

[Judith Windle interviewing Eleanor Piggott in 1978]

[00:00] Eleanor Piggott: I can see if these girls, I don't know what spot they're in... Oh yes, you see those two girls, for instance, came back after having taught for three... Yes, here it is, "but she has fulfilled the qualifications that said we may recommend her to be worthy of a normal school diploma valid for three years from this date of issue". Now that was a third class certificate, or a preliminary certificate as they called it, and that, that was the first term. And then if you went on for the second term you got the second class teacher certificate. And that came out, that was- that came out at the end of May, yes, we finished at the end of May and it was issued in September.

Judith Windle: So first term started in September?

EP: Yes... I don't think I, don't think it shows... I...

JW: Went to December.

EP: December, yes, it started in- in September, about the first of September, somewhere around there. It went to December...

JW: And that was [inaudible crosstalk]?

EP: ... and then if you had qualified you got a third class, or preliminary certificate. And you could go out and teach for three years... and earn enough money to come back and do the rest. I didn't do that fortunately, I had, my father thought it was better for me to go through and get the whole business.

JW: So in January...

EP: And this was, this was permanent, you see. Unless you misbehaved yourself which, of course in which case it was...

JW: So you [inaudible crosstalk]?

EP: ... "valid during the pleasure of the council".

JW: And that was from January to May, and then you could go out and you were fully qualified.

EP: Yes...

JW: Was there a first class teacher certificate?

EP: Well, if you wanted a first class you had to get first year university, that gave you a first class, or sometimes called an academic... I should have one around, those around somewhere, but I didn't I just went straight... I taught for three years. Saved up my money, and then I decided that... well, I didn't think that I was really getting anywhere that little, little country schools where you live, you know. So I had saved up my money and... I had enough money saved up to put me through two years at university, being very careful. And... after that, dad came and said "well there's no sense in stopping now, you may as well keep it up", so I went and finished. But... so I don't think I ever bothered about a first class certificate, I just went straight through and got the BA.

JW: Did you get that at Victoria, or over at UBC?

EP: UVic- UBC, because Victoria had only a, two years. When I was going to university they had just the two years, yes, and the student used to come across from Victoria College as it was in those days into third year university. And... as I wasn't a Victoria girl, so I didn't do it that way.

JW: You were upstairs in the domestic science room?

EP: Yes we had, yes upstairs at the far end, the left-hand end.

JW: Was the apartment in there? Were you able to-

EP: Yes, we- well, I think we did have a sort of apartment in there, yes. There was a restroom for the girls and... a home ec room and... Kitchens, of course. My neighbor next door said that somebody... was rather making fun of us, learning home ec up there. She said that we were learning there with electric stoves, and when we went out to country places there weren't any. Well that was not quite true, we kn- in a place like that you couldn't go in for a dozen wooden coal stoves. And... the stoves that we had, as I remember them, I can't go back very far in my memory for that. But as I remember them, they were little electric plates.

JW: Like a hot plate.

EP: Like a hot plate, yes. I'd, certainly we had that kind of thing at home, in our home ec classes... and we did have a big, wooden coal stove in the home ec room, but not for each girl. But when you, when the girls were doing their work, they couldn't- of course, they do nowadays, I know they have a stove for about every three or four girls but... The idea in those days would have been pro- well, it would have been... Even as it was, people said that that was far too elaborate a place for the job that was to be done. Actually I suppose it was but...

JW: There weren't many boys in your class...

[04:59] EP: No, and the ones who were there... Two or three of them came back from [inaudible]. Now you can have one of these pictures, you can have this one if you like, this with the first class. That is Mr. Freeman, and I mention him first because he was a good friend of mine. He was my high school principal all the way through high school, and then when I graduated he graduated [EP laughs].

JW: Which high school was that?

EP: That was in Armstrong, up in northern Okanagan. And so... he was a very, very kind person to me always and...

JW: He taught nature studies, didn't he?

EP: Nature study, yes, all that sort of thing... and Mr. Dunnell, who was a one of my very best friends because he taught art, and I liked art and he painted me a picture. I don't really you went in for these things when you were [inaudible]. Mr. Donald, where are you? Oh that's funny... [inaudible] he had painted some for Mr. MacLaurin, he had them in his office, they looked just lovely.

EP: I came-

JW: [Inaudible crosstalk]

EP: -across his grandson the other... oh, some time ago, working in one of the stores.

JW: He- you were very interested in art, I was wondering if you could... you remember in the auditorium at the back.... Was there a frieze up on the wall of a Greek scene? It's in the, the auditorium.

EP: I don't remember anything on the wall, but there used to be, there were several Greek busts around the place... Homer, and Cicero I think... well, that's not Greek of course, but Homer and... Classical busts, I should say.

