BIRDS OF PASSAGE OR EARLY PROFESSIONALS? TEACHERS IN LATE NINETEENTH-CENTURY BRITISH COLUMBIA*

Jean Barman

Recent analyses of teachers and teaching in Canada have viewed the occupation's feminization—its growing dominance by female teachers—as a key variable explaining change over time. Alison Prentice and Marta Danylewycz have compared the shift in Ontario and Quebec, demonstrating convincingly that in the two major urban centres of Toronto and Montreal "in the early decades of school system building [1861-81], women were admitted to public education mainly to fill the bottom ranks or were ignored altogether." Some persevered, others "abandon[ed] teaching as soon as the opportunity presented itself."[1] John Abbott has written about turn-of-the century rural Ontario from the perspective of male school inspectors overseeing female teachers.[2] Moving forward in time and to the west coast province of British Columbia, J. Donald Wilson and Paul Stortz have incisively explored the difficult physical conditions in which female rural teachers found themselves.[3]

This plethora of recent work focusing on woman teachers has very usefully drawn attention to the importance of sex roles in teaching, but it has also obscured other changes occurring over these same years, or, where paying them attention, linked them to feminization as the responsible agent.[4] The studies share an unexamined assumption that male teachers were somehow different, possibly more "professional," that is, self-directed and committed to the occupation over the long term. Just how or why this should have been the case remains largely unexamined. Neither Abbott nor Wilson and Stortz compare rates of transiency between sexes. Rather, by focusing exclusively on females and on the very real problem of rural teacher transiency, they leave the impression, perhaps unintentionally, that women were peculiarly susceptible to becoming birds of passage. By extension, had more teachers been men, transiency might have been reduced and conditions of rural schooling thereby improved.

This exploratory essay, which represents a first stage of a long-term research project on teachers and teaching in late nineteenth-century British Columbia, suggests somewhat tentatively that feminization may have been overemphasized as an explanatory device.[5] During the critical late decades of the past century, a time period when the public school was becoming the norm across North America for all children as opposed to the quasi-voluntary literacy vehicle of earlier years, the occupation of teaching was without doubt attracting greater proportions of women. It was, however, also undergoing other shifts of equal or greater importance. By focusing on teacher retention within the school as opposed to teacher longevity in the occupation, this paper makes two complementary points that relate directly to the debate over feminization. The British Columbia case

HSE/RHÉ 2, 1 (1990): 17 - 36

indicates, first of all, that the process of feminization occurred at very different rates across Canada. Secondly, in British Columbia, feminization of itself did not necessarily alter the character of teaching as an occupation, both female and male retention rates gradually increasing within the very city schools where women first assumed numerical preponderance.

The findings reinforce and refine more general arguments being made by Michael Apple, Myra Strober, and others concerning the changing nature of teaching.[6] Growing regulation of the occupation is perceived as critical to its feminization, men finding "the opportunity cost" simply too great. Then, as women moved in, male administrators became even more concerned to credentialize what were perceived as individuals who by virtue of sex alone were incapable of regulating themselves. In similar fashion, wages were kept low on the grounds that women were after all only birds of passage marking time between their own schooling and marriage. In the case of British Columbia, external oversight of the occupation of teaching remained minimal through the end of the nineteenth century, and possibly as a consequence, feminization not only developed relatively slowly, but so long as unaccompanied by close patriarchal regulation, had little impact on the occupation's early professionalization, as measured by teacher retention within schools.

The Circumstances of British Columbia

The west coast province of British Columbia presents a particularly good laboratory for examining the relationship between teacher retention within schools and feminization. Public school legislation was passed in early 1872 within months of the province entering Confederation and from then until the turn of the century teaching remained peculiarly voluntary. Individual men and women made the decision largely on their own terms whether or not to enter the occupation. Unlike virtually every other jurisdiction in North America, where aspirants were increasingly expected to have some training in the art of teaching, no teacher training college or other institution of higher education existed. Before 1901, when the first normal school opened in Vancouver, all that was necessary to become a teacher was to take a knowledge-based examination given annually in the capital city of Victoria and eventually also at an interior location. A mark as low as 30% on subject matter roughly equivalent to that taught in high school gained a certificate good for a year; higher grades, longer term-certificates.

