THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF A TEACHER IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA: 1919 - 1959

by

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THE EVERYDAY LIFE OF A TEACHER

IN BRITISH COLUMBIA: 1919-1959

Author

Jennifer Marie McKnight

(date)
ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis was to present a credible portrait of the everyday life of a teacher in British Columbia during the period 1919 - 1959.

Data for this study were collected through audiotaped interviews with fourteen teachers who taught throughout the province during 1919 - 1959. The interview was framed from a previewed set of questions which were designed to provide information that could be categorized under various aspects of school life during 1919 - 1959. A review of literature pertaining to the history of schooling and settlement of British Columbia was conducted to facilitate in the validation of research data. In addition a pictorial history of everyday school life was compiled from the photographic files of retired teachers.

The research revealed that whereas the everyday rituals of school life changed in response to the economic and political state of the province the profile of the teacher remained constant. Teachers were adventuresome setting out to remote parts of the province where they performed their duties admirably in often ill equipped and uncomfortable schools. They survived spartan living conditions in communities where they were under the scrutinious eyes of parents and visiting inspectors. They were resourceful and creative in managing to teach the three Rs to all their students despite their varying needs; they were dedicated to extending learning into the community with programs and activities that went beyond the required curriculum. These teachers arrived as
strangers but soon established themselves as an integral part of the community.

The study suggests that teachers played an important role in the communities of British Columbia. They were instrumental in nurturing and influencing the community builders of tomorrow and made worthy contributions to the development of a British Columbian way of life.
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CHAPTER I

ESTABLISHING A VIEW

INTRODUCTION

"I did not realize that the old grave that stood among
the brambles at the foot of our farm was history."

- Stephen Leacock -

People wherever and whenever they have lived have left behind, accidentally or intentionally, some record which lives on beyond their lifetimes. The records may vary greatly from newspaper clippings and hand-written journals to faded photographs and stories repeated like a chain that links us with our past. Sparked by genuine interest and curiosity, the historian sifts through the records with patience, sensitivity, and intelligence, selecting information which will allow them to reconstruct as accurately as possible a picture of the past.

History, like many things which conjures peoples’ interest and imagination, has particular periods of time or aspects which capture the attention of many; while other areas equally significant but perhaps superficially not as scintillating are often not pursued with the same zeal. Such has been the case with much of educational history especially in Western Canada. A substantial amount has been written about the history, for example, of British Columbia, but within the documentation the attention paid to education and schooling has comprised only a small portion of the historical profile of the province. In Margaret Ormsby’s British Columbia: A History (1958) only a few of its 556 pages are dedicated to education and schooling. Perhaps more interesting is the fact that F.W. Howay, a past Judge of the County Court of Westminster
was honored by his city in 1890 when a school was named after him and yet; Howay himself
does not make one reference to education and schooling in his 721 page book British Columbia;
From the Earliest Times to Present (1914). There is a sad irony that a school be named after
a person who diligently chronicles the Province’s history with anecdotes about "Scotch Jennie"
and her boarding house (p.122) and the "Old Timers" (p. 138) and yet is remiss in recollecting
any events about the contribution teachers and their students had in creating the Province’s
colorful and rich history (Howay, 1914).

Certainly there has been notable documentation specific to educational history in Western
Canada but, as Jean Friesen mentions in the introduction of her book Historical Essays on
British Columbia, widespread interest in British Columbia history only dates to 1958 during a
time when there was a notable expansion in the numbers of professionally trained historians in
the Province (Friesen, Ralston, 1976). F. Henry Johnson states in his preface to A History of
Public Education in British Columbia that he wrote the book in response to the great discrepancy
between the attention of historians to war, politics, religion and trade in comparison to education
which had been largely overlooked (Johnson, 1964). Later Johnson wrote the book John Jessop:
Goldseeker and Educator which is a biography about the founder of the British Columbia school
system (Johnson, 1971).

There can be no argument about the importance of Johnson’s historical work and yet after
reading his books there still remains a nagging void in capturing the life and spirit of early
education and schooling and its contribution to the building of British Columbia. In Johnson’s
first book he examines education at the institutional and departmental levels with chapters such
as, "The Foundations", "The Structure of Education" and "Problems, Reports and Reforms"
(Johnson, 1964). His later book about John Jessop examines education on a more personal level since it is about a particular educator; however Jessop's contribution was at an administrative level as Superintendent of Education (Johnson, 1971). Johnson's work, like much of the documentation of the Province's educational history does not look at schooling from a "grassroots" level.

In 1987 J. Donald Wilson in his article, "The Visions of Ordinary Participants: Teacher's Views of Rural Schooling in British Columbia in the 1920's" states that if history is created by the ordinary participant acting within structural constraints then, "it does seem strange that for the past two decades most Canadian educational historians have deliberately avoided an examination of the culture of the classroom." (Wilson, 1989, p. 1). Wilson, in support of his argument for examining the culture of the classroom cites scholar Richard Aldrich as calling for research on "the actual nature of the educational process itself" (Wilson, 1989, p. 1) and Chad Gaffield who has suggested that "it is time for historians of education to go back to school [to] the topics of books, pupils, teachers and schools" (Wilson, 1989, p. 1).

Although historical research about everyday school life is not abundant, there can be no denying that within the field there are superb examples of historical research which captures the heart of education and schooling in British Columbia. John Callam's book Alex Lord's British Columbia: Recollections of a Rural School Inspector, 1915 - 36 is an edited collection of memoirs from the manuscripts of a prominent B.C. inspector (1991). Lord's accounts of his experiences as a school inspector allows the reader to "move with him day and night, around the seasons, along road, rail, and water routes; on foot, horseback and bicycle...in the company of settlers, police officers, trappers...priests and judges; to meet teachers, trustees,
schoolchildren...government agents, telegraphers and bootleggers." (Callam, 1991 p.25). It may be because Lord was a trained geographer or perhaps because more time was spent covering the considerable territory between schools that his writings give a greater flavor to the character of the people and the Province rather than to the details of classroom life.

Closer to everyday classroom life is the book by Joan Adams and Becky Thomas, *Floating Schools and Frozen Inkwells* about the rise and fall of the one-room schools of British Columbia (1985). The authors do not attempt to record the history, sociology or philosophy of education; but rather, they nostalgically capture the everyday events that occurred in one-room schools through-out the Province. Adams and Thomas record in their chapters reminiscences of "The Turning Seasons", and "Days That Were Special" as well as poignant and often comical memories in such chapters as "Romance" and "Trial and Terrors".

The deliberate emphasis on recording the everyday lives of ordinary people is again seen in Jean Barman's book, *The West beyond the West* (1991). Barman includes in her history an examination of the role of the school as an institution through personally interviewing and corresponding with over two hundred men and women of diverse backgrounds. Barman cites in her preface that the observations and insights of everyday British Columbians were "...critical to my understanding" (1991). Barman has also preferred to use natural language in her writing which at times necessitates the simplification of complex points; however it makes her text more readable and complementary to her philosophical approach to historical research.

Some historians have chosen to omit education and schooling in their studies and some have chosen to acknowledge educational history with important documentation about its structure and function, but fewer have attempted to explore the very life and spirit of education by focusing
on the teachers and their contribution to building the future. It cannot be denied that the early teachers deserve special attention since no one group of community members have had such an impact on determining the future. It was what transpired in the everyday activities of the classroom which was instrumental in establishing a Canadian way of life. It has been the teachers who have nurtured and influenced the community builders of tomorrow and it is the everyday happenings of school life which are precious enough to warrant preservation through historical documentation. This project recognizes the need for research and documentation of the everyday activities of teachers in their classrooms by examining a group of teachers who taught in communities throughout British Columbia during the period of 1919 - 1959.

**PURPOSE OF THE THESIS**

"...the total number of British Columbia communities, as defined by the existence of a post office and probably a general store, school and one or more churches, grew steadily to peak over a thousand in the first decades of this century...The contribution made by women and men living in these many communities has often been obscured in historical writing about the Province."

-Hale, Barman, 1991-

There is a wealth of information about the early history of British Columbia; however in-depth documentation specific to the early days of school life in British Columbia is limited in comparison to the amount of research on other aspects of the Province's history. Undoubtedly the early teachers of British Columbia deserve special attention as the early pioneers not only performed their duties admirably, but often did so in uncomfortable, ill-equipped schools with
few books and almost no supplies. In addition, their daily activities were often under the scrutiny of the entire community. It is the belief that: 1) teachers who taught during the Province’s early days made not only a contribution to the education system, but also played an important role in the development of the character of the Province and 2) by examining early everyday school life the obscurity of the past will emerge as a vivid account of the contribution teachers made in building the Province. It is these two beliefs which initiated my interest in this project.

The purpose of this project was to present a credible portrait of the everyday life of a teacher in British Columbia during the period 1919 - 1959. Focusing on this time period was decided because: 1) the earliest teaching experiences of the interview candidates began in 1919; 2) the forty year time span was a reasonable time frame to examine effectively and 3) the time frame represented a period of rapid growth in the province. This portrait was obtained by gathering information on the following aspects of the lives of teachers who taught in British Columbia during the period 1919 - 1959:

1) Career Chronology
2) Motivations to Become a Teacher
3) Teacher Training
4) Daily School Life - Physical Plant
   - Curriculum
5) Discipline
6) Extra-curricular Activities
7) Parents and Community
8) Challenges of Teaching
9) Pleasure, Pain and Amusement: Anecdotes about Teaching
10) Significant Changes in School Life
11) Memories to Remember
12) The Resourceful Teacher

In addition, a photographic portrait was compiled from old photographs which might
otherwise be lost over the years. The photographs visually capture what everyday life was like in British Columbia during 1919 - 1959.

**DESIGN OF THE THESIS**

**PHILOSOPHICAL APPROACH**

J.D. Wilson in his introductory chapter of *Schooling in 20th Century British Columbia* (1980) charts educational history with three movements: Reformist, Revisionist and Radical Revisionist. Wilson identifies the work of Henry Johnson (1964) as an example of Reformist noting that despite Johnson's valuable contributions to the field his work has three weaknesses:

1) "...overly simple linear interpretations of the rise of the present system of universal public schooling";

2) "...lacking a social and political context in large because so little good Canadian social history had been written" and

3) "...relying almost exclusively upon sources that are narrowly institutional and departmental". (1980 p.8).

In the mid 1970's Neil Sutherland's book *Children in English Canadian Society* (1976) marked a move in educational history from Reformist to Revisionist. Wilson describes the Revisionists as wanting,

"...to see educational history as more than simply the 'history of schools and schooling' to broaden the perspective so as to include other agents of enculturation; the church, the family, the community and peers." (1980 p.10).

A third movement, Radical Revisionism, paralleled Revisionism in time as it also emerged in the mid 1970's; however it differed with its more cynical view of schooling within a social
and political context. The greatest criticism of the Radical Revisionists was their tendency to make judgements on the past based on current day concerns and values. Historical research which make inferences strongly based on the biases of the researcher only results in a tainted and unfair portrayal of the past.

A lot of educational history has been written from a variety of perspectives especially since the 1950's when interest in Western Canadian history began to increase. The differing perspectives or philosophies about the field has opened educational research to lively scholarly debate; however more important is that the variety of approaches has imbued the field with a multifaceted richness. There has been a healthy transition from being undynamic and one dimensional.

The perspective or philosophical approach taken in the design of this study is one which is akin to Revisionism as it will examine the everyday lives of teachers within a holistic social context. Although the focus will be on the daily activities in the classrooms of British Columbia communities between 1919 - 1959 the project will attempt to examine how school life contributed to and was affected by the development of British Columbia as a province.

DATA SOURCES

Cooperation for researching this project required the participation of retired teachers who taught throughout the Province during the period of 1919 - 1959. Volunteer participation in this project was elicited through nine B.C. Lower Mainland Retired Teacher's Associations. The contact member in the following Retired Teacher's Associations provided names of members
who agreed to be interviewed:

1) Abbotsford Retired Teacher's Association
2) Burnaby Retired Teacher's Association
3) Coquitlam Retired Teacher's Association
4) Delta Retired Teacher's Association
5) Langley Retired Teacher's Association
6) North Shore Retired Teacher's Association
7) Richmond Retired Teacher's Association
8) Surrey Retired Teacher's Association
9) Vancouver Retired Teacher's Association

Collection of data consisted of: 1) a review of literature pertinent to the history of schooling in British Columbia; 2) audiotaped interviews with teachers who taught at some time during the period of 1919 - 1959 and; 3) collection of unpublished photographs of everyday school life from the private photograph albums of retired teachers.

It is recognized that the teachers being interviewed may indulge in nostalgia indiscriminately and that care must be taken by the interviewer to validate information. John C. Charyk in the Preface to his book *Pulse of the Community* (1970) succinctly states that,

"Memory can dwell on a subject to the point of monotony, be fallacious and insidiously impetuous. So on occasion it exaggerates or fabricates all sorts of things and adds them to a disappearing way of life. The contemporary society, on the other hand, unfamiliar with the texture of a life that now exists only in the memories of our pioneers will often conclude, 'this can't be true' or 'this could never have happened' when they read the story..." (Charyk, 1970).

It will be the responsibility of this historian to record as completely and as accurately as possible; to sift out fact from fiction by conducting the research with sensitivity and integrity.

To ensure consistent collection of information during the interviews the interview questions will be framed and the collation of data organized under headings which deal with aspects that represent everyday school life in British Columbia during 1919 - 1959 (Appendix A).
The collection of photographs will consist of making photographic copies of teacher's photographs taken during the years they taught.

This project is organized with a comprehensive review in chapter two of the Provinces's history of settlement development as a contextual base to examine the history of schooling in British Columbia from 1919 - 1959. Chapter three is the results and discussion of findings based on audio taped interviews and collection of historic photographs. Chapter four is a summary, project conclusions and suggestions for further research related to this field of study.
CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

INTRODUCTION

"British Columbia...if I had known what it was like, I wouldn't have been content
with a mere visit. I'd have been born here."

-Stephen Leacock-

To ask a British Columbian to describe his Province one might wonder if these natives could all
be talking about the same place. British Columbia, for all its land mass totalling almost a
million square kilometres is truly a collection of contrasts geographically and demographically.
To understand the everyday life in British Columbia schools from 1919 - 1959 one must examine
it within the context of the character of the Province. As early as 1911 the uniqueness of British
Columbia which set it apart from the rest of Canada was acknowledged in an article in
Vancouver Magazine which stated, "...while there is only one British Columbia, there are so
many kinds of it that he is a brave man indeed who can say he knows the Province and get away
with it."

It must be recognized that the examination of everyday school life in, for example the 1930's
would be dependent on whether the school was located in an urban center such as the Lower
Mainland or in a more rural setting in the Northeast regions of the Province. A truly accurate
historical account of school life would require examining schooling in each of the uniquely
distinct ten regions of the Province during the same time period. However a project so enormous in scope and quantitative detail is not necessary in capturing the more qualitative essence of the period while still maintaining historical integrity.

This chapter begins by looking at the geography of British Columbia for as Jean Barman states, "Any search to understand British Columbia and its past must begin with geography" (Barman, 1991, p.4). The chapter will then present a profile of the Province during 1919 - 1959 under the headings:

1) Development of Settlement Prior to 1919;
2) Development of Settlement 1919 to 1959;
3) Development of Schools: Historical Perspective Prior to 1919 and;
4) Development of Schools 1919 - 1959.

**GEOGRAPHY**

The physical face of the Province extends thirteen hundred kilometres from north to south and almost eight hundred kilometres from its Pacific coast to its eastern mountain and prairie. For the early settlers the formidable size and geographic contrasts of the Province made travel a daunting endeavour resulting in most settlers being unable to fully comprehend or understand British Columbia beyond the characteristics of their immediate locale.

To help in the understanding of the Provinces geography it is helpful to examine it by the ten regions which were identified by the federal census at the turn of the century (map 1) (Barman, 1992 p.6).

Starting to the west is the first of British Columbia’s ten regions, Vancouver Island and the
MAP 1

REGIONS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
surrounding 225 Gulf Islands. Vancouver Island possesses a rugged mountainous coastline to the west which levels out towards the east into fertile lowlands suitable for farming. Much of British Columbia’s early development began on Vancouver Island when in 1849 The Hudsons Bay established its western headquarters of the southern tip of the island and the Royal Navy made its home base in the natural harbor at Esquimalt. The mild climate allowed for some farming in the southeastern region of the Island as well as on many of the Gulf Islands. The heavy growth of coniferous forest that originally mantled much of the lowland was at first more of a hinderance than an asset. It was not until later when external markets and transportation connections were developed that forestry became a viable industry.

Moving east is British Columbia’s second region, the Lower Mainland which extends as far as the Fraser River and the community of Hope and runs north to south from the Sechelt Peninsula to the Washington, United States border. Discoveries of placer gold from the 1850’s onward gave tremendous stimulus for settlement resulting in the Lower Mainland becoming the most densely populated area soon exceeding Vancouver Island.

The third region, the Southern Interior, also known in the early days as the Upper Country, is geographically a natural trade route because of the Fraser and Thompson Rivers which flow through it; shallow draft paddle-wheelers were a common sight in the early 1900’s. Across the region are dry grasslands which became a popular homestead for ranchers especially along the Cariboo Wagon Road which was built as a link to interior gold fields. To Cache Creek, or 0 Mile House, miners brought their caches of gold with the journey northward being marked by
such roadhouses as 70 and 100 Mile House.

South of the interior lies British Columbia's Okanagan/Boundary region; its most dominant feature being Okanagan Lake and its subsidiary lakes at its north and south ends. It was the rich fertile soil which attracted early European settlers to the area where they became farmers and fruit growers.

Further east lies the West and East Kootney which consist of craggy chains of mountain ranges running the length of the regions. The West Kootney region is separated from the west of the Province by the Monashees and Eastern region by the Purcells. Eastern Kootney borders onto Alberta where it established closer ties to Alberta than it did to the rest of British Columbia. The development of mineral resources in Eastern Kootney eventually opened up the region more to its native Province.

The remaining regions, Central Interior, Central Coast, Northwest and Northeast were very isolated from the rest of the Province and with the exception of a few hardy individuals remained sparsely unpopulated. There were a few cannery and logging communities in the Central Coast and mostly miners and trappers in the northwest. The Northern Alberta Railway opened up the Peace River country which made the area more accessible to settlers who wanted to farm; however the land was heavily forested with lodge pole pine which was difficult to clear. Many farmers supplemented their income by making ties from the timber they cleared, and came to be known as stump farmers.

It becomes apparent by examining the topography of the Province that it is not geographically homogeneous. The prairie lands of the Peace River, the mountains of the Kootneys, the semi-arid branches of the Okanagan and the rain forests of the Coast all provide geographical
contrasts which although initially physically limiting proved to be rich in a variety of natural resources. British Columbia's economy, as any economy reliant on resource exploitation would prove to be very volatile with great potential for wealth but also a propensity for collapse. Hale and Barman observe that, "These [settlements] have most often been located near the particular staple being exploited and so sometimes become ghost towns when the particular resource was depleted or lost its economic value." (Hale, Barman, 1919, p.1).

People congregated where the resources were resulting in not only major urban centers developing but also small towns and communities. Despite the size of the settlement people had the same needs, although varying in scale, to sustain a reasonable life. They needed homes to live in, stores to supplies from, roads to commute on, a post office to communicate through and a school to educate their children. The development of schooling, like any of the basic needs of settlement was reliant on the pulse of the community and later the province, country and world; and hence to understand development of schools one must understand the development of settlement in British Columbia.

**DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENT**

History is a continuum usually dependent on cases and effects of events; therefore a brief explanation of the years leading up to the British Columbia of 1919 facilitates a greater understanding of the time period 1919 - 1959.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA PRIOR TO 1919**

Although trading posts had been built earlier major European settlement dates to 1849 when
the Hudsons Bay Company set up its western headquarters on Vancouver Island. Settlement was predominately centered in the Saanich Peninsula north of present day Victoria and in a few agricultural settlements along the east coast lowland of Vancouver Island. (Farley, 1979 p.2). The settlements were supplied by sea with communication between centers by boat. Farmers found the dense forest a hinderance to clear; however the timber was later to become a lucrative forestry industry as outside market demand and transportation connections were developed.

