

# GENDER AND SPACE

## *Constructing the Public School Teaching Staff in Nanaimo, 1891-1914\**

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THE YEARS 1891 TO 1914 marked a formative period in public schooling in Nanaimo, British Columbia. During this time the public school trustees chose not to appoint males who applied for entry- and middle-level teaching positions. As a result, the trustees created professional employment opportunities for women while, at the same time, denying those opportunities to men. Once hired, however, women teachers found themselves barred from senior positions and the highest salaries, in part because of the spatial configuration of the schools. Gender had a Janus face: where there were possibilities for women, men were constrained; where there were possibilities for men, women were constrained.<sup>1</sup> This paper initially

\* I would like to thank Jean Barman, Peter Baskerville, and Veronica Strong-Boag for their comments on an earlier version of this paper. I am also indebted to the editors, Annalee Golz and Lynne Marks, as well as the anonymous reader.

<sup>1</sup> Jane Rendall and Phyllis Stock-Morton suggest that gender history grew out of work by Joan Kelly and Natalie Zemon Davis in the mid-1970s on the social relationship of the sexes. Jane Rendall, "Uneven Developments: Women's History, Feminist History and Gender History in Great Britain," and Phyllis Stock-Morton, "Finding Our Own Ways: Different Paths to Women's History in the United States," in Karen Offen and others (eds.), *Writing Women's History: International Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991), 48 and 64-65. Joan Scott has emphasized the role of gender history in revealing the connections between the construction of masculine and feminine in "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *The American Historical Review* 91, 5 (December 1986): 1066-67. Other historians, as well, have pursued this approach to gender history, for example, Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet, "The Double Helix," in Margaret R. Higonnet and Patrice L.-R. Higonnet (eds.), *Behind the Lines: Gender and the Two World Wars* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987), 34. By the 1990s, gender historians were becoming increasingly concerned with fragmentations in the categories "woman" and "man." For a particularly clear statement of the expanding parameters of gender history, see Lykke de la Cour, Cecilia Morgan, and Mariana Valverde, "Gender Regulation and State Formation in Nineteenth-Century Canada," in Allan Greer and Ian Radforth (eds.), *Colonial Leviathan: State Formation in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), 165. Similar definitions are articulated in Gillian Creese and Veronica Strong-Boag, "Introduction" *British Columbia Reconsidered: Essays on Women* (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers,

considers the powerful role of gender in the hiring process, and subsequently examines the function of space in the maintenance of a gendered teaching hierarchy.

The procedures for hiring teachers and establishing their salaries derived from both law and practice. Trustees in all British Columbia school districts acquired the power to hire teachers in 1873, but the provincial authorities continued to set the number of teaching positions for each district, and the salaries for those positions.<sup>2</sup> In 1884, the province created the first three city school districts, one of which was Nanaimo.<sup>3</sup> The 1893 amendment to the Public School Act transferred the authority to establish and pay teachers' salaries in the city school districts to the local trustees.<sup>4</sup> Prior to 1893 the Nanaimo trustees had applied to the superintendent of education when they wished to hire additional teachers. If their application was successful, the government would include a salary for the position in the provincial estimates. The trustees could then include the salary in the advertisement for the position.<sup>5</sup> After 1893, it was up to the Nanaimo trustees to decide how many teachers would be hired and what their salaries would be. The Nanaimo board continued the practice of setting the salary before advertising the position.<sup>6</sup> Of the seventeen newspaper

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1992), 5, and Franca Iacovetta and Mariana Valverde, "Introduction," *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992), xii. The Nanaimo school trustees hired across class and religious lines. Race, however, was the great divide. No Chinese or native women or men taught in the Nanaimo public schools between 1891 and 1914. For a discussion of the social construction of the term "race" see Creese and Strong-Boag, "Introduction," note 1, 14.

<sup>2</sup> British Columbia, Legislative Assembly, [BC, LA] Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1873, chap. 8, sec. 7, and BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1872, chap. 16, sec. 7:8. Only persons who held a teaching certificate were eligible for appointment. BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1872, chap. 16, sec. 33.

<sup>3</sup> The first three city school districts, Nanaimo, New Westminster, and Victoria, were created in 1884. Vancouver became the fourth city school district in 1888. BC, LA, An Act to amend the 'Public School Act, 1879', SBC 1884, chap. 27, sec. 2, and BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1888, chap. 32, sec. 2. When the government increased the number of city school districts in 1901, and divided them into three categories based on average actual daily school attendance, Nanaimo became a city school district of the second class. BC, LA, Public Schools Amendment Act, SBC 1901, chap. 48, sec. 4.

<sup>4</sup> BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 3:30. City school boards gained the right to set salaries because the province, between 1888 and 1893, had transferred the full responsibility for funding teachers' salaries to the four city districts. BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1888, chap. 32, sec. 10; BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1891, chap. 40, sec. 30; BC, LA, Public School Amendment Act, SBC 1893, chap. 41, sec. 3:30.

<sup>5</sup> See for example, *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 15 July 1891, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Salaries were tied to the rank of the position in the hierarchy of divisions rather than to the incumbent. It was not unusual for a teacher with, for example, a 2nd class B certificate teaching the 5th division at Central school to make \$60 a month, while another teacher with a 2nd class A certificate, teaching the 9th division at Central school, made \$50. See salaries for Miss M. P.

advertisements for teaching positions in Nanaimo which have been found for the years 1891 to 1914, eleven included the salary.<sup>7</sup> The advertisement of 23 September 1905 was typical. "Applications will be received by the Board of Public School Trustees up till 4 p. m., on Tuesday, 26 Sept. for a teacher for the 9th Division Central School. Salary \$40.00 per month."<sup>8</sup> Applicants for teaching positions, then, often knew from the advertisement not only what position was available, but what the salary would be.

The literature on feminization of teaching argues that men were not interested in entry- and middle-level teaching positions because the salaries were so inadequate that only women would, or could, accept such remuneration. In 1975, Alison Prentice wrote: "by the end of the century the question of whether to employ a male or female teacher had become academic, for in most places in Canada, almost the only elementary-schoolteachers available for hire were women."<sup>9</sup> She added: "for many . . . school authorities, the main reason for engaging female teachers was less their real or imagined qualifications, than the fact that they could be obtained relatively cheaply."<sup>10</sup> Marta Danylewycz and Prentice made the same argument in 1984: "women teachers, it was well known, could be engaged for half the salaries required by men."<sup>11</sup> Writing in 1991, Prentice and Marjorie Theobald appear to accept the validity of these earlier arguments.<sup>12</sup> Over a considerable period of time, then, historians have concluded that the majority of teacher salaries were so low that only women would accept

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Haarer and Miss M. Woodman, British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, [BC, SE] 28th Annual Report of the Public Schools, [ARPS] 1898-99, xlvi.

