

Andrea H. Procter

A Long Journey: Residential Schools in Labrador and Newfoundland

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Histories of Canada and of residential schools are incomplete without these distinct histories of Inuit and Innu Survivors from Labrador and Newfoundland. In *A Long Journey*, Andrea Procter has partnered with Survivors of Labrador and Newfoundland schools to contribute a history largely untold during the Truth and Reconciliation “era” in Canada. Residential schools in Labrador and Newfoundland were not included in the 2006 Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) and as a result only had a marginal inclusion in the Truth and Reconciliation hearings between 2008–2015.⁷ The book follows the *Long Journey* of Labrador and Newfoundland Survivors and their tireless activism and advocacy to have their histories heard and included. A great deal of this activism culminated in leading their own class action lawsuit resulting also in the 2017–2018 Healing and Commemoration hearings in Labrador and Newfoundland. There was a distinct role for former students and Survivors during the gatherings including making key decisions, including the directive to build an archive in Labrador that provides access to the records of the schools close to most former students (410–411).

This book is essential reading for anyone wishing to learn about the history of residential schools in Canada and about the complexities of residential schooling across Canada. This book is also a key reading in the history(ies) of Canada: educational history of Canada is deficient without this book. Nunatsiavut Inuit, NunatuKavut Inuit and Innu students encountered many of the same kinds of day-to-day experiences and abuses that other residential school Survivors did, across Canada. They also had distinct, regional, and familial-specific experiences that are framed in *Long Journey* through Inuit and Innu knowledges and storytelling. Landscapes, territories, and colonial relationships in Labrador and Newfoundland influenced how children were taken and how they were treated at the schools. The Moravian Church is one of the oldest Protestant orders, with international missions and long histories of colonial incursion; the International Grenfell Association (IGA) is a charitable association for educational and health support, through similar colonial-mission objectives. Neither the Moravian Church nor the IGA received federal funding from Canada or from Newfoundland and Labrador. The schools were operated in a similar way to all other residential schools in Canada in order to assimilate, Christianize, and civilize Indigenous children, even though the funding and administration was almost entirely drawn from the churches themselves.

Voices of Survivors and their *Long Journey(s)* with Canada form the central narrative of the book. Coupled with the Survivor histories of the book, the chronology

7 Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2015).

is also focused on archival records and documents of the Moravian Church and the IGA. Prior to the Healing and Commemoration gatherings, most of the histories of the schools were recorded only by these churches and colonial authorities. This history of the schools centres former student experiences and documents their traverse through Canadian processes of reconciliation. It is also made clear that Canada should have done far more to include Labrador and Newfoundland in all processes of reconciliation, commemoration, apology, and healing from the start. Furthermore, relying on the labour and energies of former students, residential school Survivors, Inuit, and Innu communities to carry the stories and histories alone is part of enduring colonial abuses.

It should not be overlooked or understated just how rare or underrepresented some of these community histories, archival sources, and images are in Procter's volume. The book includes comprehensive and insightful histories of Canadian and international colonial institutions such as the Moravian Church and the IGA. These institutions hold primary colonial records of Nunatsiavut, NunatuKavut, and Innu nations. Both the body of the text and the appendices include important family and community information that Procter has synthesized with personal and Indigenous community knowledge from each nation as well.

Truths and complexities of the residential school experience in Labrador and Newfoundland are presented thoroughly, honestly, and with a consistent acknowledgement that these stories have often been missed in Canadian histories of residential schools. After decades of advocacy, Labrador and Newfoundland Survivors have made clear that their stories and histories must be heard in the same venues as all other residential school Survivors in Canada. Apologies for the schools delivered in 2017 came too late, but they also came to Survivors with a message about repair and towards restoring relationships with Inuit and Innu nations.

Schools in Labrador and Newfoundland are still missing from maps of residential schools in Canada, and inclusion of the Moravian Church and the IGA still falls behind in the ecclesiastical-colonial histories of Canada. *A Long Journey* also includes Survivors' reflections on both apology and on reconciliation. Innu Survivors importantly remind that rejecting the Prime Minister's apology in 2017 acknowledges how the current child welfare system perpetuates what was supposed to have ended with residential schools.

A thorough and considerable volume, Procter's *A Long Journey* is readable and is centred on important Survivor statements, quotations, and well-curated and researched archival selections. Ideally, readers of *A Long Journey* should be anyone interested in histories of both residential schools and/or Labrador and Newfoundland. It is important to note, though, that anyone interested in Canadian history, Indigenous peoples' histories, colonialism, and Atlantic Canada will find genuine interest in *A Long Journey*.

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