

## Picturing Rural Education: School Photographs and Contested Reform in Early Twentieth-Century Rural Nova Scotia<sup>1</sup>

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### ABSTRACT

This article calls for the critical study of photography in the history of Canadian education, including images that might not at first appear to be politically consequential. It considers the work of independent, itinerant photographer Frank Adams and argues that in the absence of other documents produced by local communities, school portrait photographs in early twentieth-century rural Nova Scotia may offer an alternative rural perspective on narratives of Progressive education reform. At a moment when many voices sought to sway public opinion about what rural education should be, Adams's school photographs articulated a range of meanings assigned to and produced by rural communities that are visibly at odds with the imagery and ideology of Progressive education reform in the period. Produced in the years before school portrait photography became part of the official imagery of educational bureaucracies, Adams's photographs celebrate a unique sense of place and are evidence of a transitional moment when alternative ways of imagining rural education were possible.

### RÉSUMÉ

Cet article propose une étude critique de la photographie dans l'histoire de l'éducation au Canada considérant même des images n'ayant aucune incidence politique à prime abord. L'auteur analyse le travail du photographe indépendant et itinérant Frank Adams en soutenant que faute de documents écrits dans les communautés locales quant à la réforme progressiste de l'éducation, les portraitistes scolaires dans le monde rural de la Nouvelle-Écosse au début du vingtième siècle peuvent offrir une solution alternative à l'absence de tels discours. Alors que plusieurs voix essayaient d'influencer l'opinion publique sur ce que devrait être l'éducation en milieu rural, les photographies prises par Adams illustraient un éventail de principes éducatifs véhiculés et mis en pratique par les communautés rurales à l'encontre des vues et de l'idéologie de la réforme progressiste de cette période. Produites avant que la photographie scolaire soit intégrée aux images officielles des instances éducationnelles, les photos prises par Adams commémorent l'importance des identités locales et illustrent une époque transitoire où il était encore possible d'imaginer autrement l'éducation en milieu rural.



Figure 1. *Frank Adams, Otter Brook school, June 10, 1912.*  
*SCH Otter Brook, P93-7, Stewiacke Valley Museum, Upper Stewiacke, Nova Scotia*

In June 1912, itinerant photographer Frank Adams travelled northeast through central Nova Scotia, eventually heading to the coast along the province's Eastern Shore. Whether he had ever made this particular trip before, or if he ever made it again, is unclear. What is clear is that for the children along his route, in small rural schools at Middle Stewiacke, Otter Brook, Dean, Crossroads, Newton Mills, Upper Stewiacke, Spry Bay, and most likely others, one of their sunny June days was briefly interrupted by a friendly visitor. As the school year came to a close, it was time for class pictures in this part of rural Nova Scotia.

The resulting photographs and others like them are at the centre of this study.<sup>2</sup> They are school photographs made at a time before conventions for such images had been standardized. The groups depicted are tidy and organized yet relatively relaxed in comparison to the strict orderliness of the more formal school portraits that would appear in later years. Groups of children of various ages and sizes are pictured, most of them in the unique local backdrops of their schoolyards or nearby scenery. The children's teachers are with them, usually to one side, though sometimes difficult to discern due to their youth. The children and teacher in Otter Brook (fig. 1) pose on and around a log on a stony patch of ground in front of a backdrop of stately spruce trees. The following year in Noel Shore (fig. 2), the students were arranged on a leafy knoll with a backdrop of tidy grazing fields. A few years earlier in Oyster Pond (fig. 3), everyone was arranged on the rocks across the road from their school at low tide. Each school is situated in a distinctive spot in the province and Adams uses these locally specific backdrops to emphasize and highlight the unique features of each place.

School photographs have been the subject of only passing critical interest to historians, yet they are eagerly collected by local historical societies who use them



Figure 2. *Frank Adams, Noel Shore school, June 1913.*  
*East Hants Historical Society Museum, Selma, Nova Scotia*

as key tools in their efforts to imagine the pasts of their communities. This avid collecting underscores that these seemingly innocuous artifacts in fact speak volumes about community identities. For rural areas in particular, school photographs from the early twentieth century are sometimes the only visual representation of a group larger than a family, making momentarily visible the social networks and processes that drew people together in those places. Expanding beyond these individual community histories, this study suggests that school photographs should also be



Figure 3. *Unknown photographer, Oyster Pond school, [c.1905–1910] (cropped).*  
*Eastern Shore Archives, Lake Charlotte, Nova Scotia*

integrated into our understanding of the political history of education.

The images discussed here were created at a moment when reform of rural education was on the minds of many Canadians. The federal Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education was underway and Progressive reformers were loudly asserting the benefits of manual education, school consolidation, and other transformations to elementary schooling. Local rural responses to reform initiatives were often enthusiastic, but at other times were quite contrary to the wishes of reformers. These responses have not been well documented and Canadian historians of education have long been troubled by a lack of articulate documents produced at the community level to counter the copious documentary archive of reformers and bureaucrats.<sup>3</sup> The result is that educational history has often been narrated from an urban perspective.

Recently scholars of rural Canada, including Michael Corbett and Ruth Sandwell, have shown how an apparent failure of rural people to meet ostensibly universal normative standards might be re-interpreted as evidence of alternative rural ideologies. They remind us that rural communities might have priorities, goals, and aspirations that are at odds with hegemonic discourses of success, while dominant, typically urban, observers see only backwardness or pernicious ambivalence in local responses to reform.<sup>4</sup> Corbett writes that seasonal patterns of rural life have defied the ambitions of reformers for standardized education across all communities, while alternative, locally-accepted ways of life in rural places have often made formal schooling seem to be an urban imposition. He insists that historians must continue to note differences between rural and urban education norms and “challenge assumptions about state hegemony and the shape of ‘Canadian education’ as though this were a uniform entity.”<sup>5</sup>

With sensitivity to rural difference in mind, it is particularly important to attend to those community expressions about rural education that *are* available from the early twentieth century. This study, therefore, calls for a critical attention to photography in the history of Canadian education, including images that might not at first appear to be politically consequential. Art historian Geoffrey Batchen has long argued for the significance of vernacular practices of photography and the “ordinary photographs” that in fact have always made up the bulk of the medium.<sup>6</sup> Attention to the idiosyncrasies and the social and cultural embeddedness of school portrait photographs in early twentieth-century rural Nova Scotia offers the possibility for an alternative rural perspective on narratives of Progressive education reform in the province and the country.

