

Dorothy Mark Interview – October 20, 2014

AF – Ashley Forseille (interviewer)

DM – Dorothy Mark (interviewee)

DL – Diane Leslie (niece of DM)

AF: Okay, so maybe we'll start here. We can look at this AnEcho together.

DM: Yes. And this, this was—these were the, the staff.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: So...

AF: And you were saying that the sergeant...

DM: That, that was the sergeant that drilled the fellows.

AF: Okay.

DM: They had to have drills and work.

AF: But the female students didn't do that training?

DM: Yeah and there is—and we used to have to, the girls had—the fellas had to take cooking lessons.

AF: Oh yeah?

DM: And I forget which one of these because they all look the same here [laughter]. Where as he looks different with the hat. But no, he was a sergeant and these were people, were, these were the head honcho. That's the man. And then this was another, the same teacher and we, we had a good group, you know. We used to kind of go, "Ha ha ha," but it didn't mean—but we did enjoy it. And this was were the back of the normal school was—And they were, before we went down to the Shrine. You know, you knew we went the Shrine?

AF: Mm-hmm. So you were at the normal school until, was it the spring of the next year?

DM: Well when then they moved us out you'll see us moving I think it's here. Here we are see there is the normal school. And there are all, there are all of us. And here I am, and here is the girl I, I boarded with, is over here. And most of us boarded with another girl. And this—these were all different. They, they say where they're from.

AF: Did you board in a private home, or was there...

DM: Yes, a private—we were lucky it was a teacher, a principal who—home. And he taught away from us, so he used to drive us to normal school. And then we came and got home by ourselves. We would walk home. But he, he would always drive us. And then when the—we were thinking we were going to be bombed, he, he—we went back at put sheets up all over the windows and that was not the finest hour. [laughter] My landlady was a bit weird and she locked us out. [laughter]

DL: Including herself!

DM: And we had it all shaded. And they said, “So no how are we going to get in, well we’ll have to get someone in through the window.” Well Marjory said, “I’m too heavy,” the other one was too heavy. “Well guess what Dorothy, put your bottom up there and we’ll push!” [laughter] We had a lot of fun over it, though. But anyway, that was, you see, the back of it there. And we all came out and they took our picture.

AF: So this was ’41-’42, that you attended normal school?

DM: You have a good look at it. And this in the name of the book, Provincial School.

AF: That’s a great photo. It shows the grounds a little bit.

DM: Yeah that was all of the—see that these all have the names. There I am, and if you count along, you’ll see that I am Gilles here. D. Gilles. So they are all named.

DL: When, when the boys had to do their drill work, where did they march?

DM: The boys?

DL: Yeah? Did they...

DM: In the gym.

DL: Oh, in the gym.

DM: And you see this is—and then when they got downtown they marched up and down the streets because they were with all the other people. You know the sailors and all were down there so anyway, but that was to make sure they were in good shape.

DL: Mm-hmm. Just in case, I guess.

AF: Oh, okay. So it wasn't so that they could teach in the school, it was for them...

DM: No., no Well that would be an extra plus, but they, they were taught that if the war broke out that they might be drafted. So anyway, So whatever it is...

AF: That's great that you took notes, too.

DL: Yeah, isn't that neat. [laughter]

DM: Today I, you know, I was—I look at it now and realize how young we were, because it, it was like young high school kids.

DL: Yeah. You were—they were what, 19 or 20 and...

DM: When you were there, you know, most of us hadn't been away from home to go to school. You know, I used to walk out the door and go down to school. [laughter] And most of them had—and some of them had come from country schools.

AF: So when you were in high school did you have to finish senior matriculate to get enter the normal school?

DM: Well, we had to finish grade—well, the first year of university. Our 13th, we had the 12 and then we had to go for the 13.

AF: Thirteen, okay.

DM: So we had to have that to go to normal school.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: And boy did we sweat tears when we were writing those exams to see if we were going to make it, you know. Because they were heavy exams to us after just school exams.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: But anyway, you know.

AF: I didn't realize you had to write an exam before you could get entrance.

DM: And see here, here, here is the clock.

AF: Right, I recognize that now.

DM: There is the...

AF: At this time were there enough men for them to be separated into a separate class or were they in classes with...

DM: No, we were in separate classes but when we went downtown, we were in—just in, a—well we went in the Shrine building that was their building for being Shriners.

DL: Mm-hmm.

DM: Now that's what we lived—we had. And then somebody broke in and stole our money. So they had, they had to replace it.

DL: Oh my gosh!

DM: You know, coming off the street, because it was just off the street.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: So, but that, they didn't make a fuss. They just said "No, this is part of you not being in your own place," so anyway they they said "no, we wouldn't have to." But ,you know, all of us were kind of on a tight, tight string, anyway. So these were all the—they were from all over, you know, into the interior and...

AF: Which class were you in?

DM: Yeah.

AF: Were you in A—there was A, B, C? Do you remember...

DM: B.

AF: B.

DM: Yeah, that was B class. I was in B. I have to see, B, yeah I was in B class. There was A, B, C, you know. And it wasn't particularly that how well you did, it was just that they had the...

DL: Numbers. [laughter] Auntie Dorothy has a funny story about the dance. There was a dance that was going to happen. Tell her the story about this.

DM: Oh yeah. [laughter] That! Are you thinking about my landlady?

DL: Yeah.

DM: My landlady was determined that Marjory, my girlfriend, and I were not going to be without a partner at the dance so she said to her husband, Marjory and I, "Get in the car." And away we went down. She went down, she went down to Johnson Street and that's where all the sailors and soldiers used to be. And when she saw somebody that looked pretty good she dashed out of the car and grabbed him to bring him into the car and said, "We need you to go to a dance." [laughter]

DL: Because there were so few men around.

DM: And then when we got up to the dance well she had, she said, "I'll get a few extra, just in case somebody might need one." Well when we got up to the dance we opened the door and all the girls saw all these fellas and they thought, "Oh." And Marjory and I stood there and no—no fellas! [laughter] You know, when you're young it's lots of fun. But anyway, and then they did lots of sports, the boys, and the girls.

