

# Appendix D: Life and Legacy of Egerton Ryerson

August 20, 2021

## Standing Strong Task Force Research Team

Taylor D. Starr (PhD Candidate, History, York University), Graduate Research Associate

Amina Dirie, Undergraduate Research Assistant

Wyeth Robertson, Undergraduate Research Assistant

With Heather Driscoll, PhD and Catherine Ellis, DPhil, Ryerson University

# Foreword

This timeline encapsulates the life and work of Egerton Ryerson and documents the ways in which Ryerson's work was interpreted for commemorative and political purposes after his death. As Ryerson's legacy is attached to the complex history of the operation of both racially segregated schools and the residential schooling system, this timeline includes some information about the policies, rhetoric, and legislative justifications for the systems of education that developed as a result of Ryerson's contributions; however, given the Task Force's focus on the life and legacy of Ryerson himself, this document should not be taken as an extensive or complete history of systems of education.

Task Force researchers used both primary and secondary source materials to identify key milestones in Ryerson's life and to examine his connections with the development of Ontario's education system and of residential schools. Our work differs from Victoria University's *Presidential Report on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson* (June 2021) in that our task was not only to identify Ryerson's contributions to education, but also to consider how such contributions produced a legacy and then to trace the ongoing impact of his legacy on the Ryerson University community. This timeline is therefore divided into two chronological parts: the years of Ryerson's life from 1803 to 1882, followed by a tracing of the continued impact of Ryerson's work from the 1880s to the present. The timeline concludes with a discussion of the ways in which Ryerson's life and legacy can be discerned in the twenty-first century.

It is important to document some events of the recent past because they inform and illustrate the complexities of commemoration. Although this timeline is organized chronologically, we recommend that readers reflect on and engage with the ways in which ideas can transcend pivotal moments within grand historical narratives. This timeline does not imply success, "progress," or the linear development of ideas. Rather, it should be read as an example of how one man's life and work had enduring consequences, both beneficial and harmful.

A note on terminology: the primary sources used to develop this timeline often use language that is outdated and offensive today. We have embedded quotes that employ such language judiciously and only where we believe the original language is more effective than paraphrasing to convey the contemporary perspectives.

This report follows the guidance and conventions found in Gregory Younging, *Elements of Indigenous Style: A Guide for Writing By and About Indigenous Peoples* (Edmonton: Brush Education, 2018).

# Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	7
<b>Sources and Methodology</b> .....	8
<b>Part I: Ryerson’s Life and Relationships (1803–1882)</b> .....	9
➤ 1803 Birth of Adolphus Egerton Ryerson	
➤ 1805 Treaty 13 (Toronto Purchase)	
➤ 1812–1815 War of 1812	
➤ 1818 British Colonial Land Purchase Policy	
➤ 1820 Mississauga Difficulties in an Era of Land Acquisition	
➤ 1821 Ryerson Joins the Methodist Society and Leaves Home	
➤ 1821–1824 Ryerson’s Formative Experiences with Education	
➤ 1825 Kahkewaquonaby’s Conversion to Methodism	
➤ 1825 Ryerson’s First Year as a Methodist Circuit Preacher	
➤ 1825 Rebuilding the Mississauga Community at the Mouth of the Credit River	
➤ 1826 Ryerson Challenges Bishop John Strachan	
➤ 1826–1827 Ryerson Lives at the Mission among the Mississaugas of the Credit River	
➤ 1827–1829 Ryerson Ordained in the Methodist Church and Works on the Cobourg and Ancaster Circuits	
➤ 1828 Ryerson Marries Hannah Aikman	
➤ 1829–1831 The Mohawk Institute is Established at Brantford	
➤ 1829–1840 Ryerson Appointed Founding Editor of the <i>Christian Guardian</i>	
➤ 1830 The Colonial Office Endorses the “Civilization Policy”	
➤ 1833 Ryerson Marries Mary Armstrong	
➤ 1833 Ryerson’s Trip to England to Unify the Canadian Methodist and British Wesleyan Churches	
➤ 1833–1835 Ryerson’s Trips to England on Behalf of the Upper Canada Academy at Cobourg	
➤ 1837 The <i>Aborigines Report</i>	
➤ 1837 Foundation of the Aborigines Protection Society	
➤ 1837–1838 Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada	
➤ 1838 Colonial Office Statement on “Indian Policy”	
➤ 1838–1840 Ryerson Reinstated as Editor of the <i>Christian Guardian</i>	

- 1839–1867 Confederation Period and the Division of Federal and Provincial Responsibilities within the British North America Act (1867)
- 1840 Turning Point for the Mississauga of Credit River
- 1840 and Beyond “Towards a Governmental School System”
- 1841–1867 Separate Schools
- 1841 Ryerson Appointed the First Principal of Victoria College
- 1842 Ryerson Receives Honorary Doctorate from Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut
- 1842 Governor General Sir Charles Bagot Commissions a Review of the Indian Department
- 1844 Ryerson Appointed Superintendent of the Common Schools of Canada West
- 1844 Ryerson’s Educational Tours as Superintendent of the Common Schools
- 1844 Bagot Report and the Department of Indian Affairs
- 1846 The Conference of the Narrows (“Conference on Residential Schools”)
- 1846 Ryerson’s First Act (Common School Act of 1846)
- 1847 Mississauga of the Credit River Extinguish Their Council Fire
- 1847 Ryerson Comments on the Common School Acts of 1841 and 1843
- 1847–1851 Formative Years of the Normal School
- 1847 *Report of Dr. Ryerson on Industrial Schools*
- 1847 After Ryerson’s Report: Alnwick and Mount Elgin 1847–1860
- 1849 and 1850 An Act for the better establishment and maintenance of Public Schools in Upper Canada, An Act for the better establishment and maintenance of Common Schools, and Egerton Ryerson’s tolerance for racially segregated schooling
- 1854 Religion and Morality in Public Schools
- 1855–1856 Ryerson Purchases Copies of European Art for the Education Museum
- 1856 Kahkewaquonaby (Peter Jones) Dies
- 1859–1863 Ryerson and the “University Question”
- 1857–1861 Ryerson Receives Honorary Degrees from University of Toronto
- 1867 British North America Act s. 91(24)
- 1870–1950s Distinguishing Features of the Residential Schools
- 1871 Education Act
- 1874 Industrial Schools Act passed in Ontario

- 1874 Ryerson Named President of Methodist Church of Canada
- 1876 Ryerson Retires from Post as Chief Superintendent of Education
- 1876 Indian Act and Preceding Legislation
- 1879 *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds* (the “Davin Report”)
- 1882 Ryerson’s Death

**Part II: Egerton Ryerson’s Legacy and Residential Schools (1882–2021).....87**

- 1883 Parliamentary Commitment of Funding to Industrial Schools
- 1883–1930 Systemic Growth of Residential Schools
- 1894 Indian Act Amendment; Toronto Celebrates Fifty-Year Anniversary
- 1889 Statue of Egerton Ryerson Unveiled
- 1894 Indian Act Amendment
- 1898 Publication of Statistics Respecting Indian Schools with Dr. Ryerson’s Report Attached, by Clifford Sifton (Department of Indian Affairs)
- 1912 J. Harold Putman Writes *Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada*
- Conditions in Early Twentieth-Century Residential Schools
- 1910 Contract
- 1914 The First World War and the 1920s
- 1920 Indian Act Amendments
- 1929–1939 The Great Depression and Onwards
- 1939–1945 The Second World War and the Foundation of Ryerson Institute of Technology
- 1946–1951 House of Commons Review of “Indian affairs” in Preparation to Amend the Indian Act
- 1946–1969 Residential Schools After the Mandate for Integration
- 1948 Ontario Government Announces Creation of “Multi-Program Technical School”
- 1950 Students Want to Keep the Ryerson Statue on Campus
- 1968–1969 *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy*, or the “White Paper”
- 1968–Present Black and Indigenous Solidarity
- 1970 Peaceful Occupation of Blue Quills

- 1972 National Indian Brotherhood and “Indian Control of Indian Education”
- 1973 Statue Routinely Vandalized
- 1989 Statue of Ryerson Turns One Hundred Years Old
- 1980s–1990s Final Closures of Residential Schools
- 2001 “Forsaken Father” in the *Ryersonian*
- 2008 Ryerson University Pressured to Host Healing Event
- 2010 Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council Inquires into Ryerson’s Role in Residential Schools
- 2013 Black Lives Matter Established
- 2015–2017 Community Consultations and the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- 2018 Community Consultation Report, Plaque, and the Star Blanket
- 2020 Global Protests Follow Police Killing of George Floyd
- 2020 BLM Toronto Takes Credit for Defacing Ryerson Statue
- 2021 Bodies of 215 Indigenous Children Uncovered at Kamloops Indian Residential School Site

<b>Bibliography</b> .....	121
---------------------------	-----

# Acknowledgements

The *Life and legacy of Egerton Ryerson* was produced as part of the Standing Strong (Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win) Task Force's fulfilment of their mandate. Overseen by the Task Force co-Chairs, Joanne Dallaire and Catherine Ellis, and the Task Force Engagement Manager, Rachel DiSaia, the inquiry was led by a student research team. Graduate Research Associate, Taylor Starr, along with Undergraduate Research Assistants, Amina Dirie and Wyeth Robertson, worked with historians, archivists and other knowledge keepers to develop this comprehensive account of the life and legacy of Egerton Ryerson.

This research was conducted almost entirely remotely due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions. Access to archival materials was made possible through the support of archivists at the Ryerson University Archives & Special Collections and the E.J. Pratt Library at Victoria University. We are very grateful for the assistance of Bailey Chui, Rosalynn MacKenzie, Catherine McMaster, Alison Skyrme and Oliva Wong.

Special thanks to Dr. Heather Driscoll for joining our project at a pivotal point. Your knowledge, experience, passion and organization provided crucial support to the development of this work.

The completion of this undertaking would not have been possible without the assistance of Heidi Bohaker, Natasha Henry, Ian Mosby, Alison Norman, Donald Smith, Ronald Stagg and Jennifer Tunnicliffe, who graciously shared materials, answered questions and provided critical insights. Thank you for your expertise.

Finally, thank you to our community members who have sought truth and understanding of our history, have shared resources and perspectives, and have thought critically about how the past impacts our present and future.



## Sources and Methodology

Our research was initially informed by extensive secondary source review and an external scan of similar considerations of commemoration and naming undertaken at other institutions in both Canada and globally.

We were unable to access some primary sources directly, including the United Church Archives, due to nation-wide archive closures during the global pandemic. Nevertheless, historians familiar with this body of material generously shared their expertise and made an abundance of sources digitally available to us to document Ryerson's life and relationships with Indigenous Peoples and to trace his legacy through the twentieth and into the twenty-first centuries. The Task Force Research Team worked with several archivists who shared digitized collections and other sources with us. We are particularly grateful to Bailey Chui at the Victoria University Archives (E.J. Pratt Library and Special Collections), who photographed the Donald Smith Fonds, and staff and archivists at the Ryerson University Library and Archives, who provided invaluable assistance throughout our work.

Our research was informed by Ryerson's voluminous correspondence with colonial officials, by scholarly articles and books, contemporary and recent newspapers, journals, commission reports, legislation, memoirs, biographies, and treaties. We also connected directly with experts in Indigenous history for direction and areas for further inquiry. An oral history component was beyond the scope of this project; however, it may be important to include it in any further research.

# Part I: Ryerson's Life and Relationships, 1803–1882

## ➤ 1803 Birth of Adolphus Egerton Ryerson

Ryerson was born on March 24, 1803, to Joseph Ryerson and Sarah Mehetabel (née Stickney), in the township of Charlotteville, a few miles from Lake Erie in the County of Norfolk, Upper Canada.<sup>1</sup> His family was descended from early Dutch Huguenot settlers to New Amsterdam (New York) in the mid-seventeenth century. His father, Joseph, was born in 1760 and traced his lineage back to a Dutch settler named Martin Ryerzoon (anglicized to “Ryerson” around 1700). Joseph Ryerson was loyal to Britain during the period of the American Revolution, and in 1783 he found it necessary to relocate first to New Brunswick and later to Upper Canada, where Loyalists were more welcome.<sup>2</sup> As a colonel of militia and United Empire Loyalist, Joseph Ryerson was given twenty-five hundred acres of land by the government of Upper Canada and settled as a farmer. Egerton Ryerson was raised on the farm alongside his five brothers.<sup>3</sup>

## ➤ 1805 Treaty 13 (Toronto Purchase)

The land on which Ryerson later established public educational systems and on which Ryerson University was built was “ceded” in 1805 through Treaty 13, or the Toronto Purchase Agreement.

After the end of the American Revolution in 1783, settlers loyal to the British Crown, known as United Empire Loyalists, fled the American republic for the remaining British colonies in the Maritimes as well as Upper and Lower Canada. This influx of people seeking new homes and livelihoods in British North America—including Ryerson's father—put pressure on the colonial government to acquire more land from Indigenous Peoples, particularly the fertile lands around the Great Lakes. The Crown (British imperial government) pressured the

---

<sup>1</sup> Charles Bruce Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*, vol. 1 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Clara Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969), 3.

<sup>3</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 1:4.

Mississaugas of the Credit to grant lands in what became known as the Toronto Purchase Agreement.<sup>4</sup>

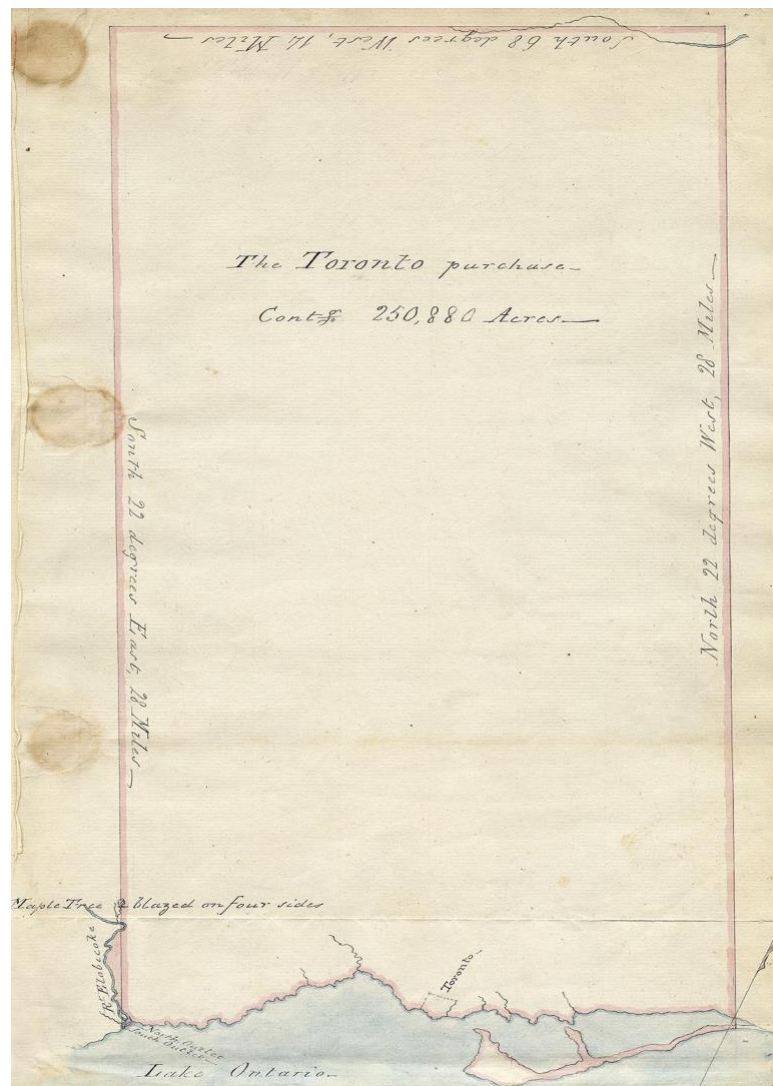


Figure 1. "1805 Toronto Purchase," transferred to the Toronto Public Library, 1902. Part of manuscript volume "Indian Treaties." Toronto Reference Library Baldwin Collection, call number MS1902.1.

The Toronto Purchase was the second attempt by the British to gain control over these lands. The initial agreement, made in 1787, was deemed by both the Crown and the Mississaugas to be problematic due to the amount and location of land ceded. According to the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation:

<sup>4</sup> Mississaugas of the New Credit First Nation, "The Toronto Purchase Treaty No. 13 (1805)," <http://mncfn.ca/torontopurchase/>.

A supposed deed documenting the sale of the lands was found years later and raised serious questions about the legitimacy of the deal between the Crown and the Mississaugas. Problematically, the deed was found blank and had no description of the land “purchased” by the Crown. Also of concern was that the marks of the chiefs who had agreed to the sale were written on separate pieces of paper and then affixed to the blank deed. An attempt to survey the Toronto Purchase Treaty lands in 1788 met Mississauga opposition indicating that there had been no clear delineation of land boundaries agreed upon by the Crown and the First Nation.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>5</sup> Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, “The Toronto Purchase Treaty No. 13 (1805),” <http://mncfn.ca/torontopurchase/>.

therefore make to the same. Hereby meaning and for  
 our abiding, ourselves, our children, descendants and  
 posterity of all title to the said parcel or Tracts  
 of Land, the said woods, and waters thereof in favour  
 of the said William Claus Esq<sup>r</sup> Superintendent of  
 Indian Affairs, for and in behalf of his said Bri-  
 tannic Majesty, his heirs and successors forever.  
 In witness whereof we have for ourselves, and the  
 rest of our Nation hereunto set our respective marks  
 and seals this Twentieth day of August in the  
 third seventh Year of the reign of King George the  
 Third. Having first heard this instrument duly  
 read and rehearsed in our own language and fully  
 approved by ourselves and our Nation, and in  
 the Year of our Lord One thousand seven  
 hundred and Ninety seven (1797)

Present at the execution and delivery of this Instrument and witnesses thereto:

(sig) Rob <sup>d</sup> Nelles — George Asholm } Howard Douglas Esq <sup>r</sup> R. A } John Bromhead Esq <sup>r</sup> 2 <sup>d</sup> Reg <sup>t</sup> } W. Johnson Esq <sup>r</sup> Secy } S. B. Rousseau Esq <sup>r</sup> Depy }	(sig) W. Claus Esq <sup>r</sup> } in behalf of the } Crown. } Quondbonon } Otaquar } Okomobenope } Sabundon } Wabanosh }
--	---

Done 1797

Figure 2. 1787 Treaty. Note that the last signature (and eagle doodem) appears to be the same name as that of Kahkewaquonaby's grandfather, spelled in the treaty as "Wabanosh." Image from Toronto Public Library Reference Department.

There is a growing body of research detailing the complex and very different meanings and expectations of treaties for Indigenous peoples versus the British. The Anishinaabe peoples, including the Mississauga, had a system of governance consisting of "decentralized, interconnected, and interdependent alliance networks" in which *doodem*, a very long-standing "category of kinship," was central.<sup>6</sup> Among the Anishinaabe, local councils were responsible for the

<sup>6</sup> Heidi Bohaker, *Doodem and Council Fire: Anishinaabe Governance through Alliance* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Osgoode Society, 2020), xiii–xiv, xvii.

division of lands and for managing key resources such as fisheries and hunting grounds. For the Mississaugas of the Credit River, the council fire is led by the Eagle *doodem*, which is typically represented by an eagle in a perching position or catching prey, meaning that Eagle leaders are expected to personify the acts of provisioning and protecting their community.<sup>7</sup>

The Mississaugas' previous alliances with the British meant that they had established a relationship with the British government and the settlers. Mississauga leaders may have felt a responsibility to make room for the settlers as part of their responsibility to provide for the people with whom they had made an alliance. As historian Heidi Bohaker explained,

Land sale agreements that comprise the contemporary set of recognized "treaties" are not standalone agreements concerned solely with a specific property transaction. Rather these treaties must be understood as a modification of the larger alliance relationships between interdependent council fires in accordance with the laws of Great Lakes Indigenous nations.<sup>8</sup>

Any earlier sense of reciprocating duty on the part of the British and colonial governments waned, however, and was increasingly disregarded or ignored in the early nineteenth century as colonial officials felt less need of alliances for military support or land acquisition.<sup>9</sup>

➤ **1812–15 War of 1812**

Following the War of 1812, years of military stability between the British and the Americans shifted perspectives within the British Colonial Office and the Indian Department, which no longer needed to regularly seek military aid or economic support through the fur trade from the Indigenous Peoples of the Great Lakes.<sup>10</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, 153, 139.

<sup>8</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, xxi.

<sup>9</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, xxi.

<sup>10</sup> L. F. S. Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8, no. 4 (1973): 51.

The war also accelerated a shift in the colony's economy from subsistence to commercial, with lumber and wheat exports becoming increasingly important.<sup>11</sup>

By the end of the war, settler populations outnumbered the Indigenous Peoples in the Great Lakes region.<sup>12</sup> In order to stimulate the increasingly agricultural economy in Canada, which relied on access to fertile land and a ready supply of people to work the land, the British Colonial Office adopted a more aggressive policy of land acquisition. This policy resulted in the dispossession of Indigenous lands and opened the door for the development of new policies in the mid-to-late nineteenth century that aimed to erase and thus destroy Indigenous economic, social and cultural lives through "civilization," assimilation and enfranchisement.<sup>13</sup>

At the same time, between 1783 and 1812, Indigenous communities around the Great Lakes experienced waves of epidemics that disrupted the transmission of knowledge, of leadership and of kinship ties to alliances. It was within this environment that Mississauga leaders such as Kahkewaquonaby (named "Peter Jones" in English) chose to adopt select attributes of British culture as an adaptation strategy to maintain and protect the Mississauga people.<sup>14</sup>

The life of Kahkewaquonaby provides an important perspective on the relationship between Indigenous self-determination, colonialism, education and religion. This timeline includes periodic references to Kahkewaquonaby juxtaposed with Ryerson's own journey as an integral part of a full assessment of Ryerson's role in the legacy of residential schools.

Kahkewaquonaby's parents straddled the Indigenous and British colonial worlds. His mother, Tuhbenahneequay, was the daughter of a Mississauga chief from the Eagle *doodem*. His father, Augustus Jones, was a United Empire Loyalist settler who worked as a land surveyor. Born in 1802, one year before Ryerson,

---

<sup>11</sup> Francis Michael Quealey, "The Administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, 1818-1828" (PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1968), 6

<sup>12</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, xxi.

<sup>13</sup> Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy," 51

<sup>14</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, 174-75.

Kahkewaquonaby lived until age fourteen with his mother among the Mississauga. It was around that age that his grandfather Wabenose gave him the new name of Kahkewaquonaby (“Sacred Feathers”) in recognition of the Eagle *doodem*. He did not reveal what he was called earlier in his life.<sup>15</sup>

Bohaker explains that by giving the young boy a name belonging to the Eagle *doodem*, his grandfather announced and reflected the community’s belief in his leadership abilities. Kahkewaquonaby related that he was later adopted for a second time by another chief, Adjutant, who had lost a son also named Kahkewaquonaby, an act that reconfirmed the community’s support for his leadership and their vision of him as one of their own. His behaviour subsequently “conformed to Anishinaabe expectations of leaders,” and he devoted the rest of his life to serving his community.<sup>16</sup>

In 1816, Kahkewaquonaby and his brother were sent by their father to a school in Saltfleet Township near Hamilton. After nine months, Kahkewaquonaby could read and write. He also received his English name, Peter Jones, in this period.<sup>17</sup> He converted to Christianity in 1820 and was baptized into the Church of England at the Mohawk church on the Grand River.<sup>18</sup>

### ➤ **1818 British Colonial Land Purchase Policy**

In 1818, the British Colonial Office ushered in a new era of land acquisition under the supervision of the newly appointed Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, Sir Peregrine Maitland.<sup>19</sup> This new program of land purchase was enacted through payments of annuities rather than a lump sum. Under its provisions, land would be purchased through small annual payments, so settlers could put a 10 per cent down payment on land and pay the remaining mortgage through their revenues, which the Crown would subsequently use as annuities

---

<sup>15</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals of Kah-ke-wa-quo-nā-by (Rev. Peter Jones), Wesleyan Missionary* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1860), 1–3; Donald B. Smith, *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 4–5.

<sup>16</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 3; Bohaker, *Doodem*, 185.

<sup>17</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 6; Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 41–43.

<sup>18</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 7; Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Quealey, “Administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland,” 23.



to Indigenous communities. In such a way, the British redirected most of the cost of land acquisition from the Crown and instead used the revenues produced through exploitation of Indigenous land. Over the next fifteen years, much of the very large tracts of land acquired by the Crown for agricultural settlers was purchased in this way.<sup>20</sup>

### ➤ **1820 Mississauga Difficulties in an Era of Land Acquisition**

The Mississaugas of the Credit River had continued to lose land through settler squatting and repeated appeals from the colonial government to cede more land. Within a few years, there were twenty thousand white settlers in the area. Although the Mississauga expected a degree of reciprocity and gratitude from the settlers, instead they were made unwelcome and often denied access to their recently ceded lands.<sup>21</sup> During Kahkewaquonaby's childhood, Mississauga elders described to him the arrival of the British settlers and the Mississaugas' loss of land:

Our fathers held out to them the hand of friendship. The strangers then asked for a small piece of land on which they might pitch their tents; the request was cheerfully granted. By and by they begged for more, and more was given to them. In this way they had continued to ask, or have obtained by force or fraud, the fairest portions of our territory.<sup>22</sup>

According to Kahkewaquonaby's biographer, Donald Smith, the Mississauga not only considered the actions of the settlers to be a bruise to their alliance, but the colonial government's inaction in defending Mississauga treaty rights fractured that alliance, depriving the Mississauga of "their camping spots along the lake, their burial grounds, and their fisheries between the Head of the Lake and Toronto."<sup>23</sup>

---

<sup>20</sup> J. R. Miller, *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*, 3rd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000), 117–18.

<sup>21</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 26–27.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Jones, *History of the Ojebway Indians* (London: A. W. Bennett, 1861), quoted in Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 27.

<sup>23</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 27.

By 1820, Mississauga lands had been reduced to a reserve at the mouth of the Credit River. Around this time both the *ogimaa* (chief) and *anniqueogimma* (deputy chief) died, leaving a leadership vacuum. The Mississauga chose Joseph Sawyer as *ogimaa* and Kahkewaquonaby as *anniqueogimma* because they were from the Eagle *doodem* and because of their ability to navigate between British and Anishinaabe cultures. Bohaker's research has emphasized that together Kahkewaquonaby and Sawyer "demonstrated the adaptability of Anishinaabe governance as they worked to find a way forward for the greatly diminished Mississaugas of the Credit, to rebuild the community, and to maintain their autonomy." They adopted some practices found in settler governance, such as keeping meeting minutes and establishing a formal justice system, but they did so on their own terms, making changes that were "self-directed and represented adaptation instead of assimilation."<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, in his mission for land acquisition on behalf of the Colonial Office, in 1820 Maitland delivered a broad proposal to that office for the "civilization" of Indigenous Peoples that focused on agricultural education. Maitland's proposal included the development of boarding schools for Indigenous youth, as he believed children were easier to influence than adults, and therefore the success of the "civilization" program depended on moulding children from an early age.

In North America, residential schools and the application of a "civilization" model to Indigenous People by European colonizers had first been introduced by the French regime in the early seventeenth century, but the British did not immediately adopt these measures after defeating the French on the Plains of Abraham in 1760. Maitland's was the first plan for residential schools presented to the British colonial authorities, and as a historian of Canada's residential school system, John Milloy, has shown, it "contained most of the civilizing concepts and techniques that were adopted in the next three decades."<sup>25</sup>

---

<sup>24</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, 161, 183; also Donald B. Smith, "Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga, 1826 to 1856, an Appeal for Further Study," *Ontario History* 113, no. 2 (2021): 229–30.

<sup>25</sup> J. S. Milloy, *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986* (Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999), 15.

Maitland recommended that schools be built to teach skills that would promote the creation of settled communities, such as Christianity, industry, manners, reading, writing and arithmetic, as a way of converting Indigenous children to European ways of life.<sup>26</sup> The overarching goal of Maitland's plan to develop colonial-style Indigenous industrial settlements was to open up more land to settlement and support the colonial economic development of Upper Canada.<sup>27</sup>

Over the next eight years, little came of Maitland's plan; however, in 1828, the plan for a "civilizing" program was reinvigorated in response to calls from Lord Goderich, the colonial secretary, to dismantle the Indian Department. In 1828, Chief Superintendent of the Indian Department Major General Darling adopted Maitland's suggestions and proposed this initiative as a new direction for the department.<sup>28</sup>

After 1820, Maitland worked with the Methodists to establish the River Credit Settlement, which Milloy considered to have inspired future models for "civilization" policies from 1830 onwards (discussed below).<sup>29</sup>

### ➤ **1821 Ryerson Joins the Methodist Society and Leaves Home**

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, Methodism spread throughout Upper Canada and the United States. A religious awakening occurred in Upper Canada, which helped to increase the popularity of Methodism along with other Christian denominations. As the historian of Canadian Methodism Neil Semple notes:

Into a social environment defined by Anglican and orthodox Calvinist ideologies came a new trust in personal control, under God, of one's

---

<sup>26</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 14–15.

<sup>27</sup> John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 82–83, cited in Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1, Origins to 1939*, Vol. 1 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 57. Note: Grant's *Moon of Wintertime* is not available digitally; thus in this timeline it is referenced solely from within the TRC Report.

