

Establishing Pathways for Woman in Education in Saskatchewan: Never-Married Women Career Teachers¹

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the professional activities of never-married women teachers. The 'spinster' teacher was not considered a potential ideal career teacher, in part, because women were not considered long-term workers. Until the mid-1940s, most school districts refused to hire married women teachers and so remaining single was the only option to continue in the profession. These career teachers were forced to deal with the same short shrift faced by young short-term women teachers though they were trying to establish themselves in the profession. Without established pathways and facing discrimination in employment, these never-married women persevered to have long careers and to make contributions to their professional associations. These teachers were in the forefront of women who broke the glass ceiling into what had been male preserves in the profession and in teachers' associations.

RÉSUMÉ

Cet article s'intéresse aux activités professionnelles des enseignantes qui ne se sont jamais mariées. Il était difficile d'imaginer des enseignantes « vieilles filles » comme des femmes faisant carrière en partie parce qu'on ne les voyait pas comme travailleuses à long terme. Jusqu'au milieu des années 1940, la plupart des commissions scolaires refusaient d'engager des enseignantes mariées et la seule option pour poursuivre dans l'enseignement était de rester célibataire. Ces femmes de carrière étaient confronté aux mêmes difficultés que les jeunes travaillant à court terme malgré leurs efforts pour s'établir dans le métier. Ne jouissant d'aucun précédent, elles ont eu à affronter de la discrimination à l'embauche. Pourtant, ces femmes célibataires ont persévéré en menant de longues carrières et en participant à leurs associations professionnelles. Ces enseignantes étaient au premier rang parmi ces femmes qui ont brisé le plafond de verre en entrant dans les domaines auparavant réservés exclusivement aux hommes tant au sein de la profession que dans les associations professionnelles.

In 1945, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation (STF) elected Ethel Coppinger President.² Starting her career in a one-room country school with only Normal School credentials, Coppinger established herself as a respected educator. As a career teacher, Coppinger had a direct stake in the activities of the Federation and as a

person without obligations to a spouse or children; she could allocate time to devote to both to her career and to the Federation.³

This paper examines the professional activities of Saskatchewan women career teachers, such as Ethel Coppinger, who either nevermarried or married later in life.⁴ The 'spinster'⁵ teacher was not considered a potential ideal teacher, in part, because women were not considered "long-term workers."⁶ Until the mid-1940s, most school districts refused to hire married women teachers and so remaining single was the only option to continue in the profession. These teachers were forced to deal with the same short shrift faced by young short-term women teachers while trying to establish themselves in their careers. Without established pathways for women in the profession and facing discrimination in employment, these never-married women persevered to have long careers and to make contributions to their professional associations. These teachers were at the forefront of women who broke the glass ceiling into what had been male preserves in the profession and in teachers' associations. We conclude that never-married women were likely to become involved in the profession, in part, because teaching was the primary activity in their lives and also because they did not face domestic responsibilities associated with childrearing.

Studies of schoolteachers in Saskatchewan have emphasized that the particular circumstances of teachers depended on transitions in economic and political conditions. These studies have examined the plight of novice teachers,⁷ circumstances facing teachers from 1905–1920,⁸ the development of professional associations,⁹ the professionalization of teaching,¹⁰ women's patterns of exiting the profession¹¹ and the material conditions of their work.¹² Increasingly, studies have focused on specific aspects of these women's careers such as employment patterns,¹³ married women re-entering the profession,¹⁴ comparisons of conditions between women and men,¹⁵ and the issues facing women teaching in the 1930s.¹⁶ Hidden between the lines of this previous research is the hint that, in fact, some women never married and focused their lives on teaching and on building the profession.

For this analysis of never-married, career women teachers, we drew on first hand accounts provided by forty-six Saskatchewan women teachers and archival material. We use the label 'never-married' to refer to these women teachers as they were not married during their long teaching careers. All remained single for the duration of their career while three of the women married later in life. Six others taught as part of their vocation as Catholic sisters.¹⁷ These women started their extensive careers between 1909 and 1950. Many of the women who started teaching before the 1920s were not born in Saskatchewan, but moved there as children or as adults to work as teachers. All of the women referenced here were typical of Saskatchewan teachers during this time period in that they were of European ancestry, by and large, from Great Britain. After extended careers, all retired from teaching between the mid 1950s and early 1980s.

The women presented their lives and their stories in such a way as to omit mention of intimate partnerships or non-heteronormative identities. While undoubtedly there were lesbian, bisexual and queer never-married women teachers, we do not know that the women, in this study, fall into this category. However, lesbian, bisexual

or queer never-married career teachers would face many of the same circumstances as our sample of never-married women teachers.

The first-hand accounts were acquired by access to interviews done with Saskatchewan women teachers and by written submissions from teachers, who had been asked to follow a guided autobiographical format.¹⁸ The interviews were undertaken between 1985 and 1995 and were conducted in the homes of the retired teachers.¹⁹ The written submissions were requested in 1985 from women who were members of the Superannuated Teachers' Association. In addition, information on several women was available from published sources, such as Normal School Reunion publications.

Not all of the women approached chose to participate. Some may have been suffering illnesses associated with age and others may not have wanted to stir up recollections of earlier times. Those women, who participated, were eager and generous with their time. We recognize that the lapse in time between their experiences and the request to document their accounts may have resulted in selective memory and reconstruction of early events from the vantage point of the changed societal expectations of the 1980s and 1990s. A further concern regarding comprehensive coverage of issues with these oral histories is the potential hesitancy to discuss intimate or embarrassing personal experiences or even the potential reticence of the interviewers to ask such questions.²⁰ Given lapses in memory and other such issues, we have chosen to build off of Hallman's example²¹ and embed our analysis in forms of evidence such as Annual Reports of the Saskatchewan Department of Education, commentaries from school inspectors, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation Bulletin, Saskatchewan newspapers,²² Saskatchewan Normal School Reunion booklets,²³ the Dominion Bureau of Statistics (Statistics Canada) and other works, as cited.

Building a Coterie of Saskatchewan Teachers

The Dominion of Canada settled the prairies with the goal of expansion to the West. They solicited people from Northern and mid-European backgrounds to ensure an homogeneous population, which could be assimilated into British cultural expectations. By the early 1900s the Saskatchewan prairies were settled by an overwhelming majority of people of European ancestry, living in patriarchally-organized family structures.²⁴ These farm-based families began to organize rural school districts to give their children access to education.²⁵ In 1905, the newly formed Province of Saskatchewan inherited a labour force of 1,300 teachers, which was comprised of 51.5% women.²⁶

With few exceptions, these teachers had received their teacher training outside of the new province.²⁷ The Department found that "They [out of province teachers] are ignorant of our school laws, our regulations, and our educational system in general; they find a different system of grading and classification in vogue, and our text books and outlines of study are not those with which they are familiar."²⁸ In response, the Department of Education established a priority to train teachers at Normal Schools in Saskatchewan to ensure that the government could control the values imparted in the classroom.

