

Joan Montieth Interview – February 29, 2008

HR – Helen Raptis (interviewer)

JM – Joan Montieth (interviewee)

HR: So you're currently living in Penticton.

JM: That's right.

HR: And you taught in the Thompson Valley. What I'd like to just begin with, maybe, is a little bit about your own schooling experiences where you grew up, where you went to school, and whether you recall anything about your early experiences that might have influenced you to become a teacher?

JM: Actually I can tell you just right off without going into any of those things that what put me into teaching was the principal of the high school called my mother and I in and wanted to talk about what I was going to do when I was through school, 'cause I was at the end of my grade, my grade—the last grade of high school. And so he said, he said, "I want her to go take Grade 13 and then go to normal school and be a teacher." And that was it.

HR: Oh wow.

JM: That was it.

HR: So he saw something in you, I guess.

JM: I don't know what it was [laughter] because I'd never really thought of it. You know, times were really tough then.

HR: What year would that have been, Joan?

JM: That would have—just a minute now. I went to—oh gosh, I taught 1939, that's when I started teaching. So it would be 2 years before that, '37 I guess.

HR: Okay. So things were still tough, I guess, from the Depression?

JM: Yes that's right, that's right.

HR: So he recommended that you be a teacher. What about your schooling, were you as a, as a teenager were you interested in children or did you participate...

JM: Not really, I was an only child until we adopted a little boy when I was about 10. So, I don't

know I, I don't think I'd thought of it. I lived in another world I think. I wrote stories, I liked writing stories and I spent time doing that. But I, I don't recall children, you know?

HR: Mm-hmm.

JM: I don't know he just said that and we went along with it.

HR: You must have been a good student.

JM: No. [laughter]

HR: No?

JM: Lazy one.

HR: [laughter]

JM: I don't think I ever, you know, put my full mind to studying or anything like that. I was always told I could do better if I'd just work harder, you know? But I got along without so I didn't bother.

HR: And where, where was that Joan? Where were you at school?

JM: Well funnily enough we came out from England and in a soldier settlement thing after the first world war. And so I land—we landed up in a little village 20 miles north of Kamloops?

HR: Mm-hmm.

JM: Called Vinsulla and we were on a farm there. And I went to sch—Grade 1 and 2, I guess, there. A one room school. And that was the first school I taught in.

HR: Oh goodness!

JM: When I got out of normal school I'm looking in the paper every night, you know, to look at school teachers wanted and here was one that said—a little tiny notice in the paper, this Vancouver Sun. Vinsulla School wanted a school teacher. And I thought, "Well for heaven's sake that's where we landed." And so I went there, loved it.

HR: Was, was your family still there when you were teaching?

JM: No, no we'd gone. We were only a few years in Vinsulla and then a year I think in, in Kamloops. And then we went to the coast. And I grew up in North Vancouver.

HR: Okay.

JM: North Vancouver High School.

HR: And so you graduated from North Van High?

JM: That's right.

HR: And is that where you did your Grade 13 as well?

JM: Yes, yeah.

HR: Okay.

JM: And in the nick of time I got money from England, isn't that amazing? It was as though I was supposed to do it. [laughter] I got money that paid for my Grade 13 and normal school.

HR: And where was that money from? Was it family money?

JM: Yes, yeah. In England, yeah.

HR: Can you tell me a little bit about North Van High? Do you have any memories?

JM: Oh yes. A lot of memories, I still have friends that, you know, I went through school with. I liked it, I had a good time. And I, I, you know, I, I got along with teachers. I don't know how I got into teaching except for this being told that, you know, he thought that would be the best thing for me to do and there was nothing there that sort of made me want to go and teach school myself.

HR: So did you, at high school, did you belong to any clubs or do any sports or anything like that?

JM: Not a great deal. I don't know what I did. [laughter] Chase boys. [laughter]

HR: Chase boys! [laughter]

JM: Oh dear, that was a big part of your life. [laughter]

HR: [laughter] And I, I take it when you went to normal school in 1930—was it 1938 you started at the Vancouver Normal School?

