

**BEAUVAIS SCHOOL**  
**A COLLECTED AND LIVING HISTORY**

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To

Gaston and Paulette

Who continue to reveal to me life's greatest lessons...

## Abstract

The purpose of this project is twofold: (1) to collect, summarize, and narrate the history of the Beauvais School, a historic one-room schoolhouse in the Municipal District of Pincher Creek, and (2) to recreate, in the form of an educational, interactive program, a half-day of school in 1911/12 at the Beauvais Schoolhouse (Appendix A). Using original documents from the Beauvais School and District (daily attendance records, the school board minute book and cash book, local newspapers, and pioneer's personal histories), the following topics are examined: the Beauvais family, the Beauvais School District, teacher training, caretaking, the school board, the interior and exterior of the schoolhouse, discipline and mischief, special occasions, morning routines, lunch and recess, textbooks and readers, the multi-grade classroom, attendance and truancy, teacher salaries, transportation to and from school, the school budget, the library, teacher shortages, the inspector, the large school unit, and rural school closures. The examination of these topics resulted in the re-creation of partial school day in the context of 1911/1912. Participants in this re-creation (designed for elementary school children or family groups) assume the names of actual Beauvais students and progress through the routines and lessons of an early twentieth-century school day. The intent of this research is to allow older generations to re-experience their past, and younger generations to understand the origins of their current community and lifestyle.

## Acknowledgements

As a student with lofty goals and a restricted budget, I have learned far more than local history through this project. I have been frequently and delightfully overwhelmed by the support and kindness of people offering to nourish and sustain my work (and me) during the course of this research.

Staff at the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, the Provincial Archives in Edmonton, the Sir Alexander Galt Museum in Lethbridge, the Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village in Pincher Creek (notably Farley Wuth and Betty Smith), and St. Michael's Church in Pincher Creek (specifically Rosalie Levesque) consistently handled my research as enthusiastically as if it were their own. Their demonstration of bending over backwards certainly qualifies them as research gymnasts.

There is a wealth of undiscovered history contained in the library and files of the Beauvais Lake Provincial Park office. Much of this research, done previously by Darrell Croft, formed the backbone of this project. I owe thanks to the Parks and Protected Areas staff of Pincher Creek/Lethbridge for providing access to the Beauvais Lake Office and the resources contained therein. In addition, Heidi Eijgel's encouragement in the initial stages of the project made me believe it was worthwhile and Cliff Thesen's support of my proposal provided the means to make it happen. Al Heschl and Bryan Sundberg deserve special thanks for maintaining my momentum with their daily inquiries, sincere interest in the project, technical support, timely distractions and comic relief.

I am only beginning to discover history through individuals who lived the story of the one-room schoolhouse. I am inspired and humbled by each interaction with former students and teachers willing to share a piece of their past. In particular, I am grateful to the staff and residents of Crestview Lodge, and members of the local community who will be participating in my continuing research. The very personal research styles of Pat (Kropinak) Moskaluk and Joyce Sasse have provided me with excellent local mentorship.

There is a unique kind of confidence born when someone you regard highly is intrigued by your vision, encourages progress on your own terms, and celebrates each small success as it happens. To Dr. Brian Titley I am grateful for this. My deepest thanks go also to Dr. John Poulsen for his enthusiasm and feedback, particularly with the practical application of this research.

To each person who volunteered hours of time to scrutinize the initial drafts of this research, thank you for your commitment, encouragement, and helpful feedback.

Only Michelle Forget could take the grueling task of data entry and transform it into something playful and entertaining. Her example is a metaphor for so much more.

Being from the city, I found it difficult to imagine the kind of spirit that embodied the early rural community of the Beauvais District. But I have found a living example in Ken and Carolee Elliott. From the day we met, I was warmly welcomed into their home as family. With each visit, I am treated to large helpings of local history and Carolee's home cooking. Information and assistance provided by Ken and Carolee is woven richly into the pages of this document.

All of this would have remained an unfulfilled idea were it not for Paul. Inadvertently, his gentle encouragement earned him the roles of research assistant, local historian and editor. I cannot express in words what his support has made possible.

## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements.....	v
Table of Contents.....	vi
List of Tables.....	vii
List of Figures.....	vii
Preface.....	viii
1882: The Beauvais Family.....	1
1888: The Beauvais School District.....	8
1896: The First Teacher and the Caretaker.....	10
1897: Father Lacombe.....	14
1902: Early Teacher Training.....	17
1907: School Board.....	19
1909: The New School: Renovations and Repair.....	24
1910: Discipline and Mischief.....	26
1911: On the Inside.....	32
1919: Finding Teachers for the School.....	36
1920: Heat and Water.....	41
1922: Morning Routines.....	47
1923: Special Occasions and Events.....	50
1924: The Best Part of the Day.....	54
1926: Readers and Textbooks.....	58
1928: Early Transportation.....	61
1929: The Fun Part of Learning.....	64
1933: The Multi-Grade Classroom.....	67
1934: Attendance and Truancy.....	72
1935: Teacher Salaries.....	75
1938: School Budget.....	78
1938: The Large School Unit (the beginning of the end).....	82
1941: The School Library.....	86
1942: Teacher Shortages.....	88
1943: The Inspector.....	91
1949: Van Routes and School Closures.....	97
References.....	101
Appendix A: Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails – An Educational Program.....	104
Appendix B: Opening Exercises.....	122
Appendix C: History of the Pincher Creek Area.....	123
Appendix D: Authorized Textbooks in 1911/12.....	124
Appendix E: Beauvais School Library Books, 1941/42.....	125
Appendix F: Families of the Beauvais School.....	127

### List of Tables

1. Normal School Courses Between 1890 and 1905 .....	18
2. Trustees of the St. Agnes/Beauvais School Board .....	22
3. Miss Jane Kelly: Documented Information .....	26
4. A Multigrade Time Table .....	68
5. Normal School Courses in 1933 .....	69
6. Salaries of Beauvais School Teachers (1896-1949) .....	77
7. The Inspector's Rating of a Teacher's Performance .....	93
8. An Inspector's Responsibilities .....	95

### List of Figures

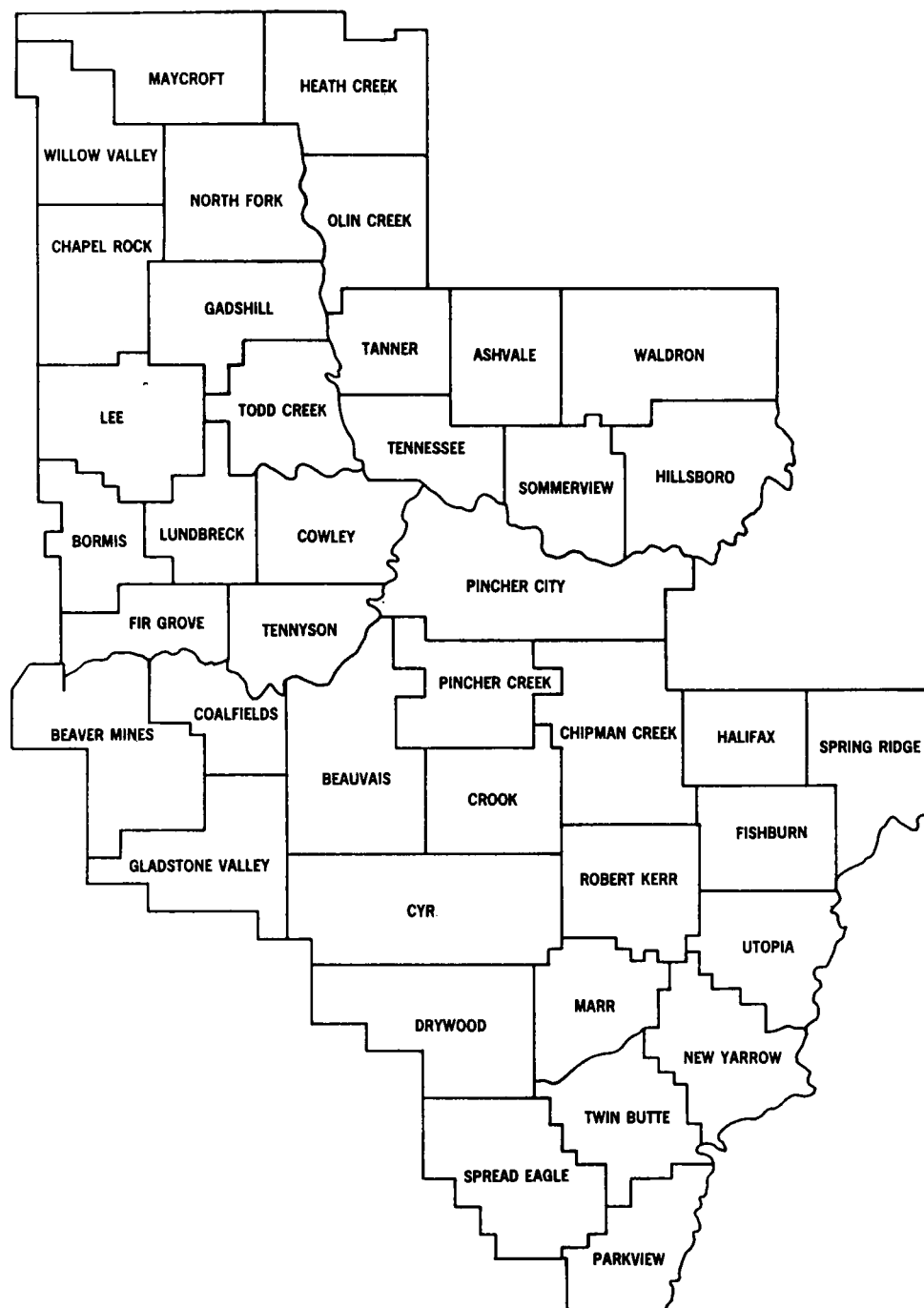
1. School Districts in the Pincher Creek Area .....	ix
2. A Map of the Beauvais School District.....	x

## Preface

For two years now, I have been collecting loose strands of the past, hoping some day to restore them into something resembling the original tapestry from which they were scattered. It is long past time for the weaving to begin. What follows is an account of my attempt to reunite the pieces of history that tell the story of a one-room schoolhouse known originally as St. Agnes.

The story of the St. Agnes/Beauvais School cannot be told in isolation. It is part of a much broader context. As a result, anecdotes included in this story are not exclusively from the Beauvais School. While it is true that each school history is unique, the Beauvais School is linked to others by virtue of its place in time and space; over forty one-room schools in the Pincher Creek area existed in the same time period, on the same landscape, by communities sharing similar lifestyles. For this reason, examples from other school histories are used to illustrate what *may have been* at the Beauvais School, when Beauvais specific anecdotes were unavailable, and have been woven into the research to add flesh to the context.

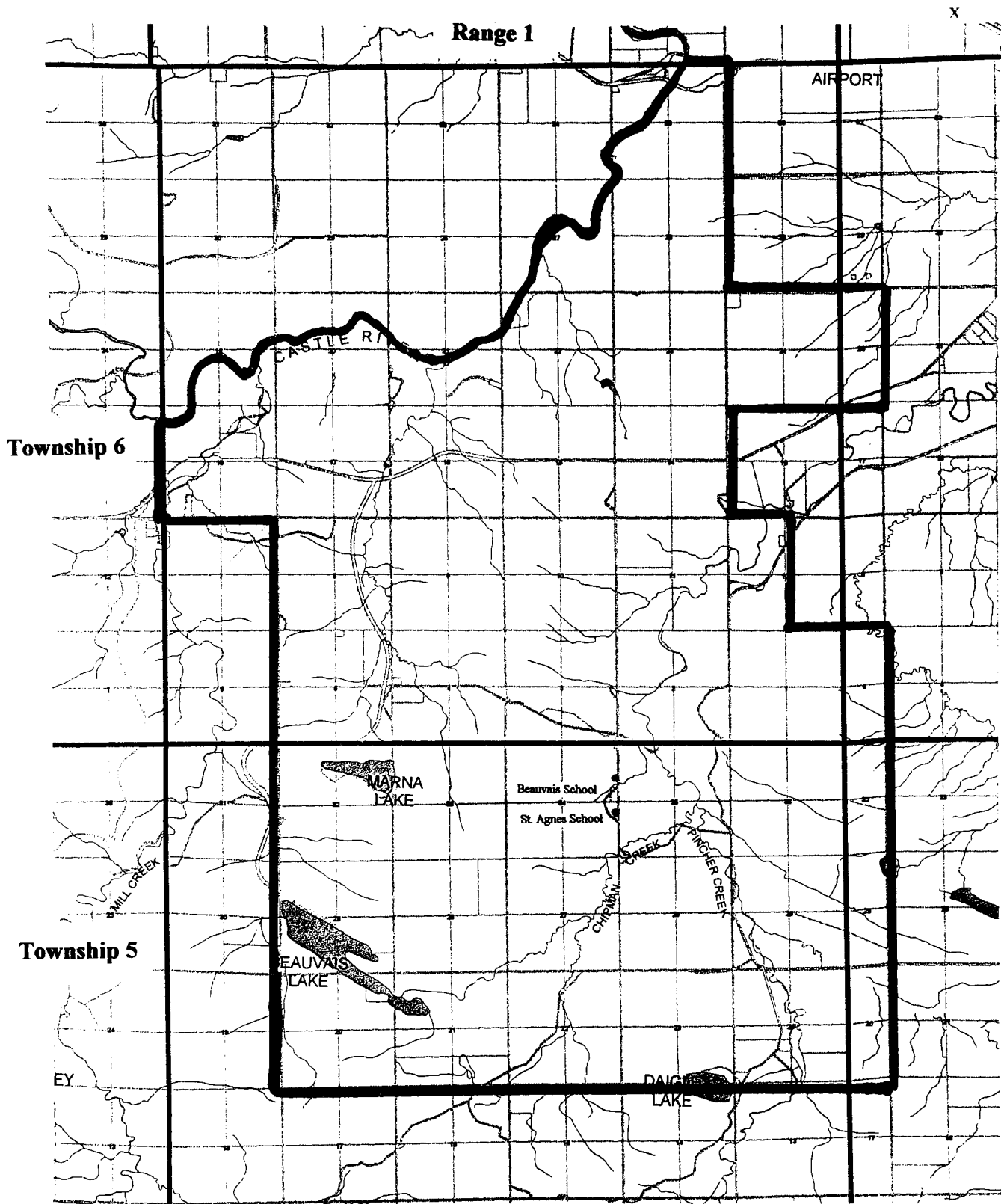
The intention of this research is to offer current generations an opportunity to relive a piece of Alberta's past through the context of the one-room schoolhouse. Because I did not experience this history first hand, my re-telling of the story may be incomplete or misinformed. For this reason, I am committed to revising and updating this research collection at every opportunity.



**Figure 1**  
**School Districts in the Pincher Creek Area<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Pincher Creek and District Historical Society (hereafter cited as PC&DHS), *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass: History of the Pioneers of Pincher Creek and District*, (Calgary, Alberta: PC&DHS, 1974), viii.





**Figure 2**  
**A Map of the Beauvais School District<sup>1</sup>**

<sup>1</sup> Created upon request of the author at the Pincher Creek Municipal District Office, February 2003.

## 1882: The Beauvais Family

30 June 2002

Rays of sun shone hot through the sealed windows of the faded blue suburban as it jarred violently through unavoidable ruts in the road. Although there was no trace of snow on the ground, three recent, snowstorms in May and June had dumped almost three metres of heavy, wet snow. Subsequent drying had transformed the back-roads into an obstacle course. One particularly bone-rattling bump caused a rush of historic empathy as I tried to imagine traveling the same road with a horse-drawn wagon.

In the year that I had lived and worked in Beauvais Lake Provincial Park,<sup>1</sup> I had never visited the nearby Beauvais homestead that became the namesake for the lake, the creek, the district, the schoolhouse and the provincial park.<sup>2</sup> But today we had set aside the afternoon to explore nearby sites that could give us a better sense of the local history. There were five in our party, all of us keen, and filled with a strange reverence as the old house came into view.

It sat alone in the middle of an open field. It was obvious that much of the open space has been used for livestock grazing. In the distance to the west and the south, the front range of the Rocky Mountains formed a sweeping arc. To the east and north, the land rolled easily, covered in alternating patches of grassland and forest. It was beautiful, and I paused trying to take it all in, long after the vehicle had come to a stop.

Darrell stirred in the back seat. "Let's go take a look," he said, shouldering the door and allowing a blast of ever-present wind to swirl through the suburban. The house was about two hundred metres from the road. We walked in silence, each lost in his or her own thoughts. I was reminding myself what I knew about the Beauvais Family history:

Remi James Beauvais was born 30 September 1825 in Laprairie, Quebec, and baptized two days later.<sup>3</sup> I knew little of his youth. As a young man, he was married twice. Curiously, both of these women seem to have been widows; they each had children by another man.<sup>4</sup> From these two marriages, he had no biological children own and only one surviving stepson. What happened to these two wives is a mystery to me.

In his early forties, Remi moved to Oregon.<sup>5</sup> The reason for his move is unknown, but a goldrush in Eastern Oregon may have influenced his decision<sup>6</sup>. He married Marie Ducharme<sup>7</sup> on 26 December in either 1866 or 1868.<sup>8</sup> Their ages were approximately

<sup>1</sup> Local residents pronounce it "Bo'-vee". If you inquire about Beauvais using the French pronunciation, they will tell you they've never heard of the place.

<sup>2</sup> Dominion Lands Office, *1888 Plan of Township No. 5, Range 1 West of the Fifth Meridian*, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta. Prior to the publishing of the 1888 map, the official name of Beauvais Creek was changed to Chipman Creek.

<sup>3</sup> Beauvais Family Genealogical Summary, "Beauvais, Remi James (Sr.)," Family Papers, Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta, n.d., 001.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. Remi Beauvais' first wife, Mrs. Longtain had a son, Joseph Longtain II, who lived only 2 years from 1860-1862. His second wife, Mrs. Camiran had two children by a man named Ludger Camirand; Henry (Honore) who lived from 1862-1931 and Marcelline, born in 1865, who died young.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid. The exact date of his move to Oregon is unknown, but he is listed as a member of the Walla Walla Parish in Umatilla County, Oregon in 1866. In the same year, his name appears in the Marion County Census.

<sup>6</sup> John W. Evans, *Powerful Rocky: The Blue Mountains and the Oregon Trail*, (La Grande, Oregon: Eastern Oregon State College, 1990), 311. Footnote 342 in mentions that a man named Mose La Grandeur was in Oregon with Remi Beauvais, and that they later migrated to the Pincher Creek area. The gold rush is believed to have drawn La Grandeur to Oregon.

<sup>7</sup> Homestead Patent Application, Mary Beauvais to Dominion Lands, Northwest Territories, 1 May 1904 – 13 September 1907, copy at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta. (Marie's name is often anglicized to Mary on official documents). A sworn statement in 1905 indicates that she is sixty-three (and therefore born in 1842).

<sup>8</sup> Beauvais Family Genealogical Summary, "Beauvais, Remi James (Sr.); Beauvais Family Tree, "Descendants of Gabriel Beauvais," Family Papers, Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta, n.d. Family genealogy records conflict on this matter, which is, in itself,

forty-two and twenty-five. Over the course of fifteen years, they made their home in various places in Oregon<sup>9</sup> and bore six children along the way.<sup>10</sup> Then, early in 1882, something motivated them to leave. With a newborn baby and five other children ranging in age from two to fourteen, they loaded their belongings into a covered wagon. The families of Mose La Grandeur, Max Brouillot, Alec LeBoeuf, Henry LeBoeuf, and Joe Mongeon joined them on a three month trek that ended near Pincher Creek, Alberta.<sup>11</sup> For the Beauvais family, it ended right where I stood.

We had reached the house;<sup>12</sup> it was one of two built by the Beauvais family before 1900.<sup>13</sup> Resting on a foundation of carefully laid slabs of sandstone, the house stood two stories high, eighteen metres long and nine metres wide (sixty by thirty feet). The carpenter who built this house embellished each window frame was embellished with a triangular peak, and the lower half of the roof had a slope characteristic of early French-Canadian architecture.

In front of where I stood, the large logs forming the walls of the house were exposed where the external planks had come off. Something caught my eye; along the length of each log, the surface was scored with vertical lines. As I was pondering these, Bruce and Paul rounded the corner of the house, talking excitedly. Each of them held something in his hands. Before I could even inquire, Bruce began showing me a handful of large, rusty nails that looked oddly square. He explained with enthusiasm that each one of them would have been made by hand. When he directed my attention to the building, I could suddenly see nails everywhere, especially on the roof where the shingles had come loose.

Paul, waiting anxiously for my attention, held out a rust-covered horseshoe. I turned it over in my hands, remembering that the Beauvais family brought with them from Oregon a string of highly renowned racehorses.<sup>14</sup> One of them, Ocealo by name, was Remi's pride: "A sure winner and one of the finest horses ever brought into this country, you bet say!" he would boast.<sup>15</sup> In fact, on 1 July 1882, the year they arrived in Canada, Remi was presented with a silver cup by the Hudson's Bay Company for a race won by Ocealo.<sup>16</sup> The horse, widely recognized for its racing speed, eventually took a tumble

interesting – according to records, their first child was born in 1868. If they were married on December 26, 1868, their first child would have been conceived and quite probably born out of wedlock. The Beauvais Family prescribed devoutly to the Catholic faith – this may have been a strong motivation to record the marriage as 1866. Alternately, they may have quite legitimately married in 1866, with the 1868 date being a typing error.

<sup>9</sup> Beauvais Family Genealogical Summary, "Beauvais, Remi James (Sr.)." In 1866, Remi was a member of Walla Walla Parish, Umatilla Oregon. Later in the same year, a census records him in Marion County Oregon. In 1882, his son Franklin was born in Union County Oregon.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. Remi and Marie's first six children were: Caroline (1868), Alexander (1870), Caroline (1872), Angele (1878), Florence (1880) and Franklin (1882). Their seventh child, Remi James Jr., was born in 1886.

<sup>11</sup> Barry Potyondi, *Where the Rivers Meet: A History of the Upper Oldman River Basin to 1939*, (Lethbridge, Alberta: 1992), 46; Evans, *Powerful Rocky*, 312.

<sup>12</sup> Province of Alberta, Culture and Historic Sites, "Historic Sites Inventory," John Daley, compiler., 1980-1981. This building stands on SE S34-T5-R1-W5, was constructed in the early 1880s, and was the home of the Remi Beauvais family. As the family grew, a second house was built nearby, across Chipman Creek on NE S27-T5-R1-W5 to accommodate one of his married daughters (Caroline and Theodule Cyr).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. When the Beauvais family first arrived in 1882, they moved into an existing house that had been originally built for George Ness, a friend of Charlie Smith on SE S27-T5-R1-W5. Believed to have been built in 1881, it is thought to be one of the oldest standing buildings in Alberta.

<sup>14</sup> *Henderson's Northwest Brand Book*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. (Winnipeg, Henderson Directory Co., 1896), 18, Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village, Pincher Creek, Alberta. Remi Beauvais' brand was RB, and could be seen on the left shoulder of his horses and the left hip of his cattle. His vent was on the left hip. A vent is a brand made when selling an animal, indicating absolution of ownership. This mark was typically one of the characters of the brand (an R or a B in Remi's case) placed on its side, rotated counter clockwise. (Brand Inspector, Clay Peters, telephone conversation with author, 11 February 2003.)

<sup>15</sup> In various other historic accounts, the name of this horse is spelled Ocealeo and Occaleo.

<sup>16</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 219

over a dog during a race, so injuring his knees that he never raced again.<sup>17</sup> This horseshoe in my hand suddenly felt warm – my imagination, I’m sure, as I wondered if it were a shoe thrown from one of Remi’s own horses.

“Say, fellas,” I said, handing the horseshoe back to Paul, “What do you make of these?” I gestured to the vertical lines in the logs that had caught my attention earlier. They took turns explaining that the marks were probably left by a broadaxe that would have been used to make the logs square.<sup>18</sup> As Paul photographed the nails and the broadaxe marks, I wandered off around the building.

Where the front door would have been, there was a gaping entry. Catherine had cautioned that the floor was probably unsafe to walk on, but I was drawn inside. The ground level was one big room with tall windows on three sides, allowing light to spill across the dirt-covered floor.<sup>19</sup> I reached inside my pocket and pulled out a photocopied page that read: “Macleod Gazette, July 17<sup>th</sup>, 1896: On Tuesday of last week, a picnic was held at Beauvais Lake, in connection with St. Michael’s Roman Catholic Church. About sixty attended, and spent an enjoyable afternoon in boating and athletic sports. A dance at Mr. Beauvais’ house followed in the evening, most of the picnickers getting home after dawn on Wednesday.” Smiling, I looked up from the paper and could easily imagine furniture pushed back against the walls, rugs rolled back, a fiddler and a harmonica player in the corner, and a kaleidoscope of whirling colour as a square-dance caller’s voice rang out over the music. I had heard that the Beauvais house was often a gathering place for the community, and it was easy to see why.

I leaned my head out a south facing window and surveyed the view. It was spectacular. The Beauvais family had grown or raised most of their own food, and mined their own coal from nearby hills.<sup>20</sup> Remi’s wife Marie was apparently known for her saskatoon berry bread. I had also read somewhere that when Marie’s father died, he was buried at the back of the garden to the north of the house.<sup>21</sup> I also recalled that there were five other graves next to his; Remi and Marie’s fifth child, Florence, died in 1888 when she was only eight years old.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps she is one of the bodies there. The others may belong to Beauvais grandchildren who died young.<sup>23</sup> Apparently when the children played outside near the graves, they would call to each other, “Don’t run there! You’ll step on Grandpa!”<sup>24</sup> I moved to a north-facing window to see if there were any obvious grave markers, but could not see any.

The Beauvais family had been settled for four years when their seventh and last child was born in 1886.<sup>25</sup> By this time, Remi was taking a leading role in the French Catholic Community, donating money, resources and time to the establishment of a local church and school; the contract in 1886 to build the first Roman Catholic Church in Pincher

<sup>17</sup> *A History of the Early Days of Pincher Creek*, (Pincher Creek, Women’s Institute of Alberta, n.d.) Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village, Pincher Creek, Alberta.

<sup>18</sup> Curator, Farley Wuth (Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village), telephone conversation with author, 3 February 2003. This would have been done for strictly aesthetic reasons and was the mark of a “classy” home – ordinarily, the logs would have been left rounded.

<sup>19</sup> The floor was covered with boards but cattle had been in and out of the building, leaving a layer of fine-ground manure

<sup>20</sup> Letter, Mabel (Cox) Sykes to David Friebe, 25 August 1982, Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta. The Christie Coal Mine was later established on the same coal seam and operated from 1884-1943. At its peak in 1916, the mine employed 7 men and was removing about 100 tons of coal every day.

<sup>21</sup> Letter, Mabel (Cox) Sykes to David Friebe.

<sup>22</sup> Beauvais Family Genealogical Summary, “Beauvais, Remi James (Sr.).”

<sup>23</sup> Letter, Mabel (Cox) Sykes to David Friebe; Province of Alberta, “Historic Sites Inventory.”

<sup>24</sup> Letter, Mabel (Cox) Sykes to David Friebe.

<sup>25</sup> Beauvais Family Genealogical Summary, “Beauvais, Remi James (Jr.),” Family Papers, Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta, n.d., 002.

Creek was witnessed by Remi Beauvais.<sup>26</sup> Even today, there is a large stained-glass window in the Pincher Creek Catholic Church inscribed: "In the Memory of Remi Beauvais." Father Lacombe, a Catholic missionary, was well known to the Beauvais family, and stayed often at the Beauvais Ranch. On one occasion in the 1880s, Father Lacombe asked Remi and Marie to take four children into their home.<sup>27</sup> The mother of these children had recently died, and their father, new on his homestead, could not tend the land and the children at the same time. For the time that followed, seven Beauvais children and four Gregoire children lived with Remi and Marie as a family under one roof.

But for all of these children, there was still no school in the district. And so in 1888, the community met and elected Remi Beauvais, Charlie Smith and Ludger Gareau as trustees of the newly formed St. Agnes Catholic Public School District No. 18.<sup>28</sup>

For his efforts, the title of the school and district were later changed to bear his name. The creek that flowed across his property and the lake that fed it were also named Beauvais, and in 1957 a local picnic area was christened Beauvais Lake Provincial Park.<sup>29</sup>

The rest of my group had gathered and were looking sunburned and wind-beaten. They continued sharing their impressions of the homestead as we returned to the suburban. With one last glance over my shoulder, I recalled the words of Remi Beauvais' obituary in 1899: "... by dist [*sic*] of industry and hard work, [he] had become one of the most prosperous farmers and ranchers in the district, being noted particularly for the fine class of horses which he raised. Mr. Beauvais was a sturdy old French gentleman, kindly and courteous to all with whom he came in contact and a general favourite with all classes of people. He will be much missed in the section where he was best known."<sup>30</sup>

That evening, my mind was still full of images and ideas inspired by the Beauvais homestead. I sat in the quiet of the Park Office, suddenly reaching for the Pincher Creek phone book. I wanted to call a Beauvais descendent and hear more about the family. But there were no Beauvais. How could that be?

I spent some time looking through books and files to find out what happened to Marie and the Beauvais children.

After Remi's death, Marie continued to live on the homestead with her youngest children, but eventually moved to the house she and Remi had temporarily occupied when they first moved to Alberta, and remained there for a number of years. During this time, she kept cattle, horses, and pigs.<sup>31</sup> Marie acquired an additional quarter section of land in 1908. She died in 1915 at the approximate age of seventy-five.

Louise, the eldest daughter, was fourteen years old when the Beauvais family migrated from Oregon. Joe Mongeon, a twenty-nine year old bachelor, joined them on

<sup>26</sup> Contract, W. Carruthers, 11 January 1886, accession no. 71.220/5309, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton. William Carruthers signed the contract for \$100.00 on 11 January 1886. Other witnesses were A. Grenier, T. Lebel, D. Cyr, and E. Chamberlain.

<sup>27</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 221. Louis Gregoire had been a French fur trader for the Hudson Bay Company near St. Boniface, Manitoba. When his wife, Marguerite Pelletier, died he brought his four children (Florence, James, William and Louis) to Alberta. They were placed for a time with the Beauvais family, until Father Lacombe placed the three boys in an Edmonton school.

<sup>28</sup> *Northwest Territories Gazette*, Regina, 26 May 1888.

<sup>29</sup> The park would later expand to its current size of approximately four and one half sections.

<sup>30</sup> *Macleod Gazette*, Fort Macleod, 15 September 1899.

<sup>31</sup> Homestead Patent Application, Mary Beauvais to Dominion Lands, Northwest Territories, 18 June 1896. The house she moved to was on SE 27-T5-R1-W5. She resided there from 1902 to at least 1905.

their journey.<sup>32</sup> They eventually married, living on the Beauvais property for a time before setting up their own homestead on Drywood Creek near Twin Butte.<sup>33</sup> Here, four children were born.<sup>34</sup> The birthing of their last child in 1902 ended Louise's life at thirty-four.<sup>35</sup> Joe, unable to care for the children on his own, placed them in the Catholic Convent in Pincher Creek. "They remained there until each was able to find his or her own path in life."<sup>36</sup>

There is little information available on Alexander Beauvais. When he was nineteen years old, he applied for a homestead, but later filed for abandonment.<sup>37</sup> At some point before the death of his father, he married Mary Lucier, and appears to have had no children.<sup>38</sup>

Remi's daughter Caroline was one of two Beauvais sisters to marry two Cyr brothers.<sup>39</sup> With her husband, Theodule, she bore seven children.<sup>40</sup> Their home was located across the creek from Remi and Mary's home.<sup>41</sup> In Remi's will, Theodule Cyr was named executor, and appointed legal guardian of Remi's infant children.<sup>42</sup> Caroline died in 1921.

Angele, twenty-one years old when her father died, received through his will \$500.00, one cow and her two calves, one mare and a quarter section of land.<sup>43</sup> After arriving from Montana in 1902 or 1903, Paul Cyr took a mining job in Frank. He broke his leg and was sent to the Pincher Creek hospital, one week before the Frank Slide. While recovering, he met Angele Beauvais.<sup>44</sup> They were married in the fall, and had two children.<sup>45</sup> Each lived past seventy; Paul died in 1938, and Angele died in 1952.

Florence, born in 1880, was two years old when the family moved to Canada, but died six years later in 1888.<sup>46</sup>

Franklin Beauvais never married and had no recorded children. He was seventeen at the time of his father's death, and continued to live with his mother. Remi's will stated that after the payment of the funeral, all remaining property including the house, buildings, lands, implements and stock were to be divided between Franklin and Remi

<sup>32</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 794. Joe Mongeon was born in 1853 in the same county as Remi Beauvais (LaPrairie, Quebec).

<sup>33</sup> Document, Concerning the Last Will and Testament of Remi Beauvais, 6 November 1899, copy at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta. Louise received \$1000.00 from Remi when she married.

<sup>34</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 794. The four Mongeon children were: Florence (1883 - died at 25 during the flu epidemic of 1918), Noe (1898), Herman (1901-1947) and Marie (1902).

<sup>35</sup> Letter, Mabel (Cox) Sykes to David Friebe, 25 August 1982.

<sup>36</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 795.

<sup>37</sup> Declaration of Homestead Abandonment by Alexander Beauvais to Dominion Lands, Northwest Territories, 18 June 1896, copy at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta. The land Alexander Beauvais originally filed for was SW S34-T5-R1-W5 in 1889. He would have been 19 years old at the time. In the Declaration of Abandonment Alex asks to have his application cancelled and be permitted to take up another homestead. He explains that, except having broken a few acres, he has not worked the land because he has been a resident on his father's property.

<sup>38</sup> Last Will and Testament of Remi Beauvais, 6 November 1899. Alexander received \$1000.00 from Remi when he married.

<sup>39</sup> Last Will and Testament of Remi Beauvais, 6 November 1899. Caroline received \$1000.00 from Remi when she married.

<sup>40</sup> Beauvais Family Tree, "Descendants of Gabriel Beauvais." Family Papers, Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta, n.d. The children of Caroline and Theodule Cyr were Margaret Mary (1899), Alphie (~1900), Agnas (1902), Doris (~1903), Lea Clemence (~1903), Elizabeth/Lizzie (1905) and George Remi (1907).

<sup>41</sup> Province of Alberta, "Historic Sites Inventory." Caroline and Theodule's home was located on NE S27-T5-R1-W5 in the extreme NE corner of the quarter section.

<sup>42</sup> Beauvais Family Tree, "Descendants of Gabriel Beauvais." At the time of Remi's death, his youngest children would have been Remi Jr, (13) and Franklin (17) and Angele (21).

<sup>43</sup> Last Will and Testament of Remi Beauvais, 6 November 1899. Angele received NE S27-T5-R1-W5. This is the quarter where her sister Caroline and Husband Theodule were living.

<sup>44</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 219.

<sup>45</sup> Beauvais Family Tree, "Descendants of Gabriel Beauvais." The children of Angele and Paul Cyr were: Maxime (~1904-1908) and Mary (1908).

<sup>46</sup> Beauvais Family Genealogical Summary, "Beauvais, Remi James (Sr.)."

Jr., under the condition that they would support their mother during the remainder of her life.<sup>47</sup> In April 1900 he received his Certificate of Naturalization, allowing him to apply for his own land.<sup>48</sup> During the application process, he owned livestock, had erected significant fencing, and had broken and cultivated a portion of the quarter he was applying for.<sup>49</sup> His application was approved in 1904.<sup>50</sup>

The youngest Beauvais, Remi James Jr. married Elise Leblanc and had four children.<sup>51</sup> They separated in 1910 and divorced in 1912. Around this time, Remi sold his ranch, moved to Polson, Montana, and enrolled his oldest son Alexander Joseph at the Indian School at St. Ignasas. Elise had taken the other three children for schooling at Lacombe Home in Midnapore, until Denise contracted scarlet fever there and died in 1919. That fall, Elise took the two remaining children, Marie and Henri, to Medicine Hat where she became a dressmaker. She died of goiter on June 11, 1920 and is buried in Medicine Hat.<sup>52</sup> In the meantime, Remi Jr. married Emma Senecal in 1914.<sup>53</sup> They had one child.

As for Henere Camirand, Remi's stepson, he was bequeathed a quarter section of land in Remi's will, and continued to pay taxes on it until 1910.<sup>54</sup>

It was well past dark, and just after midnight when I pushed my chair back from the table. I was feeling an overwhelming appreciation for Remi Beauvais and his family. Interesting, I thought, how one person's existence and actions sets into motion lifetimes of repercussion. As I turned off the lights and locked the office door, I wondered silently if the scattered descendents of Remi and Marie Beauvais knew the origins of their courageous, colourful family. As an afterthought it occurred to me that we are all born of such adventure.

The next day, Paul and I drove to Pincher Creek to find Remi Beauvais' grave. I had written down the directions from Darrell: "Fairview Cemetery, two big poplars, small white cross." It was easy to find and beautifully simple, compared to the elaborate size and decoration of others nearby. I sat down in the grass facing the lettering on the marker. Resting there in the dappled shade, I had a flood of thoughts – the kind that are often inspired by cemeteries. I realized that the name on the simple, white cross represented the entire life of one man who lived over one hundred years ago. And suddenly I was surrounded by gentle whispers coming from the sea of crosses and headstones around me. Each one was an entire lifetime, either of days or years. So many lives. So many triumphs. So much suffering. So much living. All during a time so different from my own. I would like to have known it. Failing that, I would like, at least, to have a sense of what it must have been like. The past has always fascinated me but

<sup>47</sup> Last Will and Testament of Remi Beauvais, 6 November 1899.

<sup>48</sup> Certificate of Naturalization to Franklin Beauvais from the Dominion Lands, Northwest Territories, 9 April 1900, copy at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta. A 'naturalized' person is recognized as a British Subject, allowing him/her the same privileges as a born British Subject. This could be granted when a person had resided in a British territory for a period of three years.

<sup>49</sup> Letter, Department of the Interior to the Agent of Dominion Lands, 23 June 1904, copy at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta.

<sup>50</sup> Letter, Department of the Interior to Franklin Beauvais, 8 October 1904, copy at Beauvais Lake Provincial Park, Alberta.

<sup>51</sup> Beauvais Family Genealogical Summary, "Beauvais, Remi James (Jr.)." The children of Remi James Beauvais Junior and Elise Leblanc were Alexander J. (1905-1957), Mary/Marie (1906-?), Denise (1908-1919) and Henri (1910-?).

<sup>52</sup> Ibid. Elise Beauvais is interred at the Hillside Cemetery in an unmarked grave.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Emma Seneca lived until 1984. The child they had, Lucille, was born in 1915.

<sup>54</sup> Cashbook, Beauvais School District No. 18, 1907-1938, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta. The land he received was located at NW S34-R1-T5-W5.

there was something particularly intriguing about Remi Beauvais and the community in which he lived.

Paul's hand was resting on my shoulder. It was time for us to be heading back. In one last sweeping glance, I noted many French names on neighbouring headstones and it occurred to me that we were in the Catholic section of the cemetery. One name instantly caught my eye - Louise Mongeon, Remi's eldest daughter. Were other Beauvais nearby? I would have to come back another day. As we walked away, I sensed that my research on the Beauvais District was just beginning.



## 1888: The Beauvais School District

In many ways, the Beauvais School District resembled other school districts established during the settlement era. It was born of a community's desire to provide education for its children. In 1888, the community gathered at the home of Charlie Smith, and elected its first board of trustees.<sup>1</sup> By this action, The Saint Agnes Catholic Public School District No. 18 of the Northwest Territories was formed.

The original St. Agnes School was a one-room log structure that opened its doors in 1896.<sup>2</sup> When it was replaced in 1909, the area was renamed The Beauvais School District No. 18 of the Province of Alberta.<sup>3</sup> The school was in continuous operation for fifty-three years, closing its doors permanently in June 1949.<sup>4</sup>

The boundaries of the school district determined the tax base for the school program. In 1888, the original boundary encompassed fourteen sections. Gradually, more sections were added until the district reached its peak size of thirty-six sections in 1939.<sup>5</sup>

The local school board was made up of resident members of the community. Over the span of fifty-three years, at least seven different men chaired the board. That these men volunteered an average of seven years of service is testament to their dedication to the school program. In addition, six different men held the position of secretary-treasurer. Twenty men and two women filled the role of trustee over the years.<sup>6</sup>

Between 150 and 200 children from over sixty different families received education from the St. Agnes/Beauvais School between 1896 and 1949. In a number of families, two different generations appear on the attendance register.<sup>7</sup>

Of the twenty-seven teachers that taught at St. Agnes/Beauvais School, 74% were female. At least two of its former students returned as teachers to the Beauvais School after receiving Normal School training.<sup>8</sup>

In all of the above ways, the St. Agnes/Beauvais School District superficially resembled other rural districts in the Pincher Creek Area. Its obvious difference, however, was in the names filling the early school registers: Beauvais, Clavelle, Cyr, Delaurier, Gareau, Gervais, Maldidier, Primeau, Routhier, Therriault and Trudel left no question as to why the district just north of the Beauvais District was known as the French Flats.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Northwest Territories Gazette*, Regina, 26 May 1888. This board consisted of Charlie Smith, Remi Beauvais and Ludger Gareau.

<sup>2</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 243.

<sup>3</sup> *Alberta Gazette*, Edmonton, 28 February 1910; *Pincher Creek Echo*, 31 March 1910.

<sup>4</sup> PCSD No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 95.

<sup>5</sup> *Northwest Territories Gazette*, Regina, 26 May 1888; *Northwest Territories Gazette*, Regina, 19 August 1897; *Alberta Gazette*, Edmonton, 30 June 1906; *Alberta Gazette*, Edmonton, 15 April 1922; *Alberta Gazette*, Edmonton, 30 May 1931; *Alberta Gazette*, Edmonton, 30 May 1931.

<sup>6</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18. These numbers are probably a bit higher – I have been unable to find board member information from 1896-1906.

<sup>7</sup> Attendance Register, Beauvais School District No. 18, 1928/29 – 1947/48.

<sup>8</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18; Attendance Register, BSD No. 18; PCSD No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 87-104.

<sup>9</sup> Potyondi, *Where the Rivers Meet*, 46. "It probably would have retained that name, too, had it not been for the intervention of Fred Godsall, who was by then ranching on the South Fork. One of Godsal's neighbours, Jonas Jones, decided to petition Ottawa for the establishment of a school district. When Godsall heard that French Flats was the proposed name for the school, his British sense of decorum was offended. 'Jonas,' said Godsal, 'do you wish French Flats, Alberta, to be your post office address for ever, for a school always brings a small store near it, then a post office.' Jones asked for a better suggestion. Godsall thought briefly about the excellent grazing in the vicinity and replied 'Call it Cowley,' the old English term for 'pasture for cows.' This was done, and without any consultation whatever, local French-speaking settlers found themselves sending their children to a school with a name that could not have been more Anglo-Saxon."

Interestingly, there is no evidence that French was ever the first language of the school. All school records are in English, and it does not appear that teachers hired at St. Agnes/Beauvais school were required have a knowledge of the French language.

It was highly unusual for a rural school to be designated a Catholic school, but the concentration of French Roman Catholics in the Beauvais District made the local school an exception to the rule. In the early days of St. Agnes, children received regular religious instruction. If the teacher hired was not Catholic, a Roman Catholic missionary would visit the school to deliver the religion lessons from time to time.<sup>10</sup>

The concentration of French families eventually blended into a more multicultural representation. By 1949, the year the school closed, the surnames on the final roster included: Bertram, Brown, Lang, Louchart, McIntee, Murray and Therriault<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>10</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 243.

<sup>11</sup> *Attendance Register*, BSD No. 18, 1948-1949.

## 1896: The First Teacher and the Caretaker

John Jessiman Skene stepped off the train in Lethbridge, Alberta at the end of the tracks. A bachelor of thirty-eight, he was on his way to Pincher Creek to be the first schoolmaster of a new country school called St. Agnes. He was not new to the teaching profession; he had taught for some years in his home province of Ontario. Still, he was anxious to carry on, so he hired a driver and team with a democrat for the last leg of his journey.

Lodging had been secured for him two and a half miles south-east of the school with the Routhier Family. He arrived safely the night before he was to commence teaching and made his acquaintance with Jean Charles, his wife Elodi, and their young family.

He woke the next morning to find the September fields blanketed with four and a half feet of fresh white snow. For three days, he repeatedly tried to make his way to the school, but always returned unsuccessful. Finally, on the fourth day, he reached the one-room log schoolhouse and waited for his pupils. The first to arrive was Alexis Gervais, a ten-year-old boy who confided, while they waited for others to arrive, that he enjoyed school and wanted someday to be a priest. Eventually the children of Charlie Smith and Ludger Gareau arrived through the drifts of snow, and the first day of school began.

