

ARTICLE

Regulating the Personal Lives of “Lady Teachers”

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Abstract

During the first half of the twentieth century many teachers in Saskatchewan still taught in one-room schools that dotted the countryside. Living in these small rural communities teachers found themselves under close scrutiny by farm men, farm women, and their children. While focusing on the gendered constraints at play, this paper explores how women teachers lived with, negotiated, and challenged these prescribed expectations. I examine the regulation of rural women teachers by local farm families in their capacities as parents of school children, school trustees, and landlords in the first half of the 20th century. I argue that the expectation to be a quiet and conforming female by community members, as enforced by the total discretion over firing and rehiring, made it difficult for rural women teachers to assert autonomy and agency. For those women who attempted to deviate from the standards of this time, the visibility of their activities constrained their latitude of departure and left them vulnerable to disciplinary measures. Life histories from over 200 women, who taught in rural Saskatchewan in the first half of the 20th century, provide the basis for this analysis.

Until the 1950s, many teachers in Saskatchewan taught in one-room schools located within farming communities and were under close scrutiny by farm men, farm women and their children. Three local farm men, in the capacity of trustees, were responsible for hiring and, if necessary, firing the teacher and funding the local rural school. The school operated as the hub of the community and was positioned centrally among the family farms. Generally, the only new member of the community would be the lone teacher who came every year to teach the children. The teacher was directed by the trustees where to live – either in a teacherage¹ or with a specific farm family. Depending on the decade, they shared the same party telephone line as their host family or were

without a phone if they lived in a teacherage.² Transportation out and back to the school district on weekends relied on the hospitality of a farm family. Friendships were by necessity limited to neighbouring people and social events to those held locally.

Homesteads in the districts were established between the 1890s and 1920s, and as time progressed, children attended school together and one son or more sons would stay to farm in the district³. The limited number of families, the commonality of economic circumstance and communal festivities, often at the country school, meant that everybody knew each other and had to the opportunity to be aware of each other’s business and personal affairs.⁴ As teacher Marion Graham (1926) observed, “Small communities have extensive personal involvement that cities do not, everyone knows each other in a small community.”⁵ Taking a contract to teach at a one-room school transported each teacher into these very public and very insular rural communities.

Using a mailed questionnaire to prairie teachers, Patterson⁶ examined women students’ experiences within Normal School and, then as novice teachers, entering their first rural classroom. Patterson concluded that rural teachers’ willingness to endure harsh, lonely and often less than desirable conditions allowed for the development of the teaching profession. He further urged that the personal experiences of women teachers must be drawn upon in order to understand the diverse range of conditions that rural schoolteachers faced. Drawing upon newspapers and reports issued by the Saskatchewan Department of Education, Poelzer⁷ provided an understanding of the material and patriarchal context facing Saskatchewan women teachers in the period between 1905 -1920. Hallman⁸ collected Saskatchewan women teachers’ oral histories to gain a fuller understanding of the way gendered constraints shaped their professional lives. Using data from Statistics Canada, Corman⁹ documented both the employment opportunities and differential pay for female versus male teachers over the course of the twentieth century. Using Poelzer’s collection of first-hand accounts,¹⁰ Corman¹¹ explored the conditions that allowed married women to reenter the teaching profession. Drawing upon the same collection, Corman and Ensslen¹² examined the particular working conditions that women teachers faced during the Depression. Ensslen and Corman¹³ provided insight into the working lives of never-married women teachers. Thus far, the research has largely focused on rural women teachers in their professional roles both in the classroom and within the Saskatchewan Federation of Teachers. As an extension to this research, this article shifts the focus to explore the ways women teachers’ private lives were regulated within rural Saskatchewan communities during the first half of the twentieth century.

This paper explores how women teachers lived with, negotiated, and challenged community expectations regarding their social and personal comportment during the first half of the 20th century. I argue that many of the women internalized behavioural practices considered appropriate for “lady” teachers and saw these behaviours as reflective of their character. Other teachers felt it was necessary to conform to the behaviour expected of the “lady” teacher in order to keep their teaching jobs and maintain their livelihoods. Expectations to be a “proper” female by parents, trustees, and other community members, as enforced by the total discretion over firing and rehiring, made it difficult for rural

women teachers to assert their autonomy. The visibility of their behaviour exposed any deviation from the established conventions.

