

"A NEW UNDERSTANDING OF THINGS INDIAN"

George Raley's Negotiation of the Residential School Experience

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AT THE 1972 Coqualeetza Indian Residential School reunion, an ex-student concluded a glowing tribute to Reverend George Henry Raley: "Above all, he was respected and beloved."¹ Raley was principal of Coqualeetza School in Sardis, British Columbia, from 1914 until 1934, and the fondness with which he is remembered is striking. For some students this sentiment extends to positive memories of the school. One ex-student, who interviewed Coqualeetza alumni with the intention of writing a history of the school, found many who felt that Coqualeetza was one of the finer residential schools for Native children.² Recollections such as these contrast with the stark image of residential schools presented in recent literature, and they hint at a greater heterogeneity of residential school experiences than is commonly assumed. An analysis of Raley and Coqualeetza adds a new dimension to our understanding of residential schools by revealing a flexible system with the potential to encompass a range of attitudes, environments, and experiences. In 1935 Raley issued a plea for "a new understanding of things Indian"³ among the Canadian public. During his years at Coqualeetza, he took advantage of the latitude available to him as principal to implement his interpretation of what this meant and to realize his own vision of education for Native children. Through his various initiatives he was able to

¹ "A Tribute to Dr. G.H. Raley," 21 October 1972, A.S. Charlton, private collection. The "Tribute" indicates that a large number of students and staff, as well as Raley's daughter, attended the reunion. Ellen confirms that the event was a huge success.

² Interview with Ellen, 23 February 1993. Over two days in February 1993, I interviewed three men and two women who attended Coqualeetza. Because three of the elders requested I not use their names, I use the following pseudonyms throughout: "Daniel," "Ellen," "Helen," "Ben," and "Charlie." I also interviewed a woman who attended the Roman Catholic residential school in Kamloops; I refer to her as "Mary."

³ G.H. Raley, "Canadian Indian Art and Industries: An Economic Problem of Today," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 83 (1935): 1,001, Museum of Anthropology Archives, UBC.



Dr. and Mrs. Raley with their dog at the Ocean Park summer camp in Crescent Beach, n.d. While Raley's ideas for a summer camp reflected reformist debate on childhood and child welfare, they remained grounded in the Victorian values symbolized by the Union Jack. The name of his dog, "Trotsky," suggests another source of his inspiration.

SOURCE: A.S. CHARLTON, PRIVATE COLLECTION.

mitigate some of the pernicious elements inherent to the residential school system. Yet Raley's thoughtful program ultimately reinforced rather than challenged that system. His very ability to conceptualize "a new understanding of things Indian" was constrained by the colonial assumptions of the system he worked within as well as against. By examining Raley and his work at Coqualeetza, this article seeks to illuminate both the latitude and the limitations of the residential school system.

George Henry Raley was born in Yorkshire, England, in 1864 to devout Methodist parents. He was educated at a grammar school before coming to Ontario to farm in 1882. He joined the Methodist ministry in 1884, however, and in 1893 he and his wife moved to British Columbia to serve as missionaries to the Aboriginal population. Raley arrived with a keen interest in Native culture, feeling that "in order to understand the attitude of the Indian towards Christianity and white civilization it was necessary to study the ethnological

background of the people."⁴ The Raleys worked as missionaries at Kitimat and Port Simpson before Raley was appointed principal of Coqualeetza Residential School at Sardis in the Fraser Valley in 1914. After his retirement in 1935, Raley and his family moved to Vancouver, where Raley continued to write and lecture prolifically on Native issues until his death in 1958.

Raley's philosophy both departed from and converged with prevailing thought. His program at Coqualeetza created a more comfortable environment for the students, but it did not challenge the removal of Native children from their family, community, and culture. He rejected the notion that Native people were inferior to Euro-Canadians but not the policies of Christianization and civilization. Even his desire to preserve and promote Native art and culture remained grounded in the paternalistic assumption that Native communities needed White leadership and instruction. This tension between supporting and challenging the dominant paradigm is also embodied in his language. When expressing progressive opinions in speeches and articles, Raley often used terms such as "savage," "heathen," and "weird" to describe Native culture. Just as Raley's ideas were founded upon contemporary values, so they were expressed through the prevailing linguistic matrix.

The kinder, gentler version of residential school that Raley may have created cannot legitimate the residential school system. Residential schools were culturally destructive institutions that have had devastating consequences for Native people across Canada.⁵ Yet, to continually restate this now well-known fact does not deepen our understanding of how the system functioned. By taking the residential school system as a historical given, it is possible to evaluate Raley's attitude towards the care of his students with reference to contemporary debates and developments and without recourse to morally valid,

⁴ G.H. Raley, "Mission work of the Methodist Church among the Indians of BC prior to the organization of the United Church of Canada in 1925," 30, A.S. Charlton, private collection.

⁵ On the effects of residential schooling see, for example, Rosalyn N. Ing, "The Effects of Residential Schools on Native Child-Rearing Practices," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 18 (1991): 65-118; Linda Bull, "Indian Residential Schooling," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 18 (1991), 1-64; Celia Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal* (Vancouver: Tillicum Library, 1992); Elizabeth Furniss, *Victims of Benevolence* (Williams Lake, BC: Cariboo Tribal Council, 1992); Roland Chrisjohn and Sherri Young, "Among School Children: Psychological Imperialism and the Residential School Experience in Canada," paper presented at the Vancouver International Symposium on Ethnicity, Conflict, and Cooperation, UBC, August 1993; Roland Chrisjohn and Sherri Young, "Research and Residential Schooling: Ideas for First Nations Individuals and Communities," paper prepared at the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People, September 1993.

although historically unhelpful, indignation. Analyses of individuals such as Raley contribute to our understanding both of the factors that perpetuated the residential school system and of that system's meaning for Native students.

This article considers three initiatives through which Raley mobilized his philosophy. The first is his approach to child welfare and institutionalization; the second is his curricular innovations; and the third is his plan for a "revival" and commercialization of Native art. Because these aspects of Raley's thought were heavily influenced by debates and movements outside the realm of the Canadian residential school system, this article ranges broadly in order to contextualize his thought appropriately.

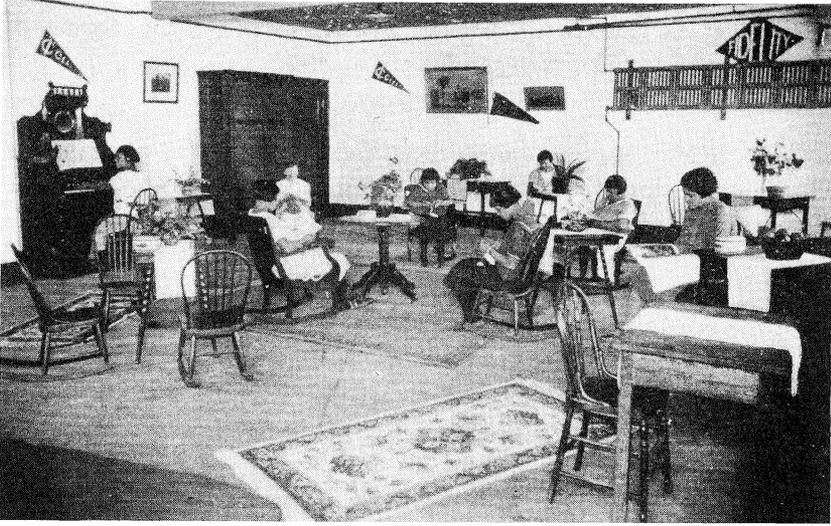
"A BIT OF THE HOME SPIRIT"