There is very little information available about John Skene's year at the Beauvais School, except that he became a surrogate single father of two for a short time; Mrs. Chamberlain had lost her husband in 1892. Her home, almost four miles north of the schoolhouse, was a long walk for her young sons. Mr. Skene agreed to look after George and Frank in the Routhier home so that they could attend school.<sup>1</sup>

Although John Skene taught for only one year, he and his family became quite woven into the St. Agnes/Beauvais School story over the passing years. In 1901 John Skene became active on the St. Agnes School Board, and was a strong advocate for the construction of a better schoolhouse. He remained on the board until 1909 at which time he held the chair.<sup>2</sup>

In 1909, when he was serving as Chairman, the following notice appeared in the local paper.

A special meeting of St. Agnes School No. 18, will be held on Monday February 22<sup>nd</sup>, when Inspector Brown will be present. There have been considerable grievance [*sic*] existing in that school for some time and this meeting is called for the purpose of settling the difficulties<sup>3</sup>.

The announced meeting is not documented. On 21 May, however, at another special meeting called by Inspector W.J. Brown, the existing school board members were relieved of their duties with no explanation contained in the minute book.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 220

<sup>2</sup> Author's note: to date, I have not been able to locate the minutes of the school board meetings held between 1888 and 1908. However, in 1909 the board purchased a minute book that was passed from secretary to secretary, and contains details of all of the meetings thereafter, until the closing of the school in 1949. This minute book, currently housed at the Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village in Pincher Creek, is a key source of this research project.

<sup>3</sup> *Pincher Creek Echo*, 18 February 1909.

<sup>4</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 21 May 21 1909.

Shortly after, a third special meeting was called on 25 June to elect new trustees. When acting chairman Inspector W.J. Brown opened the floor for trustee nominations, the first three names put forth by the community were the members of the former board. When the votes of the community were finally counted, however, two of the three original trustees had been voted out.<sup>5</sup>

Following this meeting, an articulate exchange of scathing, accusational editorials between Edward Lunn, the newly elected chairman and John J. Skene, the former chairman was printed in the *Pincher Creek Echo*. What follows is John J. Skene's rebuttal to Edward Lunn's article entitled, "St. Agnes School Board."

In commenting upon an article entitled, "St. Agnes [Beauvais] School Board," I said that "facts were hard to deal with." It is a matter of fact that the trustees of St. Agnes never spent twenty minutes all told during the three years referred to in disputations as can be proven by a reference to the books of the district. If Mr. Lunn would refresh his memory by a reference to the books kept he would find that his memory does not agree with what is there stated over his own signature. I attended every meeting of the St. Agnes School Board covering a period of nearly eight years and can prove by the records of the meetings that the best feelings and harmony existed within the Board. True there existed a powerful and not very "cany" combination outside the Board who until lately made their attacks like wild animals, from behind the bush, the safest place when directing a campaign of falsehood. Even now they find it safe to make a cat's paw of Mr. Lunn. The St. Agnes School Board alone remained free from the control of what, for want of a better name might be called, The Co-operation Society of Property Destroyers, a compact which has done much to curse the community and stay progress among many lines, a nameless active combination which requires to be stayed in their efforts. Look at our roads and our school and ask who is responsible for the shameful condition thereof. Mr. Lunn, no doubt, expressed truthfully his feelings when he viewed my letter as "dribble." A true version of anything is distasteful to some minds. "Cast not your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under foot and turn again and rend you," applies to all truth. The trustees of St. Agnes will watch with interest to see what lawlessness will effect, and if rowdyism prevails lay the blame where it belongs. Yours, John J. Skene.<sup>6</sup>

It is no surprise that Mr. John Skene never again served on the school board. In 1911 when Mr. Skene's poor health made it impossible to continue farming, his wife Isabella accepted a teaching position at the Beauvais School, where she remained for seven and a half years.<sup>7</sup>

All of the Skenes' three children attended Beauvais, were schooled by their mother, and spent time as teachers in their adult life.<sup>8</sup> Their son William Arnold taught for one year and then returned to his parents' farm for fifteen years. In 1930, he was elected to

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<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, June 1909.

<sup>6</sup> *Pincher Creek Echo*, 15 July 1909.

<sup>7</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 246. Her stay at the Beauvais School was the longest of any teacher during its 53-year history. More about Mrs. Skene is said elsewhere in this research.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, The Skene children were: Jean Isabel (1902), William Arnold (1905) and Margaret Ann (1907).

the Beauvais School Board as trustee.<sup>9</sup> In 1934, he assumed the responsibilities of secretary treasurer and remained in that capacity until his resignation in 1941.<sup>10</sup>

As a family, the Skenes contributed at least eight and a half years of teaching and nineteen years of school board service to St. Agnes/Beauvais.

And what about young Alexis Gervais, the first child to arrive for school at St. Agnes? Did he ever follow his dream to the seminary to become a priest? No, he eventually followed in the footsteps of his father, who ranched and farmed in the Beauvais District. Alexis' parents, Cuthbert and Marie (Delorme) Gervais had established a homestead one and a half miles north of St. Agnes School.<sup>11</sup> It was here that Alexis and his two sisters were raised.<sup>12</sup> As a young man he married Mary Ann Pope, took over his father's farm, and began a family.<sup>13</sup> When each of Alex and Mary Ann's four children reached school age, they attended the Beauvais school, and acted as school caretakers between 1922-1932.

Keeping a rural schoolhouse clean and warm was a critically important task to its occupants, to the community, and to the school inspector. At the Beauvais school, students, teachers and members of the community were paid for the various types of caretaking:

"*Scrubbing the Schoolhouse*" referred to washing the floor, and was done once every two months or directly following school dances. This work was usually done by a woman from the community who was paid \$2.50-\$3.50 for her services.<sup>14</sup>

"*Firing*" included arriving early at the school (typically one hour before the morning bell) to light the fire and warm the schoolhouse, and was usually required from October to April.<sup>15</sup> Often the job of fire keeper also included cleaning ashes from the stove,<sup>16</sup> hauling wood and coal from the outdoor storage bins,<sup>17</sup> chopping a supply of kindling and wood, and carefully banking the fire at the end of the day.<sup>18</sup> For all of this, the board offered \$2.50 per month. This job was not without risk; a young girl from the nearby Halifax school recalls having an axe buried into her foot through three layers of shoe, overshoe and sock.<sup>19</sup>

"*Sweeping*" encompassed a number of daily tasks including dusting the desks, cleaning the blackboards and brushes, and cleaning the toilets. Sweeping the floor was dirty work; children often wore their footwear into the school. When children came indoors after walking to school, morning recess, lunch and afternoon recess, they often brought in with them much of the surrounding landscape, stuck to the bottom of their soles. The floor was swept at least once every day using dust bane, a sweet-smelling,

<sup>9</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18. An interesting note: Stephen Lunn, the man who replaced William Skene's father as Chairman in 1909 was still holding the Chair in 1930, although his term had not been continuous.

<sup>10</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1934-1938; Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1934-1941. During the time, he was paid \$25.00/year for his services as secretary treasurer.

<sup>11</sup> Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride*. Alexis Gervais' mother, Marie Delorme Gervais was also the mother of Marie Rose Smith. More about her can be found in the biography of Marie Rose Smith: *Fifty Dollar Bride*.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. His sister Azilda married Robert Gladstone and his sister Nancy married Henry LeBoeuf; Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 4 October 1914. Cuthbert offered his services to the school from time to time; in 1914, he was hired by the board to replaster the stable.

<sup>13</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1916-1918; Cummins Map Company, *1918 Cummins Rural Directory Map No. 19*. Cuthbert Gervais stops paying taxes in 1918 and Alexis starts paying them in 1916. A 1918 map shows Alexis on Cuthberts former land.

<sup>14</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18

<sup>15</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 165.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 143.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 85.

green, oily sawdust sprinkled on the floor just prior to sweeping. It was not uncommon for the board to purchase one to four new brooms for the school each year.<sup>20</sup> The board offered \$3.00 per month for sweeping.

*"Miscellaneous custodial work"* included oiling the floor whenever necessary, washing the windows, and cleaning the barn. These jobs were typically contracted out to members of the community.

Caretaking at the school was an excellent source of income for the person willing to do the work.<sup>21</sup> In some years, a student took on the responsibility. In others, the teacher was paid a monthly fee on top of his or her regular salary. Frank Stuckey, a former student from a neighboring school, still has the first five-dollar bill he made while doing the firing and sweeping at the Chipman School. He admits readily that regular caretaking duties were "quite a responsibility for a young boy."<sup>22</sup>

The Gervais family was very familiar with custodial tasks. When Azilda, the oldest child, was in grades two, three and four, she did the firing and the sweeping at the school.<sup>23</sup> She was replaced as custodian by her brother Wilbrod, who took over for three years, followed by brothers Fred and Morris who each spent two years caretaking.<sup>24</sup> Between 1924 and 1931, Mrs. Mary Ann Gervais often did the bi-monthly scrubbing of the schoolhouse floor.

Incidentally, Mrs. Gervais took great interest in the operation of the Beauvais School and made local history in 1928 by becoming the first of two women elected as trustee to the Beauvais school board.<sup>25</sup> The timing and significance of this was monumental. Although women could legally vote and hold office in 1916, and were legally declared persons in 1927, attitudes toward women were slow to change in rural Alberta.<sup>26</sup> Mrs. Gervais' position as elected trustee suggests that the people of the Beauvais community were beginning to see women as capable in previously unconventional roles.

Between 1896 and 1938, three generations of the Gervais family were actively involved with the St. Agnes/Beauvais School.

<sup>20</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18. In the following years, the cashbook details the following purchases: 1911, 2 brooms (\$0.75); 1915, 1 broom (\$0.60); 1916, 2 brooms (\$1.50); 1917, 1 broom (\$1.50); 1918, 1 broom (\$1.50); 1919, 4 brooms (\$4.80); 1922, 1 broom (\$1.20).

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., Payment fluctuated throughout the years. From 1923-1930, a person could make as much as \$8.00/month doing firing and sweeping. Beginning in 1931, during the depression, the price for monthly caretaking was set at \$5.00/month and did not change until the 1940s.

<sup>22</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 75-76.

<sup>23</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18. Azilda was in grades two three and four in 1922/23, 1923/24 and 1924/25 respectively.

<sup>24</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18. Wilbrod did the custodial work in 1926/26, 1927/28 and 1928/29. Fred did the custodial work in 1926/27 and 1929/30. Morris did the custodial work in 1930/31 and 1931/32.

<sup>25</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 14 January 1928, 22 February 1930, 22 March 1930. In 1928, Mary Ann Gervais was elected into a 3-year term, but only served 2 years. For some reason, she temporarily relocated to Kimberly B.C. in 1930 and was unable to complete her term.

<sup>26</sup> Sheehan, "Women and Education in Alberta," 115, 123

## 1897: Father Lacombe

My intrigue with one-room schoolhouses has led me on numerous adventures down backcountry gravel roads to explore abandoned buildings. There is one, somewhere between Medicine Hat and the Cypress Hills that was being used as a granary when I chanced upon it in the summer of 2000. It was empty and the door swung open freely when I nudged it.

Every teacher knows that when chalk is applied to a freshly cleaned blackboard and then erased, a ghostly image of the last thing written remains. When I stepped tentatively into the forsaken schoolhouse, my attention was immediately drawn to the erased blackboard. Two faint but clear words stood alone in perfect, teacher handwriting:

### *Father Lacombe*

Of all of the words that could have been suspended there in time, why the name of an Oblate priest? What was so significant about this man, that the school children of the 1950s were studying his life?

Father Lacombe is known generally “as one of the most zealous missionaries employed by the Catholic Church in the Canadian Northwest, a pioneer, and a most genial man.”<sup>1</sup> He was an accomplished traveler, covering Alberta frequently from north to south, and Canada from West to East. As rail lines continued to link the country, he covered ground more quickly, using his free lifetime rail pass. His good name always brought change and much needed supplies.<sup>2</sup> A 1954 publication called *Meet Southern Alberta* describes Albert Lacombe’s life in the west, which began in 1852:

The young priest’s mission-field spread from the shores of Lake Athabasca to the American border in the south, and for more than sixty years he covered it faithfully. Labouring for Christianity and the welfare of the Indians, he starved, froze and lived through epidemics and battles. His survival in the face of such bitter hardships was a great factor in bringing many of his Indian companions within the fold of his religion, convincing even the fierce, resisting Blackfeet of its protection. At St. Albert he taught the way of peace and civilization through the plough and the Bible, establishing the colony of St. Paul de Metis, and building the first flour mill and bridge in this province. The Lacombe Home at Midnapore which has sheltered many aged people and orphans, was built at great effort during his old age. In fact the whole of Alberta is dotted with schools, missions and hospitals founded by this great humanitarian.<sup>3</sup>

As early as 1890, Father Lacombe was attempting to have an Industrial School built in the Beauvais District on S29-T5-R1-W5.<sup>4</sup> This particular section of land has

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<sup>1</sup> *Lethbridge News*, 12 April 1894.

<sup>2</sup> Joyce Sasse, at a community gathering entitled “Father Lacombe: Friend of Natives and Non Natives in Southern Alberta,” 16 January 2002.

<sup>3</sup> Margaret Maw, *Meet Southern Alberta*, (Alberta: Southern Alberta Pioneers and Old Timers Association, 1954).

<sup>4</sup> Letter, G. Hurdney, Department of the Interior to Reverend Father Lacombe, O.M.I., 5 April 1890, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

special significance.<sup>5</sup> When new townships were surveyed, sections 11 and 29 were set aside as *School Lands*, and Father Lacombe petitioned the Department of the Interior to allow for the construction of a school on section 29.

In 1892, his request was refused with this statement:

There is no provision in the law whereby School Lands can be appropriated for a school site, and the Dominion Lands Act distinctly provides that School Lands shall be disposed of by sale at public auction.<sup>6</sup>

Simply stated, school lands were never meant to have schools built on them. They were to be sold to generate revenue for the local school board.

Undaunted, Father Lacombe worked with the Beauvais community to open St. Agnes Catholic Public School in 1896 (historically, it was one of only sixteen Catholic public school districts established in Alberta).<sup>7</sup> Once established, Father Lacombe visited the school periodically, taking over the religious instruction from Mr. John J. Skene, who was non-Catholic. It was an agreeable arrangement; "He and the Father became good friends and Mr. Skene, in later years, often spoke of this famous man with admiration and respect."<sup>8</sup>

The local history tells many stories of Father Lacombe's involvement in the Beauvais community, suggesting that he was much more than a passing visitor in the district. The home of Charlie and Marie Rose Smith, "The Jughandle Ranch," was a favourite stopping place for many travelers, including Father Lacombe. He became good friends with the Smith family, and came to their aid whenever he could. With nineteen children, they had occasional need of emergency medical attention. On more than one occasion, Father Lacombe sent Marie Rose and an ailing child to the hospital he founded near Midnapore on his free rail pass.<sup>9</sup> When Marie Rose's life was threatened by the breech birth of her eleventh child in 1895, Father Lacombe was there. By 1897, Marie Rose had born twelve children. To ease the number of children in the home, Father Lacombe arranged for the Smith's oldest daughter, Mary Louise, to attend a convent school in Quebec.<sup>10</sup>

The Beauvais family was also host to Father Lacombe on his frequent visits to the District. He presided over the weddings of at least two of the Beauvais children (Louise and Angele). From time to time, he called upon the Beauvais for special favours:

Louis Gregoire was a French fur trader for the Hudson Bay Company in Manitoba. He and his wife, Marguerite had four children. But Marguerite died when the children were very young, and Louis moved to the Beauvais District to make a living at farming. Father Lacombe saw a need to help poor Louis Gregoire so he placed the four

<sup>5</sup> Author's note: section 29 is significant for two reasons: (1) it was originally designated *school land* and (2) it is now incorporated in the present Beauvais Lake Provincial Park.

<sup>6</sup> Letter, G. Hurdne, Department of the Interior to Reverend Father Lacombe, O.M.I., 15 August 1892, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

<sup>7</sup> Robert Carney, "Hostility Unmasked: Catholic Schooling in Territorial Alberta, 30. In fact, after 1901, no further Catholic public school districts were formed, and some existing ones abandoned using Catholic in their names. In 1910 the St. Agnes Catholic Public School was renamed the Beauvais School.

<sup>8</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 243.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 249.

<sup>10</sup> Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride*,



children in the Beauvais home under the care of Remi and Marie until he could find a boarding school in Edmonton that would take young James, William and Louis, since there were no nearby schools at the time. Florence, the oldest child, remained in the district.<sup>11</sup>

Father Lacombe always took a special interest in the schooling of children. When Florence Gregoire married and had children of her own before the new Beauvais School was built, Father Lacombe took her two oldest sons, Wibrod and Joe, to the Lacombe home in Midnapore. Of his early experiences with the priest, Wilbrod would later recall, "I served at various times as altar boy for that good old man Father Lacombe. He was well liked by all who knew him for his helpful ways."<sup>12</sup>

When Eugene Chamberlain, a young bricklayer, died suddenly, his wife was left with three young children. Since her homestead was located four miles from the Beauvais School (too far for the young children to travel twice daily), it was decided that George and Frank would board with Mr. Skene, the teacher, at the Routhier residence. As for young Delina, Father Lacombe ensured that she had a place at a convent in Calgary.<sup>13</sup>

For his tireless work in the Beauvais faith community, he was always welcomed. A tiny retreat house (12 feet by 12 feet) was even built for Father Lacombe on the property of James H. Schofield/Gus Altermat, in the southwest corner of the district.<sup>14</sup>

While Father Lacombe remained dedicated to serving the local community, neither the Beauvais District nor Pincher Creek was his home; he considered the entire province, especially the aboriginal peoples, his family and had dwelling places everywhere in Alberta. In 1913, he retired to Lacombe Home. When he died in 1916 at the age of 89, "his body was buried at St. Albert (Cree Territory) and his heart was buried at Midnapore (Blackfoot Territory) – indicating how close he felt to both people."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 221.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 223.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

<sup>14</sup> Province of Alberta, Culture and Historic Sites, "Historic Sites Inventory," John Daley, comp., 1980-1981. Province of Alberta, "Historic Sites Inventory." The land location is NE ¼ S32-T5-R1-W5.

<sup>15</sup> Joyce Sassy, "In One Life-Time: Father Albert Lacombe (1827-1916)."

## 1902: Early Teacher Training

By the time Miss Emma Laire Boyes began teaching at St. Agnes School in the fall of 1902, the school district had changed a great deal since its formation in 1888. Its land base had increased in size from fourteen to twenty-four sections.<sup>1</sup> In 1898, the Crowsnest Pass branch of the Canadian Pacific Railroad was completed with rail platforms at nearby Pincher City and Cowley, making it much easier for settlers to travel and to ship goods to and from the Beauvais District.<sup>2</sup>

Emma Boyes had moved with her parents and seven siblings to their new homestead on Beauvais Creek, and was hired immediately to teach.<sup>3</sup> At that time, what kind of training would she have needed to qualify to teach grades one to eight in a rural schoolhouse? Where might she have studied to become a schoolmarm?

For prospective teachers in the early 1900s, there were not many training institutions to choose from. The first western Normal Schools to open were in Winnipeg (1882) and Regina (1892).<sup>4</sup>

The length of teacher training programs depended on the degree of training sought. In general, program length increased over time, except during teacher shortages. From the 1880s to 1918, a person seeking a first or second-class teaching certificate could expect to spend four to five months in training. A third-class certification program in the 1880s lasted only one month.<sup>5</sup> In order to pass the teacher training program, a student was required to have an average of 50% in all of his/her subjects, and not lower than 34% in any one subject.

The standard requirements for admission to Normal School was a good moral character (some institutions required a supporting letter from a clergyman), secondary training to grade ten or eleven, and a minimum age of fifteen for girls and seventeen for boys.<sup>6</sup>

In a growing province, schools were located in towns, villages, and rural settlements with abundant cultural diversity. As the landscape varied from grasslands to foothills to mountains and forests, so did the character of the people supporting and attending the schools. Although every schoolhouse was unique in its challenges, the Normal Schools offered a one-size-fits-all kind of training - a standard program with no option courses and few opportunities to specialize.

From 1890 to 1905, Normal School students in the territories had to qualify in the following subjects during a four-month course:<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Northwest Territories Gazette*, Regina, 1 September 1897

<sup>2</sup> Potyondi, *Where the Rivers Meet*, 94

<sup>3</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 285. Emma is the daughter of Mr. James Daniel and Mary Clorinda Green Boyes. They homesteaded at Chipman Creek from 1903 to 1917. Her siblings were George, Mary Gertrude (married T.J. Moore), Ann (married G. Dione), Frank, Josephine (died in her early teens), Miles J. (married Clarie Harkin) and Harriet (married Mr. Lavoie).

<sup>4</sup> John W. Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, (Canada: University of Toronto Press, 1967), 408-409. Normal School was an institution dedicated to the training of school teachers.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 408. Third class certification programs were discontinued in 1910, but were still issued to students that were less than successful in the first and second class programs.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

Table 1  
Normal School Courses Between 1890 and 1905

Math	Language	Social	Science	Arts	Pedagogy	Other
Arithmetic Algebra Geometry Bookkeeping	Grammar Composition Literature Reading Writing Diction	Geography History	Botany Chemistry Physics Statics Hyrostatics Agriculture	Drawing	Science and the Art of Teaching School Law	Latin French

Although nothing is known about the educational background of Miss Emma Boyes, it is possible that she received a four-month teacher-training course in Winnipeg or Regina, and may have been as young as fifteen years old when she accepted a position at St. Agnes. Single, young school teachers were quickly sized up and courted by the eligible bachelors in the district; Miss Emma Boyes' teaching career ended in 1903 or 1904 and by 1905, she was married to Charles Lynch-Staunton, a rancher from the Lundbreck District.<sup>8</sup>

By today's standards, the time spent preparing early teachers to instruct grades one to eight was surprisingly short. But the comparison gains perspective when one considers that most early teachers spent only one or two years before leaving the profession.

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<sup>8</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 526. Charles had come to the Lundbreck district in 1896. After they married, Emma was active in the Red Cross and the Women's Institute, eventually becoming its southern director. She was involved in gathering and publishing *A History of the Early Days of Pincher Creek*. Charles and Emma had one child; a son named Hardwick.

## 1907: School Board

Author's note: Researching the past is an exercise in diligent attention to detail, and enduring patience. Often, documents sought no longer exist, or exist quite secretly in an inaccessible location. Even less often, a piece of unexpected information presents itself by surprise, from an unlikely source.

Unquestionably, the St Agnes School Board kept records since its inception in 1888. The location of the records between 1888 and 1906, however, is a mystery. Conveniently, (for me) in 1907, the Board purchased a cashbook to keep an account of its financial transactions, and continued to use it until 1938.<sup>1</sup> This cashbook comprehensively records the money obtained to support the operations of the school, and how that money was allocated. But numbers and dates without explanation only tell part of a story.

In 1909, the board began recording the particulars of its regular and annual meetings in a minute book that was passed from secretary to secretary until the closing of the school in June 1949. Both the minute book and the cashbook for the St. Agnes/Beauvais School still exist and are accessible. When the details articulated in the minute book and the dates and numbers of the cashbook are combined, they form a speaking voice that explains, in part, the philosophy, motives and direction of the Board.

Every rural schoolhouse had a local school board that was responsible for the administration and the day-to-day operation of the school. Most boards had three elected, unpaid trustees and an appointed secretary-treasurer, who received an annual fee for his services.<sup>2</sup> The trustees were voted into three-year terms by the people of the district at the annual ratepayers meeting. Among themselves, the trustees appointed one of the three to serve as chairman. Predictably, trustees serving on the board were often parents with a number of children attending the school.

What were the criteria to be a trustee? Who was eligible to vote a trustee into office? William Owen Davis asked these very questions on 27 January 1934. He had just attended the annual ratepayers meeting, and was "inclined to think there [was] something radically wrong in elections of Trustees at [the annual Beauvais School] meeting."<sup>3</sup> He objected that since neither the newly elected trustee nor the incumbent trustee were landowners or taxpayers in the district (just residents) they were ineligible to serve as trustees. He also pointed out that a number of people voting in the election were U.S. citizens residing in the district, but were not landowners or taxpayers, and that the election should be considered "null and void."

He addressed these issues to Mr. J.T. Ross, the Deputy Minister of Education, who responded promptly with the following information: to hold the office of trustee, a person must (1) be able to read and write, (2) be a British Subject, and (3) be eligible to vote at an election for trustees.

<sup>1</sup> Cash Book, Beauvais School District No. 18, 1907-1938, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta. The cashbook was purchased on 3 July 3 1907 for \$3.50. An official auditor certified its correctness each year. When the Beauvais School was consolidated into a larger school unit around 1938, the local board was absolved of its financial responsibilities, and discontinued cashbook records.

<sup>2</sup> Minute Book, Beauvais School District No. 18, 1909-1949, Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village, Pincher Creek, Alberta. The St. Agnes/Beauvais School Board almost always had four members with the following exceptions: in 1946, the Board consisted of only one member, and from 1947 to 49, there were two or three members on the Board.

<sup>3</sup> Letter, Wm. Owen Davies to J.T. Ross, Deputy Minister of Education, 27 January 1934, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

To be eligible to vote, a person must be twenty-one years of age, and a resident of the district for one year (it was not necessary to own property or be assessed taxes within that district).<sup>4</sup> Based on this response, it was determined that the election at the annual meeting was entirely legitimate, with the exception of some American voters who had not been in Canada for a full year.

As for the position of secretary-treasurer, the Board of Trustees hired a person to take responsibility for recording the minutes of each school board meeting, and to manage the paperwork involving the cashbook. This included calculating assessment rates and sending out tax notices and reminders throughout the year. His annual wage fluctuated considerably.<sup>5</sup> In 1910 and 1911, his yearly salary was \$40.00. Between 1912 and 1918, his pay was raised to \$50.00 per year. The secretary-treasurer's wage peaked at \$75.00 per year spanning 1918 to 1930. After this date, when tax collection was turned over to the Municipal District, the secretary-treasurer's pay was reduced to \$25.00 per year.<sup>6</sup>

Even though they were accountable to the local School Inspector, the early school board had vast authority and great responsibility. Each year, the members of the board set boundaries for the operating costs of the school. An annual grant from the Alberta Government was used to cover a small portion of this. The rest would be collected from the landowners of the district. Late or delinquent taxpayers would leave the school board short of funds, forcing them to take out annual loans from the Union Bank.<sup>7</sup> Available monies would be spent on essential goods and services including: (1) salaries of the teacher, custodian and secretary-treasurer, (2) maintenance of the schoolhouse, school grounds and outbuildings, (3) furniture for the school, (4) classroom supplies, equipment, and books for the library, (5) fuel, and (6) maintenance of the heating and water systems.

The board had many other obligations. It was the duty of the board to advertise for, hire and dismiss teachers, and to enforce standards of student and teacher behaviour expected by the community. The board attended to matters of health, and accordingly scheduled vaccinations and fumigations whenever necessary.<sup>8</sup> Annual paperwork was compiled and submitted to the Department of Education regarding the status of the board and the district.<sup>9</sup>

To support the efforts of school boards throughout the province, the Trustee's Association held an annual convention. In nine separate years between 1923 and 1939, a delegate from the Beauvais School board attended, with a majority of his expenses reimbursed by the board.<sup>10</sup>

In order to conduct regular business, it was typical for the St. Agnes/Beauvais School Board to schedule four meetings each year, including the annual ratepayers meeting which the residents of the district were encouraged to attend. But four meetings each year

<sup>4</sup> Letter, J.T. Ross, Deputy Minister of Education to Wm. Owen Davies, 6 February 1934, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton. The Deputy minister also pointed out that a person paying taxes in the district but residing elsewhere is not qualified to vote or hold office in that district.

<sup>5</sup> Author's note – use of the pronoun "his" is deliberate – only men served as secretary-treasurer on the Beauvais School Board.

<sup>6</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18.; Cash Book, BSD No. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., Between 1910 and 1928, the board borrowed an average of \$385.00 per year (range: \$300 to \$500). Their financial institution, the Union Bank, later became the Royal Bank. It was located in Pincher Creek.

<sup>8</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 27 April, 1934; Attendance Register, Beauvais School District No. 18, 1931/32, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta. Vaccinations were scheduled in 1934. The school was fumigated for scarletina on Feb 19, 1932.

<sup>9</sup> Correspondence, Department of Education to the Beauvais School District No. 18 School Board, 1932 to 1938, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton. This paperwork was necessary before the school would be sent its annual government grant. In five separate years, the Beauvais School Board failed to send the appropriate paperwork, and was sent a reminder from the Department of Education (1932, 1933, 1935, 1936 and 1938). Their grant was withheld until the paperwork was received.

<sup>10</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18. These years included 1923, 1924, 1926, 1927, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1937 and 1938.

were not always enough to attend to the more challenging issues; in 1909 and 1910, the board met fourteen and thirteen times respectively, in order to construct a new schoolhouse and rebuild a school board that had been relieved of its duties. From time to time, a minor emergency would warrant a special meeting of trustees but it was rare for a board to meet more than six times in one year.

In time, the authority of the local board was transferred to the Pincher Creek School Division, leaving very little to be discussed and decided by the local board. In the final decade of the school's operation, the board was only meeting once each year.

A former student from a neighboring district recalls, "Parents served on the school board for their own district and were responsible for administration and day-to-day operation of the school. It all made for a tight-knit, friendly community with the school house being the center of social activity as well as learning."<sup>11</sup> This describes an ideal atmosphere. Unfortunately, harmony was not always present at school board meetings. As documented earlier, the St. Agnes School Board experienced such volatile politics in 1909 that the local inspector was called upon to mediate a dispute in the community that resulted in the formation of a new school board.<sup>12</sup> In 1933, the chairman resigned from his position when the other two trustees, without his consent, readmitted a previously expelled family to the school.<sup>13</sup> Despite disagreements such as these, essential work was always accomplished.

For the years of volunteer service given to secure quality education for all children of the district, the following trustees deserve mention:

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<sup>11</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 57. The student was from the New Yarrow District.

<sup>12</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1909.

<sup>13</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 1929/30. The four Tourond children are missing from the final attendance summary. The children were expelled from the school, but no explanation is given. In September 1922/1934, three of them reappear on the attendance register, just prior to Chairman S. Lunn's resignation.

Table 2  
Trustees of the St. Agnes/Beauvais School Board

Chairmen			Secretaries			Trustees		
<i>Name</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Years</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Service</i>	<i>Years</i>
<b>J.J. Skene</b>	<b>8 years</b>	<b>1901-1908</b>	<i>C Duthie</i>	1+ years	?-1909	C. Smith	1+ years	1888 - ?
<i>S Lunn</i>	8 years	1909-1911, 1929-1933	W.A. Ross	23 years	1909-1931	R. Beauvais	1+ years	1888 - ?
<i>R Duthie</i>	1 year	1912	<i>W. Lang</i>	2 years	1932-1933	L. Gareau	2+ years	1888 - ?
<i>R Lang</i>	16 years	1913-1928	<b>W. Skene</b>	<b>7 years</b>	<b>1934-1940</b>	<b>R. Lang</b>	<b>4 years</b>	<b>1909-1912</b>
<b>N. Gareau</b>	<b>7 years</b>	<b>1934-1940</b>	<i>L. Cote</i>	4 years	1941-1944	<b>R. Duthie</b>	8+ years	<b>1909-1911, 1913-1917</b>
<i>T.C. Bertram</i>	<b>3 years</b>	1941-1943	<b>S. Lunn</b>	Partial year	1942	<b>S. Lunn</b>	6 years	<b>1912, 1918- 1921, 1934</b>
<i>E.R. McIntee</i>	<b>5 years</b>	1944-1948				T. Cyr	5 years	1913-1917
						J. Gleason	5 years	1918-1922
						H.M. Frey	4 years	1921-1925
						A. Cote	10 years	1923-1926, 1938-1943
						Geo. Bodell	2 years	1926-1927
						F. Therriault	3 years	1927-1929
						Mrs. Gervais	2 years	1928-1929
						T. Smith	4 years	1930-1933
						<b>W. Skene</b>	<b>4 years</b>	<b>1930-1933</b>
						<i>W. Cavelle</i>	3 years	1935-1937
						Mrs. Daigle	2 years	1941-1942
						<b>E.R. McIntee</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>1943</b>
						<b>T.C. Bertram</b>	<b>1 year</b>	<b>1944</b>
						J. Schumaker	1 year	1944
						<i>C. Lang</i>	3 years	1947-1949
						W. Murray	3 years	1947-1949

The persons shown in bold held two or more different positions over their years of service.

The persons shown in italics were former students of the St. Agnes/Beauvais School.

Mrs. Gervais and Mrs. Daigle were the only two women to serve as trustees on the Board

To a reader who is not familiar with the families of the Beauvais District, the previous table could be easily dismissed as a list of names and dates. But each name represents a lifetime of experiences on the land. Each name suggests the joys and hardships that accompany the raising of a family. Each name is evidence of a community working together toward a common goal of providing quality education for their young children. While it is not possible to tell the story of each family in the district, I would like to honor the memory of these pioneers by giving small glimpses into the lives of certain families and individuals, to create a context for the spirit of the people who lived in the Beauvais District and participated in the maintenance and growth of the Beauvais School.

For instance, a close examination of the chart above shows two men by the name of Duthie. Richard Duthie was born in Quebec in 1848 when the fur trade and exploration were the occupations of the west. When he was seventeen years old, he went to Pennsylvania to work in lumber camps for five years. At thirty-two, he was engaged by Princess Louise (daughter of Queen Victoria) and her husband, the Marquis of Lorne (Governor General of Canada) as a canoe man. Through this employment, Richard Duthie met Colonel DeWinton. Together they came west in 1881 and formed, with a

handful of other shareholders, the Alberta Ranch Company to raise sheep, horses and cattle. They were leased large amounts of land at \$0.01/acre in the Pincher Creek Area (including the Beauvais District) in the early 1880s at a time before homesteaders had begun flocking to the area. The NWMP had only recently arrived to establish and maintain order and safety.<sup>14</sup>

In 1885, at thirty-seven years of age, Richard Duthie married Theresa Ann Clark, a young woman who had come west to help her newly married sister Clara (Lachlan) Bell care for her first child. Eventually, Richard and Theresa Ann had four children of their own,<sup>15</sup> but since St. Agnes School had not yet been built, Theresa Ann moved to a house in Pincher Creek so that the children could go to the town school.<sup>16</sup>

When the government cancelled the grazing leases around 1900 to open the land for incoming homesteaders, the Alberta Ranch Company sold much of its livestock. Ranchers were given the opportunity to purchase a small portion of their former lease. At this time, Richard Duthie bought land in the Beauvais District, and continued to work as a foreman on a nearby ranch until 1907.<sup>17</sup>

There are no early records of their children attending St. Agnes School, so it is impossible to say for certain if or when the Duthie children attended the country school.<sup>18</sup> However, Mr. Duthie became active on the St. Agnes/Beauvais School Board prior to 1909 and served for over nine years until 1917. During his term he was involved in the building of the new schoolhouse. He was the only trustee to be re-elected after the 1909 board dispute.<sup>19</sup> After retiring from the school board and his ranch in 1917, Richard Duthie moved to town where he resided until his death in 1922. His wife, Theresa Ann survived her husband by twenty years, remaining active in her church and social community.

Clark Duthie, the second child of Richard and Theresa Ann also served on the school board in 1909 as secretary-treasurer. He was twenty years old at the time, and working as a rancher with his father.<sup>20</sup> Clark's experience on the ranch led him to study veterinary medicine. During World War I, he was stationed in Montreal and later in New

York inspecting all remounts going overseas. He later worked at the Lethbridge Research Station until his retirement.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>14</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 226-229; Wilbur Lang, *A History of Pincher Creek Ranches and the People Involved*, (Lethbridge, Alberta: Ronalds, n.d.), 2-7.

<sup>15</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 227-228. The Duthies had four children: Beatrice Kate (1887-1941), Richard Clark Duthie (1889-1962), Ethel (1893-1962) m. Frank McLaughlin and Grant (1903 - ).

<sup>16</sup> Lang, *A History of Pincher Creek Ranches*, 2-7. When the children grew older and needed more education Mrs. Duthie moved to town. Fred H. Schofield remembers that when he was in grade one at the Pincher Creek School ~ 1896, Clark Duthie (who was very young at the time) was also in his class.

<sup>17</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 226-229; Wilbur Lang, *A History of Pincher Creek Ranches*, 2-7.

<sup>18</sup> PC&DHS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 104. Since both Richard and Clark Duthie served on the board, it is probable that some of the Duthie children attended the Beauvais school at some time between 1896 and 1916. However, a 1911 class photo does not show Grant Duthie, who would have been about 8 years old at the time.

<sup>19</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1909-1917

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 1909

<sup>21</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 226-229; Wilbur Lang, *A History of Pincher Creek Ranches*, 2-7.



## 1909: The New School: Renovations and Repair

As the early years passed, teachers came and went at the tiny log schoolhouse in the Beauvais District, each spending no more than one or two terms. Mr. Ferrel, Mr. Burwack, Mr. Bremner, Miss Margaret Kelly, Miss E.C. Cameron, Miss Wilson,<sup>1</sup> Miss Tighe and Mrs. Ford all taught at St. Agnes in the decade between 1898 and 1908.<sup>2</sup>

The School Board of St. Agnes soon concluded that the rustic structure that had been the center of learning in their community for twelve years was no longer adequate, and began planning an upgrade. Scott Brothers drew up the plans for the building, which showed a one-story, one-room building on a concrete foundation, thirty-four feet long and twenty-four feet wide.<sup>3</sup> High-paned windows would line the south and east facing walls and a wide stairway would rise to a double-door entry on the south side of the school.<sup>4</sup> The board scrutinized the plans, made minor alterations, and advertised in the local paper for tenders to build the new schoolhouse.<sup>5</sup> The contract was awarded to T.H. Hinton for \$708.00.<sup>6</sup> Within one month the building was complete and the following invitation appeared in the *Pincher Creek Echo* on 9 September 1909:

The opening of the new school for St. Agnes School District will be celebrated by a dance in the new building, to take place on Friday evening, Sept. 17<sup>th</sup>. Tickets, \$1.00. Suitable music will be furnished, and a good time may be expected by all who take the affair in.<sup>7</sup>

The dance was a success and the new schoolhouse, officially renamed The Beauvais School was the pride of the district.<sup>8</sup> It regularly doubled as a community hall for all kinds of celebrations:

A dance will be held at St. Agnes School on Friday, January 28, when a rattling good time may be anticipated by all who intend to be present. Gentlemen's tickets cost \$1.00, ladies free. Ladies are expected to bring baskets with refreshments.<sup>9</sup>

Even wedding receptions were held at the school:

Mr. and Mrs. Paul Trudal entertained a large number of friends to a dance at the St. Agnes School on Friday night last. The dance, which was a post nuptial reception was a most enjoyable one. Refreshments were served at midnight.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Pincher Creek Echo*, 24 August 1928. Miss Wilson's obituary indicates that she taught in the Beauvais District prior to 1903.

<sup>2</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 88; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1907-1938. Exact years are not known.

<sup>3</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 25 March 1909; School Buildings Report, Inspector James A. McKay, Superintendent of Pincher Creek School Division No. 29, 9 May 1949, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

<sup>4</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 104. Details discerned from a 1911 photograph of the school.

<sup>5</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 8 April 1909, 3 July 1909; *Pincher Creek Echo*, 15 July 1909.

<sup>6</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 31 July 1909, 1 September 1909

<sup>7</sup> *Pincher Creek Echo*, 16 September 1909. A reminder printed one week later read: "Make a note of the dance at St. Agnes new school to-morrow night, and don't fail to attend if you want to have a specially good time."

<sup>8</sup> *Alberta Gazette*, Edmonton, 28 February 1910; *Pincher Creek Echo*, 31 March 1910.

<sup>9</sup> *Pincher Creek Echo*, 20 January 1910.

<sup>10</sup> *Pincher Creek Echo*, 12 May 1910. In the School Board Minutes 21 May 1910, the secretary-treasurer was instructed to write Paul Trudell asking him to have the schoolhouse scrubbed "on account of holding a dance therein."

Subject to the elements and daily (and nightly) use, the new Beauvais School became weathered over time, and routine maintenance and minor renovations were necessary. Two shelves were installed in the porch and two additional shelves were built in the main schoolroom.<sup>11</sup> Two hyloplate blackboards were installed.<sup>12</sup> The foundation of the building and the front step of the schoolhouse were inspected and repaired or rebuilt as necessary.<sup>13</sup> The original blinds installed were replaced a number of times throughout the years.<sup>14</sup> The windows were in constant need of attention;<sup>15</sup> during the depression of the 1930s, the board had a budget so limited that repairing the windows was deferred for a number of years.<sup>16</sup> Eventually, storm windows were purchased to protect the old ones.<sup>17</sup>

In 1933, the ratepayers of the district succeeded in petitioning the school board to install a new floor in the schoolhouse suitable for dancing, and proposed that the proceeds of the dances would pay for the new floor.<sup>18</sup>

Since keeping the schoolhouse painted was a costly endeavor (about \$62.00 including supplies and labour), the task was done only when absolutely necessary (1909, 1919, 1925, 1928 and 1936).<sup>19</sup>

The chimney and roof also needed attention from time to time. In 1924, cement and a brick top were added to the chimney.<sup>20</sup> By 1941, it needed rebuilding.<sup>21</sup> In the same year, new shingles were needed on the north side of the roof.

Almost every year, small amounts were paid from the building fund to cover labour or supplies for oiling the schoolhouse, repairing door latches and other miscellaneous tasks.<sup>22</sup>

The local school board was diligent in maintaining the school building during the years when it held decision-making authority. When the building was inspected on 19 May 1949 in its last year of operation, the building was reported to be in good shape.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1 July 1911, 12 August 1911.

<sup>12</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 20 July 1927 and 27 March 1930; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1927 and 1930. The first blackboard, installed in 1928, was 4x11 feet, and was purchased from Christie Supplies for \$11.59. The second blackboard installed in 1930 was 3 feet, 6 inches by 10 feet 3 inches with top and end molding. It was purchased from F.E. Osborne for \$17.70.

<sup>13</sup> Regarding the foundation: Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 25 June 1920 and 11 June 1936; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1920. To fix the foundation, Mr. S. Lunn was paid \$10.00 to haul rocks. Fixing the foundation was discussed again on June 11, 1936. Regarding the step: Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1 December 1916. Seventeen years later, the steps needed to be rebuilt. [Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 30 September 1933].

<sup>14</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 4 October 1909. Alex Therriault installed the original blinds. Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1921, 1925, 1931. New blinds were bought in 1921 (\$18.15 from T.H. Scott), 1925 (\$16.45 from T.H. Scott) and 1931 (\$18.60 from T.H. Scott).

<sup>15</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 30 September 1933. The windows were repaired in 1933 by A. Therriault and Tony Singer.

<sup>16</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 27 November 1934, 5 June 1935. The need for window repairs was identified, and was deferred until spring. The board again discussed the issue and decided to wait until a later date.

<sup>17</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 30 January 1937. Board authorized the purchase of storm windows but they were not purchased until 1938 from Sartoris Lumber Company for \$54.40 [Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1938].

<sup>18</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 3 April 1933. The cost was estimated at \$45.00, and needed 802 board feet of lumber.

<sup>19</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18. Supplies and labour for painting was as follows: 1919: \$60.80, 1925: \$55.00, 1928: \$68.05, and 1936: \$67.00

<sup>20</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 21 July 1924. J. Slevin did the work for \$6.00. Cement and brick were purchased from T.H. Hinton for \$2.70 [Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1924].

<sup>21</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 24 March 1941.

<sup>22</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 11 July 1918. Cost: \$40.00.

<sup>23</sup> School Buildings Report, Inspector James A. McKay, 9 May 1949.

