

[Judith Windle interviewing Wilfrid Johns in 1978]

00:00 Judith Windle: Student in 1922.

Wilfrid Johns : Oh yes, mm-hmm.

JW: There were.

WJ: That was just after the second great war and

JW: Did you come right out of high school?

WJ: Right out of high school and I was about seventeen years of age at that time, and so ... my career has really been involved with the education in all forms.

JW: When you were in the normal school, all the boys were lumped into one class, weren't they?

WJ: Yes, we had sixty-eight men. Of course, the numbers were quite different at that time. They dropped from about two hundred and sixty down to thirty. Actually, when I went back to teach at the normal school ... it looked as though the normal school had reached the lowest ebb it will ever reach because as I, as I say, there were only thirty there and we moved out of the normal school and we conducted classes in the Memorial Hall just behind the Christ Church Cathedral.

JW: You were there during those turbulent ... years of trying to put up with poor conditions.

WJ: Oh yes, but for three years we were in at the Memorial Hall and ... that was when I, back to assess them. I was principal of the ... or vice-principal of the North Ward School at the time and Dr. Denton was the principal of the, of the normal school. Have you heard of Dr. Denton [inaudible]? You must have.

JW: Yes, yes.

WJ: Well, he was there for three years and I've certainly very, very well remember the fact that he came and pled with me to come to the normal school. But ... I, I think it really was a case of pleading would, would I come, you know, because he was on a, his last legs as far as the normal school was concerned. So I finally said to him, well ... I'll come to the normal school providing, of course, that you can make the arrangements and provide the substitute because, I said, I am involved at, with the Victoria School Board so I can't very well carry on in this manner. So finally he says, well I think that can be arranged. Not, little, little did I think that, what would happen of course. But he approached the school board and ... asked for my services and it was granted. And [the substance?] was that he was a substitute. For three years Dr. Denton was my substitute at the North Ward School. So that's a great something because he was nearing the end of his career and he was an older man, of course. So it must have been very difficult for him to carry on in my place when I went to the normal school. So I traveled there, oh, three times a week and the number grew from thirty to about seventy in three years' time, which wasn't very good of course, considering the numbers at the normal school in later years. But ... anyway that's what happened. And during the normal school at that time, there was almost as many, well I wouldn't say as many, but a large number of, of the staff, out of all [proportionate?] was students ... we had about ten members on the staff if you can imagine that so ...

JW: Well, you, you taught part-time though, did you?

WJ: I taught part-time.

JW: During that, did everybody?

WJ: Oh, well, they, yes, but [inaudible] they carried a full load of course, but they certainly taught part-time ... When I was teaching I took the whole staff, the whole, the whole student body so what were they doing during that time? ... I taught them all because the normal school was being used for ... a military hospital. The men were returning from the, from the second great war, of course, and they were using that for a hospital. That's why it is so a white building. It didn't always look that way and the doors were made in a sort of a hospital kind of arrangement. But ... anyway, this lasted for three years and I taught in the Memorial Auditorium. All the students

at once. So this student body rose from seventy or, or rose from thirty to seventy. This wasn't too many of course but still quite a lot of people to teach at once. In which time I was filling in, while I was occupied with the system or instruction and ... at the end of three years ... the normal school decided, they had increased their numbers, so they looked back to the normal school and, I must say, the building was very large of course, far too large for them, but they began to increase and they appointed somebody to be in charge of art.

05:00 WJ: So that let me out, you see. For three years this person carried on and at the end of three years they had increased to well over a hundred and so I was called back to the normal school. That was the year that Hugh Farquhar and I were [hired?] at the same time and Henry Johnson. So now we were on, I was on full time. I mean we were all on full time but.

JW: What year was this that you came full time?