To compound this problem, the province could not rely upon trained teachers remaining in the classroom. According to the 1903 *Annual Report*, "...the frequent change of teachers has a retarding influence on the progress of pupils. Many teachers are leaving the profession, the women to assume other responsibilities, the men to accept more lucrative positions. Owing to the scarcity of teachers many schools have been delayed opening for weeks and months."²⁹

In 1909 the Department of Education felt that there was not only a shortage of teachers but also a shortage of qualified teachers, "the number of qualified teachers...did not nearly meet the demand and early in the year the Department was face to face with a demand for qualified teachers which it was impossible to supply."³⁰ Consequently they found it "necessary to grant provisional certificates to persons having certain academic standing but having no professional training," 36% of the certificates issued that year were provisional ones.³¹ Strategies developed to recruit large numbers of Saskatchewan individuals into the teaching profession had their problems as well. The Department developed Local Sessions outside of Normal School in a variety of areas. Graduates of these Local Sessions would emerge with a Third class or provisional certificate, which lasted for only a year.³² While this strategy increased the supply of teachers, especially the more valued Saskatchewan teachers, the Department acknowledged that the eight weeks of training received was not truly adequate. According to Hallman some women teachers themselves reported finding their short training sessions inadequate and less than helpful.³³ By 1921 the Saskatoon Normal School staff members were "unanimously of the opinion that the so-called local session should be discontinued forthwith."³⁴ The Department of Education's strategy to train teachers at provincial Normal Schools was paying off. By the 1920s, Saskatchewan licensed more provincially trained teachers than outsiders. The 1921 *Annual Report* was so optimistic in this regard that it stated, "in the near future, Saskatchewan must look forward to educating and training practically all its own teachers."³⁵ In that year 661 newly licensed teachers came from outside of Saskatchewan compared to 816 from the previous year.³⁶ Local supply met demand in the 1920s, but the turnover rates were still high. Although there was an abundance of teachers in the 1930s, few had degrees or long term experience. A shortage reemerged during WWII, with the introduction of similar short-term accreditation strategies. According to Lyons, teacher shortages continued to be an issue well into the 1970s.³⁷

The STF, which formed in 1933, also had clear ideas about the standards appropriate for Saskatchewan teachers. As late as the 1940s, the STF was highly critical of Department strategies to recruit more teachers by letting people with few credentials be licensed to teach.³⁸ The STF considered the "continual 'stop-gap' method of grinding out from the Normal School" not only ineffective as a long-term solution, but also a method which degraded the quality of the teaching profession.³⁹ As the STF was pushing for longer training programs, they considered the teachers "churned out" of Normal Schools to be "untrained, unqualified and inexperienced."⁴⁰ The shortage of teachers, and a further shortage of those who had sufficient credentials and remained teaching to acquire experience in the classroom, set the stage for the Department of Education and for the STF to encourage more men to teach.

Male Teacher Preferred

The Department of Education hoped to establish a stable body of Saskatchewan trained, experienced and qualified teachers in order to appropriately educate the children of the people Saskatchewan, which at that time consisted of primarily white settlers and Indigenous Peoples. Male teachers were seen as being suitable of long-term careers because they were neither required nor expected to quit upon marriage and men were seen as more capable, especially for older grades, and for positions of authority.⁴¹ A publication of the STF, explained the position of the government, “Single women teachers were regarded as marking time between their own educations and their true vocations of wife, mother and homemaker.”⁴²

The expectation that men would be career-oriented providers for their families was intrinsic to the common sentiment of the time. Poelzer stated that Saskatchewan women did not live and teach within a vacuum but that their lives and opportunities were shaped by both Canadian and world events.⁴³ According to Kinnear’s analysis of early twentieth century Manitoba, “The self-sufficiency of a respectable woman who could decently support herself with her own trained and tested labour was itself an affront to the notion of gendered dependence.”⁴⁴ Furthermore Kinnear stated while single women were permitted into select professions such as being teachers, nurses, physicians, lawyers and university professors, “when a professional woman remained single, her supposed celibacy reinforced her image as an honorary man, whose sexuality was effectively neutered. Professional women’s gender could be overlooked, so long as their numbers were small.”⁴⁵ This assertion of Kinnear’s regarding a neighbouring prairie province is similar to the Saskatchewan context. In 1929 the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix* printed, for their Saskatchewan readers, the comments of Jonathan Cape, a guest speaker at the Toronto Women’s Press Club on the matter of women and work: “I am old fashioned enough not to like it. But I am ready to face facts. As long as women are only dabbling [in] things, men won’t object. But let them take up anything seriously, in which they come into competition with men, and there will be a row.”⁴⁶

The Government had hoped to build an experienced teaching force by focusing on men, in part, to combat attrition. Implied was that attrition was due to women leaving the profession to marry but men also left for other opportunities. Due to the short training period (about a eight months in Normal School) and less than desirable salaries, the profession was seen by some men as a temporary career until something better could be found, yet they remained the preferred teacher.⁴⁷ According to one Inspector, “The smallness of the number of married men bears eloquent and convincing testimony to the fact that school teaching, particularly rural school teaching, has still very far to go before it attains the dignity of a profession.”⁴⁸ In the 1935 *Annual Report*, the Deputy Minister of Education stated, “Although the percentage of male teachers has increased from 16.7% in 1918 to 30.49% in 1935, the great majority of our teachers are women and so long as this condition exists there will be a heavy loss of teachers from the profession each year.”⁴⁹ Just as during the previous war (1914–1918), demand for soldiers in WWII drew men out of the classroom.

In response, school boards would break standard practice and rely upon married women to fill teaching positions vacated by men.⁵⁰ Despite the contributions of women teachers, the assumption that women would only teach until marriage and then resign retained the focus on men as candidates for the ideal teacher for the first half of the 20th century.⁵¹ According to Poelzer the primary concern of Department of Education officials, Professional Educators Organizations, the Trustee Association and educational administrators was that the teaching profession failed attract men as teaching was considered a “feminized” and therefore “low status profession.”⁵² These groups ignored the large body of women teachers as well as their hard work and “preached that professional respectability was dependent on the numbers of men in the ranks.”⁵³

The Department of Education was not the only body to consider men the solution to teacher shortages. The STF was not only keen to fix the problem of teacher shortages but also to keep more individuals they considered to be ideal in the profession, namely “the experienced and older teacher.”⁵⁴ It seems that when thinking about experienced long-term teachers, they overlooked never-married women. The long range plan of the STF to fix these problems, as outlined in the editorial in the October 1946 issue of their newsletter, the *Bulletin*, was that “Teaching must be sold as a career, and a campaign must be conducted to enlist more men in the teaching profession.”⁵⁵ It is particularly interesting to note that even in the year 1946 the STF itself could not consider that women might devote themselves to the teaching profession, especially as the current president of the STF was a woman. Ethel Coppinger, an unmarried career teacher, had been on the STF Executive since 1940, assumed the role of Vice President in 1942 and then President mid-way through 1944. In the newsletter, directly after the editorial outlining the importance of recruiting men to the profession, is her presidential address where she informs readers that she is becoming the President of the Canadian Teachers’ Federation (CTF) the following year.⁵⁶ It is ironic that the Editorial Board’s solution was more men into the profession, as two out of the five members of the *Bulletin’s* Editorial Board were women.⁵⁷ They lacked the foresight to recognize never-married ‘spinster’ women or even the increasing body of married women teachers, being accepted into the profession due to WWII teacher shortages, as solutions to the problem of inexperienced teachers.