AF: Mm-hmm. Did you ever do any clubs?

DM: I'm not a sport type.

AF: Me neither. [laughter]

DM: I'm the kind that would sit and say "Whoopie!" And then there was a lot of literary and they were a very talented group of people for all of the—and the social...

AF: One of the other interviewees talked about going down to the beach and having picnics and those kinds of things. Did you do those?

DM: Yeah.

AF: Yeah.

DL: What about food, Auntie Dorothy? What about food? Were you—like, for you were boarded.

DM: We ate at school.

DL: Oh you did.

DL: But then we boarded.

DL: Mm-hmm.

DL: The board was pretty good except for the time she made something and put it in with the— with some very strong stuff and we ended up tasting like we were eating, oh, moth balls. [laughter] I never could eat them after that. Every time I saw that food, I'd go, "No" You know, Marjory told me, "Don't look at it." [laughter] Because all you could do was smell the moth balls, you know. But she was nice. She was good to us. And they'd made sure that if it rained they came and got us and did everything so...

DL: But, but were there restrictions on the food? Like were you—did they—did you have like hardly any meat or...

DM: In some of these I'm not in the picture and I couldn't figure out why because Marjory was there. Then I remembered that, they gave us shots and I had a real reaction and my arm went up. And then and they had to bring the doctor in. They thought I, I was delirious, and that's why I'm not in the pictures. And my arm went up and they the the doctor from school in to see me and he had been our doctor in Trail. Not, not for mom.

DL: No.

DM: But for the school.

DL: Oh okay.

DL: And when he came in he says to me, "Didn't you tell them you can't take shots?"

DL: I said, "I left that up to you!" [laughter] I said...

AF: You're the doctor! [laughter]

DM: But anyway, but that—they weren't—the odd thing that happened but that was with me because of the shot.

DL: Mm-hmm. What type of shot was it? Was it because they were afraid of an epidemic from the war or anything?

DM: Yeah, yeah. No it was just a normal shot. What you used to get...

DL: Oh, okay like Small pox or...

AF: Measles or...

DM: ...in case you got exposed to too much. Well I don't know. They just said, "put out your arm."

DL: Yeah.

DM: You never had the chance to say, "Who me?" [laughter] But anyway, but that's why I wasn't in some of them.

DL: Oh, okay.

DM: I couldn't figure it out then, but anyway. That's the group that was there. And then we graduated and we went out to teach. We had a hard time getting jobs because there were not, there were not many jobs. And I was lucky because I got the one in Salmo, and the lady in there was going to move to Trail and she was hiring so she said, "Oh, I'm hiring, so I'll give, give it to the girl from Trail and to get a job." And she was going, and then she gave Dawn Sharp, who was my friend and had been at normal with me. She lived in Nelson, so she said, "And I'll give the second job to Miss Sharp."

DL: Oh, cause it was close at home.

DM: Because it was, because we both were in the same areas.

AF: So where was your first, your first teaching position? Where was it?

DL: Salmo.

AF: Salmo?

DL: Yes, in Salmo, wasn't it? The first school that you taught at, was in Salmo.

DM: It was in Salmo, yeah. It was a small town.

AF: Is that near Trail?

DL: Yeah, yeah. S-A-L-M-O.

DM: I boarded with a lady and her husband and he was called Pa. And everyone in town called him Pa. And I'd say—they'd say to me, "Oh you're the girl that's, girl that, that boards with Pa." And I thought, "Boy, Pa and I are getting a reputation." [laughter] He did have a wife. But he was nice and one time he said something, he loved his beer, and it was rationed, you know. And so he—if he, when it came in he would be there and he would sit there and when I came home I knew when the beer was in because he would be [sways] you know. His wife would say, "Pa,

straighten up! Miss Gilles is here.” And he would say, “That’s alright, I talked to her the other day and she said it’s alright she won’t go to heaven because she’d rather be where I am. It’s more fun.” [laughter]

DL: So Auntie Dorothy, you’ve got a funny story about beer rationing.

DM: Oh! [laughter] Well the beer rationing, they brought, they brought the beer in and then they rationed it out and—so the beer would come in and everyone would swarm up to the beer parlour. So this day they thought that they would fix—they would try a little stunt on Dawn and I. So they told Mr. Fehr, who was in charge of the beer, and he said, “You girls go up and go in the beer parlour and tell them the beer is here.” So Dawn and I got up to the beer parlour. Now we’re under age to start with, and everybody is watching us you know what they’ll say, “They were at the beer parlour.” So Dawn said “What are we going to do?” and I said “Knock on the door.” And we knocked on the door and when they came out they didn’t know what we were there for. Who would knock on a beer parlour? So anyway, we said, “Beer is here. You have to go and get it before it goes.” Now we turned and walked away but all over Salmo they talked about these crazy girls knocking on the door.

AF: You got a reputation after that.

DM: We, we didn’t go in and we were, “Beers here.” We did a lot of funny things, that that they would kind of get you to do something and then you’d look—you would come out looking like a stoop. But that time that floored them. Well, anyway, but we had a good time.

AF: So you got to see Dawn often, because she was close?

DM: Pardon?

AF: You got to see Dawn often then, because she was close? She was teaching close to you?

DM: Well, because we both got up there, you know. And then Dawn came to me one day and she said, “You know, I feel I’ve lost something.” And I said, “What have you lost, Dawn?” She said “Well I don’t know. I just don’t feel right. Would you come in the room and look with me?” So I went in and I said, “Well I don’t see anything different,” you know. So I’m going all over. And she says—a little voice says, “Can I go home then?” And a little girl that she had scolded for talking, and she had said, “Go and sit in the corner,” so the little girl had gone behind the, the, the...

DL: Piano. Was it the piano?

DM: No, the phone. Not the phone, the piano.

DL: The piano, yeah.