<sup>28</sup> Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy," 56–57.

<sup>29</sup> Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy," 15.

spiritual health and a deeper commitment to earnest religion. Whether individuals were members of well-established denominations or without previous religious belief, they joined with Methodists in the revival movement and either altered their religious affiliation or became active supporters of a personal, experiential spirituality within other evangelical churches. Inspired by the twin goals of converting and sanctifying the individual and spurring the community along the path of spiritual and ethical growth in order to achieve a post-millennial rule of Christ in the world, revivalism became one of the pre-eminent concerns of the nineteenth century English-speaking world, and it redefined the very nature of religious expression.<sup>30</sup>

To the Anglicans, who largely controlled the levers of power in Upper Canada, the emergent and growing Methodist contingent was perceived as disruptive. Consequently, Methodists were generally frowned upon and disrespected.

Initially three of Ryerson's older brothers—George, William and John—converted to Methodism. Their mother, Sarah Mehetable Ryerson, was also sympathetic to their newfound faith and converted in 1816.<sup>31</sup> Ryerson routinely attended meetings and services with his brothers. In 1821, at the age of 18, he joined the Methodist Society, formally cementing his relationship with the upstart missionary church.<sup>32</sup>

The religious awakening in the Ryerson household was troubling for Joseph Ryerson, a staunch Loyalist and supporter of the Anglican Church of England, who viewed his sons' conversions as a betrayal not only of the Anglican faith but also of himself. Ryerson's family had expected him to become a farmer, and his upbringing had prepared him almost exclusively for that path. He had worked with a carpenter for six months to hone the skills that were required for the

---

<sup>30</sup> Neil Semple, *Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 128.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 28; Neil Semple, "Egerton Ryerson," in *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (online), <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/egerton-ryerson>.

<sup>32</sup> Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life: Being Reminiscences of Sixty Years' Public Service in Canada*, ed. J. George Hodgins (Toronto: William Briggs, 1883), 26.

maintenance of the family home and farm. Ryerson later recalled his father's reaction to his decision to convert and its impact on his future career: "Egerton, I understand you have joined the Methodists; you must either leave them or leave my house ...' The next day I left home."<sup>33</sup> In response his father, likely in an attempt to dissuade Ryerson from his newly chosen path, refused to provide books or schooling for his son so long as he was associated with the Methodists.<sup>34</sup>

### ➤ **1821–1824 Ryerson's Formative Experiences with Education**

After he left home, Ryerson found work as an assistant teacher or "usher," as the role was then known, in the London District Grammar School, where his brother George was master. Two years later, his father asked him to come home.<sup>35</sup> Although Ryerson did not provide an explanation for his father's change of heart, he noted that his father had hired a farm labourer who turned out not to be not as efficient a worker as his own son.<sup>36</sup>

Ryerson returned to the farm for one year and seemed to find a renewed appreciation for the physical and intellectual stimulation of agricultural labour. He was, he wrote,

engaging again on the farm with such determination and purpose that I ploughed every acre of ground for the season, cradled every stalk of wheat, rye, and oats, and mowed every spear of grass, pitched the whole, first on a waggon, and then from the waggon on the hay-mow or stack. While the neighbours were astonished at the possibility of one man doing so much work, I neither felt fatigue nor depression, for the joy of the Lord was my strength, both of my body and mind, and I made nearly if not quite as much progress in my studies as I had done while teaching school.<sup>37</sup>

---

<sup>33</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 27.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 29–30.

<sup>35</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 1:6.

<sup>36</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 27.

<sup>37</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 27–28.

Meanwhile, Ryerson's brother George insisted that Ryerson further his formal education. This time his father was more supportive and agreed to let Ryerson, now twenty-one, study under the scholar and headmaster John Law at the Gore District Grammar School in Hamilton.<sup>38</sup> There Ryerson immersed himself in classics, studying Latin and Greek. He worked with such fervour that he became exhausted, acquiring a "brain fever" and "inflammation of the lungs," which left him seriously ill for an extended period of time and compelled him to pause his studies.<sup>39</sup> According to Ryerson, this proved to be another transformative point in his life's work:

I then and there vowed that if I should be restored to life and health, I would not follow my own counsels, but would yield to the openings and calls which might be made in the Church by its chief ministers. That very moment the cloud was removed; the light of the glory of God shone into my mind and heart with a splendour and power that I had never before experienced.<sup>40</sup>

He survived and shortly thereafter embarked on his journey as a circuit preacher with the Methodists.

### ➤ **1825 Kahkewaquonaby's Conversion to Methodism**

Between 1822 and 1825, Kahkewaquonaby spent his summers working in brick-making and farming so that he could attend school in the winter.<sup>41</sup> In 1825, he converted to Methodism after having a spiritual awakening at a Methodist camp meeting at Ancaster Township.<sup>42</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, now equipped with an English name and a colonial education, went on to rebuild the Mississaugas' Credit River settlement with log houses, a day school and church, logging business and fishery. He devoted his life to protecting what remained of Mississauga lands and advocating for Mississauga legal rights. It was within this

---

<sup>38</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 1:7.

<sup>39</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 31.

<sup>40</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 28.

<sup>41</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 8.

<sup>42</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 55–61.

nexus of religion, education and Indigenous adaptation that Kahkewaquonaby and Ryerson met.

➤ **1825 Ryerson's First Year as a Methodist Circuit Preacher**

In 1825, the Methodist circuit stewards, who were responsible for overseeing and organizing missionary work, signaled their confidence in Ryerson's ability to spread God's word to the rapidly growing settler communities by providing him with a horse and saddle and assigning him an area along Yonge Street.<sup>43</sup> Unlike preachers who worked out of a specific church, a circuit preacher travelled within an assigned geographic area, holding meetings in farmers' fields, forests or anywhere groups of people would gather, and visiting people in their own homes, effectively ministering to multiple fledgling congregations.<sup>44</sup> As a junior preacher, Ryerson was expected to stay within a circuit area for one to two years, developing his skills in speaking, reasoning and persuasion in front of large and diverse groups of people.<sup>45</sup>

Ryerson's work as a travelling preacher made him acutely aware of the challenging living conditions experienced by settlers in much of Upper Canada.<sup>46</sup> Many were poor, illiterate and lacked formal education. In contrast to Anglicans, Methodists held that literacy was vital for the faithful to gain direct access to God's wisdom and teachings through reading the Bible.<sup>47</sup> From his colonialist vantage point, Ryerson saw Methodism and consequently education as keys to self-determination. This sentiment strongly influenced his relationships with Indigenous, working-class and Black communities.

---

<sup>43</sup> Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life*, 29.

<sup>44</sup> Goldwin S. French, "Egerton Ryerson and the Methodist Model for Upper Canada," in *Egerton Ryerson and His Times: Essays on the History of Education*, ed. Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978), 51.

<sup>45</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 24.

<sup>46</sup> J. Harold Putman, *Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada* (Toronto: W. Briggs, 1912), 7. Project Gutenberg.

<sup>47</sup> James Forbes, "Contesting the Protestant Consensus: Voluntarists, Methodists, and the Persistence of Evangelical Dissent in Upper Canada, 1829–1854," *Ontario History* 108, no. 2 (2016): 192–94.

### ➤ **1825 Rebuilding the Mississauga Community at the Mouth of the Credit River**

In the spring of 1825, the Mississauga decided to relocate to the mouth of the Credit River in an effort to safeguard key resources, including a fishery and timber on the remaining portion of Mississauga traditional lands.<sup>48</sup> When Dr. Strachan, the Anglican Bishop of York, visited the Mississauga at the Credit River that summer, he suggested the government would aid the Mississauga in their efforts.<sup>49</sup> Kahkewaquonaby recalled in a letter dated November 10, 1825, that after a meeting with colonial officials at York in October 1825 Lieutenant Governor Maitland “kindly offered to build twenty dwelling houses, and a school house for us, between this and next spring.”<sup>50</sup> In February and again in April 1826, the government promised to help build ten log homes and clear twenty-five acres of land. Kahkewaquonaby made no mention in his journal of whether this work was completed; he did note, however, the work of the Mississauga in clearing land, organizing lots and building their own school and mission house.<sup>51</sup> The government appears to have used the promise of aid to build a settlement as bait to end the community’s ties with the Methodists. For example, Kahkewaquonaby noted that Maitland “was very much opposed to our attending the Methodist Camp meetings ... we could now make our choice, either to desist from attending Camp meetings, and retain the good will and aid of the Governor, or persist in going and lose his friendship and assistance.”<sup>52</sup>

In 1825, Kahkewaquonaby became a Methodist missionary.<sup>53</sup> He began regular travels to other Indigenous communities in Upper Canada where he explained why he believed that Methodism, farming skills and schooling provided a way

---

<sup>48</sup> Smith, *Sacred Feathers*, 19–22.

<sup>49</sup> On July 13, 1825, Kahkewaquonaby wrote, “The Doctor then spoke to us, expressing his happiness in seeking the work of the Lord among us. He then gave us some advice, thinking it would be best for us to settle on the Credit and erect a village, saying he thought the Government would assist us, and wished us to consult about the matter.” Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 38.

<sup>50</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 46.

<sup>51</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 51, 62. See entries for February 3, 1826, and April 14, 1826. Kahkewaquonaby described how he and some of the Mississauga built a temporary building for the school and mission house April 27–29, 1826; see 64.

<sup>52</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 75. See entry for August 8, 1826.

<sup>53</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 19.



forward for Indigenous Peoples with a vision of self-determination, safety, and prosperity. It was Kahkewaquonaby's absence from the Credit River settlement that opened the door for the Methodist Connexion, or Church, in 1826 to send Ryerson to the Mississauga mission at the mouth of the Credit River.

➤ **1826 Ryerson Challenges Bishop John Strachan**

The Methodists in early nineteenth-century Upper Canada were a religious minority and the Bishop of York, John Strachan, did not recognize the legal existence of the Methodist Church. Bishop Strachan had emigrated from Scotland and began working as an Anglican minister in Cornwall, Ontario. Strachan's vision was for Upper Canada to be a "little England" with institutions, religions and politics modelled on those of the metropole.<sup>54</sup> Ryerson challenged Strachan, and his vision, by publishing letters in defence of Methodism.

Ryerson's controversy with Strachan began after Strachan's sermon on the death of Dr. Mountain, the Bishop of Quebec, was printed in the spring of 1826. Strachan argued that the Church of England (the Anglican Church) was the only recognized church in Upper Canada. He denounced all other sects of Christianity, including Methodism, whose adherents he described as ignorant, uneducated, lazy, and ostensibly American in nature, which was intended as an insult.

Any growth in the popularity and influence of Methodism was of course a threat to the Anglican Church, the only Christian denomination that received Clergy Reserves, tracts of land (one seventh of public land) in Upper and Lower Canada that were reserved for the Church of England based on the 1791 Constitutional Act.<sup>55</sup> Ryerson worked with William Lyon Mackenzie, a reformer and advocate against the Church of England's presence in Canada, to interview members of the Colonial Office and solicit support to extend the reserves to other

---

<sup>54</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 49–51.

<sup>55</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 1:23.

denominations. (The Clergy Reserves question remained unresolved until the 1850s.)<sup>56</sup>

The Methodists proposed a response to Strachan's attacks on their church and agreed that "the Boy Preacher" Ryerson would prepare the rebuttal. In a twelve-thousand-word article in *The Review*, Ryerson noted that the Church of England denied the right of the Methodist church to solemnize marriage or receive land for chapels, parsonages and burial grounds. He took strong exception to Strachan's claim that Methodists were American and thus sympathetic to republicanism, and remarked that only eight Methodist ministers had not been not born and educated in British dominions.<sup>57</sup> He also observed that he was both a Methodist minister and the son of a Loyalist.

Ryerson's paper generated much controversy and debate among local settlers in Toronto.<sup>58</sup> Within two weeks, he had received four responses to his publication, which were unsupportive and called Ryerson a "proud boaster of his learning."<sup>59</sup> Despite this, he had the support of the Methodists, who believed that he was a capable minister and could contribute significantly to the respectability and legitimacy of the Methodist church in Upper Canadian society.<sup>60</sup> For Ryerson, the controversy with the Bishop of York firmly cemented his ideas and theories about religious liberty in civil society.

---

<sup>56</sup> Lower Canada was home to many Catholic clergy with historic ties to France. Clergy Reserves were a deliberate effort by the British to solidify their hold over the territories previously held by the French and to bolster support for the Protestant church as it established itself in Upper Canada and extended into Lower Canada. The idea behind this land was that it could be sold off over time to support Protestant (read British-supported) clergy. During Strachan's time, multiple Protestant groups could have laid claim to the Clergy Reserves; however, Strachan had a vested interest in making sure that all the reserves went to the Anglican Church. His diatribe against Methodism was partly intended to ensure Methodists would not gain access to this source of power and wealth. By the 1820s, Strachan had become more interested in selling than leasing portions of these lands because other sources of "free" land had evaporated in Upper Canada, which made the Clergy Reserves more marketable as new settlers sought land to purchase.

<sup>57</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 28.

<sup>58</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 49.

<sup>59</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 53–54.

<sup>60</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 53–54.

Ryerson was a staunch Methodist and worked to see the religion better represented in Upper Canadian society. His thoughts on education were shaped during this critical time that questioned the supremacy of the Anglican church over all facets of life, including education. By working to legitimize the Methodist Church, Ryerson strove to foster religious pluralism (the tolerance and coexistence of multiple religions and denominations) in Upper Canada, particularly greater tolerance for Methodism in a predominantly Anglican settler society. As historian Goldwin French wrote, for Ryerson “civil liberty meant that every citizen should have an equal opportunity to deploy his talents in his own interest or in service to the state. Religious liberty meant freedom of conscience and freedom for the churches, but it also meant for him that a clear distinction must be drawn between religious and political opinions.”<sup>61</sup>

Ryerson believed religious and civil liberty were firmly based on subscription to some form of Protestant Christianity, whether Methodism or Anglicanism, to provide a moral basis for the education system. He championed non-sectarian Christianity, not secularism, in Canadian society. As he continued as a public figure, his theories on education and Christian-based morality strongly influenced his policies both as Superintendent of the Common Schools of Canada West and in his 1847 *Report on Industrial Schools*, in which he proposed the “civilizing” of Indigenous peoples through Christianizing education, whether Methodist, Catholic, or Anglican. These issues are discussed in more detail below.

➤ **1826–1827 Ryerson Lives at the Mission among the Mississaugas of the Credit River**

In 1826, Ryerson was sent by the Methodist Church to work at the mission located on the Mississauga of the Credit River reserve lands.<sup>62</sup> The Credit River

---

<sup>61</sup> Goldwin S. French, “Egerton Ryerson and the Methodist Model for Upper Canada,” in *Egerton Ryerson and His Times: Essays on the History of Education*, ed. Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton (Toronto: Macmillan, 1978), 54.

<sup>62</sup> After 1783, there had been a substantial influx of United Empire Loyalists, which increased pressure on the colonial government to settle land further west. The Mississauga had surrendered their land to the British for use by Upper Canada in the Ajetance Treaty (Treaty 19) in 1818.

mission was led by Kahkewaquonaby, and Ryerson became its first full-time Methodist minister. Ryerson and Kahkewaquonaby likely first met in Newmarket, where Kahkewaquonaby heard Ryerson preach in July 1826. He also preached along with fellow Credit Mississauga Methodist John Sunday to a group of “[a]bout thirty pagan Indians.” A few days later, Kahkewaquonaby and other Mississauga Methodists met again with prospective Indigenous converts, including a chief who told Kahkewaquonaby, “for my part I am ready and willing to become a Christian. I hope that all my young men will become good and wise, and serve the Great Spirit.’ He then enquired when they should have a school.”<sup>63</sup>

Ryerson arrived at the Credit River Mission Village in September 1826. In his memoirs he described his year at the mission as difficult and laborious, but he deeply valued the work he was doing. He slept on a small wooden plank with a blanket yet wrote that he “was never more comfortable and happy ... I showed the Indians that I could work and live as they lived and worked.”<sup>64</sup>

Within eight months, Ryerson had learned sufficient Anishinaabemowin to speak it with his congregants and translate Biblical texts. He helped them with their project to build a model agricultural community as well as finish their school building. He used his farming background to teach the Mississaugas agricultural skills, including how to plough and plant their first wheat and corn fields.<sup>65</sup> Ryerson had worked for six months as a carpenter, and he recounted that he used that experience to teach the people of the Credit River how to plane boards, build roofs, and make window frames, log floors and clapboard houses, as well as how to enclose gates for gardens. Since Bishop Strachan had refused to provide government funding for the Credit River school and the mission buildings, Ryerson helped with fundraising, combining the funds he raised himself with funds his brothers had procured from circuit preaching and money the Mississauga made selling baskets, mats, moccasins and salmon. After two months of work, the building was completed.<sup>66</sup>

---

<sup>63</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 72–73.

<sup>64</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 59.

<sup>65</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 56; Smith, “Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga,” 226–27.

<sup>66</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 60, 81.

Ryerson made repeated observations about the school at Credit River and the role of education in general. The school had forty students when he first came to the mission; by the time he left the number had increased to fifty, with separate teachers for girls and boys. The children learned to read and write using English and Anishinaabemowin primers and religious texts. They were taught by Mississauga Methodist missionaries and Mississauga teachers, occasionally supplemented by white teachers.<sup>67</sup> Ryerson wrote to the Lieutenant-Governor, Sir Peregrine Maitland, on the progress at the Credit River mission and the importance of continued support for the schools:

This extensive reformation, has been effected and continued, by means, which, to all human appearance, are altogether inadequate to the accomplishment of such a work. A school at the Grand River containing thirty scholars, one at the Credit forty, another at Belleville upwards of thirty, and one lately established at Lake Simcoe containing forty, and the missionaries who have been employed amongst the Indians, together with the boarding of a number of Indian boys, have only amounted to a little more than £150 per annum. It is of the last importance to perpetuate and extend the impressions which have already been made on the minds of these Indians. The schools and religious instruction must be continued; and the Gospel must be sent to tribes still in a heathen state.<sup>68</sup>

Historian Thomas Peace has recently argued that the Mississauga used the schools to acquire skills they needed to petition the colonial government in writing to advocate for land and treaty rights and to voice complaints about settler encroachments on their land or thefts of resources. They also recorded complaints about the colonial government's failures to follow through with

---

<sup>67</sup> Thomas Peace, "Searching for Order in a Settlers' World: Wendat and Mississauga Schooling, Politics, and Networks at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century," in *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America, 1749–1876*, ed. Elizabeth Mancke, Jerry Bannister, Denis B. McKim, and Scott W. See (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019), 189. Peace also notes that other schools had existed since the 1780s, such as among the Mohawk at Grand River and Bay of Quinte (192).

<sup>68</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 63.

annual payments.<sup>69</sup> It is unclear how attuned Ryerson may have been to such connections between education and self-determination, but by the time he had finished his year with the Mississauga, he had concluded that schools were vital to fostering Christianity among Indigenous Peoples. He later reflected that “[t]he schools to the missions are as important as a foundation is to a building.”<sup>70</sup>

Before Ryerson left the Credit River for his next assignment in 1827, the Mississauga bestowed upon him the name “Cheechalk,” meaning a “bird on the wing,” because he was “constantly on the move among them.”<sup>71</sup> “Cheechock” was the name of an *ogimaa* (chief) of the Eagle *doodem* who had died in 1810.<sup>72</sup> The Mississaugas conferred a similar name on Ryerson to recognize an alliance with him and to set out their expectations, namely that he protect the people and the land. Whether Ryerson understood the deeper significance of this gift, particularly from the Mississauga perspective of naming and *doodems*, is unknown; however, one indication that he may have appreciated the meaning was his decision in 1838 to advocate for Kahkewaquonaby’s petition to the Crown to confirm the Mississaugas’ legal title to their reserve lands.<sup>73</sup>

#### ➤ **1827–1829 Ryerson Ordained in the Methodist Church and Works on the Cobourg and Ancaster Circuits**

In 1827, Ryerson was ordained in the Methodist Church. He was assigned to the Cobourg circuit but he also covered the area that extended from Bowmanville to Brighton and preached to the Indigenous communities at Rice Lake.<sup>74</sup> From September 1828 through 1829, Ryerson worked on the Ancaster circuit.<sup>75</sup>

#### ➤ **1828 Ryerson Marries Hannah Aikman**

---

<sup>69</sup> Peace, “Searching for Order,” 192.

<sup>70</sup> Ryerson, *Christian Guardian*, February 22, 1832, cited in Peace, “Searching for Order,” 198.

<sup>71</sup> Darin Wybenga, “A Missionary at the Credit River in Historical Tidbits: Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation” (Pillar 5 Committee, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, 2019).

<sup>72</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, 160.

<sup>73</sup> Peace, “Searching for Order,” 191.

<sup>74</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 1:64.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 60–61.

Ryerson married Hannah Aikman on September 10, 1828, in a ceremony performed by a Presbyterian minister because Methodists were not permitted to perform marriage ceremonies. Aikman and Ryerson had two children together: Charles and Lucilla. Both died at an early age, Charles in 1835 at age six and Lucilla in 1849 at seventeen. Aikman died in 1832, shortly after Lucilla's birth.<sup>76</sup>

➤ **1829–1831 The Mohawk Institute is Established at Brantford**

In the late eighteenth century an Anglican-influenced Mohawk band, led by their chief, Joseph Brant, was resettled on the Grand River as a part of the United Empire Loyalist migration.<sup>77</sup> Beginning in 1786, the Mohawks established a number of day schools, many of which did not last long due to lack of funding.<sup>78</sup> In 1822, Brant's youngest son went to London to request that the New England Company establish an Anglican mission and a day school that would teach reading, writing and accounts.<sup>79</sup> In 1827, the company sent Robert Luger to establish a mission, and soon thereafter he began to open schools, notably the Mohawk Institute at Brantford, which began operating in 1829.<sup>80</sup> Luger recommended to the company that the institute be a "mechanic's institution" that trained adults. However, following Governor Maitland's earlier belief that the "civilization" model would be most effective when applied to Indigenous children, Protestant missions were encouraged to focus on educating children.<sup>81</sup> Accordingly, the Mohawk Institute largely educated younger students in vocational programs beginning in 1833 and introduced boarding in 1834.

At this time, the institute provided students with simple training in English, farming and gardening. Historian Robert Carney observed that as the first residential school in Upper Canada, the Mohawk Institute "became a model, in

---

<sup>76</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 59.

<sup>77</sup> Robert Carney, "Aboriginal Residential Schools before Confederation: The Early Experience," *CCHA Historical Studies*, 61 (1995): 23.

<sup>78</sup> Carney, "Aboriginal Residential Schools," 23.

<sup>79</sup> Carney, "Aboriginal Residential Schools," 23.

<sup>80</sup> Cody Groat, "Commemoration and Reconciliation: The Mohawk Institute as a World Heritage Site," *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 2 (2018), 196; Carney, "Aboriginal Residential Schools," 23.

<sup>81</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 15; Carney, "Aboriginal Residential Schools," 24.

terms of programs and physical layout, for Indian schools in Canada well into the next century.”<sup>82</sup> The Mohawk Institute went on to be the longest continually operated residential school in Canada. It closed in 1970, and the building has housed the Woodland Cultural Centre since 1972. It is one of the few residential school buildings still standing.<sup>83</sup>

➤ **1829–1840 Ryerson Appointed Founding Editor of the *Christian Guardian***

Ryerson’s publications during the controversy with the Bishop of York on the legitimacy of the Methodist church showed him to be an articulate and competent rhetorician. In 1829, he was appointed founding editor of the *Christian Guardian*, a weekly publication that disseminated information about Methodism and its views on civil liberty, church-state relations, education, marriage, temperance and other topics popular in the social discourse at that time.<sup>84</sup>

Within three years, the *Christian Guardian* had become a staple publication in Upper Canada, with twelve thousand registered subscribers. The paper most clearly championed the right to religious liberty when in 1831 the editors forwarded two petitions to Parliament in London, arguing for recognition and legal status for Methodists and against Anglicans in higher education. In 1832, the Methodists released Ryerson from his editorial duties to travel to England to resolve the church’s issues with the British Wesleyans.<sup>85</sup> He returned to the *Christian Guardian* after his trip but then resigned in 1840 because the Methodist Conference’s prohibition on the discussion of political issues in the paper was at odds with Ryerson’s desire to address a broad range of public issues.<sup>86</sup>

➤ **1830 The Colonial Office Endorses the “Civilization Policy”**

In 1828, Lieutenant-Governor Maitland’s strategy for “civilizing” the Indigenous People of Upper Canada had yet to be implemented. It was, however,

---

<sup>82</sup> Carney, “Aboriginal Residential Schools,” 24.

<sup>83</sup> Groat, “Commemoration and Reconciliation,” 196; Woodland Cultural Centre, <https://woodlandculturalcentre.ca/>.

<sup>84</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 61.

<sup>85</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 60–61, 63.

<sup>86</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 551–52.



encouraged and endorsed by Major General Darling, Chief Superintendent of the Indian Department, whom Lord Dalhousie had commissioned to provide a report on the department's work.<sup>87</sup> Darling praised the "successes" of Methodist missionaries in converting the Indigenous People in Upper Canada, citing the examples of Rice Lake and the Bay of Quinte regions.<sup>88</sup> His report argued that the Indian Department was necessary for the assimilation and control of Indigenous People, ideally through cooperation between the Indian Department and Methodist or Anglican missionary groups. Credit River was one of the "successful" examples of this approach in action.<sup>89</sup> Thus, Darling's report was a bid for the Indian Department to take on a more active role in controlling the livelihood of Indigenous People, ultimately applying Maitland's "civilizing" strategy due to the methodology and "successes" of the Methodists in the 1820s, especially among the Ojibwe.<sup>90</sup>

Historian Leslie F. S. Upton describes Darling's 1828 report as the foundation for the "civilization" program, which would follow Maitland's provisions for governmental responsibility to provide religious, agricultural and basic elementary education. In 1829, Sir James Kempt succeeded Lord Dalhousie and affirmed and expanded upon the program.<sup>91</sup> In 1830, the Colonial Office endorsed many of Maitland's suggestions for this new policy, to be overseen by the Indian Department.<sup>92</sup> This endorsement was led by Colonial Secretary Sir George Murray, and at this time the Indian Department became an object of civil, rather than military, administration.<sup>93</sup>

### ➤ **1833 Ryerson Marries Mary Armstrong**

---

<sup>87</sup> Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy," 56.

<sup>88</sup> James Napier Bailey, *Sketches of Indian Character: Being a Brief Survey of the Principal Features of Character Exhibited by the North American Indians; Illustrating the Aphorism of the Socialists, that "Man is the Creature of Circumstances"* (Leeds: Joshua Hobson, 1841), Project Gutenberg, 51–52.

<sup>89</sup> John F. Leslie, *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943–1963* (Montreal: Carleton University, 1999), 29.

<sup>90</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 57–58.

<sup>91</sup> Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy," 57.

<sup>92</sup> John Milloy, "Indian Act Colonialism: A Century of Dishonour, 1869–1969," research paper for the National Centre for First Nations Governance, May 2008, 5.

<sup>93</sup> Upton, "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy," 57.

On November 8, 1833, Ryerson married his second wife, Mary Armstrong. She was the eldest daughter of James Rogers, a wealthy merchant.<sup>94</sup> Ryerson had two children with Armstrong, Sophia in 1838 and Charles Egerton in 1847.

➤ **1833 Ryerson's Trip to England to Unify the Canadian Methodist and British Wesleyan Churches**

On behalf of the Methodists, Ryerson travelled to England to solidify a union between the Canadian Methodists and the British Wesleyans. The Wesleyans proposed the union to provide security and legitimacy to the Methodist Church. Although Ryerson was at first sceptical of the proposal, he understood the institutional support a union with the Wesleyans would provide for Canadian Methodists. In early March 1833, Ryerson left York and travelled to England by way of New York. His visit was primarily concerned with advancing and disseminating the union proposal across England. For four weeks he addressed missionary meetings in eighteen different counties in England. He was successful: when the Conference of Wesleyans assembled in Manchester in July 1833, the British representatives agreed on the terms of the union. Canadian Methodists agreed shortly thereafter.<sup>95</sup> Ryerson proved to be a committed Methodist, and his unification of the two churches testifies to his determination to strengthen Methodism.

➤ **1833–1835 Ryerson's Trips to England on Behalf of the Upper Canada Academy at Cobourg**

On his first trip to England in 1833, Ryerson was also tasked with securing funding for the new Upper Canada Academy in Cobourg and presenting Canadian petitions to the Colonial Office on the Clergy Reserves question.<sup>96</sup> Ryerson managed to solicit funds from members of the Wesleyan Conference and members of the British government amounting to £111.17.<sup>97</sup>

---

<sup>94</sup> Ryerson, *Story of My Life*, 120.

<sup>95</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 1:171.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 66.

<sup>97</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 1:172.

Ryerson returned to England in November 1835, this time with his wife, Mary Armstrong, to continue to raise funds for the Upper Canada Academy, as it was in dire financial straits. After he petitioned the Colonial Office and the British government, he came home to Upper Canada with the first ever Royal Charter granted to a non-Anglican institution.<sup>98</sup> The charter was a testament to Ryerson's commitment to religious liberty and legitimized the Methodist church as a denomination worthy of receiving a Royal Charter.