Geography and demography were both conducive to ready employment. The physical circumstances of British Columbia, located at the edge of a continent separated by mountains and by sparsely inhabited prairies from the rest of the country of which it was nominally a part, mitigated against experienced teachers being directly recruited from elsewhere. The one attempt, made during the 1870s, was remarkably unsuccessful, breaking down over who should pay the high cost of transportation. Certainly, experienced teachers did arrive, but primarily for the same more general reason which over three decades brought almost 150,000 settlers to the province—a perception of greater opportunity and

better life style. Very few, so it seems from qualitative data being collected, came specifically in order to teach, although once arrived, very possibly they took up the occupation on becoming aware of the ongoing demand for teachers. This was particularly so during the population boom following the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1885-87 and a decade later on the initiation of a federal immigration campaign. Over the years 1872-1901, teachers remained in sufficiently short supply that it was never that difficult to secure a position, if not in the city then certainly on the frontier, if not immediately when school started in August of each year then a bit later as the incumbent departed for one reason or the other.

Most of the men and women who taught in British Columbia over the last three decades of the nineteenth century thus did so principally as a consequence of individual or family decision-making. Once so decided, the process for acquiring the necessary certification was reasonably accessible, not demanding a period of time away from some other occupation to attend classes, but rather only evenings of study for the upcoming examination. No screening or weeding out process existed such as Alison Prentice has documented for men and women choosing to attend the Toronto normal school and John Calam for its eventual British Columbia counterpart.[7] Neither were British Columbia teachers inculcated with any standardized version of what a teacher should be, against which they might later measure their classroom performance, possibly find themselves lacking, and therefore voluntarily leave the occupation.

This is not to say that teachers in British Columbia were subject to no oversight whatsoever. As was the case in other jurisdictions, the ongoing operation of schools was under local control, which meant that the predilections of trustees helped determine who was hired and how long he or she remained. The annual reports of the provincial Department of Education were increasingly replete with admonitions on approved behaviour, much of it centring on being moral exemplars, but no statement suggests that the reports were ever distributed, or intended to be distributed, to individual teachers in the field. As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the number of school inspectors was expanded, moving away from the original policy in which the provincial superintendent was expected to serve as his own inspector. While in repeated inspections of the more accessible schools teachers were undoubtedly given much advice on how to conduct themselves, remoter locations such as the Cariboo gold mining town of Barkerville remained through the end of the nineteenth century outside even this minimal level of oversight. Another external agent which may have encouraged self-assessment of suitability for the occupation was the annual institutes promoted by provincial authorities at which individividual teachers presented papers, principally on teaching methods. Institutes were, however, held only sporadically and attended by a minority of teachers, principally it would seem by the most senior who were thereby the least likely to view the advice being given as applicable to themselves. The overall circumstance of relative freedom from external monitors or perceptions of the ideal teacher makes the situation of British

Columbia teachers in the late nineteenth century a particularly useful laboratory for examining change over time in the occupation.[8]

Feminization

There is no question that in British Columbia, as in most other places across North America, the occupation of teaching became increasingly attractive to women during these years. Particularly in British Columbia, then as now a resource-driven economy, options for paid employment open to women so in need or desire were very limited. Teaching was preferable to most alternatives, in part precisely because no period of training, possibly away from home, was required. Qualitative evidence ranging from diaries to family recollections to the manuscript census confirms teaching's diverse appeal, be it the young women at loose ends or her slightly older counterpart forced to fend for herself.[9]

Yet compared with the geographical areas supplying both a plurality of residents and the assumptions underlying British Columbia society and its system of public education, the occupation did not become feminized either as rapidly or to the same degree.[10] In England, as Apple has pointed out, women surpassed men almost immediately the state indicated financial willingness to support mass primary education. Numbers in England were relatively equal in 1870, but a decade later female teachers outnumbered their male counterparts by one and a half to one and by 1900 almost three to one, this over a time period when the total number of schools was expanding enormously.[11] A similar pattern existed in the Canadian provinces which most directly influenced British Columbia: Ontario, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick.[12] As indicated by Table 1, based on provincial statistics compiled by the federal government, by the turn of the century seven out of ten teachers in Ontario and eight out of ten in the two Maritime provinces were female.

According to the same data, the percentage in British Columbia at the end of the century stood at almost two-thirds, up from just over half five years previously.[13] This proportion is somewhat deceptive. Table 2, unlike the provincial data, does not double-count teachers holding more than a single job within a single year and includes all teachers hired over the course of a school year.[14] It emphasizes an important distinction existing from the mid-1880s and even earlier between teachers hired at the beginning of the school year and subsequently during the year. In the former situation, men still essentially held their own at about 40% overall. To the end of the century the absolute number of male teachers continued to grow moderately. Men did not, however, keep up with rapidly growing demand for teachers due to population increase from about 10,000 non-Natives in 1871 to 150,000 by the end of the century. Women responded to the momentum. They provided the filler, being most often the individuals hired after the school year began. This very probably occurred because they could, following summer certification, most readily afford to wait at home, in the interim assisting the family economy with unpaid labour.

