

[Judith Windle interviewing Benjamin Crawford in 1978]

00:11 Benjamin Crawford: Hello. My name is Ben Crawford. ... I attended normal in 1928/29 which is roughly fifty years ago. And I came from Creston which is in the East Kootenays and ... I was typically, typically country boy, if you want to put it that way. Now you go ahead and ask your questions.

Judith Windle: Thank you. ... When you came down to the normal school, were you the only one from your community or were there others?

BC: No, no, there were two other, there were two girls and myself, from Creston.

JW: And you had a place to board when you were here?

BC: Well ... yes ... the family knew a family in Victoria. And ... I came to board ... with them. And ... I stayed there for about matter of four months, up until about Christmas time. And then I moved into another boarding house where there were other youngsters ... that were going to normal.

JW: It was closer to the school?

BC: Yes, actually it was ... just a matter of three or four blocks from the normal school.

JW: You just had to walk in every morning.

BC: Yes, right. And ... when I was in the other boarding house, why it was a matter of coming by street car every morning.

JW: You went on the famous Mount Tolmie streetcar.

BC: That's right. Uh-ha! Yes.

JW: I've heard a lot about that.

BC: Yes, well it was rather ... noisy. And it was a bit of a rough ride too. It wasn't ... it was like Toonerville Trolley, actually. Yes.

JW: ... What time did your school day start?

BC: Well you know ... I would've, would say, that it probably began at 8:30\ I'm not too sure I've, that I remember precisely.

JW: Did you have your morning assemblies each day?

BC: No, no. No I think we went ... to classes, directly to classes. We registered in a home room. And ... our teacher was ... Mr. Denton who was rather famous as a geographer. He wrote one or two textbooks that we used as we taught. And ... we met every morning at and ... had roll call of course. And then went to our regular classes.

JW: What was Mr. Denton like? I've heard [inaudible]

BC: Well he was a bit of a character actually. He was, he liked boys which was wonderful and he disliked girls intensely. ... When we went to get our criticisms which we did after each teaching session, why the boys usually ... came out of it with a smile and the girls often came out of it in tears because he gave them quite a rough going over. But, the boys thought he was alright. Yeah. But he was a, bit of a, rough jewel if you want to put it that way.

JW: He was just an instructor when you were up there. Did he hold a position?

BC: Oh no, he would ... he was on staff. But I don't think ... I think you would, think of him more or less as a Mr. Denton as a master teacher. He, he was an excellent teacher. And he taught social studies or geography and did an excellent job of it. Oh yes he was, and as I say I think that he, he did much to help boys adjust to the teaching situation and to like it.

JW: When you were there, were there less or considerably fewer boys than girls?

BC: Yes, roughly there were about a hundred and seventeen girls and thirty-one boys so's about matter of almost about four to one. And ... at that time of course I think that was ... possibly ... a natural distribution of ... people in the classroom. You know the teachers I think were mostly were girls that went into teaching and not too many, men. But that was our, the ... numbers it was roughly ... thirty-one to a hundred and seventeen I think, as I recall. Yeah.

JW: What are the classes can you remember, that really stood out?

04:47

BC: ... Well you know I ... I think that some that still stay with me were, are English classes. And of course at that time we were still learning to teach grammar. And I, I'm sure I came out with ... an excellent knowledge of, of grammar and how to teach it. And the textbook oddly enough was written by our school principal, Mr. MacLaurin. And ... I've seen all the grammar textbooks since then and I've never seen one that could compare with it. It was an excellent textbook and if, all youngsters were taught from that textbook, they would have an, an excellent knowledge of English. Of English grammar.

JW: Did Mr. MacLaurin teach you the English when you went to normal school?

BC: Ah, no actually, the teacher of English ... I think was our, our friend C.B. Wood who was later the registrar at UBC [University of British Columbia]. And [inaudible] he just died here within about two months ago. We had ... hoped to him as one of the two remaining staff members who were still alive. The other one is a young, was a young lady by the name of Isabel Coursier. And she was at the time if I recall, a national ski champ. And ... she taught physical ed [education] with the girls, and health, and health education I suppose it would be. But ... she's still living in Victoria. But C.B. ... died here just, oh a matter of two months ago.