➤ **1837 The *Aborigines Report***

In years preceding and following the official commitment to a "civilization" policy in 1830, there were numerous reports of the mistreatment of Indigenous People by British colonists. In 1836, the British government ordered an inquiry into mistreatment in all colonial holdings of the British Empire, which led to the presentation of the *Aborigines Report* to the British House of Commons in 1837.<sup>99</sup> While this inquiry sought to secure for Indigenous People "the due observance of justice, and the protection of their rights," it still aimed to promote the spread of "civilization" and Christianity in Indigenous communities.<sup>100</sup> Ultimately, the inquiry found a number of instances of mistreatment and injustices in the colonies and drew to wider attention some of the devastating impacts that contact and colonialism had in Indigenous communities across Canada. The *Aborigines Report* also highlighted growing tensions between humanitarian, political and economic motives in colonial policy in the 1830s.<sup>101</sup>

Between 1836 and 1838 Ryerson, together with three other Methodist missionaries (Mississaugas Kahkewaquonaby and John Sunday as well as the linguist James Evans, who was responsible for systematizing Ojibwe grammar and spelling), met with British parliamentary committees, Colonial Office officials, King William IV and Queen Victoria to appeal for additional protections for Indigenous People from British expansionism and settlers' illegal land

---

<sup>98</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 76–77.

<sup>99</sup> Michael D. Blackstock, "The *Aborigines Report* (1837): A Case Study in the Slow Change of Colonial Social Relations," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 20, no. 1 (2000): 68.

<sup>100</sup> Quoted in Blackstock "Aborigines Report," 68.

<sup>101</sup> Blackstock, "Aborigines Report," 68–70, 81.

acquisition.<sup>102</sup> The resulting *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes* (1837) included testimony from Kahkewaquonaby, Evans and Ryerson.<sup>103</sup> Ryerson's testimony demonstrated his conviction that religious training was the prerequisite for all other forms of education in the mission to "civilize" Indigenous Peoples in Upper Canada:

The Rev. Mr. Ryerson, who is described as being intimately acquainted with the Mohawks, gives a similar history of their past and present circumstances:

A striking proof of the inefficacy of merely educational instruction to civilize barbarous tribes, and of the power of the gospel to civilize as well as to christianize, the most vicious of the human race, is furnished by the Mohawk nation of Indians in Upper Canada. The Mohawks are one of the six nations of Indians to whom, at an early period, his Majesty granted a large tract of land, situate on the banks of the Grand river, the most fertile tract of land in Upper Canada, lying in the heart of the province, and surrounded by a white population. Most of these Mohawks had even been baptized, and they were visited once a year by clergymen of the Church of England. The greater part of them were taught to read and write : they were exhorted to till the soil, and cultivate the arts of civilized life ; yet this nation was more drunken, ferocious, and vicious than any one of the five other heathen nations of the Indian reservation. They were proverbially savage and revengeful, as well as shrewd, so as often to be a terror to their white neighbours. In no respect was the social and civil condition of the Mohawks practically and morally improved above that of the neighbouring heathen tribes, by the mere educational and civilizing process of forty years. The example and vices of the Mohawks were often urged by their heathen neighbours as an objection against the christian religion itself, when missionaries were sent among them. But a few years

---

<sup>102</sup> Neil Semple, *Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 169–70.

<sup>103</sup> Aborigines Protection Society, *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes (British Settlements)*, published for the Society by William Ball, Aldine Chambers, Paternoster Row, and Hatchard & Sons, Piccadilly (London, 1837), 63–66.

ago (1825), when the gospel was preached to these Mohawk Indians, as well as to the several tribes of the Chippeway Indians, a large portion of them embraced it, and became at once changed in their dispositions, and reformed in their lives, teachable, sober, honest, and industrious; and are improving in the arts of civilisation, and cultivating the virtues and charities of christian life.<sup>104</sup>

The derogatory language Ryerson used with reference to Mohawk peoples is at odds with some of his other descriptions of Indigenous Peoples, which are often cited to illustrate his friendly relationships, particularly with the Mississauga. For example, in April 1827 Ryerson wrote from the Credit Mission that the “affectionate manner” in which he had been received by the Mississauga “enabled me to embrace them as brethren, and love them as mine own people.”<sup>105</sup> The authors of the Select Committee report may have taken liberties in interpreting Ryerson’s testimony. Ryerson may also have used different language in different circumstances to achieve his desired ends; however, there are similarities between his language in the late 1830s and the terms Ryerson himself used and the views he espoused in his 1847 report on industrial schools for Indigenous children (discussed below).

### ➤ **1837 Foundation of The Aborigines Protection Society**

While the humanitarian impact of the *Aborigines Report* was modest, it led directly to the foundation of the Aborigines Protection Society, which consisted of five members of the Select Committee responsible for the Inquiry.<sup>106</sup> The society sought to protect those “who have no power to protect themselves” by “diffusing correct information concerning the character and condition of the Aborigines; by appealing to the government ...; and by bringing popular opinion to exert its proper influence in advancing the cause of justice.”<sup>107</sup> In 1840, the society proposed legislation to protect Indigenous People throughout all British colonies by providing political and social rights and improving their living

---

<sup>104</sup> Aborigines Protection Society, *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee*, 66.

<sup>105</sup> Egerton Ryerson, April 18, 1827, quoted in Smith, “Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga,” 226.

<sup>106</sup> Blackstock, “Aborigines Report,” 82.

<sup>107</sup> Aborigines Protection Society, *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee*, x.

conditions through “civilization.”<sup>108</sup> Ultimately, the British government did not accept this system.<sup>109</sup> The society was considered a humanitarian effort to secure money and defend the interests of Indigenous Peoples at the time, although as John Leslie has observed, Methodist missionaries were often motivated to secure land titles in order to defend their perceived progress in conversion and assimilation through “civilization” initiatives.<sup>110</sup>

Ryerson’s connection with the Aborigines Protection Society is unclear. In his history of Canadian Methodism, Neil Semple claimed that Ryerson became its Canadian representative,<sup>111</sup> but the society’s 1839 *Report on the Indians of Upper Canada* made no mention of Ryerson, although it discussed Kahkewaquonaby’s trips to Parliament.<sup>112</sup> Whether or not Ryerson was an active member of the society, historian Hope MacLean found that the society’s support for residential schooling for Indigenous children was “due directly to the influence of [William] Case, [Peter] Jones, [John] Sunday, and Egerton Ryerson” because Methodists were quietly “feeding information” to both the Aborigines Protection Society and the Society of Friends (Quakers). Thus in the late 1830s, MacLean concluded, “the impetus for residential schooling was not part of a coordinated program by other missionary groups in cooperation with the government, but rather direct adoption of plans proposed by Peter Jones and other Methodists.”<sup>113</sup>

In 1836, Sir Francis Bond Head was appointed Lieutenant Governor of Upper Canada and subsequently reviewed existing proposals for a new “Indian Policy.” Bond Head developed his own policy that rejected many of the principles of the existing “civilization”-focused program discussed previously, and advanced instead a radical “Indian Removal” policy that aimed to dispossess and relocate

---

<sup>108</sup> Standish Motte, cited in Blackstock, “Aborigines Report,” 83.

<sup>109</sup> Blackstock, “Aborigines Report,” 83.

<sup>110</sup> John F. Leslie, “The Bagot Commission: Developing a Corporate Memory for the Indian Department,” *Historical Papers* 17, no. 1 (1982): 36.

<sup>111</sup> Semple, *Lord’s Dominion*, 170. The document Semple cited is not digitized and was not available to Task Force researchers for verification.

<sup>112</sup> Aborigines Protection Society, *Report on the Indians of Upper Canada* (London: W. Ball, Arnold, 1839), 1–52.

<sup>113</sup> Hope MacLean, “Ojibwa Participation in Methodist Residential Schools,” *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 25, no. 1 (2005): 110–111.

all of the Indigenous People living in Upper Canada to the Manitoulin Island chain. Both Methodist missionaries and the Indigenous communities of Upper Canada were outraged. The missionaries argued that the policy of deportation directly interfered with their own assimilationist motivations and their “progress” in conversion and “civilization,” while great unrest was reported in Indigenous communities as a result of the threat of “removal.”<sup>114</sup>

The Executive Council of Lower Canada submitted a report in 1837, cautiously suggesting that Bond Head’s policy might be too radical and recommending a different approach that had some similarities with the Select Committee’s *Aborigines’ Report*, which had been issued just a few weeks earlier. The Select Committee’s findings reportedly had great impact on the decision of Lord Glenelg, Secretary of State for War and the Colonies, that Bond Head’s proposal was misguided, and ultimately he heeded the calls of the Aborigines Protection Society, the Executive Council, and the Methodists to adopt a different approach.<sup>115</sup>

➤ **1837–1838 Rebellions in Upper and Lower Canada**

Insurgents in Upper and Lower Canada led rebellions against the Crown and the political status quo. These rebellions led to the Durham Report, which recommended merging of the two colonies. The Act of Union created a single Province of Canada in 1841 with the two colonies now known as Canada East (Lower Canada) and Canada West (Upper Canada). The rebellions are important when thinking about the history of education and Ryerson’s role in Ontario education because political parties did not exist and the principle of ministerial responsibility had not been conceived of by the 1840s.<sup>116</sup>

➤ **1838 Colonial Office Statement on “Indian Policy”**

After the conflicts between Bond Head, the Methodists, the Executive Council of Lower Canada, and the Aborigines Protection Society, Lord Glenelg and the

---

<sup>114</sup> Leslie, “Bagot Commission,” 35–36.

<sup>115</sup> Leslie, “Bagot Commission,” 36–37.

<sup>116</sup> For further reading on the Rebellions, see Alan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1838 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993).

Colonial Office restated their commitment to the policy of “civilization” that they had initially endorsed in 1830.<sup>117</sup>

➤ **1838–1840 Egerton Ryerson Reinstated as Editor of the *Christian Guardian***

In June 1838 Ryerson returned to the role of editor of the *Christian Guardian* at the request of the Methodist Conference. The *Christian Guardian's* editorials from 1838 to 1840 were often concerned with the Clergy Reserves question and the future of Upper Canada’s educational system.<sup>118</sup> In his first editorial on July 11, 1838, Ryerson addressed the need for education reform:

In nothing is this Province so defective as in the requisite available provisions for, and efficient system of, general education. Let the distinctive character of that system be the union of public and private effort ... to Government influence will spontaneously add the various and combined religious influence in the country in the noble, statesmanlike, and divine work of raising up an elevated, intelligent, and moral population.<sup>119</sup>

Thus, through Ryerson’s various published papers he was able to influence the discourse and ultimately the decision regarding education reform in Upper Canada and, eventually, the Province of Canada.

➤ **1839–1867 Confederation Period and the Division of Federal and Provincial Responsibilities within the British North America Act (1867)**

Although the Dominion of Canada was not formalized until July 1, 1867, the Confederation period began shortly after Lord Durham’s 1839 *Report on the Affairs of British North America*. After the rebellions the seeds of a unified “Canadian” nationalism began to grow, nourished by the concept of “two founding nations” (which in turn was rooted in the British North America Act of 1867). The “two founding nations” approach sought to preserve French and

---

<sup>117</sup> Leslie, “Bagot Commission,” 37.

<sup>118</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 81.

<sup>119</sup> Quoted in Egerton Ryerson, *The Story of My Life*, 201.



English institutions at the provincial level while using assimilation and exclusion to manage Indigenous People and newcomers.

The Confederation period is historically relevant to an examination of Ryerson's life and legacy for two main reasons:

1. Ryerson's work and relationships with the Mississaugas of the Credit before formalized Confederation are often referred to as a "positive" experiment, in contrast to post-Confederation developments;<sup>120</sup> and
2. Ryerson's suggestions for a system of education to be developed at the provincial level were accepted as per Section 91 of the British North America Act, which left education for Indigenous Peoples within federal jurisdiction from 1867 onwards (British North America Act of 1867 s. 91 [24]).

➤ **1840 Turning Point for the Mississauga of Credit River**

Despite the hardships the Mississauga experienced after the War of 1812, Bohaker's study describes a "thriving" community on the Credit River until 1840. They made self-determined accommodations to colonial rule under intense pressure and from a nearly desperate position and succeeded in maintaining their own culture and governance. They also became largely self-sufficient for staple foods, and they built a timber mill and a pier into the Credit River for a schooner to transport the wood. The community included farmers, carpenters and a shoemaker. Moreover, "[m]ost could read and write in English (something that was not true of many white settlers) and twenty-four members of the community had been employed as missionaries around the Lakes."<sup>121</sup>

After 1840, however, circumstances worsened for the Credit River Mississauga. They faced pressure from settlers to sell their land, and when they resisted some settlers moved in regardless, taking over valuable farmland. The Indian

---

<sup>120</sup> For example, Hope MacLean, "A Positive Experiment in Aboriginal Education: The Methodist Ojibwa Day Schools in Upper Canada, 1824-1833," *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* XXII, 1 (2002): 23.

<sup>121</sup> Bohaker, 181.

Department did not help the Mississauga defend their land or treaty rights. Moreover, the resources that had once made the Credit River site so desirable were now under threat. The fishery was mostly ruined as a result of the appearance of settler-owned mills along the river and the resultant destruction of the salmon spawning grounds. The fish that remained were often stolen by settlers. The timber that had generated income for the community had nearly run out, and what remained was also often stolen by settlers.<sup>122</sup>

➤ **1840 and Beyond “Towards a Governmental School System”<sup>123</sup>**

Between 1840 and 1867, British North American colonies experienced dramatic changes at all levels, economic, political, social and cultural. Central to these changes were controversies over public schooling and growing support for the separation of church and state.

According to Susan Houston and Alison Prentice, historians of public education in Ontario, the most striking impression of mid-nineteenth-century school reform is the “overblown rhetoric of its promoters,” among them Egerton Ryerson, whose extensive writings on education employed “an intricate and interminable prose that seemed designed to exhaust as much as to persuade.”<sup>124</sup> Houston and Prentice observed that it was challenging to extract the essential beliefs of reformers such as Ryerson due to the sheer volume of their writing and their tendency to contradict both themselves and each other. The reformers did, however, share the “dualistic vision” typical of the Victorian period, manifested in a propensity to “see the world painted in black and white, rarely in the subtler shades of grey,” together with a strong belief in the need for school reform to counter what they believed were threats posed by “ignorance” and idleness among the people—particularly the youth—of a colony in transition. And Ryerson and other white reformers of the middling and better-off classes were united in viewing education as the solution to a wide range of social ills.<sup>125</sup>

---

<sup>122</sup> Bohaker, 182.

<sup>123</sup> Houston and Prentice, “Towards a Governmental School System,” in *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (1988), 97–124.

<sup>124</sup> Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 97.

<sup>125</sup> Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 97–98, 100–101.

Charles Duncombe's *Report on the Subject of Education in Upper Canada* (1836) was the first of many government-sponsored reports on the need for reforms to education. Duncombe focused on the youth of Toronto, whom he found to be "idle," unclean, prone to use "vile language" and highly likely to engage in crime. Duncombe recommended employment as much as education as the solution.<sup>126</sup> When Ryerson became Superintendent of schools, he took up Duncombe's initial themes but placed much more weight on education. "To leave children uneducated," he claimed in 1847, was to "train up thieves and incendiaries and murderers."<sup>127</sup>

The result of such concerns was a series of laws that increasingly centralized a provincial system of schooling. Both the growing necessity of literacy in an industrial society and the taxes levied to pay for education put schooling on many more people's minds across Upper Canada (later Canada West) in the mid-nineteenth century.<sup>128</sup> By the 1840s, vast parts of Upper Canada had been settled by European immigrants, and their presence demanded, in the view of educational reformers, proper and uniform education. As Benedict Anderson argued in his seminal text on nationalism, *Imagined Communities* (1983), the modern education system was closely tied to the nationalist and colonialist project. For Anderson, the modern education curriculum legitimized the colonial state and civil institutions and provided trained groups for governmental and corporate hierarchies.<sup>129</sup> However, new school legislation in Upper Canada in the 1840s generated considerable controversy and demonstrated that many felt the new laws did not prioritize the interests of families, children, churches or teachers.<sup>130</sup>

---

<sup>126</sup> Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 99.

<sup>127</sup> *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*, Vol. 12, 90–91, cited in Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 99–100.

<sup>128</sup> Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, "Industrializing Canada, 1840–1867," in *Foundations: Readings in Pre-Confederation Canadian History* (Pearson Education, 2004), 416–17.

<sup>129</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Revised edition (London: Verso Books, 1991), 132–34.

<sup>130</sup> Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 98 and Chap. 4.

For example, historians Claudette Knight and Kristin McLaren have demonstrated that Black residents in Canada West were eager for their children to be educated but encountered deep-seated prejudices when they tried to send their children to public schools.<sup>131</sup> Ontario amended its School Act in 1849 to permit municipal councils to “authorize the establishing of any number of schools for the education of the children of colored people that may judge expedient.” The preamble to the statute drew attention to the fact that “the prejudices and ignorance” of some Ontario residents had “prevented” Black children from attending the common schools in their district. Constance Backhouse also demonstrated that the language of white officials coerced Blacks into applying for segregated schools.<sup>132</sup>

As with public schools, the foundations of Canada’s university system were also developed in the mid-nineteenth century. Only a tiny fraction of men received a college education at that time; it was required for a professional career in law, medicine, theology and science. In Canada West and elsewhere in British North America, church-supported colleges survived but politicians with liberal leanings argued that state-supported educational institutions would better serve a “progressive society.” In addition, Ryerson’s and Duncombe’s concerns were political as well as social and economic.<sup>133</sup> An uneducated public would be less governable and a fertile ground for crime. As Bruce Curtis observed, “the central focus of mid-century school reform was the creation of subjects who were capable of being governed—or of governing themselves.”<sup>134</sup>

### ➤ **1841–1867 Separate Schools**

Separate schools for different Christian faiths were introduced between 1841 and 1867. School Acts of 1841–43 enabled either the Roman Catholic or

---

<sup>131</sup> Claudette Knight, “Black Parents Speak: Education in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada West,” *Ontario History* 89, 4 (1997): 269–84; Kristen McLaren, “‘We Had No Desire to be Set Apart’: Forced Segregation of Black Students in Canada West Public Schools and Myths of British Egalitarianism,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 37, no. 73 (2004): 34–37.

<sup>132</sup> Constance Backhouse, *Colour Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada 1900–1950* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Osgoode Society, 2007), 250.

<sup>133</sup> Houston and Prentice, 101.

<sup>134</sup> Bruce Curtis, “Preconditions of the Canadian State: Educational Reform and the Construction of a Public in Upper Canada, 1837–1846,” *Studies in Political Economy* 10 (Winter 1983): 100.

Protestant minority in a local municipality to establish a separate school board. The British North America Act of 1867, section 93, guaranteed the continuation of existing separate school rights.

Ryerson is described as being opposed to separate schools for Protestants and Catholics because of the challenges they posed to common schools; however, in a report to the Provincial Secretary (the nominal head of the Department of Education) in 1847, he stated, "I was not prepared to condemn what had been unanimously sanctioned by two successive parliaments."<sup>135</sup> Ryerson's claim that separate schools would "die out, not by force of legislative enactment, but under the influence of increasingly *enlightened* and enlarged views of Christian relations, rights and duties between different classes of the community," suggests that he was hopeful that separate schools for different Christian denominations would eventually come to a natural end.<sup>136</sup>

➤ **1841 Ryerson Appointed the First Principal of Victoria College**

The Methodists continued to promote their own plans for a college. They eventually secured an addendum to the charter of the Upper Canada Academy at Coburg (1836), and within a year of Ryerson's appointment in 1841 as principal of the new Victoria College, students began to attend. As A. B. McKillop observed in his history of Ontario universities, by this time "Egerton Ryerson dominated the scene."<sup>137</sup>

➤ **1842 Ryerson Receives Honorary Doctorate from Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut**

For his service in the Methodist church, Ryerson was awarded an honorary doctorate from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut. The president of Wesleyan University was one of the early Methodist itinerants in Canada. Ryerson said nothing of the award at the time; however, he later renounced the

---

<sup>135</sup> Cited in Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 85.

<sup>136</sup> R. M. Stamp, *The Historical Background to Separate Schools in Ontario* (Toronto: Department of Education, 1985), 21.

<sup>137</sup> A. B. McKillop, *Matters of Mind*, 15. Ryerson's connections with Victoria College are outlined in more detail in *Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson* (Toronto: Victoria University, March 25, 2021).

use of his honorary title in the preface to his letters in defence of Governor General Sir Charles Metcalfe.<sup>138</sup>

➤ **1842 Governor General Sir Charles Bagot Commissions a Review of the Indian Department**

In 1842, Governor General Sir Charles Bagot commissioned an additional investigation into the Indian Department throughout Canada East and Canada West. Three commissioners, Rawson W. Rawson, John Davidson and William Hepburn, held public hearings for fifteen months. The terms of reference of the “Bagot Commission” were to

inquire into the application of the *annual grant* of money made by the Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland for the *benefit of the Indians* in this Province, together with such other matters connected with the Affairs of the Indians residing in or visiting Canada, as have come, or you shall consider right to bring under the cognizance of the Provincial Government, and to report to me upon said several matters, and whether in your opinion any change should be made in the manner of conducting the business of the Indian Department, or in the application of funds placed at its disposal.<sup>139</sup>

With reference to the Bagot Commission, Bohaker observed, “[b]y the mid-nineteenth century, what Patrick Wolfe calls settler colonialism’s ‘logic of elimination,’ which ‘detroys to replace,’ was fully operational.”<sup>140</sup>

➤ **1844 Ryerson Appointed Superintendent of the Common Schools of Canada West**

In 1844, Ryerson was appointed Superintendent of the Common Schools of Canada West under the leadership of Governor General Sir Charles Metcalfe and

---

<sup>138</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:25.

<sup>139</sup> Charles Bagot, *Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada*. Report laid before the legislative assembly on March 20th, 1845, 1 (original italics).

<sup>140</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, xx.

Vice-Chancellor Robert Jameson.<sup>141</sup> It was a vital step towards his goal of quality education for all Upper Canadians.

Prior to Ryerson's appointment, the colonial government did not enforce provincial government regulations because they were the responsibility of local authorities. Moreover, the provincial regulations were recommendations and not expected to be directly implemented. For Ryerson, the main defect of the provincial school system was its lack of uniformity and efficiency. He believed these problems could be remedied through the introduction of uniform textbooks, qualified teachers, proper schoolhouses, consistent student attendance and routine inspections to ensure that all schools were following the provincial government's guidelines.<sup>142</sup>

### ➤ **1844 Ryerson's Educational Tours as Superintendent of the Common Schools**

Ryerson's role as superintendent required him to organize and administer the entirety of Canada West's educational system. He began by spending thirteen months surveying best practices in education and learning in schools across Europe and the United States.<sup>143</sup> From November 1844 to December 1845, Ryerson travelled to England, Holland, Belgium, France, Prussia, Switzerland, Ireland, Italy, Scotland and other European countries. He collected information from books on each country's educational system and interviewed professors, teachers and school directors on their educational styles.<sup>144</sup>

He was primarily interested in analysing the ways different countries trained teachers, whether schools were religious or secular, and in the standardization of textbooks.<sup>145</sup> He also made an effort to survey each country's political system and government institutions alongside its schools. In France, he directed his

---

<sup>141</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 82.

<sup>142</sup> Nathanael Burwash, *The Makers of Canada: Egerton Ryerson*, Volume 13 (Toronto: Morang, 1906), 165–66.

<sup>143</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 98.

<sup>144</sup> Charles Bruce Sissons, *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947), 90–93.

<sup>145</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:93.

energy to learning the language, and within a few months he had developed a speaking and reading knowledge of French.<sup>146</sup> In Italy, he particularly enjoyed the country's efforts to display different kinds of antiquities, art, sculpture and paintings. Ryerson was most impressed by the education systems in Prussia, Holland and Switzerland.<sup>147</sup> In Prussia, he appreciated the religious sentiments that pervaded their schools, writing, "I promised God that I would look upon every Prussian peasant child as a being who could complain of me before God, if I did not provide him with the best education, as a man and a Christian, which it was possible for me to provide."<sup>148</sup> In Switzerland, Ryerson noted the compulsory school attendance law, although at the time he was not prepared to recommend such a measure. He wrote, "would Canada be people forty years hence, if every child from this time henceforth, should receive eight years instruction in the practical arts and duties of life on Christian principles!" In Ireland, he was impressed by the uniformity of national textbooks and the ways in which religious instruction was incorporated.<sup>149</sup>

Ryerson's subsequent reports reflected his conclusion that, in the words of one of his earliest biographers, "the productive capacity of the people, their morality and intelligence, are in direct proportion to their schools and institutions of learning."<sup>150</sup> In 1846, Ryerson incorporated his findings into a *Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada*, in which he argued for a universal and compulsory primary and industrial education system founded on Christian religion and morality.<sup>151</sup> This report became the foundation of the Common School Act of 1846, also known as "Ryerson's Act," in the same year (discussed below).

Ryerson's Methodism and moral thought contributed strongly to his proposals on education. As Albert F. Fiorino noted, he did not subscribe to the emerging theories on reason and rationalism in education; rather, he proposed a moral

---

<sup>146</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:85.

<sup>147</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:93.

<sup>148</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:95.

<sup>149</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:98, 95.

<sup>150</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 112.

<sup>151</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:95.



theory based on Christianity. Ryerson's Christian moral philosophy influenced his goal of establishing a universal public school system that was, as he stated repeatedly, the basis on which to produce thoughtful Christian citizens.<sup>152</sup>

Ryerson developed a theory of education based on the idea that education aided in the Christian actualization process. He produced five principles on which a public educational system must be based: education should be universal; it should be practical; it should be moral and based on Christianity; it should acquaint students with fundamental elementary knowledge; and it should develop the intellectual as well as physical capabilities of students. For Ryerson, education both gave people the capacity to provide value to society by improving humankind and enabled individuals to better connect with their Christian faith.<sup>153</sup>

#### ➤ **1844 Bagot Report and the Department of Indian Affairs**

In 1844, the report General Sir Charles Bagot had commissioned two years earlier was complete. It recorded a number of problems within the Indian Department and highlighted deplorable conditions and other sources of tension between the department and Indigenous communities:

The Commissioners concluded that the Indian people of both Canadas, despite their diverse stages of development, shared similar difficulties: squatters on reserves, improper recording of land sales and leases, lack of progress in agriculture and excessive use of liquor. The situation in Canada West was more acute due to its larger Indian population, numerous reserves, and its more recent adoption of the civilization program. As well, legislation to control liquor, protect reserve land, and prevent trespass had been evaded or ignored by the new settlers.<sup>154</sup>

---

<sup>152</sup> Albert F. Fiorno, "The Moral Education of Egerton Ryerson's Idea of Education," in *Egerton Ryerson and His Times*, ed. Neil McDonald and Alf Chaiton (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1978), 59–62.

<sup>153</sup> Fiorno, "The Moral Education," 66–71.

<sup>154</sup> Leslie, "Bagot Commission" 39.

Ultimately, the Commissioners found the 1830 “civilization” program had been ineffective because of its tendency to isolate Indigenous communities. They argued instead that a new approach was required to “civilize” Indigenous Peoples, which should be accelerated through “Indian education, protection of Indian land and resources, and a complete reorganization of the Indian Department.”<sup>155</sup>

Among their recommendations, the commissioners stressed that it was imperative for Indigenous People to be made into Christian farmers. The report argued that the earlier day schools had been ineffective in achieving this goal due to parental influence and low attendance. Commissioners therefore advised instead that new “Indian boarding schools with attached farms” should be created with the cooperation of all religious groups, including Methodists, in order to teach industry, animal husbandry and mechanical trades as a means of entry into the domestic agricultural economy. The report also mandated the creation of four manual labour schools that would provide students with education and experience as timber rangers and pathmasters, along with the establishment of boarding schools as alternatives to day schools.<sup>156</sup>

➤ **1846 The Conference of the Narrows (“Conference on Residential Schools”)**

In 1846 Thomas G. Anderson, the visiting Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, gathered approximately eighty to one hundred Indigenous men, including representatives from Orillia, Port Credit, Alderville, Alwick, Rama, Rice Lake, Mud Lake, Skugog Lake, River Credit, Snake Island, Beau-Soleil Island, Owen Sound, “Sahgeeng,” and River Severn, the Mohawks, the “Chippeways” (otherwise called Mississauga), and the Otahwaus.<sup>157</sup> At this council, Anderson informed those present that the “civilization” program had largely failed. He stated that a new system would be implemented to consolidate Indigenous populations in Munceytown, Alderville and Owen Sound, and subsequently establish manual labour boarding schools near these communities. These boarding schools would

---

<sup>155</sup> Leslie, “Bagot Commission,” 40.

<sup>156</sup> Leslie, “Bagot Commission,” 40.

<sup>157</sup> Henry Baldwin, “Minutes of the General Council of Indian Chiefs and Principal Men, held at Orillia, Lake Simcoe Narrows,” *Canada Gazette*, Montreal, 1846, 4.

separate children from their parents, and the chiefs who were present would pay annuities to fund the schools.<sup>158</sup> After both government officials and representatives of the Methodist Church promised that the education provided by the schools would advance Indigenous People's autonomy and equality in settler society, Anderson received permission from representatives of almost every band in attendance to apply these annuities for the next twenty-five years to support the construction of schools at Alnwick, Munceytown and Owen Sound.<sup>159</sup>

Historians have concluded that the implementation of manual labour schools in this period came largely in response to Methodist and Ojibwe petitioning.<sup>160</sup> Ryerson was also influential in the development of a "cooperative approach to Indian education" that included both the Indian Department and Methodist missionaries. The resulting agreement gave responsibility for the industrial schools to the Methodists, including the provision of books and the teachers' salaries.<sup>161</sup>

➤ **1846 Ryerson's First Act (Common School Act of 1846)**

The Common School Act of 1846, for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada, provided a basis upon which all subsequent provincial school legislation was founded. This act established the principles of school administration, student age, teaching standards, curriculum and standardized textbooks, building design and maintenance. It also introduced the development of a model school and a "normal school" for teacher training.