It should not be surprising that, as principal, Raley had the power to shape life at Coqualeetza. Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill have already concluded that early nineteenth-century institutions "possessed distinctive characteristics deriving from the personalities and commitment of their leaders."⁶ Raley's example suggests that this conclusion can be extended to early twentieth-century schools as well. Although the federal government was ultimately responsible for the schools, principals wielded a great deal of control over school life. A.V. Parminter, Regional Superintendent of Indian Schools for British Columbia from 1952 until 1961, notes that prior to the Second World War "the Federal Government provided scant academic leadership to the far flung collection of schools for which it was legally and morally responsible. In practice [the curriculum] was left to the discretion of the principal or teacher."⁷ This federal indifference was complemented by school staff's denominational loyalty. As a University of Alberta study has concluded,

Even though paid by Indian Affairs, as clergymen, [the principals] felt their first allegiance to be to their church or order. When they received unwelcome direction from Indian Affairs, they were not above lobbying to the Minister in whose department Indian Affairs happened to be

⁶ Jean Barman, Yvonne Hébert, and Don McCaskill, eds., *Indian Education in Canada*, Vol. I (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1986), 7.

⁷ A.V. Parminter, "The Development of Integrated Schooling for British Columbian Indian Children" (MA thesis, Department of Education, UBC, 1964), 51.



Senior Girls' Sitting Room and Senior Boys' Bedroom. Sitting rooms and semi-private bedrooms for senior students were part of Raley's attempt to introduce "a bit of the home spirit" to the institutional atmosphere at Coqualeetza. Comfortable as these rooms may have been, they were conceived within a White, Victorian definition of "home."

SOURCE: COQUALEETZA COMMENCEMENT ANNUAL, 1925; BOOKLET COMMEMORATING THE OPENING OF NEW COQUALEETZA BUILDING, 1924, A.S. CHARLTON, PRIVATE COLLECTION.

placed at the moment . . . a course of action no properly indoctrinated civil servant would ever pursue.⁸

Indeed, Raley was not shy about making special appeals for Coqualeetza directly to Duncan Campbell Scott, the head of the Department of Indian Affairs (DIA). On several occasions, he requested extra funds to finance private music lessons for a talented student, to pay for children to go home to visit their parents, or to fund the yearly summer camp at Ocean Park in Crescent Beach for students who were unable to go home for the holidays.⁹ That Raley may have been breaking protocol by writing directly to Scott may be inferred from the fact that the response often came from one of Scott's underlings.¹⁰

Raley took his position as principal of a residential school for Native children seriously and felt a deep sense of responsibility towards the students in his charge. He described himself as standing "*in loco parentis*" to the students at Coqualeetza, and he insisted that "this parental relation is not a mere legal form; it is an actual and concrete responsibility."¹¹ In Raley, this sense of responsibility included an unusual sensitivity towards Native culture and values. In his speeches and writings, Raley emphasized the positive educational and moral structures of Native society.

If we think the Indians of B.C. had no form of education we have another guess coming. True they had no school houses, text books and other appurtenances necessary to education today. But they had that creative urge to grow, to make, to progress, to develop, an intuition without which there can be no education.¹²

⁸ J.W. Chalmers, *Education Behind the Buckskin Curtain: A History of Native Education in Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Staff Study, 1972), 174.

⁹ The request for music lessons was somewhat indignantly turned down, although Raley did succeed in getting money for trips home and for the summer camp. See RG10, vol. 6040, files 160-3 and 160-3A, reel B-9826, British Columbia Archives and Record Service (hereafter referred to as BCARS); RG10, vol. 6422, file 869-1, reel B-1859, BCARS; and RG10 vol. 6442, file 880-1, reel C-8766, Public Archives of Canada (hereafter referred to as PAC).

¹⁰ See RG10, reel B-9826, BCARS; RG10, reel B-1859, BCARS; and RG10, reel C-8766, PAC.

¹¹ Raley to DIA, 24 April 1917, "A Third Appeal: Statement of Reason for New Classroom Building to Include Manual Training Plant at Coqualeetza Institute, Sardis, BC," G.H. Raley, Coqualeetza Industrial Institute and other schools, various papers, Raley Collection, BCARS.

¹² "Introduction to Education, 1948," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

Indians of both sexes were taught to be clean, truthful, honest, generous, hospitable and brave. Now a race which inculcates such sound virtues in the minds of their children can hardly be called deprived or debased.¹³

The seriousness with which Raley approached his duty as a surrogate parent stands out against the background of abuse and neglect that characterized so many residential schools. Unusual as Raley's caring attitude may appear against the Canadian residential school landscape, it was rooted in contemporary concerns about the nature of childhood and child welfare. The nineteenth century is often called the century that "discovered" the child¹⁴ because it was a time during which the notion of childhood changed so dramatically. New requirements arose for the proper care of children, who came to be seen as "innocent and naturally moral creatures"¹⁵ who were "especially vulnerable to mistreatment and exploitation."¹⁶ As a result of this redefinition of the child, the nature and the appropriateness of children's institutions came into question. Raley's philosophy was part of this topical, newly deployed discourse of childhood. His sense of parental responsibility was typical of what Neil Sutherland has called the twentieth-century consensus born out of the nineteenth-century childhood debate.¹⁷ Raley is notable not for the specific substance of his ideas, but for the way he brought concepts from the broader arena of social reform to bear on Native issues.

Raley seized upon a popular new concept, the "cottage" or "family reform" system, in his attempt to counter the "unnatural"¹⁸ effects of institutionalization on children. He argued for the cottage system as "a forward movement of great importance in our Indian work."¹⁹ British and American reformers had espoused the cottage system as an alternative to traditional congregate or dormitory models, which were

¹³ "Radio Address," 3, G.H. Raley, "Notes for Speeches and Articles re: civilization of Indians," Raley Collection, BCARS. For similar sentiments, see also "Introduction to Education, 1948," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

¹⁴ Neil Semple, "'The Nurture and Admonition of the Lord': Nineteenth-Century Canadian Methodism's Response to 'Childhood,'" *Social History* 14, 27 (1981): 159.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 157.

¹⁷ Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1978), 228.

¹⁸ Robert E. Mills, "The Child and the Institution," *Canadian Welfare Summary* 15, 3 (1939): 48.

¹⁹ "Resolution Re: Safety and Welfare of Little Children in Residence at Coqualeetza Institute, Sardis, BC," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

the norm for children's institutions, including residential schools.²⁰ Labelled "anti-institutional institutions"²¹ by reformers, cottage schools were meant to provide "inmates" with a home-like environment where they would live in small "family" units under the care of a surrogate mother or father. According to historian Steven Schlossman, the cottage system "helped generate what might be termed a new liberal consensus on a modified version of the status quo, a new 'sensible' position around which members of the institutional establishment could rally to defeat the radicals and at the same time support change."²² This approach was well suited to Raley's program, which aimed to alter the nature of the institution while maintaining the system and his position within it.

