

A Qualitative Study on the Experiences of Students Attending Thunder Bay
Area Rural, One-Room Schools in the early 20th century.

Jennifer Isotalo

A Thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Education

Faculty of Education
Lakehead University
Thunder Bay, Ontario

June 2009

Abstract

One-room country schools, which began appearing in the early 1900s in the District of Thunder Bay in Northern Ontario, Canada, provided educational opportunities to the children of the first and second generation immigrant settlers to the area. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate, through the oral history interview process, the experiences of students who attended these one-room schools and to examine the socialization processes employed through this organized education system for integrating the children of immigrants into a specific representation of Canadian citizenship culture. The five participants in this study were, at the time of attendance at school, one landed immigrant, three first generation Canadian citizens and one second generation Canadian citizen. Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were employed to allow the participants to express their views on their experiences attending the one-room schools. Five themes that emerged were: (a) parental and peer influence on participants' adoption of school culture; (b) the Provincial government mandate that was both reflected and altered in the rural, one-room school curriculum; (c) the positive influence of immersion in English-language culture on ESL learning; (d) the disciplinary measures that created un/accepted behavioural patterns; and (e) the one-room school's influence on participants' definitions of Canadian citizenship and culture. The findings of this study indicated that participants had a close connection to their family and peers and that this connection was often strengthened through their immersion in the one-room school environment. The ESL participants revealed that they positively benefitted from their English-only submersion into the one-room school classroom, and that the disciplinary measures enforced by their respective teachers were necessary and acceptable to them. Finally, the participants relayed that their definition of Canadian citizenship was based on a British-Canadian, Christian ideal that was perpetuated throughout the one-room school environment.

Acknowledgments

There are many individuals to whom I would like to extend my sincere appreciation. Without their support, I would not have been able to complete this thesis.

I would like to thank Dr. Hope-Arlene Fennell, my thesis supervisor, for her guidance and editorial support throughout this research process. In addition I would like to express my appreciation to my Committee Member, Dr. Walter Epp, for his professional efforts and constructive criticism.

I would like to thank the five participants who volunteered to take part in the study for their cooperation, inspiration and support. They have contributed a great deal to my own education and hopefully to that of other students and teachers.

I would also like to thank Mrs. Diana Mason for her helpful and friendly assistance. Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my parents and fiancé for their unwavering encouragement and support.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Overview of the Study

The late 19th century was a time when the government of Canada began to encourage large-scale immigration to the country. This foreign recruitment was not only limited to the previous traditional source areas of Great Britain, Western Europe and the United States, but now included immigrant populations from Central and Eastern Europe. This was due, in part, to world-wide prosperity and specifically in Canada, for a need to have willing workers to “...cultivate the vast areas of virgin prairie, to build the new transcontinental railroads, and to supply the manpower for an expanding industrial system” (Avery, 1995, p. 10). The election of Laurier’s liberal government in Canada in 1896 was followed by a significant expansion of immigrants into Canada. Laurier’s government viewed the Canadian school system as a key component to socialize the children of these new immigrants into the English language and Canadian citizenship expectations. Specifically in “...Ontario and western Canada, schools were seen as important for teaching students a sense of Canadian nationalism” (Marsh, 1990, p. 85). With the unification of Upper and Lower Canada into the Province of Canada in 1841 and subsequently the Province of Ontario in 1867, there was interest by the Provincial government in a common educational system for all of its inhabitants. This interest was recognized in 1850, with the creation of *The Common School Act for Upper Canada*.

The Common School Act focused on a universal education system for both the urban and rural inhabitants of the region, and created school sections as the smallest unit for the administration of rural public schools. The *School Act of 1871* made schooling free, universal and compulsory for “all Ontario children between the ages of seven and twelve [who] were for

the first time compelled to attend some school for at least four months of any given school year” (Prentice, 1977, p. 17). Tyack (1976) stated that “In legally compelling school attendance, the democratic state not only coerces behavior but also legitimizes majority values” (p. 364). Subsequently, by 1914, all Canadian provinces, with the exception of Quebec, had “established organized systems of education with approved curricula and textbooks. In rural areas, one-room schools, with one teacher instructing 20 or 30 children of all grades, were common” (Marsh, 1990, p. 87-88).

Some of these one-room country schools, which began appearing in the early 1900s in the District of Thunder Bay provided educational opportunities to the children of the first and second generation immigrant settlers to the area. The country schools were classified as Township schools and were located in the rural areas surrounding the towns of Port Arthur (1884) and Fort William (1902). The students who attended the one-room schools in the early 1900s had to deal with challenging circumstances both in and out of school and were among the first graduates of this province-wide, government-organized system of instruction in Ontario (Gunnell, 2001, p. 16).

By the 1950s, due to post-war prosperity, the baby boom and renewed immigration policies, many of these schools were abandoned as families moved into towns and enrolled their children in city schools (Gunnell, 2001). Today, there are few personal records available which relate the formal and informal experiences of the student participants of this early school system. This study explores students’ experiences through the oral recollections of five adults who attended one-room rural schools in the Thunder Bay township area circa the early 20th century.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of students who attended one-room schools in the rural Thunder Bay township area of Northern Ontario in the early 20th century. The study was framed by the following eight research questions:

1. Where did the participants' families emigrate from to come to Canada and where did they settle in the Thunder Bay area?
2. What were the participants' language fluencies upon attendance at the one-room schools and what were their primary motives for attending the one-room school?
3. What was the formal, academic curriculum that was provided to the students of the one-room school?
4. How was the English language taught and promoted within the one-room schools?
5. What was the informal, education curriculum that was provided to the students of the one-room schools?
6. What were the disciplinary measures that were enforced within the one-room schools?
7. What conflicts did the participants' experience during transitions between the rural and school settings?
8. How did the one-room schools influence the ways in which the participants came to define the concept of Canadian citizenship?

Significance of the Study

The study of students' experiences in one-room rural schools is significant for three reasons. The first is that there has been little research done in this area. Autobiographical and biographical studies by Canadian authors Cochrane (1981), Clement (1987) and Petrone (2007)

focused on teachers' perspectives as instructors in one-room schools. A few contemporary educational studies, such as those by Johnson (1980) and Brint, Contreras and Matthews (2001), looked at socialization processes in contemporary schools, but few studies have examined the experiences of immigrants to North America who were the students in the one-room schools. Theobald (1993) noted that "Given the fact that the rural schooling experience in America was most typical for most of our history as a nation, it is surprising how understudied this experience is" (p. 133). Tomkins (1997) also wrote that scholars need to look at:

the part played by our schools in socializing immigrants [in the late nineteenth century] to a dominantly Anglo-Saxon value system. We need to know much more about how the Canadianization process was reflected in the curriculum, in the administration and organization of the schools and in the statements of 'philosophy' that emanated from provincial departments of education over the decades... We also need to ask how Canadians have perceived education (p. 16).

In addition, this study provided information that has increased the current limited documentation that exists regarding local education, cultural, political and social practices of the early years of Thunder Bay township school history. Further, the study extended the literature of sociologically-based practices through first-hand accounts from students who attended these early learning institutions, and allowed participants to recall and relate early childhood memories.

Limitations

The following were constraints on the research study's design:

1. Due to the small number of participants interviewed for the study, the findings were limited to the experiences of students who attended one-room schools in Northern Ontario in the early 1900s.
2. The validity of the data was dependent on the subjects' honesty.

3. The study was limited to one-room schools that existed in Northwestern Ontario in the early 1900s.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in this study and should be considered when interpreting the findings.

1. The participants were able to comprehend the interview questions.
2. The questions were clearly worded and the participants were given the opportunity to request clarification if they did not understand questions.
3. Participants read and reflected on the interview questions prior to the interview.
4. The participants responded in a thoughtful and honest manner to the questions during the interviews.

Delimitations

1. Within this study, the questions asked to the participants focused on their experiences during the years of their schooling at the one-room schools. Though I asked students as to what their lives, and their family's lives, were like prior to their entrance into primary education, I did not look in detail at their own lives, or the lives of their families, after they exited the rural school system.

Definition of Terms

Acculturation. Acculturation is defined as the adaptation to a new culture; as learning to function in a new culture while maintaining one's own identity (Schumann, 1978). Ellis (1986) stated that this process involves developing an understanding of the systems of thought, beliefs, and emotions of the new culture, as well as its system of communication. In addition, acculturation is an important concept to consider when

researching second language learning, as it has been hypothesized that successful second language learning is more likely when second language learners succeed in the process of acculturation (Ellis).

(Canadian) Common public school system circa 1910-30 in Canada. The common school system is defined as “...secular – to overcome the particular intentions of denominational authorities; open to all pupils – to ensure that the entire population had a common education; and suited to the cultivation of social and political bonds within Canada...to preserve Canadian autonomy against American influence” (Wotherspoon, 2004, p.59). This system is also defined as one which provided “...the cultural content of curriculum in English-speaking areas of Canada [with] a British imperialist or colonial perspective at the expense of addressing Canadian contexts or content” (Sumara, Davis and Laidlaw, 2001, p.155).

English-as-a-Second-Language (ESL) learner. ESL learner refers to those who have learned the English language after acquiring their first-language or ‘mother tongue.’ [Though arguments have been made recently to refer to ‘mother-tongue’ as ‘language-inheritance’ (Norton, 1997), in this study I will be using the term ‘mother-tongue.’] In this paper, English-as-a-Second-Language learning will refer to learning that occurs in a predominantly English cultural environment where English is the language spoken.

First-generation Canadian citizen. In this paper, the term ‘first-generation Canadian citizen’ will refer to a person born in Canada and who is a child of a first-generation landed immigrant.

Immigrants/foreign born. The term immigrant refers principally people who are, or have been, landed immigrants in Canada. A landed immigrant “is a person who has

been granted the right to live in Canada permanently by immigration authorities. Some are recent arrivals; others have resided in Canada for many years” (Boyd & Vickers, 2000, p.2). For the purposes of this paper, an immigrant will be defined as a person (s) who came to Canada circa 1850 - 1920 from a European or Scandinavian country to take up permanent residence and who may or may not have full Canadian citizenship status.

Second-generation Canadian citizen. In this paper, the term ‘second-generation Canadian citizen’ will refer to a person born in Canada and who is a child of a first-generation Canadian citizen.

Outline of the Study

This study is divided into five chapters. In the first chapter, the purpose and significance are explored. Related literature is reviewed in the second chapter. In the third chapter, the methodology, research questions, research approach, type of sampling, type of research, ethical concerns, assumptions, delimitations, data collection and definition of terms are presented. In the fourth chapter, interview data and the findings of the study are shown. General themes in the responses to each question in the interviews were identified, typical or unique responses were quoted, and then results were summarized. The fifth chapter is composed of research which summarizes the patterns, themes and relationships relating to the main research questions presented in the study. Recommendations and suggestions for further research are provided in the sixth and final chapter.

CHAPTER TWO

Review of the Literature

The review of related literature is presented in this chapter. The purpose of the review is to provide background information to support the development of the problem and the findings of the research. In the first section, a historical overview of immigration trends in the early 20th century in the Thunder Bay area is presented. In the second part, the ways that the one-room schools were used as a means of inculcating a specific view of nationalism for recently immigrated families was discussed and in the third section, I explored how the government's goal of creating a national citizenship through encouraging certain educational practices at the one-room schools was a complex, multifaceted process that was often challenged by individuals both inside and outside of the classroom.

Immigration trends in the Thunder Bay area

Port Arthur and Fort William's immigrant population slowly began to grow in the 1850s with Scottish settlers, employed by the government as surveyors, geologists and other support staff, coming to the area. By 1881, the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) had started and the population of the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William grew to 1,965 inhabitants, of which those of British origin made up 68 percent of the total population. By the 1890s, "the economy of Canada as a whole, and in particular Thunder Bay as a region, started to expand" (Southcott, 1987, p.11). Southcott reported that at this time the CPR deemed British workers highly undesirable to work on the railway due to British immigrants being "...unwilling to tolerate the low wages and the primitive working conditions [and] they could also use the English-language press to make their poor working and living conditions known. As a result the railways gave hiring preferences to central and southern European immigrants" (p.11). The

contentious Railways Agreement, signed on September 1, 1925 by the Canadian government, also increased the amount of immigrants to the area. This “controversial agreement with the Canadian Pacific and Canadian National railways...granted them the right to directly recruit agricultural workers from countries previously identified as ‘non-preferred’ sources for immigration”, with part of the agreement stating that “It is the policy of the Government of Canada to promote the immigration into Canada of persons who... are of such nationalities, races and modes of life as to be assimilable into the population and citizenship of Canada” (Library and Archives Canada, 2005). As well, in all of Canada, Southcott (1987) noted that, “Following the passage of the manufacturing conditions in 1898, the lumber industry began to expand at a rapid rate. An urgent need for workers arose” and yet again British immigrants were not the industry’s preferred choice for workers (p.13). This was due to the fact that many British immigrants did not like the seasonal nature of the job, did not care for the stark and cold environment of the lumber camp, and did not have experience sawing lumber. Southcott stated “by 1901 the Port Arthur Board of Trade made an urgent appeal to the Minister of the Interior for more immigrants, especially Finnish and Scandinavian who were experienced in wood cutting and timber floating” (p.12) so that by 1911, the census of Thunder Bay and Rainy River District area included 4,000 Scandinavian people listed within the approximately 67,000 immigrant and native inhabitants.

Along with the railroad and lumber camps, many immigrants in the early 1900s were also influenced to come specifically to Northern Ontario due to an inexpensive loan system which allowed families to lease large tracts of land to settle and farm on. Some areas of land in Northern Ontario were even designated for specific nationalities, such as the Dutch or Finns. By 1912 the Finnish immigrants, who numbered over 1700 people in the early 1900s, and who had

mainly settled in “Port Arthur because of its proximity to the lumber camps” (Southcott, 1987, p.12) began a “back to the land” movement in the Thunder Bay area. This initiative encouraged Finn families both already in the Thunder Bay area and who were immigrating to Canada to take advantage of leasing the large tracts of land that were being made available outside of the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William for very little cost. Though the land was not offered for outright purchase, many Finns opted to move to townships outside of Thunder Bay and take advantage of leasing the 160 acres of vacant land open to any male over 18 years of age for \$1.50 (*The Finnish Experience*, n.d.). This movement was a success, with a large population of Finns settling in rural areas surrounding Thunder Bay at this time. So, by 1921, according to the Census of that year, the immigrant population of Port Arthur and Fort William totaled approximately 35, 400 people, with the largest immigrant groups being approximately 22, 000 British, over 3,000 Scandinavians (Finnish, Danish, Swedish, Norwegian and Icelandic) over 3,000 Ukrainians and Austrians, and 2,000 Italians (Southcott, p.16). According to Harper (1997), these large groups of newly arrived immigrant families that flooded into Canada, and specifically Northern Ontario, in the late 1800s and early 1900s from non-Northern European, non-British countries, led to an “intensive campaign [by the Canadian government] to assimilate the children of these new immigrants” into a Christian, Anglo-Saxon ideal (p.193-94).

Early government citizenship concerns

The idea of recently arrived immigrants to Canada going through a process to become “Canadianized” (Harper, 1997, p.193) was “supported by school trustees, teachers' associations, agrarian reformers, social gospellers, temperance groups, the women's rights advocates, the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Girl Guides and Boy Scout organizations” (p.193-94). This idea was also supported by Egerton Ryerson, Chief Superintendent of Education for

Upper Canada in 1844, who suggested that “[immigrant] ailments might be harbingers of a worse pestilence of social insubordination and disorder and therefore it was seen as essential that this untaught and idle pauper immigration be prevented from undermining the laws in Upper Canada” (p.193). Harper continued that Ryerson stated that education was the key to solve this problem and that Ryerson argued "Only the diffusion of education among the immigrants could counteract what was becoming an unfortunate influence on provincial affairs" (p.193). As well, with the development of such organizations as the first Finnish Socialist organization in Port Arthur in 1903, local public concern over non-English speaking immigrants grew in the Thunder Bay area. Chochla (1987) reported that many British born immigrants at this time believed that the Finnish and Ukrainian organizations were “fronts for a communist movement in northern centres like North Bay, Timmins, Sudbury, Port Arthur and Fort William” (p.52). In Port Arthur there were fears from the British-born citizens that these new immigrant populations, who many British believed adhered to Socialist and Communist ideologies, could become a real threat to the law and order of the community (Chochla, 1987).

Therefore, due to the fact that many in Upper Canada believed that Canadian unity, prosperity, harmony, even Canadian identity, was “inextricably linked with conformity to Anglo-Saxon culture and Western ideals [in the late 19th century century]” (Harper, 1997, p.193) and that this conformity could only be achieved by educating the masses of immigrants entering the country, schools began to be constructed in Ontario. By 1846 Ryerson had created *An Act for the Better Establishment and Maintenance of Common Schools in Upper Canada* which created the basis for a universal education system. This legislation created a seven member administrative body called the General Board of Education which was allowed to regulate the governance of public school boards across the province, grant funding, approve textbooks and

curriculum materials, establish a Provincial Normal School which was to include a Model School for the training of teachers, and oversee their certification. By 1871, the *School Act* was introduced which made schooling in Ontario free, universal and compulsory for “all Ontario children between the ages of seven and twelve [who] were for the first time compelled to attend some school for at least four months of any given school year” (Prentice, 1977, p. 17). According to Stamp (1977a), compulsory schooling was maintained in Ontario because educational authorities, such as Howard Ferguson who was both the Premier of Ontario and Minister of Education by 1923, “had warned that the foreigner must be transformed through schooling into a loyal Canadian citizen or there would be adverse social and political consequences” (p.36). Harper (1997) explained that this strong belief from the Ontario government that difference could be eliminated through education was the result of:

a specific view of children that was at the forefront of Ontario's school reforms...By providing standardized education, many reformers believed that students would “gain respectability or the marks of ‘civilization’: respectable religion (Christianity), respectable speech and manners (standard English), and respect for and desire for private property (capitalism). It was an education intended to eliminate diversity among students, ensuring conformity to a standard identity, narrowly and rigidly defined (p.193).

As well, Clewley and Kelly (1975) stated that Ferguson was also reported to have argued “that [specifically] the inhabitants of northern Ontario should receive not only the basic skills of reading, writing and arithmetic, but also some idea of the nature of democratic government and society” (p.10). J.B. MacDougall (1919), an Inspector of Public Schools in [New] Ontario from 1904-1911, and the Deputy Chief Inspector with the Ministry of Education in 1922, also stated that the Northern Inspector must ensure that “every effort was put forth to encourage naturalization, to place the schools on the usual democratic working basis of self-government and gradually inculcate British methods and ideals and familiarize the residents with British

institutions” (p.121-22). Interestingly, there is little mention in the literature as to whether or not immigrant parents supported mandatory schooling, with only a few references by authors as to parents’ lack of support for their children’s educational opportunities (Houston & Prentice, 1988). Therefore, mainly based on arguments made by top officials in the Ontario government of the time, children of immigrants to Northern Ontario in the early 1900s began to embrace a particular view of citizenship in Canada through attendance at the one-room schools and the curriculum that was provided there.

The creation of rural schools

In the Thunder Bay area of northern Ontario, the earliest date recorded of any type of school was in 1860 in the town of Port Arthur. By 1873 the municipality of Shuniah had been established and the first rural school was constructed (McKellar & Oliver, 1917). Houston and Prentice (1988) wrote that from 1850 to 1875:

the proportion of children enrolled in the common schools of Ontario increased substantially in all cities, towns, and country school sections of the province. In raw figures, the numbers of children five to sixteen years of age reported by local superintendants as registered in all common schools rose from 168, 159 in 1851 to 451, 568 in 1875... To put it another way: over these two decades school enrollment grew by 165 per cent, while the provincial population as a whole increased by only 70 per cent and the school-aged population by 89 per cent (p.200).

Due to this influx in population, J.B. MacDougall (1919) stated that his primary concern was for the students in schools who were “Native-born of non-English-speaking parents” (p.132) and that:

If there is any land which has reason to dread the undue multiplication of such a class out of sympathy with British idealism with all its train of dependent evils and dangers, it is Canada. We have a comparatively small nucleus of citizens of Canadian or British-born parentage, familiar with and appreciative of, those principles for which our British connection stands. These must furnish the solvent for the social, civic, and national anomalies of the remaining wholly, or partly, unnaturalized groups (p.133).

He stated in the same report that "...it is Ontario that herein concerns us most intimately. When we come to it we are met by startling facts. She has the largest proportionate non-English-speaking population and at the same time by far the fewest naturalized citizens" (p.136). He continued that the educational system must and will vindicate itself by "...penetrating into the remotest corners of the land, and making accessible and real there, as in the higher spheres of life, the benefits of culture to the largest degree possible" (p.154).

With an influx of immigrants coming to the Thunder Bay District area in the early 1900s, rural one-room schools were built in many of the townships, such as Conmee Township's first school, a one-room log building, built in 1909. The majority of the rural one-room schools in the Thunder Bay area were first constructed from 1900-1910 (Gunnell, 2001, p.35-124) and followed a similar pattern of basic frame construction. Gunnell reported that "From the little evidence remaining, they appeared to be a single room...one door and a couple of windows... Usually the ceilings were relatively low to conserve heat" (p.23). Schoolteacher P. Petrone (2007), teaching in 1942 at S.S. #7 McIntyre, a one-room rural school located in McIntyre township outside of the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William, described the school as "a white frame, one-room schoolhouse about twenty-five feet square with a small front porch" (Petrone, 2007, p.33). Once constructed, the one-room building itself promoted certain ideals and values based on the interior layout of the classroom and the objects housed within it.

Formalized classroom practice

Classroom practice and British-Canadian customs

Troper (1978) argued that in Canada at the start of the 20th century, a Canadian national spirit was inextricably linked to the British Empire. Similar to many historians, Troper purported that this British-Canadian connection was strengthened due to many factors, such as the

resettlement of the Loyalists into Canada after the American Revolution, a desire from Canadians to be seen as distinct from the Americans, and the Canadian government's fears of being invaded and taken over by the United States (Troper, 1978, p. 24-26). He explained that:

Although the term Canadian 'citizenship' was widely applied, in fact Canadian citizenship did not become a legal definition until 1947. Before that date naturalization granted a status of British subject resident in Canada. When the status of Canadian citizen was introduced, one became both a Canadian citizen and a British subject (p.26).

Troper continued that "The emphasis on the Imperial connection and the role of British institutions and culture in 'the shaping' of Canadian identity remained intact in English Canadian schools until after World War II...Rather than become citizens of Canada and the New World, immigrants were admonished to become good British subjects – citizens of the Empire" (p. 17).

Historian Stamp (1977a) explained that Superintendent of Education, E. Ryerson:

never saw the production of 'good little Canadians' as the central reason for advocating publicly supported schools. Ryerson did see the political value in free schooling; but it lay in inculcating loyalty to Britain and to British institutions...Upper Canada and the other English-speaking provinces regarded themselves as provinces of the British Empire, not as provinces of a united Canadian nation (p.31).

Even after Confederation in 1867, education was left under provincial jurisdiction and never fell under a federal umbrella. Scholars, such as Stamp, have theorized this was because:

at that time schooling was very much a local concern. Each of the colonies that later became a part of Canada had developed its own unique school system. Education was not then viewed as a factor contributing to national economic growth. There fore in the conferences and debates of the 1860's, most politicians took it for granted that education should be a provincial concern... The 1841-1867 period of legislative harmony between Upper and Lower Canada had proven how difficult it was to secure harmony between English and French speaking Canadians over matters of education and religion...Hence, with virtually no debate, education was assigned to the provinces (p.31-32).

Troper commented that this agenda of a Canadian and British dual nationality was strengthened by having Canadian school students "study British history and literature, not as

separate from Canadian history and literature but ‘as’ Canadian history and literature” (p.17). It also was encouraged by having students “...subjected to a daily ritual of saluting the Union Jack, singing ‘God Save the King,’ and pledging allegiance to the Crown” (p.17). Remembering his past days at school in Barrie, Ontario in the 1890s, historian Arthur Lower concluded ““The wonder is that the tender plant of Canadian nationalism survived at all, for all little Canadian boys and girls have been subjected from the day on which they start school to an unending steeping in the liquid of imperialism...”” (Stamp, 1977b, p.109).

Local schoolteacher Petrone (2007) wrote that, while teaching at her one-room school in MacIntyre Township, she followed the provincial agenda of perpetuating British identity and family values in the classroom. She stated that her students “...began and ended the [school] day with song. ‘O’Canada’ in the morning and ‘God Save the King’ in the afternoon” (p.39).

Canadian nationalism appeared to be inextricably linked to British nationalist spirit, as Petrone related encouraging “an animated patriotic spirit in my little one-room schoolhouse...I enrolled the school in the Junior Red Cross programme. As members, we read *The Canadian Red Cross Junior* magazines which included poems, short stories, plays and letters of thanks for blankets and quilts from children in war-torn Britain” (p.44). Repo (1997) wrote that in the early 1940s, at her one-room school where she was a student, a group of her peers met for meetings twice a month for a Junior Red Cross Club. She stated that the minutes she kept at the time recorded British-centred events such as:

On the twelfth day of September (1940)...We decided to start knitting blocks twelve by twelve inches to make a blanket for crippled children because they had lost their parents, especially in England...The programme at the last meeting, May 22, 1942, had a patriotic theme. ‘The Maple Leaf Forever’ and “There’ll be Bluebirds Over the White Cliffs of Dover’ were sung by all. ‘A Message of Welcome by Princess Elizabeth’ was read by Aino Siiter, ‘Anthems of the British Empire’ read by Alfred Korpiaho, Kaarlo Hynna, John Tulin, Onni Peltola and

Eino Hynna, 'Dunkirk' read by Risto Ranta, and the 'Union Jack' by Eila Korpiaho (p.14-15).

Petrone also related her interest in colonial British ideologies in her memoir, writing how she attempted to share her interest with the students in her classroom of "The wonders of the world discovered by Marco Polo, Sir Francis Drake, Livingstone, Captain Cook...and tried to make infectious my fascination with the new lands, vast new oceans, and strange new peoples in their desert, jungle, or tropical island homes" (p.38). In her art class, she focused on crafts, and again related impressing a British nationalism upon her students by having them follow her example in creating paper folds of Anglo-Saxon, class symbols such as "...the Queen's Crown, King's Crown, cup and saucer, windmill, flower pot, shawl and cupboard" (p.40). Schween (1997) wrote that, while a student at S.S. No.1 in Lappe township beginning in 1931, her teacher also impressed a British nationality onto her and her fellow students. Schween wrote that "My first teacher's name was Mrs. Mary Goodspeed. She was very 'Brit' and taught us many things about English history, the kings and the battles in and for England and the Empire. These things had little to do with us or our lives, but we had to learn them anyway" (p.10). This impressing of British national pride onto immigrant students' consciousness may also be seen in the historically accurate reproduction of the one-room school of Conmee S.S. #1, originally built in 1935 and located in Conmee Township, now situated on the grounds of the Founders' Museum and Pioneer Village just outside of the city of Thunder Bay. Based on historical fact, the one-room school displayed British national symbols, with the classroom having the British flag and pictures of the British rulers attached to the front wall that the students would have faced when being instructed each day by their teacher. Historian Cochrane (1981) related that in all schools in Canada at the turn of the 20th century "there was a formal start to the day...facing the Union

Jack and a portrait of England's reigning monarch, the class sang a national anthem or two, God Save the King, The Maple Leaf Forever, or, latterly, O Canada" (p.56).