This legislation is known as "Ryerson's Act" because of his involvement in drafting the legislation, which reflected the definition of education he had

---

<sup>158</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 75–76

<sup>159</sup> Leslie, "Bagot Commission," 50; Milloy, *A National Crime*, 16–17; *Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson*, 16–17.

<sup>160</sup> MacLean, "Ojibwa Participation," 105; Peace, "Searching for Order," 198.

<sup>161</sup> John F. Leslie, *Commissions of Inquiry into Indian Affairs in the Canadas, 1828–1858*, Indian and Northern Affairs, Treaties and Historical Research Centre (Ottawa: Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1985), 15; also Milloy, *A National Crime*, 17.

formulated in his *Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada* (1846):

By education I mean not the mere acquisition of certain arts or of certain branches of knowledge, but that instruction and discipline which qualify and dispose the subjects of it for their appropriate duties and employments of life, as Christians, as persons of business, and also as members of the civil community in which they live.<sup>162</sup>

Ryerson wished to see a system of universal education adapted to the needs of the country:

The branches of knowledge which it is essential that all should understand should be provided for all, and taught to all; should be brought within the reach of the most needy and forced upon the attention of the most careless. The knowledge required for the scientific pursuit of mechanics, agriculture, and commerce must needs be provided to an extent corresponding with the demand and the exigencies of the country; while to a more limited extent are needed facilities for acquiring the higher education of the learned professions.<sup>163</sup>

#### ➤ **1847 Mississauga of the Credit River Extinguish Their Council Fire**

The hardships faced by the Credit River Mississauga beginning in 1840 culminated in 1847 with the decision to leave their now diminished, depleted and damaged lands. After considering their options, the Mississauga decided to accept a parcel of land from the Mohawks at Grand River, land that they had originally given to the Mohawks in 1784, and they extinguished the council fire at the mouth of the Credit River.<sup>164</sup> Kahkewaquonaby's vision of an Indigenous-designed and -led model agricultural and commercial settlement with its own school and church proved unsustainable under settler and colonial pressures.

---

<sup>162</sup> E. Ryerson, *Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction for Upper Canada* (Montreal: Lovell & Gibson, March 1846), in J. George Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada from the Passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791 to the Close of Dr. Ryerson's Administration of the Education Department in 1876*, Vol. 6 (1846; Toronto, 1899), 142.

<sup>163</sup> Ryerson, *Report on a System*, 142.

<sup>164</sup> Bohaker, *Doodem*, 176–76.

Nevertheless, the Mississauga demonstrated continued resilience and resourcefulness and created yet another new home, where they continue to reside today.

➤ **1847 Ryerson Comments on the Common School Acts of 1841 and 1843**

Earlier Common School Acts applied only to Canada West. The principle of “separate schools” for different religious denominations, which had first been accepted in 1841, continued into later acts; however, it was now available only to Roman Catholics and Protestants rather than being open to any “different faith.”<sup>165</sup> The term “separate schools” was used within the provisions of these acts and became the basis of all laws governing denominational minority schools in Upper Canada.

Although “separate” schools had been written into the law prior to Ryerson’s appointment as Superintendent of Education for Canada West in 1844, he did not support the measure. It was still on his mind when he wrote his report that year. At that time, he allowed that denominational schools had some benefits, such as putting “all religious persuasions on the same footing” and reducing opposition to common schools. Nonetheless, Ryerson stated that he accepted continued provisions for “separate” schools only because they had already been approved by earlier Parliaments.<sup>166</sup>

➤ **1847–1852 Formative Years of the Normal School**

The first Normal School (teacher’s college) in Upper Canada opened in Toronto on November 1, 1847, at the former Government House of Upper Canada. The 1846 Act provided a subsidy for the building and maintenance of the school. The development of the Toronto Normal School was the first step in the establishment of formal teacher training and provided a foundation of practical and professional standards for all teachers. The school offered instruction in the history and philosophy of education and taught methods for maintaining order in the classroom. On July 2, 1851, the school was moved to the land bounded by

---

<sup>165</sup> Stamp, *Historical Background*, 25.

<sup>166</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 85.

Gerrard, Church, Gould, and Victoria streets, which Ryerson had purchased from Peter McGill for £4,500.<sup>167</sup>

➤ **1847 Report of Dr. Ryerson on Industrial Schools**

In March 1847, George Vardon, the British Assistant Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, wrote to Ryerson asking for his advice in realizing Anderson's vision for manual labour schools. Vardon told Ryerson that he had "great anxiety" about the project, for "You are aware that there are numerous persons in the colony, though actuated by different motives, who will alike rejoice in the failure of a plan which tends to place the Indian on a footing of perfect equality with their White Brethren."<sup>168</sup> Two months later, Ryerson replied that he would "have great pleasure in stating to you, in as few words as possible, what occurs to me on this most important subject."<sup>169</sup>

Ryerson's response to Vardon's request was uncovered by historians in the late 1990s, appended with the title "Report of Dr. Ryerson on Industrial Schools" to an 1898 publication from the Department of Indian Affairs. Since then, the document has become pivotal to assessments of Ryerson's legacy and his connections to the residential school system.<sup>170</sup>

In his 1847 report, Ryerson advised that the new institutions be called "industrial schools" rather than manual labour schools because they should be "schools of learning and religion" and "industry is a great element of efficiency in each of these." According to Ryerson, labour was used in manual labour schools as a tool to achieve the intended end of learning. Industrial schools, by contrast, should use learning as a tool to produce "industrious farmers."<sup>171</sup> Thus, he

---

<sup>167</sup>John Downing, *History of Ryerson*, Ryerson University Archives and Special Collections, Toronto, 1979, 5–7.

<sup>168</sup>Vardon to Ryerson, March 18, 1847, quoted in Smith, "Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga," 233.

<sup>169</sup>Egerton Ryerson, "Report of Dr. Ryerson on Industrial Schools," May 26, 1847, in *Statistics Respecting Indian Schools* (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1898), 73. This report is also reproduced in *Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson*, Appendix 2, 29–34.

<sup>170</sup>*Victoria University Presidential Report on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson* (Toronto: Victoria University, June 2021), 3.

<sup>171</sup>Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 73–74.

envisioned that his report to Vardon would outline “the best method of establishing and conducting Industrial Schools for the benefit of the aboriginal Indian Tribes.”<sup>172</sup>

Ryerson made three main recommendations, accompanied by suggestions on how to put them into practice. He began by contrasting his goals for industrial schools with those of “common schools.” His model of education was shaped by his view of the character and capabilities of Indigenous People, which necessitated both a residential school setting and a firm foundation of religious instruction in order to achieve his goals:

As to the objects of these establishments, I understand them to not contemplate anything more in respect to intellectual training than to give a plain English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic. In this their object is identical with that of every good common school; but in addition to this pupils of the industrial schools are to be taught agriculture, kitchen gardening, and mechanics, so far as mechanics is connected with making and repairing the most useful agricultural implements. It is, therefore, necessary that the pupils reside together. Hence the necessity of providing for their domestic education, and for every part of their religious instruction. This last, I conceive to be absolutely essential, not merely upon general Christian principles, but also upon the ground of what I may term Indian economics as it is a fact established by many experiments that the North American Indian cannot be civilized or preserved in a state of civilization (including habits of industry and sobriety) except in connection with, if not by the influence of, not only religious instruction and sentiment but of religious feelings. Even in ordinary civilized life, the mass of the labouring classes are controlled by their feelings as almost the only rule of action, in proportion to the absence or partial character of their intellectual development. The theory of a certain kind of educational philosophy is falsified in respect to the Indian: with him nothing can be done to improve and elevate his character and condition without the aid of religious feeling. This influence must be superadded to all others to make the Indian a sober

---

<sup>172</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 73.

and industrious man. Even a knowledge of the doctrines and moral precepts of orthodox Christianity, with all the appliances of prudential example and instruction, is inadequate to produce in the heart and life of the Indian, the spirit and habits of an industrial civilization, without the additional energy and impulsive activity of religious feeling. The animating and controlling spirit of each industrial school establishment should, therefore, in my opinion be a religious one. The religious culture in daily exercises and instruction should be a prominent object of attention; and besides vocal music, generally, sacred music should form an important branch of their education.<sup>173</sup>

Ryerson went on to explain why the new industrial schools should train Indigenous students for agricultural labour rather than skilled trades: "I think that it is neither expedient nor practicable with the probable resources available to provide for educating them in the industrial schools to any other pursuit than agriculture." He believed it would be too expensive to build trades buildings and hire tradesmen as teachers, and teaching the trades would complicate the management of the schools. He also doubted sufficient employment existed for Indigenous tradesmen to justify the cost of training. In any case, he concluded, "Agriculture being the chief interest, and probably the most suitable employment of the civilized Indians, I think the great object of industrial schools should be to fit the pupils for becoming working farmers and agricultural labourers, fortified of course by Christian principles, feelings and habits."<sup>174</sup>

Having outlined the goals and focus of industrial schools, Ryerson in his second recommendation addressed the balance between government and independent management of the schools, starting with the centrality of religious instruction:

I think that any attempt to carry on these establishments by providing merely for secular instruction, and that any attempt to separate the secular from the religious instruction will prove a failure; and that any

---

<sup>173</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 73.

<sup>174</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 74.



attempt on the part of the Government to provide religious instruction will be found equally impracticable.<sup>175</sup>

The government, Ryerson argued, should focus on inspection and funding rather than day-to-day management:

I think therefore, the interference or control of the Government should be confined to that which the Government can do with most effect and the least trouble, namely, to the right of inspecting the schools from time to time by an agent or agents of its own, to the right of having detailed reports of the schools as often as it shall think proper to require them, at least once or twice a year, and the right of continuing or withholding the grant made in aid of these schools....

It is this power over the grant, the exercise of which will be determined by the inspections made and the reports given, that the paramount authority of the Government, in respect to these schools will be secured, while the endless difficulties and embarrassments arising from fruitless attempts to manage the schools in detail will be avoided.<sup>176</sup>

Ryerson recommended that considerable authority over the organization of industrial schools be granted to religious denominations, who should reach agreements with the government on building construction, conduct and the conditions upon which the students should be received in the schools. Drawing in part on the example of common school governance in England, Ryerson further recommended that the staffing of the new institutions (other than the superintendent) be largely left to the religious authorities of each school, for “the task of selecting and overseeing such agents can be much more effectually performed by the authorities of a religious body than by the Government.”<sup>177</sup>

---

<sup>175</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 74.

<sup>176</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 74.

<sup>177</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 74–75.

Ryerson's third recommendation pertained to "general regulations on which the Government should insist in the management of these industrial schools." He continued to lean heavily on the importance of religious education, which must "pervade all departments of [the schools'] immediate management" in order to "civilize" Indigenous children. Ryerson's travels to the agricultural school at Hofwyl and the normal school in Haarlem had also taught him that the "character and qualifications of the superintendent and agents employed" must be carefully evaluated. The number of employees would depend on the needs of each individual school, but Ryerson insisted on a paternalistic structure and hierarchy for the staff: "under a paternal discipline, it would be desirable that the master of the school should also be the farmer and the pupils be members of his family." The superintendent "ought to be the spiritual pastor and father of the family; a farmer and a schoolmaster."<sup>178</sup>

The remainder of Ryerson's third recommendation addressed the structure of the industrial school day, the age range of the students, and the need for efficient bookkeeping on the part of the superintendent to avoid "extravagance" and "injudicious expenditures."<sup>179</sup> Ryerson was not prepared to recommend an age at which Indigenous children should enter an industrial school, but he suggested that they remain in the schools for between four and eight years.<sup>180</sup> School days should consist of eight to twelve hours of manual labour and two to four hours of academic instruction, with some variation depending on the season and an additional hour of sleep during the winter. Students would

rise at five in the summer, attend to the police of the house, and have prayers and lessons in the school until seven, breakfast at seven, labour from eight until noon, dinner and intermission from twelve until one, labour from one until six, supper at six, lessons until eight, have prayers and retire to bed between eight and nine.<sup>181</sup>

---

<sup>178</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 75.

<sup>179</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 76.

<sup>180</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 77.

<sup>181</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 75.

Pupils should attend religious services and study sacred music and catechism. Academic instruction should include reading, English language, arithmetic, geometry, geography, general and natural history, agricultural chemistry, writing, drawing, vocal music, bookkeeping (with a strong emphasis on developing financial literacy for the purpose of farming), Christian religion and morals. Drawing again on his earlier visit to the Hofwyl Agricultural School, where the headmaster taught his agricultural pupils bookkeeping, Ryerson suggested students in industrial schools might be paid up to a penny a day for their labour so they could learn to manage their own financial account and have some funds available when they finished school. Also taking his inspiration from the Irish National Agricultural School, Ryerson hoped that the training and labour he outlined, coupled with the school superintendent's careful management and government oversight, would lead to his desired outcome, which was to see graduates of the industrial schools become prosperous farmers.<sup>182</sup>

Donald Smith has recently argued that Ryerson focused on European-style agricultural education to enable Indigenous Peoples to “retain their lands and to continue as a separate people.” According to Smith, Ryerson “wanted Indigenous students to become self-sufficient and independent—totally confident in their relationships with the non-Indigenous society.”<sup>183</sup> Victoria University's Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson read both the intentions and the outcomes of the 1847 report very differently. The panel noted that some Indigenous parents and leaders, including Kahkewaquonaby, sought European-style education for their children as a means of economic survival, but Kahkewaquonaby envisioned residential schools that would be led and staffed by Indigenous People and would train students in a range of skills and trades beyond agriculture. This model of schooling reflected promises made to chiefs at the Conference of the Narrows in 1846, when they had agreed to use their annuities to support schools whose education would “lead to Indigenous self-government, autonomy, and advancement in settler society.” However, Ryerson's report to Vardon, on which the first two industrial schools were based,

---

<sup>182</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 75–76.

<sup>183</sup> Smith, “Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga,” 234.

did not share those goals: “Ryerson ignored alternative visions and promises that saw Indigenous education as a pathway to equality and self-governance, instead recommending an educational system intended to turn Indigenous students into a racialized subservient class.”<sup>184</sup> Accordingly, Ryerson’s 1847 report became “one of the seeds for the genocidal residential school system.”<sup>185</sup>

Although Ryerson claimed that the objectives of the industrial schools he proposed were “identical with that of every good common school,”<sup>186</sup> many of the recommendations for industrial school structure, educational content and governance that he made in 1847 were quite distinct from the provisions he had made for common schools the previous year. Both models of education emphasized mechanics, agriculture and commerce, but the focus and implementation of industrial schooling were different. Industrial school education was intended exclusively to produce “industrious” Indigenous farmers through very long hours of manual labour, extensive religious teaching and limited academic instruction. Common schools, by contrast, were intended to produce good Christian citizens, “members of the civil community in which they live,” including professionals and business people, opportunities that were not found in his proposals for Indigenous students.<sup>187</sup> These distinctions reflected Ryerson’s beliefs in racial hierarchy, the limited capacities of Indigenous People, and the centrality of Christianization, and his assessment that the educational needs of Indigenous children differed from those of other students. The scope and goals of industrial school education were therefore much more limited than common school education, with lasting results.

As noted in the discussion of Maitland’s proposals in 1820, ideas about the development of schools to teach Indigenous children Christian religion, elementary academic education, agriculture and industry in Upper Canada existed decades before Ryerson’s formal recommendations. As historian John Milloy has found, the origins of the Canadian residential school system cannot

---

<sup>184</sup> *Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson*, 15–17 (quotes pp. 17 and 15).

<sup>185</sup> *Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson*, 2.

<sup>186</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 73.

<sup>187</sup> Ryerson, *Report on a System of Public Elementary Instruction*, 142.

be traced to a “single root.” The residential school model long predated Ryerson, beginning with the application of both a “civilization” model and residential schools for Indigenous People in the early seventeenth century by the French regime in North America, followed by its use in other parts of the continent.<sup>188</sup> Frameworks for institutions similar to Ryerson’s recommended model are clear in Maitland’s 1820 proposal and subsequent “civilization” initiatives, including but not limited to Darling’s 1828 report and the Bagot Commission in the 1840s.

Although Ryerson’s model of industrial schooling was not particularly original or unique, the recommendations he made to Vardon in May 1847 had a great deal of influence on account of Ryerson’s position in society and government. His report provided a detailed framework for Indigenous People’s education, how the industrial schools should be staffed and managed, and the reasons why they should function in key respects differently from common schools. Critically, the program of education Ryerson provided to the colonial government was not designed to promote equality and self-determination for Indigenous People in settler society, as Indigenous leaders had been promised at the Conference of the Narrows the previous year.

Ryerson concluded his report by offering to address any omissions and expressing his willingness to “be ready at any time to do what I can to promote the objects of these contemplated industrial schools.”<sup>189</sup> The 1847 report was, however, both Ryerson’s most explicit contribution to the structure of Indigenous education and his final discussion of industrial schools. He does not appear to have made any further recommendations on education for Indigenous children, nor was he consulted on the topic again.

➤ **1847 After Ryerson’s Report: Alnwick and Mount Elgin 1847–1860**

After the Bagot Report, the Conference of the Narrows, and Ryerson’s report, the Indian Department initiated the construction of two schools that were largely based on Ryerson’s recommendations: Alnwick, to serve northern and south-eastern bands in Alderville, and Mount Elgin, to serve south-western

---

<sup>188</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 13–14.

<sup>189</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 77.

bands. Kahkewaquonaby oversaw the construction of Mount Elgin in 1847. He had planned to be the school's first superintendent; however, he fell ill and the role was taken on by two non-Indigenous missionaries, S. D. Rice and Samuel Rose.<sup>190</sup>

William Case had already established a small residential school in Alderville in 1838–1839, which had 30 students by 1845. In 1845, the Alderville band committed a portion of their annuity money to help build a new school, which became Alnwick.<sup>191</sup>

Alnwick and Mount Elgin were staffed by teachers who had been trained at the Toronto Normal School. According to MacLean, the schools “incorporated the reforms which Egerton Ryerson was making in the provincial school system” in the same period, and the teachers were “a step up from the untrained teachers previously used in the Methodist Ojibwa day schools.”<sup>192</sup> Nonetheless, as historian Alison Norman has noted, government officials’ concerns about the quality of “Indian teachers” persisted into the early twentieth century.<sup>193</sup>

School directors claimed that their students received instruction in reading, writing, arithmetic, grammar, geography and astronomy. After 1856, general history, English and Canadian history, algebra and agricultural chemistry were added at Mount Elgin. MacLean observed, however, that reports from missionaries and Samuel Rose noted that few students made progress in English, which would suggest little advanced learning in other fields.<sup>194</sup>

Students also worked in agricultural labour, as Ryerson had recommended. A daily schedule from Mount Elgin included five and a half hours of physical labour (see Table 1).<sup>195</sup>

---

<sup>190</sup> MacLean, “Ojibwa Participation,” 111, 113.

<sup>191</sup> Carney, “Aboriginal Residential Schools,” 25; MacLean, “Ojibwa Participation,” 103.

<sup>192</sup> MacLean, “Ojibwa Participation,” 113.

<sup>193</sup> Alison Norman, “‘True to My Own Noble Race’: Six Nations Teachers at the Grand River in the Early Twentieth Century,” *Ontario History* 107, no. 1 (2018): 18.

<sup>194</sup> MacLean, “Ojibwa Participation,” 113–14.

<sup>195</sup> MacLean, “Ojibwa Participation,” 114–15; table reproduced from p. 115.

**Table 1**  
**Daily Schedule at Mount Elgin School in 1851**

5 am.	Bell rings, students rise, wash, and dress
5:30 am.	Breakfast, then prayers
6-9 am.	Boys work on farm and girls in house
9-12 am	School
12-1 pm.	Lunch and recreation
1-3:30 pm	School
3:30-6 pm.	Work on farm
6 pm.	Dinner and prayers
evening	In winter, boys in evening school, girls learn needlework
9 pm	Bedtime

Source: Miss. Soc. Rep, 1851, xi-xii. The report does not say what the students did in the evening in summer. Perhaps they did even more work on the farm.

*Figure 3. Daily Schedule at Mount Elgin School*

Other aspects of the two schools also reflected Ryerson's 1847 recommendations, most significantly the goal of assimilation through Christianization. As Maclean noted, the purpose of these schools was "to eradicate Ojibwa culture. Instruction in Christianity was considered a primary means of effecting change and consisted not only of daily prayers and attendance at church, but also the memorization of long passages of Scripture."<sup>196</sup>

In the early 1850s, the schools were seen as a success by both colonial administration and missionaries. Maclean posits that the death of William Case in 1855 and Kahkewaquonaby in 1856 marked a turning point in the quality and perceived success of both schools. Case was succeeded as director of Alnwick by Sylvester Hurlburt, who did not act in the best interest of the Indigenous students. In 1855, a report from Viscount Bury at the Indian Department found that Alnwick had seen a decline in hygiene, ventilation quality, and organization, although Bury was still impressed with the conditions at Mount Elgin.<sup>197</sup>

Hygiene problems contributed to a typhus epidemic later that year, which killed four students and a teacher. Alnwick closed briefly until July 1856, and

<sup>196</sup> MacLean, "Ojibwa Participation," 115-16.

<sup>197</sup> MacLean, "Ojibwa Participation," 117-18.

enrolment declined as many children ran away, parents began to refuse to send their children to the schools, and northern bands stopped paying annuities to Alnwick.<sup>198</sup> In fact, children running away or refusing to return appeared to be one of the main problems with these schools from the outset. Attendance was not compulsory, and neither Methodists nor the Indian Department compelled enrolment by force. According to MacLean, support for Alnwick likely declined due to the Indian Department's use of force to dispossess local Indigenous People of their lands and the failure to build a new school. At Mount Elgin, the main reasons for the withdrawal of support included restrictive policies on parental visits, the amount of labour required of the children and rates of disease.<sup>199</sup>

In 1858, the Commission to Investigate Indian Affairs found that both of the schools had failed to achieve their goals and recommended that their grants be discontinued as the schools were not worth the investment. The commission blamed the failure of the schools not on administrators or teachers but largely on the Indigenous children and their families. The commissioners considered that parents were prejudiced against the schools and many children were too old when they entered the institutions; they arrived with "filthy and vicious habits" and were accordingly uncontrollable. As well, children did not remain in the institutions for long enough and often returned to their own homes "without permission." Once students had left the schools, they did not share or make use of what they learned: "the girls make no effort to improve the condition of the houses, nor do the boys attempt to assist their parents steadily on the farm." The commissioners also noted structural problems. Boys were not provided with a portion of land when they completed their education as originally promised, and thus they worked "without the stimulus of reward"; and funds from the Indian Department were not sufficient to enable a system of education in the mechanical arts. "It is then with great reluctance," the commissioners concluded, "that we are forced to the conclusion that this benevolent experiment has been to a great extent a failure." They recommended that the

---

<sup>198</sup> MacLean, "Ojibwa Participation," 118.

<sup>199</sup> MacLean, "Ojibwa Participation," 120–22.



Colonial Office stop deducting from annuities for the schools and make provisions for the closure of the schools and repurposing of the buildings.<sup>200</sup>

➤ **1849 and 1850 Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Public Schools in Upper Canada, Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada Amendment, and Egerton Ryerson’s tolerance for racially segregated schooling**

The Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Public Schools in Upper Canada (1849, amended from 1846) allowed the establishment of separate schools on religious and racial grounds.<sup>201</sup>

Although the 1849 act is commonly referred to as the Separate Schools Act, racially segregated schools were already commonplace prior to this legislation; there were also significant societal barriers to Black children’s access to education.<sup>202</sup> Even within non-segregated school buildings, Black children were sometimes physically separated from white children. Such separation was supported by school trustees and white families, some of whom refused to allow their children to go to school with Black children. White teachers could also find their jobs in jeopardy if they continued to provide education to Black students.<sup>203</sup>

Pressure for racial segregation was stronger in smaller, more agricultural communities than in Toronto, and Ryerson attributed what he saw as the greater spirit of inclusivity in the city to its inhabitants’ “good sense and Christian and British feeling.”<sup>204</sup> Many Black families in Hamilton and other parts of southwestern Ontario, where most of the province’s Black population lived at the

---

<sup>200</sup> *Appendix to the Sixteenth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada*, Appendix No. 21, 1858, 114–15.

<sup>201</sup> Harry Arthur, “Civil Liberties—Public Schools—Segregation of Negro Students,” *Canadian Bar Review* 41, no. 3 (1963): 453.

<sup>202</sup> McLaren, “We Had No Desire,” 32-35.

<sup>203</sup> Natasha Henry, Standing Strong (Mash Koh Wee Kah Pooh Win) Task Force presentation, Toronto (virtual), May 19, 2021.

<sup>204</sup> Ryerson, quoted in McLaren, “We Had No Desire,” 33.

time, protested that their children were denied full access to schools despite their families' payment of taxes. Ryerson commented on the fact that requests for racial segregation went against the law; however, he did not necessarily use his position to stop them. For example, in response to complaints about ongoing segregation of Black students in London in 1847, Ryerson wrote, "I have done what I could to remedy [this problem], but with only partial success. The caste of colour in this case is stronger than the law."<sup>205</sup> Despite Ryerson's claim of engagement with these concerns, Kristen McLaren found no evidence in Department of Education correspondence that Ryerson "involved himself in this conflict at all."<sup>206</sup> Archival records do not suggest that he critiqued the creation or existence of racially segregated schools, and Alexander McNab, who was the acting superintendent during Ryerson's international educational tour of 1844–1845, actively encouraged segregated school districts as "the 'remedy of the evil' of blacks 'forcing' themselves into white schools."<sup>207</sup> Thomas Peace has also highlighted the separation of Black students inherent in Ryerson's vision for public education, which included "the conditions for local racially-based segregated schools."<sup>208</sup> In short, although racial discrimination was unlawful, segregation and separation of Black students persisted without intervention from the Department of Education under Ryerson's leadership.<sup>209</sup>

Ryerson also drafted the bill that became An Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada [1850], generally referred to as the Common School Act (1850). It created schools for teacher training, or normal schools, and a structure of superintendents to oversee school districts. It enabled a school tax on the parents of all children of school age (over five and under sixteen) as well as standard textbooks approved by the Board of Education, a measure Ryerson strongly favoured.<sup>210</sup> The act also

---

<sup>205</sup> Ryerson to W. H. Draper, April 12, 1847, cited in McLaren, "We Had No Desire," 36.

<sup>206</sup> McLaren, "We Had No Desire," 36.

<sup>207</sup> Henry, Standing Strong Task Force presentation.

<sup>208</sup> Thomas Peace, "Want to Understand Egerton Ryerson? Two School Histories Provide the Context," *ActiveHistory.ca* (July 12, 2021), <http://activehistory.ca/2021/07/want-to-understand-egerton-ryerson-two-school-histories-provide-the-context/#more-30612>.

<sup>209</sup> Henry, Standing Strong Task Force presentation.

<sup>210</sup> J. George Hodgins, *The School Book Question: Letters in Reply to the Brown-Campbell Crusade* (Montreal: John Lavell, 1866), 13–16.

included a “protection of children” clause that prevented children from being required to participate in lessons or religious practices that their parents found objectionable.<sup>211</sup>

In his 1912 biography of Ryerson, J. Harold Putman presented Ryerson’s involvement in the 1850 act as evidence of his “practical common sense.” Putman credited Ryerson with drafting what was referred to as the “Charter of the Ontario School System” and praised his commitment to the creation of free schools through legislation.<sup>212</sup> Critically, however, the 1850 act still included a clause that allowed for separate schools to be based on race or religion, as well as the establishment of separate schools for male and female students.<sup>213</sup> Ryerson’s involvement in the codification of schooling in this period demonstrates that while he opposed separate schools in principle, he tolerated them in practice. Through the 1850 act, Ryerson played a major role in shaping and codifying racially segregated schools in Canada West as the act opened the door to a new category of separate school for “coloured people”—with lasting consequences.<sup>214</sup>

According to R. M. Stamp and other historians of education, the impetus for separate schools in the 1850 act came from Black families, whose children were excluded from attending common schools; however, Kristin McLaren’s research produced no evidence for such claims. McLaren found instead that “support for separate schools among white leaders was quite strong.”<sup>215</sup> Henry has noted that the 1850 act was intended to allow families freedom of choice by enabling the establishment of separate schools for Protestants, Roman Catholics or

---

<sup>211</sup> J. George Hodgins, *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada* (Toronto: Warwick Bros & Rutter, 1894). See also Common School Act (1850).

<sup>212</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 152.

<sup>213</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 152. See also Susan E. Houston and Alison Prentice, “Exceptions to the Rule,” chap. 9 in *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988), 274–309; Stamp, *Historical Background*, 3; An Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada (1840), 4. Section 44 indicates both men and women could be teachers, but Normal and Model Schools must be staffed exclusively by male teachers.

<sup>214</sup> Natasha Henry, “Anti-Black Racism in Ontario Schools: A Historical Perspective,” Turner Consulting Group Research Policy Brief, Issue 1 (May 2019), 2.

