

PORTRAITS IN THE FIRST PERSON: AN HISTORICAL
ETHNOGRAPHY OF RURAL TEACHERS AND TEACHING IN BRITISH
COLUMBIA'S OKANAGAN VALLEY IN THE 1920s

by

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ABSTRACT

This study is a micro-analysis of a particular educational milieu: a history of the development of rural schools and community in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia from 1874 until 1930, focussing mainly on the period from 1920 to 1930. The teacher, or more specifically the female teacher, is the main subject. A series of oral interviews conducted with surviving rural teachers and pupils from the 1920s comprise the primary data. Personal narratives form the core of the text. Also used were the pertinent printed and manuscript records of the Department of Education, penned by teachers, school inspectors and other officials, local histories, the 1931 Census of Canada and photographs.

The purpose of the study is twofold. First, it is to delineate what the job of teaching in a rural school in the 1920s entailed. The physical and pedagogical conditions of that work are described. The role and status of the teacher in the local community are also highlighted. Teaching in an isolated community, especially for the novice, was an arduous assignment and one that demanded the acceptance of considerable physical, professional, mental and emotional hardships. The underlying relationship that existed between the individual teacher and the local world of education in rural districts and how the nature of that relationship influenced the quality of teacher experience is a central theme of the study. Social background and upbringing, as well as personal disposition, were found to be key variables determining the extent to which teachers were able successfully to adapt to living and working in a remote rural district.

Second, the study examines the social context and meaning of the experience of teaching as work for women. By focussing on how involvement in the profession fitted into the larger structure of the female life course, a more complex, yet clearer, vision emerges of what teaching actually did *for* women in terms of how they used the profession to accommodate their own personal agendas. For many women their experience as a

teacher, albeit brief, played an important, and for some a profound, role in their lives. Despite the strenuous and often frustrating nature of their working and living circumstances many teachers enjoyed their jobs. Motivated by a determination to succeed many regarded their experiences in rural schools as a challenge. They had their sense of self-worth and confidence enhanced by their ability to prove to themselves that they could survive under such adverse conditions. Teaching also afforded women economic independence and relative autonomy and thus expanded their personal and career horizons beyond the traditional domestic roles. Moreover for a substantial number of women teaching was by no means just a prologue to anticipated marriage but rather a life-time commitment. At the same time women's career pathways, unlike that of the majority of their male colleagues, were not organised to enhance career aspirations. Women negotiated their work interests with traditional sex role and family expectations. Decisions concerning work were deeply entrenched within, and contingent upon, their changing personal and family circumstances. Home and family obligations, both real and perceived, defined their lives and played a key role in their life planning. Pursuing a "career" as a teacher in the traditional sense was not necessarily always the main priority in women's lives and certainly had little to do with what they viewed as commitment to the job.

The study contributes to a fuller understanding of the phenomena of rural schooling and teaching in British Columbia and provides some insights into rural life itself. It also raises important questions as to the meaning of teaching as work to women and the nature of their participation in the workforce. It demonstrates that any evaluation of women's work must be derived from women workers' own perceptions and definitions of work and career.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	II
TABLES.....	VI
FIGURES.....	VII
MAPS.....	VIII
PHOTOGRAPHS.....	IX
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	X
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER ONE: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY.....	43
CHAPTER THREE: A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE OKANAGAN VALLEY 1811-1930.....	87
CHAPTER FOUR: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS 1874-1930.....	121
CHAPTER FIVE: TEACHER CAREER TRAJECTORIES 1920-1930.....	158
CHAPTER SIX: WORKING CONDITIONS: SCHOOL FACILITIES.....	192
CHAPTER SEVEN: WORKING CONDITIONS: TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES.....	207
CHAPTER EIGHT: LIVING AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS.....	254
CHAPTER NINE: TEACHING AS PART OF THE LIFE COURSE.....	293

CONCLUSION.....	337
BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	345
APPENDIX 1: NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENT.....	381
APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE.....	382
APPENDIX 3: TAPE RELEASE FORM.....	387

TABLES

TABLE 1:	DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS IN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY	
	1874-1930.....	125

FIGURES

FIGURE 1:	NUMBER OF ONE-ROOM AND MULTI-ROOM SCHOOLS 1920-1930.....	142
FIGURE 2:	ANNUAL TOTALS AND NUMBERS OF ASSISTED, RURAL, RURAL MUNICIPALITY, SUPERIOR AND HIGH SCHOOLS 1920-1930.....	143
FIGURE 3:	ANNUAL TOTALS AND ENROLMENTS IN ASSISTED, RURAL, RURAL MUNICIPALITY, SUPERIOR AND HIGH SCHOOLS 1920-1930.....	144
FIGURE 4:	ENROLMENT IN ONE-ROOM AND MULTI-ROOM SCHOOLS 1920-1930.....	145
FIGURE 5:	NUMBERS OF MALE, MARRIED FEMALE AND SINGLE FEMALE TEACHERS 1920-1930.....	160
FIGURE 6:	PERCENTAGES OF MALE, MARRIED FEMALE AND SINGLE FEMALE TEACHERS.....	161
FIGURE 7:	FREQUENCY OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION.....	162
FIGURE 8:	RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION BY SEX.....	163
FIGURE 9:	TEACHER TRANSIENCY 1921-1930.....	175
FIGURE 10:	FREQUENCY OF TEACHER TENURE.....	176
FIGURE 11:	FREQUENCY OF TEACHER TENURE BY SEX.....	177

MAPS

MAP 1:	STUDY AREA.....	89
MAP 2:	SCHOOLS IN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY 1874-1930.....	124

PHOTOGRAPH CREDITS

SUGAR LAKE SCHOOL, 1926. COURTESY ALICE GIBSON.....	248
INTERIOR VIEW OF SUGAR LAKE SCHOOL, 1926. COURTESY AMANDA SINGER.....	248
EXTERIOR AND INTERIOR VIEWS OF ELLISON SCHOOL, 1927. COURTESY BERNARD C. GILLIE.....	249
PUPILS OUTSIDE THEIR SCHOOL AT MEDORA CREEK, 1928. COURTESY ANNE VARDON.....	250
VERA EVANS, TEACHER AT WINFIELD SCHOOL, WITH HER PUPILS, 1929. COURTESY VERA TOWGOOD NEE EVANS.....	250
TEACHERAGE AT MABEL LAKE SCHOOL, 1929. COURTESY LUCY MCCORMICK.....	251
PUPILS AT MABEL LAKE PLAYING IN SCHOOL GROUNDS. COURTESY LUCY MCCORMICK.....	251
LUCY HARGREAVES, TEACHER, WITH PUPILS AT GLENROSA SCHOOL, 1923. COURTESY KELOWNA MUSEUM, #3135.....	252
FANCY DRESS PARTY AT SUGAR LAKE SCHOOL, 1926. COURTESY ALICE LAVIOLLETTE.....	252
PUPILS OUTSIDE KEDLESTON SCHOOL, 1920. COURTESY ILA EMBREE.....	253
THE CONSTRUCTION OF SPRINGBEND SCHOOL, 1924. COURTESY MILLIE BONNEY.....	253

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INTRODUCTION

Two specific areas of inquiry frame the text of this study. First and foremost the aim is to present an empathetic appreciation of the professional and social experiences of the teachers who lived and worked in rural areas. The central question posed is a simple one: What did it mean to be a teacher in a small rural school in the Okanagan in the 1920's? In this context a plethora of further questions arise. Who were these teachers? Why did they decide to teach in small schools in remote areas? How long did they stay in any one rural community? What prompted them to move on? What were the physical and pedagogical conditions of the schools in which they worked? How well prepared were they to teach in these out-of-the-way schools? Did they experience any difficulties in "fitting into" the community? Were they able to make friends easily or did such socialising depend on factors such as the size or economic base of the community, or their own background and upbringing? To what extent were they considered as "outsiders" and/or the representatives of Victoria? How did they perceive their status as members of the community in general, and as teachers in particular? To what extent was their experience in such remote schools a positive one? To what extent did they find such challenging, and often frustrating, work enjoyable? How much autonomy were they able, or did they want, to exercise? Did teaching provide them with an opportunity for relative independence and self-development, or did the burden of their work outweigh this potential? How was their experience as a rural school teacher affected by their gender? Did their aspirations and expectations for themselves differ from that which was socially prescribed? To what extent, if at all, did the teaching experiences of those who taught in rural schools have any long term impact on their life courses as a whole?

Secondly, albeit indirectly, the purpose is to uncover the influence of the community on the character and the operation of the schools as well as the reciprocal

influence of the schools on the community. In this respect the following questions are addressed: What did the community perceive the function of education to be? What were the attitudes and responses of the parents to schooling? Was pupil attendance at school dependent upon the "rhythm of work" in the local community? What was the nature of the relationship between the teacher and the pupils both in the classroom and in the larger context of the local community? To what extent were the particular characteristics of the social and learning environment in these rural schools determined by the community in which they were located? What was the role and place of the teacher in the local community? What was the nature of the relationship between the teachers and the parents and/or the school trustees?

The study is divided into nine chapters. Chapters One to Four essentially provide the contextual background. Chapter One reviews the literature on the history of women teachers and teaching in North America and thus locates the research within the relevant historiographical tradition. Chapter Two describes the methodological approach adopted as well as the specific research procedures that were followed in the sample selection, data collection, analysis and representation. Chapters Three and Four provide an overview of the local physical and historical (economic and social) settings from which the participants' recollections emerged. Chapter Three considers the geography, climate and topography of the Okanagan Valley. It also includes a general outline history of the area in terms of the settlement patterns, economic activity, and transportation and communication networks that evolved in the period up to 1930. Chapter Four focuses on educational developments in the study area over the same period. The original research is presented in Chapters Five to Nine. The aim of these chapters is to convey in intimate detail a portraiture of the multiple realities of the experience of rural teaching as it was perceived by the teachers themselves. Chapter Five takes a close look at the demographics of the participants and analyses their career trajectories between 1920 and 1930. Chapters Six and Seven appraise the physical and pedagogical working conditions that teachers confronted on a daily basis in their rural

classrooms. Chapter Eight explores beyond the strictly professional responsibilities and activities of the rural teacher to consider the nature of their living and social circumstances in remote communities. Chapter Nine approaches the rural teaching experience from a longer historical perspective by integrating the participants' experiences in the 1920s within the wider context of their life courses as a whole. The Conclusion then reviews the findings of the research and offers suggestions as to the overall significance of the study.

CHAPTER ONE

LITERATURE REVIEW

The original research in this thesis deals with the lives of those who taught in one type of educational institution, in a specified location and within a given decade, namely the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's. However, this story cannot be fully understood without an appreciation of the wider historiographical tradition from which it has emerged. This literature review addresses the principal themes and questions that have emerged in recent historical research on teachers and teaching in the public school systems of North America. The teacher, or more specifically the female teacher, is the primary focus of the discussion.

Early studies in the history of teachers and teaching in North America were characterized by a narrowly institutional approach that focussed mainly on the struggles involved in the "rise" of the professional and, more often than not, on the male teacher. Willard S. Elsbree's encyclopaedic work The American Teacher: Evolution of a Profession in a Democracy, published over fifty years ago, is a classic example of this approach.¹ Extremely comprehensive, it includes discussions of professional preparation, teacher certification and teachers' working conditions. It is an optimistic account of educational development that was directed towards a specific audience. Although Elsbree was resentful of the low regard for teachers that had existed in the past, the future for him held hope and as such the intention of the book was inspirational: to encourage teachers, teacher educators and their students in their quest for professional improvement. Canadian studies that

¹(New York: American Book Company, 1939).

address the same theme of teacher professionalism include those of J.G. Althouse, Charles E. Phillips and Andre Labarrere-Paule.²

By the early 1970's this celebratory approach had come under attack. Revisionist historians argued for the need to incorporate the social and political context into their discussions of educational developments and to adopt a more critical perspective. As far as teachers were concerned the call was to explore their history in the context of the local communities and school systems in which they lived and worked. One American study of pre-Civil War Massachusetts teachers revealed startling conclusions about the numerical preponderancy of females in the teaching force and the effect that this might have had on American society.³ It became increasingly clear that there was a need to consider the history of teachers and teaching in terms of gender.⁴

² J.G. Althouse, The Ontario Teacher: A Historical Account of Progress 1800-1910 (Toronto: Ontario Teachers Federation, 1967), originally published as the author's D. Paed thesis, University of Toronto, 1929; Charles E. Phillips, The Development of Education in Canada (Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company Limited, 1957); Andre Labarrere-Paule, Les instituteurs laiques au canada francais, 1836-1900 (Quebec: Les Presses de l'universite Laval, 1965).

³Richard M. Bernard and Maris A. Vinovskis, "The Female Teacher in Ante-Bellum Massachusetts," Journal of Social History 10, 3(March 1977): 332-345. They argue for the importance of teaching in shaping women's lives because of the large number of women who taught at some point in their lives. From their findings they conclude that "approximately one out of five white women in pre-Civil War Massachusetts was a school teacher at some time in her life! Moreover, since almost all of the teachers were native-born, probably one out of four Massachusetts females born in this country once taught school," 333.

⁴John Rury has argued that gender has been, until recently, "a shamefully neglected issue in the history of education." See "Education in the New Women's History," Educational Studies 17, 1(Spring 1986): 1. It is generally acknowledged now, however, that gender must be central to any discussion of the history of teachers and teaching. David B. Tyack and Myra H. Strober argue the gender is "one of the fundamental organizing principles in society, as important a category for analysis as class or race or age." See "Jobs and Gender: A History of the Structuring of Educational Employment by Sex," in Educational Policy and Management: Sex Differentials, eds. Patricia A. Schmuck, W.W. Charters, Jr., and Richard O. Carlson (New York: Academic Press, 1981), 131. It is described as "the absent presence" by Michael W. Apple. See "Work, Gender and Teaching," Teachers College Record 84, 3(Spring 1983): 625. Nancy Hoffman regards gender as "that roar on the other side of silence." See "Feminist Scholarship and Women's Studies," Harvard Educational Review 54, 4(November 1986): 511. The all-encompassing importance of gender in historical research is made clear in Ruth Roach Pierson's definition: "When I speak of gender as a fundamental category of social historical analysis, I understand gender to encompass all discourses, practices and structures shaping (and shaped by) the prescribed and prevailing actualized social relations between the sexes." See "Gender and the Unemployment Insurance Debates in Canada, 1934-1940," Labour/Le Travail 25(Spring 1990): 78, footnote 8. For a more theoretical, feminist discussion of the meaning of gender see Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," American Historical Review 91, 5(December 1986): 1053-1075.

Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald argue that both feminism and marxism were influential in determining the direction that revisionist historical work on teachers would take. As they point out:

Feminism taught us to explore the history of teachers from the point of view of the women who taught school and to look for the structures that subordinated and exploited women in education. From Marxism, we learned to look for the material conditions of teachers' lives: their class backgrounds and economic status, the ways in which their work was structured, and how it changed over time. Some of us (especially in North America) began with a concern to understand what we called, for want of a better term, the 'feminization' of teaching - that is, the gradual increase in the numbers and proportions of women teaching in most state school systems, along with their low status and pay within those systems. Most of us gradually moved to broader concerns. Our goal was, increasingly, to understand the history of all kinds of women teachers in whatever social and political settings they were to be found. This meant comparing women teachers' lives and work with those of the men who taught in the past. It also meant looking at the history of women teachers in two broad contexts: the history of women more generally, and of the changing family and community structures in which their lives were embedded; and the history of work, and of the shifting economic and social structures that encompassed, in particular, women's work in educational institutions. What we were increasingly engaged in, whether we were fully conscious of it or not, was the study of gender in the history of a profession which had been implicated in the articulation and perpetuation of gender inequality in Western society.⁵

As noted above, the "feminization" of teaching became one of the major questions in the research on the history of teachers and teaching in Canada and the United States. Alison Prentice identified the importance of this topic in a pathbreaking article which drew attention to the image and reality of gender as a determining variable in the historical process.⁶

⁵Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, "The Historiography of Women Teachers: A Retrospect," chapter in Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching, eds. Prentice and Theobald (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 4-5. The material in this chapter is based, in part, on an earlier article co-authored by the late Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice. See "Revising the History of Teachers: A Canadian Perspective," Interchange 17, 2(Summer 1986): 135-146. The two reviews differ, however, in that the Danylewycz and Prentice article focusses mainly on the North American context, whereas Prentice and Theobald have widened their scope to deal in more detail with the literature on the history of women teachers in Britian and Australia, as well as North America.

⁶Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada 1845-1875," Histoire sociale/Social History 8, 15(May 1975): 5-20, reprinted in The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History, eds. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Alison Prentice (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 49-65. Prentice summarizes well how and why there was a shift toward female teachers during the mid nineteenth century.

Various suggestions have been put forward to explain how and why the occupation of teaching became feminized. One approach has focussed on ideology. Studies dealing with the ideology which promoted the employment of women teachers reveal the rhetoric used for advocating the hiring of females.⁷ Teaching was seen as "woman's true profession." Women's maternal and nurturing qualities, natural affinity for young children and their superior powers of sympathy and communication made them ideal teachers. The school was seen merely as an extension of the family with the parent in the home being replaced by the teacher in the school. However, this did not mean that women should be teachers instead of being mothers. Rather, it was argued that teaching prepared women to be better mothers and that it was but a step from the parental home to the schoolhouse and then back again to the home as mother and wife. As Myra H. Strober and David Tyack explain: "The conviction that teaching was appropriate to woman's sphere and compatible with marriage was one of the powerful preconditions that led to the increasing employment of women as teachers."⁸

⁷Thomas Woody, A History of Women's Education in the United States Volumes I and 2 (New York: The Science Press, 1929); Glenda Riley, "Origins of the Argument for Improved Female Education," History of Education Quarterly 9, 4(Winter 1969): 455-470; Keith Melder, "Woman's High Calling: The Teaching Profession in America, 1830-1860," American Studies 13, 2(Fall 1972): 19-32; Kathryn Kish Sklar, Catherine Beecher: A Study in American Domesticity (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1973); Joan N. Burstyn, "Catherine Beecher and the Education of American Women," New England Quarterly 47, 3(September 1974): 386-403; Nancy Hoffman, Woman's "True" Profession: Voices From the History of Teaching (New York: The Feminist Press, 1981).

⁸Myra H. Strober and David Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?: A Report on Research on Schools," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 5, 3(Spring 1980): 497. For an account of the feminization of teaching in which women are portrayed as the unwitting participants in the maintenance of patriarchy see Madeleine Grumet, "Pedagogy For Patriarchy: The Feminization of Teaching," Interchange 12, 2-3(1981): 165-184. See also Madeleine R. Grumet, Bitter Milk: Women and Teaching (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). In contrast, Redding S. Sugg's, Motherteacher: The Feminization of American Education (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978) provides an extremely derogatory and condemnatory view of the effect of women's growing dominance of the teaching profession. See also Deborah Fitts, "Una and the Lion: The Feminization of District School Teaching and Its Effects on the Roles of Students and Teachers in Nineteenth-Century Massachusetts," in Regulated Children/Liberated Children: Education in Psychohistorical Perspective, ed. Barbara Finkelstein (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1979), 140-157, for an interesting discussion of the ideology surrounding the feminization of teaching influenced by psychoanalytical thought.

While ideology no doubt played a role in the shift to teaching being regarded as women's work, the issue cannot totally be explained in this way. In fact much of the rhetoric involved in the ideological arguments resemble little more than a rationalization for more objective economic and organizational changes that were occurring at the same time as teaching was being feminized. Janet Guildford has argued in her work on the feminization of the teaching force in Nova Scotia that "ideology and economics...were in fact intimately related and mutually reinforcing."⁹

A number of historians have attempted to explore these changes by examining the relationship between the growth of "formalized" school systems, increases in the percentages of women teachers and decreases in female/male salary ratios.¹⁰ Strober and Lanford argue that "where the percentage of women teachers was high, schooling was likely to have been "formalized" - that is, schools had become formal organizations - relatively early and the ratio of the average female teaching salary to the male teaching salary was likely to be relatively low."¹¹

⁹Janet Guildford, "'Separate Spheres': The Feminization of Public School Teaching in Nova Scotia, 1838-1880," Acadiensis 22, 1(Autumn 1992): 47.

¹⁰See Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching,"; Myra H. Strober and Laura Best, "The Female/Male Salary Differential in Public Schools: Some Lessons From San Francisco, 1879," Economic Inquiry 17, 2(April 1979): 218-236; Strober and Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?"; Tyack and Strober, "Jobs and Gender," 131-152; Myra H. Strober and Audri Gordon Lanford, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching: Cross Sectional Analysis, 1850-1880," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 11, 2(Winter 1986): 212-235. For a study of the relationship between compulsory school attendance and increased percentages of women teachers see John G. Richardson and Brenda Wooden Hatcher, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching 1870-1920," Work and Occupations 10, 1(February 1983): 81-99. For a study that correlates high rates of female school attendance and percentages of women teachers see Susan B. Carter, "Occupational Segregation, Teachers' Wages, and American Economic Growth," Journal of Economic History 46, 2(June 1986): 373-383.

¹¹Strober and Lanford, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching," 215. The authors are critical of studies that stress causal connections between urbanization and the rising percentages of women in teaching. They argue that the proportion of women in teaching increased not because of urbanization per se, but because of the "formalization" of school systems and the decrease in the female/male salary ratio, which tended to occur in urban settings. Examples of studies that stress the importance of urbanization include Michael Katz, The Irony of Early School Reform: Educational Innovation in Mid-Nineteenth Century Massachusetts (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1968); Michael B. Katz, "The Emergence of Bureaucracy in Urban Education: The Boston Case, 1850-1884," History of Education Quarterly 8, 2(Summer 1968): 155-188 and 8, 3(Fall 1968): 319-357; David Tyack, The One Best System: A

The striking differences between urban and rural areas in this respect have been the subject of much of the research.¹² Focusing largely on the nineteenth century, studies of school systems have shown that schools in the large cities were first formalized. In these urban centres "public school teaching not only became feminized" but also "stratified by sex."¹³ In other words, in urban schools women became numerically superior but in terms of the positions they occupied in the profession and the salaries they received they were inferior. The concept of a segmented labour market is central to these arguments. Women were segregated into lower paying positions in the bottom rungs of the occupation, mainly as teachers of younger pupils, whereas men were employed in the well-paid and more administrative positions as senior teachers, principals, inspectors and superintendents. Strober and Lanford have summed up the basic arguments nicely:

Formalization of schooling precipitated occupational segregation in teaching by unleashing both demand- and supply-side pressures. On the demand side, the graded school brought with it a specific demand for women teachers in part because women were cheaper to hire than men and in part because of the stereotypes concerning women's superiority in dealing with children and women's docility in taking orders. On the supply side, longer school terms and increased credentialing requirements meant the opportunity cost of staying in teaching was raised for men. Because they could neither continue to treat teaching as supplementary employment nor afford to be full-time teachers (the average salary in teaching, a public occupation funded by tight-fisted tax payers, was inadequate for supporting a family), most men dropped out. Men left teaching because they had more lucrative alternative occupations open to them. Women stayed in teaching, at lower wages than those paid to men, because they did not have other options.¹⁴

History of American Urban Education (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1974); David Tyack, "Bureaucracy and the Common School: The Example of Portland, Oregon, 1851-1913," American Quarterly 19, 3(Fall 1967): 475-498.

¹²See Strober and Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?"; Tyack and Strober, "Jobs and Gender," and Strober and Lanford, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching."

¹³Strober and Best, "The Female/Male Salary Differential," 220.

¹⁴Strober and Lanford, "The Feminization of Public School Teaching," 234. For a detailed discussion of the "push" and "pull" factors that led women into teaching in the United States see Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "'Daughters into Teachers': Educational and Demographic Influences on the Transformation of Teaching into 'Women's Work' in America," History of Education Review 12, 1(1983): 15-28, reprinted in Prentice and Theobald, eds. Women Who Taught, 115-135.

John Rury has suggested that the reason why women earned less than men was because "the inability - and, in some cases perhaps, the unwillingness - of women to work beyond marriage resulted in distinctive male and female career paths in education." In short, he continues "most women simply did not remain in the teaching force long enough to compete for administrative posts. Sexist assumptions about their *true* careers blocked the movement of women into the emerging education hierarchy."¹⁵

In contrast to the urban model outlined above some historians have noted that rural areas were slower to develop a segmented labour market in teaching. Rural schools - usually one-room - were more informal and less rigid in organization, had less discrepancy between male and female salaries and tended to employ more equal numbers of men and women, although women tended to be employed in the summer term (when the older boys and male teachers were engaged in agricultural work) and men in the winter time. The way in which rural schools were organized meant that both males and females had similar jobs. Both taught ungraded classes in one-room schoolhouses and therefore were able to exercise "considerable independence, discretion and autonomy and operated without benefit of any formal on-site supervisors."¹⁶ However, this situation was not to last. American studies have shown that as state regulation and standardization increased, feminization became the norm in rural as well as urban areas.¹⁷

Urban models of schooling transferred to rural environments were thus seen to be appropriate in accounting for the feminization of teaching. However, it became clear from work done on Canadian teachers that this explanation was too simple a generalization and that more complex alternative models were needed. As Danylewycz and Prentice point out:

¹⁵John L. Rury, "Gender, Salaries and Career: American Teachers, 1900-1910," Issues in Education 4, 3(Winter 1986): 230. Italics in original.

¹⁶Strober and Best, "The Female/Male Salary Differential," 221.

¹⁷Strober and Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?" 498.

From an early appreciation of the fact that what we needed to document was not only the shift in *public* schools from a largely male to a predominantly female teaching force but also women's prior educational work in domestic surroundings, there gradually emerged a perception of the importance of regional differences in understanding both of these phenomena.¹⁸

In their study of the evolution of the sexual division of labour in nine counties in rural Ontario and Quebec Danylewycz, Light and Prentice propose two new models to add to the already existing early urban and late rural patterns of feminization. First of all, they suggest a modified "early" rural model that was "characteristic of troubled agricultural regions and the resource frontier." Poverty and the presence of resource industries such as lumbering and fishing provided alternative employment to teaching for young men. They therefore suggest that male unavailability was in part responsible for the feminization of teaching in certain regions of rural Quebec and Eastern Ontario where women were the predominant sex from the very beginning of public school systems. Secondly, they propose an alternative model for the sexual division of labour that developed in Quebec that takes into account the importance of the tradition of women in teaching prior to the emergence of government supported schools - a tradition that can be traced back to the nuns in education since the founding of New France.¹⁹ In another article Danylewycz and Prentice have revealed that Montreal, Quebec's largest metropolitan centre, did not conform to the classic North American pattern of a public school system governed by a male hierarchy in which women proliferated in the teaching posts in the lower ranks. Montreal developed a dual educational system in which the French Catholic system was divided along gender lines which favoured boys' schools run by male teachers. As such, the entire French Catholic

¹⁸Danylewycz and Prentice, "Revising the History of Teachers," 137. Italics in original. Guildford also emphasises the importance of regional differences in her study of Nova Scotia teachers. See her "'Separate Spheres'."

¹⁹Marta Danylewycz, Beth Light and Alison Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: A Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 16, 31(Spring 1983): 81-109.

system was dominated by males until the end of the nineteenth century.²⁰ The necessity of examining regional differences and local settings rather than making sweeping generalizations concerning the nature and extent of the feminization of teaching in North America is made abundantly clear by these studies.²¹

As more research is conducted into the topic of the feminization of teaching it is becoming increasingly obvious that it is a very complex phenomenon. Jean Barman looks at feminization and teacher (both male and female) retention rates in schools in late nineteenth century British Columbia.²² She argues that feminization may have been overemphasized as an explanatory device and that "in British Columbia, feminization of itself did not necessarily alter the character of teaching as an occupation, both female and male retention rates gradually increasing within the very city schools where women first assumed numerical preponderance."²³ She found that there were markedly differing patterns of retention between city and non-city schools and that these differences were firmly in place prior to and, as she speculates, very possibly largely unrelated to the parallel process of feminization. She offers the suggestion that the more satisfactory "material

²⁰Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers, Gender, and Bureaucratizing School Systems in Nineteenth Century Montreal and Toronto," History of Education Quarterly 24, 1(Spring 1984): 75-100. A further paper by Danylewycz and Prentice, which includes details from the two articles cited above, is useful in this context. See "Lessons From the Past: The Experience of Women Teachers in Quebec and Ontario", in World Yearbook of Education 1984: Women and Education, eds. Sandra Acker, Jacquetta Megarry, Stanley Nisbet and Eric Hoyle (London, England: Kogan Page, Limited, 1984), 163-172.

²¹Chad Gaffield recently emphasised the importance of studying "regions" as compared to "provinces and nations." He argued that focus exclusively on the latter "can rarely do justice to the complexity and variety of human thought and behaviour....[C]onclusions drawn at such high levels of aggregation either do not apply to many residents or reflect a particular perspective (often that of elites in metropolitan centres)." Consequently he applauded the fact that "the study of regions has become a mainstream focus of scholarly attention." See "The New Regional History: Rethinking the History of the Outaouais," Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'etudes canadiennes 26, 1(Spring 1991): 64. As early as 1969 J.M.S. Careless observed that regionalism had been, and continued to be, the predominant feature of Canadian life and so urged historians to study smaller communities and to examine rural patterns. See "'Limited Identities' in Canada," Canadian Historical Review 50, 1(March 1969):1-10.

²²Jean Barman, "Birds of Passage or Early Professionals? Teachers in Late Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'education 2, 1(Spring 1990): 17-36.

²³Ibid., 18

conditions" of city as compared with non-city schools may have been a more important factor in teacher retention. Barman contends:

When research is limited to a single sex, as have been recent analyses of teacher feminization, the impression is left, whether or not it be deliberate, that all human behaviour somehow derives from sex and gender. To understand the role of women in the past with all its inherent complexity, a broader context is essential.²⁴

Work in Canada and elsewhere has also begun to look beyond the basic question of gender to examine the social structure of the teaching profession and how that may have changed over time. By exploring the average age of teachers, their household and marital status, ethnicity, and class origins historians have been able to build up a more precise picture of the composition of the teaching forces in various localities as well as speculate, albeit tentatively, on the circumstances of the lives and the meaning of teaching to people of different backgrounds who chose to join the occupation.

Researchers have begun to investigate the backgrounds of teachers through the use of records of local school boards and provincial departments of education and manuscript census data. In their study of rural teachers in nineteenth century Ontario and Quebec in the period from 1851 to 1881, Danylewycz, Light and Prentice discovered that "women (and to some extent men) living at home with their parents were replacing both male household heads and male boarders among rural Ontario teachers." In addition they found that "Women were increasing in all categories but the women teachers who were under 30 years of age grew from 12.8 to 38.1 percent of all teachers."²⁵ Their findings for the city of Toronto reveal that "the bureaucratizing public school system in this city not only favoured the unmarried and youthful among its women teachers, it also showed a clear preference for hiring large numbers of such women to staff its growing schools."²⁶ Shifts in the age

²⁴Ibid., 23.

²⁵Danylewycz, Light and Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour," 101.

²⁶Danylewycz and Prentice, "Teachers, Gender and Bureaucratizing School Systems," 84.

structure and the marital and household status of teachers therefore paralleled the change in elementary school teaching from a male to an increasingly female occupation.

Findings on the ethnic and class origins of teachers have also proved suggestive. By pointing to the larger proportion of non-Canadian born individuals among the male teachers of Ontario, Danylewycz and Prentice proposed a possible correlation between ethnicity and the sexual division of labour in teaching. They found that in certain areas of rural Ontario male teachers continued to be numerically dominant for several decades longer in comparison to rural Quebec and certain Eastern Ontario counties. They argue that this resistance to the trend towards predominantly female teaching forces may have been linked to the existence of a pool of cash-hungry immigrant men who, because of fewer opportunities or skills for employment in other fields, were willing and able to teach when their Ontario-born counterparts were not.²⁷ Information gleaned from the manuscript censuses for Montreal and Toronto concerning the occupations of parents with whom city teachers lived enabled them to identify the class origins of these teachers and to speculate on their significance. In Montreal about half of the female teachers who lived in their father's households were the daughters of skilled and unskilled workers. Toronto revealed a slightly smaller proportion and in both cities relatively few female teachers were from the entrepreneurial and professional classes. They also point to the high proportion of women teachers in both cities who were living with a widowed relative or parent and suggest that they were the major breadwinner in the household.²⁸ Therefore, if the reason for employing women as teachers was because they were a cheap means of labour necessary to fill the growing needs of expanding school systems, then it was equally true that "women increasingly welcomed (and were in need of) paid employment outside of the home." As

²⁷Danylewycz, Light and Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching," 98.

²⁸Danylewycz and Prentice, "Teachers, Gender and Bureaucratizing School Systems," 91-92.

such "for many Montreal and Toronto schoolmistresses, something more than a response to "women's high calling" was involved in the decision to teach school."²⁹ Thus the details revealed in these studies of teachers' backgrounds both support and refine the findings of earlier studies on the economic and organizational explanations for the feminization of teaching in the nineteenth century.³⁰

Despite this wealth of information on who taught in schools, and how and why this changed from a mainly male to a predominantly female occupation in the nineteenth century, little of the research has approached the topic from the perspective of the teacher as worker. This is rather surprising given that teaching has been regarded as "women's work" since the middle of the nineteenth century. As alluded to earlier, educational historians have tended to focus on the professionalism aspect of teachers work rather than on the actual tasks they performed.³¹ In the same way teachers as workers have not been placed at the centre of enquiry in either labour or women's histories. The question of occupational categories when dealing with teachers' history appears to have been problematic because:

[Teachers] have not fitted very well into the classic model of workers perceived to be men doing manual, as opposed to intellectual or managerial, work. Teachers, on the contrary, have been seen and portrayed as "brain workers," and as actually or ideally the managers, at the very least, of children if not of other adults. In addition, they were very clearly not working *men*, since so many, as time went on, were in fact women (*italics in original*).³²

²⁹Danylewycz and Prentice, "Revising the History of Teachers," 139.

³⁰For an interesting account of the social composition of American teachers at five points in history, ranging from the late colonial period to the late 1980's, see John L. Rury, "Who Became Teachers: The Social Characteristics of Teachers in American History," in American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at Work, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 9-48.

³¹For example, Althouse, The Ontario Teacher and Labarrere-Paule, Les instituteurs laiques au canada francais.

³²Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Central Canada," Labour/Le Travail 17(Spring 1986): 61. Reprinted in Schoolwork: Approaches to the Labour Process of Teaching, ed. Jenny Ozga (Milton Keynes, England: Open University Press, 1988), 61-80, and in Women Who Taught, eds. Prentice and Theobald, 136-159.

The need to understand teachers' work as work, to look at the labour process of teaching, to understand the nature and meaning of changes in teachers' work and working conditions, to develop teacher history and to inform all these with a gender conscious perspective has been the focus of recent work by Michael W. Apple and others on American and British teachers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They argue that teaching as an occupation has been subject to a process of "proletarianization" which entailed an increasing rationalization and restructuring of the job and that this process is linked with gender.³³ As Apple contends: "Historically women's jobs have been much more apt to be "proletarianized" than men's." He goes on to argue that "once a set of positions becomes "women's work," it is subject to greater pressure for rationalization. Administrative control of teaching, curricula, and so on increases. The job *itself* becomes different."³⁴

Drawing on the work of Apple and others Danylewycz and Prentice have incisively explored the actual tasks teachers performed in their work in the schoolrooms of nineteenth and early twentieth century Ontario and Quebec.³⁵ In doing so they attempt to determine

³³Michael W. Apple, "Teaching and "Women's Work": A Comparative Historical and Ideological Analysis," Teachers College Record 86, 3(Spring 1985): 455-473. This article is essentially reproduced in the author's Teachers & Texts: A Political Economy of Class & Gender Relations in Education (New York: Routledge, 1988), 54-78. See also Apple, "Work, Gender, and Teaching," 611-628; Michael W. Apple, "Work, Class and Teaching," in Gender, Class and Education, eds. Stephen Walker and Len Barton (New York: The Falmer Press, 1983), 53-67; Barry H. Bergen, "Only a Schoolmaster: Gender, Class, and the Effort to Professionalize Elementary Teaching in England, 1870-1910," History of Education Quarterly 22, 1(Spring 1982): 1-21, reprinted in Schoolwork, ed. Ozga, 39-60; Jennifer Ozga and Martin Lawn eds., Teachers, Professionalism and Class: A Study of Organized Teachers (London, England: The Falmer Press, 1981). For a discussion of the "proletarianization" thesis as applied to the transformation of the clerical labour market and office working conditions in Canada between 1900 and 1930 see Graham S. Lowe, "Class, Job and Gender in the Canadian Office," Labour/Le Travailleur 10(Autumn 1982): 11-37, and Graham S. Lowe, "Mechanization, Feminization, and Managerial Control in the Early Twentieth-Century Canadian Office," in On the Job: Confronting the Labour Process in Canada, eds. Craig Heron and Robert Storey (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1986), 177-209.

³⁴Apple, "Teaching and "Women's Work", " 457, 462. Italics in original.

³⁵ Danylewycz and Prentice, "Teachers' Work," 59-80. See also Alison Prentice, "From Household to School House: The Emergence of the Teacher as Servant of the State," Material History Bulletin 20(1983): 19-29.

how the nature of that work, and the working conditions under which those tasks were carried out, changed during a period when state school systems were in the process of being established and the occupation was becoming increasingly feminized. The central theme of their study of teacher's work is the increasing formalization of, and control over, school procedures and administration which led to a phenomenal growth in the workload - academic, supervisory, administrative and manual - of teachers. In short they reveal a critical restructuring of the form and content of the tasks of teachers themselves in subtle but important ways.³⁶

Danylewycz and Prentice also draw attention to the perceptions held by teachers about their social and economic position in the workforce, and about what work was compatible with that position. The restructuring of the work of the teacher in the school did not improve their lot and the evidence of growing workloads encouraged school teachers to organize protective associations. However, as Danylewycz and Prentice point out, women teachers' associations often pursued contradictory policies as they tried to improve their members' conditions of work and define their position in the labour force.³⁷ They draw again on the work of Apple concerning his ideas on the contradictory class location of teachers. He argues that twentieth century teachers are "located simultaneously in two classes" in that "they share the interests of both the petty bourgeoisie and the working class."³⁸ Canadian teachers, as Danylewycz and Prentice note, were like their American counterparts in that they formed their associations to fight for better wages and working conditions but, unlike the most radical Americans, they found it difficult to see themselves

³⁶For a discussion of the restructuring of the work of teachers in relation to the changing role of the school in early twentieth century British Columbia, see Timothy A. Dunn, "The Rise of Mass Public Schooling in British Columbia, 1900-1929," in Schooling and Society in Twentieth Century British Columbia, eds. J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1980), 23-51.

³⁷Danylewycz and Prentice, "Teachers' Work," 62.

³⁸Apple, "Work, Class and Teaching," 53.

as "workers" or to form alliances with trade unions and other working class organizations that had similar problems.³⁹ There was a definite contradiction between the actual social and economic position of teachers in the workforce and their perceptions of what that position was. Classroom teachers were poorly paid, experienced difficult and demanding working conditions and had little control over the workplace. In this way they were no different from industrial workers. However, teachers, for the most part, continued to identify themselves as mental rather than manual workers despite the fact that most of them were not accepted by their communities as fully professional. Teachers therefore occupied a very contradictory position in the labour force. "It was," Danylewycz and Prentice continue, "the uncertainty of their position in the labour force that helps to explain how women teachers could flirt with the mystique of professionalism while at the same time their members referred to themselves as the exploited or as toilers and hirelings."⁴⁰ Perhaps, as has been suggested, the main problem for women teachers was the fact that they were working in school systems that were, for the most part, managed by, and for men.⁴¹ This fact draws attention to the literature on the history of teachers and teaching that approaches the subject from the perspective of those who trained, organized and controlled the schools and school systems in which those teachers worked, and which underlines the importance of examining the interplay between the lives of those who taught and those who

³⁹Studies of women teachers' associational work in Canada include: Wendy E. Bryans, "Virtuous Women at Half the Price: The Feminization of the Teaching Force and Early Women Teacher Organizations in Ontario," (M.A. thesis, University of Toronto, 1974); Alison Prentice, "Themes in the Early History of the Women Teachers' Association of Toronto, 1892-1914," in Women's Paid and Unpaid Work: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives, ed. Paula Bourne (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1985), 97-121. See also Harry Smaller, "Ontario Teacher Federations and the State - An Historical Overview," History of Education Review 14, 2(1985): 4-14, for a discussion of the nature of the involvement of the state in the development of the early stages of teachers' protective associations in Ontario. An essential American source on the topic is Wayne J. Urban, Why Teachers Organized (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1982). Urban focuses on women teachers' associations in Chicago, New York and Atlanta. See also Urban, "New Directions in the Historical Study of Teacher Unionism," Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'education 2, 1(Spring 1990): 1-15.

⁴⁰Danylewycz and Prentice, "Teachers' Work," 79.

⁴¹Ibid., 80.

managed. Recent work on the history of normal schools and teacher training⁴² and also on the role of superintendents, inspectors and principals⁴³ has begun to address such issues.

It is clear from this survey of the literature on the history of teachers and teaching in North America that, to a large extent, historians have concentrated on ideological concerns as expressed in the prescriptive literature and the rhetoric of educational promoters, have employed broadly quantitative methodologies and/or have provided accounts of teachers' lives in urban public school systems. These approaches have generated important information that has improved our knowledge of the composition of the teaching force in the nineteenth century and raised searching questions about how and why the structure and organization of teaching as an occupation changed over time. However, these studies also tend to portray male and female teachers in stereotypical roles and leave one with an interpretation of teaching as a "hierarchically structured and gendered school system" which entailed male control of women's work, the reproduction of subordinate roles for female teachers, and a situation in which "women teachers were seen both as its victims and unwitting perpetrators."⁴⁴

The essence of this vision of teaching lies in the increasing bureaucratization of school systems at various levels which led to ever tightening controls over the occupation

⁴²John Calam, "Teaching the Teachers: Establishment and Early Years of the B.C. Provincial Normal Schools," BC Studies 61(Spring 1984): 30-63; Alison Prentice, "Like Friendly Atoms in Chemistry"?: Women and Men at Normal School in Mid-Nineteenth Century Toronto," in Old Ontario: Essays in Honour of J.M.S. Careless, eds. David R. Keane and Colin Read (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1990). For a good source of information on teacher education in the United States, see Jurgen Herbst, And Sadly Teach: Teacher Education and Professionalization in American Culture (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1989), and Herbst, "Nineteenth-Century Normal Schools in the United States: A Fresh Look," History of Education 9, 3(September 1980): 219-227.

⁴³Philip Corrigan and Bruce Curtis, "Education, Inspection and State Formation: A Preliminary Statement," Canadian Historical Association, Historical Papers (1985): 156-171; John Abbott, "Accomplishing "a Man's Task": Rural Women Teachers, Male Culture, and the School Inspectorate in Turn-of-the-Century Ontario," Ontario History 78, 4(December 1986): 313-330; Thomas Fleming, "'Our Boys in the Field": School Inspectors, Superintendents, and the Changing Character of School Leadership in British Columbia," in Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History, eds. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Limited, 1986), 285-303.

⁴⁴Prentice and Theobald, "The Historiography of Women Teachers," 6-7.

in terms of normal school training and certification requirements, control of the curriculum, and the many levels of inspection beginning with school principals and ending with district and provincial inspectors and superintendents. The purpose of this organization and control is made clear by Strober and Tyack: "Given this purpose of tight control, women were ideal employees. With few alternative occupations and accustomed to patriarchal authority, they mostly did what their male superiors ordered. Difference of gender provided an important form of social control."⁴⁵ As Danylewycz and Prentice explain: "Indeed, educational administrators developed bureaucratic modes of organization chiefly with male aspirations for power and social mobility in mind."⁴⁶ Hoffman argues that the structure of the school "reinforced the notion that women were capable of teaching the ABC's and the virtues of cleanliness, obedience, and respect, while men taught about ideas, and organized the profession."⁴⁷ Melder contends that women teachers were central to the purposes of educational reformers and administrators in that women were "a resource, a labour force, that could be manipulated for their advantage." He goes on to explain:

Women entered the schools, enthusiastically supported by male educators, only to find that they occupied the lowest rung of a long bureaucratic ladder with virtually no hope for advancement into positions of power. A tiny minority of women became principals of secondary schools, system superintendents, or officers of teachers' organizations, but men monopolized administrative and policy making positions. One of the great advantages seen by the educators in employing them was the very docility and lack of worldly ambition which appeared to give women an advantage in teaching young children. Woman's natural submissiveness would prevent her from becoming a threat to the system of education, the policy-making and power structure erected by men. In attracting women into teaching the reformers not only obtained a competent labor force that they could not secure otherwise, but a class of workers which would accept masculine domination.⁴⁸

⁴⁵Strober and Tyack, "Why Do Women Teach and Men Manage?" 500.

⁴⁶Danylewycz and Prentice, "Teachers, Gender, and Bureaucratizing School Systems," 78.

⁴⁷Hoffman, Woman's "True" Profession, xxii.

⁴⁸Melder, "Woman's High Calling," 27-28.

At the same time, as Strober and Best argue, men's higher status in teaching made it possible to "more securely link the schools to the (male) power bases in the surrounding community [because] men not only had obvious overt status characteristics which served to raise the status of schools in local eyes, but also, through all-male clubs and sports, had far easier access than women to key members of the areas' business and political power structures."⁴⁹ Therefore, the bureaucratization of school systems both promoted and institutionalized unequal relations between the sexes and resulted in a situation in which women's position was in general inferior to that of men's. Prentice has drawn attention to the wider repercussions of such a situation:

To the extent that this pattern persisted and spread, and to the extent that school children absorbed messages from the organization of the institutions in which they were educated, Canadian children were exposed to a powerful image of woman's inferior position in society. One must not discount, moreover, the impact on the women themselves. The experience of public school teaching, the experience of its discipline and of its hierarchical organization, became the experience of large numbers of Canadian women by the end of the nineteenth century.⁵⁰

A number of problems arise from these studies that portray men and women in stereotypical roles in school systems. Women appear as all too accepting of their inferior position in the teaching force. But to what extent did women enter the teaching profession because they regarded themselves as the ideal and natural educators of the young? How far were they controlled and dominated by their male employers? How did women teachers *themselves* perceive their position and experience as teachers in the workforce?

Quantitative studies provide a macro-portrait of the occupation of teaching in terms of age, sex, marital and household status, class, ethnicity and so on, and offer explanations for the increase in female involvement as teachers in public educational systems in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. However, they reveal little about individual experience, or the personal meaning of teaching as work, or allow us to discern how

⁴⁹Strober and Best, "The Female/Male Salary Differential," 223.

⁵⁰Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching," 20.

teachers themselves made sense of their lives both in the classroom and in the communities in which they lived and worked. As well, studies focussing on ideology tend to equate rhetoric with actual experience, what was intended with what actually happened. Even when teachers have been the centre of attention, as is the case with much of the literature discussed so far, the story has been more in terms of what was done to them, or thought of and about them, by others, rather than in terms of their own experience as teachers.⁵¹ In other words:

[H]istorians have tended to treat teachers as nonpersons. Female teachers especially have been portrayed as objects rather than subjects, as either the unknowing tools of the social elite or as the exploited minority whose labor is bought cheaply. Rarely have they been treated as subjects in control of their own activities. Seldom has the world of schooling been presented through their eyes.⁵²

Therefore these approaches only go part of the way towards a full understanding of the complex picture of the history of teachers and teaching.

American educational historian Geraldine Joncich Clifford has highlighted some of the problems associated with quantitative approaches to the history of teachers. She draws attention to "their inability to reveal how teachers actually perceived and reacted to their professional status, the demands of their tasks, to their students and patrons, and to pedagogical-reform 'movements' that are presumed to have existed." To continue her argument she contends that "accumulated data of these sorts and the hunches they generate, no more constitute a record of the *experience* of schooling than all the possible statistical findings about age of marriage, illegitimacy rate, household size, infant mortality, number

⁵¹As early as 1975 John Calam noted that the teacher in history had, for the most part, been placed "at the periphery rather than at the centre of research attention." There was a need, therefore, to fill this gap in Canadian educational historiography and so ensure that "the teacher in history lives and breathes once more." See "A Letter from Quesnel: The Teacher in History, and Other Fables." History of Education Quarterly 15, 2(Summer 1975): 136, 142.

⁵²Richard A. Quantz, "The Complex Visions of Female Teachers and the Failure of Unionization in the 1930s: An Oral History," History of Education Quarterly 25, 4(Winter 1985): 439.

of wage-earning members, together will produce the *experience* of the family."⁵³ As far as she is concerned: "The meanings people attach to their experiences; their sense of what drives or limits their actions; the victories and defeats of their lives; what build them up and what tears or wears them down; the struggle within as well as the struggle without - these are also the data of history."⁵⁴

In the light of such concerns the efficacy of studying the subjective side of educational history in general, and the history of teachers in particular, has, and is, being increasingly advocated. The central questions that some historians began to ask are simple, illustrated by Barbara J. Finkelstein in the preface to her bibliography of educational reminiscences: "What...was the character of pedagogy as understood by participants?"⁵⁵ Clifford has also called for "a people-centred institutional history that deals, in significant and sensitive ways, with students, parents, school board members, as well as teachers - warts and all."⁵⁶ Her main conviction is that educational history should probe for "the intentions of the givers and receivers of education" by focussing on "personal conceptions and misconceptions" and on the "consequences of formal education as perceived by the participants...in contrast to the ideals or functions of education as articulated by philosophers and recognizable "spokesmen" for education." In short she argues for a

⁵³Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "History as Experience: The Uses of Personal-History Documents in the History of Education," History of Education 7, 3(October 1978): 192. Italics in original.

⁵⁴Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "'Marry, Stitch, Die, or Do Worse': Educating Women for Work," in Work, Youth, and Schooling: Historical Perspectives on Vocationalism in American Education, eds. Harvey Kantor and David B. Tyack (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1982), 225.

⁵⁵Barbara J. Finkelstein, "Schooling and Schoolteachers: Selected Bibliography of Autobiographies in the Nineteenth Century," History of Education Quarterly 14, 2(Summer 1974): 293. See also Barbara Finkelstein, ed. Regulated Children/Liberated Children and Barbara Finkelstein, Governing the Young: Teacher Behavior in Popular Primary Schools in Nineteenth-Century United States (New York: The Falmer Press, 1989).

⁵⁶Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Saints, Sinners, and People: A Position Paper on the Historiography of American Education," History of Education Quarterly 15, 3(Fall 1975): 268.

"personalized history."⁵⁷ Canadian historian Chad M. Gaffield has reiterated these concerns and urged educational historians to focus on the "experiential meaning of education" from the point of view of "all those who have been involved in the process."⁵⁸ In his recent work on the French language problem in Ontario in the nineteenth century he emphasized the importance of documenting the experiences of "the boys and girls, men and women whose lives gave meaning to the questions of schooling."⁵⁹ Likewise Richard Quantz, an American educational historian, has suggested:

To understand teachers, we need to do more than treat schools as little black boxes with interchangeable parts which take inputs and create outputs and which are manipulated by those from outside them....Attention to the larger forces of history provide a framework of understanding, but without a depiction of the finer detail of the participants' subjective realities, we fail to understand the dynamics of history. By following only microhistory we are in danger of reversing the common maxim and "failing to see the trees for the forest." In our eagerness to map out the great movements of "man," we sometimes forget that historical events often involved real women living in their own subjective, but equally real, worlds.⁶⁰

Recent feminist historiography has also influenced the move towards a more subjective approach to the history of teachers and teaching with its emphasis on the necessity of viewing women in the past as historical characters in their own right. In her 1975 article on the problems of various approaches to women's history Gerder Lerner stated that the true history of women is "the history of their ongoing functioning in that

⁵⁷Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Home and School in 19th Century America: Some Personal-History Reports from the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 18, 1(Spring 1978): 4-5. Italics in original.

⁵⁸Chad M. Gaffield, "Back to School: Towards a New Agenda for the History of Education," *Acadiensis* 15, 2(Spring 1986): 182. Paper was originally presented at the Canadian Historical Association Meeting, Montreal, 1985. See also Chad Gaffield, "Coherence and Chaos in Educational Historiography," *Interchange* 17, 2(Summer 1986): 112-121.

⁵⁹Chad Gaffield, *Language, Schooling and Cultural Conflict: The Origins of the French Language Controversy in Ontario* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987), 30. Alison Prentice has expressed similar concerns in her "Introduction" to a special issue on educational history of *Ontario History* 78, 4(December 1986): 281-284.

⁶⁰Quantz, "The Complex Visions of Female Teachersd," 440-441.

male-defined world, *on their own terms*."⁶¹ Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice contend that the tasks of the feminist historian are "the simple retrieval of women from obscurity" and to "ferret out the ways in which women have participated but which traditional histories have overlooked." As such they argue for a history of women that gets at "the actual experience of women in the past."⁶² But, as they also acknowledge, this is not an easy task for the historian. This is the case partly because much of the female experience has gone unrecorded. However, even when women in the past have been described and analysed it has either focussed on what Natalie Zemon Davis has termed "women worthies"⁶³ or from the angle of vision of the men - fathers, husbands, brothers, employers - who have sought to define, explain and influence women's lives. In this situation "the activities of men and women are evaluated asymmetrically, women's activities being ignored, subsumed, or measured by the standards of male experience."⁶⁴ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg contends that we need to "hear women's own words directly, not filtered through a male record. Male voices have so often drowned out or denied women's words and perceptions that the rediscovery of women's unique language must be our first priority - and our first defense,

⁶¹Gerder Lerner, "Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges," *Feminist Studies* 3, 1-2(Fall 1975): 6. Italics in original. A revised version of this article is published in *Liberating Women's History: Theoretical and Critical Essays*, ed. Berenice A. Carroll (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1976), 357-367. See also Gerder Lerner, "New Approaches to the Study of Women in American History," *Journal of Social History* 3, 1(Fall 1969): 53-62, reprinted in *Liberating Women's History*, ed. Carroll, 349-356; and Gerder Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979).

⁶²Ruth Pierson and Alison Prentice, "Feminism and the Writing and Teaching of History," in *Feminism: From Pressure to Politics*, eds. Angela R. Miles and Geraldine Finn (Montreal: Black Rose Books, 1989), 168-169. Also published in *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal* 7, 2(Spring 1982).

⁶³Natalie Zemon Davis, "'Women's History' in Transition: The European Case," *Feminist Studies* 3, 3-4(Spring-Summer 1976): 83.

⁶⁴Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Man/Woman/Teacher: Gender, Family, and Career in American Educational History," in *American Teachers*, ed. Warren, 294. See also Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo, "Women, Culture and Society: A Theoretical Overview," in *Women, Culture and Society* eds. Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974), 17-42, particularly pages 18-23.

as women scholars, against the undue influence of theories formed in ignorance of women's experiences."⁶⁵

Pierson and Prentice argue that, although much valuable work has been done in examining and analyzing the prescriptive literature directed to women and also the various medical, legal, educational and religious documents which reflect prevailing attitudes towards women and their roles in the past, "it must always be recognized that women's actual behaviour did not necessarily coincide with such projected images and pronouncements." In their view the task of historians of women is "to go beyond the prescription of and debate over roles wherever possible, in order to examine women's actual behaviour and their lives through whatever sources are available."⁶⁶ In this way, a woman-centred history, as Eliane Leslau Silverman argues, "makes women the subjects of a new body of literature. They do not exist in it as the 'other' - subsidiary, auxiliary, objectified - but come to the centre stage of the historical experience."⁶⁷ But as Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman have pointed out:

⁶⁵Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Hearing Women's Words: A Feminist Reconstruction of History," chapter in Disorderly Conduct: Visions of Gender in Victorian America (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Incorporated, 1985), 29. A strong feminist perspective is adopted in Canadian Women: A History, eds. Alison Prentice, Paula Bourne, Gail Cuthbert Brandt, Beth Light, Wendy Mitchinson and Naomi Black (Toronto: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Canada Incorporated, 1988). These six feminist writers are committed to "increasing women's autonomy in a world where it has generally been less than men's." Their starting point is that it is essential to recognize that "women's situation and experience are distinctive" and as such "should not be judged inferior by male standards or in comparison to men" (14). See also No Easy Road: Women in Canada 1920s to 1960s, eds. Beth Light and Ruth Roach Pierson (Toronto: New Hogtown Press, 1990). In the introduction to this documentary history of Canadian women Alison Prentice states in a nutshell the sentiments held by many Canadian feminist historians: "The ultimate goal is the creation of a Canadian women's history, one that speaks both to women about the sources of their present lives and to everyone about history seen from women's point of view" (11). In the same vein a comprehensive account of the lives of women in the past from the European perspective can be found in Bonnie S. Anderson and Judith P. Zinsser, A History of Their Own: Women in Europe From Prehistory to the Present, Volumes 1 and 2 (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, 1988).

⁶⁶Pierson and Prentice, "Feminism," 169. See also Linda Gordon, "What's New in Women's History," in Feminist Studies: Critical Studies, ed. Teresa de Lauretis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 20-30.

⁶⁷Eliane Leslau Silverman, "Writing Canadian Women's History, 1970-1982: An Historiographical Analysis," Canadian Historical Review 63, 4(December 1982): 533. Silverman adopts this perspective in her powerful "collective autobiography" of the experiences of Western Canadian frontier women entitled The Last

[M]uch of female experience has gone unrecorded in easily recognizable or accessible form. Of necessity historians of women have had to tap some previously unused, even uncollected, sources. A new sensitivity, often feminist in inspiration, to the frequency with which women's lives and beliefs have been interpreted for them by men has led to a search for documents in which the historical subjects themselves describe their own experiences.⁶⁸

Margaret Conrad contends that if we are to study what she describes as "women's culture" then new approaches must be adopted. As she persuasively argues:

In taking up the issue of women's culture we are addressing fundamental questions of sources and methodology. We are shifting the focus of analysis from the world of men to that of women. If public and published documents are few and macro studies difficult, then we must investigate personal and private sources with greater seriousness. If women's participation in politics is peripheral and labour force activity is muffled then we turn to local and family histories where women have figured prominently both as participants and as chroniclers. When approaching history from a woman's angle of vision the question becomes not "Why did women not protest their deliberate disenfranchisement in the era of responsible government," but "What characterized the lives of middle-class British North American women in the nineteenth century?" Not "Why are women marginalized in the early trade union movement?" but "What are the essential features of working-class women's lives?" Not "Why have women been relegated to the private sphere in industrial societies?" but "How has women's sphere been transformed by the emergence of industrial society?" The answers to questions such as these will allow us to transcend the less ambitious queries and lay the foundation for a genuine human history.⁶⁹

Best West: Women on the Alberta Frontier 1880-1930 (Montreal: Eden Press, 1984). See also Alison Prentice, "Writing Women into History: The History of Women's Work in Canada," Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal 3, 2(Spring 1978): 72-83.

⁶⁸Veronica Strong-Boag and Anita Clair Fellman, eds., Rethinking Canada: The Promise of Women's History (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Limited, 1986), 5. This point has also been made in the introduction to an excellent new collection of articles on British Columbian women. See Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, "Introduction: Taking Gender into Account in British Columbia," in British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women, eds. Creese and Strong-Boag (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1992), 11.

⁶⁹Margaret Conrad, "'Sundays Always Make Me Think of Home': Time & Place in Canadian Women's History," in Not Just Pin Money: Selected Essays on the History of Women's Work in British Columbia, eds. Barbara K. Latham and Roberta J. Pazdro (Victoria, British Columbia: Camosun College, 1984), 4-5. Reprinted in Rethinking Canada, eds. Strong-Boag and Fellman, 67-81, particularly pages 69-70. See also Margaret Conrad, Recording Angels: The Private Chronicles of Women from the Maritime Provinces of Canada, 1750-1950 (Ottawa: Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Women, 1982), revised and reprinted in The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History Volume 2, eds. Alison Prentice and Susan Mann Trofimenkoff (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), 41-60, and Margaret Conrad, Toni Laidlaw and Donna Smith, No Place Like Home: Diaries and Letters of Nova Scotia Women 1771-1938 (Halifax, Nova Scotia: Formac Publishing Company Limited, 1988).

A number of historians have taken an alternative approach to questions concerning the history of teachers and teaching and have employed more qualitative methodologies. By exploring and analysing first-person accounts of teachers' lives in letters, diaries, personal journals, memoirs and autobiographies, and also by way of oral testimony, historians have been able to examine the social context and the meaning of the information established by the quantitative studies of teacher's lives. Clifford states that such documents "provide subjective commentary on events, interpret experiences, preserve (sic) facts and express feelings according to some personal sense of what is meaningful, and they communicate an intense understanding of what one's own life is and has been." In this way such material "presupposes reflection on an inner world of experience made conscious; it relates *experienced reality*" (italics in original).⁷⁰ Sociologist Arlene Tigar McLaren has argued that the "discovery" and "acceptance within the discipline" of these "new" historical sources has given women's history a "vitality."⁷¹

Historians utilizing such sources have revealed the immense variety in women's experience in teaching. They have highlighted the fact that teaching was an extremely personal affair for those who chose to work in the occupation. A number of studies of both American and Canadian teachers have challenged many of the taken-for-granted notions and assumptions concerning the stereotype of the female teacher as the victim of oppression and have examined the ways in which some women, individually and collectively, used teaching to further their own aspirations despite the oppressive conditions with which they had to contend. Indeed some historians have been able to document that teaching was, in fact, a liberating experience for many women. Although published eighteen years ago the comments of Carroll Smith-Rosenberg are particularly pertinent:

⁷⁰ Clifford, "History as Experience," 186, 192.

⁷¹ Arlene Tigar McLaren, "Introduction," in Gender and Society: Creating a Canadian Women's Sociology, ed. McLaren (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman Limited, 1988), 14.

The view of woman as victim presupposes a simplistic view of role determinism - the assumption that cultural norms expressed in the cult of domesticity produced a single modal female personality....Women, as well as men, come in assorted psychological shapes and sizes....Any study of women's personal papers will reveal that women responded to normative definitions of their role in a variety of ways. Indeed a spectrum of female behavior and personality ranging from belligerent deviance to uncritical acceptance far more accurately reflects reality than any hypothesis of one or a few modal personalities.⁷²

Clifford has extracted from a large body of nineteenth and twentieth century writing on education those that deal with the experiences and consciousness of teachers and has argued, in a number of important papers, that although there are ample examples of the blacker side of teaching there was also "recompense for the arduous and often unfulfilling duties of the teacher." A teaching career, however brief, provided many young men and women with "an opportunity for respectable paid employment, greater personal freedom, a modicum of independence and authority, and a larger world view."⁷³ However, she also argues that women derived rewards from teaching that were unique to their gender. Many women became teachers because of the economic independence it gave them. The teachers' diaries and letters she read make it clear that "women teachers wished to be neither a financial burden nor otherwise indebted to anyone. They wished to pay their own way, to gain initiative and advantage not likely to be experienced in their parents' home or as the unmarried 'auntie' in the homes of their brothers."⁷⁴ Their ability to gain independence through self-support was deemed critical to the development of some sense of self in many women teachers and also enabled them to contribute to the financial well-being of their families. As Clifford explains:

⁷²Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The New Woman and the New History," *Feminist Studies* 3, 1-2(Fall 1975): 194.

⁷³ Clifford, "History as Experience," 195-196. For a very brief discussion of some of these points as they relate to Canadian rural teachers, see J. Donald Wilson, "'I Am Here to Help You If You Need Me': British Columbia's Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer, 1928-1934," *Journal of Canadian Studies/Revue d'etudes canadiennes* 25, 2(Summer 1990): 97-98.

⁷⁴Geraldine J. Clifford, "'Lady Teachers' and Politics in the United States, 1850-1930," in *Teachers: The Culture and Politics of Work*, eds. Martin Lawn and Gerald Grace (London, England: The Falmer Press, 1987), 10.

Teaching wages *were* low, but the ability to earn even a small wage, especially in cash-poor rural and small town America where most of the population still lived, made young women, many girls in their teens, economically important to their families. The wages of teachers...might make the difference between keeping or losing the farm in a bad year, between renting or buying a house, between sending a brother to learn telegraphy in a proprietary school or to study natural philosophy in a college (*italics in original*).⁷⁵

Teaching came to be regarded as a desirable transition stage for women between their own schooling and the beginning of married life.⁷⁶ In fact, teaching permitted women to put off temporarily, or even reject permanently, the act of losing their "precious independence" by marriage which appeared to many women teachers to signify domestic servitude or social uselessness.⁷⁷ By being able to choose when, and whether to marry, some women teachers "very likely retained a degree of power, egotism, and individualism within the marital relationship that was inconsistent with conventional expectations of marriage."⁷⁸

Equally important to women was the fact that teaching enabled them to lead a respectable public life. To quote Clifford once again:

To organize a school, deal with the community's leaders, put on ceremonies, and travel about collecting the wages owed from cash-poor patrons was to take on major responsibility in a time when the public world was not yet considered the appropriate place for women. As teachers women exercised control over nonfamily men and provided for themselves in the process, gaining self-confidence and higher expectations of what they were owed in economic and professional terms.⁷⁹

⁷⁵Ibid., 10-11.

⁷⁶David Allmendinger, Jr., "Mount Holyoke Students Encounter the Need for Life-Planning, 1837-1850," History of Education Quarterly 19, 1(Spring 1979): 27-46. Veronica Strong-Boag has argued that although marriage was both desired and expected by most Canadian women in the inter-war period, some women were able to postpone this inevitability by taking a teaching job. As she states: "For many young women who wished respectable employment and enjoyed children, teaching offered a prized opportunity for some independence and challenge." See The New Day Recalled: Lives of Girls and Women in English Canada, 1919-1939 (Markham, Ontario: Penguin Books, 1988), 63 and *passim*.

⁷⁷Clifford, "'Lady Teachers'," 12. See also Hoffman, Woman's "True" Profession, xviii.

⁷⁸Clifford, "'Lady Teachers'," 13. See also Polly Welts Kaufman, Women Teachers on the Frontier (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984), 43.

⁷⁹Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "Women's Liberation and Women's Professions: Reconsidering the Past, Present, and Future," in Women and Higher Education in American History: Essays from the Mount Holyoke College Sesquicentennial Symposia, eds. John Mack Faragher and Florence Howe (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988): 177.

Clifford further argues that through teaching women forged bonds with other women - students, mothers of students and women with whom they boarded, as well as other female teachers. This broadened their perspectives and created sentiments of sisterhood. Networks of support, grounded in the realities of the work of teaching, and shown in their close friendships, their yearly meetings at institutes and summer courses, their help to each other in finding schools in terms of job information and references, were the commonplace experience of many female teachers.⁸⁰ The effect of such a situation was that these "unremarkable and historically unremembered women teachers, most of whom eventually married and settled into relatively conventional domestic lives, were a large, receptive and influential constituency for feminism."⁸¹ Hence as Clifford makes patently clear in her work, teaching provided some women with a measure of autonomy and control over their lives and allowed them to develop a sense of independence and personal growth.⁸²

Nancy Hoffman has also used autobiographical materials to study the lives of female teachers who taught in schools on America's East Coast in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and her findings concur with much of Clifford's work as regards the liberating effect of teaching on women's lives. She reveals how the woman teacher's own descriptions of her motivations for taking up teaching as an occupation diverged sharply from the picture of the ideal woman teacher as the natural educator of the young who regarded teaching as merely a stepping stone to marriage. She found that "neither their love

⁸⁰ Clifford, "History as Experience," 196; "'Lady Teachers'," 14-15. Wilson, on the other hand, in his work on rural teachers in British Columbia in the 1920's, "found little evidence of the existence of female networks between the teacher and the women in the community" and in fact "friendship with married women may have been problematic." See Wilson, "'I Am Here to Help You If You Need Me,'" 113.

⁸¹ Clifford, "'Lady Teachers'," 22. Anne Firor Scott has argued for the importance of female teacher training institutions in the development of feminist values of self-respect and self-support in the women who attended them. See "The Ever Widening Circle: The Diffusion of Feminist Values from the Troy Female Seminary 1822-1872," *History of Education Quarterly* 19, 1(Spring 1979): 3-25. Reprinted as a chapter in the author's *Making the Invisible Woman Visible* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 64-88.

⁸²See also Geraldine Joncich Clifford, *Those Good Gertrudes: Women Teachers in America* (forthcoming).

of children nor their attitude toward marriage" dominated the comments of women teachers in their writings. Rather, women entered teaching "because they needed work." Women had only a few choices of occupation and, compared with most, teaching offered many attractions. She concludes that, from the teacher's perspective, "the continuity between mothering and teaching was far less significant than a paycheck and the challenge and satisfaction of work."⁸³

Polly Welts Kaufman has painstakingly retraced the lives of single antebellum Eastern pioneer women teachers who were sent to the American West by the National Board of Popular Education from 1846 on two-year teaching contracts. Basing her account on a diary, letters and a reminiscence of nine teachers, she emphasizes that these women were "distinct individuals" and notes the "tremendous diversity among them and the differences in their perceptions and conditions." Kaufman draws attention to the varied motivations that drew these women into teaching: "As teachers the women felt a strong pull to bring education and Protestant evangelical religion to the West, and some possessed a sense of adventure as well; as women they were pushed by a strong sense of personal economic need."⁸⁴ But whatever reasons inspired each individual teacher to travel West the experience proved to be a liberating one. As Kaufman contends:

By using the teaching profession as their route to new lives, they achieved a significant degree of autonomy. Because teaching was an acceptable profession for women, they were able to attain a higher level of self-sufficiency than practically any other group of women in their time, almost unnoticed. By acting to take control of their lives, they exhibited an independence of spirit.⁸⁵

⁸³Hoffman, Woman's "True" Profession, xvii-xviii. See also Jo Anne Preston, "Female Aspiration and Male Ideology: School-Teaching in Nineteenth-Century New England," in Current Issues in Women's History, eds. Arina Angerman, Geerte Binnema, Annemieke Keunen, Vefie Poels and Jacqueline Zirkzee (London, England: Routledge, 1989), 171-182.

⁸⁴ Kaufman, Women Teachers on the Frontier, 13.

⁸⁵Ibid., 48. See also an earlier article by the author, "A Wider Field of Usefulness: Pioneer Women Teachers in the West, 1848-1854," Journal of the West 21, 2(April 1982): 16-25.

Historians have been able to document not only the liberating impact of teaching on women teachers but also the ways in which some women, both American and Canadian, have been able to transcend the structures and roles that were intended to maintain and promote their inferior position in the workforce in particular, and society in general, by using teaching as a stepping stone to more powerful roles in politics and the professions. Indeed women were empowered by the competencies they gained in public school teaching. The organisational and managerial skills they acquired in running a nineteenth century schoolroom, more often than not entirely alone, inspired women with self confidence and a strong belief in their capabilities that encouraged many to move on and apply their talents elsewhere. Many women began their public lives in the schoolroom and later enlarged their audiences in other, more challenging areas.⁸⁶

Clifford has argued for the importance of teaching in the lives of American women who chose to go into the political arena. By examining the role of women teachers in electoral politics in twentieth century America she has demonstrated the possibilities available to women teachers to form a political agenda and play a role in matters of public policy and government. She also speculates as to the role that former teachers might have played in the political movement of organized feminism that helped to persuade public opinion of the necessity of expanding women's rights and opportunities.⁸⁷ She argues that some women "discovered *themselves* in the classroom" and inspired by the "injustice and male arrogance" they saw in teaching they became "the readied soil to catch the seeds of feminism."⁸⁸ Why this was so is clearly explained by Clifford:

⁸⁶For a fascinating account of the teaching lives of two women who chose the "scholarly life" and carved out careers in "institutions of higher learning" see Alison Prentice, "Scholarly Passion: Two Persons Who Caught It," Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation 1, 1(Spring 1989): 7-27.

⁸⁷Clifford, "'Lady Teachers'," *passim*.

⁸⁸Ibid., 16. Italics in original.

[I]n the process of pursuing the independent life of an unmarried school mistress, often far from home influences, a significant number of women teachers came to different conclusions than their mentors intended about woman's God-given nature and her proper place in society. It turns out that her personal odyssey also greatly enlarged the pool of political activists who would agitate the 'woman question' until female suffrage and the other goals of the 19th-century women's rights movement were achieved.⁸⁹

Similar examples of the impact of teaching on the course of women's careers can be found in the literature on the history of Canadian women. Veronica Strong-Boag has examined the diaries of nineteenth century Canadian doctor Elizabeth Smith and has revealed the important role that teaching played in the development of her career. Elizabeth chose teaching because it provided her with economic independence, the means to pay for further study and her route into a more challenging profession in medicine. Success with school teaching and the approval of trustees provided her with the self assurance that would be essential in her medical career.⁹⁰ The autobiography of Nellie L. McClung - prairie reformer, suffragette, parliamentarian, author, newspaperwoman and one of Canada's leading feminists - makes clear the relevance of her teaching experience in the small rural schools in Manitoba to her later career in more public arenas.⁹¹ Likewise Agnes Macphail, the first woman to be elected to the house of Commons in Canada, also began her career as a teacher. In fact, until age eighteen the height of her ambition was to enter the profession. Her experience in the rural schools of Ontario and Alberta allowed her to fulfil her resolve of "doing some work as a person."⁹² It also brought her to the realization that perhaps there

⁸⁹Ibid., 4. See also Sarah King, "Feminists in Teaching: The National Union of Women Teachers, 1920-1945," in Teachers, eds. Lawn and Grace, 31-49. Reprinted in Women Who Taught, eds. Prentice and Theobald, 182-201.

⁹⁰Veronica Strong-Boag, ed., 'A Woman With a Purpose': The Diaries of Elizabeth Smith 1872-1884 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1980).

⁹¹Nellie L. McClung, Clearing in the West: My Own Story (Toronto: Thomas Allen & Son Limited, 1965) and Nellie L. McClung The Stream Runs Fast: My Own Story (Toronto: Thomas Allen & Son Limited, 1965).

⁹²Margaret Stewart and Doris French, Ask No Quarter: A Biography of Agnes Macphail (Toronto: Longmans, Green and Company, 1959), 30, and passim. See also Doris French, "Agnes Macphail 1890-1954," in The Clear Spirit: Twenty Canadian Women and Their Times, ed. Mary Quayle Innis (Toronto:

was more to life than country school teaching. Although she was proud and happy to be a teacher, when the time came she was ready for the next step. She was elected as M.P. for South-East Grey, Ontario, in 1921, a seat she held until 1940, first for the United Farmers of Ontario and the C.C.F. but mainly as an Independent. As the first woman M.P. in Canada she acted as an inspiration to other women.

It is clear from the studies cited above that many women did not conform to the stereotype of the female who entered the occupation as described in much of the prescriptive literature of the nineteenth century. However two important points need to be made here. First of all, it has been recognized that the powerful images projected by such stereotypes "possess power in their own right."⁹³ As cultural constructions stereotypes are grounded in what is perceived to be reality and as such they influence the self-concept of the teachers themselves. Secondly, any evaluation of the work commitment of women must consider women's own perceptions of the place of work, and in this case teaching, in their lives. Following on from this the necessity of acknowledging the importance of familial commitments is deemed critical to any understanding of the meaning of teaching as work to women within the wider context of the rest of their lives. Indeed such concerns must be placed at the centre of any inquiry into the nature of women's participation in the workforce.⁹⁴ A number of studies, drawn mainly from historical research on American teachers, have begun to address some of these issues.

Richard Quantz has used oral testimony "to discover the cultural definitions of participants in an historical situation." Specifically, he examines the failure of unions to organize female teachers in Hamilton, Ohio in the 1930's. Four metaphors of the

University of Toronto Press for the Canadian Federation of University Women, 1966), 179-197. For a more recent biography see Terry Crowley, *Agnes Macphail and the Politics of Equality* (Toronto: James Lorimer & Company, Publishers, 1990).

⁹³ Clifford, "Man/Woman/Teacher," 311. The dual themes of "domesticity and familism" emerge in this analysis of gender and schoolteaching. Clifford examines the gender-laden stereotypes of teachers and attempts to uncover the meaning of teaching as stages in the lives of men as well as women.

⁹⁴Ibid., 329.

subordinate authority figure, the school as family, the natural female avocation and the dual self emerged from the stories of the teachers as they were asked to define the world in which they worked and lived. The failure of unions to organize women teachers was inevitable, Quantz argues, given the commonly accepted reality the women had concerning their place in the workforce and in the larger context of society as a whole. He argues that in using the four metaphors as "guidelines for their lives and their jobs" the women teachers in Hamilton "may have participated in their own powerlessness and been part of broader social movements, while merely acting within their own subjective worlds."⁹⁵

Kathleen Weiler has suggested that the position of women in teaching was a "contradictory" one. From her work based on first person accounts of the women who taught in the rural schools of Tulare County, California in the period 1860-1900, she contends:

Rather than viewing teaching as either a means of social control and the reproduction of the ideology of women's subordinate place in an expanded domestic sphere or viewing teaching as a path to personal autonomy and resistance to the dominant ideology, I suggest that it contained both possibilities.⁹⁶

By examining the individual lives of women teachers Weiler has revealed the many possibilities that existed for women in teaching within the material constraints and ideological constructs of what it meant to be a female teacher in the nineteenth century. She argues that women used teaching primarily to meet their own personal needs and desires. Teaching enabled women to find a way of being in the world that not only met societal expectations of what it meant to be a woman, but also allowed for more subversive challenges to that definition.

⁹⁵Quantz, "The Complex Visions of Female Teachers," 457.

⁹⁶Kathleen Weiler, "Rural, Liberty, and Hope: Women Teachers in Country Schools in California 1860-1900," paper presented at the American Educational Research Association Conference, San Francisco, 27 March, 1989, ms. 23. Emphasis in original.

Utilizing a life-course approach, Kathleen Underwood has examined the lives of the young women who graduated from the Colorado State Normal School in the first decade following its founding in 1890. Her findings are mainly based on an analysis of the correspondence between these women and the editor of the "Alumni News" column in the student newspaper, the Crucible. Underwood argues that the advantages teaching provided for young women in terms of economic independence and social status outweighed the disadvantages of low pay and sexual segregation in the occupation and allowed the young woman teacher in the West the chance to "direct the pace of her life." She concludes, however, that teaching did not "revolutionize" women's lives but rather "the decisions they made frequently were shaped by the social and familial context within which they lived." Thus, she argues, the study of teachers "provides a view of women who tried to integrate new opportunities for education and career within the traditional and more familiar life pattern of the nineteenth century."⁹⁷

Courtney Ann Vaughn-Roberson has used the writings and oral statements of Oklahoma women educators who taught between 1900 and 1950 to try and determine the attitudes of these women to their place in the profession and found their statements to be somewhat paradoxical. As she explains:

For many of the state's females...the teaching profession provided an opportunity to influence the world outside their immediate family environments. Although they worked within the confines of the domestic image, they still won victories (sometimes unconsciously) for female social equality. Some remained single to keep their jobs, nearly all struggled independently and collectively for fair treatment on the job, and most promoted female leadership in the schools....At the same time, however, most retained their prejudices against women entering the workforce in a capacity other than teaching....Thus the Oklahoma women educators' struggle for independence and individuality was accompanied by continual adherence to the ideology of domesticity. They sought to preserve the female domestic sphere while also struggling for equal opportunity for the professional woman educator.⁹⁸

⁹⁷Kathleen Underwood, "The Pace of Their Own Lives: Teacher Training and the Life Course of Western Women," Pacific Historical Review 55, 4(November 1986): 530.

⁹⁸Courtney Ann Vaughn-Roberson, "Sometimes Independent But Never Equal--Women Teachers, 1900-1950: The Oklahoma Example," Pacific Historical Review 53, 1(February 1984): 57-58. See also the

In a similar vein, Margaret K. Nelson contends that whilst teaching "enhanced women's roles, it did not fundamentally alter them."⁹⁹ Her research on nineteenth century Vermont teachers (both male and female) lead her to conclude:

Most women did not gain autonomy by teaching. The employment did not free them from the immediate context of a family's authority, nor did it free them from the broader context of a patriarchal society....Common schoolteachers joined the labor force without ever leaving home."¹⁰⁰

As more studies are published on the nature and meaning of women's participation in the teaching profession, especially those that focus on the personal lives of women teachers in different localities, as expressed in their diaries, letters, autobiographies and oral statements, the immense variety in the experience of the female teacher in the past is becoming increasingly apparent. Indeed, as more studies of teachers are conducted a far more complex picture is revealed which demonstrates the importance of questioning many of the assumptions that have been generated about the experience of teachers that rely on generalizations rather than specific cases of the actual lived experiences of individuals.

In addition to the aforementioned need to study the lives of teachers from a personal and local perspective, it is equally relevant to examine teachers in rural settings. Such a focus is in keeping with the increasing recognition that rural society needs to be examined in its own right and not just as the passive recipient of changes that were initiated in urban centres. Rural society was neither "passive" nor "homogenous." Rather, historians have been able to document "dynamic historical processes" at work independent of any metropolitan forces. Indeed, rural life was the main feature of social formation for the majority of the Canadian population until the early decades of the twentieth century and as

authors "Having a Purpose in Life: Western Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century," Great Plains Quarterly 5, 2(Spring 1985): 107-124.

⁹⁹Margaret K. Nelson, "Vermont Female Schoolteachers in the Nineteenth Century," Vermont History 49, 1(Winter 1981): 28.

¹⁰⁰Ibid., 27-28.

such must be accorded equal importance with urban society.¹⁰¹ The study of the teachers who taught in rural areas is obviously central to such an agenda. During this period the one-room school operated as the predominant educational structure across rural Canada. Rural schools were an integral part of the rural landscape. Small rural schools stood everywhere. This thesis offers a look at the dynamics of rural schooling, and indirectly rural society, in the form of a case study that explores the complexities of teaching as work as determined by the self-perceptions and expectations of teachers in the small rural schools of the Okanagan Valley in the Southern Interior of British Columbia in the 1920's.

I will now turn to the literature that relates directly to the specific research topic of this thesis. The educational history of rural British Columbia has been, until recently, a much neglected area of academic investigation. This is especially true of the period from 1920 to 1930. However, rural society was the experience of a large percentage of British Columbians in this decade. In 1921, the majority of the residents of British Columbia lived in rural areas,¹⁰² and 806 (85.2%) of the total number of 946 schools in the province were

¹⁰¹Chad Gaffield and Gerard Bouchard, "Literacy, Schooling, and Family Reproduction in Rural Ontario and Quebec," Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation 1, 2(Fall 1989): 201-202. See also Robert P. Swierenga, "The New Rural History: Defining the Parameters," Great Plains Quarterly 1, 4(Fall 1981): 211-223 and articles in Canadian Papers in Rural History, Volumes 1-8, ed. Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, Ontario: Langdale Press, 1978-1992). Examples of in-depth Canadian rural histories include W.H. Graham, Greenbank: Country Matters in 19th Century Ontario (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 1988); Paul Voisey, Vulcan: The Making of a Prairie Community (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); Gaffield, Language, Schooling, and Cultural Conflict; David C. Jones, Empire of Dust: Settling and Abandoning the Prairie Dry Belt (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1987); David C. Jones ed., We'll All Be Buried Down Here: The Prairie Dryland Disaster, 1917-1926 (Calgary: Alberta Records Publications Board, Historical Society of Alberta, 1986); David C. Jones and Ian McPherson, eds., Building Beyond the Homestead: Rural History on the Prairies (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1985); Allan Greer, Peasant, Lord, and Merchant: Rural Society in Three Quebec Parishes 1740-1840 (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1985); Donald Harman Akenson, The Irish in Ontario: A Study in Rural History (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1984) and David Gagan, Hopeful Travellers: Families, Land, and Social Change in Mid-Victorian Peel County, Canada West (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981). For a review essay which discusses "some of the most sophisticated Canadian books in rural history of the last five years," see Catharine Anne Wilson, "'Outstanding in the Field': Recent Rural History in Canada," Acadiensis 20, 2(Spring 1991): 177-190.

