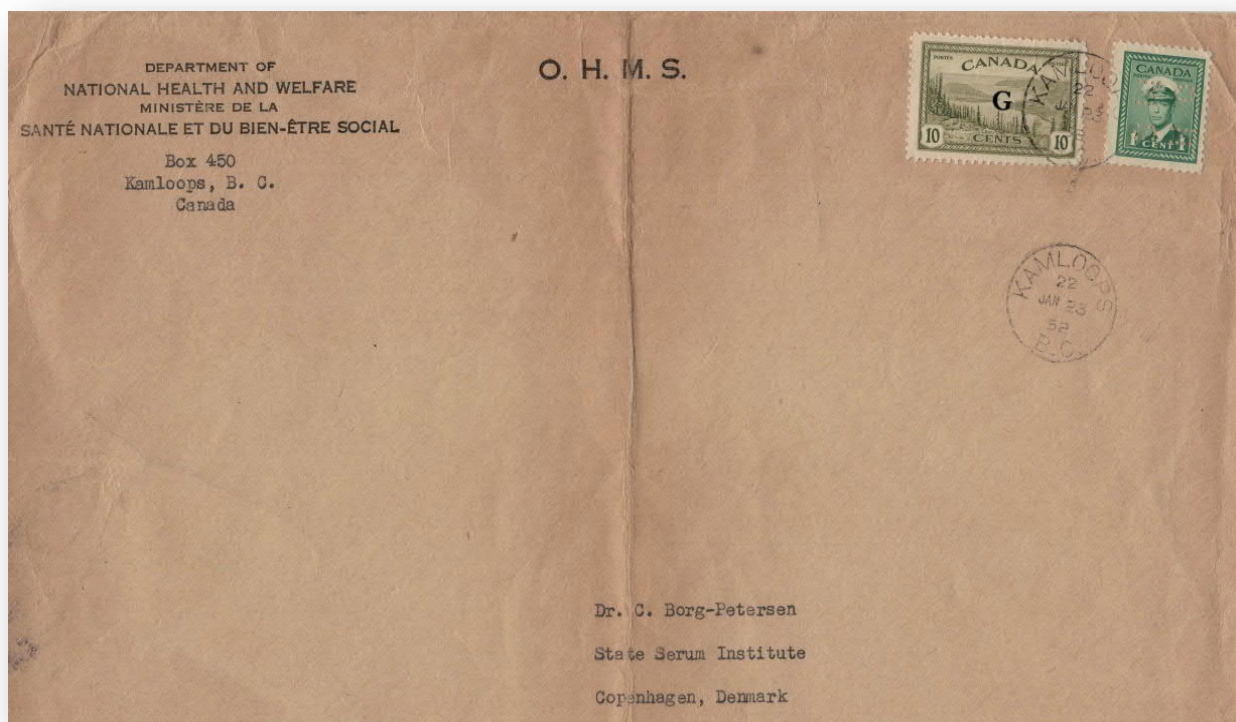


Kamloops - 215 pairs of children's shoes to commemorate

On the stairs of the Vancouver Art Gallery stand 215 pairs of children's shoes; they are meant to commemorate the martyrdom of those 215 children whose remains were found in and around the town of Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. Rumors have long persisted, but now new ground-penetrating radar technology makes it possible to locate the decomposed remains.



The original Department of Health of Canada is established in 1919; the Department of National Health and Welfare in 1944. They would be responsible for controls in boarding schools.

The story behind it: The conquistadors of Canada made treaties with the natives, to whom the concept of property as understood by Europeans was foreign. This was often interpreted as a breach of treaty. Diseases such as smallpox, measles, and later the Spanish flu, made it easy to establish the Christian religion, because the natives doubted their own faith. Then, in different areas of Canada, since the 19th century, the children are taken away from the natives, they are supposed to be civilized, forget their customs and their relatives and become other people. In the beginning they are taken to state schools, which are gradually run by the church. The children are more and more alienated from their parents in these schools.

In 1876, with the Indian Act, Native Americans become protectors of the state. The Indian agent and lieutenant governor of Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Northwest Territories of Canada, Edgar Dewdney, establishes schools outside the reservations that are run as residential schools and to which the young people are now forcibly admitted and are no longer allowed to speak their native language there. In many cases, there are physical, sexual and psychological assaults by the socially more highly regarded teachers. Amendments to the Indian Act (1905, 1911) facilitate expropriations on reservations or their reduction in size, which leads to famine among the native peoples. Assimilation is not to end until the Indians would have disappeared as a separate and distinct people; according to Duncan Campbell Scott (1913-1931), head of the Department of Indian Affairs. This tactic continues into the 1960s. Residential schools continue into the 1970s, with the last school closing in 1996. - And new graves continue to be found....

Further reading: Wikipedia. - Gerd Braune 2021: The Tormented Souls of Kamloops in Tagesspiegel