<sup>215</sup> Stamp, *Historical Background*, 21; McLaren, “We had No Desire,” 38–40, quote p. 40.

“coloured” people.<sup>216</sup> While in theory it provided more options and opportunities for Black families, in practice the act resulted in forced attendance in separate schools that were chronically underfunded and often provided inferior education. Furthermore, through the Common Schools Act, Ryerson gave local trustees the authority to develop schools rather than providing genuine choice to Black families and communities. Indeed, writing to George Duck in 1852, Ryerson stated that the act was not meant to propose that families could “choose any school they want” but rather that the Board of Trustees was responsible for such determinations.<sup>217</sup>

When Black families brought concerns to Ryerson, he encouraged them to seek damages through the court, thus absolving himself of responsibility to address the issue. At least six lawsuits were filed regarding the practice of segregation and racial discrimination in schools, but in all but one the practice was upheld by the court.<sup>218</sup> While exclusion was against the spirit of the law, Ryerson continued to tolerate this form of discrimination and segregation and claimed that there was little he could do to stop it.

Ryerson is commonly understood and celebrated as the champion of a universal public education system that aimed to create “social cohesion and harmony” among all children.<sup>219</sup> That understanding of his vision for education is difficult to sustain alongside his belief in and tolerance for separate schooling for both Indigenous children in the 1830s and 1840s and Black children during his years as superintendent.

### ➤ **1854 Religion and Morality in Public Schools**

By 1854, Methodism had crept into public schooling despite the 1850 Common School Act’s “protection of children” clause. Common schools were provided with prayers and biblical texts; Figures 4 and 5 provide examples.

---

<sup>216</sup> Henry, Standing Strong Task Force presentation.

<sup>217</sup> Duck, quoted by Henry, Standing Strong Task Force presentation.

<sup>218</sup> Henry, Standing Strong Task Force presentation.

<sup>219</sup> Charlotte Neff, “Ontario Industrial Schools Act of 1874,” *Canadian Journal of Family Law* 12, no. 1 (1994–95): 177–78; also Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, “Conclusion.”

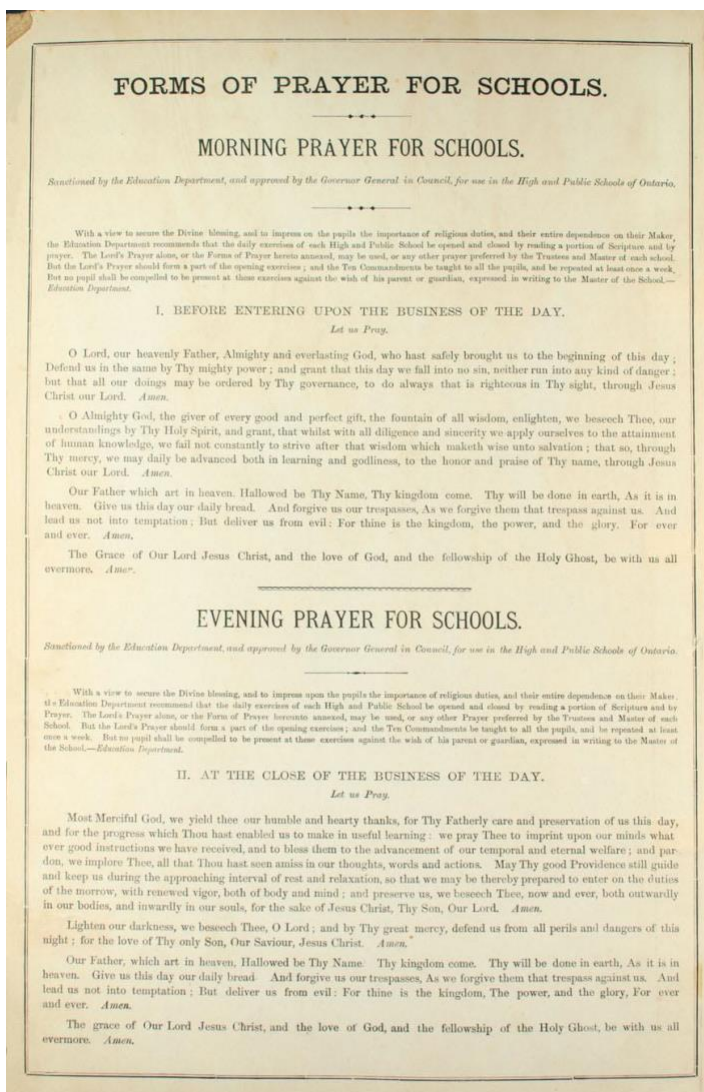


Figure 4. 1854 Source: Toronto District School Board Museum and Archives

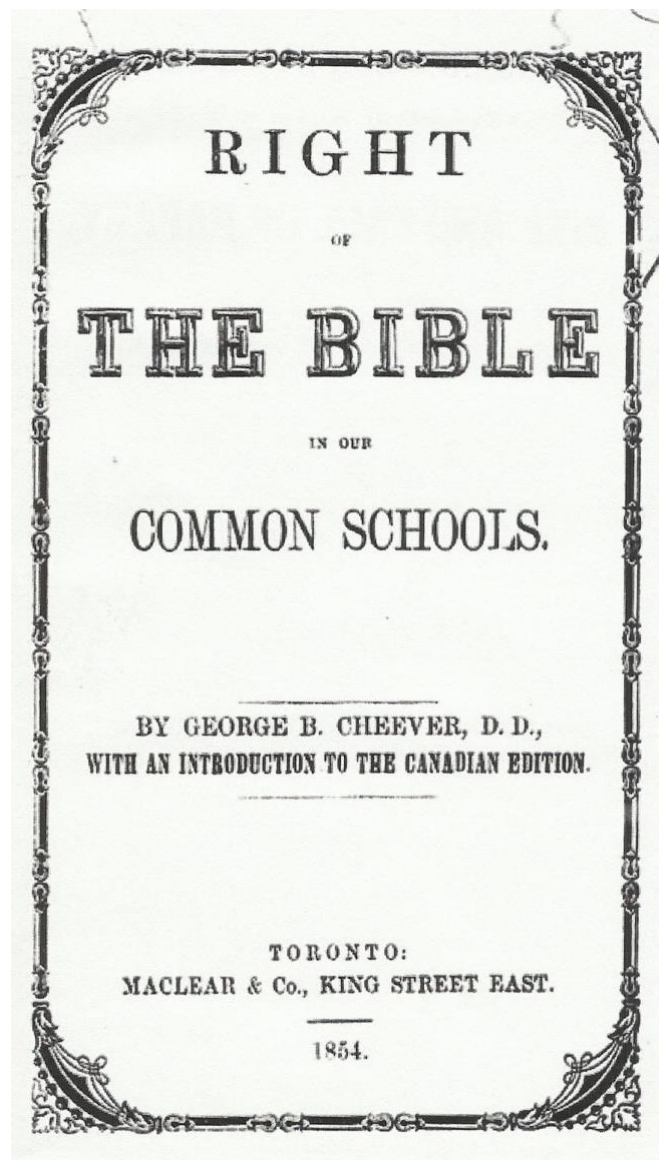


Figure 5. 1854 Source: Toronto District School Board Archives

➤ **1855–1857 Ryerson Purchases Copies of European Art for the Education Museum**

For ten months in 1855 and 1856, Ryerson and his daughter Sophia travelled to Europe to buy copies of Old Masters for an educational museum that he planned to open in Canada West.<sup>220</sup> In Paris, Florence, Antwerp and London, he purchased some 236 paintings, approximately 1,000 plaster casts of sculptures,

<sup>220</sup> Virginia Nixon, "Egerton Ryerson and the Old Master Copy as an Instrument of Public Education," *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art Canadien* 27 (2006): 95.

and other items for the planned museum.<sup>221</sup> He believed the elevating and refining qualities of European art should be accessible to all, regardless of class. European art not only provided individuals with an affective and sensory experience, but was also educational. Ryerson wrote in 1856:

[I]n Canada, where there are no such Art Treasures, where we are so remote from them, where there is no private wealth available to procure them to any great extent, a collection (however limited) of copies of those paintings and statuary, which are most attractive and instructive in European Museums, and with which the trained teachers of our public schools may become familiar, and which will be accessible to the public, cannot fail to be a means of enjoyment, to numbers in all parts of Upper Canada.<sup>222</sup>

In 1857, Ryerson opened the Education Museum of Upper Canada, Canada's first publicly funded museum, in the Toronto Normal School. The museum displayed copies of European art and was intended to help train teachers in fine art and design.

---

<sup>221</sup> Nixon, "Ryerson and the Old Master Copy," 99.

<sup>222</sup> *Educational Museum and School of Art and Design for Upper Canada with a Plan of the English Educational Museum, Etc., Etc., From the Chief Superintendent's Report for 1856 to Which is Added an Appendix* (Toronto: Lovell & Gibson, 1858), cited in Nixon, "Ryerson and the Old Master Copy," 100.

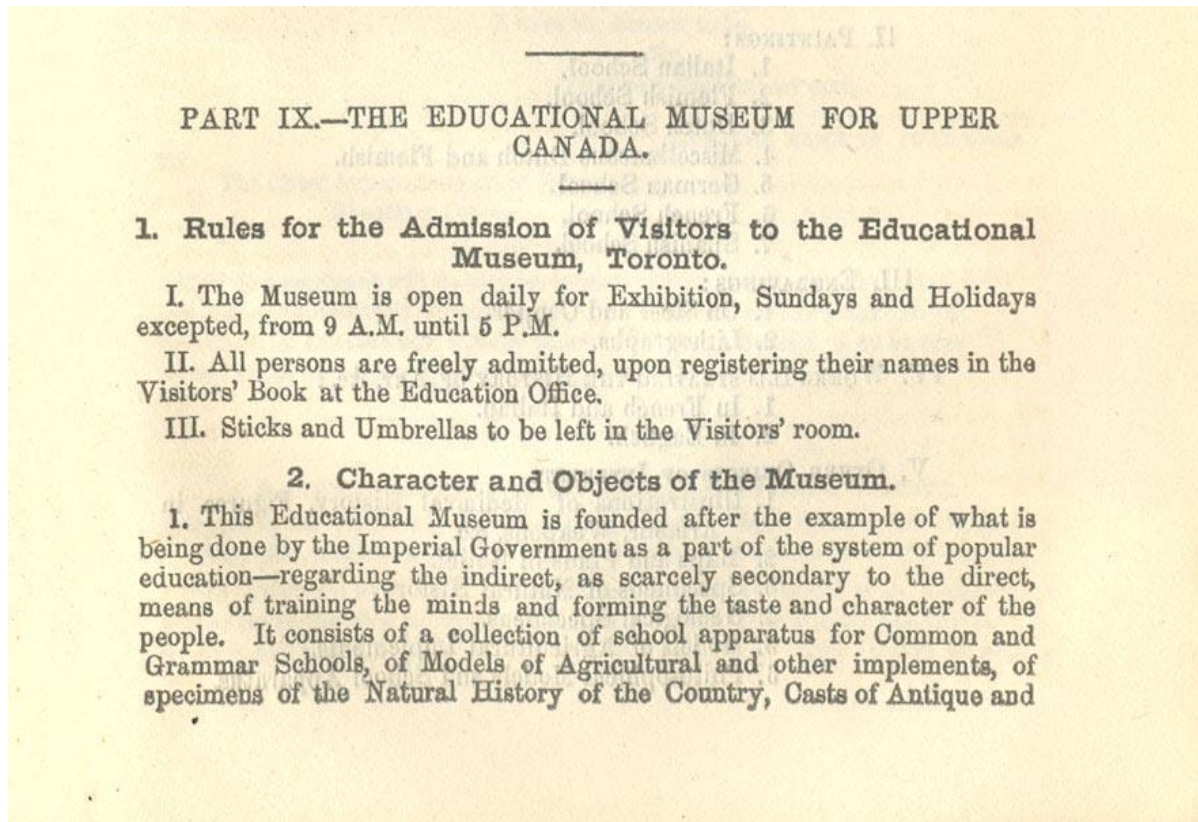


Figure 6. 1857 Source: Toronto District School Board Museum and Archives

### ➤ 1856 Kahkewaquonaby (Peter Jones) Dies

Kahkewaquonaby's health had been declining for several years. On May 20, 1856, he travelled from Brantford to Toronto to see a well-regarded physician, Dr. James Bovell, and he stayed in Ryerson's house for four weeks. Although Ryerson was very busy as Superintendent of the common schools, he spent evenings and Sundays at Kahkewaquonaby's bedside.<sup>223</sup> Kahkewaquonaby's wife Eliza wrote in the final chapter of her husband's journal that "[i]n the evening Dr. Ryerson prayed for the last time by the dying bed of his dear friend and brother. Seeing me much affected, he took my hand, and with a heavenly smile on his countenance said, 'We have lived most happily together for many years, and it is hard to part.'<sup>224</sup>

<sup>223</sup> Donald B. Smith, *Mississauga Portraits: Ojibwe Voices from Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 3–10.

<sup>224</sup> Kahkewaquonaby, *Life and Journals*, 415.



The best medical attention available in Toronto proved to be no help and Kahkewaquonaby returned to Brockville, where he died at home on June 28. An obituary in the Toronto *Globe* noted that the funeral procession was the largest ever witnessed in Brantford and included a congregation of Indigenous People, eighty carriages and others on foot.<sup>225</sup> Ryerson preached at the funeral and stated that Kahkewaquonaby had “enjoyed the esteem of, and had access to, every class of Canadian society.”<sup>226</sup> A year later when a stone was dedicated to Kahkewaquonaby by the Ojibwe and other Indigenous tribes, Ryerson wrote an inscription commemorating his life and service to the Methodist Church.<sup>227</sup>

➤ **1856–1863 Ryerson and the “University Question”**

Following earlier disputes about whether common schools should be secular or denominational, by the late 1850s churches were mounting a campaign to control funding and curriculum for universities. By 1856, the legislature had received a number of petitions objecting to the “unnecessary expenditure of the endowment of King’s College,” an Anglican institution that became the foundation of the University of Toronto. The 1858 Methodist General Conference passed a resolution condemning existing university policy as “grossly illiberal, partial, unjust and unpatriotic.” The main campaign began in 1859 when Ryerson lobbied for non-denominational and public funding for universities, a call that was contested at the time and was commonly referred to as the “University Question.”<sup>228</sup>

In 1859, Ryerson engaged in the University Question through a debate at the Methodist Conference in Quebec City with two senior members of the University of Toronto, Vice-Chancellor John Langton and Daniel Wilson, professor of history. Langton and Wilson challenged Ryerson’s claim to support the denominational colleges’ use of public funds for their institutions. According to Brian McKillop’s history of Ontario universities, the two-hour debate combined

---

<sup>225</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:346.

<sup>226</sup> Donald B. Smith, “Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby),” in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. VIII (1851-1860), online: [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jones\\_peter\\_8E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jones_peter_8E.html).

<sup>227</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:346–47.

<sup>228</sup> Brian McKillop, *Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario 1791–1951* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), 29–30.

detailed criticisms and defence of spending, organizational structures and curriculum with “fierce vituperation and outright character assassination.” Ryerson’s efforts did not meet with success. In May 1863, the University of Toronto became the sole recipient of public funds for universities. Denominational colleges were not eligible for state funding and were even barred from receiving small grants.<sup>229</sup>

- **1857–1861 Ryerson Receives Honorary Degrees from University of Toronto**  
Ryerson received an honorary master’s degree from the University of Toronto in 1857 and an honorary Doctor of Laws (LLD) from Victoria College in 1861.<sup>230</sup>
- **1867 British North America Act s. 91(24)**  
Formalized confederation influenced how Crown–Indigenous relations subsequently developed. Section 91(24) of the British North America Act of 1867 granted the federal government the power to legislate over “Indians, and the lands reserved for Indians” and laid the foundation for the paternalistic Indian Act (1876). This constitutional division of powers gave the federal government control over Indigenous Peoples in a way that allowed for a uniform, Canada-wide approach to the highly diverse Indigenous Peoples and cultures throughout the country.

Section 93 of the act gave provinces exclusive jurisdiction over education, subject to certain provisions, which confined Ryerson’s responsibilities and recommendations to provincial systems of education.

- **1870–1950s Distinguishing Features of the Residential Schools**  
Although Ryerson’s responsibilities as superintendent were confined to the provision of education in Ontario, some elements of his vision for the education of Indigenous children were apparent in the formative years of the federal government’s residential school system. In his 1996 history of residential schools, for example, J. R. Miller noted that the “half-day system,” in which students divided their days between the classroom and manual labour, was

---

<sup>229</sup> McKillop, *Matters of Mind*, 30. See also Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:395.

<sup>230</sup> *Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson*, 7.

“copied from the prescription of Egerton Ryerson.” Miller also observed, however, that the same system was already in use in American schools, which likely provided a more immediate model for the development of schools in Canada.<sup>231</sup> More recently, Thomas Peace has cautioned both against connecting Ryerson too closely to later schools and omitting to consider Indigenous Peoples’ own interest in education:

We must be careful ... not to draw links too tightly between Ryerson and the later residential school system. Manual labour schools, which were the foundation for Ryerson's planned “industrial schools,” were an important curricular movement in the nineteenth century, especially in missionary circles; at least initially Kahkewaquonaby and many Anishinaabe communities supported the creation of these types of institutions.<sup>232</sup>

➤ **1871 Education Act**

The 1871 Education Act was Ryerson’s final piece of legislation related to the improvement of schools. The act had four parts: compulsory and free education, efficient inspection, teachers' pensions, and the licensing of teachers under government direction. Grammar schools were also renamed “high schools” and collegiate institutes were established to offer a more university-focused, classical education. From this point onwards, the significance of Ryerson’s work began to be debated in legislative and political arenas.

➤ **1874 Industrial Schools Act Passed in Ontario**

Ryerson’s willingness to support different types of schools for different categories of students continued into the 1870s with the passage of the Industrial Schools Act of 1874. This legislation enabled the creation and operation of residential industrial schools for neglected and dependent children, including “vagrants, beggars, destitute orphans, children growing up ‘without

---

<sup>231</sup> J. R. Miller, *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 157.

<sup>232</sup> Peace, “Searching for Order,” 198.

salutary parental control and education.”<sup>233</sup> As Charlotte Neff has noted, the 1874 act highlighted tensions between Ryerson’s vision of “a high quality, free, universal and compulsory state education system” that promoted patriotism and common purpose among all children, and the fact that “respectable” children would not attend the same schools as vagrant, neglected and criminal children. In Neff’s view, Ryerson tolerated the creation of separate schools for disadvantaged children to strengthen the public school system and help achieve his goal of compulsory school attendance.<sup>234</sup>

➤ **1874 Ryerson Named President of Methodist Church of Canada**

Ryerson was president of the Methodist Church of Canada from 1874 to 1878, a largely clerical role.<sup>235</sup>

➤ **1876 Ryerson Retires from Post as Chief Superintendent of Education**

After thirty-two years in public service, in 1876 Ryerson retired from his position as Chief Superintendent of Education at the age of seventy-three. Prior to his retirement, he worked to establish an Education Department, and the position of Chief Superintendent was replaced by a Minister of Education. The Council of Public Instruction was replaced by the Department of Education staffed by civil servants.

In retirement, he embarked on a variety of writing projects, most notably a two-volume work entitled *The Loyalists of America and Their Times*, which traced the history of American Loyalists from 1600 to 1812.<sup>236</sup> He also worked on his memoir, *The Story of My Life*, and *Canadian Methodism, Its Epochs and Characteristics*, a history of Methodism in Canada.<sup>237</sup>

Beyond his scholarly pursuits, Ryerson spent his retirement fishing at his beloved cottage. It remains unclear whether Ryerson ever knew that in 1850

---

<sup>233</sup> Neff, “Ontario Industrial Schools Act,” 172.

<sup>234</sup> Neff, “Ontario Industrial Schools Act,” 177–78.

<sup>235</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:651, 643–44.

<sup>236</sup> Thomas, *Ryerson of Upper Canada*, 133–34.

<sup>237</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:656.

Kahkewaquonaby had made a claim on behalf of the Mississauga to the land that included “Ryerson Island,” Ryerson’s “haven” off Long Point on Lake Erie.<sup>238</sup>

### ➤ **1876 Indian Act and Preceding Legislation**

After Confederation, the Canadian government quickly began drafting legislation to control the livelihood of Indigenous Peoples on a federal level. This began in May 1868 with An Act providing for the organisation of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, and for the management of Indian and Ordnance Lands.<sup>239</sup> This act took a variety of pre-existing legislation from the Province of Canada and expanded it to apply it to the entire Dominion of Canada.<sup>240</sup>

Many of the provisions of this act, including those pertaining to property ownership, management of Indigenous lands and money, citizenship and education, were carried over into the 1876 Indian Act, which is discussed below.

The 1868 Act made the Secretary of State also the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs with responsibility for and authority over the management of Indigenous land and property. Land held or reserved by Indigenous communities could only be sold, alienated or leased through the Crown, and any release or surrender of lands “reserved for the use of Indians” required the consent of the chief(s) or a majority of the chiefs or bands that lived on or near the land. The governor in council had the power to hold, invest or disburse the money made from the sale of Indigenous lands, including a provision for directing some of these funds to be set aside as a contribution to schools that Indigenous children attended. The act also defined an “Indian” as someone with “Indian blood,” “belonging to a tribe, band or body of Indians,” or anyone with an Indigenous parent, or any woman legally married to someone who met these criteria. Only people who met this definition of “Indian” could settle on Indigenous lands, and local authorities were responsible for removing

---

<sup>238</sup> Smith, “Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga,” 238.

<sup>239</sup> “An Act providing for the organisation of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, and for the management of Indian and Ordnance Lands.” In *Consolidation of Indian Legislation*, Vol. 2: *Indian Acts and Amendments, 1868–1975*, ed. Gail Hinge under contract to Department of Indian and Northern Affairs, 1.

<sup>240</sup> TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 1*, 107.

unauthorized settlers. Finally, the act allowed for unauthorized people who extracted resources from Indigenous lands to be penalized.<sup>241</sup>

This act was followed in 1869 by An Act for the Gradual Enfranchisement of Indians, the Better Management of Indian Affairs, and to extend the provisions of the Act 31st Victoria, Chapter 42 (also known as the Gradual Enfranchisement Act).

In 1876, the federal government officially adopted the Indian Act, also known as An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians, which consolidated all federal policies pertaining to Indigenous Peoples in the Dominion of Canada into a single act. Critically, the Indian Act placed power over rights and freedoms of Indigenous Peoples and their lands in the hands of the federal government<sup>242</sup> and reaffirmed the power of the Superintendent-General of Indian Affairs (also the Minister of the Interior) over the land, money and property of Indigenous Peoples in Canada.<sup>243</sup>

The Indian Act exerted complete control over the livelihood of Indigenous Peoples across Canada, with provisions ranging from the management, deployment and protection of reserves; repair of roads; conditions of land surrenders; management of sales of Indigenous land and property; management and sale of resources on Indigenous lands; management of Indigenous money; management and appointment of Indigenous councils and chiefs; the legal rights of those deemed to have the legal status "Indian"; punishments for "Indians" convicted of crimes; management of and penalties associated with alcohol and intoxicant sale, possession and procurement; and detailed accounts of enfranchisement and the rights associated with it.<sup>244</sup> As

---

<sup>241</sup> "An Act providing for the organisation of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada," in *Consolidation of Indian Legislation*, 2:1–6.

<sup>242</sup> Sarah Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999), 115–18.

<sup>243</sup> "An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians," in *Consolidation of Indian Legislation*, 2:24.

<sup>244</sup> "An Act to Amend and Consolidate the Laws Respecting Indians," 2:24–52.

Canadian historian Sarah Carter put it, “[t]hrough the administration of this act, government agents were able to control minute details of everyday life.”<sup>245</sup>

It is through the Indian Act and the introduction of this legal framework that the federal government sought to control and assimilate the Indigenous people of Canada. Connections between the idea of a degree of “civilization” and the prospect of enfranchisement appear in both the Gradual Enfranchisement Act and the Indian Act. Those acts defined the franchise and used it as a tool to advance assimilation, for example by enfranchising band members who earned a university degree, qualified as a doctor, lawyer or teacher, or were ordained as a Christian priest.<sup>246</sup> Education was clearly used as a tool in the erasure of Indigenous culture.

➤ **1879 Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds (the “Davin Report”)**

In 1879, Nicholas Flood Davin published a report for the federal government that drew heavily on the American industrial boarding school system and served as the official justification for the residential school system.<sup>247</sup> On the basis of his examination of the American system, Davin concluded that Indigenous adults could not be assimilated and therefore the development of a residential schooling system was essential.<sup>248</sup>

While Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council’s 2010 history “Egerton Ryerson, the Residential School System and Truth and Reconciliation” noted that “Davin references Egerton Ryerson’s letter of 1847 as supporting industrial schools for Aboriginal children,”<sup>249</sup> a full review of the Davin Report reveals no

---

<sup>245</sup> Carter, *Aboriginal People and Colonizers*, 118.

<sup>246</sup> TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 1*, 107–108.

<sup>247</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 52.

<sup>248</sup> TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 1*, 155–57.

<sup>249</sup> Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council, “Egerton Ryerson, the Residential School System and Truth and Reconciliation,” 4.

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_Qw5WLAZZbDU7OXXWKFoKHmwKWp\\_BoW1o3-l6xMjnE/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_Qw5WLAZZbDU7OXXWKFoKHmwKWp_BoW1o3-l6xMjnE/edit).

direct mention of Ryerson. For example, when Davin explained where he learned most of what he discussed in his report, he did not mention Ryerson:

At Winnipeg, I met most of the leading men, clerical and lay, who could speak with authority on the subject of the inquiry, and to the experience, knowledge and courtesy of Mgr. Tache, Pere Lacombe, Hon. Jas Mckay, and many others, this report is much indebted.<sup>250</sup>

However, Davin adopted various ideas and beliefs that also appeared in Ryerson's 1847 report. For example, Davin's veneration of the missionary establishment of early industrial schools was clear:

The first and greatest stone in the foundation of the quasi-civilization of the Indians, wherever seen, was laid by missionaries, men who had the supreme object and who did not count their lives dear unto them. Schools are scattered over the whole continent, wherever Indians exist, monuments of religious zeal and heroic self-sacrifice. These schools should be utilized as much as possible, both on grounds of efficiency and economy. The missionaries' experience is only surpassed by their patient heroism, and their testimony, like that of the school teachers, like that of the authorities at Washington is, that if anything is to be done with the Indian, we must catch him very young. The children must be kept constantly within the circle of civilized conditions.<sup>251</sup>

---

<sup>250</sup> Nicholas Flood Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds*, report produced for the Minister of the Interior (Ottawa, 1879), 9.

<sup>251</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 12.



There are several other strong similarities between Davin's report and Ryerson's earlier recommendations, given in Table 2:

<b>Similarities</b>	<b>Ryerson's 1847 Report</b>	<b>Davin's 1879 Report</b>
<p><b>On the purpose of industrial schools</b> Davin and Ryerson share the perspective that the objective of industrial schools ought to be to teach industry and agriculture, as this best suited Indigenous People of the time.</p>	<p>"As to the objects of these establishments, I understand them to not contemplate anything more in respect to intellectual training than to give a plain English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic. In this their object is identical with that of every good common school; but in addition to this pupils of the industrial schools are to be taught agriculture, kitchen gardening, and mechanics, so far as mechanics is connected with making and repairing the most useful agricultural implements."<sup>252</sup></p>	<p>At the industrial school, in addition to the elements of an English education, the boys are instructed in cattle-raising and agriculture; the girls in sewing, breadmaking, and other employments suitable for a farmer's wife. In the case of boys, agriculture is principally aimed at cattle-raising requiring but few hands." Davin also argues that it is of importance that this "education" be instilled in children, stating the following about Indigenous adults: "He can be taught to do a little at farming and at stock-rising, and to dress in a more civilized manner, that is all."<sup>253</sup></p>
<p><b>On the importance of religious education</b> Davin and Ryerson shared the belief that</p>	<p>"I think that any attempt to carry on these establishments by providing merely for secular instruction, and that any attempt to separate the secular from the religious instruction</p>	<p>Davin states that boarding, clothing and instructing Indigenous children must be paired with religious training.<sup>255</sup> He further asserts:</p>

<sup>252</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 73.

<sup>253</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 2.

<sup>255</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 12.

<p>religious education, training and management were essential for residential schools to achieve their goal of “civilizing” the students.</p>	<p>will prove a failure; and that any attempt on the part of the Government to provide religious instruction will be found equally impracticable.”<sup>254</sup></p>	<p>“The importance of denominational schools at the outset for the Indians must be obvious. One of the earliest things an attempt to civilize them does, is to take away their simple Indian mythology, the central idea of which, to wit, a perfect spirit, can hardly be improved on. The Indians have their own ideas of right and wrong, of ‘good’ Indians and ‘bad’ Indians, and to disturb this faith, without supplying a better, would be a curious process to enlist the sanction of civilized races whose whole civilization, like all the civilizations with which we are acquainted, is based on religion.”<sup>256</sup></p>
<p><b>On governmental inspection</b> Davin and Ryerson both recommend that the government’s role be to inspect schools</p>	<p>“I think therefore, the interference or control of the Government should be confined to that which the Government can do with most effect and the least trouble, namely, to the right of inspecting the schools from time to time by an agent or agents of its own, to the right of having detailed reports of the</p>	<p>“In order to secure that the education given would be efficient, there ought to be competent inspection. Failing this, when industrial boarding schools come to be widely established, large sums will be thrown into the sea. The education given in Indian schools is, as a rule, of a very</p>

<sup>254</sup> Ryerson, “Report on Industrial Schools,” 73.