Many contemporary educational scholars, such as Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein, and Colby (1999) and Norton (1997) also acknowledged the effectiveness of instituting daily educational practices and visual aids to encourage its school-age children in developing nationalist pride. In N.B. Johnson's (1980) study, the author agreed with well-known anthropological writer and Professor Emeritus at Rutgers University, Yehudi Cohen, who stated "socialization and enculturation into national society and culture are symbolically reinforced by the integrative functions of customary public school classroom decoration and artifacts" (p.173). Johnson continued that "Customary, often taken-for-granted items of public school classroom material culture in part function as a mode for the representation and symbolic transmission of socio-cultural ideologies, mythologies, and core value orientations" (p.174). He concurred with Cohen, who asked:

...what relevance is the daily oath of allegiance to a flag – and the flag itself, which the child faces throughout the learning period – to the acquisition of knowledge and skills... the object is to present all future participants in the society with uniform ideological symbols. The goal is to make these symbols integral parts of shaped minds, so that response to them in adulthood will be uniform when the state bureaucracy ...needs to use them to gain acquiescence or mass participation in an activity of the society (p.177).

This overtly patriotic teaching of British values and history in Canadian schools continued well into the mid-1900s, strengthened in part by H. J. Cody, rector of St. Paul's Anglican Church in Toronto, and newly elected Minister of Education of Ontario in 1918. Stamp (1982) wrote that "[Cody] preached that the genius of the British people had been granted by God, and that it was to the credit of the Britons that they had set out to share their genius with backward people. ...[He] had visions of a new Canada 'united in...readiness to serve King and country (p.105-

106). Cody and other Ministry educators also supported Ryerson's Christian-based religious initiatives that attempted to instill uniform religious practices for the students in the one-room, common (public) schools.

Classroom practice and Christian education

Scholars Houston and Prentice (1988) concluded that "Of all the subjects that [Superintendent] Ryerson desired to see in the common school curriculum none approached the importance of religious instruction" (p.247-48). They continued that Ryerson wrote in 1846 that "The Christian religion should be the basis [of education], and all pervading principle of it" (p.248) though he also stated that children were not required to use religious books objected to by their parents and that separate schools could be established for Protestants and Catholics in any locality. Despite this apparent acceptance of different religious denominations, Stamp (1982) argued that the Ontario common school curriculum of the early 1900s, which followed Ryerson's early school blueprint, encouraged Ontario students to acquire and emulate the state values of an idealized British-Christian society. Jain (1977) noted that Ryerson stated in the 1870s that the glue that would hold the entire society of Ontario together would be a "free and comprehensive system of Christian Education for the youth of the land" (p.40). Indeed, the current Ontario government's Ministry of Education website stated that in the early 20th century, the Ontario school curriculum:

reflected the social values of the time, particularly patriotism for the British Empire, and religious and moral instruction. While religious education was not a formal part of the curriculum in the public schools, bible stories were used in all classrooms (not just in the Roman Catholic Separate Schools) as a vehicle to teach a variety of subjects. Daily prayers to open and close a school day were intended to form character and ground students in the value of discipline and virtue and continued well into the 20th century (*Curriculum: The 3 Rs*, 2005).

This focus on the Christian religion was prevalent in rural, early 20th century Thunder Bay schools, as Petrone (2007) explained how soon after she began teaching at the S.S. #1 MacIntyre, a Miss M-, “representing the Canadian Sunday School Mission [and who shared her] English lunches of jellied salads and devilled eggs [with me]” (p. 42) was given permission by the School Board to teach about the Bible in a Bible study class. As well, Schween (1997) reminisced about attending S.S. #1 school in the township of Lappe beginning in 1931 and seeing “Miss E. M- coming to tell us Bible stories using her flannel board... and memorizing 300 Bible verses” (p.3). Harju (1997) also explained in the same book about how, while attending the one-room school of S.S. No.1 in Lappe beginning in 1944, “Missionary and teacher, Miss M-, used to come and teach us Bible stories. She would have a board covered with flannel cloth and figures of Jesus and other Bible characters made of the same material so that they would stick to the board. In this fashion, she would tell us about the Bible...but not any others [faiths]” (p.17). This religious authoritarianism not only demonstrated a Christian-centric approach in the formal school curriculum, but also showed how Christian Anglo-conformity often encouraged nation-state, and not local, beliefs, values and ideologies in the classroom. For example, Clement (1987) noted that while teaching to his one-room class in Miscampbell Township in 1927 he encountered a student who disagreed with his pro-British political views. After searching out the student’s brother for an explanation about how the student acquired his viewpoint, Clement then recounted his own response using Christian and class imagery to comment about how passionate he believes the young student’s brother is about this alternative to the Canadian government system. Clement stated that “Sulo [the brother] came to see me...A fervent supporter of the Marxist-Leninist line, his eyes gleamed with missionary zeal. He was also an agile debater; such that if I had been one of the downtrodden of the earth, I would have

welcomed the idea” (Clement, p.26). Clement also stated that though he was interested in discussing his students’ various points of view on religion or politics after class hours, he did not encourage these discussions during school hours.

Even today, N.B. Johnson (1980) explained how the dominance of the Christian religion is still found in many contemporary rural schools. His micro-ethnographic study of classrooms in the town of Deerfield, USA, had student participants who were similar in their families’ employment, socio-economic status and cultural diversity, as the students who attended the one-room schools in the Thunder Bay township areas in the early 1900s. He showed in his study that, like many of the rural Thunder Bay area townships, there was ethnic diversity within Deerfield, but there was little to no evidence of any local cultural group being presented aside from the state national culture in the schools. He reported that in the kindergarten classes he observed that “Visual emphasis is upon the display of animals having anthropomorphic qualities of speech and personality, on numbers, and upon the elaborate and prominent illustration of national holidays” (p.178) and that the other classrooms at the schools also featured Christian holiday decorations, commercially produced calendars and clocks, national flags, and “Save for the third grade current events bulletin board, there are no apparent references to, or symbols of, local socio-cultural and ethnic traditions or orientations” (p.180). This limitation of local religious and political beliefs and dominance of state values in the one-room schools was also demonstrated through its textbook-laden curriculum.

Classroom practice and the textbook-based curriculum

A major focus of Ryerson's educational system, which was imbedded in the curriculum of all schools in the early 1900s, was “to prepare students with the skills they need to become productive members of society... the essentials of these being the "3 Rs": reading, writing and

arithmetic. For many decades, these rudimentary skills would constitute the extent of the formal education received by many children. (*Textbooks and School Libraries*, 2005). Across the province, the most used teaching tool in the classroom at this time to instill those skills upon students was textbooks. Houston and Prentice (1988) wrote that:

For much of the century [1800s], schoolbooks were *the* central feature of the common school. In rural schools especially, but, until very late, almost everywhere, the school-books available dictated the ‘curriculum.’ For two or more generations so few of the province’s [Ontario] teachers had real professional training that when much else failed, as we know it frequently did, memorizing the textbook could pass the time and placate the school trustees on examination day. School-books were counted upon to convey the ‘useful knowledge’ necessary to deal with the practicalities of life and to provide an inkling of the standards of belief and behaviour expected by adult society (p.239).

Though school texts were considered an essential part of the curriculum for the one-room schools, because of “the scarcity of textbooks in the rural school sections however, school teachers would use whatever resources were at their disposal, including American texts promoting anti-colonialism” (*Curriculum: The 3 Rs*, 2005). Tomkins (1977) wrote that fears about American-heavy content books circulating in Upper Canadian schools “reached a peak in 1847 when it was found that half the books used in the schools came from the United States. Most American books were soon replaced [by Ryerson readers]...an event which conveniently marked the beginning of a British colonial curriculum heritage that endured into the 1950s” (p.10). Stamp (1977a) explained that these school readers for elementary students in the early 20th centuries had distinctively British content and “were full of prose and poetry selections designed to produce loyal subjects of the Empire. Readers...in most provinces included such selections as Kipling’s ‘O motherland, we pledge to thee,/Head, heart and hand through years to be;’ ...as well as Thompson’s *Rule Britannia*” (p.33). Stamp (1982) affirmed that “The Ontario Readers, revised in 1909-10, remained in use through the 1920s and 1930s, thus guaranteeing

that yet another generation of Ontario youngsters would be exposed to an over-riding emphasis on traditional moral and political values, Britain's past military glories and Canada's place in the Empire" (p.105).

As well, Theobald (1993) cited studies by Elson (1954), Finkelstein (1989), and others in the United States who have examined these nineteenth and early twentieth century textbooks that rural-school teachers both in the United States and Canada relied upon almost exclusively to teach students recitation and language skills. Theobald maintained that these scholars have concluded "through practice paragraphs, sentences, and words, millions of rural schoolchildren recited a white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant worldview daily to their teachers" (p.121). He continued that these scholars also illustrated that the "formal classroom instruction of rural schoolchildren was dominated by religious and moral instruction, character building, and racial ability assessment. Within this curriculum which was designed to teach reading and grammar, schoolchildren were often taught about the deficiencies of Native Americans, blacks, and sometimes Catholic Americans" (p.121). He also purported that racial and patriarchal elements of the predominant Anglo-British and American society were also passed along in the curriculum of the country school texts and used the example of a 1908 version of Webster's speller. This speller, used in many American and Canadian schools in the 1900s, required students to recite the practice sentences, "It is almost impossible to civilize the American Indians,' 'Ladies should know how to manage a kitchen' and 'A good mistress will keep her house in order'" (p.122).

In the Thunder Bay area, Petrone (2007) related that she taught from *The Programme of Studies* (1937), commonly known as *The Little Grey Book*, which provided an outline of the subjects and topics to be covered in the first six grades of elementary school. It stated that 'the schools of Ontario exist for the purpose of preparing children to live in a democratic society that

bases its way of life upon the Christian ideal” (p.37). This book was examined by Milewski (2007) who explained that dominant Anglo-Christian discourse existed throughout the text. He wrote that “Exclusion was evident throughout *The Programme*...It was, in all terms, a reflection of the economic, political, educational and cultural interests and desires of those in control of the system of schooling [in Ontario]: a largely Protestant Anglo-Saxon, middle-class educated, male-dominated elite” (p.104-105). As well, Stamp (1977a) argued that the book blatantly encouraged children to become familiar with British symbolism, as the “fronts-piece of the Ontario Third Reader for 1922 carried a full colour illustration of the Union Jack with the caption ‘One Flag/One Fleet/One Throne’” (p.34).

Interestingly, Burton (1997), while teaching at S.S. #1 in Conmee in the early 1930s, remarked that she taught her students to read not only from *The Programme* but also, in part, from the Eaton’s department store catalogue. The author who interviewed Burton reported that “Eaton’s catalogue was used by Burton to teach English phonetically” (O’Brien, 2003, p.C3). Like ‘The Little Grey Book’ that utilized a British, Christian-based pedagogical discourse within the text, the Eaton’s department store catalogue was also a medium that acculturated support for British-Canadian, Christian philosophy. The Canadian media institution, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) (2005), stated that the Eaton Company’s catalogue was characterized with Christian terminology and that “By the early 1900s the Eaton's mail-order catalogue has become a Canadian institution [and was] often nicknamed the *Homesteaders’ Bible*” (Eatons, 2005). In fact, not only did Eaton’s sponsor Christian-based events but the company also sold the texts that the students of the one-room schools and their families learned English from (Cochrane, 1981). Not only did the Eaton’s department store help foster a sense of British imperialism, but Stamp (1982) reported that The Robert Simpson Company, currently

referred to as Sears Department Store, made “annual Empire Day presentations of Union Jacks to Toronto schools with large foreign enrollments. ‘The idea behind the gift,’ declared a company executive, ‘is to inculcate in the minds of the rising generation a definite feeling of loyalty and respect for both the flag and the Empire” (p.106). These stores, like many of the one-room school texts, encouraged a specific view of Canadianism that many immigrant students and their families in Northern Ontario and province-wide came to embrace.

In rural and urban areas, as a means of standardizing what was being taught in schools, Egerton Ryerson required that all schools use textbooks approved by the Education Department. Authorized textbooks would be made available for purchase or distribution through the Educational Depository. Schools that did not teach from authorized textbooks could be denied funding from the Education Department. Titles of approved textbooks were published in a list circulated by the Department of Education known as Circular 14. (*Curriculum: The 3 Rs*, 2005). In circulars, also referred to as pamphlets, Ryerson often encouraged trustees to enhance their school’s collection of authorized textbooks with additional books for the reading enjoyment of the students, parents and ratepayers. He:

paid special attention to the establishment of school libraries not only because it encouraged literacy, but also as a means of controlling what books were being read. Library books, just as textbooks, had to meet specific standards to be approved by the Department of Education. This requirement was intended to protect young minds against “that pernicious class of the lighter literature of the day” (*Curriculum: The 3 Rs*, 2005).

Petrone (2007) wrote how she “scoured the local library for the best available books to give me details that would amaze and impress my students” (Petrone, p.38). Stamp (1982) reported that Minister of Education H. Cody in 1919 “moved quickly to strengthen patriotic teaching...Not content to rely solely on the authorized readers, Cody published in 1919 a booklet entitled *The*

Great War in Verse and Prose, which was placed in quantity in each school library with instructions that excerpts be read by the class-room teachers as often as possible” (p.105).

Still today, this focus on specific values being laden into the textbook curriculum is often followed by those who are in charge of education in North America. Brint et al. (2001) reported that former U.S. Secretary of Education William Bennett stated, in his *Book of Virtues* (1993), that education must restore curricula that focuses on “ ‘moral virtues,’ such as honesty, fairness, perseverance, compassion and courage” (p.158). Brint et al. explained that Bennett’s introduction to his book included the comments “Where do we go to find the material that will help our children in the task [of developing moral literacy]?...we have a wealth of material to draw on – materials that virtually all school and homes and churches once taught to students for the sake of shaping character” (p.158).

In addition to texts, a “number of departmental examinations [at the one-room schools] appeared over the years as a means of measuring the readiness for further academic pursuits of elementary and secondary students. These examinations were intended to provide an external means of ensuring that a uniform curriculum was being taught province-wide” (*Curriculum: The 3 Rs*, 2005). These examinations were given to “elementary school pupils ...traditionally had been administered in June and used as a basis for evaluation and promotion” (Milewski, 2007, p.105). Jain (1977) explained that even here there is evidence of the strong British influence in early Canadian schooling, as “in [the late 1800s], history, in particular Canadian history, was treated as a poor relation in the school curriculum, in the lists of textbooks, and in examination questions” (p.41). He purported that the people in charge of the provincial education at this time did not see a new focus on Canadian history as a way to exclude British nationalism, but rather “On the contrary, the connection with Great Britain and the Empire added another dimension to

the feelings of national pride” (p.42). Not only did the one-room school’s textbook-based curriculum help maintain students’ homogeneity of culture, but the students’ exclusive use of the English language also aided in their developing collective identity.

Promotion of the English language

Tomkins (1977) pointed out that “...although somewhat less tangible than nation-state and geographic home, yet not less important to nationalism are such factors...Of these factors, language is at the same time the most important and the great divisive factor within nations” (p.7). In Ontario in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the Ministry of Education mandated that all instruction by teachers at the city and rural schools would be exclusively in the English language to the exclusion of any other mode of communication. Despite the fact that most of the inhabitants of the rural schools at this time were of ESL background and did not speak English as a first language or at all, the teachers and students were forbidden to dialogue in any language with their students other than English. In fact, Hukkala (1997), a student who attended S.S. No.1 in Lappe Township beginning in 1947 and who was an ESL student, explained that “It was said, that at one time [in Lappe township] the area around the school was so unilingual, even the neighbourhood dogs barked in Finnish” (p.16). Gunnell (2001) explained that “All education [at the rural schools in the Thunder Bay area] had to be taught in English. That may have been a bit of a chore in a virtually all Finnish school” (p.30). The implementation of this type of language learning in the one-room schools may have been reflected in contemporary studies done by McLaughlin (1987), Lanca, Roese, Alkinis and Gardner (1994), Lippi-Green (1994), where the researchers argue that continued use of one language, to the exclusion of all other languages, leads to it being automatized and privileged through practice.

The complexities of non-English speaking students attending a solely English language school were elaborated on by Horvath (1997), when she related her experiences as an ESL child of immigrant parents who emigrated from Finland in the early 1900s. She began attending S.S. No. 1 in Lappe Township in 1932, and stated how she was bilingual, but that neither of the languages she knew was English. She explained that “Our home language was Swedish...Our neighbours were mostly all Finlanders [in Lappe township], and by the time I was seven years old I could speak Finnish well enough to be understood” (p. 9). Despite her abilities to understand and speak both Swedish and Finnish, she described the difficulties of not knowing the English language when she began attending school. She stated:

The first day of school was uneventful, but in the middle of the second day I got very tired and decided I wanted to go home. The only language I knew was Swedish, so I stood up at my desk and called out to my sister Dangne: ‘Dangne, jog vill go hem nu!’ (Dangne, I want to go home now). I was promptly led up to Miss Goodspeed’s desk and disciplined, and then I was told to go and sit down and quit crying. I learned a valuable lesson that day, for I never got the strap again in school (p.9).

Roper (1997) also explained that as a student attending S.S. No.1 in Lappe in the early 1940s, she also could not speak English before attendance at the school. Roper stated, “I was six years old when I started school at Lappe. I was totally without any knowledge of the English language. My two sisters and brother had already been to school, but since only Finnish was spoken at home, all of us learned our English in school, like everyone else in those times” (p.11). This comment is similar to Tulin’s (1997) response that upon enrolling in S.S. No. 1 in Lappe Township in 1937, he “knew not a word in English, nor how to write, except for one word, ‘ceiling.’ How I knew that I do not recall. Growing up in a totally Finnish environment, we all had ups and downs in school” (p.12). Cochrane (1981) reported that, in fact “Few rural teachers in any province had any help in dealing with the difficulties of language and cultural change [for

the students]. The children usually just learned their new language...by osmosis” (p.58).

Cochrane’s interview with a teacher from Northern Ontario also has the teacher elaborating on the lack of students in the class who are able to speak English, and how the teacher was instructed to work on the immigrant children’s socialization into a British-Canadian ideal while teaching them the English language. The teacher explained that the school was four miles from the railway and that “I had 17 pupils, and only three spoke English. The others were Russian, Finnish and Polish. The inspector came the second week and told me to help them live in Canada, and to forget history, geography and science” (p.58). Horvath’s (1997) own recollection of how she acquired the English language was not only by osmosis and the teacher’s instruction in British social norms, but also from the persistence and efforts involved on the part of her one-room school peers. She explained “The weeks and months went by, and gradually Miss Goodspeed taught us how to talk in English. She would say ‘cat’ and tell us to repeat the word...To make sure that we knew what ‘cat’ meant, she would then say ‘kissa’ (Finnish for cat). Now we all understood what ‘cat’ meant. We practiced with each other” (p.9). This exclusive use of the English language by the immigrant students, along with the British-Christian curriculum practiced within the one-room school classroom helped to “transmit... socio-cultural ideologies, mythologies, and core value orientations” (N.B. Johnson, 1980, p.174). Yet another way these beliefs were diffused was through the informal school celebrations that the students took part in.

Informal school celebrations and national ideals.

The influence of British-Canadian nationalism in early 20th century Ontario one-room rural schools can be clearly seen in the national holiday celebrations that took place there. As a teacher at a one-room school, Petrone (2007) related how, when doing research for her own

memoirs in later years, she also was struck by the importance that both she and her former students had placed on the Christian-based, yearly Christmas concert. Petrone explained that “The concert would not take place until December 21, but we [her and her class] began practicing in the late fall, using noon breaks, recesses, and every spare moment to prepare for the big event” (p.40). In addition to the concert being recited by the students entirely in the English language, Christian symbolism was diffused throughout the informal curriculum of the Christmas concert. Petrone related how one of her students decorated the Christmas tree with holiday-appropriate designs he made in art class, and how the girls sang Christmas carols, like ‘Silent Night.’ Clement (1987) also realized the importance of the Christmas concert in his school’s township and explained “Dances, [Christmas] hymns and drills are the life blood of a Christmas concert...They [citizens of Miscampbell Township] came in off skis, off sleighs, off just their plain feet, and stamped their way in... We were playing to a full house, perhaps 25 souls, the entire population” (p.22). Petrone (2007) and Clement (1987) also reported that the Christmas concert often had a nativity scene as part of the program and that there would often be a student recitation of the Christmas Story.

Generally, the popularity of the Christmas concert at the one-room school was found throughout many of the country schools in all areas of Canada at this time. D. Hallman (1996) wrote that, when interviewing her mother who taught at a one-room school in rural Nova Scotia from 1936-1941, her mother said “The fun time of the year was the preparation for a Christmas concert. All the pupils took part, even the youngest. They loved it and we all worked hard to make it the best concert around” (p.238). Another less frequently mentioned school celebration that Hallman’s mother, Petrone, and Clement also described was the British national May Day holiday. Hallman’s mother explained that in May “...we had Arbor Day. This was clean up day.

Everyone worked at it...The boys cleaned and raked the yard. They also carried the water from the nearest home which was heated on the school stove for cleaning...When everything at the school was spic-and-span, the rest of the day was spent having a picnic” (p.238).

Another highly influential custom which promoted love of the British Empire and which was followed faithfully throughout the early and mid 1900s by teachers and their students at the majority of the schools in Canada was Empire (Dominion) Day. Stamp (1977a) reported that the idea “originated with a private citizen, Mrs. Clementine Fessenden of Hamilton, Ontario, [in 1897] but was quickly seized upon and exploited for political reasons by Ontario Education Minister George Ross” (p.33). For over:

60 years the Department of Education (now the Ministry of Education) promoted homage to the Monarchy and patriotism within the Commonwealth by setting aside one school day a year to observe Commonwealth traditions and ideals. The day was called "Empire Day" and it was observed in May preceding Queen Victoria's birthday. The Department issued teaching aids and advice in colourfully published in 'Empire Day pamphlets.' Each issue include[d] a message from the Minister of Education as well as specific instructions for teachers of children from kindergarten to Grade 8... Every issue praised Ontario's links to the British Empire and made such sentiments a priority for teaching in the classroom (*Empire Day*, 2005).

Beginning in circa 1897, every province in the Dominion, including Newfoundland, “held community events to mark the occasion. Empire Day was also celebrated in other Commonwealth countries such as New Zealand and Australia...Departments of Educations produced Empire Day annuals...[which] included a discussion on Empire Day itself as well as history lessons, songs, poems, pictures and stories [concerning the British Empire]” (*Victoria Day and Empire Day*, n.d.). Stamp (1977b) reported that Ross and the officials in his department sent out suggestions to all the schools in the province as to what activities they could do on the holiday at school and recommended that:

Part of the forenoon might be occupied with a familiar talk by the teacher on the British Empire, its extent and resources; the relation of Canada to the Empire; the unity of the Empire and its advantages; the privileges which, as British subjects, we enjoy... The aim of the teacher in all his references to Canada and the Empire should be, to make Canada patriotism intelligent, comprehensive and strong... The afternoon, commencing at 2:30 P.M. might be occupied with patriotic recitations, songs, readings by the pupils and speeches by trustees, clergymen... The trustees and public generally should be invited to be present as these exercises (p.104).

The motto schoolchildren recited for Empire Day was ‘One King, one flag, one fleet, one empire’ and its rallying cry was ‘For God, duty and Empire’ (*Victoria Day and Empire Day*, n.d.). Stamp (1977b) continued that Ross, in response to critics who objected to the lack of Canadian content in what they viewed as a mainly British-centred celebration, responded that “There is no antagonism between Canadianism and Imperialism... The one is but an expansion of the other” (p.103).

Stamp (1977b) also explained that by 1919, the mayor of Toronto, Tommy Church, made his support of Empire day known province-wide and declared at the annual parade that “It would do the people of Winnipeg good to see such an inspiring sight... There is no room for Bolshevism or European socialism in Canada and we are going to have none in Toronto” (p.106). In the Thunder Bay area, an undated picture taken circa 1910-1913 shows a group of female students chosen from several local schools dressed up on Empire Day wearing maple leaf trimmed skirts and red, white and blue sashes, holding red ensign and Union Jack flags. Stamp (1977b) maintained that by 1923, due to the popularity of the holiday in major cities and towns in Ontario, G. Howard Ferguson, Premier and Minister of Education from 1923 to 1930 in Ontario, even wrote an essay to be included in an Empire Day pamphlet that went out to all the nation’s schools and which expounded on British ideals and provided “suggestions for studying ‘the greatness of the British Empire’” (p.107). The Canadian government also encouraged this

'British-Canadianization' of immigrant students through the disciplinary measures the students followed throughout their years of attendance at the one-room schools.

Disciplinary practices and socialization

While commenting on disciplinary measures used in Ontario classrooms in the early 20th century, educational researchers such as Houston and Prentice (1988) noted that provincial models of discipline used by teachers were based on vague Education Department regulations that stated "a teacher should practice such discipline in his school as would be exercised by a judicious parent in his family" and which encouraged teachers to adopt a disciplinary, familial attitude towards their students (p.193). Petrone (2007) described her and her students in her one-room school as "one big happy family," (p.39) and Clement (1987) also stated, when describing his one-room class, that while teaching he "came to know the worth of the 'family setting' in the classroom... The high proportion of study or seat work to teaching time, made the pupil depend upon himself. The pupils could help one another. Bright kids could listen to senior work which interested them. Acceleration could take place at any time with special students" (p.40). The literature at this time argues that not only were teachers expected to take paternal or maternal care when dealing with his or her students within the school context, but there was "the assumption that adults 'owned' children or at least had rightful control over them. It was understood that respect for authority had to be drilled into children, through physical punishment if necessary" (Gleason, 2001, p.201). Though the use of corporal punishment in the early 20th century was on a decline in educational writings, Gleason noted that in the early 20th century in Canadian schools:

progressive tenets rarely trickled down to actual classroom practice. On the contrary, formalism – with its emphasis on strict discipline, rote learning, and memorization – tended to hold sway... In the early and middle decades of the twentieth century, therefore, school children were expected to learn and remember

important lessons regarding submission to authority and control over urges to disobey or to act out. (p.196).