In a 1932 letter to Reverend Beaton, Associate Secretary of the Board of Home Missions, Raley offered his definition of the cottage system. "When I refer to the 'cottage type' I mean a house where each is a complete unit with its own kitchen and dining room, and where the number of children should not exceed 25 or 30 in one cottage."²³ Raley criticized the congregate system for making the institution "a sort of catch-all for a homogenous mass of children," a place where "children are cared for en masse with little approach to family life; where treatment of the children must necessarily be collective rather than individual."²⁴ The cottage system was meant to benefit the younger children in particular, who, Raley argued, needed "more motherly care" and "more supervision."²⁵ Raley wrote that "no one believes institutional care, however good, is suitable for young children except in unusual cases. In exceptional cases only, could we be justified taking young children six and eight years old away from their parents."²⁶ In such "exceptional cases," Raley believed, the cottage system would help provide the children with the love and attention they needed.

Although Raley articulated these ideas in the 1930s, he had developed them long before. A paper he wrote around the turn of the

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Steven L. Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), 38.

²² Ibid., 49.

²³ Raley to Rev. A.K. Beaton, Associate Secretary, Mission Rooms, Toronto, 1 April 1932, G.H. Raley, Correspondence Outward, Raley Collection, BCARS.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ "Resolution Re: Safety and Welfare of Little Children," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

²⁶ Report for unidentified committee, Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

century, entitled "Indian Child Life of British Columbia,"²⁷ indicates that he was interested in child welfare well before he came to Coqualeetza. Within a few months of his appointment as principal in September 1914, Raley began modifying the congregate dormitory structure along more familial lines. By December, two extra dorms had been built, housing twenty students each.²⁸ Then, in 1919 and again in 1920, Raley requested "two small cottages, one for small boys and one for small girls."²⁹ Reverend T. Ferrier, Superintendent of Indian Education for the Methodist Church, relayed these requests to the DIA on Raley's behalf in letters listing the "present needs" of each of the Methodist residential schools in Canada. In both instances Coqualeetza was the only school for which cottages were requested. In a 1926 letter, Raley described the "open air dorm that has been built for boys" as "warm and homelike . . . The boys occupying this building are not over twelve years of age except the trusty monitor."³⁰ These arrangements were his attempt to implement the cottage system ideal.

In this same letter, Raley made an admission that reveals the importance of the cottage issue for him. The extra dorms had made it possible to admit more students, and he had done so while trying to convince the DIA to provide additional per capita grants.³¹

We have done the work, fed, clothed, and educated the extra pupils without crowding. We have fulfilled the requirements of the agreement the Department has with the church except the important one, the sanction of the Department . . . Personally I feel I have a good case if dealt with on its merits and without prejudice. I admit I took these children to care for in faith I was doing right but without permission being granted.³²

The DIA was not moved by moral appeals, however. In a subsequent letter, Raley expressed his disappointment that "the Department would pay no per capita grant for children who are not sleeping in the main building."³³ Despite this, Raley appears to have kept the extra dorm full, perhaps through increased subsidies from the missionary societies. Two

²⁷ Raley to J.G. Brown, 20 April 1933, A.S. Charlton, private collection.

²⁸ RG10, reel B-1859, BCARS.

²⁹ Ferrier to Scott, 25 April 1919 and 8 July 1920, RG10, reel B-9826, BCARS.

³⁰ RG10, reel B-1859, BCARS.

³¹ RG10, reel B-1859, BCARS.

³² RG10, reel B-1859, BCARS.

³³ Raley to Ferrier, 22 July 1926, RG10, reel B-1859, BCARS.

children's cottages are on a 1932 blueprint of the school grounds,³⁴ although by this time they may have been used to isolate children with tuberculosis, a program that began sometime in the 1930s.³⁵

Although Raley was never able to implement a full cottage system at Coqualeetza, he was successful at infusing the school with "a bit of the home spirit"³⁶ and, thus, at mitigating some of the negative aspects of the congregate system. Architecturally, this compromise took the form of outside "cottages" for younger students and semi-private rooms for senior ones, who were believed to need more privacy.³⁷ Raley lessened the institutional atmosphere in many other ways, ranging from festivities on special occasions³⁸ to rides around the schoolyard in his car.³⁹ These efforts tempered the harmful disruption of social bonds and created an enjoyable environment for the children. Bonds that formed the basis for life-long relationships were created among students as well as between students and staff.⁴⁰ The 1972 Coqualeetza reunion, attended by both former staff and students, is perhaps the most effective demonstration of these lasting relationships.

While Raley certainly did not orchestrate each relationship at Coqualeetza, his role in creating an atmosphere conducive to the formation of strong friendships cannot be dismissed. Enduring relationships, especially between staff and students, would have been less likely to evolve had the negative aspects of the school, such as separation from their families, been the students' overriding experi-

³⁴ "Blueprint of Coqualeetza Grounds, 1932," RG10, reel C-8766, BCARS.

³⁵ "A Brief History of Coqualeetza," 5, A.S. Charlton, private collection.

³⁶ G.H. Raley, Coqualeetza Commencement Annuals, 1925.

³⁷ Booklet commemorating opening of the new Coqualeetza school building, 1924, A.S. Charlton, private collection.

³⁸ Christmas in particular was a special time at the school. The 1930 annual proudly maintained: "If anyone doubts there was feasting and merrymaking at Coqualeetza at Christmas, let him read the 'Christmas Day Menu': Breakfast: Corn Flakes and Milk, Parker House Rolls with Honey, Cocoa; Dinner: Roast Goose, Dressing and Gravy, Mashed Potatoes, Stewed Tomatoes, Cucumber Pickles, Apple Sauce, Plum Pudding, Caramel Sauce, Lemonade, Christmas Cake, Fruit, Candy and Nuts; Supper: Mince-meat Turnovers, Sugar Cookies, Marble Cake, Jelly and Custard, Raisin Bread and Butter, Christmas Cake, Coffee. There!" As well, all of the alumni I spoke with remembered Christmas as a special time, when everyday roles were relaxed and the children were "in charge." In "A Tribute to G.H. Raley," given at a 1971 Coqualeetza reunion, an ex-student recalled, "And Christmas, how the school was transformed into a fairyland with cedar festoons and holly decorating the halls and assembly halls, and the giant Christmas trees with a present for every boy and girl, no child was forgotten. Those indeed were the most wonderful Christmases" (A.S. Charlton, private collection).

³⁹ Interview with Helen, 23 February 1993.

⁴⁰ An outstanding example of a long-term relationship between a staff member and a student is that between Ellen and Peter Pirie, the agricultural teacher. Although Mr. Pirie has now passed away, Ellen is still in touch with his family.

ence. The close bonds generated at Coqualeetza demonstrate the possibility of constructing conditions within residential schools that could neutralize many of their "dysfunctional relationships."⁴¹

Besides representing a possible improvement to institutional school life, the cottage ideal also reveals the intellectual limits of contemporary reformist thought. Even if Raley's well-intentioned efforts to implement the cottage system at Coqualeetza had succeeded, the fundamental problems engendered by the non-Native community usurping the right to educate Native children would not have been alleviated. The cottage model was itself value laden. Although meant to create a more "home-like" atmosphere, its definition of home was Victorian and middle-class. As Schlossman points out, cottage residences in the United States were "intentionally made to appear like normal middle class family dwellings."⁴² The cottage ideology was based on the assumption that the nuclear family was the natural and ideal family unit. Raley never questioned this definition and thus did not consider the very different forms of family among Native people. He revealed his assumptions about the nature of the family when he wrote in 1935 that "tribal pride is giving way to family pride. The tribe was formerly the center of [the Indian's] ambition; to-day it is the family."⁴³ Yet despite his ethnocentric conception of the family, Raley often expressed a desire to preserve and promote Native culture. His definition of culture apparently did not recognize family structure as an integral, irrevocable element.