<sup>256</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 14.

<p>and make sure they are up to standard.</p>	<p>schools as often as it shall think proper to require them, at least once or twice a year, and the right of continuing or withholding the grant made in aid of these schools."<sup>257</sup></p>	<p>poor sort, mechanical to the last degree."<sup>258</sup></p>
<p><b>On the appointment of principals and agents</b> Both Davin and Ryerson hold the view that the religious bodies that govern an institution should be in charge of appointing their agents, principals and assistants.</p>	<p>"[T]here should be a mutual understanding, and, on the following points, concurrence between the Government and the religious denomination through the agency of which each of these schools is to be conducted: 1. The appointment of the superintendent. 2. The buildings to be erected. 3. The conditions on which pupils shall be received into the schools. The appointment and dismissal of the other assistants and labourers at the industrial school establishment, can be most beneficially left with the authorities of the religious persuasion having charge of the majority of the Indians where each school may be established. Such religious persuasion contributing part of the funds</p>	<p>"When an agent is to be appointed, the candidate is chosen on the recommendation of a representative of one or other of these religious bodies. This, I was assured, worked well, and secured a superior class of agents. Appointing men for political services had proved a failure."<sup>260</sup> Davin continues, "The Industrial Boarding School is conducted by a Principal, who has one or more assistants in proportion to the number of scholars. What religion shall be taught in the school is generally easily settled, as the rule is to permit but one sect on an Agency."<sup>261</sup></p>

<sup>257</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 74.

<sup>258</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 15.

<sup>260</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 12.

<sup>261</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 3.

	<p>necessary to support the school and being the spiritual instructor of the Indians concerned, will have a direct interest in the most economical management of it, and in the employment of the best agents, and will have much better opportunities of doing so than the Government."<sup>259</sup></p>	
<p><b>e) On the character of instructors</b> Both Davin and Ryerson explicitly discuss the importance of the character of instructors at industrial schools.</p>	<p>"It follows as a necessary consequence, that everything as to human agency in regard to the success of these schools, depends upon the character and qualifications of the superintendent and agents employed to conduct them."<sup>262</sup> Ryerson continues, discussing the perceived successes of the agricultural school at Hofwyl: "It was the piety and judgement and example of the late excellent Mr. de Fellenberg, more than any code of rules, that rendered his agricultural school for the poor, at Hofwyl, near Berne, in Switzerland, a blessing to hundreds of peasant youth, and a model for all similar establishments."<sup>263</sup></p>	<p>"The character of the teacher, morally and intellectually, is a matter of vital importance. If he is morally weak, whatever his intellectual qualifications may be, he is worse than no teacher at all. If he is poorly i[n]structed or feeble in brain, he only enacts every day an elaborate farce. It must be obvious that to reach semi-civilized children is a more difficult task than to teach children with inherited aptitudes, whose training is, moreover, carried on at home. A teacher should have force of character, and when he presides over an industrial school should have a knowledge of farming. Such a man must be adequately paid.</p>

<sup>259</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 74.

<sup>262</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 75.

<sup>263</sup> Ryerson, "Report on Industrial Schools," 75.

		<p>The advantage of calling in the aid of religion is, that there is a chance of getting an enthusiastic person, with, therefore, a motive power beyond anything pecuniary remuneration could supply. The work requires not only the energy but the patience of an enthusiast. The teacher's appointment to an industrial boarding school should be made by the Government, after consultation with the religious body immediately interested, and the whole machinery should be carefully guarded against suspicion of having any character of religious endowment, or any likelihood of issuing therein."<sup>264</sup></p>
--	--	---

Davin's report also made a variety of recommendations that were not present in Ryerson's 1847 report, including an initial limit of four "industrial boarding schools" with pupils aged eight to twelve years.<sup>265</sup>

In his third recommendation, Davin suggests the establishment of an Episcopalian industrial boarding school in South Saskatchewan near Prince Albert. His fourth proposal was for a Methodist industrial boarding school near Old Bow Fort, his fifth for a Roman Catholic industrial boarding school at

---

<sup>264</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 15.

<sup>265</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 13.

Qu'Appelle, and his sixth for a Presbyterian industrial boarding school on Riding Mountain.<sup>266</sup>

Davin recommended several inducements to entice Indigenous parents to send their children to industrial schools:

(7.) Some distinction should be made between the treatment of parents who send their children regularly to the day-school, and of those who are either careless whether their children go to school or not, or who are wholly opposed to their children attending school, as some are. To the first, an additional ration of tea and sugar might be given.<sup>267</sup>

(8.) Where practicable, some inducement of a special nature should be held out to the child.<sup>268</sup>

He expected that such measures would sow the seeds for mandatory attendance:

(9.) As Bands become more amenable to the restraints of civilization education should be made compulsory.<sup>269</sup>

Davin's report, which argues for "an extensive application of the principle of industrial boarding schools in the [Canadian] North West,"<sup>270</sup> served as the federal justification for industrial schools by the government of Sir John A. Macdonald in the 1880s, but as John Milloy observed, the existence of the Mohawk Institute, Wikwemikong, Mount Elgin, and Shingwauk schools demonstrates that the origins of the residential school system preceded the Davin Report.<sup>271</sup> Although no direct line can be drawn between Ryerson's and Davin's reports, their similarities reinforce Milloy's conclusion that "[t]he Imperial

---

<sup>266</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 13-14.

<sup>267</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 15.

<sup>268</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 15.

<sup>269</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 15.

<sup>270</sup> Davin, *Report on Industrial Schools*, 13.

<sup>271</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 8.

policy heritage of the 1830s, 1840s, and 1850s, supplemented by federal legislation and programming in the first decade of Confederation, was both the context and the rationale for the development of residential schools.”<sup>272</sup>

### ➤ **1882 Ryerson’s Death**

Ryerson died in Toronto on February 19, 1882. In February 1881, he began to write about suffering severe bouts of colds and influenza. By July he reported better health, but he was not well enough to fish.<sup>273</sup> In the autumn his illness worsened and he was nursed by his daughter-in-law.

Following Ryerson’s death, several editorials were published commemorating his life in public service and the Methodist church. The *Globe* published one-and-a-half columns mourning his death, as well as a four-thousand-word editorial on his achievements and his career in public service.<sup>274</sup> A tribute was published in the *Canadian Methodist Magazine* praising his contributions to the Methodist Church, education, and the fight for civil and religious liberty:

But by those who knew him best, his memory will be cherished and revered, not for what he did, but for what he was ... Few men grew old so gracefully as he. He had been, we may say, a man of war from his youth, and he was the hero of many a hard-fought fight, yet he was without a particle of bitterness or guile.... We never knew a man so simple in his greatness, so generous in recognition of merit in others, so tender in the bestowment of sympathy, so wise in giving of counsel.<sup>275</sup>

Ryerson was given a public funeral service and procession, which moved up Yonge Street to Mount Pleasant Cemetery, where he was buried.<sup>276</sup>

---

<sup>272</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 15.

<sup>273</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:658.

<sup>274</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:658.

<sup>275</sup> *Canadian Methodist Magazine* (1882), 278–79, in Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:661.

<sup>276</sup> Sissons, *Ryerson: Life and Letters*, 2:662.

## Part II: Egerton Ryerson's Legacy and Residential Schools (1882–2021)

### ➤ **1883 Parliamentary Commitment of Funding to Industrial Schools**

Following the Davin Report in 1879 and campaigning from prominent Catholic figures like Bishop Vital Grandin of St. Albert and the Archbishop of Quebec, as well as Edgar Dewdney, Lieutenant-Governor and Indian Commissioner for the North-West Territories, Hector Langevin, the Minister of Public Works, presented a budget for new residential schools to the House of Commons. Parliament approved \$43,000 for three new industrial schools, which were established in the North-West Territories, in Qu'Appelle (Treaty 4 land, in Saskatchewan), and in Treaty 7 territory (now southern Alberta).<sup>277</sup>

Although the Davin Report had recommended the development of just four industrial schools,<sup>278</sup> the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) concluded that the much more extensive residential school system that developed was based “in large measure on the 1879 government commissioned report of Nicholas Flood Davin.” The commission recognized this as a “turning point in Canada’s direct involvement in residential schooling for Aboriginal people.”<sup>279</sup>

### ➤ **1883–1930 Systemic Growth of Residential Schools**

Following federal government investment, a significant number of industrial schools were developed throughout the Dominion of Canada. From 1879 to 1923, the number of schools grew from four to fifty-five boarding schools and sixteen industrial schools across Canada, with over five thousand children in residence.<sup>280</sup> Because this growth occurred as a result of parliamentary decisions and the Davin Report, there was no cohesive plan for the deployment of the system, which resulted in an unplanned, unrestrained and inhumane

---

<sup>277</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 158–61.

<sup>278</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 52.

<sup>279</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 197.

<sup>280</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 52.



system that was consistently lacking in funding.<sup>281</sup> The residential school system reached its peak in 1931 with eighty schools and over nine thousand Indigenous People enrolled.<sup>282</sup>

The TRC's historical report describes the deliberate and deep impact of the development of this school system: "Throughout its long history, the residential school system constituted an attack on the identity and vitality of Aboriginal children, Aboriginal families, Aboriginal languages, culture, and spirituality, and Aboriginal nations. As official records show, these impacts were not unfortunate by-products of a well-intentioned system. On the contrary, they were the predetermined and desired outcomes built right into the system from the outset."<sup>283</sup>

For much of the next twenty years, the system operated in a fragmentary way, with no widespread policy on how schools should be run, and the schools were accordingly unregulated and unrestrained, operating largely independently. In 1885 the federal and provincial governments, seeing the need for oversight, agreed to deploy inspectors of industrial, residential and day schools; such inspectors, however, were hardly qualified to assess the schools and had "little authority to order improvements."<sup>284</sup>

The lack of policy coherence in schooling led to a variety of proposals from 1886 to 1890 for the reform of industrial school operations and funding. But the federal government was very reluctant to invest sufficient funds to implement the recommended reforms, which resulted in chronic lack of resources within the schools and increasing dependence on the labour of the students themselves to reduce costs. Furthermore, regional religious authorities extended control over the design and growth of residential schools and the system as a whole.<sup>285</sup>

---

<sup>281</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 52.

<sup>282</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 209–11.

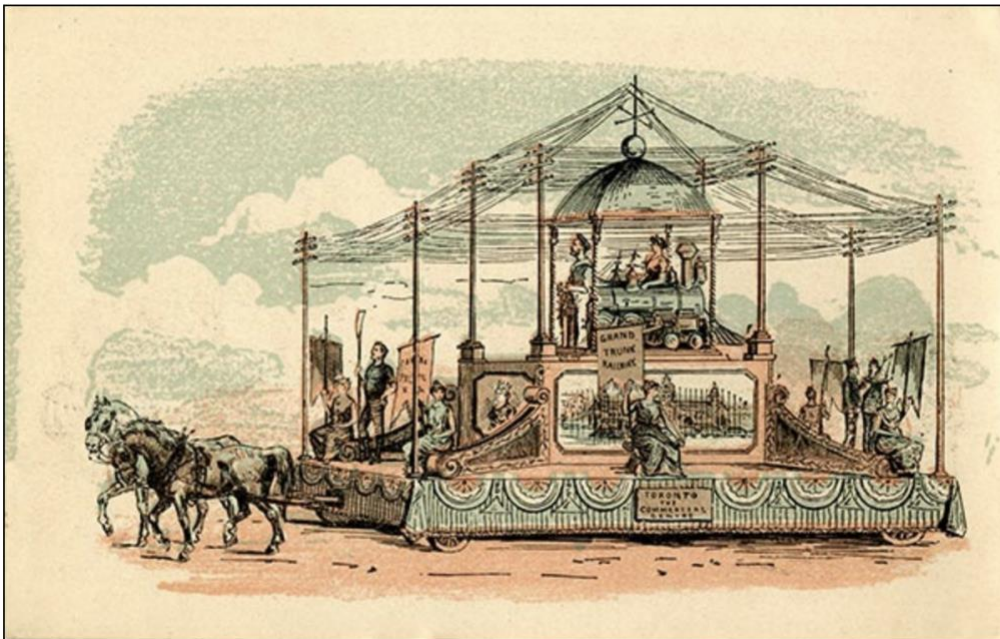
<sup>283</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 162.

<sup>284</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 201–2.

<sup>285</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 206–9.

➤ **1884 Indian Act Amendment; Toronto Celebrates Fifty-Year Anniversary**

In 1884, the City of Toronto held a week-long commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of its incorporation in 1834. Tens of thousands of people joined celebrations of Toronto and its relationship to British colonialism.<sup>286</sup> The celebration featured a parade with twelve floats, including one on education called “Toronto—A Seat of Learning.” Such efforts to define the growing city’s identity as an educational centre helped to heighten the importance of Egerton Ryerson as an example of educational success.



“Toronto - A Seat of Learning.”

*Figure 7. The historical tableaux displayed in the procession in honor of Toronto's semi-centennial (Toronto: Grip Printing & Publishing Company, 1884)*

According to Victoria Freeman, the 1884 celebration marked the transition from the founding of the settlement in 1793 to its incorporation in 1834 as Toronto’s “founding moment” and marker of the assumed “indigeneity” of settler-immigrants. The “deed” acquired from the Mississaugas in 1787 in the highly problematic precursor to the Toronto Purchase was deemed to

<sup>286</sup> Victoria Freeman, “‘Toronto Has No History!’ Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada’s Largest City,” *Urban History Review* 38, no. 2 (2010), 21.

be irrelevant as the 1834 Act of Incorporation became the “symbolic deed to Toronto’s modernity.”<sup>287</sup>

In 1884, the Indian Advancement Act also made attendance in residential schools for Status Indians mandatory until the age of 16.<sup>288</sup>

➤ **1889 Statue of Egerton Ryerson Unveiled**

On May 24, 1889 (Queen Victoria’s seventieth birthday), a statue of Egerton Ryerson was unveiled on the grounds of the Education Department to commemorate Ryerson’s contributions to the development of public education in Ontario. Funds for the statue were raised through an appeal to the province’s school children and educators. It was at this time that Ryerson was first referred to as the “architect” of Ontario’s school system, notably by Senator John MacDonald in J. George Hodgins’ *Memorial Volume* for Ryerson, published to commemorate Ryerson following the unveiling of the statue:

---

<sup>287</sup> Freeman, “Toronto Has No History!” 21.

<sup>288</sup> Sharon Venne, *The Indian Act and Amendments 1868–1975* (Saskatoon: Saskatoon Law Centre, 1981).

It would not be fair to ascribe to the architect all the credit for the grace, symmetry and safety of the most magnificent public buildings. True, he it was who planned the foundations, made them deep and broad, so that they might be safe and enduring. True, he it was who gave grace and beauty to the elevation, so that it might not only answer its purpose, but that it might be at the same time "a thing of beauty;" but how easily might not only the safety of the building be imperilled but its beauty marred by careless and by ignorant treatment; but skilful treatment has produced the needed strength, and has secured the grace of outline, and the building is perfect and harmonious in all its parts.

What the architect is to the building that was Egerton Ryerson to our school system. His it was to lay the foundation upon which a structure which might be at once the pride and the glory of our Province could be erected; his it was to lay these deep and broad and enduring. How wisely and how well he did his work. How well his efforts have been supplemented by the able band of workers who were associated with him the splendid school system of our Province to-day abundantly testifies.

It is fitting, therefore, that his statue should be placed on these grounds, so that the coming generations may be made familiar with the general appearance of the man who has done so much for the educational interests of his country.

But it is not here, faithful as the bronze may speak of the man, that his most fitting and most enduring monument must be found. The group of happy faced children which throng our sidewalks wending their way each morning to our schools, the pupils of our Model Schools, our High Schools, the under-graduates of our Universities, and these seen not only in their school period, but in their subsequent career taking their place in our country as its legislators, its professional men, its merchants, mechanics, farmers, its matrons, taking their places in life, and taking them all the better for their own good and that of their country for the training, sound, thorough and scholarly, which they have received in the schools, colleges and universities of their own country, helping them to make their homes homes of comfort, elegance and refinement.

*Figure 8. George Hodgins, Ryerson Memorial Volume 1844-1876 (Toronto: Warwick and Sons, 1889), 21.*



*Figure 9. Hodgins, Ryerson Memorial Volume, 1.*

The appeal for funds to erect the statue, reproduced in the same commemorative volume, suggested that Ryerson's memorialization was necessary for nation-building:

In obedience then, to one of the purest and loftiest instincts of our nature, let us unite in paying a common tribute of admiration and regard to the memory of him to whom we all sustained a common relationship, and to whom we also, without distinction as to nationality, political preferences, or religious belief, can pay sincere homage, as the founder of our present excellent and comprehensive system of education. In honouring him we do honour to our common country and recognize our obligation to pay fitting homage to the great men of our

Dominion, whose names, with his, are inscribed high upon the roll of Canada's famous sons."<sup>289</sup>

➤ **1894 Indian Act Amendment**

Education issues were on the mind of government officials. The 1894 Indian Act authorized the governor-in-council to make appropriate regulations to ensure compulsory school attendance by Indian children. The legislation empowered the Superintendent General to take steps "[t]o the arrest and conveyance to school, and detention there, of truant children" and allowed for the imprisonment of parents who did not comply with government orders.<sup>290</sup>

➤ **1898 Publication of *Statistics Respecting Indian Schools with Dr. Ryerson's Report Attached by Clifford Sifton (Department of Indian Affairs)***

In 1898, Ryerson's 1847 Report was appended to the publication of *Statistics Respecting Indian Schools*, as it continued to play a key role in describing the philosophy of Indigenous education fifty years after its original publication.

---

<sup>289</sup> Appeal for Funds for Erection of the Statue, in Hodgins, *Ryerson Memorial Volume*.

<sup>290</sup> "An Act further to amend The Indian Act," S.C. 57-58 Victoria, c. 32 (23 July 1894), 137–39.

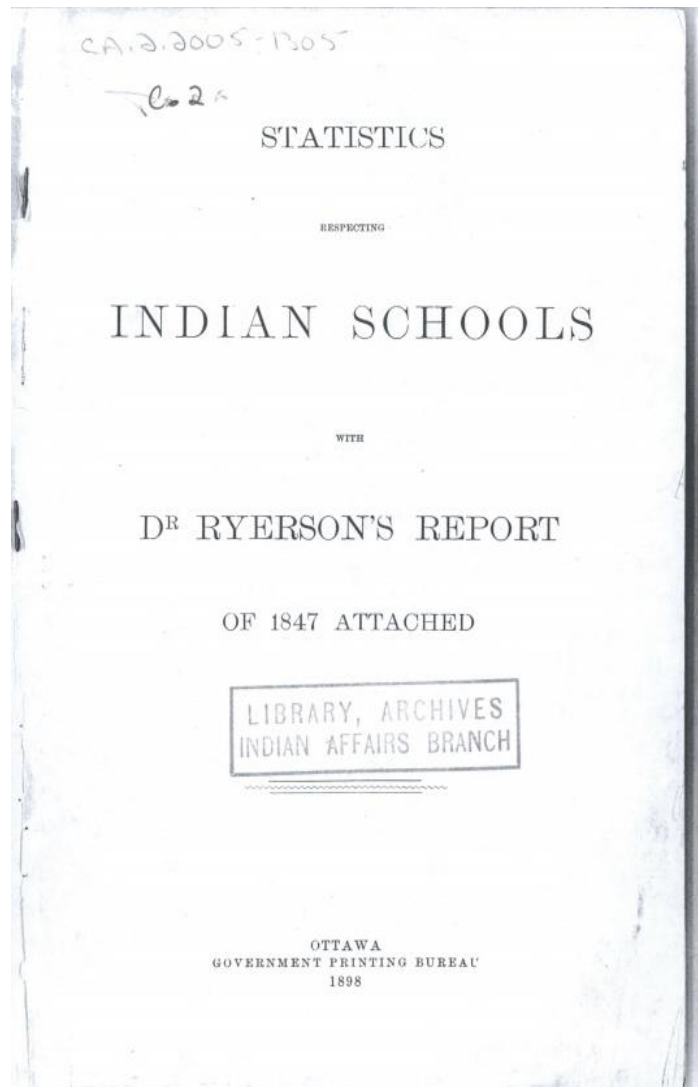


Figure 10. Cover, *Statistics Respecting Indian Schools with Dr. Ryerson's Report of 1847 Attached* (1898)

➤ **1912 J. Harold Putman writes *Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada***

In 1912 one of Ryerson's first biographers, J. Harold Putman, celebrated the dedicated creator of an education system that was ahead of its time:

How are we to sum up the work of this man who moulded the schools of Ontario during a period as long as the life of a single generation? Would the schools of 1876 have been what they were had there been no Ryerson? We think not.

No doubt the people of Upper Canada would, without Ryerson, have worked out a good school system, because a school system must in the end reflect the average intelligence and the fixed ideals of a people. But in Ryerson, Upper Canada had a man who, by his dogged determination and his hold upon the affections of the people, was able to secure legislation somewhat in advance of a fixed public opinion. To a considerable extent he created the public sentiment which made his work possible. He knew what the people needed and persuaded them to accept it. This we conceive to be the work of a statesman.<sup>291</sup>

Biographies such as Putman's were integral to constructing a highly celebratory narrative around Ryerson in the early twentieth century, but Putman stopped slightly short of hagiography. While Ryerson's accomplishments were vast, ranging from the creation of the Education Department, the Normal School, and an "educational museum," Putman found Ryerson had a "natural tendency to be autocratic" and he "never could believe that he himself might be wrong.... He was always either shouting from the pulpit or thumping the desk of the schoolmaster." In Putman's view, Ryerson was no scholar and he would not have been successful as an elected politician. His appeal and success lay elsewhere, among "the whole body of intelligent men and women of Upper Canada."<sup>292</sup>

On the originality of Ryerson's work, Putman also demurred. He noted that Ryerson had drawn inspiration from New England, New York, Germany and Ireland and in his legislation had often adopted "suggestions of men more competent than himself to form a judgment." Ryerson's reliance on other men's ideas in no way detracted from his "greatness," however, for "his genius was shown in the skill with which he adapted these to suit the needs of Upper Canada."<sup>293</sup> Most

---

<sup>291</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 264.

<sup>292</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 265–67.

<sup>293</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 267.



importantly, Ryerson had a tremendous capacity for work and he was “without peer as an administrator.”<sup>294</sup>

Putman concluded with a call for ongoing celebration and commemoration of Ryerson:

The history of Upper Canada during a period of nearly sixty years is as much bound up with the labours of Egerton Ryerson as with the work of any other public man. He gave us lofty ideals of the meaning and purpose of life, and he had an abiding faith in the power of popular education to aid in a realization of these ideals; he fought for free schools in Upper Canada when they needed a valiant champion. Let the present generation of men and women honour the memory of the man who wrought so faithfully for their fathers and grandfathers.<sup>295</sup>

#### ➤ **Conditions in Early Twentieth-Century Residential Schools**

Incoherence of policy and lack of stable funding had devastating impacts on Indigenous children during the development of the residential school system. From the outset, the school buildings were constructed as cheaply as possible and consequently suffered from inadequate heating, lighting and ventilation. Throughout the early 1900s, multiple reports drew attention to the appalling conditions in residential schools across Canada, among them a report from Dr. P. Bryce in 1907, from Indian Department accountant F. H. Paget in 1908, and from S. H. Blake, a lawyer reviewing the work of the Anglican mission, which he submitted to Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, in 1907. All found that the school system had been inadequate since its conception, which resulted in failing and underfunded maintenance programs and a desperate lack of health regulations and medical services. The excessive labour demanded of residential school students made the schools even more deadly. The government’s inaction in the face of these conditions, Blake wrote in his report to Oliver, “brings the Department within unpleasant nearness to the charge of manslaughter.”<sup>296</sup>

---

<sup>294</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 268.

<sup>295</sup> Putman, *Ryerson and Education*, 268.

<sup>296</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 76–78.

Reports such as Bryce's and Oliver's demonstrated that everyone involved in the system was aware of the disease and deaths caused by underfunding of residential schools. John Milloy characterized this period as a "crisis in conditions, sanitation, and health" and labelled both the government and the churches complicit in "hundreds or thousands" of deaths caused by these preventable conditions.<sup>297</sup>

### ➤ **1910 Contract**

In 1910, Duncan Campbell Scott, Superintendent of Indian Education, proposed a new approach to the education of Indigenous children: that the funding of schools should be agreed in a contract between the church and government that set per capita grants for the improvement of conditions in boarding schools.<sup>298</sup> This resulted in approximately \$150,000 a year going to the residential school system. The scale of this investment rapidly diminished during the First World War, however, as wartime inflation rendered the grants completely inadequate to maintaining conditions in schools.<sup>299</sup>

### ➤ **1914 The First World War and the 1920s**

The economic impact of the First World War (1914–1918) resulted in a decline in the number of industrial schools and further deterioration of the buildings in the 1920s. The federal government acquired many church-owned and -operated schools in this period, supporting them financially while the churches consolidated their power over the structure of education and deployment of resources.<sup>300</sup> Despite slower growth, churches still pushed to open new residential schools throughout Canada, and the federal policy of assimilation continued despite the financial constraints caused by the war.<sup>301</sup>

### ➤ **1920 Indian Act Amendments**

---

<sup>297</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 77.

<sup>298</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 235.

<sup>299</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 238–39.

<sup>300</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 239–40.

<sup>301</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 102.

In 1920, the government of Canada responded to ongoing pressure from religious groups by amending provisions for education to more rigidly enforce compulsory attendance through the Indian Act. This amendment concentrated power and the enforcement of attendance in the hands of the federal government and provided that it could use its authority to “compel any First Nations student to attend residential school” until the age of fifteen.<sup>302</sup> The amendment was a further step towards the forced assimilation of Indigenous People, which had been recommended in models of residential schooling from the 1820s onwards.

The TRC’s first volume on the history of residential schools discusses the philosophy behind these amendments, and their consequences:

[Deputy Minister] Scott’s testimony is a clear statement of colonial policy. First Nations people were not members of nations with whom Canada had a relationship: they were a problem. In the process of gaining control over Aboriginal land and resources, the Canadian government had assumed a series of obligations to Aboriginal people. In Scott’s mind, the role of Indian Affairs was not to administer these obligations—which, when they were being negotiated, had been described to Aboriginal people as being part of an ongoing, indeed, eternal, relationship—but to terminate them. The best way to do this was to eliminate First Nations identity—in all its legal and cultural forms—thus bringing to an end all obligations. The government now had the power to rob adults of their status and to rob parents of their children. The fact that the 1920 amendments addressed both enfranchisement and education demonstrates that the ongoing colonization of Aboriginal people was not limited to education. Throughout the first half of the twentieth century, the Indian Act was repeatedly amended to undermine First Nations’ control of land and cultural identity. Traditional economic pursuits were discouraged through the application of provincial game laws, communal farming was disrupted by the subdivision of land, and the authority of First Nations leaders was undermined. Aboriginal culture and strong

---

<sup>302</sup> TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 1*, 278–79.

collective identity were to be eliminated by government policies designed to inculcate and foster a spirit of individuality.<sup>303</sup>

➤ **1929–1939 The Great Depression and Onwards**

The global economic crisis of the Great Depression caused a further deterioration of conditions in residential schools as the federal government reduced per capita grants for the schools and made additional cuts to operational funding for the churches.<sup>304</sup> By the beginning of the Second World War, it was estimated that the department had less than half the funds it required to repair and maintain school buildings, and a majority of the schools were in neither good nor adequate condition for education. Rates of infection and disease remained very high, most notably outbreaks of tuberculosis, but underfunding was not the sole reason for these conditions. As Milloy and others have noted, responsibility lies with the structure of the entire system, which was built upon ideological foundations of assimilation and “civilization.”<sup>305</sup>

➤ **1939–1945 The Second World War and the Foundation of Ryerson Institute of Technology**

While the Second World War alleviated many of the economic pressures caused by the Great Depression, residential school conditions and funding did not improve because money was reallocated to the war effort.<sup>306</sup>

In the 1940s, memories of the First World War and economic depression left little room for idealism. At the same time, wartime mobilization demanded unprecedented cooperation between Canadian universities and the federal government.<sup>307</sup> This was the environment in which the Ryerson Institute of Technology was born in 1948.

---

<sup>303</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 288–89.

<sup>304</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 1*, 291.

<sup>305</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 102–4, 106.

<sup>306</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 103–4.

<sup>307</sup> McKillop, *Matters of Mind*, 521.