JM: Just a minute. Yes, it would be around then, yeah. I taught in gra—in '39 and so it would be

'38 I was in Grade 13.

HR: Okay.

JM: Yeah.

HR: And when you went to normal school did any of your friends come along with you?

JM: Yes there was a gang of about four or five of us that came—went from North Van. And over the, over the inlet and it's away off up to the normal school. Yes, a gang of us.

HR: How did you get to normal school each day?

JM: Street car down Lonsdale Avenue, across on the ferry, and then a street car, and then a bus and we were there.

HR: Wow.

JM: Yeah.

HR: Long way to go.

JM: It was but it was okay. You got used to it. Sometimes we had walked, you know. Walked from the normal school down to the fe, the ferry.

HR: Oh gosh that's a long way to go.

JM: It was actually, yes. I didn't realize I'd been so athletic. [laughter] I look back at it.

HR: What do you remember about that year? Do you remember any of your teachers or anybody?

JM: Well yes, yes. A dear man was my home room teacher at normal school and I don't think I can remember his name. He was very into the mind. What was it he taught? I can't remember.

HR: Was it psychology perhaps?

JM: Sort of psychology, he was, yeah. He was into it. Very nice. No, they all were. I had no—I wasn't very fond of the grade—the one that taught us about Grade 1. I never wanted Grade 1. [laughter]

HR: Was that because of the teacher or because of having to teach the kids?

JM: I think because—I don't know, she was a typical Grade 1 teacher. You know they're very good, they're wonderful, but it—the very youngest ones didn't appeal to me. I liked them a little bit older.

HR: Hm.

JM: My favourites were Grade 6 and 7. No not—yeah 6, 7 were my favourite to teach.

HR: So you—was it a busy year the, the normal school?

JM: Normal school, yes, it was busy. We all enjoyed it, I enjoyed it very much. There again I was—one of the teachers told me if I'd just do some studying, you know, that I could have had first, first class or whatever it was. I don't know, you know, but I, I just—I wasn't a good studier.

HR: Were you too busy doing other things?

JM: Lazy I think.

HR: [laughter]

JM: I, I really do. Yeah I, I really do because I got that in high school, I got that at normal school and [laughter] I, I wasn't a studier. I knew people who studied. I mean, you know, really late and I just fell asleep.

HR: [laughter] Well that's nice to hear, that you...

JM: Pardon?

HR: It's nice to know that you could get by without studying.

JM: [laughter]

HR: I, I never could. [laughter]

JM: Well I'm not saying I didn't do any. But, I mean, I just didn't really work at it, you know.

HR: You must have been very bright to be able to do that.

JM: I don't know. [laughter]

HR: Well I'm, I'm wondering if you remember any of your classes from the normal school? Do you remember what they taught you? Does anything stand out? For example, some people have

talked about the MacLean writing method.

JM: Oh yes, yes.

HR: It surprised me how many people have wanted to talk about that.

JM: Is that right?

HR: Yeah.

JM: Well he was a very nice man, you know, he was a nice man. MacLean, wasn't it?

HR: Yeah.

JM: That's the name? Yeah. He was a very nice man. I guess I still partly do it but although you scribble more as you grow older. But yeah, actually what I enjoyed most was being next to the—oh I can't remember the name of what they called it. But it was a school.

HR: The demonstration school?

JM: Yes, only—we were, were allowed in—taken in, and and we could take lessons—do lessons. And I loved that, I enjoyed that. Just going and doing it instead of always just talking about it.

HR: So that—is that—what grades did they have in the demonstration school?

JM: Grade—gosh, I think—I would think—It was a straight school. I can't—there was a name.

HR: Okay.

JM: My memory is so bad, I'm sorry. [laughter]

HR: That's okay, that's okay. Do you remember anything else? Did they, did they tell you about what to expect going out to rural areas?

JM: Oh yes. What it—they would talk about that, who was it? One of them used to talk about it quite a lot. Yes, we knew what it would be like sort of thing, you know, yeah. There was a, there was a class there I think that we could—I was trying to think what the demonstration class that was Grades 1 to—I'm not sure.