JW: Do you know where they came from? Or were they just there when you got there?

EP: Oh, I think they just were part of the building, you know... Somebody must be cooking something... But the floor, I think, has changed. It used to be a parquet floor, little pieces fitted in, you know. It was not a particularly good auditorium for hearing. It still isn't, as far as I know. I worked up there a little bit with the... some years ago, and I used to find that people had a great deal of difficulty hearing, and... so did I when I was down in the audience hearing a speaker. But... still, it was a nice auditorium and...

JW: Did you use it very often?

EP: Pardon?

JW: Did you use it very often?

EP: Oh, yes. Now... going back, do I remember... I think we gathered there every morning for announcements and things, and then went to our various rooms. Certainly we were in there a great deal, and we put our little... do skits and things. I remember getting up there and giving a dissertation on Shakespeare's heroines. [EP laughs] And somebody came to me after and said, "oh, you've been reading Mrs. Jameson, have you?" [EP laughs] I had. However, people wanted to know about Shakespeare's heroines and I couldn't get them all down any other way, so.

JW: Mr... Dunnell...

EP: Mr. Dunnell, Miss Dan.

JW: Where did he teach his art class? Was there a special art room?

EP: Oh, yes. Yes, the art room was on the north side.

JW: Was it on the top floor?

EP: On the main floor, yes. He was a dear. I remember one funny thing, he had a heavy, heavy moustache... and one day I went hurrying down that hall upstairs and round the corner. I heard him talking to Mr. Freeman and I went dashing around the corner... and he cut off his moustache. I hardly [inaudible, EP laughing]. Oh dear... Miss Dan, of course, presided as, in the home ec department. She was a remarkable woman and she's an excellent person. I was 17 at the time and... girls were supposed to have their hair done up when they put... You did- a teacher did not go around with her hair flipping around. I went one day with my hair down in curls, and I was immediately called aside and said "Ms. Piggott, I think that is not quite the style for a teacher." [EP laughs] And then Mr. MacLaurin, who later was Dr. McLaurin, I think he was a remarkable person. I think he put his stamp on the students for precision and sort of... integrity.

[10:02] EP: I, I always felt that he was wonderful person. I remember the last time I saw him he was getting old... his memory had gone. He had most remarkable memory. His memory had gone, and he was wandering around up there one night, it was a university extension lecture. And he said, "you know, I used to work in this room". I said, "I know you did, Mr. McLaurin. I was one of your pupils". He had completely forgotten. And yet, you know when I went down there to the educational office, once I had been... away from the Normal School... 20 years or more, I guess. I walked into the office and asked to speak to him about something, he said, "Ah, yes, Ms. Piggott, you're teaching so and so aren't you?" [EP laughs] It's so sad to hear, to find that his memory had gone like that. And then Mr. Denton taught... mathematics... and... history, I mean. Mr. MacLaurin taught Mathematics. Now these boys, this was [Buddy Hearne], who later on with the head of the community drama department down here... he died for three years ago, he came to us from the Air Force.

JW: So he was a little older than the others?

EP: Oh, yes, he was older than the rest of us. It wasn't too bad, we could [inaudible]. And then Burt Smith... he also had been overseas and had lost a leg. And he ended his teaching career as principal of Kitsilano High School. He's still alive. And then, Archie Robinson I don't know, I never heard of him since the day we left. I suppose he's still around somewhere. Then John Keenan, he was drowned... I never knew who that boy was, somebody told me it was Bruce Hutchinson, but I... somebody else said "Oh, no Bruce Hutchinson never went to normal school", but the girl who was in the class said it was Bruce Hutchinson, so have it whichever way you like, I don't know. And this was Jack Calvert, who later on became a dentist in town here. He's probably still in town, I don't know. And this one over here is... Bob Lindsay from... my small town, and he went into the war, the last war, and became a Major and stayed in with the army occupation in Germany for... a good minute. Well, as far as I know he's maybe still there. But I saw him once not so long ago.

JW: Were the, were the boys and the girls integrated?

EP: Yes. Yes, so classes were arranged alphabetically. That is why... I am not always too sure of... quite all of them. I don't know all of them but... these two definitely, because she was... was, and is, one of my best friends. Those two were... returnees, and I think one or two of these people, but I'm not sure of them all. They weren't

many. Most of us were in there for the, for the term. But these girls had had three years teaching... and this man came back too. I don't know whether he went on teaching afterwards. I lost track of him, he married one of the girls but...

JW: How long did this go on, the two terms? Um, I saw many pictures in the early years, and then later on in the twenties I only saw one picture a year, so do you happen to know when they, they stopped?

