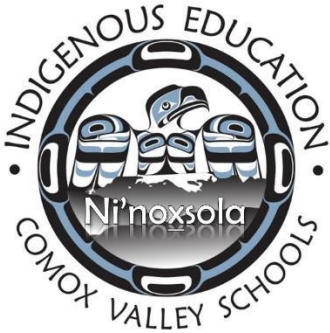


NI'NOXSOLA

Elders in Residence Program
Indigenous Education Comox Valley Schools



Sheila Buchanan
School



School was a lot different when I attended as a youngster. We had to be very quiet in the classroom and we were not allowed to speak to each other. The only time we could speak to each other was at recess or lunch, but not during class time.

We did not have cell phones, so we would pass notes to each other. If we got caught sending notes, we had to read it in front of the whole class. Sometimes it was embarrassing to read the message to the class because it was personal.

When we broke rules that were forbidden, the teacher was allowed to hit us with a leather strap. It would either be 2 to 4 hits on each hand. This was to restore discipline and to ensure that it was not repeated in the future.

It was abolished because it was considered barbaric discipline.

Another punishment that was given which was not as painful as the strap. It was called writing lines. Such as ("I will not talk in class") 100 times, either in your scribbler or on the blackboard. Some people would use two pencils to speed up the process. If the teacher caught you using 2 pencils, he/she would make you write 200 lines.

Our classes ran from 9 AM to 4PM daily. We got 20 minutes for recess and a one hour lunch break. Most of us went home for lunch. I lived 2 miles from school and it was very cold in Alberta where I grew up. We ran home to eat lunch and ran back to school so we wouldn't be late. It was usually enough time.

We wore the same clothes for the whole week, and we would change into our play clothes when we got home after school.

Girls always wore skirts or dresses to school, some of us didn't even own a pair of slacks.

We had to dress up for school. Denim was not allowed.

Teachers wore proper attire. The men wore suits and ties and the ladies wore dresses or skirts and a nice blouse and suit jacket.

We did not sit at tables, each student had their own desk. The desks were lined up one after the other. You would either be the front or in the rear or in between. If you sat in front of a bad boy, he would either pull your hair or poke you with his pencil. If you made a noise, the teacher would tell you to be quiet. She never asked what was causing you to grumble. The boy didn't get into trouble, you did.



School is much more modern today and a lot has changed. We survived it and thought nothing of it, because it was something we grew up with.

Sheila Buchanan (Kookum)