This research is based on access to Dr. Irene Poelzer’s collection of 200+ accounts.¹⁴ Simultaneous to Patterson’s¹⁵ emphasis on the importance of examining individual’s lived experiences, Dr. Irene Poelzer invited retired Saskatchewan women teachers to submit firsthand accounts by interviews or an in-depth self-administered questionnaire regarding their time as teachers. All respondents started teaching between 1909 and 1959. The year that each began teaching is indicated in brackets. These women were typical of Saskatchewan teachers during this time as they were of European ancestry; however, their backgrounds varied as to whether they were raised within urban or rural communities. The accounts were analyzed through the use of Hypertext, a qualitative analysis program. The interviews were coded to correspond with the questionnaire probes, I referenced material on being a role model, dating and marriage, community involvement, politics and community factions, and negotiating surveillance¹⁶.

The “Lady” Teacher: Being the Role Model

The expectations placed upon teachers and those placed upon women intersected to form the regulations, both spoken and unspoken, for the “lady” teacher. As a teacher (1936) explained, “As a woman teacher one was expected to act as a lady at all times.”¹⁷ Communities expected the “lady” teacher to be well-mannered and to behave respectably, both during and after school hours, unlike her male counterparts, she was expected to be chaste, to refrain from drinking, smoking, and wear “appropriate” feminine attire. Almost every woman recognized that as a teacher they were expected to be a role model for students in regards to enacting appropriate values and morals.

According to Edith Newell (1930), “I felt I was a role model and that my conduct after school was as important as it was during school hours.”¹⁸ The conduct in question pertained to smoking, drinking, dress codes, and sexual relations. Lucy Rollheiser (1947) and others recognized the prohibitions on drinking and sexual activity, “Yes, I always felt that. As a woman-teacher you were expected to act like a lady. You were not to risk scandal by drinking, or by being sexually promiscuous, or dressing indecently...”¹⁹ Norma Corman (1943) reported that the restrictions on behaviour were related to a desire for school children to learn similar values. She explained, “you followed those rules of etiquette so that it would help mold, besides teaching, you help mold the lives of those children by being that good example.”²⁰

Some women had internalized the societal expectations placed upon women teachers at the time to the extent that, even in the 1980s, they reported that there were no special or specific behavioural expectations of them as women or as teachers at all. These women did not consciously think about regulations because their values were already in line with those of the community. Omel Downey (1925) explained, “...I endeavoured to carry on with my duties as a teacher and to help with community affairs whenever I could. I had never considered whether I was meeting the standards expected by the community at large.”²¹

Other women reported an awareness of the restrictions upon them as women teachers, but many still expressed no desire to contravene these restrictions. Elsie Faulkner (1923) reported, “As far as expectations of behaviour no more was required than I could have considered decent and appropriate.”²² For these women, adhering to restrictions on their personal behaviour coincided with the lifestyle they wanted to live.

On reflecting back in time, some women were more aware of the expectations placed upon them as teachers, but still had no problems with the regulations. Florence Doherty (1923) commented, “They naturally expected me to be on good behavior and be an example for the students.”²³ These women had few qualms with these expectations as they had little interest in contravening them. Other women only reported an awareness of expectations pertaining to teaching duties, Evelyn Ahner (1939) explained, “Their expectations of me were not unreasonable. They expected me to get along with the children, to do a good job of teaching, to produce a good Christmas concert, and to be co-operative and friendly.”²⁴ Ahner was not alone in her assessment of the regulations placed upon her. In 1909 when Minnie McMaster commenced teaching, women, and particularly women teachers, were treated very differently from men²⁵. Despite this, McMaster reported, “They didn't expect any more than they would for a man teacher. We were treated about the same, men and women teachers.”²⁶ While this group of women had some awareness of the expectations placed upon teachers' behaviour and acted accordingly, it seems that they were far less likely to recognize the gendered expectations they faced, either at the time, or even by the 1980s, when their personal histories were collected.

