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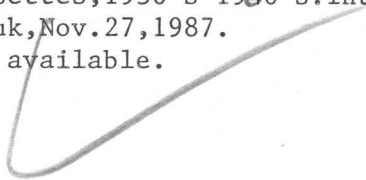
TEACHERS

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Donahue, Alice (Baird)

2 audiocassettes, 1930's-1980's. Interviewed
by Vi Kowalchuk, Nov. 27, 1987.
Transcript available.



TO MY FATHER, JOSEPH GAUTHIER, 1915 (?)

Christmas is a time of many things; happiness and the laughter of anticipation...but it is also the time of remembering.

Today, as we drive over highways and freeways - swift miles in minutes to return home laden with gifts for our loved ones, my thoughts take me back many years.

I have cherished Robert Frost's beautiful poem, "Stopping By Woods on a Snowy Evening" since my first reading of it:

"The woods are lovely, dark and deep, but I have
promises to keep - and miles to go before I sleep."

It has been given many interpretations, but I have my own - it is a Christmas word picture and always recalls my first remembered Christmas.

My Father was a French Canadian, born in Three Rivers, Quebec. His was a large family and his Mother died when he was very young. I do not believe he ever knew Christmas as a child, because when he became a man, he so loved all it stood for; as people love freedom who have been denied it.

He was twenty-five when he left Canada and came to Wisconsin to log, and also to finally learn to speak English - though always retaining his beautiful French accent, so that I hear his voice again when Maurice Chavilier speaks.

He was a timber cruiser, a logger, a sawmill man. Not large - I grew up to be as tall - but in the woods and on the trail, in speed and endurance, he was a giant and could out distance any man. And always he followed the tall trees - Quebec, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Washington and finally back to Canada. The great pine forest of Alberta drew him and he took his family into the Peace River Country.

There were freeways that were truly free in that long ago. Great roads that crossed and re-crossed the land, and the only cost for a man to ride them were his own courage and his skill. They were the Rivers. Rivers that first knew only the Indian and his birch canoe or log dugout, but as more and more men poured into this land so rich in timber, the great paddle wheel steamer came.

The towns were named for what they truly were. Landings! Mirror and Athabasca. So along the Athabasca River my Father built his sawmill and a log house for his family. Finally the railroads came. Oh, they were close to the mill - only five miles away! The Rivers continued to carry the logs to the great booms that held them for the mill, but man came to depend on the rails for his link with civilization.

This particular winter was a heavy one. Deep snows and the trains could not run. The mill shut down till spring, but my parents stayed on - warm and secure in the log house. Everything they needed for existence and comfort was there.

But the Christmas presents were in Athabasca Landing, fifty miles away.

December passed and it became January. I do not remember when my Father left the house one day. We were small children, but we woke one morning to the sound of his deep voice and heard the joy in my Mother's as she said, "It's Christmas morning!". And it truly was. I can't recall the presents as much as a man could pack on his back. (I'm sure a doll, whose head was soon broken - small brothers were so hard on doll heads). But the memory of the love that carried my Father through the long and lonely night along that frozen river has been and will be with me always.

The dangers were very real - a man could not stop and rest. The cold was there - waiting to creep in and numb his body and his brain until he slept and never woke again. And there were timber wolves. And let me tell you - nothing Hitchcock has ever presented is as spine chilling as a timber wolf howling on a winter night. They howl because they starve and food is where they find it, be it man or beast. (The corner behind the wood stove was my refuge when the wolves howled). Beauty was there, too. The stars so close, and the trees so black against the snow. The great smooth flow of the frozen river - motion suspended. And over and above all, the Northern Lights. Maybe one could not really hear them, but I remember we always said we could.

Times and places change, but not people. Our roads today are no longer water or ice, but rivers of steel and concrete that flow across the land.

But the love that carries the Christ Birth message from one generation to the next burns as bright and warm today, in hearts everywhere, as it did for my Father.

"For I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep, and miles to go before I sleep..."

Renee Gauthier Moys

- 1966 -

An Interview with Mrs. Alice B. Donahue

by Vi Kowalchuk

VK: Well, we'll begin with a bit of family history, Mrs. Donahue. Do you want to give your full name and address?

ABD: Yes, my name is Alice Blanche Donahue.

VK: Go ahead. Tell us where you were born.

ABD: And I was born at Red Willow, Alberta. My father was James Alexander Baird. He was a farmer and my mother was Martha Ann Steetson, a postmistress. And our family background is Scottish and Irish, mostly Scottish. I first came to Athabasca in August of 1937, which will soon be fifty years.

VK: My goodness, is that right?

ABD: Now before coming to Athabasca I was teaching at New Norway. I went there in 1930 and taught there from 1930 to 1937. I was married in 1937 and we came to Athabasca because my husband was working in the Creamery.

VK: So that was your reason for coming to Athabasca. Where did you meet your husband?

ABD: It was in New Norway.

VK: That isn't where he came from though was it?

ABD: No, he came from Manitoba. He was a graduate of the dairy department...the Dairy, what would you call it, Faculty of Manitoba. Manitoba Agricultural College.

VK: So really your decision was made by the fact that you got married.

ABD: That's right.

VK: Do you remember anything about your trip to Athabasca?

ABD: Well yes. I thought I was going to the end of the world.

VK: No doubt.

ABD: Really. It was all right until I got as far as Clyde and when I got to Clyde all these trees began to close in on me. I just thought I couldn't breathe. Sort of like the mountains.

VK: Yes.

ABD: And of course it was very, very much more closed in than it is now.

VK: But you came right into town.

ABD: Right to Athabasca and our first home was a log house right beside the Creamery which was steam heated, fully modern.

VK: What kind of appliances and modernization did you have there?

ABD: Oh, radio and you know vacuum cleaner, washing machine, all the conveniences.

VK: Good. All right, you had no indoor toilets.

ABD: No, no.

VK: Not in that time, no.

ABD: No the toilets were all outside.

VK: So your water supply?

ABD: The water supply came from the...they had water in town but no sewage.

VK: And your heating was?

ABD: Well we were steam heat from the Creamery but the heating here in town was mostly by wood and the long barrel-type stoves.

VK: Lighting. Well you didn't have electric lights then did you? Was there electric lights already?

ABD: Yes we had electric lights supplied by the Creamery.

VK: Again supplied by the Creamery.

ABD: It was the Light & Power, Athabasca Light & Power.

VK: Oh sure.