Feminization, in British Columbia as elsewhere, developed first in city schools.[15] In the province a clear dichotomy early appeared between three and then four coastal metropolises and the rest of the province. As Table 3 makes clear, between a quarter and 40% of teaching positions over the years 1872-1901 were in Victoria, Nanaimo, New Westminster, or Vancouver; the remainder were in scattered locations about the province. By the end of the century a handful of other schools were divided into two or more divisions, but their sophistication paled before that of the four urban centres.

From the passage of school legislation in 1872, half or more of city jobs were filled by women, a reality that provides a useful refinement to Apple's view that women were co-opted into schools subsequent to and consequent on their growing oversight by male administrators. Through the 1870s all that existed in British Columbia was a single male superintendent of education with an entire province to supervise. Women were from the very first in a majority, and as qualitative evidence demonstrates, they were in no way passive but rather very willing to stand up publicly and fight openly for the positions they held.[16] The proportion of women grew to two-thirds and more during the late 1880s, a time of marked school expansion consequent on post-railroad migration, principally from within Canada. It is very possibly due to the arrival of large numbers of young women from Ontario and elsewhere who were experienced in teaching in rural as well as urban conditions that women during this same time period began also to equal their male counterparts in non-city schools.[17] Women came to form the clear majority late in the century as the number of non-city schools began to expand rapidly both in absolute numbers and in proportion to city schools in response to the federal immigration policy launched in 1896. Thus, it is important to emphasize, feminization of teaching in late nineteenth-century British Columbia was a complex phenomenon, differing significantly between city and non-city schools as well as between teachers hired at the beginning and during each school year.

Teacher Retention

If feminization is seen as the key variable explaining change over time, then patterns of teacher retention should reflect its primacy. Several options exist to measure teacher retention. Very often it has been considered as total years within the occupation. But in this early time period, when schools were concerned to provide more than basic literacy, another measure becomes more relevant: that is, retention within the school itself. Teachers willing to stay a second or third year within a school acted in a far more "professional" manner than did individuals who may have built up extensive experience in the occupation but did so while moving in rapid succession from school to school. For these reasons, retention as analyzed here uses the individual school as the measure.

Two techniques are used to compare male and female teachers between city and non-city schools. In Table 4, mean teacher experience within a school at the beginning of each school year is calculated. Table 5 measures teacher retention

by years of previous experience of the typical teacher within the school. In terms of mean experience, over the time period 1872-1901 British Columbia teachers did stay in individual schools longer. Within several years of the passage of school legislation, the pattern became clear. The least persistent teacher, a female teaching in a non-city school, still had at the beginning of a school year between a half year's and a year's previous experience within the same school. In all other circumstances the mean was considerably higher, ranging from one to two years of experience within the school for males teaching in non-city schools to three years or more for both males and females teaching in city schools. Over the three decades the mean twice moved upward, first in the relatively stable conditions of the late 1870s and early 1880s and then after the disruptive demographic consequences of the post-railroad boom which, as Table 2 reminds us, almost quadrupled the total number of teachers in just a decade. Teachers, be they male or female, were far more likely to remain longer in city than in non-city schools but in neither case can they be characterized as birds of passage.

Retention rates, as summarized in Table 5, reflect a similar pattern. Three-quarters or more of city teachers were likely to remain a second year within a school. By the end of the century as many as 80% of those still in the school probably stayed a third, 80% a fourth, and then also 80% a fifth year. The pattern was markedly different in non-city schools where few more than half were likely to remain for each subsequent year. Throughout much of the time period women were less likely to remain in a non-city school for a second and subsequent year, but by the end of the century those women who did remain a second year were as likely as their male counterparts to stay for a third, fourth, and fifth year within the same school.

Teacher Retention and Feminization

The relationship between teacher persistence within schools and feminization is less straightforward than the distinction between city and non-city schools. The latter clearly provides the key relationship explaining individual behaviour. Feminization occurred earliest and most extensively within city schools, and that is precisely where male and female mean experience and rates of retention remained remarkably similar over the three decades. Unlike Toronto and Montreal where, so Danylewycz and Prentice suggest, many female teachers soon left the occupation, women and men exhibited comparable high levels of commitment to their jobs and thereby to their charges. In contrast, in non-city schools, where feminization was slower, men were more likely to remain a little longer, although in the last half century of the decade, as noted, retention rates for each sex became remarkably similarly after the second year in a school.

