

**“In Reply to Your Advertisement . . .”:  
Local Influences on the Hiring of Teachers,  
Arkona, Ontario, 1882–1884<sup>1</sup>**

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**ABSTRACT**

This paper examines a collection of documents related to the public school board for Arkona, Ontario for the period of the early 1880s, with a stress on letters of application by various teachers from across Ontario. An examination of these letters and the accompanying references in the local context of the changing economic and social underpinnings sheds light on the hiring processes, as well as providing access into the lives of individual teachers during the 1880s.

**RÉSUMÉ**

Ce texte rend compte de l'analyse d'un corpus documentaire émanant du conseil scolaire public d'Arkona, en Ontario, pour la période du début des années 1880. Il s'attarde aux lettres de demandes d'emploi venant de différents enseignants de tout l'Ontario. Le dépouillement de ces lettres et la prise en compte, dans un contexte local, des changements économiques et sociaux, met en lumière tant les procédures d'engagement que la vie personnelle des enseignants durant la décennie 1880.

On November 14, 1884, the Toronto *Globe* published an advertisement from the school board of the southwestern Ontario village of Arkona calling for two female teachers in the second and third divisions of the local school.<sup>2</sup> From her family home at 222 Niagara Street in Toronto twenty-year-old Hattie Holmes wrote “In reply to your advertisement for teachers I beg to lay before the ‘Trustees’ my application for one of the vacancies. I think my experience and Certificate would warrant me in applying for the position as teacher of the ‘Second Dep[artment].’”<sup>3</sup> Holmes’ letter was one of eighteen applications responding to the advertisement of a small rural school board. Its style, contents and diction had little to distinguish it from the others. Indeed Holmes’ offerings to the school board were comparatively paltry containing no accompanying references and only the briefest of outlines of her teaching

experience of “a little over a year, part of the time here in the ‘City’ and in S.S. 17 Peel.”<sup>4</sup> Collectively, however, these letters and supporting documentation provide a rare glimpse into teacher applications and the mechanisations of school board hirings in the final quarter of nineteenth-century Canada.

Early studies of education in Ontario emphasized the roles played by key public figures like Ontario’s first superintendent of education Egerton Ryerson, and worked to uncover the pressures and developments that spawned the emergence of the province’s public school system. While scholars have examined numerous aspects of education in nineteenth-century Ontario, increasingly studies have focussed on the ways in which different social, political and gender groups changed and influenced education within Ontario by relying upon the documentation that has been preserved in provincial and regional archives. These studies have led to a clearer and broader understanding of public school system, the figures that shaped it and the constituents it served.<sup>5</sup> Work by Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice used the contracts of teachers in Quebec to provide useful insights into important aspects of a teacher’s work which has shed partial light upon the hiring process in the 1880s.<sup>6</sup> At rare intervals materials emerge to shed new light on old practices, helping to come to new understandings of various aspects of education in the nineteenth century.<sup>7</sup> Given that education had a very important local component throughout the nineteenth century, much of the documentation remained with the local school boards and their trustees. The vagaries of time, the restructuring of school boards and the lack of any concerted effort at preservation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries meant that many primary source materials relating to the day-to-day functioning of rural schools have been lost or remain hidden away leaving gaping holes in the documentary evidence. The general dearth of such materials makes it difficult for historians to come to an understanding of key issues and processes surrounding the hiring of teaching staff.

In the instance of the Public School Board of the small Lambton County village of Arkona, Ontario local trustee and onetime secretary treasurer Robert Dunham (1838–1917)<sup>8</sup> deposited a cache of school records amongst his personal papers which were stowed in a trunk and preserved by three subsequent generations. The documents cover the period stretching roughly from 1879 to 1885 with surviving receipts, contracts for teachers, tallies of school attendance and, perhaps most fascinating, two groupings of letters of application by a total of twenty-six individual teachers. The letters were written in response to the school board’s advertisements for available teaching positions in 1882 and 1884. Admittedly the scope of the collection is limited, covering only a brief period in what was only one of the some 5,000 school boards scattered across Ontario.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, Ontario boasted approximately only 7,000 qualified teachers throughout the early 1880s.<sup>10</sup> Individually the letters are unremarkable, but as a whole the letters, their accompanying references, and the notations by examining trustees, when referenced and examined in light of the social and economic setting of the broader Arkona community provide avenues into the study of hiring practices of teachers in the 1880s and insights into the relationships between trustees, applicants and teachers and the local imperatives that influenced the hiring of teachers and functioning of schools.



Situated in the northeastern portion of Lambton County, Arkona straddled the line between the townships of Bosanquet and Warwick, from which it had been carved upon incorporation in 1876. With a population of between 600 and 700, the incorporation of the village had been only one in a long line of hopeful measures which sought to cement the village's prosperous future.<sup>11</sup> Two years earlier the trustees of the school section — encompassing the village and some outlying farms — constructed a two-storey school building to accommodate a growing school-aged population. As local promoters liked to boast, the two-storey, two-room school soon proved inadequate and within two years a one-storey 'annex' was added to house the school's youngest pupils.<sup>12</sup>

A surviving report from 1880 indicated that the school had a total of 258 students on the rolls, 253 of whom fell between the ages of five and sixteen, 4 between seventeen and twenty-one and 1 student over the age of twenty-one. The 142 boys enrolled constituted 55 percent of the school's population while the 116 girls represented 45 percent. (Aggregate provincial statistics for 1880 indicated that the gender division was 53 percent for boys and 47 percent for girls, which remained markedly consistent between 1876 and 1886). Attendance varied with twenty-one students attending class less than twenty days out of a total of 221 days of instruction (seventy-one students attended between 151 to 200 days and only eight attended more than 201). Ninety students were studying at the first level in reading, sixty at the second, sixty-two at the third, thirty-seven at the fourth and only nine were studying out of the fifth-level reading book. A slight majority of 136 of the students came from within the village limits, while 122 students hailed from outside the municipal boundaries, coming from either Warwick or Bosanquet Townships. While there was religious diversity within the village and the surrounding farms, Arkona was an overwhelmingly Protestant community. The main village and surrounding territory was heavily influenced by agriculture with an overwhelming number of families working on freehold farms. In the village proper there was a general mix of skilled tradespeople, professionals, farmers and other workers. Of the 188 people reporting occupations, the largest group were thirty-six farmers followed by eleven carpenters. Presumably the villagers with the most formal education included the four clergymen, three physicians, one dentist, two engineers, a banker, two telegraph operators and four druggists. However, there were also two listed as "Medical Students" and of course at least seven merchants, and one individual listed as a 'broker'. The other villagers professed to be plasterers, masons, clerks, seamstresses, hotelkeepers, tailors, teamsters, harness makers, machinists, blacksmiths, butchers, cabinet makers and one individual who incongruously, for a land-locked village, reported himself as a 'ship carpenter'. Outside of the village limits the vast majority of those listing an occupation listed themselves as farmers or agricultural labourers.<sup>13</sup>

With a new school and burgeoning school-aged population Arkona was possessed of an unbridled optimism for the future. In addition villagers were certain of lucrative railway connections which would be both harbingers and anchors of prosperity. Railway fever gripped the village and enterprising villagers pegged their hopes on the railway that would connect them to London, Strathroy and the small lakeside



Figure 2: A photograph of the Arkona School from 1907. The main structure was completed in 1874 and the additional wing or 'annex' was built in 1876. The building to the right is the Arkona Methodist Church. Courtesy of the Arkona Historical Society.