JW: Was Mr. Freeman an instructor up there?

BC: Freeman?

JW: Yes.

BC: Oh yes. He was ... one we all remember I suppose, for the fact we went on many nature hikes. Some of us never arrived at the same destination. We seem to have peeled off a little bit here and there and got back to normal at the same time he did somehow or other. And ... he didn't seem to notice that we had disappeared. But he was, he was most interesting. But he taught the, I suppose you'd call some of the physical sciences and ... But he, he was famous for his nature hikes.

JW: Where were the hikes, to?

BC: Oh, well of course this country around here and we would possibly have been up to Mount Doug [Mount Douglas] I'm sure. ... This was all ... very much rural. And ... at the time, and ... you could literally go off the normal school grounds up to Mount Tolmie or up through there and you were in very ... rural area. Yeah. So we saw all of ... everything that you needed for a nature hike. Yes.

JW: How long would be the hike in hours?

BC: Usually it be probably from 1:00-3:00 or 4:00 something like that. It would be an afternoon. Yeah.

JW: Did you have the ... assemblies on Friday afternoon when you were there where you had to do the scheduled reading?

BC: ... Yes. ... I don't recall just when they were actually, whether they were every Friday afternoon. But they definitely did have skits, some that were written by students. ... There was ... music and ... it was just generally a fun session. I think it was very interesting. I didn't participate. I, I was interested in physical ed [education] and sports and ... therefore ... I couldn't sing. So I stayed out and ... listened.

JW: Did you have a ... a music teacher, when you were there?

BC: ... Yes. I ... that was one of her favourites in as much as she excused me from singing because she realized after one or two attempts to get me to sing that I wasn't talented. So she was quite willing to let me sit out.

JW: Who, what, what was her name?

BC: Well, as I recall, Miss Riddell. Yes, and ... I've almost forgotten her through the years. No we shouldn't say that. She was a Scotch lady, and truly a lady. And ... we were very, very fond of her actually. But ... I liked her because she recognized the fact I couldn't sing and she left me alone. ... Yes.

09:46

JW: Did Mr. MacLaurin teach at all any of the, the

BC: ... Well you know, it seemed to me Mr. MacLaurin, taught. I suppose it would be like guidance and ... more or less counseling one thing or another like that. Nah, I don't, I don't truly recall whether he taught the English. I don't know whether he taught that much actually. But I don't re, I recall him coming and talking to us about ... what we would have considered guidance or counseling. And ... some ... well what, facts of life if you want to put it that way. But ... no I don't think he taught any subject particularly. Now I may be wrong in that, but as I recall it, no.

JW: Who taught you physical education?

BC: Well we had a ... couple of ... army, I suppose they'd been sergeant majors, I'm sure they were. But ... one's name was [Frost?] and I don't recall the other. I may as I, think back. But, they were truly physical [compos?] that is they were in despite the fact they were probably be in their forties or something like that, they were in wonderful shape and could do everything they expected us to do. So that we certainly ... were well taught. And of course at that time, physical exercise was physical jerks. You know ... shall we say getting in shape. And ... they didn't participate. We did our own ... coaching of basketball one thing and another like that. They didn't do any coaching of teams. And the track as I remember, track practice and all that, we did on our own.

JW: Where did you practice track?

BC: Well we, we just had the grounds outside of course. They had, few tennis courts. But the

JW: The tennis courts were in the front of the

BC: Right.

JW: On the lawn.

BC: Yes, right. Yeah. They were really, good grass courts. And ... I recall, Mr. [MacDonell?] ... he was quite an avid physical ed [education] or rather, tennis player. And we used to get out with him a lot. And ... he, he couldn't see the base line. He used to call his shots. You know, we made them, we were long and if he made them, they were inside and we didn't dare argue with him of course. But he was ... he was fun. Yeah.

JW: Did you have a tournament with anybody else or just within the [inaudible crosstalk]

BC: No, just within the school. Yes.

JW: Did you have garden plots?