ABD: You remember that.

VK: Well no, but I guess that was the first, yes. So, would you like to describe your house a little more? What else can you tell us about your house, your furniture?

ABD: Well, it was a two-bedroom house and it had a large livingroom, and dining room, kitchen. The kitchen was built...the log house faced north and then there was a sort of back, like it was L-shaped and the sun shone in from the east and from the west into the kitchen.

VK: It was really beautiful there for you.

ABD: Yes and very comfortable. And furniture, well it was all new furniture of course.

VK: You were newly married.

ABD: Yes, chesterfield and you know bedroom suite, dining room suite.

VK: Did you ^yby your things...?

ABD: In Edmonton.

VK: And brought them with you.

ABD: And brought them out, yes.

VK: You had a telephone, no doubt.

ABD: Yes.

VK: The telephone...the numbering system was different in those days wasn't it?

ABD: Yes, I think our number was 26 or 15. I'm not just sure. The Creamery was one.

VK: It was a two number...

ABD: And we...the phone rang. You had to ring.

VK: Right, it wasn't...Did Mr. Donahue have a car?

ABD: Yes.

VK: Can you describe it? Tell us a little about the car?

ABD: Well the car was...It was a Chevrolet, or a Ford, I'm not just sure. I had a Ford before, myself.

VK: Oh, you did?

ABD: One with a rumble seat, yes. But anyway, it was a Ford I think.

VK: OK. Did you have a radio in the house? I suppose you did.

ABD: Yes.

VK: A radio set. No television of course.

ABD: Oh no, no television then.

VK: No, not til later. All right, we'll just go back a little bit and if you could tell us something about school as a child, where you attended school and...

ABD: Oh, I attended...when I started to school I went to a rural school and it was called the Red Willow School. Now that school was built right in my grandfather's farm. My grandfather's farm was just five miles from what Red Willow is today and you see there is no railroad and so they had settled there and they had their homesteads. In the corner of his farm there was a store and a post office and a mill, and a blacksmith shop and a school.

VK: Did he donate the land for the school and for these...?

ABD: Well it all moved from there then, all the store. Yes, I'm sure that he....

VK: Probably did...

ABD: I don't think they donated it, they just built there.

VK: Really.

ABD: The school was a one-room school.

VK: Of course. And you attended what one to...?

ABD: One to eight.

VK: And then where did you take your high school?

ABD: Well in the meantime we had moved. You see we left, yes. So we went in the one-room school til about grade....well, grade seven.

VK: Could you tell us anything about lessons or teachers? Anything that stands out in your mind?

ABD: I remember my first teacher was Miss Watt and our first Superintendent was...oh no...my first superintendent when I started to teach was the superintendent I had when I started school.

VK: No.

ABD: He was a friend of the family's.

VK: For heaven's sakes. That made it a little nicer.

ABD: Yes. And of course we used the old Alexander Reader. We had reading and arithmetic and citizenship and social studies, not social studies, nature study. Health, geography, history.

VK: Well. You taught all the subjects.

ABD: Each one separately.

VK: Each one separately. How did you travel to school in those days?

ABD: Well I was right beside the school...walked.

VK: Of course you were right beside so you just walked automatically. Students. How many students would have attended the school then?

ABD: I suppose there would be about twenty. I think about twenty-five. Twenty to twenty-five.

VK: Any special memories of your school days?

ABD: Oh yes. It was a real experience to start to school. The first thing I did I got head lice.

VK: Dear me.

ABD: I was told apparently there was head lice in the school and my mother had told me "now don't put anyone else's cap on" or anything else like this but you know a kid. Next thing I knew I had head lice.

VK: And how did you cope with that?

ABD: And the unfortunate part was my teacher was going with my uncle, so that wasn't a very happy situation.

VK: What did they do in those days for head lice?

ABD: Kerosene.

VK: Kerosene, it was kerosene. I think you probably ran into head lice when you got to Athabasca.

ABD: Oh many times after.

VK: Afterwards.

ABD: Yes. And bed bugs. But we didn't have anything like that. This was just head lice. One family in the district that had it.

VK: Gosh it's always usually that way, isn't it? And then they spread it. Isn't that right? I remember those kind of things happening when I was teaching. Well, any other school memories that you would like to mention?

ABD: Well I can remember the fun at recess. In the winter time we played "fox and geese" and that was really a lot of fun. We played baseball in the summer.

VK: Yes, yes. Baseball.

ABD: And I remember in school I loved reading. Then we had a lot of memory work.

VK: Yes, in those days. That's right. Not like we are today. Alright, where did you take your teacher training and could you tell us when?

ABD: Camrose in 1925-26.

VK: You had normal school. That was what they called the Normal School.

ABD: Normal School, right.

VK: Can you give us the year?

ABD: 1925-26.

VK: You said 1926, right. Alright, what where course of studies like in those days for teachers and how long did you attend?

ABD: We attended ten months.

VK: Ten months then. And of course after that first year you were out teaching.

ABD: Out teaching, that's right. You had to go to summer school, at least they recommend that you go to summer school.

VK: Following that.

ABD: The salaries were \$1000 a year for ten months and then we were expected to go to summer school besides. Save enough money to go to summer school.

VK: Yes.

ABD: I got ahead of my story there.

VK: That's all right. Where did you live when you went to Camrose?

ABD: I boarded with a private family.

VK: How did you happen...? How did they pick the families? How did you come by...?

ABD: Well you had to send...When you registered you had to get the list from the Principal and he gave you a list of homes and we could not go to public dances. I'm telling you that was something.

VK: They were quite strict hey?

ABD: Very strict.

VK: Who set these rules down? The Camrose School?

ABD: The Camrose Normal School.

VK: The Normal School.

ABD: The principal.

VK: Can you think of any others they said you must not do?

ABD: Well, we couldn't go to any public dances and we couldn't...we really weren't allowed to associated with the town people. That is, too much. That is, the young people because there were lots of boys and girls there of course that were at....

VK: What was the reason do you think? Did they expect the teacher to just have some type of higher morals than everyone else, or....?

ABD: Well I suppose, but the trouble was there that some kids, some students had gone there the year and two or three years prior to that and there had been some wild goings on. And some very serious problems. And I think that they just decided that....

VK: That was that.

ABD: That was that.

VK: They were going to watch you.

ABD: There were some hockey players. There were quite a number of hockey players there. The Hanson boys, and of course they were.... girls were really very...