DM: Piano. And she was behind the piano. Then the next day, we—the, the principal said, “You people are going to be the death of me.” And I said, “Oh yeah?” He said, “You keep complaining about the Grade 7s running and knocking down the, the primary,” he said “I’m going to put—make you sure you do something about it.” So I thought, “Okay.” So they would have to run by my room. And I was the one that had to pull the, the bell with the line, the rope for the bell. So anyway, I saw them coming and I thought, “Oh you stinkers, you’re not going to knock my babies over,” and I—and as they came by I yanked on it and the rope broke and it went down on all the Grade 7s. [laughter] And they went home and said, “You’ve gotta watch that Miss Gilles. She’s tough. She just pulled that rope down.”

DL: And Auntie Dorothy is very tiny, right? So I mean the Grade 7s were probably bigger than you, physically.

DM: Yeah. Oh they were, they were great big. They were looking down at me. But the rope was around their head. But we had fun. And some didn’t, they—some, you know, and they—but of course Dawn and I could go home, on the weekends.

DL: Mm-hmm.

DM: You know, that made a difference.

AF: Mm-hmm. And how many years did you teach in that school, in Salmo?

DM: I taught there one year. And then I moved into Trail. I applied to Trail and went to Trail. And I had Grade 3 in Trail.

AF: In Trail.

DM: Then I finally went down to—back to Grade 1.

AF: And you stayed in Trail for...

DM: Yes, I said until I met my husband and then I married and then we just stayed period.

DL: Yeah. Just, what, retired in 1981, I think. Auntie Dorothy has got some stuff in here. Yeah, this is kind of interesting stuff, too. There, you’ll be interested in the salary that she earned when she started working.

AF: Yeah. Oh my gosh. This is amazing that you still have this [book of certificates and letters].

DL: Isn't it great?

AF: This is one of the specific questions about salary, that we have.

DL: Oh is it? Okay.

AF: That's great. Do you mind if I take photos?

DM: No.

AF: I'll just do this.

DM: There's nothing there that I would mind at all.

DL: Do you want me to hold it up?

AF: I can do it like this. It should be—as long as it's not too shinny.

DM: My mother did that. She was—when she pointed I'd think, “You know grandma.”

DL: Mhmm.

DM: She had to paste it all on—they could get it all...

AF: Confirmation. Is your family Italian?

DM: Yeah.

DL: No! Not Italian!

DM: No! Never Italian.

AF: No?

DM: English. And actually, if you weren't Cornish, you weren't English. [laughter]

DL: We were laughing at this. “The First Aid, to the injured [Certificate].” I mean, why else would you need it?

AF: First Aid—Yeah, why else would you need it, yeah.

DM: We had to take the, the ambulance course at, at normal school.

AF: Oh, okay.

DM: Because they said, “if you were in the country you might need to be able”...

DL: Mm-hmm.

DM: And they said, “Don’t touch them but make sure that you know enough not to try to fix it.”

DL: Yeah, make sure that they’re warm and not—yeah, yeah.

DM: You’d get somebody, and get somebody in.

DL: Yeah, there’s another certificate here, then it’s her—this one. Which I mean that’s interesting because of the salary and everything, but look at the top here.

AF: Oh okay, right, because after 1950 you couldn’t teach anymore?

DL: No, no. It was just, it was just that they were acknowledging her change of name upon marriage. But that’s how they did it. [laughter]

AF: Just put it on a—yeah.

DL: Yeah on a certificate. [laughter]

AF: So can you tell me any more about the school in Salmo that you taught at first? How big was it?

DM: Yeah, yeah. Well we, we, you know, said that when I taught in Salmo there was no heat in my room and no light. That was the, the old part of the the school and it had high—they, they they—oh the screens, the walls were up high. And every one of the blackboards was up by the top and they had to build, build me a little stool and I had to put down to stand up to write on. Just to put my lessons up.

DL: Oh, isn’t that...

DM: That was why that girl said, “We started out together [teaching in Salmo].”

DL: How many teachers were in that school, in Salmo?

DM: In Salmo, oh I had about—I think I had about 22.

DL: Students? Yeah.

DM: Yeah.

DL: But how many other teachers? So there you and Dawn...

DM: Oh we had myself and then, and Dawn who was Grade 2 and 3. And then we had another lady that came from—and she had Grade 5 and then the principal had the older ones.

DL: Oh okay.

DM: So there were, really five of us there. But that was exciting.

DL: Mm-hmm.

AF: And which grades did you teach?

DM: Pardon?

AF: Which grades did you teach?

DM: I taught Grade 1 in Salmo. Then I went to Trail and I taught Grade 3. Then I taught Grade 2, Grade 1 and then I—that's, that's I quit. I'm not going any lower and I'm not going any higher. [laughter] So that's when I retired. I was teaching Grade 1.

DL: Yeah, after—it's 1981, I think, wasn't it? That you retired? 1981, I think.

DM: Yeah.

DL: There was a thing here from the teacher's federation. Letter and—from the, from the...

DM: Oh that's the Trail business college. I went—I did...

DL: Yeah. So, June '81. So there's that one and then there was—Yeah.

AF: I think I—I don't know if I took a photo of that. I should.

DL: I think they're still at the same address, aren't they?

DM: Yeah.

DL: BCTF, I think they're still on Burrard Street. Which is interesting. How handy is that? You don't have to worry about making copies of things.

AF: I know, it's great. It's great that, yeah, you can zoom in and...

DL: Yeah.

AF: So when you were teaching during the war, were you collecting for War Bonds or...

DM: We, we, we were told. We bought War Bonds, we did.

AF: Okay.

DM: And they would say how—Kay Ellice, you know, she was resentful. She said, “I do not be told that I have to.” And so Mrs. Morrish said very quietly, “Maybe you don't but you may not have any money to buy anything else if you don't.” [laughter] We had a very old fashioned teacher. And she had taught for many years and she was the initial person in the school so she was funny. We called her the Duchess, not to her face! We would say—we would be talking, “Here comes the Duchess!” And everybody would run. [laughter] You know when you were young, we were only 21 and 22, you know. But anyway, it was a good start and that, because she was very definite about what you did and what you didn't do.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: But I can tell you another thing maybe that might be of interest. That our classes were really high in numbers because in the winter people from the prairies came and put their beds—their farms to sleep for the winter. They would come to Trail to work for the smelter in the shops. And then they'd bring their children. And we would have maybe—get maybe, oh, 10 more children. So we had a big class, you know. But they were always nice because they were always a little bit of a boost to the class, you know. Especially the one little girl that got sick and then I—we were all kind of wondering why she hadn't turned up. And nobody said anything. And at this stage this little fella got up and he said, “I want to say something, Miss Gilles.” I said, “Fine, you tell us then.” He said, “Well I talked and Joyce,” I think her name was Joyce, “is very sick and she may not be able to come. She may be dead.” [laughter] He says...