## 1910: Discipline and Mischief

In December 1910, Miss Margaret Jane Kelly resigned from her teaching position at the Beauvais School. Resignations were certainly not uncommon in rural schools, but as a school teacher, I can't help but wonder what might cause a teacher to resign only four months into a school year. In an attempt to solve the mystery, I backtracked through the school board minutes, the school cashbook and old newspapers of 1909 and 1910 to look for clues. Here is what I found:

Table 3  
Miss Jane Kelly: Documented Information

Source	Documented Statements
Pincher Creek Echo: 21 January 1909	"On the 9 <sup>th</sup> [of January] Miss Jane Kelly, eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. P. Kelly, left by train for Pincher Creek to take charge of a rural school near that town. Miss Kelly is a graduate of the Sisters School in Calgary and also the Provincial Normal School. The young lady has grown up in the community and is universally esteemed and it is the hope and wish of her hosts of friends that she may be successful in her chosen profession, and that the neighbors may have the pleasure of seeing her back again in the holidays picking berries as of yore." – Okotoks Review
School Cashbook: Spring 1909	Miss Kelly was paid \$50.00 each month from January to June.
School Cashbook: Fall 1909	Miss Kelly was paid \$50.00 each month from September to December.
School Board Minutes: 30 October 1909	The secretary-treasurer was instructed to advertise for a female teacher for next term at an annual salary of \$600.00/year.
School Board Minutes: 25 November 1909	Miss Kelly submitted her resignation. It was accepted by the board, and to take affect on 31 December, 1909.
School Board Minutes: 11 December 1909	The secretary-treasurer was instructed to write Miss Bertha Jackson of Calgary offering a teaching position for \$600.00/year. If she declined, he was to write Miss Margaret Kelly offering her the position at the same salary.
School Board Minutes: 1 January 1910	Miss Margaret Kelly was rehired for 1 year, commencing January 1 at \$600.00 per year.
School Board Minutes: 19 March 1910	Miss Kelly was granted either the 24 <sup>th</sup> or the 29 <sup>th</sup> of March as an extra holiday
School Board Minutes: 16 April 1910	The secretary-treasurer was to "write Mr. Theodule Cyr to put this complaint with reference to treatment of his children at school in writing or appear before the Board on the 3 <sup>rd</sup> Saturday in May. [The secretary-treasurer was also to] inform Mr. Cyr that parents render themselves liable to prosecution before a magistrate if they fail to send their children to school the required number of days in the year."
School Board Minutes: 21 May 1910	The secretary-treasurer was to "write Florestine Gareau, expelling her from school until after midsummer holidays on account of improper moral conduct and that copies of the letter be sent [to] her father and also Miss Kelly." The secretary-treasurer was to "write to Miss Kelly drawing her attention to the reported poor discipline in the school asking her to have it remedied."
Pincher Creek Echo: 7 July 1910	"Miss Kelly of De Winton, Alta, a former teacher of St. Agnes School is renewing acquaintances in the district."
School Board Minutes: 11 August 1910	Miss Kelly was to be engaged for the remaining portion of the year at same salary. The secretary-treasurer was to inform Miss Kelly that "she can take only legal holidays, unless she has the consent of the board."
School Board Minutes: 30 September 1910	The secretary-treasurer was to write Miss Kelly regarding the condition of school grounds and fence.
School Board Minutes: 17 November 1910	The secretary-treasurer was to "write Miss Kelly regarding re-engagement asking her if she wishes to engage for 1911 and what salary she would want. The secretary-treasurer was also" to write her again regarding holidays."
School Board Minutes: 1 December 1910	Miss Kelly's resignation was accepted, effective 31 December 1910.

Using the facts, a teacher's intuition and creative speculation, I would offer the following interpretation of the preceeding table:

Miss Margaret Jane Kelly grew up in the small town of Okotoks where she was hard working and well liked. At sixteen years of age, she packed her bags and for the first time in her life she moved away from her parents to attend a four-month teacher-training program at the newly established Calgary Normal School. In the first two months, she studied theory including the History and Philosophy of Education, Psychology, School Law, Teaching and Class Management and Methods of Teaching. In the last two months, she spent her time observing and practice teaching, lesson planning, and discussing practice lessons. Since the Normal School staff had a difficult time finding enough placements for practicum students, she delivered no more than eight practice lessons. All of these were in urban schools.<sup>1</sup>

As she was finishing her training, she learned of a country school called St. Agnes that would be needing a teacher beginning January, 1909. With a youthful sense of adventure she accepted the \$50.00 per month position. She arrived in the Beauvais District to a situation that Normal School did not prepare her for: a quarreling school board, a drafty, cold log schoolhouse, and a class of mischievous rural children that had caused the early resignation of her predecessor. Throughout the spring term and the fall term, she struggled in isolation, unable to manage discipline in a classroom of children not much younger than herself. In the meantime, the board remained absorbed by their internal problems and their quest to build a new schoolhouse. The completion of the new building offered Miss Kelly no comfort. Even worse, it became obvious that the board was very dissatisfied with her work when they began advertising for a new teacher in October. Her first year of teaching had exhausted her confidence and energy, and she tendered her resignation for 31 December 1909.

But when the board was unable to find a replacement, they were desperate for her to stay, offering her a pay increase to \$60.00 per month, and a promise to provide professional support. Obliging, she accepted. The students, however, were relentless and unforgiving. By March, facing each new day required more energy than she could muster, and she approached the board for a few days of leave. The board granted her one day. A young couple with children attending St. Agnes were becoming increasingly concerned about the lack of discipline at the school. When their five young children (ages five to nine) continuously brought home stories of the mischievous antics of the older children and the increased incidence of bullying on the playground, the young couple decided to keep their children at home, and registered a formal complaint with the school board in April regarding the treatment of their children at school.

Miss Kelly struggled to improve her management of the class, but she had neither the experience nor the skills to win the respect of the students in the school. In an attempt to assert control, she had made enemies with the oldest girls in the class. What began as typical adolescent rebelliousness had transformed, in the extended absence of classroom discipline, into deliberate torment of Miss Kelly and the other students. In May, after one particularly nasty incident with these girls, Miss Kelly was so overwhelmed that she did not go to school the following day. The school board responded by expelling the sixteen-year-old 'ringleader' from school for the rest of the term. In addition, the board wrote a

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<sup>1</sup> Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 412.

letter to Miss Kelly, addressing for the first time in writing, a discipline problem that needed to be remedied. She was also reprimanded for taking an unscheduled holiday.

Unfortunately, one expulsion did not significantly change the atmosphere of the school. Miss Kelly limped through the remainder of the spring term, one day at a time, and welcomed the summer break when it mercifully arrived.

Unfortunately, her one-year contract bound her to return, and the school reopened on 16 August 1910. With the same students returning, it was impossible to 'start fresh.' She did not have the respect of the students, and there was little she could do to change that fact. After a very trying September, wrestling with discipline and eight grades of lesson preparation, she received a critical letter from the board about the school grounds and surrounding fence. Vandalism was rampant and she was to address the issue with the students. In October, she missed another day of school, overwhelmed by the stress of her situation, and was reprimanded by the board again.

In November, when the board asked Miss Kelly if she intended to renew her contract for another year, she responded promptly with a letter of resignation.

It would be no shame to Miss Kelly if the above interpretation were true. She would not be the only teacher at a one-room schoolhouse unprepared by her training to deal with the challenges inherent in a rural teaching position. There are a number of entries in the Beauvais School minute book that suggest the challenges faced by other teachers of the Beauvais School, including:

Teacher to explain to the children of the school that they must remain on the school grounds during school hours (27 May 1912).

"Any Child guilty of improper conduct on school grounds or any child having tobacco in any form or cigarettes on his or her person on the school grounds or in the schoolhouse be expelled by the teacher for one week for the first offence, one month for the second and at the pleasure of the Board for the third" (27 May 1912).

"Certain ratepayers met the board along with the inspector to deal with the conduct of certain pupils. It was decided to have the teacher report any troublesome cases to the board" (30 March 1923).

"After some discussion of the Gervais boy case, the meeting was adjourned" (30 December 1925).

Purpose of the meeting: to hear a complaint in regard to the conduct of the Wm Tourond children – children to be expelled from school until further notice (19 November 1929).

The entries in the Beauvais Minute Book very professionally omit the particulars of the students' misbehaviours. *Teachers* from the era tend to be more liberal with the details. One teacher

had survived the stench of urine poured into the school stove; she had laughed off rumours of an illicit affair with a student, she had conquered the mid-winter cold of broken windows and stolen fuel-oil, and she had extinguished one serious attempt to burn down the schoolhouse. She had lived with nights of catcalls and peeping boys; she had confiscated real pistols, dynamite caps, kitchen knives, and obscene drawings.<sup>2</sup>

If rural teachers were to compile their stories of student mischief, common themes would appear: Teachers opening their desk drawers in the morning might find dead mice, or a freshly butchered pig's tail.<sup>3</sup> The chimney stove, on occasion, was mysteriously blocked, smoking up the classroom when the teacher tried to light it, resulting in a rapid dismissal.<sup>4</sup> At least once in every schoolhouse, gunpowder or shotgun shells were tossed into the fire, resulting in varying degrees of damage to the stove and varying lengths of holidays.<sup>5</sup> A favourite prank of the older boys was to push the outhouse building a few feet backward so that an unsuspecting entrant might fall into the exposed hole.<sup>6</sup>

And how were the young offenders dealt with? As we have seen in the case of Miss Kelly, many teachers were ill equipped to respond to matters of discipline. Those who were more forceful might temporarily suspend or, with the backing of the school board, expel the offending student. For the sake of discipline alone, males were preferred at schools offering high school grades. But male teachers, after 1900, were in short supply. They were outnumbered 3:1 by their female counterparts and were more likely to be teaching in urban schools.

Teachers who did not hesitate to exercise authority resorted to physical punishment. One male teacher, dealing with an unruly boy, recalls that he "just hauled off and gave him a slap on the side of his face and kicked his feet from under him. He then stretched him over a register under a window and strapped him."<sup>7</sup> This kind of discipline, often practiced in the home, was not considered inappropriate in the early 1900s.

For the record, young Florestine Gareau gained infamy as the first student expelled from the St. Agnes/Beauvais School. The reason, other than "improper moral conduct" was never clearly defined.<sup>8</sup>

Like most children during the homesteading era, Florestine came from a family with an extraordinary story. When her parents arrived in the Beauvais District in 1886, her father, Ludger Gareau, was thirty-one years old, and her mother, Madeline (Delorme) was

<sup>2</sup> Patterson, "Voices From the Past," 107. This quote is not taken from a Beauvais School teacher, but likely contains experiences familiar to teachers of the Beauvais District.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>4</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 36. This incident happened at the Twin Butte School, a district near the Beauvais District.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., This incident occurred at the Fishburn School, a district near the Beauvais District. It was a common prank in the days of wood-burning stoves.

<sup>6</sup> Martina Schmidt, telephone conversation with author, 7 December 2002. Martina's grandpa was involved in such antics.

<sup>7</sup> Patterson, "Voices From the Past," 108. This quote is not taken from a Beauvais School teacher, but likely contains experiences familiar to teachers of the Beauvais District.

<sup>8</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 21 May 1910. In the year that Florestine was expelled, as many as 4-5 Gareau children may have been on the school roster. Her expulsion happened within one year of the reorganization of the board that saw her father removed as trustee. Considering the complex politics of a small district, it would be interesting to know if her expulsion and her father's disassociation with the board were related in any way.

nineteen.<sup>9</sup> As a boy, Ludger worked on his father's farm in Quebec. As a young man, he worked with the CPR, contracted as a freighter, and worked as a carpenter for Xavier Letendre, a well-known fur trader in Saskatchewan.<sup>10</sup> After Ludger married Madeline, a seventeen year-old metis woman, in 1884 they built a home in Batoche that was destroyed a year later during the Riel Rebellion.<sup>11</sup> On 1 June 1886, in the heat of the summer, the Gareaus made a thirty-day trek with two other families, from Batoche to Pincher Creek<sup>12</sup>, herding 40 to 50 cattle as they traveled. Upon arrival Ludger obtained a homestead and began farming and raising livestock.

In 1888, along with Remi Beauvais and Charles Smith, Ludger Gareau was elected as trustee to the first St. Agnes School Board.<sup>13</sup> He served on the board for over twenty years, until it was reorganized in 1909. His involvement contributed to the building of the first and second Beauvais Schoolhouses. His wife Madeline was hired to scrub the schoolhouse two to three times each year between 1914 and 1917. In the fall of 1919, she filled in as a temporary teacher at the Beauvais School while the board searched for a professional replacement.<sup>14</sup>

It is probable that all of Ludger and Madeline's nine surviving children<sup>15</sup> received their education in the Beauvais District;<sup>16</sup> their homestead was less than one mile from the school property. When St. Agnes School opened in 1896, it is likely that Wilfred and Emma, two of their oldest children, were in attendance.<sup>17</sup> While Florestine was a student, she served as caretaker for at least one year and was probably present at the school from 1898 until her expulsion in the spring of 1910. After their son Napoleon finished his education at St. Agnes School, he continued to reside in the district (eventually, when his own three children attended the Beauvais School, he gave seven years of service as chairman of the school board).<sup>18</sup> Elisa, one of the youngest girls in the family, attended the Beauvais School and the Kermaria Convent between 1904 and 1916. She returned to teach at the Beauvais School in 1919/20 and again in 1942/43. The two youngest boys, George and Albert appear in a school photograph taken in 1911 (as a young adult, Albert hauled wood to the school for the woodstove).<sup>19</sup>

Ludger and Madeline retired from ranching in 1922 and moved into town. After a long life together, they were buried at the St. Michael's Cemetery in Pincher Creek.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Carpenter, *Fifty Dollar Bride*, PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 229-232. Madeline Delorme Gareau was daughter of Marie Delorme (wife of Cuthbert Gervais and mother of Alexis Gervais). She was also sister to Marie Rose Smith.

<sup>10</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 230-231. Xavier Letendre was known as "Batoche". He was well liked by First Nations Traders. The crossing and trading center were named after him.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 231. The Gareaus had gone east in 1885 for a delayed honeymoon. When they returned months later, their house and all of their belongings had been burned to the ground.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., Madeline's sister and brother in law, Marie Rose and Charlie Smith had previously settled in the Pincher Creek area.

<sup>13</sup> *Northwest Territories Gazette*, Regina, 26 May 1888.

<sup>14</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1919. It is not known exactly how long she taught, but she was paid \$45.40 on 28 Nov 28 1919 for her services.

<sup>15</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 232. Ludger and Madeline Gareau had twelve children but three of them died in infancy. Another died in 1924.

<sup>16</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18; Minute Book, BSD No. 18. There are no school attendance rosters available during that time period, however, the School Cashbook, the School Minute Book and old photographs and birth records have been helpful in placing the students at the school in certain years.

<sup>17</sup> Birth Records, Gareau Family, St. Michael's Church, Pincher Creek, Alberta. Wilfred would have been 6 years old. Emma would have been 5.

<sup>18</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 1933/34 to 1940/41. The children of Napoleon Gareau are: Eula (1924), Malcom (1929) and Robert (?). Napoleon Gareau served on the school board from 1934-1940. [Minute Book, BSD No. 18]. The dates that Napoleon attended the Beauvais School are not known.

<sup>19</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1925. Albert was paid \$5.00 in 1925 to haul wood to the Beauvais School.

<sup>20</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 232. Ludger died in 1954 when he was 98 years old. His wife died soon after in 1958 at the age of 91. St. Michael's Cemetery is currently known as Fairview Cemetery.

Considering the Gareau family's life-long commitment to education and to the Beauvais School, the expulsion of their daughter Florestine in 1910 seems most unusual and begs many unanswered questions.



### 1911: On the Inside

A rare 1911 photograph of the Beauvais School shows a sturdy looking, freshly painted, recently constructed schoolhouse. In the foreground, an assortment of fifteen students is bunched on the stairway leading to the door of the building. A study of their names indicates the family nature of rural schools; there are two of each of the following siblings: Cavelle, Gareau, Primeau, Smith and Routhier. The new teacher, Mrs. Skene, has three children of her own as pupils. One Lang and one Cyr are also present. Behind the children, one of the school's double doors is open, but the angle of the photograph offers no hint of what might be inside. I imagine myself as one of the children in the picture, posing on the stair. We all stand properly, not smiling, while the photographer captures the scene. Then we jostle back into the school and return to our desks. If I could be one of those children, what would I see as I sat in my desk and gazed around the interior of the classroom? Naturally, I have stereotypical images of one-room schoolhouses that come to mind, but how close are those images to the reality of the Beauvais Schoolhouse? The minutes of the school board meetings and detailed purchases in the school cashbook record furniture and equipment acquired between 1907 and 1949. While the interior of the classroom was probably sparse in 1911, by the 1940s there was a modest accumulation of well-used resources and furnishings. I have used available information to construct the following composite sketch.<sup>1</sup>

Beyond the entryway, there is a small porch area with two shelves for boots and athletic equipment.<sup>2</sup> Tucked into the porch corner are a number of worn-out brooms and a hand shovel.<sup>3</sup> Centrally located at the front of the classroom, the teacher's desk<sup>4</sup> displays an alarm clock,<sup>5</sup> a hand bell,<sup>6</sup> an oil lamp,<sup>7</sup> a small box of chalk,<sup>8</sup> a bottle of ink,<sup>9</sup> and a roll of binding tape for book repair.<sup>10</sup> In tidy rows, varying sizes of children's double and single desks fill the floor space.<sup>11</sup> Tall paned windows with blinds line the walls facing south and east, filling the school with sunlight.<sup>12</sup> Large hyloplate blackboards are mounted on the west and north facing walls.<sup>13</sup> The top of each blackboard is lined with a decorative row of chalk figures made from blackboard

<sup>1</sup> Author's note: This reconstruction is by no means complete. On many occasions, the cashbook indicates that "supplies" were purchased but does not provide the details.

<sup>2</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1 July 1911: Mr. Lunn was to get two shelves for the porch.

<sup>3</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1920. Brooms seemed to wear out quickly – in 1920 alone, four brooms were purchased.

<sup>4</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 5 October 1938; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1938. In 1908, Miss Francis Fugina requested a new desk and chair. She and the chairman selected a \$243.00 desk from Moyers School Supplies.

<sup>5</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, February 1913. The alarm clock was purchased for \$2.50.

<sup>6</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1 September 1909.

<sup>7</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 25 January 1925. This was purchased by Miss Routhier with monies left over from the Christmas tree allotment.

<sup>8</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1920, 1938. Chalk was purchased annually. In 1920, it was \$0.30. By 1938, it was \$1.25.

<sup>9</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1928. Before the days of ball point pens, ink appeared regularly on the school supply list. In 1928, a bottle was \$1.75.

<sup>10</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1938. Binding tape was \$0.15. Since the school library was also used by adults in the community, it was often necessary to repair well used books.

<sup>11</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18; Minute Book, BSD No. 18. Desks appear frequently in the minutes and the cashbook. New desks were purchased in 1909, 1912 (\$22.87), 1914 (\$19.75) and 1921 (\$62.62). Repairs to desks were done in 1918, 1921, 1923, 1924 and 1934. In the 1940s the supply and maintenance of desks became the responsibility of the Pincher Creek School Division, and would not have been recorded in the Beauvais School Board Minutes.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., New blinds were purchased in 1909, 1921 (\$18.15), 1925 (\$16.45) and 1931 (\$18.60).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., New blackboards were installed in 1928 (\$11.59) and 1930 (\$17.70).

stencils.<sup>14</sup> The various corners of the schoolhouse contain an organ,<sup>15</sup> shelves full of library books,<sup>16</sup> storage cupboards,<sup>17</sup> and the Waterman Waterbury stove.<sup>18</sup> Arranged neatly on the shelves under the windows are a globe,<sup>19</sup> a set of drawing models,<sup>20</sup> and an odd assortment of animal skulls, bird feathers and wasp nests.

Beside the blackboard on the wall behind the teacher's desk hangs a yard ruler<sup>21</sup> and a strap.<sup>22</sup> Directly above the blackboard is the Union Jack or the Red Ensign. Throughout the room, maps of Alberta,<sup>23</sup> North America<sup>24</sup> and the world<sup>25</sup> cover available wall space, or hang above the blackboards, ready to be unfurled when needed (one or more of these maps, undoubtedly, was provided free of charge by the William Neilson Limited Company).<sup>26</sup>

A basin, a bar of soap, a water crock and a dipper sit on a low stand at the back of the room.<sup>27</sup>

When Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene arrived in the fall of 1911 to teach at the Beauvais School, it was not quite so well-equipped as it eventually became. Nonetheless, she accepted the position for \$700.00 per year.<sup>28</sup>

It was rumored that Mrs. Skene had come from the east around 1900, answering a newspaper advertisement for a wife. According to district lore, she and John Skene (the first teacher at St. Agnes) married the day she arrived.<sup>29</sup> In actual fact, John and Isabella had taught together previously in Ontario and knew each other quite well when they married in 1901.<sup>30</sup> When the last of their three children reached school age, Isabella returned to the classroom with young Jean, William and Margaret in tow.<sup>31</sup>

After having a number of young, single, inexperienced teachers the Beauvais School children must have been quite surprised to meet their new, forty-one year old,

<sup>14</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 44-46. Teachers changed the designs often, to match the seasons and special events celebrated in the school (lilies or bunnies at Easter, turkeys at thanksgiving, poppies or crosses on Armistice Day, pumpkins and witches at Halloween, Reindeer and Santa Claus at Christmas, and daffodils or crocuses in spring).

<sup>15</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 13 January 1923, 27 November 1934. The ratepayers of the district presented the school with an organ in 1923. During the depression, when the school budget was depleted, it was sold for \$6.00-\$8.00 in 1934 in order to pay the balance owing on the new floor that had been installed.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 12 August 1911. Two shelves were installed in 1911. By the early 1940s, there were 235 books in the Beauvais School library [Inventory, Beauvais School District Library, 1941/42, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta].

<sup>17</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 25 March 1921.

<sup>18</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 2 June 1917. The Waterman Waterbury heating system was installed at the Beauvais School in 1917.

<sup>19</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 21 May 1910; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1925. A full mounted globe was purchased in 1910. Another was purchased in 1925 for \$15.00.

<sup>20</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 25 October 1913. Drawing models were purchased in 1913.

<sup>21</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 19 January 1935.

<sup>22</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 19 January 1935. A new strap was purchased in 1935.

<sup>23</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18; Cash Book, BSD No. 18. Alberta was a growing province – keeping up with the geography meant frequently ordering new maps. A map of Alberta was purchased in 1911, 1913 and 1918. (Other maps were purchased in 1910, 1921 and 1925, but their geographic region was not specified).

<sup>24</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, July 1 1911. A North American map was purchased in 1911.

<sup>25</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 25 October 1913; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1913. World maps at this time frequently showed all of the countries under the British Empire in red. A map of the world was purchased in 1913.

<sup>26</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 43-44. William Neilson Limited (the chocolate bar company), began distributing these free maps in the early 1930s, with the condition that the advertising on the map was not removed or altered. For rural schools on a tight budget, in a time when a changing world meant a new map every few years, these were the only maps available, especially during the depression years.

<sup>27</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1923. A crock was purchased for \$2.50; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1938. Soap was a regular supply item. \$0.25 worth was purchased in 1938.

<sup>28</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 12 August 1911; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1911, 1912.

<sup>29</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 95.

<sup>30</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 244

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., In 1911, when the children joined their mother at the Beauvais School, their approximate ages would have been: Jean Isabel (9), William Arnold (6) and Margaret Ann (4).

seasoned school mistress. She appears to have done well, spending a total of seven and a half years in the district, the longest term during the fifty-three year history of the school.

The Skene homestead, over three miles from the schoolhouse by road, made daily travel difficult, especially in winter.<sup>32</sup> When the school board approached her to do the daily caretaking in addition to her teaching duties, they also requested that she stay at the schoolhouse from Monday morning to Friday night.<sup>33</sup> In exchange, the school board offered to supply her with coal for the winter.<sup>34</sup> Living at the schoolhouse with her three young children, however, was not very appealing. With no teacherage to stay in, the Skenes decided to supply their own in the form of a "12 x 12 tent which was built round to form a two-windowed structure. It had white painted siding, green trim and roof and was affectionately known by the family as 'The Cottage.'"<sup>35</sup>

It appears that Mrs. Skene was well liked by the students, and that she was thoughtful beyond her regular duties; "The children loved her and no matter how busy she was she often would bring a lovely cake to school for holidays and celebrations."<sup>36</sup>

As the years passed her salary gradually increased, reaching \$840.00 in 1918/1919, her last year at the Beauvais School.<sup>37</sup> In her final months of teaching, a series of statements in the school board minute book suggests that Mrs. Skene and the board (perhaps the entire community) disagreed strongly on matters regarding the instruction of grade nine at the Beauvais School.<sup>38</sup>

On 22 February at the annual meeting of rate payers it was requested "that the trustees ... find out if the teacher of this school is compelled to take Grade IX and if so why – only 3 pupils are accepted."

On 21 March at a regular school board meeting, Mrs. Skene was to "be instructed to stop taking up grade IX work."

On 10 July at a regular school board meeting, a letter was read from the Department of Education regarding "taking up Grade IX work in a rural school." At the same meeting, the secretary-treasurer was to place an advertisement in the Calgary Herald for a Second Class Professional Certificate at a salary of \$900 per year. He was instructed to notify Mrs. Skene that the board had advertised for a new teacher.

Was Mrs. Skene released from her position because she insisted on providing grade nine instruction to children that may have otherwise been forced to end their formal schooling at grade eight? Was the community concerned that the teaching of high school would mean that children in younger grades would be neglected? In her last year of teaching, her children Jean, William and Margaret were sixteen, thirteen and eleven respectively. If all of them were still attending the Beauvais School, it is conceivable that

<sup>32</sup> Cummins Map Company, *1918 Cummins Rural Directory Map No. 19*, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta.

<sup>33</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18. From 1913 to 1919 Mrs. Skene did most of the daily caretaking duties, including sweeping and firing. Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1 December 1916. Mrs. Skene was asked to remain the school beginning in 1916.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 December 1911.

<sup>35</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 245

<sup>36</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 95

<sup>37</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1917. Mrs. Skene taught consecutively from September 1911 to June 1916, with one exception. She did not teach from September to December in 1917. No explanation of this is provided by the School Minutes.

<sup>38</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1919.

Jean or William (or both) were studying at the grade nine level. Was she insisting on teaching grade nine to ensure a quality education for her own children? Regarding these questions, the minute book is silent. When the students of the Beauvais District returned to school in the fall of 1919, Mrs. Skene was no longer there.

## 1919: Finding Teachers for the School

Some days, it must have been very difficult to be Chairman of the school board. But then Robert Lang would never claim to have had an easy life. Born in Quebec, his parents had chosen to farm a landscape had to be cleared of either rock or timber.<sup>1</sup> Young Robert earned a living logging and driving team of horses in the winter, floating logs downriver in the spring, and clearing land in the summer. Later, he hired on in Minnesota in the freight sheds. As boats would come in, he would unload and reload cargo, sometimes “working for twenty-four hours or longer, until the boats were unloaded.”<sup>2</sup> Eventually, Robert and a handful of his rugged friends moved to the Beauvais area at the urging of John Skene, each taking a quarter section of land near to one another.<sup>3</sup> As a team, they went from one quarter to the next, building each other’s homes.

With his quarter section and his house newly built, Robert returned briefly to Minnesota to marry Bessie Morton; they had met earlier at a dance when Robert accepted a dare to ask her to dance. It was a partnership that was to last a lifetime.<sup>4</sup>

Life continued to be full of challenges for Robert and Bessie Lang. When a flu epidemic hit the Beauvais District, the entire Lang family and their neighbours, the Ledinghams, were stricken. Only Robert was well enough to look after the two households, nursing the sick, doing all of the farm chores, and keeping the fires burning in both houses, which meant sleeping for only two hours at a time.<sup>5</sup>

Together, Robert and Bessie had three sons. As soon as the first began attending school, Robert Lang began serving as a trustee on the Beauvais School Board. It was a commitment that would last 20 years, from 1909 to 1930. Of those, sixteen years were spent as chairman. His efforts were deeply appreciated by the landowners in the district; at the annual school board meeting in February, 1919 the community honoured him for his dedication to the school board.<sup>6</sup>

He deserved the honour. It was not easy to manage a school board, nor to keep a rural school staffed. Finding a teacher in 1919, in fact, proved to be more challenging than in any other year of the Beauvais School’s history.

The year began well with Mrs. Skene from January to June, but because of a controversial issue over teaching grade nine she was not asked to return for the fall term. In August, the board began searching in earnest for a replacement. Miss Rennett was offered the position but she declined.<sup>7</sup> After placing an advertisement in the *Calgary Daily Herald*, the board received a favourable response from Miss E. McKenzie.<sup>8</sup> She began in September, but lasted only three weeks.<sup>9</sup> In desperate need of a teacher, it appears that the board asked a parent, Mrs. Madeline Gareau, to act as an emergency substitute teacher until another teacher could be secured. Mrs. McFarland arrived in November to take over the class, but by the first week in December, she announced that

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<sup>1</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 233.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Author’s note: These friends included Jack Ledingham, Mickey MacDonald, Tom Smith and Jim Smith. John Skene was Jack Ledingham’s cousin, and had written to Jack in the late 1890s with word that homesteads were cheap and the country was beautiful in the West. [PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 233-234].

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 224.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>6</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 22 February 1919.

<sup>7</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 4 August 1919. A CPR Telephone Company call was made for \$0.50.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, The ad cost \$1.17.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 10 October 1919. She received \$55.00 for fourteen days of teaching.

she would only teach until Christmas, resulting in another advertisement in the Calgary Daily Herald, and a flurry of long distance phone calls.<sup>10</sup>

Why were dedicated, competent teachers so difficult for rural schoolboards to secure? Were there simply not enough teachers? Were the training institutions failing in their efforts to produce quality graduates? Were the students entering Normal School of such poor quality that the training programs could not adequately prepare them for teaching in rural schools? Was school teaching as a profession simply too demanding for the average person?

An explanation of historic trends involving teachers, training and their lifestyles might provide some answers.

In early settlement times (prior to 1900), few schools had been established in the Northwest Territories, and the number of men in the west was disproportionately larger than the number of women. For this reason, most teachers in the early western schools were male by default, usually British subjects from Eastern Canada or from the motherland.<sup>11</sup> The Beauvais School, from 1896 to 1900 had six different teachers in six years, all of them male.

Surprisingly, teaching was not considered an academic career. It was for those “unwilling or unable to compete in more risk producing, academically demanding, financially rewarding, status generating occupations.”<sup>12</sup> For men, it was usually considered a stepping-stone to a more worthy occupation<sup>13</sup>. Those men content to remain in teaching were labeled as lacking in the three G’s; Grit, Go and Gumption.<sup>14</sup> All male teachers were expected to aspire to the administrative roles of Normal School instructor, inspector, or supervisor. Between 1900 and 1949, only three men taught at the Beauvais School. All of them left the conventional classroom for other more highly recognized professions.<sup>15</sup>

As the stream of settlers continued, amplified by the completion of Crowsnest Branch of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1898, the need for new rural schools and more rural teachers increased. It wasn’t long before the first generations of pioneer children born in the new country graduated from the one-room schoolhouses and returned to instruct. As the number of women began to increase rapidly in the general population, so did their numbers in the ranks of schoolteachers. In a country where half of the population was rural, and where women were highly limited in their choice of occupation, the job of teaching school was one of the only professional options available to rural girls. The opening of accessible training institutions (Calgary Normal School in 1906, Camrose Normal School in 1912, and Edmonton Normal School in 1920)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., December 1919.

<sup>11</sup> Sheehan, “Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980,” 41.

<sup>12</sup> Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 196-197.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid. Even in 1946, the average male teacher was leaving the profession after seven years in order to seek more remunerative and attractive occupations.

<sup>15</sup> Author’s note: Mr. D.S. Brenman taught from January to June, 1910, and appears to have been an inspector in the Pincher Creek Area between 1911 and the 1940s [Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1 July 1911 and 8 June 1938]. Mr. R.U. Harwood taught for two years (1920/21 and 1921/22), and went on to be a doctor and professor of Biochemistry [PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 59-62]. Mr. Hugh Ross taught for two years (1926/27 and 1927/28), and later became Superintendent of Schools at Lacombe and Claresholm ([PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 141].

encouraged teenaged girls to make this choice.<sup>16</sup> Before long, rural schools in the west were filled with young women who had been born and trained in the west.

Accordingly, between the years of 1914 and 1934, most one-room schoolteachers were single women from rural backgrounds.<sup>17</sup> The percentage of rural students (compared to urban students) enrolling in Normal School continued to increase throughout the years – 50% in 1932, 64% in 1937 and 80% in 1944.<sup>18</sup> Since the quality of education provided in a multi-grade, rural classroom could not compare with the quality of the one-grade classrooms of urban schools, the majority of graduates from Normal School had, themselves, received sub-standard education as children. In addition, the training they received at Normal School was woefully inadequate. Consider that today a university student spends *five years* in training to teach grade one. By comparison, from 1906-1918, a Normal School student spent only *four months* in training to teach grades one to eight.<sup>19</sup> This lack of preparation made it very difficult for an inexperienced teacher to have a successful first year experience.

Sixteen was the minimum age of entry to Normal School for girls (eighteen for boys) until 1929 when eighteen became the standard age for both sexes. It was not uncommon for a first-year teacher to be schooling students her own age or older, making discipline a challenge. Their youth also made single female teachers desirable to single men in the school district. Apparently, “it was the custom that when the young teacher arrived all the eligible young men, as soon as convenient, sometimes within the first day or two, would turn up at the school and introduce themselves.”<sup>20</sup> Arthur Storey, in his book *Prairie Harvest* went so far as to suggest that female teachers weren’t interested in teaching at all, but instead used their position as a ticket to find a husband, and if they didn’t succeed in the first two years, they would transfer to another district.<sup>21</sup> He is not the only author to make this claim. In 1968, John Chalmers wrote; “Some pert young school mistresses departed because they married local farmers – and others because they didn’t. If a girl hadn’t acquired an engagement ring by the end of her first year of teaching, she usually left for pastures greener.”<sup>22</sup> It was generally expected that once a schoolteacher married, she would leave her profession and assume her rightful place in the home. In its fifty-three years of operation, the Beauvais School had fourteen single teachers, each staying for an average of two years.<sup>23</sup>

Lack of training and the tendency to marry were not the only factors contributing to the high turnover of rural schoolteachers. The teacher often had no choice in the matter of lodging; they were told by the hiring authorities where they would stay.<sup>24</sup> One teacher recalls staying at a boarding house frequented by threshing/railroad crews. Under the

<sup>16</sup> Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 412-414.

<sup>17</sup> Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 101. On average, women outnumbered men 3:1.

<sup>18</sup> Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 424; Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 202.

<sup>19</sup> Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 201-203; Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 414, 416. The program lengthened to eight months in 1919 and nine months in 1928.

<sup>20</sup> Patterson, “Voices From the Past,” 103.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Once a teacher did find a husband, she left the profession to assume her expected place in the home. It was rare in the early years of education in Alberta for married women to stay in the classroom but there were exceptions; in 1915 Gladys Caverhill asked if she could remain on staff if she were married. The superintendent of school replied: “There is no objection to Miss Caverhill’s marriage as it is a war measure.”<sup>21</sup> With the passing of the WWI and the Great Depression, attitudes toward married women in the classroom eventually changed. In an attempt to keep rural schoolhouses open during the teacher shortage caused by WWII, Superintendents were begging rural farm wives to return to the teaching career they had left decades earlier.

<sup>22</sup> Chalmers, *Teachers of the Foothills Province*, 8.

<sup>23</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18; Minute Book, BSD No. 18. Miss Katie Marie Routhier was the single teacher who stayed the longest term (5 years) and Miss E. McKenzie for the shortest (14 days). The single female teachers taught for 31 of the school’s 53 years.

<sup>24</sup> Patterson, “Voices From the Past,” 104.

influence of alcohol, it was difficult to “get them to keep their hands off.”<sup>25</sup> Crawling creatures of another sort were a common complaint:

The physical conditions during the first year were primitive. The main part of the house was made of logs, which were swarming with bed bugs. My room was a lean-to made of lumber. In order to keep the bugs from invading my privacy, everything moveable in my room was taken outside and washed with coal-oil; this was a weekly occurrence. As my bedding mattress, pillows and quilts were stuffed with raw wool from the local sheep (a smell I have always hated), I did not smell exactly like Chanel No. 5.<sup>26</sup>

The homes built by the rural settlers were rarely equipped with guest rooms. One teacher found herself sharing a bedroom with a mother and child while a male boarder slept with the husband in an adjacent room.<sup>27</sup> Another teacher, “to reach her bedroom with its uncomfortable straw mattress, ... had to pass through the main bedroom where the couple and their four children slept.”<sup>28</sup> Comforts such as heating were often absent, with the bedroom temperature occasionally dropping below zero at night.<sup>29</sup>

Boarding with local families did not always offer companionship. One teacher longed to participate in weekend or evening outings but she was always left behind.<sup>30</sup> Another teacher, in a similar situation was so overcome with loneliness that “she wished her parents would come and take her home. Yet she knew it wasn’t possible because her parents were poor and they couldn’t do it. They didn’t even have a car. They never came to see her in the three years that she was there which was only about fifty-five miles from her home.”<sup>31</sup>

Other teachers witnessed “much quarrelling and lying and violence”<sup>32</sup> within the families that boarded them.<sup>33</sup>

In certain districts, especially during the depression, poverty coloured a teacher’s boarding experience. One teacher recalls eating “in a separate room from the four children since there was not enough “quality” food to go around. Favoured, she recalled her guilt as the children gazed ravenously at her plate.”<sup>34</sup> In districts where one family could not afford to board the teacher long-term, they were boarded rotationally with every family in the district, forcing them into “a continual adaptation to changing routines, expectations and degrees of destitution.”<sup>35</sup> There were those districts where no one would offer a place for the teacher to live. “In one such area, a family was willing to provide room and board in their mud house. The roof was thatched with straw and the walls were made of mud and straw.”<sup>36</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 105

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Jones, “Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties,” 278.

<sup>29</sup> Patterson, “Voices From the Past,” 105.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 106.

<sup>34</sup> Jones, “Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties,” 278.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Patterson, “Voices From the Past,” 105.



In an attempt to address the residential difficulties of teachers, the department of education began providing money to school districts for the construction of teacherages.<sup>37</sup> Since there were no standards for building and maintaining teacherages, the construction and up-keep of some were better than others. "Some living quarters were little more than a lean-to built on the school."<sup>38</sup> Renovations were permitted, but at the teacher's own expense.<sup>39</sup> Teachers recall scant furnishings and "stories of snow-laden roofs caving in, of infestations of mice and vermin, of fear of "foreigners" in immigrant districts, of social isolation and abject loneliness."<sup>40</sup> In the Beauvais District, however, a teacherage was not provided. With the exception of Mrs. Skene, all teachers boarded with local families.

With so many reasons to leave the teaching profession, it's no wonder Robert Lang, Chairman of the 1911 Beauvais School Board, had a difficult time finding staff for the Beauvais School. After hiring four teachers in 1910, it was beginning to look as though the students would be returning from their Christmas holidays to a teacher-less classroom. To his relief, a twenty year old, newly married woman agreed to teach the spring term. Mrs. Elisa Sorge was no stranger to the Beauvais School; prior to attending Kermaria Convent in Pincher Creek and Calgary Normal School, she attended the Beauvais School until she was ten years old. She had grown up less than a mile from the school in a home that her father, Ludger Gareau had built. Prior to marrying Louis Sorge, she had taught for two years, making her a veteran teacher (by the standards of the day) and a welcome presence in the Beauvais classroom.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> Jones, "Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties," 277.

<sup>38</sup> Patterson, "Voices From the Past," 106.

<sup>39</sup> Jones, "Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties," 277.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 154.

## 1920: Heat and Water

It had been ten years since the Beauvais School had a male teacher. Even the oldest students in the class of 1920/21 had only known the guidance of a female instructor. The new teacher, Mr. Robert Unwin Harwood, was young and bright with a quick mind for science, and *male*. He had attended St. Michael's School in Pincher Creek for all of his schooling, and he was fond of school. He understood the politics of education too; his dad had been secretary-treasurer of the St. Michael's School Board for as long as he could remember.<sup>1</sup>

By October, the familiar chill of autumn was in the air. It was time to start the daily firing of the stove. Often this task was given to a responsible child willing and able to arrive one hour early each day, and stay late to bank the fire overnight so that it could be restarted easily the next morning. Banking the fire involved "covering the glowing embers with a fresh supply of coal and adjusting the drafts to keep the fire inactive."<sup>2</sup> In some years, it was considered more convenient for the teacher to take on the firing, especially when he or she boarded close to the school and spent extra time before and after class preparing lessons at the schoolhouse. For an extra \$3.50 each month, Unwin Harwood took on the duty of fireman during his two years at Beauvais.<sup>3</sup>

Early stoves in the original log schoolhouses were often ingenious (and sometimes quite ineffective) works of art. For instance, an old gas barrel turned on its side and mounted on legs in the center of the room was all some school boards could afford.<sup>4</sup> Poorly designed stoves were not always successful at circulating heat evenly throughout the classroom. Students sitting immediately adjacent to the stove would be uncomfortably hot, while a basin of water at the back of the classroom would freeze.<sup>5</sup> Smoke was a perpetual problem, made worse by strong Chinook winds perpetually forcing smoke back down the chimney into the classroom. In one school near the Beauvais District, a problem with the draft on the stove forced the fire lighter to leave the school each morning until the smoke cleared.<sup>6</sup>

In the beginning, the St. Agnes/Beauvais School had an old shaker stove.<sup>7</sup> Fortunately, by the time Unwin Harwood arrived, the Cadillac of schoolhouse stoves, the Waterman-Waterbury heating system had been installed.<sup>8</sup> John C. Charyk, who experienced one-room schoolhouses as a student and a teacher, described the Waterman-Waterbury in the following way:

The installation of this make of stove followed a set pattern. It was placed in one of the corners at the back of the room and then connected to a brick chimney at the opposite end with a prodigious length of overhead eight-inch stovepipes. Part of the accepted technique for heating schools in the early days

<sup>1</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 61. John William Harwood was secretary-treasurer of the St. Michael's School Board for 35 years.

<sup>2</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 27.

<sup>3</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 25 May 25 1921 and 3 July 3 1922.

<sup>4</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 33.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 121.

<sup>7</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1912.

<sup>8</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 2 June 1917; Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1917. A Waterman-Waterbury heating system was ordered and installed in 1917.

was the theory that the longer the line of pipes that meandered aloft, the more heat that was bound to radiate from their combined surfaces.

The real success of the Waterman-Waterbury heater stemmed from its gargantuan size, which provided a vast heating surface, and from the five-foot-high, double-layered, insulated sheet metal jacket that enclosed it like a huge cylinder. The sides and back of the jacket were supported by steel struts while the front quarter was mounted on hinges and could be swung open or closed like a door or gate.

It didn't require an expert to fathom the mystery of how this monster heater worked. The cold air was drawn from the floor at the bottom of the stove. Confined by the jacket, it circulated around the hot surface of the heater until it became warm and rose upwards toward the ceiling. At the same time the cold air in the classroom descended and once more moved along the floor towards the foot of the stove to start repeating the heating process. The air circulated so rapidly and positively that the room became free from any cold corners. The temperature varied only three or four degrees between the floor and the ceiling."<sup>9</sup>

Maintaining warmth in the school from October to April demanded a constant supply of wood and coal. At the request of the school board, the teacher would send word with the students that the school was looking for tenders from the community to supply fuel to the school.<sup>10</sup> Typically, two or three men were contracted each year. Because coal was available locally from a number of nearby mines, the school board would purchase it, and a contractor would haul it to the school.<sup>11</sup> Wood was harvested from the contractor's personal property, cut into manageable pieces, and transported to the school's woodpile. Hauling the fuel to the school was no minor task. In some years, over 9,000 pounds of coal were needed to keep the school warm from fall to spring.<sup>12</sup>

Between the years of 1907 and 1939, the following individuals spent hours of their time ensuring the delivery of fuel to the Beauvais School:<sup>13</sup>

George Bodell	H.M. Frey	Raymond Lang	A.C Sweetnam
Fred Clavell	Albert Gareau	Albert Link	Fred Therriault
Albert Cote	Ludger Gareau	Edward Lunn	M. Trudel
Edmund Daigle	Alexis Gervais	Richard Murtland	Paul Trudel
J. Dumas	Fred Gervais	J.H. (Bert) Owens	
Garfield Duncan	Mary Ann Gervais	Jonas Smith	
Mr. Fitzpatrick	Morris Gervais	A.A. Sparks	

<sup>9</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 4 October 1914.

<sup>11</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18. Coal was purchased from the following mines: Link Brothers (1909-1917), Mill Creek Mine (1913), Victory Mine (1923), Christie Coal Mine (1928-1938)

<sup>12</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18. In some years the amount hauled in pounds is provided: 6500 lbs (1920), 3010 lbs (1921), 9250 lbs (1925), 6300 lbs & 3450 lbs (1928), 4775 lbs (1929), 8750 lbs (1931), 3990lbs & 4400 lbs (1938).

<sup>13</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18; Minute Book, BSD No. 1.

Despite the ample supply of fuel, and the Waterman-Waterbury heater, schoolhouses were notorious for drafts, and could still be chilly on the coldest days. It's not difficult to imagine the following scene:

Unwin Harwood wakes in the pre-dawn darkness to a muted howling. Without even opening the blinds, he knows that a winter storm is in full force. Three feet of freshly accumulated snow impedes his progress as he struggles against a biting wind that has sent the wind chill to minus forty-five degrees Celsius. He arrives late at the school and can hardly flex his frozen fingers to grip a match. The embers have gone completely cold over the weekend, and the first few flames begin to catch just as the children from the closest homestead arrive. It is clear that if others are on their way, they will be late. It is also obvious that the bone-chilling temperature in the school will not encourage focus and attentiveness for the lessons he has prepared.