HR: Okay. Then do you, do you remember any of the methods that you were taught? Like, how to teach reading, how to teach math, what books you used, any of that kind of stuff?

JM: I guess there was. There must have been. Isn't it awful, but what I just most remember is doing it, isn't that funny?

HR: Doing it at, at the demonstration school for your practicum or, or teaching in Vinsulla?

JM: I beg your pardon?

HR: Do you remember the teaching part in Vinsulla or do you remember the norm, the normal school teaching?

JM: No, no I don't actually. I remember hiding under the school. [laughter]

HR: At, at?

JM: Now why did I do that?

HR: Where was that?

JM: I was—that was at Vin—when we were up on the farm, when I was just a kid and going to grade, into Grade 1, I guess. And I—actually I went in a year earlier, another little girl and I did, so the school could stay open. We had to have so many students before they would send a teacher. So this other little girl and I were sent. And I think something happened at home or something and, and I was late for school and I didn't want to walk in late so I went underneath the school. You could sort of crawl under it.

HR: [laughter]

JM: And then I appeared later. [laughter] Yeah that was really stupid. But that—isn't that the kind of thing you'd remember though, isn't that stupid.

HR: Yes, it is the kind of thing. I, I remember being at—when I was a child we used to stand outside and wait for our names to be called for the classes on the first day of class.

JM: Oh yes.

HR: And I didn't here my name called, so after all of the classes went I was left standing in the school yard. [laughter]

JM: Oh no, what an awful feeling.

HR: But I was too shy and too embarrassed to speak up so I just stood in the school yard crying. [laughter]

JM: [laughter] Isn't that interesting?

HR: Those are the things you remember, aren't they?

JM: [laughter] Oh dear.

HR: So when.

JM: Now where were we, sorry. [laughter]

HR: When when you were at the normal school you said that they prepared you quite well for work, working in the rural areas.

JM: I thought they did, yes. There was a one room school now, I'm sure, yes. And, and so we'd sort of knew how it ran. How to—how you could run it. I'd forgotten that.

HR: And how—what kinds of advice—do you remember what kinds of advice they gave you? Because working with all those different grade levels must have been very complex.

JM: Yes. You you had to, you had to be, you had to be able to maybe combine grades for certain subjects. And some of them didn't get their grade level but they got a year of it. Do you know what I'm trying to say?

HR: So if you had, say, Grade 3 and Grade 4 they might be working on the same math for example, or...

JM: Or well when you got into more of the the things about—oh isn't that awful I'm so far away from it.

HR: Social studies maybe? Social...

JM: Yes! That kind of thing you could combine—make combinations. So they missed their actual grade level but they got a good year anyway on whatever the subject was.

HR: Oh I see.

JM: Maybe it wasn't the same country or the same, you know?

HR: But they got the same skills?

JM: But they got the—yes. They, they learned something. You, you sort of had to make some combinations.

HR: Okay. So you would combine by grades?

JM: Yes and how many kids you had. Like, if you've got one kid alone in one grade, you've got to sort of, maybe, fit her or him in. I don't know. It, it seemed to work.

HR: Did you ever...

JM: I enjoyed it.

HR: Do you ever remember combining subjects areas? For example, art and social studies and...

JM: Yes, yes, yes.

HR: How, how did you do that? Can you give me an example?

JM: One of the pictures I sent you is not artistic at all, but it's a picture of, of, of the flag. The Canadian flag or the Eng—I guess it was the English flag then and it was in parts and we were—it was a concert we were preparing for. And they did this—some of them it was their job to do that, that painting of the flag and it was in parts. And they marched it in and put it together while the rest sang "There Will Always Be An England."

HR: Oh isn't that interesting.

JM: Yeah I can remember that distinctly because I've got the picture. I had a ball looking through my book getting pictures to send to you. [laughter] The, the camera is not very good it's years and years and years and they've been sitting in the—the pictures have been sitting in a book and so they're not great. But they sure brought everything back to me.

HR: And and that was happy memories coming back?

JM: I beg your pardon?

HR: Those were happy memories?