AF: She might be. [laughter]

DL: So the—other than the War Bonds—like you had to contribute to the War Bonds, did the kids have to collect anything?

DM: No, they didn't no. It, they—it were not—it was never part of the—what we did do, they did collect—they used to have little drives. And, you know, if they sang we would have the little concert and they'd put their penny or whatever in. And then if, if a parent came home on leave they came down to the school and they would go and see Mrs. Morrish and they would say—he'd say “I'm on leave,” and she would say “Fine, you son or daughter is in. Go down the other

aisle and go.” And then they would take the child home and keep them at home all the time he was at home so that they could be with their dad.

DL: Oh, that’s nice.

DM: Yeah that was—yeah. It’s funny what you remember after, you know. And so, but it was interesting. When I retired it was interesting to see the kids come in and they’d say, “My little boy was in your room. And he asked me, he said, ‘Should I be frightened?’ and he said, ‘No. She doesn’t strap. But you better be sure you got a good excuse!’” [laughter] So anyway, I laughed. But we had a good life, you know. With the children, and that. And every Friday you used to have a little concert in your room, just to change. And we had one boy that was quite a musician. He would say, he always sang, “I’m gonna hang my wash on Hitler’s lawn.” And that was the song of the day.

DL: Oh really, oh!

DM: And, and I thought if I ever hear that song I was gonna go, “Ah!” But he would sing it and everybody, the kids, would join in. But that as all the songs that they were singing, you know. Wartime stuff. Whatever, yeah.

AF: Did you also collect tin, or...

DM: Pardon?

AF: Did you also collect tin or things like that contribute. Did you do drives like that?

DM: Yeah, whatever.

AF: Yeah. At home or, or in the school?

DM: We didn’t have a lot of room but that—one day the principal, not the principal, the inspector came in and he came up to my desk and he sat down and opened the drawer. And a little kid he said, “You better not touch that. You’re not allowed to!” [laughter] And the principal—the inspector looked at him and said, “I know that.” “Well you shouldn’t be doing it then,” he said! [laughter]

DL: That’s this little kid. Oh God.

DM: They were not shy. But anyway, we had fun.

AF: And you said that you knew the inspector that came to your first school?

DM: They always came and watched you teach.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: And then they would make notes and which you'd just about die when there would be [pretends to write notes] and frowning. But yeah, they were very reasonable. I mean, they realized we were new, but also, they also could realize that we were doing, with the big classes we had, that we were doing the best we could, you know. And especially when they saw a few of us do a few dances around them once. And we weren't supposed to. [laughter] But anyway, we were all young and foolish.

DL: [laughter] That's the way it should be.

DM: When we weren't planning dates we were planning what we could do to be funny.

AF: So, if you needed help with your teaching material, what you were going to teach the students, did you have somewhere you could go if you needed that?

DM: No, we, we didn't have much in that. We had to do it all on the black board, or we had—and for the want of a term a “jelly pad.” And you had to put it on and then it would all—sometimes would blur off. And then somebody had the bright idea, maybe if we—we always were full of bright ideas. That if we warmed them up, the paper would sit on it and it would do better. So anyway, everybody put them on top of the radiator. So we had a lot of jelly. [laughter] We didn't have much.

DL: It made a big mess! So there was no such things as sort of a “resource room.”

DM: No, no.

DL: No just whatever was—that was your sort of resource.

DM: And, you know, when we first got a secretary we had to ask permission to use her.

DL: Oh!

AF: Hmm.

DM: Yeah because they had never—and she was complaining she was being over used. And so they'd—you'd have to clear it with Mrs. Morrish. Who was every reasonable, I'm not saying that. But anyway that was because that everyone thought no they don't have to use these jelly pads anymore! And they could type it and we can just get it. But it wasn't quite that easy. [laughter]

AF: Was Mrs. Morrish the principal or...

DM: She was the principal.

AF: Okay.

DM: But she had been the original teacher, at the school and she, she—when they needed a principal they appointed here. And that was quite unusual for a woman to get—to be principal.

AF: Yeah, that's what I was thinking.

DM: And she was, she was good. And she wore her hair like the old time English people, back with the big bun on it, you know. And she she—you couldn't pull anything over her. She'd say, "Somebody in here, didn't get their work on the blackboard before they left." And, you know, you'd think, "Well I got mine." And you'd try to remember who left early. [laughter] But I mean, she was good. She was—and then I think I've told you this story that we used to—we didn't have much in decoration. We were—had a big long hall like this, say. And so they had them, the children, decorate it with with crayon. And they—and the big thing was nobody touches that because it's gonna smear. So anyway, this day, my—Audrey was my friend and she was the other Grade 1 teacher. And she was following me and she said, "Remember we—et's warn them. Don't touch the, the wall." I said, "Okay," and I mentioned it to mine and she mentioned it to hers, kind of laying the law down. So all of the sudden I heard, "Stop!" And I looked and it was Audrey and she had red hair and it wasn't for nothing. We stopped and this little girl had taken her finger and had gone all the way up and down like this, down the, you know. You'd say "Don't do it," so she'd...

DL: And you have to prove why not!

AF: Yeah that's what I want to do!