In 1858 the governor of Vancouver Island and senior official for the Hudsons Bay Company, James Douglas, requested that England provide military protection for the mainland of British Columbia as there was a huge influx of miners seeking their fortune in the gold rush in northern B.C.; Douglas wanted to ensure that his Company's trade was not disrupted with potential feuds between the miners and the Native Indian population (Woodland, 1973, p.2). England sent the Royal Navy who, although soldiers were also skilled surveyors, architects, draftsmen, masons, painters, carpenter, miners, blacksmiths and printers; the soldiers brought their families and the Lower Mainland experienced appreciable settlement growth (Woodland, 1973, p.2). By 1870 population on the Mainland was approximately 3,012; by the turn of the century the Lower Mainland just surpassed Vancouver Island with the Lower Mainland registering 53,641 and the Island registering 50,886. (Table 1).

The construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1896 provided a link to the interior of the Province with Vancouver as its important western terminus. Most new settlers to the Province passed through Vancouver as evidenced by the nearly sixty hotels in the Gastown area alone in 1880. Settlers moved to the vast interior of British Columbia and established themselves in ranching, logging and mining settlements. The Cariboo and Chilcotin areas
TABLE 1

BRITISH COLUMBIA POPULATION DISTRIBUTED

BETWEEN REGIONS, 1911 - 1961

(000's)

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
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<td>8</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>78</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>74</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Vancouver Island: Region 1  
Lower Mainland: Region 2  
Southern Interior: Region 3  
Okanagan/Boundary: Region 4  
West Kootneys: Region 5  

East Kootneys: Region 6  
Central Coast: Region 7  
Northwest: Region 8  
Central Interior: Region 9  
Northeast: Region 10

Sources: Barman, J., 1919, TABLE 14; BRITISH COLUMBIA POPULATION DISTRIBUTED BETWEEN REGIONS, 1881 - 1981.
experienced exceptional growth with building of the Cariboo Wagon Road (Adams, Thomas, 1985, p.9). By 1898 the Canadian Pacific Railway's Crows Nest Pass line was finished opening up settlement in the extreme southeast where coal, silver, lead and zinc were being mined in the Kootneys and copper in the Boundary region.

In the ensuing years from 1911 the density of settlement within the established centers fluctuated with economic and political trends; however the population settlement patterns remain much the same today as in the early years. With the outbreak of World War I British Columbia experienced a depression as the lack of manufacturing industries and the distance between the Province and Europe made it impossible to be competitive in the munitions market. British Columbia, like most of Canada, was slow to recover from the post-war depression.

**BRITISH COLUMBIA: DEVELOPMENT OF SETTLEMENT 1919 - 1959**

During the 1920's the Province slowly recovered from the post-war depression. There were no significant changes in the patterns of settlement; however, the population increased dramatically from 392,480 in 1911 to 524,582 by 1921. (Table 1). Between 1920 - 1929 agricultural settlement increased in the Lower Fraser Valley and Okanagan as a result of the development of an automobile road system. As well, in 1921 the Pacific Great Eastern Railway was completed opening up the area between Squamish to Quesnel.

By the 1930's the continued extension of road and rail links had impact on increased settlement development with the northern half of the Province becoming more populated due to improvements to the Grand Trunk line. The Peace River country continued to be tied more towards Alberta and would remain so until the 1940's.
The depression of the 1930's paid its toll in British Columbia as it did with all Canadians. As Barman states, "While numbers make the point in a general way, the human misery wrought by the Depression is most acutely captured in the lives of individuals. In *Waste Heritage*, the classic novel of the Great Depression in British Columbia, a father lamented, 'I got three boys starin' ahead at nothing.'" (Barman, 1991, p. 248).

The condition of the Province was intensified with the large numbers of unemployed people coming west for the milder climate. The population continued to grow steadily; between 1921 and 1931 numbers grew 32.4% from 524,582 to 694,263 (Table 1). Population was up and yet everything else in the Province was down as families persevered the hungry 30's.

A solution to British Columbia's economic woes came in 1939 with the declaration of World War II. British Columbia was different from British Columbia at the turn of the century; this time the Province was established in it's industrialization and was able to sustain important munitions contracts for the war being played out in the Pacific. Northern points of the Province such as Prince Rupert as well as the Peace River district experienced industry and population growth and were opened up to the rest of British Columbia with the completion of the Pacific Great Eastern Railway.

With the end of World War II in 1945 the people of British Columbia feared another recession like the last Great War; however their fears were allayed as the Province moved into a period of economic stability which would last into the end of the 1950's. It would be the post-war economy that facilitated the growth of the Province and the leadership from a man described by Canadian history professor Hugh Keenleyside as"...undoubtedly the most effective political leader in British Columbia history." (Keenleyside, 1982 p.494).
Economically there were three reasons as cited by Barman (1991) for the post war boom; 1) people were not spending money which had been saved during the war; 2) demand was high for British Columbia's primary resources so help rebuild Europe and 3) agricultural commodities were also needed by Europe as they were now in short supply.

In 1952 William Andrew Cecil Bennett, a maritimer who had migrated via Alberta and settled in the Okanagan region was elected leader of the Social Credit party, the new government power. Bennett’s frustrations with the politics of the Province had directed him to government in a desire to develop economic expansion by ameliorating regional disparities. "He had come to power by appealing to groups not traditionally within mainstream society, including ethnic minorities swelled by prairie migration and hinterland British Columbians long existing in a urban shadow." (Barman, 1991, p. 280).

It was the agenda of Bennett and his party that had a direct effect on the development of settlement in the Province. By the 1940's British Columbia had opened up as result of road and rail improvements and the development of the resource industry; however the standard of living in areas outside of Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland remained primitive. In 1945 Vanderhoof had only fourteen indoor toilets and travelling time from Vancouver to Lillooet took two days (Barman, 1991, p.271). As part of the governments attempt to create a more economically integrated province a large portion of the budget was allocated to road improvements. From 1952 - 1957 more money was spent on roads than in the entire history of the Province.

In addition to road improvements the Province improved rail and water transportation as well as developed air communication. The Pacific Great Eastern Railway to North Vancouver was
revived in 1952 and by 1958 it extended north to Fort St. John, Peace River and Dawson Creek. The B.C. Ferry Corporation was also formed taking over the water connection responsibility between Vancouver Island and the Mainland. Scheduled air service began in 1939 between Vancouver and central Canada with major communities within the Province also acquiring small airport facilities and at least one landing strip.

In industry and resource exploitation there was an emphasis on large projects. Natural gas found in 1949 near Pouce Coupe in the Peace River region prompted commercial development; later in the decade a natural gas pipeline was constructed from the northeast to the coast; there would now be a gas as well as oil pipeline, linked into Vancouver.

The development of hydroelectric power became important if large foreign interests were to be drawn to the Province. Hydroelectric power necessary for large, resource exploitation projects, was harnessed with the building of dams on the Nechako River south of Fraser Lake, at the upper end of Kootney Lake and the lower ends of the Arrow Lakes north of Revelstoke. The largest and most controversial project was the building of the Columbia Dam.

Forestry had expanded and in 1955 nearly twenty-five hundred sawmills were operating not only along the coast but also in the interior and northern parts; however as a result of the government's desire to monitor the harvesting of trees many small sawmills were forced to close as forestry giants like MacMillan Bloedel became the dominant power. The small reliant communities disappeared in favor of more densely populated settlements centered around large mills.

The density of population and growth within these large settlements resulted in an improved standard of living. The old company towns, which historically owned and ran all aspects of
community life, disappeared and people began to share in the decision making and ownership of their towns and cities. British Columbia experienced urbanization with the acquisition of paved roads, concrete sidewalks, public buildings and a variety of services. As transportation improved suburbs developed with more people easily commuting to work and schools.

By no means had British Columbia become homogeneous; communities such as Prince George, Kamloops and Cranbrook would still maintain their distinct personalities but now they were able to contribute to and benefit more equitably from the prosperity of the Province. There would be no guarantees that the good times would last forever, and just as communities shared in the prosperity so too did they experience economic down turns. In fact, the early 1960's marked the beginnings of a recession and later in 1972 a change of power when Dave Barrett and his New Democratic party defeated Bennett.

To say the everyday lives of British Columbians has ever been ordinary would truly be an understatement especially during the period of 1919 - 1959. Each of the Province’s district ten regions shared in the despair and prosperity of the times. Within a forty year span people survived the post war depression of World War I, gradual economic recovery in the 1920's, the great depression of the 1930's, World War II in the 1940’s followed by a post-war economic boom which lead into a period of rapid economic and regional growth. It was how British Colombians reacted to and coped with the economic and political events based on the reality of the Province’s geographic diversity and reliance on natural resources which defined what everyday life would be like.

To examine everyday school life one cannot examine it apart from the social forces that have shaped it. School life is not an autonomous institution exclusive in its own right, but rather it
is the historical mirror of societal changes. To understand education is to understand that it is a history of successful adaptations to changing circumstances. As economies and politics have dominated the development of the character of British Columbia so has their influence been evident in the everyday life of the classroom.

DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE PRIOR TO 1919

There were no formal schools in British Columbia until 1849; until then children were educated by their parents at home, on the trapline or in the garden. With the arrival of the Hudsons Bay Company came European settlement complete with its ideals and morals about what civilized life should be like. The Hudsons Bay Company could be defined as one of British Columbia's first company towns as defined by Barman, who states, "The company that owned the town exercised virtually unlimited authority over the lives of the workers and their families..." (Barman, 1991, p.197). As stated in the rules and regulations of the Hudsons Bay Company the religious leader of the community should, "...be encouraged to devote part of his leisure hours to teach the children their A B C and Catechism, together with such further elementary instruction, as time and circumstance may permit (Johnson, 1964, p.15). The primary role of the school in the community of the Hudsons Bay Company was to prepare the children for social stability and character formation through religion, morality, and discipline; the role of preparing the children for occupations was solely the responsibility of the family with children’s vocational roles usually being the same as their parents. Later in 1851 the Hudsons Bay Company established schools for the children of the "laboring and poorer classes" which
again reflected the role of the school when Governor Douglas stated, "These schools are to offer moral and religious training and a good sound English education and nothing more" (Johnson, 1964, p. 17).

Teachers needed to only have very basic knowledge and skills and since no teacher training institutes were established as yet qualification to teach was based on examination marks in the regular school curriculum. Teachers were issued certificates that ranged from First Class A&B, Second Class A&B to the lowest certificate of Third Class A&B. The first class certificate only guaranteed that the teachers were trained in basic skills in numeracy and literacy. A high school student with a 30% average in their final year qualified for a third class B certificate (Johnson, 1991, p. 71).

By 1862 the main impetus to provide students with free, non-sectarian education had begun when Reverend Robert Jamieson opened a non-denomination school in his garden. A parent's committee was formed to manage the affairs of finances and through fund raising managed to accrue one hundred pounds which was matched by the government on the request of parents. And so began the transition of the role of the school as an inculcator of morals dictated by companies such as the Hudson Bay to the role of providing children with rudimentary skills necessary, as defined by the community, to sustain a reasonable standard of living.

By 1872 the Enactment of the Public Schools Act laid the foundation for a free, non-sectarian system. G.W. Spragge stated that the Act was, to "give every child in the Province such knowledge as will fit them to become a useful and intelligent citizen in after years." (Johnson, 1964, p. 45). A six man Board of Education was appointed and a Public School fund of $40,000 was established for teacher's salaries and for the building and maintenance of school
buildings. Provincial school districts were authorized to elect a three member board of school trustees to manage local affairs including the mandatory attendance of all children six to sixteen years of age; by 1876 the first Public high school was opened in Victoria and would be under the authority of the local school board.

The new Act created the office of Superintendent which was to be the one-man department of John Jessop, a graduate from Toronto’s Normal School. Jessop was concerned with providing schooling in the settlements which had developed throughout the Province especially since the completion of the Canadian National Railway. His travels to the rural settlements to inspect the teaching conditions was an acknowledgment of the importance of providing education for all British Columbia’s children. During his tenure from 1874 - 1878 Jessop was responsible for the opening of a boarding school at Cache Creek for students who did not live in reasonable proximity to a school as well as ensuring that the primitive rural school houses were at least supplied with maps, a globe and a set of textbooks. (Adams, Thomas, 1985, p.9). He was also responsible for initiating co-educational programs which replaced the practice of segregating girls and boys taking the same courses. As well Jessop established a grading system which divided students into ability levels under different teacher’s instruction. The system was deemed educationally sound and was implemented in the major urban centers; however rural schools would continue as late as the 1930’s to have one teacher teaching up to eight grades in one classroom. The grading system, although educationally sound was not economically or demographically feasible in many rural communities that had enough difficulty providing for ten children under a one room school roof.

By 1901 the first Normal School was opened and although not of the same calibre as a
university provided training for prospective teachers. The school offered two courses which were Preliminary and Advanced. The Preliminary course included teaching methods, practice teaching, drawings and nature study which when successfully completed led to a Third Class certificate that was valid for two years. The Advanced certificate course of study included the history of Education, school hygiene and psychology which when completed gained the student a Permanent certificate.

In 1906 Victoria opened the first Superior School which allowed students to take an additional year of schooling at the end of elementary school before moving to a High School; in effect it was the beginning of the model for what would later be known as a Junior High. The Superior Schools were especially welcomed in rural areas as students could remain in their communities longer and parents had one less year of fees to pay for High School boarding; the first Superior Schools opened in rural municipalities in 1910 (Johnson, 1964, p. 63). During the same period curriculums expanded their scope in response to communities requests for more technical and vocational training for the ever increasing urbanized Province; high schools offered commercial, manual training, domestic sciences, technical, agricultural sciences and physical education. By 1918 students wrote entrance exams where they were required to pass all subjects, rather than on promotion by individual subjects. Teachers were known to hold back students weak in perhaps one subject, knowing they would not fulfil High School entrance criteria; this system proved discouraging for many students resulting in them not continuing their education. The new system allowed students to be recommended by teachers and principals and if not recommended students still had the option of writing the departmental examinations; the system opened up opportunities for a greater number of students who required a more extensive
education if they were to compete for jobs.

Historically, the first settlers relied on primary industry such as farming, fishing and forestry. The early developments in these industries were such that most employees required little formal education or technical training. Many businesses were family run and hence children were trained by their parents rather than by the school. A basic working knowledge in reading, writing and arithmetic was even sufficient for people working in the small industries, which were beginning to expand beyond family centered enterprises during the turn of the century. However as British Columbia moved into the twenty first century the increasing demands of industrialization put more demands on the schools. In addition to providing students with a Christian set of values, teachers needed to prepare their charges for the challenges of the ever growing Province. Whether in the most rural parts of the Peace River Country or the urban center of Victoria the size of one's backyard was rapidly growing; people were as a result of improved communication and transportation beginning to look at possibilities beyond their immediate community.

DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS 1919 - 1959.

The post war period brought a renewed confidence in democracy; World War I, "the war to end all wars" had many people looking now to building a better future. Young men had returned to Canada after serving overseas and many were anxious to pursue teaching careers. Although great advancements would be made in education it would be over thirty years before the disparities between rural and urban schooling would be equalized.

In 1919 the British Columbia Teachers' Federation was formed in an effort to improve the
quality of teachers and the profession; the first offices were opened in Victoria and later moved in 1926 to Vancouver. The B.C.T.F. was responsible for the idea of having a thorough survey of the Provincial schooling system conducted by the Department of Education. In 1924 the Department of Education agreed and it would take the form of The 1925 Putman-Weir Report (Johnson, 1964, p. 101). The report recommended; 1) improved curriculum, teacher training, inspection of schools, school organization and the financing of education. The report resulted in the following changes in education: 1) a new 6-3-3 system of school organization to replace the old 8-4-2; 2) a new curriculum to provide a suitable junior high school program; 3) increased vocational training options at the high school level and 4) the abolition of high school entrance examinations. In addition, a taxation system for school purposes was adjusted and although not as drastic as the Putman-Weir Report had recommended, some school districts were consolidated. It would not be until the 1930's, due to the financial failure of many small school districts, that plans for major consolidation would be put into effect.

The Putman-Weir Report addressed the issue of the disparity between the quality of education throughout the Province. The commission felt that rural schools, "...had fared very badly in the past and something should be done to raise the quality of education here to a level commensurate with that attained in the urban and municipal schools. The vital factor in improving rural education they recognized to be the quality of teachers available." (Johnson, 1964, p. 105).

In 1922, prior to the publication of the Putman-Weir Report, the University of British Columbia introduced teacher education programs during summer school for Normal School graduates. As well, in 1923 the University opened the Faculty of Education which offered a
teaching certification program to graduates in the Bachelor of Arts program. In response to recommendations the Putman-Weir Report the Normal Schools in Victoria and Vancouver amalgamated their two programs into one and abolished the third class certificate. The focus of the Normal school program would as John Callam states in his article "Teaching the Teachers: Establishment and Early Years of the B.C. Provincial Normal School" that, "...Instead of learning tricks at it,...beginners [teachers] ought to leave in possession of a philosophy of education as guide to classroom practice. Instructors should deal with principles of educational psychology, not dictate notes on 'tricks of the trade'."(Calam, 1986, p.85). It was because of the Putman-Weir report that teaching as a profession would begin to make the transition from being considered trade to teaching as a science.

Despite improvements in the quality of teachers the quality of education and the conditions of teaching did not improve appreciably until the 1940's especially in the rural areas of British Columbia. It was not that teachers were poorly trained, but rather the challenges of teaching in the rural areas which predominated the Province were so overwhelming, even for the best teachers. Robert Patterson in his article, "Voices from the Past: The Personal and Professional Struggle of Rural Teachers" states that, "Prior to World War II nothing had been done to alter significantly the conditions of teaching in rural, western Canada. The personal accounts and recollections of the teachers of the period suggest that the rural school experience, the beginning assignment for nearly all normal school graduates, was physically, emotionally and professionally demanding, so much so that many of these young people live lives of quiet, lonely desperation as they tried to provide a limited level of educational service to their students." (Patterson, 1986, p. 110).
In a 1935 report entitled *School Finance in British Columbia*, later to be known as the "King Report" after its author Dr. H. B. King recommended that in order to afford rural children with the same benefits of "good teachers, good secondary schools, effective supervision and school health services which city children enjoyed" a more centralized system with a large unit of administration should be employed. (Johnson, 1968, p. 121). The idea of organizing education locally on the basis of larger administrative units initiated a number of small scale consolidations; however there would still be no large scale consolidation resulting in still over 650 school districts under the authority of 437 school boards and 213 official school trustees. (Johnson, 1964, p. 125).

The depression of the 1930’s had such a devastating impact on lives of British Columbians that despite the fact that rural consolidation of small school districts was economically and educationally sound it perhaps took until the 1940’s to happen because the priorities of the government and people in British Columbia was on more survival rather than on improvement. The conditions of schooling no matter how poor would have to remain the status quo until economic recovery was established. There was no money to bear the cost of consolidation as evidenced in the drop in educational expenditures in British Columbia from a high of over $11,000,000 in 1928-29 to a little more than $8,000,000 in 1933-34. (Phillips, 1957, p. 171). Despite the decrease in funding for education, the daily attendance had increased greatly and students, because there were no jobs stayed in school longer; the enrolment of students in British Columbia Schools increased from 86,000 in 1921 to 114,000 in 1931. (Phillips, 1957, p. 182). As well, standards for admission to Normal School from High School became more stringent as a result of the increase of demands from High School graduates.
The outbreak of World War II saw British Columbia’s economy, along with the rest of the country, readjust to the war effort. The perils of going to war were overshadowed by the opportunity of employment in the armed services and war-related industry. Just as in all sectors of daily life schools adjusted to the war time. In 1942 the Council of Public Instruction passed a regulation permitting the release of high school students, "who were in good standing to be employed in the summer and fall months on farms where there was a labor shortage. Thousands of students responded." (Johnson, 1964, p. 123).