¹⁰²Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, I (Ottawa: 1936), 364-369.

situated in the hinterland far away from the urban centres.¹⁰³ In 1925, 47 291 (48.3%) of the total enrolment of 97 954 pupils in British Columbia attended rural schools, and of the 3 115 teachers employed in the province 1812 (58.2%) were employed in rural districts.¹⁰⁴ Thus, a study of the rural schools of British Columbia in the 1920's is appropriate. Much of the literature approaches the subject from the general perspective of the development, implementation and impact of educational policy for rural British Columbia.¹⁰⁵ Material documenting the rural school from the perspective of how these rural institutions functioned at the local level is sparse and restricted mainly to anecdotal works.¹⁰⁶ However, the recent work of J. Donald Wilson and Paul J. Stortz has begun to fill this gap in rural educational historiography. Of central concern to their work are those who participated in rural schooling: the pupils, the local community, the school inspectors and particularly the teachers. In their joint article, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You': The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920's," they provide a general overview of the one-room school in British Columbia emphasizing how such factors as local

¹⁰³British Columbia, Annual Report of the Public Schools (hereafter AR), 1921, F9. Those schools in "Rural Municipalities" as well as those designated as "Rural" and "Assisted" schools are included in the calculations.

¹⁰⁴AR, 1925, M9.

¹⁰⁵See John Calam, "Teaching the Teachers,"; David C. Jones, "'We Cannot Allow it to be Run by Those Who do not Understand Education' - Agricultural Schooling in the Twenties," BC Studies 39(Autumn 1978): 30-60; David C. Jones, "'The Little Mound of Earth' - The Fate of School Agriculture," The Curriculum in Canada in Historical Perspective, Canadian Society for the Study of Education Yearbook (1979): 85-94; David C. Jones, "Creating Rural-Minded Teachers: The British Columbian Experience, 1914-1924," in Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West, eds. David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan, and Robert M. Stamp (Calgary: Detselig, 1979), 155-176; David C. Jones, "The Strategy of Rural Enlightenment: Consolidation in Chilliwack, B.C., 1919-1920," in Shaping the Schools eds. Jones, Sheehan, and Stamp, 136-151; David C. Jones, "The *Zeitgeist* of Western Settlement: Education and the Myth of the Land," in Schooling and Society, eds. Wilson and Jones, 71-89 Most of Jones' work is based on his doctoral dissertation. See David Charles Jones, "Agriculture, The Land, and Education: British Columbia, 1914-1929," (Ed.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1978).

¹⁰⁶See Jean Cochrane, The One-Room School in Canada ([Toronto]: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1981), *passim*, and Joan Adams and Becky Thomas, Floating Schools and Frozen Inkwells: The One-Room Schools of British Columbia ([Madeira Park, British Columbia]: Harbour Publishing Company Limited, 1985).

economic activity, community settlement patterns and local politics affected the pedagogical and physical conditions of the schools and in turn determined the conditions in which the teacher lived and worked.¹⁰⁷ The theme of examining the interplay between intentions and consequences, the gap between what was intended and what actually happened, runs throughout their work especially in their discussion of the various solutions proposed by the Department of Education to the problems of the financially and pedagogically inefficient one-room schools. They reveal how the administrators in Victoria had little idea of the hardship and frustrations experienced by teachers in isolated areas. They also speculate as to why these harsh conditions continued and why the Education Department, convinced that rural schooling was improving year by year and that they were actually creating "rural-minded" teachers, failed to understand the roots of the rural school problem. Wilson has also examined two other aspects, again from the perspective of the teacher, of rural schools in British Columbia in the 1920's: the ethnic diversity with which teachers in rural schools had to contend,¹⁰⁸ and an in-depth study of Lottie Bowron, the Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer who was appointed in 1929 to provide pastoral care for the female teacher in British Columbia's isolated one-room schools.¹⁰⁹

Stortz's M.A. thesis, "The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s" deals with the one-room schools in two broad sections. Part One discusses conditions in schools before and after the major provincial survey for educational reform, the Putman-Weir Report of 1925, and covers much of the ground discussed in the aforementioned

¹⁰⁷Wilson and Stortz, BC Studies 79(Autumn 1988): 24-58.

¹⁰⁸J. Donald Wilson, "The Visions of Ordinary Participants: Teachers' Views of Rural Schooling in British Columbia in the 1920s," in A History of British Columbia: Selected Readings, ed. Patricia E. Roy (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1989), 239-255.

¹⁰⁹Wilson, "'I Am Here to Help You If You Need Me'," 94-118. Two other, abridged, versions of this article have also been published. See Wilson, "'I Am Ready To Be of Assistance When I Can': Lottie Bowron and Rural Women Teachers in British Columbia," in Women Who Taught, eds. Prentice and Theobald, 202-229, and Wilson, "Lottie Bowron and Rural Women Teachers in British Columbia, 1928-1934," in British Columbia Reconsidered, eds. Creese and Strong-Boag, 340-363.

work co-written with Wilson concerning the effect of educational reform on the actual conduct of classrooms. Part Two offers a closer look at the one-room school by way of a case study of a specific region in the Northern Interior of British Columbia. Stortz studied the schools which existed in the years from 1915-1930 between Terrace and Vanderhoof along the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and concluded that, from the establishment of the first school in 1906 to the proliferation of the one-room schools throughout the district in the 1920's, "school conditions were similar to those found in the province as a whole."¹¹⁰ However, the question must be asked as to whether it was the geographical, climatic and economic circumstances of the North Central Interior region of the province that caused the severe problems he documents as regards education, or whether similar problems occurred in other regions where one-room schools proliferated in the 1920's. The co-authored work of Wilson and Stortz would suggest that is the case. But did they overemphasize such environmental and economic factors as the independent variables in their study? Did they give fair consideration to the role of individual motivation in teachers' lives as opposed to portraying the female teacher merely as the victim of a particular situation? Was their rather negative interpretation of teacher experience in rural schools the result of the kinds of sources they employed? Questions such as these indicate the need for further case studies, such as the one presented here, to compare local conditions and rural schooling in different regions of the province in order to uncover the effect of rural circumstances on schools and teacher experience.

¹¹⁰Paul James Stortz, "The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s (M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1988), 121. See also Paul J. Stortz and J. Donald Wilson, "Education on the Frontier: Schools, Teachers and Community Influence in North-Central British Columbia," Histoire sociale/Social History (forthcoming, 1993). This article is based in large part on Stortz's case study of the Bulkley and Nechako Valleys that comprises Part Two of his M.A. thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

METHODOLOGY

This study is an attempt to understand a particular educational setting in the past through the experience of a number of participants within that setting. Specifically, it is concerned with the identification and examination of the nature and meaning of teaching as work, and the role that teaching played in the lives of some of those who taught in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia in the 1920's. The study therefore requires a research methodology that will elicit the attitudes, perceptions and feelings held by individual teachers about their life and work experiences in the past, and that will also provide a sense of how this group of people constructed meaning in their lives. A qualitative research approach, orientated towards people's subjective experience and committed to the quest for meaning rather than objective truth, was deemed the most appropriate methodological perspective. The purposes of this chapter are three-fold: to provide an overview of the qualitative research paradigm and a brief discussion of the specific methodology adopted; to describe in detail the precise procedures used in the sample selection, data collection, analysis and representation; and to offer suggestions as to the benefits and limitations generated by these choices.

Prior to detailing specific research procedures it is important to consider the general methodological framework within which these strategies are located, in order to acquaint the reader with the rationale for particular methodological decisions. Two major theoretical perspectives have dominated the study of social phenomena. The first, positivism, examines relationships among phenomena with little regard for the subjective states of individuals. Most history has traditionally been written from this perspective. The second perspective, often referred to as the phenomenological or naturalistic approach, is

concerned with understanding human behaviour from the subject's own point of view.¹ Phenomenology or naturalistic inquiry is most commonly carried out using qualitative research techniques. Fundamental to this approach is the belief that meanings of actions are socially constructed and that to fully comprehend human behaviour it is essential to consider it at the level of abstraction and complexity experienced by the subjects themselves. In short, the essence of naturalistic inquiry is to understand how the subjects of the research make sense out of their worlds through their own frame of reference: "*their* meanings, perspectives, and definitions; how *they* view, categorize, and experience the world"²

Consistent with the aim of understanding social phenomena from the subjects' perspective, methods of data collection and analysis in naturalistic inquiry are humanistic, holistic, inductive and eclectic. The human encounter lies at the heart of the method. The researcher attempts to immerse her/himself in the subjects' ways of seeing and knowing in order to view the experience of the subjects through their eyes. The researcher looks at settings and people holistically by attempting to maintain a focus on the entire context of peoples' past and present lives. Subjects are encouraged to reveal the totality of their life experiences. This approach enables the researcher to gain a more complete understanding and appreciation of the individual subjects' experiences, and their perceptions of the psychological, social, economic, political and physical realities which impinge, or impinged, upon their lives. It also helps to avoid the distortion of selecting aspects of the subjects' experiences which appear to be relatively important to the researcher but may not be the most important to the subjects. In this way researchers are, for the most part, not as

¹These include ethnography, ethnomethodology, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, field research, case study research, oral history etc. While these terms are not synonymous, the various methodological and theoretical frameworks share some common underlying assumptions, objectives, methods of data collection and analysis. For a useful introduction to the theory and practice of qualitative research see Steven J. Taylor and Robert Bogdan, Introduction to Qualitative Research Methods: The Search For Meanings 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1984).

²Ibid., 88. Italics in original.

concerned with the literal truth of the statements that subjects use to describe their lives as with their version of reality. Researchers seek to construct descriptions of peoples' lives within the varied contexts and to generate from these descriptions the complex interrelationships that affect human behaviour toward the particular phenomena being studied.

Within such a general and holistic framework naturalistic research does not usually proceed from well developed *a priori* hypotheses or strictly defined research questions. Rather the objective is to let a picture emerge from the data as the research progresses. In this way the research is inductive. Insights and theories are generated from the observations of subjects' words and actions rather than from any preconceived structured operational definitions. Subject constructs provide first-hand sensory accounts of the phenomena under study as well as determining the direction in which the research proceeds. The researcher reconstructs the categories that subjects use to conceptualize their own experiences and world view.

Data collection and analysis procedures in naturalistic research are reciprocal and ongoing, rather than separate and distinct, phases in the research process. The major strength of this type of approach lies in the depth of understanding which is permitted of subjects' experiences and perceptions. However, the approach also allows for a good deal of flexibility. Data analysis is a dynamic and creative process in which the researcher is continually modifying and refining interpretations as data collection progresses. It is the researcher's task to use the words and actions of subjects to describe, as accurately as possible, key facets of the subjects' experiences, illustrate how they interpret those experiences and show how they structure the social world in which they live. However, researchers are compelled to go beyond what subjects have said to search out a framework which facilitates a meaningful interpretation of their words. The researcher endeavours to understand the meanings inherent in subjects' words and then to state as explicitly as

possible what that understanding demonstrates about the society in which the subjects' lives are, or were, embedded.

Analysis usually begins with a systematic sorting of the material according to specific content-related categories which appear to be dominant in the data. Once the data are sorted into groups they are examined for themes or patterns which are then used to form a framework for understanding the phenomena under study. When analysis is complete the study is written up. Subjects' quotations are used extensively to illustrate key points and to permit the reader to substantiate the inferences drawn by the researcher in the development of a theoretical framework. The emphasis throughout the process is on grounding all assertions in empirical data in order to ensure that the reconstruction of the subjects' lives represented in the text, and the theories used to describe those lives, are congruent with the meanings the subjects construct in their everyday realities. In short, a close fit between the generation of theory and the subjects' own words and actions is essential.

It is clear that analysis of data is a highly interpretive process. The distinctive feature of naturalistic methods, regardless of the means of data collection, is that the researcher is the primary research instrument. Fieldwork involves a complex interaction between the researcher and her/his subjects and is constructed in a process of reciprocity. The development of a relationship with the subjects is essential to the collection of rich descriptive data. As such the researcher's own subjectivity will obviously influence the interpretation of the data collected. Recognizing that there can be no positionless or value-free study of human beings, and that researchers cannot eliminate their effects on the people they study, naturalistic researchers attempt to identify their individual assumptions, biases and predispositions in their work. For this reason they often regard their influences on the data not only as an integral part of the research process, but of the finished written product as well. Therefore a detailed discussion of the effects of the researcher on the data is often incorporated into qualitative studies.

A second concern that confronts naturalistic researchers is the generalizability and validity of their findings. As the collection and analysis of data are generally labour intensive and expensive, in terms of time as well as money, sample sizes are often small. This approach facilitates the study of selected issues in depth and detail. As well, samples are rarely selected in such a way as to be considered representative of larger populations. Consequently findings cannot be directly generalized to individuals or groups outside the immediate sample. This is not to say that researchers are unconcerned about the accuracy of their studies. The use of multiple sources of evidence helps to enhance the accuracy of qualitative studies. In addition to in-depth interviewing and participant observation - the mainstays of naturalistic research methods - researchers make use of archival records, personal documents such as diaries, newspaper reports, court transcripts, agency records, government reports and documents, photographs and other physical artefacts, and questionnaires and surveys as sources of evidence in their work. Such eclectic data collection procedures, along with systematic triangulation³ allow for a clearer, deeper and more accurate understanding of the settings and subjects being studied, thus helping to ensure the construct validity of qualitative studies.⁴

The specific approach adopted in this study is historical ethnography in which oral interviews are used as the primary method of data collection.⁵ The essence of ethnographic research is summed up in James P. Spradley's definition of the discipline:

The essential core of ethnography is...concern with the meaning of actions and events to the people we seek to understand. Some of these meanings are directly

³Triangulation is qualitative cross-validation and entails comparison of information from different data sources and/or data collection methods to determine whether or not there is corroboration.

⁴For an example of the ways in which a quantitative approach can be used to cross-check the validity of oral history interviews, see Rebecca Sharpless, "The Numbers Game: Oral History Compared with Quantitative Methodology," *International Journal of Oral History* 7, 2(June 1986): 93-108.

⁵For a discussion of some of the methodological issues involved in using historical ethnography as applied to the history of childhood, see Jean Barman, "Constructing the Historical Ethnography of Childhood Through Oral History," paper presented to the American Educational Research Association Conference, San Francisco, March 27, 1989. Also available through ERIC on microfiche.

expressed in language; many are taken for granted and communicated only indirectly through word and action. But in every society people make constant use of these complex meaning systems to organize their behavior, to understand themselves and others, and to make sense out of the world in which they live. These systems of meaning constitute their culture; ethnography always implies a theory of culture.⁶

This case study⁷ of the culture of rural school teachers takes into consideration the historical setting in which that culture was located, and therefore examines the culture in the context of its own time and place. Ethnographic oral history techniques incorporate the concept of chronology, "the basic methodological assumption which underlies the practice of all historians,"⁸ into one of the primary research methods of ethnography, namely, oral interviewing.⁹ This approach was considered the most appropriate for the retrieval and representation of the experience of rural school teachers in the 1920's.¹⁰ The approach

⁶James P. Spradley, Participant Observation (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1980), 5.

⁷For a convenient summary of the literature on case study research in educational settings, see Sharan Merriam, "The Case study in Educational Research: A Review of Selected Literature," Journal of Educational Thought 19, 3(December 1985): 204-217.

⁸Bernard S. Cohn, "Anthropology and History in the 1980s: Towards a Rapprochement," Journal of Interdisciplinary History 12, 2(Autumn 1981): 228.

⁹ For a brief discussion of the history of the relationship between history and ethnography, see Francois Furet, In the Workshop of History (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 68-74. A special issue of Oral History Review, 15, 1(Spring 1987) entitled "Fieldwork in Oral History" addressed the ways in which oral historians and ethnographers can profitably exchange ideas, concepts and methods in their work. See especially Micaela Di Leonardo, "Oral History as Ethnographic Encounter," 1-20, and Fern Ingersoll and Jasper Ingersoll, "Both a Borrower and a Lender Be: Ethnography, Oral History, and Grounded Theory," 81-102.

¹⁰The methodological literature on ethnography, oral history, case study research and qualitative methods in educational research in general is vast. Most useful for this thesis are the research traditions as discussed in Robert C. Bogdan and Sari Knopp Biklen, Qualitative Research for Education: An Introduction to Theory and Methods, 2nd. ed. (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Incorporated, 1992); Robert K. Yin, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, rev. ed. (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications Incorporated, 1989); Danny L. Jorgensen, Participant Observation: A Methodology for Human Studies (Newbury Park, California: Sage Publications Incorporated, 1989); John Van Maanen, Tales of the Field: On Writing Ethnography (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Paul Thompson, The Voice of the Past: Oral History, 2nd ed. (Oxford, England: Oxford University Press, 1988); Trevor Lummis, Listening to History: The Authenticity of Oral Evidence (London, England: Hutchinson Education, 1987); Ronald J. Grele, with Studs Terkel, Jan Vansina, Dennis Tedlock, Saul Benison and Alice Kessler-Harris, Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History 2nd ed. rev. and enl. (Chicago: Precedent Publishing Incorporated, 1985); Judith Preissle Goetz and Margaret Diane LeCompte, Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research (Orlando, Florida: Academic Press, 1984); Martyn Hammersley and Paul Atkinson, Ethnography:

integrates elements from both ethnography and history and blends the strengths of each to achieve a distinctive style that is strong on narrative, analysis and chronology but is also sensitive to the importance of striving for impartiality and the need to provide nuanced accounts of peoples' lives that reveal the variety of personal meanings and perceptions of individual experience.¹¹

Evidence for the thesis was obtained from multiple data sources. I began my research by examining the relevant official printed and manuscript documents. The Annual Reports of the Department of Education, officially known as the "Annual Report of the Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia," were consulted for the fifty-six years from 1874, when the first school was established in the Okanagan Valley, up until 1930.¹² In addition to the Superintendent of Education's general overview of the development of public education in British Columbia, the reports contain brief summaries by individual inspectors of the state of affairs in each inspectorate throughout the province. Their assessments are mainly positive and encouraging descriptions of what they considered was

Principles in Practice (London: Tavistock Publications, 1983); Spradley, Participant Observation; James P. Spradley, The Ethnographic Interview (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979). Two other classic works on qualitative research have informed the approach taken in this thesis: Barney G. Glaser and Anselm L. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1967), and Jan Vansina, Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1965).

¹¹John Van Maanen has drawn attention to the recent growth and popularity of what he terms "adjectival ethnography," that is, ethnographic studies that are being conducted outside of its traditional discipline in fields such as education, law, medicine and policy studies. See Tales of the Field, 23 and 41, footnote 15. See also Patricia Adler and Peter Adler, "The Past and Future of Ethnography," Journal of Contemporary Ethnography 16, 1(April 1987): 4-24. However, Harry F. Wolcott argues for the need to distinguish between "anthropologically informed researchers who *do ethnography* and educational researchers who frequently *draw upon ethnographic approaches* in doing descriptive studies" (italics in original). See "Ethnographic Research in Education," in Complementary Methods for Research in Education, ed. Richard M. Jaeger (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, 1988), 202. I place myself in the latter category. Although I have drawn on ethnographic techniques in the course of my research, this thesis is primarily a historical, not an ethnographic work. The intention, rather, is to bring an ethnographic perspective to historical study. For this reason most of the methodological issues raised in this chapter are discussed with reference to the literature of oral history although material in other disciplines has also been cited when considered appropriate to illustrate a particular point.

¹²Multiple copies of the AR are located at the Main Library, University of British Columbia, at the Public Archives of British Columbia in Victoria (hereafter P.A.B.C.), and at Robarts Library, University of Toronto. Inspectors' reports for each district are not included in the AR after 1929.

good and/or bad, right and/or wrong in their respective domains. The Annual Reports also contain a wealth of statistical details which are useful for charting, year by year, the growth of schools in the study area. Included in the statistical tables are details on types of schools established; names of schools and teachers; teacher sex, teaching qualifications and salary; pupil enrolment and attendance; and the operating budget of each school.

The inspectors' individual school reports were also consulted.¹³ They allow a closer look at how each school functioned at the local level. For the majority of cases the schools were inspected twice a year and as a result approximately 1 000 of these reports were consulted for the Okanagan Valley for the period 1920 to 1930. These documents contain evaluations of the pedagogical and administrative competence of individual teachers and suggestions as to how their classroom practices could be improved; pupil enrolment, attendance and academic progress; and the availability and physical condition of school buildings, grounds and equipment. Other, more personal, aspects of rural teaching are rarely mentioned. John Calam's comments on the style of such inspectors' reports are particularly pertinent for the schools of the Okanagan Valley. In the context of the Putnam and Weir survey of 1925¹⁴ he refers to the "bland, colourless prose" of the inspectors' reports that gave the impression of a situation that was "perpetually 'satisfactory.'"¹⁵ Taken together, the Annual Reports and the inspectors' individual school reports provide the

¹³Copies of the inspectors' individual reports had to be made available to the teacher, the local school board for whom s/he worked, and the Department of Education in Victoria. See British Columbia, Office of the Provincial Secretary, Revised Statutes of British Columbia, 1924, 3, Chapter 226, Section 7. These reports are available on reels of microfilm in the P.A.B.C. (GR 122). They are filed chronologically under various categories: "Elementary Schools," "High Schools," "Superior Schools," etc. Within these categories the reports are arranged alphabetically by name of school. Consult the Department of Education Finding Aid at the P.A.B.C. The inspectors for the Okanagan Valley between 1920 and 1930 were A.R. Lord, J.R. Hall, A.E. Miller, A.F. Mattheson and J.B. DeLong.

¹⁴This was the major provincial administrative critique of British Columbia's educational system in the 1920's which laid down details for administrative reform. See J.H. Putnam and G.M. Weir, Survey of the School System (Victoria, British Columbia: King's Printer, 1925).

¹⁵John Calam, ed., Alex Lord's British Columbia: Recollections of a Rural School Inspector, 1915-1936 (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1991), 17-18.

official view of teacher experience and professional development in the rural schools of British Columbia.

The reports of Lottie Bowron, the Rural Teachers' Welfare Officer, offer a more intimate account of teaching conditions and teacher impressions of rural schools and community.¹⁶ Bowron commenced her job in 1929, the mandate of which was "to visit the rural districts of the Province where the living and social conditions under which young female teachers are working are not found to be satisfactory."¹⁷ In contrast to the strictly administrative and pedagogical concerns of the inspectors, Bowron's responsibility lay expressly with the social and personal aspects of female rural teachers' lives. She dealt with issues such as living arrangements, social life, and teacher-community relations, and attempted to find solutions to any problems that arose in these areas. In short, her function was to act as a "good friend and counsellor" to female rural school teachers, and specifically those who were experiencing difficulties.¹⁸ Bowron wrote approximately 250 reports each year, some of which reveal in graphic details the trying conditions facing young female teachers in the isolated schools of British Columbia. However she does not appear to have visited many of the the rural schools in the Okanagan Valley. In fact only eighteen reports were available to be consulted for the years 1929 and 1930. In addition her remarks in these reports are brief and often the perfunctory "satisfactory." Her lack of comments on the schools in the Okanagan Valley provides indirect evidence that these schools were perhaps not "problem schools."

¹⁶Miss Bowron's reports are included in the inspectors' individual school reports in the P.A.B.C. (GR 122). Her reports cover the period 1929 to 1933. The reports for the years 1931 to 1933 were not consulted as they were outside the time-frame of this thesis.

¹⁷AR, 1930, R10.

¹⁸Ibid.

The Teacher Bureau Records are another potentially a rich source of information as to how teachers perceived their work in small rural schools.¹⁹ The purpose of the Teachers' Bureau was made clear in the Department of Education Annual Report of 1922:

A Teachers' Bureau has been organized with this Department for the purpose of aiding School Boards in securing suitable teachers and assisting unemployed teachers in obtaining positions. The service is free to both teachers and Boards of Trustees.²⁰

The Bureau Records are single sheet administrative forms that were filled out by individual teachers in rural schools and contain details on the location of the school; the availability and type of transportation to and from the school; the general living conditions of the district in which the school was situated in terms of climate, geography, local industry etc.; pupil enrolment and attendance; and the physical condition of the school buildings and grounds. Sometimes the teacher provided a photograph of the school to be included with the form. Unfortunately, the records pertaining to the schools of the Okanagan Valley have proven to be particularly disappointing in that many of the responses are brief and non-committal. Space was provided at the end of each form for "additional remarks" where teachers were given the opportunity to express in more detail their opinions and feelings about their life and work in rural schools and communities. However, in over a third of the Bureau Records from the schools in the Okanagan Valley (33 of 91) this section was left blank.

As my research progressed I became more and more frustrated by my inability to uncover evidence that revealed the personal experience of the rural school teacher in the Okanagan Valley. My sense of what it had been like to be a teacher in this region of British

¹⁹The Teacher Bureau Records (hereafter TBR) are officially known as "School District Information Forms for the Teachers' Bureau, Department of Education, Victoria, B.C." They are located in the P.A.B.C. (GR 461). They are filed alphabetically by name of school according to each year. Unfortunately only the records for the years 1923 and 1928 have survived the passage of time. Of the total number of 1 380 responses from these two years ninety-one were written by teachers who taught in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley. The TBR provide a good complement to the reports of Lottie Bowron.

²⁰AR, 1922, C11.

Columbia in the 1920's was vague indeed. It became increasingly clear that most of the available material was statistical or based on official documentary sources such as those described above.²¹ They did not reveal in any tangible way the motivations for becoming a teacher in a small rural school, or the actual day-to-day demands of the job, or what the impact of teaching was on the individual, or on teacher-community relations. Thus, while the available statistical and official records provided me with an adequate impression of the number of teachers and general trends in educational developments in the study area, reliance on such sources made it virtually impossible to reconstruct the experience of the teachers. I did not begin my research intending to use oral techniques, but rather turned to the method when it became obvious that if I wished to pursue this particular research topic an alternative research strategy would have to be adopted in order to bring the project to a successful conclusion. The necessity of talking face to face with former teachers became an inevitability. Although referring to personal history documents rather than oral testimony as a means of getting at "insiders' perspectives" the words of Donald Warren are particularly apt here in summing up my predicament: "Without such sources," Warren suggests, "historians have trouble getting past the schoolhouse door."²² Or as Richard J. Altenbaugh has contended in the introduction to a recently published collection of essays on the history of American teachers: "Oral history enables educational historians to open the classroom door and investigate schooling from the perspective of one of its principal participants - the teacher."²³

²¹See Susan Laskin, Beth Light, and Alison Prentice, "Studying the History of Occupation: Quantitative Sources on Canadian Teachers in the Nineteenth Century," *Archivaria* 14(Summer 1982): 75-91, for a discussion of the use of similar quantitative sources in studying the history of teachers in Ontario.

²²Warren, ed., *American Teachers*, 4, 7.

²³See *The Teacher's Voice: A Social History of Teaching in Twentieth Century America*, ed. Altenbaugh (Washington, D.C.: The Falmer Press, 1992). For an early article that stresses the important role that oral historical techniques can play in research on the history of education, see William W. Cutler, III, "Oral History - Its Nature and Uses for Educational History," *History of Education Quarterly* 11, 2(Summer 1971): 184-194.

While there are limitations to an oral approach, to which I have already referred and will return to in more detail later in this discussion, the method also has distinct advantages as a research tool in the collection of the necessary experiential evidence for this case study of rural school teachers. E.H. Carr has argued: "History cannot be written unless the historian can achieve some kind of contact with the mind of those about whom he is writing."²⁴ Historians of the written word can attempt to achieve this "contact" by way of letters, diaries, memoirs, autobiographies and other personal history documents. Use of these materials, however, is limiting in two important ways.²⁵ First of all, they restrict the historian to those documents which already exist. Secondly, the sources used are by their very nature "mute" and "frozen" in time²⁶ and therefore any relationship between the historian and document can never be more than a "one-way communication"²⁷ with the past. In other words, from written historical sources "we can only infer what individuals mean by the language they use."²⁸

Historians of oral testimony, however, have the ability to generate their own primary source material from people's memories. "The important thing about oral history," Edvard Bull writes, "is that we as historians are no longer necessarily the captives of the

²⁴E.H. Carr, What is History? (Middlesex, England: Penguin Books, Limited, 1964), 24.

²⁵This is not to suggest that such sources are of no value to the historian. I merely wish to draw attention to the shortcomings of relying solely on written documents when attempting to reconstruct the experience of people in the past.

²⁶Michael Frisch and Dorothy L. Watts, "Oral History and the Presentation of Class Consciousness: The *New York Times* versus the Buffalo Unemployed," International Journal of Oral History 1, 2(June 1980): 90. Also published as a chapter in A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History by Michael Frisch (Albany, New York: State University of New York, 1990), 59-80.

²⁷Thompson, The Voice of the Past, 104.

²⁸Kathryn Anderson, Susan Armitage, Dana Jack and Judith Wittner, "Beginning Where We Are: Feminist Methodology In Oral History," Oral History Review 15, 1(Spring 1987): 112. Reprinted in Feminist Research Methods: Exemplary Readings in the Social Sciences, ed. Joyce McCarl Neilson (Boulder, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990), 94-112. This article provides an excellent example of an interdisciplinary approach - history, sociology, psychology - to the study of women's lives from a feminist perspective.

pre-existing sources. For the period still within reach of the memory of living people, we can contribute to the creation of new sources for our own purposes."²⁹ In being able to do so the historian is in a position to "imagine what evidence is needed, seek it out and capture it."³⁰

One advantage of oral evidence is that it is "interactive and one is not left alone, as with documentary evidence, to divine its significance."³¹ Gary Okihiro sums up well the difference between the use of written versus oral sources for the historian:

[T]he archival historian is limited to the written word and cannot go beyond what the author of a given document thought, what s/he thought happened or ought to happen, what s/he wanted others to think happened; in other words, the distinction between the behavioral and the ideational is blurred; and the historian is uncertain of the historicity of the evidence. On the other hand, the oral historian who employs a document which s/he has created with an interviewee is able to observe human behavior at firsthand in all its complexity and under varying circumstances; and s/he is able to engage in dialogue with the historical actor.³²

The historical account based on such "face-to-face interaction" necessarily becomes "more than the sound of one voice."³³ Orally communicated history therefore provides the key to a recreation of historical events based on "narrator's" perceptions of the past and thus the

²⁹Edvard Bull, "Industrial Boy Labour in Norway," in Our Common History: The Transformation of Europe, eds. Paul Thompson with Natasha Burchardt (New Jersey: Pluto Press, 1982), 224.

³⁰Thompson, The Voice of the Past, 5.

³¹Lummis, Listening to History, 43.

³²Gary Okihiro, "Oral History and the Writing of Ethnic History," in Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, eds. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History in Cooperation With the Oral History Association, 1984), 200. Originally published with the subtitle "A Reconnaissance into Method and Theory," in Oral History Review 9(1981): 27-46.

³³Sherna Gluck, "What's So Special About Women? Women's Oral History," in Oral History, eds. Dunaway and Baum, 225. In this paper Gluck discusses the implications of a feminist perspective for oral history interviewing as well as providing advice concerning the practicalities of adopting such an approach. An expanded version of this article was first published in Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies 2, 2(Summer 1977): 3-13.

means by which researchers can view the past directly from the angle of vision of participants.³⁴

The primary significance of oral historical sources lies in the fact that they reveal "less about events as such than about their meaning."³⁵ In his discussion of the current trends in ethnography Van Maanen argues that "it is no longer adequate for a fieldworker to tell us what the native does day in and day out. We must now know what the native makes of all this as well." In other words, in studying a culture an ethnographer must offer "perspective as well as practices."³⁶ Similar concerns have been voiced by historians. For example George Ewart Evans has argued: "[I]t is vital to the historian to know, as far as he can, not only what the people he is writing about did but what they thought about what they did."³⁷ Indeed, Ronald J. Grele has suggested that "how people see the world is as important in understanding how they act as the action itself."³⁸ The way in which oral testimony can give the historian access to "feelings, attitudes, values, and meaning" has been explored by Kathryn Anderson:

Traditional historical sources tell us more about what happened and how it happened than how people felt about it and what it meant to them. As historians, we are trained to interpret meaning from facts. But oral history gives us the unique opportunity to ask people directly, How did it feel? What did it mean?

Activity is, undeniably important to document; but a story restricted to action and things is incomplete. Oral history can tell us not only how people preserved meat but whether the process was fun or drudgery, whether it was

³⁴See Barbara Allen, "Re-creating the Past: The Narrator's Perspective in Oral History," Oral History Review 12(1984): 1-12. See also Barbara Allen, "In the Thick of Things: Texture in Orally Communicated History," International Journal of Oral History 6, 2(June 1985): 92-103.

³⁵Alessandro Portelli, "The Peculiarities of Oral History," History Workshop 12(Autumn 1981): 99.

³⁶Van Maanen, Tales of the Field, 50.

³⁷George Ewart Evans, Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of the Oral Tradition (London, England: Faber and Faber Limited, 1970, 1977), 23.

³⁸Ronald J. Grele, "Louise A. Tilly's Response to Thompson, Passerini, Bertaux-Wiame, and Portelli, with a Concluding Comment by Ronald J. Grele," International Journal of Oral History 6, 1(February 1985): 44.

accompanied by a sense of pride or failure. The unadorned story of what people did tells us more about the limitations under which they operated than the choices they might have made. With oral history we can go further; we can *ask* what the person would rather have been doing.³⁹

Orally communicated history offers the means of humanizing official records and statistical data by "add[ing] flesh and blood to the dry bones of statistical evidence and rais[ing] questions about the quality of women's lives...that cannot be answered by punching the keys of of a computer terminal."⁴⁰ The personal contact that interviewing entails can also provide the researcher with a sense of being there and participation. As George Ewart Evans suggests: "[I]t is [the] direct contact which I believe works through a kind of osmosis, through your skin so to speak, to give the feel of history, a sense of the past which is such an essential ingredient to the best historical writing."⁴¹

In general terms the oral interviews used in this study complement the information in the official sources and provide insider perspectives of the events referred to in the written documents. More importantly, they generate primary source material about the undocumented areas of teacher experience or where the written documents are inadequate. Specifically, oral techniques are used in this study to uncover the details of the lives of female teachers. In the 1920's women predominated in the profession. In 1925, for example, 2 447 (74.3%) of the total number of 3 294 teachers in British Columbia were female.⁴² The oral approach is widely acknowledged as an appropriate method for documenting womens' experience,⁴³ and has proven to be particularly successful in

³⁹Anderson *et al.*, "Beginning Where We Are," 109. Italics in original.

⁴⁰Conrad, Laidlaw and Smyth, No Place Like Home, 23.

⁴¹George Ewart Evans, "Approaches to Interviewing," Oral History 1, 4(1975): 71.

⁴²For rural teachers the ratio was even higher. In the same year 1 376 (78.9%) of the total number of 1 743 teachers who taught in rural areas in British Columbia were female. For references to these figures, see AR, 1925, M12.

⁴³See Sue Scott, "Feminist Research and Qualitative Methods: A Discussion of Some of the Issues," in Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods, ed. Robert G. Burgess (London, England:

obtaining hitherto unavailable information about the participation and contribution of women in the past.⁴⁴ As such it is a legitimate and important source for revising history so as to include women in the record.⁴⁵

Eliane Leslau Silverman has drawn attention to the need to examine the lives of women in the past "on their own terms." In collecting oral data for her study of Alberta frontier women it became clear that "women's lives were simply different from those of men." In her conversations with interviewees she found that: "Women defined themselves self-consciously as women, and therefore we must take from the informants themselves the clue to look for evidence of a separate women's culture."⁴⁶ Katherine Jensen has argued that the concepts used by researchers in women's studies must be derived from the subjects themselves. She categorically states: "Only when researchers use concepts that women themselves recognize do researchers finally allow women to participate in the creation of knowledge."⁴⁷ Similarly Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack have asked the questions:

Is the narrator asked what meanings she makes of her experiences? Is the researcher's attitude one of receptivity to learn rather than to prove preexisting ideas

The Falmer Press, 1985), 67-85. See also Ann Oakley, "Interviewing Women: A Contradiction in Terms," in Doing Feminist Research, ed. Helen Roberts (London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981), 30-61.

⁴⁴For example, two special issues of Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies have been devoted entirely to articles on the oral history of women. See "Women's Oral History," 2, 2(Summer 1977), and "Women's Oral History Two," 7, 1(1983). See also Alice Duffy Rinehart, Mortals in the Immortal Profession: An Oral History of Teaching (New York: Irvington Publishers, Incorporated, 1983). Rinehart's study deals with teachers from the eastern states of America.

⁴⁵ For an excellent and up-to-date collection of historical essays based on the oral testimony of women, see Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History (New York: Routledge, Chapman and Hall, Incorporated, 1991).

⁴⁶Eliane Leslau Silverman, "Preliminaries to a Study of Women in Alberta, 1890-1929," Canadian Oral History Association, Journal 3, 1(1978): 25, and Silverman, The Last Best West, *passim*. For further discussion of this point see Chapter One of this thesis, especially pages 21-24.

⁴⁷Katherine Jensen, "Oral Histories of Rural Western American Women: Can They Contribute to Quantitative Studies?" International Journal of Oral History 5, 3(November 1984): 166.

that are brought into the interview? In order to listen, we need to attend more to the narrator than to our own agendas.⁴⁸

The oral interview allows women the unique opportunity to take an active part in the creation of their own history, and hence make them the subjects rather than the objects of a women's history.⁴⁹ It allows them to describe, in their own words, aspects of their life experiences and to reflect on the significance and meaning they attribute to their own behaviour and experiences. It allows them to choose for themselves which experiences to relate and how they will relate them. It allows them to articulate what is of value in their lives and why. The relevance of using oral methods to include women's experiences and perspectives in the historical record is made clear by Nancy Grey Osterud and Lu Ann Jones in their recent review of the oral histories of American rural women: "The respect for the subject and the validation of her viewpoint that oral history entails, coupled with the collaborative character of the relationship between informant and interviewer, fulfil feminist criteria for a non-objectifying, non-exploitive research methodology."⁵⁰ Historians who make use of oral evidence in their research to retrieve the experience of women in the past must therefore be sensitive to the meanings that women attach to the words they use to describe their lives. Dana Jack has highlighted the importance of language in women's oral testimony:

Oral interviews allow us to hear, if we will, the particular meanings of a language that both men and women use but which each translates differently....Looking

⁴⁸Kathryn Anderson and Dana C. Jack, "Learning to Listen: Interview Techniques and Analyses," in Gluck and Patai, Women's Words, 11-12.

⁴⁹See Katherine Jensen, "Woman as Subject, Oral History as Method," Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies 7, 1(1983): 86. Canadian sociologist Dorothy E. Smith has made the same point, only from a sociological rather than a historical perspective. See "Some Implications of a Sociology for Women," in Woman in a Man-Made World: A Socioeconomic Handbook, 2nd. ed., eds. Nona Glazer and Helen Youngelson Waehrer (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1977), 15-29. See also Marcia Westkott, "Feminist Criticism of the Social Sciences," Harvard Educational Review 49, 4(November 1979): 422-430. Reprinted in Feminist Research Methods: Exemplary Readings in the Social Sciences, ed. Joyce McCarl Neilson (Boulder, San Francisco: Westview Press, 1990), 58-68.

⁵⁰Nancy Grey Osterud and Lu Ann Jones, "'If I Must Say So Myself': Oral Histories of Rural Women," Oral History Review 17, 2(Fall 1989): 2.

closely at the language and the particular meanings of important words women use to describe their experience allows us to understand how women are adapting to the culture within which they live....For the researcher using oral interviews, the first step is to ask the meaning of words in order to understand them in the subject's own terms.⁵¹

Oral testimony is used in this study to offer a detailed look at one aspect of the subjects' life experiences. By placing the subjects within the context of the typical conditions under which they lived and worked as teachers in the rural communities of the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's, the primary emphasis is placed on understanding the nature and meaning of teaching as work as understood by the subjects, and how their involvement in the occupation fitted into the larger structure of their lives. It was decided to interview former pupils in order to provide additional information on school conditions to supplement that obtained from the teachers. However, interviews with pupils have proven most useful in offering insights into the nature of teacher-pupil relations both in, and out, of the classroom.⁵²

So far I have concentrated on illuminating the relevance of oral methods to the wider framework of analysis. I would now like to focus on the interview process itself. Contact with former teachers and pupils was achieved by way of letters to the editor placed in twenty five newspapers, including the Vancouver Sun, the Province, the Victoria Times Colonist and a number of community newspapers circulated in the Lower Mainland, Victoria and the Okanagan Valley (see Appendix 1). In addition an interview was conducted for C.B.C. radio on a province-wide local history programme. The response to

⁵¹Anderson, et al., "Beginning Where We Are," 114 and 118.

⁵²As William W. Cutler, III, has argued: "It is important to save knowledge about the relationship between teachers and children in [the] past. It is important to save knowledge about the interactions among students as well as their memories of their teachers, their schools, and their reasons for being there." See "Asking for Answers: Oral History," in Historical Inquiry in Education: A Research Agenda, ed. John Hardin Best (Washington, D.C.: American Educational Research Association, 1983), 94-108, especially page 96. The recent book by Bruce Curtis has been particularly instructive in this respect. See Building the Educational State: Canada West, 1836-1871 (London, Ontario: Althouse Press, 1988). See also Finkelstein, Governing the Young, and Larry Cuban, How Teachers Taught: Constancy and Change in American Classrooms, 1890-1980 (New York: Longman, 1984).

the request for information was good, although interestingly no replies came as a result of the radio broadcast. A number of people responded who had taught outside the geographical and time-frame boundaries of the study. Although their accounts were not used directly in the analysis these outside accounts were useful in understanding the overall picture of rural schooling in British Columbia in the 1920's. All respondents - twenty-six - who fulfilled the appropriate criteria for the study were sent letters informing them in more detail of the research I was undertaking, and inviting them to participate in the project. Choices were offered as to the method of participation. They could either relate their experiences to me by way of an interview, in person or on the telephone, or, if they preferred, in the form of a written communication. For this reason an interview guide was included with the letter sent to respondents (see Appendix 2). This guide was developed on the basis of the secondary literature and my own ideas of the kind of information I wished to uncover. It was not intended to be used as a questionnaire. Rather it was to act as a guide to the areas of teacher or pupil experience in which I was particularly interested, and also to give people time to think back over the years and consider what they did, and did not, want to speak about. Twenty-three of the respondents (fourteen teachers and nine pupils) agreed to a personal interview. The remaining three respondents (two teachers and one pupil) chose to relate their experiences in written form.⁵³ Interviews were then arranged by subsequent letters and telephone calls.

The selection of the sample for this study was largely contingent upon the nature of the population available to be studied. A number of factors limited the possibility of obtaining a statistically valid sample, or what Thompson has termed "retrospective

⁵³One woman wrote to me on behalf of her mother who, although recently deceased, had taught for many years in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley and been a prominent and well respected member of the profession in the area. I decided that it would be fruitful to conduct an interview with this woman about her mother's teaching experiences, especially as I also had access to this teacher's memoirs. This was the only oral interview conducted with a subject that was neither a former teacher, nor pupil.

representiveness."⁵⁴ Obviously I was only able to interview survivors and I had no means of determining whether they were a representative sample of the whole population under study. However, not only was I restricted to interviewing survivors, but more importantly I had to rely on those subjects that were locatable and willing to participate. The problems of sample selection for the oral historian are made plain by Katherine Jensen when she states that we can only interview "those that are still alive, those who did not leave, those who are willing to talk."⁵⁵ Such limitations clearly affect my historical account of the experience of rural school teachers based on that evidence.

From the interviews I have conducted I am left with the impression that the experience of the teachers in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's was, for the most part, a positive one.⁵⁶ In addition, the sources appear to favour the most successful teachers. A number of those interviewed either made teaching a life career or returned to teaching at different stages throughout their lives. A different picture may have emerged from interviewing those who had tried the occupation but left it because they could not tolerate the conditions of employment. However, these people are difficult to locate and/or are reluctant to talk about their lives. One such person was brought to my attention during an interview with another former school teacher, but when contacted by me later she refused to share her experiences, either by letter or by personal interview. I can only speculate that it was the result of a distressful experience. For reasons such as these, I have no way of knowing the differences between those who participated and those who did not.

⁵⁴Thompson, TheVoice of the Past, 130.

⁵⁵Jensen, "Oral Histories of Rural Western American Women," 164.

⁵⁶This is in contrast to the findings of other studies of rural school teachers, in the same time period but in other regions of British Columbia, which tend to stress the more negative side of rural school teaching. See the work of Wilson and Stortz cited in the bibliography and discussed in Chapter One of this thesis, especially pages 40-42.

I am also aware of the gender bias of my study. Although I initially anticipated using a balanced sample of equal numbers of male and female subjects, I soon discovered that this was not a realistic goal. Factors relating to the nature of the occupation itself, as well as the sample available to be studied, placed a limitation in terms of gender on the study. Of the sixteen personal accounts of teacher experience used in this study only one is from the male perspective. Of the ten accounts of pupil experience, only two are male. This is perhaps to be expected since, in the 1920's, four fifths of the teachers in rural schools were female, and women have longer life spans than men. Therefore the primary focus of the research became the female perspective although attempts were made wherever possible to include the male perspective and to make comparisons between male and female experience. Issues and questions that arose in the course of my interviewing mainly women, and how I interpreted their experiences as rural school teachers, are raised later in the discussion of the actual interviews. It is sufficient at this stage to point out that studies where the oral statements come from predominantly female subjects have their own special problems as regards which aspects of experience are revealed, and how that experience will be related.⁵⁷ I regard it as imperative, therefore, that these potential sources of bias evident in the characteristics of my sample are made explicit from the outset, so that the reader is aware of the sort of experience that is represented in the text and which sort of experience is left untapped.

Insights from the ethnographic tradition have proven useful here. Instead of trying to justify the lack of a representative sample it appears more profitable to build on the strengths derived from naturalistic research and the advantages to be gained from

⁵⁷An analysis of how and why women communicate in very different ways to men, as well as practical suggestions regarding appropriate methods for interviewing women, can be found in Kristina Minister, "A Feminist Frame for the Oral History Interview," in Gluck and Patai, Women's Words, 27-41.

interacting with the subjects.⁵⁸ In their work on the bakers' trade in Paris, Daniel Bertaux and Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame confronted the problems of sampling for the oral historian and argued the need for a wider conception of representativeness. In carrying out their interviews they concluded that no set number of participants were needed in order to have a representative sample. Instead when collecting information from a contingent number of individuals from a specific milieu they simply went through a process of "saturation" As Daniel Bertaux explained:

We gathered life stories following what is pompously called 'a snowball strategy'. For instance we gathered about thirty life stories from bakery workers. The first life story taught us a great deal; so did the second and the third. By the fifteenth we had begun to understand the pattern of sociostructural relations which makes up the life of a bakery worker. By the twenty-fifth, adding the knowledge we had from life stories of bakers, we knew we had it: a clear picture of this structural pattern and of its recent transformations. New life stories only confirmed what we had understood, adding slight individual variations. We stopped at thirty: there was no point going further. We knew already what we wanted to know. Thus we went through a process of *saturation of knowledge*.⁵⁹

In the interviews I have conducted for this study this process was at work in that each subject - or case - was confirming, and in many cases replicating, what the previous ones had related to me. For this reason, and given the fact that this thesis examines a specific

⁵⁸For a discussion of this point within a more general comparison of the ways in which the problems of reliability and validity are approached in ethnographic and experimental research, see Margaret D. LeCompte and Judith Preissle Goetz, "Problems of Reliability and Validity in Ethnographic Research," Review of Educational Research 52, 1(Spring 1982): 31-60.

⁵⁹Daniel Bertaux, "From the Life-History Approach to the Transformation of Sociological Practice," chapter in Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences, ed Daniel Bertaux (Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publications, 1981), 37. Italics in original. See also his jointly authored chapter with Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, "Life Stories in the Bakers' Trade," in Biography and Society, ed. Bertaux, 169-189, especially page 187. Robert K. Yin has expressed similar solutions to sample representivity in his text on case study research methods. He argues that the external validity of case study research derives from what he terms "replication logic" rather than "sampling logic." As he contends: "A fatal flaw in doing case studies is to conceive of statistical generalization as the method of generalizing the results of the case. This is because cases are not "sampling units" and should not be chosen for this reason." Instead, he argues that the purpose of case study research is to provide new knowledge that can be generalized to a theory, or a framework for understanding real life events, rather than a population. "Under these circumstances," he continues, "the method of generalization is "analytic generalization," in which a previously developed theory is used as a template with which to compare the empirical results of the case study. If two or more cases are shown to support the same theory, replication may be claimed." See Yin, Case Study Research, 27-60, especially page 38.

occupation within a single community, it is reasonable to assume that I can generalize with some confidence about the experiences of this group. As a case study, however, I lay no claims that its findings can be directly generalized to the experience of other rural school teachers in British Columbia in the 1920's. Instead the significance of this study derives expressly from the contribution it makes to a fuller understanding of the phenomena of rural schooling both in the British Columbian and Canadian contexts. In this way it is to be regarded as just one more part in a complex mosaic.

The materials that comprise the observational data, the main source of evidence for the study, are derived from a six month period of fieldwork from December 1988 to May 1989. This fieldwork was divided into three phases according to the geographical location of the subjects. The first phase involved interviews with former teachers and pupils who were residing in the lower mainland of British Columbia; the second phase took place in various locations throughout the Okanagan Valley⁶⁰ and the third on Vancouver Island. The subjects were all personally interviewed by me so that I could maintain maximum control over the generation of data. In the pre-interview phone calls, in which the date, place and time of the interview were arranged, some of the subjects expressed some apprehension concerning where our meeting would take place. For this reason all the interviews were conducted in the homes of the subjects, usually over coffee and cookies, where they felt "in command of the social situation and relaxed in the comfort of familiar surroundings."⁶¹ In this context our relationship assumed more one of hostess/host and guest rather than that of researcher and subject.

⁶⁰I spent two weeks in March 1989 travelling around the Okanagan Valley interviewing former teachers and pupils; hunting out information in local libraries, museums and archives; and taking photographs of the small rural schools that still stand today. Gathering data at the "natural" location of the phenomena was invaluable in enabling me to gain a more intimate appreciation of what it may have been like to experience life in the schools and communities in the study area.

⁶¹Lummis, *Listening to History*, 66.

All the interviews were recorded on audio tape cassettes with the subjects' knowledge and consent. I chose to tape the interviews rather than take notes for a number of reasons. First of all, recording interviews and preserving them on tape provides an accurate and objective account of the conversation which is essential to establish the provenance and authenticity of the evidence.⁶² Secondly, the taped interview records not only what was said but the way in which it was said. As Trevor Lummis argues, "[R]ecording establishes beyond doubt what was said by whom and with what expression."⁶³ Thirdly, by preserving recollections intact as the original source their potential as primary source material for future historians is greatly enhanced.⁶⁴ Finally, the inductive nature of naturalistic research methods means that researchers, especially in the early stages of data collection, are not always in a position to judge at the time what is of importance. By failing to record their interviews on tape, they may leave out information that may later seem relevant and significant. Taping allows the researcher to acquire a verbatim record of the conversation(s) with the subject(s).

In order to break the ice I began the interviews by asking the subjects for formal biographical details about themselves. This appeared to ease the tension for many subjects as it was straightforward and gave them something to focus on that was non-threatening. Throughout the interview I was direct and frank about my intentions. From the outset I explained that there were no right or wrong replies to questions asked, and that I was not looking for any set or specific answers. Rather I was interested in, and wanted to learn

⁶²For a useful discussion of some of the practical and theoretical issues arising from tape recording oral history, see David King Dunaway, "Field Recording Oral History," *Oral History Review* 15, 1(Spring 1987): 21-42.

⁶³Lummis, *Listening to History*, 24.

⁶⁴The obligation of the oral historian to preserve interview data on tape and make them accessible to other scholars is discussed at length in David Henige, "'In the Possession of the Author': The Problem of Source Monopoly in Oral Historiography," *International Journal of Oral History* 1, 3(November 1980): 181-194. See also Susan Emily Allen, "Resisting the Editorial Ego: Editing Oral History," *Oral History Review* 10(1982): 33-45, for similar arguments as applied to the transcriptions of oral interviews.

about, their own perceptions, attitudes and feelings concerning their experience as a rural school teacher or pupil. They were made aware that they could end the interview whenever they chose, and that they were under no obligation to answer any questions that included information they did not feel comfortable in relating. In such circumstances they were told that they could reply that they did not know, or that they could not remember. For this reason the questions were structured in such a way that if they wished to avoid revealing certain information it was possible to do so by giving brief or perfunctory answers. At all times I tried to display a sensitivity to the particular circumstances of each interview.

I used both interview questionnaire and interview schedule techniques. The questionnaire was used when planning the research, deciding what information may be relevant and the areas of discussion which might throw light on the subject matter, and the interview schedule was used in the actual interview itself. Although I had a schedule I rarely referred to it in the interview. It was merely a short list of questions to use as a memory prompt for myself to ensure that all the subjects related the same areas of experience. Therefore although I asked some specific and focussed questions about certain details of individuals' experiences in rural schools, the direction of the interviews was largely determined by the subjects and those aspects of experience they chose to discuss.

The questions I asked fell into three categories. First of all, probing questions were used to encourage the subjects to talk about their experiences; secondly, summary statements ensured that I had correctly understood the subjects' comments; and thirdly, questions that clarified unclear statements. As much as possible questions on specific topic areas were incorporated into the flow of the conversation and those that did not arise naturally from the subjects' reflections were raised after considerable discussion had already occurred. I attempted to corroborate the information already established in one interview with that of others. As all the interviews were concerned with documenting a common experience in a precise locality they provided numerous cross-checks between each other. In this situation the questions asked were carefully worded to encourage the

subject to provide fresh commentary about the topic. Therefore the interviews provided the means by which the information conceptualized in the questionnaire was conveyed, and to which the subjects added their own perspectives.

The interviews ranged from one to three hours in duration. The cue to end the interview usually came from the subjects who either appeared tired or restless or directly indicated that they had nothing more to contribute to the interview. After the interview the subjects were asked to read and sign the consent form which released the information generated in the interview to me (see Appendix 3). They were informed that they could impose conditions on my use of the material, or withhold their consent altogether if they wished. All subjects agreed to release their recollections to me immediately and without reservations.

The use of an ethnographic oral history approach in this study, with its emphasis on interpersonal dynamics, necessarily means that the information I gained from the interviews with former teachers and pupils was dependent upon the relationship established between myself and the subjects -- how we both perceived and reacted to each another. In this way the interviews were a two-way process, a dialogue dependent upon the thoughts, feelings and perspectives that each party brought to the interview situation. The nature of this "social relationship"⁶⁵ and how it influences the material collected through it is obviously a concern for researchers who employ naturalistic methods such as participant observation and interviewing. It is necessary, therefore, as historian Gary Okihiro points out, "to analyze carefully that relationship between interviewer and interviewee to understand what kind of communication is taking place, what meaning is being conveyed, and what mutual influences are at work in the shaping of the conversation."⁶⁶

⁶⁵Thompson, TheVoice of the Past, 117.

⁶⁶Okihiro, "Oral History and the Writing of Ethnic History," 204.

This study thus begins with the general understanding that knowledge cannot exist independently of the perceiver. Researchers bring their own subjectivity to the task and hence the representation of knowledge is inevitably influenced by the assumptions and biases which have shaped the researchers' perception of the phenomena under study.⁶⁷ It is essential, therefore, that the researchers' subjectivities are identified and described at the outset.⁶⁸ For this reason, in writing up this study I have tried to convey how my own perspectives influenced the way in which I conceived the research topic, designed the research questions and the methods I used to answer those questions. Also important is how I influenced the people I interviewed, and therefore the kind of information the subjects related, or chose not to relate, as a result of their perception of me.

Richard Quantz is of the opinion that "history is created by the ordinary participant acting within structural constraints."⁶⁹ Following from this statement I see each individual as the product of a combination of ideological, structural and individual influences. Ideological and structural constraints define the boundaries within which individuals construct their lives. However, within these boundaries people can, and do, make choices that affect the course of their lives. In this thesis I have tried to document the interplay between constraint and choice in women's lives. I have endeavoured to identify how the subjects of this research were able to forge personal meanings within an imposed structure. Teaching provided many possibilities for those who chose to take up the profession. The words of the teachers I interviewed make it clear how teaching enabled women to meet

⁶⁷For a discussion of the role of the historian in the interpretation of events, see Henry W. Hodysh and R. Gordon McIntosh, "Problems of Objectivity in Oral History," Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'education 1, 1(Spring 1989): 137-147.

⁶⁸In ethnography, both the researcher's experience in the field as well as their influence on the data are regarded as an integral part of the research process and the finished written product. Van Maanen's definition of the discipline makes this point explicitly clear. In his view ethnography entails "representing the social reality of others through the analysis of one's own experience in the world of these others." See Tales of the Field, ix.

⁶⁹Quantz, "The Complex Visions of Female Teachers", 457.

societal expectations of what it meant to be a young woman in the 1920's, and the kind of work that was appropriate for such a person, by choosing "the natural female avocation"⁷⁰ as employment. However, teaching also enabled them to fulfil many of their own needs and desires, and so challenge such expectations. As Osterud and Jones argue: "Beyond simply documenting oppression, [oral history] illuminates the strategies women have adopted to cope with their situation, and the ways they have come to terms with, compensated for, and even challenged the limitations they faced."⁷¹

In documenting the experience of those in the past, historians must always be aware of the extent to which their interpretation of the subject matter is informed by contemporary attitudes. In the light of this concern I regarded it as an essential part of the process of monitoring my influence on the data to recognize, to quote Thompson, "the disjuncture between the questions which concern a young feminist women's historian and an older woman informant, and to judge how far the past may be analyzed in terms of present-day thinking."⁷² For this reason I tried at all times to maintain a balance between an openness to the subjects' words and to the meanings they ascribed to their teaching experiences, and my own analytical framework.

Although I had spoken to each subject a number of times on the telephone the interview was the first occasion on which we met. Establishing rapport with the subjects was, for the most part, not a problem. Initially, however, two problems arose. First of all, when subjects met me at the front door their reaction to me was interesting. They seemed surprised by my appearance. I was greeted with such exclamations as "But you're so young..." or "You're much younger than I expected." Secondly, at first I just introduced

⁷⁰Ibid., 447.

⁷¹Osterud and Jones, "'If I Must Say So Myself,'" 3.

⁷²Paul Thompson, "Between Social Scientists: Responses to Louise Tilly," International Journal of Oral History 6, 1(February 1985): 21. See also Gluck, "What's so Special About Women?" 225-226.

myself as a research student from the University of British Columbia doing a study on rural school teachers for my masters thesis. Such an introduction made a number of subjects feel uneasy about our meeting. Some expressed anxiety about whether they would "perform" adequately. I soon realized that my approach was too formal. By revealing that I too was a former rural school teacher, and that I wished to learn about their experiences in the occupation, the interview relationship changed considerably. The subjects relaxed and began to talk enthusiastically about their teaching days, interjecting their recollections of particular incidents with pupils, community members, inspectors etc. with "Well, you know what it's like..." In this way they expected me to understand what they meant simply because I had been one of them. On the other hand they were also concerned that I should understand the differences between their experience and mine and how "It was very different then you understand...not like nowadays." Hence the knowledge that I had taught in a rural school helped the subjects to "place" me as a person with whom they could identify and share experiences.⁷³

⁷³A number of scholars have considered the relationship of the gender of the interviewer to both the research process and the finished written product. Robert Dingwall contends that "certain sorts of data are more readily obtained by personable young women." See "Ethics and Ethnography," Sociological Review 28, 4(November 1980): 881. Janet Finch has suggested reasons why women find it easy to establish rapport in an interview situation, especially with other women. As she argues: "However effective a male interviewer might be at getting women interviewees to talk, there is still necessarily an additional dimension when the interviewer is also a woman, because both parties share a subordinate structural position because of their gender. This creates the possibility that a particular kind of identification will develop....One's identity as a woman therefore provides the entree into the interview situation." See "It's Great to Have Someone to Talk To': The Ethics and Politics of Interviewing Women," in Social Researching: Politics, Problems, Practice, eds. Colin Bell and Helen Roberts (London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1984), 76 and 79. This is in contrast to the experience of Jean Barman who has interviewed adults about their childhood experiences in elite private schools in British Columbia. She found it difficult to establish rapport with female subjects but "had no difficulty interviewing men of similar upper-middle or upper-class background." See "Accounting for Gender and Class in Retrieving the History of Canadian Childhood," Canadian History of Education Association, Bulletin/d'association canadienne d'histoire de l'education 5, 2(May 1988): 5. Sue Scott has studied the power relationships inherent in qualitative research and raised the point that although women may be useful as interviewers they also face problems when interviewing males, and in her case, male peers. See "The Personable and the Powerful: Gender and Status in Sociological Research," in Social Researching, eds. Bell and Roberts, 165-178.

The extent to which the fact that I am a woman may have affected my relationship with the subjects of my research is difficult to assess. I found that variations in the degree of openness or reticence displayed by subjects in relating their stories to me was due more to differences between individual personalities rather than their gender. For this reason I prefer not to speculate about my gender as an influencing factor in the interview process.

There is considerable debate over whether an interviewer should be an "outsider" or an "insider." My experience as a rural school teacher would, on the face of it, designate me as an insider. However the fact of my identification with the subjects as a former rural teacher should not be overstated in this context. Teaching single-age, single-ability classes in a 1 000 pupil school in rural Warwickshire, England, in the 1980's was a dramatically different experience to teaching in the small isolated rural schools of the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's. It is more appropriate therefore to define my relationship with the subjects as one in which I was at the same time involved in, but detached from, their experiences. I tried to strike a balance between being involved enough to be in a position to learn about, understand and interpret the culture the subjects related to me, while being detached enough to make the "known" unknown. As Thompson points out, the insider "knows the way around, can be less easily fooled, understands the nuances."⁷⁴ However, he also argues that being an outsider has its advantages too:

[T]he outsider can ask for the obvious to be explained; while the insider, who may in fact be misinformed in assuming the answer, does not ask for fear of seeming foolish. The outsider also keeps an advantage in being outside the local social network, more easily maintaining a position of neutrality, and so may be spoken to in true confidentiality, with less subsequent anxiety.⁷⁵

As an outsider and observer I was of, but not in, the world of the subjects.

The attitude of the subjects towards their role in my research was revealing. Many of the women were surprised that I wanted to interview them because, in their view, they had nothing useful to tell me. This lack of awareness of the historical value of their life experiences was expressed to me time and time again in a "Why me?" response. Other women's historians, who have used oral methods in their research, have reported similar experiences. Sherry Thomas, for example, found that every single farm woman she

⁷⁴Thompson, The Voice of the Past, 120.

⁷⁵Ibid.

interviewed said "You don't want to talk to me, I'm not important."⁷⁶ This kind of response did not feature in the interviews I conducted with male subjects. Once I established that they and their stories were both a relevant, and necessary, element to be included in the historical record, the women's reactions to the interview became more positive. In fact by the time our conversations came to a close the self-esteem of many of the female subjects seemed to have increased. When I expressed my thanks at the end of the interview, they thanked me for not only enabling them to look back over the years, but also for making them feel important. I believe that for some of the women I spoke to the interview was a significant experience.⁷⁷

Differences between male and female subjects were also revealed in the ways in which they related their stories to me in the interviews. A group of feminist researchers have stated that one of the basic assumptions on which their work is based is that "there are profound differences in the ways that men and women view the world and their places in it."⁷⁸ Bertaux-Wiame has expanded at length on this issue:

Men seldom talk spontaneously about their family life - as if it was not really part of their life. *Their* life: men consider the life they have lived as *their own*; this is perhaps the key difference from women. Men present their life as a series of self-conscious acts, a rational pursuit of well-defined goals - be it success, or simply 'la tranquillité', quietness and security. Their whole story revolves around the sequence of *occupations* they have had, as if they insisted on jobs because work is the area where they are active. They present themselves as the subjects of their own lives - as the actors.

Women do not insist on this. Instead, they will talk at length about their *relationship* to such or such a person. Their own life-stories will include parts of the life-stories of others. They bring into view the people around them, and their relations with these people. In contrast with men's accounts, women will not insist

⁷⁶Sherry Thomas, "Digging Beneath the Surface: Oral History Techniques," Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies 7, 1(1983): 54. See also Sara Diamond, "Women in the B.C. Labour Movement," section in an article entitled "Oral History Perspectives on Women's Studies," Canadian Oral History Association, Journal 6(1984): 10, and Silverman, The Last Best West, iii.

⁷⁷Other scholars have found this to be the case. See, for example, Anna Bravo, "Italian Peasant Women and the First World War," in Our Common History, eds. Thompson with Burchardt, 157-170, especially page 169, footnote 1. See also Gluck, "What's So Special About Women?" 223.

⁷⁸Anderson *et al.*, "Beginning Where We Are," 125.

on 'what they have done', but rather on 'what relationships existed' between themselves and persons close to them...their 'significant others.'⁷⁹

Bertaux-Wiame has also explored the ways in which these differences are illustrated in the actual language that men and women use to articulate their life experiences. She continues:

Men will use the 'I' much more often than women. The masculine 'I' definitely points to the subject of an action. The feminine 'I' often takes a different meaning. It does not designate the narrator as subject, but as one pole of a relationship; it is the 'I' in relation to another person. And very often, women preferred to use 'we' or 'one' (on in French), thus denoting the particular relationship which underlied this part of their life: 'we' as 'my parents and us', or as 'my husband and me', or still as 'me and my children'.⁸⁰

Originally I intended to question the subjects explicitly as to whether they considered that their gender had influenced their experiences as a rural school teacher. After a number of "I'm not sure," and "I don't know," replies I refrained from using such a direct approach. By questioning indirectly I obtained greater insight into the nature of the influence of gender on oral testimony.⁸¹ Differences in the manner in which female and male subjects related their stories to me became implicitly clear. In the interviews I conducted with women, they talked more about matters of a private rather than a public nature.⁸² Often there was more warmth and enthusiasm in the details they shared with me about their life outside of the classroom. In contrast, quite frequently, their recollections of teaching

⁷⁹Bertaux-Wiame, "The Life History Approach to the Study of Internal Migration," *Oral History* 7, 1(Spring 1979): 29. Reprinted in *Biography and Society*, ed. Bertaux, 249-265. Italics in original. Also published with the subtitle "How Women and Men Came to Paris Between the Wars," in *Our Common History*, eds. Thompson with Burchardt, 186-200, especially page 193. See also Kathryn Anderson, "Washington Women's Heritage Project," section in article entitled "Oral History Perspectives on Women's Studies," Canadian Oral History Association, *Journal* 6(1984): 12, and Osterud and Jones, "'If I Must Say So Myself,'" 4. Dana Jack has used the term "self-in-relation" theory to conceptualize these differences. See Anderson *et al.*, "Beginning Where We Are," 118.

⁸⁰Bertaux-Wiame, "The Life History Approach," 29

⁸¹See Marjan Schwegman, "Women in Resistance Organizations in the Netherlands," in *Our Common History*, eds. Thompson with Burchardt, 297-310, especially page 298.

⁸²Silverman found this to be the case with the women she interviewed. As she states: "They perceived their lives within the private realm, rarely fitting even their paid labour into a public context." See *The Last Best West*, iv.

practices were vague, formal and even inhibited. They seemed to remember little about precise lessons, methods of classroom management, even less about the wider issues concerning the development of educational policy in the 1920's, and far more about the personal relationships they had with the pupils they taught, the members of the communities in which they lived and worked, and the other teachers with whom they shared a social life. Decisions concerning their work in the teaching profession were, almost without exception, made not only on the basis of what they wanted or needed, but also in terms of the needs and desires of others in their families -- parents, siblings, husbands, children. Often the needs of these "significant others" came first.⁸³ It is for reasons such as these that some scholars refer to women's lives as being embedded in both family and work in that the private and public concerns of their lives are always intertwined.⁸⁴ In contrast, the male subject that I interviewed talked more in terms of the development of his career in the teaching profession, rarely mentioning personal or family matters in his accounts.

It would be naive to believe that oral history gave me direct access to the past. As Thompson has pointed out: "Recalling is an active process."⁸⁵ In asking people to recall feelings and attitudes, as well as facts, from the past the oral historian is faced with the dual

⁸³Sara Diamond has made this point in her work. She argues that one of the "special qualities" that women possess is "a sense of connection between workplace practice and personal needs." See "Women in the B.C. Labour Movement," 10.

⁸⁴See Joan Kelly, "The Doubled Vision of Feminist Theory," in Sex and Class in Women's History, eds. Judith L. Newton, Mary P. Ryan and Judith R. Walkowitz (London, England: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), 259-270. See also Anderson *et al.*, "Beginning Where We Are," 126. The theme of the interplay between the domestic and working lives of women has also been drawn out in a number of papers that were presented at the International Conference on Oral History and Women's History, Columbia University, New York, November 18-20, 1983. See especially the papers by Anna Bravo, Adele Pesce, Isabelle Bertaux and Diana Gittins. For a summary of these papers and others presented at the conference, see "News From Abroad," Oral History 12, 1(Spring 1984): 8-12.

⁸⁵Thompson, The Voice of the Past, 114.

problems of selectivity of memory and the possible distortion of that memory over time.⁸⁶

It has been suggested, however, that these limitations may decline with age as individuals undergo a "life review" later in life.⁸⁷ To quote Thompson once again:

The final stage in the development of memory commonly follows retirement, or some other traumatic process, such as widowhood. This is the phenomenon recognized by psychologists as 'life review': a sudden emergence of memories and of desire to remember, and a special candour which goes with a feeling that active life is over, achievement is completed. Thus in this final stage there is a major compensation for the longer interval and the selectivity of the memory process, in an increased willingness to remember, and commonly, too, diminished concern with fitting the story to the social norms of the audience. Thus bias from both repression and distortion becomes a less inhibiting difficulty, for both teller and historian.

Interviewing the old, in short, raises no fundamental methodological issues which do not also apply to interviewing in general.⁸⁸

However, it is also imperative to note that "Even where memory is intact, privacy and personal discretion have limited the disclosures which have been made public."⁸⁹ At the same time it must also be recognized that in interviewing former teachers about their experiences in the past that I was only getting at their current perceptions of those experiences because, as Jean Barman suggests, "each individual's perception of past experience is filtered through a contemporary lens."⁹⁰ Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame has made a similar point:

It should not be forgotten that every biographical account takes place in the present time, and *in relation to the present*. For the person who tells his or her life-story,

⁸⁶In ethnography it is widely accepted that "Ethnographic truths are...inherently *partial* - committed and incomplete" (italics in original). See James Clifford, "Introduction: Partial Truths," chapter in Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography eds. James Clifford and George E. Marcus (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 7.

⁸⁷For interesting discussions of this point see Harriet Wrye and Jacqueline Churilla, "Looking Inward, Looking Backward: Reminiscence and the Life Review," Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies 2, 2(Summer 1977): 79-84, and Peter Coleman, "The Past in the Present: - A Study of Elderly People's Attitudes to Reminiscence," Oral History 14, 1(Spring 1986): 50-59.

⁸⁸Thompson, The Voice of the Past, 116.

⁸⁹Patterson, "Voices From the Past," in Schools in the West, eds. Sheehan, Wilson and Jones, 100.

⁹⁰Barman, "Accounting for Gender and Class," 10.

the first purpose is *not* to describe the past 'as it was' or even as it was experienced ('*vécu*'), but to confer to the past experience a certain *meaning*; a meaning which will contribute to the meaning of the present....To tell one's life story is not only to talk or to remember; it is an act, an *encounter* with reality. If this encounter seems to limit itself to an account of the past, it is oriented in fact by the present in two ways: first it reconstructs the meaning of the past from the present point of view; second, and more deeply, it gives meaning to the past *in order* to give meaning to the present, to the present life of the person.⁹¹

In summary, although there are inherent limitations to using oral techniques to document the history of rural schooling in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's, they should not detract from the validity of the interviews as an historical source. The recollections may be simplified, compressed and abstracted, but this does not make them any less an authentic image of the past. All evidence, whether oral or written, is fallible and subject to bias. So perhaps when assessing the relative reliability of oral and written sources "it is less a matter of testing one source against the other than of being aware of the shortcomings of both and using them as complementary sources to illuminate one another."⁹²

Consistent with naturalistic inquiry, data collection and analysis were not separate stages in this study but rather ran concurrently throughout the research process. The ongoing nature of data analysis allowed for the construction of "a chain of evidence" in which there were "explicit links between the questions asked, the data collected, and the conclusions drawn."⁹³ The analysis was directed towards developing an in-depth understanding of the settings and participants studied.

Memo writing accompanied data collection. The memos involved three types of notations: observational, theoretical and methodological. Immediately on returning home from an interview I listened to the tape(s) and as I listened I noted down my impressions and observations from the interview. I constructed a running log of my ideas about themes

⁹¹Bertaux-Wiame, "The Life History Approach," 29. Italics in original. See also Daniel Bertaux, "Stories as Clues to Sociological Understanding: the Bakers of Paris," in Our Common History, eds. Thompson with Burchardt, 92-107, especially page 98.

⁹²Lummis, Listening to History, 75.

⁹³Yin, Case Study Research, 84.

emerging from the data, relationships among themes and possible interpretations of the data. I also documented decisions concerning the direction to be taken in future interviews. As data collection progressed the questions asked during the interviews often emerged from the information gathered in previous interviews. As I collected more information I tried to record my changing awareness of the nature and meaning of rural schoolteaching as experienced by the participants. Initially I was interested in documenting the subjects' teaching experiences only in terms of the actual years in the 1920's in which they taught. Gradually, however, as more interviews were conducted and I began to make sense of the data, it became apparent that adopting such a "snapshot" approach and isolating their teaching years from the rest of their lives, prevented a full understanding of both. It became necessary to take a longer historical perspective by incorporating the details of their experiences in the 1920's within the wider context of their whole life course. The Personal Narratives Group at the Center for Advanced Feminist Studies, University of Minnesota, have suggested that such an approach is essential to "illuminate the course of a life over time and allow for its interpretation in its historical and cultural context." They continue:

The very act of giving form to a whole life - or a considerable portion of it - requires, at least implicitly, considering the meaning of the individual and social dynamics which seem to have been most significant in shaping the life. The act of constructing a life narrative forces the author to move from accounts of discrete experiences to an account of why and how the life took the shape it did. This why and how - the interpretive acts that shape a life, and a life narrative - need to take as high a place on the feminist agenda as the recording of women's experiences.⁹⁴

Memos were also used to record any conversations, in person, on the phone, or in the form of a letter, that I may have had with a subject apart from the formal tape recorded

⁹⁴Personal Narratives Group, ed., Interpreting Women's Lives: Feminist Theory and Personal Narratives (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1989), 4. For an intelligent discussion of the uses of the biographical approach as a methodological tool in women's history, see Susan Mann Trofimenkoff, "Feminist Biography," Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal 10, 2(Spring 1985): 1-9. For a more general account of the importance of biography in educational research, see Geraldine Joncich Clifford, "The Life Story: Biographic Study," in Historical Inquiry in Education, ed. Best, 56-74. A strictly quantitative, macro-sociological study of the female life-course can be found in Ellen M. Gee, "The Life Course of Canadian Women: An Historical and Demographic Analysis," Social Indicators Research (1986): 263-283. Also published in McLaren, ed. Gender and Society, 187-204.

interview. Memos regarding the interview process itself were also noted - how I had conducted the interview and how the subjects had reacted to me. As a result my interviewing techniques improved throughout the period of fieldwork. For example, I became aware in my initial interviews that I talked too much. In my eagerness to document every aspect of the experience of teaching in a rural school in the 1920's, I tended to ask the subjects too many questions that required recall of dates and the precise details of their lives and work, rather than allowing them to reflect and expand upon their feelings and attitudes about their work in rural communities. I soon realized that the information that I wished to uncover about teacher experience would not be gained in such a way, and so I learned to sit quietly and just listen to what the subjects wanted to tell me.⁹⁵

Faced with such a large quantity of rich and varied data, collected in the interviews and recorded in the memos, the ongoing review, classification and clarification of the data was essential. This constant assessment constituted a preliminary analysis of the data. By reviewing each interview as it took place I was able to confirm and explore the findings in subsequent interviews and so continually expand and refine my tentative interpretations. I moved back and forth between observations from the interviews, and analysis and understanding.

Once the period of fieldwork was complete the tapes were partially transcribed.⁹⁶ Letters were then sent to a number of the subjects asking for further information to clarify and explain certain points, and also additional and/or new information where necessary. Some replied promptly and with enthusiasm. Those who did not reply I did not pursue further. It was at this stage that a more systematic and intensive analysis of the data began.

⁹⁵Neil Sutherland has made this point in his work on the history of childhood in which he interviews adults about their childhood experiences. See "'Listening to the Winds of Childhood': The Role of Memory in the History of Childhood," Canadian History of Education Association, *Bulletin/d'association canadienne d'histoire de l'education* 5, 1(February 1988): 27-28.

⁹⁶I transcribed all the tapes myself for the same reasons as I personally conducted the interviews: to maintain control over the data and to ensure the same researcher bias for all the data.

On listening and re-listening to the taped interviews, and reading and re-reading the transcripts and memos, I became aware of the tremendous diversity in the stories related to me and the fact that teaching in a small rural school was indeed a unique and personal affair. However it was also possible to identify patterns of common experiences among the recollections. Data was grouped under general headings and supporting sub-headings. The emerging interpretations were incorporated into content-related themes or categories which I considered to be important in recreating the subjects' perspectives of rural schooling. The strategy throughout this process was to develop a logical framework within which to interpret the subjects' perceptions and attitudes towards their experiences as teachers in such a way that all the cases could be accounted for including the exceptions.

Information from the observational data was then reviewed along with the official printed and manuscript sources discussed earlier. Issues that emerged in my findings were compared with those raised in the secondary literature. Three other sources of evidence were then incorporated into the study. Various histories that refer to schools and community settlement in the Okanagan Valley were consulted. Although many of these are written by local historians and therefore needed to be checked for reliability and factual accuracy, they did provide a local historical context for the teachers' recollections. The 1931 Canadian Census⁹⁷ was referred to but only for background details on population growth and composition, economic development, and employment in the study area. Its utility as a source of evidence was limited by the fact that the geographical boundaries of the study area only encompassed a census sub-district. The inclusion of photographs - of school buildings and grounds, classroom interiors, and teachers and pupils - in the thesis was considered important. The single image of a teacher standing with her pupils lined up beside her in front of a schoolhouse can provide valuable insights into the cultural context

⁹⁷Dominion Bureau of Statistics, Seventh Census of Canada, 1931 (Ottawa: J.O. Patenaude, King's Printer, dates according to volume).

of rural education by "revealing the details usually omitted by the narrative: body and facial expressions, small artifacts, and spatial relationships. It puts things in perspective."⁹⁸ The value of photographs in historical research has been summed up splendidly by J. Robert Davison:

[T]he real potential of historical photographs for researchers and historians [is] their ability to amplify our knowledge of the past - amplification, which is more than illustration and less than proof. Photographs are powerfully evocative. At the verbal level we learn much, but photographs can penetrate directly into that ineffable region beyond the uttered word where we feel and experience as much as think. Captured within the "mirror with a memory" is frequently a faithful reflection of the individual and interpersonal dynamics of an entire society, focussed intensely into one visual image no bigger than a postcard. Photographs are also extremely seductive. Arousing our curiosity about worlds at a cultural and temporal remove, and fascinating us with the incongruities between Actual and Arranged, photographs encourage us to read closely and re-examine facts outside the image in order to find an explanation.⁹⁹

Following what Yin has termed a "corroboratory mode" the multiple sources of evidence were reviewed and analyzed together.¹⁰⁰ In this way the findings of the study emerge out of "the development of converging lines of inquiry, a process of triangulation."¹⁰¹ Such a strategy provided a solid basis for interpretation of the data and helped ensure the construct validity of the study.¹⁰² Data analysis therefore comprised three stages. Preliminary analysis entailed the identification and classification of data into potential themes or categories throughout the course of data collection. Systematic triangulation of the data after all the material had been collected allowed for further development and clarification of themes, and resulted in a refinement of my understanding

⁹⁸Madelyn Moeller, "Photography and History: Using Photographs in Interpreting Our Cultural Past," Journal of American Culture 6, 1(1983): 3.

⁹⁹J. Robert Davison, "Turning a Blind Eye: The Historian's Use of Photographs," BC Studies 52(Winter 1981-82): 34-35.

¹⁰⁰Yin, Case Study Research, 97.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²See Trevor Lummis, "Structure and Validity in Oral Evidence," International Journal of Oral History 2, 2(June 1981): 109-120, especially page 110.

of the subject matter. The final stage involved the development of a framework to incorporate and interpret the themes identified in earlier stages of analysis and the placing of the data within a broader historical context.

I would now like to turn to the representation of the data, which are presented in Chapters Five to Nine, and the issues that arose in this connection. Van Maanen has argued that a culture is neither "tangible" nor "visible" until it has been represented. As he states:

A culture is expressed (or constituted) only by the actions and words of its members and must be interpreted by, not given to, a fieldworker. To portray culture requires the fieldworker to hear, to see, and, most important for our purposes, to write of what was presumably witnessed and understood during a stay in the field. Culture is not itself visible, but is made visible only through its representation.¹⁰³

Van Maanen's words draw attention to the responsibility, indeed obligation, of the researcher, in documenting a culture, to represent the subjects' words and actions as accurately and honestly as possible. All research situations involving human beings raise problems of ethics.¹⁰⁴ While researchers have an obligation to contribute to knowledge, they also have a duty to protect the subjects of their research. The cooperative nature of oral history raises direct questions about the moral responsibility of the historian to the people they write about. Confidentiality is the most familiar ethical question facing researchers of social phenomena. I explored the issue of anonymity and confidentiality with each of the subjects I interviewed. All of them were comfortable to be referred to in the thesis by their own name. My views on this issue concur with those of Sherry Thomas who has conducted extensive oral interviews in the course of her work on the history of older American farm women.

I think using real names is part of doing oral history. I mean I changed names when I had to, but I felt like I lost a small piece that matters to me a lot...that absolutely ordinary people matter and count and their stories are important and we need all of

¹⁰³Van Maanen, *Tales of the Field*, 3.

¹⁰⁴See Janet Finch, "'It's Great to Have Someone to Talk To,'" 70-87, for a useful discussion of the ethical issues that arise in interviewing women, and which includes a look at the development of trust in the interview situation and the exploitive potential of this.

their stories, and that when you start changing the names you take away some of that basic belief system.¹⁰⁵

Inseparable from the issue of confidentiality is the equally important issue of trust. The subjects I interviewed were made aware that the details of their lives that they shared with me could be widely read, or even eventually published. For this reason some of the subjects were keen to be kept informed of the progress of the study. The issue of trust is central to a major concern that I hold about the way in which I, as a researcher, can take the material from the interview and use it for my own purposes. Jolly Bruce Christman has summed up this dilemma well with reference to her interviews with returning women graduate students:

For me, the greatest source of conflict revolved around using a woman's words about her life to construct *my* argument. A woman gave her story to me in an act of friendship over tea at the kitchen table. While she set boundaries around what she was prepared to tell in that story, I still took it away from the kitchen table and set it in a context that served my research purposes.¹⁰⁶

Daphne Patai has expressed similar concerns when she states that she continues to be "uncomfortable with the appearance of friendship and intimacy that the personal interview situation generates and even temporarily creates, in view of the extraordinary distance that, thereafter, is inevitable."¹⁰⁷ As my work progressed, and especially as I began the process of writing up the findings of the study, I became increasingly concerned about the potential problem of the misinterpretation, or misrepresentation, of the subjects' words.¹⁰⁸ As Judith Stacey has clearly stated:

¹⁰⁵Thomas, "Digging Beneath the Surface," 55.

¹⁰⁶Jolley Bruce Christman, "Working in the Field as the Female Friend," Anthropology and Education Quarterly 19, 2(1988): 78. Italics in original.