EP: I don't think it lasted very long. It lasted only just so long- I should say, now this is my opinion, it lasted only just as long as there was a shortage of teachers. And when there, when teaching became perhaps more attractive, or whatever, they... There wasn't the need to let youngsters out at 18 in just the same way. But you couldn't teach until you were 18. Not within a few weeks.

JW: Were there any other stipulations, like you had to be a Canadian citizen?

EP: [inaudible]

JW: Are there any other stipulations to teach?

EP: You had to have a recommendation before you were allowed in... [inaudible] character. Usually your clergyman, or some other professional person had to give it. Or did give it, I mean. You had to have something of that kind. You could go when you were 17, which was the matriculation age.

[15:00] EP: Usually, in those days. But you couldn't, you weren't supposed to teach til you were 18. And... I don't know that there are any other stipulations... There was one thing I might tell you... I don't know whether you've come across it, there were two normal schools, one here, one in Vancouver. And the Vancouver Normal School, in general, looked after Vancouver girls and the Fraser Valley, and just around there. The Victor- the Victoria Normal School looked after... the girls from the interior, and the girls from around here. And the biggest group of girls, apart from the Victoria ones, were from Nelson. I think there were about eight or ten from Nelson. If you wanted to go to Vancouver you had to have a... a special... progress, special concession.

JW: Was the Vancouver Normal School the same length of time as the Victoria one?

EP: Yes, I think they, I think they followed pretty much the same... courses and that sort of thing. But it was a matter... I think of... well, country girls seemed to, to fit into the Victoria situation. You know, it's a small town and they weren't... distracted in the same way that they would have been perhaps in Vancouver. I don't know why, but... at any rate that's, that's what happened.

JW: Well, everybody found a place to board then, when they came down?

EP: Yes, that was looked after by the, by the school. Ms. Den saw to it the girls were properly... placed. There were certain houses, which were accredited, and... I don't think there was ever any question of any girl being on her own. And if anybody was ill, Ms. Den... [inaudible] to the situation, found out, got a doctor, sent me to the hospital. I know when I had flu... got me a doctor, saw to it that- she said my... wasn't satisfactory that I was... living with others, and getting our own meals, you see. We were three of us living together, and she thought that I was too- the others were much older, they were, they weren't teachers. So, she saw to it that I got a proper boarding place again.

JW: Where did you board?

EP: I boarded over on Fernwood. This, this girl here, and I... boaded there. We were... But every house had to be properly looked into, make sure that the... lady of the house was... and in this case we, the daughter was a teacher already so it was a proper atmosphere.

JW: Were you expected to pay board, or just do babysitting or services in return?

EP: Oh, no. We paid board, strictly.

JW: What was it for the rate then, do you remember?

EP: I think we paid about... I wouldn't like to say for sure, but I should say 35 to 40 a month. That's what I paid when I was teaching anyway, out of my 900 a year. [EP laughs] Still, there was nothing else to spend your money on, not in the out of the way places. And most of these girls, I think, the girls who came from out of town would go back to schools out of town. I know a great number of my friends went up the Columbia Valley to those little, little schools up there, you know. And I went to schools outside Kamloops, up in the mountains.

JW: And you'd have one-room classes?

EP: One room, one... Eight, eight classes, grades one to eight in one room. Two or three in a class. I remember the saying, "what's the ideal timetable for the ideal teacher?", I'm afraid I [EP laughs] didn't get that.

JW: Were the model schools in operation when you were there?

EP: Oh yes, oh yes, we had- the model school was up in the, in there, this end of the building was given over to the model school and that is the east end. In Vancouver the, the model school was separate. I think they're both [down?], both the model and the Normal School there. But here, we had two classes, a Ms. Stanlin and Ms... somebody else, who had two classes right in the building. And then we came down to do practice teaching in Bank Street and North Ward.

[19:59] JW: Did you get out quite often into the schools?

EP: After we had got started, I think we went about once a week. Still remember the creaking floor at North Ward... [EP laughs] that's down, of course...

JW: And then you had a, one of your instructors come out and..?

EP: Oh yes, they were, they watched. One of the instructors, always, yes. Incidentally there is, speaking of instructors, one per- man doesn't show on here. We hadn't regular music teacher... but we had a man who came in, Mr. Butterworth, and gave us choir practice and so on, so that we always had... But he was not a regular member of the staff.

JW: How often did you have his class?

EP: I would think about once a week, this is going back a long way.

JW: Your physical education? Did you have-

EP: The physical education was this man.

JW: What did you have to do?

EP: Oh, we went downstairs into the... gym and we did, we played games. They had a, they had about both a women's and a boys basketball team. I wasn't on the girls, the basketball team, I... wasn't tall enough I guess. But they had, they had teams. And then we used to do physical [church?], you know, and that's something. We hadn't much in the way of equipment that they have now, none of these horses and things which you jump over. But just... straight physical exercises. And I think, probably about twice a week as far as I remember. And we used the same room when we had our... graduation dinner.

