

and chocolates from a staff member, he had the suspects thrashed with a seven-thonged strap and then placed on bread-and-water diets.⁴⁰⁵

Some schools had a specific room set aside to serve as a “punishment room.”⁴⁰⁶ After a 1907 inspection of the Mohawk Institute in Brantford, the Ontario inspector for Indian agencies, J. G. Ramsden, reported, “I cannot say that I was favourably impressed with the sight of two prison cells in the boys [sic] play house. I was informed, however, that these were for pupils who ran away from the institution, confinement being for a week at a time when pupils returned.”⁴⁰⁷ In 1914, a father successfully sued the Mohawk Institute principal for locking his daughter in a cell for three days on what was described as a “water diet.”⁴⁰⁸

Boys at the Anglican school in Brocket, Alberta, were chained together as punishment for running away in 1920.⁴⁰⁹ At the Gleichen, Alberta, school, a principal was accused of shackling a boy to his bed and beating him with a quirt (a riding whip) until his back bled. The principal admitted to having beaten the boy with the whip, but denied breaking the boy’s skin.⁴¹⁰

Abusive punishment often prompted children to run away. The father of Duncan Sticks, a boy who died from exposure after running away from the Williams Lake school in British Columbia, told a coroner’s inquest in 1902 that, in the past, his son had run away because he had been “beaten with a quirt.”⁴¹¹ A boy who ran away from the Anglican school in The Pas, after being severely beaten by the principal, nearly died of exposure.⁴¹²

The violent nature of the discipline at the schools came as a shock to students. Isabelle Whitford said that prior to coming to the Sandy Bay school, she had never been physically disciplined. “All my dad have to do was raise his voice, and we knew what he meant. So, when I first got hit by the nuns, it was really devastating ‘cause how can they hit me when my parents didn’t hit me, you know?”⁴¹³ Rachel Chakasim said that at the Fort Albany school, “I saw violence for the first time. I would see kids getting hit. Sometimes in the classrooms, a yardstick was being used to hit.”⁴¹⁴

Fred Brass said that his years at the Roman Catholic school at Kamsack, Saskatchewan, were “the hellish years of my life. You know to be degraded by our so-called educators, to be beat by these people that were supposed to have been there to look after us, to teach us right from wrong. It makes me wonder now today a lot of times I ask that question, who was right and who was wrong?”⁴¹⁵ According to Geraldine Bob, the staff members at the Kamloops school she attended were not able to control their tempers once they began to punish a student. “They would just start beating you and lose control and hurl you against the wall, throw you on the floor, kick you, punch you.”⁴¹⁶

It was a common practice to shave the heads of students who ran away. William Antoine recalled that at the Spanish, Ontario, school, this was done in front of the other students. “They got all the boys to look at what is happening to this boy, what they were doing to him because he ran away. They cut all his hair off and they pulled, pulled his pants down and