BC: Have?

JW: Garden plots, when you were out there?

BC: ...Yes. Yes, I remember those faintly.

JW: Where were they?

BC: Well they were right ... close by the normal. I think down toward, they would be d... on the southeastern part of the school. I've, I've never been back up there since I left. I'll go up one of these days and say hello I suppose. But we had these, these small plots.

JW: What did you grow?

BC: Oh, I suppose radishes and carrots. Nothing very pretentious. No.

JW: The grounds were beautifully kept even then [inaudible]

BC: ... Yes, they were show place. Yes, they ... they had started at that time bringing in ... plants, trees etc. from all the, from Japan and foreign countries. So we had a ... truly very very fine ... garden and ... you know and ... trees etc.

JW: Well they had gardeners for all that.

BC: Yes.

JW: Did you ever have anything to do with the gardeners?

BC: No. No. Not personally.

JW: ... I'm wondering if maybe they helped you out with those garden plots at all?

BC: Well we probably, you know we had to make leaf collections and flower collections, and all that. So, we probably stripped their trees for them. But ... we weren't supposed to have done so. No.

JW: Were the rose gardens still down below towards the tennis courts?

BC: As I recall it yes. Yeah. Yes.

JW: The grounds have changed quite a bit in that respect.

BC: Well, parking lots have made it necessary. I'm sure that's where the change has come. Cuz what is a parking lot now as I recall it was strictly, you know grass and lawn, and ...

JW: Was the Dunlop House there ... that house that's right next to the, the brick building?

BC: Well now I, I couldn't say yes. It must've been. Yes it must have been there.

JW: I was just wondering, who would have lived in it at that time. It had something to do with the normal school.

BC: No I don't recall, no. But I wasn't, I wasn't too interested in ... you know, who lived around there.

15:10

JW: How was your day spent when you were a student and really there to work. What went through your mind in that time?

BC: Well you know, first it was a serious business. And ... the teacher control ... was very strict. And you were given assignments and then you were expected to do them. And many of us of course put our assignments off until the night before or something like that and then spent all of ... literally all the evening and the whole night preparing or getting our assignments up. I remember doing that on one or two occasions. But ... you, you paid attention and you worked as they expected you to. And of course they expected you, to work very hard. So ... as far as the classes were concerned, I think we were well taught and ... taught what we were supposed to go out and teach. Cuz I'm sure that in math and grammar and that, that we were well taught. And ... I never recall having any difficulty going out and teaching classes because I hadn't been properly prepared. And ... while we were in the class we really paid attention to what was expected. And then of course we, a group of us at least ... put all our spare time in the gymnasium. And ... course the usual thing after hours why, we were just like anybody else. Yeah.

JW: What other sports did you ... do when you went to the [inaudible]

BC: Well, tennis. And ... we turned out for track. And ... we used to, jogging as you know it now, while we all, jogged. ... We never thought that it was anything very special you know, it was just keeping in shape. Tennis. And ... did tumbling ... quite a bit of that was done but mostly basketball and tennis. When we're outside, we played tennis, and when we're inside why, we ... played basketball. Now there was a ... table tennis group. There was one or two of the instructors who were very avid table tennis players. So there was a good table tennis group. But I don't recall badminton or anything like that that was very special.

JW: You really made use of the gym then.

BC: Yes, right. Yeah.

JW: Do you remember the, the little plunge baths? Pools?

BC: Oh yes, yes! Our, our swimming pools, which was literally a dive from one end, come up and ... the other and hope you didn't hit your head before you got up.

JW: Did you make use of those very often?

BC: Yes, oh yes. They ... they spent a lot of time there. But they were, oh I'm sure they were, twelve feet long and ten foot wide or probably even less than that. So it wasn't much of a swimming pool. But a lot of the people, every Friday night of course, ended up at the Crystal Gardens. That was a meeting place.

JW: You didn't have a regular swim team go down and practice?