Prentice (1977) related that in the late 1800s, writing extracts from Ontario's *Chief Superintendent's Report* described the school system as "a branch of the national police designed not only to occupy a large portion of the rising population but also to support and restrain many of the grownup population" (p.132). Prentice continued that common schools were the "cheapest form of moral police...Toronto School Superintendent George Barber argued that school houses were better public investments 'than Penitentiaries or jails'...[schools] guaranteed a disciplined and moral working class would not steal or rise up against property (p.133).

One way this formal discipline was covertly reinforced was through the physical setting of the one-room classroom. Houston and Prentice (1988) stated that:

In large measure, particulars of school architecture, down to the layout of the schoolyard, were designed to convey the visual effect of order and stability. Interior physical arrangements as well as the timetable of studies were intended to reinforce the message: the placing of benches in rows, the orderly arrangement of hats and coats on hooks, the precise timing of recess – all of it was to be capped by the ringing of the school bell to announce the beginning and end of the school day (p.192).

This setting encouraged a focus on orderliness, as both Petrone (2007) and Clement (1987) noted that their classes were set up so that all of the desks were in pairs and faced the front of the class where they, as instructors, stood and lectured. Petrone commented that within the schoolhouse she taught at, "A blackboard extended across the entire front but for a door which was a fire exit. The moveable seats and desks, graduated in size, were arranged in six straight rows, the oldest girls and boys on one side of the room, the youngest on the other and the others in between" (p.34). Petrone (2007) went on to explain in her memoir that she believed "learning could take place only in an orderly, well-managed classroom. And so right from the beginning the students discovered that I would tolerate no nonsense. I demanded obedience and order. I expected the

students to follow strict rules of behaviour...I exercised authority and control” (p.35). Gleason (2001) explained that the French philosopher, historian and sociologist Michel Foucault argued in his critical studies of the power of normalization and discipline in modern society (p.194) that social institutions, such as schools:

served as ideal sites in which professionals and experts initiated young citizens into a system of surveillance, classification, and normalization in order to serve the powers and interests of government...schools were places in which children were watched and classified, judged in terms of their relationship to particular standards, required to obey rules, and to standardize behaviour and appearance (p.194).

Many teachers at this time also use images of British-style military training when they were describing the disciplinary measures they had their students follow in the classroom. Houston and Prentice (1988) explained that “Ryerson urged all male common school teachers to start drill for boys...[However] Enthusiasm for military drill proved short-lived...interest in the ‘regularity of movement and the aim at perfection’... was transferred to gymnastic exercises for boys and a genteel form of calisthenics for girls (p.251-52). Petrone (2007) wrote that she “taught Physical Education in the aisles, in military fashion. I was the drill sergeant, calling out the orders: ‘Attention!’ ‘On the spot, march.’” (p.39). As well, perhaps similar to a drill sergeant’s whistle in the army corps to signal the start of training, Petrone commented that at her school, in front of her students “...on a raised platform sat the large teacher’s desk with a hand-bell in the middle [to signal the start of the school day]” (p.34). In the one-room schools, the hand-bell was a clear indicator of a teacher’s authority, as students were not able to move from the schoolyard into the school until the teacher rang the bell. Cochrane (1981) reported that “When the teacher rang the bell the children lined up, boys at the boys’ door, girls at the girls’ door, grade one first, grade eight last. Then they marched in...and they kept on marching, all around the schoolroom until each child had stopped beside his own seat” (p.56). Houston and

Prentice (1988) compared the school at this time, with its emphasis on hand-bells and drills, to a factory of sorts, and asserted “Certainly, in broad outline the Normal School blueprint for Ontario’s common schools appeared to mimic an industrial environment: from the ringing of the teacher’s bell in the morning, the school day marked its time by the minute details of an official timetable and discrete lessons in a prescribed textbook; silence, punctuality, and regularity prevailed” (p.264-65). In a contemporary study by Brint et al. (2001), they stated that teachers still “...use ritual means of maintaining quiet, such as sounding a bell or raising an index finger” (p.168)

Even though punishment through physical means was not used as frequently as it was in the 19th century in Ontario schools, discipline was still often reinforced in the one-room schools of the early 20th century through the threat of, or actual, corporal punishment. This method often included the teachers’ use of the strap on his or her students. Cochrane (1981) explained that “The strap was standard issue in rural schools for many years. When it wasn’t available, children were sent into the bush to cut switches as substitutes.” (p.43). Petrone (2007) related that upon arrival at her one-room classroom at S.S. #7 MacIntyre township in the Thunder Bay area, she believed in the importance of exercising absolute control over her students, and comments on the forms of corporal punishment that she was made to endure as a schoolchild.

She wrote:

I supposed it was the way I had been taught because the black leather strap was used nearly every day when I went to elementary school [in Ontario]. We adhered to the British school system motto then: “Spare the rod and spoil the child.” It was an age of absolutes when teachers taught by rod and rule, and conformity, uniformity and obedience were expected... Within this controlled context, I blended patience with firmness, order with activity (p.35-36).

Gleason (2001) stated that in her study she found that “Teachers [in the early 1900s] embodied the authority of the school...had the most direct power over children. For children, this power and authority was often exercised most memorably and effectively upon the body” (p.196). Speaking of her own disciplinary measures she used within her one-room classroom, Petrone (2007) stated that in the early 1900s “Physical punishment was the norm in Canadian schools. But one incident haunts me still. Since there was no black leather strap in the school, I struck a boy’s hand with a short piece of wood...It was the only time I ever strapped a student. To this day, I harbour guilt and shudder with shame” (p.35). Theobald (1993) explained that in the American Midwest at the turn of the 20th century “Classroom management in rural schools typically revolved around...the ‘switch.’ It is nearly impossible to find a...diary account of a country teacher that makes no reference to corporal punishment” (p.123-24). Petrone related that even when teaching music, the dual images of learning and punishment with the strap were conveyed to the students, as she stated that “I remember teaching ‘School Days!’ [The song went] School Days, school days, Dear old golden rule days, Readin’ and writin’ and ‘Rithmetic, Taught to the tune of the hickory stick” (p.39). Horvath (1997) recalled an incident when it appeared the students had attempted to rid the classroom of this form of punishment, as she stated that “the blackboard fell down at the front of the room, and guess what – there were a half a dozen straps that were behind it. I wonder how they got there!!!” (p.9). By the turn of the 20th century however, corporal punishment was starting to decline as a method of punishment in Canadian classrooms due to “the mere fact that incidents of allegedly brutal school discipline were frequently publicized after mid-[19th]century confirms the shift in attitudes as well as some softening of the general practice...once the likelihood of a minimally competent teacher and a

semblance of home discipline were secured, school discipline became less physical and more indirect. In urban schools especially..." (Houston & Prentice, 1988, p.194).

Other forms of discipline were also used in the one-room school classroom, as Theobald (1993) explained in his article that "Until very late in the nineteenth century it was common practice to seat the female students on one side of the schoolroom and the males on the other. It was considered a severe punishment for a misbehaving boy to be made to sit on the girls' side" (p.122). Interestingly physical punishment, though looked upon as an allowable way to discipline a child in the one-room school at this time, appeared to have had to follow the certain formal and informal rules set out by the Ontario Ministry of Education and the local School Board of Trustees and agreed upon by the students' parents. In July 1967, the *Thunder Bay News-Chronicle: Centennial Edition* published the minutes and notes from old records found of incidents surrounding the operation of the one-room school of S.S. #1 Shuniah in the 1880s that were published in the *Thunder Bay Sentinel* newspaper in 1882. There is a report that appeared in the *Thunder Bay Sentinel* on February 17, 1882 regarding punishment meted out from teachers of the junior department at the school who went too far in the Board's opinion while disciplining their students. The case investigation read that a:

Miss Bowerman and Miss Bray have admitted the charge insofar as the administration of black pepper to the children in small quantities was concerned, though the trustees have had it proved to their satisfaction that there has been great exaggeration as to the effect upon the children by this mode of punishment. However, they were directed to use the ordinary and approved modes of school discipline [by the school board] (Old Minutes, 1967).

This indication of the unacceptability of some forms of punishment used on students may be worthwhile to note within the many records of corporal punishment also documented at this time.

It was interesting to find that at this time Ryerson and his colleagues came up with an alternative method to corporal punishment that they believed would help teachers encourage their students to maintain the norms of behaviour desired in Ontario schools. Houston and Prentice (1988) stated that in 1865, the Education department, comprised of Ryerson and his coworkers, desired to create an award system that would allot “incentives for local school trustees to single out and reward meritorious pupils” (p.263). They continued that the Ontario Education department, in 1865, introduced a system of merit cards which were “illustrated with biblical scenes and mottoes...came in four categories: punctuality, good conduct, diligence, and perfect recitations [and] Students collected the cards and [winners] received a book prize” (p.264). Ryerson (1868) stated that finding a problem with the concept of the cards would be tantamount to finding a problem with the Christian Bible, God and all civilization. He explained that “...to object to encouraging diligence and good conduct in schools, by the distribution of prizes...is to object to the principles of Holy Scripture... and the universal practice of civilized mankind in all other matters of common life” (p.86). However, despite a quiet observance by the immigrant students and their families to the Christian, British-Canadian customs perpetuated by the Ontario Government and Ministry of Education within and outside of the classroom at this time, conflict is also seen between these two groups. This visible conflict may be perceived and summarized in the distinct tension between the Ontario Government and Ministry of Education’s political and social agenda of attempting to suppress the newly arrived immigrant students and their families’ past social and political beliefs. This often also included the immigrants’ loyalty to their former countries’ values, practices and ideals.

Conflict between home and school lives

Educational scholar Stamp (1982) wrote that in 1919, after Ontario Minister of Education H. Cody began actively promoting British history and patriotism throughout the schools of Ontario, that:

The province's agrarian leaders, through the columns of the Farmer's Sun [newspaper] kept sniping at Cody throughout most of 1919. Insinuating that the Minister of Education believed Canada to be 'but an outpost of London, England,' the Sun charged that Cody's purpose, 'more or less openly avowed, was to make the public schools of Ontario a means of Imperialistic propaganda' (p.106).

This disconnect between local, often agrarian-based culture and state philosophy in the classroom can still be seen today in educational settings. In N.B. Johnson's (1980) contemporary study of the classroom culture contained within the rural town of Deerfield, USA, Johnson found that "it is common for local orientations to conflict with the orientations in the school...agricultural communities [are] organized around cycles differing from the school year...[however] In American industrial culture and society, there is one, and only one, mode...Public school clocks and calendars" (p.184). Petrone (2007) supported this observation by N.B. Johnson of a rupture between students' life within and outside of the one-room classroom, as she related how she also recognized while teaching in rural MacIntyre township, how "Stories in their [students'] textbook *Mary, John, and Peter* were foreign to the children's backgrounds, since they all lived on farms" (p.38). Petrone did not change the stories to be more relatable to the students but said she "...used contextual and configuration clues, growing blackboard sentences out of conversations and stimulating pictures...I related the words to their individual experiences" (p.38).

It is important to note that there were some initiatives by the Provincial Ministry of Education at the time to connect the agrarian economy to the school culture through activities

such as rural school fairs. Schween (1997) reported that in 1936 in the Thunder Bay District there were 19 fall fairs held, with a total of approximately 30 schools in attendance. Ultimately, many of these activities were seen as one-time events in the school year and it was only “when the exodus from country to city became severe enough to be recognized as rural depopulation, [that] education and agriculture ministries pitched in to sell farm life to farm children” (Cochrane, 1981, p.75). Interestingly, many contemporary studies, such as one done by Tucker and Matthews (2001) still comment on the disconnect present among rural students’ home and school lives. The authors stated that “few studies have examined...the experience of childhood in the countryside...children continue to be ‘invisible’ in most rural studies.” (p.161).

In addition, N.B. Johnson’s (1980) contemporary study of Deerfield, USA, had him remark about the gap between the local and state culture in the classroom, as he stated that “Deerfield’s multiethnic community observes important holidays and celebrations of its own” (p.184) while within the classroom only celebrations of state holidays are recognized. This is similar to Thunder Bay area rural, immigrant student S. Johnson’s (1999) recitation about how, as a small child, she remembered the specifics of the Dutch holiday celebrations, but upon arrival in Canada and attendance at the school, “Old customs were soon forgotten. We [the children] quickly transferred our beliefs to the whimsical Canadian Santa Claus and his eight reindeer” (p.87). This idea of reconstructing past identity and culture within a new context may be reflective of studies by Hall (1990), Ghosh (2000), Libben and Lindner (1996) and Li (2003). The researchers in these studies all pointed out that immigrants, both ESL and non-ESL, often searched for new meanings of identity within a new culture and either disregarded their old identity for a new identity, or integrated their new knowledge to create a combination of their old and new identities.

This configuration of identity formation is noted in S. Johnson's (1999) memoir when the author reiterated the connection early 20th century Canadian educational society put on acquiring the English language and then becoming a 'real' Canadian citizen. She narrated that "Once you could speak English after 2 years in Canada you felt 'Canadianized' though parents still often spoke Dutch (p.46). She also relayed that upon arrival at the rural one-room school she attended in South Gillies township, "Perhaps the most positive feature was our enrollment as Canadian citizens, and the legal use of our thoroughly anglicized names" (p.72). Johnson also related how her Dutch immigrant mother was eager to embrace the foreign English language taught in the Canadian classrooms at this time. However, S. Johnson noted that even though her mother, helped by a neighbouring Danish couple, "...learned to speak English almost fluently" Johnson and her siblings "wouldn't admit it because of [their embarrassment of her] a distinct accent" (p.52). Through this comment, S. Johnston illustrated how immigrants' acquirement and use of the English language was a complex process. Schween (1997) contrasted this view when she explained that while attending school at S.S. No. 1 in Lappe Township she would have liked to have had her parents acquire the English language but her family was keen to continue speaking their Finn dialect and refused to embrace any aspects of the English language. She wrote:

English would have been a whole lot easier to learn if one could have spoken it at home, but this was forbidden....many parents then did not deem it [acquiring knowledge and fluency of English] necessary, and no wonder, we lived in a totally Finnish community. This did not dampen my enthusiasm...I learned the English and loved it (p.10)

An interesting point Schween related later on in the text is when she explained her love of English-language magazines, such as cowboy serial stories in a magazine called *The Free Press Prairie Farmer*. She stated how she adored reading these English-language magazines at home despite her family's resistance to the language and questioned "How father ever came to

subscribe to this ‘other language’ paper I cannot recall, but we read every last bit of it, fought over it even” (p.10).

Citizenship affiliation

Troper (1978) argued that this clear privileging of the English language by the immigrant students was due to the fact that in schools, and society in general at this time, the English language served as a clear marker of being a ‘true’ Canadian citizen. To strengthen his claim, Troper mentioned the well-known Canadian novel *Under the Ribs of Death* published in 1957 by a Hungarian immigrant to Canada named John Marlyn and argued that incidents in this book parallel the experiences of many immigrant children who arrived in Canada at the turn of the 20th century. Troper described how Marlyn, who came to Canada at six years old, composed his book as a “commentary on the problems of cultural assimilation... [it focuses on] the progress of young Sandor Hunyadi as he struggles to cast off his Hungarian background and become a ‘real Canadian’” (McClelland & Stewart Ltd., 2008). Troper wrote in his article about how the character of young Sandor attempted to tell his father about the privileging of the British people as authentic Canadian citizens and his distress at being looked at as an immigrant based on his clothes, living quarters and language. Troper illustrated how Sandor privileged the English language when he said:

‘The English,’ he [Sandor] whispered. ‘Pa, the only people who count are the English. Their fathers got all the best jobs. They’re the only ones nobody ever calls foreigners. Nobody ever makes fun of their homes or calls them ‘bologny-eaters,’ or laughs at the way they dress or talk. Nobody,’ he concluded bitterly, ‘because when you’re English it’s the same as bein’ Canadian.’ (p.21).

Some one-room school students also mentioned how they retained their ‘mother-tongue’ language while also incorporating their school language into their knowledge base, and that their bilingualism led to success. Sillanpaa (1994) explained how her knowledge of her parents’

native language, coupled with her learning of the English language in school, led her to personal economic success. She wrote that, as a child born of Finnish immigrant parents in 1917, and who attended a Cochrane, Ontario one-room school in the 1920s, “Father always made me speak Finnish at home, and for which I have always been glad. I came to have many little jobs, such as interpreting for women when they went shopping, or went to see a doctor, etc. They always paid me for my help. Dad spoke English well, but Mother had an accent and was shy about it” (p.30). Sillanpaa relates that she was proud to know both her home and school languages and that she felt proud of her dual heritage. The tension present between the school and home was also demonstrated in an anecdote by Jackson (1997) who explained that while attending S.S. No.1 in Lappe, she ran off for a week from school to play in the forest in a self-constructed tree fort. Upon discovery by her non-English speaking mother, Jackson noted that she delighted in the language barrier her mother encountered by not being able to speak English, as it privileged the young girl from receiving any punishment. She explained that she composed a note to excuse her absence at school, as “It was easy to send a note to school as the child’s parents had no English, the Mother signed whatever the child asked her to. Easy, yes? I thought so, but did not do it again” (p.5). Jackson related that though she knew more than her mother did, she later taught her mother bits of the English language to help her to better fit in with the community of both Finn and English people.

This tension was again illustrated in a personal reminiscence by Hukkala (1997) when he related acquiring an understanding of the English language as acquiring a new way of thinking about things. He stated that “Being fluent in Finnish, but hardly any knowledge of the English language, made the first few weeks of school somewhat stressful but everyone learned the ABCs, reading and printing words. This brought along a new way of expressing one’s opinion” (p.16).

He continued that his new knowledge from school made him feel more of a part of ‘the group’ of students in his class and later made it easier for him to access further educational opportunities in the town. This ability of the early 20th century immigrant student to create a space where both his or her traditional ethnic family language and the English language can coexist, and the complexities involved in this endeavour, has not yet been addressed in any educational or historical literature. However, not all of the students at the one-room schools were willing to blend their parents’ and school’s cultures and convert to the idealized British-Canadian citizenship vision presented to them in the one-room classroom. In fact, some students, through attendance at the one-room school, attempted to question and subvert the very socialization processes that the Canadian government was working to promote in the one-room school classrooms.

Though Troper (1978) wrote that “[In Canada] Anglo-conformity did not require the foreigner to mix biologically with the Anglo-Saxon who was to act as his model. It only demanded that the foreigner behave as if he had” (p.19), at the turn of the 20th century some immigrant students and their families actively disagreed with the provincial government’s Christian, British-Canadian ideals that were continually presented in the one-room classroom as superior models of citizenry. Clement (1987) related the argument one of his students presented while Clement was recounting “...my story of the British Empire as a congregation of free nations under the mother-ship of Great Britain, etc” (p.25). Clement stated that after he finished his diatribe, “Young Johnnie Johnson [pointed out that he] didn’t think they [the British] were so free. They all had capitalist governments; therefore, under such rulers, the working man was a slave. The discussion revealed that this young Finnish lad was being tutored in the Communist line at home” (p.25). Later, Clement found out that the boy’s brother had been getting

newspapers from Sudbury and Winnipeg on Marxist ideas and that the boy had even been given an offer of an all-expenses paid trip to Moscow for training at its Communist academy. S.

Johnson (1999) also explained how, as a young child, she witnessed her father's rebellion against complete assimilation into a British-Canadian culture that would ignore him and his family's immigrant past. She recounted how her immigrant father, despite having received naturalization papers in Canada which included his and his children's new anglicized names, had:

absolutely refused to change his name which had been passed on for generations. He would always proudly be *Anne Jelles* (pronounced Awn'-neh Yell'-ess), even though it caused some confusion in Canada. His signatures on documents were always disputed: 'No, no, your name, not your wife's,' was the usual routine. 'Anne is my name,' he shot back in broken English. 'My wife is *Neeltje*.' Eventually most people called him 'A.J.' (p.72).

As well, Theobald (1993) related how some students physically rebelled to the corporal punishment the one-room school teachers meted out. Theobald wrote that "In some cases, rural students reacted to this form of discipline by striking back at the teacher... While these cases are extreme... the amount of violence reflected in... rural schools presents [an] interesting dimension that is largely hidden from conventional wisdom concerning the one-room school (p. 124).

All of these examples show how there was a distinct gap between what the provincial or state government promoted as an idealized version of the early 20th century immigrant school student and the realities of the student and his or her beliefs found within the classroom setting.

In this chapter, a review of the research and writings surrounding immigrant students' experiences attending rural, one-room schools in the late 19th and early 20th centuries in Ontario, Canada was examined. By exploring the research, it was apparent that the Provincial government employed numerous socialization processes in the policies, curriculum and activities of the one-room school to encourage immigrant students and their families to follow a certain Christian, British-Canadian image that they believed would unify the country into one common

citizenry. From the policies employed by the government to allow certain immigrant groups into Canada at this time and the dispersion and eventual employment of these people into specific work groups, a certain Canadian government agenda that perpetuated and privileged certain racial beliefs became visible. The creation of the schools, and specifically the one-room schools in Northern Ontario, illustrated the goals of the new country's government in creating a nation united in specific common ideas, values and beliefs of the people who were in economic, political and religious power at the time. The many policies, curriculum and activities found within the one-room school demonstrated the government goals of teaching the new immigrant children adherence to a common image of citizenship. Whether or not this agenda was followed by the teachers and students within the one-room schools of the Northern Ontario region of Thunder Bay will be further examined in this study, as well as any ruptures in ideology between the Canadian government education agenda and the immigrant students of these schools.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology and Research Design

Introduction

In this chapter the methodology and research design of the study are presented. The discussion begins with the purpose of the study, which was to explore the experiences of students who attended one-room schools in rural Northwestern Ontario in the early 20th century.

Questions that guided the research were:

1. Where did the participants' families emigrate from to come to Canada and where did they settle in the Thunder Bay area?
2. What were the participants' language fluencies upon attendance at the one-room schools and what were their primary motives for attending the one-room school?
3. How was the English language taught and promoted within the one-room schools?
4. What was the formal, academic curriculum that was provided to the students of the one-room school?
5. What was the informal, education curriculum that was provided to the students of the one-room schools?
6. What were the disciplinary measures that were enforced within the one-room schools?
7. What conflicts did the participants' experience during transitions between the rural and school settings?
8. How did the one-room schools influence the ways in which the participants came to define the concept of Canadian citizenship?

Methodology

Oral History. The research design of this study was based on oral history methodology, described by Creswell (1998) as:

an approach in which the researcher gathers personal recollections of events, their causes, and their effects from an individual or several individuals. This information may be collected through tape recordings...specific biographies may be written [in a] scholarly way with a strong historical background of the subject and a chronological organization (p.49-50).

This approach both shapes and records specific perspectives of the past. Both the interviewer and interviewee collaboratively create meaning and interviews are constructed within a historical frame that is negotiated by the participants, set in a contemporary location, and uses specific criterion of language and cultural interaction (Dunaway, 1992). Atkinson (2001) defined the life history technique is most useful when a researcher is going to “focus on a specific aspect of a person’s life, such as work life or a special role in some part of the life of a community. An oral history most often focuses on...what someone remembers about a specific historical event, issue, time or place” (p.125). Currently oral history, as a method through which events in the past may be recorded and analyzed, is increasingly used to explore the pasts of those people whose voices may otherwise not appear in an ‘official’ record. This method may show “why ordinary people made decisions that in the aggregate influenced history but are nowhere written down” and enables the researcher to understand the artifacts and “images and the symbols people use to express feeling about their experiences and give them meaning” (Yow, 2005, p.10-13).

Therefore, the oral history technique, as a research method, allows the interviewer to compile life histories among all socioeconomic levels of the population, reveal daily life in the home and workplace, and illustrate cultural divisions, norms and ruptures among populations (Yow, p.10-13).

Research Design

Oral history interviews. Oral history interviews engage the researcher in a dynamic process, as Lummis (1987) states that “One precise advantage of oral evidence is that it is interactive and one is not left alone, as with documentary evidence, to divine its significance; the ‘source’ can reflect upon the content and offer interpretation as well as facts” (p.43). This method allows an interviewer to question an interviewee and reveal information that may have not been written in public record due to the person’s socioeconomic circumstance, cultural or religious value. This bias is illustrated by Williams (1979) who stated “Insofar as the [Jewish] immigrants [in Manchester, England] survive in the written record they do so chiefly in accounts composed by an older-established Anglo-Jewish elite, with a vested interest in rapid assimilation...Written accounts by immigrants of their own experience are rare...all but non-existent” (p.43). Therefore, oral history interviews allow researchers to obtain a picture of an entire society, as this methodology allow the viewpoints of the non-elite to be presented. This individual or group testimony can then be used to understand the meaning of specific lifestyles and value systems within a community, as recollections told by townspeople of their own and others’ actions may define community concepts of terms such as ‘a good person’ or ‘a good education.’

A definitive exemplar for researchers to examine when engaged in historical analysis through the oral interview process is Passerini’s (1987) model which argued that interviews, as preexisting oral cultural forms, translate historical processes into symbolically mediated experiences. Both Passerini and Smith (2001) suggested that interviews are built upon a plethora of already existing oral-narrative sources that influence interviewees choice of form and imagery and may include “conversational storytelling jokes, church sermons, political speeches

and testimonies given at Bible study groups and political party training school” (p.712). They also pointed out the importance for interviewers to be aware of interviewees’ “silences and other ruptures [which may] point to aspects of experience not fully mediated by...interpretation of past events” (p.712). Researchers Denzin and Lincoln (2005) also noted that the oral history interview method allowed researchers to view each life history as an individual world, but to also work back and forth between life histories in a collection to compare the specific to the general case. Finally, Denzin and Lincoln also noted that it was important for interviewers to find participants who were not hesitant to share ideas and comment on key events and experiences from the past.

Type of sampling. Purposeful sampling was chosen as is not concerned with the representativeness of the sample and generalizing it to the target population but is concerned with “selecting individuals that support a specific purpose...in order to complement the goals of the study” (Schloss & Smith, 1999, p.104). The results from this type of sampling may not be generalized often to other individuals, but “simply illustrates a method or trend that may be evaluated with other individuals possessing characteristics similar to individuals in the sample (Schloss & Smith, p.107).

In the study, three women and two men participated. Yow (2005) stated that it was important to be aware that “Since images of women and men are socially constructed, the interviewer has to keep in mind cultural [and gender] influences...Failing to consider this difference distorts, if not falsifies, an account” (p.233-234). It was felt that the diversity in Canadian citizenship background, English language skill and gender among the participants was important as it allowed the participants to provide a variety of observational responses from their

classroom experiences, and also gave the researcher the ability to compare and contrast key elements of the participants' experiences within the study.