JM: Oh absolutely! I had a ball. I just had a great day.

HR: Can, can you tell me a little bit about how the war—you were, you were in Vinsulla for 2 years, so to 19...

JM: '39 and '40, ending in '41.

HR: And did you teach after that? Or did you...

JM: Yes, then I, then I went to—applied for a school in Kelowna and I went there for sev—I was there for 7 years 'til I got married and then I quit. So I didn't teach and have children. I thought, “If I have kids all day, I don't think I'd be a 100 percent for my kids when I got home.”

HR: Mm-hmm.

JM: So I, I, I could so I did.

HR: And in...

JM: But I worked with kids from then on. [laughter] Volunteering, You know. Girls Guides and stuff like that.

HR: And when you were in Kelowna was it also an elementary school?

JM: Yes it was Kelowna Elementary; it was the only one in Kelowna at that time. And when I went there my—it was Grade 2 which isn't my favourite. But my two favourite friends who were teaching those grades and so I stayed with them for—until they both got married. And then I jumped into Grade 5, Grade 6 and 7 together and, and I ended up—you mentioned somewhere money. And I always managed my money. I would, you know—it was very low but then everything else was low too. It didn't matter. But I felt a little—I should have got extra money for my last year because Mr. Marriage, the principal, asked me if I would take over the special class. And this was a class of misfits. They fit—didn't fit in because they would fight a teacher if they were too old for that class, you know what I mean?

HR: Were they Grade 6-7? Is, that the...

JM: They were, they were all grades.

HR: Okay.

JM: And I can't remember just how many of them there were. We, we were in a, a little building across from the school on our own. And I got along with the, with the kids that were a bit troublesome. I could get along with them, and that was why he put me there. But it was extra work. It was a great strain, but I wouldn't have missed it for anything, you know. It was good.

HR: Why do you think that they, they didn't consider giving you extra pay? Did you ask for it?

JM: No I didn't. I just, you know, he said, “Will you take it? I can't get us a teacher for it.” And the, the—I don't think he had very li—much warning from the guy who used to do the special class. He couldn't find anyone who was free I suppose. So he asked me if I'd take them, and I did. And then of course he got someone who was, you know, specially trained for it.

HR: In special education I guess.

JM: Yeah, it was, it was—like, there was a boy who came from a school, one room school maybe, somewhere up north and he wasn't up to where the class was. He couldn't fit in, you know, because he hadn't—he'd been in a one room school, I guess. And he fought the teacher, you know, couldn't get along.

HR: And what—he wasn't at the same level academically?

JM: He was okay. I mean he—it was simply he hadn't had the work and he didn't know it. But he—so when he came down to Kelowna he's put in a class that have, you know, gone year by year all together and, and he's in there and he doesn't know what they're talking about. And so he was a nuisance. You know, he was bad. To get along, hard to get along with. So he was there. And there was another boy that I knew from when he was in Grade 2 and he was a very, very slow learner, so he was there. And there were—there was a little girl that was very slow at Grade 2, I knew her and she was in this class now. They were, they were all misfits and it was, it was tough. It was a tough year.

HR: And that was your last year?

JM: I guess it was. Then I met Doug. [laughter] But I—you know, it was a good experience. I mean, I, I did it and I helped Mr. Marriage out. He was a dear man. And really, I was so lucky because he was a great principal. An Englishman and no nonsense, but just as fair as could be.

HR: And did he help you out if, if you ever needed any help?

JM: I could have got it from him, yes. Oh yes, he'd back you up.

HR: And what about your resources? Did you have enough resources to cover the curriculum? Books, materials?

JM: You know, it, it was war time and I don't think things were great. I don't remember being short of anything, you know, wanting. Of course the two—the one room school, there wasn't even running water. [laughter]

HR: Oh wow. [laughter]

JM: Outdoor biffy and yeah it—but I mean I had a wonderful time with those kids. They were lovely kids.

HR: And did, did the war impact directly your work? I mean, did you, did you talk about the war with the kids?