That males and females teaching in non-city schools should have differed, particularly in the transition between the first and second year, is in many ways not unexpected. In this sense gender-based factors may have played an important role. Qualitative evidence on individual teachers makes clear that many males combined teaching with agriculture, settling themselves down on a permanent

basis and continuing to teach so long as it took to get a farm established—five or ten years, or even longer. Although some women possessed equal persistence by virtue of continuing to live at home, female teachers were more often, like their male counterparts, thrust into a new environment. Given contemporary prescriptions on approved female behaviour, it is not surprising that for the most part they found it far less possible to adapt over the long term except via marriage. In that case, like the evolving practice across North America, employment as a teacher was no longer a viable option, although it should be added that where married women were forced to support themselves exceptions continued to be made by education authorities in British Columbia through the end of the nineteenth century.

By contrast, in city schools female teachers remained within individual schools on average as long as did their male cohorts, being by the end of the century even more likely to continue into a second and then third and fourth year in the same school than were their male counterparts. Again the explanation lies, not just in women's differing perception of the occupation, although this may have played an important role for some women, but rather in material conditions. Female teachers, perforce single, could much more easily make a satisfactory life for themselves in urban conditions. Social amenities, be they shops, churches, or just other individuals of similar age and background, were far greater. If boarding with a family—the accepted practice for women not living at home—they could nonetheless exercise options for their free time as opposed to being constrained within their rooms on weekends, as was often the only option for non-city female teachers. Some, so the qualitative evidence makes clear, continued to live with their families, often eventually taking over the family home, becoming a female head of household, and even providing the financial support for less productive siblings of both sexes who also chose not to marry.

Conclusion

The data on teacher retention within schools in British Columbia over the last three decades of the nineteenth century make several points. The process of feminization, the focus of much recent research, was far more complex than has sometimes been assumed. In British Columbia feminization began as an urban phenomenon and only slowly spread out of city schools. The markedly differing patterns of retention which distinguished city and non-city schools were firmly in place prior to, and very possibly largely unrelated to, the parallel process of feminization. When research is limited to a single sex, as have been recent analyses of teacher feminization, the impression is left, whether or not it be deliberate, that all human behaviour somehow derives from sex and gender. To understand the role of women in the past with all of its inherent complexity, a broader context is essential.

Analysis of retention data argues that teachers, be they male or female, were not the birds of passage they could easily have become in view of the limited nature of gatekeeping into the occupation in British Columbia. Indeed, it is very

possible that lack of oversight encouraged, so Apple and others would concur, both male and female retention. Even teachers remaining a year or less in a single school most often moved on to another job rather than going on to another occupation. Overall, the majority of teachers remained in a single school far longer than a single year. In non-city schools the mean at the end of the century stood at almost a year's prior experience for women, over a year and a half for men. In city schools both women and men had almost three years' previous experience in the school, which strongly suggests growing commitment to teaching as an occupation and even as a profession.[18]

A final observation needs to be made, and that relates to the establishment in 1901 of British Columbia's first normal school. It was this institution, it might be speculated, which both truly feminized teaching in the province and, moreover, created the correspondence between feminization and the perceived lesser ability of women emphasized by Apple and others. Even a quick perusal of the normal school's list of students completing the course underlines the gender assumptions upon which it was created and operated.[19] Following a first year, in which fully 80% of those completing it were women, annual proportions of females troughed at between 90% and 95%. Thus, not unexpectedly, as noted in Table 1, by 1905 the proportion of females among British Columbia teachers had risen to three out of four.

The normal school perceived itself, so it might be postulated based on Prentice's observations concerning the Toronto normal school in an earlier time period, as training the untrained.[20] It sought to stamp its imprimatur on young women and part of that imprimatur lay in inculcating them with suitable assumptions as to their deferential place in the teaching hierarchy, perceived as lying in the least attractive positions, very often on the frontier. Previously entering and remaining within the occupation largely on their own terms, women had very understandably opted for city schools and there, in comparison with male counterparts, made as great or greater a time commitment. Put under the gatekeeping of the patriarchically ordered normal school, the occupation of teaching in British Columbia was quickly directed into the same gender-premised hierarchy of opportunity and perceived ability becoming the norm across North America.