Types of questions. Standardized, open-ended questions were used and an outline of the eight questions and additional probes guided the researcher so as to make the data collection systematic and comprehensive in its use. The interview questions were based on the questions guiding the research, which were developed from the pilot study and ideas and topics noted in the research literature surrounding the examination of one-room schools. The set of questions was carefully worded and arranged with the intention of "taking each respondent through the same sequence and asking each respondent the same questions with essentially the same words" (Patton, 1990, p.285). Based on Patton's classification of questions, the types of questions used were: experience/behaviour questions, opinions/values questions, feelings questions, knowledge questions and background demographic questions. The questions were also open-ended with a focus on a particular subject. Patton recommended that by following this method of interviewing, the effect of interviewer bias is decreased, the comparability among the responses and consequent ease of data analysis is improved, and thick, descriptive data is produced. The standardized open-ended interviews encouraged "participant observation and almost casual chatting" (Creswell, 1998, p .122) and also allowed for the participants' input throughout the interview process.

When interviewing aged persons, Yow (2005) recommended that "In oral life history interviewing, it is feasible to begin with the most open-ended questions whenever possible so that the aged narrator selects what he or she wants to talk about within the topic indicated" (p.39). She continued that "One precise advantage of oral evidence is that it is interactive and one is not left alone...to divine its significance; the source can reflect upon the content and offer

interpretation as well as facts” (p.9) and that the in-depth interview is able to disclose a psychological reality that is the basis for standards which the individual possesses and for the things he or she does.

Therefore, from this information, interview questions were designed to encourage thick, rich descriptions in subject response and to check for response bias. I also took into account Plummer’s (1983) assertion that an effective researcher must keep in mind three questions: “Is the individual representative? What are the sources of bias? [and] Is the account valid when the subjects are asked to read it, when it is compared to official records, and when it is compared to accounts from other informants?” (p.206-207). The interviews ranged from approximately one to two and a half hours in length and were audio-taped and then transcribed.

Research Process

Selection of participants. A maximum of five participants were chosen as a purposeful, non-random, convenience sample. They were selected based on the following criteria:

1. Attended a rural, Thunder Bay area township one-room school for at least 3 years of his or her primary level (Grades 1-8) education during the years circa 1920 – 1940.
2. Were children who had landed immigrant status or were first or second generation Canadian citizens during their attendance at the one-room school.
3. Were children of immigrant parents who came to Canada from a European country in the late 1800s and early 1900s (pre-1920).

Ethical considerations. Each participant was required to read a cover letter (Appendix A) and sign an informed consent form (Appendix B) which provided information on (a) the purpose of the study, (b) the treatment of confidentiality, including the use of a pseudonym, (c) the treatment of audio tapes and transcripts, (d) the known risks associated with the study, (e) the

benefits of participating in the study, (f) the name, phone number, and e-mail address of my thesis supervisor at Lakehead University, and (g) the voluntary nature of participation. Each participant was expected to mail one signed consent form to me and keep the second one for his or her records. At the beginning of the interview with each participant, ethical considerations were reviewed and permission was once again requested to audio-tape the interview.

Data collection. The initial contact with each participant, for the purpose of acquiring consent for an interview, was done by telephone. Then a follow-up conversation, in person, was conducted where the participant was given a copy of the questions to examine, so as to gather their thoughts before the interview, and a formal interview date was scheduled (Appendix C). A comfortable, safe and convenient location was chosen for the tape-recorded interviews and I then contacted the participants to set up dates to meet for the interviews. At this time I also mailed each participant the Cover Letter (Appendix A) and Letter of Consent to sign (Appendix B). Prior to the start of the interviews on the days selected, I gave the participants a copy of the Cover letter and Consent Letter to read again, briefed the participants on the purpose of the study, reminded and assured them that the information provided would be kept strictly confidential, that their names would be changed on the transcripts to protect their anonymity, that their participation in part or in full was strictly voluntary and highly appreciated, and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. At this time, they also each gave me their signed Consent Forms. The primary method for data collection was tape-recorded interviews conducted in the English language. Structured interviews with open-ended questions were employed in this study which allowed each participant to express his or her unique viewpoint.

In the interview, probing and follow-up questioning was done occasionally when I believed, as Yow (2005) stated, “something has been left out, that the narrator could give a more

complete answer” (p.102). Yow related that, “By probing, you invite the narrator to go into greater detail...probing can force the narrator to think more deeply about what he is trying to say, ‘perhaps even admit things he never verbalized before to another person” (p.102). This situation occurred a few times during my individual interviews with the participants. An example would be when I was interviewing Hannu and he remarked during the interview that he had never told anyone the story of his experience learning the French language and then interacting with the other French-speaking men at the bush camp. I also utilized follow-up questioning when I observed that a key term which an interviewee mentioned could be pursued in greater depth. For example, in the interview with Clara, I asked her to expand on her feelings about the Ukrainian children in her class when she brought up the fact that she had Ukrainian friends that she played with after school hours. This follow-up yielded information as to Clara’s opinion about how some of the non-English speaking students in her class performed in the academic setting. Throughout the data collection process, preliminary codes were developed, and data were coded as they were collected. The example below illustrates how the data were analyzed and coded. This is an excerpt from the response of Hannu during the interview:

I think when I was about three, four, from grade four up, I always done translations for them [his parents], when they would get letters in English and I would translate them into Finnish to him [his father], so that he’d know who the letter was from, and I’d always say that you gotta learn to read. I was after my mother and my dad both to read because I could see that they couldn’t go backwards, y’know, you needed to go forward.

This piece of data was coded as “adaptation to English language” because it indicated that the participant was interested to adopt and embrace the English-language. Data with this code were then placed into the category of ‘acculturation,’ which covered data that indicated how the participants adapted themselves to a new culture – the predominantly English-language culture of the province of Ontario. The interviews lasted approximately 1 to 1 ½ hours in length.

The interviews were all conducted within a two-week period and once the data was collected, it was housed at the researcher's place of residence and was personally transcribed within a week of the completion of each interview.

Data analysis. Once the interviews were completed, the data was analyzed by the researcher without the assistance of computer analysis software. Terms and phrases that summarized each participant's responses to each query were identified and formed the basis of common codes which were created. Data with similar content was identified with the same code. I identified regularities and patterns in the transcribed responses of the participants and took out key phrases and words to represent these common occurrences and patterns. Once the preliminary codes were extracted and modified, I combined and assigned them to form categories, which were then clustered around themes, corresponding to the research questions. An earlier pilot study of a subject who attended a one-room schoolhouse in a Thunder Bay township in the 1930s, was used to assist in development of the format of the questions for this current study.

To help ensure that each transcript was accurate and reflected the participant's meaning, each transcript was proof-read by the researcher immediately after typing. As not all of the participants were English as a First Language speakers, and transcribed interviews are based on spoken English, some sentences and words in the transcripts are grammatically incorrect. To maintain transcripts as original and authentic, however, I made few corrections on the quotes from responses from the participants. All audio tapes, computer discs containing transcript files, and transcripts were coded with a pseudonym and stored in a filing cabinet at the researcher's house when not being used. At the end of the transcription process, to help establish trustworthiness in the study, member checking was employed. In qualitative research it is

important that the results are reliable. Educational writers Bogdan and Biklen (1998) stated that “qualitative researchers tend to view reliability as a fit between what they record as data and what actually occurs in the setting under study, rather than the literal consistency across different observations” (p.36). This research addresses reliability in two different terms related to Bogdan and Biklen’s definition. First, it was important to find that there was an overlap among the participants’ responses to questions so that consistency of response supported the reliability of the data. Secondly, that participants’ answers in this research were comparable and similarities were found when looking at similar situations published in the available literature was also deemed essential to the study’s success. At this time, the literature review and field notes made through observations allowed the process of triangulation to take place to add validity to the study. Upon completion of the interviews, the participants were provided with a copy of their individual interview transcript to review in order to make necessary alterations and reflect upon his or her comments. No additional comments from the participants were added to the transcripts at that time for clarification or correction.

CHAPTER FOUR

Presentation of the Findings

Participants' responses to the interview questions

The findings presented in this section are based on the themes that emerged from the study. The common trends and patterns that the participants related are discussed using direct quotes.

Description of the participants

Each of the five participants attended a rural, one-room school in the Thunder Bay Township areas in the early 20th century. The first participant was Aili, a first generation Canadian citizen of Finnish descent, who spoke both Finnish and English at home and began attending a one-room school in Lappe Township in the early 1900s. Aili spoke fluent English upon arrival at the one-room school, and attended the school from grade one to grade eight.

The second participant was Mykailho, who was also a first generation Canadian citizen of Ukrainian descent, who only spoke Ukrainian at home, began attending school in a township down Arthur Street road outside of the city of Fort William and spoke only a word or two of English before his attendance at the one-room school. He attended the one-room school from grade one to grade eight.

The third participant was Clara, who was a second generation Canadian citizen of British and Welsh descent and who attended a one-room school outside of Neebing Township. She spoke English fluently at home and at school and attended the school from grade one to grade three, before moving into the city of Port Arthur and attending a consolidated school.

The fourth participant was Taina, who was a second generation landed immigrant of Finnish descent and who spoke only a word or two of English before attending a one-room school in Forbes Township from grade one to grade eight.

The last participant was Hannu, who was a first generation Canadian citizen of Finnish descent and who only spoke a word or two of English before his attendance at the one-room school in Intola Township from grade one to grade eight.

Aili

Aili explained that her father came to Canada with his parents, who wanted to find work, circa 1914-1915. She mentioned that her father spoke Finn and Swedish, as he was born on the border of Sweden and Finland but later moved further into Finland. Her father was 12 or 13 at the time he came to the Thunder Bay area with his family, and attended “school here [Thunder Bay area] at Central School” where he learned to speak English in class. Aili’s mother was born in Lappe Township outside of Thunder Bay to Finnish immigrant parents circa 1918. She spoke Finnish at home but spoke English while attending school at Lappe School S.S. #1. Though both of Aili’s parents were primary Finnish speakers as children, Aili recalled that while she was growing up her parents spoke both Finn and English at home to her. She explained that her father and mother settled in Lappe township on a leased piece of land and her father was employed working “in the bush, in those days, yah, and farming naturally” and that her mother “was there, she used to milk the cows, and so on.” She attended a one-room school called Lappe School S.S.#1 in Lappe township beginning in 1939 when she was around 6 ½ to 7 years old and attended for eight years. Aili explained how her parents, having both attended a one-room school in the Thunder Bay area as children and having been taught a certain amount of the English language, spoke both Finn and English at home. She explained that she took pride in the

fact that she was bilingual before she began attending school, and that she felt that her fluency in Finn was equal to her English language skills as a child. She also explained that most of her extended family were in Lappe township's population and that many of the children at the school were of Finnish heritage but also spoke English quite well. She detailed that "there was a lot of them [fellow students] too that knew English because, you see, my cousins, their fathers they went to the school and learned their English there, y'know." She further explained that when she went to visit other family members when she was a child "the children probably, we spoke English and the elders, Finn." Aili stated that she attended school "to learn English and [for] more education" and that her parents stressed the importance of school and told her "naturally, to go to school and learn." I probed further and asked if she thought they really believed in the value of a formal education, and she responded "Well, of course!"

Alli recalled that her classroom was set up so that the children sat in rows of desks according to grade level and that the rows were not gendered in any way. She also stated that there was a picture of the British king or queen placed at the front of the class with a flag and recalled that she believed that there was the Canadian flag that also hung in her classroom. Aili explained that each school day started with the students reciting the Lord's Prayer and singing 'God Save the King/Queen.' In regard to the subjects taught at the one-room schools at this time, Aili stated that she loved learning about all the subjects of British, Canadian and world history, math, science, reading and writing. She did not recall learning about Finland or discussing any local cultural events in class, and that all her formal academic education came from the school textbooks. In regard to homework, Aili pointed out that she remembers getting homework to bring home from school often throughout her school attendance and that the students occasionally had to read passages at the back of the class. Aili also related a story about

an academic struggle in regards to the formal academic curriculum, as she and her family moved from the country and her one-room school into town and a multi-class school in the middle of her grade eight school term. She explained that coming from the rural school environment into the city school was a challenging transition and that she struggled at the city school and that “it was the environment and everything else, it was so new to me, and ah, of course I failed [grade 8] so I had to go try out, try out ahem, the final exam at the technical high-school, which is Hillcrest now...I finally passed.”

In regard to classroom religious instruction, Aili explained that a lady from G- Hall came when she was in older grades to recite Bible stories to the class once a month during school hours. She also stated that the students had “a little red book with hymns in it...we used to sing from that a lot” and that she and her classmates also often read from another book who’s title she forgot, but who’s text began with the phrase “In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God.” Aili also recalled participating in the annual school-run Christmas concert and that her teacher and class began preparing for the concert at approximately the end of November and that the preparations took approximately a month to complete. Aili did not recall any of the decorations that were up in the classroom, but stated that the students “used to sing, and we used to have little acts.” She remembered singing Christmas songs such as ‘We three kings of Orient are,’ that only the parents of the students whom attended the school went and watched the yearly Christmas concert and that the students never watched other schools’ Christmas concerts. Aili related that the dialogue for the concert was entirely in English and that no other language was spoken during the performances.

Aili reported some struggle between her home and school languages, though she spoke both Finn and English with her parents. She stated that “mostly we used to speak both [English

and Finn] at home” and that in the community it was “English to the younger ones, y’know to the children...and Finn to the older.” Aili also pointed out that when she was first attending the one-room school she remembered having a teacher who spoke Finn to the students and alternated between Finn and English words to help the class better understand the language. Though Aili spoke the Finn language at home with her parents, they also spoke English, and Aili reported that having a teacher who spoke Finn did not really help her “because I spoke English, so there’s no problem there.” Aili also stated that she believed English was taught by the teacher primarily from a reader and that there was a ban at school from any language other than English being spoken and promoted in the school curriculum. Aili explained that as she progressed from grade to grade, she also encountered a widening division between adult and youth language dialogue. She stated that even though the adults in her community knew some English from their later years of attendance at the one-room schools when they had first immigrated to Canada as children, “as I got [older], still mainly the children, we spoke English, and the elders, Finn.”

Aili did not recall any state celebrations ever occurring at her school but did remember getting a break from school for a few days at Easter. She also made it clear that the reason she believed the students did not actively celebrate more holiday traditions, such as going Halloween trick-or-treating, was mainly due to the long distances between houses in the rural townships. Aili also pointed out that once her family moved to town, in the middle of her grade eight year of school, she and her sister began to follow the custom of trick-or-treating. The issue of distance was a key point for Aili, as she stated that for many students, like herself, it was over 2 ½ to 3 miles to walk to school every day, and that in the winter, despite having skis to use for the journey, it was often dark when the students returned home from school. She explained that the

parents of the students would urge their children to return home right after school to avoid getting lost in the approaching darkness of the evening.

Aili related that she and her classmates knew, at the sound of the teacher's hand-bell, when to come into the school in the morning. She mentioned that the hand-bell was used at recess and at lunch to signal a return to the classroom and that it was a "sound of school." She also responded that another identifiable marker of school was the teacher/student relationship that existed during her attendance at the one-room school. She explained that the relationship was comparable in many aspects to the parent/child relationship she experienced at home, as both her parents and her teacher encouraged discipline, hardwork and respect. She stated that she knew, from her earliest school attendance, that it was important to respect her teacher and that this acknowledgement did not have to be taught but was generally assumed upon attendance at school. Aili related that in her opinion a well-behaved student was one who "didn't talk, y'know. Or tease anybody, stuff like that. Or talk back to the teacher." She also pointed out that when the teacher asked a question within the classroom, it was expected for a student to raise his or her hand to answer. She mentioned that she recalled some of the boys talking back to the teacher in a disrespectful manner and being sent to sit on the platform, though she said she did not recall any of the girls misbehaving in any situation. Aili further explained that misbehaviour in the class was characterized by actions such as children "talking, and maybe the boys pulling the girls' hair" and that the common punishment within her classroom was when "they [children] misbehaved, there used to be a platform in the front and they'd have to go and sit and face the other children, sit on the platform." Aili related that the strap was the most severe punishment a child could receive in class and though she knew of the strap's existence as a method of

punishment from discussions with her friends, she did not remember ever seeing any student receiving this disciplinary measure while she attended the one-room school.

Aili also related that, as a child attending a one-room rural schools in the Thunder Bay area township, a major challenge related to her school attendance was the often extreme distances she had to overcome when leaving home and walking, biking or skiing to school. She stated that “We lived farrrr off, 2 ½ miles [from school]...almost 3, that was far away from the school. In the summertime it was ok because I had a bicycle, in the wintertime it was skis.” Aili explained that she even missed a year of school when she was quite young on account of a cold winter and the distance she had to travel to school. She stated “I even missed a year. When I first started it was so cold that next winter that my mother wouldn’t send me...I missed a year because of that...it was so far to go...yah, I went back, when I was a year older, so.” Aili further pointed out how her two brothers helped out her father on the family farm and she remembered that her one brother missed a year of schooling on account of working for their father. She stated “I do think that he missed a year, though, to help at home, if I remember right. There was so much to do on the farm.”

Aili commented that she had a close relationship with her parents but that she “wasn’t interested” in hearing about any of her Finnish heritage and that she focused more on her friends’ lives, country dances and other informal township activities. She stated that there were no noticeable differences between the Christmas traditions that were celebrated at the one-room school and those that were held at her home and reported that her family celebrated all of the same Christmas traditions that she remembered being present at school such as exchanging presents, singing carols and waiting for Santa Claus on Christmas Eve.

Aili stated that throughout her schooling she thought of herself as a citizen of the country of Canada and related that she felt her success at school made her more of a true Canadian citizen. She elaborated that she felt confident in her English language skill and her ability to fit into the school social fabric when she passed exams at the end of each year. She explained that a personal marker of her overall success in being a part of her Township community was her ability to pass her annual June school examinations. She commented that “Yah, passing exams, yah, definitely helped” and that it was important for her to feel part of a social group.

Mykhailo

Mykhailo stated that his parents were both born in the Ukraine, and though he didn't remember when his mother came to Canada, he stated she was born in 1909 in the Ukraine. He explained that “My mother was pretty young when she left because the situation there was a little unstable. Aye, and she left on her own.” Mykhailo also detailed that his dad was in the Thunder Bay area before his mom arrived, but was also a young adult who left on his own. Both parents attended school in the Ukraine for an indeterminate amount of time, and Mykhailo explained that when they came to Canada they did not speak English aside from a rudimentary word or two. Mykhailo recalled how his mother came to Thunder Bay:

[She] arrived east on the railroad. She missed the station here [in Thunder Bay] on Syndicate Avenue...she got the engineer to stop at the crossing...as soon as she got off there she seen this woman pasturing her cow there, so she went over there and asked her, and it was a good thing she talked Ukrainian, and my mother asked her if she knew where so-and-so people lived, and she says ‘sure I know them’ so she pointed them out just where to go, it was easy to point out because there were not too many houses and she pointed out the house exactly where my mother's aunt lived.

He further explained that his parents met in the city of Port Arthur and settled a mile up the road from where he currently lives on the outskirts of the city of Thunder Bay on Arthur Street. He stated that his father was in farming and owned a farm. He also alluded to the fact that his father

was married once in Canada before he met Mykhailo's mother, and that his mother and father not only raised him and four siblings who were all born in Canada, and also raised five Canadian –born half-siblings whom Mykhailo, to this day, considers immediate family. Mykhailo recalled that he was born in 1926 and that he spoke Ukrainian fluently and spoke little to no English before attending school.

He attended a one-room school near Rosslyn road and began attending in approximately 1932 when he was 6 years old and attended for eight years. He did not have English-speaking parents, but explained how the children he interacted with before attending school aided him in their development of his first few English words. Mykhailo commented that he knew some basic English words before he began attending school because "I used to play with kids you see" and that the children were not only Ukrainian but English speaking as well. Through this interaction, Mykhailo picked up a limited amount of words from the English-language dialect but in this study was classified as an ESL student upon his attendance at the one-room school. Mykhailo also explained that his parents believed in the value of a formal education, telling a story from his past that illustrated the consequences of not attending his classes at the one-room school. He stated:

there's an interesting story about me playing hooky. That happened right on the corner there, there were no houses there then, not one house on Rosslyn, on that road when I went to school. And I was sitting on the corner there, watching the traffic go by [playing hooky]...And lord and behold, I seen mother come walking down. And she spotted me before I spot her, and she said 'What are you doing here?' and I said 'I'm counting cars' and she says 'You better get going, you better go home' and I said 'No, if I go home now, I'll get a lickin' from my dad.

Mykhailo stated that his classroom was set up in rows of desks, that they were not gendered, and that a British flag hung at the front of the class along with a picture of the Queen or King of England. He stated that each school day ended with a prayer that began "Light in the

darkness, we beseech thee O'Lord” and also a recitation of ‘God save the King/Queen.’ He also responded that each school subject was taught at the same time every day, “mathematics, that was done in the morning all the time,” and that he was taught all the traditional school subjects. He relayed that textbook-based learning was the primary instructional tool that was utilized by the teachers in his one-room class to educate students and that he and his classmates would read primarily from a reader and could only remember learning from “just the textbooks” while in class. He remembered being taught a combination of both British and Canadian history but no world history or any local culture, though he stated that his class was taken on field trips in the area surrounding the schoolyard to pick up “forest samples” for science class. Mykhailo also related how when he started attending school, he was aware how many of the children spoke better English than he did, and that the teacher would rely on these older students to help teach English to the younger children in the class. Mykhailo commented that, on direction from the teacher, “if something was really important like that to get over to us, we would go over and sit with our brothers, older brothers or sister, they would be in the next row up and then they would help us out.” In addition, Mykhailo recalled that his teachers would read Bible stories to the class each morning once the students were in their desks. He explained “that was the first thing in the morning, the very first thing in the morning, she read out of the Bible.” He did not recall doing any homework, but commented that may not have been because the teacher didn’t assign any, just that he may not have wanted to do it.

Mykhailo stated that every year at his school there was a Christmas concert, and that his teacher and class began preparing for the concert at approximately the end of November and that the preparations took approximately a month to complete. He stated that his one-room school’s windows were decorated with Christmas images drawn by some of the other students and that

the Christmas concert “was held maybe a week before Christmas and at night-time, and the school used to be just jammed” with people. Mykhailo also stated that “we had plays, and I always was in one...and the reason for that was because it went on your report card after” though he enthusiastically acknowledged that the concert required a lot of effort from the students and that the entire class participated to some degree in the concert. He stated that the concert was performed entirely in English and that it was only the parents of the students whom attended the school who went and watched the concert. Mykhailo pointed out that his class received gifts from a man dressed as Santa Claus at the concert and that the gifts “were supplied by the municipality...they bought the gifts, yah, and they were nice gifts too...you’d get a truck, a little dump truck...[the girls would get] dolls and stuff.”

Mykhailo did not remember any Dominion Day celebrations at his school, and initially made a mistake and confused Dominion Day with Canada Day. When I stated the difference, he explained that, in his opinion, British and Canadian heritage celebrations are interchangeable. He added that his most memorable ‘Canada Day’ focused on when “the Queen come down and she stayed at the Royal Edward Hotel, and one day we all got into this big truck, with a big rack in the back, and we all got in to see her, and I didn’t speak to her but...pretty exciting, oh yah.” Mykhailo recalled his school celebrating a day in the spring when the teacher would direct the students to clean up both outside and inside the classroom for the entire day, though he did not remember it being called ‘Arbour Day,’ and also spoke enthusiastically about the school-run fall fairs. Mykhailo recalled his class attending country fairs during the school year and related how his school, in addition to four other nearby township schools, attended the festivities held in a rural area in his township. He explained how he and the other students from his school would “march in, like we’d be in two rows and our rows were pretty long ‘cause there were quite a few

kids.” He continued that he used to make wood carvings and would get paid for his work at the fairs. He stated that “even at a young age I liked to make things outta wood. I used to get prizes, and we got money for it, yah, from the school board.”

In regard to classroom markers, Mykhailo said that a hand-bell was used to signal the start of the school day as well as “at dinnertime [lunch-time] and at recess.” He continued that the handbell was respected by the students, as was the teacher. He pointed out that even after personally receiving corporal punishment and other types of discipline from his teachers, he still respected them and today believes that all his teachers were “good to us...I have no regrets, they were all nice.”

At school he stated he was expected to behave to his teacher like he would to his mother and father, and described a well-behaved student as one who raised his or her hand and did not talk out loud in class. Mykhailo insisted that in his one-room classroom “to be honest, there wasn’t much punishment...I never ever heard a swear word,” though he recalled personal incidents of his own misbehaviour. He gave the example of when “right after the first day of school, after summer holidays, we would, well myself and my friends, we would try to catch the back seat, roll in the back seat as that was 20-30 feet from the front and from the teacher, but she would bring us right up to the very front.” Mykhailo also explained that later on that same year his teacher caught him teasing one of his friends by “pok[ing] him, there’d used to be a little spot in-between the seat and I would kick him a little bit in the rear end y’know, and he’d look around and he’d start laughing, and she’d [the teacher] see it.” He detailed the types of punishment that the teacher gave in out his classroom were things such as “you’d have to go back to, what they called a cloakroom, where they had a fridge. And you’d have to spend time in there by yourself.” Mykhailo explained that when the teacher caught him poking his friend through the desk, she

“just stare[d] at us there for about 10 minutes and ke[pt] us in for recess, we wouldn’t get out at recess, and then comin’ up the time to go home we rode bicycles to school and she rode a bicycle to school and she rode with us [all the way to each of their respective homes].” Mykhailo explained that he believed she “put those looks on us just to put us off to other people” so that the teacher could set an example and so that no other students would misbehave in the same way.

Mykhailo recalled that at his school the strap “wasn’t used that much,” that it was “kept in her [the teacher’s] desk,” and that “in all the time I went to school I only got the strap...once.” Mykhailo explained that he got strapped “for talking, you know, I turned around like this behind ya, I recall that this was already getting back into the older grades, grade seven or grade eight, but I was talking...when we would talk and that and she, we would get punished.” He remembered a second incident when “one youngster threw something and it cracked the window and that was when he got the strap there.” He did not recall any reward measures used for his or the other students’ good behaviour in class.

Mykhailo related that a major challenge related to his school attendance was the often extreme distances he had to overcome when leaving home and walking, biking or skiing to school. He stated that it would take “a good half hour [to get to school]...it depends, in the wintertime the side road we had to cut across, Rosslyn Road, there were weeks when it wasn’t plowed and we had to walk on top of the snow where the snowplow had pushed the snow previously, we had to walk like that.” Mykhailo also stated that he and his brothers would all be absent from school for one to three days in the fall to help their father harvest their farm’s produce. He explained that his teacher understood and would not penalize the students for their absence, as there were approximately three other students attending his school who also helped their fathers with the farm crops.

