

A defence of Methodist minister and educator

# EGERTON RYERSON

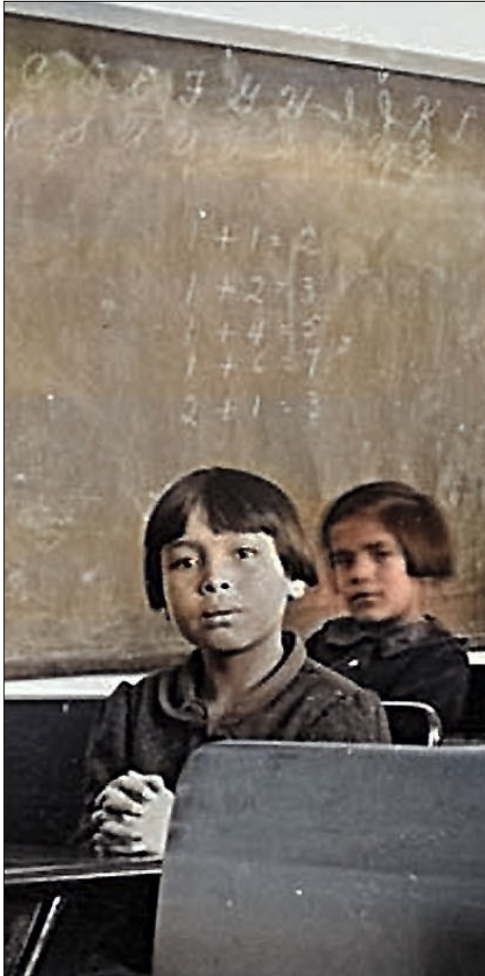
Len Fortune / APRIL, 2021

**‘ I FEEL AN  
INEXPRESSIBLE JOY  
IN TAKING UP MY ABODE  
WITH THEM ... MY HEART,  
FEELS ONE WITH THEM**



Rev. Dr. Egerton Ryerson spoke the words, *above*, during his time living with the Indigenous Peoples, the Mississauga Ojibwe of the New Credit

## prologue



- nation archives of Canada photo

>> **IT'S HARD** to read the mind of the Indigenous learner above. She and the girl behind her attended a Residential School in Cross Lake, the photo was taken in 1940; one can only pray that both of them escaped any of the horrific abuses that have been documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other agencies ...

**D**ear Task Force, please humor me to preface my defence and reflections to state that I am an Indigenous advocate and author; a TRC ambassador ( Niagara Diocese ); the grandson of Jack and Rose White, Mi'kmaq from Newfoundland and a Ryerson University alumni, attending 1970-74 and 1983.

In these troubled times, I find it painful to challenge my Indigenous brothers and sisters of Ryerson's Indigenous Education Council who released a damaging report of Rev. Dr. Egerton Ryerson in 2010.

Indigenous communities that are spread across the nation are not monolithic; we do disagree, and in the case of the University's namesake, I disagree with his vilification.

But wholeheartedly, I await the day when all Canadians will have abandoned their prejudices and provide Indigenous Peoples, Blacks and all marginalized peoples equal participation in the nation's governance and its society.

I realize that my defence of Egerton Ryerson will not be popular, but I couldn't as a member of an alleged just society, allow an innocent man be swallowed up by a tsunamic forced march to the execution chamber. Trust me, it will taint the integrity of future social justice protests if Ryerson is a casualty.

The Task Force should ask itself, is it morally right to sacrifice an innocent person along the way in addressing this fictitious wrong. I'm truly sorry to be so blunt, but the facts support Ryerson, I fear blinders may be in play.

Retribution isn't in the spirit of Truth and Reconciliation, and based on the language of the protestors, this social justice uprising appears to be more about retaliation than precuring social justice; the charges are unrecognizable in the mire of flawed, baseless, distorted and misinformed allegations against Ryerson.

From what I have seen, watched and researched, the protests are more of a spectacle rather than a honest concern for the truth based on principles, integrity and facts.