Raley's application of the cottage system and its underlying values still deserves consideration, however, because of the positive experience it created for many students. The long-term negative effects of the residential school system have been overwhelmingly documented,⁴⁴ and it is worth considering whether they would have been as devastating had a familial atmosphere, even one defined from a Euro-Canadian perspective, prevailed at more residential schools.

"THE THREE-FOLD NATURE OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT"

The creative initiatives Raley brought to Coqualeetza are perhaps most apparent in his curriculum. The program at Coqualeetza reflected

⁴¹ Bull, "Indian Residential Schooling": 56.

⁴² Schlossman, *Love and the American Delinquent*, 40.

⁴³ G.H. Raley, "Canadian Indian Art and Industries: An Economic Problem of Today," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 83 (1935): 995 (Museum of Anthropology Archives, UBC).

⁴⁴ See Note 5 above for sources on the effects of residential schooling.

Raley's belief that "the White man" in general, and the residential school system in particular, had a responsibility to provide Native people with useful skills that would allow them to lead independent, dignified lives. As with his ideas on child welfare, Raley derived his curricular plans from a range of contexts, and his innovation lay in resituating these ideas within the framework of Native residential school education.

For Raley, any program that provided Native children with useful skills needed to encompass "the three-fold nature of child development,"⁴⁵ consisting of "moral," "intellectual," and "physical and manual" components.⁴⁶ This tripartite division of education was common in provincial public schools⁴⁷ as well as in private schools run by British headmasters,⁴⁸ neither of which catered to Native children. The similarity to schools modelled on the British tradition is important because Raley's grammar-school education in England directly linked him to this philosophy. As Jean Barman has noted, headmasters of British origin commonly "copied as much as possible from their own experiences."⁴⁹

Raley defined the "moral" category broadly. It included, but was not limited to, religious instruction. In a 1917 letter, Raley lamented the lack of a school chapel as being the one weakness of the moral component of education at Coqualeetza.⁵⁰ In this respect his perspective was akin to that of British headmasters for whom school chapels were a priority and "religion was a code word for general moral instruction."⁵¹ Under this model, character building took precedence over theological training. Notions of morality and character were nonetheless inextricably linked to Christianity. Although Raley rejected any suggestion that Native culture was inherently inferior or immoral, his program required the Christianization of Native people.

⁴⁵ Raley to DIA, 24 April 1917, "A Third Appeal," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Timothy A. Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning of Work: Vocational Education in British Columbia, 1900-1929," in D.C. Jones, N.M. Sheehan, and R.M. Stamp, eds., *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1979), 248.

⁴⁸ Jean Barman, *Growing Up British in British Columbia* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1984), 65.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 64.

⁵⁰ Raley to DIA, 24 April 1917, "A Third Appeal," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS. One of the original aims of the Coqualeetza Alumni Association was to raise funds to build a school chapel. Although the annuals reported on this chapel fund every year, there is no indication that a chapel was ever actually built. See Raley, *Coqualeetza Commencement Annuals, 1920-1934*.

⁵¹ Barman, *Growing Up British*, 69-70.

He strove to create responsible *Christian* citizens of the Dominion⁵² less by having students master specific religious forms and observances than by having them internalize appropriate social forms and identities. Leadership qualities and Victorian gender roles were emphasized among these social/moral forms: girls needed to prepare for "true womanhood" and boys for "true manliness."⁵³

Although Raley did not question the Christian character of the school, his tendency to define moral training in terms of character building rather than theology meant that the religious presence at Coqualeetza was not overwhelming. Religion was not foremost in the memories of the ex-students I spoke with, all of whom remembered other aspects of school life, such as meals, sports, academics, and chores. Helen and Ben recalled a short prayer or hymn period in the mornings as well as regular Sunday services. These recollections are very different from those of the elders I spoke with who attended Roman Catholic residential schools. For Mary, the religious atmosphere at Kamloops Residential School was pervasive, and the activities of kneeling and praying were incessant. Charlie feels that he "mostly learned religion" after he was forced in 1922 to transfer from Coqualeetza to St. Mary's School in Mission because he was Roman Catholic.

Raley made up for his lack of emphasis on prayer and religion with his attention to academic work. In this respect he departed from the educational models of British and residential schools, both of which tended to hold intellectual achievement in low regard.⁵⁴ The academic component of education at residential schools has earned a notorious reputation.⁵⁵ After the turn of the century, the DIA began encouraging schools to emphasize "practical instruction" instead of academic achievement.⁵⁶ Peter Pirie, a full-time teacher at Coqualeetza from 1925 until 1939, accurately characterizes the DIA's attitude in his

⁵² This idea is reiterated throughout the Coqualeetza Commencement Annuals (1920-34). See the 1923 annual for one example. For a further example, see booklet commemorating opening of the new Coqualeetza school building, 1924, A.S. Charlton, private collection.

⁵³ Raley, Annuals, 1923; Denzil G. Ridout, "More Home Missionaries I Have Met," March 1934, "Edenbank Farm," file 177, Chilliwack Archives.

⁵⁴ Jean Barman writes that headmasters were in agreement that "academics were the least important [component of education]" (Barman, *Growing Up British*, 66). For a demonstration of this in the original British context, see J.A. Mangan, *Athleticism in Victorian and Edwardian Public Schools: The Emergence and Consolidation of an Educational Ideology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 93, 94, 106, 110, 111, 189.

⁵⁵ See, for example, George Manuel and Michael Polsuns, *The Fourth World* (New York: The Free Press, 1974), 66; and Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 66-69.

⁵⁶ Barman et al., *Indian Education*, 120.

autobiography: "The Indian Department [was] not inclined to take the children beyond Grade Six."⁵⁷ Indeed, across most of Canada, Native students were not permitted to attend provincial public schools or to continue past the primary grades until the late 1940s.⁵⁸ As serious as these limitations on Natives were, it should be remembered that in much of early twentieth-century British Columbia, particularly in rural areas, "high school education was considered more the exception than the rule" for all children.⁵⁹

In this light, the academic accomplishments at Coqualeetza stand out as all the more exceptional. An unusually high number of Coqualeetza students went on to Chilliwack High School. Ex-students Ellen and Charlie remember that as early as the beginning of the 1920s several children rode their bicycles to Chilliwack High School each morning. In 1926 Raley proudly reported that six students had just passed the high-school entrance exams,⁶⁰ a number that increased to thirteen the following year.⁶¹ Significantly, Coqualeetza students continued to do well academically at the high-school level. Ben reports that he maintained a solid C+ average after making the switch to Chilliwack High in 1940, and the commencement annuals indicate that some students even achieved honours standing.⁶² Coqualeetza's reputation was so renowned that Charlie's parents sent him to the Methodist school even though they were Roman Catholic.⁶³

Raley was central to these academic successes. He insisted that practical activities "be arranged so as not to interfere with . . . academic work"⁶⁴ and noted that Coqualeetza students completed a grade a year, even when half of each day was devoted to pre-vocational training.⁶⁵ In 1925, when Coqualeetza became the first residential

⁵⁷ Peter Pirie, *The Stump Ranch* (Victoria: Morris, 1975), 82.