And so he gathers the children around the fire, engaging them in casual conversation to take their minds off of the cold. Since the beginning of the year, the students have become endeared to their eighteen-year-old schoolmaster, and are encouraged by the informal setting to ask him a few personal questions.

"What does your dad do, Mr. Harwood?"

"Well, he did a lot of things. Before he moved west, he was famous for his rowing abilities. Once, he was even presented with a medal from Judge Routhier."<sup>1</sup>

"You mean, the man who wrote the words to O Canada?"

"That's right. Then, when he came to Pincher Creek area in 1901, he had a homestead for a while. That's where I was born, in a one and a half story log house. But cattle rustlers and hail got the best of him, so we moved to town where he sold insurance and real estate.<sup>2</sup> Would you like to hear how my mother and father met?"

Encouraged by their enthusiastic response, he continues. "Twenty-five years ago, my mother had come from Milwaukee to visit her aunt in Montreal. To celebrate my mother's visit, Auntie threw a big sleighing party. My father ended up sitting next to my mother in the sleigh, and during the ride they enjoyed each other's company. But because of the darkness and the furs they were bundled in, they were unable to recognize one another when they returned to the parlour. Strangely each separately asked the same young lady to point out the other one."<sup>3</sup>

A grade one student asks, "How long did you live on the farm?"

"Not very long. Only four years. My mother tells me that one day when I was a baby, she and I were late getting home from somewhere. I was thirsty and crying and needed some milk. My mother noticed some Indians camped with their livestock along the river. When she asked them if they would milk a cow so that I could have a drink, they were happy to help."<sup>4</sup>

Suddenly, Mr. Harwood begins to laugh.

"What's so funny?" asks the oldest boy.

<sup>1</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 61.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-61.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 59-60. John William de Lotbiniere-Harwood married Mabel Ann Shackell in Milwaukee, Wisconsin in 1897. They had three children: Robert Unwin, Margaret and Angelique.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 60.

"I was just remembering a story my father told me about a time when my grandparents came for a visit a year after I was born. They had never been here before, and so my father hitched up his driving team to give them a tour. Almost immediately, they found themselves driving towards an Indian on a pony. He was a big fellow and his feet almost touched the grass. As he saw the ladies in the buggy, he pulled his shirt, his only piece of apparel, down in front, but that made it ride high in the back, so he pulled it down in the back. After they had passed, my father turned to my grandmother and asked if she'd seen enough Indians or if she wanted to go on. He says they went back to the farm for tea."<sup>5</sup>

Mr. Harwood continues to entertain the students with memories and anecdotes and before long the school is warm, the last of the stragglers have arrived, and it is time to formally begin the day.<sup>6</sup>

In 1920 when Mr. Harwood was in his second year of teaching, I noticed in the school cashbook that a new water crock was purchased. This led me to wonder where the school obtained their water. There was a creek nearby.<sup>7</sup> Could that have been the source?

I knew from previous research that rural schools were forced to employ many creative strategies to ensure a supply of drinking water to the occupants of the schoolhouse.

The simplest, most inexpensive solution was to have students bring their own water from home. This meant that each child had to find a vessel that would not only contain enough water for a day but also prevent spillage while on horseback or on foot. Ingenuity resulted in "baby milk bottles, long-snouted oiling cans, hip flasks, demijohns, canvas bags, jugs of all types and even hot-water bottles."<sup>8</sup> Occasionally, however, students would forget their water, or hot weather and exertion would cause them to drain their supply before the end of the day. Considering the water needs of a child who walks two to eight miles on foot each day in hot weather, having enough water to last the day was very important.

If there was no water on the property, an inconvenient, expensive way to supply water was to have it delivered to the school in liquid or frozen form. Many school boards opted to contract a member of the community to keep the cream can of water at the back of the classroom full throughout the year.<sup>9</sup> Other school boards built an icehouse, storing large blocks of river or lake ice packed in sawdust. Melting ice as a water source had problems of its own. Chipping small chunks of ice from the large blocks was not always easy. Before melting, the ice had to be carefully rinsed to remove the sawdust and if particles remained, the water would have to be poured through a milk strainer. On cool days when the water would not melt fast enough, the pail would have to be placed on the stove, or children would suck on chips of ice while they waited.<sup>10</sup>

If the district was lucky, the school property contained a natural spring, creek or river. This meant that when the water pail or earthenware crock was empty, someone

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 61; *Pincher Creek Echo*, 11 May 1928. Robert Unwin Harwood eventually attended the University of Alberta where he received an M.Sc. and McGill University where he obtained a Doctorate majoring in Biochemistry. While he continued to research, he taught at McGill. Sadly, after being ill for a number of months, he died in 1930 when he was only 28 years old.

<sup>7</sup> Municipal District of Pincher Creek No. 9, *May 2001 MD Map*, Municipal District of Pincher Creek, Alberta.

<sup>8</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 20.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 23,24.

would make a trip to the water source. Managing a full pail was best done with two students synchronizing their gaits. “They would start out with a pail full of water carrying it between them. The ground was rough with many hummocks. This necessitated frequent rests, and maybe a wrestling match to relieve the monotony. The result was two boys each with a wet leg from slopping the water and only a scant amount in the bottom of the pail.”<sup>11</sup> Contrary to popular myth, fetching water did not always excuse students from class for extended periods of time, allowing the volunteer to be distracted by bird’s nests, gophers and garter snakes. Instead, it was usually done over recess or lunch, in wind, rain and snow. One disadvantage of using a local creek or spring as the only source of water was that it sometimes dried up when you needed it most. In addition, livestock and wildlife congregated along the same water sources used by the children. Near one school, a perpetually funny taste in the water explained why the nearby stream was called Cow Creek.<sup>12</sup>

After trying most of the above solutions, most boards opted to dig a well. Determined attempts often found no water at all, or struck water that was unpalatable or unsafe to drink. In one school district close to Beauvais, the well water was laden with typhoid bacillus.<sup>13</sup> When the water was good, it was impossible to keep creatures of all sizes from falling in.

A peek down the well always revealed a dead mouse, gopher, [or] rabbit ... floating around in the water. Every so often when someone caught sight of such decaying objects, the water was declared unfit to drink; otherwise, no one was any wiser and continued to drink the water.<sup>14</sup>

Insects weren’t as much of a concern. At one well with a grasshopper problem, the students

found a small white cotton bag draped neatly around the spout of the pump. The purpose of the bag was to filter out the extraneous things in the water. It proved to be most successful, and the water emerging from the spout was free of grasshoppers. Anytime the bag became a bit bulky, it was removed and the sodden mass of drowned grasshoppers and other squashy-looking fauna was dumped to one side.<sup>15</sup>

As for the Beauvais School, statements in the minute book and the cashbook suggest that when the log schoolhouse was in use, students obtained water from the nearby creek and spring. The board was concerned, however, about its adequacy; the school inspector was asked by the board to scrutinize the water supply in 1911.<sup>16</sup> In 1913, a well that was installed prior to the acquisition of the school property was taken over by the school board.<sup>17</sup> This was officially inspected in 1916<sup>18</sup> and cleaned in 1917.<sup>19</sup> In 1924,

<sup>11</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 36. Quote from an Alberta teacher.

<sup>12</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 20,21.

<sup>13</sup> PCDSO No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 175.

<sup>14</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 24.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>16</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 1 July 1911. Mr. Brennan was the school inspector at that time.

<sup>17</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 19 July 1913. The well had been previously owned by Paul Trudel. He was paid to be \$120.00 for it.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 1 Dec 1916.

<sup>19</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1917. It was cleaned by Alexis Gervais for \$7.00.

at the annual ratepayers meeting, the community discussed piping water to the school, and a local landowner offered two days of free labour to fix up the spring<sup>20</sup>. After this date, the Beauvais School water supply is no longer mentioned.

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<sup>20</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 12 January 1924.

## 1922: Morning Routines

It's a shame Sir Adolph Basil Routhier, renowned judge and poet, died in 1920.<sup>1</sup> Had he lived two years longer, he would have seen his granddaughter Katie take her first teaching job at the Beauvais School. Then, on one of his visits from Quebec, Katie could have introduced her students to the man who wrote "O Canada".<sup>2</sup>

Like most of her friends born in the Canadian west, Katie had a right to claim that her family had a rich, colourful, adventurous past. During the Riel Rebellion in 1885, her father, Jean Charles Routhier, came west from Quebec as a young Lieutenant. After the rebellion, he returned to Quebec and finished his law degree. But he had been charmed by the western frontier, and soon found himself in Fort Macleod, enlisting with the North West Mounted Police. When he resigned three years later, he purchased land in the Beauvais District, where a large number of French Canadian settlers had congregated.<sup>3</sup>

In the 1880s, when women were greatly outnumbered by their male counterparts; female newcomers to the Pincher Creek area were welcomed with gusto. Elodi Pelletier, born in New Brunswick in 1869, had twelve siblings. When she was sixteen, Elodi left home to join her five sisters who had journeyed west. Most of them, true to their heritage, had married into French Canadian families (Levasseur, Cyr, Marquis, Fournier). Elodi was no exception; she married Jean Charles Routhier in 1894. Their youngest of six children was Marie C., but she was known by all as Katie.<sup>4</sup>

Katie had grown up two and a half miles from the school on the "Edge-Hill Ranch." Because of its proximity to the school and the generosity of its hosts, the Routhier home was an appealing place for teachers to board.<sup>5</sup>

Between the years of 1911 and 1917, young Katie was a student and one-time caretaker at the Beauvais school. She continued her education at Kermaria Convent and Pincher Creek High School, and graduated from an eight-month teacher training course at the Calgary Normal School in 1922.<sup>6</sup>

In September, 1922, at nineteen, she returned to the school of her youth as a first year teacher. No doubt, it took some time to establish an effective rapport with the class. There was, however, an unchanging security that every new teacher could rely on to start each day - the morning routines. With only minor variations from school to school, the first five to ten minutes of the day were quite predictable.

Students were called from outside to the schoolhouse door by the ringing of a hand bell or a bell mounted on the exterior of the school. They would line up, often youngest to oldest before being led by the teacher into the classroom. In some schools, this would be done to music supplied by the teacher on the piano or organ. On cold days,

<sup>1</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 238-239. Sir Routhier's contribution to the legal system are substantial - many of his judgements are milestones of Quebec Law.

<sup>2</sup> Government of Canada, *National Anthem of Canada*. [http://www.pch.gc.ca/symb/anthm\\_e.htm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/symb/anthm_e.htm) [30 May 2001]. Originally, "O Canada" was a patriotic poem written in French by Sir Adolphe Basile Routhier. Calixa Lavallee, the well known Canadian composer was commissioned to set it to music, and it was first sung in 1880. Many English versions have appeared, but the one that was widely accepted was written in 1908 by another judge, R. Stanley Weir. A slightly modified version of the first verse of Weir's poem was proclaimed as Canada's national anthem in 1980.

<sup>3</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 239.

<sup>4</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 240-241. Other Routhier children were Adolphe, Juliette, Alma, Henri, and Jeanette.

<sup>5</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 243. For instance, John J. Skene, the first teacher at the Beauvais School, boarded with Mr. and Mrs. Routhier in 1896.

<sup>6</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 241.



the line of students would be led for a few laps around the classroom, to warm the students and to circulate the warmth of the stove to all corners of the building.<sup>7</sup>

Once standing beside their desks, the students would recite the Lord's Prayer together, often followed by a prescribed daily bible reading. In a daily show of patriotism, the students would face the photograph of the reigning monarch and a version of the Canadian flag (either the Union Jack or the Red Ensign), and sing one of Canada's recognized anthems (either God save the King or The Maple Leaf Forever). In some schools, this was followed by the pledge of allegiance that read: "I pledge Allegiance to our flag and the country for which it stands with liberty, equality and justice for all."<sup>8</sup>

After attendance was duly recorded in the daily register, the teacher would make announcements about upcoming events (social and athletic activities at the school, approaching holidays), or messages from the school board (calls for tenders for work that needed to be done, changes in discipline procedures). Since almost every school was involved in a province-wide pest eradication effort, the teacher was also responsible to collect evidence of the schools participation in reducing the number of crows, magpies and gophers in Alberta. A pair of feet or an egg from a crow or magpie would fetch the successful hunter one cent apiece, as would the tail of a gopher.<sup>9</sup> It didn't take long for enterprising children to discover that it was easier to catch young birds in the nest before they gained mobility. Motivated by an opportunity to earn some pocket change, many misguided youngsters released gophers after cutting off their tails, believing that they would grow them back.<sup>10</sup> Setting traps and snares along the route to school ensured daily success. However, young boys anxious to collect their share of feet, eggs, and tails, would rather have been out hunting all day than sitting in the schoolhouse in early spring. Many young lads employed an easy solution to this problem; block the chimney so that when the fire was lit, the classroom would be filled with smoke, resulting in an early dismissal.<sup>11</sup>

The task of paying one cent for every egg, tail and pair of legs sounds deceptively simple, but in practice was somewhat more complicated:

In one particular instance, three children rode their pony three and one half miles to school each day carrying their lunches, too and any other incidentals. On this day they also toted a ten-pound Roger's Golden Syrup pail of crows' and magpies' eggs. Upon leaving home, the pail was full of whole eggs but after joggling along that distance the teacher was presented with approximately half a pail of scrambled eggs. Often the eggs were anything but fresh. The less said the better about the conditions of some of the feet and legs which were brought. One can almost smell the day that a little lad brought his jam can filled with crow and magpie feet to collect his share of the bounty that the Fish and Game were offering to enterprising young people. The teacher, noticing the high odour, asked why they hadn't been brought in before and got the standard answer "I forgot." On opening the can the poor lady discovered not just the feet, but he entire bodies

<sup>7</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 56, 60.

<sup>8</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 56, 60; Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 7.

<sup>9</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 36. This was recalled by a student from the Twin Butte School, near the Beauvais District. Another student from Utopia School (also near to the Beauvais District) recalls a \$0.05 bounty on crow and magpie feet (Ibid., 25).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 36

of the baby birds. A gallant lad came to her rescue and offered to take the can and contents down to the far end of the schoolyard, count the bodies and burn them.<sup>12</sup>

Once the morning routines were taken care of, lessons began in earnest.

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<sup>12</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 54. This was a recollection from the Pine Hill District in 1912.

### 1923: Special Occasions and Events

“Although educating the children of the district was the primary function of the school, it also served as the social center for the community.”<sup>1</sup>

During a time when rural people were potentially miles away from their nearest neighbours, the schoolhouse was a gathering place for community events (showers, wedding receptions, dances, election polling stations, vaccinations), and for school celebrations (Halloween, Christmas concert, Valentine’s Day, Year-End Field Day).

Not unlike today, a shortage of money to embellish these gatherings forced the teacher and the parents of the district to constantly plan creative fund raising events, including chicken shoots, card parties, raffles, pie socials, tie socials, and bake sales.<sup>2</sup>

One particularly entertaining fundraiser was the Shadow Box Social. Prior to the start of the event, a number of older students volunteered to be “auctioned” to the highest bidder to supply a day or a weekend of labour. These volunteers, unseen by the crowd, disguised themselves in old coats, straw hats, and ill-fitting clothing. Then, one at a time, they appeared as a shadow on a curtain that had been strung across the front portion of the room. The shadow struck poses, danced, and did amusing acrobatics for the entertainment of the crowd, who’s applause and laughter encouraged the shadow’s outrageous antics. By the end of the evening, the crowd was tickled, the shadows (and the attached students) were sold, money was raised, and everyone enjoyed a home cooked, potluck meal.<sup>3</sup>

For the bachelors, the fundraiser of the year was the Basket Social:

All the women and girls came with boxes decorated to the hilt, filled with a delicious lunch. The men and boys would buy these boxes from the auctioneer and win the right to eat dinner with the owner of the box. A young couple courting would try to connive a way so the beau would know which box belonged to his sweetheart. The married men would take great delight in giving him a hard time and bump the bid just a little to watch the young couple squirm. As a young girl, it was the horror of her dreams to have a “crusty old bachelor” buy her box – much better if it was the young man down the road.<sup>4</sup>

The artistic merit of these decorated boxes and baskets was remarkable. Some, down to the finest detail, resembled shoes, animals, houses, barns, tepees, wagons, steamboats, and other objects of the creator’s imagination. The lunch inside, of “delicious fried chicken, sandwiches, yummy cake and cookies,” was ample and tasty: if the maker of the box was still in school, the food was likely prepared by her mother. Basket Socials were always well attended and successful; some baskets commanded as much as \$10.00 or \$15.00.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 119.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 24, 57, 85, 111, 144, 180.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

<sup>5</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 46; Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 114.

On 13 January 1923 at the annual ratepayers meeting in the Beauvais School District, the community, gave “a vote of thanks [to] Miss Routhier and the ladies who took part in the Xmas entertainment.”<sup>6</sup> This is high praise indeed – it is the only place in the school board minute book (which records *thirty years* of recorded meetings) where the community or board offers thanks to a teacher for his or her efforts. Even more impressive is that Miss Routhier managed to organize such a note-worthy program in her first year of teaching.

Of all of the social events held in the district throughout the year, the Christmas concert was, by far, the most anticipated. In preparation, a teacher began as early as September, selecting potential music and material for presentation. Schools in nearby districts would have to be consulted – each school chose a different date so that people of the area could see each of the different concerts.<sup>7</sup> Fund raising events had to be planned and scheduled so that the teacher had enough money to purchase gifts and candies from Santa. How fortunate for the teacher that the T. Eatons Company provided a brilliant service designed for schools:

Early in September every school district in Canada received a Christmassy-looking green order form. All the busy school teacher had to do was to write in the ages and number of boys and girls for whom presents were needed, enclose the amount of money collected in the district for the Christmas expenses, and make sure to indicate the date of the concert. The Eaton’s Christmas Tree Shopping Service did the rest. They gift wrapped the presents, labeled them as to age and boy/girl suitability, and sent the parcel in plenty of time to reach its destination by the date indicated on the order form. It was a simple matter for the teacher to write the name of the appropriate pupil on the Christmas tag attached to each gift package and place them all under the school Christmas tree.... The order was filled beyond anyone’s expectations.... Many a teacher received the surprise of her life, when, upon opening the school’s parcel from Eatons, she found a special treat for her students – a bag of candy. It was unbelievable! It was incredible! Yes, it was a Christmas miracle! The teacher knew very well that these sweets would be the only ones her pupils would receive for Christmas.<sup>8</sup>

In November, practicing for the concert began. Although ideas for skits and plays could be found in books, the students were encouraged and excited to develop scripts of their own. Rehearsals were scheduled for recess and noon, but often spilled over into regular lessons.<sup>9</sup> If a school didn’t have a piano, the students walked to a nearby homestead for music practice. The neighbour’s piano was later loaded into a horse-drawn wagon and carted to the school for the night of the concert.<sup>10</sup>

In each home, mothers were busy sewing elaborate costumes from leftover fabric, crepe paper, cheesecloth and bits of coloured tinsel.<sup>11</sup> Bed sheets were fashioned and

<sup>6</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 13 January 1923.

<sup>7</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 37; Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 87.

<sup>8</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 117.

<sup>9</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 31, 111.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 25, 113.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 85, 111.

dyed for use as curtains and skirts for the stage.<sup>12</sup> As mothers busily prepared sandwiches, cakes and cookies for the midnight lunch, they listened and watched attentively to their children's endless repetition of lyrics, lines, and theatrics.<sup>13</sup>

A stage was needed, so with large planks, the fathers built a sectional platform with wings for exiting, entering and changing. The homemade curtains were mounted on tightly strung wire so that they could be opened and closed.<sup>14</sup>

As a finishing touch, a Christmas tree was carefully selected, mounted in one corner of the room, and decorated with strings of popcorn and cranberries and ornaments made from the colourful pages of old catalogues. Candles in little tin holders were carefully clamped to the branches of the tree.<sup>15</sup> Hand-made crepe paper decorations of all sizes, colours, and shapes festooned the walls and hung from the ceiling.<sup>16</sup>

With high expectations, the entire community jammed into the tiny schoolhouse on the night of the big event. To begin the program, a school board trustee welcomed the audience.<sup>17</sup> Then, with a fluttering of the curtain, a choreographed sequence of Christmas carols, poetry recitations, plays, skits, pantomimes and marching drills delighted the audience.<sup>18</sup> "Occasionally, the four sections of the stage floor would jar apart a little and cause some unexpected activity in the [performance] such as a chair leg falling through just as a young lady attempted to sit down gracefully only to land on the floor."<sup>19</sup>

Out of nowhere, accompanied by the jangling of sleigh bells, Santa Claus would arrive to gleeful squeals from the children. Before distributing the gifts, he would spend considerable time telling stories about the good deeds of the children in the district. Then, he would hand out neatly wrapped gifts (courtesy of the T. Eaton Company), candy bags and a Japanese orange to each expectant, grateful child.<sup>20</sup>

Without pause, the strains of a fiddle, piano, accordion or mouth organ would rise up, the floor would be cleared, and a dance would shake the tiny schoolhouse to its foundations. While bundled babies lay sleeping on the desks, and older children played on the stage and the busy dance floor, callers directed enthusiastic dancers through squares and reels.<sup>21</sup>

At midnight, a collective array of each woman's finest offerings was set out on makeshift buffet tables. Strong coffee, kept warm in a copper boiler on the stove was served (sometimes doctored) to the exhausted but happy crowd. While the dancers rested and feasted, individuals with talent took the floor to entertain the crowd with step dancing, whistling, and singing. Shortly, the dancing resumed, continuing on into the night.<sup>22</sup>

In the darkness of the December morning, the festivities ended, and families, one by one, made their way to the blanketed horse teams that had waited patiently since the prior evening. Looking back to that moment, one person remembers: "Often it was very

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 31, 85

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 46, 111.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 31, 46.

<sup>15</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 120.

<sup>16</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 123.

<sup>17</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 85.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 25, 31, 46, 58.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 32.

<sup>20</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32, 37, 46, 47; Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 117; Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 84-85.

<sup>21</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 47.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 24, 46, 47,

cold and I remember Mamma and Papa bundling us warmly into the sleigh and hearing the crunch of the horses' hooves and sleigh runners as we journeyed home with stars sparkling in the sky".<sup>23</sup>

With all of the energy and enthusiasm contributed by the entire community, it is no wonder that the annual Christmas concert was looked forward to with such anticipation.<sup>24</sup> It is also no surprise that teachers like Katie Routhier breathed a deep sigh of relief when it was over.

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>24</sup> Christmas concerts were so enjoyed by the community that in 1939, when the Pincher Creek School Board ordered Christmas concert practices not be held during school time and that concerts not be held in the evenings the district called a meeting and wrote letters informing the Pincher Creek School Board and the Department of Education that this was not satisfactory. A letter was received in January 1940 acceding to their wishes and the concerts carried on as usual [PCDSD No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 25].

## 1924: The Best Part of the Day

Despite the fact that the school board did everything it could to make the schoolhouse a comfortable learning environment, there were always unavoidable distractions. Children who rose early to finish farm chores before walking for one or two hours to school (depending on the weather) were physically taxed before the start of the school day. The temperature in the school was never constant and often uncomfortably warm or cool. Other living creatures inhabiting the school (flies, spiders, wasps, bees, and mice) constantly competed with the teacher for attention. Multiple lessons going on in the classroom made it difficult to focus on one's own work.

It would be untrue to say that school was always an uncomfortable and undesirable place to be. However, the children (being children) of the one-room schoolhouse needed to be released regularly from the demands of focus and concentration. This happened three times daily, during a one-hour lunch period and two fifteen minute recess breaks.

In the minds of the children, three entities held the keys to their freedom; the loudly ticking clock on the wall of the schoolhouse which dragged its hands slowly from break to break; the teacher who abruptly interrupted their freedom with the ringing of a hand bell; and the weather which both smiled and frowned upon the whole business with rain, wind, snow, wind, sun and wind.

The lunch hour, because of its length, afforded the most satisfying break, and allowed an opportunity to refuel for the second half of the school day. Each child's lunch, packed neatly in a syrup pail, was hearty and nourishing, and might contain a hard-cooked egg, a cold baked potato, a chunk of cheese, an apple, fresh cookies or cake, and a sandwich on thick slices of home-made bread, spread with lard, bacon fat, molasses, syrup, or jam.<sup>1</sup>

On 16 January 1925, the Beauvais School Board caught wind of an innovative, new hot lunch program, and decided to implement it at the Beauvais school. Thereafter, Miss Routhier was given authority (but no extra pay) to look after hot lunch and cocoa for the pupils.<sup>2</sup> Like her counterparts in other rural schools, she

presided over the preparation of a proper hot lunch of stew or beans brought from home, and when times were hard, she made a kind of co-operative soup. One child brought a potato, another a carrot or an onion to go into the pot in the morning and be soup by noon. Sometimes the school garden was used to grow root vegetables that were stored by neighbours and cooked up in cold months, so the children got a hot dish of turnips or carrots as part of a rib-sticking winter lunch... [Necessary] funds came from the school board or from the women's groups, or were raised at community parties.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 121, 143, 154; Fort Steele, *Schoolhouse Days: Educational Programmes – Fort Steele Heritage Town*. <http://www.fortsteele.bc.ca/visitor/education/schoolhouse.asp> [27 June 2002].

<sup>2</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 16 January 1925.

<sup>3</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 19.

The teacher always ate lunch with the students. Actually, there was one teacher, Mrs. Elisa Sorge, who didn't in 1943, and was directed by the board that she "should have her lunch at school with her pupils as in previous years."<sup>4</sup>

Once they were done eating, the children wasted no time getting down to serious play. In spring and fall, the students organized themselves into games of anti-I-over,<sup>5</sup> duck on a rock, follow the leader, hide and seek, hop scotch, stealing sticks, pom-pom-pull-away, rope skipping, run sheep run, and red light, green light. All of these games required little or no equipment. For those that did, equipment was fashioned from materials in the schoolyard or from home.<sup>6</sup>

More complex games appeared in the form of football and baseball. As one teacher recalls,

The leading sport indulged in by the boys and girls at school was football, and all through the winter unless the mercury got lower than thirty degrees below zero, they were all out in the road during recess, and kept the pigskin on the merry jump. They knew nothing of the game, and even when I tried to teach them, they preferred to simply kick it and run. The girls were as good players as the boys, and when it came to a heavy body check the boys usually got the worst of the bargain.<sup>7</sup>

A modified form of baseball called scrub was also a favourite. An ongoing game played at consecutive breaks could last over a week. High quality equipment was hard to come by; "When a bat broke, a light fence post would do. When the ball was lost or worn out, rags or string were wound tight to make a substitute."<sup>8</sup> When it came to baseball, a fierce rivalry existed between neighbouring schools. Even the youngest players took the competitive Friday afternoon games (scheduled monthly and sometimes weekly in the spring) very seriously.<sup>9</sup>

For a curious child, the science and beauty of the landscape could easily fill a lunch break. In the nearby creek, minnows and water bugs could be caught and studied. Hunting for edible plants like wild onions, saskatoons, and crab apples caused students to stray far enough from the school that they couldn't seem to hear the bell when it rang (They also hunted for gophers, crows and magpies, but this had little to do with curiosity).<sup>10</sup> If a lake was near enough to the school, students fished or constructed rafts. The children who rode horses to school challenged each other to races in the open fields. It was rare for a student to admit boredom during lunch or recess.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 23 February 1943.

<sup>5</sup> Pat Moskaluk, "North Fork School, 1906-1955," (Personal Research, Pincher Creek, 2003), 26. Anti-I-over was a tag and ball game played over a structure (the schoolhouse, barn or a large outbuilding). After dividing into two teams, each team chose opposite sides of the building. A ball was tossed over the roof of the building. The receiving team had to catch the ball, run around to the opposition's side, and tag an opponent. Those tagged became members of the opposing team.

<sup>6</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 97, 108; PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32, 65, 71, 84, 156; Pat Moskaluk, "North Fork School," 19, 26.

<sup>7</sup> Ian MacPherson, "George Chipman, Educator," *Alberta History*, 26:4, (Autumn 1978), 38.

<sup>8</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 97.

<sup>9</sup> Pat Moskaluk, "North Fork School," 26; Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 108; PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32, 71.

<sup>10</sup> See section 1922: Morning Routines.

<sup>11</sup> Pat Moskaluk, "North Fork School," 19, 26; Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 97; PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32, 34, 44, 63, 65, 84, 144.



With winter came a new set of pursuits, dependent on snow and ice. Snowball fights, and the building of snow forts and igloos occurred naturally as a seemingly instinctive response to accumulated snow. If sheets of ice were near, students were delighted to simply slide around. Games of shinny (like hockey without skates) were played using branches from nearby trees. Goalies lashed old catalogs to their shins for padding. If small hills or coulees were nearby, students would ride wildly down the slopes on pieces of cardboard until all that was left of their makeshift sleds was soggy pulp.<sup>12</sup>

The outdoor winter activity best remembered was a tag game called “fox and geese,” as described by a former student:

In a field of new virgin snow, students would follow the leader who designed a giant pie. The centre part of the pie was the “safe” spot, one person was “it” and he proceeded to chase people around the pie until he tagged them. Only one person at a time could be in the safe spot and when a person was tagged he became “it” as well and this continued until only one person had not been tagged and was considered the winner.<sup>13</sup>

On particularly chilly days, the barn became an exciting venue for adventure:

Get all the horses out pasturing in the yard and you were challenged to swing from the rafters, and more daring yet, swing the rafters with the horses tied in their stalls... Needless to say, this did not always go over well with the teacher, and also helped spoil many a good saddle horse.

The horses, unfortunately, were not the only ones to be spoiled. Eventually, “the barn was declared off limits after one student fell from the rafters and suffered a concussion.”<sup>14</sup> An accident, it seemed, (including a broken bone, a broken window, falling through ice, being kicked by a horse, severe frostbite and others) resulted in immediate (but not always permanent) prohibition of the offending activity.<sup>15</sup>

Inevitably, there were days that were too cold or too wet to take an outside recess or lunch break. If a child arrived at school with wet clothing and footwear, it was very important that it dried out before the trip home, which sometimes meant staying indoors to prevent re-soaking them at each break. On indoor days, children played “I spy with my little eye,” “twenty questions,” “hangman,” and “upset the fruit basket.”<sup>16</sup> “A few lucky schools had games like Snakes and Ladders, checkers, [and] crokinole, bought out of money raised at the Christmas concert or the fair.”<sup>17</sup>

Some students, who had far more energy than could be spent playing quiet indoor games, had a solution of their own. “On extremely cold days, students often played football with the boy’s cloakroom being the football field and the doorway between the

<sup>12</sup> Pat Moskaluk, “North Fork School,” 18, 26; Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 97, 108; PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 23, 33, 34, 84, 144, 156.

<sup>13</sup> Pat Moskaluk, “North Fork School,” 26.

<sup>14</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32, 65, 84.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 32, 72, 84.

<sup>16</sup> Pat Moskaluk, “North Fork School,” 26.

<sup>17</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 57.

cloakrooms being the goal. The dust was so thick one could barely breathe and all the participants had bruises from their ankles to their knees...".<sup>18</sup>

Recess and lunch breaks served as much more than an energy outlet. The children were learning the value of fair play within cooperative and competitive activities. Since the people they were playing with (mostly brothers, sisters, and first and second cousins) were members of their current and future community, they had the opportunity to practice social interaction, conflict resolution and self-reflection. By participating actively in the children's games, teachers had an opportunity to model and encourage the morals and ethics of the day.<sup>19</sup> For most teachers in the early days of the one-room schoolhouse, it was natural to participate in student games, since he or she was the same age or a few years older than the oldest pupils. As an added bonus for the students, the teacher's participation also resulted in extended recesses and extra innings. In one particular school, "recess lasted as long as the teacher was winning."<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> Sheehan, "Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980," 229. School inspectors in the 1920s were insisting, in fact, that teachers take a greater interest in supervising physical and moral development during the recess and noon breaks.

<sup>20</sup> Betty Smith, 7 April 2002, editorial comment.

## 1926: Readers and Textbooks

The last male teacher to instruct at the Beauvais School was Hugh Ross. Hugh was born into a family of teachers; His father, W.A. Ross had come from Manitoba to take the principalship of the Pincher Creek Public School. Hugh's two siblings, Colin and Kathleen, also became teachers. Although Hugh didn't know it when he accepted his two-year posting at Beauvais, he would eventually become Superintendent of Schools in Lacombe and Claresholm.<sup>1</sup>

By the end of his first year (1926/27), he had impressed the school board: "Some discussion took place regarding the teacher's salary for the coming year. It was felt that Hugh Ross had given good service...". A motion was passed that his wage be increased by \$5.00 each month to an annual salary of \$1100.00.<sup>2</sup>

The most important scholastic resource available to Hugh Ross (and every other teacher of the time) was the elementary school reader. In 1922, a new series of textbooks, the *Canadian Readers*, had replaced the familiar *Alexandra Readers*, which Hugh himself had learned from as a child. The implementation of a new reader series may seem like a simple act, but in retrospect, that act spoke volumes about the changing face of Canadian culture and society. By way of explanation, a brief history of readers follows:

In the 1880s Canada was still a very young country. Ranchers running cattle on large tracts of leased land had heavily utilized the Pincher Creek area, until the Dominion Government of Canada began canceling their leases so that quarter sections could be offered to newly arriving, homestead-seeking farmers. The process of replacing ranchlands with farmlands at this time in history was slow – the fingers of the railroad had not extended this far west, making travel and the supply of goods very labour intensive.

There were few schools in the Northwest Territories at the time, and even fewer well-trained teachers. While textbooks could be purchased for a few cents from the T. Eaton Company, teachers used whatever was available to them, including texts printed in the United States of America.<sup>3</sup>

In 1893, David C. Goggin, an Ontario educator, was hired to be the first superintendent of schools in the Northwest Territories. He was an ambitious and dedicated man. Knowing that schools could be used to transmit culture, model morality, and work as agents of the crown, he immediately transplanted the Ontario curriculum, including the *Ontario Readers*, to the Northwest Territories. The *Ontario Readers* quickly became the centre of the entire school program – in a culture that believed that knowledge was finite, it became an undisputed authority, especially for teachers lacking adequate training. The readers celebrated British heroes, events and places, and idealized the British values of loyalty, honesty, respect and obedience.<sup>4</sup>

In 1908, the *Alexandra Readers* replaced the *Ontario Readers*. The new series,

<sup>1</sup> PC&DHS, *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass*, 141-142.

<sup>2</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 20 July 1927.

<sup>3</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 75.

<sup>4</sup> Sheehan, "Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980," 39.

“the first free text distributed to all schoolchildren in Alberta, suggested to the reader that the British Empire was progressive, powerful and the most enlightened of civilizations and that the British people were brave, intelligent and moral.”<sup>5</sup>

Any Canadian content in the readers reinforced Canada’s place as a colony and a faithful servant of Britain. The selections in the reader were chosen to introduce pupils to an array of modern English writers, and to cover topics of science, geography and history.<sup>6</sup> A pupil advancing through the grades was assigned a new, more advanced reader each year. Since the reader was practically the only text used, “all work seemed to centre around [it], whether it was silent reading, oral reading, literature, memorization, the study hour, topics for composition, or even exercises for grammar.”<sup>7</sup>

There were strict rules regarding care of the readers. The teacher was accountable for every reader received by the school, and had to report annually to the Department of Education the number of readers on hand, and the number of new readers required for each grade.<sup>8</sup> If a child lost or damaged the book assigned to them, he or she would not receive another reader until advancing to the next grade.<sup>9</sup>

Students took their readers everywhere. Many parents, in fact, gained literacy in the evenings from their children’s readers. For all their usefulness, early readers would not, by today’s standards, be considered attractive: “Their few illustrations were in black and white, and even the hard cover was finished in a drab brown or dull gray.”<sup>10</sup>

In 1922, the *Alexandra Readers* were replaced by the *Canadian Readers*. By 1926, Hugh Ross’s first year at the Beauvais School, the new series had already been the authorized elementary text for four years.

During World War I, the exploits of Canadians gained international recognition for Canada, not just as a colony of Britain but as a country with an identity of its own. The new *Canadian Readers* mirrored the nation’s increasing sense of pride; they were filled with stories of Canadian heroes and Canadian settings. Illustrations showed the parliament buildings in Ottawa and the Canadian Ensign. Nationally recognized songs (O Canada and the Dominion Hymn) were also contained within its pages.<sup>11</sup>

The *Canadian Readers*, like the *Alexandra Readers* before them, acted as transmitters of culture, clearly reflecting and perpetuating attitudes concerning women, their nature, and their place in society:

The Alexandra Readers, ... and the Canadian Readers ... seldom mention women, and if they did it would be in a nursery rhyme selection such as “Mary’s Little Lamb” or the story of Joan of Arc. Stories about everyday people and activities did not usually include girls and women. When they did, the little girls were in embarrassing situations, and their mother reacted with shrieks as in “Maggie and Tom.” Or they were like the girl in “Maggie Tulliver and the Gypsies” who was so silly as to think she could run away and be happy with gypsies. For the most

<sup>5</sup> Sheehan, “Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980,” 41.

<sup>6</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 74; Sheehan, “Indoctrination,” 230-231.

<sup>7</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 41-42; Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 74.

<sup>8</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 30 June 1930. The register contains a form filled out by Miss Katie Marie Routhier requesting ten new readers.

<sup>9</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 41-42.

<sup>10</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 41.

<sup>11</sup> Sheehan, “Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980,” 41.

part these sets of readers told the stories of heroes, hunters, soldiers, Indians, explorers, inventors, and wise men – characters who were not female.<sup>12</sup>

In time, the pedestal upon which the elementary reader sat began to crumble. By 1934, the philosophy of education had changed radically. As the child became the centre of learning, the new reader series, *Highroads to Reading*, and various other textbooks were unrecognizable from their predecessors:

New books, more colourful, child-oriented and illustrated were introduced. The readers ... had a controlled vocabulary, introducing new words one at a time and in order of difficulty. The content changed from “old” world to “new” world interests, from materials dealing with the past to those concerned with the present; and from an emphasis on the world of the adult to that of the child.<sup>13</sup>

This new way of learning called “Progressive Education” no longer looked to the reader as the undisputed authority. Instead, it became one of a multitude of resources available to supplement learning. This movement required (in theory) that each rural school have a library and cupboards full of reference materials, books, and manipulatives. Unfortunately the long-term effects of prolonged drought, the economic depression and World War II hampered the development and attainment of truly Canadian resources, forcing many rural teachers to fall back to the reader as a primary resource.<sup>14</sup>

Interestingly, despite progressive education philosophies, the new readers and textbooks in the 1940s and 1950s continued to portray women as “simple helpless creatures ... confined to the home”<sup>15</sup>

[Girls] were silly, as in “Jane Helps” in which Jane set the table and forgot to set a place for herself, or a nuisance as was Deborah who insisted on tagging along with her brothers, or they were seen baking, cleaning, or sewing. Boys and men, meanwhile, were involved in building tree houses or tracking wild animals; they saw that the car was repaired, carried brief cases, and were seldom found in the house.<sup>16</sup>

The elementary reader began as *the* highly recognized authority meant to transmit a British Imperialist way of knowing the world. It evolved into a vehicle for an emerging Canadian (specifically western) culture. In the end, it lost its singular importance, demoted to a common resource. At disadvantaged schools, it was used as a consolation for their lack of resources.

<sup>12</sup> Sheehan, “Women and Education in Alberta,” 118.

<sup>13</sup> Sheehan, “Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980,” 46.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, 43-46.

<sup>15</sup> Sheehan, “Women and Education in Alberta,” 118.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

## 1928: Early Transportation

When you ask someone who attended a one-room schoolhouse to name the horse he or she used to ride to school, names like Old Bob, Lady, Nibs, Cuddles, Trinket, Big Black, Spike and Flicka spill out fondly without hesitation.<sup>1</sup> When you ask the same person to recall the names of their early teachers, there is a pause as names are listed with uncertainty. This is no surprise. Teachers rarely stayed in the district longer than two years, but well-trained farm horses were dependable, long-standing servants that frequently gained family status.

The Beauvais School District, at its largest, was nine miles long and over five miles wide.<sup>2</sup> Because of the school's central location in the district, students traveled from every direction of the compass to attend. A student could be as close as a few hundred yards (the Therriault family lived two hundred yards from the school), or as far as six to seven miles by road (the farthest distance on record is four and a half miles).<sup>3</sup> It was common for students within three miles to walk (sometimes barefoot) if the terrain was gentle and the weather was mild.<sup>4</sup> Students challenged by farther distances, rough terrain and inclement weather relied on other forms of transportation. Riding horseback was typical, but it was easier to carry multiple passengers in two-wheel carts, buggies, and wagons until winter, when cutters, bob sleighs and enclosed cabooses became more practical.<sup>5</sup> Bicycles, mules and donkeys also carried riders, and occasionally the family dog pulled young children to school on a sled.<sup>6</sup>

For those of us born after the era of the one-room schoolhouse, it is easy to imagine adventure (in mythical proportions) of the daily journey to school on horseback. In truth, the ride was almost always uneventful, even boring<sup>7</sup> (there was also an annoying consequence to riding bareback – in spring, when the horses shed their warm winter hair, “it would stick to clothing where the rider and horse made contact”).<sup>8</sup> On rare occasions, an unexpected event broke the monotony of the ride, causing a rush of adrenalin. For instance, “the horses were often watered in the ditches on the way home since there wasn't an ample supply of water at school...” One young student was caught off guard when “her horse (rider and all), decided to roll in the water and cool off...”<sup>9</sup> Wildlife sightings were cause for caution; “It was not unusual to see bears and often a mother with cubs during the summer.”<sup>10</sup> In the days before bridges were common in the Pincher Creek area, daily river crossings were potentially dangerous, especially in winter when the surface was iced over, and in spring when the water was high. Miss Katie Routhier (who had returned in 1928 to teach at the Beauvais School for an additional two years), recalled traveling to the Beauvais School as a student:

<sup>1</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 50, 62; Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Alberta Gazette*, Edmonton, 4 February 1939.

<sup>3</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 1927/28, 1931/32, 1946/47 and 1947/48. Two generations of Therriault's lived right next to the school [1927/28, and 1947/48]. Children from the Wormley and Craig family [1931/32 and 1946/47 respectively] traveled 4.5 miles to school each day.

<sup>4</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 45, 71.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 50, 55, 71; Manager, Howard Synder (Remington Carriage Museum), telephone conversation with author, 3 March 2003.

<sup>6</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 100-102; PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32, 71, 136-137.

<sup>7</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32.

<sup>8</sup> Pat Moskaluk, “North Fork School, 1906-1955,” 15.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>10</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 48.

The Creek Crossing was often a near disaster for us getting to school before the bridge was built. We often drove in a light wagon in the spring when the creek was high, swift and dirty. My father used to say, "Watch the bank on the other side. Don't look at the water and hang on." With that the horses would plunge in over their chests and always got us through safely. As I got older I have crossed there and had to hold my feet up to keep dry. Then in the winter often it would be glare ice. We carried a shovel to sand but sometimes took a chance, and the horses might be down until it was sanded! One team we had did fall. The next time we arrived, they laid down before they stepped onto the ice and waited until it was sanded! When the ice started to go out and a channel washed thru, it could be pretty dangerous.<sup>11</sup>

Most trips, however, were uneventful. In fact, to amuse themselves, "the more adventuresome or foolhardy would sometimes wrestle on horseback."<sup>12</sup> All things considered, a horse that is startled or irritated, or has stumbled in a gopher hole, can react quite unpredictably. With so much potential for injury, it is quite remarkable that there were so few broken arms, sprained wrists, or broken collarbones.<sup>13</sup>

Pity there was no Normal School class designed to prepare city-born teachers-in-training for travel on horseback. One teacher, on the first day of school, fell off his horse while crossing the river, resulting in an unscheduled holiday for the students.<sup>14</sup> Another teacher was riding along quietly when a nearby train blew its whistle. "Before she realized what was happening, she was off the horse and fortunately only dragged a short way."<sup>15</sup> More than one inexperienced schoolmistress found her pride and her bottom injured when, riding sidesaddle, she found herself easily dismounted.<sup>16</sup> Teachers like these watched the horsemanship of the students with amazement:

By nine o'clock they began to arrive from every quarter of the compass... I had seen equestrians before but none like these children... Sometimes as many as three rode on the same pony without a saddle. The oldest, whether boy or girl, sat in front and held the reins while the others sat in the rear and embraced their drivers. In this precarious manner they came up and down the hills as fast as the ponies could run and finished up with a grand race on the level before the school house. None of them seemed to think of danger for they had ridden the ponies since they were five years old...<sup>17</sup>

Imagine a five-year-old, forty-pound child commanding an 1100 to 1200 pound horse a cumulative distance of six to nine miles, five days a week. Parents, of course would find the gentlest, most well-trained horse available to convey their youngest

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 32.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 110, 111.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 178. According to Hughie Cameron, a student of the Hillsborough School District (near the Beauvais District) this event happened to Frank Austin in 1924.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 179.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 122.