VK: Impressed by them...

ABD: Impressed by those chaps and things, so...There were lots of romances then. I think that was the reason. And our dance started at nine o'clock and ended at eleven.

VK: Very short, eh?

ABD: Lots of excuses to go to the library to study at night so we could walk home with.... with the boyfriends.

VK: What were some of your courses there?

ABD: We took English literature, art, and cooking, and sewing.

VK: Cooking?

ABD: Right. Miss Hasty taught that. And history, geography, nature study.

VK: Again nature study. Isn't that something. Of course I suppose that...

ABD: Oh nature study was...

VK: Big thing then...

ABD: Big thing.

VK: And of course you were expected to teach it when you came out so this is why they had it.

ABD: And phys. ed.

VK: And phys. ed. So anything outstanding as far as your university was concerned?

ABD: Well you mean the Normal School.

VK: The Normal School. Other than the strict rules they had.

ABD: Well we didn't notice them as being strict. There were 300 of us, so we were very happy and they all boarded around. Now right back...we looked out the front door on this house that had a great big back verandah upstairs. We called them the dirty dozen, these boys and they used to sit out there and play poker at night. Far into the night, you know, and so there was lots of activity among the Normal students themselves. So they weren't too anxious to meet up with the town people.

VK: You had a little community of your own more or less.

ABD: That's right.

VK: Of those 300, what percentage would you say were males?

ABD: Five, six.

VK: There weren't that many men in those days going into education.

ABD: No, I would say there wouldn't be more than seventy-five men.

VK: Of the 300.

ABD: Of the 300. I've got the Normal School book. The pictures of them all.

VK: Have you? Oh gosh, that's good. Alright, did they give you any pedagogical training? Did they try to teach you how to teach?

ABD: Well of course we had to do practice teaching.

VK: Tell us about that.

ABD: And Jack Appleby was one of the teachers.

VK: Was he?

ABD: Well he wasn't there when I was there, but Jack was in the practice school.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: And you had to go down and teach a lesson for them.

VK: Well. And you didn't take...did you take anything like...

ABD: Anything from one to eight.

VK: One to eight. That was your certificate for one to eight.

ABD: No, from one to eleven.

VK: One to eleven.

ABD: But we didn't do any practice teaching in the high school.

VK: What was your lesson that you had to practice teach?

ABD: Oh I had to teach one lesson on the difference between a mountain and a hill. And another one was I had to teach the different breeds of chickens.

VK: Well. That is different.

ABD: That was agriculture. So then I had a lesson in math. Had to teach some multiplication.

VK: And so who gave you...Did they grade you...I suppose this teacher...?

ABD: The professor.

VK: The professor was there.

ABD: He was there plus the teacher. And you had to keep discipline, you know, there was no way that...

VK: Of course, everything was up to you.

ABD: I remember when I was teaching this lesson on chickens, you know, at...coming from the farm I didn't know much about different breeds of chickens but I had studied it so it came kind of easy to me and these boys were trying to catch me and they were asking me all these different questions.

VK: Alright, you didn't take any course like psychology?

ABD: Yes, we had psychology. Dr. Sanson taught us psychology.

VK: Sociology?

ABD: Yes.

VK: Those kinds of things were there.

ABD: And that was all crammed in the ten months.

VK: Quite a full program. Right. How long would your day have been?

ABD: Well it would have been from nine to four.

VK: Right. Five days a week.

ABD: Saturdays and Sundays free.

VK: And they had the library right within the ...?

ABD: The library, everything was right in the Normal school.

VK: Everything you needed to have there.

ABD: So when you went up to the Normal school all your classes were there and everything.

VK: Right. Did you do any observation of students?

ABD: Oh yes, we had four weeks of that.

VK: Four weeks of that? And how much...?

ABD: And four weeks of practice teaching. Oh yes, we observed the classes.

VK: So that really...that was about eight months of actual study and two months of observation and teaching. So how many years did you have of teaching then, of teaching experience, before you came to Athabasca?

ABD: Oh, I was four years at Red Willow and seven years at New Norway. Eleven years.

VK: Eleven years of experience. So once you got married that didn't, you didn't stop teaching. You continued on.

ABD: I resigned at New Norway but I came up here and Mr. Kostash came to see me and came to see if I would go...

VK: He was the Superintendent.

ABD: The Superintendent, right. To see if I would go out west to teach.

VK: Alright, so where was your first school then?

ABD: Oh, you mean the first school that I...

VK: Here in Athabasca.

ABD: Fairhaven. Fairhaven was the first. I went out...

VK: Your talked about going out west.

ABD: Well no. He wanted me to go out west. And apparently the people out there were very hard to please and I thought, well, I haven't had any problems in my eleven years and I'm not going to go out and ask for it. So I did subbing here in town, and then I went out to Poplar Grove.

VK: Where was that?

ABD: That was Grassland. I taught Don Course.

VK: Right. Don Course. The famous, slightly famous, eh, shall we say?

ABD: That's right, slightly famous Don Course. And I taught out there ten days.

VK: Did you?

ABD: And I only went out there because Fairhaven school was a one-room school and the enrolment was so heavy that they turned the coal shed into the senior room. Amelia went there. And I had the big classroom and Alfred Gorman had seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven.

VK: My goodness, what was the total population there then at...? How many students did you have?

ABD: Well I had about forty.

VK: Just from grade one to six and he had the rest of them.

ABD: He had the rest of them. I was there four years.

VK: So Mr. Kostash, the Superintendent, actually hired you. It was, of course, Athabasca School Division, not the County. Not even a school division.

ABD: No, no. It was just the Fairhaven School District and they couldn't pay you. When I went out to Grassland, they hadn't paid the teachers there for four years. So I wasn't paid when I was the ten days there and then I came in and I went out to Fairhaven and at Christmas time I got \$25. And I said to Alfred Gorman, I said "You know we got a bonus, \$25!" "Bonus," he said, "That's all you're going to get." And it was!

VK: Did you ever get paid for being at Grassland?

ABD: Oh, later.

VK: Eventually.

ABD: Cliff had to pay...I was out there two months. I boarded and he had to pay my board.

VK: Wow. For heaven's sakes.

ABD: So it was really something.

VK: I guess. How did you get out there?

ABD: Walked out.

VK: You walked every day?

ABD: I boarded first and then after a bit...

VK: Who did you board with, excuse me?

ABD: Oh, Mrs. Davidson, Roger Davidson's.