<sup>7</sup> *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 15 July 1891, 1; 12 Dec. 1891, 1; 30 Dec. 1899, 1; 5 Feb. 1900, 2; 6 Aug. 1900, 4; 22 Feb. 1901, 1; 5 Aug. 1901, 4; 27 Jan. 1904, 1; 23 Sept. 1905, 4; 30 July 1906, 4; 10 July 1907, 4.

<sup>8</sup> *Nanaimo Daily Free Press*, 23 Sept. 1905, 4.

<sup>9</sup> Alison Prentice, "The Feminization of Teaching in British North America and Canada 1845-1875," in J. M. Bumstead (ed.), *Interpreting Canada's Past* Vol. 1, Before Confederation (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1986), 375; originally published in *Histoire sociale/Social History* XV (1975).

<sup>10</sup> Prentice, "Feminization," 377.

<sup>11</sup> Marta Danylewycz and Alison Prentice, "Teachers, Gender, and Bureaucratizing School Systems in Nineteenth Century Montreal and Toronto," *History of Education Quarterly* 24 (Spring 1984): 87.

<sup>12</sup> At the same time, Prentice and Theobald are critical of the argument that feminization of teaching was primarily the result of a gender ideology which emphasized women's natural role as nurturers of the young. Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald, "The Historiography of Women Teachers: A Retrospect," in Alison Prentice and Marjorie R. Theobald (eds.), *Women Who Taught: Perspectives on the History of Women and Teaching* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 6. Other historians, such as Janet Guildford, give primacy to gender ideology. Janet Guildford, "'Separate Spheres': The Feminization of Public School Teaching in Nova Scotia, 1838-1880," *Acadiensis* xxix, 1 (Autumn/Automne 1992): 47.

them. The feminization of urban teaching staffs across Canada was at bottom an economic issue. Women would work for wages that men would not accept. Two questions arise from the economic explanation for the feminization of teaching. How did entry- and middle-level teaching salaries compare to salaries in other occupations open to young women and men? Is there any evidence that men sought entry- and middle-level teaching work at the salaries women received? Both of these questions can be addressed in the context of the Nanaimo experience.

The 1901 nominal census provides a perspective on Nanaimo teacher salaries. The median salaries reported for nineteen to twenty-seven year old males and females, shown in table 1, gives some indication of the relative position of entry- and middle-level teachers'

TABLE I  
*Number employed and median annual salaries, ages 19-27,  
Nanaimo 1901*

OCCUPATION	MEN		WOMEN	
No occupation	6	—	158	—
Teacher	—	—	5	\$ 660
Printer	5	\$ 900		
Barber	5	\$ 900		
Blacksmith	7	\$ 750		
Barkeeper	6	\$ 710		
Coalminer	88	\$ 700		
Carpenter	7	\$ 660		
Teamster	9	\$ 650		
Tailor	5	\$ 600	1	\$ 600
Clerk	15	\$ 600	11	\$ 400
Labourer	6	\$ 400		
Laundryman	11	\$ 180		
Domestic			9	\$ 160
Other: upper ½	10	\$1000	1	\$ 600
middle ½	10	\$ 830	2	\$ 420
lower ½	10	\$ 600	1	\$ 180
Total	200		188	

Source: Canada, Nominal Census, 1901. The calculations are based on a sample of census data which includes 50 per cent of the residents of the City of Nanaimo.

salaries.<sup>13</sup> The figures suggest that the median reported teacher salary compared favourably with the median salaries or wages reported for clerks, tailors, coalminers, teamsters, carpenters, and barkeepers. It seems unlikely, therefore, that young men would have universally eschewed entry- and middle-level teaching positions on the grounds of inadequate salary. In addition, men could aspire to rise to the top of the hierarchy and higher salaries, and in that respect they might have had an even greater incentive than women to attempt a career in teaching.

While the evidence suggests that entry- and middle-level teacher salaries could have been acceptable to men, the question remains as to whether there is any evidence that men were attracted to teaching at the salaries offered. In fact, there is. That there were no men in the lower- and middle-level positions in the teaching hierarchy in the Nanaimo public schools was not a result of disinterest on the part of men. This can be demonstrated by an analysis of the sex of the applicants for those positions. The Nanaimo school board minutes name both successful and unsuccessful applicants for teaching positions in the forty-four competitions recorded in the minutes between July 1891 and January 1914.<sup>14</sup> Table 2 summarizes the sex of applicants and appointees in the thirty-one competitions for positions at the entry- and middle-levels of the Nanaimo public schools over the twenty-three year period.<sup>15</sup> Some applicants were referred to only by their last name and one or more first initials. The sex of these applicants is unclear. However, applicants known to be male were often referred to in this way in the minutes and the annual reports,

<sup>13</sup> The 50 per cent sample includes every odd-numbered page for the census for the three Nanaimo city wards, North Ward, Middle Ward, and South Ward. The age group nineteen to twenty-seven was chosen for comparison because census data indicate that thirteen of the fourteen entry- and middle-level teachers in the Nanaimo public schools were within this age range. If five or more individuals reported an occupation, it has been included separately in table 1. For eighteen males and ten females in the sample the record was either incomplete or unreadable. Entry- and middle-level teaching positions include the 3rd to the 10th divisions at Central school, and all divisions at North, Middle, and South Ward schools. Senior positions include the principals of the High school and Central school and the first assistant teachers at each of those schools. In June 1901 the fourteen entry- and middle-level positions were held by women and the four senior positions were held by men. The median annual salary for all women teachers in the Nanaimo public schools in June 1901 was \$660, and for all men teachers, \$1200.

<sup>14</sup> Not all hirings resulted from competitions. Also, one competition might result in hiring for several positions.

<sup>15</sup> Not included are the thirteen competitions for senior positions. These include positions as principal of the Boys' and Girls' schools, principal or first assistant at Central or Quennell schools, or any position at the High school. As far as the second and third positions at the High school were concerned, women did compete with men and get hired on three of four occasions. No women applied for the position of principal of Central school or principal of the High school in any of the four competitions detailed in the minutes.