Mykhailo explained that there were many differences between his Ukrainian home Christmas traditions and the ones presented at his school. He stated that the actual date to celebrate Christmas following the Ukrainian calendar was a week after the one at his school and that his dad and his friends would go caroling around the neighbourhood at the time. He also noted that his home celebratory Christmas foods were much different than the ones he read about at school that the children in the textbooks would eat. However, he stated that he never felt left out from the school celebrations, and that it added to his enjoyment of the season. Mykhailo related that he did feel a tension between his home and school languages once he started to learn English at school, as at home “I just spoke my mom and dad’s language [Ukrainian]” but that with his brothers and sisters who attended the one-room school, “I spoke English.” He explained that his mother and father spoke no English up until their deaths, and that he helped translate for his mother and father when they would have to talk with English speaking people, such as doctors, in the community. He explained that “I spoke [English] to a doctor, oh yah, yah, I recall that a couple of times.” Mykhailo stated that as he grew more knowledgeable in the English language he began to lose some knowledge of his parents’ home language from the Ukraine. He explained that “I wouldn’t say I’d lost it [the Ukrainian language], but as we speak about it now I have lost quite a bit of it...when the parents passed away...’cept right now my sister lives next door and she’d say something to me in Ukrainian and [shakes his head]...no.”

Mykhailo also pointed out that that he was content not to speak Ukrainian in class because learning the English language was very important to him. He explained that he saw the act of learning English as a vehicle which allowed him to interact more often with the other students and become more comfortable in the classroom environment. He noted that by the end of his first school year he only spoke English with his fellow students both within and outside of

the classroom context and explained that he felt that “going to school, mixing with all the others, it was very important” and that those times, and learning the English language at school, helped him become comfortable within the school and Township communities’ environments.

Mykhailo explained that he felt he was situated fully as a Canadian citizen from birth, but that his parents would have defined themselves as both Ukrainian and Canadian. He explained that his parents valued their Ukrainian heritage and that “they kept in contact with their friends that come from the other country [Ukraine] and lived here.” He could not remember if his mother ever received her Canadian citizenship, but did not think she did based on the fact that he believed she would have had to understand the English words on the citizenship application, and she did not speak, read or write any English in her lifetime. Mykhailo explained that, though his parents never learned English, they did encourage him to learn it, and that he believed acquiring English and attending school were important factors that attributed to his success in life. He summed up that “going to school, mixing with all the others, it was very important...you’d even mix [at country fairs] with other schools, and to this day you still remember some of those people, you still see them around.”

Clara

Clara responded that both her parents were born in Canada but on the east coast of the country and that her grandparents immigrated to Canada from Wales and England for undetermined reasons in the mid-19th century. She stated that her parents met in the Thunder Bay area, settled in the city of Port Arthur and that she was born in 1938 and had nine siblings. She said that her parents only spoke English and that she grew up only speaking English. Her father was employed in the Port Arthur shipyards and her mother was a homemaker. She attended her first year of school at 6 years old in 1944 at a multi-class school in the city of Port

Arthur, but then moved out to the country and attended a one-room school for approximately three years. She explained that the one-room school “wasn’t a big place though, as it had been an old Department of Highways garage.” Clara’s parents and close family only spoke English, and she did not know any other language other than English before attending school. She explained that the township she lived in was made up of primarily English-speaking families, with a few Ukrainian families as well and that was reflected in the one-room class attendance.

Clara explained that her classroom was composed of rows of desks, had a flag of the King or Queen of England that hung at the front of her classroom year round, and was quite stark in overall appearance. She also stated that in the morning the day started with “God save the Queen, and then there was, we sang O’Canada, and the Lord’s Prayer in the morning.” She also stated that her learning in class was primarily textbook-based and that in the classroom “everything was done, like a schedule.” Clara remembered learning “a lot of British history” and some world history, as well as the traditional subjects. She did not recall any mention of local culture and history of the Thunder Bay area or any regionally-based information, though she did remember that her teacher would take the class outside of the school into the woods surrounding the schoolyard and teach them about the local environment. Clara explained that she was taught religious education at school and that a lady called Miss M- “would come in [to the school], not during school, so it would be after school...it was usually around suppertime...or just after suppertime, we would go back to school and she would teach us...it wasn’t mandatory.” Clara explained that she loved these classes because Miss M- had a felt-board and “she used to, it was on an easel and then she had all these beautiful pictures from the Bible that were cut out, like figures and stuff, and as she told a story she would put these pictures up to go with the story. That was very neat because we didn’t have those kinds of things.” She explained that not all of

the children came back in the evening to take part in these classes, and that the children who attended were “probably whoever was closest to the school, I guess, because some of the kids lived quite a ways off.” In regard to homework, Clara explained that “you could take your books home if you had homework you had to do, you took your book home with you but you had to have it back there the next morning.” She stated that each year there would be an exam at school in the late spring and that she dreaded writing it, as it caused her a lot of stress. She also stated that she did well at school and often received ‘A’ letter grades.

Clara stated that at her school’s annual Christmas concert, the school’s windows were decorated with Christmas images drawn by fellow students. She recalled making chains and decorations out of Kraft paper, and that she liked making “angels and stars.” She explained that she and the other students “just sang the hymns” such as ‘Away in a Manger’ and ‘Silent Night,’ and that, as a shy young girl, at the concert she often wanted to hide. She related that the dialogue for the concert was entirely in English and that no other language was spoken during the performances that the Township parents would attend.

In regard to other informal school celebrations, Clara recalled that Empire Day took place at her school on May 24th each year, and that the students would put things up, though she couldn’t remember any specific decorations. She recalled that British flags were always visible around the classroom and did not recall any Canadian flags that were ever on display through her years of attendance at the one-room school or at the multi-class school she later attended. Clara also remembered that her teacher and fellow students celebrated Arbour Day and that the class participated by cleaning out the schoolroom

Clara responded that the teacher/student relationship that existed during her attendance at the one-room school was comparable in many aspects to the parent/child relationship she

experienced at home. She mentioned that she was very close to her mother, and that she knew that she had to show the teachers at school the same amount of respect that she would show her parents at home. Clara explained that in regard to respecting the teacher in class “She [the teacher] ruled!” and that “whatever the teacher told you to do, you did.” She pointed out that student respect of the teacher “was more expected, like what you would like to do, like kinda like you were being friends with the teacher, y’know.” She recalled listening for the hand-bell, used by her teacher, to indicate the beginning of school, the end of recess and the end of lunch-time, and the importance of following this implicit cultural rule of bell signals. Clara further elaborated that she believed a well-behaved student was a child who was quiet within the classroom context, and that she remembered that the “the boys used to throw spitballs...they would take pieces of paper and shoot them at their friends, and flick it with the ruler” but that “girls didn’t get the strap, girls behaved.” Clara also defined bad behaviour as when students were “talking and looking around and not paying attention,” and again mentioned “spitballs.” When I probed further, she admitted that she occasionally got one in her hair and that it was, in her opinion, “humiliating.”

Clara explained that a punishment often used in her classroom by the teacher was having an offending student stay in at recess, though she related that in her classroom, the strap would be used by the teacher on a student “every so often” and that when she saw the strap “I was terrified.” She remembered that it was kept in the teacher’s desk drawer, and that she and her classmates “saw them [the student] get the strap, they didn’t go out or anything, they were in class, they got it, they went up to the front of the class and got it, and everyone would see they got it.” Clara related that students got the strap for talking in class or “sassing back or something like that” and that she clearly remembered seeing a classmate get the strap for the first time and

that she would “never forget it.” Clara also specified that it was only the older boys who received the strap, not the younger children or any girls. She relayed that “she [the teacher] wouldn’t strap the real younger ones, it was really for the older boys, it was the threat that was there.” She did not remember any reward measures being given to any of the students in her class.

Clara explained that her house was only four or five minutes away from the school, so the local environment was not a challenge throughout her one-room school attendance. She also explained that, perhaps due to her British and Welsh heritage, she recalled no difference between her home and school culture at Christmas or at any other time throughout the school year, and that there was no language struggle that she encountered as both she and her family only spoke the English language. Though Clara spoke English at home and at school, she recalled noticing that “the kids always spoke the Ukrainian, like the girls I knew and had chums with. They spoke Ukrainian at home but spoke English at school.” Clara reflected that she remembers the children in her township interacting with each other, but that some of the adults did not. She commented that “you associated with the children so you knew where the families were or whatever, but most of the Ukrainians or whatever, they kinda stuck to themselves...they didn’t associate with anybody but them, their own people.” Clara stated that she remembered that “the Ukrainian children’s parents [in her Township] wouldn’t speak a lot of English” and that, in her opinion, she felt these parents didn’t really try to fit into what she considered the Canadian social fabric. Clara explained that she never thought about citizenship matters and that it was probably due to the fact that “my parents were born here, and my grandparents were born in England.” When I probed her further, she admitted that she equated British heritage to Canadian heritage and that the two countries were, in many ways, “one and the same.”

Taina

Taina explained that her parents were both born in Finland, married in Finland, and came to Canada in their twenties. Taina was born in Finland as well, and came with her parents to Canada in August 1929 when she was approximately a year and a half old. She stated that they came to Canada “because they thought this was the land of opportunity, many people came at the same time, there were boatloads.” She continued that they spoke no English at all, only Finnish, and came directly to Thunder Bay upon arrival in Canada. Taina told how through conversation with the immigration office her parents came to lease a piece of land they settled on in Forbes Township outside of the cities of Port Arthur and Fort William. Taina commented “they were allowed to use it [the land] as long as they were out there, then if they left, it went back to the government.” She detailed how her parents built a log cabin on it, farmed the land, had “cows and chickens and a pig” and that her father also “worked in the bush, he worked on making, all the fathers worked on making the road out [of the township], cause there was no road [to get into town]...they were paid five dollars a month.” She also stated that her mother was a homemaker and looked after her and her sister, both of whom spoke little English before attending the one-room school.

She was born in 1927 and first attended school at 6 years old at the one-room school called S.S.#1 in Forbes Township for eight years. Taina, who was a first-generation Finnish immigrant to Canada, did not speak any English before attending the one-room school and was classified as an ESL student upon her attendance at the one-room school. In addition, her parents only spoke Finn at home and she would speak fluent Finn with the other Finnish adults who came to visit her parents. She related that in the township there were a majority of Finnish families, as well as two British families and some Swedish people. She continued that, as a

child, she remembered her parents visiting with other Finn parents at her home but that “The British parents would come over [to our house] to visit too...I don’t know how they communicated but they did...until I learned to speak and then I used to translate.” I probed further and Taina explained how on Sundays the British parents would come to visit her parents, and though neither spoke the other couple’s language, they “seemed to be having a good time, drinking coffee and somehow [communicating].” Taina also stated that her parents stressed the importance of getting a formal school education, and that her father told her about going to school in Finland and how he took a carpenter course and that how she still, to the present day, treasures his carpentry graduation picture. She also explained how proud she was of her mother who, while in Forbes township, attended English language classes at her school once a week with the other non-English speaking parents to try and improve her language skill.

Taina relayed that at the one-room school she attended, the classroom was set up so that the students sat in rows of desks according to grade level and that the rows were not gendered in any way. She remembered that there was a picture of the current British ruler at the front of her classroom and that the Union Jack flag hung at the front of her classroom year-round, and was the only flag that was ever in the schoolhouse. Taina explained that in her opinion “I think the Canadian flag was the Union Jack in those days...the Maple Leaf came after.” She also stated that in the morning the day started with ‘God save the Queen’ then ‘O’Canada’, and then the Lord’s Prayer.

Taina explained that all the “traditional subjects” were taught in her class, and that each subject was taught at the same time each day. She stated that textbook-based learning was the primary instructional tool that was utilized by the teachers in her one-room class to educate the students and that she was taught reading from a primer. Taina also explained that she learned a

majority of British history out of all the history she was taught, and that it was “always about the explorers, more than anything else y’know, we knew what the Nina and the Pinta and the Santa Maria were.” She continued that “we learned about the monarchy, and that they were part of us,” and did not recall any formal learning about local culture and history of the Thunder Bay area or any regionally-based information. She remembered going for fieldtrips into the woods and that the teacher would explain to her and her classmates about the local trees and flowers, though she stated this was only done once or twice a year. She also recalled a visiting missionary woman who would “come in, and usually when she came she stayed a week...more or less maybe once a year, and maybe sometimes twice a year...she would talk to us about God and Jesus.” Taina pointed out that the missionary spoke both Finnish and English and that her bilingualism helped her and the other non-English speaking students understand the stories more clearly.

In regard to learning how to read, write and comprehend the English language, Taina explained that the teacher “taught us through phonics...she would put a picture of a ‘t’ and say ‘that’s tuh’ and y’know, on the alphabet like that...and then she’d tell you to put the things together...yah, and form the word.” Taina recalled that her teacher worked hard to get her and the other students to pronounce the foreign English words in a proper accent. She explained that “she [the teacher] wanted to get rid of the Finnish accent. She didn’t allow us to speak Finnish at school, so that we would leave or forget this Finnish accent that we had, and learn to speak English properly.” When probed further, Taina explained that the teacher really focused on the students’ articulation of the English words, and that the teacher would correct students on their mispronounced words while they were reading aloud in class. Taina further explained that though “we weren’t allowed [to speak Finn] in our school, some of the other schools allowed it,

and their accent stayed... They [the students] grew up and they really had Finnish accents, I don't think we lost all of ours but it made a difference." Taina continued that "Once we grew up and went to the dances, you'd always know because these kids came from the other townships, they had a thicker accent." She stated that she was pleased that her teachers did not allow her and the other students to speak Finn and retain their accents and commented that "We didn't mind it at all, we were quite happy because that was helping us with our English, and we were in Canada and that was what we were supposed to do." She also pointed out that if her or her classmates had homework the teacher would utilize the Eaton's catalogue to help the students better understand a concept. She explained "well, when we had homework, if we had to demonstrate something, we could cut pictures out of the catalogue... yah, and put it with our homework" so that the student could visualize an image to go with the foreign English word he or she needed to know to complete his or her homework. Taina explained that there was a small library set up in her class, composed of her teacher's books, and that she remembered borrowing "the Bobbsey twins, and Les Miserables." She explained that at around ten years old she borrowed 'Les Miserables' and enjoyed reading it so much that she read it twice. She further explained that many of the students borrowed books this way and that the students could borrow the library books for as long as they needed and that "we were allowed to take them home, as long as we brought them back."

Taina pointed out that the annual Christmas concerts each December were one of her most treasured memories throughout her years of attendance at the one-room school. She remembered that her teacher and class began preparing for the concert at approximately the end of November and that the preparations took approximately a month to complete. She recalled making chains and decorations, such as angels and holly, out of Kraft paper and related that there

was an actual live tree in her classroom that the students decorated. Taina stated that “the whole class would act out a play” and that one of the plays was named “‘The Breckenridge Way’ but we changed it to ‘Down Nipigon Way’” so that it could be relatable to the families who would be in attendance on the actual night of the concert. She remembered singing ‘Silent Night’ at the concerts and pointed out that the concert was performed entirely in English and required a lot of effort, especially from the ESL students. Taina explained that not only would her class perform their play for the Township parents, but her entire class from Forbes township “went to the Ellis school, we’d get the horse and sleigh out and we’d go and we’d do our play there.” Taina further stated that she did not recall any students or classes coming to see her own class perform their concert.

Taina explained that at her school the parents would buy the toys that would be distributed by Santa and that “[Santa would be] one of the Swedish children’s father. He was just a wonderful Santa, he would come in with the sleigh, and then the parents, whatever they could afford, would buy for their children, they’d [the presents] be on the sleigh, and he’d come in and he’d hohoho.” Taina pointed out that she and the other children figured out that it was one of the Swedish immigrants playing Santa at the concert because of the man’s accent. She explained that “we got a little bit older and we thought, wondering, how come he’s got that Swedish accent, and that’s got to be Mr. Swenson.” Taina also pointed out that she believed the concert created a sense of community among the people present, and that in her township there was a lot of visiting among the families that occurred at this time of the year.

In regard to other informal school celebrations, Taina first mistook Empire Day for Canada Day, and then admitted that the celebration was never performed at her school to her recollection. Taina specified that she did remember Arbour Day being celebrated at her school,

and that it consisted of the students having to “go out and clean the schoolyard and wash the windows and make everything neat and tidy.” Taina also recalled attending school rural fairs, though she did not remember much about the event, aside from the agricultural information that was presented by local farmers and the local produce competitions that were held for the students to compete in.

Taina stated that she was very close to her parents and that she was taught by them to respect her teacher in the same way she respected their authority as her parents. She responded that the teacher/student relationship that existed during her attendance at the one-room school was comparable in many aspects to the parent/child relationship she experienced at home. Taina explained that in regard to respecting her teachers, “I don’t think you thought about not respecting them, that was your teacher...and you respected her.” Taina explained that the hand-bell was a sign of the teacher’s authority and that it was important that students obeyed it. Taina related that most students behaved well at her school and characterized a student who misbehaved as one who would “speak when you’re not spoken to, whisper to the person in front of you” and that, in her opinion, most of the students in her class “didn’t do that.” Taina stated that students in her classroom would get in trouble for actions such as “talking out loud...and then if you tried to sneak information from the student ahead of you.”

Taina stated that when a student was caught talking to another student during class, the students would have to stay in at recess and “stay in your seat and do some extra work.” She also recalled that “if we were being punished, we would have to stay after four [o’clock]” at school for “about half an hour, no more than that, just to get caught up on other work.” Taina explained that at her school, if a student was caught talking in the Finnish language either within or outside of the class, the student would be punished. She stated, “if you were out at recess and

she [the teacher] heard you and if you said something in Finn then she'd tell you to get inside...and you'd have to stay in your seat and do some extra work." She continued that she didn't remember any of the students speaking Finn in the classroom, as she believed this would result in a more serious punishment. Taina stated that the strap was used occasionally in her classroom by the teacher and it was kept in the teacher's desk drawer. She explained that the other students would see the student getting strapped by the teacher, as the student would stay in his desk and "she'd [the teacher would] slap your hand." Taina explained that the teacher would rarely use the strap, and "mostly [on] the boys" and that students in her classroom received the strap for talking back to the teacher "or if they didn't do their work, and they were just sitting there, not doing their work." Taina related a specific incidence where a boy in her class, "a big fellow in grade eight" would "pick up his rubber boot, his foot and all" and put it on his paper if he made a mistake and "try to rub it out." Taina clarified that, in her opinion, he was only doing this to amuse the other students, and was not deliberately trying to be cruel to the teacher, but that he received at least three hits with the strap. Taina did not remember her or her classmates ever being rewarded for good behaviour but did recall an incident where she received a present from her teacher when she excelled on a mathematics test. She explained that "one year the whole class had a math exam, she gave us across the whole eight grades, and I got the prize for it...I got a broach with three maple leafs on it...and it was pewter. It was a little bit expensive." She continued that "that's the only thing I remember, because it was such an awesome thing that I won it!"

Taina also related that a major challenge related to her school attendance was the often extreme distances she had to overcome when leaving home and walking, biking or skiing to school. She related that "some of them [other students in her class] lived over two miles away

and they learned to make a trail through the bush to make a shortcut...there were no plows...we skied.” She stated that there were often no trails cut in the bush and that the young children had to make their own trails, on skis, to and from the school. She also explained that, in regard to the farm harvest each year, she was proud and appreciative that her father made sure that the harvesting was done only on the weekends, and that she and her sisters never missed school. She explained that she was pleased that her parents valued her schooling, and stated that her parents explained that “we had to go to school because when the report card came there was on there how many days you had missed.”

Taina explained that, as a child, she was often exposed to Finnish culture at home from her parents discussions and from the family radio transmitter. She remembered her mother and father discussing the Finnish war that was going on back in Finland and related how “we had a radio with a battery in it, and when the war was on we weren’t allowed to listen to anything in case the battery died...they’d [her parents] would come and tell you that you had better shut that off because they wanted to hear because the relatives were in the war...some of them [relatives] died in the war.” Taina related that her parents also often told her and her sister about what their relatives did in Finland and “how they struggled too...in those days [back in Finland] there was no refrigerators and there was no electric stoves y’know and fireplaces, they had fireplaces but to do their baking and everything like that.” Taina explained that her family also celebrated different Christmas day traditions than the ones presented in class, and that she was taught to value these traditions. She explained that she loved following her family’s Finnish traditions that her parents remembered from Finland, which included “we’d have a sauna for one thing, that was always important, then we’d have supper...rice pudding, that was always a must, and fruit sauce, and homemade cake with whipping cream!” Taina also pointed out that her family and

the other Township families would not exchange Christmas presents, but that it was due to economic constraints, not different cultural values. She stated “no, no [gift exchange], because how could you go anywhere to get anything, at that time of year, and there was no money. . .it was hard times for everybody, it was a depression.” Taina did point out that she remembered one student in her class who did receive gifts, and that she was “one British girl, who was there, her relatives from England would send her clothes, y’know she was a little better dressed than the rest of us.”

Taina related some struggle between communicating in her parents’ home language and the language she was taught at school, though she pointed out that her parents were very enthusiastic about her acquisition of the English language. She explained that her parents spoke Finn at home, but that they both encouraged her to learn English and that, in her opinion, the majority of the other Finnish families in Forbes Township also worked hard to learn English and fit in with the predominantly English-speaking communities in the towns of Port Arthur and Fort William. She stated that “some of them [Finnish immigrants] that came later than we did, they learned to speak [English] pretty well.” She also explained that her mother tried to learn English by attending a weekly night-course offered by Taina’s own teacher to the immigrant parents in the Township so that they could learn the English language. Taina explained that “but then my dad was working out in the bush and she [my mom] was scared to leave us alone” so her mother stopped attending classes. Taina then began teaching her mother English by “us[ing] the school primer and I started teaching her to read from there. . .she knew lots already. . .but she didn’t talk very much, she always felt uncomfortable. . .but she talked some.”

Taina explained that even though she and a majority of her friends only spoke Finn when they were at home, by the end of their first year of school, these same boys and girls only spoke

English to one another when they were in class, outside at recess, walking home after school or playing with one another after school. Taina explained that “we [she and her school peers] spoke English...It just became a habit” but that this did lead to a visible division that was present in her Township, as she and her friends spoke English together at school and when visiting each other, while these same students spoke primarily Finn to their parents and older relatives.

Taina stated that when she started to speak English fluently at school she also felt more comfortable in the school community. She explained that as she learned more of the English language, she felt like she was better fitting into the Canadian social fabric and that “you just felt like you were home...more comfortable...oh yes, yes, it [learning English] was important, that’s why I used to read...a lot.” When asked about citizenship concerns, Taina related that she only felt she was a Canadian citizen upon receiving her Canadian citizenship shortly after the birth of her second child. She also stated that her parents both felt it was important to get Canadian citizenship, but that they both achieved this quite a few years after she was an adult. She explained that for her parents “well, until they got their citizenship papers, I think they thought they were Finn.” She also pointed out that in her Township she recollected that the Finnish-speaking parents, including her own, were quite interested to learn English and connect with people of other ethnicities from surrounding Townships.

Hannu

Hannu asserted that both of his parents were born in Finland. He stated that his dad immigrated to Canada when he was around 19 or 20 years old from a city in the centre of Finland because there was no work for him in Finland at the time. He said that his mother came from a city in Finland by the ocean called P- and she worked in a lumber place there until she was 18, and left “cause the lumber mill that she was working at had a fire and burned, those

days they didn't rebuild...she said there was nothing for her to look forward to and there was a big demand from European countries for people to come over here because this was a better land and they wanted somebody to come." He explained that his parents individually immigrated to Canada circa 1922. He described how his father, upon meeting a man from Finland who had arrived in the Thunder Bay area earlier than he did, went with him to a trap-line to work north of the city of Schreiber, ON. He detailed that this man and his father had "a trap line about 30 miles north [of Schreiber] and they had three cabins and they travelled from one cabin to the next, and they'd meet once in the middle, y'know." Hannu's mother came to Port Arthur and got a job at a photo studio and met Hannu's father at a dance at the local Finn hall in the city of Port Arthur. Hannu explained that the couple eventually got married and then moved to a bush lot of land, explaining how at that time "you could get this 160 acre lot, you had to sign for it and you live on it for four years, and they didn't have to pay nothing and worked the land, so this was past, up west anyways, in the bush and they went there and there was nothing there but just timber, they built their own cabin." He added that his dad also "learned how to cut ties out of the big logs, big trees over there, as ties for the railroad." He further stated that when his family finished clearing the bush lot his dad had earned enough money to allow the family to purchase a place on Mapleward Road in a township called Intola just outside of the town of Port Arthur. Hannu explained that his mother and father spoke no English, only Finnish, before they arrived in the Thunder Bay area, and after they had been in the area for awhile, Hannu responded that "they might have learned a few words, my mother actually seemed, to me, to learn a few more words than my dad, my dad was, he didn't want to try." Hannu explained that he was born on May 9th, 1926 and that when he began attending school he had not learned any English at all from his parents.

He began his education in the one-room school in Intola at 6 years old and also attended for eight years. He did not have English-speaking parents but explained, in response to my query about how he first started learning the English language, a similar situation of learning language skills from his peers. He disclosed that:

I had a friend, my mother's cousin's children were going to school and they were older, they were in their last grade, they came and met me first [the first day of school] , first month every day on the road, I'd walk down Mapleward to Lepanen's corner and then we'd walk [together]...it took me closer to $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour...they would try and teach me English on the way, it'd mostly be in Finn so you could learn something." [He explains that they tried to teach him] "Just the basic things, I think there was the 'cat,' 'dog,' a few things y'know, you could relate to, y'know.

He knew a very limited amount of the English language when he began attending the one-room school and was classified as an ESL student upon his attendance at the school. Hannu continued that the township population where he and his family lived, and also the student population at his school, was made up of "I'd say $\frac{2}{3}$ Finnish and maybe $\frac{1}{3}$ English, and some of them were English-French" and that the majority of students his age did not speak English at the start of his school attendance. In addition, Hannu explained that his parents supported his school attendance and subsequent education, but that after attending the English-speaking school for a year, his mother worried that he might start to lose his Finnish language, which was their primary mode of communication at home.

In regard to the physical classroom environment, Hannu stated that his classrooms was set up so that the students sat in rows of desks according to grade level and that the rows were not gendered in any way. He noted that setting up the students in rows was a useful and easy way for the teacher to instruct the students according to grade level. He remembered that there was a picture of the king or queen, depending on the British ruler of the year, which would be placed at the front of the class with a Union Jack flag. He pointed out that the flag hung at the

front of his classroom, year-round, and was the only flag that was ever in the schoolhouse.