⁵⁸ Haig-Brown, *Resistance and Renewal*, 66; Parminter, "Development of Integrated Schooling," 77; Jean Barman, *The West beyond the West* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 307.

⁵⁹ Jean Barman, "Reflections on the Role of the School in the Transition to Work in Resource Towns," in Rebecca Coulter and Ivor Goodson, eds. *Rethinking Vocationalism: Whose Work/Life Is It?* (Toronto: Our Schools/Our Selves, 1993), 13.

⁶⁰ Raley to Ferrier, 22 July 1926. RG10, reel B-1859, BCARS.

⁶¹ Raley, *Annuals*, 1927.

⁶² Raley, *Annuals*, 1925; interview with Ben.

⁶³ When the Roman Catholic authorities found out that Charlie was attending Coqualeetza, he was quickly transferred to St. Mary's Catholic Residential School in Mission.

⁶⁴ G.H. Raley, "Canadian Indian Art," 996.

⁶⁵ Raley, *Annuals*, 1927. At residential schools across Canada, a "half-day system" was employed, where students spent half the day doing school work and half doing some sort of vocational or manual training.

school in Canada to teach Grade 9,⁶⁶ Raley broke with the otherwise ubiquitous half-day system and provided senior students with a full day of academic instruction.⁶⁷

Former Coqualeetza teacher Peter Pirie confirms that Raley's emphasis on academic instruction went against the grain of DIA policy. "We endeavoured to get as many of the students in the higher grades to stay in school all day so they could be entered in the high school at Chilliwack. At that time the DIA was not convinced that academic learning would fit in with village life built around fishing and hunting."⁶⁸ Pirie met a principal who followed this DIA line when he visited the United Church residential school at Munsey, Ontario. Pirie mentioned that Coqualeetza was "sending between twelve and fifteen boys and girls a year to the high school in Chilliwack," and he was taken aback by the principal's response.⁶⁹ "Much to my surprise [the principal] was not impressed. 'If boys can drive a team of horses and run a binder,' he remarked, 'that is about the extent of education they can expect to absorb as far as we are concerned here.'"⁷⁰ The attitude expressed by this principal was far too common throughout the residential school system, and it is a cornerstone of the tragic history of Native education in Canada.

Predictably then, the DIA's attitude towards the academic achievements at Coqualeetza was not supportive. According to Pirie, the antagonism Raley's academic program generated at upper bureaucratic levels precipitated Coqualeetza's conversion to a tuberculosis hospital for Native people in 1940. Pirie reports that

the change over [from school to hospital] was utilized as a lever by those who were not in favour of educating the Indians to the extent that Coqualeetza was doing . . . When I first went to work at Coqualeetza in 1925, Dr. Raley told me there was a large lobby in Ottawa endeavouring to get Coqualeetza closed because we were sending our boys and girls to Chilliwack High School. Dr. Ferrier, the Inspector for Indian Schools, came to Coqualeetza about twice a year and he kept Dr. Raley informed of these proceedings, and I was included in many of the briefings.⁷¹

⁶⁶ Raley, *Annuals*, 1925.

⁶⁷ Pirie, *The Stump Ranch*, 75.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 80.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 82-83.

Pirie further implied that this changeover precipitated Raley's retirement.⁷² Raley's grandson confirms that a deal between the United Church and the DIA regarding the school influenced Raley's decision to retire.

Raley believed that the third component of education, physical development, was an essential aspect of character building and a necessary complement to academic studies. Recreation and sport, he wrote in 1923, are "the birthright of all children."⁷³ Accordingly, the Coqualeetza school annuals reported on a dizzying array of sports: basketball, baseball, softball, soccer, archery, badminton, and track and field. Membership in such organizations as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Brownies, Cubs, Cadets, and Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) was also offered.⁷⁴

These games and organizations were accompanied by a philosophy that was British in origin and heavily laden with Victorian values. Historian J.A. Mangan has pointed out that the "games ethic" embodied the most basic Victorian, Protestant ideals.⁷⁵ At the turn of the century, a powerful movement held games to be at the heart of the educational process and believed in their value for the development of ethical behaviour and the formation of sound social attitudes.⁷⁶ Mangan further notes that this "cult of athleticism was replicated to a large extent in the educational institutions of Canada, where the tenets of muscular Christianity became firmly entrenched during the nineteenth century."⁷⁷ Jean Barman makes this same point: "It is hard to overstate the importance that was attached to this aspect of character development."⁷⁸ The Boy Scout and Girl Guide groups were fitting complements to the games ethic, since they were designed to diffuse middle-class ideals among a non-middle-class audience.⁷⁹ Games, as well as the Baden-Powell variations, were pivotal to the development of the "moral" qualities mentioned above: "leadership," "citizenship," "womanhood," "manliness," and even Christianity, all of which were constructed and defined in distinctly Victorian terms.

⁷² Ibid., 84.

⁷³ Raley, *Annuals*, 1923.

⁷⁴ Raley, *Annuals*, 1914-34.

⁷⁵ See, for example, Mangan, *Athleticism*; and J.A. Mangan, *The Games Ethic and Imperialism: Aspects of the Diffusion of an Ideal* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986).

⁷⁶ Mangan, *Games Ethic*, 43.

⁷⁷ Morris Mott, ed., *Sports in Canada: Historical Readings* (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989), 99.

⁷⁸ Barman, *Growing Up British*, 71.

⁷⁹ Gary McCulloch, *Philosophers and Kings: Education for Leadership in Modern England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 19.

The Victorian basis of these activities should not obscure the fact that they translated into student enjoyment. They generated school spirit and are remembered with extreme fondness by all the ex-students I interviewed. The boys' soccer team and the "Inter-Residential School Olympiad" are vividly recalled for resounding Coqualeetza victories. Muscular Christianity aside, games broke what could otherwise have been the relentlessly strict and tedious routine that prevailed at so many other residential schools.

The rather contradictory result was that, by ensuring that his students had opportunities to play and have fun, Raley facilitated one mainstream, conservative discourse of his day while hindering another. The techniques of the Victorian games ethic conflicted with the strict, bureaucratic policy of the DIA, which transformed many residential schools into institutional work camps. In this sense, sports and other extracurricular activities at Coqualeetza resemble the cottage system ideal, which also markedly improved the school environment, despite its Victorian foundations.⁸⁰

Raley was satisfied that the intellectual development at Coqualeetza was "excellent"⁸¹ and the physical training "unequaled in any institute of the province."⁸² For him, the "weak link in a strong chain"⁸³ was manual training. Manual training courses for girls included house-keeping, hygiene, child care, laundering, home nursing, cooking, sewing, typing, bookkeeping, and Indian basketry. Boys learned agriculture, carpentry, animal husbandry, shoe repair, mechanics, boat building, and Indian carving.⁸⁴

Manual and vocational instruction were also at issue in public schools at this time. While manual training was supposed to provide students with useful skills, in practice it often "provided rather limited marketable job skills for youth."⁸⁵ Raley was intent on making manual

⁸⁰ The Constitution of the Coqualeetza Fellowship, a society established by Coqualeetza graduates to provide assistance to Natives in Vancouver, reveals that some Coqualeetza students sustained their Aboriginal identity while, at the same time, internalizing at least some values of the games ethic. Seven objectives of the fellowship are listed in the constitution. The first six delineate intentions to foster the education, culture, welfare, and employment of Natives; the seventh, which makes no reference to Natives, is simply "to stimulate competitive sports among all Canadians" (*Constitution of the Coqualeetza Fellowship*, p. 1, A.S. Charlton, private collection).