Very few teachers recognized that more was expected of them than other community members and felt that these expectations were unfair. Estelle Barr (1935) explained, “the community expected the same behaviour from teachers as from the clergy, and far more than the community members expected of themselves. Teachers and clergy must ‘walk the straight and narrow path,’ keeping a tight grip on their actions and do nothing to cause others to disrespect them...They certainly had expectations of me (a) as a woman (b) as a teacher.”²⁷ Grace Ford (1935) explained the consequences of these expectations: “They put you on a pedestal and forgot you were a human being like the rest of them.”²⁸ Teachers were well aware of the precarious nature of their jobs and many, like Evelyn Revet (1935), tried their hardest to conform in order to keep their position. Revet noted that “[the teacher] was supposed to be subservient to the trustees and ‘take’ what many parents dished out, without saying a word in her defense.”²⁹

Dating and Marriage

Remaining single was a large component of being a “lady” teacher. Until the 1940s, most school boards expressed a preference for single, rather than married, women teachers³⁰. For the most part, districts expected women teachers to resign upon marriage and devote themselves to their duties as wife and mother³¹. Grace Morrell (1914) explained, “Expectations? Well you would have to behave yourself and not be a philanderer in the town or chasing men and that sort of thing. They expected you to have a good character.”³²

Mary Donovan (1927) explained, “As a woman teacher I was expected to behave respectably and be a good example to the students, not cause gossip.”³³

Women teachers found that expectations regarding dating varied from community to community forcing them to adjust quickly. In one community, Norma Corman (1943) found that after being escorted to one dance she was never asked on another date again. She was informed decades later that her landlord had forbidden men from dating the teacher. In stark contrast, her next community considered teachers as excellent candidates for marriage.

In communities where dating was appropriate, women had to strategically negotiate dating without causing offense. Elna Kopperud (1917) reported, “You had to be diplomatic even when refusing a date so as not to offend. I remember one fellow who liked to ‘drink’ and tried very hard to date me. Sometimes you had to lie a little such as ‘I already have a date, or I’m going here or there.’”³⁴ Refusing a date could have severe consequences, Orma Menzies (1932) explained, “After harvest Mrs. H. began asking me over for the weekends and to go out with the family. However, when after several weekends there, I refused to go out with her eldest son, she went to the next board meeting...and had me fired.”³⁵ Additionally, according to Elizabeth Cooke (1926) “I was asked to resign once. Because the bachelor chairman got no attention.”³⁶ Regardless of whether teachers could date or not, all communities expected that the female teacher would behave chastely. As Marguerite Burke (1943) commented, there was “great stress on my personal conduct especially with regard to gentlemen friends.”³⁷

Even when the teacher had a private teacherage, her actions were still easy to monitor because the teacherage was frequently situated next to the school on the one main road. Jean Reinhardt (1930s)³⁸ explained, “Nor was one to forget that this home was under strict surveillance at all times so that, although there was no telephone in the area, the comings and goings at the teacherage were common knowledge in the district. It was therefore only with the greatest discretion that callers of the opposite sex were entertained therein”³⁹. The panopticism of their communities was not lost on the women, most were well aware of the strict surveillance they were under in their living quarters and modified their behaviour to cope with the potentially constant surveillance. As late as the 1940s, women teachers reported being monitored for appropriate behaviour in their private lives.

Not only did expectations vary between districts, but women also had to negotiate the expectations of the particular family they were boarding with. Every year, the female teacher moved into a foreign district, but also into a stranger’s home that she had no hand in picking. These families were frequently kind and considerate; however, they had varying expectations of what was appropriate. Ultimately these families played a crucial role in the surveillance and regulation of women schoolteachers. Elizabeth Wilkinson (1933) experienced this directly: “There was a dance at a neighboring school one Friday night. The ‘hired man’ offered to take me. While there I met the teacher who lived at home and [she] invited me to stay for the weekend. This I did. On Saturday morning the landlady...went

out to the 'bunk house' to see if I had slept with the 'hired man.' I can remember being utterly appalled to think of sleeping with a man who wasn't your husband."⁴⁰

Given the expectation that women would quit teaching upon marriage, those who wanted to continue teaching strategized to keep their marriage a secret from the community. Grace Cunningham (1918) reported, "I know of two incidents of this sort. The first was a woman principal in a school where I taught and the year was, I believe, 1925. She was married in her home town at Easter time, but told no one except her landlady...for she would have been dismissed at once if the school authorities had known of it."⁴¹ One of the reasons women were expected to resign was related to notions of propriety. Sylvia Birnie (1924) explained, "Once a teacher was married she couldn't teach in a school. Maybe that wasn't written anywhere but it was an understood fact. The trustees simply did not hire a married woman. She might become pregnant. Perish the thought!"⁴²

Expectations for After Hours Involvement

The rural teacher's day, in the first half of the 1900s, did not end when her students were let out of class. While these teachers did not have to provide afterschool activities for children, they were drawn into attending social gatherings, especially as the school was frequently the only suitable venue.⁴³ Estelle Barr (1935) commented, "Since all community events took place in the school, I was either directly or indirectly involved. My other involvement was the frequent visits to my pupils' homes." In fact, the teacherage in the Davyroyd School was located behind the school blackboard, in that circumstance there was no leaving the party, the teacher had no choice but to stay until the end of the festivities.