WJ: ... See 1933, well 1942, and then we, three, six, so about 19--, ... about 1948 or 1949, in there. Somewhere in that direction. But ... from that time on it steadily grew but at the same time, of course, Victoria College was growing ... more rapidly than we were, of course. And so they, they were crying out for more space. So to make ... an end of things, they [decided?], they, they were given permission to use one end of the normal school and we used just the other one, other end. So ... their principal was Dr. Ewing at the time ... and by this time we had a different principal of course. Dr. Denton had died and he was replaced with ... his assistant, Mr. English. So he was the principal at one end for us and Dr. Ewing at the other end. So that was something else. So anyway, ... Dr. Ewin, Ewing, died very suddenly of a heart attack and not too long after that Mr. English died, so this was a nice way out of things, I suppose because they were always at one another's ... after one another. They didn't get along well at all but ... anyway, Mr. ... Mr. who, Mr. Hickman was the acting principal for the college and Harry, Harry Gilliland was the director of the normal school ... He had become the assistant to the, to the principal of normal school so it was a logical thing for him to step in. So ... things gradually of course went right ahead. Of course it wasn't easy sailing by any mean, but ... nevertheless they went ahead and ... we gradually grew and grew and grew and of course Victoria College grew and grew too. As far as we're, we were concerned, ... we had a nice department established. In fact, we added to it considerably. And Mr., Miss Marion Small became my assistant really. And she, she was teaching full time, as was I too. Then of course, for, bit by bit we added other courses until we need, needed more ... instructors too. So Donald Harvey was appointed and following Donald Harvey, no I'm getting, getting ahead of myself. ... I have to think back a bit ... As the two, as the two groups began to grow, both groups began, began to need more room. Well, by this time, I better get, get my book over here. I just jotted down a few things knowing that you were coming. Because I can't remember all this, this, these details ... In, somewhere in 196-, well the 1960's I guess, in the early part of 1960's, it was decided that the archives wasn't big enough so we would have to move out to the other campus. Well the first person to move was myself and two or three other people, but we had a split campus between the two. Between the present campus and the normal school and we functioned on both campuses and ... in order to, to ... remedy the situation of the, meeting classes, the classes were actually staggered. About a one half hour between the two. But from then on, I would say we made steady progress right straight through. A lot has happened since then, of course, but as far as we were concerned, speaking about my part of it, ... our own department, my own department grew steadily until it became quite, quite a decent size. For what it is today, of course. But ... now what [something?] next.

JW: I was wondering, the instruction that you gave at the normal school, was it different than the instruction you gave when it later became the college?

10:03 WJ: Oh yes. Quite different. Well not so, not so different because this was always my philosophy. Never, it hasn't changed a bit, one little bit ... I think the actual instructions as far as we were concerned were not that different. Of course you had to sort of ... follow sort of, of a pattern. I think that's more or less required of, of everybody. And our pattern was very much the same as what they were doing in, at the UBC. Their, our patterns were pretty much the same. But apart from ... I would say there wasn't that much difference in the instruction today and the instruction at that time. Now of course a lot of other things have been added to the art curriculum ... such as the graphics and ... modeling and clay work and that sort of thing. All these various things have been added.

JW: What would you instruct?

WJ: Well at, at present of course, at, at the very, at the very ... at the first I was instructing almost anything. Modeling and painting and design. This is all part of my work. Then later on of course we added to our staff and

faculty. And so these things were given by different people. But ... I think the program at the, teacher training part of it, was a very very full program and a very very well thought out program. I must say. [inaudible] I'll find [inaudible] this time but.

JW: What were the students expected to, to do in the art class in the normal school?

WJ: Oh very, they were very busy. The art class consisted of the students, well ... the, the classes actually ... met together and did the work themselves. Lots of work. And the senior class of course, they did a lot of those things too. In painting and design and all that stuff ... just whatever, whatever we just, we thought of doing, this is what they would do. There were ... they didn't, the last thing, they learned a great deal from year to year, of course, depending on what you were thinking about at the time. But ... you know what, I can't remember way back all this, this stuff, really. You should have come about fifteen years ago ...

JW: When, when you were a student way back in the twenties, did the art class you have then stimulate you, really interest you?

WJ: ... No, actually I must say that the art class that I took at that time was totally [opposed]. I was totally opposed to it and what I gave was very different of course than what it was before.

JW: Who was your instructor at the normal?

WJ: Mr. Denton. Mr. Dunnell, Dunnell. D-U-double N-E-double L.

JW: What did he expect of you.

WJ: I don't know what he expected of me but the whole thing was that every, everybody did the same thing.

JW: Very structured.

WJ: Everything was exactly just so. We followed little ... a book and you followed exactly ... what you should do and that was it. Now of course I didn't believe in that thing at all. My whole art or part of my teaching career after that, the normal school ... was pretty much the same because it ... also the same structure, the whole province. Everybody did the same thing. Well that was so far removed from my belief. As soon as I got to the normal school I decided to do away with the whole thing. Well I'm, I'm, I'm sure it's gone on just like that because Marion Small has carried it, the progress, program on I'm pretty sure. You know Marion Small, don't you?

JW: Mm-hmm.

WJ: Well, she's up, still up there ... Did you take any art at the normal school, at the Victoria College?

JW: No.

WJ: Oh, well she's almost, she has almost white hair. She's very pretty. Pure white and she's a fine teacher ... now what, what else should, should I tell you?

JW: While at the normal school, you were hired or invited to come as an art instructor.

