



Newfoundland
and
Labrador
Heritage
patrimoine
de Terre-Neuve et du Labrador

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Mount Cashel Orphanage Abuse Scandal Timeline

Government to
1730

Government
1730-1815

Reform Era
1815-1832

Representative
Government
1832-1855

Responsible
Government
1855-1933

Collapse of
Responsible
Government
1929-1934

Commission of
Government
1934-1949

Confederation
1864-1949

Provincial
Government
1949-1972

Provincial Politics
1972-2001

Changing
Government
1971-1972

The Moores
Government
1972-1979

The Peckford
Government
1979-1989

The Wells
Government
1989-1996

Meech Lake

Mt. Cashel

Mt. Cashel
Timeline

The Tobin

Oct. 1974 Mount Cashel residents Johnny Williams and Derek O'Brien, along with Williams's cousin Brenda Ann Marie Lundrigan, complain to the Department of Social Services that a Christian Brother beat Williams. They allege that some of the Christian Brothers working at the Mount Cashel Boys' Home sexually and physically abuse residents. No investigation ensues and the trio does not hear back from the department or the police.

July 1975 Ruth Williams (unrelated to Johnny) complains to social services that her nephews are being mistreated at Mount Cashel. She reports that one boy is sleeping on the floor in filthy sheets and that another says the brothers physically abuse residents. No investigation ensues.

Sept. 1975 William Earle takes his son, Billy, and fellow Mount Cashel resident Bobby Connors to the Department of Social Services. Billy Earle alleges that he was recently beaten by a brother and the two boys report physical and sexual abuse is not uncommon at the orphanage.

23 Oct. 1975 Social workers Robert Bradbury and Sharron Callahan send a letter to the department's director of child welfare, F.J. Simms, reporting Earle's and Connors's allegations. They write that "charges of severe punishment by the Brothers are not new and could indicate a limited but still present level of child abuse in the institution" (Royal Commission, Vol. I 86-88). Simms forwards the complaint to Mount Cashel Superintendent Brother Douglas Kenny to deal with as he sees fit. No further action is taken.

7 Dec. 1975 Mount Cashel volunteer Chesley Riche suspects nine-year-old resident Shane Earle has been beaten by a Christian Brother and takes him to the boy's mother's house. Riche calls RCMP

Government
1996-2000

The Grimes
Government
2001-2003

The Williams
Government
2003-2007
Timeline

The Williams
Government
2007-2010
Timeline

Aboriginal Self-
Government

Modern
Women's
Movement

Social
Changes



Corporal Gerald McGuire, who arrives at 4:35 p.m. and interviews Earle. Earle reports instances of physical and sexual abuse at Mount Cashel. He displays bruises received from a recent beating.

- 8 Dec. 1975** Riche reports Shane Earle's allegations and his own suspicions of ongoing abuse to the Department of Social Services. Two social workers visit Shane at his mother's house and the boy is taken to the Janeway Child Health Centre. A medical examiner reports the matter to the Newfoundland Constabulary.
- 9 Dec. 1975** The constabulary opens an investigation into abuse at Mount Cashel Boys' Home. Detective Robert Hillier heads the investigation.
- 9-16 Dec. 1975** Hillier interviews 24 Mount Cashel residents and Shane Earle's mother, Carol. Almost all boys report that they have witnessed or experienced physical or sexual abuse at the orphanage, committed by some of the Christian Brothers working there.
- 17 Dec. 1975** Hillier interviews Brothers Alan Ralph and Edward English; both confess to child molestation.
- 18 Dec. 1975** Chief of Police John Lawlor and Assistant Chief John Norman order Hillier to end his investigation and file a report. Hillier submits a report that day. About an hour later, Norman orders him to write a new one and delete any reference to sexual abuse. Hillier refuses, but complies when Norman says the order comes from Lawlor. Hillier destroys the first report and submits a second; it implicates five Christian Brothers working at the orphanage of abuse.
- Late Dec. 1975** The Christian Brothers send Ralph and English out of the province for treatment. Other brothers implicated in Hillier's report are removed from the orphanage in the coming months. No charges are laid as a result of Hillier's investigation.
- Jan. 1976** A mother of three boys who lived in Mount Cashel until late 1975 tells the *Evening Telegram* about abuse at the orphanage. The news department investigates, but the publisher prevents the story from going to press.
- 3 Mar. 1976** Lawlor orders Hillier to file a second report at the