DM: So, you know, (inaudible) go out and do it! So anyway, she said, "You come with me and I'll get Mrs., Mrs.," no I wasn't married then, "Miss Gilles to come with me—us, and we'll take the children back to the room and you have all got work to do and we're going to be out with Mrs. Morrish." Well that was, oh boy! I thought we were going to sit there like that. So we got up there and we took this little girl in and she said, and, and she said to Audrey, "Why are you bringing her in here?" And she said, "Well she took her finger and went all along the chalk board, and she smeared it all," and she said, "and we know how we all don't do that." You know, how we talk in front of little kids. And she said, "That's right." And so she said to the little girl, "Why did you do it?" "They said not to so I felt like it." You know, she was honest and then she says to Mrs. Morrish, "now I'd tell you I'm sorry but I have to got to the bathroom." And Mrs. Morrish says, "Enough people have played that on me. I know you don't have to." And she said, "Yes I do." And she did, And she did it right there! It took about a week to air out of the office.

[laughter] So we, we never—when a little kid said they had to go to the bathroom, “Which way?!” [laughter] But we had things like that happen that, you know, funny and—but it was good. I enjoyed my teaching, I always did. Yeah, but when I retired they had a nice party for me and some of them they came up and they said—one girl came up to me and said “You remember—I remember when you came and you were, you were so young.” You know, because they had all older teachers and we were just out of normal school. So I said, “Well that makes me feel good.” So she said, and she said something else, and I said “Well, you know, I always thought of you of my little Spanish girl.” Because she looked like Spanish, She was dark and her parents were dark and that but they weren’t Spanish. But the mother always dressed in sort of Spanish clothes. And I said “I always thought of you as my little Spanish girl.” And she said, “Oh, well I always thought of you as the lady that didn’t like my clothes.” [laughter]

DL: [laughter] Probably because you made comments about them, sort of, you know.

DM: Well, anyway. It was good. If you like kids and you don’t mind that some of them are little imps, you know. If you don’t mind it and you can stand it. And you can yell loud enough. [laughter] Or give a dirty enough look.

AF: That’s the essential skill. To be able to yell.

DM: You’ll make it, yeah. But I, I, I enjoyed every bit of it. And I was there right to the end. So, and that. Even if I was caught drinking, having a, a drink in the morning. A fella poked his head in the window in our boat—of our boat and we were sitting having a rum and Coke with our friend, my husband and I and our good friends. And we were out at the lake, up out at the trail. Out there.

DL: Oh yeah, at Christina Lake or somewhere.

DM: So anyway, this boy says, “I never thought I would look in and see my Grade 3 teacher having a drink this early in the morning.” And here was one of my students.

DL: That was now a mar—or, like, and older person. [laughter]

DM: So anyway. But afterward I told Lorne I should have said, “What do you want, a drink?”

DL: Yeah, he probably would have said yeah!

DM: But I did, I did say—but anyway, I was just telling Diane before I left I had a little note came from a girl and she had bought me a book that was on Salmo. Somebody had written a book on Salmo. And she had seen it and she had been in my Grade 1 class. So she said, “I thought of this: you were new to it and so was I,” she said, and she sent me the book. So I thought I couldn’t have been too bad for them.

DL: Well she remembered you after all those years, that's the amazing part to me, yeah.

DM: But anyway, I enjoyed it. You have to enjoy it, because some people don't and if they don't there's no fun in it, you know. And there can be a lot of fun. It can be a lot of tears too, but a lot of fun, yeah.

AF: Did you stay at the same school when you were teaching in Trail. Were you at the same school the whole time?

DM: No, basically I went to Salmo first because that was where there was a school. And then I, when I—my mother was going to be alone and she was saying, "Why don't you try in Trail?" and I—so I applied to Trail and I got in, I came and got accepted so I, then I stayed in Trail. And then when I got married my husband worked at the smelter so I stayed in Trail.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: And of course I was born and raised there so they, they all knew me. And one little boy went home and he said, they said—they were kind of curious who he had, if he was going to have me. And so anyway, his dad said, "Well, who—which teacher did you have?" "I got the one with the gold hair." [laughter]

DL: Gold hair!

DM: So he said to his wife, "Phone, tell them there is no use in her trying to play bridge with you until you teach him how to—what the difference between gold and silver. [laughter] And it—I guess it was gold, it was gold.

DL: Funny. It was valuable. [laughter]

DM: I don't recogni...

DL: But when you went to Trail, and you were teaching in Trail, you were always at the same school?

DM: Yes, that's right. Well that was where the opening was and that was where I went. And that was where Mrs. Morrish was. And she said to me once, "Well, you know, I knew your dad well and," she said, "And when, when you, when you say something sometimes you just sound like him."

DL: Oh really? Oh wow!

DM: She said, "And you don't," she said, "You listen." She said, "Your dad always listened."

DL: Yeah.

DM: Yeah. When he was city foreman there he always listened to everybody, and she said, “You always listen.” But then we went...

DL: Aunty Dorothy was only 7 when her dad died.

DM: Yeah.

DL: Yeah.

DM: And then I used to walk to school with Kay Ellice. And, and she was at the school. She wasn't a happy person. She didn't like Mrs. Morrish. She didn't like the whole thing. I mean, that happens. Personalities, not—and anyway we walked to school and we went early because we were anxious to be there and have everything ready. And so the fellow phoned and asked Mrs. Morrish, “Can we get somebody else to start the furnace?” He thought it was kind hard to get two young teachers to go and start the furnace. We were going so early he was sure that was why we were going.

DL: Oh!

DM: We walked along Riverside, you know. And he would see us going. So that he phoned and asked if we were turning—starting the furnace.

DL: And were you?

DM: Yeah.

DL: No, you weren't starting the furnace?

DM: No, no. We could of told on our other friend who smoked and she would go in and smoke but she wasn't allowed to—no smoke in the school according to Mrs. Morrish. So she used to go down and go behind the furnace. [laughter]

AF: So...

DM: Those bring me a lot of memories and laughs, you know. But we—I enjoyed it. And some don't, and some get very unhappy and I'm always sorry for them. Because, you know, if you're not happy, children can drive you over a wall. [laughter]

DL: Thank you very much.

Woman: Can I get you a cup of tea now?

DM: Oh that would be nice.

Woman: Would you like tea?

AF: I'm done with my coffee but thank you very much, yeah.

DM: And anyway, I hope I have been helpful but you're very welcome to use anything in the books.

AF: I would love to photograph this as well.