JW: That was down there... Did you ever use the little plunge baths that were in the change rooms?

EP: I don't think... as far as I know we didn't have those, I don't remember them. I don't remember that.

JW: Was the library downstairs, or was it upstairs when you were there?

EP: Library... did we have a library? I suppose we did.

JW: From what I understand in the beginning, it was quite small.

EP: I don't remember it. I may come back to me, but...

JW: Did you have a special gym costume to wear to your physical education?

EP: I don't know that we had a special gym costume. Remember that this was out, just after the war and things were... a little tight for money, it's tight. I don't think, I don't remember having a special gym costume. I think we just went down in our skirts and blouses. The white blouse and the dark skirt was fairly usual. We had one, that something that maybe interesting to you, we had one Chinese girl. It was rather unusual. I don't know whether she was happy with us or not, but anyway there she is. Here too somewhere. And this, this girl, actually was living in town. I think I told you that though. She married a man named Luma, Claire Luma, who used to teach across here at Oak Bay.

JW: Did you have an annual with, in your year?

EP: No, we didn't have an annual, we hadn't got to such... heights of extravagance. [EP laughs] No, I had, I don't remember ever coming across a school annual until... I had been teaching for quite a while before... I was teaching up island in a little school, we had a very small annual there and... I remember that because I did the typing for it.

JW: Did you have the garden plots when you were there?

EP: Oh yes, indeed we did. That's one thing we certainly did have.

JW: Where were the-

EP: I had... right at the corner, you know where the, the two roads... Hillside comes and meets Richmond, all that was garden plots, and we planted some of those trees.

JW: Oh did you?

EP: Yes, we did.

JW: That was before all the landscaping and everything wasn't it?

EP: Yes, oh yes, there was no landscaping to speak of in those days. We were the landscapers, we had our little garden plots, they weren't very big. I should think about... four feet wide and... eight feet long, perhaps, something like that.

JW: You planted a little of everything.

EP: We planted little, little vegetable gardens, I don't know what happened to the produce, I don't remember seeing it but...

JW: You were gone by the time it was ready.

[24:56] EP: Yes, yes we should have gone by that time. But... a little bit of agriculture went into it, a little bit of a home economics, little art, little music. Those were our... extra things beyond the... history and... mathematics. Mr. MacLaurin did the math. Mr. Denton, the history. I enjoyed it.

JW: Did you, were you able to use the front entrance or were you having to use the side entrances?

EP: I think we usually used to use the side entrance for the simple reason that... There used to be a streetcar going up there, in those days. If you caught that particular streetcar you got there on time, if you missed it you didn't. I remember one streetcar... conductor, they had a motorman a conductor, you see. He realized I had missed the Mount Tolmie bus, streetcar, and so he clanged his horn at the, at a, ahead of me, and waited until I got from one to the other. You were not... supposed to be late. It was not considered good so I, and he knew that, he knew we always worried if we were late. But I think we always went in on the side, on the door off Richmond, because that's where we left our coats and things and... skedaddled up to the auditorium.

JW: I'm just going back to the model schools again, was there one at each end or just... one... down at the west

end, or the east end.

EP: The, the what?

JW: The model schools.

EP: Oh, just one.

JW: Just the one?

EP: Just the one. Yes, the... up at the... it'll be the west end, was the home economics and Mr. MacLaurin's office and... I've forgotten what else there was, Mr. Denton's office... No, Mr. MacLaurin's office wasn't there, Mr. Denton's office was. But the girls... rooms. But the other end was the... model school.

JW: Did you get a chance to teach in the model school or do you just observe?

EP: I think I did once, but I'm not quite sure. I think we all had a chance in there once but, what I remember particularly was coming down here to Bank Street and going to North Ward. Why I should remember those any more than the others, I don't know.

JW: Was the class very big there?

EP: Their class, the, well I taught in Bank Street in the, little, the little people and... as Ms. McMurray, who must have been a marvelous teacher, I think, for little people. Tiny ones, you know, the grade ones. Primary class. She looked a little as if she had come out of a fairy story. And I think she had the most remarkable influence on those children. Most enthusiastic. When I was in the North Ward one, one of the... Campbell family was the principal there. Not, not Mr. Harold Campbell, I met him later on but.... I've forgotten the other one, George perhaps. That was a very nice school, I think of it as being very dark, and smelling of oil. [both laugh] That's, all our floor were oiled in those days. I don't think the model school's up at both ends yet, you know, I'm just beginning to wonder whether I'm right. But certainly there were the two classes in the, in the school. I'll ask my sister if you're really interested, because she'd know. Or I'll ask Nora, because tomorrow she's coming to lunch. She might remember. She left, when she left she and I taught... schools, adjacent schools, and then she went to Guelph and took her... home economics, and she taught home economics until she retired. She also served during the war on the troop ships as the, the dietitian... which was something of a job.

