



# All Saints School, Lac La Ronge, SK

In 1846, the Hudson's Bay Company granted permission to the Church Missionary Society to establish an Anglican mission on the great Churchill River waterway, just north of Lac La Ronge. Rev. Robert Hunt was assigned to the mission, which he opened in 1851 and named Stanley Mission after his wife's home in England. An HBC post followed in 1853, which soon attracted permanent and seasonal settlements of native Cree families. Stanley Mission thrived for two generations, particularly during the tenure of Rev. John A. Mackay (1864-1877) who, as a teacher, was fluent in Cree and improved the syllabic system for translating English text into Cree.

Mackay's expertise with the Cree language contributed to his appointment as teacher and then principal of Emmanuel College in Prince Albert. This institution, founded by the Bishop of Saskatchewan in 1879, was the Diocese's first Indian residential school for young men wishing to be trained as missionaries and catechists for work in native communities throughout the Northwest Territories. About 1883, Emmanuel College also served as an Indian Boys Industrial School until 1905, when it was closed and purchased by the Indian Department. Four years later it would be re-established in its original role (divinity college for native and non-native students) at the University of Saskatchewan's Saskatoon campus. By this time, Canada's four main churches and the Indian Department had established several new residential schools for native children throughout the District of Saskatchewan.

By 1905, the La Ronge All Saints Mission, situated on the southwest shores of its namesake lake, had replaced Stanley as the headquarters for the mission district. Nine years later the Hudson's Bay Company followed suit, prompting most of the native community at Stanley to disperse. In 1906, a new mission day school opened at Lac La Ronge and this was soon enlarged to take in boarders. Archdeacon John Mackay was the driving force behind the school's establishment by securing funding and being "hands-on" during its construction. He set up a sawmill on site to finish the timber felled by local natives.

Following a destructive fire in 1920, the government constructed a larger, modern residential school equipped with electricity and steam heat. All Saints Indian Residential School opened in 1922. Most its students came from the local Lac La Ronge and Stanley areas, with others drawn from Montreal Lake to the south and Pelican Narrows in the east.

Despite its newness, the building suffered from poor construction and insufficient funding for many needed repairs over the years. It was cramped, draughty in winter, and later suffered from high staff turnover. The small mission hospital, built in 1921, was torn down in 1927 due to its remoteness from the school and its materials reused in the construction of the principal's residence. By the late 1930s, the school's closing was suggested by the Diocese but dismissed by the Missionary Society of the Church of England in Canada (MSCC), which operated the school.

In 1947, All Saints School was destroyed by fire. Rebuilding was not considered this time as the government favoured a new site at Prince Albert, 200 km southwest of Lac La Ronge. Here, a large military base was in the process of being decommissioned and its barracks could serve effectively as student dormitories. Thus, many staff and much of the student body, formerly at Lac La Ronge, were transferred to Prince Albert for the start of the fall term in 1948. The new school retained its former name, "All Saints – Lac La Ronge" but was also known as the Prince Albert Indian Residential School, a name officially adopted in 1953, following its amalgamation with the recently closed St. Alban's residential school.

# Milestones

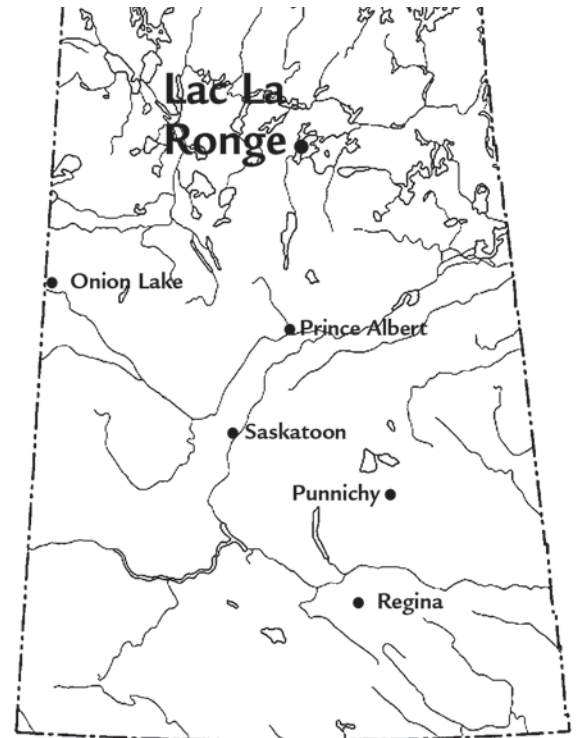
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- 1906 Lac La Ronge mission day school opens Jan. 1. Government had granted \$2,500 towards its cost. Building is soon expanded to take in some boarders, providing classroom instruction for about 40 students.
- 1911 Diocese of Saskatchewan formerly takes over Lac La Ronge Boarding School, which has authorized pupilage of 50. Ottawa agrees to provide \$125 per capita annual grant.
- 1920 Jan. School is destroyed by fire.
- 1922 Feb. 1 New government-built All Saints Indian Residential School opens, with authorized pupilage of 100. Instruction is given up to grade 7.
- 1946 Feb. Residential students number 109. School building needs extensive repairs, which the Diocese and Indian Affairs Dept. cannot fully fund. Indian School Administration (MSCC) wants capacity raised to 140.
- 1947 Feb. 2 Fire destroys school again. Indian Affairs decides not to rebuild on site and succeeds within months in securing the use of an army barracks being closed at Prince Albert. Urgent preparatory work subsequently

commences to bring premises up to acceptable, but less than ideal, school standards. A few staff and students make use of partially remodelled building for 1947-1948 school year.

- 1948 Sept. “All Saints School – Lac La Ronge” formally opens, using part of barracks complex released in 1947 for use as a residential school. Many former staff and students at old school site transfer to new location. Use of old name causes confusion and is officially changed in 1953 to Prince Albert Indian Residential School.



Compiled by General Synod Archives, September 23, 2008.

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GENERAL SYNOD OF THE ANGLICAN CHURCH OF CANADA  
80 Hayden St., Toronto, ON, M4Y 3G2

For further information, contact the General Synod Archives at  
archives@national.anglican.ca or (416) 924-9199, ext. 279