community of Port Franks. By the late 1870s the village boasted dozens of businesses and even an ambitious weekly paper *The East Lambton Advocate*. The school building was the most tangible monument to Arkona's ambitions.<sup>14</sup>

The day-to-day instruction and administration in Ontario public schools were left to the teachers and principals. In addition to the frontline teachers a series of officials oversaw the education system from the Minister of Education in Toronto, down through county-based school inspectors, to the trustees on the individual local school boards. Each rural school section had a board of three or four trustees who provided for the construction and maintenance of school buildings, purchased necessary school supplies, and represented the interests of the broader community in the functioning of the school. One of their most important roles dealt with the hiring of teachers to staff the schools.<sup>15</sup> As the administrative cycle of the school year corresponded with the calendar year the trustees were elected on an annual basis either at the end of December or the beginning of January. (Similarly teaching contracts commenced with the beginning of the new year.) Elections and terms for members of the school board were staggered so that there was always at least one person sitting on the board from a previous year. The board members were always local men elected by the male property owners in the school section. Arkona was actually a union school. As Arkona had been carved from both Bosanquet and Warwick Townships, and the school section stretched beyond the village's corporate limits it was officially designated S.S. # 1 Bosanquet and S.S. # 9 Warwick. A surviving "Poll Book" from the January 1879 contest for trustees listed sixty-seven ratepayers who cast two ballots for four candidates. Ultimately, James Russell and J. Cornell won the contest

with sixty-two and fifty-nine votes respectively. The two other candidates, B. Gott and I. Hilborn, came in with only fourteen and nine votes respectively.<sup>16</sup> The men who acted as trustees represented varying occupations and interests within the combined school section. The two new trustees elected in December 1883, were Robert Dunham who, with his wife and family, farmed fifty acres north of the village limits, and Arkona-based physician Dr. Jonathan Wilkinson who had only set up his practice earlier that year. Between 1882 and 1884 the office of secretary-treasurer was held by George B. Stephenson and Chester M. Eastman, the former a banker and the latter a local merchant.<sup>17</sup>

In October 1882, the incumbent school principal Samuel Roulston informed the Arkona Public School Board that he would “respectfully but positively refuse to accept the offer made me . . .” Roulston possessed a first-class teaching certificate and had begun teaching at the Arkona school midway through 1880 at a rate of \$200 for the remainder of the year. His contract had been renewed in the fall of 1881 with salary of \$525. Although there is no extant record of the offer proffered him in 1882, it presumably fell well below his expectations. Arkona’s trustees were in no mood to entertain further bargains for by early November they were actively seeking out a replacement for Roulston. At the same juncture, on November 16 the trustees also published an advertisement in the Toronto *Globe* seeking a replacement for one of the teachers under Roulston’s supervision.<sup>18</sup>

Since the middle of the nineteenth century the majority of teaching posts in Ontario were filled by women.<sup>19</sup> School trustees could expect to pay women considerably lower salaries than their male counterparts. (Provincial averages suggest that women were paid only sixty-five percent that of their male counterparts). In larger schools, with more than one classroom, however, it was still the common practice for men to act as principals or headmasters with women filling the subordinate positions of assistants in the various lower divisions of a school with according gendered disparities in wages.<sup>20</sup> (In 1880 it was stated that on average male teachers in East Lambton County were paid \$407.82 per annum and while the average salary for female teachers was \$277.00).<sup>21</sup> A report to the Ontario Legislature drew attention to the disparities between men and women and it was suggested that “[w]hen women are employed in graded schools, with only limited responsibility regarding discipline, organization, etc., there may be some justification for the payment of lower salaries . . .” However, the same report questioned whether differences in salaries could be justified when women “have all the responsibilities of a Principal . . .” While it was noted that gendered disparities existed in other occupations it could be argued that in teaching “women’s work is as valuable as the man’s work”.<sup>22</sup>

Of the eight letters of application that arrived in Arkona in 1882, only two came from men: John Donnelly for the junior division of the Arkona School and Joseph Pickering for the principalship (Donnelly was responding to the advertisement placed in the *Globe*. There had been no such advertisement for the principalship and Pickering had been informed of the opening by a school inspector). Two years later the school board specifically requested “TEACHERS—TWO—FEMALE” for the second and third divisions of the school, ensuring that all eighteen applicants were

women. Of the thirteen surviving signed contracts from the Arkona School—covering the period 1880 to 1885—eight were for women teaching the lower levels of the Arkona school with five representing the four men who filled the position of school principal from 1878 to 1885.<sup>23</sup> It is important to note, however, that while across-the-board salaries for men were considerably higher than for women, those men who taught in schools outside of Ontario's cities could expect to be paid on average fifty-percent less than their urban counterparts. Women teaching in rural schools, on the other hand, could expect a difference of between 25 and 30 percent in salary from their urban counterparts. Given that women in most rural schools had greater if not sole authority over discipline and instruction where such matters were vested more fully in male teachers in graded urban schools would account for the proportionate variance between the genders in this pay scale. The fact that male teachers could expect considerably lower wages than their urban counterparts might also have factored into the considerably fewer applications submitted by men to the Arkona board.<sup>24</sup>

### **Hiring in 1882**

The extant records for Arkona clearly demonstrate that the local school board conformed to provincial trends in terms of the gender ratio of the student body and the remuneration of male and female teachers. At the same time, however, an understanding of a particular local context provides insights absent in larger general narratives. While Arkona's Principal A.E. Wallace with a Second Class Certificate was paid a salary of \$550 in 1880, his successor Roulston received \$525 for 1882. The next principal was hired with a salary of \$500. The gradual deflation of wages reflects a growing pessimism within the wider Arkona community. After Roulston's rejection of the terms offered him in October 1882, his predecessor Wallace was contacted by board member William Vahey. Vahey attempted to entice Wallace to return to Arkona. Wallace's reply was cautious and noncommittal. While he expressed an interest in the offer, he refused to suggest a salary. He explained that should the board "feel disposed to make us [including his wife] an offer it will be considered." He and the Arkona trustees had not parted on the best of terms. Wallace further wrote "to speak candidly, I did not exactly know how to interpret the cut down to \$550 . . ." during his last year at Arkona. With some bitterness he continued "Some trustees take that plan of telling a man his services are not [sic] longer wanted . . ."<sup>25</sup> While the whittling down of the principal's wages may have reflected a certain level of parsimony on the part of trustees, the decline in the principal's salary coincided with the general decline of Arkona's fortunes (by 1881 its population had declined from approximately 700 to 569. Of the 115 dwellings in the village nine were vacant).<sup>26</sup>

Existing literature suggests that there was a tendency amongst rural school boards to hire teachers from the local area. Beyond a general belief that teachers needed to have a vested interest in the local community there were practical considerations as well. Local teachers would be known in the community and by trustees and have what was deemed to be the steadying influences of their family close at hand. There were concerns about having unmarried women living away from their families, and

a perception that these 'vulnerable' women would be susceptible to corrupting influences.<sup>27</sup> The surviving applications from both 1882 and 1884 in Arkona shed some interesting light upon these issues. For 1882 there are a total of seven surviving applications for the position in the school's junior division. Curiously, the Arkona trustees did not place an advertisement in the locally circulating *Watford Guide* or *Watford Advocate* nor in newspapers out of the neighbouring community of Forest. Most of those returning applications indicated that they had seen the advertisement in the widely-circulated *Toronto Globe*. The incoming letters came from a wide geographical area. Two of the letters came from within Lambton County, one from the town of Strathroy in neighbouring Middlesex County, and another from Stratford in Perth County. John Donnelly mailed his application from Riversdale in Bruce County and Maggie Dunn wrote from Woodstock in Oxford County. Miss F.H. Taylor sent her application from Port Perry northwest of Toronto.<sup>28</sup> There seems to have been no aversion to seeking applicants from across the province so long as they were deemed competent. Similarly, the fact that applicants from across the province with no discernable connection to Arkona applied to these schools suggests that school boards and teachers were not as parochial in their focus as has been earlier suggested.