While women were hired to teach and in fact have formed the majority of teachers, since the inception of the province, they were not considered by the Government, the Federation or school boards as having long-term prospects because of cultural expectations of marriage and motherhood, which were reinforced by prohibitions against hiring married women.⁵⁸ As a teacher reported, “In 1925, a woman principal was married in her home at Easter, but told no one except her landlady until the end of term in June, for she would have been dismissed at once if the school authorities had known.”⁵⁹ This refusal to hire married women to teach was codified in the 1930s as men were assumed to require the income more than women.⁶⁰ This same woman reported yet another case of dismissal, “In the early thirties, a teacher was married the end of May, and was not allowed to teach to the end of term, one month later.”⁶¹ As Flora Henderson (1923) observed, “During the 1930s, if there was a married woman

teacher available it was better to wait six months... it was better to let the children remain uneducated than to have a married woman teach them.”⁶²

Given that male teachers were seen as more capable and skilled than female ones, they were paid higher wages and hired into more desirable positions.⁶³ As male teachers were more valued they were given positions in city and town schools, which were infinitely more comfortable than rural schools and far better paid.⁶⁴ Men were the desired principals, vice principals, high school teachers and math and science teachers.⁶⁵ Classified advertisements from the 1930s show that men were overwhelmingly recruited for positions that were more prestigious and seen to require more skill,⁶⁶ regardless of the fact that in many circumstances they were not required to have any more training than female teachers.⁶⁷ Of the 20 advertisements for principals from the 1930s classified that were surveyed 17 of them were for male principals, two did not state the preferred gender. Exceptions were made for propriety; one advertisement requested a “Lady” principal as the principal was required to share a teacherage with a woman teacher.⁶⁸ All five of the assistant or vice principal advertisements specifically requested men.⁶⁹ Women were desired, both by school boards and inspectors, to work as teachers for lower grades and small children due to perceptions that women were natural carers and nurturers.⁷⁰ Since they were not expected to remain in the profession and due to the perception that teaching lower grades was “women’s work” they received lower pay and had lower status.

Thus, even into the second half of the 20th century, the Department of Education and the STF did not consider women as ideal teachers because of the belief that women’s primary obligations would center on their nuclear family and therefore they would not be long-term workers.⁷¹ This assumption had been a forced reality as teaching while married for women was not allowed by many boards until the 1940s, employment for married women was not the norm until the 1970s, and, even then, lack of adequate maternity leave and child care made the double day onerous.⁷²

The Never-Married Woman Teacher

Despite the expectation that women would not acquire appropriate credentials and classroom experience, records show that there were women who began their career, as early as 1909, who taught continuously and established long careers. Since school boards approached staffing from the perspective that women would inevitably quit their jobs at marriage, those who embraced a long-term career were forced to deal with the same difficult circumstances faced by young short-term women teachers even though never-married career women teachers depended upon their teaching career to support themselves. Poor pay levels, discriminatory hiring practices, little room for upward mobility, and inadequate pension plans had profound consequences for these women who remained in the profession.⁷³ As Kinnear explained, “A single woman was not immune to the dominant notions of gender. Until she was old enough not to have children, there was the perpetual expectation that she might lean towards the primary obligation of a woman rather than exhibit unanswering commitment to her profession.”⁷⁴ Consequently single women in their thirties who had devoted a decade

or more to the profession were not necessarily seen as dedicated teachers.

Prior to the achievement of the STF to standardize pay based on credentials and experience, school boards paid men more than women and were keen to keep salaries for all teachers low.⁷⁵ There was a perception that women teachers did not need the money they earned to the same extent that male teachers did. This perception can be seen in the Depression era especially, as men were favoured over women for teaching positions.⁷⁶ As the Depression neared to a close and the STF fought for a mandatory annual minimum of \$750, the question was raised regarding what single women would do with so much 'surplus' or 'unneeded' money. One trustee wrote, "Just imagine our young lady teachers rolling in money like that! What a boom there would be in the trade in silk stockings, fur coats, and pink nail polish. And wouldn't the Normal Schools be flooded? But there is another side of it. When these girls get married in a few years what a life they will lead their husbands if they can't keep them in the style they are accustomed to!"⁷⁷ Comments such as these show a perception of women teachers to be frivolous, demanding, impractical and lacking in commitment to the teaching profession. While teaching, women relied on their meager salaries to support themselves, also overlooked were the women for whom teaching was their sole means of support over the course of their lives, or women who were the sole supporter of their children, siblings or parents.

Due to the gendered preferences of urban boards, during this period, women teachers frequently found themselves restricted to teaching lower grades. Even when women were acknowledged as capable to work as principals, some were kept from doing so for fear that the men who would become their subordinates would feel emasculated. Elsie Frank (1923) reported, "Male principals did not favour females being given positions on par with their previously 'private preserve.'"⁷⁸ Furthermore, in instances where men and women held the same teaching positions they were still paid differing amounts.⁷⁹

Less pay over the course of their career had long-term effects on their pensions. Grace Morrell, a woman who taught continuously from 1914–1954, reported that she was forced to retire at the age of 60, whereas her male counterparts could teach for another five years. Ultimately after 40 years of teaching in Saskatchewan her pension was so low that she was forced to work as a receptionist in order to support herself.⁸⁰

Most teaching jobs were in rural areas.⁸¹ Women continued to hold a disproportionate number of these positions.⁸² Living conditions for these teachers were deplored by the STF as late as 1946, "General living conditions, particularly in the rural areas are, to say the least, abominable and as long as the bulk of our rural teachers are very young girls, the answer is not a teacherage, as the life is too lonely and many communities too isolated."⁸³ While some rural teachers lived alone in teacherages, however, often women teachers found themselves required to live as tenants with unfamiliar farm families and some even had to share a bed. The women had no choice as to what sort of family they boarded with and attempts to switch family could result in their teaching contract not being renewed. Rural trustees fired Helen Grant (1916) from her first country school because she wanted to change boarding houses.⁸⁴

As they were living in such close quarters with the farm family they had to assimilate themselves in order to manage. Gail Stewart (1910) explained the general living situation for women teachers boarding with farmers:

In those days everybody [in the farm house] worked around the table in the evening. Father sat in the corner at his desk and did his paper work, and the kids sat around the table and did their homework and I sat there with them... that was true everywhere. You never went to your room and stayed by yourself. You were part of the family, you played with the children, and you looked after the baby when it was hungry or tired or in need, you picked it up and did something for it...If the mother was busy and the baby wanted something, well, you did it for it.⁸⁵

Many noted their lack of the privacy and inability to live an autonomous life. Nan Corman (1936) reported, "...you had no real freedom, basically you hardly ever had what you could call a room of your own, far less a room with a view. You hardly had a room of your own because your room was just a place where you went to sleep...It wasn't fixed up like a room of your own..."⁸⁶ Even in town schools, women teachers had less freedom than their male counterparts.⁸⁷ Minnie McMaster (1909) explained, "In the town schools I was always expected to sing in the [church] choir for one thing. Or you were expected to teach Sunday school. I would always try to be active in the town I lived in."⁸⁸ Fortunately for McMaster, she did not mind these extra duties however much they may have cut into her personal life. The STF felt the community demands upon teachers so severe as to consider them a factor that encouraged teachers to leave the profession, "Teachers are generally willing and do engage in many community activities but as a citizen of the community, they like the same rights as anyone else to volunteer this service, and they resent being forced to join in these community activities."⁸⁹

While these circumstances may have been manageable for a woman who planned on teaching for only a few years, it was difficult for older never-married women teachers to shape their lives as they pleased with obligations to participate in events as well as surveillance of their personal lives. Gail Stewart (1910) observed that expectations regarding the female teacher extended far beyond the school grounds, "...we certainly were not disgracing ourselves in front of them [members of the school board and public] and of course smoking wasn't considered the thing to do in those days... especially [for] women."⁹⁰ Another woman reported that as late as 1967 a female teacher was dismissed for "her conduct out of school hours."⁹¹ Women during this time were expected to be devoid of sexuality or sexual desires that were not limited to the marriage bed. Never-married women teachers were not allowed to "run around" with men and any sort of romantic relationships they formed would have to be kept secret from the community. As Grace Morrell (1914) stated, "Expectations? Well you would have to behave yourself and not be a philanderer in the town or chasing men and that sort of thing. They expected you to have a good character."⁹²

In addition to these material circumstances, women who did not marry faced

being stigmatized as a 'spinster,' with the various connotations associated with that label.⁹³ As Olive Evasiuk (1935), who did marry explained, "Somehow the word "career" wasn't in vogue the way it's now. Neither was marriage [a good option] in my mind—I was afraid of marriage because visiting friends, relatives, I observed many things that were not right, and yet a stigma was attached if you're past 21, unmarried—that there was something wrong with you."⁹⁴