JM: Yes, yeah I think a lot of them—I imagine most of them had relatives, a cousin or a brother or a uncle, you know, in the war. So, yes in the news, you know, where you sort of talked about what had—was happening before you got going on the lessons. Sort of discussions. They'd be talking about a letter that came back. One really funny incident was that I had one girl and her name was Joan too. And she had a, a single mother which wasn't common in those days. And Joan was standing up wanting to tell us about a visit, about [laughter] a visit from this soldier who was not her father. [laughter] And I thought, "Oh my gosh!"

HR: [laughter]

JM: I said something awfully quickly. Oh it was funny. [laughter] That didn't happen very often, but this girl was a case. Oh she was really funny.

HR: So they would share sto—war stories.

JM: They'd share their stories, yes. At the Grade 2 level you know what it was like.

HR: Yeah. Did, did you ever do any drills with them? What to do in the case of an air raid or anything like that?

JM: Never came up. I don't think—No, we never thought of it coming up. I never thought of an air raid happening.

HR: So there were no blackouts, no practices, no drills?

JM: No, nothing like that. I don't remember those.

HR: Did you help the children to collect any scrap metal or paper or anything like that for the...

JM: Not so much that but we did a lot of talking about—oh what did we call them? You could buy these—they would...

H: Oh war stamps. The war stamps?

JM: Something like that, yes. Yes, I can't—that's not exactly what we called them, but it—that was the idea, yes. And so we did do that.

HR: And bonds, maybe, bonds?

JM: Well no, that would be a bit beyond that age group.

HR: Okay.

JM: Yeah. I have that written down somewhere. Oh there it is, war savings certificates.

HR: Oh okay.

JM: War savings certificates, I think that was the name.

HR: All right. And do you remember much about the community? About the trustees or about the parents? Were there any community activities, dances, things like that?

JM: In the one room school yes, there were dances.

HR: That was Vinsulla, Vinsulla?

JM: In Vinsulla. Yes, and there would be a dance, say, for Halloween and, and the whole—all the community, all the parents would be there. And there was no running water and this [laughter] wasn't very popular with the, the fellow who came. What do you call him? Came to insp—the inspector. You know, the school inspector?

HR: Yes.

JM: From Kamloops arrived the day after a dance. And there's dishes [laughter] waiting to be washed because the, the ladies were going to come right after school with warm water and, you know, do the washing up. You couldn't do it at that night, you know, because of the the dance.

HR: And it was in the school, the dance?

JM: Yes, that was—there was, there was nothing else there. We didn't even have a, a store.

HR: I see.

JM: The nearest store was 5 miles south. But, yeah, it—that was awful. He saw those dishes there and I thought, "Oh my gosh, this is awful." But I couldn't do anything about it. That was the only real hardship I guess.

HR: And how did you make room in the school? Did you take the desks out of the school?

JM: I guess we must have pushed them up somehow. I'm not sure, quite sure what happened. And the men would have done it, you know. So, I, I guess that's why I can't recall what we did. Of course, we had them around the room for people to sit in, I suppose, between dances. I don't know.

HR: Mm-hmm.

JM: I can't see that in my memory, I can't see quite how it worked out.

HR: And when you were in Vinsulla did you live with a family or did you...

JM: I lived with the dearest couple. Actually he was—his name was Joe Spratt and he remembered me as a little red-haired kid when we came out from England. And he had a dear wife, Marion, and they were just across a field, not very far from the school. And she brought me a warm lunch everyday and—because I couldn't leave the kids, you know, they all brought their lunches. So I, I was well looked after. Couldn't have been nicer people.

HR: Wow. So she would make a lunch I guess for herself.

JM: Yeah, a hot lunch for him, but she'd put mine in a—she had long tin with a lid and she'd carry it over every day for me.

HR: Oh isn't that nice.

JM: It, it was wonderful. It, it—my whole experience there was a delight. I enjoyed it so much.

HR: And do you remember anything about the upkeep of the school? Who—did you have a wood stove in that school?

JM: Yes there was a wood sto—a big wood stove and one of the boys got there in time to light it and get it just warmed up a bit, you know, in the winter. And that was his job. I don't—now I don't know if the school board fellas paid him or whether they just were expected to do it. I couldn't tell you. But those jobs were, were looked after.