¹⁰⁷Daphne Patai, "Ethical Problems of Personal Narratives, or, Who Should Eat the Last Piece of Cake?" International Journal of Oral History 8, 1(February 1987): 9. See also Patai, "U.S. Academics and Third World Women: Is Ethical Research Possible?" in Gluck and Patai, eds. Women's Words, 137-153. Patai work is based upon her extensive interviewing of Brazilian women.

¹⁰⁸For a detailed account of how one particular researcher was confronted with, and solved this problem, see Katherine Borland, "'That's Not What I Said': Interpretive Conflict in Oral Narrative Research," in Gluck and Patai, eds. Women's Words, 63-75.

With very rare exceptions it is the researcher who narrates, who "authors" the ethnography. In the last instance, an ethnography is a written document structured primarily by a researcher's purposes, offering a researcher's interpretations, registered in a researcher's voice.¹⁰⁹

The questions of accountability that I faced, and the way in which I resolved them, at least in part, have been clearly articulated by Sherry Thomas who experienced similar problems in her own research:

The big issue for me...was that I felt a tremendous question about accountability to the material. Given what I was doing with the transcription, given that I was severely editing the pieces, that I was taking myself out of all the pieces so that it looked like a first person statement instead of a question-and-answer form, was I being faithful -- to the voice, to the content of the material? Could I really take four sentences from here and put them at the end of another whole section and be faithful to the flow and the content and the mood and the tone of the piece? I felt a tremendous seriousness about that, and ended up having to say I *had* to trust myself, my sense of that person, my sense of the connection out of those long talks, and my sense of the shape of what they were trying to convey about their lives.¹¹⁰

I decided that an extensive display of data, as it was recorded, was essential so that readers could make their own sense of what rural teaching entailed. In this sense I saw it as my responsibility to build a bridge between the participants and the reader. By revealing the experience of rural school teachers as described by the participants themselves this study is, by its very nature, written largely by the people whose work it records. The quotations used in the body of the thesis were selected as they illustrated the themes generated from data analysis. When contrasting views were expressed, quotations which showed such disagreements were used.

In presenting the data I decided to use two different approaches. The analysis in Chapters Five through Eight deals with teachers' accounts of their experiences in rural

¹⁰⁹Judith Stacey, "Can There Be a Feminist Ethnography?" in Gluck and Patai, eds. Women's Words, 114. The complex issues involved in the creation and interpretation of womens' lives are also discussed at length in a collection of essays entitled "Narrator and Interpreter." See section in Interpreting Women's Lives, eds. Personal Narratives Group, 199-258.

¹¹⁰Thomas, "Digging Beneath the Surface," 52-53. Italics in original. I also returned the sections of this study which are based on the interview data to two of the subjects - one female and one male - for their comments on the accuracy of my interpretation of the experience of rural teachers.

schools specifically in the 1920s. Whilst attempting to remain true to the highly personal and unique nature of each individual teacher's experience, the information at my disposal was so rich and varied that I chose to thread together their accounts in order to convey the character of their collective experience. In this way the resulting narrative is the composite story of rural school teaching in the Okanagan Valley as told by the subjects and as such consists of a cross-case analysis, at once both descriptive and explanatory.¹¹¹ In contrast, in Chapter Nine, I wished to illustrate what teaching meant to individual teachers in the longer term, and thus how their experiences in rural schools fitted into the larger structure of their entire life courses. I decided that the most satisfactory way to convey this extremely intimate information was to adopt a biographical approach and present the data in the form of a number of discreet life stories, each one chosen because it represented a different response to the experience of teaching as work.

Jean Barman has drawn attention to the importance for historical ethnographers to move beyond the individual account in their work to a social interpretation. As she states:

Adoption of an historical ethnographic approach in no way diminishes our responsibility to search out broader contexts in which to place the texts that emerge out of our research. The retrieval and representation of individual experiences...cannot be allowed to remain an end in itself, but rather become the means toward better general explanation than would otherwise be the case.¹¹²

In short, it is important that the goal of "illuminating a broader social context through the prism of individual experience" be central to the agenda of researchers who use oral evidence.¹¹³ As historian Ruth Pierson has argued:

¹¹¹Yin, Case Study Research, 134-136.

¹¹²Barman, "Constructing the Historical Ethnography of Childhood," 28.

¹¹³Frisch and Watts, "Oral History and the Presentation of Class Consciousness," 90. Similar concerns have been expressed by other historians. See for example, Thompson, The Voice of the Past, 262, and debate between Louise A. Tilly, Paul Thompson, Luisa Passerini, Isabelle Bertaux-Wiame, Alessandro Portelli and Ronald Grele in International Journal of Oral History 6, 1(February 1985): 5-46, especially comments on pages 17 and 28.

As collectors and recorders of the stories of others...we cannot accept a woman's recollection uncritically, that is, as unmediated by cultural/historical context....It has, after all, never been the job of the historian only to reclaim voices. That would result in naive empiricism. No, the task has been equally, and just as importantly, to contextualize the individual voices, to reconstitute the 'discursive' world which the 'subjects' inhabited and were shaped by.¹¹⁴

The individual experiences of those who taught in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's are thus located not only within the contexts of the educational and rural history of British Columbia in particular, and Canada in general, but also within the history of women and work, and specifically the history of teachers and teaching.

I would like to conclude this chapter with a quotation from Silverman. Her words accurately reflect my own feelings about this study of rural school teachers:

The analysis which threads together this collective autobiography is mine; it is that of a historian and a woman, and is based on reading and thinking and certainly some identifying. I tried to listen both as a scholar and as a participant. I hope that my interpretations are true to the experiences of these...women.¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴Ruth Roach Pierson, "Experience, Difference, Dominance and Voice in the Writing of Canadian Women's History," in Writing Women's History: International Perspectives, eds. Karen Offer *et. al.* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1991), 91, 94.

¹¹⁵See The Last Best West, v.

CHAPTER THREE

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE OKANAGAN VALLEY 1811-1930

Understanding the culture of rural school teachers in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia in the 1920's requires an understanding of the physical and historical (economic and social) settings in which the lives of the teachers, and the work they carried out, were embedded. Chapters Three and Four provide this contextual background. This chapter begins with a description of the geographical location of the study area within the province of British Columbia. This is followed by a brief account of the area's topography and climate, both of which were important influences on the subsequent development of the Okanagan Valley, and on the educational structures that evolved. A general outline history of the study area is then provided, drawing attention to such factors as settlement patterns, local economic activity, and the growth of transportation and communication networks, before 1930. Chapter Four has a narrower focus in that it deals with the nature and extent of educational developments in the area between 1874 and 1930, focussing particularly on the decade from 1920 to 1930. The chronology of the establishment of schools is documented. Reasons for the existence and changing circumstances of the schools, as regards openings and closures, enrolment patterns, and so forth, and how these related to the settlement patterns and local economic activity outlined in Chapter Three, are suggested. The overall purpose of the two chapters is to provide a sense of the local context from which the teachers' recollections emerged.

The Okanagan Valley is situated in the southern interior of the province of British Columbia. The Okanagan Valley, following Okanagan River, extends southward through Skaha (Dog), Vaseux and Osoyoos Lakes to approximately seventy-two miles (115 kilometres) south of the International Boundary where it joins with the Columbia River in

Washington State.¹ The Canadian portion of the Okanagan Valley extends from the International Boundary at latitude 49° North to Sicamous at latitude 50° 45' North, a distance of approximately 120 miles (192 kilometres). The average longitude is 119° 30' West. However for the purposes of this thesis the term Okanagan Valley refers to that area enclosed by the North Okanagan and South Okanagan Electoral Districts as they existed in 1920 (see Map 1)² Thus defined the study area is approximately 150 miles (240 kilometres) in length and covers 2 172 square miles (3 475 square kilometres).

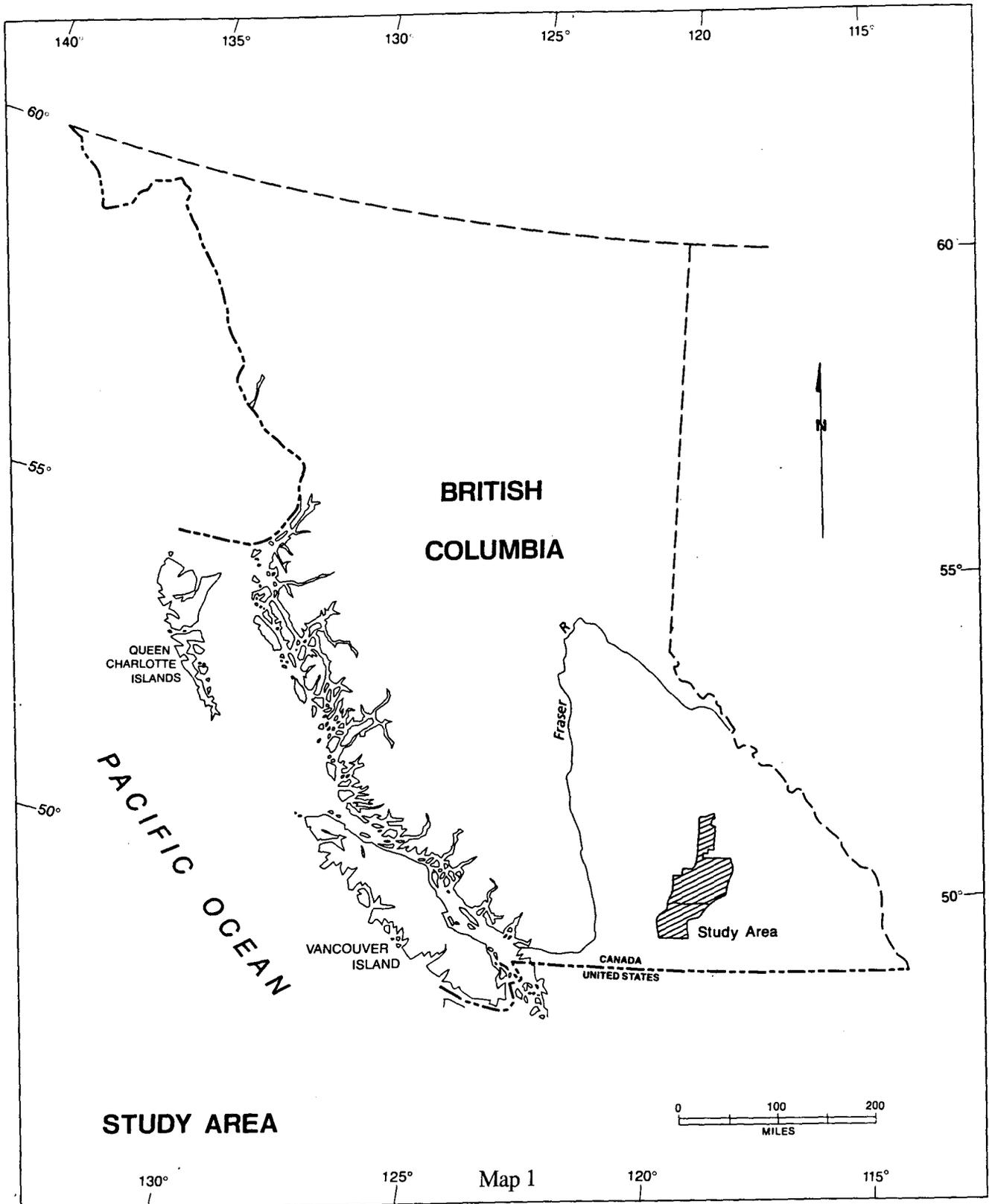
The topography of the area has been described as "maturely dissected."³ The Okanagan Valley, sometimes referred to as the Okanagan Depression or Okanagan Trench, forms a broad irregular depression in the Interior Plateau and is bounded by the Cascade Mountains to the west and the Monashee Mountains to the east. The Okanagan Valley is intersected by a series of smaller long trough-like valleys, which, especially in the case of the main ones, are carved as deep as 3 000 to 4 000 feet (915 to 1 220 metres) into the plateau. The northern part of the Okanagan Valley, from Kelowna to Seymour Arm, is characterized by valleys that branch east and west and also by more or less parallel valleys in the main depression. To the south of Kelowna the valley becomes a single trough with smaller and less significant tributaries.

¹Units of measurement used in this thesis are those that were in use in the 1920s. The equivalent S.I. units are noted in parentheses.

²Beginning with the year 1877-78 the Annual Reports of the British Columbia Department of Education lists schools by Electoral Districts. This information is included in the statistical tables towards the end of the Reports. The availability of this information made it possible to track down all the public schools in a given area. Without such information many of the small, isolated rural schools whose names did not correspond to the districts in which they were located, and whose period of operation may have only spanned one or two years, may have failed to be included in the study simply because I would have been unaware of their existence.

It is important to note here that Electoral Districts in British Columbia were redistributed in 1923. This resulted in a number of the schools in the pre-1923 North Okanagan Electoral District being transferred to the Salmon Arm Electoral District. These schools were, however, retained in the case study.

³British Columbia, Lands Service, Department of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources, Victoria, British Columbia, The Okanagan Bulletin Area: Bulletin Area No. 2. Text by R.G. Williston, Minister of Lands, Forests, and Water Resources (Victoria: K.M. MacDonald, Queen's Printer, [1967]), 12-14, especially page 12.



The glacial drift, occurring approximately ten thousand years ago, was extremely important to the evolution of the Okanagan Valley giving rise to a number of specific topographical zones, each with its own special features. The first zone comprises the valley bottom which is at elevations of approximately 1 000 to 1 200 feet (305 to 366 metres) above sea level. As a result of glacial action the valley bottom is U-shaped with post-glacial lakes occupying over half of the depression. Okanagan Lake, the largest of the lakes in the study area, extends approximately sixty-nine miles (110 kilometres) from Penticton to the head of the lake and dominates the valley floor. Other important lakes in the study area include Shuswap Lake and Mara Lake to the north, Mabel Lake and Sugar Lake to the north-east, and Kalamalka Lake (Long Lake) and Wood Lake which lie parallel and to the east of Okanagan Lake.

At a slightly higher elevation is the second topographical zone which consists of gently sloping clay or silt terraces, often called "benches." These benches fringe the lakes and the upland valleys leading into the main valley. The steep valley sides of the main and tributary valleys form the third topographical zone. They are comprised of silt terraces, although, unlike the benches described above, their banks are often hard enough to form vertical or near vertical faces. These "bluffs," especially near Summerland and Naramata in the south of the Okanagan Valley, are a prime feature of glacial-stream deposition. The fourth and final zone consists of the Interior Plateau. This area is comprised mainly of wooded hills and rounded mountains with rolling upper surfaces which rise to elevations from 4 000 to 6 000 feet (1 220 to 1 830 metres).⁴

In general terms the Okanagan Valley has a very attractive climate, one that is

⁴C.C. Kelley and R.H. Spilsbury, Soil Survey of the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, British Columbia, Report No. 3 of British Columbia Survey ([Victoria]: British Columbia Department of Agriculture in Cooperation with Experimental Farms Service, Dominion Department of Agriculture, 1949), 8-10, especially page 8. For a comprehensive account of the topography and the history of the physiographic formations of the Okanagan Valley, see Adrian C. Kershaw, "The Quaternary History of the Okanagan," Okanagan Historical Society Report (hereafter OHSR) 42(1978): 27-42.

characterized by short and relatively mild winters, warm to hot summers and low to moderate precipitation. In fact it is often reputed to have one of the mildest climates in Canada. The basic climatic pattern in the main valleys has been classed as arid to semi-arid.⁵ However such a designation does not reveal the distinct features that characterize the various climatic zones that can be observed as one proceeds from north to south, from east to west, and from lower to higher elevations throughout the valley. These factors, latitude, longitude and altitude, play important roles in influencing the weather patterns of the region. The main features of the climate of the Okanagan Valley, from north to south and from higher to lower elevations, are a rise in mean temperatures, a lowering of precipitation and an extension of the frost-free period, and hence the growing season.⁶ The east of the area is moister than the west.

By comparing the mean daily temperatures for the coldest (January) and the warmest (July) months of the year, from three different weather stations (Seymour Arm in the north, Vernon in the centre and Penticton in the south) some of the above climatic features are illustrated.⁷ Winter temperatures in the Okanagan Valley are amongst the highest in Canada. From north to south the mean daily temperature for January ranges from 21.9°F (-5.6°C) in Seymour Arm to 23.4°F (-4.8°C) in Vernon to 27.1°F (-2.7°C) in Penticton. Although extreme minimum temperatures for January have been recorded as low as -14.1°F (-25.6°C) in Seymour Arm, and -16.1°F (-26.7°C) for both Vernon and Penticton, the Okanagan Valley is much less likely to undergo long periods of continuous cold than are centres in the northern interior of British Columbia such as Prince George. In

⁵The Okangan Bulletin Area: Bulletin Area No. 2., 18.

⁶A useful figure illustrating this information can be found in Fritz Dalichow, Agricultural Geography of British Columbia (Vancouver: Versatile Publishing Company, Limited, 1972), 88.

⁷Environment Canada, Atmospheric Environment Service, Canadian Climate Normals, 1951-1980. Temperature and Precipitation (British Columbia) (Ottawa: Canadian Government Publishing Centre, Supply and Services Canada, 1982), especially pages 174 (Penticton), 208 (Seymour Arm), and 247 (Vernon).

July, when surface heating has reached a maximum, mean daily temperatures range from 65.8°F (18.8°C) in Seymour Arm, to 68.0°F (20.0°C) in Vernon, and 68.5°F (20.3°C) in Penticton. Although daytime temperatures have been recorded as exceeding 102.0°F (38.9°C) in Seymour Arm, 101.3°F (38.5°C) in Vernon, and 105.1°F (40.6°C) in Penticton, the surface cools quite rapidly at night in the valley and down-valley breezes and cooler temperatures are typical.

The Okanagan Valley has an unusually dry climate as a result of the influences of the Pacific Ocean and the rainshadow effect imposed by the major mountain ranges to the west. Annual precipitation decreases progressively from north to south along the Okanagan Valley. Seymour Arm at the north end of the study area has an annual mean of 29.4 inches (74.7 centimetres) of precipitation. Further south there is an annual mean of 11.4 inches (29.0 centimetres) in Vernon and 9.3 inches (23.6 centimetres) in Penticton. Precipitation also changes with altitude. As elevation is increased the air loses its ability to hold moisture. The main valleys experience relative dryness, with slightly wetter conditions on the plateau and moderate precipitation at high altitudes in the Cascade and Monashee Mountains. The plateau receives more than twice the precipitation of the valley floor.

The range of climatic conditions throughout the study area are reflected in the variety of natural vegetation, and the types of soils and hence crops produced. Much of the Okanagan Valley belongs to the Ponderosa Pine-Bunchgrass vegetation zone which occurs mainly on the valley bottoms and on the benchland bordering the lakes. At slightly higher elevations, where precipitation increases and temperature decreases, vegetation is of a denser variety and Ponderosa Pine is replaced by, for example, Douglas Fir. At elevations above 4 000 feet (1 220 metres) the land is much more thickly forested with trees such as Engelmann Spruce and Lodgepole Pine. Changes in vegetation occur both with altitude and latitude. The gradual decrease in precipitation southwards is a prime factor creating successively more arid soil and vegetation patterns. The Podsol soils north of Armstrong are replaced by the Black soils which predominate in the Vernon area and by Dark Brown

and Brown soils in Kelowna and Penticton respectively to the south.⁸

In evaluating the settlement process in the study area from the early nineteenth century, when the first white men entered the valley, until 1930, a number of distinct phases of development, each characterized by a particular mode of economic activity, can be discerned. Fur trading, missionary activities, mining, extensive ranching and farming, and intensive horticulture have all played a part in the development of the Okanagan Valley, albeit at different times and in different ways. However, the changing nature of economic activity and the settlement in the study area can only be fully understood in relation to the improvements that took place in the system of transportation (road, rail, and water), both in terms of routes and technology, within the time-frame of this study. In this context the single most important event was the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 with its branchline to the Okanagan Valley, the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway, completed in 1892. The effects of these events were far reaching and contributed to the transformation of the landscape of the Okanagan Valley by 1914. It is therefore appropriate to divide the history of the study area into two sections: the period before about 1890, and the decades from 1890 to 1930.⁹

⁸For details on these topics see Kelley and Spilsbury, Soil Survey, especially the figure on page 21 showing the distribution of the several zonal soil groups in the study area, and Vladimir J. Krajina, Bioclimatic Zones in British Columbia, Botanical Series Number 1 (Vancouver: [University of British Columbia], 1959). For a more detailed, and contemporary, description of specific districts within the study area in terms of topography, climate, natural vegetation, as well as some references to settlement patterns, land useage, and transportation and communication networks, see British Columbia, Department of Lands, Survey Branch, Extracts From Reports of British Columbia Land Surveyors on Surveys Within Yale District (Victoria: Charles F. Banfield, King's Printer, 1929), especially pages 5-18, 20-22, 42-46, 65, 76-78, 90-92, 102-110, 118-119 and 165-166.

⁹Information on the history of the study area both before and after 1890 is included in the following material. Where titles do not indicate the specific geographical area of study, the information is noted in parentheses. Annie Dorothy Abercrombie, Sicamous, Mara to Three Valley: Gateway to the Okanagan, Land of Shimmering Sunset Water ([Sicamous]: A.D. Abercrombie, 1985); F.W. Andrew, The Summerland Story (Penticton: The Penticton Herald, 1945); Gwen Bauer, History of Seymour Arm ([Celista]: Gwen Bauer, 1980); Caroline Bawtree, Reflections Along the Spallumcheen ([Enderby: Riverside Centennial Committee], 1975) (Ashton Creek, Trinity Creek); F.M. Buckland, Ogopogo's Vigil: A History of Kelowna and the Okanagan (Kelowna: Okanagan Historical Society, 1979); Victor Casorso, The Casorso Story: A Century of Social History in the Okanagan Valley (Okanagan Falls: Rima Publications Limited, 1983) (Okanagan Mission, Kelowna); R.W. Corner, Glenmore: The Apple Valley ([Kelowna]: Glenmore Centennial

Committee, 1958); David Dendy, "A Cent a Pound or on the Ground: Okanagan Fruit Growers and Marketing, 1920-1935," M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1981; Rosemary Deuling, Beyond Shuswap Falls (N.p.: [Parkland Color Press], 1973) (Mabel Lake, Sugar Lake, Shuswap Falls); Theresa Gabriel, Vernon, British Columbia: A Brief History ([Vernon]: Vernon Centennial Committee with the assistance of the Vernon Branch of the Okanagan Historical Society, 1958); [Brenda Gardner and Heather Stefanyk], Mara's Memories, (N.p., n.d.), Dorothy Hewlett Gellatly, A Bit of Okanagan History (Kelowna: Kelowna Printing Company, 1932) (Westbank, Peachland); Grassroots of Lumby 1877-1927 (Lumby: Lumby Historians, 1979); Art Gray, Kelowna: Tales of Bygone Days (Kelowna: Kelowna Printing Company, 1968); Greater Vernon Museum and Archives, Valley of Dreams: A Pictorial History of Vernon and District (Alton, Manitoba: D.W. Friesen and Sons, 1992), Grindrod 1910-1985 (N.p.: [Grindrod History Book Committee], 1985); Nan Harris, Nan: A Child's (sic) Eye View of Early Okanagan Settlement ([N.p., 1981] (Kelowna: Regatta Press Limited)) (Kelowna); Historical Outline of Seymour Arm Area, 1860-1970 (Seymour Arm: The Bradleys, [1972]); C.W. Holliday, The Valley of Youth (Caldwell, Idaho: Caxton Printers Limited, 1948) (Sicamous, Enderby, Vernon, Okanagan Mission, Kelowna, Peachland, Summerland, Naramata); An Illustrated History of Vernon and District, text by Theresa Hurst (Vernon: Vernon Branch, Okanagan Historical Society, and the Board of Museum and Archives, Vernon, British Columbia, 1967); [David Jones and Ruby E. Lidstone], In the Shadow of the Cliff: A History of North Enderby (Enderby: North Enderby Historical Society, [1976]); Jon K. Laxdal, "The Okanagan Valley," Canadian Geographical Journal 75, 5(November 1967): 150-161; Ted Logie, Ted Tells (Okanagan) Tales: True Stories From Our Okanagan Pioneers (N.p., 1967) (text deals with no specific districts in the study area but refers in general to the Okanagan Valley); J.A. MacKelvie, "The Development of the Okanagan," in A History of British Columbia eds., E.O.S. Scholefield and R.E. Gosnell (Vancouver and Victoria: British Columbia Historical Association, 1913), 211-222; David Mitchell and Dennis Duffy, eds., Bright Sunshine and a Brand New Country: Recollections of the Okanagan Valley 1890-1917, British Columbia Sound Heritage Series 8, 3(1979): 1-73 (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Aural History Program, 1979) (text deals with no specific district in the study area but refers in general to the Okanagan Valley); Naramata in Retrospect (N.p., n.d.), text originally published as an article in OHSR 29(1965): 172-190; Ninety Years of Vernon, Illustrated, text by Edna Oram and John Shephard (Vernon: Greater Vernon Board of Museum and Art Gallery, 1982); Margaret A. Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia," M.A. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1931; Margaret A. Ormsby, ed. A Pioneer Gentlewoman in British Columbia: The Recollections of Susan Allison (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1976) (Sunnyside); Margaret A. Ormsby, Coldstream - Nulli Secundus (Vernon: Corporation of the District of Coldstream, 1990); Peachland Memories: A History of the Peachland and Trepanier Districts in the Beautiful Okanagan Valley (Peachland: Peachland Historical Society, 1983); Gordon Peachey, The Okanagan (Kelowna: Gordon Peachey, 1984) (text does not deal with any specific district in the study area but refers in general to the Okanagan Valley); Anne Pearson, An Early History of Coldstream and Lavington (Vernon: Wayside Press Limited, 1986); W.R. Powley, comp., Early Days of Winfield, B.C. ([Winfield: Winfield Women's Institute, 1958]); Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Donald Graham, "The Okanagan: Reminiscences of Donald Graham," no date (Armstrong, Spallumcheen); Rutland Centennial Committee, comp., History of the District of Rutland, British Columbia, 1858-1971 ([Rutland]: Rutland Centennial Committee, [1971]); Don Salting, Smile of Manitou: The History of Naramata ([Naramata]: Skookum Publications Limited, 1982); Marjorie Selody, Meeting of the Winds: A History of Falkland (Vernon: Wayside Press, 1990); Johnny Serra, The First Hundred Years: The History of Armstrong, British Columbia (N.p., [1968]); Springbend Community Recollections (N.p.: Springbend History Book Committee, 1987, 1988); Ursula Surtees, Sunshine and Butterflies: A Short History of Early Fruit Ranching in Kelowna ([N.p.], 1979) (Kelowna: Regatta City Press)); Duncan Duane Thomson, "History of the Okanagan: Indians and Whites in the Settlement Era, 1860-1920," Ph.D. thesis, University of British Columbia, 1985; D. Tutt, comp., The History of the Ellison District, 1858-1958 ([Ellison]: Ellison Centennial Committee, 1959); University of British Columbia, Main Library, Special Collections Division, Howay-Reid Collection, Donald Graham, "Diary," 1876, and "Reminiscences," no date (Armstrong, Spallumcheen); Primrose Upton, The History of Okanagan Mission: A Centennial Retrospect (Okanagan Mission: Okanagan Mission Centennial Committee, 1958), reprinted as an article in OHSR 30(1966): 176-247; Vernon Museum and Archives, Kalmalka Women's Institute, comp., "History of Oyama," [1951]; Larry Mike Yakimovitch, "An Historical

Until the early nineteenth century the Okanagan Valley was largely a wilderness, unexplored by the white man. The original inhabitants of the region in the period prior to white settlement were the Okanagan, and, further north in the area, the Shuswap, tribes belonging to the ethnic group called the Interior Salish.¹⁰ Three different but related activities dominated the initial development of the Okanagan by white settlers: fur trading, the work of Christian missionaries and the search for gold.

The first white men to enter the Okanagan Valley were probably American fur traders employed by the Pacific Fur Company. In 1811 David Stuart, a Scotsman, set out by canoe from Fort Astoria at the mouth of the Columbia River and continued up the river until he reached the junction of the Okanagan River, and there established Fort Okanagan, near present day Brewster, Washington, United States of America. He then proceeded north through the Okanagan Valley to the Thompson River to Shuswap country to trade with the Indians. He returned the following year to build a post at Kamloops. By crossing the height of land dividing the Columbia River system (Okanagan Lake and River) and the Fraser River system (Shuswap Lake and North Thompson River) Stuart had discovered a potential route overland to connect the upper Fraser and the New Caledonia to the North

Interpretation of the Land Utilization and Tenure Pattern in the Vernon Rural Area of the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia," M.A. thesis, University of Oregon, 1965; and articles in British Columbia Historical News, Man-To-Man Magazine, Okanagan Historical Society Report and Westward Ho! Magazine cited in the bibliography. For an excellent bibliographical tool providing invaluable information on the existence and location of materials, mainly primary, pertinent to the history of the Okanagan Valley, see Kathleen Barlee, comp. and ed., with Duane Thomson and Maurice Williams, The Central Okanagan Records Survey (Kelowna: Okanagan College Press, 1988).

¹⁰For an account of the population, social organization, economy and history of the Okanagan Indians, see Peter Carstens, The Queen's People: A Study of Hegemony, Coercion, and Accommodation Among the Okanagan of Canada (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991) and Thomson, "History of the Okanagan." Both of these studies focus mainly on how white settlement in the Okanagan Valley was to the detriment of the native population, resulting in Indian dispossession and marginalization. In the Thomson thesis the theme is developed within the context of a comprehensive local history. See also Mrs William Brent, "The Indians of the Okanagan Valley," OHSR 6(1935): 122-130. Two other recent publications are also of interest: Jean Webber and the En'owkin Centre, Okanagan Sources (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1990), and J. Coffey, E. Goldstrom, G. Gottfreidson, R. Matthew and P. Walton, Shuswap History: The First 100 Years of Contact (Kamloops: Secwepemc Cultural Education Society, 1990). For a more general discussion of the Indian tribes in British Columbia see Wilson Duff, The Indian History of British Columbia, Volume 1, "The Impact of the White Man," Anthropology in British Columbia. Memoir Number. 5 (Victoria: Provincial Museum of Natural History and Anthropology, 1964).

with the lower Columbia Rivers. In 1813, John Stuart, nephew of David, working for the North West Company (to whom the Pacific Fur company had sold out in that year) proved that such a land route was possible. In 1821 the North West and the Hudson's Bay Companies amalgamated, operating under the latter's name. With the establishment in 1826 of the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail which traversed the length of the Okanagan Valley from Fort Okanagan to Fort Alexandria, the Okanagan Valley became the supply route for the bulk of the fur trade for the New Caledonia and Shuswap regions. The settlement of the International Boundary dispute in 1846 severed the communication link between the Fraser and Columbia River systems. The Brigade Trail was abandoned and as a result the Okanagan was bypassed and probably saw few white men for the next ten years.¹¹

As far as the settlement process in the Okanagan Valley is concerned the fur trade was never of great significance. Being semi-arid there were relatively few beaver pelts, the staple of the fur trade, in the Okanagan Valley. Their quality did not compare to the furs further north where the long harsh winters produced a superior pelt. In addition, no forts were built in the Okanagan Valley itself. Although some campsites, such as the one at Westbank, were regularly used by their brigades, the fur trading companies did not encourage their employees to settle permanently in the area.

The first permanent white settlement in the Okanagan Valley was by three priests of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.¹² Father Charles Marie Pandosy, Father Pierre Richard

¹¹A detailed account of early discoverers and fur traders can be found in Buckland, *Ogopogo's Vigil*, chapters 1 and 2. This text contains important source material for the historian of the Okanagan Valley as Buckland obtained much of his information from old-timers in the area. See also F.M. Buckland, "The Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail," *OHSR* 6(1935): 11-22, and Margaret A. Ormsby, "The Significance of the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail," *OHSR* 13(1949): 29-37. With the abandonment of the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail new routes to the east and west became necessary. The Dewdney Trail became the means of access to the Pacific and the route that many of the early settlers used. See Kathleen Stuart Dewdney, "The Dewdney Trail," *OHSR* 22(1958): 73-91. Included in this article is a detailed map of the route of the Dewdney Trail.

¹²Although both Protestant and Roman Catholic missionaries had been active in the Okanagan Valley since the late 1830's Pandosy and his associates were the first to establish a presence on a permanent basis. See Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 21-22. See also D.A. Ross, "St. Joseph's Jesuit Mission in the Okanagan," *OHSR* 24(1960): 59-61.

and Brother Richard Surel arrived in October 1859 at L'Anse au Sable, near present day Kelowna, where they established a temporary mission. The following year they moved to Mission Creek and founded Okanagan Mission "building themselves a Mission House, a little Church, and a school of logs cut from the bush nearby."¹³ In addition to their religious duties the priests also cultivated the soil in their "desire to teach the natives husbandry as well as Christianity."¹⁴ They successfully grew wheat, barley, potatoes and tobacco, planted fruit trees and vines, and also raised cattle.¹⁵

The role of Pandosy in the history of the Okanagan Valley is considered of great import by a number of historians.¹⁶ Ormsby contends that the work of the priests was made possible by the contribution of the fur traders whose exploration of the region improved the accessibility of the area. As far as the subsequent settlement of the region is concerned Ormsby cites numerous examples of settlers whom Pandosy persuaded to come to the Okanagan to take up farming and ranching. Indeed, as she has pointed out, for over fifty years, until 1912 when it closed down, Okanagan Mission continued to be the nucleus for white settlement in the area. She suggests that the beginning of agriculture can thus be dated from the time of the mission and that in this sense Pandosy is worthy of the title of "father of settlement in the Okanagan Valley."¹⁷

Coincident with the activities at Okanagan Mission, the news of the discovery of

¹³Buckland, Ogopogo's Vigil, 28.

¹⁴Ibid., 27.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶See for example Primrose Upton, "Father Pandosy, O.M.I.," OHSR 26(1962): 141-145, and F.M. Buckland, "Settlement at L'Anse au Sable," OHSR 6(1935): 48-52.

¹⁷Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 23-27. Other sources also suggest that Pandosy was responsible for bringing new settlers into the Okanagan Valley, many of whom were connected, either directly or indirectly, with the mining industry. See Buckland, Ogopogo's Vigil, 33, 36, 38-39, and MacKielvie, "The Development of the Okanagan," in A History of British Columbia eds., Scholefield and Gosnell, 213-214. A copy of this text is available at the P.A.B.C. in Victoria.

gold on the Lower Fraser River in 1858 sparked off a new and large scale movement of transient miners through the Okanagan Valley. Thousands of men flocked north across the American border heading up the old Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail to reach the new diggings. All the creeks flowing into Okanagan Lake were prospected in the early 1860's. In the study area the locations that attracted the greatest activity were at Mission Creek (east of Kelowna) and Cherry Creek (a tributary of the Spallumcheen River which could be approached via the Coldstream Valley to the east of Vernon), the latter being more profitable than the former.¹⁸ Several mining companies and many individuals held high expectations of the gold and other minerals to be found but no substantial, long-lasting mining activities ever materialized. The mining camps at Mission and Cherry Creeks operated for only a few seasons before being deserted by men in search of better diggings.¹⁹ As Carstens succinctly concludes: "The new finds literally proved to be no more than a flash in the pan, and the Okanagan 'gold rush' proved a complete flop."²⁰

Although mining had little direct influence on the economy of the Okanagan Valley, indirectly its impact on the subsequent development of the region was significant. The large influx of miners travelling through the Okanagan Valley, who were unable to carry

¹⁸See H.J. Blurton, "The Placer Mines on Cherry and Mission Creeks," OHSR 1(1926): 17, reprinted in OHSR 17(1953): 105-106, Mrs. Angus Wood, "The Cherry Creek Mines," OHSR 3(1929): 12-13, Mrs Angus Wood, "W.C. Young's Report on Mines on Cherry Creek," OHSR 6(1935): 57-60, Charles D. Simms, "Claudet's Report on Silver Mine at Cherry Creek," OHSR 6(1935): 61-62, G.C. Tassie, "The Cherry Creek Silver Mining Company, Limited," OHSR 6(1935): 74-75, Margaret A. Ormsby, "Francis G. Claudet's Journal: A Trip to Investigate the Cherry Creek Silver Mine, July 31 - August 23, 1867," OHSR 12(1948): 29-40, and Margaret A. Ormsby, "Wm. C. Young's Report on Cherry Creek," OHSR 16(1952): 136-144. Michael Hagan, a reporter for the Victoria Colonist in the 1880's, wrote a series of articles on the Okanagan Valley, a number of which describe the various mining activities in the Cherry Creek area. These articles, along with others that focus on early settlement and transportation in the district, have been reproduced and edited with the title "A Trip Through Okanagan Valley in 1888," OHSR 16(1952): 15-36. See especially pages 25-36,

¹⁹For a detailed analysis of the mining sector of the Okanagan economy in the early period, see Thomson, "History of the Okangan," 211-244.

²⁰Carstens, The Queen's People, 42. Ormsby reached the same conclusions. She summed up the history of mining in the Okanagan Valley in the period before 1930 as "a series of discoveries, soaring hopes and then disheartening failures." See "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 34.

adequate provisions for their long journeys, coupled with a deficiency of livestock in the valley itself, put pressure on the food supply. This situation led Governor Douglas to encourage the importation of cattle, horses and sheep which in turn inspired some enterprising men to drive livestock north from Oregon to supply the miners' requirements in various parts of the province.²¹ Moreover, early land settlement in the area was the result not only of the search for gold but also of the failure to find wealth in the gold diggings. The decline in mining created a surplus of white people many of whom became the first pre-emptors of land on a permanent basis in the study area. Indeed, Thomson has argued that mining was the "mother of other industries."²² As he explains:

The initial gold rush introduced many potential settlers to the area and some of them remained as ranchers or as farmers engaged in a joint mode of production. Gold mining was responsible for the introduction of government services to the area, as the colonial authorities quickly assumed control, built roads, and established a pervasive presence. The mining sector complemented the agricultural sector nicely, providing a limited but important local market for agricultural produce and a source of income for subsistence farmers. The mining industry, limited as it was, provided an outlet without which agriculture, and therefore white settlement, may not have survived.²³

The early settlers in the study area were mostly agriculturalists. In the northern part of the Valley the first people to settle were from the Overland Expedition of 1862, who had travelled east across the Prairies to take up land in the Spallumcheen Valley in 1866-67.²⁴ The 1879 Okanagan Assessment Roll, which covered the region from the Misson to Enderby, reveals that sixty-one of the sixty-nine taxpayers in that area, that is, 88.4%, were claiming to be stockraisers or farmers.²⁵ By 1881 the total population stood at 817.²⁶

²¹Margaret A. Ormsby, "The History of Agriculture in British Columbia," Scientific Agriculture 20(September 1939): 63.

²²Thomson, "History of the Okanagan," 212.

²³Ibid., 243-244.

²⁴Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 59-61. See also F.T. Marriage, "The Overlanders," OHSR 20(1956): 100-146, and continued in OHSR 21(1957): 69-82.

²⁵This document gives details of settlers' occupations, landholdings and livestock for taxpaying

For the same year Thomson estimates that the number of white and Chinese people in the Okanagan Valley numbered 413.²⁷ However, compared with the massive increases in the rate of immigration into the area that occurred in the decades that followed, the 1881 figures represent "only a handful of settlers."²⁸ The period from the early 1860's until approximately 1890 was one during which white settlers in the Okanagan Valley acquired huge tracts of land which they devoted primarily to stockraising but also to farming or both.

Although stockraising was the dominant economic sector in the Okanagan Valley, and the sole source of income for many of the early settlers, it was not the only economic activity pursued in the early stages of the development of the Okanagan Valley. In the northern part of the study area between Vernon and Sicamous, which was more heavily timbered and where the bunchgrass was not so prolific, early emphasis was placed on grain growing.²⁹ Settlers in the Okanagan Valley first began growing wheat during the late 1860's in the Enderby area. The Spallumcheen Valley became dotted with large wheat ranches with the grain being ground at the local grist mills.³⁰ As well as cattle and grain,

purposes. It has been reproduced with a brief introduction in A.J. Hiebert, "District of Okanagan Assessment Roll, 1879," OHSR 41(1977): 97-99.

²⁶Canada. Dominion Bureau of Statistics. Seventh Census of Canada, 1931, I, 350. In the 1931 Census the study area is designated as Division No. 3, Subdivision A - Okanagan and Shuswap, Upper. For the period 1881-1921, however, such detailed information was not included in the Census and therefore figures cited in this thesis are based on those for the whole of Division No. 3. As Division No. 3 is comprised of three subdivisions of which Subdivision A is the largest and most significant, no serious distortions arose. For a map of the census divisions in British Columbia see 1931 Census, Volume II, Appendix A. Population figures for individual census divisions are not available for British Columbia prior to 1881.

²⁷Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan," 29. This figure included Indian wives or concubines of white settlers. Significantly Thomson also points to the fact that at this time the white population was still only about half that of the Indian population and that it was not until the mid-1880's that the white population surpassed the Indian community numerically.

²⁸Jean Barman, The West Beyond the West: A History of British Columbia (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 9.

²⁹Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 59.

³⁰These were located at Enderby, Armstrong and Vernon. See Donald Graham, "The Rise and Fall of

which were the basis of the early Okanagan Valley economy, a variety of other kinds of livestock and crops provided for a subsistence economy. Many of the ranchers also raised horses, poultry, hogs, and sheep, and planted fruit trees and vegetables for their own use and for sale. Appreciable permanent settlement began with the arrival of the large-scale ranchers.

Prevailing conditions of market demand, unlimited availability of land and determinate transportation, were ideal for the initiation and then rapid expansion of these changes to the landscape. Much of the country was well-watered with vast ranges covered with lush bunchgrass for grazing the stock. The land was left virtually unfenced so that livestock were able to roam at will over the hills and benchlands in search of sustenance. Moreover, land was cheap and plentiful. Settlers were able to acquire, mostly by pre-emption, large acreages of land on easy terms from the government, with grazing land being sold at one dollar an acre.³¹ Some holdings extended over thousands of acres. In this way much of the study area in the period until the early 1890's became monopolized by a few individuals including Cornelius O'Keefe, Thomas Greenhow, Thomas Wood, Price Ellison and A.L. Fortune.³² According to Ormsby the ratio of cattle to settlers in the

Grist Milling in the Okanagan Valley," OHSR 4(1930): 12-15, and Joseph Brent, "The First Stone Grist Mill," OHSR 6(1935): 27.

³¹Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 40-41.

³²For descriptions, mainly contemporary, of the nature and extent of the landholdings of some of the early ranchers see Margaret A. Ormsby, "A.L. Fortune's Autobiography," OHSR 15(1951): 25-40; Art Gray, "Thomas Wood - Pioneer Rancher," OHSR 32(1968): 99-104, Myra K. DeBeck, "Price Ellison: A Memorial By His Daughter," OHSR 12(1948): 48-58, Primrose Upton, "The Story of the Postill Family and Some of Their Descendents," OHSR 30(1966): 77-85, F.T. Marriage, "Reminiscences of A.L. Fortune," OHSR 20(1956): 97-146, and 21(1957): 69-82, Hagan, "A Trip Through Okanagan Valley in 1888," 15-36, Mitchell and Duffy, eds., Bright Sunshine, 1-14, Buckland, Ogopogo's Vigil, chapters 4 and 5, and Graham, "Diary," 1876, and "Reminiscences." The Graham materials provide excellent first-hand detailed descriptions of life in the northern Okanagan Valley in the pioneer era revealing how closely in touch he was with current events. It should be noted that two versions of Graham's "Reminiscences" are in existence. A manuscript copy is available at the location cited above in footnote 8. A typescript is also deposited at the P.A.B.C. Although the substance of the two accounts of Graham's experiences as a pioneer in the Okanagan Valley are similar, the exact details of particular events differ. Short biographical sketches of Graham's life and work can be found in Jim Wardrop, "Donald Graham: Pioneer, Politician and Co-operator," OHSR 44(1980): 19-22, and James E. Jamieson, "Donald Graham...Early North Okangan Pioneer," OHSR 38(1974): 11-13.

Okanagan Valley in 1892 was probably five to one!³³

The pattern of settlement and economic activities that developed in the study area prior to the early 1890's evolved within the context of the existing transportation system.³⁴ Access to the Okanagan Valley was both arduous and time-consuming. Travel was only possible by horseback on pack trails such as the Hudson's Bay Brigade Trail and the Dewdney Trail that were used by fur traders and miners. As settlement increased wagon roads were built. The first was constructed in 1873 from the head of Okanagan Lake to Spallumcheen.³⁵ In 1875 the Okanagan and Mission Valley Wagon Road was completed. Construction on the road began in 1871 and it ran from Kamloops via the head of Okanagan Lake to Vernon (then Priest's Valley) and then on to Okanagan Mission.³⁶ As more land was taken up further south on both sides of Okanagan Lake more roads had to be built.³⁷

The terrain of British Columbia is such that settlers often located in narrow river valleys or near lakes. Water transport consequently played an important role in the development of many areas.³⁸ Access to, and transportation throughout, the Okanagan Valley was facilitated by steamboat navigation of its waterways. In 1866 a sternwheeler,

³³Ormsby, "The History of Agriculture," 63.

³⁴For a comprehensive account of the transportation system that evolved in British Columbia between 1870 and 1930 which also draws attention to the relationships between that system and the developing economy and society of the province, see Cole Harris, "Moving Amid the Mountains, 1870-1930," B.C. Studies 58(Summer 1983): 3-39.

³⁵Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 153. See also pages 36-40 for a summary of the early roads in the 1850's and 60's that connected the Okanagan Valley and surrounding area to other parts of British Columbia.

³⁶Buckland, Ogopogo's Vigil, 53-54. See also J. Percy Clement, "Early Days in Kelowna," OHSR 23(1959): 116-117.

³⁷For an account of the development of road construction up to 1914, see George M. Watt, "Transportation by Road and Trail in the Okanagan Valley," OHSR 27(1963): 50-57. Better roads also improved the mail service. See Ken Mather, "Stagecoaches in the North Okanagan - 1872-1892," OHSR 52(1988): 37-40.

³⁸Barman, The West Beyond the West, 113.

the *Martin*, was built by the Hudson's Bay Company to transport passengers and freight between Kamloops and Seymour Arm at the head of Shuswap Lake.³⁹ As the Spallumcheen River was navigable as far as Enderby (then Fortune's Landing) a route existed that connected the agricultural areas in the north Okanagan to Kamloops. In 1882 the navigation of Okanagan Lake was inaugurated by Captain Thomas Dolman Shorts who began the first passenger and freight service in an open rowboat.⁴⁰ In 1886 he launched the first of many steam-powered vessels to travel the length of Okanagan Lake. The *Mary Victoria Greenhow* operated between the head of the Lake and Penticton.⁴¹ Access to the west side of Okanagan Lake was made possible by ferry.⁴²

In 1885 the mainline of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) was completed to British Columbia's coast. The railway passed through the sparsely populated southern interior region of the province skirting the shores of Shuswap Lake in the northern Okanagan Valley. Sicamous, often referred to as the "gateway to the Okanagan" became an important railway junction.⁴³ The completion of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway in 1892 had the greatest effect on the subsequent development of the area. One of the early pioneers has referred to the building of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway as "a sort of

³⁹William Alison and Helenita Harvey, "Steamboats on the Shuswap," OHSR 49(1985): 48-53.

⁴⁰Eric Sismey, "Thomas Dolman Shorts," OHSR 29(1965): 145-146.

⁴¹L. Norris, "The First Steamboat on Okanagan Lake," OHSR 3(1929): 24-26, reprinted in OHSR 18(1954): 39-41. and Joseph B. Weeks, "Steamboating on Okanagan Lake," OHSR 6(1935): 220-229. See also Otto L. Estabrooks, "Some Reasons for Stern Wheel Boats on Okanagan Lake," OHSR 32(1968): 27-30.

⁴²L.A. Hayman, "The Kelowna-Westbank Ferry," OHSR 10(1943): 39-44, and C. Noel Higgin, "The Summerland-Naramata Ferry," OHSR 15(1951): 90-95. For a recent article that brings together much of the above information, see Harley R. Hatfield, "Commercial Boats of the Okanagan: A Summary Sketch," OHSR 56(1992): 20-33.

⁴³"Excerpts From "Southern British Columbia" (The Garden of Canada): Issued by the C.P.R., 1906, to Encourage Colonists to B.C. Kootenay, Boundary and Okanagan Districts and Vancouver Island. A Brief Description of Their Wonderful Resources and Scenic Beauties," OHSR 22(1958): 21.

turning point in our lives."⁴⁴

On June 2 1886 the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway Company was incorporated by a Dominion Act, its mandate to build and operate a railway line from Sicamous to Okanagan Landing near Vernon at the head of Okanagan Lake, a distance of 51.3 miles.⁴⁵ The line was made possible by the initiative of local and provincial businessmen and the financial assistance of both the Provincial and Dominion Governments. The CPR leased the railroad and began operation on May 12, 1892. Shortly afterwards the CPR, in competition with privately-owned local enterprises, began sternwheeler operations on Okanagan Lake to provide ongoing transportation further south of Vernon thereby extending the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway to the foot of the Lake. These steamers, beginning with the luxurious *Aberdeen*, and then later the *Okanagan* and *Sicamous*, travelled down the lake to Penticton stopping to pick up or deliver passengers and goods at the many landings along the way.⁴⁶ A connecting stagecoach ran to the American border.⁴⁷ The sternwheelers played an important role in the development of the Okanagan Valley, not the least because they served as a locus of social activity for the communities along the lakeshore. Until the mid-1930's when improvements in road transportation between Penticton and Vernon made the steamer service obsolete, the lakeboats were regarded as "the lifeline of the community."⁴⁸ To many settlers they represented mail, supplies and perhaps a chance to

⁴⁴Holliday, The Valley of Youth, 256. Holliday came to the Okanagan Valley in 1889 to work as an engineer on the CPR line at Sicamous for one year. He stayed for fifty. Although rather anecdotal Holliday's account is fascinating. He vividly recreates the whole range of different types of people who made up Okanagan society in the early decades of settlement.

⁴⁵George H. Morkill, "The Shuswap and Okanagan Railway Company," OHSR 3(1929): 10-12, and 4(1930): 15-17. Reprinted in OHSR 6(1935): 114-118, and 18(1954). See also Robert Cowan, "100th Anniversary of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway," OHSR 56(1992): 7-11.

⁴⁶Joseph B. Weeks, "The Swan Song of the Sternwheelers on Okanagan Lake," OHSR 13(1949): 59-62.

⁴⁷Barman, The West Beyond the West, 114.

⁴⁸Ninety Years of Vernon, Illustrated, 20-28 especially page 27. A number of fine photographs are

visit friends thus reducing the sense of isolation so typical in small rural areas. R.J. Sugar, who immigrated to Vernon from London, England in 1905, explains:

A landing had a dock or wharf and served a few miles of settlers either way. And there would usually be a post office at this location, and probably a store....One of the strange things about it is that it didn't seem remote. We didn't feel cut off. We could go to one of the nearest landings and get on one of the boats. We could go south today and north tomorrow....We didn't feel that we were out in the sticks at all.⁴⁹

Improvements in rail transportation also took place in the period after 1892. The Kettle Valley Railway, running through Penticton and Summerland and completed in 1915, was the first railway line to be built in the southern part of the study area.⁵⁰ In the 1920's short stretches of Canadian National Railway lines were also laid. Running from the mainline at Kamloops via Armstrong to Vernon, the line then branched off into two spurlines, one to Lumby and the other to Kelowna. These lines were completed and in operation by 1925.⁵¹ A succinct summary of the long term ramifications of improvements in transport, especially transport by rail, on the subsequent development of the Okanagan Valley is provided by Thomson. He makes it clear that transportation played a decisive role in that development:

The railroad opened the Okanagan Valley to the outside world. Transportation development was closely related to the progress of white settlement because improved transportation made new industries viable and increased the value of the land and mineral resources, thus attracting new immigrants. Dramatic changes in immigration, economic activities and social development accompanied and followed railway construction, altering the face of the Okanagan.⁵²

Between 1890 and 1930 the economy of the Okanagan Valley also underwent a period of transition both in terms of land tenure and utilization. The period heralded a shift

included in this text.

⁴⁹Mitchell and Duffy, eds., Bright Sunshine, 27.

⁵⁰For details on the construction and route of the Kettle Valley Railway, see Ruth Macorquodale, "Andrew McCulloch and the Kettle Valley Railway," OHSR 13(1949): 71-82.

⁵¹Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 158-159.

⁵²Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan," 27.

in agricultural orientation as new modes of economic activity and organization were inaugurated. Large ranches based on cattle and grain were subdivided into smaller plots which were then devoted primarily to the production of fruit. Extensive ranching was replaced by intensive horticulture. Orchards had existed in the Okanagan well before the 1890's. The Oblate Fathers had planted apple trees at Okanagan Mission in the 1860's, and many of the early settlers grew fruit on a small scale for subsistence purposes. However these early attempts at fruit growing "were not commercial orchards in the modern sense, but rather the fruit-gardens of cattlemen and grain farmers."⁵³

The main impetus for the introduction of commercial fruit growing in the Okanagan Valley came through the ambitious efforts of the Scottish aristocrat, Lord Aberdeen, who was Governor General of Canada from 1893-1898. He and his wife, Lady Aberdeen, purchased two large ranches in the Okanagan, the Guisachan Ranch (480 acres) near Kelowna in 1890, and the Coldstream Ranch (13 000 acres) near Vernon in 1891. In 1892 he planted 200 acres of each ranch to orchard, and the following year subdivided part of the latter into smaller plots for sale to settlers who wished to become fruit farmers.⁵⁴ Inspired by Aberdeen other farmers embarked on similar ventures in the early 1890's.⁵⁵

This enthusiasm for fruit farming proved to be premature. The widespread

⁵³David Dendy, "The Development of the Orchard Industry in the Okanagan Valley - 1890-1914," OHSR 38(1974): 68. A shorter version of this article is published in British Columbia Historical News 23, 2(Spring 1990): 28-30.

⁵⁴It is generally accepted that Aberdeen be given the credit for this. See for example Margaret A. Ormsby, "Fruit Marketing in the Okanagan Valley of British Columbia," Agricultural History 9, 2(April 1935): 81. This article is based on material in chapter six of the author's M.A. thesis cited in the bibliography. F.W. Andrew, however, contends that James Gartrell, who pre-empted land in the Trout Creek area near Summerland and began planting apple trees in 1890, rather than Aberdeen, was the first to grow fruit commercially in the Okanagan. See "The First Commercial Orchard in Okanagan Valley," OHSR 18(1954): 53-58. Aberdeen also grew hops. Hop production continued to flourish in the Coldstream Valley until about 1914. Due to the shortage of local labour the Nez Perce Indians from Washington, travelled up to the Okanagan Valley every year to harvest the hops. See E.V. de Lautour, "The Nez Perce Indians," OHSR 14(1950): 110-118, and Patrick Bennett, "Nez Perce Indians Hop Picking at Vernon," OHSR 14(1950): 119-122.

⁵⁵By 1893 approximately 75 000 trees, most of which were apple, had been planted in the Yale-Cariboo district, mainly at Kelowna and Vernon. See Dendy, "The Development of the Orchard industry," 69.

conversion to intensive horticulture was achieved neither quickly nor easily. Hindered by a variety of problems the fruit industry remained experimental for almost another decade. Thus, important as the early plantings were as the forerunners of later developments, they did little to alter the fundamental nature of the Okanagan's economic base. Orchardists were inexperienced, lacking the necessary knowledge to successfully plant, nurture and harvest their crops. Marketing problems and a continent-wide depression that lasted from 1893-1898 also hepled account for the fruit industry's shaky start.⁵⁶ More important, and perhaps the major setback, was the lack of available land for development. Practically all the good farming land was still owned by the original ranching oligopoly. The following excerpt from the Vernon News in 1905 explains:

[A] great drawback to the development of the district and its expansion in population and importance has been the fact that large areas of land, secured by the early settlers, were held by the individual owners, who refused to sell, and thus, to a great extent, kept the small rancher from gaining a foothold in the valley.⁵⁷

It was not until the profitability of cattle and wheat ranching had passed, the first generation of landowners had retired and/or were willing to sell their properties, and economic conditions in general had improved that commercial orcharding on a large scale became possible. These conditions were fulfilled by the turn of the century.⁵⁸

The transition to an orcharding economy required large scale capital investment necessary for the purchase and development of the vast ranchlands:

A number of individual entrepreneurs felt that the time was opportune for money to be made both for the ranchers and themselves if they could convince the ranch

⁵⁶Ibid., 69-70.

⁵⁷Vernon News, Dominion Fair Number, September-October 1905, "The Valley of the Okanagan, British Columbia," 17. This piece provides a good primary account of the economy of the Okanagan at a time of transition. It is, in essence, a guided tour of the region in 1905. It describes each district as one travels from north to south through the valley emphasizing climatic and geographical features as well as the options available for land use. Attention is particularly paid to the advantages of fruit growing.

⁵⁸The circumstances that resulted in the replacement of the old ranching economy in the post-railway era with that of intensive horticulture were complex and thus beyond the scope of this thesis. For detailed discussions of the issues involved see Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan," 262-291 and 322-336. See also Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 57-58 and 68-74.

owners to sell off part of their land. In turn, the entrepreneurs believed that they could then sell the land as orchard properties and promote the development of settlement and the fruit farming industry in the valley.⁵⁹

The "boosterism" efforts of these entrepreneurs - men such as George G. MacKay, Lord Aberdeen, John Moore Robinson, Walter R. Pooley, Edward M. Carruthers and Thomas W. Stirling - played a crucial role in the development and settlement of the Okanagan.⁶⁰ They formed land development companies to administer the purchase of many of the large established ranches.⁶¹ Realizing that "water was the golden key to unlocking the hundreds of acres of potential development land"⁶² many companies also incorporated extensive and expensive irrigation schemes into their overall plans.⁶³ Once irrigated the land was planted

⁵⁹Paul M. Koroscil, "Boosterism and the Settlement Process in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia, 1890-1914," in Canadian Papers in Rural History Volume 5, ed., Donald H. Akenson (Gananoque, Ontario: Langdale Press, 1984), 76.

⁶⁰Ibid., 73-103, especially pages 98 and 100. This article provides detailed information on the biographical aspects of the individual boosters as well as discussing the nature and impact of their activities on the development of the Okanagan. Additional sources on Aberdeen include Ormsby, Coldstream - Nulli Secundus, 12-22 and *passim*, Pearson, An Early History of Coldstream and Lavington, 27-38 and *passim*, R.M. Middleton, ed., The Journal of Lady Aberdeen: The Okanagan in the Nineties (Victoria: Morriss Publishing Company Limited, 1986), Doris Shackleton, "Lord and Lady Aberdeen: Their Okanagan Ranches," The Beaver 312:2 (Autumn 1981): 10-18, and Mary Kitcher, "Coldstream Ranch Goes Back One Hundred Years," OHSR 27(1963): 119-123. On Robinson see F.W. Andrew, "Peachland, Summerland and Naramata," OHSR 19(1955): 62-72, Win Shilvock, "John Moore Robinson," British Columbia Historical News 23, 2(Spring 1990): 26-27, Mitchell and Duffy, eds., Bright Sunshine, 56-65, and Provincial Archives of British Columbia, J.M. Robinson, The Transition of the Okanagan: As Told by J.M. Robinson, [1926]. On Carruthers and Stirling see W.R. Carruthers, "Edward Maurice Carruthers, J.P.," OHSR 32(1968): 63-68, H.J. Hewetson, "Commander Thomas Willing Stirling," OHSR 15(1951): 185-186, and Arthur W. Gray, "Commander T.W. Stirling: Early Kelowna Pioneer," OHSR 35(1971): 98-100.

⁶¹The best source on the activities of the land development companies is David R.B. Dendy, "One Huge Orchard: Okanagan Land Development Companies Before the Great War," B.A. honours thesis, University of Victoria, 1976. Dendy deals mainly with the Kelowna area. See also William Quigley, "Belgo Canadian Land Company," OHSR 25(1961): 140-144, Hilda Cochrane, "Land & Agricultural Company of Canada," OHSR 26(1962): 107-110, Hilda Cochrane, "Belgian Orchard Syndicate," OHSR 26(1962): 111, Art Gray, "Central Okanagan Land Company," OHSR 29(1965): 91-97, Jane Evans, "The Rise and Fall of the L&A Ranch in the North Okanagan," OHSR 41(1977): 29-34, and Carol Scott, "Land Development Activities in the Okanagan (1890's)," OHSR 43(1979): 43-46.

⁶²Surtees, Sunshine and Butterflies, 20.

⁶³See Arthur W. Gray, "The Story of Irrigation -- Lifeblood of the Okanagan Valley's Economy," OHSR 32(1968): 69-80, Lydia Baumbrough, "Irrigation and Water Legislation in the Pioneer Years," OHSR 43(1979): 5-10, Brian Rude, "History of Vernon Irrigation," OHSR 35(1971): 108-110, and A.W. Gray, "The Wood Lake Water Company Limited," OHSR 29(1965): 133-137, Jay Ruzesky and Tom Carter, Paying For Rain: A History of the South East Kelowna Irrigation District (South East Kelowna Irrigation District,

with orchards and subdivided into smaller plots for sale to individual settlers.⁶⁴ Subdivision greatly increased the amount of land available for purchase. Some of the boosters also built storage and packing houses, canneries and processing plants, established nurseries to supply the orchards, and were responsible for the construction of primary and secondary roads in the areas of their landholdings.

The land companies not only developed the land but embarked upon aggressive advertising campaigns to sell their land and encourage further settlement in the Okanagan. Newspaper and magazine articles, brochures, pamphlets and even books extolling the virtues of the fruitlands were published and distributed not only in British Columbia and other parts of Canada, especially on the Prairies, but also overseas in Britain and Europe.⁶⁵ The CPR took part in the promotion of the Okanagan by offering a special low fare of forty dollars to potential settlers for transportation from England.⁶⁶

Improved transportation, increased availability of land, and the promises of fame and fortune made by the real estate agents and in the promotional literature, lured settlers in great numbers to the Okanagan and precipitated a land boom. The optimism and rapid

1990). Ormsby deals in detail with the history of irrigation in the period up to 1930. See "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 78-98.

⁶⁴For interesting details on the purchase dates and acreages of some of the original large landholdings in the Okanagan Valley, as well as the prices at which they were re-sold in the early 1900's see Margaret A. Ormsby, "Pre-exemption (sic) Claims in Okanagan Valley," *OHSR* 6(1935): 177-184.

⁶⁵Examples of articles published in British Columbia during the land boom years 1900-1913 include H.M. Walker, "Enderby, the Gateway of the Okangan," *Westward Ho! Magazine* 2, 6(June 1908): 67-69, "Armstrong, B.C.," *Westward Ho! Magazine* 2, 6(June 1908): 70-72, "Vernon, the Hub of the Okanagan," *Westward Ho! Magazine* 3, 2(September 1908): 161-165, A.T. Robinson, "Summerland," *Westward Ho! Magazine* 3, 4(November 1908): 359-365, Walter R. Pooley, "Kelowna -- The City Desirable," *Westward Ho! Magazine* 3, 5(December 1908): 446-451, "Salmon Arm," *Westward Ho! Magazine* 4, 4(April 1909): 262-265, "Naramata: A Fruit Growing Community," *Westward Ho! Magazine* 5, 1(July 1909): 448-452, W.J. Clement, "Fruit Growing in the Okanagan: One of the Most Productive Fruit Belts in the World; Its Development; Its Opportunities," *Man-to-Man Magazine* 6, 8(September 1910): 633-643, and W. Beaver Jones, "Kelowna - The Orchard City of the Okanagan," *British Columbia Magazine* 9, 7(July 1913): 391-396. See J.S. Redmayne, *Fruit Farming on the "Dry Belt" of British Columbia: The Why and Wherefore* 4th ed. (London, England: The Times Book Club [1909]) for an example of a piece of promotional literature published in Britain, and aimed at, the British.

⁶⁶Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia : A History* (Vancouver: Macmillan of Canada, 1958), 314 and 353. See also "Excerpts From "Southern British Columbia,"" 19-25.

growth that characterized this boom reached its peak in the years before the First World War. Indeed by 1913 "boosterism was at a "feeverish (sic) pitch."⁶⁷ Between 1901 and 1913 the number of fruit trees planted in the Okanagan had increased by 525%.⁶⁸ By 1913 the Okanagan was the leading orchard region in the province with over twenty million pounds of fruit being produced in that year, an amount worth more than 640 000 dollars to the farmers and with 30 000 people dependent on the success or failure of the crop.⁶⁹ Land values rose to unprecedented rates. By 1912 irrigated land was selling for between \$200-400 an acre, whereas a fully developed orchard in bearing could cost as much as \$2 000 an acre.⁷⁰ Dorothea Walker's comments on the nature of Okanagan society in the early years of the twentieth century are telling when she suggests that "Everybody was fruit-mad in those days."⁷¹ Significantly, the news of the land boom in the Okanagan "encouraged unbridled speculation" in other parts of the province such as the West Kootenays and the south and central interior, as many settlers embarked on orcharding hoping for, although not always achieving, the same measure of success as those farmers in the Okanagan.⁷²

The collapse of the Okanagan land boom occurred as rapidly as its meteoric growth. Inflated claims as to the quality and fertility of the lands advertized as suitable for orchard, poor land management due to inexperience, rapid over-production of fruit and disorganized marketing of the fruit crops were all contributing factors in this collapse:

Some of the promotional efforts in selling orchard land to overseas buyers were highly questionable and the cause of great distress to many improperly informed, inexperienced purchasers encouraged by pie-in-the-sky prospectuses of

⁶⁷Koroscil, "Boosterism and the Settlement Process," 97.

⁶⁸Ormsby, "Fruit Marketing," 82.

⁶⁹Dendy, "The Development of the Orchard Industry," 73.

⁷⁰Ibid., 71.

⁷¹Mitchell and Duffy, eds., Bright Sunshine, 54.

⁷²Barman, The West Beyond the West, 186-187.

land agents....

Great hardships were endured by the pioneer orchardists because of totally inadequate irrigation systems, recurrent winter freezes, the planting of numerous and unsuited varieties, minor element deficiencies, the invasion of codling moth...and above all, by repeated failures to establish a sound marketing system backed by unified grower support.⁷³

Disaster came in 1912. Dendy explains:

By this time many of the new orchards were coming into bearing. A heavy crop in the Okanagan coincided with similar heavy crops in Washington and Oregon, and the result was that the usual markets on the Canadian prairies were glutted with the American surplus at low prices, and Okanagan fruit, which came onto the market later than the American crop, was put at an enormous disadvantage, with resultant disasterously low prices.⁷⁴

A crash in the British Columbian real estate and investment market in early 1913 marked the final end to the boom. The fruit industry almost ground to a standstill. Land sales dropped dramatically. New plantings ceased and many of the marginal or failed orchards were abandoned. After 1919, however, conditions began to stabilize as attempts were made to consolidate the fruit industry by solving some of its problems. New orchards of more suitable varieties of fruit were planted and most on a smaller scale and thus more realistically related to market requirements. In addition farmers were forced to found cooperative organizations to facilitate more extensive marketing of their fruit crops.⁷⁵ Thus by 1921 the acreage of fruit trees planted in the Okanagan, as compared to 1901, had risen by 674%.⁷⁶

Throughout the 1920's the production of fruit remained a dominant economic activity in the study area. As a result of major subdivision activity between approximately 1900 to 1910 the industry was typically characterized by small units of production, the

⁷³D.V. Fisher, "History of Fruit Growing in the B.C. Interior," QHRS 42(1978): 72-73.

⁷⁴Dendy, "The Development of the Orchard Industry," 72.

⁷⁵For details see Dendy, "'A Cent a Pound or on the Ground'." See also Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 99-119, Ormsby, "Fruit Marketing," and F.M. Buckland, "The Beginning of Co-operative Marketing," QHRS 15(1951): 148-179

⁷⁶Ormsby, "Fruit Marketing," 83.

average size being between six and twelve acres. Most of the farms were owner-occupied and operated mainly on the basis of household production. At mid-decade approximately 1 400 plots of land were being worked by individual fruit farmers and the members of their families.⁷⁷ In 1930 the annual value of the fruit industry in the Okanagan was \$5 000 000.⁷⁸

Although orcharding accounted for the greatest proportion of agricultural production in the 1920's, the Okanagan Valley was by no means a one-crop region. Early attempts at growing fruit in the Spallumcheen Valley proved to be unsuccessful, the extreme cold in the winter killing the majority of the trees. The experience of the Skelton family was typical of many other disappointed settlers who, convinced by the persuasive advertising of land development companies, came to the Spallumcheen Valley with the purpose of growing fruit. They arrived in 1907 and a short time later planted forty acres of their land to orchard. By the late 1930's only two or three dozen trees remained:

Fruit growing was given up after World War I because Armstrong winters were simply too harsh for the tender trees....Mixed farming proved a more practical enterprise for the area. Workers and the owners of small holdings supplemented their incomes by logging during the winter as well as cutting firewood and railway ties.⁷⁹

Thus out of necessity the industry gradually became localized in the area between Vernon and Penticton where the climate was more conducive to growing fruit. In the northern part of the study area other types of land use, especially mixed farming and lumbering were pursued.⁸⁰ Cultivated hay (alfalfa, timothy, clover, grasses) as well as cereal grains

⁷⁷Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan," 327. Thomson obtained some of these details from a fruit survey of the province conducted between 1921-1925 by F.M. Clement and W.J. Wilcox of the University of British Columbia. See L. DeW. Mallory, "A Short Summary of the Tree Fruits Survey," Victoria, 1929. Cited in Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 117.

⁷⁸Ormsby, "Fruit Marketing," 97.

⁷⁹Moyreen McKechnie, "The Skelton Family," *OHSR* 48(1984): 123.

⁸⁰For details on these industries see Ormsby, "A Study of the Okanagan Valley," 120-141. See also Ronald Rupert Heal, "Farms and Enterprises in the North Okanagan," *OHSR* 16(1952): 121-127. The 1931

(wheat, barley, oats) were important field crops in the northern Okanagan. A variety of vegetables were grown in large quantities in the many truck gardens. In the area around Vernon, and also in the Kelowna area, the principal crop was tomatoes, although other vegetables such as potatoes, onions, cabbages, turnips, parsnips, carrots, beets, and cucumbers were also successfully grown. At Armstrong the major crops were celery and lettuce, and later asparagus.⁸¹ Tobacco-growing, especially around the Kelowna area, had been a significant industry since the 1890's, and by the late 1920's was one of the most important intensive crops grown in the southern part of the study area.⁸²

Dairying was a significant part of mixed farming in the northern part of the valley, especially during the 1920's when a good local market for a variety of dairy products had developed. Cream was collected in cream gathering trucks from the small farms that raised cattle in outlying districts and shipped to one of the creameries for processing. The most important of these was the Okanagan Valley Cooperative Creamery Association which had plants at Armstrong, Enderby and Vernon, although by the end of the 1920's all processing was centralized at Vernon. Some farmers even raised bees and sold honey.

Logging was a long established industry in the Okanagan. Early saw-mills were built at Peachland, Summerland and Kelowna but the largest logging areas were further north where the timber supply was greater.⁸³ The main source of lumber was located in the region of Mabel and Sugar Lakes and throughout the huge watershed of the Shuswap River.⁸⁴ Enderby, as a result of its central position in the district, became the main location

Census provides detailed lists of the types and quantities of the various crops, livestock and forest products on which the economy of the Okanagan Valley was based. See Volume VIII, pages 744-757.

⁸¹Judy Reimche, "Armstrong: From Celery to Cheese," British Columbia Historical News 23, 2(Spring 1990): 19-20.

⁸²See Helen Payne, "The Tobacco Industry in Kelowna 1894-1932," OHSR 46(1982): 29-37.

⁸³See, for example, Hamish C. MacNeill, "Logging and Sawmills in Peachland," OHSR 44(1980): 60-65.

⁸⁴Two local histories that deal with this area are Deuling, Beyond Shuswap Falls and Bawtree,

of the early lumber mills.⁸⁵ Mills were also established, and still in operation in the 1920's, at Armstrong. In addition to lumber manufacturing, and especially after 1914, pole-cutting became important as a number of American companies began operations in the valley. Most of the poles came from the Sugar Lake and Trinity Valley areas where lumber camps were established. Pole yards existed at Enderby, Mara, Grindrod, and Lumby. The poles, along with fence posts and railway ties, were shipped to eastern Canada and to the eastern United States.

In addition to the main economic activities already described some of the settlers in the Okanagan found employment with the C.P.R., especially in communities such as Okanagan Landing and Sicamous, both of which were busy rail terminals. Okanagan Landing was also an important boat landing centre with a thriving shipyard. Work was also available on one of the many road building crews involved in improving the road system throughout the area.

Between 1890-1930 significant changes occurred in the settlement pattern in the study area. The initial impetus came as a result of improved transportation routes which opened up the Okanagan and thus facilitated easier access to the region. Settlers moved into the area in rapidly increasing numbers from both east and west. The activities of the land development companies continued, and even accelerated, the changes already underway.

From the 1880's onwards the population of the Okanagan increased tremendously from 817 in 1881 to 3 360 in 1891, 12 085 in 1901, and 28 066 in 1911. Thereafter the rate of immigration slowed down so that by the end of the next decade, primarily as a result of the crash in the land boom and the effects of the First World War, there was a marked decline in growth. In 1921 the total population stood at 35 522. Between 1921 and 1931

Reflections Along the Spallumcheen. See also Isobel Simard, "Reminiscences of Mabel Lake 1907-1967," OHSR 34(1970): 145-155.

⁸⁵G.L. Ormsby, "Saw-Milling at Enderby," OHSR 12(1948): 109-111.

the population of the Okanagan grew by only 5 001 to 40 523.⁸⁶

The distribution of the population also changed in the decades after 1890. Prior to that date the majority of settlers lived in the Head-of-the-Lake-Spallumcheen-Mission regions. As immigration increased the pattern changed to a more even distribution throughout the area with settlers also taking up land to the east in the Coldstream Valley and out along the shores of the Shuswap River and its surrounding area to Mabel and Sugar Lakes. Communities also grew up on the west side of Okanagan Lake at locations such as Peachland and Summerland.

The type of settler who came to the Okanagan was particularly important. In part the composition of the population was determined by the activities of land development companies whose success depended on a steady stream of settlers with money coming out to the Okanagan to buy up their land. The companies often directed their propaganda machines to the geographical areas with which they were the most familiar, usually from where their finance originated. Many of the land companies were backed by capital from foreign firms, and as the most prevalent were British, a sizeable proportion of the individuals who took up land in the Okanagan in the period 1890-1914 were from Britain. The influence of Lord Aberdeen was important in this respect. When he subdivided his land on the Coldstream Ranch he made no attempt to sell the plots to people in the local area. Rather, he was more concerned to attract settlers from England and Scotland that were, as Lady Aberdeen described them, "of a very good class."⁸⁷ Many such young middle and upper class men of means were attracted to the Okanagan and played an important role in its development:

⁸⁶1931 Census, Volume 1, 350-358. For the period 1921-1931 details on the population of Subdivision A are available. Over that decade the population rose by 2 680 from 21 982 in 1921 to 24 662 in 1931, an increase of 12.2%. Thus illustrating that the increases in population in Subdivision A were representative of the general population trends for the whole of Census Division No. 3.

⁸⁷Middleton, ed., The Journal of Lady Aberdeen, 55.

These men were to place an indelible stamp on the Okanagan landscape. They had the financial capability to purchase expensive land, wait for it to become productive and operate it as gentlemen farmers. Virtually hundreds of these immigrants established themselves in the Okanagan on small acreages, nearly all of them hoping to gain their living through fruit production.⁸⁸

Not all young Englishmen were so industrious, or had such a long-lasting influence on Okanagan society. Many, referred to as "remittance men," were individuals, usually well educated, who had been sent out to the colonies because, for a variety of reasons, they did not conform to the norms of English society. Often regarded as "a wastrel" such a man "got an allowance from the Old Country to keep him out of the way. He didn't have to earn his living."⁸⁹ An early pioneer of Peachland describes their lifestyle:

Very few of them would hire out to work. They all had good horses, many of them owned a small cabin and a bit of ground to scratch around in, but they never tried to raise a crop. Many of them lived on credit, lived well, paid their store bill when the money came from "Home" and would take a trip to Kelowna for a short spree and brought back a bottle or two for their friends. This life died out after 1914.⁹⁰

Many other British settlers were from "simple working class backgrounds, men and women seeking a better life in a newer land."⁹¹ Although British immigrants continued to choose the Okanagan as their destination and some took up land under Soldier Settlement Board schemes after 1918, the massive influx of settlers that had characterized the early 1900's had practically dried up by 1914. Nevertheless, much of the Okanagan, particularly the Coldstream and many of the communities around Kelowna, retained their distinctly British character throughout the 1920's and beyond.

⁸⁸Thomson, "A History of the Okanagan," 326.

⁸⁹Mitchell and Duffy, eds., Bright Sunshine, 31-38, especially page 36. For further discussion of the British influence in the Okanagan see pages 39-48.

⁹⁰Olive B. Clarke, "Peachland in the Pioneer Days," OHSR 39(1975): 186. Excerpts from this article are also published in Peachland Memories, 26-35.

⁹¹Barman, "The World That British Settlers Made," 612. Barman's discussion of British emigration to British Columbia, and particularly the Okanagan Valley, focusses mainly on the reasons for, and impact of, immigrants from the middle and upper classes. See also her "Ethnicity in the Pursuit of Status: British Middle and Upper-Class Emigration to British Columbia in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries," Canadian Ethnic Studies/Etudes ethniques au Canada 18, 1(1986): 32-51, and "British Columbia's Gentlemen Farmers," History Today 34(April 1984): 9-15.

Other areas of the Okanagan were settled by Canadians. J.M. Robinson, for example, the Manitoban newspaper publisher and land booster, promoted the sale of his fruit lots in Peachland, Summerland and Naramata in Manitoba. Like Aberdeen he was in no doubt as to the kind of people he wished to attract. A brochure published in 1912, advertising the sale of land in Naramata suggested that "you would not wish to find yourself surrounded with garlic eating, foreign speaking neighbours, with whom you could have nothing in common socially. The class of people coming to Naramata is not of that type. They are the very best Canadian stuff."⁹²

The Okanagan Valley attracted immigrants from many other different sources. During the years up to 1930 there was a slow but steady movement of settlers into the Okanagan who were neither of British nor English Canadian origin. Many came during the early depression years at the end of the 1920's in the hope of finding employment. The influx of newcomers of diverse cultural backgrounds resulted in the development of pockets of settlement with distinct ethnic identities.⁹³ The Chinese at Armstrong, Swan Lake and Kelowna, Finns at Mara, Swedes and Norwegians at Mabel Lake, Germans at Medora Creek, Italians and Japanese at Kelowna, Ukrainians at Seymour Arm and then Grindrod,⁹⁴ Bohemians and Czechoslovakians at Trinity Creek⁹⁵ and French Canadians at Lumby⁹⁶ are all examples of the many ethnic groups that were an integral part of Okanagan society. By 1931 approximately 57% of the population of the study area was Canadian-

⁹²Okanagan Securities Brochure, 1912. Cited in Koroscil, "Boosterism and the Settlement Process," 95.

⁹³For a brief account of the many nationalities that have settled in the Okanagan since 1811 see J.L. Monk, "The Okanagan Mix," *OHSR* 51(2987): 27-28.

⁹⁴Dolores Weber, "A History of the Ukrainian People in Grindrod," *OHSR* 43(1979): 30-42.

⁹⁵Wejr, "Memories of Trinity Creek Area," and Bawtree, *Reflections Along the Spallumcheen*, *passim*.

⁹⁶For a history of the Lumby area which emphasizes its French heritage see *Grassroots of Lumby*.

born, with 24% British-born and 19% foreign-born.⁹⁷

As the population of the Okanagan increased a number of urban centres were established as the focal points for trade and commerce. Vernon, the first to be incorporated into a city in 1892, was then followed by Enderby and Kelowna (1905) and finally Armstrong (1913).⁹⁸ By 1931 the population of the two principal cities, Kelowna and Vernon, had risen to 4 655 and 3 937 respectively. Armstrong and Enderby remained much smaller in size with populations of 989 and 555.⁹⁹

Despite this relatively large concentration of people in urban areas, the study area remained predominantly rural. The 1931 Census figures for Subdivision A - Okanagan and Shuswap, Upper show that 55.7% of the total population lived outside of the main cities in the surrounding countryside. Moreover 72.2% of those residing in these rural districts lived on farms.¹⁰⁰ While many of these holdings were well-established and made a good living, many others were too small to be economic and provided only a bare subsistence. Many families made only a marginal living farming, trapping or logging in the "bush." A massive gulf existed between the wealthy orchardists and the mass of impoverished farmers. Settlers coming to the Okanagan often arrived with more hope than money, and unable to afford the high prices asked for agricultural land in the vicinity of Vernon and Kelowna, moved out to the surrounding areas with the purpose of finding suitable land to preempt: "Folks were attracted to the land in outlying areas because they could homestead with little financial output, whereas land around Vernon was privately owned and selling

⁹⁷1931 Census, Volume II, 246. These figures correspond to those for the whole of Census Division No. 3 which were 57%, 22% and 21% respectively.

⁹⁸Ibid., Volume I, 193-4.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰1931, Census, Volume VIII, 760-61. For Census Division No. 3 as a whole these figures are reversed with the rural population accounting for 71.4% of the total, 54.8% of which lived on farms.

for more princely sums."¹⁰¹

Typically, individual farms were geographically isolated indicating the scattered nature of settlement in the Okanagan Valley in this period.¹⁰² While improved water and overland transportation networks linked the larger, densely populated centres, travel and communication between the more remote districts was excessively slow, often unreliable, and sometimes impossible due to unyielding terrain and adverse climatic conditions during the winter months. In these out-of-the-way settlements in the Okanagan Valley, as elsewhere in North America:

[L]ife was hard - a struggle against the vicissitudes of nature to scratch out a subsistence - and usually meant constant work, with few rewards or opportunities for human contact beyond a restricted geographical area. Neighbourhoods became self-sufficient cocoons, insular in attitudes and suspicious of any intrusions by outsiders.¹⁰³

For those living such "sequestered" and "self-contained" lives their immediate vicinity became their "exclusive world" out of which they rarely ventured.¹⁰⁴ The very nature of rural life ensured that localism, by which I mean attachment to, and identification with local communities, was the overriding influence in determining the framework within which the pattern and pace of the everyday lived experience in the remote settlements of the Okanagan Valley was both defined and conducted. Ultimately each community was unique, representing in essence a separate and distinct self-contained society, whose individualism

¹⁰¹LaVonne Byron, "The Better Halves: The Way of Life and Influence of Women in the Vernon Area From Settlement to 1921," *OHSR* 45(1981): 68.

¹⁰²In 1931 the population density of Census Division No. 3 was 3.78 people per square mile. Comparable figures for the whole of the province, and the districts with the highest (Division No. 4 - Lower Fraser Valley and Howe Sound) and lowest (Division No. 10 - Liard, Finlay-Parsnip, Beaton River and Kiskatinaw River) population densities area, were 1.93, 38.90 and 0.08 people per square mile respectively. See 1931, *Census*, Volume II, 6. Figures for Subdivision A - Okanagan and Shuswap, Upper are not available.

¹⁰³William A. Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place: Schooling, Society, and Reform in Rural Virginia, 1870-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 13. The influence of localism on the development of rural education is a central theme of this book.

