

Being Young in the Country: Settler Children and Childhood in British Columbia and
Alberta, 1860 - 1925

by

Kathryn Bridge
B.A., University of Victoria, 1977
M.A., University of Victoria, 1984

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of the Requirements for the Degree of

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Abstract

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This dissertation demonstrates that the voices of children and the experiences of childhood provide important new perspectives about the settler societies in British Columbia and Alberta during the period 1860 – 1925. It employs a combination of direct quotations from individual children and analysis across the cohort of one hundred historical children as a means to explore both individual personalities and shared child perspectives of childhood. Child-created diaries and correspondence were selected as the principal documentation in this study as a deliberate strategy to privilege children and to enable clear child-centred voices unmixed with those of adults. The intent is to reveal child-centred understandings about the physical and emotional aspects of growing up in Western Canada that are set within the contexts of specific communities, of family life, of sibling relationships, of friendships and separations. Some significant findings include the phenomenon of boarding school within the childhood experience and the realization that many settler children spent childhoods away from family, the difficulty boys shared in achieving masculinity, and the importance placed by girls and boys on charting and comparing their physical growth and attainment of child-centred milestones of achievement.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

This study

In Canadian historical studies archival records created by adults are mined for references to children but little attention is paid to the children's own writings. Most of what we learn about Canadian children in the late nineteenth or early twentieth centuries has relied either on oral recollections of adults who look back to their own childhoods and reminiscence or write retrospectively, or upon institutional records about children, or through examination of children's literature. Historians have seldom employed a methodology that utilizes child-created records as primary documentary source material and this represents a gap in our historiography.

My own research in British Columbia and Alberta archives indicated that such records exist. Here then was a challenge. Might it be possible to write about Canadian children through the perspectives of the children themselves by using these child-created records as the principal source of documentation? Could I demonstrate that new historical information could be obtained through utilization of child-created records? Could I demonstrate that these untapped sources are an important utility for historians? It seemed worthwhile to pursue, as did the importance of incorporating a wide spectrum of child records that would take the study beyond that of a few children, whose records might then be deemed atypically rich. The study would therefore be both exploratory in the sense of utilizing less accessed archival records, and experimental in its attempt to use the full range of records created by a number of children over a specific period of time to tease from the records both overt and subjective details not only about the children

themselves but especially to utilize these records as a platform to reveal the individual voices and perspectives of children.

The intent of this dissertation therefore is to learn about children in the past through examination of records created by children, which constitute the primary source material of the study and were selected deliberately with the intention of privileging children's voices. Adult created records have not been included in this study for several reasons, principally because to do so would provide alternate voices when my intention is to learn about children from the perspectives of the children themselves and to hear individual child voices. As a matter of practicality, records of these children's adult family members are generally not extant. Children's records are rich yet surprisingly underutilized historical sources are important because they reveal discourses among children that are largely invisible to adults and reflect children's concerns. These records provide evidence about settler children and their times from the perspectives of children themselves and in so doing offer fresh details that contributes to our historical understanding. For instance:

You said that it has been raining nearly every day at Cariboo. I wish it had been here I do not think it has rained once since you left, the dust is dreadful but that is not all for the last fortnight or more the place has been thickly covered with smoke some times it is so dense that we cannot see the end of the big field. I believe it comes chiefly from along the Sannich road the farms about there are in great danger, we hear that people have to watch day & night to protect them the fences have been removed & much of the wheat & barley spoiled. Last saturday Martha Douglas & Mary with all the Douglases & Helmckens went at five o'clock to Machus-an & did not return till about 7 p.m. Mary-Ann went the same day with Mrs. Deisy to the Machanics' picnic in Medana's grove. She enjoyed herself very much & so did Mary.¹

This study documents one hundred children who lived within the geographic setting of British Columbia and Alberta during the time period from 1860 through 1925

¹ Susan Crease to Henry Crease, 13 August 1870. British Columbia Archives.

within what is termed today as colonial or settler societies. The diaries and letters of these children are located in a number of public archives in Canada and Great Britain. The children are “white” and English speaking, primarily middle class and upper middle class, although a small number of working class children are also included. This cohort represents almost all the children whose records were located. In some cases the archival documentation created by one child is extensive, while another is minimal, thus the level of evidence available varies, greatly dependant upon the extant records. The letters and diaries attest to the individual literate states of each child. These girls and boys crafted letters and wrote in diaries from the ages of six through twenty years. The cohort is roughly 3:1 female/male, and the quantity of records extant for girls is larger than that for boys. The records are chiefly positioned within the archival fonds of families, and in several instances this means that letters and diaries of more than one child in the family are available. At times also, a child or his family saved that child’s incoming correspondence from friends or family members, thus some children in this study are within a cohort of peers – circles of friendships. The children represent every decade between 1860 and 1925 and this allows comparisons across time, as well as the geographical space of western Canada.

For the sake of brevity references to the entire cohort in this study utilize the appellation of “children” although in our minds today, such an appellation might seem inaccurate given the current tendencies to delineate and segment this age group of under twenty through age-specific terminology such as “tweens” or “teenagers.” Neither are alternate terms such as infant, adolescent or youth utilized because the definitions are inconsistent and because these words often have contemporary meanings that were not

historically applied. The term adolescent for instance came into popular usage only after 1904, and therefore has no historical application prior to this date.²

The age of twenty was chosen as the upper age for children in this study because during the time period under study, the legal age of majority was twenty-one, thus those children less than twenty-one years, were legally minors and this status defined them absolutely in relation to those who had reached the age of majority.³ The children so represented here are captured at specific ages within their life spans. Their records document not only evidence of their developmental levels, but more importantly, their perceptions and hence, their voices as they grow. The cohort reveals children whose lives, life styles and positions have both linked and independent characteristics. There is breadth in their individuality, in their states of dependence or independence, of mature or immature outlooks, of cocooned or worldly-wise experiences; and all colour this cohort, further challenging generalizations about children and children's experience.

Why choose this cohort?

The records created by children in the settler societies of western Canada hold valuable information to document their own lives and those of their family, friends and community. The situations of these children were quite different than those of their counterparts in Britain by virtue of their presence within a "frontier society" in newly created settler enclaves. And for this reason, their diaries and letters reveal childhood experiences that in turn reveal colonial lives and perspectives. These children grew up in diverse situations within landscapes sparsely peopled and geographically distant from the

² The term "adolescence" came into usage after the publication, G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence* (New York,; D. Appleton and Company, 1904).

³ A helpful study of children from a legal perspective, although not Canadian, is Holly Brewer, *By Birth or Consent: Children, Law and the Anglo-American Revolution in Authority* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005).

metropole. Middle class and upper middle class children in British Columbia and Alberta during the time period from 1860 to 1925 were not usually raised by governesses or separated physically in nurseries away from the adult worlds as might be expected of their counterparts in Britain or Europe. Nor did their families employ domestic help on the scale of families from similar economic and social situations in Britain. Children on ranches and farms in British Columbia and Alberta contributed to the household economy and shared the physical labour, as did, although often to a lesser extent, children in towns and cities whose parents focused on establishing commercial and social connections to facilitate betterment for the family in its standing within these communities. Settler children, especially in the first waves of immigration in the 1850s through 1880s were not cocooned, instead were enmeshed within the adult worlds, and far more visible than children in established settlements in other parts of North America or across the Atlantic. They were visible also because the settler population was young and the adult male/female ratio skewed. Migrant single men, drawn by fur trapping, the lure of gold, of money to be made in forest or fishing economies and land speculation, far outnumbered women. Women were a distinct minority, which meant that families were few.⁴ As a result, the records of settler children are important because they and their families formed the stable core of colonial society. Children's perspectives contribute to our understanding of the larger settings in which they lived because they operated within it, were not sheltered or physically separated. The nuanced information contained in diaries and letters therefore provides important primary source material for understanding the settler societies in the Canadian west.

⁴ See tabulations for B.C. and the Territories in Table 2.1 in Peter and Danielle Gavreau Gossage, "Canadian Fertility in 1901: A Bird's-Eye View," in *Household Counts. Canadian Households and Families in 1901.*, ed. Eric W. and Peter Baskerville Sager (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 62.

Children's perspectives are individual and bear the stamp of independent personalities, yet at the same time, there is enough commonality throughout their records to argue for a distinction in points of view between children and adults, and to advocate for the importance of child-perspectives as a counter to the voices of adults, and to recommend child-created records as a rich source of historical detail.

This thesis will argue that:

Child-created records reveal child voices and perspectives that are different than those of adults and provide new and important information about the experiences of being a child in these times and places, of the settler society, and about the cultural expectations and assumptions that informed children's own understandings of self and of their integration within families, amongst peers and in the larger society. The following five arguments will be threaded throughout this study.

1) These historical children shared understandings about their own growing up that are both personal and collective, and centred in their bodies.

Adults might remark on children's increasing height and weight, and recollect anecdotal aspects of this phenomenon from their own childhood, but it is only children themselves who are able to provide the on-the-ground perspectives as their bodies mature. Children reveal their awareness of the physical aspects of their own growing up as they observe their own bodies and those of their friends. Children monitor and measure their bodies, compare themselves to others, they share in each other's attainment of height and weight. Children also note and compare physical prowess and achievements or new skill-sets made possible by larger, stronger bodies. The discourse becomes more

obviously gendered at puberty as girls note and comment about their menstrual periods and boys become entirely silent about any bodily commentary.

Monitoring of their bodies also extended to keeping watch over themselves and others when contagious diseases threatened their bodies. When epidemic illness settled in a community orphaned children or sibling deaths resulted. Children's awareness of mortality was fed by fears and concerns that were different in focus and causation than those recorded by adults whose bodily fears have been shown as focused more towards the possibility of accident or threats of childbirth. Children noted signs of illness in those around them, documented their own illnesses, and commented upon community deaths in ways that reveal their anxiety and fear, but are also matter-of-fact, realizing as they did, their own powerlessness in regards to epidemic illnesses. Today many of these illnesses are largely eradicated through vaccinations or cured with antibiotics. As a result, historical children shared a preoccupation with sickness and the threat of death, that today's children do not experience.

2) Children sorted themselves by age and acknowledged transitions towards adulthood in stages or at ages understood and shared by their cohort.

These child-created divisions were rooted in childhood understandings and were different than the life stages created by social scientists using developmental models to categorize stages in childhood. Children identified within cohorts that changed as they did, and defined themselves in relation to those older and those younger in ways that are not unlike adults, yet children acknowledged transitions through terminology and references shared within the broader culture of childhood not that of adulthood. For example, children "played" and utilized the word "play" for very specific reference.

Older children observed those younger as “playing” but did not use the word to describe their own activities. Children saw themselves in relation to other children, sorted themselves by child-established gradations, determined in their own minds whether they were a little girl or an older girl, a small boy or a big boy.

Children clearly saw themselves within a cohort bounded by an abstract idea of an upper edge, after which came adulthood. The children in this study seem shocked when acquaintances cross this edge before their time, yet they all grapple with their own individual and gradual shifts toward adulthood. The records provide examples of children who worry about irrevocable change as they close in on adulthood, or actively embrace it.

What constitutes the end of childhood and the assumption of adulthood has challenged historians and social scientists over the decades as society’s ideas about these life stages changes, as has the situation of labouring children that challenges ideas of dependency and childhood being coterminous. Therefore, the perspectives of BC and Alberta children from both working and middle class households provide us with the evidence that children held their own ideas of what constituted childhood – where they were situated – and what aspect/life decisions removed children from this category.

3) Child-created records show the power of gender in the behavioural expectations and life role models taught to children by adults. Children’s actions illustrate their steady acquisition of these gendered expectations but not without struggle.

Literary sources and prescriptive tracts of the times suggest a divided world in which children were taught gender roles and then moved steadily towards ideals as they approached adulthood; girls learned from their mothers, boys moved away from the

influence of feminine discourse towards male role models such as fathers. To a large extent the records support these generalizations. Girls learned household skills, were expected to cook and sew, boys escaped the house environment for the outdoors, and learned about management of the farm, the ranch and the business. The oldest female siblings “mothered” younger male and female siblings. The oldest male siblings quickly moved away from household duties and partnered with fathers on work projects or were removed from feminine influences entirely by being sent to boarding schools. Gender-segregated boarding schools enveloped boys or girls completely in masculine or feminine environments.

Acquisition of femininity by girls by and large appears seamless, or at the least, not disruptive emotionally. There is little evidence of rejection of the norm, except among girls who chose a profession (teaching) or work opportunities outside the home. But it is the boys’ records that reveal the acquisition of masculinity to be more rigorous and difficult than was the acquisition of femininity for girls. The stoicism expected in regards to outward actions was especially hard to acquire, and the letters boys wrote home provide important evidence that they needed the emotional outlet of communication with family members as balance. But boys themselves change as they gradually and more thoroughly absorb gendered behaviours until they exhibit the very same characteristics that originally were so upsetting when demonstrated in others.

The child-created records do reveal points of disjuncture in regards to gendered behaviour and gender-based alliances. Girls and boys didn’t always follow the prescribed rules. Girls created situations where they could wear pants to experience some of the freedoms accorded boys in regards to clothing and rebelled against strictures on their

movement outside the confines of home or school. Family provided avenues for boys in particular to be emotional in ways not dictated in the all-male environments of their boarding schools. Some children selected chores that would not typically have been on their horizon. There are many examples in the children's writings to suggest that the time of childhood allowed some flexibilities or inconsistencies as children learned gender roles and expectations, and that allowances for personality also figured.

Children's individual personalities played a role in crossing gendered expectations, especially in the area of parent-child relations. Children crossed gender divides suggesting a conflict between expectations and on-the-ground performance, for instance some girls developed closer ties with their fathers than with their mothers and some boys shared viewpoints and had more honest interchanges with their mothers than with their fathers. In these ways it was more complex than the advice literature of the times might indicate or for that matter, our own stereotyped expectations. In some cases personality interrupts patterns of gendered behaviours and this was observed across the cohort in different situations and time periods. Although general statements can be made, personality and emotions played a role in how girls and boys responded to gendered expectations. These letters and diaries then reveal the internalizing of gender within children. Without these records this process would be documented only from the observer's viewpoint.

4) Children's records provide new perspectives on family relationships and reveal how children played an active and distinctive role in creating extended family networks and communities.

Privileging adult voices has overshadowed the active role children play in social interactions. The children's side of child-parent relationships allows us to see how the disciplinarian, the nurturing, the teaching, the intimate and loving side of parents is received, and how children then relate to these different presentations and interact with parents. Children challenge their parents in ways that reveal how they learn and mature. Neither child-rearing manuals nor fiction presents this perspective.

Bonds between fathers and sons, or mothers and daughters are revealed as varied in nature, some close, some distant, suggesting the interplays of personality and circumstances to be determining factors that can lead to significant differences between families. These aspects have been minimalized in studies that privilege gender as the central category of analysis. At the very least, the child-created records suggest that other factors have significance.

Some of the strongest documentation in this study reveals the effect of boarding school separations on children. They experienced a profound disruption of family life that affected the children themselves, their relationships with siblings, and parents. This situation has not been studied in regards to Canadian colonial children. It was principally boys who endured the longest separations and at the youngest years of age. The child letters are poignant in their emotional immediacy, but they are much more than stories of homesickness. They trace children as they valiantly wrote over extended periods of time in order to maintain connections that grounded them in belonging. But the letters also reveal details of child decision-making in the absence of parental control, and reveal the power wielded by children as they turned their own situations into opportunities to advocate for their position, their choices, their own way.

Most significant is the revelation of the power of historical childhood sibling relations, visible in letters written between siblings whose shared intimacies facilitated an honest and emotional discourse that was different than their written communications to parents, or to peers. These letters are most apparent during the boarding school separations.

The importance of birth order on children, combined with the situation of large age differences between siblings created childhood sibling relationships that were both lateral and vertical. Older siblings took responsibility for raising younger siblings. Younger siblings found their older siblings to be parental substitutes. As family financial circumstances changed, younger children had less responsibility throughout their growing years because servants or technological aids took the place of child chores and this might create a charged dynamic of resentment by the older child who may have missed schooling. It also allowed very different experiences of childhood to exist between siblings. This situation along with age and gender created and perpetuated linkages and roles between siblings. These dynamics are different from contemporary sibling experiences of small families and of children who were born more closely together.

Children's records also illustrate how children's actions contributed to joining their extended family members together via correspondence, reminding us that the often geographically remote extended family was not peripheral to children's sense of identification and belonging, but played significant roles. The potential power that these aunts, uncles and grandparents had in the lives of children is demonstrated in the correspondences of some of the children, likewise the children's agency in maintaining and nurturing these long-distance relationships through active letter writing has not been

previously acknowledged. Studies of the historical family usually focus on the nuclear family, or on households. The links with extended family are not seen in census or in studies of daily patterns of life within the family. We do know that adult women nurtured long distance familial relationships through correspondence, often considered women's responsibility, but this study indicates that ties to distant family members were also formed and nurtured by boys and girls in their letters.

Children's written perceptions of community are different than those of adults because their lens is through their own childhood encounters and their own worlds extend out through these encounters. These perceptions in and of themselves provide new detail for historians. But on another level, child friendships with other children, facilitated children's entrees into their friends' own family lives via play, sleep-overs, recreational outings and other interactions and this is revealed as an important function in building communities because children's networks facilitated connections between families. In historical study children's records allow us to see new and different ways in which communities were connected – through their children as opposed to through networking of parents or via business relationships. The children's connections help us to understand how historical community dynamics were multigenerational and intersectional. In new communities where there were few pre-existing social ties and connections, the networks of children may have played a larger role than previously considered.

The role of friendships has been studied in relation to adult friendships, particularly those between young adult and adult women⁵ but child-to-child friendships

⁵ Sharon Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Disorderly Conduct. Visions of Gender in Victorian America* (New York: Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

have yet to receive attention. Children's friendships link them across geographical spaces and through their letter writing reveal discursive spaces that are independent of adult initiative. They reached out to peers outside their home communities and often maintained long distance friendships through correspondence. These friendships provided opportunities for children to learn about communities beyond their own, about different geographical and cultural settings. It was learning gained from peers, not through schooling or family, and therefore less likely to have been substantiated or otherwise referenced in adjacent adult records.

5) Children's own perceptions of school suggest that it was less important in their own priorities than we have assumed.

Most of the children in this study attended school at some point and how they integrated these blocks of time into their own lives provides a counterpoint to the perspectives of school provided through records of teachers, or of the philosophy and aims of schooling as found in the records of educators or the bureaucracy, or within the educational literature. For day school students, school appears largely irrelevant within their writings, in the sense that they spoke very little about school directly. School if noted at all was in relation to the block of time it represented. Time spent at school seemed to serve only to frame the time spent around other activities in their daily and weekly routines. It was a structure, not unlike church attendance or chores. Considering the importance placed by adults on schooling for children, the absence of detail about the experience of school itself within child documents is unexpected. Much in their lives interested children and they made mention of many things. To be so silent about what

went on at day school, therefore, seems to indicate less engagement than educators themselves believe school had in children's lives.

For boarding school students, the physical experience of attending school was not something they left behind them at the end of the afternoon or on weekends. Boarders lived at the school and were unable to escape it for family life. School – the masters/teachers, the physical space that also doubled as their home – captured children for extended periods in which they were separated from loved ones, from any alternative to the power of their masters/teachers and staff. Children at boarding schools wrote about their school experiences in letters to parents. The information in these letters sets their life at school in the background as they emphasize maintenance of pre-existing family or social connections and their doings as core to their commentary. The manner in which these children conveyed information about schooling in relation to the rest of what they wrote establishes attendance at school in the perspectives of children as an obligation, not as a preferred topic of conversation. Children communicated the various aspects of their routines set within the body of a wider exchange of “news”, but like day students, the focus of the discourse (and the correspondence itself) was largely extracurricular. Analysis of the percentage of letter topics devoted to school compared to other letter topics confirms that children talked about school in a bare bones manner. I would argue that one way for children at boarding school to escape school was through the act of letter writing.

These themes are woven throughout the following chapters, either in greater or lesser emphasis depending on the topic under discussion. Each chapter is designed to build upon the previous one and at times references quotations from the diaries or letters

that appeared in earlier chapters as a way of repurposing the evidence as each peeling back reveals different nuanced information. The chapters move from establishing the geographical setting and times and the nature of the archival records, through examinations of the structures that framed children's days and understandings of the passage of time; to child perspectives of the ongoing and internalized process and experiences of growing up; to the significance of boarding school years on individual children and their families; to child relationships with parents, siblings and peers; to children's wider view of their communities.

Writing about children and childhood

Writing in the early 1990s, American historian Elliott West was blunt in his observation concerning the roles accorded children and youth in the context of historical study. He said, "We [historians] are guilty of child neglect. If boys or girls are mentioned at all in our writings they appear usually as passive and peripheral creatures, pliant parties to forces beyond their control, figures playing at the edges of the main action."⁶ West and other historians writing at this time advocated that greater attention be given to the earlier life stages, recognizing that neither childhood, adolescence nor youth had been studied on their own merits, but instead were generally presented as prefaces to set the stage for in-depth studies of adults and of adult doings. "For the most part, history is read as if people suddenly and without preamble sprang up as event-shaping adults,"⁷ wrote C. Robert Haywood, author of a study on teenagers in nineteenth century Kansas. Another American historian observed, "The historical invisibility is understandable but

⁶ Elliott West and Paula Petrik, *Small worlds: children & adolescents in America, 1850-1950* (Lawrence, Kan.: University Press of Kansas, 1992), 1.

⁷ C. Robert Haywood and Sandra Jarvis, *A Funnie Place, No Fences. Teenagers' views of Kansas, 1867 - 1900* (Kansas City: University of Kansas, 1992), p. xi.

unwarranted.... For one thing, children were far too numerous, too ubiquitous to be ignored.”⁸

Certainly historians have studied children, but typically within projects that centre on the actions of adults and examine institutions such as the juvenile courts, health or social services; or adult interactions with children in education, or through adoption.⁹ Consider for a moment, studies of the educational system or of teaching. It is the experiences of teachers, the philosophies of the educators, the bureaucracy that grew around schooling and the community input into teaching that form the basis for historical studies.¹⁰ The objects of the educational system, the children for whom the adult efforts were directed remain in the background. And this situation holds true in many cultural histories; children are principally viewed as receivers of and objects of socially constructed values and expectations that are transmitted by adults.¹¹ Social history studies

⁸ N. Ray Hiner, "Seen But Not Heard, Children in American Photographs," in *Small Worlds: Children and Adolescents in America*, ed. Elliott West and Paula Petrik (Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2004), 167.

⁹ In Canada consider: Mona Gleason, Tamara Myers, Leslie Paris, Veronica Strong-Boag, ed. *Lost kids: vulnerable children and youth in twentieth-century Canada and the United States* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2010); Mona Lee Gleason and Jean Barman, *Children, teachers and schools in the history of British Columbia*, 2nd ed. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003); Tamara Myers, *Caught: Montreal's modern girls and the law, 1869-1945* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006); Joy Parr, *Labouring children: British immigrant apprentices to Canada, 1869-1924* (London: Croom Helm, 1980); Patricia T. Rooke and R. L. Schnell, *Discarding the asylum: from child rescue to the welfare state in English-Canada (1800-1950)* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1983); Joan Sangster, *Girl trouble: female delinquency in English Canada* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002); Veronica Jane Strong-Boag, *Finding families, finding ourselves: English Canada encounters adoption from the nineteenth century to the 1990s* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2006).

¹⁰ In British Columbia consider Mona Lee Gleason and Jean Barman, *Children, teachers and schools in the history of British Columbia*, 2nd ed. (Calgary: Detselig Enterprises, 2003)

¹¹ For example, Karen Sanchez-Eppler, *Dependent states: the child's part in nineteenth-century American culture* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); Nancy Chodorow, *The reproduction of mothering: psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender: with a new preface* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999); Miriam Forman-Brunell, *Made to play house: dolls and the commercialization of American girlhood, 1830-1930* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993); Claudia Nelson and Lynne Vallone, *The Girl's own: cultural histories of the Anglo-American girl, 1830-1915* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994). See also the chapter, "Material Children: Making God's Presence Real for Catholic Boys and Girls and for the Adults in Relation to Them" in Robert A. Orsi, *Between heaven and earth: the religious worlds people make and the scholars who study them* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2005); Susan

of the family or community include children within the larger discussion yet neglect analysis at the experiential level. The life phase of adulthood is the focus of study or coming of age changes such as transitioning to work and wage-earning, marriage, childbearing and raising,¹² and, less frequently, the post-production years when economic independence becomes economic dependence as adults transition to old-age.¹³ Children also appear within demographic studies that trace populations, domestic arrangements, the shifts from rural to urban living, fertility and mortality, and other aspects of human society.¹⁴ These studies nibble away at our awareness of young people yet do not really allow us to understand them.

Attention has been given to the idea of childhood and of what constitutes childhood, triggered in part by French academic Philippe Aries, who wrote the first history of childhood and in so doing created enormous debates about the nature and character of both historical and contemporary childhoods, and of changing societal attitudes. In a single sentence, Aries initiated historical and sociological controversy. He stated, “in medieval society, the idea of childhood did not exist”¹⁵ that it was, instead, a relatively recent construct and progressive in understanding. Historians critically

Fisher, *Boys and girls in no man's land: English-Canadian children and the First World War* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

¹² For example, John Bullen, "Hidden Workers: Child Labour and the Family Economy in Late Nineteenth-Century Urban Ontario," in *Canadian Family History*, ed. Bettina Bradbury (Toronto: Copp Clark Pitman, 1992); Leonore Davidoff, *The family story: blood, contract, and intimacy, 1830-1960* (London: Longman, 1999). Robert G. McIntosh, *Boys in the pits: child labour in coal mines* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2000).

¹³ For instance, Michael Gauvreau and Nancy Christie, *Mapping the margins: the family and social discipline in Canada, 1700-1975* (Montreal; Ithaca: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004).

¹⁴ For example, Bettina Bradbury, *Working families: age, gender, and daily survival in industrializing Montreal* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007). Peter A. Baskerville and Eric W. Sager, *Household counts: Canadian households and families in 1901* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

¹⁵ Philippe Ariès, *Centuries of childhood: a social history of family life* (New York: Vintage Books, 1962), 125.

challenged Aries' position.¹⁶ Out of the debates came some consensus, chiefly, that all known societies had some concept of childhood,¹⁷ but the questions that remain today continue to be enmeshed in defining that childhood. "Is childhood a stage in the life course, a set of practices, a relational category, a set of images and representations, something that has implications for whole societies as well as for individual women, men and children, or is it simply a plaything for theorists, experts, parents, adults, to juggle with?"¹⁸

Childhood is the word that references the state of being a child and the experience of being a child, yet generalization is elusive even within a specific time period and culture for the experiences of children are variable, defined by conditions such as social position, living conditions, physical or mental capabilities. To speak of a generic childhood is nigh impossible, to speak of childhood at a particular historical time and setting must be qualified to acknowledge these great variety of experiences.

The modern concept of western childhood as a dependent state that requires children to be sheltered and protected from adult concerns is of very recent vintage but it nevertheless colours perceptions as we look back at the historical past and try to understand how children fit into the larger picture of human society. Likewise non-western cultures hold different understandings of young people and different sensibilities towards what constitutes childhood. Transnational or global discussions of childhood

¹⁶ See in particular Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten children: parent-child relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For a summary of the debate see Hugh Cunningham, *Children and childhood in western society since 1500*, 2nd ed. (Harlow, Essex, England; New York: Pearson Longman, 2005), 9-12, 57.

¹⁷ Joseph M. Hawes, "'From Aries to Huck's Raft: A Personal Journey of Studying the History of Childhood and Youth'," *Newsletter, Society for the History of Children and Youth* Summer 2005, no. Number 6 (2005): p. 2-3.

¹⁸ Virginia Morrow, "At the crossroads," *Childhood* 14, no. 1 (2007).

reinforce difference and scholarship about non-western childhoods is increasing with good result, countering generalization or assumptions brought about by an overly western emphasis in historical writing.¹⁹

In 1992, British social historian Harry Hendrick summarized what he saw then as the current situation for western scholarship: “during the last twenty years, scholars have developed three principal areas of interest...the concept of childhood; child welfare and social policy; and child-parent relations” and “these histories usually deal with adult attitudes to children, rather than the young people themselves.”²⁰ The situation still lingered, despite major shifts in the scholarship, when in 2008 Peter Stearns provided the following critical comment. “A disproportionate amount of what passes for the history of childhood still not only involves adult filters but also really turns out, on examination, to be mainly centered on what adults were doing about this or that aspect of children’s lives, including of course, what they were doing in areas such as law and policy.”²¹

West, Hendricks, Stearns and others challenged historians to move beyond writing about adult ideas of children or adult actions towards children and to focus instead on changing the observer. Instead of looking at children through the lens of adulthood, perhaps new historical insights might be achieved by using the child (or adolescent, or youth), their actions, their thoughts as the means to uncover children’s lives and their perspectives. To do this requires a shift in both our motivation and also a

¹⁹ For instance, see Jack Lord, "Child Labour in the Gold Coast: The Economics of Work, Education, and the Family in Late-Colonial African Childhoods, c. 1940-57," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 4, no. 1 (2011); Taylor Long, "Political Parenting in Colonial Lebanon," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 4, no. 2 (2011).

²⁰ Harry Hendrick, "Children and Childhood," *ReFresh, Recent Findings of Research in Economic and Social History* Autumn, no. 15 (1992).

²¹ Peter N. Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008): 36.

belief that children could and should be studied in their own right; that children should be figured as valid observers, and that children's own observations constitute important sources of primary evidence. These historians acknowledged that a bias based upon age had directed historical enquiry, one that privileged an assumption that the actions and influences of adults in the past create history, that children are passive receptors whose agency is/was limited, that children themselves are not trustworthy or thorough in their observations because of their age and situations.²²

Today, historians studying children and youth tend to fall into two camps, those who continue to work in the fruitful area of examining children through the lenses of adults who in different capacities interact with children; and those who search for children's own perspectives of their own lives and interactions as a means to reveal new voices when interpreting the past. The historiography is rich and growing and marked by an attention to terminology as much as the shift in focus away from adulthood. A wide body of work begins to position historical children and youth more visibly in the literature, often making them central within studies as subjects in their own right. Scholarship now increasingly explores the voices of children, adolescents and youth; acknowledges that these members of society hold their own views and understand their worlds quite differently than do adults, therefore their "experiences [are] worthy of study in themselves."²³

²² It is this marginalization of children as subjects and as valid observers that likens them to women and other subaltern figures as deserving of serious study and attention.

²³ Paula Fass, "Childhood and Memory," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 3, no. 2 (2010): 161.

A new historical field of study

A new specialized field of research and study, “the history of children and youth” is the direct result, emerging generally from the disciplines of social and cultural history and specifically from the connected fields of women’s history and gender history.²⁴ An integral aspect of the specialty is this awareness of and sensitivity to the perspectives of children and youth. The field moves within a global understanding that childhood is socially constructed, that it “was not a ‘natural’ or ‘universal’ phenomenon, but one that varied in the way it was understood and experienced according to period and place.”²⁵ The field recognizes that the state of being a child (or adolescent or youth) is embodied within a space of time referenced as “childhood,” that it was and is therefore both an individual and collective experience that has changed over time, changed over historical periods, changed between generations, and also changes within the duration of a child’s time as a child.

Historians of children and youth “assume the existence of a child’s realm and the validity of a child’s perspective on events”²⁶ and aim to privilege these younger members of society, to offset a long-standing emphasis on adults as the subjects of historical enquiry and by so doing provide new information about children in the past and of the

²⁴ The roots of the field are described most recently in Miriam Forman-Brunell and Leslie Paris, *The girls' history and culture reader: the nineteenth century* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Colin Heywood, "Centuries of Childhood: An Anniversary - and an Epitaph?," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, no. 3 (2010). In 2001 the international *Society for the History of Children and Youth* was founded to promote the history of children and youth. The organization (1) supports research about childhood, youth cultures, and the experience of young people across diverse times and places; (2) fosters study across disciplinary and methodological boundaries; (3) provides venues for scholars to communicate with one another; and (4) promotes excellence in scholarship.

²⁵ ———, "Centuries of Childhood: An Anniversary - and an Epitaph?," 346.

²⁶ Fass, "Childhood and Memory," 161.

worlds in which children lived and interacted. To advance understanding of being “young in the country”²⁷ is to provide new insights into our understanding of historical times.

The field embraces challenges that are acknowledged quite openly. One challenge is the need to detach the actual experiences of children from the amorphous category that is “childhood.” Economic historian Hugh Cunningham recognized this when he stated that it is easier to write about childhood in the abstract, than it is to write about children. The challenge, he maintained, “is to tease out the relationship between ideas about childhood and the experience of being a child.”²⁸ Therefore it is the actual individual experiences of children (or adolescents or youth) themselves that are required to ground the category of “childhood” and give it meaning. And it is through the study of specific children that we can look for patterns and chart change over time.

Another challenge is the requirement of specificity when writing about children. The word “children” needs definition within projects to make clear the precise cohort under discussion. Historians of children and youth do not presume common understanding of childhood, nor of what constitutes a child or youth, but define their subjects specifically within the context of their study. For instance, Elliott West admitted to an arbitrary definition of children when he wrote *Growing Up with the Country Childhood on the Far Western Frontier*, as he limited his discussion to “children under the age of fifteen”²⁹ yet Howard Chudacoff in *Children at Play: An American History*, categorized infants separately, stating, “what I mean by children is the age group between

²⁷ Phrase is inspired from the title of Elliott West’s monograph. Elliott West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far-western frontier*, 1st ed. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

²⁸ Hugh Cunningham, *Children and childhood in western society since 1500* (London ; New York: Longman, 1995), 3.

²⁹ Elliott West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far Western frontier*, 1st ed., Histories of the American frontier. (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), p.xix.

about six and twelve.”³⁰ In *Children, Childhood, and English Society*, Harry Hendrick stated, “by children, I mean the age range from babyhood up to thirteen or fourteen-years.”³¹ Steven Mintz defined children as infants to age eighteen³² in his synthesis of American childhood, *Huck’s Raft*. Leslie Paris, in *Children’s Nature: the Rise of American Summer Camps*, used the eligibility year for summer camp enrolment to provide one end of the definition of a child, and the child’s own realization that they reached a time when they are “too old for camp” to mark its terminus.³³ In *Children of the Western Plains: The Nineteenth Century Experience*, Marilyn Irvin Holt defined children as anyone under sixteen and specifically excluded “older teens whose roles and expectations were those of young adults.”³⁴ Pamela Riney-Kehrberg’s definition of rural farm children took into account that urban and rural environments were factors in conceptualizing children. In *Childhood on the Farm: Work, Play, and Coming of Age in the Midwest*, she suggested,

a child is best defined as any dependent son or daughter, generally twenty-one or younger, regardless of physical maturity, who remained subject to his or her parents’ authority on the farm and in the home.... Youngsters who lived away from home periodically, but who were still expected to contribute their wages to the family and return home to labor as necessary, are also defined as children.³⁵

³⁰ Howard P. Chudacoff, *Children at play: an American history* (New York: New York University Press, 2007), p. xv.

³¹ Harry Hendrick, *Children, childhood, and English society, 1880-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 1.

³² Steven Mintz, *Huck’s raft: a history of American childhood* (Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2004), p.viii.

³³ Leslie Paris, *Children’s nature: the rise of the American summer camp* (New York: New York University Press, 2008).

³⁴ Marilyn Irvin Holt, *Children of the western plains: the nineteenth-century experience*, American childhoods (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003), p. 5.

³⁵ Pamela Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the farm: work, play, and coming of age in the Midwest* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2005), p. 4.

Child-centred scholarship

Privileging the child or youth point-of-view is not always easy. The relative scarcity of child-created records within archival repositories (compared to adult-created records) is a fundamental reality. These records are at best, scattered and scanty in terms of coverage, quantities and aspect. What records exist primarily document the voices of literate upper middle class children; the wider spectrum of the society is not nearly as well represented. The second reason lies in the difficulties of identifying extant records. Often, the access tools created by archivists are inadequate to allow identification of records as being child or adult-created.³⁶ Very seldom do key word searches or browsing index terms reveal helpful or delineated entry points. Ideally words such as “child” or “children” could be better employed by cataloguers to guide the researcher towards child-created records (like diaries and journals) as opposed to only records about children (such as administration records).

Difficulty in locating primary source material is perhaps the largest challenge in writing about children from their own perspectives and in consequence has forced historians to look for alternative documentation in order to find a way to bring children to life. One fruitful path, especially for the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, is oral history, which provides needed personal viewpoints. But oral history is adult

³⁶ In 2004, Library and Archives Canada created a report “to identify, within the collections of LAC primary sources created by and about children.” The report concluded, “At the onset of the project, there was apprehension that very little material would be found. As the research progressed, however, it was evident that LAC holds a wealth of material created by children, but that unearthing it was a very time intensive process. One person could easily spend several years on the project and still not uncover all of the material. The main cause of time consumption was access to the collections, many of the key items were discovered by chance ... while ArchiviaNet was a helpful tool in its user friendly approach, many of the descriptions did not offer the type of detail that was required of this project. There were a good number of descriptions that gave no indication of some of the treasures found within the collection, but rather vague and uninteresting lists. The occasional spelling error or mis-description did not assist the process either.” Library and Archives Canada internal report 2004; personal correspondence with Library and Archives Canada archivists in 2008.

reminiscences; it is the perspective of adults looking back on their own child years and is much different than temporal evidence within child-created writings chiefly because the immediacy is gone. While it assists in capturing select memories filtered through the lens of time and experience, it cannot recapture emotions of the moment, understandings nailed to specific chronological date and time. American historian, Howard Chudacoff noted, “post-structuralist critics have challenged the genre of recollection, arguing that memoirs and autobiographies are really acts of inventing a life, a form of storytelling that is mediated by the ways that their writers wish to interpret their lives to others and to themselves.”³⁷ Elliott West commented on the situation. “Memories of the distant past, especially of youthful years, can be the most distorted of all...nonetheless, these reminiscences represent a huge body of evidence.... The only thing more foolish than accepting all this at face value would be to ignore it.”³⁸

Evidently this perspective is shared by historians eager to write about children but unable to gain access to child-created writings because oral history, reminiscences and autobiography form major components of scholarship today, often integrated into studies using written records from other sources. In Canada, Neil Sutherland was an early proponent of oral history as the basis for writing about children in the early twentieth century and his work has had an important influence on child studies. His publications³⁹ brought validity to the use of memory as evidence, although mindful of the drawbacks.⁴⁰

³⁷ Chudacoff, *Children at play: an American history*: xiii - xiv.

³⁸ West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far-western frontier*: xx.

³⁹ Neil Sutherland, *Growing up: childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the age of television* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1997); ———, *Children in English-Canadian society: framing the twentieth-century consensus* (Waterloo: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2000).

⁴⁰ Adult-created impressions of a time past have methodological issues relating to selectivity and accuracy, along with retrospective analysis although having the capability to personalize the past and provide the all important first person voice. This evidence is often only as good as the interviewer who sets up the

His work inspired that of others, including scholars such as Norah Lewis who, like Sutherland worked on western Canada; and Jean Barman, in her work on the experiences of boys at private school in British Columbia.⁴¹

Debates challenge not only concepts of an historical child but also question what constitutes an authentic child voice. Historians ruminate about the difficulties in interpreting child-created records, “in part because they [children’s diaries and letters] so often reflect the looming influence of elders.”⁴² Adults exert power over children in their interactions and relationships. It is also adults who teach children to read and to write, oversee in greater or lesser ways the act of children’s writing and composition, perhaps review their letter writing or diary entries. Yet such adult support and oversight does not eliminate the child voice, it layers it. The challenge is to be mindful of the child voice and to let it rise up. Recent scholars of eighteenth and nineteenth century child correspondents agree that young people have agency, they modify their letter and diary writing for their own ends. Even with supervised correspondence, writes Amy Harris, “the child did have a voice and a point of view which was not necessarily scripted by an

questions. The adult interviewee intends their testimony to be informative, but often abbreviates, conflates, or omits information either intentionally, or unknowingly. Neil Sutherland discussed the issue of memory as evidence of past childhood in ———, “When You Listen to the Winds of Childhood, How Much Can You Believe?,” in *Histories of Canadian Children and Youth*, ed. Joy Parr and Nancy Janovick (London: Oxford University Press, 2003).

⁴¹ Norah Lillian Lewis, *Freedom to play: we made our own fun*, Studies in childhood and family in Canada (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2002). ———, *“I want to join your club”: letters from rural children, 1900-1920* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 1996); Jean Barman, *Growing up British in British Columbia: boys in private school* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1984); Fisher, *Boys and girls in no man’s land: English-Canadian children and the First World War*.

⁴² Daniel Cohen, “Rewriting the Token of Love: Sentimentalist, Sophisticates, and the Transformation of American Girlhood, 1862- 1940,” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 4, no. 2 (2011): 223.

adult”⁴³ and “as children grew they began their own correspondence...[they] explicitly intended the letters as a private correspondence...not under surveillance by their elders.”⁴⁴ Adults may supervise and regulate it seems, but in the end, it is the child who creates her own written record.⁴⁵

Another challenge for historians of children and youth is to be sensitive to the need to balance our understanding of the younger years with that of the older child and to seek out records by young children alongside those of older children because the archival evidence is disproportionate. Extant adolescent sources are more plentiful than those of younger children, an imbalance that is a result not only of the mastering of pen and paper, which increased the quantity of written records, but is also about social visibility. The ideas and attitudes of older children appear in larger quantities in the historical record because, as Leslie Paris observed, older children were “more likely to speak in public, write about their experiences, and otherwise participate in public culture, than...younger children, who often appear in the historical record as objects of reform but rarely as individuals representing or commenting on their own experiences.”⁴⁶ Peter Stearns agreed, “we know more, from their own lips, about teenagers than we know about young

⁴³ Amy Harris, ““This I Beg My Aunt May Not Know”: Young Letter-writers in Eighteenth-Century England, Peer Correspondence in a Hierarchical World,” *Journal of the History of Children and Youth* 2, no. 3 (2009): 340.

⁴⁴ Clare Brant, *Eighteenth-century letters and British culture* (Basingstoke England; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 334. cited in; Harris, ““This I Beg My Aunt May Not Know”: Young Letter-writers in Eighteenth-Century England, Peer Correspondence in a Hierarchical World.” 340.

⁴⁵ For instance see discussion on the function and meaning of aphorisms and religious passages used deliberately by children in diaries. Found in, Jane Hunter, *How young ladies became girls: the Victorian origins of American girlhood* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002).

⁴⁶ Leslie Paris, “Through the Looking Glass: Age, Stages, and Historical Analysis,” *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1(2008): 110-11.

children.... This leaves the range of childhood between toddlers and teenagers as unfamiliar territory.”⁴⁷

Steven Mintz recently stated the problem: “various socially and culturally constructed meanings are attributed to particular age categories. Implicit in terms like child or adolescent are certain assumptions about maturity, irresponsibility, and incomplete development and maturation.”⁴⁸ This acknowledgement of age-bias suggests a reason why historians have more generally avoided utilizing child-created records – lack of life experience constituting, in some opinions, a barrier to a child’s ability to accurately record her world and compromising what historians have considered a meaningful voice. But it also explains the historian’s preference for records created by more literate or articulate older children over those by younger children, who by their comparative age, may be viewed as holding even less authority or legitimacy, or creating content that is not thought to be useful historical documentation. Historians of children and youth work to change these perceptions, and as they do, the body of scholarship that is grounded within the records of younger children grows.⁴⁹

Paula Fass provides an important observation about age as a subjective experience that is contingent and fleeting, and changes as we move through life. Fass argues that knowing about a person over time, allows us to see change in that person over time, and reveals a changing self, the impermanence of subjectivities.

If we believe in the child’s authenticity at various stages in the past and document her culture, her social relations, her schooling, etc. at specific

⁴⁷ Stearns, "Challenges in the History of Childhood," 36.

⁴⁸ Steven Mintz, "Reflections on Age as a Category of Analysis," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1.1, no. Winter (2008): 93.

⁴⁹ For instance, on younger children see Cohen, "Rewriting the Token of Love: Sentimentalist, Sophisticates, and the Transformation of American Girlhood, 1862- 1940."

moments in the past, we are not only questioning a grand integrated adult-based narrative, we are making possible the unraveling of the coherent individual and asserting that this individual has engaged in a number of separately investigable lives, lives that could change over time. That child and others like her, we insist, can be studied in the past, regardless of whom she later becomes. Indeed, we are not asking these historical actors to become anything other than the children they are.⁵⁰

Thus, if we are sensitive to the differences that age, with its accumulation of life experiences creates within children and youth, then addressing the imbalance between our understanding of young children and of their older counterparts is another necessary ingredient for today's scholarship.

The field of the history of children and youth is growing quickly and shares interests within both the humanities and social sciences, enabling varied and often interdisciplinary work. Scholars in the United States, Canada and Great Britain in particular, have published national and transnational syntheses; historiographical work; monographs of comparative, regional or topical studies; and many articles of theoretical and methodological approaches whose rich analyses indicate an important depth of scholarship. These include international and comparative works such as *Growing Up: The History of Childhood in a Global Context* by Peter Stearns and *Encyclopedia of Children and Childhood in History and Society* by Paula Fass;⁵¹ national studies in America such as those by Joseph Illick⁵² and Harvey Graff,⁵³ which present child-centred

⁵⁰ Fass, "Childhood and Memory," 161.

⁵¹ Peter N. Stearns, *Growing up: the history of childhood in a global context* (Waco, Tex.: Baylor University Press, 2005); Paula S. Fass, *Encyclopedia of children and childhood in history and society* (New York: Macmillan Reference USA: Thomson Gale, 2004).

⁵² Joseph E. Illick, *American childhoods* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2002).

⁵³ Harvey J. Graff, *Conflicting paths: growing up in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995).

historiographies, and the above noted, *Huck's Raft*,⁵⁴ by Stephen Mintz; Ping-chen Hsiung's *A Tender Voyage* details Chinese childhood in history; and *Childhood in Russia 1890-1991, A Social and Cultural History*, by Catriona Kelly.⁵⁵ Synthesis at the international level is difficult given the variety in cultural constructions of children across the globe. The work of Paula Fass is perhaps the most prominent in its international emphasis⁵⁶ as is the work of Peter Stearns.⁵⁷ British historians Harry Hendrick⁵⁸ and Hugh Cunningham⁵⁹ have written extensively setting children in the context of the history of the United Kingdom and Europe. A synthesis of Canadian childhood has yet to be written.

Canadian studies

Canadian scholars of the history of children are well established in the field yet less numerous than their American counterparts and have tended to write studies rooted in institutional histories⁶⁰ or edited collections on the family; of adult intervention in

⁵⁴ Mintz, *Huck's raft: a history of American childhood*.

⁵⁵ Ping-chen Hsiung, *A tender voyage: children and childhood in late imperial China* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2005); Catriona Kelly, *Children's world: growing up in Russia, 1890-1991* (New Haven Conn.; London: Yale University Press, 2007).

⁵⁶ Fass, *Encyclopedia of children and childhood in history and society*. ———, *Children of a new world: society, culture, and globalization* (New York: New York University Press, 2007). Paula Fass, "The World is at Our Door: Why Historians of Children and Childhood Should Open Up," *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth* 1, no. 1 (2008).

⁵⁷ Stearns, *Growing up: the history of childhood in a global context*.

⁵⁸ Hendrick, *Children, childhood, and English society, 1880-1990*.

⁵⁹ Hugh Cunningham, *The children of the poor: representations of childhood since the seventeenth century* (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, USA: Blackwell, 1992); ———, *Children and childhood in western society since 1500*.

⁶⁰ For example: Sangster, *Girl trouble: female delinquency in English Canada*; Mary-Ellen Kelm, *Colonizing bodies: aboriginal health and healing in British Columbia, 1900-50* (Vancouver, BC: University of British Columbia Press, 1998); *ibid*; Cynthia R. Comacchio, *The dominion of youth: adolescence and the making of a modern Canada, 1920-1950* (Waterloo: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006); Myers, *Caught: Montreal's modern girls and the law, 1869-1945*; Mona Lee Gleason, *Normalizing the ideal: psychology, schooling, and the family in postwar Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1999); Kristine Alexander, "The Girl Guides, Imperialism and Internationalism in Interwar England, Canada and India" (York University, 2010); *ibid*.

schooling, health and the courts;⁶¹ or studies based in literature⁶² rather than about the experience of children directly. *Breaking new ground* is an important work by Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, a regional study of children utilizing the double lenses of work and rural life in western Canada.⁶³ Studies such as this show the potential for further Canadian work based in regional studies or in comparative analysis that focus on the everyday lives of Canadian children rather than those children who intersect with institutions or the courts. For instance, the engagement of children within the dynamic of family is another avenue for Canadian scholarship, as are areas of sexuality, of masculinity or the making of girlhood, which have been undertaken in the United States and Britain.⁶⁴ Likewise, studies of Canadian children as siblings or peers would further reveal child perspectives.⁶⁵ The immigrant experience as studied in America provides another model.⁶⁶

⁶¹ Some recent examples include: Veronica Jane Strong-Boag and Cheryl Lynn Krasnick Warsh, eds., *Children's health issues in historical perspective* (Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2005); Strong-Boag, *Finding families, finding ourselves: English Canada encounters adoption from the nineteenth century to the 1990s*; *ibid*; Joy Parr and Nancy Janovicek, eds., *Histories of Canadian children and youth* (Don Mills, Ont.: Oxford University Press, 2003); Gleason, *Lost kids: vulnerable children and youth in twentieth-century Canada and the United States*.

⁶² Fisher, *Boys and girls in no man's land: English-Canadian children and the First World War*. See also studies such as Terri Doughty, *Selections from The girl's own paper, 1880-1907*, Broadview reprint ed. (Peterborough, Ont. ; Orchard Park, NY: Broadview Press, 2004). In the Canadian context, works by Mavis Reimer and others involved in studying the culture of childhood through Canadian children's literature.

⁶³ Sandra Rollings-Magnusson, *Heavy Burdens on Small Shoulders. The Labour of Pioneer Children on the Canadian Prairies* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2009).

⁶⁴ For instance, Martha Vicinus, "Distance and Desire: English Boarding School Friendships, 1870 - 1920," in *Hidden from history: reclaiming the gay and lesbian past*, ed. Martin B. Duberman, Martha Vicinus, and George Chauncey (New York: New American Library, 1989); John Tosh, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England* (New Haven [Conn.]: Yale University Press, 1999); Hendrick, *Children, childhood, and English society, 1880-1990*; Carol Dyhouse, *Girls growing up in late Victorian and Edwardian England* (London; Boston, Mass.: Routledge & K. Paul; Broadway House, 1981); Doughty, *Selections from The girl's own paper, 1880-1907*; Elizabeth Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁶⁵ The model has already been written for American children in Annette Atkins, *We grew up together: brothers and sisters in nineteenth-century America* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001).

⁶⁶ Melissa R. Klapper, *Small strangers: the experiences of immigrant children in America, 1880-1925*, American childhoods (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2007); Sarah E. Chinn, *Inventing modern adolescence: the*

Children in the American West

A significant pocket of scholarship in the United States is important also for Canadian historians because it presents evidence of the internal migration westward in that country that is not only similar to the frontiering experiences in the Canadian context, but it is also child-centred utilizing records created by children. Scholarship on children in the American west is prolific and has been possible because of the rich quantity of primary records preserved in American archives of westward overland migrations. These records include the diaries and letters of children alongside those of their parents, and an abundance of written reminiscences. As an historical resource it dwarfs the Canadian archival record and is the key reason for the large quantity of recent studies of the Western American child experience. This field burgeons with State-specific or period delineated work often utilizing alternate methodologies or themes to suggest unifying characteristics or synthesis and thus presents increasingly specific studies of particular aspects of the childhood experience. The canon includes case studies, thematic articles and also monographs. Elliot West's *Growing Up With The Country* is the apex, always child-centred, emphasizing the emotional world of children, comparing and contrasting views of the world from above (adults) and below (children), in West's words, from "three feet off the ground." West re-presented the overland migrations and the settlement of western lands as seen through the eyes of children by relying on child records alongside complementary records of the parents, and at times, combined both

with reminiscences and autobiography. He has placed the child fully in the centre of the narrative.⁶⁷

The history of children and youth in American frontier societies provides some parallels for understanding children and youth in the colonies of Vancouver Island and British Columbia, and the North West Territories which later became the settler societies of the provinces of British Columbia and Alberta. The social, cultural, economic, political, environmental settings in which these children lived and grew up created commonalities of experiences not shared by children living, even at similar time frames, within more established urban settings, non-transient, culturally contained towns and cities of central Canada, the north and eastern seaboard of the United States, or the established British settings.

British studies

Studies of children in Britain are also helpful in understanding children in British Columbia and Alberta because of the cultural connections England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland held with North America, and specifically as a result of emigration to Canada.

These ties were reinforced when colonial and Canadian children left their homes to attend

⁶⁷ The oeuvre is too large to cite in its entirety, but the following are additional examples of American studies that emphasize the use of child-created records and in so doing, set the standard for Canadian scholars to follow. Each has provided some methodological or thematic perspective that I found useful for my own work. This first citation uses three case studies to play with the rhetoric of the westering experience, countering ideas that the journey resulted in a net gain for migrants. Here the focus is on the negative experiences and the irreparable harm inflicted on families, a thoughtful reminder to put within a Canadian context. Lillian Schlissel, Byrd Gibbens, and Elizabeth Hampsten, *Far from home: families of the westward journey* (New York: Schocken Books, 1989). This next example examines children's experiences in broad categories of expectations and perceptions alongside activities such as work and play, education, and family life set against a backdrop of American expansionism and regional identities. Here is a model for setting children within the context of the colonial and Canadian experiences. Marilyn Irvin Holt, *Children of the western plains: the nineteenth-century experience* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003). This next study organizes the children by geography and situation but then works to delineate "cross cultural characteristics that were shared by the children in all categories and all generations." These characteristics include love for family and of particular family members, learning of traditions, ingenuity, friendship, fears, and courage. This book demonstrated that it might be possible to look beyond the outward evidence and examine cultural and emotional aspects of children as they learned from family and society. Richard Melzer, *When we were young in the West: true stories of childhood* (Santa Fe, New Mexico: Sunstone Press, 2003).

British boarding schools and became physically and emotionally immersed in the metropole. Thus studies of British families, children's literature, masculinity and the making of girlhood, for instance, are very relevant.⁶⁸ A study not previously mentioned is one by Anna Davin who studied working class children in London to show how children lived within interlocking networks of family, school, work and neighbourhood. Her approach (although based in oral history) would be transferable in studying Canadian children as well, for their worlds spilled out of the house and into the environment in very parallel ways.⁶⁹

Thematic studies

Several North American and British works provide through example, frameworks applicable for studies of Canadian children, or show (by their absence) how the introduction of child-created records might have made the works richer. For instance, the work of Mona Gleason and also Joy Parr on body history⁷⁰ is pivotal because they not only articulated a new level of understanding about how we experience life, but also pointed out how much historians have left unexamined. Parr's discussion of the imprinting of the physical environment on memory and the importance role of the senses in our experience provides inspiration in its applicability to child-created records.

⁶⁸ For instance: Cunningham, *Children and childhood in western society since 1500*; Paul R. Deslandes, *Oxbridge men: British masculinity and the undergraduate experience, 1850-1920* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2005); Doughty, *Selections from The girl's own paper, 1880-1907*; Dyhouse, *Girls growing up in late Victorian and Edwardian England*; Hendrick, *Children, childhood, and English society, 1880-1990*; Ellen Ross, *Love and toil: motherhood in outcast London, 1870-1918* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993); John Tosh, *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family, and empire*, 1st ed. (Harlow, England; New York: Pearson Longman, 2005).

⁶⁹ Anna Davin, *Growing up poor: home, school, and street in London, 1870-1914* (London; Concord, MA: Rivers Oram Press; Paul and Company, 1996).

⁷⁰ Joy Parr, "Notes for a More Sensuous History of Twentieth-Century Canada: The Timely, the Tacit, and the Material Body," *The Canadian Historical Review* 82, no. 4 (2001); Mona Lee Gleason, "Embodied Negotiations: Children's Bodies and Historical Change in Canada, 1930 to 1960," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 34, no. 1 (1999).

Likewise, Joan Brumberg's *The Body Project* holds rich evidence in girls' diary references to the marking of experience through the body. "A girl's experience of these inevitable biological events is shaped by the world in which she lives."⁷¹ She is one of a few historians to use children's own records in this manner. This book is an important model reminding historians to be sensitive not just to the actual written words, but also to silences.

Two Canadian biographies that focus on the family and on the written records of family members also provide methodological guidance. Katherine McKenna's *A Life of Propriety: Anne Murray Powell and Her Family* is notable for its extensive use of correspondence.⁷² Likewise, Françoise Noël's admirable *Family Life and Sociability in Upper and Lower Canada* relies specifically on diaries and correspondence to document the inter-family dynamics and relationships.⁷³ But neither study included the available child-created records. In McKenna's study the sections covering Powell's children use only the letters of parents to document these lives, neglecting any child-created records. Noël only uses adult voices in the chapters on childhood and parent-child relationships. Nor does her chapter on sibling relations deal with the siblings whilst children. Instead only the adult phase of the relationships are traced, without reference, explanation or benefit of knowledge of the childhood beginnings of the relationships. The rich documentary record allowed detailed analyses of these families, and facilitated the extensive quotes from diaries and correspondence included in the study. This very

⁷¹ Joan Jacobs Brumberg, *The body project: an intimate history of American girls* (New York: Vintage Books, 1998), xviii.

⁷² Katherine Mary Jean McKenna, *A life of propriety: Anne Murray Powell and her family, 1755-1849* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994).

⁷³ Françoise Noël, *Family life and sociability in Upper and Lower Canada, 1780-1870: a view from diaries and family correspondence* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003).

intimate perspective would be absolutely crucial to a study based on child-created records that intended actual child voices to be heard. By not utilizing child-created records, these works by McKenna and Noël demonstrate gaps in capturing some of the temporal voices within the families they discuss. Very good scholarship could be even better with the addition of children's perspectives written into the biographies of families.

Jane Hunter's work utilizing diaries and records of girls provides inspiration in its depth and breadth of the archival sources available and for the comparative thematic analysis she threaded through the rich and plentiful quotes. She demonstrated how individual personalities could still be presented when looking for commonality in themes across a cohort and most importantly, through example showed how important it is to incorporate at every stroke, the words of children in such a study.⁷⁴

Two books that share the topic of children and their schooling yet study very different historical times and situations, provide historical contexts for nineteenth century North American colonial children at boarding schools in Scotland and England and also early twentieth century Canadian children at colleges in Eastern Canada and the United States. These books also served as inspiration and revelation in how to interpret or read between the lines of children's writings. Elizabeth Buettner's *Empire Families: Britons and late imperial India* prompted my own focus and analysis of the experience of boarding school and of its impact upon children and their families. Margaret Lowe's *Looking good, college women and body image* provided direction in utilizing letters of

⁷⁴ Hunter, *How young ladies became girls: the Victorian origins of American girlhood*; Jane H. Hunter, "inscribing the Self in the Heart of the Family: Diaries and Girlhood in Late-Victorian America," *American Quarterly* 44, no. 1 (1992).

older girls away not at boarding schools, but at institutions of higher education.⁷⁵ Both focus on the politics of inclusion within a cohort and on gender based cultural understandings that frame and inform children's subjectivities.

Letters and diaries

This study is centred in its use of letters and diaries as the principal historical evidence and therefore relies upon and is situated within an understanding of the cultural expectations and understandings of such writing. Writing conventions changed over time, codified in contemporary etiquette manuals or educational tracts. This advice literature proved helpful in setting the children's letters and diaries within the guidelines in vogue during the time period of this study. Just as children would be taught the purpose of diaries and the conventions of diary writing, the expected subject matter or information worthy of recording, they also received instruction in letter writing.⁷⁶ Children were guided in appropriate wording for salutations and signatures, and in topics of conversation. Children's letters and diaries then followed formatting conventions that were "inscribed by very specific codes of form and structure." Most children conformed to the outward aspects of convention but employed "a free form within."⁷⁷ Young children's letters and diaries in particular, might therefore be framed by or follow the content advice of an adult, but this phase was usually short lived as children increasingly took responsibility for composition. Child-created letters and diaries reveal the agency of

⁷⁵ Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*; Margaret A. Lowe, *Looking good: college women and body image, 1875-1930* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003).

⁷⁶ For example: *Aids to Epistolary Correspondence, or Familiar Directions for Writing Letters on Various Subjects: Also Rules of Punctuation*, (Quebec: C. Darveau, 1887); Samuel Orchart Beeton, *Beeton's Manners of Polite Society, or, Etiquette for Ladies, Gentlemen, and Families* (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1876).

⁷⁷ Caroline Bland and Máire Cross, *Gender and politics in the age of letter writing, 1750-2000* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), 5.

the writer in individualized ways because that writer chose to compose and shape the information recorded, deliberated on subject matter, made intentional and unintended silences.⁷⁸ In their diaries children framed and recorded their constructed worlds. In letters they employed these constructions and imagined themselves in order to define, maintain or further relationships.⁷⁹ The choices children made (their agency) in subject matter, what they talked about or did not mention, how they represented themselves in solitary or epistolary writing, underlay the core of what constitutes the child voice.

International scholarship regarding the construction and situation of letter writing and diary keeping over time also informs this study. Historical and literary scholars examine letters and diaries as evidence of the times and discuss issues such as the writer's voice and intent; analyze the limitations of evidence and of the external influences at play that colour interpretations. As with other areas of the historiographical record, this work almost exclusively assumes discussion of adult records. The records of children are not referenced.

The straightforward methodological strategies delineated by two historians were helpful reminders of steps in analysis. Sharon Marcus recommended "just reading" to understand the words, establish the content and situate the context before moving on to deconstruct (reading against the grain as is fashionable in cultural studies).⁸⁰ Ann Stoler

⁷⁸ Historian of the family, Françoise Noel remarked: "interpreting silence is one of the more difficult tasks associated with using diaries [or letters] as a source." Silences are not always secrets, many activities considered too familiar and mundane might not be included in diaries, and their absences in letters might indicate shared or assumed knowledge.

⁷⁹ These concepts in relation to adults are discussed in Rebecca Earle, "Introduction: Letters, Writers and the Historian," in *Epistolary Selves: Letters and Letter Writers, 1600-1945* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999); James S. How, *Epistolary Spaces: English Letter-Writing from the Foundation of the Post Office to Richardson's Clarissa* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003); Charlotte J. MacDonald, "Introduction," in *Women Writing Home, 1700-1920: Female Correspondence Across the British Empire*, ed. Charlotte J. MacDonald (London: Pickering & Chatto Ltd., 2006).

⁸⁰ Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England*.

reinforced this fundamental approach when she suggested first reading along (what she terms) the archival grain before attempting to delve deeper. Both she and Marcus emphasize the importance of first examining what is on the surface before looking for clues to greater understandings.⁸¹ Understanding what children wrote is not necessarily straightforward because of course, neither diaries nor letters were written for the eyes of today's historian, but instead for the creator's own reading, or for a letter's recipient. In the case of diaries the creator often incorporated a shorthand or specific method in the entry-writing. With letters, the "writers assumed that their reader would understand the multiple contexts of what is said, and therefore they [left] out connectors and background detail that a good story would include."⁸² Working through the words – "just reading" – was important in its own right to establish key understandings.

Historical and literary scholars analyze letters and diaries as texts, material objects and historical productions and move beyond the direct words, to better understand the cultural conventions and wider historical contexts in which these documents were produced. Both Canadian and international studies proved useful to guide my unlayering of information preserved within the ways children chose to record their days and in their epistolary communications.⁸³

⁸¹ Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the archival grain: epistemic anxieties and colonial common sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009).

⁸² Judith Hudson Beattie and Helen M. Buss, *Undelivered letters to Hudson's Bay Company men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830-57* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003), 407.

⁸³ Scholarship on letter writing and the cultural conventions associated with the practice of epistolary exchanges, especially in the situation of nineteenth century migration and overseas communication includes Bruce S. Elliott et al., *Letters across borders: the epistolary practices of international migrants*, 1st ed. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); Brant, *Eighteenth-century letters and British culture*. In the Canadian context, Helen M. Buss, ed. *Undelivered Letters to Hudson's Bay Company Men on the Northwest Coast of America, 1830-57* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2003); Noël, *Family life and sociability in Upper and Lower Canada, 1780-1870: a view from diaries and family correspondence*. Literature on diary-writing as a specific form includes Philippe Lejeune, *On Diary* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009). For a discussion of the diary as historical source see Johanna

Conclusion

This study is positioned in response to the historiography and to the increasingly strong new work on and about children. It is motivated not only by an archivist's desire to bring forward underutilized records for examination, but is also an affirmation that a gap exists in the literature. By deliberately establishing a methodology that utilizes archival records created by children rather than the more familiar harvesting of adult records that reveal children's activities, the study is therefore experimental, addressing that gap and explores new ground. Child-created letters and diaries provide rich and compelling historical sources which reach beyond the documentation of children themselves to reveal different perspectives on the cultural and social worlds in which children grew-up.

Selles-Roney, "A Canadian Girl at Cheltenham: The Diary as an Historical Source," *Historical Studies in Education* 3, no. 1 (1991). Of special note is Laura Mitsuyo Ishiguru, "Relative Distances: Family and Empire between Britain, British Columbia and India, 1858-1901" (University College London, 2011). Her work relates directly to nineteenth century British Columbia as situated in the wider British colonial setting.

Chapter 2: The Setting, the Cohort and Children's Sense of Place

The setting

Most of the one hundred children whose records form the basis of this study were born within the geographical area that now comprises British Columbia and Alberta – what are today two adjoining westerly provinces of Canada. The time period discussed stretches from the height of colonial expansion until just after the First World War. During these seventy or so years, the settler populations increased from a minority situation to a majority in relation to the Aboriginal peoples; land use and land ownership shifted eventually placing First Nations on the physical peripheries of urban centres. On the Pacific Coast, legal and political authorities created crown colonies of both Vancouver Island (1849) and of British Columbia (1858) and combined these colonies (1866). On the prairies, the jurisdiction of the Hudson's Bay Company gave way to territorial status that encompassed this area as North West Territories (1870); and in 1871 British Columbia achieved provincial status and confederation with Canada while Alberta followed in 1905. British Columbia developed into a resource extraction province with coal and mineral mines, vast timberlands, fishing and canning. Alberta supported cattle ranching and grain growing, later oil and natural gas. The uses of the land by settlers dictated the shapes and locations of their enclaves.

Initially, in the pre-colonial period while the Hudson's Bay Company asserted its authority over the vast empire of Rupert's Land, overland trails and later north-south ocean travel linked this vast western area to the metropole – the heart of the British

Empire –to America and to Eastern Canada. Immigration in numbers on the coast was linked to the discovery of gold in the Fraser River (1858) and again in the Cariboo (1862), and further associated with mineral extraction in the Kootenays (1890s). In 1885 a continental railway greatly reduced travel times while improving travel frequency and level of comfort. Between 1896 and 1913 immigrants, especially those from Europe, lured by homesteading incentives doubled the prairie population each decade. Between 1901 and 1911 alone, the settler population of Alberta increased by over 400.¹

Immigration of Eastern European farmers beginning in 1896 changed the character of settler societies in Alberta because of their vast numbers. In British Columbia, less ethnically diverse immigration continued up to the First World War (1914) and facilitated the ascendancy of Vancouver while opening to settlement geographic areas such as the Shuswap, Okanagan and Boundary districts. The Grand Trunk Pacific Railway opened north to Prince Rupert (1914), as port facilities there and in Vancouver linked the Canadian west to the Orient. Various technological innovations associated with telegraph, postal and telephone service facilitated ever improving communication over great distances while later in the early twentieth century, systems of roads and highways (Cariboo Highway 1926) connected people beyond the whistle stops of the railroads.

Immigrants came to work the land, invest and develop industry. With such rapid strides in taming distances and geography, children grew up experiencing great changes in their daily conditions of living and in their understanding of the physical spaces in which they, their families and communities functioned.

¹ The Census Office, *Fourth Census of Canada, 1901*, vol. I (Ottawa 1902); Canada. Census and Statistics Office, *Fifth Census of Canada, 1911* (Ottawa: C.H. Parmelee, 1912).

Settler society

Settler children in British Columbia and Alberta lived in towns and rural settings within cultural and social environments that were colonial in nature and much different than their counterparts in the metropole. In general, settlement society was small and tightly contained. Class differentiated those with wealth or position, but, judging from the mixing of children, the middling classes were not completely divided from upper class social life. Household living situations were less refined or comfort-laden than those in Britain, while domestic responsibilities fell within the purview of all its members and was certainly more utilitarian. For almost the entire period under study, this immigrant population was thinly spread over a large landscape; barely a dozen settlements could be classified as towns, and even fewer as cities. In British Columbia, urban centres included: Victoria, Nanaimo, New Westminster, Kamloops, Vernon, Nelson, Yale, Vancouver; while in Alberta, urban centres included: Calgary, Edmonton, Red Deer and Lethbridge. Many of the children in this study hailed from urban areas, but some of them also lived in more isolated situations, on ranches or farms in the Cariboo, Kootenay and Okanagan regions of British Columbia, while in Alberta, they homesteaded in areas north of Calgary, west of Lethbridge, south east of Edmonton or lived in small enclaves such as Grande Prairie, Pincher Creek or Fort Macleod.

All of the children (and their parents) formed what we reference today as the “settler society,” distinct and separate (physically, culturally and in other ways) from the much larger established and pluralistic aboriginal population spread throughout the Pacific coast and inland along rivers and drainage systems, or across the prairies. The settler society was mixed in terms of ethnicity, social class, gender and age; thus, despite

its distinctiveness in relation to the Aboriginal peoples, it was not, by any means uniform. The majority of settlers in British Columbia during the period 1860 to 1925 were of British descent – parents or grandparents born in England, Scotland or Ireland. Others hailed from Europe, Canada or the United States. Asian immigrants, comprised an even smaller segment, and these people were physically and culturally separate.² In Alberta prior to 1901 the settler population remained essentially Anglo Saxon in descent, but this soon changed when the Dominion government launched a concerted immigration scheme targeting eastern European farmers used to a life on the soil, later immortalized as a “stalwart peasant in a sheep-skin coat.”³

The settler society then, was small and primarily English-speaking for the nineteenth century and also in British Columbia through the first decades of the twentieth century.⁴ Most records in public archives are from this mainstream society and the children in this study echo that profile; they identified as Anglo Saxon and were born in North America of British-descended parentage. A small percentage of the cohort does, however, reflect other European extraction or American. An even smaller percentage was hybrid, that is, their mothers or grandmothers were of First Nations heritage; however they largely identified with and were accepted within the “white” population. These children operated within the settler society, entrée established through paternal

² This study does not include records created by children of Chinese parentage nor children whose fathers and mothers were both aboriginal because of gaps in the historical record. For detailed demographic information on British Columbia see tables at the end of Jean Barman, *The West beyond the West: a history of British Columbia*, Rev. ed. (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1996). p. 363-369.

³ Quote from Sir Clifford Sifton, 1922, former Minister of the Interior, cited in *Maclean's Magazine*, April 1922.

⁴ For instance, in 1881, the British Columbia white settler population was less than 35% of the total population, 8.8% were Asian, leaving 52% Aboriginal. This shifted from 1871 when the Aboriginal population numbered almost 71%. Information presented in Barman, *The West beyond the West: a history of British Columbia*: 363.

links. Finally, most of the children can be identified as Christian in faith and Protestant by denomination. How children perceived others within their social sphere was at times based upon such subtle and not so subtle differences in their cultural heritages.

The social and economic situations that framed the experiences of the children in this study varied, dependent to a large extent upon the work engaged by the fathers. In British Columbia many of the children's fathers worked in some capacity for the government, either as appointed officials or within the bureaucracy, others were merchants or businessmen, some combined land holding and the running of ranches and farms with political life. In Alberta, several fathers were Northwest Mounted Police officers whose postings meant the family uprooted itself regularly. Other families owned extensive real estate on which they established ranches and farms, creating lifestyles that allowed some separation from the hardscrabble existence that characterized the lives of other homesteading families. The children in this study are predominantly drawn from the middle class and upper middle class segments of immigrant society, although depending upon their situation they might live in sod houses in Alberta or in backwoods shanties in British Columbia. Several families transitioned from such pioneering situations to more comfortable existences during the lifetimes of their children.

The settler population was young and this meant two things, generational representation was limited – most settlers were of child bearing ages or children themselves – and for many children this meant that grandparents or extended family did not live with them or even nearby. This physical separation from older family members denied in-person inter-generational interactions such as those experienced (and considered the norm) by children in the metropole or more established communities in

the central and eastern areas of the continent. Grandparents, aunts and uncles of colonial children lived in Britain or elsewhere. Correspondence maintained relationships and established feelings of kinship and connectedness. Growing up without extensive family members was an experience settler children shared with each other.⁵ Families learned to be self-sufficient emotionally and practically. Distant from kin they had to make social connections amongst those closest to support their immediate needs and to create a sense of community and well-being. None of the children in this study were part of a group emigration; instead, their families arrived independently, usually driven by employment opportunities for the male householder or a desire to work the land. The families therefore set down in communities whose members may have as commonality only their physical proximity. There was seldom a sharing of hometowns, of former places of residence, or even sharing of social networks. Families had to learn to coalesce within new communities in ways that at times transcended earlier practices or experiences. Each family shared a fundamental characteristic, they hailed from somewhere else but now called British Columbia or Alberta, home.

Children's identities were also shaped and directly related to the way their families defined themselves, for instance as transplanted English; as expatriate Irish; as migrant Americans; or as career-minded professionals; land-seeking farmers; or as business-seeking merchants. Such identities and motivations characterized settler communities and facilitated internal connections forged by choice and circumstances rather than blood.

⁵ The situation of a younger less generational population was characteristic of both the American and Canadian Wests. In the American context it is a reoccurring theme in West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far-western frontier*.

Children were seen and also heard in settler communities chiefly because the small size of these communities necessitated the dynamic created by the presence of children for its cohesion.⁶ Settler children along with their families stood in stark contrast to the largely single male populations of immigrant British Columbia and Alberta. Children's presence buoyed numbers at public events. They interacted with other children and their families interacted with one another, and were publicly visible in such interactions. Children were seen on the streets en-route to school, in church or doing chores.

Children were integrated into the broader social mix and not separated because of their age as they might be later in the twentieth century or as might be their counterparts in the metropole, or within older established communities where middle class and upper middle class children inhabited parallel existences within a nursery life under the care and supervision of governesses or servants. Thus, settler children observed life and acted alongside their parents and other adults in their social worlds privy, in many cases, to understandings of the adult world denied many of their counterparts in Britain or other more established communities. There, larger populations and the wider range of ages created more divisions between children and adults, and less expectation of communal activities or situations that fostered interaction. Children in late nineteenth and early twentieth century British Columbia and Alberta were positioned well to observe others and participate within their communities and this reality makes them important sources

⁶ Demographic information on British Columbia is compiled in tables at the end of Barman, *The West beyond the West: a history of British Columbia*. p. 363-369. Data from the 1901 Canada census reveals that children under 15 in B.C. accounted for 25.5% of the population and in the Territories (which included Alberta) was 39.4% and that the adult settler population was largely male with adult mean ages of under 30. See also table 2.1 in Gossage, "Canadian Fertility in 1901: A Bird's-Eye View," 62. For implications of the gender imbalance in B.C. see Adele Perry, *On the edge of empire: gender, race, and the making of British Columbia, 1849-1871* (Toronto; Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2001).

for understanding this young settler society and key to understanding the social history of British Columbia and Alberta generally.

Children's sense of place

Settler societies existed within a wide spectrum of geographical settings and were characterized by the political, economic and entrepreneurial opportunities that drew and kept its members. The records of the children reflect these different complexions of life and circumstances and as we learn about children through the records, we also learn about aspects of their individual social situations, family dynamics, sibling and peer relations; all of which provide new perspectives from which to view the social and cultural history of British Columbia and Alberta.

Embedded within children's writings are details of these historical places, people, lives and society that enliven and enrich our understandings of the settler communities within British Columbia and Alberta and of the times in which these children were situated. They reveal moment-in-time evidence about what it was like to live in Red Deer; to work in Calgary; to see outsiders move into your community in Lethbridge; to socialize and see the behind-the-scenes family life of friends living across Victoria; to visit fairs and attend churches in Vancouver; to live with Eastern European immigrants in Mud River; to bring in crops at Grand Prairie or plant orchards in Salmon Arm. Children's writings capture aspects of the everyday; the flow of routines and also the disconnects, the unusual happenings within the communities they lived, and the people – next door neighbours, cross-town friends, families at church or those who attend the balls and parties, teachers, shopkeepers, doctors, domestic servants or others – with whom they interacted. When Kathleen O'Reilly kept her father abreast of family news, or Myra

Ellison recapped her college socials, or when Phoebe Sanders noted the daily round of barracks social life, or Neil Gilchrist and Oliver Gardiner recorded their school routines and Saturday pursuits, they each wrote with a specific purpose but their words are layered with historical evidence about the settings and people within the wider worlds in which they lived. The evidence is often fleeting, but is not trivial. One example is the description created by nine-year-old Phoebe Sanders of her own participation in the leave-taking of men in her community as they departed for the Boer War in 1899.

We saw the men start for South Africa. There was a man his name was Long he has children here he went he was the only man married there and are [sic] servant man Carson went to[o] and I chered [sic] them I wished they would return safely. They drilled up at the station ... 11 men went. It was sad to see them leave. Mrs. Demers took there [sic] pictures in the train. They took off there [sic] hats and chered [sic] that they would get back safe and so did I. they all shook hands with every body & was very sad in deed and they went on.⁷

Phoebe mentioned community members by name provided a summary of the event. Her words reveal that Phoebe understood herself to belong to this community, a community that assembled to support and say goodbye to many of their men. She cheered, she was sad; she was caught up in the personal reactions of the crowd and of the ceremony of the event. She belonged and wrote as a participant who was emotionally connected. She had a sense of how she fit with others around her, and compared her situation with those of other children in her community through the reference to the man who “has children here.” Historical details then mix with a child’s perceptions and her observations. The quotation does double duty. Even though the children provide rich and detailed evidence of historical place this study does not focus on this level of information, for that would be another and very different study. These details are downplayed, set in the background of

⁷ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 31 December 1899. Glenbow Archives.

discussion. Instead, the focus is on specific child perspectives concerning how they define and understand their days, their growing up and their relationships and what this in turn reveals about settler society.

But the quotations throughout the study do emphasize the children's sense of connectedness to place, which for many children shifted as they and their families moved from town to town, from farm to town, from province to province. The composite sense of who they are included these connections, which were imprinted on the bodies of these growing children and played an important role in defining them, as did the historical times in which they grew up. For this study also stretches over time, documenting different generations of children who grew and lived in western Canada. Each of their childhood experiences were given shape and contoured by the combination of geographical space, the historical times and family situations.

Ethnic, racial or social "others"

The world was wider than the immediate circles in which young children played and their families interacted. This would become apparent to children as they matured and became more cognizant of the social milieu, and of their place in it, and of persons within their wider world whom they recognized as "other." The children's comments show awareness of their own placement within a society they learned to view as stratified and their actions reveal learned attitudes and assumptions. They learned they belonged to a society based upon British roots and that this society was dominant, that those not from this background and heritage or those of different social footings so might be considered as "other." For instance, one girl relayed to her mother the advice given her by the school administration. She wrote, "they do not like us to go into Eatons at this time of

year and I told Hugh and Bert not to go into Eatons as there are all sorts of people in there.”⁸ This example illustrates the ingrained teachings received and internalized by children about separating themselves from “others” as a strategy for life.

In general, the children in this cohort rarely commented about those they perceived as socially “other” which might speak to the narrowness of their worlds, or the invisibility of those not within their sphere of reporting. The same holds true for ethnic and racial “others.” For most of the children in this study “other” inevitably meant non-white, and perhaps also non-English speaking. These people might be domestic servants, working class neighbours or labourers, shopkeepers; they might be racially “other” settlers such as Chinese immigrants, or the many aboriginal inhabitants.

Given that the children’s writings contain many important historical details about the specific settings in which they lived and of the other children and families within their communities with whom they interacted, the fact that their writings are remarkably free of comment about Aboriginal people in particular is surprising, especially given the demographics which indicate their high numbers in comparison with the much smaller settler society. Children undoubtedly experienced and observed Aboriginal people yet the proximity and the frequency of encounters seems to have triggered very few references or comments.

Perhaps it was considered improper to leave such a record of one’s thoughts about people regarded as “other.” It might also suggest that there were infrequent opportunities for children to mingle across class or that interactivity between white children and the non-white populations was unusual. The very few direct references in the children’s

⁸ Gladys Berry to Ada Berry, 22 January 1911. Glenbow Archives.

writings about ethnic or racial others supports the assumption that middle and upper middle class English-speaking settler children growing up within a pluralistic environment were sheltered by their elders or segregated themselves from those community members outside their social worlds. Yet, as will be seen in later chapters, children carried with them understandings of how they fit into a class-based society, a nation and empire. For the children in this study, the lack of direct references in their writings can be interpreted to indicate that children did not “see” either the Aboriginal inhabitants or the Chinese settlers as part of their world, and therefore they did not write about them. In this sense, the Aboriginal and Chinese populations were then rendered invisible in the children’s understanding of place.

Perhaps it is our twentieth-century perspective that expects more content in their records. What is certain though is that in the cohort under study, silences in regards to ethnic, racial or social “others” are overwhelming. The composite realities of British Columbia and Alberta settler societies therefore formed a part of the children’s sense of place although the children did not articulate or make many direct references to “others.”

The records and the cohort

The one hundred children in this study are represented through diaries and letters that they created during their childhood years while either they or their family were resident in this area of western Canada. The study is split quite evenly to reveal late nineteenth and early twentieth century childhoods and also documents the spectrum of child years from age six through age twenty. But many more records were written by girls, than boys, roughly 3:1 and the actual quantity of records (the sheer page count) overwhelmingly documents girls. Both girls and boys maintained daily diaries, usually

small pocket diaries intended not for extensive commentary but for simply recording highlights or events of each day. Yet diary writing, especially as a pattern of activity over the years seems more weighted as a female activity than a male, as the ratio is 2:1 on the number of girls compared to boys whose diaries are extant. Both boys and girls however engaged in correspondences with their parents and siblings but very few letters to peers written by boys have survived, as opposed to many examples by girls. The reluctance of boys to keep diaries or write letters to friends is assumed in today's world as expected behaviour; the evidence of extant records in archives appears to indicate this is a continuing and historically based situation. Indeed a couple of boys write specifically about the challenges they experienced in finding the time or energy to keep up diaries. Girls too were not immune to the attractions of playing with friends or using the excuse of being too busy for writing, as the gaps in their diaries attest to the fact that it was not an automatically gendered preference. Diary writing itself was learned activity. The desire to keep a diary was personality driven as well as gender weighted.

These diaries and letters are most often preserved within the larger context of records created by other family members and as part of their family fonds. Occasionally child records are stand-alone, having survived through time but without the larger context of their creation. The records used in this study fall into both categories. In some cases the records of more than one child in a family or community have survived, and this creates interactive child voices. In British Columbia eight families are so documented. The Crease family, resident in New Westminster and Victoria, is represented by all six of its children whose age spread between them was eighteen years. The three O'Reilly children in Victoria are of an age with the younger Crease children. The Douglas and

Helmcken families, also in Victoria, are accessible through the records of their youngest children. All these families socially mingled so the child records become richer for their interconnectedness. The Vernon based Ellison family of eight children is represented here by two of the four daughters. The Lawson family lived in West Vancouver and the two of the siblings are included here. The Loudon and Richter families united through two marriages include records of both generations. The five Jenns daughters called New Westminster and Victoria home at points in their lives but also lived in Prince Rupert and other northern locations. In Alberta, four of the five Macleod siblings document the fifth sibling and family moves between Fort Macleod, Pincher Creek and Calgary. Both Claudia and Oliver Gardiner kept diaries while at boarding school in which the occasional cross-reference links them. The diaries of Phoebe Sanders and letters of her sister Constance link them and their family at Fort Macleod, Calgary, Athabaska Landing and other locales. The three Berry children document each other in letters written to absent parents. In addition, incoming correspondences from child friends to these children provides interactivity beyond their family.

Because this study draws on such a large cohort and incorporates many quotations from different diaries and letters, keeping track of each child, who they are, their age, setting and family is a challenge. To assist, an alphabetic listing of the one hundred children with biographical summaries and sketches of their family and social situations is located in Appendix A on page 436 of this study.

Conclusion

Each child in this study grew up and inhabited specific geographical places in British Columbia and Alberta and operated within the wider sphere of settler society.