HR: And did someone clean the school for you, or was that your responsibility?

JM: I think someone must have cleaned it. Maybe one of the bigger girls? I'm not—you know, I can't remember that.

HR: Okay. But it wasn't you that cleaned it?

JM: It wasn't me that had to clean it, no.

HR: And what about your experiences in Kelowna, were you able to mix in with the community in the same way as Vinsulla?

JM: Well it was, it was a much big—you know there were three class—three rooms of each grade. So it was, you know, a nice sizes school. And the community, while it was very small compared to what Kelowna is now, it still was a, you know, it was fine. I was—I had a good time

there too. Well, I stayed. [laughter] We only just moved to Penticton to be closer to our daughter. But we were in Kelowna until it got too big and then we left.

HR: And did you board with someone in Kelowna?

JM: Yes, yes I did. I boarded at two different places. The first was with a, a very English ex-nurse who married a soldier during the war. And she was very bossy, but it was okay. You know, she was kind enough. But she was funny, you had to laugh at her because she was so bossy, to him and to us. My friend came and we—I said, “Could she come too,” because this was the second year, “could she come and stay here too?” And, “Well all right, but you’ll have to share the—you’ll have to share the bath time.” The bath—I was allowed, I guess I was allowed two so she said, “You’ll have to share that with her.” You know, you—so instead of just me having one and two people having one, we, we bathed together. [laughter] Oh dear.

HR: So you shared the bath water?

JM: Yeah we really shared the bath. [laughter]

HR: Oh goodness.

JM: She was funny. She really was, but, you know, she was kind.

HR: So only two baths were allowed? She wouldn’t extend the baths.

JM: She wouldn’t extend the bath time, no. It it was—I think she didn’t want anyone else, but then she couldn’t say no. She didn’t like to say no.

HR: Ah.

JM: And anyway, then I stayed with a lady who, widowed lady, whose daughter was—she sent her daughter to a boarding school and she had the room. And she had us and, and that was fine except we had to eat out except for breakfast. Which wasn’t great, but there was a place that was—wasn’t really a restaurant, you know, they just did meals for people like us.

HR: Oh!

JM: Yeah it was, that was very handy. So that was okay.

HR: So was it—would they hand you the meal and you’d take it back home, or would you eat there?

JM: No it was, it was just at the end of the street, of the main street, just as you turned the corner.

And it was just a little, small little place. Enough room for them to do the evening meal. And, and there were people that wanted an evening meal and there it was. And you, you were definite you went every day.

HR: Okay.

JM: I can't, I can't remember what we called it even, what the name was. But it was, it was excellent.

HR: Okay. And financially, how did you manage? Was it expensive to board?

JM: No it wasn't expensive. No I always—you know, in Vinsulla I arrived there in September and before long I was paying \$5 a month to buy my first horse. [laughter]

HR: Oh wow.

JM: You know, I obviously had \$5 I could spare. It was the minimum for that year, what it was I can't remember. But the Spratt's were very, you know, they didn't charge me very much. So I, you know, I never suffered.

HR: And in, in Kelowna was—were there community events or was it—was the school too big by that time?

JM: Or was there what?

HR: Were there community events that you participated in?

JM: Oh yes, there was lots going on. Dances, regular dances, that we could attend and there was, you know, badminton, tennis in the summer. Yeah anything you, you know, all the—it was a a little town. It was more than a town really.

HR: And you, you had colleagues, you had some friends of yours who were teaching there?

JM: Yes, loads of friends, yeah.

HR: Is there anything else that I haven't thought about that you might want to add, that you remember? Any challenges of the time any?

JM: Let me just look through, I—we jotted down some things.

HR: Okay.

JM: Challenges—oh yes, one of your questions. You see I, I never taught when there wasn't a war on, so I don't know about ordinary teaching.

HR: Mm-hmm.

JM: Without a war, you know, I, I never it was just the war period that I taught.

HR: Right. And after the war, things didn't, didn't really change? Because you taught up to 1948, so the la—those couple from about '45 to '48.