On November 7, 1882, Joseph Pickering wrote from Florence in Dawn Township to apply for the principalship of the Arkona School, having heard that the incumbent was leaving. Pickering explained:

I hold a Second Class Normal School Certificate obtained in July 1879. Since passing the Second Class Examination I have spent fifteen months at High School and in June last, I passed the Matriculation Exam at Toronto University, obtaining First Class Honors in English (Grammar, Composition and Literature) and Second Class Honors in English History and Geography. I am teaching now as Principal in Florence School, and Trustees and people wish me to remain, but I wish to change. You will form some idea of my successes as a teacher from the enclosed testimonials.<sup>29</sup>

Pickering was particularly proud of the fact that in June 1882, he sent three of his pupils to high school examinations "all of whom passed getting high marks."

Pickering included references from the public school inspectors, school trustees as well as the headmaster of the Caledonia High School. The trustees from the Florence school attested to Pickering's "ability and faithfulness" and wrote of the regret shared by trustees, pupils and people of the district at his decision to leave. They concluded that "[o]ur school is in a better condition now than it has ever been before . . ."<sup>30</sup> John Brebner, West Lambton's school inspector, echoed the praise of the trustees and explained that Pickering "has proved himself a most painstaking, faithful and efficient worker in the school . . ."<sup>31</sup> His former headmaster at Caledonia argued that Pickering "should be in great demand as a teacher." Similarly he complimented his dedication to study and his exceptional achievements, especially in English which was "both accurate and thorough". Pickering had also successfully taught younger students and "[h]is character is irreproachable and this added to his gentlemanly

bearing is sure to win him golden opinions in any position he may fill.”<sup>32</sup> While the glowing appraisals of Pickering’s conduct and successes surely swayed the Arkona trustees they were undoubtedly amenable to his willingness to maintain his salary at \$500 “provided there would [be] a good chance of getting an advance of \$25 or \$30 the second year . . . if satisfaction were given.”<sup>33</sup> The incumbent principal was already receiving \$525—five percent less than his own predecessor—and had tendered his resignation over the board’s apparent stinginess. Pickering’s relatively frugal request surely increased his appeal in the board’s estimation.

Writing from Riverdale in Bruce County John Donnelly applied for the position of teacher in Arkona’s junior division and enclosed three testimonials. Assessing Donnelly’s performance, one long-serving trustee of S.S. # 1 Greenock wrote that “we have never been better served . . .” Trustees attested to Donnelly’s good character and the “best satisfaction” he had provided in his post and explained that “the good wishes of the section are with him wherever he may go.” East Bruce’s inspector W.L. Clendining wrote that Donnelly “gave evidence of fair efficiency” and that the performance of his classes improved by eight percent between the inspector’s two visits.<sup>34</sup>

The testimonials and references for both Pickering and Donnelly spoke to the two men’s efficiencies and performances in the classroom and spoke to their upstanding characters. Apart from the reference to Pickering’s ‘gentlemanly bearing’ the references accompanying the applications of the nineteen women applying for the jobs in 1882 and 1884 differed only slightly in their assessments and content. That teachers were expected to set moral examples for their students was generally understood. In fact it has been suggested that trustees and parents placed a higher emphasis upon moral instruction than intellectual achievement. Given these expectations and the fact that women were generally viewed to be a nurturing force within society, not surprisingly the applications and references reflect these concerns. Indeed those men who provided references for female job seekers tended to use words such as ‘unassuming’ and commented upon their deportment; such assessments were not included for men like Pickering and Donnelly. When Emma Giles of Toronto forwarded her letter of application in November 1884, she included a reference from J.A. Wismer, the principal of Parkdale County Model School in the Toronto suburb of Parkdale. Wismer confirmed Giles’ regular attendance and attested to her “practice in actual teaching.” He wrote that Giles’ “manner is quiet and unassuming, her deportment correct and considering the time she has been in attendance I am satisfied she will make a painstaking and successful teacher.”<sup>35</sup> In addition to lauding the studiousness of Alice Nevills while under his tutelage at Seaforth High School, J.C. Harstone complimented her as being “a young lady of good ability and of a pleasing manner and will do her duty to the best of her power . . .”<sup>36</sup> The master of Sarnia’s Model School described, if somewhat vaguely, applicant Miss Ross Cameron as “a young lady of irreproachable moral character good intellectual ability & possessing in a high degree those qualifications necessary to ensure success as a teacher.”<sup>37</sup>

Although later supporters of Joseph Pickering would compliment his involvement in Arkona’s Methodist Church, there was no mention of religious affiliation in his references. However, given the importance placed upon organized religion at the

time, many of the women applicants included references from their clergy as a means of establishing their moral credentials. Laura M. McLean of Chatham included a letter from Rev. John Thompson of her native Sarnia who wrote that McLean “is a young lady of whom I think very highly . . .” In addition to his pastoral considerations he was also a member of Sarnia’s Board of Education and judged McLean to be a credit to her field. He added also that “[s]he is a great favorite with all who know her, and from what I know of her I feel assured that she will prove herself an efficient teacher . . .”<sup>38</sup> Toronto-based applicant Margaret Y. Gowans recruited the principal of Manitoba College, John M. Vining, who had formerly been pastor of St. James Square Presbyterian Church in Toronto to vouch for her character. Vining argued that Gowans was “a young person possessed of such intelligence, good principle and kind feelings, as to fully entitle her to be accepted for a position in a school.”<sup>39</sup>

Unfortunately, but not surprisingly, there is no record of the deliberations of the trustees, and therefore no way of knowing how they came to their final hiring decisions. However, there are some clues as to the candidates who figured higher in their estimations than others, and suggestions about what factors may have led to a particular hiring. The hiring of a teacher in Arkona’s junior division for 1883 seems to have had a much to do with the trust local authorities placed in the judgement of their newly-hired principal. Having secured the principalship of the Arkona school on November 22, 1882, Pickering wrote to his new employers the following day recommending that they hire one of his incumbent teachers at Florence, Jennie Davidson. As he explained:

She has been placed in a rather peculiar situation. She wished to take charge of a school, herself the coming year. She engaged in Camden, but, a few days after was offered a school at home (near Ingersoll). The Trustees in Camden agreed to let her go because she was going near home. Through a mistake on the part of the Trustees she did not get the position. They wish to engage her now but another teacher has already got the position. She has therefore lost both.<sup>40</sup>

Pickering went on to extol Davidson’s abilities and noted that of the five assistants he had worked with “Miss Davidson has been the most faithful and efficient.... The order in her room is always good. She seems to have the perfect command over her school and she is very thorough in her work.”<sup>41</sup>

There seems to have been no tradition of hiring any male assistants to fill the junior positions within the Arkona school, which would have probably ruled out the hiring of John Donnelly. As a male teacher Donnelly would have been entitled to a higher salary than his female counterparts. Given that the principal was to be paid \$500, Donnelly’s expectation of an annual salary of \$400 probably also helped to rule out his engagement. Perhaps it was with Donnelly in mind that two years later the board explicitly advertised for female applicants only.<sup>42</sup>