They each held a sense of place, which was formed by a composite understanding of what constituted their community, of the peoples who lived within it, of the society at large that gave it shape. Children understood they were a part of a place and had a role within it. In later chapters children's attachments to place will be apparent because it coloured their relationships and twined with their changing understandings of self.

Chapter 3: The Structure of Their Days

“Predictable patterns and events shape the totality of childhood experience,”¹ writes Kathy Merlock Jackson in *Rituals and Patterns in Children’s Lives*. Children (as do adults) make sense of the passage of time by marking “events; both routine and special, predictable and mundane.”² Can we look across the cohort of children in this study to explore this idea? Almost a third of the children wrote diaries; might their diaries reveal patterns or structures in the outward aspects of their daily lives that allow us to talk generally about shared experiences of daily routines or activities? To do so would be a step in understanding historical children both collectively and as individuals. Daily diaries are the key because they functioned to record everyday events and therefore provide information on the outward aspects and routines of the children. Their regularity allows us to chart children over periods of time and to reconstruct the rhythms of their lives. Repetition across these diaries would allow us to generalize or assume the existence of common experiences among the children, threads upon which to articulate child perspectives (in aggregate and in specific) and to see how children as a group (while accounting for their individuality) provide us with distinct and new points of view.

Some of the diaries are very short, or very skeletal, some document a specific time such as a vacation. But eighteen children did leave diaries that conform to the cycles of a calendar and these children wrote in them regularly, usually daily. They cover

¹ Kathy Merlock Jackson, *Rituals and patterns in children's lives* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press/Popular Press, 2005), 8.

² *Ibid.*, 9. This book charts birthday parties, Halloween and other specific rituals, discusses toy and game dynamics.

three months duration at minimum, most document a year. Because of the vagaries of time and circumstance that govern the long-term survival of archival records, in some cases only a single extant diary represents a child while other children have several diaries and a few have diaries that cover most of their childhood years. The diaries vary considerably in content, some are brief, succinct, or minimalist in composition, others are more fulsome and detailed. Yet because children recorded facets of their lives on a (usually) daily basis in their diaries, the day-to-day, week-to-week, month-to-month, and year-to-year rhythms could be ascertained. The eighteen children are geographically and chronologically diverse across the two provinces. Six boys and twelve girls represent the working, middle class and upper middle class, rural and urban in residence. The youngest diarist was nine-years-old, the eldest, eighteen-years of age. They are in short, a representative sampling of the larger pool of children in this study.

The diary notations reveal patterns in what the diarist chose to record and also patterns in how their days were constructed. Common categories of activities emerge yet manifest differently for each child, that is, they shared certain routines in their lives yet each child's life routines were individual and specific to them. The children referenced activities that repeated and created patterns. "Structures" is the word employed in this study to reference these repeated activities and patterns because they serve to give form and shape to the children's lives over time. Structures then are patterns in their lives, patterns that the children recorded, but did not necessarily write about. Realizing that structures existed and created routine and regularity in their lives enabled children to anticipate, to prepare, to know in advance that certain set activities framed each day.

The diary entries reveal not only the presence of structures (the activity itself) and the blocks of time allocated for it, blocks of time that were consistent or repeated over time, but also how the child chose to record his or her activities in and around these structures. Two styles emerge. For some children the repeated activities provided the substance of their documentation, they noted with regularity the sameness of daily routine. But it is the variations in the way they entered the information that provides clues to irregularity. Generalized patterns then are viewed not in their sameness, but in their different and various manifestations. Other children might not view these “structures” as noteworthy because they were closely embedded and therefore invisible. They were just part of life. Their diaries then present a second style, as these children used their diaries to record the breaks from routine rather than reveal the routine through repetition.

The patterns found within the children’s daily diary entries allow us to trace changes. The structure of a child’s days might shift from one year to the next, linked to their physical and mental growth and abilities, that is, their “growing up,” the relative dependence or independence of the child. Changes in residence, in family composition, in conditions external to the control of the child such as illness or economic status would also facilitate change, including also the non-static cast of characters around them. As the variables changed, so might the routines. Yet outward structures of some sort were always present.

Three of these structures are discussed here: attendance at school, family chores and church-going. These three structures are not unusual; they are expected and assumed to be common in the experiences of most western children. Most children attended

school, most had chores and many attended church. But it is the manner in which the children set these structures within the context of their days that provides their own perspectives. The evidence is fairly consistent across the cohort and clearly demonstrates “structures” that we, as adults today, assume to be characteristic components of the routines and lives of western settlers and of settler children, did not function absolutely as the focus of children’s days, but rather children perceived these structures as events within their days, around which other, more important child events or situations might be set. It is these latter aspects that children chose to write about, not necessarily the structures that adults saw as forming child days. Children emphasized in their diaries not the details of school, family chores or church-going, but their worlds outside of these structures. The weighting then of the adult world was not the weighting of the child world. Children’s perspectives could be different than those of adults when it came to defining their days.³

The ages and maturity levels of the children in this study are broad and therefore structures important in the lives of younger children might not apply to older children, the structures were often different or changed as they grew up. Depending on a child’s age,

³ Only a few daily diaries of parents of children in this study exist in archival repositories. These include the Crease, O’Reilly and Steele parents, fathers Gilbert Sanders and James Douglas, mothers Mary Rogers and Irene Parlbly. Letters written by parents are more common, but not necessarily date-sequenced correspondence that documents the same time as the child diaries. The larger basis upon which I make this statement about difference in perspectives is situated in examination of the larger historical scholarship about specific communities, about social and cultural life in both British Columbia and Alberta, and of biographies of well-known or pivotal personalities and of the published diaries of adult community members. For instance, Susan Allison and Margaret A. Ormsby, *A pioneer gentlewoman in British Columbia: the recollections of Susan Allison* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 1976); *ibid*; Robert Burnaby, Pixie McGeachie, and Anne Burnaby McLeod, *Land of promise: Robert Burnaby's letters from colonial British Columbia, 1858-1863* (Burnaby: City of Burnaby, 2002); Jo Fraser Jones, *Hobnobbing with a Countess and Other Okanagan Adventures. The Diaries of Alice Barrett Parke, 1891-1900* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001); Roberta L. Bagshaw, *No Better Land. The 1860 Diaries of the Anglican Colonial Bishop, George Hills* (Victoria: Sono Nis Press, 1996); Kathryn Carter, ed. *The Small Details of Life. 20 Diaries by Women in Canada, 1830-1996* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); Alice Barrett Parke and Jo Fraser Jones, *Hobnobbing with a countess and other Okanagan adventures: the diaries of Alice Barrett Parke, 1891-1900*, *The pioneers of British Columbia*, (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 2001).

or their circumstances, or the historical times, their days had different structures. Specific urban or rural settings, or the economic status of the family or other factors such as ethnicity, gender or social position might create variations within the basic structures. For instance, school or book learning might structure segments of time several days each week. Or alternately, a child's day might include chores, housework or child minding instead of school. Some children attended church or Sunday school, while others did not.

School attendance⁴

The diaries reveal that when of an age, or when circumstances permitted, most of the children attended school for some or most of the year, and often their education incorporated private study as well. Children attended small private academies, local public schools or moved away from home and boarded at schools distant in other provinces or out of the country. In the diaries, the children recorded their own school attendances in very individualistic ways but usually included notations to mark the beginning and ending of school terms in recognition that these were days of transition as they moved from one structure (school attendance) to another (home life without school). Generally it was this change in routine rather than the routine of school itself that children recorded. Some children noted each day they attended school, or when they did not, whether they were on time, or noted disruptions or irregularities in school schedules such as holidays, but this is where the expected content ends and the child perspectives begin.

Children seldom devoted spaces in their diaries to the actual experience of school.

Only on rare occasions did they note normal homework or ongoing class assignments. At

⁴ Notebooks containing school work or homework assignments will not be discussed here as they are documents of the schooling process itself rather than the child's perspective of school within the larger context of their own life.

times they listed special readings either in-progress or completed (milestones); they underlined highlights (special events, unusual or noteworthy days); and recorded achievements (both academic and athletic) but did not reveal the routine of school or devote much space in their diaries to discussion of that portion of their days.

For instance, Kathleen O'Reilly's small pocket diaries do not provide much space for daily writing, but in 1878 at age nine she chose to record noteworthy aspects of her days, including her school year as she saw it. The entries list her attendance at school, her absences due to illness, her class standing (top five), but the longest entries are those explaining how she actually got to the school. The family lived in Victoria, a short distance out of town and she was quite young to walk the distance alone, passing as she would, industrial activity on the harbour, men driving horse-drawn rigs with heavy loads they negotiated along the narrow road. The first day of the autumn term Kathleen wrote, "I Went to school. Mama drove me in the ponycarriage & came & took me home."⁵ In 1880, the first day of school in January had a similar notation, but with a difference, she now walked home. "Went to school (the first day) Papa drove me in the Pony carriage [sic]. I walked home with P. Finlayson, S. Jenns, Flenereu [?], M. & Milly Drake."⁶ A few weeks later, "Papa drove me to school in the pony carriage with M. & M. Drake. I walked nearly home. Papa picked us up at 'Sprats Foundry.'"⁷ The next week she recorded three late arrivals at school, the first because a tardy houseguest delayed their departure. The second day there is no explanation, but "I walk to school by myself. I was late but walk fast not so late as I expected." And returning from school, "I walk as

⁵ Kathleen O'Reilly. Diary. 15 August 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁶ Kathleen O'Reilly. Diary. 26 January 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁷ Kathleen O'Reilly. Diary. 2 February 1880. British Columbia Archives.

far as Herald St. where Papa met up & drove.” The next day “Mama drove me to school (late).”⁸

Some of these entries represent the only notations Kathleen chose to enter on those days. Apart from the brief entries recording non-attendance because of illness, or listing of class standings she defined her day based not on the school work, or the events at school as might an adult, or even an older child, instead she thought it important to record the milestones of walking without parental accompaniment marking the achievements by measuring the distances by reference to landmarks – Sprat’s Foundry and Herald Street. An older child might have calculated mileage, or might not have considered the distance or the act of walking it worthy of comment.

Eleven-year-old Martha Douglas walked to a small private school from her home on the shores of James’ Bay. Her references to school were usually in conjunction with this activity and included observations about the weather and the condition of the roads. “It set in to rain at 5 o’clock this morning, and rained heavily all day: deluge, and has made the roads very wet, as I found to my cost in walking to school.”⁹ Like Kathleen O’Reilly, on occasion she noted her placement amongst her classmates or first days of term and mid-term breaks alongside the weather. Martha Douglas’s daily diary provides little insight into her views about her school. Only a very few of the days in her two-year span of daily entries reference school, and these rate only a sentence at the most, generally linked with another non-school observation or else in relation to her day’s activities.

⁸ Kathleen O’Reilly. Diary. 9, 10, 11 February 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁹ Martha Douglas. Diary. 7 February 1866. British Columbia Archives.

The first diaries for Josephine Crease date from 1878 when, at the age of thirteen, her father gave her a pocketsize diary and memoranda. The month was listed on the left facing page with a blank page opposite. Josephine struggled valiantly to compress her daily thoughts into a single short line, but by August gave up and handmade her own diary, using blank pages from a school notebook. Unlike O'Reilly or Douglas, she recorded each school day. She used standard entries, listing first the time she arose from bed, then the brief phrase "go school." She often arrived early at school, which indicated that she used the extra time for pre-school preparation or studying. On occasion, when she was late, she noted, "late" and specified the time of arrival. Josephine also recorded with whom she walked to school, usually her friend Lidy Richards, "up 7:30 meet Lidy go to school together just in time."¹⁰ Josephine was dedicated in her regular recording of her school morning preparedness and her arrival at school, but she also kept a record of how she physically traveled to school. Usually the girls walked but in very inclement weather, they might be driven in a buggy, or stay home altogether. Josephine also noted any irregularities in school dismissal times. Her diaries cover several years and are notable for her uncompromising repetitiveness in regards to her school days. This attentiveness to regularity (and noting of irregularities) provides evidence that this structure was important in defining her days.

Like Kathleen O'Reilly (who attended the same school, but was a few years younger), Josephine recorded her placement. "I top of my class (2nd) this week & have 181 marks. Lidy fifth in the first class. She have 177."¹¹ Although she made no overt comments, Josephine's noting of her standings reveals that she was competitive and also

¹⁰ Josephine Crease. Diary. 23 August 1878. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹ Josephine Crease. Diary. 2 September 1878. British Columbia Archives.

that she compared herself to her peers; her performance was important although recording the content of her school times was not. Josephine's diaries document the rhythm of her life over the years of her adolescence, providing information on her days that was not recorded by her parents in their extensive extant diaries and letters.¹² By 1881 she no longer attended the private Anglican Church-supported Angela College but her days continued to be structured through daily German, French, Geography and drawing lessons provided by friends and family. She took her learning seriously both during her formal school days, and later as well, noting on each occasion, her lessons and practise times, her preparedness, and occasionally, her lack thereof. Her diaries are more fulsome than those of most of the other children in this study, perhaps because she chose blank notebooks and lined paper for the diaries rather than conforming to the usual pocketbook sizes. Yet in spite of the length of the entries, she revealed her world to be very regimented by the educational process. Other aspects of her childhood world existed against this backdrop.

Florence Suter of New Westminster kept a diary for the first three months of 1887 when she was thirteen-years of age. She dutifully recorded "Went to school today" or "didn't go to school today."¹³ The diary reveals her school attendance was determined by two factors, her health (whooping cough kept her at home for several weeks) and the weather (snowing or raining). "Snow not a bit melted. Wind blowing hard again. Went to

¹² The lives of the parents of Josephine Crease traced through their own diaries hardly reference the children, nor do their correspondences to each other that include social and political doings rather than the minutia of their children's lives. See Barbara Powell, "Sarah Crease and Susan Crease," in *The Small Details of Life: 20 Diaries by Women in Canada, 1830 - 1996*, ed. Kathryn Carter (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2002); *ibid*; ———, "The Crease Family Women," *BC Studies* (1995); Kathryn Anne Bridge, *Henry & self: the private life of Sarah Crease 1826-1922* (Victoria, B.C.: Sono Nis Press, 1996).

¹³ Florence Suter. Diary. 7-10 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

school. Mama wanted me to stop house. But I didn't."¹⁴ When she did go to school on 7 February her coughing was disruptive. "[I] got a scolding for coughing so much."¹⁵ Three days later she was at home, "Didn't go to school today. I'm not going till my cough is better, it is a great nuisance."¹⁶ Florence's determination to attend school despite weather and illness suggests that she enjoyed school, or found value in it. Her diary entries for the days she attended reveal only two school-related incidents, otherwise like other children in this study, the routine of school formed her days but the actualities of school were seldom worthy of comment in diaries.

Fourteen-year-old Duncan Lawson lived on his family's acreage in what soon became West Vancouver. He traveled across Burrard Inlet to Vancouver five days each week to attend what was then the closest high school, King Edward High School. Each morning he walked to the edge of the family property to catch the passenger boat and then travelled by foot and streetcar to school. During the six-month period from January to June 1912, Duncan chose the first lines in his daily diary entries to record which ferry he took and which one he returned on. The trip lasted 25 minutes normally, but fog, tide and water traffic, ferryboat substitutions or mechanical issues created delays on occasion, delays that Duncan faithfully recorded. "7:30 boat 1 hour late. Half-an-hour late for school. Heavy fog all day. Took 4 boat home." "Took 8 boat to town 10 min. late for school." "Took 8 boat to town. 5 min. late for school."¹⁷

¹⁴ Florence Suter. Diary. 2 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵ Florence Suter. Diary. 7 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶ Florence Suter. Diary. 10 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁷ Duncan Lawson Diary. Entries through January-24, 2 February, 27-31 May 1912. Duncan's father established the first ferry service across the inlet, and he therefore knew the ins and outs of the business and also the "politics" of the service providers. His notations relate to this "insider perspective" but also colour his individual days.

Duncan had plenty of remaining space on his diary pages but these were never completely filled despite his brief notations referencing other activities such as his weekends with his cousin Howard; the details of raising ducks; and the seasonal round of outdoor athletics. Notably there are very few direct references to what happened on any specific day in school. He reported on final exam preparations towards matriculation, but he did not note assignments, marks, school events or episodes along the way. Like Josephine Crease, the regular reporting of getting to school was the first line every day in his diary, while the larger block of time each day set aside for school lay outside Duncan's reporting interests.

Sixteen-year-old Vancouver schoolboy Neil Gilchrist also kept a diary. In 1910 he filled it with references to his social activities. School was less often a direct subject, but more frequently, a counterpoint to what happened at lunch hour and after school. Like Duncan Lawson, getting to and from school, however, was a regular feature in his writings. "Got late to school on account of car off the track."¹⁸ "Walked to school in 30 min."¹⁹ "Nearly got late to school in morning."²⁰ "Walked to school in morning... Walked part way home."²¹ As were his non-attendances, "Bummed around and then went over to school with Ros."²² "Didn't have to go to school as the school caught fire."²³ And his longer-than-wished-for attendances, "Had to stay in 15 min. for Woods because I

¹⁸ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 9 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 14 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁰ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 11 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²¹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 14 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²² Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 11 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²³ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 21 November 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

didn't have rose fruit done."²⁴ Neil also recorded what he deemed extraordinary homework efforts, or when homework responsibilities interfered with his social plans. "Did 3 hrs homework including 6 verses from Childe Harold."²⁵ He recorded his class placement "got my rank (7th in class),"²⁶ writing exams, "Had exam from Miss. Cameron which canned me,"²⁷ and marks on exams "Took 91 in Latin exam."²⁸

Although we learn from the ebb and flow of his entries about school activities and the time devoted to his studies, he never once indicated whether he enjoyed school or working on particular subjects or assignments, or for that matter if he did not. School was just part of the pattern of his days, while the responsibilities associated with it (studying and assignments) factor as mandatory time commitments around which swirled his social life and ever increasing network of friends and activities.

Phoebe Sanders, whose father was an officer in the North West Mounted Police, received a haphazard education as the family moved frequently, to and from police posts in Saskatchewan and Alberta. At times a tutor was hired to provide instruction. In 1904 the family lived at the old Fort Calgary barracks, inconveniently situated in relation to public schools. In January the following year, when Phoebe was fifteen, she and her younger sister, Constance, enrolled in a Calgary public school in a move designed to re-establish a more formal routine. "School" became a line that introduced other events going on in her life rather than as a subject in its own right. Despite the absence of direct commentary, her diary shows that the time set aside for school, whether irregular or not

²⁴ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 23 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁵ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 23 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁶ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 13 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁷ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 13 June 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

²⁸ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 24 October 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

provided structure to Phoebe's days because her entries often began, "went to school and when I came home...."²⁹ Her intention in writing was to capture details of the latter, not the former.

Like O'Reilly, Josephine Crease, and other children in this study, Phoebe Sanders was diligent in recording the irregularities of life, in this case, her school attendance. For instance, she recorded not going when ill, or when her mother determined that the snow was too deep or the temperature too extreme. "Lots of snow and very cold. I did not go to school as Mother said not."³⁰ Phoebe's attendance was spotty, if tired or disinclined she did not attend. "Never went to school in morning was too tired."³¹ "Never went to school had a cough."³² If her mother was feeling poorly (a frequent occurrence) Phoebe sometimes stayed home to be with her. Then, in February 1905 Phoebe contracted diphtheria and was very ill. After an absence of three weeks she returned to school. She left no other notation about this day except a comment on the travel arrangements that facilitated her attendance. "Daddy has me driven to school now at 8:45 and 1:15."³³ In April the family closed up the house and took an extended vacation in Vancouver. Sustained academics for that term did not occur. Yet Phoebe took it all in stride, there is no indication in her diary that she bemoaned either the lack of regular school or resented school attendance. No comments at all.

In the early months of 1906, Phoebe and Constance Sanders, along with other children of the police officers attended school at the barracks with a hired teacher. The

²⁹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 11, 12 January, 8 February, and various dates 1905. Glenbow Archives.

³⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 10 January 1905. Glenbow Archives.

³¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 3 April 1905. Glenbow Archives.

³² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 10 February 1905. Glenbow Archives.

³³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 14 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

term ended in March. Later that spring the sisters left home to become boarders at Miss. Gordon's School for Girls [Crofton House] in Vancouver. As would be expected, the diary of a boarding student had a different focus than a student who lived at home and Phoebe Sanders' diary demonstrates changes in the structure of her days while away from home. However, what Phoebe's 1906 diary did not do, was note any details at all about school, or about her teachers, or about her lessons. Instead she thoroughly discussed the character and physiques of her fellow students, recorded the incidents of mischief, and also her absences from class. She did not use her diary to record particulars of courses taken, of school routines or of the hours of schoolwork each day because for her, the fact of school attendance was a given structure and needed no commentary, instead, she wrote around it.

Oliver Gardiner and his sister Claudia left their ranch home in Alberta to board at Ontario preparatory schools. Their diaries, like that of Phoebe Sanders while boarding, are remarkably free of the academic aspect of school. Claudia seldom mentioned classes or lessons; her diaries recorded instead the extra curricular activities such as a gym show, a play, or a school fair. She recorded the social aspects of boarding school life. Friends and their doings occupied the space, not the structure of school itself.³⁴

Oliver's 1926 diary for both school terms recorded more references to sporting activities at school (both his own and that of various school teams) than to anything else. Almost one hundred entries are notations about sports compared to only twenty about the academic side. His interests included his own physical education, running races, learning to wrestle and gymnastics. The academic entries are nearly all about examinations,

³⁴ Claudia Gardiner. Diaries, 1924, 1925, 1926. Glenbow Archives.

although some reveal breaks in routine, which qualified them for notation. “French was not as bad as I expected.”³⁵ “I did Arithmetic [sic].”³⁶ “Three exams done with, passed geometry.” “Passed Latin.” “Passed Arith.” “I came 9th in class.”³⁷ “Half holiday”³⁸ Again very little commentary on the content of his school day.

John Biller turned ten the year he kept a diary. His life on small James Island in British Columbia was contained. He had a sister and cousins to play with along with children from the village school. He recorded his days as they related to his play and pleasure filled activities. School enters his diary less than ten times the entire year. As the diaries of other children have shown, he noted the first and last days of the term and school breaks along with exams and marks. He noted the arrival of new students, “Dorothy McNaughton came to school but Audrey is too young.”³⁹ Arthur also recorded a pesky schoolmate: “Arthur Rowbottom [?] me in school [?] is always bothering me.”⁴⁰ He used his diary to note irregularities such as absences from school. He recorded not only his own absences but also those of friends and even his teacher. “Went to school in the morning but was too sick in afternoon,”⁴¹ “Jock twisted his ankle so he couldn’t come to the village school,”⁴² “Miss. Rose the Junior Teacher is ill.”⁴³

³⁵ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 26 March 1926. Glenbow Archives.

³⁶ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 20 April 1926. Glenbow Archives.

³⁷ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 13, 15, 16, 17 December 1926. Glenbow Archives.

³⁸ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 19 February 1926. Glenbow Archives.

³⁹ John Biller. Diary. 13 May 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁰ John Biller. Diary. 14 May 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁴¹ John Biller. Diary. 25 September 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁴² John Biller. Diary. 6 May 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁴³ John Biller. Diary. 29 September 1924. British Columbia Archives.

Eula Carscallen in Red Deer kept daily diaries when she was thirteen and fifteen. In 1918 she faithfully recorded the mundane. “Monday February 11th, 1918. Went to school. Came home for dinner.” “Tuesday February 12th 1918. Went to school. Handed in a composition, descriptive, got 13 out of 15 for it. Agriculture exam. Made 82.” On occasion she made slight variations in content, a little more detail. “Thursday February 7th 1918. Rose late. Had breakfast practiced 10 mins. [piano] School. Mrs. Dawe gave music lessons at school today. Had Agriculture exam, memory and spelling. Went for a walk. Geom. in school today.” And, “Wednesday April 13th 1918. Had geog. match on N.A. Brenda won. Did not do much practicing when I came home. Did my homework and knit in even. Had a bath.”⁴⁴

Although Eula’s entries provide information on exams and assignments, her diary is terse and to the point. We don’t know whether she was pleased about her schoolwork or not. In one entry, it is only a single underlined word that provides a clue to what must have been an unanticipated result. On June 6th she noted, “Had literature exam. I was very disappointed in my mark of 66.”⁴⁵ The entries documenting her school activities represent about one-third of the total entries. They are matter of fact, bare bones records with only the one hint of personal engagement, uniformly phlegmatic. She gave equal treatment to everything she recorded, devoid of emotion or of emphasis.

Yet despite her flat recording, what she chose to include provides us with another variation to the structure of days. We know she walked to school and often took her dinner (lunch as we would more commonly say today); she performed housework, attended music lessons, and had a circle of friends. School was just one of many

⁴⁴ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 7, 11, 12 February, 13 April 1918. Red Deer and District Archives.

⁴⁵ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 6 June 1918. Red Deer and District Archives.

structures in Carscallen's life and she weighted it evenly with the others, wrote just the facts, never embellished. Her diary, devoid of much personal commentary and rigorous in its routine recording of "fact" nevertheless presents a child's individual perspective as do those of the other children.

School attendance was not an automatic structure in the lives of children on farms or with everyday responsibilities requiring them to remain at home, or children in peripatetic situations. For instance, Julia Short lived on her family's homestead in the area of High River, Alberta. She kept a diary from 1884 through 1888, beginning at the age of eleven. There was no school but a neighbour volunteered to give lessons once a week. Her first year's diary (which began 1 November 1884) optimistically recorded the structure of weekly lessons, "Very cold I walked up to Mr. Crombies for my lessons." "May and I rode up to Mr. Crombies today on horseback..." "Edie and I went to Mr. Crombies for my lessons."⁴⁶ But soon winter weather arrived and prevented the girls from either walking or riding the distance. "I did not go down to Mr. Crombie's as it was too cold." In January Julia wrote, "I did not go to Mr. Crombies. Papa think I had better leave my studies alone until March when it will be warmer."⁴⁷ By March that year both Crombie and the Shorts were busy planting crops, continuing to build their houses, and developing their homesteads, the lessons were never resumed. Julia's diary does not comment further so we do not know whether she regretted not being able to attend. It is notable then that the impact of the short time in which she took lessons away from her house created recognition of a structure for her. She continued to be informally home-schooled but never once mentioned in her diaries any activities around lessons received.

⁴⁶ Julia Short. Diary. 16, 23 and 30 November 1884. Museum of the Highwood.

⁴⁷ Julia Short. Diary. 14 December 1884 and 18 January 1885. Museum of the Highwood.

The actual process of schooling – moving physically out of her house to a place where she was given lessons, clearly delineated in her world a structure. Learning at home did not warrant that same function.

Because Marjorie Gordon's family was on the move between 1894 and 1896, she did not attend a school, instead received daily instruction from her mother and occasionally, a private tutor.⁴⁸ Marjorie and her younger brother Archie were taught together with individualized lessons and schoolwork. Marjorie's days as revealed in her daily diaries indicate that for the Gordon children, every day except Sunday was a day incorporating a routine of educational content that was not optional in its time element or delivery. Unlike Julia Short, Marjorie saw her homeschooling very much as a structure and her diary entries document their routine.

Most mornings, Marjorie and Archie rose early. "Before breakfast we learnt our lessons" and in the afternoons they combined revision of the morning's studies with rest: "at 1:30 we lay down & repeated our lessons."⁴⁹ "Before breakfast we occupied our time by learning our lessons... at 3:30 we went & lied down, and say our lessons. Mother gave us three additional ones for tomorrow."⁵⁰ Her diaries note the morning and afternoon times set aside for her education with enough regularity that when she abbreviated this structure to just three words for a day, "learnt our lessons" within the detailed chronological listing of the day's activities we can interpret her shorthand. On occasion

⁴⁸ Gordon's outward life was also very different from the other children in this study because of the roles and positions of her parents. As Governor-General of Canada, her father, Lord Aberdeen led a public existence. His wife, Ishbel, Lady Aberdeen was a feminist and social advocate who, in her own right, was a public personality. Marjorie and her siblings lived in their shadows. Marjorie's diary is included in this study because it covers the months each year spent at the family estate, Coldstream, in the Okanagan Valley, British Columbia.

⁴⁹ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 22 October 1894. Library and Archives Canada.

⁵⁰ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 23 October 1894. Library and Archives Canada.

slightly fuller descriptions provide evidence of the educational content. “We did Latin and Greek with Dr. Gibson till 1 and then said our other lessons till 2.”⁵¹ “We did some lessons from 8 till 9:30 – writing an abstract of a chapter of Parkman’s History of Canada. Latin and Greek Exercises etc.”⁵² Marjorie also recorded the names of novels she read, novels selected by her mother for their educational as well as youthful appeal. Only infrequently did she briefly record whether she enjoyed the novels; never once did she comment or record an opinion about the content of the “lessons learnt.”

The routine of lessons gave structure to her day. This is evident in the fact that she chose to note them, but like the other children, lessons were the pattern, not the focus of her entries. Lessons formed prefaces to recreational activities that followed, activities that were allotted more space and detail in her diaries. “I got up at 7:30 and after having finished learning my lessons, I went out to try to get blue jays & magpies...when I returned I painted what I began yesterday till breakfast.”⁵³ Her entries show that after she finished her required structure – lessons – the rest of the day’s activities could begin. “Before breakfast, I learnt my lessons...and afterwards, Archie & I went down to the farm.”⁵⁴ “Did lessons as usual, till 9:30 when I drove into town with Percy Marks, to get my present for Archie.”⁵⁵

Considering that attendance at school or in lessons required large blocks of time, the children’s references in their diaries are disproportionate in emphasis. They wrote remarkably little on the subject, the bulk of the entries relate to the means of getting to

⁵¹ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 14 October 1895. Library and Archives Canada.

⁵² Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 25 September 1895. Library and Archives Canada.

⁵³ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 29 October 1894. Library and Archives Canada.

⁵⁴ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 30 October 1894. Library and Archives Canada.

⁵⁵ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 1 October 1895. Library and Archives Canada.

and from school both routine and unusual, and also the times in which they arose, or when the school day ended for them. The children chose to write in their diaries information about their before and after school days rather than the actual experience of being in school. This suggests that school did not shape child perspectives and priorities, and that the time spent in school was a structure that did not carry over into other aspects of their days. Pamela Riney-Kehrberg in her study of childhood on the farm reinforces this hypothesis. She maintains that the function of school to provide education was the adult perspective not the child's. From the child's perspective school attendance provided other opportunities, including companionship and entertainment, which, she emphasizes, for rural children in isolated circumstances, allowed socialization with peers.⁵⁶ Whether attendance was encouraged (as it was prior to development of legislation) or mandated (in British Columbia after 1871 and Alberta after 1905), either way, the children's diaries downplayed the actual schooling experience itself, they did not question its presence in their lives but incorporated it within their assumptions of their childhood years.

Chores and housework

Work – that is assistance with domestic tasks, assignment of specific chores, general help around the home or outside – was recognized by each of the eighteen child diarists. Mostly it was their own contributions that they noted, but at times the contributions of others. Not every child had chores, but each recognized the doing of work by others as a part of daily existence, a structure of everyday living. In *Heavy Burdens on Small Shoulders. The Labour of Pioneer Children on the Canadian Prairies*

⁵⁶ Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the farm: work, play, and coming of age in the Midwest*: 5.

Sandra Rollings-Magnusson states, “While the work performed by children within the family economy may have been a function of family and social expectations...the work itself may have flowed seamlessly from task to task as an ordinary and expected aspect of day-to-day living.”⁵⁷ In this way, children may not have viewed assigned chores as an overlay to base, but rather an integral component of everyday routines. This is an important observation that is echoed in the child diaries in this study. Chores structured children’s lives as did school. Children accepted chores and school as part of life and did not comment on options, did not recognize that these structures might be flexible or even optional as might children today. The children delineated their chores, and in so doing we learn about specific chores and can see the different tasks, but in general they did not talk about the specifics of doing, the difficulties or the challenges. In this way chores are recorded but not discussed by the children, are a structure but seldom a point of commentary.

Rollings-Magnusson documented and classified work performed by historical rural children on farms in western Canada and her findings relate to this study because, like this study, they reveal “an apparently gendered and aged division of labour that existed between boys and girls” that, like the hidden work of women has been unacknowledged.⁵⁸ Her analysis of rural children’s work provides important detail that in many cases corresponds directly to the chores and housework mentioned by the diarists who recorded distinct and separate gendered assignments that reflect the idea of girls creating cleanliness indoors and developing expertise in sustaining and nurturing the

⁵⁷ Rollings-Magnusson, *Heavy Burdens on Small Shoulders. The Labour of Pioneer Children on the Canadian Prairies*: 14.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

family while boys learned to support the indoor domestic world through necessary yet often dirty or exertive outdoor activities. Occasionally, and usually in a rural environment, girls too might perform outdoor work and this is seen in the diaries. As noted by scholars such as Ann Scott Macleod, opportunities for girls to step out of the female world tended to be temporary and age determined.⁵⁹ Outdoor chores provided one such opportunity for girls. Boys it seemed did not have such crossover possibilities, neither the literature nor the evidence of the child diarists record the same flexibility.

Children's contributions via direct farm labour or less quantifiable domestic duties were, in large part a socialized expectation. Whether a rural child whose contributions were essential to the family's ability to make ends meet, or an urban child whose family engaged servants but who was nevertheless assigned their own specific chores, the children in this study understood that their contributions were expected and part of the routine of their lives.

While Josephine Crease's world revolved within the structure of schooling, it had not been the same case for her three elder sisters, Mary, Susan, and Barbara who were ten, nine and seven years older than she. The Crease family immigrated to Vancouver Island in 1860 when Mary, the eldest, was seven-years-old. Four years later they moved to a small log home amid tree stumps at New Westminster on the mainland, where they resided until late 1868.⁶⁰

The diaries of Mary and Susan Crease bear only the tersest of entries. Each girl recorded the weather, reinforcing its importance in the daily lives of a rural family living

⁵⁹ Anne Scott MacLeod, "The Caddie Woodlawn Syndrome. American Girlhood in the Nineteenth Century," in *The Girls' History and Culture Reader. The Nineteenth Century*, ed. Miriam Forman-Brunell (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011).

⁶⁰ For further information on the Crease family see: Bridge, *Henry & self: the private life of Sarah Crease 1826-1922*.

some distance from the nearest community. Alongside the weather, family birthdays punctuated the rhythm of the seasons. But the majority of entries are those that record the sisters' domestic duties. On 13 March 1867, Sarah Crease gave birth to a son whom they named Lindley. With the birth came new responsibilities for these two eldest daughters. To Susan fell the lot to look after toddler Josephine, while Mary took on a wider range of duties including those her mother would have normally performed. The day after the birth, Mary "wrote 3 letters. 1 to Aunt Bar, 1 to Grandmama, 1 to Mr. Alston."⁶¹ Writing to inform relatives was an important task, and one that Mary recognized as such, thus the entry in her diary. Mary was accorded the role of "little housekeeper" a term affectionately bestowed by her parents but which recognised their acknowledgement of her principal role in sharing domestic duties.⁶² In brief diary entries, both Susan and Mary recorded a variety of tasks, some of which seem clearly designed for Mary's own learning as much as actual assistance to her mother.

Mary noted responsibilities for the poultry. In April 1867, "I set silver hen on 4 turkey eggs. & Dovey hen on 9 eggs."⁶³ "Set black & brown hen on 10 eggs."⁶⁴ "I put 7 hens eggs under Silver hen."⁶⁵ "Set Mary Ann hen on 9 eggs."⁶⁶ In May, "I expect Chickens."⁶⁷ Clearly, she knew the requirements for hatching birds and which hens could be relied upon to perform. Susan was not involved in these tasks.

⁶¹ Mary Crease. Diary 14 March 1867. British Columbia Archives.

⁶² See Henry and Sarah Crease to Mary Crease correspondence, 1868. British Columbia Archives.

⁶³ Mary Crease. Diary. 19, April 1867. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁴ Mary Crease. Diary. 20 April 1867. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁵ Mary Crease. Diary. 25 April 1867. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁶ Mary Crease. Diary. 10 May 1867. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁷ Mary Crease. Diary. 15 May 1867. British Columbia Archives.

The next year, following her mother's instructions, Mary learned to make preserves and to bake bread and "rusks." She noted these new accomplishments in her diary, along with her varying successes. On 26 June "I made Rusks." She then wrote the recipe in her diary, an indication that this baking was now her responsibility (no longer that of her mother) and she must remember the proportions and method.⁶⁸ The following day, "I made 2 lbs of Black berry jam & made 3 loaves of bread for the first time."⁶⁹ On 10 July "I made current jelly," but the following day, "Bread a failure too doughy."⁷⁰

At age fourteen, the structure of Mary's days revolved around tasks essential to a rural and fairly isolated family for whom self-sufficiency in food production and domestic life was necessary and this required the sharing of responsibilities between all capable family members. The diaries of both Mary and Susan provide important and new evidence about female settler children; and especially of settler children whose social standings were or would soon become elite. At an early age these girls assumed a wide range of duties that structured their days, the consequences of which affected their ability to be schooled. These duties also created set patterns in the individual responsibilities of each of the female siblings because, depending on birth order and abilities, some duties became associated with one sibling but not another, connected to a specific girl whose days then became channelled into different set routines which over the course of her family life extended into adulthood and remained set.

Mary Crease was the first of the siblings to learn to bake and cook. These abilities became her important contributions to the family because she was now able to

⁶⁸ Mary Crease. Diary. 26 June 1868. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁹ Mary Crease. Diary. 27 June 1868. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁰ Mary Crease. Diary. 10 and 11 July 1868. British Columbia Archives.

provide relief to her mother (who would have another two babies after Lindley) and enabled Mary to assume a leading role in times of illness or when servants were unavailable. Comparing the diaries of Mary, Susan and later, Josephine it is clear that it was to Mary that these responsibilities fell. Neither Susan nor Josephine's diaries record baking, making preserves or cooking, or having much responsibility in the kitchen. It was always Mary. Finding the early patterns of this structure in her child diaries explains the set routines in her later life that perpetuated these divisions of labour between siblings.

The family moved from New Westminster to Victoria where they built a substantial house. The youngest child, Arthur, was born in Victoria in 1872. As the family prospered and the eldest daughters advanced into early adulthood the diaries of the youngest daughter, Josephine, document a different reality in regards to the structure of domestic duties and chores. She grew up not having to be the one responsible for child-minding or baking, in fact her three elder sisters handled most of the chores and it is only as she grew into her teenage years that she began to contribute in these areas. The structure of domestic duties that bounded her sisters' worlds benefited her directly because she was not so bounded and therefore had free hours in the day, which enabled her to attend school more regularly than they had been able. But she was not immune from chores. Just days after starting at Angela College in 1878, Josephine recorded, "have plenty housework to do before school."⁷¹

Josephine's diary entries show a distinct change in her day-to-day routine after 1879 when her formal schooling ended. No longer were her days defined by school

⁷¹ Josephine Crease. Diary. 19 August 1878. British Columbia Archives.

attendance and lessons. Her days now had a routine that encompassed housecleaning and tidying each Saturday – she did her room and her mother’s and on occasion her father’s with periodic deeper cleaning such as shaking out carpets and scrubbing floors. “Began my room at 6:30 and working hard at it until 3:30 gave it the summer cleaning.”⁷² She polished the silver once a week and helped with irregularly assigned tasks, “went out to help to pick the raspberries & then string the red currants”⁷³ or “de-stoning raisins,” or fetching milk from a neighbour’s cow.⁷⁴ There is no pattern to these latter activities. She noted them in her diary because they were irregular and at times unanticipated, interfering with her own plans for the day. For instance, on 22 March 1881 she “came home directly afterwards” from her French lesson (given by the mother of a friend), presumably not lingering or staying for lunch because “Mama not very well & was in bed all the morning. I had to set lunch table.”⁷⁵ Two days later “after breakfast I swept the spare room...laid lunch table...dusted Ma’s room. I drove [presumably in the buggy] Ma & Artie [youngest brother] to church.”⁷⁶

Her Saturday chores were not to be deferred even in extraordinary circumstances such as the day following Dominion Day festivities on the Gorge waterway where the family met friends at their boathouse and rowed up the Arm “and had great fun” which ended at midnight when she finally got home and into bed. That next morning “most awfully stiff & tired. Did my room in a most slip-shod manner. Did Mama’s....”⁷⁷

⁷² Josephine Crease. Diary. 13 July 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁷³ Josephine Crease. Diary. 14 July 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁴ Josephine Crease. Diary. 3 January 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁵ Josephine Crease. Diary. 22 March 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁶ Josephine Crease. Diary. 24 March 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁷ Josephine Crease. Diary. 1 and 2 July 1881. British Columbia Archives.

Although a necessary part of her routine, housework was not as predominant in the defining of her day as it had been for her sisters at that age although Josephine's recording of chores indicates that they formed a structure to her days and created patterns to each week. She benefited from her position in the birth order as the youngest daughter, ten years younger than, and therefore dependent upon her sister Mary's own contributions which freed up her own time. Contrasting the diaries of Josephine and her sisters provides new evidence of the internal dynamics of the family, of the allocation of areas of domestic responsibility based upon birth order and family circumstances. Not all girls in a family learned or were given oversight for the same chores, but retained specialty areas.

Martha Douglas was the much-youngest child in her family, born at a time when her family was well established financially and socially. Her growing up did not involve chores and housework, as would have been the lot of her older sisters. The house was commodious for just her and her parents (brother James was at school in England and her sisters already married with their own families). Martha's diary is remarkable for its absence of references even to unusual household events. She recorded the passing of seasons with little relation to activities linked to them. Unlike the Crease sisters who documented seasonal picking of berries (for the production of jellies and jams) or noted the haying on the property, the hatching of poultry or watering of gardens, Martha noted the rain, the temperature and the sun or heat, and recorded the blossom on fruit trees but did not link it to responsibilities, or even the excitement of eating sweet raspberries from the garden. For Martha, servants provided the work in her house, and she referenced them occasionally, but chores were something she was not assigned. She is one of only a

few girls in this study in this position, and is mentioned here to emphasize the difference from household to household even within a small community such as Victoria where the Crease and Douglas families intermixed socially yet retained different private household routines. Kathleen O'Reilly, also in Victoria, rarely mentioned household responsibilities, until her late teens, perhaps indicating that for her, as for Martha Douglas, such work was not regularly required.

Florence Suter in New Westminster did have regular household tasks and used her diary to record changes in routines that required her to undertake additional work. When her mother tended an ill neighbour "I had to do most of the work myself now."⁷⁸ She also child-minded for another neighbour, taking young Charley Hoy "out for a ride in his sleigh" and "took Charley down town to see the skaters to-day."⁷⁹ She "made molasses candy"⁸⁰ and gardened. "Fixed my garden ready for the seeds." "We are fixing the raspberry canes."⁸¹ She noted these responsibilities alongside the weather and school attendance, suggesting the interrelation of these three structures and the effect each could have on the other. Unfortunately no references to her brother exist to determine his chores or note if his were different or similar.

Sophie Puckette's diaries more than those of the other children, show the influence of weather upon the structures in her life, in particular, her chores. On winter days this Alberta farm girl recorded very little else but on days that were clear but cold she noted outdoor chores. Sophie's own responsibilities are threaded into her diary references in relation to those of other family members. An important task was to take

⁷⁸ Florence Suter. Diary. 12 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁹ Florence Suter. Diary. 8 and 5 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁰ Florence Suter. Diary. 17 March 1887. British Columbia Archives.

⁸¹ Florence Suter. Diary. 22, 24 March 1887. British Columbia Archives.

letters to a neighbour for mailing, or checking with neighbours for incoming mail. Maintaining contact with family and friends, keeping in touch with the world beyond their isolated sod house was paramount to the mental wellbeing of a family in such circumstances. Getting away from insular activities held appeal for Sophie who volunteered regularly for mail duty. In the Puckette family this duty was shared by the children and considered a perk because of the freedom it provided, the opportunity to get away from the close environment of the homestead and parental oversight. “This morning Horace, Lee, Maude and I went over to Mr. Miller’s and got the mail.”⁸² “In the P.M. Maude and I went to Millers to get him to mail some letters.”⁸³

More often, Sophie’s diaries recorded a variety of indoor work. “7:30 Breakfast is over, dishes washed, beds made, floors swept etc.”⁸⁴ “We washed today and mopped the kitchen half. This eve I sprinkled the clothes and will iron in the morning.”⁸⁵ “I sewed some on my waist. Maude ironed.”⁸⁶ The repetition of daily work is evident in the brief notations. “Mama, Maude and I all started new waists.”⁸⁷ “Did the washing.”⁸⁸ “I washed this morning.”⁸⁹ “I ironed this morning.”⁹⁰ In milder months, the chores varied and moved beyond the confines of the house. “Alta & I papered the bed room in morning and she, Maude & I went berrying in afternoon got gooseberries.”⁹¹ “Today we gathered

⁸² Sophie Puckette. Diary. 3 January 1904. Glenbow Archives.

⁸³ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 7 January 1904. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁴ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 7 December 1903. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁵ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 28 June 1904. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁶ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 30 January 1904. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁷ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 17 November 1903. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁸ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 19 November 1903. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 2 December 1903. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁰ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 3 December 1903. Glenbow Archives.

⁹¹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 2 July 1904. Glenbow Archives.

strawberries, and put up five quarts.”⁹² Sophie’s notations about other aspects of family and social life are threaded around these recordings of duties as she almost seamlessly incorporated her entire days into a few brief sentences that mix this structure with the dramas of daily family life.

Julia Short wrote daily diary entries over a five year period and noted in particular her family’s work on the homestead, including with great regularity, details on the chores she and her siblings performed, the eldest of whom was her brother Charley, age thirteen to Julia’s ten. Edith, a year older than Julia and May, a year younger, she referenced less often. Julia’s regular responsibilities included, like Sophie Puckette, riding to pick up the mail at a neighbour’s where it arrived once a week. Thus every Thursday (and then later, every Friday) she recorded her trip and its results, mail to bring home, or none waiting. “I rode on horseback for the mail. Got nothing but a few papers.”⁹³

Like Puckette, Short also lived on a homestead and her family needed the everyday contributions of the children to establish their livelihood. Gender-based divisions of labour framed the ideal, but in practical application this meant that a wide range of different tasks fell to whoever was physically big enough to do them. The diaries of both Puckette and Short illustrate that assignment of chores could be porous and flexible. Julia performed housekeeping tasks but also “rode on horseback after the milk;” snared rabbits for food; “Got one rabbit in the snow;” and collected eggs, “Got 1 egg.... Got 2 eggs.”⁹⁴ These tasks did not require the physical strength of her older brother Charley who helped their father with more manual labour. “Papa and Charley are out in

⁹² Sophie Puckette. Diary. 19 July 1904. Glenbow Archives.

⁹³ Julia Short. Diary. 27 November 1884. Museum of the Highwood.

⁹⁴ Julia Short. Diary. 18, 24 November 1884, 26, 27 February 1885. Museum of the Highwood.

the woods chopping down trees.” “They are hauling out logs.” “Papa and Charley cutting block.” “Papa ploughing and Charley harrowing.”⁹⁵

When the spring arrived and the weather improved, Julia recorded a variety of tasks that she undertook with her younger siblings, including planting onions, parsnips, potatoes, peas, beats, turnips. They also worked in the woods. “Us children driving rails down creek.” “Us children cutting sticks in the morning for fence.” “Us children have cut 1000 sticks.”⁹⁶ Then they weeded, transplanted, watered, and tended the crops. “Hoeing potatoes. Transplanted carrots.”⁹⁷ Then crops had to be harvested and sold. All these tasks required skill and practise. The work was not token but essential to the family survival. Julia and her siblings had huge responsibility riding on their performance. If crops failed because of inadequate garden preparation, the family might be in jeopardy.

Brief as they are, Short’s diary entries convey her pride in accomplishment as she listed quantities and totals, or the fact that she performed independently the type of jobs that Charley might have once undertaken if he had not been so busy in other areas. It was Julia to whom responsibility fell to cart the produce away for sale. “I went down to the store. Sold 100 pounds of potatoes.” “I took a [load?] of peas to Mr. Lynch and stopped in at Mrs. Spauldings. Got two loads of hay.”⁹⁸ Julia’s diary entries regarding her performance of chores make up the bulk of her entries and far surpass any other structured activities in her world.

⁹⁵ Julia Short. Diary. 1, 4, December 1884, 25 February and 28 March 1885. Museum of the Highwood.

⁹⁶ Julia Short. Diary. Various entries March through May 1885 and 27, 28, 29 May 1885. Museum of the Highwood.

⁹⁷ Julia Short. Diary. 9 July 1885. Museum of the Highwood.

⁹⁸ Julia Short. Diary. 6, 18 August 1885. Museum of the Highwood.

Anne Willison was the eldest child on the family's homestead south-east of Calgary. She had no brothers. The sibling age spread was fifteen years; when Anne was eighteen, her youngest sister was just three, a spread not unlike that of the Crease family in British Columbia. Her diary covered a five-month period in 1907 in which she documented daily and seasonal chores that show no boundaries between inside and outside work. Anne recorded cleaning and scrubbing, baking bread; but also planting potatoes and going for the mail. "Scrubbed, Baked and churned and after we had the milking done I rode Bill up for the mail."⁹⁹ Anne also worked alongside her father performing chores that might more usually have been assigned to a boy had she a brother. She is the only girl in this study whose chores so consistently crossed gendered lines. "I helped Papa drive some steers to the slaughter house this morning and they were bad things to drive, running all over and one got away from us and we had a hard time getting him corralled up."¹⁰⁰ Certain chores took the amount of time available, which might be all day.

...got the forge and early this morning I started to round up the cattle I had quite a time of it too as they had all broke through into Mr. Dawson's pasture. I got them into the corral at last and Mr. Barry came over and helped me get them into the stable. We got twenty four branded I branded one myself... we did not stop till seven and it was too late to go for the mail after we got the work done up so I will have to wait till tomorrow.¹⁰¹

Although Anne did not normally write of dissatisfaction with her lot, comments such as "I've been baking bread and it makes it so hot"¹⁰² provide us with a little of her internal thoughts while the juxtaposition of her notations about chores and the rest of her

⁹⁹ Anne Willison. Diary. 14 June 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁰ Anne Willison. Diary. 1 July 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰¹ Anne Willison. Diary. 20 July 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰² Anne Willison. Diary. 24 June 1907. Glenbow Archives.

day reveal the burden of compulsory work as it interfered with things she really wanted to do, or the social side of her life. “I got the work done early and then...”¹⁰³ is one way in which she indicated the structure of her day (chores) and then delineated the optional events that followed. Anne’s diary also illustrates a situation common in rural families (like the Puckettes, Shorts and Creases), the need for child assistance with farm or ranch duties and at times this competed with school attendance. “I kept Mary home from school and she helped me with the work in the afternoon...got home at six and after I got the cows milked I went up for the mail.”¹⁰⁴

Roger Sugars and his parents arrived in the Okanagan from England in 1905. They bought the land pre-emption from an original settler and moved in to an old log cabin, alongside a tent, on 140 acres of wild land along the shores of Okanagan Lake. Roger kept diaries where he recorded his daily activities alongside narratives about aspects of natural history, specifically the land and animals he saw around him. His extant diaries begin in 1911 when he was fourteen-years-old. Like Marjorie Gordon’s journal, Roger Sugars composed his diaries for family back home, in this case, his aunts in England. The information he included had a didactic purpose he knew that others would read the diaries. For this reason the entries are strong on big events and weak in terms of repetitive entries that signal daily structures. However, close reading makes it possible to detect patterns to his activities, enough to illustrate that this boy shared several of the experiences of other children in this study, namely, responsibility for assisting in the day to day function of the family’s livelihood.

¹⁰³ Anne Willison. Diary. 20 June 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Anne Willison. Diary. 22 June 1907. Glenbow Archives.

Like Sophie Puckette, Julia Short and Anne Willison, Roger Sugars undertook responsibility to go for the mail (in this case it was several miles distant at Kennard's store). In his first entry Roger stated, "I shall not record every day, only days when something interesting has happened. I shall leave out mail days, as they are nearly always the same – going to Kennard's for the mail every Monday & Friday."¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, his diary does document this activity, along with other trips for supplies and food. For instance, on 13 June 1911 he "rode over to the Ewing's Landing Store, reached there about 10 a.m. (it is about 5 miles north of our place.)"¹⁰⁶ The following day being a Friday, he recorded, "Very hot, & clear. Got a letter in the mail from Geoffrey Haddon."¹⁰⁷ The next day, "Very hot again. Rode up to Attenborough's in the morning with some mail for Colin, as he is not coming down here tomorrow."¹⁰⁸ In August, "Had a wet ride to the mail."¹⁰⁹ "As we are short of provisions, some what, I rode to Ewing's Landing in the morning, to see if I could buy some eggs & potatoes from anybody. Did not succeed, but if I go to Jimmy Bruce's on Saturday I can get potatoes."¹¹⁰

Sugars took on seasonal employment in local orchards and caught fish to sell. These responsibilities he could accomplish in and around his regular mail runs and grocery shopping. For instance, "Had the day off from fruit-picking, to go to Kennard's for the mail."¹¹¹ But other tasks involved his entire days. In October 1912 he recorded,

¹⁰⁵ Roger John Sugars and John A. Sugars, *An Okanagan history: the diaries of Roger John Sugars, 1905-1919* (Westbank, BC: Sugars Pub., 2005), diary for Friday June 2, 1911, p. 5.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., diary for Thursday 13 July 1911, p. 24.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., diary for Friday July 14, 1911, p. 25.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., diary for Saturday July 15, 1911, p. 25.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., diary for Monday August 7, 1911, p.32.

¹¹⁰ Ibid., diary for Wednesday August 9, 1911, p. 33.

¹¹¹ Ibid., diary for August 25, 1911, p. 37.

I have got a job to herd the Shorts' Point sheep. I have to walk to the Point in the morning, catch a cayuse out of the meadow, take it up to the stable & saddle it, then turn the sheep out of the corral & count them (there are 76) then drive them along & leave them on the hill above our place for several hours.... In the late afternoon I round them up & drive them back & corral them, unsaddle, put the cayuse in the meadow & walk home when it is nearly dark. I do not know what I shall be paid for this, but I imagine about 50c a day. I have been doing it since Wednesday.¹¹²

Sugars' diary entries begin with a line or two about the weather in a manner similar to Sophie Puckette and Julia Short as many of his structured routines depended upon an ability to travel distances (mail or supplies pick-up) or work outside (pick fruit, herd sheep, plant gardens). Crops, gardens and domestic animals relied on regular tending and feeding. Martha Douglas may have recorded the weather and been inconvenienced on her walks to school, but for children in rural or isolated circumstances, the structures of their lives shifted with and were dependent upon the forces of nature. Sugars' diary and those of his rural counterparts are helpful in illustrating the level of independence expected by parents of their children and how these children appear to have enjoyed the opportunities given to interact with others while physically distant from their home.

Phoebe Sanders ran errands. "Went up to the store for meat"¹¹³ and "went up to the store got eggs at the Duffuses."¹¹⁴ She was responsible for keeping her room. "Made our bed & tidied our room up after lunch."¹¹⁵ Like other children, Saturday chores structured the weekends. "House cleaning very busy indeed."¹¹⁶ "Did our usual house

¹¹² Ibid., diary for October 29, 1912, p. 51-2.

¹¹³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 10 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁴ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 20 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 10 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁶ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 12 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

work.”¹¹⁷ “Made beds & darned 2 pairs of socks.”¹¹⁸ She and her sister assisted in the preparation and serving of guests at her mother’s supper or card parties. “Mother had Mrs. & Mr. Rowley Col. & Mrs. Herchner, Mr. & Mr. Jephson & Mr. McBeth for supper after church. Tods & I got 25c for waiting on table.”¹¹⁹ Yet with the exception of these and a few other examples, Phoebe’s diary entries reveal more about the irregularity of maintaining domestic help. Lines such as, “Esther our servant left us”¹²⁰ and “we do our own work now”¹²¹ reveal the impact that hiring and firing of domestics had on the daughters of the family whose routines would be affected through such actions. Her mother might have noted such hiring or firing, but certainly not in relation to the change such actions made in her children’s routines.

Like many of the children who performed chores, Phoebe Sanders noted them in a relational manner in her diaries. She described what she did before and after rather than commenting directly on the chores. She seldom detailed the chores, but wrote about them in such a way as to frame her social activities. For example, the following notation clarifies the time of a social visit by positioning it in relation to her completion of chores. “After lunch after we had finished the dishes and things,” she wrote, “we went down to Constance Hall’s and stayed for tea.”¹²²

Eula Carscallen’s family circumstances shifted in 1917 when her father’s business collapsed. The woman they had previously employed to assist with housework was let go

¹¹⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 5 January 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 17 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 4 March 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹²⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 22 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹²¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 20 October 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹²² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 25 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

so Eula and her mother assumed basic clean-up and house maintenance. Eula's diary entries changed to reveal how these tight financial times affected them both and allow us to see the impact that changing family finances had on children. The seemingly mundane phrase "Washed supper dishes"¹²³ takes on importance when seen in the context of her earlier diary notations that do not record this task. Soon dishes and other domestic duties became routine and a structure to her days and increasingly visible especially the following year to reveal an established weekly schedule. Most Saturdays she spent helping in the house, "worked all morning" or "I did all the work."¹²⁴ Without mentioning school, her entries now indicate that domestic responsibilities created new routines during her weekdays: "came home [at lunch hour] to do the dishes."¹²⁵

Neil Gilchrist also had weekly Saturday chores. He noted them all in his diary, but the most regular task was responsibility for pressing his Sunday suit and other clothing. This was usually performed Saturday evening and after homework. "Studied at night & pressed my suits"¹²⁶ documents an important transition in cultural acceptance of this domestic task as one suitable for boys, and illustrates changing ideas of masculine activities; boys in the nineteenth century such as Arthur Crease or Frank O'Reilly would never have ironed clothing.

Neil's other chores were seasonally assigned. Yard work, in particular cutting the lawn happened from April on through the autumn. "I work AM cutting lawn,"¹²⁷

¹²³ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 25 February 1918. Red Deer and District Archives.

¹²⁴ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 18 and 25 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹²⁵ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 7 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹²⁶ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 2 April 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹²⁷ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 9 April 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

“Worked at lawn most of morning,”¹²⁸ “Worked at lawn cutting round edges AM,”¹²⁹ “Cut lawn AM including outside of side-walk,”¹³⁰ “Broke lawn-mower AM.”¹³¹ Like Carscallen, he weaved these tasks into his routine, arranging with friends to meet after the morning’s work, ensuring his homework was completed ready for Monday morning and his suit pressed for church on Sunday. Neil’s diary notations about chores show a firm structure to each day and week. The entries are all very brief. Of the sum total of each day, it is chores that he most consistently chose to record. The pattern and repetition of getting to school and completing chores by far overwhelm the less rigorous recording of optional activities.

Alec Dennys was a young fruit rancher near Salmon Arm whose days were entirely structured by chores. He was just seventeen when he and his cousin, Bryan, arrived from England to take on and develop (by themselves) an orchard on land purchased by his father some years earlier. His day revolved around seasonal work; he planted and tended peas, rhubarb, beets, strawberries, cherry and apple trees; pruned, fertilized, watered and harvested the crops; transported them to the railway line. Just days after arriving in Salmon Arm, he wrote, “In the afternoon we put in two rows of Carters Duke of Albany Peas, also 1 row of Egyptian Turnip Rooted Beet. Unpack household goods.”¹³² The next day, 3 May 1912, “I put out two rows of strawberries. Also planted 4 cherry trees, 3 yrs old, from the nursery to replace dead ones at the back. Also one Jonathan 4 yrs old into top of orchard – removing a very young one from there

¹²⁸ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 14 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹²⁹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 28 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³⁰ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 24 June 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³¹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 2 July 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³² Alec Dennys. Diary. 2 May 1912. Salmon Arm Museum.

to the nursery.”¹³³ “I got Leo to help me plough etc. the whole day. He drove & I steered.”¹³⁴ “Unpacked & ‘cleared’ & ‘mucked’ up ‘house’! Nothing broken.”¹³⁵ It was hard, heavy work that for the first year, dominated his life and his diary keeping. Unlike most of the children in this study, Dennys undertook adult responsibilities and adult workloads while still legally a minor. His independence is a direct contrast to the dependence of his contemporaries Duncan Lawson and Neil Gilchrist and provides a reminder that the lives of “children” under twenty-one years might be greatly different.

The presence of chores in the routines of children is consistently documented in their diaries through direct commentary about a specific chore, or a reference to chores in relation to another aspect of their days. Like school attendance, chores functioned to shape children’s days and gave them the sense of the passage of seasons, ways to reckon time. The fact that children chose to document chores, even obliquely, suggests that performance of chores was important in their worlds. Surprisingly children reflected very little on what they thought of chores short of commenting on the inevitable disruption to some other planned activity. Nor did they leave much commentary reflecting disagreements related to the performance of chores. The closest instances are sentences such as, “I have to do all the cooking & every particle of housework now as dear old mother is laid up.”¹³⁶ “Cleaned out the drawing room all by my lonesome.”¹³⁷ Children appear to be self motivated and considered chores as part of their relationship with their parents, and primary to the smooth running of the household, and contributing

¹³³ Alec Dennys. Diary. 3 May 1912. Salmon Arm Museum.

¹³⁴ Alec Dennys. Diary. 7 May 1912. Salmon Arm Museum.

¹³⁵ Alec Dennys. Diary. 8 May 1912. Salmon Arm Museum.

¹³⁶ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 12 November 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹³⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 16 March 1907. Glenbow Archives.

directly to the family economy. Chores do not appear to be interpreted by children as secondary or optional, not manufactured for the sake of teaching responsibility. There are no instances of arguments over chores or evidence of rebellion. Nor is there evidence that the children worried parents might read their entries so omitted negative commentary or self censored. The children's diary notations reveal a world in which chores were basic to their understanding of being part of a family and of sharing tasks. The occasional sense of pride or accomplishment that shows through the brief notations indicates children took ownership over their assigned tasks and satisfaction in performing them well.

These references to chores provide new, but not entirely surprising confirmation that children undertook a wide variety of chores, essentially doing what needed to be done and did so as a contribution to the family's ongoing needs knowing that their input was part of their role as a family member. As children grew, their ability to contribute, to perform more complex tasks and physical work was seamless in relation to their growing up. In the main, the modern day notion of chores as character building or to teach responsibility reflects a time when modern labour saving conveniences – mechanical aids or machines, farm equipment, refrigeration, corner stores, bakeries, home delivery – freed children from many repetitive and labour intensive tasks, thereby altering the roles they performed in tandem with adult family members in the everyday smooth running of the enterprise that was their family.

Church-going

Like school and chores, the child records show clear patterns in regard to observance of the Sabbath and attendance at church and or Sunday school. Given the

demographic profile of the settler communities and of these children in particular, this is not surprising. Middle class families in urban centres were more generally church-goers than might be working class families in mining communities. The cohort includes the former, not the latter. Census records confirm that the families were Christian in faith and mainly Protestant, only a few being Catholic.¹³⁸ Sunday itself therefore formed another structure common to their childhood. Studies of religiosity in western Canada have generally used adult-created records, especially census returns, but the rhythm of faith-based activities on the daily and weekly level has not been so traced.¹³⁹ Child-created records open up this perspective, confirming that children (at least urban middle class children) were guided towards church attendance (perhaps as a social responsibility) by their parents, and churchgoing itself was widespread amongst the cohort. These children took the time to record their attendances often noting in relation to other family members or in comparison to previous weeks. But like school attendance, the content of their time in church was seldom delineated in the diaries.

The diaries for the Crease children provide ample evidence of the patterns for Sundays, which centred on morning or evening (and sometimes both) attendance at either the Anglican Christ Church Cathedral or St. John's Church in Victoria. Josephine Crease's diaries on Sundays report regularly whether it was her turn to attend the morning service or not. "My turn to go to church in the morning." "Mary, Susy and I went to the early service. Barbara stayed at home this morning and so I went." "All went

¹³⁸ On-line indexes and microfilm of Canada Census returns for the years 1881, 1891, 1901, 1911 confirm the ethnicity and faith declarations of these families.

¹³⁹ For instance, Tina Block, "Everyday Infidels: A Social History of Secularism in the Postwar Pacific Northwest" (University of Victoria, 2006). Lynne Marks, "Leaving God Behind When They Crossed the Rocky Mountains: Exploring Unbelief in Turn-Of-The-Century British Columbia," in *Household Counts. Canadian Households and Families in 1901*, ed. Eric W. and Peter Baskerville Sager (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

to church except Mary and she not well enough.”¹⁴⁰ She noted attendance at evening services. “Have dinner at 6 & so awfully late for church.” “Rig, Babs and I went church even.” “Ma, M, B, and I go ch. evening.”¹⁴¹ As a young child Josephine attended Sunday school, but by age eighteen she taught it, as did several others in her family. “All went to Sunday School.”¹⁴² She also indicated that some of her friends also taught, and that they covered for each other during illnesses or absences.¹⁴³

Martha Douglas and her family attended Christ Church and later, the Church of Our Lord.¹⁴⁴ Martha’s diaries for 1866 and 1867 note church attendances that were almost weekly with the exception of the summer months. She also recorded when she or other family members were unable to attend, indicating deviation from the pattern. That she saw fit to do so indicates the special place churchgoing had in her family’s weekly routine. For instance, “Cold. Raw. I went to church with Amy [her cousin], Papa being a little out of sorts could not go with us,”¹⁴⁵ or “snow melting very fast. We did not go to church to-day, as it was so wet under foot, but we had prayers at home.”¹⁴⁶ “I was not very well, and did not go to church.”¹⁴⁷ She noted the holy days and how they structured her routine. “This being Good Friday, we attended morning service.”¹⁴⁸ “A pleasant spring day. This being Easter Sunday, there was a large attendance at church, and many

¹⁴⁰ Josephine Crease. Diary. 26 February, 12 March, 30 April 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴¹ Josephine Crease. Diary. 26 February, 12 March, 2 April 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴² Josephine Crease. Diary. 12 March 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴³ Josephine Crease. Diary. 9 April 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴⁴ In 1874 a schism within the Anglican Church divided local Victoria Protestant churchgoers. The Douglas family moved with Bishop Cridge to the newly created, Church of Our Lord.

¹⁴⁵ Martha Douglas. Diary. 11 November 1866. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴⁶ Martha Douglas. Diary. 21 January 1866. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴⁷ Martha Douglas. Diary. 16 December 1866. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴⁸ Martha Douglas. Diary. 31 March 1866. British Columbia Archives.

persons went to the commu[n]ion table to take the Sacrament.”¹⁴⁹ Church-going was important in the Douglas household, although her mother (who was of Cree descent and was reclusive) seldom attended. When her sister Alice with husband and children arrived from New Westminster Martha noted, “Mr. Good and sister Alice went to church with us today”¹⁵⁰ indicating that such activity was a shared family priority. Martha also noted her niece’s first attendance. “My little neice [sic] Annie went to Church today, for the first time & was very good.”¹⁵¹

Kathleen O’Reilly also marked the Sunday routines. “Went to church with Papa Mama & Jack.”¹⁵² “Went to St. John’s church with Mama & Jack.”¹⁵³ And the disruption in routines, “I did not go to Church because I was not well. Papa, Mama & Jack went. It was Sacrement [sic] Sunday.”¹⁵⁴ “Mama was not well so that she did not go to church. I walked with Papa to Christ Church to hear Bishop Ridl[e]y preach. Papa also went in the evening to St. John’s with Mr. Ward & Willy to hear the Bishop.”¹⁵⁵

Florence Suter indicated that church-going was not only a pattern in her life but an important aspect. When she contracted whooping cough she recorded the following break in routine. “I could not go to church this morning my [cough] kept me home. Mama says I can go to Sunday-school this afternoon... So sorry I could not go this morning.”¹⁵⁶ Three weeks later, “Can’t go to church nor Sunday School to-day.”¹⁵⁷

¹⁴⁹ Martha Douglas. Diary. 2 April 1866. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁰ Martha Douglas. Diary. 22 June 1866. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵¹ Martha Douglas. Diary. 27 May 1866. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵² Kathleen O’Reilly. Diary. 11 August 1878. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵³ Kathleen O’Reilly. Diary. 20 October 1878. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁴ Kathleen O’Reilly. Diary. 7 March 1880. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁵ Kathleen O’Reilly. Diary. 21 March 1880. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁶ Florence Suter. Diary. 6 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

When she regained her health the pattern of church-going resumed. “I went to church this morning. I’m going again to-night. I’m so glad I can go again.”¹⁵⁸

Marjorie Gordon’s family life was also structured around attendance at church, but because the family was often on the move and had to keep official engagements while traveling across Canada, the churches attended were local and, in Marjorie’s eyes, the variety made the experiences worthy of recording. For instance:

started at 10:45 for the Knox (Presbyterian) Church. Dr. Duval is the minister. He preached about Lazarus. It is a large church. We walked home... At 6:30 we had tea & soon after Mother & us started walking for West End Church which is Mr. Gordon’s. We know him as we heard him at Banff 3 years ago.... He is very nice. It is a little mission church. He preached about the ill woman who touched the hem of Jesus’ garment... Dr. King who comes to this church, walked home with us.¹⁵⁹

In Vancouver she wrote, “After breakfast we got ready for church and went to Mr. McLarens church, St. Andrews.... He preached a v. good sermon.”¹⁶⁰ While at Coldstream they attended services in Vernon.

We learnt our Bible, Hymn, Collect, and Catechism, had breakfast, and got ready for church. At 10:30 we started. We got there in good time, and Mr. Wilson preached, and Dr Gibson played the harmonium. When we got back, we said our lessons, and read the Bible and the Shorter Catechism...About 6:50, Mrs. and the Miss. Abbot’s arrived for service. At 7 it began. Father talked on the Psalms...¹⁶¹

Very occasionally the family did not attend formal service. For instance, on 28 October 1894, Marjorie recorded, “We did not go to church in the morning,” but revealed private

¹⁵⁷ Florence Suter. Diary. 20 February 1887. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁸ Florence Suter. Diary. 6 March 1887. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁹ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 30 September 1894. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁶⁰ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 11 November 1894. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁶¹ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 29 September 1895. Library and Archives Canada.

prayers later that day. “At 6:30 we had a service. Father gave a little address on ‘fellow workers with him’. We had Rock of Ages, How sweet the name of Jesus sounds, & Abide with me hymns. Mrs. & the Miss. Abbotts came to service & stayed to dinner...”¹⁶² Marjorie wrote about other events of her day by their relationship to the structured prayer that formed an integral part of each morning through phrases such as “then till prayers at 9:45 we...”¹⁶³ or “after prayers and breakfast...”¹⁶⁴

Phoebe Sanders recorded regular attendances at Sunday school. “Went to Sunday School,”¹⁶⁵ was her standard entry. Sunday school structured her mornings, “Didn’t do anything particular Sunday morning just learnt my lessons for Sunday School. Went to Sunday School at 8 o’clock...”¹⁶⁶ Sunday school was prelude to Sunday afternoon’s social activities, thus her entries sometimes read, “Went to Sunday School and after Sunday School went to see the Duffusses”¹⁶⁷ or “Went to Sunday School came home & skated on the Ormeston’s rink.”¹⁶⁸

In 1907, Duncan Lawson’s Presbyterian family organized the first church services in West Vancouver in their house because it was important for them to formalize the Sabbath day through assembly. By 1912, the year of Lawson’s diary, a church had been built several blocks away and regular services were now available. Duncan noted each Sunday attendance. “Went to church in afternoon.”¹⁶⁹ “Bob and Aunt Annie came down

¹⁶² Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 28 October 1894. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁶³ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 25 September 1895. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁶⁴ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 26 September 1895. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁶⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 1 January 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁶⁶ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 15 January 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁶⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 29 January 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁶⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 5 February 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Duncan Lawson. Diary. 7 January 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

to church.”¹⁷⁰ “Howard came down with me to church.”¹⁷¹ “Fine day. Special service in church.”¹⁷² “Church at 7 in evening today...Cranes came down to church.” “Fine day. Went to church. Mr. Davis preached.”¹⁷³ Duncan Lawson rarely referenced his sisters or his parents in his diary, so unlike some of the other children who indicated each family member’s attendances, we must assume in the absence of specific mention, his family also attended.

Neil Gilchrist attended church almost every Sunday along with Sunday school. Like Lawson, his family is rarely mentioned in his diary so it is difficult to confirm their attendance, but based upon his Saturday routine of pressing his suit, it is likely church was a family event. Like the other children, Gilchrist noted changes to the ordinary indicating deviation from a pattern. “Was too sick to go to either S.S. or to church. Was feeling rotten all day. Did some Church work for Dad. Fine weather.”¹⁷⁴ “Very hot weather. Got awfully sick in Church nearly fainted. Didn’t go to S.S.”¹⁷⁵

Alec Dennys’ diary indicates that he did what he could to enable taking some time from his orchard and vegetable gardens on Sundays. Observing the Sabbath was an important punctuation in his week, and he set aside part of available Sundays to attend services. In the absence of a local church or clergy service was initially held at a neighbour’s house. “Went down to Wright’s for their services. Stayed all day.”¹⁷⁶ Later, an itinerant preacher provided service in Canoe, the nearest community but it was hit and

¹⁷⁰ Duncan Lawson. Diary. 18 February 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

¹⁷¹ Duncan Lawson. Diary. 25 February 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

¹⁷² Duncan Lawson. Diary. 7 April 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

¹⁷³ Duncan Lawson. Diary. 2 June 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

¹⁷⁴ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 16 January 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁷⁵ Neil Gilchrist. Diary 10 July 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁷⁶ Alexander Dennys. Diary. 30 March 1913. Salmon Arm Museum.

miss. “Went down to Canoe for service but Mr. West never turned up & so Ashby read the service!!”¹⁷⁷ “Walked down to Canoe to Church there. Mr. West took it.”¹⁷⁸ “Went over to Smith’s about 10 a.m. & then went down to Canoe with Joyce & waited till 12 for Mr. West to turn up but he did not come & so there was no service.”¹⁷⁹ He also attended “Mrs. H’s Bible Class” in the Spring of 1915.¹⁸⁰

Like the settlement of Canoe, Anne Willison’s community was unable to enjoy regular services and her diary reflects this.¹⁸¹ Julia Short’s community was also without a church building or full time clergyman so was dependent upon itinerant preachers, who did not always keep to schedule. “In the evening we went to Mrs. Bunce’s for service but the minister did not come.” “Went to service. Mr. Dyke preaching.” “Papa Charlie May and I went to church. Mr. Dyke preaching.” “Went down to church. Mr. Somerset preached.”¹⁸² At times also, the weather was against them. “Service but too cold to go.”¹⁸³ Nevertheless, on Sundays she wrote “Sunday” beside the date, something she did not do for other weekdays. In this way, even if there was no comment about attendance or non-attendance, she recognized the structure to the week. Like her weekly ride for the mail, weekly prayer service offered a respite from the routines of chores and allowed physical separation from the homestead, albeit just for a few hours.

¹⁷⁷ Alexander Dennys. Diary 25 April 1915. Salmon Arm Museum.

¹⁷⁸ Alexander Dennys. Diary 30 May 1915. Salmon Arm Museum.

¹⁷⁹ Alexander Dennys. Diary. 27 June 1915. Salmon Arm Museum.

¹⁸⁰ Alexander Dennys. Diary. 11 April and 23 May 1915. Salmon Arm Museum.

¹⁸¹ “May, Florence and I were at church yesterday but there was no minister so we sang a few hymns and came home again.” “A young Minister called at Lowes this evening and said there will be a meeting at the school house next Sunday. I am so glad if they will keep the meetings on there has not been any for over a month.” Anne Willison. Diary. 15 July, 10 August 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁸² Julia Short. Diary. 12 December 1884, 6 September, 1 and 15 November 1885. Museum of the Highwood.

¹⁸³ Julia Short. Diary. 21 November 1884. Museum of the Highwood.

Eula Carscallen attended the Methodist church regularly unless she was ill or on occasion, got up too late. “Cold day. Did not get up in time to go to church.”¹⁸⁴ She also went to afternoon Sunday school. Eula referenced her attendance by noting with whom she walked, “Went to Sunday School with Marion,”¹⁸⁵ or that she went somewhere afterwards, “over at Flo’s after.”¹⁸⁶ She did not record church sermons but did note extraordinary Sundays. On 24 March, Eula wrote, “Beautiful day. Went to church with Mother, Daddy and Lena. In afternoon we had a special Sunday School service when nearly all the pupils signed a pledge. I was 1.”¹⁸⁷

In 1926, Oliver Gardiner recorded his Sunday church attendance twenty-two weeks out of fifty-two. He attended church more frequently when at home than he did chapel (he was in the choir) while at school. At times his diary merely noted attendance, but on occasion he recorded the day more particularly. For instance, in early January before he and Claudia returned to school he wrote, “Today was the first time in two years that the whole family had been to church together.”¹⁸⁸ When family members attended with him, this fact was noted, “I went to church with Mother.”¹⁸⁹

Sophie Puckette’s father had been a lay preacher prior to their emigration so one would expect the family’s activities to be structured by an ongoing observance of the Sabbath, but this does not appear so, if using the evidence in the diaries. Certainly the change in routines as the family physically moved across Alberta to the homestead, and

¹⁸⁴ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 10 March 1918. Red Deer and District Archives.

¹⁸⁵ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 10 March 1918. Red Deer and District Archives.

¹⁸⁶ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 14 April 1918. Red Deer and District Archives.

¹⁸⁷ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 24 March 1918. Red Deer and District Archives.

¹⁸⁸ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 3 January 1926. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁸⁹ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 10 January 1926. Glenbow Archives.

the necessity of establishing self-sufficiency to survive the winter months created new rhythms. But Sophie's diary entries suggest a change in how she and other family members viewed the Sabbath. In the fall of 1903, on the family's first Sunday in Canada she wrote, "Papa and I went to church at night at the Baptist church."¹⁹⁰ But the following two Sundays indicate that the need to attend church was not strong. On 1 November, "I guess I won't get to go to church tonight as Papa doesn't feel like going."¹⁹¹ And on 8 November, while the rest of the family attended services, Sophie recorded "I don't feel like going."¹⁹² These candid explanations of why she did not attend church are not uncommon excuses, but probably were not publicly stated, less likely to be shared outside the family and therefore less likely to be documented elsewhere. In comments such as these, children illustrate how they were less bound by convention which might have factored into an adult's record of the same event.

As these examples illustrate, beyond recording the patterns of church and Sunday school attendance children are relatively silent on the details about what actually happened. Occasionally some insight is recorded, such as the appreciation of a particular sermon, or more rarely, a comment about the clergy, such as, "Mr. Thompson (Prespy) preached here today. He wiggles intolerably."¹⁹³ But generally the diaries provide little evidence of how children themselves experienced Sundays. The stereotype of a hushed household, additional or lengthy prayer or bible reading may have been part of Sundays as may have been a cold meal eaten, or servant given leave. Presumably optional chores were forgone (or completed on Saturdays) which contributed to a quieter household, but

¹⁹⁰ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 25 October 1903. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹¹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 1 November 1903. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹² Sophie Puckette. Diary. 8 November 1903. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹³ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 20 August 1905. Glenbow Archives.

the child-created records do not indicate much in this regard, or, that time weighed heavily on Sundays. This is a silence in the records, but whether it is a silence meaningful as an indicator of something best not complained about, is unclear. What is clear is that the records tell us that the outward conventional practise of church-going was consistently a part of children's lives throughout the period under study. This is an aspect greatly changed in children's lives since then.

Conclusion

The intent of this chapter has been to demonstrate a commonality of shared structures to childhood experienced by settler children of differing ages, geographical situations and social positions. The children recorded these shared structures of school attendance, chores and church in relation to their own particular daily, weekly and seasonal routines and in so doing reveal new evidence about family patterns and interactions that help us to understand the lives of settler society families. Children's perspectives about the structures themselves are seldom overt in the diaries. Beyond the occasional note of pride in marks received, or work accomplished or sermon enjoyed, there is no extended reflection on these structures at all. And this holds true across the ages, eras and geographical situations of these children. They did not write about the details, nor did they really fight against the imposition of these structures on their lives. Children's diaries show no complaints at being home schooled or in attending local schools, children who laboured do not note hardship or adversity and did not compare their lives with others. Children did not bemoan Sundays.

These conclusions are different from the impressions we form of the past based upon today's standards where conflict over school or chores is expected and Sunday

church-going is not necessarily the pattern. The school curriculum taught to children in this study seems not to have surfaced in their priorities when writing up their days in diaries, suggesting at best, that it was incidental to other interests. Today our life routines might be quite different than those of our neighbours; child rearing philosophies create difference in the ways children are taught about being part of a family. Children experience mixed messages about dependency and independency based upon known or imagined societal fears that are much different than those in place in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Children have socially acceptable options for Sunday, including soccer or gymnastics or swimming clubs scheduled at the same time as traditional church services. Legislation allowing commerce on Sunday has changed forever the ways children experience Sundays, and the rhythm of their weeks. The slowing down, the difference that was Sunday is lost, and this loss is made clearer when we read these children's diaries and realize just how children's expectations for the Sabbath have changed.

The children's recordings of the three structures examined in this chapter allow us to see commonality across their lives and consistency through their shared awareness of life's routines. In the main children used these daily diaries to record rhythms and deviations from rhythms and rarely used daily diaries for analysis or to record much of their inner selves and this is consistent with the format of the diaries, usually pocket sized with only a few short lines or blank space to summarize each day's activities. Nevertheless diaries are important because they provide overall frameworks to the more specific aspects of children's existence that will be examined in later chapters. For it is

within correspondence that children's opinions and thoughts on any number of other themes are found.

Chapter 4: Growing Up In All Directions – Physical, Social and Emotional

“Nothing is more certain or important about childhood than the leaving of it,” writes Daniel T. Rodgers in an article on the socialization of middle class children. His point is basic to our understanding. Children are shaped from their earliest years by “processes of leave-taking [which] are not incidental to childhood; to a great extent they form its very core.”¹ Leave-taking of course, is the inevitable move from considering oneself, and being considered by others, as a child. When a child matures and is no longer a child, the child grows up. “The complicated process of growing up”² as Elliott West calls it, includes physical, emotional and psychological aspects that are specific to each child, but are experienced as shared and as inevitable. Steven Mintz defines the history of growing up as one of “diverse and shifting pathways through which the young navigate the transition from youthful dependence to adulthood independence.”³

Child-created diaries and letters provide historians with insights into just how historical children experienced their own growing up and saw it in their siblings and peers. In this study the evidence presented is specific to each individual child but is also present across the cohort of children. This enables us to see patterns and themes and importantly, the children’s own ways of seeing themselves that counter perspectives

¹ Daniel T. Rodgers, "Socializing Middle-Class Children: Institutions, Fables, and Work Values in Nineteenth-Century America," in *Growing Up In America, Children in Historical Perspective*, ed. N. Ray Hiner and Joseph M. Hawes (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985), 119.

² Elliott West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far-western frontier*, 1st ed., Histories of the American frontier (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989), xix.

³ Steven Mintz, "The History of Children and Youth: The Past Has Many Faces," *Society for the History of Children and Youth Bulletin* Winter, no. 15 (2010).

provided within didactic or prescriptive literature or the observations of adults, all of which are more traditionally utilized sources accessed to interpret children in the past.

Children's writings exhibit basic qualities that make them different from these sources. The most fundamental difference is that they are personal, first person recordings that are in-the-moment observations of themselves and their peers – insider understandings of the process of growing up. Each child's observations are situated in what they comprehend at a particular moment, thus, over the course of a child's life, his perspectives change and this allows us to learn about his own internal growth. The examples in this chapter are drawn from a number of children, several of whom "grow up" within their own documents as we observe them changing over the years.

The state of being a child is socially constructed in the sense that it is seen as separate from adulthood. Children themselves then inhabited a world of siblings and peers bound together by the quality of not being adult. Children recognized that on the basis of age they could define and acknowledge their own particular cohort within the larger cohort of "children." This is seen in the ways in which children's own words create inclusion and exclusion. Children also recognized "transition points" or "stages" in which they see themselves and others. The repetition of like information seen across the records from different children living in different decades attests to this understanding. Because these "stages" are temporal and not retrospective and are self-applied they are also different from developmental stages ascribed by social scientists to childhood.⁴ These understandings formed the basis through which children sorted

⁴ Adult-recognized stages defining children's growing up included marrying, leaving parents' homes, establishing new households, leaving school, and entering the workforce. See Jordan Stanger-Ross, Christina Collins, Mark J. Stern, "Falling Far from the Tree. Transitions to Adulthood and the Social History of Twentieth-Century America," *Social Science History* 4, no. 2 (2005).

themselves by age and were centered in the children's own bodies because it was the child's body that most clearly and outwardly symbolized their own place within the trajectory of childhood and it was also the child's own body that held experience and facilitated doing. Some of these transition points are included in this chapter, but those that occurred on the cusp of adulthood are included in a later chapter.