WJ: Mm-hmm.

JW: Did you teach anything else or was it just art?

WJ: At the normal school?

JW: Mm-hmm.

WJ: ... I taught penmanship.

JW: The MacLean Methods.

WJ: Yes, well that, that's it you see. In penmanship everybody did, did the same thing. In art, it was pretty much a case of everybody doing the same thing and both of these things ... were very, had to, had to go very much against my grain. I must say.

JW: Were you, did you find that the principal at the time

15:00 JW: had a, a set direction that you, you must follow or were you given ... little bit of leeway?

WJ: Oh yes, we were given a little bit of leeway, leeway but the department of course set down what we should do, really. So that we had a program pretty well set up, whereas today no such thing exists at all. And you, you are pretty much given the freedom to do what you want so I find, found this fine, was fine.

JW: While at the normal school, which room did you have for your art instruction?

WJ: The normal school, on the top floor on the extreme west of the building. One room, you see. And this is a great difference from what it is today but.

JW: What sort of equipment would ... people use?

WJ: Oh, well they would have, use pretty much what the, the, the, the elementary school uses. We did nothing more than that really. At that time. These other things didn't come on until later, but they had, of course, anything under the sun ... You could certainly expect to see people using and I think its become very much more professional ... and much more sort of ... well ... I guess you could call it sort of an academic program but of course it's very different to the other academic things. But ... it, it became very much freer, I must say.

JW: Did you find the students at the normal school were more serious than later on when it became a college and university?

WJ: Well, I, I must say, perhaps I take a different, different point of view. I found the students were always very free and as far as I'm concerned, I think there was a great feeling of rapport between them and me, so that I kind of ... saw a different side of the [mike?] I quite think to what some people must have felt. No, I, I think there was a great deal of freedom and I couldn't, I couldn't imagine anything better than that and my whole attitude towards the art program became very, very different from the last twenty-five years. When I first started to teach I wondered whatever I got into it because I, it wasn't my first choice by any means but ... I changed to ... to the, my present attitude because I felt, well, this is just fine, couldn't be different. And I hope it's still the same ...

JW: When you finished at the normal school as a student, did you go teaching right away?

WJ: Right away. I started to teach, well, I just turned eighteen so ... at that time of course, all these men from the Front were coming home with nothing very much to do and they turned to teaching for a position and so it was very difficult to, to, for the like of me to find any kind of teaching position because I wasn't known and I had to fight all the rest of these. I, I applied all over the province for applications and most of them didn't even return an invitation ... but ... I was finally appointed to Saanich. Now Saanich at that time was separate from Victoria and ... so I taught in, oh, three schools. [Tolmie?] School, Cloverdale School and the Tillicum School. And ... I was moved every year, of course it was you know, it was the the thing to do for the for the trustees to move teachers around a great deal. So with the working conditions being such as they were, with all the ... the rules and regulations being laid out and things being so opposed to what I really believed in, so I found it very difficult to carry on. So finally I got my back up and said I'm going to leave Saanich no matter what. So I applied to Victoria and right away I was appointed. Now of course at that time ... I had built, I had begun to build up rep, my, my reputation because at that time all of the students, when they finished grade eight now, this is different again today, but they had to write an examination. Every person had to write, for instance, an art examination and my reputation grew to the point that ... I think that the students who went through my classes did about the best in the province. Highest marks in the province so that was what I speak about reputation. Therefore ... this first year that I came into the city, I taught in Sir James Douglas School and because of this reputation ...

20:00 WJ: the principal of the George Jay School, was Mr. Hall at the time, ... asked me if I wouldn't come over to George Jay which is unheard of at that time too. To ask by the principal would I come and teach for him. The idea was would I teach him, his students, the art program. So, I went along to his place finally, finally and ... I was placed in charge of the entire art program of the whole school and also music. Music was one of my favorite

things too. So between the art and the music that's pretty well all that I did ...

JW: You were lucky then when you finished normal school to get within the city limits really, weren't you.

WJ: Oh yes I was, I, I must say I was extremely lucky.

JW: Because most of the students they went out and they [were?] in one room classes.

WJ: Oh yes, yes, yes. No, my whole teaching career was right in Victoria and Saanich could be considered part of Victoria today of course but it was very different in those days.

JW: Can you remember anything about your student year at the normal school? Was there much of a social life?

WJ: Well, there was fair amount of social life and of course the, the principal at that time ... Mr. MacLaurin ... was not a social person so that he was kind of frowning on that sort of thing, so therefore I'm quite sure the students would find it very difficult to sort of meet up to what he required. But this was, this was common, very common. I think that the whole working of the normal school, as far as the faculty was concerned, was indicative of the, of the feeling of, of the ... the time. Things were laid down in such a rigid rule that you had to agree to carry on. That was part of, par for the course.