As the war progressed the teacher shortage became a problem as many young men where leaving the classrooms to join the services. The only compensation to decreasing numbers of teachers was the fact that enrolment had not increased appreciably from 1931 - 1941 as many people held off having families during the depression years; school enrolment from 1931 - 1941 only increased by 5,500 from 114,000 to 119,500 (Phillips, 1957, p. 182). The shortage of teachers would not become acute until the 1940's when the "post-war baby boom" children would be entering the schools. Again, because of society’s preoccupation with the war efforts education would have to wait. In 1941 Dr. Weir had informed the teaching profession that ‘"during the period of the war we may be obliged to mark time. It is not probable that grants for education or even for health will be greatly increased before the end of the war. In the interval however, careful planning and study of our reconstruction and rehabilitation problems should not be neglected. " (Weir, 1941, p.46).

By the mid 1940’s British Columbia’s educators were confronted with a growing body of evidence that consolidation of the school districts should be the future for the Provinces’s schools. Despite improvements in travel communication throughout the Province, the regional
disparities in the standard of education paralleled the regional disparities in the standard of living. Jean Barman in discussing the varying standard of living throughout the Province states that, "In reality services assumed to be the norm in Vancouver and Victoria were most often non-existent. Access to health care, to schooling and professional expertise varied tremendously." (Barman, 1919, p.194). The key to equalization was perceived to be in the amalgamation into larger administrative units and in response to this idea the Provincial government appointed in 1945 a one man commission, Maxwell Cameron, a University of British Columbia professor of education, to produce what would be known as "The Cameron Report". The report recommended consolidation of the Province’s 650 schools to under 100 with each district having adequate facilities for offering education through to grade twelve. If children were unable to travel to the high school then boarding facilities would be provided. New larger schools would be built and because of the improved roadways bussing became the rule. In addition to consolidation, the report made recommendations which were to be paramount in equalizing the quality of education. The report recommended a new formula of grants to school boards which would equalize teachers’ salaries throughout the Province; the grant would cover the school board costs for a pension fund for teachers as well as isolation bonuses for teachers and an allowance for supervision.

The recommendations of the Cameron Report were implemented almost immediately with the final plans for putting the Act into effect by April, 1946. The necessary legislation involving 120 amendments to the Public Schools Act was prepared by Dr. S. J. Willis in his last year of office as Superintendent of Education. A bold decision to put the whole plan into effect at same time throughout the province was undertaken resulting in the consolidation of 650 school boards
with the new school boards being chosen as the old ones stepped down. British Columbia had obtained a large system of administrative units almost overnight, especially when compared to other provinces who made the transition to larger administrative units only after years of negotiating with the school boards of small districts.

The forging ahead in the implementation of recommendations made by the Cameron Report reflected the pace of change in British Columbia schools and society. The province entered a post war period where all aspects of society were rapidly expanding. The removal of a war-time price ceiling brought on a national wave of inflation which when coupled with the war babies coming of school age put enormous pressures on the school system. Wages and prices of materials had risen to the point where the fifty per cent provincial grant for school capital costs, implemented in 1945, was now inadequate and yet school boards had to somehow accommodate the increasing numbers of school age children.

The challenge of coping with the growth in the province necessitated making a series of financial adjustments. In 1948 the Legislature passed a number of amendments to the Public Schools Act which would allow for the equalization of sharing school taxes between school districts and the government. By 1955 the government considered it necessary to further restructure the financing to the degree that it bore little resemblance to the original Cameron formula; the restructuring was an acknowledgement that there was a difference between the local needs of a school board and its actual ability to subsidize the cost of these needs. The growth in school population, especially in the newly urbanized areas of the province did not have the tax base to support the spiralling costs of the local school system.

Dr. H.L. Campbell, the Deputy Minister of Education and his committee investigated
and made recommendations which would become known and adopted as the Campbell formula. Under the new formula were provisions for the equalization of tax assessments which would provide more adequately for the post war period which was not foreseen by the Cameron Report. By 1961 further amendments would be made in the formula and incorporated into legislation with the basic intention of providing equal educational opportunities to students throughout the province by basing educational grants on the reasonable taxation of resources within a school district.

With the growth and equalization in education however; came a sad epilogue. As in all major changes there would be trade offs. The consolidation was in some respects the winning of the larger urban model over the smaller rural one; rural schooling was now to become a reflection rather than a contrast to urban schooling. The small one room schools once the "hub of the community" were now to become dinosaurs of the past; with their passing went many settlements basis for existence for as Thomas and Adams state in their book *Floating School Houses and Frozen Inkwells*, "To have a schoolhouse however rough or small, meant that there really was a community." (Thomas, Adams, 1985, p. 36).

**SUMMARY**

To understand any aspect of British Columbian life one must examine it within the context of its geography for it is the Province's topography which makes its ten regions distinct from each other. Although each of the regions of the Province are unique they do share the commonality of relying on natural resources for economic survival. It has been resource exploitation which has afforded the opportunity for wealth but at times has had a propensity for
economic failure; the success of the Province and therefore the quality of everyday life has been reliant on the national and international need for natural resources.

Until the 1940’s British Columbia had struggled to equalize the geographic and economic disparities throughout its regions but it was not until the post war economic boom of the 1940’s that extensive improvements in communication and the technology of resource exploitation that the Province became more equalized. With the arrival of the 1950’s came a sharing of the prosperity of the Province which historically had been monopolized by the Lower Mainland and Vancouver Island.

By examining the history of the Province and the history of the Province’s schools it becomes apparent that the educational system has responded to the rhythm of the development of British Columbia. Schools, as an integral part of even the earliest settlement have benefitted from the economic good times, suffered in the bad times and responded to the needs of the community in preparing its children, socially and economically, for the future. Even the physical plant of the school has kept pace with the development of the Province with the one-room school house serving a small community being replaced over time by larger schools serving a more urbanized population where commuting is no longer a problem.

It can be concluded that everyday life in British Columbia schools, whether in the past or present, is a reflection of everything that makes up the character of the Province. It would be arrogant to examine everyday school life during the period of 1919 - 1959 without an examination of what the Province was like as a whole at that time lest we naively determine our conceptual base on what everyday school life means to us in this period of time. Conclusions about everyday school life during 1919 - 1959 can be made through an understanding of the
history of the Province and its educational system; however a richer and more meaningful understanding is possible through the recollections of those people who actually lived during the period. It is the belief that historical documentation through the recollections of participants provides a vital and unique link with the past, for unlike artifacts and documents which can wait over the centuries to be revealed, first party recollections fade with the passing of time. It is the combination of verified historical documentation with the recollections of people who lived during 1919 - 1959 that affords us the opportunity of understanding everyday school life in that period with a passion that is rooted in historical integrity.

**SELECTION OF INTERVIEW CANDIDATES**

Candidates for interviews were obtained by contacting nine Lower Mainland Retired Teacher’s Associations, which although based in the Lower Mainland, have memberships of teachers who during their careers taught throughout the Province; the British Columbia Teacher’s Federation provided the names, addresses and phone numbers of contact members for each of the Retired Teacher Associations. A letter of introduction and an explanation about the project was mailed to each contact member and was later followed up with a telephone call to discuss further the possibility of eliciting interview candidates (Appendix B). The response was very favorable with all nine associations providing names and phone numbers of members who agreed to be interviewed. Selection of interviewees from the names provided was based on the decision to have relatively equal representation of teachers who began their teaching careers throughout the time frame of 1919 - 1959. Fourteen candidates were selected who began their teaching careers in the following years and regions of British Columbia:
1919: Lower Mainland, Southern Interior
1925: Lower Mainland, Central Interior
1928: Lower Mainland
1928: Lower Mainland, Southern Interior
1936: Lower Mainland
1937: Lower Mainland, Central Interior, Vancouver Island
1940: Lower Mainland
1940: Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Northeast
1945: Lower Mainland
1947: Lower Mainland
1950: Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, Southern Interior, West Kootney
1950: Lower Mainland, Central Interior
1953: Lower Mainland, West Kootney
1955: Lower Mainland

A linear graph illustrates the distribution of representation during the period 1919 -1959 (Appendix C).
CHAPTER III

STORIES FROM THE PAST:

A PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

A TEACHER'S CREED

I believe in boys and girls, the men and women of tomorrow; in joy and song and laughter and music and sunshine and good fellowship in the schoolroom; in honest effort and hard work for myself and my pupils; in preparing, day by day, as best I can, the lessons I am to teach the boys and girls; in kind words for all and special encouragement for those who are slow; in patient forbearance for those who are weak and unsteady; in games and play for myself and my pupils; in cleanliness of person, neatness of dress, and purity of speech; in teaching thrift through care and economy in the use of working material and school property; in the stern condemnation of vice, cruelty, meanness and selfishness; and finally I believe in teaching politeness, courtesy, truthfulness and righteousness, not by much talking about these virtues but by living them day by day with my pupils and in the community of which I am a part.

-J.H.Putman-
The simplicity of John Harold Putman’s, "A Teacher’s Creed", represents a nostalgic commentary of what schooling must have been like in the 1930’s (Putman, 1938). For teachers to devote their lives to developing in their students "...good fellowship...cleanliness of person, neatness of dress, and purity of speech..." may not be acknowledged by many as epic in contributing to society and yet the importance of the contributions teachers have made to the collective experience of building the character of early British Columbia cannot be overlooked by historians. In listening, through interviews, to the thoughts, feelings, experiences and challenges of early teachers it becomes evident that the lives of teachers and the routines of everyday school life are significant enough to warrant historical attention; their unique "lived" experience is a vital part of our history which needs to be acknowledged, revealed and understood.

To document the story of teaching from 1919 - 1959 is difficult because of the innumerable participants and variety of experiences, but if the story is to be told with credibility then the reliance of a few to tell their stories of what it was really like must be utilized.

The subject of this chapter concerns the recollections of everyday school life for fourteen retired British Columbian teachers. Their transition from deciding to pursue teaching, to teaching training and eventually a long rich career in education is examined; all the participants have devoted themselves solely to careers in education, with some taking time out to have raised families, go to war or branch out to education related occupations such as administrators and university professors. Their stories are about their solitary persistence to build a life for themselves as educators as well, although at times perhaps unaware, contributing to the establishment of teaching and education in British Columbia.
The task of categorizing source material based on audiotapes and collections of photographs from personal collections is extremely difficult because each piece of information is intertwined into a collective whole. The stories about the city teachers in their first country school bring trying to shoo away a bull moose from the school grounds or the six year old child riding five miles by horseback to school in 40 degree below zero weather are not so much about the particular incidents as much as they are a commentary about a way of life. It is through listening to all the stories and examining the many faces in the photographs which gives us a collective understanding of what it was like to have lived and taught in British Columbia from 1919 - 1959.

**WHY BE A TEACHER?**

Who were these early teachers and why did they decide to pursue a career which would engage them in a low-profile and often low status occupation? A career that would demand they endure the hardships of living in remote parts of the province in often unbearable conditions. The majority of teaching positions were filled by women; however the teachers selected for this study represent fifty percent women and fifty percent men to allow for two perspectives of what the teaching experience was like.

For some of these teachers there was never a decision to be made. One woman who taught for thirty years said, "It never entered my mind to do anything else. Ever since I was three or four years old I played with my blackboard. I was the teacher and my dollies were the students. Even when the war came and the girls were quitting high school to make a lot of money working in the shipyards, I continued with my studies."
For others it seemed to be a destiny determined by heritage. One teacher stated, "I never thought to be anything else. My brother who was nine years older than me was a teacher and I looked up to him. Later my younger brother became a teacher. It was an occupation that our family encouraged." The other teacher who began her career in 1928 remembers "...our family moving to British Columbia in 1920. I was a farm girl from Saskatoon, but I knew I would become a teacher. I had an aunt and three uncles who were teachers."

Others felt teaching was suited to them because they were always leaders, whether in girl guides or clubs and school activities; they were encouraged by friends and teachers they admired to pursue teaching. Still others were motivated by mothers who said their sons and daughters were not going to "sit around the house." A teacher of forty years recollects how his mother escorted him to Normal School at 12th and Cambie Street in Vancouver and registered him, although he had no idea what Normal School was. His mother then arranged for him to live with his aunt in Vancouver while he attended classes.

For many teachers the economic times was a factor in deciding their future occupation. Two teachers had been attending the University of British Columbia, but could not afford to continue paying the tuition fees. One decided to devote himself long term to teaching whereas the other planned on teaching only long enough to be able to earn enough money to return to U.B.C. and complete an Engineering degree; both men enjoyed long and rewarding teaching careers for forty three years. For others there was not a lot of occupational choices as explained by a teacher who began his career in the 1940's in Peace River North region. "One didn't have many choices. The times were tough. I'd been picking berries for 12 cents an hour and wanted a higher paying and more respectable job. My buddy in high school convinced me to go Normal
School and my aunt lent me the $200 tuition fee which I paid back at $5 per month. You have to understand that these were hard times. I was eighteen years old and was paying back my aunt by working as a paper boy for $2 a day."

By the 1950's there was incentive for out of town residents, as defined as living outside of the regions of Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland to pursue teaching. A teacher, originally from Revelstoke, had been working at the local Post Office when she heard about the free tuition being offered at Victoria Normal School to out of town B.C. residents. Her decision to teach was like many teachers dictated by economics and lack of occupational options.

It became evident through the interviews that while there was a wide range of reasons for deciding to become a teacher, there was also evidence that the teachers shared a common view of life. They spoke of being "curious", "open to adventure", "wanting to trail blaze" and to be a "maverick". Whether they had pursued teaching reluctantly, with zeal or as a matter of consequences, they all agreed that their careers had been "extremely rewarding" and that "education had not let them down". As evidenced by the length of their careers ranging from 35 to 47 years their reasons for teaching were incidental; the important factor was that their decision to teach was personally the right one.
THE QUINTESSENTIAL TEACHER

"She would be diligent yet lively, alert to inattention, quick to question, her finger upon the mental pulse of each student'. This teacher would demand neat, concise writing, clear thinking and careful recapitulation, pacing the work steadily throughout the year and keeping accurate records of student progress. Under her encouragement, children would develop their imaginations, growing at length to enjoy their compositions, and appreciate - even love - the literary selections to be read. She would help children speak and draw well. But the key attribute of this teacher would be her ability and desire to see the true work of the school - the development of character".

-Donald L. MacLaurin-

These words spoken by Donald L. MacLaurin, the first principal appointed to the newly opened Victoria Normal School in 1914 were shared in definition and philosophy by Victoria's partner, the Vancouver Normal School which had been in operation since 1908 under the principalship of William Burns. In fact the two schools were very similar with common admission standards, examinations, diploma and certification requirements. They received the same support and coverage through the press and accounts of their work appeared in the superintendent's yearly reports on the public schools of B.C. Despite the commonalities between the two institutes the most distinguishable difference was one which was to prompt controversy and competition between the administrators of the Victoria and Vancouver schools. Although the Victoria school
was more accommodating in size it consistently recruited fewer students than the Vancouver school in the order of 45 to 237, January to May 1915 and 252 to 396 in 1924 - 25. (Calam. 1986, p. 79). Victoria appealed to students coming from outside of the Lower Mainland as it offered household science and manual training courses which were not available at the Vancouver Normal School. As well, the Victoria School housed its own two-room model school which enabled students to practice teaching without going out on weekly practicums as Vancouver students did. Despite the larger facility, model school and expanded curriculums Victoria had difficulty matching the enrolment of the Vancouver school; it was perhaps because boarding arrangements were easier for students and the density of population greater in the Lower Mainland that many opted for enrolment in the Vancouver school. The controversy over enrolment continued until 1919 when William Burns filed a proposal to send advanced students to Vancouver and preliminary students to Victoria. Ultimately the Education Minister J. D. MacLean decided that the policy of only allowing greater Vancouver and Lower Fraser Valley trainees to Vancouver Normal School and Victoria Normal school enroling the rest of the province's trainees would stand; however he did state that exceptions to this rule could be made which only continued to confuse the issue surrounding admission policy and balancing enrolment equally between the two institutes.

In the ensuing years the Vancouver and Victoria Schools proceeded with little change in initial policies and routines. As John Calam states,

"Somehow the day-to-day pre-occupation with getting paper off desks-invoices, vouchers, incidental reports, records, requisitions, testimonials, complaints, assessment, contracts, inquiries-together with certain seasonal events such as sessional openings, ceremonial closures, examinations and annual reports, stood in the way of long-range, more sustained exchanges over aims or ideals or learning or childhood...Having heralded and educational panacea - normal schools
- which their government had seen fit to inaugurate and leave to their collective professional care, three educational leaders [Burns, MacLaurin and Robinson] apparently discovered they had little time to explore essentially educational issues" (Calam. 1986, p 90).

The future teachers had little praise or criticism of their Normal School experience but instead, willingly accepted the curriculum, organization, studying, practicums and living arrangements. These teachers were from a society which was essentially credentialist; a society where future teachers would do without question whatever was required of them to teach.

Many graduates felt the practice teaching sessions for half a day every Friday afternoon in a model city classroom did not adequately prepare them for the rural classroom where nearly all teachers started their careers. One teacher remembers, "The day before I began my first teaching job was terrible. I'd graduated from Normal but felt I knew nothing about teaching." For most, the teacher training experience would be "discovered" during their first year in the classroom; as one teacher noted, "You had to have stamina and be very resourceful...you were on your own."

Normal School for many of the servicemen returning home from the Second World War meant an opportunity to receive occupational training paid by the Department of Veteran Affairs. Two teachers described how as veterans they had the choice of Veteran Affairs paying for new household furnishings or their tuition fees. One of the teachers who had served for seven years in the army explained how the servicemen would attend school year round and, in addition to having tuition fees paid, receive ninety dollars per month living expenses. On completion of the program the men were issued a permanent certificate which for non-service people was not issued until the completion of two years teaching. As the same teacher observed, "It made you wonder about the real value of the permanent certificate."
Despite the view that the Normal School experience was not considered by many graduates to have been particularly valuable, the teachers interviewed did agree that "quality" teacher training and education was helpful in preparing teachers for their occupations. In fact, five interviewees returned to school to pursue Masters degrees and one interviewee also completed a Doctorate. Interestingly all the interviewees who pursued Post graduate degrees were men. Only one of the women who taught from 1945 - 1980 returned to school to complete a Bachelors degree at the University of British Columbia; her motivation to complete the degree was because she was concerned that a university degree would become a mandatory requirement for all teachers. One might conclude that the men interviewed were more ambitious and more interested in career advancement; however it was circumstances which resulted in many women not considering it necessary to complete degree programs. Of the seven women interviewed four had at some time during their career held administrative positions. They explained how they were appointed to these positions during the war time when there was a shortage of men who traditionally had held school administrative positions. These women were not only successful and effective but they must have also demonstrated unique leadership qualities which during war times would include resourcefulness and dedication as they were appointed to these positions without any preliminary training, support or experience.

In conclusion, the Normal schools maintained a good reputation as educationally conservative teacher training institutes where the supremacy of practice teaching was emphasized. For most graduates the success of their experience at Normal school was measured by the fact that it certified them to teach; the quality of the program was not paramount. In fact, most interviewees found Normal School to be socially, rather than educationally enlightening.
where the school lessons may have been forgotten but the friends made were not. For many Normal School graduates the test of their ability to teach would not come until their first teaching job.

**SETTING OUT**

With the Normal School experience "out of the way" newly certified teachers set forth to find positions in schools throughout the province. For most, especially in the earlier years, a job meant moving for the school term to teach in the many one-room school houses scattered over untamed parts of British Columbia. The new teachers, just as they were accepting of the Normal School experience, gave little consideration about location, comforts or living conditions; for new teachers the main objective was to get a job.