Children employed their own selves to chart physical, social and emotional changes, using their own bodies as the measuring stick. Children were cognizant of their bodies changing, and also of their abilities and accomplishments as they matured. Their writings exhibit a heightened awareness and sensitivity to their own selves as they looked closely for evidence of their maturity and shared this awareness and sensitivity with their friends, linking them together in a communal growing up. Awareness of physical growth is manifest in the writings in two ways: through comparisons they made with peers of weight, height and physical maturity; as well as commentary with family or friends or self-notations in diaries. By monitoring and recording physical changes in their bodies children participated in the shared state of childhood which acknowledged this phenomena.

Young children received information from others that they were growing, that their growing was expected and would have an end result. Children were objective about their growth, recognized change within themselves and over time, their actions and perspectives altered. One particularly child-centred transition is the individual awareness of having transitioned from "play" to someone who observes play in those younger; another transition is the practise of testing oneself through acts of deliberate stretching away from dependency or reliance on others. Individual child writings provide evidence

of that child's cohort along with child-understood concepts of what they were not, or "other" – older or younger children, adults. Individually and collectively children held firm understandings of what constituted adulthood as opposed to childhood. When children experienced their peers transgressing these distinctions, they often experienced discomfort and this is evident in their writings. This content is important because it reinforces the argument that children's perspectives are distinct and different than that of adults and allows us to see social interactions and dynamics that adults are not privy to because they operate on the level of observers of children, no longer children themselves.

Children received gendered learning regarding socially acceptable behaviours, including how to handle and process emotions. In their records we see them working through this learning and over the term of individual childhoods, gendered expectations become more firmly rooted and integral to their own actions and expectations for themselves.

Another aspect of growing up is the speculation or uncertainty that children held about the future. This is manifest not only in worry about moving into the world of adults (another chapter), but in preoccupation with the threats inherent in their own situations from disease or illnesses that were so much a part of lives and life expectancies in this period, and over which, children were essentially powerless. Child mortality was more common in the past and figured prominently in the minds of children, and this preoccupation is revealed in the way children tried to make sense of it through lists, accountings and comparisons. The attention paid by children to the dead, the dying and the ill in their writings shows children deliberately recording facts as a way to make sense of what they could not control.

The physical body: “I’m bigger than you are!”

Key to the experience of childhood is the phenomenon of physical growth, a continuous and unstoppable process and the important realization that a child is never the same, never static. Each day, month and year he or she grows and in that growing comes change. Children become taller, heavier, develop body strength, increased coordination and stamina. At puberty girls and boys begin to assume their adult shapes and soon cease to look like children. Boys experience alterations in their voice, girls their menses. All these processes created change in the ways children thought about their own selves and each other. Clumsiness during a growth spurt might lead to insecurity and shyness. Sometimes physical growth accelerated or individual children began to physically mature ahead of peers. The reality and the inevitability of this process could be experienced as excitement or anxiety. The children’s words provide evidence that they knew and were proud of progress, or knew and worried about progress. Through examination of themes and of silences in their records, we also learn how children might choose not to write about certain aspects.

Observations on physical size appear in almost all the records in some manner. Most obvious are the notations about height and weight. Although the evidence is more overt with girls, both boys and girls traced their physical growth, compared and shared it with others. Girls especially seemed to discuss height and weight quite freely and with some candour. Phoebe Sanders maintained a network of friends who were former neighbours (all daughters of North West Mounted Police fathers) who had met at different posts and had developed friendships. These friends shared the experience of physically maturing in their letters to each other. It was a bond between them. “You must

be very tall,” wrote Flora Steele who had moved to South Africa. “I have grown a great deal lately, more than an inch in a few months.”⁵ While Hilda Douglas added a postscript to one letter, “P.S. I weigh 110 lbs. and am 5 ft. 1 ½ inch tall.”⁶ Some of the girls had not seen each other for several years and so they compared themselves to each other and to the selves they knew from the past. This practice was reassuring. Knowing that others were similar, gave them confidence in their physical changes. “I am exactly the same height as yourself being 5 ft. 2 ¼ inches. I think 102 lbs. is a pretty good weight, I do not weigh 100 lbs. yet. When last weighed I was 84 lbs.!”⁷ Exchanging statistics in letters was one level of sharing, but sending photographs provided the visual confirmation. “I have seen your photographs though, you look much older than I thought you were.”⁸

Phoebe kept her own private recording of her physical size in her diaries. Opportunities to measure and weigh were infrequent but offered reference points to judge the progression of her physical growth. In March 1905 she wrote, “Daddy measured me I am 15 yrs. 6 mts. Height 5 ft. 2 ¾ ins.”⁹ But only three weeks later, following a serious illness (diphtheria), which included a high fever for several days running, Phoebe was less robust and her body bore the evidence. “Got weighed at the store and weighed 92 pounds.”¹⁰ She recovered and built her strength during a spring spent in Vancouver, at the

⁵ Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 29 November 1903. Glenbow Archives.

⁶ Hilda Douglas to Phoebe Sanders, 10 September 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁷ Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 29 December 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁸ Rena__ to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 27 December [1905?]. Glenbow Archives.

⁹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 5 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 21 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

end of which, “got weighed & weighed 105 ½ lbs after being at the coast....”¹¹ The following year she was taller. “Was measured and am 5’ 7 ¼ & weight 100.”¹²

Annie Hill, at All Hallows School at Yale, mentioned in a letter to her father mid-term, “I got weighed on my birthday and I weighed 94 lbs.”¹³ Presumably she and her father both had a reference point to an earlier weight, thus her sentence would indicate physical growth. But this growth necessitated new clothing. In a subsequent letter Annie asked him to “please give the slip of paper to Aunt Annie which I am enclosing in this letter. It has on it the measurements she asked for. Will you please tell her that the 27 inches does not include the hem. They are all new measurements.”¹⁴ All new measurements confirmed a change in size from a previous accounting.

Sophie Puckette and her sisters were also weighed periodically and each time she wrote the results in her diary, creating reference points for comparison. “Ella, Maude and I went out this eve and got weighed. I weigh One Hundred Thirty pounds. Ella 127 – Maude 110.”¹⁵ “[Maude] and I got weighed. I weigh 137, Maude 115. Have gained 7 lbs. In the last month.”¹⁶ “We got weighed. Annie 135, Sophie 133 – Maude 116 – Alice 64 – Mama 176 – Elmer 154.”¹⁷

Boys talked less overtly in their writing about their sizes, yet becoming taller and heavier was never far from their minds. Ten-year-old Lindley Crease proudly recounted his trip to a tailor with his aunt, who had taken one look at his clothing and realized it

¹¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 15 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 16 February 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹³ Annie Hill to A.E. Hill. 22 November 1904. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁴ Annie Hill to A.E. Hill. 4 March 1905. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁵ Sophie Puckette. Diary 6 November 1903. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁶ Sophie Puckette. Diary 5 December 1903. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁷ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 30 May 1904. Glenbow Archives.

would never do for his tenure at boarding school, it spoke of little boy, not independent student. “On Tuesday,” he wrote, “I went with auntie to the Tailors and she got me a new hat and over coat...she also got me a dressing gown just like papa’s. She got me some trousers & eton jacket as she says I am too tall to be in knickerbockers & she says that I will wear-out my sailor suit by easter-term.¹⁸ His sister, Josephine understood about growing and comparisons. She wrote to Lindley at school in England to tell him about a new neighbour whom she compared to him in a way that suggested Lindley should be proud because he was taller despite being younger. “Walter Machell is such a nice boy he is not nearly as tall as you & he is such a little scamp, he is very slight he is 13 years old.”¹⁹ For his part, Lindley wrote to his father, “Please send me Arthur and Zeffie’s height as I am anxious to know if they are much taller this term. I make measurements every week or so (without book) & if it is correct I have grown about that much [1/2 inch] this term.”²⁰

Hugh Berry at school in Ontario wrote to his mother, “I am very well, I am fatter now than I was when I left home.”²¹ Each year he grew a little more. A month after returning to school after summer break in 1913, Hugh could not fit his clothes. “I believe I have grown ½ an inch since I left home. The trousers of my blue suit are not any too long when they are turned down as far as they will go.”²² Hugh also recognized growth in his older brother whom he saw intermittently over the school terms, as they attended different schools. He seemed pleased to inform his mother that he was gaining height in

¹⁸ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 19 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁹ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 8 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

²⁰ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 22 May 1881. British Columbia Archives.

²¹ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 12 November 1910. Glenbow Archives.

²² Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 4 October 1913. Glenbow Archives.

relation to Bert. “Bert came up & saw me last Monday he is looking fine & he is only about three inches taller than me.”²³ Bert’s hand-me-down boots only “just fit.”²⁴

Jack O’Reilly repeatedly grew faster than his parents anticipated and wrote to his mother with some dramatic flare about the rips in his pants. Frank Richter also had problems with splitting seams. “My pants,” he complained to his mother, “did not last as I thought they would every pair of pants I get always goes at the crotch.”²⁵ He resolved to get corduroys the next time.

In younger children it was all about being taller and bigger, about seeing change that proved they were growing up and moving towards new capabilities. Measurable change in body size coupled with confidence allowed children to seek new standards and be proud of physical achievements. For example, eight-year-old Frank O’Reilly informed his father, “I walked to school early by myself.”²⁶ Jack O’Reilly wrote to his brother after a return from the seashore with the exciting news “I can almost swim,” and quickly qualified, “I think I can in a week or two.”²⁷ Oliver Gardiner began to play tennis at school and only a few days after starting, he noted in his diary, “I played tennis. Improvement.”²⁸ Neil Gilchrist reported, “Learned to swim on back.”²⁹ Hugh Berry was excited about school hockey. “We are having skating here now, I am trying for goal I think I will get it.”³⁰ Phyllis Jenns reported, “I am learning to skate but my ankles are a

²³ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 28 September 1913. Glenbow Archives.

²⁴ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 4 October 1913. Glenbow Archives.

²⁵ Frank Richter Jr. to Elizabeth Richter, 28 November 1926. British Columbia Archives.

²⁶ Frank O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 22 April 1874. British Columbia Archives.

²⁷ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 19 October 1884. British Columbia Archives.

²⁸ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 18 April 1926. Glenbow Archives.

²⁹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 11 July 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

³⁰ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 18 December 1910. Glenbow Archives.

little weak.”³¹ She also expressed pride in her sewing achievements, which gained her certain autonomy in determining her clothing style and quantity. “Mother showed me how to make two dresses for myself.”³² Her sister Kathleen was clearly happy in moving into new outdoor pursuits. “I have been out in a gasoline boat to-day and I steered all the way...I also have been learning to paddle a canoe, and I can steer now.”³³ Julia Short recorded a new domestic triumph. “Edie and I made some jelly. It was even better than that Mama made.”³⁴ Bessie Richter wrote, “Mama you will be surprised ...I can play, “Over the Waves” now.”³⁵

But children, especially girls, did not often feel comfortable right away with their new physical selves. It took mental and social adjustments to inhabit a larger body. Uncertainty in how to reference one’s growth to others, or how to acknowledge it comfortably is detected between the lines in some cases, or in a change in expression. In the following quote, Phoebe Sanders seems proud, but a bit reluctant regarding her new size. In one of her regular letters to an aunt who lived in Ireland, Phoebe conveyed the realities of her physical growth in an almost coy manner, which was very unlike her earlier style and suggestive of her own awkwardness. She was faced with an unfamiliar situation, rather than receiving a gift of clothing that she could be expected to grow into, the clothing sent to her was too small. “The Blouse is very nice but I am such a big thing

³¹ Phyllis Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 5 February 1913. British Columbia Archives.

³² Phyllis Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 4 April 1912. British Columbia Archives.

³³ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 27 June 1915. British Columbia Archives.

³⁴ Julia Short. Diary. 23 July 1886. Museum of the Highwood.

³⁵ Elizabeth Richter to Elizabeth Richter, 8 March 1908. British Columbia Archives.

that the blouse is much to[o] small the sleeves come up to my elbows & its too tight and I had to give it to Tods.”³⁶

Older girls and boys interact with their own growing and move from acting as passive recorders of changes in height or weight to become agents of their own change, opinionated about their own situations. These older children exhibit gendered discourses about their growing up not seen in those younger. They received, learned and held understandings of what constituted “normal” or “desirable” feminine and masculine physical attributes and were not content to let nature take its course but instead acted proactively to assist nature along its course. Boys start to exercise and lift weights; girls worried about being too tall or heavy, and although not directly referenced in this study, must have been moulding their bodies with corsets. Children commented on their own bodies when they were unhappy about height or weight in ways that indicate they held standards and were aware of how they themselves measured up to these standards. Boys in particular worked to assist Mother Nature.

When Oliver Gardiner went out for the boxing team at school his diary entries changed. He began to record his interest in physical size. “Started putting up the boxing ring, we weighed in Today. I weigh 112.”³⁷ Because he competed in a category with heavier boys, his weight level was a concern for him. But he was not discouraged and kept up his practicing. Later that autumn he reported, “I’m still trying for the 120 lb.

³⁶ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 7 December 1903. Glenbow Archives.

³⁷ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 8 March 1926. Glenbow Archives.

team.”³⁸ Less than a week later he had two successes. “I played on the 120 lb. team. We won.”³⁹

At age thirteen, Duncan Lawson was advanced academically and by far the youngest in his grade. Although his diary does not record the reason Duncan enrolled at a gym, he may have needed the boost in his physical image that exercise could provide. “Started gymnasium evening,”⁴⁰ he wrote in January 1912, and soon encouraged friends to attend. “Went to Gymnasium in evening with Howard”⁴¹ and “Frank & Arthur Balfour came to gym.”⁴² He does not mention his size or physical growth, but notations chart that once beginning at the gym, he became regular in his weekly attendance. On occasion, he recorded “dumbbells in gym”⁴³ thus confirming an interest in building muscle mass. Neil Gilchrist’s 1910 diary has two cryptic references to size. “Took John’s measurements,”⁴⁴ he wrote on one day, and on another, “took our measurements & I showed Rus some night exercises.”⁴⁵ When he turned sixteen his parents provided him with membership at the YMCA, perhaps in response to a request.

For Kathleen Jenns and other girls, being too big was embarrassing. At a time in her life when she expected to be fully grown (eighteen-years), she moaned, “I am still growing, worse luck, some people tell me I am getting fat while others tell me I am

³⁸ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 14 October 1926. Glenbow Archives.

³⁹ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 18 October 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁴⁰ Duncan Lawson. Diary. 15 January 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

⁴¹ Duncan Lawson. Diary. 4 January 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

⁴² Duncan Lawson. Diary. 21 January 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

⁴³ Duncan Lawson. Diary. 18 February 1912. West Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁴ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 16 July 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁴⁵ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 28 July 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

getting thin so I really do not know what to believe.”⁴⁶ “I really think that I have grown about three inches since I left home. It makes me sick to think how much more I will grow. If I don’t stop soon I will not be able to get through the door.”⁴⁷ “Really I am so tall I am ashamed to walk along the streets sometimes, and when a little short man happens to come near me I nearly die of embarrassment. I suppose I will get used to it some day, and I hope that ‘some day’ will come soon.”⁴⁸ Kathleen held an idea of what she should look like, a point at which her body should have finished its growth. Ellen Ellison also held a clear position regarding appropriate female physical size and was not hesitant to share a confidence with one sister about their younger sibling when this became a concern. Her sister may also have shared Ellen’s standard of normal or correct. “Myra must be a whale. I can’t imagine her being 102 lbs. She was always so skinny. That is a good place to stop at. She doesn’t want to get too big for her age.”⁴⁹ The following year while away at school, Ellen Ellison commented on her own growth in a letter to her mother back home in Vernon. “I can’t wear one of my last years dresses. Not even my pretty white one. They are all so small.”⁵⁰ There is no pride in this accounting. Her comments exhibit a certain resignation to her inevitable growth.

Sixteen-year-old Lizzie Loudon, at convent school in Washington State, wrote to her mother in a perplexed state. She had grown in size and become far larger than she realized; when new clothing was sent to her, it did not fit. The change in her body shape must have been dramatic because she complained (and was perhaps embarrassed) that old

⁴⁶ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 4 January 1912. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁷ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 28 September 1911. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁸ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 23 May 1912. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁹ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 20 November 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁵⁰ Ellen Ellison to Sophie Ellison, 2 June 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

friends hardly knew her. “Now the only thing that ailed the drawers is the band was too small you never saw any body so fleshy my chin is duble [sic] I will be an other Grandma Montgomery I think I weight about 156 pounds it is terrific. When Mr. Harding was here he hardly recognized me.”⁵¹

Even the sophisticated veneer of an English finishing school could not counter the awkwardness experienced by eighteen-year-old Alice Ward who used humour to deal with her embarrassment at her height, having gained several inches while away from Victoria in London. Newly returned she wrote, “All Victoria...have been to Highwood to see the “show” girl five foot eight & a half just arrived from England!!”⁵² She also expressed discomfort at being the tallest in a wedding party. “I am to be Mabel Charles bridesmaid, there are only to be two Katie & myself. Mr. Burns & Arthur Jones the groomsmen...it [will] not be a tall wedding. Mabel says I shall have to stoop for will not want me to top her.”⁵³ Kathleen O’Reilly also found that she too, was taller than she thought fashionable. At over five feet, seven inches, she called herself a “lumping big sister” and hoped that her elder brother had continued to grow, for “It would look so bad to have a little brother.”⁵⁴ Undeveloped eyeteeth made her view herself as “a walrus” which furthered feelings of self-consciousness linked to her physical features.⁵⁵

Older children needed to consider themselves presentable and that they conformed to standards they held themselves, standards that they saw in those around them and read in books. Boy and girl cultures focussed on this need to be outwardly

⁵¹ Elizabeth Loudon to Maria Loudon, 6 May 1893. British Columbia Archives.

⁵² Alice Ward to Kathleen O’Reilly, 8 April 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁵³ Alice Ward to Kathleen O’Reilly, 8 April 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁴ Kathleen O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 4 August 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁵ Kathleen O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 7 November 1884. British Columbia Archives.

conforming, thus they emulated others. Correct shape, size, clothing and mannerisms would make the right first impression, a statement about one's self to one's peers.

Children were better able to socially interact when they had confidence in themselves and therefore it was important to be on target with one's growing.

The female discourse is much more frequent and detailed in the records than the male discourse and acknowledges wider gendered understandings about "the social and cultural meanings given to women's bodies"⁵⁶ in particular in training for domestic responsibility. Consumerism is also revealed in the writings of older girls as distinctly gendered. Older girls purchase for themselves and others, boys have female relatives assist or guide their purchases. When these girls take on purchasing responsibility the letters make a quick turn in subject matter. In general, the male discourse is less open or extended in the records. Boys exchanged less "talk" in letters or diaries than seen in the records of girls.

Part of a cohort: younger, older, little, big

In her study of summer camps, Leslie Paris comments that children speak from their understanding of self at the specific moment. Single perspectives exist neither within a specific age group, nor "between children of different age groups."⁵⁷ Therefore a child might reference himself in one way one day and differently the next, dependent upon his own feeling of accomplishment and comparison to those around him as the moves from one phase or closer to another. Because, of course, children's continual growing up enabled their subjective selves to be in almost constant transition.

⁵⁶ Lowe, *Looking good: college women and body image, 1875-1930*: 4. A fuller discussion of this discourse, particularly as it applied to female university students is discussed in Chapter 6

⁵⁷ Paris, *Children's nature: the rise of the American summer camp*: 12.

Identities, subjectivities and personality

These children existed within social networks composed of family and kin, neighbours, schoolmates and friends. In each of these networks children interacted with other children and with adults in specific ways contingent upon societal expectations, familiarity and blood relations. Thus, children's roles could be simultaneous and disparate. Within families, for instance, a child was at any moment, a sibling, a son or daughter, a grandchild, a nephew or niece, or a cousin to various and different family members. Depending upon family dynamics, geographical or emotional proximity some or all of these roles might encase a child's understanding of self and of her emotional relationships with specific family members. Outside of their families, children maintained additional roles as neighbours, as friends, as schoolmates.

Each of these categories of relationships required the child to draw upon her own understanding of self – who am I? – when communicating in letters or writing in a diary. These records then provide evidence of how children functioned in these capacities – I write as a dependent, I write as a sister, I write as part of a larger whole, as a family member – and stand as testaments to children's familial, emotional and social ties. The overt action of writing a letter to maintain contact speaks to obligations, to love and respect, and to priorities. The substance of their letters – the topics and people discussed, the information exchanged – allows comparison and analysis of the relationships held by each child and reveals their changing nature as the children age and “grow up,” that is, learn and develop cognitively, socially and physically.

The letters reveal children becoming, developing and experiencing their subjective selves. Subjectivity relates to the concept of identity, but is a process rather

than an end result. For instance, we each hold ideas of who we are and these ideas change over time and are multiple and simultaneously held. Subjectivities might be formed by more ingrained perspectives rooted in gender or learned through socialization and role models, but might also be situational. Thus “subjectivities” held by children undergo continuous change as a child experiences life. Who these children are and who they become (or move towards over time), is affected not only by their upbringings and by their gender, but also by their birth order and their life relationships.

In addition to providing evidence of child-held identities and child-experienced subjectivities, the large body of extant records for some of these children provides the opportunity to also pay attention to the internal and external factors that form what we term today in an all-encompassing word, “personality.” In Victorian times personality was defined as “true self” comprising “a set of qualities and characteristics that defined the essence of an individual.”⁵⁸ Personality accounts in part for differences in the ways children responded to outside influences and to external situations, the way they related to others.

Who am I?

In such ways children stretched away from those younger, stretched closer to those older, and in so doing switched affiliations. How a child referenced himself and other children reinforced that child’s own understandings of their position in the continuum. In subtle under-texts their words might also reveal uncertainties about their own self-definitions, but they clearly align themselves as “not adults.” For instance, Gwen Tunstall, an ex-classmate of Phoebe Sanders wrote to describe “an amateur play

⁵⁸ Karen Lystra, *Searching the heart: women, men, and romantic love in nineteenth-century America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 38.

last Friday night at the opera-house, it was awfully good, there were 150 children in it as well as a good many grown-up people.”⁵⁹ She distinguished between grown-ups and children in the cast, but we are not privy to the rules under which she made these designations. Her letter assumed understanding with Phoebe, an understanding of their own shared status. At age eighteen Phoebe and Gwen, and their friend Janet (who was in the cast of the theatrical performance) still considered themselves “not adults.”

Yet within the larger category of children, to which we speculate that Phoebe Sanders and her friends still thought they fit, internal delineations existed. The following examples illustrate that these were accomplished through an understanding of inclusion or exclusion – me or not me, us and them. In their writings this is revealed at times by just a word or two of explanation added to their diary entry or to a letter commentary, or else through their unconscious assumption of position on a topic. The writings provide evidence that insider/outsider categories existed within what adults might see as a less undifferentiated definition of children or of the process that is childhood itself.

At the beginning of her second term at boarding school, Phoebe acknowledged that she was now one of the older girls when she noted in her diary, “Their [sic] are 4 new little girls & only one big one & I am the second from the eldest this term worse luck.”⁶⁰ The lack of girls her own age was a big change from the previous term and was disconcerting because it meant she did not have a tight cohort with which to identify, girls with whom she belonged. Instead, she placed herself in a category separate from the “little girls” but different from the “one big one,” a lonely proposition for the school term.

⁵⁹ Gwen Tunstall to Phoebe Sanders, 28 October 1907. Glenbow Archives.

⁶⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary 5 September 1906. Glenbow Archives.

Humphrey Parlby was under twelve when he wrote to his mother. He recognized that he was viewed as a “small boy” which rankled. “The small boys are not going to sign for the guns because they are to[o] heavy, but boys over twelve can sign.”⁶¹ He did not protest about this rule, even though despite being a “small boy” he had his own gun at home. Being categorized by age, not ability was what seemed unfair, not being allowed to shoot purely based on age. His own understanding of self-competency did not mesh with the arbitrary assignment by adults.

Ivy Jenns reminded her absent father of her self-definition in relation to that of her sisters when she wrote to him of an upcoming outing. She was no longer considered a “little girl” but reported that younger sisters Kathleen and Phyllis were so designated. “We are going to Bowen Island on the *Britannia* boat, the little girls are going to Mrs. Tucker’s house for their picnic for they are too young to go on the boat.”⁶²

Terminology at times appears ambiguous, but perhaps this is an adult perspective, for the children seem clear in their use of appellations. For example, twenty-year-old Josephine Crease referenced herself when she wrote about “a young girl about my age.”⁶³ For her the adjective had particular meaning, much different from “little girl.” In 1883, Frank O’Reilly, age seventeen, had only just returned from five years schooling in England when he commented to brother Jack about a neighbour who was the same age as Jack, “she has grown to be such a big girl.”⁶⁴ Frank did not refer to her as a young lady, nor did he say she had grown-up; his words were very precise. He used Jack’s terminology for someone his own age. Likewise, Josephine Crease described a

⁶¹ Humphrey Parlby to Irene Parlby, 16 April 1910. Glenbow Archives.

⁶² Ivy Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 27 July 1902. British Columbia Archives.

⁶³ Josephine Crease to Arthur Crease, 7 November 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁴ Frank O’Reilly to Jack O’Reilly, 18 December 1883. British Columbia Archives.

neighbour to her brother. She said, “Jack [Richards] has grown such a big fat boy you would never recognize him as the thin delicate little boy that he was when he first came.”⁶⁵ Jack Richards was thirteen at the time of her comment. He and Lindley Crease had played together in younger days.

Neil Gilchrist used the word “kids” to describe his cohort. “Bill and us kids,”⁶⁶ was inclusive, but “the little kids”⁶⁷ described those younger than him, while “big fellows,”⁶⁸ those much older. He also distinguished himself and his friends from other children when in a larger context. To describe his shenanigans at school, he showed the divide through terminology. “Big kids at noon formed a line inside of door to soak kids.” In this instance, Neil is a “big kid.” Physical size not just age was a factor in delineation, big and little could be synonymous for older and younger. The sentence, “Ros & 2 shrimps all the time fighting” might reference younger children or smaller children.

Another solid clue concerning how children saw themselves growing up is seen in the way they distance themselves from those younger. Susan Crease at age seventeen clearly saw herself in a more mature light than “children” only a few years younger than her. She assumed an air of sophistication in her commentary. “Mr. & Mrs. Macdonald & children returned from England...”⁶⁹ she wrote. “Flora Macdonald is 15 & much improved. Edith & Tiny much the same as ever.”⁷⁰ Such a narrative reporting style

⁶⁵ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 29 March 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁶ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 9 August 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁷ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 12 April 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁸ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 7 August 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁹ Susan Crease. Diary. 10 October 1873. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁰ Susan Crease. Diary. 12 October 1873. British Columbia Archives.

shows how children could clearly place themselves in the role of one who recognized and acknowledged change in those younger.

Another way was through recognition of child-centred milestones or “firsts” in those younger. The very act of recording such events reveals a child whose perspectives are self-consciously changed from those younger. For instance, in 1877 Josephine Crease told Lindley about Arthur’s first appearance at the evening Christmas dinner, having previously been considered too young to attend. “We had a nice Xmas dinner & Arthur was up to it & did not go to bed till nearly 11 o’clock.”⁷¹ A few years later, at age sixteen, Josephine let thirteen-year-year-old Lindley know that she was now viewed as one who would assume the role of a children’s party organizer rather than a children’s party guest. “Last Friday there was a children’s party at the Langleys. Mary [Langley] asked me to help her to amuse them which I willingly did.”⁷² With this sentence, Josephine Crease clearly positioned herself not only as being older than her definition of a child, but as someone who, with this “first” had transitioned away from being so categorized by others. She became, as her sister Susan had done years before, one who straddled worlds, no longer unconsciously placing herself alongside children just a few years younger, but neither defining herself as wholly outside childhood. Josephine now commented from the lofty perspective of mid teenage years and as a beneficent elder. “Maggie & Arthur are great friends it is very amusing to see them together.”⁷³

Martha Harris reported on a “first” achievement of a younger cousin. “Rode out into the Country, with Papa and Harry Helmcken, being the first long ride of the latter,

⁷¹ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 30 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

⁷² Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 15 August 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁷³ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 29 March 1881. British Columbia Archives.

who is about seven years old. He rode “Cendré” and to his delight, coaxed him, now and then into a fast canter.”⁷⁴ She also referenced her young niece. “Annie went to Church today, for the first time & was very good.”⁷⁵ That children could recognize the importance of firsts in those younger is in itself evidence of a certain ability to be objective about their own status. That they periodized their own childhood and the childhood of others around them into transitions or stages as seen through specific milestones indicative of movement or passage along a continuum is a shared child perspective.

Play-time

Children have the ability to play, to occupy themselves in imaginative worlds, to amuse themselves in solitary or group pursuits. Play is something that today is considered integral to the expectations we hold for modern western childhood and is synonymous with a healthy and happy child. Play is explicitly recognized by the United Nations as a right of childhood.⁷⁶ The concept of play has changed over time, but it also changes within a child’s own understanding of what it constitutes. The transition from young child to older child can also be observed in the ways children described their activities in the blocks of time not taken up by the structures of school, chores, church or family. How

⁷⁴ Martha Douglas. Diary. 25 April 1867. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁵ Martha Douglas. Diary 27 May 1866. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁶ For discussion of social science research on play see Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the farm: work, play, and coming of age in the Midwest*: 26-33. Play is explicitly recognized in Article 31 of *The Convention on the Rights of the Child* (adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations, November 29, 1989), which states: 1. Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.

children amused themselves and how they described passing such time changed over the course of their growing years.⁷⁷

In *Children at Play*, Howard Chudacoff argues, “from a child’s perspective play serves as a means of asserting autonomy.”⁷⁸ Elliott West states, “Of all parts of children’s lives, play was the one they controlled the most and adults understood the least.”⁷⁹

Children’s play was then an act of agency, it was a form of activity in which adults were excluded, and it was not bounded by format or rules.

The word “play” presents itself in the diaries and letters, as do activities that today we would agree meet the preceding definitions. But play was (and is) a word that had a specific meaning for children; for instance, “we played till tea time.”⁸⁰ The word was not applied to organized activities (however play-like they might seem) or to activities where children interacted with older members of society even though it might be playing a game. Children understood play as it related to themselves at specific moments in time and this is clearly visible in their use of the word play in their own writings. Play was a word for a child interacting with another child, or a child in solitary or imagination-centred activities often involving toys, building or constructing places in which to play, or aids to play (forts or doll clothes). Tracing the word “play” in the diaries and letters reveals usage linked directly to a child’s personal subjectivities. Young children recorded playing and older children recorded younger children (usually siblings) playing, but older

⁷⁷ For discussion of girls’ play and play activities see Forman-Brunell, *Made to play house: dolls and the commercialization of American girlhood, 1830-1930*. For play juxtaposed to farm duties see Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the farm: work, play, and coming of age in the Midwest*: 126-57.

⁷⁸ Chudacoff, *Children at play: an American history*: xiii.

⁷⁹ West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far-western frontier*: 117.

⁸⁰ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 19 October 1885. British Columbia Archives.

children did not refer to their own amusements as “play” as this word had special application for younger children.

The records of fourteen children, the eldest at fifteen-years of age, record “playing.” Martha Douglas played. “I was out playing most part of the day...”⁸¹ “Spent some hours playing out side with Amy and the Mouats who came to see us.”⁸² “The two little Goods came over to play with me.”⁸³ So did Kathleen O’Reilly, “We played all the morning.”⁸⁴ Etholine Clearihue wrote to her father about her brothers and their doings. She reported “Bertie was at Mrs. Higgins to day playing with Kenny.”⁸⁵ Bessie Richter played with girls at her convent school. “The weather is fine out here and we go out playing every day.”⁸⁶ Kathleen Jenns reported a lack of playing to her father, “ I went to play two or three times with some girls...but have not gone since.”⁸⁷ John Biller’s diary is filled with references to play. “Played soldiers in afternoon.”⁸⁸ “Played with Bonfire and baked clay animals.” “Burrows kids came to play.”⁸⁹ “Played indians.”⁹⁰ “Played eggshell people and played on the beach.” “Went to the arm with David & played brigands coming back.”⁹¹ “Played with Cecil Dixon.”⁹²

⁸¹ Martha Douglas. Diary. 2 January 1866. British Columbia Archives.

⁸² Martha Douglas. Diary. 5 January 1866. British Columbia Archives.

⁸³ Martha Douglas. Diary. 8 September 1866. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁴ Kathleen O’Reilly. Diary. 1 April 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁵ Etholine Clearihue to Joseph Clearihue, 10 May 1898. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁶ Elizabeth Richter to Elizabeth Richter (mother), 8 March 1908. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁷ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, __ January 1913. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁸ John Biller. Diary. 6 January 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁹ John Biller. Diary. 24, 25 February 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁰ John Biller. Diary. 5 March 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁹¹ John Biller. Diary. 8, 18 April 1924. British Columbia Archives.

⁹² John Biller. Diary. 17 May 1924. British Columbia Archives.

Phoebe and Constance Sanders played with each other and with friends. Phoebe's diaries give some specifics about the types of play, including a version of house. "Played in dog kennel. Vernie Ormiston, Kathleen Belcher, Hilda Hobbs were my children. Tods lives in a big box her children are Gordon Egbert, Freddie Ormston, Louie Pratt." "Played in our little houses," "went out to play at our little houses again," "went to school & after school played in my little play house. Tods lives in the big one... Winnifred & Ruby Groch came up to play."⁹³

Phoebe "played with dolls" and "played dolls," distinctions that could delineate solitary activity with dolls and companionate activity. "We went down to Constance Hall's to play we dressed dolls all afternoon," "Dressed dolls. Their names are Elsie and Alice."⁹⁴ She caught gophers to keep as pets and tried to tame them. "Started to build a large gopher hut and played with our gophers."⁹⁵ Phoebe also referenced less specific activities. "Stayed in and played."⁹⁶ "We played up in the atic [sic]."⁹⁷ "Jean Jephson & Jessie Cholis came up to play with Tods."⁹⁸ "Went over to Hobbs to play with Hilda."⁹⁹ "Went out to play."¹⁰⁰

Sometimes play was too general for description, "Nothing in particular was played."¹⁰¹ Play was sometimes thwarted, "didn't go out to play," "there was no one to

⁹³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 2,3,4,7 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁴ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 7, 11 January 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 28 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁶ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 30 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 8 April 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 16 January 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 3 February 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 1 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 13 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

play with but Vernie & Louie so we skipped and teetered in Louie Pratt's yard."¹⁰² Not always enjoyed, "went down to Jessie Macleod's to play and have tea. Had no fun."¹⁰³

In 1905 Phoebe had her first menstrual period, soon after the verb "play" almost disappears from her diary. Coincidence? Her entries now read, "Eileen Harris came up and we fooled around." "Eileen and Lily De Susa came up and we skated & then had a cup of tea and gossiped."¹⁰⁴ Phoebe's recreational activities included skating and riding horses but she noted more sedentary pursuits in her diary than the previous year. She sewed clothing, she read novels or "never did anything in particular," "fooled around,"¹⁰⁵ but no longer "played."

Josephine Crease's diaries exist from age twelve and although she met and visited with friends, she did not use the word "play." She did, however, record her younger brother at play. "Katy Beaven come and play with Arthur."¹⁰⁶ "Hugo and Willie Beaven came to play with Arthur & stayed to dinner."¹⁰⁷ Arthur on his part, told his mother in a letter (she was away) about his own playing. "Yesterday I went to play with the Wards, we made fires & burned up all the rubbish & leaves round their place. We made a new rabbit hutch & put 10 young rabbits in it."¹⁰⁸ As this entry reveals, play often morphed into specific named activities that if assigned by parents, or defined by older children might be termed chores.

¹⁰² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 14 March, 6 April 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 29 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 29, 31 January 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 30 May 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁶ Josephine Crease. Diary. 31 August 1878. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Josephine Crease. Diary. 11 June 1881. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Arthur Crease to Sarah Crease. 28 November 1880. British Columbia Archives.

Twelve-year-old Constance Sanders wrote to an aunt about her birthday presents and expressed awareness of her age in relation to the things she still liked to do. “Fancy, I got a doll from Mrs. Welch. Such a big girl that I am, but I still play with [it] for it is a rather nice one.”¹⁰⁹ This overt self-reflective awareness of a child about her growing up is rare in the records. At twelve, or thirteen or fourteen, the Sanders girls might play with dolls, or play house with younger children, but they comprehended that they were becoming too old for such activities. A friend wrote to Phoebe several months after the playhouse phase and asked, “Do you still play in your old playhouse?”¹¹⁰ While another asked her about an older chum she hadn’t seen since moving away. “I suppose Nora is quite a big lady now & do you still play with her?”¹¹¹ She used the word “lady” to suggest someone too old for “play” and by implication that the Sanders girls would soon be as well.

Older children of course had fun times and engaged in activities during their discretionary hours, but they were less likely to refer to such activities as play. The records of these older children provide details about a number of specific activities, but their general characteristic is that that they tended to be less spontaneous, more formal and organized. Going for a walk, or a picnic, or an excursion, going to movies, skating or driving in cars were not considered play. This particular change in terminology is not linked to an established age in years, but definitely is linked to the child’s own understanding of where they fit in relation to being a child. These older children used the word “play” as a verb combined with a noun to indicate their participation in activities,

¹⁰⁹ Constance Sanders to Edith Browning, 14 January 1904. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁰ Hilda [?] to Phoebe Sanders 9 July 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹¹ Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 17 June 1904. Glenbow Archives.

for instance, “played hockey,” “played tennis.” This usage is consistent in the written records across the cohort and across the years documented in this study, but beyond this phraseology, these older children used other words to describe their discretionary activities whether solitary or with friends. They “visited,” “fooled around,”¹¹² “hung around,” “bummed around,”¹¹³ and even “did a whole lot of nothing”¹¹⁴ but very definitely did not “play.”

Although they did not use the word recreation, the activities of these older children often fit what we would define today as recreation because their intention was to refresh or entertain, or agreeably occupy themselves. Entertaining and agreeably occupying sound very much like the outcome of successful “play” but the difference is in the function. Play was not considered a means of rejuvenation, yet recreation was increasingly seen so by children as a need to let loose from the other “structures” of their days. Recreation assumed a need to re-create, to provide “refreshment of the strength and spirits after toil.”¹¹⁵ The very switch in association implies a passage from a younger child (perhaps with few responsibilities or cares) who played when time or situations allowed, to an older child who passed time pleasantly – often with friends – as a counter to her structured (and perhaps stressful or filled) time of school and chores.

The diaries and letters of older children are thus filled with references to active pursuits such as hockey, skating, sleighing, swimming, tennis, rugby, cricket, horse back riding, acting in plays, going to the movies or the fairgrounds, visiting the beach; or

¹¹² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 28 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹³ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 20 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹¹⁴ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 18 April 1926. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁵ *The New Webster Encyclopedic Dictionary of the English Language*, ed. Virginia S. Thatcher (New York: Avenel Books, 1984), 700.

social activities such as picnics, dances, theatre and music concerts. These pursuits or activities were not necessarily different than those undertaken by younger children, but it is how the children perceived them that changed. Their choice of words in describing what they do is linked directly to how they think of and see themselves and this presents clear evidence from the children's own perspectives of their own awareness of change, of growing up. Playing was what a child did until that child recognized that he or she had become distanced from those younger than them and then playing was something others did but they no longer. This subtle but key shift in self-awareness, in noting one's position in relation to others is nuanced and very personal. The adult perspective might observe outward physical changes in children, or celebrate achievement of "firsts" or other milestones, but not be privy to the associated child-internalized perspectives that defined the children amongst themselves.

Deliberate stretching away

These same child-internalized perspectives become visible when children deliberately shift or position themselves away from their younger selves. They "stretch away" from earlier benchmarks; push forward to prove to themselves and to others their own increased abilities or capacities. This is the motivation that propelled Jack O'Reilly in 1879. We learn of him through his sister's comments to their father. She suggests he is a young boy anxious to begin and do things on his own. "When Mama heard that the *O[lympia]* was coming down on Wednesday she said that she might go up to New Westminster to-morrow and ever since [sic] Jack has given Mama no peace he... wanted to go by himself and surprise you."¹¹⁶ Jack's need to stretch and test his abilities

¹¹⁶ Kathleen O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, 8 December 1879. British Columbia Archives.

was made manifest in this wish to be the one to go – on his own – to meet the steamer that carried his father. For her own part, Kathleen O'Reilly reported to her father with some satisfaction, that she had undertaken a new duty, something that perhaps a year earlier she would not have yet been able to accomplish. Her mother was ill and “said her head was bad, and that I was to write for her.”¹¹⁷

Phoebe Sanders captured the excitement of her sister's new pony in a way that linked the new pony to stretching away. “I tried Tods' new pony, the first time any of us had ridden it & in the afternoon Tods rode it all her self.”¹¹⁸ Two days later, “Tods rode out to the nuisance ground following Smiths dump cart. She was very proud going out of the Barracks.”¹¹⁹ Phoebe herself received a new pony shortly after. Confidence high, she stretched her newly acquired riding skills to show off to a friend who was frightened of a horse. “She [the friend] is as scared of it so I rode it & it bucked for 2 minutes steady & bucked the saddle off it[s] neck but never got me off.”¹²⁰ It was important for Phoebe to deliberately test herself and to show superiority.

Occasionally children anxious to grow up tried to force their status. Eileen Harris may have undertaken more than she was able when overseeing younger children while on a family vacation in Banff. “I had to go up the river the other day to see that Ned & two other kids behaved themselves when they were fishing, and they did nothing but go from seat to seat, having turns in rowing & would not listen to My orders!! so Mother had to go with them to day.”¹²¹

¹¹⁷ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 23 April 1879. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 26 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 29 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹²⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 31 July 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹²¹ Eileen Harris to Phoebe Sanders, 24 July 1905. Glenbow Archives.

Children observed other children deliberately stretching away, and if they thought these attempts ill timed, might make adverse comments amongst themselves. Thus a sister reported to her brother about a former schoolmate.

Has anybody told you that [seventeen-year-old] Elliott has been calling at places & leaving his cards !!!!! & wants everybody to call him Mr. King. Did you ever hear anything like it!! He goes about with long coats & those stuck up collars with a great gold (but I think brass) stud in the middle of his tie & then he has his walking stick & you can imagine how he would walk with it!!!!¹²²

Stretching away might also manifest in ways that challenged adult order and authority. Such was the case with Jack O'Reilly who, when his sister found a cigarette in the pocket of a suit she was brushing, came up with a less than plausible excuse for its presence.¹²³ Neil Gilchrist noted in his diary the occasions when he tried smoking cigarettes up in his bedroom, or behind the trees at the local park, or stole carrots from the Chinese farmer.¹²⁴ He also began to spend more time with his friends away from home. "We had a great time with Clint & girls but Dad was mad because I wasn't home to help him."¹²⁵ Eula Carscallen also pushed boundaries on occasion. "We did not get home till after 11 & mother & dad were of course furious."¹²⁶

Assuming responsibility for yourself and taking action to direct your own life is part of growing up. Eula Carscallen tried to do so and in her diary promised to improve her grades, not an easy task given the distractions that thwarted these best intentions. Popular and sought after by her peers, Eula was conflicted internally because socializing

¹²² Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 30 December 1877.

¹²³ Jack O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 9 November 1884. BC Archives.

¹²⁴ Neil Gilchrist, 13 May, 14 September, 30 August 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹²⁵ Neil Gilchrist, 10 March 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹²⁶ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 25 September 1920. Glenbow Archives.

interfered with her educational priorities. The pressure exerted by friends and schoolmates for whom the social life was their focus encumbered her application and resolve to concentrate on academics, to study and do her homework. She began her diary on the first day of school with this resolution. “I’ve decided to work this year, and above all, have some discipline, a set time table so that I’ll get everything in!”¹²⁷ Eula’s diary entries show her frustration at the expectation that she “go for drives” or hang out on the verandah, go to new movies or to dance. “I like the kids awfully well, but Ye Gods there’s no chance to study if this is to keep on.”¹²⁸ On 18 September 1920 she wrote, “I had the ‘blues.’ I was supposed to go down town with Brenda this PM but didn’t want to. However I finally went. I don’t know what got into me, but I decided I’d have to go away – and my heart’s desire would be to go to a boarding school...I want to get away from boys etc.”¹²⁹ The following day, “Felt worse than ever today. I cooked all day, knowing there was no use to go to a boarding school. I’m sure I can’t under stand why I feel so awful, but it just seems as though I must get rid of it all.... I guess its all my own fault. I can’t settle down...oh well I must try & make the best of it.”¹³⁰

Her diary entries show that she struggled to find a balance between maintaining a social life and academic excellence. She took the initiative, prioritized schoolwork and the time it required, balanced it against family responsibilities, church and an active social life but her frustration (perhaps anger) at herself and her situation is evident. For example, at exam time she wrote, “Had our first Xmas exam today Geography. It was Fair as far as was concerned. I absolutely must do well in these exams or it will be no

¹²⁷ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 30 August 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹²⁸ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 14 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹²⁹ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 18 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹³⁰ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 19 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

more going out for me. Crystal opened tonight & everyone seemed to be going. I wanted to but nothing doing – I had to stay in & study.”¹³¹ And, “decided I must study today. We have three Xmas exams on Tuesday, Biol., Geom., & Hist. Studied considerably but not any too much... Beth wanted me to go skating but nothing doing – I had to study.”¹³² Carscallen and these other children reveal their own growth as they pushed themselves. By taking charge of their own actions and to a certain extent, stretching themselves away from their peers, they worked towards meeting their own objectives.

Gendered bodies

As children matured, gender played a larger part in their definitions of selves. They saw themselves not just as young or older children but also increasingly as girls or boys whose lives and expectations for the future were socially prescribed. Their gender identities allowed children to move within not just childhood, but within girlhood and boyhood sharing the attendant cultural definitions of each. Girlhood and boyhood will be discussed further in a later chapter, as it is the physical transition points of puberty that form the basis for this section. Children’s transforming bodies provide undeniable evidence of their growing up, a point of no return.

Joan Brumberg states, “more often than not girl diarists have been silent on the subject of their own changing body.”¹³³ Philippe Lejeune makes a similar comment, “All that pertains to the body, to sexuality, remains outside the scope of the diary. A girl could keep a diary, without any interruption, between the ages of eight and seventeen,

¹³¹ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 10 November 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹³² Eula Carscallen. Diary. 13 November 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹³³ Brumberg, *The body project: an intimate history of American girls*: xxvii.

without mentioning the transformations brought about by puberty.”¹³⁴ These observations seem relevant for the older girls in this study because the comparisons of height and weight disappear when they reach puberty. But the observations also hold true for boys who are suddenly silent in regards to their physical bodies. In place of the earlier preoccupation with their own interests in weight and height are silences. Whereas girls note assiduously in their diaries (yet not in their letters) the biological milestone of menstruation, but do not mention body hair or developing breasts, boys are silent about their first shaving of facial hair, or even the acquisition of facial hair (or genital hair for that matter), neither do they mention deepening voices or wet dreams. The observations of Brumberg and Lejeune therefore have wider interpretation; the silences in the records of both boys and girls are all about change that is absolute, change in the body that transitions it irrevocably from child to adult, change that perhaps shames or frightens, discouraging written notation.

“My first attack X”¹³⁵ was how Susan Crease noted the arrival of her first menstrual period. The large X was the code in her diary (as it was for others, including her sisters and mother). The choice of such an aggressively charged word, “attack,” suggests a literal assault on her previous body and previous self.

The use of euphemisms for the menstrual period is well established, as are cryptic references.¹³⁶ Claudia Gardiner’s diary entry illustrates the subtlety employed to reference the reality. She wrote, “Feeling indisposed I stayed in bed for breakfast and

¹³⁴ Lejeune, *On Diary*: 132.

¹³⁵ Susan Crease. Diary. 11 June 1871. British Columbia Archives.

¹³⁶ Brumberg, *The body project: an intimate history of American girls*: xxviii.

most of the day.”¹³⁷ Kathleen O’Reilly’s 1880 diary lists a week in March where her entries took on a different pattern and word usage. “I did not go to school, stayed in bed until twelve o’clock.” “I did not go to church because I was not well.” A few days later, “I went to school & to church.”¹³⁸ Martha Harris noted similarly, “I was not very well and did not go to church.”¹³⁹ These entries may have documented their menarche. Such statements of withdrawal from school or church do not appear previously in the diaries of either girl. O’Reilly’s choice of “not well” as the descriptor was a commonly chosen euphemism for the “monthly cycle.”

Phoebe Sanders wrote in pen with a double underline and asterisk, “My visitor started*.” Along side this entry, at a ninety-degree angle on the date she also wrote in pencil (probably before the pen entry) “my thing me-bob started.”¹⁴⁰ From this date forth she used her daily diary to note the beginning of each period “my visitor came,” or “visitor.” Over time she shortened the notation to just a large asterisk at the end of the day’s record. Occasionally she noted “no visitor” to acknowledge irregularity. Sometimes her period made her uncomfortable so she “Didn’t eat any tea”¹⁴¹ or “Didn’t eat a blessed thing.”¹⁴² Sometimes it interfered with what she would have enjoyed doing. “Mother, Miss. Seymour and Constance went bathing about 11:15. I couldn’t go on

¹³⁷ Claudia Gardiner. Diary. 27 April 1925. Glenbow Archives.

¹³⁸ Kathleen O’Reilly. Diary 5, 7, 10 March 1880. British Columbia Archives.

¹³⁹ Martha Douglas. Diary. 16 December 1866. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 6 July 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 12 December 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 13 December 1905. Glenbow Archives.

account of *.”¹⁴³ Or might legitimate an absence. “Miss. Gordon said that I needn’t drill or go for a walk on account of my *.”¹⁴⁴

She also recorded her sister’s menses, beginning with “Constance had her * for the first time,”¹⁴⁵ and the following month, an abbreviated entry on 6 November 1906, “Con’s*.”¹⁴⁶ Nine days later, “Constance went to bed directly after tea on account of her*.”¹⁴⁷ The next day, “Miss. M. Gordon [school mistress] kept Constance in bed on account of her * it hasn’t stopped yet.”¹⁴⁸ The equation of menses with maturity may have been the rationale for a change Phoebe made in referencing her sibling. Up to July that year, Phoebe referred to her sister as Tods, her family nickname. Tods now began to alternate with Con, and on occasion she used her full name, Constance. But now, beginning in November, Phoebe almost always referenced her as Constance.

Sophie Puckette kept track of her monthly cycle at the beginning of her diary, noting each calendar date and commenting specifically when she had forgotten and was retrospectively guessing. Her body now had a new rhythm that structured her days in ways she had previously never imagined.¹⁴⁹ The menstrual cycle was the single most irrevocable divider of boys and girls. Girls became united as they shared experience of this dramatic biological process. The impact of menstruation on their lives is easily visible in the diligent recording of each monthly flow.

¹⁴³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 7 July 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴⁴ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 13 September 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 18 October 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴⁶ Phoebe Sanders. Diary 6 November 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary 15 November 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 16 November 1906. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁴⁹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. Page facing first entry, 1903. Glenbow Archives.

The diaries and letters of pubescent boys in this study hold no such direct references to their own bodies, even though they experienced dramatic physical maturing. But boys' diaries do hold references to their own inquisitiveness about physical changes and demonstrate sexual awareness and curiosity, something absent in the girls' records. For instance, Jack O'Reilly disputed that he flirted, which indicated his awareness of what flirting implied.¹⁵⁰ When he learned that his older brother now sported a moustache and fancy clothes, Jack sketched small ink drawings of Frank as a "swell," marking Frank in his transformation from boy to sophisticated new adult.¹⁵¹ Neil Gilchrist's diary records he and friends specifically visiting Stanley Park to watch rutting Elk and also hiding away with male friends to "play cards with a bunch of smutty postcards." He employed a code in his diary to disguise the new subject matter – references to body parts, rude noises and to sexual-related thoughts.¹⁵²

Mastering emotions

During the period of this study, extending roughly 1860 to 1925, prescriptive literature, reinforced by common understanding, viewed basic emotions as deeply gendered.¹⁵³ The literature was premised in assumptions that women and men had innate characteristics that determined their ability to act and react on emotional levels, thus girls and boys were brought up with the expectation that their emotional worlds were different

¹⁵⁰ Jack O'Reilly to Peter and Caroline O'Reilly, Xmas [ca. 1886] Xmas. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵¹ Sketches in margins of Jack O'Reilly to Frank O'Reilly, 19 October, 18 November 1884. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵² Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 30 September, 11 October, 13 March 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁵³ Although a discussion of prescriptive and didactic literature is outside the scope of this study, it is important to note that the ideas presented within this literature has formed the basis for historical studies of adults in their adult worlds, and by assumption, studies concerning children as well. Over this period, prescriptive literature did not change drastically. It was not until the professionalization of experts and proliferation of science-based research that the gendering of emotions shifted to a more gender-neutral interpretation, for instance, Hall, *Adolescence*.

and that their actions and reactions to emotional situations should manifest this difference. They were taught to channel their emotions through specific behaviours and these behaviours were also gendered; boys usually had the outlet of physicality while girls were taught to channel emotions in ways that were not so public. Adults were expected to master these standards of conduct and control, and through their daily actions and behaviours provide examples that children should follow. Thus, gendered ways of expressing fundamental emotions such as fear, anger, jealousy and love were taught to boys and girls. Part of their growing up was learning to conform, to exhibit normative and proper responses. The children's writings show their attempts to channel emotions, which are not always successful, providing evidence of children in the process of learning as they mature.

One example of channelling emotions can be observed in the letters of Lindley Crease. He was deeply miserable for the first few years at boarding school, yet never overtly admitted this situation. At age ten he kept a stoic façade. The repetition of stock phrases such as, "I try hard to do what is right. I always pray for you" or "I read my Bible & Daily bible readings"¹⁵⁴ show how he attempted to manage his anxiety, fear and aloneness through learned actions. Through bible reading and prayer, he focussed his energy on a routine and ritual that was familiar and comforting. A few years later, at age thirteen and still at boarding school, Lindley demonstrated how he tried to channel fear he felt for his father who had been seriously injured while on his circuit court travels. From personal experience Lindley knew about such dangers because in 1877, he had been with his father in the Cassiar when Henry Crease fell from his horse and sustained

¹⁵⁴ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 31 March and 25 August 1878. British Columbia Archives.

serious internal injuries. At that time his father's incapacity was life threatening. They were far from home, help or transportation in a distant frontier land. With this knowledge, Lindley therefore wrote, "I am thankful it was not worse...I want to know how you have been after it."¹⁵⁵ Channelling is shown through the use of measured language and references that illustrate learned tactics. After each questioning remark, Lindley added a comment illustrative of ways in which he had learned to deflect fear. The first was through his faith in a higher power, "we can look to God to do the rest... if it seems good in his sight." The second was by turning the situation around and recognizing that he himself would have to be patient in his expectation for more information. Lindley's words indicate that he respected and understood his father's own priority to heal first and communicate to his son second. "Patience must come [to me]...it was very good of you to write to me under such difficulties and let me know of it so soon."¹⁵⁶ The words are calm in their composition, yet the fear and anxiety behind them visible when we see the words within the context of the letter in its entirety. These phrases are not confined to a paragraph about the situation, but are found inserted into other parts of Lindley's letter as he attempted to move on to other topics of discussion. His intent was to move onward and write a normal letter, but his preoccupation with his father's health inserted itself, even as he wrote of other "news."

Humphrey Parlby was an only child who feared being separated from his parents while boarding at Bishop Pinkham College in Calgary. His first letters were poignant. Even the second term found him distraught. "I am not feeling quite as bad as last time but am pretty miserable," he began his letter, but then changed his mind and continued,

¹⁵⁵ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 28 May 1881. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵⁶ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 28 May 1881. British Columbia Archives.

“I will tell you straight I feel about as bad as last term though you may not believe it.... I don’t want this letter to make you unhappy but it is the truest thing I have said to you in my life.”¹⁵⁷ Humphrey’s fear and unhappiness made him desperate. He was unable to disguise his emotions through language as had Lindley Crease. Humphrey did not attempt to be brave and either deliberately chose to not channel in order to use his emotional state as leverage, or found that he was unable to be “grown-up” in this situation at all.

Fourteen-year-old Blythe Rogers also feared separation when his parents took him to school at St. Alban’s in Brockville, Ontario, far from his Vancouver home and family. Even before his parents returned home, he wrote,

Dear Mother. Please come back to me. Although there was a little fun here at first, it’s all over now. I shall feel like I don’t know what if you don’t. I am so lonely, and I must see you again before you leave. Aw-please do? I have a lot of things to ask and tell you anyway, but why I want you to come is because I’m so lonely and homesick. You might not believe it, but I am. I want to get away from this place as soon as I can. Its awful, but it will be twice as bad if I don’t see you again before you go to Vancouver.¹⁵⁸

As with Parlby, Blythe’s fear was not disguised, he made no attempt to moderate and show control. Perhaps at his stage of maturity he was incapable of reasoning or harnessing his emotions to present a manly front.

I am writing this letter by forfeiting my down town time. I don’t know how I can stay here a term, but oh! Mother, PLEASE don’t press me to stay longer, or I can’t bear it. It made me cry on this morning when I received Dada’s letter and realized how much fun you thought I was having, and when he said that about enjoying a trip on my bycicle [sic] I couldn’t control my tears...¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁷ Humphrey Parlby to Irene and Walter Parlby, 12 January 1914. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁵⁸ Blythe Rogers to Clara Rogers, [August? 1907]. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁵⁹ Blythe Rogers to Clara Rogers, September 1907. City of Vancouver Archives.

For these young boys, the expectations for masculine behaviour lost out to the utter anguish they experienced. There is little evidence of tempering or of stoicism as might be expected. At this stage in their childhood these boys had not yet mastered the gendered standard of male stoicism in adversity.¹⁶⁰ In examples such as this, what would become in adulthood as an automatic channelling of emotion or an internalizing process is seen undisguised, “writ large” in child-created diaries and letters.

Other boys such as Oliver Gardiner channelled anxiety into physical contact sports such as boxing, which was an established method of transference. His diary references to boxing dominate the first few months of boarding school indicating that he busied himself in sport during this most difficult transition, learning to be away from home and family. Physically aggressive behaviour, especially fighting in boys might also mask situational anger, and was also not entirely disapproved of because boys were taught that physicality was an outlet. Jack O’Reilly’s comments about fighting and bullying, both observations of this activity in peers and his own participation therefore provide evidence of this process. “There have been about five fights with a boy who is always bullying. A new boy had a fight and noched him over. I licked him but today I stopped them he is in for a row.”¹⁶¹

In opposition to the advice given to boys, girls were encouraged to sublimate, to work on their acquisition of character, to improve their own selves so that they could

¹⁶⁰ For discussions of manly traits see Tosh, *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family, and empire*; Martin Francis, "The Domestication of the Male? Recent Research on Nineteenth and Twentieth Century British Masculinity," *The Historical Journal* 45, no. 3 (2002).

¹⁶¹ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, nd. [1884]. British Columbia Archives.

weather strong emotions.¹⁶² Writing in a diary was one means to transfer anger that should not be physically expressed. Josephine Crease was the most consistent of the cohort in recording when she was angry. She acknowledged her feelings regularly in her diaries, often set amidst regular reporting of the day's events. "I awfully cross and fretty." "I cross all day with everybody." "I very cross & grumpy."¹⁶³ In the main it was not the day's events that provided the evidence for her anger, but rather, family members, in particular sisters or her mother seemed most common. "Susy & I had a tiff."¹⁶⁴ "Both awfully cross" referenced Josephine and her sister, Mary who seem to have had the most conflict. "Had a quarrel with Mary." "I too cross with Mary to think of listening [to the church service]." "[Mary] & I had a regular fight after church in Sunday School. I never so angry in my life."¹⁶⁵ Josephine used her diary as an outlet. She was expected to absorb frustrations in life and show no outward distress, but for this to work, she needed to channel her frustrations and writing allowed her to do so. By putting pen to paper she has left a record of her state of mind that shows her working out frustrations by legitimating them on paper, and then, presumably moving forward.

Her sister Susan left even stronger evidence of her emotional state. Like Josephine, writing – in a way a form of confession – was the learned reaction. She used her diary to articulate her feelings of personal inadequacy and her grief at the death of her

¹⁶² Gendered advice literature for girls during this time period is grounded within ideas found in publications such as, Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The daughters of England: their position in society, character, and responsibilities* (New York: D. Appleton, 1843).

¹⁶³ Josephine Crease. Diary. 31 August; 5, 29 October 1878. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶⁴ Josephine Crease. Diary. 1 August 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶⁵ Josephine Crease. Diary. 3 May 1882; 14 July, 6 November, 11 December 1881. British Columbia Archives.

infant brother whose chronic illness had taken a toll on the entire family. She was merciless in her self-assessment and despaired that she had lost her parent's love.

I am 15 years old a great dunce & very ugly & cross. I have lost my dearest baby Harry. I am not happy. O God make me more so. I am no longer bright & lively but dull & stupid. O that they loved me more but I cannot complain, I have more than I deserve. I must be grateful & faithful & love them more. Dear Jesus teach me to do so!¹⁶⁶

Susan's confession is unusually candid. It speaks to her grief over the death of her brother, whom she would have tended during his short life, and to whom she had given her love. It also reveals her perception of an emotional abyss between her and her parents (and, perhaps, elder sister) that may have been of longer standing.¹⁶⁷ She calls out to her God, which was a socially acceptable means of channelling emotion, but describes the difficulty she has in accepting the situation, as if by articulating her thoughts she would be made stronger. The children in the Crease family, more than other children in this study, had been taught to use their faith as a means of channelling when raw emotion threatened to overwhelm them.

Kathleen O'Reilly handled emotional situations by busying herself and not sentimentalizing. When her parents returned home to Victoria they left her and Jack in England. Part of her must have been saddened, but outwardly her reserve was stoic and she handled the actual parting with reserve. She acknowledged her behaviour in a letter some weeks later and explained that it was the way she coped. "I am afraid sometimes that I have been heartless about your going away so far but it does no good to fret about

¹⁶⁶ Susan Crease. Diary. The entry is in a diary for 1867 that she repurposed. The entry itself is dated 21 or 22 April 1870. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶⁷ And most certainly was a reoccurring theme in her adult diaries. See Powell, "Sarah Crease and Susan Crease."

the parting & I hope it will not be long before we meet.”¹⁶⁸ She acted in a similar fashion a few years later when her friend, Alice Ward returned home, leaving the school and Kathleen behind. In response to her father’s concern, she wrote, “You say that I shall fret and miss Alice a good deal but that is not the case. I am of course sorry for my own sake that she has gone but I do not believe in fretting & it is less than a fortnight to the holidays when I am going down to Folkestone to be with Jack...”¹⁶⁹ Kathleen’s physical reserve and unemotional outward stance was her own way of control but was also part of gendered cultural training which emphasized the importance of keeping an upper hand, not allowing emotions to rule actions or to give away inner turmoil. Presenting stoicism in writing to her parents was also, as it was for Lindley Crease, motivated by a desire to save her parents the anguish of long distance worry. The fact that these children had the ability to see beyond their own needs is also evidence of another form of channelling. By sublimating any indication of distress, carrying on a deception motivated by love, these children worked through their own emotional distress.

Mortality

In the nineteenth century, the threat of mortality was ever present in the daily understandings of children, not hidden away. Disease and illness could and did result in deaths, and could change families forever. In the days before antibiotics and prophylactic vaccinations, childhood fevers and debilitating infections were much more common than

¹⁶⁸ Kathleen O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 17 November 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶⁹ Kathleen O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 27 March 1884. British Columbia Archives.

they are today and included many seasonal and childhood illnesses that are today largely unknown.¹⁷⁰

Child mortality was a present and acknowledged threat. Contagious or hereditary illnesses could just as easily strike parents. From a child's perspective, their sense of belonging and security might become precarious. They were vulnerable, especially when people close to them or nearby, succumbed to illnesses. Thus, the sniffles and coughs described by children held the potential to become serious. The children's writings seldom articulate directly their own personal fears, but the patterns of their notations reveal that many shared deep-seated and fundamental illness-based fears and this reveals an important difference from childhood today, where medical advances have placed such illnesses in the background of life, not the forefront. Our understanding of why and how germs spread, for instance, makes illness more comprehensible to children today. The children in this study had very little understanding of why sickness happened. Their writings reveal that worry about death from illness played a significant part in childhood.

Josephine Crease's diaries record the seasonal rounds of sickness. "Measles everywhere (winter),"¹⁷¹ she wrote in summary of 1882. In addition, in that year alone, "Ma has measles," "the 2 Beavens got chicken pox," "Susy & I have whooping cough," "Willie got the cholera infantum," "I went to see Katie, she got the whooping cough."¹⁷²

¹⁷⁰ Measles, scarlet fever, smallpox, whooping cough, and typhus were all contracted through personal contact. Intestinal diseases such as dysentery and Asiatic cholera might be contracted through contact or infected bedding. Laryngeal diphtheria (for which the mortality rate was one in four) was airborne, or transferred by touch or handling of contaminated objects. Malarial fevers, pulmonary diseases, meningitis, and the resultant side effects or lasting weaknesses added to "normal" situational threats such as accidents, burnings, or drowning. Elliott West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far-western frontier*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1989).

¹⁷¹ Josephine Crease. Diary. "Principal events of the year." British Columbia Archives.

¹⁷² Josephine Crease. Diary. 13 May, 24 July, 18 August, 4 September, and 11 December 1882. British Columbia Archives.

In early November while visiting with friends in Yale, her sister came down with German measles. “We heard that Susy got measles.” Four days later, “get telegram of Susy saying very ill but crisis over.” Two weeks later, Susan was able to travel and came home. “Doctor Hannington brought Susy himself. She have to be in quarantine until the end of a week.” A week later Susan was still in her room. Finally, on 16 December, “Susy came downstairs for first time since her return so the rooms were fumigated with sulfur.”¹⁷³ Recovery times were much longer than we would expect today because the illnesses had to run their course without the aid of modern day antibiotics or medicines.

In November 1883, Barbara Crease died of what seems to have been a recurring illness.¹⁷⁴ Josephine recorded the long progression, beginning in March. “Bar & I most awfully busy. She has to have my room for good & I have hers!!! because her old complaint came back.”¹⁷⁵ The old complaint originated with rheumatic fever years earlier. By mid April “Barbara not any better.” In May, Josephine’s parents and Barbara left the city for specialist consultations. But 29 June, “Bar not much better than before she went.” 15 July, “Bar not at all well.” On 16 September, “Barbara very bad.” A week later she was taken to San Francisco where, despite medical attention, she continued to weaken. On 13 November, Mary travelled to be with her. On 24 November, Josephine and Arthur, with Susan remained at home where they received the news. “We hear fr:

¹⁷³ Josephine Crease. Diary. 6, 10, 25 November; 3, 16 December 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁷⁴ St. Vitus Dance, now known as Sydenham’s Chorea, an after-effect of rheumatic fever which she may have suffered in 1860. See Bridge, *Henry & self: the private life of Sarah Crease 1826-1922*: 102.

¹⁷⁵ Josephine Crease. Diary. 10 March 1882. British Columbia Archives.

Frisco that B. dying.” This is the last entry Josephine made in her diary for the year. Barbara died the following day.¹⁷⁶

Josephine’s dutiful recording of illnesses contracted by herself, family members, and friends was not just a means of filling the pages of her diaries. It was grounded in her awareness of the dangers these illnesses presented. Aches and pains were analyzed and self diagnosed. “Mary not at all well. She think she got the measles.”¹⁷⁷ It was not the measles. “Mary ill with the very mildest scarletina,” she noted soon after, “doctor coming twice to see her.”¹⁷⁸ By specifying it as a mild case, presumably on the assurances of the doctor, Josephine’s worries were assuaged, but it was not to last. A note on the following diary page delineates a complication. “Mary’s eyes very, very bad, nearly blind.”¹⁷⁹ “Dr. More come to see both M[ary] & S[usy]. Say Mary got ‘ophthalmia’ & Susy Russian measles but Dr. Helmcken say only ‘rose-rash.’”¹⁸⁰

Josephine’s underlying fear appears masked in part by the lack of emotion, the matter-of-factness, the sparse wording in her diary entries. But her careful acts of notation perhaps served to make the worries real and not to hide them away. It was important to name the illness, to put a face to it and to then be able to gauge one’s fears. So when Josephine reported new developments, the strain of the uncertainty escalated. Josephine appears to have channelled her worry through these diary entries. She prepared for eventualities because she articulated the threats, confirmed their existence and the disruption they presented to her days and to normal life, her peace of mind.

¹⁷⁶ Josephine Crease. Diary. 9 April, 19 May, 29 June, 15 July, 16, 24 September, 24 November 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁷⁷ Josephine Crease. Diary. 12 June 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁷⁸ Josephine Crease. Diary. Note across page of 12 to 16 June 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁷⁹ Josephine Crease. Diary. Note across page of 17 to 21 June 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁸⁰ Josephine Crease. Diary. 26, 29 June 1883. British Columbia Archives.

Josephine Crease also recorded deaths, the passing of old and young, babies and the elderly, peers and relations. Sometimes she incorporated them into the daily entries, other times listed them in a section at the back of her diary that she titled “Principal events during the year.” For instance, “Lieut Lees died from injuries to his face,”¹⁸¹ and “Mr. James Douglas buried in Victoria immense funeral.”¹⁸² But these notes may have been more than a way to structure each year, they perhaps served a purpose that was both cathartic and realistic. She conquered the fears generated by illnesses, especially the fear that loved ones might die by placing them within the context of her wider world and perhaps, the world created by a higher power. Although none of these entries allude to her faith, her matter-of-fact recording suggests an acceptance of things she could not change. At sixteen, she received information about her good friend Walter Machell (who with his family had moved away). “I heard that dear Walter was very ill & that he was not expected to live through the night, we heard through Dr. Powell & his letter was 3 wks old. So no one knows if he is dead or alive now...I am so sorry for W’s parents quite heartbreaking.”¹⁸³ “Arthur Good died this morning age 19 ½,” wrote Josephine that same year. A few months later, “The youngest of the J.B. Good’s was prayed for in Church (Beatrice),” then; “I saw in the paper that Beatrice M.H. Dundas Good age 10 months had died yesterday of Cholera infantium.”¹⁸⁴ The tragedies around her were part of her world and were random. No one was immune. Her best friend, Lidy Richards died in 1884 of rheumatic fever far away in Bermuda. It is only with Lidy’s death that we are privy to

¹⁸¹ Josephine Crease. Diary. Principal events of the year, October 4, 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁸² Josephine Crease. Diary. 14 November 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁸³ Josephine Crease. Diary. 26 March 1881. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁸⁴ Josephine Crease. Diary. 13 May, 4, 7 September 1881. British Columbia Archives.

more than just her diary notations. Se wrote a letter to Lindley. In it her inner grief is exposed. "I...feel quite desolate without her."¹⁸⁵

The Sanders letters include many references to health issues. Phoebe and Constance keep their aunt apprised of all the family's aches and pains. In late 1903, Phoebe wrote, Mother says I am sick but I am not and she is going to keep me home until after Xmas. She says now that she is going to keep me home till Easter." The reason becomes clear the following week. "I am not going to school until after Easter I am Emick [sic]."¹⁸⁶ A year later, just before Christmas 1904, Phoebe drew a sketch of herself for her aunt. Beside it she wrote, "Here I am sick in bed with inefoelitus [sic] and it is under my right eye and across my nose and my right glands are all swollen and a read [sic] flannel around my neck and I am all painted up. The paint I have on my nose is brown."¹⁸⁷ She recovered and a friend was relieved: "I am awfully glad you have got over the sickness."¹⁸⁸

In March 1905 Phoebe confided in her aunt, "Little Kathleen Belcher died after lunch today. She had the same thing as the little Cross children had, she died of heart failure."¹⁸⁹ The news reached her remote friends also. Hilda Douglas, now in the Yukon, wrote, "I am sorry to hear that Hilda Hobbs was ill...It is too bad that Kathleen Belcher is dead. I suppose that Hilda Hobbs is better by now."¹⁹⁰ The heart failure Phoebe

¹⁸⁵ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 1 November 1884. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁸⁶ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 1 and 7 December 1903. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁸⁷ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 11 December 1904. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁸⁸ Hilda Douglas to Phoebe Sanders, 9 July 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁸⁹ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 27 March 1905. Glenbow Archives. The Cross children were Helen (born 1900) and Selkirk (born 1901), a third child, Jim, (born 1902) survived. The Cross children were those of Helen Macleod. See Sherrill MacLaren, *Braehead: three founding families in nineteenth century Canada* (Toronto, Ont.: McClelland and Stewart, 1986), 325-27.

¹⁹⁰ Hilda Douglas to Phoebe Sanders, 9 July 1905. Glenbow Archives.

described was actually a symptom of diphtheria. What Phoebe did not say was that she too, and very recently, had been ill for several weeks with a high fever and painfully swollen glands in her neck (not unlike her earlier illness only much more severe). Too sick to keep her diary, while on the mend she caught up with retrospective entries: “taken sick in bed temperature 103 pain intense,” “temperature 103 suffered frightfully,” “temperature 103 ditto worst day,” “temperature gone down a little felt a little better but still suffering frightfully.” Eventually the illness passed, and near the end of the month she “got up about 5 o’clock but was pretty shaky.”¹⁹¹ It would take several months for complete recovery but the high fevers created hair loss. “I have 10 hairs left now...”¹⁹²

Phoebe did not comment directly either in her diary or in letters about fears she undoubtedly had during her illness, nor did she name it, but she did allude to her own illness in her diary on the day of Kathleen Belcher’s death a month later. Kathleen was younger, but one of her playmates. She wrote, “Little Kathleen Belcher died from heart failure she had a very sore throat.”¹⁹³ Phoebe survived diphtheria, as did Hilda Hobbs, who recovered quickly because she had been given an antitoxin, a fact Phoebe also recorded. “Hilda Hobbs is sick has been in bed for 1 week sore throat antoxine 3 times. Mother stayed their the night Dr Hobbs away East. Mother has a sore throat herself.”¹⁹⁴

The connections between Hilda Hobbs, her mother’s symptoms, her own illness, Kathleen Belcher, and others in her community become clear when correlating her diary, her correspondence outwards and incoming letters from friends. Phoebe noted each and every time her parents became ill and described their symptoms and the course of

¹⁹¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 15, 17, 19, 22, 25 February 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 16 May 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 27 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹⁴ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 1 December 1904. Glenbow Archives.

medication, she understood the relationship of her illness to that of others around her who did die. Awareness of illness and the knowledge that children die, children she knew and interacted with, was a fundamental fact of life. Every sniffle, every sore throat or stiff neck, every fatigue might result in a death. The time Phoebe took to note the health of each and every family member is perhaps now apparent. Perhaps, like Josephine Crease, Phoebe Sanders observed and recorded to monitor, each girl acutely aware and fearful at a fundamental level each and every time a symptom manifest. The two children are separated by three decades. It is speculative, but their need to monitor and observe appear to indicate that the threats represented by illness were important aspects of the experience of childhood over a longer time period. We might also speculate that some children tried to control their fears, or at best understand them through diary notations. At the most basic, such actions reveal an additional level of connections between children who were peers and friends as they monitored each other's health, even when separated from long distances.

Conclusion

The voices of children provide many opportunities for historians to gain insight into the personal and individual experiences of growing up, whether it is in a statement of a child's height and weight, a comparison of abilities, a change in word usage or milestone achieved, or in the way they handle emotions. Categorizing children as they saw each other according to their own degrees of "grown-up-ness"¹⁹⁵ rather than employing adult-created understandings of relationships between age and physical maturity or using a developmental model truly presents new perspectives.

¹⁹⁵ "Grown-up-ness is a term used by Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the farm: work, play, and coming of age in the Midwest*: 183.

The children in this chapter were born across the decades within the date range covered in this study. Each underwent the transformation from young child to older child; each experienced the emotions of physical and psychological changes. By looking across the cohort this way and finding common subjects such as physical growth, accomplishments and stretching away, and noting child-centred shifts and acquisitions of gendered teachings, any chronological and geographical disparities between the children disappear. What we see are commonalities within the experiences of childhood, suggesting shared experiences as well as shared preoccupations that transcend time and place. In this case, children growing up in the long Victorian age demonstrate similarities in their experiences with children growing up in the Edwardian years. Children on ranches or in rural settings exhibit some of the same angst as those in the cities. Children sent away to school have the same preoccupations about physical growth as those at home.

For all their individualities, it is the children's shared perspectives that reinforce and validate, it is their child voices in unison that now provide fresh alternate historical viewpoints. This chapter reveals the perspectives of the individual children, but like the previous chapter, also shows how children's experiences transcend their individuality. Other shared transitions along the continuum of childhood follow in a later chapter.

Chapter 5: The Boarding School Experience and Separation

Schooling is almost synonymous with our understanding of childhood in the western world. Most children attended school locally even if only for a short duration. Attendance at school therefore defines the experience of childhood, and in autobiographies or memoirs is almost certainly a standard topic of recollection. Almost all the children in this study received some type of formal education. Although not every child progressed through all the levels, or even had ambitions to do so, each came away with an understanding of the process of education and a certain degree of literacy. For it is both the experience of school and of literacy that unites these children. Becoming literate was a process that deliberately excluded those who did not share the hours, days and years, physical space or companionship – the experience of attending school. In the nineteenth century aboriginal children rarely attended school and when they did, it was not at the same schools as colonial children. Later, Asian immigrants in urban centres were forced to attend segregated schools.

English language schooling (and literacy in general) therefore emphasized the distance between colonizer and colonized, the dominant settler society from others; thus colonial white children who rubbed shoulders and got to know peers at school moved within insider social circles.¹ The time spent in application of learning solidified self-

¹ For discussion of the adult perspective of the function of historical Canadian schools in creating “national-identity construction” and “common cultural knowledge” see Stephen J. Heathorn, *For home, country, and race: constructing gender, class, and Englishness in the elementary school, 1880-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000). For information on the goals of British Columbia schooling see Gleason and Barman, *Children, teachers and schools in the history of British Columbia*. In an Ontario

understandings that formed the very core of each child's identity. Children could speak to each other across the shared intimacies of textbooks, or lessons, of grade or form levels, of exams, of passing or failing, and know that others of their own cohort would understand and relate. Letters between children where they compare grades and confirm competencies provide evidence of this fact, as do their comments about friends and acquaintances that are set within a context of self-understandings that place each child in relation to another on the basis not only of scholastic achievements but also on the assumption of shared beliefs learned in school. School-based literacy and accomplishment in the arts along with social networking assisted children to operate within the settler society and established between children, circles of commonly held perspectives.

The previous discussion of children's attendance at local schools as a "structure" within their lives demonstrated that school itself seldom provided subject matter for letters or diaries, suggesting that the experience of school was of less import for children than the contexts in which they attended. But not all schooling was local. Middle class and upper middle class children in British Columbia and Alberta might also be sent away to boarding schools. These children were now absent from home and distant from family members. This circumstance facilitated the creation of correspondence. Children wrote home and kept in touch with family and friends. Many letters were so exchanged. Yet examination of these letters reveals that children still chose to spend little time in deliberate description of their academic days. Close reading of these records, however, reveals that even though rarely a topic of deliberate conversation, child perspectives

context, but applicable for the period generally, see Paul Axelrod and John G. Reid, *Youth, university, and Canadian society : essays in the social history of higher education* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1989).

concerning their own experiences of their boarding school situations are embedded within the written conversations of letters, providing important evidence of these child worlds.

Boarding schools

In nineteenth and early twentieth century British Columbia and Alberta middle class and upper middle class parents often sent their children, especially boys, away from their homes to board at and attend distant schools. These children were separated from their families and communities for significant periods of time and this situation had an effect upon not only the children thus sent, but also on siblings and adult family members left behind. This chapter utilizes the diaries children wrote and their letters home to reveal how their learning at boarding school was not merely academic. Yes, they received a standardized education that would insure continuation of class structure and prepare them for future roles as key players in the construct and maintenance of Empire. But while at school they also learned to live and operate within homosocial worlds; to participate and be immersed in gender-specific cultures set within the confines of their school; to cope with peer dynamics and to make decisions and direct their own futures when the opportunities presented. Most significantly, they learned to function without the physical comfort of family members alongside and the daily intimacies of family living. While at boarding schools, children proactively engaged in long distance communication via letter writing as they endeavoured to maintain connections to siblings, parents and friends. The strain of separation is seen very clearly in the children's writings. The child perspective of boarding school as an experience involving emotional

pain is very different than the perspective held by their parents as they made decisions about sending children away.

In *Empire Families*, Elizabeth Buettner examines the practice of sending children from India to the metropole for some or all of their schooling and the impact this had on families. Her study traces colonial children and families in India but has obvious parallels to British Columbia and Alberta families whose children were sent “home” to receive their education. Buettner’s work illuminates the shared experiences of colonial families whose children left their homes for schooling in Britain; shared experiences that often were habitual, and patterned successive generations. Removing children from the colonies meant extended disruptions, a “family life punctuated by separations.”² When children returned from these long absences they were changed and grown-up. Reintegration into their families was often awkward and unsettling, cohesion between generations and between siblings suffered because of this practice. Today in the twenty-first century, boarding school students share some similarities in the aspects of separation and adjustment but without most of the strains of the nineteenth century when absences were longer, distances not so easily travelled, when letter writing (subject to uncertainties of the mail and lengthy delivery times) formed the principal method of communication home.

Parental perspectives on sending children away to school

Parents sent children to boarding schools because they assumed that local schools did not provide a level of education deemed appropriate by parents for their children. In particular, fathers who had themselves attended elite preparatory schools and colleges,

² Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*: 14.

advocated that their sons receive similar training. Local schools lacked the prestige, the status of having taught generations of students. Likewise, the available advanced schooling for their daughters fell short of the established ladies academies and finishing schools in Britain or on the continent that many upper middle class mothers had themselves, attended. In the absence of appropriate locally available schooling in British Columbia or Alberta, parents who had the financial means and motivation, then sent their sons and daughters away to boarding schools if they wished to ensure the perpetuation of the social status quo, or enable upward mobility. Parents were also guided by nineteenth century discourses of colonial British family life that stressed the importance of allowing children the opportunity to absorb and identify with their British heritage as a counter to the cultural and physical proximity of non-British and indigenous populations in the colonies.³ Perceived threats of ethnic and racial contamination⁴ and nascent sexuality⁵ comprised parental worry, as did concerns about the maintenance of class status. The solution was to separate these children from their colonial homes and have them connect with the metropole. Parents had the futures of their children at heart when they made these decisions and it was not without emotional misgivings. Children left the security of family life for the very different setting of boarding school. Parents seldom accompanied children on their journey, because the financial outlay was prohibitive or other circumstances (employment for instance, or raising younger children in the family)

³ For an examination of changing attitudes of colonists to the colonized as reflected in dress and behaviour, see E. M. Collingham, *Imperial bodies: the physical experience of the Raj, c. 1800-1947* (Cambridge UK: Polity Press, 2001).

⁴ For discussion of the culture of respectability and racial exclusion (sturdy manhood and domesticated femininity) see Catherine Hall, "Of Gender and Empire: Reflections on the Nineteenth Century," in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine.

⁵ Articles by Fiona Paisley and Patricia Grimshaw in Philippa Levine, *Gender and empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

necessitated their own continued colonial residency. Instead parents might coordinate their child's departure with that of other community members who might then act as chaperones.

Nineteenth century practises

In the nineteenth century it was to Britain in particular that parents sent their sons for schooling. British public schools boarded students from the metropole as well as the colonies. Parents also recognized that the distance from cultural opportunities and of refined teaching disadvantaged their daughters. Yet the pattern for sending girls away for fundamental education was less engrained. In the nineteenth century, upper middle class British Columbia and Alberta parents sent their sons, but not their daughters to Britain for fundamental schooling. This study includes only two girls in the nineteenth century who were sent to Britain compared to nine boys. Economics may have been a deciding factor, but it was also cultural, girls having less need for academic excellence, or so it was assumed. The advantages of gender specific academies where girls received education from gentlewomen or male tutors in a home-like setting could come, parents knew, later, as their daughters approached adulthood and would benefit from "finishing," from smoothing some of their colonial roughness.

Boarding schools in North America for boys (and later girls) became increasingly available in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century. They were modeled on male British public schools (which were the standard) and were located in distant cities, in other provinces (chiefly Ontario) or in the United States. In the last decade of the nineteenth century and first two of the twentieth century, these establishments became the norm for parental considerations. Eighteen girls and eight boys in this study attended

Canadian schools, while five girls and three boys attended American schools. Depending on personal situations and preferences, parents who had financial means, held aspirations for their children's future betterment, and who carried their own experience of boarding school in their personal history elected either British or European, Canadian or American schools and arranged that children, some as young as nine-years-old, leave their homes and families to enrol as boarders.

Children sent to boarding schools overseas in the nineteenth century spent long periods away from home, extending far beyond the school semesters. Boys especially went away as young scholars and often did not return until graduation and might be absent for five to eight years. At times boys moved straight into professional articles or apprenticeships, increasing their overall absences. In this study, Joseph Wilson, Harry and James Helmcken, Lindley and Arthur Crease, Frank and Jack O'Reilly had this latter experience. Girls such as Kathleen O'Reilly, Alice Ward, Martha Douglas and Mary Crease were much older, in their middle to late teens when they attended finishing schools or had private study in Britain and their times away from home were shorter, generally between one and three years. Unlike their brothers they did most of their physical and emotional growing up within their family settings but like their brothers, learned to be self-sufficient while separated.