Roland Barthes famously observed that “a photograph is always invisible.” Typically, when we look at a photograph, “it is not it that we see,” but rather its referent, the subject depicted on it.<sup>7</sup> The stubbornness of the photographic referent obscures the political, cultural, and economic forces that converge to make a particular image look the way that it does. As a result, old school photographs are mainly valued as portraits of ancestors and as indexical documentation of past schooling practices: how many students there were, what they wore, what their schools looked like, and so

on. While this documentary use of photography may sometimes be valuable, it only scratches the surface of the potential for using photographs to understand the past. Photographs are not transparent images of a past reality. Like other kinds of historical sources, photographs are the products of innumerable choices, interpretations, technological processes, and circumstances of chance. But it is also important to note that photographs were themselves historical actors, circulating and signifying in the time under discussion. Rather than only focusing on what they *show*, it is more importantly the work of historians to consider what photographs have *meant*, and how they have produced those meanings. More than twenty years ago, Abigail Solomon-Godeau asked “historians and critics to attempt to excavate . . . coded and buried meanings” in photographs, “to bring to light . . . rhetorical and formal strategies that determined the work’s production, meaning, reception, and use.”<sup>8</sup> Following a cultural history model, this study attempts to do some of this work, to consider what these rural school photographs may have meant to the people who made, purchased, and viewed them in the early twentieth century. It does so by interrogating both the making and viewing of photographs as cultural practices with “significance in social as much as aesthetic terms,” and by situating these images within their larger historical context.<sup>9</sup> By considering the circumstances of their production and original use, we can begin to recognize these photographs as complex sites through which meanings were, and continue to be, created and negotiated, rather than simply as quaint pictures of children.

At a moment when so many voices sought to sway public opinion about what rural education was and should be, Frank Adams’s school photographs articulated a range of meanings assigned to and produced by rural communities that are visibly at odds with the ideology of Progressive education reform in the period. It is unlikely that Adams ever explicitly intended to contradict the efforts of education reformers, and we cannot know the extent to which the communities he depicted welcomed or rejected the reform measures imposed on them. However, his photographs are evidence of a transitional moment when alternative ways of imagining rural education were possible. Bringing Adams’s photographs together from their disparate locations around the province produces what Shawn Michelle Smith has called a “counterarchive,” which speaks back to the official archive, opening up new possibilities for the interpretation of each.<sup>10</sup> By juxtaposing Adams’s photographs with official education imagery and ideology from the period, a more nuanced picture of the contested process of rural education reform becomes visible. Within a couple of decades, school portrait photography would be enfolded into the official imagery produced by the educational bureaucracy and such alternative ways of imagining rural education would disappear.

That the school photographs created by Frank Adams might be understood as community expressions, rather than as official documentation of the education system, is perhaps not at first obvious. Fundamental to this possibility was Adams’s status as an independent, itinerant photographer who worked outside of the educational bureaucracy, which was itself significantly diffuse. In Nova Scotia in the early twentieth century, a provincial body licensed teachers, issued a standardized

curriculum, and employed county school inspectors who were authorized to chastise delinquent school sections, but the sections themselves remained tremendously independent — in part because the inspectors often appeared only once throughout the school year, if at all. In 1912, the year of Adams's trip described above, there were 1797 autonomous school sections in Nova Scotia.<sup>11</sup> In rural areas, each school section was responsible for a single school, including the hiring and paying of teachers, the maintenance of the school building, and the levying of fees for these services from the ratepayers in the community. Unlike other parts of North America where rural school consolidation was adopted quite early on, in Nova Scotia this decentralized system remained in place into the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>12</sup>

In 1912, Frank Adams, an immigrant from Britain, had been travelling rural Nova Scotia for more than a decade, often by bicycle but other times with a darkroom and mobile studio in two specially outfitted horse-drawn wagons. He provided his services to a range of clients, including various kinds of portraiture and landscapes, but his primary occupation was school photography.<sup>13</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that rural school administrators at any level were involved in Adams's visits to their schools or in the decision to have school photographs made.<sup>14</sup> It seems that this was a deal brokered individually between the photographer and each local teacher, and by extension the parents of each school section. The photographs were likely taken on speculation, in the hope that some might be sold, but despite the apparent uncertainty of the proposition, Adams, like other photographers across North America, was willing to take his chances. Unlike the many social documentary photographers practising in the period, whose images of rural communities were widely circulated to audiences elsewhere, itinerant commercial photographers such as Adams had to make a living selling photographs back to their subjects and were thus beholden to their specific interests and purchasing power. In his well-known reflections on the work of photographer Leslie Shedden of Glace Bay, Nova Scotia, Allan Sekula emphasizes the centrality of this aspect of a commercial photographer's practice. He notes that "like all commercial photographers, [Shedden's] work involved a negotiation between his own craft and the demands and expectations of his clients." Sekula reminds the viewer not to lose "sight of the social institutions — corporation, school, family — that are speaking by means of the commercial photographer's craft."<sup>15</sup> John E. Carter's study of "town photographers" in small American mid-west towns and villages at the turn of the century supports this observation. Carter argues that because most "town photographs" in the period were made for sale to community members, "we may be safe in assuming that they represented more than simply the whimsical choice of the picture taker. . . . Town photographs emerge as a market-driven, collective expression of community identity . . . and speak to collective values and sensibilities."<sup>16</sup> Frank Adams's commercial photography practice was shaped by similar forces. While these considerations imposed a range of limitations on the photographer, it was this joint authorship, so to speak, that allowed Adams to meaningfully represent the communities whose schoolchildren he photographed. Adams's photographs were circulated and cherished among rural families, contributing to the imagination and construction of particular family and community narratives. This is central to an

appreciation of the potential clout of Adams's vision of rural education in relation to the seemingly much more influential voices of educational authorities.

Adams's larger body of work adheres to contemporary styles in photographic art, most notably Pictorialism; it does not romanticize rural places, an intellectual process that insists on sentimental generalizations and the anonymity and de-personing of rural people. Rather, made for sale to rural audiences, Adams's photographs celebrate the idiosyncrasies of rural places and the individuality and dignity of rural people and communities. All of Adams's photographs suggest a great deal of respect for rural experiences and the particularities of rural lives. This locally-destined commercial work stands apart from the romanticization and marketing of rural Nova Scotia—already long underway by the 1910s and buttressed by the work of documentary photographers—in which the complexities of rural life were significantly erased from the view of a distant audience.<sup>17</sup>



Figure 4. Frank Adams, *Keble school, 1911*.  
PH1-060, North Shore Archives, Tatamagouche, Nova Scotia

Along with a very distinctive arrangement of the people in his photographs, Frank Adams's best images present dynamic, layered, environments. Adams's rural groupings often eschew rigidity and straight lines in favour of pleasing dissymmetry or arrangements that draw the eye around the image in elliptical or disorderly paths. Complementing the people in his pictures, Adams makes the scenery before which they are placed an integral part of the image, rather than simply a backdrop. One such example shows the children and teachers of Head Harbour school in 1904 positioned in the foreground of a scene that looks out over the harbour to a wooded coastline and the horizon beyond.<sup>18</sup> While the majority of the group is in the bottom two thirds of the frame, two small clusters of boys extending up into the top part of the image are arranged to frame either side of a fishing stage in the harbour. This

emphasis on the unique built landscape of their community clearly identifies them with the life of a harbourside village. The 1911 photograph of the schoolchildren of Keble (fig. 4) does similar work, though in this case these young people are positioned as the future of a modest agricultural community. A small group of girls and boys has been arranged at the foot of a hill, the village road extending out behind them and passing by roughly fenced fields and rows of ploughed soil. In many other photographs, rather than a wide vista, Adams simply uses the local flora to create a unique setting. Numerous photographs show groups backed up close against a green bower, an orchard, or the edge of a wood, mimicking the effect of an elaborate studio backdrop and providing a visually dynamic frame around the children and their teachers.