Howard Kerr, who became the institute's first principal, had been the director of the Dominion-Provincial War Emergency Training Plan since 1940. The program provided training for workers in war industries and armed forces personnel. It used facilities in school buildings after hours, but also had a branch in the Normal and Model School buildings, which had been vacated in 1941. Kerr worked initially at Queen's Park until 1944, when he moved to Egerton Ryerson's former office at St. James Square and turned his attention to the educational needs of the post-war period.<sup>308</sup>

Kerr had visited Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1943 and returned home convinced that Canada would benefit from a similar technical- and career-focused alternative to university education to support both industry and business. He envisioned a form of education that filled a gap between university graduates and apprenticeships. It would include both technical skills and a foundation of humanities and social sciences training and would be flexible and responsive to the needs of society.<sup>309</sup>

➤ **1946–1951 House of Commons Review of “Indian affairs” in Preparation to Amend the Indian Act**

In 1946, the House of Commons and the Senate began two years of public hearings to review the history of “Indian affairs” in Canada. The resulting report contained twelve recommendations but few were implemented, and the final amended act passed in 1951 was heavily criticized for being largely a restatement of earlier Indian Acts, still founded on the goal of assimilation. One key difference, however, was a recommendation that funding for the residential system be redirected to support a new policy of “integration.” The recommendation called for the closing of residential schools and the transfer of children to integrated provincial schools.<sup>310</sup> Ultimately this resulted in a revision to the Indian Act in 1951 that removed many of the compulsory mandates

---

<sup>308</sup> Ronald Stagg, *Serving Society's Needs: A History of Ryerson Polytechnic University* (Toronto: Ryerson University, 1998), 4.

<sup>309</sup> Stagg, *Serving Society's Needs*, 1, 5.

<sup>310</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 188–89.

related to education alongside a restatement of the commitment to assimilation.<sup>311</sup>

➤ **1946–1969 Residential Schools after the Mandate for Integration**

The federal government's shift towards integration did not include any provisions to address existing problems. Accordingly, the devastating impacts of the residential school system continued in the decades following the Second World War.<sup>312</sup>

By the 1960s, the prevailing view was that the residential school system should be closed, and the schools and their students were further neglected by the federal government. Despite periods of economic prosperity in Canada after the war, ongoing neglect and underfunding ensured that residential schools continued to provide inadequate housing, food, clothing and educational programs. Furthermore, the sexual and physical abuse that pervaded the schools was ignored, and Indigenous students were subjected to cruel and unethical medical and nutritional experiments throughout this period.<sup>313</sup> Ultimately, the federal government took control of the schools in 1969.

➤ **1946 Ontario Government Announces Creation of “Multi-Program Campus”**

In 1946, the government of Ontario approved the creation of technical institutes, including a “multi-program campus” on the site of the teacher-training centre in Toronto. Growing Cold War tensions meant that the site might be needed for military use; accordingly, not until August 1948 was it released for the institute.<sup>314</sup>

---

<sup>311</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 2, 1939 to 2000*, Vol. 1 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 14.

<sup>312</sup> Milloy, *A National Crime*, 260.

<sup>313</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 2*, 21; Ian Mosby, “Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942–1952,” *Histoire sociale/Social History* 46, no. 91 (2013): 145–72; Catherine Carstairs and Ian Mosby, “Colonial Extractions: Oral Health Care and Indigenous Peoples in Canada, 1945–79,” *Canadian Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (2020): 192–216.

<sup>314</sup> Stagg, *Serving Society's Needs*, 6–7.

With very little time before the new institute was to open, Kerr had to come up with a name that would confer immediate credibility and attract students. As the historian of the university, Ronald Stagg, explained, Kerr chose "Ryerson" for several reasons:

Howard Kerr, the first principal, chose a name that would give the school a measure of instant tradition. The Ryerson name tied the new school both to the man, Egerton Ryerson, and to the location, St. James Square, which Ryerson had made the centre of education in Ontario. Each could be associated with what the Ryerson Institute of Technology was trying to do.<sup>315</sup>

RG 12.192.001.001 EXCERPT TAKEN FROM A HISTORY OF RYERSON WRITTEN BY HOWARD KERR, FIRST PRINCIPAL OF RYERSON, IN 1961

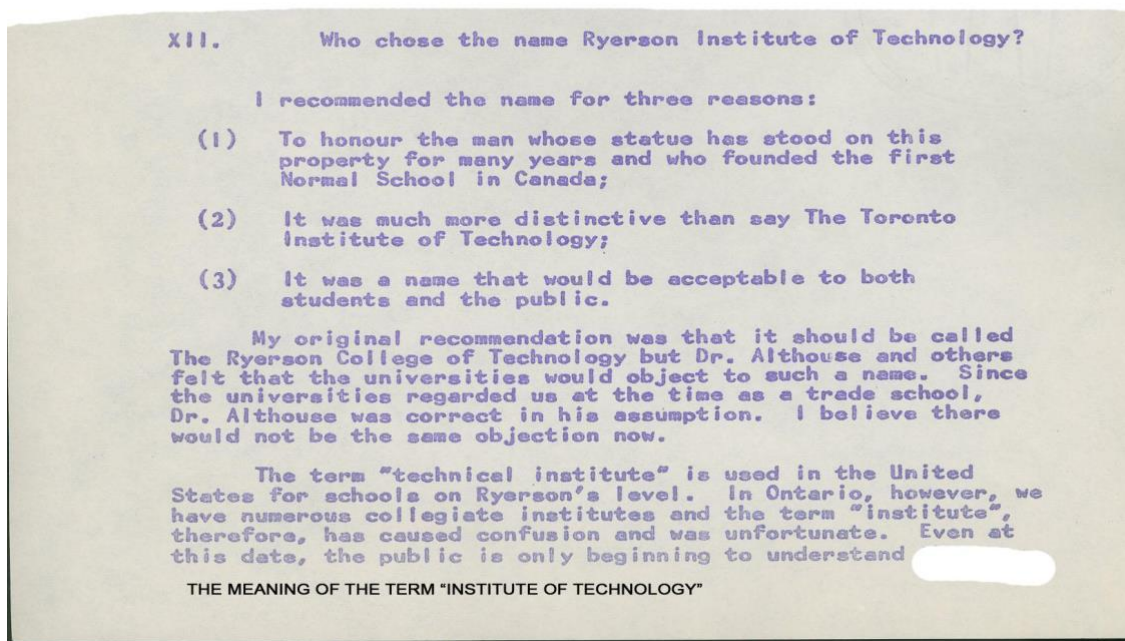


Figure 11. Howard Kerr's explanation, written in 1961, for the name of Ryerson Institute of Technology

Kerr and his staff also placed newspaper advertisements that featured Ontario's coat of arms along with the names of senior government officials, all in an effort

<sup>315</sup> Stagg, *Serving Society's Needs*, 2.

to "give instant prestige to the new institution."<sup>316</sup> Both Egerton Ryerson's and Kerr's visions of education remained central to the institution's subsequent development.<sup>317</sup>

The C. T. S. 22....37

Page 102

order had not been passed formally. So that was finally done the week before the school opened.

Now that Kerr and his colleagues had permission to start a new school, they had to call it something. Kerr was the one, after all the discussions, who chose the name Ryerson. Why? He said: "We were looking for a name, something distinguished that wasn't being used by any other institution at our particular level. At first we were trying to get a very unique name. Nobody seemed to be able to think of any. Neither could I. Then we thought we should try and tie in history with it. First of all, we thought of The Upper Canada Institute of Technology. The Institute of Technology part was fine but not the rest. Then I suggested Ryerson Institute of Technology because Ryerson was so well-known and his statue was there on the grounds. There was Ryerson Public School and Ryerson Press but the name wasn't used that much. In the long run, the Ryerson Institute of Technology was probably as easy a name as there was to remember and it held as much prestige and history as could possibly be had."

There was no trouble getting approval of the name from Queen's Park. Kerr recalls: "Dr. Althouse was quite a student of Ryerson and he had lectured about him at the College of Education. When I suggested the name Ryerson to him, he said: "Now that's appropriate because Ryerson was not only interested in teacher training and all the rest of that but he also had a shop in his basement and he built little boats. He was quite skilled with his hands as well as his mind! Althouse would not have been happy if the word "college" had been used in the title, Kerr said.

*Figure 12. Source: Downing, History of Ryerson, 102.*

Kerr later recalled that he chose the name "Ryerson Institute of Technology" partly because the institute was on the grounds where the Egerton Ryerson

<sup>316</sup> Stagg, *Serving Society's Needs*, 7.

<sup>317</sup> Stagg, *Serving Society's Needs*, 26.



statue was located and because of the prestige and history the name carried in relation to education. He also thought it would be memorable (see Figure 12).

### ➤ 1950 Students Want to Keep the Ryerson Statue on Campus



Figure 13. *Globe and Mail*, December 13, 1950

In 1950, the statue of Egerton Ryerson was treasured by the Ryerson community. When Toronto mining executive Keith Balfour suggested that it be moved to Queen's Park, there was strong opposition and the statue was protected by guards—on campus.<sup>318</sup>

<sup>318</sup> "Students Sore at Suggestion Ryerson Statue Be Moved," *Globe and Mail*, December 13, 1950.

➤ **1968–1969 *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, or the “White Paper”***

Despite the federal government’s commitment to close the residential schools twenty years earlier, in 1968 over eight thousand students still lived in residential schools, which the government began to refer to as “residences and schools.” From the late 1960s onward, enrolment began to decline.<sup>319</sup>

In 1969, the *Statement of the Government of Canada on Indian Policy, or the “White Paper,”* renewed the government’s commitment to the assimilation of Indigenous People. Indigenous political organizations responded swiftly by restating the rights of their people. As a result, the federal government accepted the principle of “Indian Control of Indian Education.” Several First Nations nonetheless chose to take control of residential schools as an alternative to assimilation into provincial education systems that were viewed as “unreceptive, inappropriate, and racist.”<sup>320</sup>

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission concluded that the White Paper “ignored virtually everything First Nations people had been telling the government about Treaty and Aboriginal rights. The goals of the White Paper amounted to a continuation and an acceleration of the policies enunciated by Duncan Campbell Scott in 1920.”<sup>321</sup> The recently formed National Indian Brotherhood declared that the intention of the White Paper was to bring about “the destruction of a Nation of People by legislation and cultural genocide.”<sup>322</sup>

The chiefs of Alberta then produced a “Red Paper,” which rejected any move to shift control over Indigenous education into the hands of the provincial government.<sup>323</sup>

---

<sup>319</sup> TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 2*, 10.

<sup>320</sup> TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 2*, 11–12.

<sup>321</sup> TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 2*, 14.

<sup>322</sup> Cited in TRC, *Canada’s Residential Schools, Part 2*, 22.

<sup>323</sup> Saddle Lake Cree Nation Archives, “Blue Quills Indian Residential School, A History: 1870–1970,” Blue Quills First Nations College, St. Paul, Alberta, 14.

### ➤ **1968–Present Black and Indigenous Solidarity**

The Black Power movement gained popularity following a decline in the more respectable and incrementalist aspects of the civil rights movement in the 1960s. The Black Panther Party for Self Defense, otherwise known as the Black Panthers, was founded by Huey P. Newton and Bobby Seale in 1968 in Oakland, California. The Black Panthers used the politics and theories of communist, Black Muslim, anticolonial and revolutionary thinkers to establish their party and mobilized disenfranchised Black people in the United States to provide self-defence and protection from the police and government.<sup>324</sup>

Within a few years, the Black Panther Party had over thirty-eight chapters and branches with over five thousand members. It was particularly adept at promoting Black Americans' solidarity with oppressed peoples by highlighting their shared experiences of colonialism, capitalism, and police brutality, for example with the Vietcong, the Front de libération nationale FLN (the Algerian revolutionary party), the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), and Indigenous liberation organizations in settler colonies such as Canada and Australia.<sup>325</sup>

Indigenous groups in Australia used the tenets of Black Power to form the Australian Black Panther Party in December 1971.<sup>326</sup> As scholar Kathy Lothian notes, the Australian Black Panthers drew direct comparisons between the plight of Australian Indigenous communities and the experiences of Black Americans and stimulated the adoption of a more militant political framework that allowed Australian Indigenous groups to determine the direction of their material lives without white interference.<sup>327</sup>

In Canada, Indigenous and Black solidarity emerged in many forms, such as prison abolition, organizing, and cross-coalition work. For example, the

---

<sup>324</sup> Joshua Bloom and Waldo E. Martin Jr., *Black against Empire: The History and Politics of the Black Panther Party*, 1st ed. (Berkeley: University of California, 2013), 2–5.

<sup>325</sup> Bloom and Martin Jr., *Black against Empire*, 2–5.

<sup>326</sup> Kathy Lothian, "Seizing the Time: Australian Aborigines and the Influence of the Black Panther Party, 1969–1972," *Journal of Black Studies* 35, no. 4 (2005): 181.

<sup>327</sup> Lothian, "Seizing the Time," 180–84.

Prisoners Justice Action Committee (PJAC) was founded in 2004 to abolish the prison-industrial complex and fight for the rights of prisoners, who are disproportionately Black and Indigenous in Canada.<sup>328</sup>

The confluence of the Black Power Era, the “Post-Colonial Sixties” and Indigenous liberation movements provided a theoretical, solidarity and material framework for future organizers and activists to build coalitions and fight settler colonialism, colonialism, racism, white supremacy and capitalism.

➤ **1970 Peaceful Occupation of Blue Quills**

In 1970, twenty-five Indigenous People had a peaceful sit-in at the Blue Quills school, which was slated to be transferred to provincial authorities and turned into a residence.<sup>329</sup> The Blue Quills Native Education Council proposed instead to take over the school themselves and teach students in grades four through nine.

The council framed the issue as one of “Red Paper” versus “White Paper” policies. Key council positions were:

- a) The right of Indian communities to determine their educational ends has to be respected.
- b) Special organizational structures developed by Indian groups have to be respected and recognized by the federal and provincial governments.
- c) Federal enabling policies have to be instituted which will allow Indian groups to assume responsibility for sizeable amounts of money for providing educational services.
- d) Provisions must be made whereby certain essential educational positions in the Public Service of Canada will be abolished and the funds designated for salaries turned over to Indian groups.

---

<sup>328</sup> Rodney Diverlus, Sandy Hudson, and Syrus Marcus Ware, eds., *Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter Canada* (Regina: University of Regina, 2020), 37–42.

<sup>329</sup> Saddle Lake Cree Nation Archives, “Blue Quills Indian Residential School,” 14.

e) Independent Indian education groups will be allowed a strong measure of autonomy and carry on consultations with federal and provincial agencies as needs arise.

f) Broad adult training programmes [must be] provided for education board members and institutional workers, such funds to be included in annual budgets.

g) [There must be a] minimum of interference from the federal Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, except that Indian groups be held accountable for the educational funds in their possession.<sup>330</sup>

➤ **1972 National Indian Brotherhood and “Indian Control of Indian Education”**

Following the takeover of facilities at Blue Quills, the National Indian Brotherhood drafted a policy paper that demanded Aboriginal rights over the education of Aboriginal children.<sup>331</sup> These actions and documents marked the beginning of a transfer to Indigenous people of control over residential schools, which resulted in significant improvements to the schools.<sup>332</sup>

➤ **1973 Statue Routinely Vandalized**

---

<sup>330</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 2*, 88–89.

<sup>331</sup> National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations, “Indian Control of Indian Education,” policy paper presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development (Ottawa: NIB/AFN, 1972), 27.

<sup>332</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 2*, 99.

Ryersonian 25 Tues. Dec. 4, 1973

Page 23

# Statue butt of many jokes

By ROS GUGGI



Egerton Ryerson

Fifteen years ago the sight of the statue of Egerton Ryerson dressed in a bra probably wouldn't have made anyone look twice.

After all, "old Eggie" had often been seen sporting a new outfit of garbage bags, a new coat of paint, a new hat or placards around his neck. Condoms were often placed in his hand while empty liquor and beer bottles seemed to find a final resting place at his feet or in his arms.

Since its unveiling in 1889, the statue has been the scene of numerous pranks and jokes most of which took place over five years ago.

Most of them took place during Winter Carnival, at Halloween or after a dance but for a time it was a fairly regular thing said Louis Gonsalves, the Director of Alumni.

"For a while there it seemed as though something happened every three weeks.

While living at Eric Palin Hall as Director of Residence, Mr. Gonsalves enjoyed a good vantage point. He remembers seeing "Eggie" cloaked in garbage bags with beer bottles strewn about his feet and once they put a doll or something in his arms."

According to Alberindo Sauro, Dean of Applied Arts, the most memorable prank occurred about 15 years ago when the Ontario Agricultural College, now the University of Guelph, dabbed the statue with paint signifying their school colors.

In recent years, however, everyone seems to have decided to let the statue rest in peace. Mr. Sauro said, "There hasn't been anything like that now" while Mr. Gonsalves noticed the pranks started dropping off from 1963 on. Both men felt this may be because the statue is less accessible now than it was earlier.

Before 1963 the statue was situated in the quadrangle in front of the facade. When the three buildings that had been in the quadrangle earlier were torn down and the present building built, the statue was moved to its present position on Gould St.

According to Mr. Sauro, "the statue was the centre of attraction earlier and was a good target for pranks." He added that the fence around it now may act as a deterrent.

Jim Peters, Director of Language Studies and Archivist, as well as teaching at Ryerson for the past 23 years thinks the statue plays an important role in Ryerson.

"I think its been a very important symbol because it symbolized Ryerson's name and I think Ryerson has derived a lot of pride from being on a site where the statue of the founder of education stands."

He also has noticed the absence of pranks in recent years.

"It's been pretty dull these last five years." Mr. Peters added that there was a tradition calling for the statue to be facing the lake which had something to do with Ryerson's love for Lake Ontario.

He pointed out a marble bust of Egerton Ryerson and his old chair which are both kept in archives—two more attempts perhaps to immortalize the enigmatic figure of the man.

And enigmatic he was. With only a grade eight education, Egerton Ryerson now bears the title of father of education. Born in Norfolk County, he lived the life of the early pioneer and was educated in grammar school near London.

He entered the Methodist ministry and took an interest in the education system. Interested in seeing a different system, Ryerson toured England in 1845 and submitted a report on his findings. He advocated the adoption of a basic curriculum aimed at attempting to break down rigid and ancient educational standards.

He also felt strongly that schools should not become a tool of sectarian minorities which they were at that time and suggested the standardization of text books under the control of the provincial government.

As a result of his report the Bill of 1846 was passed as a basis on which the Ontario public school system was founded. It served as a standard on which all subsequent school legislation was founded.

The Toronto Normal School was also founded as a result of the report in 1847 and Ryerson served as Director of Education for the province.

Ryerson advocated one more thing in his report—that of practical experience rather than theory in education. One hundred and ten years later Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, using this theory as its basis for operation, was founded on the old site of the Toronto Normal School. At the time of its building it was the first institute of its kind in Canada.

It is perhaps fitting that Ryerson has the statue—it took the citizens of Toronto seven years to raise the money for it—on its grounds. Over \$4,500 was collected through public subscriptions from teachers, students and school officials. The Ontario government gave \$2,000 and the city of Toronto \$500.

By the time the statue was finally ready to be bought over \$1,000 in interest had accumulated on the money. Sculptor Hamilton McCarthy made the nine foot high bronze statue at a cost of \$5,000. The pedestal was made of New Brunswick granite at a cost of \$2,600 while the fees for erection were \$380.

In 1971 the statue served a group of prominent Canadian writers in their protest against the sale of the Ryerson Press (unrelated to our Ryerson) one year earlier to McGraw Hill of Canada Ltd., a totally U.S. owned subsidiary.

To the strains of Yankee Doodle they draped the statue with an American flag and placed a wreath at its base. The action was described by a local newspaper as a blow for an independent Canadian publishing industry.

This year Ryerson celebrates its 25th anniversary yet through the statue, our history goes back much further.

Figure 14. *The Ryersonian*, December 4, 1973

The statue of Egerton Ryerson was the target of many pranks from both within and outside the Ryerson community. From small objects like money and beer being placed in his hands to being splattered with the colours of the Ontario Agricultural College, the Ryerson statue was defaced multiple times.<sup>333</sup>

<sup>333</sup> Ros Guggi, "Statue Butt of Many Jokes," *The Ryersonian*, December 4, 1973.


## ➤ 1989 Statue of Ryerson Turns One Hundred Years Old

May 24, 1989 marked the centenary of the statue.

EYEOPENER • JANUARY 12, 1989

# Statue of Ryerson turns 100 this year

By David Muir



Egerton Ryerson's statue, which stands on Gould Street, will be a century old this year.

On May 24, 1889 — Queen Victoria's birthday — an official unveiling brought the monument into the public eye.

Egerton Ryerson was the founder of the public school system in Ontario. After his death in 1882 a fund was started to collect money for the statue.

Over \$8,000 was raised, with teachers, students and school officials contributing over \$4,500, and the Ontario government adding another \$2,000. The City of Toronto gave \$500 and the fund had accumulated over \$1,000 in interest by the time the statue was purchased.

Egerton's bronze likeness is nine feet tall, a creation of sculptor Hamilton McCarthy. It sits on a pedestal of New Brunswick granite. McCarthy charged \$5,000 to make the monument, and the pedestal cost \$2,600. A further \$380 was spent on erecting the statue.

Sir Alexander, lieutenant-governor at the time, unveiled and said, "Dr. Ryerson is known throughout the world and breadth of the representative of the province has had ever as pleased to give to him to disclose which falls to my lot in unveiling the monument man."

*The Globe and Mail*, 25, 1889 had this unveiling of the monument erected in a position of the North York grounds which were of the grand teacher yesterday afternoon large concourse. There were there, senators, politicians, presidents, cities and eminent learned in the law, princes, manufacturers, agriculturalists, and pupils all being as honor to the name of the monument was whose virtues were ed."

EYEPHOTO: Loredana Rosotti

Egerton's standing tall as he celebrates his 100th birthday this year. The statue was officially unveiled on May 24, 1889. Egerton Ryerson was the founder of the public school system in Toronto. The bronze statue is nine-feet tall and was sculpted by Hamilton McCarthy.

Figure 15. Eyeopener, January 12, 1989

### ➤ **1980s–1990s Final Closures of Residential Schools**

The number of residential schools declined from fifty-six in 1970 to zero by 1999.<sup>334</sup> The TRC observed that it took almost sixty years for the Department of Indian Affairs to close down the system. The federal government attributed the slow pace to a lack of classroom space for Indigenous students on reserves, the churches' continued support of residential schools, an increase in Indigenous students, and Indigenous opposition to the transfer to provincial schools. Throughout this period of financial and governmental neglect, the institutions continued to deteriorate.<sup>335</sup>

The federal government estimated that at least 150,000 Indigenous children were forced into the residential school system and over 135 schools were developed across Canada.<sup>336</sup> The Aboriginal Healing Foundation and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada estimated that there were approximately seventy-five to eighty thousand survivors of the residential school system alive in the early 2000s.<sup>337</sup>

The devastating impact of the residential school system did not end with the final closure of the schools. The “Missing Children and Unmarked Burials Project” is an ongoing effort to record the names of children who died at the schools, many of whose families were never informed of their deaths or the location of their graves.<sup>338</sup> The legacy of the schools is also apparent in significant educational, income, physical and mental health disparities between Indigenous People and other Canadians, pervasive and systemic racism, and the disproportionate representation of Indigenous People in Canada's child welfare

---

<sup>334</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 2*, 103.

<sup>335</sup> TRC, *Canada's Residential Schools, Part 2*, 106.

<sup>336</sup> Aboriginal Healing Foundation, research series, 2002; Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Ottawa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015), 3.

<sup>337</sup> Aboriginal Healing Foundation, research series, 2002.

<sup>338</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*, Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Vol. 4 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015), 1–2.



system and prisons. This traumatic legacy has also extended through multiple generations. In the words of the TRC:

The beliefs and attitudes that were used to justify the establishment of residential schools are not things of the past: they continue to animate much of what passes for Aboriginal policy today. Reconciliation will require more than pious words about the shortcomings of those who preceded us. It obliges us to both recognize the ways in which the legacy of residential schools continues to disfigure Canadian life and to abandon policies and approaches that currently serve to extend that hurtful legacy.<sup>339</sup>

➤ **2001 “Forsaken Father” in *The Ryersonian***

In 2001, various plans were proposed to celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of Egerton Ryerson’s birth in 2003, including the possibility of a plaque installed at his gravesite in Mount Pleasant cemetery, celebrations on campus, or an opportunity to advocate for more affordable higher education.<sup>340</sup>

---

<sup>339</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada’s Residential Schools: The Legacy*, Vol. 5 (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015), 3–4.

<sup>340</sup> Jennifer Greens, “Forsaken Father?: Egerton Ryerson’s 200th Birthday is coming in 2003; \$10,000 Plaque ‘Might Happen’ if Benefactor Steps Up,” *The Ryersonian*, 28 November 2001.

# Forsaken father?

Egerton Ryerson's 200th birthday is coming in 2003  
\$10,000 plaque 'might happen' if benefactor steps up

By Jennifer Geens  
Ryersonian Staff

Shortly before Halloween, with the aid of a map provided by Mount Pleasant Cemetery staff, the Ryersonian located Egerton Ryerson's grave on the north side of plot G.

The monument is made of polished rose-coloured granite, of the same type as the base of his statue on Gould Street. The style must have been popular near the turn of the century. The same monument is repeated again and again in the cemetery, in various hues.

Egerton's inscription has only his name, the date of his death (Feb. 19, 1882) and his age. There is no mention of the man's accomplishments. The inscription is worn, the edges of some of the letters are chipped away.

This modest stone marks the resting place of the founder of Ontario's public school system.

Every three or four years, some reporter gets the bright idea of rediscovering Egerton, as a search through Ryerson Archives' bulky files on Egerton Ryerson reveals.

Born into a loyalist Anglican family in Charlottesville, Norfolk County, Ont. on March 24, 1803, Egerton converted to Methodism at the age of 18 and his father threw him out of the house. Egerton became a minister and then editor of the *Christian Guardian*, a platform from which he criticized the wealthy Anglican loyalists who ran Upper Canada (the Family Compact) and perpetuated British class divisions through patronage.

Egerton was a moderate. He deplored the Family Compact, but neither did he support William Lyon Mackenzie's violent attempt to overthrow it. Egerton chose to focus his energy on education as the way to eradicate class barriers. He became principal of Victoria College in Cobourg, Ont. in 1841, and was appointed Canada West's Chief Superintendent of Education in 1844. To Egerton, free public education was the key to a democratic society.

Egerton was not a rich man, he was a thoroughly middle class Victorian. A published collection of his daughter's letters to his daughter reveal a man who gets into disagreements with his wife, keeps track of the cost of everything, and is plagued with headaches from stress and overwork.

After being appointed Chief Superintendent of Education, he made it his business to get a school bill passed, one of the clauses of which would allow municipalities to tax property owners in order to fund free public schools.



Photo courtesy Ryerson University Archives

Egerton Ryerson, a tireless crusader, wrote to his daughter, "I have more than once wished that my own career might now terminate... as I have no hope of any domestic tranquility."

It was an uphill battle. In 1846, he wrote to a friend: "I have heard of one rich man objecting to it... He says, I am told, that 'the does not wish to educate all the brats in the neighbourhood.' Now, to educate all the brats in every neighbourhood is just the very object of this clause, and, in order to do so, it is proposed to compel selfish, rich men to do what they ought to do, but what they will not do voluntarily."

The clause wasn't passed until 1850. The Ontario legislature didn't allow municipalities to impose it until 1871. Egerton's career was one of struggles, setbacks and perseverance. He had to fight for his school system every step of the way.

Egerton's 200th birthday will be in 2003. University president Claude Lapinewski says something's in the works, but won't reveal exactly what. As for Egerton's grave, nothing could be done about it, he says, since the grave belongs to the Ryerson family.

But Tara Pryke, a service

co-ordinator at Mount Pleasant Cemetery, has news for Lapinewski: Pryke says contrary to popular belief, putting a flat marker at the foot of Egerton's grave would be no problem. The relatives with signing authority are deceased. She says we could put anything we want on a flat marker, and it would cost between \$500 and \$1,000.

Meanwhile, Bruce Percy at University Advancement is in the dark with respect to Lapinewski's plans. Percy hasn't heard of any plans to honour Egerton, though he said there might be something done once the name change (to Ryerson University) becomes official.

"He's an interesting guy," he said of Egerton. "A leader in the province. We don't have anybody of that stature today."

Ryerson archivist Claude Doucet says the university has applied to Canada Post to try and get a commemorative stamp issued for Egerton's birthday. But Doucet says no events have been planned yet.

Standing in the shadow of the Normal School facade watching an impromptu soccer match, Alex Leman, Ryerson's v.p. education, has a different idea for commemorating Egerton.

"It's like to see the university actually take a stand and say 'Our namesake advocated for the public

education system and we're going to do so as well,'" says Leman. "I think the best birthday present would be for the university to honour its namesake and fight for affordable education."

Alex Riley, an author, director of the Ontario Heritage Foundation, and a Ryerson alumnus, feels Egerton's grave would be a show-stopper for an official gold and blue OHH plaque.

"When you look at the people we've awarded plaques to... just the name, Ryerson in terms of public education would put him at the top of any list."

Of course there's a catch. For a fully OHH funded plaque there's a waiting list. But if a private sponsor were to put up the money for things like the research, the reception, and the plaque itself, the marker would be ready by March 2003.

The cost? "It's probably something around \$10,000," Riley said.

Percy laughs when told the price, and says it's unlikely Ryerson could put up that kind of money, unless an outside benefactor came forward.

"It's not that we don't want to do something," Percy said. "He's our namesake. And it actually might happen, you never know. It could be some kind of project somebody grabbed onto and really got excited about and wanted to support, in which case it would be great."

Sometimes it's hard to remember, when the most visible symbol of him is 20 feet tall (including the pedestal), that this man of bronze was once flesh and blood. The long hours he worked cost him in his health and on the homefront. He wrote to his daughter Sophia one morning in 1872 just after his wife had left for the train station.