DM: But anyway, it—I feel sorry for people that go in for teaching that don't like it. Because it's a very unhappy, I've seen that, very unhappy situation. They just can't help it, you know. But I was always lucky. I always got along with them. And I don't mean because it was me. But I mean, I could cope with what was going on and then the girls that I went with they all were the same kind. We all liked it. We could see the humour in us trying to be so upright.

AF: It probably helped having friends that you could talk to about when you were having challenges when you first starting.

DM: yeah that's right.

AF: Yeah.

DM: And then they used to have the doctor come and exam, you know, and just give a quick test to the children, the little ones. So anyway, we went down this day and this little girl in my room, she was a little pudgy. And she was there on the table and so when the doctor came he padded her on the tummy. "You're a little fatty, aren't you?" And she said to him, "Daddy, I told you I wasn't going to come in here if you were"—he was the doctor and he was her dad. And we didn't realize that he was the dad. We knew the little girl and we knew him as the doctor. But we had—the mother always brought her to school.

AF: That's funny! "Dad, I told you I'm not..."

DM: "Daddy!"

AF: That's funny.

DM: And that's where you get the, the, the funny things in life. You know, that you think—and the little boy that my brother-in-law was driving me to school when I first went to Trail and when

we pulled up in front of the school there was a little boy there and he was sitting with his dog and he was red and the dog was red. So anyway, we got out and my brother-in-law was carrying my stuff in. And this little guy says, “Do you think that I’m good looking?” He said to my brother-in-law, and my brother-in-law has had boys so he kind, he kind of looked for a minute and he said, it was kind of a little monkey face, he said “Oh I think you look fine. You’re a good looking little boy.” He said “That’s good because they tell me I look just like my dog.” And then the dog came. [laughter]

AF: We’re twins!

DM: And then Bill said to me , “How did you keep a straight face?” My brother-in-law said. “Well I was having trouble but that cloud up there was pretty fascinating.” But he was so cute and he had such a cute little pudgy face and his dog was cute. But anyway—but I enjoyed it and I enjoyed everybody. The odd one—I’ve never taught with someone that I disliked. I mean, I might have not quite been want to be the best of pals, but I always managed, you know. And we’ve had a lot of—and then Mrs. Morrish was very, very much the type that was very, oh into Canada. We are Canada and England. So then when the war was on, whenever we went anywhere we always had to sing, “There’ll Always Be An England.” And all the kids—and if you’ve ever had over 100 kids singing and you count down and it was hard to tell what they were singing. But yeah...

AF: [laughter] And were there marching rills at your school during the war as well?

DM: Yeah.

AF: Yeah?

DM: And, and see when the war was—they they said it as over, we went up—thank you dear. We went up to the hall to the ball field and they—we marched up there. And Mrs. Morrish says “We’re going to sing loud and clear, ‘There Will Always Be An England.’” And so we are—have you ever heard a hundred kids strung out, singing. And then when we got up there, Central School were coming over from the other side, over the bridge. And they were singing a different song. And do you think that was enough. [laughter] But we celebrated!

DL: It’s hot, be careful.

DM: But I, I, I never—there wasn’t one class that I could say, that I could say I disliked. And I, and I—there was the odd little buy that I would really think—say, “Oh what’s he going to be like?” And he would turn out to be the best. And one day we were—I was going down—this is a long story. But we used to have, on Valentines day, we had a post office and we put—and then they put, the children put—brought pennies and put it in and that was for their stamp. And then they put—gave it to for something for the school, instead of. So anyway, they asked me to go

down and get the money from the post office where these little kids were counting, because I was out at the school earlier than the others because I always had the Grade 1s. And when I take it down to the Grade 5s and they would count it. So I went to down to get—got the money and just when I got inside to the Grade 5 room and I had this bunch of pennies and everything and then in my had like this. [laughter] Some little kid says, “Whoopee!” And I went “Whoa!” And have you ever watched money go “Woo!” And all the kids, all these Grade 5s going “Oh!” So the teacher that was their room teacher she was very strict type but she wasn’t, she had a sense of humour. And she said, “Okay, everybody down. Pick ’em up and I’m going to count ‘em. Come on, up!”

DL: And so they had to pick them all up off the floor?

DM: Yeah. And then they counted them and they got them all back. So but her big deal was when we were going anywhere and we would say, “Alice we’re going somewhere and its going to cost everybody 50 cents, say, you know.” “Oh, gee, I just don’t happen to have 50 cents with me.” So anyway, when I retired they wrote her, they wrote her an invitation if she wanted to come. So somebody said, “If it’s more than 50 cents, forget it!” You know, and then we were laughing maybe. And all of the sudden she came into the party with the reception in a hall and she comes up to me and she says, “First time I’ve ever had to break that 50 cents.” [laughter] And then we all laughed. And everybody around us couldn’t figure out what we were laughing about. But it was always, “Make sure you don’t—(inaudible).” [laughter]

AF: Was there a big difference in your school during the war and then...

DM: Pardon?

AF: Was there a big difference during the war and after the war? Like, did you notice that things were really different or...

DM: Well, during the war it was always sort of iffy. Like, when the fellows came home and they would come to pick up their family so they could take them home. And then we had people—one boy who lost their brother in the war. You know, and it was sad. So we, we knew, and the kids knew. And then the fellow in Nelson that took out that one plane I’ve forgotten his name. He took out a Japanese plane and he was killed. He was famous. And and he—well, that kind of hit everybody. You know, before that it was kind of...

DL: It was over there, yes, you know?

AF: But when know somebody...

DL: I think what’s one of the interesting things about this teacher’s certificate is the number that—is the number, 5771. So that’s not very high is it?

AF: No. I'm trying to...

DL: Assuming that they did them in numerical order.

AF: I know the normal school in Vancouver was quite a lot larger; probably twice the size.

DL: Mm-hmm. I would think.

AF: But I can't—the numbers fluctuated a lot during the war. I wonder when the numbering started.

DL: But it was interesting what you said about the normal school in Vancouver.

DM: Oh, that's right, yeah.

DL: You had to have a relative in Vancouver to attend that normal school.