Figure 5. *Frank Adams, Spry Bay school, 1912.*  
*Little White Schoolhouse Museum, Truro, Nova Scotia*

In many cases, the subjects are better described as having been inserted *into* the scene, rather than being positioned in front of it. In the 1912 photograph at Spry Bay (fig. 5), there is almost no real backdrop to speak of; the sky is completely bleached out in the black and white photograph. Rather, Adams situated himself at a low angle, emphasizing an elaborate foreground out of which the group emerges, along with little fir trees and ferns, from the spaces between the rocks. A similar effect is produced in the photograph of Noel Shore (fig. 2). Here, again, the sky forms a white strip, filling the top third of the image, while the focus is pushed explicitly to the leafy foreground by the lines of a fence close behind the group, and another in the distance.

The photograph of the school children at Oyster Pond (fig. 3) takes this effect of being within the scene even further. Here the children are elaborately arrayed on



the rocks across the road from their school at low tide. The apparently haphazard arrangement of bodies, in fact, imitates the haphazard configuration of the exposed rocks and fills the huge middle ground of the photograph in such a way that the image more fully resembles a scenic landscape picture than a group portrait. Even the background itself, which fills nearly half of the frame, passes through many layers before finally opening up into the bright white sky. But while the children of Oyster Pond, and arguably those in Spry Bay, Noel Shore, and other places, have been positioned as part of the scenery of their community—an arrangement that might imply a rather patronizing gaze on the part of the photographer—he also carefully attended to their individual identities. Indeed, exceptional care has been taken to ensure that every little face is perfectly visible to the camera and the viewer, a task that must have taken a great deal of time and attention to detail. Beyond this, the range of poses, including sitting, reclining, and standing, some children grouped with their friends, arms around each other's shoulders, contributes to a sense of the individuality of each child that is often absent in school photographs that depict straight rows of children all sitting or standing in exactly the same position. In Adams's images individuals are often unevenly spaced. Friends touch each other affectionately or cluster together while others set themselves apart and use the space to stretch out their small bodies. Teachers interact with those nearest to them, either out of affection or as acts of discipline. These groupings could not be mistaken for candid; the children may have positioned themselves, but the extent of Adams's direction is suggested by the three pairs of girls in white dresses at the respective centres of the photographs of Noel Shore, Oyster Pond, and Keble. In all of his best school photographs Adams recreates a moment to be captured, rather than an institution to be documented. And by prioritizing the distinctive setting of each school he photographed, Adams offered his rural clients an opportunity to celebrate a unique sense of place.

The practice of yearly class portraits emerged in the late nineteenth century with group photographs made by independent, itinerant photographers. It was taken up unevenly throughout North America, but by the 1880s readily identifiable school portraits, showing children and their teachers grouped together with no one else present, were being made even in rural Nova Scotia. The existence of these photographs is evidence that by this time their role as commodities had become widely acceptable and photographers were able to count on sales from this work. Related to this, the practice of school photography also signals the emergence of the idea of "school" as a formal community occasion to be commemorated, a development, according to Pierre Bourdieu, that is particularly revealing of a community's shared cultural values. Writing about rural communities in France in the first half of the twentieth century, Bourdieu notes that only certain occasions were regularly photographed, and these only within certain conventions. For example, "photographs of major ceremonies [such as weddings] are possible because . . . they capture behaviour that is socially approved and socially regulated, that is, behaviour that has already been solemnized."<sup>19</sup> The increased attention to documenting elementary schooling

mirrors the increased formalization of education and its growing legitimacy in rural communities in the late nineteenth century. It also matches the more general entrenchment of photography in everyday life at that time, as well as the efforts of trade photographers to stake out territories of relevance after the emergence of amateur snapshot photography.

School photographs are not innocuous, neutral artifacts of the past. Even in their earliest years they actively created and reinforced particular ideas and knowledge about children and schooling through their composition, their inclusions and exclusions, and the systems of meaning embedded in their production. Complementing the assertions of Sekula and Carter about the intentionality of commercially motivated photography, Eric Margolis writes that “class photographs were not randomly produced but were carefully fashioned using socially agreed upon conventions of representation . . . frequently composed to symbolize social relations.”<sup>20</sup> Margolis has written about the ways that American school photographs in online collections make visible the hidden curriculum of education, including forms of socialization and acculturation such as gender role assignment, racial and class segregation, the enforcement of behavioral norms, and the reproduction of ideological belief systems.<sup>21</sup> These agendas are perhaps most obvious in the public relations photographs of indigenous children at boarding schools, a topic that has been discussed by a number of scholars.<sup>22</sup> In terms of exclusions, the apparent absence of many people of colour in Frank Adams’s extant photographs reveals social boundaries and patterns of residential segregation, reinforced by the mapping of school sections, that contradict the ease with which Adams himself moved about the province. Majority African-Nova Scotian schools were often among the poorest school sections due to the patterns of racism that marginalized their communities. Their photographic legacies have been shaped by the same forces so that today our picture of rural education in early twentieth-century Nova Scotia is overwhelmingly white.<sup>23</sup>

Even when the hidden curriculum is not so visible, it is important to interrogate all photographs with these considerations in mind. Frank Adams’s images spoke to their intended viewers (who were in many cases also their purchasers) about their communities in ways that were pleasing and affirming to them. In their study of official school portraiture in mid-twentieth century Portugal, Catherine Burke and Helena de Castro write that “the embodiment of school in the annual portrait that finds its place in the home is neither public nor private but straddles the two domains acting as a border crosser encouraging emotional investment in the notion of school.”<sup>24</sup> In the first decades of the twentieth century “the notion of school” in rural Nova Scotia was a contested one.