¹⁰⁴*Ibid.*, 16.

was determined by the precise physical, economic, social, political and personal circumstances existant in the particular locality. It was in settlements such as these that the one-room schools discussed in the next chapter were located.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS 1874-1930

As settlement increased in the Okanagan Valley the provision of educational services became a growing concern. Inspector John Martin of the Kamloops Inspectorate, which included a small number of the schools in the study area, pointed out in his report for 1914:

The increase in the number of schools has and must keep pace with the increase in population. Provision must be made...for the establishment of many schools in the outlying districts, as pre-emptors with families hesitate to locate where educational facilities are not provided.¹

From 1874, when the first officially recognized school district was created, until 1930, ninety schools were established within the geographical boundaries of the study area. Sixty-five of these schools were operating in rural districts between 1920 and 1930.² For

¹AR, 1914, A53. Interestingly, a government lands survey document published in 1929 noted that one of the chief reasons for the lack of settlers in the Trinity Valley area in 1920 was "the absence of a school." See Extracts From Reports, 118.

²Details on the history of individual public schools in the study area can be found in Edith M. Aitken, "Early Records of Salmon Valley and Glenemma Schools, OHSR 29(1965): 49-53; Edith M. Aitken, "Early Settlers of Salmon River Valley," OHSR 15(1952): 100-107; Dorothea Allison, "Kelowna's First School Teacher," OHSR 18(1954): 98-101; James Bell, "Knob Hill School," OHSR 36(1972): 149-150; Mrs. William Brent, "The Priest's Valley School," OHSR 6(1935): 64-65; F.M. Buckland, "Okanagan School," OHSR 6(1935): 53-55, reprinted in OHSR 17(1953): 95-97; O.B. Carlson, "Consolidation of School Districts in Armstrong and Enderby Area," OHSR 50(1986): 80-81; Joan Chamberlain, "Mission Creek School," OHSR 48(1984): 162-168; Allan H. Davidson, "Westbank Schools," OHSR 15(1951): 132-136; David Dendy, "Schools at Okanagan Mission Before 1885," OHSR 40(1976): 38-43; Donald W. Ferguson, "L.J. Botting - Falkland's First Teacher," OHSR 54(1990): 135-136; Jordie Fulton, "Armstrong Elementary School," OHSR 52(1988): 164-68; Art Gray, "The Rutland School's 50th Anniversary," OHSR 29(1965): 83-87; Arthur W. Gray, "First Okanagan School - Still Functioning," OHSR 33(1969): 82-86; Kathy Halksworth, "Grindrod Schools 1900-1976," OHSR 40(1976): 51-52; Wilma (Clement) Hayes, "My Favourite Teachers at Ellison Public School," OHSR 53(1989): 132-137; Harry W. Hobbs, "The First Half-Century of the Rutland Schools," OHSR 15(1951): 126-131; Marguerite Hodgson, "Okanagan Landing School Days," OHSR 34(1970): 116-119; James E. Jamieson, "Early Days' Schools in Armstrong and Spallumcheen," OHSR 36(1972): 161-163; Charles LeDuc, "Early Settlement in the Municipality of Spallumcheen," OHSR 15(1951): 67-72; Ruby E. Lidstone, ed., Schools of Enderby and District 1896-1965 N.p., 1965; Ruby E. Lidstone, "A.L. Fortune School, Enderby, B.C.," OHSR 40(1976): 99-105; S.A. MacDonald, "Summerland Schools," OHSR 30(1966): 26-30; Leanne MacKay, "Grindrod Schools," OHSR 43(1979): 159-160; F.T. Marriage, "School Expansion in Kelowna," OHSR 18(1954): 102-103; Minnie E. Mawhinney, "Black Mountain School Days," OHSR 12(1948): 112-114; Lucy (Hill) McCormick, "Early Rural Schools of Vernon and White Valley," OHSR 46(1982): 38-44; Heather O'Brien, "The Vernon Commonage School," OHSR 36(1972): 61-64; H.D. Pritchard and Clarence Fulton, "Story of the Vernon

the most part they were located in the small towns and rural settlements that were strung along the valley bottom from Seymour Arm to Penticton, and to the east through the Coldstream Valley following the course of the Shuswap River to Mabel and Sugar Lakes (see Map 2 and Table 1).³

A detailed examination of the chronological development of schools in the study area reveals a correlation between the increase in the number of schools established and the geographical locations in which they appeared, and the settlement patterns, local economic activity and changes in transportation outlined in the preceding chapter.⁴ Prior to

Schools," OHSR 15(1951): 137-143; Provincial Archives of British Columbia, John Jessop, Correspondence of the Superintendent of Education, and School Inspector's Diary, 1872-1876; Edith Raymer, "The Story of the Three Watson Brothers," OHSR 14(1950): 57-63; Owen Romaine, "Early School Buses and Their Drivers," OHSR 50(1986): 102-106; School District #23, Kelowna, Ellison Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1920-1930; School District #23, Kelowna, South Okanagan Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1920-1922; School District #23, Kelowna, Westbank Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1919-1922; School District #23, Kelowna, Westbank Townsite Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1910-1930; School District #23, Kelowna, Wood's Lake Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1909-1930; George F. Stirling, "Dry Valley School," OHSR 19(1955): 85-86; University of British Columbia, Main Library, Special Collections Division, Howay-Reid Collection, Okanagan Mission Public School, Minutes of Meetings and Account Book, 1875-1909; Vernon Museum and Archives, Pamela Hughes, "The Keddleston Story," 1974; Vernon Museum and Archives, "Vernon and District School Histories: 1971 Centennial Project," 1971; Vernon Museum and Archives, Oyama Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1915-1923, Hester (Mrs R.B.) White, "Governesses," OHSR 23(1959): 47, and Stan Wejr, "Memories of the Trinity Creek Area in the 1920's," OHSR 50(1986): 78-79. Information on school histories is also included in the relevant sections of most of the local histories listed in footnote 9 in Chapter 3.

³A good source of information as to the locations of these small settlements as well as interesting details on the origins of their names can be found in "An Historical Gazetteer of Okanagan-Similkameen," OHSR 22(1958): 123-169. See also A.G. Harvey, "Okanagan Place Names," OHSR 12(1948): 193-223.

⁴This thesis is concerned exclusively with the Public Schools that operated in rural districts in the Okanagan Valley. Thus only those officially recognized government supported schools enumerated in the AR's were examined. No attempt was made to include details on the private schools that existed in the study area for the same period. Material that focuses on the history of private education in the Okanagan Valley includes: Barman, "The World That British Settlers Made," in British Columbia, comp. and eds., Ward and McDonald, 600-626; Jean Barman, "Growing up British in British Columbia: The Vernon Preparatory School 1914-1946," in Schooling and Society, eds., Wilson and Jones, 119-138; Jessica Frances Harding, "Chesterfield School, Kelowna, B.C.," OHSR 39(1975): 115-118; Hugh F. Mackie, "Private Schools in the Okanagan Valley," OHSR 12(1948): 160-165, Aileen Porteous, "St. Michael's School," OHSR 35(1971): 149-151, and Winston A. Shillock, "Private Schools in the Okanagan," British Columbia Historical News 23, 2(Spring 1990): 25-26. For a more general look at the history of private education in British Columbia, see Jean Barman, Growing Up British in British Columbia: Boys in Private School (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984).

Privately run schools were also sometimes set up by motivated settlers, prior to the existence of a government supported school, in districts where the number of school-aged children was too few to warrant government assistance. In the Lavington area, for example, local residents opened their own school in April 1913. They built their own one-room schoolhouse, hired the services of a teacher and paid her salary for the

Confederation the choices available to the settlers living within the boundaries of the study area, in terms of educating their offspring, were limited. As early as 1863 the Oblate Fathers at Okanagan Mission established a school for local white and metis children in the local community.⁵ Alternatives to the elementary education provided by the missionaries, however, were few. Most early settlers could either have their children educated at home by private tutors,⁶ or send them to the coast or to eastern Canada for their schooling.

The newly created Province of British Columbia passed the Public School Act in 1872 which assumed responsibility for the "establishment, maintenance, and management of Public Schools throughout the Province."⁷ John Jessop, who was appointed as the first Superintendent of Education,⁸ was "particularly concerned with the problem of providing schooling for the little mining and ranching communities of the vast interior plateau."⁹ With this goal in mind he travelled thousands of miles each year throughout the province - by

six months prior to the government taking over in September 1913, when enrolment numbers had risen sufficiently. See Vernon Museum and Archives, "Vernon and District School Histories: 1971 Centennial Project," 1971, 18, 23, and Pearson, An Early History of Coldstream and Lavington, 75-76. A similar situation occurred at Oyama School prior to the opening of a government supported school in the school year for 1909-1910. See Kalamalka Women's Institute, comp., "History of Oyama," [1951], 20. Such schools were also not included in this study.

⁵See Dendy, "Schools at Okanagan Mission," 38-39, and Thomson, "History of the Okanagan," 96-98.

⁶These options were only really available to the more wealthy settlers. On the use of private tutors see Hester White, "Governesses," OHSR 23(1959): 47. The children of families who lived on small subsistence farms in isolated locations in the study area, whose parents could not afford to have them educated privately, often received no education at all until a public school was established within walking distance of their home. As George F. Stirling, a former teacher who taught at Dry Valley School when it opened in 1908, recalls: "As there was no school for miles around, some of the children had been brought up without any schooling whatever. One boy, aged 16, could neither read nor write nor count." See Stirling, "Dry Valley School, 85.

⁷AR, 1874, 35.

⁸For an account of the life and work of Jessop see F. Henry Johnson, John Jessop: Goldseeker and Educator (Vancouver: Mitchell Press, 1971).

⁹Dendy, "Schools at Okanagan Mission," 43.

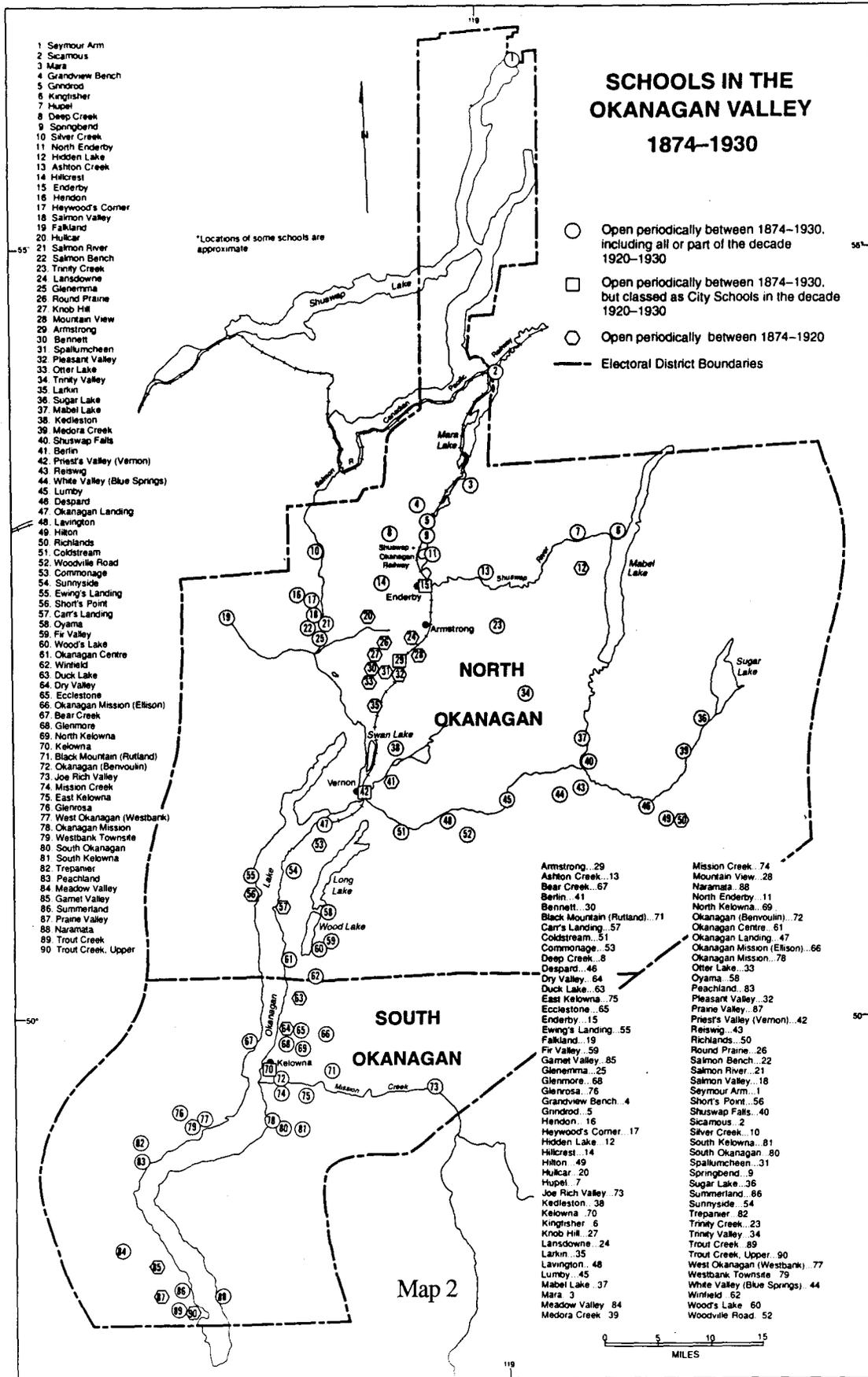


TABLE 1

DEVELOPMENT OF SCHOOLS IN OKANAGAN VALLEY 1874 - 1930

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1874			Okanagan School District created July 31
1875	Okanagan		
1884	Priest's Valley Spallumcheen		
1885		Spallumcheen	
1886	Round Prairie Spallumcheen	Priest's Valley	
1887	Priest's Valley		
1888			Priest's Valley renamed Vernon
1889	Enderby	Vernon	
1890	Vernon	Spallumcheen	
1891	Lansdowne		
1892	Coldstream Spallumcheen		Vernon upgraded to two divisions
1893	Armstrong Kelowna White Valley		
1894	Deep Creek Otter Lake Okanagan Mission		Vernon upgraded to three divisions
1895	Mara (A) Okanagan Landing (A) South Okanagan		Assisted (A) designation introduced
1896	Short's Point (A)		
1897	Black Mountain (A) West Okanagan (A)	Coldstream	Vernon upgraded to four divisions

TABLE 1 (continued)

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1898	Coldstream Commonage (A) Lumby Peachland (A)	Okanagan Landing (A) Short's Point (A)	White Valley renamed Blue springs
1899	Okanagan Landing (A)		Mara raised to rural school status
1900	Glenemma (A)	Coldstream Round Prairie	Peachland raised to rural school status Armstrong upgraded to two divisions
1901	Coldstream Round Prairie	Okanagan Mission	
1902	Okanagan Mission		Enderby upgraded to two divisions Vernon opens high school Vernon raised to city school status
1903	Mabel Lake (A) Silver Creek (A) Summerland (A)	Black Mountain (A) Blue Springs Coldstream	Kelowna upgraded to two divisions
1904	Black Mountain (A) Berlin (A)		Armstrong upgraded to three divisions Summerland raised to rural school status Vernon upgraded to five divisions
1905	Blue Springs Duck Lake (A) Prairie Valley (A) Shuswap Falls (A)		Enderby raised to city school status Kelowna raised to city school status West Okanagan renamed Westbank (A)
1906	Carr's Landing (A) Sunnyside (A)	Carr's Landing (A)	Armstrong opens high school Kelowna upgraded to three divisions Peachland upgraded to two divisions Westbank raised to rural school status
1907	Kedleston (A) Naramata North Enderby	Berlin (A) Deeep Creek (A) Duck Lake (A) Round Praire	Armstrong upgraded to four divisions Kelowna upgraded to four divisions Spallumcheen Rural Municipality School District (hereafter RMSD) created incorporating Armstrong, Hullcar, Knob Hill, Lansdowne, Otter Lake and Pleasant Valley Schools Summerland RMSD created incorporating Summerland, Prairie Valley and Garnet Valley Schools Vernon upgraded to six divisions

TABLE 1 (continued)

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1908	Berlin (A) Dry Valley (A) Duck Lake (A) Mission Creek Okanagan Centre (A) Salmon River (A) Salmon Valley (A)	Shuswap Falls (A)	Bennett School opened in Spallumcheen RMSD Black Mountain raised to rural school status Enderby upgraded to three divisions Kelowna opens high school Okanagan Mission renamed Ellison Summerland upgraded to two divisions
1909	Oyama (A) Reiswig (A) Shuswap Falls (A) Sicamous (A)	Duck Lake (A) Dry Valley (A) Mabel Lake (A)	Armstrong High School upgraded to two divisions Coldstream RMSD created Enderby opens high school Peachland RMSD created Summerland upgraded to three divisions Trout Creek School opened in Summerland RMSD Veron upgraded to eight divisions
1910	Hilton (A) Richlands (A) Westbank Townsite (A) Wood's Lake	Berlin (A) Reiswig (A)	Armstrong upgraded to five divisions Glenemma raised to rural school status Kelowna upgraded to five divisions Peachland opens high school
1911	Ashton Creek (A) East Kelowna (A) Grindrod (A) Hidden Lake (A) Mabel Lake (A) Reiswig (A) Seymour Arm (A)	Blue Springs Hidden Lake (A) North Enderby Shuswap Falls (A) Westbank	Armstrong upgraded to six divisions Black Mountain upgraded to two divisions Enderby upgraded to four divisions Larkin School opened in Spallumcheen RMSD Okanagan Landing raised to rural school status Vernon High School upgraded to two divisions Westbank Townsite raised to rural school status

TABLE 1 (continued)

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1912	North Kelowna	Commonage (A) Sunnyside (A)	Enderby upgraded to five divisions Kelowna upgraded to seven divisions Kelowna High School upgraded to two divisions Lavington School opened in Coldstream RMSD Summerland RMSD consolidated into one central school of five divisions Summerland opens high school Trepanier School opened in Peachland RMSD Vernon upgraded to ten divisions
1913	Falkland (A) North Enderby Sunnyside (A) Trout Creek, Upper (A)		Armstrong raised to city school status (no longer in Spallumcheen RMSD) Enderby downgraded to four divisions Grindrod raised to rural school status Kelowna upgraded to eight divisions Oyama raised to rural school status Vernon upgraded to thirteen divisions
1914	Bear Creek (A) Deep Creek (A) Glenrosa (A) Shuswap Falls (A) Woodville Road (A)	Sunnyside (A)	Armstrong High School upgraded to three divisions Enderby upgraded to five divisions Garnet Valley School in Summerland RMSD re-opened Kelowna upgraded to twelve divisions Lumby upgraded to two divisions Naramata upgraded to two divisions Vernon upgraded to fifteen divisions
1915	Hupel (A) Sunnyside (A)		Black Mountain re-named Rutland Kelowna downgraded to eleven divisions Okanagan Landing upgraded to two divisions
1916	Meadow Valley (A)	Sunnyside (A) Woodville Road (A)	Armstrong upgraded to seven divisions Armstrong High School downgraded to two divisions Kelowna downgraded to ten divisions Mara upgraded to two divisions Naramata raised to superior school status Rutland upgraded to three divisions Rutland raised to superior school status Summerland High School upgraded to two divisions

TABLE 1 (continued)

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1917	Hendon (A) Woodville Road (A)	Salmon River (A)	Armstrong downgraded to six divisions Enderby downgraded to four divisions Naramata downgraded to one division Naramata reduced to rural school status Okanagan Landing downgraded to one division Oyama upgraded to two divisions Silver Creek raised to rural school status Trout Creek school re-opened in Summerland RMSD Vernon downgraded to fourteen divisions
1918	Grandview Bench (A) Salmon Bench (A)		Armstrong upgraded to seven divisions Kelowna upgraded to eleven divisions Mountain View School opened in Spallumcheen RMSD
1919	Heywood's Corner (A) Westbank (A)	Richlands (A) Shuswap Falls (A) Trout Creek, Upper (A) Woodville Road (A)	Garnet Valley School in Summerland RMSD closed Naramata upgraded to two divisions Peachland upgraded to three divisions Summerland upgraded to seven divisions Vernon upgraded to fifteen divisions Vernon High School upgraded to three divisions
1920	Fir Valley (A) Sunnyside (A)	Bear Creek (A)	Armstrong City School District and Spallumcheen RMSD amalgamated to create Armstrong and Spallumcheen Consolidated School District consisting of one central school of fifteen divisions East Kelowna raised to rural school status Enderby upgraded to five divisions Kelowna upgraded to twelve divisions Kelowna High School upgraded to three divisions Summerland upgraded to eight divisions Summerland High School upgraded to three divisions Vernon upgraded to sixteen divisions Vernon High School upgraded to four divisions Wood's Lake upgraded to two divisions

TABLE 1 (continued)

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1921	Bear Creek (A) Ewing's Landing (A) Hillcrest (A) Trinity Valley (A) Woodville Road (A)	Wood's Lake	Armstrong and Spallumcheen Consolidated School District upgraded to sixteen divisions East Kelowna upgraded to two divisions Kelowna upgraded to fourteen divisions Naramata upgraded to three divisions Naramata raised to superior school status Oyama upgraded to three divisions Oyama raised to superior school status Rutland upgraded to four divisions South Okanagan upgraded to two divisions Summerland High School downgraded to two divisions Vernon upgraded to seventeen divisions Westbank Townsite upgraded to two divisions Westbank Townsite raised to superior school status
1922	Blue Springs Despard (A) Joe Rich Valley (A) Shuswap Falls (A) South Kelowna (A) Trinity Creek (A) Winfield (two divisions)	North Kelowna Reiswig (A) Woodville Road (A)	Armstrong and Spallumcheen School District downgraded to fifteen divisions Armstrong High School upgraded to three divisions Glenmore RMSD created Summerland upgraded to nine divisions Summerland High School upgraded to three divisions Vernon upgraded to twenty divisions
1923	Reiswig (A) Woodville Road (A)	Hendon (A)	Coldstream upgraded to two divisions Enderby High School upgraded to two divisions Grindrod upgraded to two divisions Kelowna upgraded to fifteen divisions Mission Creek upgraded to two divisions Okanagan Landing upgraded to two divisions Oyama downgraded to two divisions Oyama reduced to rural school status Oyama opens high school Trout Creek School in Summerland RMSD closed Vernon upgraded to twenty-two divisions Vernon High School upgraded to five divisions

TABLE 1 (continued)

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1924	Hendon (A) Medora Creek (A) Sugar Lake (A)	Bear Creek (A) Reiswig (A) Woodville Road (A)	Armstrong and Spallumcheen Consolidated School District downgraded to fourteen divisions Enderby downgraded to four divisions Enderby High School downgraded to one division Grindrod upgraded to three divisions Kelowna downgraded to fourteen divisions Kelowna High School upgraded to four divisions Mission Creek downgraded to one division Naramata downgraded to two divisions Naramata reduced to rural school status Okanagan Landing downgraded to one division Peachland downgraded to two divisions Vernon downgraded to twenty-one divisions Westbank Townsite reduced to rural school status
1925	Reiswig (A) Salmon River (A) Springbend (A)	Blue Springs Despard (A) Heywood's Corner (A) Okanagan Landing	Kelowna downgraded to thirteen divisions Kelowna High School downgraded to three divisions Okanagan Landing incorporated within Vernon City School District
1926	Heywood's Corner (A)	Glenmore RMSD Hendon (A) Kedleston (A) Seymour Arm (A) Sunnyside (A)	Armstrong and Spallumcheen Consolidated School District downgraded to thirteen divisions Deep Creek raised to rural school status Enderby downgraded to three divisions Falkland raised to rural school status Glenmore RMSD incorporated within Kelowna City School District Kelowna upgraded to fourteen divisions Lumby upgraded to three divisions Lumby raised to superior school status Mission Creek upgraded to two divisions Summerland downgraded to eight divisions Vernon downgraded to nineteen divisions Vernon High School upgraded to six divisions

TABLE 1 (concluded)

YEAR	OPENED	CLOSED	OTHER DETAILS
1927	Hendon (A) Kingfisher (A) Seymour Arm (A)	Heywood's Corner (A) South Okanagan	Enderby High School upgraded to two divisions Kelowna upgraded to sixteen divisions Kelowna High School upgraded to four divisions Lumby reduced to rural school status Vernon downgraded to eighteen divisions Westbank Townsite raised to superior school status
1928	Ecclestone (A) Okanagan Mission (two divisions)	Ecclestone (A) Fir Valley (A) Hupel (A)	Ellison upgraded to two divisions Kelowna upgraded to eighteen divisions Kelowna High School upgraded to five divisions Lumby raised to superior school status Okanagan Centre raised to rural school status Rutland upgraded to five divisions Summerland upgraded to nine divisions Vernon upgraded to nineteen divisions
1929	Heywood's Corner (A) Hupel (A)	Salmon River (A)	Ellison downgraded to one division Glenemma reduced to assisted school status Kelowna upgraded to twenty divisions Lumby reduced to rural school status Trepanier School in Peachland RMSD closed Vernon upgraded to twenty-one divisions
1930		Hilton (A) Reiswig (A)	Armstrong High School upgraded to four divisions Ellison upgraded to two divisions Kelowna upgraded to twenty-one divisions Kelowna High School upgraded to six divisions Okanagan renamed Benvoulin Rutland upgraded to six divisions Vernon High School upgraded to seven divisions

SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1874 - 1930.

steamer, canoe, stage, horseback and on foot - assessing where there was a need for schools to be established. He made a preliminary visit to the Okanagan Valley in 1872 when he took an informal census of the number of school-aged children in the area. He returned for a second visit in 1874 and at that time he met with the local settlers in Mission Valley on June 8 and "gave full instructions for the formation of a school district - there being 24 children of school age in the radius of a circle 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ miles [from the Mission]."¹⁰

Local residents acted quickly on the Superintendent's instructions. On their application the Okanagan School District was created on July 31 1874, the boundaries of which were:

Commencing at a point at the mouth of Mission Creek; thence northerly along the shore of Okanagan Lake a distance of five miles; thence easterly a distance of five miles; thence southerly to Mission Creek; thence westerly to the point of commencement.¹¹

They elected the required three School Trustees from amongst themselves.¹² One trustee, William Smithson, donated an acre of land to be used as the school site and also sold a log building to the government which provided the schoolhouse.¹³ From entries in the school's Account Book it would appear that local residents also gave of their time freely and provided the necessary materials required to transform the Smithson loghouse into a satisfactory condition to function as a school.¹⁴ In his Annual Report for the year ending

¹⁰Provincial Archives of British Columbia, John Jessop, School Inspector's Diary, June 8, 1874, 43.

¹¹AR, 1874, 20. This area included what is now the city of Kelowna, Okanagan Mission, Mission Creek and Benvoulin Districts. When the Okanagan School District was created there were only twenty-six public schools employing thirty-two teachers and with a total enrollment of 1 245 pupils in the entire province. See AR, 1876, 126.

¹²It was stipulated in the Public Schools Act, 1872 that the number of Trustees for each school district should be three, who would hold office for three years. See AR, 1874, 38.

¹³AR, 1877, 43.

¹⁴University of British Columbia, Main Library, Special Collections Division, Howay-Reid Collecton, Okanagan Mission Public School, Account Book, 1875-1909, especially entries for 1875.

July 31, 1875, Jessop referred to the "very commodious school-room and teacher's residence at Mission Valley."¹⁵ However, although he also stated: "A teacher from California is expected in a few days for this district, and I am yet in hopes that the school will be in operation before the close of the present term"¹⁶ the services of a teacher took longer to acquire. It was not until December 20 1875 that Angus McKenzie, a Scot with a first class teacher's certificate from the State of Kansas, was officially engaged as the teacher at Okanagan School. A physically impressive man "standing well over six feet [he] wore his whiskers like Abraham Lincoln, and had one wall-eye which he always partly closed when looking at anything intently", McKenzie "came walking into the valley with his blankets and a bundle of books on his back."¹⁷ In addition to his sixty dollar a month salary from the government "his meat, milk, butter and eggs, and his firewood were supplied free by the settlers."¹⁸ As it was the only school in the Okanagan Valley in the mid-1870's the pupils who attended Okanagan School came not only from within the boundaries of the prescribed school district, but also from other locations throughout the valley including Similkameen, Osoyoos, Okanagan Falls, White Valley and Head of the Lake, boarding with families at the Mission during the school term and returning home for the holidays.¹⁹ Despite constant complaints from the school trustees regarding the lack of money available to hire well-qualified teachers and to improve the facilities at the school, as well as two further changes in teaching staff,²⁰ Okanagan School continued to function,

¹⁵AR, 1875, 27.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Buckland, "Okanagan School," 55, 53.

¹⁸Ibid., 53. See also chapter on Okanagan School in Buckland, Ogopogo's Vigil, 51-60.

¹⁹Buckland, Ogopogo's Vigil, 53. The practice of pupils boarding away from home in order to attend school slowly died out as more schools were established in other locations in the study area and children were able to attend a school within walking distance of their home.

with a steady enrolment²¹ and high average attendance,²² as the only school in the study area until 1884.²³

The increasing immigration associated with the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1885 resulted in the expansion of educational facilities in the Okanagan Valley. More schools began to be established, mainly in the northern part of the valley, namely Priest's Valley School (1884), Spallumcheen School (1884), Round Prairie School (1886), Enderby School (1889) and Lansdowne School (1891).²⁴ This expansion was predicted by Superintendent of Education, S.D. Pope, in his Annual Report for 1885:

It is apparent...that there has been a very marked increase in enrolment during the past two years. This is chiefly attributable to the large increase of population, and the prospects are that the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway will cause an influx of immigrants greater than ever before experienced in the history of the Province; and as a resultant, demands for educational facilities will be greatly increased.²⁵

The majority of the schools in the study area were founded between 1892 and 1920. The completion of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway in 1892 further improved access to the valley and this, coupled with the subdivision of land and development of large-scale irrigation schemes in the first decade of the twentieth century, resulted in a massive influx of people into the Okanagan Valley. Many schools were opened, or experienced

²⁰University of British Columbia, Main Library, Special Collections Division, Howay-Reid Collection, Okanagan Mission Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1875-1909, *passim*.

²¹Average enrolment at Okanagan School for the period 1875-1885 was 22.1 ranging from 15 in its first year of operation to 26 in 1882-1883. See AR's, 1875-1885.

²²For example, in 1882 Okanagan School had a 92% average in regular attendance, being the second highest in the province for that year. See AR, 1882, 191, 224.

²³Okanagan School continued to operate up to and past 1930. In 1929 it was renamed Benvoulin School. See Gray, "First Okanagan School," 85.

²⁴Details on the history of some of these early schools can be found in Brent, "The Priest's Valley School," Jamieson, "Early Days' Schools in Armstrong and Spallumcheen, and Lidstone, ed., Schools of Enderby and District.

²⁵AR, 1885, 308. Pope was referring to British Columbia as a whole, but his remarks are also pertinent, in this instance, to the situation in the Okanagan Valley.

considerable expansion, as a direct result of these two developments. Superintendent Pope remarked in his report on Vernon School in 1891 that "Owing to the completion of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway as far as this thriving village, the attendance has considerably increased during the present year, over forty pupils being already enrolled."²⁶

Okanagan Landing, which was the terminus of the Shuswap and Okanagan Railway, became a thriving railroad depot and boat landing centre. A school was therefore established in 1895 to cater to the children whose fathers worked on the railroad tracks and in the CPR shipyard, as well as to those living on the small mixed farms in the surrounding countryside.²⁷ The opening of the Mission Creek School in the Kelowna area was closely associated with the activities of the Kelowna Land and Orchard Company, which bought up land in the district and divided it into small plots that then sold rapidly. With the many new families moving into the area the existing school, Okanagan School, became overcrowded, and hence Mission Creek School opened its doors in January 1908.²⁸

A brief history of the Rutland School, to the east of Kelowna, provides a fine example of the effect of intensive land development schemes on the expansion of educational facilities in the Okanagan Valley. Originally named Black Mountain School, it opened as a one-room school in 1897. It remained a small assisted concern until 1908, when a new larger frame building was erected on land which had, interestingly, been donated by the Central Okanagan Lands Company. The school was then raised to the status of a regularly organized rural school district. The increasing prosperity of the district at that time, due in the main to the efforts of the aforementioned land company, resulted in the rapid expansion of the school. As one local historian of the Okanagan Valley explains: "With the rapid growth of the community through the bringing in of irrigation and

²⁶AR, 1891, 258.

²⁷Hodgson, "Okanagan Landing School Days," 117.

²⁸Chamberlain, "Mission Creek School," 162.

subdivision of the large ranches into small 10 to 20 acre lots, this school soon became too small, and the half-acre grounds too confining."²⁹ Rutland School was upgraded to two divisions in 1911 and by 1930 had been raised to the status of a superior school consisting of six divisions.³⁰

Further south in the predominantly fruit-growing districts of Peachland, Summerland and Naramata, the appearance and expansion of educational facilities again followed the influx of settlers, resulting from the acquisition and subdivision of the land into small fruit lots by entrepreneurs, particularly J.M. Robinson, between 1898 and 1908. At Summerland, for example, the Summerland Development Company, organised by Robinson, began buying up property in the district in 1902. Early in 1903 an assisted school was opened. At first there were children from only two families attending the school, one of which was the Robinson family.³¹ However new settlers began to move into the district in rapidly increasing numbers to buy up the new fruit lots and enrolment rose considerably. At the end of the school year twenty-one pupils were in attendance.³² The following year enrolment more than doubled to fifty-four³³ and the small schoolhouse was now overcrowded. This situation prompted Inspector J.S. Gordon to comment in his report on the Summerland School District for that year: "The school population is rapidly

²⁹Gray, "The Rutland School's 50th Anniversary," 86. See also Hobbs, "The First Half-Century of the Rutland Schools," Rutland Centennial Committee, comp., History of the District of Rutland, British Columbia, 57-65, and Mawhinney, "Black Mountain School Days."

³⁰Superior schools in the study area were organized in Rural School Districts in which usually one division of a school was devoted to the provision of a high school education by offering courses at a senior elementary and junior high school level. See F. Henry Johnson, A History of Public Education in British Columbia (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, Publications Centre, 1964), 62-63.

³¹MacDonald, "Summerland Schools," 26-27.

³²AR, 1903.

³³Ibid., 1904.

increasing, making grading difficult."³⁴ Extra divisions were added to the existing schoolhouse, and new school buildings erected. By 1930 the Summerland School District, a Rural Municipality since 1907, boasted a nine division consolidated elementary school, and a high school of three divisions.³⁵

Whereas the period from 1892 to 1920 was characterized by the proliferation of schools throughout the countryside opening, the years from 1920 to 1930, more particularly after mid-decade, saw a limited growth in the number of schools established. Only fifteen new school districts were created over the decade, reflecting the slower rate of immigration into the area. Without exception the schools established started out as small one-room entities with characteristically small enrolments. New divisions were added where needed to existing schools in order to cater to the expanding school-aged population in districts where settlers were arriving in large numbers. Schools which opened in what developed into the major communities of Armstrong, Enderby, Kelowna and Vernon evolved into large, multi-roomed and centrally organized City School Districts. By 1930 the schools at Kelowna and Vernon had each grown to twenty-one divisions, while Armstrong had thirteen divisions in operation and Enderby three divisions. Multi-room elementary schools had also been established in the Rural Municipalities of Coldstream, Peachland and Summerland, and in the Rural Districts of East Kelowna, Ellison, Grindrod, Lumby, Mara, Mission Creek, Naramata, Okanagan Landing, Okanagan Mission, Oyama, Rutland, South Okanagan, Westbank Townsite, Winfield and Wood's Lake. However, with the exception of Summerland, which by 1930 had increased to nine divisions, and Rutland (six divisions), Grindrod, Lumby, Naramata and Oyama (three divisions), none of these schools expanded beyond two divisions over the decade.

³⁴Ibid., A52.

³⁵ Details on the development of schools in the Summerland area are also included in Andrew, The Story of Summerland, 14-15, 21-22, 28.

The provision of educational services beyond the elementary level occurred at a relatively early stage. Vernon opened a high school in 1902 - the second to open in British Columbia's interior, the first being at Nelson. High schools were then established at Armstrong (1906), Kelowna (1908), Enderby (1909), Peachland (1910) and Summerland (1912). As well, superior school facilities were made available at Naramata and Rutland (1916). In 1921 A.R. Lord, of the Kelowna Inspectorate, which included the Okanagan and Similkameen Valleys, commented on the increasing demand for high school privileges in his inspectorate:

The provision of high-school facilities in rural districts continues to receive a good deal of attention, both from parents who are directly concerned and from public-spirited ratepayers who are interested in the development of their local districts.³⁶

As a consequence, between 1920 and 1930, superior schools were established at Oyama and Westbank Townsite (1921), the former being raised to the status of a high school in 1923, and at Lumby (1926).

An important development in the history of the education system in the Okanagan Valley prior to 1930 was the successful implementation of a number of schemes for consolidating school districts. The erection of the Rural Municipalities of Spallumcheen and Summerland into school districts in 1907 was the first move towards the centralization of educational services in the study area, the main purpose of which was to improve the economic and administrative efficiency of the one-room schools that existed within the boundaries of each municipality.³⁷ Rural Municipality School Districts (RMSD) were also created at Coldstream and Peachland (1909) and Glenmore (1922).

³⁶AR, 1921, F36.

³⁷Johnson, *A History of Public Education*, 94-95. Incorporated within the Spallumcheen RMSD were the Armstrong, Hullcar, Knob Hill, Lansdowne, Otter Lake and Pleasant Valley Schools. Summerland RMSD included Summerland, Prairie Valley and Garnet Valley Schools. The individual schools remained open and continued to function as individual units as far as the actual teaching of the pupils was concerned, but the overall administration of the schools came under the control of each respective municipality.

The success of the early attempts at centralization encouraged educational administrators in their belief that consolidation was the answer to the problem of the inefficient one-room rural schools.³⁸ In 1912 a proposal for amalgamating the one-room schools in the Summerland RMSD and the erection of a single multi-roomed school was carried out. In this regard, A.E. Miller of the Revelstoke Inspectorate, was able to report:

In the Municipality of Summerland the Prairie Valley, Garnet Valley, and Trout Creek Schools were closed in order to carry out a scheme of consolidation, by which the children in the outlying sections are conveyed to a central graded school. The experiment (for this is the first trial of consolidation in British Columbia) may, on the whole, I think, be considered a success.³⁹

The most ambitious plan for consolidation was inaugurated in the north of the study area. Inspector A.R. Lord was a keen advocate as a means of dealing with the "rural-school problem," which he regarded as "the most serious question confronting educational administration in this Province."⁴⁰ He noted enthusiastically in his report for 1920:

A real attempt to give to the country children the greatest possible educational opportunity is being made at Armstrong, where the graded school of that city is being consolidated with the eight rural schools of the adjoining municipality of Spallumcheen. The legal union has already taken place and the consolidated school will be in actual operation as soon as the new building, now under construction, has been completed. The result will be watched with interest by the many districts in this inspectorate, where a similar plan is entirely feasible.⁴¹

³⁸For a detailed discussion of the issues involved in the move towards school consolidation in British Columbia, see Jones, "The Strategy of Rural Enlightenment," in *Shaping the Schools*, eds. Jones, Sheehan and Stamp, 136-151. The initial idea of applying the principle of consolidation to some of the rural school districts in the Okanagan Valley originated from Victoria. However the inauguration of any such scheme depended on its acceptance by the members of the communities concerned. As Inspector Arthur Anstey, of the Vernon Inspectorate, explained in his report for 1915: "In several rural districts a scheme of consolidating the schools appears perfectly feasible and eminently desirable; the responsibility of deciding this matter rests upon the localities concerned, and in view of the success that has attended consolidation on the Prairie, as well as in this Province, there would appear to be no reason for hesitating to adopt it." See AR, 1915, A38.

³⁹AR, 1912, A40

⁴⁰AR, 1920, C34.

⁴¹*Ibid.* For information, albeit brief, on the history of the Armstrong and Spallumcheen Consolidated School District, see Jordie Fulton, "Armstrong Elementary School," OHSR 52(1988): 164-168, and O.B. Carlson, "Consolidation of School Districts in Armstrong and Enderby Area," OHSR 50(1986): 80-81. For details on the operation of the new consolidated school between 1920 and 1930, as outlined in the

All the rural schools in Spallumcheen Municipality were closed and the pupils transported in school "trucks" to the new Armstrong School which opened in September 1921.⁴² The scheme was a success. The following year A.E. Miller of the Revelstoke Inspectorate, which as a result of a redefinition of inspectorate boundaries in 1922 included the Okanagan Valley as far south as Armstrong, summed up the pros and cons of consolidation:

The Armstrong-Spallumcheen consolidation scheme appears to be working out very satisfactorily. There has been a little grumbling with regard to the expense, and there were a good many difficulties connected with the transportation problem during the winter months, when conditions in this respect were just about as unfavourable as they could be; but when the benefits of better housing, improved attendance, and more efficient teaching are fully realized there should not be much inclination to return to a system that at its best deprived many children of the opportunity of securing anything like an adequate preparation for the business of life.⁴³

Two further plans for consolidation were carried out in the study area prior to 1930. In 1925 the school in the rural district of Okanagan Landing was closed and the pupils transferred to the Vernon School in the city of that name. In the following year the school in the rural municipality of Glenmore was incorporated within the Kelowna City School District.⁴⁴

Between 1920 and 1930 the number of one-room schools in operation in the Okanagan Valley far outweighed that of multi-room schools (see Figure 1). For example, in 1925, of the total number of fifty-seven schools in operation in rural districts, forty-three (75.4%) were one-room. Moreover, thirty-one (72.1%) of these one-room schools were of

minutes of the meetings of the Council of the City of Armstrong, see Johnny Serra, The First Hundred Years: The History of Armstrong, British Columbia N.p., [1968], 73-107, 199-205.

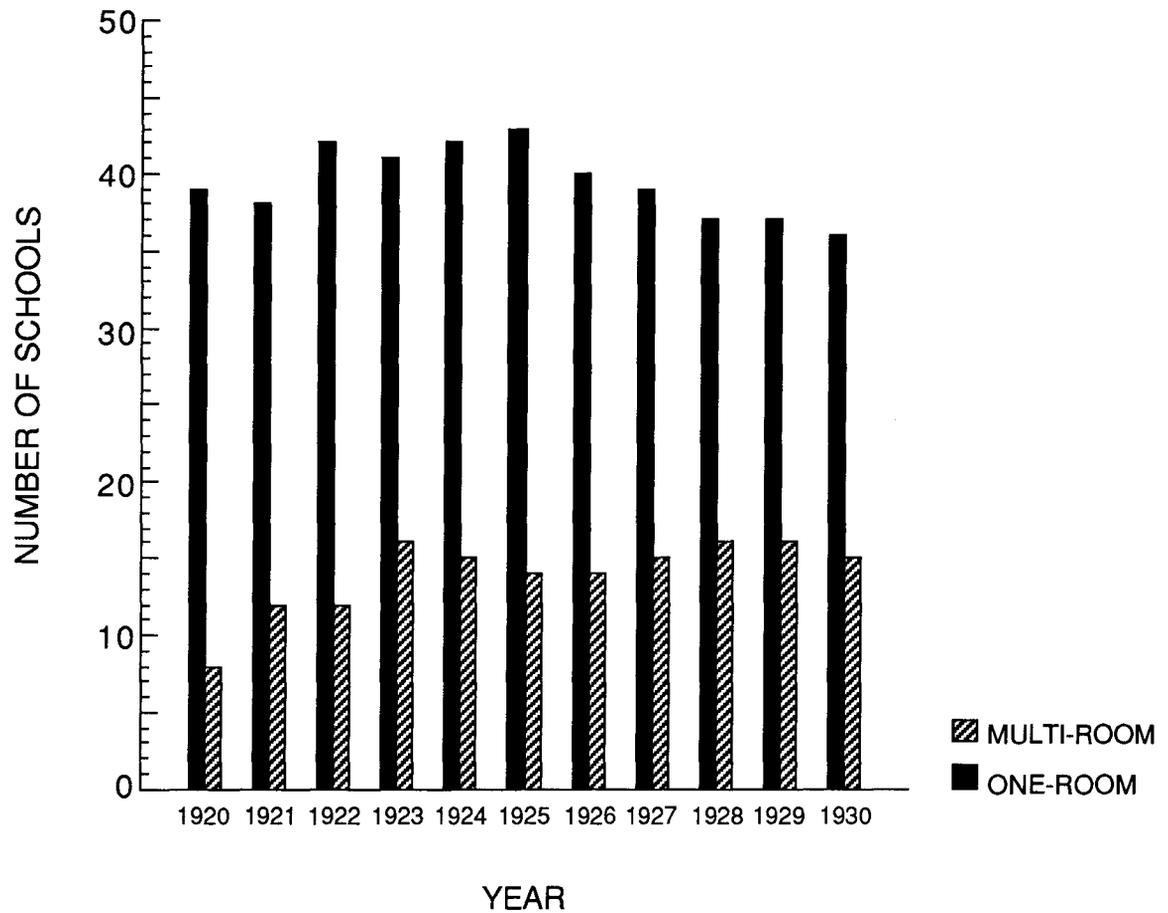
⁴²For an interesting account of the first school buses see Romaine, "Early School Buses."

⁴³AR, 1922, C36.

⁴⁴See comments by Inspector T.R. Hall of the Kelowna Inspectorate in AR, 1925, M35.

FIGURE 1

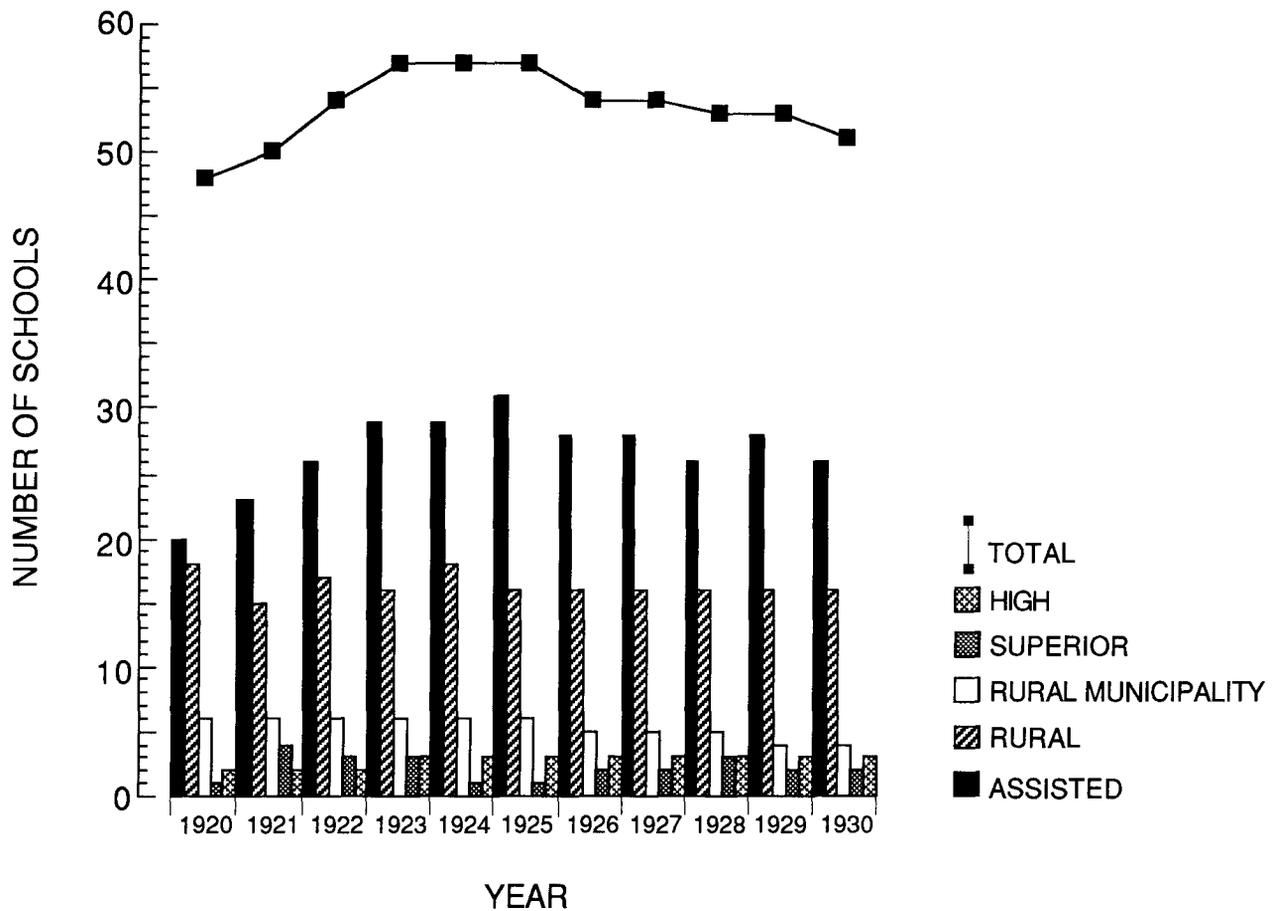
NUMBER OF ONE-ROOM AND MULTI-ROOM SCHOOLS
1920 - 1930



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

FIGURE 2

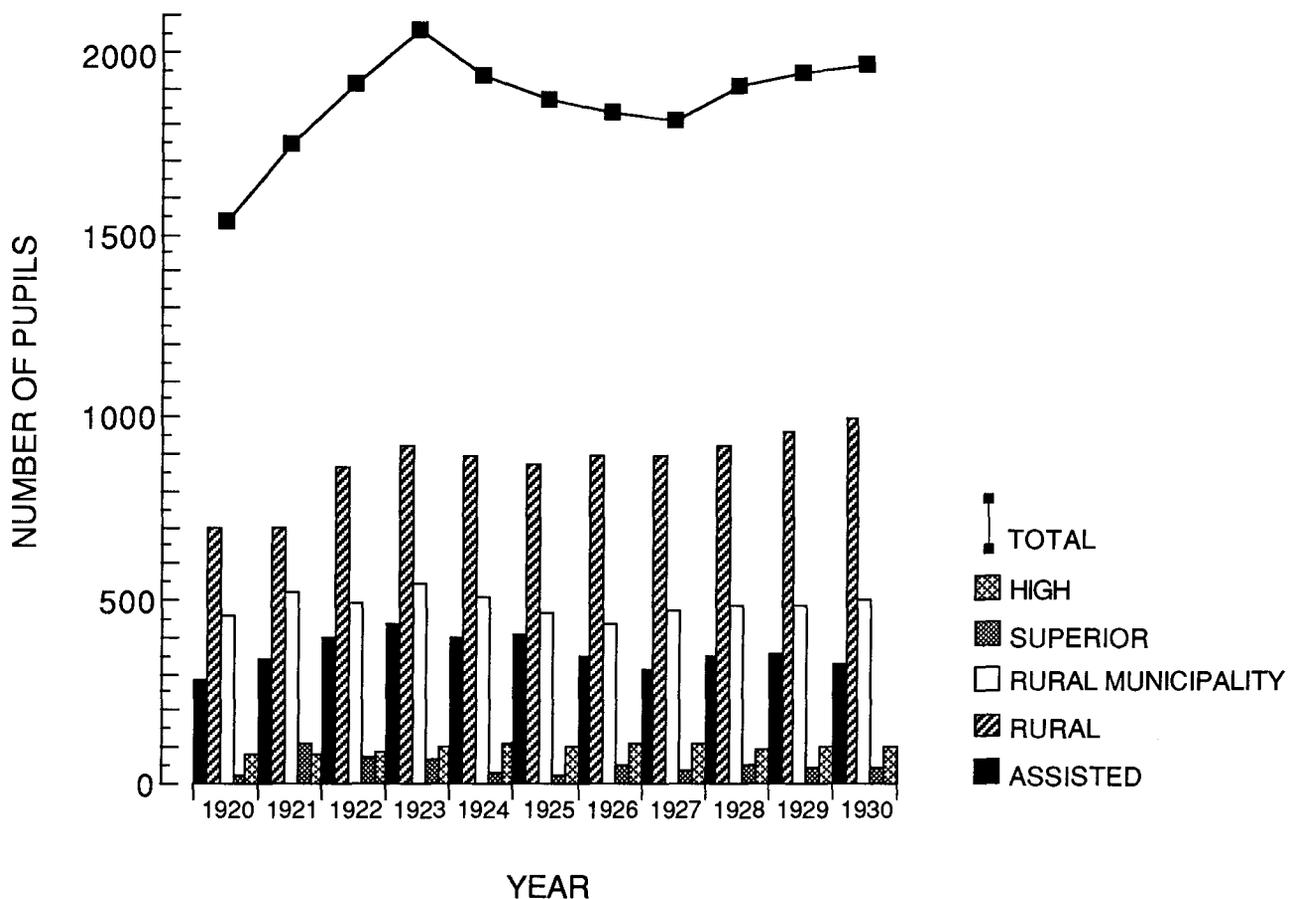
ANNUAL TOTALS AND NUMBERS OF ASSISTED, RURAL,
RURAL MUNICIPALITY, SUPERIOR AND HIGH SCHOOLS 1920 - 1930



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

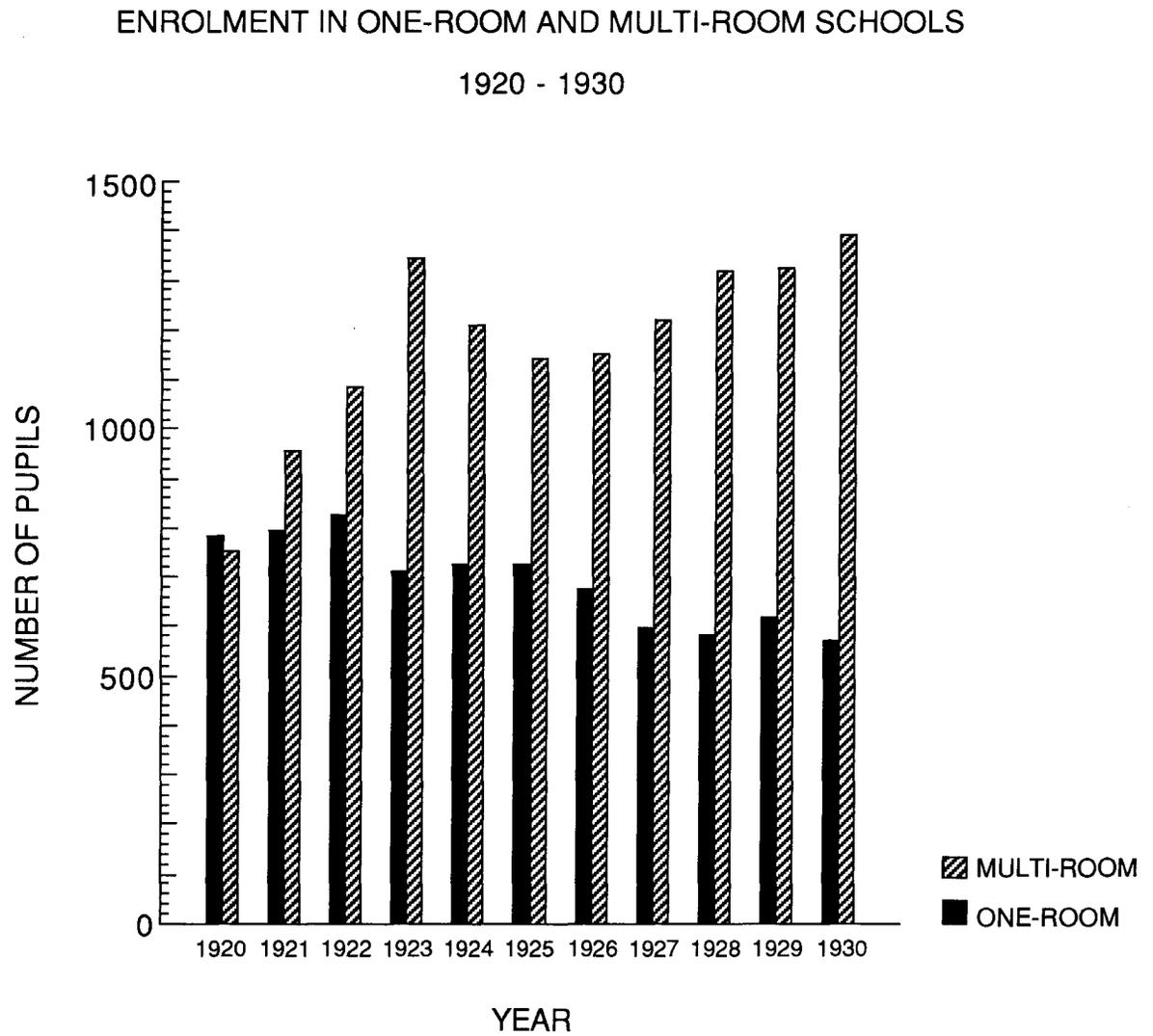
FIGURE 3

ANNUAL TOTALS AND ENROLMENTS IN ASSISTED, RURAL,
RURAL MUNICIPALITY, SUPERIOR AND HIGH SCHOOLS 1920 - 1930



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

FIGURE 4



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

assisted status⁴⁵ (see Figure 2). Comparing Figure 1 with Figure 2 it is significant that although the total number of schools fluctuated very little over the period from 1920 to 1930, the number of multi-room schools nearly doubled from eight in 1920 to between fourteen and sixteen from 1923 to 1930, whereas the number of one-room schools declined slightly over the same period. In 1920 thirty-nine one-room schools were in operation. By 1925 the number had increased to forty-three, but then declined steadily to thirty-six by 1930.

The trends in the changing numbers of one- and multi-room schools are reflected in their enrolment patterns between 1920 and 1930 (see Figures 3 and 4). Total enrolment increased over the decade from 1 534 in 1920 rising sharply to 2 054 in 1923; enrolment then fluctuated for six years to the 1930 figure of 1 960 (see Figure 3). However, enrolment in multi-room schools almost doubled from 750 in 1920 to 1 392 in 1930, whereas the one-room schools experienced a decline in total enrolment figures, albeit less marked than the increase in enrolment in the multi-room schools, from 784 in 1920 to 568 in 1930 (see Figure 4). Furthermore, the average size of the one-room schools in the study area actually decreased over the decade, as is indicated by the increase in the number of assisted schools between 1920 and 1930 (see Figure 2). In 1920 the average number of pupils in a one-room school in the Okanagan Valley was 20.1 (see Figures 1 and 4). By 1927 this figure had fallen to 15.2, rising only slightly to 15.8 by 1930. In assisted schools average class size was even smaller. Throughout the decade of the 1920's the highest

⁴⁵"Assisted" was used to denote the smallest classification of school by the British Columbia, Department of Education. All assisted schools in the study area were one-room. This designation of school was introduced in the 1895-96 school year and described thus: "By an *assisted* school is meant that the salary of the teacher or monitor and a small grant for incidental expenses are paid from the Provincial Treasury, parents and others interested supplying a suitable school-room, furnishing the same and meeting all other expenses connected with the maintenance of the school." See AR, 1896, 185. Rural School Districts were not subject to municipal control either financially or administratively.

average annual enrolment for such schools was 15.3 in 1922 and the lowest was 11.1 in 1927 (see Figures 2 and 3).⁴⁶

To summarize, one-room schools were much more numerous than multi-room schools throughout the decade from 1920 to 1930. However, the slight decline in the number of one-room schools combined with the decreasing number of pupils enrolled in each school, and the increasing numbers of, and enrolment in, multi-room schools, resulted in a marked decrease in the proportion of the total population of pupils who were educated in a one-room school environment as the decade progressed. In 1920, 81.3% (thirty-nine of forty-eight) of the schools in operation in rural districts in the study area were one-room and 51.1% (784 of 1 534) of the total number of pupils were enrolled in one-room schools. By 1930, these figures had dropped to 70.6% (thirty-six of fifty-one) and 29.0% (568 of 1 960) respectively (see Figures 1 to 4).

The provision of educational services in the Okanagan Valley was well advanced by 1930. A large number of multi-roomed schools were situated for the most part in the main centres of population at points throughout the study area. They provided both an elementary and advanced level of education, and based on an increasingly centralized system of administration. However the majority of the schools established remained small individual concerns with each school district being locally organized as a single administrative unit. Moreover, although the move towards a more centralised administration of education was actively pursued in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's, schools were also being established in the more isolated districts in the area.⁴⁷ It is with

⁴⁶As noted earlier the number of multi-room schools, and the total enrolment in multi-room schools both approximately doubled between 1920 and 1930, implying that the average size of such schools remained relatively constant over the decade.

⁴⁷For example the tiny assisted schools of Despard, Ecclestone, Ewing's Landing, Fir Valley, Hillcrest, Joe Rich Valley, Kingfisher, Medora Creek, Springbend, Sugar Lake, Trinity Creek, and Trinity Valley all opened their doors for the first time during that period. See Map 2 for the locations of these schools.

those who taught, and those who were educated, in such schools that this thesis is primarily concerned.

The details from the Annual Reports of the British Columbia Department of Education provide excellent material from which to construct an outline of the general trends in the development of schools in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920's, but they do little to help elucidate the reasons for such developments. Local histories of schools, by virtue of allowing a closer, more personal look at the changing circumstances of individual schools, provide the necessary context on which to base any inferences drawn from the statistics.

The impact of localism on the the character of the educational structures and practices was profound. It determined how and why people in individual rural communities established, managed, and supported their schools, and how and when their children experienced learning. Typically located in isolated settlements in outlying districts, the schools were intensely local institutions, rooted in the very fabric of rural society. Established only at the behest of the community, the survival of a school also depended on continuing local support and participation, which in turn indicated the degree of local enthusiasm for education. The necessity of adapting to local circumstances ultimately meant that the schools developed as an integral part of their immediate environment and, accordingly, closely came to reflect not only the material conditions but also the attitudes, mores and values of the communities of which they were a creation. Localism promoted widespread qualitative differences in educational conditions between districts only a few miles apart and ensured that each rural school was unique. An appreciation of this intimate connection between school and community in remote country districts, which has been accurately described by one historian as a "symbiotic relationship,"⁴⁸ lies at the heart of any understanding of the rural schooling experience.

⁴⁸Link, A Hard Country and a Lonely Place, 24.

The existence of the one-room schools was generally dependent upon struggling subsistence economies and the degree of transiency of the population in the area. The appearance and then continuing survival of these schools, which more often than not proved to be extremely precarious, were dependent upon the nature and extent of economic activity and hence available employment in a district. This in turn determined the size of the community, and whether the legal number of pupils to warrant opening a school could be acquired, and then maintained.⁴⁹ In short, the changing nature of the specific economic and social conditions unique to each community decisively affected whether or not a school was in operation in that community. Meadow Valley School, a small one-room assisted school located approximately ten miles equidistant from Summerland and Peachland, opened in 1916. The settlement in which the school was situated was a small lumbering town of the same name, although later renamed Mineola, which grew up as a result of the founding of the Mineola Lumber Company in 1910. By 1920 the community was flourishing with a successful saw-mill and box factory. However, in 1923 the mill closed down and moved its operations to Myren. The same year the box factory relocated to Summerland.⁵⁰ The effect on the community and the school was devastating. As Lillian Blanche Roadhouse, teacher at the school in 1923, commented on the form she submitted to the Teachers' Bureau in that year: "The saw-mill which was the chief industry of the district is closed and will not re-open. Families are gradually leaving. The lady with whom I stay will not be here next year."⁵¹ Enrolment at the school dropped dramatically from sixteen in 1923 to six in 1924. The situation did not improve. Four years later, the teacher Mrs. Ethelwyn B.

⁴⁹In 1896 it was stipulated that a minimum monthly enrolment of ten pupils, and an average daily attendance of not less than eight had to be maintained in order to keep a school open. See AR, 1896, 185. In 1917, an amendment to the Public Schools Act, 1872 was introduced whereby schools in rural districts were to be closed "where the average attendance falls below eight in regularly organized school districts, or below six in assisted schools." See AR, 1917, A109.

⁵⁰Don Emery, "Mineola," OHSR 34(1970): 36-39.

⁵¹TBR, 1923.

Lee, referred to the district as "sparsely settled and only three families have children of school age."⁵² The school struggled to maintain the necessary number of pupils with enrolment fluctuating between eight and nine until 1930.⁵³

The fate of Meadow Valley School was similar to many of the other small rural schools that opened in the more remote locations. Lack of employment in a district and/or the prospect of better opportunities in the larger, more prosperous communities often prompted families to move on. As the population in a district dwindled it became more and more difficult to maintain the required level of enrolment and many schools had to close. As the community which formed the nucleus for the school dissipated, so too did the school. Kedleston School, opened in 1907, was located on a steep hill approximately seven miles from Vernon, midway between the city and the summit of the Silver Star Mountain. The community in which the school was established was tiny, isolated, almost inaccessible and impoverished, consisting mainly of struggling bush farmers who had preempted land above the B.X. Ranch.⁵⁴ They are remembered as "the people who lived on Poverty Hill."⁵⁵ Pamela Hughes has described the harsh lifestyle that continued to exist in Kedleston throughout the 1920s:

Water was still being carried from the creek, access was still exceedingly poor and there was no economic growth. Silver mining rights on the mountain were obtained [but] met with no financial success. The settlers supported their families with home-grown food, everyone having chickens and a cow, baking their own bread, growing their own vegetables and earning money for basic necessities by cutting

⁵²Ibid., 1928.

⁵³For enrolment figures see the Statistical Tables in the AR for 1916-1930. Meadow Valley is included in the tables for Rural and Assisted Schools for the period 1916-1925, and for Assisted Schools for 1926-1930.

⁵⁴For details on the history of this ranch, one of the oldest established in the Okanagan Valley, see Mabel Johnson, "The B.X. Ranch," OHSR 20(1956): 86-89.

⁵⁵Hughes, "The Kedleston Story", 10.

and hauling wood down into Vernon. The effort involved was not compensated financially.⁵⁶

Given such circumstances it is not surprising that from 1914 on the Kedleston community witnessed "a steady decline."⁵⁷ By 1925 the effects on the school were beginning to be felt and the following year enrolment had fallen to seven⁵⁸ and the school had to close. It did not open again until 1935. The example of the Commonage School, which opened in 1898 in a small farming community near Vernon, is also a case in point. The school closed by 1912 due to a lack of pupils. It did not reopen. A local historian recounted the story:

The Commonage School was very much a part of the community in which it developed....Being an integral part of the community, this one-room building shared the same fate as the Commonage settlement...

The Commonage had not been kind to the settlers largely because of an inadequate annual rainfall. Existence, even on a subsistence level, required boundless energy. Greener grass could be seen on the other side of the mountains so many homesteaders moved on to new pre-emptions. Vernon, now a growing town offered the prospect of less demanding jobs for higher wages. The once prospering community of the Commonage dwindled. One of the first effects felt was the loss of the school. With the families moving on, the difficulty in finding eight school-age children became an impossibility. Without education available more people were forced to leave, until only a few households remained.⁵⁹

Whether a school remained open often depended on seasonal factors. Allan H. Davidson, a pupil who attended Westbank School, in the south of the study area and on the west side of Okanagan Lake, in the early 1900s, explained:

For the first two or three years, it was a struggle on the part of parents and teacher to keep the school roll up to the number required to keep the school open. Sometimes, during the summer months, families moved from the district to be near seasonal work. In winter, barefoot children could not be expected to walk through the snow.⁶⁰

⁵⁶Ibid., 9.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Enrolment at the school from 1907-1925 fluctuated between eight and twenty-two with an average of fifteen. See Statistical Tables in AR for the relevant years. Kedleston School is included in the tables for Rural and Assisted schools for the entire period.

⁵⁹O'Brien, "The Vernon Commonage School," 61, 63.

⁶⁰Davidson, "Westbank Schools," 134.

At certain times, particularly at harvest, the need to help on the family farm was more pressing than the need to attend school with the result that "the attendance dropped off to the point that it wasn't worth while keeping them open."⁶¹

The life span of schools that were established in very small communities consisting of perhaps only one or two families was uncertain in the extreme with many disappearing into obscurity after only a very short time of operation. Ecclestone School, established in a tiny wood-cutting and small-time ranching settlement approximately ten miles north of Kelowna, opened in 1928 with an enrolment of six pupils, all of whom came from one large family named Schleppe.⁶² Reuben Nesbitt, hired to teach at the school described the circumstances of the "one foreign family" as "poor."⁶³ The school remained open for less than one year, 160 days to be exact.⁶⁴ Then "the school closed for lack of pupils and the building disappeared."⁶⁵ Lacking documented evidence, one can only assume that the Schleppe family moved away thus removing the entire school-aged population from the district.

It is clear that it often took a great deal of effort to gather and then maintain the required minimum number of pupils for a school. To many of the settlers in the Commonage district outside Vernon "it seems to have been very important that their youngsters receive schooling. Everything was done to keep their school open."⁶⁶ Likewise in isolated Sugar Lake Alice Gibson, teacher at the school from 1924 to 1928, stated that the people were "so delighted" to have the school that they "worked hard to maintain the

⁶¹Mawhinney, "Black Mountain School Days," 113.

⁶²Corner, Glenmore, 38.

⁶³TBR, 1928.

⁶⁴AR, 1928. Ecclestone School is included in the lists of Assisted Schools in the Statistical Tables.

⁶⁵Corner, Glenmore, 38.

⁶⁶O'Brien, "The Vernon Commonage Schoole," 61.

necessary average attendance of six."⁶⁷ Lucy McCormick, who taught at a number of small rural schools in the Okanagan Valley, has suggested some of the ways in which school boards tried to solve the problem of insufficient enrolment:

[O]ften the required 8 pupils had to be rounded up by hook or by crook and I mean that literally. In several instances we found that 4 year-olds were conscripted, and older pupils, who might be working or married, were sometimes added to the register so the school would have its quota.⁶⁸

J.J. Conroy, whose older brother and sister already attended the Okanagan Mission School, remembers: "At the ripe age of five years I was also drafted to attend, at least part time, as the trustees needed another body to count, in order to keep the school open."⁶⁹ Many examples exist of pupils who were borrowed by schools that were struggling to maintain the required enrolment from districts with an excess of school-aged children. They would normally board in nearby homes until enrolment had risen sufficiently to enable them to return home. Alice Laviollette, along with two of her sisters, were three such pupils. As she recalled: "Sugar Lake wanted to open up the school. There was plenty of kids at Cherryville so they wanted to borrow three from us."⁷⁰ Outright misrepresentation of the number of pupils in a school may have also occurred although these instances are

⁶⁷Interview with Alice Gibson nee Brown, Shawnigan Lake, Vancouver Island, May 1989.

⁶⁸McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 38.

⁶⁹J.J. Conroy, "Boyhood Recollections of the Okanagan in the Early Nineteen Hundreds," *OHSR* 37(1973): 33. Other examples of schools where under- and over-age children attended in order to maintain enrolment, included Springbend, (*Springbend Community Recollections*, 50); Commonage, (O'Brien, "The Vernon Commonage School," 61) and Grandview Bench, (Lidstone, *Schools of Enderby and District*, 107), Lavington, (Pearson, *An Early History of Coldstream and Lavington*, 76), and Ellison, (Tutt, *The History of Ellison District*, 63-64). Although beyond the time-frame of this study, it is interesting to note the example of Isobel Simard nee Moore, who in 1936 made it possible to keep open the Hupel School where attendance had fallen to seven: "In order to bring it up to the required eight, Mrs. Simard helped the situation by taking on the position of teacher with her four and a half year old son to complete the necessary enrolment." See Lidstone, ed., *Schools of Enderby and District*, 103. This information was confirmed in an interview with Isobel Simard, Enderby, March 1 1989.

⁷⁰Interview with Alice Laviollette nee Werner, Vernon, March 3 1989. The Werner girls were attending the Hilton School in Cherryville at the time of their transfer. Other schools where this occurred include Kelowna. (Minnie MacQueen, "A First Person Account of Early Days," *OHSR* 27(1963): 165); Sugar Lake, (McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 42); Mara, ([Gardner and Stefanyk], *Mara's Memories*, 42) and Commonage, (O'Brien, "Vernon Commonage School," 61).

difficult to verify. Donald Graham, a prominent pioneer in the north Okanagan in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, has related the following anecdote of the measures taken by the members of a community to keep their school open, and to prevent the teacher losing his job:

Most of the new School Districts starting, are driven to expedients of one kind or another, to meet Govt. requirements, but one I heard of on `Okanagan Lake,' I think takes the cake. Being deficient in numbers and no extra children readily available, as two dogs were regular in their attendance, the teacher decided to enter them on the role. So in due course, the names of Bowser Brown, and Jack Smith appeared. When the Superintendent came around unexpectedly, and enquired where the balance of the children were, he was told, that they were at home helping to plant potatoes.⁷¹

The fact that schools did open in remote, sparsely settled and often very poor districts is a clear indication that the schooling of their children was an important consideration to many new settlers. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the provision of educational services was sometimes a prerequisite for settlement in a particular district. As close observers of educational developments in the study area, the school inspectors certainly believed that the desire for education was strong among newcomers. They pointed to the flood of petitions for the establishment of schools that began to pour in soon after the arrival of settlers in an area. H.H. MacKenzie of the Kamloops Inspectorate was of the opinion that the development of railway networks throughout the interior of British Columbia, and thus the opening up of large areas of land for settlement were "most potent factors towards the in-bringing of new settlers."⁷² He further remarked: "One of the matters of first concern to these incoming settlers is naturally the education of their children, and many petitions for the establishment of schools...may be looked for in the near future."⁷³ The following year John Martin, who was now responsible for schools in

⁷¹Donald Graham, "Reminiscences," no date, unpaginated.

⁷²AR, 1913, A44.

⁷³Ibid.

the Kamloops Inspectorate, noted that whilst many problems were associated with the efficient operation of rural schools, they were not insurmountable. He also suggested that such problems were perhaps inevitable given the nature of pioneer life in British Columbia's interior in the early part of the twentieth century:

There is a general appreciation among the settlers of the value of education, and in most districts there is a determination, in spite of difficulties, to maintain a school....It must be remembered, however, that many of the settlers are struggling with the physical realities of life. That appreciation of education and a willingness to assume the burden of maintaining a school are so general, are hopeful and encouraging indications.⁷⁴

Localism affected the issue of where a new school was built. Although usually arrived at by way of a compromise between the various local interest groups, often agreement as to the location of a school could not be reached as local residents fought to ensure that their children had a school to attend near to their home. Sometimes drastic measures had to be taken to placate the feuding factions. A pupil who attended the Salmon Valley School, until one fateful morning in June 1919, has related one such incident:

On arriving there one morning shortly before the start of the summer holidays we found a smouldering ruin. No doubt it was arson but no one was ever convicted. This, of course, posed a problem of a replacement. Dad and close neighbours thought the new school should be built close to the store, but people at the other end of the District were adamant (sic) that it be built on the old site. The dispute became so bitter that some thought it advisable to have a policeman sit in at the school meeting to prevent a possible fist fight. The Board of Education at Victoria settled it by creating a new school district, and stated it would be named "Heywood's Corner School". A frame building was built a few hundred yards north of the store by local labour. At Salmon Valley (south) they built another log building on the old site. So ended the school controversy!⁷⁵

⁷⁴AR, 1914, A53-A54.

⁷⁵Doug Heywood, "The Heywoods of Heywood's Corner (Salmon River Valley)," OHSR 41(1977): 168. The same incident is recorded in Aiken, "Early Records of Salmon Valley and Glennema Schools," 52. Similar disagreements erupted over the boundaries of school districts. For example, in 1926 plans were made to enlarge the Rutland (called Black Mountain until 1915) School District at the expense of the nearby Ellison (called Okanagan Mission until 1908) School District. Ellison residents were outraged. Only the intervention of T.R. Hall, school inspector for both districts brought the potentially explosive situation to a mutually acceptable conclusion. See School district #23, Kelowna, Ellison Public School, Minutes of Meetings, 1926, 90-93.

The degree of commitment that many new settlers were willing to devote towards ensuring that their children were educated is also demonstrated by the active participation, in a large number of cases, of local residents in the practicalities of opening a school. Schoolhouses were often built on land donated by local settlers. Particularly in the case of assisted schools, of which those in the study area were a majority, the building itself was constructed, and sometimes paid for, by the people in the community if government assistance was either inadequate or not forthcoming at all. Collections were made to buy building materials, volunteer labour cleared the land and local carpenters gave freely of their time and expertise. Milley Bonney attended Springbend School in the late 1920s and early '30s and clearly remembered that the actual construction of the schoolhouse had been a "volunteer project." She stated: "It was built by the men of the district....I can recall my dad going to work on the school."⁷⁶ Furnishing the school often proved a problem as supplies from the government were minimal. Sometimes, as in the case of an early school in Glenmore Valley, less than legitimate means were used to procure the necessary equipment.

As equipment was needed in a hurry two of the interested men broke into [an old disused school] and hauled away everything that could be used in the new school, desks, benches, clock, books, etc. The Departmental authorities were expected to take a dim view when advised of this direct method of setting up elementary education, but no action was taken against the trustees and school was able to start on time.⁷⁷

⁷⁶Interview with Milley Bonney nee Duckett, West Vancouver, 24 February 1989. See also Jim and Alice Emeny, "The Emeny Family's 100 Years in Springbend," OHSR 52(1988): 25. Examples of such schools abound in the local histories and include Heywood's Corner, (Doug Heywood, "The Heywoods of Heywood's Corner 168); Kedleston, (Hughes, "The Kedleston Story," 2); West Okanagan (Westbank), (Davidson, "Westbank schools," 132); Trinity Creek, (Wejr, "Memories of the Trinity Creek Area," 78); Grindrod, (Halksworth, "Grindrod Schools," 51, and MacKay, "Grindrod Schools," 159); Glenemma, (Aitken, "Early Records of Salmon Valley and Glenemma Schools," 49); Black Mountain (Rutland), (Hobbs, "The First Half-Century of the Rutland Schools," 126); Hilton, ("Vernon and District School Histories," 5); Ashton Creek and Trinity Creek, (Bawtree, Reflections Along the Spallumcheen, 13-14); Joe Rich Valley, (Rutland Centennial Committee, comp., History of the District of Rutland, 54); Mabel Lake and Grandview Bench, (Lidstone, ed., Schools of Enderby and District, 99, 106) and Mara, ([Gardner and Stefanyk], Mara's Memories, 42). See also TBR for 1923 on Despard School.

⁷⁷Corner, Glenmore, 39.

Evidence to support the contention that the education of their children was given a high priority is overwhelming. Furthermore, one can confidently suggest that the one-room school was the pivot around which the rest of rural society revolved. In many of the smaller settlements the school was the primary, and often the only social institution that existed. For the residents in these communities, with little access to the outside world, the school became the centre for the social and all other public activities in the district. Isobel Simard, former teacher at Kingfisher, Hupel and Ashton Creek Schools who has lived all her life in the Okanagan Valley, explains:

These schools were not only places of learning but served as community centres where dances, concerts, wedding receptions, meetings, church services, political rallies, and card parties were enjoyed.⁷⁸

Another long-time resident has summed up the place of the "little one-roomed school" in rural districts by commenting that it was "really the center of our lives."⁷⁹

This and the preceding chapter provide a general overview of the physical and historical (economic and social) environment within which the small rural schools of the Okanagan Valley were established, and then continued to function, in the period 1874 to 1930. They lay the foundation for a closer look at life within these schools from the more intimate perspective of those who participated: the teachers and their pupils.

⁷⁸Isobel Simard, "Reminiscences of Mabel Lake," 151. Indeed it was a rare exception for a school to function only as a place of education.

⁷⁹Clarke, "Peachland in the Pioneer Days," 182.

CHAPTER FIVE

TEACHER CAREER TRAJECTORIES 1920-1930

Between 1920 and 1930 a total of 419 individuals taught in the schools located in rural districts in the Okanagan Valley. As the decade progressed the size of the teacher population expanded significantly in response to the increased demand for, and provision of, educational facilities in the area (see Figure 5).¹ Annual totals of the number of teachers employed rose sharply at the beginning of the decade, from sixty-five in 1920 to eighty-five in 1923, then declined slightly to a total of eighty within the next three years, and finally levelled out to eighty-three by 1930. But who were these teachers? What were the specific demographic characteristics of this particular group of people? From an analysis of data relating to gender, marital status, education and professional qualifications, teaching experience and age, a profile of the typical rural teacher was constructed.²

As Figure 5 makes clear, the composition of the teaching force, while fluctuating slightly from year to year, remained fairly stable between 1920 and 1930, with women teachers predominating throughout the period. Considering the decade as a whole, 76.8% of the teachers in the area were female (see Figure 6). Fully 91.3% of these women were

¹ The data concerning the characteristics of the teacher population in the Okanagan Valley, and from which the figures used in this thesis are calculated, are compiled from the Statistical Tables in the annual printed reports of the Department of Education for the years 1920 to 1930 inclusive. These data enumerate only one teacher per school (or per classroom in schools comprised of more than one division) for each school year. However, qualitative evidence from interviews with former teachers and pupils, and details included in inspectors' individual school reports, indicate that in some instances several teachers were employed during a given year within a single school. This suggests that the data may underestimate actual numbers. Replacement appointments made both prior to and following the point of data collection appear to have been omitted. The magnitude of this potential error and its significance to the conclusions drawn from the calculations based on such statistics are unknown.

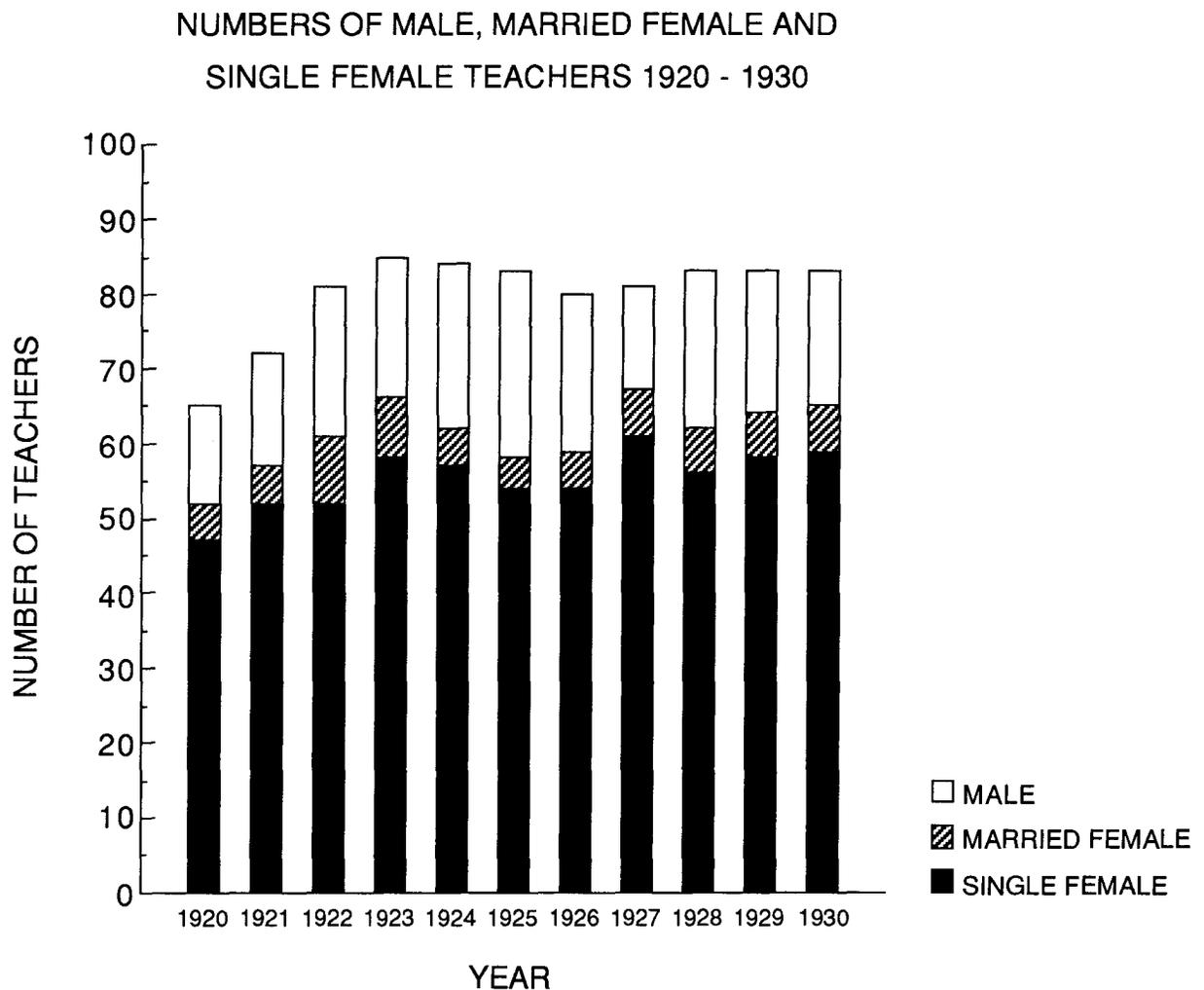
² The teachers' specifications that emerged from the data on the Okanagan Valley roughly correspond to province-wide statistics on rural teachers for the same period. See Wilson and Stortz, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You'," 38-40. For comparable figures on the Bulkley and Nechako Valleys see Stortz, "The Rural School Problem," 91-94.

unmarried. Thus between 1920 and 1930 70.1% of all rural teachers in the Okanagan Valley were single females.