VK: I see.

ABD: And those people would not get up in the morning! I used to run to school because I mean I wanted to be a school ahead of the children.

VK: So were they farm people then, the Davidsons?

ABD: Oh yes, they were all farm people.

VK: How far away were they?

ABD: A mile. They lived....

VK: Now, I'm just trying to think of where they would have lived.

ABD: Well I think there was a Webb lived there after. He had a trailer. Their house burned down.

VK: Webb, eh? Which direction from Fairhaven school?

ABD: West. A mile west and...well, quite close to Devlin's.

VK: Oh, that's the one. Yes, I know Devlin's. Wouldn't that be more than a mile from Fairhaven? You would cross country, did you or what?

ABD: No, no. I mean we were back this way. I said it was north. Come up to that road that Devlin's were on.

VK: Oh yes, I see.

ABD: We didn't get paid until when the County, when the Division took over. Then they asked us if we would take it all in one lump sum.

VK: Your back pay?

ABD: Our back pay with a percentage cut. Well see, our salary was \$840, with a 16 2/3 percent cut.

VK: Now when you say \$840, you're saying 840 dollars a year.

ABD: A year. With a 16 2/3 percent cut. And then they asked us if we would....they would give us our money, the back pay, if we would take a discount. And I said, "No, I waited this long. I'll wait for the rest of it." So I did. It took about five years.

VK: It took that long!

ABD: Till I got paid. Well there were so many other teachers that had to be paid.

VK: When did this school...when did the school division...when was it formed?

ABD: It was formed in about 1940, 39 or 40. Because when I came into Athabasca to teach I was not in the Division. Athabasca town was alone.

VK: Did the school year begin in September?

ABD: September.

VK: September 1st.

ABD: And went to June.

VK: The end of June.

ABD: And usually starts September 1st. And we had to put in 210 days.

VK: Two hundred ten. How long a Christmas holiday did you have then?

ABD: From about the 23rd to the 2nd of January.

VK: And Easter was?

ABD: It was from Good Friday to the following week.

VK: Well, your school day began at 9:00, no doubt, and ended at 3:30. In those days. And, of course, life was pretty difficult. You had to do all sorts of things like keep registers and...

ABD: And you had to keep the fire going.

VK: Keep the fire....Who did the janitor work?

ABD: Well the janitor work was done by a Byrtus boy, but we used to arrive at the school....

VK: Mike Byrtus, or

ABD: No, Joe Byrtus's. We used to arrive at school about the time that the janitor was arriving.

VK: Pot belly stove?

ABD: Pot belly stove and so they'd bring in these big logs and I had never seen logs like that but I had to learn to "fire up."

VK: Fire up. Isn't that something. Usually they had a fellow in the community that would take on the job of bringing in the wood for the year's supply.

ABD: Oh yes.

VK: Would somebody have a kind of a contract or something?

ABD: I think there was someone who brought the wood, but then this boy would bring the wood in in the morning and then you just used what was there.

VK: Winters were bad? Do you remember that first winter?

ABD: Oh, the winters were cold. Cold. I remember walking out there when it was 60...it went from 60-64 below and the only people at school was the Richards and the Gormans.

VK: Really. Can you name other families while we're at it? Richards, Gormans....

ABD: DeFords, Porteous, well then the Byrtus's, two families of Byrtus's and LaPortes.

VK: Right, LaPortes.

ABD: Richards.

VK: Who else would have been there?

ABD: Oh, Overholts and Devlins.

VK: And Devlins.

ABD: And Davidsons.

VK: Right.

ABD: And that would be the...those were the only families.

VK: Right. The Fairhaven people had mainly, what, English-speaking people, eh?

ABD: I think they were mostly English.

VK: There were no Europeans.

ABD: There was no problem, you know...

VK: The Gormans, Mrs. Gorman wasn't teaching then at that time?

ABD: Yes she went to teach at Big Coulee and taught you didn't she?

VK: Yes, but that would have been later.

ABD: That was in the war years when they couldn't get teachers.

VK: Right. Because before she came I think Mrs. Day, Chloe Day was teaching. Well when my sister went it was Miss Moore, I guess. That would be earlier, so. Alright, so, can you tell us about your school day?

ABD: The school day?

VK: The school day.

ABD: Well school was called...you know the bell rang.

VK: Now you have the little old bell, didn't you? No buzzers.

ABD: Yes, the little old bell and you rang that bell and you marched...got them into the school and then you, of course, you saluted the flag and repeated the Lord's Prayer. And then you had, for the higher grades they had math...rapid cal. And for the little ones, the younger ones, we had reading. And then it was just, right about, then after recess was...the big ones had the English and the little ones had the math.

VK: Switched around...

ABD: And then the afternoon was always, you know, geography, history, you know...alternate. But the little ones always had citizenship and health and nature study.

VK: Right. You had to say "let's put out the nails and let's check the nails, and have you got a handkerchief this morning, and have you brushed your teeth?"

ABD: Oh. Right.

VK: That was a ritual.

ABD: When I first came out of Normal School...this is going back...when I first came out of Normal School, you see we were taught the evils of tobacco and the evils of drinking. And so, and we were supposed to weigh all the children when they came to school. Take their height and everything. Well! You can imagine, that took all of one day practically to get that done. We got that done and I'm teaching, when it came to this health, I'm teaching the evils of tobacco, you know, and how, you know, the growth would be stunted. This little guy got up and said, "My grandfather's 90 some years old and there's nothing wrong with him." Well. From then on I didn't say anything about the evils of tobacco or drinking because what did...well, these kids knew more about it than I did.

VK: Well right.

ABD: I was very naive about that.

VK: So you planned your own timetable. You set up your own timetable.

ABD: Own timetable, yes. I think I've still got some of my first timetables.

VK: Have you really? Don't throw them away.

ABD: I wouldn't.

?: We might want to copy some of them.

VK: Right.

?: How did you manage the school? What would, would you have the older children given their lessons and let them work while you talk to the younger ones, or...?

VK: Tell us about that because that's interesting to juggle all those grade and to keep everybody busy, Mrs. Donahue.

ABD: Well, you had to have the se-...you know, you knew what the lesson was...that the...the lessons they were going to have so you had a series of questions that they had to find the answers to. We didn't always have too many books.

VK: I was going to ask you about textbooks. There were very few.

ABD: Very very few textbooks.

VK: You probably had a globe, and a few textbooks and chalk and rulers. The blackboard and...