Many teachers found themselves not only involved in community activities, but frequently in organizational roles. Margaret Burnet (1929) explained, "They expected the teacher to put on most entertainment that they had. If they had a shower for somebody getting married, the teacher was expected, at least where I was anyway, was expected to organize it, and you were expected to do a lot in the community...because the school is the central point."⁴⁴ In Marquette Faber's (1928) school "used as a community centre for meetings, Christmas concerts, dances, summer picnic. At Rock Creek S.D. we had a garden and won a prize for it at the Summer Fair in 1939."⁴⁵ Additionally she, like Burnet, faced a further gendered expectation, "Many communities had Homemaker Clubs or similar Women's clubs, Red Cross Societies, etc. who gathered at district homes, and as a teacher you were one of the members."⁴⁶ There was an expectation within communities that the teacher would be involved in these activities and, doubly so, an expectation that women teachers would become involved. Teachers may have participated in order to better fit into the community, but as there were few sources of entertainment outside of these social events, many may have also joined out of a desire to have fun. These may or may not have been the social activities that they would have chosen, but these were their only options as they had restricted mobility.

Some women were hired particularly because of their talents and were then expected to volunteer their services. As Margaret Ahrens (1934) explained, "The trustee wanted

someone who could play the organ at church...it was difficult to get a teaching position unless you had some attribute that was needed in the community.”⁴⁷ If their talents were not part of the hiring process, once they were recognized the teacher became part of the events. As Omel Downey (1925) observed, “Within a week, we were in the church choir, teaching Sunday School, doing embroidery work for the fall bazaar. We were also taking part in a three-act play to be presented in the village and neighbouring villages.”

Some women found themselves taking on responsibilities they would rather not have had. Louise Stewart (1917) said, “Well, [they] just kept asking and asking, and saying I should, and so I did. It was hard. It was hard but you got more used to it.”⁴⁸ Additionally Jessie Bailey (1935) commented, “When I was expected to be a leader of the C.G.I.T. [the Canadian Girls in Training] and Sunday School leader I agreed. But I believe now that I should not have.”⁴⁹ Due to the total discretion school boards had over hiring and firing, being thought well of and being an asset to the community could be incredibly important if the teacher was interested in maintaining her position or being rehired. According to Ruby Smeltzer (1927), “Only one of my friends was fired. She has always blamed the Secretary, whose wife didn't approve of her...She didn't attend teas given by the Secretary's wife, or meet her standards of refinement. It was a humiliating experience that she has always resented, and has never completely forgotten.”⁵⁰

Politics in the Country

Women teachers quickly learned not to become politically active if they were interested in remaining employed for another school year. While some women stated that they did, indeed, vote during elections, very few stated that they had any further political involvement.⁵¹ Minnie McMaster (1909) commented, “Activist? No, I don't say I was. I never worked politically for any party.” Even decades later, many of the women discussed this topic in a very careful and self-aware manner. For example, Mary McIsaac (1912) stated that she would always “take part,” however, amended her statement to specify that she did not do so while a teacher.⁵²

Some women who started their careers in the late 1910s and early 1920s had specific notions regarding women's involvement in politics. These notions may have arisen from the struggle for suffrage that was occurring at this time; it was not until 1916 that settler women in Saskatchewan got the right to vote.⁵³ Elna Kopperud (1917) explained, “Politically, women were not even permitted to vote, although I expressed my opinion.”