I phoned Ryerson security ( April 19, 2021 ) to ask whether Ryerson's statue had been cleaned up following the two "artistically disrupted" attacks in July of 2020, and was told "no" it hadn't — nine months of unwarranted shame.

It's low. The inaction by the University fails to acknowledge that Ryerson is innocence until proven otherwise, while empowering the anti-Ryerson forces and condoning a violent act — a dereliction of duty by the University to provide a fair playing field.

For us in Ryerson's corner, we know that the tide is against us. As one informed source said "It will be an uphill battle to have the University acknowledge that it was wrong, especially given the public perception." So sad on so many levels.

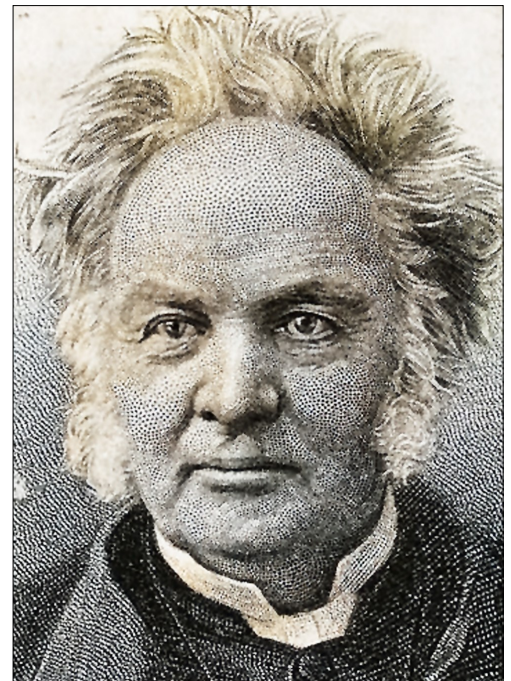
Along with labelling Ryerson "a racist" they have targeted him as "a sexist," an allegation which is juvenile and not worthy of voices from a institution of higher learning — it lacked the common knowledge of days gone by, along with ignoring the fact that *virtually all men*, 200 years ago, were in today's definition, "sexists" — *presentism* run amok.

When I initially read the Cesar petition, I was saddened that it was taken seriously. To implied that Egerton Ryerson was "a symbol of racism, sexism and cultural genocide" was total over-reached orchestrated with little or no facts.

I suspect that Ryerson's 1847 report ( his only Indigenous Education report ) on "Indian Schools" is the anti-Ryerson force's smoking gun. Which is again over-reach. The five-page report unveiled a litany of positives for the Indigenous learner outweighing one perceived negative that suggested the introduction of Christianity into the curriculum — that's the stinger for most of his critics.

*Facts, solid facts* is the key to proving that Ryerson was a racist and all, not an emotion, impulse or whim that can be hyped and put into overdrive to drown out all criticism.

Some Task Force members are aggressive Ryerson critics — being a younger group "with a social conscience ( they seem ) to feel the facts are just an alternative opinion and reject them." The latter quote, written by a concerned educator appears to suggest the group is a driving force within the panel and are hell-bent on toppling a good man and a sincere friend of "Indians" without considering all of the facts — seriously *unconscionable*.



— EGERTON RYERSON

a defence

a defence

# Sins of omission



I've thoroughly examined the 2010, five-page report prepared by Ryerson's Aboriginal Education Council ( AEC ) that scoped the career of Dr. Egerton Ryerson, the namesake of Toronto's Ryerson University.

The Council's report, although respectful, tells only a small part of Egerton Ryerson's story, who was born in Upper Canada 218 years ago, and was both a Methodist minister and an educator; after years of careful thought, exhausting research and diligence, he established "a free and compulsory public education system" for Upper Canada.

He was also, which almost never comes into the exchange, both an advocate and close friend of the "Indian" and that's where the anti-Ryerson forces fall short, so far short, I'm tempted to call it a sin of omission.