Across Canada, the “rural problem” of depopulation, specifically of young people “leaving the farm” for work and life in urban areas due to social stagnation and economic change, had become a major point of public concern by the late nineteenth century, intensifying through the first decades of the twentieth. A wide variety of reforms was suggested to make rural life more efficient, viable, and comfortable for rural families.<sup>25</sup> While it was acknowledged in principle that any real solution would have to be produced by rural communities themselves, reformers were also quick to

add that rural people needed a guide to get them on the right track. As reformer J. S. Woodsworth explained in his booklet, *Studies in Rural Citizenship* (c.1914), “Most people need a bit of a jolt to set their thinking apparatus in motion. Our task is to give the jolt, not to think for anyone.”<sup>26</sup> The patronizing tone of these efforts was similar to that of social reform in urban areas. The difference was that most urban reformers at least lived in cities, whereas those making suggestions about rural life had in many cases never lived in the country themselves. Acknowledging that he, himself, was of the city, Woodsworth haughtily dismissed such concerns: “Well, all wisdom is not confined to the country, and sometimes an outsider can see things more clearly and in truer perspective than one who is ‘right up against’ the perplexing details of practical problems.”<sup>27</sup> While an outside perspective might certainly be valuable, an opinion is not the same as an imposition, which is what many reform efforts came to feel like to the people for whom they were intended. For example, Linda Ambrose has described the ambivalent response to the federal *Agricultural Instruction Act* (1913) by the rural people it was meant to serve, and argues “that the Borden government’s funding for agricultural education actually served to heighten rural discontent rather than to assuage it.”<sup>28</sup> These tensions and patterns were apparent in all aspects of rural reform.

Among the range of efforts to improve rural life, changes to rural education were perhaps the most significant strategies. The 1913 *Report* of the federal Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education, which included agricultural education in its purview and led to the passing of the *Agricultural Instruction Act*, declared that “nothing can be done by legislation to compel people to stay in the country, but much may be done by education to cause them to prefer to stay there.”<sup>29</sup> Reformers saw the school as the best vehicle to create significant, lasting change in rural communities by teaching children, as well as older people, skills, behaviours, and attitudes that they would later apply to their work and lives on the farm. This coincided with a period in which North American elementary schooling in general was being transformed by Progressive reforms under the auspices of the New Education, which sought to make schooling more practical and relevant, moving away from rote memorization and recitation to better prepare students for a variety of paths—including rural life. New additions to standard elementary curricula in the period included various forms of gendered manual training, nature study and school gardens, physical education, and health and temperance studies. None of these ideas was new, but their discussion and application in the context of larger social reform movements, and in the face of the perceived rural crisis, was intensified in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>30</sup>

In Nova Scotia, many New Education initiatives, including manual training and school gardens, were introduced by Alexander MacKay, provincial Superintendent of Education from 1891 to 1926, and Loran DeWolfe, Director of Rural Science Schools beginning in 1913, both of whom were loud and articulate voices on the provincial and national stage for the value of manual education, particularly in its rural forms.<sup>31</sup> Beginning in 1899, reformers received a boost from the Macdonald Robertson movement, a major privately-funded initiative in Eastern Canada, which

inculcated the ideas that would characterize rural education reform and theory in Canada for decades to come. In his typically sincere but mildly (sometimes overtly) patronizing tone, leader James Robertson told all who would listen that the movement “does not desire to destroy anything that now exists in rural districts, except weeds, but it hopes to help in building up something better than is now known and done, and thereby displace what is poor. It aims at helping the rural population to understand better what education is and what it aims at for them and their children.”<sup>32</sup>

One representative example of Progressive rural reform ideology was the school gardening movement. Neil Sutherland suggests that “for the minority of rural children who received any benefits from the new education, it was more likely to take this form than any other” due to a convergence of interests among various reformers.<sup>33</sup> Kristen Greene agrees, writing that “the possibility of economic benefits through scientific agriculture appealed to vocationally-minded people, whereas the intellectual benefits of learning through studying nature and working the soil appealed to social reformers.”<sup>34</sup> Robertson, MacKay, and DeWolfé joined a chorus of high, almost naive, hopes for the potential of school gardens to effect change in rural Canada. Edwinna von Baeyer has described the missionary zeal of school garden advocates, noting that “ecstatic descriptions became common whenever a true believer described the movement.”<sup>35</sup> Beyond lessons in practical farming, and often in place of them, school gardens were ideally meant to be incorporated into a range of teaching exercises. For example, plots could be measured and divided for lively lessons in mathematics, or a gardening journal could be an exercise in English grammar and composition.<sup>36</sup> In Nova Scotia it was this more informal use of school gardens, integrated into the daily curriculum, that received the most encouragement. Under MacKay’s leadership, Nova Scotia was often singled out in national and international literature as an example to be followed in the school gardening movement, occasionally because it was characterized as such an unlikely place for it to flourish.<sup>37</sup>

School gardens were officially supported by the province through legislation in 1904 and later written into the new Education Act in 1911, which provided twenty-five dollars to any teacher who maintained a school garden “kept up to the standards of form and efficiency prescribed by the Council [of Public Instruction].”<sup>38</sup> Certainly the children in Frank Adams’s photographs would have received some form of training in nature study, and many of their schools may have had a rudimentary garden. However, as strong as the support was—and it was very strong—the project struggled against indifference, impracticality, and simple non-participation. While twenty-five dollars was a significant sum for a teacher whose yearly salary may have been less than two hundred dollars, in many cases the extra duties were simply too much to fit into the already crowded day of a multi-grade classroom with minimal resources. The rocky terrain represented in Adams’s photograph of Spry Bay (fig. 5) underscores the challenges of centrally-mandated programs conceived under idealized conditions. As von Baeyer has pointed out, “the school garden promoters did not recognize that the program had been nurtured and protected like a hot-house plant by monetary infusions and highly-trained personnel. They truly felt the ideal rural education was at hand.”<sup>39</sup> Teachers in communities such as those along the

rocky coasts of Nova Scotia where agricultural conditions were less than ideal, and growing seasons were short—and coincided with the summer vacation—found it particularly difficult to participate in such programs, or to see their real value. This is not to say that they did not make any effort at all, or that their efforts were not acknowledged. It was duly noted in the regional newspaper's community notes for Pleasant Harbour, a village just down the coast from Spry Bay, that on a day in May 1912, teacher Ethel Glawson helped her students put in a "small school garden . . . after clearing away the play ground."<sup>40</sup> What is unknown, however, is how long their garden lasted. Even at schools in inland areas more conducive to gardening, the reality of yearly teacher turnover—the bane of every attempted reform of rural education in Nova Scotia as elsewhere—made elaborate school gardens nearly impossible to maintain in the long term.

Taking school gardens as a representative example of rural education reform philosophy in the early twentieth century and juxtaposing the ideology and imagery of school gardens with Adams's photographs of rural schoolchildren provides a dramatic view of the discrepancy between idealized prescription and the assertiveness of local conditions. The point of this line of inquiry is not to demonize the idea of school gardens and their attempt to engage children with the world of nature around them—a fairly radical vision for education systems significantly reliant on book learning. Rather, such a comparison is meant to draw attention to the embedded narratives and agendas of each form of representation and to show how school photographs may be part of a politically salient historical analysis of education.