- request of the justice department; no reason is provided. Lawlor again orders Hillier to omit references to sexual assault. Hillier submits the report later that day. No charges are laid.
- 26 Jan. 1977** Deputy Minister of Justice Vincent McCarthy returns the 1975 and 1976 reports to new Chief of Police John Browne with a note stating: "in view of the action taken by the Christian Brothers further police action is unwarranted in this matter" (Royal Commission, Vol. I 213).
- 10 Apr. 1979** Constabulary Detective Sergeant Arthur Pike appears before a closed provincial inquiry into a suspicious fire in St. John's. He alleges that police have concealed reports of criminal activity in the past and describes the Mount Cashel investigation as an example.
- 17 May 1979** Two St. John's newspapers report Pike's allegations, but the coverage receives little attention and no action is taken.
- 1 Dec. 1982** Brother David Burton is convicted of molesting a boy at Mount Cashel.
- 13 Feb. 1989** Associate Deputy Attorney General Robert Hyslop receives a telephone call from a woman demanding a public inquiry into the 1975 Mount Cashel investigation. That night, a caller to VOCM's popular *Open Line* radio show alleges that police and government officials covered up allegations of abuse at the orphanage in the 1970s.
- 14 Feb. 1989** Court of Appeal Judge John W. Mahoney speaks with Hyslop about the allegations broadcast on VOCM. Hyslop asks the constabulary to send him the 1975 and 1976 reports. He informs Justice Minister Lynn Verge.
- 15 Feb. 1989** Verge announces the Royal Newfoundland Constabulary is reopening its file on the 1975 Mount Cashel investigation.
- 19 Mar. 1989** Former Mount Cashel resident Shane Earle goes public with his history of abuse in the weekly newspaper *The Sunday Express*. The article sparks a strong public reaction.
- 5 Apr. 1989** Earle announces he will file a lawsuit against the Christian Brothers and provincial government.

- 14 Apr. 1989** The province appoints a Royal Commission of Inquiry into the justice system's handling of child-abuse allegations at Mount Cashel during the 1970s. The commission is chaired by retired Ontario Supreme Court Judge Samuel Hughes.
- 23 Apr. 1989** Newfoundland and Labrador Archbishop Alphonsus Penney appoints former Lieutenant-Governor Gordon Winter to lead an inquiry into sexual abuse of children by the clergy and Christian Brothers. The inquiry's mandate includes determining "how such behavior could have gone undetected and unreported for such a long period of time."
- 1 June 1989** The newly elected government of Clyde Wells reappoints the Hughes Commission with an expanded mandate.
- 11 Sept. 1989** The Hughes Commission begins public hearings. More than 200 people are interviewed in the coming months, including former Mount Cashel residents and officials from the police, Social Services, and Justice Departments.
- 27 Nov. 1989** The Christian Brothers announce Mount Cashel will close following a gradual phasing out of services. About 70 boys still live there.
- 1989-1993** Nine Christian Brothers who worked at Mount Cashel in the 1970s are convicted of assault-related crimes. Prison terms range from one to 13 years.
- 1 June 1990** The Roman Catholic Church closes Mount Cashel.
- 18 July 1990** The Winter Commission releases its report. It harshly criticizes the Archdiocesan administration for its ineffectiveness and negligence in dealing with allegations of child abuse. Archbishop Penney apologizes to victims and announces that he will resign.
- 31 May 1991** Hughes submits his two-volume report to the province. The government delays releasing it to the public while trials are underway.
- 5 Apr. 1992** The Christian Brothers of Ireland formally apologize to victims of abuse at Mount Cashel.
- 24 Apr. 1992** The Hughes Commission report is released to the public.

- 21 July 1992** Demolition crews begin to tear down Mount Cashel. Work continues for two months.
- Nov. 1992** The Roman Catholic Church announces its will sell the 20-acre Mount Cashel property. Sobeys expresses interest in building a grocery store on the site, but is opposed by the public.
- Apr. 1993** Sobeys negotiates an option to buy the Mount Cashel site within the next five years.
- 25 Aug. 1995** Shane Earle accepts an undisclosed cash settlement from the Christian Brothers.
- 2 Dec. 1996** The Newfoundland government announces it has reached a confidential out-of-court settlement awarding \$11 million to approximately 40 Mount Cashel victims. They receive the money in 1997.
- 8 Apr. 1998** Sobeys receives permission from the province and city to build a \$20-million supermarket and housing development on the Mount Cashel site.
- 5 Apr. 2003** An Ontario Superior Court judge awards approximately \$16 million to 83 Mount Cashel victims. Individual payments are made in 2004 and range from \$20,000 to \$600,000.
- 2009** More than 50 Mount Cashel victims still have civil suits before the courts; some allegations date back to the 1940s.

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