Hannu also stated that before class started in the morning, “we used to have to say the Lord’s Prayer” but that he did not remember reciting ‘God Save the King/Queen.’

Hannu pointed out that he learned about many different subjects in the one-room school, but that each subject was taught at the same time every day. He also relayed that textbook-based learning was the primary instructional tool that was utilized by his teachers in the one-room class to educate the students. In regard to learning how to read, write and comprehend the English language, Hannu explained that his teacher would draw pictures on the blackboard “with the English word but not the Finnish word, we had to, y’know, in our own minds, and then we had to draw something on a piece of paper, colour’em in so our mind would start working.” He also explained that after drawing a letter the teacher would make the students speak the letter out loud in class. He continued that if he or the other younger students were having difficulty learning a word, then the teacher would pair up the struggling student with another student who understood that information. He explained that the teacher “would get somebody else, into partners, and you’d go out for recess and practice that...it wouldn’t matter if it was another relative, so long as the person was [older]...you had to sound the word out and she’d see that you had practiced some” after recess. Hannu stated that in regard to learning about history in school, “mostly it was British history...about the kings and the queens, and what we owed, what we as Canadians owed to the British, why the monarchy was like our head and everybody knew Canada wasn’t independent.” Hannu reported when asked if he learned about any local culture “never, or very little” and that he only spoke about Finland at home, never in class. He explained “No, we never spoke about that, not in school so much, back home,” though he did recall going on field trips and stated:

we used to go, the teacher used to, maybe two in the spring and two in the fall where we'd have to go out and she'd take us out to different places and we'd learn about the mushrooms and all the different kinds of mushrooms, the bad ones, and all the different trees and the brush, y'know, and the red willow and the green willow and what the difference was...flora and fauna...and trees y'know, between balsam and spruce, pine.

In regard to classroom religious instruction, Hannu explained that the only religious component to his school classes was the recitation of the Lord's Prayer every morning to signal the start of the day's instruction.

Hannu also related a story about an academic struggle he experienced when he was in grade eight. He detailed how by grade eight he was ahead of the other students in class, and that his teacher made the decision to forward him and a fellow classmate into grade nine without having to pass the grade eight exam. Hannu stated that at first this plan seemed to be fine with everyone involved and he left the one-room school to take grade nine classes in the town of Port Arthur, but that near the end of grade nine the school board heard about his teacher's actions and demanded he return to the one-room school to write a grade eight assessment and then write the grade eight exam. He detailed his frustration with this course of events, as he pointed out that he had not taken the grade eight curriculum. He explained how his teacher's actions:

really made a war, yah, because the people from the school board, they had students there, I think there were four students in grade eight, and so, we were allowed, the two of us [to skip a grade, but] then they demanded that we come back to write the final exam, and the only one who passed [avoided] it, who didn't have to write [the final grade 8 exam] was Ronnie T-, who came from English parents, all the others, the seven of us, had to come and write it at the Port Arthur Collegiate...it didn't matter how good of a mark [you had] because the inspector came there and gave the test, and we beat [passed] the knowledge [curriculum], so he had no choice but to take us all for the exam...I passed.

In regard to the informal activities that took place at his one-room school, Hannu pointed out that his favourite event was the annual Christmas concert. Hannu related that there was an actual live tree in their classroom that the students decorated near the concert date. He pointed

out that only “the older ones of us were allowed to decorate the Christmas tree.” He remembered that there was approximately a month of preparations done at school before the concert and that the event would take place at night, about four or five days before Christmas. Hannu stated that in his class the teacher separated the students into choir sections and that “we had a group that would sing, and she’d [the teacher] have us all sing, and she’d say ‘I’m going to make a group out of you and you’re going to sing a bit, and then you’ll sing this.’” He continued that most of the songs would be hymns and Christmas carols. Hannu also recalled that he and many of his fellow students were aware, as children, of their immigrant, non-English speaking parents’ lack of English language knowledge, and would make sure to perform plays with some “jovial stuff in it so that people, y’know, cause we knew that they [the parents], they would try to understand what we were trying to do.” A further probing question elucidated the fact that Hannu was aware, as a child, of his parents’ lack of English language comprehension, and that the Christmas concert play needed to have easily understood actions and not a lot of English-language dialogue. Hannu further explained “I think, ah, between us and the teacher at the time, we kinda thought, y’know, we want to get it across to the parents because we had the French-Canadians y’know, and they were different than the English were, and the Finnish, the Finnish people they were there, and we could have had some Swedes even so y’know.” Hannu also related that “some years we had a Santa and some years we had a Santa and he wasn’t dressed at all...he had the big bag though” full of presents for the schoolchildren.

In regard to other informal school celebrations, Hannu clearly remembered Empire Day celebrations that took place at his school. He pointed out that this holiday was not acknowledged each year, and that recognition for this event within the classroom solely depended on which teacher he had that year at school. He explained that, when celebrated, Empire day consisted of

the teacher devoting a morning or afternoon to answering any questions the students had about the British Empire and Canada's role in this context. He further commented that this half-day recognition of the British Empire:

depended on the teacher, because if the teacher, y'know, like when we had the Empire Day it was a, y'know, you were able to ask questions 'cause a lot of the, as you got older you started to realize, y'know, what the Empire Day was, y'know, England and Canada being partner one over the other, and you'd start to ask a lot of questions, and she'd try to explain y'know...it seemed to be for a long time we had a hard time to understand that we had our own country and yet our government could not pass laws unless they were approved by England, y'know, we'd ask why should it, it bothered a lot of students as they got older.

He pointed out that he considered the Empire Day curriculum comparable to a morning question period and that his impression was that the teachers who celebrated this day gave the perception of being proud the connection between Canada and Britain.

Hannu also recalled that Arbour Day would be held every spring and that he and the other students "would go and clean [the school's] windows, we had groups y'know, whatever we had, and even [clean] the outhouses, the outhouse that we had, it was just an outhouse, we had to clean it, mop up the floors, cobwebs on the corners, like it was ready [for spring]." Hannu also recalled attending school rural fairs, though he did not remember much about the event, aside from the agricultural information that was presented by local farmers and the local produce competitions that were held for the students to compete in.

Hannu explained that there was a definitive teacher/student relationship that existed during his attendance at the one-room school that was comparable in many aspects to the parent/child relationship he experienced at home. He stated that it was important "to respect your teachers, like your parents. They were the same. They cared for you...looked after [you]."

Hannu also recalled that part of this respectful attitude included adhering to the cues from the

hand-bell his teacher used to indicate the beginning of school, the end of recess and the end of lunch-time.

When asked about classroom behaviour, Hannu stated that the majority of his class were well-behaved. He explained that a well-behaved child was one who was quiet and polite to the teacher and always put up his or her hand to ask a question. He explained that he could recall a few general incidents of misbehaviour, but that overall his classroom was a calm, pleasant place to learn in. Hannu stated that many types of punishment were used in the classroom, and that punishment ranged from less severe to more severe measures. He explained that it was normalized behaviour for the teachers to “once in a while, she’d go around and if you were sitting at the back of the desks and she’d seen you, doing something, like talking, you’d get a ruler on the head...yah, she’d have the ruler about that high [motions about a foot over his head] bonk, just to wake you up, the head, you weren’t supposed to be doing, talking to the guy at the back of the school, so you, bonk.” He also described other punishments given to misbehaving students by his teachers, which included “you couldn’t get any recess, or you’d have to stay in after four.” Hannu related that “nobody really wanted to stay in after four, the days, y’know, not so much in the spring and early fall, but in the wintertime nobody wanted to stay because it got dark, by the time I used to get home it’d be dark, we had to walk along roads.” He also explained that when he first began attending school “I went there and was told, ‘You do not speak one word of Finn, not even when you go outside’” and explained that if someone did speak Finn “you had a detention; you would not go out during recess or stay in after four for half an hour.” He clarified that if a student was struggling to understand the English language, the teacher would help that student, and stated “if you had a tough time or something, you would talk to an older one [student], or somebody who had a better sense of the word.”

Hannu explained that at his school the strap was rarely used but that “one teacher, he, both of the teachers kept the strap in the desk, and one teacher, he hung it on a table...on the outside of the desk, would hang it on there in the morning, just to let you know that it was there, you know?” He continued that in his school he believed girls got the strap and that “it was, it was fair, it was available then, I think in my time it was three times I seen the strap,” though he does not specifically remember an incident of a female getting the strap as punishment. Hannu also related memories of his fellow students receiving the strap and explained that when a student got the strap “the other students would see...he’d [the student] would have to put his hand on the table and get whacked, boom!” Hannu continued that he received the strap only once from his teacher and that “I must have done something she didn’t like, y’know, I had to go up to the front y’know, it hurt my wrist.” He further commented that “I think I was in grade five, four or five, I’d been for a long time in the school system.” He added that when someone got the strap “you were kind of ashamed...because everybody would look at you.” He also explained that his teachers would not reward him and his classmates, but they would tell the students that their good behaviour would be recorded on their report cards. Hannu also remembered that in grade seven he received a gift from one of his teachers. He explained “when I was in grade seven, two of us, two of us got a present because we were, she was teaching grade eight, and we put our hands up, and we gave grade eight answers.” For assisting the teacher by answering her questions, Hannu explained that he and his friend received a thank you gift “something nice...two little jackknives, probably worth about fifty cents in that day, but it was a nice present, yah” from their teacher during class.

Hannu related that while attending the one-room school he remembered that the people on the Township family farms where he lived valued education and made school attendance a

priority for their children. He explained that the families would do their harvesting on the weekends so that their children never missed a day of school. He explained “most of the farmers, they got together on Saturday and Sunday and will work...then all the kids would go there and work y’know...they tried to keep it away from conflicting with the school.”

Hannu related that there were some noticeable differences between the culture taught at school and the culture of his home. For example, he stated that his family celebrated Christmas on the 24th, not on the 25th of December. He explained that though his family sometimes received gifts from Santa Claus, that in the Finnish tradition, Santa Claus was not a person the children ever saw. He continued that “Santa Claus was there but if we got a present from mother and dad we’d hear a knock on, my dad would go outside somewhere and be gone and he’d all of a sudden ...you’d hear a knock on the door and you’d go out, nobody there, and there’d be a bag of...it wasn’t...you’d never see a Santa Claus but you did get the presents.” He further explained that “the presents, when we had them, were very small [due to] the times, and the hardships,” and were not as significant as the presents given out to him after the Christmas concert at school.

Hannu stated that there were some challenges that he encountered when he transitioned between his home and school languages and related that when he began to speak more English than Finn after his first year at school, this new knowledge led to a conflict with his mother. He explained that “for a while my mother said ‘You are starting to forget your Finn, y’know, because [though] I talked with my parents, outside of that it was always English...I think it was in the summer, y’know, in the summertime we would go to the [English-speaking] neighbours and the neighbours would come to our place, especially in the early spring,, they would come and help us plant, so it was all English for the whole weekend, and I guess my mom and dad felt,

they didn't want us to lose Finn.” He further explained that though he spoke to his parents fluently in Finn, “I never knew Finn in writing or reading.” He explained that he would not only help translate the English language for his Finnish speaking parents, but that he also encouraged them to learn how to read and write the English language. He stated “I think when I was about three, four, from grade four up, I always done translations for them [his parents], when they would get letters in English and I would translate them into Finnish to him [his father], so that he'd know who the letter was from, and I'd always say that you gotta learn to read. I was after my mother and my dad both to read because I could see that they couldn't go backwards, y'know, you needed to go forward.” He also related how his father relied on Hannu's knowledge of the English language to help them in their family-run business. Hannu explained how his father often had Hannu explain business deals to the other English-speaking families in the neighbouring townships. He said “we had the milk farm and my dad delivered milk and I'd, people would buy the tickets we sold, 13 tickets for a dollar, you'd get thirteen quarts of milk for a dollar, they were otherwise 12 cents a quart by itself y'know, and we'd have to go, my dad would send me to the house, y'know, say that ‘Now go and see if they want to buy a dollar's worth of tickets and collect the dollar’...yah, I'd be speaking English to them because he [could not].”

Hannu commented that despite his mother's initial reluctance concerning his acquisition of the English language, after his second year of school his mother “was always trying to learn” the English language. He explained that her eagerness to learn English came from the fact that many of the Finn parents from the township would often come to visit and that these Finn people would end up speaking more English than Finn in the conversations because “they had been here for maybe ten or fifteen years and they had, y'know, kinda floated into the English language.”

He explained that his parents would say these Finn people, who used many words from the English language in their conversations, were speaking 'Finn-glish' because the conversations used a mixture of Finnish and English words. He further stated that his mother would often ask him to tell her what a Finnish word meant in English and that "it bothered her [not to know English], so she'd ask and I'd try to interpretate to her, to her what it is y'know, and she'd try and say it and then she'd come back next day and say 'What did you say again.'"

Hannu stated that his willingness to learn the English language was influenced by the greater social interaction that accompanied this learning process. He explained that even though he and a majority of his friends only spoke Finn when they were at home, by the end of their first year of school, these same boys and girls only spoke English to one another when they were in class, outside at recess, walking home after school or playing with one another after school. He described the school's lending library as a tool that encouraged his social assimilation. He explained that at school "we had a lil' two-bit [library], it wasn't very big, and a lot of the books were older and torn, and we tried to patch them up but they just disappeared slowly...the teacher used to bring most of the books in... it was nothing for the boys to find out what the girl, what's she's read, and she said 'I'd think you'd enjoy this,' and then he'd get this [book] and read it, y'know." Hannu also stated that he read the comics from the newspaper his father used to buy for the agrarian tool section, as the comics not only helped improve his English language skills, but were also a way to fit in with the other students in his class. He stated:

I think it was the Winnipeg Free Press, it used to come every two weeks, my dad had bought it for me, because there were animals, oh and farm implements, so he, we had bought that place on Mapleward 'cause we didn't have any implements, nothing at all, so he was very interested in that, and always in there they had these sections, and one of the things too is I went to school and everybody'd talk about the comics section. It was the first thing once you learned to read, is read the comics so that you could go back and be one of the crowd...to chat

Hannu explained that he began to feel comfortable at school “when I got into grade seven” and that this feeling was influenced mainly by the fact that he was doing better than the other students in reading and math and that the teacher would allow him to work ahead in his math book. He elucidated that “I’ll tell you, the teacher would say if you want to go ahead and read, y’know, chapters ahead, I’d be ten, fifteen pages ahead, yah.” Hannu continued that he believed this confidence he felt in these situations helped him to succeed at school. Hannu also explained that he was in grade seven when he noticed that his parents were talking less about Finland and more about Canada, and he felt that they were becoming more comfortable as landed-immigrant Canadians. He explained that his parents “didn’t talk that much about Finland, unless you asked. I don’t know even when we went to the neighbours, they would talk to the neighbours, y’know, but it would be very short.” Hannu further explained how he believed that language is a complicated, intricate form of communication and that it is important for people to maintain the ability to communicate in whatever languages they are taught as children. He related a story from his youth that allowed him to show how he understood the challenges and barriers involved in language, and how he appreciated the reasons why only the English language was taught in his school. He explained:

I took French in high-school, I was pretty good at French at one time, and I started to realize...one language is so much better...when I really got [it was] when I learnt the French and went up to Armstrong to work, people came from Quebec, Frenchmen to work there in the wintertime, they’d come there in October and they’d stay ‘til the end of April, and we’d have some [Frenchmen] come from Manitoba, and the two groups would not understand each other, and I couldn’t believe this and then when I went to talk to them, they’d say ‘Are you trying to give us the dictionary word of that?’ so I kinda lost my speaking French, because I was using the top French y’know, and they had this slur, but neither side could understand each other, or me!

He restated “I started to realize...that any one language is so much better because you are talking to so many people.”

CHAPTER FIVE

Discussion

This section presents the themes that emerged from the analysis of the qualitative data. The purpose of this interpretation chapter is to extend the analyses and present focused observations from which I will then draw conclusions and present suggestions for further research.

Settlement of immigrant families

Each of the participants responded that employment need was the driving force for family immigration to Canada in the late 1800s and early 1900s. This reflects information recorded in Southcott (1987) and Avery (1995) who explain how, at the turn of the 20th century, northern Ontario and specifically the Thunder Bay area, were receiving an influx of immigrants from northern and central European countries who were needed, by the Canadian government, for specific employment endeavours. The employment that the participants' families were involved in is also reflective of the literature, as all of the participants' fathers worked in the manufacturing, agriculture or forestry industries and each of the mothers, except for Claire's mother, were also employed in the family's agricultural endeavours. Both Taina and Hannu explained how their Finnish parents leased land on which they settled and farmed, which concurs with Southcott's claim that "By 1912 the Finnish immigrants...began a *back to the land* movement in the Thunder Bay area" (p.12). This settlement not only helped develop the rural areas surrounding Thunder Bay but also led to the establishment of schools in these areas due to increases in population.

The three participants whose parents were non-English speakers related that their parents settled in areas where there were others of the same ethnic origin, so that they could limit the

amount of ‘culture learning’ they would have to engage in to be successful in their new community. Culture learning refers to the process of “acquiring the culture-specific and culture-general knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for effective communication and interaction with individuals from other cultures” (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein and Colby, 1999, p.3). It is interesting to note that the three ESL participants related how their non-English speaking parents did not learn any English prior to their arrival in Canada, and that English language acquisition did not appear to be initially important in settlement in the Thunder Bay area at this time. The participants’ related that this may have been due to the fact that many of the immigrants who migrated to this area had made prior connections or quickly made new connections with the ethnic groups in the Thunder Bay area who spoke their ‘mother language.’

Mykhailo related how his mother, who only spoke Ukrainian, was quick to make connections with other Ukrainian speakers, and also summarized how his mother and father were able to meet, obtain employment, marry, and begin raising their family without ever having to learn more than a word or two in the English language. Like Mykhailo, Hannu also stated how his father only spoke Finnish when he came to Thunder Bay but had no problem gaining employment soon after he arrived from a man who also spoke the Finnish language. Hannu explained how both his parents, who could only communicate in the Finnish language upon their separate arrivals in the Thunder Bay area, both gained and maintained employment, met one another, dated, married, purchased land and began raising a family in Thunder Bay without ever having to learn to communicate in the English language. In addition, Taina related how her parents, who knew only the Finnish language upon arrival in the Thunder Bay area, leased land, settled, and raised a family without having to know more than a few words in English. All of these participants stated that, in their recollections, their parents were not given any government-

sponsored, community support systems, on arrival in Canada, to aid them in their English-language acquisition.

The ease with which the participants described their non-English speaking parents settling into Thunder Bay area society is supported by the historical data at the time which demonstrated that there were significant communities of non-English speaking people in the Thunder Bay area in the early 1900s. Southcott (1987) reported that by 1921, though British immigrants were the largest population in the Thunder Bay area, there were also large immigrant populations of Scandinavians, Ukrainians and Italians. From the participants' recollections, it can be surmised that though the English language may have been the dominant form of communication at this time in the Thunder Bay area, it was not needed to achieve many of the goals of the immigrant population who came to settle in the area in the early 1900s. This ability for the immigrant families to settle, farm, achieve successful employment and raise a family without needing to rely on the English language appeared to contradict Egerton Ryerson's statement that the immigrant population in Ontario at this time was an "untaught and idle pauper immigration [population]" (Harper, 1997, p.193). The data also supported the fact that the director of Census Research in Canada in the 1920s, Mr. Mclean, was incorrect in his assessment that the newly arrived immigrants to Canada were generally illiterate and "illiteracy was the product of social class, the wrong values, and attitudes and inferior social behaviour" (Chochla, 1987, p.50). In fact, this study showed immigrants in the Thunder Bay area were indeed literate and able to communicate well with one another, and that their illiteracy in English had nothing to do with social class and values, and everything to do with their former country's preferred languages of communication and their present country's lack of social structures to aid them in their adult English language development. Despite these challenges, the immigrants that

settled in the Thunder Bay area were eager to embrace the opportunities for education that were offered to their children at the one-room schools.

Primary motives for attendance at school

Parental influence

Interestingly, the participants all stated that, as children, though they knew their parents' home language for communication purposes, they were not greatly interested in learning about their parents' foreign culture and readily accepted the cultural norms of the British-Canadian classroom. This acceptance may have been influenced by two factors: one, how the participants noted their parents' lack of interest in communicating about their foreign homeland with the participants, and two, by the encouragement the participants received from their parents whom supported their formal and informal education at the one-room school. Each of the participants noted that their parents' enthusiasm for the school environment encouraged them in their own educational pursuits within the one-room school setting. This fact is reflected in studies by Ying (1999) and Buki, Ma, Strom and Strom (2003) whom have shown that the role of family or parenting is crucial for success for both Canadian-born and foreign-born students. The participants' comments also strengthen Gardner and Lambert's claim (1972), found in Gardner's (1960) study on English-speaking students learning French and their language-learning aptitude, that students' interest and acquisition of a new language may depend upon the "family's attitudinal disposition" towards the information being acquired. In fact, Stern (1983) stated that the factor that affects learning the most in second language acquisition are the perceptions held by second language learners, and that these perceptions are often influenced by cultural and sociolinguistic assumptions that are prevalent in the community where learning occurs.

To this account, the participants noted that parental encouragement for their educational endeavours was shown through parental attendance at school functions, parental modeling of appropriate behaviour through home disciplinary measures, and active dialogue between the participants and their parents as to the importance of getting a formal education for later life success. All of the participants used or inferred the word 'support[ive]' when they described how their respective parents would attend the school's student-run, yearly Christmas concerts and demonstrated encouragement for the participants' involvement in the class plays and presentations. Three of the participants also explained how their parents helped to provide the food and drink for the after-party. In addition, Taina relayed how her mother, and the other students' mothers, cleaned and lit the classroom stove each morning at the school before the students arrived, and Aili and Taina each provided examples of how their respective parents relayed their own school experiences as ways to help inspire their daughters' understanding of the importance of school attendance. Aili explained how her mother made a point to tell her that she attended the same one-room school that Aili attended when she was a child, and that it was important for Aili to be proud and appreciative of the generational connection. Taina explained how her father told her about the carpentry course he took in Finland, and how it helped his career aspirations. Taina also stated how she knew her mother, Emily, was in favour of Taina learning English when she saw Emily start to attend English-language classes at the same school Taina attended for grammar school.

In this study, Taina also related how her parents demonstrated a positive attitude towards people from the dominant English culture by introducing her to a British family, and subsequently the English language, when she was a very young child. She explains how her parents, who only spoke Finn, would invite their British neighbours, who only spoke English,

over for tea on Sundays. She explained that her parents were interested to learn English, and that the two families would visit and attempt to communicate with one another. She stated that “The British parents would come over [to our house] to visit too...I don’t know how they communicated but they did...they seemed to be having a good time, drinking coffee and somehow [communicating].” Similarly, Hannu also explained how, as a child, he noticed that his parents and the other Finn parents integrated their known Finnish language with the English language that they learned from friends and their children, and developed a combination of the two languages which they then named ‘Finn-glish.’ The idea of creating culture in a new context and, in part, reconstructing identity, is what Hall (1990) referred to as a “process of becoming and being” (p.59). Ghosh (2000) referred to this way of ‘becoming’ as a process where people search for new meanings of identity and redefine norms of identity at the individual level. This observation by Hannu of his parents’ integration of the two languages may also support Libben and Lindner’s (1996) statement that “the second culture learning process involves the expansion of an existing system by integrating new knowledge into it, rather than the development of a new one, because culture seems less bounded and it is probably impossible to develop dual non-interfering cultural systems” (Li, 2003, p.15).

Examples of how the participants’ parents got involved in the school context through a variety of informal activities and subsequently encouraged their children’s school participation contradicts claims made by school reformers beginning in the late 1800s that:

much criticism of the school system assumed that children in the lower strata of the working class remained untaught and unschooled and that their parents were satisfied – indeed responsible, owing to their apathy or ignorance – for that state of affairs. It followed that the obvious, perhaps the only, institution capable of reaching those families was the common school, now free (Houston and Prentice, 1988, p.303).

This study also supports the study by Delgado-Gaitan (1991) which encouraged isolated Spanish-speaking parents to participate more fully in their children's education through non-traditional means and found that "many parents believed that they could not actively participate in the schools because they did not speak English and did not have schooling in this country," but that with encouragement, the parents ended up getting involved in "nonconventional activities [which] encouraged parents to participate in their children's education through culturally responsive education" (p.20). Similar to my study in which the participants commented on their parents' enthusiasm and enjoyment in participating within the one-room school context, Delgado-Gaitan concluded that the "nonconventional activities validated the social and cultural experience of school, which allowed parents to feel a part of and be active in their children's schooling" (p.42). This study also draws parallels with contemporary research by Anderson and Morrison (2003) which concluded that school initiatives which adopt a "parents as partners" approach positively aid students in overcoming language barriers. Epstein, Coates, Salinas, Sanders and Simon (1997) also created an exemplar based on the theory of "overlapping spheres of influence" (p.3) which demonstrated that the overlap which positions parents and teacher as partners, sharing the interests and responsibilities of their children, culminates in a "caring learning community" for all (Epstein et al., 1997). Recent research by Garcia and Hasson (2004) has suggested that children who are involved in "Parents as Teachers" (PAT) initiatives demonstrate higher gains on specific measures of reading and mathematics compared to those whose parents did not participate in such initiatives. Pelletier and Brent (2002) also illustrated that parent involvement was positively associated with student test performance.

Peer connection

Another intriguing finding from the study was how all of the participants related that their successful acculturation to the classroom context and mainstream British-Canadian society was aided by their interactions with peer groups both within and outside of the school context. In this study, Hannu related how the students would often rely on one another for help with homework during class and at recess, and cited the example of when he first started school and his school-attending cousins helped him learn his first few words in the English language. He described how his mother's cousin's children walked him to school for the first month of his attendance, and that "they would try and teach me English on the way, it'd mostly be in Finn so you could learn something... Just the basic things, I think there was the 'cat,' 'dog,' a few things y'know, you could relate to."

Similarly, Mykhailo told a similar story where he explained that he knew some rudimentary English words because "I used to play with kids [at a neighbouring house] you see" and that the children were of both Ukrainian and British backgrounds. He also explained how he would speak English both at school and at home with his brothers and sisters, despite their parents speaking only the Ukrainian language. Mykhailo commented that he and his siblings spoke English to one another at home 'just because we were used to it' from their regular attendance at the one-room school. This connection among peers to learn English language skills may be reflective of the study by Wong Fillmore (1976) where the researcher showed that in an examination of five children learning English "The [ESL] learners who were most successful initiated interactions with speakers of the target language and used whatever language they had acquired to maintain the conversation. They also counted for help on their friends who spoke the target language" (August, 1976, p.718).