One of the central features of any proper school garden as prescribed by Progressive reform ideology was the rigid orderliness of its arrangement, both in terms of the process through which it should be created and used, and the actual physical arrangement of the plots in the ground. While local circumstances, such as climate, space constraints, and the number of children, were meant to be taken into consideration, school garden advocates also insisted that the overall goals, plans, and uses for any *real* school garden should conform to certain predetermined criteria. Indeed, while it was suggested to teachers and school trustees that "even a poor garden is of some educational value,"<sup>41</sup> in truth such efforts were deemed inadmissible into even the category of true school gardens. Gardens described as "a credit to teachers, pupils, and neighborhood, healthful and helpful in their general influence" were awarded funding, but they were, according to one observer at least, "not school gardens in the best sense of the term."<sup>42</sup> This distinction was restricted to those that resembled the photographs and illustrations included in a special multi-authored bulletin on school gardens in Canada prepared by the Canadian Department of Agriculture in 1916. Loran DeWolfe's work is prominent throughout this publication. For example, he is the author of the opening piece, which features a diagram of a suggested plan for a garden measuring one hundred feet by eighty feet. It is surrounded by an ornamental border of ten or twelve varieties of roses and once inside, the visitor would be met by a plot for grains, a display of flowers, and many tidy rows of nearly thirty kinds of vegetables and fruits. The explanatory notes for this diagram, and the others featured in the bulletin, are meticulous.<sup>43</sup>

Setting aside the agricultural lessons, underlying designs such as this—and there were many produced—were recommendations that gardens should also contribute to the overall “beautification” of the school grounds. Proposed gardens such as DeWolfe’s are idealizations, but their implications are significant. Namely, that the unmanicured areas surrounding rural schools—the very scenes celebrated by Frank Adams’s photographs—required beautification, were not “beautiful” in their current state. A beautiful school ground was an orderly and productive school ground. Moreover, the proposed sites of school gardens were consistently referred to by reformers as though they were blank slates or empty spaces just waiting to be filled with tidy rows of beans, petunias, and rose hedges. On the contrary, as Adams chose to highlight with his photographs, these areas were often filled with local flora such as grasses, shrubs, trees, and wildflowers, as well as distinctive geological formations. The rocky landscape of the Spry Bay school has already been mentioned as one that challenged the impulses of the school gardening movement, and many more of Adams’s photographs show sites that resist the ideals of manicured space promoted by reformers. Numerous photographs include plants that seem to envelope some of the children, leaving only their heads and shoulders visible while their bodies are obscured by leafy foliage. The children of the Five Islands school (fig. 6) posed for their photograph in 1912 arranged on a disorderly assemblage of old logs and random bits of wood with a messy patch of grass before them. Yet it is clear in the photograph that the space is not only visually dynamic, it is also an animated environment with which the children have been interacting. Some of them hold bouquets of wildflowers in their hands as they pose. A boy at the top left of the photo has inserted himself into



Figure 6. Frank Adams, *Five Islands school*, c.1912.  
*Photo box P33, 90.103.8, Colchester Historical Society Archives, Truro, Nova Scotia*

the skinny branches of an alder. In the 1915 photograph of West Tatamagouche, a pigtailed girl leans elbow first into the shaggy rhodora bush that her fellow students have gathered around, while in the 1909 photograph of Brule, two boys have climbed up into the branches of a spruce tree at the back of the group.<sup>44</sup>

Without overstating the obvious—that the proposed discipline of nature in the schoolyard replicated the kinds of discipline enacted on the bodies and minds of pupils in public schools—it is nevertheless worth noting the extent to which such orderliness was prescribed by reformers for all aspects of the elementary school experience. In the context of school gardens, Greene has argued that the type of rigid ordering seen in the plans for the gardens, which could be mandated and overseen by a centralized authority, was integral to the practices of the Macdonald Robertson movement as a whole. Indeed, she argues that the relative success and failure of various aspects of the movement hinged on “the ease with which” each could be “standardized and centrally controlled.”<sup>45</sup> With this in mind, the proposed orderliness of schoolyards should be viewed not only as an aspiration of the Progressive reform movement, but also as a means by which its aims were pursued. Despite the rhetoric of New Education, which sought to break with the formalism of traditional schooling and encourage the growth of the individual child, it must be noted that in its application in rural areas many aspects of reform during this period also sought to censure the local character of rural schools in favour of a standard vision of universal education.

But this type of discipline and standardization did not become reality in most rural schools during the period and it is not reflected in the images produced by Frank Adams. Adams often chose to represent landscapes that appear to defy outside imposition, and bodies that interact with these landscapes in intimate, highly unregulated ways. Corbett suggests that the very wildness of many rural areas contributed to the ability of rural communities to resist standardized education. He writes that “the normalizing of schooling operates more effectively in the context of urban spaces, already colonized by linear constitution of space and work time. Simply by their resistance to becoming engineered spaces, rural areas were sites for the development of localised identities, community, and idiosyncratic forms of resistance to the project of schooling.”<sup>46</sup> By celebrating these sites/sights and behaviours, the version of rural schooling that Adams presented to his customers was at odds with official efforts to stamp out such unruliness, and contributed to an alternative vision of rural education.

Adams’s interpretation of “school” in this period seems to have included very few straight lines. His decision to place his subjects in distinctive rural backdrops made it virtually impossible for him to replicate the kinds of straight lines and standardization that would be available in other settings. For example, Adams’s school photographs from a later period demonstrate the kind of uniformity available in urban settings. Here the grade two class of LeMarchant school in Halifax in 1929 sits posed on the back steps of their school (fig. 7). At first glance the grouping is not radically different from Adams’s earlier rural photographs, but on closer inspection the differences emerge. Rather than the somewhat haphazard arrangements that follow the contours and random seating options of rural spaces, the steps here create four uniform, evenly



Figure 7. Frank Adams, Grade two class of LeMarchant school, Halifax, 1929.  
 Personal collection of Peggy Wright

spaced rows of seats so that everyone is able to pose in identical positions. Those at the front are seated with their hands clasped on their laps, while those standing at the back hold their arms straight at their sides. Additionally, all the children in a single row are able to sit at the same level creating four straight lines of little faces across the photograph. The uniformity is heightened further by the fact that this is a photograph of a single grade. This means that the children are generally about the same size, but it also points to the kinds of organizational gradations and categories that simply did not apply to small rural schools. In this way, Adams's photographs of rural schools replicated the contingency of their day-to-day ordering.