TABLE 2  
*Summary of hiring competitions for lower/middle level teaching positions  
 Nanaimo, July 1891-January 1914*

	NUMBER OF COMPETITIONS	NUMBER OF APPLICANTS			NUMBER HIRED	
		FEMALE	MALE	UNKNOWN	FEMALE	MALE
(a)	11	109	20	17	22	1
(b)	7	30	0	9	9	0
(c)	12	56	0	0	16	0
(d)	1	0	1	1	0	1

*Source:* School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, Minutes, 6 July 1891 to 5 June 1914.

while applicants known to be female were rarely referred to in this way. Therefore, while table 2 distinguishes those applicants whose sex is unknown, most of them were probably men. The thirty-one competitions are divided into four categories: a) those competitions in which there were female and male applicants and applicants whose sex is unknown; b) those competitions in which there were female applicants and applicants whose sex is unknown; c) those competitions in which there were only female applicants; and d) a single competition for which only male applicants were invited to apply.<sup>16</sup>

In category 'a', females and males applied in each of the eleven competitions. Applicants whose sex is unclear applied in nine of the competitions. In every instance, except the competition in January 1914, the trustees hired females. In category 'b', females and applicants whose sex is unclear applied in each of the seven competitions. No known males applied, but as argued above most of the applicants whose sex is unclear were probably men. In each of these competitions, the trustees hired women. Taking 'a' and 'b' together, in the seventeen competitions in which trustees definitely or likely could have hired men rather than women for lower- or middle-level teaching positions, the trustees appointed women. While women always outnumbered men as applicants, the virtual monopoly women had on the lower- and middle-level teaching positions resulted from the Nanaimo trustees choosing to appoint females even when, in many instances, they could have appointed males.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> This competition was unusual and is described later in this paper. See discussion of the hiring of M. A. Phalen.

<sup>17</sup> In category 'c', only female applicants applied in the twelve competitions and in each case the trustees hired women.

Eight of the thirty-one competitions occurred in the 1890s. Females applied in all of these competitions, males in six of them, and applicants whose sex is unclear in six of them. The other twenty-three competitions were held in the twentieth century. Males applied in six of these competitions, applicants whose sex is unclear applied in ten, and females applied in twenty-two of them. In eleven of these twenty-three competitions, only women applied. Males, then, were less likely to apply in the twentieth century competitions. Nevertheless, even though it was clear by the twentieth century that "no men need apply" for lower- and middle-level teaching positions in Nanaimo, it appears that they continued to do so in about half the competitions, and the trustees continued not to hire them.<sup>18</sup>

Over the period 1891 to 1914 in Nanaimo, women monopolized the entry- and middle-level teaching positions while men were limited to the senior positions. This numerical dominance of women teachers was typical of urban North America.<sup>19</sup> The American historian, David Potter, has suggested that for women individual opportunity began in the city.<sup>20</sup> In terms of the opportunity for women to gain professional employment, education historians would concur. Prentice and Theobald have demonstrated that "wherever . . . urban hierarchies came into existence, the percentage of female teachers tended to be higher than the average for the region or the period in question. . . ." <sup>21</sup> Jean Barman has established that in British Columbia in 1891, 37.7 per cent of teaching positions were in the four city school districts. Of these positions, 62.1 per cent were held by women. In 1900, 31.2 percent of positions were in the city districts and 70.5 per cent were held by

<sup>18</sup> The Nanaimo trustees closed the door to men far more tightly than did trustees in the other three city school districts in British Columbia. In 1901, in New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria, approximately 20 per cent of all entry- and middle-level teachers were men. The difference between Nanaimo and the other cities is exemplified by the 1901 median male monthly salary. In Nanaimo, where men held only senior positions, this was \$92. In New Westminster, Vancouver, and Victoria, where men held the senior positions and also entry- and middle-level positions, the median male monthly salaries were \$70, \$72, and \$65 respectively. BC, SE, 30th ARPS, 1900-01.

<sup>19</sup> Most studies on feminization of teaching focus on the second half of the nineteenth century. Chad Gaffield, however, suggests the importance of a longer view. "The aggregate Canadian data show that by 1875, female teachers outnumbered male teachers by approximately a 2:1 ratio . . . this disproportion increased to more than 4:1 in favour of females by 1905. . . . by 1970, the ratio of female to male teachers . . . dropped to 1.5:1." Chad Gaffield, "Back to School: Towards a New Agenda for the History of Education," *Acadiensis* 15, 2 (1986): 181-82.

<sup>20</sup> Noted in Judith Fryer, "Women and Space: The Flowering of Desire," in Jack Salzman (ed.), *Prospects*, The Annual of American Cultural Studies, Vol. 9 (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1984), 199.

<sup>21</sup> Prentice and Theobald, "Historiography of Women Teachers," 5.

women.<sup>22</sup> In the city of Nanaimo, by systematically hiring women for entry- and middle-level teaching positions, the trustees provided a singular and important venue of employment for young women. On the other hand, the trustees limited men to senior positions. Such positions required a high level of credentialization, often a university degree. Work as a teacher, then, was more accessible to women than to men. However, it became evident in the Nanaimo schools during this period that, as the number of women increased, their access to leadership positions diminished.<sup>23</sup>

The Nanaimo trustees were not comfortable with women in the senior positions in the teaching hierarchy. In the summer of 1891, the secretary of the board complained to the provincial superintendent of education that Miss Gardiner, principal of the Girls' school, had "exceeded her authority."<sup>24</sup> She resigned shortly afterwards.<sup>25</sup> The trustees demoted her successor, Miss Lawson, and reduced her salary when they amalgamated the Boys' and Girls' schools into Central school in 1896.<sup>26</sup> She resigned a year after the school opened without observing the custom of doing so in writing.<sup>27</sup> Miss Mebius succeeded Miss Lawson as the most senior woman teacher. In 1914, the trustees demoted Miss Mebius as part of the process of merging Central school with Quennell school.<sup>28</sup> These were the three most senior women in the Nanaimo public schools between 1891 and 1914, and each experienced the trustees' lack of confidence in their leadership.<sup>29</sup>

The trustees wanted men to hold the senior positions. They were fortunate to find in Walter Hunter, John Shaw, and James Galloway men who made long-term commitments to Nanaimo. All three were teaching in Nanaimo at the beginning of the expansionary period in

<sup>22</sup> Jean Barman, "Birds of Passage or Early Professionals? Teachers in Late Nineteenth-Century British Columbia," *Historical Studies in Education* 2, 1 (Spring 1990), table 3.

<sup>23</sup> Other historians have noted the diminishment in leadership and salary possibilities for women after 1890. See for example, Martha Vicinus, *Independent Women: Work and Community for Single Women 1850-1920* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), 40, 102, and 176.

<sup>24</sup> British Columbia Archives and Records Service, GR 1445, Superintendent of Education, Correspondence Inwards, Donald Smith to S. D. Pope, 10 August 1891.

<sup>25</sup> School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, [SD68, NBST] Minutes, 11 December 1891.

<sup>26</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 24 December 1895. The combined school did not actually open until 1 April 1896.

<sup>27</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 3 April 1897.

