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BACKGROUND

Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) in Fort George, Quebec

CHISASIBI AND FORT GEORGE:

The Cree Nation of Chisasibi – which translates to *the Great River* – is located along the flowing shores of *La Grande Rivière*. The northernmost Cree community in Eeyou Istchee accessible by the Billy Diamond Highway, Chisasibi is home to more than 5,000 community members and residents.

Only a short drive and ferry ride away is Fort George, the island from which the community was re-located in 1979-80. Fort George is where Chisasibi *Eeyouch* (Crees) lived briefly (4-5 weeks) each summer when they returned from spending 10-11 months of the year on their hunting grounds throughout northern Quebec. It's also where First Nations children – both local and from other Nations across Quebec and Ontario – were sent to residential schools.

FORT GEORGE RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS:

Fort George is the location of the first Anglican-run and Catholic-run residential schools in the province of Quebec. There are a total of five sites where these buildings existed (due to fire, rebuilds, expansion and additional buildings). These schools were among the largest and longest-operated residential schools in Quebec.

Residential Schools:

1. Fort George Church of England (aka St. Philip's Anglican) Residential School, 1933-1975
2. Fort George Roman Catholic (aka Ste. Thérèse de l'Enfant Jesus) Residential School, 1937-1981

Children who attended these schools were taken from communities predominantly from Eeyou Istchee, Quebec and northern Ontario (Whapmagoostui, Wemindji, Waskaganish, Nemaska, Mashteuiatsh, Moosonee, Attawapiskat, Albany, etc.)

Due to the re-location in 1979-80, most original buildings in Fort George were demolished, including the Residential School buildings. Among the few buildings that were transported and relocated to Chisasibi is the Catholic Church, located at the corner of Maamuu Road and Fort George Road.

GROUND SEARCH AT FORT GEORGE:

Since May 2021, the Cree Nation of Chisasibi has held several consultation sessions with Survivors, Elders, intergenerational Survivors and community members to discuss a potential ground search. We are moving forward with the ground search, and specific details will be announced June 21. The geology and geography of Fort George are complicating factors to be discussed with the community as we move forward.