To gain more freedom most of these career—oriented women teachers angled to get a city position as soon as possible. In the city they could find their own living accommodations rather than having them chosen by school boards, they may even have had what Nan Corman (1936) termed "a room with a view."⁹⁵

Career Paths: Experience, Permanence and Credentials

These women came of age in an era where they were socialized into the expectation of marriage and home-making. As Leger-Anderson explained, "The curriculum female students have been taught has been affected by gender considerations. Historically, female education in Saskatchewan was largely linked to the presumed proper destiny of women: marriage, with its associated roles of mother, wife and homemaker."⁹⁶

Not all respondents explained why they never married, whether it was by choice or accident, to gain freedoms or because the right person never turned up or simply because marrying would have meant they would have to cease teaching. Mabel Braaten (1925) summed up this perspective nicely, "Marriage wasn't important. I was having too good a time to settle down. I thought that probably I'd meet a man that I couldn't live without. I didn't."⁹⁷ According to Mary Donovan (1927), "The right man never turned up. I wasn't particularly interested in marriage. I was happy to have work to do...useful work. If the right man came along then I might marry."⁹⁸ Nor did many disclose details regarding romantic relationships or if their sexual identity played a role in their decision to never marry.

Due to the void of examples, in the first half of the 20th century, as teenagers many did not intend teaching to be a life-long career. Typically, as Mary Tolly (1934) stated, "I had not planned on making a lifetime career of teaching. I just took things as they came."⁹⁹ A few though knew from the start of their first job that they intended to be career teachers. Henderson (1923), born in 1906, said that she did not marry because she "was very ambitious." She achieved her Bachelor of Education in 1947, and worked as teacher and principal and formed the Superannuated Teachers' Association.¹⁰⁰

Some saw teaching as their first choice but others reported entering the teaching profession due to a lack of other options for women. For example, Grace Morrell (1914) reported, "To tell you the truth it wasn't that I didn't want to teach but there was nothing else for me to do."¹⁰¹ Mary Donovan (1927) explained gender scripts in the first half of the 20th century, "Girls were mostly teachers, nurses, housemaids, or hairdressers in those days."¹⁰²

The short training period was very attractive. As Gail Stewart (1910) reported, it was very easy to become a teacher due to the desperate shortage. She explained:

[In 1909], the year that I was ready to take my grade eleven, the Department ...[was] very short of teachers, and they put on a short six week course and they promised that if you were successful with the course that you would be allowed to teach for two years and then you would have to go back to Normal. So I took that short course, went back to Collegiate and finished my grade eleven and in July of 1910 I began to teach.¹⁰³

Due to short training requirements, women who were in desperate need to provide financially for themselves and their families of origin could achieve this end by becoming teachers. For example, Mary Tolly (1934) reported, "My parents had hoped I would help them financially as times were very difficult."¹⁰⁴ Minnie McMaster's (1909) parents could not afford to send her to university and in fact needed her to help support them and so she became a teacher, "...anything that I had was spent on my parents. I helped them out."¹⁰⁵

This dedication to monetarily supporting their families of origin in some cases continued throughout their careers and shaped their lives.¹⁰⁶ Elsie Frank (1923) had the responsibility to support her mother with Depression era wages, which were especially low for women.¹⁰⁷ According to Frank, "Circumstances governed my life. My father passed away in 1932 and from then until her death in 1947, I was my mother's sole support. By then remaining single was my choice."¹⁰⁸ In McMaster's (1909) early years as a teacher, she used her pay cheque to help her parents raise her siblings:

Teaching seemed to be such an honourable profession, you know. And of course it was economic too...my Father was just a labourer at times and he came from Ireland and my Father and Mother had nine children and times weren't too good. And I wanted to help, in fact, I just had to help. When I got my cheque I just handed it over to my Mother and she got the use of it...¹⁰⁹

It is important to note that the rationale surrounding differential pay between men and women in the early 20th century, in many cases, hinged upon arguments that pay should not be equal as men had families to financially support whereas single women did not. However, a number of the never-married women in our study did find themselves in positions where they needed to financially care for family members on their lower salary. Further while some male teachers may have had children, "All men, both single and married, enjoyed a higher rate of pay than all women, whether the men had dependents or not."¹¹⁰

Other women strategized as to how they could arrange their career so it was possible to live with and further assist family members. Helen Grant (1916) is an example of this situation. Her father died when she was 10 and she used teaching as a way of supporting her family, going as far as to lie about her age when she was 15 to get into Normal School that much earlier, "the first teacher training I had I lied about my age because I was too young. But I only got a permit and at the end of that permit, either I quit teaching or take further training. The Principal in Normal knew that I was under age but I looked older and I had four years of high school — he had girls there

that only had Grade 10.” She then lived with her sister throughout most of her career and even into her retirement until her sister died.¹¹¹ Another teacher, Mabel Braaten (1925) continued to live with her mother after her own retirement from teaching.¹¹² Levels of support provided by these women varied from sending money home to parents in the early stages of their career, to providing more long-term assistance, such as living with a family member short or long term and perhaps providing care or financial support. The majority of these women would not have had life long caring commitments in the same way marriage was intended to be.

Not being accountable to a spouse, for most of these women, gave them flexibility to explore. Helen Grant (1916) was typical of those who switched schools often simply for the sake of change. She outlined her career path by stressing her sense of adventure:

I decided that I was going to move and see a little more of Saskatchewan. So I taught for 6 months each in the next schools. I just wanted to see the country...I had a good clean boarding place, lovely. I liked it there but I wanted to wander... So I took another school near Maymont. It was a nice school too but then I decided that I would like to teach in small town.¹¹³

Some like Nan Corman (1936) and her colleagues seized opportunity in the 1950s to teach children of the Canadian troops stationed in Germany, an opportunity not feasible for logistical reasons to married women teachers.¹¹⁴ Others found opportunities to work abroad by entering teacher exchange programs.¹¹⁵

Never-married women had greater control over the money they earned and could spend it on recreational travel. A survey of Normal School Reunion booklets shows a trend among many never-married women teachers to list travel among their past-times. Ten out fourteen never-married career women teachers emphasized travel either for holiday, education purposes or to teach abroad.¹¹⁶ It would have been very difficult for a married female career-teacher with an employed husband and children in tow to have travelled as extensively as a woman like Agnes Hill. Hill graduated from the Saskatoon Normal School in 1934 and ultimately taught for 38.5 years; over the course of her life she travelled to every Canadian province, throughout the eastern and western American states, Cuba and the Caribbean.¹¹⁷

The activities of these career-oriented, never-married teachers, made available by their income and their autonomy, benefited the goals of the Department of Education as the Department strove to enhance the dedication, experience and credentials of teachers. Additionally, children benefitted from emotional bonds that many of these teachers developed with their pupils, as they saw them to an extent seeing them as ‘their children.’ According to Minnie McMaster (1909), “I don’t know but there is something about working with little children, most of them are so loving and a teacher is like a mother to the little ones, usually. And the older ones, if they liked the teacher, then they couldn’t do enough for you.”¹¹⁸ Evelyn Mooney (1935) had a similar experience to McMaster; “Every school where I taught, I became so attached to my students, that it was very hard to part with them when the time came to leave.