*'I was never more comfortable and happy'*

— Egerton Ryerson, on living with 'Indians'

"The Credit ( River ) Indians became very attached to their young minister ( Ryerson )," who was so revered by the Indigenous community of southern Ontario that he was given an "Indian name" Cheehock, which in translation means "a bird on the wing." <sup>1</sup>

Years later, after living with the Credit River Ojibwe community, he wrote, "I was never more comfortable and happy." <sup>2</sup>

Considering the sacred bond between Ryerson and the Ojibwe, and trying not to sound too exasperated, I humbly ask his critics, "How is it possible for a virtuous man, as Egerton Ryerson was, to write the words, '**I feel an inexpressible joy in taking up my abode with them ... my heart feels one with them**' <sup>3</sup> and then go on to execute a unconscionable plan to create a learning space, contaminated with a morally-deprived staff that would eventually abuse physically and sexually and steal the culture of its Indigenous students?"

*For a man of Ryerson's integrity and faith, it's was not possible.*

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- len fortune photo

## AN ACT OF VIOLENCE

>> **THE PHOTO** of Egerton Ryerson's statue, *right*, was taken in August, 2020, a few weeks after it had been twice vandalized – "artistically disrupted" by Black Lives Matter ...

In the first assault, it was painted pink, and on another day, it was sprayed entirely off green, save Ryerson's hands, which were splattered with bright red paint, birthing obvious symbolism ...

The action, although no one was harmed, was violent, it lacked the sensibility and sensitivity of our most memorable crusaders, Martin Luther King and Mahatma Gandhi ... and why does this matter? In Indigenous culture, *respect* is one of seven pillars ( Grandfather's teachings ) of its humanity and cultural integrity ...

# Ryerson doesn't deserve

**T**he record shows that in 1826, Ryerson became the first permanent missionary to the Ojibwe “ ... working side by side with the Indians, eating Native food and living in their homes. He also learned their language, since only one-eighth of the band really spoke English.” 4

As mentioned previously, it's rare that his close link to the “Indian” community is mentioned; And it's difficult to reason why that is.

The Mississauga Ojibwe, who after the War of 1812, and other such dust ups, found its existence, positioning and relevance in the over-bearing “New World” to be in peril – the British colonial forces no longer needed them to fight their battles and their traditional life of hunting and gathering had lost traction to encroachment of the ever advancing settlers.

As mentioned before, their worth in the colonial-run Upper Canada had slipped to a point where most of the settlers were certain the Indigenous reality was soon to disappear and awaited patiently for the death rattle.

## TABLE OF TESTIMONY

>> “**IT'S AN ORDINARY TABLE**, *right*, overrun by books and reports, nothing to get shook up about, unless you take a look under the roughly 6 by 12-foot tired structure.

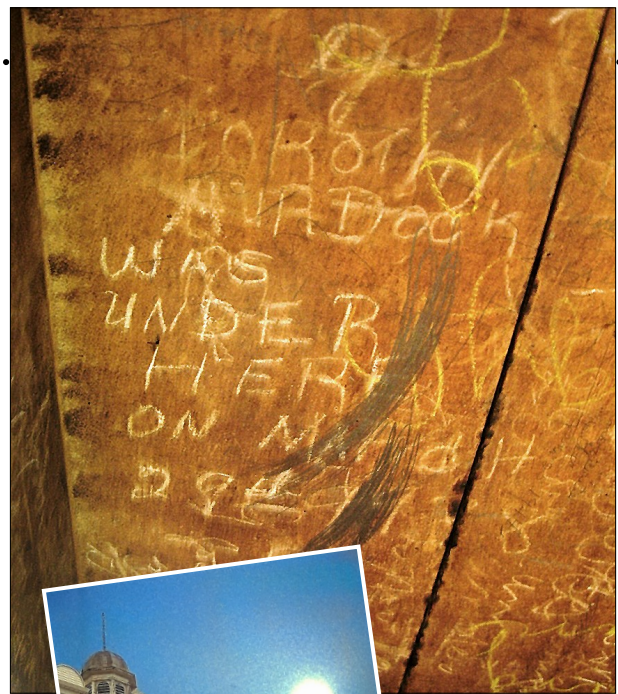
The table once sat in a library that was housed in the infamous Mohawk Residential School ...