As far as their academic credentials were concerned 51.3% of the total number of teachers held a second class teaching certificate, which meant that the individual possessed three years of high school and one year of normal school (see Figure 7). The proportion with an academic teaching degree or a first class certificate accounted for 12.2% and 22.0% respectively, denoting in the former case, university graduation and one year of normal school, and in the latter case one year at university and one year of normal school. Only 10.0% of all the teachers in the area were in possession of third class qualifications, a classification that was abolished in June 1922, but until then entailed three years of high school and one term (four months) of normal school. The remaining 4.5% held either a temporary or special certificate.³ Statistics comparing the qualifications of male with female teachers were more suggestive, revealing that on average female rural teachers in the area were less qualified than their male counterparts (see Figure 8). Of the male teachers 56.7% held either an academic or first class teaching certificate whereas only 27.3% of females were equally qualified. Correspondingly 72.7% of female teachers compared to only 43.3% of male teachers had second, third, temporary or special certificates. The fact that the male teachers who taught in the area were generally more highly qualified than their female equivalents may explain why, over the decade, 59.5% of all male teaching positions, as compared to 40.1% of the posts occupied by female teachers, were in the larger multi-roomed schools of two or more divisions. Consequently the majority of teaching assignments held by the women who taught in the

³The educational requirements of each of these certificates are outlined in AR, 1923, F11-12. Temporary certificates were often granted to teachers who had been trained out of province and had not yet acquired their B.C. licence, and who thus had some normal school training and previous experience but who did not possess all the qualifications necessary, and special certificates were usually awarded to teachers of manual training and domestic science.

FIGURE 5

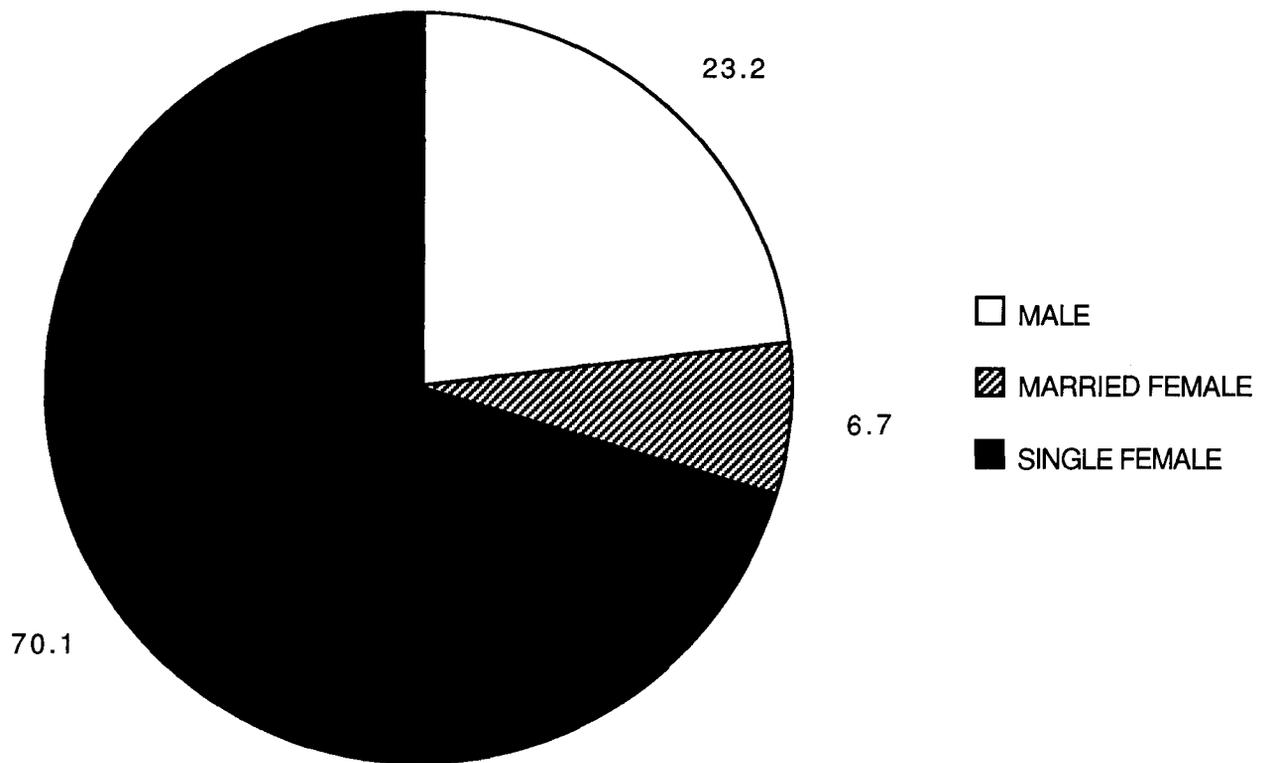


SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

NOTES: The Department of Education data concerning the characteristics of the teacher population in the Okanagan Valley, and on which the calculations used in this thesis are based, enumerates only one teacher per school (or per classroom in schools comprised of more than one division) for each academic year. Other sources make it clear however that replacement appointments were made throughout the school year, both prior to and following the point of departmental data collection, but which appear to have been omitted from the published reports. It is therefore possible that the official statistics may underestimate actual numbers of teachers.

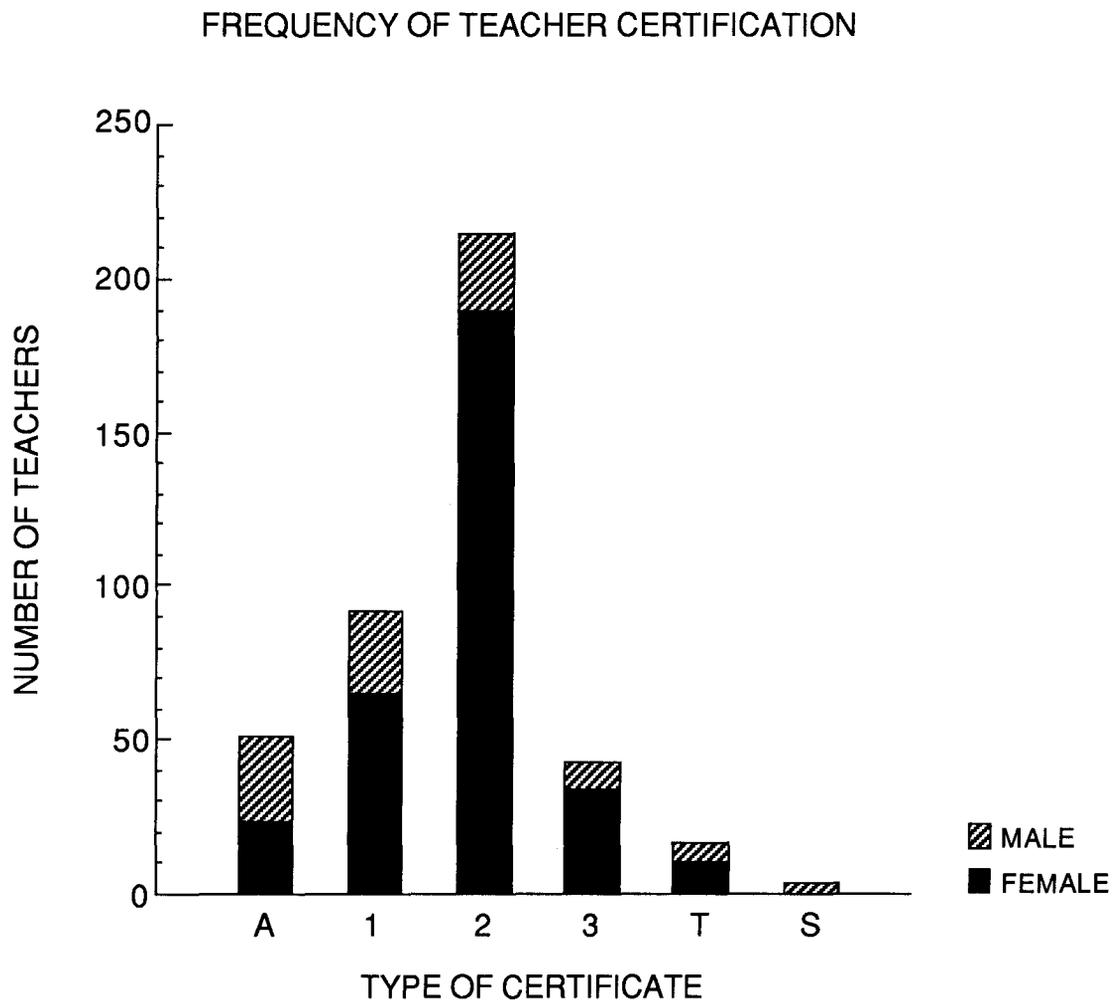
FIGURE 6

PERCENTAGES OF MALE, MARRIED FEMALE AND SINGLE FEMALE TEACHERS



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

FIGURE 7

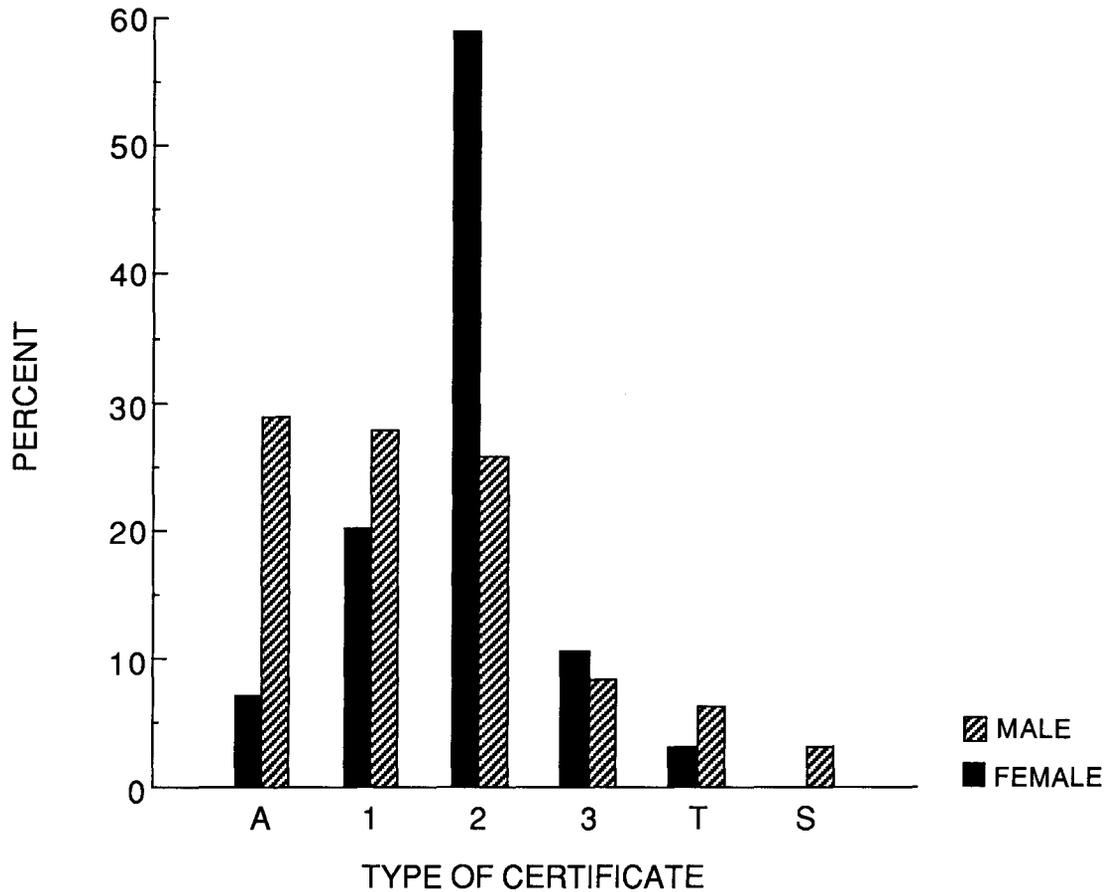


SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools 1920-1930.

NOTES: Teacher certification is categorised according to the class of teaching certificate held by individual teachers. Each type of certificate required different levels of academic and professional qualifications. A = Academic (University degree and one year of Normal School); 1 = First Class (one year at University and one year of Normal School); 2 = Second Class (three years of high school and one year of Normal School); 3 = Third Class (three years of high school and one term (four months) at Normal School, abolished in June 1922); T = Temporary (often awarded to teachers who had been trained out of province and who had not yet acquired their British Columbia licence); S = Special (usually awarded to teachers of manual training and domestic science).

FIGURE 8

RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF TEACHER CERTIFICATION BY SEX



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

NOTES: Teacher certification, categorised according to the class of teaching certificate held, is represented for female and male teachers as the proportion of the total number of teachers of each sex.

Okanagan Valley, 59.9%, were in one-room schools, whereas only 40.5% of the male teachers endured the same degree of professional and personal isolation.

Relative inexperience was also a characteristic of many of those who taught in the rural schools in the study area.⁴ Nearly half, roughly 44%, of all rural teachers had only one year or less of experience as a teacher. Approximately 25% of the teachers had five or more years of overall teaching experience and about 31% had taught for between two and five years. Although the ages of all these teachers is unavailable, given their lack of experience it is reasonable to speculate that a substantial number of them were also young. Information collected during interviews with former teachers also supports this contention. They were unanimous in their impression that a great many of their colleagues who taught in the area in the 1920s were, to use their own words, "youngsters" or "kids" not long out of normal school, and that they themselves were therefore representative of much of the larger population of teachers. Indeed, with the exception of three, who had taught in rural one-room schools elsewhere for a couple of years prior to accepting jobs in the area, all the participants took up their posts in the Okanagan Valley between the ages of seventeen and twenty-one, with no previous teaching experience whatsoever, rural or otherwise. Thus the typical rural school teacher in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920s was a young, single, inexperienced female, or as Lucy McCormick, a long-time teacher in the area, simply stated, "usually a girl in her first school."⁵

Why did so many young people, and particularly women, turn to teaching as their choice of occupation? For some the initial decision to teach was forged early in childhood. To Agnes Ball teaching was definitely a vocation: "I always wanted to be a teacher when I was a young girl....I just had it in me....I wanted to get out and do something, spread my

⁴Details on the teachers' number of years of classroom experience were derived from the inspectors' individual school reports and not the Statistical Tables in the AR. As the figures cited here are taken from a sample, rather than all of the reports for the study area, they are therefore approximations.

⁵McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 39.

wings."⁶ Like Agnes, Janet Graham had also always dreamed of being a teacher. As a pupil in elementary school in Kamloops she became overawed by a particular teacher and dates her decision to teach from that time:

When I was in Kamloops I had a teacher that was utterly charming. I came home one day at lunch-time and said to my dear mummy "I know what I want to be when I grow up. I'd like to be a teacher just to show children how nice a teacher can be.

For others the desire to teach stemmed from a general feeling of love for, and affinity with, young children. Mary Genier stated that "I think that I was a natural...I knew children, I loved children and got along well with them." Esma Shunter expressed similar sentiments by stating enthusiastically that she was, and still is, "crazy about kids and the worse they are the more I like them."

A few had been influenced in their initial career decisions by the members of their families and also by friends. The example of parents, siblings and other relatives who had been, or were still, teachers encouraged some women to join the profession. A history of teaching was well established in Esma Shunter's family: "I had three sisters already who had gone to Normal so it was sort of a family tradition." Ila Embree also had a sister who was a teacher. Lloyd Wills attributed her decision to become a teacher "partly" to her father, Thomas Alfred Norris, who had been the first teacher at Lumby School in the late 1890's. However she also drew attention to the important influence of her close female friends in determining her choice of occupation: "I had four very good chums, you know, girls, pals, three of them were going down to Normal School at Victoria, so I just made up my mind to go with them seeing as my dad had been a teacher."

⁶Unless otherwise stated all quotations of former teachers and pupils used in this thesis are taken from the personal history materials as cited in the bibliography. To assume that the complete picture of teacher experience in rural areas can be found in this, and the chapters that follow, would be a gross oversimplification. It is possible, and even likely, that many teachers would not be able to identify with the world of rural teaching presented here and that my sample of participants represents the exceptional rather than the average. Thus it is essential that the reader bears in mind that this thesis relates specifically to the Okanagan Valley and most importantly to the experiences of those individuals about whom I have information.

It is clear from the comments of former teachers, however, that for a substantial number of them, their decision to teach did not originate from any strong vocational calling or indeed from the intrinsic appeal of the occupation itself. In fact many implied that their entry into the teaching force was in a sense involuntary. They gave the impression that they had been more or less forced into the occupation because, for a variety of reasons, they felt that their options for employment were limited. When asked specifically why they became teachers many commented explicitly on the nature and extent of these limitations. At the same time they seemed to accept their minimal prospects as a fact of life.

In summing up the range of options available for a young woman just out of high school in the 1920's Lucy McCormick expressed the commonly held perception of all the female participants. She stated emphatically: "I think that's what most people did. They either went nursing or teaching. They were all anybody I knew did. Or get married. They were the three things that girls did." For those who regarded marriage as an option rather than a necessity and wished to work, but also for those for whom the option of marriage was not available and who therefore were compelled to find a job, nursing and teaching remained the only socially acceptable occupations. They were generally regarded as superior to other types of work for young women such as "hairdresser," "secretary type," "hired girl," "work in a cafe," and "telephone operator."⁷ The participants suggested that these jobs were not considered as viable alternatives because they carried too little status. As Ila Embree bluntly commented on the latter occupation: "Only the dummies became telephone operators." Nursing had its drawbacks. Its appeal was limited by the fact that the necessary training was lengthy and therefore required a considerable financial investment which many families just did not have. Requiring relatively little training and few special

⁷For discussions of the kinds of paid employment available to women in Canada in the inter-war years, see Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, 41-80, Prentice *et. al.*, Canadian Women, 218-239, and Light and Pierson, No Easy Road, 251-312.

skills, the attraction of teaching was partly related to the relative immediacy of access to the occupation.

Some participants had to face family prejudice about the types of work that were suitable for them. Esmā Shunter's father had very definite ideas concerning the "right" choice of occupation for his daughters: "and my father said 'There's no way you're going to be a hairdresser'." Marianne Nelson simply stated: "My father didn't want me to be a nurse." Her decision was made for her. For others, like Alice Gibson, the stimulus for choosing teaching rather than the other available opportunities was essentially, as she admitted, a "negative" one. When asked what had motivated her to take up the option of teaching she asserted: "I didn't want to do the other two." Her succinct answer clearly illustrates not only her distinct lack of choice she faced but also the fact that her decision involved little more than a process of elimination. "After all," she added "when you're eighteen your mind might be a little bit more on tennis and the swimming and the boys."

Economic necessity was thus one of the main driving forces behind the decision to take up teaching for many women and men. When Ruby Lidstone decided to become a teacher in the 1920's she did so because "There were only two professions open to girls at that time - teaching and nursing." Although she did not explicitly state the reason for her choice it is likely that she opted for the former for economic reasons. She made many references in her memoirs to the fact that "money was scarce" in her family. Moreover, while at Normal School Ruby boarded with a young married couple in Victoria and "acted as a babysitter to their two children [and] also did weekend household chores" so that she only had to pay "partial board." For Isobel Simard her choice of occupation was limited to teaching because her father "couldn't afford anything else."

He couldn't afford to send me anywhere else, even nursing....What I really wanted to do was go in for ballet dancing but Dad couldn't afford that....My sister was the one who wanted to be a nurse but the same thing happened there. Apparently it cost so much to send anyone to train.

Bernard Gillie was faced with a similar situation:

When I went into teaching that really wasn't what I wanted to do. I went into teaching because it was the only thing that I was able to train myself for because that was all the money we had....That was the basic reason...because it was fairly easy to get into teaching in terms of the length of time [for training]...and the money was good if you could call it that....What I really wanted to do was go into forestry....I'm still a tree nut, I just love big trees...but I couldn't go into that because that was a five year programme and there was no way I could go to university for five years.

As far as Ila Embree was concerned getting a job was her first priority. Given the available choices, training to be a teacher represented to her the quickest and easiest way of gaining access to a relatively well-paying position in the workforce. Beginning Normal School prior to 1922 meant that Ila only had to attend "short term" in order to acquire a Third class Teaching Certificate and was therefore eligible to teach in less than six months. Her motives for becoming a teacher were clear: "I wanted to get to work and earn money. A hundred dollars a month was a lot of money in those days." Certainly her decision did not result from any strong desire to make a life career out of teaching. "Women didn't in those days. You were lucky just to get a job." For Ila, like many others, teaching was therefore just "something to do to earn a living. You had to do something." A considerable number of young people were therefore directed into teaching for reasons that were mainly beyond their immediate control: they needed a job and teaching, especially for young women but also for some men, was one of the few, perhaps the only, feasible option available.

On completing their training at Normal School the young graduates began their search for employment. The sense of forced choice that the teachers indicated they had faced in making their initial occupational decisions was also evident in their accounts of how and why their years in the profession began in schools in isolated rural communities. The job market for teachers in the 1920s was tight. In 1928 Inspector A.F. Matthews of the Kamloops Inspectorate noted that "the supply of teachers in this Province is now somewhat greater than the demand for their services."⁸ Given these market conditions competition for jobs was intense, particularly so for the recently graduated novice teacher for whom the

⁸AR, 1928, V26.

degree of choice they were able to exercise in determining where they would teach was negligible. Obtaining a position in an urban graded school was almost unheard of. In fact it was taken for granted that the beginning assignment for nearly all new teachers was the small rural classroom. As Mary Genier remembered: "I didn't know of anybody at that time that ever went to their first school except that it was a rural school. I don't think you could get in a town school without experience." Lloyd Wills confirmed that this situation "was more or less the set up at the time. New teachers...for their first year they had to go out to those little one-room schools." Although in reality it was generally not the case some of the female participants perceived gender-based factors to have influenced women's assignment to rural posts. Thus Alice Gibson asserted: "Of course the men never had to go to these situations [or] very rarely....[T]hey always seemed to get the cushy jobs in the city schools." But Alice, like many other women, just accepted this as a fact of life. In fact she was resigned to the situation: "That's the way it is....It was just par for the course."⁹

Nevertheless Alice Gibson felt "very lucky indeed" to be offered a post at Sugar Lake School, not only because it was relatively close to her home town of Kelowna, but more so because "There was very little choice for 2nd class beginning teachers who were not from the Vancouver area....In 1924 when I graduated from Victoria Normal there were hundreds of new teachers from the two normal schools flooding the market." Lists of vacant teaching positions were issued by both the Vancouver and Victoria Normal Schools. Like countless others Lucy McCormick applied "for lots of jobs - about sixty or seventy - all kinds of them all over the place." She even applied for a position "on a barge where the kids had to all wear life jackets and the school was on the barge, one of those Davies rafts they had on the coast." Lucy's enthusiastic hunt for employment was not unusual. As she pointed out: "Everybody did the same thing. All my friends that I knew at that time [made]

⁹In this context Jean Barman had suggested of the training females received at Normal School: "It sought to stamp its imprimatur on young women and part of that imprimatur lay in inculcating them with suitable assumptions as to their deferential place in the teaching hierarchy, perceived as lying in the least attractive positions, very often on the frontier." See "Birds of Passage", 24.

dozens of applications." Ruby Lidstone applied in vain for 100 jobs before she was eventually successful with her 101st job application to the Grandview Bench School in December 1927. Unable to procure a job in their own province many teachers had to look further afield. Esma Shunter reported: "Both of my sisters, they went to Normal and couldn't get jobs in British Columbia so they went to Saskatchewan, and that was practically the last we saw of them."

As September and a new school year approached, those teachers who had failed to acquire a job turned to more drastic measures. For Janet Graham her choice of schools when she graduated from Vancouver Normal School in 1923 was limited to one:

You didn't choose....There was no option. There was a glut of teachers. You'd send out...I don't know how many [applications] I sent out....No answer came. So then you could write to the Provincial Government and say "Get me a school" and you went where they sent you and mine was Shuswap Falls.

Bernard Gillie's account of his search for his first teaching job in the summer of 1926 is similar to that of Janet's, but also fairly typical of many other beginning teachers in the 1920s who found that, by force of circumstances, they had to accept schools in very remote districts such as in the Northern Interior of British Columbia.

I happened to hit the teacher market at a time when jobs were very, very difficult to get. To give you an idea of how difficult it was to get *any* kind of a job *anywhere*, the question is "Where do you want to go?" "It doesn't matter. I'll go anywhere." I wrote, I remember very well, this figure is deeply ingrained in my memory, I wrote fifty-six applications to fifty-six different schools in British Columbia and I didn't even get an *answer* from one. [But] I knew I simply had to get a job somewhere.

Finally in "desperation" Bernard decided that, since he was living on the family farm in Strawberry Vale in Victoria, he would go to see the Teachers' Registrar at the Department of Education to explain his case and ask directly for help in finding a job. When the Registrar offered him a position at the school in Hutton Mills, a tiny lumber town located on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway approximately seventy-five miles east of Prince George, Bernard accepted immediately and without reservation. "It could have been in Siberia for all I knew but I didn't question it. I said 'Yes, fine. Where is that?'"

Of the large numbers of teachers still unemployed as the new term began in September, some turned to alternative sources of employment to earn money whilst continuing to look for a teaching position. However, as the narratives of former teachers suggest, jobs became available at times throughout the year particularly in one-room schools occupied by inexperienced teachers, often those born and bred in urban British Columbia, who found that they could not tolerate the isolated conditions. Esma Shunter worked in the packing house in Kelowna from September to December 1928 before accepting the position of teacher at Shuswap Falls School in January 1929. The previous teacher, who had attended Victoria Normal School with Esma, resigned after only four months because, as Esma was led to believe, "she just couldn't take it." Esma suggested that part of the reason for that teacher's unhappy experience was that she could not adapt to the harsh physical conditions that rural school teaching involved:

She was from Victoria. She'd never been out of Victoria in her life and you know when you get up there in December and the snow is up to your knees and you've got to climb a hill and walk, oh I guess half a mile up hill, right through the bush to get to the school, and when you get there you had to light a fire.

As I listened to accounts of how beginning teachers acquired their first schools it became clear that family initiative and the influence of local community networks were responsible for filling many vacant teaching positions. Localism often had a strong impact on the process of teacher selection. For Marianne Nelson, who lived with her family in Lumby, the problems of finding her first teaching position were considerably lessened by assistance from her father. A position at Hupel School became vacant when the teacher, a young man from Victoria, decided to resign at the end of the school year, possibly because, as Marianne suggested, "One year out in the sticks was long enough for him." She was offered the job of teacher at the school primarily because her father knew the Secretary of the School Board. As Marianne explained: "I remember teachers looking for schools and they were saying I was lucky. I got my school through friends." Unable to get a teaching job on graduating from Victoria Normal school in June 1929, Lucy McCormick remained

at home in Lumby until November of that year when the opportunity arose to teach at Mabel Lake School. In describing how she came to be offered the post she explained that "I got it through word of mouth." She continued:

In those days...in the interior the school boards wrote to Victoria and they sent people up from the coast instead of looking around locally....That's how I got my job because the person they sent up couldn't stand it....When the snow came and they just couldn't stand it [they] just packed it up and went out....When the stage came in from Mabel Lake to Lumby they looked around and one of the chaps in the store...he knew I hadn't a job.

Similar circumstances surrounded the appointment of Mary Genier to her first job at Medora Creek School in 1925. However, in her case, help came from a fellow rural teacher. Despite the fact that she had "applied all over the place" Mary did not have a school by the beginning of the year and so took a job picking and packing fruit in Kelowna. Meanwhile Alice Gibson, teacher at Sugar Lake School and friend of Mary's from Kelowna, heard that the post had become vacant at Medora Creek when the teacher there resigned in October, only one month into the new term. Aware that Mary was still looking for a teaching position she called to inform her that the school board urgently needed a replacement. Knowing little about the school and the local community, and undeterred by the fact that the previous teacher had abandoned her post because of a "nervous breakdown" Mary applied for, and was offered the job. She explained that "I jumped onto it because jobs were hard to get...because I needed a job. You can pick and pack fruit just so long....I just took Brownie's¹⁰ word for it that it would be O.K." In 1927 a new school was opened for the first time at Kingfisher. As a result of her family's connections in the area - they farmed on land between Enderby and Armstrong - Isobel Simard was offered the job of teacher at the school. She accepted the position although with some reluctance. Her disinclination as revealed in the account below, which reflects Isobel's feeling that

¹⁰Alice Gibson's maiden name was Brown. The nickname "Brownie" was coined during her years teaching at Sugar Lake School.

teaching had indeed been a forced choice of employment for her, but her acceptance of the job also indicates the obligation she felt towards her parents:

That first year I couldn't get a job so then I went to Kelowna to help a family....I just liked it *so* much there. Anyway, I *did* like housework....Then by the time I'd been there a year I didn't care whether I ever taught at all. [But] the Hadley's had spoken to mother about this school being built and [said] that if I wanted it I could have it. But of course mother...just made me quit where I was and come on up and take it because I had gone through normal school and Dad had paid money out to put me through and I think she just figured that's what I should do.

Considering the difficulties most teachers had encountered in acquiring a teaching position, the amount of time they spent in rural schools was somewhat shortlived. Indeed, throughout the 1920s transiency remained one of the principal characteristics of the rural teacher population in the Okanagan Valley (see Figure 9), reflecting a common pattern occurring in other rural districts across British Columbia.¹¹ The highest turnover rate during the period was in 1923 when 78.8% of the total number of rural teachers did not return to the same school in which they had been employed the previous year. This figure had fallen to 39.5% by 1927. Subsequently the proportion of transient teachers increased to 50.6% over the next two years but then fell to a decade low of 31.1% by 1930. In their reports inspectors frequently deplored what Lord referred to as the "constant migration" of teachers in rural schools.¹² They were particularly concerned about the detrimental impact of such teacher discontinuity on pedagogical effectiveness. Miller, to take a typical example, noted that schools were being "handicapped" by what he described as "this veritable menace to efficiency."¹³

¹¹See Wilson and Stortz, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You'," 37-41, and *passim*, and Stortz, "The Rural School Problem," 94-98.

¹²AR, 1921, F36.

¹³AR's, 1922, C36, and 1921, F37. See also IR's on the following schools for further comments on the problem of teacher transiency: Ashton Creek (March 7, 1923), where Miller warned that "The frequent changing of teachers...inevitably results in a lower standing," Coldstream (April 8, 1924), Ellison (May 3, 1921), Hilton (May 10, 1922), Naramata Superior (November 15, 1921), Shuswap Falls (May 27, 1924) and Westbank Townsite (April 27, 1922). From about mid-decade inspectors began to refer to teacher turnover mostly in terms of its decline, a situation Hall regarded as "decidedly encouraging." See AR, 1924, T53.

Rural teacher turnover was indeed a very real problem in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920s. In fact mean teacher tenure over the decade was only 1.8 years. This figure is somewhat deceptive. Using the mean as the measure of central tendency is inappropriate in this instance because it does not adequately represent the actual experience of the majority of rural teachers in the area. By focusing on teacher tenure within individual schools a more accurate description of the data emerges. As indicated by Figure 10, the frequency distribution of the data is markedly positively skewed. Well over half (271 or 57.1%) of those who taught in the area between 1920 and 1930 were likely to have spent only one year in a school before vacating their post. The number who probably remained for a second year was dramatically lower (118 or 24.8%). Even fewer were prepared to stay on for a third (48 or 10.1%) or fourth (19 or 4.0%) year, with a rare individual remaining five or more years (19 or 4.0%) within a single school. Given the non-normal distribution of the data the mode, the most frequently occurring value in this set of data, is taken as the preferred measure of central tendency. In this way modal teacher tenure in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley over the 1920s was just one year.¹⁴

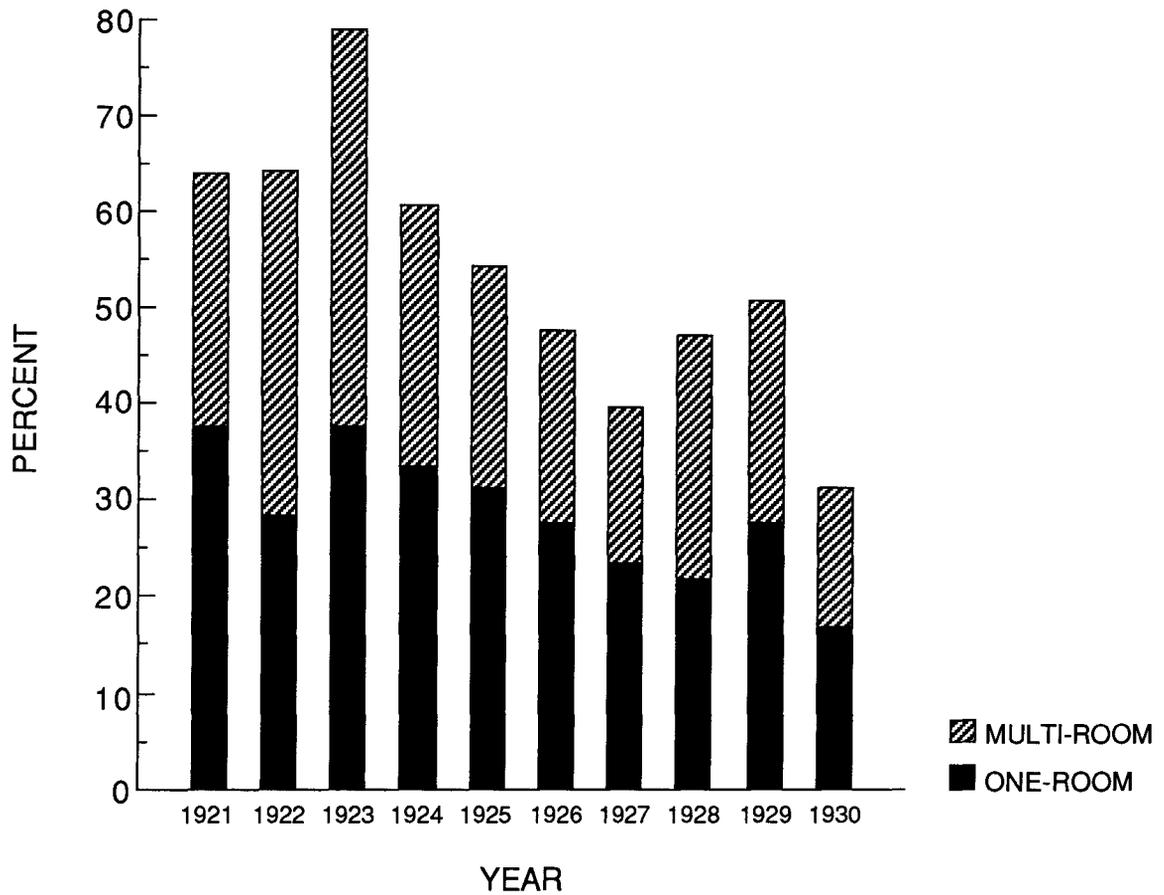
Interestingly, according to the same data the pattern of rural teacher tenure for each sex was remarkably similar (see Figure 11).¹⁵ Although the proportion of female teachers who were inclined to remain in a school for five or more years was less than half that of their male colleagues, this difference is more apparent than real since the small absolute numbers in this category yielded a misleadingly large percentage difference. In all other categories, where percentages are based on larger absolute numbers, the ratio of men to women was more or less equal.

¹⁴The dependent variable (teacher tenure in number of years) is a discrete rather than continuous scale. In the set of data illustrated in Figures 10 and 11, the mode is located at the minimum possible discontinuous value. Since the modal value represents in both cases more than half of the dependent measures (number of teacher-positions and percent in Figures 10 and 11 respectively), the median, another commonly used measure of central tendency in sets of skewed data, is also equivalent to one in this case.

¹⁵Barman has reported similar findings on British Columbian teachers in non-city schools for the period 1872-1901. See "Birds of Passage," 22 and Table 5 on pages 32-33.

FIGURE 9

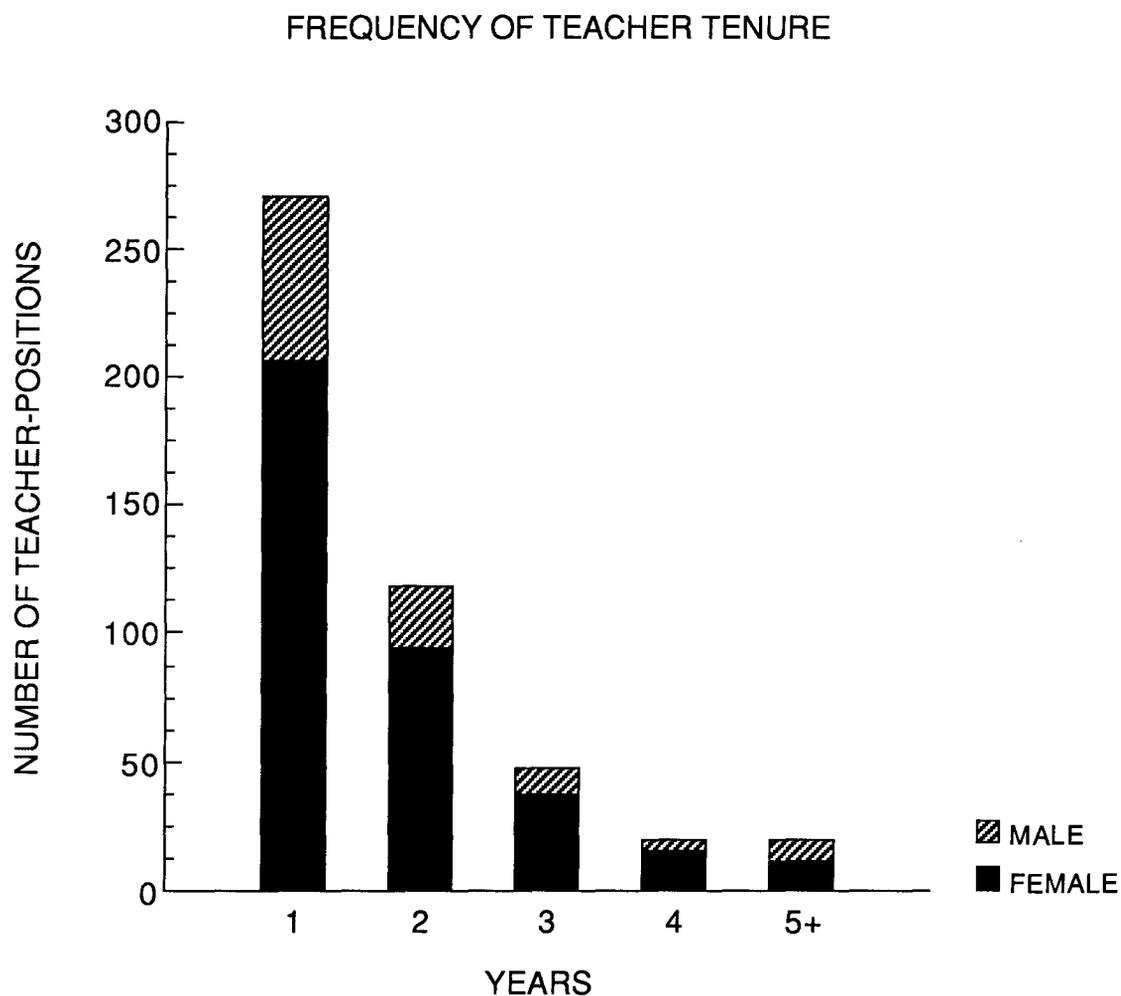
TEACHER TRANSIENCY 1921 - 1930



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

NOTES: For each school year teacher transiency is represented as the proportion of teachers who did not return to the same school in which they had taught the previous year. In cases where schools were comprised of more than one division the movement of teachers between divisions from one year to the next is not considered.

FIGURE 10

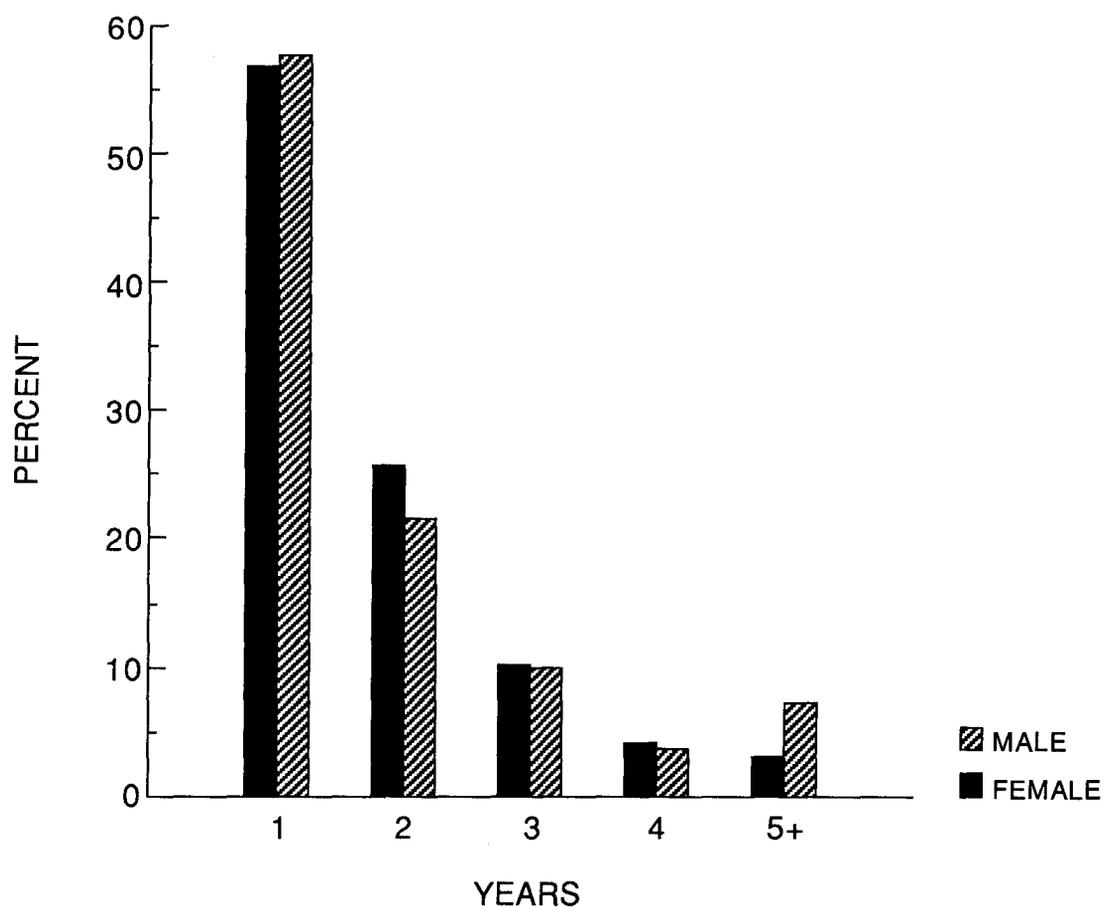


SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools 1920-1930.

NOTES: Teacher tenure is categorised according to the number of consecutive years of experience of an individual teacher within a single school over the period 1920-1930. The unit used is the teacher-position. One teacher-position represents a single uninterrupted period of employment by any one teacher in any one school. Forty-five (10.7%) teachers worked in more than one school during the decade and each therefore contributes more than one teacher-position. In cases of multi-divisional schools the movement of teachers between divisions from one year to the next is not considered.

FIGURE 11

RELATIVE FREQUENCY OF TEACHER TENURE BY SEX



SOURCE: British Columbia, Department of Education, Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1920-1930.

NOTES: Teacher tenure, categorised according to the number of consecutive years of experience of an individual teacher within a single school, is represented for female and male teachers as the proportion of the total number of teacher-positions for each sex. In cases of multi-divisional schools the movement of teachers between divisions from one year to the next is not considered.

The data from which the figures cited above were calculated provides valuable information from which to plot the general trends in teacher transiency in the Okanagan Valley between 1920 and 1930, but offers few clues as to reasons why rural teachers were apparently so mobile, as the vast majority so enumerated (374 or 89.3%) taught in only one school in the area before disappearing from the records. Of the forty-five (10.7%) teachers who did transfer to another school within the district, thirty-seven relocated once, five moved twice, with the remaining three individuals teaching in four different schools over the decade. Tracking the movements of this group of teachers yielded little useful information from which generalisations could be developed to explain why teachers moved from one particular school to another. The data suggest that in most cases career advancement was seemingly the prime motivation for a teacher to leave a school, in that the typical transfer entailed a teacher moving to a larger, more prosperous school district, and was often accompanied by a salary increase. Significantly, however, in some instances the reverse situation occurred. For example, in 1927, after teaching at Salmon Bench School for two years, Harriet Richmond moved to nearby Hendon. Both schools were of assisted status and located in small, isolated districts, but at the latter both enrolment (thirteen compared to nineteen) and the annual school operating budget (\$548 compared to \$1102) were considerably lower than at the former. As well Miss Richmond accepted a decrease in salary from \$1000 to \$960 per annum in order to work at Hendon.

The geographical mobility of the teachers also appeared to be quite arbitrary. Some, like Miss Richmond, transferred only a few miles to a new school. Others travelled all over the valley. Between 1922 and the end of the decade George E. Welbanks changed schools four times. He first taught for three years at Despard, then transferred over fifty miles east to Heywood's Corner where he remained for less than a year before returning back east to be in charge of the school at Reiswig for three years. In 1929 he moved once again, this time to Salmon Valley, but the following year found him teaching at nearby Heywood's Corner for a second time. Likewise Earla H. McDonald taught at Hillcrest, west of

Enderby, in 1922 and then moved a considerable distance south-east to Shuswap Falls the following year. Although there is no record of her having worked in the area in 1924, by 1925 she had returned to teach in the Okanagan Valley, at Joe Rich Valley, east of Kelowna and thus much further south in the area.

It is clear that if the reasons why a teacher took the decision to leave a particular rural school to transfer to another, or even out of the profession altogether, are to be uncovered, it is essential to examine teacher transiency at the level of the individual. Information collected during interviews with former teachers confirmed that although financial remuneration and career advancement were certainly important factors determining where they might work teachers often had other, very personal, reasons for terminating their employment in a school.

As the weight of evidence presented in this thesis will suggest, teaching in a remote country school in British Columbia in the 1920s, especially for the novice, could be an onerous assignment. It certainly was one which demanded the acceptance of considerable physical, mental, emotional and professional hardships. Rural teachers faced endless challenges both in and out of their classrooms. They toiled long hours in often primitive buildings, experienced seemingly insurmountable pedagogical difficulties and responsibilities. They battled with brutal climatic conditions and sometimes wild animals, were forced to tolerate uncongenial, and even in some instances, hostile living arrangements, suffered from constant local scrutiny, often highly critical, of both their working and private lives, and in all of this endured great personal and professional isolation and loneliness. These arduous conditions took their toll of many rural teachers and discouragement was common. It is perhaps easy to understand, therefore, why some individuals, finding themselves faced with such difficult and sometimes unpleasant circumstances, chose to move on to a situation they felt suited them better, often after only a brief time.

In his report for 1920 Inspector Lord suggested that one of the main causes of rural teacher transiency stemmed from the demanding "working conditions" with which teachers had to contend in ungraded schools:

In the last analysis the conscientious teacher finds her reward in the realization of a duty well performed; the knowledge that satisfactory results cannot be obtained is a vital factor in the constant changing of teachers from one school to another.¹⁶

It is probable that this was precisely the case for some of the rural teachers who taught in the area in the 1920s. However, in the course of my research I found little direct evidence to support Lord's supposition.¹⁷ In contrast many of the former teachers interviewed emphasised that the nature of the living and social conditions that existed in the communities in which they worked had a far greater influence in determining the quality of their rural teaching experience, and thus whether, or how long they remained at a particular school.¹⁸

Janet Graham was appointed in September 1923 to teach at Shuswap Falls, a one-room school located in a tiny farming and trapping community approximately twenty-five miles east of Vernon. She was desperately unhappy in her first teaching post, and by December had resigned and returned to her home in Kelowna, where she worked as a substitute teacher. Interestingly, as her comments imply, she felt that she could not relinquish her position without the consent of her parents: "I could have stayed if I'd *had* to...". Like many other teachers her misery originated not from her professional responsibilities but lay rather in her social circumstances:

It was utter isolation as far as I was concerned....It was loneliness too, you see. There wasn't anyone to talk to....My few months at Shuswap was a time of great

¹⁶AR, 1920, C34. For an extended discussion of the physical and pedagogical circumstances encountered by teachers in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley, see Chapters Six and Seven of this thesis.

¹⁷For an example of such a teacher, see Chapter Seven, page 212.

¹⁸The living and social conditions of rural teachers in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920s is the focus of Chapter Eight of this thesis.

homesickness - never had I thought of such an experience....It was so foreign to me....I was truly grateful to my parents for letting me return home - to basic standards of living - I felt very sorry indeed to let down the five lovely little pupils.¹⁹

Ila Embree, whose home was in Delta, south of Vancouver, also found remote rural life in British Columbia's interior hard to take. She taught at Kedleston, in a one-room school built on a steep hill, just seven miles outside Vernon. The small poverty-stricken community was comprised mainly of returned soldiers who had been allocated land by the Soldier Settlement Board and who were struggling to wrest a bare subsistence living from the land. As Ila suggested: "They were starving to death, all of them." She outlined some of her reasons for leaving Kedleston after less than a year and a half:

Where I had to board was a mile & a half from the school....I got tired of trudging through the snow in the winter....I hated the climate up there. It was cold....I waded through snow lots of times. That's one of the reasons I quit up there [and] when they told me to be careful - some hunters had noticed animal [cougar and bear] paths at the side of the road - I thought it was time to leave - and applied for a position at Mosher Siding through the Delta school board.

Similarly Mildred Buchanan, also from Vancouver, who accepted a position to teach at the school in Glenrosa, a community of mixed farmers in the South Okanagan near Westbank, transferred after only one year to Strathcona Elementary School in Vancouver. Professionally Mildred found the job in Glenrosa rewarding: "It was a great experience....I feel that I was completely successful especially with...the inspector." An unsatisfactory personal life, however, induced her to seek out a new assignment. Denominational differences were the main source of tension between Mildred and the residents of Glenrosa. The community was predominantly Plymouth Brethren and it was made quite clear to Mildred that she was not accepted into their world. Although she was permitted to attend their religious services, at the same time, she was excluded from any active participation in the weekly ceremony: "They sat in a circle [but] I couldn't sit in the circle because I hadn't been saved again. I had to sit outside." Moreover Mildred recalled one occasion that upset

¹⁹Janet Graham's rural teaching experiences at Shuswap Falls, and then later Ewing's Landing Schools, are discussed in detail in Chapter Eight.

her a great deal. She had spent much of the Saturday prior to Easter Sunday decorating the blackboards at the school with seasonal chalk drawings of rabbits, chickens etc for her pupils. This had obviously been considered as too "frivolous" by the community and because she had not observed the traditions of this particular religious clique someone had removed all traces of the pictures before the Sunday church services, which were held in the schoolhouse. Mildred reported: "I found that they were very narrow-minded....It was the strictness of their religion, their narrowness, complete narrowness." Consequently, she added:

I let them live their lives and I led mine....There was no getting together with the parents of the children....I wasn't going to stay up there if I could get a school in Vancouver. If I had a chance to get a school in Vancouver I took it....I didn't want to live that life up there. It had nothing to interest me except the teaching.

In 1925 Vera Towgood, on graduating from Normal School, taught in the one-room school in Squilax, west of Salmon Arm, just outside the Okanagan Valley. The problems she encountered in trying to find suitable accommodation in the community ultimately provided a strong reason for transferring at the end of that school year to Trinity Valley, another isolated one-room school, located in a dairy farming and pole- and tie-cutting district between Vernon and Enderby. As she clearly stated: "I wasn't very happy there [Squilax] because there didn't seem to be anywhere to board." Vera recalled her trying situation in vivid detail.²⁰ It had been arranged that she would board with "Mr and Mrs C." a couple who ran, and lived in, the local store. On arriving in Squilax late at night she found that to her dismay "the Missus" was away in Vancouver and that she would therefore have to spend the night alone in a house with a man she did not know: "Since it was midnight I didn't feel like routing out another family, and [so] opted for the room that had been prepared." As a precaution, however, Vera "braced the chair under the door knob" before going to sleep. She was subsequently informed that "Mr C." whom she had

²⁰Vera Towgood, "A Chapter of My Early Life, 1925," typescript.

thought of at the time as a "harmless old man" had in fact had "a bad reputation" as a womaniser, and been "found shot one night as he returned home, in front of his garage." Although his wife, "a crack shot" was implicated, "nothing was ever proved."

After Vera had been living at the local store for only a few days, Mrs C. "found it too much of a tie to keep a boarder" and so informed Vera that she had made arrangements for her "to sleep in a room of the school building" and for "the fish warden and his wife [to] supply my meals." Vera was very uncomfortable about using the schoolhouse as a bedroom because of the threat of unwanted intruders: "I wanted to have my window open at night for fresh air, but purposely left the door unlocked, as I wanted to escape one way if someone came in the other." In addition, when she approached the family who were to feed her, she found they were "astounded" at her suggestion, clearly unaware that any such arrangements had been made. Luckily they felt sorry for Vera and agreed to provide her with her meals each day. Vera recalled: "I was very grateful and we became good friends. I have never forgotten, for I was very lonely until then." Unfortunately the family "were just camping there for the fall season of fishing" and so after only a short period Vera was again looking for somewhere to board. She was accepted into the home of the "Finlander family in the section house," an arrangement that also had its disadvantages:

The first night I slept there was a roaring blast of noise, the house shook and I was out of bed in terror and across the room before I was awake -- I had forgotten that my room was almost on the railway tracks....

The lady of the station house was a good cook, but no matter what, she insisted on serving me first and alone. I would have enjoyed the company of the family, but she shook her head and I dined in state. I felt that with all the others waiting, I should hurry, and that perhaps they had only the leftovers.

Fortunately Vera was able to remain with the Finlanders for the rest of the year and as time passed she became more involved with the people in the community and her situation improved. However, when the position at Trinity Valley arose, Vera jumped at the opportunity to move. Although the transfer involved an increase in salary, financial remuneration was not Vera's prime reason for applying for the job. The unsettled nature of her living arrangements in Squilax certainly prompted Vera to resign her position at the

school, but the decision to specifically choose Trinity Valley was motivated by another, more powerful influence:

What I liked least was having only brief visits with my family [so] I wanted to be nearer home [Oyama] and my Dad had a homestead up in Trinity Valley. He knew people there. Maybe that had something to do with it....I knew Dad knew some families there and I thought from what he told me about them [that] it would be a nice place to go.

Significantly Vera also reported that "my brother, Eldred Evans...was teaching in a Bohemian settlement at Trinity Creek which was...through the backwoods...road toward Enderby" and thus she was able to ride her horse to visit him when she wished to.

Similarly, in June 1927, Bernard Gillie, a native of Victoria, decided to terminate his employment of one year as teacher at Hutton Mills School in British Columbia's northern interior, in order to take up the position of Principal of the two-roomed school at Ellison, near Kelowna, the following September. After his sheltered and comfortable life on the family farm, he found his "living conditions" in Hutton Mills "very kind of hard to take. I wasn't used to that kind of thing really." He boarded in the mill's "rude staff-house" which proved to be very primitive:

A tiny rough-walled room, a single narrow iron cot with a thin mattress, one small table, one chair. That was it. No curtains, no carpets. His window was too big for the sash and would not close. Bernard had to stuff a towel into the four-inch gap in an effort to keep the cold out.

Green lumber had been used to build the staff-house. Shrinking, it had filled the walls with cracks. In turn, the cracks were filled with bed bugs.²¹

Bernard regarded his first teaching experience as "a tough time" and referred to the initial months as "the dark days." He explained: "I was still a kid really....I'd never been away from home outside of a few miles. I'd had no experience and...frankly, I didn't know how to teach school." Unfortunately his inspector, G.H. Gower, seemed less than sympathetic. In fact, Bernard considered him to have been "pretty harsh" on him.

I didn't do a particularly good job in teaching, I know that. My inspector, when he came, was not very happy with much that I was doing....Later in the year [when] I

²¹The Daily Colonist, December 19, 1976, George Inglis, "Variety -- Spice of Life," 6.

got the report...I was crushed. I wanted to resign. I wanted to quit because of the report.

With encouragement and support from the community, however, Bernard, persevered and things improved. However, when the opportunity arose, he chose to relocate to Ellison. Replicating Vera's words he stated: "I wanted to be nearer home. I guess I was a bit of a homebody."²²

As the recollections of former teachers recounted above make plain, a considerable number of young teachers did not make a complete break with their families when they began work. Even if, like Janet, Ila and Mildred, they did not explicitly state as such, given the opportunity many seemed to deliberately seek out positions in schools that enabled them to move nearer home and more familiar circumstances, perhaps to be able to live at home at the weekends, or at least during the school holidays. Others did so under duress. Margaret Landon, who taught for one year in the one-room school at Salmon Bench, a lumbering and mixed farming district in the Salmon River Valley, reported:

My parents were anxious for me to come home [to Armstrong] so I accepted the opportunity to join the staff at Armstrong Consolidated School in 1924-25 although reluctantly as I had enjoyed my first year and they [the community] didn't really want me to go.

For some teachers, particularly women, the responsibility and obligation they felt towards their families influenced whether or where they taught. In a number of cases women subordinated teaching to their perceived need to act as primary care-giver to a particular family member. A case in point is Ruby Lidstone, who taught in the one-room school at Grandview Bench, just above Grindrod in the North Okanagan, from January 1928 to June 1929. Despite her heavy professional commitments as a novice teacher and the fact that Grandview Bench, where she boarded, was more than five miles from her home in North Enderby, a considerable distance to travel at that time given the poor road

²²Bernard also reported: "The future of the mill was very uncertain. In fact it closed down...the next year after I was there. So there was a real question as to whether the school would continue." Between 1920 and 1930 thirty-two rural teachers in the Okanagan Valley left their schools because they closed.

conditions and lack of transportation, Ruby made frequent trips home to comfort and care for her mother who was dying of pernicious anaemia. She reported:

When the spring came and the roads were dry she rode her bicycle to the Bench from her home and made a bi-weekly trip on Wednesday afternoons, to have supper with her family - then rode back to Grindrod and walked up the long hill, pushing her bicycle.

In January her mother finally passed away. Despite the fact that it was "a hard winter, very cold with a lot of snow" Ruby made sure that she "got home in mid week as often as possible and always at weekends, when she tried to bake as much as her father & brothers would need for the week." When, six months later, her father committed suicide Ruby made the decision to give up teaching at Grandview Bench altogether to remain at home to help run the family farm and provide for her brothers' needs.²³

Mae E.A. McMynn, who taught at Westbank Townsite for the 1922-23 school year, also took time away from her appointment to care for her mother. In January 1923 she sent a telegram to the trustees informing them that "owing to the illness of her mother she would be detained another week."²⁴ Unfortunately she appears to have been the victim of uncooperative and unsympathetic school officials, who were no doubt displeased with the fact that while she was absent from school, her classroom was "closed accordingly."²⁵ In March of the same year Mae commented in the questionnaire she submitted to the Teachers' Bureau: "The present secretary of the trustees...has caused much unpleasantness for the present, and I believe, previous teachers." Significantly three months later the trustees made the decision "to advertise for a teacher in Miss McMynn's place."²⁶ One can

²³For further details on Ruby's teaching career, see Chapter Nine of this thesis. Interestingly Ruby referred to herself in her memoirs in the third, as opposed to the first, person.

²⁴School District #23, Kelowna, Westbank Townsite Public School, Minutes of Meetings, January 8, 1923.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid. June 29, 1923.

only speculate as to the reasons for Mae's brevity of tenure at Westbank Townsite School. Did she voluntarily resign her post or did particular members of the School Board, finding her work to be unsatisfactory, take the decision to terminate her employment at the school? Did she choose to leave in order to continue caring for her mother or because the "unpleasantness" directed towards her by members of the community forced the issue? Whatever her reasons were for leaving Miss McMynn remained at Westbank Townsite for only one year. Christine Kearne, appointed to teach at Okanagan Landing School in September 1921, seems to have experienced similar difficulties with regards to her relationship with local school officials and other members of the community. In March 1923 she felt obliged to warn future incumbents of the situation: "There is very little co-operation between parents and trustees and parents and teacher. Trustees do not work harmoniously together, consequently frequent changing of teachers."²⁷ Records reveal that she resigned by the end of the school year as in September 1923 Dunbar H. McLean is noted as being in charge at the school.²⁸

Teachers were also influenced in their decisions concerning where they might work by a variety of other people. Evidence suggests that in a number of cases rural teacher transiency was precipitated by the fact that, as Marianne Nelson suggested, "other teacher friends moved away" or by "a sentimental interest in one of the opposite sex!" Contact with fellow colleagues in whom they might confide was often critical to a rural teacher's stay in a community, especially for those individuals working in very remote districts that offered little in the way of a social life. In 1926 Agnes Ball resigned her post as teacher at Broadwater, near Deer Park on the Lower Arrow Lake, to transfer to another one-room school, at Joe Rich Valley in the Okanagan. Both personal and professional factors

²⁷TBR.

²⁸See IRs, October 28, 1921, and September 26, 1923. See also Statistical Tables in the AR for the period 1920-1924. Okanagan Landing is included in the lists of Rural and Assisted Schools.

motivated her to relocate. Miss Reekie, the teacher in the junior division at Winfield School, also in the Okanagan Valley, wrote to Agnes and suggested that she might consider teaching at Joe Rich Valley. Miss Reekie had previously taught at the school at Renata, across the Arrow Lake from Broadwater, and she and Agnes had become firm friends, attending many dances together. The idea of being close to her friend again appealed to Agnes. At the same time the position at Joe Rich Valley meant that she would be "really getting a little bit further on into a bigger community" and hence the opportunity to advance her career.

Some young teachers found the small isolated rural communities in which they were "marooned," often for months at a time, very limiting in terms of the opportunity for romantic encounters with eligible partners. This was certainly the case for Ila Embree. She reported that at Kedleston there were few single men in the community: "They were all mainly married men, soldier settlement fellas, they all had wives and kids." As a result "There was nothing much to do on weekends except go out with some of the boys you didn't want to go out with much up there." In contrast, when she transferred to Mosher Siding School in 1921 in the much larger Delta School District, Ila stated that she "met my fate...met him right away...on a skating rink near Mosher School." She got married within a year of moving to the coast and gave up teaching.

During the 1920s, particularly towards the end of the decade, it was generally accepted that if a female teacher decided to marry then her position in the workforce was no longer tenable. The withdrawal of women from the profession when they got married made a significant contribution to the brisk turnover of teachers in rural districts. In January 1929 Vera Towgood was offered the job as teacher of the junior division in the two-room school at Winfield, a predominantly fruit and market gardening district, that enabled her to be near her home, and boyfriend, in Oyama. Vera reported that the position had become available because the previous incumbent, a young girl, had left to get married. Vera had similar intentions. As she explained: "By this time I was planning to be married which I did in

1930. Automatically then a woman was not allowed to teach because she had a husband who was supposed to support her!" Similarly in 1928, when Janet Graham gave up her job in the one-room school at Ewing's Landing, a small community on the west side of Okanagan Lake, she did so for precisely the same reasons: "I left to marry....I was not free to teach - that would be taking [a job] away from a man!"²⁹

While matrimony was undoubtedly one of the reasons why large numbers of female teachers withdrew from the profession, the stories of some of the participants indicate that not all female teachers dash to the altar. Instead when faced with the choice many opted to take up a another position rather than get married. By 1928, after two years at Joe Rich Valley School, Agnes Ball felt that it was time for a change once more, despite the fact that she had enjoyed her time in the Okanagan, and the community had asked her to return for a third year as teacher at their school. She explained what provoked this decision: "It was about time for me to go....I hardly thought I should stay more than two years in any one place." Although she was "pretty serious" about going back to school to improve her qualifications, she decided that she would "rather take a trip somewhere." She even considered combining both of these ideas by enrolling to do a course at the University of California. When asked whether marriage had been one of the options she had considered at that time she stated emphatically: "No! I didn't want to get married. I didn't have anybody in mind to get married....I wanted to try something else."

Unfortunately, lack of money prevented Agnes from putting her plans into action immediately. However when she discovered that the position of principal at Telegraph

²⁹Judith Arbus found this to be the case for the women teachers she interviewed who had taught in Ontario during the 1920s and 1930s: "During the Depression...[m]en's work became even more strongly valued, while women's work, especially in a "career," was no longer merely inappropriate but economically and morally open to question. As long as women were employed they were said to be taking the place of a male and hence they were seen as partially responsible for male unemployment." See "Grateful to be Working: Women Teachers During the Great Depression," in Feminism and Education: A Canadian Perspective, eds., Frieda Forman, Mary O'Brien, Jane Haddad, Dianne Hallman and Philinda Masters (Toronto: Centre for Women's Studies in Education, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, 1990), 177-178.

Creek School had become vacant she promptly applied. It involved a substantial increase in her salary and therefore the means by which to acquire the necessary funds to go "travelling overseas." Again her application was successful. Whilst at Telegraph Creek Agnes met her husband-to-be and consequently found herself faced with a difficult dilemma: career or marriage? The young man in question "got really down to business" and told Agnes that he did not want her to teach after they got married. To begin with she was undecided: "I didn't think I was going to [get married], that's why my husband and I put it off for quite a while, because he couldn't understand that I wanted to go to Egypt. I was still wanting to go places and one place was Egypt." Clearly she had her own ideas about what was best for her. Rather than an inevitability, she regarded marriage as an option which she elected to postpone until the time was right. This uncertainty prompted Agnes to delay her marriage for two years until 1930.

In the same way, after two years' service, Mary Genier was "ready to get something better" and so left the tiny one-room school at Medora Creek in 1927 to pursue other career opportunities. Much like Agnes, marriage was not a priority to Mary at that time:

I met him [husband-to-be] when I was teaching at Medora but I wasn't ready to be committed to anything....I wanted to get my Alberta Certificate...and make my way....I knew I could get a job there because I had an uncle that had influence. I taught there [Alberta] for two years and...had grades five, six and seven and...about thirty-five or forty [pupils] and that was quite different. But I did well there too. Then I didn't want to stay there. I wanted to come back to the Okanagan so I got a job in Lumby [in 1929]....I got married in 1931. In those days you weren't supposed to be married and teach school. So I was married for a year before it was made public. The School Board knew [but] they wanted me as a teacher....So the second year I was married I got pregnant and quit.

Towards the end of the decade, mainly due to market forces, the rate of rural teacher transiency in the Okanagan Valley declined. The short supply of teaching jobs meant that many teachers were unwilling to relinquish their posts until an alternative position became available. Alice Gibson remained from 1924-1928 at Sugar Lake School, a tiny, decrepid log structure located in a very isolated logging and trapping community

"carved out of the bush" approximately forty miles east of Vernon, in what on the surface seemed to be extremely primitive living and working conditions. Lottie Bowron's verdict on the school as a result of a visit in 1929 is telling:

As this is rather a vacation place...it is all right for the summer months but it must be a lonely spot in winter and would not consider it a good place for a young girl. It is very isolated. Better for a man.³⁰

The main reason for Alice's unusually long tenure at the school, was, as she explained: "The Inspector advised me to stay there until another job offered itself as it was still very hard to get jobs." She finally left in 1928 when she was given the opportunity to teach at Shawnigan Lake School, on Vancouver Island: "It was generally a pleasurable experience but I was ready, after four years, to get back again into "civilisation". Similarly, Lucy McCormick, who was appointed to teach at Mabel Lake in 1929, reported: "I was there at the beginning of the Depression...and you just didn't move." Four years later in 1933 she transferred to Shuswap Falls School, located a few miles from Mabel Lake, because the position offered her "better money," an important consideration to a young single teacher during the early years of the Depression. She added that the move also enabled her to "get out" and live closer to her family in Lumby: "I was glad to go. I'd done my share there."

The purpose of the discussion that follows is to provide in intimate detail a portraiture of the multiple realities of rural teaching as it was encountered by a specific group of people, focussing on their working and living conditions and professional responsibilities, how they coped with the situations they encountered in isolated communities, and the consequences of those experiences in terms of their life courses as a whole.

³⁰Bowron Reports, Sugar Lake, May 30 1929.

CHAPTER SIX

WORKING CONDITIONS: SCHOOL FACILITIES

The framework of analysis for this and the next chapter centres exclusively on teacher experience within the confines of the schoolhouse itself. The physical and pedagogical circumstances that rural teachers confronted on a daily basis are the focus of discussion. The quality of teacher work experience in remote districts was of necessity, given the enclosed nature of rural society, intimately tied to, and thus to a large extent although not exclusively, determined by community conditions. The specific circumstances existing in each community were crucial factors influencing not only the material conditions of the schoolhouse and its grounds, but also the social and learning environment within the school, that is, who was enrolled, when and why they attended or did not attend, and how they were educated.

As outlined in Chapter Four the schoolhouses in which rural teachers spent their days were essentially a product of their immediate environment. Whether a school existed in a district often depended upon local initiative and support. It was usually built by local members of the community using materials available in the vicinity. The physical structures containing schools, and the furniture therein, could therefore be as primitive or as luxurious as the communities creating them allowed. Consequently the vast majority of schools were often indistinguishable from other homes and farm buildings in the surrounding district and merged into the topography.

The comments made by teachers in the Bureau Records concerning the general conditions of the buildings and grounds of the schools in which they taught varied considerably. Some found their circumstances to be agreeable and well-disposed. Obviously satisfied with their lot these teachers used adjectives such as "excellent," "very good," or "good" to describe their workplaces. In the questionnaires only a few, however,

elaborated upon these brief comments to suggest the reasons for their assessments. Grace Ford, teacher at Silver Creek School in 1928, described her school thus: "Modern painted buildings [and] cleared yard....The school yard is fenced, trees are planted (last fall), there is a swing and "teater" [sic] and the people of the district take an interest in their school & grounds." Margaret E. Whitworth, who taught at Ellison School in 1923, was equally content with her working conditions. She noted enthusiastically that Ellison was a "New school [with] large grounds....The school is furnace-heated, has a good library, blackboards back and front, sand-table for Primary Work. Large basements where children play in wet weather."

Inspectors were also satisfied with the condition of some of the rural schools they visited in the Okanagan Valley, and on a few occasions congratulated school districts for the highly commendable condition of their educational facilities. Thus in his report for 1920, Lord, of the Kelowna Inspectorate, proudly announced: "A pleasing feature of the past year has been the interest manifested by many Rural School Boards in the appearance of their buildings and grounds; in a considerable number of cases extensive improvements have been made at a very considerable expense."¹ Individual schools were also singled out for praise. In the same year Lord described Naramata School as an "Excellent two-roomed frame building....One of the most attractive school properties."² On inspecting the school in 1925 Hall was equally impressed noting that the school grounds were "Levelled; fenced; good space in lawn; very few rural schools in this inspectorate have such creditable grounds."³ He also considered Rutland School, a four-roomed brick structure, to be of superior quality. As a result of his visit to the school in 1925 he reported: "The condition of

¹AR, 1920, C33.

²IR, December 9, 1920.

³Ibid., October 21, 1925.

the grounds, building, and school property generally is highly creditable."⁴ Even schools established in very remote, and sometimes impoverished, areas proved to be in highly satisfactory conditions. Miller described Hillcrest School in 1921 thus: "New frame building....A neat looking schoolhouse, well planned, well built, and a distinct credit to the community."⁵ In 1930 Lord commented on Joe Rich Valley School: "This school, though small and isolated, is surprisingly well equipped. It is neatly decorated and the library is creditable. The standing is quite up to the average of rural schools."⁶ Agnes Ball who taught at Joe Rich Valley between 1926 and 1928 stated that it was "kept very well" and "even had blinds at the windows." Other former school teachers also recalled that the schoolhouses in which they worked had been in relatively good condition. Lucy McCormick described Mabel Lake School as "a good solid building" that was "pretty well cared for." Similarly Janet Graham who spent four years at Ewing's Landing School, remembered her classroom thus: "It was light and bright and cheerful...a spacious room with room to spread." Bernard Gillie regarded Ellison School as having provided "really excellent accommodation for a school. [It was] well equipped, pleasant, comfortable, warm - all the things that a classroom...should be."

Schools such as those described above, however, were the exception rather than the norm for the study area. Located in remote and often impoverished communities, the majority of schools in operation in the Okanagan Valley over the decade of the 1920s were of assisted status and thus the "poorest and most needy category of rural schools."⁷ The repercussions of insolvency on educational matters were enormous. Unlike regularly

⁴Ibid., January 11, 1925.

⁵Ibid., November 2, 1921.

⁶Ibid., May 1, 1930.

⁷Ivan J. Saunders, "A Survey of British Columbia School Architecture to 1930," Parks Canada, Research Bulletin 225(November 1984): 6. See also Figure 2 in Chapter Four of this thesis.

organized rural schools, assisted schools "received no special design or construction assistance at all" and therefore "generally possessed little architectural merit" and were often built with "little or no emphasis on the requisites of minimal school facilities."⁸ Moreover, as Hall of the Kelowna Inspectorate noted in his report for 1927: "The small assisted school remains the chief problem for it is here that the less experienced teachers are employed, and it is likewise here that there is the greatest difficulty in obtaining supplies and equipment requisite to successful work."⁹

Strictly utilitarian in purpose and built of lumber, log or wooden frame construction, most rural schools of the Okanagan Valley, much like those throughout the rest of the province, were rectangular structures with windows down one, or sometimes both sides, and with a small entryway or porch built on the front for the pupils' outer clothes and lunch pails. In general they were small, usually no larger than twenty-four by thirty feet, and poorly constructed, suffered from inadequate lighting, heating and ventilation, and were sparsely furnished and equipped.¹⁰ Lack of available money meant that the upkeep and repair of many of the schools in remote districts was often minimal.¹¹ It is not surprising therefore that in the Bureau Records many teachers referred in a rather

⁸Ibid., 6, 9.

⁹AR, 1927, M37.

¹⁰A further source of information on the early history of school design in the province, which also includes a section on the Okanagan, can be found in Douglas Franklin et. al., Early School Architecture in British Columbia: An Architectural History and Inventory of Buildings to 1930, unpublished internal document of the Ministry of Provincial Secretary and Government Services, Heritage Conservation Branch, Victoria, British Columbia, 1980, particularly pages 27-40.

¹¹Significantly, the assisted schools in British Columbia were "probably, by 1930, inferior to similar schools in the other western provinces" and thus "remained a growing embarrassment" to the educational authorities in the province. See Saunders, "A Survey of British Columbia School Architecture," 14 and 8.

derogatory fashion to their working conditions as merely "fair," "poor," or, as in a number of instances, "very poor."¹²

Inspectors frequently drew attention in their reports to the appalling condition school buildings and the need for them to be replaced, or at least undergo renovations. In 1920 Lord deemed the "loghouse" used as the school at Heywood's Corner as "unsatisfactory" and regarded it as "imperative that a new building be erected."¹³ In his report on Blue Springs School in 1924 Hall warned: "If this school is to remain in operation...it will be necessary to make considerable improvements in the building in order to make it fit for use as a school."¹⁴ Similarly in 1928 he considered Hilton School "not in good repair; interior is dingy and unattractive and would be much improved by painting."¹⁵ Lord described the interior of Mara School as "disgraceful" when he visited the school in 1930 and noted that it was "urgently in need of decoration."¹⁶ Some schools were obviously unsuitable for the "extreme" weather conditions in the Okanagan Valley, particularly during the harsh winter months. As a result of his inspection of Fir Valley School in 1923, it was Hall's opinion that the "small log building...must be cold, draughty and almost unfit for use in winter."¹⁷ Likewise when Lord visited Trinity Valley School in the autumn of 1929 he pointed out that "The schoolhouse requires a certain amount of fixing-up before really severe weather sets in."¹⁸

¹²See for example teacher comments on Fir Valley, Mabel Lake and Medora Creek Schools in 1923, and Ecclestone and Hendon Schools in 1928.

¹³IR, April 21, 1920.

¹⁴Ibid., May 26, 1924.

¹⁵Ibid., September 21, 1928.

¹⁶Ibid., May 7, 1930.

¹⁷Ibid., April 17, 1923.

¹⁸Ibid., October 8, 1929.

A number of former teachers that were interviewed depicted the physical condition of the schools in which they taught in less than glowing terms. Mary Genier described Medora Creek School in the following way: "It was really primitive, more like a barn than a school." Marianne Nelson who followed Mary as teacher at the school referred to the schoolhouse as a "wreck" that had been "condemned" because, as she explained:

The plaster between the logs of this building was loosening, the lighting was poor - there were only two windows on the one side and one small one near the teacher's desk! There were holes between the boards in the floor. When the pupils had gone home and I was sitting quietly at my desk after school, mice would pop up and scurry across the floor.¹⁹

Vermin were also a problem at Sugar Lake School where Alice Gibson taught. She reported: "If you happened to look up at the right time you might see a rat running along a log." Alice politely, or perhaps rather sarcastically, described the school, a tiny one-room log structure built against the mountain so it was "very dark," as "rustic." Alice Laviollette recalled that when she attended Hilton School there were "great big cracks in the floor. You lost your pencils underneath there. It was never banked up or nothing like that."

Included in the structures used as schools were a significant number of other buildings of one sort or another that were never intended as schoolhouses, and thus were deemed "unsatisfactory" and/or "unsuitable" by teachers and inspectors alike. Usually as a result of overcrowding teachers and pupils had to relocate to alternative, temporary quarters such as a "local church,"²⁰ "boarding house,"²¹ "old dwelling-house,"²² "fruit-pickers bunkhouse,"²³ "construction camp,"²⁴ "vacant store building,"²⁵ "lower half of an old

¹⁹See also IR, September 18, 1924, for details on the decrepid condition of Medora Creek School.

²⁰Okanagan Centre (TBR for 1923 and 1928, and IRs for the period 1921 to 1929), Glenrosa (IR, November 25, 1920) and Summerland High (IR, November 14, 1921).

²¹Falkland (IR, April 27, 1921).

²²Falkland (TBR for 1923, and IRs for November 3, 1921, October 1, 1923, and September 24, 1924).

²³East Kelowna (IR, April 21, 1921).

store,"²⁶ or "hotel,"²⁷ In the unfortunate case of Lydia Hayes who taught at Seymour Arm School in 1923, school was held in the "small front room of dwelling house occupied by teacher."²⁸

Regardless of the type of building in which school was held the vast majority of rural schools at this time did not have any modern conveniences such as electricity, running water or indoor plumbing. As Ila Embree, teacher at Kedleston School in the early 1920s, stated: "Everything was primitive. No heat. No light. No anything like that." Shuswap Falls School was a rare exception in that "when the power plant was opened in 1928, electric light was installed, making it the first rural school [in the Okanagan Valley] to have such a luxury. It was the end of the sub-line which served the operators' homes."²⁹ Obtaining fresh water for the school, for both drinking and washing, could also be a problem. In 1923, Miss E.G. Ford, teacher at Deep Creek School, pointed out that although there was a well in the school grounds its contents were "unfit for use. Trustees are attempting to procure water for school purposes from another source."³⁰ Usually the only access to water was a creek, spring or stream, often inconveniently located, and when temperatures fell below zero for periods of time during the winter, unavailable. In the case of Despard School water had to be collected "from spring quarter of mile away" and at

²⁴South Kelowna (IR, December 21, 1922).

²⁵Naramata (IR, April 7, 1921).

²⁶Okanagan Landing (Hodgson, "Okanagan Landing School Days,' 119, and interview with Ida Palmer, March 2, 1989).

²⁷Summerland High (Division 3) where the "noise" from the "hotel kitchen" interfered "seriously" with the teacher's work (IR, November 14, 1921), and Lumby (interview with Lloyd Wills, March 5, 1989).

²⁸IR, April 24, 1923. See also TBR for 1923.

²⁹McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 41.

³⁰TBR.

Medora Creek School "from stream at considerable distance."³¹ Hall noted that water had to be "carried from Wood's Lake" to Oyama School, but because this supply was only available "for part of the year" he recommended that "it would be well to take steps to provide a more satisfactory and dependable supply."³²

Inside most schoolhouses the surroundings were bare and the contents usually in no better condition than the buildings that housed them. Desks, for both teacher and pupils alike, were "often homemade benches, sometimes logs split in half" and consequently were "very uncomfortable, causing much shuffling of pupils."³³ At Westbank School in 1923 sixteen pupils were enrolled but, as Hall noted, "Only six desks are satisfactory..." He therefore demanded that "twelve new ones should be provided."³⁴ Buster Schunter recalled that as a pupil at Hilton School each desk accommodated a number of pupils, usually four, although "Sometimes they squeezed five in if they were little ones!" The rudimentary items of school furniture comprised a bench on which stood an open water pail with floating dipper and "germ-laden" metal cups, usually one for each family, and sometimes a wash basin, soapdish and towel, a book-case and/or cupboard for supplies.

Not only were many rural schoolrooms spartan but sometimes they were also inadequately heated. Climatic conditions in the Okanagan, particularly in the northern part of the valley, were severe during the winter months with very low temperatures and heavy snowfalls. Typical of the comments that rural teachers made are those of Marion L. Seldon, teacher at Silver Creek School in 1923, who described the weather thus: "Cold winters, max. temp. 25⁰ below zero, snow for about 4 months."³⁵ One of Lucy McCormick's most

³¹IRs, November 11, 1922, and September 18, 1924, respectively.

³²IR, October 16, 1922.

³³McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 38.

³⁴IR, April 11, 1923.

³⁵TBR, 1923.

vivid memories of the first year she taught at Mabel Lake School was that she "was never very warm." Rural teachers often fought a losing battle trying to keep their classrooms, themselves and their pupils warm. The central feature dominating the interior of most rural schools, and often the only primitive source of comfort, was thus the heater. Usually situated towards the middle of the room it became the focus around which the days activities revolved during the long cold winter months.