JW: Where did you teach after you finished your education at UBC?

EP: I taught in Cranbrook, and then I came to the Fraser Valley for nine years, and then I... taught up island for... Well, I went to England and took a year at London School of Economics. And when I came back I... had a job up island for a while, and then I came in here, and I've been here ever since.

[30:08] EP: Mr. Denton wrote a book on the history of British Columbia. Stan went east and got married eventually. Mr. Freeman and Mr. Donald died on the job. Or well, I don't really, maybe they retired a little while but not long. Mr. Freeman was not young when he came here. As for the others, I can tell you a lot of, who a lot of them are, but I can't tell you what happened to them. She got married, she got married, she was not married when I last heard of her, which was not long ago. And she taught in the Indian schools. And this one. And she became a nun. And... so did one of the others, Deborah. But for a lot of them I, I don't know what became of them.

JW: Did many of them keep teaching as their career for very long, or did they just teach for a while and then get married?

EP: The tendency was to get married, I think within about three or four years. But, they didn't all marry. I don't think that girl, I don't think she, as far as I know she didn't marry. And I had, I have, a lot of them I have known. Margaret Lewis is still unmarried, she taught art in Vancouver for many years. Vicky Rogers didn't marry she was, she died not very long ago. Ms. Den... wrote a little bit, her gospel of art and... that was Ms. Den, I mean, she worked for... for the joy of working and... Let's see... Mr. Denton.

JW: Oh he had a fancy signature didn't he?

EP: It's quite a signature, yes.

JW: Did you have a writing class at all when you were up there?

EP: Writing, oh my yes. We had muscular movement, you put your arm on the desk and you made these, these muscles work for you and didn't overwork the muscles of your fingers.

JW: A lot of people claimed that when they had to learn... writing that they, just, you know, their own handwriting was so corrupted it was...

EP: Yes, well my sisters like, was like that. She had quite good writing [inaudible]. I'm just going to show you Mr. Denton's, and Mr. McLaurin's. But, this was quite a book for the normal, for that, those days. Ruby Glasses, she was one of the... she was one of the girls from Penticton. She was one of the Nelson's... There were a lot of Nelson girls, Betty Brown, she was the pretty fair haired one in here somewhere. [Inaudible], I'm afraid.

JW: Oh it's quite alright.

EP: That is... Oh, yes, here's Mr. MacLaurin. He didn't have muscular movement, he had a very distinctive handwriting.

JW: It was lovely.

EP: Beautiful writing. And that was like, like him, he was just like that. Clear and distinct, and he knew, knew where he was going.

JW: Writing was an art, really, wasn't it?

EP: Yes...

JW: Before they got into the muscular movement.

EP: Yes, yes... She was in high school with me, and she was somewhere in here too. Well, those are the important ones, but...

JW: When you first got together, for your first time in normal school, did they have a picnic to get everyone acquainted?

EP: No, no.

JW: Was there any activity at all?

EP: No, I... I think we just depended on getting to know in our own classes. Oh, that's one thing I might tell you. This business of getting acquainted. Each class had a register, a regular school register of her own, the names of the people in her own class, and that register was taken every morning and you, you kept you register regularly. Just as if it were a serious one at the end of the, for the regular school. So in that way, you got to know who your own class were, and we were arranged alphabetically, so we, we knew... certain classes more than others.

[34:56] EP: But... we didn't have social functions as they have them nowadays, that, as I say, there were the... the games, the basketball and that sort of thing, and we had a... a banquet at the end of the year. And when that was over our certificates were given to us. It was a little hard on some people if they weren't getting certificates, but some, they didn't all get them.

JW: Not everybody got through, eh?

EP: One of my friends didn't get hers and it was a great pity because... it meant, meant her whole life's work to her but still.

JW: Did she try again or, once you...

EP: No...

JW: ...didn't quite make it, were you told maybe you better try something else?

EP: Well, I think if you hadn't made it at Christmas time they would let you try again, but if you hadn't made it in, in May... you weren't, it wasn't recommended that you go back, I think. Certainly she didn't go back. She changed her way of life completely. Some [inaudible]. I met her years later. Last I heard of her she was teaching up in Alaska... in a Mission School. Curiously enough, she had been teaching most of her life, I think.

JW: Even without her certificate?

