

THEN/HiER Visiting Doctoral Student Program
Final Report
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Linguicide and the School Newspapers of Nineteenth-Century Residential School

My visit to treaty 6 and 7 territories was to work with Dr. Dwayne Donald at the University of Alberta, where he is an associate professor of secondary education. I had first met Dr. Donald at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final national event the previous year. I had read much of his work and had seen him present at conferences. My own dissertation has been greatly informed by his concepts of the Pedagogy of the Fort as well as his technique of "excavating the colonial terrain." His past work has also troubled the histories of Edmonton—far beyond the provincial politics the city was consumed by when I arrived.

At York University, I am currently completing a dissertation on the newspapers of nineteenth-century residential schools in Canada. Former students recall brutal punishment for speaking Indigenous languages, and government reports confirm that language was integral to the schools' assimilative mandate. Though few documents remain showing exactly *how* English was taught, at some schools students produced newspapers as part of typography classes. Newspaper production at residential schools occurred for almost 100 years and in diverse regions across both Canada and the U.S. While Indigenous language denigration today is often understood as loss, this research instead reveals a calculated destruction, or what Andrea Bear Nicholas calls linguicide, which attempted to sever ties amongst generations. English studies were a crucial component of the colonial project, altering students' epistemological, ecological, spiritual, and cosmological relationship to land and family.

Focusing on six newspapers, my research asks: What was the purpose of these newspapers and who was reading them? How was time, space, place, and land represented and constituted? How are these newspapers both testaments to and examples of resistance against the linguicidal goals of residential school? And how can we presently come to understand these documents in a post-Truth and Reconciliation Commission Canada today?

While in Alberta, I was able to visit four archives that held these newspapers. I visited the Provincial Archives of Alberta, which was similar in its scope and mandate to other provincial archives I had visited previously. I also had the honour of visiting the library and archives of two institutions that were residential schools and are now post-secondary institutions: Red Crow Community College as well as the historic Blue Quills First Nations College, the first college to be Indigenous controlled and operated in Canada. In addition, I was also able to visit the Esplanade Archives in Medicine Hat. These archives and communities were very far away from each other, necessitating two road trips, which Dr. Donald generously helped to coordinate.

Back in Edmonton, I was able to sit in on one of Dr. Donald's classes and learn more about the innovative programs in the faculty of education at the University of Alberta.

During my time as a visiting student, I was able to finish my methods chapter, which questions the space and concept of the archive (particularly amidst the barriers of access that survivors and their families have experienced). I also conducted research for two other chapters in my dissertation, and developed an idea for a journal article. The impact of this time I am only beginning to process one month later. I thank THEN/HiER and Dr. Donald for the opportunity!