By the 1920s, the pot-bellied stove that had generally been used in most of the original one-room schools had largely been replaced by an empty gasoline barrel turned on its side and set in an iron cradle. Some of these wood-burning contraptions were highly precarious. Marianne Nelson named the "air-tight tin heater" at Medora Creek School "Vesuvius [sic]." She explained why: "After the fire in the stove became lively on nippy winter mornings, the lid might blow upward some 2 or 3 inches, at the same time letting out a ring of smoke beneath it....I watched this stove anxiously after the first few of these eruptions, but this blow-up never seemed to go beyond this huffing and smoking." Some schools were better off and had furnaces to heat the buildings. Even these proved to be potentially dangerous. Miller, on inspecting Mara School in 1923, found that there was "furnace-smoke pouring into the classrooms at all too frequent intervals."³⁶ On Lord's advice Grindrod School was closed at one point because of the "nuisance" caused by the "very unpleasant odor apparantly coming from [the] furnace."³⁷

Whether temperamental or not most stoves in rural schools were inefficient and tended to heat only those seated in its immediate vicinity. Consequently, as was the case at Grandview Bench School and many other rural schools in the Okanagan Valley: "Those nearest to it suffered from the extreme heat while those farthest in the remote corners, shivered from the winter draughts that found their way through the well-chinked walls and

³⁶IR, March 9, 1923.

³⁷Ibid., December 3, 1919

around the windows."³⁸ Teachers recall having to spend considerable amounts of time "moving children around" their classrooms to make sure that everyone gained equal and maximum benefit from the heater.

Trying to ensure that their schools were warm before classes began was also a perennial problem for rural teachers. Ila Embree stated that the "heavy iron heater" at Kedleston School kept the room warm, but only "as long as you got it going in lots of time." When Hall arrived at Peachland School one morning in January 1925 he found that "the rooms were very cold; evidently the stoves were not lighted early enough."³⁹ Anne Vardon stated that at Medora Creek School "teachers usually came to school early to light the fire so the school would be warm when the children arrived. Many times the teachers were late and the children came to a cold room. On many occasions the ink was frozen in the inkwells....We'd have to wait till the school warmed up and the inkwells would thaw and it wouldn't be very pleasant." Both pupils and teachers remember many freezing winter mornings, still clad in their outer clothing, waiting for the schoolroom to warm up. Wet clothes sat alongside inkwells and lunches to thaw on top of the stove creating a certain "atmosphere" in the schoolroom. A pupil who attended Ashton Creek School in the 1920s vividly recalled this situation: "I often wonder how the teacher stood the combination of odors given off from wet socks, mitts, etc. that were spread under and hung upon the metal screen around the big stove that heated our school."⁴⁰ Although the cold of the winter presented many problems, the summer months could be equally unpleasant. Lacking sufficient ventilation rural schools could be unbearably hot and oppressive. Stan Wejr, a pupil at Trinity Creek School, reported: "[I]n the summer the mosquitoes were so bad one

³⁸Lidstone, ed. Schools of Enderby and District, 107.

³⁹IR, January 16, 1925.

⁴⁰Bawtree, Reflections, 40.

had to run to school to keep ahead of them. There were no screens on the windows the first year at school and they got really thick inside...feasting on hands, legs and face."⁴¹

In many cases the grounds on which rural schoolhouses stood were undeveloped and as devoid of refinements as the buildings themselves. In a number of instances grounds were non-existent. Miss W.M. Lang described the grounds at Joe Rich Valley in 1923 as "rough and unfenced."⁴² Likewise Belle K. McGauley referred to Ashton Creek School grounds in 1928 as "uneven, stumpy."⁴³ In the same year Vera G. Evans complained that at Trinity Valley School there were "No suitable school-grounds except for one corner partially cleared," and Mabel Willoughby, teacher at Mabel Lake School, optimistically remarked: "[G]rounds as yet unimproved."⁴⁴ Ida Winnifred Parker did not waste words in describing her situation as teacher at Okanagan Centre School in 1923: "School in church - no grounds."⁴⁵ Typical of the circumstances found in most rural school districts in the Okanagan were those at Sugar Lake, as depicted by Alice Gibson: "There were no, as it were, school grounds. The log school was just set down in an uneven clearing with trails to a few houses...and to the lake."

The grounds of the vast majority of rural schools may well have been inadequate as playgrounds but they were nevertheless an important extension of the schoolhouse because they contained various other structures such as the woodshed, a shack or small stable to house the horses that some pupils rode to school, and most importantly the outhouses, or "biffys," located often at some distance from the schoolhouse itself. School outhouses were at best merely unpleasant. Most were squalid, unsanitary and graffiti-covered, and

⁴¹Wejr, "Memories of Trinity Creek," 79.

⁴²TBR.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Ibid.

some were even a health hazard. Arthur Ward, who attended Glenmore School, described the facilities as "two four-holers by the tule swamp. The little boys wet all over the seats and everywhere, so were warned by the big ones to stay on their own side or have their ears cut off."⁴⁶ Students at Hilton School remembered that there had been "two outhouses, one for the boys and one for the girls. Toilet paper was an old catalogue when someone brought one but most of the time there was none."⁴⁷ Although inspectors frequently commented on the unsatisfactory condition of the sanitary facilities at some schools, little was done to improve them unless they forced the issue. Lord warned on three separate occasions that the "unpleasant scribbling" on the walls of the boys' toilets at Ellison School should be removed.⁴⁸ Likewise he commented that at Okanagan Landing School in 1921: "Doors on both water-closets are STILL off as a year ago."⁴⁹ At Mission Creek School he considered that "The condition of the toilet in respect of morality is disgraceful."⁵⁰ At Glenrosa School Hall reported: "The closets are not satisfactory; pits should be dug; condition at time of inspection was far from what it should have been."⁵¹ At Grindrod in 1929 Miller found the situation intolerable and issued the following admonition: "Unless more sanitary methods of disposing of the contents of the privy pails are put in practice at once serious outbreaks of various forms of disease may be expected."⁵² School outhouses were used by teachers and children alike.

⁴⁶Ward, "Growing Up in Glenmore," 104.

⁴⁷Cherryville School Reunion, 1905-1970, unpublished booklet, 4.

⁴⁸IRs, April 13, 1920, November 28, 1921, and April 28, 1922.

⁴⁹Ibid., October 1921.

⁵⁰Ibid., April 14, 1920.

⁵¹Ibid., December 3, 1923.

⁵²Ibid., March 20, 1929.

For many teachers in remote schools the poor quality of the physical conditions in which they were expected to carry out their professional responsibilities were not conducive to an ideal working environment. However, in so far as effective teaching was concerned, virtually all those former teachers interviewed considered the paucity of school apparatus, in terms of instructional resources and supplies available in rural schools, far more of a problem. Alice Gibson stated that at Sugar Lake "Equipment at the school was practically nil by today's standards." Mary Genier's experience at Medora Creek School was the same: "As far as equipment was concerned there was nothing." Grace Fuhr recalled that as a pupil at Trinity Creek School supplies had been "likely adequate but only the barest needed." Hall pointed to the obvious consequences of this situation in his report on Hilton School in 1924: "The teacher is handicapped by a lack of supplies."⁵³ As Ivy K. Harper, teacher at Hendon School in 1928, lamented: "[E]quipment, for better work, is lacking. The great difficulty is to keep up to date; as modern methods require appliances."⁵⁴ Even an essential item of equipment such as the blackboard was often small and of inferior quality. In many schools they were, as in the case of Sugar Lake School, "painted wall-board" and therefore "not satisfactory."⁵⁵ The only other pieces of equipment that could generally be found in rural schools in the 1920s have been summed up by Lucy McCormick. They typically included "a roll of maps on spring rollers which, with wear and tear, shot up like cannon and had to be rewound with a fork....A photo of the King, a Union Jack, a globe, and a school handbell..."⁵⁶ Facilities for sports activities were virtually unheard of, as Charlie Hanson, a former pupil of Hilton School, recalled: "There was not much for recreation for the children." In these circumstances the parents often

⁵³IR, September 25, 1924.

⁵⁴TBR.

⁵⁵IR, September 18, 1924.

⁵⁶See "Early Rural Schools," 38.

improvised to provide the necessary equipment. Charlie continued: "Mrs. A. Hanson made a ball by cutting strips of tire tubes, binding them round, and sewing a leather casing on to make a ball. The bats were made from old discarded pee-vee handles that had previously been used in the bush for rolling logs."⁵⁷ Some teachers also helped out. Thus one of the "first things" that Hilda Cryderman did when she was appointed as Principal at Coldstream School was "buy a football for the school."⁵⁸ At Mission Creek School Cecil E. Richie and his students "built a hockey-sized skating rink in the schoolyard, pumping the water with a hand pump and using sleds to carry the water in order to flood the rink."⁵⁹

The primary concern of most rural teachers was the lack of sufficient books with which to instruct their pupils. In this sense Isobel Simard faced a particularly distressing and frustrating situation as she embarked on her first teaching post at the newly opened Kingfisher School in September 1927:

They hadn't finished the roof at the time and there were no books until after the second week. I had to teach without any textbooks for two weeks and then to the tune of the hammering on the roof and I thought then I would quit at Christmas because teaching was not for me. Then the books came and the hammering ceased. Well, then, I was quite willing to go on.

School libraries were often extremely inadequate, and apart from the compulsory textbooks supplied by the Department of Education, usually did not stretch beyond what teachers themselves provided, or managed to procure. Margaret Landon reported that she "never regretted" the fact that she had purchased "a set of "World Books"" from a "salesman" who had called at Salmon Bench School because "any kind of books were very scarce in country schools." Ila Embree recalled that at Kedleston School she "took a trunk full of books up there of my own....Teachers bought a lot of [books] out of their money,

⁵⁷"Vernon and District School Histories," 6.

⁵⁸Details on Hilda that are included in this thesis are taken from letters sent to me by Nancy Jermyn on March 25 and 30 1992. Nancy was Hilda's life-long friend and companion.

⁵⁹Chamberlain, "Mission Creek School," 165.

and used them, out of their wages." At Medora Creek School Marianne Nelson explained that "Our library consisted of my new set of "The Books of Knowledge", several of my National Geographic magazines, my Comstock's Handbook of Nature Study and any second-hand story books I had got from home and friends." Moreover, although the provision of pupils' writing materials was the responsibility of the parents, in many cases teachers also provided these essential items for their pupils at their own expense. Alice Gibson suggested why rural teachers may have felt the need to do this: "Some of the families were rather poor and stores were a long way off, so I always had a supply of scribblers and pencils, etc." Clearly rural teachers laboured under very trying circumstances.

CHAPTER SEVEN

WORKING CONDITIONS: TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Both the official written documents and the personal recollections of former teachers and pupils indicate that, irrespective of whether the physical conditions of their workplaces were problematic or not, rural teachers, with few exceptions, encountered and ultimately had to cope with very diverse pupil populations in their classrooms. This diversity engendered a whole slew of pedagogical challenges which, for the most part, were beyond the control of the individual teacher and which combined to produce considerable personal stress.

A matter of major concern to all rural teachers was the problem of orchestrating the simultaneous instruction of a group of children of varying ages, abilities and attainments. The design and then implementation of a structured academic programme to serve all the various grades in the rural school was an extremely difficult task, often made all the more time-consuming when the previous teacher had failed to leave any progress reports on the pupils. As Lord commented on the obviously trying situation facing Duncan P. Clark, a graduate of Manitoba Normal School, who was appointed to teach at Mabel Lake School in September 1929: "Mr Clark is not familiar with either ungraded or primary school work [and] the outgoing teacher left literally nothing to assist him in organizing his school. Satisfactory results can scarcely be expected for a time."¹ Each teacher had to assess the level of attainment of individual pupils, and then group them together in appropriate grades in order to shepherd them through the prescribed curriculum. Some schools had high school classes which put added pressure on the teacher because the students' success or

¹IR, October 3, 1929. Significantly, Mr Clark had resigned by November, to be replaced by Lucy McCormick.

failure obviously reflected back on them. Thus Margaret Landon, who began her teaching career at Salmon Bench School in 1923, remarked: "I was lucky enough to have a small group of pupils in grades 1 to 7 so there was no grade 8 to prepare for government examinations in June." In the case of children with special needs, whether learning disabled or gifted, rural teachers felt particularly frustrated because they had neither the training nor the resources, much less the time, to devote to them. Some pupils suffered from a lack of stimulation. Alice Gibson regretted the fact that because Sugar Lake "was such a small school, the smarter ones often had no-one to challenge them." Similarly Alice Laviollette, from the point of view of a pupil, reported: "We had no goal really and there was no competition because I was the only one in my grade....What you did, you did. It wasn't like trying to compete or be the first one in the class."

Timetabling and preparing individual lessons in every subject and for each grade, and then marking the assignments set, as well as keeping up to date with the compulsory school records such as monthly report cards for each pupil, was an administrative nightmare for rural teachers. Particularly for those with little experience it demanded a seemingly inordinate amount of work. Lloydia Wills explained: "When you have...all those different grades you *have* to keep working not only inside the classroom but outside too because you have to prepare so much of the time for what's coming. You never know what they are going to ask you." To Isobel Simard it seemed that "Every hour of the day practically I was preparing lessons." Marianne Nelson expressed similar sentiments when she stated: "I taught by one method, constant work, work, work, for *me*, that is."

Rural teachers were not only subject to severe time constraints in trying to carry out their work, both in terms of the huge volume of preparatory work and also the short teaching time available per grade, but such problems were merely exacerbated by the lack of teaching aids as outlined earlier. In the face of such limitations rural teachers, of necessity, had to extemporise, modifying or varying their lessons according to the resources at their disposal, and also preparing their own materials. The dearth of textbooks

was partially overcome by teachers spending substantial amounts of time laboriously copying out various exercises, assignments and notes onto the blackboard. Isobel Simard stated that at Kingfisher School she "always kept lots of work on the blackboard for them. I had to go down in the evening to prepare work on the blackboard for them." In fact she referred to the schoolhouse as "my home" because she "spent so many hours in that school." Pupils also recalled that most of their lessons were, as Laura Gregory, former pupil of Mission Creek and East Kelowna Schools, described them, of the "chalk and talk" variety. Alice Laviollette clearly remembered that at Sugar Lake: "The teacher did everything on the board....No textbooks. All our work was put up on the board." Some rural teachers made use of the "hectograph" or "jelly pad" duplicator, a primitive contraption, usually homemade from a metal cookie tray and gelatin-based mix, that reproduced multiple copies from master sheets that had been written out using "very purpley and messy" ink. To Marianne Nelson the hectograph had been invaluable. She recalled spending long hours on many nights preparing and then pressing out worksheets and maps to keep her students busy the following day, and thus she suggested jokingly: "I had hectograph ink in my blood."

Rural teachers also learnt to utilise the natural resources on their school's doorstep to provide interesting lessons for their pupils. Lloyd Wills, like many others, often took the whole school on an "excursion." She explained that while she was teacher at Hilton School: "We just took off, went up through the bush and studied the flowers and the animals that we saw [and] brought home one of each wild flower. It was a nature lesson in other words." Anne Vardon recalled that at Medora Creek:

Our teachers took us on many nature rambles and there always seemed to be several large coffee jars with frogs' eggs hatching into tadpoles, at the back [of the classroom] on a table....It seemed we were forever drawing any flower that was in season, or leaves or fruit.

Organising instruction during the actual school day required that rural teachers develop considerable management skills to ensure that their pupils were productively

occupied at all times and that their classrooms remained under control and running smoothly. For the most part teachers worked with each grade separately. Ila Embree described the strategy adopted by most rural teachers: "You bring the ones in the class to stand around your desk - grade 1 or 2 or 3 or whatever it is - and talk to them and teach them and then send them back to do it. Then you call up the next grade." Isobel Simard reported: "I knew I was teaching from the front of the room all the time." This meant that at any one time the majority of pupils were working unsupervised. This situation posed a real dilemma for many rural teachers, as Margaret Landon explained: "To keep the classes going with suitable busy-work while I taught each class in turn was my biggest problem." Fortunately there were some periods in the school day in which all, or most, of the pupils could participate together such as music, art, or physical exercise.

Finding themselves swamped with work a number of rural teachers reverted back to the old monitorial system of using older students to help those in the lower grades. Anne Richards remembered that at Okanagan Landing School one of her teachers "used to perhaps take somebody out of the grade eight or seven [who] was doing well and didn't need extra [help], and sent them down to look after the grade one's and the grade two's and help them with their work."² Many of those interviewed also recalled that the situation often occurred where information was "absorbed" by pupils in different grades simply by "listening in to" or "overhearing" other pupils' lessons. Thus Margaret Landon stated that at Salmon Bench School "the children helped each other and everyone was exposed to other classes so could pick up on things they might have missed." Mary Woollan, a pupil at North Enderby School from 1917-1924, recalled that "jumped grades were frequent as so much could be learned from listening to the senior classes and helping with the juniors."³

²See also Hodgson, "Okanagan Landing School Days," 116.

³[Jones and Lidstone], In the Shadow of the Cliff, 14.

The extent to which an individual teacher was able to deal successfully with such exigent circumstances was dependent to a certain degree upon the level of enrolment at the particular school in which they taught. Schools with relatively small numbers on the roll were, after an initial period of trial and error, manageable. Alice Gibson, for example, likened her position as teacher at Sugar Lake, where the numbers never rose above eight in the four years that she taught at the school, to that of a "governess job." She explained that "with only six or seven pupils in three to four levels it wasn't difficult to keep a good working rapport." Similarly, Mary Genier, who never had to teach more than ten pupils at Medora Creek School, stated that for her, working in a small one-room school was "just like tutoring. You take one kid at a time." However, in some schools, those designated as "heavy" by teachers and inspectors alike, usually because enrolment was at the level of thirty pupils or above, the organisational and instructional problems outlined above were of an order of magnitude greater than in schools with low enrolments.⁴ Marianne Nelson taught in a number of rural schools throughout the Okanagan Valley and in describing her experiences she made a clear distinction between the different types of schools according to their level of enrolment:

My first five years of teaching, in small ungraded schools, were satisfactory, in that I wasn't driven to the necessity of doing so much preparation and correcting of work, for such long hours beyond the school day....When I taught in the larger ungraded schools I rarely went to bed before 12 P.M. to one A.M. as I had work answers and essays to correct, to find out how the pupils were doing....The two schools...with thirty pupils in eight grades, were, 'teacher killing' schools. I heard several cases where young beginner teachers quit at Christmas, or the next June after September, or had nervous breakdowns....I was lucky to have had five years of experience in two ungraded schools with a school attendance of only twelve pupils or so. I can well sympathise with any inexperienced teacher who gave up teaching thirty-plus pupils with eight grades.

Although there is little direct evidence in the written sources supports the contention that "heavy" schools proved unendurable for the young and inexperienced in the

⁴Schools described as "heavy" included Westbank Townsite (TBR, 1823), Deep Creek (IR, October 9, 1930), Falkland (IR, November 14, 1928), Lavington (IRs, June 11, 1928, and November 7, 1930), Mission Creek (IR's, December 1, 1921, and April 26, 1922), Okanagan (IR, December 2, 1921) and Rutland (IR, March 6, 1929).

profession, one can infer from inspectors' comments that this may have been precisely the case for some unfortunate individuals. Miss H. Graham, teacher of only one year's experience, was appointed in September 1921 to the one-room school in Grindrod where enrolment stood at thirty-nine. When Miller visited her in October of that year he reported: "This is a difficult proposition for a comparatively inexperienced teacher accustomed only to much smaller schools." Miss Graham was obviously finding her assignment troublesome. Miller stated that she needed to "endeavour to strengthen her control by making sure that the pupils are at all times profitably occupied if she wishes to obtain good results." When he returned to the school in March 1922 he noted that the character of her teaching was still "unsatisfactory."⁵ Miss Graham did not return to teach at Grindrod the following September. Her reasons for resigning the post are unknown but she may well have been one of those teachers who, as Marianne Nelson suggested, chose to "quit" because they found their conditions of work intolerable.

To control such a varied group of children in one room made maintaining discipline a concern for all teachers in rural schools. For some keeping order in their classrooms was a substantial challenge. There was no place for the teacher who could not control her charges. Again such problems were magnified in schools with large enrolments. Overage boys, who often rivalled the teacher in size as well as age, could be particularly problematical. Isobel Simard stated that, compared with teaching on average only eight pupils at Kingfisher School, at Ashton Creek she had "a tough time" because it was "so crowded. There was hardly room to get between the desks in that little school....I had so many pupils and they were all big fellas, taller than I." Anne Richards, who attended Okanagan Landing School in the early 1920s, recalled that "some of those kids in grade eight were practically grown up, sixteen, seventeen years old....They would be hard to handle too." Lord had designated Okanagan Landing an "unusually heavy ungraded

⁵IRs, October 26, 1921, and March 15, 1922.

school."⁶ Laura Alcock was a pupil at Mission Creek School between 1918 and 1923. In 1922, just prior to the opening of a second classroom, enrolment at this one-room school had risen to forty-nine. Laura vividly remembered the "stress" that one of her teachers experienced in trying to control the "big boys":

There was no discipline at all. There would be amongst the smaller children because they were more afraid, but the bigger ones just dominated her with their saucy remarks....I can remember her bursting into tears. She could not discipline those great big boys....She simply could not control them. Possibly if it had been a man teacher it might have been a different picture. But they never did anything that they were told....They were like grown men, the ones that were in grades seven and eight.

At the two-roomed Coldstream School, where enrolments were consistently high throughout her tenure as Principal of the school, Hilda Cryderman worked hard to maintain control: "Discipline was one of Hilda's strong points. She laid out the rules in September and anyone who disobeyed just once was punished - there was no "don't do it again" with her, and the pupils knew and understood the rules."

The designation "heavy" referred not only to those schools where class size made them difficult to organise but also, and in many instances simultaneously, to those where the pupil population included children from various ethnic backgrounds. In addition to having to cope with pupils of differing ages and abilities, some teachers also had to accommodate children, often newly arrived in Canada, who spoke little or no English.⁷ Immigrant children often frequently spoke their native language with their parents at home and teachers had to constantly battle to ensure that such children reverted to English during the school day. As a pupil at Medora Creek School, Anne Vardon recalled the following situation: "When my younger brother started school I remember the teacher getting after us

⁶Ibid., October 28, 1921. See also IR, September 26, 1923.

⁷For a discussion of this particular problem, see Wilson, "The Visions of Ordinary Participants," particularly pages 243-245.

all the time [saying] 'Don't speak German to him. He's got to learn English.' We all had to learn English when we went to school."

In this context there were a number of rural schools in the Okanagan where language and cultural barriers presented considerable difficulties and resulted in teaching conditions that were strenuous in the extreme. Inspectors often commented explicitly on the nature and extent of the problems facing teaching in such schools. After his visit to Norma Schroeder, a beginning teacher of less than twelve months' experience, at Benvoulin School in 1930, Hall reported:

This is the most difficult rural school which I have seen in the course of my work as an inspector. The attendance averages around fifty, all grades are represented, and a large proportion of the pupils are of foreign extraction.⁸

A week later he encountered a similar situation at Rutland School. Dorothy Clements was in charge of division six in which Hall noted: "Over sixty percent of the forty-one pupils enrolled are of foreign parentage; a considerable proportion entered school in September with no knowledge whatever of English."⁹ In 1929 Lottie Bowron visited Mission Creek School, where the teacher, Norma Ross, had graduated only three years earlier from Vancouver Normal School and was under considerable pressure:

This room has 7 nationalities in 42 pupils and is far too heavy for any but an experienced teacher and even then is too heavy for one. Miss Ross had written to me early in the year telling me that conditions were rather trying.¹⁰

The problems teachers faced as a result of their pupils' lack of fluency in English were obviously intensified in schools that were located in ethnically homogeneous communities. At Hupel School, for example, where Margaret Fraser taught a class of just eight students in 1930, Lord reported that "Seven of these pupils, from one family, are of

⁸IR, November 21, 1930. See also IRs for March 12, and September 25, 1930.

⁹Ibid., November 27, 1930. The same situation occurred in other divisions of the school. See IRs for December 20, 1927; December 5, 1929; and April 2 and November 28, 1930.

¹⁰Bowron Reports, May 31, 1929.

French-Canadian parentage." He also noted that, although overall the "standing" of the pupils was "good," the teacher was obviously hampered by their "natural deficiency in English."¹¹ Likewise at Okanagan Centre School, Hall reported: "Fourteen of the twenty-two children enrolled are of Japanese parentage. While the children are industrious and anxious to learn, language difficulties interfere with the work of teaching them."¹² Mary McKenzie's position at Medora Creek School was similar. A large proportion of her eight pupils were of German descent which prompted Hall to write "This is not an easy school....In quite a number of cases the children are of foreign parentage so that a good many language difficulties exist."¹³ At Trinity Creek in 1930 there were only twelve pupils enrolled at the school but the teacher, Henry Edward Vogel, had no English-Canadian pupils at all to teach. On inspecting the school Lord noted that the children were "all of Czechoslovakian parentage" with "obvious English deficiencies."¹⁴ Throughout the 1920s teaching at Grindrod School was not an easy assignment because the enrolment was comprised primarily of non-English-speaking Ukrainians who were, in Miller's opinion, "somewhat difficult types of pupils."¹⁵ This situation "handicapped" the teachers who were employed at the school "to a very considerable extent" and served to "preclude anything very high in the way of average attainment."¹⁶

¹¹IR, May 13, 1930.

¹²Ibid., November 6, 1930.

¹³Ibid., October 28, 1926, and June 16, 1927, and interview with Mary Genier nee McKenzie, March 1, 1989.

¹⁴IR, May 14, 1930. See also TBR, 1928.

¹⁵IR, February 17, 1927.

¹⁶Ibid., October 21, 1927. See also IRs for November 29, 1922; March 8 and December 7, 1923; January 22 and December 10, 1925; May 8, 1930; and TBRs for 1923 and 1928. For brief discussions of the provision of education for the Ukrainian children living in Grindrod, see Weber, "A History of the Ukrainian People," 36, and Lidstone, ed. *Schools of Enderby and District*, 114. Other schools where the ethnic composition of the pupil population was problematic included Coldstream (IR, December 13, 1928; May 15 and November 25, 1929; and April 8, 1930), Mabel Lake (IR, November 4, 1930), Shuswap Falls (IRs, November 4 and May 16, 1930), Winfield (IR, 1929) and Woodville Road (IR, May 17, 1921).

The daunting prospect of solving the dilemma of how to instruct those pupils with whom they could not communicate effectively tested teacher patience and resourcefulness to the limit. Not only did the vast majority of rural teachers face the job alone, but their task was made all the more frustrating by the fact that, professionally, they were not equipped to deal with the difficulties of language and cultural change. In the 1920s, English as a Second Language (E.S.L.) training for teachers, as well as the necessary curriculum materials, were undeveloped and certainly unavailable, in rural schools. Evidence suggests, however, that out of necessity most rural teachers coped with such "adverse," difficult" and "trying" conditions, and that some even did so with a measure of success. Inspectors reported how "impressed" they were with individual teachers and commended them for "doing good work" and "achieving satisfactory results" given their circumstances. Information regarding the specific practices and strategies that rural teachers actually employed to effectively instruct non-English-speaking pupils was more difficult to uncover. Given the large proportion of foreign children at Mission Creek School, Lord suggested that the most germane approach for the teacher to adopt was essentially a pragmatic one:

[U]nder such conditions the fundamental aim of the school would seem to be the development of whatever abilities a child may have, at as rapid a rate as possible, rather than a rigid adherence to the standards established for schools of normal type.¹⁷

When Ellison School opened in September 1927, the situation facing Bernard Gillie, and his assistant Irene Cooper, was probably typical of many other rural teachers. They had to accommodate a group of eighteen Austrian children, whose parents had recently moved into the district to work on the tobacco farms. Bernard explained in colourful detail the nature of the predicament he faced and how he attempted to cope with it: "[They] didn't speak a word of English...couldn't understand a thing I said and I had to

¹⁷IR, November 18, 1929.

provide an education for these people. I was completely stunned." With no information about the level of educational attainment of the children Bernard and Irene were at a loss as to how to grade them. In this situation, Bernard continued:

We lined them all up - this could hardly be described as reliable pedagogy - according to size and the nine or ten smallest ones went into Irene's room and the other ones came in my room.

What, and more importantly how, to instruct these children was the next problem. Lacking any appropriate language textbooks, and "in a state of panic" Bernard wrote to a former instructor at Normal School pleading for help. As a result he acquired a few copies of "English for New Canadians" to help him teach the Austrian pupils. Fortunately Bernard discovered that many of the young immigrants were proficient in arithmetic. He explained how he capitalised on this situation:

Since arithmetic is the same in Austrian as it is in English it doesn't really make much difference. These poor little wretches. When I didn't know what else to do with them I put copious quantities of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division on the board and said "O.K. Get busy and do this."

Unable to speak to the children in English the only way that Bernard could communicate his instructions was by way of "waving my hands around and making signals and signs etc."

Rural teachers also had to take account of the fact that many immigrant children found the process of adjustment to their new culture very bewildering. Mary Genier felt sorry for the "little German kids" at Medora Creek School who were obviously confused about their new schooling experience: "One little girl crawled under the desk for the first day...like a little wild animal, scared to death." Sometimes, of course, there was also prejudice. A number of former pupils, particularly those of German origin, related that they had experienced racial discrimination from both pupils and teachers. Anne Richards recalled that after the First World War "There was that terrible feeling against Germans....You didn't let anyone know that you were German. I was lucky. My father was English so I got away with it." In the same way Alice Laviollette stated that she and

her siblings "had quite a hard time because we were classed as Germans and we didn't have many friends."

Compounding the problems associated with having to cater to the pedagogical needs of such a diverse group of children, rural teachers also had to accept the probability that the level of attendance at their schools could be, and often was, both sporadic and unpredictable. Irregular attendance patterns, the result of a combination of complex and sometimes conflicting causes and motivations, were a common feature of rural education and for the most part were well beyond the control of the teacher.

First a word about the function that education served in rural communities. The attitude towards education varied considerably not only from one school district to another, but also between different families in an individual community, according to the home situation. Most of those former teachers interviewed reported that, in their experience, parental support for education in rural districts, in terms of whether they encouraged their children to attend school, was positive, and often enthusiastic. According to Marianne Nelson: "[They] generally are people who have come as pioneers....They want their children to get a better education. They stress that to their children. So the children try....To them education, by all means, first and foremost." At Mabel Lake Lucy McCormick had the firm support of the parents because they "were anxious for their children to get as much education as they could." Likewise, as far as Vera Towgood was concerned, the community at Trinity Valley, where she taught, "were all families that encouraged and wanted them [their children] to learn. They were interested. The children's attitude toward learning was very good, in fact eager." Grace Fuhr, a former pupil at the school, expressed similar views: "I would say they cooperated wherever they could [and] were glad to have their children have the opportunity of schooling." Ida Palmer recalled that her parents were very concerned that she and her siblings attend school in Okanagan Landing: "They wanted us to be educated so badly."

Other children attended school, some teachers believed, only because they were compelled to do so. Mary Genier remarked that "Their attitude wasn't for education. The kids *had* to go to school....They didn't go because they wanted to be educated and do something better." The response of some rural parents to the education of their children was, so Alice Gibson asserted, "passive." In this sense the attitude held by Anne Richard's parents, who lived at Okanagan Landing, was typical of this perspective: "I don't think they thought too much about it or worried too much about it. They sent us to school and that was it....I don't think they thought too much about ...whether we were becoming educated or not."

Such passivity can partially be explained in terms of the limited future prospects that the majority of young men and women in rural districts faced on leaving school. Most remained in the small communities in which they had been born, raised, and educated, to follow on in their parents' footsteps, making a living farming or logging. Accordingly, attaining a high degree of academic achievement seemed both unnecessary and irrelevant. Bernard Gillie suggested that this was the case for most of his pupils at Ellison School:

They didn't take it [education] very seriously. The idea that they would go on...to high school never was taken seriously....In general they were typical...youngsters of agricultural families with the same attitudes and interests that their parents had really. Most of them [were] not particularly ambitious, nice youngsters...but rather slow-paced....They didn't expect to go on to, the majority of them, to any kind of certainly professional career.

After all, as Ila Embree contended: "Work and a job and bringing some money in was the main ambition of everybody in those days." Thus in isolated districts, schools were so closely adapted to the communities of which they were a product that the level of education children both required and received represented no more than the needs of rural society. It was a reflection of what rural parents expected.

It is interesting, however, that even in those families where the parents had a minimal interest in education, their children often developed a strong desire to attend school. When actually in the classroom they were "anxious" and "eager" to learn. Such

eagerness may have been because, as Alice Gibson suggested was the case at Sugar Lake: "There wasn't anything else to do for them....There was nothing there." This situation also tended to occur in poverty-stricken homes, the miserable circumstances of which provided little in the way of comfort or stimulation for the children concerned. In such cases the school, and hence the teacher, became the critical hub of their lives. Alice Laviollete and her sister Amanda Singer, who attended various one-room schools in the Okanagan Valley, are a case in point. Alice stated:

You went...and it was a commitment....It was something you knew you had to do [but] you were pleased to be able to do it....It was a routine. It was a way of life and you knew you were at least accomplishing *something*. You were getting away from home and getting out into the world.

Amanda's feelings about school were the same: "I was always happy to go to school. I really enjoyed school and I was always looking forward to seeing everybody there." As noted earlier, the school was frequently the only social institution for children, and indeed adults, in remote communities and thus was, as Lucy McCormick observed, "a focal point for them....It was something they looked to. It was important."¹⁸

Unfortunately, whether the attitude to education was "positive" or merely "passive" the isolation, harsh topography, transiency and chronic poverty so characteristic of many of the small rural settlements in the Okanagan Valley, were factors which had a tremendous influence on the process of education in general. They could not help but impede school attendance. Moreover it is clear that in many instances pupil absence from school was often a direct result of these factors as opposed to being an indication of any disregard for the importance of education by their parents.

¹⁸Wilson and Storz also discussed the significance of rural schools in this context: "Schools and teachers were extremely important socializing agents in the remote areas of the province. Such districts often lacked the amenities of urban life including Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, C.G.I.T. (Canadian Girls in Training), and other church-based clubs, as well as the recreational centres and organized playgrounds that by the 1920s were becoming quite the rage in urban areas. In rural B.C. the school was one of the few public gathering places specifically designed to educate and socialize children." See ""May the Lord Have Mercy on You,"" 31.

Even though in most cases rural schools were centrally located in a community, the scattered nature of settlement in the Okanagan Valley meant that the distance between home and school prevented some pupils from attending regularly. This situation occurred at Reiswig School in 1928, as its teacher George E. Welbanks was at pains to point out: "(N.B.) Because of the distance some children have to come, the attendance varies considerably."¹⁹ Five years earlier Aileen M. Halford reported a similar problem at Hilton School: "Difference between average attendance [8.4] and number of children of school age [14] is accounted for by great distance from school."²⁰

Most teachers and pupils travelled to school on foot, others came by horse and buggy or on horseback. Occasionally, however, severe weather conditions caused already poor roads to become impassable. This combined with inadequate or unavailable transportation to exacerbate the problem of distance. Alice Gibson stated that for the pupils at remote Sugar Lake School "Weather conditions would keep them home more than anything else." Many former pupils recalled the problems of trying to get to and from school, particularly in the winter. Anne Vardon attended Medora Creek School with her brothers and sisters: "Whenever we got a heavy snowfall overnight, my Dad harnessed the old mare and ha[d] her pull a big log to school to make a trail for us to walk in, as there were no ploughs to clear the roads." Millie Bonney still has vivid memories of her journey to Springbend School: "It was pretty cold sometimes and you had to trudge through deep snow and [your] hands would be freezing when you got [there], almost crying with pain." On arrival at school during periods of severe climatic conditions rural teachers had to take precious time out of their already hectic schedules to ensure that their pupils were warm, dry and comfortable enough to concentrate on their lessons. On many occasions Marianne

¹⁹TBR.

²⁰Ibid., 1923

Nelson had to deal with "children, walking several miles to school, scantily clothed, who had to be warmed near the school stove, and for quite some time."

Some schools closed completely, often for weeks at a time, due to inclement weather. Esma Shunter, who taught at Shuswap Falls School at the end of the 1920s reported: "The second year I was there...in February, it got so cold they had to close the school....The kids couldn't come to school so they closed the school down for two weeks." Isobel Simard remembered the same situation happening at Kingfisher School: "There was one winter that was so cold the school had to close in January for a week or two." Anne Vardon recalled that at Medora Creek School "When the temperature went down to 35 deg[rees] below zero (F) the school was closed for usually a few days."

The level of school attendance was also dependent on the nature and extent of economic activity and hence available employment in an area. Transiency was a common feature of the settlement pattern in rural districts, particularly those based on struggling subsistence economies. This often posed a real problem for teachers who could unexpectedly be faced with the possibility of an increase, or alternatively a decrease, sometimes substantial, in the number of pupils enrolled at their school. At Medora Creek School Marianne Nelson stated that attendance varied because "sometimes an extra pupil would be added for a time when the parents of this pupil moved into the area to do some logging." This was a common experience for teachers in rural schools. In his report on Okanagan Centre School in 1929 Lord pointed out that "Several pupils are transients attending only during the fruit packing season."²¹ A year earlier, Olive Grace White, teacher at Mission Creek School, commented: "The population of this district is very fluctuating, as a large number of foreigners and Japanese (who have large families) are only in the district for the time being."²² Enrolment at the school had risen dramatically

²¹IR, September 23, 1929.

²²TBR, 1928.

from thirty-eight in 1926, to fifty-five the next year, to seventy-three at Miss White's time of writing.²³ At Bear Creek School in 1923 Winnifred J.L. Raymer was confronted with the opposite situation. She noted: "The school population varies, for although there are 12 on the roll, these are not always in the district."²⁴ The number of children living in the area that were of school age had fallen to four. Similarly Bernard Gillie remarked in February 1928 that Ellison School had "but a very poor enrolment owing to foreign settlers leaving the district.." He optimistically added "but a new colony is to arrive about April 1st."²⁵

Throughout the decade of the twenties Westbank School suffered from chronic attendance problems that appear to have been related to the ethnic makeup of the school population. The school district adjoined an Indian Reserve with the result that, on average, half of the school enrolment was comprised of Indian or "half-breed" children. When Lord inspected the school in the spring of 1922 only five of the eleven students enrolled attended that day. In these circumstances he urged that the trustees take measures to enforce compulsory attendance, and warned: "Until they do so it is impossible for any teacher to secure satisfactory results."²⁶ The situation did not improve. When Lord inspected the school almost a decade later his report stated: "Almost half of the pupils are Indians whose attendance has been very irregular; the other pupils also attend poorly. Only three children were present on the day of my visit; so it is impossible to judge the standing of the school."²⁷

²³See ARs for the period 1926-1928. Mission Creek is included in the lists of Rural Schools in the Statistical Tables.

²⁴TBR, 1923.

²⁵TBR.

²⁶IR, April 25, 1922.

²⁷Ibid., May 6, 1931. See also IRs for December 10, 1920; November 8, 1921; November 19, 1929; and March 28, 1930.

When the number of pupils in their schools dropped rural teachers not only had their work plans disrupted, but were also threatened with the likelihood of school closure, if enrolment fell below the required minimum to keep the school open.²⁸ Bernard Gillie faced just this situation. In 1928, the enrolment at the two-room school at Ellison fell to thirty-seven, which was below the level to warrant a second classroom. Bernard was informed by Inspector Hall that unless he could find a way of bringing the enrolment up to the necessary level he was to lose his second teacher, and face the daunting prospect of converting the school into one-room and teaching all thirty-seven pupils himself, Bernard recalled his dilemma and how he eventually solved the problem, which he described as "enough to drive anyone to distraction":

I've never worked harder in my life than I did for that month. I worked fifteen to sixteen hours a day trying to prepare material....I resorted to desperation....I scoured the neighbourhood to find if anybody had a couple of youngsters that *looked* as if they *might* be of school age. Let's not worry about whether they really were or not. I found a couple and I persuaded their parents to send them to school. So that gave me my thirty-nine or thirty-eight or whatever I needed....Nobody ever came and said "Let me see the birth certificates of these two kids that you've got"....For all [anybody] knew they could have been three years old.

Rural teachers also had to accept the fact that parents, struggling to provide the bare essentials of food, clothing and shelter, might withdraw their children from school in order for them to work. Often a child's contribution, either as an extra unit of labour on the family farm, alternatively in terms of the additional few dollars they might earn working elsewhere in the community, was vital to a family's economic survival. For almost three months at the beginning of the school year in 1923, Miss M.E.A. McMynn, teacher at Westbank Townsite School, had a much reduced class to teach, because, as she explained: "Until nearly the end of November about half the pupils are absent to pick and pack fruit."²⁹ Inspectors frequently drew attention to such truancy in their reports, and noted the

²⁸For a more detailed discussion of this point see Chapter Four of this thesis.

²⁹TBR.

deleterious affect it had on pupils level of academic attainment. As a result of his visit to the school in 1920 J.B. DeLong noted that the children in the superior school at Naramata "have been very irregular in their attendance because of Apple picking; accordingly while some have a fair grasp of the work covered, others will need much careful solid drill work before they are up to the standard."³⁰ Lord warned that similar problems occurring at Oyama School in 1929 needed to be curbed: "Far too many pupils are absent, for considerable periods, packing and picking fruit. I would urge that the school board take steps to prevent continuance of this practice."³¹

Millie Bonney stated that, while the majority of her fellow classmates at Springbend went to school regularly, others did not: "I remember one boy who didn't attend too well when he got to about grade seven and his reason...was that he was helping mostly in the woods." Similarly Amanda Singer recalled that her brother "missed so much school all the time. Dad would keep him home to cut firewood and things like that. Of course a book didn't mean much to him." Girls were sometimes required to care for siblings while parents were at work. Alice Laviollette reported:

[I] had to stay home lots of times to stay with the younger kids....I was always the one who had to stay....Lots of times I would have to take [the baby] to Mum where she was working because she was nursing then. Really I didn't go to school every day.

Farmwork and childcare aside, family impoverishment sometimes drove parents, often through shame or embarrassment, to keep their children at home when they could not afford to provide them with appropriate clothing or footwear, or with a lunch for noon hour. To quote Alice Laviollette once again:

The reason why I quit going to school was because we had nothing to eat in the house, absolutely nothing. We were just starving....We had nothing to make lunch with....We had no clothes and we were very, very poor.

³⁰IR, October 25, 1920.

³¹Ibid., November 26, 1929.

Thus rural teachers had to cope with children who were often hungry, undernourished and poorly clothed. Lloydda Wills, who taught Alice and some of her siblings at Hilton School recalled the desperate situation of the family . On one particular occasion, after they had been absent from school for three days, she decided to go to their home to ascertain the reason for their truancy, whereupon she found them "playing outside in their bare feet." Lloydda quickly realised why they had not been attending school:

They didn't have very much. They didn't have very much to eat either. They were quite poor. They didn't even have enough bread in the house for their lunches and that's why the mother didn't send them.

Finally pupil attendance in rural schools was affected by illhealth. Outbreaks of contagious diseases spread rapidly from one pupil to another and could empty a schoolroom in a very short time. In his annual report on the Kelowna Inspectorate in 1924, which included sixty-one schools in rural districts, Hall noted:

The work of the schools was greatly handicapped during the year by poor attendance, due to illness; in consequence of successive epidemics of whooping cough and measles many of the schools were closed for a time, while for several weeks the attendance was so broken that satisfactory work was out of the question. As a result the standing of a considerable proportion of the schools was noticeably affected...³²

In 1927 a serious outbreak of poliomyelitis occurred in the Okanagan Valley, extending over several months. The effect on school attendance was marked, as Hall pointed out in his report at the end of the school year: "The alarm caused by the prevalence of infantile paralysis led to the closing of many schools for a considerable time during the school term; in many cases little of the year's work was overtaken during September and

³²AR, 1924, T53. See also Hall's individual school reports in 1924 for East Kelowna (February 19) and Peachland (February 22). For examples of other schools where low attendance rates were caused by illness and disease, see IRs for Hupel (December 4, 1923) where "school was closed for nearly six weeks...on account of a scarlet fever epidemic", Kedleston (September 24, 1923), Mara (May 7, 1930), Medora Creek (October 2, 1929), Shuswap Falls (May 16, 1930), and Westbank (December 10, 1921) where "due to an outbreak of measles" only eleven of the nineteen pupils enrolled were in attendance. See also School District #23, Kelowna, Westbank Townsite Public School, Minutes of Meetings, for January 1929, which states that the school was closed for a few days because of mumps.

October."³³ At least on one occasion, however, when a school was closed due to illness it did not unduly upset the teacher concerned, despite the lost teaching time. When Ellison School was shut down for almost two months in the fall of 1927 because of poliomyelitis in the Kelowna area, Bernard Gillie, unable to teach but also not permitted to leave the district, found alternative employment: "It was during the apple picking season. It happened that the janitor of the school had a big orchard there...so I picked apples for nearly all of that period." Consequently Bernard was "extremely wealthy" as he was able to draw two salaries, one from teaching and one from picking fruit!

The pupils were not the only ones in rural schools to suffer from the effects of illness, as Lucy McCormick explained: "If an infectious disease struck, everyone came down with it, including the teacher."³⁴ With no one to take over from them at the school many rural teachers often struggled on with their work. Lucy continued:

I had never had any childish diseases and I got chicken pox at Mabel Lake. But there was no use me staying home. I couldn't give it to the youngsters because they had given it to me....I couldn't sit in the cabin [teacherage]. I didn't have anything to read except the labels on cans....So I went back to school.

In Ruby Lidstone's case it was she who infected her pupils at Grandview Bench School with mumps in 1929, but like Lucy she also "continued at school though she often felt rotten and one by one all the pupils contracted the mumps."

The preceding analysis of teacher experience in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley graphically depicts the demanding working conditions they faced in their classrooms, from the inferior quality of school buildings and grounds to the lack of instructional resources, equipment and supplies, to the diverse and fluctuating nature of their pupil populations. Taken together such circumstances ensured that life for the lone

³³AR, 1928, V28. See also individual school reports for Okanagan Mission (December 7, 1927), Oyama High (March 14, 1928), Peachland High (October 27, 1927), Rutland (March 13, 1928), Salmon Bench (October 24, 1927), and Westbank Townsite (October 28, 1927).

³⁴McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 40.

teacher in an isolated district was at the very least hectic. Often they proved formidable. Professional survival in a one-room school was thus a real challenge. In this sense one can fully appreciate the significance of the comments of Lottie Bowron regarding the situation of the teacher at Reiswig School when she visited her in 1929. She simply stated: "Mrs Gibson looked as if she was ready for the end of term."³⁵

There is no doubt that working under these strenuous conditions militated against any serious hopes that rural teachers might have harboured of developing, and then successfully implementing, a comprehensive, up-to-date and structured academic programme in their schools, such as was advocated in the Putman-Weir Report of 1925. Consequently the daily agenda for most pupils who attended rural schools consisted primarily of instruction in the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and usually by way of word and phonic drill and rote memorisation. Millie Bonney, former pupil at Springbend School, stated that "There were no frills in those days. We had the three R's and the only thing other than that was what we used to call exercise. But there was no equipment at all." Likewise, at Okanagan Landing School Marguerite Hodgson recalled that "the three 'R's' were stressed, so there were not too many subjects to tax our youthful brains."³⁶ Anne Vardon, who attended Medora Creek School, explained in more detail:

Spelling was very important in those days, as was arithmetic and writing. I think spelling and arithmetic were done every day, with a spelling bee once a week. Reading was also important. Almost every weekend we would have from one to four verses to memorise....Some of the other subjects that we were taught were Language, Geography, Grammar, Literature, History and Art.³⁷

In addition to their strictly professional responsibilities, teachers in rural schools were also expected to find time in their already busy workdays to perform in a number of

³⁵Bowron Reports, May 29, 1929.

³⁶Hodgson, "Okanagan Landing School Days," 116.

³⁷Interestingly, the teachers who were interviewed recalled very little about matters of curriculum or their teaching methods.

other roles at the school. Although these non-teaching "duties," as Lucy McCormick described them, were both "many and varied," for the most part rural teachers undertook them voluntarily and accepted them as being part of their job.

One of the questions posed in the questionnaire circulated by the Teachers' Bureau to teachers in rural districts was "Does Board engage a janitor for school?" Sixty-five percent (59 of 91) of the teachers in the Okanagan Valley who completed and submitted this document to the Department of Education answered in the affirmative. These responses did not necessarily indicate either a full-time or an adult employee however. In some districts individuals were appointed only part-time or to do a specific job. At Salmon Valley School, the teacher, Lydia Hayes, reported that a janitor was engaged "For firelighting 5 months only."³⁸ In a number of instances the School Board employed one or more children to carry out some, or all, of the janitorial work. Belle McGauley stated that "2 school pupils" were engaged at Ashton Creek School, and Alfred Hooper, teacher at South Kelowna School noted: "One pupil paid to do sweeping only."³⁹ Children could not always be relied upon however, as R.N. Nesbitt clearly pointed out was the case for Ecclestone School: "Pupil, not well done."⁴⁰ Concomitantly this meant that even where a janitor was engaged rural teachers could also be liable for at least a portion of the work. They may also have had to supervise the work of others to ensure that it reached the required standard.

Moreover in at least thirty-five percent (32 of 91) of the rural schools in the Okanagan Valley teachers were entirely responsible for keeping their classrooms clean and warm. Vera Towgood recalled having been forewarned by an instructor at Victoria Normal "about the possibility that we might find a one-room school in "a less than clean condition".

³⁸TBR, 1928.

³⁹Ibid., 1928 and 1923 respectively. Pupils were also employed at Ewings Landing (TBR, 1928), North Enderby (TBR, 1923), Okanagan (TBR, 1928), Silver Creek (TBR, 1923) and Westbank Townsite (TBR, 1923 and 1928).

⁴⁰TBR, 1928.

[He said] "Don't hesitate to do what you can - sweep it out, scrub the floor & walls if necessary. Remember that "all work is noble"." Many of the former teachers who were interviewed confirmed that fulfilling such obligations had indeed been part of their rural teaching experience. Lucy McCormick stated that "as a rule" those who taught in rural districts also served as the "caretaker, firelighter, and general custodian of the school, especially if it was in an isolated area."⁴¹ A number of others, such as Marianne Nelson, emphasized the multifarious nature of their work by describing themselves as a "general factotum" rather than exclusively an educator of children.

Whereas chores such as sweeping the floor, cleaning the blackboards and general tidying up could be done after school, lighting a fire in the stove could only be done early in the morning. This made it imperative that those rural teachers arrive at the schoolhouse long before the start of the normal school day. Lucy McCormick lived in a teacherage in the grounds of Mabel Lake School and her daily routine began thus: "I'd light the fire in my own cabin and rush over and light the fire in the school." While teaching at Hupel School Marianne Nelson lived less than half a mile from the schoolhouse, whereas most of her pupils "walked several miles to attend school." So early each morning she "carried kindling, wrapped in newspaper from my boarding house to start the winter and cool-weather fires." Esma Shunter experienced real problems in trying to get the old Shuswap Falls School warm before her pupils arrived: "There was a big hole where the stove pipe went out and the snow would come down and the stove would be covered with snow and you'd have to sweep the snow off before you lit it."

Use of the school building in many rural areas for various community functions often increased the teacher's janitorial workload. Lucy McCormick recalled that "As the schools were frequently used for Saturday night dances and for church services on Sundays, on Monday mornings most of the desks would be in the wrong places and had to

⁴¹McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 39.

be reorganized."⁴² Likewise Ila Embree reported that at Kedleston "When there were any events in the neighbourhood they happened in the school yard or at the schoolhouse and you didn't know if it [would] have been cleaned up like you'd like to have it."⁴³

Interestingly, although rural teachers were not overly enthusiastic about their janitorial duties, in general they did not object strongly to the expectation that such work was their responsibility, perhaps because as Marianne Nelson suggested "there wasn't much to it." In this sense Alice Gibson expressed a commonly held view of many of the participants: "All this was not a hardship as it was the status quo for most one-room teachers of that era....[It was] one of the things you did." At least on one occasion however a teacher decided that she drew the line at some of the heavier manual tasks she was expected to do. At Shuswap Falls the Secretary of the School Board informed Esma Shunter that chopping wood for the school stove was the teacher's, and thus her, responsibility. Esma thought otherwise. After she had deliberately broken "two axe-handles" the Secretary gave in and employed a man to do the job. Esma stated triumphantly: "This is one teacher who doesn't split wood. It's not in her contract....I was the first teacher there that ever got her wood split for her."

In many instances, usually because they were too busy to do the work themselves, rural teachers, acting on their own volition, enlisted the support of other individuals who were willing to offer their services at the school. Most frequently the situation occurred where one of the older students would act as a "pupil-janitor." Thus Lloyd Wills reported that at Hilton School: "I did it when I had the time to do it but I assigned different ones [pupils] for different days to do it." As one of the senior pupils at Medora Creek School, Buster Schunter sometimes helped out. He recalled:

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³References to the problems caused by schools being used for community functions are made in the minutes of the meetings of various school boards, see School District #23, Kelowna, South Okanagan Public School (May 3, 1921), and Westbank Townsite Public School (January 7, 1929).

The janitor [was] the kids. You took your turn one week, and [then] the next oldest kid, he took a turn. You'd clean the blackboard. You'd clean the brushes and you swept the floor before you left for home. And in the morning you went there early and lit the fire and things like that.

Ila Embree used to finish school early on Friday afternoons so that the pupils could clear up all the garbage that had accumulated in the school grounds over the previous week. While at times "pupil-janitors" provided an "adequate" service, more often the schoolhouse received merely "a lick and a promise."⁴⁴ Otherwise as in cash-poor Kedleston the five dollars a month that could be earned for doing the housekeeping at the school was much sought after by the pupils. Consequently Ila Embree stated: "There was almost a war at the end of the month - Who'd do it next month? So I hired a steady adult - What a joy to have a warm school in the long winters." Ila paid the janitor out of her own salary.

It was also quite common in rural districts for the parents of the pupils to help out voluntarily with the janitorial duties. In the case of Sugar Lake School the task of heating the schoolhouse was a joint effort by teacher, pupils and community members together. Alice Gibson explained: "The men would have a bee and cut up a bunch of wood, and the children would bring it in and I would keep it [the stove] going." Similarly at Medora Creek School Gertrude Cumming, a former pupil, recalled: "The grown-ups were great sports and always willing to help with things. Some weekends there was a cleaning bee. The school floor was scrubbed with water heated outside over an open fire." Marianne Nelson even managed to persuade one of the Trustees at Hupel School to help her:

The stage which carried the mail to Enderby from Mabel Lake, passed by the school, early Tuesday and Friday mornings. One of the trustees who lived across the river from the school, crossed over by boat to post or get mail from this passing stage. Instead of waiting in the cold, [he] used to put on the fire and sit in the comfort reading my National Geographics or senior textbooks on cold wintry mornings. Believe me, I appreciated this in those cold winters.

Teachers in isolated districts also had to double as nurse, doctor or even dentist for their pupils when the situation arose. Complying with Provincial Department of Health

⁴⁴Lidstone, ed. Schools of Enderby and District, 107.

regulations, rural teachers routinely checked their pupils for contagious diseases and administered general health care precautions. Wilma Hayes, former student at Ellison School, recalled how one of her teachers, Eldred K. Evans, acted on the advice of the local Public Health Officer to help reduce the incidence of goitre amongst the pupils at the school: "One such project that I recall was in the days before the use of iodized salt. Each noon hour every student lined up, under Eldred's supervision, for a glass of water containing several drops of tincture of iodine."⁴⁵ Some teachers even acted in the capacity of dentist. Marianne Nelson reported: "I used to pull teeth too. I got pretty good at pulling teeth."

Dealing with situations like those described above presented most rural teachers with few problems. However, when unpredictable crises struck such as a sudden illness or an accident at their schools they were often unprepared, and therefore unable to cope. Although the situations they faced were perhaps no worse than those confronted by their urban colleagues, the fact that expert medical care was so much harder to come by in rural areas made any problems potentially more serious. Lucy McCormick explained:

She had to deal with any emergency....Telephone service was non-existent, and medical services the same, with no Public Health nurse to turn to. The Medical Officer of Health...had such an area to cover that a school was lucky if they saw him every second year. If hospital care was needed it was a long way from Cherryville, Mabel Lake, or Trinity Valley by horse and buggy to Vernon.

A number of "unfortunate" incidents were related to me by former teachers where children needlessly suffered due to the lack of immediate and appropriate medical attention. At Mabel Lake School one young girl had her eye punctured by a stick and as a consequence lost her sight in that eye. At Medora Creek School another girl died as a result of a ruptured appendix. Teachers expressed the utter frustration and helplessness they felt in such

⁴⁵Iodine supplements were given to school pupils in the 1920s because prior to its use "25 percent of the Kelowna school children had large goitres." See David Green, "Dr. William John Knox 1878-1967: Beloved Doctor of the Okanagan," *QHSR* 33(1969): 14. Lucy McCormick also noted that a "duty" of the rural teacher was to give "iodine tablets" to their pupils. See "Early Rural Schools," 39.

circumstances. They not only lacked the necessary knowledge and expertise in medical procedures, but in most rural schools supplies to render even the most basic first aid did not exist, as Marianne Nelson's account of the contents of the medical facilities at Medora Creek School clearly illustrates:

There was no equipment for first aid...nothing. With the exception of some clean white rags coming from the kind lady of my boarding place, I used a green salve for cuts, some tweezers to pull out slivers, and some needles and thread and safety pins, to save a pupil's dignity, should he or she rip clothes in play.

Marianne added resentfully: "Our Normal training should have included a course in first aid."

Finding time during the school day to take a few quiet moments alone was virtually impossible for the teacher in a rural school. Even during recess and noon-hour they were obliged to oversee their pupils activities and to take responsibility for their behaviour, as the minutes of the South Okanagan School Board for 1920 imply: "The question of the teacher leaving the school during lunch hour was discussed. It was decided that same c[oul]d not be allowed." Significantly a later entry for the same date stated that "a change of teacher" was "advisable" and the "secretary was instructed to advise [the present teacher] that her engagement w[oul]d cease at the end of current term."⁴⁶ Whether the two entries were linked is unknown.

At recess, there was usually little in the way of sports equipment. So if weather permitted, teachers often organised, and sometimes participated in outdoor games such as Kick-the-Can, Fox-and-Goose, Run-Sheep-Run, Mother-May-I, Anti-Anti-I-Over, Prisoners Base, Tag, Hopscotch, Skipping and Softball. When it was too cold or wet pupils remained inside and the teacher resorted to various types of guessing games.

Many rural teachers were also "ordered" to preside over the organisation of a hot meal for their pupils at lunch-time. This usually consisted of a soup concocted from

⁴⁶School District #23, Kelowna, South Okanagan Public School, Minutes of Meetings, October 5, 1920, 21.

vegetables, either dried or in season, and would be cooked slowly on the school stove over the course of the morning. "So there goes the teacher," Lucy McCormick stated, "cook as well as nurse."⁴⁷ Some teachers, particularly those working in impoverished communities, like Marianne Nelson at Medora Creek School who felt very concerned about those of her pupils whom she regarded as obviously "deprived" and "underfed," initiated the provision of food for their pupils at lunch-time at their own expense. In such cases they did so, not because they were required to, but in response to a perceived need to ensure the children received at least minimal nutritional requirements. Marianne stated: "You should have seen those kids look forward to lunch." Anne Vardon, one of Marianne's pupils, recalled her kindness: "We were very poor at that time, and whenever she could she always helped out by bringing extra lunch that she thought we'd like, like extra cobs of corn or extra tomatoes or extra apples or something."

A final "duty" that many teachers in rural districts were expected to fulfil was the improvement of their school grounds. Despite the enormity of the task that they confronted they made valiant attempts to ameliorate their often bleak surroundings. Some, like Marianne Nelson, managed to get help. She reported: "In my first two schools I asked the Trustees if we could have the school grounds cleared of logs and stumps. I stated that the children needed some organised fun etc. The Trustees willingly did this." Lucy McCormick was not so fortunate so she and her pupils "dug out stumps to make a baseball diamond" in the grounds of Mabel Lake School themselves. At Medora Creek School Gertrude Cumming, a former pupil, recalled: "The teachers used to encourage the pupils to have a garden plot where flowers were grown. The girls tended them. The boys looked after a veg[etable] plot but it didn't come to anything at the old school."⁴⁸

⁴⁷McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 40.

⁴⁸See also IR on Medora Creek School (October 28, 1926) where Hall commended the teacher, Mary McKenzie, for her "small school garden."

The in-school workday of the typical rural teacher was thus fully occupied. In trying to coordinate their time effectively and allocate it between their many responsibilities, they had, out of necessity, to become a jack-of-all-trades. A huge gulf existed between what was expected of them and what in reality they could achieve given the circumstances in which they were required to perform. Anne Richards, referring to one of her teachers at Okanagan Landing School, has encapsulated most rural teachers' inevitable situation, given the trials and frustrations they confronted on a daily basis:

I think she had more work than she could stand really....But she was, well I guess, like all country school teachers, she did the best she could and that was all.

Stan Wejr, a former pupil of Trinity Creek School, appreciated the huge undertaking it must have been to effectively manage a rural school in the 1920s when he wrote: "Believe me, that teacher earned her salary."⁴⁹

The issue of whether the instruction teachers received during their months at Normal School actually equipped them to practice their profession in an isolated rural school was a moot point among the former teachers interviewed. When questioned specifically in this respect Esma Shunter's response, like that of many of the others, was emphatic: "No. I don't know how it could." Although they felt that their pedagogical training had been an important part of their lives in terms of their personal development, by the same token many of them also made vociferous complaints about what they regarded as the shortcomings of that training. Alice Gibson stated: "Normal School was a wonderful experience but there's no way it could prepare you for one-room teaching. The problems were different in every one." Lucy McCormick questioned how any Normal School programme could feasibly instill in student teachers an awareness and understanding of the idiosyncracies of living and working in remote districts: "The teacher training didn't do much to equip a young teacher to face a group of children and a community which could be

⁴⁹Wejr, "Memories of Trinity Creek Area," 79.

very critical." The struggles of individual teachers trying to adapt to the hardship and loneliness of rural life in general, and how they coped with such difficulties, are addressed in Chapter Eight as part of the discussion of the teacher in the community. At this juncture the emphasis remains on their classroom responsibilities.

As noted earlier, the foremost stumbling block for new teachers was instructional: how to coordinate tuition in a multi-grade situation. The statements by former teachers indicate that in this regard they deemed their professional training to have been both impractical and irrelevant in the face of the actual circumstances they encountered in their rural classrooms. Mary Genier recalled: "All I did [at Normal School] was review the *subjects* that you had to teach. But they didn't tell you *how* to go about it." Margaret Landon, only nineteen years of age and fresh out of Normal School, began her "new life as a school marm in fear and trembling" in the one-room school at Salmon Bench in 1923. Her "first task," she explained, was the "making of a timetable" whereupon she soon realised that her "year of preparation" at Vancouver Normal School "seemed very inadequate." Marianne Nelson concurred: "[W]e weren't told how to devise a timetable for teaching eight grades. Never shown how to teach raw beginners to read etc." Hilda Cryderman stated: "In teacher training we had training in making multi-class timetables but no training in the necessity for meaningful work for the other grades while I was teaching Grades 7 or 8. We called it seat work."

Facilities for practice teaching existed at both Vancouver and Victoria Normal Schools in the 1920s and most of those interviewed regarded such experience as the "most useful" and "valuable" aspect of their training programme, because as Bernard Gillie suggested, it gave them "some idea of the importance of the continuity of lessons etc." Unfortunately, as Alice Gibson pointed out, "It was geared mainly to teaching one grade...situations in city schools." In 1927 Ruby Drasching did her "final two week practicum...at a rural school "Happy Valley", on the outskirts of Victoria," an assignment of far too short a duration and in a location that was hardly isolated enough to give Ruby

any real sense of what teaching in the remote corners of British Columbia's hinterland really entailed. Her first teaching post was the one-room school at Grandview Bench where conditions were qualitatively very different to those she had experienced in suburban Victoria.⁵⁰

The following account of Bernard Gillie's rude introduction to the very real world of one-room teaching was an experience replicated in countless other rural schools. It highlights the immense training gap that existed as teachers tried to follow Department of Education policy and Courses of Study:

One of the things that they taught us in Normal School was that you had to plan all your lessons. You made a lesson plan for everything you were going to do and we had a formal plan form that you made out and all the rest of it. Knowing what I know now, that's theoretically a brilliant idea....I started out trying to do this. Here I am with six classes, some of them had only two or three youngsters in, including of course a group of eight beginners who had never been to school before. So if I tried to plan a lesson, to write out a lesson plan for each one of those classes for all day long I needed a twelve day week in order to do that and I didn't have one. This was hopelessly unrealistic....I couldn't bridge the gap, the gulf between theory and practice. How do you turn it into a practical performance day after day after day. This is what really I found difficult...to tackle what seemed at first as a totally impossible situation....This was the experience of hundreds of teachers, dropped into one-room schools, totally inexperienced, not knowing how to go about really much anything.

It is also apparent from the comments inspectors made in their reports on the pedagogical practices of those under their supervision that many novice teachers experienced problems in trying to adapt to their situations in rural schools, a process that often took a considerable period of adjustment. Miller's assessment of May E. Burton, teacher with no experience in charge of Deep Creek School in 1925 where enrolment stood a thirty pupils, is typical. He suggested that she "must learn to economize her time and keep her pupils more profitably employed....More frequent revision and closer observation of grade and term limits, coupled with a rather firmer grasp of the requirements of the Course of Study, will also be of help in bringing about improved conditions." Almost exactly

⁵⁰The same was true of the Normal School in Vancouver where schools in places such as Surrey were used for practice teaching.

twelve months later he filed a similar report on Miss Burton, noting no real improvement. It was not until October of 1927 that he was able to state she had "gained somewhat in teaching strength" and was "making fair progress."⁵¹ Historian David C. Jones has suggested a cynical metaphor that is particularly pertinent here: "[N]ormal school training in the early twenties prepared trainees to teach on the moon better than in the typical one-room...school."⁵²

The transition from training to employment was eased somewhat for those teachers whose own public school education had taken place in a rural setting. Bernard Gillie suggested that for him, as for many others in similar situations: "What we did in sheer desperation was think "Well, what did *my* teachers do?" I simply fell back on how *they* had done things." Ila Embree firmly believed that she was "much better prepared" to teach in a one-room school because she had "been through it" and thus "knew how to do it." She argued: "I learnt how to write, MacLean's Method⁵³, and all that sort of thing at Normal and I specialised in Physical Education [but] if I hadn't gone to a country school...I would never have known how to teach at all." Alice Gibson felt the same: "I don't think I was conscious of it at the time, but a one-room school was quite ordinary to me."

⁵¹IR, December 8, 1925, December 2, 1926 and October 19, 1927. Examples of other teachers who seemed to be experiencing similar problems abound in the records. See for example inspectors' comments on Ruby E. Drasching (IR's, Grandview Bench, November 9, 1928 and May 29, 1929), Irene Pellow (IRs, Falkland, November 26, 1925 and April 15, 1926), Islay B. Noble (IRs, South Okanagan, November 30, 1921 and March 1, 1922), Miss E. L. Haywood (IR, Sicamous, February 23, 1925), Vera M. Ford (IR, Hillcrest, January 21, 1925), and Emily M. Melsted (IR, Silver Creek, April 6, 1925). It was not only new graduates that found teaching in rural districts problematic. There was another group of teachers, many with long years in the field, who were also unprepared. A prime example of such a teacher was Miss A.E. Browne, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, with over eighteen years of teaching experience, who taught at Sicamous School from 1927-28. Miller noted in his report that she was "not finding it easy to adjust her methods to the needs of a British Columbia one-room school such as this." See IR, November 9, 1928. See also inspectors' comments on Anson W. Morrow (IR, Lavington School, June 11, 1928), Duncan P. Clark (IR, Mabel Lake School, October 3, 1929), and Mary Gemmell (IR, Salmon Bench School, February 26, 1923).

⁵²David C. Jones, Empire of Dust: Settling and Abandoning the Prairie Dry Belt Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1987, 179.

⁵³Ila is referring here to The MacLean Method of Muscular Movement Writing introduced into the British Columbia school system in 1921. See AR, 1921, C10.

Just as teachers in rural schools were inadequately prepared for the tasks they encountered in the classroom, they also suffered from a professional support system that was sadly lacking and did little to mitigate the daily frustrations of one-room teaching. Teacher anecdotes about the nature of their relationships with the inspectors who supervised their work manifested an ambivalent attitude towards these men. On the one hand teachers looked forward to visits from their inspector because they offered news of the "outside" and thus a welcome respite from the overwhelming feeling of isolation that was so common amongst those who taught in outlying rural districts. For the vast majority of teachers he was their only link with the larger world of education. Often, as historian John Calam has pointed out, the inspector was the "sole educational professional in whom they could confide during an entire school year."⁵⁴ Some participants, like Margaret Landon, "approved" of their inspectors using words such as "kind" and "supportive" to describe certain individuals. Generally, however, most teachers were not overly impressed with the quality of the service they received from their inspectors. In this context they cited a number of specific grievances related mainly to availability and utility.

Rural teachers were certainly not hampered in their work by an excess of supervision. In fact for the vast majority of teachers contact with their inspector was minimal. Constrained by their heavy workloads - too many schools to inspect in too short a period of time - as well as the often unreliable nature of transportation and communication between scattered rural communities, inspectors were hard-pressed to meet the demands of their job. As Inspector A.F. Matthews noted in his 1922 report: "Six schools in isolated parts of the district were not inspected, as three of these were closed temporarily on the date of visit, and the difficulties of travel and lack of time proved obstacles in the case of the others."⁵⁵ Consequently visits from the inspector were rare and frustratingly brief, usually

⁵⁴Calam, Alex Lord's British Columbia, 18.

⁵⁵AR, 1922, C33.

limited to a few hours twice, sometimes only once, a year. This was hardly sufficient time for him to gain an intimate knowledge and understanding of the precise circumstances each teacher faced, both in her school and in the local community. Mary Genier clearly remembered that when Hall came to Medora Creek to inspect the school "He didn't spend much time." On one particular occasion Lord's visit to Esma Shunter and her pupils at Shuswap Falls School was cursory to say the least:

He never went inside the school. He came at recess and we were out in the yard playing and he came over and talked to me and then he left....The only thing he talked about... - I think he used to teach school in Kelowna and he taught some of my older sisters - and all he talked about was my older sisters: Where they were and what were they doing? and then he got in his little car and drove off.⁵⁶

Many teachers also suggested that they received few practical or constructive suggestions from their inspectors on how to improve their performance in the classroom. Ila Embree's comments were fairly typical: "He just walked up and down and scared the dickens out of you and you wondered what he was thinking....[H]e didn't help me any but I got fairly good reports." Some also felt that their inspectors' reports were not very useful. Lucy McCormick recalled:

When you got your report...it was just routine...it was terrible...it didn't mean a thing....Also he usually left instructions with the teacher to approach the trustees regarding improvements. This was not an easy task, and by the time the Inspector's official report was received the term was over and his suggestions were conveniently forgotten.⁵⁷

She added indignantly: "How was any young teacher going to go and tell the trustees that they should be doing this or that. That was *his* job."

During the provincial inspector's visits his agenda was strictly administrative: to assess the pedagogical capabilities of the teacher, the academic progress of the pupils and the overall "standing" of the school. Other more personal issues were rarely addressed.

⁵⁶Lord was Principal of the Central Elementary School in Kelowna from 1910-1914. See Calam, Alex Lord's British Columbia, 4, 103-111.

⁵⁷Interview with Lucy McCormick and McCormick, "Early Rural Schools," 40.

Many inspectors seemed to express little concern, or even interest, in the life of the individual teacher outside of her professional responsibilities, surely a matter of crucial importance to a young teacher's survival in a remote school district. But as Lucy McCormick suggested, some inspectors gave her the distinct impression that "It was just a job....Sometimes it depended on what kind of person *he* was, how well he got on with [teachers] who were sort of isolated in a community." Accordingly in many instances a serious communication problem existed between inspector and the inspected in rural areas. But perhaps this was inevitable given the nature of the power relationship between the two parties. As historian John Abbott has summed up: "[M]ale inspectors, usually heads of families and well advanced in their careers, superintended a very young, inexperienced, minimally trained, and transient female teaching force."⁵⁸ Although the local school board had ultimate control over a teacher's tenure, a "poor" or "unsatisfactory" inspector's report could adversely effect a teacher's prospects of transferring to a better position in another school, could be instrumental in influencing a school board's decision to dispense with a teacher's services, or as Alice Gibson stated: "If you didn't do a good job, the Inspector might move you." Many teachers therefore found their bi-annual visits from the inspector more stressful than fruitful. Marianne Nelson reported: "I truly never felt at ease....I was nervous." It was partly for this reason that Lucy McCormick suggested that some young girls were "really almost frightened" of their inspector.

The recollections of former teachers imply that there may have been more insidious aspects to the teacher-inspector relationship and that in some cases the latter used his position of trust to take advantage of those under his supervision. Lucy McCormick contended: "There was the odd inspector who wasn't a saint by any means." Marianne Nelson, speaking from personal experience, was more explicit. She felt extremely uncomfortable in the presence of one particular inspector: "I was quite busty and he was

⁵⁸Abbott, "Accomplishing "a Man's Task", 313.

very fond of...looking down your clothes and so on, the old devil." At one point, in the early 1930s, she and a number of other female teachers decided to get together and report this individual so that "something be done about" his behaviour, which had been continuing for some years. In the end they let the matter drop, partly because they were very skeptical about whether their grievances would ever have been taken seriously but also because the man in question was within a few years of retirement. Marianne regretted that she had not taken the matter further. She also suggested that some young women teachers, fearing the loss of their job, may have had good reason to permit such otherwise unacceptable behaviour to occur: "It was such hard times that maybe a girl would do almost anything if she were destitute." In contrast the participants referred to the visits of Lottie Bowron in very different terms. To quote Lucy again: "She was very nice and...a very motherly sort of a person. She knew what to ask to find out for herself. I think probably teachers would open up to her more than they would to a man." Unfortunately Bowron's mandate did not include all female teachers but was restricted primarily to those in difficult situations. Consequently the typical rural teacher very often felt very much alone as regards professional help and support. As Alice Gibson so succinctly stated: "What do I remember about teaching in a rural school? That I was entirely on my own." Marianne Nelson reiterated Alice's sentiments almost exactly: "You were on your own. You were completely on your own." So too did Mary Genier: "The kids and I were more or less isolated....I taught them. They learned from me."

Such professional isolation meant that rural teachers welcomed the annual Teachers' Conventions.⁵⁹ Lucy McCormick reported:

⁵⁹A number of teachers' associations existed in the Okanagan in the 1920s. In 1922 the Okanagan Valley Teachers' Association, the first of its kind in the area, was formed in response to "a need...felt amongst the teachers...for more unity." A local organisation serving Armstrong, Enderby, Vernon, Lumby and Oyama was also established and called the North Okanagan Teachers' Association. See Lidstone, ed. *Schools of Enderby and District*, 64. In 1929 another association was formed to represent rural teachers working in schools further south in the Okanagan around the Kelowna area. See *AR*, 1929, R30.

I always went....That was part and parcel of our in-service training....They were very useful because they were geared to small schools, mainly because there weren't that many big schools, and from the point of view of getting to know other people...with similar problems.

Agnes Ball expressed the same opinion: "It was useful to get together and talk with other teachers." Inspectors also acknowledged the importance of these yearly meetings. For example, Hall of the Kelowna Inspectorate noted in his report for 1926 that the annual assembly of the Okanagan Valley Teachers' Association had "proved, as usual, stimulating and helpful to those attending."⁶⁰ Moreover he felt "increasingly convinced of the value of the small convention of this type [to] teachers employed in the rural districts...to exchange ideas and to help each other with classroom problems [and thus] offset the handicap under which rural teachers work."⁶¹ Held in October in either Vernon, Kelowna or Penticton, the conventions not only provided rural teachers with professional enrichment and a chance to update their knowledge and expertise in the field, but also served an important social function as well. Indeed, for many lone rural teachers the annual meeting of their local teachers' association represented their only chance for contact with colleagues. Not all of the participants reported having attended teacher conventions during the 1920s however. The cost of travelling to the central location where the meetings were held, as well as accommodation expenses for the duration of the convention, had to come out of the teachers' own pockets and were sometimes prohibitive. Moreover, to those working in very isolated communities serviced by inadequate transportation networks, the meetings were inaccessible. Many more, unfortunately, had simply been totally unaware of their occurrence.

An outsider might view the job of the rural teacher as a particularly onerous one that ostensibly offered little in the way of any recompense. However, this was not the general view of many of the former teachers interviewed. In fact in a number of cases the

⁶⁰AR, 1926, R38.

⁶¹Ibid., 1929, R30.

participant's own perspective was quite the opposite. None disputed the fact that they had endured often extremely strenuous working conditions in their rural classrooms, but, at the same time, they also made it quite plain that there had been some gratifying aspects to one-room teaching.

Being far removed from any direct supervision meant that rural teachers were, as Alice Gibson's, Marianne Nelson's and Mary Genier's comments above imply, able to exercise a considerable degree of autonomy. While there were limits to what they could achieve given the paucity of instructional resources, equipment and supplies at their disposal, as well as community expectations and their own lack of preparedness and general inexperience, and although the content of the curriculum they were required to follow was determined by the Department of Education, ultimately rural teachers were a law unto themselves in their classrooms. Bernard Gillie recalled his situation at Ellison School, which he regarded as representative of other rural districts, as one where the "community was hardly aware of what you were doing." The general attitude was: "What happens in the school is the teacher's business." Esma Shunter reported the same scenario for Shuswap Falls: "Nobody interfered....I never had anybody tell me what to do." Likewise Lucy McCormick stated that as the teacher at Mabel Lake she had been "absolutely autonomous. Nobody questioned [me] at all." With usually no principal to tell them what to do, or from whom they could seek advice, teachers in remote one-room schools had to make their own decisions and were thus in control of the daily pedagogical activities that took place in the school. They were free to set the pace of work to meet the needs of individual students, to alter their schedules if and when it suited them, or to experiment with different kinds of teaching methods to find the approach that worked best for them. In this sense some participants viewed their professional isolation as working to their benefit rather than to their detriment. Thus Janet Graham reported: "It made you responsible. You have the full responsibility of getting them through." As a young novice teacher Agnes Ball believed that teaching in a one-room school encouraged her to be "more

independent....It was a good start off for me....A good grounding is what a person needs, to jump head first into something. I think that had done me a lot of good."

Thus in contrast to their colleagues who taught in large, hierarchically structured, urban school systems, teachers posted to one-room schools in remote districts were permitted a kind of freedom in their jobs. While not all teachers may have relished the opportunity for such independence, the stories related to me by former teachers reveal that some clearly did. Lloyd Wills reported that the autonomy she had so appreciated while teacher at the one-room school in Hilton in 1925-26 was lost when she transferred to the larger graded school in Lumby where the external controls over the structure of her work were more keenly felt:

I think of all the years [23] I taught school that I enjoyed that first year the most because it was new to me and it was nice to see what I could do....I just thoroughly enjoyed it...because you could do what you wanted to do....[Later] it became a drag instead of a pleasure....All those darn red tape rules started coming in. They wouldn't let you do what you could do.

Participants also regarded the one-room school as a superior environment in which to teach in the sense of the highly personal nature of their work and their familiarity with the children they taught. Thus Lloyd Wills recalled: "I had such close contact with the pupils....It was really a pleasure." The intimate atmosphere of the small rural community fostered the development of such special relationships because, as Vera Towgood suggested: "You know all the children and you know all their homes. You know what their backgrounds are....My relationship with the pupils was close. Having so few, 11 or 12, I got to know them well." Lucy McCormick expressed a similar opinion: "This intimacy with families helped [the rural teacher] understand the emotional life of her pupils."⁶² The bonds that developed between the rural teacher and her charges were often very strong and when participants recalled their pupils they spoke with affection and warmth. Many had obviously cared very deeply for their "kids" or "little ones." Significantly, many former

⁶²McCormick, 'Early Rural Schools,' 40.

teachers depicted their relationship with their pupils with family-like metaphors. Isobel Simard's attitude was typical: "The salary never bothered me at all. I never thought about that. All I thought about was the children and getting them through their grades and helping them. They were like my own children to me." Pupils also recalled the family atmosphere of the rural school and the way in which their teachers cared for them. Amanda Singer, a former pupil of Alice Gibson's at Sugar Lake, recalled Alice in a particularly poignant way:

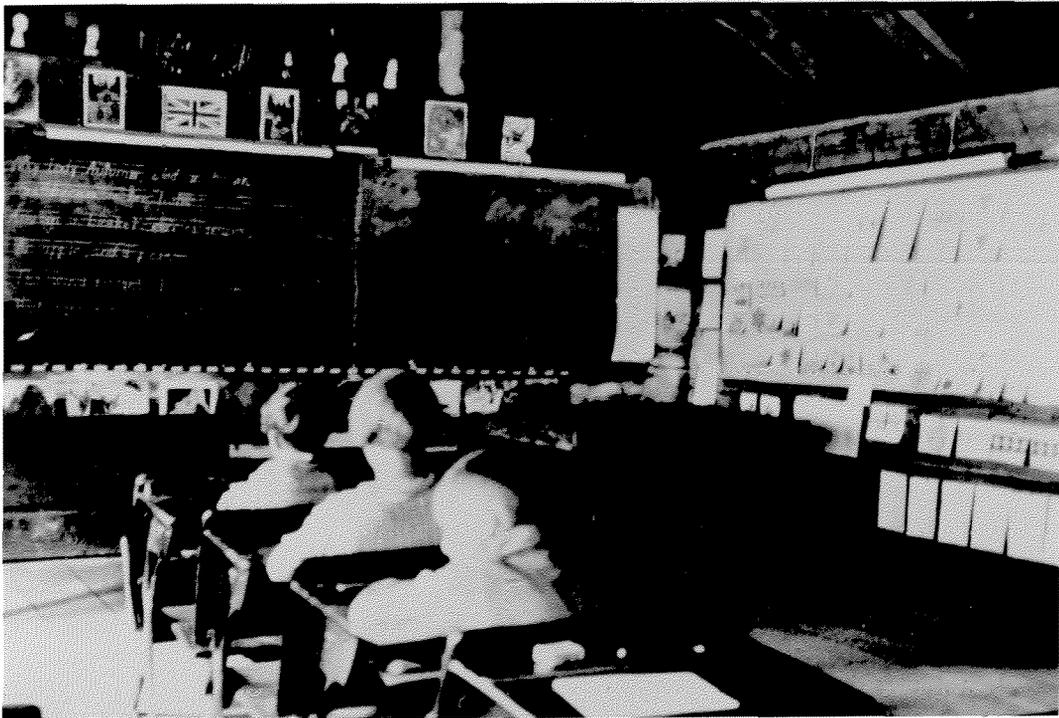
She was a really nice teacher, really nice. She was always kind [and] did everything she could to make us happy....I always felt like she was my big sister. I could talk to her about anything....That's what I really liked about her. You tell her that I just loved her and I'll never forget her.

Thus, at least for some individuals, rural teaching offered rewards that helped to offset the hardships and for this reason they enjoyed their work.



"The log school was just set down in an uneven clearing with trails to the few homes...and to the lake."

Sugar Lake School, 1926.