EP: Well, I don't know what she did about a certificate. She may have gone elsewhere, I don't know. But she wasn't teaching in a public school, you couldn't do it without, in a public school without a certificate. It was a private school, and she did extremely well I may tell you. But that is the group, and I think I counted somewhere about 80, 75 to 80 there. A little bigger, this one perhaps than this, although I'm not sure. It's a long time ago.

JW: When you went into the Normal School, it was 1919. Do you happen to know, were the classes from 1915 to 1919, were they held in this building?

EP: They, I, I think so. I think this building opened... I think it grad- the first class graduated in '14. Certainly, my sister was here before me. The year before.

JW: And she was in that building.

EP: And she was in that building, yes. During the war, of course, the... this was, building was used as a hospital, military hospital. And at that time the classes, which were much smaller, were held down at the memorial hall of the cathedral.

JW: Yes.

EP: But until that time, I think... I think the institution of the Normal School was, was with the building. But I'm not sure of it, but I, I'm fairly sure. I was given to understand that the first class graduated in '14. Certainly my sister graduated the year before I did. There had been a, another woman teach, a teacher there teaching the music. A Ms. Morris. But she went east and got married too [EP chuckles]. I didn't know her. But my sister did, my sister was musical and sang nicely so she... she knew about these things.

JW: In the picture, there's no such thing as asphalt or driveways or anything.

EP: I think that would be gravel in those days.

JW: Was there the circular driveway out front? Or did that come in later? Your garden plots were down...

EP: The big one?

JW: Yes.

EP: Oh I think that probably came later. I think that a great deal of the money for the place had been taken up in the building, and I don't think there was a great deal of money for landscaping in those days. I think it's very doubtful, although I don't remember, as I say we, we skittered in the side door, usually. I don't remember ever coming out the front door very much. So I don't remember whether there was a driveway. I should say probably not because I rather think the grounds were... pretty bare.

JW: Well your gardens were down below the...

EP: The gardens were down below, yes.

JW: ... taking up most of the... I saw a picture yesterday of... some of the gardens in about 1915, 1916 and...

Everybody was in their long black skirts and their white blouse and your hats. And the men were all suited up with their hat on doing gardening

EP: Yes, yes... You didn't go out without a hat or gloves in those days. I even wore gloves going to Sunday school.

[40:04] EP: But if you were, if there are any questions that you want to ask that I can't answer... Lucy Dedolph, who is now Mrs. Claire Luma lives up on... Up near the Normal School, up there near... Fredette, Fre- Frechette Street. I saw her the other day, she's still very lively and I think she would probably... rather enjoy talking it over with you. And... as I say she's coming tomorrow, so if there's any question that I can ask... her, anything I can't answer I'm sure she'd...

JW: There is one question which nobody can answer for me just yet, and that's why they call it "normal school" when it was a teacher training. All across Canada the teacher training [inaudible crosstalk] just were "normal", and we just wanted where that name came from.

EP: I saw, I saw some something about it not so long ago. So apparently we got it from France.

JW: From France, could you just read that? For training teachers in France... Normal School...

EP: Now we'd have to find out what the French "normal" [inaudible]. These glasses are getting less and less useful... There you are, there's "normal" perhaps, that'll tell you.

JW: Normal school, primary school... The French meaning is a, a primary school, yes.

EP: Primary school, yes.

JW: So it came from the French.

EP: Well it almost certainly came to us then from, from French Canada, they probably had started small schools, you know training schools there and... we just picked it up. I... did see a reference- oh, it must have been when I was looking in here for something, I saw the reference to the normal school. So I don't know whether that answers your question but it's...

JW: Yes! It does! [JW laughs]

EP: ... as close as we'll get to it.

JW: It's just that people were saying "why normal school?", and we had no idea... where it'd come from.

EP: Oh we're... inclined to take these things for granted sometimes and- [Audio cuts out]

JW: The school day, when you went out and taught, started about 8:30 did it? And went right through? Or did it vary on the community?

EP: A teacher was supposed to be in her classroom at least half an hour before school started. As I remember it, half past 8:00 would be about right, yes. Because generally speaking, it was 9:00 to 12:00 and 01:00 to 03:30. They let little people out about 02:00, or half past 2:00, because they're, you know, they just couldn't take it, they just went to sleep. But... And the normal school classes... went at the, on the same schedule as the... ordinary schools, because we were being trained, and so we went to those... in the same way, you see, the timing and so on.

JW: How long were your individual classes?

EP: I should think an hour. I think, I think that would be an hour, yes. And... we were checked up quite often, and they say... when a... student had been out for a practice teaching. We had to prepare a lesson plan, of course. And when the period was over the teacher in charge of the class said in a report, and then quite often one of the staff of the Normal School would drop in, but the teacher sent out a report. And then we were called in to discuss that with Mr. MacLaurin or Mr. Denton, or something like that. So there was quite, quite frequent contact

between the student and the staff. And we, we were well known within a few days of being there.

