

TEACHING FAMILIES IN DISTRICT 14 RTO/ERO - Part 1 - FIVE GENERATIONS OF TEACHING

This is the story of a family which, during the last five generations, has had five members who became elementary school teachers covering almost 150 years. The earliest one started teaching around the time of Canada's Confederation in 1867 and the last one retired in 2015.

My name is Grant Black and this story takes place almost entirely in southern Ontario. My wife Evelyn and I (the 4th generation teacher) both attended Hamilton Normal School in 1950 and 1951 and began teaching in Caledonia and Welland. We were married in 1952. In 1953, my grandmother (the 2nd generation teacher) was clearing her Springfield house (north of Aylmer) to retire in nearby St. Thomas at a hotel. She gave us most of her antique furniture including a bedroom dresser. Inside one of the drawers we later found some pages (instead of newspapers) that were old school attendance register pages dated June 1867 and September 1867. On those pages were beautiful handwritten script lists of pupils' names. The teacher's name on the June 1867 page was "Mary Grant" and on the September 1867 page was "Mary Chambers". Mary Grant had married Ralph Chambers in July 1867 a few days after Canada's Confederation occurred. Mary Chambers (the 1st generation teacher) was my great-grandmother.



Grant Black
4th Generation

Mary Chambers was a teacher in a rural school in Malahide Township just east of Aylmer and had grown up in Sheffield, a small village on Highway 8 near the border of Hamilton and Cambridge. Ralph Chambers (my great-grandfather) was a farmer in Malahide Township. Their first child, Romain Chambers (the 2nd generation teacher), was born in 1868 and she was my grandmother on my father's side. She also became a teacher in a rural school in Malahide Township for several years, but stopped teaching when she married Malcolm Black of Springfield (my grandfather) in 1891. Springfield is a small village a short distance north of Aylmer.



Mary & Ralph Chambers
1st Generation

Romain and Malcolm Black had three sons who were born in the 1890's and a daughter, Kathleen (Kay) (the 3rd generation teacher) who was born in 1908. Kay attended Normal School either in London or Stratford. Around 1930, she moved into my father's home in Humberstone (now part of Port Colborne) and taught at Dewitt Carter School for nearly 15 years. She retired in 1944 when she married Canby Minor of Wainfleet. Kay moved to St. Catharines and later to New Jersey in the United States.

My position in this story is that of the 4th generation

teacher. I taught two years in Port Colborne and then in Thorold Township starting in 1957. Thorold Township joined Welland in 1960. My first principalship was in Thorold Township in 1959 for three years at Glendale School. In total, I taught for 34 years and was a principal in Welland for 25 of those years before I retired in 1985.

The 5th generation teacher in this story was our daughter, Kerry Black. She attended Western University Faculty of Education and initially taught French and German at the elementary level. She later taught French full-time. Kerry started her teaching career in Gravenhurst and then Brantford in primary and senior schools. She ended her career in November 2015 after teaching at three different schools with the Peel Board of Education (Brampton and Mississauga). She married in 1991 and lives in Etobicoke and winters in our former condo in Florida.



Kerry Black
5th Generation

This brings us to the end of the history of the Black family of five generations of teachers over almost 150 years. The present millennial generation of four grandchildren have completed or are completing their university education, but none are presently teachers. We can only hope that one grandchild may become a teacher in the future to carry on the tradition.

P.S. My wife Evelyn and I celebrated our 65th wedding anniversary on August 16, 2017. My great-grandmother (the 1st generation teacher) and great-grandfather would have celebrated their 65th wedding anniversary in July 1932, 22 days after he passed away. (Canada also celebrated its 65th anniversary on July 1, 1932.)

Editor's Note: Sadly, Grant's wife, Evelyn (also a teacher with Niagara South), passed away on November 29, 2017. He would like to dedicate this article in her memory and honour.

ARE YOU PART OF A "TEACHING FAMILY"?

As part of our 50th Anniversary Celebrations this year, we would like to feature the stories of members who are part of second, third, or maybe even fourth generation line of teachers. The first appears in this issue. Did one, some, or all of your grandparents, parents, and children teach? Please let us know, and we will tell your story in the Grapevine in one of our issues this year (bonnieb773@gmail.com).



TEACHING FAMILIES IN DISTRICT 14 RTO/ERO - Part 2

FIVE GENERATIONS OF TEACHERS

This Teaching Family story begins with the statement “Albert Hellyer (1st Generation) in early manhood was engaged in the teaching profession and taught at SS # 10, 2nd Concession, Arthur Township.” Albert married Ida and had three children two of which became teachers.



Albert Hellyer



Elmore Hellyer

Elmore Hellyer (2nd generation), a WW I veteran, ended his teaching career in 1959 when he retired from the high school in Dunnville, Ontario.

Rae Hellyer (2nd generation) had a little more varied story. She taught at SS # 14 West Luther, Wellington County, in the mid 1920's. Three names on her class list were Hilda Small just starting school, Florence Duncan who was a couple of years older and her brother George Duncan who was about to graduate from public school.