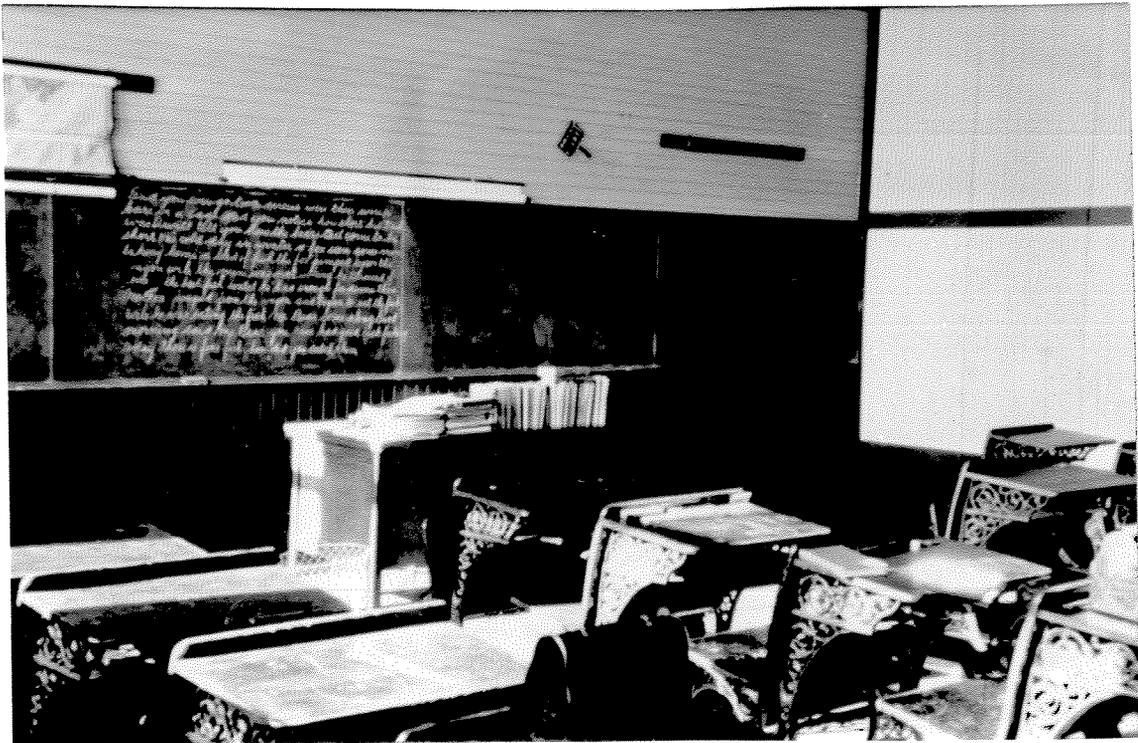


"The teacher did everything on the board....No textbooks....All our work was put up on the board."

Interior view of Sugar Lake School, 1926.



"Really excellent accommodation for a school...well equipped, pleasant, comfortable, warm - all the things that a school...should be."
Exterior and interior views of Ellison School, 1927.

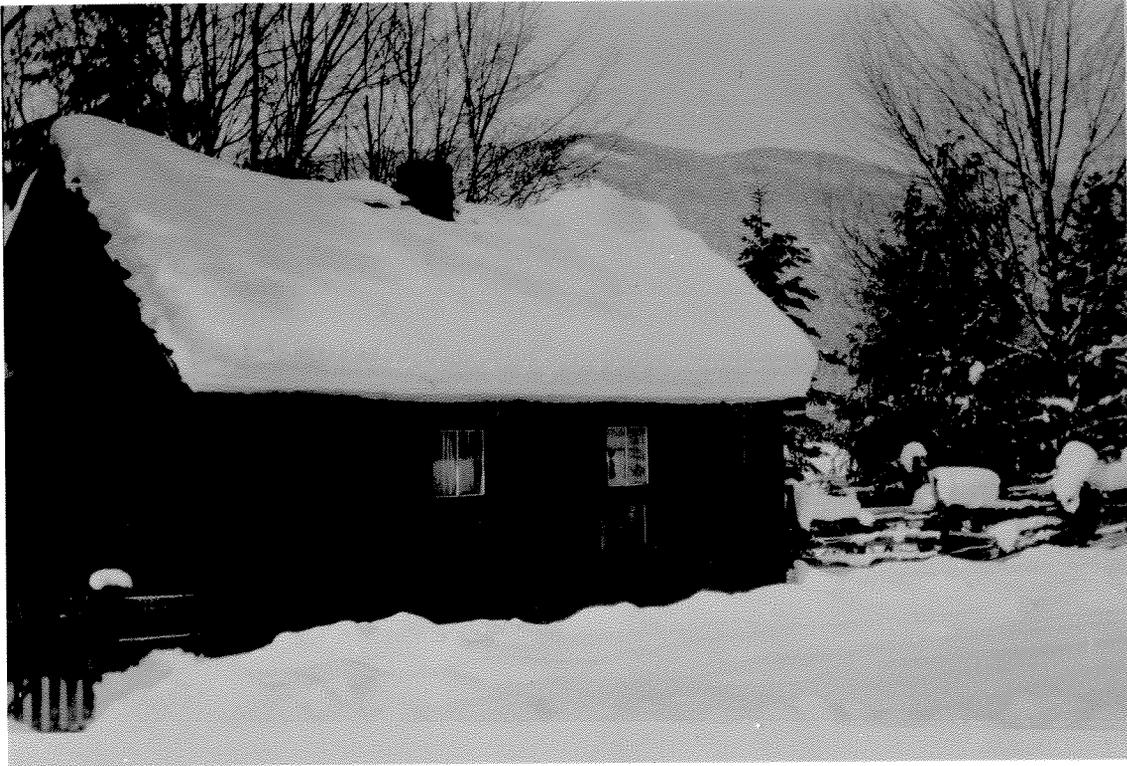




"It was a strange assortment, from a five year old girl...who could not speak English, to a fourteen year old boy who was ready for Grade 8, with either none or one or two in the grades between."
Pupils outside their school at Medora Creek, 1928.



"In quite a number of cases the children are of foreign parentage so that a good many language difficulties exist."
Vera Evans, teacher at Winfield School, with her pupils, 1929.



"I had some funny experiences in that cabin, I tell you!"
Teacherage at Mabel Lake School, 1929.



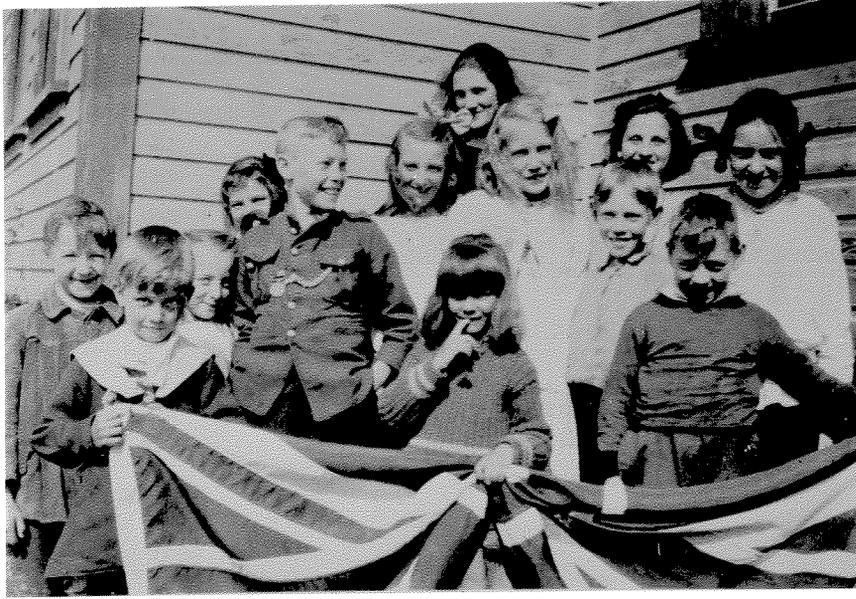
"[W]e dug out stumps to make a baseball diamond."
Mabel Lake pupils playing in school grounds, 1929.



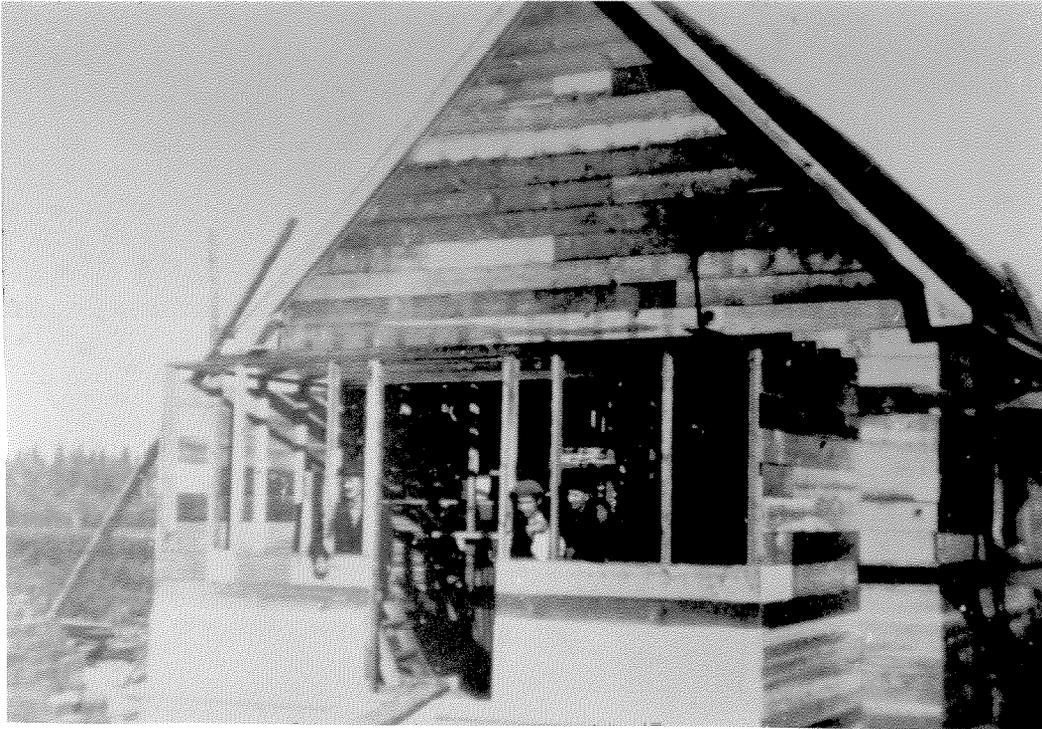
"Many teachers were not much older than their students."
 Lucy Hargreaves, teacher, with pupils at Glenrosa School, 1923.



"The means of entertainment were in our own hands....We made our own fun."
 Fancy dress party at Sugar Lake School, 1926.



"[T]he little one-roomed school...was really the center of our lives."
Pupils outside Kedleston School, 1920.



"I can recall my Dad going to work on the school...It was a volunteer project...built by the men of the district."
The construction of Springbend School, 1924.

CHAPTER EIGHT

LIVING AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS

The physical and pedagogical circumstances that rural teachers encountered in their classrooms were certainly gruelling. However, far more of a test of the individual teacher's ability to cope with the exigencies of working in a remote district was whether they were able to adapt to the prevailing social climate of the local community. To Lottie Bowron the welfare of female rural teachers rested on two main prerequisites: the availability of safe and congenial accommodation and access to a satisfactory social life. In fact, as Bowron's reports attest, where and with whom, and thus how they lived could make or break a teacher's stay in a rural community. To complete the picture of rural teacher experience in the 1920s it is therefore necessary to explore beyond their strictly professional responsibilities and activities to consider the more personal aspects of teachers' lives outside of the school house. Bearing in mind the influence of localism on teacher experience, this chapter offers a detailed look at teacher perceptions of, and attitudes towards, their social experiences in the rural districts of the Okanagan Valley. Specifically the aim is to uncover the nature and extent of teacher interaction with the local community.

First of all, a general note about the role and place of the teacher in rural communities. Only very occasionally did rural teachers live close enough to their family homes that they could remain there.¹ Rather, accepting a position as the teacher in one of

¹See for example TBR's for Bear Creek (1923) where Miss Winifred J.L. Raymer noted that she lived "at mother's home about 2¹/₂ mi. from school," South Kelowna (1928) where Alfred H. Hooper remarked: "I have been the only teacher employed by the district since the school opened six years ago and I have always boarded at home," and Glenemma (1928) where Lewis J. Botting wrote: "I live in my own home." Both Hooper and Botting lived in their own homes rather than with their parents. For a brief biographical sketch of Botting, a long-time resident of the Salmon River Valley area, who taught at Heywood's Corner School from 1920-1925 and then at Glenemma School from 1925 until he retired in 1934, see Donald W. Ferguson, "L.J. Botting - Falkland's First Teacher," *OHSR* 54(1990): 135-136. Miss Annie Fenton, who taught at Springbend School from 1925 until her retirement in 1930, also lived at home. Her family had a homestead in Springbend and when her father died he had "willed her the...house and 21 acres of land, so she lived there and drove an old Model T Ford coupe to and from the school." See *Springbend Community Recollections*, 52-53.

British Columbia's interior schools, necessitated that, *ipso facto*, the individual concerned simultaneously agreed to relocate and live in the district in which the school was situated and to endeavour to function socially as a member of the local community. While the intimate nature of rural life made teacher integration with the community all the more pertinent, at the same time the very structure and organisation of rural society, with its inherent isolation and insularity, could militate against this crucial process.

Specific community conditions varied from one district to another but a common feature of nearly all the rural settlements in the Okanagan Valley was the pervasive isolation that seemed to impinge upon almost every aspect of daily life. Geographically, most communities were located in out-of-the-way places, far away from the major towns like Vernon or Kelowna, and suffered from extremely inadequate, and often unreliable communication and transportation networks. Vera Towgood nee Evans' comments on Trinity Valley, taken from the questionnaire she submitted to the Teachers' Bureau in 1928, are typical of other one-room teachers' assessments concerning the general living conditions of the districts in which they worked: "Isolated - 15 miles from 'phone. Mail weekly from Lumby - 15 miles away." She also noted that the nearest railway station was at Enderby, twenty-two miles distant, then added "but road is little used - often impassable." The station at Vernon, over thirty-one miles away, was the only alternative. On another occasion Vera reported that what she liked "least" about teaching in isolated rural schools were the "only brief visits with my family and the distance from shopping areas and the outside world." Similarly Ida Winifred Parker, who taught at Okanagan Centre in 1928, commented that although she regarded community conditions as "good" she qualified her statement with "but impossible to leave for week-ends except by automobile - no sunday boat."² Particularly during periods of inclement weather it was often just not feasible for teachers in remote areas even to consider travelling outside their

²TBR.

immediate vicinity. Lucy McCormick recalled that while she was teaching at Mabel Lake she "didn't get out that much in the winter....The roads weren't ploughed or anything in those days. One winter I wasn't out from Christmas to Easter....I just knew I couldn't do it." Likewise Esma Shunter, who taught at Shuswap Falls, stated:

In those days you wouldn't believe the road. You couldn't get out in the Spring. At Easter when I wanted to go home [to Kelowna] for the holidays...the car couldn't go on the road [because of] the mud....The road was terrible so there was very little in the way of community get-togethers.

Thus, by force of circumstance finding themselves confined to their school districts for sometimes months at a time, rural teachers had to rely on local residents for companionship. However, as Esma's comments imply, the opportunity for social interaction within the communities in which they worked could also be limited due to the widely dispersed pattern of settlement in many districts and the difficulty of getting from one home to another. A number of teachers indicated that a common feature of many of the farming communities in the Okanagan in the 1920s were the long stretches that existed between individual homesteads. Thus in 1923 Gladys E. Walker reported that in Ewing's Landing "Homes of the pupils are scattered."³ In 1928 George E. Welbanks noted of Despard: "District quite "spread out" with few families," and Ethelwyn B. Lee described Meadow Valley as "sparsely settled."⁴ Bernard Gillie, who taught in the one-room school at Hutton Mills, a small lumber town in the north of the province, before transferring to Ellison, a predominantly tobacco-farming district, outside Kelowna, attributed the "different kind of social structure" he found at the latter location to the economic base of the community:

Being an agricultural community [Ellison was] much more scattered. There isn't the close association that you get in a company town like Hutton Mills where everybody lives next door. The whole thing was on ten acres, I guess. It creates a different atmosphere when everybody is living as a group, in and out of one

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

another's houses and all the rest of it. In an agricultural community that's not so. Your next door neighbour lives half a mile down the road.

The majority of rural settlements in the Okanagan in the 1920s were family-based rather than community-based. Moreover, as far as most of the small, indigent, subsistence farms that proliferated throughout the valley were concerned, the family economy continued as the predominant form of economic organisation. Accordingly, up until 1930 a pioneer-style way of life was still much in evidence in the Okanagan and so many teachers worked in extremely impoverished communities. Ruby Lidstone nee Drasching described Grandview Bench, a small mixed farming district in the north Okanagan, where she taught in 1928, as a "rather struggling community...of English nationality."⁵ In the same way Aileen M. Halford reported in 1923 that the circumstances in Hilton, a farming and ranching area, east of Vernon, were "not of high standard" and "not such as to induce prosperity."⁶ Five years later the general standard of living in the district had not changed. P. Evaline Scott, teacher at the school in 1928, remarked: "It isn't very good, too many foreigners here who are very poor."⁷

The repercussions of these circumstances on teacher experience were significant. The long hours and physically demanding nature of farm work meant that, for those trying to wrest a bare living from the land, socialising was a rare luxury, and definitely not a priority. Moreover, when families did take time to relax they tended to keep to themselves, especially in winter. Lloyd Wills recalled that while she was teaching at Hilton School in 1925-26 she had little contact, in terms of recreation, with the community:

I didn't have much [of] a social life [because] there weren't that many families around to do very much at that time....People were busy, clearing the land and getting soil ready for gardens and all this sort of thing, and looking after their stock....You're doing something all the time if you are a rancher. There isn't much rest.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

It was perhaps for similar reasons that Mary Gemmell wrote of the community in Salmon Bench in 1923: "Ranches are poor & there are not many comforts....There is practically no social activity in this district."⁸

Compounding the geographical isolation and extreme poverty of the communities in which the majority of rural teachers worked was the fact that many were also very small. Lydia Hayes, teacher at Seymour Arm, located at the northern tip of the study area in a tiny trapping, wood-cutting and small scale farming area, described the community in 1923 thus: "This place, at present, is almost deserted."⁹ In this context a number of participants even questioned the use of the term "community" as an accurate representation of their school districts. Thus Mary Genier, referring to Medora Creek, stated: "It wasn't a community...just three families." Likewise Alice Gibson recalled that at Sugar Lake: "There was really no community - just a few scattered log cabins in the woods." Janet Graham, who taught at Shuswap Falls School in 1923, reported: "There wasn't any community. There was just this farmhouse."

Given such seclusion, and in order to ensure their professional and personal survival, it was imperative that rural teachers establish, and then strive to maintain, amicable relations with the residents of their communities. They were obliged to accept the specific circumstances they encountered, and, to the best of their abilities, conform to local priorities. Alice Gibson firmly believed that: "You *had* to be one of *them*." This was often not an easy task, especially in cases where the teacher's social background, religious orientation, personal standards and general outlook on life did not coincide with that of the community, particularly the "powers that be" who ran the school. Rural teachers worked in a very small world where local control over education was in the hands of a group of people who were themselves products of the rural environment, elected into the position by

⁸Ibid.

⁹Ibid.

virtue of their ranking within local social hierarchies. The members of the school board, more often than not parents of pupils, were essentially non-professionals with little knowledge or experience outside the local community. Whether they may, or may not, have been supportive of the teacher, their first allegiance was usually to the local ratepayers to whom they were accountable. Many participants emphasised how important it had been for them to remain on good terms with the "main people" in the rural communities in which they had taught. Agnes Ball suggested that it was essential for rural teachers not to "impose" themselves on the community:

Listen to other people's views and always listen to the people in the place where you go. Don't go in there just qualified and thinking you know it all. *Never* do that....Go in there with an open mind and listen to what the main people say.

The position of the teacher in rural districts could be further complicated by the fact that some communities suffered from internal divisions. Mary Genier reported that in Medora Creek "the kids got along fine" whereas the parents "didn't communicate at all." Likewise in Ashton Creek, Belle McGauley, teacher at the school in 1928, noted: "The people around here are very friendly themselves, but they cannot seem to pull together. There is a continual feeling of opposition in the air."¹⁰ Often the cause of a rift in the community was political in origin. Lucy McCormick recalled that at Mabel Lake "there were frictions between the Conservatives and Liberals. The families were split." Sometimes the lack of communication between the different families in a community, such as in East Kelowna, was based on class. Laura Alcock reported:

Up in East Kelowna we had a very, very definite class distinction among the people. There were the lower benches and the upper benches. The lower benches were considered just the ordinary types. Up on the upper benches were people that came from the Old Country with lots of money....They never mingled. They just kept in their own little cliques.

In these circumstances rural teachers had to use exceptional tact to negotiate their way through the often very complex affairs of the families they dealt with. As Lucy

¹⁰Ibid.

McCormick argued: "I think that in isolated communities [teachers] had to learn diplomacy very fast....It was a question of how to get along." Neutrality was their best strategy as favouring any one faction or family in a community could prove a rural teacher's downfall. Community disunity could adversely affect the quality of life of the rural teacher in other ways. Thus in 1928 Jennie M. Richards wrote of the Salmon Bench district: "Not a very good community spirit, so very little social life." Esma Shunter expressed similar sentiments about Shuswap Falls: "There was just no community feeling...nothing went on in the community."

The role and status of teachers in rural communities was almost wholly dependent on the attitudes of the local residents. However, sealed off in their remote settlements, rural inhabitants often retained very insular attitudes. Such parochialism could make it difficult for the teacher to become an accepted member of the community. In trying to adapt to the very real isolation and loneliness of life in country districts, rural teachers also had to come to grips with the fact that although they might live *in* the local community, they were, in many respects, clearly not *of* it, and thus were often, as one historian has suggested, considered as a "stranger outsider."¹¹ Laura Alcock, a former pupil at Mission Creek School, suggested why teachers might have been viewed in this way:

The teacher was seen as different. [She] wore different clothes. You would think of her as a city person [with] fancy sort of clothes and fancy boots and all that sort of thing....There was a certain fear of the school teacher. She was sort of on a pedestal.

Some teachers indicated that they too had been keenly aware of their situations. Mary Genier recalled: "I think [the people in Medora Creek] thought I was a little bit wild, but I wasn't. I was just different from them." Ila Embree voiced a similar opinion about her experience as the teacher in Kedleston: "They must have got a joke when I went up there. I dressed differently. I was so different from them." By virtue of their education and social

¹¹Ben Eklov, Russian Peasant Schools: Officialdom, Village Culture, and Popular Pedagogy, 1861-1914 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 16.

background, teachers who went to work in small backwoods communities often found themselves treated as outlanders, even intruders in some cases, and as the representatives of the larger world of education emanating from Victoria. At times, as Stortz has suggested, they "must have exuded an almost alien urban presence, an academic in an overwhelmingly working class milieu."¹² Being the "teacher" could also hinder the development of close relationships because community members often failed to look beyond the role to the person. Teacher acceptance in rural areas was also, usually, a function of time. Bernard Gillie cut right to the heart of the issue when he said:

It's very difficult to become [part of a community] largely because teachers tend to be transient....Many [rural] teachers...never really got their roots down into a community....Especially in agricultural communities, it takes years to establish yourself as a *real* member of the community.

At the same time, rural teachers stood at the head of the principal, and frequently the only, social institution in remote settlements, as former pupil Eric McCaul's verdict on Deep Creek clearly illustrates: "There was no community life there at all. Just the school." Vera Towgood offered the same scenario for Trinity Valley: "I don't know that they did much as a community except for the school because there wasn't anything else there."¹³ In this context rural teachers occupied a central place in their local communities. In the minds of most rural residents the term "school" held much wider connotations than merely the physical structure in which their children spent their days. Rather "school" indicated a complex system of interpersonal relations between the teacher, her pupils and the community, both in the schoolhouse and in the community at large. Teachers had to learn very quickly what was required of them as their success was largely determined by how well they measured up to community expectations. Failure to do so could result in harsh criticism, and even ostracism in extreme cases.

¹²Stortz, "The Rural School Problem," 114.

¹³See Chapter Four of this thesis for a discussion of the importance of the school in rural communities.

Participants recounted the many demands made of them. In addition to their professional responsibilities rural teachers were also looked to as role models for their students and as a moral example to the community in general. Lucy McCormick indignantly reported : "Not in rural schools, you didn't have your own life! Good gracious, if you'd had a drink it would have been something else....Everybody else was drinking but not the school teacher." The image projected by rural teachers was critical. They were presumed to be nothing less than paragons of virtue. Under constant community scrutiny of both their professional and personal activities, rural teachers, as one participant shrewdly suggested, "practically lived in a fishbowl environment." Moreover, it was often taken for granted that the teacher could be relied upon to offer wise counsel on a wide variety of subjects and was often pressured into organising community events when necessary. Lucy McCormick recalled:

Things were referred to me to ask my opinion...and I would say in most cases the teacher in the rural community had a great deal of influence...because she probably had a little more education than the rest and they thought she should know the answers....[I was] much in demand regarding big decisions. I helped figure out the volume of water to construct a small hydro-electric plant....[T]hey expected me to do all sorts of things *because* I was the teacher. If they decided they were going to have some kind of entertainment, I would have to run the entertainment.

Alice Gibson reported a similar situation at Sugar Lake: "[T]he only thing there that was done together at all was something to do with the school and I would have something to do with that." Teachers often found that the community judged them as much by the quantity and quality of their non-teaching activities and as by their work inside the classroom.

Living up to community expectations clearly put rural teachers under a great deal of stress. At the very least it meant that their role as teacher spilled right over into the social life of the community and that the boundaries between their public and private lives were blurred. The life of the teacher and that of the school were woven together as an integral part of the very texture of rural society. As Alice Gibson stated: "Everything was of one piece and the schooling went along with the living and existing...and keeping nature away

from the front door." Thus, ultimately, rural teachers found themselves in the contradictory position of being central figures in communities of which they were never truly a part.

Of immense importance to the quality of life of teachers working in isolated districts were their board and lodging arrangements. However it is apparent that when it came to finding a suitable place to live rural teachers had little say in the matter. In most instances it was quite simply beyond their control.¹⁴ Often the decision was made long before they arrived in the district and was usually based on local custom and availability. When questioned about the degree of choice she had been able to exercise in deciding where to live in Hupel, where she had been offered the job of teacher at the school in 1925, Marianne Nelson replied: "None. I "boarded" where former teachers had." In the same way Mary Genier, referring to Medora Creek, reported: "All the teachers boarded at the Schunter's. You had no choice. You went there and that was it." Esma Shunter recalled that at Shuswap Falls: "There was no other place to stay....They were the only ones that had a house big enough." Lucy McCormick, who lived in a teacherage at Mabel Lake, stated: "I *had* to live in the cabin." Although, in the event, rural teachers may not have approved of the accommodation offered to them, Bernard Gillie suggested that it was "wise" to accept the community's decision because "rejection" could result in unwelcome "hostility" and "enmity" from the parties concerned.

The specific living conditions experienced by teachers in individual school districts reflected local circumstances and attitudes and were, as a result, extremely diverse, both in terms of type and quality. Participants reported a wide range of accommodation situations as they moved from one school to another. The majority of teachers "boarded" in the homes of local residents, an arrangement that proffered certain advantages but also entailed

¹⁴Miss Lily J. Owen, teacher at Okanagan School in 1923 appears to have been an exception. Objecting to the fifty dollar a month cost of boarding in her school district of Benvoulin she chose instead to live at some distance from the school to get cheaper lodgings: "As the distance from Kelowna to Okanagan School is only three miles, I found it much better to cycle each day and board in Kelowna where board is far more reasonable than nearer the school. Since Sept. 1921 I have only boarded in Benvoulin about twelve weeks." See TBR.

some distinct drawbacks. On the one hand it meant prepared meals and some companionship that helped alleviate at least some of the rural teacher's feelings of isolation. Some communities obviously provided very satisfactory lodging arrangements for the teacher. Thus in 1923 Charlotte E. Simpson, teacher at Glenemma, wrote of her circumstances: "Present boarding place - excellent," and in 1928 Olive Grace White described the home in which she lived in Mission Creek as "very good and close to school."¹⁵ Marianne Nelson, who taught in a number of schools in the Okanagan, reported: "I was lucky. I always had nice boarding places." Other teachers were content but not overly enthusiastic. Ruby Drasching wrote that the facilities at Grandview Bench in 1928 were "Plain but rather comfortable," and George E. Welbanks assessed Despard's offering in 1923 as "Fairly convenient; quite satisfactory."¹⁶

Typically circumstances were far from ideal. In some rural districts the teacher soon realised that her value to the community was judged not just in terms of her teaching skills, but also in dollars. Friction over where the teacher lived was a common occurrence, particularly in impoverished subsistence farming communities where the teacher's boarding costs, which averaged thirty to thirty-five dollars in most districts in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920s,¹⁷ might represent the sole family income for those who boarded her. Sometimes teachers were forced to move from one boarding place to another as the circumstances of those with whom they lived changed.¹⁸ While teaching at Hupel School Marianne Nelson had to transfer from her original living quarters when the wife of the married couple who

¹⁵TBR.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Interestingly female teachers paid less than males for their board in some school districts. See for example TBRs for 1928 for Oyama High and Winfield. The reason for this discrepancy is unclear. Did women eat less than men? A more likely explanation was that female teachers, as some former pupils reported, helped out with the household chores in the homes where they boarded. This contribution may have been taken into account when assessing their boarding fee.

¹⁸See Chapter Five of this thesis, pages 182-184, for an extreme example where a teacher had to move four times over a single school year.

boarded her died. Likewise Agnes Ball found that she had to move on from her boarding place in Joe Rich Valley when the family with whom she lodged invited an elderly relative to stay and allotted the visitor Agnes' bedroom! When the people with whom Alice Gibson had lived for three years in Sugar Lake moved away, Alice had to make alternative arrangements: "I boarded at a logging camp, eating with the men...in the cookhouse...and sleeping in a little log cabin."

The general poverty afflicting most rural settlements in the district meant that teachers sometimes found the physical condition of their boarding places hard to take, although, as the recollections recounted here suggest, most seemed to accept their situations as being a necessary part of the rural teaching experience. Almost certainly the buildings in which they lived would be frugal with few, usually no modern conveniences. Quite often, too, teachers were expected to live in log structures that were decrepit and ill-kept, sometimes unfinished, poorly insulated and thus cold, damp, and uncomfortable. Lloyd Wills' description of her accommodation in the community at Hilton was fairly typical:

In the winter in my house...where I boarded [I would] wake up in the morning and find an inch, or an inch and a half of frost along the edge of [my] blanket....The window would be frosted over. And they didn't have taps and hot and cold water in the house...and no electric light...just lanterns and lamps and the big basin and the big jug for water....[T]he whole water jug [would be] frozen solid in the morning when you woke up because the house wasn't finished yet....There were big, large cracks between the logs.

Although Janet Graham experienced similar conditions in her first year teaching at Ewing's Landing she accepted the physical hardship as a matter of course:

It was a chilly little room I had. On cold, cold mornings the frost would come through the seams of the wood and be white on the inside. I once had my hot water bottle frozen at the end of my bed....But that didn't bother me. I was a good sport, and I was used to, as they say, "taking things as she found them."

Alice Gibson recalled of her boarding place at Sugar Lake:

Of course, the plumbing was out of doors....All the toilets were outside. If you wanted to have a bath you [had it] after everyone else had gone to bed...in a great big flat sort of a tub thing beside the stove in the living room.

But, like Janet, when asked if she found such primitive conditions a problem Alice replied: "No, because everybody up there lived that way."

Boarding also posed difficulties for rural teachers in a social sense. Bernard Gillie pointed out that gossip could be a very real problem for new teachers trying to "establish" themselves as a member of the local community:

You have to be...very careful what you say....People will repeat what you said. If at the dinner table you say...something like "Billy Smith was a ...two-headed little hyena this afternoon...and I boxed his ears," well that's all round the community by the banshee telegraph in no time, and it doesn't earn you any Brownie points, believe me. You have to [use] discretion to establish yourself.

A number of participants also raised the issue of the meals provided by their hosts. In most cases teachers merely complained of the "monotony" of the culinary fare offered them. Others, particularly those boarding with foreign families, were shocked at the food they were expected to consume, but nevertheless felt obliged to accept it for fear of appearing ungrateful, and therefore possibly alienating the family in question. Janet Graham recalled that at Shuswap Falls she was given "a slice of venison for breakfast, venison in our sandwiches and I don't know *what* we came home to. And on Sunday" she added despondently, "for a great treat you had these salted Kokanee from the creek!" At Medora Creek Mary Genier boarded with a German family. Often breakfast consisted of "meat and potatoes and sauerkraut - a great big feast in the morning." It was not to Mary's liking: "To this day I just *hear* the word sauerkraut and [I feel squeamish]. There was too much of it." Likewise Marianne Nelson recalled: "Sometimes the lunches were odd. One place where I went to, this lady didn't know how to make lunches too well. She [gave me] prune sandwiches. I couldn't eat them [but] foolishly left them in my lunch kit and it hurt her feelings for weeks." Agnes Ball experienced similar problems. She explained that at one particular boarding place "the woman didn't know how to cook. I was either constipated or starving to death....I would stay at the school after school was over, get my work all done, and then make it as late as possible to get home *just* after dinner time."

Rural teachers seldom had any privacy if they boarded with a family. In this context the problems teachers experienced often stemmed from the fact that there were children living in the house. Some teachers preferred not to board with the parents of their pupils because they disliked the intrusion into their personal affairs. Ila Embree, who taught at Kedleston, was relieved that the home in which she boarded was occupied exclusively by adults: "You don't want to board with a lot of kids....You don't want them involved in your private life." This may also have been precisely the reason why Blanche H. Duclos, teacher at Reiswig School in 1923, was content with her living arrangements. She wrote: "The teacher's boarding place is very pleasant, no children."¹⁹

The presence of children also invariably meant that in the evenings there was no quiet place for teachers to correct books and prepare lessons for the next day. Often the room allotted to the teacher was small and lacked a desk. Certainly during the winter it would be too cold to use as a study. It must also be remembered that the vast majority of rural schools had no lighting and so teachers were unable to remain at school after dusk. Some teachers even had to share sleeping quarters with their pupils. At Medora Creek Mary Genier slept in a little two-roomed cabin that was attached to the main house of the people who boarded her. She had one room and the three female children of the family slept in the other. One teacher, Anna Thorlakson, who taught at Kedleston School between 1918 and 1920, clearly did not like boarding with her pupils and so set out to persuade the school board to improve her living arrangements:

They were apparently not particularly happy years for her. She lived with a family who had children attending the school and found the arrangement not at all satisfactory. At her suggestion...a small two roomed teacherage was constructed in 1920 attached to the rear of the school. This contained a wood burning stove with one hot plate and very little else. The teacherage was to be available to the teacher at no cost but he or she was to supply all the amenities.²⁰

¹⁹TBR.

²⁰Hughes, "The Kedleston Story," 9. Not all teacherages were provided rent-free.

Teacherages were provided by a number of school boards and were usually conveniently located on the school grounds or at least in the near vicinity. Some, like that at Kedleston, even adjoined the school house itself.²¹ Teacherages offered those who lived in them a certain degree of privacy and a means of avoiding any local feuding that might occur over the income from their boarding fee. Thus in 1920 the trustees of South Okanagan School recognised the "pressing need...for an official residence" which they considered would enable the teacher to "take that position of social independence which the importance of her office demands." They issued a clear warning to the ratepayers of the district:

[U]nless some provision [is] made to overcome present conditions, it w[ill] be impossible to secure or to retain the services of the type of woman that we are anxious to get - a woman of strength of character, decision, and ideas of her own & driving force sufficient to carry them out, a woman who w[oul]d be the last kind of individual...to allow her private & domestic affairs to be permanently at the mercy of any ratepayers who chose to offer to take the teacher in.²²

A "Pleasant 4-room cottage" was constructed and provided "rent free" to the teacher. Not surprisingly Winifred MacGregor, teaching at the school in 1923, described her living conditions as "excellent."²³

However, living in a teacherage might also be a harrowing experience, especially for the young teacher away from home for the first time. Providing basic amenities such as food, heating, and lighting, as well as water for drinking, cooking, bathing and washing clothes could prove to be a substantial challenge for those unused to fending for themselves. The teacherage also presented problems of a more maleficent nature, both real and imagined. Possible encounters with wild animals and the threat of unwelcome male intruders with suspect intensions could unnerve, and even endanger, the teacher living

²¹See TBR for Trinity Creek (1928) in which the teacher, Eldred K. Evans, noted that his accommodation consisted of an "Unfurnished teacherage 11' x 19' on end of school." See also IR for October 17, 1927.

²²School District #23, Kelowna, South Okanagan Public School, Minutes of Meetings, October 27, 1920.

²³TBR.

alone. It required an individual of some fortitude to cope with the solitary existence that these isolated domiciles imposed upon their tenants. Lucy McCormick was one such individual.

For the four years she taught at Mabel Lake School - November 1929 to June 1933 - Lucy had no choice of accommodation but to rent, for five dollars a month, a two-roomed teacherage located approximately 800 metres from her school house.²⁴ She recalled: "At first my mother was a bit horrified at the fact that I was going to live by myself in a cabin." Mabel Lake was Lucy's first teaching post and initially, like her mother, she found the prospect of living in a teacherage somewhat daunting."But," she added, "I managed all right." In many respects Lucy was quite fortunate. Although the cabin was sparsely furnished it had a pot-bellied heater in the bedroom and a stove for cooking and so was "quite comfortable, really." Moreover, the owners of the cabin provided Lucy with wool comforters for her bed and also took care of her bedlinen. She had to cater to all her other needs herself however. Obtaining water was sometimes a real problem, particularly in the winter: "I had to carry water from the creek and [it] froze so hard that...I had to get into a beaver dam in order to get water." With no local stores Lucy had to send to Lumby, seventeen miles away, for supplies. She made an arrangement with the driver of the mail stage that travelled through Mabel Lake to Lumby on Friday mornings. Lists of her requirements were delivered to the butcher, grocer, drugstore, etc. in Lumby and then delivered back to her via the returning stage on Friday evenings.

Lucy implied, however, that living alone in the "cabin" could have been a potentially frightening experience. She recounted stories of the "very odd characters" that she came into contact with at Mabel Lake, of the local young men who took great delight in trying to intimidate the "new" teacher by playing "tricks" on her, and the fact that she often

²⁴For a photograph of the teacherage that existed at Mabel Lake in the 1920s see page 251 of this thesis.

saw cougar roaming the district. As she stated: "I had some funny experiences in that cabin, I tell you!" She recalled that on one particular evening she was alone in the cabin preparing work for the next day when there was a knock at the door: "I opened the door a little bit, in the dark, and this hand came out...with all blood running out of it...and all I could see was his two eyes and all this beard and he said, 'Isaac sent you this.' It was some fresh liver." The visitor had been the brother of a local farmer who thought that Lucy might appreciate the offer of some fresh meat. It had been an innocent encounter that Lucy had found amusing - "I thought it was funny" - but she speculated that a person of a more nervous disposition might have been "frightened to death" and that the situation would have "scared the wits out of her." Lucy also suggested that baiting or harassing the unsuspecting teacher was a common past-time in rural districts and that Mabel Lake was no exception. On one occasion some of the local young men at Mabel Lake, in an attempt to intimidate Lucy, tied a violin string to the screen of one of the cabin's windows and used a bow to make a sound like a "wild banshee." She was unperturbed. Realising the prank she decided to retaliate by chasing the offenders away with a "toy sword" left over from a school concert. Her ploy was effective. In spite of all this Lucy emphasised that she was never "depressed" at Mabel Lake. She explained why she "never had any fear at all" about living alone in an remote community:

I was pretty self sufficient when I think of myself at that time. I'd been brought up that way, to sort of depend on myself. That's my personality....The fact that I had grown up in a rural community helped me understand the situation and make do with the bare minimum of supplies....I didn't feel badly about [the isolation]. I didn't feel "Oh, I can't hardly wait to get out of here." I didn't feel that at all because where my parents lived [in Lumby] was pretty well as isolated.

Other teachers at Mabel Lake had not fared so well. The previous incumbent, Duncan P. Clark, appointed in September 1929, resigned after only two months. While his short tenure at the school can be partly attributed to certain professional difficulties he

experienced, Lucy is convinced that he also fell prey to local aggravation: "They smoked him right out....They put wet sacks down the chimney....He quit I guess."²⁵

Some communities appeared to make little effort as far as to provide the teacher with somewhere to live. Thus in 1928 Mr F.L. Irwin noted that in Rutland lodging facilities were "Difficult to procure in private family."²⁶ Likewise Miss M.W. Lang, teacher at Joe Rich Valley in April 1923, lamented:

Very difficult to get good board and accommodations....There is no settled place for teacher to board. Have had much difficulty myself and altho' I have [had] fairly good accommodation since Feb. 1 this may not be available next term and teacher will have difficulties.²⁷

However, the alternatives to boarding with a family or living in a teacherage were limited. Some teachers ended up living in hotels. The fact that there was "very little co-operation" between the parents and herself may have explained why Christine Kearne lived in the "Strand Hotel" in Okanagan Landing in 1923.²⁸ Miss A.G. Brown described facilities in Sicamous thus: "Very little choice (2 hotels)....From \$40 up." As Miss Brown's comments imply hotel accommodation could be expensive. Thus Agnes Blackberg, who also taught at Sicamous, had to pay sixty-five dollars a month to live in the local hotel, an amount that was double the average cost of boarding and just over sixty percent of her monthly income of \$108.²⁹

"Batching" was the only other option. This was an arrangement whereby teachers were expected to find their own accommodation, usually in one of the derelict buildings to be found scattered about the local area. Lydia Hayes noted that the boarding arrangements

²⁵See IR, October 3, 1929, and also Chapter Seven of this thesis, page 207.

²⁶TBR.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid., 1928, 1923.

for the teacher in Seymour Arm in 1923 were "(poor) unless one is willing to batch." She chose the latter: "I was able to secure a cottage and begin housekeeping."³⁰ Five years later Miss Hayes was teaching at Salmon Valley School. Once again she was unable to arrange for a satisfactory place to board and so had to batch. On this occasion her problems stemmed from the obstinacy of the school trustees:

There are a number of good boarding places in the next district but my sc[hool] b[oard] made a restriction that [the] teacher had to live in their district and as there wasn't a suitable boarding place near the school I rented an abandoned home nearby.³¹

For some teachers the prospect of batching must have been a worrisome proposition. Particularly for those newly arrived in a district, and thus unfamiliar with the general layout of the local territory, the job of finding a roof over their heads was most probably the cause of a good deal of stress. Such facilities were also invariably of poor quality and sometimes makeshift, usually extremely limited and by no means guaranteed to be found near the school. Howard Daniel, teacher at Trinity Valley in 1923, insinuated that the school may not have been a suitable posting for female teachers because of the distance they would have to travel between their living quarters and the school house. He noted that accommodation in the district was "O.K. for male....Necessary for a female teacher to walk two miles. Plenty of shacks for "batching" purposes for men."³² In the same way Reuben Nesbitt warned in 1928 that Ecclestone School "would be almost impossible for a lady teacher on account of board facilities." He described his accommodation as "Poor, unsatisfactory...almost batching."³³ In contrast at least one female teacher deliberately chose to batch. When Janet Graham first began teaching at Ewing's Landing in 1924 she

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

boarded quite happily with a local family. However when the opportunity to rent a small shack on the lakeshore arose she jumped at the chance. It gave her privacy and independence and a place of her own to which she could invite her mother from Kelowna to stay. Janet, much like Lucy McCormick, expressed no apprehensions about living alone:

My life in my "cabin"? I loved it! freedom! I lifted my water needs from the lake daily! My outdoor toilet was on the hillside behind the cottage - yes, chilly in winter....My food was my responsibility - 1qt. of fresh cold milk from [a local farm] daily. Vegetables from store at wharf [as well as] eggs bread, butter....[F]ish from the lake. I had a rowboat & went fishing when I needed. Meat? rarely or canned. My dear mother spent a month or more with me, and loved it all & did some good cooking....There wasn't a chance of a stranger in the world. I knew everyone....I loved the rural areas. I certainly never sought a city. I wouldn't have been happy in a city....I really was country.

Walking between their living quarters and the school house and then back again each day, or indeed anywhere alone in the local area, was a concern for rural teachers. Most merely emphasised that the journey could be strenuous because of the distance and/or the poor terrain over which they had to travel, particularly during periods of inclement weather. Ila Embree stated that she "hated" the climate in the winter while she taught at Kedleston School. She boarded over a mile and a half from the schoolhouse and found the steep uphill walk very trying at times: "I waded through snow lots of times." For Isobel Simard, as teacher at Kingfisher School in the fall of 1927, getting to school was also treacherous. Due to a flash flood in the area she explained that "the creek rose and the bridge washed out. So we felled a tree across the creek and I had to walk across with the water roaring right below." The following spring the same situation occurred and Isobel "was obliged to walk on windfalls over deep water through the woods to get to school."³⁴ Whereas Alice Gibson had but a short walk to school each day from her boarding place in Sugar Lake, some of her pupils lived out in the bush on the opposite side of the lake to the school house. Each morning Alice would take a small rowing boat across the lake to collect

³⁴Lidstone, ed. Schools of Enderby and District, 103.

the children so that they could attend classes. At the end of the school day she made the return journey to deliver the children home again.

Other teachers recalled that on occasion they had faced both frightening and potentially dangerous situations. Wild animals were responsible for most of the fearful encounters. Sightings of skunks, chipmunks, rats and deer were commonplace occurrences for rural teachers and for the most part posed no problem. Cougars and bears were a totally different matter. A number of former teachers had vivid memories of what could have been fatal incidents. Lloyda Wills recalled one "rather startling" encounter with a "grizzly" on the way home to her boarding place in Hilton one late afternoon:

I was walking neatly along just past the school and I turned sideways...and here was a bear standing up. And he was huge, he was big...he stood right up on his hind feet. My books went in one direction and I ran all the way back to the school as fast as I could. It wasn't that far but I could hear the little trees snapping and it seemed to me that he was coming after me....I ran into the school house, slammed the door shut, not that that would have been much help if he had been after me...but it seemed safe at the time. I guess I waited there for about fifteen to twenty minutes before I realised it [the bear] was going in the other direction down the bank through the bushes and across the creek. So I ventured out again, picked up my scribblers and...ran the rest of the way [home].

While teaching at Trinity Valley School Vera Evans had a similar near-encounter, but in her case it was with a cougar. She recalled: "I had a horse to ride and explored the area through the woods on logging roads...and both my horse and I had some scary moments." One weekend she had decided to visit her brother who was teaching at Trinity Creek. As he lived quite a distance "through the backwoods" Vera rode her "trusty horse." However on sighting a cougar she recalled that "my horse pricked up his ears, became excited and refused to go further. Suddenly [he] leaped forward, nearly throwing me off, and flew down the road helter skelter....Was I glad that I hadn't been left on the road with the unknown terror."

Female rural teachers were also very much aware that by walking unaccompanied along deserted and isolated foot paths they faced the possibility of being the subject of an

attack of a very different sort. Interestingly, few of the former teachers interviewed seemed to take this threat very seriously. Marianne Nelson reported:

I had to have a guard in 1929...when I walked home alone because [a] teacher had been murdered in Port Essington....When this came about any young girl teaching in an out-of-the-way place shouldn't walk home alone.³⁵

The person appointed as Marianne's "body guard" was one of her pupils, a grade three girl who was also one of the children in the family with whom she boarded, and who in the event turned out to be of little use to Marianne in terms of protection. The first time they saw a cougar the child fled in fear leaving Marianne to walk the rest of the way home on her own. Marianne, unimpressed by the service provided by the young sentinel, decided that since she felt quite content to do so, she would go back to traveling to and from school alone. If anyone in an official capacity was to ask her why she did so her stock answer was: "There are quite a few wild animals here but no wild men!" She also questioned why it was only considered necessary for female rural teachers to be chaperoned on the journey back from school at the end of the day: "They didn't think there were any lechers walking the roads at eight o'clock in the morning!" Similarly, Esma Shunter, who taught at Shuswap Falls, recalled:

There had been some teacher molested...and there was a rule saying that the teacher could not stay in school after the last child had left....The farm [where I boarded] was down in the valley...and to get [there] you had to go up a very steep hill. You couldn't do that on a bicycle. So you really had to walk and I think a lot of the girls [other female teachers] were probably afraid to walk, especially in the wintertime when it gets dark early.

Like Marianne she felt no need of any protection but complied with the "rule" anyway: "I had Mischief [a dog]. He was just as good as a man anyday. He'd scare the pants off anybody."

³⁵Marianne was referring to the murder of Miss Loretta Chisholme, teacher in the one-room school at Port Essington, near Prince Rupert, in May 1926. For details on the case, which remained unsolved, see Wilson, "'I Am Here to Help If You Need Me'," 105, and footnote 50.

The recollections of former teachers underscore the fact that, living arrangements aside, a most important component of the experience of working in remote rural communities, and one that had a profound influence on their sense of personal well-being, was the need for a fulfilling social life. While the majority felt that, given the rigorous nature of their professional commitments, the opportunity to indulge in recreational pursuits was essential, in some instances a heavy workload left rural teachers with little time. Especially in the case of novices, it sometimes precluded the possibility of an active social schedule. Thus Lloyd Wills recalled the year she spent at Hilton School:

I didn't have much time for a social life...because I had too much work to do, even with just my eleven pupils...I had quite a few books to mark all the time, lessons to set for the next day. I worked as long as I could at the school correcting books every day and what I didn't get finished I'd take home with me at night...I never went around visiting very much because I never had time...because I was the janitor, I was the teacher, I was the person who looked after...everything else....It was my first year [as a teacher] and I was learning all the time.

Similarly Agnes Ball reported that although she had "jolly times" with the people in the community at Joe Rich Valley "I was pretty well wrapped up in my teaching." Vera Towgood stated that at Trinity Valley she had not had much of a social life because her time had been taken up "mostly with schoolwork." Luckily, she added, "I wasn't much of a gad about anyway."

As indicated earlier, the isolation and impoverishment of most rural settlements in the Okanagan meant that the recreational facilities available to teachers in remote districts were often extremely limited. According to Alice Gibson: "The means of entertainment were in our own hands....We made our own fun." Moreover, most teachers had few individuals with whom they could share a social life. Thus for the most part their leisure time was restricted to associating with the people in their boarding places, nearby homesteaders, and even their pupils, often just a couple of families, and to the kinds of activities in which the community engaged. Lucy McCormick remembered that at Mabel Lake: "I learned to play cards. I'd never played cards in my life before but I had to learn to

play...because it was the social thing that people did."³⁶ By the same token, Lucy added that although she was an Anglican she had attended the religious services of the Seventh Day Adventists that were held every Saturday in Mabel Lake "because there was nothing else to do." Musical soirees were also quite popular. A former pupil of Heywood's Corner School recalled:

Lack of transportation prevented most of them from going far, so we often invited one or two school teachers to spend the weekend with us. Dad had brought his piano from England, and some of the girls could play and sing, so many a musical evening was arranged.³⁷

Similarly, Mary Genier reported: "I was quite a good singer then....We'd have great musical evenings."

Another activity which accounted for much of the free time of rural teachers was the practice of "eating around." Buster Schunter, a former pupil at Hilton School, reported: "Every weekend each [family] would strive to have the teacher up for a dinner." Thus Vera Towgood recalled that during her time as teacher in Trinity Valley "different families frequently invited me to dinner on Sundays." Janet Graham stated that in Ewing's Landing: "I was often asked to the homes of pupils & their dear parents for supper." Likewise Alice Gibson reported: "A lot of my dealings with the parents would be social....They'd ask me over for supper. I was always going over to one house or another for supper." Lucy McCormick stated: "As I lived alone I was invited out for huge meals - fortunately I was very skinny and could eat pecan pie and ice cream without any pain....I put on pounds because they were such good cooks."

Teachers also took advantage of the ample opportunities for outdoor sports activities that existed in many rural areas. Bernard Gillie spent many hours "exploring the countryside" around Ellison on horseback, as did Vera Towgood in Trinity Valley and

³⁶A number of participants reported that card games had been a favoured past time among the residents of rural communities in the Okanagan in the 1920s.

³⁷Heywood, "The Heywoods of Heywood's Corner," 167.

Agnes Ball in Joe Rich Valley. Janet Graham stated that at Ewing's Landing: "We had superb tennis courts. I bought a boat of my own so that I could go fishing."³⁸ Similar amenities were available in Naramata in 1923. Edward W. Tanner, principal of the three-roomed school noted that he had access to "Basketball, Badminton, Tennis, Boating & Fishing."³⁹ Like many other teachers Marianne Nelson's social life in Medora Creek included "hiking, rowing, also fishing [and] horse-back riding" in the summer and "skating on ponds [and] skiing also in winter." At Sugar Lake, Alice Gibson enjoyed her free time in the winter "snowshoeing, skiing and tobogganing by day and going by horse and sleigh to old-time square dances at Cherryville, some twelve miles south."⁴⁰

Attending dances, whether in their own district or sometimes miles away in a larger community, was an important aspect of the rural teacher's social life because it gave them the chance to make acquaintances, possibly of a romantic nature, with members of the opposite sex. As far as Ila Embree was concerned the year she spent in Kedleston was quite lonely. She recalled: "There wasn't any social life....I would describe it as a failure...except you'd get a boyfriend [from] Vernon. There used to be dances in Vernon. I used to go to them....The teacher was the thing in the community in those days." As Ila's comments suggest, female teachers often became the focus of male attention in rural communities. Indeed as the newcomer in a remote district many former teachers recalled the flattering attention they had received from local bachelors from which they seemed to gain a certain eclat. Janet Graham stated: "They'd come and look you over as soon as you arrived...trying to see if they could get this girl." Alice Gibson reported that at Sugar Lake: "I was *the* only young woman....The young fellows were loggers and trappers [and] I had

³⁸In the TBR she submitted in 1928 Janet noted that although the district was isolated in the winter it was also "Pleasant, suitable for one fond of summer sports."

³⁹TBR.

⁴⁰See also TBR for Sugar Lake School in 1928 where Alice wrote: "Friendly neighbours and facilities for all kinds of water & winter sports."

no shortage of swains....All single men were boyfriends of the teacher in those outlying areas." Likewise Lucy McCormick remembered that at Mabel Lake there had been "all kinds of single fellers" and thus she had been "much in demand at school dances." She continued: "If you went to a dance you were absolutely exhausted by the time you got home because you had been dancing continuously [with] huge loggers who loved to square dance - my poor ribs!"

Thus as far as promoting an active social life was concerned the very facts of having been both young and single were perceived by many of the female participants as distinct advantages. At the same time their popularity with the opposite sex could be problematical. Bernard Gillie suggested that in many remote communities the rivalry amongst the local men could be so intense that they were "ready to fight a duel any day of the week" over a female teacher. "In some instances," he added, "they treated her as if she was just something to amuse them [and] took advantage of her in one way or another." Furthermore he maintained that the attempts by female teachers, particularly "young girls" from "city homes," to initiate friendly, albeit purely platonic, relations with the men in the community were "misinterpreted nine times out of ten, you can bet on it....The culture clash is right there." He recalled a number of "very ugly incidents" that had occurred. From the female perspective Marianne Nelson reported: "These young fellers got the idea that being friendly was serious. They wouldn't take no for an answer and became very angry."

In this respect it was essential for female teachers working in isolated rural communities to exercise caution when associating with the men of the local community. Agnes Ball made it clear that fraternising with married men was strictly out of bounds: "I didn't let anything like that go on. I knew that there could be trouble." Likewise Alice Gibson was very careful about the type of relationships she established with the men at Sugar Lake: "Everyone wanted to take the teacher out - but I had no special attachment. [We] went in groups to dances at Cherryville or Vernon. Not much going steady until [you] were ready to settle down." Mary Genier, who often spent her weekends with Alice

at Sugar Lake during the two years she taught at Medora Creek, concurred: "Brownie and I, we never palled with any of the boys. We were good friends with all of them.... [T]hey'd do anything for us, but as to date them - no. We went in a group." She then added with a chuckle: "Brownie bought a car in the second year we were up there so we were independent, you know. We didn't need men!" Although she had many admirers amongst the men in Ewing's Landing, Janet Graham never felt pressured into accepting their advances because she had a "gentleman friend" who lived near her home in Kelowna. She reported: "They all knew I had a 'friend' in Kelowna....It gave me a protective cloak." At Shuswap Falls Esma Shunter had no say as to whether she was "protected" against the men with less-than-honourable intentions who wished to court her:

Boys from Lumby used to come out every once in a while but most of them were French and for some reason or other [my landlord] didn't like Frenchmen and he wouldn't let me go out with any. As a matter of fact, by Saturday night he'd usually had a few [alcoholic drinks] and he would go out and run them off the farm!

Fortunately Esma found the behaviour of her landlord amusing rather than controlling.

In gauging their male acquaintances female rural teachers also had to avoid alienating the women of the local district. By virtue of their unmarried and economically independent status women teachers were often perceived as having an edge over the rest of the female population in the community, who generally had greater family commitments and were thus able to exercise less choice in their lives. Invidiousness and resentment towards the teacher were sometimes the result of such a situation. Ila Embree recalled that at Kedleston: "I don't know that I was popular with the ladies round there. I was free to do what I pleased. I wasn't stuck home with a bunch of kids like most of them were....I think they thought I went out with too many fellers." Likewise Marianne Nelson suggested that "Because we had "jobs" and were free there seemed to be a bit of envy, but it wasn't too common....I snickered at it....There were others that were *so* nice it made up for it." At this point in the interview Marianne broke down into tears. While teaching at Medora Creek she had become very close to the woman with whom she had boarded and found the

process of recalling the happy times she spent with this woman, who had since passed away, quite distressing.

The other side of the equation should not be overlooked. Some former teachers indicated that in the rural communities to which they had been posted in the 1920s there had often been few single females of their own age. In these circumstances they turned to the women with whom they boarded, the mothers of their pupils and even the pupils themselves for companionship. Many female rural teachers, like Marianne, forged strong and lasting bonds with the women in the local community. Esma Shunter recalled of Shuswap Falls: "There were no young people around there...at all [because] once they got old enough to leave, they left." Consequently Esma spent the majority of her leisure time with the other women in the community: "If they went anywhere they always took me with them." Mary Genier suggested that in some instances the relationship between rural women and the local teacher was mutually beneficial. Referring to Medora Creek she reported:

In fact, I think the women had more fun and more pleasure when Brownie and I were there than they'd ever had in their life (sic). We skied and we swam and we skated and we hiked and we would coax them along. You know...they liked going along with us. They liked doing things.

Mary also enjoyed an easy camaraderie with some of her older female students. One fifteen year old girl in particular "was more of a friend than a pupil...We were good friends." Janet Graham recalled one of her pupils in Ewing's Landing in a similar way: "Sybil Leckie-Ewing was my inseparable friend. She was called a limpet. She was fifteen when I went there....I enjoyed her company. She was a dear kid. She needed me too." In Kedleston there were no young women with whom Ila Embree could socialise. To assuage some of her loneliness Ila found friendship with her oldest pupil, a seventeen year old girl: "[She] often asked me up to her home and I'd go once in a while on a weekend, way up about two miles through the bush....It was a break, a little different."⁴¹

⁴¹Establishing friendships with their pupils is not surprising given the fact that many rural teachers were themselves very young. Mary Genier was only nineteen when she took up her position at Medora

Even if the people in the districts where they lived and worked were congenial many former teachers implied that, from a professional point of view, they often felt very much alone and longed for the opportunity of contact with their peers. Some, like Margaret Landon who spent her first year as a teacher at the Salmon Bench School, were lucky:

I was fortunate that the previous teacher was teaching in the Silver Creek School on the Salmon Arm Road. She was a tremendous help especially when the Christmas Concert came into the picture. In fact we joined classes for the occasion and we put on a joint affair.

The two young women also spent a good deal of their free time together. Margaret continued:

Ruth was engaged to be married to the oldest...boy [of the family with whom I boarded] and she climbed the hill every Friday from Silver Creek to spend the weekend...so we became very good friends especially as she had to share my bed. I was very sorry when she...got married and moved to Seattle.

Whilst teaching at Medora Creek Marianne Nelson also "chummed" with "two teacher friends" who were working in the nearby schools at Hilton and Sugar Lake. She stated that "Teachers clubbed together [and] became friends in small rural schools." Indeed, as far as she was concerned, even though she liked and got on well with everyone in the community at Medora Creek, if she had been unable to spend time with other teachers "It would have been more lonesome." For Mary Genier, who followed Marianne at Medora Creek, the social life she shared with teacher Alice Gibson at Sugar Lake was a critical aspect of her rural teaching experience. In fact it was more important than the job itself. She explained why:

I had never lived in the wilderness [but] I taught there at Medora Creek for two years and I would *never* have survived except for Brownie up at Sugar Lake....I used to go there nearly every darn weekend....To me right then the school was incidental. That was my job. I had to do that.

In order to help them cope with the stresses and demands of their occupation women teachers working alone in isolated districts sought one another out and grouped

Creek. Similarly, Janet Graham was twenty when she went to work in Ewing's Landing and Ila Embree was just nineteen at the time of her appointment as teacher in Kedleston.

together wherever and whenever possible to create a collegial support system based on gender. These relationships which often developed into intense and lasting friendships, were very important to the women concerned. As historian Veronica Strong-Boag has argued: "[W]omen placed great value on personal ties and contacts. A predisposition to intimacy, rooted in patterns of socialization, helped sustain a female culture without which lives would have been poorer and harder."⁴² Thus Marianne Nelson suggested: "[We] understood the need to help each other." With practical assistance from their inspectors often a far cry away, the mere fact of being able to meet and discuss their experiences had been a source of great comfort to many of the former women teachers interviewed, primarily because it made them aware that other teachers in other one-room schools were facing the same, or at least very similar, difficulties. They offered one another not only practical advice, but more often than not, a sympathetic ear and a shoulder to cry on. As emphasised earlier, rural teachers were also an important source of employment information for their colleagues, alerting one another to suitable teaching positions in nearby districts as they became vacant. This was an invaluable service during the 1920s when the oversupply of teachers caused much competition for jobs and where many positions were filled through informal and local networks. Then rural teachers themselves sometimes played a significant role in the hiring process. The practice of visiting each other in neighbouring districts, usually for the weekend, also gave rural teachers the opportunity of a much welcome respite from the intensity and tediums of daily life in small and isolated communities.

Unfortunately rural teacher networking was a closed circle depending on circumstances. All too often the secluded conditions in which one-room school teachers lived obviated the possibility of association with colleagues on a regular basis. As Bernard Gillie stated: "Maintaining close contact with fellow professionals was difficult and often

⁴²Strong-Boag, *The New Day Recalled*, 218.

just simply did not happen." Janet Graham recalled of her experiences teaching at both Shuswap Falls and Ewing's Landing: "No contact with other teachers - no sharing of social life with any teachers, no teachers dwelling within miles! & no means of travel, had I wished to meet others." Lloyd Wills faced the same situation at Hilton: "[T]hey were too far away. It wasn't easy to get to visit them and I guess they were all as busy as I was." Lucy McCormick concurred. She stated that rural teachers were only able to connect with their peers "if they were close enough...but not usually. Usually it was on your own."

Rural teacher discontent, discouragement or unhappiness were not common phenomena among the former teachers interviewed. Although most recalled that they had felt very lonely and homesick when they took up their first teaching posts in the 1920s in the one-room schools located in various rural communities throughout the Okanagan Valley, they qualified their statements by adding that they had quickly become reconciled to their situations and ultimately had enjoyed their assignments. Indeed for the most part their accounts of their experiences were positive. One of the reasons for their success may have been because many had been fortunate in their appointments. Thus Bernard Gillie reported that the year he spent teaching in Ellison he "felt very much at home" mainly because the people with whom he boarded treated him "like a member of the family....You were going to be there for a year so they took you in. Some people weren't that fortunate but I just happened to be lucky." Agnes Ball found similar circumstances in the community at Joe Rich Valley: "They made me very welcome, very much at home and I liked everybody. I liked them all." In the TBR she completed in 1928 while working at the school Agnes described the general living conditions of the district as "Comfortable and happy....For one who enjoys...a cheery social life this district is ideal." Lloyd Wills recalled the kindness of the locals while she taught at Hilton School: "The people up there were very, very good to me. People coming from Sugar Lake down into Lumby...would stop every time they went by to see if there was anything I needed." Ruby Lidstone had been "welcomed with open arms" and treated as "just part of the community" by the residents of Grandview Bench. To

Lucy McCormick in Mabel Lake: "It seemed...they just accepted me as part, as one of the group....I had a very good relationship with the parents." At Trinity Valley the community were equally accommodating. Vera Towgood recalled: "They were all very kind to me....My relationship with the parents, on my part, left nothing to be desired. They were all very friendly and supportive." Marianne Nelson also had the full support of the community in both Hupel and Medora Creek:

Every school I taught [in] they backed me up....It really was a cruel life [but] all you have to do is pass the word around and you got help. You got good cooperation from the people in those country schools. In every way they were helpful. If they see that you're working and you're earnest, they will.

Likewise it appeared to Alice Gibson in Sugar Lake that there was "nothing they wouldn't do for the teacher." She then added: "The most important thing [in a rural community] is the parents. If the parents are with the teacher you got it made."⁴³

The recollections of former teachers make it abundantly clear that the quality of rural teacher tenure was largely contingent upon the extent to which the teacher was able to secure the active support of the community. Accordingly, if the local residents were considerate and helpful, and if the teacher was well-liked and respected and accepted as very much a part of the community, then the life of the teacher working in an isolated school district was not only bearable but could be a very pleasant one. As suggested earlier rural teachers occupied a central place in their communities and many were made to feel very special. In this context Ila Embree recalled of the people in impoverished Kedleston: "They gave me nice Christmas presents I knew they couldn't afford....I just felt choked. I saw the way the kids were dressed and I knew they couldn't afford it. But what could you

⁴³The TBR's also include numerous examples of teachers who reported favourably about the social circumstances of the communities in which they taught. See records for South Okanagan (1923) where Winifred MacGregor wrote: "This district is an extremely pleasant district to be in both socially & from an education standpoint"; Charlotte Simpson noted that although there were "Few amusements [and] no church" she regarded Glenemma (1923) as a "splendid community"; C.F. Swannell described the people in Westbank Townsite (1928) as a "very social set," Eldred K. Evans noted of Trinity Creek (1928): "People of the district on the whole are very congenial and wish their children to have the full benefit of an elementary education"; and Lucy Hargreaves simply wrote that community conditions in Glenrosa were "The best."

do. You...just say "Thank-you". Teachers often made strong lasting friendships with local residents, with many maintaining contact all their lives. Quite a considerable number of young women would marry local boys and settled down to live in the area and made a real contribution to community life.⁴⁴

The geographical location of the schools in which rural teachers worked was also a significant factor. Many of the participants lived in relative proximity to their families. Margaret Landon, who taught at Salmon Bench School, suggested the benefits to rural teachers of such a situation: "I wasn't too far from my home in Armstrong so I wasn't homesick and it was amazing how quickly I settled down." In the same way Janet Graham reported that when she taught at Ewing's Landing School: "I was close enough to my family [in Kelowna] not to be lonely. Letters came up and down on the boat every day if I wanted to. I had home ties in that sense." Lloydia Wills was a typical "suitcase teacher." She boarded in the community at Hilton during the week but most Friday evenings, weather permitting, her father drove out to Hilton to collect Lloydia and take her home the twenty miles to Lumby to spend the weekend with the family. Access to their families often helped to combat the overwhelming feelings of isolation and loneliness so common among rural teachers.

Concomitantly, a number of participants regarded themselves as fortunate to have been posted to one-room schools in the southern as opposed to northern interior region of British Columbia where living conditions were perceived to have been far more severe. Thus Alice Gibson reported: "A lot of them went up north. But I was lucky." Ila Embree shuddered at the thought of teaching in a remote community like Telegraph Creek because "that would be different...not much of a life up there." Mary Genier, who found Medora

⁴⁴See life-histories of Ruby Lidstone and Vera Towgood in Chapter Nine below. Three other participants - Isobel Simard, Esma Shunter and Mary Genier - also married local men and remained living in the Okanagan Valley all their lives. See also Hayes, "My Favourite Teachers," 137; McKechnie, "The Skelton Family," 124; Bawtree, *Reflections*, 45; Upton, *The History of Okanagan Mission*, 63.

Creek to be very isolated, sympathised with those teachers who worked further north: "They must have been desolate up there...in the wilderness." Likewise Lucy McCormick recalled:

The ones who were up north...got out of there as quickly as they could. I knew several teachers who taught up north because that is where most people went to....Some of my friends who were teaching in very remote areas found life rather difficult....Two of [them] went to the Cariboo and it [1929] was a very, very cold winter. It was the coldest winter we'd had for many years and in the Cariboo it was fifty and sixty below zero. It was dreadful....Some of them had it pretty [t]ough.

In contrast, one teacher, Agnes Ball, consciously chose to teach in a remote northern community. As she explained: "I had a *craving* for the north." Thus in 1921, at the tender age of sixteen, without even completing her secondary education, and in spite of the fact that she thought her parents "would have been very much against it," she applied for, and was accepted, to the position of teacher at the one-room school in Wandsworth, a tiny subsistence farming community located near Prince Albert in northern Saskatchewan. In fact, Agnes remarked, it was "so far north" that the school had to be closed for the months of January and February because it was "too cold" for the pupils to attend.

Community endorsement and school location were not the only factors influencing teacher contentment in rural areas. Earlier I cited how Lucy McCormick had settled easily into her role as the teacher in Mabel Lake. Significantly she intimated that having been raised in rural Lumby facilitated the process of adjustment considerably. By the same token she suggested that for those teachers who had grown up in urban centres such as Vancouver and Victoria the transition was more difficult: "[M]any of these persons were unaccustomed to country life and found conditions rather rough. Local teachers were not so upset by the isolation and better fitted the situation."⁴⁵ A number of other participants expressed similar opinions. Thus Bernard Gillie, who although a native of Victoria had spent his childhood on a farm on the outskirts of the city, contended that teaching in a rural

⁴⁵McCormick, "Early Rural Schools", 42.

school was "a tough assignment and a very unfair assignment in many instances" especially for teachers from "city homes" who neither shared nor understood rural values and consequently had "no idea of what they were getting into." Marianne Nelson concurred:

Most of the students who were let out in June [from Normal School] were...poor kids from the coast, youngsters that had never been out in the country....No wonder they said it was terrible. We out here in the bushes, we were Indian. We were, I mean we were used to it, you know....They must have felt *lonely*.

Like Lucy McCormick, Marianne had grown up on a farm in Lumby. Representative of the experiences of many of the other participants, Vera Towgood, whose home was in Oyama, reported: "I think what I liked best about teaching in a rural school community was that I had grown up in a relatively rural area and felt at home. I understood them better."

The many young urbanite teachers who were thrust, often with little monition, into one of the provinces isolated hinterland settlements must undoubtedly have experienced enormous culture shock. The way of life to which they were accustomed and the brutal reality of the environment to which they were expected to readily adapt must have seemed like worlds apart. Country-reared teachers on the other hand were usually more familiar with basic living conditions. Many had grown up with outdoor privies, bathing in a thimbleful of tepid water, and cold bedrooms, were used to "making do." They were not unduly perturbed about walking alone along unlit and lonely pathways at night, or the prospect of the occasional unexpected brush with bear or cougar. Moreover, as the comments of former teachers recounted above suggest, they were au courant with the mores and attitudes of rural folk and thus better able to handle their situations.

It must be remembered, however, that for some teachers even a "rural" upbringing was still no real preparation for the kinds of circumstances they confronted in very remote communities where living conditions had progressed little beyond the pioneer stage. In this context Alice Gibson, who grew up in Kelowna, raised a significant point: "My life in Kelowna, you might say was city life, only a small city, but city life in comparison to Sugar Lake....The difference between the Okanagan in Kelowna and...Sugar Lake was so

vast....It [Sugar Lake] was very, very primitive." In many, although by no means all, instances a teacher's ability to "fit into" the community in a rural district was dependent upon whether the social circumstances of that community coincided with the former lifestyle of the teacher.

Janet Graham is a case in point. Born in 1904 in the Orange River Colony in South Africa, where her father, Walter Moodie was working as a civil engineer, both Janet's parents were of British heritage. In 1908 the Moodie family moved to British Columbia first to Kaslo, then to Prince Rupert and then finally settling in Kelowna by 1910, where Walter had been appointed manager of the Canyon Creek Irrigation Company. The Moodies lived on the "upper bench" in East Kelowna, a predominantly English community comprised of people from the "Old Country," in a very comfortable home designed by Walter and built by the Irrigation Company: "Besides having three bedrooms and a large verandah, it contained a bathroom with tub and flush toilet. With these amenities it was unique in 1911."⁴⁶ Janet led a sheltered and relatively privileged life growing up in Kelowna. As far as her education was concerned, although she spent a brief period during the First World War attending public school, for the most part Janet was educated at home by governesses. As she stated: "It was all done privately. We were very British." On completing her secondary education Janet spent one year in the Arts Programme at the University of British Columbia, and then a year at home in Kelowna "deep in piano" before entering Normal School in Vancouver in 1922. On graduating at the end of that year Janet acquired her first teaching position in September 1923 in the one-room school at Shuswap Falls, a tiny, impoverished, subsistence farming community located twenty-five miles east of Vernon. Although she stated that she "really was country" and "certainly never sought a city" the living conditions Janet encountered in Shuswap Falls were such a shock to her

⁴⁶Janet Graham and Marcella Bell, "Walter Hill Moodie 1871-1955," OHSR 55(1991): 112.

sensibilities as to be intolerable. She had resigned from her post by Christmas. Her reasons for leaving were very clear:

It was the loneliness...you see. There wasn't anyone to talk to....I didn't see beyond this great farm where I was living...with these kindly good people....They were real types and trumps in *their* world but it wasn't *my* world....I was in circumstances I'd never met before....It was all so foreign to the way I lived....I was so *very* lonely [and] thoroughly homesick....I was so unhappily out of my depth. I came home. I didn't hear who succeeded me.

Janet described some of the activities she found most "distressing" about the lifestyle of the people she lived with:

They netted fish, which was forbidden, and by moonlight from Shuswap River. *They* didn't, but their friends stole turkeys for Thanksgiving. [They] were always hiding from the police....He was a packer and a trapper and he took me - I loved horses - riding on his trapline one day. [There were] great big hunks of meat [as bait] in the traps. Oh, I was so thankful we didn't see anything trapped. I would have found that very difficult....

Once a month the men would go to Vernon for a good drinking bout. They never misbehaved [and] were never indecent in any way [but] I used to be sort of disturbed about the drinking because they'd carry it on at home with homemade this and that and t'other. They weren't ever objectionable [but] I'd been brought up in a teetotalling house. I used to shove my trunk against the [bedroom] door, rather foolishly. The drink...sort of bothered me or at least was foreign to me.

Janet's situation in Shuswap Falls must have caused her much anxiety, so much so that she often replied to my questions about her experiences thus: "I have no recollection. I think I just closed my mind on it all....It was something I have no pleasure in remembering." After a short period of living at home with her parents in Kelowna, during which time she did some substitute teaching in one of the local schools, Janet began her search for another permanent teaching position, and was soon offered the job of teacher in another one-room school in the Okanagan Valley, this time at Ewing's Landing on the west side of Okanagan Lake. Her account of the time she spent working in the community was in stark contrast to that at Shuswap Falls:

I fitted into the district [and] I was well chosen for their purpose....They were thoroughly British, the whole crowd of them. Penniless mostly, but with a background that was very complementary, similar to mine, what I would call gentlefolk....[They were] highly educated people from the "Old Country" [who] had the background which appreciated the things *I* did....I was amongst civilised people....

All my experiences [at Ewing's Landing], I can say quite honestly, were as a friend amongst friends. I couldn't have been in happier circumstances....It was just like one big family really [and] I felt utterly at home.

Significantly Janet enthusiastically noted in the TBR she completed in 1928 while teacher at Ewing's Landing School: "The happiest spot in B.C. for the right person! - My fourth year, - and they still cheer me on!"

Personal disposition was very important in determining whether teachers were able to prevail over the hardships they encountered in rural communities. As Alice Gibson bluntly stated: "If you went to teach in a country school...[y]ou either survived or you got out." Likewise Mildred Buchanan suggested that to feel sorry for oneself was "just fatal" and those who fell prey to such introspection "made their own unhappiness by not seeing that [rural teaching] was a great experience." Self-assurance, independence and certainly sanguinity were valuable assets to the teacher working in a remote school district. As noted earlier, Lucy McCormick attributed her success at Mabel Lake partly to the fact that she was "pretty self-sufficient" because she had been "brought up that way, to sort of depend on myself." Ila Embree had much the same personality: "I thought I could handle it....I always was confident [and] figured I could do it." Mary Genier had also been a determined and independent young woman when she went to teach at Medora Creek:

The men [in the community] were domineering with their wives and their children [but] not with me because I wouldn't knuckle under....I don't think they ever had a teacher like me. I think they were all mousy whereas I was exuberant....Things used to go my way....Anytime I really wanted to do something I always managed somehow. Still do.

Esma Shunter, who taught at Shuswap Falls School in 1929, six years after Janet Graham, was similarly optimistic: "I guess I was very naive. I thought I could handle anything....I was young and healthy and full of vigour and vitality. [I] thought I knew everything there was to know, and had the world by the tail." She further suggested that her "sense of humour" and the fact that she "wasn't expecting so much maybe" had helped ensure her survival. Consequently, she added: "I don't ever remember being lonesome....I didn't have any bad experiences. I had a lot of fun."

As Esma's comments imply, youth and good health were also distinct advantages to teachers working in remote pioneer communities where physical hardship was very much a part of daily life. Lucy McCormick reported: "[B]eing young I was capable of chopping wood, shovelling snow and living on my own. I also, fortunately, was very healthy." Alice Gibson suggested that youthfulness, although usually denoting inexperience, may also have helped rural teachers adapt more quickly to their situations: "The younger the better because you're not set in your ways."

It is clear from the stories of rural teachers recounted here that their social experiences in isolated school districts varied enormously, not only from one district to another but between different teachers who taught in the same school. Significantly, the discussion emphasises the decisive roles played by social background and upbringing, as well as individual personality, as the key variables determining the extent to which teachers were able to adapt to the idiosyncracies of living in a remote rural district.

CHAPTER NINE

TEACHING AS PART OF THE LIFE COURSE

The foregoing account of the teacher experience in the rural schools of the Okanagan Valley over the decade of the 1920s contributes to the growing body of knowledge on this subject relating to both British Columbia and Canada. In the final analysis, however, such a snap-shot perspective is incomplete in that it fails to address issues concerning the full impact of that experience on the individual teachers concerned. Specifically, how did involvement in the profession fit into the larger structure of the female life course as a whole? Significantly, details from the interviews and personal documents utilized in this study strongly suggest that for many women their experience as a rural school teacher, albeit brief, played an important, and for some a profound, role in their lives. By approaching the rural teaching experience from a longer historical perspective and incorporating the experience in the 1920s within the wider context of the entire life course a more complex, yet clearer, vision emerges of what teaching actually did *for* women in terms of how they used the profession to accommodate their own personal agendas. This perspective is essential if a more complete understanding of the precise nature of the meaning of teaching as work to women is to be constructed.

Employment options may well have been limited for young women in the 1920s, and there is no doubt that the difficult and demanding living and working conditions that teachers were forced into accepting in small isolated communities in British Columbia's hinterland tested the will and stamina of the strongest of individuals. It is also true that many could not long endure the sometimes intolerable circumstances of rural teaching and quickly and quietly left the profession. However, in many other cases the reverse situation occurred. The stories related to me by former rural women teachers reveal that many

regarded their experience in rural schools, particularly their inaugural year, as a challenge. Motivated by a determination to succeed they had their sense of self-worth and confidence enhanced by their ability to prove to themselves that they could persevere with, and ultimately survive under, such adverse conditions. For these individuals the potential for personal and professional development that teaching in a rural school offered far outweighed the negative aspects of the job.

Attaining a teaching certificate gave women the opportunity to deviate from what was considered in the 1920s as their normal life course. Instead of remaining in the family home until they married, teaching provided them with the alternative option of moving away from familiar networks of kinship and of becoming financially self-sufficient. The possibility of leading an independent life, of building new relationships grounded in the reality of their work as teachers, had been a highly attractive, albeit daunting, prospect for many of those interviewed. Yet after they began teaching they came to thrive on their newly acquired independence. Their financially secure and relatively autonomous position enabled them to fulfil a variety of other personal aspirations such as the quest for adventure, the improvement of their professional and academic qualifications, or just having the satisfaction of being able to repay parents for putting them through Normal School, or help finance the education of one of their younger siblings. Some women moved out of the world of public school teaching to pursue other opportunities, often related to education in its broader sense, and found that their training and experience were invaluable assets in these other lives. Moreover it is apparent that the mere fact of having taught also had a significant impact in shaping these womens' lives if they became wives and mothers.

Most importantly teaching provided women with choice: to determine for themselves the future course of their lives by giving them the freedom to decide if, when, and where they might work, and if and when they might marry and bear children. Thus the economic independence that teaching afforded women expanded both their personal and career horizons and opened up new vistas beyond the traditional domestic roles. While the

majority of women teachers did ultimately conform to societal expectations and withdrew from the profession to marry and most, although not all, bore children, some chose to defer the process until they felt they had satisfied their own career objectives. A small minority of women decided to abandon the expected life course altogether and remained single all their lives.

A crucial aspect of women's work as teachers concerns the nature of their participation in the occupation. While the commonly held image of the young female teacher who pursued a brief career in teaching for only a few years, and whose involvement in the profession was merely a stop-gap measure, a way of productively filling the period between their own schooling and getting married, certainly occurred in reality, it was not the only career pattern for women teachers that existed. On the contrary, the predominant pattern that emerges from the stories of former rural teachers was that of the woman whose career spanned many years, even decades. Some had long and successful careers before marrying. Clearly for many women, not only single women but also a substantial number of those who were married, teaching was by no means a temporary resort but rather a life-time commitment.

At the same time, unlike many of their male contemporaries, whose career paths often entailed a continuous upward movement within the occupation's administrative hierarchy, women's participation in the profession was typically episodic.¹ Movement in and out of the teaching corps over the course of their working lives was a common experience of most of the women interviewed. A woman might initially teach for a few years and then leave the profession for a period of time, only to resume her career at a later stage in her life, sometimes out of necessity, but often because she wished to, and an opportunity had presented itself. Most returned to the classroom when their family

¹Other historical studies of female teachers that have emphasised this aspect of women's work experience include, Clifford, "Man/Woman/Teacher," Underwood, "The Pace of Their Own Lives," and Rinehart, Mortals in the Immortal Profession.

commitments had lessened. Their teaching certificate was a much prized possession because it gave them the peace of mind that they could re-enter the profession if, and when, they chose to. Some women resumed their careers after their husbands had passed away. As a widow, the ability to teach provided them with access to the job market at a time when they most needed it, financially and emotionally. Many taught until their retirement

The reasons for women teachers' erratic career paths were complex. The extent to which family obligations, both real and perceived, governed these women's lives was of paramount importance. Consequently any decisions concerning work were deeply entrenched within, and contingent upon, their changing personal family circumstances. Essentially it was their relationships with their family group - with parents and siblings and then later husbands and children - that defined their lives and played a key role in their life planning. As suggested earlier, the example of, or pressure from, other family members exerted a powerful influence over many a young person's decision to become a teacher. Moreover, although they considered their inaugural years in teaching as a significant time in their lives in that it marked a breaking away from their families and the transition into adulthood, most retained close family ties and continued to regard their parents' residence as "home." Often young female teachers, given the opportunity, accepted positions in schools near their families, although they might only get home at the weekends. Thus many did not make a complete break with their families when they began work.

Although they did not always explicitly state it as such it is clear from personal accounts that for many former teachers traditional gender roles had at various times in their lives overshadowed their career opportunities. Teaching may have provided women with greater freedom to determine their life course but undoubtedly the claims made on them by their families dictated the outcome. The responsibility and obligation that these women felt towards their families often influenced their decisions about whether and where they taught. Thus while numerous women lived a life of independence, many more felt that others depended on them. Some women withdrew from the profession for periods of time

because of their perceived need to care for particular family members. The motivation to find employment in a school either in, or nearby, their home district was sometimes precipitated by the fact that a parent had become too old, infirm, or sick to be able to look after themselves. In addition, with few exceptions, female teachers left the field when they got married in order to "keep home" and rear their children. Certainly the expectation that such behaviour was the "right" thing to do dominated the conscious views of many of the women I interviewed.