DM: To go to that...

AF: Yeah.

DM: They were not allowed. That's why I had to go—all of us did.

DM: Yeah, had to go here.

AF: Would you have rather gone to Vancouver, if you had the choice?

DM: No I didn't, I didn't—but I had an uncle in Van—Victoria but that didn't count, because I was here anyway.

AF: Yeah it was strange the way they did it. I think it was anyone that was from Vancouver or if you had family that you could stay with. But then the rest of the province had to come to the island. It seems kind of backwards.

DL: Seems kind of awkward. I would imagine that the students that were in Vancouver's normal school would have had more—well maybe not if they were at school, because you had the base here, so maybe not militarily. But I would think that if you lived in Vancouver, or the coast you would probably have more a sense of the war than in the interior, you know? Just because there was more activity going on.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: Well, they, they had—I'm speaking now for Kay Ellice. When she went she was over there because they had cousins over there. And she went and she got a lot of help with her singing. And that's how she was a better singer. Because there was more of the talent, more...

DL: A bigger group.

DM: A bigger group.

AF: Do you remember doing your practice teaching when you were at the normal school?

DM: Pardon?

AF: Do you remember doing any practice teaching when you were at normal school?

DM: I can't think. I don't. In fact I don't think I heard.

DL: Did you—when you had to do your practice teaching did you do that—like, that was part of your training?

DM: Oh yeah. I did that, that small school that's like on a house that's near the—oh it's old one. And and it's next, pretty well next in the—across the street from the park and then the, the building behind is the, is the, is actually the post—not the post office—the building, the parliament building. You know, there's an old—that little old building.

DL: Oh, okay.

DM: Its a little, like, a little house. Well that's where I practiced all at once. And I was told not to take the children across the road, not because of the cars or anything but because of the, the darn old swans coming out and hitting them with their...

DL: Oh! Yeah!

DM: Not to take them across there. And then I'd, and then I practice taught at Fort Street, you know. Yeah, so I taught there for—Grade 5 I taught there. But the other one was just one for primary.

DL: That would almost—the first school you taught in was it only a—was there only one class room or were there more than—there was more than one classroom, was there?

DM: Where? At the, at the...

DL: At the first one?

DM: Yeah. At the first one. But there was really was two rooms, because it was really primary school. But the other one, Fort, was bigger. And it had more rooms.

DL: Yeah. Was it, like, a regular school, like, a brick building, the second one?

DM: Yeah.

DL: I wonder would that be...

AF: I know there's a bunch of government buildings back there now. I wonder if maybe they've been turned into—the school has been turned into one of those kinds of office buildings.

DL: But on Fort street I'm just thinking there's that school that's near, right near...

AF: Oh on Fort.

DM: You know, you...

AF: The one near Oak Bay junction?

DL: Well that's Oak Bay, right, School. But then there's that one—on Pandora, there's that firehall. So there's Pandora here and Fort Street here and there's a school between the two of them.

AF: Mm-mm.

DM: Yeah.

DL: I think it might be a middle school now. I'm wondering if its that one.

AF: I think I know where you mean. There's a Shell gas station that's right there.

DM: They renovated the the the other school on Fort Street.

DL: Oh, okay.

DM: You used to be able to go up and they renovated it and made it more up to date. But that was before we were there.

DL: Oh yeah. Mm okay.

DM: And Mr. Munsey used to tell us he used to teach there.

DL: Oh and he was, and he was...

DM: He was the one that we boarded with.

DL: Oh, oh okay. Yep, yep.

DM: And he would say, “Well don’t let them get ahead of you, because they’re a tough little bunch!” [laughter]

AF: But you didn’t have to do any practice teaching that wasn’t in Victoria? Did you have to go anywhere for a couple of weeks or...

DM: Yeah, well we did, reluctantly.

DL: But you, for your practice teaching, you stayed in Victoria? You didn’t have to go to Nanaimo or Duncan or anywhere.

DM: No, we did it while we were at normal school. And then we came home, but when we came home, that, in the spring, we came home to practice teach in Trail.

DL: Oh you did! Oh, okay.

AF: Oh, okay.

DM: You came home and if you—if they though you needed a little longer, you were kept down here for—and, and I know that my girl friend, she wasn’t—kept down. We all went home and she was, not all of us, but she was one that had to stay.

DL: Oh, okay. That’s interesting.

DM: And she was really disappointed because she was in Kaslo and she had went up there. That’s a small town near Trail. But, anyway. But all of Trail group, the boys and, and there were—so it worked out.

DL: So one of the interesting things that you experienced when you were in normal school was the disappearance of some of your classmates for a weekend.

DM: Oh yeah. It was wartime, and they’d, they’d meet a fellow and they’d go away. And then we’d all—I’d say, say, “Miss, Miss Jives,” and one of us would yell out, “Here!” So finally they said “You know, we’re getting tired of these people they’re all—they’ve been here so many years that we think that they’re were that many of these people.” And we were all trying to help them out and everybody was saying, “Here!”

DL: And they were—they had gone away to get married to the servicemen.

AF: Oh, okay.

DM: They were all—they were disappearing quite quickly. Especially after we moved down, on to—into...

DL: Oh. Downtown.

DM: ...downtown, because the fellows came up, downtown and waited for the girls outside. [laughter] Anyway, made it interesting.

AF: Mm-hmm. Did you come back to Victoria to do a summer school session after you finished your normal school?

DM: Oh well we had to come back for summer schools. For twice. It seems to me we went for 2 years, 2 or 3 years. And we had to go and we all came back. There was one teacher they didn't like and, well I didn't either but, you know, there's always somebody. And we were—we went—where we did our—is the high school downtown. They had it and they said it was quite old and they rebuilt it. Well we were in there, the old one. So we were in there and they looked down and they saw this prince—this fellow. And they saw me down at the bottom, so they thought, "we'll startle that fellow." So we leaned over the railing and yelled, "Hey! Dorothy! Dorothy! Dorothy!" and then threw me a book and he stand just about a little—and I'm like, "How can I know people like that?" And he said to me, "Did you throw that book?" and I said, "Not from down here, I'm looking at you!" But anyway, talk about—I thought when I get those home but they all went home on the bus. [laughter] Anyway, what you do when you're young. But that was the, the boys school. And they—didn't they rebuild that after.