BC: No. No. No. No there, there was very little of that at the time. They ... there were, the only competitions that I recall were against Vic High [Victoria High School]. And of course we played basketball against the Chapmans and the Patricks who were, as I, I recall it, at Vic High [Victoria High School] at the time. And ... we used to go out to James Island, they had a basketball team. And the navy had a basketball team. We used to play, they were, I suppose you'd say Senior B ... teams. And ... well the high school, the Vic High [Victoria High School] of course, was a, I'm sure one of the top high school teams ... in the province. And ... I also belonged to a soccer team that played out in the, I suppose you'd call it the commercial leagues here. I ... the, one of our janitors was an old country soccer player and he talked me into going out and playing soccer with him. And ... it was a good experience. But ... tennis and basketball were the two big sports as far as I was concerned. And soccer we played outside the school of course every week. I played ... every Saturday I think it would be ... while it was on. And tumbling did I, quite a bit of that.

20:17

JW: There was ... segregation between the boys and the girls. I was wondering

BC: Very much so as far as the staff were concerned! Ha!

JW: Did you ever get together for any sports at all or was that very segregated too?

BC: Oh yes, I, I would say yes very very much so. They didn't encourage the games between the boys and the girls like they do now where well in your physical ed. [physical education] classes ... you often had the girls teams play the boys teams ... now! And I think it makes for bit of fun and interest of course. At that time, why Mr. MacLaurin was very much against any, you know get-together within the school premises anyway. In fact I think the only game I all recall was one that was played between boys dressed as girls and, and one of the boys teams. And that's ... that was quite an event actually.

JW: What was that all about?

BC: Well they just, one group they dressed up as girls and the other, and of course girl's ... costumes at that time were what bloomers, pantaloons or something like that; I don't know what you'd call them but ... and dresses that came about three quarters the way down. ... And of course we'd have, hospital attendants and everything like that. It was, tried to put on a show for everybody. But it was ... it was closest we got to participating in sports with the girls. Well not, I shouldn't say that, but of course tennis we, played there was a, as I recall it when the girls and I won the girl, the mixed doubles, in the tennis. And ... but ... no outside of that, why there was nothing. Table tennis I imagine there was

JW: Was that held in the gym too?

BC: The table tennis? No, they had a special room for that.

JW: ... [inaudible crosstalk]

BC: But it would be like a lunchroom or they'd set the tables up after lunches or some

JW: Did you have the lunchroom across from the gym? Was that [inaudible] when you there?

BC: Yes. Mm hmm [yes]. No I ... I haven't been up there. Is what you call lunchroom now is it? But it was a fairly ample room as I recall it. So it must have been ... one that could have been used for the lunchroom.

JW: Was the library down on that floor too? Can you recall the library?

BC: No, not ... not as to exactly where it was. No.

JW: It was a very small room I think. Yeah.

BC: Yes I remember being in it, on occasions.

JW: Did you find it very helpful?

BC: ... No. I, I think I did most of my research out at the, you know at the city library. No I don't recall using the library there very extensively. No. ...

JW: Were you very interested in art when you were out there?

BC: Yes. We had ... Mr. [MacDonell?], [MacDonell?] ... or I think we called it, Mr. [MacDonell?] I'm sure that's the way you pronounced it. And ... it was mostly of course, water colours ... perspective drawings. And ... I enjoyed it. In fact I, when I was teaching, I was, taught art in the ... elementary school in Creston where I taught. And I taught it in the high school, I taught art. In fact I went to Nelson as a an art t, as

their art teacher. And of course all that I got from Mr. [MacDonell?]. And ... at that time we wrote an art exam, the grade eight level. And ... there were certain things like ... design. There was, there was always, they would ask for certain examples of your year's work in design ... natural or still life ... a scene such things as that. So we, we practiced every facet of water colours. And then of course ... how to do certain, you used your geometry sets one another like that. But art was very well taught. And ... as I say I went when I was out in ... teaching ... I, I taught art at, in fact in Nelson I taught both the high school art and the elemen ... and the junior high art. And ... I taught some art in Trail. I taught in Trail for a year. And I taught some art there. And ... but in Creston I was the art teacher there when they built the, what was then the consolidated school. And that was the first consolidated school I believe in the, in the, the province as I recall. And that was like a bringing all the students in from all the district by bus. And at the junior high and senior high level. So

26:07

JW: When you were, finished your year at the normal school, you had a certificate that enabled you to teach up to a certain grade, or did you just go out?

