



Grandin College in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, developed a positive reputation as a “leadership factory” for the North. Deschâtelets Archives.

world in the 1960s.²³⁷ John Amagoalik wrote that at the Churchill Vocational Centre, “we had excellent teachers. To this day we still talk about them.... They treated us as ordinary people. We had never experienced this sort of attitude before and it was, in a way, liberating to be with new teachers that treated you as their equal.”²³⁸ David Simailak spoke of how his time at residential school gave him a series of new opportunities. He fondly remembers excelling at math and spelling competitions, and travelling to Montreal for Expo ’67.²³⁹

Specific teachers were remembered with gratitude. When Roddy Soosay lived in residence, he attended a local public school. He credited his high school principal at the Ponoka, Alberta, public school for pushing him to succeed.²⁴⁰ Martha Loon said that at the Poplar Hill, Ontario, school in the 1980s, there were staff members who befriended and helped her and her siblings. There was one staff member to whom she could tell all her problems. “I could say anything to her, and we’d go for walks sometimes. So, I could tell her anything and she wouldn’t, she wouldn’t say anything to other staff members about it. So, in a way, that’s, you know, gave me a chance to express my frustrations, and the things that I didn’t like.”²⁴¹

Other students were able to concentrate on their studies. Frederick Ernest Koe said that at Stringer Hall in Inuvik, he devoted all his energies to his school work. “You kind of develop a protective mechanism on the shell that you didn’t rat on anybody, you kind of behave, you followed orders and things would go smooth.”²⁴² Madeleine Dion Stout succeeded academically at the Blue Quills school, but she did not credit the school for her success. “It’s not residential school that made me a good student. My, the fundamental