⁸¹ Raley to DIA, 24 April 1917, "A Third Appeal," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Raley, *Annals*, 1914-34.

⁸⁵ Dunn, "Teaching the Meaning," 240.

training more directly relevant and sought to provide concrete occupational skills and opportunities for his students. The two areas of manual training he felt were most important in this respect were boat building and what he referred to as "Indian arts and handicrafts."

His proposal for a boat-building program at Coqualeetza was bold and extensive.

I would propose that the industrial school pupil who has been handy with tools, in his graduating year, upon the recommendation of the Principal, with the endorsement of the Indian Agent of the Agency concerned, build a boat under the direction and with the assistance of a competent instructor, the material to be provided by the Department of Indian Affairs; the boat when built to become the property of the graduating pupil . . . Such equipment would take away the great complaint that the graduate of the industrial school has to waste a lot of time for lack of suitable equipment and employment when he leaves school.⁸⁶

Raley's further comment that "the boat should be of an appropriate model"⁸⁷ indicates his awareness that the the bureaucratic DIA could misuse a well-intentioned idea. Raley closed his request by reporting that he had spoken with several ex-Coqualeetza students in Prince Rupert who were very enthusiastic about the prospect of students learning boat building rather than farming.

Raley's position is remarkable. Interest in Native opinions, even regarding issues directly affecting their lives, was uncommon in his day. Moreover, Raley's emphasis on the practical skill of boat building demonstrates an attempt to prevent the all-too-common perversion of manual training into forced manual labour.⁸⁸ Raley encouraged boat building despite the fact that it would not help with school repairs or food production.

Boat building was implemented at Coqualeetza in 1920, although not on the scale that Raley had originally envisioned. Boys worked

⁸⁶ Raley to Ferrier, 9 October 1916, "Supplementary to Statement Re: Technical And Vocational Instruction dated 24th April 1915," Coqualeetza Industrial Institute, Raley Collection, BCARS.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ This has been discussed extensively in the literature. See, for example, Jacqueline Gresko, "White 'Rites' and Indian 'Rites': Indian Education and Native Responses in the West, 1870-1910," in Jones, Sheehan, and Stamp, *Shaping the Schools*, 94; Manuel and Polsuns, *The Fourth World*, 65, 71; Bridget Moran, *Stoney Creek Woman: The Story of Mary John* (Vancouver: Tillicum Library, 1988), 44; and David Wallace Adams, "From Bullets to Boarding Schools: The Educational Assault on the American Indian Identity," in Phillip Weeks, ed., *The American Indian Experience* (Arlington Heights, IL: Forum Press, 1988), 228.

collectively on a single boat, which seems to have been used later as a mission launch.⁸⁹ Lack of funding likely forced Raley to curtail his initial plan. Although he was unable to impress his interpretation of manual training on the DIA, Raley was able to provide the boys with boat-building skills which were of far greater practical use to them than were agricultural skills.

Important as boat building was to Raley, he believed that the cornerstone of practical training for Native students was "traditional" arts and handicrafts. This was the issue for which he lobbied most passionately. In the early 1920s, Raley introduced Aboriginal carving and basket weaving into the Coqualeetza curriculum. The boys carved and painted totem poles and the girls learned traditional basket weaving. This, like many of his other initiatives, was opposed by the DIA. In 1934, he received news that the DIA was "not disposed to make a grant of \$600 to continue the teaching of Indian pupils their native handicrafts such as weaving, basketry etc."⁹⁰

Raley had more success convincing the United Church of the value of promoting Aboriginal arts. In 1934, the residential school principals of the United Church of Canada adopted a resolution, modelled on Raley's articles, urging the Church and the DIA to encourage the development of Indian arts.⁹¹ Similarly, the United Church's 1935 report on Indian education included a lengthy section entitled "Indian Art and Handicrafts," which expressed many of Raley's exact sentiments and made specific reference to him.⁹²

In one sense, Raley saw the handicraft program as a logical extension of the more general manual training classes. He wrote that "technical education already has a definitely organized place in the school system of the Indian Department, and this particular type of instruction, the teaching of Indian handicraft, is not out of harmony with the general function of technical training."⁹³ At the same time, the basketry and carving classes were part of Raley's attempt, as Ellen recalls, to "keep Native culture in front of us." Aside from the

⁸⁹ Raley, *Annuals*, 1920.

⁹⁰ Raley to O'N. Daunt, Indian Agent, New Westminster, 4 May 1934, Industries and Handicrafts, Raley Collection, BCARS.

⁹¹ Resolution adopted by Conference of Indian Residential School Principals of the United Church of Canada (re: Handicrafts), 29 January-1 February 1934, Toronto, RG10, reel B-9826, BCARS.

⁹² Board of Home Missions and the Women's Missionary Society of the United Church of Canada, "Report of Commission on Indian Education, 1935," United Church/Victoria University Archives, Toronto, 28-29.

⁹³ G.H. Raley, "Canadian Indian Art," 996.



Main entrance of the school and Display of the Indian Handicraft Department. Raley believed Native arts and handicrafts could link students to their cultural traditions and to modern economic opportunities. He displayed his collection of Native art in the school entrance, and adjusted the manual training program to include carving for boys and spinning, knitting, and weaving for girls.

SOURCE: COQUALEETZA COMMENCEMENT ANNUAL, 1934.

handicraft program, his efforts included serving Aboriginal dishes (such as oolichan) in the dining room⁹⁴ and prominently displaying his collection of Indian baskets, carvings, and other pieces of art in the front hall of the school. According to a school annual, Raley possessed "one of the finest collections of Indian curios in private hands in Canada, and [was] an acknowledged authority in folk lore and legends of the Indian people of the north."⁹⁵ Raley used his collection, which contained almost 700 pieces,⁹⁶ to illustrate his periodic lectures to students on different aspects of Native art and culture.⁹⁷ This large corpus later came to form the nucleus of the Museum of Anthropology collection at the University of British Columbia.

"GIVING THE INDIAN A FAIR START IN LIFE"

Raley's attempt to sustain a Native cultural presence at Coqualeetza was the most unique aspect of his curriculum. His efforts in this direction were part of a comprehensive, long-term plan that saw "Indian art and industries" as the solution to the social and economic problems confronting Native people. He "endeavored to co-relate Indian handicraft art and industry for the economic benefit of the native people themselves."⁹⁸ As with other aspects of his philosophy, Raley's belief in the need to rejuvenate Native culture derived from the contemporary debates surrounding him.

Raley's interest in Native art and culture dates back to the turn of the century, a time when anthropologists were reconceptualizing the idea of culture. As Robert Berkhofer Jr. points out, concepts central to modern anthropology (such as relativism, pluralism, and functionalism) were developed prior to the First World War by Franz Boas and his followers, although the strictly modern notion of culture did not prevail until at least the 1930s.⁹⁹ Raley and Boas were almost exact contemporaries, their respective births and deaths separated by just six years. Raley owned several of Boas's works,¹⁰⁰ and he included an acknowledgement to Boas in a monograph he wrote on the totem

⁹⁴ Interview with Ellen.

