

sister only four times a year at the Wabasca, Alberta, school. “They had a fence in the playground. Nobody was allowed near the fence. The boys played on this side, the girls played on the other side. Nobody was allowed to go to that fence there and talk to the girls through the fence or whatever, you can’t.”²³

The only reason Bernice Jacks had wanted to go to residential school was to be with her older sister. But once she was there, she discovered they were to sleep in separate dormitories. On the occasions when she slipped into the older girls’ dormitory and crawled into her sister’s bed, her sister scolded her and sent her away: “My sister never talked to me like that before.”²⁴ Helen Kakekayash’s older sister tried to comfort her when she first arrived at the McIntosh, Ontario, school. She recalled that “she would try to talk to me, and she would get spanked.”²⁵ Bernard Catcheway said that even though he and his sister were both attending the Pine Creek school, they could not communicate with each other. “I couldn’t talk to her, I couldn’t wave at her. If you did you’d get, you know a push in the head by a nun.”²⁶ On her second day at the Kamloops school in British Columbia, Julianna Alexander went to speak to her brother. “Did I ever get a good pounding and licking, get over there, you can’t go over there, you can’t talk to him, you know. I said, ‘Yeah, but he’s my brother.’”²⁷

Taken from their homes, stripped of their belongings, and separated from their siblings, residential school children lived in a world dominated by fear, loneliness, and lack of affection.

William Herney, who attended the Shubenacadie school in Nova Scotia, recalled the first few days in the school as being frightening and bewildering. “Within those few days, you had to learn, because otherwise you’re gonna get your head knocked off. Anyway, you learned everything. You learned to obey. And one of the rules that you didn’t break, you obey, and you were scared, you were very scared.”²⁸ Raymond Cutknife recalled that when he attended the Hobbema school in Alberta, he “lived with fear.”²⁹ Of his years in two different Manitoba schools, Timothy Henderson said, “Every day was, you were in constant fear that, your hope was that it wasn’t you today that we’re going to, that was going to be



The strict segregation of the sexes at the schools meant that brothers and sisters were quickly separated from one another. General Synod Archives, Anglican Church of Canada, P7538-635.