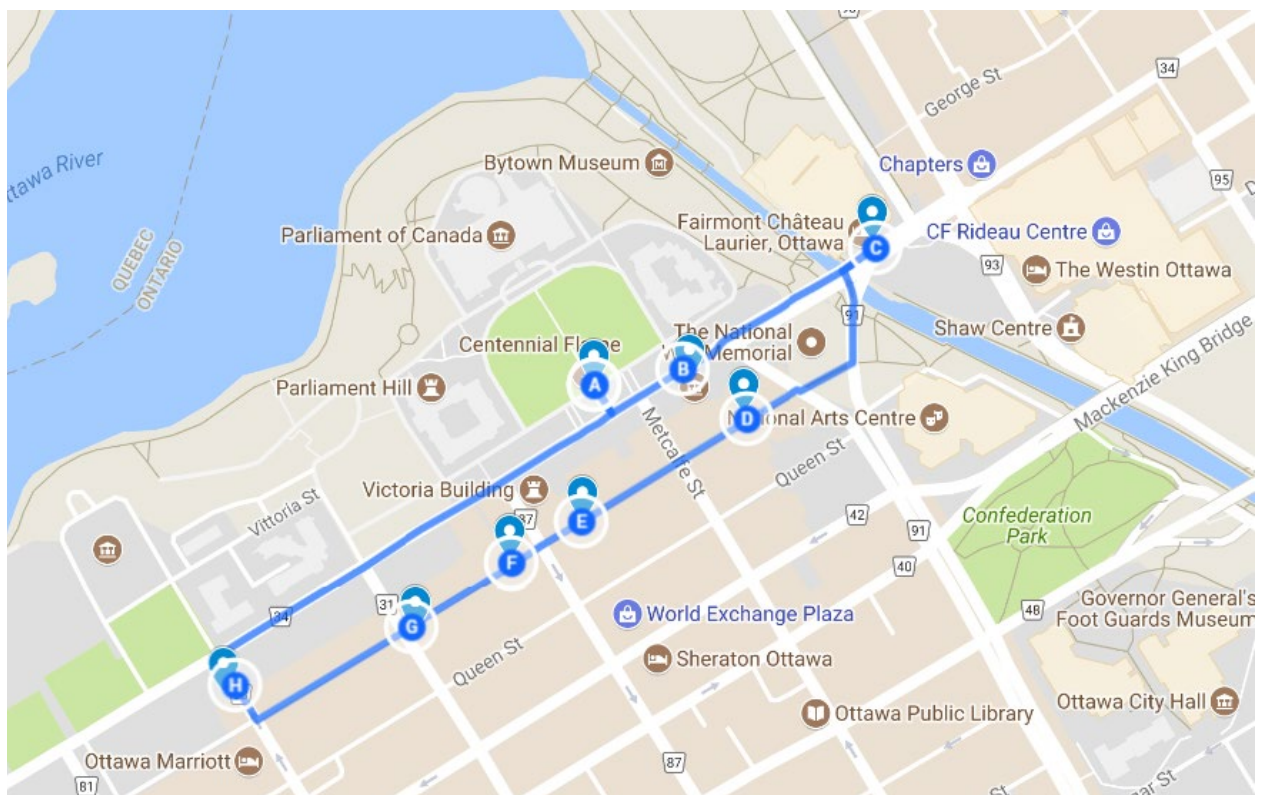




Self-Guided Reconciling History Walking Tour

The Reconciling History Walking Tour takes place on the traditional and unceded territory of the Algonquin Anishinabe Nation.



A. Parliament, Wellington Street (the Parliament buildings)

The Parliament buildings house elected Members of Parliament in the House of Commons and appointed representatives in the Senate. Together, the House of Commons and the Senate pass legislation that governs Canada. The first Canadian Parliament began in 1867 shortly after Canadian Confederation.