JW: Very formal, wasn't it?

WJ: Very, very, very formal. Well, it's just the opposite today. At teacher training, for instance, and probably all through the normal, all through the ... university. Isn't formal training, it's of an informal training. I don't think one has to be tied down rigidly to anything. I'm sure that's probably true to, to other places, to other things, to other subjects too. I'm talking rubbish really.

JW: Not really. Did any of your instructors in the normal school really make an impression on you?

WJ: On me?

JW: Yes.

WJ: I can't really say that they, they did. I think the whole thing was foreign to my whole attitude. So I don't think they really made much of an impression on me, that's for sure. To tell you the truth I can't even remember who they were ... That's how much of an impression they made on me.

JW: How did you fair in your first practice teaching? Do you remember where your first school was, you had to go out and, and practice teaching.

WJ: Ah well, we all, we did it, we did it very differently in that time because we taught in our practice teaching in groups of ... four or six, once a week. We all went on a Friday.

JW: And how many lessons did you teach? Just the one each person?

WJ: Oh just one, yes, one lesson, yes between six people of course.

JW: Did you have any of your instructors come and watch your lesson?

WJ: Oh yes, hmm-mm. Yes, they used to sit at the back of the room and would take it all in. Well, occasionally of course, but not, not too often but they did do that. Of course then the teacher, who was in charge of the classes, of course, watched us very closely because we were kind of invading their territory. So ... well that sort of thing has gone by the board too. There again of course today it's totally different to what it was at that time because there's so much more freedom involved today than there was ... at that time. I think it's really all to the good except ... I think maybe they've gone a little bit too far in this matter of freedom. I'd hate to go back over it all again, that's for sure ...

JW: I was told that in the twenties, most of the years, each year, the students kept a little vegetable plot, little gardens.

WJ: Oh yes, yes ... I wouldn't say all of them but some, some did a, a vegetable patch. That was probably part of the science program and partly due, probably due to the fact that there were, people were being encouraged to, to ... garden.

JW: Did you have a garden plot? Do you remember?

WJ: Well yes, I [worked it?].

JW: What did you grow?

WJ: Oh ... nothing much. Carrots and beets and onions, that sort of thing.

JW: Was it good soil up there? It was pretty rocky terrain.

25:00 WJ: Not too good, not too good. No.

JW: Did you enjoy that?

WJ: Oh yes. Well, of course, I didn't think, think much about it ... I remember one experience, speaking about the normal school, ... [inaudible] class consisted of sixty men and the rest were all women ... Miss [McFrom?] was the ... household science teacher and ... she found herself unable to, know what to do with the, the men. How could she teach all these people. So she decided she'd teach them all at once. And she, we'd all formed a sort of circle around her and she would teach them all sorts of fancy cooking, [arrangements?], that sort of thing. And then we, we'd eat the good sandwiches. That's all our teaching consisted of.

JW: Well she did try and, and show you the basics

[inaudible crosstalk]

WJ: Oh yes, she showed us the basic of, basics, all right. She told us all that [went with that?] but as far as we were concerned, I'm sure that's pretty well all she could do.

JW: You didn't get a chance to do much in, in the ... domestic science room.

WJ: Nothing, nothing.

JW: Just observed.

WJ: Just observed. That was one of the height, height of our achievements, I'm, I'm sure, at normal school. Mind you, it only lasted a year at the normal school. Less than a year, about nine months. That's, that's what normal teacher training consisted of in those days.

JW: What certificate did you get when you finished your normal school?

WJ: Just the normal school [train]... certificate that we graduated from normal school. After, less than, as I say, less than a year, and then I think we had to teach for two years under ... a sort of ... an interim time during which we had to prove ourselves. I think, I'm not too sure, I think it was about two years.

JW: Then did you go back for an, another degree or did, that was just, that was just it?

WJ: No that's it, that's it, that's it, that's it. And we had, of course we had, every year we had our certificate from the inspector and I, I guess we were judged on that.

JW: Did you ever have one of your instructors from normal school come into your classroom with a student teacher when you were out teaching in Saanich?

WJ: ... No they didn't come to Saanich at all. But that

JW: That's too far out wasn't it?

WJ: It was too far out, yeah.

JW: How did you get to school?

WJ: Well ... I was driving of course at that time. Eighteen years of age, believe it or not. So sometimes I took the car. Sometimes I ... we had jitneys in those, at that time too. Old ... Model T Ford cars were sort of used as jitneys and I went to several of the schools by jitney if the weather wasn't decent, or by the streetcar. Streetcars

JW: I heard though

Wj: Streetcars were running of course at that time too.