Four of the female applicants—holders of second-class non-professional certificates<sup>43</sup>—Minnie Foster of Stratford; Maggie Livingstone of Forest; Eliza Dewar of Strathroy; and F.H. Taylor of Port Perry; were relatively junior and were only then

completing their respective studies in Model School. The women were generally young; both Minnie Foster and Maggie Livingstone were about eighteen.<sup>44</sup> The four women stated their expected salaries at \$225, \$260, \$275, and \$200 respectively. That the issue of salaries did play a role in the decision making of the Arkona trustees is certain, given that the suggested salaries were penned in at the top of most of the application letters by the school board. The applicants' inexperience was reflected in their relatively low salary requests, which might have meant considerable savings for Arkona ratepayers. While the trustees were certainly cognizant of these concerns, they were also looking for those with a proven track record.<sup>45</sup> A fifth woman applying for the job, Maggie Dunn of Woodstock, possessed a renewed a third-class certificate, some teaching experience and had recently attained an intermediate 'A' certificate.<sup>46</sup> Ultimately, however, none of these women received the job. The Arkona School Board may have been reluctant to hire these five women due to the fact that while their third-class certificates were valid for the period of one year, for them to have taken up a position would have required a special request on the part of the trustees to enable to them take up their duties. Jennie Davidson possessed a second-class certificate and had already taught for two years at the Florence school. Similarly she came with the recommendation of Arkona's incoming principal and, unlike the other women applying, forwarded testimonials, one from the Florence trustees and the other from Charles A. Barnes, the local school inspector.<sup>47</sup>

On November 28, 1882 Jennie Davidson formally signed her contract with the Arkona school board for 1883, a post she took up at the beginning of the new year with Joseph Pickering as principal. Shortly into the new year, however, the other assistant teacher resigned her post. There was no time to place an advertisement or to engage in a long hiring process, and so, expediently, the board hired twenty-seven year old Martha W. Dunham of Watford. Dunham, who cared for two aging parents, probably had a slight edge over other potential candidates given that her brother, Robert Dunham, was a resident of the Arkona school section and by year's end would be elected as one of the replacement trustees. Martha Dunham served the school from February 5 to May 4, 1883.<sup>48</sup> For reasons that were not explained at the end of this term Dunham's services were not renewed. In September the board hired Lurenia Moore of Clinton for the yearly salary of \$250. Her contract was renewed early in 1884 for same terms and rates.<sup>49</sup>

### **Hiring in 1884**

Given that there are more extant applications from 1884, more can be said about the selection process Arkona's trustees followed in selecting their new teachers. An advertisement was placed in the *Globe* on November 14, 1884 calling for applications for two female teachers for the second and third divisions of the school with the stated salaries of \$280 and \$240 respectively. The Arkona news correspondent for the *Watford Advocate* reported a week later that "Our school board has advertised for two female teachers to take the places of Miss Davidson and Miss Moore."<sup>50</sup> For her part Lurenia Moore was leaving Arkona to upgrade her education at the Toronto Normal School.<sup>51</sup>

Few within Arkona would have heralded the early 1880s as a golden age. By the late 1870s the railway mania that had so captivated villagers had begun to subside. Complaints were lodged that the elusive railway that had held promises of growth and prosperity was now damaging the village's prospects. One correspondent asserted that "there is a general feeling of fear that our expected railroad will prove a myth."<sup>52</sup> Even the village's flagship newspaper the *Arkona Advocate* moved to the railway town of Watford in 1879.<sup>53</sup> The general gloom was accompanied by a steady haemorrhaging of businesses and ratepayers seeking better prospects further afield. The devaluation of teachers' salaries was symptomatic of a community losing both confidence and revenues. While the lack of a rail connection hurt the local economy, Arkona was dealt a more dramatic and even more egregious blow mid-way through 1884. During the wee hours of July 2<sup>nd</sup> Dominion Day firecrackers ignited a fire in a furniture manufactory near the village's main intersection. The spreading inferno soon engulfed most of the village's business section, destroying twenty-one buildings with damage estimated at \$40,000. Sarnia's *Observer* screamed "Arkona in Ashes! A Thriving Lambton Village Swept Away!"<sup>54</sup> The fire had been only the most dramatic in a series of setbacks and misfortunes to beset the community.

The applications that arrived in Arkona in 1884 came from an even wider geographic area than those from 1882. Eighteen women from thirteen different communities across province sent their applications to Arkona's secretary-treasurer C.M. Eastman between November 14 and December 27, 1884. Four of the applicants—Emma Giles, Margaret Young Gowans, Hattie Holmes and Fannie Milligan—wrote from Toronto. (Gowans and Holmes were both about twenty, Milligan was nineteen, and Giles was probably of a similar age.) While the four came from various parts of the city, three of the four may well have been known to one another; Gowans, Giles, and Milligan all attended the York County Model School in the western suburb of Parkdale. Certainly all three enclosed a testimonial from the school's principal J.A. Wismer. Holmes, however, did not appear to attend the Model School in Parkdale, but was on the only one of the four to attend a session at the Toronto Normal School. While Wismer asserted that Gowans "had instruction and practice in teaching . . ." while under his instruction, Holmes taught for a "little over a year" both in Toronto and at S.S. # 17 Peel Township, Wellington County.<sup>55</sup>

Katherine Cron, Mossie Sheppard, and Marie Bureen all sent applications from the community of West Sutton on Lake Simcoe. Bureen spent four years in public school at Meaford on Nottawasaga Bay, while twenty-year-old Cron came from Whitby, and Sheppard from Vaughan Township north of Toronto.<sup>56</sup> Minnie Raines applied from Bowmanville for the position in Arkona's second division. While she had been teaching in Bowmanville for two years Raines had received most of her education and training in Brantford at Brantford Collegiate and the Brant County Model School.<sup>57</sup> The rest of the applicants came from the southwestern portions of the province, including Belle Brown from Caledonia and Alice Nevills from Berlin. Other applicants came from St. Mary's, Chatham, Sarnia, Strathroy and the nearby township of Adelaide.<sup>58</sup>

While the hiring of Jennie Davidson in 1882 had been a relatively straightforward

process, the situation two years later was anything but. Part of the problem had to do with the fact that the board was seeking to replace two-thirds of its teaching staff, all within a period of less than two months. Trustees were mindful of the fact that they needed to keep the cost of salaries as low as possible, but they also wanted to ensure that they hired teachers of high calibre and 'efficiency'. When it came to the second department there were certainly no shortage of applicants. Of the eighteen teachers who expressed an interest in the Arkona school, ten expressed sole interest in teaching in the second division. Two more candidates writing from West Sutton asked to be considered for both. As Katherine Cron noted that while she "[w]ould prefer the second department . . . will be pleased to accept the lower division . . ." <sup>59</sup>

The board was particularly impressed with the application of twenty-eight-year-old Ellen Miller of Adelaide Township. She was the daughter of the township clerk and came from a family that valued education; Miller taught school and her younger brother studied at the college level. Her experience alone spoke volumes. She had been a teacher for eight years, one of which was spent in a 'graded school' with other teachers. From 1880 to 1884 she had taught at S.S. # 11 in her native Adelaide Township. The trustees wrote that Miller had "given good satisfaction as a Teacher and it is with regret that we accept her resignation which she has seen fit to tender us." Perhaps most importantly, from the perspective of the Arkona board, Miller openly stated her willingness to accept pay at \$300 even though she was currently receiving \$375.<sup>60</sup> While the board had advertised a maximum salary of \$280, Miller's experience could surely justify the extra expense of \$20, a veritable steal given her previous wages. It is little wonder that Miller was the first choice for Arkona's trustees.