ABD: Now down at New Norway and at Red Willow, see, then when I started to teach I taught at home.

VK: Right.

ABD: And the schools were well equipped.

VK: Well equipped. Much more so. They were more advanced than we were here probably then in the northern part of Alberta.

ABD: Yes. Well of course it had been settled much longer.

VK: Of course, of course. That's true. But it took a bit of juggling didn't it. I remember when I first started teaching I had grades one to eight or nine and, you know, to prepare lessons and to keep everybody busy.

ABD: Keep everybody busy.

VK: It was quite a thing.

ABD: But you didn't have too many in a grade.

VK: No. Three or four or five.

ABD: You might only have two in one grade and they seemed to...they would get a book or, you know, if they finished. We never seemed to have them....

VK: The discipline problem, eh?

ABD: No discipline problem and they were never bored.

VK: Right. They were so anxious to learn I think. Yes, it was a whole different...attitude.

ABD: Oh, a different ball of wax now. Oh yes, they were really anxious to learn. And we were just as anxious to teach them.

VK: That's right.

ABD: You know, there was just so much enthusiasm.

VK: They were eager. That's for sure. Alright, the school inspector, you said, was Kostash.

ABD: Here, here, yes.

VK: So he was...how long did he...?

ABD: He left here...he wasn't here too long. Just about a year after I came.

VK: Is that all? How many visits would he make a year to the school?

ABD: One.

VK: One a year. Dear me. Do you remember anything of the school board?

ABD: Well we didn't see much of the school board because...

VK: You didn't, eh?

ABD: Not here. But, you know, at home...yes.

VK: But they were organized. They did have school boards then did they?

ABD: Oh yes, there were school boards. Gylvia DeFord was on the school board and Lawrence Devlin. And Mr. Davidson, I think, was the other one.

VK: Is that right? I remember name for some reason. I do remember that. What...so they didn't really interfere with your teaching then. You had very little contact with the school board.

ABD: Oh no. You had no contact with them.

VK: At all. What kind of decisions were they expected to make at that time then...of the running of...as far as....?

ABD: They just hired the teacher and then she had to do it.

VK: And that was it? So how long were you at Fairhaven?

ABD: Four years.

VK: Four years. And all that time...you didn't board out all that time.

ABD: No, no. I boarded out the first two months.

VK: The first two months only.

ABD: And then the Richard's kids asked me, "Why don't you..." it was a Friday night, "Why don't you come home with us and walk into town?" I said, "Walk? Where do you live?" and they told me where they lived. And then they told me that their brothers Stan and Bill walked to school. And I thought well if they can walk to school, why can't I walk. If they're walking that way, I can walk this way. So I started and I walked. And I would walk out across the golf course and up the hill to Richards.

VK: Wilderness. Wasn't it wilderness?

ABD: Wilderness is right.

VK: And you weren't afraid?

ABD: Well, I didn't know enough to be afraid.

VK: I suppose, eh? Never even thought about a....

ABD: Never thought about a bear. Well, we didn't have bears at home and why would I think there was any bears.

VK: Did you have any wild escapades walking back and forth?

ABD: No. The only time that I saw an animal was this little brown thing and it looked like a muskrat. And I sort of stomped my foot at it. I thought it would run and it didn't. It just chattered right back at me. It was a woodchuck.

VK: Woodchuck, yes.

ABD: You know, one of the experiences was...I was coming in the spring of the year when the water was, you know, melting. The snow was melting and it had run down this old road. There used to be a road straight out across the golf course and this boy was riding his horse into town and his horse fell into...it wore the earth away until there was a hole...and the horse fell in the hole. I came along. I was so upset. This poor horse was in there and I was on my way home. So...and he was crying. And do you know who it was?

VK: No.

ABD: Rojowski. Pete Rojowski. And he was telling me about, you know, that his father was dead and his mother...there was just his mother and his brother and his sister.

VK: All the children, yes.

ABD: I felt so sorry for him.

VK: What was he doing? What was he going to town and coming back?

ABD: He was coming...going to town to get groceries and the horse fell in. I think they had to kill the horse. And there were some men...the men had arrived...you know, to help him get it out. And I stood there and I watched all that, you see. And then I went home. And I told Cliff....

VK: Was he the boy she's speaking of? How old would he have been?

ABD: He'd be about twelve years old.

VK: My goodness. He lived quite a number of miles further north. In fact, he was a neighbour of ours and we lived, what would that be, about...at least twenty miles out of town. Beyond that. I'm interested to hear about your ball games and your concerts and all these things. Track meets. What...tell us what kind of extracurricular things you did.

ABD: Well we always had a Christmas concert.

VK: Right.

ABD: And at Fairhaven we had them...we had the concert in the main part of the school, and then the back part, where Alfred had, was the senior room, and that's where they would dress and undress. And we built a ladder up so that the kids could come up the ladder and go through the window and onto the stage.

VK: My goodness.

ABD: Now that's how we put on our Christmas concerts.

VK: Now somebody in the community no doubt built you a stage.

ABD: Alfred.

VK: Specially for that occasion.

ABD: Yes, that's right.

VK: For the Christmas concert. You had Santa Claus.

ABD: Santa Claus, treats. Bought a gift for every kid.

VK: You did?

ABD: Yes, yes.

VK: Did you really?

ABD: Always went in...we'd go into Woolworth's and you'd get a...you know, you could go around and pick up anything you wanted and put it in this basket and then take it to them, and they would wrap it for you and you'd pay for it.

VK: For heaven's sakes. Someone in the community was Santa Claus?

ABD: Yes.

VK: Interesting. Where did you...where did you find ideas for your concerts?

ABD: Oh, we had books.

VK: You did have books made up that had plays and...

ABD: Well in those days you could send away and get these plays and Christmas concerts. I gave a lot of mine to Mrs. Parker after I came here. And in this book there would be a book of drills, a book of plays, a book of recitations.

VK: Right. You always had to have a little of each, didn't you?

ABD: And every child in the room had to perform.

VK: Right. Costumes. Who did the costuming for you?

ABD: The parents.

VK: The parents. Right. Crepe paper, a lot of crepe paper.

ABD: Oh yes, lots of crepe paper.

VK: The parents actually co-operated very well didn't they?

ABD: Oh yes.

VK: They were really quite good about those kinds of things. Well did you get a present then, at Christmas from the students?

ABD: Oh yes, always. You always got a present.

VK: Can you remember what you got?