They were my family...A lady, who lived nearby, told me she couldn't understand how any children could be so attached to anyone, as those children were attached to me. It worked both ways, I guess."¹¹⁹ Their devotion to teaching assisted children to make a smooth transition to school.¹²⁰

In line with the Department's aspirations for higher credentials, these women enjoyed the flexibility to use their salary to pay for additional education. J. Victoria Miners (1913)¹²¹ was typical of those who dedicated their time to upgrading their credentials by spending evenings and summers completing university degrees.¹²² Some took advantages of opportunities to study outside of Saskatchewan or even Canada. Several reported taking summer courses or full year programs in the United States. For example Alice Lucke graduated from the Regina Normal School in 1944 and went on to study not only at universities in both Minnesota and Arizona but also for a semester at Oxford. In 1961 Lucke found herself recruited to teach in Fort Wayne Indiana and from there moved on to teach in Michigan City.¹²³ Sister Cornelia Catherine Mantyka studied in many countries and still managed to teach for 31 years. After graduating from the same Normal School class as Hill, Mantyka went on to get a Bachelor of Arts in 1940, a Bachelor of Education from the University of Saskatchewan in 1950, a Masters in Education at Fordham University in New York state, studied at the Sorbonne in 1965, the Sacred Heart University in Rome in 1966, and the University of Ottawa in 1969, in 1984 she then took a sabbatical year at Gonzaga University in the United States.¹²⁴

Married women who taught in the 1940s, '50s and '60s with responsibilities to husbands and children had little time to advance professionally. Muriel Setter (1950) clearly articulated the burdens on women with children as compared to men with families. Left a widow, she resumed her teaching career and became a principal. "Being the only woman principal working with five or six men principals was interesting in that when I compared my circumstances with theirs, I discovered that I was doing double duty. I was responsible not only for the school and its development, but after school hours, I was responsible for my home and children and all the duties that entailed... The men, responsible for a school, could go home to a hot meal and they left all the home responsibilities to their wives."¹²⁵ While Setter managed to perform this double day of both working as principal and being the primary or exclusive caretaker for her home and children, it is possible that women who had a husband and children would not do so.

Like the never-married career teachers Janice Wallace studied in Ontario, by remaining single Saskatchewan women teachers, "were free of the constraints that many married women experienced...and were able to pursue their teaching interests without having to worry about the traditional responsibilities of married women."¹²⁶ Thus, for example, a single woman was the first woman to be appointed as a superintendent in Saskatchewan.¹²⁷ Miss Marian Scriber, a long time teacher and principal of four years achieved this position in 1946.¹²⁸ Earlier in 1931, Miss Mary Isabella Grant was appointed Supervisor of Schools.¹²⁹ Single women also formed the majority of the women teaching in Normal Schools. For example, in 1948, of twelve instructors at the Saskatoon Normal School, six were men and six were women, of

these, five were single.¹³⁰ Never-married women also went on to be actively involved in the Superannuated Teachers Association, which was founded by Emma Stewart (1916).¹³¹ Never marrying meant that these women had the opportunity to achieve greater autonomy in their professional life than many married women.

Women and the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation

Despite the fact that women made up the bulk of the teaching population, they were not as proportionately active in professional associations as men. The young women, who taught only a few years until marriage, did not have a stake in the profession and even if interested they were scattered in rural schools with limited access to telephones or transportation. Single, self-supporting women, who were committed to a long-term career as a teacher, though, had a vested interest in the professionalization of teaching. These single women prepared the way for other women to become involved in the administration of their professional association.

Never-married women had worked for years organizing the Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association (SWTA), the Saskatchewan Teachers' Alliance and the Rural Teachers' Association.¹³² With this experience, these women helped to build the STF. By 1933, the STF replaced the Saskatchewan Teachers' Alliance and was soon established as a provincial association with mandatory affiliation for all teachers.¹³³ As evidence that the new Federation expressed interest in uniting both female and male teachers, from the 1930s to 1957, the STF's bylaws ensured that there were at least two women on the executive and a five person Women's Publicity Committee actively encourage the participation of women.¹³⁴ The Women's Publicity Committee published numbers on the lack of involvement by women and worked to encourage more participation on the part of women teachers:

Ladies of the teaching profession—it is your duty to stand up for your rightful place in the organization...Do you realize that of some forty-eight members in the Council for 1936 only four were women, outside of two others who were on the 1936 Executive?¹³⁵

The STF's publication the *Bulletin* even included a special column in almost all issues that beseeched women to become more active. Articles like "Waken up, women teachers, waken up!" did their best to inspire women teachers to become involved by exclaiming: "It is strange but true that the majority of Saskatchewan teachers, namely the women teachers, apparently fail to realize their potential power. They fail to realize that with their help, active or passive, the education of this province would go further...than it is at the present moment."¹³⁶

According to Sister Anne Fetsch (1935), "During the Thirties the STF leadership's organizational goal was to increase women's participation in the STF as it considered it to be a vital weakness of the Federation and not effective if women didn't stand up for their rights. The participation of women was very slow to develop."¹³⁷ Possibly some of the lack of interest on the part of women teachers came from the fact that

they were planning to resign at marriage and because many lived and taught in remote areas. The *Bulletin* itself admitted a “lack of contact between the (5,600) rural teachers and the Federation Executive.”¹³⁸ It was also difficult for rural teachers to get to STF meetings when they lived so far away. According to Leeta Boxall (1931), she and many other teachers had to forgo attending meetings as they had no way of getting to them, very few rural teachers in the 1930s owned cars.¹³⁹ Another teacher reported that she never attended any teacher gatherings; she had no money for train trips or hotel rooms.¹⁴⁰

While women in large numbers were slow to become engaged in the STF, women who never married or married late, were among the first active women to participate in the STF. Never-married women were part of the STF’s Executive Committee every year for the first three decades. Even as more women continued to teach after marriage few of them became involved in the upper branches of the STF. Between the years 1934 and 1968 only three married women were involved in the Executive branch, Mrs. Bertha Paintin in 1942, Mrs. Margaret McFarley in 1943 and Mrs. J. Alix Steen between 1947 and Easter 1951 as compared to 19 unmarried women, 13 of whom were part of the Executive for at least two years.¹⁴¹ Fetsch commented on the women who devoted time to the STF,

A small number of remarkable energetic women did emerge from the teaching force to influence the course of the growing organization... In 1954 ([the year that] Caroline Robins was elected to office) an ‘equal opportunities’ resolution was passed approving the appointment of women to principals and superintendents positions provided that their qualifications warrant the promotion. Despite these bright lights, the Federation’s early efforts to organize ‘Women in Education’ were a failure.¹⁴²

Elsie Frank (1923), a never-married teacher, falls into the category of women Fetsch described. She was interested in becoming involved in teachers’ organizations for her entire career though she had a difficult time navigating her way into the organizations in the early years. She reported her experience as such,

With the exception of the STF a minimum of women were elected to office. My keen interest in the local women’s group finally helped me to become a representative from Regina to the Provincial body... This provided a challenge as women were not encouraged to take part in this very important phase of promoting better conditions, physically or financially. Prior to [the formation of the STF] there had been teachers organizations mainly segregated as to male and female... It took many years and rarely amicable discussions to unite the male and female groups... My efforts during these [segregated] years were in this field rather than along cultural, recreational or artistic lines.¹⁴³

These determined career women teachers quickly made places for themselves in the STF. Gail Stewart (1910–1953) had been a teacher for 24 years before the founding

of the STF and also an organizer for the Rural Teachers' Alliance. At the inception of the STF, she became the Federation's first Vice-President. Stewart strove to realize one of the main goals of the STF, to elevate the status of teaching as a profession. According to Stewart, "...the first thing that we put a lot of emphasis on was upgrading your standing because it was realized that if we were going to demand professional status and professional salaries that we were going to have to be professionals. One of the very first things that they began emphasizing was the upgrading of teacher's qualifications and a great many of us here in Regina for instance had what we called a second-class certificate." Achieving a first class certificate at night while continuing to teach during the day involved incredible commitment. "Well we went to work and took night classes and we organized forty or fifty people...so the classroom would be full. We would get a specialist in Literature. We'd all write the literature examination and then next year we had one man who was an expert in history. Most of us covered it in four years and we got our first class certificates. Now, I'm telling you it's hard work."¹⁴⁴