On the underside of this table, which was used in the sewing class, are the names and other scratches of former students ...

Again nothing unusual, unless you realize the names are living testimony from young Indigenous students, mostly written with grease pencils on the five hard wood planks that provide support for the fame.

It's alleged that students were abused under this table.” 5

— From ‘A’ is for Assimilation, 2011, Len Fortune



- len fortune photos

# a statue of limitation

I researched and wrote this defence of Ryerson from a good place, taking advantage of my lineage that consists of both Indigenous and White blood lines — it allowed me empathy for both the Indigenous and non-indigenous perspectives — poetically, a foot in two canoes.

Setting the stage for my reflections, it's important for the Task Force to know I agree that "from 1830 ( or so ) forward, politicians, missionaries and British humanitarians actively pursued a program of 'civilizing' the Native people."

Though I will add that some of the aforementioned groups were more fervent than others; Ryerson, of what is known about him, was measured in his actions, having little or nothing to do with Indigenous education after his 1847 report. Following the report, he devoted his time to establish and to perfect a public school system, which he did during a period of constant unrest: It included a rebellion, endless scimmages of religious differences and a myriad of challenges which included the constant flood of destitute settlers — who were in assorted states of disarray — to Upper Canada.

And the math — in the mid-1800s, the Indigenous population was less than 1% of the 725,879 ( and growing fast ) who made up Upper Canada — a statistic that would have dictated where Ryerson would direct most of his energies, although he was a constant strength for the Mississaugas on the New Credit chief, Peter Jones, even taking him into his Toronto home for a month to help him recover from what proved to be a fatal illness.

The Anglican Church of England fought for the upper hand, while the Catholic Church, along with smaller churches gave no quarter to the steam-rolling Anglicans. Amid this, Ryerson suffered from the presence of two Methodist sects, each claiming to be the true light.

*Ryerson's segregated  
education suggestion  
for Indigenous  
learners challenged*

Fast forward 164 years, and considered that Aboriginal Education Council took issue with the Reverend Doctor's suggesting segregation of Indigenous Industrial Schools; it implied without filing a firm condemnation that his proposal was wrong. <sup>6</sup>

Yes, Ryerson's gut feeling was to separate Indigenous children away from the public schools, but it was in step with the times, and the right thing to do considering their inability to speak English compounded by the prevailing racism which awaited them in public schools — especially from the lower rungs of the White communities.

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Consider that in 1843, when black parents in Hamilton, asked to have their children taught in public schools, Lord Elgin, the Governor General of Upper Canada, responded to the situation, “I regret to say there is a strong prejudice existing amongst the lower order of whites against “colored people” ... teachers acquainted with the extent of this prejudice fear that if “colored children” are admitted ... the parents of white children will take them ( their children ) away.” 7

In his position as Superintendent of Education – appointed in 1844 – Ryerson would have known about racism against the black community, and most certainly, he would have realized that his Indigenous brethren were, in the minds of many whites, a rung lower than Blacks in the Upper Canada social structure; for Ryerson, an Indigenous-only place of learning for Native children was the safest and more practical environment.

An ironic and devastating twist to the latter, Residential Schools evolved over the decades into horrific environments of something other than safe; *again, something that Ryerson in no way anticipated, planned or participated in.*



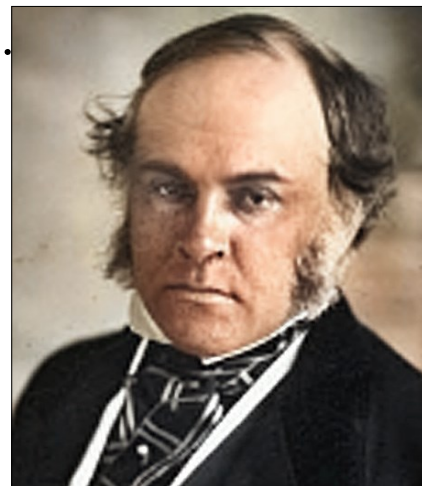
Make no mistake, what was done in July to Ryerson’s statue was a violent act, not “artistic disruption” as the protesting group, Black Lives Matter professed with a warning that “You’re lucky that this is all we did” which was aired on CP24. Who are the “you’re”?