These aspects of rural difference were visible in Adams's photographs, and were put on display in the homes of some of these children. These images privilege a particular vision of rural schooling that contrasts sharply with that proposed by reform advocates. Returning to the school garden as a representative example of reform, this image (fig. 8) shows a publicity photograph of children working in the showpiece Macdonald Robertson school garden in Middleton, Nova Scotia. This photograph conforms to Sally Kollstedt's observation that school gardens were typically photographed during planting season or later when vegetables and blossoming flowers were on display.<sup>47</sup> The garden is certainly flourishing here, though some of its vibrancy and much of its detail are undoubtedly lost in this static black and white image. But what this photograph really highlights is that the children are actively *working* in their garden, rather than simply enjoying it. Girls and boys of various ages and some of their teachers are positioned with rakes, all with heads down, apparently engrossed in their chores. Each has been placed before a leafy plant and appears to be performing the same action, carefully overseen by a man, presumably their gardening instructor, who stands just outside the group. If the message here was not clear enough that the children were to be interpreted as the next generation of farmers, a nearly identical





Figure 8. *Unknown photographer, "Macdonald School Garden, Middleton, Nova Scotia," in A.H. MacKay, "Consolidation of Schools: Nova Scotia," Agricultural Gazette 1, no. 7 (1914): 560.*

photograph of the school garden at Galetta, Ontario, in another publication carried the caption "A busy half hour," further emphasizing the labour of the children, rather than the product of their efforts. Indeed, garden boosters such as the author of the accompanying article would assert that ultimately it is the child who is the product of the garden and "a well ordered pupil rather than a well ordered garden is the supreme end of it all."<sup>48</sup>

While it is no surprise that children appear in photographs like this one, such images are also part of a spectrum of visual representations of reform in which children predominated. James Opp has noted that children were prominent in the images produced by social reformers in the period. He writes that "the bodies of children drew attention to the moral codes ascribed to the social space that surrounds them. . . . The pliable nature of children in the face of their environment indicated that the space surrounding the child's body held a particular moral significance."<sup>49</sup> In the context of glowing articles about the successes of school gardens and the advantages of Progressive education reforms, these images implicitly specified gardens as appropriate environments for children, and by extension "the cultivation of the soil as an ideal life-work"<sup>50</sup> for any rural person. Arguably, Adams's photographs of school groups in agricultural communities, such as Noel Shore (fig. 2), Keble (fig. 4), and numerous others, offer a similar message, but Adams celebrates a locally resonant, place-based pride in farming and farm work, without reducing the community's children to anonymous bodies.

Frank Adams clearly did not intend to position schoolchildren as labourers in his photographs. If the relatively casual arrangement of his photographs contrasts with what is expected of school photographs today, it contrasted even more dramatically

with the intentions of reform advocates at the time who wished to use images of children's disciplined bodies in highly organized landscapes to promote the ideal of manual education in rural schools and to symbolize the more profound discipline that would be its result. On the contrary, Adams's photographs show children at leisure. Arms are folded and hands rest in laps; some children even lounge on the ground. Many of his scenes could be mistaken for group photos at a Sunday school picnic. Adams's photographs are no less posed than the many publicity photographs of school gardens, and his choice to emphasize particular aspects of the environment over others was just as explicit. It should be noted that Adams could have chosen to photograph the children during their calisthenics drill, standing in front of their schoolhouses (as he did in some cases), or even indoors at their desks if this had been a priority for his rural customers.<sup>51</sup> And while the lack of formalization in the genre gave photographers license to experiment, not all of them took up this challenge. Examples of dour, unimaginative school photographs preceded Adams through rural Nova Scotia and are filed along with his images in community archives.

In the early twentieth century, Frank Adams was at work during a transitional moment in the history of rural education when the strict formality of schooling was being replaced by more child-centered forms of learning. What his photographs underscore, however, is that this new agenda was still at odds with rurality. Progressive reform in rural areas in the early twentieth century sought a standardized version of schooling across diverse communities. But standardization is not represented by Adams's photographs. While these images cannot be interpreted as actively resisting reform ideologies, they nevertheless show the uneven way that those ideologies pervaded rural places and may be read as evidence of the contested nature of rural school reform in the period. Adams's photographs imagine schooling in a way that may have fit more closely with the community's own preferred image of it; certainly they celebrate the very circumstances that reformers denounced. Looking at Adams's photos, the reformers would have seen exactly what they were fighting against: messy rural spaces and undisciplined bodies representing the dangerously idiosyncratic ways of rural people. But Adams's photographs are not simply inadvertent documentation on behalf of a reform agenda. Rather they were produced in celebration of exactly those unique aspects of rural places that the reformers were publicly condemning. A critical reading of these photographs and their historical context offers a dissenting note to traditional understandings of the contested processes of rural school reform in early twentieth-century Nova Scotia by highlighting an alternative way of imaging and imagining what rural education could be. Such alternatives were only possible while independent, itinerant photographers plied their trade in rural places.

The early history of school portrait photography has yet to be written. Until at least the interwar years, school photography in North America was the work of independent photographers rather than devoted school portrait studios, and was defined by fragmentation and local character, much like the school system itself. It is perhaps not surprising that the small body of scholarship that has been produced about school photographs focuses on the later standardized portrait style that we know today. For example, Noah Rosenblatt-Farrell argues that early school photographs

“functioned differently” than contemporary ones due to their lack of uniformity and standardization.<sup>52</sup> Likewise, Burke and de Castro have argued that “inexorable order, regularity and persistence of form and style” characterize school portraits so that the central meaning embedded in them is that of belonging to a ritualized tradition of standardized imagery.<sup>53</sup> But when Frank Adams was making the photographs in this study this logic of ritual and seriality was only perhaps emerging in the genre. This interpretative framework, with its emphasis on uniformity, has excluded a meaningful engagement with early school photographs, which do not adhere to these later conventions. But a critical engagement with Frank Adams’s images reveals that the diversity of early school photographs offers an imaginative starting point rather than an interpretive dead end. Their variety does not simply set the older images at odds with contemporary school portraits; it is, in fact, their central characteristic and one that may be mined for meanings as rich as those produced through the uniformity of later images. While it is possible to dismiss these photographs as charming but not politically consequential, it is far more compelling to explore their potential as sources that reveal the social and political forces at work during this important moment in the history of rural education in Nova Scotia and Canada.