In second place they ranked Rebecca Brammer who had submitted her application from the Lambton village of Wyoming. Brammer came from an Anglican farming family outside of London and had been teaching for upwards of five years. Four of those years she spent working in the London suburb of London West, having "received a testimonial when I left." Her experiences in Wyoming did not meet with her satisfaction, for she wanted a better position and explained that "I do not wish to engage for less than \$280 per year as stated in your advertisement." The board was impressed enough with Brammer's experience to pencil on the bottom of her letter "Take above if Miss Miller refuses."<sup>61</sup>

Miller apparently declined Arkona's offer of a job and Brammer was only too happy to accept. However, on December 11, 1884 she wrote to the board informing them that she had "received a letter which has altered all my plans, and rendered it impossible for me to engage to teach for you next year as I intended."<sup>62</sup> With less than three weeks left before the start of term the board was left scrambling, and therefore turned to their third choice, Jennie Weir of Strathroy. Little can be said about Weir, although she was attending the local Model School in November 1884, and held a third-class non-professional certificate. She enclosed no written testimonials but wrote that with "regard to my teaching ability I refer you to the Inspector of the Strathroy Model School."<sup>63</sup> Although no signed contract for Weir has survived, her name was recorded as a teacher at Arkona for early 1885.<sup>64</sup>

Hiring a teacher for Arkona's third division also seems to have been fraught with

difficulties. The overwhelming majority of applicants sought a position in the second division, either explicitly, or implicitly by stating the \$280 salary advertised by the board. Given that the trustees had set a salary cap of \$240 on the third division—fifteen percent lower than the second division—the dearth of applications is hardly surprising. Emma Giles of Toronto, however, specifically named the \$240 salary listed for the third division in her covering letter. It is to be assumed that the six remaining applicants sought the third division position as well. Most of them were junior. Given the inexperience of these far-flung applicants, the Arkona trustees entertained a hope that they might hire an Arkona student, Ella Trimble. The difficulty was that Trimble had not turned sixteen and was still technically ineligible to enter a Model School. While the local school inspector held no objections to Trimble's appointment as a teacher, ultimately it was a decision that had to be made by the Minister of Education in Toronto, a prospect that seemed "exceedingly small."<sup>65</sup> The board apparently did not pursue the matter further.

By early December the board sent out communications to various applicants with regard to the hiring. Lily Herrington, who had been rejected for the position in the second division, now set her hopes on securing the third. In response to the school board's letter of rejection she asked the trustees if they "would be willing to give me the 3<sup>rd</sup> division . . . until the *summer vacation* at the rate of \$240 per annum." She would not take the position for the full year as she asserted it was not in her interests "to take it for the whole year at that rate."<sup>66</sup> Herrington's proposal was probably not considered, as an offer had already been sent to Emma Giles in Toronto who wrote back to accept.<sup>67</sup> For some reason or another, Giles never signed a contract with the Arkona board, and within a couple of weeks of her apparent acceptance the board was again searching for a third division teacher. With only days to spare before the commencement of the 1885 school year they secured the services of Miss D.C. McLeish for \$250, ten dollars more than they had originally advertised. Nothing is known about McLeish's origins, but she may have been a local student for she was in Arkona on December 27, 1884 to sign her contract. Given the late date on which she was hired, the extra ten dollars in her salary may have been a means of ensuring there was a teacher in the classroom when January came around.<sup>68</sup>

By the time the trustees secured Weir and McLeish for the second and third divisions they were dealing with a new crisis that threatened to disrupt their plans for the 1885 school year. When the hiring process had been initiated in November 1884, there was no discussion of replacing Joseph Pickering as principal. He was by all accounts a credit to himself and the school as a whole.<sup>69</sup> The local papers spoke highly of him not only for his professional conduct but his involvement in Arkona's Methodist Church and Sunday School.<sup>70</sup> The *Watford Advocate* reported that "Mr. Pickering has given the best of satisfaction since he began here, and he has the name of being one of the best public school teachers in Lambton." The rival *Watford Guide* informed its Arkona readership that Pickering had been "re-engaged [for 1885] as Principal of our schools at \$540 per annum, being \$20 of an increase in salary [from 1884]."<sup>71</sup> Tragedy, however, ruined these plans. In the middle of December 1884, Pickering became ill and despite the ministrations of Dr. Jonathan Wilkinson—himself a

member of the Arkona School Board—the teacher succumbed to remittent fever on December 28, 1884, at twenty-six years of age. His remains were sent back to Paris, Ontario for burial.<sup>72</sup> On December 27, even while Pickering lay on his death bed—presumably beyond human help—the school trustees secured the services of a Duncan K. McNeil of Dawn Township. Like Pickering he held a second-class teaching certificate and had been teaching in southern part of Lambton County. In the end the school board was able to make some savings by paying the new principal \$500, a full \$40 less than they had been prepared to pay Pickering.<sup>73</sup>

The difficulties that faced the Arkona Public School Board in the early 1880s over the hiring of teachers have been largely forgotten. Robert Dunham served out his term as trustee for the board and even served a stint as secretary-treasurer, depositing the records, letters and other related school board paraphernalia in a trunk with his collection of receipts, newspapers, and personal correspondence. The papers were mostly left for the perusal of his various descendants and occasionally leant for inclusion as interesting incidentals on Arkona's history.<sup>74</sup> A careful examination of these papers, however, sheds new light on the processes by which teachers were hired in rural Ontario in the 1880s. They provide insights into applicants themselves. The surviving testimonials illuminate details and assessments not generally available for teachers for the period, and suggest the different ways that male and female applicants were viewed and how they attempted to sell their services to school board trustees. By using the cache of letters and examining them with an understanding of the local context, these documents indicate the ways local social and economic conditions influenced decisions made by school trustees. Arkona was a village which was facing new, disquieting realities. The buoyant hopes of the 1870s had given way to the sobering 1880s. Hopes of attracting a railway had failed to materialize, leading to a rather speedy, if only temporary, loss of population and confidence. These new realities had an impact on the treatment of teachers, leading to a steep deflation in salaries, and coloured the decision-making processes of the school trustees. At the most basic level, however, these letters and testimonials infuse life and identity into newly emerging teachers who harboured hopes for careers and financial independence.

## Notes

- 1 A draft of this paper was presented at the Congress of the Humanities and Social Sciences, Canadian Historical Association, at London, Ontario, June 1, 2005. I would like to thank the late T.M. Russell Dunham (1912-2005) of Komoka, Ontario for allowing me to use the materials kept by his grandfather Robert Dunham (1838-1917) of Arkona, Ontario. Thank you also to my father Glenn Stott for reading over drafts of the paper and for seeking out some important information for me. Given that the focus of this paper is on members of the teaching profession I would like to acknowledge and thank five special teachers of outstanding merit who helped instil in me a love of learning and guided me in former days; Margery Johnston (1982-83), Shirley Metcalfe (1984-85) and John Moore (1985-86) at Warwick Township Central School, and Doug Furtney (1990-94) and Derek Arthur (1992-94) at North Lambton Secondary School in Forest.