The Indigenous community that I know, is of the Round Dance and Healing Circles and the odd blockade, where there is respect and an awareness that respect begets respect. Something that is alarmingly absent in the recent uprisings. There are many legitimate targets that Indigenous and BLM protestors can chase down and apply redress to, *but again, Ryerson isn’t one of them.*

## INFLUX OF RACISM

**LORD EGLIN**, *right*, feared for the safety of Black students being placed into public schools where rampant racism was a reality — Elgin refused to allow the Black learners merge with the White students ...

Also, during this era, thousands of Europeans scrambled for places in the “New World” and it’s not a secret that many of the new arrivals were suspect in their tolerance of different races ...



- national archive of Canada photo

— LORD ELGIN



It's not an exaggeration to say that Ryerson was committed to eliminating the use of alcohol by both the White and Indigenous communities.

Alcohol addiction, in the early and mid 1800s — at least in the central and southern parts of Upper Canada where Ryerson served — was a concern and recognized as a societal disruptor; and the Methodists were possibly the most ardent in the fight for temperance.

I realize when I say Indigenous men of the Ryerson era were susceptible to the drink, threads on sensitive grounds; I am, in no way perpetrating a stereotype, I'm simply pointing out a reality. Even back then, Indigenous men suffered a fallout from the loss of self worth and of loss spirit, inflamed by the overwhelming influx and shock of the new arrivals.

**I**n March 1847, as noted previously, Egerton Ryerson, was submerged in navigating a free public school system, when asked by Indian Affairs of Upper Canada to provide the best pathway to establishing an “Indian” industrial school of learning.

The Superintendent of Education concurred and filed a *five-page report* in which it is difficult to find anything contentious, let alone racist, but for one line *repeated below*, which in my research doesn't reach the level of conscious racism:

“With him ( the Indian ) nothing can be done to improve and elevate his character and condition ( sobriety ) without the aid of religious feeling.”<sup>9</sup> Ryerson, in the same breath — and this is important — also suggested the same assessment for the non-Indigenous laboring citizenry.

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- national archive of Canada photo

— JOHN A. MACDONALD

## A VERY POLITE GENOCIDE

**CANADA'S FIRST PRIME MINISTER** John A. Macdonald “was a contradiction in character, while he played loosely with the lives of First Nations, he actually at times, spoke gently about them, perhaps as one would dote on a dog” ...

... ( but he ) “can't be excused for his actions against the Plains Indians — his policy was to bring First Nations to within a breathe of dying, and then intervene with nourishment, a cruel and inhumane plan bent on swaying Natives to adjust to his grand scheme.”

“In too many cases, his government was late in providing subsistence causing thousands to die from starvation.”<sup>8</sup>

— From *Truth and then Reconciliation: A Trilogy*, 2016, Len Fortune

Hardly a reason for the good pastor to be damned as ‘the’ abusive architect of the horrific residential schools. His sin, if his distractors are correct, is that Ryerson was / is guilty of introducing Christianity into the education equation; more exact, into the curriculum.

Ryerson did suggest the Industrial School should be of “a plain English education adapted to the working farmer and mechanic.”<sup>9</sup> There was never any talk of “taking the Indian out of the child,” only of what the “Indian” child could learn and what the hopes of the learners could be.



One of Ryerson’s closest friend was Chief Kahkewaquonaby ( Sacred Feathers ), an Ojibwe chief also known as Peter Jones, and one of several chiefs who supported and respected Ryerson; they all showed enthusiasm for a place of learning for their Indigenous children to ensure that the young learners wouldn’t fall further back in relation to

*‘Sacred Feathers had ‘come to the conclusion ... that residential schooling was essential to his people’*

— From *Sacred Feathers*  
by Donald B. Smith

their non-Indigenous counterparts. Kahkewaquonaby, by the 1830s, had “come to the conclusion that education, and more particularly, residential schooling, was essential for his people.”<sup>10</sup>

Ryerson was consumed with admiration when he worked side by side with his Indigenous comrades in the fields; Ryerson, rightly or naively, believed he *could save* his Indigenous friends by giving them the tools to keep abreast of their uninvited *guests*.