[44:59] JW: Your conferences with the different staff members then, it'd be quite constructive wouldn't it?

EP: Yes.

JW: The, they'd tell you how to get your point across?

EP: They often did, yes. I was going to tell you something funny, but I mustn't do that, not over your... I'll tell you some other time.

JW: Oh it'd make my tape interesting if you did.

EP: One of the things that we were supposed to do was to behave as if we were teachers. And on one occasion, I didn't. [EP laughs]

JW: Oh dear, did you get into trouble?

EP: Actually, it wasn't... Mr. MacLaurin of all people too. But anyway, he was a marvelous person and I think he did a tremendous amount for the students. I know that... I've talked to a lot of the... girls who went out from his classes and they all said much the same thing, how he gave them a standard to work to and they tried... they must- it wasn't always easy either when you have eight classes to teach.

JW: How many was in your class, to your, you know [inaudible crosstalk]?

EP: Here?

JW: Yes.

EP: I would say about 30. 25 to 30.

JW: That was a large number!

EP: But, as I said, they tried to run the classes as if we were in ordinary schools, you see. With the registers, and the calling of the names, and everything else.

JW: Well then for 80 students rambling around in that big building, it must have been very...

EP: Well, of course we had the two model school classes, but I don't remember them coming very much into the, into the main building at all. It seemed to me there was just ourselves.

JW: And your whole life revolved around your learning that year...

EP: Oh yes...

JW: ... you had no extra time for anything?

EP: Not, not really, no. No, it was a serious business. It was serious for all of us for various reasons. For one thing it was our, going to be our job, we hoped. And another thing, most of us, as I said, were out of town students. Or at least a great many of us, and we were having to pay our board, and... there were no fees, as I remember. I don't remember ever paying fees. If there were they... my father must have paid them, because I certainly didn't have anything to do with paying. But... money was scarce in those days. And we took these things seriously

JW: Did you have to buy your own textbooks?

EP: No, no, they were issued. Every, every student... [inaudible] that silly. I don't [inaudible] or somebody else. But there was a little card saying that this was issued by the Department of Education, and these were our books. This is Henry's Flora of Southern British Columbia, which we... used in our history courses because,

partly because Mr. Freeman had helped Mr. Henry make the book and... That book is now worth a lot of money. A friend of mine bought one not long ago it cost \$25... and we were given one.

JW: You were able to, well obviously, just take it...

EP: Yes.JW: ... each student is given one

EP: Yes, we were given a set of... of books to take out. And quite often the books we had were nearly the only library we had in the schools that we went to. I remember packing all mine in a big book and... hearing the train man, the little... [inaudible] stop where I was... getting on. He had to lift this thing up into the baggage car and... I heard him saying to others, train man, to somebody else "these things belong to that woman?" [EP laughs] There must have been a over a hundred pounds of books in it. So I explained to him this was my library, I was going to Hope to teach.

JW: I didn't realize that you were to take the books, I thought that maybe they were on loan for...

EP: [inaudible crosstalk]

JW:... to the students.

EP: There were these... I think, as far as I remember we were given a fairly complete set of the books that we were supposed to use as... particularly, certainly the reference books. But that's the only one that has come down through the ages.

JW: For that time there'd be no other books, you know, available in the small communities...

EP: No, no there wasn't.

JW: ... where you could prepare your lessons.

[49:55] EP: No, I used to take everything I could lay my hands on in the way of reference books. You know, history and so on... No, we didn't have much to go on. I'm surprised sometimes at how well... these youngsters did when they were finished. Considering the... level we had to, you know, the few books that they had. And if they had any at home well, that was fine but...

JW: You had to teach right from the beginning, like teach them how to read...

EP: Yes...

JW: Read through 'til they were [inaudible crosstalk].

EP: I don't think I could do it now. A friend phoned me and asked me if I would instruct a boy who had come here from Africa and was behind in his reading. She asked if I would take him on for, as a student. I said, "I'm sorry. I don't think I'd know where to start." Certainly, in a serious matter like that of adjusting a boy to... a new set of educational systems. I, I just wouldn't have wanted to do it so I made another suggestion which worked out much better [EP laughs].

JW: You didn't have anything in your teacher training to do with science did you? It's

EP: With science?

JW: [inaudible crosstalk] science just wasn't an accepted or well-known field was it?

EP: We did a little science with Mr. Freeman. A few test tubes, and testing for acids and bases and that sort of thing.

JW: Was there a science room in, in the Normal School?

EP: There must have been. There must have been something with somewhere where we worked. But I haven't

any clear picture of it at the moment.