I now turn to the specific details of the lives of six former rural school teachers. Their stories were chosen because they are representative of the variety of responses to the opportunities afforded by the experience of teaching as work to women as well as men.

Vera Towgood nee Evans² was born on August 21, 1905 in Kingsley, Quebec where her parents ran a dairy farm, shipping butter and cream to Montreal. Eldred, her brother and only sibling, was born in 1907. Around 1910 the Evans family moved to Saskatchewan where they homesteaded, albeit not very successfully, so in 1913 they packed up their belongings and travelled to the Okanagan Valley in British Columbia, this time to pursue fruit farming. They located first at Reiswig, where they rented a ranch. With no school within walking distance of home Vera attended the Blue Springs School and boarded with a local family. After five years they moved again settling permanently in Oyama, where Vera and Eldred completed their elementary and high school educations. Vera then enrolled at Victoria Normal School for the year 1924-1925 and achieved a Second Class Teaching Certificate.

Vera's first teaching post was in the one-room school at Squilax, west of Salmon Arm, beginning in September 1925. Although, like most other novice teachers, she had

²Most of the information on Vera's life-story included here, particularly the specific details of her teaching experiences in the 1920s, are taken from the conversation I had with her in her home as well as several written communications. Although, sadly, Vera passed away before I had finished compiling the details of her post-professional life, her daughter, Joyce Bingham, kindly agreed to help me in this respect.

been unable to exert any real choice in the matter of where she would begin her career as a teacher, this situation was not of any particular concern to Vera. Of much greater importance was the fact that she now had the opportunity to "earn some money" and to prove to herself that she was capable of surviving and being an independent person in her own right. She recalled the immense sense of anticipation she felt on the day she left home to travel by C.P.R. train from Vernon to Squilax via Sicamous. "I set out with my steamer trunk and my suitcase on my big adventure...full of high hopes and excitement in starting my new career."

Unfortunately Vera's introduction to the world of rural teaching was fraught with setbacks that must, at the very least, have been discouraging. Arriving at Squilax at eleven o'clock at night "in pitch black darkness and a light rain" and three hours late, Vera found no-one to meet her:

I felt very much alone, not one light in sight. My trunk had been deposited on the platform of the little station, and for a moment I thought of taking refuge under its roof. I took a deep breath and started to walk in the direction I had been told [by the station brakeman]....It was an uncanny feeling to be lost and blind in strange country. My suitcase was heavy, and my new shoes hurt my feet, but I wouldn't go back. I summoned up my courage and told myself that "this is an adventure, and I'll have a story to tell when I write home."

Her recollections of the year she spent at Squilax were instructive because they reveal in very personal detail how one young and inexperienced female teacher coped with the rigours of living and working in a remote district. Her story also clearly indicates that, much like the other participants, she was determined to succeed in her assignment. As she encountered each problem she took stock of her situation and accepted the challenge.

At the end of the year Vera chose to resign her position at Squilax. Looking back she acknowledged that, although her first teaching assignment had been extremely trying at times, ultimately it had been a positive experience from which she had benefitted: "I did my best, and enjoyed it, and gained a fair bit of experience and independence." Moreover it had enabled her "to repay a loan I had received from my parents. The money would enable my brother to go to Normal School that year." A confidence and pride in the significance of

what she had achieved came through clearly in her recollections of that time. The experience certainly did not deter her from continuing to teach in isolated districts as she proceeded to work in a further three rural schools over the next four years. After Squilax Vera transferred to Trinity Valley near Lumby for two years. Then in September 1928 she taught at the school in Fairview, near Oliver, further south in the Similkameen, but only stayed three months. In January 1929 Vera moved back to the Okanagan to be in charge of the junior room in Winfield. In the summer of 1930 Vera got married, a decision that altered her life significantly. As she simply stated: "This put an end to my teaching career."

Typical of many other women teachers in the 1920's who chose to marry, Vera, after only a brief period of professional service, withdrew from public school teaching, to dedicate her life to her new career as a wife and mother. She gave birth to four children, one girl and three boys, in the "dirty thirties." Yet the subsequent pattern of Vera's life-course also differed significantly from that of many of these same women, some of whose stories are recounted here, in that she did not return to the occupation at a later stage in her life. Although she did do "a little bit of subbing" when they were "desperate" Vera's role as a young mother, as well as poor personal health were contributing factors and certainly restricted Vera's capacity to pursue a full-time career in teaching. As her daughter stated: "With 4 children under the age of 9, and with health problems, I don't think that my mother ever seriously considered going back into teaching....I can never remember her experiencing really good health."³

At the same time her husband also exercised a strong influence on the decisions Vera made about the direction in which her life would proceed. Although he did not overtly suppress her occupational interest, neither did he actively encourage her in this regard. Rather it has been suggested that in a very "subtle" way that he may have "repressed" Vera's desire to work outside of the home on a permanent basis:

³Personal letter from Joyce Bingham, November 26 1992.

He wouldn't have minded her going back [into teaching] as long as it hadn't affected his quality of life too much....Although my father loved my mother dearly, and was proud of her accomplishments, there were many things that he was just not interested in. I don't think he would really be aware that my mother was influenced by her years teaching.⁴

It is likely that by not wishing to challenge the boundaries of her life, which were so very clearly defined within the domestic sphere, Vera simply "made the best of things." Although she "probably had regrets" she "never expressed them." Instead she became "resigned to the fact" that she would never return to a career in teaching.⁵

However, Vera did not simply forget her experiences as a teacher in the 1920s. At the time of our conversation she was very frail due to ill-health. Yet her memories of teaching were lively and witty, vivid and engrossing. Her tenure as a teacher had been relatively short-lived, a mere five years, but there is no doubt that, to her, it had been a meaningful experience and represented an important stage in her life. At the time it had been, as she stated, an "adventure" from which she had gained "experience" and "independence" as well as being able to help provide the necessary funds for her brother's teacher training.

In the longer term, teaching also had definite repercussions on Vera's life-course as a whole. Thus when Vera retired from the profession in 1930 she took her "teacherness," the skills and talents she had acquired and developed in various rural classrooms, with her into her new life. Although she was no longer physically involved in an institution of schooling, throughout her life she made choices, whether consciously or not, that enabled her to remain close to children and to matters of an educational nature. Clearly teaching provided her with a set of ideals that continued to motivate her. Specifically, teaching played a central role in shaping her life as a mother. As her daughter reports:

[M]y mother's experiences in teaching influenced the way we were brought up a great deal....I think it did affect the way she parented her children....She was so

⁴Ibid, and telephone conversation with Bingham, December 3 1992.

⁵Ibid.

good at explaining things to us, and getting us to question what we saw....I do know that thinking was encouraged....Education was always considered very important in my family. All 4 of us children obtained University degrees, which was most unusual for farm families in the Okanagan Valley at that time.⁶

On at least one occasion Vera was able to use her teaching skills in a very practical way.

During the early 1940s she decided to home-school one of her sons. Her daughter explained:

When my oldest brother was 6, we were living 4 miles way from school, and my mother chose to tutor him at home for the first year. She obtained the correspondent course materials from the ministry and helped him to complete grade one at home. I don't know that she would have considered doing this without experience. After that we moved closer to the school.⁷

Of immense import are the ways in which Vera affected the work and career decisions of her daughter who also, significantly, chose to become a teacher "[T]eaching...was a job that I always had an affinity for because of my mother's influence....Without [her] encouragement and help, I probably would not have ever become a teacher."⁸ Over her daughter's thirty-three year career Vera continued to impact upon her "values" and "ways of connecting with the world.":

Through the years my mother was always very interested in what was going on in education and in my teaching, and it was very interesting for me to hear her points of view. I also think that much of my success as a teacher came about because of the respect that she instilled in me for the child as an individual, and the importance of enhancing self-esteem. Hearing stories of her experiences in teaching in the early days certainly encouraged me, and helped me keep my own challenges in perspective....[A]nd that is her legacy.⁹

Vera also built on her teaching experiences to actively contribute towards the life of her local community. After the Second World War, she "taught English to "displaced persons"....She got a lot of satisfaction from this, and enjoyed the appreciation that she

⁶Personal letter from Joyce Bingham, November 26 1992.

⁷Ibid.

⁸Ibid. It is interesting to note that it was a common feature of the lives of many of the teachers interviewed that one or more of their children also became teachers.

⁹Ibid.

received from her students."¹⁰ The immigrant children she taught at both the rural schools in Squilax and Winfield would obviously have prepared Vera for this work and given her the self-confidence to volunteer for the task. She also maintained direct links over the years with the schools and pupils with whom she had been involved in the 1920s. As she stated: "Now and then I hear from one of my former pupils, and it is gratifying to hear their comments, and to know that so many of them are living useful lives." Over fifty years after its opening Vera was invited by "the teachers at the school in Winfield...to come and spend some time with the children" and talk to them about its history, as part of the anniversary celebrations. It "meant a lot" to her "to be remembered and to take part." Finally, for most of her adult life Vera was a supportive member of the Women's Institute, sometimes acting on the executive. In that capacity she played a principal role in the researching, writing and compiling of a number of projects aimed at preserving the local history of Oyama for present and future residents.

Vera's story thus represents an example of the way in which a woman, beginning teaching in the 1920's, was able to use the occupation as a means of concatenating her own personal desires for work and career with the more traditional life course expected of women at that time, namely marriage and family.

Alice Gibson nee Brown was born in 1905 in Montreal, one of the three daughters of George and Sadie Brown, who were of Scottish and English origins respectively. George had owned a tea business and also worked as a book-keeper and thus Alice and her sisters had lived a "typical middle class life" in Montreal. The Brown's decided however that the "big city" was not the kind of environment in which they wished to raise their children and so in 1912, after purchasing ten acres of what was advertised as good orchard land in the Glenmore district of Kelowna, the family moved to the Okanagan Valley in

¹⁰Ibid.

British Columbia. Unfortunately, George's inexperience in working the land coupled with the fact that their land in Glenmore, then appropriately named Dry Valley, was unsuitable for growing fruit, resulted in many of their crops failing. Realising that he was not a "born farmer" George moved his family after about five years into Kelowna where he once again took up book-keeping, and later had interests in the dairy and bakery businesses.

Whilst in Glenmore Alice's elementary education had been at the one-room school in the district and so when she transferred to the Kelowna High School she found it a "bit traumatic." In 1923 she attended the Normal School in Victoria and graduated with a Second Class Teaching Certificate. Like other newly qualified teachers Alice applied for many teaching positions and only a week before term began in September 1924 she was offered the job at the one-room school at Sugar Lake. A tiny logging and trapping community comprised mainly of "squatters," Sugar Lake was located approximately forty miles east of Vernon and seventy miles from her home. The centre of the community at Sugar Lake was a "picturesque hunting and fishing resort" called Tillicum Inn, run by a Major M.A. Curwen and his wife, where the teacher, and hence Alice, "always boarded." She taught in the community for four years.

In 1927 the Curwen's had rented out the Inn and left for a trip to England. On returning to British Columbia later that year they had settled in Shawnigan Lake on Vancouver Island, where the Major had formerly taught at the private boys' school there. When he wrote to Alice informing her of a vacant teaching position at Shawnigan Lake Public School she jumped at the chance, sent in an application and "on the recommendation of the Curwen's" was offered the post. Compared to Sugar Lake her new job was "Quite a shock. From six pupils to 39 - Grades 1, 2 and 3." Nevertheless Alice settled easily into her new situation and "made friends with the young people of the village almost immediately." However she "only taught one year" at the school because, she explained: "I met my husband...and got married in the summer of 1929." As "married women didn't teach in those days" Alice gave up her teaching career at this point and, although she

privately "tutored a grade one child" when she was first married, she did not return to full-time public school teaching again for thirty years.

In 1930 the Curwen's offered Alice and her husband, Eric, the management of Tillicum Inn with the option to buy after a year. As Alice recalled: "We went up and stayed a year - and enjoyed it - but the depression had knocked the bottom out of hunting and fishing lodges so we came back to Shawnigan Lake." Interestingly, during that year the teacher at the school in Sugar Lake, Barbara Webster, boarded with Alice and Eric at the Inn. Soon afterwards they took what Alice regards as a "big stepping stone" in their lives, and began building their own house in Shawnigan Lake on plots of land given to them by Eric's parents. By this time -1932- they already had two children, one girl and one boy, and with the birth of their second son in 1933 their "little family was complete."

During the depression years of the 1930's Eric was employed as "a sawyer in the mills around" but because there were "frequent shut-downs and lay-offs" he was "in and out of work" and thus the young Brown's were "poorly off." In spite of their tight financial circumstances, Alice did not participate in any paid employment outside the home. She strongly believed that as a wife and mother it was her primary responsibility at that stage in her life to care for her husband and to nurture and raise their three children:

Married women with children didn't work in those days. You stayed home with your children and brought them up. That [teaching] was not my job then. My job was to bring up my family.

Instead, in order to "make a few dollars a month," Alice started working at home writing articles for the Victoria Colonist and the Cowichan Leader which she "continued for some years."

By the 1940's, "as soon as the children were old enough to leave with Eric," Alice had become "heavily involved in community work" in Shawnigan Lake. She began to attend the local church and became the organ player, an activity she "kept...up for some fifty years." She also played "an active, and often secretarial" role on the local School Board, in the Girl Guides Association and the Brownies - "I was Brown Owl" - as well as

the local library, Chamber of Commerce and Women's Institute. With respect to the latter organisation she acted as President of the South Vancouver Island Women's Institute for two years. Then in 1953, with her children now grown, Alice "went into business with another woman. We ran a coffee shop in Shawnigan for seven years."

In 1960 Alice resumed her teaching career. The coffee shop was sold and with her share of the profits she bought a car. She enrolled at the University of Victoria for a "summer refresher course" and got a job almost immediately in a "two-grade primary situation" at the Cowichan Station Public School and was thus "in business again." Alice then taught for eleven years until she retired "for the second time" in 1971, aged sixty-five. She had taught for a total of sixteen years.

As a result of her visit to the school on May 30, 1929 it was Lottie Bowron's verdict that Sugar Lake was a "lonely" and "very isolated" location and thus "not...a good place for a young girl." In fact she decided that it would be "Better for a man." In contrast, Alice, who was just nineteen when she began teaching at the school, reported that she had "a wonderful time" and "really enjoyed the wild life up there and the things we did...learning to ski, learning to snowshoe and all that kind of thing....I learned to target shoot." Her four years at the school "introduced" her to "a backwoods life" that she had "never experienced except in books." It was precisely the fact that the remote and primitive living conditions at Sugar Lake were such "a different kettle of fish" that made Alice's experience there so exhilarating and memorable for her:

The whole atmosphere and everything was so different than what I [was] used to but I liked it. You had to realise that there was that segment of the hunters' and trappers' way of life....I admired them tremendously because of the lives they did lead and the fact that they survived and were cheerful....[I]t was, and is, in a little nutshell in my mind.

The intensity and vividness of Alice's recollections of Sugar Lake suggest that her first teaching experience was one that was filled with adventure and pleasure. The impression it left on her was both powerful and lasting. She especially appreciated the beauty of the "natural surroundings - practically untouched by man" and the opportunity

this gave her of "associating with the wild." She spent much of her free time taking "walks in the woods" and exploring the area around Sugar Lake. In this respect one experience that was "particularly important " to her involved a trip that she took up into the mountains with some friends:

On the first week of one summer holiday, Mary McKenzie¹¹ and I, with two trapper friends, plus a chaperone, went on a ten day trip with pack horses and tents, etc., high up into the Monashee Range, above the timber line, and into some snow. The weather was not too good, but the scenery was breathtaking and I will never forget it. I saw my first, and only, porcupine in the woods.

The community at Sugar Lake was very remote so that the school was the focal point of the children's limited world. Alice "regretted" this "closed in" life that her pupils led. So in her capacity as their teacher, and perhaps as one of the most influential people in their lives, she saw it as her duty to teach them not only the prescribed curriculum but also to endeavour to provide for their general welfare and happiness. Every day Alice would row across the lake to collect the children from a family and bring them to school and did the return journey at the end of the day. She often took the children on "jaunts" such as nature trails and picnics in the woods around the school and also organised fancy dress parties for their entertainment. It gave her great pleasure to be in the position to "bring to these children news of the outside world." Alice also recalled: " One year I took a little six year old girl pupil home with me to Kelowna for the Easter holidays. She had a ball." Interviews with two of Alice's former pupils from Sugar Lake indicate that her impact on these individuals was indeed profound. As one stated: "Those two years I spent at Sugar Lake...were the best years of my life."

There is no question that Alice was a dedicated teacher and achieved great personal satisfaction from her job, but at the same time it is also clear that she worked primarily for the benefit of her pupils, their parents and the community. A sense of deep community

¹¹As noted earlier Mary was the teacher at Medora Creek School "about seven miles down the road" which meant that, weather permitting, she and Alice "spent most weekends together."

involvement emerged as the dominant theme in Alice's account of her experiences at Sugar Lake. For example, on a number of occasions she used her own resources to assist the less advantaged people living in the district:

[I] was the only person in the community with ready cash [as] I was the only one...that had a monthly cheque coming in....In one case, a man and wife and family had a job to go to [in another district] but no money for the move so I bought their houseboat from them - a cabin on floats - I kept it for a year and then sold it. Another family, same thing, but they had chinchilla rabbits which I bought, hutches and all....I kept them and fed them to maturity...and then sold them at the right time through one of my trapper friends....That was the sort of help teachers in poor outlying places often felt called upon to give.

Alice owned a car and made it available, always ensuring that it was "full of gas," to anyone who wished to borrow it. These activities offer just a few examples of the complete involvement and service orientation Alice had for her work as a rural teacher. Not surprisingly she assessed her social status in the community as "very high...as everyone thought I was wonderful."

Although Alice gave up her career as a teacher after only five years in order to get married, she nevertheless, like Vera, built on her experiences at Sugar Lake to serve her local community and to run her own business. Moreover, as the biographical details above illustrate, throughout her life Alice remained closely involved with both young people and educational concerns. It is interesting that Alice, like Vera, influenced the work and career decisions of her children, in that her daughter also opted for teaching as her choice of occupation. When she returned to the profession in 1960 it is significant that it was on her daughter's suggestion. Alice's account of what prompted her decision to teach again at age fifty-five after so many years away from a classroom is revealing:

My daughter was teaching then at Duncan and she said "Why don't you go back teaching?" So I thought, Well, if my children say "Why don't you?" why don't I? because you don't like doing things that they're against. But it was *her* idea.

It almost seems as if it was an acknowledgment that her responsibilities to her family were now complete. She also implied that her experience of raising her own children may have contributed directly to improving her abilities in the classroom: "I have no illusions about

my work in the four years I was at Sugar Lake....but I know myself that when I went back teaching for 11 years...I did a much better job in every way than I had at 19 years of age."

When Alice became a teacher in the early 1920's it was not out of any great sense of calling or mission. As she stated: "Why I chose teaching - because I liked the idea better than nursing or business college." Furthermore over her working life she spent more time out of, as opposed to actively working within, the profession. But for Alice teaching was by no means just a prologue to anticipated marriage. Once she began teaching she came to love her work and was totally committed to the education and overall well-being of her pupils, both in and out of the classroom. In contrast to her initial pococurante attitude to the occupation is the real sense of her having been engaged in vocational work.

Ruby Lidstone nee Drasching¹² was born in December 1908 in Winnipeg, Manitoba, the first child of Ellen (nee Louch) and Martin Drasching. Her mother was from Warwickshire, England, and her father was of Swiss origins, although he had emigrated to England, where the young couple had met. They married in August 1906 and then almost immediately "sailed for Canada." The Drasching's settled in Winnipeg and worked in the hotel business, where they "did well for themselves." Two more children, sons, were born in 1911 and 1913. When war broke out in 1914 it changed the lives of the Drasching family:

The hotel business slackened and the...[h]otel was converted into a barracks for the soldiers....This was time for Martin to seek new employment and perhaps a new home....The mountains in B.C. reminded Martin of his native Switzerland, so after consulting his wife they decided to venture west.

In 1916 they exchanged their Winnipeg property for a farm at the foot of the Enderby cliffs in the north Okanagan. They built up a small mixed farm of cattle, chickens, a few fruit

¹²Unless otherwise stated the details on Ruby are taken from her unpublished memoirs which also includes a number of often uncited and undated newspaper clippings. Information in the newspaper articles that did not corroborate that in the memoirs was not used.

trees and bees. Their new life working on the land was certainly a "struggle" for this "gently-reared couple from the city" and often they "found it hard to make ends meet." As a child Ruby helped out on the farm whenever she could. She wrote that she "assisted her mother with the dressing of the poultry" and also contributed to the family effort "when the bees swarmed and when it was time to extract the honey."

Ruby's first year of schooling had been in Winnipeg and so when she came to British Columbia she entered grade two of the four-roomed school in Enderby. One of the teachers at the school, Miss M.V. Beattie, under whose guidance Ruby graduated from grade eight in 1922, "left a profound impression on her that lasted all her life" and was no doubt the person who most influenced Ruby into taking up teaching as a career.¹³ Ruby then attended the Enderby High School for three years before enrolling in the Normal School in Victoria in the fall of 1926. The following excerpt, which refers to her teacher training year, reveals the strong attachment Ruby felt towards her home and family and is an early indication of the enduring obligation she felt that it was her duty, first and foremost, to care for her family's needs:

This was Ruby's first experience away from home and many were the homesick nights and days....

Ruby did not go home for the Christmas holidays. Times were hard and money was scarce and her mother Ellen was not too well. She might never have returned for the second term had she seen how things were at home.

Her mother was dying of pernicious anaemia.

Ruby's year in Victoria was nevertheless an extremely enjoyable and important new experience, and one that "passed very quickly in spite of the hard work and a lot of study." She had formed a number of "firm friendships" with fellow female students and so it was "a sad affair" and "many were the tears that were shed" when the time came to leave the "halls of learning." On graduating from Normal School with a Second Class Teaching

¹³Ruby's great admiration for Beattie led her to write a short biography of her life. See Ruby E. Lidstone, "Mabel Beattie: Enderby's Honoured Pioneer," *OHSR* 41(1977): 149-152.

Certificate Ruby returned to the family farm in North Enderby and began the hunt for her first teaching assignment. Although she applied for many positions, in fact "one hundred of them that summer - many to the Prairie schools of Alberta and Saskatchewan" she was not unduly disappointed when she found herself still unemployed in September, because "her mother was far from well, indeed, she was soon to become seriously ill." Instead, to Ruby, "it seemed as if "it was meant to be" for she had this time with her mother and spent her evenings reading and sewing while her mother rested."

In December 1927 Ruby's 101st application was successful and she was appointed as the teacher of the one-room school at Grandview Bench, just above Grindrod, approximately five miles from North Enderby, and thus relatively near her home. In her memoirs Ruby emphasised the immense satisfaction she gained being financially self-sufficient for the first time in her life.

Wages were then just less than \$100 per month, with room and board \$35 monthly. Out of the balance Ruby paid \$50 a month to her father to pay off her normal expenses, so she was left with the grand sum of \$15 a month on which to manage. Yet this amount coming in regularly seemed to make her very rich and she was able to do so many things with her first earnings. She was at last able to buy some ready-made clothing.

During her first winter months at the school, when the weather was bad, Ruby boarded with a family who lived near the school. However, because her mother's health was "not getting better" she decided to make the effort to spend more time with her and returned home as often as she could. In July of 1928 Ruby attended summer school in Victoria. She did not go alone, however, but took her mother with her "so that she could see and smell the ocean once again..." As Mrs Drasching had by then "deteriorated very much" and was "very tiny and frail" she had to travel everywhere in a wheelchair. This was hard work for Ruby but she was only too pleased to see her mother happy.

Ruby returned to Grandview Bench that fall for a second year as the teacher at the school. However because her mother was now "bed-ridden most of the time" she was "very punctual with her Wednesday trip home from the Bench." In January her mother

finally passed away. Nevertheless, Ruby still made sure that she got home in mid-week to help her father and brothers by doing the household chores of cooking and cleaning.

In June 1929 tragedy again shattered Ruby's life when her father committed suicide. He had taken his wife's death "very hard" and afterwards a "sad, forlorn look settled on his face and never left it, inspite of all that was done to try to cheer him." No inquest was considered necessary because it was decided that he had "died of a broken heart." The months that followed her father's death were "a trying time" for Ruby, and one which involved "giving up her teaching duties and trying to operate the farm" with the help of her brothers.

Whilst teaching at Grandview Bench Ruby "attended her first public dances...held every so often in the schoolhouse." It was at one of these events that Ruby had met Clifford Lidstone, from Winfield. They had continued to see each other and during this difficult time he "offered help and encouragement." Love blossomed between Clifford and Ruby and "on a bitterly cold day with the thermometer at 40°F below zero" in January 1930 they were married. Clifford then purchased the Drasching farm, the house was renovated, and in October of that year "much joy and happiness came into their lives" when Eleanore, their only child, was born.

Although her career was, to quote Ruby, "interrupted" by the death of her father and then her marriage, this did not stop Ruby from continuing to harbour an interest in the work of young people. She taught Sunday school at the local Anglican church, was "a leader" in the Junior Women's Auxiliary for two years, and for three years retained the position of Diocesan Co-ordinator of the Girls' Auxilliary. However "as soon as she was able to"¹⁴ she was back in the classroom. In 1933 she began as a substitute teacher in the local schools and carried on in that capacity for thirteen years, although her daughter has

¹⁴Interview with Eleanore Bolton, daughter of Ruby Lidstone, 1 March 1989, Vernon, British Columbia.

suggested that Ruby did not really like substitute work because "there were no books to mark at night."¹⁵

After the Second World War the Lidstones sold the farm and moved into Enderby. Ruby then decided to return to the profession full-time and subsequently "taught continuously for 29¹/₂ years" in the Enderby area. In February 1946 she was appointed to teach in the Enderby Junior-Senior High School as "homeroom teacher" for grades six and seven. As the "only lady teacher on staff" she served as chaperone for all the Drama Club trips as well as the girls' sports activities. In 1953 she moved to the M.V. Beattie Elementary School, named after her former beloved teacher, where she remained until 1972. For the two years remaining prior to her retirement in June 1974, aged sixty-five, she taught at the A.L. Fortune Junior Secondary School where she specialised in teaching English and then later Guidance. Her daughter has suggested, however, that: "She was forced to retire. She would never have retired unless she'd been forced to."¹⁶ Thus although after 1974 Ruby did not teach full-time again she "substituted on a regular basis" and "in every capacity from kindergarten to grade 12." When she died in 1987 she had taught in the schools of Enderby and the surrounding area for over fifty years.

For almost two decades after she qualified as a teacher in 1927 Ruby's participation in the occupation was similar to that of many other women teachers, in that it was characterised by her periodic movement in and out of the workforce. There is no doubt that the need she felt to care for her parents and siblings, and then later her husband and daughter, clearly determined her life during those years. In terms of her life course as a whole, however, it was teaching that she seemed to value most. Accordingly, she resumed a full-time career as a teacher in 1946 when she felt her family responsibilities permitted her to do so. Although she may not have advanced very far up the professional ladder, she

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

certainly made teaching her life's work. Ruby loved teaching. In fact, as her daughter suggests, "She absolutely adored it."¹⁷ Furthermore she always remained, even beyond retirement, a committed teacher and educator who devoted her energies to the cause of education in both its narrow and wider definitions.

For Ruby, her success as a teacher was defined by her relationships with her students and the respect she won from the members of the community in which she lived and worked. In writing her memoirs she recorded little about what or how she taught, but emphasised instead the sense of satisfaction she got from the "extra curricular studies" she organised, such as the "craft club" held on Friday afternoons for her pupils at Grandview Bench School. The fact that she noted that the community were "loud in their praises of the pupil's handiwork, which would equal any done in a larger school with more equipment" is a clear illustration of her pride in her accomplishments as a teacher. She also noted that she was "instrumental" in helping the students in the Journalism Club produce the first Enderby Junior High School Annual in 1948, a tradition that continues to the present day. A "major reward" of Ruby's career was the "contacts maintained over long numbers of years with past students." To her it was "always a thrill to meet and to teach children of former pupils." Perhaps a more telling testimony of how she valued her work as a teacher is revealed in her expressed intention to "continue to live my life so that it might be an inspiration and example to my students and would hope that some small spark would remain to kindle their lives in the future." If the tributes paid to her when she retired in 1974 are any measure of her success, then Ruby was certainly a well-respected teacher who was held in high regard by her charges and colleagues alike. She noted that she was "feted on four separate occasions when teachers and students from all over the valley attended." She also revealed that it was a "highlight in her life" when, in 1978, the students

¹⁷Ibid.

in grade twelve at the A.L. Fortune School chose her as the guest speaker at their graduation ceremonies.

In addition to her work as a teacher within a school setting, Ruby remained throughout her career "keenly interested in" and actively involved with teacher associations, at both the local and provincial level, participating in many capacities ranging from secretary, vice-president, president and coordinator of public relations, to editor and publisher. In recognition of her long-term services she was the recipient of honorary life memberships of the Okanagan Valley Teachers' Association (1970), the Enderby District Teachers' Association (1970), and the British Columbia Teacher's Federation (1971), the latter two being the first of their kind to be awarded to a teacher still in active service. She was also a member of the Canadian College of Teachers, and became secretary and then president of the Okanagan Chapter of that organisation. Ruby regarded her contribution to these associations not only as an important element in her professional development, believing that "participation in this work has stimulated my classroom efforts."

Ruby was also a vital and active member of the community in which she lived for reasons other than in her capacity as a classroom teacher. Many local organisations such as the Junior Women's Auxiliary, North Enderby Ladies Club, the Queen's Committee, the Parent-Teacher Association, the Enderby Museum Society, and the Okanagan Historical Society have gained from Ruby's expertise. In fact it has been suggested that Ruby was "the best organized organizer organizing every organization" that she ever belonged to.¹⁸ Throughout her years of teaching Ruby also developed a love of writing and a desire to record the history of Enderby, thus ensuring its preservation for future generations. In addition to the many articles published in the Okanagan Historical Society's Annual Report and in the local newspaper, the Enderby Commoner, she has also written two books: In the Shadow of the Cliff: A History of North Enderby, with David Jones, and Schools of

¹⁸Marjorie Abbott-Pavelich, "Ruby Lidstone - Our Friend (1908-1987)," OHSR 52(1988): 109.

Enderby and District 1896-1965, the latter while "convalescing from a broken elbow in the spring of 1965." In 1979 Ruby was the "first person" to be chosen as Citizen of the Year by the Enderby Chamber of Commerce in recognition of her outstanding contribution to education and her community.

Lucy McCormick's parents were Annie and Isaac Hill who had met and married in Manchester, England in 1892, and emigrated to Ireland soon afterwards. They ran a small mixed farm in County Down, Northern Ireland, where Lucy was born in March 1910, and she and her other four siblings were raised. The eldest daughter and elder son moved out to British Columbia first, prior to the First World War, both settling in the Okanagan Valley, in Kelowna and Lumby respectively. Then in May 1921 the rest of the Hill family, except for one sister who remained in England, emigrated and came to Lumby where they also farmed. To Lucy's parents Canada offered "a better way of life away from the troubles in Ireland" in which to bring up a young family.

To begin with Lucy lived with her sister in Kelowna in order to attend the small two-room school in East Kelowna. Her parents had thought that it would have been too much of a "traumatic transition" for her to go immediately into the larger superior school in French-Canadian Lumby. After a year, however, she transferred to Lumby and then went on to high school in Vernon from where she graduated in 1928. The following year she attended the Victoria Normal School, attaining a Second Class Teaching Certificate. Lucy's first teaching post was the one-room school at Mabel Lake, a farming and logging district, to which she was appointed in November 1929 and where she stayed for four years. Like most novice teachers Mabel Lake was Lucy's "first experience being away from home" and also like so many others she had to come to terms with the often difficult situations and circumstances that rural teaching entailed. Teaching at Mabel Lake made a significant influence on Lucy in many ways, but particularly in terms of her personal development. She considered "self-sufficiency" as the most important lesson she learned from the

experience: "I don't think anything would faze me again. I felt I could have lived anywhere."

In September 1933 she moved to the one-room school at Shuswap Falls where she taught for a further seven years. It was during this period that Lucy met the person who changed the course of her life. As she explained:

I met my husband in 1936 as I was returning from the opening of the Vimy Ridge Memorial in France. My eldest brother was a Canadian soldier who survived the Battle of Vimy Ridge in W.W. I - on my way from France I detoured to England and Ireland and met Charlie on the S.S. Athenia returning to Canada.

As Charlie lived in Toronto, but also because they were uncertain of whether they should marry in such uncertain times, the young couple were only able to correspond at first. In November 1940, however Lucy, aged thirty, made the decision to resign her position at Shuswap Falls, give up teaching, and leave her home, family and rural existence to travel across Canada to the city of Toronto to marry Charlie. Unfortunately they were able to spend less than a year living together before Charlie, in service with the R.C.A.F., was posted to Brantford, outside Hamilton. Being alone in Toronto Lucy was at a "loose end" and "needed to do something." She did not wish to teach in a city school and so for a short period she worked for the Red Cross and became involved with "food administration." Then, being "a patriotic soul" she decided to join the R.C.A.F.W.D.¹⁹ The four years she spent in service during the war were, as she recalled "a very enjoyable part of my life." It was a new and exciting experience to her particularly so given the fact that she was a member of "the second [women's] squadron to be formed and the first to be sent out to R.C.A.F. stations." In her case she was posted near Ottawa.

On her release in March 1945 Lucy returned not to Toronto, but to her parents' home in the Okanagan. Although she "didn't intend to teach after the war" she was soon "commandeered" back into the classroom:

¹⁹Royal Canadian Air Force Women's Division.

I came home to Vernon as my father was ill and my former Inspector met me and asked me if I would consider teaching. I said 'no' as I had been away from teaching for 6 years. [H]owever as Charlie was still in [the] R.C.A.F. and not sure when he would be released I decided I'd keep busy.

Consequently, she taught for a year at Reiswig, a one-room school east of Lumby. The following year "still Charlie was away" so she agreed to take on the position of principal at Lavington, a two-room school in the Coldstream district. "So that," she stated, "made thirteen years of rural school teaching during depression years."

Charlie was finally released from the R.C.A.F. and so Lucy promptly gave up teaching again and returned to her husband in Toronto in 1947. He resumed his position at Timothy Eaton's and she was "back to keeping house." For the next six years Lucy was content in her role as a wife and partner to her husband and did not work during this time. In 1949 she and Charlie took a "belated honeymoon" and travelled to the United Kingdom to "meet my inlaws in Ireland and visit my sister in London.... We did a lot of travelling between 1948-53."

By 1953 Lucy had settled back into a life of domesticity, and as she stated "set up my home again." It was not long, however, before she felt that she was ready to return to the workforce, and indeed to teaching. At the same time she had also decided that she "didn't want to do regular mainstream teaching" and so began looking for a new challenge. Lucy was at a juncture in her life where the decisions she subsequently made resulted in the redirection of the path of her career as a teacher. As she explained:

To continue my education saga, in 1953 I became involved with the newly formed Toronto Association for the Mentally Retarded as a teacher. The upshot of this experience was I continued in this field....and although I had no special training...(there wasn't any available in Can[ada] or the U.S.) I learned by trial and error to the point where I was able to collect a certain expertise in this field and ended up teaching teachers at S[ummer] School.

The provision of special schooling for the mentally handicapped in Toronto was in its infancy in the early 1950's. As Lucy proudly claimed: "I was there at the very beginning with the work on retarded children....Nobody was qualified in those days [so] we learned as we went along." Originally hired as a classroom teacher she quickly moved into more

administrative positions, first as a principal of a school, then as supervising principal in charge of a number of schools, and finally as liaison coordinator for the Toronto area. Lucy continued working with the mentally handicapped in Toronto until she retired in 1975 at which time she and her husband then settled in the Coldstream in the Okanagan Valley. Lucy's career as a teacher had spanned thirty-five years.

Lucy's marriage to Charlie in 1940 had a major impact on the decisions she subsequently made regarding her work and career. Teaching had obviously been an important part of her life but for thirteen years following her marriage she more or less withdrew from the profession. Even though she did teach for a year each at two other rural schools just after the Second World War, the fact that at one of these schools - Reiswig - she "didn't sign a contract" but "worked month by month" clearly illustrates that her participation in the occupation at that time was merely a temporary expedient whilst she was waiting for her husband to return from his war-time service.

Marriage to Charlie meant living in Toronto and this represented a new experience for Lucy. All her life she had lived in rural areas, and since the age of eleven, in the Okanagan Valley. She must have found the transition to city life in Toronto exciting but also daunting and she did not feel comfortable about teaching in a city school. However when she became aware of work that was just starting to be done to provide special education for children with developmental handicaps she saw an opportunity to make a real contribution. She joined the Parents Council for Retarded Children and was initially hired to teach at the rate of "\$4 per day." Significantly it was her wide experience in rural schools which had required her to cope with children of very diverse abilities and ages together in one room that had impressed her interviewers so much and prompted them to hire Lucy as a classroom teacher. She loved her new work - "I got to enjoy it so much" - that she devoted the next twenty-two years to the cause of improving educational facilities for mentally handicapped children, mainly in the capacity of an administrator, where she was in a more powerful position to initiate and carry through such improvements.

Lucy has been described as "a remarkable woman" who was "instrumental in getting education for the mentally handicapped in Toronto."²⁰ Indeed two years after she had retired, the Metropolitan Toronto School Board built a new school for students with developmental handicaps and named it the Lucy McCormick Senior School in her honour. Lucy "went back to Toronto for the opening" of the school in October 1977 and although generally taciturn about her accomplishments as a teacher her description of the school itself reveals, in an indirect way, how proud Lucy is of this particular achievement: "It is a two storey building with air conditioning, elevator, carpeted throughout...a far cry from my rural school days!"

In many ways the details of Lucy's early career in teaching portray the stereotype of the young female teacher who taught in rural one- and two-room schools for a number of years and then left the profession to marry and pursue a life of domesticity. But Lucy, like so many other women teachers, later returned to her life as a teacher and used the skills acquired in her rural classroom to shape her life in new dimensions. Her contribution to the development of the highly specialised field of education for the mentally handicapped in Toronto was, and still is, an exceptional achievement.

Hilda Cryderman²¹ was the daughter of William and Ella Cryderman (nee Donaldson) who had both been born and raised in Ontario, he near Hamilton and she in Ayr. They both then emigrated, independently, to British Columbia, settling in Okanagan Landing, in 1892 and 1890 respectively. They were married in Vernon in 1895. William became a prominent architect and contractor who "built many fine homes and buildings

²⁰Telephone conversation with D. Secord, Vice-Principal (Summer School), Lucy McCormick Senior School, Toronto, July 22 1992.

²¹Unless otherwise stated the details on Hilda are taken from letters sent to me by Nancy Jermyn on March 25 and 30 1992. Various other materials relating to Hilda such as her Curriculum Vitae, a letter from the B.C.T.F. to the Business and Professional Women's Club, newspaper articles that refer to her, published papers authored by her and photographs of Hilda were enclosed along with the personal letters. Nancy and Hilda "shared a home for 45 years together."

throughout the Okanagan Valley" including the family home which was situated just outside the centre of Vernon. The Cryderman's raised a family of four girls, although one sadly died at the age of fifteen, and two boys. Hilda, born on May 10 1904, was the third eldest.

Hilda attended both elementary and high school in Vernon before entering the Victoria Normal School in 1923. On graduating with a first class teaching certificate a year later, Hilda obtained her first teaching post as principal of the two-roomed school in the Coldstream which she commenced in September 1924, aged nineteen. Hilda remained as principal of the school for thirteen years.

In 1936 Hilda was responsible for pioneering "School of the Air" radio broadcasts by organising pilot school programmes in the Okanagan Valley, which were later adopted by the Department of Education and expanded by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Towards the end of her tenure at the Coldstream School Hilda decided that she wanted to improve her academic credentials and so she attended summer school at the University of British Columbia for three years, specialising in History, Economics and Political Geography, before obtaining her B.A. in 1937. In the fall of that year she was "invited" to teach Business Law, Canadian History and International Studies at the newly opened Vernon Senior Secondary School. In 1938 she again spent her summer at the University of British Columbia, this time to do post graduate studies in Vocational Guidance and Counselling, but also as President of that summer session. In 1939, in addition to her regular classroom teaching responsibilities, Hilda was appointed as girls counsellor, and then later as head of the Guidance Department for secondary schools in the Vernon district, again pioneering in this specialised area of education.

In 1942 Hilda was selected by the Department of Labour to organise and direct the "Save the Berry Crop" campaign. The project entailed her supervising a group of a hundred high school girls from Vancouver who had volunteered to pick the crops on the farms that had been vacated by the Japanese farmers in Mission, in the Fraser Valley. The task took

five weeks, mostly over the summer vacation, after which the fruit was subsequently processed and shipped to Britain to be made into jam for the Armed Forces. Between 1943 and 1945 Hilda took a leave of absence from teaching when she was drafted by the Canadian Legion Educational Services to act as educational counsellor for the Women's Forces in the Pacific Command. Basically her mandate was to help service women who wished to improve their education in preparation for their return to civilian life. In this capacity she travelled throughout British Columbia and set up forty-five classes in Navy, Army, and Airforce stations, and in military hospitals. In 1944 she attended the Victoria Summer School of Education as lecturer in Guidance and Counselling. Hilda returned to her teaching duties at the conclusion of the war and remained as a teacher and counsellor at the Vernon Senior High School for another twenty-two years. She took early retirement from teaching in 1967, aged 63, when she was appointed to a seven-year term as the "only woman" Federal Commissioner on the Public Service Staff Relations Board of Canada. She died in 1985 having taught for forty-three years.

As a young girl Hilda had been something of a "tomboy" and spent much of her childhood "playing with the boys in the neighbourhood." She had been brought up to be independent and to be confident in herself and her abilities. She was also encouraged to believe that she could achieve whatever she wanted out of life. In this context her mother had an important and influential effect on her: "I had a wonderful mother. She never even suggested that I should not play baseball and hockey with the boys of the neighbourhood. My mother never suggested I might fail in anything I was planning to do."

Hilda had "always wanted to be a teacher. She loved knowledge and [was] interested in teaching young minds. It was a challenge." The circumstances leading to her appointment to her first teaching job illustrate well Hilda's determination to achieve her goals. As a result of "a discipline problem in the school" the Coldstream School Board had been experiencing some difficulties with regards to staffing. In his report for April 8 1924 Inspector T.R. Hall noted: "Teacher in charge for two weeks, being the third teacher since

January." The position was again vacant in the summer of the same year and so Hilda, eager to remain in the Okanagan Valley, immediately applied for it. In an interview in a local newspaper almost thirty years later Hilda recounted how she had to "battle" to get the job however because the trustees had wanted to hire a male teacher as principal of the school: "The trustees were dubious...they scratched their heads...mumbled into their beards..."We really would prefer a man," they said. "In fact we need a man."²² In spite of this opposition the redoubtable Hilda broke down their defences and managed to persuade them otherwise. She had been confident she could "do just as good a job as any man" and told the school board just that.

It appears likely that Hilda's experience at the Coldstream School, which certainly must have been a challenge, was critical in terms of the future course of her career. Over her thirteen years at the school she became firmly committed to the value of education and to the fundamental importance of equality in access and opportunity for all. Moreover she became passionately concerned about the rights and status of women in society in general. Specifically she was interested in the advancement of women's career opportunities, and particularly, but by no means exclusively, in her own profession. In her roles as classroom teacher and principal it is probable that she developed and perfected strong organisational and stategical skills and discovered her talent for leadership. In short she must have been empowered by this first teaching assignment. Hilda's general "philosophy for living" which she maintained throughout her adult life, must surely have been born during her formative years as a young girl and then consolidated over the period she taught in the Coldstream:

Whenever she took on a project she made it a success. She never thought about failure and she anticipated all the things that might happen and was ready for them. She never said "no" when asked to do something for the benefit of others....She was always positive and knew her facts and had them straight. She was a leader.

²²Vancouver Sun, Magazine Supplement, July 2, 1955, Mabel Johnson, "She is Head of Her Class," 4.

As a woman of growing ambition her experience as a rural school teacher provided Hilda with the confidence, but more importantly the opportunity, to seek out and be elected into positions in organisations - local, provincial and national - that enabled her to actively work towards correcting what she observed as injustices and inequalities in life. Teaching thus gave Hilda the means to act powerfully and influentially in the larger public arena outside of the school setting.

Some of Hilda's primary concerns were "to improve the role of teachers, the standing of teachers and high standards in education." In her capacity as president of the North Okanagan Teachers' Association (1936), the Okanagan Valley Teachers' Association (1939), the first woman to be elected to these offices, Hilda was in a position to generate initiatives towards achieving these objectives. In 1946 she chaired the Strategy Committee that won equal pay for women teachers in the Okanagan Valley, the first to do so in the country. In an interview given for a local newspaper in 1985, six months before her death, Hilda revealed that this particular achievement was still her "most thrilling personal moment." She stated: "I remember the strategy and excitement of winning equal pay for women teachers in 1946. We were the first in Canada. Arbitration was a dirty word then."²³ In 1953 she served as chairman of the Equal Pay Committee that successfully petitioned the government to enact the Equal Pay Act in British Columbia that year. Nancy Jermyn, Hilda's lifelong friend and companion, has related a incident that sums up the real significance of these achievements:

Some years later we were at a Bus[iness] and Prof[essional] Women's [Club] meeting in Grand Forks and a girl, a teacher, when she heard Hilda was present, said "I must go and meet Hilda and thank her, after all she put the bread on our table."

No doubt Hilda's success with the equal pay issue led to her election as president of the British Columbia Teachers' Federation in 1954, again the first woman in the office in

²³Vernon Daily News, June 29, 1985, Lynn Atkins, "Order of Canada for Local Woman."

the organisation's thirty-five year history. In a tribute to Hilda, R.M. Buzza, Executive Director of the B.C.T.F. in 1982, wrote:

It was the women teachers of B.C. who asked Hilda Cryderman to be their candidate to climb up through the two vice-presidencies to the President of the British Columbia Teachers Federation.

For three consecutive years women from all the local associations in the province saw that they were delegates to the Teachers Conventions to vote for Hilda.

In 1954 the teachers had their first woman president, Hilda Cryderman. In the next ten years there were another two women presidents - that was Hilda's way always to make it possible for other women to follow....

Hilda we salute you!²⁴

In recognition of her service Hilda was awarded honorary life memberships of both the Okanagan Valley Teachers' Association (1967) and the British Columbia Teachers' Federation (1969), and was awarded the Fergusson Memorial Award (1971), the highest award given by the B.C.T.F.

Hilda's desire to improve the status of women extended beyond her own profession. Holding executive offices locally, as well as at the provincial and national level, Hilda made important contributions to the Business and Professional Women's Club, to which she was granted Honorary Life Membership (1958), the Council of Women, the University Women's Club and the National Native Women's Association, the latter awarding her Honorary Membership and their Beaded Medallion in 1972, "a very special honor and rarely given."²⁵ She was a very accomplished platform speaker and in 1975 travelled extensively throughout Canada and the United States giving invited lectures to promote International Women's Year. In 1978, in recognition of her contribution to "the advancement of women in all fields but more particularly her outstanding service in improving the status of women in the teaching profession," Hilda was made an Honorary

²⁴Buzza had been invited, as he stated, to "contribute something in writing for the Business and Professional Women's Club 50th Anniversary Dinner Tribute to Hilda Cryderman on behalf of the British Columbia Teachers [sic] Federation." The tribute is dated April 5, 1982.

²⁵Nancy Jermyn, "Hilda Cryderman," *OHSR* 50(1986): 147.

Member of the Alpha Province of the Delta Kappa Gamma Society International Organisation of Educators. In 1982 she was named "Woman of the Century" by the Vernon Business and Professional Women's Club.

Hilda was interested in working not only for the benefit of women but "for people of all ages and in all walks of life."²⁶ As a result she became actively involved in many organisations and served on innumerable committees concerned with educational and human rights issues. Moreover she was an "excellent Parliamentarian" and, although defeated, ran as Liberal candidate for the Okanagan-Revelstoke Riding in the 1953 and 1957 federal elections. In 1985 her "lifetime of leadership and service" resulted in her being awarded the Order of Canada, and made the first Honorary Member of the Human Rights Institute of Canada.²⁷

Hilda was in some respects atypical of most women teachers who began their careers in the 1920's. First of all, she never married but remained single all her life. She placed great store on her independence. The financial self-sufficiency that she gained as an unmarried teacher was important to her because, initially, she was "the sole support of her family for a long time. She paid for a business course for her younger sister and brother and supported her mother." Later Hilda came to thrive on her autonomy. Teaching gave her the economic security to pursue the other issues about which she cared so passionately: "She enjoyed her independence and freedom to do the things she wanted to do. Helping people was more important to her and righting injustices wherever she found them."

Secondly, also unlike the vast majority of female teachers, Hilda's career as a teacher, except for her war-time service, was uninterrupted. She taught continuously from her graduation from Normal School to her retirement. Interestingly, however, her principalship of the Coldstream School aside, she never aspired to move up into the

²⁶Ibid., 146.

²⁷Ibid.

administrative hierarchies of the schools in which she taught. She clearly had the leadership skills to do so but instead chose to remain a classroom teacher and counsellor. Although her influence extended well beyond her work as a teacher, it was teaching, defined not as the transmission of a curriculum but as the ability to reach the hearts and minds of young people and the satisfaction of knowing that their lives may have been enriched or improved by her efforts, that Hilda valued most. Indeed, as she once stated: "But don't forget -- most of all, I'm a teacher."²⁸

Bernard C. Gillie was born in 1907 on the family farm in the Strawberry Vale district of Victoria, British Columbia. His father, whose family came from Scotland, and his mother, from eastern Canada, were two of the thousands of people who came out west looking for a better life. Although they had originally met and married in Nicola, and established a large cattle ranch there, in 1906, when Bernard's father became almost blind as a result of a serious illness, they moved to Victoria and settled on what was then a fifty acre farm in Strawberry Vale.

Bernard began school in 1914 in the one-room school in Strawberry Vale near the family home. Then when a new two-room building was completed, he transferred there to complete his elementary education to grade eight. He entered the Oak Bay High School which involved travelling a twenty mile round trip each day between home and school. On graduating from high school in 1923 Bernard enrolled at Victoria College for one year. Then, as money was tight, he decided that the best course of action would be to take teacher training, teach for a few years, and return to university, this time to the University of British Columbia, to pursue his real desire, which was forestry engineering. He therefore spent one year at Victoria Normal School. His one year at University made him

²⁸Johnson, "She is Head of her Class," 4.

eligible to graduate from Normal School with a First Class Teaching Certificate with honours standing.

Representative of many other young teachers in the 1920's, Bernard was faced with little choice as to the type or location of the school for his first teaching assignment. In the event it turned out to be the one-room school in the tiny mill town of Hutton Mills, seventy-five miles east of Prince George, where he remained for one year. Bernard's second teaching post was as principal of the two-room school at Ellison, a "typical farming community" based mainly on fruit and tobacco growing, located approximately ten miles from Kelowna in the Okanagan Valley. He was surprised that his application to the school had been successful: "Here am I, one year's experience and not very good experience at that, having not the foggiest idea what a principal did for a living outside of teach school." The circumstances surrounding his appointment are revealing. They hint at the stereotypical attitudes that existed at the time towards women, as compared to men, in terms of the different locations they occupied, and functions they performed, within the hierarchy of a school, and the different chances for promotion that existed within that hierarchy, at least as perceived by Bernard.

[When] I went to Ellison in 1927-8...very, very few women were appointed to administrative positions....Women didn't apply for those jobs. It never occurred to a woman in those days to apply as a principal....That's a fact."

The teacher appointed to take charge of the junior classroom at Ellison was a local woman from Kelowna. Bernard was of the opinion that:

She could have been principal just as well as I could have done. No question. [But] it would never have occurred to anybody to appoint her. In fact people would have been really quite stunned if you had suggested that they [appoint a woman]. Equally, in turn....if somebody had suggested that I go there and that she be the principal, I don't think I'd have gone. I would have regarded that as a blot on my masculine escutcheon or something...²⁹

²⁹The desire of the school board for a "male teacher for the principal" is noted in the school minutes for 1927. See School District #23, Kelowna, Ellison Public School, Minutes of Meetings, June 25 1927, page 95.

At the end of his first year at Ellison Bernard considered that he had done well enough to warrant an increase in salary and so he gave the school board an ultimatum: more money or his resignation. They accepted his resignation. The summer of 1928 saw Bernard back in Victoria. By this time his vision of forestry engineering had begun to fade. Instead, discovering that he "liked teaching" and in fact "enjoyed all aspects of it" and because he thought he was "fairly good at it," he decided to change his plans and pursue a career in the teaching profession.

In the fall of 1928 he began a three-year stint as the principal of the two-room school at Britannia Beach, a copper mining company town less than thirty miles up the coast from Vancouver. During this period Bernard became heavily involved with the B.C.T.F., eventually serving as President of the Federation for a term in the mid-1940's. He maintained his association with the B.C.T.F. until the early 1960's when he went north. In 1931 Bernard returned to Victoria once more, this time to teach. He had been hired by the Oak Bay School District to teach at the Monterey Elementary School, a position he subsequently held for nine years. In 1940, he changed schools, but not school board, when he was appointed first as vice-principal, and then later principal, of the Willows Elementary School. Bernard was determined to complete the Bachelor's degree he had begun in 1923 and so during the nineteen years that he was employed by the Oak Bay School District, he also attended summer school for "eleven straight summers" as well as "night classes" and "Saturday lectures" at the University of Victoria. He was finally awarded both a B.A. and B.Ed. In 1950, when the S.J. Willis Junior High School in Victoria opened its doors for the first time, Bernard C. Gillie stood at the helm as the principal and remained there for ten years.

By 1962, with only a decade left until his retirement, Bernard decided that he wanted "to try something quite different." Two positions for a district superintendent of schools had become available in the Northwest Territories: one each for the Eastern and Western Arctic. He applied for both and was given the choice of either one. He opted for

the latter. So in 1962 Bernard along with his wife - he had married in 1958 - six-month-old baby girl, and huge Great Dane, Dusty, began the long 1 500 mile drive north to his new job. Based in Fort Smith, Bernard, in his capacity as superintendent, was responsible for sixty-five schools in the vast area covering the Mackenzie River District. He remained in this job for ten years, the last four of which he was director of education for the whole of the Northwest Territories from east to west.

On retiring in 1972 Bernard and his family, which now included two daughters, returned to Victoria and the family home in Strawberry Vale. He was not ready, however, to forfeit his involvement in the educational world and so determined to continue to keep his "hand in education." Lecturing part-time in the Faculty of Education at the University of Victoria for a short period, Bernard also became involved in a number of education-related projects in association with the University. For a number of years he assisted in the provision of a resource service for teachers called L.E.A.R.N. (Laboratory for Educational Advancement: Resources and Needs). He also acted in an advisory capacity in the selection and preparation of materials being compiled on the Haida Indians of the Queen Charlotte Islands. During the 1970's he spent five years as a member of the University Council for British Columbia, a government appointed body set up to administer the finances and programmes of British Columbia's three universities. In recognition of his services to education the University of Victoria awarded him an honorary doctorate.

It was never Bernard's original intention to become a life-long teacher. Rather he viewed the occupation as a means of achieving what he really wanted out of life, and in this sense teaching was initially merely a fundraiser to him. As he explained: "The idea was that I would teach for a few years, get enough money to go to university to do forestry...[This] was so common with so many people who taught in those days....It was a stepping stone." In addition, as he pointed out, his year at Hutton Mills was in many respects typical of countless other beginning teachers, female as well as male. However once he had made the decision to pursue teaching as a "career" he was determined to get ahead.

Unlike many of the women teachers interviewed, whose work patterns for their teaching careers indicated a somewhat bi-modal distribution due to their intermittent work records, Bernard's participation in the occupation was not only continuous but also entailed rapid advancement through the ranks. He quickly progressed from being a teacher in a tiny one-room school to the position of principal in a two-roomed school. From there he successfully sought promotion into positions in the administrative hierarchies of large multi-divisional schools in urban areas. His career culminated in his appointment as director of education for the whole of the Northwest Territories.

Significantly, and again unlike the majority of women teachers, Bernard's career was largely unaffected by his personal family commitments. He retained a strong attachment to his home in Strawberry Vale, and indeed during the Depression years of 1930's took the decision to live at home in order to provide his parents with financial support during a difficult time. He also married, albeit later in life, and he and his wife raised two children. But, however important these occurrences were, and indeed are, to Bernard, they did little to interrupt and/or alter the course of his career. Bernard may well represent an extreme example of the male career path in teaching, but his story is important nevertheless because it draws attention to the basic and fundamental differences in experience that existed between men and the majority of women in terms of the nature of their participation in the occupation.

Under traditional occupational theory the structure of career is based on a vertical model which is comprised of two fundamental components: advancement or upward mobility, and continuous and long-term career commitment. In the light of such a definition many of the women whose work histories have been recounted here would not be regarded as committed career teachers in that their participation entailed neither continuous nor progressive advancement in the occupation. Moreover, pursuing a "career" as a teacher in the traditional sense was not necessarily always the main priority in their lives and certainly

had little to do with what they viewed as commitment to the job. Recent sociological research has begun to question whether the vertical conceptualisation of career is at all appropriate to an understanding of the relationship between women and their commitment to work and career. Sari Knopp Biklen has described the ways in which women's work lives have generally been examined as both "inadequate and misleading" because they are based on "stereotypical assumptions about women" and as a result "we are hindered in thinking clearly about the work women do because of our immersion in a sociology of occupations which takes the lives of men as the norm."³⁰ But, as Rosemary Grant makes plain: "[T]he career perceptions and concomitant experiences of women are different from men's in important ways." She argues that for women, far more than for men, "home and family circumstances" have "powerful effects" on women's careers and as a result their "career pathways" are necessarily "locked into, and shaped by, developments in their personal lives."³¹ Sandra Acker also views the "male-as-norm assumption" as problematic because of the tendency in conventional sociological writing "to take male experience as the norm to which women are then (unfavourably) compared." As a consequence, she argues that:

Writers get tangled up trying to equate 'commitment' with what men do. 'Lack of commitment' turns out to mean interruptions for childrearing; 'commitment' to mean furthering one's career, especially by moving out of classroom teaching.³²

Scholars such as Biklen, Grant and Acker suggest the need to go beyond analyses of the working lives of women where the sole criteria used are the expectations and experiences that have characterised most men's work lives and which in turn view any

³⁰Sari Knopp Biklen, "Can Elementary Schoolteaching Be a Career?: A Search for New Ways of Understanding Women's Work," *Issues in Education* 3, 3(Winter 1985): 217.

³¹Rosemary Grant, "Women Teachers' Career Pathways" Towards an Alternative Model of 'Career'," in *Teachers, Gender and Careers*, ed. Sandra Acker (New York: The Falmer Press, 1989), 39, 47.

³²Sandra Acker, "Women and Teaching: A Semi-Detached Sociology of a Semi-Profession," in *Gender, Class & Education*, eds. Walker and Barton, 128

departures from the male and thus "normal" work pattern as failure or deviation. The issue of women's career commitment has to be understood somewhat differently. A revised approach is sought that supplements, if not replaces, the vertical model of career with "alternative" conceptualisations that take into account women's own perspectives and thus "fits more readily with the realities of women's lives."³³ As Biklen contends: "A generic career model must, at its base, account for the lives of both men and women equally well."³⁴

In the course of her interviews with female secondary school deputy head teachers Grant found that for many of the women "motherhood was a highly valued role." This led her to suggest:

[G]iven traditional role expectations and responsibilities it is inappropriate to expect the majority of women to adopt the consistently single-minded approach to career advancement....Nor do they necessarily wish to do so if this means forfeiting other equally fulfilling aspects of their lives....The probability is that many women will attempt to juggle family and career roles and that there will be times - possibly in mid-career - when their career advancement will be constrained by family demands. It is important, therefore, to regard women's avowed intentions to pursue career goals as being subject to fluctuation and change.³⁵

Biklen studied the attitudes of a group of female elementary teachers towards their work, and how they negotiated their work interests with sex role and family expectations. She discovered that although they were not always "physically engaged in full-time teaching" because they withdrew from the profession for periods of time over the course of their careers, usually to have children, the women she interviewed "always considered" themselves as teachers. This apparent contradiction stemmed from the fact that the women saw that "bearing and caring for children of one's own did not necessarily reflect upon

³³Grant, "Women Teachers' Career Pathways," 39.

³⁴Biklen, "Can Elementary Schoolteaching Be a Career?" 228.

³⁵Grant, "Women Teachers' Career Pathways," 41.

one's career commitment."³⁶ Moreover they "questioned why breaks for child-rearing were equated with lack of job commitment when they had always thought of themselves as teachers."³⁷ Biklen described the career pattern for these women teachers as one defined by "internal consistency about one's occupation rather than continuing external employment."³⁸ As she explained:

Externally, then, the lives of these women represent the interrupted career pattern. Internally, however, they thought of themselves as teachers, whether or not they were in the job market, and they made choices that kept them close to children or to educational concerns. While they did not, in some ways, challenge the boundaries of their lives, they exhibited a coherence in their attitude toward their work.³⁹

As noted earlier, commitment to a career usually is seen as inseparable from upward mobility. The women teachers interviewed by Biklen also brought a different perspective to this issue. She found that the most "committed" teachers brought a "high level of idealism" to their work which caused them to concentrate on the "quality of work and work setting."⁴⁰ The children were clearly the "core" of their work and this focus determined to a large extent their "work orientation." To quote Biklen:

It is this kind of work orientation that I define as idealistic, because it reflects a person's ideal concept of how a job ought to be done. The teachers focused on the content of the occupation, rather than on their work as a link to other occupational choices. Quality of performance overrode career value. These teachers often thought of how they served the occupation rather than of how the occupation could serve them.⁴¹

Although no doubt exists that opportunities for promotion within the school were limited, the teachers idealism about their work also affected their attitudes concerning how

³⁶Ibid., 220.

³⁷Ibid., 223.

³⁸Ibid., 220.

³⁹Ibid., 223.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid., 224.

worthwhile it would be to move out of their classrooms and up the administrative hierarchy of the school. The immense sense of "personal satisfaction" from having gained "reputations as great teachers" was of vital importance to these women teachers because it enabled them to "wield more power and strengthen their autonomy....As the teachers saw it, to be a great teacher meant "something." They were not sure that being a great administrator carried an equal weight."⁴²

Ellen Lewin and Virginia Olesen have developed the concept of "lateralness" as a "viable and meaningful career pattern" for women.⁴³ In their study of female nurses they found that for certain of the women they interviewed their careers were characterised not by "advancement" but by "rewards of intensification" by which they were referring to the "personal satisfaction" derived from "a sense of work well done."⁴⁴ As they explain:

[G]etting better at her job constitutes a central source of satisfaction for the lateral nurse. The pattern which emerges shows that this factor of intensification - the sense of importance which grows from heightening the attributes of the job, becoming more skilful, and relating more sensitively to patients - not only is reflected in stated job satisfaction but may also become an element in the definition of advancement.⁴⁵

Likewise, Jennifer Nias, in her analysis of a group of elementary teachers, the vast majority of whom were female, revealed that most frequently the word "commitment" was used synonymously with "caring." Individual teachers were in the occupation because they felt "'the need to give' [often] because they 'care about children'." In this sense commitment to a teaching career entailed "a high level of 'inclusion'...[where] self and role

⁴²Ibid., 227.

⁴³Ellen Lewin and Virginia Olesen, "Lateralness in Women's Work: New Views on Success," Sex Roles 6, 4(August 1980): 626.

⁴⁴Ibid., 619, 624.

⁴⁵Ibid., 625.

are necessarily fused."⁴⁶ An equally large proportion of the respondents used "commitment" to mean "occupational competence" where their definition of the word was characterised by a concern with "taking the job seriously" and "'doing the job well'."⁴⁷ In both cases "'commitment' meant 'involvement'...i.e. a willingness to give thought, time and energy to the day-to-day performance of the job."⁴⁸ In contrast, and significantly, Nias reported that as far as commitment defined as "career-continuance" was concerned she "encountered only three direct references...all of them from men."⁴⁹ These findings did not mean that those who used commitment in the sense of "caring" or "occupational competence" did not wish to pursue careers as teachers. They clearly did.

Locating women's work as teachers within the context of the above literature not only helps clarify the nature of their involvement in the profession but also provides a framework for evaluating the dynamics of what teaching meant as work to women. Such an approach brings to the fore the potential problems inherent in making inferences and/or assumptions about the inevitability of women's work experience from outside the framework of the women themselves and of imposing a set meaning on what that experience involved. As the details of the lives of the women teachers presented in this thesis clearly show these women were able to construct lives within the confines of what it meant to be a woman, and indeed woman teacher, in the 1920's, and to meet their own needs in very personal and sometimes unexpected ways. Any analysis of women's work must therefore be derived from women workers' own perceptions and definitions of work

⁴⁶Jennifer Nias, "'Commitment' and Motivation in Primary School Teachers," Educational Review 33, 3(November 1981): 184-5.

⁴⁷Ibid., 186-7.

⁴⁸Ibid., 182.

⁴⁹Ibid., 188.

must therefore be derived from women workers' own perceptions and definitions of work and career.

CONCLUSION

This case study of teachers and teaching in the rural schools of British Columbia's Okanagan Valley in the 1920s is significant on a number of levels. The findings corroborate many of the conclusions reached by other scholars whose research interests have focussed on the phenomenon of rural schooling elsewhere in the early decades of the twentieth century. In many respects, the nature of rural school conditions and teacher experience in the Okanagan Valley were found to be similar to those recorded in other studies relating to different regions of British Columbia,¹ as well as across Canada² and the United States.³ Irrespective of geographical location rural teacher populations were

¹See the work of Wilson and Stortz, as well as David C. Jones cited in the bibliography and discussed at length in Chapter One of this thesis, especially pages 40-42. See also Adams and Thomas, Floating Schools and Frozen Inkwells for an interesting, albeit less academically rigorous, account of rural schooling that is based on the reminiscences of former teachers and pupils.

²For scholarly studies of the Prairies in the inter-war period see Robert S. Patterson, "Voices From the Past: The Personal and Professional Struggle of Rural School Teachers," and David C. Jones, "Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties," both published in Schools in the West, eds. Sheehan, Wilson and Jones, 99-111 and 265-283. See also Jones' "Glory, Glory to Alberta," which is included as a chapter in his Empire of Dust, 176-202. The lives of teachers and pupils in rural schools on the Prairies can also be found in the work of John C. Charyk whose approach to the subject is anecdotal rather than analytical but informative nevertheless. See The Little White Schoolhouse. Volumes 1-3 (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1968-1977), Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails: Memories of the One-Room School (Saskatoon: Western Producer, 1983) and The Biggest Day of the Year: The Old-Time School Christmas Concert (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1985). John Abbott has addressed two important issues relating to rural education in Ontario: the difficulties involved in the provision of schooling for children in isolated districts and the often problematic relationship between rural teachers and their inspectors. See "Hostile Landscapes and the Spectre of Illiteracy: Devising Retrieval Systems for "Sequestered" Children in Northern Ontario 1875-1930," in An Imperfect Past: Education and Society in Canadian History, ed. J. Donald Wilson (Vancouver: Centre for Curriculum and Instruction, University of British Columbia, 1984), 181-194, and "Accomplishing "a Man's Task"." For a more popular piece that is based primarily on the personal recollections of former teachers who taught in rural Ontario, see Myrtle Fair, I Remember the One-Room School (Cheltenham, Ontario: The Boston Mills Press, 1979). Studies of rural schooling and teaching in Quebec and Newfoundland can be found in Jacques Dorion, Les ecoles de rang au Quebec (Montreal: Editions de l'homme, 1979) and Phillip McCann, ed. Blackboards and Briefcases: Personal Stories by Newfoundland Teachers, Educators and Administrators (St. John's: Jespersen Press, 1982). For a general overview of Canada as a whole see Cochrane, The One-Room School in Canada.

³Particularly useful here are Link, A Hard Country and a Lonely Place, Wayne Fuller, The Old Country School: The Story of Education in the Midwest (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) and Wayne E. Fuller. "The Teacher in the Country School," in American Teachers: Histories of a Profession at

typically comprised of young, single, and primarily female individuals. They were also generally inadequately trained and highly transient. The often gruelling professional and social conditions encountered by these teachers in small, isolated, and usually impoverished communities, that suffered from inadequate and often unreliable transportation and communication networks, tested the will and stamina of the strongest of individuals. Rural teachers toiled long hours in poorly equipped buildings where they struggled with seemingly insurmountable pedagogical difficulties and responsibilities. They had to tolerate primitive, sometimes uncongenial, and occasionally hostile living arrangements. They suffered from constant local scrutiny, frequently highly critical, of both their working and private lives. And in all of this many endured great personal and professional isolation and loneliness. Taken together such circumstances ensured that life for the lone teacher in a remote school district was at the very least trying. For some it was intolerable. Yet not for all. Despite the uniformly grim circumstances of rural teaching many teachers regarded their experiences as gratifying and enjoyable. The question I posed was, why?

This question was answered by documenting the experience of rural teaching from the intimate perspective of the teachers themselves. Oral interviews with former teachers, as well as details from personal history documents, revealed that teacher experience in rural schools was by no means homogeneous. In fact the weight of evidence pointed to diversity rather than uniformity of experience. Thus, although rural teachers may have shared some common demographic characteristics, and often had to cope with similar occupational and social problems and stresses, it was found that a crucial aspect of the rural teaching experience was the very personal nature of that experience. The underlying relationship that

Work, ed. Donald Warren (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1989), 98-117. See also Andrew Gulliford, America's Country Schools (Washington, D.C.: The Preservation Press, 1984) and Cuban, How Teachers Taught.

existed between the individual teacher and the local world of education in rural districts was of fundamental importance in determining the nature of teacher experience.

A central theme of the study was the profound influence that localism and community conditions had in shaping the educational structures and practices that evolved in these districts. Localism ensured that each school and the community in which it was situated was different. The experiences of each teacher depended on such factors as the particular school in which they taught, the community in which the school was located, and the character of the school's organisation and management as dictated by the school board. Consequently the specific circumstances encountered by individual teachers varied enormously. The influence of localism had significant implications for teacher experience, and ultimately, played a predominant role in determining the nature of that experience. The unique economic, social, political and personal circumstances that existed in each community resulted in often extremely disparate teaching experiences from one school to the next. Thus, as this study argued, to comprehend fully the historical experience of rural teachers it is essential to examine that experience in the context of the local communities in which rural teachers' lives were embedded.

While the recollections of former teachers indicated that local conditions certainly had a decisive effect on their experiences in rural schools, the role played by more personal factors was found to be equally, if not more, significant. The very structure and organisation of rural society, with its inherent isolation and insularity, meant that in order to attain a degree of success teachers had to conform to the idiosyncracies of the particular community in which they taught. The extent to which teachers were disposed to adjust to the circumstances in which they found themselves depended primarily on their upbringing and social background, as well as their personality. Teacher reactions to, and management of, their living and working environments were thus extremely diverse. No single teacher experienced rural teaching in the same way as another. In essence, how each teacher actually *perceived* their experience was as unique as the community in which they taught.

This brings us to the original question I posed in the Introduction: What did it *mean* to be a teacher in a small rural school in the Okanagan Valley in the 1920s? This study of rural teacher experience not only provided a detailed analysis of what that job entailed but also offered insights into the significance of the experience to the individual teachers concerned and the impact that teaching had on the female life course as a whole. The main concern was with how women teachers made sense of, and constructed meaning in, their lives and construed their social reality. Specifically I have tried to document the interplay between constraint and choice in women's lives and the ways in which women were able to forge personal meanings within an imposed structure.

To the women whose stories are recounted in this study teaching offered many advantages that far outweighed the negative aspects of the job. In spite of the difficult and demanding living and working conditions they had to deal with in rural districts, and in contrast to the sense of restricted occupational choice, many women came to love their work and were deeply committed to their pupils and the people in the local communities. Women teachers stressed their degree of autonomy, high social status and immense sense of job satisfaction at least as much as the limitations of their work. The evidence in this study strongly suggested that for a substantial number of women their experience as a rural schoolteacher, even if that experience had been brief, played an important role in their lives. Most importantly teaching gave women choice in their lives and the opportunity to postpone, either temporarily or permanently, the expected life course for young women in the 1920s, that is marriage and the roles of housewife and mother. Many women thrived on the economic independence and autonomy that their work as teachers afforded them.

At the same time however the experience of teaching did not "revolutionize"⁴ the lives of women. Historian Veronica Strong-Boag has outlined the powerful ideological

⁴Underwood, "The Pace of their Own Lives," 515.

constraints which defined the boundaries of women's lives in the 1920s and which determined how and why their lives took the shape they did:

[W]omen had to make their way in a world that, for all its appearance of innovation, remained committed to their sex's primary responsibility for the maintenance of family and home. Right from birth, female socialization was designed to produce citizens committed to domestic values [and] the maternal role they were expected, almost without exception to embrace. The implications of this fundamental allocation of responsibility touched every facet of female experience.⁵

The women whose lives were the focus of this study were no exception. Unlike the majority of their male contemporaries, traditional gender roles overshadowed the career opportunities of the women who were interviewed. Their career pathways were characterised by periodic movement in and out of the labour force as opposed to most men which displayed continuous and usually upward movement. Clearly "women's lives do not share the same rhythms [as men's]."⁶ Motherhood was regarded as an equally, and for some a more, fulfilling aspect of their lives. For the most part these women accepted what Judith Arbus has referred to as the "gender status quo."⁷ Teaching may have provided women with greater freedom to determine their life course but the responsibility and obligation, both real and perceived, that these women felt towards their families had a profound influence on the decisions they made concerning work and career. As educational historian Geraldine Clifford has contended: "For women, far more than for men, family membership has determined or influenced entry to, persistence in, and departure from a teaching career."⁸ She further argues that the effects of home and family circumstances on

⁵Strong-Boag, The New Day Recalled, 217.

⁶Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, ed. Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), xix.

⁷Arbus, "Grateful to be Working," 187.

⁸Clifford, "Man/Woman/Teacher," 320.

women's lives "requires not mere acknowledgement or apology, but reconceptualization in history and sociology."⁹

This study addressed the important issue of women's participation in the workforce. It argued that if we are to understand the nature of the meaning of teaching as work to women the experience of women teachers must be "thoughtfully situated in time and space."¹⁰ Moreover, it is only by listening carefully to their personal accounts and closely examining the details of their lives that it becomes possible to go beyond the ideological assumptions of what the life of a woman who began teaching in the 1920's entailed. Only then does it become possible to speculate on the reasons for, and consequences of decisions that were made in terms of rewards as well as limitations, and to understand the complexities of what work and career meant to these individual women.

As well as focussing on the experience of the teachers who taught in remote districts this study also considered the process of schooling in the rural communities themselves. As the primary, and frequently the only, social institution in many rural communities the school acted as the pivot around which the rest of rural society revolved. Standing at the helm of the school the teacher occupied a central place in the local community. The life of the teacher and that of the school were woven together as an integral part of the very texture of rural society. Through a detailed examination of the life and work experiences of teachers who worked in rural districts this study also offered some insights into the role of education in rural society and how remote schools functioned at the local level: where, how and why they were established, managed, supported and controlled; who was enrolled in them; when and why they attended, or did not attend; and how they were educated and experienced learning. Information collected during interviews with former rural school pupils provided fascinating material concerning the dynamics of

⁹Ibid., 329.

¹⁰Personal Narratives Group, *Interpreting Women's Lives*, 12

the rural classroom, the nature of the relationships that developed between teachers and their pupils, and the responses of the students, and indirectly their parents, to their rural schooling experience. The evidence strongly supported the contention that the education of their children was given a high priority by rural residents. At the same time, however, rural schools were intensely local institutions. They were so closely adapted to the communities of which they were a product that they came to mirror not only the material conditions, but also the attitudes, mores and values of the local community. Accordingly, the nature and extent of the education rural children both required and received represented no more than the needs of rural society. It was a reflection of what rural parents in the 1920s expected and wanted.

Finally, the significance of this study is not restricted exclusively to the field of educational history but also contributes to the broader question of rural history, an area of research that has been largely neglected. Although referring to the American situation, historian William Link's suggestions as to the possible reasons for this dearth of research into rural history are also pertinent in the Canadian context:

First, geographical diversity makes study of the rural world an imposing subject, full of obstacles to understanding collective pasts; decentralization and regional distinctions make the rural experience considerably more difficult to understand than the urban experience. Second, the sources of rural history, unlike those of urban history, are scattered, largely oral and unwritten, often unpreserved and lost in the oblivion of the past.¹¹

School and community in rural areas were so intimately connected that this study, by virtue of its focus on the school, inevitably offered some perspective on the nature of rural society and the qualities of rural life itself. Rural schools provided a window on their social surroundings. Thus, the ways in which rural residents organised and ran their schools revealed not only their views on the relative importance of education but also suggested much about their general attitudes towards work and recreation and thus what was of value

¹¹Link, *A Hard Country and a Lonely Place*, ix.

in their lives. Rural living in the 1920s is portrayed in this study as strenuous. Physical hardship, isolation, poverty and constant work were its predominant features. Such factors not only had a profound impact on the process of schooling but were the overriding influences that determined the framework within which the pattern and pace of the everyday lived experience in remote settlements was both defined and conducted.

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APPENDIX 1

DID YOU TEACH IN A ONE-ROOM SCHOOL?

I am a historian of education at the University of British Columbia and am currently studying the history of rural and one-room schools in British Columbia, focussing on the Okanagan area in the period from 1920 to 1930.

While I have been able to compile a comprehensive list of school and teacher names it is very difficult to build up a detailed picture of exactly who these teachers were -- Why did they decide to pursue a teaching career in one-room schools in remote areas? What was it like to teach in these schools? How did local conditions and circumstances affect the way in which they carried out their teaching responsibilities?

I would be very grateful for any information that would shed light on my research topic. In particular, I would like to share the recollections, impressions and experiences of those people, both teachers and pupils, who encountered life in the rural and one-room schools in the Okanagan in the 1920's.

My address is: Penelope Crabtree, Department of Social and Educational Studies, Faculty of Education, 2125 Main Mall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, British Columbia, V6T 1Z5.

Thank-you for your cooperation.

APPENDIX 2**ATTENDING A RURAL SCHOOL IN THE OKANAGAN VALLEY IN THE
1920s**

1. How old were you when you first went to school?
2. Can you remember the names of the schools you attended between 1920 and 1930?
3. Can you describe the conditions of:
 - a) both the interior and the exterior of the school house itself?
 - b) the school grounds?
 - c) equipment and supplies in the school?
4. Was the school adequately heated?
5. Was a janitor employed to heat the school?
6. How did you get to school every day?
7. Did you ever have any difficulty in getting to school?
8. Can you remember how many pupils there were in the schools you attended?
9. How many grades did each of the schools you attended include?
10. Can you remember the name(s) of the teacher(s) who taught you?
11. Can you remember where, and with whom the teacher(s) lived?
12. How did you feel about your teacher(s)?
13. Did you get on well with her/him/them?
14. What sort of homes did most of the pupils come from?
15. What kind of work did your parents and those of other parents do?
16. Do you recall the parents of the pupils ever coming to the school to see the teacher for any reason?
17. How do you think the teacher got on with:
 - a) the parents of the pupils
 - b) men in the community?

c) other women in the community?

18. What was the attitude of the community towards education?

19. Do you ever remember the Inspector visiting the school? If so, can you describe these visits? Did a female Inspector ever visit your teacher? If so, can you describe these visits also?

20. How old were you when you finished attending rural schools?

21. What are your most vivid memories of you education in rural schools? Please explain in as much detail as possible any events or feelings that stick out in your mind as being important/amusing/upsetting/ etc. Don't forget to indicate, if you can, which schools and/or teachers you are referring to? Remember that I am interested in your experience in rural schools and that all your recollections , however trivial you may think they will seem to me, are important.

Finally, what values do you think you gained from attending rural schools?

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

TEACHING IN RURAL SCHOOLS IN THE OKANAGAN IN THE 1920'S

TEACHING AS EMPLOYMENT AND/OR CAREER

1. Why did you decide to take up teaching as a means of employment?
2. How old were you when you began teaching?
3. Was your training at Normal School adequate as preparation for teaching in a rural area?
4. Why did you choose to teach in a remote rural area?
5. What were the names of the rural schools in which you taught between 1920 and 1930?
6. What salary did you earn and do you think it was appropriate for the job that you were doing?
7. What degree of intellectual stimulation did you gain from your job?
8. Was your task as a teacher affected by your gender? In other words, was your job made any easier/more difficult by the fact that you were a woman/man?
9. How long, in total, did you teach in rural schools?
10. How often, if at all, did you move from one school to another?
11. What reasons did you have for moving?
12. Did you ever attend Summer School or one of the annual Teachers' Conventions?

SCHOOL FACILITIES

1. How would you describe the conditions of:
 - a) both the interior and the exterior of the school house itself?
 - b) the school grounds?
 - c) equipment and supplies in the school?
2. Was the school adequately heated?
3. What funds were available for buying school equipment and supplies?
4. Was a janitor employed to clean the school house?

PUPILS

1. How many pupils/grades did you teach in each school?
2. What was your relationship with the pupils like?
3. What were the pupils attitudes towards learning?
4. Did they regard education as important?
5. How would you assess the academic performance of the pupils?
6. What kind of teaching methods did you use in these small rural schools?
7. How would you assess the general state of health of the pupils you taught?
8. Was the attendance of the pupils affected by climatic conditions/seasonal changes in employment in the community etc.?

INTERACTION WITH THE COMMUNITY

1. What were your relationships like with:
 - a) the parents of the pupils?
 - b) men in the community?
 - c) other women in the community?
 - d) the school trustees?
2. What was the attitude of the community towards education?
3. What degree of authority did you have over educational policy-making in the community?
4. How would you describe your status or standing as a member of the community in general, and as a teacher in particular?
5. What degree of authority did you exercise in the decision-making in the community?
6. Do you think you fitted into the community well or did you feel that you were an outsider?
7. Were there any experiences that were particularly important in your time as a teacher in rural communities?

SOCIAL/PERSONAL LIFE

1. What kind of accommodation did you have? Can you remember how much it cost?
2. How much choice did you have in deciding where and with whom you lived?
3. How would you describe your social life as a teacher in a rural community?
4. What means of entertainment were available for you to pursue?
5. Did you have contact with other teachers either in your own community or elsewhere?

EDUCATIONAL POLICY-MAKING

1. What was your relationship with the Inspector like?
2. How did you feel about the visits of the Inspector to your school(s)?
3. Did Lottie Bowron, the Rural Teachers' Welfare officer, ever visit you? If so, can you describe her visit(s)?
4. What degree of job security do you consider you had as a teacher in a rural school?

What are your most vivid memories of your experience as a teacher in rural schools? Please explain in as much detail as possible any events or feelings that stick out in your mind as being important/amusing/upsetting etc. Don't forget to indicate which schools you are referring to. Remember that it is your experience as a teacher in rural schools that I am interested and that all of your recollections, however trivial you think they may seem to me, are important.

Finally, what values do you think you gained from living and working as a teacher in rural communities?

THANK-YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

APPENDIX 3
TAPE RELEASE

Subject to the conditions noted below, I release all rights, title or interest in, and to all or any part of this recording to PENELOPE CRABTREE who, for scholarly purposes only, may freely cite and/or quote from it according to guidelines established by the Provincial Archives of British Columbia. Unless specified below, I do not object to the recording being deposited in the said Provincial Archives.

Conditions:

None: or

Signed:
Date:

Agreed:
Signed: