

With Care and Deliberation: Prairie Teachers go to Work

By Christine Ensslen, Master of Arts

Critical Sociology

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Critical Sociology

Faculty of Graduate Studies, Brock University
St. Catharines, Ontario

© 2016

Abstract

At the turn of the 20th century, people from select European countries were invited to homestead in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada. The provincial Department of Education had two goals: assimilating the children of these immigrants into Anglo-Saxon cultural traditions and sourcing teachers with the appropriate values to do so, however, they had very few ways of measuring how and if teachers were fulfilling their goals. This thesis examines a group of Saskatchewan women teachers who utilized the opportunity to write their life stories to establish themselves as dedicated, hardworking professionals. I explore how these women characterized their teaching practices as part of a larger enterprise of creating solid citizens. The thesis is centered around two research questions: (i) how did a particular group of Saskatchewan women teachers utilize their personal histories and supplementary documents to counter the ideal of male teacher? (ii) how did these women's classroom practices and goals facilitate the process of "Canadianizing" rural immigrant students?

I explore these questions through a combination of feminist historiography and narrative analysis as ways of studying women's stories and 'documents of life' (Plummer, 2002, Stanley, 2013) and the socio-cultural contexts within which they were embedded, I argue that these teachers chose examples from their own lives to illustrate women as legitimate, serious, hardworking teachers. These women consciously participated in the Saskatchewan Department of Education's project of Canadianizing immigrant children. Furthermore, as they were aware that they were responsible for imparting more than reading, writing and arithmetic they also sought to inculcate values

and moral characteristics that they personal felt were important for these children to learn.

Key Words: *Women teachers, citizenship, Saskatchewan, one-room schools, Canadianizing*

Acknowledgements

My fascination in the lives of rural women teachers stems from my family's history as educators in Saskatchewan. As a little girl my grandmother regaled me with stories about the time she spent teaching in one-room schools. She, like some of the women in my thesis, never stopped being a teacher even after she left the profession to marry. It was my grandmother, Norma Corman, who taught me to read and to write and to love books. I owe a debt of gratitude to all 255 women for the time and care they put into Dr. Poelzer's project. Although I only examined a subset of these women in my thesis, I have enjoyed reading all the women's stories and sharing them in the forms of conference papers and publications over the past six years. I would especially like to thank Dr. Irene Poelzer who made this thesis possible.

Deepest thanks to my thesis committee, professors Andrea Doucet, Kate Bezanson and Jennifer Rowsell for their sharp insight and invaluable suggestions. My sincerest gratitude goes out to my supervisor, Dr. Andrea Doucet, for all her time, support and encouragement.

To my parents, family and friends, thank you for the constant support. Many thanks to my parents and brother, June, Harald and Daniel, for always being there to listen, motivate and provide advice. And to my best friend and my partner, Lana and Chelsea, I couldn't have done it without the two of you as my cheerleaders. Finally, to my cat Jeeves, thank you for personally overseeing almost every word I have typed and every revision I have made.

Table of Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	iv
Table of Contents	v
List of Illustrations	vii
Chapter 1: Introduction	1
1.1. (Re)presenting Women as Dedicated Teachers	2
1.2. Constructing Good Citizens	2
1.3. Working with Irene Poelzer’s Collection	4
1.4. Overview of the Research	5
Chapter 2: Setting the Stage	8
2.1. The Creation of Saskatchewan and its Ideal Citizen	8
2.1.1. <i>Rupert’s Land and the Hudson’s Bay Company</i>	8
2.1.2. <i>The Creation and Settlement of Saskatchewan: Policies of Inclusion and Exclusion</i>	10
2.2. Educating Saskatchewan Citizens	17
2.3. The Ideal Saskatchewan Teacher	19
2.3.1. <i>Hiring Discrimination: Lady Teacher Wanted for Junior Room</i>	20
2.3.2. <i>“Improving” a Feminized Profession</i>	23
2.4. Researching Saskatchewan Women Teachers	29
Chapter 3: Research Design	31
3.1. Sources of Data and Data Collection	31
3.2. Reflexive Positioning	33
3.3. Methodological Issues and Ethical Considerations	35
3.3.1. <i>Remembering the Past</i>	38
3.4. Conceptual Approaches	40
3.4.1. <i>Key Terms</i>	41
3.5. Analysis Strategy	42
3.6. Space-Time Grid	44
3.7. Biographies	47
Chapter 4: (Re)presenting Themselves as Dedicated Teachers	51
4.1. A Chance to Tell their Stories	51
4.2. Entering the Profession with Little Training or Supervision	59
4.3. Stories of Hard Work, Dedication and Professionalism	60
4.3.1. <i>Becoming a Teacher</i>	62
4.3.1.1. <i>“I Always Wanted to Teach”</i>	63
4.3.1.2. <i>“Forced” Decisions</i>	65

4.3.2. <i>Going Above and Beyond</i>	69
4.3.3. <i>Valued by their Communities</i>	71
4.3.4. <i>Contributions to the Profession: Anna Ingham and the Blended Sound-Sight Method</i>	74
4.4. Concluding Remarks	78
Chapter 5: Canadianizing Ambitions within the Classroom	79
5.1. Embedded within the Canadianizing Agenda: Gender and Religion	81
5.1.1. <i>Working within a Patriarchal Society</i>	83
5.1.2. <i>Christian Born and Raised</i>	85
5.2. Teaching English and Patriotism in the Classroom	89
5.2.1. <i>Patriotic Songs, Decorations and Celebrations</i>	91
5.2.2. <i>The Red Cross</i>	94
5.2.3. <i>Recess as a Site of Citizenship Building</i>	96
5.3. Teaching Values with Deliberation and Care	98
5.3.1. <i>Story Time: Imparting More than Literacy</i>	101
5.3.2. <i>Aspirations in the Classroom: A Case Study</i>	105
5.4. Reflecting on Saskatchewan Heritage	110
5.5. Concluding Remarks	115
Chapter 6: Conclusions	117
6.1. Strengths and Limitations	119
6.2. Contributions to the Field	121
6.3. Looking Back	122
References	124
Appendix 1: Selection of Submissions from Mary Donovan	133
Appendix 2: Anna Ingham's Space-Time Grid	137
Appendix 3: Biographies of the Women Teachers	141

Illustrations

Maps and Charts

Figure 2.1 1869 Map of Rupert's Land	9
Figure 2.2 Diagram of Prairie Survey System	12
Figure 3.1 Example of Space-Time Grid Template	45

Documents of Life

Photographs

Photograph of Anne Harcourt	47
Photograph of Kate Myers	48
Photograph of Sylvia Birnie	48
Photograph of Ruby Smeltzer	49
Photograph of Mary Donovan	49
Photograph of Anna Ingham	50
Figure 4.1 Photograph of Sylvia Birnie	55
Figure 5.1 Photograph of Mary Donovan's Grade 2 class c. 1964-1969	93
Figure 5.2 Photograph of Kate Myers at her chalkboard c. 1956	93
Figure 5.3 Photograph of students and teachers awaiting the Governor General, August 1925	94
Figure 5.4 Picture of Birnie's first grade one class	109

Women's Writing

Figure 4.2 Birnie's annotation to Fig 4.1	55
Figure 5.5 Birnie's diagram of handwriting technique	109

Personal Accomplishments

Figure 4.3 First Prize Certificate awarded to Ruby Smeltzer	58
---	----

Teaching Keepsakes

Figure 4.4 1961 Red Cross post card thanking Ruby Smeltzer	71
Figure 4.5 Easter/get well card given to Ruby Smeltzer by a pupil	73

Chapter One: Introduction

In the early part of the 20th century women teachers were commonly portrayed as “damaging, deficient, distracted and sometimes dim” (Acker, 1983, p. 124). In the context of notions of the “ideal” teacher as being a white male as presented by the Saskatchewan Department of Education (Ensslen & Corman, 2013; Poelzer, 1990), in this thesis I examine how a small group of 20th century Saskatchewan women schoolteachers presented themselves as women who were “good” teachers as well as how their teaching goals and practices played a role in not only “Canadianizing” students but also teaching values that the women felt were important to impart to their pupils. I examine their characterization of their teaching goals and practices in light of what they saw as their project of producing educated students who would make a solid contribution to the province of Saskatchewan. I explore these issues by performing a narrative analysis of their written personal histories and the supplementary documents that they included such as their personal photographs, letters and other documents of life.

There is a limited body of literature critically examining Canadian teachers’ lives through narrative analysis. Petra Munro (1991 & 1998) utilized narrative analysis to explore American women schoolteachers’ life histories and the ways teachers resisted patriarchal stereotypes as well as the ways their stories allowed them to present themselves as active agents.

1.1. (Re)Presenting Women As Dedicated Teachers

Robert Patterson (1986) was one of the first to highlight that women teachers in the prairies during the first half of the 20th century were undervalued within the profession as compared to their male counterparts who they substantially outnumbered. Additionally Patterson (1986) noted that while these young women teachers were well aware of this sentiment, few were in a position to critically challenge the discrimination they faced within the profession. This thesis explores how a particular group of retired Saskatchewan women teachers presented themselves as educators to counter the ideal of male teacher by utilizing their personal histories and supplementary documents. I found that their accounts contest the longstanding view that women who taught were not committed teachers. These women chose examples from their own lives to illustrate women as legitimate, serious and hardworking teachers.

1.2. Constructing Good Citizens

According to the 1911 census 1/3 of Saskatchewan's inhabitants were born outside of Canada or Great Britain (Waiser, 2005). As such, the province placed great emphasis on the importance of assimilating this "foreign" population to create a cohesive, English speaking, British identified, Christian populace. As Gidney & Millar (2012) note in the Canadian context the classroom was intended as a site to teach immigrant children these desired values. Llewellyn (2012) has documented how teachers in urban centres, Toronto and Vancouver, were expected to produce appropriate citizens in the post World War Two context. A great deal has been written on the expectations of provincial Departments of Education regarding assimilation, however, much less is known on how

and if women teachers chose to impart these values (Gidney & Millar, 2012). This thesis seeks to address this void by asking how a subset of women teachers characterized their classroom practices and goals as facilitating the process of Canadianizing their rural immigrant students. I found that these women participated in the project of raising solid citizens and instructed students in notions of desirable values and behaviours. Importantly in addition to these practices, the women used the latitude they had in the classroom to emphasize other values that they personally felt were important.

Within the context of this thesis the term “Canadianize” encompasses not only citizenship,¹ but additionally the moral characteristics and ideologies that were associated with belonging to Canada during the first half of the twentieth century. According to Gidney & Millar (2012, p. 214):

The solid virtues of citizenship...were to be taught within a framework of loyalty to the imperial idea, to the British monarchy, to the Union Jack as its symbol and to the idea that patriotism meant being prepared to fight side by side with Britain in its defence of freedom.

Schools had the responsibility of teaching and reinforcing ideal Canadian values to all of the students as well as Canadianizing immigrant students (Gidney & Millar, 2012).

Characteristics of the “ideal” Canadian identity schoolchildren were meant to learn entailed the speaking of one language, the English language; Christianity; citizenship and patriotism; normative gender roles; and traits such as hard work and discipline.

¹According to Osbourne (as cited by Gidney & Millar, 2012, p. 213) to school officials “citizenship was an amalgam of national identity and patriotism; political literacy; a balanced awareness of rights; and the fulfillment of duties.”

1.3. Working With Irene Poelzer's Collection

Dr. Irene Poelzer, born in 1926, grew up on a farm near Humbolt Saskatchewan to Catholic immigrants from Germany (Hallman, 2006). Dr. Poelzer joined the Loretto Sisters in 1950 and worked as a teacher and principal. She was appointed to the Faculty of the College of Education at the University of Saskatchewan in 1970. Poelzer was a trailblazer within the University at the time as she emphasized the importance of feminist perspectives and practices; even into the 1980s she was still the only member of the department with an expertise in feminist theory (Hallman, 2006). In 1973 Poelzer fought an uphill battle to introduce a course entitled “Women and Education” as she felt that “a terrible injustice is done to women when the knowledge we teach is built on the experience of only half the human race” (Hallman, 2006, p. 231). Not only did Poelzer emphasize the importance of “rediscovering women’s contributions to history,” further she was actively engaged in the process herself through the project she undertook in the mid-1980s to document the teaching experiences of Saskatchewan women teachers (Hallman, 2006, p. 232).

Poelzer issued a call to retired women teachers in the 1980s asking them to participate in a project documenting the lives of Saskatchewan women teachers who began teaching between 1905-1955. She gave these women the option of having their material preserved in the Saskatchewan Archives. In addition to donating their personal histories, some of the 255 women who responded also chose to submit photographs from their time as teachers as well as Valentine and Easter cards from students, Red Cross postcards, personal report cards, inspector’s reports, newspaper clippings, reference

letters and a wide variety of other material. This thesis draws upon a subset from Dr. Irene Poelzer's collection of 255 personal histories.

1.4. Overview Of This Research

Chapter Two provides a historical overview of the origins of the province of Saskatchewan, including the province's immigration and settlement policies, the development of the Saskatchewan education system and the "ideal" teacher as conceptualized by the Department of Education. The final section discusses how feminist historiography is useful to doing research on Saskatchewan women teachers.

Chapter Three is divided into seven components: sources of data and data collection; reflexivity; methodological and ethical considerations; conceptual approaches; analysis strategy; space-time grids; and biographies. The first section details the origin of the personal histories that I analyzed. The second section discusses my reflexive positioning and the impact it has had on my project. The third section discusses the methodological and ethical considerations that arise from working with this data collection. I examine issues surrounding the types of stories these women would have been willing or unwilling to disclose; reconstruction of the past from the changed societal perspective of the 1980s, the women's own ethical concerns and issues of memory. The fourth section outlines the ways my analysis has been informed by narrative analysis, documents of life and Annette Kuhn's understanding of photography. The fifth section delineates my analysis strategy utilizing feminist historiography, narrative analysis and space-time grids. The sixth section explores my use of space-time grids. At the end of the

chapter I provide mini biographies of each of the ten women in order to familiarize the reader with the broad strokes of the women's teaching lives.

Chapter four explores the ways that these women teachers (re)presented themselves as hard working, dedicated and professional, despite the perception at the time they entered the profession that young women teachers were not dedicated and were expected to teach only for a short time before quitting to marry and raise a family. The first section examines contextual issues that helped to shape the ways these women discussed their years as a teacher. The second section outlines the context of almost no external motivation or classroom support for these young women teachers. Despite this lack of supervision, as well as the daunting task of strategizing how best to teach eight grades and maintain discipline for upwards of 40 pupils, these women reported taking their job seriously and doing their best. Finally the chapter examines their stories of hard work, dedication and professionalism through their discussions of becoming a teacher; their ways of framing themselves as going above and beyond; how they presented themselves as valued by the communities they taught in; and a case study of one teacher's active engagement in enhancing the teaching profession.

Chapter five examines the values that these women strove to impart to their pupils and situates these women's individual classroom practices within the Saskatchewan Department of Education's project of creating Canadian citizens. While these women's teaching practices were in line with the Department's Canadianizing agenda, they additionally stressed values they felt were important in creating good citizens. The following issues are addressed: the ways the women teachers themselves were embedded within a patriarchal and Christian society that they were expected to reproduce; the

emphasis placed upon teaching immigrant children English and citizenship; the ways in which these women reported teaching their own personal values to their pupils; and the women's reflections on how they felt their teaching career played a part in Saskatchewan's heritage.

The conclusion reviews the findings of chapters three and four; provides a discussion of the strengths and limitations of this thesis; outlines ways in which this thesis contributes to the field of narrative analysis, to methodological issues and to the history of education. This chapter additionally includes my own reflections upon the writing of my thesis. The final section points to future areas of research that could be pursued.

Chapter Two: Setting The Stage

This chapter has four purposes: the first is to provide context regarding the perceptions the federal and provincial governments held as to who was an ideal Saskatchewan (and furthermore Canadian) citizen as well as the attributes that the “ideal” citizen should have. The chapter outlines the immigration goals and settlement practices that were specific to the prairie provinces. The second section briefly outlines the formation of the province’s education system, including the creation of the Saskatchewan Department of Education, and the organization of one-room schools in order to provide an understanding of the conditions that rural women teachers were working in. The third section illustrates whom the province and the Saskatchewan people considered to be the ideal teacher, as this perception directly influenced the types of teaching jobs available to women teachers, the rates of pay, the location of these jobs and likelihood of promotion. The fourth section provides a discussion on how feminist historiography is useful to doing research on Saskatchewan women teachers.

2.1. The Creation Of Saskatchewan And Its Ideal Citizen

2.1.1. Rupert’s Land and the Hudson’s Bay Company

In 1670 the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) was founded and given a monopoly on trading privileges of the area called Rupert’s Land, which consisted of almost eight million square kilometers and comprised Manitoba, most of Saskatchewan and parts of Alberta, Nunavut, Ontario, Quebec and, until 1818, some land south of the 49th parallel (“Canada buys Rupert’s Land,” 2001). This monopoly, or patent, gave the HBC the right to “develop, exploit, and sometimes settle, on behalf of the English Crown” (Carter,

1999, p. 41). Additionally the HBC had the freedom to wage war on “non-Christians” who might already be living on the land that the English government planned to extract natural resources from (Carter, 1999).

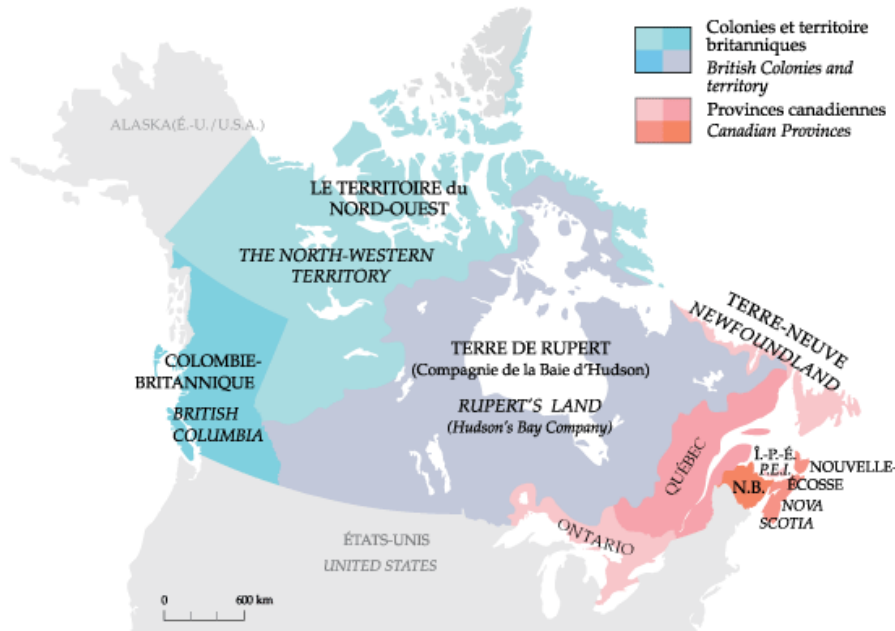


Figure 2.1 1867 Map of Rupert’s Land (Historical maps of Canada, n.d.)

It was not until 1811 when the HBC granted land in present day Manitoba to the Earl of Selkirk for the formation of the Red River Colony that Catholic and Protestant missionaries began to be encouraged to operate in Western Canada (Carter, 1999; “Red river colony,” 2015). Prior to this the HBC had been reluctant to encourage missionary work, as they were concerned that it would disrupt the hunting economy (Carter, 1999). Education during this time period was not formally organized or overseen by a cohesive governing body. By the 1820s the HBC was providing missionaries with funding to educate First Nations children and was similarly providing money to help settlers establish their own schools (Scharf, 2006). While they promoted the development of

schools, the HBC did not play a role in determining curriculum or regulating these schools (Scharf, 2006).

2.1.2. The Creation and Settlement of Saskatchewan: Policies of Inclusion and Exclusion

Dominion of Canada was created in 1867 in large measure for the purpose of uniting British land in North America “politically and economically in order that they might more effectively cope with alterations that had taken place in imperial and continental relationships and which rendered existing arrangements obsolete if not wholly inadequate” (Fowke, 1957, p. 4). This new government would take over the responsibility of defending this land as well as forming a national economic unit wherein the development of agriculture in Rupert’s Land, rather than a continuation of the fur trade, would play an important role in (Fowke, 1957).

After 1869 the Dominion government undertook the task of settling Rupert’s Land with the ambition of making it economically viable as farmland and with the second ambition preventing the United States from encroaching. Canada had initially planned to operate the newly acquired prairie land after the fashion of a colony rather than as provinces (Waiser, 2005). The Red River resistance resulted in the creation of the province of Manitoba in 1870. The bulk of the remainder, which was termed the North West Territories, was formally divided into the newly formed provinces of Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905. As this land was acquired from the Hudson’s Bay Company with the intention of developing Canada’s economy and the Dominion government’s settlement

project, the Dominion government maintained control over Manitoba's and later Saskatchewan's and Alberta's public land and resources (Fowke, 1957; Waiser, 2005).

From the 1870s until 1906 treaties were established restricting First Nations people to small reservations across the North West Territories (Anderson, 2013).² In 1871 the prairies began to be surveyed utilizing a grid pattern creating six-square-mile townships (Waiser, 2005). Each of the 36 square miles were numbered 1 through 36 and divided into four $\frac{1}{4}$ sections. Most of the even numbered sections were intended for homesteads and most of the odd numbered sections were designated "railway land" (Waiser, 2005).³ In order to qualify for a $\frac{1}{4}$ section (160 acre) homestead, applicants had to be 18, male and "prepared to become a British subject, if not one already" (Waiser, 2005, p. 104). While First Nations people were allowed to farm on reserve land they were excluded from applying for homesteads (Carter, 1999). White women also faced restrictions, as only women who were the sole head of a family could file for a homestead (Waiser, 2005). In order to promote the farming of this land the federal government put certain stipulations in place requiring homesteaders to live on the land and cultivate a minimum of 15 acres within 3 years. After this point homesteaders could purchase more farmland if they so desired. Even into the 1910s homesteaders found themselves living in primitive conditions, isolated, hungry and struggling to build and maintain a house and

² It is important to note that the Canadian government frequently ignored treaty agreements. Additionally, Frank Oliver, the Minister of the Interior and Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, appropriated land from reserves as the amount of available homestead land shrank (Waiser, 2005).

³ Two sections in each township were reserved for school land and parts of other sections were reserved for the Hudson's Bay Company as per the 1869 agreement when land ownership was transferred. Land set aside for both the railroad and the Hudson Bay Company later also became farmland (Waiser, 2005).

grow crops on land of varying quality (Waiser, 2005). Consequently many gave up or failed to meet the requirements to secure their land title (Waiser, 2005).

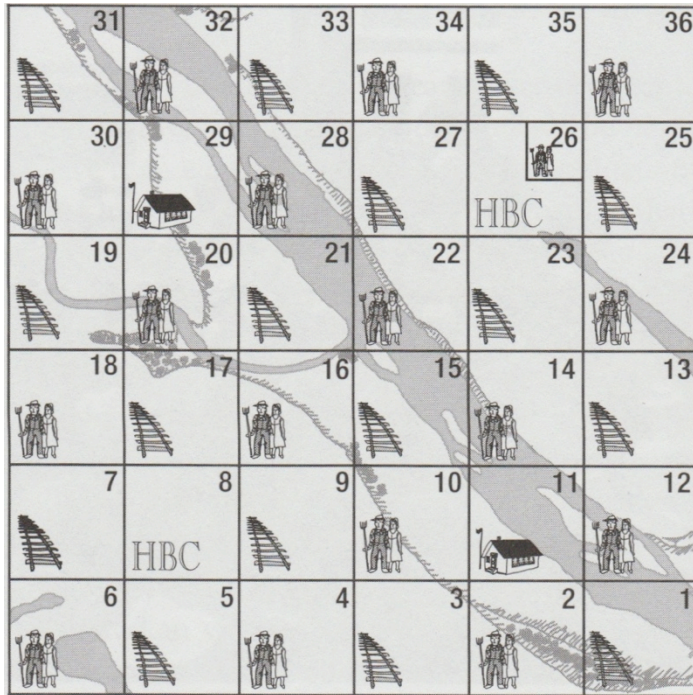


Figure 2.2 Diagram of the Prairie Survey System (Waiser, 2005)

While the development of the prairies was done so with the goal of building the Canadian economy, the way this process was undertaken was shaped by the Canadian government and white Anglo-Protestant Canadians' desire to create an English speaking British-identified population (Swyripa, 2010). Immigrants from countries such as Britain, France, Germany and Scandinavia were considered the most desirable potential immigrants (Swyripa, 2010). In 1896 Clifford Sifton was appointed minister of the interior, Sifton was interested in recruiting immigrants he felt could be relied upon to homestead, rather than move to cities and "take jobs" away from Canadians (Waiser, 2005). Consequently Sifton's immigration strategies focused on soliciting peasants from Central and Eastern Europe, such as Doukhobors, Russian Germans and Ukrainians because it was thought that they were used to hard work as well as farming. Additionally

he assumed that descendants from these countries could be relied upon to assimilate into Canadian ways (Swyripa, 2010; Waiser, 2005). Through sponsoring displays at exhibitions, issuing promotional brochures, and advertising in select newspapers and other publications, Sifton was very successful in promoting both immigration to the prairies and the immigration of specific “desirable” groups (Swyripa, 2010; Waiser, 2005). The immigration policies for the prairies, both before and after the province was created, held a vision for what this land and by extension the rest of Canada should look like and part of this vision was the creation of a “white” Canada. Consequently immigration strategies opposed the recruitment of individuals from other races to immigrate to Canada. In fact, prejudices against certain groups of white Europeans, such as Jews and southern Europeans, also ran so strongly that they too were seen as undesirable (Waiser 2005). At Saskatchewan’s inauguration party in 1905 celebratory talk regarding the province’s future was that it would be “a British province, peopled by British immigrants” (Waiser, 2005, p. 59).

Immigration to Saskatchewan began to boom in the 1900s with more applicants than ever applying for homesteads in the prairies (Waiser, 2005). Immigrants brought with them their own cultures and traditions, additionally certain blocs of applicants moved from their home countries to Saskatchewan with the goal of creating their own special settlements (Waiser, 2005). The 1911 census ultimately showed that the goal of creating a British-identified province was in peril as 1/3 of Saskatchewan residents were not born in Canada or Great Britain (Waiser, 2005). While Sifton’s immigration recruitment strategies were incredibly successful, many Anglo-Saxon Canadians at the time were concerned that:

these foreign groups threatened to weaken, perhaps even ruin, the Anglo-Canadian fabric of the country. They also questioned why the backward dregs of European society were more welcome than English workers. Was not western Canada supposed to be home for the sons of Britain? Race, not agricultural experience, should have governed entry into Canada (Waiser, 2005, p. 65).

While Sifton felt his new immigrants were a desirable and needed addition to the prairies' landscape as farmers, he did expect that they would embrace assimilation and consequently be "Canadianized" (Waiser, 2005, p. 65). Others doubted whether this was even possible. Not only did some in Canada at the time believe that Central Europeans were largely poor, ignorant and immoral, but it was also questioned whether they would make "good" citizens considering their "unpronounceable last names, pauperlike appearance, strange customs, and different religious beliefs" (Waiser, 2005, p. 65).

Frank Oliver replaced Sifton as Minister of the Interior in 1905 and shifted immigration strategies back to attempting to recruit British immigrants, and then Northern Europeans and Americans. Oliver had been an ardent critic of Sifton's stating that Sifton's immigration policies were populating the prairies with "scum" (Waiser, 2005, p. 73). Oliver's policies drove the majority of the "undesirable" Doukhobors, a Protestant sect from Russia, out of the prairies to British Columbia and successfully splintered the communal lifestyle of the Doukhobors who chose to remain in the province forcing them to become individual homesteaders (Waiser 2005).

As Saskatchewan was intended to be "white man's country," immigration policies that were already leery of certain white European ethnic groups were firmly opposed to the African American men who were interested in homesteading (Waiser 2005, p. 74). In

1905 a few African American families moved from the American Midwest to settle in Saskatchewan. As their numbers slowly began to increase prairie newspapers began a campaign advocating that African Americans should move back to America and that they could never truly be Canadian citizens (Waiser, 2005). The Department of the Interior responded to the public outcry by removing advertisements to homestead from newspapers in African Americans communities; instituting stricter medical exams at the Canadian border, even on occasion bribing doctors to refuse entry; and sending two agents into Oklahoma to tell African Americans about the poor reception they would receive if they came to Canada (Waiser, 2005). In 1911 Oliver managed, with the Prime Minister's approval, to ban black immigration for a year (Waiser, 2005).⁴

This racism extended to curtail the economic possibilities that were afforded to First Nations peoples in the prairies, as they were considered to have “no place in the province's future” (Waiser, 2005, p. 21). Hayter Reed,⁵ an Indian Commissioner and later the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs, considered First Nations people to be a “foreign element” and dangerous. He believed that it was important to disband and assimilate First Nations people, although assimilation did not mean encouraging them to emulate white farmers (Carter, 1999). In the mid-1880s reserves were to be subdivided into 40-acre plots in an effort to introduce “family farming” and discourage communal enterprise (under this newly imposed system the male head of the household was expected to farm his own land individually and his wife was to work as his homemaker)

⁴ This was repealed after a few months, only because African Americans stopped trying to immigrate to the prairies (Waiser, 2005).

⁵ Hayter Reed was himself born in Ontario; both of his parents were English immigrants (Macleod, 1993).

(Carter, 1999). Within a few years some First Nations farmers on reserves began to produce enough hay, cattle and grain to not only consume but also to sell.

At this point white farmers became concerned that First Nations farmers were providing “‘unfair’ competition” and that their potential future successes might deprive white farmers of their livelihood (Carter, 1999, p. 168). Reed consequently introduced a policy to make farming more difficult for First Nations peoples. He limited the amount of land on reserves First Nations peoples could farm to one acre (as compared to the 160 acres that each white homesteader had) and mandated that each First Nations farmer could only have one or two cows rather than a herd (Carter, 1999). First Nations people were additionally disallowed from having up-to-date farming equipment in order to further discourage their farming efforts. According to Carter (1999) “Reed argued that labor-saving machinery might be necessary for other farmers, but Indians had to first experience farming with crude and simple implements. Otherwise they would be defying immutable laws of evolution, and would be making an ‘unnatural leap.’” (p. 169). Due to these constraints many First Nations peoples ceased farming altogether (Carter, 1999). Frank Oliver’s statement to the House of Commons in 1906 sadly summarized the continued sentiment of the Federal and Provincial government towards First Nations people, stating: “If it becomes a question between the Indians and the whites, the interests of the whites will have to be provided for” (Waiser, 2005, p. 40).

While immigration policies were selective in regards to which groups of people were admitted to homestead, Saskatchewan was more ethnically diverse than intended (Waiser, 2005). Townships were largely ethnically homogenous allowing immigrants to continue to speak their native language and perpetuate their traditions. Consequently

diversity in language and religion was still considered an issue well into the 1930s in that this homogeneity retarded the rate of assimilation (Scharf, 2006). According to Swyripa (2006): “immigrant settler peoples, their patchwork of ethno-religious settlements, and their related institutions enjoyed more latitude than they would have had entering established regional societies...” (p. 7). As the province was intended to be a bastion of British values, assimilating Saskatchewan’s immigrants was considered a priority and one of the key methods of assimilation was through education (Waiser, 2005).

2.2. Educating Saskatchewan Citizens

Within Canada each province has its own separate education system, although the federal government regulated Residential schools (Gidney & Millar, 2012).⁶ The “responsibility” for educating white settler children in the North West Territories, was transferred “from the Hudson’s Bay Company and mission schools to the Government of Canada” (Scharf, 2006, p. 4). In 1875 the North West Territories Act was created, this act “provided for the voluntary establishment of schools” (Scharf, 2006, p. 4).

⁶ Residential schools were federally regulated boarding schools for First Nations children operated by Christian churches. The intention of these schools was to teach First Nations children trades and also to force these pupils to assimilate into the white Anglo-Saxon culture (Waiser, 2005). The first of these schools were established in the 1800s and the last residential school closed in 1996 (“A timeline of residential schools,” 2008). These children were forced to live in often-squalid living conditions, which resulted in illness and in some cases death. Not only did these schools seek to eradicate indigenous cultures, but further many pupils endured physical, psychological and even sexual abuse (“Residential schools,” 2012). Residential schools are outside of the scope of this thesis and as such a history of them is not provided within this chapter. For more information on residential schools consult Bays, 2009; Loyie, Spear, & Brissenden, 2014.

Education within Saskatchewan and Canada was from its inception rooted in Christianity. The province's education system was established in the wake of the past difficulties of creating a unified education system in Ontario and Quebec. Issues that had arisen during the establishment of other provincial education systems were primarily over religion and language (Gidney & Millar, 2012). Due to disputes over religion Parliament "ensured that the rights and privileges of both Protestants and Catholics would be protected" (Scharf, 2006, p.3). Based upon these issues it was determined in the 1880s that a system of regular and separate schools would be established within Saskatchewan. Schools within a district could either be established as Protestant or Catholic as determined by which religion held the majority within the district. If there were enough members of the minority religion (either Catholic or Protestant) to merit their own school a separate school for these children could be established within the district. The Council for Public Instruction was a decision making body comprised of two Protestants, two Catholics and the Lieutenant Governor (Scharf, 2006). This council determined all matters ranging from matters of curriculum and textbook selection, to teacher certification and training standards, and the enforcement of regulations. In 1901 this council was replaced with the Department of Education, which had responsibility over all public and separate schools as well as Normal Schools. At this same time English, rather than English and French was adopted as the sole language of instruction (Scharf, 2006).

Prior to the establishment of the province of Saskatchewan, farmers in the districts were themselves responsible for the creation of their local school. Due to this, the establishment of schools lagged, as it was to be undertaken on community members' own

initiative.⁷ Education levels across ethnic groups within the province consequently continued to be stratified (Gidney & Millar, 2012). By 1905 with the creation of the province, the Saskatchewan government made the establishment of schools mandatory (Gidney & Millar, 2012). Three district members, who were elected by fellow ratepayers, comprised the board of trustees. This body was responsible for hiring and firing the teacher, collecting taxes⁸ from ratepayers with which to pay the teacher and maintaining the school as well as meeting the Department of Education's minimum requirements (Gidney & Millar, 2012; Scharf, 2006). School inspectors hired by the Department of Education had the responsibility of visiting each school at least once a year to inspect the school's condition and ensure that the teacher was maintaining curriculum standards (Corman & Ensslen, 2012). According to Scharf (2006): "The centralization of curricular authority was, in large part, a product of the conflict over the organizational structures and curricular policies designed to address religious issues: the curriculum was to remain non-denominational Christian and the language of instruction English" (p. 7).

2.3. The Ideal Saskatchewan Teacher

Women comprised at least half or more of the Saskatchewan's teaching force since the province's inception (Corman, 2010); however, the contributions of Saskatchewan's women teachers were largely overlooked until the mid 1980s (Patterson, 1986; Poelzer, 1990). Additionally, over the course of the 20th century women teachers were generally considered less professional than their male counterparts by the

⁷ See Gidney & Millar (2012) for more information on the factors that hampered the establishment of schools.

⁸ This tax money was used to maintain schools and pay the teacher's salary, although it was also frequently subsidized by provincial grants (Gidney & Millar, 2012).

Department of Education, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF), school trustees, principals and frequently the Saskatchewan populace at large (Ensslen & Corman, 2013; Poelzer, 1990).⁹

Due to this perception, women teachers during this period found themselves facing discrimination regarding pay levels, promotion, hiring preference and a double standard regarding the types of behavior expected from males teachers versus female teachers outside of school hours (Corman, 2010; Corman & Ensslen 2012, Ensslen, 2016). Until July 1st, 1940 Saskatchewan teachers lacked a minimum salary, consequently school trustees could determine the teacher's salary themselves and many schools even encouraged competitive underbidding on the part of teachers in order to secure positions (Corman, 2010). While there were no formal salary regulations, women teachers on average were paid consistently less than male teachers regardless of time period. In 1910, female teachers with a first class certificate working in urban schools averaged a salary of \$730 whereas their male counterparts were earning an average of \$1,052. For the 1949-1950 school year, almost a decade after the minimum salary had been put in place, urban women teachers with first class certificates averaged \$1,744 compared to similarly qualified males who were earning an average of \$1,969 (Corman, 2010).¹⁰ As male teachers preferred city and town schools where they were afforded more privacy, paid more and had opportunities for promotion and to teach higher grades,

⁹ Dr. Poelzer analyzed newspapers from the time period to understand the perception of the Saskatchewan public. According to Poelzer large public debates would be held in Saskatchewan during winter months on important issues such as whether women should work in professions or be homemakers (Poelzer, 1990). Men and not women were frequently the debaters on these subjects (Poelzer, 1990).

¹⁰ During this time period urban teachers were paid at higher rates than rural teachers. Male teachers of equal level of certification and locale were consistently paid better than their female counterparts (Corman, 2010).

female teachers were predominantly hired to teach in remote areas, districts without housing that would be considered adequate for men or teachers with families and in districts which offered lower rates of pay.

2.3.1. Hiring Discrimination: Lady Teacher Wanted for Junior Room

Throughout the first half of the century “men were seen as the natural leaders and administrators, and women were perceived to be eminently suited by nature for the ranks of elementary teachers in the classrooms of cities, towns and villages, and the multi-grade, one-room schools of the rural areas” (Poelzer 1990, p. 5). One of the primary methods of hiring teachers was to publish advertisements for teachers in the classified section of local newspapers. According to Poelzer (1990) between 1905 and 1920, 99% of advertisements surveyed for principals asked specifically for male applicants whereas female teachers were predominantly specified for kindergarten and primary grades. This trend remained at least until the 1950s, if not after. Of the newspapers surveyed between 1930 and 1939, Saskatchewan classified advertisements predominantly requested men to fill the position of principal and to teach higher grades (Corman & Ensslen, 2012). Male applicants were specifically requested for all positions posted for secretary treasurer, vice-principal and assistant principal. Of the 21 advertisements for principals, 17 advertised for men, three did not specify gender and one specifically requested female applicants (the fact that the principal was intended to share the teacherage with a female teacher may have impacted this decision).¹¹

¹¹ Newspapers were analyzed for the years 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939. The advertisements were gathered from the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, the *Regina Daily Post*, the *Battleford Press*, the *Regina Leader-Post* and the *Prince Herald Daily Herald*.

During this time period men were almost exclusively requested to teach higher grades. Schools seeking teachers for both a junior and a senior room specifically stated that male applicants were desired for the senior room and women for the lower paying, lower status, junior room. Between the years 1905 to 1920, and after, when women teachers replaced men in the position of assistant principal, the title of the job was changed to assistant teacher (Poelzer, 1990).

As school boards had total latitude over hiring practices, applicants could be disregarded solely based upon their gender, or for any particularistic reason such as ethnicity, religion, or other less tangible reasons (Corman & Ensslen, 2012). Applicants had no procedure to appeal unfair hiring or firing practices or contest that they were more qualified than the teacher hired. Consequently trustees could be very frank about reasons for disqualification. In fact, in 1916 a woman teacher found herself rebuked for not clearly stating her gender in her initial application and so inadvertently allowing the school trustees to assume she was a man. Upon finding out that they were mistaken the Secretary-Treasurer wrote:

We were very disappointed to learn that you were a female teacher, whereas our advertisement was for a male teacher. There was nothing in your first letter to indicate that you were anything but a male teacher. True you signed (Evelyn), but boys and girls are both named Evelyn. The board has decided under the circumstances that your application is unsatisfactory (Corman, 2010, p. 93).

Unfortunately for Evelyn her qualifications that had merited her to be considered for the position were not enough for her to be considered a “satisfactory” candidate.

Women were frequently overlooked as candidates for higher grades and positions of authority. Additionally, even when hiring committees acknowledged that a female teacher was a qualified candidate for promotion she might still have found herself being turned down. As late as the 1950s and 1960s men in positions of authority were reluctant to promote women, perhaps out of concern that male teachers in these schools would feel emasculated. According to Elsie Frank (1923),¹² “Male principals did not favour females being given positions on a par with their previously ‘private preserve’” (Ensslen & Corman, 2013, p. 28). Conditions were slow to improve for women teachers, as late as 1975 only 11.4% of school administrators in Saskatchewan were women despite the fact that 54.3% of teachers were women (Corman, 2010). Not only were qualified, dedicated women not considered viable candidates, in some cases these women found men who were younger, less experienced and under-qualified being promoted rather than themselves. According to Rita Tagseth (1944) “In the 1970s I was an experienced teacher hired to teach the primary room¹³ and a young man with no teaching experience was hired as principal simply because he was a man” (Corman, 2010, p. 99). After being passed over three times in favour of less qualified male principals Tagseth was finally hired as the first woman lay principal in the school unit. However, as she was a principal of an elementary school and likely because she was the only female principal, she often found herself ignored or overlooked at principals’ meetings (Corman, 2010).

¹² The respondent’s name was changed to respect her privacy request. Dates in brackets beside a teacher’s name refer to the year she started teaching.

¹³ The primary room was a term used within the context of two-room schools. The primary room, or junior room, would hold the younger grades whereas higher grades were taught in the senior room.

2.3.2. “Improving” a Feminized Profession

Women teachers were considered less professional and paid at lower rates, however, this is not to state that women teachers were not appreciated by the communities that they taught in or in certain specific circumstances preferred to male teachers.¹⁴ Additionally, it is important to note that this does not mean that their work as teachers or the contributions of women teachers more generally were never appreciated by students and parents. Participants in Poelzer’s project report instances of districts asking them to remain for subsequent years, giving them thank you gifts, and writing glowing reference letters. They also recounted stories of being approached decades later by appreciative former pupils. Male teachers, however, were seen as more professional than female teachers and recruiting a larger body of men to become teachers was considered by the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation as an essential way to boost the public’s perception of teaching as a profession (Poelzer, 1990). This perspective was in part due to sexist beliefs at the time regarding men as more career oriented and better disciplinarians; it was also related to the fact that until teacher shortages during World War Two women were expected to quit teaching upon marriage. As a result, women teachers were not considered long-term or career oriented (Ensslen & Corman, 2013).¹⁵ From the 1940s on, women could remain teachers after marriage but were expected to at least temporarily cease teaching once they became pregnant (Hallman, 1997). This

¹⁴ They were valued and often preferred in urban areas as teachers of lower grades due to the association between teaching and mothering (Hallman, 1997). Additionally they were sought for in many rural districts in part because it was possible to pay them less and to provide them less spacious or private accommodations than male teachers would accept (Hallman, 1997).

¹⁵ The assumption that women teachers would quit upon marriage impacted the expectations that women teachers had and the choices they made. Many women teachers reported to Dr. Poelzer that they planned on teaching only until marriage.

expectation to take time off when pregnant hampered women teachers' abilities to make teaching a career, especially as it was not until 1976 that they were guaranteed the ability to enter back into their positions after childbirth (Hallman, 1997).

Consequently, men were considered more ideal as they could work as long-term teachers, however, it was difficult to recruit men to teach elementary grades, where there were the most teaching positions, because this was considered a feminized profession (Poelzer, 1990).¹⁶ Additionally as teaching was not lucrative many male teachers saw it as a temporary career (Lyons, 2006). According to Poelzer (1990):

The fact that two-thirds or more of the teaching profession were women, and that their wages were indeed low did not go unnoticed by Department of Education officials, Professional Educators' organizations, the Trustee Association, and educational administrators. However, the concern of these groups was not that women were paid so little, that they were overworked, nor that they often laboured under primitive conditions with poor educational facilities. Their main, perhaps sole, concern was that, due to low salaries, the teaching profession did not attract men into its ranks in greater numbers. It was believed that a "feminized" profession was a low status profession...the education officials of the day virtually ignored these women and preached that professional respectability was dependent on the numbers of men in the ranks. The persistent and gradual movement for higher salaries, more qualified teachers, and professional status was conceived as for the betterment of male teachers. (p. 44).

¹⁶ Galman (2012) defines a feminized profession as "one in which there are and have been large numbers of female workers, not that these female workers hold considerable power in the face of hegemony or domination of the work site" (p. 44).

Additionally, it was thought that these long-term male teachers would be providing a unique resource to small communities by bringing their wives with them. According to a 1916 issue of the newspaper the *Regina Leader*, the province was in need of well trained teachers, more specifically married men because of the benefit their wives would provide to small communities (Poelzer, 1990). During the first half of the 20th century rural women schoolteachers were expected to organize and participate in social activities (Ensslen, 2016), consequently due to these gendered expectations it was assumed that the teacher's wife could also be expected to work to enhance the community without pay (Poelzer, 1990).

This emphasis on male teachers neglected to recognize women teachers' contributions to the profession and even hampered the ways women could contribute to the profession. Additionally this focus ignored never-married women who were long-term career oriented teachers, as these women did not fit gendered norms due to the fact that they were considered "spinsters" (Ensslen & Corman, 2013). Prior to the 1940s and the lifting of informal marriage bars, never-married women teachers were frequently seen as unfulfilled and frigid rather than women who might have chosen a career over marriage (Cavanagh, 2005).¹⁷ A 1916 issue of the *Regina Leader* summarizes the prevailing sentiment of the time: "In the case of lady teachers we cannot expect and would not wish them to remain in the profession after they have a suitable chance to take up the higher duties of wifehood and motherhood" (Poelzer, 1990, p. 40).

¹⁷ Conditions did not improve for never-married women teachers after this period. Frequently after this point their status of never-married meant they were viewed with suspicion and homophobia, for more information on this see Cavanagh, 2005.

The contributions of women teachers and the reasons that they might desire to teach were even publically dismissed or belittled. During the first half of the 20th century there was little public understanding for why single women or even married women would need to make or have money of their own. It was expected that male teachers, or men more generally, would be supporting a spouse and children with their salary this same expectation was not extended to women. The possibility that women who were not widowed might have dependents to support was frequently disregarded. Women teachers did report to Poelzer that they used their earnings to support their parents, younger siblings or other family members either temporarily or more permanently, but they had to do so with their comparatively smaller salaries (Ensslen & Corman, 2013).

In fact some of the Canadian public was of the impression that the unemployment crisis during the Great Depression could be eased if women stopped taking jobs that men could have. According to one male conference speaker, “if the 55,000 lady teachers in Canada were eliminated from their positions, making way for men who are now walking the streets, the unemployment situation would be eased up considerably” (Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation, 1937, p. 40).¹⁸ Even school trustees could not fathom why women would need better teaching salaries or in fact why single women would need to make money at all if not for frivolous reasons. According to one trustee regarding the discussion of creating a minimum salary for teachers:

Just imagine our young lady teachers rolling in money like that! What a boom there would be in the trade in silk stockings, fur coats, and pink nail polish...When these girls get married in a few years what a life they will lead

¹⁸ That this “solution” would among other things leave 55,000 women unemployed and potentially destitute was apparently not a concern.

their husbands if they can't keep them in the style they are accustomed to!" (Tyre, 1968, p. 19-20).

Sentiments such as this made earning an adequate teaching salary especially difficult for women who never married or taught for an extended period of time before marrying.¹⁹

During this time period, working as a teacher was seen by some women as a way of earning money in order to be able to buy furniture or other necessities once they were married. According to Hallman (1997) bringing this small amount of money into a marriage could be a way "to gain some financial independence, ease the future burden associated with raising a family, and thereby improve their status as wives and mothers" (p. 152). In some circumstances when men acknowledged this desire it was trivialized or even mocked. During a 1911 session in legislature when the matter of teachers' poor salaries was raised one man commented to the effect that:

they were getting a large number of young ladies from Ontario as teachers and it was perfectly well known that many of them came west to earn a marriage portion with which to pay for the furniture. It would be a shame to send them back without that portion (Poelzer, 1990, p. 28).

His comment on the matter of women teachers' salaries, which seems to have been made in jest, allegedly elicited cheers and laughter from the other politicians. Clearly the issue of paying women teachers well was unimportant to these men, but additionally women's desires to have and earn their own money even for the practical purpose of assisting in household purchases was laughable.

¹⁹ According to Corman (2010) "Women, on average, were paid less than men during this period, but salaries for women increased commensurate with those of men" (p. 94).

This perception of women teachers as being frivolous disregarded the fact that their time as teachers was an opportunity for autonomy. It formed a brief time where a woman could live on her own, travel around Saskatchewan, make her own decisions and earn and spend her own money, between moving from her father's house to her husband's (Ensslen & Corman, 2013).

2.4. Researching Saskatchewan Women Teachers

Feminist historiography arose as a response to male-centred research that neglected the lives of women (Moffatt, 1995). Some initial studies of Saskatchewan women focused on the lives of "great" women and others subsequently examined women as victims of oppression. The more contemporary research within feminist historiography emphasizes women's diversity of experiences. Aileen Moffatt (1995), a Saskatchewan historian, called for work to be done on examining women's lives within the context of how "wider social, cultural, economic and political movements" influence individual's lives (p. 26). Much of the more recent research on Saskatchewan women teachers explores these women's circumstances through a feminist historiographical perspective as developed by Prentice & Boutilier (1997), Sangster (2001), and Coulter & Harper (2005).

Writing from a feminist perspective Dianne Hallman (1997) argued that the lives of rural Saskatchewan teachers were deeply shaped by gendered expectations of teaching. Hallman's (1997) research examined Departmental expectations of what should be taught as well as the agency that rural teachers had in the classroom to negotiate the teaching of both information and ideologies that they thought were of importance.

Dr. Irene Poelzer (1990), the original collector of the data I am working with, examined the ways in which gendered norms constrained the lives of Saskatchewan women teachers. Poelzer (1990) framed her work through feminist historiographical analysis and made extensive use of primary documents to contextualize these women's experiences from the period of 1905-1920. Analysis of Poelzer's collection has utilized feminist historiography in order to examine women teachers' employment patterns (Corman, 2010), the effects of the Great Depression on women teachers (Corman & Ensslen, 2012) as well as the experiences of never-married career women teachers (Ensslen & Corman, 2013). All of the previous research performed on Poelzer's teacher study had been restricted to the women's written accounts rather than including their supplementary material. My analysis extends Poelzer's project by providing an in-depth analysis of ten teachers to examine how these women (re)presented themselves as "good" teachers and how they embraced the task of constructing solid citizens.

Chapter Three: Research Design

My research examines how a particular group of Saskatchewan women teachers presented themselves as educators and as such countered the ideal of the male teacher. In addition, I explore how these women teachers characterized their classroom practices and goals as facilitating the process of creating Saskatchewan citizens, through emphasizing “Canadian” citizenship attributes the Saskatchewan Department of Education intended as well as by emphasizing values that they themselves felt were essential to citizenship.

To address these issues I performed a close reading of ten retired women teachers’ archived personal histories²⁰ and supplementary documents informed by Liz Stanley’s approach to narrative analysis and documents of life, and feminist historiography. These ten women’s histories were selected from Dr. Poelzer’s collection of 255 personal histories provided by retired Saskatchewan women teachers.

3.1. Sources Of Data And Data Collection

Dr. Irene Poelzer, from the University of Saskatchewan, commenced a project (in the mid 1980s) to document the contributions of women who taught in Saskatchewan between 1905 and 1955. Originally envisioning the project as a series of books divided by time period, Poelzer wrote letters to retired women teachers, most of whom were in their 70s, 80s and 90s, soliciting their contribution to her project. Poelzer expressed a specific interest to these women in their teaching experiences between 1905-1955; consequently the women’s accounts are framed with this specific interest in mind. The amount of material that the women included about their lives and careers after 1955

²⁰ These personal histories were elicited through in depth mailed questions.

varies in amount and quality. Appendix 1 contains a selection of some of the documents that one of the teachers submitted in her personal history.

Poelzer retired before she could complete her series of books and unfortunately due to health complications was not available for consultation regarding her motivations or thought processes in shaping the initial letter inviting participation or the framing of the open-ended questionnaire. However, within the archival records, copies of her original letter to potential participants exist as well as the subsequent correspondence between women who chose to participate and Poelzer's research team.

The questionnaire that Poelzer sent out consisted of 86 open-ended questions, many of which contained sub-questions or asked for a very detailed answer.²¹ These questions pertained to topics such as motivations to teach, time in Normal School, curriculum, schools taught in, supplies provided, notable experiences, living conditions, community events they became involved in, finding jobs, discrimination, and what they perceived as their contribution to Saskatchewan heritage. As Poelzer expected, it took a substantial amount of time and effort for the women to answer the lengthy questionnaire, especially as many of the elderly women who chose to respond handwrote or typed (on a typewriter) very detailed responses to all of the questions. Poelzer additionally asked these women if they would consent to have their names used, their stories profiled and their responses to the questionnaire and any photographs or other documents they cared to submit preserved in the Saskatchewan Archives if they so chose.

²¹ The questionnaire additionally came with two appendices, the first to be filled out if they had ever been involved in curriculum planning and the second for women who had worked as principals or vice-principals.

I chose these ten women, out of Dr. Poelzer's collection of 255 respondents, as they provided the most extensive documentation of their lives as teachers, agreed to donate their material to the archives, and additionally agreed to be identified by name.²² These personal histories consist of very long handwritten or typed responses to questions regarding their experiences as teachers as well as other related issues. These ten women supplemented their responses with a variety of material ranging from photographs documenting their teaching lives, their original teaching contracts, valentines from students, diplomas, their own report cards and some of their yearly inspector's reports detailing the inspector's level of satisfaction with their teaching abilities. Additionally, included in this archive are the copies of the correspondence between Poelzer and the women who contributed to her study. In some cases, Poelzer's research assistants carried out follow up interviews with the respondent. Transcribed copies of both the interviews and the lengthy responses are in the files. I scanned and digitally stored the additional material that the women submitted.

3.2. Reflexive Positioning

My relationship with Poelzer's collection of personal histories has changed over time. I gained access to these archives through Dr. June Corman who received these files in the 1990s from Poelzer after she retired. I initially became involved in working with this collection as Dr. Corman's research assistant. Although I have worked with this material intermittently since 2010 it was not until the summer of 2013 that I first

²² My thesis focuses exclusively on the teachers' experiences teaching under the jurisdiction of the provincial government and therefore does not include the federally organized residential school system.

encountered the original documents that the women submitted. Upon seeing both the painstaking amount of work that some of these women put into handwriting or typing (on a typewriter) dozens of pages detailing their experiences as well as their donations of photographs that they had preserved for so long, I felt both a sense of curiosity and responsibility to continuing to work with their material.

Part of my interest stems from my family's history as educators in Saskatchewan, my grandmother, three great aunts, one great great aunt and a great great grandfather taught in rural one-room schools. The no longer operational rural school that my grandmother taught in still is used today for the social gatherings and women's club meetings that my grandmother attends. Many of the women's stories from the Poelzer collection are similar to those of my grandmother's and the satisfaction that they seem to have received from teaching mirrors her own. Visiting my grandmother in Saskatchewan, celebrating her 90th birthday in her old one-room school, and hearing her stories has made me even more attached to these women. It has caused me to think carefully about how they might want their stories presented and to worry if they would be happy with being remembered in the way that I have presented them. These women had agreed, and in some cases were delighted, to participate in Dr. Poelzer's project documenting and preserving the work of Saskatchewan women teachers. While these ten women agreed to have their material stored in the Saskatchewan Archives to be analyzed by future researchers (such as myself), it is entirely possible that they would not be happy with the types of projects these researchers were undertaking or the conclusions that were being drawn.

3.3. Methodological Issues And Ethical Considerations

There are several complex methodological issues involved in working with this archival material. The original study was restricted as it could only reach women who were still alive in 1985, of reasonable health and who had remained in the province and so could be tracked down. Given that all women participating had the option of donating their material to the Saskatchewan Archives and the ten within my research agreed to do so, it is possible that these women framed their responses differently than they would have if they were not being preserved in this public venue. The desire to have their lives archived may have played a role in the generous manner in which some chose to donate their old photographs and documents and influenced the choice of which particular documents they enclosed.

One of the most difficult challenges within this study is the women's lack of disclosure of intimate, uncomfortable or unflattering information about their teaching experiences, time spent within these rural communities or personal lives. Not only might women have chosen not to report moments from their teaching career that they were not proud of but further they might have chosen to censor details from their lives that were more difficult to discuss. None of the 255 women disclosed non-heteronormative identities or experiences. Never-married respondents may not have been single; some might have been involved in same-sex relationships. Respondents who never married gave very little detail as to why they never married and did not they discuss relationships they might have had with either gender (Ensslen & Corman, 2013). Additionally, respondents who chose to discuss sexual harassment and assault that they experienced as schoolteachers had great difficulty doing so, it is entirely possible more of the women

might have had these experiences but chosen not to share them (Corman & Ensslen, 2012).

As these women were being asked about their lives by a stranger, with the additional understanding that the information that they provided would be stored in the Saskatchewan Archives, it is possible that many of the women chose to omit details of their lives that they would not be comfortable having preserved. I have been attentive to the fact that these personal histories were constructed for preservation. My analysis of their personal histories examines how these retired women teachers presented themselves and their teaching goals and classroom practices. According to Lois Presser (2005) the “purpose of the interview, whether conveyed directly or indirectly, influences narrators in the selection of “facts” about “what happened”” (p. 2069). I am primarily working with written responses rather than interviews, these concerns still remain relevant. To attend to these complexities I have incorporated Ken Plummer’s understanding that the way a story is told is dependent upon circumstances such as when and where it is told, as well as the circumstances motivating that particular telling of the story, the audience and what is being told (Plummer, 1995 & 2013). Chapter four contains a more detailed analysis on factors that influenced the ways these women chose to shape their personal histories.

As the respondents in the late 1980s were discussing events that occurred anywhere from 40-60 years prior I have been attentive to issues regarding memory and reconstruction of past events through the lens of the 1980s. Furthermore, although Poelzer, using the Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation’s (STF) records, offered all retired women teachers the opportunity to participate in the study it is possible that only the women who felt more positively about their teaching experiences chose to participate.

As I analyzed personal histories that spanned the twentieth century, I drew upon tools from feminist historiography in order to be mindful of the ways our societal norms have changed since the early 1900s so as not to impose my own views upon documents, events and attitudes from earlier times periods. I have followed Dr. Poelzer's (1990) strategy of contextualizing these women's personal histories by consulting historical material from the time period such as newspaper clippings from the time period; the STF's Annual Reports and other reports commissioned by the Department; the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation's monthly publication for teachers called *The Bulletin*²³ as well as books on the history of Saskatchewan and the history of education in Saskatchewan.

Included in the original surveys were questions asking the women whether they would be comfortable being prominently profiled by name. I only analyzed material from women who have consented to have their material archived and names identified. Additionally, some women have made their own stipulations on material they have included regarding what can or cannot be published. If they have asked for certain students' names or other material provided not to be divulged, these wishes were of course be respected.

As I was performing a secondary data analysis²⁴ on material collected by another researcher, I faced several interesting constraints. I had no role in devising the focus of the original project or in constructing the questions. In analyzing these ten women's personal histories I was in the position of working with material that had been collected

²³ As the STF did not form until 1934 and previous Saskatchewan teachers' unions did not issue similar publications, my analysis of union publications was from 1934 onwards.

²⁴ For information on the debate regarding the secondary data analysis and data sharing see Mauthner 2012; Mauthner & Parry, 2013.

by another researcher almost 30 years before. Additionally, I was reengaging with material that I had previously worked with as Dr. Corman's research assistant. As this was the case I actively attempted to employ "reflexivity in retrospect" as a way of viewing research and the knowledge produced as a continuous and open-ended process that changes as researchers revisit their data and as new researchers reanalyze old data sets" (Doucet & Mauthner, 2006, p. 41). My approach to these women's material has changed since seeing their photographs and documents for the first time in 2013. Furthermore, I chose to broaden my analysis to include documents that were exchanged between Poelzer's and the women such as Poelzer's letter of invitation, their continued correspondence and the consent form she sent them.

3.3.1. Remembering the Past

As these women were asked to reflect back on occurrences that happened up to 50 or 60 years before, it is likely that some of their teaching experiences have been forgotten, cannot be remembered clearly or, at this point, might have been misremembered. Remembering events that happened so long ago might have been additionally difficult for women in their 80s and 90s, some of these women's memories might be impaired by age or health related factors.

Fortunately, to a certain extent some of the women relied upon photographs and other documents from their time as teachers to function as memory prompters. For example, some women consulted old photographs of their schools in order to better be able to describe the layout of the schoolhouse, the types of supplies they had access to or to refresh themselves about how many students were in their classes. Additionally, some

women like Sylvia Birnie enclosed these photographs with their written submissions in order to buttress her statements.

Some of the women did respond to certain questions that they were unable to remember any events that would fit those descriptions. These responses themselves lend to interesting speculation especially as they often related to questions about unpleasant events. Some women remember and share tragic stories from their teaching careers, often stories relating to children falling ill or even dying, however, others were unable to think of any. It is possible that nothing sad befell them, their pupils or the community members during their teaching careers, although possibly these experiences have been forgotten as the happier times are preferable to remember. I was aware that these women may have shaped their stories by what Di Leonardo calls “rhetorical nostalgia,” which is the telling of nostalgic or “uncritical narrative[s]” (Coulter & Harper, 2005, p. 23). Di Leonardo (1984) explains, rhetorical nostalgia is respondents’ “denial of context, of the material, historical locations of particular social forms” (p. 234). When asked to compare their teaching experiences with that of the present day (1980s) some of Poelzer’s respondents relayed nostalgic stories of how teaching was better during the first half of the twentieth century. They told stories of parents being more supportive, communities being more cohesive and students being better behaved. These stories in some cases contradicted other answers the women provided. Feminist historiography’s emphasis on understanding the socio-cultural context of the participants’ lives positioned me to locate these women’s nostalgic responses within their historical context.

3.4. Conceptual Approaches

Narrative analysis as a method of doing feminist historiography, supplemented by an analysis of documents of life, provides a helpful way to engage with these women's stories. I examined the stories that the women chose to tell in order to explicate the importance of teaching to their lives and the ways that they wanted their contributions remembered. The work of Stanley is especially useful to this research project as she focuses upon letters, artifacts and autobiographies as narrative data in order to understand the ways that people make sense of their lives (Stanley 1993, 2004, 2008 & 2013a). Stanley has used narrative inquiry as an approach to analyzing material ranging from studies of women in South Africa to the development of proto-nationalism (Stanley 2008). Stanley (2004) theorizes letters are dialogical, as they function as a communication exchange rather than a standalone object, and perspectival in that they do not represent a fixed point of view. In accordance with Stanley's approach, I was attentive to the concern that letters should not be read as a simple representation of facts but understood as providing an ability to understand changes in events or relationships over time (Stanley, 2004; 2013c). Stanley's (2013b) insight, much like that of Ken Plummer (1983), that documents of life are texts produced for a purpose as well as a version of events rather than "facts" was particularly relevant to my analysis of these women's supplementary material.

Discerning what a photograph is documenting is difficult, especially within a context such as this, where the researcher was not there when the photographs were taken (Kuhn, 2007; Stanley, 2013a). "Reading" photographs is made more complicated as I was unable to talk to the women who submitted them. Annette Kuhn (2007) theorizes that a

single photograph or visual can have the ability to tell multiple and different stories, and that these stories that extend beyond the moment captured on film. Additionally as Kuhn (2007) writes, photographs hold multiple meanings not only as memory prompters but also as keepsakes or connections to the past. Informed by a documents of life approach, I am not making claims regarding being able to know the “truth” behind these supplementary documents (Stanley 2013b, p. 7). In addition to exploring what these personal histories reveal about the conditions of rural teachers, I examined what their time as teachers meant to these women. As photographs and letters are particular narrative documents with their own constraints, limitations and insights, I drew upon the work of Liz Stanley (2004 & 2013) and Annette Kuhn (2002 & 2007) for guidance.

3.4.1. Key Terms

Narrative: I am utilizing Stanley’s (2008) definition of narrative as “an analytical frame enabling small-scale stories to be located in relation to a wider (temporal, spatial) context of bigger stories” (p. 436). Plummer (2013) explains “while stories direct us to *what* is told, narratives tell us *how* stories are told” (p. 210). As I am performing a narrative analysis I am looking at the “social conditions, uses and consequences” of the stories that these women tell (Plummer, 2013, p. 210).

Documents of Life: This term refers to material such as photographs, diaries and letters, seeing these documents as a form of data that is “everyday, representational and significant in organizing and shaping lives” (Stanley 2013b, p. 4). Plummer makes a distinction between “research generated” documents of life (i.e. stories generated based upon queries by researchers) and “naturally occurring” examples such as diaries (Stanley 2013b, p. 4).

3.5. Analysis Strategy

I began my project by reading the most comprehensive responses to Dr. Poelzer's project. As I read these ten women's life histories and examined their personal documents, two research questions emerged. The first question was: how did this particular group of Saskatchewan women teachers utilize their personal histories and supplementary documents to counter the commonly held opinion they faced while teaching that men constituted the ideal teacher? The second question was: how did these women's classroom practices and goals facilitate the process of "Canadianizing" their rural immigrant students? Two compatible approaches provided analytical guidance: feminist historiography and narrative analysis.

Feminist historiography emphasizes the importance of analyzing these women's lives in the context of their time period. Narrative analysis provided an approach to reading these in depth submissions. In addition I used space-time grids as an analytical tool (Nichols et al., 2012). As these women's material was entrenched in the historical context of the first half of the 20th century, I chose to follow Dr. Poelzer's approach to the data and utilize a feminist historiographical perspective. Feminist historiography emphasizes that it is important to "draw parallels and make connections to regional, national and international developments. History cannot be written or understood in a vacuum" (Moffatt, 1995, p. 26).

Following this approach, in Chapter Two I provide the historical context of each research question to explicate who was the ideal teacher during this time period and to understand the settlement of Saskatchewan and the province's Canadianizing agenda. From there I created a space-time grid for each of the ten women. These grids provided a

framework to write biographies for the women in order to understand their lives holistically. I referred back to these analytical tools throughout the analysis process. For example Anna Ingham's space-time grid allowed me to track her contributions to the profession over time (see Chapter Four).

I utilized Liz Stanley's perspective on narrative analysis to examine how these women chose to discuss their teaching careers. For example, this approach guided my analysis of the letters allowing me to understand how the correspondence between the women and Dr. Poelzer had consequences for the types of stories they told. As narrative analysis emphasizes "lives are always 'read' and interpreted through the stories told, and untold, about them," I scrutinized the stories these women told about themselves (Stanley & Temple, 2008, p. 278). From there I looked at the themes across these women's stories that emerged regarding how they presented as teachers and how they described their classroom goals. I additionally drew upon Ken Plummer and Liz Stanley's approach to documents of life in order to analyze the range of material these women submitted. For example, I categorized the documents the women provided to see commonalities in the types of documents they submitted and further broke the documents down by who they received them from (e.g. pupils, trustees, community members and inspectors). From there, I cross-referenced the documents with references in their text to the mementos they submitted. Analysing their documents in this way provided a systematic approach to first organize and then analyze the range of materials they submitted. Organizing the documents in this way allowed me to see certain themes emerging, as all of the women selected documents that reflected positively on them. The cards they received from students and the community members' letters illustrated how much they and their efforts

were appreciated; the assessments from inspectors that they included praised their teaching abilities; and the personal report cards, awards and certificates they included emphasized that they were hard working, intelligent and motivated to improve their teaching skills. Additionally, cross-referencing them with the text allowed me to see the ways these women included documents to buttress their statements. For example, Mary Donovan (1927) stated that the communities she taught in were supportive and appreciative of her and additionally chose to include a thank you letter from a community she taught in.

3.6. Space-Time Grid

I adapted Nichols et al. (2012) space-time grid approach²⁵ to suit the particularities of this existing data set. Poelzer had expressed to these women that she was interested in their time in Normal School, their subsequent educational upgrades and their time as a teacher. Additionally, her project's focus was to document the first 50 years of education within the province of Saskatchewan (1905-1955). Consequently, the amount of material pertaining to where they grew up, when they were born, if and how many children they had, where they lived and jobs they had when not working as a teacher, and much of their lives post 1955 varies from woman to woman and unfortunately is not comprehensive. I used the space-time grids to map all information they provided on where and when they were born, where they went to Normal School, the schools they taught in and where they resided, when they married, and where they retired to and how

²⁵ Many thanks to Dr. Jennifer Rowsell for suggesting that I utilize the space-time grid.

they occupied their time after they retired. Appendix 2 contains one of the women's completed space-time grids.

SPACE:	Parent's Home	Education	Occupation	Teacher Housing	Married Life?
TIME:					
Retirement (year)					
Teaching: (year)					
Teaching: (year)			Where taught/ grade level		
Normal School (year)		Where went to school/certificate type			
Childhood (year born)	Where grew up/type of school				

Figure 3.1 Example of Space-Time Grid Template

The space-time grids were essential to my data analysis process, as these women did not talk about their teaching experiences sequentially when answering Poelzer's questions. Understanding which decade or even year they were referring to was necessary in order to contextualize their answers. For example Anne Harcourt (1916) and her fellow female teachers had only just received the right to vote in Saskatchewan in 1916. Furthermore, they were teaching during World War One, the socio-political context of which had ramifications even within the Saskatchewan Department of Education and the small Saskatchewan communities these women were teaching in. Many of the other women like Kate Myers (1924) and Kathleen Nouch (1926) taught during the 1920s, the Great Depression of the 1930s, the 1940s and World War Two, and into the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s either continuously or with interruptions.

Additionally many of the women moved to different school districts every few years. The space-time grids allowed me to plot the locations that these women taught in over the course of their careers as knowing where lived geographically is crucial to understanding the ways they talked about the schools they taught at. During this time traveling even short distances was difficult due to lack of access to transportation. Until at least the 1950s, none of these ten women had their own cars and additionally harsh Saskatchewan winters complicated travelling. Women had to walk, hitch rides with farmers or save up for bicycles, which they could only use during clement weather. Visiting friends and family members regularly could be inconvenient or even impossible depending if they were teaching in a distant district.

Locating their personal histories spatially and chronologically was necessary for my analysis as the societal expectations of women changed over time. Knowing the time period they taught in allowed me to situate their teaching stories within time period specific expectations regarding who was considered an “ideal” teacher and constraints that women teachers faced. These women’s patterns of re-entry back into the profession were heavily dependent on the shortage of male teachers during World War Two (Corman, 2010). Women such as Harcourt who married and left the profession in 1919 were not in the same position of being able to re-enter the profession as women who began teaching later. Locating their statements in time and place was further important in understanding the societal climate they were teaching Canadian values in, especially if they were teaching during World War One or World War Two. Additionally locating them spatially in rural schools vs. urban schools allowed for an understanding of whether they were teaching in ethnically homogenous rural communities.

The space-time grids helped to shape the structure of the biographies I wrote for each woman and thus my understanding of these women's lives. I have included short biographies within this chapter for several purposes, the first of which is that it is essential for the reader to be familiar with each of the ten women prior to reading the data analysis chapters. The second purpose is that I hope the reader will develop a personal connection to these women after reading their biographies and seeing their faces,²⁶ as I myself feel connected to them after having spent so much time immersed in their life stories. The third purpose is to allow the reader to contrast these women's lives as they were born over a 30-year time period. Appendix 3 contains more detailed biographies of the women.

3.7. Biographies

Anne Harcourt nee Brunn (Born June 12th 1898; taught 1916-1919)



In 1916 with only a 9th grade education, 18 year old Anne received a temporary teaching permit from the Saskatchewan Department of Education in order to start teaching at Deer Lake, which was desperately in need of a teacher. During the summer of 1919 Anne married and quit teaching. Anne raised seven children and taught for three years.

Edith MacLeod nee Taylor (Born 1902; taught 1922-1969 with interruptions)

Edith opted to become a schoolteacher, as there were limited career options for women in the 1920s. In 1922 after graduating from Normal School Edith, now twenty years old, began teaching in rural schools. In 1930 Edith married, quit teaching and moved with her husband to Nova Scotia for the next 23 years. In the 1940s she resumed teaching in order

²⁶ Unfortunately, not all of the women included photographs of themselves.

to help financially support her family. In 1953 she moved back to Saskatchewan and continued to teach until 1969. Edith taught for 27.5 years.

Kate Myers (Born c. 1905, taught 1924-1967)



Kate started teaching in 1924 at the age of 19 and was hired directly out of Normal School to teach in a four-room village school in Markinch and from there moved to teach Grade One and Two in Harris, Saskatchewan. From 1929 until she retired in 1967 Kate primarily taught the First Grade in Weyburn City. Kate continued to pursue her own education and upgrade her teaching credentials throughout her life. Upon retiring in 1967 Kate spent seven years as the Pastoral Assistant in Weyburn's Grace United Church and additionally spent three years as the president of the local Red Cross. In 1981 she retired from teaching Sunday school.

At the time of participating in Poelzer's project in 1986/1987 she was the leader of the UCW, a member of the Rebekah Lodge, led the World Day of Prayer 100th Anniversary Service, and chaired the 1987 Banquet and Programme for the 25th Anniversary of the UCW. Kate never had children and in addition to never marrying did not disclose having any romantic relationships. Kate taught for 43 years.

Sylvia Birnie nee Surring (Born c. 1905; taught 1924--? with interruptions)



Sylvia grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan. Upon finishing High School in 1923 she went to Normal School and at 19 started teaching. In 1930 Sylvia married the brother of the woman she had been boarding with and spent the next 22 years raising their five children. In 1952 Sylvia returned to teaching in Saskatoon and continued until at least the mid 1960s. After retiring, Birnie became the President of the Saskatoon branch of the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan (STS). In 1982, at 77 years of age she was the guest speaker at the Maple Creek-Medicine Hat chapter's annual meeting.

Kathleen Nouch nee Mathers (Born c. 1908; taught 1926-1971 with interruptions)

While Kathleen's parents had only been willing to finance her education at Normal School and nowhere else, she initially planned to become a nurse rather than a teacher. Her future husband ultimately persuaded her to become a teacher. With a Grade 11 education she took a four-month course at the Regina Normal School in the fall of 1925. At 17 years of age she found herself responsible for teaching and maintaining discipline to 40 pupils, one of them older than she was herself. While Kathleen took a four-year break from teaching in 1929 (when she presumably married her husband) she resumed teaching in 1933 applying to schools that were close to her husband's work. Kathleen taught for approximately 37 ½ years.

Ruby Smeltzer nee Swanston (Born 1908; taught 1927-1970 with interruptions)



Teaching was a family career path for Ruby, her mother, two sisters, aunts and grandfather before her all worked in the field. Ruby started teaching at 19 years of age and two years later ended up teaching and even sharing a two-bedroom teacherage with one of her sisters from 1929-1933. She started teaching in 1927 and taught until marriage in 1933. Ruby resumed teaching for three years during World War Two, but returned to working as a farm wife until being asked to teach in 1953 and so drove six miles every day from the family farm to Ogema to teach a split Grade 5/6 class. In 1967 Ruby became a substitute teacher and spent the last two years of her teaching career as the Ogema school librarian, officially ceasing teaching in 1970. Ruby taught for 23 years.

Mary Donovan (Born 1909; taught 1927-1969 with one interruption)



In the fall of 1926 Mary moved to Regina for the four month Normal School program and in January of 1927 moved back into her parent's home to teach at age 18 in the local school, Grosmont. After her father's death in 1958 she temporarily quit teaching and chose to work for the Pioneer Co-op for three years operating the bookkeeping machine. In 1961 Mary resumed teaching, a year later began teaching Grade 12 algebra, English and French, and then spent her final years as teacher teaching the 2nd Grade. In 1969 Mary retired from teaching after 35 years in the profession. Since retiring she continued to take University and Community College courses. Upon participating in Dr. Poelzer's project in 1986, at 77 years of age, Mary was only four credits away from completing her Bachelor's of Arts. Mary never married nor did she choose to report any romantic relationships.

Ellen Kristianson (Born c. 1911; taught 1930-1972)

Growing up on a farm Ellen always knew that she wanted to teach in a rural school. Ellen reported that she, like many girls her age, planned to teach until marriage and then quit to raise children. At 19 years of age she started teaching in 1930, the Depression derailed these plans. Consequently Ellen continued to teach in order to support herself. After 19 years of moving from rural school to rural school every few years Ellen moved to the town of Shaunavon in 1949 and taught there until retiring in 1972. It is unclear whether Ellen ever married or had children; she did not choose to mention any romantic relationships she might have had. Ellen taught for 42 years.

Anna Ingham nee Lake (born 1911/1912; taught 1934-1972 with interruptions)



Anna graduated from the Saskatoon Normal School in 1934 with a 2nd class certificate and began teaching when she was approximately 22 years old. In 1936 Anna took time off from teaching to marry and to have her first child. She resumed teaching in 1938 in order to help put her husband through school. Anna intermittently took time off teaching after having each child. As Anna taught she cultivated her teaching method the Blended Sound-Sight Method of Learning. Around 1965 Anna began to speak at various institutes and teachers' conventions on the subject. Her book on the method was published in 1967. In 1973 she took early retirement to continue to promote the BSSM through speaking engagements and running short courses. From 1974-1977 she worked as a consultant for the Department of Education. At the time of participating in Dr. Poelzer's project she was still speaking at conventions and giving summer classes on her method. Anna taught in rural, town and city for 29 years, in addition to the years she spent as a schoolteacher, she spent decades cultivating, promoting and teaching BSSM.

June Baumgartner nee Robinson (Born c. 1931; taught 1949-??)

In 1949 after graduating from the 12th Grade, 18-year-old June found herself asked by a local Superintendent if she would like to become a Study Supervisor for a nearby rural one-room school that needed a teacher. June used the money she earned that year to go to Normal School in Moose Jaw in 1950. After one year of working as a teacher she was offered a teaching job in Regina. In 1953 she married and moved to Prince Albert to teach in the All Saints Indian School.²⁷ It is unclear whether June continued to teach after 1955. She made little mention of her life after 1954, her only statement regarding whether she had considered teaching a life-long career is difficult to conclusively analyze. She stated: "But this [teaching] did not turn out to be only a career until marriage for I continue to choose to acquire knowledge and skills through studies etc."

²⁷ June taught in this residential school from 1953-1954. This thesis analyzes June's teaching aspirations and practices; however, its focus is on Saskatchewan's provincially regulated education system rather than the federally regulated residential school system. She is the only one of the ten women within this thesis who reported teaching in a residential school.

Chapter Four: (Re)presenting Themselves as Dedicated Teachers

The collection of personal histories gathered by Dr. Irene Poelzer provides an opportunity to examine how a group of Saskatchewan women teachers presented themselves as educators utilizing their personal histories and supplementary documents. I found that their accounts contest the longstanding view that women who taught were not committed teachers. They, in fact, chose examples from their own lives to illustrate women as legitimate, serious and hardworking teachers.

Participating in Dr. Poelzer's project gave these elderly women a platform to publically discuss their time as a teacher. Both Poelzer's framing of the project and the women's own motivations for participating elicited stories and documents of life that presented these women as "good" teachers. While these women were entering a profession where there were low expectations placed on women's professionalism as teachers, coupled with only a few months of training and little supervision, these women were dedicated to their job, the profession and the students they taught. This chapter examines the common themes that emerge regarding their entrance into the profession; their examples of going above and beyond what was required; and the communities' appreciation of their efforts.

4.1. A Chance To Tell Their Stories

Originally envisioning the project as a series of books divided by time period, Poelzer wrote letters to retired women teachers, most of whom were in their 70s, 80s and 90s, soliciting their contribution to her project. Poelzer, as a feminist historian, felt it was important to document and appreciate the lives and work of the thousands of

underappreciated women who had taught in the province. Her letter of invitation as well as subsequent correspondence, the consent form she issued and the questionnaire itself make it clear to the women how Poelzer viewed their contributions to Saskatchewan and the teaching profession. Considering the context in which their accounts were solicited is important as the context influenced whether they chose to participate and additionally what stories they chose to tell about their teaching career and how they chose to tell them.

Through the initial letter sent out, the subsequent letters and the questionnaire, Poelzer expressed to them that their work as teachers was a valuable contribution to Saskatchewan and its heritage and moreover that their personal stories were worth documenting and preserving for future generations. She framed women teachers as professionals and that their time as teachers was inherently valuable and important enough to document and preserve. In her correspondence with them Poelzer stressed to the women that they had contributed greatly to Saskatchewan heritage and that these contributions had been previously undervalued to the extent that little effort had been previously made to document or preserve their time as teachers. She additionally stressed to some that their personal feedback was an especially important memorial as few women teachers from Saskatchewan's early days were still alive at that time. This emphasis that Poelzer placed upon the value of their contributions might have discouraged women who disliked teaching or felt they were poor teachers from participating in the project. Overwhelmingly the women who chose to participate presented themselves as having enjoyed teaching or, at the very least, enjoyed aspects of teaching.

In Poelzer's letter thanking Sylvia Birnie (1924)²⁸ for agreeing to participate Poelzer clearly expresses her motivations for undertaking the project. She wrote:

I believe it is very import to document the work and lives of our Saskatchewan women teachers for future generations. I fear, this should have been done years ago, and I fear that many of our very early teachers no longer are alive to tell their stories. However, we will do the best we can. I want to thank you for your enthusiasm and support in this work. I would not be able to do this without the marvelous cooperation of older women teachers.

Poelzer situated the project as one in which the contributions of the women was crucial as their autobiographies would allow her to compile, in a sense, a collective biography that would attempt to speak about the larger body of Saskatchewan women teachers.

Poelzer's framing of women teachers as valuable but underappreciated undoubtedly played a role in how these women thought about the project. Additionally they too had their own personal reasons for contributing to the enterprise and reasons for framing their responses in the ways that they did. Within their correspondences with Poelzer, their consent forms, and their responses to her questions, it is possible to discern some of the women's motivations for undertaking such an ambitious project. My subset of ten women expressed a variety of reasons for being interested in contributing to the project and it is clear that these motivations played a role in what stories and documents they chose to share and how they chose to present them. While I am only focusing on these ten women and not all 255, it is not because these ten are special or necessarily had

²⁸ The year in brackets beside women's names denotes the year they started teaching in order to situate their comments within the context of the time period they taught in. The span of their time as teachers is not denoted as many of their careers are complicated by exit and re-entry patterns related to marriage, childrearing or other factors.

unique reasons to contribute. In fact, many of these ten women's reasons to participate and the stories they told regarding teaching are largely representative of the other respondents. However, these ten women are unique in that they chose to contribute more detailed information and a greater variety of photographs and other documents of life than the other participants.

Many of the women who participated in Poelzer's project would have done so because they saw this as a way of having their cherished teaching experiences and lives documented, preserved and celebrated in Poelzer's book as well as the Saskatchewan Archives. As many, if not all, were in their 70s or older, they might have been especially eager to have a home in the archives for their cherished documents from their teaching careers that they had saved since they were young women. Many of the women expressed that they were happy to have their stories solicited and modestly proud when asked about how they perceived their contributions to Saskatchewan heritage. As Ruby Smeltzer (1927) wrote on her consent form: "Yes, I will be pleased that my contribution may be preserved. Please feel free to use or keep any pictures in the album too."

Some women were in fact already compiling their own memoirs or were inspired to do so when approached by Poelzer. In fact, Kathleen Nouch (1926) wrote on her consent form: "Yes, I'm willing for you to use anything I print within, but I warn you that I'm keeping a copy and may do some freelance writing about this, myself." Additionally, while writing her responses to Poelzer's questions, Sylvia Birnie (1924) decided to make a copy of her responses for her grandchildren as well as for Poelzer. This decision resulted in Birnie organizing her answers into a more formal autobiography. Birnie put her answers in a binder, illustrated a titled cover page and inserted photographs that

corresponded to relevant questions and points in her life. Birnie additionally annotated the pictures, much in the same way one might find in a traditional autobiography.



Figure 4.1 Photograph of Sylvia Birnie circa 1924 from her autobiographical binder submitted to Dr. Poelzer entitled “Early Teaching Years of Sylvia Surring Birnie 1924-1930.”

Picture 6
Sylvia in men's overalls,
dressed for riding. No pant
suits for women at that time.

Figure 4.2 Birnie's annotation to Picture 6 (see Figure 4.1) from her autobiographical binder submitted to Dr. Poelzer entitled “Early Teaching Years of Sylvia Surring Birnie 1924-1930.”

The way she chose to respond to the questions and the generous amount of material she provided was no doubt related to the fact that she intended her family to read and preserve this autobiography. Birnie presented herself as competent, hard working and striving for professionalism, she did not dwell overly on stories of personal failure or on less than pleasant events. It is entirely possible this is because she did not want to discuss

uncomfortable or embarrassing moments as she was creating a memoir intended for her family, even if she had been willing to share these incidents with Poelzer. More broadly speaking, these 255 women might have chosen to omit moments from their teaching career or lives because they did not want to share uncomfortable or distressing memories with a stranger or to have them preserved in the Saskatchewan Archives.²⁹ Some women chose to deal with concerns regarding privacy and confidentiality by requesting that Poelzer not use certain specified names, places or stories that they provided in her book. These requests were primarily made in instances where women wanted to protect past students' feelings rather than related to their own shortcomings or intimate confessions.

While an interest in preserving their own life stories played a role in motivating many of the women, others seem to have additionally been keen to undertake the project because they saw it as a forum to express their opinions. Part of Mary Donovan's (1927) enthusiasm in the project and reason for participating was because women teachers had been ignored during her time as a teacher and that she, like many other women, had been too shy to speak up. Donovan wrote that she was not surprised that very little had been written about Saskatchewan women teachers.

I remember many Teachers' Conventions where the executive were all men, the speaker was always a man, and women in the audience very seldom opened their mouths. I was a very shy person in those days, but I have changed and have no fear to speak up. However, that does no good now that I'm retired. I still write letters, though, about teachers supervising children at noon, recess, etc.

²⁹ Or even because they did not want to dwell on those memories themselves, very few women discussed sexual assault or harassment (Corman & Ensslen, 2012).

Donovan was deeply interested in expressing her opinions about the profession and about how hard teachers work and so it seems that she saw this as an effective forum to voice her opinion and presumably shaped her answers to the questions to reflect this positioning.

While Poelzer had only requested that women donate or lend photographs if they were so inclined, some of the women chose to donate a wide variety of documents, some more related to teaching than others. I believe that the donation of these materials stemmed from a desire to have these precious documents preserved and a desire to be helpful but additionally to position themselves as hardworking, dedicated and professional teachers. The documents of life they donated range from cards from students and parents, markers of their own achievements in the form of report cards, teaching certificates, inspectors' reports and newspaper clippings celebrating them.

While these women may not have thought of their donations consciously as reinforcing themes of hard work, intelligence, dedication and commitment to upgrading their credentials this is ultimately what many of their documents highlight. Mary Donovan (1927), Anne Harcourt (1916) and Sylvia Birnie (1924) all donated diplomas and certificates of first, second and third class teacher standing denoting their various academic achievements. Both Donovan and Ruby Smeltzer (1927) in fact included their high school report cards in their submissions and Donovan went one step further to include an entire manila envelope labeled "Mark Statements etc." containing all of her grades from high school to the university courses she took in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s (even including grades from courses she took after she formally retired). Smeltzer chose

to include her 1921 first and second place prizes in the categories “essay” and “geometry” respectively from an annual fair.

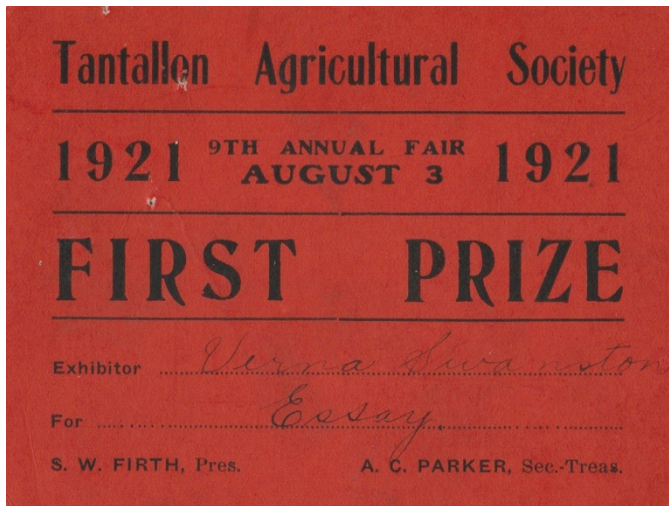


Figure 4.3 First Prize Certificate awarded to Ruby Smeltzer nee Swanston (age 13) at the 9th Annual Fair in 1921.

Additionally, it is possible that never-married childless women like Donovan saw this project as a way to preserve and memorialize their lives as they might not have had a younger generation to pass their stories and documents down to. Similarly Kate Myers (1924), also fits this pattern, she submitted glowing inspectors’ reports, thank you letters from pupils and parents and an extensive newspaper article from 1960 celebrating the 31 years she spent teaching at the same school. These were the only documents she still had preserved. According to her note “In 1985 I started getting rid of many treasures – notes from parents, from children, reports and such. It hurt but I realized I had to start clearing them out. May uncover more this winter but think I parted with most.”

Participating in Poelzer’s project meant that these women could donate their treasures to the Saskatchewan archive and think of them as valued as part of Saskatchewan’s heritage rather than junk to be thrown in the trash. These considerations are especially important as the types of information available about the lives of early 20th

century Saskatchewan women teachers was ultimately shaped by the stories and the documents of life that these women chose to share with Dr. Poelzer.

4.2. Entering The Profession With Little Training Or Supervision

In the first half of the 20th century, most teachers who taught in rural Saskatchewan were women. For the most part, these women were required to retire upon marriage, and consequently there was substantial turn over within the profession. Some of these women ultimately would return to teaching decades later after World War Two had engendered a change in societal norms. Teachers in these rural one-room schools were given little in the way of teacher training (8 months or less), could be as young as 18 years old, and additionally had access to few teaching supplies and received little to no supervision or teaching assistance as they worked alone without a principal or fellow teachers. Not all farm men and women were educated and among those who were, few had more than a Grade 8 education. There were no formal processes in place for parents or trustees to be involved in the classroom, and there were no parent-teacher associations or formal meetings over student progress. Teachers reported to Poelzer that during this time period parents largely left teachers to their own devices to devise classroom content and teaching methods as they saw fit. Additionally, the inspector came only once or twice a year to check on the teacher, although she had to impress the inspector, the teacher had a certain amount of freedom to teach students as much or as little in any fashion she chose the rest of the school year (Corman & Ensslen, 2012).

The consequences of failing to teach the students well were mitigated by the fact that teachers frequently chose to change schools every year or two³⁰ and because the female teacher might have been planning on leaving the profession shortly to get married. Some women, and presumably men, did take advantage of this lack of supervision. According to Mary Donovan (1927): “There was absolutely no equipment in the school, no decent library - nothing. I was told that the previous teacher, whom the children idolized, had spent a lot of time here crocheting.”

Despite this latitude and the expectation that women were not professionals in the workforce, the responses of the vast majority of the 255 women who participated in Poelzer’s project were full of stories of dedication, love of teaching, hard work and pride. It is very clear that many of these women had taken great satisfaction and sense of self from their time as teachers, even if they only taught for a short time. The work had great meaning to them and many derived a long-term sense of identity from being teachers.

4.3. Stories Of Hard Work, Dedication And Professionalism

During the first half of the twentieth century women teachers would have been aware of the public perception that they were not career-oriented and were less ideal (Patterson, 1986). They also would have been aware of the privileges bestowed upon male teachers although the meanings they made of these facts varied (Patterson, 1986). As the women were embedded within the societal expectations of the time, it is possible that they might not have made linkages between the public sentiment regarding women teachers and their own teaching careers and the constraints women faced. According to

³⁰ Teachers could not easily move between schools during the Great Depression of the 1930s as teaching positions were far harder to obtain (Corman & Ensslen, 2012).

Poelzer (1990) “The fact that women teachers in those years generally taught only a few years and then married simply reflects how women themselves had accepted and adhered to their socially constructed roles” (p. 28-29).

Separating the women’s own desires for their teaching careers, for example whether they would have liked to quit at marriage or not, from the time period’s cultural expectations for women is not possible. Even decades later when responding to Poelzer’s questions some of these women still did not present their decisions as influenced by or embedded in societal constraints of the time. Sylvia Birnie (1924) stated:

I wanted a teaching career until marriage and this became an actuality. Then I wanted a family...We had five children...I stayed in the home mothering them for twenty-two years. I didn’t ever dream of leaving them with a baby-sitter. In fact “baby-sitter” is a term coined years later than when my husband and I were raising our family. I believed that no one could teach my children how to FIND THE GOOD LIFE better than their father and mother. There was an added factor, of course, which didn’t affect me in the least. I did what I wanted to do. Once a teacher was married she couldn’t teach in a school. Maybe that wasn’t written anywhere but it was an understood fact. The trustees simply did not hire a married woman. She might become pregnant. Perish the thought! Sometimes the girls married but kept the marriage a secret until the end of the term. And still another factor. When a girl married at that time she expected her husband to support her and he expected to do just that. There was no question as to the role of a married woman. Her place was in the home especially if there were children.

Interestingly, while Birnie acknowledges the expectations of the time and the way those expectations impacted women teachers' lives, she draws no connection between these factors and her own life choices. Birnie instead presents herself as making her own choices, based on her own beliefs. While Birnie positions her account from the societal perspective of the 1980s when she was writing it, by acknowledging that times have changed, she still does not examine her own choices through this lens. It is additionally possible that as Birnie had created a second copy of this autobiography for her children and grandchildren that she was less inclined to be introspective as to the decisions she made regarding raising her family.

Poelzer's project was the first public platform available for many of respondents to establish themselves as hard working, dedicated and professional, countering the negative perception of women teachers that they faced when they taught. These women did so by offering examples of their dedication to the teaching profession through their motivations to become teachers, the ways they went above and beyond what was required of them; and how they were valued and skilled professionals.

4.3.1. Becoming A Teacher

During this time period there were few prestigious jobs that were considered suitable for women. Indeed, an overwhelming number of women who responded to Poelzer's project acknowledged this constraint. As Sylvia Birnie (1924) outlined, "There were fewer options for young women at the time. One could become a teacher, a nurse, or a stenographer." The fact that teaching required a short or, during some years, no training period was especially appealing if women weren't sure how long they were planning on working or could not afford to go to university. Consequently many women entered the

profession regardless of whether they were truly invested in being teachers or not. While many women admit that they became teachers due to economic circumstances or lack of other job options, two interesting themes emerge from these ten women's discussion of their motivations to teach. These two themes construct these women as either passionate about teaching or that they took their job seriously and were hardworking teachers.

4.3.1.1. "I Always Wanted to Teach"

The first theme is one of passionately desiring to teach or even to some extent being "born teachers" in that they had always thought of themselves as teachers and had spent their childhood assisting their own teachers or playing school. Kate Myers (1924) explained, "I always wanted to teach. As a child my two favorite games were "School" and "House." If I could not find enthusiastic pupils I lined up chairs or boxes or etc. and I taught!!!" Despite the perception that women teachers were transient workers Myers stated that she had always been interested in making teaching a lifelong career. This became an actuality as she taught for 43 years with no interruptions.

Ruby Smeltzer (1927) further established herself as a born teacher through her family's teaching legacy. She stated: "I think that as far back as I remember I wanted to be a teacher. My mother had been a teacher, my grandfather, and several aunts. My two older sisters became teachers." Additionally Smeltzer stressed her teaching ability by informing Poelzer that her own teachers had sought her out to assist them on numerous occasions. As Smeltzer explained:

When I was in Grade Four at Ferndale School, one of my teachers had me helping her teach two slow learners. Also in Grade Nine at Welwyn Village School I was often sent to supervise the Grade IV to VI room for a half day when the teacher

was absent. In this way I became accustomed to classroom management, and had an idea of teaching a roomful of children.

Ellen Kristianson (1930) wove her own love of learning into her story of always wanting to teach. She stated:

I remember the day a Shaunavon lady³¹ phoned to tell me my name was listed in the Regina Leader Post, among the names of those who had passed the Grade 8 Departmental Examinations. I ran to the barn where my father was pitching feed into the loft, shouting, “I passed! I passed! I’m going to go to high school!” My father paused, looked at me and smiled. I went to high school...

Kristianson did not feel that she was constrained by the lack of career options available to women during this time. As she stated “In the 1920s there were not as many career choices open to women as there are in 1986. Most of my friends planned to become teachers, nurses or secretaries... I didn’t lose any sleep deciding... I had known for years I wanted to teach.”

Mary Donovan (1927) situated her decision to teach within a context of own educational achievement:

Girls were mostly teachers, nurses, housemaids, or hairdressers in those days. I was a good student and liked to read and write so I presumed I would be a good teacher. Besides we were 5 or 6 miles from the nearest school, Sandy View, which was only open in the summer time. I had reached grade six. I needed a better school. Dad decided to move to a farm... [the next] school, Grosmont, was only a quarter of a mile from our house. I was soon in Grade Eight. I wrote

³¹ Shaunavon is a town and was also a rural school district at this time. It is unclear which Shaunavon she was referring to.

Departmental Exams and passed with honors. By hook or by crook I made my way as far as Grade Eleven, then went to Normal School in Regina for four months. Then I went teaching in my home school, Grosmont, where I taught for two years, then went back to Normal in Regina for six months.

4.3.1.2. “Forced” Decisions

The second theme that emerged regarding becoming a teacher was one of growing to enjoy teaching or at the very least one of striving to be a good teacher despite the fact that it was not a career they had always been passionate about. Kathleen Nouch (1926) stated, “I wanted to be a nurse but my parents forced me to be a teacher by refusing to finance me for anything else... I was going to finance myself to be a nurse. But my future husband begged me not to.” While she did not want to become a teacher she concluded her statement by commenting “Many pupils come back to tell me they hated me but consider me the best teacher they ever had.”

Similarly Edith MacLeod’s (1922) explanation of why she chose to teach emphasized that while she was not overly interested in becoming a teacher she worked hard as one. According to MacLeod:

I hardly know [why I became a teacher]... In those days there wasn’t so much choice. I had a sister who had a business course and worked as a secretary and in a bank. That didn’t appeal to me. I didn’t fancy being a nurse. That left teaching, which I decided to try, though I was very shy in my early days, as I spent several years on a homestead. Times were hard. Money was scarce. It was hardly a matter of choice, it was a chance to make a living, tho’ I liked the children and did my best for them.

Sylvia Birnie (1924) presented her entrance into teaching as being possibly forced but she was still incredibly ambitious:

I might add that though circumstances may have forced the decision in the beginning, I have never regretted it, for I loved every moment of my teaching days. Of course, I learned along the way. In my youth I was ready and fully intended to change the whole Educational System in the first six months, but finally had to acknowledge the fact that progress is painfully slow.

Interestingly, Birnie stated elsewhere in her response to whether she planned to be a career teacher she only intended to have teaching as a career until marriage.³²

Even though these women had not chosen the profession due to a love of teaching many of them grew to enjoy it and took pride in their work. In fact, some women took such pride and sense of self from teaching that they still identified as teachers decades after they retired or even in cases where they had only taught for a few years until marriage. June Baumgartner's (1949) explanation of her time teaching further exemplifies this theme. As she stated:

I chose teaching as a profession because I had to make a living to support myself. It took one year of study and then a young woman could be self-supporting. I also noted that a teacher within a community is a person of prestige, responsibility and honor. Therefore my intent was to become self sufficient, as an individual, and to be respected in the community in which I worked.

³² Possibly this desire developed after she started teaching, however, it is interesting that different questions regarding teaching aspirations elicited different responses.

Baumgartner constructed herself as a qualified and capable teacher through her explanation of how she came to teach. Rather than seeking the profession out, the profession sought her in the form of a Superintendent.

The motivation and encouragement came from my parents and a Superintendent who needed a Study Supervisor for a country school.³³ He had examined my grade twelve marks and had met with me and he decided that I was a good candidate to be a responsible and worthwhile teacher. After Teacher's Training College I was accepted in the Lumsden School, 1951-52, and then I was offered a position in the Regina School system. Each year there was more responsibility but more money and more social status or prestige.

While it seems that Baumgartner only taught for approximately four years, she continued to consider herself a teacher due to her love of learning. She emphasized, "But this [teaching] did not turn out to be only a career until marriage for I continue to choose to acquire knowledge and skills through studies etc."

Within these teachers' personal histories, they emphasize the importance they placed upon their own interest in learning and knowledge as well as the value they placed upon sharing knowledge. Anne Harcourt (1916) fell into the profession without any teacher training:

I just liked to always learn something and do something for people. That was my life and it still is...While I was going to Grade Eight in high school I didn't have much ambition to be a teacher until this opportunity presented itself. The school

³³ Baumgartner does not explain how the position of Study Supervisor differed from teacher. It seems that the school had no teacher and that Baumgartner was responsible for teaching the students with little external support and no teacher training.

needed a teacher out there and my mother said, “why don’t you apply”? So I did. I took a dare and a challenge.

Saskatchewan women teachers remained in the profession for a variety of reasons some never married and taught to support themselves like Mary Donovan while others married and resumed teaching once their children were of school age.³⁴ As Anna Ingham (1934) stated, “No, I was not interested in making teaching a lifetime career. I intended to make teaching a career till marriage. However, after our marriage my husband enjoyed his career flying and I enjoyed mine teaching so we both continued our careers.”

Despite the fact that some of these women would not have chosen to become teachers had they been provided with other career options, all ten entered the profession determined to their best. While Kathleen Nouch (1926) did not want to teach, she was still so dedicated to doing a good job that her former pupils gave her glowing reviews. Naturally not all young women entering the profession were as dedicated, however, these ten women’s stories of their entrance into the profession certainly dispute the provincial government’s assessment that “single women teachers were...marking time between their own educations and their true vocations of wife, mother and homemaker” (Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation, 1988, p. 1). These women were not simply marking time; they were committed to their jobs and pupils. Furthermore, their willingness to dedicate so much time and energy to Poelzer’s project certainly demonstrates the value they placed upon this special time in their lives.

³⁴ Women only had this option starting in the 1940s with the teacher shortage that took place during WWII.

4.3.2 Going Above And Beyond

While these women lacked supervision within the classroom and had a great deal of latitude regarding the amount of time and effort they put into teaching the students, these women present themselves to Poelzer as taking their jobs incredibly seriously. Many of them seem to have had standards far above what the parents of the schools would have expected of them. Their professionalism and hard work certainly exceeded the general perception that the public, the Department of Education and male members of the teaching profession held of them. Writing to Poelzer, these women emphasized the long hours they spent grading homework, crafting lessons and strategizing how to maintain control in the classroom. Additionally, these women were so committed to teaching their pupils and to the districts they taught in that they went above and beyond what was required.

June Baumgartner (1949) took her job seriously and held herself to her own exacting standards that she took on the responsibility of teaching herself how to teach. Baumgartner stated:

I purchased a book on how writing should be properly executed and taught...And so the first person that I practiced on was myself...I would stay after school, draw lines, with chalk, on the board with an instrument provided to draw the fine lines and four spaced for the use of music. And then I taught myself how to write properly because I maintain that if a teacher wishes to teach students how to write properly then that teacher should be a good writer herself/himself and so this was the objective I worked toward.

Other women continually upgraded their skills when they found themselves teaching grades or courses that they lacked expertise on. As Ellen Kristianson (1930) explained:

I could have taught indefinitely with [a Permanent First Class Certificate], but whenever I felt I needed to improve certain skills I did so by attending summer or winter classes or taking one by correspondence. For example, because I felt very inadequate teaching Grade 1, I attended the winter class [in] Primary Methods.

When asked to teach chemistry in Briercrest, a summer course made me feel more confident when teaching Grade 11 and 12 laboratory classes.

The women additionally stressed how they had little time for social lives while working in these one-room schools. According to Mary Donovan (1927):

As I usually taught many grades, I did not get involved much in community affairs. I usually spent much of the evenings checking work done by the students during the day (arithmetic, tests, written questions on reading or geography or history) [and] later, social studies, civics, etc.

While Donovan was too busy to be socially active she still emphasized that she made the time to enrich the community she was living in. Donovan stated:

I always put on a school concert as a rule. One winter, at Grosmont School [where she taught from 1927-1939] the young people (mostly past school age) and I practised a number of plays, three, I believe, and we presented them in the school at Easter time. So, to that extent we contributed something to social life in the community.

Ruby Smeltzer (1927) similarly found herself driven to enhance her pupils' athletic standing during Field Day competitions although this was not required of her.

She explained:

We had some good athletes, but they never seemed to come out winners. I delved into the matter and discovered in a sports book the Kirkpatrick Method... There was a Pennant that the school kept until the next year, and Ogema School proudly held it several years.

Smeltzer further emphasizes the extent to which she strove to go above and beyond for her students, the community and the larger society by including several Red Cross thank you post cards from 1961. These postcards thank Smeltzer and her pupils for the modest sums of money she raised by serving refreshments at events she organized for the parents of the children she taught.



Figure 4.4 1961 Red Cross postcard thanking Ruby Smeltzer and her pupils for the funds they raised

4.3.3. Valued and Praised By Their Communities

The documents of life that these women included reinforce their statements as to the extent to which they were valued as teachers as some of them included testimonials

from the communities, parents and students. Donovan (1927) wrote to Poelzer “Most people in that district appreciated my efforts to teach their children and were very kind to me. They supplied me with fresh milk, butter, and bread and brought me groceries from town.” She additionally provided a letter from a community she taught in to support her statement: “Dear Miss Donovan: Tonight we wish to acknowledge our appreciation of your lengthy and splendid service in this district. We wish you the best luck at your new school. Accept this gift as a kind remembrance from, The community.”

Women proudly wrote of interactions with former pupils seeking them out and thanking them for being their teacher. To further buttress this, women included tokens of pupils’ appreciation ranging from valentines, Easter cards, get-well cards and letters. Kate Myers (1924) in fact explicitly states that this is the reason that she included certain documents in her submission to Poelzer, on an envelope containing these documents she wrote, “Perhaps the enclosed indicates that communities appreciated my endeavours.” Myers included several thank you letters from communities and parents as well as a letter from a pupil lamenting that Myers had chosen to switch schools.

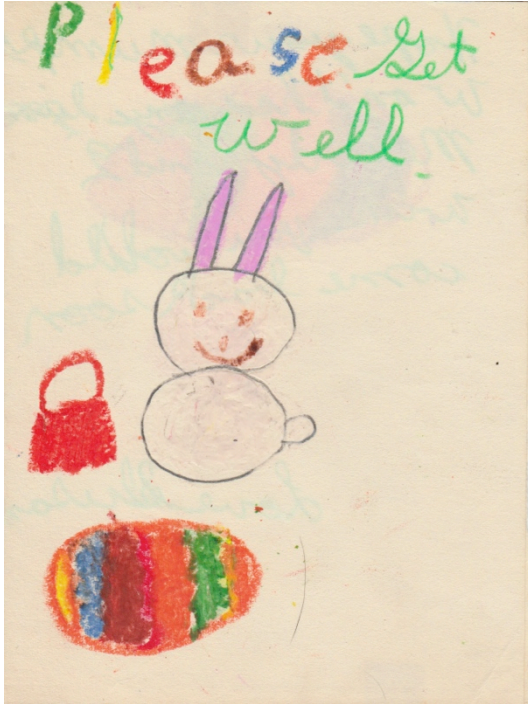


Figure 4.5 An Easter/Get Well Card Made for Ruby Smeltzer by a Pupil—the interior states “Hope your mumps won’t get any lumps. Melody and I wish you would come back soon. Love Susan”

While these documents confirm the teachers’ likeability and community involvement, they do not emphasize their hard work or the extent to which they are good teachers. As evidence of being hard working and skilled teachers, women additionally chose to submit glowing references from inspectors, trustees and principals. Presumably these evaluations were thoughtfully selected for Poelzer as all of them present these women in the most positive of lights. None contain criticism and very few suggest any alterations in behavior or technique. It is entirely possible that the women chose not to save the negative evaluations they received or made the conscious decision not to submit them to Poelzer and consequently have them preserved at the Saskatchewan Archives.³⁵

³⁵ Teachers did not always receive a copy of the inspector’s report. That meant they did not know if or how the inspector wanted them to improve but it also, obviously, meant that they could not donate copies of these reports to Poelzer (Corman & Ensslen, 2012).

Commentary in inspectors' reports that they submitted ranged from "the work achieved by Miss Myers is above formal criticism," to "[Smeltzer is] an experienced, capable teacher" to "[Donovan] is sincere in her efforts to give good service."

While school board trustees were less capable of evaluating the teacher's ability, trustees did receive inspector's reports and some were in close communication with the inspectors themselves. The trustees' references speak to the children's love of learning from their teacher and interestingly in the earlier years these references also speak to the teacher's moral caliber. As Sylvia Birnie's (1924) 1926 reference from the school chairman states "She is a young lady of very fine character, and as a teacher can be equaled by the very best." Anne Harcourt (1916) even included a reference letter from her own high school principal in 1916 written as a recommendation for a teaching position. This letter emphasized that she was a very hard worker but further stated, "She is a young lady of good moral worth and character and should prove a capable and painstaking teacher." While these considerations of moral character seem out of place now they were, however, incredibly important during the first half of the 20th century (Ensslen, 2016). Even in the 1980s many of the women teachers responding to Poelzer still thought that behaving "appropriately" or "like a lady" was an important aspect of their teaching careers (Ensslen, 2016).

4.3.4. Contributions to the Profession: Anna Ingham and the Blended Sound-Sight

Method

Despite the sheer number of women in the teaching profession, men dominated the Saskatchewan Department of Education and the teachers' union (the STF) as well as higher paying teaching positions such as principal, vice principal and higher grades

(Corman & Ensslen, 2012). Men comprised almost 100% of the superintendents and school board trustees during the first half of the 20th century.³⁶ None of the ten women became principals or vice-principals and upon moving to teach in multi-room schools found themselves primarily teaching grades 1 through 3. This is not to say that these ten women did not enjoy their teaching positions or would have preferred to teach a higher grade, however, their ability to make a larger contribution to the profession was consequently constrained. Women teachers were not only viewed as temporary and less serious teachers, but also were frequently working in rural schools removed from a larger community of teachers and the places where teachers' conventions were held. During the Depression some teachers could not afford to travel to the conventions even if they had been so inclined. Myers (1924) related an incident where a female teacher chose to spend her last \$5 on shoes rather than attend the convention in Weyburn. Additionally, male members of the teaching profession were more likely to play a prominent role as a speaker at teachers' conferences³⁷ and according to Donovan (1927) male teachers also dominated conversations at the conventions.

This is not to say that women teachers were not interested in making contributions to the profession. Six of the ten women reported attending teachers' conventions where they had the opportunity to meet fellow teachers as well as learn new teaching techniques. Anna Ingham, in fact, was asked by her inspector to perform teaching demonstrations based upon the successes she was having in her classroom.

³⁶ According to the 1935 Annual Report it was estimated that women comprised 2% or less of the total number of trustees in Saskatchewan (Annual Report, 1935).

³⁷ Upon examining pamphlets for Swift Current teachers' conventions for 1946 and 1950, as provided by Mary Donovan, it seems that women presented on matters regarding primary grades and drama.

Many rural women teachers worked incredibly hard and had to strategize as to how best to teach a large number of students, spanning 8 to 11 grades with almost no teacher training, few supplies and no assistance. It was within this context that Anna Ingham created her own method for teaching pupils, which she developed through trial and error over her years as a one-room schoolteacher. As Ingham explained:

What I then began to do affected what I did in later years. I was not satisfied with the programs set up so I deviated from them, keeping the parts that were successful for me and setting up my own program. Each year I experimented, added, changed and organized until I came up with a program which helped my pupils and me to be successful. The parents were delighted with the progress of their children. Principals and superintendents began to take notice.

Ingham initially turned down a request in the 1950s to share her special teaching method due to time constraints, however, a visiting group of Manitoba teachers and principals in the 1960s were so impressed with the results of her system that Ingham, with her school board's support, agreed to write a brief program of study and make visits to give them guidance. Ultimately, in 1965, Ingham found herself writing a book on her teaching method, the Blended Sound-Sight Method of learning (BSSM), and began, upon request, to travel to institutes and teachers' conventions across the prairies. By the late 1960s Ingham was teaching short courses on her system through the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) and by 1971 found herself taking early retirement from teaching in order to keep up with speaking engagements. From 1976-1981 Ingham worked as a consultant for the Saskatchewan Department of Education. Ingham continued to teach the

BSSM well into her 80s. With her daughter's assistance, she continued to travel and speak about the learning method as well as issue a regular newsletter on the topic.

The BSSM appears to have been a large part of Ingham's identity as a teacher, as she refers to it in one letter to Poelzer as her "life story." Poelzer, upon seeing the Blended Sound-Sight Method letterhead that Ingham wrote her initial response letter on, asked for more information on the teaching method. Because of this request Ingham remained in communication with Poelzer from 1986 until at least 1991, sending her brochures, pamphlets, newsletters, newspaper clippings, her resume and Christmas cards detailing her teaching method as well as glowing letters soliciting speaking engagements as well as thank you letters from grateful educators. It was very important for Ingham that Poelzer see and appreciate the work that she had done and in fact, Ingham on several occasions encouraged Poelzer herself to start promoting BSSM. Her teaching method drastically changed both her career and her personal life. As Ingham wrote:

While the production of this program has netted me but meager financial gains, with no degree, it has done something far more worthwhile; it has enriched my life, increased my knowledge, brought me untold happiness and opportunity to share and assist my fellow-teachers. This is all the reward I need.

While Anna Ingham's career path was an anomaly among the women who participated in Dr. Poelzer's project, there were participants who were involved in the STF and the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan (STS).³⁸ Women teachers participated in the STF on the executive level, some were even elected as president.

³⁸ For information on never-married women teachers' involvement in these organizations see Ensslen & Corman, 2013.

While their numbers were small, dedicated women teachers engaged themselves in the important work of improving the profession that they took so much pride in.

4.4. Concluding Remarks

The teachers participating in Poelzer's project were well aware of the public sentiment that women teachers were not deemed professionals or on par with male teachers. Not only did all women teachers face discrimination regarding pay and frequently promotion if they taught in larger schools, but they were additionally exposed to these sentiments in local newspapers and the STF's publication *the Bulletin*. Poelzer's project on Saskatchewan women teachers provided these women a forum to publically share their accounts and memorabilia of their teaching careers in order to present themselves as good, hard working and dedicated teachers. While their efforts and contributions to the profession were often disregarded when they were working as teachers, Poelzer's project allowed them to assert their value as teachers in a way that would survive even after they passed away.

Chapter Five: Canadianizing Ambitions within the Classroom

As most children in Saskatchewan attended school for a minimum of six to seven years (Gidney & Millar, 2012), the classroom setting provided the ideal place for the realization of the Department of Education's expectations that teachers would not impart only academic content but additionally a second moral curriculum (Scharf, 2006). *Gidney & Millar (2012)* explained:

...it was the school's explicit job to build upon the values of the church and the good family and to counteract what were perceived to be evil influences from whatever source they might come. The pedagogy of habit formation, in other words, applied just as forcefully to moral as to mental training (p. 210).

The Saskatchewan Department of Education expected that teachers would impart "Canadian" values in the classroom. As the assessment of a report by Harold Foght (1918) to the Department stated:

...patiently, sympathetically, but firmly, he [as Foght terms the "alien immigrant"] must be led – and by teachers of highest Canadian ideals, who have special fitness and training for this problem. With the right type of schools established in the heart of the non-English communities –faithfully served—the assimilation process cannot be long delayed (p. 19).

Canadian citizenship, as it was conceptualized during the first half of the twentieth century, was inherently linked to Anglo-Saxon identity. Being a "Canadian citizen"

meant identifying with the British Crown as Canada is a constitutional monarchy, which only received full sovereignty in 1982 (Waiser, 2005).³⁹

The teaching of the moral lessons associated with characteristics of the “ideal” Canadian citizen were difficult for the Department to assess or measure, consequently there is far less information on how and if these moral lessons were taught (Gidney & Millar, 2012). Informed by feminist historiography’s emphasis on the importance of examining everyday practices, in this chapter I seek to address this void in the literature by examining how a group of Saskatchewan women teachers’ classroom practices and goals facilitated the process of Canadianizing rural immigrant students through the promotion of normative gender roles; Christianity; one common language, the English language; citizenship and patriotism. Their personal histories and documents of life allow for an understanding of how they assisted in the process of Canadianization that constituted the second curriculum that the Department of Education hoped that they would teach.

The personal histories these teachers created illustrate that they deeply desired to create solid citizens. They very consciously felt that they had a duty to impart much more than “reading, writing and arithmetic” to their students. Not only did these women impart Canadian citizenship values but additionally they reported teaching what might be considered a third curriculum to the students, which were the lessons and values that they personally felt were important to impart. While the values stressed varied from teacher to

³⁹ Colonialism’s entrenchment within the concept of Canadian citizenship can be seen in the way Fought (1918) distinguishes between “Canadians” and “alien immigrants.” Fought utilizes the term “native Canadian” to refer to white settlers who immigrated to Canada from Britain, at no point within his section on “The Race Needs of the Population” does he discuss First Nations peoples.

teacher they were largely moral characteristics such as self-discipline, responsibility, hard work and compassion, as well as a desire to teach their pupils to value learning and literature, that the women felt were important lessons to impart. The wholesome lessons that these teachers personally emphasized complemented the citizenship values that Department hoped they would impart.

The chapter is divided into four sections. The first section examines how the social expectations that women teachers were embedded in encouraged them to impart Canadian values such as appropriate gendered behavior and Christianity. The second section examines the teaching of Anglo-Saxon identified patriotism, the promotion of the English language, the Junior Red Cross and recess. The third examines the teachers' own goals and practices regarding the particular wholesome values that they felt were important to impart to pupils as budding Saskatchewan citizens. The fourth section provides an understanding of how these women viewed their own personal Canadianizing actions within a broader historical context of contributing to Saskatchewan's heritage.

5.1. Embedded Within The Canadianizing Agenda: Gender And Religion

The school system was responsible for helping to spread and reinforce the values that “were held by the larger society of white English-speaking Canadians” (Gidney & Millar, 2012, p. 215). Not only were these values reflective of British immigrants who comprised most other Canadian provinces, but they were to a certain extent reflective of the values of many of Saskatchewan's new immigrants as well. Selective recruitment of “desirable” immigrants from France, Germany, Scandinavia as well as Central and Eastern Europe meant that the prairie provinces were largely populated by individuals

who might still identify with their homeland and not speak English but were white, Christian, patriarchal, and considered to have a suitable work ethic or farming background (Swyripa, 2010; Waiser, 2005). Consequently, the farm families within these rural districts to some extent already shared and promoted many Canadian values.

The Saskatchewan Department of Education wanted its body of teachers to be of British-origin as well as Saskatchewan-born and educated so as to be best able to educate children in the curriculum and follow the Department's prescribed textbooks (Annual Report, 1903; Ensslen & Corman, 2013). The Department was sufficiently concerned about the issue that they kept records of the ethnic backgrounds of Normal School students during the 1930s (Annual Report, 1930). This meant that Saskatchewan teachers, especially those born and raised in the province, were already to some extent inculcated into the province's Canadianizing agenda. By the 1930s the majority of teachers had a Saskatchewan education and many teachers were of British origin. Consequently, it is likely that they would be inclined to bring both the Department's and their own pro-British or pro-Canadian sentiments into "foreign" districts. As Sylvia Birnie (1924) stated:

I believe that the teacher in any school who taught children, of any nationality, commanded respect. There were not as many educated people in communities fifty or sixty years ago as there are today. It was a different era. I was brought up by parents of the Victorian order of rules governing human behavior, strict but just, so deeply instilled in me that they'll guide me to the end of life. Thus my life had been lived. I do not know whether others admire or resent my life's patterns.

The women's embeddedness within these patriarchal and Christian communities and their identification as patriotic Canadian citizens impacted the specific Canadianizing goals and practices that they held. As Gidney and Millar (2012) highlight, teachers had a great deal of latitude within the classroom over how they imparted Canadian values, or even the extent to which they chose to do so. Women teachers who moved into rural school districts that were comprised of non-British ethnicities should not be seen simply as women operating blindly within a racist and patriarchal Canadianizing agenda. These women were products of the social context in which they were raised and further were constrained by expectations of the communities they taught in.

5.1.1. Working within a Patriarchal Society

The school trustees were an important part of the process to ensure that women teachers set appropriate examples for their students. Trustees within districts had total control over firing practices, consequently women teachers had to live up to the strict expectations placed upon their behavior even outside of school hours (Ensslen, 2016). They expected the female schoolteacher to conform to gendered norms and more specifically to be "ladylike." The expectation that the female teacher would uphold the standards of the "lady teacher" existed not only because this was how women were expected to behave but additionally because the teacher was expected to set an example for her students.

The teachers were very comfortable conforming to the pervasive gendered norms and values. By and large women who responded to Poelzer's project seem to have been modest; from reading their responses it is clear that they took pride in their work but were not boastful. They were aware of the higher expectations of them and considered these

expectations to be appropriate. As June Baumgartner (1949) stated: “To set a good example as to clothing, grooming, cleanliness etc. is important as a teacher. But it would not be a good idea to be as a fashion model.” Anna Ingham (1934) similarly stated, “I didn’t see myself as a model or symbol of hope for these children,” but in a previous question responded “My motto was: values are caught, not taught.”

These women felt that teachers were expected to set an example for the students, or at the very least to behave “honorably.” As Anne Harcourt (1916) stated “You represented a little bit of higher standing that they should follow.” But more than simply setting an example regarding hygiene these women had a gendered expectation to be “ladies.” As Kate Myers (1924) stated:

I think that in the 20’s, 30’s and into the 40’s lady teachers were expected to set a “good example” to young folk. I know that in the late 30’s it was frowned upon, and perhaps forbidden, for lady teachers to smoke in public in Weyburn.

These young teachers were often the only new community member and potentially the only unmarried young woman in the district (Corman & Ensslen, 2012). It seems that students looked to the teacher as a potential resource to learn about desirable expressions of femininity. As Ruby Smeltzer (1927) explained:

Yes, the teacher was always watched to see what she was wearing. [In 1929] the girls of one family could tell me exactly what I had worn the day I arrived in town as a substitute teacher. While teaching, I had a friend mail me out a new blue dress, with bias cut skirt and a white roll collar. The next dance one of the above mentioned girls had on a new black dress, an exact copy of my new blue one. She was an excellent seamstress. They say that imitation is a compliment. I had a

wonderful pair of earrings. They had snap on plastic coloured centres in about ten colours. One of my pupils said, “We like it because your earrings always match your blouse.” Another little girl reported home to her mother what jewelry I had worn each day.

Many one-room women teachers had rather limited wardrobes, especially during the 1930s. It was expected that they would be neatly dressed and wear appropriate gendered clothing (Ensslen, 2016). As Sylvia Birnie (1926) explained pantsuits for women were simply not available or appropriate in the 1920s (refer to Figure 4.1 & Figure 4.2)

5.1.2. Christian Born and Raised

As the immigrants recruited to homestead were predominantly Christian, this immigration policy helped to reinforce the Christianity embedded within the structure of Saskatchewan schools. Saskatchewan rural schools were established as either Catholic or Protestant depending on which was the religious majority. Saskatchewan teachers were expected to impart a nondenominational Canadian-centric brand of Christianity. They were not responsible for converting these immigrant children or their parents as the majority were already Christian (Scharf, 2006; Waiser, 2005). Saskatchewan schools were expected build upon and reinforce existing values, “it was the school’s explicit job to build upon the values of the church and the good family and to counteract what were perceived to be evil influences from whatever source they might come” (Gidney & Millar, 2012, p. 210).

Religion was only an explicit part of the curriculum in separate schools; however, it could be offered after school if the school board trustees and by extension the community felt it was a priority (Gidney & Millar, 2012). Even though religion was not

a course taught within most Saskatchewan schools, Christianity was embedded within the curriculum. Teachers were expected by both the Department of Education and by community members to plan a Christmas concert every year. This concert was more than simply a religious celebration. It was a source of entertainment that children and adults alike looked forward to, as there were few other sources of entertainment in the countryside. Additionally it was a crucial barometer by which the teacher's ability was measured. Women reported to Poelzer that putting on a good show and keeping all of the parents happy by finding each child a role was crucial to keeping their jobs and being asked to come back the following year. Teachers taught students during school hours or even recesses to recite Christian songs and poems for this important occasion. These verses remained with some children long after they graduated. Kate Myers (1924) stated:

Recently I met Mrs. P. who now lives in Calgary. She asked if I could recall the words of the second verse of "Christmas Shopping," which was always a favorite song, acted and sung at our Christmas Concerts. Mrs. P.'s two daughters wanted to teach the song to their children.

The latitude rural teachers had in the classroom meant that they could incorporate Christian messages and lessons into the curriculum as they chose. Eight out of the ten women reported that they themselves went to church. Kate Myers (1924) stated that the other career she had been interested in, as a young girl was becoming a church deaconess. As Myers stated "I was always interested and involved in the community. At the top of my list was the Church." She became actively involved in the United Church in 1929 and during various years sang in the choir, taught Sunday school, worked with the Canadian Girls in Training (CGIT) and participated in missionary clubs. After retiring from

teaching she spent seven years as a pastoral assistant and continued to teach Sunday school until 1981. In 1987 Myers lead the World Day of Prayer 100th anniversary service and chaired a banquet for a Christian women's organization. Similarly Ruby Smeltzer (1927) reported that as a girl she had dreamed of becoming a missionary. While Smeltzer and her sister were teaching at the same school from 1929-1933, they ran the Sunday school program together. Smeltzer, herself, additionally ran the mid-week CGIT meeting. In the 1950s, if not before as well, Smeltzer chose to lead the pupils she supervised over lunch hour in this grace:

Bless this food that we shall eat
This bread that we shall break
And make our actions kind and sweet
We ask for Jesus' sake

While the other women did not report dreaming of a career in the church, many were still involved with teaching Sunday School, leading CGIT groups and teaching other sorts of Bible classes over the span of their careers. In the 1960s Edith MacLeod (1922) assisted women in the community to run a Child Evangelism Class in her own classroom after school despite the fact that it added considerably to her daily workload. Ellen Kristianson (1930) was also variously involved in teaching Sunday school in the 1930s and then in 1945 volunteered to be an assistant CGIT leader.

The women became involved in teaching Sunday school and CGIT classes at the request of community members and not as an effort to convert the children they were hired to teach. As June Baumgartner (1949) described her time as a CGIT leader as such:

During my year, 1951-52, in Lumsden, Sask., I was asked to be a Canadian Girl in Training (C.G.I.T.) leader. I had a number of girls from about ages nine to twelve. We met in the United Church basement each Wednesday evening after supper. We said our pledge, learned how to tie knots, to help the elderly etc., and for each job well done they received a merit badge and so many points. If they received enough points they would progress through to the next group.

