Residential Schools:
Recommended Reading from Winnipeg Public Library

**Shi-shi-etko**
By Nicola Campbell / 2005
Shi-shi-etko is a young girl who has four days before she leaves home for residential school. Campbell's story - and illustrations by Kim LaFave - follow Shi-shi-etko as she absorbs the world around her and collects a "bag of memories" at the instruction of her grandmother. But she doesn’t take the memories with her. Instead she buries them under a tree for safekeeping while she is gone.

**As Long as the Rivers Flow**
By Larry Loyie / 2002
Cree author Larry Loyie writes about his last summer with his family, before going to residential school in Northern Alberta in 1944. Larry learns things like how to care for a baby owl and to gather medicinal plants with his Kookum. His story highlights how his education at home was disrupted by the residential school system.

**No Time to Say Goodbye: Children's Stories of Kuper Island Residential School**
By Sylvia Olsen / 2001
This collection of fictional stories of five children sent to residential school is based on real life experiences recounted by members of the Tsartlip First Nation in B.C. The children cope as best they can at Kuper Island Residential School but it’s a far cry from the life they’re used to.

**Arctic Stories**
By Michael Kusugak / 1998
This trio of stories about a ten-year-old girl named Agatha is based on the childhood experiences of beloved Inuit author Michael Kusugak. The book begins with a tale of Agatha ‘saving’ her community from a monstrous flying object and includes the story of Agatha being sent away for school, “The nuns did not make very good mothers and the priests, who were called fathers, did not make very good fathers,” Kusugak writes.

**My Name is Seepeetza**
by Shirley Sterling / 1992
Written in the form of a diary, My Name is Seepeetza recounts the story of a young girl taken from home to attend the Kamloops Indian Residential School in the 1950s. Sterling’s award-winning book has been described as an honest, inside look at the residential school experience - one that highlights the resilience of a child in a place governed by strict nuns and arbitrary rules.

All these titles, and more, are available to borrow for free at Winnipeg Public Library.

For further research visit our online guide to Residential School resources:

winnipeg.ca/library > Info Guides

Membership in Winnipeg Public Library is free to Winnipeggers.

Search our online catalogue to find and request books, movies and more.

Return items to any branch of Winnipeg Public Library. After-hours returns available at all branches.

FOR ADULTS & TEENS

**Secret Path**
by Gord Downie and Jeff Lemire (illustrator) / 2016
Secret Path is a ten song digital download album, and a graphic novel, which tells the story of Chanie “Charlie” Wenjack, a twelve-year-old boy who died fifty years ago while fleeing from the Cecilia Jeffrey Indian Residential School.

**calling down the sky**
by Rosanna Deerchild / 2015
A poetry collection that describes deep personal experiences and post-generational effects of residential schools in the 1950s, where thousands of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit children were placed against their parents’ wishes.

This summary volume of the six-year investigation of the residential school system includes the history of residential schools, their legacy, and the full text of the Commission’s 94 recommendations for action.

winnipeg.ca/library
The Education of Augie Merasty: A Residential School Memoir
by Joseph Auguste Merasty with David Carpenter / 2015
This book is a courageous and intimate chronicle of life in a residential school. Now a retired fisher and trapper, Joseph A. (Augie) Merasty was one of the 150,000 Indigenous children taken from their families and sent to government-funded, church-run schools, where they were subjected to a policy of “aggressive assimilation.”

This Benevolent Experiment: Indigenous Boarding Schools, Genocide, and Redress in Canada and the United States
by Andrew Woolford / 2015
This book offers a multilayered, comparative analysis of Indigenous boarding schools in the United States and Canada.

They Called Me Number One: Secrets and Survival at an Indian Residential School
by Bev Sellars / 2013
The first full-length memoir to be published out of St. Joseph’s Mission at Williams Lake, B.C. Sellars tells of three generations of women who attended the school, interweaving personal histories of her grandmother and her mother with her own.

Indian Horse: A Novel
by Richard Wagamese / 2013
Saul Indian Horse is dying. Tucked away in a hospice high above the clash and clang of a big city, he embarks on a marvelous journey of imagination, with all its sorrows and joys, back through the life he led as a northern Ojibway.

Sugar Falls: A Residential School Story
by David Robertson and Scott Henderson (illustrator) / 2011
A school assignment to interview a residential school survivor leads Daniel to Betsy who tells him her story. Abandoned as a young child, Betsy was soon adopted into a loving family. At the age of eight, everything changed. Betsy was taken away to a residential school. A graphic novel based on a true story.

Broken Circle: The Dark Legacy of Indian Residential Schools - A Memoir
by Theodore Fontaine / 2010
In this powerful and poignant memoir, Theodore Fontaine examines the impact of abuses, and the loss of language, culture, family, and community. He relates a unique understanding of post-traumatic stress disorders and why succeeding generations of Indigenous children suffer from this dark chapter in history.

From Lishamie to living in the French-speaking Fort Providence Residential School to singing with the Chieftones
by Albert Canadien / 2010
An exploration of Albert Canadien’s life from growing up in a traditional Dene camp in the village of Lishamie to living in the French-speaking Fort Providence Residential School to singing with the Chieftones and opening for the Beach Boys and Jerry Lee Lewis in New York City.

Finding My Talk: How Fourteen Native Women Reclaimed Their Lives After Residential School
by Agnes Grant / 2004
Fourteen Indigenous women who were affected by residential schools reflect on their experiences. They describe their years in residential schools across Canada and how they overcame tremendous obstacles to become strong and independent women.

Indian School Days
by Basil Johnston / 1988
It was 1939 when the feared Indian agent visited Basil Johnston’s family and removed him and his four-year-old sister to St. Peter Claver’s school run by the priests near Sudbury, ON.

FOR CHILDREN

I am Not a Number
By Jenny Kay Dupuis / 2016
A picture book based on a true story about a young First Nations girl who was sent to a residential school. When eight-year-old Irene is removed from her family to live in a residential school she is confused, frightened, and terribly homesick. Based on the life of Jenny Kay Dupuis’ own grandmother.

These are My Words: The Residential School Diary of Violet Pesheens
By Ruby Slipperjack / 2016
Twelve-year-old Violet Pesheens is taken away to residential school in 1966. The diary recounts her experiences of travelling there and the first months at the school - the routine, struggles with other girls, being quarantined, and reuniting with her family. When the time comes to gather at the train station for the trip back to the residential school, her mother looks her in the eye and asks, “Do you want to go back or come with us to the trapline?” Violet knows the choice she must make.

When We Were Alone
by David A. Robertson and Julie Flett (illustrator) / 2016
A young girl begins to notice things about her grandmother that make her curious. Why does her grandmother have long braided hair and wear beautifully coloured clothing? Why does she speak another language? She is told about life in a residential school a long time ago, where everything was taken away.

Kookum’s Red Shoes
by Peter Eyvindson / 2011
An elderly Kookum (grandmother in Cree) recounts her experiences at residential school - a time that changed her forever. “Her tornado had arrived. It rushed up and slammed to a halt just past the wonder world she had created,” writes Eyvindson. Throughout the story Kookum reveals what was lost in her life, and how goodness persisted.

A Stranger at Home: A True Story
by Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton / 2011
In this sequel to Fatty Legs, Margaret Pokiak is now 10 years old and can hardly wait to return home from residential school. But her homecoming is not what she hopes for. “Not my girl,” is what her mother says when she arrives. The story follows Margaret as she moves through feelings of rejection and tries to reconnect with her family, language and culture.

Fatty Legs: A True Story
By Christy Jordan-Fenton and Margaret Pokiak-Fenton / 2010
Margaret, an eight-year-old Inuvialuit girl, wants to learn how to read so badly that she’s willing to leave home from residential school to make it happen. When she gets there, a mean-spirited nun known as the Raven is intent on making Margaret’s time at school a misery. But Margaret refuses to be defeated.

Goodbye Buffalo Bay
By Larry Loyie and Constance Brissenden / 2008
This book tells the story of a boy trying to make it through his last year of residential school. After he is finally able to leave school he confronts a struggle to learn where he belongs.

Shin-chi’s Canoe
By Nicola Campbell / 2008
This award-winning book, the sequel to Shi-shi-etko, tells the story of six-year-old Shin-chi as he heads to residential school for the first time with his older sister. As the children are driven away in the back of a cattle truck, Shin-chi’s sister tells him all the things they must remember about home. Shin-chi endures a long year of hard work, hunger and loneliness before returning home to his family with his sister.