Table 1

PROPORTION OF FEMALE TEACHERS IN SELECTED PROVINCES, 1875-1905

School year beginning	Nova Scotia	New Brunswick	Ontario	British Columbia
1875	62.1	62.7	54.6	NA
1880	60.2	61.9	51.5	NA
1885	67.4	72.3	62.4	42.6
1890	73.3	76.6	65.5	55.2
1895	76.1	78.2	66.6	55.5
1900	78.3	80.6	70.7	65.9
1905	85.8	83.6	77.9	74.5

SOURCE: *Historical compendium of education statistics from Confederation to 1975* (Statistics Canada, 1978), table 13, 154-57.

Table 2

EMPLOYED TEACHERS IN BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1872-1901

School year beginning	Teaching at beginning of school year				Unemployed and hired during school year				Total employed during school year			
	Total	M	F	% F	Total	M	F	% F	Tot al	M	F	%F
1872	18	10	6	33.3	2	1	1	50.0	20	11	7	35.0
1873	19	5	13	68.4	7	6	1	14.3	26	11	14	53.8
1874	25	12	11	44.0	6	4	2	33.3	31	16	13	41.9
1875	38	19	18	47.4	3	2	1	33.3	41	21	19	46.3
1876	49	24	22	44.9	2	2	0	00.0	51	26	22	43.1
1877	49	27	22	44.9	4	1	3	75.0	53	28	25	47.2
1878	57	28	26	45.6	6	5	1	16.7	63	33	27	42.9
1879	54	28	25	46.3	8	7	1	12.5	62	35	26	41.9
1880	53	32	20	37.7	5	0	5	100.0	58	32	25	43.1
1881	61	32	27	44.3	7	3	4	57.1	68	35	31	45.6
1882	61	33	27	44.3	5	2	3	60.0	66	35	30	45.5
1883	65	34	30	46.2	9	1	8	88.9	74	35	38	51.4
1884	79	42	37	46.8	5	2	3	60.0	84	44	40	47.6
1885	91	50	41	45.1	5	5	0	00.0	96	55	41	42.7

(continued)

Table 2 (continued)

School year beginning	Teaching at beginning of school year				Unemployed and hired during school year				Total employed during school year			
	Total	M	F	% F	Total	M	F	% F	Total	M	F	%F
1886	101	56	43	42.6	13	5	8	61.5	114	61	51	44.7
1887	122	62	59	48.4	5	0	5	100.0	127	62	64	50.4
1888	131	69	62	47.3	17	2	15	88.2	148	71	77	52.0
1889	151	71	80	53.0	20	6	14	70.0	171	77	94	55.0
1890	165	78	87	52.7	22	3	19	86.4	177	81	106	59.9
1891	190	89	101	53.2	35	12	23	65.7	225	101	124	55.1
1892	220	107	113	51.4	47	12	35	74.5	267	128	148	55.4
1893	264	118	146	55.3	38	13	25	65.8	302	131	171	56.6
1894	297	132	165	55.6	39	14	25	64.1	336	146	191	56.8
1895	321	146	175	54.5	57	13	44	77.2	378	159	219	57.9
1896	347	143	204	58.8	52	14	38	73.1	399	157	242	60.7
1897	380	157	223	58.7	62	22	40	64.5	442	179	263	59.5
1898	405	166	239	59.0	65	15	50	76.9	471	181	289	61.4
1899									569	233	334	58.7
1900									587	230	354	60.3

NOTES: Totals differ from official Department of Education figures, used as the basis for Table 1, for two reasons. As well as including teacher monitors, these totals count all teachers employed during school year wheras departmental figures appear to have included only those hired up to a certain time of year, usually late autumn or possibly the end of the calendar year.

Totals for 1899-1900 and 1900-01 are not directly comparable with earlier years due to difference in data included in Department of Education annual reports.

Table 3

CITY AND NON-CITY TEACHING JOBS BY SEX, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1872-1901

School year beginning	Non-city jobs	City jobs	% of city jobs	City jobs			Non-city jobs		
				M	F	% F	M	F	% F
1872	21	9	30.0	4	5	55.6	11	7	38.9
1873	24	10	35.6	5	5	50.0	10	12	54.5
1874	29	10	25.6	6	4	40.0	14	12	46.2
1875	45	12	21.1	5	7	58.3	23	17	42.5
1876	52	18	25.7	9	9	50.0	30	18	37.5
1877	49	21	30.0	11	9	45.0	27	20	42.6
1878	51	21	29.2	9	10	52.6	30	19	38.8
1879	43	21	32.8	10	9	47.1	26	17	39.5
1880	41	21	33.9	9	12	57.1	26	14	35.0
1881	50	21	29.6	10	11	52.4	27	22	44.9
1882	48	24	33.3	8	16	66.7	28	20	41.7
1883	69	30	30.3	11	19	63.3	40	29	42.0
1884	78	25	24.3	9	16	64.0	51	28	35.4
1885	91	30	24.8	11	19	63.3	54	36	40.0
1886	101	42	29.4	14	28	66.7	65	34	38.2
1887	108	44	28.9	15	29	65.9	61	46	43.0
1888	114	52	31.3	16	36	69.2	65	49	43.0
1889	138	83	37.6	26	57	68.7	73	65	47.1
1890	138	82	37.3	25	57	69.5	65	72	52.6