- 2 Toronto *Globe*, November 14, 1884.
- 3 Hattie Holmes, Toronto, to C.M. Eastman, November 15, 1884. Thomas Milton Russell Dunham Collection. Private. (hereafter TMRD).
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 In addition to understanding and plotting the origins of public education in Canada, much scholarship has increasingly looked at the interactions between students and teachers in comparatively remote rural communities. Such works have investigated the effects that inappropriate behaviours and community influences have had on individual members of the teaching profession in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. George Perry, "A Concession to Circumstances': Nova Scotia's 'Unlimited Supply' of Women Teachers, 1870-1960," *Historical Studies in Education*, 17 (2005): 327-60; Jean Barman, "Encounters with Sexuality: The Management of Inappropriate Body Behaviour in Late-Nineteenth-Century British Columbia Schools," *Historical Studies in Education* 16 (2004): 85-114; Paul J. Stortz and J. Donald Wilson, "Education on the Frontier: Schools, Teachers and Community Influence in North-Central British Columbia," *Histoire sociale – Social History* 26 (November 1993): 265-90; Henry Smaller, "Teachers and Schools in Early Ontario," *Ontario History* 85 (December 1993): 291-307; R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, "From Voluntarism to State Schooling: The Creation of the Public School System in Ontario," *Canadian Historical Review* 66 (December 1985): 443-73; Alison Prentice, *The School Promoters: Education and Social Class in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Upper Canada* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1977); Susan E. Houston, "Politics, Schools, and Social Change in Upper Canada," *Canadian Historical Review* 53 (1972): 240-71; Susan E. Houston and Alison Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988); R.D. Gidney and W.P.J. Millar, *Inventing Secondary Education: The Rise of the High School in Nineteenth-Century Ontario* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's Press, 1990); Robert Lanning, "Awakening a Demand for Schooling: Education Inspection's Impact on Rural Nova Scotia, 1855-74," *Historical Studies in Education* 12 (2000): 129-42;
- 6 Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers' Work: Changing Patterns and Perceptions in the Emerging School Systems of Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Central Canada," *Labour/Le Travail* 17 (Spring 1986): 59-80.
- 7 Ibid., 59-60; East Williams Memorial Public School Book Committee, *From Barefeet to Buses: A History of Education in East Williams Township, Ailsa Craig and Areas* (Forest, Ontario: Pole Printing, 1978), 1-2. In the late 1970s, the Middlesex County Board of Education was mandated to collect all records pertaining to the former one-room schools that had existed within the various townships prior to the creation of central township schools in the 1950s and 1960s. As a result of this directive the staff and parents of East Williams Memorial decided to compile a history of the old school sections that had made up East Williams Township before the records were deposited with the board office.
- 8 Robert Dunham was born in East Gwillimbury, York County, Upper Canada moving to Peel Township, Wellington County in 1848, where he married Louisa Green (1848-1894) in 1864. The couple lived on two rented farms in Middlesex County before removing to Arkona, Ontario in 1878. They raised eleven children born between 1865 and 1894, most of whom attended the Arkona Public School. Various papers, TMRD; Greg Stott, *I Think I Have the Dunham Pedigree: The Story of the Robert and Louisa (Green) Dunham Family* (Arkona, Ontario: G. Stott Publishing, 2006), 159-88; Greg Stott, "The Persistence of Family: A Study of a Nineteenth-Century Canadian Family and Their Correspondence," *Journal of Family History* 31 (April 2006): 190-207.
- 9 *Documentary History of Education in Upper Canada from the Passing of the Constitutional Act of 1791*, Vol.24, 1872, J. George Hodgins, ed. (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1908), 69 and Ibid., Vol. 28, 1876, (Toronto: L.K. Cameron, 1910), 179. In 1872 "[t]he

- Schools under the Education Department have increased to the number of 4,703, and the Pupils in them to the number of 454, 616 . . .” By 1875 it was noted that 4,834 schools were reported open in all of Ontario with a combined attendance of 450, 805 students. Assuming that there was a similar rate of growth until the early 1880s suggests that the number of schools and schools boards must have stood around 5,000. Most rural township schools were governed by their own separate board of trustees, resulting in many townships having ten or more school boards. Ontario 51 Victoria Sessional Papers, vol. 20, part 2, Section 7, xx. By 1886 there were 5, 454 school houses in Ontario. However, as 207 were located in towns and 170 were in cities which were governed by single school boards then the estimate of 5,000 school boards is probably fairly accurate.
- 10 Ontario 51 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 20, part 2, Section 7, xvii.
  - 11 *Historical Atlas of the County of Lambton, Ontario* (Toronto: Beldon, 1880; reprinted Sarnia, 1973), 11.
  - 12 William Johnson, *Arkona Through the Years: 1821-1976* (Forest, Ontario: Pole Printing, 1976), 18-19, 35-37.
  - 13 Annual Report of the Public School Trustees, S.S. # 1 Bosanquet– S.S. # 9 Warwick, Arkona, Ontario. TMRD; 1881 Canada Manuscript Census for Arkona. 136 students were listed from the Arkona census. The other students listed on the 1880 report therefore came from the surrounding farms outside the municipal boundaries of Arkona; Ontario 51 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 20, part 2, Section 7, xii-xiii.
  - 14 Johnson. *Arkona Through the Years*, 55; Greg Stott, “The Chicago of the Dominion?: The Development of Port Franks, Ontario,” *Ontario History* 95 (Spring 2003): 22-37.
  - 15 On January 2, 1879, retired farmer Richard Burdett was hired by the trustees for the Arkona School Board to act as the school’s caretaker for 1879. His duties included attending fires in all three divisions of the school, maintaining the stoves, sprinkling, sweeping, and scrubbing floors, walls, and windows, keeping the privies clean and “supplied with sufficient lime or copper as to keep them sweet” and to maintain the school grounds. For his pains he was to be paid \$55 annually. Contracts were also signed for the supplying of wood for the school’s stoves. J.H. Brower received the contract for 1880 on December 28, 1879, to supply wood at 89¢ per cord. A month later a similar contract was signed by Ann G. Brower who was “[t]o supply 30 cords of body wood Beach and Maple two feet long and split ready for stoves in school.” TMRD.
  - 16 “Poll Book for the Election School Trustees” Arkona, January 8, 1879. TMRD.
  - 17 Trustee Declarations, TMRD; Johnson, *Arkona Through the Years*, 62; *Historical Atlas Lambton*, 54. Wilkinson’s predecessor was Robert George Brett (1851-1929) who had served a term as Arkona’s reeve and subsequently moved west and ultimately became the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta in 1915. David J. Hall, “Robert George Brett,” *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* Vol. 15 (Toronto: University of Toronto, 2005), 144-47. Brett temporarily left Arkona in 1880 for Winnipeg but had returned by 1881 and probably remained until sometime in 1883.
  - 18 S. Roulston to G.B. Stephenson, October 31, 1882. TMRD; Samuel Roulston Contracts, signed July 18, 1880 and November 23, 1881; Maggie Dunn, Woodstock, to G.B. Stephenson, November 17, 1882. The previous principal at the Arkona School, A.E. Wallace – who served from 1878 to 1880 – had a yearly salary of \$550 with his Second-Class Certificate. A.E. Wallace, Contract signed November 8, 1879. Lambton Room, Lambton County Library Headquarters, Wyoming Ontario (hereafter LR) 8A-C “East Lambton, List of Schools, Teachers, Secretaries from 1871-1896.” Nelson K. Joannetee, “The Benefits of Education: Teachers’ Pensions in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Ontario,” *Ontario History* 87 (June 1995): 193-207. The creation of this pension plan did provide some protection against the vagaries and whims of excessively frugal school boards.

