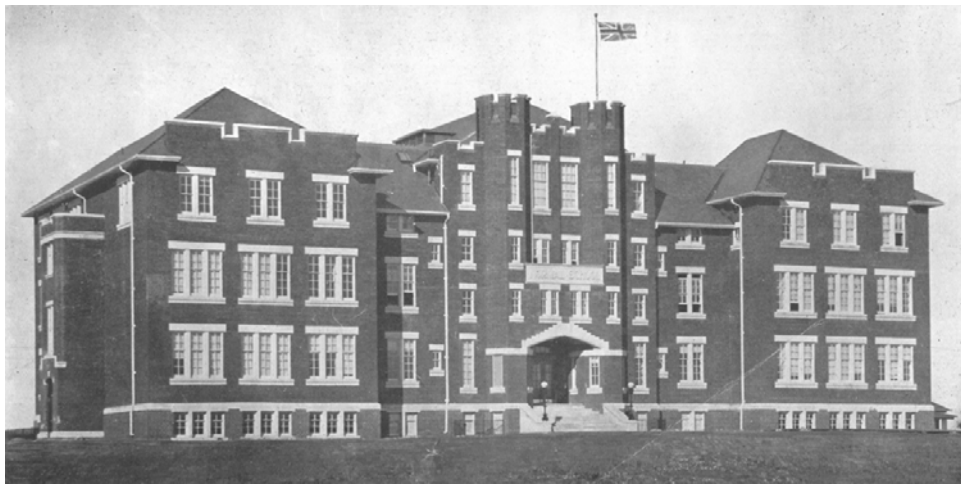


Teacher's Stories

Class of 1938



**Camrose, Alberta Normal
School**

**Compiled by
Shirley A. Freed, Ph.D.
2002**

PREFACE

This project began with my mother - one of the 1938 graduates from Camrose Normal School. I am a teacher educator, and professor of leadership. For a number of years I have been intrigued as I listen to my mother's stories of her training and years as a teacher and principal in public and private schools in Alberta, Canada.

My mother received her training during The Progressive Era – a time when John Dewey had significant influence on education in America. Was his influence felt in Canada? I have often wondered about that!


When I discovered that my mother's class was having occasional reunions - I determined to meet with some of her classmates and listen to their stories as well. What is compiled in this volume are the stories I have gathered to this date. However, the project is in no way complete – I expect others in the class to add to this small beginning and also would not be surprised to find more stories emerge as the class members read each others stories.

A wonderful find was the Yearbook from the class of 1938. I have included a number of items from the yearbook and have differentiated them with a scroll-type border so you might know the source. Also, a number of advertisements from the yearbook seem to tell us something of the times. You'll have no trouble identifying them!

I basically reproduced the teacher's stories here in the format they were given to me. Some of the stories come from video interviews so they have an "oral-telling" tone to them. I suggested that the teachers share stories from normal school as well as early experiences in their educational experience and in their teaching careers.

Following the teacher's stories are a number of "responses" to the stories -- these were written by students from various classes of mine. Please browse and enjoy and if you'd like to give me any feedback, my email is freed@andrews.edu or Dr. Shirley Freed, School of Education, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI 49104 USA.

Always in style; never without a smile.
Ambition - To survive till the end of the term.
Favorite expression - Just think where we shall be in a year from now!



Edna

I was born in August of 1918 in Alberta. My father homesteaded and the nearest town was 25 miles away, so we had few advantages. However, my mother had been a school teacher and I remember trying to read her old Encyclopedia. How I wanted to read!

When I was about 5, my cousin and I decided, one morning, to walk to the local school a mile away. We were just to the corner of the school yard when I heard my Dad's "Model T" coming up behind us. We were so disappointed that our little plan had failed.

I didn't start school until May, 1925. I'd been ill before Christmas and the school was closed for 4 months due to the severe winter. It opened for 4 summer months and I completed my grade 1 in those 4 months.

I graduated from high school in 1937. I was so elated when I received my grade 12 marks from Edmonton, to say I had passed. It had been a real struggle all the way. Our local school only taught to grade 9. So, I took grade 10 on my own, with the teacher kindly helping me after school. My Dad was able to pay my board so I could attend the Hanna High School for grade 11. The next year I stayed at home and took 3 courses by correspondence. This lightened my load for grade 12, which I took in Big Valley, where I stayed in a dorm; did my own cleaning and laundry and helped with the cooking and cleaning for the whole dorm. I think I paid \$10

per month as well. These were the “Dirty Thirties” and I credit my parents for encouraging and helping me all they could.

1937-1938: This was my year at Camrose Normal School - a year of so many new experiences and a hectic pace - so much to do and learn in one year. There were only 75 attending C.M.S. that year and, because of the lower number of students, I happened to be the only Normalite at my boarding house. I felt I missed a lot because I had no-one with whom I could discuss and share assignments, etc. We did get to know each other quite well at the school and the professors were an inspiration to me. They were wonderful role-models. Mr. Doucette even invited us, in groups, to his home for dinner. They had a maid and everything was done properly. I think this was a lesson in social graces! I participated in the Glee Club and the Drama Society and enjoyed both, but, the Practice-Teaching in the local schools was the terror of my life.

I got my first school in the fall of 1938. There were so many teachers looking for schools I felt fortunate to be hired. I was really excited going out to teach – I’d been raised in a very remote area and it was difficult to get my education –this was a very exciting time for me to get out and really be in a school. I found that the rural schools were really important in the communities – sometimes too important – because they had their dances in the schools and left their crusts under the desks.

My first school was in a rural area, of course. I still have a fondness for those first pupils. They were quite disadvantaged because times were so hard. There were no up-to-date books and no equipment. I had a blackboard, a globe and a pointer. I had to provide anything else. With grades 1 to 8, time was also in short supply. I bought the reading work-books for the Elementary grades with my own money. One soft-ball was our only play-ground equipment. The children were respectful and well behaved and we had a happy time together, though I felt a bit inadequate for the task of trying to educate this diverse group of children. I spent two years in this school.

The salaries were very small but we thought they were big. I gave part of it to my mother, brother and sister. "Take this home, I don't need it all!" It was 84 dollars!

In the summer of 1940 I attended summer school at the U of A. With this and satisfactory superintendents reports, I was granted my permanent Elementary and Intermediate Alberta Teachers Certificate.

In the fall of 1940 I moved to another country school, but times were changing and, after my first year of teaching, the Alberta government re-organized its school system. The Province was divided into School Divisions. The schools in each Division were run from a central office. When this happened we were provided with the necessary supplies from the Divisional Office.

This second school was in a relatively progressive ranching community and the pupils were a delight. I had been placed in this school because of discipline problems there. This did not materialize for me. Knowing there had been a problem, I involved myself in almost all of their recess and noon-hour activities, especially at first (I played a lot of soft-ball!). I just felt that there was a little feud going on between the families and that was causing the problem and I didn't want the children to have time to pursue that. I found that being in touch with the children solved the problems. As with my first school, we put on a Christmas Program each year and these were always so well received. One thing I didn't particularly like was the use of the school for dances. This meant a big clean-up the next day and a disruption of classroom displays and blackboard work. This was war-time so most of our Current Events each morning consisted of how the war was progressing. At noon we got hands washed, sat in an informal group and ate and visited. Then off to play ball or winter games outside (weather permitting).

In 1942 I was offered a position in a town school but I declined and got married instead. I was marrying a farmer so we were married at Easter, before spring's work. Since I'd had bridal showers in my fiancée's district and in my hometown, the parents at my present school decided, instead, to give us a pair of white wool blankets. Also, one morning, after the Easter break, I arrived at school to find a large parcel, with my name on it. Assuming this was a wedding gift I gathered the pupils around me and said

we'd open the parcel together. Well, when I opened the parcel, here was a beautiful white chamber pail! That was really embarrassing in those times. I'm sure my pupils and their parents had a good laugh that evening. I knew, too, who had played the prank. It was from this "friend to all" bachelor who lived in the district.

I hadn't planned to teach after I married, but in the fall of 1942, some parents came and begged me to take the school a mile from our place. There was such a shortage of teachers now, due to the war. So, I took the position, but it was a very unrewarding year with 6 pupils and almost that many grades. There was no challenge for either pupils or teacher.

I only taught for 5 years before I was married – we had a very close knit group – families were all pulling for the school. I found it helped to learn all about the families. We didn't have much equipment, we had a ball and when the weather wasn't too cold, we played morning and noon and that worked well. However, when it was cold we had to organize something inside the schools – board games etc.

We had a group of young people – we had a club. We'd go to the lake together – that's how we got our husbands. There was communication between the district schools – 5 or 6 schools – came together for dances and Christmas programs. We each had our own different nights. Some of our gang played the music for the dance – there were so many of us. I really enjoyed my life as a young person.

I didn't teach again until 1964. I had my children and my husband wouldn't let me teach - he wanted me to stay home with the children. I substituted for 2 years here in our town school and what a change to have a roomful of pupils, all in one grade. Those who have had more experience in this situation know the pros and cons of this better than I do. So, I won't go into that here.

Before I close, I would like to elaborate on the system we were trained for at C.M.S. This was a new concept called "The Enterprise System," and our slogan was: "Learn to do by doing." The grades were divided into Divisions:

Div. I - Grades 1-3

Div. II - Grades 4-6

Div. III - Grades 7-9

This system of divisions was designed to give more flexibility in pupil progress. Our Course of Study outlined the type and number of "enterprises" that should be covered in Div. I and Div. II over a three-year period. The Enterprise had to be organized to include subject matter and activities appropriate to the learning level of that Division.

One example of an Enterprise is taking a trip, which could include a lot of subject matter and related activities. These situations lent themselves very well to teaching subjects like Social Studies. We taught the basics - reading, spelling, arithmetic, etc. separately, of course. Division III had a very specific outline of subject matter to be taught in the "course of study."

I'm not sure how this all worked out because I was away from teaching for so long. In the meantime schools became centralized and everything had to be adjusted for one or two grades to a room. When I substituted in 1964-1966 I didn't see much that I felt was related to the Enterprise System.

In conclusion, I must say that, as a teacher, I worried a lot and wondered if we were doing all we could to apply learning to life. I think I worry even more now because I see my grand children using calculators and computers and wonder if the basics are over-looked. I would hate to live in a push-button world and I don't want them to. But, I guess grandmothers tend to be old-fashioned! In any case, I certainly wish the educators and the students all the best in the future.

Sergeant-Major Hawkes: (To Miss Johnson who has a far away look in her eyes) "Miss Johnson, you are now taking P. T. in the Camrose Normal School and on the bottom, not the top floor."