As jobs were scarce during the Depression, remaining politically neutral was a calculated decision in order to retain teaching positions. Irene Copeland (1929) observed, “In the 1930s the teacher was at the mercy of a three man school board so you did not become active politically.”⁵⁴ This sentiment continued through the 1940s as Gwendoline Baker (1934) stated, “I did not become involved in politics. In the years 1934-1945 a teacher did not dare to become political. We had a war to get through...”⁵⁵ Regardless of decade or of world politics, women teachers during the first half of the 20th century were firmly of the opinion that it was best to stay out of politics. A woman (1941) stated, “I never involved

myself politically in a community, your safest position was to be neutral.”⁵⁶ Due to the high degree of surveillance that teachers experienced, expressing divisive political opinions or attending political meetings was incredibly risky even for teachers in larger communities. Depending on the school district, some teachers did lose their positions if they were public with their party preferences. Another woman (1951) recalled that her own teacher had been fired: “...very abruptly, during a political campaign, we learned that our English teacher was leaving - after years of teaching...We heard that our teacher made her political affiliation known and they did not correspond to that of [the] school board. I recall the students being so upset that we wanted to stay home as a protest...Our principal resigned because of the incident and thus, we lost two super teachers.”⁵⁷

Even women who wanted to be politically active knew better than to become too heavily involved. Kathleen Slaney (1930) explained, “In 1935 when Social Credit was gaining momentum in Saskatchewan as well as Alberta I became very interested and attended some meetings in surrounding areas. I was dismayed when told it was unwise for a teacher to become politically involved. I felt uncomfortable.”⁵⁸ Teachers had to strategize how keep their political views to themselves and additionally had to be savvy enough to navigate the various factions within the communities. Many teachers tried not to make waves within the community, as one respondent (1928) stated, “I believe my objective actually was to be quietly one of the community, and my involvement would be of a cautious nature. My reason being that in a smaller community one must be aware of factions. I hoped to be a helper and be co-operative in an unobserved manner.”⁵⁹ Ellen Kristianson (1930) recalled how she strategized to keep her political beliefs to herself when she was confronted: “I was not an activist and took no part in politics except to vote... A Grade 10 student asked me if I was a Liberal or a Conservative. When I told him I was neither, he said, ‘I know what you are, you are a Liberal because I know all Scandinavians are Liberals.’ I laughed and told him I was second generation Scandinavian, in other words a Canadian. I reminded him that Canadians have freedom of choices.”⁶⁰

Negotiating Surveillance

Some women conformed deliberately, others unconsciously, and some refused to conform, while others recognized decades later that they did not conform very well. One response to the restrictions may have been to walk away from teaching entirely. Few of the teacher’s actions were outside of the community’s scrutiny. In this environment of transparency, they had no choice but to live up to the community’s expectations of appropriate behaviour or suffer the consequences. Conforming to community standards gained an added importance if women boarded with those directly responsible for their rehiring or firing. Lenore Streicker (1948) commented on the type of surveillance she faced as “Nothing overt, but then I was boarding with the chairman of the board and they probably knew everything I did.”⁶¹

Some women teachers were well aware of the type of gossip circulating about them and the public’s opinion of them. One respondent (1949) reflected, “I found that in 1949-1950 a teacher was looked up to. Also you were watched and talked about. Anything you did

always ended up at the boarding house and you were usually told about what was being said."⁶² This sort of information could be especially important to the rural teacher; several women reported using their knowledge of the negative gossip circulating about them to change public perception.

Surveillance was not only practiced within the home, teachers found themselves monitored within the school and at social gatherings. Sylvia Birnie (1924) reported, "I was warned that [the chairman of the Board] wasn't above listening at the keyhole. The previous teacher was supposed to have caught him." Tips from the previous year's teacher and gossip about the community beforehand were invaluable to the incoming teacher. Knowledge of factions within the community, or the reason that the previous teacher was fired, or chose to move, could allow the new teacher to formulate a plan as how to best manage in this foreign district. Armed with the knowledge that the community was divided meant that Verna Aasen (1927) was able to negotiate the various factions in order to retain her teaching position. As she explained: "I was 19 years old. It was a small country school and I felt at ease because I resolved to make good. The teacher I replaced had been fired and I had to try and please both sides of the community and I did."⁶³