Miss Rose Johnson was also a member of the first executive of the STF and served on the Women's Publicity Committee with Miss Gail Stewart.¹⁴⁵ Other early contributors to the profession and the Federation included Miss Louise Aitchison, Miss J. Victoria Miners and Miss Myrtle Strangeways (1919–1955). Miners, who had concluded her career as principal in 1948, had contributed to Saskatoon Women's Teachers' Association in Saskatoon as first President, to the Saskatchewan Teachers' Alliance as President in 1920 and 1921, to the Canadian Teachers' Federation as participant at the inaugurate meeting in 1920 and to the STF as active member. Strangeways was a dedicated classroom teacher for 35 years and also was an active member of the Teachers' Alliance, vice-president of the STF, president of the Prince Albert Teacher's Local and also successfully struggling for a superannuation scheme. She was a member of the Teachers Superannuation Commission for over three decades.¹⁴⁶ In 1941, Miss Ada M. Tainor, a grade four teacher, held an executive position with the STF and worked as a councilor for the City of Regina.¹⁴⁷ Emma Stewart (1916–1942), after teaching 26 years, took on the responsibility of Assistant Secretary to the Federation (1942–1962). She had acquired union organizing experience as a member of the Alliance and the Rural Teachers' Association.¹⁴⁸

Participation in the provincial associations opened doors for a role for women on the executive of the CTF and at the annual meetings of this organization. Thus, for example, in 1946, Miss Ethel Coppinger¹⁴⁹ the first female president of the STF from 1945 to 1946, was one of the four person executive of the CTF and Miss Florence Irwin, was one of the three Saskatchewan delegates.¹⁵⁰ Of the 27 delegates from the nine provinces, 20 were men and 7 were single women.¹⁵¹ As Robert Tyre conceded, the position of STF president was "normally a male preserve," however, for the years 1954 and 1955 Caroline Robins became the second woman since the STF's inception to step into this role.¹⁵² Robins had served as Secretary of the Saskatoon Elementary Teachers' Association and also as President. For ten years she served as head of the financial committee of the Federation. From there Robins moved on to the CTF being elected Vice-President in 1955 and then President in 1956. Not only

did Robins have the time to dedicate to these institutions, which marrying earlier in her career may not have allowed, but she also had the freedom to pick up her life and move to England in 1931 to work as an exchange teacher for a year, in 1957 to accept an appointment to the Canadian National Commission for UNESCO and in the 1960s to work in Europe as executive assistant to the superintendent of schools established by the Department of Defense for children of the Canadian Armed Forces.¹⁵³

Conclusion

This paper draws attention to never-married women who established careers as teachers and who also contributed to building the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation. Despite the rhetoric, which bestowed the label of ideal teacher on men, there were single women who chose a career in teaching during the time that resignation at marriage was accepted and expected for women. These career oriented women persevered through years of teaching in one-room schools and boarding with parents of their pupils to achieve employment in urban school boards. They saved money from their second class salaries to achieve their degrees, and many furthered the profession through activity in the STF. By the time that married women began to teach continuously, single career-oriented women had opened the door for women to be professional educators. These accomplishments were possible because by remaining single these women could continue teaching. By profiling a selection of women, we draw attention to the many others, in these circumstances, who pursued careers as professional teachers. They embodied the characteristics that were desired of the ideal teacher: permanency, skill, higher education, and dedication.

Notes

- 1 The authors appreciate the comments given to this paper at the ACHE/CHEA Conference, October, 2012 and also the comments reviewed by the reviewers for the *HSE/RHE*.
- 2 Brackets after a woman's name denote the year she started teaching.
- 3 Robert Tyre, *Tales Out of School: A Story of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation*, (Toronto: W.J. Gage Ltd., 1968), 231-232.
- 4 Out of the 46 women only three eventually married. One of whom married shortly before retirement after several decades of teaching and the others after retiring. They were included as the experiences they had for the majority or all of their careers would have been very similar to those of women career teachers who never married.
- 5 The term 'spinster' is used only when referring to what these women would have been thought of as and how they would have been stigmatized in the time period while they were teachers.
- 6 Sheila Cavanagh, "Female Teacher Gender and Sexuality in Twentieth Century Ontario," in *History is Hers: Women Educators in Twentieth Century Ontario*, eds. Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Helen Harper, (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 2005), 111.
- 7 Robert S. Patterson, "Voices from the Past: The Personal and Professional Struggle of Rural School Teachers," in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History* eds. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson and David C. Jones, (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1986), 99-111.

- 8 Irene Poelzer, *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905–1920: Their Contributions* (Saskatoon: Lindenblatt & Hamonic Publishing, 1990).
- 9 For the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation see Apolonja Maria Kojder, "The Saskatoon Women Teachers' Association: A Demand for Recognition" in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West*, eds. David C. Jones, Nancy M. Sheehan and Robert M. Stamp (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises Ltd., 1977), 177-191. John E. Lyons, "Ten Forgotten Years: The Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and the Legacy of the Depression," in *Shaping the Schools of the Canadian West* eds. Jones, Sheehan and Stamp, 113-129; Clarence Sterling McDowell, *The Dynamics of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation*, (Ph.D. diss. University of Alberta, 1965); Tyre, *Tales Out of School*.
- 10 Verna Gallén "The Development of the Teaching Profession in Saskatchewan," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan: Selected Readings* eds. Brian Noonan, Dianne Hallman and Murray Scharf, (Regina: Canadian Plains Research Centre, University of Regina, 2006), 165-147; Eleanor Campbell, *Reflections of Light: A History of the Saskatoon Normal School (1912–1953) and the Saskatoon Teachers' College (1953–1964)*, (Saskatoon: The College of Education, University of Saskatchewan 1996); Gail McConnell, *Arbos 1983: Memories 1933–1983* (Saskatoon: STF, 1983).
- 11 Dianne M. Hallman, "Telling Tales In and Out of School: Twentieth Century Women Teachers in Saskatchewan," *Saskatchewan History*, 49, 2 (1997): 3-17.
- 12 Ibid.
- 13 June Corman, "Rural Prairie Teachers: Labour Market Conditions and the Search for Employment," *Vitae Scholasticae*, Spring (1999): 63-77; June Corman, "Seeking Greener Pastures: Rural Women Teachers in Southern Saskatchewan," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan* eds. Noonan, Hallman and Scharf, 181-194.
- 14 June Corman, "Returning to the Classroom: Married Women Fill the Void for Teachers in Saskatchewan," *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal*, 27,1 (2002): 81-90.
- 15 June Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators: A Century of Change" *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal*, 35,1, (2010): 92-107.
- 16 June Corman and Christine Ensslen, "Surviving Tough Times: Saskatchewan Women Teachers in the Great Depression" *Saskatchewan History*, 64, 1, (2012): 8-23.
- 17 This paper is not intended to be a comparison of the circumstances of women who never-married and Catholic sisters. The information provided by the Catholic sisters is to document their contribution to education in Saskatchewan. Further research could be done on the unique position of Catholic nuns in rural country schools.
- 18 The majority of these accounts were collected by Dr. Irene Poelzer and supplemented by accounts collected by Dr. June Corman and John Henderson as were the accounts of married women that were consulted for comparative purposes. This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation and Brock University.
- 19 The interviews in both the Poelzer and Corman collections can be considered oral histories according to guidelines by Ritchie in that the oral interviewers were intended to document significant features of the past—women's experiences as educators—by collecting personal commentaries. Each of the semi-structured oral interviews proceeded according to pre-set standards and all participants signed consent forms, in most cases, also consenting to the use of their name. The guided autobiographical written submissions followed similar standards, with the exception that the women provided written not oral accounts to a series of guided issues. See Donald A. Ritchie *Doing Oral History: A Practical Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).
- 20 Other researchers, such as the cross-disciplinary team working with Rebecca Coulter and Helen Harper, highlighted similar methodological issues. Rebecca Coulter and Helen Harper, *History is Hers: Women Educators in Twentieth Century Ontario* (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2005).