BC: Well I, I think ... circumstances decided that because many of us taught in high school with just what would have been the grade twelve, thirteen ... standing. And later on they, s ... they brought out certification. But I'm sure that many of the teachers that ... I graduated with taught high school. And then ... many of them went back of course and got their degree. I went back after ... I started teaching and would go back to summer school and eventually picked up my degree. But ... that's what happened to probably most of them that did end up. But many of them taught high school and if you get out in a rural area why you'd go up to grade ten anyway at least, and many of them taught right up to grade twelve, maybe only one or two students but they would have taught high school and then ... you tried, of course the idea was to move into the bigger centres. So we ... we did teach high school of course. I was teaching in a high school before I, finally upped my degree.

JW: When you were practicing, were the normal schools available, not the normal schools, the model schools, which were in the, in the model school were they open to you to teach, or did you just observe them?

BC: No I don't, I don't recall ever having taught in the model school. But they, they took students in to observe teaching in the model school.

JW: Did you find that helpful?

BC: No, not particularly ... maybe I didn't take it seriously. But I, I would believe that we got most of our help from the teachers who were in the schools that we went out to teach in. I taught at ... several of the ones that are here. You know ... the James Douglas School I think it was, and the Jay school [George Jay Elementary School] ... and ... Quadra I think ... there was the Quadra school [Quadra Elementary School] too. Well we, I went out also to Sidney I guess it was and taught in Sidney or

JW: That would be classed as a rural school.

BC: Yes right. Yes. But I don't even recall how I got out there. I think I must have gone out by bus ...

JW: How often did you go out and do your practicum?

BC: Once a week.

JW: Right from the beginning?

BC: Well, I'm not too sure of that. But I remember having spent ... practically every Friday out teaching, practice teaching.

JW: Just the one day?

BC: Yes, and then I think we had to do a week. At the close to the end of the school year I think we went out for a week's a practice teaching.

JW: At one point, I'm not sure which year it was, the students, the teachers went out and taught in the home town for a few weeks. Then they had to come back in, it was close to the very end of the year. Did you have to do that?

BC: No, no we, we were confined to the island you might say. No we didn't ... wander that far. No I, I don't recall what year that was. But I don't think, I think that was after the war you might say up around the probably starting in the the '50's. But I .. I remember having had ... students come in to the school ... who had gone through our school in Nelson. I was a principal there and ... I remember many of the youngsters coming back to teach in the junior high. So, that would be after 1953.

30:35

JW: When you were practice teaching, each time did you have a teacher from the normal school come and watch you to evaluate you or was that, that was each time?

BC: Oh yes! Oh yes! There was an evaluation given ... each teaching session. They didn't ... possibly stay too long. I suppose they came in to ... just check over things. But, the teacher in charge of the classroom gave you a of course an evaluation also. And that was the one that ... I suppose was more important of the two.

JW: Were you given any words of wisdom when you first went out [inaudible] get your students [inaudible]?

BC: Just hope, just words of hope! I ... I don't recall ... how good my ... evaluations were actually. I know that Mr. Denton of course always as a rule gave me my evaluations ... from the teachers.

JW: Because he was your homeroom teacher?

BC: Right. And he and I got along very well together. So ... he, he never ... made any statement as to whether I was doing well or bad. He was quite satisfied and ... that was all that mattered. So, he certainly thought I was alright ... at hope, anyway. Yes.

JW: When you had finished your teaching, were there many jobs available or were they hard to come by at that time?

BC: Well actually I never went ... I never went ... directly into teaching. I, I worked in the post office as I recall it for a year and then I went to university. I put three years in arts and medicine. And then of course, the recession or the ... was at its worst. And ... I had to go to, to go teaching. And I actually I got a job. I didn't even, I didn't even write a, a ... an application, one single application. I was offered a job. And I don't know particularly why. It was in the rural area around where I had grown up. And ... I haven't any idea why they gave it to me

JW: But that started your career.