Transgressions, even perceived or speculated transgressions, on the part of these women often went directly from their landlord to a member of the school board, which could have dire consequences for retaining their jobs. Hazel Mountney (1932) slipped out one night to spend time with some friends only to find that her landlady later phoned a school trustee alleging she had gone off with a married man.⁶⁴ Margaret Spencer (1936) reported a friend of hers was forced to slip out the window in order to go to dances as her "district was death against dancing."⁶⁵ While these women faced intensive surveillance, they were not simply victims to community standards. Responses ranged from sneaking to dances to instances of quiet and deliberate rebellion. Dorothy Dandie (1934) commented, "I found teaching personally restrictive. The community expected teachers to fit a certain mold. Public behaviour was placed under strict scrutiny. There was a strict code of behaviour for teachers in the '30s. Alcohol and cigarettes were taboo for women teachers, particularly public use of them. My peers and I tried both, not habitually but as a symbol of defiance against societal strictures imposed upon us."⁶⁶

Not only did these women have to negotiate how to live under the surveillance of the family they boarded with, but they also were limited by, and had to strategize around, the particular regulations placed upon them by these families. Marjorie Burton's (1923) landlord did not want her to visit other neighbours; she found herself so isolated she chose to leave.⁶⁷ Community factions ultimately drove many women out of districts. According to Jean Ritchie (1909), factions would "arise in a district, making life so difficult for a teacher that she would just give up at the end of the term and move on to another school."⁶⁸

Some women blatantly refused to adhere to community regulations, while in most circumstances this resulted in being fired, on some occasions the teacher was successful in her act of rebellion. Mary Newth (1917) and her compatriots banded together in order to reject community efforts to limit school dances. Newth explained, "...what do you think

those mean old school boards wanted us to do; sign contracts or promises saying that we wouldn't go to dances except on the weekends. I can still remember the indignation meeting we held at a dance after we all received these notices. And we didn't sign either.”⁶⁹

Conclusion

Classified advertisements expressed a desire for teachers to be competent with the instruction of children of diverse ages and grades as well as to function as the lone disciplinarian⁷⁰. There was, however, much more expected of the teacher, much of which was unspoken, and could vary from community to community. While all rural teachers were expected to be examples to the children and have a sterling character, women teachers had added gendered expectations to be ‘ladies.’ This behavioural expectation did not end when the school day was over, it carried on into every aspect of the teacher’s life. To keep their job or to get a reference, they had to strategize how to maintain approval within the classroom and outside it. Schoolteachers, and women teachers in particular, had to negotiate community expectations in an environment where all of their actions were transparent. When teachers entered these insular rural communities they lived in an area in which many aspects of their professional lives and personal lives were visible. Only the teachers’ thoughts were private.

Dr. Poelzer had envisioned utilizing the personal histories she collected to write a series of publications on the professional and private lives of rural one-room women teachers, unfortunately she was never able to write this series. This paper addresses part of her vision by examining the gendered constraints that women teachers faced and negotiated. The expectation to be a quiet and conforming female by community members, as enforced by the total discretion over firing and rehiring, made it difficult for rural women teachers to assert autonomy and agency. For women who attempted to deviate from the standards of this time, the visibility of their activities constrained their latitude of departure and left them vulnerable to disciplinary measures. Despite the strict regulations they lived under, many of these women teachers still found teaching to be a rewarding experience and a time in their lives that they looked back on fondly and took pride in their work⁷¹.

Notes

¹ Corman, J. “Seeking Greener Pastures: Rural Women Teachers in Southern Saskatchewan” in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan: Selected Readings*, ed. B. Noonan, D. Hallman, & M. Scharf, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Center, 2006). Corman mentions that teacherages were small buildings erected near the school for teachers to live in.

² Waiser, B. *Saskatchewan: A New History*. (Calgary: Fifth House, 2005). Waiser comments that party telephone lines were shared by multiple service subscribers, subscribers could eavesdrop by picking up their telephone.

³ Waiser, *Saskatchewan: A New History*.

⁴ Corman, "Seeking Greener Pastures".

⁵ Marion Graham, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶ Patterson, R., "Voices from the Past: The Personal and Professional Struggle of Rural School Teachers", *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History*, ed. N. Sheehan, J. Wilson, & D. Jones, (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 1986).

⁷ Poelzer, I. *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920: Their Contributions*, (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt & Hamonic Publishing, 1990).

⁸ Hallman, D. "Telling Tales In and Out of School", *Saskatchewan History*. 49(2)(1997): 3-17.

⁹ Corman, J. "Seeking Greener Pastures" & Corman, J. "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators: A Century of Change", *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal*, 35(1) (2010): 92-107.