Social Activities

The round of entertainment for 1937-38 began on the evening of Friday, September 17, when the staff were hosts at a combined welcoming party for the students and farewell party for Miss Hastie.

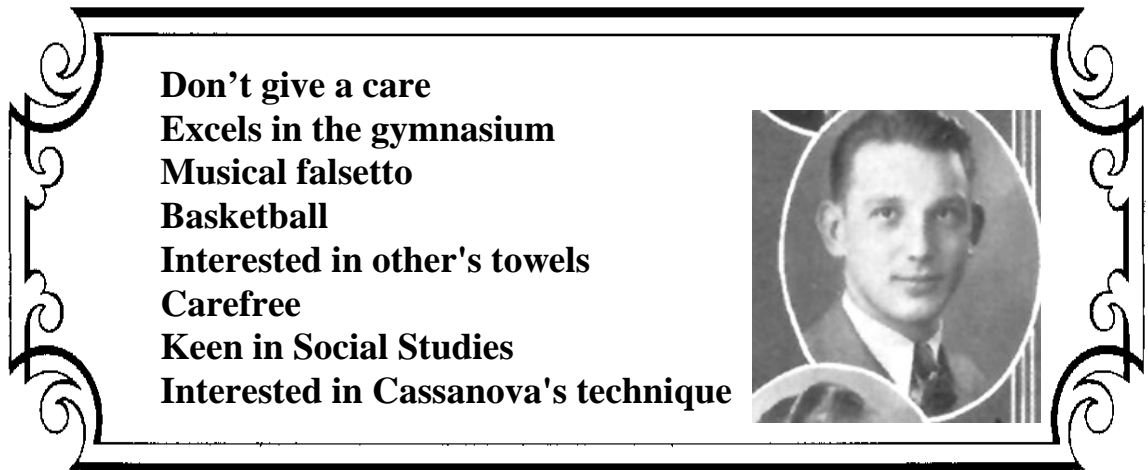
On Friday evening, November 5, the newly appointed social committee, had their first taste of their duties as a social committee. The Assembly Hall was decorated in the Hallowe'en motif, and the orchestra excelled – result a most successful and enjoyable evening. The evening of Friday, November 26, found the students again tripping up the frosty walk to take part in another happy party.

The Christmas party was the social highlight of the first term. Examinations left behind, the students focused their attention upon decorating the hall for the gala occasion. The stage was ablaze with scores of lights on the gaily decorated Christmas trees. The very successful programme was followed by a delicious lunch, and this in turn was succeeded by dancing, during which diversion, hats and novelties added to the fun. Indeed, a few of our more modern students tried their hands, or shall we say their feet, at the Big Apple. The first executive wound up their term of office with a party on Friday, January 28, when, as usual, games and lunch were followed by dancing to the music of our own expert orchestra.

The social committee for the second term was initiated on March 4, when Grades XI and XII from the High School were entertained at a party.

Plans are being made for a Saint Patrick's Day party on March 17, when our Irish students will be given full opportunity for The Wearing of the Green. There will also be a party on April 8. This will be the last before the Easter holidays.

An outdoor picnic and Sports Day will be held in May and the big event of the school term will be the final party of June 2.



Frank

While in high school, I was encouraged to become a school teacher. After completing schooling in Old Strathcona in 1937, I entered Camrose Normal School in the fall of 1937. After a year's program, I received my teaching certificate.

My senior room of Prosvischenia School consisted of 14 students from grades 8-10. It was a real experience. With the coming of school divisions, my school became a one-room school. I was transferred to Bellis School where my grades were 6-9 consisting of 30 students.

In 1940, I married Nancy. Francis, our oldest, was born. Both Nancy and I raised a family of four boys, namely Frank, Jr., Henry, Wayne, and Richard (Rick), who are all married and have provided us with eight grandchildren.

In the fall of 1942, I had my basic army training in Camrose. By late fall of 1943, I was a member of 86 Bridge Company overseas.

Until World War II ended, I saw action in United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany. Waiting to be repatriated, I was selected for one of the cultural tours of Berlin.

On February 14th, 1946, I had my feet back on the soil of my country of the Maple Leaf. It was back to the U. of A. in the faculty of Education.

There I found time to pick up the Industrial Arts Certificate. Soon I was relieved of the academics on the staff at Calmar and I took over the arts program where the classes were limited to eight students, and I received a raise in my salary.

In 1957, I arrived in Fort Saskatchewan High School and stayed with the Arts until my retirement in 1977.

Early School Days

The first three years were very difficult at the school. The school population was nearly 50% Ukrainian and the other half was Romanian. We were the only Polish speaking family in the district. There were no residents of British stock. As youngsters we learned to speak each others' languages. The two imported teachers from Ontario were unilingual and had the school's by-laws in their hands. They forbade us to speak any language except English on the road to and from the school grounds. At the kangaroo court, you at least got a hearing. There were many days I had a hard time to hold the crayon to write on the slate. But there was joy.

Transfer

I could not do justice to the ½ hour academic courses consisting of thirty students. Marking the assignments was a burden. A spare per day was not enough. So off to the vocational school. The classes were four hours long. The wood working and metal courses lasted from 8:00 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon. It took two summers to get my Junior Industrial Arts certificate. The senior certificate followed.

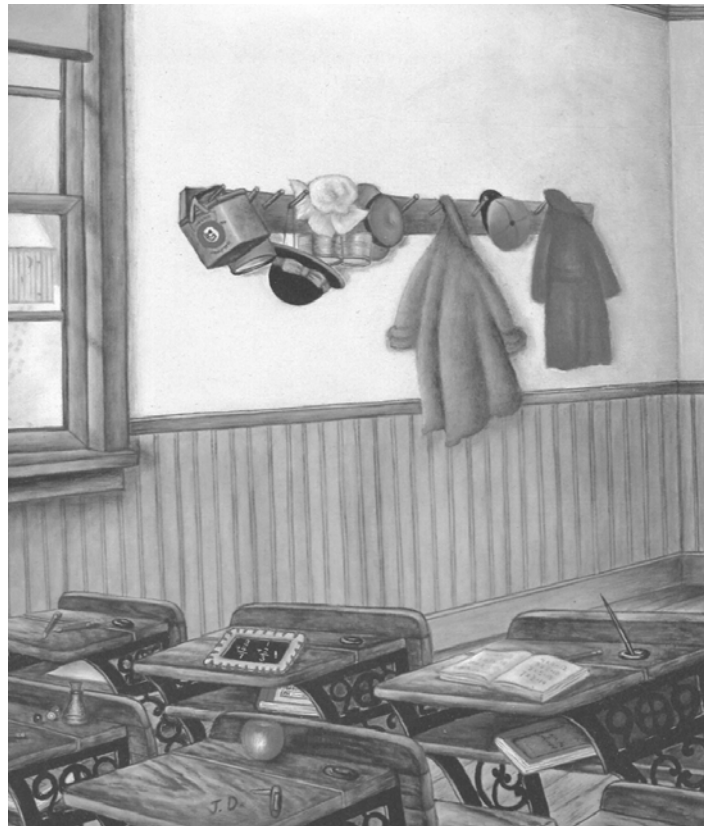
There was a good reason to change. The classes were two to four hours long. The eight student class was the limit. I had plenty of time to work with the students. Marking went along with the class. The students wanted to be in the course. Here are some of the gems I picked up during the years of teaching industrial arts:

- a.) Mr. _____ , I cut this board twice and it is still too short.
b.) Imagine, one day in the shop, I already know how to make sawdust.
c.) What tree is buried in this sentence? The lumber was sent tO A Kiln to be dried. Ans: Oak.

Retirement

I have been a member of the Pioneer Singers for almost 20 years. I am one of the charter members.

“Alas for those who never sing but die with all their music in them.” –
Oliver Wendell Holmes.



**LAST MINUTE SOLILOQUIES OF A NORMALITE
BEFORE A GRADE NINE CLASS**

Five more minutes and I begin, but I don't think I have anything to worry about. I don't feel nervous; I worked at this dratted lesson from six last night until two this morning, was up again at four, and know something about "sanatoria and insane asylums." I think I should get an "A" easily. Funny, how scared some girls are about practice teaching. Let me see now, how was I to begin? – Oh yes: "now class our lesson this morning." Just the same, even though I do know my lesson plan backwards and forwards and don't feel the last bit nervous, I do wish I could have started in a lower grade than nine.


Here comes the class. Say, those kids are as big as I am, some bigger; that boy in the corner is sprouting a moustache and that girl over there – I don't like the look in her eye. See those young imps sizing me up. They think they know more than I do – Gee! What if they do?

Why, my teeth are beginning to chatter and my heart is pounding! I am certain those kids can hear it – this agony is awful – three more minutes! Whatever made me think I could teach? Why didn't I stay home and do something easier; for instance, milk cows and pitch bundles? Oh Lord, let me get a "B". (I am praying, not swearing.) What was I to teach, and how was I to begin?

. . . . "Class, this morning our lesson is in Health" – that's a joke, fancy me teaching health – why I have heart failure, stomach complaint, high blood pressure, rickets, fallen arches, palsy, knocking knees, and St. Vitus Dance.

My time draws nearer. I'd rather face a firing squad than those forty pupils! Goodness! I hope I don't let my notes fall, and if my teeth would only stop chattering. . . .The last second Going!.Going!. . . . Gone!

Edith

<p>Educated - Reluctantly Ambition - To be an aviatrix Chief characteristic - Laughing hazel eyes Pastime - Sitting in the art room Favorite expression - "Will we ever finish?"</p>	
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Isobel

Whacks

Mr. J.K. Haverstock, principal of the Camrose Normal School, admonished our graduating class to “start with the brakes on,” in our new teaching positions.

One day in September of 1938, two grade 7 boys required discipline for picking on a younger child. I kept Mr. Haverstock’s advice in mind and kept them in after school. There was a leather strap in the teacher’s desk. I gave each boy two “whacks” on each hand with it. That was the end of the incident and the need for discipline, while I taught at Horse Shoe Lake S.D. (No parental questions or interference).

In 1943 I was in the RCAF Women’s Division section in Halifax. There I met my grade 9 student, Stewart Black. He was an officer in the RCAF and I had to salute him.