- 21 Hallman, "Telling Tales In and Out of School," 16.
- 22 Newspapers were analyzed for the years 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1937, 1938 and 1939. The advertisements were gathered from the *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, the *Regina Daily Post*, the *Battleford Press*, the *Regina Leader Post* and the *Prince Albert Daily Herald*.
- 23 *Twi-Light S.N.S. 1933–1934* [Saskatoon Normal School Reunion Booklet] publication date unknown; *Book of Recollections 1920–1935* [Regina Normal School Reunion Booklet] publication date unknown; *Life After Normal 1943–1944* [Regina Normal School Reunion Booklet], 1992; *S.N.S. 1912–1952* [Saskatoon Normal School Reunion Booklet Supplement], January 1994.
- 24 Poelzer, *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905–1920*, 7-34.
- 25 Murray Scharf, "An Historical Overview of the Organization of Education in Saskatchewan," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan* eds. Noonan, Hallman and Scharf, 3-19.
- 26 Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107.
According to Corman while the proportion of female to male teachers fluctuated over the course of the 20th century, women were always in the majority.
- 27 For example in 1906 187 of the teachers granted new licenses and 206 were trained outside of the province. By 1926 1,655 teachers were trained in Saskatchewan and 225 were trained outside the province. Saskatchewan Department of Education, *Annual Report 1926* (City: King's Printer 1927), 71. For information on number of students trained in the North-West Territories from 1880 to 1904 see M. Toombs, *The Control and Support of Public Education in Rupert's Land and the North-West Territories to 1905 and in Saskatchewan to 1960* (University of Minnesota: doctoral dissertation, 1962,) 169.
- 28 *AR* 1903, 21.
- 29 *Ibid.*, 56.
- 30 *AR* 1909, 12.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 12.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 13.
- 33 Hallman, "Telling Tales In and Out of School," 13.
- 34 *AR* 1921, 61.
- 35 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 36 *Ibid.*, 14.
- 37 John E. Lyons, "Henry Janzen and Curriculum Reform," in *A History of Education in Saskatchewan*, eds. Noonan, Hallman and Scharf, 56.
- 38 Sterling McDowell, *The Dynamics of the Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation*.
- 39 "Editorial" Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation *Bulletin*, October, 1946, 2-3.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 2-3.
- 41 Similarly in British Columbia, in the early 20th century and in Australia in the 19th century, women were expected to teach briefly, then marry, resign and raise a family. Kristina R. Llewellyn, *Democracy's Angels: The Work of Women Teachers*, (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012); Marjorie Theobald, "And Gladly Teach? The Making of a Woman's Profession" in *Women Teaching, Women Learning: Historical Perspectives*, eds. Elizabeth M. Smyth and Paula Borne, (Toronto: Inanna Publications and Education Inc.), 65-84.
- 42 Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation, *A History of Women in Education*, (Saskatoon: STF, 1988): 1.
- 43 Poelzer, *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905–1920*, 7.
- 44 Mary Kinnear, *In Subordination: Professional Women, 1870–1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1995), 16.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 16.
- 46 Saskatchewan Board of Archives (SAB), Micro 7.14(84) "Charges many wives have

- nothing to do," *Star-Phoenix*, February 20, 1929, 8.
- 47 Lyons, "Henry Janzen and Curriculum Reform," 56.
- 48 *AR* 1916, 62.
- 49 *AR* 1935, 9.
- 50 Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107.
- 51 Llewellyn, *Democracy Angels*, 72.
- 52 Poelzer, *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920*, 44.
- 53 *Ibid.*, 44.
- 54 "Editorial," *Bulletin*, October, 1946, 2-3.
- 55 *Ibid.*, 3.
- 56 "The President's Page" *Bulletin*, October, 1946, 5.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 1.
- 58 In keeping with the attitudes of the time, Normal School students in 1908-1909 did "not see themselves as professionals in that they did not consider their upcoming work as enduring." Campbell, *Reflections of Light*, 15.
- 59 Grace Cunningham, Personal account provided to Dr. Irene Poelzer, 1985.
- 60 Corman and Ensslen, "Surviving Tough Times," 8-23.
- 61 Grace Cunningham, Personal account provided to Dr. Irene Poelzer, 1985.
- 62 Interview with Flora Henderson by June Corman, 1993.
- 63 Men were also viewed as the ideal teacher during the introduction of secondary education in Toronto. Susan Gelman, "The 'Feminization' of the High Schools?" *Women Secondary School Teachers in Toronto: 1871-1930* *Historical Studies in Education/Revue d'histoire de l'éducation*, 2, 1 (1990): 119-148.
- 64 Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 92-107.
- 66 Poelzer found similar trend in classified advertisements for the period 1905-1920 in Saskatchewan. Poelzer, *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920*, 23.
- 67 For details on similar circumstances in Ontario see Cecilia Reynold and Harry Smaller, "Ontario School Teachers: A Gendered View of the 1930s," *HSE/RHE*, 6, 3 (1994): 151-169 and Judith Arbus "Grateful to Be Working: Women Teachers During the Great Depression" in *Feminism and Education: A Canadian Perspective* eds. Frieda Forman, Mary O'Brien, Jane Haddad, Dianne Hallman and Philinda Masters (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990), 169-190.
- 68 "Classifieds" *Regina Daily Post* January 2, 1930; "Classifieds" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* May 1 & 23, 1930; "Classifieds" *Battleford Press* April 27, 1931; "Classifieds" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, November 22 & December 18, 1933; "Classifieds" *Regina Leader Post* July 7 & August 7, 1933; "Classifieds" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* June 7, 13 & 18, November 25, December 10 & 28 1935; "Classifieds" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* May 25, 1937.
- 69 "Classifieds" *Regina Leader Post* August 23 & 28, 1933; "Classifieds" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* September 11, 1933; "Classifieds" *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix* June 6, 1935.
- 70 Poelzer, *Saskatchewan Women Teachers 1905-1920*, 23; Hallman, "Telling Tales In and Out of School," 6.
- 71 See *Ibid.*, 15-31; Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107. As Reynolds found in Ontario, by 1921 the Toronto Board of Education had banned married women from teaching. This ban remained until 1926. Cecilia Reynolds, "Hegemony and Hierarchy: Becoming a Teacher in Toronto, 1930-1980," *HSE/RHE* 2,1 (1990): 95-118.
- 72 A very small number of married women taught prior to the shortage of teachers ushered in the conditions for married women to return to the classroom in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107.
- 73 Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107.