Early twentieth century schooling

Boarding school children in the early twentieth century were spared some of the privations experienced by nineteenth century boarders because improvements in communication and transportation enabled families to reunite between terms and during holiday periods. The diaries of the Gardiner children attest to that, as do the letters of the

Cross children, the Ellison sisters and Blythe Rogers, all of whom were schooled in North America, not Britain, yet the Berry siblings (who were Ontario schooled) did not see their parents for longer stretches, not even during Christmas breaks, presumably because of the expense of travel for this less affluent family. Family uncertainties and the responsibilities of parents to care for younger siblings caused lengthy separations.

The legacy of separations

If we consider, as Leonore Davidoff maintains, that “children’s identities formed predominantly within a familial rubric”⁶ and, as Anna Davin states, “interlocking networks of family, school, work and neighbourhood gave children form,”⁷ then those children sent to the metropole for years at a stretch (and even those who boarded elsewhere in Canada or the United States) were “defined in terms of their lack of family”⁸ and of severed connections with neighbours and friends. The emotional strain of separation and the lost years of intimacy have been described as the “price of empire” and it affected the parents and siblings left at home as well as the absent children themselves.⁹

This legacy of lengthy school-based separations has not yet been examined in relation to Canadian children. The letters written by children while attending boarding schools both overseas and in North America form a particularly strong component of the primary documentation in this study and contain the content that allows us to begin such an examination. In these letters children recorded what was important to them at the moment and what was important to relay to others. In silences we can also see the aspects they desired to suppress or the topics they did not consider pressing. The letters are

⁶ Davidoff, *The family story: blood, contract, and intimacy, 1830-1960*: 55.

⁷ Davin, *Growing up poor: home, school, and street in London, 1870-1914*: p. 31.

⁸ Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*: 111.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 14.

especially strong in documenting not only the emotional anxieties children endured during their years away from home life but also the efforts made by these children to maintain intimacies with siblings and the concurrent efforts made by siblings left at home to also maintain ties, to hold fast to memories of routine and shared experiences. The letters of boys at boarding school also convey anger at parents for their continued separation, anger at siblings who do not write as frequently as these boys might wish. Anger coloured their familial relations and this fact would undoubtedly have implications for their lives after they returned home and resumed physical proximities, but also might carry over into their adult lives. The situation of boarding school separations as experiences held by a significant segment of middle class children generally and the examples of the children's own perspectives of their specific experiences revealed in this study provides important new evidence of the strains experienced by Western Canadian children (and their families) both in the names of empire and of education.

Twenty boys and twenty-eight girls – almost half of the children in this study – grew up away from family and amongst other students, with teachers or staff the closest adults in their immediate worlds. Such deliberate separation from the nuclear family was accepted in nineteenth and early twentieth century British Columbia and Alberta settler society and warrants specific comment here because it is an aspect of family studies seldom discussed in the literature or acknowledged in examination of family behaviours, and if examined, is done so from the parental perspective or in reflection.¹⁰ It is also worthy of analysis because children's growing up in isolation from their families was not an insignificant variable for British Columbia and Alberta children during the period

¹⁰ For instance, Barman, *Growing up British in British Columbia: boys in private school*.

under study and might have important ramifications for understanding the adults these children would become and the society they created.

Boys experience school

A priority for British public schools and North American boarding schools was to deliver standard academic curriculum but the philosophical underpinnings of these schools also stressed the development of a student's moral character. During the period under study, these schools placed "emphasis on the secular virtues of determination, self-control, and a sense of duty. For the pupils this translated into a cult of athleticism and the celebration of games as the mainspring of those qualities of fair play, unselfishness, and *esprit de corps* deemed the foundation of gentlemanly conduct."¹¹ In their letters home, boys in the nineteenth century included comments or detailed reporting on rugby and football (soccer) games undertaken by their school, which they may or may not have taken part in, but nevertheless often served as the "news." Boys in the early twentieth century added archery, wrestling and gymnastics to their commentary. Girls talked of basketball and hockey. Trying out for the team, playing on a team, cheering for the school at game time, dealing with one's own injuries or successes, scoring and disappointments all comprised regular and quite extensive sections of letters home, confirming sporting events and athleticism as underpinnings of student dynamics. Even boys or girls who were not interested in their own athletics, celebrated the performances of others in their cohort and worked to minimize any divide between aesthete and athlete, for boy's culture and to a large extent, girl's culture as well, came together through general support of physical performance.

¹¹ "Public Schools: Britain," in Fass, *Encyclopedia of children and childhood in history and society*: 704.

In the nineteenth century parents of boys in public schools supported routines of “stern discipline, reinforced by the generous use of corporal punishment, the devolving of disciplinary power onto prefects, and the practice of fagging, whereby younger pupils were required to perform services for older boys.” Such organizational practices were accepted because they were believed to teach “boys those habits of obedience, self-command, and authority necessary for a future role in public life and the administration of empire”¹² and in so doing would affirm their position within the class structure.

Studies of public schools in Britain trace the roles that all-male student bodies and teaching staffs played in creating and sustaining homosocial bonds that reinforced each boy’s social positioning and also confirmed gendered divisions outside of school in everyday life.¹³ It is sufficient to conclude that such environments, while supporting the status quo, might not always have a beneficial outcome on the immediate personal level. For within public schools themselves flourished a boy culture that John Tosh in *Manliness and Masculinities*, maintains “despised intellectual ability and aesthetic sensibilities; it elevated athletic prowess to become a fetish; and it cultivated...group loyalty...” The homosocial culture of public school, argues Tosh, functioned around “a crude pecking order by seniority and by muscular might...[and] taught boys to endure cruelty and then inflict it on those weaker than themselves.”¹⁴ The influence of these schools and this culture upon the boys in this study, along with the effects of their separation from families can be seen in their letters home.

¹² “Public Schools: Britain,” in *ibid.*

¹³ See Deslandes, *Oxbridge men: British masculinity and the undergraduate experience, 1850-1920*; Tosh, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England*.

¹⁴ ———, *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family, and empire*: 112, 13.

Boy culture

Boys defined themselves in relation to what they were not, that is, no longer children, but not yet men, and most importantly, not girls, but boys. “Boyhood” comprised the years when boys ventured outside the house and claimed the yard, the streets, the playgrounds and neighbourhood as places to interact with male peers, away from the physical proximity of girls and the direct oversight of female adult family members. Boys freely played with other boys, and age was not such a determinate as it would become later in the twentieth century with the establishment of age-graded schooling and the development of boys’ organizations. Boys sorted themselves out by size and skill. Boarding school, like the outdoors was boy-centric space. The microcosm of the boarding school, like that of the outdoors, set boys as inhabitants of “an alternate world” that was “a sharp contrast to the domestic, female world – the world to which they returned every evening,”¹⁵ or in the case of boarders at all male public schools, only at term ends or school leaving.

Anthony Rotundo suggests that the world of boys – of boy culture – was defined by “energy, self-assertion, noise, and frequent recourse to violence,” the opposite of “kindness, morality, nurture, and a gentle spirit,”¹⁶ of the female sphere. Although his description reinforces behavioural stereotypes and promotes an essentialist view, his comment nevertheless serves to acknowledge discernable characteristics that made “boy culture” and “girl culture” appear distinct and defined in opposition to each other. The child voices in this study, however, will suggest some intersections.

¹⁵ E. Anthony Rotundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in 19th Century America," in *Meanings for Manhood: Construction of Masculinity in Victorian America*, ed. Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 16, 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 19.

Boy culture functioned on the level of commonality or inclusiveness based upon gender and was defined further by shared understandings of what constituted masculinity as opposed to femininity, thus, both younger and older boys connected at basic levels that girls would not know. Boys tested each other. “Humbugging” – lying, intentional deception, playing pranks – was accepted practice at boys’ private schools. Frank O’Reilly predicted that his friend Willie Ward from home who was a new schoolmate “will get humbugged a good deal when he is first left alone.”¹⁷ His brother remarked, “Ching [one of the older boys at school] is always humbugging Ernest.”¹⁸ But boys also assumed responsibility towards each other. For instance, when an acquaintance arrived at school and became the “new boy” these established boys understood it was their role to guide and mentor their acquaintances even though it might dislodge other school-established interpersonal dynamics. Lindley Crease wrote:

George Moody will be here for the first time & it will be my duty to look after him & put him up to everything & try to influence him for the good to make good resolutions in the new step of life but it will be hard as I do not think that he is the kind of fellow to get on very well with his comrades & then there is Rashdall – how will he like it? To have a “new governor” of that kind in whom he has no interest going about with him as he must when we go together.¹⁹

Boarding schools were almost entirely without female influence. Boy culture thrived. Male teachers often became role models; young boys observed older boys, patterned themselves after the examples of older boys or teachers. Older boys led by virtue of their size and age and longevity at the school, while younger boys followed.

¹⁷ Frank O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 21 February 1881. Private Collection.

¹⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 9 March 1886. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁹ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 25 January 1882. British Columbia Archives. Herbert Rashdall was Lindley’s friend from home, also a student at Haileybury. George Moody was a son of Richard Clement Moody, acquaintance of Lindley’s parents from past days in B.C. Lindley had previously met George whilst staying with the Moody’s on a school break.

Peer pressure played a part in encouraging homosocial ties and discouraging boy's ties to female family members. Ridicule was an effective tool in the hands of older boys or boys who knew how to assert power over others, but it also had the ability to ostracize. A boy who wanted to be part of the cohort did what was necessary to conform and not be subject to ridicule. In this study, one clear example is visible in the letters of Lindley Crease who had been ridiculed for maintaining communication with his mother. Within the student body at his school, Haileybury College, it was paramount to demonstrate male bonds. Keeping in touch by writing to male family members was expected, but "No boy who valued his reputation would speak of mother or sisters."²⁰ With some contrition, Lindley explained to his mother that she should understand it was difficult for him to write to his sisters because he was teased for doing so.²¹ Boys made life difficult when they perceived one of their own to be "tied to apron strings" because "becoming a man involved detaching oneself from the home and its feminine comforts."²² Likewise, he instructed his mother to refrain from addressing his letters, "Master Lindley Crease"²³ as this salutation emphasized a domestic boy, not an independent schoolboy away from home.

Popular literature – adventure novels and serialized fiction – also played a role in moulding boy culture from the late nineteenth century. Boys often received subscriptions to these weekly monthly magazines from male family members. These were read avidly and shared with fellow students. At school in Switzerland, Joe Wilson wrote to his father

²⁰ Tosh, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England*: 118.

²¹ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 31 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

²² Tosh, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England*: 110.

²³ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 31 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

and asked that he “thank uncle Joe for me for sending me Frank Leslie’s.”²⁴ Family friend Willie Dickson at school in Scotland also wrote to thank Joe’s grandfather for “the papers I am getting them weekly.”²⁵ Other magazines read included *Chums* and *Tip Top* magazines²⁶ whose fictional male protagonists exemplified manly traits such as self-reliance, courage, moral strength, loyalty and stoicism. Such values might reinforce standards already internalized by boys as defined in their family interactions through church-going, participation in boy’s clubs and general discourses of the day. But living at school in a single gender environment did nothing to offset the stereotyping of male heroes and the predictably one-sided portrayal of girls and women in these publications. The actions and opinions of friends at school as they discussed each week’s magazine tales provided daily interactive reinforcement of their belonging within a male peer group and within a larger understanding of “boy culture.”

Fagging

Boarding schools were a social microcosm that often closed in on the new and younger students, and then opened up for students as they progressed in years and achievements. Each student body had a pecking order, an internal hierarchy based on status accorded to students by age, years at the school and grade level. It was sanctioned through dispensation of privileges and also through the centuries-old practise of

²⁴ Joseph Eilbeck Wilson to William Wilson, 3 March 1880. City of Victoria Archives. Frank Leslie’s Boys and Girls Magazines were published weekly.

²⁵ William S. Dickson to Joseph Wilson, Senior, 3 January 1881. City of Victoria Archives.

²⁶ Published in England, *Tip-Top* magazine was promoted as "an ideal publication for American Youth" and featured fictional heroes such as student Frank Merriwell. *Chums*, founded in 1892, another well known English boys' publication, included illustrated adventure stories about animals, people, and sports which encouraged boys to be good, honourable, moral, and respectable. It also featured school stories set in boarding schools. *Chums* also included moralistic messages to be honourable, not quarrel and respect your elders.

“fagging,”²⁷ a formalization of power relations structured by age which gave senior students both power over and responsibility for the behaviour of younger students. In theory, the system reflected ideas of social hierarchy, of working ones’ self to the top and earning status, of first learning to follow, and then later, to lead others. In practice, the altruistic intents of fagging were often lost in the misery experienced by younger students left at the mercy of irresponsible or power-abusing seniors. Exploitation (and at times, also physical and psychological abuse) was common, and considered part of the educational experience by adults who facilitated its perpetuation.²⁸

Lindley Crease at nine-years-old was a younger student. He held colonial status combined with a gentle personality. He was alone and miserable. He must have been bullied; he certainly would have fagged for older boys although he mentions nothing. Neither did the young Jack O’Reilly speak directly. His early school letters are filled with sporting events and his academic woes. He did not reference fagging, and no diaries are extant to pattern his peer interactions, yet Jack’s constant entreaties to be brought home speak to his misery and undoubtedly are connected to fagging, as most surely were the silences of Lindley Crease. Later, as he moved up in age and rank during his last year at Montague House Jack noted his right to be a fag-master, that is, as an older student, he had fags responsible to him, and he to them. In a letter to Kathleen, he included a diagram showing boys designated as the King and Queen, and under them were six boys, Jack being one, and under Jack the names of boys who were his fags.

I have ten boys under me and I can wack them as much as I like it is a joak. I tell two to take off my boot one to put off my cap and one to

²⁷ See definition in Fass, *Encyclopedia of children and childhood in history and society*: 705.

²⁸ The child voices in this study do not reveal evidence or instances of sexual abuse, although it most probably was prevalent at their schools.

bring my slippers and when my commanders have done there work well I give them one for the day to fag for them. Then I have a prize for the boy who behaves best in the week it is a penny-worth of sweets which they all try to get but if they do anything very bad I report them to the Queen who tells me to do what I think right with them...²⁹

Now a senior boy at the school, Jack's intent in writing this description and the next, was to show not only his enviable position but his thick skin regarding the misery of junior students, as seen in the following passage which references one of Jack's young charges. "There is a kid howling all the time I am writing to you blubbering...so that I could not write but now as he is gone, I will be able to write."³⁰ Jack's comments reveal that he had come to embrace the culture of rights and privileges linked to age, size, academic level and years resident. He now relished his power over those younger and this provided some measure of compensation for his continued separation from home and family.

The following academic term, Jack changed schools, left the preparatory school of Montague House to become a new and junior student at Uppingham School. He had to begin again at the bottom of the hierarchy, as a fag to the older students and this time he wrote about it. His matter-of-fact recording suggests an easy compliance with the duties. Perhaps his previous experience and greater age played a part. He wrote,

I begin my fagging today. Sweep the Passage, Call out along the Corridors. Hall list (That is if boys want to go to the Hall I have to get their names signed). Study Leave (That is leave to go in another boys study). Call the Dormitory (That is to wake them in the morning). Listen to the Bells. (That is to go out on a rainy night to know whether the other boys have to go to there classes).³¹

²⁹ Jack O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 26 March 1886. British Columbia Archives.

³⁰ Jack O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 15 June 1886. British Columbia Archives.

³¹ Jack O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 31 January 1887. British Columbia Archives.

Oliver Gardiner's diary entries for the first few months of 1926 show the perpetuation of fagging forty years later in Canadian schools. Here he recorded the demands made of him by more senior students, those in the Sixth-Form. He "fagged" that is, he functioned as their personal servant. "We arrived back at school. I had to look after 11's suitcase." "Unpacked Archibald's trunk." "I had to fag for 8. It was a fine day." "I went for a walk with Henry and fagged for 4." "I did not do much. I fagged for Carhatt and marked."³²

Girls at school

In an age when formal schooling for middle class girls in Canada and Britain often ended at age twelve, finishing schools, and later boarding schools enabled girls, especially those of means, to continue a broad education in a formal manner outside their home setting. Finishing schools, often called ladies academies, operated in Britain and Europe throughout the nineteenth century. They were small, home-like establishments whose aim was to provide a safe and nurturing environment during the school term for older girls. Finishing schools represented an optional path for upper middle class girls to occupy their "after school" years. Girls received instruction in languages, history and geography alongside deportment, genteel skills of needlework, household knowledge, and achievement in music and the arts. The dual focus functioned to instil gendered cultural and social discourses within girls as they learned refinements of manners and movement, of practical household management alongside an academic curriculum. It also assisted to prepare girls who might wish to teach, one of a limited number of professions available for middle class females.

³² Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 12, 13, 14, 20, 22 January 1926. Glenbow Archives.

The girls in this study who moved from their homes for the purposes of higher education – finishing schools, colleges or universities did so willingly. They were motivated to achieve personal betterment; wished to be educated, cultivated and challenged academically. The evidence discernable in their words provides a counter to stereotyped ideas today that such education was undertaken lightly, or that it was considered lightweight and gender confining. Kathleen O'Reilly, who, like Martha Douglas, attended an English finishing school to round out her colonial education “with a careful training in manners and general knowledge”³³ attended “Lady Murray’s” school for girls and pursued academic subjects alongside instruction in deportment. She acknowledged difficulties. “French & German take me such a long time to do that it puts me back with my other studies,”³⁴ she wrote, clearly despaired of her performance. “I am very backward & it makes me disgusted always coming out bottom.”³⁵ If she had not cared, these thoughts would not have featured in her letters home.

In 1898 Ada Loudon wrote from Beulah Mill College, a “young ladies seminary” in Oakland concerning her plan to qualify as a governess, an occupation that today through the lens of literature and popular fiction, is seen as a last resort available to unmarried middle class women of little independent income.³⁶ Ada wanted to teach and prepared for this vocation by tailoring her education, which suggests prior planning and perhaps a certain choice in the matter. Flora Steele attended a finishing school and then,

³³ Quoted in John D. Adams, *Old Square-Toes and his lady: the life of James and Amelia Douglas*, 1st ed. (Victoria, BC: Horsdal & Schubart, 2001), 190.

³⁴ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 30 November 1883. British Columbia Archives.

³⁵ Kathleen O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly 14 December 1883. British Columbia Archives.

³⁶ Ada Loudon to Elizabeth Richter, 30 January 1898. British Columbia Archives.

almost immediately at the age of eighteen, undertook formal training to be a nurse.³⁷ Her family's financial situation did not require her to take waged employment. The actions of Ada and Flora both suggest that a need to be participatory, to be helpful within the wider community motivated girls who might not have a financial need to work, but went ahead and chose a life that was quite different from that automatically available to them.

Josephine Crease was eighteen but still not satisfied with her learning. She chose to extend her education and although an English finishing school was denied her because of tight finances (created in part by the costs of the overseas education of her two brothers), her parents arranged a local alternative; she received art instruction and academic lessons with private tutors. Her 1882 diary entries record dogged pursuit of humanities-based instruction. Five or six mornings every week she "had my lessons" in seasonal patterns that paralleled her earlier school terms. Josephine recorded, "First examination...on Astronomy," "Have exam: on Physical Geography, A bad paper on the whole." "Exam on French. A very bad paper, took me all the morning." "Geography examination did pretty well." "German exam: do it most awfully," and "English history exam."³⁸

Josephine Crease and these other girls indicate engagements with their curricula that were surprisingly rigorous given today's stereotyped images of the purpose and function of lady's academies or of a girl's wish to learn beyond what she was obliged or expected to learn. The writings of these girls provide important evidence that finishing schools, private lessons and vocational pursuits did not merely occupy their time (and keep them "safe" in their pre-married state). The girls were interested in academic

³⁷ Canada Census for 1911 lists Steele as a nurse working at Holy Cross Hospital, Calgary, Alberta.

³⁸ Josephine Crease. Diary. 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 June 1882. British Columbia Archives.

subjects and pursued knowledge acquisition. Their records stand in contrast to those created during their earlier school years when the structure of schooling, its impact on their daily and weekly routines or relationship to other structures was the focus of their writings rather than was the content of school hours or their engagement with the curriculum. The evidence of their writing concerning their further education refutes assumptions that the girls were not interested in academic subjects, and shows that they pursued further education purposefully. Furthermore, their writings also suggest that neither was education provided to them half-heartedly, they were formally tested and expected to achieve. Both Josephine Crease and Kathleen O'Reilly were critically aware of their abilities and strived to improve performance. Their written descriptions imply their willingness to attend, and indicate they were interested and motivated to learn. Girls as well as boys then, might undertake education beyond that expected by cultural norms in a serious capacity and be academically challenged.

Beginning in the 1890s, boarding schools for girls modeled organizationally on British public schools replaced finishing schools and were available in North America. Studies of female boarding school experiences draw parallels to that of boys in public schools.³⁹ The girls in this study utilized terminology echoing that of public schools in terms such as headmistress or prefects, and show the emphasis on team sports (hockey, basketball), but many of the negative aspects such as an enthusiasm for corporal punishment appear tempered. Bullying existed, but was often less overt, or less delineated in letters girls wrote home. Like boys, girls at boarding schools learned to relate to and be intimate with those of their same gender and these close bonds

³⁹ For example, see Selles-Roney, "A Canadian Girl at Cheltenham: The Diary as an Historical Source."; Vicinus, "Distance and Desire: English Boarding School Friendships, 1870 - 1920."

contributed to perpetuating difference between the genders. The twinning of gendered education and cloistered living strengthened ties amongst girls in much the same manner as it did with boys at school. This move continued into the early twentieth century as female academic learning became increasingly acceptable at fledgling North American universities. In Canada, McGill University offered a separate women's college where girls boarded and received instruction separate from the male student body. Each setting facilitated a girl culture that reinforced bonds between girls based upon the shared experience of being thrust together in living situations and in gender specific learning.

Girl culture

Letters between girls provide important clues to the nature of “girl culture,” a term coined to describe and encompass the phenomenon of late twentieth century pre-adolescent and adolescent girl identity,⁴⁰ but which also has clear application for historical female children whose subjectivities and definitions of self were also linked to popular culture, societal expectations, and patterns of gendered behaviour. “Girl” is a socially constructed category whose definition is variable. “Girlhood,” like boyhood references a subscribed and individually acknowledged age range in which a “girl” determines she is no longer a “child” but not yet a “woman.”⁴¹ “Girlhood,” ostensibly the world of girls and the communal experience of being a girl, is not necessarily strictly bounded by class or social position, although the child-created evidence in this study

⁴⁰ Girl culture is generally understood today as the intertwining of girls, the media, and cultural artifacts, especially print media and music, and views girls either as passive victims of commodity culture, or in acts of resistance or negotiating the cultural messaging.

⁴¹ Catherine Driscoll and Sally Mitchell reference the issue that “girl” and “girlhood” are rarely defined within particular historical applications. See: Catherine Driscoll, *Girls: feminine adolescence in popular culture and cultural theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); Sally Mitchell, "Girl's Culture at Work," in *The Girl's Own: Cultural Histories of the Anglo-American Girl, 1830-1915*, ed. Claudia and Lynne Vallone Nelson (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1994).

indicates that such conditions were on occasion factors that bound the immediate cliques or defined girls as friends and acted as markers of inclusivity. Child self-definitions of inclusivity as seen in the examples that follow, provide insider evidence that historical girls identified themselves as belonging to an understood category bounded by their gender and also by their age, where they “were consciously aware of their own culture and recognized its discord with adult expectations.”⁴²

For the purposes of this study it is the genealogy of this concept that has import: “how knowledge about girls...shaped what it means to be a girl and how girls experience their own positions in the world in relation to diverse ways of talking about and understanding girls.”⁴³ “Girl culture” existed whenever two or more girls interacted, each informed by spoken and unspoken discourses which served to bond them together in spirit borne of age and gender. The records of several historical girls illuminate their own networks of friendships, their social activities, and preoccupations in ways that provide insight into “girl culture” of their times and into their own individual and changing understandings of themselves in relation to others, including boys.

In 1880, Nellie Cridge wrote, “I got a letter from Maggie Schutt...she sent her love to “my sisters” so I suppose it included you.”⁴⁴ Josephine Crease still identified with her cohort despite no longer attending Angela College. “Met all the College girls out walking,” “went to town & on my way home saw the A. College girls & went with them to Marvin’s hill to toboggan,” “went to see the College girls before our lecture.”⁴⁵ This

⁴² ———, “Girl’s Culture at Work.” cited in Driscoll, p 39.

⁴³ Driscoll, *Girls: feminine adolescence in popular culture and cultural theory*: 4.

⁴⁴ Nellie Cridge to Mary Cran, 6 November 1880. City of Victoria Archives.

⁴⁵ Josephine Crease. Diary. 24 October 1881, 23 November 1881, 27 January 1882. British Columbia Archives.

idea of sisterhood, of ties created by gender, not by family, enabled girls to see themselves as part of a larger culture delineated by their girlhood.

Like boy culture, girl culture was also influenced by magazines and reading material. Girls read magazines designed for girls but also consumed those of their brothers. As the references below indicate, girls could be omnivorous in their reading of stories directed at boys and crossed the gender divide quite on their own accord. Josephine Crease recorded reading *Boy's Own Paper* and other boy-oriented serial publications.⁴⁶ Marjorie Gordon did also, as she noted, "Miss. Wetterman read to us from *The Boys Own Paper*." A few days later, "*Munsey's Magazine* for August... I read through" [except for] "'Whether you should send your boy to college' and 'Bismark's American friends'. There was a very good story about some Indians and an officer and also one of a cowboy."⁴⁷ Neither Josephine Crease nor Marjorie Gordon, both of whom also read *The Girl's Own Paper* and other magazines for girls, commented on whether their brothers read the *Girl's Own*. Historians of masculinity suggest that boys were less enthusiastic readers of girls' magazines and usually confined their reading to boys' magazines. The boys in this study left no evidence of having read girls' magazines, which may reinforce an earlier observation that boys defined themselves by what they were not, they were not girls. Therefore they would not reveal interest in stories about girls because this was an antithesis to what they believed to be their core identities. Girls, on the other hand might have been more willing to identify with male characters, did not

⁴⁶ Josephine Crease, Diaries 1878, 1879, 1881, 1882, 1883, and 1884 in "Books Read" section at back of each diary. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁷ Marjorie Gordon. Diary. 4 and 6 August 1895. Library and Archives Canada. *Boy's Own*, another British magazine was first published in 1879 and *Munsey's Magazine* in 1889.

define themselves against boys. For girls, personal interests might prove stronger than culturally expected norms.

Cross-dressing

Another example is in the practise of cross-dressing, when girls donned the clothes and mannerisms of boys, usually in the context of a party or fancy dress occasion. From the evidence of girls in this study, it was fun and adventurous. Girls seem little concerned when acting out male caricatures; they experimented enthusiastically and did not worry so doing would diminish or threaten their femininity. Cross-dressing is discussed in *Looking Good*, a study of girls at three different American colleges. Margaret Lowe maintains the act of wearing male clothes enabled girls to physically experience the clothing of boys, feel the coarser fabrics and the movement of fabric pant legs against thighs, which was so different than the experience of skirts and silks. Girls could also pretend and affect a male persona for its curiosity value and as entertainment. Lowe argues that cross-dressing was not undertaken because of envy. It was an experiment, a short-term opportunity presented by a fancy dress dance or acting on the stage, but at the end of which, girls returned once more to their own familiar female identities.⁴⁸

Examples of cross-dressing appear in the diaries and letters of girls in this study, the earliest from 1882. Thirteen-year-old Ada Pemberton described younger sister Sophie. “We had such fun on April fool’s day, late at night Sophie dressed up as a man & rung at the bell. Papa was told a young man was waiting to see him & said ‘How do you

⁴⁸ Lowe, *Looking good: college women and body image, 1875-1930*: 70-71.

do Sir.’ before he found out his mistake.”⁴⁹ This example illustrates a point made by Sharon Marcus in her study of female friendships that in instances such as this, cross-dressing girls were generally “treated as amusing pranksters”⁵⁰ rather than as challenging the gender order.

Cross-dressing thrived at all-girl schools. The diary of Phoebe Sanders while at boarding school provides an example. “Nice day gathered greens to decorate our play room as we are going to have a dance to night. I am going to be a man also Tods who is Paddy...we had a fine time at the dance I am engaged to Dorothy Eskrigge we never stopped till after 11 & never got to bed till after 12.”⁵¹ Ellen Ellison’s choice of costume at a fancy dress party at college allowed her to pretend to be something she was not, a male student.

Last night the Seniors and Juniors gave a consolation party to the Sophs & Freshies.... It was a fancy dress dance. The costumes were simply splendid. Ellen dressed as a Freshie boy. She got white pajamas and a red Fresh man’s cap, a red tie and stiff collar and a short red jacket from one of the girls. She had an ’11 banner fixed on her arm and carried another one on a banner cane. It was not exactly a pretty costume but it made a hit nevertheless.... We had refreshments...we broke up sometime before 12.⁵²

In describing these cross-dressing experiences the girl’s words convey excitement and enthusiasm. The girls appear confident in their situation as girls, and with the participation of other girls, enjoy their moments – opportunities to dress up and become “other.” The security they experienced as girls among other girls in their boarding school or segregated college life allowed them to undertake such actions without worrying that

⁴⁹ Ada Pemberton to Nellie Cridge, 21 April 1882 [misdated 1881]. City of Victoria Archives.

⁵⁰ Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England*: 38.

⁵¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 28 May 1906. Glenbow Archives.

⁵² Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 13 October 1907, Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

they were jeopardizing their own selves. In these examples there is no sense of shame or of regret, only enjoyment of the moment.

Girls willingly donned the clothing of boys, but as with reading gendered literature, boys seldom donned the clothing of girls, at least not until their own sexuality was established or publicly known. Homophobia created an environment that targeted a “mama’s boy” and applied a major stigma to those considered effeminate. This situation effectively curbed such activities. No examples of boys cross-dressing exist in the writings of boys at boarding school or, for that matter, in this study at all, that might sit as parallels to that evidenced in the records of girls.

Shared belonging

Girls at boarding schools bonded (as of course did boys) through formal acceptance of each other into the closed societies that were the dormitory worlds. Phoebe and Constance Sanders underwent a formal ritual the first month at boarding school that sanctioned their places within the hierarchy of the students and undoubtedly this sort of mock ceremony varied and was prevalent in many schools.

We were anniated to the sheep society which is they put the whole play room in utter darkness then brought me in & put on 10 night dresses & blocked my ears up & covered my eyes up then gave me a rope & told me to hold it for dear life so I did then they led me up & down & around the room & then they made me lie down & told me to say ba which I did & I got stuffed down my mouth salt, Talcom powder, tooth powder & many other things & then I belonged to the sheep society...⁵³

Girls also bonded through shared social activities such as ritualized feasting, a fad that appears directly connected with the liberation experienced by boarding school girls from the control and responsibility exerted by mothers in regard to family food consumption.

⁵³ Phoebe Sanders, Description written on diary pages for 8, 9, 10, 11 May 1906. Glenbow Archives.

Gladys Berry called it “silly cooking for fun”⁵⁴ but it was more commonly referred to as “spreads.” Margaret Lowe, in *Looking Good*, describes this activity as “small and informal, although sometimes quite elaborate spreads...organized when students wanted to share a food box from home, celebrate a birthday, or mark a school event.”⁵⁵ Claudia Gardiner noted taking cake and cheese to another student’s room, and eating “ice-cream grape fruit and cake.”⁵⁶ Another evening “we played cards and had a pickle feast.”⁵⁷ Spreads seem to have been a female activity. They were more than just an ongoing sharing of food parcels as mentioned for instance in the letters of the Crease and O’Reilly boys several decades earlier, or even as a rebellion against institutional food. Feasts had an air of organization and festivity associated with them. Myra Ellison wrote:

In the evening five of us gave a spread to five others in our room. It was a great success. It cost five of us 88c apiece and we had, roast duck & chicken with potato chips, olives, home made chili sauce, cream cheese, peanut butter, saltine crackers bread & butter, rolls, dough nuts and fruit salad. We got oranges, bananas, grapes, peaches and walnuts for the salad and it was delicious. We made it in our wash bowl, not because we needed a dish that size for ten but because we had nothing else. We made lemonade in the water pitcher.⁵⁸

Fagging

Fagging was less pervasive in female boarding schools. The girls in this study said very little about fagging in their letters and diaries (or said it in more subtle ways). It certainly does not appear as the trauma experienced by the young boys. The girls seemed to be more overtly concerned with forming alliances and friendships, and achieving the

⁵⁴ Gladys Berry to Ada Berry, 1 November 1910. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁵ Lowe, *Looking good: college women and body image, 1875-1930*: 1.

⁵⁶ Claudia Gardiner. Diary. 30 April 1925. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁷ Claudia Gardiner. Diary. 3 January 1925. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁸ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 13 October 1907. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

privileges of senior status than in age and grade-based power over others.⁵⁹ For instance, as a Fifth-Form student, Claudia Gardiner noted her (fagging) duties to other girls. “I packed Genevieve Conant’s and Carol Clark’s trunks”⁶⁰ She did not complain or comment against her obligations. She did, however, note the separate activities of “prefects” whose schedules were at times different than the others: “Prefects went down town.”⁶¹ When she herself moved up to Sixth-Form, she wrote about the special privileges received. “Miss. Ellis is taking VI to the movies on Friday.”⁶²

Ellen Ellison also wrote about special status. “We matric girls will have Senior privileges after Xmas.”⁶³ Her sister wrote “last night it was announced that VI Form girls might swim in the evenings and mornings now if they wished.”⁶⁴ The emphasis is different than the evidence presented in the boys’ records.

Girl culture in college

As girls in boarding school moved along in their education, opportunities for higher education for females developed in the early twentieth century. In this study the voices of the Ellison sisters document both boarding school and college life. They were seventeen and nineteen years of age when attending together, their first year at McGill University. In their letters home both Ellen and Myra Ellison articulate the close relationships they had with other female students, with whom they lived and studied at Royal Victoria College (which had been built to accommodate McGill’s female students

⁵⁹ While not in scope for this study, the newsletters of girls’ private schools indicate the deference made to the “Head Girl” and those elite members of the Sixth-Form.

⁶⁰ Claudia Gardiner. Diary. 18 December 1924. Glenbow Archives.

⁶¹ Claudia Gardiner. Diary. 23 April 1925. Glenbow Archives.

⁶² Claudia Gardiner. Diary. 28 April 1925. Glenbow Archives.

⁶³ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 29 September 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁶⁴ Myra Ellison to Price and Sophia Ellison, 30 April 1907. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

only a few years before their arrival). McGill's all-girl dormitories and segregated classes enabled a continuation of the girl culture they had experienced earlier at boarding school. Ellen described her cohort to her mother in a manner that indicated her own understanding of inclusiveness. "The girls are all lovely and English.... Oh! Say you ought to hear them talk. But except for their accent they are more like Americans."⁶⁵ Seventeen-year-old Myra tried to convey this gendered dynamic with its shared discourses in her letters home.

The Freshman and Sophs had a procession. It was splendid.... With all the banners they looked very gay and they kept giving their yells. The R.V.C. girls were on the other side of the street and every once in a while they would give what they call the R.V.C. yell. We really have not [got] one but they made one up which they call ours and give way up in their heads with their voices as squeaky as possible.⁶⁶

These early twentieth century college girls had different experiences as boarders than their male counterparts because the colleges held them to specified (and gender based) standards of behaviour and decorum.⁶⁷ Contemporary discourses concerning the potential dangers and corrupting influences inherent in cities for females combined with worry of the ubiquitous "stranger" guided adults (school administrators, instructors) in their oversight of female students.⁶⁸ Life on campus generally was regulated, girls were tightly supervised in their living quarters, their ability to interact with peers off-campus, attend parties, shop or enjoy other non-academic pursuits was subject to strict oversight

⁶⁵ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 15 September 1905. Greater Vernon and District Museum and Archives.

⁶⁶ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 13 October 1907. Greater Vernon and District Museum and Archives.

⁶⁷ Evidence of segregated schooling, of the formal distancing of the female student population from that of the male student population also appears in Barry M. Moody, "Esther Clark Wright and the Making of A Maritime Historian," in *Creating Historical Memory*, ed. Beverly Boutilier and Alison L. Prentice (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997).

⁶⁸ Judith R. Walkowitz, *City of dreadful delight: narratives of sexual danger in late-Victorian London*, Women in culture and society (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992).

by matrons. Such regulation affected their ability to be spontaneous in their choices of times to do things or places to go. For instance,

Last night Ellen and I and Annie Gray who will be a senior next year went down town to have ice cream. We were tired of study and felt we had to do something. Miss. Hurbutt wasn't quite sure that it was proper but as it was only eight o'clock we convinced her that nobody would run away with us at that hour and that it was quite a proper thing to do.⁶⁹

Here, Myra Ellison's words show that she understood the social guidelines, yet was confident to voice her opinion and assert her freedom to be un-chaperoned, and in so doing exemplified and articulated ideas of "the New Woman."⁷⁰ Such societal expectations and school regulations shaped the ways girls were expected to act (and also to interact with the larger student body) and this reinforced girl culture in these settings.

Girls were closely monitored because of lingering discourses concerning the potential harm that academic life might pose to girls and to their futures as wives and mothers. Medical and popular opinion considered that female anatomy was not naturally receptive to the stresses of intellectual life, stresses that might weaken reproductive capabilities. An academic life was blamed "for weight loss, irregular menses, lethargy, and all manner of social problems."⁷¹ The child-created records demonstrate that girls operated with full knowledge of this contemporary discourse. As seen in an earlier chapter, Myra Ellison and many other girls closely monitored and commented on their weight and that of others, for gaining not losing weight was desirable and equated with good health. Improved athletic skills were signs of flourishing constitutions. They studied hard, worried about exams, took seriously the responsibility to prove both individually

⁶⁹ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 28 May 1908. Greater Vernon and District Museum and Archives.

⁷⁰ See chapter two, Walkowitz, *City of dreadful delight: narratives of sexual danger in late-Victorian London*.

⁷¹ Lowe, *Looking good: college women and body image, 1875-1930*: 33.

and collectively that academics did not threaten their health. Sharing this awareness united older girls across the student body, much as they united through sports teams or clubs, and demonstrates historical synthesis, beginning with Kathleen's O'Reilly's letters home in the 1880s (where she avoids her health as a subject of conversation), through to these letters of the Ellison sisters who in 1907 hold ideas about ideal weight, through the comments of Claudia Gardiner in 1924 about feasting.

How boarding schools functioned for children

Children at boarding school were immersed in gendered peer culture, learning and living. Their fundamental understandings of their place in society and of the expectations for their future lives were grounded in the lessons learned in these all boy or all girl schools. Boy cultures and girl cultures created the means for children to find commonality within their gender and enabled them to belong in the larger sense of being part of something more than their identification as a family member. As well, these cultures and the children's separation from family, provided frameworks for boys and girls to create and shape their own identities.

Boarding schools, finishing schools, and also colleges and universities were places where children formulated ideas for their futures as adults, prepared academically to qualify in areas of employment or professions that they were most suited, or enabled them to be well-read, well-rounded and contributing members of their settler societies. The letters written while at school show the inner workings of decision-making in which children had voices and of the private emotional worlds of children living and growing in the absence of their family situations.

From the child perspective, continued schooling, especially boarding, held disadvantages, particularly in the misery experienced by young boys separated from family intimacies and thrust together with those who might torment. Students of both ages experienced homesickness and misery until they adjusted. But there were also advantages. Boarding school children experienced the independence of autonomy. They were able to make many decisions normally handled by parents and in consequence gained confidence in their own abilities. Their words show pride in achievement. Older siblings like Kathleen O'Reilly at finishing school in London, made decisions on behalf of her younger brother enrolled as a boarder outside the city. When Jack outgrew his clothes, she went to a tailor and ordered new ones. Her reporting of this activity reflected confidence in her actions. "I had to bring his trousers to town! They were 3 inches too short in the body utterly useless! They are to make him another pair. I have been to the Stores about them this afternoon."⁷²

Children made travel arrangements, paid accounts, bought necessities. They learned first hand how to make allowances and pocket money last. Deliberating over competing merits of needed supplies or services, buying rabbits or postage, Jack O'Reilly learned to budget his allowance. "I have had to buy such a lot of things."⁷³ "I think I have been spending too much money but it was at Xmas so you must forgive me. Now I will have to buy my eatables so I will want more...I am spending a fortune in stamps for I write much more than I used to do."⁷⁴

⁷² Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, contained in letter from Jack O'Reilly, nd. 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁷³ Jack O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, 20 January 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁴ Jack O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, 21 January 1887. British Columbia Archives.

For some children being at school provided respite from the daily responsibilities of home life, whether that meant contributing to the family economy through chores and other tasks on farms and ranches, or via specific skills such as needlework or child-minding. One child alluded to the reality of family responsibilities in a letter written to a friend after her return home from boarding school. “I had a wonderful time in Winnipeg but of course, that was to be expected. We had some lovely parties, drives, picnics, teas, n’everything and I just hated to come home because I knew it meant real hard work for me when I got home.”⁷⁵ At age sixteen, Helen Macleod also recognized this advantage after the fact. She moved from full time student in boarding school one month to a clerk in the Hudson’s Bay Company the next when the unexpected death of her father created financial complications.⁷⁶ In the months that followed, letters she received from friends still at school emphasized the difference in these two worlds.⁷⁷

Children either embraced the time they had surrounded by peers and away from parental oversight, or alternately impatiently awaited their release so the next chapters in their lives could begin. Phoebe Sanders thought that her continued enrolment at boarding school unnecessarily delayed her entry into adult life and her diary references chronicle a wish to return home so she could “come out” in society. For days and weeks in succession her diary pages contain the single message that she hoped her school days would be over.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Lorna_ to Christine Nelson, 6 August 1921. Glenbow Archives.

⁷⁶ Nancy Millar, *Once Upon A Wedding: stories of weddings in Western Canada, 1860-1945, for better or worse* (Calgary: Bayeux Arts Incorporated, 2000), 32.

⁷⁷ Correspondence inwards to Helen Macleod is included in the chapter on peer relations.

⁷⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. Various dates 1906, 1907. Glenbow Archives.

Other children recognized that time in boarding schools (and higher education for that matter) also deferred decisions about their futures. School was for them a safe haven. As children neared the end of their schooling such thoughts punctuated their letters and reveal worry grounded in the uncertainty that accompanied change. Would they return home to a world that might have changed beyond recognition? Arthur Crease worried about next steps. “I hate looking forward,” he said to his older brother. “I suppose it is natural for my age.”⁷⁹

Being “Other”

For some children, boarding school gave them their first experiences of cruelty, of rejection, of aloneness and of being unaccepted, or at least needing to prove one’s self amongst peers. But it also opened up new friendships and positive opportunities. They grew by accepting challenges, making decisions on their own, operating without parental oversight. Many of these instances are delineated in the children’s letters quoted in upcoming chapters. Depending upon the location of the boarding school, in Canada or beyond, the children also experienced the dynamic of a student body that emphasized its own roots. For instance, children such as Phoebe and Constance Sanders moved from Alberta to board at a Vancouver girl’s school. Ellen and Myra Ellison left the town of Vernon to board in Ontario for their school. Claudia and Oliver Gardiner left their Alberta ranch for boarding schools in Ontario also. Each of these children mixed with other Canadian children in classrooms, on the sports fields, and in dormitories. Diaries and letters include descriptors about other students, indicating self-sorting by regional or national identifications. Children commented on the difference in manner, in voice and in

⁷⁹ Arthur Crease to Lindley Crease, 23 March 1880. British Columbia Archives.

attitudes of American students in relation to their “Canadian” norm and also noted differences between central Canadians and their own western perspectives. The experience of coming together as children who share their Canadian-ness united them, yet their child perspectives also show that regional self identifications, their belonging to disparate geographic areas of the country also provided opportunities for their peers to see difference. From the child perspectives otherness within the school cohort might be grounded this way. For instance, Blythe Rogers was called “a Vancouver bum” and believed that he was unfairly treated as such. And for his part, he retaliated by condemning “Easterners.”⁸⁰

Children who traveled to Britain for schooling had even more dramatic experiences of stereotyping and prejudice, being categorized as “other” by their British schoolmates. Rather than being part of a “Canadian” contingent as were students at school in Canada, their colonial birth and upbringing geographically distant from the metropole created barriers in their associations with other students. Colonial-born children such as Jack O’Reilly, Lindley Crease, Harry or James Helmcken were treated as outsiders – separated by their accents, their often out-of-fashion clothing, and their aloneness. From the larger cultural perspective, these children were “insiders in the empire because of their whiteness while simultaneously outsiders in England due to their colonial origins.”⁸¹ The parental intention that overseas schooling provide them with academic credentials to facilitate entry into class-determined professions and socially appropriate roles did not envision the on-the-ground experience where ongoing outsider

⁸⁰ Blythe Rogers to Mary Isabella Rogers, 7 September 1907. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁸¹ Angela Woollacott, *To try her fortune in London: Australian women, colonialism, and modernity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001). Quoted in Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*. p. 3-4.

status reinforced difference. Lindley Crease was called ““Beargrease” & Grease pot and nothing else.”⁸² Jack O’Reilly was teased for his pride in his hometown. Children at school on the continent such as Joe Wilson in Switzerland experienced the handicap of a unilingual upbringing. Lack of German or French comprehension divided Joe from many of his European classmates. “The grammar is very hard,” he wrote.⁸³ It is “beastly stuff.”⁸⁴ A classmate left the school on account of such difficulties. “He went to live with one of his uncles...he didn’t know how to speak French.”⁸⁵

How children coped at boarding schools

Once at school children had little choice but to take each day as it came. Each child was homesick; each child worried about absent family members, each child had their own way of adjusting to circumstances. These realities are visible especially in the letters of the young boys and are often grounded in their bodies. In addition, children experienced what might have been a new situation for them, being considered “other” or different from the majority of their peers.

The young boys appear to have little agency in decision-making regarding their removal or the terms of separations. Parents expected them to adapt and tough out the homesickness. Although children reacted individually when removed from familiar environments, the misery of these young boys is most overtly visible in their writings. They were without the physical and emotional security of home and family that allowed them to function with confidence in their own world. For Lindley Crease, fearfulness

⁸² Lindley Crease. Diary. 2 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁸³ Joseph Wilson to Isabella Eilbeck Wilson, 16 March 1880. City of Victoria Archives.

⁸⁴ Joseph Wilson quoted in Joseph Wilson Senior to William Wilson, 18 November 1880. City of Victoria Archives.

⁸⁵ Joseph Wilson to Joseph Wilson Senior, 3 October 1881. City of Victoria Archives.

was first communicated in the way he recounted the voyage across the Atlantic. In a letter to his father written en-route to England and onboard ship, he related, “We have had very rough weather and head winds & fogs,” but left his most detailed descriptions for hazards other than weather. “All the [life] boats have air chambers, there are 12 boats. Every fire caution is taken against fire. Hoses are spread over the ship every night...”⁸⁶ By choosing to write about the fire precautions in place on board ship he signalled his own worries about accidental mishap and fear for his own safety. But the journey to school was just the beginning of a new life, new situation, new people and new surroundings. Young boys were generally overwhelmed by aloneness, uncertainty about school and of their school mates; and of this unknown life, different from that previously experienced at home in familiar surroundings amongst family and routine.

Jack O’Reilly spent five years in England wishing to be at home. He constantly implored his parents to allow his removal from school and return to Victoria. They tried to assuage his aloneness through promises to visit but Jack’s letters count the months and years of separation. A clue to his agitation is in his use of underlining, which normally he used sparingly. He used multiple underlines – two or three stacked on top of each other for emphasis. “When are you coming...it is 3 Years since I have seen you, to day the 19th Oct. 1886 and it was the 10th Oct. (1883) when you left.”⁸⁷ “When are you coming here remember you will have been gone 4 years in Oct.”⁸⁸ “I do long to see you if you don’t come to England please let me come home, I would like it much better do let me

⁸⁶ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 15 November 1877. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁷ Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 10 October 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 24 January 1887. British Columbia Archives.

come.”⁸⁹ “Please can I come at Midsummer to B.C. I have 9 weeks --- and I could easily come. Remember I have not seen you for 1. 2. 3. 4. getting on for 5 years do let me come.”⁹⁰

Kathleen O’Reilly, as we have seen earlier, handled the pain of separation from her parents quite differently than some of the young boys, undoubtedly because as an older child, she had been included in some of the decision-making and preparations for her removal to finishing school, and was more mature in her ability to handle emotions. She did so through transference, by busying herself and not sentimentalizing.

Ellen Ellison feared that something awful had happened to either a parent or a sibling when without warning she ceased to receive letters from home. In her mind, reliable correspondence equated with reassurance. This instance shows just how tenuous and fragile could be the ability of children to function at a distance from their home world and loved ones. She wrote from Toronto to Vernon, “Why does not somebody write? I can’t understand what could be the matter unless Papa or Lizzie is very ill.... I don’t know what to do or think. This has been, it seems to me, the worst week I ever went through.”⁹¹

Anger was not uncommon amongst boarding school children and not easily sublimated even though these children had been taught to channel emotions. Anger and fear were often connected as seen earlier in the comments of Jack O’Reilly whose comments about school betrayed the anger he felt towards his parents for putting him there. For sixteen-year-old May Loudon, boarding school in southern Washington State

⁸⁹ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 16 March 1887. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁰ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 5 July 1887. British Columbia Archives.

⁹¹ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 29 April 1905. Greater Vernon and District Archives.

was the last place she wanted to be. She feared for her health and this fear turned to anger that she expressed directly. She did not mince her words but she also exhibited resourcefulness by transferring anger at her situation into specific detail calculated to make an impact.

You will want to know how I like it here, I don't like it one bit. Would just as soon be in jail. Everything is Adventists. We don't get one bit of Meat or butter, we live on wheat and skimmed milk just like pigs. I am starved, I am getting poor. I will have to go home or starve to death... everything is religion, down on my knees half time. Mrs. Milbury and I are the only [sic] ones that are not Adventists. They are always talking their religion...⁹²

Not only were the living conditions difficult, but communication with her parents was not often reciprocated. May Loudon covered her anger at not receiving letters from her parents with the following comments.

I have given up all hopes of ever hearing from you again, does baby Lloyd take up all of your time [?] so I will forgive you again Dear Mama I will try & write once a week if you can all right...this is the last term it gets out on the 21 of May & then I can come home...I want to come home & I think that you want me to come home to don't you Mama. I would love to hug you...I just want to stay home all summer...Make Charley write to me & tell Papa to drop me a line wonce a year if he has time at all.⁹³

On a separate slip of paper enclosed in her letter she wrote, "My dearest Papa. My address is College Place Wash. I am still your Daughter. May Loudon."⁹⁴ Frank Richter cut to the chase. "If I have to stay in this [] forsaken place another year I'll go absolutely crazy the food is getting worse every day. And there is darn little of it that I almost starve."⁹⁵

⁹² May Loudon to Lizzie Richter, 27 September 1900. British Columbia Archives.

⁹³ May Loudon to Maria Loudon, 4 March 1901. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁴ May Loudon to Maria Loudon, 4 March 1901. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁵ Frank Richter to Lizzie Richter, 29 September 1926. British Columbia Archives.

These children harnessed sarcasm to cover their true feelings of anger but with little success, since their anger speaks clearly through. Their words are powerful and reinforce the depth of the pain caused by separation from family and demonstrate how important familial ties were to children's emotional and psychological selves. The strains of separation ran deep throughout their school years.

The importance of place, the role of memory

Eventually, boys and girls settled in, misery became less overt in later letters, but was never far below the surface. It was the details and intimacies remembered of home life that gave children some security while away. Just as emotional responses were rooted in their bodies, so was children's sense of belonging to place. These boarding school letters reveal that children held strong attachments to and even love of particular places. They quite readily expressed dissatisfaction at being in places that did not appeal, and usually remarked on what a place was not like, that is, not like home. Their references to home emphasize the comfort it provided, and how fundamental this was to their self-definitions. May Loudon longed for the more rugged geography of her own home when she was away at school. "I don't like this Country, all level no Mountains you can see for miles, and it rains and blows to beat the devil..."⁹⁶ Humphrey Parlby constantly compared, he was miserable away from his own farm. "I am afraid Calgary is not the place for me. We have these beastly winds every day..."⁹⁷ He found little redeeming value in his situation, "certainly the most god-forsaken place I was ever in."⁹⁸

⁹⁶ May Loudon to Lizzie Richter, 27 September 1900. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁷ Humphrey Parlby to Irene and Walter Parlby, 15 September 1913. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁸ Humphrey Parlby to Irene and Walter Parlby, 12 January 1914. Glenbow Archives.

Jack O'Reilly was emotionally connected to his house and garden at Point Ellice, and always asked for reports of his garden and his pigeons. He was imprinted with the physicality of his home, his body remembered the special places and those remembrances he held tight. He was also materially connected to place, had photos of Victoria hung on the walls of his bedroom, created a "museum" of objects from British Columbia, and avidly collected British Columbia postage stamps and had the Victoria newspaper forwarded. This material connectedness was not an unusual manifestation and one that Elizabeth Buettner indicates was typical of the British child at boarding school. Likewise, the letters of both Lindley Crease and Jack O'Reilly were part of a larger phenomenon, very like those she found for children of Anglo-Indian families because they exhibit commonality in terms of the focus on school grades, on exams, on ranking, on sports or athletic accomplishments.⁹⁹

Boarding school letters are peppered with questions about their pets, about their gardens, about the livestock and their favourite routines. "Tell me how Coon is when you get him back."¹⁰⁰ "It will be very nice if you can take the ponies with you w[h]erever you go."¹⁰¹ These are not just idle questions, or the stuff of conversation. Children needed to know and be reassured of the details of home, and of everyone at home. This need to stay connected with family remained paramount throughout the separations, visible in the letters often as a series of questions. Lindley Crease held strong connections to place, his practice of remembering and reliving camping trips and travel with his father helped him through the years of separation, but asking for specific details about home

⁹⁹ Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*: 141, 43.

¹⁰⁰ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 3 December 1910. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰¹ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 18 December 1910. Glenbow Archives.

was even more important. He maintained a strong attachment to his garden plot. “How is my garden. I hope it is not very weedy who takes care of it...”¹⁰² “How is my garden getting on & my work shop is the green plot in front of the house very long. I wish I was at home and that thought often makes me very sad.”¹⁰³ “Do the blackberries still abound in such quantities? You must be very tired of my forever repeating my remembrances to you but it seems to transport me for the moment to the place I love to think of.”¹⁰⁴ For Lindley’s brother Arthur, it was the family pets. He rebuked his parents. “Bye the by nobody ever thinks of saying anything about the dogs. I wish somebody would write & say how there going on. I wont to hear awfully if the puppies have learnt to swim.”¹⁰⁵ It is important that the dogs remain healthy while he is away, it is important that he not miss out, that he know every change to keep him connected. It was this fear of disconnection that was most strong in the children. His sister Josephine understood this and wrote, “There is possitively nothing worth telling you except that all at home are quite well even to the cats & dogs & horses.”¹⁰⁶ Through quotes such as these we learn that children’s attachments were not just to people, but to pets and also to geographical space and place and that this imprinting was important as they grew.

Hearing of change long-distance triggered worry in children. For instance, Hugh Berry, with his sister and brother (each at different boarding schools) waited in the wings while his parents uprooted themselves from the home he had known in Pincher Creek, Alberta and traveled through several provinces in search of a suitable place to relocate.

¹⁰² Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 27 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰³ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 24 February 1878. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 28 May 1881. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁵ Arthur Crease to Mary Crease, 1 July 1886[?]. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁶ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 31 January 1881. British Columbia Archives.

They eventually selected Strathmore, some 250 kilometres northeast. In his letters Hugh barely masked his fear as he awaited their decision, which took nearly six months, during which his sense of disconnectedness increased. “I am glad that you are not going to sell the ranch. Camrose must be a very nice place. Tell me your address when you go,”¹⁰⁷ he wrote one month, followed the next month by, “I wonder which place you will go to Mo[o]s[e] Jaw or that other place.”¹⁰⁸ A month later, “I g[u]ess I will so[on] know w[h]ere you are going to settle.”¹⁰⁹ “I got a letter from you from Calgary but I have not read it yet. I gess you have dissided where you are going. I will know when I read your letter I gess.”¹¹⁰

When Myra and Ellen Ellison received word that their parents planned to sell their house and move to a larger one close by, the sisters had mixed feelings. So many memories were associated with the house and gardens. “I don’t know what Ellen thinks. I doubt if she knows herself. I am sure I don’t know what I think. In a way I would like it [moving] but I would kind of hate to leave ones old house. Of course it wouldn’t fly away and we could go down and sit under the apple trees when we got lonesome for it.”¹¹¹

Conclusion

The reasons parents sent children to boarding school might not be clear to young children, or appreciated by children homesick or in unsettling situations, but such distant schooling shaped children and provided them with a common experience of growing up

¹⁰⁷ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 3 December 1910. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 29 January 1911. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁹ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 4 February 1911. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁰ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 21 January 1911. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹¹ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 10 January 1908. Greater Vernon and District Archives.

that was fundamentally different than that of children who did not attend boarding schools and grew up in the intimacy of home environments. The years spent at boarding school were years in which children grew physically and psychologically. The fact that they did so away from home, from everyday overt parental control, influence or support is important because this phenomenon has not yet been recognized as a characteristic of many middle class and upper class western Canadian family situations or as a factor in contributing to the complexity of the social history of western Canada. Serious infections, accidents, puberty, first menstrual periods, first shaving and other rites of passage occurred outside of the support of family or community. Child worries or concerns had to be communicated long distance in their correspondences. In situations of trouble or uncertainty, children relied on the emotional support of fellow students or the adults within the school, not parents. Children's remembrances and emotional ties with home and family created within them strength to move forward and to have confidence in their own identities. In their bodies children held strong memories and emotions regarding home and place that are clearly expressed in letters home. Their records reveal perspectives of their growing up that were not witnessed by their parents who were physically distant and not in a position to observe or otherwise document these aspects of their children's experiences.

This chapter provides the broader context in which to understand that for many children in this study boarding school must have had an effect upon the ways they reintegrated after schooling, how they socialized and readjusted to a mix of genders and age ranges in a wider community than their school settings. The tendency to look for

commonality, to make generalizations about settler children must be tempered with knowledge of this fundamental split within the cohort.

Children at boarding school were immersed in gendered peer culture, learning and living. Core understandings of their place in society and of the expectations for their future lives were grounded in the lessons learned in these all boy or all girl schools. Boy cultures and girl cultures created the means for children to find commonality within their gender and enabled them to belong in the larger sense of being part of something more than their identification as a family member. As well, these cultures and the children's separation from family, provided frameworks for boys and girls to create and shape their own identities.

Boarding schools, finishing schools, and also colleges and universities were places where children formulated ideas for their futures as adults, prepared academically to qualify in areas of employment or professions for which they were suited, or enabled them to be well-read, well-rounded and contributing members of their settler societies. The letters written while at school show the inner workings of decision-making in which children had voices and of the private emotional worlds of children living and growing away from their family settings.

A secondary intent of this chapter is to acknowledge that the fact of boarding school created the opportunity for children to write home as a means to keep in touch. This documentation is important and rich evidence from the children's own perspectives, which provides evidence of their experiences as they grew up and includes strong examples of how they bonded with others within gendered cohorts, and of their belonging within girl and boy cultures that lay within the schooling experiences.

Chapter 6: Older Children Move Actively Towards Adulthood

After puberty, older children continued their growing up as they measured their movements towards adulthood. Puberty transformed them physically and signalled to them that their tenure as children was finite, that change was irrevocable. Children's inner lives – their understandings of themselves, and their ability to emotionally absorb and facilitate their own needs – had to catch up to their bodies. Growing up for older children then was about achieving balance. Understandings of their own selves remained centred in their bodies, as had their earlier experiences (detailed in Chapter 4). Such experiences were grounded physically and emotionally, “felt” on the outside and the inside. It was this internalization of their self-understandings that at times might represent points of tension with adult expectations because child-felt appropriate times for change, for acknowledgement of transitions, did not always agree with ideas held by their parents.

Older children saw their growth as a continuum punctuated by milestones or transition points along the way to an adulthood that now seemed closer and less abstract than it had when they were younger. They sculpted this growing in individual ways, in their own time, dependent upon their own circumstances and shaped by gendered discourses. It might be individual, and this is seen in case studies of specific children who struggle to shape their own identities, or it might also be collaborative. To a certain extent, children together with adults planned aspects of their transitioning towards adulthood according to adult-created markers. But in other examples, or even within the

life of a single child, children might give more weight to transition points recognized by their cohorts.

Older children continued to stretch away from adult oversight. The records provide examples of their experimentation with religiosity, questioning of behavioural expectations, and crossing social boundaries. On the other hand, these older children also reveal how they had absorbed the social, gender and cultural understandings of their worlds, and comment from positions of indoctrination.

Many of the challenges faced by children came as their schooling neared completion emphasizing the need to move forward. Boys and girls faced different decisions because gendered expectations dictated separate pathways, but their records reveal that economic necessity, class or social expectations might also dictate a child's future. Working class children play a larger role in this chapter than previous chapters and allow a comparison across the social spectrum in which children's agency is clear. They all actively pursue future goals and provide input to the adults in their lives about the ideas and expectations they held for themselves.

This chapter follows older girls and then older boys as they grow towards adulthood. The evidence is presented by theme and the children divided, when appropriate, by social class as the "stories" of the children and their pathways are quite different dependent upon their situations. A series of transition points for girls and for boys allows us to see the children's own perspectives as they or their peers reach them. Girls and boys are then discussed together in regards to their emotional maturity, identity formation, religious maturity and marriage.

As children meet and pass through adult defined transition points, as well as other separate child acknowledged milestones, the emotions they expressed might be very different than the expectations adults had of them. For instance, making decisions on professions, on articles or apprenticeships required boys to also assent to further separation from families beyond that experienced in the boarding school years. Mid-teenaged children of Anglican faith attended religious instruction leading to their confirmation, a step acknowledging full belonging in that church, yet this might also be a time of spiritual misgiving for them. Likewise, “coming out” in society could be a pressure point for girls whose friends were not yet so designated, or for girls not ready for such self-declaration.

Children at times found themselves unprepared for these events, not ready in their own minds to acknowledge that they measured up to the social expectations symbolized in these markers. In their writings children reveal that child acknowledged milestones might also hold equal import, and be more revealing of the child’s own state of mind than other markers. For instance, the deliberate changing of clothing or hairstyle or growth of facial hair was a child’s own signal of self-assessment, one they initiated, whether approved by adults or not.

In an article on transitions to adulthood, Jordan Stanger-Ross, Christina Collins and Mark Stern acknowledge the importance of shared understandings. “Peers move together through these linked decisions; young people take note of each other’s movement along multiple dimensions, and their decisions and paths impact one another.”¹ This is especially true of older children for whom the ceiling of childhood is

¹ Stanger-Ross, "Falling Far from the Tree. Transitions to Adulthood and the Social History of Twentieth-Century America," 628.

not nearly as abstract and distant as it was when they were younger, for these older children adulthood is more clearly defined and around the corner. In the understanding of children certain actions propel them toward that adulthood, yet other actions remove them immediately from childhood. This study follows children up to the age of twenty-one and many of the traditional markers of adulthood as defined by social scientists are not experienced by twenty-year-olds and so are not part of this study. But two are. The evidence shows that children recognized two actions that, even taken in youth, served to remove children from their cohort and make them adults in the eyes of these peers. These actions were the acquisition and assumption of full time employment in which a child now controlled his or her finances, and marriage.² The children in this chapter lived across the time span of this study and resided in rural areas, small towns and cities. Their child voices illustrate these common themes and contribute to the evidence gathering of this study that aims to present children's perspectives.

Futures for working class children

Children such as Anne Willison and her sisters were caught between the burden of situation and their own dreams for their future. Anne's parents were Swedish immigrants who in 1900 moved from Ontario to Alberta to homestead. The reality of six girls and no boys in the family had given the sisters a childhood where gendered delineations of chores did not exist. But the continued existence of the farm was threatened as they grew up and formed their own ideas of their futures, which did not include that life. The eldest two, Anne and Ellen moved from the family ranch in 1907 to take work in Calgary and by so doing went against the wishes of their parents. Anne was

² For a discussion of work as a transition to adulthood for girls, see Alice Kessler-Harris, *Out to work: a history of wage-earning women in the United States* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

seventeen and wanted to “make...money for clothes and I need a lot.”³ Her diary records the reality of the manual labour required of her at the soda factory where she acquired employment. “Worked all day at sealing [bottles].” “Sodas all day today I was very tired when we were through.” “We have had sodas for many days now and some nights have to work overtime and it is so hard to stand on your feet about twelve hours steady.”⁴

Fifteen-year-old Ellen worked at “Rochon’s ice cream parlor...she says she likes it fine.”⁵ Like other young working class females of their time, the sisters in Calgary lived in a situation that prevented them realizing their hopes for a brighter future. Their move into Calgary from the farm created expenses that challenged their employment incomes. They attended church and kept a semblance of propriety yet Anne’s diary reveals the uncomfortable and disconcerting experience of being young, single and female living apart from family in an urban setting. The ratio of wages and expenses prevented them from ever having much pocket money; drunken or boisterous young men made street travel frightening; the absence of parental oversight facilitated socializing that for Anne at least, was worrisome. The unexpected appearance of their father and his shock at their living situation left them with an ultimatum. As the eldest, Anne was perhaps more duty-bound and soon responded to parental pressure. She returned to the farm to assist her father with outdoor work and to also support her mother who still had four girls at home.

The diary of Alberta farm girl Sophie Puckette provides a similar voice as she too struggled against the expectations held by her family of her future life. Her diary reveals a child who would not willingly accede and who strived to better herself so that she

³ Anne Willison. Diary. 6 April 1907. Glenbow Archives.

⁴ Anne Willison. Diary. 8, 6, April, 7 May 1907. Glenbow Archives.

⁵ Anne Willison. Diary. 18 July 1907. Glenbow Archives.

would have a different life away from the hardscrabble existence on their farm. Sophie experienced her situation most intently; her writing indicates that her state of mind manifested a longing that was physical. Like the other children in this study, Sophie was an active agent working towards her future, but unlike middle class children, and like Anne Willison, her own personal situation appeared insurmountable. The stumbling blocks were money and time. Sophie wanted to teach but needed to finish high school to qualify. Her education had been interrupted as the family emigrated from the United States and then established their farm. The school was far away, she would need to board, but her labour was needed on the farm. She lived in the trap of circumstance in a sod house at Del Norte (later renamed Innisfree), Alberta. The farm was isolated and the living conditions Spartan, even after they moved from the sod house into a frame one.

Sophie's diary documents the difficulties she experienced with family members who did not understand her desire to pursue schooling when she was clearly needed on the farm. For Sophie, schooling was the key to her future position, which did not include remaining on the farm. In October 1904 after much pleading, her family arranged that she board with a woman in Vegreville who had agreed to provide lessons so that Sophie could complete high school. In an unfortunate and ironic turn, a few weeks into her studies, she broke her eyeglasses and was unable to study. "Dec.7, 1904 – Wednesday. Yesterday I broke my glasses. I put my big foot square on to 'em & smashed them good. I guess I'll have to not study till I get some fix to them. O, dear, how I hate to stop when time is so precious! My headaches this evening too. O dear, O dear..." "What shall I do! I don't know how I'm to get my glasses fixed, and I must get to studying again..."⁶

⁶ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 7 and 18 December 1904. Glenbow Archives.

Without eyeglasses she was unable to study and returned to the farm. It would be almost a year until she was able to continue.

She strategized and kept her dream alive. By late spring 1905 something triggered the following comment in her diary, which spoke perhaps of a new opportunity. “Is my ‘career’ about to begin?” she mused, “Or am I doomed to have another disappointment?...I’m afraid I don’t know exactly what I do want – or what is good for me.”⁷ By the end of the summer Sophie had changed her plans and now proposed to learn office work and save her salary to finance her academic dreams. “I thought last year I’d take the teacher’s course, but have decided this year to go to the College and take Book-keeping and Stenography – as it will enable me to get a position more quickly and thus be able to earn enough to take me through the High School.”⁸ But again, she was stymied. Not only was the loss of her farm labour for the family an issue, but the cost of room and board in Edmonton, were also beyond her family’s means. She confided in her diary, “oh how I wish we had enough to take us girls thru school.”⁹ In addition, she felt betrayed by her brother because he refused to be her ally or to support her plans. He did not understand her fierce need for education, her need for something more than a hardscrabble life. His dismissal of her dreams was difficult to bear. “Cyrus has objected, all along to my taking that commercial course...he asked me why I was looking so blue. “It is no bodies funeral.” Those were his words. I told him it was my funeral and oh, how my throat ached.”¹⁰ It would be several days of emotional pain until she and her brother reconciled and another month of desperate uncertainty as she waited. On 28 November

⁷ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 19 May 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁸ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 20 August 1905. Glenbow Archives.

⁹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 20 August 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 7 November 1905. Glenbow Archives.

came another blow. “Well, the plan is off as usual. There is no money and I’ll have to stay at home too. I’m frowning like a good fellow as I write this, I’m afraid I don’t take dissapointments very well. I’ve written to a correspondence school, but haven’t any idea it will do any good. Oh, how I get to hating this place. I’m afraid I’m very wicked.”¹¹

But then on 23 December her situation changed.

Well, another fitful gleam of the star of hope streams across my horizon. In my imagination I can see it growing, rising, spreading, till it sets in wonderous glory. I hope this is not only a teasing glance, to have it disappear now, would be a greater dissapointment than ever. Papa is going to let me have \$100, and I’m going to school after all!...I hope I shall get in a nice place to stay we’ll go up the 2nd of Jan. of the New Year 1906.¹²

The diaries of Anne Willison and Sophie Puckette reveal that working class children had dreams for the future and that they were willing to go against family wishes to follow those dreams. The fact that these two girls were unsuccessful while under the age of twenty-one in securing change of their situations might mean that without the evidence of their child-created records, these acts of agency would have gone undocumented. Change in social status and circumstances came later as adults, after they had worked hard to pursue careers and leave their farming backgrounds behind. These girls lived in Alberta and were roughly contemporary in age, of immigrant parents who homesteaded. With only two examples it is not possible to generalize, but it does raise speculation that during childhood, offspring of immigrant parents might not hold the dreams their parents held – of a future life for their families on the land.

¹¹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 28 November 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹² Sophie Puckette. Diary. 23 December 1905. Glenbow Archives.

Upper class and upper middle class girls who do not work

Nineteenth century girls of wealthier backgrounds, or whose families assumed an elite social position, did not expect to work outside the home. This situation was accepted by the girls in this study but not without struggle for some, especially if the routines of adult life they saw in their future held little appeal. In particular, the time after school but before marriage was seen as an in-between time, a time in which these older girls were trained by their mothers more fully in regards to life expectations and responsibilities suitable for their station. These older girls were however expected to contribute through good works or charitable activities and this was very much understood although not always recognized by the girls as meaningful to them. Marjorie Gordon was kept busy as an “editor” for a monthly children’s journal titled *Wee Willie Winkie*, which her mother had founded when Marjorie was younger.¹³ Now as Marjorie was older, she was expected to assist with each edition and work to publication deadlines. From her mother’s perspective, Marjorie had a role to provide leadership to the working class children to whom *Wee Willie Winkie* was aimed via her writing. This responsibility would in turn instil character in Marjorie herself. From Marjorie’s diary we see the child-perspective that at fourteen-years-old, this work seemed indistinguishable from the other responsibilities assigned by her mother or expected of her by others. She dutifully recorded her work of writing, replying to letters, creating games or puzzles but in an abbreviated dispassionate manner indicative of obligation rather than particular interest.

¹³ The magazine was originally aimed at the working class children of mothers working on their Scotland estate but had grown to be much broader in circulation with Canadian and British readership. Its creation was part of the Ishbel Gordon’s larger interest and projects aimed at improving the education and circumstances of the labouring classes.

“Before breakfast I wrote a bit – W.W.W. letters.” “When we got in, I did W.W.W. letters.”¹⁴ There is no evidence that Marjorie recognized her work as self-improvement, or even as altruistic or that it was useful activity of which she should be aware.

A need to be useful may have escaped Marjorie at that time in her life, but was keenly experienced by Josephine Crease. Josephine’s family was prominently situated in the community and this fact elicited certain public posturing. The overseas education of her two brothers combined with real estate losses resulted in very tight finances for the family, a situation known within the family, but kept from the social community in which they moved. The girls in the family therefore did what they could to economize, but to preserve face they were not allowed to accept paid employment. Josephine knew the frustration of such a situation full well, having witnessed the aimlessness of her elder sisters.¹⁵ When, for financial reasons, Josephine had to withdraw from school, she was not ready to assume the straight pathway to adulthood that was understood within her family’s social world. Josephine rebelled. In a letter to her brother she let him know that although she was no longer a student she did not see herself as an adult, or as marriageable. “I am only sweet sixteen,”¹⁶ she wrote. With her expectations of learning now subordinated she was at loose ends, frustrated in self-assessment. “I am without a single accomplishment & so want to be able to do something.”¹⁷ It was Josephine’s life at the moment that was important to her, she wanted to have purpose at the moment and was not content to wait as the future unfolded.

¹⁴ Marjorie Gordon, *Journal*, 5, 19 October 1895. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁵ For further details see Powell, "The Crease Family Women."; ———, "Sarah Crease and Susan Crease."

¹⁶ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 31 January 1881. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁷ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 1 November 1884. British Columbia Archives.

Kathleen O'Reilly's usefulness was tested first at home in household management. She returned from Lady Murray's finishing school in England because of parental illnesses and assumed stewardship of the family home and gardens. Alice Ward returned to a family home filled with younger sisters as her brothers were away at school. Because her mother had ongoing health problems, Alice assisted with the management of the house. Neither Kathleen nor Alice left poignant written evidence as did their acquaintance Josephine Crease when she bemoaned her lack of a vocation or sense of contributing but tension might very well have existed. There is no evidence of concern over their lack of choice for women's life work beyond the domestic world. We are left to speculate that perhaps they internalized any emotional frustration, as would have been expected of older girls in this time period. The options available to older girls in later decades were little dreamed of in the 1880s.

Phoebe Sanders lived twenty years or so after these other girls, in an age when upper middle class female employment was on the rise, indeed some of her childhood friends would soon themselves work. Yet Phoebe did not work, nor did she write about such possibilities. Instead, after leaving school in 1906 because of illness, her life took on a new rhythm. She lived at home with her parents within a North West Mounted Police barracks-centric world and transitioned slowly toward adulthood, not propelled swiftly as were her working acquaintances. Her diary detailed the card parties, the dinners and social functions. Phoebe learned to play Euchre and Bridge, mentioned shopping for her mother and tidying the house. But overall, her days soon become repetitions of each other, revolving not around intellectual challenges and comradeship, as she had known at boarding school, but the minutia of female domesticity and small-

town society. With sister Constance and most of her peers away at school, the insular life of women within the social confines of the barracks soon became oppressive, her days somewhat predictable and repetitive; boredom is evident in her commentary. “Didn’t do a blessed thing but sew at my old blouse till I am sick & tired of it.”¹⁸ “Very tired & cranky to-day stayed in & sewed all day.”¹⁹

Her diary entries for 1907 and 1908 contain just a few out of sequence remarks that are not tied to the day’s events at all. On the bottom of one page she sketched a head and shoulders self portrait, through which she scrawled “Kiss me, Kiss me.”²⁰ On the lower half of another page she sketched a wide-eyed doll-like figure crying, “Help.”²¹ While a few months later, “I hope some thing allarming will happen on this day,”²² and “No body loves me so I am going into the garden to eat worms.”²³ These entries have the sense of an alternate voice, a counter to the predictable routine in which she was caught and to the non-judgmental reporting of the everyday that characterized the bulk of her diary entries. In these few entries Phoebe channelled her emotional concerns over the dreariness of barracks social expectations, and the boredom of a predictable routine in a way that would not hurt others but would provide brief release for her – by writing in her private diary.

A schoolmate wrote to keep in contact. She thought a post-school reality to be more exciting than perhaps seems evident in Phoebe’s diary entries. “I suppose you are

¹⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 23 March 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 1 April 1907. Glenbow Archives.

²⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 24 November 1907. Glenbow Archives.

²¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 3 December 1907. Glenbow Archives.

²² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 27 June 1908. Glenbow Archives.

²³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. noted on 23 July 1908. Glenbow Archives.

quite grown-up now & having a lovely time.”²⁴ A cousin at the school also wrote, “I suppose you are having lots of fun now.”²⁵ Flora Steele, not aware of the health issue, assumed that Phoebe’s schooling had terminated because of design. “I suppose you are having a gay time out in society & are pleased your school days are over.”²⁶ None seemed aware of the anguish Phoebe kept hidden.

Phoebe’s daily entries provide on-the-spot evidence of her daily routine and the sameness of a social round that did not match the ideas held by her correspondents, and perhaps did not even match the expectations she held. Perhaps she saw life in the barracks as an in-between time while she awaited her nineteenth birthday and a more formal transition to adulthood. In the overview of a lifetime, the waiting phase of Phoebe Sanders, Kathleen O’ Reilly, Alice Ward, Josephine Crease and even Marjorie Gordon would become forgotten or its existence situated within a larger context of the life itself, and perhaps lost to the historian, but for the evidence of child diaries such as those presented that capture the changes from lives as school-girls to lives as young women in waiting, not yet grown-up, not independent, not pursuing her own choices, and situated in the sameness of domestic routine.

Phoebe Sanders’ situation has additional historical worth because of her chronological placement at the turn of centuries. Her voice is set in a time of transition from the more narrow gendered domestic sphere experienced by girls in the nineteenth century to one of opportunities outside that sphere and that time. She herself did not place herself beyond the expected, yet the attitude towards female employment was

²⁴ Marion Bostock to Phoebe Sanders, 6 October 1907. Glenbow Archives.

²⁵ Gladys Jukes to Phoebe Sanders, 4 January 1908. Glenbow Archives.

²⁶ Flora Steele to Phoebe Sanders 26 December 1907. Glenbow Archives.

shifting. The writings of girls in the early twentieth century then will differ considerably from these late nineteenth century models and are important for the evidence they provide of the change within girls who now easily and naturally assumed that working was a part of their futures.

Girls from the middle classes pursue employment

The upper middle class pretensions of the Creases, O'Reillys or Wards in the 1880s marked a time when women of their station did not work. By the early 1900s, families such as the Gardiners, the Sanders and the Ellisons continued to hold this view, yet employment was very much expected of the daughters in the more modestly situated Jenns family. By this time, societal attitudes had become more flexible, parents could see benefits in their daughters having the means to earn a living and did not necessarily see female employment as an embarrassment to their idea of social position. This might explain how girls such as Phoebe Sanders' friend Flora Steele chose nursing and Elizabeth Lawson in West Vancouver pursued teaching even though their fathers held prominent positions in the community and their incomes were not needed for family finances.

For many girls the process of actively searching for a job was a pivotal emotional and intellectual undertaking, for it was an endeavour that took them out of their comfort zones and was therefore the first in a series of changes to their routines and forced them to be perhaps braver than ever. Oldest daughter Sylvia was first of the Jenns sisters on the job market. She quickly learned of its competitive nature, not a process that she had expected. Writing to her father she conveyed some of the reality of the situation. "I went

down town to hunt for a position that I saw advertised in this morning's paper but there were about fifty other girls there already so I turned tail..."²⁷

Securing employment necessitated not only new routines, but also often a move to a different community, or out of the family home. This was certainly true also with the Jenns sisters. At age nineteen Ivy was the first sister to move away. She began teaching school at Louis Creek north of Kamloops. Youngest sister Phyllis moved to Victoria at age seventeen to attend Normal School and boarded with a family close to campus while she worked toward a teaching certificate. She taught in Port Clements and then Bella Coola before she turned twenty. During summers she harvested hay (near Bella Coola) or picked raspberries (with sister, Ivy near Hatzic) to earn money to augment the modest teacher's salary.²⁸ "I am just beginning to learn that money just melts, especially when you have to get things for yourself,"²⁹ she confessed to her father.

At seventeen, middle daughter Kathleen Jenns straddled the world of dependency and semi-dependency. She mixed with peers who worked for their livings and, because her solicitor father could not support all his daughters on his income, she and her sisters grew up with the expectation of employment in their future. Thus, her letters to her father reveal she was very comfortable amongst older employed peers and admired their career achievements. "Sylvia and I are invited to a birthday party," she wrote. "The people are English and the boy will be 21 years old and has a business of his own already and is making lots of money. That is pretty good for a boy of 21 isn't it?"³⁰ Her

²⁷ Sylvia Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 27 January 1910. British Columbia Archives.

²⁸ Phyllis Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 4 July 1915, 5 July 1918. British Columbia Archives.

²⁹ Phyllis Jenns to Eustace Jenns, November 1916. British Columbia Archives.

³⁰ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 30 November 1911. British Columbia Archives.

comments suggest such a topic was normal and natural for her at this time in her life and within the middle class expectations for her own future.

Working for a living irrevocably distanced children from their peers who did not work. These children now assumed new routines and often moved out of their residence to take on employment a distance away. But for these employed children, the transition might not be fully embraced. They might not self-identify as adults although their activities created the outward appearance of adulthood. For instance, eighteen-year-old new teacher Mary Williams, now situated in a tiny and insular community of Mud River outside of Prince George, was a long way from her family in Victoria, and found little in common with the eastern European immigrants with whom she boarded and whose children she taught. She had no immediate cohort, no one her age or background to talk with. “I want to go home & be a kid for a while,”³¹ she confessed during a particularly difficult time.

Middle class girls coming of age

Growing up held gendered milestones that were expected and witnessed by the larger society through specific rites of passage. For girls, it was their chronological age that triggered certain expected transition points. As girls turned sixteen, or eighteen, or nineteen, they moved publicly towards adulthood. Age signified maturity for girls rather than accomplishments in schooling or development of careers that marked the coming of age for boys. The writings of girls indicate two aspects; they acknowledged the publicly celebrated transitions, but also held their own girl-understood transitions that were at times different or in addition to those publicly celebrated. Girls might see themselves

³¹ Mary Williams. Diary. 16 February 1923. British Columbia Archives.

transitioning in steps that adults did not recognize, or that might not always synchronize with ideas or timings held by adults and this could create tensions. This section therefore includes child perspectives on both adult held and child held transition points.

Clothing for girls was dictated by fashion of the day and custom. Young girls often wore a pinafore over a day dress. The pinafore had a practical function as it protected the dress from dirt or dust, allowed a girl to play and have her garment protected. Transitioning from a young girl to an older girl involved removal of a pinafore for daily wear, an act that acknowledged also that she was more responsible in keeping clean. It also recognized the less physical nature of their transitioning days as they moved away from “play” towards more sedate pursuits. But pinafore removal was not an act that a girl generally took of her own accord. The same is true in regards to under clothing designed to mould and change the body shape. Mothers initiated and monitored this practice with their daughters. The act of wearing a corset restricted a previously free body and transitioned a young girl, but so did dress lengths. In the late nineteenth century, younger girls might wear dresses of mid calf length. Older girls, ones who assumed the transition to adulthood dropped their skirts to ankle length. In the early twentieth century, female fashion was slightly different, but still preserved clothing differences as outward signals of transitioning girls. The records of older girls provide evidence of their use of clothing to delineate their maturing status, also their deliberate changing of hairstyle. The latter was one of the first overt acts taken by girls after puberty, at perhaps age fifteen or sixteen, to announce their own newly defined status. Such practice was undertaken when a girl believed herself to have left young girlhood behind. She did so in full knowledge that such a step would outwardly signal to others

the subjectivity she now held. It was an act usually taken with approval of mothers, but not always, as we shall see.

In essence, these older girls decided that they were of an age and would no longer wear their hair loose on the shoulders as they had throughout their childhood. They lifted their hair and styled it in a knot upon their head, making an immediate visual message. While at boarding school, girls experimented, anxious to show their maturity, but in the absence of mothers, their headmistress or teachers had the final say. At sixteen, Phoebe Sanders tried to push her adulthood, recording in her diary that, "I did my hair up again & Miss. Gordon says I am not old enough. I am though."³² Her schoolmate had a similar experience. "I had my hair up the other day & of course I ran into Miss. M. Gordon & she gave me a long lecture, about keeping young as long as I can ahem!"³³ Their comments illustrate defiance and clearly reveal their child perspectives as different from adults. Wearing hair up was a deliberate act that asserted the girl to be a young woman, or at least that she believed herself to be so. Adults might not agree, nor might others in their cohort, but it was a child's own statement of their transition. Phoebe soon reached the appropriate and parent-sanctioned time and wrote, "18 years old today did my hair up on the very top never to take it down again."³⁴

Changing one's hairstyle deliberately, knowing full well the meaning this would have to others was an act of agency in which girls self-declared their maturity. Other girls observed and noted the day of change as a milestone in the lives of their friends or sisters. For instance, Phoebe Sanders made special note in her diary of Constance's

³² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 1 May 1907. Glenbow Archives.

