

KINDERGARTEN

MISS DOROTHY COTTON - Retired kindergarten teacher,
206 1901 Barclay Street, Vancouver, B.C.

MRS. ALMA REYNOLDS - Assistant kindergarten teacher,
North Vancouver, B.C.

INTERVIEWED: March 6, 1975

NO TAPE

Qualifications:

Miss Cotton - A two-year course in Seattle, of which half of each day was practicum. Worked in Seattle, Wash., following graduation

Mrs. Reynolds-(formerly Miss Barry) - courses in music

Steveston United Church Kindergarten

Apparently, the School Board at that time asked the Methodist Church, now the United, to start a kindergarten. Arrangments were made with the church head office in Toronto. The church paid the salaries of the staff.

The school started in 1925, located next to the church, one block north of Montcalm Street in Steveston. This was a one-story building.

In 1927, a new school building opened next to the old one. This was a two-story building, with the classroom on the top floor, the entrance from the outside being in the centre of the front of the building. The washrooms located in the bottom floor, the girls were divided for privacy but not so for the boys. Also, the bottom was used for free play-time and a space for the childrens coats. In contrast to the old pot-bellied type stove of the old school, the school now had a "pipeless" furnace.

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The enrollment was about 120 children, divided into morning and afternoon classes of 60 students each. The children started school as early as four years old until six years of age, then enrolled in the public school. The exception was when a non-English speaking child attended at an older age to learn English before attending public school.

The school closed after the attack on Pearl Harbour (Dec.6/41) - sometime in 1942.

Classes & Supplies

- The class was headed by a qualified teacher, and the assistant teacher had special training in music.
- The school followed the "Froebel System".
- All the children were Japanese, and teaching English was a main goal. This was done by pictures and objects, the music usually had sentence songs.
- When the school first came into operation, it took three years generally for the children to learn English, the latter years one year.
- The school also had a rhythm band.
- The school operated under the church with very good supplies, which were also plentiful.
- The cost to each child was about 50¢ a month, later raising to \$1.00 a month.
- The children put on plays, painting the scenery, dressed in costumes made by the mothers.
- The children also did crafts, which included making gifts.

Anecdote: -A little boy was making a gift for his father, Miss Cotton was about to write "to papa from ___" but the boy objected stating he had only one father. Miss Cotton then asked about "for papa", again the boy objected saying he had only one father. Miss Cotton and the boy finally agreed on "Merry Christmas Papa, from ___".

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Parent Involvement

Once a month the mothers came to school to watch their children and talk with the teachers. Parents were very co-operative and did extras for the school such as sewing curtains.

A.L.DYBALL