate signed by doctor; buried Chehalis Indian Reserve; DIA inquiry (see LAC c-8788, pp. 676-81) [NB: principal's statement at DIA inquiry: 'He did not appear to suffer much or to consider his pain as at all serious. Its persistence alarmed me and remitted in my calling in the doctor'. 'I took him to the hospital in the car.']

Mabel Paull (date of death unknown) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Myrtle Richardson* (1928/10/19), 10 yrs old; Chilliwack Band; born Chilliwack; parents George Richardson, Agnes Mussell; d. OMI Mission, Mission City; lobar pneumonia; death certificate signed by doctor; buried Chilliwack]

[NB: parents' marriage certificate states George Richardson, fisherman, residence Chilliwack, born New Westminster Junction (parents William Richardson, Annie Fisher), bachelor, aged 20, and Agnes Mussel, residence Chilliwack, born Sumas, (parents Harry Mussel, Laura Charlie), spinster, aged 18, were married 25 March 1915, Indian Church, Chilliwack Landing, witnesses August William, Mathilda Pierre, Reverend E.C. Chirouse, OMI, officiating]

Robert Wells* (1934/2/12), 11 yrs old; Pemberton Band; born Pemberton Indian Reserve; parents Denny Wells, born Pemberton Reserve, Susan Joseph, born D'Arcy; d. Mission Memorial Hospital; pulmonary abscess; death certificate signed by doctor; buried OMI, Mission City [NB: death certificate states date of death was 1934/2/8]

[NB: death certificate for father, Denny Wells, farming and labourer; residence Pemberton Indian Reserve, Mount Currie; born November 1886, Mount Currie; parents unknown; married (wife Susan Joseph); d. 17 May 1965, Squamish General Hospital, aged 78; broncho-pneumonia, pulmonary tuberculosis; death certificate signed by doctor; buried Indian Cemetery, Mount Currie]

Virginia Fidele* (1931/1/16), 12 yrs old; residence Whonnock Indian Reserve, Whonnock; born Whonnock Indian Reserve; father Felix Fiddelle deceased, born Whonnock Indian Reserve, mother Mary; d. St Joseph's Hospital, Victoria; pulmonary tuberculosis; death certificate signed by doctor; buried Ross Bay Cemetery, Victoria [NB: death certificate states surname was **Fidelle**] [NB: not identified as a student in death certificate]

Mary Jane Indian (1907/2/14) [DEATH CERTIFICATE NOT YET LOCATED]

Compiled by Nina Green 9 November 2021; updated 11 April 2023.