My First Cheque

September 28, 1938 - My first cheque was hand delivered to me at school in an envelope, by the chairman of the district school board, a local farmer. That envelope was so precious I carried it in my hand as I left the school for my two mile hike to my boarding house. A necessary detour took me to the

newly dug girls outdoor, two open seater, toilet. I set the envelope far to the left as I sat over the right hole. To my dismay, as I stood up, my coat tail whisked my precious envelope down the left hole. What was I to do? I went back to the school shed to get a long stick with a nail on it to retrieve my envelope with the cheque. It was dark inside. As I reached for a stick I was confronted by my nemesis - the mouse. Immediately I left that stick and decided to come to school early the next morning, in the daylight, to get a stick. On September 29th I was successful. Thank goodness for the envelope. My first \$80.00 cheque was clean.

Daily Routine

To begin our day we: 1) said the Lord's prayer 2) saluted the Union Jack as we sang O Canada 3) the command "Class be seated."

Assignments for each class were in a particular spot on the blackboard which was across the front of the school room. The teacher read first with the grade one students and then gave them seat work. The seat work had been reproduced by the teacher on a hectograph pad. This was a "jelly-like" purple substance made by the teacher and poured on to a cookie sheet. It resulted in a smooth surface and it did duplicate copies.

Each class in turn was attended to by the teacher. Everyone took part in Current Events, Music and Art. There was a climate of helping each other in the Grades 1-6 when the teacher was busy with Grades 7-9.

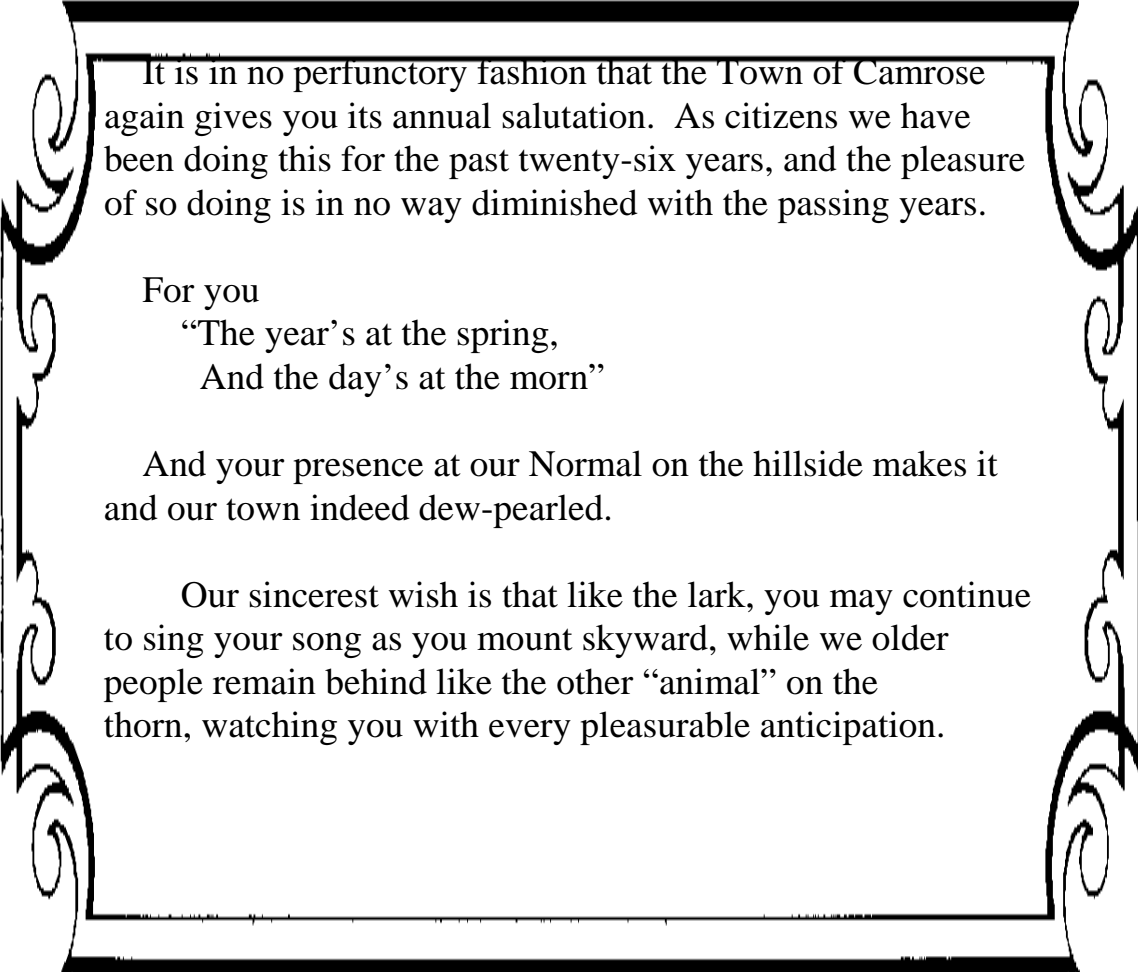
Teaching in Retirement

In 1986 the Canadian Teachers' Federation sent me on a four-member team to the Gambia in West Africa. We were the sixth and final team of a three-year project with the Gambian Teachers' Federation to upgrade their elementary school teachers.

My assignment was using audio-visual materials in the classroom. In Ottawa I was told that there was no electricity in the classroom, no cassette

players, no projectors of any kind and no record players. What was I to do?

My thoughts went back to Horse Shoe Lake School in 1938. I planned 1) maps of different colored local mud...no money for salt and flour 2) puppets and plays in English 3) oral stories, written and copied 4) local songs in native language 5) musical scale on bottles - tap out songs 6) rhythm band, sticks, hands, feet, voice.



It is in no perfunctory fashion that the Town of Camrose again gives you its annual salutation. As citizens we have been doing this for the past twenty-six years, and the pleasure of so doing is in no way diminished with the passing years.

For you
“The year’s at the spring,
And the day’s at the morn”

And your presence at our Normal on the hillside makes it and our town indeed dew-pearled.

Our sincerest wish is that like the lark, you may continue to sing your song as you mount skyward, while we older people remain behind like the other “animal” on the thorn, watching you with every pleasurable anticipation.

ATHLETICS

During the past school year the activities of this society have been enjoyable and profitable for all its members. In spite of the necessity of doing a certain amount of school work, everything undertaken was well supported. . .

A short summary will serve to show the part played in school life by the Athletics Society. Fall games were largely confined to softball and basketball. No definite teams or schedules were organized for softball, but in basketball house leagues were drawn up early in the term. In these, competition was keen in spite of the disadvantage of a small student body. Results in the pyramid building were good, even if a little shaky at times. . .

A boys' hockey league was also formed. . .of Normal School students and several players from town to complete the line-up. To date they have an unbroken record of victories. Later in the season the girls organized a hockey team. Several well supported games were played with high School and Lutheran College teams.

A Bonspiel was also held after Christmas. This event was so successful that it was followed by a second one late in February.

At the time of writing, the spring activities – baseball, softball, basketball, tennis and track events – are still in the future.

The Athletic Society also played its part in the Class programs where six girls in Irish costume, gracefully danced the Irish lilt, another group of girls swung Indian clubs, some did the sword dance and the men built pyramids.

**Laura first made herself heard near Ponoka in 1918 and has been making herself heard ever since.
Favorite expression - Oh Fiddle!
Favorite pastime - Abducting Miss Twomey's music books.
Ambition - To teach Math. in High School.**



Laura

We graduated in 1938, and all of us went to rural schools and most communities were supportive of the schools. Schools had been built by the local residents -- they gathered together because they felt that the kids needed an education and they were supportive of the schools.

When I first graduated I taught at the school where I attended where I had taken my high school and stayed there two years and then had one nightmare year - taught in a rural school with 46 students. At the beginning of the year I had 13 grade ones around a little table. They bought their own workbooks and then they'd fall off the bench and tear and they'd come crying because their parents couldn't afford another workbook.

Thirteen grade ones, all the grades up to grade eight – there was an old box heater in the center of the school and when it got colder, you had to watch the kids so they didn't burn themselves. Also, I had to watch them closely at recess time because the kids were known as a tough bunch. I had no prep time – had to watch them all the time. There was one little boy in grades 3 or 4 and for some reason the kids picked on him, so I had to watch him closely. But, I told him, "I can't watch you, you stay right here." That year I broke down with TB in the middle of the year. After that I didn't teach for 12 years.

Altogether I taught 20 years – I taught at the Indian reservation and 18 years in one school.

For the last 12 years, even with out a degree, I was principal of the school. The principals didn't want to stay in little 5 room schools. They wanted to move on to bigger things so I was principal.

I was in my 3rd year of university – but I never did get my degree.

When we went to normal school, most of us came from rural schools and we had seen teachers of various abilities and talents teaching kids and the ideas of what worked and what didn't. But the people who went to town schools with one grade hadn't seen this or a grade one student for about 12 years and didn't know what to do. Country kids had some of that growing up so they were able to get rapport with the kids.

You could even see that with practice teaching. I taught with a practice teacher who was an only child and had never been around younger children and you could tell she didn't know what to do. She went into a grade 3 class and she had no idea what to do. We had to practice teach a half day, three or four different grade levels throughout the year. In the spring I went to a rural school and practiced under a regular teacher for about one week.

We had to prepare some of our classes with our normal school teacher before we went to the school. We had about 5 half days or so and we had to go to different rooms. Half of the teachers in Camrose had been picked out by our teachers because they thought would be able to represent the inspector.

This practice teaching experience was helpful but it didn't really prepare you for facing your own students in the country. I remember going into grade 8 with a bunch of ornery boys. This was **their** practice room! That was their fun day. They weren't easy to work with. You couldn't walk in there and say, "This is what I'm going to teach." You had to figure things out on the spot!

Break of 12 years: It was mostly my health had broken down – and then I got married in 1942. My husband was in the air force in Calgary – and we had 4 children then, back in the san for TB. I had three bouts of TB, and that was a terrible experience – thank the Lord that doesn't happen anymore! I was fortunate. I was one of the survivors. Wonderful people to help -

some husbands never came back.

I'm facing up to my health. I tried to teach so that all the kids would feel like they belonged in the school. There was very little dissension in the school – the kids cooperated and I was interested in what the kids did and I tried to stay down at their level.

I was not a typical principal. It was a 5 room school and three of the teachers had been on the staff longer than I had. I was hesitant to take the position when they offered it to me because I just didn't feel I had the qualifications – so I didn't have a heavy hand.

There was a spirit of cooperation with the staff and the kids. When one child got into trouble I asked him to leave the room and then I would say to the rest, "We don't want to be responsible for bringing up a child that gets into trouble, it's up to us to help them through this."

I tried to help them level off. And that worked really well. A lot of people wouldn't be able to do this.