Others who came later when residential schools begun to surface in earnest, brought the evil and incorporated the abuse and the unholy environment which destroyed generations of Indigenous families, *again not the Methodist preacher*. After the passing of *The Indian Act* in 1876, it was visible that the federal government

were resolute to play hardball, even to the point of defining a “person” as any individual other than an “Indian.”

William Ferguson, who is often whimsical in his reporting, was deadly right when he wrote, “Anglican and Catholic Church leaders at the turn of the century ... pressured the federal government to set up residential schools where “Indian” children could be taken away and civilized. Thus, with full support of mainstream Canadian society, the state began kidnapping children.”<sup>11</sup>

And *again*, during the above historic period, *Ryerson was nowhere to be seen or heard, he was resting, hopefully peacefully, six feet under ground in Toronto’s Mount Pleasant Cemetery.*

*It would be a gratifying result to see graduates of our Indian industrial school become overseers of some of the largest farms in Canada, nor would it be less gratifying to see them industrious and prosperous farmers on their own account'*

— Egerton Ryerson from his 1847, five-page *Report on Indian Education*

What is the case against Ryerson, we must agree that it is directly related to the interpretation and parsing of his words? A *five-page report* on establishing a school for Indigenous learners is his critics'smoking gun — they don't have much more.

**The subjects suggested by Ryerson in his one and only report on Indigenous schooling:**

Reading    English Language    Arithmetic    Geometry  
 Knowledge of Forms    General History    Natural History  
 Agricultural    Chemistry    Writing    Drawing    Vocal Music  
 Book Keeping    Religion and Morals

There was nothing in the Ryerson 1847 report that suggested anything immoral was afoot; the good preacher even concluded his written submission with his aspirations of what was possible for the students upon graduation, "It would be a gratifying result to see graduates of our Indian industrial school become overseers of some of the largest farms in Canada, nor would it be less gratifying to see them industrious and prosperous farmers on their own account." <sup>12</sup>

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**TENDER LOVING CARE?**

**WHEN TRC** commissioner Marie Wilson was initially questioned about her task in producing a report on Residential Schools, she answered that she wasn't "on a witch hunt" and that the commission would report on "both the good and the bad."

And there was good, but as Rev. Dr. Wendy Fletcher once said to put a "good" parallel to the horrific happenings at Residential Schools is to only revictimize the victims of this shameful era in Canada's history ...



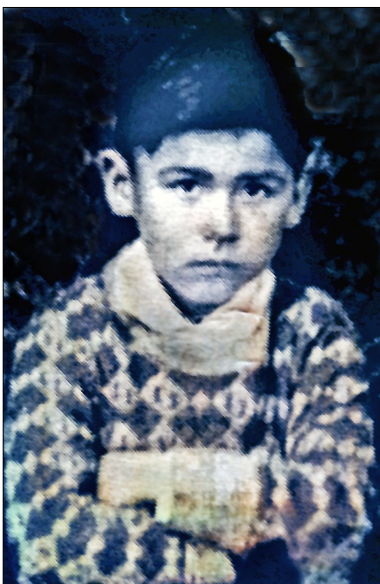
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I wholeheartedly admire elder, Andrew Wesley, now attached to Toronto Council Fire; I haven't seen him in years, but I always felt unworthy, not an exaggeration, when he walked into a room. He was a Residential School survivor of the infamous St. Anne's Residential School situated near the south part of James Bay.

He was abused both sexually and physically in his time there, but miraculously he went on to become an Anglican priest while still maintaining his Indigenous spirituality. His ability to see the beauty and worth of the two beliefs, Indigenous spirituality and Christianity is proof of a keen sensitivity to the goodness of both, even the *Seven Grandfather Teachings* complement the Christianity core.