In 1876, Parliament unilaterally passed the *Indian Act*, which consolidated and coordinated Canada's relationship to First Nations peoples. Moving away from a treaty-based relationship to a paternalistic relationship, Canada adopted the *Indian Act* to colonize and control the political, economic and social fate of First Nations peoples. The *Indian Act* created reserves and imposed the band council system. It defined who would be considered a

Status Indian and denied First Nations women Status if they married a non-First Nations person. In later amendments to the *Indian Act*, Canada assumed stricter control over First Nations' lives. Amendments introduced the pass system restricting First Nations' movement, established Indian Agents with punitive authority, and outlawed Indigenous languages and the practice of cultural ceremonies. In 1920, the *Indian Act* made attendance at residential schools' mandatory for all First Nations children between the ages of 7 and 15. The *Indian Act* also established the Department of Indian Affairs and vested it with decision-making powers over First Nations families and communities.¹

Although the *Indian Act* has undergone many changes since it passed in 1876, it continues to impact First Nations families and communities. It is one example of how Canada attempts to control and colonize Indigenous peoples with Inuit and Métis encountering different methods. For instance, starting in the 1930s, Canada forced Inuit to relocate to permanent settlements and other settlements far away from their families and traditional land, as seen in the high Arctic relocations. These relocations often meant that Inuit could no longer practice their traditional way of life. Meanwhile, Canada failed to deliver on its promises of a "better life" resulting in Inuit experiencing extreme poverty exasperated by the lack of access to land to obtain food traditionally.² Many Inuit are still experiencing the multigenerational impacts stemming from these forced relocations.

Canada also attempted to control and colonize Métis by devising a complex scrip system to part Métis from their land and extinguish the Métis Nation. From the 1870s to the 1920s, the scrip system that issued documents in exchange for land or money. The scrip system did not consider Métis ways of life nor collective land rights in what would eventually become the prairie provinces and parts of the territories. It allowed for the proliferation of non-Indigenous speculators who defrauded Métis of their scrip, often through forgery. The result was the systematic loss of Métis lands with Métis being left just 1 percent of land scrip in Saskatchewan while speculators and the main banks in Canada ended up with 90 percent of money scrip.³ In 1921, an amendment to the Canadian Criminal Code barred Métis from suing speculators after receiving scrip, leaving Métis impoverished and forcing them to "squat" on the fringes of communities and Crown lands, eventually becoming known as the Road Allowance People.⁴

The Parliament Buildings are the seats from which elected and appointed leaders passed legislation with the intention of controlling and colonizing Indigenous peoples. While the methods Parliament used to colonize First Nations, Métis and Inuit sometimes differed, they ultimately worked to remove Indigenous peoples from their lands and eliminate Indigenous cultures, languages and ways of life.

B. 80 Wellington (Office of the Prime Minister and the Privy Council; former Langevin Block)

The former Langevin Block was the first federal government office building constructed outside of the Parliament Hill precinct and is named after Sir Hector-Louis Langevin. Langevin is remembered as an effective defender of Québec's interests and the rights of French Canadians. He was also a strong supporter for the establishment of the residential school system, arguing that children must be separated from their parents for the schools to be effective tools of assimilation. In 1883, during his tenure as Public Works Minister, Langevin recommended a budget of \$43,000 be added to the Department of Indian Affairs for the building and operation of three industrial

¹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 Origins to 1939*.

² Qikiqtani Truth Commission. (2014). *Nuutauniq: Movies in Inuit Life*.

³ Canadian Geographic: Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada. (n.d.). Métis Scrip.

⁴ Muzyka, K. (2019, April 25). *What's Métis scrip? North America's 'largest land swindle,' says Indigenous lawyer*. CBC.

schools. Later, Prime Minister John A. Macdonald ordered that two of the schools be built using simple and cheap construction with the idea that in a few years' time a more permanent building could be established when the budget allowed for the costs.⁵ Today, the former Langevin Block houses the Prime Minister's Office.

C. 1 Rideau Street (the Chateau Laurier; Yousuf Karsh's studio from 1973 to 1992)

Yousuf Karsh was an internationally renowned portrait photographer whose studio was in Ottawa's Chateau Laurier. Karsh took the most well-known portrait of Duncan Campbell Scott, who is a renowned Canadian Confederate poet. Scott is also known as one of the architects of the residential school system. In a letter dated August 22, 1895, Scott, in his capacity as acting-Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs, wrote to the Deputy Minister of Justice to request authorization to force Indigenous children to leave their homes in order to attend residential schools. The letter read, "I have the honour... to request you to have the goodness to furnish me at your early convenience with a form of warrant for the committal of an Indian Child to an Industrial School."⁶

