

## Life as a Teacher in the Community

The teacher, in small communities had an exhausting, but enjoyable job. Teachers faced common problems. They were often underpaid and young- sometimes not much older than their pupils. Schoolroom supplies, materials and texts could be in short supply. The school house could even be too hot or cold. Regardless of the obstacle, the local teacher did the best job that they could manage, even at times with limited resources.

The teacher would board with families of the students during their term. Sometimes the community had a shack-like structure lacking basic comforts, located near the school or usually found in an isolated area. The teachers were very lonely, and had to deal with students that sometimes did not show up due to weather or because they were busily helping the family with farming, or were disrespectful. Another type of lodging was a small room built onto the schoolhouse for the teacher.

Even though teachers in small communities were paid very little in salary, the local teacher could encounter difficulty and experience problems collecting their pay for long periods, as the families simply did not have the funds available. Sometimes the local teacher would be paid in the equivalent of goods, such as crops. The teacher would then have to sell or trade goods at the general store for what they needed.

At first, most of the rural schools had male teachers. Usually, the teacher could teach whatever grade they stopped at, for example, if the teacher stopped their schooling at grade seven, they could only teach up to grade seven. Communities gladly took in female teachers, as they were paid less than men. The female teachers were often very young, sometimes as young as the students themselves, and did not usually stay in one place long, as better opportunities arose.

## Ethical Guidelines & Rules for Women

Rules for female teachers in the late 1800's included:

- 1) Not marrying during the term of the contract.
- 2) Not to keep company with men.
- 3) To be at home between the hours of 8 in the evening and 6 in the morning unless attending school functions.
- 4) Not loiter in the down town (in any of the ice cream stores).
- 5) Not travel beyond the city limits unless permission from the chairman of the board is given.
- 6) Not ride in a carriage or automobile with any man unless they are your father or brother.
- 7) Not smoke cigarettes.
- 8) Not dress in bright colours.
- 9) You must wear at least two petticoats.
- 10) Dresses must not be more than 2 inches above the ankle.
- 11) To keep the school neat and clean.  
Floors must be swept at least once daily; scrub the floor at least once a week with hot soapy water; clean the blackboards by 8 each morning.



Lower Sackville School students circa 1915 enjoying some games in a field across from the school when it was still a one-room facility

## Teaching and Learning in a One & Two-Room Schoolhouse



Lower Sackville School, circa the 1940s

## Fultz House Museum



# A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO SCHOOL LIFE

## The Lower & Middle Sackville Schools

School in the late 1800s and early 1900s was very different than how schools operate today. Back then, it would have usually been a one room schoolhouse facility, with one teacher (who boarded at a nearby home), and a class of about 25-30 children of varying ages. The teacher was paid approximately \$3/\$5 a month, along with room and board. The teacher(s) who would have taught the children, had the added responsibility to clean the school and start the stove to keep students warm on those nippy autumn days and through cold and drafty winters.

The children would be called up to the front of the room by grades to teach them lessons in history, geography, arithmetic, penmanship, etc.

The children would have to walk a great distance to get to school, unless there was a storm, and then they normally would not go, unless one of their fathers would hitch up the sleigh and bring them in.



Lower Sackville School – the class of 1905 – gathered with their teacher (likely Annie Underwood) and some of their parents on the bridge over the Little Sackville River.

The Lower Sackville School was built in 1899, on what is known as the Sackville Cross Roads, then, however, it was known as School House Lane. There was an additional classroom built onto it in 1929, and the entire building was torn down in 1986.

There were so many students at the Lower Sackville School that the grades were split up in 1942. Grades five to eight moved temporarily to the Acadia Hall, which was built in 1923. Grades one to four stayed at the Lower Sackville School until the four-room schoolhouse, Acadia School (see below), was built and opened in 1948. All the classes then moved there, leaving the Lower Sackville School vacant. The Lower Sackville School building was torn down in the mid 1980's.

Middle Sackville School held approximately forty-five students from grades one to eleven in the early part of its school life. Corporal punishment was often used in that timeframe, with the strap and pointer a solemn reminder at the front of the class.

Acadia School



At the back of the Middle Sackville schoolhouse there was a large stove that would heat the building, and dry the clothes on wet days. On some holidays, the stove would be used to make a snack of taffy or fudge with each student bringing in a contribution for the treat.

Middle Sackville School was built on the Old Sackville Road at the bottom of Shay Hill, around the mid 1800s and was in use until 1949, when there was another school built for Middle Sackville. Almost a hundred years of teaching occurred within the walls of the school, memories and knowledge benefitting the community year after year.



Middle Sackville School after 1949

## Private & Finishing Schools

In private schools the girls were taught manners, dancing, French, drawing and how to walk and act like a young lady. They were also taught spelling, reading, history, arithmetic, geography and writing.

## Remember...

Students were supposed to attend school until the age of sixteen, but many never finished eighth grade, as they had to work in factories or farms. Some children went to high school, and not many went to college. Very few women got to go to college, not even all the wealthiest women were able to attend.