<sup>28</sup> BC, SE, 43rd ARPS, 1913-14, Sessional Papers of British Columbia, [SPBC] 1915, Vol. 1, A cxxvii. Miss Mebius taught school in Nanaimo until she died in 1926. For biographical information on Miss Mebius see Jean Barman, "Pioneer Teachers of British Columbia," *British Columbia Historical News* 25, 1 (1991-92): 15.

<sup>29</sup> The women who taught high school were part of a separate hierarchy.



1891. Hunter had started there in 1887 and continued until his early death in 1905. John Shaw, who was well regarded by the women teachers,<sup>30</sup> headed the Boys' school, then Central school, from 1884 until his retirement in 1907. He later served both as a school trustee and mayor. James Galloway taught from 1889 until he retired in 1905. Other men such as E. Foy, M. A. Phalen, G. G. Sedgewick, and F. B. Dixon seem to have worked well as principals for longer or shorter periods, but then moved on.<sup>31</sup> Some, however, were not successful, and the trustees felt it necessary to request resignations from three principals, G. H. Knowlton, S. Code, and J. C. Haley.<sup>32</sup> Once Hunter, Shaw, and Galloway had gone, the trustees did not always find it easy to hire competent men for senior positions, and none of those that were hired matched the longevity of the initial three. Therefore, the trustees' concern that women work under male supervision was more easily addressed when schooling was concentrated in as few spaces as possible.

The spatial configuration of the Nanaimo schools affected women teachers' opportunities for leadership roles. The intricacies of the social relationship of space and gender have recently begun to attract attention from historians and other scholars.<sup>33</sup> The growing literature suggests a significant interaction between urban space, institutions, and gender. Linda Kerber devotes a considerable portion of her much cited article on separate spheres to an examination of historical works which treat sphere "not only as a metaphor but also as descriptor. . . ." She concludes that "the philosophy and ideology of . . . institutions are increasingly understood to be embedded in their arrangement of physical space."<sup>34</sup> Judith Fryer suggests that as women began to work outside the home it became increasingly necessary to control them

<sup>30</sup> Interview with Margaret Nicholls, daughter of May Grant who taught with Mr. Shaw. Miss Grant became Mrs. Williams. I am greatly indebted to Peggy Nicholls for sharing with me, in many conversations, her extensive knowledge of Nanaimo history. For biographical information on John Shaw see Barman, "Pioneer Teachers," 17.

<sup>31</sup> One male career educator who applied to teach in Nanaimo, but who was passed over in favour of a woman, was Donald MacLaurin. SD68 NBST, Minutes, 17 July 1905. He became a school inspector and later the principal of the Victoria Normal School. British Columbia, Minister of Education, *Public Schools of the Province of British Columbia: Special Historical Supplement to the One Hundredth Annual Report, 1970-71*, 106.

<sup>32</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 27 June 1905; 1 and 29 December 1911; 20 November 1912.

<sup>33</sup> See for example Veronica Strong-Boag's recent presidential address "Contested Space: The Politics of Canadian Memory," presented to the Canadian Historical Association meeting in Calgary, 13 June 1994.

<sup>34</sup> Linda K. Kerber, "Separate Spheres, Female Worlds, Woman's Place: The Rhetoric of Women's History," *Journal of American History* 75, 1 (June 1988): 31 and 33. For an innovative study of the way in which social class was reflected and constructed by the spatial organization of schools see Ulla Johansson and Christina Florin, "Order in the (Middle) Class! Culture, Class and Gender in the Swedish State Grammar School 1850-1914," *Historical Studies in Education* 6, 1 (Spring 1994): 21-44.

through rigid spatial order in the home and presumably in the workplace.<sup>35</sup> Gillian Rose and Miles Ogborn argue that "unequal gender relations are produced and reproduced through spaces, places, and landscapes, for through these processes women have literally been put in their place."<sup>36</sup> The spatial arrangement of the Nanaimo schools changed as the trustees expanded the school system in response to a growing school population and pressure from the education department to reduce the overcrowding of classrooms.<sup>37</sup> In the years between 1891 and 1914, spatial organization of the schools was most favourable to women from 1893 to 1896 and to a lesser extent from 1899 to 1912; it was least favourable to them in 1897-1898, for six months in 1904, and in 1913-1914.

In 1891 and 1892 the board expanded the spatial distribution of the schools when it built two co-educational schools, North Ward and South Ward, as feeders for the Boys' and Girls' schools. The locations of these schools are shown in figure 1.<sup>38</sup> The new schools opened in 1893, and the teaching staff at that time is shown in table 3.<sup>39</sup> This arrangement allowed some leadership possibilities for women. Not only was Miss Lawson principal of the Girls' school, but the senior teachers at the spatially separated North and South Ward schools were de facto principals. Samuel Gough, the secretary for the board of school trustees, referred to them as principals when he wrote to them, and they were almost always referred to as principals in the school

<sup>35</sup> Fryer, "Women and Space," 207. Scholars who examine the relationship of space and gender inevitably find themselves confronting the question of the causal relationship between the two structures. Generally, they argue either that the causal relationship is not discernible or not significant. See for example, Daphne Spain, *Gendered Spaces* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992), 6; Shirley Ardener, "Ground Rules and Social Maps for Women: An Introduction," in Shirley Ardener, (ed.), *Women and Space: Ground Rules and Social Maps*, revised edition, (Oxford: Berg, 1993), 2.

<sup>36</sup> Gillian Rose and Miles Ogborn, "Debate: Feminism and historical geography," *Journal of Historical Geography* 14, 4 (1988): 408.

<sup>37</sup> In 1890, there were 576 pupils enrolled in the Nanaimo schools with an average daily attendance of 295. The Board employed three male and four female teachers. In 1901, there were 1,364 enrolled students with an average daily attendance of 915. The board employed four male and fourteen female teachers. By 1913 there were 1,304 enrolled pupils with an average actual daily attendance of 1,060. The board employed four male and twenty-two female teachers. BC, SE, 19th ARPS, 1889-90; BC, SE, 30th ARPS, 1900-01; BC, SE, 42nd ARPS, 1912-13, BCSP, 1914, Vol. 1.

<sup>38</sup> I am greatly indebted to Robert Slobodian of the geography department at Malaspina University-College for this map. He developed the computerized map of Nanaimo for use in his forthcoming doctoral thesis, "Biography of an Urban Landscape: Spatial Development and Community Planning," in the department of geography at the University of Victoria.

<sup>39</sup> The High school did not have its own building in the years between 1891 and 1914. Rather it moved between the Boys' school building and the North Ward school building. For a short period it was located at city hall.