The CGIT program was founded in 1915 and supported by the Young Women's Christian Association (YWCA) as well as by Anglican, Baptist, Presbyterian and Methodist churches. By 1933-1934 40,000 girls attended CGIT meetings across Canada in 1,100 communities (Prang, 1985). These mid-week meetings were often led by young women teachers and were ideally supplemented by attendance at Sunday school (Marr, 1991). While these meetings operated outside of school hours some provincial educational councils arranged CGIT leadership training courses to be offered as an optional course at Normal Schools (Prang, 1985). These meetings emphasized democratic values and an appreciation of Canadian prose and poetry, Christian activities such as sewing for missions and taught girls activities such as table setting, in addition to less traditionally gendered activities such as debate. The organization was entrenched in both Christianity and Canadian nationalism, each meeting commenced with saluting the Christian flag and the Union Jack (Prang, 1985). Organizers felt that it was important to train the young girls who would become "tomorrow's mothers" (Marr, 1991, p. 254). The organization sought to teach girls to become "ideal" citizens and conceptualized citizenship for female Canadians as "learning to exercise the virtues deemed peculiar to women in their mothering and nurturing capacities in the public sphere" (Marr, 1991, p.

255). Four out of the ten women reported working as CGIT leaders, in this capacity they worked to teach their young female pupils the ideal behavioural practices and beliefs that Canadian Christian women should uphold.

5.2. Teaching English And Patriotism In The Classroom

Saskatchewan teachers played an important role in Canadianizing immigrant children through the teaching of the English language. Discussion regarding which languages should be taught in the classroom was embedded within larger debates of what characteristics constituted the ideal Canadian citizen and which types of immigrants could be considered as a “threat” to Saskatchewan’s development as a “home for the sons of Britain” (Waiser, 2005, p. 65). As such the school became a site of debate regarding the inculcation of Canadian identity.

English was established as the primary language of instruction in Saskatchewan schools in part because the province was intended to have an “Anglo-Canadian” identity rather than modeling itself after Quebec (Scharf, 2006; Waiser, 2005). It was additionally seen as an important way of Canadianizing the children of European homesteaders as many of them did not speak English (Waiser, 2005).

With the outbreak of World War One in 1914, Saskatchewan citizens of German and Ukrainian origin began to be viewed with new suspicion. Pressure to assimilate citizens of Central and Eastern European origin mounted, “the use of English alone in the province’s schools was now seen as essential to the survival of democracy, the empire, and the nation” (Waiser 2005, p. 200). At this time many rural children only remained in school for a few years or failed to attend class regularly. While only half an hour per day

was allotted to the study of French or another non-English language, more than 300 schools were teaching immigrant children in a language other than English for the bulk of the day (Waiser, 2005). As trustees had such latitude regarding hiring standards they could opt to hire teachers with similar religious or ethnic backgrounds or teachers who spoke their native tongue, this hiring preference lasted well into the 1950s (Corman & Ensslen, 2012). Mary Donovan (1927) found that she would only be hired into one particular district that was predominantly French speaking if they could not find a teacher who could speak and teach French.

As a result of nationalistic fears stemming from World War One, the School Attendance Act was passed in 1917 requiring all children between ages 7 and 14 to attend school. It was amended a year later to forbid the use of languages other than English in the classroom (Waiser 2005).⁴⁰ Donovan found herself in a position to enforce this ban almost a decade later when she began her teaching career:

My first school was in a Russian - German community. It was following the 1914-1918 war, so they were forbidden to speak German on the school grounds. If they did they were reprimanded. One beginner spoke only German but he learned English quickly.

During this time period cultural difference was looked upon negatively or even with suspicion by the Saskatchewan Department of Education and by the province's English speaking populace. Throughout the first half of the 20th century immigrant children found themselves faced with a curriculum that valued and taught British history and culture rather than their own native cultures and tongues (Sutherland, 1997). Their

⁴⁰ French was not banned, however, regulations were put in place regarding its use in the classroom (Waiser, 2005).

experiences of alienation were heightened during the world wars and the interwar years, during this period “those of ‘enemy’ origin experienced both the cultural hostility that permeated formal and informal classroom discourse and the personal hostility of some teachers and many classmates” (Sutherland, 1997, p. 213). These ten women enforced Departmental regulations surrounding the teaching and practice of the English language on school grounds. They operated within a system that considered the teaching of English to be essential for assimilation and they, themselves, considered teaching English to be important. Despite this, it seems from their accounts that they respected their non-English speaking students and strove to make them comfortable with the classroom. As Sylvia Birnie (1924) commented:

I always did my best to reach out to a child or an adult who couldn’t speak English, trying in an unspoken way to make them feel my equal. You and I both know that to feel inferior in any situation is devastating to the feeling of oneself.

Despite wartime hostilities to certain European ethnic groups or prevailing cultural sentiments of racism towards Chinese Canadians or First Nations peoples, these women’s care for their students was reflected in their teaching practices.⁴¹

5.2.1. Patriotic Songs, Decorations and Celebrations

The majority of the ten teachers mentioned that they led their students in patriotic and religious songs and recitations such as O Canada,⁴² God Save the King and the

⁴¹ That is not to say that these women did not hold racist beliefs that were emblematic of the time period they were teaching in. They may have chosen not to report instances where they advertently or inadvertently belittled or neglected children based upon their ethnic background or race.

⁴² O Canada and God Save the King have the virtue of being both Christian and nationalistic, it is worth noting that O Canada is also reinforces patriarchal norms as the anthem stresses “True patriot love in all thy sons command.”

Lord's Prayer as part of their school routine.⁴³ After World War One a greater emphasis was placed upon the national anthem and flag saluting as part of the school system's assimilationist policy (Sheehan, 1987). According to Ellen Kristianson (1930) this practice was standard for Saskatchewan teachers. Religious, British-identified performances were also an aspect of Teacher's Conventions. The Swift Current Teacher's Convention programs indicate that the event was concluded every year with the singing of God Save the King (Swift Current Superintendency, 1946; Swift Current Superintendency, 1950).

None of the women provided photographs of the interiors of the one-room schools they began their careers in, but several provided photographs of their later classrooms. These photographs allow for an understanding of what an average Saskatchewan primary grade classroom would have looked like. The photographs emphasize the British-identified values that the Saskatchewan school system held. Figure 5.1 shows a child reading to the class under a photograph of Queen Elizabeth with the Union Jack flag on either side of the photograph. While, unfortunately, it is not clear who the man hanging on the wall behind Kate Myers' head in Figure 5.2, the lesson she was teaching that day in May 1956 was about the Union Jack flag which is red, white and blue.

⁴³ Unfortunately, Poelzer did not ask the women specifically if they had their students salute the flag, perform O Canada, the Lord's Prayer or God Save the King or if they led their students in prayer at lunchtime. More women out of the ten I am looking at might have done so but simply not thought it was worth mentioning.



Figure 5.1 Grade 2 Class in Chaplin, Saskatchewan c. 1964-1969 (photograph provided by Mary Donovan)



Figure 5.2 Kate Myers at the chalkboard, Room 1 Haig School 1956 (photograph provided by Kate Myers)

Schools also taught children to celebrate patriotic events such as the 1925 visit of the Governor General of Canada, Julian Byng. As Myers describes the occasion “[the] front of the school was decorated with red, white & blue bunting and many children

waved flags. The Gov. General walked between the lines, spoke briefly and declared the rest of the day a holiday.”



Figure 5.3 Students and Teachers waiting Governor General Byng’s visit, August 1925 (photograph provided by Kate Myers)

5.2.2. The Red Cross

While the Canadian Junior Red Cross (CJCR) was an optional program that was not part of the curriculum, it operated in many schools across Canada and had the firm support of the Saskatchewan Department of Education (Sheehan, 1987). Its aims of teaching children health and citizenship in some ways dovetailed with the provincial Departments of Education’s own goals (Sheehan, 1987). Junior Red Cross societies developed during World War One and grew in popularity in Canada during the 1920s, especially in Saskatchewan. By the mid-1920s Saskatchewan CJCR enrollment reached 40,000 as compared to Ontario’s membership of 10,000 (Sheehan, 1987). These Red Cross clubs were organized by teachers across Saskatchewan and like the CGIT clubs they sought to teach children democratic principles by encouraging them to utilize parliamentary rules and democratic voting principles (Sheehan, 1987). As Edith

MacLeod (1922) reported, “The children made up a program — largely from the R. C. Magazine. This was a chance to read or speak in front of the class. They also had President, Secretary, etc. and learned to conduct a meeting.” The program further sought to teach Canadian citizenship through “the inculcation of interest in and knowledge of one’s community, country and empire” (Sheehan, 1987, p. 256).

As this program took place once or twice a month on Friday afternoons when students would otherwise be learning the curriculum, teachers could have their classes take part in it or not as they felt was fit; however, participation did come with the added benefits of Red Cross classroom teaching material (Sheehan, 1987). Teachers had a great deal of latitude over how they imparted Red Cross values as there were no forms of supervision (Glassford, 2014). Both involvement in the CJCR as well as what exactly took place during meetings was at the teacher’s discretion. Seven of the ten teachers reported organizing Red Cross clubs in their classrooms. These women appreciated the values of the organization and felt that the club’s principles would benefit their students. In fact, for some of these teachers the CJCR was another means of teaching the wholesome values that these women felt were important. Ruby Smeltzer (1927) appreciated the club’s stress on volunteerism, stating “It was a way for the children to express love and concern for others.” These women and their pupils, like the thousands of other JCR clubs across Canada, worked hard to raise money for charitable causes, put Canadian democratic principles into action within their club meetings and learned Canadian citizenship values which both the Red Cross and the education system felt were essential to a child’s education. The teaching of these moral characteristics such as hard work, compassion for others and self-discipline did not conflict with the larger Anglo-

Saxon society's vision of Canadian citizenship, however, these values should not be conflated with the Department of Education's assimilationist "Canadianizing" agenda.

5.2.3. Recess as a Site of Citizenship Building

Another key arena for the Canadianizing process was the schoolyard. Arising in Britain, America and Canada during the late 1800s to 1920s was a concern that children needed a proper public space to play in order to direct children into appropriate activities that would foster important characteristics of citizenship. Games, or rather specific types of games, were considered to be more than simply a fun activity for children but rather that games could help "our youth toward a well rounded physical, mental, and moral personality, our games are building a better type of citizen, and preparing him for the responsibilities of life" (Ripley, 1920, p. 218).

The playground was where children learned to "relate to one another, negotiated social spaces, struggles for authority and power, and celebrated lifestyle and community values through sport and recreational practices" (Adams, 2011, p. 69). Play during recess was also an important site for learning and celebrating desirable forms of masculinity and femininity (Adams, 2011). Some of the games and activities that were undertaken during breaks were gendered, as Sylvia Birnie (1924) stated, "After lunch the bigger boys would go outside for snowballs or build snow forts. The girls amused themselves with books or crayons or playing house."

Interestingly traditional gendered play was also subverted in these small rural schools. It is important to note that rural children had a different experience from their urban counterparts. The rural schoolyard constituted their only public playground while the yard was used for events it was not a place children stayed after school to play in.

Additionally the lone one-room schoolteacher constituted the sole supervisor during lunch and recess breaks. Consequently the teacher received no private lunch break, she ate lunch with the children and from time to time shared her lunch with hungry pupils. As part of her role as schoolyard supervisor the female schoolteacher was also the sole adult organizer of sporting activities that took place during breaks. Mary Donovan (1927) reported playing softball with her students until 1939, when she was 30 years old. She did not specify whether she was playing softball with just her male students or students of both genders, however, at the very least all of her pupils saw that women could play and enjoy sports and could do so in competition with boys rather than apart from them.

While several of the women reported that they did not receive directives regarding the games that students should play, however, by and large these women's pupils were all engaged in playing the same games such as Pom Pom Pull Away, Drop the Handkerchief, Blind Man's Bluff, Softball and Anti-i-over. In fact, many of the same games were played throughout Saskatchewan one-room schools during this time period (Mitchell, 2006). Many of the games that the women reported playing with their pupils were games that were of British origins or had been adopted as a British pastime and were subsequently introduced to Canada and the United States (Milberg, 1976). Some of the games explicitly conveyed British culture such as the Duke of York and London Bridge, while others such as Capture the Flag were less apparently rooted in British history (Milberg, 1976).⁴⁴ Although the origins of the games that children played at school seems trivial, it still had consequences for children of other ethnic backgrounds. According to one woman who was a pupil in Saskatchewan during this time:

⁴⁴ Capture the Flag's origins stem from British-Scottish border raids (Milberg, 1976).

What I call the Holy British Imperial Empire Saskatchewan School System did a heck of a lot more for the British Empire...than it ever did for Saskatchewanians. We learned to be loyal British Empire subjects, proud as punch that the sun never set on the British Empire...[but] you did not (indeed, you dared not) play Norwegian singing games in the schoolyard (and under pain of death, German ones) (Story, 1994, as cited by Sutherland 1997, p. 168).

5.3. Teaching Values With Deliberation And Care

Saskatchewan schoolteachers, like their counterparts throughout the country, were given relatively little formal training or on the job guidance as to how to discipline students, impart the curriculum and educate multiple grades at the same time. The majority of Saskatchewan's teaching force during the first half of the twentieth century was comprised of a fluctuating body of young, inexperienced teachers. These young teachers had to devise their own discipline strategies, classroom practices and teaching methods. These strategies additionally had to be modified almost yearly based upon the particular demands and constraints of each school they moved from district to district.⁴⁵

Further, within this context of little guidance or training young rural schoolteachers had the responsibility of translating "regulations, policies, and programs of studies into classroom practice" (Gidney & Millar, 2012, p. 271). In the early twentieth century teachers were largely responsible for fleshing out course content as they were

⁴⁵ These women reported that school supplies or their lack thereof, expectations community members held the types of activities the teacher was required to run and the district's attitudes towards discipline varied from district to district. Something as simple as the school being equipped with an organ or piano made a huge difference to the types of lessons they could teach.

directed to sections of Department of Education approved textbooks rather than provided with more detail on how the content should be taught (Gidney & Millar, 2012). As Kate Myers (1924) explained: “I believe that the Curriculum was to be used as a Guide to be followed as closely as possible using methods we could best handle in our situation and with our capabilities.”

Canadian education at this time was comprised of “...undeniably, a “bookish” curriculum delivered by means of a “bookish” pedagogy, and there was no question that the job of the teacher was to direct instruction, to determine the what and how of learning” (Gidney & Millar, 2012, p. 209). Anna Ingham’s (1934) career as a teacher sheds an interesting light on how one woman strove to be the best teacher she could within this context of limited resources and supervision. She described her first day as a teacher as such:

I began to realize how little of my teacher training I was going to be able to use. Although I had arms full of material I made at college, there was very little of it that I could apply especially the first day of school. Even the suggested timetable given to me at college was of little value. I had to use my head, my own intuitiveness and good common sense and face reality as it really was. I had prepared a variety of things to do with the class as a whole as well as written work according to individual grades. I had never as a child attended a rural school so I wasn’t too familiar with it except during my practice teaching time.

The specifics of how teachers taught course content varied from teacher to teacher, as societal expectations changed, as events such as the Great Depression limited resources,

if they had to adapt to teaching in multi-graded urban classrooms and as a teacher gained more experience over the course of her career. Anna Ingham (1934) explained:

I was not satisfied with the programs set up so I deviated from them, keeping the parts that were successful for me and setting up my own program. Each year I experimented, added, changed and organized until I came up with a program which helped my pupils and me to be successful.

Not only were these teachers interested in teaching lessons and values aligned with the Department's Canadianizing agenda, teachers also stressed their own particular values to the children. These women understood that the actions and activities they undertook with the students taught larger lessons than simply the matters at hand. Often these women were very thoughtful about the types of values they wanted to impart and how best to teach them. Ingham saw one-room schools as unique settings where rural teachers emphasized "sharing, patience, compassion, tolerance and understanding" by asking older pupils to assist younger students. Ingham felt that lessons in discipline were integrated into rural life both within the home and the school through the responsibilities that parents and teachers expected students to undertake.

June Baumgartner (1949) similarly made a deliberate effort to teach her pupils self-discipline, even after she moved from teaching in a rural setting to multi-room urban schools:

[Self-discipline] is not a natural function of a human being but this needs to be taught, explained and learned through example by the children through the parents as the first socializing agent and from the school teachers, principal etc. as the second socializing agent. Therefore discipline needs to be explained and an

example set by adults so that children may follow this example... The constant practice of a person to act in a self-disciplined manner is a learned response. This attribute may then last for a lifetime. And if a child may attend school, university, etc. and acquire a truth and/or a better way to function within our system then this person will have learned a worthwhile and a more fulfilling manner in which to live and function in this, our reality and our world.

5.3.1. Story Time: Imparting More Than Literacy

In addition to wanting to teach their students “appropriate” values and behavioural practices, four of the ten women also stressed that they wanted their students to be passionate about learning or, at the very least, enjoy reading. As Mary Donovan (1927) stated:

I really put great emphasis on teaching them to read and to enjoy books. If they like to read, they can educate themselves. They can go on learning all their lives. They always have something to do...I always endeavored to teach the beginners to read well and to like reading. I liked to teach the classes to tell a story well and to be able to write a story well.

The teacher and the physical resources she brought into the classroom were incredibly important within the context of one-room schools. Often these schools had very few books and were rarely gifted with new ones.⁴⁶ Teaching students to read and love reading was so important to Donovan that she felt that if she accomplished this she “had given them something invaluable.” She felt this so deeply that she considered the theft of a

⁴⁶ School libraries were in especially limited throughout the 1930s. Inspectors lamented their condition in the Department’s Annual Reports each year (Annual Report, 1934).

school library book that she had read to the class as a “compliment” as it meant that a pupil was so interested in the book that he or she had wanted to own it.

To deal with the lack of resources within schools and in order to engage children with literature, teachers often brought their own books in to read to students. Some teachers chose to read *A Christmas Carol* and *The Night Before Christmas* to their pupils, but other less seasonal books were brought into the classroom to enrich pupils’ lives as well. Ruby Smeltzer (1927) shared her *Teacher’s and Pupil’s Encyclopedia* with the students to use as a reference and read them *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* and *The Wizard of Oz*, as well as other storybooks from her own personal collection. In fact, she chose to structure the school day in such a way that the half hour directly after their lunch break was dedicated to story time. Smeltzer did this because “...many homes lacked reading material. I hope that this added colour and interest to their lives.” There were few sources of educational or cultural entertainment within these rural communities at the time, especially if families did not emphasize buying and sharing books. Radio batteries were frequently rationed, towns and cultural resources such as libraries, bookstores and movie theatres were difficult to get to (even if they were not geographically far away) and televisions did not start entering Canadian homes until the 1950s (“TV in Canada,” 2015).

The books that these teachers reported reading to their white European pupils are especially worth noting as they emphasized messages that were in keeping with the school system’s Canadianizing agenda. The books that these women chose were all Canadian, British or American in origin and originally written in English. Both books that Smeltzer mentioned were originally written in English and revolved around white

protagonists who were presumably of Anglo-Saxon origin. The book *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm*⁴⁷ (Wiggin, 1903) tells the story of Rebecca a plucky and spirited girl who leaves the impoverished family farm to live with her unmarried aunts. Ultimately Rebecca, like the women teachers who grew up reading her story and years later read it to their own pupils, valued education and dreamt of becoming a teacher. It is worth noting that Rebecca's aunts expressed clear ideas as to how to turn Rebecca into a respectable and mature young lady, which they to some extent succeeded in. Additionally, the characters in the book are Christians. The novel, in fact, concludes with Rebecca thanking God for the inheritance she received from her recently deceased aunt (Wiggin 1903). It is interesting that Smeltzer chose books with precocious, young girls as the central protagonists. These protagonists did largely conform, or in Rebecca's case learned to conform, to appropriate gendered norms but they still actively had adventures and misadventures of their very own.

Similarly Edith Macleod (1922) also reserved ten minutes each day to read stories to her students. Although MacLeod herself never taught First Nations children, she chose to read these stories about "Indians" to her white pupils who were predominantly of German or Anglo-Saxon origin. Unfortunately she did not provide information on why she chose these books or what particular messages she hoped these books would impart to the students. MacLeod simply commented, "One had to find a book that suited all grades." Whether these were books already owned or purchased for the purpose of reading in class is unclear. The content of the books and the fact that she chose to read her students these books provides interesting room for speculation.

⁴⁷ To those who have not read it, it is remarkably similar to the Canadian classic *Anne of Green Gables*, which was published five years later in 1908.

MacLeod chose to read her students books about living in the wilderness and about First Nations people, albeit from the perspective of white men. *Two Little Savages* was written by Ernest Seton (1903) who was a founding pioneer of the Boy Scouts of America (“Biography,” 2015). Seton, a white British man who moved to North America in 1866, was responsible for appropriating First Nations culture and integrating it into the Boy Scouts. He was also responsible for founding The League of Woodcraft Indians, an organization for white children in 1902 (“Biography,” 2015). *Two Little Savages* details the adventures of two white American boys who choose to live in the woods as “savages” or rather, like First Nations people. Part of the book’s promise was to provide a unique insight into “Indian” culture and woodmanship (Seton, 1903).

Seton himself seems to have found First Nations people fascinating and considered his writings to fill an important void, namely that few materials existed to teach (white) boys to “play Indian.” Seton wrote in the *Ladies’ Home Journal* that he hoped his writings would help boys “to get the most pleasure possible out of playing Red Man” (Dykema-VanderArk, 2002, p. 18). According to Dykema-VanderArk (2002) around the turn of the 20th century Native Americans were seen as a less developed “child-race” in addition to being considered savages. Seen as such “playing Indian” or learning a romanticized version of First Nations peoples’ cultural practices was tremendously appealing. Similarly to Peter Pan (Barrie, 1904) and his lost boys, the boy “playing Indian” could imagine himself free of parental strictures and societal rules; capable of living in the woods alone; and free to play with weapons, loaf and adventure as he pleased. Learning about “Indians” and the appropriation of their alleged lifestyles was not seen simply as a way of teaching children an appealing game but also “as a

useful pedagogical stratagem,” a way of encouraging active play such as swimming, running and rowing in addition to a way to impart nature lessons (Dykema-VanderArk, 2002, p. 19). Seton’s (1903) protagonist in *Two Little Savages* sought out information regarding plants and wildlife as part of his fascination with “Indian” culture and Seton included these nature facts within his story presumably for the edification of his young readers.

The second author that MacLeod chose to read to her students was Grey Owl, a man who wrote about First Nations peoples in Canada and about importance of nature conservation. Although she was not aware of this at the time she taught these stories, Grey Owl was not actually a First Nations man as he purported to be. He was in fact a white British man who fabricated a First Nations identity after he moved to Canada and became a fur trapper and later a conservationist (“Grey owl, white Indian,” 2015).⁴⁸

5.3.2. Aspirations in the Classroom: A Case Study

Rural teachers had latitude in the classroom to develop their own teaching styles and to structure lessons around issues that they felt were important. Decades later they still found the lessons and knowledge they tried to impart to be important, going as far as to stress the value of these lessons in their responses to Poelzer. Sylvia Birnie (1924) provides an excellent case study to examine the teaching aspirations that these young women had and the lessons that they strove to teach their pupils. As Birnie stated:

⁴⁸ It was not until after Grey Owl’s death in 1938 that his background began to be questioned and his true identity was revealed (“Grey owl, white Indian,” 2015). MacLeod does not explicitly state which years she taught these stories, but I believe it was from 1922 to 1930, before she took a 20 year hiatus from teaching to raise her children and assist her husband on their farm.

How can I forget my first day of school as a young teacher? I was eighteen at the time, healthy and happy, filled with a zest for life, a little in awe of the fact that it was I who stood at the teacher's desk gazing into the expectant faces of a group of rosy-cheek children. At that moment I had an incredible desire to succeed. Life was wonderful and I wished to impart to each child some of my assurance that the way to a good life was to explore and move through the land of books...

Teaching a child to read was like opening a gate to the world of tomorrow. I could always lose myself in the magic of a lesson and I suppose it follows that the pupils like what the teacher did best.

In 1924 to 1930 there was a healthy attitude in the school toward education. The children were so appreciative of anything the teacher did for them. I was an idealist and could carry the children with me when we talked of building a better world, with love, sharing, understanding and kindness. They might even have felt let down when they returned home to face reality at night...

Birnie expressed that she wanted to teach her pupils to be kind, understanding citizens and it was important to her that Poelzer understand that this was not simply an ideal that she discussed with them but that she actively embedded the virtues of kindness and thoughtfulness within her classroom lessons. This can be seen within a story she related about her first year as a teacher when she learnt that her some of her pupils were destroying birds' nests.

I was upset and pondered long and seriously as to how to handle the situation. I did not sleep much that night and the next morning when school was in session I told the children the following story:

“Girls and Boys”, I began, “ Last night after I had gone to bed something happened at my house which made me very sad, and I want to tell you about it. I could hear the clock tick in the otherwise silent room. Every pair of eyes was glued to my face.

“I was just about asleep when I heard a funny noise at my bedroom window. At first I thought it was the wind blowing the leaves against the screen, but after a while I thought the noise sounded like sobbing. I crept out of bed and hastened to the window. There outside of the screen was a mother bird. It was sobbing I had heard for her heart was broken. Do you know what she told me?” Deep concern was written on all their faces.

She said some boys and girls had not only destroyed her nest on their way home from school, but they had broken all the eggs, and now, she sobbed, there wouldn't be babies.