What do I bring this up? Because it shows how two reasonable and responsible men, Rev. Dr. Egerton Ryerson and Rev. Andrew Wesley responded to a reality: Ryerson saw that the Mississauga Ojibwe were disadvantaged and overrun by an European juggernaut and was moved to help them to survive; and Wesley, who had every right to demand redress and to shun everything non-Indigenous, did the opposite by taking his own spirituality which saw the Great Spirit in every scintilla of life and earth, and in Christianity where a rabbi, more than 2,000 years ago, preached peace and love; Wesley blended them into something remarkable and palatable — Indigenous spirituality and Christianity, two promising ideologies, united.

As Wesley can square his devotion to both Indigenous spirituality and Christianity, I see it as a positive for Ryerson's defence. He witnessed distress in the Native communities which were largely awashed in poverty and sought to help them — he saw their worth as unique beings and was captivated by their spirit.



- toronto council fire photo



- len fortune photo

## THE ULTIMATE SURVIOR

>> **ANDREW WESLEY**, an elder and an Anglican priest is pictured during a smudging and as a Residential School student, *far left*, at the notorious St. Anne's Residential School in 1952 ...



As this report was in the writing stage, a dangerous precedent was in the making, one which permitted protesting groups to override and suppress both common sense and the truth by simply attacking from all directions; the Egerton Ryerson camp didn't even have a chance to circle the wagons. This was and continues to be done in Ryerson's case — the strategy of shouting down opposing views until the untruths have overwhelmed the opposition, seems to be working; and as history has shown us, once set in motion, a faulty narrative is difficult to overcome and almost impossible to reset.

Considering the previous paragraph, I appreciated the words from Donald Smith, a *professor emeritus* from the University of Calgary who wrote in the *Globe and Mail* that “As a Canadian historian ... I find the current controversy over Egerton Ryerson ... totally baffling. I wonder how deeply his critics have probed into the past of the founder of the modern Ontario public-school system. The portrayal of him as anti-Indigenous misrepresents the man completely.”<sup>13</sup>

Actually, if Egerton was alive today, he would be the first to engage a march to stop racism and injustice; throughout his life, he was a tireless crusader for the individual rights for all, which included both Indigenous Peoples and Blacks.

And if the late, Shannon Koostachin, a teen-ager, who crusaded for and was denied a “proper school” in the Attawapiskat First Nation, were alive today, I believe she would be a Ryerson fan — and he would definitely accept and praise Shannon's mantra that “school should be a time for dreams” — surely the two are kindred spirits in Sky World.

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- national archive of Canada photo

## UNHOLY PLACE

>> **THESE INNOCENT** young students also attended St. Anne's Residential School where unspeakable abuse was not unusual. One priest had over 300 hundred alleged charges, but he died before the allegations could be addressed.

Many ex-students were and still are blocked from seeing all of the documents / records related to the reign of horror in which they were victims of ...

*'The Methodists were the underprivileged of this society ( 1820s in Upper Canada ) and Egerton Ryerson was their champion. All the strong democratic and liberal impulses ... seemed to have found expression in the fight of the Methodists for social and religious equality'*

— S.D. Clark, *The Canadian Journal of Economic and Political Science*, 1948

**I**n closing, I humbly insist that it will be a “national crime” if the persecution of Ryerson’s legacy were to continue. The circuit preacher was, in all concerns, a caring person, especially in his relations with the Indigenous Peoples; he may have been slightly ignorant of the wholeness of Indigenous spiritually, but that’s not unusual considering that he was born 218 years ago; and for someone born more than two centuries ago, it was seriously exceptional that the “Indians” did capture his heart — no small feat, keeping in mind the wholesale colonial prejudices of the time, prejudices which still have a strong pulse.

It’s a “national crime” because guilt can’t be judge solely on a perception of guilt — something like a hunch; truth has to be in sharp focus, and as far as I know, truth doesn’t change as time passes, it’s not that profound. Actually it’s simple, Ryerson’s truth can’t be changed to fit the 2021 narrative ( *revisionism* ), which sadly in most parts, is a flawed account.