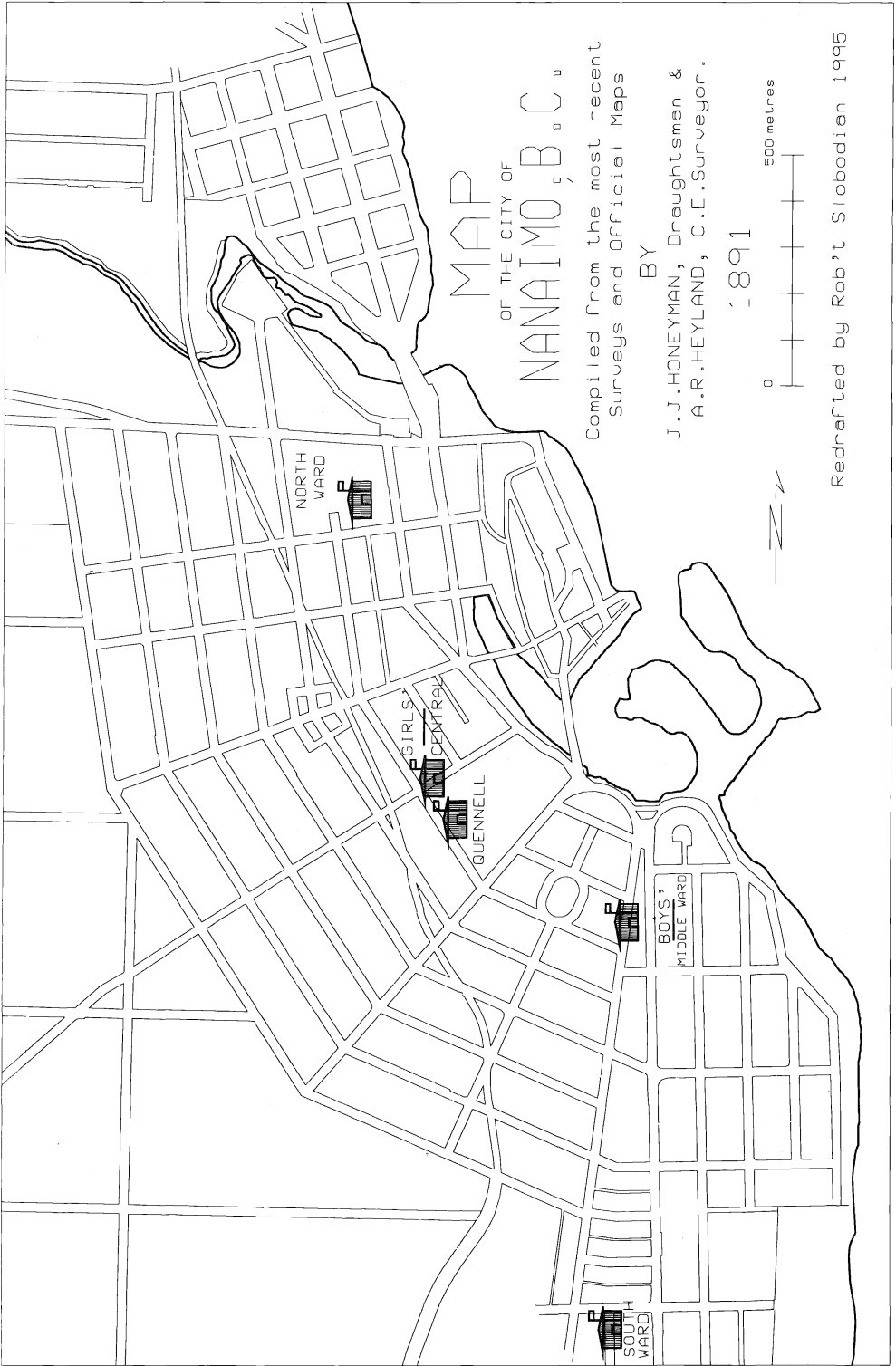


FIGURE I Nanaimo Schools, 1891-1914  
 SCALE 1:15000

TABLE 3  
*Nanaimo Teachers, January 1893*

SCHOOL/DIVISION	TEACHER	CERTIFICATE	MONTHLY SALARY
High School	Mr. Hunter, B.A.	First A	\$115
Boys' School 1	Mr. Shaw	First B	\$100
Boys' School 2	Mr. Galloway	Second B	\$ 75
Boys' School 3	Miss Hartt	Second B	\$ 60
Boys' School 4	Miss Pool	Third B	\$ 50
Girls' School 1	Miss Lawson	Second A	\$ 80
Girls' School 2	Miss Mebius	Third A	\$ 65
Girls' School 3	Miss Brown	Second B	\$ 55
Girls' School 4	Miss Haarer	Third B	\$ 50
North Ward 1	Miss Gordon	Second B	\$ 60
North Ward 2	Miss Hilbert	Third B	\$ 60
South Ward 1	Miss Duncan	Second A	\$ 60
South Ward 2	Miss Marshall	Third B	\$ 50

Sources: School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, Minutes, 14 October 1892 and 6 January 1893; British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, 22nd Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1892-93, Sessional Papers of British Columbia, 1894, 660.

board minutes.<sup>40</sup> Also, the senior teachers at the Ward schools communicated directly with the board, a privilege the trustees accorded only to principals.<sup>41</sup> Thus, three women and two men had the title "principal." In addition, the highest-paid woman teacher had a higher salary than the lowest-paid male teacher, suggesting a certain mutability to the gendering of salaries. Only two of the ten women teachers worked under direct male supervision. In January 1893, the spatial distribution of the public schools in Nanaimo created leadership roles for women teachers that were the best they would be at any time between 1891 and 1914.

A subsequent board began the process of bringing the Ward school teachers under supervision. In November 1894, the trustees placed North Ward school under the principalship of Miss Lawson at the

<sup>40</sup> See for example, SD68, NBST, Minutes, 6 March, 1893; Nanaimo Community Archives, [NCA] NBST, Letterbook, S. Gough to Miss Duncan, 17 October 1893; S. Gough to Miss Duncan, 20 November 1894; S. Gough to Miss Gordon, 20 November 1894.

<sup>41</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 4 September and 16 October 1893; NCA, NBST, Letterbook, S. Gough to Miss Lawson, 11 September 1893.

Girls' school and South Ward school under the principalship of Mr. Shaw at the Boys' school, "for the preparation of examination papers, and general oversight. . . ."<sup>42</sup> However, with the Ward schools at a distance from the Boys' and Girls' schools, and with Shaw and Lawson teaching all day in their own classes, not much supervision could go on. The spatial separation of the Ward schools from Central school subverted the intended arrangements. That reality was reflected in Gough's continued references to the senior teachers at the Ward schools as principals.<sup>43</sup> However, while the trustees' efforts at this time were frustrated, they were a harbinger of the future.