<sup>17</sup> Ian MacPherson, "George Chipman, Educator," 34.

children to school. Some of these horses came to know the route so well that they could travel the entire distance without any direction from their rider. When a child (and family) outgrew the need for such a horse, it was often sold to another family with young school age-children. It was humorously common for a relocated horse to bring a young child to the wrong home for the first week of school.<sup>18</sup>

The round-up at the end of each school day was an entertaining sight. On some days there were as many horses as there were children, especially in the cold winter months. It was the responsibility of the teacher (with the help of the older pupils) to make sure that each child found their own horse<sup>19</sup> (every once in a while, a horse left without its rider, who, forced into a long walk home, found the horse waiting impatiently at home in the yard to be fed).<sup>20</sup> The youngest children were dependent on others (or on handy platforms, steps, fences, etc.) to help them up onto their mount:

Once a small child got off his horse, voluntarily or accidentally, the hardest task facing the tot was to climb back on, especially if he had been riding bareback and there was no saddle to use for leverage. Most parents were aware of the problem and erected small wooden platforms near wire gates, where the children had to dismount to open them. Without such convenient pedestals, the resourceful youngsters relied on the barbed wire fence, nearby boulders, a clump of shrubs, or similar makeshift underprops.<sup>21</sup>

One father even trained the family horse to lie down for the children when they wanted to get on, and then to stand once they were securely mounted.<sup>22</sup> Another father secured an extra stirrup to the saddle horn so the child could climb the stirrups like a ladder.<sup>23</sup>

For their service, the horses were allowed to graze in the school pasture in good weather, which, in turn, controlled the weeds and grass. Most rural schools including the Beauvais School had a barn, that became particularly crowded (and needed frequent cleaning) in winter.<sup>24</sup>

The value of horses and the success of the one-room school were inseparable. While every district had its own heroic story of the horse that saved its rider by carrying him or her to safety through a blinding snowstorm, they were also recognized for the everyday effort they contributed to getting the children and the teacher to school.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 32.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 32, 45, 50.

<sup>20</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 51.

<sup>21</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 100.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> Betty Smith, 7 April 2002, editorial comment.

<sup>24</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 110-111.

<sup>25</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 97-98.



## 1929: The Fun Part of Learning

Daily routines and standard resources, inextricably linked, formed the backbone of the one-room school program, providing comfort, familiarity and efficiency for teachers and students. Unfortunately, routines and textbooks are not the stuff of which school legends (and other extraordinary school memories) are made. After decades have passed, former students are more apt to recall a teacher with a unique talent, a lesson taken outside, learning disguised as games, lessons that were scary or disgusting, and the introduction of new equipment and technology.

For instance, when Miss McLeod came to teach in the Pincher Creek area, she gave her students a memorable “crash course in the Highland Fling.” Peter Stones, a teacher with a gift for art, excited his students with lessons in woodworking, oil painting and picture tinting. Vera Cox taught the boys and the girls in her class “how to knit and do fancy work.”<sup>1</sup>

Science came to life when students experienced it first hand during Nature Study. One student recalls

the day Pa Rutledge and some of his neighbors shot a bear on his land. They put the dead bear on the back carrier of his car and brought it down to the school for all to see. What excitement, a real bear, and only two miles from the school.<sup>2</sup>

Another remembers how Mr. Riggall, a parent, used to take the class on nature hikes to teach the students about plants: “One walk was to Pine Ridge, where he showed us a large den of garter snakes, telling us about their habits and hibernation ways.” Mr. Eric Tucker, a teacher with a flair for botany, “showed [the students] how to press [flowers and grasses] and then later they’d be mounted in a large heavy scribbler and named. He also helped [the students] differentiate between weeds and noxious weeds.”<sup>3</sup>

In an attempt to bring nature into the classroom, one teacher

located a large glass container, which was made into an aquarium (no electric, no power in those days). It was filled with water from a nearby slough, and the beautiful water plants were placed in it, then the many interesting beetles and any other little aquatic creatures – some frogs’ eggs too. It was great fun and educational, to notice their changes as the eggs slowly turned into quick moving tadpoles, each with a little short tail. Water was changed every two or three days to keep it fresh. After two or three weeks, the teacher had us put the little creatures and plants and tadpoles back in the slough.<sup>4</sup>

Miss Doris Cox provided an unforgettable example of inquiry-based science the day her class studied the prairie gopher:

Using a length of binder twine the older boys were sent out to capture a gopher. This they did without much trouble as they were plentiful that year. They brought

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<sup>1</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 58, 65, 135.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 85

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 85, 46, 45.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 45.

the live animal into the school in a cardboard box. During the class study someone asked if gophers were good to eat. The teacher did not know, but why wouldn't they be, gophers just eat grain and grass! After much deliberation it was decided the only way to know was to try it. So the gopher was killed, skinned, dressed out and parts were cooked over an open fire. The teacher, Miss Cox, and three of the class were game enough to try this delicacy. Well the end result was that all four got sick, so the rest of the school got a half day holiday.<sup>5</sup>

Rural school children, especially those who walked to school daily, were hardly in need of physical education. Nonetheless, teachers endeavored to provide their students exposure to a variety of physical pursuits. Students from the Kerr School in the Pincher Creek area remember vividly when they built home made tumbling mats from burlap bags stuffed with straw. A neighboring school followed suit and also constructed a box horse. "Many hours went into practicing for a tumbling display given in June." Mr. Ammon Ackroyd provided a comical spectacle for the Utopia students in his first year of teaching when he tried to carry a newly made ping-pong table to school, uphill in a stiff west wind. His efforts were not wasted: "Students practiced for hours to be able to improve enough to be able to beat the teacher".<sup>6</sup>

Geography and History were enlivened by competitive and cooperative ventures. The geography spelling bee pitted two teams against each other.<sup>7</sup>

The teacher started the game by calling out, or by writing on the blackboard, some geographical name. Then it was up to each team member in turn to supply another geographical word [beginning with the last letter of the previous word]. No name could be repeated; each had to be of a real place, mountain, lake, river, ocean, sea or desert. In addition, the words used had to be spelled correctly. As the score was based on the number of letters in each geographical name given, the pupils spent a good deal of time prior to Friday's contest searching for the longest names they could find in their geography textbooks... The teacher... was astounded by the improvement that she noted in the geographical knowledge and vocabulary of her pupils as a result of these Friday afternoon spelling bees.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast, the students of another rural school learned the geography of Alberta by working together:

We went out into the yard when the snow was nearly gone, scooped soft snow into piles in appropriate places to provide us water sources, marked out our map of Alberta to rough scale, dug us river basins with a hoe, piled us mountains with a shovel, got melting snow to put water in our rivers, stuck spruce branches and twigs in where we needed "bushland", set little blocks for cities and towns [*sic*]. It was great fun but very mucky.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 166.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 33, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 22, 33. Bees could focus on any topic, including farming, science, and literature. Equally popular were rapid calculation arithmetic contests.

<sup>8</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 46-47.

<sup>9</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 67.

When the Kerr School received a sand table, it was used to build “an Iroquois village, an ancient Inca city and numerous other worlds...”<sup>10</sup>

One would expect health class to be wholesome and comforting. But in winter, health meant a daily serving of cod liver oil. Boys delighted in grinding the capsules between their teeth and forcefully expelling their disagreeable breath to nearby students. Even worse, as part of the health program, a doctor or nurse made an annual visit to the school, which involved a general checkup and sometimes a vaccination. “The students dreaded these visits even more than that of the inspector.”<sup>11</sup>

In 1941, when the Beauvais School received a battery-powered combination radio and gramophone, the educational world increased in size as Beauvais students joined children across the province by tuning in to weekly scheduled programs. On Tuesday afternoons, children could listen to “Folk Music of the America’s” on CBC or “Tales From Far and Near” on CBK. Wednesdays offered “Singing in the Elementary Grades on CJOC and on Thursdays, CFCN broadcasted “Social Studies in the Intermediate Grades”. Friday afternoon could be spent listening to “Music Appreciation.”<sup>12</sup> Since many rural families could not afford to purchase a radio, this was, for some students, their only exposure and access to the broadcasted audio programs.

Novel events presented by teachable moments, exciting topics, creative teachers, and student antics lightened the tedium of classroom routine from time to time, and gave fuel for many supper table conversations. Necessity, however, dictated an adherence to a rather predictable schedule.

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<sup>10</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 33.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 33, 25.

<sup>12</sup> Bulletin, Pincher Creek School Division No. 29 to schools in the division, 1940, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta.

### 1933: The Multi-Grade Classroom

As a classroom teacher, I once taught grades seven to nine in one room at a rural school. It was, by far, the most challenging teaching assignment I have ever taken. Anxiety grips me when I think that the teachers of the Beauvais School were responsible for grades *one to eight* every day during the school's fifty-three years of operation.

Unbelievably, in 1933, Miss Mary Adela Willock taught grades *one to ten* at the Beauvais School. A handful of other teachers including Mrs. Skene, Miss Estelle Lynch, Mrs. Helen McIsaac, Mrs. Elisa Sorge, Miss Anne Krigousky and Miss Josephine Michalsky, taught grades *one to nine*.<sup>1</sup>

Prior to my research on historic classrooms, when I tried to imagine the daily timetable of an eight-grade classroom, I could not - if each grade studied only four different lessons each day, a teacher in an eight-grade classroom would have thirty-two lessons to prepare and deliver. It didn't seem possible.

I found a helpful answer in John C. Charyk's book *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails* in the form of a weekly timetable made by teacher Irene MacKenzie (reproduced below). Although the year this time table was used is not given, the subjects studied suggest that it was developed before 1935.<sup>2</sup> Note that although grades one to nine are scheduled, grades two and seven are absent.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Attendance Registers, Beauvais School District No. 18, 1928/29 – 1947/48. The attendance registers are only available for the final twenty years of the school's operation. For this reason, it is conceivable many early teachers between 1896 and 1928 were responsible for teaching grades beyond grade eight.

<sup>2</sup> Sheehan, "Education, the Society and the Curriculum in Alberta, 1905-1980," 44. After 1935, the Enterprise program was employed, and would have resulted in a much different looking timetable.

<sup>3</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 59.

Table 4  
A Multigrade Time Table

TIME TABLE								
Times	I	III	IV	V	VI	VIII	IX	
9:00-9:05	OPENING EXERCISES							ALG <i>Mon Wed</i> GEOM <i>Thurs</i> HIST <i>Tues Fri</i>
9:05-9:25	ORAL PREP PHONICS	SPELLINGS <i>Mon Tues Wed Thurs</i> ART <i>Fri</i>					ARITH <i>Mon Tues Thurs</i>	
9:25-9:35	READING	READING	READING S.W.	LITERATURE	ARITH <i>Mon Tues Wed Thurs</i> ART <i>Fri</i>	HISTORY <i>Wed</i>		
9:35-9:45	SEAT WORK	Silent Reading <i>Tues Thurs</i>	READING	S.W.		ART <i>Fri</i>	S.W.	
9:45-10:00	S.W.	Oral Reading <i>Mon Wed</i>	S.W.	S.W.		S.W.	S.W.	
10:00-10:15	S.W.		S.W.	ARITH		S.W.	S.W.	
10:15-1030	S.W.		Classes on Alt Days <i>Mon Wed Fri Tue Thurs</i>			WRITING	S.W.	S.W.
Morning Recess								
10:45-11:00	ARITH	ARITH	ARITH	ARITH	LIT <i>Tues Thurs</i>	LIT <i>Mon Wed Thurs</i> AGRI <i>Tues</i> HYG <i>Fri</i>	FRENCH <i>Tues Thurs</i> GEOM <i>Mon Wed</i> COMP <i>Fri</i>	
11:00-11:10	ARITH <i>Mon Wed Fri Tues Thurs</i>		S.W.	S.W.	HYGIENE <i>Fri</i>			
11:10-11:30	S.W.		LITERATURE S.W. <i>Fri</i>	S.W.	LITERATURE			
11:30-11:40	S.W.		ARITH Oral on Alt Day			AGRI <i>Booklet</i>		S.W.
11:40-12:00	S.W.			S.W.			S.W.	
1 Hour Intermission								
1:00-1:10	ORAL READING daily if possible by Teacher							HIST <i>Mon</i> COMP <i>Wed Thurs</i> LIT <i>Tues Fri</i>
1:10-1:25	PHONICS	GEOG <i>Tues Thurs</i>		HIST <i>Mon Wed Fri</i> GEOG <i>Tues Thurs</i>		ARITH <i>Fri</i>		
1:25-1:40		CITIZENSHIP <i>Mon Wed Fri</i>		HIST <i>Memory and Notes</i>		HIST <i>Mon Tues Thurs</i>		
1:40-1:50		MUSIC <i>Wed</i>					ORAL CLASSICS <i>S.W. Alternate Days</i>	
1:50-2:00		PHYSICAL TRAINING <i>Tues Thurs Fri</i>						
2:00-2:15		GEOG <i>Booklets</i>		GEOG <i>Textbooks</i>				
Afternoon Recess								
2:30-2:45	MEM WORK <i>Tues Thurs</i>	NATURE STUDY <i>Tues</i>		COMPOSITION		COMP <i>Tues Fri</i>	GEN SCI <i>Mon</i>	
2:45-2:55	ART <i>Mon</i>	ART <i>Wed</i>		NATURE STUDY		GRAM <i>Thurs</i>	FRENCH <i>Wed Thurs</i>	
2:55-3:05	WRIT <i>Wed</i>	HYGIENE <i>Mon</i>		ART		ART <i>Wed</i>	ALG <i>Thurs</i>	
3:05-3:20	PHONICS	WRITING <i>Thurs Fri</i>		WRITING <i>Fri</i>		WRIT <i>Fri</i>	ORAL	
3:20-3:30	<i>Fri</i>	WRITING		WRITING		WRITING		

There is far too much information in this timetable to take in with a single glance. The bold cells of the table indicate the grade on which the teacher focused her attention (Irene McKenzie took special care to try to schedule time with each grade before and after each recess). These focus blocks are ten to twenty minutes in length, meaning that each grade had Ms. McKenzie's attention for only forty to eighty minutes per day.

The daily schedule of a rural school strikes me as overwhelmingly difficult, but when placed in the broader context of the life of a schoolteacher, it is only one obstacle, and seemingly small in comparison.

By 1933, the teacher-training course at the Normal Schools in Calgary, Camrose and Edmonton had been lengthened to almost ten months. In that short time, participants raced through the following courses:<sup>1</sup>

Table 5  
Normal School Courses in 1933

Math	Language	Social	Science	Art	Pedagogy	Other
Arithmetic Elementary geometry algebra	English Literature Composition Grammar Reading Spelling	Geography History Civics	Nature Study Agriculture Physiology Hygiene	Art Music	History of Education Science of Education Class Management, Laws & Regulations School Organization Primary Methods Psychology Educational Principles & Problems	Physical Training Household Science (cooking and sewing) Manual Training/Arts • penmanship • woodwork • loom work • basketry • modeling

Normal School students also received brief lectures on topical subjects such as the school fair, public health, tree culture, the Junior Red Cross and involvement in rural organizations.<sup>2</sup>

Despite efforts made to provide a high quality of training to student teachers, there were many things that could not be taught by the Normal School experience. With little or no opportunity to observe and practice in a rural setting, graduates were not prepared for rural conditions. They did not learn how to plan multi-grade timetables, group children of various learning abilities, recognize children with special needs, keep students busy on different projects, or grade, test and teach such classes.<sup>3</sup> Since the Normal School program focused on elementary grades, the graduates did not have experience teaching secondary grades.<sup>4</sup>

All rural teachers encountered immigrants, and the major responsibility of integrating the children fell to the teacher.<sup>5</sup> However, no special training was given to student teachers bound for work with foreign children who did not speak English.<sup>6</sup> In many districts, teachers were witness (and often party) to discrimination and prejudice. On 23 November 1917 for instance, the school board debated the attendance of Doukhobor children at the Beauvais School.<sup>7</sup>

As settlers arrived in waves at the turn of the century, or left in droves during drought, the number of children on the register fluctuated wildly. At the Beauvais School in 1934/35, the year began with six students and ended with eighteen (a single family moving into or leaving the district could impact the class by four to six children).<sup>8</sup> On average, however, the Beauvais school had fifteen students attending each year between

<sup>1</sup> Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 416, 419, 422.

<sup>2</sup> Jones, "Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties," 274.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 268.

<sup>4</sup> Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 418. There were two exceptions to this – Camrose Normal School did provide some practical experience to a limited number of students at the high school level. As well, a four-month "academic course" for university graduates was developed to prepare secondary school teachers. This course lasted from 1919 to 1929. Less than two percent of Normal School graduates took this course. See John W. Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, p. 418.

<sup>5</sup> Patterson, "History of Teacher Education in Alberta", 198.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 200.

<sup>7</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 23 November 1917.

<sup>8</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 1934/35.

1928 and 1949.<sup>9</sup> Teachers in other rural schools were not so fortunate. Some had over fifty students in one room, with insufficient seating, textbooks and learning resources.<sup>10</sup>

Irregular attendance of students was a constant bane of rural teachers. Weather, duties at home, and parents who did not appreciate the value of education kept students from attending school for days, weeks or months at a time.<sup>11</sup> This complicated a teacher's regular workload by forcing him or her to arrange separate programs for the truants.

These obstacles did not prevent school boards from expecting teachers to take on custodial services, and to provide hot lunch programs. Nor did it deter school inspectors from directing teachers to spend their recess and lunch breaks supervising the children at play to encourage their health, happiness and moral welfare.<sup>12</sup> In addition, teachers bound by conscience spent hours after school assisting students who needed extra attention.

How then, did a teacher manage the expectations and workload of a rural posting? Survival demanded that each teacher develop coping mechanisms, which usually included a combination of the following strategies.

After taking inventory of the teaching resources available at the school, teachers "modified and interpreted curricula direction and guides according to their own expertise and education and the circumstances of their classroom."<sup>13</sup> Wherever possible, classroom chores were delegated or contracted out to willing and responsible students.

To make scheduling economical, routines were established so that the classroom could almost run itself. Time spent with each grade was short and concise. Lessons frequently combined two grades, with assignments expecting deeper comprehension from the higher grade.<sup>14</sup> Students learned to work independently for long periods of time, and advanced students were directed to tutor and assist those in need of attention when the teacher was otherwise occupied.<sup>15</sup>

When dealing with foreign students in large numbers, the curriculum was forsaken in favour of more practical lessons. One teacher "set up a house in one corner of the room, and a store in the other, using pictures, samples and crudely made furniture."<sup>16</sup>

To save time, teachers found clever ways of recycling previous lessons:

When I put math on the blackboard, I so prepared the problems that I need not erase it all and put up new. I could make new problems for the next day by erasing a number here or there and substituting another... [or] I would make a 1 into a 4 or a 9 or a 6 without even erasing. And then I need change it all only once a week – over the weekend.<sup>17</sup>

No matter how effective the coping strategies of a teacher, planning lessons for multiple grades kept rural teachers up past midnight and awake before 5:00 am:

During weekends ... and vacation periods, I worked out all the Reading and Literature questions and put them on rolls of store wrapping paper with each end

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., From 1928 to 1949, class sizes at the Beauvais School ranged from six to twenty-four.

<sup>10</sup> Patterson, "Voices From the Past," 108.

<sup>11</sup> See preceding section: 1933: Attendance and Truancy

<sup>12</sup> Sheehan, "Indoctrination", 227.

<sup>13</sup> Patterson, "Voices From the Past," 107.

<sup>14</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 67.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 58.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., 69

fastened to a rounded stick. Then I'd simply roll on to the next section after I'd finished teaching my 10 minute lesson and the students would have that day's seatwork.<sup>18</sup>

Despite their efforts, there was general consensus that rural teachers were "undertaking work that they [were] but ill-equipped to perform."<sup>19</sup> Their lack of preparedness did not go unnoticed by the parents, who often had no empathy for the teacher's situation. One resident wrote to complain against "[the inspector's] action of placing a teacher in charge of our school who is entirely incapable of managing a school as proven by her last years work here."<sup>20</sup>

It would have been nothing short of a miracle for a teacher with eight ( or as many as twelve) grades under one roof to daily meet the academic needs of each student. In the end, as teachers struggled nightly to learn secondary material critical for preparing high school students for their exams, it was the primary students that fell into the shadows of neglect:

Rolly Jardine ... never forgave his teacher for what she did to him in grade one. Preoccupied by the older scholars, she completely ignored him the whole year. He would get up, saunter aimlessly around the class, play in the sandbox, sit down, go to sleep, get up and wander off home. Never did his teacher interrupt this shiftless, loitering existence. She taught him nothing, and what he learned on his own matched that. At year-end he had no rudiments, no reading, no writing, no arithmetic, nothing. The day of reckoning finally arrived and he received his report card. He had passed into grade two! Over the next years Rolly paid heavily for the horrific start.<sup>21</sup>

When you ask a former teacher of a one-room schoolhouse to recall his or her experiences, they share regret: "I did not know how to handle the situation. Now I know, I failed at it."<sup>22</sup> Interestingly, former students remembering through the optimistic and egocentric eyes of a child have a much different perspective. Unlike Rolly Jardine mentioned in the example above, they rarely recall being neglected by the teacher. What they remember instead is the way the classroom operated despite the obstacles:

We learned to help each other. There was more personal contact, you got more attention and time from a teacher that you would ever get in a city school. You weren't just a student, you were part of his family. It's a marvelous memory for me, the community, the closeness, the warmth of feeling for the land.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

<sup>19</sup> Patterson, "History of Teacher Education in Alberta", 201.

<sup>20</sup> Jones, *Empire of Dust*, 198.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 193.

<sup>22</sup> Patterson, "Voices From the Past," 108.

<sup>23</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 58.



### 1934: Attendance and Truancy

In the current age, centralized schools, a transportation infrastructure and computer networks make education accessible to children throughout the province, including those in remote and isolated areas. Only a short time ago, however, even though the law required all children to attend school, it was a challenge for the provincial government to provide this service to all families. Some parents contributed to this difficulty by keeping their children at home because the distance was too far, the terrain was too rough for travel, assistance with farm chores was needed, or ill family members required nursing.

On 27 April 1934, at a regular meeting of the Beauvais School Board, the trustees of the Beauvais District discussed the advisability of allowing the children of Harry Smith to begin attending the school so late in the school year. They decided that doing so “would be unfair to the teacher and regular attending pupils.” The board advised Mr. Smith to register his children in the fall.<sup>1</sup>

On the same day, G.D. Plunkett, Police Magistrate of Pincher Creek, Alberta, sent the following letter to J.T. Ross, Deputy Minister of Education:

Last week, sitting in the Juvenile Court, I made an order that two boys aged 13 and 14 years, attend school regularly, their parent stated that the only school that they can get to now, on account of the river, is the Beauvais School, and I ordered that they start school on Monday the 23<sup>rd</sup>. This morning I received a telephone from the father, that the School Board had refused to allow them to attend, and the Teacher had sent them home this morning. These people live on land that is not in the School District, the excuse given is that they cannot start until the fall term.

I know of nothing in the School Act that allows the Board to take this arbitrary action, but I shall be glad if you will inform me what further action I can take. These boys are both in Grade one, and have never had any education, and if they cannot go to the local School, they will have to be committed to the charge of the [Superintendent] of Neglected Children.<sup>2</sup>

In reply to the Police Magistrate’s inquiry, Deputy Minister J.T. Ross explained that the school board was required to admit the children of any non-resident parent (or legal guardian) provided that the school was equipped to accommodate them, and that the parent pay tuition to the school. However, regarding the admission of pupils to grade one according to the school act, the date of admission was at the board’s discretion.<sup>3</sup>

This meant that Harry Smith’s two teenage sons, Jim and Jake, could have enrolled in grade one at the Beauvais School in September 1934, but they didn’t. They, in

<sup>1</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 27 April 1934.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, G.D. Plunkett, Police Magistrate, Pincher Creek, Alberta, to J.T. Ross, Deputy Minister of Education, 27 April 1934, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

<sup>3</sup> Letter, J.T. Ross, Deputy Minister of Education to G.D. Plunkett, Police Magistrate, Pincher Creek, Alberta, 2 May 1934, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.

fact, avoided attending school completely by eluding truancy officers until they were no longer of school age.<sup>4</sup>

Was Mr. Smith negligent by keeping his children from school? A simple visit to his homestead provides an explanation. Mr. Smith's property was located in the hills of the present Beauvais Lake Provincial Park. Because of its relatively high elevation, the property experiences a greater and more prolonged snow accumulation in winter, making travel to and from the homestead potentially difficult in fall, winter and spring. By map, the Smith home was located approximately four miles from the schoolhouse. In reality, because of the marshlands on the east and west ends of the lake, the children would have been forced to detour widely. Two other schools, Gladstone Valley and Coalfields, were equally far from the Smith property, but both required traversing a steep valley and a large stream. Only with heroic effort could the Smith children have attended the Beauvais School (or any other school) daily.<sup>5</sup>

This being said, heroic effort was standard and expected. In a memo from James McKay, Superintendent of the Pincher Creek School Division to new teachers of the district, he explained the critical importance of teacher attendance in the rural school, especially during inclement weather and provided the following reasons:<sup>6</sup>

1. You are responsible for the children who may come even in spite of the bad weather.
2. Those who are willing to brave the elements to get to school deserve the very best teaching of the school year. They are usually the best students - pupils who are often held back by the slower or the less ambitious ones. Such a day is an opportunity to give these pupils some advanced lessons and advanced reading.
3. As in all other things the example of the teacher is very important. If you stay at home, so will the pupils.

The Beauvais School attendance registers from 1928 to 1949 indicate that teachers rarely missed school, even due to illness, funerals or weddings. When they did, the students were treated with a day off – short-term substitute teachers for rural schoolhouses were unheard of.

Students, on the other hand, were not as dependable. Because of the labour-intensive nature of early farming, boys were kept home in the spring for planting, and in the fall for harvesting. Likewise, girls were kept home to work in the kitchen, helping to prepare large meals for the work crews. The effect of this was so disruptive on schools that some boards arranged the school year based on the agricultural calendar. For instance, during World War II, because the war depleted the rural areas of young men, school age boys were responsible to bring in the crops. During these years, classes at the

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<sup>4</sup> Granddaughter of Harry Smith, Linda Oczkowski, telephone conversation with author, 7 March 2003.

<sup>5</sup> The younger siblings of Jim and Jake eventually attended a variety of schools, but always boarded.

<sup>6</sup> Memo, McKay, James A., to new staff of Pincher Creek School District No. 29, 22 May 1948, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta.

Beauvais school (and at many other schools throughout the province) did not commence until October, and extended into July the following year.<sup>7</sup>

Weather also took its toll on student attendance. Blizzards and frigid temperatures rarely closed the school. On such days however, to explain the absence of the majority of the class, the teacher recorded remarks like “Too Cold”, “Too Stormy”, or “Snowy” in the register.<sup>8</sup>

If a teacher believed that a student was inexcusably absent, it was his or her responsibility to communicate this concern to the parents, and to forward a detailed letter to the Department of Education. For instance, a letter from Miss Mary A. Willock in the spring of 1935 stated that John Mikilak had been wrongfully detaining his children Angela (age eleven) and Katie (age ten). In the teacher’s opinion, “lack of interest of parents in school seems [to be] the cause of poor attendance”. She indicated that weather and illness had not been a hindrance. In spring 1938, teacher Frances K. Fugina reported the same family, indicating that Katie (age fourteen) and Walter (age eight) had been truant. She explained that although the children claimed to be sick, she believed that the mother’s illness was a factor. Regardless, the teacher believed “they could have attended more regularly.”<sup>9</sup>

In a similar instance, the same teacher reported John Maurer for the truancy of his sons John (age fourteen), Joseph (age thirteen) and Ernest (age eleven). In her opinion, they too had been “needed at home due to mother’s illness and father working part time,” but “could have attended more regularly if [an] effort [was] made.”<sup>10</sup>

Robert Swinney was accused of “carelessness” regarding the attendance of his three children, Willard (age thirteen), Verdun (age eleven) and Noreen (age eight), in 1939, and requested “that [the] children or preferably [the] parents be advised by the Department to send [their] children more regularly.”<sup>11</sup>

The intended results of these notices, of course, were to ensure regular attendance and proper education. Sadly, parents occasionally responded by withdrawing their children from school, as was the case with Angela Mikilak and the entire Maurer family.

At the end of each month, the teacher used the information in her attendance register to calculate a statistical average of attendance in the classroom. According to these calculations, between the years of 1928 and 1949, the Beauvais school had an average daily attendance of 86%. In other words, in a class of fifteen students, a teacher could expect two children, on average, to be missing each day.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>7</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 30, 122, 143-144, 165; Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 116; Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 1943/44 and 1945/46.

<sup>8</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 16 January 1930, 24 September 1934, 16 October 1934.

<sup>9</sup> Attendance Register, BSD No. 18, 6 May 1935, 21 March 1938.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., 31 March 1938.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 2 May 1939.

<sup>12</sup> Attendance Registers, BSD No. 18, 1928-1948. More commonly, all students were present during good weather, while one third or more of the class might be absent during fall harvest, winter storms or spring planting.

### 1935: Teacher Salaries

Like a rain barrel riddled with rust cracks, the effects of the Great Depression relentlessly drained the Beauvais School District of its resources. In 1931, the school board, considering its financial state, contemplated its expenditures "very carefully." In 1932, the annual school grant of roughly \$255.00 did not come. "After considerable discussion as to the amount of money required to operate the school, it was decided to pare all items to the bone and try to get along on an estimated expenditure of \$830.00." To make this possible, the board announced that the current teacher salary of \$900.00 per annum would be reduced by \$200.00, and that, to avoid paying high school fees to Pincher Creek Schools, grade nine would be offered at the Beauvais School. In 1933, in a further attempt to side-step high school fees, grade ten students of the district were also included on the register. (These additional responsibilities were added to the teacher's job description with no increase in pay.) Like the year before, the annual school grant did not come. In 1934, the school organ was sold to pay outstanding debts incurred from the previous installation of a new floor. This time, when the board requested grant support from the Department of Education, they were told: "The fund from which grants are paid ... is practically depleted. [The department does not] expect to be able to make any payments during [1934]." On 5 June 1935, the issue of repairing the school windows was discussed but postponed due to lack of funds. At the same meeting, Miss Mary A. Willock, after five years of strenuous, underpaid labour, tendered her resignation as teacher of the Beauvais School.<sup>1</sup>

When the vacant position was advertised, it had been further reduced by \$100.00 per annum. At \$600.00 per year, it was the lowest annual salary paid to a Beauvais School teacher since 1909. Despite this, the position was filled immediately by Miss Frances K. Fugina, a twenty-one year old native of the Pincher Creek area.

When the Department of Education received a copy of Miss Fugina's contract, the Chief Attendance Officer wrote immediately to the Beauvais School Board, explaining that the minimum annual salary set by the Department was \$840.00, and that the Beauvais Board was not authorized to pay a teacher below this rate. The letter requested that the board report the financial condition of the district, and present current crop conditions. The board was to "remedy the contract, ... and have the amended contract initialed by the Chairman and the teacher."<sup>2</sup>

Despite these directives, the cashbook's records of Miss Fugina's monthly payments suggest that the Beauvais Board did not comply. (In subsequent years, the board requested and was granted authorization to pay a teacher below the minimum rate, permitting an annual salary of \$700.00 in 1936/37 and \$750.00 in 1937/38). Relatively speaking, however, Miss Fugina was very fortunate to be receiving \$60.00 each month; some of her counterparts in Alberta's hardest hit areas were continuing to teach without pay.

Historically speaking, inadequate wages for teachers were not limited to the depression era. It has been argued that perpetually poor salaries did not attract talented,

<sup>1</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 23 February 1921, 3 April 1933, 3 July 1933, 27 November 1934, 5 June 1935.

<sup>2</sup> Letter, Chief Attendance Officer, Department of Education to W.A. Skene, Secretary Treasurer of Beauvais School District, 2 August 1935, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton. This is not the first time section 161 of the School Act was violated by the school board – they received a similar letter in 1932 when they offered Miss Mary A. Willock a contract for \$700.00

ambitious teachers. Those that entered teacher training were believed to be “unwilling or unable to compete in the more risk producing, academically demanding, financially rewarding and status generating occupations of society.”<sup>3</sup>

Consider this: rural teachers were paid significantly less than their urban counterparts. As a result, new, inexperienced teachers typically received their first postings in multi-graded, rural schools where they learned, through trial and error, the craft of teaching. Once experienced, (if they still wished to remain in the profession), they left the country for higher paid, less demanding single or double-grade classrooms of the towns and cities, leaving a vacancy to be filled by another new, inexperienced teacher. The result, for rural schoolchildren, is that they constantly received inferior learning opportunities. A vicious circle formed when poorly trained rural schoolchildren entered inadequate teacher training programs and returned to the rural schoolhouses to teach (statistically, “in 1937-1938 the proportion of [Normal School] students coming from farm homes was 64 percent and it rose to 80 percent in 1943-44”).<sup>4</sup>

Because teaching was held in such low regard, it was believed that a single female remained a teacher only because she could not find a husband. For men, teaching was usually considered a stepping-stone to a more worthy occupation. Those men content to remain in regular classrooms were labeled as lacking “Grit, Go and Gumption”. All male teachers were expected to aspire to the administrative roles of Normal School instructor, inspector or supervisor.<sup>5</sup>

The Alberta Teacher’s Alliance (the forerunner of the Alberta Teacher’s Association) believed that by simply increasing teachers’ wages, “the status of the teaching profession [would] be raised... thereby attracting and retaining within the profession a large number of persons of the right type, and also rendering it possible to select those best fitted for teaching and to give these the highest possible grade of training.” This was stated in their Manifesto as early as 1921.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, compared to highly regarded professions of the day, teaching was not to gain proper respect or equitable salaries during the era of the one-room schoolhouse.

A number of factors (some logical and others arbitrary) determined the annual salary of each individual teacher: a first-class teacher was paid more than a second (or third) class teacher; an urban school typically paid higher wages than a rural school; and male teachers received higher salaries than female teachers.<sup>7</sup> Combining the variables of gender and class of certification produced interesting results: first-class female teachers were usually paid less than second-class male teachers.<sup>8</sup>

The Beauvais cashbook, which began in 1907, recorded every payment made to a teacher until 1939, at which time the Beauvais School Board relinquished its financial responsibilities to the Pincher Creek School District. What follows is a summary table of all known teachers, their dates of employment at the Beauvais School, and their annual salary. Missing or uncertain information is indicated by a question mark.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 196.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., 201-202, citing C.E. Phillips, *The Development of Education in Canada* (Toronto: W.J. Gage Ltd., 1957), 545.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 198.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 196.

<sup>7</sup> Sheehan, “Women and Education in Alberta,” 119-120.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., cited from Annual Report, 1906, 1911, 1916, 1921.

<sup>9</sup> PCSD No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 88. The Beauvais School chapter in this book provides a list of teachers not otherwise incorporated within the dates of the cashbook.

Table 6  
Salaries of Beauvais School Teachers (1896-1949)

Year	Teacher	Annual Salary	Year	Teacher	Annual Salary
1896/97	John J. Skene	?	1923/24	Miss Katie Marie Routhier	\$1050.00
1897/98	Father Lacombe (?)	?	1924/25	Miss Katie Marie Routhier	\$1050.00
1898/99	Mr. Ferrel (?)	?	1925/26	Miss O'Brien (Sept – Nov)	\$1055.25
1899/00	Mr. Burwack (?)	?		Mrs. Blanche Fraudis (Dec-June)	
1900/01	Mr. Bremner (?)	?	1926/27	Mr. Hugh Ross	\$1050.00
1901/02	Miss Margaret Kelly (?)	?		+ \$49.37 (high school grant)	
1902/03	Miss Emma Boyes (?)	?	1927/28	Mr. Hugh Ross	\$1100.00
1903/04	Miss Tye (?)	?	1928/29	Miss Katie Marie Routhier	\$1050.00
1904/05	Miss Cameron (?)	?	1929/30	Miss Routhier (Sept – June 6)	\$971.25
1905/06	Mrs. Ford (?)	?		Miss Willock (June)	\$70.00
1905/06	(?)	?	1930/31	Miss Mary Adela Willock	\$900.00
1906/07	Miss E.C. Cameron	\$500.00 (?)	1931/32	Miss Mary Adela Willock	\$900.00
1907/08	Miss Tighe	\$500.00 (?)	1932/33	Miss Mary Adela Willock	\$700.00
1908/09	Miss Tighe (Sept-Jan)	\$490.00	1933/34	Miss Mary Adela Willock	\$725.00
	Miss Jean Kelly (Feb-June)		1934/35	Miss Mary Adela Willock	\$700.00
1909/10	Miss Jean Kelly	\$637.14	1935/36	Miss Frances K. Fugina	\$600.00
1910/11	Miss Jean Kelly (Aug-Dec)	\$262.86	1936/37	Miss Frances K. Fugina	\$700.00
	Mr. D.S. Breunau (Jan-Aug)	\$406.67	1937/38	Miss Frances K. Fugina	\$745.00
1911/12	Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene	\$700.00	1938/39	Miss Frances K. Fugina	\$745.00
1912/13	Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene	\$700.00	1939/40	Miss Estelle Lynch	?
1913/14	Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene	\$700.00	1940/41	Miss Estelle Lynch	?
1914/15	Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene	\$710.00	1941/42	Helen McIsaac	?
1915/16	Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene	\$705.00	1942/43	E. Sorge	?
1916/17	Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene	\$770.00	1943/44	Miss Anne Krigousky (Oct-July)	?
1917/18	Mrs. Keays (Sept-Dec)	\$717.85	1944/45	Miss Anne Krigousky	?
	Mrs. Skene (Jan-June)		1945/46	Miss Josephine T. Michalsky	?
1918/19	Mrs. Skene (Aug-June)	\$816.00		(Oct- July)	
1919/20	E McKenzie (Sept-3 weeks)	\$55.00	1946/47	Miss Josephine T. Michalsky	?
	Gareau (?) – 2 weeks)	\$45.40	1947/48	Miss Josephine T. Michalsky	?
	Mrs. McFarland (2 months)	\$181.75	1948/49	Miss Josephine T. Michalsky	?
	Mrs. Sorge (6 months)	\$544.50		Miss Wilson (Mrs. J.J. Scott),	?
1920/21	R.U. Harwood	\$1000.00	Dates unknown	Tom Moore, D.C. McDougal	?
1921/22	Miss Katie Marie Routhier	\$1200.00			
1922/23	Miss Katie Marie Routhier	\$1050.00			

## 1938: School Budget

30 December, 1938

What follows is a fictitious interview with Mr. W.A. Ross, a former secretary-treasurer of Beauvais School. All the information contained in this section is from the Beauvais School District Cash Book, (1907-1938) or the Beauvais School District Minute Book, (1909-1949), unless otherwise indicated.

Pincher Creek Echo Reporter: Welcome, Mr. Ross. Thank you for agreeing to answer my questions on the budgets of rural schoolhouses.

W.A. Ross: You're welcome.

PCE: Before we begin, can you tell me what makes you an "expert" on this topic?

WAR: (smiling) Certainly. I've been involved with schools all my life. I originally came to Pincher Creek in 1898 to take the job as Principal of Pincher Creek Public School, which I held for six years. After my resignation, I continued to serve as chairman on the Pincher Creek School Board. When I became a bookkeeper, I began auditing the cashbooks of various school districts. It was through this work that I was hired by the Beauvais School District as secretary treasurer in 1909 and continued in that capacity for twenty-three years. Incidentally, my three children have all become teachers. My son Hugh, in fact, spent two years at the Beauvais School while I was still secretary-treasurer there.<sup>1</sup>

PCE: It sounds like you've seen school management from every angle. Since you've spent so much time with the Beauvais School, let's focus on that district. First of all, can you outline the expenses a rural schoolhouse would expect to pay annually?

WAR: Yes. Each year, salaries are paid to the teacher, the secretary-treasurer and the custodian; renovations and repairs done to the school or school grounds are paid for; furniture, library books, classroom equipment and stationary are purchased; and fuel and insurance are paid for. There are also predictable miscellaneous expenses.<sup>2</sup>

PCE: What kinds of expenses?

WAR: Well, for instance, most teachers hired by the Beauvais School are only qualified to teach grades one to eight inclusive. When students from the Beauvais District want to continue their education past grade eight, they have to attend school in Pincher Creek. The Beauvais School Board (which has already collected

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<sup>1</sup> PCDSB No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 141-142.

<sup>2</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18.

taxes from the residents of the district) is required to forward a portion of those taxes to the Catholic or Public school districts in Pincher Creek. Something like that would be considered a miscellaneous expense.<sup>3</sup>

PCE: I see. How much money is spent each year covering all of these expenses?

WAR: It depends on the year, really. On average, the annual operating budget at the Beauvais School from 1907 to 1938 was \$1381.00, but the range was from \$567.44 to \$2823.39.

PCE: Why was there such a variation?

WAR: Many things can affect how much money a school board can or does spend in a year. For instance, 1909 was one of the most expensive years because the new schoolhouse was built. In 1934 the absolute minimum possible was spent – this was the worst year of the depression for the Beauvais School.

PCE: So, you need about \$1400.00 each year to operate. Where does the board get that kind of money?

WAR: There are really only two sources of income for a school board. First (and least substantial) is a yearly grant from the Department of Education. On average, this amounted to \$255.43, which was less than twenty percent of the annual operating budget. Unfortunately, this 'yearly' grant didn't come every year. Beginning in 1932, because of the depression, the Department cancelled annual grants because the fund from which they were drawn was depleted.<sup>4</sup> The rest of the money required to support the operating of the school came from the taxpayers.

PCE: How were they taxed? How did they know where to send their money?

WAR: Each school district is outlined by a boundary. Whether or not you had children attending the school, if you had property inside a district boundary, you paid your taxes to that district. Each year the school board calculated the amount of money they needed to operate. Factoring in the size of the district's land base, they figured out how much money would have to be charged per acre of land in order to meet their required amount (over the years, this ranged from \$0.03 ¼ to \$0.11 ½ per acre). At the start of each year, it was my job to write a letter to each of the twenty-five to fifty landowners advising them how much he or she owed in taxes to the school board. I also let them know that if they made their payment before 30 June, they would receive a 10% rebate.

PCE: It sounds like a lot of work.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 1923-1938.

<sup>4</sup> Letter, Manager, School Grants Branch, Department of Education to Secretary-Treasurer, Beauvais District, 27 January 1934, Provincial Archives of Alberta, Edmonton.



WAR: Oh, it was. That is why I was paid \$75.00 each year.

PCE: Did it ever happen that people didn't pay their taxes on time?

WAR: It happened often, actually.

PCE: So what would you do then?

WAR: My first step was always to send out a reminder and then a second by mail. If monies were still owed, the delinquent taxpayer's name would be turned over to the local sheriff or another tax collecting body. It's important to understand that when people were assessed a tax amount, it was based on the assumption that everyone was going to pay what they owed. When certain landowners didn't pay, (for instance in 1928 when over \$400.00 was outstanding), it left the board short of cash to operate. This forced the board to borrow varying amounts from the Union Bank so that they could pay their bills (the loans ranged from \$300.00 - \$500.00 but averaged at \$385.00).

PCE: As the "tax man," did the people in your community treat you differently?

WAR: That's a good question. A secretary-treasurer can be seen as a "bad guy" by those unable or unwilling to pay the assessed amount, and in many districts he is not well liked. For me, however, I don't live in the Beauvais District – I'm from Pincher Creek. A tax notice coming from me is much less personal than if the secretary-treasurer was a member of the community.

PCE: You said you were the secretary-treasurer for the Beauvais District for twenty-three years. Why did you quit?

WAR: In 1931, tax collection was no longer the responsibility of the school district. Instead, the municipal districts (Castle River and Kerr) took over the responsibility, and simply forwarded a cheque to the school board for the appropriate amount. This significantly reduced the responsibility of the secretary-treasurer. My accounting services were really no longer needed, and a local community member took over the role as secretary.

PCE: What's happening with the Beauvais School Board now? Do you keep in touch?

WAR: Yes, I have been watching with curiosity over the last few years. In 1937, many of the rural schools in this area were consolidated into one large district. In the process, the local boards, including Beauvais, no longer have any financial responsibility, which also means that they have very little decision making power. They can petition the divisional board with requests, but this does not compare with their former level of authority. The people of the local board and the community (not just in Beauvais but in most of the districts affected) are unhappy with the change.

PCE: Thank you, Mr. Ross for taking time to answer these questions.

WAR: You're very welcome.

### 1938: The Large School Unit (the beginning of the end)

By the 1930s over 40 one or two-room schools were in operation in the Pincher Creek area.<sup>1</sup> This system of scattered, self-contained school boards had “developed in a time when every little community was of necessity self-contained and lived largely unto itself...”<sup>2</sup>

Over time, because of faith, finances, marriage, schooling, culture and transport, these modular communities became linked to one another like a complex, multidimensional crystalline structure. But on 19 October 1938, the crystal shattered.