- 19 John Abbott, "Accomplishing 'a Man's Task': Rural Women Teachers, Male Culture, and the School Inspectorate in Turn of the Century Ontario," in *Gender and Education in Ontario: An Historical Reader*, Ruby Heap and Alison Prentice, eds. (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 1991), 49.
- 20 Houston and Prentice. *Schooling and Scholars*, 180-81.
- 21 Johnson, *Arkona Through the Years*, 37.
- 22 Ontario 51 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 20, part 2, Section 7, xviii-xix.
- 23 Toronto *Globe*, November 16, 1882; *Ibid.*, November 14, 1884.
- 24 Ontario 51 Vic. Sessional Papers, vol. 20, part 2, Section 7, xviii.
- 25 A.E. Wallace, Port Burwell, November 6, 1882; Annual Report of the Public School Trustees. In 1880 it was reported that of the three teachers on staff, the male principal received \$550, while his two female assistants – Lucie Maude Eastman and Mary E. Mitchell – received \$275 and \$200 respectively. Eastman had been born and raised in Arkona and was first hired in January 1878, to teach the youngest students. She had just turned sixteen the previous month. Mary E. Mitchell came from Bosanquet Township. Johnson, *Arkona Through the Years*, 3.
- 26 Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 147. It was a common complaint of school inspectors that local trustees often failed to pay teachers decent salaries; Johnson, *Arkona Through the Years*, 18-19. 1881 Canada Manuscript Census for Arkona.
- 27 Houston and Prentice, *Schooling and Scholars*, 183; Charles A. Barnes, Forest, December 3, 1884. TMRD
- 28 Maggie Livingstone, Forest, November 11, 1882; Jennie Davidson, Florence, November 23, 1882; Eliza Dewar, Strathroy, November 18, 1882; Minnie Foster, Stratford, November 20, 1882; F.H. Taylor, Port Perry, November 20, 1882; Maggie Dunn, Woodstock, November 17, 1882; John Donnelly, Riversdale, November 16, 1882; Jennie Davidson, Florence, November 23, 1882. TMRD.
- 29 Joseph Pickering, Toronto, to G.B. Stephenson, November 7, 1882. TMRD
- 30 James G. Brown, William Sayers, and Samuel Hubbard, trustees, testimonial, Dawn, November 15, 1880. TMRD.
- 31 John Brebner, October 30, 1880. TMRD.
- 32 J. Morgan, B.A., Head Master, Caledonia High School, September 21, 1881. TMRD.
- 33 Pickering, November 9, 1882. TMRD.
- 34 John Donnelly, November 16, 1882; Alexander Symon, November 9, 1882; Alexander Symon and John Lockhart, November 9, 1882; W.L. Clendinning, October 25, 1882. TMRD.
- 35 Emma Giles, Toronto, November 18, 1884; J.A. Wismer, Parkdale, November 1, 1884. TMRD.
- 36 Alice Nevills, Berlin, November 15, 1884; J.C. Harstone, Seaforth, November, 1884. TMRD.
- 37 Ross Cameron, Sarnia, November 18, 1884; A. Wark, Sarnia, November 7, 1884. TMRD.
- 38 Laura M. McLean, Chatham, December 27, 1884; Rev. John Thompson, St. Andrew's Church, Sarnia. William Sinclair, B.A., headmaster of Sarnia's High School stated that McLean was noted "for her great diligence fair ability and general success and I have much pleasure in adding that her conduct has always been most satisfactory and her moral character irreproachable." William Sinclair, Sarnia, November 19, 1883. TMRD.
- 39 Margaret Y. Gowans, Toronto, November 17, 1884; John M. Vining, Winnipeg, November 4, 1884. TMRD. Margaret Gowans died at 15 Gloucester Street in Toronto on April 14, 1896, "the second daughter of John and Margaret C. Gowans." Toronto *Globe*, April 17, 1896. Margaret's sister Gavina Mary Gowans was the mother of Dr. Alan Gowans Brown of Toronto who developed pabulum. Barbara Morgan, email to author, February 28, 2006 and March 1, 2006.

- 40 Joseph Pickering, November 23, 1882. TMRD.
- 41 Ibid.
- 42 *Globe*, November 14, 1884. Donnelly mentioned nothing about his religion in his letter nor did any of those penning his references. He is probably identified as the John Donnelly (born circa 1863) to Roman Catholic farmers James and Ellen Donnelly of Greenock Township, Bruce County. Given that Arkona was overwhelmingly Protestant, Donnelly's religious background may have been an additional strike against his hiring. (In 1881 Arkona less than one percent of the population was Roman Catholic.) Religious sectarianism remained a potent force in the Arkona area with regard to teacher hirings well into the twentieth century. In 1923 at S.S. # 8 Warwick Township, two kilometres south of Arkona, ratepayers were disgruntled to learn that the incumbent teacher "Miss Downs . . . didn't pass her art and they had to let her go. She was Catholic and used her Catholic prayers which she shouldn't have done, but that didn't worry us." While her students may not have minded, the school trustees and parents were not so open-minded. Dunham speculated that it was Downs' religion, more than her failure at passing Art that led to her dismissal. T. M. Russell Dunham, interview by Greg Stott, Tape recording, Komoka, Ontario, October 12, 1997.
- 43 Archives of Ontario (hereafter AO) RG 2-301-1-2 # 38 "Index of Public School Teachers Certificates Issued by Education Department, 1871-1893." The majority of teachers writing to the Arkona Public School Board made note of their holding either second- or third-class teaching certificates. Second Class Certificates were registered with the province and entitled them to hiring in any jurisdiction. I was able to find definite references to eleven candidates. Most of these individuals received their second-class certificates either shortly before applying to the Arkona School or a year or so afterward (many of those applying for the jobs were still enrolled in Model School or held temporary third-class certificates). Those individuals I could more-or-less positively identify – with the year of achieving second-class certificate – were Jennie Davidson (1882), Joseph Pickering (1879), Rebecca Brammer (1882), Ellen Miller (1880), Alice Nevills (1886), Minnie Raines (1885), Emma McCubbin (1888), Margaret Youngs Gowans (1885), Mary Cron (1885), Isabella Ross Cameron (1887), Minnie Giles (1887).
- 44 1881 Canada Manuscript Census for Forest, 21 and St. Mary's, Div. 2, 18.
- 45 Minnie Foster, Statford, November 20, 1882; Maggie Livingstone, Forest, November 11, 1882; Miss F.H. Taylor, Port Perry, November, 20, 1882; Eliza Dewar, Strathroy, November 18, 1882. TMRD. The stated salaries of Foster, Livingstone, Taylor and Dewar were comparable to those paid to women who taught at the Arkona School between 1880 and 1882: Mary E. Mitchell with a third-class certificate, had a salary of \$200 for the year 1880; Lucie M. Eastman, also with a third-class certificate, was paid \$275 for the year 1880, her third at Arkona; Alma McCordic \$225 for 1881, although her contract was ended early in June 1881; Lizzie Stonehouse possessed a third-class certificate and received \$250 for the year 1882. TMRD.
- 46 Maggie Dunn, Woodstock, November 17, 1882. TMRD.
- 47 Pickering, November 23, 1882; Jennie Davidson, November 23, 1882; Charles A. Barnes, Forest, November 6, 1882; James Grey, Joseph Sheply, James Webster, Florence, November 1882. TMRD. It should be noted that there was at least one other applicant. M. Edmonds heard of the job from a brother of Arkona Public School Board's secretary-treasurer G.B. Stephenson. Edmonds explained that "I would not take it for less than \$350 per year . . ." Presumably the board was not interested. M. Edmonds, Clear Creek, November 18, 1882. Into the 1920s local school boards in the Arkona area were interested in keeping the salaries of their teaching staff low. One student at S.S. # 8 Warwick recalled that in 1923, following the dismissal of a teacher on the basis of her Roman Catholic faith, a Miss Stewart was hired. From the perspective of her pupils