For some the opportunity to move out of town was promising especially as most of the teachers were young and inexperienced. Normal school graduates were usually eighteen years old; however a few were even younger. As one teacher recalls,

"I had to lie about my age because I was only seventeen when I applied for the job in 1919 at Robbins Range in the Upper Country. My father had died a few years earlier from septic poisoning and I had been living at home with mother. I sent out one letter to the Secretary of the School Board in Kamloops and he telegraphed back that I got the job. Mother didn’t want me to go but I needed to get out of the city, be on my own and make some money. Some girls would have thought the job was terrible but it turned out to be a wonderful experience. I remember the train pulling up to the station and seeing only one very scruffy looking man standing on the platform; he turned out to be the Secretary of the School Board. We walked through a howling wind to his buckboard. I was so embarrassed. We used to wear long tight skirts in those days and you hobbled in them rather than walked. I had to practically pull my skirt up to my waist to get up onto the bench. We drove to the top of the mountains to a log cabin where I would board with a lovely American family. I was lucky they were so nice and that my school was only five miles from my new home. It was beautiful country; when you looked up to the sky all you could see were the tall lodge pole
pines. It was the beginning of the best year of my life. I was by myself, but I was never lonely and there were so many things to learn."

By the late 1920's teaching jobs were not easy to find which resulted in any offer being attractive. In 1928 just one year prior to the depression, a teacher explained how he had sent out thirty applications but received only one response for a position at Fife, near Fort Fraser for $1,240 a year. In the same year another woman teacher accepted a job at Spences Bridge for $76 per month out of which she had to pay $50 per month to board in the local hotel because the town had no other living arrangements for the teacher.

By the 1930's the depression had paid its toll on teachers as it did in all sectors of life. One woman teacher was delighted to get an appointment in Burnaby when the current teacher had to resign because she got married. The starting salary was $72 per month; however Burnaby went into receivership and teacher's salaries were reduced to $32 per month which was paid through a provincial government grant. Fortunately the teacher and her parents lived in Burnaby and were able to make a barter arrangement with City Hall; the taxes on their home did not have to be paid in exchange for their daughter not receiving a teaching salary. As the teacher commented, "It was amazing how people coped in the depressions years. I felt we were lucky not having to pay our city taxes in exchange for me teaching. We were broke but felt fortunate because we were able to keep our home."

When World War II broke out most of the men joined the services resulting in school districts desperately looking for teachers and administrators. There were a lot of opportunities for women and many even felt pressured to return to teaching. Women, who in the past had not been allowed to teach once they were married were now being told it was their patriotic duty to return to the classroom. One teacher who began her career in Spences Bridge in 1928 and
had resigned in 1934 when she married could not resist the offer to teach again in the 1940's.

"The school inspector from Surrey phoned and told me I better help the War effort by going back into the classroom. I told him I had young children, and because I lived in New Westminster there was no way I could get to work everyday. The inspector called me back and said he had a principalship for me in a nine room school for $1,000 a year and that he had also arranged for someone to pick me up and deliver me home each day. He explained that the previous principal had joined the air force and I was expected to be at school on Monday morning. The job turned out to be a real blessing because shortly after my husband, who was a policeman for New Westminster, was told he could not work anymore because of his tuberculosis. Luckily my mother could take care of the children and I was kept busy at work while my husband recovered in the sanatorium...I had been used to doing without during the depression years so when I got my first paycheck I went down Columbia Street and bought shoes and nighties for the children and a bolt of unbleached cotton which mother made into bedding."

Many married women with children were willing to return to the classroom only if the position was within reasonable distance to home; since few people owned cars and roads were poor a school defined as close to home meant it had to be within walking or cycling distance. The more remote school districts had to rely on single women or men who had not enlisted. One male teacher sold his motorbike for $62 and bought a car for $62.50 to drive himself and two other teacher buddies to the Peace River North; his buddies shared the cost of the gas for the long journey to Upper Pine which was thirty miles north of Fort St. John and the second most northerly school in British Columbia with the closest railway being ninety miles south in Dawson Creek.

The great migration of teachers to remote parts of the province during the 1920's and 30's would never be matched in the late 1940's and 50's despite the shortage of teaching jobs during these later years. Improved transportation and communication made schools more accessible and increased urbanization gave rise to more schools being built; many new teachers
were able to secure positions relatively close to home. For others, the desire to seek out a more rugged and exciting lifestyle lured them to positions in the more remote parts of British Columbia; these "trail blazers" unlike their predecessors moved out of town not because of necessity, but rather because of the possibility for adventure. Two teachers interviewed actually turned down positions in Lower Mainland schools in favor of out of town experiences; both men were not disappointed with their choices. One explained how he wanted to live the "rural experience" and in 1950 headed to Upper Fraser, east of Prince George, on the CN line where he taught for one year in a three room school before moving to Fort Fraser, then part of the Prince George School District; it was to be as much a learning experience for him as it was for his students. The second teacher interviewed had not only accepted a position out of town but also agreed to work with thirty eight grade seven students who had been labelled as "slow" or "troublemakers". He described how the year was a very positive experience and that he and his students were very successful which he attributed to "...learning very early in my career that you get what you ask for. There are of course limitations but these were school children...it was considered in the school to be the worst teaching assignment but, I was strict with them and they never disappointed me." Interestingly, the two teachers who sought out the adventure of moving to a rural area were later to be very successful in their educational careers. One became an Assistant Superintendent and the other became a university professor.

Ironically, one new teacher who was nineteen years old and from Kamloops had applied to Lower Mainland school districts in search of a more urban work experience. She learned quickly that much of the Lower Mainland in the 1950's was still very rural when she arrived at her first one room school, Ferndale Elementary in the Mission School District. She was to teach
grades one through three to thirty one farm children of which twenty one were very active but wonderful little boys. She was also appointed principal since she was the only teacher and received a twenty five dollar per month allowance in addition to her $160 per month teaching salary. She recalled that "I earned every cent of the principal's allowance especially when I had to balance the register in June. I was the teacher, the principal and quite often the janitor. That first year our school janitor who lived next door was very pregnant so I helped out because I couldn't have her doing any of the heavy work".

For some teachers there had been little choice as to where they would teach whereas, for others they were afforded the luxury of being able to be more selective. Despite the varying circumstances or whether they began their careers as early as 1919 or as late as 1950 all the teachers agreed that their first school was the easiest to recollect. Although these teachers had enjoyed rich careers which had taken many turns since the day they faced their first class, their early impressions and fond memories remain sharp and clear.

**WHERE DOES THE TEACHER LIVE?**

Living conditions for teachers were as varied as the communities throughout the province; however many of the smaller towns especially prior to 1940 would have one of the local families board the teacher. As one teacher who began her career at Fraser Lake during the depression explained,

"...it was a toss your lot with the lucky family winning the teacher. I lived in a two room log house with the husband, wife, two small children and two of the wives's brothers. There was no work available for the family members so all of us had to be fed on the twenty-five dollars a month allowance from the school
board for keeping me. The family was pleasant enough, but the food was terrible. We ate frozen moose meat and potatoes three times a day and it always tasted the same. I soon learned from the teachers in neighboring schools to buy tinned fruits and vegetables and bring them to school to eat. I don’t think I could have survived on the moose meat and potatoes; it was wonderful to have the support and friendship of other teachers and to exchange ideas that helped to make life easier."

The boarding house experience was positive for most of the teachers interviewed, especially for the women who felt safer living with a family rather than alone in a teacherage. The living conditions with the boarding family were rugged but it did not necessarily mean they were unhappy. The seventeen year old teacher who began her career in 1919 at Roberts Range remembers with pleasure the "lovely American couple" she lived with. She described how the wife was very citified and would set out her linens and china for each meal in the small drafty log house and how the husband was considerate and respectable because he always worked in the barn when the women had their baths. The teacher although being very petite could get the bath water from the creek but could never manage carrying the pail up the hill to the house, so she would pay the farmboy twenty-five cents to bring the water up to house so it could be heated on the wood stove for the weekly bath. She realized her boarding situation was especially good when she visited her friend Mary, another teacher who boarded about ten miles away. "Poor Mary had to go home to Vancouver at Christmas time because her pneumonia wouldn’t clear up. I stayed with her one week-end and we shared a bed. You could see the stars through the gaps in the roof rafters and the bedding never dried out from the rain. The mattress was stuffed with raw wool which gave off a terrible smell when it was wet. I was sad when Mary had to leave, but I was happy too...the poor girl would have died up there."

For two of the male teachers living in a teacherage was a much better alternative to
boarding with a family. One teacher enjoyed the solitude and convenience of living in the teachers’ quarters above his two room school in the Prince George area whereas the other teacher found the teacherage, which was a one room cabin across from the general store in Upper Pine was far better than boarding with the local school trustee’s family in a house where the teacher’s bedroom, cornered off by a bedsheet curtain, was shared with the family chickens.

In some communities the only living arrangements were in the local hotel which demanded a large portion of the teachers’ salary in rent. For one teacher who lived in the hotel at Spences Bridge it was a lively existence with lots of people “passing through with interesting stories. The town people looked on me as an oddity sometimes making me feel like an outsider, but then a lot of them kept to their own kind. If you were with the railway then you associated with rail people and the same for the miners and lumberjacks. In the dining room there was only one table set with a linen table cloth which was reserved for myself and any travelling salesmen. The rest of the tables had oil cloths because the men were dirty from working. I remember they never called my be my name, to them I was always ‘teacher’.”

By the late 1940’s most teachers were able to find suitable living arrangements without help from the community. Living with a friend of the family or a relative was a popular choice as well as sharing a basement suite with another teacher. For many the living arrangements were not a priority especially for early teachers who had little time to observe their surroundings because of the enormous amount of seat work which had to be prepared each night for the students of varying grades. For the later teachers, who worked hard but had the benefit of improved teaching conditions, home was merely a place to briefly hang their hat before heading off to school, a weekend dance or a trip to the local town.
A PLACE TO TEACH: THE SCHOOL HOUSE

There is no one model which typifies a British Columbia school especially during the early days when each community was responsible for building the local school house; however, the one building which perhaps conjures the most romantic image of early school days is in the one room log house made from local timber felled and skidded by the men in the community. The logs were left in the round or sometimes hewn flat with a broad axe. The experienced axemen would dove-tail or saddlenotch the corners and the crevices were chinked with mud and moss and later cotton batting when the mud and moss eventually fell out. The floors were either dirt or whip-sawn planks and if milled lumber was available the walls and ceiling might be finished with boards. The roof poles were often covered with cedar shakes which over the years would lift and become covered in lichen and moss. Some school roofs, surprisingly even in the interior of the province had flat roofs. As one teacher who taught in the Vanderhoof area recalled, "I questioned why they would ever build a flat roof every morning as I was shovelling off the snow after a heavy storm."

The little buildings were accompanied by a small barn for the horses usually set in the wilderness with the wild grassy fields providing a playing area for the children. Schools were often built by a water source such as a river or lake which at times proved to be precarious. One teacher remembers one of her six year old students almost drowned when she fell off the raft the boys had built. "The big boys had to drag her out by her collar and I had to fashion her a dress from towels and safety pins so she had something to wear at school that day." With the coming of winter the lake was safer to play on but it also meant the school was without any water supply. Some teachers would try and melt ice in a pail on the wood stove, but the room
was so cold and the stove so inefficient that the ice was still solid at the end of the day. A comical recollection about the lack of water supply was told by the same Vanderhoof teacher who had to shovel snow off the flat school roof. "I would never have considered using melted snow from around the school for drinking water, especially when the girls were always complaining that the boys were stopping their trip short on the snowy trail to the outhouse."

In addition to a questionable and often unreliable water supply nearly all early schools had no electricity. Some schools were provided with gas lamps but most teachers did not use them because "it was such a production to light them"; other teachers purchased a kerosene lamp for their desk so they could do work at school after the children had left for the day. The length and hours of the school day was usually dictated by available natural light with the children sometimes leaving school as early as 2:00 p.m. during the darker winter months. Lighting conditions even affected the implementation of the required curriculum as one teacher remembers trying to teach the MacLean Method of Writing. "It was quite ridiculous because the MacLean Method specified that the natural light should come into the room over the left shoulder of the student. Some days we could hardly see our papers; either there was not enough day light or the smoke from the pot bellied stove filled the room."

The heat source during the colder months was provided by a pot bellied stove or an old metal drum at the back of the room with a metal stove pipe radiating some heat as it ran the length of the room along the ceiling. Many teachers remember thawing frozen inkwells on the stove and huddling desks together at the back of the room when temperatures dropped sometimes as low as 40 degrees below zero.

Some communities found it easier to house the school in a vacant building such as the
old government building at Fife School just above Christina Lake. It was 1925 and the teacher remembers having to seat forty one students into the tiny room; it was so crowded that the first row of desks were less that six feet from the front wall and the teacher’s desk was crammed in the corner. Probably the most unique schools were built on the log floats or rafts along the west coast of the province. The unending forest which stretches from the shoreline to the mountaintop made it impossible and uneconomical for the travelling or "gyppo" logging companies to build on land, so their only alternative was to build floating communities. Early in the 1930’s one teacher remembered her first job teaching on a floating camp. She taught twenty five school children in a camp of 150 of which she was the only single woman. The life was described as "wild and rugged" with the highlight being almost drowned when a storm blew up as the camp was being moved. "The classroom was tiny but the two brothers who owned the camp made sure I got the supplies I needed...it was an exciting year but I don’t think I could have worked there much longer. The people, especially the single men, were friendly but you never got a moment of privacy. The whole community lived on the float and there was no where else to go."

By the 1940’s many log schools were still being used in remote communities, however few new log structures were being built. The government and local school boards were now sharing the cost of erecting schools, resulting in a less romantic looking, but certainly more efficient and functional building. These newer schools were built high off the ground to accommodate a ground level basement which was used for storage and a play area for the children during inclement weather; the washroom was also in the basement if the school was fortunate to have indoor plumbing. A main set of stairs at front of the school led up the cloak
room and a second set of fire exit stairs were located at the back of the building. Children, called to class by the teacher’s hand bell, would obediently line up at the bottom of the stairs of the white washed school. The teacher would lead them into the cloak room where they would hang up their coats and lunch pails on the row of coat hooks. The children would then enter the classroom and sit in their desks which were attached to runners with usually three desks to a set of runners. Desks on runners were used as early as 1919 and some teachers in the rural areas still remember them in classrooms as late as the 1950’s; the runners kept the rows of desks orderly and made it easier to move the desks to the side of the class for functions such as a Christmas concert or school dance. There were some two seater desks, however most were single seaters. The remote school districts were known to receive the cast off desks from the urban schools in the Lower Mainland; many country teachers recall having an odd array of desks being delivered to school and having to seat a six year old in a desk designed for a student six feet tall. A teacher from the Upper Country affectionately recalls how the, "wee ones feet in stockings filthy from the old oiled wooden floor would dangle from the desks built large enough for a man to sit at. The parents helped out by making little stools so the smaller children had somewhere to rest their feet."

The school rooms, whether in the log house or more modern clapboard sided building were very spartan. At the front of the class was the black slate board and the teacher’s desk, which sat facing the rows of students’ desks. The wood stove, which was stoked by either the teacher or a janitor who was usually a student, sat at the back of the room flanked by the wood box and a broom. There was a shelf for a few textbooks and sometimes a globe on one side of the room; in some schools a roller map of the world was anchored on the wall. Often there was
a piano or organ although many teachers could not play them; a parent would usually volunteer
to play at the Christmas concert or school dances. The room was illuminated by natural light
which came from a row of windows on one side of the classroom; the rationale of having
windows only on one side came from the "MaClean Method of Writing" where optimum writing
conditions were created from natural light streaming from one direction, preferably over the left
shoulder. The large windows had a transom at the top which allowed for ventilation without
having students potentially fall out and green roller blinds were installed for, when necessary,
blocking out light.

As communities grew so did the size of the schools; the traditional one room white
washed clapboard building was expanded to two rooms and in later years the basements were
used for additional classrooms. It was not uncommon to have a second building constructed
with grades one to seven in one building and grades eight, nine, ten, junior and senior
matriculation students in the second building. By the 1950's brick was being incorporated into
the construction of new schools because the buildings were now much larger; older schools were
cosmetically modernized and additions built. The new and expanded schools lacked architectural
aesthetics however they did, as one Trail teacher remembers, ...."have high ceilings and lots of
space. The were airy, not pokey like many of today's schools."

Whether the building was made of log or white washed clapboard, one or twenty rooms,
isolated in a grassy wild field or close to the heart of a bustling community it was not the
structure which defined what the school was, but rather the personality of the teachers and
students that inhabited it. It was the daily activities, whether mundane or extraordinary which
occurred in the building over the years; it was, just as it is true of today's schools, the staff,
EVERYDAY LIFE: ARRIVING AT SCHOOL

Until the 1940's poor roads and an unsophisticated communication system kept remote communities isolated from the rest of the province especially the Lower Mainland where many teacher had originated. Teachers working, for example, in the Peace River or Upper Country were unable to easily phone family or friends or visit them during school vacations; travel was difficult and expensive and telephones often non-existent. Teachers relied on the mail for communication; and often embellished their letters for mother and father to reinforce that their lifestyle was rugged and their job an adventure.

Once settled in the boarding house, teacherage or local hotel the teacher had to make arrangements for getting to school each day. Some teachers were fortunate to be loaned a horse owned by the boarding family or in the case of one Peace River teacher, from one of the local Indians. Teachers who had never sat in a saddle were brought to the barn and introduced to a large cold blooded horse that was usually docile but only half broke. For most teachers the experience was positive and they appreciated the friendship of "Apache", "Bud" or "Daisy" especially on weekends when riding became a recreational past time and opportunity to explore the countryside. A young female teacher remembers the single cowboys in the Upper Country who were very willing to spend their spare time teaching her how to ride. She recalls how the horse bolted the first time she put her foot in the stirrup. "I learned very quickly that you had to swing your other leg over the saddle as soon as your foot hit the stirrup, otherwise you would
be left sitting in the dirt...my hair always looked wild after a day of riding. It [hair] had twigs
stuck in it and I was covered in dirt. Those first few weeks riding I spent more time falling off
than I did sitting in the saddle."

When winter came the teachers and students harnessed their horses to homemade wooden
sleighs; once they arrived at school the sleighs would be stored on the sod roof of the school
barn away from small wild animals, and the horses were tied up inside. Some families did not
own a horse so the children would hitch the sturdy family dog to a toboggan for a trip to school
which was often over five miles; still other children had to persevere the bitter cold by walking
to school. The most difficult season to travel to school was in the winter. The general rule was
that school was closed when the temperature dropped to 40 degrees below zero; however an
official closure was never announced because there were no local radio stations. A teacher from
the Peace River in the 1930's remembers riding to school one winter morning to find that no
children had arrived. By 10:a.m. only one student, who was also the school janitor, had arrived
and he and the teacher played ping pong; the two finally left school at 2:00 p.m. when it was
obvious that no other children would be coming to school. The teacher later learned that the
temperature that day was 50 degrees below zero. He stated, "The children would often come
when it was 40 degrees below zero, even the six year olds would ride to school, but 50 degrees
below zero was just too cold for everybody."

Teachers who did not have a horse learned to cross country ski or snowshoe in the winter
months. A Fort Fraser teacher laughed about how she dressed for school in the 1930's. "In the
winter I would wear ski pants to school but would change into a dress for the day because you
were expected to be ladylike. I would either walk or ski to school but once, when the lake froze
over, I tried riding my bicycle. My bike skidded on the ice and I must have hit my head because I passed out. I was fortunate that I did not die in the cold, but I came to, picked up my bike and pushed it to school." Another teacher recalled being loaned a racoon coat from one of the diamond drillers at Spences Bridge. "I was so cold that winter because I did not have a proper coat; one of the drillers was kind enough to lend me his. It smelled terrible and the front was shiny from tobacco spit. I did not mind though, because at least I was warm."

