

## OFF TO SCHOOL – 1898

Families in the mining communities of Van Anda and Texada City must have been pleased in 1898 when newlyweds Harry and Olive Treat offered their first home (nicknamed the “Honeymoon Cottage”) as a temporary schoolhouse when the couple was away.

The log cabin, situated directly above the government wharf, proved later to be inadequate. The class of 20 was relocated to an old company mess hall near the sawmill which was shared with Sunday church services.

Texada’s first teacher was 20-year old Emily Raper, daughter of legendary prospector Alfred (and wife, Sarah) Raper. Emily was born in Nanaimo and grew up on Gabriola Island where she taught her first classes in 1896.

Note: The Texada Museum is currently displaying Emily’s painting “Daisies” (dated 1893) as well as her autograph book from this period.

The Raper family was well-known on Texada. In fact, Alfred was named “the Pioneer of Texada mines” by the *British Colonist* newspaper. He and his cousin, James, had prospected on the island since the 1870’s and Alfred had staked a few claims around Kirk Lake.

In 1891 Alfred built a large log house on *BC Crown Grant No. 1* - a quarter-section of land east of the iron mine (later Ideal Cement quarry). The Rapers also built a log house at the end of Emily (Turtle) Lake close to the Cornell Mine. Perhaps this inspired Alfred to name the little lake after his second daughter who undoubtedly lived here when she was teaching school and later, in 1899, while serving as postmistress.

An 1896 entry in Emily’s diary reads:

*“May you kiss who you please      And please who you kiss.”*

Emily must have “pleased” John Lawson, editor of Van Anda’s *Coast Miner* newspaper, as they married in 1900 and moved off the island.

Thanks to Miss Raper, 8 years ago (1998) our current Texada School was proud to host a community gathering to celebrate “A Century of Education on Texada.”