ABD: Oh goodness. I remember one last day of school in Athabasca, I got a tea pot. It was a beautiful tea pot. And then the next year they gave me another tea pot. It was Helen Hodgeson's son that was...the Superintendent's son...and he went home and she said, "Well what did you get the teacher this time?" We gave her a tea pot to match the other one.

VK: Do you remember...I remember chipping in, somebody would get things started, and we'd chip in, all of us chip in a quarter or something, and bought the teacher a gift. Did that...is that what the students did?

ABD: That's what they did.

VK: Or did they give you individual gifts.

ABD: Well, you often got individual gifts besides that. But that's what you got.

VK: That's what you got, right. Alright, concerts. Ball games with other communities, other schools?

ABD: We didn't have, not at Fairhaven.

VK: No.

ABD: And of course then when I came in here it just smaller children.

VK: Right.

ABD: But the track meets.

VK: The track meets. That was the thing.

ABD: Well, the track meets that...all the schools came in all around...this was when I was still teaching in Athabasca...and the teachers, we had to dig the pits. And measure out. And Jim Appleby and Frank Falconer and Alfred Gorman and who's...Beryl Willey...I guess it was, we were the ones who had to get the grounds ready.

VK: My goodness.

ABD: And I can remember digging those pits for them to jump in and then haul...get some bags of sand.

VK: Oh yes. Right. Well before we get into Athabasca, which we want to talk about here in a minute, were you familiar, or did you visit any of the other schools in that area at that time. Which schools would have been operating?

ABD: Well there was the Mercury and Greyville and Big Coulee. There was no transportation. There was no way to get around. Mind you I met them because they used to come to the house. I lived in town.

VK: Right.

ABD: So that was the meeting place for all these teachers.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: And one teacher out at Elscott. I think it Elscott.

VK: For heaven's sake.

ABD: Was that where that lady...what was her name?...she was a spinster and the postmaster, postmistress, was a friend of hers. The two ladies always travelled together.

VK: Is that right? I don't know who that would be.

ABD: Not Elscott, what's the one just beyond Boyle.

VK: You mean going north, or going to....

ABD: On the railroad and going...

VK: Newbrook, it wouldn't be Newbrook or Thorhild?

ABD: No, going the other way.

VK: Oh, the other way. Well it wouldn't have been Grassland, that's for sure, because Grassland...

ABD: No.

VK: Well Caslan you see wouldn't have been in existence then.

ABD: No, it wasn't as far as Caslan.

VK: You see those wouldn't have existed.

ABD: It could have been Caslan.

VK: Oh, is that right?

ABD: Would it be just a very small school?

VK: Yes.

ABD: Then that would be it. Caslan.

VK: Could be, could be.

ABD: And the lady that had the post office and the store, or something, and she was a big lady.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: Something like Nellie Carol.

VK: See, I don't...know who you're speaking of.

ABD: You were gone from there, I guess, by that time.

VK: Did you have any festivals?

ABD: Mr. Hodgeson started the first festival.

VK: That was already probably when you were in town, eh?

ABD: Yes. We were coming to town by that time.

VK: I remember going...when I was at Big Coulee, schools used to have special projects and I guess we competed against one another to get a small amount of money. I think it was 25, which was quite a bit I guess, \$25. But I remember one year we cleared a whole lot of land, like an acre or two. Well that was a whole lot of land to us. Do you remember anything like that? At that time, in the early days.

ABD: But you see, you came on later.

VK: Later, later. That was something later.

ABD: You see we didn't.

VK: That's right, yes. OK. So the only place you taught out in the country then was Fairhaven. And then you came into Athabasca which was what?

ABD: 1942

VK: And the first school was the Elementary School here at the old Brick School then.

ABD: And there were just two rooms and there was no electric light in the school and we would have to sing songs and the teacher would have to stand by the window and read stories to them until 9:30. When we would be able to see to go on to the...

VK: For heaven's sakes.

ABD: There was just two rooms.

VK: Two rooms there. Who was the other teacher?

ABD: Phyllis Wilson.

VK: Was she really? It wasn't the Wilson then I don't suppose...

ABD: No, she was Phyllis Ross.

VK: Phyllis Ross.

ABD: She boarded with Mrs. Taylor and we lived right here.

VK: Well for heaven's sakes. And who was the Superintendent at that point in Athabasca?

ABD: Mr. Hodgeson.

VK: That was when Mr. Hodgeson was here. Now he stayed for quite a few years.

ABD: He was here for five years.

VK: Oh, only five.

ABD: And then he went into the Faculty. He came in the fall and I...no, but I was a year out there.

VK: And he was...he was...

ABD: They must have came in '40 and left in '48. That's right.

VK: He was very nice. I remember Mr. Hodgeson as a student, not as a teacher of course, but as a student.

ABD: Yes.

VK: And then I remember him when I was at University, he was there. I'll never forget Mr. Hodgeson, he used to come out here once and awhile when I was at University and I phoned him up one day as I was desperate to get home after not being at home for weeks and I said, "Mr. Hodgeson, I hear

you're going to Athabasca," and I said, "I wonder if I could miss a class...miss some classes and come with you and get a ride." "Well," he said, "It wouldn't be ethical for me to tell you to miss a class but yes, I am going and you may get a ride."

ABD: And he was likely coming up here because they used to come up here for weekends.

VK: Yes. Quite a bit. Yes. I believe that's probably what happened. Alright, we need to get...we need to have you tell us a little bit about the school here in Athabasca. Your furnishings. How did things change in the few years now from say Fairhaven and coming into town? Did you find a difference? A little more modernized, a little more...?

ABD: No, not a bit more.

VK: It wasn't?

ABD: No, no. It was still just, very primitive. The other school was in....the other four rooms were in the Brick School and we were over there, and we had nothing but a heater, one of those Brown heaters, and we had to do all the firing. Mr....the janitor would bring the coal and the wood and leave it there, and we would have to keep the fires going.

VK: My goodness. How did you manage? All dressed up nicely with your dress and having to shovel the coal in? You managed.

ABD: You just had to do it. Just take gloves and take the coal in, you know, big chunks of coal.

VK: I see. Who would have brought...what arrangements...how did they make arrangements for coal and wood?

ABD: Well, there was a drayman in town and he brought all the coal and wood.

VK: And who was he? Do you recall the name?

ABD: Mr. Bisby. Do you remember him?

VK: No.

ABD: Mr. Bisby.