Scott became Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs in 1913 after joining the Department in 1879. He oversaw the development of policies aimed to suppress and assimilate Indigenous peoples, including the 1920 amendment to the *Indian Act* that made residential schools mandatory. Historical records show that Scott was repeatedly made aware of the shocking abuse and death tolls among students in residential schools but did little to address the problem. Meanwhile, Canada considers him a "Person of National Historic Significance" in light of his poetic contributions.⁷

D. 61 Spark Street (the James Hope & Sons Building)

James Hope & Sons published Dr. Peter Henderson Bryce's study, entitled "The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada." In it, Dr. Bryce detailed the high rates of illness and death among children attending residential schools and how the federal government was failing to prevent their deaths.

Dr. Bryce, recognized as one of Canada's leading public health authorities, was hired in 1904 as the chief medical officer of the department of Indian Affairs. He conducted an inspection of 35 residential schools and found that the schools were overcrowded and poorly ventilated, conditions known at the time to facilitate the spread of tuberculosis and other diseases. Dr. Bryce found a clear connection between the sanitation, infrastructure and health conditions within the schools and the incredible number of child deaths.⁸ Surveying a population of 1,537 pupils, it was found that nearly "25 per cent of ex-pupils are dead, of one school with an absolutely accurate statement, 69 per cent of ex-pupils are dead."⁹

Dr. Bryce documented his findings in a 1907 report to the Department of Indian Affairs and repeatedly called on Duncan Campbell Scott to improve the conditions of the schools to prevent illness and death amongst the students. However, Dr. Bryce's recommendations came into direct conflict with Scott's work to reduce

⁵ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 Origins to 1939*.

⁶ Scott, Duncan Campbell. (1895, August 22). Letter from Duncan Campbell Scott, Acting Superintendent General of Indian Affairs to Minister of Justice requesting warrant. Ottawa, no. 151-711-10.

⁷ Parks Canada. (n.d.). *Directory of Federal Heritage Designations: Scott, Duncan Campbell National Historic Person*.

⁸ Milloy, J. (1999). *A national crime: The Canadian government and the residential school system 1879 to 1986*. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press.

⁹ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 Origins to 1939*.

department spending. Scott repeatedly denied Dr. P.H. Bryce the opportunity to call attention to the harms being committed by the government by suspending funding and blocking his presentations. By 1921, Dr. Bryce was forced out of public service and into retirement. However, this gave Dr. Bryce the opportunity to finally publish his findings for the public. In 1922, he published his study entitled “The Story of a National Crime: An Appeal for Justice to the Indians of Canada.” In it, Dr. Bryce presented “irrefutable evidence that tuberculosis was killing students and the government was failing to prevent their deaths. After that, the government couldn’t pretend not to know, yet the schools were not closed until 74 years later.”¹⁰

E. 134 Sparks Street (former location of the Ottawa Evening Citizen Building)

Shortly after Dr. Bryce’s “Report on the Indian Schools of Manitoba and the Northwest Territories” was submitted in 1907, it was reproduced on the front page of the *Ottawa Evening Citizen* (now known as the *Ottawa Citizen*). The newspaper was previously housed at this location, though the original building has since been demolished.

The title of the *Ottawa Evening Citizen* article read, “Schools Aid White Plague - Startling Death Rolls Revealed Among Indians - Absolute Inattention to the Bare Necessities of Health.”¹¹ By reporting his findings to the media, Dr. Bryce was briefly successful in bringing the issue of the harms being committed against Indigenous children by the government into the public eye. Dr. Bryce also distributed his 1907 report to Members of Parliament and to many churches. Despite this, there were no concrete changes and the federal government continued operating residential schools in ways that were harmful to Indigenous children, with the last school closing in 1997.¹²

F. 165 Sparks Street (the Booth Building)

Duncan Campbell Scott’s office was once in this building. It is perhaps from this office that he penned such letters as his 1909 response to Dr. Bryce’s reports. Scott wrote that while the reports “may be scientific,” they were “quite inapplicable to the system under which the schools are conducted.”¹³ Although Scott and the government held the power to make decisions about funding and regulations that could have changed the conditions of residential schools, there was a failure to act. Indeed, Scott’s support of residential schools continued unhindered throughout his tenure at the department. He wrote, “It is readily acknowledged that Indian children lose their natural resistance to illness by habituating so closely in the residential schools and that they die at a much higher rate than in their villages. But this does not justify a change in the policy of this Department which is geared towards a final solution of our Indian Problem.”¹⁴ Although since relocated, the Booth Building in later years housed the Ottawa Bureau of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN).