JW: I've heard a lot about the Mount Tolmie streetcar which everybody used to take up to the normal school.

WJ: Yes, yes, yes. Well, I took the Mount Tolmie streetcar at the other end of course. It used to run right out, well, where Douglas Street is. And so I'd get off the end of ... the streetcar and, and walk a short distance.

JW: Were you a Victoria boy?

WJ: I was born here, believe it or not ...

JW: I was wondering if ... a lot of the student years ... the students came from the Interior and, and some points ... You were segregated it seemed. You knew certain people from Victoria and you, you'd stay within that group. Did you get very friendly with, with the boys from out of town?

WJ: Oh, I think so, yes. Our, our group consist of, well principally, laterally, in my own year they were mostly all from Victoria. But after that of course, we, they increased in the, the enrollment from, as far as the students were concerned, from other places and ... between Vancouver and Victoria, they took all the Interior. In fact, I would say that probably Victoria got more from the Interior than Vancouver. So I, I would think that the friendship was consisted largely of where these people had come from. And it probably still does.

JW: Did you have ... physical education classes? Was there a sergeant that came down and [instructed you?]

WJ: Yes, he was an army man but he used to give training, part of his work, he used to be training those students. But of course that went with the war [inaudible]. After the war of course, [inaudible] the war, but this, they used to do this at the ... the normal school.

JW: Did you ever partake in any of the tennis championships and tournaments, ping pong, or any of [those?] teams?

WJ: Well, not too much at that time, I must say ... No I don't think too much.

30:00 WJ: But ... I have done this but not, not during the normal school.

JW: Do you remember the little plunge baths, the little pools that were in the normal school? In, I think there was one in the boys' side, I think one in the girls' side.

WJ: Oh yes, yes, yes. I do remember. Yes, I do remember them, yes. That's a long time ago.

JW: ... I'm speaking about the auditorium, which was in the normal school, and there was some beautiful sculptured busts on the side and at the back of the auditorium there was ... a high relief frieze, it's a Greek scene of some sort.

WJ: In Greek, yes, hmm-mm.

JW: Do you know the history of that?

WJ: No I really don't but I know what you're speaking about. Is there just a reproduction of [inaudible] right?

JW: Yes ... we have no records of where any of this came from or what it is and it's [inaudible].

WJ: ... No, I don't know. It's, it was produced by, in [the man?] Donald's time but not by him. I'm sure that. ...No I don't really know. It was certainly there before my time. I think the normal school was built as a provincial normal school in, somewhere in the 1900's, 1912.

JW: 1915 was the first class.

WJ: 1915, yes, that's right, in 1915, yeah. I think it was built before that, about a year before that and it was produced at the same time as the ... George Jay School, which I went to. While as a student of course, I went to the George Jay School. But that was before that.

JW: When you did practice teaching, did you practice teach at George Jay School? Ever?

WJ: ...

JW: Were there just two or three schools that they did the practice teaching at, wasn't there?

WJ: Yes, I practiced at George Jay School and ... North Ward School and Oaklands School. I think those were the main schools.

JW: When you had to prepare a lesson.

WJ: But I, yes, I was the ... person in charge at the George Jay School for years and years. Then I went from there, transferred from there to the North Ward School when the junior high schools were formed and I stayed there until I ... moved up to the junior high school, Central Junior High School and I

JW: When you were a student doing your practice teaching, you had to prepare the lesson for the [inaudible].

WJ: Oh yes.

JW: ... Did you find that the little library in the normal school was very helpful?

WJ: Oh, well of course it was, yes. Everything was in keeping because you just simply find what you wanted and it was all laid out for you and so naturally we used that. It's a very different story today. But, oh well [I think?].

JW: Were you directed to specialize at all when you were in the normal school or did they just say, well these are all your classes and, and you just go out and teach everything?

WJ: All our classes were alike. No, no, there was no, nothing about what you are speaking about at all. No, as far as the training was concerned, whether you're in ... one, two, three, or whatever it happened to be, you'd be sure you're doing the same thing. That's what I had against the whole thing. Because you couldn't all think the same way, that's for sure, that's for sure.

JW: Everybody was fairly young in the normal school when they were there, weren't they?

WJ: ... Well, one what you think as being pretty young ... If you ... you probably range from eighteen [at low?], you could, could have gone way, way up. In my normal school days, there were people that, that were forty years of age. So they varied, you see, a great deal.

JW: You found everybody got along very well even though [inaudible]?