Both Mykhailo and Hannu explained that their peers, on direction from the teacher, would help them learn academic skills within the classroom context as well. Mykhailo related that when he started attending school, he was aware of how many of the children spoke better English than he did, and that the teacher would rely on these older students to help teach English to the younger children in the class. Mykhailo commented that, on direction from the teacher, “if something was really important like that to get over to us, we would go over and sit with our brothers, older brothers or sister, they would be in the next row up and then they would help us out.” Hannu added that if he or the other younger students were having difficulty learning a word, then the teacher would pair up the struggling student with another student who understood that information. He explained that the teacher “would get somebody else, into partners, and you’d go out for recess and practice that...it wouldn’t matter if it was another relative, so long as the person was [older]...you had to sound the word out and she’d see that you had practiced some” after recess. These observations may support Strong’s (1983) study in which the author suggested “that peer tutoring, when English speakers have to explain in English something they know to an English speaker, may enhance language learning...[and that teachers must not] throw children together but that they create situations in which children will want and need to communicate with each other to achieve a common goal” (August, 1987, p.718).

In addition, Clara reported that she, as an English speaker of British heritage, developed close friendships with some of the girls of Ukrainian heritage who attended her one-room school. She explained that she and the Ukrainian girls bonded due to their mutual love of school academics and relayed that “I know that the girls I was friends with, who were Ukrainian girls, they were always very good in school.” Both she and Taina related how friendships with the other girls in class were very important, and Aili even stated that her primary interest when she

was young was “my friends, dances, that was school stuff.” She also explained how she always waited and walked to school with two other girls from the area, and that they would chat about a variety of issues both on the way to school and coming back from school. Hannu also reiterated the importance of peer connection, as he explained that he liked the school’s lending library because the boys would get recommendations about books from the girls, and that he would read the newspaper comics so that he could return to school each day and “go back and be one of the crowd...everybody talked about the comics section...[it was] a way to chat.” The peer relationships that existed among the students and helped lead to the participants’ greater involvement and achievement within the school context may support August’s (1987) statement that:

Correlation analyses indicated a significant relationship between English proficiency [in ESL speakers] and verbal interaction in English with peers...[and that] these findings suggest that peer tutoring may be an effective means of encouraging interaction between [Mexican American] children acquiring English and their fluent English-speaking peers (p.717)

This close connection among students, especially by the ESL students to children of English-as-a first-language backgrounds, and their subsequent positive reaction to their years of learning within the one-room school, may support Paige et al.’s (1999) claim that “contact with people from the target culture has a positive influence and improves attitudes under some circumstances.” Porebski and McInnis (1988) further argued that increased contact with native speakers leads to ‘positive attitudes’ which were defined as the willingness of learners to cultivate friendships with speakers of the target culture.

Provincial influence in the formal curriculum

The participants demonstrated in their responses that Ryerson’s education agenda was followed closely in the one-room schools in the Thunder Bay township area. Reflective of the

literature, all five participants noted that textbook-based learning was the primary educational teaching method used by teachers in the one-room school. All of the participants also described how British history dominated their history curriculum. Taina explained that she learned a majority of British history, and that it was “always about the explorers...we learned about the monarchy, and that they were part of us.” Hannu stated that he learned about “mostly...British history...about the kings and the queens, and what we owed, what we as Canadians owed to the British, why the monarchy was like our head and everybody knew Canada wasn’t independent.” Many of the participants stated that they accepted the British dominated curriculum without question and that from their classroom instruction and appearance they related Canadian society as an extension of British society. Taina explained that in her opinion Canada was just another country owned by Britain and stated “I think the Canadian flag was the Union Jack in those days...the Maple Leaf came after.” Only Hannu questioned this infusion of a British-laden curriculum into his schooling, and stated that:

you got older [and] you started to realize, y’know, what the Empire Day was, y’know, England and Canada being partner one over the other, and you’d start to ask a lot of questions, and she’d [the teacher] try to explain y’know...it seemed to be for a long time we had a hard time to understand that we had our own country and yet our government could not pass laws unless they were approved by England, y’know, we’d ask why should it, it bothered a lot of students as they got older.

He further pointed out that his impression was that the teachers who celebrated this day at school gave the perception of being proud of the connection between Canada and Britain, and though he appreciated the connection, he felt Canada should be seen as a more independent country. The participants also found the inclusion of “God Save the King’ and ‘The Lord’s Prayer’ acceptable parts of their everyday curriculum, and noted that, to this day, four of them can still recite parts of ‘God Save the King’ and ‘The Lord’s Prayer.’ When probed further, none of the participants

questioned the inclusion of the British statement and Christian prayer into their curriculum.

Taina simply stated “It was done, we were used to it.” This is important to note, as Norton (1997) described that:

Duff and Uchida demonstrate convincingly that language and culture are, to some extent, inseparable. Culture relates to not only the cultural content of the courses language educators teach but also the subtle practices that are characteristic of their teaching: the way they arrange seating in their classrooms, the questions they ask, the stories they tell, the exercises they set (p.425)

From the study, three of the participants recalled being instructed in a Bible class, though only one of the participants, Aili, recalled the class taking place at regular intervals throughout the school term, and this only took place after she had progressed over halfway through her overall school attendance. Aili explained that a lady from G- Hall came to recite Bible stories to the class once a month during school hours and Clara recalled religious instruction within the one-room school context, but pointed out that it took place after regular school hours and that it was a voluntary activity that not all of her classmates attended. She explained that not all of the students from her class came back in the evening to take part in these classes, and that the children who attended were “probably whoever was closest to the school, I guess, because some of the kids lived quite a ways off” and it would have been too far for them to journey in the evening. Both Aili, of Lutheran-Christian faith, and Clara, of general Christian faith, responded favourably when probed as to whether or not they appreciated the religious instruction they received. Clara adamantly stated that she loved the Bible classes for their beautiful, novel imagery. She stated that the missionary Miss M- had a felt-board and “she had all these beautiful pictures from the Bible that were cut out. That was very neat because we didn’t have those kinds of things.” Like Clara, Taina pointed out that her school’s missionary would visit only once or twice a year as the Townships were too far apart for her to regularly attend to. As well, Taina

also remembered that the missionary spoke both Finnish and English, which she pointed out helped both her and the other non-English speaking students understand the Bible stories more clearly. It is interesting to note that in contrast to the formal Provincial Ministry literature of the time, religious instruction at the one-room schools in the early 20th century was not at all implemented in a consistent manner, and that despite Ministry encouragement for English only instruction in all subjects, a bilingual teacher made the lessons of Christianity more accessible for at least one school of students.

Local culture

In the Provincial Education Ministry documents at the turn of the century, there is no mention of local culture being constructed into the one-room school curriculum and, from the participants' responses, there is no direct connection found between the formal class curriculum and any local cultural information presented. None of the participants remembered their teachers instructing them about any of the local Thunder Bay area culture or on any of their parents' former country's cultures in the formal academic curriculum. Interestingly, the participants did not define their parents' cultures as an important part of their learning about Canadian culture in the classroom context, and explained that whatever they were taught in the curriculum was, as Aili stated "enough...good enough for me." Despite their compliance with the state mandated curriculum, some of the participants noted ways that the local environment and culture infiltrated the state education.

Ruptures in the mandated, state-only curriculum were found when the participants commented on science class, religious instruction and the various informal school activities they attended. Many of the participants explained how the local environment penetrated the formal curriculum during the field trips they participated in during school hours. The participants

related how their respective teachers would often take their classes outside of the school into the woods surrounding the schoolyard for science-related field trips. Mykailho stated that “In certain grades, the older grades, we would go outside and through the bushes and lawns and would talk” and find out some information about the local environment for science class. Hannu recalled going on field trips where “maybe two in the spring and two in the fall where we’d have to go out and she’d take us...and we’d learn about all the different trees and the brush, the red willow and the green willow...flora and fauna...and trees, between balsam and spruce, pine.”

As well, both Taina and Hannu remembered that even though it was against school regulations, the students’ home language was occasionally incorporated into the formal curriculum. Taina explained that the missionary who visited their school spoke both Finnish and English to the students and Hannu also stated that one of his teachers at his school spoke both Finn and English and would often talk to the class in a mixture of Finn and English.

In addition, three of the participants did not remember any Dominion Day celebrations being held at their schools, and Hannu, whose school occasionally celebrated this event, found it “unenjoyable” as he got older due to the fact that he disliked the imperial connection between Canada and Britain, and wished Canada could be more independent. Therefore, it is interesting to note that in contrast to the formal Provincial Ministry literature of the time, local culture did infiltrate the curriculum. From the participants’ responses, it was also shown that religious instruction at the one-room schools in the early 20th century was not at all implemented in a consistent manner, and that despite Ministry encouragement for English only instruction in all subjects, a bilingual teacher made the lessons of Christianity more accessible for at least two students. However, it is also important to state that none of the participants found this lack of local culture in their classroom problematic and all agreed that the curriculum they were taught

was sufficient for their later life successes. It would be interesting to explore how much of the local culture is included in school curriculum today and what students' opinions are regarding its existence or lack of existence in their education curriculum.

English language acquisition and promotion

Similar to the findings of Gunnell (2001), participants responded that English was the sole language of instruction at the schools and students were required to speak only in English at all times. This exclusion of all other languages led to the participants' privileging the English language above all other forms of communication. Clara, as an English-only speaker, pointed out how she had many Ukrainian friends at her school, but that she was never able to learn any Ukrainian words from them because the girls could only speak English to her at school and would only speak English to her outside of school. Clara reported that even when she occasionally visited with the Ukrainian girls outside of the school context, the girls would only speak English to her and, if their parents did not speak the English language, communicate in Ukrainian with their adults. She noted that the girls appeared eager to speak English, and often shy and "embarrassed" to speak the Ukrainian language around her.

Taina also related how she remembered her teacher working hard to get her and the other students to pronounce English words in what the teacher referred to as "a proper accent." Taina explained that "she [the teacher] wanted to get rid of the Finnish accent. She didn't allow us to speak Finnish at school, so that we would leave or forget this Finnish accent that we had, and learn to speak English properly." When probed further, Taina explained that the teacher primarily focused on the students' articulation of the English words, and that the teacher would correct students on their mispronounced words while they were reading aloud in class. She stated that though "some of the other schools allowed it [the children to speak Finn]...their

accent stayed, not good...I don't think we lost all of ours but it made a difference." Taina continued that "Once we grew up and went to the dances [in grade eight], you'd always know because these kids came from the other townships, they had a thicker accent." These comments by Taina show how she privileged the English language as better than the Finnish language and privileged her ability to lose her accent, as she stated "their accent stayed, not good...I don't think we lost all of ours but it made a difference." Taina demonstrated her cultural awareness of dialectical difference, continuing with the sentiment that she was pleased that her teachers did not allow her and the other students to speak their home language at school and retain their accents. She stated "We didn't mind it at all, we were quite happy because that was helping us with our English, and we were in Canada and that was what we were supposed to do." This observation by Taina may lend credibility to Paige et al.'s (1999) claim that language plays a dual role as a medium for as well as a creator of culture.

Taina also related the story of how as she and the other students began to excel at the English language, they also began to recognize and classify other dialects, which is something they had not done before. She explained that the students figured out that it was one of the Swedish immigrants who was playing Santa at their annual Christmas concert due to their recognition of the man's accent. She explained that "we got a little bit older and we thought, wondering, how come he's got that Swedish accent, and that's got to be Mr. Swenson." Like Taina, Mykhailo, who primarily spoke Ukrainian before his attendance at the one-room school, also pointed out that that he was content to give up speaking Ukrainian in class because learning the English language was very important to him. He explained that he saw the act of learning English and losing his Ukrainian accent as vehicles which allowed him to interact more often with the other students and become more comfortable and successful in the classroom

environment. It is interesting to note that Taina and Mykhailo, through their conversations, appeared to acknowledge that culturally, politically and economically, the English language was the highest status language at this time. This acknowledgement by the participants may be related to their rapid acquisition of the English language, as August (1987) related in her article “that marked differences in the political and economic power of language groups tend to interfere with language acquisition.”

These observations by Taina and Mykhailo in the classroom context may also support Lippi-Green’s (1994) claim that “For most people, accent...is the first diagnostic for identification of geographic or social outsiders... [and that] Much of linguistic variation is structured around social identity” (p.165). Lippi-Green continued that:

standard language ideology is a basic construct of our elementary and secondary schools' approach to language and philosophy of education. The schools provide the first exposure to Standard Language ideology, but the indoctrination process does not stop when the students are dismissed. Language Trait-Focused discrimination stems primarily from the acceptance of a standard language ideology (a term coined by Milroy & Milroy 1985). The definition used here is: a bias toward an abstracted, idealized, homogeneous spoken language which is imposed from above, and which takes as its model the written language. The most salient feature is the goal of suppression of variation of all kinds” (p.166-167).

The three ESL participants noted that by the end of their first school year they only spoke English with their fellow students both within and outside of the classroom context. All of these participants related that their privileging of the English language to the exclusion of their respective home languages extended to peer conversations outside on the playground, on the walks home from school, or when they visited one another’s houses. Hannu explained that even though he and a majority of his friends only spoke Finn when they were at home, by the end of their first year of school, these same boys and girls would only speak English to one another when they were in class, outside at recess, walking home after school or playing with one

another after school. Taina explained that this also happened to her and that “we [she and her Finn-speaking school peers] spoke English...It just became a habit.” Mykhailo related that once he began attending school, he noticed that at home “I just spoke my mom and dad’s language” but that with his brothers and sisters who attended the one-room school, “I spoke English...both in class and at [home].” Hannu also explained that not only did he enjoy speaking English at school, but that he worked at convincing his Finnish speaking parents to adopt the English language at home. He stated:

I think when I was about three, four, from grade four up, I always done translations for them [his parents], when they would get letters in English and I would translate them into Finnish to him [his father], so that he’d know who the letter was from, and I’d always say that you gotta learn to read. I was after my mother and my dad both to read because I could see that they couldn’t go backwards, y’know, you needed to go forward.”

As well, Taina explained that when her mother stopped attending an English language night-course offered by Taina’s teacher to the immigrant parents in the Township, due to the fact that her mother was afraid to leave her children alone in a cabin with a woodstove, Taina began teaching her mother English. Taina explained that even as a child she believed learning English was a key to being a successful member of society, and that she taught her mother English by “us[ing] the school primer and I started teaching her to read from there...she knew lots already...but she didn’t talk very much, she always felt uncomfortable...but she talked some.” Similar to Taina’s story, Hannu explained that after some encouragement by him, his mother “was always trying to learn” the English language and that his mother would often ask him to tell her what a Finnish word meant in English and that “it bothered her [not to know English], so she’d ask and I’d try to interpretate to her, to her what it is y’know, and she’d try and say it and then she’d come back next day and say ‘What did you say again.’” This naturalizing of the English language by the participants into various aspects of their lives is reflective of the

literature, as McLaughlin (1987) stated that when learnt knowledge is automatized through practice, it becomes acquired and can then be used in natural communication.

Informal curriculum

A number of sources of informal curriculum were described by the participants. They included the Christmas concert, fall fairs and Empire Day. Reflective of the literature of Clement (1987), S. Johnson (1999) and Petrone (2007), all of the participants recall their respective schools celebrating the annual Christmas concert. Four of the participants also related how this was their favourite time of year, though Clara stated she feared the concerts as it would be a time when she would have to be onstage and attempt to overcome her shyness. All of the participants explained that approximately one month of class time prior to Christmas would be taken up by rehearsing songs and plays for the concert and that at least half of every school day would be spent working on a variety of aspects of the concert presentation, such as making decorations, acting and singing. All of the participants recalled participating in the school plays because it was a requirement of their school work. Mykhailo stated that ““we had plays, and I always was in one...I enjoyed it but also...the true reason for that [his participation] was because it went on your report card after.” Interestingly, two of the participants stated that their teacher and peers created accommodations to make the play more relatable to the local ESL families who would attend the final production. A probing question elucidated the fact that Hannu was aware, as a child, of his parents’ lack of English language comprehension, and that the Christmas concert play needed to have easily understood actions and not a lot of English-language dialogue. Taina also explained how the students renamed and altered a play for the concert so that it could be relatable to the families who would be in attendance on the actual night of the concert. Taina, like Aili and Mykhailo, pointed out that she believed the concert created a sense of community

among the people present, and that in her township there was a lot of visiting among the families that occurred after the concert was finished.

Only two of the participants remembered any type of celebration being carried out at their respective schools to commemorate Dominion/Empire Day. Clara recalled that Empire Day took place at her school on May 24th each year, and that the students would put displays up on the walls, though she couldn't remember any specific decorations. Hannu was the only participant who clearly remembered any specific Empire Day celebrations. He pointed out that this holiday was not acknowledged each year, and that recognition for this event within the classroom solely depended on which teacher he had that year at school. He further pointed out that his impression was that the teachers who celebrated this day at school gave the perception of being proud of the connection between Canada and Britain, and though he appreciated the connection, he felt Canada should be seen as a more independent country.

Therefore, there were several ways, such as through the Christmas concert, fall fairs, and Empire Day celebrations, that the informal curriculum functioned to educate and influence students on both national ideals and local customs.

Classroom discipline

Reflective of the literature of Petrone (2007) and Clement (1987), all of the participants reported that their respective classrooms were set up in rows according to grade level, in a manner that Clara stated “encouraged discipline and structure.” The participants’ responses also reflected the image of the teacher as the undisputed authority in the classroom, as Clara explained that in regard to respecting the teacher in class “She [the teacher] ruled!” and that “whatever the teacher told you to do, you did.” Taina explained that in regard to respecting her teachers, “I don’t think you thought about not respecting them, that was your teacher...and you

respected her.” All of the participants stated that they respected their teachers and that even when they were punished, they agreed with the appropriateness of their teachers’ actions. The majority of the participants also stated that their adherence was based upon their parents’ directives to respect the teacher and know that any punishment meted out was, as Mykhailo stated, “for the student’s own good.” All of the participants stated that they marched into their classroom at the start of each day and on a variety of other occasions, which is reflective of Cochrane (1981) who commented that “When the teacher rang the bell the children lined up...Then they marched in...and they kept on marching, all around the schoolroom until each child had stopped beside his own seat” (p.56). Mykhailo explained that even when he and his fellow students attended the school-run rural country fairs, the students in his class would “march in [to the fairgrounds], like we’d be in two rows and our rows were pretty long ‘cause there were quite a few kids.”

When probed further, the participants remarked that they found no problems with marching at certain times, and that marching, as Clara stated “made you feel like part of the group.” All of the participants provided similar responses as to the importance of feeling like part of the classroom group, and remarked that the most effective measures for punishment were those actions that took them away from the classroom group setting.

Non-corporal disciplinary measures

In regard to non-corporal, disciplinary measures that were used in the one-room school classrooms at this time, the participants provided a variety of responses to reflect ways in which discipline was enforced within the one-room school setting. This is reflective of the literature, as Gleason (2001) reported that “The overt disciplinary regimes that children endured in school varied across classrooms...contexts, and circumstances...[w]ith girls, a simple reproof was

usually sufficient...With others...peer pressure, the shame and teasing that accompanied being stood in a corner, or a brief sentence to hard labour at the blackboard...” (p.200). This range of response in regard to disciplinary measures utilized by their teachers in the one-room schools, both in Gleason’s study and in this current study, may be due to the vague Education Ministry references of the time in regard to discipline in the classroom which stated only that a good teacher “should practice such discipline in his school as would be exercised by a judicious parent in his family” (Houston & Prentice, 1988, p.193). In regard to punishment, Aili explained that “there used to be a platform in the front and they’d have to go and sit and face the other children, sit on the platform,” Clara explained offending students stayed in at recess and Taina stated that students would have to stay in at recess and “stay in your seat and do some extra work.” Mykhailo explained the types of punishment that the teacher gave in out his classroom were things such as “you’d have to go back to, what they called a cloakroom, where they had a fridge. And you’d have to spend time in there by yourself,” while Hannu explained that one of his teachers would “go around and if you were sitting at the back of the desks and she’d seen you, doing something, like talking, you’d get a ruler on the head... bonk, just to wake you up.” Hannu laughed at this recollection and stated that whoever was ‘bonked’ deserved it, and that he bore no ill will towards his teachers for these actions. The participants all added that though these reprimands were often quite unpleasant to endure, they were always preferred over corporal punishment. They also stated that the punishments were not given often, and Aili pointed out that perhaps due to the infrequency, most of the students did not object to the teacher’s actions.

Corporal punishment

All of the participants in the study related a familiarity with the term and physical appearance of the leather strap that was used to instill corporal punishment on the students of the one-room school classrooms at the turn of the 20th century. This is reflective of the literature, as Petrone (2007) stated that in the early 1900s “Physical punishment was the norm in Canadian schools” (p.35) and Theobald (1993) explained that in the North-American Midwest at the turn of the 20th century “Classroom management in rural schools typically revolved around the proper use of what came to be known as the ‘switch.’” (p.123). In addition to the participants demonstrating an understanding and familiarity of what the strap was, the participants also related that their teachers rarely used corporal punishment in their respective classrooms and that it was often just the threat of this punishment that was used by teachers. This is consistent with studies, such as Gleason’s (2001), which reported that “In the memories of others attending school in the late 1920s, the strap was powerful because it rarely appeared from the teacher’s drawer” (p.196-197). Clara related that in her classroom, the strap would be used by the teacher on a student “every so often” and that when she saw the strap “I was terrified.” Taina stated that the strap was used infrequently in her classroom by the teacher and it was kept in the teacher’s desk drawer and Hannu explained that at his school the strap was rarely used but that “one teacher, he, both of the teachers kept the strap in the desk, and one teacher, he hung it on a table...on the outside of the desk, would hang it on there in the morning, just to let you know that it was there, you know?”

Similar to Gleason’s study where the author found that the threat of bodily punishment was “accepted positively” (p.197) by the students she interviewed, the participants in this study did not feel that the corporal punishment from the teacher was unreasonable or excessive, and

that it was meted out in a timely and appropriate manner for the misbehaviour presented by the offending student. Like Gleason, who stated that “The restraint demonstrated by Miss Dempson [Collins’ teacher] likely accounted for Robert Collin’s attitudes regarding the appropriateness of the strap as an integral part of schooling” (p.197), the participants in this study also related that they felt the strap was used in a limited and appropriate manner by their teachers. Mykhailo pointed out that even after personally receiving corporal punishment and other types of discipline from his teachers, he still respected them and today believes that all his teachers were “good to us...I have no regrets, they were all nice.”

In Gleason’s (2001) study, her participant, Collins, reported that his teacher “used the threat of the strap primarily to control older and larger boys who were ‘restlessly attending school by parental edict until they reached dropout age’” (p.197). Like Collins, Clara and the majority of the other participants in this study, specified that it was only the older boys who received the strap, and not the younger children or any girls. For example, Taina explained that the teacher would rarely use the strap and “mostly [on] the boys” and that students in her classroom only received the strap for talking back to the teacher “or if they didn’t do their work, and they were just sitting there, not doing their work.” Taina related a specific incidence where a boy in her class, “a big fellow in grade eight” would “pick up his rubber boot, his foot and all” and put it on his paper if he made a mistake and “try to rub it out.” Taina pointed out that in her opinion he was only doing this to amuse the other students, and was not deliberately trying to be cruel to the teacher, but that he received at least three hits with the strap which Taina believed was “probably” an appropriate punishment for his actions. Hannu related memories of his fellow students receiving the strap, and explained that when a student got the strap “the other students would see...he’d [the student] would have to put his hand on the table and get whacked, boom!”

Hannu continued that he received the strap only once from his teacher and that “I must have done something she didn’t like, y’know, I had to go up to the front y’know, it hurt my wrist.” He continued that “I think I was in grade five, four or five, I’d been for a long time in the school system.” None of the participants recalled any student ever showing a visible emotion like crying or screaming while getting the strap, though Hannu stated that when someone got the strap “you were kind of ashamed...because everybody would look at you.”

Overall, the participants in this study reported that they received a variety of disciplinary measures from their teachers at their respective one-room schools and that corporal punishment by the teacher using a strap on a student was a rare and justified occurrence in the classroom.

Conflicts between home and school

Rural environment

Harrison and Bucher’s (1995) study demonstrated how the issue of social isolation for rural children is often made worse by the geographical isolation of some of their dwellings. The researchers stated that “Children who live at some distance from a school, especially in rural areas, tend to become detached from their schools...Pupil isolation results from pupils having relatively few contemporaries with whom to socialize” (p.387). This isolation was seen in the study through the conflicts noted by the participants regarding their home and school lifestyles.

The participants discussed the impact of the rural environment on their school attendance. Both Aili and Mykhailo stated that they enjoyed farm life but that the distances between home and school often limited their attendance in school as well as limited their interactions with peers. Aili explained that she missed a year of school when she was quite young on account of a cold winter and the distance she had to travel to school, and that this frustrated her as she fell behind in her schoolwork but “what could she do?” Aili further elaborated on how her two

brothers helped out her father on the family farm and that her one brother missed a year of schooling on account of working for their father. Mykhailo also explained how he and his brothers would all be absent from school for one to three days in the fall to help their father harvest their farm's produce. He stated that he was grateful that his teacher understood about this issue and would not penalize the students for their absence. He believed his teacher's compassion was influenced by the fact that there were approximately three other students who attended his school and who also helped their fathers with the farm crops at that time.

Taina explained that her own father made sure that the harvesting was done only on the weekends. Similarly, Hannu stated that the township family farms where he lived would do their harvesting on the weekends so that their children never missed a day of school. Both Taina and Hannu attributed their parents' choice of harvesting time to the fact that their parents greatly valued formal education and made school a priority for the children.

The participants also pointed out that the long distances between the one-room school and the neighbourhood houses made it so that they did not associate with many of their classmates outside of the school context and that it was only the parents of the students whom attended the school who watched the yearly Christmas concerts. They also explained that they never watched the other Township schools' Christmas concerts due to the far distances between Townships. Each of the five participants noted that they did not celebrate holidays within the school environment, and Aili made it clear that the reason she believed the students did not celebrate more holiday traditions within the school environment was mainly due to the long distances between houses in the rural townships. The issue of distance from the students' houses to their respective schools was also a determinant when the students related how they did not have any formal sports teams set up at their respective schools. The participants stated that for

many students it was over 2 ½ to 3 miles to walk to school every day, and that in the winter, despite having skis to use for the journey, it was often dark when the students returned home from school. Aili responded that she was quite excited when she and her family moved into town and had the opportunity to visit friends after school and join after-school activities.