BC: That's right. Yes. Yes, yes it was a ... it was about eight miles from Creston actually. And ... a little log school house, thirty two students, eight grades. Actually only seven, there was no grade ... seven at the time. And ... no student had ever graduated or passed through grade eight in the school. And ... I had two girls in grade eight. And ... I used to go across to the Creston Elementary School. The principal there had a very fine reputation as a teacher. And he taught grade eight. Now he used to have worksheets and ... for all the worksheets, he gave me copies. So that what he taught, I taught. And as I say he had a, an excellent reputation as I, as a grade eight teacher. So my youngsters were getting the best of instruction because I followed in his footsteps you might say. And ... the two girls got through. And those are the two students first to ever pass through grade eight at, in that school. So, and then next year of course, I ... I had a grade seven class but no grade eight. Because there hadn't been. But I, I think that's where you learned to teach in the rural school because I started out and of course I, I, I was ... utterly confused because I had about an

average of four youngsters in every grade. And ... I didn't have, there were no copy machines. I got grade eight work from the ... chap in Creston. But there were no grade, or no hectographs. Well there was a hectograph but I ... those were ... a plastic or eh ... material made ... jelly, of jelly. When I run my first copy off, I pulled it off incorrectly and that was, remained full of pot holes. So I could never use it ... get another one because that was my allotment for the year. So I ... I learned ... very quickly to make the grades threes teach the grade ones, and the grade five teach the grade twos and the sevens teach the fours, and I concentrated on the grade eights. And ... when the inspector did get around ... he gave me a good criticism. And I often feel that the people that deserved it were the students that taught ... taught the others. But it was the only, the I'm sure the only way one could have survived.

36:26

JW: When you were in the normal school did they not try and prepare you for this sort of, happening?

BC: I don't think so. Not particularly, no.

JW: They just taught you how to teach.

BC: Yes. You know, well I'm sure that ... not as I recall it. They ... you know, we had art work. And ... that always took certain ... certain time you did your art. And ... I never taught music; I was an utter failure there. But ... no, no it was ... a case if you were to survive why every student had to do their fair share of the work. And the amazing thing of course that despite the fact that there were thirty-two youngsters probably talking and that, and ... discussing things they never, it never sounded loud or anything like that. They always did it very quietly. And my grade ones were all excellent readers at the end of the first year. They could all read all the books you know they were supposed to read. All thanks to the grade threes or fours ... whichever it was, yes. Yeah.

JW: Do you remember anything about the model schools that were at the normal school?

[inaudible] it would be for awhile just there and, and a, not too much fuss made.

BC: The model schools?

JW: Mm hmm [yes].

BC: Now you think the one that's attached, was attached to the normal school?

JW: Mm hmm [yes].

BC: I don't think there was any great fuss made about them. And I, I don't recall ever, recall being in the, in the model school once. But I don't recall ever having been in any other occasion. Maybe they didn't think they was, they could do very much with me anyway ... so they didn't ... didn't you know ask me to visit it. And I don't think that it was. Well I don't think that it influenced our teaching that much at the time. You know.

JW: I was speaking to some ... people who had gone to the normal school in the '30's. And they mentioned that the atmosphere while they were learning, was, was very formal. Everybody was stern there. Yet they kind of hinted that it was something like a marriage bureau. Because a lot of the students, even though they were segregated, ended up marrying after they'd graduated.

BC: Do you know, you mean married within the groups?

JW: Mm hmm [yes].

BC: Well you know, I don't think I know a single case where that happened during our year. No ... no I don't think, I don't think there was one case that I can recall where one of the boys married one of the girls. And of course I, I think the thing was that we all as a rule headed out into the rural areas. It was customary at

the time that ... ninety-nine percent literally went into rural areas to teach. And many of them married, many of the girls married men or ... in those communities. And ... well I think that went for ... the men too that many of them married girls within the community. But I, I can't recall one single case of one of the girls marrying one of the boys. No I'm sure of that. So

JW: It changed a lot.

BC: It must have been the times! Yes. Yeah.