VK: You don't remember how much they would have gotten paid for some of this work?

ABD: For the janitor work?

VK: For the janitor, yes.

ABD: Well, he would have the whole school. I suppose he might be getting \$50 - \$60 a month. If he was getting that. He got a free house.

VK: So that was....

ABD: So he wouldn't....maybe not get that much.

VK: Oh. Because I remember when I was going to Big Coulee, when I was a teenager, we took on janitor and we got a whole \$5 a month.

ABD: Yes. That's what the teacher got. Five dollars a month. If the teacher did the janitor work she got \$5 a month.

VK: That sounds familiar.

ABD: But with him...that was for one room so I suppose...they maybe got \$35-40. Something like that I think.

VK: Well. You didn't have any running water here did you? You had running water in the school?

ABD: Oh yes, running water in the school.

VK: And...but still no indoor toilets of course.

ABD: And then finally they built a...when the school got...they started bringing...they built more rooms on the far side. And then they built six toilets for the girls. Do you remember that? With the stove.

VK: I don't remember a stove.

ABD: There was a stove in it to keep you warm.

VK: Was there?

ABD: And the boys had the same.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: But you remember that.

VK: I remember the outdoor toilets, yes. Because when I was going to high school there was some.

ABD: Those were pretty fancy. See, before we just had one.

VK: Right. My goodness. Well, these were all town children now that you've got in Athabasca?

ABD: They were all town children at first.

VK: At first. Right. Before...

ABD: And then they started bussing them in.

VK: Right. Did you notice a difference between pupils in the country, the farm children, as opposed to those in town?

ABD: Well not with small children. I only had...I only had three and four.

VK: Oh yes.

ABD: Phyllis had grades one and two and I had three and four, and they were...no...they weren't.

VK: They weren't advanced more, you wouldn't say?

ABD: Well I think maybe they would speak out a little better.

VK: A little bolder.

ABD: A little, but not much.

VK: Not much, eh?

ABD: No there wasn't much difference. Now they accepted the... when the children from the country started being bussed in, they were really accepted.

VK: Were they?

ABD: At the high school I think there was differences made.

VK: Yes, I've heard that.

ABD: But not, not with the little ones.

VK: Is that right? When...when did you...when was the bussing? When did that start?

ABD: They started the bussing in... well the first would be in about in '40...'43.

VK: Sounds about right, yes.

ABD: West Athabasca and Baptiste Lake.

VK: That's where they started then?

ABD: That's where they started.

VK: Now what...the reason for that would be what?

ABD: There were no teachers. War had broken out.

VK: Oh right. Oh sure. Shortage of teachers.

ABD: And we were frozen to our jobs. The only way we could get out of teaching was to go down East and take a job in the munitions factories.

VK: Really? Did you sign a contract or something that stated to?

ABD: They just told us we were frozen to the job.

VK: And that was that?

ABD: And when I came into town I took a salary of \$750.

VK: You had a cut in wages!

ABD: Cut my salary.

VK: But were you paid a little more often.

ABD: Paid every, yes, paid every month.

VK: Every month at that point.

ABD: Well, but by the time I left Fairhaven I was paid.

VK: Oh, I see.

ABD: So that, I mean there was not...there wasn't much advantage.

VK: No, no.

ABD: I had to think a long time before I gave up Fairhaven to come to town.

VK: Did you really?

ABD: I really did.

VK: That's interesting. I was going to ask you, going back to Fairhaven, did you ever go out to the families? Did you spend some time, say visiting, or having supper, or...?

ABD: Well, not too...No because I was coming home. But those people, my place was just like Grand Central Station on a Saturday, because these women would come in. It was an opportunity for them to come to town. They would come to my place and visit.

VK: The farm ladies?

ABD: The farm ladies.

VK: Really?

ABD: And I loved them. We'd serve coffee and.....

VK: I suppose they brought the cream and butter....

ABD: Well they didn't need to bring the cream, butter and eggs because we'd got them.

VK: Of course, because your husband had...right...of course.

ABD: We had that.

VK: Of course, you had plenty of that. But would they bring you other things, do you recall?

ABD: Oh yes. Bring you rhubarb.

VK: Oh certainly.

ABD: Amelia used to bring me rhubarb. Yes, they'd bring things.

INTERVIEW WITH ALICE B. DONAHUE
by Vi Kowalchuk
November 25, 1987

V.K.: I don't know how I could forget.

A.B.D.: You couldn't forget that first year could you?

V.K.: You couldn't forget that first year, no.

A.B.D.: The first day I came home from school, I told my - my uncle was there visiting - and I said, "Well, I've earned my thousand dollars." You know my mother and dad kind of looked at one another. I guess they thought "oh know don't tell me she's gonna quit."

I had the most wonderful principal. . .

V.K.: Did you? That means a lot.

A.B.D.: He was from Arkansas.

V.K.: An American? Isn't that great? Where did all these teachers come - do you remember the teachers then, you mentioned some of the schools. Where did they all come from? Were they more or less Alberta people, do you remember?

A.B.D.: They were mostly Alberta teachers.

V.K.: But when the war broke out and there was a shortage of teachers, there was a very short course wasn't there? There is probably still a . . .

A.B.D.: Amelia took it.

V.K.: And Amelia was one of those that took it.

A.B.D.: And Mr. - your uncle was very upset with Mr. Hodgeson because he wanted Amelia - they had to have a teacher - and Amelia was of course, she, she was excellent, and he got her to go take this short course and Mr. Kavalok didn't want her to, he wanted her to take the full course and I always thought that it was very unjust you know when they said that these teachers couldn't teach after a certain period. They got out and taught and helped out, and I don't think that that was a bit fair.

V.K. Not a bit fair. Yes, this is right.

A.B.D.: It was very unjust.

V.K.: That was a very short course, what did she see three months, six weeks?

A.B.D.: Oh no, she was longer than that. It had to be three months.

V.K.: Maybe three months. I remember talking to her. . .

A.B.D.: I remember that they went and got out at Christmas.

V.K.: Did they?

A.B.D.: But, you see, they had a school waiting for her.

V.K.: Yes, she told me, I remember her saying that there was.

A.B.D.: And she was great.

V.K.: She was eh? Well then she must have got married and then . . . because she didn't teach after that really did she?

A.B.D.: Well no, because she was going to come back one time we were short of teachers and I asked her and she wrote in and they said that, you know, that your certificate expired. Well it should never have expired. They should have said you must take a course or something. But they didn't, they just said it expired.