Travelling to school was easier once winter had passed; however each season had its trials. The spring rains made travel difficult and teachers learned from their students to use elastic bands to stop their boots from being sucked off in the gumbo mud. In the summer mosquitoes and black flies were abundant and some teachers would wrap newspapers around their legs and under their stockings to avoid being bitten. A Burnaby teacher remembers an especially rainy season during the depression, "The children were very poorly dressed but nobody noticed because everyone suffered in the depression. I remember two boys whose father had been a bank manager in the Prairies. He lost his job and they came West with no money. The boys lived down by Deer Lake and had a long walk to school. They wore sacks on their backs to keep the rain off of and then would hide the sacks in the bushes by the school. Everyone knew about the sacks, but did not say anything. It was all the boys had to wear in the rain and people in those days accepted that."

Despite the difficulties of travelling to school most teachers expressed they were rarely if ever late for school. A teacher for 37 years remembers only being late for school twice and both times were during his first year teaching in 1939 at Fife School in the Peace River North. He was one of the fortunate few in the community who owned a car, but the on the first
morning of school he had a flat tire. He changed the tire but found the children had left by the time he arrived at school. He explained that the children, all liked school but any excuse for a day off was taken advantage of. The second time the teacher was late was when he was asked to drive one of the student’s mother to the hospital thirty miles away because she was having a difficult labor; he jokes about never making it back to school that day and that the woman did not have her child until one week later.

After the 1940’s more people bought cars however they were still considered expensive to run and roads continued to be difficult to travel on; it was not uncommon for teachers to car pool and share the gasoline costs. Teachers who lived and taught in the Lower Mainland were able to commute on the interurban which was described by a Burnaby teacher who began her career in 1950 as being like a large street car that ran on tracks. The interurban only ran once an hour so it was imperative that teachers were punctual otherwise they would miss the interurban and connecting bus which would bring them to the outlying country areas such as Surrey.

Students in the 1940’s and 50’s continued in the remote areas to ride horses to school; however increased population now brought schools within reasonable walking distance. School buses became the solution for bringing students from remote areas to the local school. Teachers were also known to be a school bus passenger like the Mission teacher who was driven to school before the children were picked up and driven home after the children were brought home at the end of the day. “My schedule had to be very structured. I could not stay late after school to do work or extra curricular activities because we could not have the driver waiting...besides, the children had to go home after school to do farm chores.”
The most unique school bus story happened in 1946 at Sooke Elementary where the school bus driver was also the principal and a teacher. He decided to accept the job of driving the students from Jordan River to Sooke because he needed the $4 per day driver's salary. When asked if he encountered problems being a teacher, driver and principal to the students he replied that he bought himself a bus driver's hat so he would feel more official and the students would find it easier to distinguish him from when he was the principal or the teacher. The smaller communities were more accepting of people assuming many occupational roles because there was a limited population. The same teacher remembers driving the whole community to a funeral for six school boys who had died in a tragic car accident; the teacher drove family and friends to the funeral not because he was obligated to as the bus driver or because he had taught the boys, but rather he drove them to the funeral because he was a member of the community.

Early teachers accepted that commuting would at times be difficult but still they readily accepted the challenge. Unlike today's teachers who assume when they set forth to their teaching positions that commuting will be convenient and comfortable, early teachers had to share the trail to school with wolves, bears, moose and the occasional stray cow. They had to persevere the bitter cold of winter, ankle deep mud from Spring rains and the black flies and mosquitoes in the warm summer months. They rose at dawn to drive or catch the schoolbus, saddle up their horse or walk the five miles to school. Despite the hardships that many teachers had to endure, all the teachers interviewed remembered their experiences fondly. The trials endured were remembered with laughter and an occasional nostalgic tear. As one teacher said, "Somehow the severity of the time has mellowed over the years especially when I'm remembering fifty years later in my comfortable living room."
EVERYDAY LIFE: SURVIVING THE CURRICULUM

"The teacher in the country school, expounding lesson sum and rule, and teaching children how to rise to heights where lasting honor lies, deserves a fat and handsome wage, for she's a triumph of this age.

No better work than hers is done beneath the good old shining sun; she builds the future of the state; she guides the youths who will be great; she gives the childish spirit wings, and points the way to noble things."

-Walt Mason, 1930-

These words written by Canadian rhymester Walt Mason depicts the early teacher as full of confidence and expertise ready to accept any challenge. Early teachers pursued their positions with enthusiasm but it was usually combined with trepidation as their training in Normal School did not prepare them for the realities of their first teaching experience whether in a remote one room school or a larger building in a more urbanized community. The transition from Normal school student to teacher or of shifting from the realm of teacher preparation to professional responsibility was both dramatic and traumatic for teachers. Most communities had great faith in the teacher and would provide moral support; but it was the expectation that the role of educating the children while in school would be fulfilled by the teacher. The autonomy of the teacher had appeal for the seasoned professional, but to the young and inexperienced teacher it was often intimidating. In the first weeks of teaching many learned to forfeit their idealism and
begin to develop survival skills which would maintain their sanity and classroom harmony while still meeting the expectations of the inspector on his annual visit to the school.

The Department of Education's contribution to assisting teachers in developing a curriculum was to deliver to the school a series of thick blue and red manuals prescribing a course of study in detailed lessons with sub-headings of "suggested procedures", "motivations" and "follow-up activities." Teachers at first overwhelmed by the manuals which mandated fundamentals in reading, grammar, writing, arithmetic, science, nature study, social studies, health, physical education, music and drawings soon realized that methods for implementing the curriculum would have to rely on their resourcefulness and ingenuity especially for the teachers faced with a class of as many as twenty students divided unevenly into up to eleven grades. It would be the Department of Education manuals which would dictate what to teach but it would ultimately be the teacher who would determine how to teach the material based on the uniqueness of their situation.

The teachers interviewed who had taught prior to the mid 1940's stressed the importance of "seatwork". From the beginning of the day at 9:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m., with the exception of recess and lunch hour, students were expected to remain in their seats and complete assignments which were mostly written on the black slate board at the front of the class. Despite the varying grades students did not help each other. When one teacher was asked if the older students helped the younger children he replied, "Heavens no, we didn't allow them speak to each other." It was the expectation that all instruction was given by the teacher in the form of boardwork, lectures and circulating around the classroom.

The task of planning and writing out lessons on the blackboard was very time consuming
with teachers filling the boards in the morning with exercises and doing the same thing at noon hour and after school. Teachers, in an effort to lessen their board work were prompted to seek out ways to make the job easier. A technique commonly used by teachers was to design assignments which through minor changes were suitable for more than one grade. Spelling lists would have words starred or coded for each grade and the addition of an extra column of numbers or changing a subtraction sign to multiplication created a math problem that the older students could solve. Generally, teachers planned their lessons at home during the evenings and transferred the work onto the blackboard when they arrived at school; however one Fraser Lake teacher devised her own ingenious portable blackboard. "I took the green roller blinds off the school window and took them home each night to write my lessons on. The chalk worked beautifully on the fabric and I could have all my lessons ready the night before. The blinds also gave me extra space so I didn’t have to erase a lesson that could be used later." The same teacher also spent her first paycheck on the purchase of a typewriter and a box of carbon paper. She could type three work sheets at a time and although, tediously slow by today’s standards, the typewriter was described by the teacher as "invaluable". Two other teachers remembered the hectograph duplicator, which consisted of a metal pan filled with a special duplicating jelly. The teachers would write out the worksheet on paper using the special purple hectograph pencil. The master copy was then carefully pressed down onto the jelly pad, which made a purple inked impression. Copies were made by pressing succeeding sheets of papers onto the pad; teachers could make up to ten copies with each copy becoming progressively blurred. Many teachers remember preparing each night the worksheets for the following day in the dim light of the kitchen and being thankful for the help of modern technology.
Another help for the teacher was a box of books sent twice a year to the school from the Provincial library in Victoria. The schools were loaned fifty books at a time which they would pay the freight cost. The arrival of the books was an exciting time for the teacher and the community as many parents also borrowed the books. One teacher recalls that, "It was wonderful being able to get books on loan. Our school only had a few readers and textbooks which were in terrible shape. Few had covers and they had all been scribbled in by the children over the years. The library books were story and reference books and everyone treated them with great care. Very few families owned books so they really appreciated being able to borrow from the school."

Realizing the value of a school library a teacher in the Kamloops area in the 1920's decided to try and expand their collection to include discarded books from the Kamloops Public library. The librarian was so delighted the discarded books would be used, rather than burned, that she sent rolls of sticky binding tape so the teacher and students could repair the books. Another resourceful teacher from the Upper Country wrote a letter to an American teacher's magazine requesting any old copies that were not needed; she was rewarded with a free class set of new magazines which she remembers being used until they were very "dog eared".

In addition to the curriculum mandated by the Department of Education teachers amazingly fit into their timetables subject matter which was deemed either important by the teacher, Inspector, or the parents of the community. One Vancouver teacher who found herself teaching in the Cariboo in the 1930's was terrified at the thought of having to lecture on farming when she knew nothing about the subject. "The parents and the Inspector thought it was important for the children to know how to plow a field and choose the right seeds for planting
so I had my friends in Vancouver send me all the reference books they could find about farming. I would stay up half the night reading and preparing for my lectures and somehow I muddled through."

Other aspects of the curriculum were enthusiastically introduced by teachers because they deemed them important. One teacher remembers enlightening the children to "city manners" where you said "excuse me", "please" and "thank you". The children learned not to wear their boots in class and to change into "Sunday best shoes", if they owned a pair, for the school dances. The teacher bought white cotton at the local Hudsons Bay Company and her mother sent left over embroidery threads so the children could learn "fancy work". "I showed the children how to hand sew a shoe bag and then I had them pencil their names on the bag. I taught them how to embroider over the pencil using simple stitches. Some of the work was beautiful and the children were so proud when they hung their bags on the coat hooks at the back of the classroom. Time was never a factor in the 1920's; on a sunny day we would sit outside and sew. The children, even the boys, were patient and they would sit and sew for hours."

The simplicity of school life prior to the mid 1940's was also reflected in the school supplies. A teacher would receive a box of chalk, pointer, ink and bottles, handbell, strap, register, paste, worn textbooks, foolscap and manilla drawing paper which would have to last the duration of the school year. The paucity of supplies was not because education was not deemed important enough to warrant more, but rather it was because society as a whole did not need or demand a lot materially. It was a time when nothing was wasted; paper filled on one side with students' work was turned over to the blank side and folded into sketching books;
Sears and Eatons catalogues were cut up and used in Social Studies and art projects and discards from the community such as fabric scraps and threads were treasured by teachers who were always looking for interesting things to do beyond the three R's. Learning "fancy work" or "city manners" was an enjoyable departure from the mundane rote memory lessons that teachers and students obediently endured.

By the mid 1940's increased urbanization had a great impact on all sectors of life including schooling. The romantic quaintness of life in the one room schools was disappearing but with it went aspects of schooling, such as an unrealistic teaching load with little or no support, that would not be missed. The increased density of population encouraged expansion in schools where staffs of teachers could supportively work together. The remote one room school would still survive, but it would be the exception with larger Elementary, and Superior and High schools, where teachers at most taught two succeeding grades in one classroom, becoming the norm.

The rituals of daily school life after the mid 1940's did not alter greatly. The school day was from 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and students still lined up outside when the handbell, or electric bell in larger schools, was rung. A Burnaby teacher remembers in the 1950's how she would lead the elementary school children to their classes while her colleague played children's marching music on the piano. When the weather was poor the children were allowed to line up in the school basement and if the poor weather continued they would play downstairs at recess and lunch hour with the boys and girls segregated by a partition. A Richmond teacher laughed about the squeals and commotion at his school when one of the boys would open the doors to the girls side of the school basement.
Seatwork and the lecture approach continued to be the most popular teaching strategies used. A Richmond teacher remembers how he would use the question and answer technique with students in his Science classes. "I would demonstrate an experiment, unlike today where students do the lab work, and while the students watched I would ask questions; if the knew the answer they would put up their hands. The students would then read their textbooks and I would have them complete worksheets that I had made." It was because class sizes had become considerably larger in the 1940's and 1950's that teachers required as many as fifty worksheets for one class. The introduction of the Gestetner duplicator was invaluable and its predecessor, the hectograph, soon became obsolete. The Gestetner required the teacher to write out the worksheet on a special carbon; the purple ink was transferred onto a master copy which was clipped into a metal rotating drum. The drum was turned with a hand crank producing over one hundred copies. The art of the Gestetner was to turn the drum rhythmically so only one piece of paper was fed into the machine per rotation. Teachers would have enough worksheet copies for every student to complete since all children were taught on the assumption that they learned the same way and at the same pace; differentiation between students with the exception of grade level based on age was rare.

The teachers interviewed who taught during the 1940 and 1950's felt that Normal school and university had not prepared them for the fact that children have special needs and that the schools, although increasingly aware of the diversity of their students, did not provide adequate support in the form of programs and teacher assistance. Teachers expressed frustration when recalling having to prepare up to fifty students, in a class that was far from homogeneous, for the newly urbanized and technological society. A Richmond teacher remembered how, "each
year we would give the same test and we always expected a high failure rate. Those students who failed would repeat the course and inevitably end up failing the same test the following year. Eventually the system failed them and they got tired of trying. We had a lot of students drop out but at least in those days you could get a reasonable job...I decided later in my career to become a school counsellor because I did not think the students were getting the help they needed." A Mission teacher recalled how she was shocked on her first day of teaching in 1954 when she asked the students to pick up their red crayon.

"This little boy Steven asked me, 'What was red?' I realized then that some children were so needy. I didn't know how to help Steven, but we seemed to manage. There was one woman from the School Board who occasionally visited my class, but I was not sure what her role was; I think she may have been a district principal. I was very intimidated by her because I was a young teacher and my school was where this woman had previously taught. I don't think she liked the way I did things, because it was different from her ways, so I never asked for help and she never volunteered any...I still think about Steven and wonder how his life turned out. He made such an impression on me that so many children needed special help but didn't get any."

A Langley teacher agreed that the special learning needs of children was not addressed by the schools; however he did state that the schools and community during the 1950's assumed a greater role in ensuring that children were healthy. "When I started teaching back in the 30's the parents were responsible for their children's health; teachers had to be careful not to interfere with families and how they raised their children. In those days it was obvious that a lot of the children had poor diets; sometimes they were inadequately dressed for the winter and rainy season, but it was not because they were neglected. Their families loved them, but they just didn't have the money to buy proper food and clothing." A Fraser Lake teacher remembers the first day teaching during the Depression. "The morning had gone very well but at lunch hour the children all started coughing. It was terrible, it scared me to death because all of them were
spitting up blood. I learned later from a parent that the children had whooping cough but had been sent to school because all of them were sick; there was no concern about it being contagious. Apparently the coughing was aggravated when the children ate something. I remember thinking, 'Oh my lord they are all going to die on me! I was eighteen years old so I knew nothing about children's illnesses.'

By the 1950's the economy was good and fewer children were sick as a result of poor diets and clothing. Public health nurses regularly visited schools to check children's hearing and eyesight and a doctor would visit once a year to prescribe iodine tablets for children whose diets were iodine deficient. As well, immunization clinics were held in schools and children would be vaccinated for tuberculosis, diphtheria and polio. A Vancouver teacher remembers, the children being herded down to the gymnasium where a team of uniformed nurses would efficiently give them their shots. "The children were so quiet and wide eyed as they stood in straight lines one behind the other obediently waiting for their turn."

The influx of immigrant families into Canada in the 1950's brought greater numbers of children who could not speak English into the classroom. These students did not receive any extra help learning the language but, teachers were creative in helping students adapt. A Trail teacher had a French student who could not speak English, but was excellent at mathematics. A reciprocal arrangement where the French student helped his classmates with mathematics and they helped him learn spoken English focused on the unique strengths of individual students. A situation which had been potentially difficult for the class, especially the French speaking student, had been solved by the resourcefulness of the classroom teacher without the assistance of the school. The idea of culture shock was not realized in everyday school life and it was
assumed children would easily assimilate.

Most teachers had to rely on their own resources when dealing with the special needs of their students, whether they had learning disabilities, health problems or could not speak English. Schools, despite having the financial resources, did not provide support for special needs children. The success of the students was reliant on teachers identifying their students' needs and devising creative solutions to help them learn effectively in the classroom. Teachers were constantly being challenged as the school children in British Columbia were becoming recognizably more diverse.

**NOT SO EVERYDAY LIFE: RETELLING THE STORIES.**

**CARPE DIEM**

The great diversity of schools scattered throughout the province and the variations in teaching styles of teachers make it impossible to define a typical day; however, in general, teachers all endeavoured to create a classroom atmosphere where children felt secure in the ritual of everyday school life. Students knew where to hang their coats and to take their seats; they knew each morning the Lord's prayer would be recited and 'God Save the Queen' sung and that activities would usually occur at the same time each day for the duration of the school year. Although children occasionally relished the opportunity to deviate from the norm, more often they expected and appreciated daily rituals. Teachers worked hard on establishing classroom management, but despite their valiant efforts the inevitable disruption occurred and the incident would be declared by students to be a calamity. It was during these times that teachers were tested beyond their training at Normal school or university. Appropriate responses would not
be found in teacher training manuals, and instead teachers learned even in the worst of times, to "seize the day" and make the best of the moment because learning was truly about everyday life and at school everyday life could sometimes be very eventful.

Teachers in retelling the memorable events that occurred during their careers spoke mostly of happy, amusing or exciting times; however for those who remembered the more painful moments teaching during World War II was the most difficult. Many students during the 1940's left school to go overseas and as one teacher remembers..."too many of them didn't come home. At the time when they were leaving everyone was caught up in the excitement of wearing a uniform and going across the world to fight a war. These young boys didn't believe they were mortal; they expected the other chaps to die. The saddest time would be when the students got word that one of our boys had died. There was a feeling of shock and disbelief. The war was a terrible time." A Burnaby teacher recalled having to tell a colleague that his son had been killed.

"It was just after the war had ended and a fellow teacher's son was killed in a test flight over the Pacific. The chaplain arrived at the school to inform him of his son's death but I thought it was better that he heard it from me because we were friends. I had to go up to his classroom and ask him to step out into the hall. It was one of the hardest things to do...I felt sick, but managed to take his class for him. The way they informed you of deaths could be very callous and although there was no way to make it easy it was better if a friend told you the news...When I was thirteen years old, during World War I I had a job delivering telegrams; I never knew when I had given a person a notification of a death telegram. The first time I delivered one of those awful telegrams was to a woman whose husband had died. She fainted on the doorstep and I didn’t know what to do. Can you imagine sending a thirteen year old boy to do a job like that?"

The war years paid its greatest toll on the youth of society especially, when you look through the old school yearbooks and see the lists of boys' names under 'Lest We Forget'.
Teachers expressed that the death of a student, whether in war, by accident or by terminal illness, had the greatest traumatic impact on the school community. A Burnaby teacher described the death of a student like being the death of a family member. "We never felt as powerfully close in a school as when a child died. We had one young boy who had cancer and had been coming to school ten days before his death. When he died the teachers wanted to go to his funeral, but we couldn’t close the school so only the boy’s teachers went and we covered their classes. We were all crying in the staffroom...It had been so sad to see this terminally ill child insisting on coming to school because he loved it so much. It was difficult to explain to the other children why he had to die; it was the first time that a lot of the children had experienced the death of someone close to them. It was a harsh and very unfair way to learn about life, but we did our best to comfort them."

The painful events of everyday school life hold special meaning for teachers but fortunately, the sad events share space with many happy and amusing memories. Everyday school life, just as in everyday life is an experience fraught with many different and sometimes difficult emotions.