³³ Violet Walker to Phoebe Sanders, 6 December 1907. Glenbow Archives.

³⁴ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 19 September 1908. Glenbow Archives.

actions, which came just days after her seventeenth birthday. She wrote, “Con rolled her hair up behind her in a knot on her neck & took off her hair ribbon for good.”³⁵ Girls knew that wearing hair up communicated a difference where previously there had been none. A friend from school wrote to Helen Macleod with the latest news. “Barker is just the same old girl as ever and Ethel has not changed except that she wears her hair up and has long dresses.”³⁶

But the mantle of young adulthood in the form of hairstyle or dress did not completely stifle the ex-child. Occasionally, these newly self-defined young women found it amusing to pretend to be otherwise, as was the case with some of Phoebe Sanders’ friends one evening. “We all dressed up the other night skirts to our knees & hair down (we were cute little girls) & then we went out & made several calls on people we knew we had lots of fun.”³⁷ But the fact remained there was no going back. Like Mary Williams who wished she could “be a kid again,” this friend also indicated a certain resignation to the growing up process. “I am getting so old you know its time I stopped trying to be a kitten.”³⁸ A younger childhood was definitely not something that could be recaptured, even if an older child wished to do so.

Coming out

Changing clothing and hair were steps taken by girls (with or without parental input) that signalled change in self-identification. But the adult community also established mechanisms to publicly recognize transformations. “Coming out” was the term given for formal acknowledgement that a girl was now to be considered an adult, no

³⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 20 March 1908. Glenbow Archives.

³⁶ Marie Young to Helen Macleod, 27 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

³⁷ Violet McIllree to Phoebe Sanders, 13 April 1908. Glenbow Archives.

³⁸ Violet McIllree to Phoebe Sanders, 13 April 1908. Glenbow Archives.

longer simply categorized as a female child, but as a girl with marriageable prospects. “Coming out” was her debut into adult society and it generally occurred after schooling and often after age eighteen. The most common vehicle for a girl to “come out” was social occasion such as a ball, or other formal celebration designed for adult participation and attendance. The girl (in long dress wearing hair up) would attend the function escorted by her father or other male adult family member. Her attendance signified that she was “coming out” and was now to be accepted within adult society with adult status. Coming out was a significant milestone for girls and one that is well documented in this cohort, usually with little detail, but marked in diaries or referenced in letters to peers. Mary Crease had her coming out on the arm of her Uncle John at a ball in London, England. She was nineteen-years-old.³⁹ Josephine Crease’s coming out occurred at the age of eighteen when she attended her first ball.⁴⁰ She saw the event as a personal milestone and she reserved an additional page at the back of her diary to record the details.

Mama took Mary & myself. Went in Winter’s carriage. The Marquis of Lorne, the Princess Louise...attended it.... I had a bout 10 dances most of which I had to walk as I could not dance them. The Marquis took Mama in to supper & Sir Matt: the Princess. Katie Charles, the two Miss. Bushbys, Tiny Macdonald, Helen Good, Myra Wake & myself.... We left at 2 & got home by 2:30 did not get into bed until 15.4 Very tired, Mine was abt the only long dress not dirtied.⁴¹

In this example the occasion was a particular highlight within the adult community – the visit of the Governor General and his wife (the daughter of Queen

³⁹ Sarah Crease. Letterbook, May 1873. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁰ Josephine Crease. Diary. 15 November 1882, and Sarah Crease Letterbook 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁴¹ Josephine Crease, notation at diary end for 15 November 1882. British Columbia Archives.

Victoria) celebrated at a ball at Government House where all society attended. Coming out at such an event was considered a social coup and in this case, it appears that at least six girls alongside Josephine, came out at the ball. What is also revealing in Josephine's account (in addition to the fact that she did not know the dances or was injured in some way and was unable to dance) is special mention of her "long" dress the only one "not dirtied." Perhaps this was also her first long dress and that she was not yet accustomed to careful movements required to maintain a dress in the absence of a pinafore perhaps, or at the very least, a dress of silk or other less easily washed fabric than her regular garments.

"Mary Barr has gone to Montreal for the winter and is "Coming Out""⁴² wrote a friend to Helen Macleod. This brief line confirms that Mary's coming out in a cultural mecca not a small town held cachet, and that girls monitored their cohort, noted their friend's newly changed status. Wording and assumed understanding all factor in conveying news as girls write, in effect creating a short-hand. Myra Ellison, at seventeen, may very well have already come out by the way she refers to a friend. She says, "Edna has not "come out" yet."⁴³

But did girls want to come out? Did they support this fundamental and irrevocable step in their growing up? An assumption exists that coming out was a positive step that girls anxiously awaited. The literature on nineteenth century girlhood and the contemporary discourses as seen in advice manuals and such would have us think so.⁴⁴

The records of girls themselves are less often consulted for evidence. In this study, the

⁴² Marie Young to Helen Macleod, 27 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

⁴³ Myra Ellison to Sophie Ellison, 3 April 1907. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁴⁴ For instance, Eliza Leslie, *The Ladies' Guide to True Politeness and Perfect Manners: Or, Miss Leslie's Behaviour Book, a Guide and Manual for Ladies* (Philadelphia: B. Peterson, 1864). Ellis, *The daughters of England: their position in society, character, and responsibilities*; Samuel Orchart Beeton, *Beeton's manners of polite society, or, Etiquette for ladies, gentlemen, and families* (London: Ward, Lock, and Tyler, 1876).

diaries and letters of girls confirm that the event was much anticipated and important for status amongst cohorts. Wistfulness as she awaited her own coming out is apparent in seventeen-year-old Phoebe Sanders' diary. She had experimented wearing her hair up and had fully given up on her schooling and now mimicked her mother in the events of her day, which included housework, cooking and social evenings playing card games. She had, in fact, embraced change, but was as yet too young to come out in society. Her nineteen-year-old friend, however, was publicly transitioning. Phoebe wrote in her diary of this event, and of the excitement it held for her. She wore a new dress she had made herself, was a popular dance partner and stayed out late. All taste of a life to come. "I pressed my dress for Gladys Perry's coming out dance... At nine o'clock we went to the dance I wore my little muslin I made all by my self & it was the first dance I ever had a programme & filled it all except 2." The event itself met her expectations. "I had the finest time of my life..."⁴⁵

It would be almost two years until Phoebe herself reached this milestone, in part because of her own indifferent health, and then her sister's health issues which became the focus of the family's energies. But finally, late in 1908 at the age of nineteen, Phoebe wrote enthusiastically across the top of her diary page "I came out!!" She then gave the details, "30 of the older Bachelors in town gave a big dance one of the best ever held in the City Hall. Dad took me & we went down...I had supper... Had a beautiful time danced every single dance in sight...never got home till 3 & to bed till nearly 4 – had a beautiful time."⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 2 January 1907. Glenbow Archives.

⁴⁶ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 12 November 1908. Glenbow Archives.

The backstory to Phoebe's coming out illustrates that no matter how heavily anticipated, the event was nevertheless an emotional one for girls, a milestone that they needed to share with other females in their family. As the preparations for Phoebe's "coming out" moved forward and the day approached it was a time of tension, not of the event but because Constance was very ill and would not be recuperated in time for Phoebe's big day. Phoebe's wish was to share her special day with Constance. The milestone would lose its lustre with her sister ill. Phoebe tried desperately to delay her "coming out" because of this, but the plans had to go ahead without Con, and without her mother, who could not leave her sister's bedside. "Mother says I am to come out at the big dance to morrow night. I don't want to at all. I want to wait & have one when Mother & Con can come – but I can't – Mother got me some pink chrysanthemums to wear." On the day, "Con still in bed with her eyes bandaged up – I kicked like a steer I didn't want to 'come out' at the dance at all."⁴⁷

In Phoebe's case, going forward with this milestone took courage because she would do so alone, without the support of her sister or mother. Coming out was significant for middle class girls because it was their last transition before full adulthood. Coming out recognized they were now considered eligible for marriage and future lives as mothers. The girls in this cohort, surprisingly show no reticence to this transition. In fact, the records indicate the opposite, that girls eagerly awaited their turn and that coming out was a milestone they wished to achieve.

⁴⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 11, 12 November 1908. Glenbow Archives.

Middle class boys complete schooling

Adult expectations of the after-school years of middle class boys were different than those held for girls because it was a gendered adult world, men expected to marry and support families, women expected to marry, mother and raise children. As seen with middle class girls, parents created role models for the children and established standards for their sons to follow. Advice literature given to boys at different ages also helped indoctrinate them to the expectations ahead.⁴⁸ To become breadwinners, boys required careers and longer term strategies for employment or business that would enable them in turn to support families. Their transitions to adulthood were therefore not linked to milestones of chronological age as were girls, but to tangible achievements leading to financial sufficiency.

For many upper middle class boys, schooling was intended to take them beyond mediocre employment, would prepare them for professions such as the law or engineering and “to assume leadership in society.”⁴⁹ The social and personal connections made at school often facilitated economic and personal opportunities, while the cachet of certain schools might open exclusive doors. But growing up for boys meant making decisions for their own individual paths, which might mimic that of their fathers, or move in new directions. Lindley and Arthur Crease followed in their father’s footsteps and became lawyers, establishing their own legal firm. Frank O’Reilly apprenticed as a civil engineer, while his brother Jack learned the law. The Helmcken brothers split between

⁴⁸ Reading material such as John G. Edgar, *The Boyhood of Great Men: Intended as An Example to Youth* (London: David Bogue, 1853); Samuel Smiles, *Self-Help: with Illustrations of Character and Conduct* (Boston: Ticknor and Fields, 1866).

⁴⁹ Barman, *Growing up British in British Columbia: boys in private school*: 1.

legal and medical professions. Joe Wilson took over the reins of his father's expanding clothing business; Edward Rithet (until his untimely death at age twenty) trained in the San Francisco branch of his father's import empire. The diaries and letters of these boys provide evidence that parental pressure to perform while at school could be significant and stressful, that making the transition from student towards a specific career was not an easy one, that the expectations held by boys of their performances factored into their views of themselves, and that worries and indecisiveness were part of the process.

As we have seen for girls, growing up might take courage when reviewing one's options. It was equally so for boys. Growing up required boys to shift away from dependency on parental decision-making and to recognize that it was now time to play a part in determining their own futures, to state their own positions and to guide themselves. The letters of boys in boarding schools communicate these perspectives, and the anxiety that comes with change and growth. They also reveal the child's side of the conversations about competencies. There were many more complexities in the preparations undertaken by boys as they moved towards adulthood than that experienced by their sisters and considerably more evidence of interactions between boys and their fathers in soliciting and obtaining advice. Lindley Crease noted the superior mathematics skill of an acquaintance and made a comparison. "How I wish I could get on in them but somehow or other I am remarkably stupid at them. If I was good at them I should like to take to engineering of some kind or other & next to it law."⁵⁰ He awaited guidance from his father "on what I am to be, you said you would write more on the subject."⁵¹

Humphrey Parlby indicated that he was thinking of the future in the choices made about

⁵⁰ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 25 January 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁵¹ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 25 December 1882. British Columbia Archives.

particular courses and skills. He wrote to his mother, half hoping she would agree with him, “Ask Dad if I should take Shorthand though I would rather not.”⁵²

The parents of fourteen-year-old Blythe Rogers wrote to him with their hopes for his future. The effect of their message buoyed their son’s outlook, which had been dramatically despondent and gave him focus. But the correspondence also indicates that Blythe held perspectives different from his parents, especially in regards to the appropriate transition point of applying for military college. He replied, “When I wrote that fateful epistle, I hadn’t received your letter with all those future prospects in it. That made me get underway again, and if I don’t pass the R.M.C. Exam, in 3 years, then it isn’t my fault.”⁵³ Three years later he reminded his mother not to assume his success in application. “Don’t expect me to do any wonderful RMC tricks, because the first two places have never yet been taken by an Albanian less than 18 years old.” Blythe’s sources told him that eighteen, not seventeen, was the proper age to enter military college, “especially if you get in first as you have to boss round thirty or so other fellows for a year.” His teacher too, knew the process and wanted him to wait a year. Blythe and his friends all experienced family pressure to apply even though they were too young. They were caught between family members who wanted them to grow up and their own realization that they were not ready. He tried to communicate this to his mother, “all the other fellows who are trying this year are requested to stay, but I (& they) know we can’t. The point is that none of us...have a ghost of a show for good place.... But I will do all I can.”⁵⁴ Acceptance at military college while younger than the norm would have placed

⁵² Humphrey Parlby to Irene Parlby, 19 January 1914. Glenbow Archives.

⁵³ Blythe Rogers to Mary Isabella Rogers, 28 September 1907. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁵⁴ Blythe Rogers to Mary Isabella Rogers, undated ca 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

enormous stress on these boys and they knew it. Having navigated the age and size based hierarchy of public school they had no wish to be disadvantaged through youth and smallness again.

Hugh Berry worried about his marks because the longer it took to pass his courses, the longer he was obliged to remain at school. “We are going to have some exams in about t[w]o weeks. I hope I can pass in them all. I think I can.”⁵⁵ Jack O’Reilly confessed, “There are only two boys that I can beat in somethings.”⁵⁶ Like Berry, failing grades would prolong not terminate his schooling. In the short term it might enable him to put off next steps (decisions on a future career), but would trap him at school when his dearest wish was to be at home. Jack’s letters home indicate he had yet to develop a passion for a future career, yet he experienced the same parental pressure as had brother Frank a few years earlier. At that time, Frank responded to his mother, “I wish I could answer your question about the profession, but I do not know what to say about it.”⁵⁷ Eight years later, Jack was equally uncertain and in the same predicament, perhaps more so because his good friend Ernest appeared to have found his own direction, and was about to leave Jack behind. “Ernest is going to be a Doctor and he is going to go to a school at Epsom I think,” he wrote in his Christmas letter to his family. “We begin our Exams on next Monday. I wish it may be my last term at this school.”⁵⁸

Other boys recorded similar anxieties. At eighteen, Arthur Crease wrote about his own worries,⁵⁹ but once he decided on following the example of his father and brother to

⁵⁵ Hugh Berry to Ada Berry, 4 February 1911. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁶ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 9 October 1885.

⁵⁷ Frank O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 10 July 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Peter and Caroline O’Reilly, Xmas [ca. 1886]. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁹ Quoted previously, Arthur Crease to Lindley Crease, 23 March 1880. British Columbia Archives.

pursue the law, he drummed up some enthusiasm. In preparation for his return to British Columbia from England, he strategized. "I am trying to learn all I can about English courts while I have the chance. I really believe I shall like law. I can hardly tell yet..."⁶⁰

Nineteen-year-old George Loudon focused on studies at the agricultural college in Pullman, Washington and was anxious when it appeared as though his education might be cut short of completion. He was heir to ranch lands and believed that he needed this education to move the business forward. George did not like the idea that his studies might be terminated before term so he made his case.

Well we are going to have examinations all next week. I am going to try and pass in all my subjects.... I am doing so well in all my studies that I do not like the idea of having to go home in March. If I leave school now I will have to start it all over again.... I hope that I can manage to stay the rest of term.⁶¹

George was prepared to argue for the benefit of completing his courses and this illustrates not only single-mindedness of purpose, but confidence in his own abilities. He was moving beyond an earlier dependence to advocate for his own future.

Sixteen-year-old Charles Newcombe broached the topic of his future plans to his father in a letter written from Scotland where he attended school. He advocated for course work that would enable him to be employed in Canada, not Britain, diplomatically asserting his preference. "I should of course prefer to get on a railway in B.C. but I should be very pleased to get on one even in this country, which is I suppose an easier matter."⁶² After receiving his father's reply, Charles wrote and emphasized his position.

⁶⁰ Arthur Crease to Lindley Crease, 23 March 1890. British Columbia Archives.

⁶¹ Elder sister Lizzie controlled the purse strings. George Loudon to Elizabeth Richter, 2 February 1902. British Columbia Archives.

⁶² Charles Newcombe to Charles Frederic Newcombe, 19 March 1899. British Columbia Archives.

“It is very good of you to have taken so much trouble about getting a post on the C.P.R. and I hope it will suit me. Telegraphy ought to be very interesting to learn. It goes without saying that I would 100 times prefer being on the Pacific Division within easy reach of Victoria.”⁶³ His course work in progress, the following year, Charles continued proactive oversight of his qualifications. He was not content to leave anything to chance, needed to double check that the courses he was taking would be those best applicable.

...my instructor wants me to ask you if they use the ‘sunder’ or the ‘needle’ instruments on the Canadian railways. Will you please let me know as soon as possible as it is no use my spending a lot of time on an instrument which is never used in Canada. Mr. Dixon thinks I ought to learn Book Keeping and also go through a course of office routine at Pitman’s so I am doing so but I don’t think I shall require that at all as Mr. Marpole or whatever gentleman you saw didn’t mention them to you and he would have been sure to have mentioned a subject as important as bookkeeping if it had been necessary for me to know it.⁶⁴

Fifteen-year-old Harry Helmcken conversed with his father about his own future plans. His letters reveal that his uncle, A.G. Dallas, also participated in discussions of his future. The examples of Helmcken and Newcombe provide evidence that boys utilized male networks to assist them in these crucial career decisions. In April 1875 Harry wrote from his school in Scotland. “I think either a Barrister or a Civil Engineer will suit me best but I leave the matter entirely in your hands for whatever you say, I am determined to follow it out to the last. It will not do to have two Doctors in the family.”⁶⁵ Six months later, “I intend putting my shoulder a little harder to the wheel this year. Am I to leave next year? I have had explained to me the studies etc. of a lawyer as well as those of a C.E. and as they are so ticklish to decide which to take I am rather at a loss to make up

⁶³ Charles Newcombe to Charles Frederic Newcombe, 15 June 1899. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁴ Charles Newcombe to Charles Frederic Newcombe, 18 January 1900. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁵ Harry Helmcken to John Helmcken, 3 April 1875. British Columbia Archives.

my mind. Have you and Mr. Dallas come to any conclusion yet?”⁶⁶ Evidently his father had not come to any conclusion that he communicated to Harry, for the next letter, (six months later) revealed Harry had made his own decision which he explained thus, “I have decided to go into the Chinese Consular Service. I always had the intention of becoming a lawyer but as there are quite enough of these gentlemen out there, I changed my mind. I would not like to go into the Indian Civil Service as there is very little chance getting on in the world. So I think I have made a very wise choice.”⁶⁷

From the child perspective, both Harry Helmcken and Charles Newcombe appear to have had a say in choosing their career paths, although Helmcken would eventually become a lawyer, contrary to his belief expressed above. The letters they wrote to their fathers reveal honest and open interchanges. They asked and received practical advice. Fathers discussed options with their sons, boys in turn responded with their own ideas and viewpoints that demonstrate some flexibility held by fathers and understood by their sons. Frank O’Reilly may have done also, although the evidence is not extant. Boys like Edward Rithet and Joe Wilson probably grew up with the expectation that their future was in their family’s business but again, the archival records do not exist to reveal conversations.

Judging by the evidence in this study, during the late nineteenth century upper middle class and middle class boys followed very gendered generational-based patterns for their adult lives and received support from adult males in decision making. Girls in the late nineteenth century also followed gendered generational patterns, but early in

⁶⁶ Harry Helmcken to John Helmcken, 18 September 1875. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁷ Harry Helmcken to John Helmcken, 26 February 1876. British Columbia Archives.

following century, moved away from such patterns as paid employment outside the home became an accepted option for the years before marriage.

The conversations revealed above are unique to the records of boys in this study. The records of girls who advanced to paid employment do not reveal similar discussions concerning options or of interchanges of advice. The discussions boys had with their fathers and the networks of male advisors are not visible in the records of their sisters, nor in the records of any of girls in this study and this may reflect a generational change. The sisters of the Crease, O'Reilly, Helmcken, Wilson and Rithet boys did not have the option of employment in their future because of their life positions and the historical time. It would be the next generation of girls who would seek employment following their schooling as a means to direct the years before marriage, to fulfil a need to contribute, to have worth that seemed impossible for the previous generation. But even these next-generation girls knew that this was to be a transitory phase if marriage was in their future plans.

Upper middle class girls who sought employment did so without the expert advice of family members without the gendered support experienced by boys because they were embarking on new pathways. Female role models within their families existed only in the domestic sphere because employment for upper middle class girls was newly conceived. Mothers might be supportive generally and fathers also, but they knew little of the careers— teaching or nursing or office work — sought by their daughters. This reinforces just how dramatic the shift towards outside employment was on the lives of twentieth century female children and the women they would become.

Boys at work

The gender equivalent to “coming out” seems to have been the first job or embarking on a career, defined not by a large social event but by the often unmarked beginning of paid employment. Whereas young boys exchanged knickerbockers for long pants older boys transitioned to young men by changing their daily pattern of living and perhaps residence. Employed boys experienced a changed status within their families because they had transitioned towards financial independence but this was not a publicly celebrated event as was “coming out” for older girls. If anything, it might be understated.

Neil Gilchrist wrote a single sentence on 17 May 1910, “John starts to work.”⁶⁸ This signalled an end to carefree recreation for a friend, and brought home thoughts of his own responsibilities, albeit still a little on the horizon. In Neil’s world, John was now different than him because employment acted to separate children who had grown-up together. A first job was a step towards adulthood. The child-created records in this study provide only a few glimpses of first jobs for boys, jobs that they sought out between school terms because they wanted the pocket money, wished for the experience, or wanted to initiate their transition. Employment was fundamentally different from chores because it required boys to step out of the roles they inhabited as sons or pupils and to develop relationships with bosses or sponsors. It required active engagement by boys to search out jobs, to meet with those who might potentially employ them, and for boys to promote themselves, demonstrate their own skills and their sincerity.

⁶⁸ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 17 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

Oliver Gardiner and Joe Clearihue obtained temporary jobs, not intended as careers. Their writings indicate utilization of male networks and confidence in their employability. Gardiner searched for a job during the summer holiday, and secured one that kept him working with the land (he was brought up on the family ranch). On 12 July, "I tried to get a job from Mr. Surtees (haying) if he needs anyone I'll get it."⁶⁹ A few weeks later, "Watched Mr. Surtees finish a stack. I milked one of his cows for him."⁷⁰ Joe Clearihue worked at a sawmill and lived at a boarding house in South Wellington, British Columbia, after his high school in Victoria, before he entered McGill University. Although he did not talk specifically about the details of this work, he ruminated about switching to another job, about getting on at a cannery owned by a businessman from their Victoria neighbourhood. "Say Papa, will you see Mr. Todd and see if there is a chance for me to get on the cannery this summer. I will go to work 1st July."⁷¹

Many of the upper middle class boys in the late nineteenth century were well into their careers by the age of twenty-one, the outside age date for children in this study, yet documentation from the child perspective is not plentiful. The reason is that these boys by and large returned to their home communities to embark on careers and often lived at home. The letters previously written to family then almost disappear and extant diaries are rare. This is exactly the situation of seventeen-year-old Frank O'Reilly who was back in Victoria after school and apprenticed to a civil engineer. The following two quotes are the only references he makes as an engineering apprentice involved in the construction of

⁶⁹ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 12 July 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁷⁰ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 12 August 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁷¹ Joseph Badenoch Clearihue to Joseph Clearihue, 31 March 1906. British Columbia Archives.

a new dry dock in Esquimalt. “The dock contract has been let at last,” he wrote to Kathleen in England, “so that work will commence on it some time this winter.”⁷² Eight months later, “Dock getting along well.”⁷³

Frank came back to his hometown essentially a man although he straddled the worlds to a certain extent because of his absence. He had a profession and employment that reflected his family status and position in the community. He lived with his parents, which facilitated some continuity of social ties with children that he knew prior to his years in England, and enabled his continued interaction with those younger than he, who might have been excluded from his society had he established himself in a rooming house or other residence.

Only a few clues exist from Frank’s perspective. In these same two letters he managed to discuss in a very neutral but informative way the social round of tennis in which he was obviously involved.

We have not had a very bright summer although the Flag Ship has been here this year, in fact the only thing that has gone on to any extent has been Lawn Tennis, and certainly we had plenty of that until the beginning of September, when we had a storm... People had Tennis days. Sir. M. Begbie and Mrs. Jackson had alternate Tuesdays with three courts each. Mrs. Ward had Fridays until their court was dried up. Miss. Ness[?] Wednesdays with two courts going. We generally had one day in the week. The Creases had on alternate weeks, and they had a few at Fairfield, so there were about three days in the week on average.⁷⁴

The following summer the details are not much different. “Victoria been dull better when Flag ship comes in. Mrs. Jackson Tennis Tuesdays Sir M. B- Fridays going

⁷² Frank O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 1 December 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁷³ Frank O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 25 August 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁴ Frank O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 1 December 1884. British Columbia Archives.

to the former to day.”⁷⁵ In both letters he prefaced his tennis details by indicating the slow pace of Victoria and how the comings and goings of the Royal Navy vessels provided social excitement. Certainly the life he had experienced in the metropole had greater variety, but his reporting style and the almost duplicate coverage over the space of eight months reads as boredom. There is no spark. It was if he was in limbo, finished school, beginning to work, yet tied to the old social rhythms rather than striking out in his own direction.

How did he fit in with his peers? What of his social life and new identity? These are the types of questions that are difficult to address in the absence of first person documentation, which in this study translates as a dearth of records created by older boys, and especially boys returning home after long absences. But child-created records allow us to look for clues by observers. How, for instance, did children who remembered him as a young boy perceive him now? The diaries of Josephine Crease, only two years older than Frank, attest to his presence at tennis, and on occasion at their dinner table but she does not comment on him separately. Frank and Lindley Crease had, after all, left for school together and Lindley was not yet returned. Seeing Frank return so much an adult probably set Josephine to thinking about her own brother, and how he might appear, but unfortunately, she left no record of these thoughts.

Adapting to circumstance; emotional maturity

The records of older children reveal how they adjusted to significant life changes, especially tragedies, and how they saw friends living through such events. Child-created records also reveal private underpinnings to family life in ways that were probably not

⁷⁵ Frank O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 25 August 1885. British Columbia Archives.

visible to others in the community. In their diaries in particular children recorded changes in family dynamics or in interpersonal relationships that are closely held and reveal how they themselves coped with emotional distress.

Sometimes life plans or expectations turned upside down. An unexpected death within a child's family quickly altered family circumstances and children held no option but to adapt. For instance, sixteen-year-old Helen Macleod had to be withdrawn from her schooling at Wykeham Hall in Toronto when her father passed away suddenly. Whether she had held dreams of further education or not, Helen's immediate future was now circumscribed by the death of her father, who left the family penniless. She did not have the luxury of choice or the opportunity to fall back on the gendered class assumption that young ladies of position such as she was, need not consider employment. In the popular phrasing, Macleod had left behind him no pension, no savings, but "a widow, five children and eight dollars."⁷⁶ Despite her father's status as a former senior officer in the mounted police and as a magistrate, and the community's respect for both parents, the Macleod family faced great change with the patriarch's death. Financial necessity now required Helen to earn a salary to pay for food for the family table. She was hired as a clerk in the Hudson's Bay Company store in Calgary while her mother became a seamstress to the fashionable. This was not the future that Helen or her family had envisioned.

Death of the breadwinner also put pressure on boys at school. No records of boys directly thus affected are in this study, but a reference by Ellen Ellison concerning such a situation in a family with whom she was familiar, illustrates the point. "Isn't it sad about

⁷⁶ MacLaren, *Braehead: three founding families in nineteenth century Canada*: 269.

Mr. Chambers' death," she wrote. "I just saw it in the *Vernon News*. Indeed my heart goes out to those poor girls, who are without Father and Mother now." But it was the boy in the family that gave her pause: "Wallace had just started to go to some Boys College in New Westminster, and I suppose he will have to go back to work again."⁷⁷ Deaths of parents forced children to withdraw from school and abandon longer-term educational plans. The move from dependent into breadwinner curtailed any natural or paced transition from child to adult. Children in such circumstances found themselves with adult responsibilities before they might be psychologically or emotionally prepared.

Conversely, death in the family might also change the roles between older children and their parents. Awareness of parental frailty provided an opportunity for children to demonstrate their own emotional maturity. Elizabeth and Frieda Richter compartmentalized their own grief at the unexpected death of a younger sister with whom they shared a room at boarding school. Elizabeth and Frieda each wrote separately to their mother and answered specific questions. It was important to the mother to know that the dead child had received a letter recently sent with its enclosed presents. The girls answered her questions in ways that illustrate sensitivity to their mother's need to know, but also purposefully not adding to her worries by showing their own grief. Their letters were acts of love as they channelled their own grief into comfort for their mother. Both girls wrote on the same day. Elizabeth wrote, "We received your most loving letter and were very glad to get it. We received your nice presents the day Frances left us..."⁷⁸ Frieda wrote, "Frances received the napkin ring four or five days before she died. It use[d] to be her favorite thing to play with. She also received the gold ring and died with

⁷⁷ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 30 March 1906. Greater Vernon and District Archives.

⁷⁸ Elizabeth Richter to Elizabeth Richter, 8 March 1908. British Columbia Archives.

it on.”⁷⁹ Elizabeth’s letter informed her mother that she was sending the dead girl’s effects. “We put all of Frances’ clothes in the trunk you sent us full of apples. I scrubbed it during vacation. Her hats get a little crushed so I put them in another trunk.”⁸⁰

Elizabeth’s quick action gave comfort to her mother, who would then await delivery of the trunks.

Evidence of children’s ever maturing emotional lives is also visible in situations of interpersonal conflict. Anger experienced by children at parental actions was discussed earlier in relation to boarding school separations. Anger also occurred for many other reasons while children lived at home and was sometimes recorded in their diaries, as an act of catharsis illustrating that children were aware of their emotional states and knew that they needed an outlet. Children’s diaries then provide documentation of family conflict perhaps not available in the records of adults, who might not even be aware of such strife within their children. A younger child might have a tantrum, or be unable to articulate the cause of anger, but an older child channelled the emotion into words on a page. Thus, Josephine’s impatience with her mother and father is visible through daily entries that provide evidence of not only what triggered her anger (it was usually situational), but of how she experienced that anger. The sentences Josephine employed to describe her frustrations are short and spare but acted as a conduit for her needs. When their financial situation necessitated that the family sell their horses and carriage, her diary enabled her to emotionally channel through words. “I think they could not do a meaner action.”⁸¹ Anger spilled out again when Henry Crease turned down invitations to

⁷⁹ Frieda Richter to Elizabeth Richter, 8 March 1908. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁰ Elizabeth Richter to Elizabeth Richter, 8 March 1908. British Columbia Archives.

⁸¹ Josephine Crease. Diary 6 April 1884. British Columbia Archives.

social events that she wished to attend because he would be out of town. “Papa refused the invitation to the ball on Tuesday,” she wrote in reference to the upcoming Bachelor’s Ball. She had “come out” the year previous, but would need her father’s escort. The frustration was doubled because adult siblings Susan and Barbara were able to attend, escorted by family friend, Sir Matthew Baillie Begbie.⁸²

The situations with her mother often emerged from housework expected, which in Josephine’s mind was disproportionate to that assigned to her sisters. “Mama make me clean all the everyday silver take me till 2...Ma not like me she very nasty the whole day.”⁸³ On occasion she had to take over the children’s Bible study group her mother conducted each Friday. “Mama have her class & I as usual, have to help her.” “I had to take her class for her, most beastly work.”⁸⁴ The adjectives beastly and nasty no doubt were words not normally audibly voiced. Using her diary, Josephine channelled anger into sarcasm in notations such as, “Papa stayed in bed all day with a cold. Arthur stayed at home & Mama nursed them both the poor dears.”⁸⁵ The underlined word allows her to criticize her mother’s skills as a nurse without saying directly. Likewise the phrase “poor dears” enabled her to acknowledge one of several instances of her father’s malingering without the evidence of wording to that effect. In her view, Henry Crease employed illness as an excuse to distance himself from social duties or in times of family stresses.

In January 1883 after her father had been four days in bed with a cold, she wrote, “Papa feigning ill.”⁸⁶ Later that year, in the days after Barbara’s death, he took to his

⁸² Josephine Crease. Diary. 14, 16 January 1883. British Columbia Archives.

⁸³ Josephine Crease. Diary. 15 January 1883. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁴ Josephine Crease. Diary. 17 June, 2 December 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁵ Josephine Crease. Diary. 21 January 1883. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁶ Josephine Crease. Diary. 21 January 1883. British Columbia Archives.

bed, much in the same way he had when Lindley left for school. Josephine saw the unfairness of this tactic. The entire family grieved, but the rest of them had responsibilities that continued, each had to assume the burden of mourning and deal with the aftermath of death. Why should her father escape duty? And furthermore, did he not care about the strain it put on her mother? “Papa very unwell,” she recorded one day, followed successively by, “Papa in bed with aches & pains.” “Papa in bed still.” “Papa kept in bed as best place!” “P. in bed still.” “P. in bed & wearing mother out.”⁸⁷

These examples illustrate how the older child – Josephine Crease at ages seventeen and nineteen – was able to view her world and glimpse its underpinnings. She had established her own standards of conduct and held expectations that the behaviour of others would meet her standards. She found fault in her parents who had previously been role models. She had internalized standards of conduct and now expected others to live up to them. Writings such as hers provide historians with the opportunity to see the assumption of prescriptive discourses by older children. What is documented here is evidence of the private side of families, of discord between children and other family members that challenges children to find private ways to handle it and to grow through it.

Identity formation

One of the essential accomplishments of growing up in any place or time is to establish one’s own identity and sense of self, an abstract delineated by (among other factors) gender, class, nationality and personality. The records of several children in this study provide evidence of how hard children worked to sculpt these identities, and as they matured, how these ideas of self changed.

⁸⁷ Josephine Crease. Diary. 14 to 19 December 1883. British Columbia Archives.

The letters of Jack O'Reilly during the five years he was away from home reveal ways in which he actively worked at his own growing up by establishing his own identity and place within his school cohort. He established a museum, became an authority on his colonial homeland. He created a persona that was his alone, not dependent upon the associations of family. Jack experimented also with signatures. In his letters, "Jack" signed his name variously, trying out alternative diminutives – perhaps in response to fellow students who reworked his name or insisted on calling him differently – and practiced his signature with swirls and flourishes. He signed himself as Jackalow, Jerry or Jerome, or Jack O' The Monkey.⁸⁸ It was a way he could express his individuality, actively shift his image from an ordinary boy into a creative and extravagant one. He was building a new identity that was not based on his relationship with his parents and siblings, but was based on his classmates and his position in the hierarchical structure of the school and the boys' culture within it.

Identity formation involves making choices, deciding to do one thing or another, favouring a style, or endorsing behaviour.⁸⁹ Such actions establish one's character. During his first year, Jack confessed, "I think a lot about smoking but I do not ever try." Jack included little sketches at the close of his letters to Frank, one showing "Frank's House" with "Frank smoking" a cigarette and standing in front of it. Another had a figure of Frank in a top hat with a cigarette in his mouth, a plume of smoke swirling

⁸⁸ Jack O'Reilly to Frank O'Reilly, 18 November 1884, 18 May 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁹ Identity formation is discussed in Davidoff, *The family story: blood, contract, and intimacy, 1830-1960*: 13. Elliott West writes that two of the most important questions anyone ever asks, "Who am I?" and "Who can I be?" are key to identity formation. West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far Western frontier*: 121.

upwards.⁹⁰ In the absence of Frank's letters to Jack we can only surmise that Frank had reported his own smoking habits to his brother, and perhaps also, that some of Jack's schoolmates experimented with cigarettes, putting pressure on other students to follow their lead. At one point a cigarette was found in Jack's pocket.⁹¹ One new boy to the school in 1885 did smoke. "There is two new Belgian boy[s]... the other is a boy who we call tabacco because he smoakes."⁹² Perhaps the cachet of smoking, or even having an older brother who smoked, assisted Jack in establishing his "Jack O' The Monkey" persona.

Jack also worked to establish his identity as a boy from British Columbia as opposed to the boy from Ireland, or the one from India. He was proud of his birthplace and his uniqueness in the school because of it. Jack had photos of his home and of Victoria in his room. Being British Columbian and knowing something of the place and its importance within the Empire contributed to his self-esteem and gave him an individual identity beyond that of a boy far from home. Jack asked for BC stamps and newspapers to be sent out for trading. "The Stamp rage has come in again...I am going to get some stamps in the holidays. And with the new book they will look nice."⁹³ "[Have] I have told you and thanked you for the stamps you sent me a long while ago..."⁹⁴ He asked his father, "send me a map of B.C. it is impossible to get a map of any place except this beastly England or some beastly place that no one knows about,"⁹⁵ and

⁹⁰ Jack O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, 9 November 1884, Jack O'Reilly to Frank O'Reilly, 19 October and 18 November 1884. BC Archives

⁹¹ Jack O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 9 November 1884. BC Archives.

⁹² Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 21 September 1885. BC Archives.

⁹³ Jack O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, 14 December 1884. BC Archives.

⁹⁴ Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 24 October 1886. BC Archives.

⁹⁵ Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 24 October 1886, BC Archives.

later, “will one of you at Home send me 2 Pairs of Mochassans Nobody seems to know any thing about them in England.”⁹⁶ His actions were intended to establish him as a distinct person who was an expert on his home country.⁹⁷

It was important to Jack that he be liked. At Christmas he asked, “please send me...nice Christmas card so that I can Bragg about.”⁹⁸ He needed to show his peers that he was special, had a family that – though distant – thought highly of him. Eventually Jack’s need to establish himself as a certain type of boy led him to retaliate physically when bullied, establish a menagerie of birds, rabbits and pet rats, advocate for an airgun and experiment with gunpowder only have it explode in his face. His letters show how his ideas of creating a persona for himself at school juggled with the emotions of homesickness and the sense of abandonment by his family. He struggled on the inside and in private with grades and with daily living, while working on his outward image that was more closely aligned with the expectations of the homosocial world in which he was bound. Jack’s letters to his family will be more fully quoted in later chapters. With all their contradictory messaging, with his emotionality unchecked in correspondence with family yet so denied in the culture at school, these letters are a window into his struggle towards maturity, and provide an example of the combination of sweet and bitter that was and is growing up.

As children matured their records reveal how they absorbed understandings of social or racial difference and of their situation within the milieu. Children held clear

⁹⁶ Jack O’Reilly to family, nd [probably December 1886]. BC Archives.

⁹⁷ Victorian and Edwardian education in Britain was “explicitly engaged in a process of national-identity construction...establishing in the minds of students not just the place of their country in world affairs but...the construction of a shared national culture.” Heathorn, *For home, country, and race: constructing gender, class, and Englishness in the elementary school, 1880-1914*: viii.

⁹⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 21 November 1886. BC Archives.

understandings of themselves, of their identities and made comparisons. They were like or not like certain people they met or observed. A later chapter on peer relationships shows how children's identities enabled them to bond with other children in friendship and to operate within gendered and social cultures. But this chapter employs examples from the writings of older children that illustrate how children's own identities allowed them to comment on others who were seen as different. Martha Douglas saw and articulated difference in comments made to her companions and in her own actions.

As we were coming from school this afternoon, we met a little White headed boy, who was excessively rude and picked up a stone to throw at Flora Macdonald because she made faces at him, which was very naughty of her to be for sure, as I told her at the time; for it is not nice for young ladies, to be falling out with little street boys, who are always disposed to be rude. I told the boy to throw away the stone and we left him there.⁹⁹

The way that Martha dealt with this encounter reveals clearly an ingrained class awareness of superiority that gave her confidence to not only confront the boy, but to chastise her own companion for unladylike behaviour. Martha Douglas made clear distinctions between children one played with and those one did not, and also the actions befitting a well-brought up girl and those not. She acted of her own accord in the absence of adults to direct her and this illustrates she had absorbed an understanding of self. Confidence in her own identity and place in society gave her license to act the way she did.

A similar confidence enabled Alice Ward to observe fellow passengers on the steamer taking her home from England. "Miss. Dunn is not a half caste," she wrote, alluding perhaps to some earlier speculation, "for her father & Mother have lately come

⁹⁹ Martha Douglas. Diary. 21 March 1866. British Columbia Archives.

to B.C. from Ceylon. They find a great difference in their life now poor things.”¹⁰⁰ In this final observation, Alice revealed an awareness of economic classifications of society, of the reality that a change in financial circumstances would alter opportunities. She continued her snap analysis of passengers. “There is a girl sitting near me she is traveling alone & is to all appearances an Actress.”¹⁰¹ The rigidity of such typecasting and the unspoken yet conscious attitude toward others whose circumstances and livelihoods were different than that of her social set illustrates the tightly held class-consciousness of the colonial and metropolitan elite, to whom Alice Ward believed she belonged. The earlier remark pities; the second is judgmental. At nearly eighteen, she was quite confident in her own place and saw no reason to look beyond.

In contrast, the middle class social expectations into which seventeen-year-old Kathleen Jenns was born, shifted as family finances necessitated and as a result she was much more flexible in her outlook and held a less rigid understanding of those with whom she might interact. Her own identification was linked with the family’s regular uprooting as they moved house or changed cities, with the shifting cast of neighbours and fellow boarders. When she told her father “[we are] going to move out of our three rooms into two and how five of us are going to two rooms I don’t know,”¹⁰² she did not intend the comment as a display of disappointment at her circumstances, but rather it was just matter-of-fact information about her world, a world where thrift was integral to decision-making and cost always a consideration. As an older child she exhibited practicality in many social and recreational choices. She chose to “nearly always go to

¹⁰⁰ Alice Ward to Kathleen O’Reilly, 1 March 1884. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰¹ Alice Ward to Kathleen O’Reilly, 1 March 1884 British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰² Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 19 August 1911. British Columbia Archives.

communion at half past seven, Sundays, because they give a nice breakfast just after so that we can go to Sunday School at nine, then church at eleven.”¹⁰³ She rationalized disappointments. “I would love to keep up with my [singing] lessons but it cost too much.”¹⁰⁴

Rather than positioning herself in relation to others she saw as different and therefore less desirable, as had Alice Ward, Kathleen Jenns held a more fluid understanding of where she fit in terms of social class. Her neighbours introduced her to political and religious beliefs not so mainstream and she developed her own independent opinions. She wrote to her father about the dynamic of ideologies she was aware about because they were subjects of conversation, not only amongst those of her social set, but also amongst those she interacted with yet distinguished as different from her. She was not blinkered in the ways of the children in this study who grew up in the nineteenth century. She was of another generation, but was also formed by her own unconventional family life as discussed in earlier chapters, which allowed her to be more open to difference, less rigid in her outlook. “I do believe,” she wrote, “everyone in Los Angeles are Christian Scientists or Socialists. Even when I have my boots blacked the boot blacks begin to talk of socialism and it seems rather funny that it is only the poor people ever talk about. The socialists are very strong in this town.”¹⁰⁵ She was just barely eighteen, but open to a wider world that included conversations across the gulfs of social, economic and religious differences.

¹⁰³ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 11 December 1911. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 23 May 1912. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁵ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 9 November 1911. British Columbia Archives.

Searchers

As children matured they also took their own independent steps to investigate aspects of the wider worlds they glimpsed beyond the familiar spaces in which they had grown. In a few examples, children explored and embraced ideas and areas of interest not those of their parents and this process of searching was one that expanded their previous identifications. At the very least the children who recorded their opinions and actions document their independent thinking, their openness to options, to exposing themselves to newer ideas. For instance, Phyllis Jenns at age sixteen and seventeen attended (on her own) different churches, trying in one instance, a Christian Scientist service, and commented on the discussion held afterwards.¹⁰⁶ She searched for answers to questions that were important. She purchased a book on Yogi Philosophy and astral travel. Several letters in succession included references to Yogic ideas.¹⁰⁷

Neil Gilchrist was also a searcher. Although he noted only a few sermon topics in his diary, those he chose to record seem to be ones that might have been controversial within his family or with which he himself disagreed. Neil might also have considered these sermons to be worthy of discussion with his friends, for instance, “Went to church with Rus. Preacher preached against saloons, picture shows & bum reading.”¹⁰⁸ Another Sunday he referenced a sermon on temperance.¹⁰⁹ The act of noting these sermons and not others indicates they were important to him in some way, perhaps because they

¹⁰⁶ Phyllis Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 22 February 1917. British Columbia Archives

¹⁰⁷ Phyllis Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 19 December 1916; 22 February, 7 November, 8 December 1917. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 18 September 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹⁰⁹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 2 October 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

initiated awareness of alternate perspectives on social practises. Gilchrist's diary entries suggest that he was receptive to and thought a great deal about his beliefs and experimented. The memoranda section at the back of his diary recorded, "Read Bible through from Jan 27 every night" and "Proverbs 7 [is] classy."¹¹⁰ In June 1910 he and his friend Rus went to church in the morning, and then after supper walked the streets as they gathered courage to enter a church of a different denomination. They were curious, "thinking we would go to some church anyway (Catholic or any)."¹¹¹ A week later, he attended his regular church and Sunday school, and later that evening went to a Baptist church across town. The experience prompted him to begin attending "BYPU" a weekly Baptist youth social evening.¹¹² The Baptist church was not that of his parents, and he seems to have straddled belonging to two congregations for the remainder of the year. These children of the early twentieth century – Kathleen Jenns and Neil Gilchrist – undertook deliberately to stretch beyond the given confines of their social worlds and in so doing were changed, took these new perspectives with them into adulthood, colouring their adult wider worlds with tolerances not characteristic of previous generations.

Religious maturity

As Anglican boys and girls neared the completion of their schooling or approached their middle teen-years, another formal milestone was often achieved. This was confirmation, a ceremony in which children who had already been baptized and lately undergone formal classes and training would make a mature statement of faith. Affirming their faith in public as individuals able to speak for their own selves,

¹¹⁰ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. Memoranda notes. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹¹¹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 5 June 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹¹² Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 12, 13 June 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

confirmed children thereby transitioned to full membership in their church and were then viewed both within the church and the larger society as having “come of age.” In this study several children reference the onset of confirmation classes they were expected to regularly attend, and of their eventual confirmation. Phoebe Sanders managed to attend enough classes in between her sessions of strep throat and diphtheria to be confirmed on 2 March 1905. Her diary entries read as matter of fact phrases with little indication that this was anything more than one in a series of obligations in her weekly schedule.¹¹³ The need to borrow a veil proved to be the most noted detail in her diary.¹¹⁴ In contrast, other children’s references read quite differently as the significance of the event was more understood. For some, the formality of instruction and the implications of confirmation itself, were approached in ways similar to career decision-making or coming out, with a combination of trepidation at what the step meant for them and some uncertainty that they were quite ready for it. In these cases, children appear caught between accepting the transition point as recognition of maturity, and the requirement that they publicly express their faith.

Alice Ward wrote to her friend Kathleen and through these letters we learn that at age sixteen, Kathleen attended confirmation classes while in England, and was confirmed without support of family, a fact Alice understood to be causing Kathleen worry. Kathleen herself told her parents separately in different letters that she had undertaken to do so. To her mother she said, “I am going to the confirmation classes. I feel sure you will think of me Mother dear & I hope I have not troubled you by writing to you about it.

¹¹³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 2 March and earlier 1908. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹⁴ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 31 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

I like the classes very much they are every Tuesday.”¹¹⁵ Kathleen made much of the preparation in the lessons she received from “Mr. Glynn” in the weeks leading up to her confirmation, and was diligent in her studies. Alice wrote to let Kathleen know she had been in her mind on the previous day. “I thought of you yesterday on the day of your confirmation & felt for you alone it might seem & yet not alone for you had a friend to aid you.”¹¹⁶

While Kathleen was coming to the church on her own and bravely moving forward, others had reservations about being confirmed. Josephine Crease wrote to her brother about the confirmation classes she was undertaking at age thirteen, and confessed antipathy. “I am going to be confirmed in April,” she wrote, “because the Bishop is going away in May. I don’t want to very much. I think I’m too young.”¹¹⁷ What did she consider herself too young for? She may not have self-identified as one whose time had come to meet this milestone. Perhaps she thought herself unequal to the responsibility of joining those older than her in a status that separated her from younger, less informed members of the congregation? If she viewed confirmation as a step away from childhood, perhaps this explains her position. Perhaps Josephine recognized that she lacked the spiritual motivation and equated this with immaturity.

Jack O’Reilly at age fifteen took confirmation classes, as had his sister, while in England. A letter he wrote to his mother (who was in England visiting) reads curiously as though he was only now informing her of this fact. Perhaps he, like Kathleen before him, took this step without the encouragement or support of parents. Undertaking

¹¹⁵ Kathleen O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, contained on page of letter written by Jack O’Reilly, 27 December 1883. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁶ Alice Ward to Kathleen O’Reilly, 10 May 1884. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁷ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 8 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

confirmation perhaps then is evidence of maturity of a different type, as Jack made himself into the person he wanted to be, moving forward as necessary into new areas. He wrote, “Do you think that you could manage to come down here on Sat. 24th March and stop till Monday. It is the day that I am going to be Confirmed. It will take place in the Chaple.” In a tiny script written along side the entry he added, “Answer this.”¹¹⁸

As noted in an earlier chapter, both boys and girls recorded attending Sunday school as young children and many of these children progressed in later childhood, after their own confirmation into volunteering as Sunday school teachers. Teaching Sunday school was a commitment older children made both of their time to attend each week, to be prepared in terms of the lesson plan; and of their beliefs. Children did not therefore undertake teaching lightly, they had to have confidence in their ability to perform. Teaching Sunday school was a milestone of achievement and of mature commitment that seems to be more child-recognized than adult-recognized. Teaching Sunday school offered older children the opportunity to exert authority over younger children outside of a sibling relationship and they were expected to model proper behaviour. Alice Ward described her class in a way that conveys she believed herself up to the challenge. “I have taken a class at the Sunday School since the beginning of the year & I like it very much I have about eleven little boys aged about six to nine some of them dreadful little pickles.”¹¹⁹ Phoebe Sanders noted, “11 noisy pupils five boys six girls.”¹²⁰

The diaries of both Josephine Crease and Phoebe Sanders document that they, their sisters and several friends all taught Sunday school indicating that not only was it

¹¹⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 13 February 1888. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁹ Alice Ward to Kathleen O’Reilly, 14 February 1885. British Columbia Archives.

¹²⁰ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 2 February 1908. Glenbow Archives.

common for girls to do so, but also that it was an acceptable commitment. When a girl was ill or unavailable, a friend usually agreed to fill in for them. Constance Sanders agreed to cover a class for a friend one Sunday. “Con took Helen Burnett’s class in Sunday School as they are in quarantine.”¹²¹ She was, perhaps unaware of the challenges. Phoebe noted in her own diary the next week that, “Con absolutely refused to teach Helen B’s class at S. School today so Mother took it.”¹²² It was not for everyone, nor was it considered a boy’s opportunity. Boys such as Neil Gilchrist did teach Sunday School, but teaching was more highly regarded among girls, and thus gendered in desirability.

None of the children’s references to confirmation or teaching Sunday school provide clues as to their spiritual lives. They take steps and make commitments to become full members in their Anglican church and to teach those younger but do so without any commentary regarding their own spiritualism or acknowledging faith-based motives and this is surprising given the importance placed in adult society upon Christian belief and right actions. Kathleen O’Reilly seemed more concerned about arranging for her confirmation classes on her own authority and how this might be received by parents, than a faith-based need to do so. Josephine Crease equated confirmation with age maturity rather than as a faith-inspired action.

Catholic children were equally distant. Boarding at Holy Angels Convent, Athabaska, Melissa Elmore’s first letter of the year to her married sister referenced: “I am going to make my first Communion with Jimmie and three of the other children at Easter.”¹²³ No further comment. In weekly letters to her father, Flora Steele reminded

¹²¹ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 15 March 1908. Glenbow Archives.

¹²² Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 22 March 1908. Glenbow Archives.

¹²³ Melissa Elmore to Lillie Spencer, 7 January 1888. Provincial Archives of Edmonton.

him, “I am going to make my ‘First Communion’ on the 7 of May and will be confirmed on the same day. I hope Gertrude Hubert will be my maid of honour.”¹²⁴ “My First Communion dress is very pretty.”¹²⁵ After the event, it seems the gifts received were the most significant aspect for her. “I made my First Communion on Wednesday and got lots of presents...”¹²⁶

Presbyterian Neil Gilchrist in 1910 noted, “Took part in communion (first for me)” and then spent more ink on recording the reaction of friends to his wearing long pants on the occasion and his other activities that day, “bummed around at night & bothered Anna (he he).”¹²⁷ Eula Carscallen attended the Methodist church each Sunday followed by Sunday school. On 5 May 1918 she noted phlegmatically in her diary, “I joined the church with other girls and boys.”¹²⁸ No further comment or reference.

Consistently, across the cohort over the time period, the children are silent on their religious belief. They participate publicly but what appears in their written record is a marking off, not an acknowledgement that the event had any spiritual meaning for them at all. The children’s pragmatic attitudes towards what their parents probably viewed as a significant faith-acknowledging milestone might be seen as surprising. Their silences might demonstrate that they felt uncomfortable or uncertain about talking about spirituality. At the very least it reaffirms that child perspectives are based on their own positions and place in their own worlds, not necessarily informed by the life experiences of adults or following the expectations assumed of them.

¹²⁴ Flora Steele to Samuel Steele, 13 April 1902. Provincial Archives of Alberta.

¹²⁵ Flora Steele to Samuel Steele, 27 April 1902. Provincial Archives of Alberta.

¹²⁶ Flora Steele to Samuel Steele, 11 May 1902. Provincial Archives of Alberta.

¹²⁷ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 11 December 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹²⁸ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 5 May 1918. City of Red Deer Archives.

Marriage

As seen in children's records, movement out of childhood into adulthood usually occurred as a culmination of a series of socially prescribed and child prescribed transition points or moments alongside progressively maturing emotional selves. At times children tried to accelerate the process by adopting adult clothing or hairstyles, growing facial hair or taking up smoking. But children looked at themselves and at their cohort critically, measuring and comparing. They held opinions of their peers based on age, linked to gendered ritual and symbolism such as confirmation and "coming out" and to evidence of maturity in outlook and interpersonal relationships. But absolute determination of becoming a woman or a man in the understandings held by children across the cohort (and seen earlier in the records of younger children) was the achievement of marriage. Marriage terminated childhood.

"What queer things do happen in this world," wrote nineteen-year-old Sophie Puckette in her diary. "One of the queerest, was today between the hours of 1 & 2 p.m." In brackets added at a later date, "My first proposal."¹²⁹ The first notation suggests that the proposal of marriage was unanticipated, and perhaps also from an unexpected source. No further details were forthcoming or foreshadowed earlier. Puckette may have considered herself too young to marry. Also at age nineteen Mary Willison received a marriage proposal in the post from a young man with whom she had a correspondence. Her response was negative.

I only received your letter last Saturday when I was home for the week end. I was indeed more than surprised at its contents, as well as sorry, for it grieves me to disappoint you...For I admire and respect you... you are worthy of someone who is better and nobler than this insignificant

¹²⁹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 20 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

little stenographer...I know you would do all in your power toward making me happy; but there could not be any real happiness unless there was a spontaneity of love on both sides. You would not want a loveless wife.¹³⁰

Had the girls responded differently, they would have effectively determined the end of their childhood for as we have seen earlier in this study, children who married ceased to be viewed as children, their unmarried peers considered them differently from that point onwards. Neil Gilchrist's confusion as to how to relate is visible in his diary. His entries subsequent to a friend's marriage changed from casual use of her first name to a compilation of her unmarried and married surnames and the addition of "Mrs." The same awkwardness is visible in Phoebe Sanders diary. Sophie Puckette at nineteen was bemused about, "Waldo's daughter Mary age 16 next Nov. was married in June. (How crazy girls are.)"¹³¹

But marriage seemed more palatable as children aged. At age twenty, Alex Dennys happily embraced adulthood but was patient enough to understand his seventeen-year-old fiancée, might not be so ready. On 13 April 1915 he noted that he and Joyce at last "have got "our" ring to fit right! Just one month since we were engaged. Happy Day."¹³² They waited four years to marry, until Joyce was twenty-one. Meanwhile, Joyce finished her schooling and became a teacher. The two planned their future and in so doing, allowed Joyce the opportunity of a career before marriage, but before that, the opportunity of gradually transitioning from childhood rather than abruptly terminating it by marriage at seventeen.

¹³⁰ Mary Willison to C. Colwell, 2 September 1913. Glenbow Archives.

¹³¹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 20 August 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹³² Alexander Dennys. Diary. 13 April 1915. Salmon Arm and District Museum.

No further examples of marriage opportunities or of marriage itself occur for the children in this study and this is meaningful in two ways. Firstly it indicates that within this cohort, marriage came later, after age twenty. Second, that few friends or acquaintances of the children in this cohort married before the age of twenty-one, thus the legal age of majority may have framed decision-making and contributed to standard assumptions of adulthood that, as we have seen, included several other milestones and caveats.

Apart from Dennys' diary, the boys' records do not include references to themselves or their male friends marrying, perhaps confirming the evidence of marriage registration documentation and the census that young men married at a later age than did young women in the time period under study.¹³³ But girls referenced the milestone of marriage achieved by others, which reinforces the idea that marriage was very much in the purview of their identities. Alice Ward wrote to Kathleen O'Reilly with news about being a bridesmaid to a slightly older acquaintance, showing by association that she was of an age, and also filled her in with some of the more controversial romances. "Fancy Eustace Jenns has got married he married a Miss. Webster of New Westminster to the great disgust of the family. It is a run a way match.... There is a talk that Mary Crease is engaged to Mr. Walker...though the Father contradicts it."¹³⁴ Within the diaries of Josephine Crease, are comments about suitors for her elder sister, and in her eighteenth year she began to note marriages of others within her social set, although most are older.

¹³³ Average age for first marriages in selected provinces during the period under study reveal earliest age for girls to be 22 and boys to be 32. Tables 12 and 13 in Barman, *The West beyond the West: a history of British Columbia*: 370.

¹³⁴ Alice Ward to Kathleen O'Reilly, 8 April 1884. British Columbia Archives.

For instance, “Clara Carr married to J. Nicholles at the home.”¹³⁵ “Mr. W.I. Drake married to Miss. Wallace at the Cathedral.”¹³⁶ “Dotty Mackenzie married to Mr. Dobbin.”¹³⁷ Phoebe Sanders also noted engagements she did not agree with. “Miss. Page (Vivian) is engaged to an awful student called Mr. Porter. He is a big slouchy student...Miss. Page is just 21 years.”¹³⁸ The worlds of Josephine, Alice and Phoebe changed as friends individually moved forward into marriages, forming alliances with spouses that were based upon different intimacies than that of girl or boy cultures or of remembrances of growing up.

Conclusion

When is a child “grown-up”? When is a child no longer a child according to a child? Pamela Riney-Kehrberg notes, “For most youngsters, an important part of being grown-up is believing that one is, in fact, an adult...although it is somewhat difficult to uncover the dawning of this important self-perception...”¹³⁹ This observation certainly holds true for the children in this study for they left no marker, no statement defining themselves or recognizing that they had become adult. It was a steady accumulation of changing circumstances, companions and activities that would culminate perhaps only as retrospective reflection that they had finally achieved a new status. Certainly marriage or full time employment was a clear delineator, and put an end to this seamless continuum.

Becoming an adult is for children a future outcome of their present status.

Growing up is a period of becoming someone new and different from one’s previous self.

¹³⁵ Josephine Crease. Diary. 22 June 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹³⁶ Josephine Crease. Diary. 15 July 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹³⁷ Josephine Crease. Diary. 19 July 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹³⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 25 April 1908. Glenbow Archives.

¹³⁹ Riney-Kehrberg, *Childhood on the farm: work, play, and coming of age in the Midwest*: 183.

The period of becoming stretches over the continuum of childhood and is understood rather differently by adults who observe children, children who observe other children and children who observe their own selves. Becoming someone new and different is to move away from a previous subjectivity or a former way of seeing and to incorporate new perspectives based upon an acknowledgement that one has changed. It has inner implications as well as presenting outer evidence. In this way of thinking the various culturally subscribed rituals or events are outward and not necessarily parallel to inner implications. The child-created records provide us with those inner implications, the understandings held by children about themselves and their peers at moments within their period of becoming, moments that are fleeting and cannot be recaptured retrospectively.

Chapter 7: Child-Parent Relationships

Earlier chapters looked for commonality across the larger body of child-created records and revealed the structures and patterns in children's lives; the shared experiences of growing up that then linked these children across historical time. Learning about individual children was downplayed. This chapter and the two that follow present more in depth studies of particular children and are organized by child and family rather than the earlier organization by analytical parallels. The idea is to balance the study, ground it with needed personal specificity to allow the reader to achieve an understanding of each child within his own family and within all his relationships. Through the children's written evidence about their relationships we also learn something about the activities of family members and of the child's community, revealing glimpses of the settler societies of British Columbia and Alberta and learning more of the children's sense of place.

These chapters focus on children within just five families.¹ The Crease, O'Reilly, Jenns and Ellison families in British Columbia and the Sanders family in Alberta are selected because of the richness and extent of their archival records and because in three of the families records for more than one child exist in quantities large enough to allow comparisons between children within their own family, between children in other families, and also between generations. The records of the Crease children date from the mid 1860s and are the oldest. The most recent are from the Jenns children and date from the early 1900s. Great changes in technology, in transportation, and communication alongside attitudes regarding children and their upbringing and education occurred during

¹ Appendix A holds biographical sketches of these families and provides basic information about family members.

this fifty-year span and child-created records reflect these changes. The records are the voices of children from different generations whose outlooks and assumptions show change over time.

The five families resided in a variety of geographic locations and held different social and economic positions. The Crease family lived first in New Westminster in a log cabin along the shores of the Fraser River, and then later in Victoria. The Crease and O'Reilly families both experienced urban living in Victoria, with suburban houses and gardens. The Ellison family was set within the rural landscape of ranch settlement in the Okanagan and the small town of Vernon. They had a working farm outside of town and a spacious house in Vernon. The Sanders family held no long-term family home, and instead was peripatetic following the assignments of the patriarch, living in Fort Macleod, Calgary, Athabaska Landing in Alberta and also with postings in Saskatchewan. The Jenns family had paternal roots in Victoria and maternal roots in New Westminster, but during most of the growing up years the girls lived with their mother in Prince Rupert and, for a time, in California.

All five families can be classified as middle class; the fathers were either professionals or government officials. Yet their individual circumstances, specifically their disposable income and social connections varied tremendously. The Sanders family existed within the social strata of the military and operated within the microcosm of barracks life. They were continually uprooted as Gilbert Sanders received different postings, while the other landless family, the Jenns seem to inhabit and move comfortably alongside working class neighbours who were viewed as social peers. Their separate Jenns households – mother and father living geographically distant – created a

less than common model of child raising. Both these families appear to have quite different economic situations from those of the Ellison family whose land holdings and upwardly mobile patriarch enabled their ascendant economic and social positions or the Crease and O'Reilly families. British birth and social connections held by the Crease and O'Reilly parents on the other hand, combined with key employment of the patriarchs enabled these two families to operate within the colonial elite. Yet they were cash poor. The Ellisons, Creases and O'Reillys were all upper middle class – material wealth and land holdings and marked them from the Sanders and Jenns families, yet the abilities of these three families to provide for their children and maintain the social façade expected of such positioning were quite different.

This present chapter examines the intersections and interactions of children within a single category of relationships: children and their parents. The following two chapters delineate children's perspectives in other familial relationships including siblings and amongst their peers in relationships outside the family. By working through the relationships by category we isolate the children in their various multi-held understandings of themselves. We see them as they wear their different hats. The evidence allows comparison of individual children from these families and reveals situations and child perspectives shaped by class, gender, age and personality. The intent in these three chapters is to show that although social and gender expectations created frameworks for relationships the children's own identifications of self, their subjectivities and own "personalities" enabled the development of these relationships and gave them each individual shape. Each child formed and maintained different relationships with individual parents, with separate siblings and between their friends. They engaged at

different levels and with varying intimacies that at times transcend or differ from our contemporary expectations of historical relationships.

Mothers and fathers

Mothers and fathers played key roles in forming the social and cultural expectations of their children. They taught by and through the example of their actions and interacted with their children in ways subscribed by their own identities and assumptions of gender roles. Parents were also influenced in varying degrees by advice literature of the times.² Gender historians of the middle class household and family setting such as Leonore Davidoff, Catherine Hall and John Tosh have illustrated how social and cultural changes in the nineteenth century western world affected understandings of what constituted the roles and also the very definitions of masculinity and femininity that grounded these roles.³ The historiographical pigeonholing and “separate spheres” paradigms of earlier scholarship is no longer seen as reflective of the age.⁴ This means that as we look at the children in this study, we need to remember that they lived in a time when parents themselves shifted in their own understandings of domesticity and this facilitated changes in family dynamics.

² The literature was widely available and accessed in western Canada through personal copies often given as gifts. Examples of the genre include, Sarah Stickney Ellis, *The mothers of England: their influence & responsibility* (London: P.Jackson, L. Fisher, nd); Beeton, *Beeton's manners of polite society, or, Etiquette for ladies, gentlemen, and families*.

³ Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson, 1987); Tosh, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England*.

⁴ Some of the many more recent studies include: Anna Clark, *The struggle for the breeches: gender and the making of the British working class* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995); Davidoff, *The family story: blood, contract, and intimacy, 1830-1960*; Noël, *Family life and sociability in Upper and Lower Canada, 1780-1870: a view from diaries and family correspondence*; Tosh, *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family, and empire*; Perry, *On the edge of empire: gender, race, and the making of British Columbia, 1849-1871*.

A study by Carol Dyhouse of working and middle class girls in late Victorian and Edwardian England demonstrated that the “relationships between parents and the organization of domestic life constituted first lessons in the sexual division of labour.”⁵ What children observed in their infancy and childhood constituted “normal” for them and served as role modeling. Dyhouse’s observations about the socialization of girls and the social construction of femininity are also applicable to understanding boys and the social construction of masculinities because of course, each parent taught through example. The activities and interactions of parents and also their expectations of and ambitions for their children, provided guidelines for children. For instance, when boys and girls observed and interacted with their fathers, each learned something different. Boys saw their own future roles while girls experienced paternalism. Boys and girls observed and interacted with their mothers and in so doing also learned gendered behaviours and assumptions.

Children also noted the ways in which adults identified with each other across gender and within adult relationships and within the larger society.⁶ Children saw how love, anger and other emotions cut across ties of kinship and that relationships could be complex. They absorbed, but may not have fully understood how family conflict and dysfunction created strains absorbed by family members.⁷

When confronted with the variety of experiences documented by children in this study it is difficult to make general statements about child-parent relationships for not

⁵ Dyhouse, *Girls growing up in late Victorian and Edwardian England*: 3.

⁶ Work in these areas includes Chodorow, *The reproduction of mothering: psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender: with a new preface*; Lystra, *Searching the heart: women, men, and romantic love in nineteenth-century America*.

⁷ Steven Mintz, *A prison of expectations: the family in Victorian culture* (New York: New York University Press, 1983); Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic revolutions: a social history of American family life* (New York: London: Free Press: Collier Macmillan, 1988).

only were the children nurtured in a variety of ways, but generational change in beliefs and practices around domesticity, illustrate there was no static, unchanging ideal. As Davidoff and Hall determined some years ago, “masculinity and femininity were not fixed categories acquired in childhood but were constantly being tested, challenged, and reworked both in imagination and in the encounters of daily life.”⁸ Parental roles and parental involvement with children showed great fluctuation and fluidity. The concept of “father rule” was less the focus during the Victorian age than was companionate marriage and sharing of childrearing. Mothers and fathers could and did make joint decisions about their children’s education and moral upbringing. Fathers played with their children, mothers could discipline and vice versa. The moral authority of mothers was at times belied by the involvement of fathers in the children’s daily lives. The family immortalized in prescriptive literature was seldom represented in real life.

Because understandings of gender and of gendered relations are socially constructed, they constantly change. Thus, the norms of the decades in the nineteenth century were not fixed, and the decades of the early twentieth century saw gender expectations and gender relations that were different than those of the previous century. The relationships between children and their parents were ever changing, throughout the life cycles of the individuals and throughout the decades in which the children grew up. Thus, each child in this study is/was situated at a unique place and time. The archival records capture glimpses of the relationships at specific moments.

⁸ Davidoff and Hall, *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class 1780-1850*: 450.

Relationships between children and their parents

The emphasis in this chapter will be to show how the framework for child-parent relations was just that, a framework, and that children structured each of their parental relationships their own ways either within the expected norm, or outside of it.

Personality, not just gender played a significant role in how these relationships developed and changed. The expected compatibility or understandings held between boys/fathers and girls/mothers that were rooted in shared acknowledgement of gender roles could therefore be disrupted because of personality.

The child-created records also reveal that children recognized their relationships with parents were important to them on emotional levels that they understood more fully as they grew up; and that children played active roles in developing dimensions within their relationships with parents; and that as children matured, they instigated changes in these relationships. When boys were separated from parents while at boarding school their writings reveal needs to maintain intimacy and to keep their relationships with parents close as a means of connecting at an emotions-based level that provided continuity as they struggled with the expectations of all-male school cultures. The evidence of just how fundamentally stripped these boys were of the direct knowledge of their parents is revealed in at times striking revelation, such as that of Frank O'Reilly who, after four and a half years separation did not recognize his mother when he walked into her hotel room. He wrote,

I went to the number of the room...knocked at the door and some one said come in and I opened the door and saw Mother and I did not know her and so I said that I thought that there must have been some mistake and that the Porter had told me the

wrong number and I was just retiring again when Mother said why it is Frank and then I knew that there was no mistake and that it was really Mother.⁹

The principal evidence in this chapter is found within letters children wrote to parents during separations, not only when children moved away for schooling, but on occasion when fathers, in particular, were absent from home and children wrote to them. Several strong correspondence series serve here to document individual child-parent relationships and reveal both younger and older children as they communicate from a distance.¹⁰

The Crease daughters and their parents

The Crease daughters wrote to their parents when either mother or father was absent from the home, and on occasion when the children themselves were away. Henry Crease (father) was attorney general for the colony of British Columbia and travelled regularly in this capacity, and his wife, Sarah, occasionally accompanied him. The girls' letters document the daily goings-on at home, which included their learning of and assumption of domestic chores, a very gender-based delegation of duties. It was a pattern of the Crease family dynamic that Mary (born 1854) was in charge, Susan (born 1855) and Barbara (born 1857) assisted. The pattern had been first applied in 1865 when Sarah (mother) and Susan traveled from the home in New Westminster to Victoria leaving Henry at home with Mary, Barbara and baby Josephine (born 1864). A domestic servant was there to assist. Sarah addressed Mary in her letters as "My darling little

⁹ Frank O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 8 May 1882. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰ The child perspectives remain the focus and centre of the discussion, not the adult family members. Although it is tempting to present the adult sides of the correspondences alongside that of the children, the intent is to privilege the child and to do that the adult voices must remain in the wings. A major goal of this study is to challenge assumptions held by historians about the informational value of child-created records and I fear that to regularly employ the counterpoints of adult voices would weaken my arguments.

Housekeeper”¹¹ indicative of the role expected of Mary in her absence, a role that was clearly communicated to Mary in the body of her letters. Unfortunately Mary’s letters in response have not survived, but based upon those that exist for three years later, in 1868, her mother’s expectation was that Mary was her helpmeet. It is this intermixing – daughter and helper – that characterized Mary’s relationship with her mother in a manner not experienced by her younger sisters, and also coloured her relationship with her father because she acted as a substitute source of information on the functioning of the home.

When the seat of government moved from New Westminster to Victoria, the family had to move. In September 1868 Henry and Sarah house-searched in Victoria, having left the children at home with domestic assistance. On this occasion letters of Mary, Susan, and Barbara (age fourteen, thirteen and eleven) to their parents are extant. The letters provide valuable information on “pioneering” life in New Westminster, but more specifically for this chapter, indicate the relationships each girl held with each parent, relationships that are intertwined with their own assumptions of responsibility to maintain the house, care for toddler, Josephine and infant brother, Lindley. Their birth order and age at the time of writing reveal sibling dynamics that also colour the relationships each had with their parents.

On 4 September 1868 the girls all wrote letters sent as a single package to their parents.¹² Separately, each letter provides an individual child voice, with its own weighting of subject matter and focus, demonstrating that girl’s own understanding and priorities. Together, the sisters’ parallel writings allow the reader insight into

¹¹ See letters from Sarah Crease to Mary Crease, 1865, 1867, and 1868. British Columbia Archives.

¹² Barbara Crease to Sarah Crease, Susan Crease to Henry Crease and Susan Crease to Sarah Crease, Mary Crease to Sarah Crease and Mary Crease to Henry Crease, 4 September 1868. British Columbia Archives.

simultaneous moments in time¹³ and also into their separate and individual engagements with their parents. Youngest of the three, Barbara, is the least engaged with housekeeping routines. Her news is about her world, life at home in its variety. She gave equal emphasis to sisters, pets, and the recent rains, which together made up her world. Barbara does not appear to have the same sense of having a duty to report that underlay the letters of Susan and Mary. Whereas her sisters wrote individual letters to each parent, she alone wrote only to her mother.

New Westminster BC
Sept 4 [18]68

My dearest Mama

I have hardly anything to say to you. Mary has made three pots of jam with the Plums you and Papa sent. We broke the stones first and took out the karnels and Mary put them in the jam.

Blackey has got five Pretty little kittens she has had them some time. The big tub out-side the diningroom window is very nearly full & the water is running into the well, as we have had a shower of rain lately. It has done the garden so much good. Mary and I took a walk as soon as we could. The air was so sweet & refreshing after the rain. We are all very well and I hope you and Papa are. Goodbye dear dear Mama. Your affectionate child Barbara L. Crease
NB. Please give my love to dear Papa.

The choice Barbara made to write to her mother instead of her father may speak to instructions received previously or be evidence of Barbara's need to connect with her mother, who was not often absent as was her father and more usually a part of Barbara's every-day routine. The details in the letter are those she thought her mother would like to know. The only reference to father is an oblique one regarding health and in the postscript.

¹³ Francoise Noël calls letters "moments in time" thus parallel letters provide individual or three-dimensional perspectives on the linear moment. Noël, *Family life and sociability in Upper and Lower Canada, 1780-1870: a view from diaries and family correspondence*: 3.

Susan's letters provide telling evidence about not only what Susan thought her parents, each separately, would be interested to hear of, but also what she thought they would expect to hear. In her mother's letter, she apologizes in the first and last sentences and tentatively comments on whether she really has any news to tell. "I thank God very often..." is as a gesture towards her mother's religiosity but was it also Susan's belief? She seems afraid to say anything much at all for fear of criticism. In contrast, with her father she is engaged in conversation, gentle ribbing mixed with actual news. In the last few lines Susan betrayed the state of her parental affections. Her "dear funny Papa" was the recipient of "XXX" kisses but her mother was not.

September 4th [1868]

My dearest Mama

I can only write you a very little note to thank you for your kind letter.... Please tell dear Papa I have torn off one side of his sheet of paper as Mary told me to for she said she could not send 2 letters from me. Mary has a good deal to tell you as she is "Housekeeper" but I have very little. Perhaps you might be glad to hear that I have taken up all the onions & parsnips & carrots & another batch of beans for "salting". We are all quite well except Baby but he has only a cold Dr. Jones has been to see him to-day (but we did not send for him) and said he looked much better than when he saw him last time so you need not be uneasy about him. I thank God very often for taking such good care of us & pray that he will do the same for you.... I have such a bad pen I could not write this much better so goodbye dear Mama I am your affectionate child Susan.

Ince Cottage

Sept 4th [1868]

My dear Papa

We were all so sorry that we did not get your letter till the day after the steamer left, but we were so very glad to have any from you. We all had a good laugh after we had read your letter to see how very much you were afraid we should not tell you exactly how we are getting on. Are you & Mama quite well. Mary and Barbara have been to church twice this week but they were either too early or too late, Barbara & I have been to-day however. Mary has been to the post office a little while ago I have not seen the letter yet. There is a childrens tea party this after-noon...of course we did not go as Mama is not at home.... Our 6 young Turkeys are getting on very well. Lindley has a cold but all the rest are perfectly well.

Give my best love to dear Mama and believe me dear funny Papa
 your affectionate child Susan
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
 Susan

Mary's letters show clearly the viewpoint of the sibling in charge. In a long letter to her mother she provided full accounting of all domestic matters, including the money spent on food and special details on the health of baby Lindley. Mary intended to show her competency, and thus revealed self-interest, perhaps a pride in her achievements. This letter is all about her travails within the home but the letter to her father, like Susan's, is about life outside the physical home, about outdoor pets and a feral pig, the world away from her immediate domestic assignment. Susan and Mary chose separate topics in letters to their father than they did when writing to their mother, evidence that they recognized difference and acted within a gendered world.

New Westminster
 Sep 3 1868
 My dear Mama

I have just been down to the Post-Office and got your letter.... I received Papa's the day before yesterday, I see he is afraid that we should get small Pox or else some other illness by his minute inquiries after our health though I know it is that he is afraid I should not tell him if anything was the matter so that you should not come home so soon. I can't tell you how glad I was to get your letter....

You know that before you went Lindley didn't look quite well, and he has not all the time you have been away but Dr. Jones said it was his teeth but last evening...he seemed to feel sick and seemed as if he had a bad cold on his chest so as there was some nice broth in a sauce pan in the kitchen I gave him some & that did him a great deal of good and then when he went to bed I gave him a little Grey powder which made him sick as I thought it would he appeared to be better almost as soon as he was sick & then this morning I gave him a little Castor Oil & then bye & bye Dr. Jones came to see how he was and he noticed how much better he looked than the last time he saw him. He seems quite well now & I have made 2 pots of Plum Jam with a little over and as you said we might do

what we liked with it I filled a small glass pot with the remainder & gave it to Mrs. Hall....

Please don't trouble yourself about coming home as we are all perfectly well now and are getting on very well at any note don't come home before papa as I am sure your being with him makes it seem more like home. Since you have been away I have had to get several things from town these are some Vinager ½ \$ half a tin of Lard 1 \$ & sixpence and then paying the Indians for water is another ½ \$ so altogether it makes 2 & sixpence that I have spent since you went and besides that I have had to get some butter as our Milkman had not left any. We have not been idle since you have been away. I am always finding plenty of work to do. I have made that petticoat for Barbara on the machine as you said I might at first I could not get it to sew nicely at all. I could not make the Tension tight enough so I took it off & cleaned it thoroughly – put a piece [?] leather on and the thing was then not to make it too tight after that I found the needle was blunted so I had to change that and I put another in & hadn't any trouble with it all I don't know how it is that you find it so troublesome for I don't...perhaps it is you don't hear so easily as I do....

But I must say good night now as I think I have exhausted all my thoughts so with plenty of love and kisses. Believe me dear dear Mama
Your affectionate & loving childe Mary M. Crease

Ince Cottage

Sep 4 [18]68

My dear Papa

... Please don't feel at all uneasy about us for we are all quite well I have told Mama more about it and I dare say she will tell you all about it.... Since you have been away my Dovey has had a nice brood of chickens they are beautiful chickens very thickly feathered on the legs, the young turkeys are growing nicely we have got the six still. Never mind about Mama's coming up on Monday on our account if you should not be able to come yourself as we are all better than we have been when you were here so you need not be in the lest anxious about us. I hope that you are better but I am sure it must do you good to have mama with you. The other day I saw a pig with 16 young ones they surely can't have been all her own. My dear darling Blackie has five such pretty little kittens not at all like her last....

I am afraid you will not be able to read this letter as I have written it half asleep so that I hardly know what I have said. So I must say good night & with love & kisses Believe me dear dear Papa.

Your loving child

Mary M. Crease

Mary's letters reveal tension in her relationships with her parents, tension perhaps reflective of their unwillingness to allow her to time away from responsibilities and of unrelenting expectations. It is most noticeable in the letter to her mother. "We have not been idle," she noted, almost as if she expected criticism and then deflected it with a thorough accounting of all that she had handled. She subtly, yet overtly, challenged her mother's abilities when she noted the needle on the sewing machine was blunt. Presumably Sarah's eyesight did not allow her to see this herself. And suggested that a hearing issue might be the reason why her mother did not realize a simple mechanical adjustment would have improved the machine performance. This implied criticism of her mother perhaps was intended to point out the advantage of youth in solving what had been a mystery to her adult mother. We know that as unmarried young adults the Crease sisters experienced tight reins of parental control¹⁴ so it is perhaps not unusual that early symptoms of their rebellion are evident in these letters.

Mary wrote separately to each parent in a manner suggesting that each letter was confidential. To her mother she wrote candidly about how she viewed her father's various anxieties about the children left on their own, that they might catch smallpox, or that Mary herself might not be honest in her reporting. "Don't trouble yourself about coming home" she wrote, as might any other teenager allowed to rule her sisters alone. To her father she reinforced the argument by appealing to the need she knew he had to be with her mother, not left alone. "It must do you good to have mama with you," she cleverly commented. Her letters reveal that she knew the important bases to touch with

¹⁴See Powell, "The Crease Family Women."

each parent and that she was not shy to plant suggestions in their minds regarding the state of affairs.

One further letter from Mary to her mother exists from 1868, this written just a few days later in September. She again detailed the domestic situation – baby Lindley had been ill but was recovering, Barbara needed new boots – and her responsibilities. Her tone was aggrieved. “I expect I shall have to make the yellow plum jam & also the Crabapples & what sugar shall I make them with? I suppose I shall have to buy some white sugar...will you tell me when you write next?...Dear Mama, our wood is all gone... Tomorrow too I have to ask about some Indians to get some more water as we are shorter than ever...”¹⁵ To illustrate her own busyness, Mary reported her inability to attend church. By intimation, Susan (who perhaps should have shared the burden of housework) had attended at Mary’s expense. “While you have been away I have not been to Church on Sunday as Susy goes in the morning and in the evening it is so dark by the time we come out of church that I don’t like to go. But I mean to go next Sunday morning if all is well.”¹⁶

Mary’s relationship with her mother is linked to her own performance as her mother’s “darling little Housekeeper.” Her letters show the weight of responsibility and need for approval, yet at the same time she revelled in finding fault in her mother’s own ability and revealing it subtly. Never once does she directly criticize mother, sister or father. She works her own points into the conversation through innuendo. Overall, the letters indicate Mary’s increasing resentment of the expectations held by her mother and the inability of Susan to properly come up to the mark in sharing duties. She rarely

¹⁵ Mary Crease to Sarah Crease, 8 September 1868. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶ Mary Crease to Sarah Crease, 8 September 1868. British Columbia Archives.

acknowledged a world beyond home duties, a world that for girls of her age should have involved more social activities with peers.

In letters from Mary to her father from summer 1870 she kept him apprised of family activities in a way that is different than the domestic minutia relayed to her mother. She presented the financial implications of her housekeeping decisions, which spoke to his focus and his concerns. “We have had several little picnics on the beach during the holidays & the last was large for us – I dare say you will think of the bills but with all our picnics the bu[t]cher’s was not at all more than it is when we are all at home.”¹⁷ And current affairs – the arrival of the new governor – she knew would interest him, and the many forest fires in the vicinity, “one feels quite smoked alive & everything looks either red or yellow.... Several houses have been burnt in town & part of Beacon Hill also.”¹⁸ Mary downplayed her role as “little housekeeper” and strived to make her letters newsworthy, yet not alarmist. Her father’s peace of mind seems important to her, whether for its own sake, or because it affected the family.

Mary moved into the position of informant regarding her mother’s health. She wrote, “I am afraid that I shall get a scolding when you come home for I don’t think Mama is any fatter than she was when you left...”¹⁹ Six weeks later, “I hope when you do come you will think Mama looking better than she did when you left. To me lately she has looked so much younger than I have seen her do for a long time.”²⁰ Mary reported the family’s visit to the gravesite of infant brother Harry, but omitted specific detail or emotion. “A little while ago we went down to the cemetery to see dear little

¹⁷ Mary Crease to Henry Crease, 4 August 1870. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁸ Mary Crease to Henry Crease, 14 August 1870. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁹ Mary Crease to Henry Crease, 6 July 1870. British Columbia Archives.

²⁰ Mary Crease to Henry Crease, 14 August 1870. British Columbia Archives.

Harry's grave, Mrs. Ash went with us & gave us some beautiful flowers to put on it."²¹

Sarah would have written of the visit, but Mary chose to independently report to her father. Her letter is remarkable for its matter-of-fact commentary, no references to sadness or recollection of Harry's short life. Neither do her letters read as chatty conversation, there are no endearments, no light topics, a direct contrast to Susan, whose relationship to Henry as revealed in her own letters is more of a loving child. The child in Mary is absent; she is all responsibility, with very little personal engagement. Henry Crease was an emotional man. Perhaps Mary's letters about Harry's death were intentionally emotionless as a technique to diffuse his own emotion; perhaps her observations about her mother are purposefully phlegmatic. Her words are flat since she is doing her duty through the letters, not writing to a father or mother with whom she has a relationship based upon affections.

