

NORWAY HOUSE INDIAN RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL  
NORWAY HOUSE -- MANITOBA

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Dear Friends:

Christmas at Norway House - 1963

Once again it is my pleasure to write to you and to the ladies of your U.C.W. Group who so kindly and freely contributed Christmas gifts for our Indian boys and girls here in this school. They were truly delighted with these, and such happiness could not be measured by cost alone, but also by the realisation that a great deal of thought and careful selection had gone into their presents.

Some of our children went home for Christmas, but we had about 100 in the school over the holidays. As can be imagined, excitement rose to quite a pitch once school was "out", and boys and girls - both little and big - could hardly wait!

The first part of our Christmas celebrations commenced on Christmas Eve with a Midnight Watch Service in the School auditorium, with both the boys and the girls taking part. Much preparation had been done, and the children performed so well that all of us on the staff felt they had made a very personal contribution in setting the true spirit of Christmas.

Of course, everyone was very late getting to bed, and the Supervisors reported that through the night many trips were made on tip-toe in the dormitories to see if Santa was coming; but Santa was late also, and so everyone was safely asleep.

Christmas Day dawned bright and clear, and with the usual excitement one can expect. But is it really possible to imagine how a Christmas morning can be in the dormitories, with some 50 excited boys in one, and 50 equally excited girls in another? Maybe only a Supervisor can really know... Those of us with young families ourselves can only visualise in part - and then multiply it several times over!

As is customary, everyone attended Church in the morning, and then returned to eat a sumptuous dinner in the childrens' dining room, gaily decorated, and tables equally so, which made us feel, as staff members, that despite being away from our own homes and families, this was well worth it. Following lunch, everyone assembled in the auditorium to await another visit from Santa Claus. He arrived midst much clanging of the school bell, and spent his first few moments competing with one of the dogs, who strongly objected to his presence! However, he was able to distribute all his gifts and the auditorium floor looked like Grey Cup Day, strewn with so many papers and wrappings. Small faces, and big ones alike, were wreathed in smiles of delight as the children opened their gifts. In addition to their toys this year, we had received a quantity of new sweaters, etc., and therefore each child also received an article of clothing as well. At the end of Christmas Day, one small girl returned her dress to her Supervisor. When she was told she could keep it, she replied "Do you really mean that this is my very own and that I can keep it?". Such was her delight.

Christmas holidays are usually planned by the children, who draw up a program of what they would like to do. Skating is always a favourite pastime, and this year we have a Curling Rink in which everyone is keenly interested. Entertaining was also done between the children, which is popular. One day was "Chinese Day" when everyone was dressed in Chinese clothes and ate Chinese food. Another day was "English Day" when everyone spoke with an English accent - and drank tea at regular intervals!

And so another year has passed. For some of us, our contact will be renewed again in 1964; for others, your Church will be allotted to another Mission project for next Christmas. Which ever way it is to be, we extend to you all our sincere appreciation for all your efforts and hard work in making Christmas such a happy time for our boys and girls.

With best wishes to you all for the coming year.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard D. Lee,  
Principal.

Jan/64.

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JAN 24 1964

NORWAY HOUSE.  
MANITOBA.

January 22, 1964.

Reverend E.M.M. Joblin,  
Assistant Secretary,  
Board of Home Missions,  
85 St. Clair Avenue E.,  
TORONTO, Ontario.

Dear Mr. Joblin:

We thought you might be interested in the enclosed copy mimeographed newsletter which we sent recently to the various Presbytery groups who sent christmas gifts and donations during the past year.

A letter of thanks and acknowledgement is always sent when the parcel is first received, but because each U.C.W. group sent separately last year, we had to mimeograph the newsletter which we always send round after Christmas is over. This idea has proved very popular among the groups.

Yours sincerely,

Bernard S. Lee,  
Principal.

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c.c. Dr. N.K. Campbell. ✓  
c.c. Miss E. Highfield.