40:29

JW: Did you have a graduating ceremony when you finished?

BC: ... Well yes, right. ... In fact somewhere up there there must be a picture taken of the graduating class. And ... through the years I've lost mine. But I ... I remember, I think I could recall the name of every boy that was there. But ... some of the girls you know you remembered. But there were a hundred and seventeen girls and so you didn't know too many of them.

JW: You wouldn't have classes with them would you?

BC: No, no. No and you weren't encouraged to stop and ... as they are allowed to do now in high schools you know where the boys and girls can stop and, and lean against lockers. Well that wasn't permitted! You went by and you kept your eyes straight ahead. ... Yes.

So no we didn't. ... And of course you say some of the later classes well I ... if you are talking about the, later in the '30's why that may have been so and may have been a changed atmosphere. I think Mr. MacLaurin was partially responsible for you know the formal attitude. He was an old, well I don't know whether he came from the Maritimes, I think he came from the Maritimes. And they were ... a pretty strict lot. And ... no he didn't encourage any fraternize or

JW: Did you have a, a get-together picnic when you first got there, just to get acquainted with the people [inaudible crosstalk]?

BC: No, I never recall. No.

JW: At ... some point ... later on. And there, there was some earlier, there was a picnic and at the beginning and sometimes at the end. You'd go down to Willows Beach or out to Beaver Lake.

BC: Well it never impressed me. I just went along I guess ...

JW: Did you have a, a dance with your graduation ceremony? Or any sort of dances at all.

BC: Not that I can recall, no. I used to belong to three Young People's in the ... roundabout area. And I, I think that's where I ... spent a lot of my social time.

JW: So there wasn't really that much social life at the normal school.

BC: No. No actually I would say very little. Well you made some. For instance the ... the Crystal Gardens was a Friday night institution more or less. And ...

JW: What was going on down there?

BC: Well swimming. And ... and of course it was one place that, that you could arrange to meet. You, you couldn't say, "Well I'll come ... to your home and pick you up." Because as a rule they didn't ... the people that took students in didn't encourage. I suppose it was a lot less fuss to, if they didn't have anything to do with any boys or girls being around and also ... I think that if you wanted your name to remain on the available list of residence why you, you didn't encourage this because again the, I don't think the staff

particular wanted boys and girls from up there, fraternizing. So, so ... you know we, we never, well we never had occasion of course to go to other people's home. And yet I can remember being in other homes in Victoria but not ... where students were. So, but I, I used to go out a lot to these Young People Groups.

JW: That would be your social life.

BC: That's right ... Well I, I, I have one incident. I, I mentioned my musical talents and I do that with ... great regard for Bach and all the others that followed him. But I always remember the, I was asked by ... one of the teachers to teach a music lesson. And I said well, you know literally, "Well you, you're, you're joking."

And she said, "Well no."

I said, "But look I can't sing."

And she said, "Well Mr. Trotter" (and he is a Victoria boy now. He lives in Victoria). Ah "Mr. Trotter said you had one of the finest voices in the normal school."

I said, "He's, you know talking through his hat, he's kidding you."

And she said, "Oh no he's not. You, you're one of the best music students up there."

And I said, "Nothing doing. I, I absolutely refuse to teach a music lesson." And you didn't do that type of thing, of course. You didn't refuse.

And she said, "Well I want you to teach a music lesson."

So eventually she persuaded me that I would teach a music lesson. Well, so I always remember selecting a piece, Grasshopper Green. And it, it's known I, I think every music teacher that taught in the school knows "Grasshopper Green was a cute little chap." So, when the music lesson, when I started to teach the music lesson, why the teacher was at the back of the room and Charlie Trotter was at the back of the room. I start out and pretty soon I see the music teacher kind of [inaudible] herself and head for the door. Charlie Trotter followed. So anyway I finished my music lesson and then I headed for the door. And when I opened it well there was the principal and about six teachers and Charlie Trotter among them all listening to my music lesson. I guess it was a, it was truly an experience. So, that's the only music lesson I ever taught ...

46:58

JW: When you were a teacher, I guess you saw some of your old teachers from the normal school come in and evaluate.