The relationships of the younger Crease children with their parents

The earliest letters of Josephine and Arthur Crease to their mother date from 1880 and were written on the occasion of her birthday. Both Sarah and Henry had been absent from home for three months, travelling in the Cariboo region. Arthur filled his letter with neighbourhood news. "Mr. Ward has got a new cow & he has sent both his horses out to Cedar hill for the winter." He jumped excitedly from one topic to the next. "Yesterday I went to play with the Wards, we made fires & burned up all the rubbish & leaves round their place. We made a new rabbit hutch & put 10 young rabbits in it. They have 17 rabbits now, but 3 belong to Hugo Beaven...one of the Wards nurses is very ill. There has been some thick ice & it has been freezing evry night & it is freezing now." But he

²¹ Mary Crease to Henry Crease, 4 August 1870. British Columbia Archives.

also let his mother know that he was behaving. “Tomorrow if I am a good boy Mary is going to drive me out to the “Royal Oak” with Susy.”²²

A week later, he wrote once more. His interests – his “news” – figure outside the walls of the house. “Last Saturday I went to the Beavens & went out tobogganing by the Collegiate School. Hugo Beavens sleigh beats all the others, next best to the toboggin.”²³ He enthusiastically shared his boy’s world with his mother exactly because it was his world, not hers, and he wanted to keep in touch, keep her connected to him. His motive in communication was different from that of his sister Mary in previous years. Mary’s world was prescribed by her mother’s expectations to such a degree that her letters read like reports, not as opportunities to connect emotionally. Arthur’s letters were written at a younger age, they are egocentric and contain little about anyone else in the family. He only made a single comment about his mother’s absence, and this an oblique reference to being glad she will soon be home, though he showed affectionate exuberance in lines of individualized XXX and OOO kisses and hugs that ended his letters.

On that same occasion, sixteen-year-old Josephine wrote a letter that contained very different news. She began with an apologetic note that set the tone as one of obligation. “I must try and write you a little better letter than the last one,” she wrote, perhaps as response to an earlier complaint, or acknowledgement of an overly brief previous letter. She then gave best wishes for her mother’s birthday, “I hope that next Tuesday will be a nice day and that you will have many Happy Returns of it. I have nothing to send you but my very best love & kisses. Please give some of both to Papa...” She talked about the weather, “We are having the most glorious weather, cold but

²² Arthur Crease to Sarah Crease, dated for 28 November 1880. British Columbia Archives.

²³ Arthur Crease to Sarah Crease, 6 December 1880. British Columbia Archives.

bright...it is getting almost too cold for tennis, but we generally have a game of it...on Wednesdays between painting & French, as a sort of rest from work.” In rapid fashion she reported on the neighbours. “We have not seen anything of the Wakes lately. I suppose you heard that Mrs. Dobbin is dead. Mary Langley has joined Mr. Mason’s lectures. He is trying to get all the first class girls to come to it which is very nice.... Mrs. Spalding is down here staying with Mrs. Trutch.” She did not take the time to flesh out the information. The letter has the feeling of a dry recitation, yet near the end, she included a domestic mystery for her mother. “My room is looking much cosier than it used to do, but I shan’t tell you what has been done to it although you are sure to guess,” then closed with, “I must now say Good Bye dear Mama & I remain your affectionate daughter Zeffie.”²⁴

Josephine told her mother very little about her world, but more about what she thought her mother would be interested in or expect to be kept informed about. She provided only a very little glimpse of an inner self in that coy last sentence. Overt affection was missing from Josephine’s letter with its formalized boilerplate closure; it is impossible to read beneath it. The content of her letter provides evidence that in 1880, Josephine had a very different relationship with her mother than did Arthur. Josephine closed off any trace of emotional attachment, did not discuss intimacies, perhaps a situation borne of maturation and the process of stretching away, but perhaps indicative also of tensions. She was, after all, sixteen, and may have been resentful of recent circumstances such as termination of her schooling and the ongoing absence of her brother Lindley at school.

²⁴ Josephine Crease to Sarah Crease, dated for 28 November 1880. British Columbia Archives.

No further letters from Josephine or Arthur to their mother (or father) exist from this time. Arthur's diaries, if he kept them, are not extant, and the letters he would soon write from school have not survived in great numbers. Josephine's diaries are generally consistently phlegmatic recitations of each day's events, of school, of visitors and only very rarely contain opinion or commentary. The few overt comments concerning her relationships with her parents are resentment at chores assigned by her mother or at the shamming illnesses of her father (as included in the previous chapter). Nevertheless, the evidence of these three letters reveals very different connections held by two children with their mother at a "simultaneous moment in time." The letters themselves demonstrate the ways these children reached out to connect, or conversely, might deliberately withhold themselves from making such connections. The personality and maturity levels of Josephine and Lindley combined with individual parental personalities and the expectations held by their parents of these children all factored in the ways the separate child-parent relationships developed. Combining the earlier evidence of the three older sisters and the tensions visible in their writings to their mother one might speculate on the general tension between the four girls in this family and their mother, which are now shown to be visible over the child years of each daughter. Mother-daughter tension is nothing new, an aspect of intergenerational family relations and influenced by gendered expectations. It is but one type of child-parent relationship explored in this chapter.

Frank and Kathleen O'Reilly write to their father

Like Henry Crease, Peter O'Reilly's work took him away from home for regular and extensive periods. Only four letters survive from Frank O'Reilly to his father on

these occasions, from the period prior to his schooling in England when Frank was writing from home in Victoria. In comparison many more exist from his sister, Kathleen at a similar age. Despite the unevenness in quantities, when we analyze Frank and Kathleen's letters certain fundamental differences can be found, differences that might be attributed to personality. For instance, Frank wrote short letters and was straight to the point while Kathleen wrote more rambling accounts. But the differences in content more properly speak of gender perspectives. Frank hoped that his father "had good sport," reported on his outside activities at the beach and at a party, wrote that he walked to school by himself and, in the longest of all his descriptions, recounted the sinking of the *Pacific* and "275 people are drowned; among them Mr. Sullivan and old Fung and Miss. F. Palmer. Every one is very sorry that such a dreadful thing should have happened."²⁵ Frank told his father about catching mice, reported on the neighbour shoeing his cattle, the death of their canary bird, the construction of a cellar, and about a recent storm, "When the wind rose up the water came up and nearly wast [sic] away the plat form of the boathouse and mamma was very frightened."²⁶ The implication was that he, Frank, was not frightened.

Judging by the content of his letters, like Arthur Crease, Frank O'Reilly's interests lay outside the worlds of his sister and his mother; he did not report on society events or activities in the house proper. His world did, however, include his brother. "I hope that you will...get plenty of birds for Jack and me."²⁷ Frank shared his interests with his father in a naturally unassuming manner that suggests O'Reilly probably

²⁵ Frank O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 24 September 1877, 22 April 1874 and 6 November 1874. British Columbia Archives.

²⁶ Frank O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 5 December 1874. British Columbia Archives.

²⁷ Frank O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 24 September 187[-]. British Columbia Archives.

responded with accounts of shooting birds and other adventures. Frank was clearly attached to his father and let him know that he wished him home. “I hope you are not at all the worse for your bad trip and I hope you will be over your trip before Christmas and I hope we will have some games... When are you coming back? I shall be glad when you come back, and if it is a fine day, and Mamma will let me go, I will go to meet you.”²⁸

The contrast between Frank O’Reilly’s interests and those of his sister parallel those of the Crease children. The parents in both families functioned within strongly gendered roles, which provided models for the children to emulate. In the O’Reilly family, Peter traveled in his various governmental capacities. He was the one who had adventures and sport, who undoubtedly had stories to tell upon his return. The children saw him for extended stretches only during the winter months. Like the Crease children, the O’Reilly children grew up knowing no alternative. Their mothers were almost always at home and had responsibility for the smooth running of the house and maintenance of all who lived within it. The world of the mothers was more clearly visible to the children and involved daily, not intermittent interaction. There was less mystery to their mothers, and from a boy’s perspective, perhaps less interest because the domestic space was not the world of their futures.

Kathleen’s letters to her father reveal the differences borne of gender in not only what she thought was important and newsworthy to relay, but also in the boundaries imposed by her world of interactions. Whereas someday Frank could expect to experience the independence of travel away from family, the same option was not included in the expectations for Kathleen. It was not on her radar, was not something she

²⁸ Frank O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 5 December 1874. British Columbia Archives.

needed to learn about. Therefore, apart from obligatory comments about her father's health, unlike Frank, she rarely asked questions about his world, or considered news beyond that which related directly to her as worthy of comment. Where Frank talked about the tragedy of a shipwreck, Kathleen filled pages reporting in detail her own accident.

We have been to town to day & Mama has been paying the bills & we met Uncle John in town & he said that he would come home with us, so Mama had Winters carriage to come home & at the furthur end of the bridge we saw a large wagon with four horses and a big iron safe & going all across the bridge Mama was afraid of the horses shying & just as we were passing off horse shyed & bucked the carriage & broke the railing of the bridge & Mama says the carriage was nearly over.²⁹

Thirty-two of Kathleen's letters to her father written 1877 through 1881 survive.

In each one she recorded her mother's activities, whether she visited neighbours and friends or received visitors. "Yesterday afternoon Mama went to call at the Bishop's Close & on Wednesday afternoon she called on Mrs. Raymur & Mrs. McDonald."³⁰ "Yesterday Captain & Mrs. Jemmett came to call."³¹ She recorded her mother paying bills or ordering foodstuffs for delivery to their home, entertaining family members or arranging for Kathleen to play with friends. Sometimes Kathleen accompanied her mother and this fact would make such "news" understandable, that she was describing her own day. But the content of her letters principally documented her mother's sphere, which perhaps by association (if not only gender), was also Kathleen's.

Kathleen recorded her mother receiving letters and then writing letters. Kathleen told her father each and every correspondent. "Mama has been writing all day to the two

²⁹ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 24 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

³⁰ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, _August 1881. British Columbia Archives.

³¹ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 9 February 1881. British Columbia Archives.

Mrs. Cs & to Mr. Dewdney & to you.”³² She mentioned the Chinese servants and their absences. Never once did she mention a book read, only seldom did she mention her own school, just twice referred to attending church (once when her brother was ill, and a year later on Ascension Day, the Bishop arrived and preached),³³ never Sunday school, never once any specific games played, and recreational jaunts only after the fact, never in anticipation.

Kathleen’s tone is upbeat, she means to be interesting, but it is difficult to see beneath the reporting content, to see what really gave her pause for thought. If her motivation in writing to her father was to keep him abreast of each day’s routines, she was successful. If her motivation was to advance a relationship, or write as solace because she was lonely in her father’s absence, then her letters do not present this. A few of her opening lines set out the obligation to write, “I promised to write to you and so I am fulfilling my promise but I can not write you a long letter because I have so many lessons to learn.”³⁴ In general her salutations “I hope that you are quite well...” and closing phrases “I remain your very affectionate child...” are boilerplate without additional or letter-specific intimacies. She never once says she misses him, although if we read between the lines, she is anxious that her letters reach him. Her letters have a quality of duty to them, the same duty that obliged Kathleen herself to itemize her mother’s days. Her letters to her father are not unlike the reporting of Mary Crease to her own father. Perhaps in the gendered worlds of Kathleen and Mary, females reported out to the patriarch, legitimizing days spent, custom and social expectations fulfilled.

³² Kathleen O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 28 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

³³ Kathleen O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 6 May 1880. BC Archives.

³⁴ Kathleen O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, not dated [ca 1880]. British Columbia Archives.

Kathleen's letters consistently document outward aspects of the family's activities and lack the intimate qualities evident of her brother's brief letters. Frank and his father connected because of their gender, Kathleen and her father connected through the expectations of gender roles, which obliged long distance communication but appeared not to encourage emotional connectedness.

Lindley Crease and his parents

Lindley Crease left for school in England in 1877 at the age of ten; his brother, Arthur in 1886 at the age of fourteen.³⁵ The brothers wrote to their parents on a regular basis over the long years of separation. Unfortunately the documentation for Arthur's early schooling is less fulsome than that of his brother. Only six letters from Arthur to his mother survive (and none of his parents letters to him). But sixteen of Lindley's letters to his mother exist, along with thirty-three to his father, and many of their letters to him. Judging from dates on the surviving letters and the references within them, Lindley faithfully wrote at least one letter every week for the course of several years. Many gaps exist, for instance there are no letters to his father for the first two years, but there are ten to his mother. Only one letter to his mother survives for 1880, but there are five to his father; twenty-five letters exist to his father for 1881 and 1882, just one to his mother, and so on. Despite these gaps, several generalizations can be made.

First, Lindley was sincerely attached to his parents but his relationships with them were quite different. Second, Lindley had a sense of duty as well as an emotional need to keep in close contact. This need existed despite the homosocial environment that

³⁵ Apparently the emotional toll of Lindley's absence upon his father (who developed depression and eczema as a consequence) convinced the Creases not to send Arthur until he was older. From the parental perspective this allowed them more years with their young boy, and on a practical level, necessitated only expenses for his public schooling, not for preparatory school as well. Powell, "The Crease Family Women," 52.

pressured him to distance himself from the world of his mother and sisters, and accentuated the importance of male bonds. Lindley explained to his mother that she should understand it was difficult for him to write to his sisters because he was teased for doing so.³⁶ Boys made life difficult when they perceived one of their own to be “tied to apron strings” because “becoming a man involved detaching oneself from the home and its feminine comforts.”³⁷ Lindley asked his mother to refrain from addressing his letters “Master Lindley Crease”³⁸ as this salutation emphasized a domestic boy, not an independent schoolboy away from home. And third, Lindley’s letters reveal he held a physical longing for the house and garden, the outdoor life and experiences of home. The specific geographical space of home was printed on his body and also within his emotions. His letters to his father in particular emphasize this interconnectedness and manifest in a need to reminisce and look back to his earlier experiences with nostalgia.

In the letters we glimpse the underlying basis for Lindley’s relationship with each of his parents, and also trace changes in his own perspectives as he matured and as the years of separation made it more challenging to maintain his younger emotional connectedness. By comparing letters written to his mother with those written to his father, topic content, ongoing themes, his choice of words, his deference to their views, or assertions of his own viewpoints speak to separate and gendered discourses. His letters reflect distinct differences in how he communicated with his mother and his father and of the quite separate relationships he maintained with each.

³⁶ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 31 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

³⁷ Tosh, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England*: 110.

³⁸ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 31 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

Letters written to his mother invariably focus on the interactions he has with family members in England, chiefly his Uncle Natty (his mother's brother) and Aunt Sally and their children; and his Auntie Bar (his mother's sister) and her husband. Lindley alternated holiday time between them and he provided full and lively descriptions of these times, the doings in the neighbourhoods and also responded to his mother's questions about the health and situation of them all individually. He knew that his mother greatly missed her siblings and realized her need that he be her eyes and ears.

Lindley's letters to his mother reveal that he enjoyed his Auntie Bar because she was very much like his mother in looks and manner. He appreciated her attentiveness to him: "Auntie Bar calls me little tidy tippins & she tells everybody that I am such a tidy boy;"³⁹ her quiet household, "I am very glad to get back to dear Auntie Bar;"⁴⁰ and her religious focus, "we have service in the morning at 11 oclock and in the afternoon at 3 so that we have the evening all to our selves."⁴¹ Yet he also liked the busyness at his Uncle Natty's house which brimmed with cousins coming and going from school, and with whom he could have adventures. "I went out shooting with Jack and Watty, Jack shot a rabbit. I must now play snap with my cousins...the other day May and I tumbled into a pond and got quite wet up to our knees."⁴² And bonding with his cousins. "I like Annie the best of the girls & Walter the best of the boys."⁴³

Lennie and I sleep in the same room. We have such larks in the mornings waking up Annie and May first of all when it is before daylight which is about 6 o'clock we go in and get the candle stick and matches

³⁹ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 19 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁰ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 13 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁴¹ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 13 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁴² Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 29 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

⁴³ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 19 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

and we light the candle & sometimes read to each other in a loud
Wisper...he is a dear boy and I like him and love him very much.⁴⁴

He let his mother know that his aunts look after him, that she need not worry. "Auntie is very kindly taking me in hand with my French. I have just had a lesson. I hope to get on a little."⁴⁵

The Crease household routine included regular church-going, daily prayers and bible readings and this routine was of comfort to Lindley, so he strove to reproduce it, as much for his own sake as for his mother's reassurance. Sarah Crease's children knew that it was important to act correctly and to personify Christian virtues. This attitude was integral to not only their mother's sense of self but to the expectations she held for each family member. Therefore, Lindley specifically set out to reassure her that despite his absence from home and away from her oversight of his moral growth, regardless of changes in routine and circumstances he carried on as she would wish. "The first day I was here [at school] I was not able to read my daily bible readings or even the bible as I could not have anything until the next day as the matron had not got them [the luggage] all out."⁴⁶ "Every Sunday I learn my collect and read over my catechism or rather I say it to one of my dear Aunts. My cousins always learn their collect but they do not say it ever."⁴⁷ Lindley's letters were punctuated with reassurances that he carefully maintained his Bible learning, even interrupting letter writing to do so. "I must now leave this letter to learn my gospel to say it to Mr. Rose," he wrote, leaving off his letter. The next

⁴⁴ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 29 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁵ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 19 March 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁶ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 27 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁷ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 13 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

paragraph began “I have just said my gospel...”⁴⁸ Lindley referenced his attentiveness to his bible readings and often he asked his mother about her own. “Every [evening] Lennie and I read a chapter out of Matthew (XI chapter) together instead of separate. Please tell me what gospel or Epistle you are in now and after you have read it. Please read the acts of the Apostles.”⁴⁹

For almost all the eight years of his separation, Lindley’s letters to his mother connect on the level of shared faith. He was concerned with his own moral health and wrote, “I try hard to do what is right”⁵⁰ with great regularity. “I try to do what is right & do not forget my Bible & Daily Bible reading & I always say my prayers – You know that when I say this I do not say it at all boastfully but only put it in my letters because I know you like it.”⁵¹ Even in the height of his homesickness, Lindley acknowledged to his mother that his path in life was directed by a higher power. “I do so long to be at my dear home but it was God’s will that I should leave it and after years if I live I shall thank God that I was ever sent.”⁵²

He also wished to be remembered to friends at home, many letters included such requests. “Please remember me kindly to the Richards Duponts Grays O’Reilys – Please send me Frank O’Reily’s adress as I have mislaid it.”⁵³ He knew his mother’s social duties and the family’s own social circles would enable her to carry out these requests. His letters to his father did not include such references. It may have been the practical

⁴⁸ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 31 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁹ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 29 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁰ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 31 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁵¹ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 5 January 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁵² Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 13 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁵³ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 5 January 1879. British Columbia Archives.

fact that because Henry Crease was often absent from home, he might not be up-to-date on everyone's health, thus, Lindley asked his mother, not his father for news of his siblings. It may also have been the gendered assumption that she was most in tune with family illnesses and activities, and also that writing letters – maintaining family communications – was considered “kin-work” and a female responsibility.⁵⁴ Thus, by asking his mother and not his father, he revealed his understanding of his parents' different expertise or roles. Asking and receiving news of family members was therefore integral to the letters with his mother but not his father. “How does dear Arthur get on with his lessons now he has new books? Please give him my fond love lovies & kisses.”⁵⁵ “Please give dear Arthur my fondest love, did he make his sleigh by himself? I am glad that he is getting his mouth well furnished with teeth.”⁵⁶ He questioned the health of his father. “How is dear Papa after his bad accident?”⁵⁷ “I am very glad indeed to hear that dear Papa is so much better please give him my fondest lovies & kisses.”⁵⁸ “Lovies and kisses” was a phrase absent in his letters to his father.

Lindley's letters to his mother remained surprisingly similar over the years, as if he was deliberate in maintaining a parent-child relationship rooted in his youth. It wasn't until after seven years away, as he approached his final school year that Lindley's letters to her changed to reflect his own mature outlook. In 1884 he inserted a letter to his former schoolmate Herbert Rashdall who had returned to British Columbia and was visiting Victoria. He asked his mother to forward it on to Rashdall, but suggested she

⁵⁴ Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*: 130. See also Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America."

⁵⁵ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 5 January 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁶ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 19 March 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁷ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 27 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁸ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 23 April 1879. British Columbia Archives.

read it first. “It will give you a better notion how we go on here – than what you can learn from my letters to you – it is never difficult to write to a schoolfellow on school matters.”⁵⁹ At eighteen, in some of his last letters before returning home, Lindley talked about political biographies read, about debates entered and about the responsibility he believed he had to specific teachers. He spoke of the joys of nature, about being hot and sweaty on a tramp, and sitting in a form room afterwards and staring out the skylights.⁶⁰ Both topic and tact had been completely lacking in his previous letters to her. He provided detail about his farewells, the formalities of the final week and about what was important to him. “I expect the whole of my last Sunday will be taken up with walks with fellows. I want to take a good farewell...I daresay this may rather shock you, but I really think that it is a very good way of spending a...Sunday afternoon. A walk thro’ fields & amongst the trees is most enjoyable, especially if it be with someone who appreciates them...”⁶¹ No mention of church or of Bible readings. At the end of this letter he wrote, “Throughout I have spoken very plainly to you as I do only to Father.”⁶² In this way, Lindley prepared his mother for his homecoming. He opened up the adult side of his personality to her, and made it clear that he now dwelt in the world of men competently and held his own opinions.

Lindley’s early letters to his father showed similarity in some of the topics of conversation as those with his mother, notably in comments regarding his bible readings and the affirming “I try hard to do what is right.” But where letters to Sarah contained news of her family and village life, Lindley’s letters to Henry dealt almost exclusively

⁵⁹ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 26 October 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁰ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease 26 October (evening) 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁶¹ Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 29 June 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁶² Lindley Crease to Sarah Crease, 29 June 1885. British Columbia Archives.

with doings at school – his routines, athletics, inter-school rivalries, teaching staff. Henry Crease had attended a preparatory school not unlike Lindley's Conyngham House and a public school not unlike his Haileybury College, both of which, Crease had selected for Lindley. Thus, Crease understood the environments – both academic and social – in which Lindley would become immersed. He and Lindley had the experience of public schooling in common and this sharing made their letters to each other over the years quite different from those between Lindley and his mother.

Lindley knew that his father would understand much of what he experienced, could envision the setting, the buildings and the daily routines. Lindley's letters to his father included small keyed diagrams explaining the various school buildings and proximities; he went to great lengths to make his world intelligible to his father. They were long on detail, on what he liked to do, even just daily walks in the school grounds or the pleasure of relaxing in the grass on a warm day, the comradeship of a few close friends, a game of football. Lindley believed that he could speak plainly with his father on matters of shared understanding based on gender; on their shared male experiences of boarding school, the camaraderie between schoolfellows and the knowledge gained through the lessons and mindset, all matters that his mother and sisters would not recognize or appreciate.

Lindley's letters to Henry also illustrate the importance placed on their shared experiences outside of schooling. Crease had spent time with his eldest son that was not given to the female members of the family, but would be mirrored with young Arthur. Lindley accompanied his father on the legal circuit more than once, including a trip to the Cassiar the year he left for England. They also camped with friends at Cowichan and on

the islands near Victoria. For Lindley, recollections of these times anchored him to the landscape of British Columbia and to his father. It was a very gendered tie, and different from the love he felt for his mother and older sisters, or even for Josephine, his closest sibling. Remembrances of these activities with his father formed significant parts of his letters.

How your letter made me wish to see you, & called back to remembrance our time in Cassiar which I do not think will ever fade from my memory so full was it of incidents...Are there many changes at New Westminster and do the blackberries still abound in such quantities? You must be very tired of my for ever repeating my remembrances to you but it seems to transport me for the moment to the places I love to think of.⁶³

In this letter Lindley requested of his father details of his first home and of the landscape and he confessed to reliving the past, which he did as a means of ensuring connection to family, but also to place. Joy Parr maintains that it is not only the intellect that remembers, that is historical, but that the physical body also remembers, the “sensuous body with musculature tuned by daily routines to draw parts of its physical surroundings into itself...patterns interiorized so thoroughly as habit memory and honed reflex that we might say they have become part of the self.”⁶⁴ Embodiment is then “the remembered experiences in which the body figured prominently.”⁶⁵ Lindley’s connection to his father was bound up in his body’s remembrances – his embodiment – of the physicality of travel by horse and buggy, of camping out, spending extended time outdoors and experiencing the sun, the rain and the seasons. His body held the memory of the steps and pathway to his garden, the smell of berries. With his brother he also

⁶³ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 28 May 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁴ Parr, "Notes for a More Sensuous History of Twentieth-Century Canada: The Timely, the Tacit, and the Material Body," 729.

⁶⁵ Gleason, "Embodied Negotiations: Children's Bodies and Historical Change in Canada, 1930 to 1960," 113.

shared these remembrances, but did not connect on this level with his mother or with his sisters.

Lindley maintained a dialogue in letters to his father. He asked questions and waited for answers. All through, he solicited his father's opinions and wanted him to understand his own positions. For instance, he demonstrated a budding interest in political and local affairs. "Thank you very much indeed for the two newspapers you sent me, they are very interesting to me...Have the Americans been fortifying San Juan I wish they had not got that island they command almost the whole channel."⁶⁶ His letters to Henry also provide detail about his learning. "How do you like my report? Please criticise it – it does me good. I sent off the 'Bluebook' so that you could see how I did in the examinations. My place in term was 15th so I have gained some places possibly I may get a remove..."⁶⁷ He communicated a social dilemma. "I do wish I had never been there, for although Mr. & Mrs. E[lkington] are very nice & evidently wish to be kind to me, I cannot bear the rest who are awfully fast in every sense and having had to accept the bicycle will make it more awkward to refuse an invitation when next it comes as I am sure it is likely to.... Do you understand?"⁶⁸ In sum, his letters actively solicited engagement, unlike those to his mother that centred upon reassurance of past understandings. He grows up in dialogue with his father, and was well aware of this aspect.

⁶⁶ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 8 February 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁷ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 25 January 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁸ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 15 April 1882. British Columbia Archives.

Lindley's letters to his father served a need within himself that he summed up in 1882. "I tell you my thoughts as I know you can sympathise with me."⁶⁹ He reached beneath the superficial, needed to connect and knew that he could because of the shared experiences and common male perspective which enabled him to write long letters about what he believed were meaningful subjects, not just news.

One of the most telling letters is one in which Lindley recounted for his father a dream that he had about coming home. The narrative is highly gendered. The males in the dream – his father and brother – both recognized him straight away from a distance, while the females – a neighbour, Mary, Susan and Barbara – do not, even though they spoke directly with him and were in the same room. The males he encountered outside in the street, the females inside the home. His brother picked up where they left off and walked with him as though he had never left. It is only his father who saw him as the long-absent son. The powerful emotional bonds between Lindley and his father were overt in this dream, and the recognition that their emotions must be reserved for a private setting speaks to his understanding of the outward façade required of manliness, that weak feelings should be controlled.⁷⁰ Men could not be tearful or emotional with witnesses. Strategies must be undertaken to disguise true feelings.

Last night I had a long dream about you all at home, I cannot remember the beginning of it...I had just returned from England a mail before I was expected, I remember that I was walking up Fort Street & when I had got as far as the Charles' house I saw you walking down to court & you recognised me & I you, but just behind you was I think Mrs. Grey & somebody else so neither of us wished to meet in front of them lest we should burst into tears, so you turned off & went down the road & I hid in the bushes & when you had passed I came onto the pavement & met these people coming down, & they noticed me so I had to stop and

⁶⁹ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 25 January 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁰ Rotundo, "Boy Culture: Middle-Class Boyhood in 19th Century America," 23.

talk, then I went on until I had got up to the top of the hill, I saw Arthur with some other boys so he came to me & we walked on, until we reached our house. I pretended to be some person come by the latest mail to call, so I came & was shown into the breakfast-room...Mary Susy and Barbara were in the same room. We went on talking very agreeably all the time, but I never showed my full face, but as they had not recognised me, I looked them all full in the face and then not one of them knew who I was, so I began to laugh. Then my dream came to an end.⁷¹

Lindley's dream story reinforces recent scholarship concerning Victorian masculinities,⁷² which reveal a somewhat more complex situation than the standard cliché that "the male body did, it did not feel."⁷³ The homosocial world of the boy's public school had emphasized to Lindley the importance of "manly" characteristics which attempted to negate public showing of emotions, while his "masculine" self, influenced as it had been by his mother and father and family life, struggled with the limitations so imposed. Clearly Lindley "felt" very deeply and also believed that he could express his emotions to his father because their shared experiences allowed him to undertake emotions-based conversation, quite different than that he might undertake with members of the opposite sex. Lindley had several years of daily interaction in an all-male environment to shape his abilities to relate within his gender. Lindley's reticence in his dream to express feelings across gender lines reinforced his particular perspective that male discourse was quite different than that of male-female discourse. In *Searching the Heart*, Karen Lystra argues that the need to hide male emotions in public created a

⁷¹ Lindley Crease to Henry Crease, 18 November 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁷² Mark C. Carnes and Clyde Griffen, *Meanings for manhood: constructions of masculinity in Victorian America* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990); Tosh, *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family, and empire*; ———, *A man's place: masculinity and the middle-class home in Victorian England*; *ibid.* In *Manliness and Masculinities*, John Tosh discusses the differences between the nineteenth century ideal of "manliness" essentially "a set of values by which men judged men" and the twentieth century understandings of "masculinities" to be sensibilities mediated through class, ethnicity and sexualities.

⁷³ Gleason, "Embodied Negotiations: Children's Bodies and Historical Change in Canada, 1930 to 1960," 119.

“secret self” that might (under the right circumstances, with the right person) loosen in private. Perhaps, at this stage of his life, it was with his father that Lindley was most able to be honest.⁷⁴

Jack O’Reilly and his parents

In 1877, at age eleven, Frank O’Reilly was sent to school in England, younger brother Jack followed in 1883 at age ten. Few of Frank’s letters from this time survive, but many of Jack’s have and these include letters written to his parents, letters that trace Jack’s own evolution in communication skills alongside rather fixed-in-time relationships with his parents. Good behaviour was expected of Jack. His father cautioned him to be a good boy. A cornerstone of understanding between father and son was then that they act appropriately with good manners and politeness.⁷⁵ Academic excellence was also expected. Peter O’Reilly fixated on Jack’s grades and enquired often. He wanted to receive positive news and to that end, offered to pay Jack a pound for each “1st” or prize.⁷⁶ Jack tried to live up to his father’s expectations, his grades were quite acceptable for the first year, but he did not perform consistently and had difficulties providing this information to his father directly, usually confessing to his brother or mother about grades, knowing they would provide the details to his father.

Keeping in touch was also a requirement dictated by his parents. Jack wrote to his parents as a first obligation, and to his siblings second. His father in particular expected regular and informative correspondence. Jack did his best. “Am I not a pretty good letter

⁷⁴ Lystra, *Searching the heart: women, men, and romantic love in nineteenth-century America*: 125.

⁷⁵ Peter O’Reilly to Jack O’Reilly, 8 July 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁶ Peter O’Reilly to Jack O’Reilly, 5 December 1883. British Columbia Archives.

writer I write every week as regular as the clock strikes twelve every day...⁷⁷ Jack expected and needed to read long newsy letters but he was unable to reciprocate because he did not yet know how to express himself fully on paper. “Please write longer better [letters] than the ones I write,” he begged his father, “for if I do I have not time to write to Pussy or to read any nice books.”⁷⁸ At age eleven he was unable to articulate full accountings of his activities, his letters stop mid sentence and switch topics or repeat information. He knew he had to fill the paper but didn’t quite know what level of information he had to convey. By early 1884, six months into his schooling, it is clear that his father had commented about his letters, as Jack began, “Dear Father I am going to try and write a good letter this time.”⁷⁹ His letters for the first three years are short and reveal very little of his school day apart from mentions of cricket, and athletics and very occasional comments about masters. He duly informed his father of visits to relatives on weekends and school breaks, he negotiated for birthday and Christmas gifts. His letters were positional, he provided enough information to fill the page, but what he recounted fits the expectations his father held for “news” but little more. The letters read very much as duty, very little of Jack’s personality or how he connected with O’Reilly is visible. The only clue might be in his tenaciousness in reminding his father about promised stamps for his collection, his wish for a pistol, his need for a “tricycle.” On his birthday in 1885 he wrote, “It is exactly four weeks since I wrote to you about my pistol and to day I

⁷⁷ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 22 June 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 1 June 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁹ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, letter dated only 1884. British Columbia Archives.

expect an answer as it is the time.”⁸⁰ The following birthday, “remember you promised me the gun when I am fourteen so I will be expecting it...”⁸¹

Only very occasionally did he write with enthusiasm or interest. Upon learning that his father planned a trip to England Jack was miffed at not having heard directly. “I heard that you are coming home [England] in the Spring but you never tell me anything about your coming home.” He was anxious to please, vowed to practise his violin faithfully so he could play music for his father,⁸² but O’Reilly’s plans changed and Jack was let down. Jack did on occasion write letters that he wanted his father to keep private. Some envelopes were marked “Papa Special not to be opened.”⁸³ He made it clear to his father, “When I write to you I will leave the envelope alone but when I write to Mother I will put CO’R in the corner and KO’R for Pussy and Frank FO’R.”⁸⁴ Only one of these specially designated letters has survived, it was written while he and Kathleen were at the seaside in Devon. Jack inserted “some pressed Heather and large leaf of that plum that grows outside mother’s window.”⁸⁵ It provides evidence that below Jack’s façade of anger at being away that coloured and strained his relationship, Jack, like Lindley Crease, shared remembrances of place with his father.

Although Jack expected newsy letters, he rarely acknowledged when he was pleased by the content of those received. He made an exception in 1886 with his opening remark to his father. “I received your letter from Alert Bay it was a beauty” he wrote, but

⁸⁰ Jack O’Reilly to [15?] April 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁸¹ Jack O’Reilly to Peter and Caroline O’Reilly, 26 April 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁸² Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, letter dated only 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁸³ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 9 August 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁴ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 27 September 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁵ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 4 August 1884. British Columbia Archives.

then moved off topic. This is typical. Jack's letters to his father do not read as conversations over time as do those of Lindley Crease to his own father and do not convey a sense of special connectedness that one assumes a boy might have with his father. Jack revealed very little about his private self to his father. He was the youngest child, and because his father's pattern of extended absences was well established during Jack's early years, he may have not had the same opportunity to develop clear bonds with his father, as had his elder brother, and may not have really known his father. Yet Jack certainly reacted with concern at hearing his father suffered injuries in a carriage collision. "I am very very sorry to hear about the accident," he wrote, "and I hope you will be well very soon because I never like to hear anyone suffering pain...I want you to tell me w[h]ere the accident took place and all about it please tell me all about it."⁸⁶

O'Reilly convalesced for almost six months, his ongoing incapacity necessitated Kathleen's return from England so she could assist her mother, whose own health was unstable. Although Jack understood why Kathleen had to leave, he was not at all happy about it. In an uncharacteristically unguarded letter he wrote, "I do not like her leaving me at all...It seems very hard to be left in England all by my self and no one I love except one or two relations or friends."⁸⁷ This letter, written to both parents, established a new emotionalism when writing to his father that had been devoid in his earlier correspondences, but would now be present from this point onwards.

Jack's letters with his mother reveal a dynamic different than that he held with his father. In the years prior to his father's accident, Jack wrote only on occasion directly to her, generally when his father was out of town. Examination of these letters reveals that

⁸⁶ Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 19 May 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁷ Jack O'Reilly to Peter and Caroline O'Reilly, 21 September 1885. British Columbia Archives.

in them Jack allowed emotions to colour his words. She was privy to the cracks in his stoic façade and he was more comfortable letting loose his honest perspectives. In words he would never use in letters to his father, Jack complained about the accommodations at a country inn. “This room smells like a pigsty and the servants smell like pigs.”⁸⁸ He confessed, “I know I am naughty but EW [an elderly female relation] makes me worse.”⁸⁹ “I don’t like...going to stop at EW because there is nothing to do she is as stale as bread.”⁹⁰ He told his mother about a schoolfellow who tried to escape. “One of the boys ran away yesterday...went up to London and there his pater told him that he ought not to run away and he came back on Friday.”⁹¹ By recounting the tale of another, Jack could let his mother know that all was not pleasant at boarding school without confessing anything directly himself. He chose to relate this event to his mother, perhaps knowing that she would empathize.

From 1886 to 1887 Jack intensified his correspondence with his mother. It was through his mother that Jack now kept connected. His letters lengthened and contained news that was broader than school and his facility for discussion improved. The confrontational and angry letters quoted in the last chapter concerning his enforced separation eased off, he became less intense about the situation and newsier. Whether this was a response to the maternal influence in correspondence, or the result of his maturity is impossible to know.

Jack removed from Montague House School to Uppingham School in 1888. That same year his father traveled to England on business and was able to spend time with

⁸⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 20 September 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁹ Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 20 September 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁰ Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 14 December 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁹¹ Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 14 December 1884. British Columbia Archives.

Jack. The year following, Jack's mother and sister visited. The visits answered the need Jack had to be with family and after the visits ended, his letters seem to have more scope, less negativity, more engagement with school and with the social acquaintanceships he made through his parents. Jack even presented the much-maligned elderly relative, E.W., in a more balanced light. He recounted to his mother how E.W. was solicitous on his behalf. "Last night I could not go to sleep. EW came in and put out the candle and generally tried to be nice, but it is like O [zero] in comparison with you."⁹²

It is difficult to separate Jack's relationships with his parents from his general emotional state prior to 1888 because both are so intertwined. The manner in which he related to both his parents is coloured and strained by his intense wish to leave England and return to home. In letters to his mother he let few opportunities pass to beg for his return. He traded on the closeness with his mother and he urged her to advocate on his behalf.

The correspondences of Lindley Crease and Jack O'Reilly show that both boys deliberately used their letter writing to convey intense feelings. Such revealing of emotions was contrary to gender norms which at this historical time encouraged boys and men to practice denial or mastery over intense feeling. Yet the triggers for the revelation of emotions were different between the boys. With Jack, homesickness revealed his own realization of self, an alone self, he was not prepared to handle. With Lindley, his homesickness manifest in a mental retreat as he dwelt in the power of remembrance. The differences between these two boys as they relate to each of their parents reveal the dangers of over generalizing about children on the basis of gender – the ways these boys

⁹² Jack O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, 9 March 1889. British Columbia Archives.

act are quite different from each other – and are reminders that personality also signifies in defining relationships.

Ellen Ellison and her mother

At the age of seventeen, Ellen Ellison, her mother and young brother traveled from their home in Vernon B.C. to Peoria, Illinois to visit with her mother's family, and especially to see Ellen's grandmother whose health was uncertain. The longer-term plan was that Ellen would remain with her aunt and uncle to attend high school in Peoria for her final year in preparation for college.⁹³ Sophie Ellison and Ellen's young brother returned to Vernon. Mother and daughter then maintained close contact through letters. Ellen's letters had a two-fold purpose. First, they provided information to her mother on the state of her grandmother's health so that Sophie Ellison would know and be comforted with timely updates. Having Ellen there, when she herself could not be, would have been important to Mrs. Ellison, and one of the reasons to chose Peoria as the place for Ellen to finish out her high school. Secondly, Ellen's letters filled a larger need for Ellen in particular. Writing them kept her connected to her own home and family. The time she spent in Peoria was not an opportunity for her to stretch her wings, to exercise her independence – that would come later, at college. The year in Peoria was clearly a time where Ellen lived in a close domestic setting with relatives yet attended high school where she was academically engaged and focused.

Why Ellen chose to write to her mother rather than her father cannot be known for certain. On a clearly practical level, as a member of the provincial legislature he was

⁹³ The situation of children moving from home to other households for schooling is at times visible in census records. This practice has not been much addressed in the literature but is recently discussed within: Gordon Darroch, "Families, Fostering, and Flying the Coop: Lessons in Liberal Cultural Formation, 1871-1901," in *Household Counts: Canadian households and families in 1901*, ed. Peter A. Baskerville and Eric W. Sager (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

absent from Vernon on a regular and often extended basis. So if Ellen's motivation was to keep in touch with the family her most obvious and direct means was through her mother. Ellen's letters do not mention receiving letters from her father, so it may not have been a pattern to write to him, nor him to her. He might not have seen it as his (male) responsibility to undertake regular correspondence with his daughter, that "kin-writing" was a female role. Perhaps by writing to her mother, Ellen knew her news would be passed on. Ellison's presence in the family's life is visible through Ellen's very occasional references to him, via questions to her mother regarding his health, or his political life, or within discussions of their ranch home.

The sixteen extant letters from Ellen to her mother during the period October 1904 through June 1905, reveal often twice weekly letters sent and received. The letters vary in subject matter – information about school, about her music lessons and concerts attended, to shopping for clothes, attendance at church – and shift over time. Her news moved from upbeat while she experienced a novelty in routine and place, to concern as her grandmother's health worsened, when Ellen and others became drawn into daily eldercare, to something like resignation as Ellen's dream of college seemed to be in jeopardy.

In letters to her mother, Ellen provided all the honesty missing from Jack O'Reilly's correspondence with his father or Josephine Crease's with her mother, and illustrate the solace she received from her mother's counsel. Ellen's maturity at seventeen is different than that of Mary Crease at a similar age. Both were eldest daughters, but lived in different times and circumstances. Unlike many of the boys in this study, Ellen had done most of her growing up at home, had years borne of intimacy. She knew her

parents daily, did not have to spend her childhood trying to remember them. These comparisons show that historical times or situation, child age, class or gender all contribute to variety in the experiences of childhood and reveal difficulties in generalizing about these experiences. The individuality of children as seen through their own words thus confirms complexity and depth in our understanding of children's experiences. In this light, the content of Ellen's letters is set within the contexts of her times and circumstances and her age level, but examined also for the personal voice revealed.

Ellen's expectations for the lines of communication between herself and her mother speak to her own individual maturity and but also a different type of mother-daughter interaction than that of Mary Crease and her mother. Mary Crease's words in letters to her mother indicate her general love and connectedness yet she shows emotional reserve, a divide in actual communication from the heart. Her letters seldom move beyond a reporting function. She asked and received information in a way that reflected a hierarchical intimacy but did not attempt to move beyond this, did not relate to her mother as confidant.

Ellen Ellison on the other hand, seems not to have established or recognized a hierarchical basis in her relationship with her mother, or at least it is less emphasized. Her discourse in letters appears almost companionate. This difference may have been a result of changing understandings of mother-daughter relationships. For instance the mid-nineteenth century guidelines set out in Ellis, *The Daughters of England* and *The Mothers of England*, seem antiquated when we observe Ellen's interactions. She asked questions and expected honest answers. She did not assume she should be sheltered from

reality, in fact she insisted that her mother not protect her. "Please do not keep anything from me,"⁹⁴ she wrote.

Ellen's connection with her mother was bound up with her situation as the eldest child. Her role had always been to assist her mother with the younger children for Ellen had seven siblings. The youngest four were boys from eight to fourteen years her junior. Ellen's letters reveal her side of discussions with her mother over these siblings, and her questions about them fed her need to stay connected as a big sister to them, but also a need to retain her role as her mother's confidant concerning them. She had an emotional need to be kept in the loop, so she asked questions about one of her sisters. "You haven't mentioned Lizzie lately. Is she over her nervous trouble or not? I hope she is well again and that the children will be rid of all their little complaints now that spring is here."⁹⁵ "Today is Lizzie's birthday and I have been thinking about her a great deal. I do hope she is some what better by this time. It seems strange to imagine Lizzie anything but the Picture of health."⁹⁶

She needed a photograph of her brother to keep tabs with his growing up in her absence. "I want a picture of Herbert so badly. It seems to me he can't look like he used to, so babyish at any rate I can't picture him as I can the others. How does he talk?"⁹⁷ She worried that she wouldn't fit in when she returned home. "I wonder if Herbert has forgotten all about me or if he will know me. I guess a year has made a good many

⁹⁴ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 29 April 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁹⁵ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 22 March 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁹⁶ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 21 April 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁹⁷ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 22 March 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

changes in the children. That is the worst of going away for any length of time. The children will grow up and I will be like a stranger to them.”⁹⁸

Ellen’s choice of terminology is revealing. She references her siblings collectively as “the children” illustrating that she saw herself not as a child with them, but as a sibling in a vertical relationship that placed her more intimately with her mother than with “the children.” At seventeen Ellen saw herself as a young woman whose domestic focus in the home centred on the care and nurture of younger siblings and in this role she identified with her mother, more so than with her siblings, or even with her sisters, who were not that much different in age from her.

Ellen’s separation while in Peoria also triggered worry concerning her mother because she was without Ellen’s assistance, and was also doubly busy writing to both Ellen and her father (who was in Victoria for the legislative session) as well as to Peoria family members. “You must be writing letters most of the time in order to keep Papa and me both going when you are not giving music lessons to Bert and Vernon and Herbert. I fancy it will keep you busy finding them about practise hour.”⁹⁹

The longer she was absent from home and family the more she was homesick. She expressed her feelings candidly in her letters, sharing with her mother the distress she experienced at separation from her in particular, but home in general. “I feel sometimes as if I couldn’t stand it a moment longer to be away from you. It is terrible the way I feel when I think of you all being so far away and there are three whole months yet. I have been sleeping alone and haven’t had a good hug since the last one Vernon gave me and I

⁹⁸ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 2 June 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁹⁹ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 22 March 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

am so lonesome I don't know what to do."¹⁰⁰ Receiving letters from her mother was crucial and their regular communication kept her worries at bay. Unexpected or unusual delays in receiving these letters eroded her confidence. "I didn't get a letter today altho I fully expected one..."¹⁰¹ "I haven't had a letter for 4 days."¹⁰² "I feel as if I was going crazy sometimes and my heart aches for you so...I have no one here to confide in."¹⁰³

Ellen's life in Peoria became stressful, not because of school, although the expectations were high, but as a result of her grandmother's health. She shared with her mother an admiration for her grandmother's stoicism. "After being in bed for five months hardly able to move you would think a person would become very impatient and disagreeable but Grandma is so different...she clings to life..."¹⁰⁴ But later as the situation worsened, Ellen herself remained stoic when she described to her mother what was now needed. Grandma "requires constant attention so we three walk to her house and take turns in letting the nurse sleep during the day. It is a great nervous strain to be with Grandma for any length of time."¹⁰⁵ Soon, increased care was required. The aunt took the day shift, Ellen and her uncle the night shift. At one point, the nurse threatened to leave, but "has not said anything more lately about going. I really don't see what we could do if she should go. That is why we have to help her so much or she will leave.

¹⁰⁰ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 18 March 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰¹ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 12 April 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰² Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 21 April 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰³ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 29 April 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives. Sophia Ellison's half-brother Oliver Vail who lived in Vernon died unexpectedly on 14 April 1905 hence the delay in correspondence. Vail was the son of the grandmother in Peoria, so his death affected the family there directly. "Funeral," *[Kamloops] Inland Sentinel*, 18 April 1905.

¹⁰⁴ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 8 April 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰⁵ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 29 April 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

She gets more rest than any of us now – so she is satisfied.”¹⁰⁶ Ellen did not complain, her intent was to honestly inform her mother, but not have her mother worry about Ellen’s own health nor the impact of the obligations on her schoolwork. In this respect Ellen’s concern for her mother demonstrated maturity.

Not surprisingly, Ellen became angry during her stay in Peoria. In her letters she was honest about this emotion. Writing letters provided a means to channel frustrations born of circumstances. Secure in her relationship with her mother she was candid and did not mince words, confident that her mother would understand and if required, intervene. What had started as an opportunity for schooling had shifted into an obligation to assist her aunt and uncle with an infirm and failing grandmother. What tipped the scale was her uncle’s request that after the close of the school year, she stay an additional two months to help him keep house while her aunt went east on extended visit. “I am just as cross as I can be and was never so disappointed in all my life...of course it is my duty to do so after all their kindness and it would be pure selfishness if I do not – but, I would like to know why Bess [cousin] can’t come home.... she has never hinted coming home and keeping house for her father.”¹⁰⁷ The plan had been for Ellen to return to Vernon for summer and then in September begin at Havergal College in Toronto. She had looked forward to that time at home, “it is discouraging and disappointing to think of not having what little time I have at home, after being away all year.”¹⁰⁸

More than anger tainted her temper. “I am afraid this is rather a despondent letter but it seems that I have to relieve my feelings once and a while to some body or they will

¹⁰⁶ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, undated [April] 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 2 June 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 2 June 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

burst. Moreover I am broke. I feel so ashamed to have to ask all the time for money but I never seem to have any...I will send you a list next time so that you will see that it is not squandered on things that are not necessary.”¹⁰⁹ Ellen’s honesty with her mother about her changing situation indicated an open relationship, one in which the daughter could speak her mind and knew that doing so would be accepted. Ellen had a sense of family duty but was emotionally strong enough to indicate when she thought her elders took advantage of her contribution. Ellen challenged her uncle’s expectation that extended elder care should become her responsibility when her female cousin Bess, should have been the logical one for the assignment. She did not mention her cousin Harry, who was equally logical and equally accessible. The assumption of elder care as a gendered responsibility removed Harry from the list of considerations despite the fact that both he and Bess who attended Princeton and Vassar, would be home at term end. The situation did resolve itself, Ellen returned to Vernon the summer prior to her start at Havergal College.

This mother-daughter relationship very much reflects its early twentieth century situation in the openness across the generations. Ellen is her mother’s eyes and ears and in turn, Sophie Ellison facilitates Ellen’s connection to siblings and family. It is more overtly reciprocal and less duty driven than the hierarchical overtones visible in the correspondences of the Crease girls to their mother.

The Jenns girls write to their father

The domestic situation of the Jenns family created different circumstances for the children to write to their parents. The separation of children and parents arose not out of

¹⁰⁹ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 2 June 1905. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

need for schooling but because the mother and father lived in different countries. The children at times lived with their mother, Madeline, yet at other times with their father, Eustace Jenns.¹¹⁰ The parents were thus similarly engaged with and involved in raising their children. They remained married and within a loving relationship despite the geographical separation. No certain reason for this unorthodox arrangement has yet surfaced in the research.

The Jenns family records include letters sent to the father by his five daughters, four of whom feature in this chapter; Sylvia, born 1888, Ivy, born 1891, Kathleen, born 1893 and Phyllis, born 1899. Several generalizations about the family can be made based upon examination of these records. First, the girls were faithful and frequent correspondents to their father over the course of their childhood beginning at about age seven and through age twenty, depending upon their residence and proximity to their father. Their letters document a nuclear family that rarely resided all together, but whose members appear committed to each other and to carrying on within the circumstances. Madeline Jenn's often weekly letters to her distant husband were filled with endearments and intimacies suggestive of a loving, albeit unorthodox marriage. Despite physical separation and the maintenance of separate households, the family was emotionally connected.

Jenns kept and filed his daughters' letters, noted on the top left corner of each one the date on which he replied. The letters provide a window into the workings of long-distance parenting and of the daughters' individual relationships with their father. The

¹¹⁰ For an overview of children resident with single parents in the 1901 Canadian census, see: Bettina Bradbury, "Canadian Children Who Lived with One Parent in 1901," in *Household Counts: Canadian households and families in 1901*, ed. Peter A. Baskerville and Eric W. Sager (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007).

brother (and eldest sibling) was seldom referenced in his sister's letters except for clues to indicate that he had remained with his father but went his own way at an early age. Eighteen-year-old Kathleen wrote from Los Angeles, "I do wish you would send Percival down here for what is the use of having a brother if one cannot see him once in six years."¹¹¹ "I almost forget what he looks like."¹¹²

Only a few letters survive from the girls prior to the age of eleven or twelve, but those that do provide evidence that family members wrote about things that mattered in their world, they were not distant strangers, but connected emotionally if not always physically. Seven-year-old Ivy's letters filled her father in on some aspects of her routine and structure. "I have been sick four a little while but I am a little bit better now. It is raining to day and it is Saturday. I haven't been to school for a week. Baby [Phyllis] gets in the bath every Saturday now sometimes she gets a little frightened."¹¹³ Perhaps a little of Ivy's own hopes were evident in the following exchange a year later. "The baby is so pleased with the pretty little doll you set her. She has such a dear little tooth in to day. I think she will be glad when you came home to have a play with her, when are you coming home, I hope you are well, we all send love, from your loving daughter, Ivy."¹¹⁴ Evidently Jenns responded appropriately and Ivy wrote after her birthday. "Thank you for the doll, it looks very nice...will you write me a letter. Phyllis is well, mamma says do you wear your slippers are you glad you took them. When are you coming home. we learn our lessons every night."¹¹⁵

¹¹¹ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 6 September 1911. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹² Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 17 October 1911. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹³ Ivy Jenns to Eustace Jenns, nd. [February or March 1899]. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁴ Ivy Jenns to Eustace Jenns, nd. [1901?]. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁵ Ivy Jenns to Eustace Jenns, nd. [August 1901]. British Columbia Archives.

The youngest girl, Phyllis grew up in Vancouver and also in a Los Angeles apartment house. She wrote her father (in Prince Rupert or New Westminster) about life's details, the vegetables she tried to grow in the vacant lot next door or the crowds and excitement downtown for "a Shriner's Parade and I went. It was very pretty at night" and the "flower parade with automobiles just covered with flowers some all pink and some deep red."¹¹⁶ In September 1912 when she was thirteen, she moved north to Prince Rupert and reported her new situation to her father. "School has started and I have been put in the entrance class on trial. I have the principal for my teacher...I have come to the conclusion that I can't use umbrellas here as the girls umbrellas blew inside out and all the ribs broke so if you ever see a rain coat for a girl of sixteen, I say sixteen because I want it to cover my legs as the rain wets my stockings..."¹¹⁷ The following spring she asked his advice about gardening. "Can you make a garden when the earth is muskeg? There is no fence and chickens are all over the place," and went on to report, "Somebody gave me "Treasure Island" for my birthday have you ever read it? I like it, but it is bloody in places. Grace and I and the two puppies went for a walk this after noon...Grace's dog has grown much bigger than mine I wonder why that is?"¹¹⁸ "How do you teach a dog and a cat to be friends?"¹¹⁹ The easy conversation in her letters attests to the close relationship she kept with her father, who faithfully answered each and every letter sent, answering her myriad of questions, sending her books to help with ancient history and Greek mythology.

¹¹⁶ Phyllis Jenks to Eustace Jenks, 14 May 1912. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁷ Phyllis Jenks to Eustace Jenks, 7 September 1912. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁸ Phyllis Jenks to Eustace Jenks, 3 March 1913. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁹ Phyllis Jenks to Eustace Jenks, _ April 1913. British Columbia Archives.

The girls kept tabs on one another when they moved from residence with one parent to residence with the other. They were often split up, so used their letters to their father to ask questions about their siblings or report sibling news to him. The fact that the girls include information about and references to siblings in their letters illustrates that the relationships were very much intertwined and that the girls were comfortable knowing their father thought that their childhood accomplishments to be newsworthy. Sixteen-year-old Sylvia commented about her youngest sister who now lived with him, that a friend “tells me Phyllis can skip French rope and I think it very clever of her.”¹²⁰ While several years later Phyllis told her father, “I learnt to play tennis two or three weeks ago. Ivy taught me.”¹²¹

Judging from the content of their letters, the girls cultivated confidences with their father as the basis of connection. Within her social network seventeen-year-old Kathleen Jenns mixed with boys her own age or older, and wrote to her father with a naïve candour which illustrates that although long-distance, her relationship with her father allowed her to include observations which other girls might only share with those of their own gender or age. “Our Glee Club had its regular class last night and lovely tea & cake before closing. The funny thing is that the boys all stay in one corner and the girls in another and it makes me tired to see everyone so shy of each other. But boys are always like that.”¹²² Likewise Kathleen was very sensitive about her height and weight and was not shy in confiding such thoughts to her father. “It makes me sick to think how much more I

¹²⁰ Sylvia Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 11 May 1904. British Columbia Archives.

¹²¹ Phyllis Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 2 January 1913. British Columbia Archives.

¹²² Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 30 November 1911. British Columbia Archives.

will grow. If I don't stop soon I will not be able to get through the door."¹²³ These sorts of comments within the context of family letters might be expected between daughters and mothers, or between sisters, or as diary references, but to deliberately cross gender is less expected within the context of separate spheres or within generalizations we may hold concerning the emotional engagements of fathers with daughters in the historical past. The letters of these daughters thus provide perspectives that challenge contemporary assumptions about historical family intimacies.

Conclusion

The letters written by children to their parents capture children's voices at specific moments within their emotional and cognitive development and simultaneously reflect their historical situations. For instance, the letters of Ellen Ellison and Kathleen Jenns to their parents have different qualities than those of the O'Reilly and Crease letters in part because they were older in age at the time of writing; they held more fully formed opinions, but they also experienced less sheltered, less overseen lives while at school and in their home life. The upper middle class cocooning of the O'Reillys and Creases – preoccupied as it was with matters of class and rigid gender roles – gave way, with this next generation of children who were accessible to and influenced by a wider range of experiences. These children would assume entitlement in areas never dreamed of by the earlier children. But despite the changing times, the underlying interpretations of the relationships that these letters document remains little changed. Children in all four families wrote and maintained contact during absences because of familial bonds.

¹²³ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 28 September 1911. British Columbia Archives.

Gender forms one of the major ways children interact with parents¹²⁴ and is demonstrated in this chapter through comparisons within families using children's correspondences with different parents, and comparisons across families of the correspondence of girls to parents and boys to parents. The subject matter of their letters, the levels of intimacy offered, their individual expectations, or even the frequency of communication all provide evidence of gender identification and expectations. The child-parent relationships documented here reveal considerable variety within the broad frameworks of class and gender. Parenting styles undoubtedly vary, but the external circumstance or situation of the children are also factors that characterize their relationships, as do social and cultural standards of particular generations or historical eras.

These letters also reinforce a fundamental split in the cohort between boys who were sent away to school at a young age and the girls and boys who remained at home. Boys who experienced childhood as a separation from family intimacies and lost the daily interaction with parents were forced to cling to memories as the basis for sustaining these relationships. The long-term effect of these situations is one that should be visible in their own adulthoods and parenting situations and should be studied in the context of settler relationships.

These examples also support a contention of this study that child-created letters both reinforce and at times complicate conclusions or generalizations about historical children and of the nature of child/parent relationships. The overarching statements need

¹²⁴ Early foundational studies that include discussion of mother-daughter relations, for instance, are: Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual: Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America." Nancy F. Cott, *The bonds of womanhood: "woman's sphere" in New England, 1780-1835* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977).

to be tempered with the knowledge that personality created and sustained exception as easily as it enabled conformity. The value of incorporating child-created records into studies of children and families is then found in the very variety of their authentic voices. Moments each in historical time, but personal, individual and not otherwise heard.

By writing to a parent, the child engaged herself within the wider framework of intimacies. References to other family members, reports about relatives near and far, sharing of news, questions about health, acknowledgements of achievements, and “conversation” that both informs and reveals are components of each and every letter and show how children engaged in sustaining family intimacies and how their actions had implications beyond those framed by the child/parent relationships. The shared experiences of place also form important but often, invisible ties that unite children and parents.

Chapter 8: Child Relationships With Other Adult Family Members and Siblings

This chapter continues the theme of children as they relate to family members. The first section utilizes child-created letters to learn how children incorporated grandparents, aunts and uncles into their understandings of self and how children took the initiative to foster and sustain relationships when separated. Little attention has been paid by historians to relationships held by children with family members outside the nuclear family. This chapter hopes to address that lack through an examination of letters written by children about family members who lived within their own community and through the case study of one girl's relationship with a distant aunt.

The second section covers children's relationships with their siblings and relies on child letters and diaries to show how these relationships were individually different between children in a single family and as compared to children in other families. Age, birth order, personality and gender all factored into child sibling dynamics and into the charting of these relationships over childhood. Again, this is an area underdeveloped in the literature.

Part one: relationships between children and other adult family members

Census records confirm that historical children in Canada often lived in extended families and that other family members might live nearby.¹ Thus, we assume that regular face-to-face interactions occurred between children and their adult family members, and

¹ For several examples of studies using census data that include discussions of children see Baskerville and Sager, *Household counts: Canadian households and families in 1901*.

also that children held personal relationships borne of proximity. But this situation does not apply to the children in this study, who, as previously discussed, lived in frontier societies where the settler populations were not very multigenerational. Those children whose aunts, uncles and grandparents lived with them or near by were in a minority. Most had relatives in Britain, in central or eastern Canada, the United States or elsewhere, but not in British Columbia or Alberta, at least for the nineteenth century. The situation was not so stark as the twentieth century unfolded.

Correspondence functioned as a means to keep in touch when geographically distant, and thus children who remained in close proximity to family members wrote no letters to those family members. Child letters to grandparents, aunts and uncles exist only if and when the parties became separated, for instance with physical relocation such as emigration or migration, or when children attended boarding school or went on vacation. Child references to grandparents, aunts and uncles exist also within their diaries and within the bodies of letters they wrote to others. When the recipient of the child's letter was not in a position to know details about grandparents, aunts or uncles for themselves the child provided the information, or when children did not know themselves they asked questions. This third party referencing reveals triangles of proximity, direct and indirect communication, direct and indirect interactions. To my knowledge, historians of children have not employed a methodology utilizing triangles of proximity in the quest for children's perspectives, nor have they studied child relationships with these adult family members.

The O'Reilly children and their grandmother, aunts and uncles

In Victoria, Frank and Kathleen O'Reilly were fortunate to have family only a few miles away. Mrs. O'Reilly's two brothers and their wives, and her mother lived across town and the families kept close tabs on one another, especially when any of the men, who as government officials traveled frequently, were out of town. The children's records include diary entries, letters written to others that reference these relatives and also letters written directly to them. We learn about these aunts and uncles and grandmother in references scattered throughout their records. The evidence is often just a quick sentence or two in a letter to their father, or a line in a diary, but enough to indicate that these family members were part of their everyday world and that regular interactions formed part of their understanding of family and of connectedness.

In letters Kathleen and Frank wrote to their absent father they included information about the comings and goings of family members as part of their "news." In one of a very few extant letters from Frank before he went to school, he referenced his grandmother within the context of a whole series of reporting topics. "Yesterday was Granney's Birthday. Mama gave her a jacket and a new dressing gown."² His information is intimate yet matter of fact. His grandmother had a birthday, he was aware of it, and probably was with her when she received the present. The family celebrated birthdays, the children were part of it.

Kathleen's plentiful letters provide us with more concrete information about adult family members. As previously discussed, Kathleen's letters to her father were generally

² Frank O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 6 November 1874. British Columbia Archives.

reports of everyone in her world. Her letters functioned to keep him in the loop. She wrote about each and every time she saw her maternal uncles or knew of conversations they had with her mother, and in O'Reilly's absence, of their assistance with domestic details. For instance, "Uncle John was here yesterday he ordered some more beer from Fell & Co. & the man has just brought it."³ She also kept O'Reilly abreast of one uncle and aunt in particular and let him know the frequency of visits. The following two quotes are representative of Kathleen's reporting style. "We have not seen Uncle John or Aunt Zoe since the day that they were here before you left."⁴ "Last Saturday we spent at Fairfield and tomorrow Uncle John and Aunt Zoë are coming over here."⁵ It is in these casual references that she revealed the intimacy of interactions. She kept tabs and expected that her world naturally extended to the business of her aunt and uncle's own activities. When an uncle traveled to England on business he wrote to her mother to tell her about seeing Frank and that Frank had been ill. Kathleen then passed this information on to her father. Likewise the same uncle reported on a family death in England. Kathleen took it upon herself to then forward the fact to her father. "Mama received a letter from uncle Joe for you, the other day & he said in it that poor Uncle William died on your birthday the 27th of March, & Uncle also said that Frank had not been well."⁶ There appear to be no boundaries in Kathleen's world of busy-ness, of keeping her family connected, of passing on information.

Kathleen's letters also reveal that in the O'Reilly family, she was not alone; through family letters, everyone shared. Her uncle forwarded a letter he had received

³ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 27 March 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁴ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 28 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁵ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 8 December 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁶ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 23 April 1879. British Columbia Archives.

from Frank to her mother, so she could share in it. Her mother's brother sent to his sister a letter for her husband. O'Reilly family members kept themselves abreast of family news through direct sharing and this pattern was part of Kathleen's learning about family so she in turn shared the details with her father. "Mama got a letter from Uncle Joe for you & I got one from Frank & Mama got photos of all the Barber family & a letter from Grace Davy."⁷ "Aunt Julia has been here in the carriage she brought a letter from Frank to Uncle Joe."⁸ It is a natural event that Frank in England would write to his uncle in Victoria and that his aunt would share this letter with Frank's mother and sister. And natural too, that her uncle would share other family letters. Complete transparency in exchange of information was part of the children's understanding of family. "Uncle John has just gone he brought Mama a letter from Frank and from Jeanny but none from Uncle Joe."⁹ They positioned themselves as conduits and the children were part of the connecting points.

Kathleen provides first hand evidence of how she interacted with her aunts and uncles. She was taken care of by her Aunt Zoe while her mother continued further social visits. "The day before yesterday we went to Fairfield Aunt Zoe was better & Mama took Fanny to pay some calles & I stayed there whilst Mama was out. Annie Pinder & the Baby were there & I helped to pick some fruit."¹⁰ Children easily slipped from parental to other supervision and it was just part of Kathleen's expectations. Kathleen's descriptions situated her adult family members into the everyday mix of people in her world and in so

⁷ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 15 September 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁸ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 5 February 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁹ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, nd. [? July 1879]. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 4 July 1878. British Columbia Archives.

doing her letters serve a dual role because we also learn how the community interacted with them.

When we arrived there [at the home of her aunt and uncle] the children were turned into the orchard to eat cherries which they did until they could eat no more and then they had tea about five o'clock after which they played games. Aunt Julia had the piano out on the lawn and they sang and afterwards they ran races & for the winners they had prizes; they then had some more tea & cake & after that some more singing & they finished with "God Save the Queen" & then the Bishop thanked Uncle & Aunt in the name of the teachers and children they then gave three cheers for Mr. & Mrs. Trutch & one more and then they formed in line for procession and after three more cheers they marched away with three banners flying.... I think everyone enjoyed themselves...¹¹

Kathleen centred her Uncle Joe and Aunt Julia in the glow of community approval, and she was proud of her own personal connection to them.¹² Her understanding of place, of her home and her world all join together and are grounded in her relationship to this couple.

Frank O'Reilly referenced his uncles in letters he wrote to Jack at boarding school as a means of keeping Jack abreast of some of the more exciting events. "Uncle Joe nearly had a bad Railway accident the last time he went up the line, his car, which was the last one (a train of flatcars of ballast) got off the track, and was dragged along for some distance, the wheels coming off, Uncle John was in the car, & he got a black eye, &

¹¹ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 7 July 1881. British Columbia Archives.

¹² Victoria society held the hosts of this community event in high esteem and this is an important backstory. Aunt Julia was the wife of Joseph Trutch who today is infamous for his actions in disregarding aboriginal land and title. Kathleen's account demonstrates that her aunt and uncle were popular and contributing members of Victoria's settler society, a reminder that the perspective we hold today of colonial politics is retrospective, and was not necessarily contemporaneously held. Kathleen showed the human side of this couple (who never had children of their own). They provided their gardens as a venue for a church event that allowed dozens of children the opportunity to run wild and overindulge in cherries.

For biographical information on Trutch see, David Ricardo Williams, "Peter O'Reilly," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); *ibid.* For Trutch's impact on British Columbia see, R. Cole Harris, *Making native space: colonialism, resistance, and reserves in British Columbia* (Vancouver, B.C.: University of British Columbia Press, 2002).

Uncle Joe's leg got bruised."¹³ In turn, Jack's letters home asked after his uncles as he hears about their travels across Canada and abroad and about his siblings' interactions with them.¹⁴ To his father he wrote, "I heard that you are at Unkle John's and Frank...went with Unkle John 12 miles from Yale to fish but they did not catch anything..."¹⁵

Four of Kathleen's letters to her uncles survive, the earliest written at age ten, the oldest at age fifteen.¹⁶ These letters augment the references in letters to others by showing Kathleen's direct communication with her uncles. They were written not for special occasions, or as obvious obligated thank you letters, but appear to have been written solely to keep in touch, to exchange news. These letters, along with the ones referenced in earlier quotations indicate that the O'Reilly children did not just pass on news of their uncles to others, but provided news of others to their uncles. It was a complete circle of intergenerational exchanges within their family and children were very much a part of it.

Frank, Kathleen and Jack incorporated their aunts and uncles and grandmother into a natural understanding of family. The evidence in the letters shows how these individuals figured with regularity in their thoughts. When the children wrote to their father the news included the comings and goings, the interactions and the special events shared with these adult family members set alongside other and various unconnected

¹³ Frank O'Reilly to Jack O'Reilly, 2 December 1884. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁴ Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 8 February 1885; Jack O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, February Easter Term, 1885. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁵ Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 24 May 1884. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁶ Kathleen O'Reilly to Joseph Trutch, 7 December 1878 (fragment). O'Reilly family fonds. British Columbia Archives; Kathleen O'Reilly to John Trutch, 9 January, 17 February, 15 April 1882. Trutch Family Fonds, Special Collections, University of British Columbia.

snippets of daily life. They saw no boundaries between levels of information or topics of interest, thus the letters move quickly and jump from reference to reference. Older children might be more selective about topics of conversation, or less apt to write about what they might consider as uneventful detail, but for younger children such interactions were not uneventful detail, but reinforced their own understandings of belonging to a network of kin that was not artificially bound at the nuclear level.

The Sanders girls and their Aunt Edith

Phoebe Sanders and her sister Constance wrote to their paternal Aunt Edith who lived in Ireland. Edith Browning had previously lived in Fort Macleod. She was an aunt who knew and had spent time with her young nieces in Alberta. Edith Browning and her nieces surmounted the geographical separation through correspondence that began on Phoebe's side, when she was nine-years-old and continued to her adulthood. Not all the letters survived over time, but eighteen letters from Phoebe and three from Constance are extant, that we can see the effort made by all correspondents to encourage and stimulate ongoing dialogues.

The content written by both girls exhibits familiarity and informality. "How do you like red ink? I like it all right."¹⁷ "I wish you were here to come to the circus with us we would have great fun."¹⁸ "I hope you can read my writing & I hope it is invisible to your naked eye."¹⁹ The manner in which the girls introduced topics to their aunt, the assumptions they made about each other's knowledge and understanding of their domestic settings and the character of family members speak to shared memories. "Did I

¹⁷ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 9 December 1902. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁸ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 10 August 1904. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 14 October 1904. Glenbow Archives.

tell you in our last letter we had a telephone if not I'll tell you now."²⁰ Phoebe discussed other North West Mounted Police families in the barracks in a manner that suggests her aunt had met or knew many of these people. "I think it would be a wise plan for Tods & I to go & see Mrs. Duffus this after noon. Don't you well if you don't I do we can gossip."²¹ The letters overflow with domestic details (hardly of the sort which Phoebe's mother might write) and the escapades of pets. The letters are testament that from the child perspective, in spite of her geographical remoteness, this aunt was an important "presence" within the emotional bonds of family understood and experienced by these two sisters.

Phoebe's letters document and reveal a young child maturing into an adolescent accompanied by an improvement in her cursive writing and spelling, and an increasing sophistication in communication. The letters include, as one would expect, thank-you letters to her aunt for Christmas or birthday gifts, but continue and are in fact generated not as obligations or dutiful letters, but as voluntary communications. Both Phoebe and Constance wrote for no particular occasion, sometimes as a means of passing the time when home sick in bed, or just to talk. Phoebe's manner was chatty and colloquial, beginning with the salutations and continuing throughout the body of the letters. "To charming Mrs. B. from her beloved niece Edith Phoebe Sanders"²² "Dear Mrs. Browning ok in other words Aunt Edith."²³

The letters from both girls reveal proactive interaction with their aunt to sustain their long-distance relationships and levels of intimacy whereby each party was

²⁰ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 14 October 1904. Glenbow Archives.

²¹ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 14 October 1904. Glenbow Archives.

²² Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 10 August 1904. Glenbow Archives.

²³ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 1 December 1904. Glenbow Archives.

comfortable in chastising the other for not acknowledging each other's letters. Phoebe wrote, "Why did you never answer my letters I wrote two letters & you never answered one so be sure and answer this one."²⁴ In return the aunt admonished Phoebe for her own tardiness and called her a scallywag.²⁵ Constance's procrastination was a shared enjoyment between her sister and her aunt. Phoebe noted on a spare corner of a letter, "I don't want to tell a story but Tods says she will write soon."²⁶ The aunt in turn affectionately suggested Constance to be a lazy little pig.²⁷

The letter transcribed below is the earliest extant letter, but was not the first letter Phoebe wrote to her aunt, as is clear in Phoebe's statement at the outset that she has not written recently. The reader is then thrust amid a conversation.

May Monday 1899, Calgary

My dear aunt Edith I did not writ for a long time be cause I have be gun to go to the publick school and I like it and I am geting a long fine. Tell uncle that I will write to him soon. We have got a dog and it is all ways bothring the cat how is uncles hand I hope it is beter how is the poly I am pretty nearly out of the seckened book and in sums I am on problems the dog is a fox-terrier and Tods is just piling pillows on him and he got a way from Tods, and went at the cat. Tods gave me half of the dog for the whole of the cat. We had a mouse in a cage...we weare playing with the mouse after tea and it got a way and we caught it a gain and it got a way a gain and we had a chace Amy caught it with its tail and then we put it in its cage and it got out a gain and we had a biger chace yet we could not catch it so we got the cat and we put it on the floor and she made a dash and she had the mouse and we had no more Mouse.... little Cony Roabs is frightened of her pony be cause it be gan bucking with her onit she would not get on it so Dixie said she would lead it home and she got too a crossing he be gan to pull and he got a way and he rolled and Dixie got off her pony and had to beat it and Dixie lead it up and I lead Dixie's up and they had some body to lead it up. It is snowing out and there is a cold wind out. I wish my pony in. I do not believe there will be ever summer.... We have are hotbeds planted and I have got a little part of it I

²⁴ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 9 December 1902. Glenbow Archives.

²⁵ Edith Browning to Phoebe Sanders, 6 February 1905. Glenbow Archives.

²⁶ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 27 March 1905. Glenbow Archives.

²⁷ Edith Browning to Phoebe Sanders, 7 July [1904]. Glenbow Archives.

have sun flowers in mine and I could not tell you all. Bevis is all right. I think I will have to go from Phoebe.²⁸

The first observation is that with her aunt, Phoebe exhibits a sense of fun and humour. She told an engaging story of the mouse but was not content to end her letter there; she then recounted the adventures with her friend's horse. Then quite all at once, she ran out of steam, "I think I have to go now." Writing gave Phoebe the opportunity to convey information about herself and her family (her world) to someone else – an adult – who would know and care. Because her parents lived through the escapades she described, without her aunt, Phoebe would not have had an outlet for telling a story, and the important details of a young girl's world would not have been documented. The letter represents an act of sharing, and thus illustrates Phoebe's desire to create and maintain ties with her aunt. In it she conveyed personal information (new attendance at public school, her progress with readers), her hopes (for better weather and the state of her seedlings), her worries (for safety of her pony outside in the cold), her friends (Connie Rhodes, Dixie), her personality (brave in the pony episode), her pets (a mouse in a cage, a new terrier dog "Danger", elderly dog "Bevis", "Amy" the cat). She showed a sense of humour and an ability to tell a story, she may even have been judgmental about Dixie's treatment of the pony and she referenced earlier conversations (hoped that Uncle's hand was better, asked about her Aunt's parrot "Polly"). Her letter is rich with detail and in its revelation of Phoebe herself. She is a world apart from Jack O'Reilly for whom writing was a chore and from Mary Crease who could not write beyond her obligations, and did not shift away from this mode.

²⁸ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, May Monday 1899. Glenbow Archives

Perhaps this is a crucial difference. Phoebe Sanders was under no parent-imposed rules to write once a week, she was not burdened with domestic duties that coloured her world. She was not separated from parents or far from home. Undoubtedly Phoebe was encouraged to write, but under no strain to report in to anxious parents. She wrote for the love of communication and because she received pleasure from the correspondence. She was writing twenty and thirty years after the O'Reilly and Crease children and under very different circumstances. Lifestyles had changed, transportation was more efficient and geography seemed less of a divide, while mail delivery times much improved. This may have meant that letters were not as costly to send, and could function in less critical ways, as outlets for developing and maintaining connections, as recreation.

The Sanders family operated as a nuclear unit, relatives (like Aunt Edith) were overseas or across the country. None of Gilbert Sanders' postings coincided with places other family members might reside. So without family members close by it was important to keep connected via letters. Writing served as an opportunity not only to communicate news and respond to news but also to share times of emotion. In chapter two one of Phoebe's letters to her aunt was used to demonstrate her sense of belonging to community and sense of place. This letter also revealed Phoebe's unspoken worries. Her letter made no mention that her father would, a few months later, also soon join up and head overseas. Perhaps she had not yet been informed, though she may have had suspicions. Her observation about the solitary married man in the group, suggest hope that her own father (also a married man) would not go. "There was a man his name was Long he has children here he went he was the only man married there and are [sic]

servant man Carson went to[o]...”²⁹ By writing to her aunt, she obliquely introduced her worries through the observations of the soldiers heading out. Telling her aunt might then have served as a way to share with an adult who was not her father (the person who might himself go away) or her mother (whom Phoebe may have sensed was too emotionally caught up in the situation), an adult who would understand and respond appropriately.

Phoebe’s letters show deliberate passages in which she intentionally engaged her aunt, either with common memories, or with references indicating that she knew her aunt would recognize the people whom she noted in her letters. “I suppose you know,” she wrote, “there is another little girl in the barracks, her name is Hilda Douglas,”³⁰ or, “Your friend Arbuckle next door to us sprained his back but not badly.”³¹ “Mother said to tell you that Mr. Primrose is engaged to Miss. Lily Dean.”³² Through such reporting, Phoebe played the role of social informant, and conveyer of adult news, not just the news that she would select on her own. It was a gendered “gossipy” style, which seemed to suit both child and aunt and shows some parallels to Kathleen O’Reilly’s reporting.

Constance also maintained a correspondence with the aunt, although it was much more sporadic than Phoebe’s. Like her sister, Constance wrote because she wanted to, not out of obligation. She began, “I am feeling wrather [sic] gloomy to night and am Just going to write to you. Mother and daddy are playing Bridge and girlie wants me to play begger my neighbor with her so I will stop writing until another time.” That time was

²⁹ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 31 December 1899. Glenbow Archives.

³⁰ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 9 December 1902. Glenbow Archives.

³¹ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 26 November 1904. Glenbow Archives.

³² Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 26 November 1901. Glenbow Archives.

four days later, and not until then was the letter finally completed. She ended it off with, “I am afraid I have no more news. I remain Your dearly beloved niece, Constance.”³³

Phoebe’s letters (as did Constance’s) often contained cartoons of aunt and uncle referencing some aspect of recent happenings. The letters conveyed ongoing affection and their interests in each other’s health and wellbeing. Phoebe let her aunt know that their correspondence was important. “I got your letter and was glad as punch to get it,” and then she proceeded in her reply, worrying that she had nothing newsworthy to say, but anxious to reply, knowing the etiquette of correspondence. “There is not much news here you must write to me as soon as you have time and if you do not I will not write to you.”³⁴

These niece-aunt letters illustrate familial and intergenerational affections that are separate from the child-parent relationship and are seldom included in family studies, which tend to focus on the nuclear family unit or the household. Because the letters of Phoebe and Constance were directed to an aunt who did not live with them the information chosen to include was selected for its ability to inform and to interest. They also show how children consciously built their social selves and that these social selves were different from their nuclear family selves. These letters and also those of Kathleen O’Reilly to her uncles reveal different sides of the children’s personalities than that revealed in letters to parents or in diaries. Letters children wrote to these adult family members functioned to build and maintain relationships that to a large extent, were controlled by the child’s own efforts, unlike child-parent relationships which existed automatically and which bound children in different ways. These letters also provide the

³³ Constance Sanders to Edith Browning, 22 November 1904. Glenbow Archives.

³⁴ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 14 October 1904. Glenbow Archives.

opportunity to see how children used their own agency to move relationships forward and how they actively embraced their own responsibilities to maintain long-distance communications with those who were important to them, and to provide information about family members. Their own words and their own decisions to inform the child perspectives so absent in most historical studies of family relationships.

Part two: sibling relationships

If infancy and childhood are considered “the life-period when gender identities are being formed”³⁵ then sibling relations are front and centre, inextricably linked in the moulding. The sharing of family name, of family resources and of physical space within the home all contribute to sibling childhoods that are interlinked and difficult, if not impossible to entirely separate despite the formation of each siblings’ individual identity and personality. Natural siblings inevitably share biological characteristics and traits. Natural, step or adopted siblings together learn cultural values and behaviours. Siblings share the experiences of being young within a household and of growing up alongside each other and they interact and relate to each other horizontally, across themselves, which is a fundamental difference than the vertical relationships they each held with parents. Sibling relationships also provide a contrast to the relationships held by children with their peers which will be examined in the chapter following.

Leonore Davidoff maintains, “some of the most powerful emotional bonds as well as practical human interactions remain between brothers and sisters.”³⁶ For indeed, interactions between siblings are core to a child’s understanding of self and at the same

³⁵ Leonore Davidoff, "Kinship as a Categorical Concept: A Case Study of Nineteenth Century English Siblings," *Journal of Social History*, no. Winter (2005): 413.

³⁶ ———, "Where the Stranger Begins: The Question of Siblings in Historical Analysis," in *Worlds between: historical perspectives on gender and class* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 206.

time are inseparable to their experiences of daily living. Both affinities and tensions between siblings arise through these close ties during their formative years. Siblings might ally with one another (perhaps in opposition to parental authority), or strain against one another. Brothers and sisters, for instance, might be rivals for time and affections of parents or for elemental needs like food and shelter. Siblings were not always equals, especially when one considers the large families whose eldest and youngest children spanned generations. Gender identities also factor to create sites of contested negotiations of power as typically might occur in terms of divisions of labour or of opportunities based on or because of birth order.

Children's letters and diaries provide historians with first person experiences of being a sibling and of the ways in which siblings related to each other which are not prescribed, but show variety based on factors such as age proximity, gender and personality. Relationships between siblings also changed over time, again influenced by these same factors. The child records demonstrate how siblings shared thoughts about other family members, about their personal situations, about aspirations, about frustrations. This ability to speak openly to each other, especially across gender provides historians with new and important evidence of family relations and of the child sides of events experienced by the family generally. Conversations between child siblings regarding aspects of their lives might perhaps not be otherwise documented.

This chapter utilizes individual diaries and also letters written by and between siblings in the Crease, O'Reilly and Ellison families to illustrate first of all, how these particular children recorded thoughts about their siblings or referenced them in their diaries and how they talked to their siblings in letters. What they talked about was often

different than matters shared with parents.³⁷ Letters that have been quoted in previous chapters are referenced generally rather than repeating the quotations. Secondly, the letters provide evidence that many variables influence the relationships siblings develop between themselves. Alliances born of age are seen when older children bond and play together, while younger children might be excluded from play or activities of older siblings. Girls and boys might also align themselves by gender rather than age, a result of adult expectations of gender-based likes and dislikes, cultural expectations of appropriate activities and routines. What is inevitable within all these possibilities is that children mature intellectually, emotionally and physically; alliances formed in younger years may not withstand time, affinities change. Nothing is static. Thirdly, the letters present the experiences of being a sibling and of having multiple siblings, a situation that is increasingly historically framed, for children today are more likely to grow up in small families. Thus, the insight into the relationships between children in larger families helps us to understand the dynamics of intimacies that were shared more widely than those in contemporary families of one or two children.

The Crease children: rivalry and power struggles between sisters

Several distinct relationships between the Crease siblings can be seen in their writings. The earliest, and perhaps the longest running was the dynamic between the three eldest girls, Mary, Susan and Barbara who were born in England and came to British Columbia as young girls. The three girls shared English births, and to varying degrees, remembrances of a life before emigration and this common bond was fundamental to their identifications. Their younger siblings were born in the colonies

³⁷ This is demonstrated through comparisons of these with those written by children to parents and supports contentions in *ibid.*, 207, 17.

between seven and fifteen years after the third child, Barbara. The gap in age between the younger children and these three sisters set up the dynamic delineated in the previous chapter in which the sisters assisted their mother in child care and in domestic responsibilities. Yet within these three girls were rivalries and power struggles. The 1868 letter written by Susan Crease to her mother (quoted in chapter 7) hinted at a competitive sibling dynamic that, as evidenced by Barbara Powell in her study of the Crease sisters in later life, would extend into adulthood.³⁸ In this example Susan rebelled against an injunction set by the eldest sister regarding the physical limits of the package that could be mailed. Mary “said she could not”³⁹ but Susan found a way around it. By carefully tearing off the blank part of a page written earlier to her she was able to write her own letter to her father. This creative solution enabled her to write separately to each of her parents despite sister Mary’s disapproval. Susan reinforced her action by clearly stating to her mother that she was not defying her elder sister’s instructions. This letter also shows how Susan cleverly asserted her own voice. It was Mary’s duty to report as “housekeeper” so rather than interfere with Mary’s line of authority, Susan deliberately wrote about all the “other” news.