(continued)

Table 3 (continued)

School year beginning	Non-city jobs	City jobs	% of city jobs	City jobs M	City jobs F	City jobs % F	Non-city jobs M	Non-city jobs F	Non-city jobs % F
1891	170	103	37.7	39	64	62.1	83	87	51.2
1892	180	119	39.8	38	81	68.1	94	86	47.8
1893	200	132	39.8	44	88	66.7	100	100	50.0
1894	214	130	37.8	48	82	63.1	99	114	53.5
1895	245	143	36.9	48	95	71.4	116	129	52.6
1896	283	150	34.6	46	104	69.3	123	160	56.5
1897	321	154	32.4	52	101	66.0	137	185	57.5
1898	340	169	33.2	53	116	68.6	146	194	57.1
1899	433	184	29.8	63	121	65.8	183	247	57.4
1900	425	193	31.2	57	136	70.5	175	246	58.4

NOTES: The unit used here is the job, which means that individual teachers are counted twice if holding more than a single job during a single school year. Reflecting contemporary usage by the Department of Education, cities comprise Victoria, Nanaimo, New Westminster and, after 1886, Vancouver. A few of the "non-city" schools possessed more than a single division, or teacher, by the end of the century, but only after 1900 did the Department of Education began to consider them as urban entities. Totals by sex does not equal the overall total, since it was impossible to determine the sex of a few teachers. The years 1899-1900 and 1900-01 are not directly comparable with earlier years, since the available data omits replacement and other appointments made over the course of the year.

Table 4

MEAN EXPERIENCE IN CITY AND NON-CITY TEACHING JOBS AT BEGINNING OF SCHOOL YEAR BY SEX, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1872-1901

School year beginning	Mean experience in city jobs		Mean experience in non-city jobs	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1872	.25 years	.00 years	.27 years	.00 years
1873	.60	.60	.30	.25
1874	1.33	1.75	1.10	.42
1875	2.00	1.57	.65	.76
1876	1.44	1.78	.73	1.22
1877	1.45	2.00	1.11	.90
1878	1.00	1.80	1.16	1.37
1879	1.70	2.67	1.77	2.06
1880	.56	1.42	1.81	1.07
1881	1.20	1.45	1.48	1.27
1882	2.00	1.50	1.25	1.25
1883	1.82	1.47	1.00	.59
1884	1.89	1.13	.71	.71
1885	1.36	1.32	.96	.97
1886	1.36	.75	1.00	1.03
1887	2.07	1.69	1.03	.52
1888	2.50	2.00	1.23	.90
1889	1.92	1.44	1.30	.48
1890	1.92	1.44	1.28	.58

(continued)

Table 4 (continued)

School year beginning	Mean experience in city jobs		Mean experience in non-city jobs	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
1891	1.72 years	1.63 years	1.33 years	.45 years
1892	2.37	1.69	1.49	.79
1893	2.18	2.05	1.75	.46
1894	2.48	2.23	2.00	.75
1895	2.92	2.30	2.01	1.01
1896	2.74	2.50	1.90	.88
1897	3.19	2.14	1.66	1.05
1898	3.43	3.06	1.79	1.06
1899	3.38	2.99	1.75	1.05
1900	3.11	2.49	1.57	.80

NOTES: The unit is the job, which means that individual teachers are counted twice if holding more than a single job during a school year. Cities comprise Victoria, Nanaimo, New Westminster and, after 1886, Vancouver. A few of the "non-city" schools possessed more than a single division, or teacher, by the end of the century, but only after 1900 did the Department of Education began to consider them as urban entities.

A few individuals had already begun teaching in spring 1871 following the passage of public school legislation or even earlier, according to Department of Education records.

The years 1899-1900 and 1900-01 are not directly comparable with earlier years, since the available data omits replacement and other appointments made over the course of the year.