AF: I that Central? The Boys and Girls Central?

DM: Yeah. Well that's where they threw the book.

AF: Oh, okay. Did you board while you were here for summer school?

DM: Well they, they were all—they all had to come. So no, these were my girlfriends that were being so smart.

DL: When you came for summer school, where did you stay?

DM: We tried to get the same places we had. But I can't really remember that because we knew her and we just kind of wrote, Marjory and I wrote, and said we would come, my girlfriend. And then next year we—Marjory was getting married so, and all, you know, that was it.

DL: Yeah. It changes, yeah.

AF: That's great. Thank you very much for speaking with me. Great stories. Thank you so much.

DM: Well I'm sorry that I didn't have anything more enlightening.

AF: No that was perfect. That was absolutely perfect.

DL: I'm sure it's really interesting because when you interview a board spectrum of people, hopefully, everybody remembers little bits and pieces after, yeah.

AF: Yeah, exactly.

DM: One thing that I, I would like to make a point about that was that being so hard to get a job that some of the girls had to take jobs that really weren't suitable for them. And they were, they were good girls and they taught well. But one girl being French Canadian—not a French Canadian a real French, speaking pure French. And then getting way up north up somewhere, in the, in, in among, you know. And she said she didn't know, she didn't know anything about them. And she said she felt sorry because she felt that she was trying to do her best but couldn't because she had no background.

AF:Mm-hmm.

DL: Yeah people—and I think years ago, probably more than now, people took jobs that they knew they really didn't want to take because that was a job. Whereas now people are a little more selective and say “Well I don't really want to go to Timbuktu so I will just keep looking down here until I find something.” So, big difference that way.

DM: Well I had a letter from Lorne's cousins, you know.

DL: Hmm. Yeah in—yep.

DM: And they said, “Well you know there was the strike of teachers,” and I thought, “Who didn't?” But anyway I don't think—and she said that Rosemary was a teacher and she went down to, she took fruit down, she's retired now, and she took fruit down to the people striking and walked with them.

DL: Oh she did!

DM: Yeah that's what Carol Ann said. They used to live in—one of them lived in your grandpa's place. In, in, in the apartment they had.

DL: Oh really in Canard? Oh in Canard?

DM: Yeah.

DL: Oh for heaven's sake. That's one of uncle Lorne's cousins.

DM: Yes. That's the one his, his wife was an English war bride.

DL: Oh okay.

DM: And she lived down more on the wharf and they used to really come in and bomb, you know. And she said—Joe said that he was there one night and they heard the planes coming and the bombs landing out in the water. So he thought, “Well I've just got to save Minnie's little brother.” So she—he dived under the pil—under the table and grabbed the kid. Went under the—and the kid says, you know, “Let me go, I'm not afraid of them.” [laughter] So he said—and when he got up he said there was Minnie's mum and dad and the little boy looking at them and they say, “What was that Canadian doing down?” [laughter]

DL: They were so used to it.

DM: Well they, they, they get—you know, I guess they, had so much of it.

DL: Yeah, yeah, it was just their norm, yeah.

AF: The friend of mine that the family is from Trail the name is Regnier.

DM: Pardon?

AF: The name—do you know any Regniers from Trail?

DL: R-E-G-N-O-R?

AF: R-E-G-N-I-E-R.

DM: How do they spell it?

AF: R-E-G-N-I-E-R.

DM: I don't think so, that doesn't—I know all the old timers, because I am one. [laughter] But the other ones—and I've been out of school there for 3 or 4 years.

DL: Since 1981, yeah, yeah. Yeah 1981 is when you retired that's really—you know, you start thinking about it, you know, it's a long time. Almost as long as you taught.

DM: Yeah.

AF: Yeah.

DL: You know.

DM: Well no, I, I was just thinking of it the other day that now I don't really know many in Trail any more.

DL: Yeah that's right, you wouldn't.

DM: And Lorne was saying that he doesn't know—he didn't know as many because they were all new.

DL: Mm-hmm.

DM: So are you going—are you teaching now?

AF: I'm not. I'm a researcher, so doing interviews like this is what I do.

DM: Well I hope this has been some help.

AF: It's perfect. It's absolutely perfect, yeah. It's really interesting to hear your story too because you taught at a bigger school than most of the other teachers that we've interviewed. Most of the people that we've interviewed already taught at schools, like you were saying, where they were in the middle of nowhere and they had a one room school. So it's great to see the contrast and how it was different.

DM: Well, it—I thought I always enjoyed it.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: My mother always said I bossy from the day I was born. And I guess I was. But anyway, I was lucky for the fact that a lot of people couldn't get into Trail right away and I did after I had been in Salmo that one year. But I—and I was there all those years and when I retired a lot of them came to my retirement that I had taught. So it's just nice. It's just a small town but it's good living and it's nice to have people as friends. And so...

AF: It must have been nice to know the families when you have a child in your classroom, to kind of know their family.

DM: That's right, yeah.

AF: You knew the doctor's, the doctor's family, and...

DM: But anyway, no, it was—we—I enjoyed it and the fact that there were so many of the, the, the five of the men were from Trail. And I—they were in the senior metric with me. So we were all—knew one another, you know. And then when we got—but I never taught with, until I got to Trail, with another person I had gone to school with, you know. But because in Salmo, Dawn and I, Dawn was from Nelson and I was from Trail but we had been at normal together.

AF: Oh okay.

DM: But anyway...

AF: How big was the Trail school when you first started teaching there? If there were five teachers in Salma, Solma...

DM: Well, in Trail they—it would be hard to tell because it—the each school had a different number of—like the school I was in was, was smaller than some.

AF: Mm-hmm.

DM: And then they had a big high school.

AF: Oh okay.

DM: And then they had another school. But we, we, I'll tell, we always thought we were better [laughter] because we were small. [laughter]

AF: We had the fun kids!

DM: We wouldn't admit anything different. [laughter]