Likewise, in the companion letter to her father, Susan used the instance of reporting on church attendance to facilitate criticism of Mary’s punctuality, the lack of which had made Mary and Barbara either too early or late for services twice that week. In successive sentences she slyly added a further criticism within a comment seemingly in passing. She remarked that she knew a recent letter had arrived because Mary had returned from the post office “a while ago” but that Mary had yet to share the letter with

³⁸ Powell, "The Crease Family Women."

³⁹ Susan Crease to Henry Crease, 4 September 1868. British Columbia Archives.

her sisters, the implication being Mary's unnecessary control. For her own part, Mary's letters of the same date include implied criticism of Susan. Barbara seemed caught between the two, she was always the youngest, and less robust in health, less assertive in pressing her own opinions. Over time, the ups and downs of a recurring illness set her aside from the race between her sisters to be the front runner as they jockeyed for sibling authority, or over friendships and suitors, or jointly rebelled against the strict rules set by their parents. Barbara seems to have deliberately maintained a profile that was not competitive. She quietly and independently established her own friendships and operated within the context allowed by her health.

Vertical relationships and gender define the Crease siblings

Both the age spread and the gender order of birth established differences in the ways the Crease siblings interacted and this was typical of middle class families of their times. It was not uncommon that the eldest girl assumed "mothering" of younger siblings.⁴⁰ This was as much a practical assistance to the mother as it was a gendered expectation. In the Crease family the three eldest siblings were all old enough to have borne the youngest sibling and each of these three had a hand in "mothering" the younger three. Nor was the wide age spread of these siblings uncommon in large families. It created a situation where sibling relationships at times mirrored those of parents and children, that is, in vertical relationships rather than horizontal ones. Thus, Mary, Susan and to a lesser extent, Barbara were given child-minding duties over Josephine, Harry (who died as an infant), Lindley and Arthur; they shared the burden of older children whose much younger siblings required their assistance. The family economy also

⁴⁰ "Pseudo-generational differences" muddied "the categories of parents and children and confuse[d] clear authority lines." Davidoff, "Where the Stranger Begins: The Question of Siblings in Historical Analysis," 209.

required their practical everyday help with housework and domestic chores. Mary and Susan learned to bake, to sew, to wash, to plant and maintain gardens, to feed and oversee poultry. These daily responsibilities might effectively compromise a child's own individual wishes for themselves and (although the evidence is not forthcoming in this example) might facilitate resentment held by the older three against the younger three.

Gender widened differences between siblings. The four eldest Crease children were female, the two youngest, male. As females, the care-giving elder siblings assumed gendered as well as age-related responsibilities. Not only did they perform domestic duties, they also mothered the young boys.⁴¹ Because the girls did not marry (except for Mary at age thirty-one) or move away from the family home, these duties were of long duration, stretching through their adulthood, until their brothers each attained the age of majority. The experiences of the boys then, were that their older sisters functioned as parental alternates.⁴²

The letters written by Josephine and Arthur in 1880 examined earlier as evidence of child-parent relationships also confirm ongoing vertical relationships between these two and their older sisters who jointly supervised Josephine, aged sixteen, and Arthur aged eight. It is quite clear that Mary retained the authority she had first assumed in 1865 over the functioning of the house and family. A comment by Arthur to his mother reveals Mary's mothering of him was a natural aspect of his life. He wrote, "Tomorrow if I am a good boy Mary is going to drive me out to the "Royal Oak" with Suzy."⁴³ That

⁴¹ The phenomena of the female role in non-biological mothering is discussed in *ibid.*

⁴² The fact that in a settler society dominated by men, the Crease sisters and also Kathleen O'Reilly did not marry speaks not to lack of opportunity, but other factors that can only be speculated such as parental control, child-held obligations to parents, sexuality or personal choice based on unknown factors.

⁴³ Arthur Crease to Sarah Crease, 28 November 1880. British Columbia Archives.

his sisters substituted in the absence of his mother had little direct impact on Arthur as it involved very few changes in routine.

Life at home in 1880 Victoria was far different from the “pioneering” experiences of the eldest girls in New Westminster when they lived in a modest house built of logs, *Ince Cottage*, and needed to rely on their own resources of garden produce, chickens for eggs, and a cow for milking. The substantial house, *Pentrelew*, with its extensive gardens was close to Government House and walking distance to the town and the homes of friends. The younger siblings experienced none of the liberation gained through parental absences, as had been the case in New Westminster for Mary and Susan. Life went on pretty much as usual for Josephine and Arthur under the wings of much older and very capable sisters. Their letters show little reference to ongoing household workings, indicating perhaps that these two were not obliged to assist. But what they did relay to their parents in these letters reveal differences in routine created by age and by gender. Arthur played with friends outside while Josephine’s days were structured with lessons and recreational activities.

Josephine and Lindley Crease

Josephine and Lindley Crease were very much the middle children while Arthur was the baby of the family. They were born less than three years apart and they were eight and five years older than Arthur. They shared friends, played and socialized together, bonded across gender. Even the birth of their young brother did not shift their rapport, not at least until early adulthood. But their dynamic was interrupted in November 1877 when Lindley, at ten-years-old, was sent to England for school.

The evidence about their relationship comes from a handful of letters Josephine wrote during this separation. They document the ways in which these two attempted to maintain their close relationship and reveal the difficulties of doing so given the years of separation, the reality of their separate maturing and the increasing influence of gendered expectations upon them both. Lindley's situation at school did not support boys writing to sisters and this was a hurdle that was perhaps the most difficult of all. He relied on her letters and asked her to write more frequently than she did, but as each grew up, the shared remembrances grew dimmer, while new experiences took their place. They would soon have little in common beyond these memories.

Her first letter, dated several weeks after he had arrived in England, began, "I am so sorry. I have not written to you before, but I have been so awefully busy with helping Mama & my examination, that it has been impossible for me to write to you before. I suppose you are at Uncle Natty's. How do you like them all? I want you to tell me what you think of them."⁴⁴ Lindley would be her informant concerning extended family members that Mary, Susan and Barbara had known through experience prior to their emigration, but whom were only tangentially known by the youngest children.

A few months later, Josephine inserted a remembrance into her letter. "I have put some-thing in this letter so that you shan't forget me. I hope you know what they are. Now I must say Good Bye from your loving Sister & believe me to be your ever true, Zeffie."⁴⁵ She let Lindley know that his letters were important to her, and she herself

⁴⁴ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 30 December 1877. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁵ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 8 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

knew that being busy was not an acceptable excuse for not writing. “If you have time I wish you would answer this as I like so much to get a letter from you.”⁴⁶

Two years after his departure, Josephine commented on a series of photographs that Lindley had forwarded to the family of himself. “Mama received the photos last week,” she wrote, “& we all think them very good. I think I like the full one of you the best. Somehow it seems more like you as you were when you left.”⁴⁷ She wanted to remember Lindley as he was when he left, was more comfortable with this recollection than the new images that showed him changed, a boy she might not recognize as her brother.

Josephine’s questions to Lindley reveal an ongoing interest in how he managed at school. “Do you like the school you are in?” she wrote soon after Lindley changed from Conyngham School to Haileybury. “Are the lessons much harder than at Ramsgate?”⁴⁸ But it was not always easy for her to know what to write when her interests and pursuits were no longer shared and might not be understood. “Isn’t it hard to write a letter without any news to tell?”⁴⁹

She cast around for ideas. Once she learned that Lindley played tennis, it became a topic. “I suppose you can play tennis very well. I can’t play a bit. I have not played since the midsummer holidays, except once last week. It is so strange playing with the new ones [racquets] as they are so heavy to what we have been using.”⁵⁰ Likewise, she wrote about sketching, which they both enjoyed and responded when he described his

⁴⁶ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 23 November 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁷ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 23 November 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁸ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 15 August 1880. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁹ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 29 March 1882 or 1883. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁰ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 23 November 1879. British Columbia Archives.

own activities. “How you must like the paper chases but I don’t think they [are] as nice as when you are on horseback. I think I told you I went to one in the autumn on horseback & it was great fun because we had to go through all sorts of places...down steep hills & up them again as fast as you could go.”⁵¹

Sometimes the confidences were poignant. Josephine was devastated when she learned her best friend was moving away, and desolate, unable to conceive that she might find another. She knew Lindley would understand, as he had left friends behind when he left for England.⁵² Josephine shared with him the family-shared mental depression in the aftermath of Barbara’s death the previous year. “I am afraid this letter of mine will send you into the dumps for the tone of it expresses my doleful spirits – All this summer I have (& infact all of us have) been most dull & stupid. Mr. Rashdall’s coming brightened us up a little but we are just as bad as ever now.”⁵³

Lindley and Josephine shared views that were at times different from their parents, a common aspect of sibling relations. Through the discourse of letters they undoubtedly continued the dialogues initiated before their separation. They solicited support from each other when needed to oppose ideas or rules levied by parents, or even when interpreting the actions or understandings of their parents as flawed. One such example is Josephine’s confidence to Lindley. She spoke about the uncle of a young invalid girl who had been staying with them. Josephine knew he would understand her perspective: “her uncle is one of the most selfish hypocritical men imaginable. We girls thoroughly despise him. Father & mother consider him the perfection of mankind

⁵¹ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 29 March 1883. British Columbia Archives.

⁵² Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 29 March 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁵³ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 1 November 1884. British Columbia Archives.

especially Father, for he can make himself intensely fascinating to outsiders when it suits his convenience.”⁵⁴

What was the impact of separation on these two middle children? Josephine Crease’s diaries are extant from 1878. They continue for 1879 and 1881 through 1884 and serve to document family life at home during Lindley’s absence. It is unfortunate that Josephine’s earlier diaries do not exist to compare the entries during the years before Lindley went away, to those she made in first years after he left. Her 1877 diary, for instance, might have documented her brother’s or her own thoughts on his leaving.

Did the rhythm of her days change? Did her playmates or play change? Her diaries provide some clues, suggesting that yes, perhaps so. In 1878 and 1879 she wrote about a new male friend, Walter Machell, who was between Josephine and Lindley in age. The Machells arrived in Victoria in the spring of 1878, after Lindley had left and it was not soon until Walter, along with his parents, became regular visitors to the house. Josephine’s diary noted mischievous episodes, quite unlike those she recorded with other friends.⁵⁵ Was Walter a substitute for Lindley, someone with whom she could be mischievous? Josephine dangled alone in the sibling order, the much younger girl who, without a companion brother, experienced aloneness. Her diaries do not speak of Lindley’s absence (a silence), nor, for the first few years, do they provide much information on her sisters or her parents. She was completely consumed with the structures of school (studying, assignments, exams, attendance, marks and grades), perhaps a busyness that was itself her response to Lindley’s absence. When Lindley

⁵⁴ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 1 November 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁵ Josephine Crease to Lindley Crease, 8 March, 17 November, 7 December 1878. British Columbia Archives.

arrived home from England in late 1885,⁵⁶ he met a very different sister than he had left behind, while she had to recognize a young man of eighteen, about to embark on a legal career.

Josephine Crease dangled alone

Josephine's 1878 and 1879 diaries along with the few letters from these years provide us with the perspective of the female middle sibling whose world revolved around school, drawing lessons, and her friend Lidy Richards. Her diaries are self-contained records of events with only the very occasional question or analysis. She commented on outward daily events with equal weighting. Visitors to the house come and go, church and school attendance duly noted. She is remarkably phlegmatic. In these years she was too young to be part of her older sisters' social circles and in fact, she seldom mentions them in her diaries, and when she does, they inhabit a separate and different world from her own. But in late 1881 and early 1882, with school behind her, new subject matter presented itself in the form of commentary on the social doings of her sisters that reveal she is now an observer; their activities held more interest for her, but she was not yet participating in the whirl of dances and callings of young men. "Alice & I helped Mary with her dress for the Ball."⁵⁷ "Mr. Allen came to dinner & was very silly all night with Mary."⁵⁸ "Susy busy with her ball dress."⁵⁹ "Mama, Mary & Barbara went to the Benedict's Ball."⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Lindley Crease returned home on 23 September 1885. "Returns," *British Colonist* newspaper, 24 September 1885, p. 3.

⁵⁷ Josephine Crease. Diary. 4 January 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁸ Josephine Crease. Diary. 10 January 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁵⁹ Josephine Crease. Diary. 23 January 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁰ Josephine Crease. Diary. 8 February 1882. British Columbia Archives.

During these months, she still maintained an interested eye on Arthur, who, in the absence of Lindley, became the sibling with whom she most interacted – even if it was from the perspective of an exasperated older sister – as she began to assume more responsibility for him. Her diary entries shifted to include more references to Arthur, perhaps an indication that as Arthur himself grew up, he was more capable of interaction and companionship for her.

A further shift in her diaries occurred after August 1882, she turned eighteen and “came out.” The pattern of entries after this event took a permanent shift because Josephine was now included in the adult social events that were previously unavailable to her. She joined her sisters in the social activities of tennis parties, of dances and balls. She began to record the young men and a world that opened up beyond the domestic responsibilities and routines of home life and her interest in Arthur as companion faded. She was still much younger than her older sisters, but now was herself considered to be more a part of their world and moving swiftly away from childhood.

The Crease boys

Arthur and Lindley grew up almost independent of each other. Lindley was ten and his brother just five-years-old when they separated. They did not have many years together when they might have bonded through daily familial life. Instead, their relationship was very consciously developed through letter writing. Each was apprised of the other’s activities through various family letters and then each boy wrote to the other, trying to find some point of commonality, a topic or theme that would enable them to hang on to those memories they each had of each other or at the very least connect because they were brothers. They reunited for less than six months after Lindley’s return,

as Arthur himself left for England and his own schooling in March 1886.⁶¹ No letters from Lindley to Arthur survive, but there are ten letters from Arthur to his brother. The letters are characterized by their subject matter, predominantly stories of his adventures and achievements, as might be expected of a young boy corresponding with an older brother.

His very first letter, dated a month after Lindley arrived in England established his connection to Lindley, "I bought this Card for you," he wrote, followed with a line about their shared English family. "I am glad you got safe to England and loveied Aunty Bar." In the next section of his letter Arthur let Lindley know that he had been allowed to use some of Lindley's belongings, and that he and their father continue the pattern of male activities. "I have bows and arrows and your yew bow and shoot at a black Crow hung up in a tree, and hit it in the breast. I can make my own arrows, pa puts lead on them which Lancelot got from the *Opal*."⁶² As Arthur's literacy improved, his letters became more detailed with his adventures; finding a humming kite abandoned in the back field, about snowfalls and the novelty of sleighing with friends, fishing with father, making sling shots and firing at birds, reporting football games played at Beacon Hill Park. The last four letters are entirely focused on Arthur's outdoor adventures, on bird shooting expeditions with his father's friends, and a three-part recounting of his summer camping trip by canoe.⁶³ The action is all male oriented, the friends, the participants all male. None of Arthur's letters focuses on his own domestic life, or his own schooling. None of them expresses his wish that Lindley return home, yet each has affectionate closings.

⁶¹ Arthur Crease left for England on 20 March 1886. "Personal," *British Colonist* newspaper, 13 March 1886, p. 3.

⁶² Arthur Crease to Lindley Crease, 18 January 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁶³ Arthur Crease to Lindley Crease, various dates, 1878 through 1884. British Columbia Archives.

Arthur wrote entirely for Lindley's taste. He wrote because the process of doing so connected him to his brother and the subject matter was one that interested him, so by extension, would interest Lindley. He connected with Lindley at the level of gender, a way that Josephine, who connected through shared experiences and age similarity could not.

The O'Reilly siblings

The extant letters between the O'Reilly children exhibit many of the same characteristics as those of the younger Crease children; they were similar in age differential and in years of separation caused by overseas schooling, and they are also similar in that depending on the pairings – Frank and Kathleen or Kathleen and Jack, or Frank and Jack – the relationships had very different footings and linkage points, based in part on their mixed gender or same gender pairing and contingent also upon age differentials. The conversations within the letters have some constancy; references to each other's activities and to parents, remarks about receiving and sending letters, stories of recent adventures or happenings, questions about friends or acquaintances. The conversations change as the children mature and as the children experience separations from each other. The letters also provide evidence of alliances born of shared memories, or shared viewpoints regarding behaviour of the other sibling, or alliances of the children for the purposes of a united front in situations with parents. More than anything else, the letters reveal the strain on family members because of consecutive absences of individual children from the family home⁶⁴ and illustrate how attenuated the experiences of being a

⁶⁴ Nancy Chodorow, *The reproduction of mothering: psychoanalysis and the sociology of gender* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

sibling actually were and this in itself challenges what today we understand about what it means to be a sibling.

The bonds forged by Frank and Kathleen as children living together at Point Ellice had to survive through five years of separation. Jack's childhood memories of his big brother ended before he was five and then began again for only a year's duration when he was ten. Jack did not see Frank again until he was eighteen. Kathleen, as the child who stayed mostly at home, must have felt her own separations from her brothers keenly. When Frank went to school, Jack was too young to meet her needs for a playmate. Then, during her two years in England, she was the older sister, a role that included expectations that she "mother" Jack.⁶⁵ When, as a seventeen-year-old, she was called home from England to live with her parents, Frank was already on his own and busy establishing his career. She was then the only sibling at home.

Frank and Kathleen O'Reilly

Frank and Kathleen O'Reilly were one year apart in age; seven and six years divided them from Jack. Frank was born in New Westminster and Kathleen in Victoria. They grew up in their home, Point Ellice, situated on a sheltered oceanfront byway within walking distance of the town of Victoria. Kathleen attended the Anglican-run Angela College, and Frank the male equivalent, Collegiate School. They shared early childhood experiences and family interactions, and importantly, memories of their

⁶⁵ Nancy Chodorow argued that women's mothering is taken for granted and rarely analyzed, that it is not a product of biology or intentional role training but is built in to the mother-daughter relationship. The expectation that the Crease girls and Kathleen O'Reilly mother their male siblings is a result of differences between mother-infant daughter and mother-infant son relationships which led to feminine and masculine development that would recreate this mothering. Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*: 139.

younger sister, Mary Augusta (known as “Pop”) born in 1869 who died at the age of seven when Jack was only a toddler.

Mary Augusta had delicate health and spent much time at home, shared a tutor with Kathleen and played with the same children as Kathleen and Frank. Her childhood was interspersed with episodes of illness, hinted at in her father’s letters to her, “you must be careful not to run about too much, for you know I want you to be able to take walks with me when I come back.”⁶⁶ Nevertheless, “Pop” was still a close companion to Frank and Kathleen. Early photos of the sisters show them dressed alike in matching outfits.⁶⁷

In 1876, after three weeks of severe pain and discomfort, Mary Augusta died of “cerebro-spinal Meningitis.”⁶⁸ Brother and sister shared this private grief, and as evidenced in comments made to one another, her absence was ever-present. It was not something that they could share with Jack because he had not known or grown with her in the same way. His memory did not include the years of living with her at home, or as her illness progressed, with the attendant knowledge of the inevitability of her condition. During the last few weeks Mary Augusta endured great pain before the release of death, this too provided memories for Kathleen and Frank. On an anniversary of her birth, Kathleen wrote to Frank acknowledging her sadness. “This is dear little Pop’s birthday & she would now have been fourteen years old. I have been thinking of you all & how you

⁶⁶ Peter O’Reilly to Mary Augusta O’Reilly, 21 November 1874. British Columbia Archives.

⁶⁷ Historical photographs reproduced in Powell, “The Crease Family Women.”; Virginia A. S. Careless and Royal British Columbia Museum., *Responding to fashion: the clothing of the O’Reilly family*, A Royal British Columbia Museum heritage record (Victoria: Royal British Columbia Museum, 1993).

⁶⁸ “I have left writing to the last hoping that I might be able to tell you that our darling is better. I grieve to say I am not able to say so with any certainty. I am in so much anxiety that I feel difficulty to write with calmness. The Dr. seems to be uncertain as to the malady she is suffering from. The principle symptom now is...she has severe fancies in the head and that she cannot bear any light in the room. Dr. Helmcken fears inflammation of the brain.” Caroline O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 26 October 1876. British Columbia Archives. Death Certificate for Mary Augusta O’Reilly on 6 November 1876. British Columbia Archives.

are so much further away it will be such a long time before I get answers to these scrawls.”⁶⁹

Kathleen and Frank’s remembrances of “Pop” would also connect them to remembrances of their grandmother who died the day after “Pop.” The funeral and burial services were conducted simultaneously. The dual deaths changed their family dynamic as did the later moves of their uncles and aunts away from British Columbia.

Very few of Kathleen’s letters to Frank while he was at school in England, or those she wrote from England after his return to Victoria have survived, so we have to interpret their relationship from letters that are sequentially isolated. The answers to questions asked in the extant letters are not known, nor the questions asked in missing letters. We are only able to guess from the details given in the extant letters. Even so, the tone and contents of the letters reveal intimacy and a comfortable ease between them.

In 1883 Kathleen wrote to Frank from England and filled the pages with accounts of the parades, the dances with young officers attending and the social visits. He heard nothing of her studies, but then again, he probably was not really interested in her schooling. Only occasionally did she break off to be introspective as she had regarding “Pop.” In November 1883 amid one such gossipy letter to Frank, she revealed her awareness of this superficiality. “I am afraid all this will not interest you,” she wrote, “and it is so badly expressed. I am glad that you are able to understand my letters.”⁷⁰ Her comment suggests she fully understood that Frank (who had been to London, knew the situation, and was therefore a savvy male) might not be as stimulated by her society doings as she, yet she wrote about them anyway. She did so secure in the knowledge that

⁶⁹ Kathleen O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 23 November 1883. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁰ Kathleen O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 6 November 1883. British Columbia Archives.

their relationship was close and would not be jeopardized. She was confident that Frank would allow her to rattle on, yet also share intimate topics and conversations.

Jack and Frank O'Reilly

Jack was four and a half years of age when Frank left for school in England. Frank wrote to Jack for his fifth birthday. The contents are perhaps indicative of other letters written during this period. Frank told Jack about his trip to the seashore and the amusing entertainment he saw there. An easy assumption of white superiority is part of what Jack learns from his brother.

I am now at the sea side place. I went on the pier the other day and saw some Niggers they were so funny. I wish you had been there, there was one that jumped into a barrel back wards and came out again the write way, and hit another with a bladder right on the top of his hat and smached it in and another did not want to be hit and jumped into a basket and another one took a bag of flour and threw it over him. I can't tell you all about it now but I think I shall tell you more another time.⁷¹

Jack and Frank kept connected through letters over the following years, until Kathleen, Jack and their mother came to England in 1882 for an extended visit during Frank's last year at school. It was only then they were reunited. Upon knocking at their hotel room door, Frank confessed (in a letter to his father who planned to join the family later) that at first, he did not recognize his mother and thought he had knocked on the wrong door.⁷² If he couldn't remember his mother, it must have been an even bigger shock to reacquaint himself with his siblings. The two brothers spent the next day together. "Jack and I then went out into St. James Park and saw the Ducks, and we also

⁷¹ Frank O'Reilly to Jack O'Reilly 5 March 1878. British Columbia Archives.

⁷² Frank O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 8 May 1882. British Columbia Archives.

went to see the Horse Guards.”⁷³ The family spent time together over the year when they could during Frank’s school breaks.

When Frank and his parents left England for Victoria in autumn 1883, letters between the siblings flew fast and furious for the first while as they each attempted to ease the transitions. Frank was especially solicitous to Jack, writing en-route (they spent some time in Ottawa) and then immediately on arrival in Victoria. He knew Jack would want to know about their home, which had been empty for some time during their absence to enable renovations. So he told Jack that the renovations underway during their absence were not yet completed. “My dear Jack,” he wrote.

You will see from the heading that we are still at Fairfield for the house is not ready to receive us. I was over there every day last week and went out rowing once & sailing twice but there was not very much wind. The boathouse is in a very bad condition for nearly all the posts are eaten away so that it will have to be propped up at once...Nick is quite well and is always in a great state of excitement when we go over to Point Ellice. The big Arbutus tree that used to hang over the water in front of the rock in the lot has fallen down into the water & is going to be cut up fore firewood.⁷⁴

Frank revealed sensitivity to Jack’s separation from family. He understood the need for contact by letter, and the pleasure of receiving letters from home. Frank deliberately wrote twice when once would have been sufficient. “I am writing you a few lines now so that you may get a letter from me between now, & Christmas.”⁷⁵ Frank reported on the numerous canaries kept by a family friend in a conservatory and also of the fifty white ducks and numerous turkeys kept. He knew his brother and delivered the content that would interest Jack. This is typical of the few surviving letters from Frank to

⁷³ Frank O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 8 May 1882. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁴ Frank O’Reilly to Jack O’Reilly, 18 December 1883. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁵ Frank O’Reilly to Jack O’Reilly, 9 November 1883. British Columbia Archives.

his brother. Rowing, sailing and shooting for ducks were all duly reported. Jack in turn referenced these activities in his letters to Frank. They were brothers and boys who shared a set of common interests. The age difference (seven years) was not a deterrent to the bonding gained through masculine pursuits.

Jack in turn wrote to Frank in letters that revealed his need to keep connected. The letters were frequently more candid on personal matters than those written to his parents. For instance, Jack reported his own illnesses less often to his parents than to his brother. Usually the information was mixed in with “news” of his activities such as the time when he visited his sister where she boarded in Kensington and was turned away because “I have the Hooping cough very slightly.”⁷⁶ And then, he was injured playing football. Jack wrote to Frank with details he never shared with his parents.

“I am in bed writing to you. I can tell you that I do not feel easy. I got rather a bad kick in football the other day rather a month ago and it has got awfully bad and is all swollen and nasty looking. The Doctor has ordered me to bed...I expect the Doctor’s bills will come to something this term as I have had him three times he is an old beast he gives me horrid medisin [sic]...I can not write much more as I am so cold or rather my hands are...I have got a boy to get me some sweets and then I will be able to take my nasty medesan [sic] a[nd] eat a sweet after it. I have twelve doses to take.”⁷⁷

They exchanged confidences about their sister and enjoyed mocking her interests in clothing and society. Jack reported on Kathleen’s pretensions with sarcasm when he referenced her as “The Right honourable Miss. Pussy Cat bath-a-lot bathreen O’Reilly, Member of Parliament.”⁷⁸ Such sharing was an integral part of his letters to Frank,

⁷⁶ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 10 May 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁷ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 5 April 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 10 May 1885. British Columbia Archives.

establishing a male-based connection to the brother with whom he otherwise had little in common.

His academic performance was irregular and Jack was under pressure from his father to excel. He confessed to his brother, “I am not likely to get a prize as I will be bottom in every thing especially in French. I am always bottom and I am certain that I do not learn a thing.”⁷⁹ Letters between brothers convey the honesty that Jack could not extend to his father. The brothers understood through shared but separate experiences the pressures their father put upon them regarding their grades.

After a couple of years, Jack was desperate to come home and begged his brother to intercede on his behalf to encourage his parents to bring him home. “Do write and tell me about if I am to go out to BC before very long or not please say if they say any thing about it try and make me to go out. I think England is such an awful place. All the people are so stingy here to what they are out there.”⁸⁰ “I hate it more than ever it is the most beastly muddy hole you have seen...if there is any place I hate it is here in England.”⁸¹

Jack was confident that Frank respected the privacy of their letters.⁸² Thus, he was comfortable sharing his concerns with Frank, knowing that not only his candour, but also the topics of conversation would be respected and understood. So, while Jack’s letters to his parents were silent on certain topics, it was to his brother he confided his scuffles at school. Soon he gave as well as he received. “I have a part of the skin on my nose

⁷⁹ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 9 October 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁰ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 9 October 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁸¹ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 5 December 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁸² Jack O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 22 March 1886. British Columbia Archives.

scratch[ed] off by a boy named Pollock...I punched his head for chasing me with the poker he being a mongrel scratches.”⁸³

It was important to Jack that he was able to share worries with a sympathetic older brother. Growing up, learning the gendered codes of behaviour was not easy, so it was a priority to maintain his long-distance connection to his brother. Jack looked up to his older brother and tried to connect with him even as Frank turned away from childhood towards adulthood. When Frank began to smoke and to grow his facial hair, Jack sketched images of Frank at the bottom of his letters wearing a top hat and a longish scraggly beard with captions, “This is what I expect Franks like.”⁸⁴ But as the years went by, Frank completed an apprenticeship and became a civil engineer. Frank’s work took him away from home – to Argentina and other points – and his world became that of adults. The gulf between the siblings, which had narrowed ever so briefly in England and for a short time afterwards was now widened by their disparity in maturity and continued separation. Jack didn’t fully comprehend. The Frank he remembered was not an adult, but a boy just completed his schooling. Jack complained to Kathleen, “tell Frank that it is very nasty of him not to write to me,”⁸⁵ but nevertheless, continued to keep the communication going, if for no other reason than a therapeutic output for his own solitude and struggles.

Jack and Kathleen O’Reilly

For Jack, the comfort of having his sister in England and not far from his school took the edge off his homesickness. Kathleen’s responsibility to oversee Jack provided

⁸³ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 5 December 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁴ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 3 August 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁵ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 3 December 1885. British Columbia Archives.

him with a sibling who also connected as a mother substitute. She saw to his needs, kept him company on school breaks and the time spent together enabled them to be each other's reporters in letters home. On two occasions Jack took responsibility to break the news of his sister's ill health. Kathleen "has had the Scarlett fever it is hardly anything"⁸⁶ he wrote one month, followed two months later by, "Pussy was thrown off her horse & has Concussion of the Brain."⁸⁷ Jack's reporting was matter of fact, not meant to be sensationalist, his intent was to inform in a responsible manner, much as he assumed Kathleen did concerning him. It is difficult to read behind his terse sentences to know if he was worried, or had any real sense that the situations might be serious. Perhaps his style of communication was tied into the influence of the all male environment he now lived within, because at another time, when he repeated remarks made by schoolmates concerning his sister, he had no idea that she would find them embarrassing. They remarked on his sister's appearance. "Pussy has got quite angry because I told her that her Photograph was very pretty and she was pretty and she is a green eyed cat and that the boys say she is pretty so she has not written for 3 weeks." Jack's world at school was all about maintaining gendered distances, so he did not know that his adoption of such outlooks could create strain in his relationship with his sister.⁸⁸

In September 1885 Kathleen returned home but Jack remained in England. A few weeks later he received the first letter from his sister. "I had a letter from Pussy this morning and then I went and red it quickly up stairs and I cryed after when I think that I am left alone in England and I do hope that I can come to British Columbia it is much

⁸⁶ Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 7 July 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁷ Jack O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 12 October 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁸ Jack O'Reilly to Caroline O'Reilly, 8 June and 15 June 1884. British Columbia Archives.

better than England. I do hope that you...will come and take me away from here it is so nasty.”⁸⁹ Before Kathleen left “we went and had our Photos taken” as remembrances. Kathleen promised “that she will write bundles if she has time,”⁹⁰ wrote Jack as if to convince himself she would, but letters from Kathleen dwindled. In a letter written jointly to his sister and mother, he said, “Thank you for having written to me but I very seldom have a letter from Pussy. Once in the Holidays I wrote every 2 weeks.”⁹¹ A month later, “I have just received your letter of the 24th it was a long one from you but if you only would write like you used to do but you don’t.”⁹² By April 1886 Jack was angry. “Pussy is a beast. I have burned over her photos so I shall not see it [her face].”⁹³ He confided to his brother, “I never have any letter from Pussy I am not going to write to her for she is allways [sic] going to the Tennis parties and she is to[o] swag to look at me now, she will go to Palace Hotel to go away from Mother and Father they are getting too old for her now, she would say.”⁹⁴

Jack experienced disquiet when his once confiding sister became uninterested and shallow in her communications. He remarked to her, “You never speak of...what you do, you say what other people do but not your self.”⁹⁵ His brother shared Jack’s concerns. “Frank told me in a letter I received yesterday that you were all ways having parties and you were the Boss of the shop.” Jack continued, determined to shame her. “I have been told that you have the prettiest 100 Dresses in the place. I have two hole suits and a few

⁸⁹ Jack O’Reilly to Peter O’Reilly, 27 September 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁰ Jack O’Reilly to Peter and Caroline O’Reilly, 21 September 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁹¹ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen and Caroline O’Reilly, 19 September 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁹² Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 19 October 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁹³ Jack O’Reilly to Peter and Caroline O’Reilly, 26 April 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁴ Jack O’Reilly to Frank O’Reilly, 8 June 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁵ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 12 December 1886. British Columbia Archives.

(1 or 2) old coats and waist coats and one pair of trousers.”⁹⁶ His entreaties may have had effect, for it appears Kathleen began to write more regularly, leading Jack to comment, “you have been writing a great deal lately what is the matter with you [?]”⁹⁷

Jack couldn’t afford to alienate Kathleen. He needed her to advocate on his behalf with their parents. His letters often included entreaties that she approach their parents on his behalf. For instance, “Will you ask father to let me buy a fishing rod and things...”⁹⁸ “Please tell Father the I am making the Account but I do not think that I can send it by this mail.”⁹⁹ “Ask Mother if I need not learn French any more.”¹⁰⁰ Whether these were ploys to “double-up” the pressure or whether Jack believed his own requests might be less effective, is impossible to say.

Kathleen was also one of his emotional life-lines. Despite his disdain over her lack of writing, and her attempts to be grown-up he did not want to lose her affections. Kathleen’s letters to Jack reveal the increasingly different age and gender expectations that began to change the nature of their relationships. The preoccupations of an eighteen-year-old girl, were quite different from the interests of a thirteen-year-old brother. He did not understand that she was becoming a young woman. It did not help that they were physically separated. Jack placed Kathleen (as he had Frank) in a time capsule, remembered her as he last saw her, not understanding that she was maturing, had different social activities and priorities. From Kathleen’s perspective, she was now home

⁹⁶ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 12 August 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁷ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 12 December 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁸ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 19 September 1886. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁹ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 2 March 1886. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁰ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 14 February 1886. British Columbia Archives.

with the benefit of parental emotional support and didn't need it from Jack as she had in England. The intimacy they had enjoyed when they both were in England was lost.

Ellen Ellison and her siblings

Although surviving sibling letters in the Ellison family are few, they illustrate very clearly an aspect of sibling relations not shown directly in the Crease or O'Reilly letters. Eldest daughter, Ellen Ellison, developed strong maternal ties to her siblings, especially to her brothers who were quite a bit younger. She also saw herself as a role model for her sisters to whom she encouraged independent action and initiative. She was not shy to dispense advice and saw herself as an intermediary and alternate to parental authority. The letters suggest she embraced this position and assertively connected with her siblings rather than viewing such a role to be duty as might Mary Crease, or as a means of allowing her own escape from parental supervision, as might Kathleen O'Reilly.

Ellen's letters to her sisters begin when she is seventeen, living with her aunt and uncle in Peoria. Ellen's older cousins attended college at Vassar and Princeton. Through their storytelling to Ellen, she had claims to mix in a world not yet available to her sisters. She wrote therefore with insider knowledge, recounting an episode heard from her cousins. Her intent presumably was to emphasize her mature understanding of the ways of college students and of the gaiety of such a world.

Vassar's big party was on Thanksgiving. Harry [cousin] was there. He didn't have an evening suit available to wear amongst all those gorgeous girls so the Princeton boys togged him out. One lent him a Tuxedo suit, another an overcoat and so on. When Bess [cousin] went to Princeton last year, the girls togged her out in all their best clothes. The only thing of her own that she had on was her hat. Harry didn't know her at first she was so elaborate. The college girls & boys always do that.¹⁰¹

¹⁰¹ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 26 November 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

When she described neighbourhood children on the streets for Halloween some of the same attitude is evident. Ellen told twelve-year-old Lizzie, “about sixty boys and girls of your size have just passed evidently on their way to a Party...and yelling at the tops of their voices.... Every few minutes I hear a giggle and see a bunch of girls disappear around the block.”¹⁰² Clearly Lizzie fit the profile of the children while Ellen was the amused observer, distance maintained. Ellen belonged in the adult world; Lizzie did not.

Likewise, Ellen positioned herself as experienced advisor in regards to the social necessity of knowing how to play piano. “I am so glad you practice now.... You must keep it up.... You will be so glad if you do. Then when you are a young lady and go out visiting and to parties and are asked to play you will not have to feel stupid and say you can’t play. If you kept it up until your birthday anyway I will promise you a very nice birthday present.”¹⁰³ Ellen cajoled her sisters to be proactive in their activities and seemed aware that as the eldest (and most assertive) she may have previously held them back. Now, in her absence, it was important to her that she encourage their own confidence in themselves. “I suppose you and Myra don’t know and haven’t seen about the side saddle. It is down at Coopers. They ought to have it fixed by this time.... Have you and Myra done any riding since I left? You have your chance to learn to drive now. We always said you never had a chance to because I always did all the driving.”¹⁰⁴

Ellen’s letters included the phrase “give my love to all the children” which categorized her siblings in positions of dependency in contrast to her independent residence with uncle and aunt. She admonished, “and be a good girl and be kind to the

¹⁰² Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 31 October 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰³ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 26 November 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰⁴ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 26 November 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

boys. They won't love you if you nag and slap them all the time. When Vernon was here, he said he didn't want to go home for Myra would slap him so you see it pays to be kind and patient with them."¹⁰⁵

It was important to Ellen that she keep in touch with her siblings, both for her own need to be connected to them, but because she believed she provided an important role in their growing up. Like other children in this study, her letters reveal that she didn't just assume that her brothers and sisters would write, but she worked at ensuring they had the confidence to do so. "I hope you won't get tired writing," she wrote to Lizzie, "for you write such nice letters and I enjoy them so much."¹⁰⁶ "Never mind if mother does say your letters are not worth anything for they are. You and Myra are certainly improving and write lovely letters. Aunt Lizzie thinks so too. When the spelling is awfully bad, I don't show them but just read them to her and Uncle Albert. Mother thought they were worth something when she was here."¹⁰⁷

Ellen understood the stress when adult family members or older siblings checked children's letters. She also wanted honest exchanges, and knew that what her siblings had to say might be tempered or even omitted if they knew a parent might read the letter first. With this in mind, she asked Lizzie to facilitate eight-year-old Price's letter writing. "I wish Price would write to me some times. Tell him to tell me what he did on Halloween. I will be sure to answer him. If you folks insist on reading his letter I know I won't get one. Address the envelope for him and let him do the rest."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 31 October 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰⁶ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 31 October 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 26 November 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Ellen Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 31 October 1904. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

Sibling summary

Striking parallels are visible when examining the sibling relationships of these children. First of all, none of the relationships was static. As the children grew and changed, so did the ways they interacted with siblings and this is different from the ways children evolved in their interactions with parents. The child records reveal that emerging adolescence and young adulthood worked to alter the way siblings communicated and understood each other. Not only do the letters evolve as the children mature, but the shared interests of childhood become aligned alongside newly emerging gender expectations. Thus Josephine and Lindley Crease lost their common bonds. Cross-gender sibling relations were framed by birth order in the cases of Kathleen O'Reilly, Josephine Crease and Ellen Ellison. Each assumed maternal roles over their brothers. The documentation shows that Kathleen O'Reilly and Josephine Crease petted their youngest brothers until such time as they became increasingly preoccupied with the activities and predilections of young womanhood. One of these younger brothers, Jack O'Reilly had difficulty with the changing relationship, which left him emotionally stranded.

This chapter benefits from the existence of a large body of records created by boys; thus it is possible to present brother-brother relations as a balance to sister-sister relations, which have been more studied (albeit covering the adult years). Again, age differentials characterized the interactions of the brothers. They matured on trajectories separated by time. As the older brothers moved toward adulthood with the completion of schooling and initiation of employment, the younger brothers struggled with adjusting to boarding school life. Because their extended separations denied them abundance of

shared memories, Lindley and Arthur Crease and Frank and Jack O'Reilly used the bonds of gender and of their understanding of boy culture to establish and maintain closeness. Those children separated because of schooling consciously built relationships and points of connection with their siblings, nothing was a given.

Conclusion

The letters written to adult family members reveal that children valued these relationships and that these relationships were quite different than those held with their parents. Children revealed different aspects of their selves to aunts and uncles than they might to parents or siblings. In writing to adult family members, children explained about their own lives and daily activities in ways they did not need to do when writing to those with whom they might usually reside. In letters children asked and expected answers about these adults, and by learning about their doings, incorporated this knowledge into their own child-centred understandings of the lives of distant family members. By writing to aunts and uncles children forged bonds with adults who were not their parents and with whom they learned to extend their abilities to communicate across the generations. In so doing children actively shaped their own subjectivities and played an important and relatively unrecognized role in maintaining family connectedness. The child records in this study show that children's actions resonated more broadly than they perhaps comprehended as they relayed information back and forth, across and within generations, in and out of town, or country and across time.

From the child's perspective the letters are testament to a need to be connected. It was important that they keep in touch and not cut ties or overtly change the connectedness they had with family members. The relationships with adult family

members and with siblings provided grounding and social contexts for the children. Their identities were formed by relationships and therefore maintaining relationships ensured security and continuity in a world that changed as fast as they grew. As they moved towards becoming wholly independent beings, children needed the feedback from the adults in their family, as well as their siblings to mould their emerging selves. Children felt obligated to respond to a letter because their reply would ensure the arrival of another letter addressed to them. While at school, the obligations to write first to parents directed their priorities, but it was important to children that their siblings understood that their intention and desire was to write, but often thwarted, as the following quotes indicate. “I am afraid that I can not write to Frank as I have no time and nothing to say and I must write to you and I have written a long letter to Mother & Father and I do not think that I will be able to do any thing. My hand will soon ach.”¹⁰⁹ “I have not written to you for a very long time but I knew you will forgive me because I have to write to Father and Mother instead.”¹¹⁰ But write they did, the extant letters indicate frequency in their correspondence, evidence of successful resolve to overcome the hurdles of time management. Even as their worlds expanded these connections to family did not necessarily dwindle, but were held alongside separate and simultaneous non-familial personal relationships. The next chapter builds upon and continues to discuss child relationships by examining the world of children and their peers. and children in the wider social world.

¹⁰⁹ Jack O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 6 December 1886. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁰ Jack O'Reilly to Kathleen O'Reilly, 31 January 1887. British Columbia Archives.

Chapter 9: Peer Relationships

The last chapters revealed children's perspectives of the separate and individual relationships they held with different family members, demonstrating as Leonore Davidoff and co-authors of *The Family Story* argue, "children's identities were formed within a familial rubric."¹ But children's identities, what the Victorians termed "true self," and what today we reference as "personality," was simultaneously formed through "the wider household, kinship, and friendship networks, the neighbourhood and other forms of community in which children operated."² This is the perspective of Ellen Ross in *Love and Toil*. Howard Chudacoff takes the understanding of children's identities even farther and maintains that within these networks of friends, neighbours and community lay "a matrix of overlapping experiences" and a blurring of public and private life.³ Karen Lystra, in *Searching the Heart*, contends that the process of identity formation occurred not only via physical interactions, but was articulated and developed through the discourse of letter writing.⁴ These historians indicate many complex social interactions enabled and directed children in their understanding of selves. Children matured through social interactions with family, friends and community; each category of encounter or "relationship" set within ever-changing discourses and individual moments in time.

¹ Davidoff, *The family story: blood, contract, and intimacy, 1830-1960*: 55.

² Ross, *Love and toil: motherhood in outcast London, 1870-1918*: cited in *Empire Families*, p. 136.

³ Howard P. Chudacoff, *The age of the bachelor: creating an American subculture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1999), 22.

⁴ Lystra, *Searching the heart: women, men, and romantic love in nineteenth-century America*: 36.

Through children's perspectives of their relationships with peers, specifically their friendships, we are able to see new evidence of children's agency in the ways they solicit, establish and maintain intimacies with peers. These intimacies are truly child-generated because they reflect an aspect of the child's world that was not dictated by consanguinity (which rendered relationships automatic) but instead was enabled by circumstances and the individual child's own preferences as they moved outwards beyond the cocooning of familial relationships. Key themes include: sharing of thoughts and expectations that illustrate discourses different from children's interchanges with family; the personal investments made by children in their friendships; how friendships reveal changes within children; how children's words to or about friends document ingrained positions in regards to race and class consciousness; coming of age and the emergence of sexuality as a basis for changing friendships. The most direct documentation for friendships lies within the letters children wrote to each other, but letters children wrote to adults also reported on these social interactions, while child-created diaries reveal through daily notations patterns of activity with specific friends or particular or private aspects not delineated in letters. All three types of records are utilized in this chapter.

The focus is on children whose records documenting peer relationships, especially friendships, are strong rather than on a broad sweep across the cohort. While both girls and boys were equally represented in previous chapters, this chapter is more heavily female because of the unevenness in extant documentation. More letters written by girls to girls have survived than those written by boys to boys. This situation might have a gendered explanation; that boys did not write letters as frequently as did girls, and might also suggest that girls solidified friendships through letters. But it might also reflect and

be the result of decisions made (by persons unknown) to keep or save particular child-created records. Hazardous theories to explain the “whys” of records retention is not a focus of this study. Evidence of boy friendships is nevertheless available within letters written by boys to family members and in their diaries. Extant cross-gender peer letters are almost exclusively those written by boys to girls and date from the girls age eighteen through twenty-one, a time when girls had usually completed their schooling or had “come out” in society. These boys themselves were becoming young men, and had completed school, or were often newly employed. Envisioning themselves as “young men” they wrote to further romantic inclinations, and indeed, some of their correspondence can be viewed as courtship letters.

Friendships

Gender historians are just beginning to turn their attentions to adult friendships (but not yet child friendships) as a category of study, usually in the context of sexuality,⁵ or of unconventional platonic relationships that manifest outside of family life or marriage and often across the divides of class or race.⁶ But the ordinary, everyday friendships, unless retrospectively important to understanding the life of a biographical subject, have sustained little focus. When studied, friendships are almost always discussed in isolation from overall identities or self-definitions. One pivotal study of middle class families dismissed female friendships as “irrelevant to their study of familial gender politics.”⁷ This chapter intends to illustrate that friendships and peer relationships

⁵ For instance, see Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England*; Vicinus, "Distance and Desire: English Boarding School Friendships, 1870 - 1920."

⁶ Seth Koven, *Slumming: sexual and social politics in Victorian London* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁷ Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England*: 29. Marcus references Davidoff and Hall, *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle class 1780-1850*.

generally should not be so easily dismissed and that they are part of and inextricable from the composite understanding of self, of a child's overall identity. In the context of British Columbia and Alberta, child friendships can reveal a hidden level of social networking that links families within communities and across geographic spaces through child friendships and provides important historical detail about the social dynamics within particular urban cities or small enclaves of settlement. These links deserve more analysis in the context of the adults these children would become, and the roles they would play in Western Canadian life.

Friendships meant knowing someone who was not of your family, whom you liked and with whom you spent time and shared experiences. Friendships were integral to the socialization of children and to their understanding of the perspectives of those outside their own families. Friendships grew out of acquaintanceship and became stronger by commitment but could just as easily dissolve as children matured and their perspectives and priorities – often the very things that drew them together in the first instance – changed. Friendships were important for both boys and girls, although, based on the evidence of the children in this cohort, friendships within a gender were more common than friendships that crossed gender.

Some of the children in this study left but a single letter to attest to a friendship. For instance, in 1869 Florence Bissett wrote from Victoria to her friend Helen in Fort Rupert. Her intent was to catch up on news. "I am sorry," she began,

I did not write to you before but I shall now. We have all had the Measles...I can play When the day with rosy light, Lucrecia Borgia...I can play two Duets...We are all quite well. Alice is six years old and I am seven.... I hope you are all quite well. Are there any flowers yet at fort Rupert. There are plenty here The Tiger Lilly has just come out...Do you

go to school Do you learn music, I have holidays now I have five weeks
the boys have only four weeks.⁸

In this letter we learn of previously undocumented connections between a child in a small colonial outpost, and her friend, daughter of a Hudson's Bay Company factor (and by extension of their families) and of the important points in one girl's life, of family, health, music and the coming of summer. Such a letter demonstrates how girls kept tabs on each other through the reporting of accomplishments and of illnesses and that they took the time to keep connected.

Other children have left more fulsome evidence of their networks of friends, and how these friends interrelated. Such letters provide understanding of children's worlds over periods of their childhood and of the "news" they deemed important to convey, "news" that preserves direct conversations between networks of girls who hold common understandings and share understandings of what it meant to be a girl. These letters children wrote to absent friends bear testament to children's agency, not only in their selection of friends, but also in their cultivation. They chose to maintain ties, to build on shared experiences because friendships provided children with a sense of belonging to a peer group bound by cultural, gender and age formed affinities.

When children moved they hoped for and actively searched for new friends, demonstrating the important role that peers played in their lives. In 1904, new Calgary resident, Phoebe Sanders wrote, "I know the little boy who lives next door to us his name is Gordon Egbert he seems rather nice so far. I know the girl in the white house near the

⁸ Florence Bissett to Helen __, 20 June 1869. Library and Archives Canada.

little shanty she is about my age she is rather nice.”⁹ In 1920, Eula Carscallen moved from Red Deer to Calgary and during those first few days at her new school spent time in analysis of her peers looking for a potential friend. It took Eula a while to find a group into which she fit. Her homeroom featured a “somewhat mixed bunch of girls...I don’t think they fit in with each other in the least. The boys in the room are a terrible bunch from all appearances. I don’t know any of them but they’re all awfully ugly & small. I suppose they are making the same horrid remarks about me.”¹⁰ One girl appeared to offer friendship. “Mona McIlroy who is small, and just fourteen seems to have taken a fancy to me...she’s asked me to be her partner for everything, to come over etc. etc. & all day long she writes me notes. She seems like quite a decent kid.”¹¹ But Mona was not who Eula looked for in a special friend. “I’m wishing more and more all the time that I could find my ‘ideal chum’.”¹² Claudia Gardiner knew the kind of girl who could be her friend and she hoped that she might find such a girl at her new school, Bishop Bethune College. But when she met girls from another private school she had second thoughts.

At about three Mrs. Tinning and Grace called for me and we went over to Grace’s. We went out about half-past five over to see Betty Bowl. She and Grace talked school...another girl, a friend of Grace’s came for dinner.... At about eight o’clock about ten girls arrived who go to Rupertsland [College] and they banged around and shouted and talked school and I did not like them. If the girls at Bethune are like them I won’t like it.¹³

Friends were worth fighting for and the right to choose one’s own friends was crucial. When Gladys Berry attended Havergal College in Toronto, her mother became

⁹ Phoebe Sanders to Edith Browning, 14 October 1904. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 7 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹¹ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 1 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹² Eula Carscallen. Diary. 2 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹³ Claudia Gardiner. Diary. 9 September 1924. Glenbow Archives.

concerned about Gladys' involvement in a campus society and about some of the new friends she had made. Gladys wrote to dispel her misconceptions and relied on her elder brother's opinion to support her situation. "When Bert was here yesterday," she wrote, "I told him that Reta Hutchins was boarding & he said that she was a nice girl & that I was to go with her...Bert knows her and thinks she is very nice."¹⁴ Although this male sanction played a significant role, Gladys also conveyed her own rationale. "Vera is the same age as I am and she boards at school and she is my best friend."¹⁵ In other letters during this fall term, Gladys defended her right to choose her own friends, countered her mother's long-distance worries. Gladys' agency enabled her to solicit and develop friendships on her terms. Determining her friends was her business. Her assumption of this responsibility is evidence of a maturing and confident child.

Really mother I think the girls are alright except Alden & Dorothy Hall & you know I am not going to go with her and I will stop writing to Dorothy.... Even if I wasn't in the society I would go with the same girls I think they are alright, as far as work goes they are all working very hard. Reta tried to matric last year & Marjorie & Mary are in the VIB & really dear I don't think I could find any nicer girls to go with.... I do hope you will understand about my friends, dear, I think they are alright.¹⁶

Leaving friends behind could be upsetting, for children who moved frequently, the one constant might be friendships kept through letter writing. Partings, the physical separations emphasized the importance children placed on friendships. Ties kept by children to former neighbours are community linkages beneath the radar of most historical studies. Sophie Puckette was despondent and lonely for friends left behind in the United States, for social interactions with those outside the confines of her rather

¹⁴ Gladys Berry to Ada Berry, 23 September 1910. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁵ Gladys Berry to Ada Berry, 31 December 1910. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁶ Gladys Berry to Ada Berry, 23 September 1910. Glenbow Archives.

isolated farm near Innisfree, Alberta. There were no new children to meet, so for her, each mail day revolved around the possibility she might receive a letter long distance from a friend. She noted in her diary, “I hope I shall get at least one letter today. I haven’t had one for several weeks.”¹⁷ “Last mail day I got letters from Arle and Fancy, May R. and Kit.”¹⁸ “I went home this P.M. for the mail. I got none. I should have had one from Kittie.”¹⁹

A friend wrote to Christine Nelson, “I still love and think of you often...and wish so much that you were still here as my friend. I’ll bet you have forgotten me entirely having made so many new friends.”²⁰ Letters written to Eva Kerslake from former schoolmates at Mount Royal School, Calgary after her family moved to a ranch, show similar sentiments. “I hope you will come back to Calgary soon all the girls want you back.”²¹ “I wish you were here for we have so much fun. I wish you would write to me.”²² “We miss you very much, and wish you would come back again.”²³

The evidence of friendships held by children who lived in close proximity and also friendships nurtured long distance through correspondences provides opportunities to see how children expressed themselves and pushed themselves in their growing as they moved forth individually to interact with peers, where their initiative in forming and maintaining friends required them to find points of connection on the level of personality. Children’s friendships served purposes wider than the actual interactions. They rippled

¹⁷ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 19 May 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁸ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 24 May 1905. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁹ Sophie Puckette. Diary. 16 June 1905. Glenbow Archives.

²⁰ Marjorie Bournes to Christine Nelson, 15 December 1918. Glenbow Archives.

²¹ Phyllis _ to Eva Kerslake, 11 May 1916. Glenbow Archives.

²² May Orr to Eva Kerslake, 11 May 1916. Glenbow Archives.

²³ Richard Bailey to Eva Kerslake, 11 May 1916. Glenbow Archives.

through the settler society in subtle but important ways that influenced the larger matrix and this phenomenon provides opportunities for historians to unpack.

Children link communities

In new societies, as were the towns of Victoria and Calgary and all the other centres in British Columbia and Alberta documented in this study, families were not generally connected through pre-existing ties solidified over decades of interactions as might be the case in older, more established communities. Connections between families were fresh and in formative stages. As newcomers many families shared the experience of arrival and settling down in the new communities and soon got to know one another, or at least identified themselves as neighbours. Adults met and mingled through the course of regular interactions such as business, social or religious networking. Children might meet either at school, Sunday school or in their neighbourhoods.

These settler children established their own sense of place based on the imprint of their family life, but also by the existence of friendships, which further rooted them to these new communities. As they reached out to other children, they unconsciously contributed to community dynamics by drawing together and creating linkages between families where perhaps none might have otherwise formed. Children's actions could therefore shape the adult community. Children's records provide evidence that confirms or substantiates known community linkages but also reveals those that were below the surface, not always visible through other historical evidence or on the basis of generational, religious, occupation, physical location or other adult-based ties.

Families living close together but perhaps having few reasons to mix often knew each other most intimately through their children's friendships and play. This is true of

the Crease, O'Reilly and Ward children in Victoria. The letters and diaries they wrote provide evidence that child friendships encouraged mothers to visit so their children might play, and also created situations for inter-family activities stimulated by children's friendships. The Sanders girls while in Fort Macleod and Calgary played with and mixed with other children of police fathers, but when families moved away, these girls actively maintained these friendships. The physical proximity that encouraged the social interaction of their parents lasted only as long as the police postings yet the children actively pursued their friendships and through correspondences kept the families linked across geographical divides. The fact that children saved their letters is testament to the importance these now long-distance friendships held for them.

Children also met other children at schools and these friendships joined families very specifically only through their children. Unlike the previous two categories, school friendships reveal complete independent selection. Children met, felt kinship and formed friendships with no parental oversight and at times children chose friends from another culture or class. Neil Gilchrist's friends lived geographically nearby, shared neighbourhood and bonded as they grew. They were linked by their generation, by their attendance at the local school, not by parental ties or by opportunities created through adult mixing. His network of friends was completely separate from the network of friends held by his parents. Thus, through his friendships he gained confidence to visit different churches and explore opportunities not available within his family circle. Neil met his friends at parties, at the fair, skipped school with them, and hung in a gang of his own choosing. Neil's friendships demonstrate unseen linkages within a neighbourhood

formed at the child level, fully engaging that single generation. Ties such as these certainly would influence Neil's actions as an adult, and factor in his adult friendships.

Children who formed friendships while at boarding schools created new connections between communities. The ties of friendship were based upon their shared educational experiences, experiences not shared by family members (and therefore rendered invisible). An example is the circle of boarding school friends held by Helen Macleod all of whom resided in separate towns or rural locations and in different provinces. Helen maintained active connections with her former school chums (as she did with her ex-neighbours) even though she might never see them in person. These relationships provided opportunities for children to become familiar with geographic places other than their own, and to vicariously share and stay connected as they traded news and related adventures. Children's knowledge of other towns, of different provinces or countries was personalized through shared reporting. This knowledge was internalized and had an influence on how children perceived their wider worlds. The details that emerge in letters provided children with word pictures of distant lands, of alternative places. They absorbed information about towns and cities, farms and rural communities that widened their horizons beyond their closely defined worlds of home and neighbourhood. The points of linkage created through childhood friendships have not generally been recognized to represent meaningful documentation about historical place. How we understand place generally and also the role played by knowledge gained in childhood from child informants is likewise under studied. Each contributes to adult understandings of community and of community development.

Friendships between children in the Crease, O'Reilly and Ward families

“I went on Tuesday to Mrs. Ward’s & slept all night there fore it was such a very wet afternoon that Mama could not bring me home, but she came for me after school yesterday. Alice wanted me to stay all last night also.”²⁴ In commentary from Kathleen O'Reilly we learn particularly about the ongoing friendships between the O'Reilly and Ward families, conceived initially through the children’s interactions at school but extended to the parents as a result. The quote above attests to the casual intimacies between the families. Both mothers adapted when weather prevented Kathleen from coming home as expected. Kathleen’s wording seems matter of fact; the circumstance was not an unusual situation.

Embedded in her description below are clues about knowledge shared between the families concerning Mrs. Ward’s health issues; of the role played by mothers in facilitating children’s play and something of the routineness of social visiting and the relationship between the Wards themselves.

We went to the Wards on Tuesday in the rain and today Mrs. Ward came to see Mama, brought Cecil with her, and just as she was going Frank came into the room to say that Mrs. Ward’s horse had fit and could not be d[r]iven home Mama wanted her to wait till Mr. Ellis came home but Mrs. Ward said that Mr. Ward would be frightned about her being out late so she left Cecil & walked home.²⁵

Kathleen’s letters over the years reveal an ongoing illness suffered by Mrs. Ward. At times she became incapacitated, unable to attend to the home or children. In such circumstances Mrs. O'Reilly assisted with child management, or Mr. Ward kept the

²⁴ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 27 March 1879. British Columbia Archives.

²⁵ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 27 September 1877. British Columbia Archives.

children occupied away from home. Kathleen's recordings of these incidents reveal a matter-of-fact acceptance of the situation as ongoing and to a certain extent, not unexpected. Kathleen's composure in relaying the information suggests that honesty between the families enabled support. "Mrs. Ward is much better and Mr. Ward is expected home to-day, all the children are going in a carriage to meet him."²⁶ "Mr. Ward came the other day with Alice to take me for a ride & I spent the day there & Mama came for me in the evening but when we arrived at Highwood Mrs. Ward had another attack & was in great pain & she has not been well since."²⁷

When Arthur Crease wrote about his own world, he confirmed the interconnectedness of these Victoria children. The Crease and O'Reilly children provide links to the otherwise thinly documented Ward family through friendships struck between the girls. Josephine Crease and Kathleen O'Reilly were at Angela College with Alice Ward; and the boys, Arthur Crease and Jack O'Reilly attended Collegiate School with Cecil Ward. Willie Ward, another sibling was schooled in England for a time with Lindley Crease and later Nellie Ward became a good friend to Josephine Crease.

Arthur reported rather phlegmatically about his friend Cecil Ward and made little fuss about Cecil's near fatal accident that went unreported in the newspapers. "Cecil Ward has been going to the Collegiate School but since the other day when he was at a pump house and got in water up to his neck he has had lessons at home."²⁸ A few years earlier, Cecil was a houseguest with the Creases because his parents were out of town, a situation that does not appear not to have been uncommon nor out of place to Arthur. He

²⁶ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 30 June 1879. British Columbia Archives.

²⁷ Kathleen O'Reilly to Peter O'Reilly, 6 September 1879. British Columbia Archives.

²⁸ Arthur Crease to Lindley Crease, 11 February 1881. British Columbia Archives.

wrote, "Cecil Ward has been staying here with me for three weeks while Mr. & Mrs. Ward were away at San Francisco. We made sling-shots & fired at birds with them & we had lots of fun. Emma Ward died a little while ago."²⁹ Arthur's last sentence puts the occasion in context, we are now able to understand the reason and make the connection to a reference quoted in an earlier chapter from his sister, Josephine. The circumstance that allowed an extended sleepover was a Ward family tragedy, the death of Cecil's infant sister, yet Arthur does not seem to carry this tragedy in his words. At age seven, perhaps death was an abstract concept.

The interweaving of evidence seen within the records of Kathleen and Arthur documents the daily and routine intersections between members of the Crease, O'Reilly and Ward families. If we relied upon traditionally accessed adult records for historical evidence, the connections between the families would remain invisible beyond the most superficial or public of social interactions. Although archival records for the Crease and O'Reilly parents exist, almost none survive for the Wards. Likewise, if we relied only on the biographical profiles of the adult family members, little in the way of clues would suggest linkages. Henry Crease and Peter O'Reilly were both government officials yet William Ward was a bank manager.³⁰ Their vocations and business affairs were quite distinct and separate. The wives, Sarah Lindley, Caroline Trutch, and Lydia Henley, were unconnected, each hailing from a different area of England. In Victoria, the Wards and

²⁹ Arthur Crease to Lindley Crease, 5 November 1879. British Columbia Archives. Emma Ward was eighteen months old; she died 21 October 1879 in Victoria while her parents were in California.

³⁰ For biographical information see Kathryn Bridge, "Sarah Lindley (Crease, Lady Sarah)," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Robin Fisher, "Joseph William Trutch," in *Dictionary of Canadian biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Tina Loo, "Henry Pering Pellew Crease," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2000); Williams, "Peter O'Reilly." A biographical vignette for William Curtis Ward is found in E. O. S. Scholefield and Frederic William Howay, *British Columbia from the earliest times to the present*, vol. 4 (Vancouver: S.J. Clarke 1914).

the Creases lived close by each other, yet the O'Reillys lived across town. The Creases attended the Anglican St. John's Church and also Christ Church; the O'Reillys attended Christ Church, while the Wards attended the breakaway sectarian Church Of Our Lord. The Ward parents had birthdates of 1842 and 1848; the O'Reillys 1830, 1835; the Creases 1822, 1826. They represented different generations, a twenty-year spread between the Crease and Ward parents and about twelve between the O'Reilly and Ward parents. Without their children to provide the links, these parents might not have had the opportunities or perhaps inclinations to interact. The evidence of child-created records therefore enables us to understand interpersonal dynamics between families in ways not captured in census details or demographic analysis.

The details recorded by the children are at the child level; show the child's own spin on events and their unfolding. These families knew each other well, were familiar and comfortable in each other's company, but the traditional use of adult created records might never reveal how intimate were the ties. As adults most of these children continued to reside in Victoria, their adult affiliations directly influenced by the knowledge they had of each other based upon these childhood ties. The Crease boys became lawyers, as did Jack O'Reilly and Cecil Ward (who moved to Kamloops). Their business pursuits intertwined, their bonds extending from their childhood friendships. Josephine Crease and Kathleen O'Reilly shared a life long love of painting and sketching, were active in similar women's organizations and proud of their community roots and as "pioneers."

Three girls and their circles of friendships

Phoebe Sanders had several circles of friends who corresponded: the earliest friends were girls she met while very young living in Fort Macleod; then came girls who had been at Crofton House with her; and others began after her schooling ended and included friends of both sex with whom she socialized while in Regina. Members in each circle tracked the movements and activities of others within the circle, reported on news in common, and were held together by personal commitment and interest. They laughed at each other's foibles, gossiped, and kept each other apprised of events and situations within their social worlds.

Many of these friends were daughters of Royal North West Mounted Police fathers. Police families moved frequently and for youngsters in the sparsely settled prairies the presence of other children was not a given fact and therefore, first friendships held special significance. The following excerpt from a letter to Phoebe from Flora Steele (whose father had been posted to the Yukon in 1898 and was dispatched to South Africa in 1900) illustrates these ties. The girls had been apart for several years at the time of writing. Flora wrote, "We are all well & hope you are the same. I often think of you, & upbraid myself for not writing to you. You are the first little girls I ever knew, & I often think of you as such."³¹

Phoebe's circles of friends interconnected to form a wide web of personal relationships. For instance, Flora Steele was mentioned in letters from Marguerite Cuthbert in 1899 and "Nora" in 1900. In turn, Flora referenced "Nora" in 1907. Dixie

³¹ Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 17 June 1904. Glenbow Archives.

Wilson featured in letters from girls in 1899 and in 1905. The Cuthbert siblings were mentioned by Hilda Douglas in 1905 and by “Nora” in 1900.³² In these letters the girls asked questions of each other, questions designed to keep them up to date. These letters are important sources for learning of how the children in these police barracks interacted across distances with friends at other barracks, and of how children recorded the comings and goings of their fathers and of their work, of barracks society itself and, most importantly for this chapter, how the children experiencing this life – as children within military families – used this status to enable insider cliques with their counterparts. Phoebe Sanders and her friends stayed connected well beyond their peripatetic childhoods, and indeed the child friendships also moved with them through adulthood. The following letter to Phoebe in Calgary from Marguerite Cuthbert in Fort Macleod referenced individuals appearing in other letters and demonstrates how the correspondents kept tabs on each other from a distance.

My dear Girlie. I am sorry about the dog getting bitten up. Mrs. Irwin has a baby boy & so has Mrs. Campbell seems to me there all hatching out as if they were chickens. Did you have the mumps badly? & did Tods? Cuthbert likes Bessie Jaffrey pretty well, but he had not forgotton you & Tods. Which pony do you mean that you could not sell? We will take Gumbo I suppose you know. We can nearly all talk through the telephones now there are 62 people that we can talk to there are Cowdrys, Hiltons, Gengs, Kenedys & nearly all the stores, but we have not got one as there is one in Guard room & orderly room. I guess I close now. I remain Your Friend Marguerite C. P.S. I heard that Dixie Wilson did not care for you because, you know why – don’t you.”³³

Hilda Douglas peppered a page of her own letter to Phoebe with the following, “When do you think you will get your house built...I guess you miss Aileen Harris quite

³² Phoebe Sanders, correspondence inward, 1899 -1910. Glenbow Archives.

³³ Marguerite Cuthbert to Phoebe Sanders, 25 March 1899. Glenbow Archives.

a bit...Did you like being confirmed...Is May Mackray still there. Has Tods got a pony yet?"³⁴ She mentioned an assortment of friends in common. "My friend Elsie Craig returned home this summer from Yale College. She told me she saw Dixie Wilson and a girl from Calgary there."³⁵ Nora made reference to shared towns and shared friends. "Do you like Battleford any better now than you did at first. I don't think any more of Prince Albert and am always wishing that we were back at Macleod.... Do you ever hear from Flora? I wonder how she is getting on."³⁶

The points of connection within this circle of friends included not only memories of earlier days, of playing together, but also shared understandings of class and ethnicity. Their fathers were career military men, the families English speaking and with similar social status. But even so, gradations of difference based on family situation, perhaps even their father's military rank or posting, along with individually held ideas of the ethnic other are visible in the child records. Written exchanges between Phoebe and Flora Steele demonstrate this latter layer. In August 1905, Flora Steele wrote,

Mama told me that you are both going to England to school. Well, I am also; but I cannot say when. The school decided on is kept by Miss. Herring...it is Heidelberg House, Medina Villas, Hove, Brighton. It is considered an excellent place by everybody. How delightful it would be if you went to Heidelberg House, & we could see each other after so many years separation. Do you think your mother will chose it?³⁷

The phrase "considered an excellent place by everybody" implies inclusivity, everybody within a social and cultural set, thus Flora assumed class-based and ethnicity-based links with the Sanders girls. A few months later, after receiving further

³⁴ Hilda Douglas to Phoebe Sanders, 9 July 1905. Glenbow Archives.

³⁵ Hilda Douglas to Phoebe Sanders, 10 September 1905. Glenbow Archives.

³⁶ Nora__ to Phoebe Sanders 21 January 1900. Glenbow Archives.

³⁷ Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 19 August 1905. Glenbow Archives.

information about the options that had been considered by the Sanders family for schooling which included, not just England, but Ireland (where Phoebe's Aunt Edith lived), Flora wrote again. "I am very glad you are not going to school in Ireland, as it is always nicer to be among one's own people." The Irish, in Flora's world, were outside the "everybody" referenced in her earlier letter. The Irish, in Phoebe's world, included family: her Uncle (wife of Aunt Edith) and cousin Patsy but Flora may not have known this.³⁸

Friendships between the girls were also set within shared understandings of a girl culture, which facilitated a common discourse, an awareness of belonging and identification. Thus, when Flora Steele wrote she employed a style and mannerism that she thought would resonate with her peers and would find commonality with her recipients. "I am very naughty not to write before..." "Exams at school take up all my time.... Do you ride much? I suppose you do & enjoy it too. I am very fond of it, & my pony is a dear little thing." "I am looking forward to the Summer vacation when I shall probably go home to Calgary."³⁹

Flora wrote from Pretoria, South Africa and expressed fond memories of life in Canada, especially about snow and winter. She wrote nostalgically yet simultaneously assumed an "imperial rhetoric."⁴⁰ In one letter she included but did not explain, "a snapshot of a little kaffir baby."⁴¹ Flora conveniently blamed the colonial environment for her own tardy acknowledgement of Christmas gifts. "My only excuse is that I was too

³⁸ In 1915 Phoebe Sanders married Archer Toole, son of an Irish-born father.

³⁹ Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 29 November 1903, 19 August 1905, 26 December 1907. Glenbow Archives.

⁴⁰ Buettner, *Empire families: Britons and late imperial India*: 25-38; Philippa Levine, "Introduction: Why Gender and Empire?," in *Gender and Empire*, ed. Philippa Levine (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

⁴¹ Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 29 November 1903. Glenbow Archives.

lazy. The climate of South Africa certainly affects one, & one usually gets very lazy, & can't help it."⁴² The long-distance friendship via letters ended in 1908 after the Steele family moved back to Calgary. For Phoebe, the long-awaited reunion with Flora was not as anticipated. They had kept their friendship alive through their letters, based not just on memories but on continuing threads of conversations, but the reality of face-to-face interaction brought with it a sobering reality of difference. Phoebe wrote in her diary, "Arrived in Calgary...in the afternoon Dad, Con & I went to see the Steele's...and were much disappointed in Flora Steele we heard she was so pretty & she wasn't."⁴³ While Phoebe's diary captured the superficial, the implications of her remarks suggest a sadness about differences that had nothing to do with physical looks, but everything to do with communication and assumptions of compatibility. Flora's written presence was perhaps more companionable than in person.

Helen Macleod was another child whose father was in the North West Mounted Police, and she too had her circle of friends from this connection and a separate circle met through her Ontario boarding school. Letters written by a thirteen-year-old schoolmate of Helen articulate similar shared understandings and inclusivity as evidenced in the letters from Flora Steele, this time grounded through implied favouritism. Edyth (aka Dimple) Perry asked and expected confidentiality of Helen when she wrote, "don't show this to Edie...don't show this to anybody."⁴⁴ Through this instruction, Edyth created an atmosphere of privilege – Helen's privilege in being recipient of her confidences and in reading the letter contents. She wrote at a fever-like pace, as her

⁴² Flora Steele to Phoebe and Constance Sanders, 17 June 1904. Glenbow Archives.

⁴³ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 30 June 1908. Glenbow Archives.

⁴⁴ Edyth Perry to Helen Macleod, 8 March 1891. Glenbow Archives.

thoughts jumped from subject to subject, informing – in pared-to-their-essence sentences – the necessary details of home life, then switched to broad topic, then to coquettish confidences. It was shorthand that spoke of a shared discourse.

Dear Helen, I am very sorry for not writing to you any sooner but I haven't had time. I have been trying to get the most marks every week in the school. I succeed very well coming out first twice in a month.... My mother was ill in bed for two days. My beau made me a present of a Scotch terrier dog his name is Dandy. One of my brothers has been laid up three days with a sore leg...I have been invited out to four places and I went to half a dozen of them...I have a very nice little fellow or beau I won't tell you his name he took me out for a few sleigh rides this winter. I am going out with him to-morrow. Grandpa is not very well neither is baby.... What are you a grit or Tory? I am a Tory. The grits got left in Muskoka. How is the kid (Edie)? We have lots of fun at school with our beaux. I will tell you the name of my beau if you will not tell anybody. It is Monty Mahaffy son of Judge Mahaffy. I was up to Ethel Boydell's a few nights ago for tea and had lots of fun.... your loving friend Dimple Perry. PS please answer soon.⁴⁵

In three brief sentences Edyth introduced and dismissed the adult topic of politics (without evidence of comprehension) as if to suggest familiarity without proving it. Her intention may have been to indicate her own awareness of the wider world, an awareness that she turned to her own use, perhaps in the form of challenge. Helen might interpret her sentences as, “are you as mature as I, to have political opinions?” Politics, the secret about a boyfriend, the boasting about her social popularity (also aimed at challenging Helen), are also mixed thoroughly with details of her family and her achievements at school, demonstrating there were no set boundaries or categories for her life. Everything that happened to Edyth, everything that she thought and did, in all facets, was news to be shared with her friend, Helen. Children's confidences in the school room were not limited to that shared world, but spilled out in letters during vacations and after their

⁴⁵ Edyth Perry to Helen Macleod, 8 March 1891. Glenbow Archives.

school times ended. Edyth interacted with her friend Helen in a manner that combined the intimacy of secrets with the subtle challenge of comparison, she deliberately set forth to position her world as exciting, desirable and provocative. How could Helen then not respond? Edyth Perry in writing to Helen Macleod and Flora Steele in writing to Phoebe Sanders, along with the other girls in this chapter, related to each other in narratives that emphasized their own popularity. They embellished accounts of others for amusement. Idle chatter about peers, often based upon rumour, at times with an element of salacious pleasure, was a common element of girl exchanges, less so in boy's records. In many cases the word "gossip" was utilized to describe such revelations, while "gossiped," described the act of superficially conversing with others about people not present.⁴⁶

After the sudden death of her father, James Macleod, Helen's school friends waited several weeks before writing, sensitive to the mourning period, but most certainly also understanding that in delaying contact with Helen they hoped the rawness of her grief might have subsided somewhat. This delay in turn gave them the opportunity to get over their own awkwardness or uncertainty about how to "talk" to her. One friend expressed,

I have tried several times to write to you and you have often been in my thoughts but I find it hard to express my sympathy for you in your trouble. I was very much pained and grieved at hearing of your dear fathers death. It was all so sudden which of course makes it all the harder. But I know what a noble and true hearted girl you are and that you will bear up for the others' sake.⁴⁷

These sentiments were echoed by another friend.

⁴⁶The earliest example in this study of the use of the word "gossip" is found in Florrie Clarkson to Kathleen O'Reilly, 17 August 1885. British Columbia Archives.

⁴⁷L.M. Wilkinson to Helen Macleod, 13 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

Dear Helen, I need not tell you how very, very, sorry I felt for you all when I heard of your dear father's death and how I longed to be able to do something to comfort you but could do nothing. Oh! Helen even if I did not write as soon as I heard of your trouble it was not because I did not think of you for I could never forget you dear and all you have done for me.⁴⁸

Although parental death was not unknown to sixteen-year-old girls of Helen's age, responsibility to compose letters of condolence might normally have fallen to the adults in their family. But school relationships existed outside the bonds of familial circles, so it is a measure of these bonds that her friends wrote, even though it was very likely that their paths would not cross again. "I wonder Helen when I will see you again, not for a long, long time I am afraid, for as far as I can see I do not think I will ever be able to go to Calgary so it may be years before we meet again."⁴⁹

Helen Macleod's friends kept her updated with the goings on at school. In their letters the different friends reveal their own interpretations on what others were doing, and include details that indicate that although the girls were part of a friendship circle, they were each moving in different directions. She heard that Eva Lecote "is studying hard at home this year. She has a tutor and is trying for the McGill exams.... Maude Paterson was down for the masquerade and...she is much the same as she was before she left." But, "you know of course Maude Lilt is married. Susie McNab is still in XVII she talks some of going home for Xmas and I think if she goes it will be not to return. She feels as though she ought to be at home to be a mother to the younger ones. And perhaps she is right."⁵⁰ "Ethel Nellands is in Toronto and is staying with Marion Barker they both

⁴⁸ Marie Young to Helen Macleod, 27 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

⁴⁹ Marie Young to Helen Macleod, 27 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁰ L.N. Wilkinson to Helen Macleod, 13 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

came over to see me this afternoon, and brought a few cookies...I think this is really my last year down here. I will be so glad to be home for always.”⁵¹

These letters also speak to the need of Helen’s friends to communicate with a friend not in school, with one who perhaps now had a different perspective. It was not just the recipient who benefited from letters received, but also the writer. Each of Helen’s school friends moved into a personal trajectory, one already was married, another had her hair up, another was “coming out,” while another answered the responsibilities of home and left school to assist with younger siblings, and another worked towards college entrance exams. Two of the girls looked forward to finishing their schooling and returning to home life, which as they may not have comprehended, would be different than the life they had left behind because they were now older and closer to adulthood. But the girls still at school revealed sadness at the loss of friends who did not return and remarked on changed dynamics. “School is much the same as last year. Several of the old faces are missing but new ones have come to fill their place and yet we always see and think of the old ones,”⁵² wrote one friend, falling back on cliché phrases, while another was more forthcoming about her own feelings and revealed some of the friendship dynamics at play. “It is so lonely in “24” this year. There are only Muriel Whitney, Irene and myself in it, and as the two other girls are great friends, I am almost alone.... There are not many new girls this year and nearly all the six-class boarders of last year have not come back.”⁵³

⁵¹ Marie Young to Helen Macleod, 27 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

⁵² L.N. Wilkinson, 13 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

⁵³ Marie Young to Helen Macleod, 27 November 1894. Glenbow Archives.

The third circle of friends was that of Christine Nelson, who moved from Lethbridge to Calgary. The letters her friends wrote place her squarely in the centre of shared expectations about school and about circles of peers. “Do you have good times at “Hi” this year?”⁵⁴ wrote a friend named Helen in 1918, alluding to Christine’s grade ten status and a switch in schools. Another friend, Consie, had moved to Winnipeg for her schooling. She reassured Christine, “even though there is nothing but boys in my room I have a great time as they are all nice to me.”⁵⁵ In answer to questions from Christine concerning the lack of girls, Consie, responded in some depth enumerating social activities with boys but making clear to situate herself within the small gender cohort she referenced as “we girls” or “us girls.”

I’m not in the least lonesome in school. All the boys are very nice to me from the little ones to the big ones. I always have a jolly time during school hours.... We have had a great many parties and dances this winter. On Friday I am going to our annual school carnival. The following Wednesday we girls are going to give a tea and Friday I am going to a snowshoe party. Last Friday the students gave a toboggan party for us girls and we had great fun...⁵⁶

Consie also revealed that despite being one of the girls, she was also distanced in relation to the few other female students because her personal educational priority was different from their aspirations. Her wording is deliberate and quite clear. She was “the only girl” distinct from “the other girls.” “In the afternoons I am the only girl in the school as all the other girls have the afternoon off but as I am in Senior Matriculation I have to go.... I am used to it [teasing] now they never leave me alone from morn till

⁵⁴ Helen_ to Christine Nelson, 17 February 1918. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁵ Consie Ford to Christine Nelson, 9 December 1918. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁶ Consie Ford to Christine Nelson, 4 February 1919. Glenbow Archives.

night.”⁵⁷ Details such as this provide layering to our understanding of solidarity between girls, of difference recognized by the girls themselves, and of the sharing between girls of the aspects of themselves that they held in common.

Marjorie Bournes wrote to keep Christine Nelson in the loop and talked about Ethel, who had earlier written to Christine expressing her belief “that you and I must be kindred spirits.”⁵⁸ Marjorie wrote, “Eight of us girls formed a club last year at school. Ethel is one of them...She is always in scrapes and just as overflowing with fun. I just love her and I think a good many people find it impossible not to although (teachers etc.) they pretend not to because she does so many crazy things in school.”⁵⁹ While another friend, Elizabeth claimed, “I haven’t been doing much in the way of social affairs, only having gone to three or four teas, the theatre once or twice etc. But there is always something to keep me busy, dishes, floors, tennis etc.”⁶⁰ Despite this listing of social activities, Elizabeth insisted, “I haven’t much news to tell you for I don’t get into town very often.” Elizabeth then confided, “The only scandal we have heard (and you have probably heard it by now) is that McKinley Bateman has married Pearl Taylor. Ain’t it awful Mable! Ha! Ha!”⁶¹

It was difficult to leave behind school friendships and as these last examples indicate, many children took care to nurture their connectedness via letter writing. This was not a passive undertaking. It required work – commitment to communicate and time set aside to do so. Brought together at school from often-disparate geographic

⁵⁷ Consie Ford to Christine Nelson, 4 February 1919. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁸ Ethel_ to Christine Nelson, 14 March 1917. Glenbow Archives.

⁵⁹ Marjorie Bournes to Christine Nelson, 15 December 1918. Glenbow Archives.

⁶⁰ Elizabeth_ to Christine Nelson, 4 August 1921. Glenbow Archives.

⁶¹ Elizabeth_ to Christine Nelson, 4 August 1921. Glenbow Archives.

residences, the children had bonded through the school terms as they shared physical space and time, dreams, plans and alliances. Quite naturally, some of them continued to follow each other's lives after school. The comparisons they made and the rivalries they developed during school, of grades, of height, of weight and physical maturity, turned to comparisons and commentary on the many directions they each now undertook. Keeping in touch allowed them to vicariously experience their (now separate) worlds, and to maintain these social and personal connections, which gave them belonging.

These letters between girls operate at a level of inclusion; they wrote about those in their social circles, within their world of friends and acquaintances. They could be catty in remarks, but that was part of the sharing. They exchanged news, gossiped about or criticized others, observed, compared and reinforced their own understandings of acceptable behaviours. They wrote to keep in contact, and as they had while younger, kept tabs on each other's actions or activities as a means of measuring themselves and acknowledging their own subjectivities. The girls are familiar with each other and to a certain degree their letters work in shorthand. They assume reciprocal interests and basic shared information or background details that need not be enumerated in the letters. The friendships are grounded in ways that link the girls after they are separated, after they no longer see each other regularly.

Writing to a friend is a commitment of time and also a commitment to one's belief in the importance of retaining that relationship. Friendships as seen through these girls' letters move beyond the level of bare information exchange and can be seen for the emotional support they engendered. Friends reassured each other in times of trouble or difficult situations as the case with Helen Macleod, and also it seems with Christine

Nelson. Thus, at a time of unspecified angst, a friend wrote to give her confidence. “I am so glad to know you are back at school again. I know just how much you dreaded going back, because I went through it all last year. As you say, you never knew how many friends you have until you are in trouble...just remember there is no one who understands you better or feels for you more, altho’ I’m very poor at expressing my feelings.”⁶²

Boy friendships

Young Arthur Crease played with Katie, Willie and Hugo Beaven. Gordon Egbert, Freddie and Vernie Ormston played with Phoebe and Constance Sanders. Nine-year-old John Biller listed both boys and girls in the front of his diary under the heading “My Friends” and also regularly noted girls in his list of playmates. “Had an exciting game with Arleigh and Patsy.” “Molly and Vernon came. We sailed in the Eggbeater.”⁶³ But slightly older boys tended to gravitate towards male friends much in the same way girls sought out other girls. For boys having male friends enabled a boy culture that gave them identity and belonging in the same way that girls’ friendships functioned. As seen in the chapter on growing up, boys thought of themselves as different from girls and prided themselves on this distinction. In consequence, the reasons for friendships – not surprisingly – parallel that of girls. Both boys and girls considered having friends a worthwhile and important aspect of their lives because of the companionship and sharing of experiences. But boy friendships could differ from those of girls in the activities shared and considered “fun.”