JM: Oh that's right. That was just after, yeah.

HR: Did—was there anything noticeable, noticeably different after the war, or...

JM: Not that I remember.

HR: Okay.

JM: One question you did was—what was it now? Advice for people entering the profession. It's interesting that I never thought of it before someone told me to do it, which—what the way I wanted to answer that question of your was that you, you shouldn't go into it unless you enjoy children. But I mean I never, I never enjoyed children. I didn't—never thought of children. So I, I wasn't right, my answer would have been wrong I think. If you hate children I wouldn't think it would be good to go into it.

HR: But that's a fundamental bottom line for teaching, yeah.

JM: Yeah.

HR: Even though you didn't realize it when you began?

JM: I certainly didn't. No I didn't. I, I just, you know, this is what it was suggested, you know, the principal was suggesting and so I, I thought, "Oh okay." Because things were tough then.

HR: Mm-hmm.

JM: And—but it certainly was divine providence because I loved it.

HR: Did you—before the principal suggested this and before you ended up at normal school, did you have any aspirations to do anything else?

JM: Be an actress, a movie actress or else a writer.

HR: Ah.

JM: You know really serious. [laughter] I was off, you know. I, I loved writing stories and I used to do a lot of acting in front of a mirror at one stage.

HR: And did you write when—throughout your life?

JM: Not really, not really. But I can remember, I can remember at recess, I had a little group of friends and we'd go out and sit down and I'd read them what I'd been able to write during school that morning.

HR: [laughter]

JM: Isn't that terrible?

HR: [laughter] And they would enjoy that I'm sure.

JM: [laughter] Well yes, well they did it. Stupidly they came. [laughter] Oh dear.

HR: Wow. I'm, I'm surprised that you didn't keep writing throughout your life. That] seems to be such a passion for you.

JM: Yes, yes, I know. I think about it sometimes, but I've never really done it.

HR: Did you ever have an opportunity to write stories for the children in your classes?

JM: No, but I used to try and urge them to, you know.

HR: Mm-hmm.

JM: I always remember having a fit over one little girl. They were writing, they were writing a story about what they liked to do—what was it? What they—and she wrote a story about she liked collecting things. No, but one thing—she said but, something like this, she said, “But one thing I wouldn't do would be collect bugs—no butterflies. I know how I'd feel, I know how I'd feel if someone grabbed hold of me, blew my insides out and stuck me in a book.” Or something like that and it just struck me so funny. So I laughed heartily and she just sat there and, “Oh what did I say is so funny?” But it, you know, I just enjoyed her use of crazy expo, exposition sort of thing. So I, I liked to—them to do, to do the writing.

HR: Hm and it is a very creative way to think about it, isn't it?

JM: Pardon.

HR: The way she, the way she phrased it was very creative.

JM: Oh it was, yes, it was, it was so beautifully done. And then she looked so, “Oh did I really write that?” you know, as though—she didn’t mind my laughing. I, I couldn’t help laughing. So, we, we sort of laughed together. [laughter] It’s interesting to see what—you know, it was an interesting thing to put down.

HR: Is there anything else that you’d like to add, Joan?

JM: I don’t know.

HR: Did you make any notes?

JM: Well I did, yeah. But it’s reading through that—all that MacLean’s handwriting.

HR: [laughter]

JM: [laughter]

HR: Have we missed anything or have we talked about most of it?

JM: I think we have. Oh you asked about, I guess—taking up another job.

HR: Another job.

JM: Another job. And that—I would— that was too long ago that you didn’t do that. And I, I managed without anyway.

HR: Okay.

JM: But to me that’s, that’s not the years I was active.

HR: Mm-hmm, people just...

JM: You just never—I never even thought of it.

HR: Okay.

JM: But you, you did me a favour. I’ve had a lot of fun thinking about it. Especially the one room school, it was really something.

HR: Thank you so much, Joan, I’ve learned an awful lot. And I look forward to seeing your

pictures.

JM: Okay fine.

HR: Take care.

JM: Bye-bye for now.

HR: Bye-bye.