⁹⁵ Raley, *Annuals*, 1934.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Raley, *Annuals*, 1920-34. Some examples of his lecture topics are: "Indian Legend" (1928); "Interpreting the Totem Pole" (1931); "Psychological Totemism" (1931); and "The Lure of Indian Basketry" (1932).

⁹⁸ Raley, *Annuals*, 1934.

⁹⁹ Robert J. Berkhofer, *The White Man's Indian: Images of the American Indian from Columbus to the Present* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 63.

¹⁰⁰ "Library: Ethnological etc. Books," A.S. Charlton, private collection.

poles in Stanley Park.¹⁰¹ In several respects, Raley's perspective accorded with Boas's. Like Boas, Raley was sympathetic to Native issues and was critical of the influence of modern White society on "traditional" Aboriginal life. Raley also stands out, as does Boas, for his attempts to counter the wide-spread ethnocentrism, evolutionism, and scientific racism of the early twentieth century, when "the commonly held opinion that Indians were mentally inferior to non-Indians or were lazy was justified on the basis of heredity."¹⁰² Raley publicly argued against this position, emphatically asserting that "the grey matter of the Indian brain is not inferior to that of the white man."¹⁰³ Raley asserted that the disadvantaged position of Native people arose from deficiencies in White cultural understanding, not in Aboriginal intellect. Raley recognized, as did Boas, that a particular way of life, indigenous to British Columbia, was vanishing. But where Boas was resigned to the eventual disappearance of "traditional" life and, presumably, of Native people and culture altogether, Raley was intent upon a revival. Raley believed that with the proper White and, later, Native leadership and initiative, Native communities could sustain their traditions while adapting to the modern world.

Raley's plans for modernizing the traditional were inspired by contemporary reform movements, particularly strong in the United States, that called for a reevaluation of Aboriginal cultures. In the United States, the 1920s "marked a fundamental shift in the scientific and scholarly understanding of the Indian through acceptance of the concept of culture and the ideal of cultural pluralism."¹⁰⁴ This "Indian New Deal" was ushered in by the Meriam Report (1928) and the appointment of John Collier as Commissioner of Indian Affairs (1933). The Meriam Report's analysis of Native American life included a discussion of education and the boarding school system. It maintained that, "instead of educators attempting to eradicate all vestiges of Indian culture, they ought to attempt to develop it and build on it rather than crush out all that is Indian."¹⁰⁵ The report's recommendations for a curriculum that reflected cultural variations¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ G.H. Raley, *Our Totem Poles: A Monograph of the Totem Poles in Stanley Park*, (Vancouver: Lumberman Printing, 1945), 24.

¹⁰² Chalmers, *Education Behind the Buckskin*, 283.

¹⁰³ Raley, "Canadian Indian Art," 990; "Missionary Has Praise for Indians," *Province*, 17 February 1954, in "Raley, George Henry," United Church Archives, Vancouver School of Theology, UBC.

¹⁰⁴ Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 176.

¹⁰⁵ Adams, "From Bullets to Boarding Schools," 237.

¹⁰⁶ Margaret Connell Szasz, *Education and the American Indian: The Road to Self-Determination Since 1928* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977), 23.

and the elimination of preadolescent children from the boarding school system¹⁰⁷ corresponded with Raley's efforts at Coqualeetza. The report even prompted several Indian boarding schools to experiment with the cottage system, an idea popular with educators but discouraged by the US Bureau of Budget.¹⁰⁸

Raley felt these American developments signalled the direction Canadian Indian policy should take. In two lengthy articles on the subject of Indian art and industries, Raley referred to John Collier and American policy several times.¹⁰⁹

In the United States the government acknowledged the legislative and administrative machine was in need of adjustment, so greatly so, that in the Bureau of Indian Affairs a new compact was negotiated, which means almost a complete reversal of policy. This new deal for the Indians appears to me to be a courageous attempt to restore tribal rights and above all, improve their economic outlook.¹¹⁰

Raley considered Collier's emphasis on Indian arts and crafts¹¹¹ to be particularly relevant. "Instead of eradicating traditional cultures and 'raising' them to civilization," Collier "called for their 'regeneration' through economic development, political reorganization, and legal protection."¹¹² In 1935, an Indian Arts and Crafts Board was formed in the United States,¹¹³ something for which Raley had been lobbying in Canada.¹¹⁴ Raley was impressed with the attention Collier's Bureau of Indian Affairs paid to "practical procedures for organized marketing methods, improvements, and revivals in the handicraft arts themselves and for the training of the newer generation of Indians in their production."¹¹⁵ This was the very issue to which Raley had devoted his own time and energy.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 24.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 64.

¹⁰⁹ Raley, "Canadian Indian Art," 990, 997, 999; article dated 2 May 1934, Industries and Handicrafts, Raley Collection, BCARS; Raley to O'N. Daunt, 4 May 1934, Industries and Handicrafts, Raley Collection, BCARS; G.H. Raley, "Indian Canadian Art and Industries: An Economic Problem of Today," Industries and Handicrafts, Raley Collection, BCARS.

¹¹⁰ Raley, "Canadian Indian Art," 990.

¹¹¹ Szasz, *Education and the American Indian*, 69.

¹¹² Frederick E. Hoxie, "The Curious Story of Reformers and the American Indians," in F.E. Hoxie, ed., *Indians in American History* (Arlington Heights, IL: Harlan Davidson, 1988), 224.

¹¹³ Szasz, *Education and the American Indian*, 69.

¹¹⁴ Raley, "Canadian Indian Art"; Raley, "Additional Facts," Industries and Handicrafts, Raley Collection, BCARS.

¹¹⁵ G.H. Raley, "Canadian Indian Handicraft Arts," Industries and Handicrafts, Raley Collection, BCARS.

Raley's enthusiasm for Collier's ideas was unusual for a clergyman. Collier's policies were widely seen as a "disruption of the general harmony between the missions and the government" and were considered to be "diametrically opposed to what [missionaries] had sought as goals for the Indians throughout 300 years."¹¹⁶ As Berkhofer explains,

Missionaries and their friends accused the new policy of fostering irreligion, that is, native religion, through granting freedom of worship. In their eyes, such a policy repudiated the centuries-long aim of Christian philanthropy. Others saw the encouragement of collective tribal economic and governmental organization and activity as communistic and therefore thoroughly un-American and subversive of United States institutions.¹¹⁷

Anthropologists, rather than clergy, usually "approved of the policies [Collier] administered as [being] consistent with social-science knowledge about native societies and cultural pluralism."¹¹⁸ Raley's decision to side with the "communistic" anthropologists against the "missionaries and their friends" is intriguing. Equally so is the name — "Trotsky" — he gave to his dog.¹¹⁹

Raley felt that the commercialization of Aboriginal art and handicrafts could help "place [the Indian] in a position to compete with skilled labour"¹²⁰ and, thus, alleviate some of the socio-economic problems faced by Native communities. He argued that these problems resulted from the White man's "thoughtless zeal"¹²¹ and arrogant overconfidence in "that condition we call civilization."¹²² Consequently, he believed it was the White man's responsibility to "put the Indian upon his feet and give him a fair start in life"¹²³ by restoring him to his previous state of independence.