**Alberta Teacher's Association
Code of Professional Etiquette**

It shall be considered an unprofessional act:

1. To disregard a contract with a school board.
2. To criticize adversely a fellow-member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, or to make a report on his efficiency without first having shown him a written statement and given him an opportunity of replying thereto.
3. To pass along rumors derogatory to a fellow-member of the Alberta Teachers' Association whether such rumors be based on fact or not.
4. To seek professional advancement by other than professional means.
5. To seek employment with a school board:
 - (a) Not in good standing with the Alberta Teachers' Association
 - (b) Already having a member of the Alberta Teachers' Association under contract for the same position.
6. To make known to non-members of the Alberta Teachers' Association except through authorized channels the proceedings of a committee or general meeting of the Alberta Teachers' Association.
7. To speak to any person, a non-member of the Alberta Teachers' Association, in terms derogatory to, or derisive of the teaching profession as established by **The Teaching Profession Act, 1935**, and amendments thereto.
8. To negotiate or attempt to negotiate or formally to execute a contract with a school board at a rate of salary below the Statutory Minimum as provided in **The School Act**, unless and until the approval of the Minister has been secured by the school board to engage a teacher at such lower rate.

He hails from Kingman and is a real King's man. He seems to be quiet. Yet, one never knows. Consider the actions performed by those who hear his playing in the Orchestra.



Lloyd

I was born in Bashaw, Alberta in 1916, moved, and grew up on a half-section farm near the village of Kingman, Alberta. There were three older brothers, one older sister and later one younger brother and two younger sisters. Dad was a railroad section foreman and the family did the farm work.

I started school in Grade 1 at Coal Hill Rural School, a half mile away that had grades 1-8, with about 25 pupils of various nationalities. Teachers were usually "Permit" qualifications and several turnovers. When I finished Grade 8, the Kingman rural High school opened, teaching Grades 8-11. Department Exams were written in those days. I received my Grade 8 diploma in 1929. Some of my Grade 12 was obtained by correspondence courses and help from the high school teacher. The Depression halted further education for five years. Farming jobs, if any, paid 20 cents per hour, or for some transients \$5.00 per month government allowance if a farmer supplied food and lodging for this "hired man." In 1935 arrangements were made so that I could attend Camrose Lutheran College to complete my Grade 12 with some Commercial courses. Graduating in 1936, jobs were still scarce, teachers were unemployed, etc. Later, it seemed that positions were opening for teachers and nurses. The Government had set minimum salaries for teachers to be \$840.00 per annum. I applied to enter Camrose Normal School in 1937. Unfortunately, I became ill in the last part of the 1938 term so that I had to complete my course at Edmonton Normal

School.

World War II broke out in September 1939 - with thoughts of “now what’s in the future?” Teaching jobs became available and I obtained a position in a rural school with 10 pupils. Grades 1-9, and one student taking Grade 10 correspondence. I taught at several other rural schools, with some better situations. My highest salary reached \$710.00 per annum. “Saving up” I managed to attend “Summer Schools” in Edmonton to obtain a permanent certificate. In July, 1942 I joined the Canadian Army until November 1945. On return, I attended University of Alberta from 1946 to 1950 for my B.Ed. and B.Sc. I then taught in Edmonton Public Schools from 1950 to 1980.

I, of course have had many students, and meet some of them from time to time. Some have gone on to great careers.

In my time I have seen several changes in education courses and experiments, some accepted, some discontinued. As for dreams/fears for the future - there are still problems with reading weakness, writing, spelling and math. Education should receive sufficient funding, new “gadgets” in electronics should prove their worth, class sizes should be kept at efficient levels, teachers’ salaries should be at a level to cover costs of professional development and comfortable living.

Through College Days
---and After
use the
ESTERBROOK FOUNTAIN PEN
With Eighteen different points to choose from.
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Margaret is tall and stately, with a sunny, good-natured disposition - an ardent star gazer and a worshiper of all Nature's beauties.

Characteristics - Keeness for adventure.



Ambition - To finish Mr. Doucette's assignments on time.

Margaret

When I first started school my brother and I had to walk about 1 and 3/4 miles to the one-room school of Jones Valley. I don't recall how long it was before our dad got us a horse called Bird that we rode double on. One winter my uncle and his family came for a couple months visit and my cousin went to school with us. Then there were three of us on the horse. Sometime later my dad got another horse so then my brother and I each had our own horse to ride.

We had a pasture out behind the school barn and in summer the horses were turned loose during the day. In winter they were tied in a stall and standing still all day were a bit cold. Consequently they weren't very cooperative and would sometimes buck a bit when we first started out. We rode bareback. Our dad had seen some accidents where people were bucked off and their food caught in the stirrup and as a result they were dragged and hurt. He didn't want that to happen to us.

When I completed grade nine I had to go to highschool in Lacombe. I boarded in town during the week and came home on weekends. My brother usually took me to town on Sunday evening. He would let me drive part way to town so that was the way I learned to drive a car.

When I taught in the one-room rural schools some pupils rode horseback.

One family I remember sometimes came in a buggy with a team of horses. Of course there were always those that had to walk.

After I was married and our family started school, they had to walk too. One time when our oldest daughter was walking to school she saw a porcupine on the road about a mile from home. She was afraid to go by it and came back home. Another time a bull was standing just inside the fence by the road and she was afraid to go by it. A few years later when some of her brothers and sisters started school and she had to look after them, being in charge, she was much braver.

About that time the one-room schools were closed and larger schools were built that amalgamated many rural school districts. Then the school buses took over transporting students to school.

In the one-room schools the janitor work would be done by the pupils or the teacher or both. I remember for awhile, I don't remember how long, I swept the floor each night after school. I was paid 10 cents a day. For awhile it was my brother's job to start the fire in the stove and have it warmed up for school. He used a mix of wood and coal which was stored in a shed beside the school. He earned 25 cents a day.

In the one-room rural schools we put the letters of the alphabet along the top of the blackboard, both the printed and the written ones. While you were instructing one class, the other classes were doing different assignments. Most times the only subjects that all classes participated in at the same time were Music and Phys. Ed. At recess time and noon hour the teacher usually supervised the outdoor activities too.

At the school I attended when I was young we had a teeter totter, a ball diamond and a basket-ball hoop. The basket ball I remember playing with didn't have any air in it but was stuffed with old mitts etc. that had been lost at school. You couldn't bounce it but you could catch it and try to make a toss into the hoop. When we played ball the only player that had a ball glove was the catcher. One time I remember was when I was playing in left field and caught the ball off the bat. I still remember my hands hurting but I think I hung onto the ball so the batter was out.

Usually each spring the whole school would go for a hike. We would try to learn the names of plants we saw on the way to a creek a couple of miles from the school. We also watched for birds and animals to identify. They didn't use pesticides or round-up in those days and the sides of the road were full of all kinds of wild flowers.

Each December the school would put on a Christmas concert. They had them on different nights so it was possible to go to a concert in a neighboring school as well. A few schools had a raised section in the front of the school. Those that didn't usually made a stage for the concert using sawhorses and planks. They used bedsheets for curtains to open and close.

Nowadays as you travel through they country and see those old school houses you wonder how it was possible to crowd so many people in for a concert. They look quite small now. There aren't many left. Most have been demolished.

Nowadays students have all kinds of backpacks etc. to carry their homework in. When I went to highschool we just carried our books in our arms. We didn't have calculators in those days either. We had to work multiplication and division out ourselves. When I taught multiplication I used the same method I had been taught. You wrote out the table from 0-12. An example would be:

$$3 \times 0 = 0$$

$$3 \times 1 = 3$$

$$3 \times 2 = 6$$

Then add another 3 for the answer to the next one. When you had completed the table at $3 \times 12 = 36$ you learned to count by 3's by reading the answers: 3,6,9,12,15,18,21,24,27,30,33,36.

When I graduated from Camrose Normal School I first taught 2 years in a one room rural school called Elkhorn. Then I taught 2 years in a one-room rural school called Half-Way Grove before I got married.

When I went back teaching later most of the one-room rural schools were a thing of the past, but I taught at a Hutterite school for 9 years. It was a one-room school too, with grades 1-9. After 9 years there I decided it would be beneficial for them to have a different teacher. When the colony learned I

had quit I had a visit from some of the men to inquire why. I guess my explanation satisfied them.

My next school was at Rimbey where I taught one year. That was a distance of about 30 miles from home. One morning on my way to school a large herd of deer was on the road and they didn't want to get off. It took me awhile to finally get by them.

Another time part way up a hill I got a flat tire. I was having trouble loosening the nuts on the bolts to change it. I was lucky 2 men came along and helped me so I got to school on time. Another time in the winter two of the schools closer to home, Sylvan Heights and Crestomere were closed because of weather conditions, but Rimbey was open. Someone had to sub for me.

When I taught at Rimbey I usually felt like a sub myself. I had my own class the first period of the day for math. Then I had to go to different rooms for a variety of different subjects. I could have continued teaching there but I asked if I could get something closer to home.

The next term I taught at Sylvan Heights where the grades 3 and 4 teacher retired. I was there 2 years when they decided to reduce staff. I could have remained, but since I would have had to teach Phys. Ed. I decided not to. If I had been about 20 years younger I would have enjoyed the challenge. At Camrose Normal School I had learned to stand on my head, turn cartwheels etc. but the bounce in my step was different then.

My next school was in Ponoka where I taught a grade 4 class. We were about 22 miles from Ponoka. Four years later my husband's health made it impossible for him to continue farming so we moved into Ponoka. I continued teaching at the Ponoka Elementary School until I retired in 1981.

When I attended school and when I first started teaching our subjects were: Arithmetic, Spelling, Writing, Composition, Grammar, Reading, History, Geography, Art, Music, Phys. Ed. and Science. Now History and Geography are combined into Social studies and some of the other subjects are combined too.

In my school days it was legal to use the strap. One time just before

Christmas we drew names to see who we were to get a present for. We were not supposed to tell whose name we got. I think I was in grade 3 at the time and some of us showed our friends whose name we had. I don't know how the teacher found out, but we got the strap. That was the only time I remember being strapped.

When I taught at the Hutterite colony, they were used to the strap. I never actually used it on any of them, but I sometimes carried it in my hand and hit their desk to show I meant they were to get their work done.