Table 5

TEACHER RETENTION IN CITY AND NON-CITY JOBS BY SEX, BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1872-1901

	Males				Females			
	% into 2nd yr	% into 3rd yr	% into 4th yr	% into 5th yr	% into 2nd yr	% into 3rd yr	% into 4th yr	% into 5th yr
City jobs								
1872-76	77.8	100.0	100.0	NA	55.0	100.0	100.0	NA
1876-81	75.0	43.3	100.0	55.7	76.7	50.0	58.3	88.9
1881-86	86.7	77.1	75.0	72.2	60.9	67.6	66.7	25.0
1886-91	68.9	82.0	71.6	58.4	74.2	63.4	61.0	55.2
1891-96	72.8	82.9	87.7	87.1	80.9	72.3	82.1	84.7
1895-1901	73.1	73.3	84.2	81.5	79.4	79.7	93.6	77.4
Non-city jobs								
1872-76	50.0	64.4	100.0	NA	50.4	50.0	100.0	NA
1876-81	65.6	58.1	60.0	91.7	60.9	65.7	38.3	88.9
1881-86	61.7	61.8	50.0	45.0	63.1	68.3	75.0	87.5
1886-91	51.9	57.8	53.8	66.2	44.0	54.0	44.1	39.6
1891-96	58.7	70.9	72.3	52.4	50.5	49.7	55.4	62.9
1896-1901	68.8	52.4	57.8	58.2	52.3	52.7	56.8	59.1

(continued)

Table 5 (continued)

NOTES: The measure is the proportion of teachers from the previous year who remained the next year in the same school. In the cases of city or other schools with more than a single division, changes between divisions are not considered. The unit is the job, which means that individual teachers are counted twice if holding more than a single job during a school year. Cities comprise Victoria, Nanaimo, New Westminster and, after 1886, Vancouver. A few of the "non-city" schools possessed more than a single division, or teacher, by the end of the century, but only after 1900 did the Department of Education began to consider them as urban entities.

Each time period is calculated as the mean of annual percentages of retention, but only including years in which at least one person could have theoretically been retained from the previous year.

The half decade 1876-81 is skewed downward by the controversial mass dismissals of 1879 in Victoria, mentioned in the text, which forced teachers out of the system for what were probably political rather than didactive considerations.

NOTES

* Strategic Grant funding by SSHRCC to the Canadian Childhood History Project provided the impetus to this research. A UBC SSHRCC Grant and Challenge '88 funding made it possible to employ Donna Penney, whose assistance in retrieving and linking data has been invaluable. I also want to thank Alison Prentice, Wendy Mitchinson, and the UBC History of Education Study Group for their incisive comments on an earlier version of this paper, presented to the Canadian History of Education Association biennial meeting in October, 1988.

1. Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers, Gender, and Bureaucratizing School Systems in Nineteenth Century Montreal and Toronto," *History of Education Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1984): 78 and 93. See also their "Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century Central Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 17 (1986): 59-80, and Danylewycz, Beth Light, and Prentice, "The Evolution of the Sexual Division of Labour in Teaching: A Nineteenth-Century Ontario and Quebec Case Study," *Histoire sociale/Social History* 16, 31 (1983): 81-109.
2. John Abbott, "Accomplishing 'A Man's Task': Rural Women Teachers, Male Culture, and the School Inspectorate in Turn-of-the-Century Ontario," *Ontario History* 78, 4 (1986): 313-30.
3. J. Donald Wilson and Paul J. Stortz, "'May the Lord Have Mercy on You': The Rural School Problem in British Columbia in the 1920s," *BC Studies* 79 (Autumn 1988): 24-58.
4. The argument for focusing on "women's experience in teaching" as opposed to such issues as the growth of professionalization is made persuasively in Danylewycz and Prentice, "Revising the History of Teachers: A Canadian Perspective," *Interchange* 17, 2 (1986): 135-46.
5. The project combines quantitative and qualitative data. This paper derives principally from a computer data base linking information in annual printed reports of the provincial Department of Education with biographical data from the 1881 and 1891 manuscript censuses and other sources. The qualitative component attempts to get at teachers' lives through diaries, family reminiscences and biographies. Particularly helpful have been contacts made with approximately 75 to 100 relatives of individual teachers via a letter to the editor placed in local newspapers across British Columbia. The project will also incorporate the ingoing and outgoing correspondence of the Superintendent of Education, which includes many letters to and from individual teachers providing additional insights into their material and non-material conditions.
6. See especially Michael Apple, "Teaching and 'Women's Work': A Comparative Historical and Ideological Analysis," *Journal of Education* 86, 3 (1985): 455-73, essentially reproduced as chap. 3 of his *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education* (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), 54-78. Much of the literature on the topic is incorporated in Apple; in Danylewycz, Light, and Prentice, "Evolution"; and in Danylewycz and Prentice, "Revising." Also useful is Myra Strober, "The Process of Occupational Segregation: Relative Attractiveness and Patriarchy," paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, April 1988.
7. Alison Prentice, "'Friendly Atoms in Chemistry'? Women and Men at Normal School in Mid-Nineteenth Century Toronto," in *Essays on Old Ontario: Papers Presented to J.M.S. Careless*, ed. David Keane and Colin Read (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 1989),