⁶² Marjorie Bournes to Christine Nelson, Thursday night [1917-1918]. Glenbow Archives.

⁶³ John Biller. Diary. 28 May, 12 July 1924. British Columbia Archives.

The evidence of boy friendships and the activities of boys within these friendships is not as plentiful as the evidence regarding girl friendships, chiefly because the documentation is less direct. In short, this study contains many letters written by girls to their female friends, but no letters from boys to their male peers have been located. Thus, the documentation of male peer relationships – both friendships and rivalries – is held within boys' diaries and their letters to parents, or in their sister's records. This section concentrates on the diaries of two boys, Neil Gilchrist while in Vancouver and Albertan, Oliver Gardiner while at boarding school and during his summer break, to provide the direct boy voices about activities with friends. Although the one-on-one confidences as seen in the letters between girls, are missing, the evidence within boys' diaries, not unlike that within girls' diaries, reveals patterns in activities with friends (although many of the actual activities differed), and emphasize at these times, the gendered nature of their male pursuits.

Neil Gilchrist attended the "high" school in his Vancouver neighbourhood and had friends that he "bummed with" after school, on weekends, and vacations. In 1910 Neil used his daily pocket diary predominantly to record his activities with male friends and in these entries patterns emerge. Although Neil created abbreviated entries intended as aides mémoire, rather than full descriptions, enough detail emerges to chart some of the dramas and shared experiences. Neil recorded where he went and with whom, often he did not specify the activity, just which friends he was with at the time. Many of his entries are of a pattern, walking to and from school with other boys, friends to his house after school and sleepovers on Friday night. "Had John and Guy over at night. Was over to Ros's in afternoon." "Bummed around with John & Guy for a while. Bummed after

supper with John, Russ & Guy.”⁶⁴ Neil’s world included a group of boys whose composition shifted depending on the weekday, but his diary entries reveal his acceptance within this wider cohort. He is very much in the centre of activities rather than the margins. Over the course of the year Neil seems to have oscillated between two or three favourite male friends. His diary entries show how on occasion, one of these boys was the “odd man out.” “Had John & Guy over at night. John and I tried to tell things to each other without letting Guy hear (about taking girls to a show).”⁶⁵ When best friend Ros moved away for the summer, Neil began to pal with Russ and Guy. Inevitably when Ros returned tension in the dynamic occurred. “Ros & Guy had a quarrel.”⁶⁶

When boys disagreed, they often resorted to physical means to settle their differences and this is duly noted in Neil’s diary. For instance, “Russ got sore cause John hit him with some wet sand.”⁶⁷ “Noel and Pharic have scrap at noon because Noel said a rhyme about Honey.”⁶⁸ “Ros had scrap with Noel and both were sore. Noel hit Ros with stone. Ros knocked N. down.”⁶⁹ “Went for a picnic. Result – Noel sore, me sore, everyone sore.”⁷⁰ Arguments and fighting did not seem to create long-term rifts between Neil’s “gang” but blew over (perhaps because the physicality purged the frustrations) and within a few days of these incidents the boys were again spending time together. This give and take of daily interactions emphasizes the function of companionship, of each

⁶⁴ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 23 January and 29 August 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁵ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 20 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁶ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 10 September 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁷ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 12 August 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁸ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 21 April 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁶⁹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 14 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁷⁰ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 1 July 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

day's intertwining of personalities and shows the basis on which children (in these cases boys) operated as they shared experiences both large and small.

Girls' diary entries chart arguments with peers less often and such an easy restoration of female friendships is less evident. For instance a rift between Kathleen O'Reilly and her long-time friend Alice Ward was of long duration. For over five months Alice wrote letters and never received a reply. "My dearest Kathleen, although I have never yet received a line from you I bear no malice & keep to my promise."⁷¹ Girls more usually documented the causes of disharmony rather than the process of restoration. Never one to mince words, Josephine Crease wrote, "I hate Mina, just like Silvia."⁷² Written criticism may have helped her deal with peers whom she didn't like. "Florie Jones in church in the choir looking very nice indeed dressed in black & most stylish so unlike herself."⁷³ Alice Edwards complained of Daisy Brown. "She just makes my life miserable at school. I will be delighted if I ever hear that she has left the school for she makes remarks on my clothes, whether they be nice or nasty, which they never are, she makes remarks on what I do, she calls me cheater, hits me and altogether is very disagreeable."⁷⁴

What Neil and his friends thought was fun was generally very different than those activities mentioned by the girls in this study and could involve physical roughhousing, all part of boy culture. "Had fun after school watching E. Le Messurier fighting Wallace

⁷¹ Alice Ward to Kathleen O'Reilly, 5 July 1884. See sequence of letters from Alice Ward to Kathleen O'Reilly 1884. British Columbia Archives.

⁷² Josephine Crease, Diary, 24 October 1879. British Columbia Archives.

⁷³ Josephine Crease, Diary, 3 July 1881. British Columbia Archives.

⁷⁴ Alice Edwards to Oliver C. Edwards, 12 June 1892. Glenbow Archives.

Gordon & Fred Inche.”⁷⁵ He and male friends played with knives, even had duels with axes, “mauled each other,” and in other ways spent a great deal of time relating on the physical level of testing toughness. “Pimmy stuck pins into Rus at church. Rus and I play knife out at Park. Rus, Ernest & I play knife at night. I scare Anna & M. with my loud blasts.”⁷⁶ He also played organized sports, baseball in season, went to the YMCA, swam in the ocean, went for hikes up Grouse Mountain and smoked with friends in the “Chinaman’s field” behind the school. At fifteen, his world was still very boy-centric, but soon to change.

Oliver Gardiner also used his diary to record interaction with his peers. His inclusion as one in a group of like-minded boys is very similar to that of Neil Gilchrist. Gardiner often referenced his group as “the gang” or as a collective “we.” “We went for a walk to A.”⁷⁷ “I went to A with the gang.”⁷⁸ “The gang went to the midnight show. We had a great time.”⁷⁹ “A bunch of us went to Thurso for a supper we went to the show.”⁸⁰ Thus he enjoyed insider status. Like Gilchrist, he too operated at the level of physicality in competition; for instance, “I was made King by pulling the knife out of the door.”⁸¹ Oliver’s diary patterned activities such as tennis, swimming, fishing or bicycling with a core of friends. But his outdoor pursuits in the main seem very different from the urban focus of Neil Gilchrist and his friends and this provides an important reminder of the spectrum of options for play or amusements available to children a century ago, and of

⁷⁵ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 3 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁷⁶ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 17 July 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

⁷⁷ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 31 January 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁷⁸ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 21 January 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁷⁹ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 21 January 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁰ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 15 July 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁸¹ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 18 January 1926. Glenbow Archives.

the easy assumption of interrelationship with the natural world. “Cundill, Wilkinson & I had dinner and swam at the stump. We looked for birds eggs. Swam at iron bridge saw fireworks in the evening.”⁸² “Swatty and I went for a walk and got wet in the rain.”⁸³ “Swatty and I caught 15 eels in Gages Creek. It was good fun.”⁸⁴

Friendships across divides

Friendships usually occurred between children who found common ground, perhaps shared experiences, likes or dislikes. Friendships might logically occur because of physical proximity. Neighbour children often created their friendships through the convenience of interaction. The records of two girls in this study document friendships that were less commonly held and illustrate children’s ability to stretch beyond the expected or the comfortable opportunities and might make their own decisions about who they wished to befriend. The letters of Kathleen Jenns are important for the evidence they provide of friendships struck between children of different social classes. The working class neighbours that middle class Kathleen Jenns encountered lived within the same residential setting as she and her family who (presumably because of finances) resided in boarding houses or apartments more frequently than single-family dwellings.⁸⁵ Sharing hallways and walls thrust the Jenns sisters into an intimacy not experienced by their middle class counterparts in Vancouver or New Westminster who lived in detached houses, often in suburban parts of town. In consequence, these sisters experienced everyday living situations that are not seen in other children represented in this study.

⁸² Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 24 May 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁸³ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 1 June 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁴ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 17 May 1926. Glenbow Archives.

⁸⁵ Canada Census records for 1901 and 1911, combined with return addresses on the letters written to Eustace Jenns document many addresses and locations for the girls who, with either father or mother, moved regularly. The extended stretches were Los Angeles 1910-1912, Prince Rupert 1912-1917.

The transient and changing neighbourhood population offered Kathleen Jenns short-lived yet stimulating friendships and introduced her to alternative perspectives than those held and articulated by her father's family in British Columbia.

It is lovely living in Apartments there are such a lot of people around all the time. The girls & boys come running in to visit all the time and run out again, and they strum on the piano and we sing and have lovely times. It just suits me to have lots of people around all the time, and mother does not mind, she joins in the fun too. There is a nurse at the house and she is one of my best friends....⁸⁶

Her letters also suggest confidence in freely moving about the city with peers and in the coming and going of acquaintances, many of whom appear to be single young men and women who worked and lived independently and may, in fact, have been a few years older than Kathleen. "Two or three of the girls that I know say that they are tired of Los Angeles. They say that they never feel clean, and some of them are packing their trunks now to go to San Francisco and it makes me feel lonely to think they are going..."⁸⁷

Another unlikely friendship was that between Eula Carscallen and Violet Parlee who was a "bad girl" at school. "I went up to Crescent Heights for cooking today with Parlee (Violet Parlee) she really has a rotten name but she is nice just the same...I always hate to think a girl is horrid even if she has a bad name..."⁸⁸ A few days later, "I certainly don't want to get in with Violet but I can't shun the kid."⁸⁹ A month later, "Parlee (Violet) & I skipped the first period this AM. We had an extremely exciting time dodging teachers, however it turned out quite successfully."⁹⁰ Although Eula never

⁸⁶ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 28 September 1911. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁷ Kathleen Jenns to Eustace Jenns, 28 September 1911. British Columbia Archives.

⁸⁸ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 9 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

⁸⁹ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 16 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

⁹⁰ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 8 October 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

indicated why Violet had a “rotten name” a reason might have been rumour or reality concerning her sexual availability. Eula refers to her by her surname, which would reflect the way she was referenced among her peers. Using the surname set Violet apart from other girls (all of whom Eula refers to using their first name, never the surname alone). The surname removed her feminine identification, her positive attributes as a female.

Emerging sexuality and romance

Friendships changed as children matured and as they became more aware of their own developing bodies and of societal expectations of the lives they might lead when they ceased to be children and moved into the world of adults. A good example of this is found within a single diary entry made by nine-year-old John Biller. John used his diary almost exclusively to document his daily play activities and his playmates. On 19 July 1924 John’s entry revealed a very different game. “Went to farm and played at Lovers. I loved Peggy.”⁹¹ Peggy was his cousin and John’s words suggest an assignment rather than a romantic attachment. This is a single day of play in his year and out of pattern, but nevertheless this reference indicates his awareness of gender difference. Through role-playing he mimicked adult actions. The diaries of slightly older boys do not have such matter-of-fact references to play about romance. Instead, the words of these boys revealed a heightened self-awareness that friendships with girls have the potential to be, or are, something different than the casual mix of friends. For instance, Jack O’Reilly’s reference to being called a flirt, “Thursday evening 7 to 10 fellows went out to the

⁹¹ John Biller. Diary 19 July 1924. British Columbia Archives.

Radhams Fancy dress ball.... I was too old they said that I would Flirt with the girls so none of us could go.”⁹²

The sense of divide, of awkwardness in referencing girls and new subject matter occurred as boys become more aware of their sexuality. Their diaries and letters reveal a gamut of emotions, including excitement, nervousness, embarrassment and bravado regarding their interactions with the opposite sex. Boys talked cryptically about liking girls in their diaries but make no overt comments about insecurity. This is a direct contrast to girls, who in their own diaries worry about their height compared to boys their age, and employ new vocabulary as they began to reference these boys as “men.” A previous chapter showed such shifts in diary content within the larger context of maturity. The following section expands this theme through quotes from a handful of children as they negotiated the transition from a focus on platonic friendships to a desire to form romantic friendships.

The letters of sixteen-year-old Myra Ellison illustrate a subtle but gradual shift in information conveyed to her mother. She began – at first, with no great detail – to include information about the male students she met at social occasions, and about her impressions of them. She was tentative, unused to the interaction and perhaps shy, as evident in the following two quotes. “Gussie’s brother was on the same train coming from Kingston where he had spent his vacation. Ellen introduced me to him but I was not talking to him.”⁹³ “I don’t like Naomi’s brother very much, he rather overpowers me.”⁹⁴ By her second term at McGill, the letters of now seventeen-year-old Myra indicate she

⁹² Jack O’Reilly to Peter and Caroline O’Reilly, Xmas [ca. 1886] Xmas. British Columbia Archives.

⁹³ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 9 April 1907. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁹⁴ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 17 January 1908. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

was more comfortable interacting with boys. She began to attend co-ed social events, arriving not just in a clutch with other girls, but accompanied by a male companion. “I went with Frank Stanton a Junior in Arts. He used to live in Montreal. He skates very well but doesn’t dance. I like him quite well, better than most of the boys I have met.”⁹⁵ Myra’s social life underwent changes as boys entered the scene, although it continued to revolve around the girls in her dormitory. The integration of same gender and mixed gender friendships can be seen in the following quote.

Xmas Eve I had a lovely time – enjoyed the dinner and had some very good dances after. Not many of the men danced but I danced with all that did and filled in once in a while between them with the girls. I would much rather dance with Ellen or Lil or -than any man I know. Girls dance better than boys on the whole. Our party broke up at twelve.... After they were gone the girls held mistletoe for each others heads and kissed each other Merry Xmas.⁹⁶

The intermixing of terminology, alternately noting either “boys” or “men” is typical of the records created by several of the girls in this study and is an indication of not only a change in estimation but also of self-perception. If boys became men, then the girls, with whom these men now danced, must also be maturing and their own self-identities changing. Myra’s choice of words indicated how she saw herself, as someone who now danced with men, not boys.

A similar shift in delineation of friends and acquaintances occurred in the diary entries of Phoebe Sanders who, after she finished school and returned to live at home, began to reference male friends as men rather than boys. “I invited Eileen Harris and Nada Wright & her brother, Mr. Pepler, Gordon Egbert, Kenneth and 2 other men...we

⁹⁵ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 17 January 1908. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

⁹⁶ Myra Ellison to Sophia Ellison, 29 December 1907. Greater Vernon Museum and Archives.

all skated till 10 we played on the ice crack the whip, pull out of cross, tag, puss in the corner etc. etc.”⁹⁷

Mary Crease had a definite opinion of what she wished for in her socializing with peers. Again, she makes the distinction in terminology. “The parties here are not quite so amusing as those at Cannons, there are such heaps of old Maids & tho’ they may be very nice they are not amusing and the young gentlemen are only boys – generally very plain & with nothing whatever to say for themselves, so they are not interesting.”⁹⁸

Sometimes children mimicked adult attitudes or voice to convey their new interests in moving peer relationships to different levels. Thus, the manner in which fifteen year-old Richard Carr enquired of his sister Emily about the girl who lived across the street was worded to convey his own casual sophistication. “Next time you see Minnie Cridge tell her that I send my regards, (Ahem).”⁹⁹ A similar attempt at sophistication was also made by one of Christine Nelson’s friends. “Oh I say my dear I’m having a little party next Friday all the old bunch (both sexes) you know and I’d love to have you come down for it. I have a boy all picked out for you he is a dear...”¹⁰⁰ Children moved into friendships now with other motives in mind, or other points of interest to share. The friendships of older children take on a layer of expectation, which did not sit well with some, brought an unwanted anxiety where none had existed before. Such was the situation of fifteen-year-old Eula Carscallen who dated boys and had romantic ups and downs, which she wrote about candidly and rather objectively in her diary. Yet Eula was caught between a promise she had made to herself the previous summer. It was her

⁹⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 8 February 1906. Glenbow Archives.

⁹⁸ Mary Crease to Henry Crease, 6 August 1873. British Columbia Archives.

⁹⁹ Richard Carr to Emily Carr, 14 May 1890. British Columbia Archives.

¹⁰⁰ Lorna_ to Christine Nelson, 6 August 1921. Glenbow Archives.

intention to focus on her school, and the socializing and peer relationships that threatened her ability to do so. She wrote about this inner conflict, tied as it was also, to a friend from her Red Deer days who had gone to a private school in Ontario and still corresponded with Eula.

“Worked all morning,” she wrote one Saturday. “Today I had the blues.... I don’t know what got into me but I decided I’d have to go away – and my heart’s desire would be to go to a boarding school with Ervella. I want to get away from boys...”¹⁰¹ She tried talking about her dilemma with a girl friend, but to no avail. “”All afternoon I tried to turn Brenda’s conversation from its usual bounds, but I’m afraid I was very dull.”¹⁰² “I guess its all my own fault I can’t settle down – but during the holidays I never took into my plans any boys, never considered for a moment that I would be bothered along that line.”¹⁰³ Boys were distractions from her schoolwork and took up much of her free time. They also interfered with church and Sunday school attendance, both important to her. “Started for Sunday School with Brenda but as soon as we got to the Church Ed & Jack drove up in Ed’s car. The temptation was easily given way to...so we went for a ride instead.”¹⁰⁴

Friends found themselves in awkward positions when socializing with peers who had paired off. Eighteen-year-old Phoebe Sanders noted her discomfort around two girlfriends and their dates. “They spooned all the time...stuck together like glue.”¹⁰⁵ She and her friends found themselves caught up in speculation about other girls and their

¹⁰¹ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 18 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁰² Eula Carscallen. Diary. 18 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁰³ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 19 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁰⁴ Eula Carscallen. Diary. 19 September 1920. Library and Archives Canada.

¹⁰⁵ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 30 April 1908. Glenbow Archives.

“young men.” “We are wondering,” she wrote, “whether Jessie and [Roy] Jones are engaged.”¹⁰⁶ Phoebe had opinions about the romantic attachments of other friends, and especially noted when she saw shortcomings in their choices of partners. In 1907 her friend Violet “broke off her engagement with Mr. Grant...because he was behaving so badly at Macleod (drinking)...everyone is very glad it is broken as no one likes him at all.”¹⁰⁷ Phoebe found both temperament and racial background at fault in the choice made by another school friend. With stridency and a certain backbiting commentary she reported, “Noel Moresby of Victoria was married to Basil Prior of Victoria BC son of Col Prior they were married at Seattle U.S. Basil, I believe, is a gay dissipated young fellow & has Indian blood in him. Since they were married I heard they had gone to San Francisco & joined a vaudeville troop isn’t it sad.”¹⁰⁸ To satisfy curiosity, a friend wrote to Phoebe to enquire after her own affairs of the heart. “How did the bank clerk pan out? I suppose he is a lemon.”¹⁰⁹ The bank clerk appears to have been a fellow named Douglas who wrote letters to Phoebe from Vancouver.

An earlier observation in Chapter 6 that marriage terminated childhood, left room to consider the role of romance after girls had “come out.” The presence of romance in cross gender peer relationships is not plentiful, some of the references are scattered in earlier chapters, visible in quotes from Helen Macleod’s friend Edyth Perry, for instance, when she wrote about “my beau”¹¹⁰ or in Eula Carscallen’s notations about her boyfriend.

Diaries preserve very few revelations about their romantic lives. “I got a most

¹⁰⁶ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 28 September 1908. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁷ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 5 September 1907. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁸ Phoebe Sanders. Diary. 2 May, but written on page for 15 July 1908. Glenbow Archives.

¹⁰⁹ J. R. (Rae) McIllree to Phoebe Sanders, 13 November 1909. Glenbow Archives. Letters to Phoebe Sanders from “Douglas”, no surname, are in her incoming correspondence 1909-1910.

¹¹⁰ Edyth Perry to Helen Macleod, 8 March 1891. Glenbow Archives.

affectionate letter from Scott. He is very funny.”¹¹¹ The words are all on the surface, very little detail incorporated, but enough to sense that girls were romantically involved, if not sexually active. The records located for this study include a handful of letters received by girls from older male admirers, almost certainly young men, older than twenty-one-years of age. Each was fully employed or near to completing university, indicating that they had embarked on their career paths, and undoubtedly considered themselves as men. Phoebe Sanders received letters from young bank tellers and salesmen and a few North West Mounted Police, Mary Willison from a missionary stationed in northern British Columbia, and Christine Nelson from a car salesman in a different town.¹¹² Each of the letters reference larger cohorts of friends and social activities, but the texts themselves communicate specific needs to keep in touch and are flirtatious in wording. Often these writers close with salutations of endearment, or wistful hopes that the recipient would write to them and not forget them in their absence. They are romantic, designed to connect with girls at that level, to further their hopes. There are no explicit references to sexuality, the wording earnest and seemingly chaste.

Same sex sexuality

“Victorians celebrated friendship between men, especially young men, in terms very similar to those used to laud intimacy between women,” writes Sharon Marcus. Didactic literature “praised sentimental, spiritual, romantic, and physical bonds between men.”¹¹³ John Tosh has observed that public schooling “instilled an enduring preference

¹¹¹ Claudia Gardiner, Diary, 29 April 1925. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹² Phoebe Sanders, correspondence inwards, 1910 – 1915. Glenbow Archives.

¹¹³ Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England*: 86.

for all-male sociability.”¹¹⁴ We know romantic or sexual interest between boys was known to exist at schools¹¹⁵ but the boys who attended boarding schools in this study – Lindley and Arthur Crease, Frank and Jack O’Reilly, Humphrey Parlby, Oliver Gardiner, Blythe Rogers – wrote very little in that regard. Certainly suggestive remarks are seen in the letters, but whether the word meanings equate with today’s interpretations remains unresolved.

Jack O’Reilly made a single reference to a fellow student as the “pretty boy” but nothing further. He wrote to Kathleen, “Perse send his love to you. You know who he is the Pretty Lad (He does not like being called the pretty boy).”¹¹⁶ Such terminology within the boarding school context indicated a boy of androgynous beauty who might be an object of sexual desire for some boys, or even the target of sexual acts. Jack’s reference indicates Perse to be a friend, someone for whom he passes on a personal message to his sister.

Hearing from Frank after his years of school and return home to Victoria, Kathleen O’Reilly made a remark that is ambiguous, which she reinforced with underlining. No further clues have been uncovered. In commenting upon a letter received from Frank, she said to her mother, “I was interested in all he said – he does not seem to care for BC young ladies.”¹¹⁷

In the early twentieth century, girls who attended all-girl boarding schools or the newer co-ed universities noted in their writings demonstrative affections for one another. Kissing and hugging was not uncommon, evidence of gendered demonstrativeness. Ellen

¹¹⁴ Tosh, *Manliness and masculinities in nineteenth-century Britain: essays on gender, family, and empire*: 38.

¹¹⁵ Barman, *Growing up British in British Columbia: boys in private school*: 106.

¹¹⁶ Jack O’Reilly to Kathleen O’Reilly, 14 February 1886. British Columbia Archives.

¹¹⁷ Kathleen O’Reilly to Caroline O’Reilly, 14 February 1884. British Columbia Archives.

Ellison wrote about dancing with other girls and of her preference to dance with girls rather than boys and of kissing girls under the mistletoe.¹¹⁸ But there is no hint of sexual undertones in the way she noted these activities. Her sister recorded the following situation, which does invite some speculation. “Miss. Knox gave out the funniest notice after tea tonight. There is to be no more kissing this term. I don’t know why but suppose it is some health reason. So many schools have had all kinds of sicknesses which we have escaped so far.”¹¹⁹ Was the dormitory mistress responding to something more than kisses given and received in the context of girl culture? Did this notice indicate adult concerns about physical or romantic interests between the female students, of “smashing” the term used for female crushes?

Sharon Marcus, a scholar of nineteenth century literature, states that intense female friendships were important and integral to Victorian society. “Friendship, infatuation, marriage, and women’s objectification of women [need] to be differentiated, not measured in terms of a single sexual standard.” She argues that sexuality was part of everyday friendships and not necessarily seen as “resistance to the family and marriage.”¹²⁰ The strongest evidence for a romantic female friendship in this study is found in a fragmentary diary of seventeen-year-old Susan Crease, who, in 1873 recorded what appears as an infatuation with an older female whom she alternately references either as “Miss. C. Dupont” or “Carrie,” the former suggesting someone whom she categorized as adult, but the latter indicating a personal connection that transcended age. The entries follow thus and cover a period of about a month and are included here in their

¹¹⁸ Ellen Ellison to Sophia Ellison 29 December 1907. Greater Vernon and District Museum and Archives.

¹¹⁹ Myra Ellison to Elizabeth Ellison, 9 April 1907. Greater Vernon and District Museum and Archives.

¹²⁰ Marcus, *Between women: friendship, desire, and marriage in Victorian England*: 21, 29.

entirety. “B & I went to school & I have been grumbling at having to do so because it will prevent my going with the Duponts on their camping expedition as well as because it prevents me seeing Miss. C. Dupont whom I love very much.” A few days later, “Carrie has been to see us she stayed about 20 minutes & we had a little talk.” “Miss. [C] Dupont came to see dear Mama in the afternoon, said how much she would like a companion for a nice walk. Mama would not take the hint & let me go.” “Aunt E. Carrie, Clara & I went to see dear little Janey Pemberton – I [wanted?] to have a nice long talk with Carrie but hardly had any chance. Aunt E. would go on & Clara would not go with her.” “Miss. C.D. asked me to go for a walk with her...on Sat. have not yet asked Mama.” “Mama has refused to let me go out with Miss. C. Dupont.”¹²¹ No resolution to the impasse between mother and daughter is documented and this diary fragment stands alone. Very few of Susan’s childhood diaries or correspondence survive and it is therefore difficult to put this episode into a larger context but what the entries do suggest is that Susan’s mother may have understood the implications of her daughter’s infatuation, whereas Susan’s own yearnings might not have been clearly understood by her for what they might reveal.

In general, there is a gap in the children’s records regarding same sex sexuality. Neither do they speak of it, nor does their writing reveal whether they understood or recognised same sex sexuality as a reality. There is no evidence that it might be within their experience. In the absence of evidence, it is therefore difficult to have meaningful discussion of the child perspectives. All that can be accomplished here is to introduce the possibilities through these few inconclusive quotations.

¹²¹ Susan Crease. Diary. 25 September, 1, 10, 12, 14, 17 October 1873. British Columbia Archives.

Heterosexual commentary

None of the girls in this study wrote specifics about the physical aspects of relationships they had with boys. For instance, Eula Carscallen's diary entries document the comings and goings of boyfriends, the arguments and the breakups but she did not commit to paper any evidence of sexual yearnings, frustrations or expectations, let alone actions. In letters girls exchanged confidences with tantalizing hints intended to lead the reader to suppositions. The example below shows the bravado and boasting which intimated but does not confirm. It is the most suggestive reference amongst the girls in this study.

You bad naughty wicked child you haven't answered my last letter.... Gladys dear I'm madly in love at the present moment but I guess it won't last very long. Those things never do with me, but still its not so helpless at the present moment as he doesn't love "Stouts" anymore. I guess you know by now who it is. In case you don't its Bill Christie. I'm perfectly crazy about him.... When I think of in the back of Roy's motor last Saturday night. Sing of Joy. Sing of Bliss!!¹²²

Is the lack of overt sexual commentary a silence based upon self-censorship or a silence because it was uncommon? The records of the girls in this study reveal less than hoped, but a few boys did record such activity and this fact provides evidence that sexuality and physical experimentation did occur among those under twenty-years.

Overt sexual commentary was only found in the records of three boys in this study. The first example is in correspondence of Victoria-born Edward Rithet, who, at age nineteen traveled in Germany with his older sister and mother. In one letter he wrote to his younger brother about his social life. "I have been having a high old time myself

¹²² Marg_ to Gladys Berry, 2 June 1914. Glenbow Archives.

lately. Night before last we went out to a dance & never left until half passed four & on tomorrow we go to another which means about 3 hours sleep so I am going to turn in early tonight.” He then turned to another aspect of his personal situation.

I have got an awfully bad job on at present. What do you think it is? A multi millionaire’s daughter wants to marry me she is dead gone on me & is a dear little girl & very fireiy. I see her every day & she throws her arms around me & hugs me to pieces. I don’t know how it came about but she is a friend of Gert’s [sister] & I used to go out and see here very often & now – well – Her dad is a big paper Manufacturer & is one of the most richest men in Frankfurt. I wonder if I will splice? Don’t say a word of this to Gert she doesn’t know quite how it stands.”¹²³

A few months later he dispensed words of advice regarding girls back home in Victoria.

“By God John I don’t think it is at all right for you to deprive the 400 of your society.

Why man do it right, go right in & have some fun you could do what ever you would

with them. But!! Be careful of Kitty. By the way how is she? As nutty as ever? Or

worse.”¹²⁴ He then ruminated about his own situation.

You should see me do the society act here I have a hell of a time...[a man] can do just what ever he wants with these German girls they are the warmest going. I could have what ever I want even in the highest families but I get sick of it...What do you think! You remember that heiress I told you about? Well she popped (is that right) the question to me when I was in the wood with her. Hell Eh! It isn’t Leapyear but that don’t cut with her, I had a pretty time quieting her down too. I would like to get to know some decent Americans though it would be a little bit of a change, there is something about an American girl that I don’t find in these here & I miss it...This place of a night is pretty slow though, everything closes up at 12 o’clock except in Dirty town & that is open always. I went down there once...it just costs you 50 fen which is 12c[ents], how would [you] like that Eh? You don’t have to go there for it though, the streets at 8 PM are full of them.¹²⁵

Edward explained how he managed while his mother and sister were about.

¹²³ Edward Rithet to John Rithet, 23 March 1900. British Columbia Archives.

¹²⁴ Edward Rithet to John Rithet, 14 May 1900. British Columbia Archives.

¹²⁵ Edward Rithet to John Rithet, 14 May 1900. British Columbia Archives.

I have been keeping batch quarters for the last month. Gert and Mother went to Paris & a few other places, it didn't effect me much though. I had just as good a time. I play tennis nearly every afternoon with three others. There are twelve clay courts at the Palmer Garten & they are out of sight when I am not there I go to a rodezvous with my fiancé in the Wood or some other secluded spot.¹²⁶

Although he was similar in age to Lindley Crease or Frank O'Reilly when they finished school, Edward Rithet was a world apart in his circumstances. His letters are significant for their explicit content which suggests not only his understanding of the options open to a young male, but that he had an active sexual life, details of which he willingly confided to his brother. In comparison the following examples are naïve, more revealing of awkward emerging sexuality than full-blown hedonism.

Fifteen-year-old Neil Gilchrist's diary notations clearly delineate an expanding preoccupation with sexuality and with girls. Instead of socializing with just his male friends, he began to attend parties. "Went to John Cornyn's party at night and got acquainted with both Miss. DP & Miss. AC but I like DP the best. Had lots of fun playing games at party & also going home."¹²⁷ But soon he began to include coded words within his daily entries¹²⁸ to record events that were departures from earlier entries. Perhaps he was uncomfortable about the language and subject matter. The code was assigned to spell swear words and body parts, to disguise entries about risqué thoughts and activities. Words in italics in the quotes below show the words that appear only as code in his diary. "Had Ros over at night and we played cards with a bunch of smutty postcards."¹²⁹ "We

¹²⁶ Edward Rithet to John Rithet, 14 May 1900. British Columbia Archives.

¹²⁷ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 18 February 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹²⁸ The code was easily cracked, combinations of vertical and horizontal lines in place of letters when writing words.

¹²⁹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 13 March 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

showed the girls some *dirty postcards*.”¹³⁰ “Pelosi told us at noon about *Spanish Fly*.”¹³¹ “Clint tells a *dirty joke*.”¹³² “Took 91 in Latin exam...Ros & I celebrated up in my room *smoking*.”¹³³ “Anna had a party at night. Had some *leg & ass*.”¹³⁴ Neil’s incorporation of language protected by a code suggests he is not comfortable with using the words on their own. As evidence of sexual activities it, like the innuendo in the letters of girls, shows bravado, but is not necessarily indicative of engagement.

The diary entries of sixteen-year-old Oliver Gardiner did not employ code but hinted at his new feelings and tentative advances with girls through a new choice of words and phrases. During summer vacation he recorded his romantic advances with a girl whose name was Enid whom he nicknamed “Hotsy” and another girl, Corina. “Hotsy is sick again,” he noted. “did not see Hotsy, darn!!!”¹³⁵ “I like Corina the best.... I had a wonderful evening with C. & saw E. on the doorstep we talked for a long time. For notes on C. see memoranda.”¹³⁶ “Hotsy asked me to play tennis so I did after we played cards and looked at pictures. ‘Um boy.’”¹³⁷ “We went to the show. I paid for E. she and I walked arm in arm coming home.”¹³⁸ “I took E. for a ride on the cross bar. ‘Um Boy.’”¹³⁹

¹³⁰ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 9 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³¹ Spanish Fly is an apocryphal aphrodisiac allegedly extracted from crushed blue-green beetles. Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 9 June 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³² Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 4 April 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³³ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 13 May 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³⁴ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 10 November 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

¹³⁵ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 21 June 1926. Glenbow Archives.

¹³⁶ The memoranda page of Oliver’s diary notes the favourite candies and the birthdates of his girl friends. Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 27 June and 10 July 1926. Glenbow Archives.

¹³⁷ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 12 July 1926. Glenbow Archives.

¹³⁸ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 15 July 1926. Glenbow Archives.

¹³⁹ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 16 July 1926. Glenbow Archives.

“A day long to be remembered. I K[issed] E[nid].”¹⁴⁰ Oliver is certainly more circumspect but by nicknaming a girl ‘Hotsy’ he instantly revealed an interest that was not platonic. These diary entries are such a departure from those before that they indicate change within Oliver, in his decision to use his diary to reveal romantic exploits rather than activities with his male friends as previously. In the memoranda at the back of his diary, Oliver listed the birthdays and favourite candies of both Corina and Enid.

Oliver’s diary when compared to the explicit commentary of Edward Rithet and the disguised new language of Neil Gilchrist demonstrates that boys experienced their new sexual selves differently and gradually. These new directions represent clear departures from earlier selves when sexual awareness was less in the forefront. Boys such as Neil Gilchrist and Edward Rithet employ and accept terminology that clearly indicate their embrace of such new directions, while Oliver Gardiner and girls such as the friend of Gladys Bury purposefully hint through phrases such as “Um boy” or “Sing of Bliss” without the introduction of or use of new and meaning-laden terminology. It was all about comfort levels, about presenting yourself to peers in ways that indicated you belonged and in purposefully stepping towards the world of adults.

Conclusion

This chapter has dealt principally with friendships, but children also negotiated their ways through difficult encounters with peers, and in less than supportive peer relationships. They chose to be a friend, to not be a friend, to support a peer or ignore a peer. These experiences are visible in the child-created letters, but the choice to focus on friendships was deliberate because friendships are less transitory and this comparative

¹⁴⁰ Oliver Gardiner. Diary. 14 September 1926. Glenbow Archives.

longevity allows us to follow friendships over the years of childhood and to compare the records of younger and older children, to present evidence of individual children as they changed (grew, matured) over time. By examining friendships through the perspectives of the children themselves we see them utilize agency as they made deliberate decisions in regards to peer relationships; it was one aspect of their social lives over which they had some control.

But these are the “whys” of children’s interactions, their records also reveal the “hows” and the “whos” of numerous and intertwined circles of friends and of the children’s own thoughts about the friendships they held with peers and also show how the types of friendships and the basis for friendships changed as children grew up. Children with neighbourhood friends organized their own recreation and “bummed around” in each other’s company. In letters to friends girls developed long distance discourses in which they gathered and kept close those in their sphere. Peripatetic children also prioritized friendships as a means of fixing stability as their worlds changed with each move.

The experience of being a child and being a friend, of having friends formed the core of children’s own subjectivities. Their writings clearly document how children “in-the-moment” handled difficult concepts and supported their peers, sharing life’s ups and downs. They recognized and accepted their own changing status, and the changing membership within their own cohort as they transitioned towards adulthood. Thus, when the peer relationships of Phoebe Sanders for instance, opened up to include romantic relationships, the very basis of belonging, the bonds between children underwent change. Gender based friendships of long standing became awkward as romantic based

attachments superseded them. A common quality that bound children together was their unmarried state. Marriage therefore disrupted groups and challenged individual identities, just as it removed children from childhood and opened up their new status as adults. Social relationships between children took on new characteristics when child-marriages intervened, children often did not know how to relate to or reference newly married friends, as evident in the diary of Neil Gilchrist whose comment on a friend's marriage was, "Sarah Cottell becomes Mrs. Fly."¹⁴¹

The records created by children whose schooling took them away from home are especially important because their experiences of friendships and of peer relationships occurred in the absence of parental oversight and thus the children's own commentary is the only record of these interactions and of connections that continued, after schooling and crossed geographic divides. These long-distance friendships reveal social connections deliberately forged by children who maintained these connections on their own initiatives, because they were important to them. These represent otherwise unseen linkages between communities.

Sometimes the friendships formed by children extended into adulthood, and this is certainly true of the girls in Alberta barracks society. Thus the early beginnings and the basis upon which adult friendships began can be interpreted through child-created records without the distortion of memory. Learning how children made friends is important in itself, in understanding child relationships, and constitutes a building block in our understanding of how these children would later act when adults.

¹⁴¹ Neil Gilchrist. Diary. 24 August 1910. City of Vancouver Archives.

This is all key evidence that is missed if we overlook the records created by children. We miss understanding the immediacy of childhood, as children experience the give and take of peer relationships. We miss the community connections that run separately than those of their parents as in the situation with Eula Carscallen and Violet Pardee, or even with Neil Gilchrist. Or we miss the inter-family intimacies as revealed by the Crease, O'Reilly and Ward children. Connections between South Africa and Alberta, as is the case with Flora Steele and Phoebe Sanders introduce other means by which children learned of the world and its different peoples. The Jenns girls carried with them remembrances of friendships with working class peers and learned valuable alternate perspectives when making sense of their own situations.

Children's friendships provide important new evidence concerning their own communities in British Columbia and Alberta. The connections forged within their communities reveal additional and new layers of community interconnectedness. Not only were these historical communities shaped through the business connections of adult males, or the social visitations of adult females, or by the churches, cultural organizations or the physical frameworks of transportation and infrastructure. These communities were built and internally supported, and given character and individuality through the power of children's own connections and the important role played by their childhood friendships.

Chapter 10: Conclusion

This dissertation has demonstrated that the letters and diaries of children hold important details concerning the lives and situations of specific children and contribute to historical understanding about the social and cultural history of the time period, especially regarding the settler societies of British Columbia and Alberta. More broadly, the study sets itself within the new field of the history of children and youth through its emphasis on child-centred perspectives of childhood rather than adult-centred interactions with children or adult retrospective reflections about their own childhood.

The aim of the dissertation has been to enable new understandings of historical childhood and to this end it offers several important contributions. The study reveals that children marked and measured their own growing up in ways meaningful to themselves and their peers and that these measures might be different from the markers recognized by adults. Children recognized weight, size and other aspects of physical growing as well as age related milestones in ways that show they held common understandings. These understandings are the perspectives of being a child. Children also shared amongst themselves and acknowledged within others irrevocable change or transitions away from childhood such as menses, first jobs or engagements with the opposite sex. The study also noted that children of all ages across the cohort held a firm awareness that childhood was an act of passage along a continuum.

The study revealed several different facets of the growing up process, which reiterate and strengthen the reality that for children, each day, each month, each year changed in many ways and on different levels. The assumption of gender roles was one

of many ongoing challenges for children for of course it was not an automatic process, but one that was gradual and could be difficult to achieve. We see both boys and girls struggling to conform, wrestling with emotional maturity and expected standards of behaviour. In particular, boys reveal that living up to gendered standards might be more difficult than anticipated. They had to work hard to absorb these concepts and were then expected to demonstrate established masculine behaviours. Yet in their voices we hear raw emotional needs set alongside brave fronts as they attempted to control their emotions, to act in manly ways.

Children held their life experiences in their hearts and in their bodies. They felt and acted, they remembered and held close their life experiences in ways that emphasized their body as the translator, the way of remembering and referencing. This study contributes to the history of the body because the methodology of utilizing child-created records enabled close observation of the ways in which children coded their experiences and made sense of their growing which was through ongoing references to their changing bodies and to the memories held within their bodies. Likewise children feared for their bodies when ill, and held in their body's memories of serious infectious diseases and injuries. Children's understandings of self are then rooted in a series of physical changes to their bodies, in their emotional needs and through their acquisition of gendered and culturally based behaviours. The role of place in contributing to these understandings of self is another aspect of children's voices that revealed itself in this study. Children, especially when separated, preserved memories of the physical geography of places that they called home. These memories were experienced in their bodies and became intertwined in their delineations of who they were. They belonged here, they identified

with this place, they yearned for these aspects, they equated home with very specific qualities, mixing memories of human interactions with experiences of the senses that established place as significant for them.

One of the strengths of this dissertation is in demonstrating a different way of looking at and documenting children's relationships with family members generally – that is, through the voices of children. But it is the category of sibling relationships that is of particular note because scholarship usually traces adult siblings rather than child siblings, moving back from adulthood toward distant child remembrances whereas this study is the reverse. In-the-moment conversations between child siblings allow us to see the development of these life long relationships at early stages and to see the ways siblings interacted at different stages of their own growing.

This study could very easily have been set only within an historical time period without the geographical space to delineate and specify. Such a study would have advocated for child voices, looked for patterns in children's writings, unpacked word usage and demonstrated the value of learning about relationships from the child side and contributed to our understanding of childhood. But, it might have seemed hollow. As Elliot West reminds us, “grand themes are meaningless apart from the unique experiences of individual children.”¹ The one hundred children represented here were historical beings. What they had to say in letters and diaries also reveals the components of personality, of identity and of subjectivities that were formed by their places of living, the specific people with whom they interacted, the landscape and environs in which they grew. They and their families inhabited a gendered, classed society that was situated on

¹ West, *Growing up with the country: childhood on the far-western frontier*: xxi.

the western Pacific edge of the continent and in the forested mountainous interior and on grass prairie landscapes of big skies and meandering rivers. The specifics of geography, of culture and of social interactions informed their understandings of self and guided their actions and their interactions within others. Historical place was a necessary component because, of course, it was impossible to separate out. This dissertation therefore contributes to our understanding of the settler communities of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century in British Columbia and Alberta because the child centred evidence contain references to historical people, situations, events, politics and various happenings and this evidence has seldom been utilized by historians. The settler societies seen through the eyes of children provide historians the opportunity to revisit and reinterpret scholarship.

The dissertation has also revealed several important historical situations that have been previously unexplored in studies of the settler societies in British Columbia and Alberta during the period. The first and perhaps most surprising revelation is the bald fact that almost half of the children in this cohort experienced childhoods framed by significant separation from their immediate families. These separations occurred because of schooling and went on for several key years during which their growing up occurred in the absence of family support and without family intimacies. Children, principally young upper middle class boys, lived in boarding situations at distant schools, usually in Britain and central Canada. They left their homes as young as nine or ten years of age and often did not return until their late teenage years.

The reality that many upper middle class boys were absent from their families for such long periods of time has not been recognized as an important characteristic defining

the settler society in British Columbia or Alberta. It has not been previously considered in historical studies of the development and growth of these provinces or of the social makeup of the immigrant populations. The separation of boys from their families, and of parents from their sons, siblings from their brothers has important ramifications because these were years of emotional loss and pain for all parties. Children returning from absences had to reintegrate into family situations that were in many instances only a distant remembrance, encapsulated in their memories. The missed years of intimacies would never be recaptured. The separations must have coloured the ways these children then moved forward into adulthood and how they approached their adult lives; the actions they took while parents themselves would be formed by the realities of their own childhoods. Knowing about these separations and analyzing the voices of separated children provides new and key documentation about family and community dynamics in the Canadian West in this period.

The dissertation also brought forth a second important historical situation characterizing settler societies in British Columbia and Alberta that has been previously unexplored or unrecognized. This is the important role played by children in community life and the extent to which the connections children made in their everyday interactions with peers established linkages that joined families and communities. The networks of children's friendships within their neighbourhoods and also long distance showed that ties existed which might be different from those established by their parents and that these ties deserve a more thorough analysis with respect to the larger issue of community characteristics and intercommunity linkages. In British Columbia and Alberta the settler communities were newly formed, the population was young with fewer generational

divisions. The notion that children, not just adults, might then create the characteristics of individual communities, that children growing up in urban centres and rural enclaves had the power to influence and mould these places through daily living and activities and through the creation of community bonds opens opportunities for rethinking our assumptions about these provinces and their social histories.

As expected, this study has stimulated my own desire for further research and I hope will also suggest new areas of exploration for others for the history of children and childhood generally but in specifically in regards to the history of British Columbia and Alberta generally. The rich records of children are many layered and should be repurposed for the information they contain regarding Western Canada, for the references to historical personalities, for their insights into historical events and situations, for details of place, of people in their communities.

In a study such as this with a focus on historical children it is very easy to draw comparisons of the experiences of children today with children in the past. In some cases daily life routines of yesterday and today show consistency, such as the continuing role of schooling and of play in forming the days of children. But children in the historical period experienced different understandings and expectations around communication. Long distance letter writing kept ties with family and friends and created connections between communities. But mail delivery was not instantaneous. The comfort of knowing at an instant via computer linkage or telephone was not available. Children learned to be patient, to act on their own, to continue with their living while awaiting news of absent family or friends, of stilling the imagination when delays in receiving mail occurred, or when news was worrisome. Likewise, historical children's lives were

framed in the context of childhood illnesses, of pestilence and diseases that are today largely eradicated and more fully understood. Historical children saw illness as random and unpredictable. Illness might be a major factor in how a child measured her life; it could create vigilance and worry as an underlying condition.

This study began in archives, in a curiosity to locate records to situate specific historical children within their larger contexts, but it evolved into a wider desire for advocacy, to demonstrate worth, to prove that children's words are not incidental to history, that their perspectives – those of younger children who view their worlds from “three feet off the ground” and those of older children who straddle the continuum that is childhood with ever increasing competence – add value to the historical record. I believe that the evidence has more than adequately demonstrated not only these points, but has opened up new ways of thinking about children living in the settler societies in British Columbia and Alberta.

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Appendix A

Meet the children

The records of almost one hundred individual children are employed in this study, and of these, one quarter of the children are major players, that is, the quantity of extant records created by each child documents their activities, relationships and thoughts over the course of several years and with detail. To keep each child clear in the minds of the reader, and to ensure child family relationships are evident (and thus the context for the records), this appendix includes brief biographical sketches of each child and when required, names and data on family members and places of residence. The children who are “major players” are summarized below in short biographical sketches that place them within the context of parents and siblings, cultural backgrounds. A complete alphabetical listing of all the children follows, the names of major players distinguished by bold font.

1) Major Players

The children of the O'Reilly family

The O'Reilly family lived in Victoria, British Columbia. Four children were born to the parents although the third child died in 1876, at the age of seven. Frank (born 1866), Kathleen (born 1867), and Jack (born 1873) wrote to and received letters from parents during parental absences from home; wrote to and received letters from friends, parents and siblings when absent from home themselves. They were a literate family, the child-letters served as practise in penmanship, in composition and in obligations.

The mother, English-born Caroline Trutch (1831-1899), met her husband, Irishman, Peter O'Reilly (1827-1905), while on a visit to her brothers in Victoria, and they were married shortly after. O'Reilly served in several capacities for the colonial

government, including Gold Commissioner. He later became a County Court Judge and later still, federal Indian Commissioner for British Columbia. His employment involved extensive travel, causing him to be absent from home several times each year for extended periods, during which his children wrote to him.

In 1877, at the age of eleven, the eldest son, Frank was sent to school in England. He remained there for the next six years, returning home only as his younger siblings themselves embarked on their English schooling years. In 1883, his ten-year-old brother, Jack, replaced him at school for what became eight years of studies while his fifteen-year-old sister, Kathleen attended a finishing academy where she remained for two years.

The records include Kathleen's diaries and correspondence, Frank and Jack's correspondences.

The children of the Crease family

Sarah Lindley (1826-1922), the daughter of a renowned English botanist, married Henry Pering Pellew Crease (1823-1905) in 1853. Five years later, Crease immigrated to the colony of Vancouver Island, his wife and three young daughters followed in 1860. Four children were added to the family while in New Westminster and Victoria, three would survive infancy. Crease became Attorney General of British Columbia, later Puisne Judge and Justice of the Supreme Court before retirement and knighthood. The family, while not wealthy, had prominence because of Crease's professional employment and Sarah's social position.

Eighteen years separated the eldest and youngest Crease children, Mary (born 1854), Susan (born 1855), Barbara (born 1857), Josephine (born 1864), Lindley (born 1867), Arthur (born 1872). Because of the age spread the records included in this study

are confined to those created by the three eldest as children together, and the three youngest as a separate sibling group. In November 1877, ten-year-old Lindley was sent to England for school. He and Frank O'Reilly traveled together to England, shared seasickness and homesickness, then went their own separate ways when in England as they attended schools in different areas of the country. Lindley, like Frank O'Reilly would be in England for the remainder of his childhood. He did not return to British Columbia until late 1885 when he was eighteen. Arthur followed him at school in England from age twelve to eighteen. The girls all received schooling in British Columbia.

The records include diaries and correspondence from all the children.

The children of the Sanders family

Phoebe Sanders, the eldest of two daughters, was born 19 September 1889 at Regina, Saskatchewan in the home of her grandfather, at the Northwest Mounted Police barracks. Her father, Colonel Gilbert Sanders (born in Yale, BC) was stationed at Regina, and then Fort Macleod until 1898, then Battleford, Saskatchewan, and from 1901 to 1906 in Calgary, then Regina for three years, followed by Athabaska Landing in 1909, and returned to Calgary upon retirement in 1911 to become a police magistrate. Phoebe's mother, Caroline Jukes was the daughter of a surgeon in the Police and accustomed to such a peripatetic lifestyle.

Phoebe's sister, Constance (known as Tods) born 7 March 1891, also in Regina, was her best and ongoing playmate. Moving around as the family did, the sisters were thrust together with each uprooting as they left behind friends, or at times found

themselves in locations where there were few or no other children resident. From 1906-1907 the girls attended Crofton House School for Girls in Vancouver, BC.

A key family member is Edith Howard Browning, younger sister to Phoebe's father, Gilbert Sanders,² who met her future husband, rancher Albert Edward Browning at Fort Macleod. They married in 1893³ and by 1903 lived in Ireland, Browning's country of origin. The Brownings returned to Fort Macleod for a brief visit in autumn 1904. In 1910, Phoebe visited this aunt in Ireland, and stayed for over a year.

Phoebe Sanders kept diaries from 1905-1908 and saved correspondence from family and friends. This material, along with a handful of letters written by her sister, forms the documentation.

The children of the Ellison family

Price Ellison was an Englishman who became a rancher in the Okanagan, established significant land holdings and later served as a Member of Provincial Parliament; Minister and Commissioner of Lands for British Columbia. His American-born wife, Sophie Christina Johnson, trained as a teacher, met Ellison while on a visit to her brother who lived for a time in the area near what would become Vernon, BC. The Ellison family lived a rural existence, as Vernon was in its infancy. Eight children were born between 1885 and 1905.

Ellen Fearnought Ellison, the second child born to Price Ellison and Sophie (née Johnson) was born on 5 August 1887 in Vernon. She attended local schools until the autumn of 1904 when she and her mother traveled to Peoria, Illinois to visit an ailing

² Gilbert Sanders grew up in British Columbia. They lived at Yale, BC. The children were all baptized either at Yale or at New Westminster. Vital Events Registrations, BC Archives.

³ Marriage took place in Manhattan, New York on 25 April 1893. IGA Individual Record for Edith Howard Sanders. M0016595. <http://www.familysearch.org>.

grandmother. Ellen stayed on to lend a hand and continued her high school there. In September 1905 she began studies at Havergal College in Toronto and attended until 1907 when she enrolled at Royal Victoria College, McGill University, Montreal. She was a student there until 1910.

Myra King Ellison, born 30 May 1890, was the next younger sister to Ellen. She too attended Havergal College where she completed her matriculation 1906 to 1907. She began at McGill with Ellen and eventually graduated with a Bachelors degree in Economics 1911, a Master of Arts in Economics 1913.

The records used are correspondences of Ellen and Myra to their family. These girls had two sisters and four brothers: Elizabeth born in 1892, followed by Price, Bert, Vernon and Herbert. Only a very few records survive from these children. Their eldest sister, Anna, committed suicide in 1902 at the age of seventeen. None of Anna's records survive, nor any documentation from family members of her life or death.

The children of the Jenns family

Church of England cleric, Percival Jenns, his wife, Emma, and their first-born children emigrated to New Westminister and then Victoria in 1865. The eldest son, Eustace, (born 1860 in England) married New Westminister born Madeline Fortune Webster (b. 1863) in 1884. They in turn had six children, five of whom are represented by child-created letters.

Eustace Jenns trained as a barrister and although centred in Vancouver, his work with mining interests took him to northern BC where he resided for extended periods, while Madeline, with the daughters lived for several years in California. They raised one son and five daughters: Percival (born 1885), Mablyn (born 1887), Sylvia (born 1889),

Ivy (born 1891), Kathleen (born 1893), and Phyllis (born 1899), whose residences shifted from Vancouver, to Los Angeles and Prince Rupert. Different combinations of children lived for times with either the mother or father. Jenns' parents and siblings lived in Victoria (some of the girls visited grandparents), while members of his wife's family resided in Los Angeles.

Ivy moved at age nineteen, to teach school at Louis Creek north of Kamloops, Phyllis at eighteen became a teacher in Port Clements on Haida Gwa'ii. These two and their sister, Kathleen wrote to their father over the duration of their childhood and their writings form the documentation.

The children of the Gardiner family

In 1907, Alice Edwards married Claude Gardiner (1872-1942) an Englishman who emigrated to the Canadian West. The Gardiners had two children: Claudia Margaret Ellen was born November 1907 on the Blood Reserve. In 1918 she moved into Macleod to live with her grandmother and attend school. The following year was at school in England. Claudia attended Bishop Bethune College in Oshawa, 1924-1926 and Macdonald College, School of Household Science, in Quebec. Oliver Ernest Statham born 1910 on the Blood Reserve. Oliver attended Cliff House, Bournemouth, England 1919-1920 (age 9), Trinity College School, 1926-1927. Claudia married in 1932 and died 2000. Oliver married in 1943 and died in 1996.

The Gardiner family lived on their "Wineglass" Ranch near Fort Macleod. The life was rural, the unique perspectives these children had were their close relationship to their grandparents who lived on the Blood Reserve, their grandmother who was politically prominent, and their mother's close relationship to the First Nations people on

the reserves. Documents include letters and diaries of the Claudia and Oliver, and letters of their mother while she was a child.

The children of the Macleod family

Scots-born James F. Macleod (1836-1894) Northwest Mounted Police Commissioner and later magistrate; married Mary Drever (1852-1933) the daughter of a fur trader in 1876. They had four daughters and one son. After MacLeod's retirement from the police the family moved to a small ranch at Pincher Creek where they attempted without much success, to raise horses for sale to the NWMP. In May 1894 they moved to Calgary where Macleod worked as a magistrate, he died in September that year.

Helen "Nell" Rothney (1878-1959) attended Bishop Strachan School, Toronto from at least 1892-1894. She was employed as cashier at the HBC store in Calgary after her father's death until her marriage to A.E. Cross in 1899. Helen bore seven children of whom five survived. Helen's siblings were Norman T. (born 1 January 1880) attended Trinity College, Port Hope from at least 1892 to 1894; Roma and Mary, twins (18 August 18814); Jane (7 March 1887). Her children are referenced in records of other children in this study.

Although no letters from Helen survive, the principal documentation is the letters she received from school friends and her siblings. These provide entrée into understanding Helen herself and the networking of friends met at school and those from home.

The children of the Lawson family

John Lawson was born 1860 in Ontario of Scottish descent. Christina Macdonald Smith, born 1866 Ontario was also of Scottish descent. In 1887 they emigrated to British

Columbia and worked for the Canadian Pacific Railway, leaving farming lives behind them. They married on 2 August 1888. John became a train conductor stationed out of Donald, BC; Christina worked at a CPR boarding house where she served food to passengers. They raised their family in Revelstoke before moving to Vancouver (near False Creek) 1903, to West Vancouver 1907. Lawson resigned from the CPR in 1907 to become an entrepreneur, investing in land in West Vancouver that he later sold in portions via his real estate company and established the first ferry service across Burrard Inlet. When West Vancouver incorporated in 1912, he became Reeve. The Lawsons were a working class family that moved up in status through land investments.

Elizabeth was born 6 November 1889 in Donald. Her schooling was in Revelstoke and Vancouver, then at Jameson Avenue Collegiate Institute in Toronto, 1902-1903, McGill University College of BC 1906-1907. From September 1909 to 1910 she attended the Provincial Normal School and gained her Teachers Certificate. Gertrude was born 19 June 1892 in Donald, she also attended McGill University College of BC for teacher training, 1909-1910. Duncan was born 6 September 1897 in Revelstoke, attended Revelstoke, Dawson and North Vancouver Capilano Public Schools, King Edward High School, 1911-1912 and matriced for McGill but was under age so had to wait until 1913 to attend. Went overseas in 1916, died in battle 1918.

The records used are Duncan's 1912 diary and Elizabeth's 1907 and 1910 diaries.

The children of the Loudon family

George Loudon (born 1855) was a US citizen from Philadelphia and son of a clergyman who later retired and became a machinist. In 1876 he married Maria

Montgomery (born in Ireland 1859). Loudon probably met his wife in California.

Loudon was apparently well educated but like his father, was also a machinist. They traveled overland from California in a wagon to Nevada (where Loudon supported the family as a tool sharpener) and then by 1883 to Seattle, and in 1885 to Ellensburg, Washington where he began to farm and raise stock. Loudon became a prosperous and successful stockman (cattle and sheep). He acquired land in north-eastern Washington State near the border with Canada. The principal ranch was in Oroville, and he had holdings also on the Similkameen River, although he maintained a residence in Ellensburg in 1885 and by 1891 in the railway-end-of-line town, Loomis. The Loudons raised a large family of eleven children, not all of whom are represented by correspondence. The family is included because of the trans-border existence shared by the children as they were schooled and through marriages and family associations.

Florence Elizabeth, born 17 February 1877 in Carson City, Nevada. Educated at Academy of Holy Names, Seattle 1893 (and probably before this). At the age of 17 on 18 September 1894, married Francis X. Richter, a man 39 years her senior. They raised a family of five children at Keremeos, BC. Lizzie continued to assist her parents in raising and supporting her oldest siblings to the extent that she made the arrangements for schooling, they lived with her during holidays, and her husband paid for their education. Lizzie married again after Richter's death and had two more children. (See: children of the Richter Family).

Lizzie's siblings whose records survive include Ada, born 14 February 1879 in Nevada. She attended Beulah Mill College, San Francisco, January 1898 with plans to

become her sister's governess. By 1901 Ada married her sister's son-in-law, Charles Richter (born 1869) and lived in Keremeos.

George Loudon Junior was born August 1882 in California and was educated at the Agricultural College in Pullman, Washington, November 1899; September 1901 at College Place, Walla Walla, Washington; in February 1902, returned to Pullman.

May was born 1884 in The Dalles, Oregon, her schooling included terms at College Place, Walla Walla September 1900 to June 1901 and at the Sisters of St Ann Convent, Kamloops from October 1901 to June 1902.

The documentation includes letters to and from Lizzie, those from George and May Loudon, letters from May to her mother and brother.

The children of the Richter family

Francis Xavier Richter, born in 1838 in Bohemia came to the Similkameen area of south-eastern BC via Texas, Oregon and Washington in 1864. He worked for the Hudsons Bay Company as a stockman, pre-empted land in 1865. Richter married according to the custom of the country, "Lucy" (born ca. 1846) who bore 5 sons. In 1894 he married seventeen-year-old Florence Elizabeth Loudon and his first wife continued to live in a small cottage on the ranch at Keremeos. Richter's second family included eight children, some of whom died young. Three of the children are documented in this study.

Florence Elizabeth "Bessie" was born 21 November 1895 in Loomis, Washington State. She attended the Sisters of St. Ann Convent, Kamloops, October 1904-May 1905; Academy of Holy Names, September 1906-June 1908, and graduated from Saint Ann's Academy, Victoria, 1916.

Freida Marie was born 8 April 1897 in Loomis, Washington State and attended the Convent of Sisters of St. Ann, Victoria March 1904; Convent of Sisters of St. Ann, Kamloops October 1904-1905; Academy of the Holy Names, Spokane, Washington September 1906 to June 1908. She too graduated from Saint Ann's Academy, Victoria 1916.

Francis Junior, born July 1910, was schooled at Keremeos, then attended Vancouver College 1926, then Gonzaga University at Spokane. He later served British Columbia as a Member of the Legislative Assembly from 1953 to 1975.

The children of the Willison family

Olaf (Niellson, changed to Willison) was born in 1860 and his wife Augusta who was born in 1862(4??) each emigrated from Sweden to Ontario in their twenties. There they met, married and in 1900 moved to Calgary, taking out a homestead just northeast of the city where they farmed. The Willisons had six daughters.

Only three of the daughters are represented in child-created records. Anne Mathilda born in Gravenhurst, Ontario 8 March 1889, was the eldest and as such was both her father and mother's helpmeet. Mary was born in Ontario in 1894 and Gladys Alberta in Calgary, 1904. The records include Anne's diary from age seventeen when she moved away from the ranch to get a job in the city, Gladys's 1920 diary of a vacation trip to Banff and love letters received and answered by Mary in 1913. Eventually as adults, with the support of their mother, these two sisters undertook training as nurses effectively moving them from a working class existence on a farm. In later life the five sisters shared a residence in Calgary, completing their move into a middle class lifestyle.

As adults, the sisters collectively improved their futures, the youngest became teachers and a librarian. Anne was the only sister to marry, and did so at the age of forty.

Children of the Berry family

The Berry children were each born at Yarrow Creek, Alberta where the family homesteaded and the father was postmaster. All three children were placed in Ontario boarding schools as a solution to child-care when the parents decided to sell the Yarrow Creek property and searched for a new place to settle. Selling and moving from the only home the children had known was stressful for the children. The parents moved for a time to Victoria, British Columbia but eventually in 1911, settled in Strathmore, Alberta. The documentation is the letters from all three children while at school.

The eldest sibling was Herbert (Bert) George Berry, 1894-1917. Bert attended Detroit University School 1909-1910, Upper Canada College (ca 1910-1915) and University of Toronto (1915). He died on the battlefield of Ypres-Passchendaele. Ada Gladys Berry was the second sibling, born in 1896. She died in the mid 1960s. Her schooling included Havergal Ladies College ca 1909-1914, just after the Ellison sisters. Gladys married in 1919. Hugh Wallace Berry (born 1898) was the youngest, and eleven years old when he began to board. He attended Upper Canada College Prep School 1909-1911 and UCC 1913, later University of Idaho. He returned to the new family farm in 1921.

Alphabetical listing. Names in bold are “major players”

_ Consie, friend of Christine Nelson, wrote from Winnipeg, Manitoba.

_ Elizabeth, friend of Christine Nelson, wrote from Lethbridge

_ Ethel, friend of Christine Nelson, lived in Calgary.

_ Marjorie, friend of Christine Nelson, wrote from Calgary.

_ Nora, friend of Phoebe Sanders, lived in Prince Albert.

_ Rena, cousin? Of Phoebe Sanders

Berry, Herbert (Bert) George, 1894-1917. The Berry children were born at Yarrow Creek, Alberta where the family homesteaded and the father was postmaster. In 1911 they moved to Strathmore. Bert attended Detroit University School 1909-1910, Upper Canada College (ca 1910-1915) and University of Toronto (1915). He died on the battlefield of Ypres-Passchendaele.

Berry, Ada Gladys, 1896-mid 1960s. Attended Havergal Ladies College ca 1909-1914. Married 1919. All three children were placed in schools when the parents moved to Victoria between selling the Yarrow Creek property and moving to Strathmore.

Berry, Hugh Wallace, 1898- ?? Attended Upper Canada College Prep School 1909-1911 and UCC 1913, later University of Idaho. Returned to the family farm in 1921.

Biller, John T., born ca 1914 and his sister Jill lived with their widowed mother on James Island just off the Saanich Peninsula, Vancouver Island.

Bissett, Florence, born ca 1862, daughter of Hudson’s Bay Company Chief Trader, James Bissett who was posted in Victoria between 1860-1871.

Bostock, Marion, friend of Phoebe Sanders whom she met at Crofton House School, Vancouver.

Boyd, Henry Thomas, born in 1877 was one of ten children born to John and Janet (Fleming) and lived at Coldspring, Cariboo.

Boyd, William Henry, born 1872 was a younger brother of Henry Boyd, he died in 1939 in Quesnel.

Barnett, Helen, cousin of Christine Nelson, wrote from Alberta Ladies College, and Tabor Alberta, and later, University of Alberta.

Brown, Gladys, born in 1905 lived at Pincher Creek, Alberta.

Carr, Richard, born in Victoria. B.C. on 20 October 1875, died at age 24 of tuberculosis. Younger brother of Emily Carr.

Carscallen, Eula was born 29 July 1905 (died 1991) in Red Deer, Alberta, one of three children born to Stan and Molly Carscallen. The family experienced financial reversal, moved to Medicine Hat and then returned to Red Deer in 1918. Two years later they moved to Calgary.

Clearihue, Joseph Badenoch (1887-1976) was born in Victoria, B.C., educated locally and later at McGill University and University of Oxford (Rhodes Scholar). Was the eldest of three siblings. Became a lawyer, M.L.A., alderman and a Judge.

Crease, Arthur Douglas, born 1 March 1872 in Victoria. Educated in Victoria at Collegiate School. In 1884 at age 12 was sent to Montague House and then Haileybury School, England. Returned to Victoria 1890. Became a lawyer in partnership with brother in Victoria. Married Helen Maud Tyrwhitt Drake in 1903. Died 1967.

Crease, Barbara Lindley, born 23 November 1857 in England. Educated in Victoria. Died 1883 of lingering effects of a childhood illness.

Crease, Josephine, born 7 August 1864 in New Westminster. Educated in Victoria at Mrs. Fellows School and Angela College. Later attended classes at King's College, London, 1882-1883. Unmarried, died 1945.

Crease, Lindley, born 13 March 1867 in Victoria. Educated in Victoria at Collegiate School. In 1877, at age ten, sent to England where he attended Conyngham House, Ramsgate and Haileybury School, Kent. Remained in UK until 1885. Became lawyer in Victoria. Despite two engagements, remained unmarried, died 1947.

Crease, Mary Maberly born 27 February 1854 in England. Educated in Victoria. Travelled to England 1872-1875? To visit family, returned to Victoria. Married 1886 and bore 4 children. Became a single parent. Died in 1915.

Crease, Susan Reynolds, born 18 November 1855 in England, educated Victoria. Attended classes at Kings College, London, 1882-1883. Did not marry, remained in the family home with her unmarried siblings. Died 1947.

Cridge, Nellie, born 1867. Her father, Edward Cridge founded the break-away Church of Our Lord on the shores of James Bay, Victoria. A contemporary of Kathleen O'Reilly, Sophie Pemberton, Emily Carr, Cridge attended the Anglican Church girls school Angela College. The Cridge family lived at Marifield, their cottage on Birdcage Walk. Nellie married Thomas Laundry in 1891 and raised a family. She died in 1952.

Cuthbert, Marguerite, friend of Phoebe Sanders

Dennys, Alexander, was born in India 27 June 1894. In 1912 he and his half-brother arrived in Salmon Arm, British Columbia to farm acreage near the settlement of Canoe, that had been purchased several years earlier by his father (then in Ireland), and was planted with fruit trees. Dennys had practical experience as an orchardist before his arrival. Dennys was a pacifist, did not enlist in the war. In 1919 he married Joyce Wright, to whom he had been engaged for four years.

Douglas, Hilda, friend of Phoebe Sanders, moved to Dawson, Yukon Territory.

Douglas, Martha, born 8 June 1854 much youngest daughter of James and Amelia (Connolly). Educated at Angela College, Victoria and then at Lansdowne House, England 1872-1874. Married Dennis R. Harris in 1878, raised a family, died a widow in 1933.

Douglas, James William, born 1 June 1851 to James and Amelia youngest and only surviving son. Married in 1878, died 1883. Educated in Victoria and then in Scotland at Hermitage, Newbury 1862-1870. Suffered from unspecified physical weakness that affected his studies and shortened his lifespan.

Edwards, Alice Millicent, born September 1878, died July 1964. Daughter of Henrietta Muir Edwards, prominent Canadian women's rights advocate and chair of the National Council of Women, and Oliver Cromwell Edwards, an Ontario-born medical doctor who was appointed as the physician for the Blood and Peigan Reserves in southern Alberta. Alice married Claude Gardiner and her two children were born on the Blood Reserve.

Ellison, Ellen Fearnought, born 5 August 1887, attended local schools in Vernon, BC, then Havergal College September 1905-July 1907, McGill 1907-1910, married 12 June 1913 Arthur Sovereign.

Ellison, Elizabeth MacIlvaine "Lil", born 21 April 1892. Referenced only in this study. Schooled 1908-1909 Havergal College, 1911-1914 McGill University, Montreal. Remained single, worked as a clerk steno in bank.

Ellison, Myra King, born 30 May 1890, attended local schools, then Havergal College Fall 1905? to Fall 1907, McGill graduated BA Economics 1911, MA in Economics 1913. Married Howard De Beck 1920, widowed 1929.

Ellison, Price Fearnought Junior, born 4 June 1895, educated St. John's college, Montreal 1908-1909, Trinity School, Port Hope, Ontario 1909-1913. Attended University of British Columbia until the war. Died in Vancouver 1955.

Elmore, Lilly was born 9 October 1863 to M.P. Elmore and his First Nations wife, Catla from the Lillooet area. She and her numerous siblings were sent to various Catholic residential schools. Lilly and her sister Mary Jane (d. 1889 in California) attended St. Ann's Convent in Victoria until their late teens. In the 1881 Canada census they are listed as "German" ethnic origin.

Elmore, Melissa, was a much younger sister, who with her brother Jimmie and another sister attended Holy Angels Convent, Athabasca. Extant letters are from 1888.

Gardiner, Claudia Margaret Ellen, born November 1907 on the Blood Reserve. Moved into Macleod to live with her grandmother in 1918 to attend school. The following year was at school in England. Claudia attended Bishop Bethune College in Oshawa, 1924-1926? Macdonald College, School of Household Science, in Quebec. She married 1932 and raised a family, died 2000.

Gardiner, Oliver Ernest Statham born 1910 on the Blood Reserve. Oliver was later known as "Gard." He attended Cliff House, Bournemouth, England 1919-1920 (age 9), Trinity College School, 1926-1927. Married 1943, died 1996.

Gilchrist, Neil Campbell, born 11 June 1894 in Woodville, Ontario. With his family moved to California and then in November 1911 to Vancouver. Middle child of five. Scottish descent, Presbyterian. Enlisted in the First World War 1917. Became an optometrist. Married in 1927. Kept daily diaries from 1910 until the year he died, 1975.

Gillespie, Erroll Pilkington was born in Victoria on 10 December 1893, youngest son of George and Florence Gillespie. Erroll had seven siblings, the eldest was fifteen years his senior. Like the Crease family, almost a generation separated the oldest from youngest sibling. They lived in "Highwood" the former home of Alice Ward and her family. He attended University School in Victoria. In 1905, at age eleven, Erroll was sent to Loretto School, Musselburgh, Scotland. He served in the First World War. In 1921, Erroll married Beatrice Lydia Catharine Oliver, whose mother was Alice Ward's sister, Mary. Erroll died in 1988.

Gordon, Marjorie, born in Scotland 7 December 1880, only daughter of Ishbel Marjoribanks and John Gordon, Lord Aberdeen who was Governor General of Canada 1894-1898. The Gordon's had a ranch at Coldstream in the Okanagan Valley where they retreated on holidays during their Canadian residency. Marjorie had two brothers, who were at school in Britain during these years. Youngest brother, Archie was her companion, in Canada with her.

Harris, Eileen, born ca 1889 was a friend of Phoebe Sanders

Helmcken, Harry Dallas born in Victoria, December 1859, second son of Dr. James Helmcken and Cecilia Douglas. Harry's mother died in 1865. Sent overseas ca 1872 to school in Jedburgh, Scotland at the Nest Academy. He obtained his law degree at Osgood Hall.

Helmcken, James Douglas born 8 February 1858 in Victoria. Brother of Harry. At the age of 12 he was sent to school in Scotland, followed by medical studies at the University of Edinburgh.

Hill, Annie Graham, daughter of Arthur Edmund Hill a businessman involved in railways and construction who was of loyalist stock. Presbyterian. Her mother may have died when she was young as her father married in 1909. Annie was born 18 November 1892. Sent to school at All Hallows in Yale, which she attended from 1904-1907.

Jenns, Alice Mablyn, born 27 September 1887 in New Westminster. Died 1980 in the United States.

Jenns, Ivy Jane Wilhelmina was born 25 August 1891 New Westminster. Ivy moved at age nineteen, to teach school at Louis Creek north of Kamloops. Married in 1917, died 1921.

Jenns, Madeline Kathleen A. born 15 October 1893 in New Westminster. Married in 1919.

Jenns, Phyllis Emily L. born 7 February 1899 New Westminster, died 1982 in Victoria.

Jenns, Sylvia Beatrice, born 3 September 1889 New Westminster

Lawson, Elizabeth, born 6 November 1889 in Donald. Public school in Revelstoke and Vancouver, Jameson Ave. Collegiate Institute in Toronto, 1902-1903, McGill University College of BC 1906-1907, returned September 1909 to 1910. Teachers Certificate, Provincial Normal School. Married 1914.

Lawson, Gertrude, born 19 June 1892 in Donald. Public school in Revelstoke and Vancouver. Attended McGill University College of BC for teacher training, 1909-1910. Became teacher as career for life.

Lawson, Duncan, born 6 September 1897 in Revelstoke. Attended Revelstoke, Dawson and North Vancouver Capilano Public Schools, King Edward High School, 1911-1912 matric for McGill but under age so had to wait until 1913-1916 arts class. Enlisted and went overseas 1916, died on the battlefield, 1918.

Loudon, Ada, born 14 February 1879 in Nevada. Attended Beulah Mill College, San Francisco, January 1898 - ?. By 1901 she had married her sister's son-in-law, Charles Richter (born 1869) and lived in Keremeos until her death in 1927.

Loudon, Florence Elizabeth, born 17 February 1877 in Carson City, Nevada. Educated at Academy of Holy Names, Seattle 1893 (and probably earlier). At the age of 17 on 18 September 1894, married Francis X. Richter, a man 39 years her senior. Raised family of five children at Keremeos, BC. After Richter's death she remarried in 1912 and bore two more children. She died in 1959. She assisted parents to raise and support her oldest siblings to the extent that she made the arrangements for their schooling and some of them lived with her during holidays. Frank Richter paid for their education. See RICHTER FAMILY.

Loudon, George Simpson. Born August 1882 in California. Educated at the Agricultural Colleges in Pullman, Washington, November 1899; September 1901 at College Place, Walla Walla, Washington; February 1902, back in Pullman. In 1904 in Loomis. He and his wife lived in the Similkameen district in southern British Columbia, died 1977.

Loudon, May. I. born 1884 in The Dalles, Oregon. Schooled at College Place, Walla Walla September 1900 to June 1901, Sisters of St Ann Convent, Kamloops October 1901 to June 1902. Lived in BC married twice.

Macleod, Helen "Nell" Rothney, born 9 February 1878 to James and Mary Macleod. Her father was the first commissioner of the North West Mounted Police and later a Magistrate. Helen attended Bishop Strachan School, Toronto from September 1890, returning home each summer. In August 1894 her father unexpectedly died, Helen withdrew from the fall school term, ending her schooling. Employed as cashier at the HBC store in Calgary after her father's death until her marriage. Her wages paid for the family's food. No letters written by Helen survive but it is her correspondence inward that provides rich evidence of female friendships. Married A.E. Cross 1899 and bore seven children of whom five survived.

Macleod, Jane, born 7 March 1887, Attended Central School, Calgary

Macleod, Mary "Marlie", twin of Roma.

Macleod, Norman T., born January 1880, attended Trinity College, Port Hope from September 1890 to 1894.

Macleod, Roma, born 7 March 1887, twin of Mary. Central School, Calgary. Became receptionist at Calgary city hall.

McIllree, John Raymond. "Rae", born 1893 in Regina, younger brother of Violet and correspondent of Phoebe Sanders.

McIllree, Violet Cecelia, born in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan, 1887, daughter of John Henry and Caroline Elizabeth "Lily" McIllree. Violet was a friend of Phoebe Sanders and the daughter of a North West Mounted Police inspector and later commissioner. Married Reginald Meakin 1913, Oak Bay, B.C.

Marshall, Paul, cousin of Phoebe and Constance Sanders, lived in Vancouver.

Nelson, Christine Mary, born 1903 to William and Sarah Nelson, she had a brother, Howard. Lived in Alberta, recipient of letters inward. Married William Herriot, died 1975.

Newcombe, Charles Percy Hamilton was born 29 April 1882, East Twickenham, London to Charles and Marion. With family moved to Hood River, Oregon and then in 1889 to

Victoria. Mother died when Charlie was eight. A few months later was sent to school at Inverness, Scotland, then Haileybury, England. Returned to Canada after 1899.

O'Reilly, Arthur John "Jack", born 4 April 1873 at Point Ellice. Educated from the age of 10 in England at Montague House, Folkestone and Uppingham School. Returned to Victoria at age 18 to apprentice as a lawyer. Married Mary Beresford in England in 1914. Died 1946, one son.

O'Reilly, Charlotte Kathleen, born 31 December 1867 at Point Ellice House, Victoria. Educated locally at Angela College. From 1883 to 1885 she attended Lady Murray's School in Kensington, London, England, returned to Victoria 1885. Despite receiving at least two offers of marriage, she remained unmarried and lived at the family home, Point Ellice, which she shared with Jack and his wife, died 1945.

O'Reilly, Francis Joseph O'Reilly, born 9 February 1866 in New Westminster, educated locally at Angela College and Collegiate School, then in England at Middleton School, Bognor-on-Sea, 1877-1883. Returned to Victoria, apprenticed as a civil engineer. Later became a land surveyor. Married Jessie Blakiston in 1914 but the marriage did not last. Had two sons, divorced. Died in 1941.

Parlby, Humphrey born in England 15 November 1899 only child of Walter Parlby and Mary Irene Marryat. Family lived on Dartmoor Ranch at Alix, east of Lacombe, Alberta Sent to school in Calgary in 1910 where he attended Western Canada College and Bishop Pinkham School, 1913 – 1915. Farmed the family land, married in 1931 and had three children, died 1976.

Pemberton, Ada Georgina, born 1867 in Victoria, sister of Sophia, married Hugo Beaven in 1902.

Pemberton, Sophia Theresa, born 1869 in Victoria, B.C. to land surveyor Joseph Despard Pemberton and Theresa (Grautoff). Sophie was educated at the Girl's Central School, attended art school in England and began a promising career. Married twice, died 1959.

Perry, Edyth J. was born in Ontario in 1877, probably in Bracebridge. She was a school mate of Helen Macleod.

Perry, Gladys, born 1888 in the North West Territories. Her father, Aylesworth Bowen Perry was Commissioner and later Superintendent of the North West Mounted Police. Gladys was a friend and correspondent of Phoebe Sanders and like Phoebe, moved as her father's postings changed.

Perry, Jessie Eleanor, born 14 May 1887 at Prince Albert, North West Territories, sister of Gladys. Married Gordon Tillyard Campbell, died in Vancouver 1974.

Puckette, Sophie Alice, born 29 August 1885 in Kansas, USA. Emigrated to Alberta with her family in late 1903, homesteaded at Del Norte (renamed Innisfree in 1905).

In 1906 she boarded in Edmonton while attending Alberta College for a year in a program that did not qualify her for a teacher's certificate. She had to return to the farm because of finances. She married in 1908, her husband soon became a realtor and they moved to Edmonton.

Richter, Florence Elizabeth "Bessie", born 21 November 1895 in Loomis, Washington State. Attended Sisters of St. Ann Convent, Kamloops, October 1904-May 1905; Academy of Holy Names, September 1906-June 1908, Graduated Sisters of St. Ann, Victoria, 1916.

Richter, Freida Marie, born 8 April 1897 in Loomis, Washington State. Attended Convent of Sisters of St. Ann, Victoria, March 1904; Convent of Sisters of St. Ann, Kamloops October 1904-1905; Academy of the Holy Names, Spokane, Washington September 1906 to June 1908. Graduated Sisters of St. Ann, Victoria 1916. Enjoyed a career as a classical/ballet dancer, married 1931, moved to Powell River ran Dance Academy.

Richter, Francis Junior, born July 1910, schooled at Keremeos, then attended Vancouver College 1926 then Gonzaga University at Spokane. Became MLA and Minister in BC Government, died 1977.

Rithet, Edward Paterson, born 4 January 1881 was the youngest child of Elizabeth Munro and Robert Paterson Rithet. The family were prominent in Victoria's social circles. Edward's father was a millionaire merchant whose business had a branch in California. By 1898 at the age of 17 Edward was at Westminster School, Dobbs Ferry, New York. The following year in October he and his mother and sister Gertrude were in Germany, residing in Frankfurt for a year. Edward's letters to his older brother John who was at Yale, and later in Victoria document the social affairs of a wealthy indolent teenager on the continent. Edward died 10 May 1901 at the age of twenty in San Francisco.

Rogers, Blythe Dupuy, born 22 May 1893 to Mary Isabella Angus and Benjamin Tingley Rogers. Blythe was the eldest of five siblings. The family lived in Vancouver. Blythe's father founded British Columbia Sugar Refinery. When Blythe was fourteen he was sent to St. Alban's College in Brockville, Ontario. He later attended the Royal Military College in Kingston, took an Engineering Degree in 1914. He married in 1919 and died of inflammatory rheumatism the following year.

Sanders, Edith Phoebe, born in Regina at the NWMP barracks 18 September 1889. Attended Crofton House School, Vancouver 1906-1907. Engaged 1913, married 1915. Died 1980.

Sanders, Constance Jukes, born 7 March 1891 in Saskatchewan. Attended Crofton House School, Vancouver 1906-1907.

Schneider, Katie, friend of Phoebe Sanders from boarding school.

Short, Julia born Woodstock, Ontario 9 December 1873. With her parents moved to the US, then to Manitoba and finally to High River, Alberta in 1884. Julia's brother was 3 years older, the remaining 5 siblings were younger than Julia. Kept a diary 1884-1888.

Steele, Flora, born 7 December 1891 (died 1948) eldest child of Samuel Steele and Marie Harwood. Flora's father, like Phoebe Sanders' father, was an officer in the North West Mounted Police. Had younger siblings Harwood and Gertrude.

Sugars, Roger was born in England on 25 January 1897. With his parents he moved to the Okanagan Valley of BC in 1905, eventually settling near Fintry. They lived in a log cabin, and later a small frame house. The nearest neighbours were 2 miles distant. Sugars married in 1923 and lived in the Valley all his life. Died 1981.

Suter, Florence Eleanor was born on 4 December 1873 in San Francisco. She moved north, to New Westminster with either her parents or just her mother. And lived with her Scottish paternal grandfather who was the owner and editor of the New Westminster Guardian newspaper. She had a brother James, three years younger. She married Richard Dingle in 1903 in New Westminster and died 1957.

Tunstall, Gwendoline, born 19 October 1891 in Victoria was a friend and schoolmate of Phoebe Sanders and lived in Vancouver.

Walker, Violet, friend of Phoebe Sanders from boarding school.

Ward, Alice born in Victoria 25 September 1865. One of nine siblings she was the eldest daughter of William Curtis Ward and Lydia Henley. Attended Angela College and had classmates Kathleen O'Reilly and Josephine Crease. Then to London and the finishing school of Lady Murray. Family attended The Church of Our Lord. Married and moved away from Victoria.

Wilkinson, L. N. school friend of Helen Macleod.

Williams, Mary Carolina was born in Vancouver 26 August 1903. Qualified as a school teacher and beginning at age 18, taught first at Mud River, BC, 17 miles south west of Prince George until June 1924, then in Alberta.

Willison, Anne Mathilda, born in Gravenhurst, Ontario 8 March 1889. Helped out on the family farm as a young girl, then trained as a nurse, at Holy Cross Hospital, graduating in 1912. Worked as a nurse until 1938 when she married Will Stirling, a widower from Hanna, Alberta.

Willison, Gladys Alberta, born in Calgary, 1904.

Willison, Mary, born in Ontario in 1894.

Wilson, Joseph Eilbeck, (1 December 1868 – 2 January 1945) born in Victoria to clothier William Wilson and Isabella Eilbeck. Was the second eldest of five sons and one daughter.

Young, Marie, school friend of Helen Macleod.