¹⁰ The BC Teachers Federation. (2015). Project of Heart Illuminating the hidden history of Indian Residential Schools in BC.

¹¹ Evening Citizen. (1907, November 15). Schools Aid White Plague. The Evening Citizen.

¹² Milloy, J. (1999). A national crime: The Canadian government and the residential school system 1879 to 1986. Winnipeg: University of Manitoba Press

¹³ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). Canada’s Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 Origins to 1939.

¹⁴ BC Teachers’ Federation, 2015, p. 8

G. 202 Sparks Street (the Sun Life Building)

Dr. Bryce's office as Chief Medical Health Officer of the Indian Department was once in this building. It is perhaps in this building that he wrote his 1907 report on the poor conditions of residential schools and distributed it to Members of Parliament, churches and the media. Dr. Bryce worked to hold elected officials, the Department of Indian Affairs and churches to account for creating and maintaining the conditions in residential schools that led to the deaths of so many children. Although the federal government deliberately chose not to act upon his recommendations, Dr. Bryce's work can help us understand what conditions were like in these residential schools and allow us to recognize the consequences of the actions (and inactions) of the government and churches who ran these schools. In 2016, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission estimated that between 4,000 and 6,000 children died at the schools.¹⁵

H. 82 Kent Street (St. Andrew's Church)

Dr. P.H. Bryce was a member of St. Andrew's Church. Here, we might consider the question of moral courage. Throughout his tenure at the Department of Indian Affairs, Duncan Campbell Scott acknowledged the evidence that residential schools were harmful to the lives of Indigenous children but failed to act to improve conditions in the schools. Meanwhile, Dr. Bryce demonstrated moral courage by speaking out about the injustices that he witnessed in a time when few people were doing so and despite the repercussions he faced.

It was not until 2008, when Canada issued the Apology for Residential Schools, that the federal government admitted to any negligence or wrongdoing which Dr. Bryce had so clearly shown over 100 years ago. Through the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, we are now learning more about the legacy of residential schools. The TRC Final Report, following years and thousands of testimonies by courageous survivors of residential schools, provides evidence of the immense abuse and suffering that occurred. The TRC reported that the assimilation policy of the residential school system amounted to cultural genocide and provided evidence of the intergenerational impacts on Indigenous families and communities.¹⁶

Dr. Bryce had the moral courage to stand up for the safety, health and wellbeing of Indigenous children even when it was the hard thing to do. He reminds us that people of the period knew about the injustices but were insufficient in numbers to force Canada to act. This story of Dr. Bryce and Scott provide the evergreen lessons we can glean from history to address contemporary injustices that Indigenous peoples experience.

Beechwood Cemetery

You can extend this walking tour by visiting the Beechwood Cemetery. Dr. P.H. Bryce and Duncan Campbell Scott are both buried there, along with Nicholas Flood Davin who, like Scott, is considered one of the architects of the residential school system. In 1879, Davin authored the *Report on Industrial Schools for Indians and Half-Breeds*, also known as the Davin Report, which included recommendations on how Canada should institute a residential school system for Indigenous children. The report particularly recommended that Indigenous children be removed from the influences of their parents and cultures for assimilation and "civilization" to be successful.¹⁷

¹⁵ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2016). *Canada's Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*.

¹⁶ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Canada's Residential Schools: The History, Part 1 Origins to 1939*.

¹⁷ The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. (2015). *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*.

In keeping with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action, the resting places of these three individuals are marked with historically accurate plaques. The plaques tell the full and balanced story of each individual, including their achievements and their involvement in the residential school system.

To learn more visit:

- Caring Society Reconciling History Walking Tours: fncaringsociety.com/reconciliation-walking-tours.
- Beechwood Cemetery Reconciling History Program: beechwoodottawa.ca/foundation/reconciling-history-program-beechwood-cemetery.
- Project of Heart Reconciliation Plaques: projectofheart.ca/the-reconciliation-plaques-of-beechwood-cemetery.