WJ: Oh yes, sure. Of course, all these men who had ... been overseas for several years ... probably a lot of them were going to normal school. We had quite a few of them. Well, George Brand and Winnett Copeland were students as well as the fact they went back later on to teach at the normal school. So we, we, that kind of, well they were not older than I, not that older than I, but some of the people were much older. [Wilfred Ourde?] was a man, he's been dead for years. He must, must have been about ... fifty years of age and ...several of the others



were older.

JW: Did you find that most everybody got through their year at normal school or?

WJ: I would say most of them did. [inaudible] very easy for, easy thing to do. No question about that I'm sure.

JW: Do you remember speaking with your instructors at all. There weren't too many of them at that, wasn't there?

WJ: I went, I went to see them in fear and trembling.

JW: [inaudible].

35:00 WJ: We lined up for at, in great long lineups in front of the instructor's office door and waited our turn to be, to be ushered in one at a time. Sitting before or standing before the, the person who was involved. So.

JW: They would tell you, that'd be your, for your criticism [for your class?].

WJ: For your criticism, yes.

JW: They did never really hit you hard. They, they'd be quite constructive?

WJ: Well ... I think that probably most of it's quite constructive. But that's, well yes I think it was.

JW: I've heard that Dr. Denton was, he was really a very colorful man.

WJ: Yes, that's putting it mildly.

JW: He, he enjoyed teaching the boys.

WJ: Oh yes.

JW: More so than the girls. The women I've spoken to said that.

WJ: Is that so.

JW: They didn't enjoy. He didn't enjoy teaching them.

WJ: Well he was a rough character. Probably that, that was the reason. He was a rough character.

JW: Was he your teacher that you registered with in the morning? Remember?

WJ: Ah, let's see ... I'm not too sure with, I think he, he would have been. I'm not too sure.

JW: You had morning assembly, didn't you. [inaudible]

WJ: Yes, we had the morning assembly, yes. I'm kind of mixed up, that part of it. I think maybe Mr., Dr. Denton was our homeroom teacher.

JW: Those morning assemblies were quite an event, weren't they?

WJ: Oh yes. Well, in some respects that was quite a good thing. I think that it gave the students who were ... being taught a chance to, to get up and sort of feel what they could do in front of people. Give, give more confidence.

JW: Do you remember anything that you, you put on and your class put on?

WJ: No, I can't, I can't really remember.

JW: I've heard there's plays and people talked about their home town.

WJ: Oh yes. Yes. I think that they were required if possible to speak about their, their home town because of course, again they were kind from all parts of the province. And so that was one way for the people to become familiar with the province because they might, they might be going out to teach there. So that, we're getting our stories mixed. Now this was in, laterally when I went back to teach, there weren't so much when I, when I was a student at the normal school. ... evolved in ... coming from other parts of the province. But this developed differently later on at the normal school before it became part of the university.

JW: Was, when in the forties and early fifties that when you were teaching at the normal school, they still had the Friday afternoon assemblies, didn't they?

WJ: Oh yes. When it was what of their own, not part of the university, then we had full access to the, the auditorium. And it was used of course every day for meetings, both morning assemblies and the afternoon for ... these literary society kind of things.

JW: They were quite an event too, weren't they?

WJ: They were quite an event, yes.

JW: Were you a sponsor of any of the groups?

WJ: Ah ... well I was in charge of ... the art part. As that, that was my one thing. We had to, to produce the various Anechos for the history ... We actually printed those. A whole bunch, of about five hundred of these. Laterally of course they go up to that, that number. So ... I think that, that was my main achievement.

JW: That was quite a job getting that [inaudible].

WJ: Oh it certainly was, it certainly was. We had to do a great deal.

JW: What would you have to do ... type it up and get it ready for the printers?

WJ: This was done ... no, this was taken by the printer and he off, off-set press. It was done in rub of course. Then we assembled the whole magazine. It came back to us just ... in loose form there, so we had to assemble the whole magazine ... and that was a big job too. Everything had to go in just so. So I can remember use, I used to get the students on in the afternoon to come up to the school and I'd set out all these pages. Because there are all these pages in the book of course, one after the other. So I had this gang of students going around, picking up one at a time all the way right around. So, believe it or not, we, we were able to accomplish the, finish the whole thing in pretty short time. Really.

JW: Everybody joined nearly all the clubs, didn't they, or at least one.

WJ: One, yes.

JW: Everybody really participated.

WJ: Yes, yes, I think of that, I think it was just one. But yes, that's true.

JW: I'm, I'm skipping back again to when you were a student.

39:59 JW: There was a, was there a music teacher there?