One trustee from each local school board in the Pincher Creek Area was called to attend a gathering at the Halifax School to discuss “the large school unit.” Napoleon Gareau, chairman of the Beauvais School Board (and former student of the Beauvais School) represented his district. At the meeting, he was informed of the recent formation of the Pincher Creek School Division, to which all small districts in the area now belonged.<sup>3</sup>

Consolidation of small school boards into a large administrative unit was not a new idea in Alberta. When Perren E. Baker was Minister of Education between 1921 and 1935, he had “a profound feeling that the general level of education in Alberta was deplorably low and that the chief deficiency in [the] school system was its failure to meet the needs of the rural area.”<sup>4</sup> He realized that “rural education under the existing system would always fall short of what it might be and that the over 3000 School Boards should be grouped into larger units of taxation and administration.”<sup>5</sup>

When he shared this proposal at the annual convention of school trustees in 1929, mayhem broke loose. By the end of the meeting, “there was no doubt that the majority of the rural trustees were quite opposed to giving up any of their authority to another body...”<sup>6</sup> Despite their response, during a session of the legislature later that year, Perren Baker introduced a bill providing for the creation of large school divisions. The Opposition, however, had read media accounts of the negative reaction to it at the trustees’ conference, and decided to “defend the democratic rights of the people against an autocratic government which was arrogantly trying to take one of them away... Man after man rose... opposing the bill [which] was allowed to die on the order paper.”<sup>7</sup>

In the same year, the stock market collapsed, beginning a decade long depression. In addition, consecutive drought cycles had caused a mass exodus of settlers from the driest parts of Alberta, which depopulated the local one-room schoolhouses and left few survivors to carry the tax burden of the school district.<sup>8</sup> School boards throughout the province were struggling to pay teachers the minimum required salary, and to provide minimum maintenance to the schoolhouse.

Local boards were desperate for support to prevent the closure of their community schools. When the Social Credit Administration swept into power in 1935, Premier

<sup>1</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 7.

<sup>2</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 159. Cochrane is citing the Chief Superintendent of Prince Edward Island, 1928.

<sup>3</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Perren E. Baker, *Minister of Education – Hopes and Disappointments*. [http://www.ourfutureourpast.ca/loc\\_hist/](http://www.ourfutureourpast.ca/loc_hist/) [9 March 2003].

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> Jones, *Empire of Dust*.

William Aberhart (a former high school teacher and principal) introduced, with practically no opposition, Perren Baker's former bill. Its passing gave the Minister "power to create Divisions wherever he saw fit, ... and to [relieve] the local districts of the ownership of their buildings, vesting it in the Divisional board."<sup>9</sup>

Based on this legislation, in 1938, the Pincher Creek School Division was formed, with the intent of creating affordable operating costs and the provision of continued educational services in the rural areas. Although the boundaries of the Pincher Creek School Division shifted over the years, and the town of Pincher Creek and the village of Cowley were included in 1947, the Division eventually included the following schools:<sup>10</sup>

Sub-Division No. 1

Cyr School District No. 2018  
 Drywood School District No. 1685  
 Marr School District No. 3549  
 New Yarrow School District No. 4235  
 Parkview School District No. 2965  
 Robert Kerr School District No. 878  
 Spread Eagle School District No. 3183  
 Twin Butte School District No. 988  
 Utopia School District No. 840

Sub-Division No. 2

Chipman Creek School District No. 864  
 Crook School District No. 520  
 Fishburn School District No. 311  
 Halifax School District No. 3925  
 Spring Ridge School District No. 939

Sub-Division No. 3

Beaver Mines School District No. 3134  
**Beauvais School District No. 18**  
 Coalfields School District No. 1275  
 Fir Grove School District No. 3660  
 Gladstone School District No. 1950  
 Tennyson School District No. 3667

Sub-Division No. 4

Burmis School District No. 2564  
 Chapel Rock School District No. 3663  
 Cowley School District No. 373  
 Gadshill School District No. 3806  
 Heath Creek School District No. 3481  
 Lee Creek School District No. 469  
 Lundbreck School District No. 1571  
 Maycroft School District No. 2830  
 North Fork School District No. 1361  
 Olin School District No. 3135  
 Todd Creek School District No. 2968  
 Willow Valley School District No. 3200

Sub-Division No. 5

Ashvale School District No. 2082  
 Bocket School District No. 4895  
 Hillsboro School District No. 2881  
 Pincher City School District No. 1725  
 Summerview School District No. 1360  
 Tanner School District No. 2715  
 Tennessee School District No. 2157  
 Waldron School District No. 2723

Sub-Division No. 6

Pincher Creek School District No. 121

<sup>9</sup> Perren E. Baker, *Minister of Education – Hopes and Disappointments*.

<sup>10</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 7-10.

Despite its good intentions, the result of this consolidation on the Beauvais School was a slow and painful death. In 31 December 1938, the last entry was made in the Beauvais District Cashbook. The local board, after this date, was absolved of its financial responsibilities. They were also relieved of the authority to make decisions regarding the operating of the school – hiring teachers and custodians, making repairs to the school, and securing supplies were no longer within their jurisdiction.<sup>1</sup>

With so few issues to discuss, the local board meetings decreased in frequency. Prior to consolidation, the board met, on average, four times each year. After, they met only once or twice. In 1945, they did not meet at all. The Beauvais community was no longer invested in school issues either – attendance at the annual ratepayers meetings declined drastically.<sup>2</sup>

Concerns, however, continued to arise from time to time. In 1943, the caretaker was not fulfilling his contract. The teacher was not having her lunch with the students as had been done in previous years. The library was deficient in its collection of books. In the past, the trustees could have dealt with each problem directly. Instead, they passed a resolution that the Pincher Creek School Division take up these matters.<sup>3</sup>

All around them, other one-room schools were closing, victims of consolidation. The displaced students were vanned into Pincher Creek or to the closest surviving country school. On 23 February 1946, the Superintendent, E.W. Hinman attended the Beauvais District's annual ratepayers meeting to explain that a new van route would be bringing students to the Beauvais School.<sup>4</sup>

It was evident that everywhere within the boundaries of the new Division, the disempowerment of the local communities was resulting in ambivalence and apathy. Each year following consolidation, the superintendent scheduled sub-divisional meetings, and was bewildered by the lack of public concern. In December 1946, he had this to say:

The Sub-Divisional meetings were most disappointing. Only one of the five was worth the time and energy spent on it. Two of the meetings had no ratepayers or electors present. The easy explanation is that the weather and the roads were very bad; but I am afraid there is a more serious difficulty which hinges around indifference, poor public relations and probably poor organization. It is difficult to understand why parents remain quiescent when educational conditions for their children are so bad.<sup>5</sup>

The superintendent could not understand that in wrenching control of the rural school from the hands of its people, they suffered irreparable damage to their sense of community.<sup>6</sup> They were left powerless, with little evidence that their own concerns were of importance to the large Division. For instance, in January 1946, each local board was asked by the Division to indicate necessary repairs and alterations required to the school

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<sup>1</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 25 February 1939. For instance, at best, they could *recommend* a local individual to the divisional secretary for janitorial duties, but could not hire or supervise the custodian.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, 1939-1949.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 February 1943.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 23 February 1946.

<sup>5</sup> Inspector's Reports, James A. McKay, Pincher Creek School Division No. 29, December 1946, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta.

<sup>6</sup> L. J. Roy Wilson, "Rural Equality," 142.

buildings or grounds, and to estimate each probable cost.<sup>7</sup> The Beauvais School Board complied with this request. When the local board reconvened one year later at the annual ratepayers meeting, “discussion took place regarding [the] foundation [of the schoolhouse] and screens around [the] outhouse. It was agreed that the Divisional Board be again notified about these matters as nothing was done in the past.”<sup>8</sup>

In the end, the community continued to mourn its loss of self while the Division struggled to replace the antique, rural education system that had been outgrown, “[hampering] development like a tight garment on a fast growing boy.”<sup>9</sup>

The benefits brought by consolidation to the Beauvais School before its inevitable closure are summarized in the sections that follow.

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<sup>7</sup> Memo, McKay, James A., to all school boards, 3 January 1947, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta.

<sup>8</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 14 February 1948.

<sup>9</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 159. Citing the Chief Superintendent of Prince Edward Island, 1928.

## 1941: The School Library

When St. Agnes opened in 1896, the only books likely to be found in the school were the Ontario Readers. There would not have been many other books available for children to practice their reading.

At that time, although Pincher Creek did not have a public library, a few small businesses established private lending libraries, charging a fee per day for each book. Because rural children could not afford to spend money on such luxuries, nor did they often travel to Pincher Creek, the lending libraries were out of their reach. If someone in the district purchased a new book, it would be passed around the community until it was worn out. Unfortunately, few of these were children's books.<sup>1</sup>

By 1910, the year after the new schoolhouse was built, an inventory of the Beauvais Library, cumulatively valued at \$39.25, contained forty-seven books.<sup>2</sup> Considering that the school had children from grades one to eight, there were presumably only five or six books appropriate for each grade level. It would not have taken long for an avid young reader to finish all of the books on the library shelf.

Over time, the small library slowly grew. Family and friends of students donated their used books to the collection.<sup>3</sup> Women's organizations dedicated to improving literacy among youth, including the Imperial Order of Daughters of the Empire and the United Farm Women of Alberta, also bought books for the library.<sup>4</sup> The Beauvais School Board, between 1910 and 1938 allocated \$234.59 to the purchase of books.

The Beauvais library was a community resource as much as the school was a community centre. It was not uncommon for adults to borrow from the meager assortment of books.<sup>5</sup> Despite additions from numerous sources, it was still deficient.

After the consolidation of rural schools into the larger school unit, the teacher of each school received an annual allotment to purchase library books, depending on the number of pupils registered at the school (up to ten pupils - \$7.50; up to nineteen pupils - \$10.00; over twenty pupils - \$12.50).<sup>6</sup> For the Beauvais school, their allowance of ten dollars would buy only eight to ten new books each year.<sup>7</sup>

When the Division requested, in 1941/42, that each school in the inspectorate summarize a report of all library and reference books at the school, Helen McIsaac, the teacher at the Beauvais School, compiled a list of 235 books (Appendix E).<sup>8</sup> The inventories throughout the district revealed what the superintendent already knew. The libraries in the one-room schools of the Division were woefully inadequate.

Unsatisfied with the reading opportunities available to the rural children, the Division established an impressive Central Library Service.<sup>9</sup> Each teacher received a catalogue listing all available library books, records, texts, teacher's professional books, and Enterprise books. A teacher could borrow a reader set (for use after students finished

<sup>1</sup> Archivist, Betty Smith (Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village) conversation with author, 15 November 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Cash Book, BSD No. 18, 1910.

<sup>3</sup> Archivist, Betty Smith (Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village) conversation with author, 15 November 2002.

<sup>4</sup> L.J. Roy Wilson, "Agrarian Ideals for Canadian Youth, Alberta 1916-1936," 133-149.

<sup>5</sup> Archivist, Betty Smith (Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village) conversation with author, 15 November 2002.

<sup>6</sup> Bulletin, W.A. Fraser, Secretary of Pincher Creek School Division No. 29 to teachers in the Pincher Creek School Division, 12 October 1940.

<sup>7</sup> Invoice, School Book Branch, Edmonton to Miss Jessie Fraser, Secretary of Pincher Creek School Division No. 29, 4 August 1942.

<sup>8</sup> Inventory, Beauvais School District Library, 1941/42.

<sup>9</sup> Document, Pincher Creek School Division No. 29, Central Library Service, n.d.

their prescribed reader, or as free reading) or story sets which included 10 books for grades one to three, 5 books for grades four to six and 3 books for grades seven to nine. These were intended to “be a source of enjoyment, motivation and enlarged interests.”<sup>10</sup> Book sets could be kept at the school for two months. Upon return, the school was sent another package with a completely new set of books.

Professional magazines were also available through the Central Library Service. Teachers could borrow current and previous issues of magazines, including *Instructor*, *Grade Teacher*, *Children's Activities*, and *Canadian Geographic*, at any time during the year.

In addition to providing access to a rotating collection of books, the Division expressed a desire to provide each rural school with a “shelf library”, or permanent collection of high quality reference books.<sup>11</sup>

In its last decade of operation, because of the Division's innovative and dedicated initiative to better meet the literacy needs of the rural children in the inspectorate, the Beauvais School program had improved access to an ever-changing library of resources and books.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Bulletin, James A. McKay, Superintendent of Pincher Creek School Division No. 29 to Pincher Creek School Division No. 29, 15 December 1948.



## 1942: Teacher Shortages

When the Second World War erupted in 1939, teachers, male and female, began leaving their classrooms to enlist in the service or to enter war-created industries.<sup>1</sup> In the years that followed, hundreds of rural schoolrooms in Alberta were left without teachers. With consolidation happening throughout the province, large divisions were able to close many of the rural schoolhouses by transporting the displaced students to neighboring schools in the country or in nearby villages and towns. This created problems of its own. Roads had to be upgraded and maintained. The war had driven up the price of fuel, and antifreeze was being rationed.<sup>2</sup> In addition, town and village schools were not equipped to absorb the entire rural population of teacher-less students. There were many rural schools that still needed teachers.

In 1942, the shortage of teachers reached a critical level. In an attempt to ensure enough teachers were available to fill Alberta classrooms in the fall of 1942, the Minister of Education, William Aberhart, announced the War Emergency Teacher-Training Programme. This bulletin directed high school principals, superintendents, teachers, school trustees, and parents to urge “as many high-school students as possible to enter [teacher training programs] this year...”<sup>3</sup>

Responding young high school students enrolling in the Normal Schools in Calgary and Edmonton received two condensed months of training (July/August or August/September), and were then assigned teaching positions in rural classrooms until the end of December. In January, they returned to Normal School for a four-month training period. The vacancies they left were filled by the December graduates of the regular Normal School program.<sup>4</sup>

Unfortunately, “many of the young teachers who filled various positions for a period of three months or more were highly unqualified.”<sup>5</sup> At this time in history, however, the Department of Education was not concerned with quality. It had stated previously that

the department is of the opinion that it is preferable to place a school in [the] charge of an unqualified teacher who is likely to do fairly satisfactory work than that such a school be closed owing to the inability of the board to secure a teacher.<sup>6</sup>

Because the War Emergency Teacher-Training Programme, in operation until 1945, “only partially succeeded in alleviating the shortage,”<sup>7</sup> other measures were

<sup>1</sup> Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 108.

<sup>2</sup> Memo, W.H. Swift, Chief Inspector of Schools, Department of Education to Divisional Superintendents, 20 October 1944. Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta. This memo states, “Our attempts to procure priority for superintendents to purchase Ethylene Glycol anti-freeze have been of no avail.”

<sup>3</sup> Bulletin, William Aberhart, Minister of Education, “War Emergency Teacher-Training Programme”, 1942, Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta, 3.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 195., citing George Mann, “Alberta Normal Schools: A Descriptive Study of Their Development, 1905 to 1945,” (unpublished M.Ed. thesis, University of Alberta, 1961) 244.

<sup>6</sup> Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 193. Patterson is citing the *Annual Report of the Department of Education*, 1906, 16.

<sup>7</sup> Patterson, “History of Teacher Education in Alberta”, 195.

employed. William Aberhart's bulletin in 1942 appealed to teachers already in the classroom:

Women teachers, especially, can make a patriotic contribution to an essential public service by remaining in their class-rooms during the year 1942-1943. There will be a special need for teachers who are properly qualified for high-school work.<sup>8</sup>

Superintendents of large divisions were also expected to aggressively recruit teachers for the rural schools in their inspectorate. Imagine this:

A woman in her forties is kneading bread as she looks out the window at her husband, working in the field in the distance. The phone rings. She wipes her hands hurriedly on her apron and moves to answer it.

"Hello," she says, leaning into the mouthpiece on the wall.

"Mrs. Sorge?" a man's voice asks.

"Yes, this is Elisa Sorge."

"Mrs. Sorge," the voice continues, "This is Mr. Hinman, Superintendent of the Pincher Creek School Division. Are you familiar with the Beauvais School?"

"Why, yes," she responds, adding, "I taught there over twenty years ago. I was also a pupil there as a girl..."

"Mrs. Sorge," Mr. Hinman broke in. He did not sound impatient but he was a busy man. "The Beauvais School will be closed this year unless we can find a teacher for it. Would you be willing?"

Elisa Sorge was not the only woman in the Pincher Creek area to return to the classroom after years of absence.<sup>9</sup> Other married, former teachers accepted positions at the nearby schools of Maycroft and North Fork.<sup>10</sup> The same was happening throughout the province.<sup>11</sup>

Even after closing many of the rural schoolhouses, coaxing former teachers out of retirement, pleading with teachers to remain in their classrooms, and employing partially trained youth, classrooms were still without teachers. As a solution, Divisional Boards

Registered whole schoolfuls of children for correspondence courses, and placed in charge correspondence course supervisors, who were expected to maintain order and decorum, mark the school register, see to the mailing of assignments and their distribution on return from the Correspondence School Branch, keep a record of pupil progress, implement a classroom timetable for studies, encourage the dilatory, and assist the slow students. Correspondence registrations in the

<sup>8</sup> Bulletin, William Aberhart, Minister of Education, "War Emergency Teacher-Training Programme", 3.

<sup>9</sup> Teacher Evaluation, E.W. Hinman, Superintendent of Pincher Creek School Division No. 29 of Mrs. Eliza Sorge, 15 April 1943. Glenbow Museum Archives, Calgary, Alberta. Mrs. Sorge was not an inexperienced teacher. She had spent a total of ten years in the classroom, and received high praise from the Superintendent during his annual evaluation in 1943.

<sup>10</sup> Inspector's Reports, PCSD No. 29, September 1942.

<sup>11</sup> Chalmers, *Schools of the Foothills Province*, 108-109.

elementary grades climbed from 571 students in 1940 to 4198 in 1944, when 209 correspondence centres were established.<sup>12</sup>

By 1946, there were ten correspondence supervisors in the Pincher Creek Division. After carefully evaluating each of the correspondence centres, Superintendent James McKay remarked that

two are doing the children more harm than good, four are “getting by” and four are doing work comparably to that done in an average school. The supervisors have an advantage over the “War Emergency graduates” in that the former have excellent guides in the Correspondence Courses; those supervisors who combine a little imagination and some understanding of children with the guidance of the courses are doing very credible work.<sup>13</sup>

Every effort to supply teachers and supervisors to rural schools during the teacher shortage was creative, sincere, and valiant. Unfortunately, in most cases the resulting quality of education remained poor.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 109-110.

<sup>13</sup> Inspector's Reports, PCSD No. 29, October 1946.

<sup>14</sup> The teacher shortage during World War II was not the only one experienced in Alberta. In actual fact, the province experienced a perpetual shortage of teachers beginning with the settlement era. To manage this, entrance requirements to teacher training programs were kept surprisingly low to encourage a steady supply of applicants. Weaker students who attended Normal School rarely failed (they were simply issued a lower class of certification). For a time, the Department of Education offered loans for those who would have otherwise found the cost of schooling prohibitive. In times of serious shortage, emergency courses (like the one employed during World War II) were offered. In addition, university students and other individuals with no teacher training were temporarily issued permits to teach. Education in Alberta has always grappled with mild and crisis-level shortages of educators.

## 1943: The Inspector

## “THE INSPECTOR’S COMING!”

The seven-year-old messenger bursts into the school. He is panting hard, wide-eyed and frantic. Through the open door behind him, a black car is approaching in the distance, sending a cloud of dust into the air from the dirt road. Blood drains from the teacher’s face as she grips her desk to steady herself. Without any prompting from the teacher, every child whirls into a frenzied attempt to put the classroom in order. The teacher’s voice trembles as she gives last minute directions. Then, looking at each other tensely, they wait in an awkward, breathless silence for the knock.

No one looked forward to the inspector’s visits. His demanding, expectant, unpredictable, rapid-fire questions on mathematic equations, countries of the Empire, and other curricular requirements terrified children.<sup>1</sup> Students were so flustered that they often couldn’t remember poems or multiplication tables they had practiced all year. They understood clearly that wrong or poor answers made their teacher appear incompetent. It horrified the children to think that they might get their favourite teacher in trouble with the inspector.

The school board and the local community were also apprehensive of the Inspector’s visits. His critical eye caught inadequacies in every element of the school’s operation: the classroom was not well cleaned, the schoolhouse needed painting, the barn needed cleaning, the stove needed replacing, something was awry with the school’s finances... Everything was written down in a report that would be sent to the Department of Education. It was also read to the community at the annual ratepayers meeting. The Inspector’s word carried authority; he spoke on behalf of the government, and because he visited hundreds of school districts, in the minds of the school board, his comparative observations made him wise.<sup>2</sup> He had invisible but direct power over the school’s finances. If he directed repairs and renovations, it would cost the board. If the school board was somehow being non-compliant, he could threaten that the Department of Education withhold their annual grant.<sup>3</sup> Ratepayers in the district who were late with their taxes, or delinquent in regularly sending their children to school received special attention from the Inspector. This attention, generally, was ill-received.<sup>4</sup>

But none dreaded the Inspector’s visits more than the teacher. Inspectors had a reputation of visiting unannounced. In fact, they were notoriously famous for purposefully catching a teacher and her class off guard:

If the schoolhouse happened to be located on a down grade, the scheming official would switch off the motor of his car and coast quietly and stealthily into the schoolyard. Some inspectors always made it a habit to approach the school from the windowless side, while others had become so familiar with the local districts that they were able to take shortcuts through fields and pastures and arrive at the school unheralded. Another favourite trick was to park the car a short distance

<sup>1</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 118-120.

<sup>2</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 127.

<sup>3</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 118.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 119.

from the school behind a clump of shrubs, a shelterbelt, or a knoll and walk the rest of the way. Probably the commonest way was to visit the home of the district secretary-treasurer or the chairman of the school board first and invite one of them to drive him to the school. In this way neither the teacher nor the students would be suspicious of a strange vehicle coming down the road, usually a sure sign of the inspector's visit.<sup>5</sup>

The entire community watched for his arrival, and did whatever they could to give teachers advance warning. If, for example, an inspector checked into hotel before visiting several schools in the area, the hotel attendant would spread word of his arrival. Urgent news of that sort traveled quickly, and many teachers received a full day's warning before the Inspector's call. Children, too, played their part – after the Inspector's visit, they might report to their neighboring friends (who attended the school next on the inspector's list) which questions were demanded of them.<sup>6</sup> These questions were memorized and shared solemnly on the playground, and again in the classroom in preparation for the Inspector's visit.

Advance warning or not, the general schedule during the Inspector's annual half-day visit to the school was predictable. Nevertheless, this offered no comfort to even the most experienced teacher.<sup>7</sup> After the teacher introduced him to the class, he would take his place at the back of the room and observe her lessons until recess. At recess, he would observe the teacher as she interacted with the students on the playground, looking for evidence of deliberate attempts to influence the students' moral, social and physical development.<sup>8</sup> After recess, he would take over some of the lessons, drilling students to test their comprehension and knowledge of the expected curriculum.<sup>9</sup> Before leaving, he would carefully study the teacher's plan book, and scrutinize the effectiveness of her timetable.<sup>10</sup> His feedback to the teacher was direct. As an illustration, Inspectors Reeves, Hinman and McKay gave the following comments to Beauvais School teachers in the 1940s:

- Indications were that lessons were not well prepared. All lessons should receive systematic preparations.
- Arrange the time-table to provide Reading twice a day for division one. Also divide the time more equitably among the various subjects and activities.
- Much time could be saved by doing some of the language exercises orally.
- Use either the opening exercises or the music periods as an opportunity to teach the national anthem.
- A daily plan book should be kept by all teachers. The program for each day should show the teacher's contribution to the day's work as well as the activities assigned to groups and individuals.

<sup>5</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 129-130.

<sup>6</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 120.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 126. Originally, the Inspector tried to visit each school in his inspectorate once each year. As transportation technology improved, he was able to make two or more visits each year.

<sup>8</sup> Sheehan, "Indoctrination", 227.

<sup>9</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 127, 130.

<sup>10</sup> PCDS No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 55.

- In the teaching of writing give particular attention to posture of the body, the location of the arms, the angle of the paper, and the holding of the pen or pencil.
- More benefit will result from pupil participation ... rather than have a more finished product done by the teacher.
- With your small school you should have the classes work many more arithmetic problems at the board under supervision. This eliminates much of the time spent in checking and gives greater practice in fundamentals.
- Flash-cards and blackboard drills are much more useful than the oral drills you used.
- The distribution of your time should be improved. The group two pupils did not have a “fair break.” You should have taken some time with them rather than spending as much on group three. In a school like this it should be possible to give about equal time to each group in each period.

Prior to the 1940s there was a small box on the bottom corner of the teacher evaluation form that looked like this:

Table 7  
The Inspector’s Rating of a Teacher’s Performance

<b>INSPECTOR’S RATING</b>	
Excellent	
Very Good	
Good	
Fairly Good	
Fair	
Weak	

Because of this feature, it served as a report card of sorts, and was the basis for a new teacher being granted or denied a permanent certificate. Since a copy of the evaluation was forwarded to the school board, the grade given during the inspector’s one annual visit could influence a board’s decision to release or re-engage the teacher in question (later, in the 1940s, this feature was removed – it was considered subjective and evaluative rather than a tool for growth and development).<sup>11</sup>

Of course not all feedback on the evaluation form was critical. Each Inspector tried to offer encouragement, support, and positive feedback wherever possible. He was also to supply new methods and curricular materials. Since rural teachers were isolated and had few opportunities for professional development, they relied on the Inspector as their only link to the professional world. But how much observing, mentoring, positive feedback and critical analysis could be squeezed into one or two half-day visits each year?

Teachers looked to their local inspector as an expert of all things, especially when new programs were introduced. However, one teacher noted,

<sup>11</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 129.

When the new Course of Study arrived, I wrote to my inspector and said, "Why don't you come and give me some instructions. I haven't got a clue how to do this and I can't afford to go to summer school." He wrote right back to say, "Neither have I. But do it anyway for this year, and next year I will get you a grant to go to summer school."<sup>12</sup>

Another teacher, recalling the introduction of the Enterprise program recalls; "The inspector was firm in his opinion that the enterprise system must be taught, but did not give much idea as to what and how."<sup>13</sup>

Inspectors were men with a heavy burden of responsibility. In memory and in historic accounts, they are vilified by former teachers, students, and school board members because Inspectors were charged with upholding and enforcing high educational standards in districts that could not always attain them. Historic accounts would lead to the misconception that inspectors spent all of their time terrorizing rural school teachers with their critical and unexpected visits, but this is far from true.

As long as there has been a ministry of education in western Canada, there have been school inspectors. In 1903, before Alberta became a province, there were eight inspectors covering the entire Northwest Territories. In those days, they traveled by train wherever possible, but were forced to use buggies and sleighs to get to the districts not located along the rail line.<sup>14</sup>

Before long, there were thousands of rural schools in the province of Alberta, each needing the supervision of a school inspector. To serve them, the Department of Education in Alberta employed forty men until 1922, when the provincial staff of inspectors was reduced to twenty-five.<sup>15</sup> By this time, they were traveling in Model T Ford cars, which had more endurance than their previous mounts, but were more likely to get stuck on bad roads.<sup>16</sup>

Early inspectors for the Pincher Creek area were W.J. Brown, J. Hodgson, J. Hutchinson, and A.R. Gibson.

Charles C. Bremner was inspector through the depression and consolidation, until 1940. Mr. A.W. Reeves took his place in 1941. Mr. E.W. Hinman served from 1942 to 1946, and was replaced by James A. McKay who served as inspector until the Beauvais School closed in 1949.

The variety of demands on a school inspector (whose title would eventually change to superintendent), were staggering. It was originally my intention to explain and illustrate each of the different responsibilities by using examples from the inspectors listed above. I realized very quickly, however, that with so many responsibilities and so many examples to choose from, entire books could result. Instead, I selected a *sample* of their duties, and have provided one or more examples (in their own words, wherever

<sup>12</sup> Patterson, "Voices From the Past," 109.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 126.

<sup>15</sup> Jones, "Schools and Social Disintegration in the Alberta Dry Belt of the Twenties," 276.

<sup>16</sup> Charyk, *Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails*, 126.

possible) that were relevant to the Beauvais School, or to schools in the immediate area. They are presented in the table that follows.

Examples are taken directly from the Beauvais Minute Book (MB), from the local inspector's reports (IR), from the Pincher Creek Echo (PCE) or from the Department of Education (DE).

Table 8  
An Inspector's Responsibilities

Source	Responsibility	Example
PCE 18 Feb 1910	Mediate school board disputes	A special meeting of St. Agnes school No. 18, will be held on Monday February 22 <sup>nd</sup> , when Inspector Brown will be present. There have been considerable grievance existing in that school for some time and this meeting is called for the purpose of settling the difficulties.
IR Feb 1943	Mediate teacher/parent disputes	I was called to settle a problem in discipline which had brought about a suspension. The mother of the suspended boy had caused considerable trouble and had called police.
IR June 1944		I met with the Board of Frank School district to discuss complaints re: teacher. It was considered wise to change teachers next year and possibly to re-organize the school to some extent.
IR May 1944	Counsel school boards on pupil misconduct	I visited Pearce School by request to investigate reports of obscene language and immoral conduct on the part of new students attending from the airport. I found some evidence of misconduct and worked out a scheme of supervision with the teachers which should eliminate further trouble.
DE 17 Oct 1932	Investigate paperwork concerns for the Department of Education	"Beauvais School District has made an agreement with Miss Mary A. Willock for an annual salary of \$700.00 from the first of September. However, the minimum salary is \$840.00/year. The Inspector of Schools for the district does not think it would be a hardship for the BSD to pay the minimum amount."
IR Feb 1942	Create policy	At the request of the Divisional Board I drew up a policy with regard to students who are taking correspondence courses at the Boards expense.
IR April 1942 IR May 1943	Attend festivals	I attended the Crow's Nest Pass Musical Festival to assist with the handling of the entries from the Pincher Creek Inspectorate. I attended the Coleman Drama Festival on May 13 <sup>th</sup> , serving as adjudicator.
IR May 1942	Arrange field days	Field days were arranged for convenient groups of schools in each subdivision.
IR January 1945	Organize enhancement projects for students	I spent some time with the District Agriculturist organizing a livestock project which might integrate school work with practical agricultural work. The plan is to culminate the project with a visit to the Calgary Bull sale and fat stock show.
IR June 1942	Plan teacher professional development days	I met with the Lethbridge Teachers' Convention Executive to plan for next Fall convention.
MB 1 July 1911	Ensure cleanliness and safety of rural school buildings	Sec-Treas to draw the Janitor's attention to the inspector's report on his work
IR August 1944		I arranged for school supplies and checked on building repairs and redecoration previously arranged for.
IR April 1943	Attend to school health and hygiene	I investigate reported outbreak of Scabies. Certain pupils were advised to see a Doctor and obtain a statement of proper health conditions before returning to the school. The teacher was instructed to campaign for proper hygienic conditions throughout the district.
IR May 1953		At the request of the Divisional Board, I organized the district so that all who wished might be inoculated for Diphtheria, and vaccinated for small -pox. It took 5 days to cover the entire Division. More than 500 school and pre-school pupils are being immunized.
IR May 1942 IR May 1944	Inspect and supply rural school libraries	Libraries were inspected, books listed and arrangements made for library exchanges and additions. Met with Dr. Swift and other superintendents from the South re; a co-operative library scheme.
IR September 1942 IR March 1944	Find teachers for rural schools	Married women who have had training as teachers were interviewed and teachers found for North Fork, Maycroft and Beauvais School.  I visited Beaver Heights Area where the teacher had been forced to leave due to ill health. No one would accept the janitor work at the school so it was necessary to arrange for the teacher to look after this. I was able to get another teacher and to get her comfortably located.
IR August 1944		August 28, and 29 <sup>th</sup> were spent searching for teachers and interviewing married women with lapsed certificates who might be willing to teach this year.
IR February 1944	Supervise teachers in rural areas	I visited Tanner School District and found School closed due to teacher's illness. I attempted to continue to Olin Creek School district but found roads to school impassable.
MB 30 Sept 1933	Authorize the teaching of high school grades in rural schools	"Board decided to have Grade 9 taught in Beauvais in the coming term if the inspector would sanction it. Secretary instructed to write Mr. Brenner regarding the matter."
IR December 1943	Provide education to rural areas or transport rural children of closed	I spent 3 days organizing districts so that all of the pupils could be accommodated. This entailed closing one school, re-opening another and the transfer of 2 teachers.



IR June 1945	schools to nearby districts	During the month I have made surveys of three districts in which school are closed and in which new families are moving which may make it necessary to re-open the schools. In two other districts I have surveyed the possibility of closing the school and providing van service for pupils.
IR September 1945		Two new vans routes were established and operate satisfactorily.
IR August 1942	Arrange boarding for rural students	Assisted Div Board in arranging for van transportation for pupils and in arranging for Dormitory and private home boarding of pupils from closed schools.
IR November 1942 IR September 1943	Inspect and maintain dormitory	I made a sewerage system survey for the Dormitory operated by the Divisional Board. At request of Divisional Board I secured [for] the Dormitory plans for fire escape and fire precautions. I also made a survey of cost of operation and of average capital expenditures on dormitory from year to year.
IR October 1942	Arrange for education of isolated students	I began investigating the circumstances of Mr. Frank Hill who had applied for special help in educating his children. Mr. Hill was at a lumber camp 27 miles from the nearest school.
IR October 1944		I made a check up on families living just outside the school Division boundaries on the Timber reserves. There are seven children of school age and I had thought that perhaps a supervisor of correspondence might be arranged to handle the whole group. However I found that they were separated by several miles of timber with only trails between so that such an arrangement would be useless. Accordingly I recommended special grants to help these people send the children out to other schools.
IR October 1944	Arrange for education of special needs children	I visited the Lundbreck school to check on the progress being made with the child who does not speak and who has not previously attended any school. I found that he is being accepted by the other pupils and that already he is beginning to attempt words and to be interested in school activities.
IR October 1942 IR October 1943	Aid formation of home and school organizations	In several districts plans were made to attempt formation of home and school organizations. To assist the Kinmen's Milk for Britain Fund I organized the schools for distribution and collection of Milk for Britain tickets. In Rural areas the work was taken over by Junior Red Cross organizations and good results were achieved.
IR June 1943	Monitor separate schools	I heard that the Hutterite Separate School had been closed for the year. I visited the colony and discovered that all the school children were suffering from whooping cough and that many were very ill. The teacher had found it almost impossible to carry on and so the colony manager had decided to close the school for the year. As the teacher had already gone there was nothing to be done about it for this year.
IR April 1944 IR October 1944 IR February 1945 IR November 1945	Attend meetings	I attended a meeting of the Macleod A.T.A. at the request of the executive. I attended a meeting of Superintendents and convention committee to plan for the fall convention. Inspectors conference. Feb. 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> . During the month five sub-division meetings were attended and one meeting with a local board.
IR Feb 1943	Serve as trustee if no one in the community is willing	I attended the annual meeting at Burmis as official trustee. Electors had asked for the meeting but failed to appear so the meeting was merely routine.
IR November 1946	Contend with bad weather and bad roads	The worst snowstorm for over forty years completely paralyzed our educational system and almost all other activity for several days. Some of the schools have not yet resumed operation at the end of the month. Even the town schools had a mere scattering of pupils on Nov. 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> .
IR December 1946		The very bad weather conditions reported last month have become even worse during December. Many rural schools would have been better closed during much of the month, and road conditions for vans were very bad. The succession of Chinook winds and cold snowy winds has blocked all roads leading into Pincher Creek, and blocked them in such a way that it seems doubtful if they can be cleared by any available type of road machinery. As the children from five schools are being vanned into Pincher Creek, the bad road conditions produce a serious problem for the Divisional Board.  This has been a very difficult month in which to get around. Consequently much of the time has been spent in the Pass towns and in riding (and waiting for ) trains and buses.
IR January 1947		

## 1949: Van Routes and School Closures

Imagine yourself looking at a large wall map of the various school districts in the Pincher Creek School Division (page *ix*), and that each school in the district is marked with a tiny light bulb. If a shining bulb indicates an operating school, each of the forty-one bulbs on the map would be lit at the time of consolidation in 1938. Imagine, also, that you could observe the passing of next thirty years compressed into the space of one minute as you watched the lights on the map.

Generally, the passing of sixty seconds would look like this: during the first 20 seconds (representing the 1940s), fourteen lights would burn out. In the next 20 seconds (the 1950s), seventeen more would be extinguished. In the final 20 seconds, (the 1960s), all of the action would happen in the first 6 seconds when all remaining rural schools would go dark. By 1963, all that remained shining on the map of the Pincher Creek School Division were lights in the town of Pincher Creek and the village of Lundbreck.

The first schools to close were those with very low enrollments, and those near to Pincher Creek and Lundbreck, where students could be transported easily into the town and village schools. However, new families with school age children moving into a district sometimes prompted the reopening of a formerly closed school. In addition, closed schools, on occasion, were moved to other districts. In 1954, for instance, when the North Fork School burned down, an identical schoolhouse from the Gadshill district (which had been closed since 1943) was moved in to replace it.<sup>1</sup>

Excerpts from the Inspectors' Reports between 1942 to 1945 record the details of each painstaking, problem-solving attempt to continue providing education for the rural population of the Division:

- I visited several districts in company with members of the Divisional Board to investigate possibilities of closing some schools where enrolment is below 5 pupils (July 1942).
- [I] assisted the Divisional Board in arranging for van transportation for pupils and in arranging for Dormitory and private home boarding of pupils from closed schools (August 1942).
- Arrangements were made to accommodate pupils of Robert Kerr District in other schools and it was decided to leave the school closed for the year (September 1942).
- I spent 3 days organizing districts so that all of the pupils could be accommodated by operating 2 of the 3. This entailed closing one school, re-opening another and the transfer of 2 teachers (December 1943).
- I was accompanied by one divisional trustee and we were able to investigate possibilities of closing Tanner School. Though one family is moving away it appears that there is no other way to provide for remaining children than by operating the school (February 1944).
- With the sub-divisional trustees I visited School district Nos. 2957, 793 and 1521 surveying the possibilities of closing one school now operating and re-opening one which has been closed or putting on an additional Van service (June 1944).
- [I] accompanied a trustee to investigate necessity for keeping open Todd Creek School District (July 1944).
- I was able to complete several arrangements regarding closing certain schools and making provision for high school education in others (August 1944).
- August 31<sup>st</sup> was spent arranging to close either Gadshill or Todd Creek School District and to transport pupils from the closed school to the open one (August 1944).

<sup>1</sup> Pat Moskaluk, "North Fork School, 1906-1955," (Personal Research, Pincher Creek, 2003), 33.

- Crook and Passburg School Districts have been closed and van routes established to provide for the children. Crook children are being brought to Pincher Creek Schools while Passburg children go to Bellevue Schools (September 1944).
- Marr School District has been closed and children attend Robert Kerr and Drywood Districts which have been closed but re-opened this fall (September 1944).
- It was decided to re-open Passburg School because the van did not operate to the satisfaction of the people and the Van driver wished to be released from her contract (November 1944). During the month I have made surveys of three districts in which school are closed and in which new families are moving which may make it necessary to re-open the schools (June 1945).
- In two other districts I have surveyed the possibility of closing the school and providing van service for pupils (June 1945).
- Investigation in Passburg School District shows that the School Building is not worth repairing and an effort is being made to arrange for the pupils of Passburg to be taken to Bellevue by Van (July 1945).
- Two new vans routes were established and operate satisfactorily (September 1945).

As district schools closed, parents were faced with two choices: they could pay to board their children close to a school, or they could have their children transported to a distant school via the daily van service. This service, provided by the board, deserves explanation.

In the 1940s, the Divisional Board contracted van drivers from each local community. Since few roads were graveled and none were plowed, van drivers had to open the roads whenever possible with their own farm equipment to keep the bus on schedule.<sup>2</sup> When the roads were impassable or the weather made driving dangerous, the driver was forced to stay home, but could not always alert the children waiting along his route.<sup>3</sup> In the early days of vanning, drivers transported school children in their personal vehicles, which came in all shapes and sizes. One man, for instance, built a box on the back of a 1940 Chevy half ton that transported twelve to fifteen children.<sup>4</sup> Another driver built plank seats in the back of a panel van.<sup>5</sup> Most of these vehicles did not provide the luxury of heat, so children shared blankets and foot warmers to stay comfortable when it was cold.<sup>6</sup> Discipline problems arising on the bus were handled by the driver, who did not hesitate to direct the “trouble-maker to disembark and walk behind the bus for a required distance.”<sup>7</sup> This treatment was especially effective in harsh weather.

Many families were unhappy with the arranged van routes. At an Elector’s Meeting in Pincher Creek in February 1947, Inspector James A. McKay remarked that among the eighty people in attendance, there was an

“inordinate amount of complaining about the vans. While much of the complaint is justified, I fear that the unusually bad winter here and the vociferous complaints it has produced will hold back centralization here rather seriously.”<sup>8</sup>

Parents so upset by the Divisional Board’s van service wrote to the Minister of Education to express their disappointment. Each family, because of its location, the age and number of children, the poor road conditions, and the weather, had legitimate concerns regarding the comfort, health and safety of their children.

<sup>2</sup> PCSD No. 29, 245, 311.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., 245.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., *Unfolding the Pages*, 247.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 244.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 244; Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 163.

<sup>7</sup> Cochrane, *The One-Room School in Canada*, 163.

<sup>8</sup> Inspector’s Reports, PCSD No. 29, February 1947.

Alphie Primeau, for instance, a resident of the Crook District (adjacent to the Beauvais District), wrote to Minister R.E. Ansley on 5 September 1947 to express his concerns. He explained that when the Crook School closed in 1944, a van transported his children to the Pincher Creek School. This arrangement was agreeable, since the van service came within sight of his home to pick them up. The following year, however, his children were required to walk over two miles to the nearest van stop. As compensation, he was offered a twenty-five cents per day conveyance allowance for each of his children. He was also offered pay to drive his children (and a few others along the route) to school since the regular van was over-crowded. Alphie Primeau agreed to drive for two months until a replacement driver could be found. The new driver stopped fairly close to the house but this arrangement only lasted until the snow became deep.

At that point, he took the conveyance allowance, sent one child to the Convent in Pincher and another by van service to the Beauvais school. The van continued to stop over two miles from his house, and had to travel "about 5 miles over bad roads." To meet the 8:30 van, his child had to wake at 6:30 and leave before 7:30. At night, when the road was good, he would be let off the van at 5:00 or 5:30 and home by 6:00 or 6:15. When the road or weather was bad it would be 7:00 before he was home. "[He] would be spending 14 hours a day ... to get 6 hours of school." Since there was no residence or shelter between the van stop and the Primeau house, and the Primeau's did not have a phone, if the van could not make it, the Primeau family could not be alerted in advance.<sup>9</sup>

In reply, the Minister of Education and the Superintendent of the Pincher Creek School Board informed Mr. Primeau that "he [was] as well placed as several other families in this division and in other divisions," and that the current service would not be changed. He would continue to receive van service and conveyance allowance from the Pincher Creek School Division to compensate for the daily distance his son had to travel to meet the bus.<sup>10</sup>

The Beauvais school, despite pressures to close in 1947, remained open and operational with nine children and a teacher with a War Emergency Course (Josephine T. Michalsky). In September of 1948, it opened again, this time with twelve students on the register. The school, by this time, was an extension of the Pincher Creek Division. The community no longer was involved or invested in its operation. Compared to its former days as an autonomous district, the school had now been forsaken by those who created it, except for a small handful of people who remained concerned about issues surrounding the school.

At the annual ratepayers meeting in March 1949, the minutes of the meeting, although very professional, have an undertone of surrender and powerlessness. The following comments are the last in a minute book spanning 1909 to 1949:<sup>11</sup>

- "...As only WJ Murray and C Lang were in attendance at 2 p.m. they made an inspection of grounds and buildings and recommended that the following be repaired or replaced: (1) doors on schoolhouse (2) seat in one outhouse (3) doorhandle or latch on outhouse (4) doorhandle on coalshed (5) school fence be repaired (6) school barn be cleaned and (7) one glass instorm window be replaced."
- "Mrs Bertram arrived at 3 p.m., also Albert Therriault, but no discussion was felt necessary on any subject regarding the school."
- Ed McIntee's term as trustee had expired. No other trustee was elected in his place.

<sup>9</sup> Letter, Alphie Primeau to R.E. Ansley, Minister of Education, 5 September 1947.

<sup>10</sup> Letter, R.E. Ansley, Minister of Education to James A. McKay, Superintendent of PCSD No. 29, 23 October 1947; Letter, James A. McKay, Superintendent of PCSD No. 29 to R.E. Ansley, Minister of Education, 28 October 1947; Letter, R.E. Ansley, Minister of Education to Alphie Primeau, 30 October 1947.

<sup>11</sup> Minute Book, BSD No. 18, 19 March 1949.

