

the target, the victim. You know, you weren't going to have to suffer any form of humiliation."<sup>30</sup> Shirley Waskewitch said that in Kindergarten at the Catholic school in Onion Lake, Saskatchewan, "I learned the fear, how to be so fearful at six years old. It was instilled in me."<sup>31</sup>

At the Fort Alexander, Manitoba, school, Patrick Bruyere used to cry himself to sleep. "There was, you know, a few nights I remember that I just, you know, cried myself to sleep, I guess, because of, you know, wanting to see my mom and dad."<sup>32</sup> Ernest Barkman, who attended the Pine Creek school, recalled, "I was really lonely and I cried a lot, my brother who was with me said I cried a lot."<sup>33</sup> Paul Dixon, who attended schools in Québec and Ontario, said that at night, children tried to weep silently. "If one child was caught crying, eh, oh, everybody was in trouble."<sup>34</sup> Betsy Annahatak grew up in Kangirsuk, in northern Québec, which was then known as Payne Bay. When her parents were on the land, she lived in a small hostel in the community. "When one person would start crying, all the, all the little girls would start crying; all of us. We were different ages. And we would cry like little puppies or dogs, right into the night, until we go to sleep; longing for our families."<sup>35</sup>

Students' hearts were hardened. Rick Gilbert remembered the Williams Lake, British Columbia, school as a loveless place. "That was one thing about this school was that when you got hurt or got beat up or something, and you started crying, nobody comforted you. You just sat in the corner and cried and cried till you got tired of crying then you got up and carried on with life."<sup>36</sup> Nick Sibbeston, who was placed in the Fort Providence school in the Northwest Territories at the age of five, recalled it as a place where children hid their emotions. "In residential school you quickly learn that you should not cry. If you cry you're teased, you're shamed out, you're even punished."<sup>37</sup> One former student said that during her time at the Sturgeon Landing school in Saskatchewan, she could not recall a staff member ever smiling at a child.<sup>38</sup> Jack Anawak recalled of his time at Chesterfield Inlet, in what is now Nunavut, in the 1950s that "there was no love, there was no feelings, it was just supervisory."<sup>39</sup> Lydia Ross, who attended the Cross Lake school in Manitoba, said, "If you cried, if you got hurt and cried, there was no, nobody to, nobody to comfort, comfort you, nobody to put their arms."<sup>40</sup> Stephen Kakfwi, who attended Grollier Hall in Inuvik and Grandin College in Fort Smith, Northwest Territories, said this lack of compassion affected the way students treated one another. "No hugs, nothing, no comfort. Everything that, I think, happened in the residential schools, we picked it up: we didn't get any hugs; you ain't going to get one out of me I'll tell you that."<sup>41</sup> Victoria McIntosh said that life at the Fort Alexander, Manitoba, school taught her not to trust anyone. "You learn not to cry anymore. You just get harder. And yeah, you learn to shut down."<sup>42</sup>

These accounts all come from statements made by former residential school students to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. These events all took place in Canada within the realm of living memory. Like previous generations of residential school children, these children were sent to what were, in most cases, badly constructed, poorly maintained, overcrowded, unsanitary fire traps. Many children were fed a substandard