¹⁰ Dr. Poelzer herself retired before she had the opportunity to utilize personal accounts that she gathered.

¹¹ Corman, J. "Returning to the Classroom: Married Women Fill the Void for Teachers in Saskatchewan", *Atlantis* 27(1) (2002): 81-90.

¹² Corman, J., and Ensslen, C. "Surviving Tough Times: Saskatchewan Women Teachers in the Great Depression", *Saskatchewan History*, 64(1) (2012): 8-23.

¹³ Ensslen, C., and Corman, J. "Establishing Pathways for Women in Education: Never-Married Women Career Teachers", *Historical Studies in Education*, 25(2) (2013): 21-43.

¹⁴ I supplemented these accounts with others collected by Dr. June Corman. Unless indicated otherwise, women gave permission to use their names. Dr. Poelzer's collection is in the process of being donated to the Saskatchewan Archives.

¹⁵ Patterson, R., (1986).

¹⁶ The ability to comment on resistance does not include people who had negative experiences and chose to not participate because they did not want to recall that time period.

¹⁷ Anonymous #1, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

¹⁸ Edith Newell, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

¹⁹ Lucy Rollheiser, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

²⁰ Norma Corman, Interview with Dr. June Corman, 1993.

²¹ Omel Downey, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

²² Elsie Faulkner, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

²³ Florence Doherty, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

²⁴ Evelyn Ahner, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

²⁵ Poelzer, I. *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920: Their Contributions*.

- ²⁶ Minnie McMaster, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1987.
- ²⁷ Estelle Barr, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ²⁸ Grace Ford, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ²⁹ Evelyn Revet, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ³⁰ For more discussion of marriage regulations placed upon Saskatchewan teachers during this time see Corman "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators: A Century of Change" and Corman and Ensslen, "Surviving Tough Times: Saskatchewan Women Teachers in the Great Depression".
- ³¹ Poelzer, I. *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920: Their Contributions*.
- ³² Grace Morrell, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ³³ Mary Donovan, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ³⁴ Elna Kopperud, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ³⁵ Orma Menzies, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ³⁶ Elizabeth Cooke, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ³⁷ Marguerite Burke, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ³⁸ Jean Reinhardt did not state which year she started teaching.
- ³⁹ Reinhardt, J. "The Teacherage", *Modus Operandi* (1978)
- ⁴⁰ Elizabeth Wilkinson, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ⁴¹ Grace Cunningham, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ⁴² Sylvia Birnie, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ⁴³ With few sources for entertainment, community events, held in the school, were the main source of entertainment.
- ⁴⁴ Margaret Burnet, Interview with Dr. Corman, 1994.
- ⁴⁵ Marquette Faber, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ⁴⁶ Dances at schools were not organized for the enjoyment of children. These gatherings were for the entire community.
- ⁴⁷ Margaret Aherns, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- ⁴⁸ Louise Stewart, Personal account collected by Dr. Poelzer, 1982
- ⁴⁹ Jessie Bailey, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁵⁰ Ruby Smeltzer, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁵¹ Some of the women were involved in their own professional associations, such as the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF). Far more men than women were engaged in the STF during this time period (Ensslen and Corman, 2013).

⁵² Mary McIsaac, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1987.

⁵³ Gauthier. D. ed., “Dominion Lands Act / Homestead Act”, *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan*, (Regina: University of Regina Press, 2005). Gauthier mentions that settler women gained the right to vote federally in 1918.

⁵⁴ Irene Copeland, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁵⁵ Gwendoline Baker, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁵⁶ Anonymous #2, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁵⁷ Anonymous #3, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁵⁸ Kathleen Slaney, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁵⁹ Anonymous #4, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶⁰ Ellen Kristianson, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶¹ Lenore Streicker, Interview with Dr. Corman, 1994.

⁶² Anonymous #5, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶³ Verna Aasen, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶⁴ Hazel Mountney, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶⁵ Margaret Spencer, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶⁶ Dorothy Dandie, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶⁷ Marjorie Burton, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

⁶⁸ Jean Ritchie, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1987.

⁶⁹ Mary Newth, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1987.

⁷⁰ Corman and Ensslen, “Surviving Tough Times: Saskatchewan Women Teachers in the Great Depression”

⁷¹ Ensslen, C. “Using Narratives to Explore the Lives of Saskatchewan Women Schoolteachers” (Master’s thesis, Brock University, Forthcoming 2016).