JW: Would it have been on the top floor, down on the east end?

EP: It was certainly on the top floor, because that's where I used to go to find Mr. Freeman. His all, his rooms were up there. Yet, you know, I have no picture of a science room, yet we did have a certain amount of science. We wouldn't have had that book if we hadn't, surely. That is something that I, I will try to find out for you from Nora tomorrow, if I have a chance to but there are several of them coming to lunch so we shant have much chance to chat. But... Mrs. [Lumen?] might be pleased to tell you, she might remember better than I do. And I rather think she might like to a- you know, she's a very pleasant person and she taught for quite a while after she graduated. And then she married a teacher so I think she's very interested- and her son and her daughter, I think are both teachers.

JW: In the auditorium, the balcony was there...

EP: Oh yes, it was always there...

JW: ... it was always there.

EP: Always there, yes.

JW: Did you get to the balcony from upstairs, or was there stairs from, from the... down below in the auditorium?

EP: I don't know that I ever went into it. I don't know. I don't remember ever going. Yes, I must have been, because I can remember looking down on the, on the auditorium at some time. For some reason or other I connect it with a... an Armistice Day program. But I don't know how we got up there. We certainly didn't fly.

JW: Was there a lunchroom in the normal school then?

EP: Yes...

JW: Where did you eat your lunches?

EP: Yes, we must have eaten our lunch up in the... Where did we eat our lunch?

JW: I've seen plans for the lunch room down in the basement, well, in the lowest floor.

EP: Yes, it seems to be...

JW: I just wanted to [inaudible crosstalk]

EP: Yes, it seems to be that in the gym... No, there couldn't- that, they wouldn't have messed the gym up with the, with the lunchroom.

JW: No, it would be across the hall.

EP: Yes. I think so, yes. Yes, there must have been, because I'm sure we didn't eat lunches in our classrooms. Funny, I don't ever remember eating lunch there, isn't that funny. I like food. [EP laughs]

JW: Mr. MacLaurin's office... You were in his office?

EP: Mr... McLaurin?

JW: MacLaurin. What did his office look like, was it, did it had the fireplace in it?

[54:48] EP: I don't remember a fireplace, but I do remember the pictures on the wall. They were Mr. Dunnell's paintings, you see, now I, I was interested in Mr. Dunnell's paintings and... I don't remember fireplace, don't remem- I doubt that he would, if the pla- the place was warm enough, as I remember, I don't ever remember being cold there. And if the place was warm enough, I don't think he'd have a fire. But he may have. Now you're

asking me a question. I have a vague idea of a fireplace on the... it would be on the west wall, toward the corner. But I'm afraid I've never thought of it from that day to this. But I have an idea now you mentioned it, that there may have well have been a fireplace there.

JW: Mr. Freeman was the only man that helped you with the gardens was he?

EP: Oh, yes, yes he was the, the natural history person. He was a Nova Scotian. So was Mr. Denton. Mr. McLaurin, I think, was an Ontarian and Ms, I think Ms. Den was since she went back there to marry. Mr. Dunnell was English.

JW: British Columbia hadn't produced any great teachers yet...

EP: No...

JW: ...they're still a young province.

EP: This was almost the beginning of... I don't know when the Vancouver... things started. It would be older, I think, than this. But a great many Nova Scotians came west. When I was in high school... Ms. Thompson was Nova Scotian. Another Mr. Denton. And Mr. Freeman. My principal in elementary school was a Scott. But we weren't predict- we weren't producing many teachers at that, at the high level at that time. We had to import most of them. And the ones in the Superintendent of Education, Mr. Robinson was a Nova Scotian. A great many Nova Scotians came west. Chief export of Nova Scotia, I think. [JW and EP laugh]

JW: Well your year at the normal school then was, was, brought you all very close together didn't it?

EP: Was what?

JW: It, it brought you all close together.

EP: Oh yes, yes. It was a, it was a good setup, for country teachers. You were close- we, we knew each other, we were friendly with each other, we developed a sort of... feeling of friendship that was a good thing to carry out when into a small district.

JW: You felt well prepared when you had to [inaudible crosstalk].

EP: Well, I don't know that I felt that way about it, but I know now I was. It's funny that I, I know where some of these girls are, but I don't know where they all are by any means. I should. But the actual classes... didn't mingle too much. I mean, we were there, we moved pretty well as a class, and worked as a class and... and social life... there were no, no parties that I remember. I am sure there weren't any parties. We was there for serious business. Of course, one remembers that this was the last year of the war and... people weren't frivolous in those days. It was much more serious, we grew up in a more serious time than youngsters nowadays. Not that I mind I... had a good time [EP laughs]. I enjoyed my, my normal school days.

[END OF RECORDING]