The school year that finished in June 1949 would be its last. After fifty-three years of sending their children to the Beauvais School, the residents of the district received the following bulletin from the Pincher Creek School Division on 30 August:

Parents of Beauvais School District #18: The shortage of teachers in the Division necessitates the Beauvais teacher, Mrs. N. Smith, being transferred to Gladstone Valley and Beauvais school being closed for the 1949-50 school term. The Beauvais district will be served on the north by the Mountain Mill van route and the Christie Mine van route will continue to serve the south. Parents of the Beauvais district are hereby instructed to make the necessary arrangements to have their children picked up by the van serving your part of the district and transported to Pincher Creek schools on September 6<sup>th</sup>, 1949.<sup>12</sup>

An inspection of the building done by superintendent James A. McKay in 1949 indicated that the building, barn and outbuildings were in good condition.<sup>13</sup> Ten years later, however, the “school was in very poor condition and unworthy of further maintenance.” At the time, a local farmer was using the school as a bunkhouse. Since the maintenance and insurance costs were being paid by the Pincher Creek School Division, the inspector recommended that the “building should be disposed of.”<sup>14</sup>

Accordingly, in 1962, the schoolhouse was sold to N.S. Craig Jr., a former student of the school, for \$250.00. It was moved to his property, where it still stands. The barn and coal shed, sold for \$65.00, was bought and moved by Ed Lunn (also a former student). The outdoor toilets were donated to the local Fish and Game Association.<sup>15</sup> A visit to the original school site shows little evidence that it was once the centre of the Beauvais community.

Today, the Beauvais Schoolhouse stands in ruin, serving no useful purpose. With the onslaught of time, memories of the schoolhouse are quietly slipping away with the inevitable passing of those who gathered within its walls, sat in its desks, or wrote lessons upon its blackboards.

The colourful past of this one-room schoolhouse is much more than an entertaining story. It is a record of the rugged character of the people who came to Canada when it was still a young country. The story begs to be told to the students of today – young children unfamiliar with the ways of the ancestors that brought them to this place. Although the Beauvais School closed its doors forever in 1949, it still offers many lessons. It is my desire that this living research will serve as a teacher manual for those wanting to share and experience the story of the Beauvais School.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>12</sup> Bulletin, Pincher Creek School Division No. 29 to Parents of Beauvais School District No. 18., 30 August 1949.

<sup>13</sup> Report, School Buildings Inspection, by James A. McKay, Superintendent of PCSD No. 29, 9 May 1949.

<sup>14</sup> Report, School Buildings Inspection, by School Building Inspector, Department of Education, 15 April 1959.

<sup>15</sup> PCSD No. 29, *Unfolding the Pages*, 93-99.

<sup>16</sup> Author's note: A local organization, the Livingstone Ladies Social Club, has undertaken a project, using donations from the local community, to erect markers to acknowledge the location of former one-room schoolhouses in the MD of Pincher Creek. Currently, the location of the Beauvais Schoolhouse is not marked (2003). Those wishing to make a donation to the project can find out more information through the Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village, Pincher Creek.

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**Appendix A: Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails – An Educational Program**

**Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails**

**A Curriculum-Connected,  
Historic, Interactive Program**

Simone Forget  
Beauvais Lake Provincial Park  
2002/2003

## Context

Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails is a two-hour, curriculum-connected program designed to support the new (2003) grade five elementary social studies curriculum. It is modifiable for use with other school grades, and for family/general public presentations. The intent of this program is to introduce participants to a period in Alberta's historic past by recreating a half-day experience at a one-room schoolhouse in 1911/12.

A facilitator in costume, representing Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene (the 1911/12 Beauvais School teacher), leads the program while participants take on the roles of historic students that were in her class. During the program, participants will respond in character, with aid from Mrs. Skene and from their desktops, which contain biographic information and suggested answers to questions asked by Mrs. Skene.

The program progresses through opening exercises, announcements, a homework check, recess and daily lessons. Participants will also witness or experience period discipline, custodial work, the contents of a daily lunch, local politics and more. The program ends with a dialog on participants' perceptions of issues explored, and a sharing of personal/family stories surrounding the era of the one-room schoolhouse.

## Program Outline

<u>Segment</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Approximate Time (minutes)</u>
1	Welcome, Introduction	Kootanai Brown Pioneer Village Museum	10
2	Opening Exercises	One-Room Schoolhouse	15
3	Announcements	One-Room Schoolhouse	10
4	Homework Check	One-Room Schoolhouse	15
5	Daily Lessons	One-Room Schoolhouse	15
6	Recess	Outside the Schoolhouse	15
7	Lessons (continuation)	One-Room Schoolhouse	10
	• Custodian		5
	• Letter		5
			5
8	Dismissal	One-Room Schoolhouse	5
9	Discussion	One-Room Schoolhouse	20
	• Schoolhouse issues		
	• Personal stories		
Total Time			120

**Materials:**

Safety Gear	Facilitator Props	Participant Props
first aid kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>period costume (teacher, 1911/1912)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>historic name tags (15 - one representing each student in the 1911/1912 class)</li> </ul>
fire extinguisher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>words on poster board or blackboard for:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Lord's Prayer</li> <li>The Maple Leaf Forever</li> <li>The Pledge of Allegiance</li> </ul> </li> <li>jug</li> <li>lunch: syrup pail with the following contents:</li> <li>Hard-cooked egg, cold baked potato, chunk of cheese, apple, fresh cookies or cake, sandwich on thick slices of bread, spread with lard, bacon fat, syrup, jam or molasses</li> <li>pair of crow's feet</li> <li>2 balls (nerf-style)</li> <li>assignments written on blackboard</li> <li>water pail, water crock and dipper</li> <li>ghetto blaster and cassette tape of pre-recorded letter to J. Skene</li> <li>Copy of book, <i>Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>biographical place mats (15 - one representing each student in the 1911/1912 class)</li> <li>binder (grade specific), one per historic student (15). Each binder contains copied pages from authorized text books from 1911/12.</li> <li>costume(supplied by students)</li> <li>boys: button shirt, jeans (suspenders/coveralls)</li> <li>girls: white or light coloured dress or blouse/skirt combination</li> <li>scribbler (15 – one per historic student)</li> <li>Pencil (15 – one per historic student)</li> <li>Historic textbook for Jean Skene: Dominion School Arithmetic</li> </ul>

**Proposed Location:**

- Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village: Fishburn School
- any historic one-room school house
- modifiable for an outdoor amphitheatre or indoor theatre stage

**Guiding Documents:**

- Alberta Learning Curriculum* (grade 5 social studies)
- Beauvais Lake School District No. 18 Cash Book and School Board Minutes*
- Pincher Creek Historical Society. 1974. *Prairie Grass to Mountain Pass: History of the Pioneers of Pincher Creek and District*. Calgary, Alberta: D.W. Friesen & Sons LTD.
- Authorized text books from 1911/1912 (Appendix D)

**Audience:**

Audience will be a maximum 30 grade 5 students and 6 parents/teachers/school support staff.

**Safety Measures:**

The facilitator will have access to a first aid kit and a fire extinguisher, and will be a trained first-aider. Teachers and parents will be aware of the medical history of each of the students, and will respond to the individual needs that arise regarding asthma, diabetes, allergic reactions, etc.

**Risk to Museum Resources and Artifacts:**

To prevent risk to museum resources and artifacts, participants will be provided, at the beginning of the program, with appropriate behaviour guidelines while at the museum. The facilitator, exclusively, will handle fragile artifacts. Wherever possible, replicas of original artifacts will be provided to the students for handling.

**Promotional Concerns:**

- During program booking, the teacher will be informed that a historically accurate account of a school day includes a recitation of the Lord's Prayer, which can be omitted if requested.
- Participants are asked to dress in the style of the day (girls: a white or light coloured one piece dress, or a combination blouse and skirt; boys: a button shirt with blue jeans (or coveralls) and suspenders if possible). Active games will be played at recess - comfortable footwear is strongly recommended.
- The teacher will be informed that participants will need to be organized into 15 groups prior to arrival. Ideally, there should be 1-2 students/parents in each group. If numbers are large, 3/group is acceptable.

**Promotional Description:*****Grade 5 Social Studies – Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails (2 hours)***

Step into 1911 with Mrs. Skene, teacher of the one-room Beauvais School. Take on the identity of a historic student, and join the class for opening exercises, announcements, a homework check, recess and daily lessons. Experience discipline, custodial work, the contents of a daily lunch, local politics and more. Come dressed as a student from 1911. Bring your own stories and photos of the one-room school attended by you or your ancestors.

## **Segment #1: Welcome and Introduction** (Location: Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village, Main Building)

### **Background Information**

**Program Facilitation:** the design of this program assumes that the participating group will be met and organized by museum staff and then escorted to the Fishburn School to meet Mrs. Skene, the program facilitator.

**Program Facility:** Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village – This museum, located in Pincher Creek, Alberta, contains a collected village of authentic, restored, and refurnished buildings and structures from the fur trade and European settlement eras, including a CPR caboose, the Fishburn School, Father Lacombe's hermitage, an 1887 NWMP outpost, Kootenai Brown's cabin, a typical pioneer home, a Doukhobor barn and bathhouse, a blacksmith shop, and other structures that represent the local history of the Pincher Creek area.

**Program Site:** The Fishburn School, built in 1894, was a typical country school. It served as a centre of learning, social gathering and religious worship for the local Fishburn community. It was named after Mr. Fish, one of the first settlers in the area, and the little burn (creek) that ran nearby. The first Fishburn School, now in the care of the Kootenai Brown Pioneer Village, was in operation until 1948 when a new school building (which operated until 1963) was built. Over 200 children received their education at the Fishburn Schools between 1894 and 1963 (Note: although the Fishburn School is used as the program site, the *Beauvais School* history is the focus of this program).

### **Procedure:**

1. Museum staff greet and organize the group:
  - Welcome.
  - Outline expectations of adult supervisors. Explain that their participation is critical for the success of the program. Encourage them to participate fully in every exercise, and also to model appropriate behaviour, as outlined by museum below.
  - Divide students into pairs. There are only 15 historic students in the class, which means that the program can accommodate a maximum of 15 pairs/groups of participants. If necessary, form groups of three (if there are more than 30 students), or pair parents with students (if there are less than 30 students) in order to achieve 15 pairs/groups.
2. Orient the group to the program and the facility. Include the following:
  - Demonstrate the location of the bathrooms and the water fountain.
  - The program is a 2-hour reenactment of a morning at the Beauvais School in 1911/12, which will include morning routines, announcements, a homework check, lessons, recess, and more lessons.
  - The title of the program, "Syrup Pails and Gopher Tails", was borrowed, with permission, from a book by John C. Charyk who was a student, a teacher and a principal during the era of the one-room schoolhouse (show book). This program is not based on the book, but the book was used during the research of the program.
  - The participants will take on the role of students that actually attended the Beauvais School, which included grades one to eight (and sometimes nine and ten as well). In 1910/11, there were 15 students attending the Beauvais School – each pair of participants will represent one student. When participating in an assignment or activity, each pair will work together as one person. There will be times, however, when a historic student will be required to interact with the historic teacher. In order to allow everyone to participate equally, the following is suggested: Hand out one historic student nametag per pair of students, and instruct one child

in each pair to put it on. The child wearing it will sit in the historic student's assigned desk, and will be acknowledged as that historic student while he or she is wearing the nametag during interactions with the historic teacher. At recess (or anytime during the program), the historic nametag can be transferred to the second person in the pair. Since each pair will be working collectively on lessons, a chair beside each desk will be available for the partner not wearing the nametag. The first task of each pair, when the school day begins, is to find their assigned desk.

3. Explain that the schoolhouse is filled with precious, rare and delicate artifacts. Some are touchable and some are not. Those that are will be indicated as such. For those that aren't, replicas have been made for use during the program, and may not look exactly like the original artifacts. For example, the museum does not contain a class set of the textbooks used in 1911, but a binder for each student containing photocopies of some of the textbook material has been created. For this reason, each participant will have to 'suspend disbelief' when using some of the created props, and look to the shelves, walls and cupboards of the school for examples of what the various artifacts would have looked like in their original form.  
In some instances, in order to keep the program simple and safe, historic practices have not always been incorporated into the program for example:
  - Children in 1911/12 would have used bottled ink and special pens to do their lessons. Using pen and ink takes skills that would take too long to teach during today's program so instead we will be using ordinary pencils
  - In 1911/12, if you needed a drink of water, there would have been a pail with a dipper for drinking. Everyone would have used the same dipper to drink from. You will see a pail and a dipper in the schoolhouse. Someone may even be asked to get drinking water from the creek, but we won't actually drink it.
4. The teacher will have many questions for the historic students throughout the day, and they will respond in character - the answers to most of the teacher's questions can be found on each desktop. When answering the teacher, encourage participants not to simply read the provided answer. As a historic character in a living play, instruct participants to get to know the answers on their desktop so that when the teacher asks a question, the student can respond as if the answer came from memory and personal experience.
5. The schoolhouse used for this program is not the Beauvais School – it is the Fishburn School, which existed at the same time in the same area as the Beauvais School (The Beauvais School was located 9.5 km SW of Pincher Creek. The Fishburn School was located 20 km SE of Pincher Creek).
6. The teacher's name is Mrs. Isabella Marie Skene. This is her first year teaching at the Beauvais School, but she's got plenty of experience. She's 41 years old, and she used to teach in Ontario. Recommend to the participants that they address Mrs. Skene by her name, or by Ma'am.
7. Walk the students to the schoolhouse. When the hand bell rings, class will begin.

## **Segment #2: Opening Exercises (Location: Inside the Schoolhouse)**

### **Background information:**

This segment of the program provides an opportunity for the students to become comfortable in the one-room schoolhouse and establishes rapport between the facilitator and the participating class. More information can be found on the following topics in the accompanying research paper. Chapters are provided for quick reference:

*History of the Beauvais District:* 1882: The Beauvais Family; 1888: The Beauvais School District

*Beauvais Schoolhouse:* 1909: The New School; 1911: On the Inside

*Opening exercises in a one-room schoolhouse:* 1922: Morning Routines

*Mrs. Skene:* 1911: On the Inside (Mrs. Skene's manner with the students is firm but kind, and mothering).

Each desktop contains a biography of the historical student that they have assumed. It also contains suggested answers to the teacher's questions, a class photo, and a map of the district showing the location of each family relative to the schoolhouse.

### **Procedure:**

1. Mrs. Skene, (the program facilitator in teacher's costume) calls the students from outside into the one-room schoolhouse by ringing a handbell.
2. The students enter the classroom and find their seats.
3. Mrs. Skene: Please stand for the prayer, our national anthem and the pledge of allegiance (on poster board or on the blackboard – Appendix A)
  - Recite the Lord's prayer
  - Face the Red Ensign and sing "The Maple Leaf Forever" (the students will not likely be familiar with the tune – sing the first verse and chorus line by line, having the students repeat so that they become familiar with the tune).
  - Recite the Pledge of Allegiance
4. Mrs. Skene takes attendance, calling the following roll. She has the following exchanges with the students indicated:

Student	Grade	
Skene, Margaret	1	
Skene, William	1	
Lang, Wilbur	2	Mrs. Skene: Wilbur, your dad is still on the school board, isn't he? Wilbur: Yes Ma'am Mrs. Skene: Has he talked to the school inspector about getting the school a better water supply yet? Wilbur: He sent a letter, but he hasn't heard back yet.
Gareau, George	2	Mrs. Skene: George, the school needs a good scrubbing. Would you ask your mother to come in sometime next week? George: Yes, Mrs. Skene." Mrs. Skene: Thank you. Let her know that the pay is still \$3.00.
Cavelle, Joe	3	
Routhier, Katie	3	
Gareau, Albert	4	
Skene, Jean	4	Mrs. Skene: Jean, there was something you were going to remind me about... Jean: Yes, about my arithmetic book. (Jean finds the book inside her desk) Mrs. Skene: What seems to be the problem? Jean: There are pages missing. It's in poor shape. Mrs. Skene: Oh dear. Let me have a look (Jean brings it to Mrs. Skene). Yes, I'll have to order a new one. And it's an expensive one too – twenty-five cents! For now, treat this one carefully until we can get another. You may have to share with Albert when the assignment pages are missing. Jean: Yes Ma'am.
Routhier, Jeanette	5	
Cyr, Alfie	6	
Primeau, Alfie	7	
Smith, Eva	7	
Cavelle, Wilbrod	8	Mrs. Skene: Wilbrod, how is your grandfather doing? Wilbrod: He's not well ma'am. Mrs. Skene: I've made a cake for him. I want you to pick it up before you go home. Wilbrod: Yes Ma'am. Thank you.
Primeau, Arthur	8	
Smith, Richard	8	Mrs. Skene: Richard, remind me if I forget – I need to talk to you about your custodial duties before the end of the day. Richard: Is something wrong, Ma'am? Mrs. Skene: The inspector was not entirely pleased in his last report. We'll talk about it later. Richard: Yes Ma'am.



### Segment #3: Morning Announcements (Location: Inside the Schoolhouse)

#### Background:

This segment of the program incorporates items that will help the students understand the broader context of the time period (this is done effectively within the school setting because the school was the centre for so much of community's activities). More information can be found on the following topics in the accompanying research paper. Chapters are provided for quick reference:

Lunch: 1924: The Best Part of the Day

Supply of Fuel: 1920: Heat and Water

Discipline: 1910: Discipline and Mischief

Pest Eradication Project: 1922: Morning Routines

#### Procedure:

Mrs. Skene makes the following announcements:

- Mrs. Skene: (Holding up a syrup can) Someone brought a lunch pail in from the school ground. Who's is it? (no response from the students). Ok, let's have a look at what's inside: (pull out each item to demonstrate) a hard cooked egg, a baked potato, a chunk of cheese, an apple, home baked cookies, and a sandwich spread with (peek between the thick slices of bread) bacon fat and home made jam.

Katie Routhier: I think my mom made that for my sister and me to share. We forgot that we get dismissed early today.

Mrs. Skene: That's all right. Set it on the back shelf for now.
- Mrs. Skene: That reminds me: You all know that school is cancelled for the afternoon because the school is being used for as a voting station for the local election. When you get home, please remind your fathers that they must come to the schoolhouse this afternoon to cast their vote.

Eva Smith: Should we tell our mothers too?

Mrs. Skene: Of course not. Women don't vote. They're not allowed to.
- Mrs. Skene: With the weather getting colder, we're going to need wood and coal hauled to the school soon. Who's parents have hauled fuel to the school before?

Children from the Clavel, Gareau and Smith families raise their hands.

Mrs. Skene: From where do they get the wood?

William Skene: The Clavel's and the Gareaus just cut down trees from their property and saw it into smaller pieces before hauling it to the school.

Mrs. Skene: And what about the coal?

Albert Gareau: The Link Brothers have a coal mine close to here, and there's another mine at Mill Creek.

Mrs. Skene: Please tell your fathers that the school board is looking to hire someone for the winter to deliver a few thousand pounds of coal and several loads of wood.
- Mrs. Skene: After the "incident" we had last week, the school board had a meeting and made some new rules. Let me read them to you: "All students must remain on the school grounds during school hours. Any child guilty of improper conduct on school grounds or any child having tobacco in any form or cigarettes on his or her person on the school grounds or in the schoolhouse will be expelled by

the teacher for one week for the first offence, one month for the second and at the pleasure of the Board for the third.” Are there any questions?

Arthur Primeau: I learned my lesson, Ma’am. After you whipped me, my father did too.

Richard Smith: Me too. I couldn’t ride my horse all weekend.

Mrs. Skene: Well, I’m sure it won’t happen again.

Arthur and Richard: No Ma’am.

5. Mrs. Skene: Each one of us is still doing our part to rid the province of pests, and when I last checked we were in third place for the schools in our area. Does anyone have a gopher tail or a pair of feet or an egg from a crow or magpie to turn it? Jeanette, you had a pair of crows feet in your desk that you got during the last recess. Why don’t you bring those up now. (Jeanette opens her desk, finds a pair, and brings them to the teacher). Thank you. You get one penny from the government for these. I’ll give it to you at the end of the day so you don’t loose it. By the way, Willy tells me that some of you boys are catching gophers, cutting off their tails and letting them go. What’s this all about?

Alphie Primeau: We get a penny for every tail we turn in. If you cut a gopher’s tail off and let him go, he’ll grow another and you can catch him again.

Mrs. Skene: Oh, dear. I’m afraid that’s just not true. If I cut off my finger or my arm, it wouldn’t grow back. It’s the same with a gopher’s tail. Besides, the whole point of turning in a gopher tail is to prove that there is now one less gopher destroying crops and putting holes in the ground that trip the horses and cattle.

Mrs. Skene: Well, enough announcements. Take a few moments to review your homework assignment from last night. When everyone is ready, we’ll discuss what you learned from interviewing your parents.

#### Segment #4: Homework Check (Location: Inside the Schoolhouse)

##### Background:

This segment provides a profile of the community regarding ethnic origin, occupation, family size, transportation and local colour. Particularly, it demonstrates the community's dependence on the landscape. It also highlights the interconnectedness of various members of the community, based on marriage, proximity, occupation, etc.

##### Procedure:

1. Mrs. Skene: Yesterday, we were talking about biographies. Margaret, can you remind the class what a biography is?

Margaret Skene: A biography is a written history of a person's life.

Mrs. Skene: Thank you Margaret. As a homework assignment, I asked each of you to interview your family using a series of questions. I would like to hear what you found out.

- Where were you born?  
*All of the students were born in the Beauvais District – this will be reflected in the students' answers.*
- Where were your parents originally from?  
*All of the parents were born elsewhere and came to the Beauvais District sometime between 1880 and 1900 – this will be reflected in the students' answers.*
- You were all born in the Beauvais District, but none of your parents were. What does this mean?  
*This reflects the settlement history of the area. This is outlined in detail in Appendix B.*
- What is your ethnic origin?  
*Of the 16 parents, 9 are French, 2 are Metis, 1 is Irish, 1 is Scottish, 1 is English, 1 is Norwegian and 1 is unknown.*
- How did your parents meet?  
*There are some wonderfully colourful stories here. Some reflect the cultural expectations of women at the time.*
- What did your parents do before coming to the Pincher Creek area?  
*Answers to this question produce a wide variety of occupations.*
- What was their occupation once they arrived in the Beauvais District?  
*Almost all are ranchers and farmers.*
- Why was there a change between the occupation of your father before and after his arrival in this area, and why are all of your parents farmers and ranchers?  
*How one makes a living is directly connected to the local resources and the landscape. The parents of these students held a variety of occupations because they came from a variety of locations. Now that they are all in a similar location, the landscape and resources in the Beauvais area dictates how they can make their livelihood.*
- How many brothers and sisters do you have?  
*Family sizes range from 3-17. Of the eight families represented at the school, the average family size is 8.*
- Is there anything remarkable about your family?  
*These answers will reveal that the community is quite interconnected and interdependent.*

## **Segment #5: Lessons (Location: Inside the Schoolhouse)**

### **Background:**

This segment allows the participants to experience samples of grade-specific curricular material from the authorized textbooks of 1911/1912 (Appendix D). Selections have been chosen to reflect various aspects of the time period, including: Canadian identity, perception of women, importance of schooling, etc. More information can be found on the following topics in the accompanying research paper. Chapters are provided for quick reference:

Lessons: 1926: Readers and Textbooks

More Lessons: 1929: The Fun Part of Learning

It is important to note that the elementary school reader contained content relevant to most of the subject matter taught in the lower grades, including studies of history, geography, and science. The Alexandra Readers, in use during 1911/12, were named after Alexandra (daughter of the King of Denmark), consort of Edward VII, King of England.

### **Procedure:**

1. Using the selections suggested on the following page, provide one or two assignments for each grade.
2. Mrs. Skene: You're assignments are written on the blackboard. Begin immediately, and work quietly on your own. I will be assisting certain grades. If you need assistance and I am working with other students, you may ask someone nearby for help.
3. After 15 minutes, ask the students to close their books.
4. Mrs. Skene: The water bucket is empty. Alphie (Cyr), would you volunteer to go down to the creek to fill it during recess? (hand the pair of students an empty bucket, and ask a parent to accompany them to Pincher Creek to fill the bucket with water). Come join us in our recess games when you get back.
5. Mrs. Skene: As for the rest of us, meet me outside the schoolhouse and we'll get a game started.

## Suggested content for Lessons:

	Spelling	Reading	Nature Study	History & Geography	Arithmetic and Geometry
<b>Grade 1</b>	Action Games p. 17,24 ARP	The Wise Frog, p. 72 ARP Making the Cake, p.27 ARP Coming Home, p. 43 ARP The Raft, p. 59 ARP	The Robin's Nest, p.24 ARP Learning to Fly, p. 33 ARP Welcome Robin, p. 39 ARP The Caterpillar, p. 53 ARP Choosing a Nest, p. 92 ARP	The Indian Boy, p. 86 ARP The Little Turk, p. 87 ARP The Japanese Girl, p.88ARP The Little Arab, p. 89 ARP	Feeding Chickens p. 22 ARP A Counting Song p. 25 ARP
<b>Grade 2</b>	Lesson 1, p. 3 PSS	No Time for Play, p.19 AR1 The Fox and the Crow p. 40 AR1	The Bean Plant, p. 87 AR1	A Little Indian Girl p. 56 AR1 An Eskimo Baby p. 67 AR1	
<b>Grade 3</b>	Lesson 21, p. 13 PSS	Oliver Goldsmith, p. 100 AR1 A Day's Fishing, p. 127 AR1	The Little Ant Family, p. 87 AR1	A Little Chinaman, p. 122 AR1	
<b>Grade 4</b>	Lesson 3, p. 28 PSS	The Page and the King, p. 11 AR2 The Lazy Frog, p. 73 AR2 A Story of Grandma, p. 90 AR2 The Woodman's Axe, p. 38 AR2	The Birds and Their Nests, p. 68 AR2	The Cave Dwellers, p. 191 AR2	Addition & Subtraction, p. 37-52 DEA1
<b>Grade 5</b>	Lesson 18, p. 63 PSS	The Pied Piper of Hamelin p. 44 AR2 The Ant & the Cricket p. 79 AR2 Grace Darling, p. 186 AR2 Filling a Basket with Water, p.82 AR2	An Ant Hill, p. 155 AR2	The Great Bear, p. 106 AR2	Multiplication & Division, p. 53-80 DEA1
<b>Grade 6</b>	Lesson 7, p. 86 PSS	Laura Secord, p. 244 AR3 The Shoemaker & the Elves p. 10 AR3 Fortune & the Beggar, p. 15 AR3 Webster & the Woodchuck, p. 50 AR3	The Beavers, p. 270 AR3	How Siegfried Made the Sword , p. 118 AR3	Simple Fractions, p. 81-84 DEA1 Vulgar Fractions, p. 135-152 DEA1
<b>Grade 7</b>	Lesson 38, p. 131 PSS	Heroine of Vercheres p. 123 AR3 Somebody's Mother, p. 195 AR3 The Golden Windows, p. 32 AR3 The Sentinel's Pouch, p.228 AR3	The Old Man of the Meadow, p. 325 AR3	The Indians, p. 153 AR3 Rebellion and Organization in the NW, p. 367 CP Government: The Imperial System, p. 405 CP	Factors, Cancellations, Measures, Multiples p. 21-30 DEA2 Decimals p. 63-77 DEA2
<b>Grade 8</b>	Lesson 7, p. 144 PSS	The Tiger, the Brahman, & the Jackal, p. 23 AR4 The Oak Tree and the Ivy, p. 55 AR4 Miraculous Pitcher, p.244 AR4 William Tell and His Son, p. 285 AR4	The Battle of the Ants p. 42 AR4 The Eruption of Vesuvius, p. 266	The Discovery of the MacKenzie River, p.377 AR4 An Eskimo Hut, p. 166 AR4 Canada at the Opening of the New Century p. 383 CP Government: The Imperial System, p. 405 CP	Applications of Percentage p. 83-113 DEA2 Mensuration p. 124-136 DEA2 Exercises from Elementary Plane Geometry

Key to abbreviations in table:

ARP: Alexandra Readers Primer

AR1: Alexandra Readers Book 1

AR2: Alexandra Readers Book 2

AR3: Alexandra Readers Book 3

AR4: Alexandra Readers Book 4

PSS: Public School Speller

CP: The Story of the Canadian People

DEA1: Dominion Elementary Arithmetic Part I

DEA2: Dominion Elementary Arithmetic Part II

## **Segment #6: Recess (Location: Outside the Schoolhouse)**

### **Background:**

This segment will demonstrate examples of common cooperative/competitive games played by children at rural country schools. Most outdoor games played over recess at one-room schoolhouses required minimal equipment. More information can be found on recreational games in the accompanying research paper:

*Recess Games: 1924: The Best Part of the Day*

In each of these games, the rules are flexible and variations abound.

### **Procedure:**

1. Gather the students outside. Choose one of the games below. Briefly describe the rules, and begin the game. When the game is over, allow the students to choose to replay (and add modifications, if they want to) or to try a new game. Encourage all adults to participate. After 15 minutes, return to the classroom.
  - **Aunti-I-Over** - The class divides into two groups. A student with the ball yells “Aunti-I-Over,” and throws the ball over the roof of the school. Whoever catches it must run around the side of the school and hit a player from the opposing team with the ball. The person hit changes teams. (Variation – add a second ball)
  - **Pom Pom Pull Away** – mark a rectangular playing field (size depends on number and age of children). The person who is “it” stands in the centre of the playing field. All other participants line up along one boundary. “It” chooses one person to call in the following fashion: “Katie Routhier, Pom Pom Pullaway! Come away or I’ll fetch you away!” Katie then tries to run to the opposite boundary without getting tagged. If she is tagged, she is also “it”, and another person is called. The game continues until the last person is tagged.
  - **Fox and Geese** (a winter game) – A large circle is tramped in the snow, with spokes like a wheel. One person in the class is the “fox” and the rest are “geese”. All players must stay on the outer track and inner spokes of the wheel. When the fox tags a goose, that person also becomes a fox. The game continues until everyone is tagged (Fox and Geese can be played without snow by marking the grass using chalk or paint).

## Segment #7: Lessons, Continued (Location: Inside the Schoolhouse)

### Background:

In this segment, as students continue with their assigned lessons, other activities are going on in the classroom that the students will overhear, including custodial responsibilities, and the teacher's personal thoughts on life in a one-room schoolhouse. More information can be found on the following topics in the accompanying research paper. Chapters are provided for quick reference:

Caretaking: 1896: The First Teacher and the Caretaker

The Life of a Teacher: 1902: Early School Training; 1919: Finding Teachers for the School; 1935: Teacher Salaries; 1942: Teacher Shortages

### Procedure:

1. Using the lessons suggested in the previous chart, assign a new lesson for each grade (or continue working on the previous lesson).
2. Once the students are on task, call Richard Smith to the front of the room:

Mrs. Skene: Richard, come here please. In the last inspector's report, the inspector noticed that the caretaking duties were not being done adequately. We need to go over your responsibilities. These are the following things that need to be done daily:

- In order to make sure the building is warm enough for the school day, you need to arrive at the school one hour early to light the fire.
- At the end of each day, you need to clean the ashes from the stove, bank the coals so that you can easily start the fire the next morning, chop a fresh supply of kindling and wood. You also need to bring in enough wood and coal for at least one day.
- At the end of each day, the floor must be swept, the boards cleaned, the desks dusted and the outhouse toilets scrubbed.

I know it seems like a lot of work, Richard, but it's very important that you strive to do a good job. If the inspector is unsatisfied with any part of school operations, including the custodial chores, he can withhold the school's annual grant. Besides, you're getting paid a handsome sum to do the work. Two dollars and fifty cents each month is a lot of money! Do you have any questions? (Answer Richard's questions, if he has any, and ask him to return to his studies).

3. Address any questions the students might have regarding their assignments.
4. Sit down at the teacher's desk. At this time, the teacher writes a letter. Her voice (previously recorded on a cassette) is played over speakers as she writes, so that the children can hear what she is thinking:

My Dear Husband,

Normally, I would never take time during the school day to write you a note, but Ludger Gareau is going to town this afternoon, and he offered to take in my mail.

I am finally starting to settle into this new job at the Beauvais School. I feel very fortunate that I have had previous teaching experience in Ontario – the other teachers at nearby schools are all inexperienced, first-year teachers. Many of them are barely sixteen years old, and have only four months

of teacher training. It's hard to believe that with only 4 months of training, these young ladies are authorized to teach eight grades of schooling.

Unfortunately, these young girls have a hard time with discipline, and children certainly can be mischievous. Apparently, one teacher's students poured urine into the school stove; started rumors that she was having an affair with a student, broke windows and stole fuel-oil during the coldest months of the winter, and attempted to burn down the schoolhouse. On a number of occasions, she has confiscated real pistols, dynamite caps, kitchen knives, and obscene drawings. In the evenings, she has suffered catcalls and peeping boys at her teacherage. Fortunately for me, the students at the Beauvais School have been well behaved, and we have formed a positive relationship so far.

I'm not very pleased to have to live in a tent on the school property with our three children – it's quite inconvenient, and I would much rather have our family together at the end of each day. I must admit, however, that it is nice to not have to walk so far to school each morning and evening. I suppose I should be thankful. When a new teacher signs a contract to teach at a country school, the school board often arranges a place for her to stay. I've heard terrible stories of some of these living arrangements: one teacher was forced to board with a family who had only two bedrooms in the house. The teacher had to share a bed with the mother and daughter while the husband and his sons slept in the other room. Another teacher stayed with a family that was very poor. The mother wanted to make certain the teacher was fed well, but that meant there wasn't enough food for the children. The teacher was asked to eat in a separate room so that the hungry children wouldn't have to watch. I really shouldn't complain about the tent – it's quite large, and the board has offered to supply coal to us for the winter.

It's a real treat to teach in a newly built schoolhouse. The paint is still fresh and there are very few drafts in the building. Still, there are things that need improvement. The water supply is bad and the fence needs to be built. What's worse is that the school board is still quarrelling amongst itself. The bad politics of this community has left the board with some very deep scars. I've decided it is in my best interests to steer clear of those issues.

I am thankful to have a class size of only fifteen children. I've heard of other schools that have sixty or more children in a tiny school just like this one. I can't imagine teaching in a situation like that. I find it challenging enough planning for a regular school day. At any given time, there are eight lessons going on in the room at once, and I have to plan each one of them carefully. Some nights I get to bed after midnight and am up before 5:00 in the morning just to stay on top of things. With the weather getting colder, I'm finding it very hard to work in the cold school in the morning. I just might offer to take over the custodial duties, since I spend so much time at the school anyway. I'm sure Jean, Willie and Margaret would be happy to help out in the evenings while I'm planning lessons. The extra money will come in handy, too. Currently I'm making \$70.00 each month, which works out to \$3.50 per day.

I really must turn my attention back to the students, John. I look forward to seeing you on the weekend. Until then, I remain your loving wife.

Isabella

5. Once the letter is finished, fold it, seal it in an envelope, and address any student questions.



## **Segment #8: Conclusion and Dismissal (Location: Inside the Schoolhouse)**

### **Background:**

In this segment, the teacher will wrap up the day with a few final announcements regarding social events in the community. More information can be found on the following topics in the accompanying research paper. Chapters are provided for quick reference:

**The Life of a Teacher:** 1923: Special Occasions and Events

### **Procedure:**

1. Mrs. Skene: Boys and girls, put all of your books away and tidy up your desk and the area around it. There are a few final announcements. The first one is from Joe.

Joe Cavelle: Everyone's welcome to a gathering at our place this Friday. There will be card playing, music and dancing. Tickets for men are \$1.00. Ladies are free, but they must bring a basket with refreshments. It's expected that the dancing will last until the sun rises.

Mrs. Skene: Thank you Joe

2. Mrs. Skene: Class, we need to start thinking about what we would like to do for this year's Christmas Concert. I have a few ideas, but I would like to hear from you as well. Think about this and we'll discuss it in class tomorrow.
3. Mrs. Skene: We may be starting a hot lunch program at the school soon. If we do, it would require that each day, each one of you would need to bring a vegetable, like a carrot, beet, potato, tomato, turnip or onion. The school board will supply the beans. At the start of the day, we'll toss everything into a soup pot and by lunch we'll have a hot soup or stew. Talk about that with your parents and see if they would be interested in the idea.
4. Mrs. Skene: Alfie, Eva, Alfie, Wilbrod, Arthur and Richard. Please help the younger students to catch their horses before you leave. Also, please give them help getting on their horses and heading home before you leave the schoolyard.
5. Mrs. Skene: This historic class is dismissed
6. At this point in the program, the facilitator will step out of character to encourage a dialogue with the program participants. Lead with the following questions:
  - Do you have any questions about the Beauvais Schoolhouse or the program?
  - What did you notice about the lessons you did? (What values were being emphasized in the selections you read? Describe Canada's national identity in 1911/12. According to the readings, what kind of relationship do people have with the land? What role did women play in society? What role did men play in society? Were historic lessons much different from the ones you experience today?)
  - Name differences between the historic and the current classroom. Name similarities.
  - Can you think of advantages and disadvantages of the one-room schoolhouse?

- What were the major features of the Beauvais Community? (ethnic origin, occupation before and after arrival, etc)
  - If you wanted to find out more about your historic character or about the Beauvais Schoolhouse, where could you search for more information?
  - What personal stories do you have surrounding one-room schoolhouses in Western Canada?
7. After the discussion, dismiss the class – accompany them back to the main building of the museum and thank them for coming.

## Appendix B: Opening Exercises

### **The Lord's Prayer**

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.  
 Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.  
 Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses  
 As we forgive those who trespass against us  
 And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil, Amen.

### **The Maple Leaf Forever**

In Days of yore, the hero Wolfe,  
 Britain's glory did maintain  
 And planted firm Britannia's flag  
 On Canada's fair domain.  
 Here may it wave, our boast, our pride  
 And joined in love together,  
 With lilly, thistle, shamrock, rose,  
 The Maple Leaf Forever.

*Chorus: The Maple Leaf, our emblem dear,  
 The Maple Leaf Forever.  
 God save our Queen and heaven bless,  
 The Maple Leaf Forever.*

In Autumn time, our emblem dear  
 Dawns its tints of crimson hue  
 Our blood would dye a deeper red  
 Shed, Canada, for you  
 Heir sacred rights our fathers won  
 o foemen we deliver  
 We'll fighting, die. Our battle cry:  
 The Maple Leaf Forever.

### **The Pledge of Allegiance**

I pledge allegiance to our flag and the country for which it stands with liberty, equality and justice for all.

## Appendix C: History of the Pincher Creek Area

### First Nations History (B.C. to 1750)

- At this time in history, no one claimed to own the land
- The Siksika people (Blackfoot) used this area as a small part of their large homeland. It was especially well-used in the winter because it provided shelter from harsh weather, and because there was an abundance of game (including bison) and edible plants
- The Siksika travelled mostly on foot, using the help of their dogs to carry packs and pull travois. They began using horses some time between 1730 and 1750 when horses came to this part of North America

### The Fur Trade: (1750-1870)

- At this time in history, this area was called Rupert's Land and was owned by the Hudson's Bay Company
- Major changes had happened for the Siksika – their contact with fur traders had introduced them to a deadly virus (smallpox) that killed  $\frac{3}{4}$  of their people. Following this, the Siksika's enemies (who had not been as heavily affected by smallpox) attacked them in their weakened state. Many Siksika abandoned their possessions in flight of disease or attack. Many were without tools or possessions of any kind.
- Since the survivors did not have time or energy to replace the belongings that they needed to survive, they became dependent on fur traders to supply them with tools, blankets, cooking ware, clothing, liquor, tobacco, etc.
- Trade goods came to and from the trading posts by waterways and by oxcarts or horse-drawn wagons.

### Early Settlement: (1870-1890)

- At this time in history, Canada was a young country under the Dominion Government of Sir John A. Macdonald. This area had just been sold to Canada was now a part of the North West Territories.
- Travel at this time was by horse and wagon. No railroads had been built in this part of the new country yet. There were no bridges and few fences. The only roads were wagon trails.
- Settlers came slowly to the area. There were 2 ways to settle land at this time: (1) ranchers could lease (borrow) land but the property still belonged to the government, which could cancel your lease by giving you two years notice. If you didn't have 1 cow grazing on each 10 acres of your lease land, you had to forfeit the land. (2) farmers could obtain the rights to a quarter section of land (160 acres) for just \$10 if they built a house, ploughed some land, and stayed on the homestead for 3 years.
- Many French people came to the area from Oregon and from Eastern Canada (Including Remi Beauvais).

- There were large distances between settlers. Most homes and buildings were constructed by the homesteaders with unmilled lumber.

### The North West Mounted Police (1874)

- this 'temporary' police force was assembled in eastern Canada by Sir John A. Macdonald to keep order in the western frontier until each local area could establish its own police force
- they walked or rode their horses across Canada, setting up a network of forts and detachments along the way.
- while on patrol, they visited every settler, sharing the latest news, bringing the mail, and receiving reports from the farmers and ranchers about local events
- they played a large role in helping the First Nations People settle on reserve lands
- they were highly respected by the settlers and the tribes as men of honesty and fairness

### The Railroad (1898)

- A railroad had been built from Calgary to Fort Macleod in 1891. During a time when horse and cart was the only way to get your products to the railway platform, farmers found it a difficult distance to cart their grain. For the ranchers selling cattle, it was easier to drive your herd to Fort Macleod.
- In 1898, much to the appreciation of the settlers in this area, the Crow's Nest Pass branch of the CPR was completed, with rail platforms at Pincher City and Cowley.