English language learning and family relationships

Within the study, the participants explained how the act of learning English as the sole mode of communication within the one-room school had both positive and negative impacts in their relationships with their immediate family members. Hannu related that when he began to speak more English than Finn after his first year at school, this new knowledge led to a conflict with his mother. He explained that in the summer of his seventh year:

my mother said ‘You are starting to forget your Finn, because [though] I talked with my parents, outside of that it was always English...I think it was in the summer, y’know, in the summertime we would go to the [English-speaking] neighbours and the neighbours would come to our place, especially in the early spring,, they would come and help us plant, so it was all English for the whole weekend, and I guess my mom and dad felt, they didn’t want us to lose Finn.

Hannu elaborated that he reassured his mother that he would not forget his Finnish language but that he needed to know English for school, and she appeared to be appeased and never brought up the subject with him in the future. Hannu further elaborated that his mother’s acquiescence pleased him, as he believed his acquisition of the English language would be “important to my overall [educational] success in Canada.” In contrast, Hannu’s father refused to learn the English language, despite being in charge of a family poultry business that dealt with many English speaking customers. Hannu stated that his father’s refusal to learn English meant that his father relied on Hannu to communicate with potential buyers and explain the deals that they could have for buying a certain amount of eggs and chickens. He elaborated that he did not mind assisting his father but that he believed his father’s life would have been easier if he’d learned to speak

English so that he wouldn't have had to rely on anyone to succeed. Hannu further explained that learning English was a way to make a person self-sufficient, and that independence was very important to him as he believed it led to greater overall life success.

Aili explained that as she progressed from grade to grade, she also encountered this widening division between adult and youth language dialogue. She stated that even though the adults in her community knew some English from their later years of attendance at the one-room schools when they had first immigrated to Canada as children, "mainly the children, we spoke English, and the elders, Finn." Aili stated that she didn't think about this transition as a problem because she was comfortable moving between both languages from a young age. Taina also recalled that this division was present in her Township, as she and her friends spoke English together at school and when visiting each other, while these same students spoke primarily Finn to their parents and older relatives. She explained that this division was normalized to her because almost all of her school friends encountered and dealt with the same issue. Tomkins (1977) pointed out that this tension between home and school language often occurs within immigrant populations due to the fact that "language is at the same time the most important and the great divisive factor" (p.7). This friction is also reflected in contemporary studies which examine the social and educational distances between students' home and school contexts. According to Cummins (2001) there is a wide gap between students and their families and the schools they attend and that "the major reason previous attempts at educational reform have been unsuccessful is that the relationships between teachers and students and between schools and communities have remained essentially unchanged" (p. 1). Cummins argued that there needs to be a closer relationship between teachers and the communities they serve, much like Schecter

(2003) who advocated that curricular approaches need to include forging links with homes and networks that foster students' growth.

Canadian citizenship

Social assimilation

The majority of the participants stated that learning the English language and overall school successes were the two determiners which allowed them to feel most secure in peer, school and community contexts. This is reflective of the literature, as in S. Johnson's (1999) memoir the author reiterated the connection early 20th century Canadian educational society put on acquiring the English language and then becoming a 'real' Canadian citizen and stated "Once you could speak English after 2 years in Canada you felt 'Canadianized' though parents still often spoke Dutch (p.46). In this study, Taina related that when she started to speak English fluently at school she felt more comfortable in the school community. She explained that as she learned more of the English language, she felt like she was better fitting into the Canadian social fabric and that "you just felt like you were home...more comfortable...oh yes, yes, it [learning English] was important, that's why I used to read...a lot." Hannu also explained how reading the newspaper comics not only helped improve his English language skills, which made him feel more confident at school and in the larger Township community, but that reading and understanding the comics was also a way to fit in with the other students in his class. He stated that "I went to school and everybody'd talk about the comics section. It was the first thing once you learned to read, is read the comics so that you could go back and be one of the crowd." This observation of magazines as an educational and social assimilation tool for students is brought up by Schween (1997) who also related that at her home she read cowboy serial stories in a magazine called *The Free Press Prairie Farmer*.

In addition to the participants attributing successful school and Township culture integration from attaining fluency in the English language, Aili related that she felt her overall success at school made her more of a 'true' Canadian citizen. She stated that she felt confident in her English language skill and her ability to fit into the school social fabric when she passed exams at the end of each year. She explained that a personal marker of her overall success in being a part of her Township community was her ability to pass her annual June school examinations and noted "Yah, passing exams, yah, definitely helped me [fit in]." Mykhailo surmised that he felt that "going to school, mixing with all the others, it was very important" and that those times, and learning the English language at school, helped him become comfortable within the school and Township communities' environments. Hannu also explained that he began to feel comfortable at school "when I got into grade seven" and that this feeling was influenced mainly by the fact that he was doing better than the other students in reading and math and that the teacher would allow him to work ahead in his math book. He stated "I'll tell you, the teacher would say if you want to go ahead and read, y'know, chapters ahead, I'd be ten, fifteen pages ahead, yah." Hannu continued that he believes this confidence he felt in these situations helped him to succeed at school. These examples may be illustrative of integrative motivating factors, which are defined by Gardner and Lambert (1972), as one of two major motivational orientations for second language learning. Integrative motivation, which may be illustrated by the participants desire to fit into the school cultural context, is defined as when the learner wants to acquire the second language in order to meet with, communicate with, and perhaps become like the native speakers of the second language with whom the learner wishes to identify. Therefore, it is interesting to note how the ESL participants' comprehension and

practice of the English language was, at times, both a divisive and a unifying force within their family environments.

Views on Canadian society

In regard to citizenship affiliation, four of the participants revealed that they defined themselves as Canadian citizens throughout their rural one-room schooling experience, and that this definition was important to them. All of the participants related British values and ideas with Canadian citizenry, and stated that at the time of their schooling, they did not associate multiculturalism with Canadian society. Interestingly, Hannu is the only interviewee who makes a clear differentiation between the concepts of British and Canadian citizenship, and related that he, and his classmates, found it problematic that Britain and Canada were so closely aligned in his school's definition of country and citizenship. Interestingly, all of the participants, both ESL and non-ESL speakers, also identified their primary language of comprehension and communication, when they were children, as the English language, and all the participants stated that the English language is what they believe to be the official language of Canada and Canadians. These statements by the participants may be reflective of Isajiw's study (1990) that stated that language instructs members of an ethnic group about their cultural heritage and that the process of language learning is "the simplest practical way of imprinting ethnic identity" (p.81). As the participants began learning English at the young age of six years old, it soon became their dominant mode of instruction and communication with their instructor and their peer groups, and may be seen as perhaps becoming a part of their overall "ethnic identity."

When asked about citizenship affiliation, first generation Canadian-citizen Mykhailo, like Aili and Hannu, explained that he felt he was situated fully as a Canadian citizen from birth, regardless of how his home and school cultures differed. Clara also responded in a similar

fashion, and all four participants used words like ‘proud’ and ‘happy’ when asked how they felt to be Canadian citizens. In contrast, as a landed immigrant, Taina related that she only felt she was a Canadian citizen upon receiving her Canadian citizenship shortly after the birth of her second child. The participants also stated that they did not have any great personal interest, as children, in learning about their parents’ home culture. Aili remembered her parents and aunts and uncles talking about Finland when she was growing up but related that, at that time, she “wasn’t interested” in hearing about any of her Finnish heritage and Hannu explained that his disinterest in learning about his parents’ home country may be due to the fact that his parents “didn’t talk that much about Finland, unless you asked. I don’t know even when we went to the neighbours, they would talk to the neighbours, y’know, but it would be very short.” Mykhailo also stated that his family did not talk about any of their home traditions with him unless he asked them about something specifically having to do with the Ukraine, and Clara also stated that her parents focused primarily on local Township and city events.

In addition, Mykhailo and Hannu also explained their beliefs that language is a complicated, intricate form of communication that relates to a person’s past and current citizenship. Mykhailo stated that he believed that it is important for people to maintain the ability to communicate in whatever languages they are taught as children. Mykhailo explained that now that he is an aged adult, he feels that he has lost most of his ability to communicate in Ukrainian, and that this is mainly due to his parents passing away, as they were the primary people he spoke the Ukrainian language with. He stated “I wouldn’t say I’d lost it, but as we speak about it now, I have lost quite a bit of it ...[it happened] when the parents passed away...[I only] speak it now with my sister [who] lives next door, and she’ll say something to me in Ukrainian.” This may be reflective of DeVries (1990) claim that “language retention is a

necessary condition for maintaining ethnic identity and survival, and mother tongue loss may imply a loss of associated identity” (p.235). In addition, Hannu related a story from his youth that allowed him to show how he understood the challenges and barriers involved in language, and how he agreed with the argument of only having the English language taught in Provincial schools. He explained:

I took French in high-school, I was pretty good at French at one time, and I started to realize, y’know, to keep your language, and that any one language is so much better because you are talking to so many people. And when I really got [it was] when I learnt the French and went up to Armstrong to work, people came from Quebec, Frenchmen to work there in the wintertime, they’d come there in October and they’d stay ‘til the end of April, and we’d have some [Frenchmen] come from Manitoba, and the two groups would not understand each other, and I couldn’t believe this and then when I went to talk to them, they’d say ‘Are you trying to give us the dictionary word of that?’ so I kinda lost my speaking French, because I was using the top French y’know, and they had this slur, but neither side could understand each other, or me!

These comments from the two ESL male participants are consistent with Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine and Broadnax (1994) study which found that the creation of ethnicity varies in accordance with life experiences and current situations.

In conclusion, the ability of the participants to incorporate their home and school identities into a collective Canadian identity may be reflective of Wang’s (2006) study in which the author reported on the identity formation of foreign born and Canadian born Chinese students and found “that in their search for new or modified identities, both foreign born and Canadian-born Chinese students seek a balance between their Chinese cultural heritage and mainstream Canadian culture” (p.61). As well, the participants’ responses which detail how they incorporated their home and school culture into what they described as a Canadian citizenship, may be reflective of Hamers and Blanc’s (1989) study that found bicultural children do not develop two separate cultural identities but integrate both of their cultures into one unique

identity. This point may be strengthened by the fact that in this study the majority of the participants could not think of any moments that defined them as Canadian, as they all stated that that was just an unconscious part of who they were and still are today.

CHAPTER SIX

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of students who attended one-room schools in the rural Thunder Bay township area of Northern Ontario in the early 20th century. The study was framed by the following eight research questions:

1. Where did the participants' families emigrate from to come to Canada and where did they settle in the Thunder Bay area?
2. What were the participants' language fluencies upon attendance at the one-room schools and what were their primary motives for attending the one-room school?
3. What was the formal, academic curriculum that was provided to the students of the one-room school?
4. How was the English language taught and promoted within the one-room schools?
5. What was the informal, education curriculum that was provided to the students of the one-room schools?
6. What were the disciplinary measures that were enforced within the one-room schools?
7. What conflicts did the participants' experience during transitions between the rural and school settings?
8. How did the one-room schools influence the ways in which the participants came to define the concept of Canadian citizenship?

In the study, a life history analysis was used to investigate participants' experiences as students who attended rural, one-room Thunder Bay area Township schools at the turn of the 20th century. Through tape-recorded interviews, the five participants described their family history,

commented on a variety of early education issues that existed at their respective one-room schools, and related their opinions regarding early Canadian citizenship concerns.

The findings of this study were discussed in relation to previous educational research in the literature. The implications for educational curriculum practices, student motivation and further research were outlined. The following sections discuss the responses to the research questions, implications for further research, implications for practice and recommendations.

Responses to the Research Questions

Several themes were identified that helped to describe the lived experiences of one-room rural school students living in Thunder Bay area townships at the turn of the 20th century. These included students' motivation for school attendance, the influences of the formal and informal curriculum, English language acquisition, the influences of educational success and discipline within the schoolroom environment, and cultural integration and affiliation.

Analysis of the study demonstrated that:

Immigration factors for settlement

Immigrant families came to the Thunder Bay area for employment need and that despite a lack of formal or language- specific education and socio-economic success, were often key supports for encouraging and maintaining students' positive views of the educational environment and subsequent school affiliation (Avery, 1995; Buki, Ma, Strom and Strom, 2003)

Influences on participants' school attendance

The participants' school attendance was motivated by family acceptance and encouragement of education, as well as peer relationships and an interest to acculturate to mainstream British-Canadian society (Anderson and Morrison, 2003; Garcia and Hasson, 2004).

Elements of the formal curriculum

The formal school curriculum was composed of elements of British, Christian culture and a limited amount of local culture education. The formal curriculum included drills, recitation and a primarily textbook-based education (Schween, 1997; *Textbooks and School Libraries*, 2005).

English language learning acquisition

English language learning was taught and promoted at the one-room school through a variety of formal and informal activities (Gunnell, 2001). Parental encouragement of student second-language learning was important to students' English language acquisition, as was participants' interest in close peer connections within and outside of the one-room school environment (Paige, Jorstad, Siaya, Klein and Colby, 1999).

Elements of the informal curriculum

The informal curriculum of the one-room school encouraged a British-Canadian, Christian ideology, and allowed for limited local culture learning. The informal curriculum was valued by the participants and involved activities that both strengthened and distanced their familial connections (S. Johnson, 1999; Petrone, 2007).

Participants' experiences with school disciplinary measures

Participants accepted the disciplinary actions of their teachers based on family acceptance and teachers' reasonable use of both non-corporal and corporal punishment (Gleason, 2001). The participants also enjoyed a close, familial relationship with their classroom instructors (Theobald, 1993).

Conflicts between participants' home and school life

The participants related that the conflicts between home and school life often centered on language and culture learning differences. The participants also stated that their parents were

interested in acquiring the English language and placed value on formal education practices. The participants related that their parents accommodated the participants' educational needs above family employment endeavours (Harrison and Bucher, 1995; Schechter, 2003).

Participants' views on Canadian citizenship

The participants believed it was important to fit in with the 'Canadian ideal' presented in the one-room classroom. They also stated that Canadian citizenship, not immigrant heritage, was the dominant part of their personal ideology while they were part of the one-room school environment (Crocker, Luhtanen, Blaine and Broadnax, 1994; Devries, 1990).

Implications for Further Research

Results of this life-history study have implications for a variety of stakeholders, such as policymakers, classroom educators, students and their families and peers. The narratives from the participants reflected the fact that there were many benefits associated with students maintaining deeply rooted relationships with their family members. Related to this, participants' reflections in the study suggested that family acceptance of school culture and language was significant in students' ESL acquisition and general education knowledge. With respect to the diversity found within many students' home and school environments, it was also shown that difficulties were often apparent in parents' struggles to have their children maintain both home and school language upon attendance at school, and that often the language that was taught in the classroom was the end-result dominant form of communication for ESL speakers. The participants also expressed the view that their solely English-language interactions with their respective teachers and peers were useful for their successful English language acquisition.

The study also highlighted the importance of language acquisition and use among ESL students for cultural integration and formal academic school success. The participants related

how, in a variety of ways, they immersed themselves in a predominantly English culture, and that their learning experiences enabled them to become more familiar with the principally English culture of the school and helped them to adapt and fit into that context. They continued that they believed that English language proficiency had a strong impact on their success in school. This finding confirmed Mesch's (2003) argument that "how and why immigrants acquire language proficiency and use the local [national] language is an important issue in countries that receive large waves of migrations" (p.42).

As well, from the study it was surmised that disciplinary measures used within the school context were often useful in maintaining educators' authority among the student body if those measures were used in limited, clear and comprehensible ways that were both familiar to, and respected by, the students. The participants also related that they accepted their teachers' authority, which included non-corporal and corporal methods of punishment. According to the participants, this acceptance was influenced by parental approval of methods of school punishment, the limited use of corporal punishment, and the participants' often familial-like, close bond with their teachers.

Another implication that arose from the study was that the rural, local environment often functioned as an influential component of students' learning processes both within and outside of the classroom context. A majority of the participants commented on how local environment and culture was found within many aspects of the schoolroom's formal and informal curriculum processes. The participants also stated that though their families' rural lifestyles occasionally limited their school attendance, most families' prioritized school for the children over any other influences.

From the study it was clear that the participants appeared to be bound to a Christian, British-influenced definition of Canadian culture and citizenship, and that this definition was characterized, in part, in terms of the context of their language choice. All of the participants also indicated that they enhanced their own motivation to learn English because they came to realize that their acquisition and proficiency in English was a significant factor in the process of their adaptation to the predominantly English culture of Canada. They subsequently stated that a significant part of their comfort and ease in fitting into a framework of Canadian citizenship came from their competence in English-language culture. This finding strengthened the hypothesis of Lanca, Roese, Alksnis and Gardner (1994) who stated that “language choice can be seen as a major index of ethnic identity” (p.328).

Implications for Practice

An implication for practice that arose from the study would be that there were many benefits provided for students who were associated with peer assistance programs. From the study, it was shown that peer assistance was a useful and valid way for ESL students to receive educational assistance and support on a variety of issues both within and outside of the classroom context. The participants also stated how they highly valued peer relationships and often engaged in certain activities, such as English language acquisition, to ‘fit in’ with the mainstream school environment.

An additional inference found was that explicit and implicit cultural, religious and social citizenship agendas were historically communicated through educational policies and procedures within provincial, rural one-room schools. It would be helpful for current educational policymakers to examine the underlying historical foundation of curricular practice and examine

the ways that this foundation may still today have an impact on students of all ethnic and cultural backgrounds who are attending Provincial schools.

Finally, four of the participants stated that when they were children they defined themselves solely as Canadian citizens despite any influence from their parents' immigrant backgrounds. Only one of the participants questioned the dominance of British influences throughout the school curriculum, and all five participants stated that their cultural identities were Canadian and that their immigrant heritage was part of their families' past. In practice, it may be useful for educators to create and use programs of study for students which value a Canadian identity that acknowledges the dominant British-Christian ideologies found in the curriculum and which includes an understanding and appreciation of Canadian students' diverse immigration heritage.

Suggestions for Further Research

This life-history study provided an initial investigation into students' experiences attending the one-room schools in the Thunder Bay area at the start of the 20th century. Due to the qualitative nature of the research, it is not possible to generalize the findings to the population of rural one-room school students as a whole. It would be useful, however, to replicate the study in another rural setting to determine whether the participants' experiences during their one-room school attendance are shared by other students who attended one-room schools in this time period both in regional and national contexts.

As well, as the majority of the participants were first-generation Canadian citizens, it would be interesting to examine how second and third generation Canadian citizens viewed issues of Canadian national identity and citizenry.

In addition, it would also be useful to further examine immigrant parents' impact on their children's' education and ESL acquisition both historically and in present-day Canadian culture. Delgado-Gaitan (1991) stated in her study that "contemporary research has revealed the need for parent involvement to promote children's success in school...[and that] when parents do not participate in the schools, children face negative consequences" (p.20-23). As well, Goldenberg (1987) argued in his contemporary study that:

despite widely held views regarding incompatibilities between the school and the minority child's home, two very important areas of compatibility emerge from the research: first, parents, including minority parents, highly valued educational achievement; second, they believe it can only come through individuals' efforts and persistence...and Educators and researchers should explore these and other ways of involving minority parents (and, perhaps, majority-culture parents as well) in children's school achievement (p.175-176).

All of the participants, both ESL and non-ESL, explained how their parents helped them to succeed in often challenging circumstances, thus reinforcing the argument that this aspect of educational success for students needs to be more fully examined in additional studies.

The ability of the early 20th century student to create a space where both his or her traditional ethnic family language and culture and the English language and British-Canadian culture coexisted, and the complexities involved in this endeavour, has not been addressed in the literature and may be an interesting idea to look into for further research. Li (2003) cited the fact that "the ways in which ESL learners negotiate conflicting elements of their first culture and the English culture in the process of their English culture learning" (p.85) has been ignored by many researchers.

Further investigation of the way in which, both historically and in the present day, the rural environment and local Township culture created gaps within the provincially mandated curriculum needs to be addressed. According to researchers Tucker and Matthews (2001), in the

year 2000, much as it was nearly one hundred years ago, “The lived worlds of rural young people have yet to be systematically explored, deconstructed and problematized” (p.161). The researchers continued that “few studies have examined the contemporary experience of childhood in the countryside, and [even] though Philo (1992) drew attention to this neglected rural geography almost a decade ago, children continue to be ‘invisible’ in most rural studies” (p.161).

Finally, studies should be conducted which examine how closely the characterization of Canadian citizenship, both historically and in the present day, creates its definition in schools from a British-Christian based framework, and how this concept is privileged by the education elite, researchers, educators, and both immigrant and Canadian students. Lee and Hebert (2006) stated that after analyzing over 300 written responses of Canadian high-school youth, of immigrant and non-immigrant origins, to the question of “What does it mean for me to be/become a Canadian?” the participants related a greater sense of national identity than of ethnic and/or supranational belonging. Similar to in this study, youth of immigrant origins used a discourse of becoming, though unlike this study, the contemporary participants in Lee and Hebert’s study understood multiculturalism to recognize ethnic identities associated with Charter rights. In Evans (2006) study, the author also stated that there is a vast interest by the Canadian public in citizenship education but that it is an ill-defined, province-specific and class-specific entity. He further stated that there are many “concerns raised by researchers about a general lack of empirical research on citizenship education pedagogy...only a few national and international studies are available to provide guidance” (p.411-412). Interestingly, he also commented that he chose to undertake his study on citizenship education pedagogy in Canada and in Britain due to the fact that “Canada and England, with shared traditions and challenges, and a similar

educational focus on citizenship education...existing versions of citizenship education in both contexts were sufficiently similar to allow for an interesting and valid exploration of responses to common issues and it was anticipated that a comparative orientation would offer important insights” (p.412). He concluded that “attention needs to be given to a more deeply integrated conceptualization of citizenship education pedagogy if the goal is to nurture democratic citizenship in classrooms and school communities” (p.430).

Therefore, such research will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on rural students’ experiences within the one-room school context in the early 1900s in the Thunder Bay area and will illustrate the role of English culture learning in students’ acquisition of provincially-mandated educational curriculum at this time. It also will demonstrate the impact of family and peer groups on students’ learning abilities, and how the various aspects of the classroom environment helped to create a specific version of Canadian citizenship for students at the turn of the 20th century.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Cover Letter to Potential Participants

Jennifer Isotalo
33 S. Clarkson Ave, Apt. #80
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 4W7
[Date]

Dear _____,

I am writing to request your participation in a study which will investigate the experiences of children who attended one-room schools in the Thunder Bay area circa the early 1900s. The title of the study is: *A Qualitative Study on the Experiences of Students Attending Thunder Bay Area Township Rural, One-Room Schools in the early 20th century*. I am seeking volunteers who have attended one-room schools as potential participants for the study.

The intent of this research is twofold. First, it is being conducted to fulfill the requirements for the degree of Master of Education from Lakehead University. My thesis supervisor for this research is Dr. Hope-Arlene Fennell of Lakehead University. She may be contacted at 807-343-8354 or at hfennell@lakeheadu.ca. Second, the research will provide insight into student's own educational and social experiences in one room schools and how children of immigrant parents in the early 1900s were socialized and educated on Canadian citizenship principles as encouraged through government policy. Through your participation in this study you will help to answer these questions.

The information will be gathered through one in-depth tape recorded interview (1-2 hours long) and, if necessary, a short follow-up phone call will be made to clarify content from the interview. You will be provided with a general outline of the interview questions prior to the actual interview. All answers are acceptable; there are no wrong answers. You may also decline from answering some questions, for whatever reason. Interview questions will focus on family immigration to Canada, formal and informal curriculum within the one-room school setting, community creation, and citizenship integration. Interviews will be recorded, transcribed, and coded. You will be sent a copy of each transcript and will have the opportunity to clarify your responses.

All information you provide will remain confidential. At the conclusion of the study all audio-tapes and transcripts will be securely stored at Lakehead University for five years. However, the findings of this research will be made available to you at your request upon the completion of the project. A copy of the thesis will also be made available in the Lakehead University Library.

If you are interested in participating in this research or have any questions about my proposed study, please contact me at 807-768-1454 or by e-mail at jeisotal@lakeheadu.ca. This project has been reviewed by Lakehead University's Research Ethics Board and they may be contacted at (807) 343-8283. I look forward to your participation in this research endeavour.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Isotalo

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form to be Mailed to Prospective Participants Informed Consent Form

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this study, *A Qualitative Study on the Experiences of Students Attending Thunder Bay Area Rural, One-Room Schools in the early 20th century*. This form outlines the purposes of the study and provides a description of your involvement and rights as a participant.

The purposes of this study are:

1. To fulfill requirements for the degree of Master of Education from Lakehead University.
2. To gain insight into the educational and social experiences of students who attended one room schools circa the early 1900s.

Personal interviews will be used to compile data for this study. There will be one interview that will be approximately 1-2 hours in length. The interview will be audio-taped, transcribed and coded. You will be mailed a copy of your interview transcript so that you may review it for accuracy or to clarify or add information. The audio tapes will be used solely for this study. The tapes and written transcripts of their contents will be retained by my thesis supervisor at Lakehead University for a period of five years upon the completion of the study before being destroyed.

Your real name will not be used at any point of information collection, or in the written study. To ensure your anonymity, you (and any other person you refer to) will be given a pseudonym that will be used in all your transcripts and in the completed study. The name of your school will also be given a pseudonym.

There are no known risks and/or discomforts associated with this study. You will, however, be giving up some of your own time to participate. Benefits may include increased self-knowledge and the satisfaction of contributing to society through research.

Your participation in this research is voluntary. You may decline to answer certain questions, if you wish. You have the right to withdraw at any point in the study, for any reason, even after signing this form.

Upon completion of the study, the results of the research will be made available to you, if you so request. You may access a copy of the completed thesis in the Lakehead University Library.

You are encouraged to ask any questions at any time about the nature of the study and the methods I am using. I can be contacted at 807-768-1454 after 5:00 p.m. at home, or at jeisotal@lakeheadu.ca. My thesis supervisor is Dr. Hope-Arlene Fennell. She can be reached at 807-343-8354 or at hfennell@lakeheadu.ca.

Your signature below indicates that you consent to participate freely, without coercion, having completely read this document.

Participant's name (printed)

Signature of Participant

Date

Return one signed copy to the researcher in the enclosed envelope and keep the other copy for your records.

Appendix C: Interview Schedule

1. Interview with Aili: December 16, 2009 at 10 a.m.
Location: Aili's family home in Thunder Bay, ON
Interview duration: 1.5 hours
2. Interview with Mykhailo: December 17, 2009 at 10 a.m.
Location: Mykhailo's family home in Thunder Bay, ON
Interview duration: 1.5 hours
3. Interview with Clara: December 17, 2009 at 2 p.m.
Location: Clara's family home in Thunder Bay, ON
Interview duration: 1.5 hours
4. Interview with Taina: December 19, 2009 at 10 a.m.
Location: Taina's family home in Thunder Bay, ON
Interview duration: 2 hours
5. Interview with Hannu: December 21, 2009 at 10 a.m.
Location: Hannu's family home in Thunder Bay, ON
Interview duration: 2 hours