The board concentrated the space of schooling in 1896. At that time, the Boys' and Girls' schools were replaced by Central school, which had been built on the site of the Girls' school. The trustees' decision to amalgamate the two schools into one freed them from an obligation to have a woman principal. While the law did not absolutely require that a woman be principal of the Girls' school, it strongly suggested it.<sup>44</sup> The trustees decided that classes at Central school would be co-educational, like those at the Ward schools and the high school. Simultaneously, they established the order of teachers for the new school.<sup>45</sup> Central school required only one principal, and it is hardly surprising that the board chose John Shaw over Maria Lawson. What was telling was that the trustees chose to make James Galloway, not Maria Lawson, the teacher for the 2nd division, even though she had an A Certificate and he had only a B. He received an increase of \$5 monthly while her salary was correspondingly decreased by \$5.<sup>46</sup> Under the new arrangements, Nanaimo had two male principals, one at the high school and one at Central, and two senior women

<sup>42</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 17 November 1894; NCA, NBST, Letterbook, S. Gough to John Shaw, 20 November 1894.

<sup>43</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 10 May and 24 July 1895; see also NCA, NBST, Letterbook, S. Gough to Miss Duncan, 4 February 1895; S. Gough to Miss Duncan, 10 June 1895; S. Gough to Mrs Fiddick, 27 January 1897.

<sup>44</sup> BC, LA, Public School Act, SBC 1879, chap. 30, sec. 9:4. This section continued to appear in subsequent acts.

<sup>45</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 24 December 1895. F. Henry Johnson suggests that urban centres in British Columbia lagged behind the rest of the province in adopting co-education: "in the larger centres of Victoria, New Westminster and Nanaimo separate boys' and girls' public schools were retained longer. The last stronghold of resistance to co-education was in Victoria where its Boys' Central and Girls' Central continued to operate until 1937." *A History of Public Education in British Columbia* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia, 1964), 51.

<sup>46</sup> A year later Miss Lawson resigned in the middle of the semester. At the time she did not do so in writing, but simply informed one of the trustees whom she happened to meet. This was very unusual behaviour for Miss Lawson, who was in the habit of writing to the trustees almost monthly about various matters she wished to bring to their attention. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 3 April 1897.

teachers at the Ward schools whose status as principals was ambivalent. All the men had higher salaries than any of the women and six out of ten women teachers worked under male supervision. The construction of Central school diminished the leadership possibilities for women.

Spatial integration clearly had the effect of bringing women under male supervision, but there is no direct evidence as to whether that was a major consideration for the trustees in making the decisions they did. However, events between May of 1896 and January of 1897 suggest that the board did consciously link space and gender. During those months the board received three, or possibly four, complaints about the senior teachers at the Ward schools, Miss Marshall and Miss Dobeson, and one complaint about a junior teacher at Central school, Miss Muir. The complaints expressed parental dissatisfaction with student progress<sup>47</sup> and the teachers' discipline,<sup>48</sup> competence and suitability,<sup>49</sup> and failure to assign homework.<sup>50</sup> In each instance, the trustees supported the women teachers, but at the same time their recommendations implied a need for more supervision by the male principal. In regard to the complaint about discipline, the trustees concluded that "in cases of violent or wilful opposition to the authority of teachers, that the matter be reported to the Principal of the school, who shall take the steps he may deem necessary. . . ."<sup>51</sup> For the Ward school teachers, reporting to the principal at Central school would have been complicated by the distance involved. The trustees seem to have recognized this. At a special meeting to deal with the complaint regarding homework, the trustees decided to relocate the two senior Ward school classes to Central school.<sup>52</sup> Following the move, the teachers were ranked as shown in table 4. Eight of the ten women now came under male supervision and the other two, at least nominally, did so as well. To facilitate this supervision, the trustees inaugurated a system whereby students from the high school did some teaching at Central school in order to free Mr.

<sup>47</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 12 September 1896. An earlier incident involving the same parent may have been part of the same complaint. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 23 May and 6 June 1896.

<sup>48</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 12 September 1896.

<sup>49</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 26 December 1896; 2 January 1897; 9 January 1897.

<sup>50</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 9 January 1897; 23 January 1897; 30 January 1897; 13 February 1897.

<sup>51</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 10 October 1896.

<sup>52</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 23 January 1897. The move did not actually take place until 1 April 1897, when the trustees could complete construction of a necessary fire escape. BC, SE, 26th ARPS, 1896-97, 231.

TABLE 4  
*Nanaimo Teachers, April 1897*

SCHOOL/DIVISION	TEACHER	CERTIFICATE	MONTHLY SALARY
High School	Mr. Hunter, B.A.	First A	\$120
Central 1	Mr. Shaw	First B	\$100
Central 2	Mr. Galloway	First B	\$ 80
Central 3	Miss Mebius	Third A	\$ 75
Central 4	Miss Hartt	Second B	\$ 65
Central 5	Miss Haarer	Second B	\$ 60
Central 6	Miss Muir	Third B	\$ 60
Central 7	Miss Dobeson	Second B	\$ 55
Central 8	Miss Marshall	Second B	\$ 55
Central 9	Miss Woodman	Second B	\$ 55
Central 10	Miss Donaldson	Third B	\$ 50
North Ward	Miss Edwards	Second A	\$ 50
South Ward	Miss LeFeuvre	Second A	\$ 50

Sources: School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, Minutes, 23 May 1896 to 10 April 1897; British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, 26th Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1896-97, xli.

Shaw to visit the classrooms of the women teachers.<sup>53</sup> The addition of the two Ward school classes to Central school resulted in the most spatially integrated arrangement of the schools between 1891 and 1914, and it corresponded with the fewest leadership possibilities for women. In the face of parental criticism, the board concentrated the space of public schooling to bring more women teachers under male supervision.

From the beginning of 1899, the trustees re-established a certain measure of spatial dispersion. They found themselves responding to increasing student numbers, overcrowded classrooms, and the urgings of the superintendent of education that new classes be added.<sup>54</sup> In the face of pressure, they had tried to maintain the spatial concentration at

<sup>53</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 1 May 1897; BC, SE, 26th ARPS, 1896-97, 215. There are no further references to this arrangement in the board minutes. Thomas Fleming reports that a later attempt by a city superintendent to free Vancouver principals from full-time teaching was opposed by the provincial education authorities. Thomas Fleming, "In the Imperial Age and After: Patterns of British Columbia School Leadership and the Institution of the Superintendency, 1849-1858," *BC Studies* 81 (Spring 1989): 59.

<sup>54</sup> For example, SD68, NBST, Minutes, 2 October and 6 October 1897; 28 December 1899; 6 October 1900; BC, SE, 30th ARPS, 1900-01, 280.