WJ: Yes.

JW: Yes ...

WJ: Mm-hmm. Well again, again of course, the music was very different to what it is today.

JW: Mm-hmm. What did you have to do in the music? Do you remember?

WJ: Well, again in the music we, as far as I [was?] concerned, we met our music teacher in the auditorium where the piano was and she would play on the piano certain little things. Again, we were supposed to do that. That's all that we could, would, that's, that's all it would consist of.

JW: Did you ever have to audition? To show what kind of voice you had

WJ: Oh, I think so ...

JW: ... Was there a school choir then?

WJ: ... Not as such, no. But of course I did a lot of work in, in, when, when I was teaching of course, I did a great deal of work in the, the training of choirs.

JW: Did you?

WJ: Oh a great deal. ... Music festival was just come into its own and I sort of, at an early age, developed a great deal of ability, I guess in voice training. So it wasn't too, too difficult for me to carry on with it.

JW: Did you help with the music at the normal school when you were up there?

WJ: Not the normal school, no I'm speaking of after that.

JW: Hmm-mm, this is afterwards

WJ: Hmm-mm.

JW: Hmm-mm.

WJ: I trained a great many choirs on the festival work all through the high, well all through my school career really. Except when I went to university. I didn't, didn't have anything to do with it then of course. But ... in my early days I did a great deal of singing and piano play and that sort of thing. I did a great deal of music myself.

JW: Did you ever, as an instructor at the normal school or the college, find any student who was particularly talented? Did they come off and ... you see these people [inaudible].

WJ: Oh I would say yes, yes they do, they do come off and I would say that at least one a year. But not too many of course. You wouldn't even notice them that time. But I think of the people who are very very gifted certainly. They came quite often.

JW: You'd never encourage them to, to specialize in art if they were going further?

WJ: Oh yes I surely did, yes

JW: ... Even as a normal school student? If ... like they, they were taught everything.

WJ: They were taught everything, yes.

JW: Yeah. Would you just kind of say maybe later on, you know, or just lean towards art.

WJ: Oh yes. I can remember one, my own case that ... a young fellow was very gifted and his father wanted to know what, he came to see me, and wanted to know what could he do for his son. I said, well you can't do better than what you're doing. Just let him carry on with art and he's still teaching. He's one of the most prominent teachers in the province. He's teaching art. So that's kind of the thing I've, I often had, yes.

JW: Do you feel that your training at the normal school helped you at really [great?] basic.

WJ: I think really that, are you speaking about myself? I really think that ... my training at the normal school and at the university too, perhaps more at the university, ... was inclined to encourage me a great deal because all

my work developed mostly at that time. Of course I have been painting since I was about five or six years of age so that's a long time too. I can show you some things downstairs that I produced ... way back in 1915, 1916, 1917, along in there. I've got a portrait of, of my mother downstairs which ... I did in 1936 and I think it's probably as best, one of my best paintings. So it hasn't changed that much. These were done just two years ago, so they [didn't?] change very much.

JW: You must have felt it was quite an honor when Mr. Denton approached you to come and teach at the normal school.

WJ: Oh it was an honor, it was an honor, yes. In spite of what I may have thought. I don't think he realized ... what kind of a person I am but he was destitute. He really couldn't, could, beside himself as to well what could he do? He'd have to have somebody. And so I was some person.

JW: Did you, people were appointed then, they weren't, they didn't write and ask for a job up there. It as really.

WJ: I ... yes, that's true. And then when Dr. Denton died, and I, for three years went back to teach at the junior high school, then after that ... the, the art position became vacant and Mr. English, who was now filling that position.

45:00 WJ: He came around to see me and he said he'd like very much for me to come to the art, to the normal school and teach art. I said ... well I'd have to think seriously about and I thought many times that I would never have anything to do with the normal school. I carried around my application for nearly a [week?], for a long time. I think I didn't even post the darned thing and finally I thought, well, I guess [inaudible] eventually [inaudible] I said I better put it in so that's what landed me my job.

JW: Well did you find that those part time years when the normal school was up at the Memorial Hall that you just found that wasn't too encouraging?

WJ: Hmm-mm.

JW: It just.

WJ: Well, it was, it was more encouraging I guess because it was so different to the training that I'd had before but I, I found that my experience stood me in very good stead because ... for a number of reasons ... it got me well acquainted with what I would have to ... to ... accept at the normal school and it also gave me a chance to explore things, that I could do on my own, which I did a great deal of, so I think that probably this stood me in very good stead. Anyways, I've had no regrets in spite of the fact that what I've said all the, my years were very happy, especially the, during the, the university.