Some of the most exciting memories were when a visitor, whether human or animal, made an unexpected appearance at school; two stories of school visitors, one animal and one human, were retold by teachers. A young Vancouver teacher had his first assignment in 1951 in a rural Vanderhoof school. The teacher knew nothing about wildlife so when the children told him there was a bull moose in the school yard he did not hesitate to tell them he would "shoo it away". The students were described as having incredulous looks on their faces as they followed him out to the school yard where they all stood face-to-face with the moose. The
teacher politely waved his arms at the moose who in response pawed the ground and proceeded to charge the school. There was a moment of terror and laughter as teacher and students all ran for safety inside the school. The teacher later learned it was the mating season for moose and that the "big fellow" was in pursuit of a cow moose who had been in the bush beside the school. Apparently the bull moose got off easy as one of the fathers shot him later that day. The teacher was not as fortunate; he became the subject of many good natured jokes in town. Later, the Superintendent of Schools told the story at the first Vanderhoof Teacher’s Convention. The person in the audience who laughed the loudest was the young city teacher who had thought he was a match for a Vanderhoof bull moose.

Another story about an unexpected school visitor, of the human kind, was told by a Qualicum principal. The story begins in 1957 when John Diefenbaker was passing through Qualicum on the campaign trail for Prime Minister. The principal was in town with his baby daughter when by chance he had an opportunity to meet Mr. Diefenbaker who asked the name of the principal’s daughter; the two were introduced and it was also mentioned that it was baby Margaret’s first birthday. The following year, in 1958, the new Prime Minister Diefenbaker returned to Qualicum and was mainstreeting when he again met the Qualicum principal and his daughter. The sharp politician said, "Oh there’s Margaret. I was here last year on your birthday." The principal, impressed with the memory of the politician boldly replied, "Would you come up to the school Mr. Diefenbaker?" It was agreed, on the suggestion of the Qualicum principal, that a quick visit could be arranged by having all the school children called out of the building by the fire bell as the Prime Minister’s cavalcade and press drove up. Quite incredibly the plans were made and the visit proceeded. One can image the scene of children streaming
happily out of the school building thinking it was a practice fire drill only to find a car door opening and the Prime Minister of Canada stepping out without any formal announcement. As the principal stated, "...Mouths dropped, everyone was flabbergasted. It was wonderful. Mr. Diefenbaker mixed with the kids and there were a lot of pictures taken...it was a neat moment."

Teachers' amusing memories do not include a lot of stories about convincing heads of state to visit the school as those opportunities are rare; however stories about the school outhouses were abundant. It was amazing how such a humble structure could elicit a long strand of humorous tales. Behind the outhouse was a sanctuary where young boys and girls would go to kiss and hope not to be caught by the teacher; it was a place where young boys in the dead of winter did not quite reach, instead stopping to relieve themselves in the snow banks, much to the dismay of the young girls. The outhouse was even known to have unexpected visitors such as mice, squirrels and gophers. A teacher from Spences Bridge laughs about the time she opened the door to the outhouse and a gopher head popped up out of the hole. She said she almost had heart failure but felt lucky that the gopher had not made his appearance when the building was being used. There were stories about Halloween pranks where students would stuff ignited burlap sacks down the outhouse holes; although at the time it was not considered a safe or amusing stunt by the teacher and the culprits if found were always severely reprimanded. Outdoor plumbing continued to be used as late as the 1950's in the rural areas. A teacher from Simon Cunningham remembers when the outhouses were finally replaced in the early 1950's with indoor plumbing. He described how the out houses had been removed and gravel poured over the old site. Unfortunately the gravel sank and "everything else came up." The teacher had opened the windows of the classroom and he and his students were almost knocked over by
the pungent aroma emanating from the old site. They eventually poured lye over the gravel but not before the students enjoyed a good childhood chuckle over a disgusting, but memorable experience in "toilet humor".

All the teachers interviewed agreed it was easy to remember their first class because it was a significant period in their lives; however it was the stories which contradicted the rituals of school life that evoked the most vivid and animated recollections. The teachers proudly remembered the achievements of their students and were pleased to have played a contributing role, but there was no doubt that it was the events which were out of the norm that made school life dynamic. It was the spirit of teachers and students whether encountering a bull moose, the Prime Minister of Canada or a sweetheart behind the outhouse that made everyday school life far from mundane. Perhaps the tenuous balance between maintaining calm and causing calamity was the intrinsic reward for the "mavericks" and "trail blazers" who found satisfaction in teaching.

**DISCIPLINE: DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS**

At the Victoria Teachers Institute in 1896 a principal known as Mr. Northerly gave a speech where he stated, "Corporal punishment must only be inflicted in the schools as a last resort, as with the great majority of children, kindness and firmness should prevail without resort to force." (Adams, Thomas, p.71,1985.).

Mr. Northerby's philosophy was in contrast to the "Spare the rod and spoil the child" attitude in many British Columbia classrooms where teachers readily punished children with
whatever was available. Striking a child with a strap, cane, willow switch, ruler or the back of the hand was accepted as appropriate punishment; however after the 1920's the frequency of administering corporal punishment gradually decreased. There would continue to be a few tyrannical teachers who believed in the benefits of physical punishment but they were greatly outnumbered by two other groups of teachers; those who were opposed to corporal punishment and those who used it only as a last resort. The dilemma of whether corporal punishment should be used ceased on February 14, 1973 when the minister of Education for the NDP cabinet, Eileen Dailly, included the abolition of corporal punishment in the reformation of the B.C. School Act. The issue of corporal punishment continued to be controversial, but unquestionably it was now legislated that teachers would need to consider other disciplinary actions.

Of the fourteen teachers interviewed only two supported the practice of corporal punishment. Both teachers had taught in schools, one in the Lower Mainland and the other in a remote B.C. community, where the children were described as difficult and unruly. The Lower Mainland teacher used only the leather strap which was issued to teachers by the Department of Education, but the rural teacher admitted to using a strap, pointer, ruler or hand; what she used to punishment the children was reliant on what was handiest. The two teachers appeared sincere in their belief that they did not administer corporal punishment in anger, but rather, it was done in the best interest of the students.

Of the twelve teachers who did not support corporal punishment most had tried it but did not feel comfortable about using it. The first time the seventeen year old teacher from Robbins Range hit a student she realized she could never do it again. She had smacked a student on the hand with a ruler and said she felt worse than the student; for the rest of her teaching career she
used other disciplinary techniques. She found ignoring the students worked best because she believed a child misbehaved when he was looking for attention. She would continue to include the student in lectures and boardwork, but she refused to mark their work or speak to them until the student apologized. The teacher’s technique worked well with the exception of an irate parent who wanted the teacher to hit her child and get on with teaching and an older boy who became so incensed with being ignored that he threw a book at the teacher and said he was leaving; he marched out of the classroom and never returned.

A newly appointed Burnaby Vice Principal was told by his Principal that he was to strap the children when they were sent to the office because, "they had been talked to enough and the office was the end of the line." Reluctantly, the Vice Principal performed his duty, always ensuing there was the mandatory witness present. He noted that the students must have liked him, despite his role as a disciplinarian, because they always said, "thank you: before leaving the office. The Vice-Principal believed strapping was not effective but was surprised years later when he met a new neighbor who had been a regular visitor to his office. The past student said he was never angry with the Vice Principal and in fact, thanked him, again, because he believed it "helped straighten him out".

A Peace River teacher remembered the first and only time he hit a student. It was his first year teaching in 1941, and two grade seven boys started a fist fight. The teacher stopped the fight and strapped the boy who had started the assault. The other boy, who was much larger than the small framed teacher, became uncooperative by not holding out his hand. In exasperation the teacher pulled the boy over his knee and began to spank him. One of the grade seven girls, "Pearl," who was described as having a good sense of humor walked into the
classroom and started laughing at the absurd sight of the huge boy being paddled by the small teacher. Pearl’s contagious laughter soon had the teacher and the two boys joining in. The teacher commented that his students were all basically very good children and that he could never again justify hitting them.

A Burnaby teacher discovered early in her career that children should always be treated with respect. The teacher had confiscated a note that was being passed around the class and asked the student who wrote it to read it aloud. The student refused, so the teacher began to read it aloud, "I felt just terrible. The note said, ‘Bring ten cents to school tomorrow so we can buy Mrs. McCall a Christmas present.’ Since that day I never read a student’s note. I still confiscated them, but I never read them. I had been the one who was embarrassed and I did not like the feeling. I had realized it was very important to respect children and never embarrass them.”

All the teachers interviewed agreed the students they had taught were very different to today’s students. Misbehaviour, for students of the past, was usually in the form of practical jokes or pranks that were performed to see what the teacher’s reaction would be. It was rare for children to fight and if they did it was usually attributed to being childish. Teachers emphasised that society was slower paced and children, unlike today, where not pressured to grow up quickly. Children acknowledged the difference between themselves and adults deeming their elders to be more knowledgeable and worthy of respect. One teacher described the children he taught over the years as being cooperative and polite.

Interestingly, when the teachers were asked, during the interviews, about how they approached discipline problems in their classrooms, their responses were nebulous. They could
remember a particular incident when a child misbehaved, but in general, it was as if the teachers had never given much consideration to discipline because it was not considered an issue. Teachers attributed the fact that discipline was not a problem because the children lived in a less complex and violent society; perhaps the teachers were too modest in acknowledging that the reason discipline was not a problem in their classroom was not because society was different but rather because they were good teachers. Undeniably, society during 1919 - 1959 did not have the same problems as today's more urbanized and technological society, but it is not to say that early schools and students did not have their own stresses. Many children lived spartan and even poverty stricken lives; they lived at a time when the economy was devastating or a World War was being fought, and yet, teachers described their students as pleasant and caring people who rarely misbehaved. Teachers explained how they disciplined students by ignoring them, having them write lines or stand in the cloakroom; they described the disciplinary action they took but failed to identify the one quality that may have been the most important deterrent for having their students misbehave. The teachers interviewed genuinely seemed to care about their students; they spoke of respecting, believing and learning from them. It was perhaps the empathy that the teachers displayed to their students that promoted a positive learning environment where discipline problems were incidental. It is perhaps a quality that, when present in a teacher, during any time in history, transcends the problems of society because it emanates from the basic premise of people honestly caring about other people.

**Inspectors: Passing the Test**

As early as 1830 local communities in countries such as the United States had appointed
their superintendents; however in Canada the hiring of school leaders would remain under provincial control until 1974, over a century later, when the New Democratic Party of British Columbia granted it’s seventy-five school districts autonomy to decide based on a government criteria, who they wanted to hire as their educational leaders. Historically, public schooling in British Columbia had been highly centralized, based on the assumption that the provincial government, and no other authority, should control its schools. The administering and supervising of schools scattered over the 360,000 square miles of geographically diverse terrain was headquartered in Victoria where the "...government sought to ensure some uniformity in school operations by tightly monitoring the system..." (Fleming, 1986, p. 287).

The task of overseeing the operation of schools throughout the huge province was too immense resulting in 1879 in the empowerment of the Lieutenant - Governor - in - Council to appoint a school inspector to assist the superintendent. The inspectorate gradually increased and by 1924, at the time of the Putman Weir Report, the Department of Education had a contingency of two high school inspectors, sixteen elementary inspectors and four municipal inspectors. By 1958 the school population in the province had grown to approximately 260,000 students and the inspectorate had increased to 119 Inspectors. Interestingly, from the founding of the inspectorate in 1887 until 1958 only one woman held the position of inspector; she was Margaret Strong, a municipal inspector for the New Westminster School board who held the position from 1913 - 1915. (Fleming, 1986, p. 287.).

The inspector’s report was formidably powerful and since it was reliant on only two half day visits the presence of the inspector in the classroom often caused great trepidation for the teachers. A Mission teacher recalled how she was so nervous when the inspector came to
observe her first class in 1953 that she had to send her dress to the dry cleaners at the end of the day. Although the teacher knew she was doing a very good job the idea of one half day visit determining her whole report was extremely stressful.

It was the duty of the inspector to report on all aspects of the school; George Hindle, a Trail teacher in 1918 wrote a study of education in British Columbia for his doctoral degree in pedagogy at the University of Toronto; he described the inspector's role as discussing with the teachers:

"...all matters which may promote their efficiency and the character and usefulness of the school. Furthermore, it is his duty to furnish teachers and trustees with such information as they may require regarding the Public School Act and the performance of their respective duties. In addition to the work of inspecting schools, the inspector must render aid and direction to new school districts in the process of formation. He is often detailed to visit a locality petitioning for the establishment of a school district, or an assisted school, and the fate of the petition depends almost wholly on this report. It is his duty to encourage the establishment of schools where none exist by holding public meetings in the localities. He has power to appoint trustees in all cases where the ratepayers have neglected to do so at their annual meeting."

(Frieson, Ralston, 1976, p.83).

Usually there was no forewarning as to when the inspector would arrive except for the informal network developed between teachers in the school district. There were no telephones in the early remote schools but word would get through by, as two teachers called it, "the moccasin grapevine" and "putting up the flag." Teachers were known to walk or ride to the nearby school to warn of the inspectors impending arrival or send a letter or telegram to more distant schools. The mail usually arrived before the inspector because the roads were poor making travel for the inspector difficult. Teachers were known to be relieved when the heavy snowfall came because it meant it would be unlikely that the inspector would make the trip. A Peace River teacher recalls how the trip to his school in Fort Fraser was so difficult that the
inspector had to stay overnight at the Government - Agents house where the teacher also boarded. At first the teacher was uncomfortable with the arrangement, but after one visit he actually looked forward to the inspectors arrival. The teacher enjoyed the opportunity of speaking to someone outside of community and the two men would talk over dinner about school matters as well as the latest sports results. The same teacher stated that for most teachers the anticipation of the inspector’s visit was worse than the actual event. A Burnaby teacher agreed when she recalled her first visit from inspector K.B. Woodward in Surrey. She had been warned to look out for the "green Pontiac" and sure enough saw the notorious inspector’s car pull into the school yard without any warning. She described a moment of panic and then a flurry to tidy her desk and room. Mr. Woodward quietly walked into his room, removed his hat, scarf, overcoat and rubbers and then sat at the back of the class to observe. The class went well and the report was complementary; the teacher commented that the inspector was kind and reasonable and the ordeal was nowhere near what she had anticipated.

For another teacher failure to recognized the inspector had lead to an embarrassing but humorous story. The district Secretary-Treasurer for the Kamloops school district had issued a letter stating that travelling salesmen were not to be allowed in the schools. Remembering the letter, the young new teacher proceeded to eject the inspector, mistaken for a travelling salesman, from the school. The inspector was finally allowed back into the school, but only after the teacher had examined his proof of identification. Fortunately, the inspector was understanding and actually commended the teacher for following school district policy. The over zealous teacher earned a good report and also learned to ask who a visitor was before showing them out the door.
The fear of the inspector arriving on a bad day was a teacher’s worst nightmare. A young teacher in 1953 remembers the inspector paying his first visit when one of her grade three boys, who had twice failed, was at his “most terrible best”. The boy, who was larger than the petite teacher, was disrupting the class and refusing to sit in his desk while the inspector was observing at the back of the room. Finally, the inspector got up out of his chair and grabbed the boy by his collar and the seat of his pants. He walked over to the door, opened it, and then threw the boy down the front stairs. The only words the inspector said was, "Carry on". The teacher was almost speechless but gathered herself and continued the lesson; the day went very well and she received an excellent report. There was no discussion about the incident, although the teacher noted, "I don’t think you would be able to do that today."

The teachers myth of the relentless critic whose only pleasure was in finding fault with the teacher was probably rooted in the experiences of teachers prior to the 1920’s when most of the inspectors, had been great scholars interested more in educational theory and less about educational practice. They were indeed learned men, nearly all educated outside of the province, but as Thomas Fleming states their interest in administrative theory did, "not help much with the problems at Bella Coola." (Fleming, 1986, p.291). The new school of inspectors after the 1920’s, in general, were born and educated in British Columbia; they had attended provincial schools, enrolled in Victoria or Vancouver Normal School and after graduation began teaching, and, finally earned a degree during a long period of summers at the University of British Columbia. Compared to earlier inspectors these men were practitioners with little background in administrative theory; they were men who had experience teaching in remote communities and therefore had a greater understanding of what it was like to teach in the schools.
throughout the province. There was certainly a few inspectors who fitted the mould of the cynical and unyielding critic but they were the exception. During the period 1919 - 1958 inspectors, for the most part, were a group of educational practitioners sympathetic to the realities of teaching because they could draw from similar experiences from their earlier teaching days.

The year 1958 marked the eventual break-up of the school inspectorate and the beginnings of the model for the superintendency of British Columbia. The autocratic role of the inspector whose job had been to report on teachers would be redefined in keeping with the more liberal and democratic approaches to administration which had developed in business and industry. The inspector would become closer to a director of instruction whose role was to present teachers with progressive ideas and constructive criticism. It was the beginning of a professional support system which would enable teachers to function at much higher levels of professional competence and personal fulfilment.

EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE OUTSIDE OF CLASS

Anyone who has been a student or teacher realizes that everyday school life extends beyond the classroom lessons to include aspects of learning which enhances the lives of students, teachers, parents and the community in which they are a part. The sports teams, clubs, field trips, concerts and special events are a few of the many activities that teachers sponsor outside of curricular time which provide enrichment for all the people involved. Extracurricular activities provide opportunities for students to experience success and accomplishment as well as present a situation where teachers; students and parents interact in a more sociable and
relaxed atmosphere. Certainly there have been situations where teachers have reluctantly sponsored extracurricular activities and events because of pressure from a principal or the community, but usually teachers have participated because they have had a keen desire to share their special interests and talents with others. Despite whether the teacher sponsored the activity reluctantly or with zeal, few can argue that extracurricular activities add a special and important dimension to everyday school life.

Teacher sponsored events and activities have not been a recent occurrence in schools as evidenced by school sports teams and clubs as early as 1900 in British Columbia; however when interviewing teachers they stated that the term "extracurricular" was not familiar when they taught. They explained that although producing a Christmas concert or coaching a table tennis team required "extra" work for the teacher beyond their curricular duties, the sponsoring of student activities out of class time was considered "part of the job". There was no formal job description for teachers which outlined extracurricular duties, but instead there was an assumption made by teachers, students' parents and the community that part of being a teacher was to coordinate the Valentines dance or coach the school baseball team. This assumption often caused panic in the hearts of new teachers who were expected to coordinate events such as the Christmas Concert despite the fact they lacked musical or dramatic expertise. For other teachers the opportunity to spend time pursuing an activity they enjoyed or were skilled in was welcomed. The history enthusiast, chess master or sports fan could feel satisfaction from introducing his students to a world beyond the three R's; a world that may not have been extended for many students beyond the community they lived in had it not been for the interest taken in them by a caring and devoted teacher.
Teachers who taught in the remote communities, especially during the 1920’s and 1930’s did not have the resources or a situation which was conducive for the types of extracurricular activities enjoyed in later years in the more urban schools; however being small and rural had its advantages. A teacher from Robbins Range remembers horse back riding in the country with the children. She remembers her students teaching her the names of local trees and flowers and that all the ponds in the Kamloops countryside were named after prominent community members. She recalls that the children were wonderful company and when the weather was good they would go on a picnic. She would cook a chicken and the children would bring some bread for their feasts on the hillside by the school. The teacher showed the students how to make sketchbooks from old worksheets that were filled only on one side; the paper was carefully folded so the children could rest the books on their laps while they drew the landscape. They also played a lot of different children’s game. The teacher explained how at seventeen years she was only a few years older than some of the students so she enjoyed herself as much as they did although she emphasized that it was important not to get "carried away with the games because when Monday morning came they had to look at me as the teacher".

Interschool competitions were rare in small communities where it was difficult enough for a student to commute to their own school let alone to one in a neighboring town; however there were special days which were celebrated by teachers in most schools, despite their size. Teachers would organize Halloween apple bobs, homemade Valentine card exchanges, Easter egg hunts on the school grounds and the much anticipated Christmas concert. The Christmas concert, whether in the one room schools or the larger more contemporary schools, was the annual event which the whole community attended even if they did not have children enrolled
in the school. It was no wonder that a new teacher had anxiety attacks at the thought of the community packed into the school watching and evaluating her competency based on the quality of the production. Most teachers learned that parents were forgiving critics when the actors and actresses were their sons and daughters; presentations where children stared blankly into the audience when lines were forgotten or twisted, turned and fidgeted through an off key rendition of "Jingle Bells" where acclaimed by parents, friends and even teachers as heart wrenching successes.