Rae Suggitt



S.S. 14

Rae left this school and went to teach in Sommerville Township, (near Fenelon Falls) now the Kawartha Lakes Area. While teaching there she met her husband Melville Suggitt. Following their marriage, they took up residence in Arthur Township. She soon became a mother and put her teaching career on

hold to raise her family of 5. When the last one went off to school she returned to the class room. She retired from Kenilworth Public School, Arthur Township in the early 1970's. In her late retirement she was on the committee that put together the Historical book called “From Then Till Now - A History of Arthur Township 1850 – 1985”. She lived long enough

to see it published for the Arthur Township Homecoming in the summer of 1986. Mrs Suggitt passed away in November 1986.



Ken Suggitt

Not many years after her return to classroom her first born, Kenneth Suggitt (3rd generation), decided to try teaching as a career and his first school was SS # 14 West Luther, Wellington County. This was in the mid 1950's some thirty years after his mother had taught in the same building. On his first class list were 5 siblings all with the last name Duncan. They were some of the children of George & Hilda (Small) Duncan. While Ken taught in West Luther he would drop his mother off at Farewell School in Arthur Township and continue on to school. Ken attended Stratford Teacher's college 1958-59 and taught one year in Fergus Public School. When he married Bernice Duncan (older sibling) in 1960 they moved to Fort Erie, Ontario where he taught for the next 32 years. In 1960 he started in Rose Seaton Public School and then moved to Douglas Public School, where he was the vice principle. The Fort Erie Senior School was his next stop for the duration of the Senior school's life. His final years were back at Rose Seaton before retirement in 1992 which was the school's Centennial year.

Ken has a great niece with an Early Childhood Education Degree who is an educational assistant in the public school system. He also has a granddaughter with an Early Childhood Education Degree who chose Daycare over Public School because she enjoys the “little ones”. A second Granddaughter with a B.A. in music teaches voice and piano. The proud tradition of caring for and guiding the development of our children runs deep in the Suggitt family, and will no doubt continue for many more generations to come!

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DECLINING OAS

Are you in a clawback situation which requires you to pay taxes on your Old Age Security? You can decline to receive OAS. Here's how:

Write a letter to Service Canada including your Social Insurance Number telling them you no longer wish to receive Old Age Security. Then, either mail it to Service Canada, PO Box 5100, Station D, Scarborough, ON, M1R 5C8 OR drop it off in person at your nearest Service Canada office. One can be found on Ontario Street, St. Catharines, in the plaza at the corner of Ontario St. and Henley Dr. just north of the QEW across from Tim Hortons. If you drop it off at this office it is done for you immediately.



TEACHING FAMILIES IN DISTRICT 14 RTO/ERO - Part 3

SIX GENERATIONS OF EDUCATORS

My name is Sharon Noiles, member of RTO/ERO – District 14 since 1997. My teaching family at present is in its 6th generation.

The 1st generation was my great–great grandparents, Albert and Emma Bate. They both were born in Cornwall, England and had been educated in boarding schools. After marriage they immigrated to Niagara, Upper Canada in 1838. In 1842 they shared teaching duties in the first school in Haldimand County, in present day Byng. Albert did commercial fishing and trading in good weather while Emma taught. In winter he taught and she got to stay home. They moved to another school in Sherbrooke Township in 1944. Student tuition was 25 cents for the year.

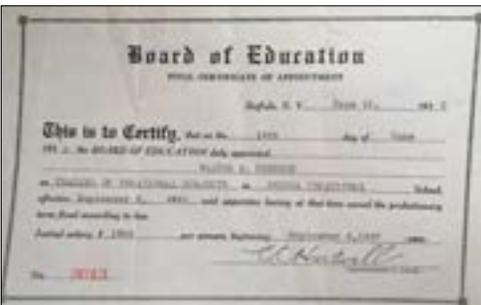
The 2nd generation was my great grandmother, Delcina Rennick, who taught in the 1880's in rural Illinois. Her family had immigrated to the USA from Ireland.

The 3rd generation was my grandfather, Walter Murray Rennick. He was born in Wyoming, Illinois. He graduated from Toulane Academy with a Teaching certificate in 1908. Not finding a position, he tried homesteading in Manitoba, Canada where he met my grandmother



Walter's 1st Teaching Certificate

who was there from Dunnville, helping her brother who was also homesteading. They married in 1914 and soon after my grandfather joined the Canadian Army. He survived Vimy Ridge, Ypres, and stayed a year after the surrender, only to find out that he had lost his citizenship. On his return to Canada, the family moved about from Manitoba then to the Niagara area in Ontario until he received his citizenship back. The family then moved to Buffalo where my grandfather, after taking more courses, was certified to teach and was hired by the Buffalo School board. He taught electrical trade



Walter's N.Y. State Contract

courses in Seneca Vocational School from 1930 until retirement in the 1950's. Walter's sister, Ruth was also a teacher and retired as the Music Consultant for the Phoenix, Arizona School Board, and also received an award for Excellence in Teaching from the USA Teachers Association.