Central school. They had built Central school to house eight divisions, but two years after it opened it had eleven divisions.<sup>55</sup> Only with the greatest reluctance did the trustees allow expansion at the Ward schools, but in the end they had little choice. There was simply no room for more classes at Central school. The trustees added a second division at South Ward in 1898.<sup>56</sup> In 1899, they started a new ward school, Middle Ward, in the former Boys' school which had been doing service as the high school.<sup>57</sup> In 1900, the board opened a second division at North Ward school.<sup>58</sup> Then the trustees added three further divisions at Middle Ward in quick succession, two in 1901<sup>59</sup> and one in 1902.<sup>60</sup> With the return of a measure of spatial dispersion came a return of some leadership opportunities for women. The salaries of the senior teachers at South and Middle Ward schools were equivalent to those of the 6th division teacher at Central school. Seven of the fifteen women — almost half — taught at a distance from male supervision. At the same time, while their later actions suggest that the trustees found this extent of spatial dispersion excessive, a considerable degree of spatial concentration still remained, with the ten divisions at Central weighing heavily against the four, two, and one divisions at the Ward schools. That degree of spatial integration made it possible for the trustees to limit the title "principal" to two men, one at the High school and one at Central school, and to continue the practice in place since 1897 of having all the male salaries higher than any of the female salaries.

That the trustees recognized Middle Ward, with its four divisions, as a distinct spatial entity is evident in their decision in January 1904 to hire a man as senior teacher for the school. The board secretary, Samuel Gough, wrote to the education department requesting help in locating a male teacher to fill the position. Gough explained that the board normally paid \$55 for this position, but they would increase that

<sup>55</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 8 October 1898. According to the board minutes the additional teacher sent to the Central school would go to the already existing 10th division and its teacher. The ARPS, however, shows the additional teacher at Central in charge of an 11th Division. BC, SE, 27th ARPS, 1897-98, xlvi. It is not clear what happened to the 11th division at Central school. It was never referred to in the board minutes and is not in evidence in the subsequent annual report.

<sup>56</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 6 November 1898.

<sup>57</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 28 December 1899.

<sup>58</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 22 August 1900. The trustees closed this division in 1901.

<sup>59</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 2, 19 and 21 February 1901.

<sup>60</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 23 August 1902. Growth in student numbers at the high school led the trustees to add a second class there starting 1 March 1900. BC, SE, 29th ARPS, 1899-1900, 220. A third class opened at the high school in the fall of 1904. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 28 July 1904.



to \$60 if they could obtain a male teacher.<sup>61</sup> The superintendent directed the trustees to M. A. Phalen, whom they duly hired.<sup>62</sup> The appointment of Phalen as principal of Middle Ward school signalled the trustees' establishment of a third male-supervised hierarchy in the public school system. As a result, eight of the eleven women taught under direct male supervision. It was awkward, though, that one woman teacher at Central school made the same salary as Phalen and two made more. While that might have been adjusted in time, the experiment was cut short when Phalen resigned after only six months.<sup>63</sup> By the end of 1904, the gender order had reverted to what it had been a year earlier, prior to Phalen's hiring.<sup>64</sup> The trustees' attempt to construct a third male-supervised hierarchy had foundered. They did not make the attempt again.

From 1905 to 1912, the spatial arrangements of the public schools were stable.<sup>65</sup> Throughout that period, the relative independence of the women at South Ward and Middle Ward schools remained troublesome to the trustees. When David Wilson inspected Middle Ward school in March 1906, his comments were generally favourable. However, he noted that "the management of this school, as well as of that in South Ward, appears faulty; the teacher of the highest class should act as vice-principal or supervisor of the school. . . ."<sup>66</sup> The following November, the *Nanaimo Daily Free Press* reported that, as a result of a suggestion made by Mr. Wilson to the school board, Miss May Grant and Miss Fannie Dick would be assisting principal Shaw in the supervision of South and Middle Ward schools.<sup>67</sup> The newspaper report suggests that the board bowed to pressure from the education department in recognizing the need for the senior women teachers at the Ward schools to be involved in a supervisory role. How sincerely the board accepted such a role for the women is questionable. There is no reference in the board minutes to these arrangements, and the board continued to limit its direct dealings with teachers to the male principals, Mr. Shaw at Central school and Mr. Sedgewick at the High school, and their successors. Through 1912, then, the trustees

<sup>61</sup> NCA, NBST, Letterbook, S. Gough to Alexander Robinson, 18 December 1903.

<sup>62</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 5 December and 20 December 1903; 2 January 1904.

<sup>63</sup> SD68, NBST, Minutes, 5 July 1904.

<sup>64</sup> The only change was that the remaining division at North Ward was closed in 1904. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 28 July 1904.

<sup>65</sup> In 1908, the trustees again opened North Ward school with a single division. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 8 February 1908.

<sup>66</sup> BC, LA, 35th ARPS, 1905-06, 21.

<sup>67</sup> I would like to thank Margaret Nicholls for drawing this to my attention.

appear to have continued to resist women teachers having supervisory roles even when the spatial arrangements made it possible.

In 1913, the trustees opened the new eight-room Quennell school. Given their history of preferring spatial concentration, it is only somewhat surprising that they had located the new school immediately adjacent to Central school. At the time the board was planning Quennell school, the school inspectors for the region were arguing that school boards should appoint male first assistants in addition to male principals. Then, if the principal left, there would be another man, fully cognizant of local conditions, ready to take over the vacancy.<sup>68</sup> The trustees accepted the inspectors' recommendations and as a result, the single teaching hierarchy which the board established for the two schools resembles that of April 1896. The process was complicated, but the result was that Miss Mebius, who had taught in Nanaimo since 1884, and who had been first assistant to the principal of Central school since 1908, was replaced by a man who did not even hold a teaching certificate.<sup>69</sup> For the second time, the board combined construction of a new school, and its attendant spatial concentration, with the demotion of the senior woman teacher in favour of a less qualified male.<sup>70</sup>

The opening of the Quennell school was celebrated in the school inspector's annual report. He wrote, "a splendid eight-roomed school was built in Nanaimo and opened at the beginning of the second term. Four additional teachers were employed and a rearrangement of all the classes in the city was brought about."<sup>71</sup> From the beginning the trustees combined the teaching staffs at Central and Quennell into a single hierarchy.<sup>72</sup> The arrangement of teachers by June 1914 is shown in table 5. This teaching hierarchy is strikingly reminiscent of that of

<sup>68</sup> See report of inspector D. L. MacLaurin, BC, SE, 41st ARPS, 1911-1912, SPBC, 1913, A32, and report of inspector John Delong, BC, SE, 42nd ARPS, 1912-13, SPBC, 1914, Vol. 1, A33.