¹¹⁶ R. Pierce Beaver, "Protestant Churches and the Indians," in Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians*, Vol. IV: *History of Indian-White Relations* (Washington: Smithsonian Institute, 1988), 456.

¹¹⁷ Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 185.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ The only clue to this remarkable choice of names is this anecdote in the 1929 annual: "In Trotsky's younger and more active days his graceful form darted hither and thither across the lawns . . . One day when a young lady asked why he was called Trotsky she received the response, 'Why because he's always a-rushin (Russian).'"

¹²⁰ "Some phases of the Native problem in British Columbia in Its Relation to the Dominion Government, 1916," Raley Collection, BCARS.

¹²¹ Raley, "Canadian Indian Art," 994.

¹²² G.H. Raley, "Legends, Stories, etc.," Raley Collection, BCARS.

¹²³ "Some phases of the Native problem," Raley Collection, BCARS.

Raley was not trying to turn back the clock, and he was aware that "the notion of turning a village into a factory for such crafts would be absurd."¹²⁴ The stress he placed on academic achievement was one way he encouraged students to consider alternatives to his craft program. His support of the Coqualeetza Fellowship, a community centre established by ex-students to help Native people adjust to urban life in Vancouver while retaining ties to their culture, was another.¹²⁵

Raley would have been a more typical missionary had he remained strictly within the framework of Victorian attitudes towards Aboriginal people.¹²⁶ As John Webster Grant points out, at the time "such curiosity about Indian culture was exceptional," although "there was enough of it to add some spice to the missionary effort and to worry efficiency-minded administrators."¹²⁷ Raley's interest in Native culture and his various programs and proposals were part of an emerging discourse surrounding Native issues. Raley himself can be considered a site where traditional Victorian values met nascent cultural ideologies — where reverend met anthropologist.

NEGOTIATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

Raley used the latitude available to him as principal to implement a philosophy of Native education based upon his own "new understanding of things Indian." Using this room to manoeuvre, he made Coqualeetza a better residential school than were many others. Remaining within the parameters of contemporary social convention, he refashioned many Victorian concepts by applying them to a new ideological framework. Raley's "progressive" policies were derived from his privileged position and were effective because of, rather than despite, their Protestant-Victorian roots. While Raley drew upon long-standing definitions and values, such as family and leadership, he also incorporated aspects of newly emerging discourses surrounding culture, anthropology, public education, and the institutionalization of children.

Raley's synthesis of these diverse debates may be his most unique achievement. The aspects of Victorianism that he retained, such as the

¹²⁴ Raley, "Additional facts," 17, Industries and Handicrafts, Raley Collection, BCARS.

¹²⁵ See M.G. Evans, "Fellowship Centres for Urban Canadian Cities: A Comparative Assessment of the 'Coqualeetza' Movement in Vancouver and Other Comparable Movements in Eight Canadian Cities" (MA Thesis, UBC, School of Social Work, 1961).

¹²⁶ Berkhofer, *White Man's Indian*, 178.

¹²⁷ John Webster Grant, *Moon of Wintertime: Missionaries and the Indians of Canada in Encounter Since 1534* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 169.

ideology of family and childhood, were not those usually applied at residential schools. At the same time, he refused to implement Victorian values that were much more common to residential schools, such as the disregard for academic study, which derived from both the games ethic and Social Darwinist conclusions about the "Indian brain." He applied modern discourses in an equally singular manner. There is little indication that the DIA followed developments in child welfare or cultural relativism as did Raley. In these areas, he looked to social and political arenas that were beyond the scope of Canadian Indian policy. Debates regarding the public school system and the institutionalization of children were focused on "White" children, and those regarding anthropology were based primarily in the United States. When Raley did implement programs such as manual training that were commonly found in Canadian residential schools, he gave them a unique emphasis. He emulated the policies of Collier and the American Indian New Deal rather than those of Duncan Campbell Scott and the Canadian DIA.

The atmosphere at Coqualeetza resulted from the collaboration of a broad range of social values. Raley's selective transposition of a variety of ideas allowed him to circumvent some of the worst aspects of the residential school system. Had he dissented by opting out of the system altogether, he would have been a conscientious objector, but he would not have been at Coqualeetza to counter the harsh environment that the infrastructure of the residential school system encouraged.

The often-positing link between the historical oppression of Native peoples, particularly by the residential school system, and modern First Nations political and social organization¹²⁸ raises considerations about the effectiveness of Raley's program. Several ex-students believe that "Coqualeetza has made contributions to the life of our people far out of proportion to the numbers of pupils who attended the school."¹²⁹ Guy Williams, who became a senator, and Frank Calder, who was an MLA in the BC Legislature, are two of the more prominent examples of Native leaders and activists who graduated from Coqualeetza. The elders I interviewed were also accomplished leaders who had been deeply involved with their communities. Citing this potential link between historical oppression and contemporary First Nations political and social organization does not justify the residential school system. It does, however, illustrate one possible result of the

¹²⁸ See, for example, Gresko, "White 'Rites' and Indian 'Rites,'" 85; J.R. Miller, "The Irony of Residential Schooling," *Canadian Journal of Native Education* 14, 2 (1987): 10.

¹²⁹ "A Tribute to Dr. G.H. Raley," 21 October 1972, 3. A.S. Charlton, private collection.



Raley surrounded by Coqualeetza alumni and children of alumni. The occasion is the opening of the Coqualeetza Fellowship, a Native welfare organization conceived, founded, and run by Coqualeetza graduates, circa 1950, at least 15 years after Raley's retirement.

SOURCE: A.S. CHARLTON, PRIVATE COLLECTION.

system's administrative latitude. To the extent that Raley's negotiation of the residential school system helped some of his students do likewise, his program can be judged effective.

Recognizing that, as principal, Raley had the authority to shape life at Coqualeetza has profound implications for the study of all residential schools. His example suggests that there was a principal at every school who had the potential to make a significant impact, either positive or negative, on the experiences of the children in his care. Despite the abusive tendencies of the system, including the DIA's parsimonious attitude, the opportunity existed to prevent schools from degenerating into the prison-like institutions so often described. The residential school system allowed individual institutions a degree of autonomy that created space for someone like Raley to build a thoughtful program based on wide-ranging initiatives. Ironically and tragically, this same autonomy also created space for certain individuals to perpetuate horrific abuse. Acknowledging this systemic flexibility makes it more difficult for school operators or staff to beg responsibility by claiming to have been part of an inefficient or

immoral system; acts of violence and abuse become much more focused and individualized.

Raley's example provides historians with valuable new insights and questions. It forces a re-examination of conceptions about residential schools, teachers, and students that may have become too comfortably entrenched. The individuality of Raley's vision for Coqualeetza hints at new possibilities of diversity behind that deceptively homogeneous label, the "residential school experience," and it suggests that this "experience" should be reconceptualized as one that was constantly negotiated at multiple points within a context that was more flexible than previously supposed. Raley's attempts to improve the institutional environment at Coqualeetza are evidence of the considerable, although not unlimited, room to manoeuvre within the parameters of the social values of the day and of the Canadian residential school system. Still more significantly, Raley's actions demonstrate that the way an individual used this latitude made a great deal of difference to the children with whose residential school experience he was entrusted.

This
Woman
in
Particular

Contexts
for the
Biographical
Image of
Emily Carr

This Woman
in Particular



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