- she “was an excellent teacher, and she asked if they could give her a raise at Christmas time, and so instead of giving her a raise they told her she could go and they hired Miss Hobbs, who lived up the road a ways. The local trustees were looking for the cheapest teacher, not always the best one.” T.M. Russell Dunham, interview, October 12, 1997.
- 48 Martha W. Dunham, contract, February 5, 1883. TMRD; Stott, *Dunham Pedigree*, 112, 158; Stott, “Persistence of Family”, 194.
- 49 Lurenia Moore, contract September 24, 1883. TMRD.
- 50 Toronto *Globe*, November 14, 1884; *Watford Advocate*, November 21, 1884.
- 51 AO, RG 2-12 Box 602, 8935, Lurenia Moore, Arkona, September 1, 1884, to G.W. Ross, Toronto; RG 2-12 Box 613, 12295, Lurenia Moore, Arkona, October 30, 1884, to Alex Marling, Toronto; RG 2-12 Box 616, 13326, Lurenia Moore, Arkona, November 19, 1884, to G.W. Ross, Toronto; RG 2-12 Box 617, 13597, Lurenia Moore, Arkona, November 27, 1884, to Alex Marling, Toronto.
- 52 Sarnia *Observer*, June 4, 1880.
- 53 *Ibid*, March 28, 1879.
- 54 *Ibid*, July 3, 1884.
- 55 Fannie Milligan, Toronto, November 14, 1884; J.A. Wismer, Parkdale, February 24, 1884; Emma Giles, Toronto, November 18, 1884; J.A. Wismer, Parkdale, November 1, 1884; Margaret Y. Gowans, Toronto, November 17, 1884; J.A. Wismer October 27, 1884. Hattie Holmes, Toronto, November 15, 1884. TMRD. 1881 Canada Manuscript Census, Toronto, St. Patrick’s Ward, Div. 1, page 74 and Div 3, p. 71; *Ibid.*, St. Thomas Ward, Div. 3, p. 17.
- 56 Marie Bureen, West Sutton, November 1884; Mossie Sheppard, West Sutton, November 17, 1881; Katherine Cron, West Sutton, November 18, 1884, TMRD; Canada Manuscript Census, Vaughan, Div. 1, p. 21; 1881 Canada Manuscript Census, Whitby, Div. 2, p. 22. Kate Cron’s elder brother William Francis Cron was also a teacher.
- 57 Minnie Raines, Bowmanville, November 17, 1884, to C.M. Eastman; M.J. Kelly, Brantford, December 16, 1882; William Wilkinson, Brantford, February 11, 1882; Robert Cameron, Brantford, September 26, 1883; J.E. Hodgson, Brantford, November 4, 1882. TMRD.
- 58 Belle Brown, Caledonia, November 16, 1884; Alice Nevills, Berlin, November 15, 1884; Lily C. Herrington, St. Mary’s, November 15, 1884; Laura M. McLean, Chatham, December 27, 1884; Ross Cameron, Sarnia, November 18, 1884; Ellen Miller, Adelaide, November 15, 1884; Jennie Weir, Strathroy, November 20, 1884; Emma McCubbin, Strathroy, November 3, 1884; Charles A. Barnes, Forest, December 3, 1884. TMRD.
- 59 Katherine Cron, West Sutton, November 18, 1884. The other applicants for second division were Ellen Miller, Rebecca Brammer, Jennie Weir, Lily C. Herrington, Belle Brown, Hattie Holmes, Ross Cameron, Alice Nevills and Minnie Raines. Mossie Sheppard asked to be considered for either position. Some of the letters do not specifically say the applicant sought the second division but they stated a salary at \$280 which was advertised for that position. The third division salary was listed at \$240. TMRD.
- 60 Ellen Miller, Adelaide, November 15, 1884; Edwin Morrow and Henry Robinson, Adelaide, November 15, 1884. TMRD.
- 61 Rebecca Brammer, Wyoming, November 17, 1884. TMRD.
- 62 Rebecca Brammer, Wyoming, December 11, 1884. TMRD.
- 63 Jennie Weir, Strathroy, November 29, 1884. TMRD.
- 64 LR ‘East Lambton List of Schools, Teachers, Secretaries from 1871- 1896’, p. 197. This ledger kept track of the aggregate and average attendance for each school section in the eastern half of Lambton County. It also kept track of the teachers at the various

- schools. Unfortunately for the historian each school only listed one teacher, and in the case of the multiple division schools like Arkona the principal was listed and not the assistants. However, for the last half of 1884 the names of Jennie Weir and Miss McLeish are listed along with that of principal D.K. McLeish (who replaced Joseph Pickering who died in December 1884). The listing for the 'last half of 1884' is incorrect, given that the three teachers were engaged for the first half of 1885. It may be a clerical error due to the chaos that must have followed the resignation of two teachers and the death of the third.
- 65 Charles A. Barnes, Forest, December 3, 1884. TMRD. Trimble eventually did come to teach in the Arkona school. Johnson, *Arkona Through the Years*, 36.
- 66 L.C. Herrington, Stratford, December 9, 1884. TMRD.
- 67 Emma Giles, Toronto, December 8, 1884. TMRD.
- 68 Miss D.C. McLeish, contract, December 27, 1884. TMRD.
- 69 AO, RG 2-12 Box 580, 270, Joseph Pickering, Arkona, January 4, 1884, to Department of Education, Toronto; RG 2-12 Box 590, 4109, Joseph Pickering, Arkona, April 30, 1884, to Department of Education, Toronto. Pickering wrote to the Department of Education on two occasions in 1884, seeking information on curriculum and seeking advice and clarification on two female students who wished to complete intermediate and third-class examinations the following summer.
- 70 *Forest Free Press*, January 2, 1885 [reprinted in *Forest Free Press*, December 29, 1904]; Lynne Marks, *Revivals and Roller Rinks: Religion, Leisure, and Identity in Late-Nineteenth-Century Small-Town Ontario* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), 23, 24. Church attendance was viewed as a sign of respectability and an adherence to the dominant social norms. It would have been particularly important for a school teacher to set this sort of example.
- 71 *Watford Advocate*, November 21, 1884; *Watford Guide*, November 28, 1884.
- 72 AO, Vital Statistics Records, MS 935, reel 13, 008331, Joseph Pickering, Arkona: *Forest Free Press*, January 2, 1885. Pickering was not to be the only death associated with Arkona's school. Nearly two years later the wife of the new school principal died after an illness of two weeks. Lurenia Moore – who returned to Arkona by 1886 – became seriously ill and had to resign from the school in March 1886, and return to her family's home in Clinton to convalesce. She was so highly valued, however, that the trustees vowed not to replace her until they knew if she would be able to return. Ultimately, Moore recovered and was back at her post by April 23, 1886. *Watford Guide-Advocate*, March 26, 1886 and April 23, 1886.
- 73 Duncan K. McNeil, contract, December 27, 1884. TMRD.
- 74 Johnson, *Arkona Through the Years*, 36-37.