I humbly ask: Let’s continue the fight against racism and other injustices, *but let’s do it right*, without bringing guiltless people to trial — accepting innocent causalities in the wake, places Ryerson’s accusers in the same canoe as the real perpetrators of evil. If the youth of Ryerson University is antsy and need a *real* cause to give their lives meaning, there’s plenty of work that needs attention, like the water situation on and around reserve land; the First Nation child, *above*, is a victim of the poisons that were / are imbedded on her reserve.

Logic dictates, we can do better — hands down, Rev. Dr. Egerton Ryerson was / is one of the good guys who has been slandered by those who haven’t done their homework or have another agenda in mind ... who really knows in today’s reality where *truth* is as allusive as the Canadian identity ...

Peace and wellness,  
Wela ‘lin,  
Len Fortune



- courtesy of Kashechewan First Nation

>> **NO CHILD**, should live in conditions that cause this proliferation of lesions, especially a child in Canada ...

## time line

- 1803 Egerton Ryerson **born** is born in Canada - Norfolk County, ON.
- 1820 Upper Canada focusing on ‘**civilizing**’ **Indigenous children**; Ryerson is 17
- 1826 Ryerson lives and works with **Mississauga Ojibwe**
- 1842 **Bagot Report** reinforces an assimilation policy and Indigenous school system
- 1847<sup>a</sup> Ryerson writes **5-page report** on Indigenous schools as requested by gov’t.
- 1847<sup>b</sup> **No record** of Ryerson’s involvement with Residential Schools after 1847 report
- 1876 **Indian Act** enacted to completely control all aspects of Indigenous population
- 1879 **Nicholas Flood Davin**, a journalist, attributed the legality of Residential Schools to Ryerson’s 5-page report penned 32 years earlier; a stretch of what the Methodist minister’s contribution was
- 1882 The majority of Residential Schools were incorporated **after Ryerson’s death** ( 1882 ), as was the majority of abuses and deaths
- 1920 Federal “Indian” superintendent, **Duncan Campbell Scott** makes it mandatory for all Indigenous children to attend Residential Schools, part of the “final solution” policy of the federal government
- 1922 Dr. Peter Bryce publishes his *National Crime* pamphlet in 1922, which outlined the appalling conditions in which Indigenous students lived — the root of the many deaths that occur in Residential Schools

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## postscript

# ‘( We ) tried to talk it over, but words just got in the way’

- Leon Russell, *This Masquerade*, 1976

When I find myself in the breach of trying to defend someone or some cause, almost always, my mind, an old mind, surfaces that brilliant line from *This Masquerade* which succinctly points out the folly of modern day communication. Presently, it's almost impossible to argue anything, even if the truth is with you.

Remembering that 150 of the greatest minds in North American including Margaret Atwood, Salman Rushdie, Gloria Steinman and Noam Chomsky signed a letter which condemned “An intolerance of opposing views, a vogue for public shaming and ostracism and the tendency to dissolve complex policy issues in a blinding moral certainty,” I think they have something there.

The letter appeared in *Harper's Magazine*, in 2020.

I'm pretty sure the esteemed group were faulting the Right, but I think it also applies to Left, where someone can point a finger and say “you're a racist” and that's it, you're done; words can be killers, I hope in these reflections, I used my words wisely ...

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## COMPLETE TRANSPARENCY

>>> **IN MY FIRST BOOK**, on Indigenous Peoples, I wrote a paragraph, actually it was a long outline which was less than fair to the legacy of Egerton Ryerson, it was a little more than a decade ago, that I jumped to judgement.

In a rush to complete the project — “*A* is for *Assimilation*”, I used a source, but didn't back it up with a least one more reference, a mortal sin in my world.

Upon recent research, I discovered that Ryerson was a wonderful, extraordinary Canadian ( *he was born in Canada* ) who in no way was a racist, a sexist, an abuser nor an enabler of genocide, all of which he has been accused of ... I'm thankful to both God and the Great Spirit that I was able to recognize my mistakes and have in the past years tried to atone for them ...