The Christmas concert in the small rural school was an especially intimate gathering of parents and community. A Fraser Lake teacher described her first Christmas concert in the one room school house.

"For weeks we rehearsed songs, poems and a skit depicting the nativity. The mothers made angel costumes and robes for Mary and Joseph out of old flour bags and a doll was used for the role of baby Jesus. We didn’t have any sort of a stage so I strung a line across the front of the class and attached a bed sheet for stage curtains. The children helped push the desks, which were on runners, to the side of the classroom and the fathers brought benches and planks from home for seats. We laid the planks across the benches so we could fit all the parents into the small classroom. I remember one mother, a very large woman with five children, falling off the planks and spraining her ankle. She was so good natured about the incident; I think that today a parent would sue the school if it happened to them. I was pleased when we raffled the fool hamper that Mrs. Dunbrowsky won it; it was a nice way to turn her luck around after injuring her ankle...The parents were always a very friendly bunch. I couldn’t play the organ but one of the mothers volunteered to play the Christmas carols...I remember being so nervous just before the concert, but once it started I relaxed. Everyone applauded after each presentation and later we had coffee and cakes which the mothers had prepared."

Christmas concerts in the larger more urban schools followed essentially the same format established during the early years in the remote one room school. The larger school population was assembled in the gymnasium and the old planks and benches were replaced by more
comfortable stacking chairs. The make shift bed sheet curtain had been abandoned for a proper stage, sometimes even with colored lights, but the program of Christmas songs, plays and poem recitations remained the same music to the pleasure of parents who watched their children participate in a school tradition much like the Christmas concert they had been in when they were young. The school Christmas concert was a special event that marked the nearing of Christmas vacation; it was an event where teachers, students, parents and the community could share in the excitement of a religious celebration in a predominately Christian society.

Sports played an important role in the extracurricular activities of everyday school life. After school games of baseball and softball were popular in the rural schools as they could be played on a rough field with a minimum amount of equipment. A Peace River teacher mentioned that the baseball games were dominated by boys in the 1940’s and that the girls preferred games such as table tennis. The same teacher remembers playing basketball on a makeshift court in the classroom. "The desks were pushed to the side of the room and we put basketball hoops attached to homemade standards at both ends of the class. It was a pretty small court but the boys and I had some good games."

Many larger urban schools participated in interschool sports leagues where games such as tennis, badminton, table tennis, basketball and track and field events were played. The games were exciting, but even more hair raising were the stories about how students travelled to other schools. Teachers stated that the school buses could not be used to drive students to games; buses were used only to transport students between home and school. The responsibility for travel arrangements was the teachers which usually meant cramming children into one of the teacher’s cars. A Burnaby teacher remembers driving his badminton team to their games. "In
those days we didn’t have seat belts, the regulation was that you could legally only have three passengers in the front. We always put five students in the back and there were four up front, including myself. One of the smaller girls sat on the lap of a student in the front seat and she was instructed to duck out of sight if anyone saw a police car." Another teacher remembers putting up to ten students into his 1936 Ford when travelling to local badminton games. The same teacher recalled how in 1942 in the Peace River he loaded his class into the back of one of the parent’s large open farm trucks so they could go on a field trip to an experimental agricultural farm in Alberta; the parent’s verbal permission was all that was required to enable students to go on a one day excursion into another province.

The overloading of students into cars and trucks so they could go to a game or on a field trip was not done in deliberate defiance of the law, but rather teachers were practising the same standards of safety precautions that most citizens took during a time when cars drove slower, traffic was not as congested and accidents were fewer. It was time when teachers and parents trusted verbal agreements; parents had faith in teachers to do their best and appreciated the interest teachers took in their students beyond just teaching them in the classroom.

At times a teacher sponsored activity such as the history club started by a Qualicum teacher expanded to include the participation of parents and the community. The teacher initiated two ambitious projects with his Secondary students to compile a pictorial history of Qualicum and execute an archaeological dig on the Little Qualicum reserve; both project’s results were so successful that the Provincial Archives accepted historical photographs of Qualicum and artifacts, such as arrowheads, with the permission from the Little Qualicum band, for their collection. It was an opportunity as the sponsor teacher stated, "...for students to
realize that history was not something remote or far away." The club exemplified how through the efforts of a teacher a curricular subject such as history was given life beyond the pages of a textbook; it was an opportunity for students and the community to learn together and to celebrate the fact they had contributed to preserving a piece of history which was literally in their own backyard.

A Kamloops teacher expressed his philosophy of what school should be, which as evidenced by the diversity of the extracurricular programs and events in schools, was shared by many British Columbia teachers who taught during 1919 - 1959. He believed "that school should be a place that was fun; it should not be a place to 'stump' you. It should allow all students to realize their strengths and provide opportunities to develop them." The teacher sponsored programs and events, whether Christmas concerts, sports teams, special interest clubs or field trips facilitated opportunities for students, parents and the community to experience success and realize through active participation that learning goes beyond textbooks and classrooms to extend into everyday life.

**EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE: A PART OF THE COMMUNITY**

In discussing with teachers the role of the school in the community it became evident that the importance of the school in the community measured in proportion to the degree of sacrifice families endured so that a school could be established. Teachers expressed that the remote, rural schools they had taught in during the 1920’s through to the 1930’s played a more important role in the community than urban schools where they had taught during the 1940’s and 1950’s. It was not implied that the later urban schools did not play an important role in the community,
but rather because families in remote communities often had to endure sacrifices for a school to be established they felt greater ownership of their small school. In addition, because the school building was often the only public building for a small community its importance was emphasized in contrast, to an urban community which had numerous public buildings.

Whether a rural or urban community, the Department of Education allotted each school a budget based on revenues generated by local taxation of land owners. The early settlers of the 1920's and 1930's did not have a lot of capital in comparison to the greater tax revenues available in the more urban centers. Although the government assistance helped with the establishment of schools the monetary contributions based on revenues in a poorer population was seldom enough to purchase more than the essentials. The building or repairing of a school and funds to assist in paying a teacher's salary and buying supplies was often reliant on the sweat and creativity of local families. Citizens banded together, not without some arguing, conflict and controversy, to decide where a school should be located, who should help build it and how funds should be generated to defer costs. It was the fund raising which perhaps was the most successful part of bringing the community together in a sociable setting and it usually meant the organizing of a school dance.

All the teachers interviewed who taught during the 1920's through to the early 1940's remember the weekly dances at the schools; teachers remembered the fun, but also the extra work required by them. The schools in surrounding area would alternate sponsoring dances where all the community would attend. The families would help in the setting up but, inevitably it was the teacher who was left with clean up. A resourceful teacher from Robbins Range learned to recruit, for a quarter each, a few keen students to clean the classroom; she
appreciated the help and her students appreciated the money. A Fraser Lake teacher remembered the preparation for the dance when the desks would be pushed to the side of the classroom and a special wax was sprinkled on the floor to make dancing easier; she laughed about how the children in their stocking feet would skid around the classroom for days after a school dance. Entertainment at the dances consisted of someone in the community playing the school organ and others bringing a fiddle to play two steps and the schotische. A Peace River teacher recalled how the mothers would bring homemade cakes and coffee but that the preferred beverage of many of the men was "moose milk", a home brew that would be consumed in secret outside the school house. The woman obliged the activity because the ritual gave a lot of the men the false courage to ask the ladies to dance. The dances were attended by families as well as any single men and women in the community; the Peace River teacher stressed that although some of the men imbibed in a little homebrew the dances were a "wholesome affair" where children danced and babies slept peacefully in make shift cradles stowed safely under desks. The same teacher remembered how if the weather turned bad everyone would sleep at the school and finally head home when it was light outside. The money generated from the admission to the dances was helpful in buying supplies; however a Spences Bridge teacher found the dances to be so popular that she doubted if they would have stopped if the school no longer needed the money.

By the late 1940's the fund raising became the responsibility of the Parent-Teacher Association whose membership was comprised of predominately school mothers, the principal and teacher representatives. The urban schools were easy to travel to so P.T.A. meetings were generally held in the school during the daytime. Fund raising events were usually simple and
child centered such as the monthly hot dog, orange drink and donut sales organized during a school lunch hour. A Surrey teacher explained how the money was used to buy the items such as a clock, flagpole or to pay the cost for sending some of the poorer children to the annual school skating party. Interestingly, the teacher mentioned that the class who had the greatest attendance at the P.T.A. meetings received the greatest share of the fund raising money; at each meeting the P.T.A. president would ask the parents from each teacher’s class to stand and be counted. The P.T.A. was dominated by women because in the 1940’s and 1950’s few held jobs outside of the home; however a Trail teacher encouraged a more equitable representation of men involved in his school by having the fathers share their hobbies and interests. Fathers helped coach after school sports or scheduled visits to the guidance classes to show students how to do woodworking or fly tying.

Few parents would venture into the school for a casual visit preferring to only come to the P.T.A. meetings, school concerts or meet the teacher evenings. A Burnaby teacher expressed that although parents would only come into the school by invitation, they were always willing to help when asked. A Kamloops teacher remembered how the parents at his school would build an outdoor ice rink in the school yard each year and construct the props and scenery for any of the drama productions. He mentioned that most parents took a great interest in everything their children were involved in, including school, and that family and community membership was very important. A Surrey teacher agreed that parents rarely came into the school uninvited but that sometimes a parent would make an unannounced visit because they were upset with school or teacher. She stated that the school she taught in during the 1950’s did not have a telephone and few people had cars, especially in the outlying areas, which meant
an irate parent would have to walk to school; fortunately, by the time the teacher had arrived at school the walk had diffused a lot of the anger.

Although parents rarely visited the school, teachers were often invited, especially in rural areas, to dinner at the homes of their students. The visit was meant to be social and a child's progress was rarely discussed. The teachers interviewed said they enjoyed the visits which helped curb the loneliness of rural life, but a Fraser Lake teacher also stated that, "...sometimes I would have preferred to stay home. I enjoyed the visit but I was always worried about getting my lessons prepared for the next day."

Teachers felt the parents and community supported the schools and that teachers were considered very important. A Trail teacher remembers his school district as being very progressive with the community support extending to local businesses. He explained how the towns major employer, "Cominco", provided summer jobs for Trail students who were at university as well as offered a seven day, expenses paid, tour of the smelting and fertilizer operations for teachers. The employment of local citizens and the public relations programs for teachers was an example of how community cohesiveness between industry, school and the citizens was deemed important.

In many communities the school extended its help to people other than the children with the establishment of night school and community programs. A Peace River teacher started a night school in his remote community for the eight families who lived near the school. He recruited the teacher from a nearby school to teach drama classes in his teacherage while he ran a sports program for adults in the school house; parents had an opportunity to play table tennis, badminton or basketball. A Clinton teacher remembered starting a very successful night school
program that offered local interest programs such as saw filing and log scaling. Both teachers attributed the success of their night schools to the fact that the programs offered met the specific interests and needs of the community.

A Burnaby teacher remembers the times as being very optimistic when he taught. Parents respected and had faith in the school system and teachers felt a partnership with the families of their students in providing an education which included a sense of membership within the community. As a Trail teacher recalled, "teachers could not do the job by themselves...they needed and readily received support from parents and the community."

EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE: A SNAPSHOT HISTORY

"Every photograph no matter how painstaking the observation of the photograph, or how long the actual exposure is essentially a snapshot; it is an attempt to penetrate and capture the moment that singles itself out of the thousands of chance compositions, uncrystallized and insignificant, that occur in the course of a day."

-Lewis Mumford-

The recording of an event or place on film has become an accepted way of authenticating an experience and sharing it with others. The camera is a devise which records moments in time; the realism and detail of the photographs can take the viewer back to an earlier time, providing accurate historical documentation of important events and everyday life. It affords
the viewer the opportunity to share visual sensations often beyond likely experience.

Historically worthy photographs usually conjure a vision of documentary pieces that contain all the elements of good composition concentrated into expressing a particular event; a strong purpose or message is communicated by capturing facts that stir an opinion about the event. To consider a snapshot that may be blurred or poorly composed would for some photography connoisseurs be blasphemous; however for the historian it is more a matter of working with what is available. The visual capturing of everyday school life during 1919 - 1959 has had to rely on the records made by teachers and parents with commercially primitive cameras. Occasionally a formal professional photograph was taken of a staff or class but what these photographs possess in technical quality they lack to some degree in expressing the genre of the time. The snapshots become more that a means of recording the obvious; they capture feelings whether in a single face or a group of people, of what everyday school life was like; we can imagine who the people were and what their lives must have been like.

A snapshot history is advantageous in understanding everyday school life because unlike human memory, the visual images recalls to the mind and enables others to see with absolute realism. A visual record is more accurate than the human memory because it remembers with clarity what has been done, seen and even thought. With one glance our eyes are allowed to inspect as searchingly as we choose, whenever, wherever and as often as we like. A snapshot allows us to picture what everyday school life was like at least for that moment in time.

The teachers interviewed did not have a wealth of photographs available because as one teacher stated, "When I was teaching during the depression nobody had money for cameras and film." Another teacher mentioned it was not a common day occurrence to take photographs.
"The parents might take a photograph at the Christmas concert, but usually they just watched the show. The teachers did not have time to be running around taking photographs. Besides, the kids would get silly if you started pointing a camera at them. We would have class photographs taken every year and the teachers always got a free copy; the children had to pay a small amount if they wanted one." Fortunately, there were a few teachers who were the exception because some did "point a camera at the kids" and captured a unique point of view of what everyday school life was like. The earliest photograph submitted was taken in 1928 and the latest was in 1956. In addition, photographs of artifacts such as slateboards, kerosene lamps and readers from the collection at Anniedale School Museum in Surrey, British Columbia have been included. The photographs are arranged in chronological order under the following headings: 1) The Early Teachers; 2) Faces from the Past; 3) The School Plant; 4) The Techerage and Boarding Families; 5) The Community; 6) Daily Routines; 7) Extra Curricular Activities; 8) Travelling to School; 9) School Artifacts (Anniedale School Museum, Surrey, B.C.), (Figures 2-77).
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

SUMMARY

The aims of this project have been to: 1) document the history of teachers and teaching in British Columbia from 1919 - 1959 within the context of the history of British Columbia; 2) attempt to present a credible portrayal of the everyday life of a teacher teaching in British Columbia during the period 1919 - 1959 and; 3) determine the role the teacher and school played in the early settlements in British Columbia.

The collection of data for the project required the participation of retired teachers who taught throughout the province during the period of 1919 - 1959. Volunteer participation in this project was elicited through contacting nine British Columbia Lower Mainland Retired Teachers Associations. Thirteen candidates from the Retired Teachers Associations were recruited as well as a fourteenth candidate who was currently teaching at Simon Fraser University. The retired teachers agreed to be audiotaped with the interview being framed from a previewed set of questions which were designed to provide information that could be categorized under various aspects which represented everyday school life during 1919 - 1959. In addition, retired teachers were asked to provide old photographs of everyday school life from their private collections; the photographs were copied and the originals returned.
The project recognized that teachers being interviewed may indulge in nostalgia indiscriminately and that care would have to be taken by the interviewer to validate sources. A review of literature pertaining to the history of settlement in British Columbia from 1849 - 1959 was conducted which facilitated the researcher in developing a conceptual framework which would assist in the validation of research data. The perspective or philosophical approach taken in the design of this study is one which is akin to Revisionism as it examined the everyday lives of teachers within a holistic social context. Although the focus was on the daily activities in the classrooms of British Columbia communities between 1919 - 1959 the project attempted to examine how school life contributed to and was affected by the development of British Columbia as a province.

This project took place over a ten month period, September 1992 to June 1993 beginning with the elicitation of interview candidates. Retired teachers who agreed to participate were interviewed at their home or office at a time and date which was convenient for them. During the interviews teachers were asked to peruse their files for old school photographs and to contact the researcher if they found any they wanted to contribute to the project. The photographs were picked up at the teachers' homes and borrowed for approximately three weeks. The photographs were duplicated using a 35mm SLR camera on a copy stand with the originals being returned to the teachers by the researcher or by registered mail. During the period of data collection, September 1992 to January 1993 a review of literature on the history of British Columbia and the history of schooling in British Columbia was conducted.

Findings from all the data were compiled to establish a picture of what everyday school life was like in British Columbia during 1919 - 1959. Conclusions about the different aspects
of everyday school life were discussed and recommendations made for further research in the social history of teaching in British Columbia.

CONCLUSIONS

There has been a substantial amount written about the history of British Columbia, but within the documentation the attention paid to education and schooling has comprised only a small portion of the historical profile of the province. Within the literature that has been written about educational history in Western Canada there has been little attention paid to capturing the life and spirit of early education and its contribution to the building of British Columbia. It must be recognized that the everyday happenings of school life warrants attention because it is an important component of the history of the province.

Everyday life in British Columbia schools is a reflection of everything that makes up the character of the province and should therefore be examined within the context of the province’s geography, economy and development of settlement. The topography ranging from the prairie lands of the Peace River, the mountains of the Kootneys, the semi-arid branches of the Okanagan and the rainforests of the coast provides everyday experiences that reflect regional uniqueness. The ten regions, because of their contrasting geography, depend on different types of industry however the regions do share a commonality in their reliance on resource exploitation to sustain their economy; the miner in the Peace River, the fruit farmer in the Okanagan or the logger on the Coast must all earn their living from the land. It has been an economy based on resource exploitation that has connected the communities throughout the province creating a kinship in everyday experiences which typify life for all British Columbians. It is these same everyday experiences that are reflected in everyday school life whether in the
rural one room school or the urban larger facility. There are everyday school experiences which are uniquely provincial, rather than merely regional and therefore the conclusions made in this project are based on the commonalities which emerged from the research which typified everyday school life throughout the province of British Columbia during 1919 - 1959.

**WHY BE A TEACHER?**

The British Columbian teacher during 1919 - 1959 was usually female; however there were also men who shared the desire to pursue a career which was considered by society to be respectable and important. The teachers, especially the women, remained single and in fact until the early 1950's were not allowed to continue to teach if they became married; the only exception to this regulation was during the Second World War when married women were allowed to fill teaching positions which became vacant when the men enlisted in the armed services. It was the expectation that a woman who became engaged to be married would submit her resignation to the principal and begin her new career as a homemaker and mother.

The reasons for pursuing teaching were as varied as the personalities of each teacher however there was evidence that the teachers who had enjoyed long and successful careers in education shared a common view of life which included being curious and open to adventure; for these teachers the decision to teach was personally right for them because teaching satisfied their desire to trailblaze or to be a maverick.

**THE QUINTESSENTIAL TEACHER**

Most teachers attended the Vancouver Normal School at 12th and Cambie, but others
usually if they resided outside of the Lower Mainland, attended Normal School in Victoria. A small number of teachers earned degrees at university and later completed teacher training at Normal School; it would not be until 1956 when the Vancouver and Victoria Normal Schools were permanently closed that prospective teachers would have to enter the Faculty of Education at the University of British Columbia or the University of Victoria. The graduates of Normal School measured the success of the program on the fact that it certified them to teach; the quality of the program was not paramount. The Normal School experience was deemed by most to be socially, rather than educationally enlightening where the school lessons were often forgotten but the friends made were not.

SETTING OUT

The test of a teacher’s ability to teach would not come until they had set out to their first teaching position. Newly certified teachers gave little consideration about the teaching job’s location or the comfort of living conditions especially during the early years of 1919 to the mid 1940’s. By the late 1940’s teachers were afforded the luxury of being more selective about where they taught which resulted in fewer teachers wanting to migrate to the more remote regions of the province. Teaching positions became more abundant during the 1940’s and 50’s due to the prosperous economy which resulted in increased urbanization and more schools being built in the more densely populated areas throughout the Lower Mainland.

WHERE DOES THE TEACHER LIVE?