TIME LINE FOR JANUARY 8th, 1938

- 9:00 – Meet at Mr. Doucette's.
- 9:15 – Push the car to the garage (tank empty).
- 9:30 – Bound west for Wetaskiwin.
- 10:15 – First stop to read the inscription on the monument and to observe the block house.
- 11:30 – Dashing through corridors and classrooms at the Edmonton Normal school.
- 12:00 – Woolworth's.
- 12:15 – Metropolitan.
- 12:30 – On our way to Fort Saskatchewan.
- 1:15 – Lunch on the bridge by the Fort.
- 1:45 – Serenading the town.
- 2:30 – Inspecting the jail.
- 3:00 – A thrill! Entered the Death cell, but came out alive.
- 4:00 – Back to the city.
- 4:30 – A visit to the Edmonton airport.
- 5:00 – Mike's news stand.
- 5:30 – Disperse for supper.
- 7:00 – Two shows.
- 11:00 – Back to Camrose.

Bill


The Dramatic Society

The large representation of students at the first Dramatic meeting showed the popularity of this extra-curricular activity. With a membership of forty-six, the members were grouped into committees to carry out the various duties involved in a dramatic programme.

The activities of the society have been varied and educational in every way. The staff representative, Mr. Doucette, has given valuable instruction in the arts of juvenile make-up, directing, costume improvising, lighting, stagecraft, pantomime and play reading.

During the first term, instead of producing long plays, the society has restricted itself to playlets suitable for the elementary school. Among these efforts were: a choric number "Don Durke of Dowdee," with a cast of nineteen members; "A Health Pageant" by twenty-six members; Armistice Pageant "The Rose of No Man's Land" and a playlet "Christmas in Many Lands". In addition, the members have contributed to the class programs with "A Minstrel Show", "Naughts and Crosses", and "Darby and Joan".

In the second term some of the proposed studies are: Old-age make-up, Middle-age and Character make-up, Dramatic Reading. More attention will be given to one-act plays suited to Intermediate School and Community Dramatics. At the time of going to print the society members are working on the following one-act performances: "Murder at Mrs. Loring's", "The Great Bell of Peking", and a martial interlude, "The Dark of the Dawn". The social activities of the society will comprise a tobaggan party and a spring hike.

<p>A firm supporter of Scotland and Normal.</p>	
<p>Noted for good-nature, softball pitching and splendid work on the forward line of the basketball team.</p>	
<p>Her special accomplishment - falling up and down stairs.</p>	

Mary

Country Teaching

One soon learns that even if you are teaching in a school that borders on four school districts there is still co-operation and a willingness to help. (Even though I couldn't find anyone to play Santa Claus one year at the Christmas Concert – I ended up with the auctioneer from a small town - that was hilarious). The students were studious and the older ones helped the younger. Grades 1 - 9 with 20 children at my first school. I learned many things.

One was a November Ritual. The children asked if they could bring potatoes to school in early November. I asked "Why would you want to do that?" They told me this was done every November. "Why?" "Well, you put the potatoes all washed and ready in their jackets on the grill atop the round, pot-bellied stove at recess and they would be baked and ready for lunch." Oh – and they had butter to put on them! I was invited to join them and it proved to be a time of learning, reading, telling stories and more. It was delightful – and I gained pounds!!

Drumheller

Many cold walks in the valley in winter – and no taxi or bus service. 1942. Then one spring the Red Deer River (which flowed through Drumheller) flooded. Children were sent home because their path crossed a

small stream which became dangerous—and they must get home before the flood crested. I lived across from the River and our house basement flooded. It was scary watching the water rise up to the top of our steps – but the crest soon passed.

Taber - 1945

Taber was just beginning to grow because of oil business. There was one Central School and one OLD School which my sister and I were “fortunate” to get. Two rooms – one on top of the other – and it really swayed in the winds of the area. ~~My sister was teaching upstairs and when the wind was bad – two classes were taught downstairs.~~ Not a great start – but we met great people and students and my sister met her husband. Seems some good comes of everything!

Red Deer 1946

Another old school, but much firmer in structure. I started teaching Grade One here - 35-40 students, but such a grand group and helpful parents. In 1951 I started to teach in a brand new school of two rooms and enjoyed the ups and downs of the building growing to 12 rooms, plus library, gym, office, etc. Two things I remember clearly:

- 1) The beginning of a French Immersion Class in Red Deer in our school at Grade One level – by Grade Three they were bi-lingual. We had a wonderful co-ordinator who monitored the scheme – how lucky we were!
- 2) I also had an advanced group of 15 who were accelerated and were in the class with 15 average students – really made a teacher work. I had this group to Grade Six when we were trying different Math – like doing this work with base 5 instead of 1- – just one of our attempts.

I ended my career in this school in 1984 – a career of 46 years – 33 of these years in this school. It was a “Wonderful Life”. I learned much to keep me enjoying life.

“Learning is a treasure which follows its owner everywhere” from “A Little Treasury of Chinese Wisdom.”

Chief characteristic - Never working on Sunday.

Favorite expression - I never bought any-thing I didn't need.

Pastime - Doing art and charts.

Noted for - Sending carbon-copied letters to all her friends.



Opal

Memories of Camrose Normal School

It was a lovely spring day in 1938 when Class B went out on the lawn of Camrose Normal School for their P.E. class under Sgt. Major Hawkes, the instructor.

The session was over when the school buzzer sounded. We raced toward the north entrance, each of us wondering how we could possibly go down to the basement, to the gym lockers, change our clothes, get our books from another locker and arrive in Mr. Haverstock's room in five minutes.

We all decided to go into his class just as we were - in our shorts. And that we did! Mr. Haverstock (principal of the school) sat at his desk. I can still see him peering over his glasses and solemnly asking "What is the reason for this?" Some of the girls who sat in the front row bravely explained. Then he calmly ordered us to go to the gym and change into our regular clothes. He made it very clear that future teachers were not to appear in the classroom in shorts. We must be properly dressed.

It may be of some interest to readers to learn that the boys had a separate class from the girls and the girls were divided into two classes according to surnames. A to McC were Class A and McK to Z were Class B and the boys were in Class C. How things have changed over the years!

My Special Teacher

When I was in grade seven, a very young teacher arrived from Edmonton to teach in our country school. There were less than ten pupils when she arrived but enrollment increased to about fifteen in about five different grades.

She was truly a marvelous teacher. She taught us not only what was on the curriculum but also anything that she felt might help to enrich our lives and stimulate us to venture out on new paths. She had a Friday afternoon session for a meeting. We learned how to conduct meetings, the duties of officers and how to write up reports for a little school news-sheet which we sent home to the parents. We passed rules regarding conduct and speech in our school.

She also taught the girls sewing. We made little books with samples of various stitches, seams and hems. She loaned us dress patterns so we could make our own clothes. She also taught us crocheting and knitting and encouraged the boys to do woodwork.

Our imaginations were stimulated when she decided we would compose our own plays, songs etc. for the annual Christmas concert. This wonder lady was just seventeen when she came to us. She remained with us for four years, probably the best years of my school life. She eventually married a farmer in our area and I still see her occasionally. She is still the same helpful, encouraging person.

The Country School

There were many advantages for children in the one-room school, which the authorities never seemed to realize. Amalgamation began about 1948 sending children on long bus rides to consolidated schools or to town.

In the one-room school children cared for each other. They walked or rode to school together, carried each others books, helped hitch or saddle the horses and always helped the little ones get boots, scarves, coats and mittens on properly. They played together, teaching the little ones the games. They learned to show kindness, patience and tolerance.

The children in a one-room school planned the Christmas concerts with the teacher's suggestions of course. And in war time my pupils put on fund raisers for the Red Cross, selling various little items which they had made.

One winter some of my pupils decided to make crib quilts for the Junior Red Cross. They sent to Eatons for free scraps of cloth (quilting bundles). These they ironed, cut into the desired sizes and pieces together on their mother's sewing machines. Then at school we set up a quilting frame and at noons and recesses they quilted. Everyone had a hand in it, even the boys. That winter they made three lovely rib quilts which we sent to the Junior Red Cross.

Sometimes older children helped the teacher by checking work of younger students or by dictating spelling. This was not time wasted. It was an experience of learning and responsibility for the older ones.

The larger schools did bring better libraries and equipment but the kindly cooperative spirit of the small school has been lost.

The Fire

At one school I taught, we had some excitement, when a pupil looking out of the window noticed a fire spreading from the school ash pile into a stubble field not far from a neighbor's house.

"What should we do?" I suggested the only quick thing I could think of. "Grab your towels, soak them in the water cooler and beat out the flames." We all rushed out with our dripping towels and went to work on the little flames which really weren't very threatening. Soon the fire was out. The neighbor thanked us for putting out the fire before it had spread out over the field, but one of the mothers was very irate over her children's extremely dirty hand towels.

AND WE WORE A POPPY

It is Remembrance Day, 1937. There is an unusual seriousness among our youthful group gathering in the Assembly Hall. Almost everyone wears a crimson poppy, for today, we who know only of history-book wars pay tribute to the men who sleep “in Flanders Fields.”

In chorusing those rousing songs, “Pack up Your Troubles”, “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary” or “Tramp, Tramp, Tramp”, we can almost hear the steady march of soldiers as they lighten the long dark hours with song.

Unashamedly we admit the awkward lump in our throats as on the stage the Red Cross nurse bends over the wounded soldier; as the crippled old veteran, moved with stirring memories of the past, lays a wreath for the Unknown Soldier.

Then the breathless tenseness as in the distance a bugle sounds. . . . The Last Post rings bravely through the solemn stillness.

The war has ended. . . . sunlight streams through the break in the scattering war clouds, and the pulse of the world picks up in more rapid tempo, soon forgetting the past, speeding into the future.

And yet, somewhere in France blue skies look down on rows of small white crosses, and soft breezes whisper among the flowers of sleep. And we who knew none of war’s bitter realism wore a poppy and silently prayed “May it not be again.”

Hazel

Pat is known to all by her cheery, winning smile. She aims at perfection in everything she does, so we are sure she will make a first-class school marm.



Patricia

A negative memory

Because I was born a south-paw, upon my first day in school I naturally put the pencil in my left hand. The teacher threatened the strap if this action was repeated. The little six-year old forgot and so the strap was administered not only once, but twice. Mother was very angry and phoned the inspector. Before he made it out there I had established the habit of putting the pencil in my right hand. Today I write with my right hand, but I am still totally left-handed. This happened in the fall of 1924.

A positive memory

Back in those days the annual school Christmas Program was a great event. That first year in school I was honored, elated and delighted when the teacher decided I could sing a solo, and so I learned three verses by memory and sang the song, "There's a Song in the Air." I remember a grade eight boy asked me, "Aren't you scared?" I said, "Scared of what?" I didn't know what stage fright was. The teacher always tried to include every child in the concert and of course the older ones were chosen first. So I was a happy little girl and of course my parents were proud of me.