and John Calam, "Teaching the Teachers: Establishment and Early Years of the B.C. Provincial Normal Schools," *BC Studies* 61 (Spring 1984): 30-63. Prentice notes that, while no more than 10% were rejected for admission, "the drop-out rate was quite high" (p. 12) at 14% to 29% for women and 24% to 38% for men over the years 1847-71 (her Table 1). Focusing on the years 1850-55, she finds that a third of the women and 14% of the men who left did so due to "incompetence" (Table 2). Possible changes in Ontario normal schools during the later nineteenth century are less well documented, being mentioned only briefly (pp. 15-16) in Robert M. Stamp, *The Schools of Ontario, 1876-1976* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1982). The only possible British Columbian equivalents prior to 1901 were teacher monitor programmes operating over part of the time period in city high schools.

8. This section is based on a reading of the annual reports of the provincial Department of Education. Findings may subsequently be modified on reading the Superintendent of Education's correspondence.
9. These observations are based on an earlier manuscript describing the principal kinds of individuals becoming teachers and on analysis undertaken for several CBC interviews on late nineteenth-century teachers and teaching.
10. As F. Henry Johnson argues effectively, Ontario influence was dominant in the public school legislation. See his "The Ryersonian Influence on the Public School System of British Columbia," *BC Studies* 10 (Summer 1971): 26-34. In "Transfer, Imposition or Consensus? The Emergence of Educational Structures in Nineteenth-Century British Columbia" (pp. 241-64 in *Schools in the West: Essays in Canadian Educational History*, ed. Nancy M. Sheehan, J. Donald Wilson, and David C. Jones [Calgary: Detselig, 1986]), Jean Barman also considers British influence but comes to much the same conclusion as does Johnson.
11. Apple, *Teachers and Texts*, 58-62.
12. The shift toward female teachers during the mid-nineteenth century is well summarized in Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching," in *The Neglected Majority: Essays in Canadian Women's History*, ed. Susan Mann Trofimenkoff and Prentice (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977), 49-65.
13. It should be noted that what is described is essentially an elementary school phenomenon. Of the 618 teaching positions filled in British Columbia in 1900-01, just 2% (fourteen)—thirteen filled by males and one by a female—were at the secondary level.
14. The Department of Education data, also used in the federal statistics, appear both to have been cut off at some point during the school year, probably in order to meet a publishing deadline, and to have double-counted teachers who before that date had moved between schools. It is, however, not completely clear how the provincial figures were determined, especially since the data on which the calculations used in this paper are based derive from the detailed breakdowns provided in the appendices to the same printed reports.
15. See Prentice, "Feminization."
16. In 1879 a major dispute broke out over teacher positions in the Victoria school. Male and female teachers were eventually fired in what seems to have been a political decision. The bitterness which has lingered to the present day is evidenced by my receiving in the mail, in response to a letter to the editor placed in a number of local newspapers requesting information on late nineteenth-century teachers, the official documents from the 1879 investigation in a plain brown wrapper along with an unsigned, typed note requesting me to "please use with discretion."

17. Two sources of evidence, not examined here for lack of space, support this contention. Family reminiscences underline the number of teacher daughters migrating with their families from Ontario who then turned again to teaching, probably near where their families took up land. The quantitative data linking the 1881 and 1891 manuscript censuses with Department of Education records reveal that whereas in 1881 the proportion of certified British Columbia teachers born in Ontario stood at about 9%, by 1891 it had risen to 35%, this over a decade of rapid expansion in the absolute number of teachers.
18. These concluding observations are perforce preliminary. Among other elements in the data base to be analyzed are salaries, levels of certification, number of jobs, total time in the occupation, and more detailed differentiation of non-city jobs. Similarly, preliminary exploration of variables derived from the manuscript census such as birthplace, ethnicity, religion, age, parental occupation, teacher siblings, and living arrangements argues for their significance.
19. Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Vancouver Normal School Graduates, 1902-10, GR 1471, vol. 11, no. 1, and "Normal school course completions," GR 1471, vol. 11, no. 11.
20. Prentice, "'Atoms'," passim.