- 74 Kinnear, *In Subordination*, 17.
- 75 Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107.
- 76 Corman and Ensslen, "Surviving Tough Times," 8-23.
- 77 Cited in Tyre, *Tales Out of School*, 19-20.
- 78 Elsie Frank, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985. Name Changed.
- 79 June Corman, "Gendered Career Paths for Saskatchewan Educators," 92-107. During this time period Kinnear found similar pay differentials in Manitoba. Kinnear, *In Subordination*, 123.
- 80 Grace Morrell, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- 81 As late as 1928 close 75% of elementary students attended rural or village one-room schools. *AR* 1928, 113.
- 82 Hallman provides an overview of the living conditions faced by these women. Hallman, "Telling Tales In and Out of School," 11-12.
- 83 "Editorial" *Bulletin*, October, 1946, 2-3.
- 84 Helen Grant, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer in 1985. Name Changed.
- 85 Gail Stewart, Interview with John Henderson, 1978. There is a discrepancy as to when Stewart started teaching between information provided by Stewart to Henderson (1910) and the year (1912) documented in Tyre, *Tales Out of School*, 187.
- 86 Nan Corman, Interview with June Corman, 1993.
- 87 Hallman, "Telling Tales In and Out of School," 11-12.
- 88 Minnie McMaster, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1987.
- 89 "Editorial" *Bulletin*, October, 1946, 2-3.
- 90 Gail Stewart, Interview with John Henderson, 1978.
- 91 Mary Donovan, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- 92 Grace Morrell, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- 93 Women who established a career in teaching but never married were regarded differently in various geographical locations, and perceptions of them changed over time. In Ontario, after the repeal of the marriage ban in the 1940s, Cavanagh has argued that Ontario educational administrators were concerned that 'spinster' women teachers would convey a masculine and pro-homosexual influence, and consequently women teachers were expected to be "heterosexually well-adjusted." Sheila Cavanagh "Female Teacher Gender and Sexuality," *History is Hers*, 111-134. Llewellyn argued that spinster teachers became considered as deviant as they had rejected their "natural purpose." Kristina R. Llewellyn, *Democracy Angels: The Work of Women School Teachers*, (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2012). Blout found that some Americans considered spinster teachers as mannish lesbians. Jackie M. Blout, "Spinsters, Bachelor, and Other Gender Transgressors in School Employment, 1850-1990," *Review of Educational Research* 70 (2000):89. Oram argued that "aberrant connotations of spinsterhood" pressured women to marry in England in the post war period. Alison Oram "To Cook Dinners with Love in Them?: Sexuality, Marital Status and Women Teachers in England and Wales, 1920-1939," in *Telling Women's Lives*, eds. K. Weiler and S. Middleton (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), 96-112. Theobald found in Australia that the activism engaged in by never-married teachers gave them a 'sense of purpose' which assisted them to address the stigma of the spinster woman. Marjorie Theobald, "And Gladly Teach?" in *Women Teaching, Women Learning*, eds. Smyth and Borne, 65-84.
- 94 Olive Evasiuk, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1986.
- 95 Nan Corman, Interview with June Corman, 1993.
- 96 Ann Leger-Anderson, "Women and Education," *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/women_and_education.html
- 97 Mabel Braaten, Interview with Pauline Johnson for the Poelzer collection, 1985.
- 98 Mary Donovan, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.

- 99 Mary Tolly, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer in 1985. Name Changed.
- 100 Interview with Flora Henderson by June Corman, 1993.
- 101 Grace Morrell, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- 102 Mary Donovan, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- 103 Gail Stewart, Interview with John Henderson, 1978.
- 104 Mary Tolly, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer in 1985. Name Changed.
- 105 Minnie McMaster, Personal account for Dr. Poelzer, 1987.
- 106 Holden reported similar findings on both single men and women frequently entering into positions as carers for family members and the ways in which this drastically impacted their lives from the time period of 1914 to 1960. Katherine Holden *The Shadow of Marriage: Singleness in England, 1914–60*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007), 67.
- 107 Corman and Ensslen, “Surviving Tough Times,” 8-23.
- 108 Elsie Frank, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985. Name Changed.
- 109 Minnie McMaster, Personal account provided for Dr. Poelzer, 1987.
- 110 Kinnear, *In Subordination*, 123.
- 111 Helen Grant, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985. Name Changed.
- 112 Mabel Braaten, Interview with Pauline Johnson for the Poelzer collection, 1985.
- 113 Helen Grant, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985. Name Changed.
- 114 Nan Corman, Interview with June Corman, 1983.
- 115 *Twi-Light S.N.S. 1933–1934*.
- 116 *Ibid.*; *Book of Recollections 1920–1935*; *Life After Normal 1943–1944*; *S.N.S. 1912–1952*.
- 117 *Twi-Light S.N.S. 1933–1934*.
- 118 Minnie McMaster, Personal account provided for Dr. Poelzer, 1987.
- 119 Evelyn Mooney, Interview with Teresa Stamler for the Poelzer collection, 1985.
- 120 See Cavanagh, p. 118-119, for how motherly behaviour in the classroom assisted “life-long, single” women teachers to appear normal and natural.
- 121 Karen Zemiak, “Miner, Victoria “Tory” (1888–1956),” *Encyclopedia of Saskatchewan* http://esask.uregina.ca/entry/miners_victoria_tory_1888-1956.html
- 122 Tyre, *Tales Out of School*, 187.
- 123 *Life After Normal 1943–1944*.
- 124 *Twi-Light S.N.S. 1933–1934*.
- 125 Muriel Setter, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985. Name Changed.
- 126 Janice Wallace, “Assuming Leadership,” in *History is Hers*, eds. Rebecca Priegert Coulter and Helen Harper, 145.
- 127 Two of the first superintendents to be appointed in Ontario were also women who never-married. Wallace, “Assuming Leadership,” 137-160.
- 128 “Personal Notes,” *Bulletin*, September, 1946, 32.
- 129 Memorandum issued by the Department of Education, Government of Saskatchewan, Regina, October 13, 1931. The memorandum names 47 male inspectors and one female supervisor.
- 130 “Saskatoon Normal School,” *Bulletin* September, 1948, 21-23.
- 131 “Council Report,” *Bulletin* 1962, 43. <http://sain.scaa.sk.ca/items/index.php/council-1962-emma-stewart;rad>; *STS: Ten Years in Review* (Published by the STS for Saskatoon’s Centennial) May 27, 1982.
- 132 Women elementary teachers formed the Saskatoon Women’s Teachers’ Association in 1918 to overcome economic and attitudinal obstacles, which were as Kojder explained, “imposed on them by a male-dominated profession which was reflection of the society of the day.” Kojder, “The Saskatoon Women Teachers’ Association” 177-191.

- 133 See Tyre, *Tales Out of School*, 30 & 83.
- 134 STF, *A History of Women in Education*, 4-6.
- 135 "To the Women Teachers", *Bulletin*, March, 1937, 44
- 136 Eugenie Thomas, "Women's Publicity" *Bulletin* September, 1938, 15.
- 137 Sister Anne Fetsch, Interview with Bernadette Marsall for the Poelzer collection, 1985.
- 138 "To the Women Teachers", *Bulletin*, March, 1937, 44.
- 139 Leeta Boxall, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- 140 Grace Ford, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer, 1985.
- 141 Tyre, *Tales Out of School*, 230-235.
- 142 Sister Anne Fetsch, Interview with Bernadette Marsall for the Poelzer collection, 1985.
- 143 Elsie Frank, Personal account provided to Dr. Poelzer in 1985. Name Changed.
- 144 Gail Stewart, Interview with John Henderson, 1978.
- 145 Tyre, *Tales Out of School*, 89 & 186.
- 146 *Ibid.*, 156.
- 147 *Ibid.*, 188.
- 148 *Ibid.*, 83.
- 149 Ethel Margaret Coppinger (Brisbin) married later in her life, after serving as head of the Finance Committee for the STF, President of the STF and the CTF.
- 150 Tyre, *Tales Out of School*, 231-232.
- 151 Florence Irwin "Report on the CTF Convention", *Bulletin*, September, 1946, 25.
- 152 Tyre *Tales Out of School*, 192-193.
- 153 *Ibid.*, 193.