Classroom Discipline

Because of the rule of the rod, the students had great respect for their teacher. The atmosphere was very stringent and regimental so that you could nearly hear a pin drop. We would raise the hand, wait till the teacher asked our need, and get permission for every move - go to the bathroom - sharpen our pencil - get a drink etc. My sister and I sat together in a double desk. I remember I raised my hand and asked, "May I please speak to Oosie?" (that's what we called her at home.) There were some giggles and I couldn't understand until my sister comforted me and whispered, "You must call me 'Ruth'." The class was reprimanded and we went back to work.

Fireside Learning

There were times when it was 30 degrees below zero that we would come to a frigid classroom. It was a time of fun when we would all sit around the pot-belly stove with our coats and mitts on and visit and play games. Just relax and be happy until the pot-belly turned red and the room warmed up. Then back to our desks to the routine of books, writing, memory work, and exercises from the blackboard. I don't remember of groups working together. All learning was on the individual basis.

Health and Exercise

We (all grades) filled out health cards every day. I wish we had more of that today. We all looked forward to recesses and noon when all grades had to go out and play ball (or other exercise). I remember an old maid (whatever that was) always came out and played ball with us. We loved to see her hit that ball and we loved to "put her out." She was such a good sport and this proved to be an excellent and positive student and teacher relationship. It was sad when a student was disobedient or tardy. The punishment was to stay in when the rest were out having fun. We always sat at our desks for 15 minutes for lunch.

Teacher Training

I have many fond memories of my “Normal School” training. We were given so many books to read. Two big ones “Child Psychology” and “Principles of Education.” I never did get through it all, but yearned for the time when I could be in the classroom. In May for the first time I was given a chance to teach a class a song, “The Robin in Spring.” I was rather anxious as there was no piano in the room. There was a piano where I boarded so I learned the song well. The children were so respectful and responsive. I forgot to be nervous and enjoyed my experience even with our normal school instructor sitting in the back of the room.

Then a few weeks before we graduated, supposedly having learned how to teach, we were all sent out to different schoolrooms to practice teach under the auspices of the teacher in charge. I was placed in a classroom with 31 children from grades 1 through 9. The subjects for each grade were: reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, language, history, geography, and science. Of course there was a book for each subject so that meant at least 63 books for me to work on. I think I swam in the rushing waters all week and didn’t enjoy the experience. I was always relieved when the priest came in at 3 pm to teach catechism. After reading this I’m sure you will conclude that teacher training has improved.

Education outside the classroom

The first year, I taught 15 students from grade 1 to 9. We experienced an occasion which I shall never forget. The Queen of England was passing through Weinwright (about 60 minutes away) and the School Board asked me to be responsible for getting the children there. I’m sure none of them had ever been more than ten miles away from home. I had a fear of losing someone, so we made, in art class, white pill box hats that would identify us from the rest of the crowd. We studied the map to see where we were going. We studied history and current events to learn why the Queen was coming. It was an emotional and loyal time when the children stood, waved their little Canadian flags, and cheered as the Queen, in all her grandeur, smiled and waved; then was gone.

Students Work Together

By my third year of teaching I was learning how to make the most of my time. Because the curriculum was quite rigid, I made a yearly (over all) lesson plan so that each subject would be covered by the end of the year. In arithmetic I actually figured how many pages a day I needed to cover in order to get through the book in time. Because the Christmas concert was so important to the children and the community, I found it more profitable to leave the program until the last two weeks and then drop the rest of the school work and devote our time to music, dram, elocution and art. This was a fun time for the children and a time of working together.

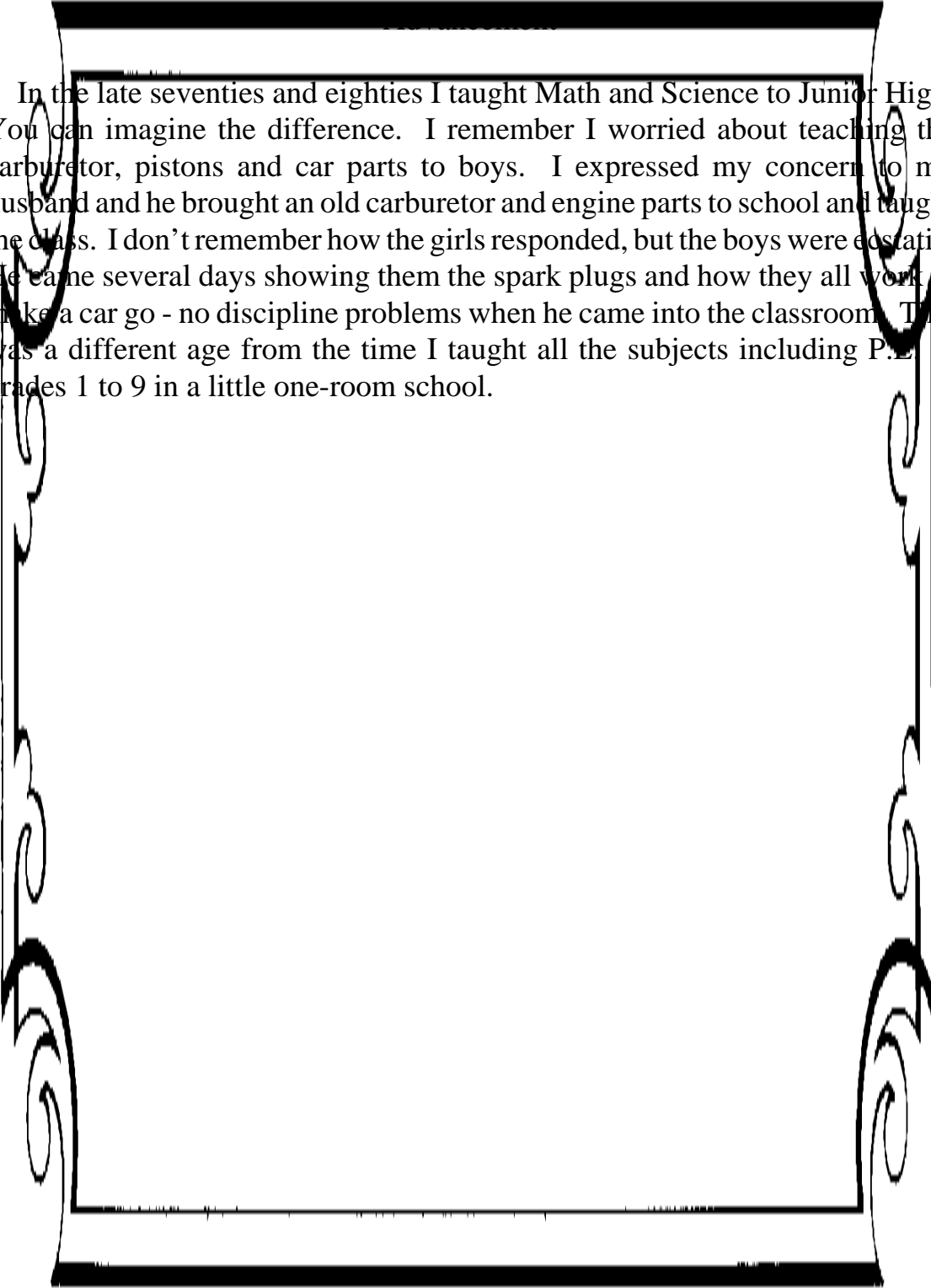
I had seven boys in grade 9 and they were so respectful, efficient, and cooperative. They helped to discipline and teach the younger ones memory work. They (with the girls also) made manger beds, angel wings and Christmas decorations. It was such a busy, yet enjoyable time for all.

The School Board members decorated the Christmas tree and put on real candles to light the night of the concert. You can imagine two or three hundred people in a little one room school. The very air got so hot and when they lit those candles I feared, “what if that tree catches fire...how would I get those children out of that building?” What a responsibility. I actually fainted, but was resuscitated and the program went through (two hours) without a hitch. My Dad said, “Excellent.”

School Reform

When I went back to teaching in the sixties, much change had been accomplished in the past twenty years. The county had closed the doors of the one room multi-grade classrooms and centralized education. I was the principal with four teachers to advise and assist. I also taught grades 7, 8 and 9 in a room together. The curriculum was more flexible. I remember we made a salt and flour map of Alberta combining Language Arts, Social Studies, Science and Art. Each child made different reports. It was a fun time but also a learning time.

Around this time they started school festivals which included music, elocution, drama etc. I always entered in all the competitions. To me this was truly education.



In the late seventies and eighties I taught Math and Science to Junior High. You can imagine the difference. I remember I worried about teaching the carburetor, pistons and car parts to boys. I expressed my concern to my husband and he brought an old carburetor and engine parts to school and taught the class. I don't remember how the girls responded, but the boys were ecstatic. He came several days showing them the spark plugs and how they all work to make a car go - no discipline problems when he came into the classroom. This was a different age from the time I taught all the subjects including P.E. to grades 1 to 9 in a little one-room school.

The Glee Club

The Glee Club was organized early in the first term with a membership of sixty-four, and met every Tuesday night. As these weekly practices were a change from the usual routine of school duties they were a source of enjoyment to all members. They gave valuable experience in singing and music reading and were a means of supplementing music work taken in class. Members of the club contributed excellent numbers to the Friday afternoon programs, and special numbers were given at the Christmas party by a choir of girls. These girls also made two recordings of school songs for the Alumni Reunion Broadcast.

The Debating Society

Although the membership of the Debating Society was small, its activities were of considerable value and interest to its members. On the evening of March 4, Mr. Dechene and Mr. Lewis, representing the University of Alberta, met and defeated our debaters in the Assembly Hall of the Camrose Normal School. In spite of the fact that our representatives failed to establish their negative argument on the subject "Resolved that an Anglo-Saxon alliance would serve to promote world peace", they had no reason to feel chagrined at the result. Not only did they present a logical and vigorous argument, but their effective use of humor won praise from the judges.

Ruth's sincere friendliness and sunny disposition made her a popular class president and president of the Dramatic Society. We know she'll make an A-1 teacher.

Ambitions - to make the high jump and to become a concert pianist.



Ruth

My Teaching Life

The beginning of my career in teaching must seem similar to that of many others of my time. I was born in the small town of Provost, grew up on a farm near Cadogan, and attended the two-room school there. A highlight of my early school years was having been taken out of school at the age of seven for a holiday in California of a month or two. I'm sure my sister and I learned more in that time than we might have in school. Such trips were not common in those times.