<sup>69</sup> The Nanaimo trustees were willing to appoint a male first assistant to the principal of the sixteen division Quennell school. They chose Henry Birch, who did not have a teaching certificate. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 18 December 1912. The education department was hesitant about giving Birch a temporary certificate, but the trustees persisted. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 3 January 1913. Initially, Miss Wooldridge who taught the 5th division was demoted to make way for Birch. BC, SE, 42nd ARPS, 1912-13, BCSP, 1914, Vol. 1, A cxv. She resigned at the end of the term. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 14 July 1913. Within a year, though, the trustees had promoted Birch to first assistant teacher and demoted Miss Mebius. BC, SE, 43rd ARPS, 1913-14, SPBC, 1915, Vol. 1, A cxxvii.

<sup>70</sup> The two situations differed in that, in the 1896 case, James Galloway was an experienced teacher. In 1913, Birch was essentially unqualified.

<sup>71</sup> BC, SE, 42nd ARPS, 1912-13, SPBC, 1914, Vol. 1, A31.

<sup>72</sup> Even though they had combined the teaching staffs, the trustees at first continued to distinguish Central and Quennell schools. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 13 February 1913. However, by the fall of 1913, if not earlier, the board referred to the two as a single entity, Quennell school. BC, SE, 42nd ARPS, 1912-13, SPBC, 1914, Vol. 1, A cxv.

TABLE 5  
*Nanaimo Teachers, June 1914*

SCHOOL/DIVISION	TEACHER	MONTHLY SALARY
High School 1	Mr. Schwartz, M.A.	\$145
High School 2	Miss Macdonald, B.A.	\$130
High School 3	Miss Holdsworth, B.L.	\$120
Quennell 1	Mr. Archer, B.A.	\$130
Quennell 2	Mr. Birch	\$100
Quennell 3	Miss Mebius	\$ 95
Quennell 4	Miss Haarer	\$ 85
Quennell 5	Miss Woodman	\$ 80
Quennell 6	Miss Garnett	\$ 65
Quennell 7	Mr. Anderson	\$ 65
Quennell 8	Miss Lawrence	\$ 75
Quennell 9	Miss Parrott	\$ 65
Quennell 10	Miss Stewart	\$ 65
Quennell 11	Miss Haarer	\$ 75
Quennell 12	Miss McMillan	\$ 60
Quennell 13	Miss Mercer	\$ 75
Quennell 14	Miss Manifold	\$ 75
Quennell 15	Miss Rowa	\$ 65
Quennell 16	Miss Haarer	\$ 75
North Ward 1	Miss Dick	\$ 70
South Ward 1	Miss Cairns	\$ 75
South Ward 2	Miss Hunter	\$ 70
Middle Ward 1	Miss Brown	\$ 80
Middle Ward 2	Miss Gibson	\$ 75
Middle Ward 3	Miss New	\$ 65
Middle Ward 4	Miss Irvine	\$ 60

Sources: School District 68, Nanaimo Board of School Trustees, Minutes, 18 December 1912 to 30 January 1914; British Columbia, Superintendent of Education, 43rd Annual Report of the Public Schools, 1913-14, Sessional Papers of British Columbia, 1915, Vol. 1, A cxxvii.

1896-1897. All the senior positions were held by men. With the exception of the women at the High school and Mr. Anderson, all the men had higher salaries than any of the women.<sup>73</sup> The senior woman teacher at Quennell school was demoted in order that there could be two men, not one, at the head of the hierarchy. Two-thirds of the women teachers in Nanaimo taught in the new integrated space of Quennell school. No women were principals.<sup>74</sup> North and South Ward schools were so small in comparison to Quennell that they were insignificant. Middle Ward, although larger, did not have its own principal. The trustees' concentration of the space of schooling between 1896 and 1898 and in 1913-1914 limited the leadership possibilities for women teachers in Nanaimo.

In *Gendered Spaces*, Daphne Spain examines the relationship between gender stratification and spatial configuration.<sup>75</sup> Overall, she concludes, spatial segregation disadvantaged women.<sup>76</sup> She correlates sexual integration in American schools with women's access to suffrage and property rights, and the right to control their own labour.<sup>77</sup> In the Nanaimo public schools, though, spatial separation created more leadership roles for women than did spatial concentration. The latter worked against the interests of the women teachers by limiting their voice,<sup>78</sup> creating a lower ceiling for them, and bringing them under increased male supervision. While Spain has generally found the way forward for women to be through spatial integration with men, the experience the women teachers in Nanaimo had of spatial integration was negative. *Gendered Spaces* is a thoughtful and innovative work, but the patterns which emerged in the Nanaimo schools suggest that the relationship between gender and spatial structures is complex and will repay further study.

The Nanaimo trustees, in building a teaching staff during a formative period, were actively engaged in gender formation. They

<sup>73</sup> The trustees appointed Mr. Anderson to the 7th division at Quennell school in January 1914. His appointment to a middle-level teaching position was almost unique. The only other instance of a man being appointed to such a position had occurred a year earlier, in 1913, when Percy Feast taught for a short time in the 13th division at Quennell. These appointments might have been a harbinger of the future, but the coming war would have made it very difficult for the trustees to find male teachers.

<sup>74</sup> The principal of Quennell school was referred to as the principal of the public schools, which included both Quennell school and the three Ward schools.

<sup>75</sup> Spain, *Gendered Spaces*, 11.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 6; 16; 27.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, 167.

<sup>78</sup> As principals, Miss Lawson and her predecessor, Miss Gardiner, had submitted annual reports directly to the superintendent of education. In addition they communicated directly with the trustees.

feminized some positions and masculinized others. Their appointments coded appropriate gender roles. As Mariana Valverde argues, though, the concept of gender formation implies a dynamic element — gender is formed and reformed, negotiated and contested.<sup>79</sup> In Nanaimo, the process of gender formation of the teaching staff never really achieved equilibrium in the twenty-three years under discussion. Some men resisted the exclusion of males from entry- and middle-level positions by continuing to apply for them. Some women resisted lower salaries by demanding raises,<sup>80</sup> others resisted demotion by resigning. In addition, the continued growth in student numbers, and education department demands for a reduction in class size, created pressure on the trustees to accept the spatial dispersion of the schools which allowed women to work without direct male supervision. Nevertheless, even though the trustees faced continual challenges, gender and space remained important parts of the experience of those who were teachers, or wished to be teachers, in Nanaimo between 1891 and 1914.

<sup>79</sup> Mariana Valverde, "Comment: Dialogue, Gender History/Women's History: Is Feminist Scholarship Losing its Critical Edge," *Journal of Women's History* 5,1 (Spring 1993): 123.

<sup>80</sup> For example, Miss George informed the board that she had been offered more money elsewhere and would leave if her salary was not increased. The board refused and she resigned. SD68, NBST, Minutes, 1 and 29 December 1911.