A little Grade I's hand shot up. His blond hair was ruffled and his big blue eyes were wide and startled as he exclaimed, “Oh! Miss Surring, I didn't know!!”

Birnie thought that this teaching moment was so important and that the particular sets of lessons that could be taught were so valuable that she chose to restructure that particular school day to teach her students about birds. She stated:

Each child contributed according to his or her size and age. That was one day I threw the Time Table out the window, and the Curriculum, and the children and I learned together, Reading, Writing, Spelling, Arithmetic, and Art were all part of this Nature Science Lesson. It was a day to remember for me and the children.

Birnie was trying to accomplish much more that day than to simply teach her students facts about birds. It seems that Birnie tried to use this incident to create a positive experience for her students rather than to simply reprimand them. By telling them the story she invented about the mother bird and teaching them bird related course content she sought to teach them about respect for nature, thoughtfulness and kindness.

This is the only story Birnie related of an instance where she expressly disregarded the timetable and the curriculum, however, she also admitted to structuring the curriculum to emphasize certain things that she deemed important. Birnie included photographs and diagrams to illustrate her teaching technique.⁴⁹ When asked by Poelzer about the curriculum and the content she taught, Birnie stressed that she taught phonics and still believed in the importance of phonics decades later. In her answer she directed Poelzer to consult a picture that she included of her first Grade 1 class in front of the chalkboard (See Figure 5.4). Presumably a phonics lesson was on the chalkboard behind them.

⁴⁹ Birnie was not alone in this, Anna Ingham (1934) also drew a diagram of a teaching style within her answers and other women included pictures of their students performing different classroom activities.



Figure 5.4 *Picture of Sylvia Birnie’s first grade one class (photograph provided by Sylvia Birnie)*

Birnie reported that she dedicated a minimum of ten minutes per day to the teaching of proper handwriting technique and the importance of the “free arm movement” which was a method for handwriting that she taught her students. Much like phonics, Birnie still promoted this method at the time of writing her personal history and in fact went as far as to explain how it works, demonstrate it (refer to Figure 5.5) and encourage Poelzer (and presumably all her intended readers as she had made a copy for her family as well as for preservation in the Saskatchewan Archives) to attempt as well.

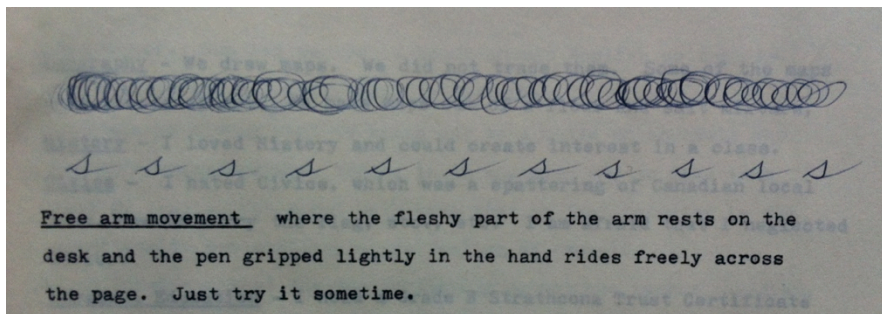


Figure 5.5 *Birnie’s diagram of handwriting technique*

5.4. Reflecting On Contributions To Saskatchewan's Heritage

Many of the questions Poelzer posed to the teachers uncovered aspects of their contribution to Saskatchewan's heritage. Their answers to these questions uncovered their goals and classroom practices, possible contributions to the curriculum, the extent to which they were involved in the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) and Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan (STS) as well as ways in which they operated to instill "ideal" citizenship characteristics. It is their answers to these questions that I have drawn upon in previous sections of this chapter. At the end of the questionnaire Poelzer asked her respondents how they saw their time as a teacher as contributing to Saskatchewan's heritage. This question proved to have been difficult for many of the women to answer, as it was not only very broad and had any number of implications, but their answer also depended upon how they defined the concept of "heritage" and how they conceptualized what qualified as making a contribution to Saskatchewan's heritage. This question required the women to think about their time as a teacher holistically, not only reflecting back on their entire teaching career, but also on the history of education in Saskatchewan and the development of the province and its people, including what their own goals were in regards to educating their pupils as citizens of Saskatchewan and also how successful they were in creating "good" citizens.

In fact, June Baumgartener (1949) outlined the way in which she conceptualized heritage and her possible contributions to it within her answer to question.

As I look back on my teaching years there has been a contributing factor to the Saskatchewan heritage. The word heritage is derived from the Latin word hereditare meaning to inherit. This is something that is handed down from one's

ancestors or the past, as a characteristic, a culture, tradition etc. It also involves the burdens, or status resulting from being born in a certain time or place or as a birthright. Therefore as a teacher I inherited the beginnings of the educational system within Saskatchewan... The curriculum that had been devised by The Department of Education had to be adhered to by all teachers. And to see that they inherited duties of their ancestors, whose culture they wished to continue as a tradition of past characteristics, knowledge and skills, a superintendent was hired... Being born as a Canadian, and as a person of all persons, female and male. And one of the rights was to receive the best education possible from this educational system. I attended a graded school for nine years and then studied in a large high school in a city. Then as a qualified teacher I, in turn, taught children the knowledge, skills, culture, the good and poor behaviour that is acceptable and that is not acceptable behavior within the educational system and within our society. I was expected to adhere to the curriculum that is presented by the Department of Education and to turn to creative endeavors when, and if, I could. This is my heritage and I acted according to the socializing process which is firstly within the family and secondly within the schools. I in turn conveyed this to the next generation through the teaching of knowledge, skills, habits, customs, discipline and by example. These are some of the attributes and attitudes of our Canadian Democratic society and of our social and physical spaces and of our world.

Seven out of the ten women taught for anywhere between 25 to 42 years. Upon pondering their contributions to Saskatchewan's heritage many of these women

categorized their time as a teacher and their efforts squarely within the province's Canadianizing agenda. Anna Ingham (1934) succinctly summarized many of the ways in which this homogenizing agenda was enacted within schools and furthermore one would presume that her teaching methods were firmly entrenched in these goals. Ingham explained:

In the 1930s Saskatchewan was a polyglot of ethnic groups. The school system was designed to add an element of common culture to children who came from widely different ethnic backgrounds. It was to make English the common language, Canadian history the common national memory, and raise children to think and reason within a scientific framework. It was exciting to be part of this historical movement.

It is hardly proper for one to extol one's own contribution to a heritage. However, in creating a learning program over thirty years of classroom experiment, I believe I have made some contribution. This learning program is embodied in the book *The Blended Sound-Sight Method of Learning*, which has been in demand sufficiently to have gone through three editions. The Blended Sound-Sight Method of Learning originated in the one- room schools of rural Saskatchewan and was perfected and adapted to the town and city schools of this province.

Ingham conceptualized her own contributions within her pedagogical contributions to the province. Most teachers did not pioneer new teaching methods, did not work as a consultant for the Department of Education or spend their time after they retired traveling around the province promoting their teaching system. Ultimately Ingham's time as a teacher is not reflective of the majority of Saskatchewan teachers' careers, however,

many of Poelzer's respondents emphasized elements of the Canadianizing agenda as part of their contribution to Saskatchewan's heritage. Their responses ranged from emphasizing Christianity, promoting Canadian democracy, creating "good" citizens, and properly socializing students through teaching by example.

Other women emphasized that their contribution to the province's heritage stemmed from the example they and other teachers set for their pupils. Upon reflecting back on her 43 years as a teacher Kate Myers (1924) responded:

I'm not sure that I can answer this very well. I suppose that anyone who teaches or works with children does contribute. Children do inherit ideas and standards from their teachers. I hope that I played a small part in helping them to become good citizens and thus contribute to Saskatchewan heritage.

Myers, much like Kathleen Nouch (1926) and Edith MacLeod (1922), drew upon examples of the successes of former students of hers in order to support her claims to contributing to Saskatchewan heritage. As Myers explained:

One day in the '50s a young man, a former pupil, and his wife, called at Haig to see his first two teachers. He said, "You don't know me." I replied, "Oh, yes I do! You are Noel!" ...He wanted his young wife to meet his Grade I and II teacher and to see where he sat, and the auditorium where we played and sang. (Dr.) Noel Hall was returning from University and was on his way to Vancouver to take a position on the staff of U.B.C. as Dean of Commerce.

About four years ago the Room 2 teacher and I had a caller from Alberta... He was in town for a few days. He had been thinking about people who had influenced his life. He appreciated all we had done for him and he wanted us to

know that we had played an important part as his first two teachers. Needless to say, this gave us “a lift.”

These and other instances I know about. There must be many that I am not aware of, many who were influenced by what was said or done in that first year of school. So as the teacher of several hundreds of little six year olds I believe that I made a contribution to Saskatchewan heritage.

Birnie (1924) contextualized her role as a socializing agent in her pupils’ lives with a focus on imparting Christian virtues. She stated:

I am thinking, thinking, thinking. I believe that any teacher in the classroom has made a direct contribution to the heritage of the land. The teacher sets the example by the life he or she lives. It is not enough to tell children about the rules for a good life. The teacher and the parent must practice what they preach...I do not know how great was my contribution or if I made any contribution at all, but I do know that I tried. I approached life with all sincerity and hope and pray that somewhere along the way I was able to guide some children in the way God would have him be.

MacLeod (1922) framed the way she contributed to Saskatchewan heritage over her 27.5 years as a teacher, by emphasizing the long hours, amount of effort she put into teaching and the concern she had for the children’s welfare. Whereas Ellen Kristianson (1930) felt that “the rural teacher played an important part in developing religious and racial tolerance among her students” and substantiated her claim by citing the province’s response to the Telemiracle. Her claims regarding the rural teachers’ role in spreading

tolerance may not be particularly accurate; Kristianson clearly believed that this was an important way teachers contributed to the province's heritage.

By and large these women were modest in their responses to this weighty question. They stated that they hoped, tried and would like to think that they contributed to the heritage of the province. Informal marriage bans and societal expectations that women were neither "serious" nor "career" teachers had meant many of Poelzer's respondents only taught for a few years and may never have perceived themselves as contributing to the development of the province at large (Corman, 2010). Anne Harcourt (1916)⁵⁰ taught for three years and then quit teaching upon marriage. Consequently her response was "I wasn't there long enough to do much damage one way or the other... Well there was only 28 there for 8 months and then there was about 12 or 15 at Huffman School and that was another year. And there was only ten or 12 at South St. Gregor." Clearly she felt that she had not taught long enough and had taught too few students to make a contribution to Saskatchewan's heritage.

5.5. Concluding Remarks

These women teachers were well aware of the fact that they were responsible for teaching their pupils more than reading, writing and arithmetic in the classroom. As they themselves were white Canadian-born Christian women they shared many of the assimilationist values that the Saskatchewan Department of Education held. They utilized the latitude they had in the classroom and leadership roles they held within organizations

⁵⁰ Harcourt did not receive Poelzer's questionnaire she was asked the same questions in an interview. Her response may have been different if she had more time to think about it. Many of the other respondents spent months answering the questionnaire.

such as the Canadian Girls in Training to build upon the Department's second curriculum of citizenship. In addition to teaching these Anglo-Saxon "Canadian" values to their immigrant pupils they also spent their careers emphasizing wholesome values that they personally felt were important such as caring, compassion and self-discipline. These women understood that they were expected to assist in the production of Saskatchewan citizens, but as such took this responsibility to mean that they should impart the moral values and lessons that they themselves felt were important. As Anna Ingham stressed in a newspaper interview "the importance of teaching intangibles such as responsibility, independence, initiative and good spirits. The teacher must work these into classroom happenings and live them as he or she teaches them. We [teachers] want to develop the whole child" (Kohn, 1984, p.5).

Chapter Six: Conclusions

During the first 50 years of history of the province of Saskatchewan (1905-1955), public sentiment, the Department of Education's officials and school board trustees frequently expressed the opinion that women teachers were not as professional as male teachers. Dr. Poelzer's project in the 1980s on Saskatchewan women teachers gave participants the opportunity to share their stories on teaching and to assert their place as professional teachers. These women established themselves as having been hard working and dedicated teachers despite the fact that the work of women teachers had been frequently undervalued. Furthermore these women felt that they had a responsibility as teachers to impart certain values to their young pupils. As such, they were responsible for communicating the provincial Department of Education's formal and informal curriculum to "Canadianize" the immigrant population and for emphasizing British imperial and colonialist values and patriotic sentiments. Additionally, they promoted their own personal standards for the characteristics of ideal citizens such as kindness, hard work, a love of learning and self-discipline, which they wanted their students to embrace.

The Saskatchewan Department of Education considered the young women who were entering the profession as transient and that they were using their time as teachers as a stepping stone between their father's house and their husband's. This perspective, which was deeply rooted in the societal expectations of women at the time, had elements of truth to it. As women were expected to give up their jobs upon marriage, many did so. Furthermore teaching appealed to young women as it was considered a "good" or

“honourable” job and additionally required only a few months in Normal School.⁵¹ Consequently there was huge turn over in the profession from year to year.⁵² However, this narrow portrayal of the situation did not allow room for the possibility of never-married women career teachers (such as Kate Myers, Mary Donovan, and Ellen Kristianson) or for the possibility that women who quit teaching upon marriage would later re-enter the profession either a few years or even several decades later (such as Edith MacLeod, Sylvia Birnie, Ruby Smeltzer and Kathleen Nouch). Women were considered short-term teachers; eight out of the ten women in this study either never married and consequently were never forced to quit, or returned to the profession when it was considered more acceptable for married women to be employed. Regardless of whether these ten women planned on teaching for a lifetime or only a few years (such as Anne Harcourt and presumably June Baumgartner) when they entered the teaching profession in their late teens or early twenties, all of them reported that they worked hard and cared about the pupils they taught.

As Saskatchewan was intended to be an Anglo-Saxon British identified province, one-room schools became a site where immigrant children from a diverse range of European countries were expected assimilate and learn to be Canadian citizens. The Department of Education was responsible for structuring the curriculum to emphasize British values, however, teachers themselves played a huge role in the extent to which they chose to emphasize and reinforce Canadian values and patriotic sentiments. Women

⁵¹ Depending on the time period Normal School applicants were not even required to have attended the 12th grade.

⁵² Men also used teaching as a stepping-stone to save up money for university. Many more ultimately would end up leaving the profession during World War One and World War Two (Lyons, 2006).

teachers at the time were themselves embedded within patriarchal Christian communities and in turn were expected to reinforce these values in the classroom. These women understood that they were not simply imparting reading, writing and arithmetic they also felt that they had a responsibility to teach important values and life lessons. Upon reflecting back upon their teaching careers, they emphasized that they tried to teach their students to be responsible and hard working Saskatchewan citizens. In addition to stressing values Canadian values such as patriotism, the English language, and democracy these women used the latitude that they had in the classroom to emphasize attributes that they themselves felt that Saskatchewan citizens should have.

6.1. Strengths And Limitations

The first strength of this thesis is that it focuses deeply on the lives of a ten of women, which meant that I could comprehensively engage with these women's material. Previous publications drawing on the Poelzer collection focused on common themes among the 255 women and did not examine the life course of any one teacher (Corman, 2010; Corman & Ensslen, 2012; Ensslen, 2016). Nor did these publications examine the documents of life (such as photographs, valentines, personal report cards and certificates) that these women provided. I do not presume that these ten women reflect the experiences of all Saskatchewan rural teachers at the time; of course there would have been a wide diversity of teacher experiences, from less-committed teachers to very dedicated teachers. However, these women reflect a subset of Saskatchewan teachers who strove to present themselves as hard working, responsible and dedicated.

Secondly, a strength of this study is that given the nature of the material available, I have had the opportunity to be attentive to how the circumstances of collecting this material shaped the type of responses I had access to. Poelzer's decision to retain the correspondence exchanged between herself and the participants made it possible for me to understand the ways Poelzer framed the project to the women and the types of relationships that the women formed with Irene. This correspondence allowed for a nuanced analysis of these women's motivations for participating, the character of their answers, and what the women hoped the project would accomplish. This approach highlights the necessity of understanding how the framing of a study has consequences for the types of information that can be obtained.

Thirdly, a unique strength of this particular archive is that the questions were posed to elicit detailed autobiographies on this aspect of these women's lives. As Poelzer mailed the questions in a package to the women rather than undertaking interviews, the women could labour and in fact did labour over many months to write thoughtful and detailed responses. This meant that they had the luxury of pondering their answers rather than feeling compelled to answer on the spot. Many women made efforts to refresh their memories by consulting old photographs and documents or even by contacting fellow teachers, or in one case a school board, to corroborate their accounts. As Poelzer set up her project as an ongoing dialogue with the women via letters, some women chose to remain in touch with her over the years to ask about the project's progress or additionally to send even more material they considered relevant.

A key limitation of this research project is that Poelzer only exhibited an interest in the women's teaching experiences up until 1955, their personal histories are

incomplete as many women did not include much information on their lives after this period. Nor did they include detailed information regarding their childhood or family background.

6.2. Contributions To The Field

This thesis furthers the field of narrative analysis while also providing an example of the importance of examining documents of life. Informed by Stanley's (2004; 2012) perspective on letters as valuable documents of life, I explored the ways in which the correspondence that was exchanged between Dr. Poelzer and the women had a profound impact on how the women understood the project and consequently shaped their responses. Furthermore, I examined the ways that these letters and other documents of life allowed for an understanding of the reasons why these women participated and what messages they were hoping to convey.

This thesis builds upon Dr. Poelzer's interest in documenting the experiences of women who comprised the bulk of the teaching force rather than seeking out only women who made special contributions. In this way this thesis contributes to the field of feminist historiography as it emphasizes the importance of valuing the lives and contributions of the so-called "typical" women teachers who comprised the vast majority of the teaching force. Furthermore, this thesis furthers an understanding of how these women perceived themselves as teachers within a context where their contributions to the teaching profession were frequently overlooked.

Furthermore, as little information exists on the ways teachers imparted the Department of Education's "Canadianizing" goals (Gidney & Millar, 2012), this thesis

provides an understanding as to how ten women teachers viewed their task of creating solid citizens and the ways they set about doing so. Additionally, the focus of my research on the activities of teachers in everyday classrooms is important as a way to examine how dominant ideologies of citizenship are disseminated and by whom in complex ways. This research adds to our understandings of on-the-ground uptake and implementation of these policies.

6.3. Looking Back

It is not my intention to excuse or support these women's Canadianizing efforts or goals. In fact, I suspect that these ten women in particular and many other former women teachers, such as my grandmother, might question my analysis of their efforts. By and large I sympathize with these women and their good intentions as they saw themselves working hard and consequently took pride in teaching farm children. In some cases, if they married a farmer in the district, they even had the opportunity to become life-long friends, or at the very least community members with their former pupils.

In analyzing their life histories I have felt deeply conflicted. Not only do I feel an obligation to them because of the generosity they displayed in sharing so much material, but I also feel very affectionate towards them. In the time I have spent reading and rereading their stories and correspondences with Poelzer, looking at the mementos they cherished enough to save and the photographs of themselves, I feel as if I know them personally. Additionally, the stories that they chose to tell and the pride that they took in their work is incredibly similar to my grandmother's own stories of being a teacher. Ultimately, although we never met and never will, in many ways it is hard not to think of

them as very much like my grandmother or, at the very least, as women she would have been friends with.

This dilemma that I face is not unique. Katherine Borland (1991) put herself in an even more intimate position of interpreting her own grandmother's story. Borland received the unpleasant shock of finding that her grandmother took issue with her interpretation, however, she at least had the opportunity to negotiate, explain and work through these conflicting interpretations. Sadly, this is not an opportunity that I have. Although Poelzer began her project as a dialogue with these women, 30 years later, I am in the uncomfortable position of having to interpret their words without their assistance.

References

- A timeline of residential schools, the truth and reconciliation commission. (2008, May). Retrieved from <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/a-timeline-of-residential-schools-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-1.724434>
- Acker, S. (1983). Women in teaching: A semi-detached sociology of a semi-profession. In S. Walker & L. Barton (Eds.), *Gender, class, and education* (pp. 123-140). Sussex: The Falmer Press.
- Adams, C. (2011). Supervised places to play: Social reform, citizenship, and femininity at municipal playgrounds in London, Ontario, 1900-1942. *Ontario History*, CIII(1), 60-80.
- Anderson, A. B. (2013). *Settling Saskatchewan*. Regina: University of Regina Press.
- Barrie, J. M. (1904). *Peter Pan*. NY: Bantam Books.
- Bays, E. (2009) *Indian residential schools: Another picture*. Ottawa: Baico Publishing.
- Biography. (2015). Retrieved from <http://etsetoninstitute.org/biography>
- Borland, K. (1991) "That's not what I said": Interpretive conflict in oral narrative research. In S.B.Gluck & D. Patai (Eds.), *Women's words: The feminist practice of oral history* (pp. 63-75). NY: Routledge.
- Canada buys Rupert's Land. (2001). Retrieved from www.cbc.ca/history/EPCONTENTSE1EP9CH1PA3LE.html
- Carter, S. (1999). *Aboriginal people and colonizers of Western Canada to 1900*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Cavanagh, S. (2005) Female-teacher gender and sexuality in twentieth-century Ontario, Canada. *History of Education Quarterly*, 42(2), 247-273.

- Corman, J. (2010). Gendered career paths for Saskatchewan educators: A century of change. *Atlantis*, 35(1), 92-107.
- Corman, J. & Ensslen, C. (2012). Surviving tough times: Saskatchewan women teachers in the great depression. *Saskatchewan History*, 64(1), 8-23
- Coulter, R.P. & Harper, H. (Eds.). (2005). *History is hers: Women educators in twentieth century Ontario*. Calgary, AB: Detselig.
- Di Leonardo, M. (1984). *The varieties of ethnic experience: Kinship, class, and gender among California Italian-Americans*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press.
- Doucet, A. & Mauthner, N. (2006). Feminist methodologies and epistemology. In Bryant, C. and Peck, D. (Eds.), *21st Century Sociology: A reference handbook* (pp. 36-42). London: Sage.
- Dykema-VanderArk, T. (2002). "Playing Indian" in print: Charles A. Eastman's autobiographical writing for children. *MELUS*, 27(2), 9-30.
- Ensslen, C. & Corman, J. (2013). Establishing pathways for women in education: Never-married women career teachers. *Historical Studies in Education*, 25(2), 21-43.
- Ensslen, C. (2016). Regulating the personal lives of "lady" teachers *Education Matters*, 4(1), 37-49.
- Foght, H. W. (1918). *A survey of education in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada: A report to the government of the province of Saskatchewan*. Regina, SK: J.W. Reid, King's Printer.
- Fowke, V. C. (1957). *The national policy and the wheat economy*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

- Galman, S. C. (2012). *Wise and foolish virgins: White women at work in the feminized world of primary school teaching*. Lanham, Md. : Lexington Books.
- Gauthier, D. (2005). *The encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*. Regina, SK: University of Regina Press.
- Gidney, R. D. & Millar, W. P. J. (2012). *How schools worked: Public education in English Canada, 1900-1940*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Glassford, S. (2014). Practical patriotism: How the Canadian junior red cross and its child members met the challenge of the second world war. *The Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 7(2), 219-242.
- Grey Owl, white Indian. (2015). Retrieved from <http://canadianicon.org/table-of-contents/grey-owl-white-indian/>
- Hallman, D. (1997). Telling tales in and out of school. *Saskatchewan History*, 49(2), 3-17.
- Hallman, D. (2006). 'Woman of Exodus II': Irene Poelzer, the women's movement, and teacher education In E. L. Panayotidis & P. J. Stortz (Eds.). *Historical identities: The professoriate in Canada*. (pp. 225-247). Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Historical maps of Canada. (n.d.) Retrieved from http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/mapping/historical_maps/1867.asp
- Kohn, S. (1984, July 11). Anna Ingham promotes learning methods that work. *South Peace News*. Pp. 4-5.
- Kuhn, A. (2002). *Family secrets: Acts of memory and imagination*. London: Verso.

- Kuhn, A. (2007). Photography and cultural memory: A methodological exploration. *Visual Studies*, 22(3), 283-292.
- Kuhn, A. (2010). Memory texts and memory work: Performances of memory in and with visual media. *Memory Studies*, 3(4), 298-313.
- Llewellyn, K. (2012). *Democracy's angels: The work of women teachers*. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Loyie, L., Spear, W. K., & Brissenden, C. (2014). *Residential schools: With the words and images of survivors*. Brantford, ON: Indigenous Education Press.
- Lyons, J. E. (2006). Henry Janzen and curriculum reform. In B. Noonan, D. Hallman & M. Scharf (Eds.). *A history of education in Saskatchewan*. (pp. 51-60). Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center.
- Macleod, R. C. (1993). *Swords and ploughshares: War and agriculture in Western Canada*. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press.
- Marr, M. L. (1991). Church teen clubs, feminized organizations? Tuxis boys, trail rangers, & Canadian girls in training, 1919-1939. *Historical Studies in Education*, 3(2), 249-267.
- Mauthner, N. (2012). 'Accounting for our part of the entangled webs we weave': ethical and moral issues in digital data sharing. In T. Miller, M. Birch, M. Mauthner & J. Jessop (Eds.), *Ethics in qualitative research*. (pp. 157-175). London: Sage.
- Mauthner, N., & Parry, O. (2013). Open Access Digital Data Sharing: Principles, Policies and Practices. *Social Epistemology*, 27(1), 47-67.
- Milberg, A. (1976). *Street games*. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill

- Mitchell, R. (2006). One-room schools. In *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan online*. Retrieved from http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/one-room_schools.html
- Moffatt, A. (1995). Great women, separate spheres, and diversity: Comments on Saskatchewan women's historiography. In D. DeBrou & A. Moffat (Eds.). *"Other" voices: Historical essay on Saskatchewan women*. (pp. 10-26). Regina, SK: University of Regina Press.
- Mooney, E. (n.d.). Dominion lands act/homestead act. In *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan online*. Retrieved from http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/dominion_land_act__homestead_act.html
- Munro, P. (1991) *A life of work: Stories women teachers tell*. University of Oregon, ProQuest Dissertations Publishing. 9205829.
- Munro, P. (1998). *Subject to fiction: Women teachers' life history narratives as cultural politics of resistance*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Nichols, S., Rowsell, J., Nixon, H., & Rainbird, S. (2012). *Resourcing early learners: new networks, new actors*. London: Routledge.
- Patterson, R. (1986). Voices from the past: The personal and professional struggle of rural school teachers. In N. M. Sheehan, J. D. Wilson & D. C. Jones (Eds.). *Schools in the west: Essays in Canadian educational history* (pp. 99-112). Calgary, AB: Detselig Enterprises Ltd.
- Plummer, K. (1983). *Documents of life: An introduction to the problems and literature of a humanistic method*. London: Allen & Unwin.
- Plummer, K. (1995). *Telling sexual stories: power, change, and social worlds*. New York: Routledge.