I credit my early and life-long love of reading to my aunt, who lived with us while I was five, and taught me to read. This meant I graduated early from high school, and changed my plans for nursing to that of teaching. I could just manage (by a month) to get into Camrose Normal School, while hospitals required one to be a year older. How young I was, to think I could mold young lives!

Since grade 12 was not offered at home, I took it in Camrose, so the new surroundings were not quite as daunting at Normal as they would have been had I gone directly from our two-room school. Still, the jump from being a "school kid" to being addressed as "Miss McConnell" and expected to act accordingly, was unexpected. Looking back, I feel sure I had little idea of what I was beginning. It seemed the thing to do, to train oneself for something, but I had no feeling of dedication to the profession. I credit

those professors, and also, co-workers, through the years, for broadening my professional outlook.

Finding a job was a challenge and I found myself in a rural one-room school, twenty miles from town. The district was very progressive and the economy good, so it was not the “back-woods” experience some of my friends had. \$840.00 per year certainly provided my needs, including \$20.00 per month board, but I had to plan for summer school expenses and a little contribution to my younger sister’s education.

Impressions of my first school: High windows, through which I could barely see with a stretch, and of which my landlady, a former teacher, thoroughly approved. “The children don’t need the distraction of the out-of-doors,” she said. The Waterbury heater, a big wood and coal-burning stove, surrounded by a metal jacket to protect the unwary. Cold blasts every time the door opened in winter. There was no cloakroom to give some protection from the weather. Grades 1 to 10 (a lad was taking the latter by correspondence and sometimes asked for help). Nice children from good families.

Work at this and two succeeding one-room schools ceased when I married my airman husband and moved to be with him. Other than some substitute teaching, that was it, until the younger of our two children was entering school. My entering the profession again was quite unplanned. The superintendent came to me at our farm home on the first day of the fall term, asking if I could please come to teach grade 1 in a nearby town, “just for a month.” (His grade 1 teacher had resigned over some small disagreement). Having two young children and a farm home to run, this seemed more than I could manage, but I would try “for a month.” Twenty-four years later I retired, so my husband and I could have our holidays at the same time!

Those were good years in which my education (informal) progressed along with that of the children. In a larger school, working with from three to five teachers teaching the same grade, was a real blessing. We helped each other in so many ways, and we remain friends to this day. I felt the burdens of teaching much less than when I was alone, and felt I did a better job.

Occasionally, our quiet paths would be diverted by a change in curriculum. We sometimes began by resisting, but in the long run found that many changes were improvements. If nothing else, they required us to revise our methods and our thinking. I held fast to some (by today's standards) old-fashioned ideas and feel justified when I read some of the mangled spelling and grammar in our newspapers. "Whole language," or not, let's have it correct language, as much as possible.

I was glad when the curriculum allowed expanding into enriching programs in which the children themselves expressed interest. This could be little or much, depending on the abilities of the particular class, but it was fun when it worked. I remember a project (still in grade 1) on dinosaurs, where the children were excited over reading and writing stories about such creatures as the pterodactyl. Not exactly in the course of studies, but, still - !

Field trips usually worked well, and I sometimes think we should have done more of that. My greatest frustrations came from either having too little time or too little knowledge to help children with learning problems. My half-time job with special education, after I had formally retired, was very rewarding. If I were starting over, I would seriously consider that field.


What is ahead for my great-grandchildren? Marvelous, miraculous technology will continue to open wonders to their young minds. But will they be tempted, as some already are, to just sit glued to that screen? Attentive parents will see to it that nature and exercise are not forgotten, but the current trend of one-parent families makes time very limited. I'm concerned, too, that children will not realize that machines are no better than the information entered, and that they need to use common sense to judge whether the answers given are correct. Modern children are being encouraged to make their own decisions. It's to be hoped that they will have training in making old-fashioned common sense conclusions.

I am also concerned regarding morals and violence. Dealing with these and all their complications is more than schools should be asked to handle, but which appears to have fallen to their lot. It is my prayer that family life will be strengthened so that home and school can do the job together.

All in all, I think we taught in the best of times, much as I yearn to be more computer literate! What fun it must be, to use these wonderful tools.

The Program Committee

The program committee for each term consisted of the various class presidents and a convener elected by the Students' Union. The purpose of the weekly programs was to provide opportunities for students to organize and participate in entertainment suited to the needs of the elementary and the intermediate schools. Weekly programs consisted, for the most part, of contributions from the various extra-curricular organizations – The Glee Club, the Athletic Society, the Debating Society and the Dramatic Society. In addition, Miss Dorothy Pybus gave a series of very instructive and enjoyable Music Appreciation talks, all of which were amply illustrated by the playing of suitable gramophone recordings. In this series the history of the Symphony Orchestra and its families of instruments was dealt with. Variety and interest were added to these programs from sources outside the school. Preceding the first bonspiel, Mr. J. W. Russel gave a most timely and instructive talk on the popular winter activity – “Curling”. Dr. H. B. Ness gave an illustrated talk on “Teeth and Their Care”.

<p>Characteristics - A tiny blue-eyed blonde.</p> <p>Ambition - To get as much free material as possible.</p> <p>Weakness - midnight lunches.</p>	
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Winnifred

The First School

A one-roomed building out on the prairie was where I first met twenty eager pupils, who helped me overcome many qualms I had about being able to enrich their lives. The school had been closed for many years and was overrun with mice. We spent about two days mainly cleaning and scrubbing (with the help of the district ladies). We thought we had everything “ship-shape” but we discovered the organ was the home of two more mice families. Undaunted, a local friend, (who later became my husband) took it apart, cleaned it up and we used it for music, which one of the pupils played very nicely.

The library shelves were in disarray too. That may have been a blessing in disguise because most of the books were soiled or outdated. There was no budget for books (times were hard) so we scrounged from far and wide and got many classics such as “Call of the Wild,” Kipling’s “Just So Stories,” “Treasure Island” etc. Many of these books were read a chapter a day, sometimes by me, sometimes by an older student. We always had a discussion of how the characters acted, or what they might do to solve a problem that would arise.

Gym

We played ball in the summer, and in the winter such games as “Fox and Goose,” weather permitting. At noon during cold days we often played board games. Also the mothers provided a big bowl of homemade soup which we heated on top of the pot bellied stove; it was enjoyed by all on chilly days.

Janitor

The janitor work was done by one of the older boys. He swept after school, chopped wood and brought in the coal, and provided a limited amount of water. He lit the fire on the cold mornings. Often it took till noon for the little stove to emit enough heat to warm up the room. He did this for about four dollars a month.

Equipment

The Department of Education provided some texts such as spellers, arithmetic books and readers such as the “Dick and Jane” series. Other than that we had to rely on our own resources. Our Normal School Staff must have anticipated our needs because we were well prepared for many of the omissions. We were shown how to use a pantograph, make a jelly-like substance in a cookie pan for duplicating materials, make large charts using cut-outs from magazines, make our own flash cards for word recognition, and arithmetic and a long list of free materials. This last source was indeed helpful in the social studies and science classes. We could get colorful charts on teeth, the oil industry, the trip of a grain of wheat to the flour mill. One place we sent to, for information on cotton, sent us several charts and a “cotton ball.”

Cooperation

In a school with most grades from one to ten, the older students seem to naturally help the younger ones, especially in enterprise activities. We had four different tables set up in the corners, one had a sand box on it, another had magnets and meccano pieces etc., another had games and puzzles and

the last one had old magazines, colorful paper, scissors, glue etc. The children used these tables when they were finished their main work and the older and younger ones conversed quietly about some project they were doing. If the younger ones were puzzled over some aspect of their assignment they would quietly ask an older pupil if the teacher was busy. Often the younger ones would listen in on lessons or science experiments the older ones were having.

Projects

Some of the main group activities were the Christmas concert, and in the Spring, a seed planting contest. Another project the pupils enjoyed was making their own newspaper once a month. All the articles, such as news, jokes, poems, cartoons etc. were submitted by the children. Some of it was hand written and some typed on my old typewriter. Then it would be duplicated on the jelly-like substance so that each family could have one. One grade nine student started to learn typing that way and she later became a secretary for a premier. She always said that typing the paper got her started.

We were quite isolated from any large center, a trip to town about twelve miles away would be a big event. There was no electricity; just a barb-wire telephone (which didn't work in wet weather).

So how did the pupils get an education? - sans television, computers, internet and specialized courses? I really think that the attitude from home encouraged the children to appreciate the opportunity to learn no matter what their future occupation. Many of the children went on to university and others have become good citizens of their community.

Farewell



We have worked together. We have played together. What a difference it does make when we can look upon our experiences as games. A certain amount of competition to be sure— example, final game in basketball; but the most friendly cooperation — example, assignments set ahead to the mutual benefit of all concerned.

Thus the year has been spent. Students and instructors working together, sharing experiences, planning activities — from Year Book to ways and means of raising funds to provide a “banquet” for the executive. We know of no more pleasant and probably no more profitable work — not from the monetary angle — than to be associated with young people of the type pictured on the pages of this book.

The word book suggests a thought. We trust that you have come to realize in a very real way that while books have had and will continue to have a most important place in any educational set-up, there are many things to learn outside of books. It may have been in planning for the Christmas Party, it may have been in a Glee Club or Orchestra practice, it may have been on the basketball floor or on the ice or even on the toboggan hill or any one of the many activities which we shared,

that we really learned to know each other. And after all, not until such time as teacher and pupils come to know each other, come to appreciate each other's point of view, come to realize each other's limitations, can full and complete development take place. From our point of view, call it philosophy if you like, education involves interactions between persons and includes shared values. This view in no way destroys individuality. Social cannot be opposed in fact or idea to individual. Society is individuals-in-their-relations.

Now the time has come to say farewell. We say it with mixed feelings, sorry to break direct contact with such a splendid group of young people – yet happy because you are going out to know children, as children – not as little men and women, to share with them child-life experiences and to contribute your bit to Alberta's Schools.

“Life has loveliness to sell,
All beautiful and splendid things,
Blue waves whitened on a cliff,
Soaring fire that sways and sings,
And children's faces looking up
Holding wonder like a cup.

Spend all you have for loveliness,
Buy it and never count the cost;
For one white singing hour of peace
Count many a year of strife well lost,
And for a breath of ecstasy
Give all you have been, or could be.”