## Notes

- 1 I would like to thank James Opp, Ruth Sandwell, Mary Vipond, Ronald Rudin, and Shannon McSheffrey for their comments on earlier versions of this work, as well as those who responded to my paper at the Canadian History of Education Association conference at York University, October 2010. I would also like to thank Nan Harvey, Sherman Hines, and Peggy Wright for their help with my research on Frank Adams.
- 2 Most, but not all, of the photographs referred to in this study are attached to matte cardboard frames featuring an embossed logo that reads “Frank Adams, Photographic Artist.” Thanks to the dated slates he placed in many of his photographs, we are able to retrace some of his travels around north central Nova Scotia. But due to the ephemeral nature of his itinerant practice, Adams left few other traces of his work and today this is the only way that his photographs may be definitively identified. However, after several years of studying this photographer’s largely anonymous practice, I am prepared to make some cautious claims on his behalf for photographs that have otherwise remained unidentified. Some of them are referred to in this article and one is reproduced as figure 3. Both photographer Sherman Hines, who was a friend of Frank Adams’s daughter Nellie, and Nan Harvey, head archivist of the Colchester Historical Society Archives, concur with my own sense of the distinctiveness of Adams’s aesthetic in Nova Scotia in the period. While looking through thousands of anonymous images in community archives in the province, Adams’s photographs stood out and, as Roland Barthes would say, “pricked” me time and again. To an important extent, however, their authorship is not central to the particular argument being forwarded here. My claims about the discursive work done by Adams’s vision of rural schools are not predicated on the uniqueness of that vision to a single man and would not change if these images were made by several different people. What is important is how these images, whether made by one or more independent photographers, diverge from the ideology and imagery of the educational bureaucracy and reform agendas at the time. Roland Barthes, *Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 26-27.

- 3 A growing body of scholarship asserts the importance of the often overlooked local context in the control of rural education. See, for example, Jennifer Anne Goldberg, "I thought the people wanted to get rid of the teacher': Educational Authority in Late-Nineteenth Century Ontario," *Historical Studies in Education* 23, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 41-60; Douglas A. Lawr and R. D. Gidney, "Who Ran the Schools? Local Influence on Education Policy in Nineteenth-Century Ontario," *Ontario History* 72, no. 3 (1980): 131-143; J. I. Little, "School Reform and Community Control in the 1840s: A Case Study from the Eastern Townships," *Historical Studies in Education* 9, no. 2 (1997): 153-164; Roderick MacLeod and Mary Anne Poutanen, *A Meeting of the People: School Boards and Protestant Communities in Quebec, 1801-1998* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004); Mary Anne Poutanen, "'Unless she gives better satisfaction': Teachers, Protestant Education, and Community in Rural Quebec, Lochaber and Gore District, 1863-1945," *Historical Studies in Education* 15, no. 2 (2003): 237-272.
- 4 Michael Corbett, "A Protracted Struggle: Rural Resistance and Normalization in Canadian Educational History," *Historical Studies in Education* 13, no. 1 (2001): 19-48; Michael Corbett, *Learning to Leave: The Irony of Schooling in a Coastal Community* (Halifax, NS: Fernwood, 2007); R. W. Sandwell, *Contesting Rural Space: Land Policy and Practices of Resettlement on Saltspring Island, 1859-1891* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005). See also David Reynolds, *There Goes the Neighborhood: Rural School Consolidation at the Grass Roots in Early Twentieth-Century Iowa* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1999).
- 5 Corbett, "A Protracted Struggle," 41.
- 6 Geoffrey Batchen, "Vernacular Photographies," *History of Photography* 24, no. 3 (2000): 262-271.
- 7 Barthes, *Camera Lucida*, 6. Barthes's own investigation takes a different direction than the analysis in this article, but this insightful statement is nevertheless a useful starting point for any critical engagement with photography.
- 8 Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 182. For recent discussions on using images as historical sources and the more general relationship between images and the past, see for example, Lynn Hunt and Vanessa Schwartz, "Capturing the Moment: Images and Eyewitnessing in History," *Journal of Visual Culture* 9, no. 3 (2010): 259-271; Jennifer Tucker in collaboration with Tina Camp, "Entwined Practices: Engagements with Photography in Historical Practice," *History and Theory* 48, no. 4 (2009): 1-8.
- 9 Jennifer Green-Lewis, *Framing the Victorians: Photography and the Culture of Realism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1996), 19.
- 10 Shawn Michelle Smith, *Photography on the Color Line: W.E.B. Du Bois, Race, and Visual Culture* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).
- 11 Nova Scotia, *Annual Report of the Superintendent of Education of Nova Scotia for the Year Ended 31st July, 1912* (Halifax, NS: King's Printer, 1913), 3. Hereafter cited as *ARNS*.
- 12 On the history of the consolidation of rural schools in the Maritime provinces, see George Peabody, *School Days: One-Room Schools of Maritime Canada* (Fredericton, NB: Goose Lane, 1992), 125-138.
- 13 For further biographical details about Frank Adams, see Sara Spike, "'Photos of the school group of this place and others': An Itinerant Photographer Pictures Rural Education in Nova Scotia, c.1912" (Masters thesis, Concordia University, 2009).
- 14 There are no references to school photographs or photographers in the annual reports of the Nova Scotia Superintendent of Education, 1900-1915, the *Nova Scotia Journal of Education*, 1900-1915, nor in the local trustees minutes books covering years from the 1880s to the 1920s held by Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management. NSARM, Department of Education fonds, RG 14, vols. 74, 111, 115, 119, 127, 174.

- 15 Allan Sekula, "Photography Between Labour and Capital," in *Mining Photographs and Other Pictures, 1948–1968: A Selection from the Negative Archives of Sheddin Studio, Glace Bay, Cape Breton*, ed. B. H. D. Buchloh and Robert Wilkie (Halifax, NS: Press of the Nova Scotia College of Art and Design and the University College of Cape Breton Press, 1983), 200.
- 16 John E. Carter, "Photography and the Rural Town," *Journal of the West* 36, no. 4 (1997): 27. On the work of commercial photographers see also Sybil Miller, *Itinerant Photographer: Corpus Christi, 1934* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1987).
- 17 See Colin Howell, "The 1900s: Industry, Urbanization, and Reform," in *The Atlantic Provinces in Confederation*, ed. D. A. Muise and Ernest R. Forbes (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 178-179; Monica MacDonald, "Railway Tourism in the 'Land of Evangeline,' 1882–1946," *Acadiensis* 35, no. 1 (2005): 158-180; James H. Morrison, "American Tourism in Nova Scotia, 1871–1940," *Nova Scotia Historical Review* 2, no. 2 (1982): 40-51. For a discussion of how photography was implicated in this, see Graeme Wynn, "Images of the Acadian Valley: The Photographs of Amos Lawson Hardy," *Acadiensis* 15, no. 1 (1985): 59-83. This process was accelerated in the 1920s, best described by Ian McKay in *The Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).
- 18 Unknown photographer, Head Harbour School, 1904, Nova Scotia Archives and Records Management, St. Margaret's Bay Historical Society Collection #4, PANS N-1766.
- 19 Pierre Bourdieu, *Photography: A Middle-Brow Art*, trans. Shaun Whiteside (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 6, 23-24.
- 20 Eric Margolis, "Class Pictures: Representations of Race, Gender and Ability in a Century of School Photography," *Visual Studies* 14, no. 1 (1999): 10.
- 21 Margolis, "Class Pictures."
- 22 See Lonna M. Malmshimer, "Imitation White Man: Images of Transformation at the Carlisle Indian School," *Studies in Visual Communication* 11 (1985): 54-75; Eric Margolis, "Looking at Discipline, Looking at Labor: Photographic Representations of Indian Boarding Schools," *Visual Studies* 19, no. 1 (2004): 72-96; Eric Margolis and Jeremy Rowe, "Images of Assimilation: Photographs of Indian Schools in Arizona," *History of Education* 33, no. 2 (2004): 199-230. In the Canadian context, see Gerald McMaster, "Colonial Alchemy: Reading the Boarding School Experience," in *Partial Recall: Photographs of Native North Americans*, ed. Lucy R. Lippard (New York: New Press, 1992), 76-87; Sherry Racette, "Haunted: First Nations Children in Residential School Photography," in *Depicting Canada's Children*, ed. Loren Lerner (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2009), 49-84.
- 23 Margolis has likewise noted the absence of people of colour in his study of school photographs, asking whether such images are "not present because they were not made, because many fewer were made, because they were not preserved, or because they were not archived." Margolis, "Class Pictures," 14. On the racial segregation of schools in Nova Scotia see Robin W. Winks, *The Blacks in Canada: A History*, 2nd ed. (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 362-389.
- 24 Catherine Burke and Helena Ribeiro de Castro, "The School Photograph: Portraiture and the Art of Assembling the Body of the Schoolchild," *History of Education* 36, no. 2 (2007): 216.
- 25 On the Country Life reform movement in Canada, see David Demeritt, "Visions of Agriculture in British Columbia," *BC Studies*, no. 108 (96 1995): 29-59; David C. Jones, "'There Is Some Power About the Land': The Western Agrarian Press and Country Life Ideology," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 17, no. 3 (1982): 96-108; Margaret Kechnie, *Organizing Rural Women: The Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario, 1897–1919* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