JW: Just one more question about those years ... at Victoria College. You said that really your instruction didn't change that much.

WJ: My own instruction?

JW: Hmm-mm.

WJ: No it didn't.

JW: A lot of things did change, like, traditions sort of fell, like the little morning assemblies and, and the closeness of the students and teachers.

WJ: Oh, yes, that, that's true, yes. But as far as my own, my own work is concerned ... I don't think it's changed a bit. Really. Well, I wouldn't say not a bit but not very much. I think the, my method of teaching laterally, this is ten years ago of course, ... hasn't changed, had not changed very much.

JW: Did you find the atmosphere was different for your, your teaching or did it stay, stay basically the same?

WJ: Basically the same. Now this of course again was when I went back to teach. But ... my instruction ... blossomed a great deal I, I think. Freedom was certainly very, always very, very prominent ... I never tried to

encourage any of the students to, to ... follow a rigid line and to do the same sort of thing that everybody else did. Because I was totally opposed to it and I think really that, that was the reason for my success. Because I felt that every person had some ability. No question about it. And I was, I think I was really able to convince the students of this importance. That they could produce too. I can remember one time when there was a, a group of the doctors, I think it was the [doctors], yes it was the doctors and their wives, for a [week of?] convention in Victoria. We're at the normal school of course at that time and we were in the MacLaurin Building and they informed us [staying at?] MacLaurin. And it was summertime, the door of my classroom was wide open, and suddenly I realized I was surrounded with all these wives outside facing the room and stand looking at what was going on. So I went outside and I said to them, well of course I spoke to them, and they said well these must be gifted people. I said, well, they're, they're regular [Reynold?] students. They're just the regular [Reynold?] students. Nothing, nothing gifted really. But oh they say, couldn't possibly do this sort of thing with just regular students. I said, of course we could. And I said if you'd like to roll up your sleeves and come in ... I'll put you in a class too. You can do the same thing too. Oh no, we'd never be able to do that. I said, you certainly would. Maybe not for a little while but you'd certainly get busy and do it too because I believe in the, the fact that you can all do the same thing. So that's what I had to work with. I think my work was quite successful.

JW: Did you teach the summer school as, as part of normal school or was that university?

WJ: University.

JW: University summer school, yeah.

WJ: Hmm-mm. I'm not too sure what, when this was that I'm speaking about but it doesn't matter anyway, but there's a class of fairly mature people and we got around the point where we were making, sort of picture making as, as it's called,

50:00 WJ: And I talked about the various, the various things but in no time did I say what you should do. I was going to leave it to the students to, to do what we thought they should, should do. And one student said it was bogged right down. She couldn't do a thing ... her paper was in front of her and nothing on it. So I went back, back, by her desk and I said, well now ... what is so wrong, what is wrong? She, she looked and said what, what we're to do? I said, well I'm not going to tell you what to do ... I just want you to get busy and do whatever you know yourself. So, finally, she gradually started. I said look, when, when you get this thing sketched, I'll come round and see you and I'll read your work. That's the way I put it. And I'm pretty sure I'll be able to tell what it is you're doing. So after a great deal of effort she must have started because she had something that anybody could certainly tell what it was. So that she just had this sort of built up in herself that she couldn't do this and she couldn't do that. I'm quite sure of that. And we must have had a lot of people in a, a similar position because I found that the ... a, a great many of the students were just simply fighting it for all they could possibly manage ... and my main job really was to try to break down that feeling of inferiority. So I think that is very true probably ... with ... most people. They can do far more than they think they can do. In fact they can do anything because there, there are, there are no rules that says that you, that you must do certain things in a certain way. And this is my, really my firm philosophy that you're not tied down in any way to, to rigid rules and regulations, because who says that a tree must look like, like the trees outside. They don't have to look like that tree, those trees. You can make them any way you want and who's to, who's to say that what you're doing is wrong. So anyway, that's my whole philosophy ... Teacher training at the university ... that's been my most, well the last thirty years I guess, involved with ... I really think it's, it's a wonderful training for a person to be involved with. And if they didn't use it, then they always have something to fall back on. I think that men that would use it but not necessarily for any great length of time. I'm sure that many of the women would not use it very long but they might use it for some years, or they could come back to it again, because so many of those, the teachers are, are widowed and that sort of thing and they might even have to teach afterwards. So they are given that confidence they've got a, a worthwhile job to teach [inaudible].

JW: It's also used as a stepping stone to other things.

WJ: Yes, it's also used as a stepping stone. A person can teach for a certain length of [year] of time and then go into something else. But there again they can always fall back to teaching if they find they can't make a go of it. I think it's a marvelous thing.