### Later Settlement (1900's)

- by the turn of the century, nearly every quarter section of land had been taken up by farmers.
- every farmer's property was fenced – this made it impossible for ranchers to continue their former practice of 'open grazing'.
- A good piece of land (near a water source and close to town) was now very hard to find, since all of them had already been settled.
- By 1901, more and more settlers opted for lands owned by the C&E Railway (at \$480/quarter) or by the Hudson's Bay Company (at \$640/quarter). As time passed, available land was farther from the nearest town and yet more expensive.
- Saw mills made it possible for people to use milled lumber for their homes and fences. A typical farm/ranch had a large garden plot, an ice house, a pump for well water, corrals near the main yard, large barns and granaries

### Appendix D: Authorized Textbooks in 1911/12

**Readers:** *Alexandra Series*: Primer, First, Second, Third and Fourth  
**Arithmetic:** *The Dominion Elementary Arithmetic*: Part I (Grades 4-6) and Part II (Grades 7-8)  
**Grammar:** *The Alberta Public School Grammar*: Grades 5-8  
**Geography:** *World Relations and the Continents*: Grades 6-7, *Dominion School Geography*: Grade 8  
**Agriculture:** *Agriculture*  
**History:** *The Canadian People*: Grades 7-8, *An English History*: Grades 7-8  
**Civics:** *Canadian Civics*: Grades 7-8  
**Geometry:** *Elementary Plane Geometry*: Grade 8  
**Composition:** *Elementary Composition*: Grades 6-8  
**Spelling:** *Alberta Public School Speller*: Grades 3-8  
**Hygiene:** *How to be Healthy*: Grades 5-7  
**Music:** *King Edward Music Readers*: Grades 4-8  
**Writing:** *The New Barnes Writing Books for Alberta Schools*: Primer, I, II and III  
**Drawing:** *The Graphic Drawing Books for Alberta Schools*, Books I-VIII  
**Physical Culture:** *Syllabus of Physical Exercises for Schools*

## Appendix E: Beauvais School Library Books, 1941/42

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### History and Social Studies

Africa, E.J. Webb  
 Age of Drake, L.W. Lyde  
 All About Canada, D.J. Dickie  
 Boys and Girls Around the World, D.J. Dickie  
 Canada's Story, H.E. Marshall  
 Canadian History: A Brief Biography, J.O. Miller  
 Community Activities  
 The Dawn of a New Patriotism, J.D. Hunt  
 Deeds That Won the Empire, Fitchett  
 Discoveries and Explorers, E.R. Shaw  
 English History, Symes and Wrong  
 Garden of Canada, Talbot  
 The Great Company, Beckles Wilson  
 Here and There in Africa  
 Here and There in Asia  
 Highroads to Geography: Introduction, Nelson  
 Highroads to Geography No. 1, Nelson  
 Highroads to Geography No. 3, Nelson  
 Highroads to Geography No. 4, Nelson  
 Highroads to Geography No. 5, Nelson  
 Highroads to Geography No. 6, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 1, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 2, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 3, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 6, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 7, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 8, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 9, Nelson  
 Highroads to History No. 10, Nelson  
 Historic Handbook on the Northern Tour, F. Parkman  
 History of Canada, W.L. Grant  
 History of Canada  
 History of England  
 How We Travel, Chamberlain  
 Knights Errand Of the Wilderness, M. Long  
 Land of Lamas  
 Little Journeys to Scotland and Ireland, C.E. Whitcomb and M.M. George  
 Little Journeys to South Africa, White and Smith  
 Little Journeys to Western Wonderland, Koch  
 On Western Trains In the Early Seventies, McDougal  
 Panama, J. Foster Fraser  
 Practical Geography Handbook, Troeger  
 Romance of Canadian History, Edgar  
 Servants of People, R. Wilson  
 Settlers in Canada, Captain Marryat  
 Short History of the English People, R. Green  
 Social History of England, G. Guest  
 Stanley's Story: Through the Wilds of Africa  
 Stories of Olden Time, J. Johonnat  
 Stories of Old World, A.J. Church  
 Stories of the British Empire, A.M. Machar  
 Story of Canada, E.L. Marsh  
 Story of Clothing and Shelter  
 Studies in Citizenship, McCaig  
 Tales and Travel, Hahn  
 Ten Great Events in History, J. Johonnat  
 A Trip up the Nile, Eliot  
 Uncle Robert's Geography, Parker  
 Under the Southern Cross, M.M. Ballou  
 Ways of Living In Many Lands  
 With Olive in India, G.A. Henty

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### Health and Science

Emergencies, C. Gulick  
 Famous Men of Science, S.K. Bolton  
 Health Through Science  
 Hygiene for Teacher and Students, Eastwood  
 Personal Hygiene for Girls, Humphreys  
 Physiology and Hygiene, Canadian Health Series  
 Physiology and Health, Turner  
 Primer of Hygiene, R. Caldwell  
 Story of the Human Body, C. Watson

### Biology and Nature

Butterflies and Moths, F. and L. Duncan  
 Elementary Agriculture, McCaig  
 Flower Fables  
 From September to June With Nature, M.L. Warren  
 In the Forest of Brazil, H.W. Bates  
 Land and Water Plants, F. and L. Duncan  
 Little Nature Studies, Burroughs  
 Living Creatures, J. Montieith  
 A Lobster and His Relations, F. and L. Duncan  
 Pearls of the Sea, A.O. Cooke  
 Plant Traps and Decoys, F. and L. Duncan  
 Plants and Their Children, Mrs. W.S. Dana  
 Sea Stories for Wonder Eyes, Hardy  
 Spiders and Scorpions, F. and L. Duncan  
 Starland, Ball  
 Water Wonders Every Child Should Know

### Poetry

A Book of Story Poems, G.R. Loane  
 A Poetry Speaking Anthology: Book 1  
 Ballads of British History  
 Canadian Poetry Book  
 Canadian Poets, Garvin  
 Child's Own Book of Verse  
 English Poetry: Book 1, J.M. Dent  
 English Poetry: Book 2, J.M. Dent  
 English Poetry: Book 3, J.M. Dent  
 The Great War In Verse and Prose, J.E. Wetherill  
 Hiawatha and Evangeline, Longfellow  
 The Ivory Gate, Part 3  
 The Lady of the Lake, Sir Walter Scott  
 Miles Standish, Longfellow  
 Poems Every Child Should Know  
 Poetical Works of Burns  
 Poetical Works of Longfellow  
 Poetical Works of Milton  
 Poetical Works of Tennyson  
 Poetical Works of Wordsworth  
 Selected Plays of Shakespeare  
 Snowbound and Others, Whittiers  
 Tempo Poetry Book, J. Milton and W. Shakespeare  
 Tempo Poetry Book, Poets at Play  
 Tempo Poetry Book, Stories and Songs  
 Tempo Poetry Book, The Fairy Harper  
 Tempo Poetry Book, The Laurel Crown

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**Junior Fiction**

Adrift on an Icepan, Dr. Grenfell  
 The Adventures of Buster Bear  
 Alice in Wonderland  
 Arabian Nights  
 Black Beauty  
 Book of Legend, Scudder  
 Boys Book of Battles, E. Wood  
 Cinderella  
 Coral Island  
 Daddy's Girl, Mrs. Meade  
 Don Quixote, Cervantes  
 Henry Esmond, W.M. Thackeray  
 King Arthur and His Round Table, B. Clay  
 Lances of Lynwood, C.M. Younge  
 Life on a Light Ship, A.O. Cooke  
 Little Eskimo  
 Little Lame Prince, Miss Mielock  
 Little Lord Fauntleroy, F.H. Burnett  
 Little Lucy's Wonderful Globe, C. Younge  
 The Little Minister, J.M. Barrie  
 Little People of the Snow  
 A Long Trail, D.J. Dickie  
 The Monster Hunters, F. Rolt Wheeler  
 More Mother Stories, Maude Lindsay  
 On Board a Borkentine, A.O. Cooke  
 Peter the Whaler, W.H.C. Kingston  
 Pied Piper of Hamilon, L. Browning  
 Polly Page Ranch Club, J.L. Forrester  
 Robin Hood, F.C. Tilney  
 Robinson Crusoe, Daniel Dafoe  
 The Seven Little Sisters, Jane Andrews  
 Stories to Tell Children  
 The Story of Columbus, J. Lang  
 The Story of George from Spencers Faerie Queen  
 The Story of Sylvie and Bruno, L. Carroll  
 The Story of the Three Apples  
 Three Midshipmen  
 Tom Brown's School Days  
 Tom Paulding, R. Mathews  
 True Tales, Sir S.W. Baker

**Senior Fiction**

Adam Bede, G. Eliot  
 Ben Hur, Wallace  
 The Bride of Lamermoor, Sir W. Scott  
 Coronata, R. Wilson  
 Curiosity Shop, C. Dickens  
 The Days Work, Rudyard Kipling  
 The Deerslayer, Red Cloud  
 English Prose: Book 1  
 English Prose: Book 3A  
 English Prose: Book 3B  
 Essays Every Child Should Know, W. Irving  
 Ethel Morgan at Chautauqua, Smith  
 Evangeline, L. W. Longfellow  
 Good Wives, L.M. Alcott  
 Harold, Lord Lytton  
 Herward the Wake, C. Kingsley  
 In Freedoms Cause, G.A. Henty  
 In the Days of Alfred the Great, Tappan  
 In the Heart of the Ancient Wood, Roberts  
 In Times Like These, McClung  
 Ivanhoe, Sir Walter Scott  
 John Halifax Gentleman, D.M. Mulock  
 John Howard, L. Cooper  
 Kennilworth, Sir Walter Schott  
 Kidnapped, R.L. Stevenson  
 The King of the Golden River, Ruskin

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The Last Days of Pompeii, Lord Lytton  
 Last of the Mohicans, J.F. Cooper  
 Life of Lord Selkirk, Dr. G. Bryce  
 Life of Mohamed, Washington Irving  
 Madame Theresa, Chartrain  
 Pendennis, W.M. Thackeray  
 Pickwick Papers, Dickens  
 The Prairie, J.F. Cooper  
 Quentin Durward, Sir Walter Scott  
 Rob Roy, Sir Walter Scott  
 Selected Essays by T. Carlyle  
 Selected Speeches by Chatham, Burke, etc.  
 Sesame and Lillies, Ruskin  
 Sewing Seeds in Danny  
 Shepard of Kingdom Come, J. Fox  
 A Sister to Evangeline, C.D.G. Roberts  
 A Son of Courage, Mckishnie  
 St. Ives, R.L. Stevenson  
 The Story of Grenfell of Labrador, D. Wallace  
 Sweet Girl Graduate, L.T. Meade  
 Swiss Family Robinson  
 Tale of Two Cities, Dickens  
 Tales From Shakespear, M. and C. Lamb  
 Toilers of the Sea, Victor Hugo  
 Treasure Island, R.S. Stevenson  
 Twice Told Tales, Hawthorne  
 Two Days Before the Mast, R.H. Dana

**Miscellaneous**

Alexander Reader Phonic Primer  
 America In Pictures  
 Bow Wow and Mew Mew  
 Canadian Reader, Book 3  
 Canadian Reader, Book 5  
 Children of the Wigwam, A. Chase  
 The Courtesy Book, Nancy Dunlea  
 Earth and Sky: First Reader, Stickney  
 Eight Modern Plays, A.A. Milne  
 Eight New Plays for Boys and Girls, J. Bourne  
 Heart of Oak Books 4, C.E. Norton  
 Hiawatha Primer 2, F. Holbrook  
 How to Study, F.M. Murray  
 How to Tell Stories to Children, S.C. Bryant  
 Industrial Work, H.E. Rollins  
 Kings and Queens  
 Learning to Speak and Write  
 Nelson's Literature Reader: Book 1  
 Nelson's Literature Reader: Book 2  
 The Rhyme and Story Primer  
 The Stage in the School, K/A. Ommannney  
 The Werner Primer 4, Taylor

**Encyclopedias and Dictionaries**

The Concise Oxford Dictionary  
 Everyman Encyclopedia in 12 Volumes, compiled by A. Boyle  
 Heroes Every Child Should Know  
 Heroines Every Child Should Know  
 Operas Every Child Should Know  
 Trees Every Child Should Know  
 Old dictionary without a cover

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### Appendix F: Families of the Beauvais School

The following table is a summary of information gathered to date regarding families and individuals involved with the Beauvais School. It is by no means complete.

ODU: "other dates unknown" (attendance registers, photographs, and references to individual children help to place a child at the Beauvais school in a particular year, but this information is not always available. Attendance information is scant prior to 1928).

DU: "dates uncertain"

Family	Birth-Death	Notes
<b>Beauvais</b> (SE ¼ S34-T5-R1-W5)		Remi and Marie married 26 December 1866 or 1868 (Marie was Remi's third wife)
Father: Remi	30/09/1825-9/09/1899	Remi was a founding trustee of the Beauvais School Board (1888), and very active in the Catholic/French community.
Mother: Marie Ducharme	1840?-1915	Occupation: farming, horse breeding
Children:		The Beauvais home was known as a place of gathering for social events
Louise (Louisa)	1868-1902	m. Joe Mongeon, July 1882 by Father Lacombe. Had 4 children
Alexander	1870-?	m. Mary Lucier. No apparent children
Caroline	1872-1921	m. Theodule Cyr. Had 7 children
Angele (Angeline)	1878-1952 or 54	m. Paul Cyr, 6/11/1903 by Father Lacombe. Had 2 children
Florence	1880-1888	Died young (8 years old). May be buried on at the Beauvais Homestead
Franklin	1882-?	Franklin may have attended the St. Agnes School. He was 14 when it opened. No recorded marriage or children
Remi James Jr.	1886-1958	Remi Jr. may have attended the St. Agnes School. He was 10 when it opened. m. Elise Leblanc, 12/09/1904. Had 4 children
Joseph II Longtain	1860-1862	Died young. Son of Remi's first wife
Honore Camiran	1862-1931	Son of Remi's second wife
Marcelline Camiran	1865-?	Died young. Daughter of Remi's second wife
<b>Bertram</b> (SE ¼ S10-T6-R1-W5)		Thomas and Alberta married 30/09/1934
Father: Thomas C.		The Bertram homestead was 2 miles from the school
Mother: Alberta Cyr		Thomas served on the Beauvais School board for one year as trustee (1944) and three years as chairman (1941-1943)
Children:		
Lorraine	30/04/1935-?	
Robert	4/08/1937-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-7 from 1941-1949
Joyce	8/04/1939-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-6 from 1943-1949
Veronica	08/04/1944-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-4 from 1945-1949
Sylvia	18/02/1946-?	



Bishop

(NE ¼ S15-T6-R1-W5)

Father: William (Bill)

Mother: Anne

Children:

Elsie

Ethel

When William and Anne lived in the Beauvais district, their home was 3.25 miles from school

Attended the Beauvais for grades 7-8 School from 1927-1929. ODU

Attended the Beauvais for grades 7-8 School from 1927-1929. ODU

Blake

Father:

Gaurdian: Mrs. H. Bradley

Children:

Robert

Attended the Beauvais School for grades 2-4 from 1943-1946

Bodell

(NE ¼ S26-T5-R1-W5)

Father: George

Mother:

Children:

Phylis

Frank

George

Home located ~ 1.5 miles from the Beauvais School

George was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School

George served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for two years (1926-1927)

Mrs. Bodell provided caretaking services (scrubbing) in 1926-1927

Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU

Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU

Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU

Cavelle

(SE ¼ S36-T5-R1-W5)

Father: Wilbrod

Mother: Mary Alvina Bond

Children:

Edwin Wilbrod

10/12/1922-?

James Lawrence

11/01/1924-?

Joseph Alwyn

10/08/1925-?

(Marie) Doreen

06/09/1926-?

Jean Edith

03/04/1930-?

Lorene

28/04/1932-?

Marlene

28/01/1942-?

Home located ~ 1.5-3 miles from the Beauvais School

Wilbrod and Mary Alvina married in 1922

Wilbrod is the son of Joseph Alfred Clavel

Wilbrod served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 2 years (1935-1937)

Attended the Beauvais School for grades 2-7 between 1933-1940

Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1933-1940

Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-5 between 1934-1940

Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-3 between 1937-1940

Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 between 1939-1940

<u>Clavel</u>			Home located ~ 1.5 miles from the Beauvais School
(SE ¼ S36-T5-R1-W5)			Joseph Alfred and Florence married 29/08/1898
(SE ¼ S35-T5-R1-W5)			Occupation: Rancher
Father: Joseph Alfred (Fred)			The Clavel home was known as a place of gathering for social events
Mother: Florence Gregoire			Fred was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School
			Florence did caretaking duties (scrubbing) in 1915 and in 1924
Children:			
Wilbrod	17/12/1899-?		Early schooling at Lacombe Home in Mindnapore with Father Lacombe. Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/1912. ODU.
			Daily caretaking duties in 1912
Florestine	20/09/1901-?		Died young
Joe	25/12/1903-?		Early schooling at Lacombe Home in Mindnapore with Father Lacombe. Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/1912. ODU
Albert	29/22/1907-?		Died young
Edward	27/09/1909-?		May have attended Beauvais School between 1914-1925. DU
Catherine Beatrice	29/04/1912-?		May have attended Beauvais School between 1917-1928. DU
George	09/04/1915-?		May have attended Beauvais School between 1920-1928. DU
Marie (Mary)	14/06/1917-?		May have attended Beauvais School between 1922-1928. DU
Florence	01/04/1921-?		May have attended Beauvais School between 1926-1928. DU
David Patrick	05/02/1927-?		Did not attend the Beauvais School – does not appear on attendance registers.
<u>Chamberlain</u>			Home located over 4 miles from the Beauvais School
(SW S22-T6-R1-W5)			Occupation: Brick layer
Father: Eugene			
	1880-1892 (died at 18)		
Mother: Mary Roma			
Children:			
George	1887-?		George and Frank were present at St. Agnes when it opened in 1896. They stayed with Mr. Skene, the teacher. ODU
Frank	(died in a mine accident)		Delina attended a convent in Calgary, on the advice of Father Lacombe.
Delina (Adeline)			
<u>Chamberlain</u>			Home located 2 miles from the Beauvais School
Guardian: Lucy Remington			
Children:			
Evelyn	12/01/1922		Attended the Beauvais School for grade 3 for 4 months in fall, 1933
Edward	1925		Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 for 4 months in fall, 1933.
<u>Corrigan</u>			Home located ~ 2-3 miles from the Beauvais School
Father: James Joseph			
	1876-20/02/1960		
Mother:			
Children:			
Joseph	7-09/03/1940		? uncertain if this is a child of James Joseph
Francis			m. Agnes Marquis 22/01/1938. ? uncertain if this is a child of James Joseph
Leonard	28/11/1921-		Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-8 between 1930-1936

<u>Cote</u> (NW ¼ S25-T5-R1-W5)		Home located 1.5 miles from the Beauvais School
Father: Albert	1888-05/03/1977	Albert and Blanche married 12/04/1915
Mother: Blanche Primeau	1897-30/09/1972	Albert and Blanche were legal guardians for Louis Louchart
		Albert was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School
		Albert served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 10 years (1923-1926, 1938-1943)
Children:		
Cecile	21/01/1916	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 6-7 between 1927-1929. ODU
Leonard	01/06/1919	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 2-9 between 1927-1934. ODU. Served on school board as secretary for 4 years (1941-1944)
Jeanette	02/06/1923	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1930-1938
Anita	24/11/1924	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1930-1939
Hector	05/12/1929	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-9 between 1936-1946
Louis Louchart	03/09/1939	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 between 1946-1948
<u>Craig</u> (NW ¼ S14-T6-R1-W5)		Home located 2.5 miles from the Beauvais School
Father: Noble		
Mother:		
Children:	17/05/1936-	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-5 between 1944-1947.
Noble Jr. (Buddy)		After the school closed, Buddy purchased the schoolhouse for \$250.00 in 1962 and moved it to his property where it still stands
<u>Cyr</u> (NE ¼ S27-T5-R1-W5) ?		? Home located ~ .5 miles from the Beauvais School
Father: Paul	1867-18/03/1938	Paul and Angele were married in 06/11/1903 by Father Lacombe
Mother: Angele Beauvais	1878-1952 or 1954	Occupation: Farmer/Rancher
Children:		
Maxime R.	05/01/1906-1908	Died young
Mary	1908	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1913-1924. DU
<u>Cyr</u> (NE ¼ S27-T5-R1-W5) ?		? Home located ~ .5 miles from the Beauvais School
Father: Theodule		Theodule was a trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 5 years (1913 to 1917)
Mother: Caroline Beauvais	1872-1821	Theodule provided caretaking service (scrubbing the schoolhouse) in 1915
Children:		Occupation: Farmer/Rancher
Margaret Mary	1899-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1904-1915. DU
Alphie	~1900-?	Alphie appears in a school photograph in 1911/12. May have attended the Beauvais School between 1905-1916. DU
Agnes	1902-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1907-1918. DU
Dorris	~1903-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1908-1919. DU
Lea Clemence	~1903-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1908-1919. DU
Elizabeth/Lizzie	1905-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1910-1921. DU
George Remi	1907	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1912-1922. DU
<u>Davies</u> (SE ¼ S27-T5-R1-W5) ?		
Father:		
Mother:		
Children:		
Horace		Attended the Beauvais School sometime in the early 1920s. DU
Margaret		Attended the Beauvais School sometime in the early 1920s. DU

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Dawson

Father:

Mother:

Children:

Devra

1931-?

Attended the Beauvais School for grade 9 between 1945-1946

Arle

1932-?

Attended the Beauvais School for grades 7-9 between 1945-1947

D'aigle

(SW ¼ S24-T5-R1-W5)

Father: Edmund

Mother: Hermaine

Edmund was contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School

Hermaine served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for two years (1941-1942)

Daigle lake (located in sections 14 and 23 of T5-R1-W5) is named after Edmund and Hermaine

Joseph Hilaire Daigle married Delina Cyr in 1930 – Joseph may have been a son of Edmund and Hermaine, and may have attended the Beauvais School.

DeLaurier

Father:

Mother:

Children:

Unknown

At least one DeLaurier child attended the Beauvais School in 1917, and did caretaking duties. ODU

Home located 3 miles from school

Duncan

Father: John

Mother:

Children:

Garfield

08/06/1918-1941 or 1942

Garfield was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School

Attended the Beauvais School for grades 4-10 between 1928-1934. ODU

Dumas

(SW ¼ S10-T6-R1-W5)

Father: J.

Mother: Mary Jane ?

Children:

1860-1951

Home located ~ 2 miles from the Beauvais School

J. Dumas was contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School

Mrs. Dumas provided caretaking services (scrubbing) in 1918.

It is not known if the Dumas family had children that attended the Beauvais School

Duthie

(NE ¼ S24-T5-R1-W5)

Father: Richard

Mother: Theresa Ann Clark

Children:

Beatrice Kate

1887-1941

Home located ~ 3 miles from the Beauvais School

Occupation: Farmer/Rancher

Richard and Theresa Ann married in 1885

Richard paid taxes to the B.D. from ?-1916

Richard served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for over 9 years from ?-1917 (He was also chairman in 1912)

Richard Clark

1889-1962

May have attended the Beauvais School between 1892-1903. DU

May have attended the Beauvais School between 1894-1904. DU. Served as secretary on the school board in 1909.

Ethel

1893-1962

May have attended the Beauvais School between 1898-1909. DU

Grant

1903-?

May have attended the Beauvais School between 1908-1919. DU

Fiddler

Father:

Mother:

Children:

Mary

Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU

Veronica

Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU

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<u>Frey</u> (SE ¼ S27-T5-R1-W5) ? Father: H.M. Mother: Children:		H.M. Frey was a trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 4 years (1921-1925) H.M. Frey was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School
Kathleen		Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
<u>Gareau</u> (NW ¼ S35-T5-R1-W5) Father: Ludger Mother: Madeline DeLorme Children:		Home located ¾ mile from the Beauvais School Ludger and Madeline married 16/09/1884 in Batoche Occupation: Carpenter, Farmer, Rancher Ludger repaired the school occasionally and was contracted to haul fuel to the school Ludger was a founding member of the Beauvais School Board (1888), and served on the board for over 20 years until 1909 Madeline did caretaking duties (scrubbing the schoolhouse 2-3 times/year) between 1912-1917 Madeline served as a temporary teacher (2-3 weeks?) in the fall of 1919
Delemina	1885-?	
Philmonie		
Alphonsine		
Josephine		
Wilfred George	29/03/1890-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1896-1906. DU
Emma	07/12/1891-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1896-1907. DU
Florestine	06/09/1893-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1898-1910. DU. Did daily caretaking in 1907/08. Expelled in 1910.
Napoleon	1896-11/07/1968	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1901-1912. DU. Served as chairman of school board from 1934-1940
Elisa	1899-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1904-1910. DU. Attended Kermaria Convent in 1910 and Normal School in 1915. Taught from 1916-1919 at various schools. In 1920 and 1942/43 taught at the Beauvais School (married name Sorge).
Albert		May have attended the Beauvais School between 1906-1917. DU. Appears in a school photograph taken in 1911/12. Contracted to haul fuel to the school in 1925.
George	02/05/1904-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1909-1920. DU. Appears in a school photograph taken in 1911/12. Did daily caretaking in 1916/17 and 1920/21.
(Marie) Ida	28/08/1908-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1913-1924. DU
<u>Gareau</u> (NW ¼ S35-T5-R1-W5) Father: Napoleon B. Mother: Mary Ann Elizabeth Brener Children:		Home located ¾ mile from the Beauvais School Napoleon served as chairman of the Beauvais School Board for 7 years from 1934-1940
Eula	20/11/1924-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-7 between 1931-1940
Malcom	21/09/1929-19/07/1968	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-5 between 1935-1941
Robert	1931-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-3 between 1938-1941
<u>Gervais</u> (NE ¼ S3-T6-R1-W5) Father: Alex (Alexis) Mother: Mary Ann Pope Children:		Home located 1.5 miles from the Beauvais School The Gervais home was known as a place of gathering for social events Alex was often contracted to do repair work at the school. He also did some caretaking duties (scrubbing). Mary Ann served as trustee on the School Board for two years from 1928-1929 Alex and Mary Ann were contracted to haul fuel (1909-1938). Fred and Morris also hauled fuel (1927-1937).
Azilda		Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1922-1927. ODU Did daily care taking from 1922/23-1924/25
Fred (Alfred)		Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1922-1927. Did daily care taking in 1926/27.
Wilbrod	8/2/1914-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-5 between 1924-1931. Did daily care taking in 1925/26, 1927/28 and 1928/29
Morris	18/05/1916-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-7 between 1925-1932. Did daily care taking in 1930/31 and 1931/32.



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<u>Lang</u> (NE ¼ S28-T5-R1-W5) or (SW ¼ S28-T5-R1-W5) Father: Cliff Mother: Alice Children:		Home located 4 miles from the school Cliff was a trustee of the school board for three years (1947-1949) Occupation: Farmer, Rancher
	Leroy	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-6 between 1944-1948
	Larry	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-3 between 1945-1948
	Dennis	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-2 between 1947-1949
<u>Lang</u> (SW ¼ S28-T5-R1-W5) Father: Robert (Bob) Mother: Bessie Morton Children:		Home located 4 miles from the school Robert and Bessie married in 1902 Robert was trustee of the school board for 4 years (1909-1912) and chairman for 16 years (1913-1928) Occupation: Farmer, Rancher
	Wilbur	Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/12. ODU. Served as Secretary on the Beauvais School Board for 2 years (1932-1933)
	Cliff	Attended the Beauvais School in 1919/20 (did caretaking duties). ODU. Served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 2 years (1947-1949)
	Raymond	Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU. Ray was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School
<u>Lawrence</u> Father: John Mother: Children:		Home located 3.5 miles from the Beauvais School
	Nancy	Attended the Beauvais School in 1936/37. Her grade was not indicated
	Cecilia	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-5 between 1939-1941
	Leona	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 2-5 between 1940-1944
<u>Ledingham</u> (SE ¼ S28-T5-R1-W5) Father: John Skene (Jack) Mother: Margaret Taylor Children:		Home located ~ 2.5 miles from the Beauvais School Occupation: Farmer, Rancher
	Beulah (adopted)	
	John Andrew (Jack)	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 10 in 1933/34 (formerly attended Coalfields School). His father died when he was 9.
<u>Leedham</u> Father: William (John) Mother: Children:		Home located 3.5 miles from the Beauvais School John was a widower with 6 children.
	George	
	Charles	Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
	John	Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
	Marian	Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
	Elaine	Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
	Fern	Attended the Beauvais school for grades 1-5 between 1924-1929

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<u>LeGrandeur</u>		
Father: Edward	1875-21/03/1952	Ed and Lena married 12/02/1900
Mother: Lena Therriault		Ed and Lena had 11 children in all, including 4 sets of twins
Children:		
Alfred	15/12/1910-10/15/1982	Attended the Beauvais school in 1923/24. ODU
Cecile		Attended the Beauvais school in 1923/24. ODU
Theresa		Attended the Beauvais school in 1923/24. ODU
Walter	03/06/1912-?	Attended the Beauvais school in 1923/24. ODU
Yvonne		Attended the Beauvais school in 1923/24. ODU
<u>LeGrandeur</u>		
Father: Mose De Motlette	?-1900	Mose and Julia married in 1874. (They lost 2 children to diphtheria in March, 1887 -a baby and a 7 year old boy)
Mother: Julia Livermore	?-1939	Occupation: Farmer, Rancher
Children:		Arrived in the Beauvais District in 1882 from Oregon
Edward	1875-21/03/1952	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Married Lena Therriault
Philomene		May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Married Alfred Pelletier
Emery		May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Bronc buster
Emma		May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Married Walter Cridland
Pete	1890-02/07/1957	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Bronc buster
Albert	1894-11/09/1972	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Married ?
<u>Lunn</u>		
(SW ¼ S11-T6-R1-W5)		Home was located 2 miles from the Beauvais School
Father: Stephen	1881-09/04/1950	Stephen came to the Beauvais District in 1902 or 1904.
Mother: Margery Caroline Cox	06/06/1888-?	Stephen and Margery married in 05/04/1915
Children:		Between 1909 and 1942, Stephen served on the Beauvais School Board for at least 15 years (8 as chairman)
Edward	10/02/1917-?	Stephen was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School
Harold	06/04/1919-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-10 between 1925-1934. Purchased the school coal shed and barn for \$65.00 in 1962
Aileen	07/07/1920-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-10 between 1925-1934. Broke his jaw in 1928 (kicked by a horse)
Joyce	25/09/1922-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-7 between 1927-1934. Married Mr. Huffman
		Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1927-1938. Married Mr. Gibson
<u>McGartly</u>		
Father:		
Mother:		
Children:		
Bella	02/12/1915	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 5 in 1939/40
Nora		Attended the Beauvais School in 1942/43. Grade not indicated
<u>McIntee</u>		
(SE ¼ S35-T5-R1-W5)		Home was located 2 miles from the Beauvais School
Father: Edward R.	?-03/03/1966	Occupation: custom threshing, saw mill operator, farmer, rancher
Mother: Juliette Lobsinger	?-06/08/1993	Edward served on the Beauvais School Board for one year as trustee (1943) and 5 years as chairman (1944-1948)
Children:		
Ivan	10/09/1937-	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-4 between 1944-1948
Beulah	04/08/1926-?	Did not attend the Beauvais School. Married Len Valin (18/12/1944)
Arnita	21/01/1925-?	Did not attend the Beauvais School. Married Edwin Kunkel (07/10/1947)



<u>Maldidier</u> (SW or NE ¼ S32-T5-R1-W5) Father: Etienne Mother: Children:		Home was located 2.5 miles from the Beauvais School Occupation: Farmer, Rancher
Eugene Leon Mary		The Maldidier children attended the Beauvais School between 1896-1915. DU Eugene married Florestine Gareau (both attend the Beauvais School). They had a child – Marie Louise – 26/01/1915
<u>Mauer</u> Father: John Mother: Children:		Home was located 3 miles from the Beauvais School
John 22/01/1922-? Joseph 08/09/1924-? Ernest 23/10/1926-? Sophie		Attended the Beauvais School for grades 6-7 between 1934-1938 Attended the Beauvais School for grades 2-4 between 1934-1938 Attended the Beauvais School for grades 2-3 between 1934-1938 Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 in 1938
<u>Mikilak</u> Father: John Mother: Angela Tracz Children:		Home was located 2 miles from the Beauvais School
Angela 31/03/1923-? Katie (Katherine) 31/01/1925-? Walter 14/02/1929-? Blanche 05/06/1931-?		Attended the Beauvais School for grades 5-7 between 1934-1938 Attended the Beauvais School for grades 4-8 between 1934-1939 Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-7 between 1936-1944 Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1938-1946
<u>Murray</u> (NW ¼ S35-T5-R1-W5) Father: William J. Mother: Children:		Home was located 1 mile from the Beauvais School William served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 3 years (1947-1949)
Charlie 30/07/1938-?		Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-5 between 1946-1949
<u>Murtland</u> (SE ¼ S20-T5-R1-W5) Father: Richard (Dick) Mother: Miss ? Leedham Children:		Home was located over 4 miles from the Beauvais School Richard was assessed tuition for his children in the early 20s since his property was outside the school district boundary. He petitioned (and succeeded) to pay his taxes to the school board after that date. Richard was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School
Grace ?		The number of Murtland children is not known. They attended in the 20s prior to 1927.
<u>Pulsifer</u> (SE ¼ S3-T6-R1-W5) ? Father: F. Mother: Children:		Home was located ~ ¼ to 1 mile from the Beauvais School Mrs. Pulsifer provided caretaking services (scrubbing) from 1920-1926
Myrtle		Attended the Beauvais School in 1920/21. Did daily caretaking in fall 1920. ODU

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<u>Primeau</u>		Home was located ~ 1.5 miles from the Beauvais School
(NE ¼ S25-T5-R1-W5) ?		Alphie and Alice married 15/05/1929
Father: Alphie	22/03/1899-16/04/1983	Occupation: Farmer, rancher
Mother: Alice Riviere	?-05/02/1994	
Children:		
Jimmy (James)	08/12/1931-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-6 between 1937-1943
Douglas	05/05/1934-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-5 between 1941-1946
Nieves		Did not attend the Beauvais School. Married R. Bristler 16/10/1969
<u>Primeau</u>		Occupation: Rancher, farmer
(SW ¼ S28-T5-R30-W4) ?S		
Father: Joe	?-07/03/1925	
Mother: Christine Albert		
Children:		
Arthur		Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/12. ODU
Alphie	22/03/1899-?	Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/12. ODU. Married Alice Riviere 15/05/1929
Blanche		May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Married Albert Cote 12/04/1915
Jeanette		May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Married Anslin Levesque 17/08/1920
Cecile	29/94/1903-?	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU
Oscar	06/09/1909-?	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU
<u>Rhodes</u>		
Father:		
Mother:		
Children:		
Margaret	1925-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 6 in 1938/39
Willifred	1927-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 6 in 1938/39
<u>Robinson</u>		Home was located ~ 2.5 miles from the Beauvais School
(NE ¼ S24-T5-R1-W5)		Occupation: Farmer, rancher
Father: F.E.M.		
Mother:		
Children:		
Diedre		Did not attend the Beauvais School
Evan	1932-	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 4-5 between 1942-1944
Margaret (Moir?)	1934-	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-5 between 1942-1946
<u>Ronwens (?)</u>		*there may have been other Ronwens children attending the Beauvais School
Father:		
Mother:		
Children:		
Unknown		Attended the Beauvais School in 1919/20. Provided caretaking duties for 1919/20

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<u>Routhier</u>		
(NW ¼ S24-T5-R1-W5)		
Father: Jean Charles	1865-18/08/1935	Home located 2.5-3 miles from the Beauvais School
Mother: Elodi (Bake) Pelletier	1969-21/08/1963	Jean Charles came west in 1884 to join the NWMP at Fort MacLeod
Children:		Occupation: NWMP officer, farmer, rancher
		Jean Charles is son of Sir Adolphe Basile Routhier (1839-1920), Author of O'Canada
Adolphe	24/29/1894-1980	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU
Juliette (Julienne)	19/03/1896-?	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU. Married Eudore Boivin
Alma	17/01/1898-?	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU
Henri	27/02/1900-?	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU Became Archbishop
Marie Jeanne Agnes (Jeanette)	09/11/1901-?	Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/12. ODU Married Paul Poirier
Marie Cecile Catherine (Katie)	25/09/1903-17/08/1992	Attended the Beauvais School between 1911-1918. Did daily caretaking duties in 1917/1918. Attended Kermaria Convent and Pincher Creek High School. Graduated from Calgary Normal School in 1922. Taught at the Beauvais School in 1922/23, 1923/24, 1924/25, 1928/29 and 1929/30. Married Thomas J. Farrell. Had 7 children
<u>Sandgren</u>		
(NE ¼ S24-T5-R1-W5)		
Father: J.A.	1863-?	Home located ~ 3.5 miles from the Beauvais School
Mother: Emma Nickelson		J.A. and Emma married in 1893
Children:		Occupation: Freighter, railroad builder, large ranch operator, farmer
		J.A. first bought land near Pincher Creek in 1906
Mabel	1894-?	May have attended Beauvais School. DU
Helga	1896-?	May have attended Beauvais School. DU
Walter	1897-?	May have attended Beauvais School. DU
<u>Sandwich</u>		
Father: Fred		
Mother:		
Children:		Home located 2 miles from the Beauvais School
Fritzie	11/07/1922-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 in 1928/29
<u>Sandy</u>		
Father: J.H.		
Mother:		
Children:		Home was located 2 miles from the Beauvais School
Fred	19/11/1916-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 6-7 between 1927-1929. ODU
Myrtle	21/11/1918-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-4 between 1927-1929. ODU
Julia	1/10/1920-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 2-3 between 1927-1929. ODU
<u>Shiell</u>		
Father: Ernest		
Mother:		
Children:		Home was located 2 miles from school
Arlo	06/09/1924-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 6 in 1935/36
Jacquelin	12/09/1927-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 2 in 1935/36
Geraldine	12/09/1927-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 2 in 1935/36

<u>Shumaker</u>		J. Shumaker served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 1 year in 1944
Father: J.		
Mother:		
Children:		
Clifford	-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 8-9 between 1943-1945
Alfred	-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 7-8 between 1943-1945
<u>Skene</u>		Home was 2.5-3 miles from the Beauvais School
(NW ¼ S4-T6-R1-W5) or		John came west from Ontario to teach at St. Agnes School in 1896/97. He lodged with the Routhier family.
(SE ¼ S9-T6-R1-W5)		John and Isabella married in 1901
Father: John J.	-1935	John was chairman of the Beauvais School Board from 1901-1908.
Mother: Isabella Maria Parso	-1946	Occupation: Teacher, dairy farmer.
		Isabella taught from 1911-1918. During this time, she did the daily caretaking duties, and lived on the school property during the school week with her children.
Children:		
Jean Isabel	23/06/1902-?	Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/12, and was present during the years her mother taught at the school (1911-1918)
William Arnold	04/08/1905-?	Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/12, and did some daily caretaking duties in 1919/20
		He was present during the years his mother taught at the school (1911-1918)
		William also served on the Beauvais School Board as secretary for 7 years (1934-1940), and as trustee for 4 years (1930-1933)
Margaret Ann	27/12/1907-?	Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/12, and was present during the years her mother taught at the school (1911-1918)
<u>Smith</u>		Occupation: Trader, farmer, rancher
(SW ¼ S2-T6-R1-W5) or		The Smith home was known as a place of gathering for social events (Father Lacombe, Kootenai Brown were frequent guests)
(NW ¼ S11-T6-R1-W5) or		Charlie and Marie Rose married 26/03/1877, when he was approximately 36 and she was 16
(NE ¼ S15-T6-R1-W5)		Charlie was a founding trustee of the Beauvais School Board (1888)
Father: Charlie	~1841-09/02/1914	Marie Rose bore 17 children at home (no doctor). She used her Metis skills to raise them off of the land. She outlived all but 5 of her children.
Mother: Marie Rose Delorme	18/10/1861-04/04/1960	Marie Rose often did the caretaking (scrubbing) at the Beauvais school between 1908-1911. ODU
Children:		
Joseph	12/07/1878-16/06/1914	Did not likely attend the Beauvais School. Died from infection of an abscessed hip
Charles	03/01/1880-08/11/1907	May have attended the Beauvais School in 1896/97. DU. Died from an illness
Jonas	03/11/1881-15/08/1917	May have attended the Beauvais School in 1896/97. DU. Contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School. Killed in action in World War I.
Mary Louise	03/09/1883-03/08/1884	Died at 11 months
John Robert	30/04/1885-?	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1896-1901. DU. Arm amputated in 1903 from a stab wound.
W. George	25/01/1887-1970	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1896-1903. DU.
Mary Anne	27/01/1889-19/11/1897	Did not attend the Beauvais School. Was enrolled in a convent in Quebec by Father Lacombe, and died at school of croup
Michael Archangel	08/07/1890-?/02/1909	May have attended the Beauvais School between 1896-1906. DU. Fell under a train and was killed at 19 years of age.
Mary Helene	03/05/1892-?	Attended the Beauvais School between 1897-1908. DU.
J. Theodore	21/01/1894-15/08/1917	Attended the Beauvais School between 1908-1910 (daily caretaking 1908/09, 1909/10). Other dates uncertain: 1899-1907. Killed in action in World War I
Frances	18/09/1895-?	Attended the Beauvais School between 1900-1911. DU
Richard (Dick)	17/02/1897-10/07/1952	Attended the Beauvais School between 1908-1912 (daily caretaking from 1908-1912) other dates uncertain: 1902-1907. Killed when his tractor overturned
Fred Albert	26/03/1898-08/05/1899	Died at 14 months
Eva	25/06/1899-?	Attended the Beauvais School in 1911/1912. Other dates uncertain: 1904-1915.
Catherine	04/07/1901-30/07/1902	Died at 13 months
Arthur Alfie	04/03/1903-16/04/1903	Died at 1 month
MarieRose Alvina	15/03/1904-28/03/1904	Died at 2 weeks

<u>Smith</u>			Home was located over 3.5 miles from the Beauvais School, just outside of the school district boundary
(SW ¼ S29-T5-R1-W5)			
Father: Harry			
Mother: Catherine			
Children:			
	Jake		Jake and Jim arrived at the Beauvais school, aged 13 and 14 with no previous schooling on 27 April 1934. The school board decided that it was unfair to the teacher and other pupils to start these two boys in grade 1 so late in the school year. They were invited to return in September, but they did not. The other Smith children attended various other schools but because of the isolated location of their homestead, they were forced to board.
	Jim		
	Dorothy		
	Charles		
	Wilbur		
	Annie		
	Elsie		
<u>Sorge</u>			
Father: Theodore			Theodore and Rosa married in 1917. They had 5 children (Harry, Ken, Steve, Agnes and Irene). Only Harry attended the Beauvais School.
Mother: Rosa Bosch			Theodore and Rosa farmed in the Crook District (west of the Beauvais District)
Children:			
	Harry		Attended the Beauvais School for grade 10 in 1933/34. Married Annie Sinnott and had a family of 9 children
<u>Sparks</u>			Home was approximately 2.5 miles from the Beauvais School
(NE ¼ S5-T6-R1-W5)			A.A. Sparks was occasionally contracted to haul fuel to the Beauvais School
Father: A.A.			
Mother:			
Children:			
	Chester		Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
	Harold		Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. Did daily caretaking in 1923/24. ODU
<u>Stanley</u>			
Father:			
Mother:			
Children:			
	Donald		Attended the Beauvais School in 1942/43
	Robert		Attended the Beauvais School in 1942/43
<u>Sulava</u>			
Father:			
Mother:			
Children:			
	Elfred (Alfie)	?-28/02/1970	Attended the Beauvais School in the early 1920s. DU
	Poley		Attended the Beauvais School in the early 1920s. DU
<u>Swinney</u>			
Father: Robert			
Mother:			
Children:			
	Willard	1924-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 7-8 between 1938-1940
	Verdun	1927-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 4-6 between 1938-1941
	Noreen	1930-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-5 between 1938-1941

<u>Tabohak</u>		Home was located 4 miles from the Beauvais School
Father:		
Mother: Marie		
Children:		
Francis	17/03/1924-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-2 between 1934-1936
<u>Therriault</u>		Home was located 200 yards from the Beauvais School
(NE ¼ S34-T5-R1-W5)		Albert took over the caretaking duties in September 1932 and continued until the school closed in 1949.
Father: Albert		?
Mother: Dora Alfreda Bruns		07/05/1907-23/12/2002
Children:		
Darlene	21/09/1940-	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-2 between 1947-1949. Married Arne Gaudette? 21/08/1963
Doris	16/01/1942-	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 in 1948/49. Married Lester Hochstein
Alphonse Ouellette	16/19/1919-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 9 in 1933/34. Albert Therriault was his guardian
<u>Therriault</u>		Home was within ½ mile of the Beauvais School
(SE ¼ S34-T5-R1-W5)		Arrived in the Beauvais area between 1908-1910
Father: Alfred		Fred was contracted occasionally to haul fuel to the Beauvais School, and to clean the barn (1930)
Mother: Angelique Bourdon		Fred served as trustee on the Beauvais School Board for 3 years (1927-1929)
Children:		Author's note: I am not certain if all of the children listed below are from the same family
Albert	?	May have attended the Beauvais School. DU
Jane		Attended the Beauvais School in the early 20s. DU. Married Altia Rutledge
Joe	17/01/1909-08/04/1986	Attended the Beauvais School in the early 20s. DU. Married Madeline Gamache, 1931
Frank	06/08/1910-?	Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
Zelma	06/04/1907-?	Attended the Beauvais School between 1922-1925. ODU
Isaie Elle (Elsie)	19/02/1914-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 7-8 between 1927-1929. Other dates unknown (1921-1926)
Titus Henry	04/01/1916-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 5-8 between 1927-1931. Other dates unknown (1923-1926)
Patrice Hector	18/03/1920-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-8 between 1927-1935
<u>Tourond</u>		Home was located at varying distances (between 2.5 and 4 miles) from the Beauvais School
Father: William		William and Helen married 04/01/1915
Mother: Helen Borze		Occupation: teamster – he hauled ice from Beauvais Lake to the King Edward Hotel and the Creamery by sleigh. He also broke horses
Children:		
Johnny (John Albert)	14/04/1915-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 5-6 between 1928-1930. Other dates unknown (1924-1926). Married Alma Goulding
Robert Alphonse	26/08/1916-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 4-5 between 1928-1930. Other dates unknown (1925-1926). Married Hazel Truitt
(William) George	01/04/1920-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-2 between 1928-1930, and grades 6-7 between 1933-1936. Killed in WW II
Kathleen (Marie Katherine)	07/11/1921-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 4-8 between 1933-1936. Married Mr. Beagle
Patrick	25/11/1923-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 3-8 between 1933-1938. Married Lorraine Hawkins
James	11/05/1925-?	Attended the Beauvais School for grades 1-3 between 1933-1936. Married Violet Hawkins
(Mary) Elmira	08/12/1926-04/02/2002	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 between 1934-1936. Married Victor Sulava, 03/04/1945
(Saraphine) Genevieve Azilda	04/01/1929- 1950	Attended the Beauvais School for grade 4 in 1934/35.
Lena		Did not attend the Beauvais School. Married Reg Achborne. After his death, remarried Ivin Godin
Marjorie		Did not attend the Beauvais School. Married Ed Wigglesworth

Trudell

Father: Paul Felix

Mother: Helen Nora (Nellie)

Braniff

Children:                      02/02/1912-?  
                                      Joseph Irvine        05/11/1916-?

Marie Alice Katherine

Wormley

Father: Chas.

Mother:

Children:

                                      Ramond                26/09/1921-?  
                                      Florence              04/10/1923-?  
                                      Marie

Paul and Nellie were married 05/04/1910

Paul installed the school property's original water system (well) prior to 1909

Paul and his brother were contracted to haul fuel between 1907-1913, and to do repairs on the school building and fence.

May have attended the Beauvais School between 1917-1926

May have attended the Beauvais School between 1921-1926

Home was located 4.5 miles from the Beauvais School

Attended the Beauvais School for grade 2 in 1928/29

Attended the Beauvais School for grade 1 in 1928/29

Did not attend the Beauvais School

Wright

Father:

Mother:

Children:

Harry

Attended the Beauvais School in 1941/42