Geo. K. Haverstock, Principal



Some reflective notes from 2002 students

(This next section has a number of responses to the 1938 Teacher Stories)

When I read the stories:

I think of my first year as a teacher. I was told I needed to teach/cover all that was listed in the curriculum guide. I was quietly delighted to find very few class sets of novels/test books on my shelf. No one ever came to check on what I was teaching, and I treasured this space. I was resourceful in creating my own materials for my students and very proud of my students' creations throughout the year. I was teaching the "curriculum" in my own way for I had limited resources!

Jennifer

I think of my first year as a teacher. I had 28 students in grades 3-5 and taught grade six subjects with grade 5, plus girls PE for grades 6 - 10. There were not enough science books. So, I used a topical approach, made questions for each grade, borrowed 40-60 books at a time from the library to supplement texts. Many

students learned the information for all the grade levels. Materials were available for many reading levels. The students learned study skills. They also worked together and shared materials. It was fun and I'm sure it was better teaching than it would have been otherwise!

Ruth

I think about when I taught music to students with severe emotional and behavioral disabilities, in a self-contained program for such children. Their challenges were great, and thus, so were mine. Teaching them, and finding ways for them to participate in the enjoyment of and performance in music required a great stretching of my teaching skills and "artistry". I had to create ways to teach that I had never been taught. I learned more, possibly, than they did. But they overcame far more. . . they overcame fear, failure, and even self-loathing as they actually became performers!

Jean

I remember my teacher playing ball at recess. She was a middle aged nun with lots of spunk. She was a very strict disciplinarian, but had a joyful and connecting way about her. One day, we were playing ball in the school yard. Sister Clemente Marie hit the ball and ran to 2nd base. I was standing on 2nd base and tried to get her out. Instead, I yanked her veil off and it was the first time any of us ever saw a nuns head!

Peg

I think of my 8th grade teacher – I discovered how much influence a teacher could have on you. Mr. Thomas, a short, funny looking English teacher with a sense of humor so dry – helped me to find my ability to write creatively. He would come into class disheveled with books and papers flying everywhere and then pass out a poem that he had written the night before. The poem or story would have each class member as a character and with humor he portrayed us in the most incredible situations. . . . Flying planes over Belgium, puffing chloroform into the limo of our famous classmate who is President of Australia etc. *Eileen*

We found the “community” theme throughout the stories:

Community

Now, single-aged

Then, multi-level.

Now, competitive

Then, interdependent.

Now, rigid compartments

Then, fluid boundaries.

Now, segregated

Then, integrated.

Now, self-centered

Then, interdependent.

Now, “I”

Then, “We”.

Now, isolated

Then, family.

Jennifer, Ruth and Jean

A Recipe for Community

- Preheat oven to family-like warmth.
- Combine one bunch of people.
- Marinate the relationships in a large dose of diversity.
- Whip synergy into sharing and interdependence
- Sprinkle with mutuality and empathy
- Enhance with a bougnet garne of cooperation, communication, caring and commitment
- Pour all ingredients over a foundation of respect and values
- Bake uncovered until tender
- Garnish with adaptability and humor
- Serves everyone!

Peg, Eileen and Ken

No Obstruction Can Defeat Us!!

Dedicated to the teachers of 1938.

Sung to the tune of The Battle Hymn of the Republic
Words by Carol, Aurea, Joe and Raul

CHORUS:

**Normal school was all our training,
memories now we are retaining.
No obstruction can defeat us,
for teaching was our goal.**

Sometimes weary after walking,
sometimes beaten by the sun.
Money lacking in our pockets,
and no gloves for baseball fun.
But pantographs we knew about,
with purple gelatine.
How good those memories!

In spring the school went for a hike
two miles along the creek,
the names of birds and animals
and plants we tried to seek
No pesticides were used those days, wild flowers
were in their peak,
How good those memories!

A school was closed for many years
and overrun with mice,
twenty pupils in a single room

six grades to teach alike.
With library shelves in disarray,
A blessing in disguise!
How good those memories!

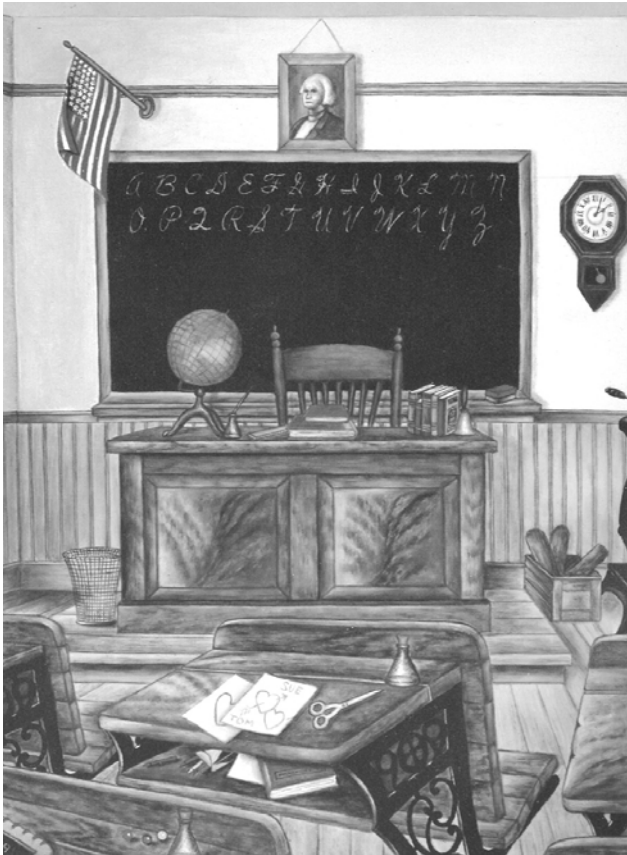
When war broke out in 39
I wondered what to do,
I taught in many rural schools,
and saved for summer school.
In 42 I trained for war,
returned in 45.
How good those memories!

Dear Nana Pat,

I really appreciate your story – I have read it at least eight times! I can imagine how you felt that day, perhaps hopeless, impotent and limited. Although you and your mother felt this action was an unjust one, I like how you tell the story. You do not present any negativism about the teacher. This means a lot to me, because I see and feel that you had a lot of respect for the teachers, totally different from now-a-days.

I am proud of you. Although you were forced to follow a different trend from what your reality was – a south paw – you triumphed. It reminds me of the verse that says, “And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul . . .” and your spirit was untouched! No matter the difficulties, you will accomplish your goals!

Lovingly, *Aida and Corina*



If these walls could but talk!!

If these walls could but talk,
And share what they know!
I'd gain wisdom
for I am so eager!

Listen to the teacher creating
when there is no paper, no board,
no chalk,
Listen to the children asking for
books,
There is nothing to read, nothing
at all."

Look at the radiant faces when
the voice is heard,
"Here is a parcel from afar—
Boy, it is heavy, What could it
be?"

"Books, books, that's what it is!!"

Listen to the children shouting in the field.
Just one mitt, but a multitude to divert.
Look at the court where basketball is played
Is that a ball, or a flat balloon, at best?
Hands and feet – though hurting
Are no excuse for players.
Laughter arises, and joy runs unrestrained
"If there are not toys, who cares?" Let us play!"
"Mama brought some soup.
We warmed it on old pot-belly."
"Yeah, it's delicious"
"Have some more, there is plenty more still."

Listen to the bell-ringing one more time.
“The game is over, it’s time to come in,
Girls enter first, orderly boys follow behind
Take out your slates. Let’s have some more drills.”

“Teacher, I can’t do this; I don’t understand!”
Look at the older student come closer and whisper;
“Don’t worry, young lady, I will stand by your side.”
“Let’s start with the easiest,
There’s still some more time.”
The room turns into a mosaic of small groups
As peers tutor peers in their task.
Who is in command now? Is anybody in charge?”

O, that these walls could but talk,
and share what they know!
I’d gain wisdom.
If it were not for these walls, no memories would remain,
“to you I am indebted, to you I acclaim
“Teach me more of that old science,
so your wisdom will not be in vain.”

Raul

Finally, I present the 1990 statement of the principles of the Network of Progressive Educators - and you be the judge about the impact of Progressive education on these 1938 graduates from Camrose Normal School.

1. Education is best accomplished in an environment in which relationships are personal.
2. Teachers design programs that honor the linguistic and cultural diversity of the local community. Schools embrace the home cultures of children and their families. Classroom practices reflect these values and bring multiple cultural perspectives to bear.
2. Teachers, as respected professionals, are crucial sources of knowledge about teaching and learning.
3. Curriculum balance is maintained by a commitment to children's individual interests and developmental needs, as well as a commitment to community within and beyond the school's walls.
4. Students are active constructors of knowledge and learn through direct experience and primary sources.
5. All disciplines— the arts, sciences, humanities, and physical development – are valued equally in an interdisciplinary curriculum.
6. Decision making within the school is inclusive of children, parents, and staff.

From Founding Mothers and Others: Women Educational Leaders during the Progressive Era. (2002). Edited by Alan R. Sadovnik and Susan f. Semel. pg. 52-53.

And a summary of how Dewey characterized progressivism in Experience and Education.

1. Exalting the learner's impulse and interest and the current problems of a changing society (pp. 9 - 10).
2. Expressing and cultivating individuality and free activity by learning through experience (p. 19).
3. Acquiring skills and techniques as a means of attaining ends which make direct vital appeal (p. 19).
4. Making the most of the opportunities of present life (p. 20).
5. Committing to some kind of empirical and experimental philosophy (p. 25).
6. Believing that experiences must lead to further quality experiences (p. 27).
7. Acquainting students and teachers with the conditions of the local community (physical, historical, economic, occupational, etc.) In order to utilize them as educational resources (p. 40).
8. Believing that subject matter shouldn't be learned in isolation (p. 48).
9. Emphasizing the importance of learner participation in the formation of the purposes which direct the activities (p. 76).
10. Focusing on intelligent activity rather than activity as an end (p. 69).
11. Valuing the importance of personal impulse and desire as moving springs (motivation) (p. 70).
12. Deriving subject matter from ordinary life-experiences (p. 73).
13. Beginning instruction with the experience learners already have (p. 74).
14. Using problems as stimuli to thinking and present experience as sources of problems (p. 70).

Knapp, Clifford. 1994. Progressivism never died – it just moved outside: What can experiential educators learn from the past? The Journal of Experiential Education. Vol 17, No. 2. August, 1994. pp. 9-12.

NOW YOUR REFLECTIONS: (And if you feel comfortable, please share with others in the next edition of this compilation. Email freed@andrews.edu or mail Shirley Freed, School of Education, Andrews University, Berrien Springs, MI. 49104. We look forward to hearing from YOU!! Thank you so much for sharing!)