BC: No.

JW: No?

BC: No. No there, there was, there was none of that actually. It was done by provincial inspectors. And ... they were usually in one or two of the bigger for instance ours ... in, in it was an inspector not a superintendent. Well it was at Cranbrook. And he usually you could expect him to come into your school probably in the spring. And he would ... give your students the All Canada test. That was a math test. And ... a spelling test. And then he would watch you teach ... grammar lesson etc. And ... then he would give you a report. But ... no, the, the t, the normal staff never came up, never came out of Victoria. They were, it was full time job here.

JW: I was wondering if you had any of your students go to normal school then come back and teach, and practice teaching your students. Did you ever have that happen?

BC: No because ... while I was still in the normal school they weren't doing that. I'm sure that happened

after, oh close to 1950 in there. And it happened I believe at the university level. Once the universities took over and the normal school was dropped, then I think that's when it actually took place. But I'm sure that was something that happened you know around 1950\ . And then we began to get students from the universities. But never from the normal because at that time they're, they had taken, the, the ... teacher training out of the normal, schools. So ...

JW: When you had finished the normal school you said you went to work in the post office. Do you know if many of your classmates, or if they all got jobs right away? Or was it a long process you know waiting around until a job came around?

BC: ... Well actually ... I would feel that ... that it wasn't that impossible a situation at the time because 1928-29 was just previous to the ... the bust ... you know the depression [Great Depression] and there was still probably jobs available. But certainly once you get up into you know 19-- , you know, '31,'32,'33, then it became, would be difficult. And ... but I don't recall any of our teachers, you know not getting a job within a reasonable time. Cuz I say I started teaching about 1933 and I was offered a job, but I don't know why ...JW: What were you planning on doing? [inaudible] teaching? Said you'd gone in for art.

BC: Well arts and med. [medicine]. I was going in for medicine. But ... even at that time it took money. And ... there wasn't any available so I went teaching.

JW: Did you work ... to earn your money to go to normal school?

BC: Yes. Yes I worked every, every summer actually. I worked with BC Tel when they put in the Trans-Canada Telephone line [Trans-Canada Telephone System] . I was on their survey and cleanup team that worked through the, well they worked through the part of the East Kootenays. And ... then I worked with the forestry. I was time-keeper on a forestry crew for a number of years. Oh I, I worked every ... summer if I weren't going to ... university.

51:01

JW: How old were you when you went into the normal school?

BC: Into?

JW: Into the normal school [Inaudible crosstalk]

BC: Seventeen. No, the see ... seventeen.

JW: And that was about the average age, for the boys?

BC: Oh I was probably a little bit, maybe a year younger than most. I, I haven't any idea. But ... most of them have been retired you know a year or so before, I retired. But a few of them would have been mine, my age. I was, when in ... I would actually be seventeen when I started teaching and was eighteen when I graduated and had my birthday in between there. So there were a few the same age but most of them were a little bit older I think.

JW: Do you remember what the tuition fee was to get into normal school?

BC: I don't think there was any.

JW: ...You just had to have your room and board money.

BC: Right. And ... they actually paid your way down and back, one time. That is, most of us paid our way down and then ... we were given a refund at the end of the year when we went home. But a lot of us got our refund at Christmas time. They paid us, I remember getting around sixty dollars to go home at Christmas time. And ... a gang of us went down to the States cuz it was cheaper to go that way.

JW: Than to go home ...

BC: Yeah. To, no but ... cheaper to go down, rather than travel by CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway] we went down through ... I went down by, came up by the Milwaukee-St. Paul electric to Spokane. And then from Spokane we went north to Yahk which is just the other side of the Canadian border and then back to Creston.

JW: How long would that trip take?

BC: Oh a couple of days. Yes. But it was almost that long by ... coming up through the CPR [Canadian Pacific Railway]. Yeah. It wasn't, it wasn't very fast.

JW: ... Well your, your school year ... coincided with ... a, a regular school year.

BC: Right. Yes. Yeah, yes I'm sure we went down the same time as it went into session, same as school and broke up at the same time.