The 4th generation was my mother Elizabeth Rennick (Eaglesham) Ouellette who taught in Crowland Township, which became part of Niagara South. She was still a

Canadian citizen and at one time attended Douglas Memorial School in Fort Erie. She received her College Entrance Diploma from Lafayette High School in Buffalo in 1933. She then was accepted at Buffalo State Teachers College and did a four-year concurrent Degree in Education and did her practice teaching each year. She specialized in Primary Education. She graduated in 1937 but as has happened since, there were more graduates than jobs. She did supply work and worked in a department store until she married my father, Bert Eaglesham and moved to Canada in 1941. After WW II she decided she would go back to teaching only to be informed that her degree wasn't valid in Ontario. She was allowed to write the Teachers' College exam in Hamilton which was only a one-year course, and passed, much to their surprise! Although her sheep skin (in which degrees issued in those days were enclosed) was never accepted here, she started to pursue a degree from McMaster. She didn't complete it. She finished her teaching career in the 1970's and collected her pension until she died in 2012.



*Elizabeth Rennick
(Eaglesham) Ouellette*

I am the 5th generation. I attended Hamilton Teachers' College on the morning shift from 8 to 12:30. After a year, I graduated with a teaching certificate, taught in Pelham Township, then Crowland Township, and then Yarmouth Township as my husband had joined the OPP and was stationed in Dutton, Ontario. In 1965, I was hired as a principal/teacher for Friendship School, a brand new school for Developmentally Challenged Students. I had to retire after 2 ½ year, as I was pregnant. There were no leaves of absence in that time period. When we returned to Welland, I was hired in Niagara South as a special Education classroom teacher, and then transferred to Pauline McGibbon School in Welland. Shortly after, I was principal at Elsie English in Fort Erie. I then obtained a BHE, and M.Ed. from Brock and Specialists Certificates in Sp. Ed. and Primary Ed. I went through the rounds of transfers and closing schools, until my last posting which remained open for a few years after I retired. I collected my pension at the same time as my mother for 15 years.

The 6th generation teacher is my daughter Pat Cass. Who, after raising a family, completed her BA at Brock and attended Canisius College in Buffalo for her teaching degree. She was qualified to teach in Canada! She taught for 8 years in various grades, supplying and in long-term positions until she was hired full time by DSBN where she continues to teach today.



*Pat & Sharon
Gen 6 & 5*

Certificate and was appointed as School Inspector in Bracebridge in 1923. Early in 1925 the London Board of Education advertised for an Inspector and he applied and was accepted there, beginning that fall. In the spring of 1938 he was appointed Assistant Superintendent of Schools for London. On September 4th of that year he suffered a stroke and died the same day.



My grandfather's brother, my great uncle, Carman Edmund Stothers, also took advantage of the veterans' education program. He returned to Canada in 1917 to recover from his war wounds. He continued to further his education graduating from Queen's and later obtaining his Doctorate of Pedagogy from U of T. in 1934. His career spanned all phases of teaching, but in the field of Special Education he made his greatest contribution. He was Inspector of Public Schools in Prince Edward County, 1927-1939, before becoming Chief Inspector and then Director of Auxiliary Services in the Ontario Dept. of Education. Author of many books and pamphlets, guest lecturer, consultant, and above all teacher, Carman Stothers was a major figure in Ontario Education. He was awarded the Greer Memorial Award in 1955. Following retirement in 1956, he continued to work with children with special needs and in 1959 established a youth employment bureau to find jobs for the handicapped. He was also the inspiration behind the Stothers Exceptional Child Foundation.

Mom began her career in Ashfield Township, Huron County, at S.S. No. 9, a one room school, grades one to eight in 1947-48. She taught there for two years, then moved to Port Rowan in Norfolk County. Following that year, she returned to Bruce County, teaching itinerant music at schools in Kinloss Township, before getting married and starting a family.

She taught grades two and three at Lucknow Public School from 1955 until she had the opportunity to become a music supervisor in Huron County in the fall of 1959. Our family sold our farm in the spring of 1959, moving to Lucknow in the transition where I was placed in my mother's grade two for April and May - quite a change for me as I had been the only grade one student, then one of two grade two students in the one room school in Holyrood. At the end of August, we moved to Goderich and, as well as I can remember, in September Mom became music supervisor at Victoria School (grades K-5 where I saw her regularly for the next two years), Victor Lauriston School (grades 6-8 where she again was a regular visitor in my classes from 1961 to 1963), Clinton Public School, the Clinton Forces Base school, and at the elementary school in Seaforth.



Following the births of two more children in the mid 1960's, the remainder of Mom's career was mostly spent in the roles of music teacher and kindergarten teacher in the town of Goderich. As her child and as her student, her work as a teacher certainly influenced my future decision making!

I never knew my grandfather and my grandmother had been long away from education in my time with her. I don't remember my grandmother's saying much about teaching except to remind us that her classes were over 40 students! When I landed in Niagara in June, 1970 for my interview with superintendents of the newly named Niagara South Board of Education, Mr. Don Reilly and Mr. E. G. Peterson, they asked me what had influenced me to pursue education as a career. The rest is history!



John Carruthers