"My dearest Sophia... I have more than once wished that my own career might now terminate, even with my work unfinished, as I have no hope of any domestic tranquility, much less domestic enjoyment, and as I have become increasingly sensitive and less able to bear what I could once endure, and much of my time and strength and concentration of mind, is lost in mental agitation and distraction. The dearer I have my salary a little longer that I may leave a little more when I go hence than I have now, weighs with me, but from the prices and the way things are now going, my whole salary is swallowed up by current expenses, without reducing my bank debt at all."

This letter is for yourself only, and you will burn it as soon as you have read it."

Egerton Ryerson didn't make any money fighting for free public schools, and for the freedom for students to go as far in life as their education can take them. He didn't get rich toiling year after year for an unpopular cause he once said was "of much more importance than even my life."

Every Ontario student should consider themselves in his debt.

### Egerton Ryerson on campus:

- The statue at the intersection of Bond and Gould was erected in 1909 on the grounds of the Normal School, Ontario's first teachers college, built under Egerton's supervision.
- The Normal School was razed in 1961; the preserved facade forms the entrance to the RAC.
- On the third floor of the library in the archives, there is a bust of Egerton and the Ryerson family records.
- Medals with Egerton's head stamped on them are handed out at convocations.
- We have a mascot named Eggy.
- A 19th-century desk, said to have been used by Egerton himself, graces the office of the dean of continuing education.
- And in the early 80s Ryerson used to throw birthday bashes for Egerton, complete with free cake.

Figure 16. The Ryersonian, November 28, 2001

## ➤ 2008 Ryerson University Pressured to Host Healing Event

In a public address, Assembly of First Nations national chief Phil Fontaine stated that Ryerson University should host one of seven major Truth and Reconciliation events. The suggestion came after Indigenous leaders and communities called for Canada and Ryerson University to address Egerton Ryerson's involvement in

the residential schooling system and work towards reconciling the harm that the system inflicted on Indigenous people in Canada.<sup>341</sup>

ener November 5, 2008 Ryerson  
E

## Chief: Rye should host healing event

BY DREW PENNER

One of the most powerful Aboriginal leaders in Canada is calling for Ryerson to get involved in the residential school healing process as a way to overcome the racist legacy of the university's founder.

While addressing a crowd on campus, Assembly of First Nations National Chief Phil Fontaine said the university should offer to host one of seven major Truth and Reconciliation Commission events. They are taking place across Canada to help erase the storied past of Egerton Ryerson, who was instrumental in creating the school system that tried to extinguish aboriginal culture and left scars of sexual and physical abuse that fester to this day.

This summer, Stephen Harper acknowledged the failed policy of assimilation promoted by Egerton Ryerson "was wrong, has caused great harm and has no place in our country."

"It's a difficult topic for people here at Ryerson to talk about," said Monica McKay, coordinator for Ryerson Aboriginal student services.

"That is one of the challenges that Aboriginal students face on making the decision of coming to Ryerson — having to come to terms with realizing that Egerton Ryerson was one of the folks who put together and suggested that Aboriginal young people be removed and placed in residential schools," she said.

Julia Hanigsberg, Ryerson's general counsel and secretary of the board of governors, said although she is not that familiar with the specifics of Egerton Ryerson's influence on the residential school system, the university is committed to promoting diversity.

"We are an inclusive environment and we are always trying to become a more inclusive environment," she said.

"Ryerson is 100 per cent committed to its Aboriginal students."

She said she doesn't know how a national Truth and Reconciliation event would be structured, but that it is an historic step for Canada.

ously by aboriginals.

"If the Prime Minister came to Ryerson and suggested Ryerson be involved in something, do you think Ryerson would listen?" she said.

As a voice for the Aboriginal community within the administration,

**If the Prime Minister came to Ryerson and suggested Ryerson be involved in something, do you think Ryerson would listen?**

— Lynn Lavallée, Aboriginal Advisory Committee Chair

"I think that if the commission wanted to come to Ryerson, I can't see that Ryerson wouldn't be interested in talking about it."

Lynn Lavallée, chair of Ryerson's Aboriginal Advisory Committee said Fontaine's words will be taken seriously.

she's looking forward to discussing the possibility of the event on campus. The committee could create a proposal at their next meeting on Nov. 18.

But there has yet to be any official discussions between Ryerson and the Truth and Reconciliation commission.



Chief Phil Fontaine wants Ryerson to host one of seven reconciliation events. PHOTO COURTESY OF THE ASSEMBLY OF FIRST NATIONS

Figure 17. *The Eyeopener*, November 5, 2008

<sup>341</sup> Drew Penner, *The Eyeopener*, "Chief: Rye Should Host Healing Event," *The Eyeopener*, November 5, 2008.

➤ **2010 Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council Inquires into Ryerson's Role in Residential Schools**

In 2010, the university's Aboriginal Education Council (AEC) inquired into Egerton Ryerson and the residential school system as a part of ongoing Truth and Reconciliation efforts at Ryerson. Many of the events discussed in their report are considered in these pages, with the AEC ultimately concluding: "Egerton Ryerson contributed to the concept of the residential school system."<sup>342</sup>

The AEC's document contains the following dedication:

Today, Aboriginal survivors of the Residential School System, their children, grandchildren and communities are engaged in healing processes. The aim of truth and reconciliation is for Canada as a whole to recognize the history and impacts of this educational system upon Aboriginal peoples and support Aboriginal communities in re-claiming their identities. Once denial is broken and dialogue begins, Aboriginal peoples and other Canadians can engage in a process of reconciliation which will lead to a new chapter in our collective history. Ryerson University is committed to this truth and reconciliation process which includes acknowledging the role that our namesake had in the conception of residential schools and creating a learning environment which welcomes and respects Aboriginal people.<sup>343</sup>

➤ **2013 Black Lives Matter Established**

Following several police killings of Black men and women in the United States, three U.S.-based organizers established Black Lives Matter, an organization that seeks to protest and organize against police killings and racial violence against Black people in the United States. In 2013 Patrisse Cullors, Alicia Garza, and Opal Tometi formed the Black Lives Matter Network following the acquittal of George Zimmerman, the thirty-seven-year-old American who shot and killed Trayvon

---

<sup>342</sup> Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council, "Ryerson, the Residential School System," 4.

<sup>343</sup> Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council, "Ryerson, the Residential School System," 5-6.

Martin, a Black seventeen-year-old in Sanford, Florida. The organizers used the hashtag #BlackLivesMatter on social media, organized against Zimmerman's acquittal and raised awareness of the state-sanctioned killings of Mike Brown in Ferguson and Eric Garner in New York City in 2014.<sup>344</sup> The movement rapidly gained momentum, and Black Lives Matter chapters were established throughout America and across the globe.

In Canada, the Black Lives Matter movement gained momentum and the Black Lives Matter Toronto chapter was established after Toronto-based organizers, activists and allies travelled to Ferguson, Missouri, to protest and show solidarity with community members after police officer Darren Wilson shot and killed Mike Brown Jr., an eighteen-year-old Black man. In November 2014, a grand jury announced that Darren Wilson would not be charged for the killing of Mike Brown. Community members and organizers in Toronto were outraged and took to the streets to mourn the killing of Mike Brown, as well as that of Jermaine Carby, a twenty-four-year-old Black man from Brampton, Ontario, who was killed by Peel Regional Police officer Ryan Reid. The core organizers, Pascale Diverlus, Yusra Khogali and Janaya Khan, organized a call to action on November 25, 2014, and over three thousand Black Torontonians and allies protested against the killings and paid respects to the families of Carby and Brown.<sup>345</sup>

The Black Lives Matter movement in Canada expanded to introduce chapters in Vancouver, Montreal and Waterloo to rally and organize around Black liberation and justice with all Black people across the globe. Black Lives Matter in Canada seeks to stand in solidarity with Indigenous People with their support of Land Back, decolonization and Indigenous resurgence.<sup>346</sup>

### ➤ **2015–2017 Community Consultations and the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

---

<sup>344</sup> Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016), 153–64.

<sup>345</sup> Diverlus, Hudson, and Ware, *Until We Are Free*, 6–10.

<sup>346</sup> "About Us," <https://www.blacklivesmatter.ca>.

Following the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report in May 2015, the university initiated two years of consultations with its Indigenous community. Consultations focused on participants' lived experiences and included panel discussions, Talking Circles, and meetings with Indigenous students, faculty, staff and members of the wider community.<sup>347</sup>

➤ **2018 Community Consultation Report, Plaque and the Star Blanket**

Following community consultations, the university released a report entitled *Truth and Reconciliation at Ryerson University: Building a Foundation for Generations to Come*.<sup>348</sup> The release of the report was marked with a celebration and ceremony led by Dr. Denise O'Neil Green (Vice-President, Equity and Community Inclusion) and Elder Joanne Okimawinew Dallaire. University president Mohamed Lachemi spoke of Ryerson's commitment to a campus environment that embraces and supports Indigenous learners, faculty and staff. As a part of this initiative, a new plaque was installed next to the Egerton Ryerson statue on campus that acknowledged Egerton Ryerson's connection to residential schools.

At the ceremony, Monica McKay, Director of Indigenous Initiatives, wrapped President Lachemi and Provost Michael Benarroch in a Star Blanket to symbolize their responsibility for responding to Ryerson's Truth and Reconciliation Report. McKay called on the university to "identify how this work will be accomplished."<sup>349</sup> The Star Blanket had been gifted to the university in 2010 to mark the launch of the Aboriginal Education Council and a new era in university-Indigenous relations.<sup>350</sup>

➤ **2020 Global Protests Follow Police Killing of George Floyd**

Following the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis on May 25, 2020, protests erupted across the globe denouncing the killing and demanding prison

---

<sup>347</sup> *Truth and Reconciliation at Ryerson University: Community Consultation Summary Report*, written by Denise O'Neil Green and Joanne Dallaire (Toronto: Ryerson University, 2018), <https://www.ryerson.ca/equity/programs-reports/truth-reconciliation-ryerson/>.

<sup>348</sup> *Truth and Reconciliation at Ryerson*.

<sup>349</sup> Swikar Oli, "Promise of Reconciliation," *The Ryersonian*, 31 January 2018.

<sup>350</sup> *Truth and Reconciliation at Ryerson University*, inside front cover.

abolition and defunding in police services. The killing resulted in one of the largest and most sustained protests in the United States in history and transcended geographic boundaries.<sup>351</sup> In both the United States and Canada, the killing engendered a swift racial reckoning that prompted settler colonial states to address and rectify their white supremacist, colonial, imperialist, racist and anti-Indigenous legacies and policies.

➤ **2020 BLM Toronto Takes Credit for Defacing Ryerson Statue**

On July 18, 2020, three protesters defaced the Egerton Ryerson statue on the Ryerson University campus along with statues in Queen's Park of former Prime Minister John A. Macdonald and King Edward VII. Black Lives Matter Toronto took credit for the defacement, citing the three aforementioned men's legacies in harming Indigenous and Black Canadians. Specifically, they argued that public statues should not represent colonialism, slavery and racism. Syrus Marcus Ware, an organizer with Black Lives Matter Toronto, stated: "Much like the institution of the police, these statues are monuments that glorify the ugliest parts of our history and our present."<sup>352</sup>

---

<sup>351</sup> Larry Buchanan, Quoctrung Bui, and Jugal K. Patel, "Black Lives Matter May be the Largest Movement in U.S. History," *New York Times*, July 3, 2020.

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2020/07/03/us/george-floyd-protests-crowd-size.html>.

<sup>352</sup> Muriel Draaisma, "Police Charge 3 People after Black Lives Matter Protesters Splatter Paint on Statues in Toronto," CBC, July 18, 2020, <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/statues-defaced-paint-toronto-defund-the-police-1.5654829>.



Figure 18. Source: Black Lives Matter-Toronto's Twitter feed, July 18, 2020.

➤ **2021 Bodies of 215 Indigenous Children Uncovered at the Kamloops Indian Residential School Site**

On May 28, 2021, news reverberated across the nation that the remains of 215 Indigenous children in an unmarked mass grave had been uncovered in Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc near Kamloops, British Columbia, on the grounds of what was once Canada's largest residential school. This discovery contributed to critical conversations across the community about the ongoing impacts of the residential school system.

The statue of Egerton Ryerson became the site of a memorial dedicated to the children whose remains had been uncovered. Hundreds of shoes, mostly in children's sizes, were left at the site.



On June 6th, 2021 the statue was toppled following a peaceful demonstration.



Figure 19. Source: "Ryerson Students and Professors Adopt 'X University' name to denounce affiliation with architect of Residential Schools," *The Star*, 1 June 2021

# Bibliography

## Primary Sources

### Archives

Archives of Ontario Digital Collection

The Common Schools Act, 1850

Ryerson Archives and Special Collections

Course calendars [1949–1950]

Downing, John, *History of Ryerson*, 1979

*The Eyeopener* [1989–2008]

*The Ryersonian* [1973–2018]

Victoria University Archives

Donald B. Smith Fonds [197?–2019] (Creation)

Saddle Lake Cree Nation Archives

“Blue Quills Indian Residential School A History: 1870–1970.” Blue Quills First Nations College, St. Paul, Alberta

United Church Archives \* *some materials inaccessible due to provincial closures* \*

United Church of Canada Social, Pastoral, and Educational Institutions Collection [1820–2004] Fonds 520

Egerton Ryerson Fonds F3209 [1824–1883]

### Commissions and Reports

*Appendix to the Sixteenth Volume of the Journals of the Legislative Assembly of the Province of Canada.* Appendix No. 21, 1858.

Aborigines Protection Society. *Report of the Parliamentary Select Committee on Aboriginal Tribes (British Settlements.)* Published for the Society by William Ball, Aldine Chambers, Paternoster Row, and Hatchard & Sons, Piccadilly, London, 1837.

Bagot, Charles. *Report on the Affairs of the Indians in Canada*. Report laid before the legislative assembly on March 20, 1845. <https://dev.nctr.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Bagot-report.pdf>

Canada. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. *Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples*. Vols. 1–5. Ottawa: October 1996.

Davin, Nicholas Flood. *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds*. Report produced for the Minister of the Interior. Ottawa, 1879.

National Indian Brotherhood/Assembly of First Nations. "Indian Control of Indian Education." Policy paper presented to the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. Ottawa: NIB/AFN, 1972.

*Presidential Report on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson*. Toronto: Victoria University, June 2021.

Putman, J. Harold. *Survey of the School System*. Victoria: King's Printer, 1925.

*Research Panel on the Legacy of Egerton Ryerson*. Toronto: Victoria University, March 25, 2021. <https://vicu.utoronto.ca/assets/PDFs/Ryerson-Research-Panel-Report.pdf>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC). *Canada's Residential Schools: The History. Part 1, Origins to 1939*. Vol. 1. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Residential Schools: The History. Part 2, 1939 to 2000*. Vol. 1. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*. Vol. 4. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Canada's Residential Schools: The Legacy*. Vol. 5. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015.

Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Ottawa: Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, 2015.

*Truth and Reconciliation at Ryerson University: Community Consultation Summary Report*. Written by Denise O'Neil Green and Joanne Dallaire. Toronto: Ryerson University, 2018. <https://www.ryerson.ca/equity/programs-reports/truth-reconciliation-ryerson/community-consultation-summary-report-2018/>.

### **Digital Media**

Aboriginal Healing Foundation. "Research Series." 2002. <https://www.ahf.ca/publications/research-series>.

Black Lives Matter Canada. "About Us." Accessed August 6, 2021. <https://www.blacklivesmatter.ca>.

Buchanan, Larry, Quoc Trung Bui, and Jugal K. Patel. "Black Lives Matter May Be the Largest Movement in U.S. History." *New York Times*, July 3, 2020.

Carter, Brianna Xavier. "Ryerson Students and Professors Adopt 'X University' Name to Denounce Affiliation with Architect of Residential Schools." *The Star*, June 1, 2021.

Draaisma, Muriel. "Police Charge 3 People after Black Lives Matter Protesters Splatter Paint on Statues in Toronto." *CBC*, July 18, 2020.

Peace, Thomas. "Want to Understand Egerton Ryerson? Two School Histories Provide the Context." *ActiveHistory.ca*, July 12, 2021. <http://activehistory.ca/2021/07/want-to-understand-egerton-ryerson-two-school-histories-provide-the-context/#more-30612>.

Stagg, Ron, and Patrice Dutil. "Egerton Ryerson Falsely Accused of Trying to Erase Indigenous Culture." *National Post*, April 6, 2020.

Toronto District School Board (TDSB) Virtual Museum. "Radical Reform: Education and Society 1845-1945." <http://www.virtualmuseum.ca/edu/ViewLoitLo.do?method=preview&lang=EN&id=25840>

### **Legislation**

An Act for the gradual enfranchisement of Indians, the better management of Indian affairs, and to extend the provisions of the Act 31st Victoria, Chapter 42, S.C. 1869, c. 6.

An Act providing for the organisation of the Department of the Secretary of State of Canada, and for the management of Indian and Ordnance Lands, S.C. 1868, c. 42.

An Act to amend certain Laws respecting Indians, and to extend certain Laws relating to matters connected with Indians to the Provinces of Manitoba and British Columbia, S.C. 1874, c. 21.

An Act to provide for the establishment of "The Department of the Interior," 1873, c. 4.

The Indian Act, S.C. 1876, c. 18 (and subsequent amendments).

The British North America Act, 1867, S.S. 1867, c. 3.

*Consolidation of Indian Legislation. Volume II: Indian Acts and Amendments, 1868-1975.*  
Edited by Gail Hinge under contract to Department of Indian and Northern Affairs. N.d.

### **Treaties**

1787 and 1805 Toronto Purchase (Treaty No. 13).

<https://static.torontopubliclibrary.ca/da/pdfs/ms-fo-indiantreaties.pdf>

### **Other Primary Sources**

Baldwin, Henry. "Minutes of the General Council of Indian Chiefs and Principal Men, held at Orillia, Lake Simcoe Narrows." *Canada Gazette*, Montreal, 1846.

Hodgins, George J. *Ryerson Memorial Volume 1844-1876*. Toronto, 1889.

Ryerson, Egerton. "Report of Dr. Ryerson on Industrial Schools," May 26, 1847. In *Statistics Respecting Indian Schools*. Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1898.

Ryerson, Egerton. *The Story of My Life: Being Reminiscences of Sixty Years' Public Service in Canada*. Edited by J. George Hodgins. Toronto: William Briggs, 1883.

Ryerson, Egerton, and Sophia Howard Ryerson Harris. *My Dearest Sophie: Letters from Egerton Ryerson to His Daughter*. Edited by C. B. Sissons. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1955.

Hodgins, George J. *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada*. Toronto: Warwick Bros & Rutter Printers, 1894–1910.

Putman, J. Harold. *Egerton Ryerson and Education in Upper Canada*. Toronto: William Briggs, 1912.

*The historical tableaux displayed in the procession in honor of Toronto's semi-centennial*. Toronto: Grip Printing & Publishing, 1884.

## Secondary Sources

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso Books, 1991.

Arthurs, Harry. "Civil Liberties—Public Schools—Segregation of Negro Students." *Canadian Bar Review* 41.3 (1963): 453–57.

Axelrod, Paul. *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800–1914*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997.

Backhouse, Constance. *Colour-Coded: A Legal History of Racism in Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Osgoode Society, 2007.

Bailey, James Napier. *Sketches of Indian Character: Being a Brief Survey of the Principal Features of Character Exhibited by the North American Indians; Illustrating the Aphorism of the Socialists, that "Man Is the Creature of Circumstances."* Leeds: Joshua Hobson, 1841. Project Gutenberg.

Blackstock, Michael D. "The Aborigines Report (1837): A Case Study in the Slow Change of Colonial Social Relations." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 20 (2000): 68–94.

Bohaker, Heidi. *Doodem and Council Fire: Anishinaabe Alliance through Governance*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press for the Osgoode Society, 2020.

Carney, Robert. "Aboriginal Residential Schools before Confederation: The Early Experience." *CCHA Historical Studies* 61 (1995): 13–40.

Cardinal, Harold. *The Unjust Society*. Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1969.

- Carstairs, Catherine and Ian Mosby. "Colonial Extractions: Oral Health Care and Indigenous Peoples in Canada, 1945–79." *Canadian Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (2020): 192–216.
- Carter, Sarah. *Aboriginal People and Colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999.
- Choquette, Robert. *The Oblate Assault on Canada's Northwest*. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 1995.
- Conrad, Margaret, and Alvin Finkel. "Industrializing Canada, 1840–1867." In *Foundations: Readings in Pre-Confederation Canadian History*, edited by Margaret Conrad and Alvin Finkel, 416–17. Hoboken, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2004.
- Curtis, Bruce. "Preconditions of the Canadian State: Educational Reform and the Construction of a Public in Upper Canada, 1837–1846." *Studies in Political Economy* 10, no. 1 (1983): 99–121.
- Diverlus, Rodney, Sandy Hudson, and Syrus Marcus Ware, eds. *Until We Are Free: Reflections on Black Lives Matter Canada*. Regina: University of Regina, 2020.
- Finkel, Alvin. *Social Policy and Practice in Canada: A History*. Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006.
- Forbes, James. "Contesting the Protestant Consensus: Voluntarists, Methodists, and the Persistence of Evangelical Dissent in Upper Canada, 1829–1854." *Ontario History* 108, no. 2 (2016): 189–214.
- Forbes, James. "'God has Opened the Eyes of the People': Religious Rhetoric and the Upper Canada Rebellion of 1837." *Journal for the Study of Radicalism* 12, no. 1 (2018): 1–25.
- Freeman, Victoria. "'Toronto Has No History!' Indigeneity, Settler Colonialism, and Historical Memory in Canada's Largest City." *Urban History Review* 38, no. 2 (2010): 21–35.
- Groat, Cody. "Commemoration and Reconciliation: The Mohawk Institute as a World Heritage Site." *British Journal of Canadian Studies* 31, no. 2 (2018): 195–208.
- Henry, Natasha. "Anti-Black Racism in Ontario Schools: A Historical Perspective." Turner Consulting Group Research Policy Brief, Issue 1 (May 2019): 2–5.
- Houston, S. E., and A. Prentice. *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth Century Ontario*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988.
- Houston, Susan. "Politics, Schools, and Social Change in Upper Canada." *Canadian Historical Review* 53, no. 3 (1972): 249–71.
- Howe, Stephen. *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

- Johnson, Henry F. "The Ryersonian Influence on the Public School System of British Columbia." *BC Studies*, no. 10 (Summer 1971): 26–34.
- Kelly, Gail P., and Philip G. Altbach. "Introduction: The Four Faces of Colonialism." In *Education and the Colonial Experience*, edited by Philip G. Altbach and Gail P. Kelly, 1–5. New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1984.
- Knight, Claudette. "Black Parents Speak: Education in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada West." *Ontario History* 89, no. 4 (1997): 269–84.
- Kosteckyj, Anastasia. "Geographies of Resistance." *The Mirror – Undergraduate History Journal* 39, no. 1 (2019): 85–95.
- Leslie, John F. *Assimilation, Integration or Termination? The Development of Canadian Indian Policy, 1943–1963*. Montreal: Carleton University, 1999.
- Leslie, John F. *Commissions of Inquiry into Indian Affairs in the Canadas, 1828–1858*. Indian and Northern Affairs, Treaties and Historical Research Centre. Ottawa: Indian Affairs and Northern Development, 1985.
- Leslie, John F. "The Bagot Commission: Developing a Corporate Memory for the Indian Department." *Historical Papers* 17, no. 1 (1982): 31–52.
- Lothian, Kathy. "Seizing the Time: Australian Aborigines and the Influence of the Black Panther Party, 1969–1972." *Journal of Black Studies* 35, no. 4 (2005): 179–200.
- McLaren, Kristen. "We had no desire to be set apart': Forced Segregation of Black Students in Canada West Public Schools and Myths of British Egalitarianism." *Social History/Histoire Sociale* 37, no. 73 (2004): 28–50.
- MacLean, Hope. "A Positive Experiment in Aboriginal Education: The Methodist Ojibwa Day Schools in Upper Canada 1824–1833." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 22, no. 1 (2002): 23–63.
- MacLean, Hope. "The Hidden Agenda: Methodist Attitudes to the Ojibwa and the Development of Indian Schooling in Upper Canada, 1821–1860." Master's thesis, University of Toronto, 1978.
- MacLean, Hope. "Ojibwa Participation in Methodist Residential Schools." *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* 25, no. 1 (2005): 93–137.
- McDonald, Neil, and Alf Chaiton, eds. *Egerton Ryerson and His Times: Essays on the History of Education*. Toronto: Macmillan, 1978.
- McKillop, Brian. A. *Matters of Mind: The University in Ontario 1791–1951*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994.



- Miller, J. R. *Shingwauk's Vision: A History of Native Residential Schools*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996.
- Miller, J. R. *Skyscrapers Hide the Heavens: A History of Indian-White Relations in Canada*. 3rd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000.
- Milloy, J. S. *A National Crime: The Canadian Government and the Residential School System, 1879 to 1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press, 1999.
- Milloy, J. S. "Indian Act Colonialism: A Century of Dishonour, 1869–1969." Research paper for the National Centre for First Nations Governance, May 2008, 1–21.
- Mosby, Ian. "Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential Schools, 1942–1952." *Histoire sociale/Social History* 46, no. 91 (2013): 145-172.
- Neff, Charlotte. "The Ontario Industrial Schools Act of 1874." *Canadian Journal of Family Law* 12, no. 1 (1994–95): 171–208.
- Nixon, Virginia. "Egerton Ryerson and the Old Master Copy as an Instrument of Public Education." *Journal of Canadian Art History/Annales d'histoire de l'art Canadien* 27 (2006): 94–113.
- Norman, Alison. "'True to My Own Noble Race': Six Nations Noble Teachers at Grand River in the Early Twentieth Century." *Ontario History* 107, no. 1 (2015): 5–34.
- Peace, Thomas. "Searching for Order in a Settlers' World: Wendat and Mississauga Schooling, Politics, and Networks at the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century." In *Violence, Order, and Unrest: A History of British North America, 1749–1876*, edited by Elizabeth Mancke, Jerry Bannister, Denis B. McKim, and Scott W. See, 183–213. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2019.
- Prentice, Alison. *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth Century Upper Canada*. 1977; repr. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004.
- Quealey, Francis Michael. "The Administration of Sir Peregrine Maitland, Lieutenant-Governor of Upper Canada, 1818–1828." PhD diss., University of Toronto, 1968.
- "Egerton Ryerson, the Residential School System and Truth and Reconciliation." Ryerson University Aboriginal Education Council. Accessed July 7, 2021.  
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1\\_Qw5WLAZZbDU7OXXWKFoKHmwKWp\\_BoW1o3-l6xMjnE/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_Qw5WLAZZbDU7OXXWKFoKHmwKWp_BoW1o3-l6xMjnE/edit).

Ryerson Polytechnical Institute for Ontario's Bicentennial. *From Cradle to Computer: A History of St. James Square, the Birthplace of Ontario Education*. Toronto: Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, 1984.

Seixas, Peter. "A Model of Historical Thinking." *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 49, no. 6 (2017): 593–605.

Seixas, Peter. "A Modest Proposal for Change in Canadian History Education." *Teaching History* 137 (2009): 26–31.

Seixas, Peter. "Mapping the Terrain of Historical Significance." *Social Education* 61, no. 1 (1997): 22–27.

Seixas, Peter, and Tom Morton. *The Big Six Historical Thinking Concepts*. Toronto: Nelson Education, 2013.

Semple, Neil. *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996.

Semple, Neil, et al. "Egerton Ryerson." In *The Canadian Encyclopedia* (online). <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/egerton-ryerson>.

Sissons, Charles Bruce, and E. W. Wallace. *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*. Vol. 1. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1937.

Sissons, Charles Bruce, and E. W. Wallace. *Egerton Ryerson: His Life and Letters*. Vol. 2. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947.

Smith, Donald B. "Egerton Ryerson and the Mississauga, 1826 to 1856, an Appeal for Further Study." *Ontario History* 113, no. 2 (2021): 222–243.

Smith, Donald B. *Mississauga Portraits: Ojibwe Voices from Nineteenth-Century Canada*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013.

Smith, Donald B. "Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby)." In *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, Vol. VIII (1851-1860) (online). [http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jones\\_peter\\_8E.html](http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/jones_peter_8E.html).

Smith, Donald B. *Sacred Feathers: The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians*. 2nd ed. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2013.

Smith, Donald B. *The Reverend Peter Jones (Kahkewaquonaby) and the Mississauga Indians*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1987.

Stagg, Ronald. *Serving Society's Needs: A History of Ryerson Polytechnic University*. Toronto: Ryerson University, 1998.

Stamp, R. M. *The Historical Background to Separate Schools in Ontario*. Toronto: Ontario Department of Education, 1985.

Taylor, Keeanga-Yamahtta. *From #BlackLivesMatter to Black Liberation*. Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2016.

Thomas, Clara. *Ryerson of Upper Canada*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1969.

Thompson, E. P. *Customs in Common*. New York: New Press, 1991.

Upton, L. F. S. "The Origins of Canadian Indian Policy." *Journal of Canadian Studies* 8, no. 4 (1973): 51–61.

Venne, Sharon H. *The Indian Act and Amendments 1868–1975*. Saskatoon: Saskatoon Law Centre, 1981.

Westfall, William. *Two Worlds: The Protestant Culture of Nineteenth-Century Ontario*. Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989.