Living conditions greatly improved for teachers after the 1940’s when teachers could
afford to rent or buy accommodations in communities where anonymity was easier to maintain because of the increased size and density of settlement. Teachers no longer had to live under the watchful eye of the community in their assigned teacherages or with the boarding family.

A PLACE TO TEACH: THE SCHOOL HOUSE

There was no model which typified a British Columbia school especially during the early years when each community was responsible for building the local school house; however the one room school house whether built from rough logs or white clapboard dominated the remote areas and some rural areas of the Lower Mainland until the 1950's. The small buildings recalled a romantic period when life was simple but the primitive conditions of no electricity, plumbing, and poor heating and lighting would not be missed when more efficient buildings were constructed during the 1940's. The traditional one room school was expanded to two rooms and in later years the basements were used for additional classrooms. It was not uncommon to have a second building constructed on the school site with grade one to seven in one building and grades eight, nine, ten, junior and senior matriculation in the second building. By the 1950's brick was incorporated into school construction because of the schools's larger size and older schools were cosmetically modernized and renovated to meet the demands of the growing communities. It became apparent during the interviews that it was not the structure which defined what the school was, but rather the people who inhabited it. It was not whether the building was log, clapboard or brick or that it was small, large, rural or urban, but rather it was the teachers, students and the daily activities that occurred in the building that defined a school's identity.
EVERYDAY LIFE: ARRIVING AT SCHOOL

Until the 1940's poor roads and an unsophisticated communication system kept remote communities isolated from the rest of the province. Teachers, prior to the 1940's who worked in the more remote parts of the province were unable to easily visit or phone friends and family; most teachers had to rely on mailing letters home. The improved roads and communication system after the 1940's greatly reduced teachers' isolation from home town family and friends resulting in the assumption made by teachers in later years that commuting would not be a problem.

Daily commuting for early teachers was often an adventure as many, especially in the remote areas would have to walk, cycle or ride horseback on trails shared by wild animals and the occasional stray cow. By the 1940's cars were a more common sight and many teachers owned a vehicle, car pooled or used public transportation. Increased urbanization also make it easier for children to travel to school with the distance from home to school being accomplished in a short walk or school bus ride.

EVERYDAY LIFE: SURVIVING THE CURRICULUM

Most British Columbian teachers pursued their work with enthusiasm although the first year of teaching was approached with some trepidation as teachers established their credibility with students and the community. Most communities had great faith in the teacher and would provide moral support, but it was the expectation that the role of educating the children while in school would be fulfilled by the teacher. There was little support from the Department of Education for the classroom teacher with the exception of the delivery of a series of curriculum
manuals sent to each school; teachers had to rely on their own resources and ingenuity to implement the curriculum. Throughout 1919 - 1959 the standard teaching technique utilized was seatwork and lecturing. Teachers in the early years would write lessons on the black slate board or print worksheets on the hectograph. Teachers after the mid 1940’s continued to use the blackboard, which actually had become a green board and print worksheets on the improved Gestetner duplicator. The curriculum was based on the Department of Education manuals; however teachers also included subject matter which they or the parents considered important. Teachers had to be very resourceful in lecturing about topics, such as farming when they knew nothing about it. As well, teachers also enjoyed teaching students social skills such as manners and good etiquette.

Teachers had to cope with very large classes of students with very diverse needs. Early teachers in the one room schools often had up to twenty students in eight different grades; later teachers in the larger schools had to cope with up to fifty students in one grade. There was no assistance from the school in meeting any of the special needs of students as children were treated as if they all learned the same way and at the same pace. Prior to the 1940’s schools took on greater responsibility in ensuring children were healthy; public health nurses, doctors and dentists periodically visited schools to examine children and immunization clinics were conducted during class time in the schools.

Most teachers had to rely on their own resources when dealing with the curriculum and the needs of their students. The success of the students was reliant on teachers identifying the students’ needs and devising creative solutions to help them effectively learn in the classroom.
NOT SO EVERYDAY LIFE: RETELLING THE STORIES

Teachers all endeavoured to create a classroom atmosphere where children felt secure in the ritual of everyday school life but inevitably disruptions occurred. Teachers in retelling the memorable events that occurred during their careers spoke mostly of happy, amusing or exciting times; however they also recalled painful moments which were as much a part of everyday school life as they are in everyday life. It was easy for teachers to remember their first classrooms, but it was the stories which contradicted the rituals of everyday school life that evoked the most vivid and animated recollections. It is suggested that perhaps the tenuous balance between maintaining calm and causing calamity in the classroom was one of the rewarding factors why teachers who described themselves as mavericks and trail blazers found satisfaction in their profession.

DISCIPLINE: DEALING WITH THE PROBLEMS

Teachers described students and discipline problems during 1919 - 1959 as being very different to the situation in today’s contemporary schools. Teachers explained that misbehaviour was usually in the form of practical jokes or pranks that were performed to see what the teachers’s reaction would be. Teachers emphasized that society was slower paced and children were not under any pressure to grow up quickly. Children were taught at home to respect their teachers and that family value was taken into the classroom by students.

Only two of the fourteen teachers interviewed agreed to the use of corporal punishment with the other twelve teachers preferring to discipline the students by talking to them or ignoring them until they were ready to apologize and be reasonable.
Teachers did not remember discipline to be a major problem in school perhaps not because society was not without problems, but rather because the teachers interviewed were excellent and effective in their craft. The teachers displayed caring and empathy when talking about their students and it perhaps could be concluded that their positive attitude about their students and teaching intercepted any serious discipline problems.

**INSPECTORS: PASSING THE TEST**

Historically public schooling in British Columbia had been highly centralized, based on the assumption that the provincial government and no other authority should control its schools. The administering and supervising of schools scattered over the 360,000 square miles of geographically diverse terrain was headquartered in Victoria where the government tightly monitored to system to ensure uniformity. The task of overseeing the operations throughout the huge province was too immense resulting in the assigning of inspectors to districts throughout province. The inspectors role was to visit and report on the schools in his district; his report was formidably powerful and since it was reliant on only two half day visits the presence of the inspector often caused anxiety for teachers. The teachers' myth of the inspector as a relentless critic whose only pleasure was to find fault with the teacher was rooted in the experiences of teachers prior to 1920 when inspectors were hired on their expertise in educational theory. The new school of inspectors were educational practitioners after the 1920's who had been in general, born and educated and taught in the province; they were men who had first hand experience about what it was like to teach especially in the remote parts of the province and therefore were more sympathetic and understanding of teachers and the schools they taught in.
the teachers interviewed remembered the visits by the inspectors to be positive; however this
could also be attributed to the fact that the teachers interviewed were effective and successful
teachers.

The year 1958 marked the eventual break up of the school inspectorate and the
beginnings of the model for the superintendancy of British Columbia. The autocratic role of the
inspector was to be redefined to keep pace with the more liberal and democratic approaches to
administration which had developed in business and industry. It was the beginning of a
professional support system for teachers which would enable them to function at much higher
levels of professional competence that they been able to during 1919 - 1959.

EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE: OUTSIDE OF THE CLASS

It was recognized that everyday school life extended beyond the classroom to include
aspects of learning which enhanced the lives of students, teachers, parents and the community.
During 1919 - 1959 it was the expectation of students, parents, and community that teachers
would sponsor activities such as sports teams, clubs concerts and performances. The term
"extracurricular" was not familiar to teachers as the activities sponsored outside of school time
were not considered extra work, but rather a part of the general duties of teaching. All the
teachers interviewed had sponsored out of class activities with enthusiasm because they enjoyed
sharing their talents and special interests with students. The smaller and more remote schools’
programs were modest usually consisting of a Christmas concert, local field trips and sand lot
baseball games. Larger and more urban schools were able to offer a wider variety of clubs and
interschool sports because of the larger teacher and student population. Success was not
determined by the size and scope of the activities as all programs, whether a picnic sketching on a hillside or an archaeological dig were equally as beneficial to students. The teacher sponsored programs and events whether Christmas concerts, sports teams, special interest clubs or field trips facilitated opportunities for students to experience success and to realize through active participation that learning went beyond textbooks and the classroom to extend into everyday life.

EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE: A PART OF THE COMMUNITY

Schools played an important role in the community especially in the early years when citizens went to great sacrifice to ensure a school was built; the school was important for childrens’ education but the building was also essential for other community gatherings. By the 1940's the school was usually not the only public building in the more urbanized community; however it remained important because of the value given to education and schooling. Teachers were respected members of the community and parents readily supported them. Parents did not participate in major decision making in the schools, but rather acted as advocates by organizing activities such as fund raising, coaching sports teams, sharing hobbies with students and building sets for plays. Few parents would venture into the school for a casual visit preferring only to come in to Parent Teacher meetings, school concerts or meet the teacher evenings. Parents respected and had faith in the sponsored out of class school system and teachers felt a partnership with the families of their students in providing an education which included a sense of membership within the community.
EVERYDAY SCHOOL LIFE: A SNAPSHOT HISTORY

Collections of photographs taken by teachers allow for a greater understanding of everyday school life because unlike human memory, visual images enables others to see with absolute realism. A visual record is not only a nostalgic view of the past, but is also an important part of historical documentation because the camera remembers with clarity what has been done, seen and even thought.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSIONS

The following recommendations may assist in the continuation of research in the social history of teaching in British Columbia.

1. It is acknowledged that the social history of education and schooling in British Columbia is worthy of documentation. Provincial professional organizations such as the British Columbia College of Teachers and the British Columbia Teachers Federation should ensure support and funding for research specific to the documentation of teaching in British Columbia.

2. Local organizations such as district teachers associations and retired teachers associations should support and initiate research specific to the documentation of teaching in districts throughout British Columbia.

3. Provincial organizations such as the British Columbia College of Teachers and the British Columbia Teachers Federation should expand their archives and organize displays of their photographs and artifacts periodically in communities throughout the province.

4. Local organizations such as Districts Teachers Associations and Retired Teachers Associations should establish archives specific to teaching in their districts and organize displays of local photographs and artifacts periodically in their community.

5. Provincial teacher training institutes should encourage students teachers to pursue research relevant to the history of teaching in British Columbia. Projects such as the audio and videotaped interviews of retired teachers could be conducted with copies being donated to local and provincial organizations.

6. Copies of data and photographs obtained by local and provincial organizations should be submitted to the Provincial Museum of History’s archives on the history of education in the province.
Teacher Rita Laidlaw and local Diamond Drillers, Spences Bridge, 1929
Teacher Rita Laidlaw in winter Racoon coat
Spences Bridge, 1929
Teacher Rita Laidlaw outside school house
Student at door, Spences Bridge, 1929
Teachers Leo Murray (left) and Harvey McKirdy,
Peace River, 1940
Teachers ready to travel to First Normal School Convention, Fort St. John School, 1940
Teacher Harvey McKirdy on horseback. School barn in backyard, Peace River, 1941
Teacher "Elsie" outside Baldonnel High School, Baldonnel, 1943
Teacher "Elsie" inside Baldonnel Classroom, Baldonnel 1943
Teaching Staff at Sir Richard McBride, New Westminster, 1943 - 1944
Spences Bridge class, Spences Bridge, 1928 - 1929
Spences Bridge class, Spences Bridge, 1928 - 1929
Surrey Center School class photograph, Surrey, 1932
Surrey Center School class photograph, Surrey, 1932
Strawberry Hill School, grades 1, 4, 5, and 6, Surrey, c. 1932
Strawberry Hill School, grades 1, 4, 5, and 8, Surrey, c. 1932
Mayne Island School, Mayne Island, 1939
School Children at Upper Pine School, Peace River 1940
Upper Pine School, Grade Eight Students, Peace River, 1941
Upper Fraser School, Intermediate Students,
Upper Fraser, c. 1950
Fort Fraser School, Intermediate Class, Fort Fraser, 1957
Fort St. James Superior School, Grades 7 - 10, Fort St. James, 1956
Fort St. John School, Fort St. John, 1940
Upper Pine School, Peace River, 1940
Baldonnel Primary School Building,
Baldonnel, 1942
Baldonnel, School Barn and play area, Baldonnel, 1942
Baldonnel School, swings and playground, Baldonnel, 1942
Pouce Coupe School, Pouce Coupe, 1942
Upper Fraser School, office and teacher accommodation upstairs, Upper Fraser, 1951
Fort St. James School, Fort St. James, 1955
Fort St. James Superior School, Fort St. James, 1956
Boarding House owned by Linquist family, Peace River, 1940
Linguist Children standing in front of Teachers car, Peace River, 1940
The Bernard Family who boarded the teacher, Peace River, 1940
Teacher Leo Murray and his teacherage, North Pine River, 1941
Building the Alaska Highway, Peace River, 1940
North Pine General Store, Peace River, 1941
Rose Prairie General Store, Peace River, 1946
Waving good-bye to teacher at the end of the day, Surrey Center School, Surrey, 1929.
Physical Education class, Teacher Leo Murray (far left), North Pine School, Peace River, 1942
High School girls, Baldonnel School, Peace River, 1942
Inside Baldonnel classroom, Peace River, 1942
Baldonnel School boys, Peace River 1942
Baldonnel School, Peace River, 1942
Baldonnel School girls, Peace River, 1942
Upper Fraser School, Students on snowdrift that reaches to windows, Upper Fraser, 1951
School Picnic, Spences Bridge, 1929
Field Trip transportation to Experimental Agricultural Farm in Alberta, North Pine School children, 1941
Field Trip transportation to Experimental Agricultural Farm in Alberta, North Pine School children, 1941
Field Trip to Experimental Agricultural Farm in Alberta, North Pine School Children, 1941
North Pine, (L-R) Madeline, Margaret, Lisa, Peter, field trip to Experimental Agricultural Farm in Alberta, 1941
Christmas Concert, Fort St. James, 1954
Christmas Concert, Fort St. James, 1954
Valentines Day Dance, Fort St. James
Superior School, Fort St. James, 1954
Christmas Concert, Fort St. James
Superior, Fort St. James, 1955
Hume Park Picnic, Sir Richard McBride School students, New Westminster, 1959
Hume Park Picnic, Sir Richard McBride
School students, New Westminster, 1959
Christmas Concert, Applying make-up for school play, McBride School, c. 1940
Typical Winter Dog Sled, Peace River, 1946
Typical Winter Dog Sled, Peace River, 1940
Students on Horseback outside School barn, Upper Pine School, Peace River, 1941
Typical homemade wooden sleigh used in winter by students, teachers, and the community, Peace River, 1941
"Jimmy" (center) during the winter travelled five miles to school on toboggan pulled by family dog. Upper Fraser, 1951
FIG. SIXTY-FIVE

Typical Teacher's Desk and Chair
Classroom Gramophone
Kerosene Lamp for Teacher's Desk
Typewriter used for making worksheets
Red Ensign, old Canadian flag
British Union Jack
Typical School Desks on Runners
School Readers and Black Slate Boards
Wood Burning Stove
Water can, ladle and wood box
Front Cover of Student Report Card, St. Elmo School, Chilliwack, B.C., 1926
Center Fold of Student Report Card, St. Elmo School, Chilliwack, B.C., 1926
Back Cover of Student Report Card, St. Elmo School, Chillwack, B.C., 1926
References


APPENDIX A

RETIRED TEACHERS INTERVIEW QUESTIONS
APPENDIX A

You start a question, and it's like starting a stone. You sit quietly on the top of a hill; and away the stone goes, starting others.

Robert Louis Stevenson

1. "So, can you tell me when you began your teaching career?"

2. "...and when did you retire from teaching?"

3. "During the _____ years that you taught you must have had a lot of experiences in different schools and school districts. Can you recall the schools and districts you worked in?"

4. "You must have found great satisfaction in teaching to stay with the profession for ____ years. Was there a particular experience or person that influenced your decision to become a teacher?"

5. "Once you made the decision to teach, how did you pursue your teacher training?"

6. "When you completed your training at ____ did you start teaching right away?"

7. "How did you get your first teaching job?"

8. "Can you take a moment to think back to your first school and your first classroom and paint a picture of them in your mind.....can you describe them for me?"

9. "In the classroom you have just described can you imagine it is in the morning, the bell has rung and a typical day has begun. Can you take me through your day?"

10. "Your former students must contribute a large part to your teaching memories. What were the students like when you were teaching?"
APPENDIX A (cont’d)

11. "Were there any students in particular who stand out in your mind, whether they were exceptionally good or exceptionally bad?"

12. "For the students who did require disciplining, how did you handle it?"

13. "On a more positive note what were some of the school sponsored activities that the students enjoyed?"

14. "Were you involved in any of these activities?"

15. "When I think of the extracurricular activities in the school I start to think about the parents of students. What role did the parents play in school life?"

16. "Where did the community come into the daily affairs of school life?"

17. "Did any of the parents or community members visit your classroom?"

18. "You must have had a few principals or inspectors arrive on your classroom doorstep. Do you have any stories to tell?"

19. "What was your biggest challenge during your career as a teacher?"

20. "If you think about the words...pleasure...pain...and amusement...What are the teaching memories that return to your mind?"

21. "Over the years you spent teaching you had the opportunity to come in contact with many students, classrooms and schools. What do you think were the most significant changes in school life from when you started teaching to when you retired?"

22. "What are the memories that you would most like remembered about school life when you taught?"
APPENDIX B

INTRODUCTORY LETTER TO ELICITE INTERVIEW CANDIDATES
"IT'S THE LITTLE THINGS"

It's the little things that make school years
Stand out from all the rest.
The games, the tricks, the laughter, the fears,
The friends we like the best.

It's not of tests and marks and grade
We'll hear when school friends meet;
But of the pranks we often played
And days with fun replete.

It's nicknames, songs, a far-fetched pun,
That give school life its zest.
We see at least 'tis not in fun.
Folks say school days are best.

It's little things our memories hold
We'll cherish till we die
We'll think of our Maroon and Gold
With pleasure and a sigh.

LEAONA WALLACE
FROM THE 1847 CLARION

I remember the erratic fire alarm system. One day after it had rung for several minutes and nobody paid any attention, I looked out into the hall to find the fire-chief with stop watch in hand checking on the time required to vacate the school.

Formal exams of 2 1/2 to 3 hours were usual, and teachers expected to use Christmas and Easter holidays for marking. Very few pupils held out-of-school jobs, and there was no such space as a student parking lot. No mistaking the era then—the boys favoured close-cropped heads and the girls were attractive feminine dress.
APPENDIX B (cont’d)

Dear 

Life in school has certainly changed but little has been recorded about it. Over the past few years groups of people have come together to record and preserve the history of British Columbia, but the story of British Columbia’s teachers has been largely undocumented.

With this in mind and with the support of S.F.U professor Dr. Norman Robinson I initiated a graduate project which will record a social history about school life in Lower Mainland British Columbia from approximately 1919 - 1959. The project is not an attempt to cover the history, sociology or philosophy of education, but rather is a nostalgic attempt to recapture something of school life and to keep its story alive for future generations. For this project to succeed I need the help of teachers like yourself to recall your memories of everyday school life during your school career.

I would like to interview teachers who taught between 1919 - 1959 as well as be able to: 1) recopy old photographs and 2) photograph memorabilia, such as day books, report cards, certificates or ? from the period of 1919 - 1959. My research is reliant on the cooperation of retired teachers participating in this study and your help would be greatly appreciated in what I believe is a very worthy project.

The length and time of the interviews is extremely flexible with most interviews probably taking one hour; you would most likely be interviewed only once. Again, I stress, your participation would be greatly appreciated as I am attempting to recollect "everyday school life".

I would like to contact you initially by telephone to discuss further if you would be willing to participate in this project. I would like to call you on ______ at ______. If this time is unsatisfactory or if you would like to contact me before the scheduled date please do not hesitate to call me at (604) 522-2346 during the evenings.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Jennifer M. McKnight
APPENDIX C

REPRESENTATION OF WHEN TEACHERS BEGAN CAREERS DURING 1919 - 1959
APPENDIX C
WHEN TEACHERS BEGAN CAREERS

YEAR

TOTAL TEACHERS