- 26 J. S. Woodsworth, *Studies in Rural Citizenship* (Winnipeg: Canadian Council of Agriculture, [c.1914]), 6.
- 27 Woodsworth, *Studies in Rural Citizenship*, 6.
- 28 Linda M. Ambrose, "Better and Happier Men and Women: The Agricultural Instruction Act, 1913–1924," *Historical Studies in Education* 16, no. 2 (2004): 259.
- 29 Canada, Royal Commission on Industrial Training and Technical Education, *Report*, parts 1-2 (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1913), 39. Hereafter cited as RCITTE.
- 30 For a general overview of education reform and the New Education in Canada in the period, see Paul Axelrod, *The Promise of Schooling: Education in Canada, 1800–1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 44-68 and 109-126; Neil Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society: Framing the Twentieth-Century Consensus* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), 155-224; George S. Tomkins, *A Common Countenance: Stability and Change in the Canadian Curriculum* (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall Canada, 1986), 98-154, esp. 98-128.
- 31 See Jane Margaret Norman, *Loran Arthur DeWolfe and the Reform of Education in Nova Scotia, 1891–1959* (Truro, NS: Atlantic Early Learning Productions, 1989), esp. 34-35; Donald Macleod, "Practicality Ascendant: The Origins and Establishment of Technical Education in Nova Scotia," *Acadiensis* 15, no. 2 (1986): 53-92.
- 32 James W. Robertson, "The Macdonald College Movement," *Proceedings of the National [American] Education Association* (1909): 92. On the Macdonald Robertson movement generally, see Kristen Jane Greene, "The Macdonald Robertson Movement, 1899–1909" (PhD diss, University of British Columbia, 2003).
- 33 Sutherland, *Children in English-Canadian Society*, 187.
- 34 Greene, "Macdonald Robertson Movement," 114.
- 35 Edwinna von Baeyer, *Rhetoric and Roses: A History of Canadian Gardening 1900–1930* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1984), 37.
- 36 See for example the evidence from Percy Shaw regarding the many ways that a cutworm found in the garden could be implicated into a day's lesson in RCITTE, 4:1741. See also L. A. DeWolfe et al., "Relationship of the School Garden to the Class Room," *Agricultural Gazette* 2, no. 4 (1915): 371-375.
- 37 See for example, R. H. Cowley, "The Macdonald School Gardens," *Queen's Quarterly* (April 1905): 399; M. Louise Greene, *Among School Gardens* (New York: Charities Publication Committee, 1910), 15; James Ralph Jewell, "The Place of Nature Study, School Gardens, and Agriculture in our School System," *Paedagogical Seminary* 13, no. 3 (1906): 273-274; James Collins Miller, *Rural Schools in Canada: Their Organization, Administration and Supervision* (New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1913), 78.
- 38 Nova Scotia, "The Education Act," in *Statutes of Nova Scotia 1911*, chapter 2 (Halifax, NS: Commissioner of Public Works and Mines, King's Printer, 1911), section 79, clause 2. See also section 91.
- 39 von Baeyer, *Rhetoric and Roses*, 44.
- 40 Truro *Daily News*, community notes for Pleasant Harbour, May 30, 1912, 8.
- 41 *ARNS*, 1908, 180.
- 42 Miller, *Rural Schools in Canada*, 79-80.
- 43 L. A. DeWolfe, "The Model School Garden: Nova Scotia," in *The School Garden as Regarded and Carried on in the Different Provinces*, Department of Agriculture Publications Branch, Pamphlet No. 4 (Ottawa: Government Printing Bureau, 1916), 8. The material for this publication was drawn from articles previously published in the *Agricultural Gazette*.
- 44 Frank Adams, West Tatamagouche school, 1915, North Shore Archives, PH4-909; Unknown photographer, Brule school, 1908–1909, North Shore Archives, PH3-074.
- 45 Greene, "Macdonald Robertson Movement," 4.

- 46 Corbett, "A Protracted Struggle," 28-29.
- 47 Sally Gregory Kohlstedt, "A Better Crop of Boys and Girls': The School Gardening Movement, 1890-1920," *History of Education Quarterly* 48, no. 1 (2008): 59.
- 48 Cowley, "Macdonald School Gardens," 409.
- 49 James Opp, "Re-imagining the Moral Order of Urban Space: Religion and Photography in Winnipeg, 1900-14," *Journal of the Canadian Historical Association* 13, no. 1 (2002): 85-86.
- 50 Cowley, "Macdonald School Gardens," 399.
- 51 The latter seems to have been the major representational idiom for school photographs in some other parts of North America in this period. See, for example, the various responses to the post "Class Pictures and School Photography" on the H-Education listserv, November-December, 2008, <http://www.h-net.org/~educ>.
- 52 Noah Rosenblatt-Farrell, "Corporate Strategies and Student Bodies: The Emergence of School Portraiture as Genre in 20th Century Photography" (PhD diss, Duke University, 2002), 162.
- 53 Burke and de Castro, "The School Photograph," 214.