

KAREN'S CORNER



As a former educator, one of the highlights of my day was always hearing the stories of my students. Each tale provided a treasured glimpse into their lives and fostered connections that evolved into lasting relationships. Now, as I spend my summers at Eagle Bay, I have come to deeply appreciate its vibrant history and the stories that resonate throughout this beautiful place.

Every cabin here holds its own legends—a tapestry of family gatherings, shared laughter, and bonds formed through overcoming hardships together. These narratives intertwine, creating a unique sense of community that makes Eagle Bay truly special. I invite you to share your stories with me! Let us celebrate the moments, memories, and experiences that make our community so remarkable. Together, we can continue to embrace the spirit of this wonderful place we proudly call home.

LESSONS BY THE LAKE

My fascination with Eagle Bay's school history began as I delved into local records and listened to lively stories from long-time residents. These tales brought to life the colourful and often surprising history of our schoolhouses. Eager to see history firsthand, I set out for the site of the first Eagle Bay school, established in the early 1920s and nestled at the bottom of Branch Road, just off Galligan. This picturesque stretch of bayfront—privately owned today—still feels like it holds echoes of laughter and learning from a century ago.

Archival records indicate that the first school was constructed in July 1921 as a modest 30x20-foot building. The Eagle Bay Farmers Institute donated all its funds to the Salmon Arm School Trustees to provide a school for Eagle Bay's children, demonstrating their commitment to education. Jim Day, a farmer from what is now Hummingbird Bay, was the board chair at the time. In 1922-1923, the School Board built a house for the teacher and supplied five cords of firewood to keep the classroom warm, while also maintaining the school grounds.

Imagine children in the early 1920s, bundled up against the cold, braving ferry and barge rides across the lake to reach school in Eagle Bay—long before Magna Bay or Anglemont had their own school. The water was dredged to grant boat access, making water travel essential in a community with scarce teachers. What stories those winter crossings must hold! Even now, old dock pilings stand as silent sentinels to this adventurous past. The school itself stood close to Eagle Bay's first post office, run by the enterprising David Lamey (see the Lamey story: <https://www.eaglebaybc.ca/history>).

As time passed and Eagle Bay grew, the original schoolhouse took on a new life as the community's gathering place after a second school was built in 1929. One joyful 1930s photograph captures neighbours celebrating Christmas together—a testament to how the old schoolhouse became the heart of local life.

From left to right, the individuals in the picture are Dave Johnson, Rhonda Reid, Mr. Reid (dressed as Santa), George and Leo (dressed as reindeer), and Del standing next to Georgina Reid



KAREN'S CORNER (ON'T

In 1949, the first schoolhouse was sold to Mr. Colthurst for \$750. The proceeds helped build the new local Eagle Bay Community Hall, which still stands 75 years later, continuing the tradition of gathering spaces.

Later, Dave and Betty Baxter, an American couple, bought the weathered original schoolhouse and its land, transforming it into a cozy summer campground. Tragedy struck when a fire destroyed the beloved building while they were at church—but in true Eagle Bay fashion, neighbours quickly rallied to help the Baxters rebuild, proving the community's spirit was as resilient as ever.

Today, Doug and Howard Campbell own the historic property that once housed the original school. Only the school's foundation remains, quietly recalling the past. A beloved fir tree still stands, once decorated for Christmas almost a century ago, connecting present residents with earlier generations.

Standing among the quiet remains today, I felt history all around me—a living bridge connecting past and present, and a poignant reminder of the people whose dreams and hard work continue to shape our community.



In 1929, after the first school became a community hall, records show a second school opened on William Whitehead's property. This location change reflected shifting local needs: after years of water travel, students began using roads to reach school. Old photos reveal daily life from that era.

Archival Records of a second school in Eagle Bay, photographed in 1938



Back Joe Wallin, Erine Whitehead, Les Dunn
Middle Cathy Carcenor (teacher), Marie (Turgeon) Muir, Ann (Whitehead) McKay
Front Bunny (Whitehead) Oakland, Donna (Turgeon) Best, Bonnie (Turgeon) Jeffries

KAREN'S CORNER (ON'T

Eagle Bay School in 1957

By the late 1950s, further changes in community needs made the second schoolhouse unnecessary. After William Whitehead moved it from his property, the building was barged across the lake. Later, a major Magna Bay forest fire destroyed it, closing another chapter in Eagle Bay's educational story.

Following the closure of the second school in the late 1950s, Eagle Bay children took the bus to Sorrento for school. After a 1996 boundary change, students began attending Carlin.

Continuing my research, I found an August 9, 1941, newspaper article stating that the Robinson family purchased 89.7 acres near Greaves Road, which included a small schoolhouse. Bob Davidson, who attended Eagle Bay school in the 1940s, didn't recall this building. Perhaps it served as a teacherage instead. The teacherage in Eagle Bay moved several times—stories persist about buildings that once housed teachers.



Robinson Property -old schoolhouse or teacherage in 1941

Although the schoolhouses have disappeared, Eagle Bay's educational legacy endures. These schools sparked friendships, nurtured dreams, and wove the fabric of community life. By honouring this heritage, we ensure Eagle Bay's story continues to unite generations.

If you have stories, photos, or memories about Eagle Bay's schoolhouses, please email me at Kloerke@telus.net. By sharing your experiences, you play a vital role in preserving and enriching Eagle Bay's educational legacy for future generations. I look forward to hearing from you!