- Plummer, K. (2002). *Documents of life 2: An invitation to a critical humanism*. London: Sage.
- Plummer, K. (2013). A manifesto for social stories. In L. Stanley (Ed.). *Documents of life revisited* (pp. 209-219). Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.
- Poelzer, I. (1990). *Saskatchewan women teachers 1905-1920: Their contributions*. Saskatoon, SK: Lindenblatt & Hamonic Publishing.
- Prang, M. (1985). 'The girl god would have me be': The Canadian girls in training, 1915—39. *Canadian Historical Review*, LXVI(2), 154-184.
- Prentice, A. & Boutilier, B. (Eds.). (1997). *Creating historical memory: English-Canadian women and the work of history*. Vancouver, BC: UBC Press.
- Prentice, A. (2004). *Schoolmistresses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Presser, L. (2005). Negotiating power and narrative in research: Implications for feminist methodology. *Signs*, 30(4), 2067-2090.
- Red River colony. (2015) In *Canadian Encyclopedia online*. Retrieved from <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/red-river-colony/>
- Residential schools. (2012). Retrieved from <http://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/residential-schools/>
- Ripley, G.S. (1920). *Games for boys*. New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company.
- Sangster, J. (2001). *Regulating girls and women: Sexuality, family and the law, Ontario 1920-60*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Saskatchewan. (1903). *Annual report – Dept. of Education*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education.

- Saskatchewan. (1930). *Annual report – Dept. of Education*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education.
- Saskatchewan. (1932). *Annual report – Dept. of Education*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education.
- Saskatchewan. (1934). *Annual report – Dept. of Education*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education.
- Saskatchewan. (1935). *Annual report – Dept. of Education*. Regina, SK: Saskatchewan Education.
- Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. (1937). Women's publicity. *S.T.F. Bulletin*
- Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. (1988). *A history of women in education*.
Saskatoon, SK: author.
- Scharf, M. P. (2006). An historical overview of the organization of education in Saskatchewan. In B.Noonan, D. Hallman & M. Scharf (Eds.). *A history of education in Saskatchewan* (pp. 3-19). Regina, SK: Canadian Plains Research Center.
- Seton, E. T. (1903). *Two little savages*. New York, NY: Grosset & Dunlap.
- Sheehan, N. M. (1987). Junior Red Cross in the schools: An international movement, a voluntary agency, and curriculum change. *Curriculum Inquiry*, 17(3), 247-266.
- Stanley, L. (1993), Knowing because experiencing subject: Narratives, lives, and autobiography. *Women's Studies International Forum*, 16(3), 205-215.
- Stanley, L. (2004) The epistolarium: On theorizing letters and correspondences. *Auto/Biography*, 12(3), 201-235.

- Stanley, L., & Temple, B. (2008). Narrative methodologies: Subjects, silences, re-readings and analyses. *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 275-281.
- Stanley, L. (2008). Madness to the method? using a narrative methodology to analyse large-scale complex social phenomena. *Qualitative Research*, 8(3), 435-447.
- Stanley, L. (2010). *Narrative, memory and ordinary lives*. Huddersfield: University of Huddersfield.
- Stanley, L. (Ed.). (2013a). *Documents of life revisited*. Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.
- Stanley, L. (2013b). Introduction. In L. Stanley (Ed.). *Documents of life revisited* (pp. 3-17). Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.
- Stanley, L. (2013c). Whites writing: Letters and documents of life in a QLR project. In L. Stanley (Ed.). *Documents of life revisited* (pp. 59-75). Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.
- Sutherland, N. (1997). *Growing up: Childhood in English Canada from the great war to the age of television*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- Swift Current Superintendency. (1946). *Teacher's Convention* [Brochure]. Swift Current, SK: Author.
- Swift Current Superintendency. (1950). *Teacher's Convention* [Brochure]. Swift Current, SK: Author.
- Swyripa, F. (2010). *Storied landscapes: Ethno-religious identity and the Canadian prairies*. Winnipeg, MB: University of Manitoba Press.
- Theobald, M. R. & Prentice, A. (Eds.). (1991). *Women who taught: Perspectives on the history of women and teaching*. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.
- TV in Canada: A history. (2015). Retrieved from

<http://canadianicon.org/table-of-contents/grey-owl-white-indian/>

Tyre, R. (1968). *Tales out of school: A history of the Saskatchewan teachers' federation.*

Saskatoon, SK: Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation.

Waiser, B. (2005). *Saskatchewan: A new history.* Calgary, AB: Fifth House Ltd.

Wiggin, K. (1903). *Rebecca of sunnybrook farm.* Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

Appendix 1: Selection of Submissions from Mary Donovan

Page One of Donovan's response letter to Dr. Poelzer's request

55-3rd. Ave. N.-E.,
Swift Current, Sask.,
Feb. 22, 1986
59H 2g 3



Dr. Irene Poelzer,
Rm. 3088
College of Education
U. of S.
Saskatoon, Sask.
S7N 0W0

Dear Dr. Poelzer,
I am pleased to be able to contribute to your book on the work and lives of Sask. Women Teachers. I am not surprised that you have not found much information re women teachers and their work, because I remember being at many, many Teachers' Conventions where the executive were all men, the speaker was always a man, and women in the audience very seldom opened their mouths. I was a shy person in those days, but I have changed and have no fear to speak up. However, that does no good now that I'm retired. I still write letters though, about teachers supervising children

I was born in Arthur, Ont. in 1909. My father was a photographer at the time. We lived upstairs, over the photographer's gallery, and I was born at home with the help of a lady doctor.

My father was a very good photographer even by today's standards, but children & pets made him nervous as clients and his customers were hard to please, so, wanting to be his own master, he decided to come west to Pincher Creek, Alta., where he worked on a dairy farm for a year milking cows by hand and delivering the milk in ^{containers} a buckboard drawn by a team of lively horses. It rained continuously and the barnyard was almost knee-deep in goo. The creek used to flood and he had to swim the buckboard & horses across the creek to deliver the milk. He soon left this job and we moved to a large mixed farm owned by the Smith Brothers east of Lethbridge in the irrigation area. The First World War came ~~on~~ ^{on} while we lived in that ~~area~~ district. Wheat crops were bountiful. The boss bought the first Ford car ever seen in the Lethbridge area and I had a ride in it. I had a lamb for a pet and taught it to pull a cart. One day it ran under a barbed wire fence & I had to make a quick exit from the wagon. The lamb

Donovan's Original Grade Twelve Diploma

 PROVINCE OF SASKATCHEWAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION 

Grade Twelve Diploma

THIS DOCUMENT DOES NOT GIVE THE HOLDER AUTHORITY TO TEACH
THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT —
Mary Alice Donovan.

having complied with the conditions prescribed by the Department of Education,
has been awarded this **GRADE TWELVE DIPLOMA.**

DATED at the Department of Education, Regina, September 2, 1942.

R. J. Davidson Registrar. *A. Staines* Minister of Education.

Form 238A—5M—6-42—3632—R3

Page of photographs with Donovan's annotations. Donovan compiled a page for each of the schools she taught at

SANFORD DENE SCHOOL
(1939-1942).



SANFORD DENE SCHOOL.
THE BUILDING USED TO
BE A POST OFFICE THERE
IN PIONEER DAYS.

MARY DONOVAN AND HER
CLASS AT SANFORD DENE
SCHOOL, 12 MILES SOUTH OF
CABRI, SASK.



CAITHNESS SCHOOL
(1944-1946).



MARY DONOVAN, TEACHER
AT CAITHNESS SCHOOL

Appendix 2: Anna Ingham Space-Time Grid

SPACE: TIME:	Parent's Home	Education	Occupation	Teacher Housing	Married Life/Family
1978-1986			Continuing 2 week seminars, Granvard AB AVC -still speaking at institutes and conventions and giving summer courses -the courses seem to be on "written communication" -unclear whether still doing the summer course that year?		-Daughter assists her with promoting and teaching the Blended Sound Sight program
Consultant 1974-78			Consultant for the Dept of Edu for teachers using the Blended Sound-Sight program		
Teaching: 1973-74			Taught a University Class (Ed 302-64) Saskatoon Sask -the course was held at St Joseph's Community College in Yorkton		
1972-1973?			Asked for year of absence b/c so busy going and speaking, then decided to take early retirement to continue w/ this		
1971			Hilroy scholarship for innovative programs		
Teaching 1969-72			Columbia Gr 1, Yorkton Sask		
Consultant 1968-69			Consultant for Yorkton schools using the Blended Sound-Sight program		

1967			Wrote book, was published by Modern Press, Saskatoon, that summer taught short course at the STF using the book		
1965-1966			Invited to speak at institutes and conventions mostly in Sask		
Teaching 1957-68			Simpson Gr 1 Yorkton, Sask	1957-72 lived in Yorkton and walked or drove if weather too bad	
Teaching: 1955-57			Look Out (rural 1-8) Willowbrook, Sask	Drove/ carpooled 14 miles per day from Yorkton.	
1955		Took correspon dence Gr 12 subjects to upgrade cert so didn't lose it			
Teaching: 1954-55			Willowbrook (town Gr 1-4) Willowbrook Sask	-had a room in a hotel where stayed during the week and walked the drove to Yorkton on the weekends.	
1952-54					
Teaching: 1948-52			Pebble Lake (rural Gr 1-8) Yorkton Sask	1949-52 lived in Yorkton and drove to	

				Pebble Lake. Car pooled w/ another teacher in neighbour district	
Summer 1951		University of Saskatchewan Summer session (helped increase salary but not cert)			
Teaching: 1947-1948			Theodore (town Gr 4-8) Theodore Sask		
Teaching: 1946-47			Theodore (town Gr 1-3) Theodore Sask		
Teaching: 1945-46			Westbrook (rural 1-8) Theodore, Sask	-first teacherage she ever stayed at. 2 room (living room/bed room) comfy but w/ bare necessities	-had children at this point, 8 yr old daughter helped w/ certain chores.
1945			Secretary of Rural Teachers' Local		
1944			-10 th year of teaching Mr Simms (inspector) so impressed asked her to demonstrate her methods at the Manitoba teachers' Convention on Classroom Management in a Rural School		
Teaching: 1943-45			South Ridge Road (rural 1-9)		

			Portage La Prairie, Man.		
			1942-43 South Ridge Portage La Prairie Man, rural	lived in small trailer on school yard while built house on schoolyard	
1939-1943			Unclear		
Teaching: 1938-39			Stoner Rest (rural 1-8) Lanigan Sask	Hauled granary into school yard and turned it into a one room house	-married and had a 1 yr old daughter, Husband travelling a lot for work.
1936-1938				-1935-49 lived v close or on school ground & walked	Got Married?
Teaching: 1934-36 (22 yrs old)			Waterloo (rural Gr 1-10) Guernsey Sask -35 pupils -stucco school, chalkboards at front & side, boy and girl cloakrooms at back, full basement and chemical toilets for winter -outdoor toilet and barn, well and school yard	1934-5 boarded w/ a family in the district. V pleasant Sept -Dec 1935 boarded w/ another family who became friends w/. Either she or they had just become the janitor _1934-36 paid \$30 per month -1934-35 about a mile fr school	
Normal School (graduated June 1934)		Normal School Saskatoon One year Normal School second class cert b/c had gr 11			
Childhood	??	-didn't attend a rural school			

Appendix 3: Biographies of the Women Teachers

Anne Harcourt nee Brunn (Born June 12th 1898; taught 1916-1919)



In 1916 with only a 9th grade education Anne received a temporary teaching permit from the Saskatchewan Department of Education in order to start teaching at Deer Lake, which was desperately in need of a teacher. In addition to teaching 28 pupils with no training, Anne made trips to town on weekends to pick materials for her own Grade 10 correspondence courses. After this first teaching experience Anne went to Normal School in Regina. At that time the requirements to obtain a 3rd class teaching certificate were simply a 9th grade education and 10 weeks at Normal School. According to Anne teacher ages were not the norm at this time and consequently found herself living with various farm families. While teaching at her very first school she shared a bed in a farmhouse with two girls her own age. During the summer of 1919 Anne got married and quit teaching. The exact reason she quit teaching is unclear, Anne stated that in addition to marrying that summer she would have had have taken the 11th and 12th grade in addition to more teacher training in order to continue teaching. Anne raised seven children and taught for three years.

Edith MacLeod nee Taylor (Born 1902; taught 1922-1969 with interruptions)

Edith opted to become a schoolteacher, as there were limited career options for women in the 1920s. In 1922 after graduating from Normal School she began teaching in rural schools. After teaching one year at Vanceview School she moved schools in an effort to live closer to her widowed mother in Saskatoon. She taught there for the next four years, travelling the 14 miles to Saskatoon by sleigh on weekends when the family she boarded with made the trip into the city. Fortunately at her next school Edith was able to travel with greater ease, boarding a train to Saskatoon on Fridays and travel back on Mondays. In 1930 Edith married, quit teaching and moved with her husband to Nova Scotia for the next 23 years. Despite their financial difficulties, during the Depression Edith did not return to teaching as it was considered inappropriate for married women to teach. Edith instead put her efforts toward raising her two sons, caring for her in-laws and running the farm during World War Two. She and her sons moved to the town of Pictou in order for them to go to high school. Edith found herself taking a variety of jobs in order to pay for their room and board until she was asked to teach the 4th Grade. From there in order to support her family she got a teaching job in a rural school 7.5 miles from the family farm. Due to weather conditions and road conditions she found herself having to buy a car in order to travel between the district she taught in, the farm and Pictou where her youngest son was finishing High School. In 1953 she moved back to Saskatchewan and continued to teach until 1969. Over the 1950s and 1960s Edith continued to upgrade her teaching certificate. Edith taught for 27.5 years.

Kate Myers (Born c. 1905, taught 1924-1967)



Kate started teaching in 1924 and was hired directly out of Normal School to teach in a four-room village school in Markinch and from there moved to teach Grade One and Two in Harris, Saskatchewan. From 1929 until she retired in 1967 Kate primarily taught the First Grade in Weyburn City. Part of the Markinch School's rationale behind hiring her was that her family's home was too far away to be visited on weekends and that consequently she could be expected to dedicate her spare time enhancing the community. Kate rose eminently to the occasion at Markinch she taught Sunday School, assisted the Mission Band, would attend the Ladies' Tea socials whenever she was not too busy with school work and participated in the Community Club meetings that were held twice a month. She continued to be as involved in community affairs, and especially religious organizations, for the rest of her career as a teacher. Kate continued to pursue her own education and upgrade her teaching credentials throughout her life. In addition to the many classes she remain up to date on Primary teaching methods, in 1939 took a theatre course at the Banff Summer School of Performing Arts. Kate additionally was determined to attain a Standard "A" Superior certification and so took University courses in the summer in order to achieve her goal. Upon retiring in 1967 Kate spent seven years as the Pastoral Assistant to Reverend Rose McMurtry in Weyburn's Grace United Church and additionally spent three years as the president of the local Red Cross. In 1981 she retired from teaching Sunday school. At the time of participating in Poelzer's project in 1986/1987 she was the leader of the UCW, a member of the Rebekah Lodge, led the World Day of Prayer 100th Anniversary Service, and chaired the 1987 Banquet and Programme for the 25th Anniversary of the UCW. Kate never had children and in addition to never marrying did not disclose having any romantic relationships. Kate taught for 43 years.

Sylvia Birnie nee Surring (Born c. 1905; taught 1924--? with interruptions)



Sylvia grew up on a farm in Saskatchewan. Upon finishing High School in 1923 she went to Normal School. In 1924 she commenced teaching in Royal Edward. Sylvia's first school was unique in that she moved in with a "remittance man" who had a relatively luxurious house. Unfortunately the man's wife was so sickly that in the winter Sylvia found herself moving in with a kind, but elderly, couple. From a fall of picnicking with local youths she now found herself lonely and isolated. In 1925 she moved to Somerset School at the request of the Somerset School Board as the teacher was leaving to get married. Sylvia found herself living with a pupil; while she felt at home with the family she ultimately still found herself lonely, as there were no social events. On some weekends she would opt to walk three miles in order to board a train. In 1930 Sylvia married the brother of the woman she had been boarding with and spent the

22 years raising their five children. In 1952 Sylvia returned to teaching in Saskatoon and continued until at least the mid 1960s. It is additionally unclear which grades she taught, she does, however, make mention of teaching Creative Writing under Paul Pauls by 1960. After retiring, Birnie became the President of the Saskatoon branch of the Superannuated Teachers of Saskatchewan (STS). In 1982, at 77 years of age she was the guest speaker at the Maple Creek-Medicine Hat chapter's annual meeting.

Kathleen Nouch nee Mathers (Born c. 1908; taught 1926-1971 with interruptions)

While Kathleen's parents had only been willing to finance her education at Normal School and nowhere else, she initially planned to become a nurse rather than a teacher. Her future husband ultimately persuaded her to become a teacher; with a Grade 11 education she took a four-month course at the Regina Normal School in the fall of 1925. At 17 years of age she found herself responsible for teaching and maintaining discipline to 40 pupils, one of them older than she was herself. While Kathleen took a four-year break from teaching in 1929 (when she presumably married her husband) she resumed teaching in 1933 applying to schools that were close to her husband's work. Kathleen taught for approximately 37 ½ years.

Ruby Smeltzer nee Swanston (Born 1908; taught 1927-1970 with interruptions)



Teaching was a family career path for Ruby, her mother, two sisters, aunts and grandfather before her all worked in the field. Ruby in fact found herself teaching and even sharing a two-bedroom teacherage with one of her sisters from 1929-1933. Ruby received a two-year teaching certificate after taking a four-month teaching course in Moosomin in 1926. Only she and Ellen Kristianson reported having the opportunity to do practice teaching. Notably, Ruby found herself both happy and proud to be given the opportunity to fill in for the school's sick Grade 4 teacher and teach the class on her own for a week. In 1927 her teaching career began officially and she taught until marriage in 1933. Ruby resumed teaching for three years during World War Two, but returned to working as a farm wife until being asked to teach in 1953 and so drove six miles every day from the family farm to Ogema to teach a split Grade 5/6 class. As she married into the same community that she had taught in in the 1930s many of her students in the 1950s were in fact children of former pupils. In 1961 to her great pleasure she switched to teaching the 3rd grade. In 1967 Ruby became a substitute teacher and spent the last two years of her teaching career as the Ogema school librarian, officially ceasing teaching in 1970. Upon reflection, Ruby reported that if she had not married she would have switched careers from teaching to being a librarian. Ruby taught for 23 years.

Mary Donovan (Born 1909; taught 1927-1969)



Born in Ontario, Mary and her family moved to Alberta and later Saskatchewan in her father's when her father decided to quit working as a photographer and take up farming to "become his own master." After working on dairy farms and ranches, Mr. Donovan eventually succeeded in this dream and bought his own half section just south of Lemford, Saskatchewan. In the fall of 1926 Mary moved to Regina for the four month Normal School program and in January of 1927 moved back into her parent's home to teach in the local school, Grosmont. Mary, unlike many other teachers who struggled to find teaching positions during the Depression, luckily managed to spend 12 years living at home and teaching at Grosmont where her father was the secretary treasurer. Through his position at the school board he managed to ensure that Mary still received her salary through these lean years when many teachers found themselves receiving far less than they were promised or even struggling to get paid at all. In 1939 Mary started teaching at different schools further from home, moving from school to school every few years, or in one case after six months, in order to find one that suited her. In 1946 Mary chose to relocate to Swift Current as her parents had chosen to move there after retiring from the family farm. Mary taught in rural schools outside of Swift Current until her father died in 1958. At which point Mary chose to work for the Pioneer Co-op for three years operating the bookkeeping machine. In 1961 Mary resumed teaching, a year later began teaching Grade 12 algebra, English and French, and then spent her final years as teacher teaching the 2nd Grade. In 1969 Mary retired from teaching after 35 years in the profession. Since retiring she continued to take University and Community College courses. Upon participating in Dr. Poelzer's project in 1986, at 77 years of age, Mary was only four credits away from completing her Bachelor's of Arts. Mary never married nor did she choose to report any romantic relationships.

Ellen Kristianson (Born c. 1911; taught 1930-1972)

Growing up on a farm Ellen always knew that she wanted to teach in a rural school. Ellen reported that she, like most girls her age, planned to teach until marriage and then quit to raise children. As she started teaching in 1930 the Depression derailed these plans, consequently Ellen continued to teach in order to support herself. Her remuneration for teaching was inadequate to support as her salary drop from \$1,000 to \$500 over the course of the decade. Additionally Ellen often only received enough of her salary to cover the rent she was paying to a local family and received promissory notes to cover the rest. Consequently she found herself needing to borrow her mother's egg money from time to time in order to support herself. Upon starting to teach at her first school at 18 years of age, she found her experience attending rural schools ultimately was of far more value than her practice teaching experience while attending the Moose Jaw Normal School. Ellen had a Permanent 1st Class teaching certificate and so while she was not required to upgrade her certificate she still chose to take summer and winter courses to improve

certain skills. After 19 years of moving from rural school to rural school every few years Ellen moved to the town of Shaunavon in 1949 and taught there until retiring in 1972. It is unclear whether Ellen ever married or had children; she did not choose to mention any romantic relationships she might have had. Ellen taught for 42 years.

Anna Ingham nee Lake (born 1911/1912; taught 1934-1972 with interruptions)



Anna graduated from the Saskatoon Normal School in 1934 with a 2nd class certificate. In 1936 Anna took two years off from teaching to marry and to have her first child. She resumed teaching in 1938 in order to make money to help put her husband through school. Anna intermittently took a few years off teaching after having each child and hired live-in housekeepers in order to facilitate her return to teaching. In 1944, with only four or five years of teaching experience, her school's inspector asked her demonstrate her teaching techniques at the Manitoba Teachers' Convention (Anna lived and taught in Manitoba between 1943-1945). In 1945 Anna and her family moved back to

Saskatchewan and she became the secretary of Rural Teachers' Local. As Anna had only an 11th Grade education before entering Normal School in 1955 she took the required grade 12 subjects in order to upgrade her certificate. As Anna taught she cultivated the Blended Sound-Sight Method of Learning. In the early 1960s her principal invited a group of teachers and principals from Manitoba who had come to view the implementation of the Spalding teaching technique to view Anna's entirely different teaching model. These visiting teachers were so enamored with her technique that they requested that she write a book on the subject and began to implement it themselves. Around 1965 Anna began to speak at various institutes and Teachers' conventions on the subject. Her book was published in 1967 and she used it to teach a summer course at the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation that same year. In 1973 she took early retirement in order to continue to promote the Blended Sound-Sight Method through speaking engagements and running short courses. From 1974-1977 she worked as a consultant for the Department of Education. At the time of participating in Dr. Poelzer's project she was still speaking at conventions and institutes and giving summer classes on her teaching method. Anna taught in rural, town and city for 29 years, in addition to the years she spent as a schoolteacher, she spent decades cultivating, promoting and teaching the Blended Sound-Sight Method.

June Baumgartner nee Robinson (Born c. 1931; taught 1949-??)

In 1949 after graduating from the 12th Grade June found herself asked by a local Superintendent if she would like to become a Study Supervisor for a nearby rural one-room school that needed a teacher. On her very first day as a Study Supervisor a local teenage girl turned up at the school explaining that she was taking Grade 10 via correspondence as her parents could not afford for her to go to High School in town. While assisting this girl was not something that she was required to do, June gamely rose to the occasion despite the fact that she likely felt overwhelmed by her own workload

teaching eight grades. June stated, "...as I walked I thought of the added work and the responsibility of this grade ten student... I put the worry behind me to walk alone along the country road and to enjoy the setting of the sun over the fields. A new road, a new responsibility and new people to meet, to enjoy and to work with." She chose to become a teacher because it offered her the possibility to "become self sufficient, as an individual, and to be respected in the community in which I worked." June used the money she earned that year to go to Normal School in Moose Jaw in 1950. After one year of working as a teacher she was offered a teaching job in Regina. In 1953 she married and moved to Prince Albert to teach in the All Saints Indian School. It is unclear whether June continued to teach after 1955. She made little mention of her life after 1954, her only statement regarding whether she had considered teaching a life-long career are difficult to conclusively analyze. She stated: "But this [teaching] did not turn out to be only a career until marriage for I continue to choose to acquire knowledge and skills through studies etc."