V.K.: Right. And yet they encouraged you people to take - go back to summer school you were saying.

A.B.D.: Oh, well, I went back and took Primary Specialists Certificate.

V.K.: I see.

A.B.D.: But they didn't pay us to go back to summer school, they didn't pay us for the certificate.

V.K.: But your salary didn't increase?

A.B.D.: Oh no. And there was no salary schedule.

V.K.: Nothing?

A.B.D.: And I joined A.T.A. for twenty-five cents.

V.K.: I was just going to ask you about A.T.A.

A.B.D.: And I tramped all over with Mr. Barnett, all down around New Norway and Camrose.

V.K.: Barnett House?

A.B.D.: Yes.

V.K.: That's the Barnett.

A.B.D.: Yes, that's the Barnett. And I went with him when he was holding these meetings and getting these teachers.

V.K.: Teachers organized.

A.B.D.: We went to Bashaw and Mirror, and around.

V.K.: For heavens sakes.

A.B.D.: I was to tell them, you see, how great it was to join for twenty-five cents.

V.K.: What were you told that you would get in return? What did the A.T.A., then, do for you?

A.B.D.: Well . . . We had no protection at all.

V.K.: None.

A.B.D.: Most of the contracts were one year at a time. And if they didn't want to extend your contract, you weren't fired they just didn't extend it. Every year you just went through, I don't know what, wondering if . . .

V.K.: Real worry, eh?

A.B.D.: Yes. So we were promised that. And we were promised that possibly we'd get better wages.

V.K. Which of course, they came through in the end.

A.B.D.: Yes, it all . . .

V.K.: It all worked out. That's interesting.

A.B.D.: Well, we had faith.

V.K.: Yes. Well, teaching is a different ballgame, as you said, in those days.

A.B.D.: I never remember the day that, you know, you get up in the morning and say, "Oh no, not another day." I couldn't wait until I got to school.

V.K.: But you know, teachers were, I don't know, they were looked upon differently ~~than~~ we do - ~~than~~ they are today.

A.B.D.: Yes, that's right.

V.K.: You were real leaders in the community and expected to do so much.

A.B.D.: You were expected a lot of you, and you expected to give a lot.

V.K.: Right, you felt it was part of your role; isn't that right?

A.B.D.: That's right.

V.K.: It just seemed. . .

A.B.D.: When Helen was . . . When I was doing this yesterday when she was here, you know, she was helping me.

V.K.: Helen?

A.B.D.: Hodgeson. She said, "Tell them that your first day of school you were more excited than the kids." She was here one time when school was gonna start, and she said, "Alice, you couldn't wait 'til you got over to that school."

V.K.: My goodness.

A.B.D.: I just walked out of the house and left them all here.

V.K.: That's why you taught for 42 years, Mrs. Donahue.

A.B.D.: Forty-six years.

V.K.: Pardon me! Was it 46?

A.B.D.: Forty-six.

V.K.: Oh, my goodness.

A.B.D.: Isn't that something?

V.K.: My goodness. Yes that is. Well . . . Gilda, do you have anything you want to say at this point.

G.: Where were we?

A.B.D.: What page are we on now?

G.: I was just thinking about . . . Yes. Once they started bussing in students, then you would have had a bit more of a mixture of nationalities here, wouldn't you have?

A.B.D.: Yes.

G.: Do you remember some of the . . .

A.B.D.: But the children had all learned English.

G.: They had at that time, so there was really no problem.

A.B.D.: There was never a problem.

G.: Would you have had any Negro, any black people from Amber Valley?

A.B.D.: In Amber Valley?

G.: Yes.

A.B.D.: In Amber Valley, I had the Williams came in here to school. Now there's a Williams boy going to . . .

G.: Edwin Parr right now. Possibly - probably some relation.

A.B.D.: Well, there's Raymond Williams.

G.: At the Elementary.

A.B.D.: No the little boy is there. And I was up there subbing one day, and I looked at that boy. I thought, "I'm sure I know him." So I looked in the Register and sure enough it was Williams and I went down and I said, "Are you Ronald's or Donald's boy?" He looked at me, he couldn't believe that I was asking that question.

G.: Is that right?

A.B.D.: And I had taught them both - they were twins.

G.: Well, and . . .

A.B.D.: And the Meltons. The Williams and the Meltons were really the only coloured people we had.

G.: Is that right? Okay, now how about any Indian, any Metis children?

A.B.D.: Oh, lots of them.

G.: Oh there were, eh? Would some of them have come from Baptiste Lake?

A.B.D.: I didn't have any from there.

G.: Just right in the town here?

A.B.D.: Right in town, all the Coutouriers, and the Whites.

G.: Whites? Is that right? I don't remember . . . I remember the White girl.

A.B.D.: The White girl, Latresa White - the girl with the red hair.

G.: You mean the one that married Soluck?

A.B.D.: She was a very, very bright child. She was the product of an American going through here.

G.: I was going to say. Yes. That's an interesting point. That's right.

A.B.D.: But the Grade one teachers mostly spent, when the children came, was trying to get those kids into school.

G.: Right and keep them there.

A.B.D.: They'd hide in the hedge and you know, and they'd get out at recess and when the bell would ring they wouldn't come back in.

G.: They were very shy.

A.B.D.: Very shy.

G.: Didn't mix, probably, with the . . .

A.B.D.: Not too well.

G.: Of course, that's been a problem right through in our school.

A.B.D.: Well, they're no better today than they were fifty years ago. So we haven't done a thing for them.

G.: Exactly.

A.B.D.: As a matter of fact, I think we've made it worse for them.

G.: Made it worse, right.

V.K.: So attendance generally, though, from the other students was pretty good, no doubt.

A.B.D.: Oh, the attendance was good. Oh, a hundred per cent attendance, yes. And, of course, when I came into town it was the war time and the children were busy collecting money mailed for Britain and that's when we started our Red Cross.

V.K.: Yes, that just reminded me - Red Cross. Do tell us about that because you've been so active in Red Cross.

A.B.D.: Well, we had our first Red Cross tea in about 1945 and we kept it up until 1967; every year.

G.: That tea, I remember, was a really big thing.

A.B.D.: And we always sent the money. In the wartime we sent it to the war effort and then after the war was over we sent it to the Crippled Children's Hospital in Calgary.

G.: Right.

A.B.D.: And I'm sure that I still have all the accounts and the financial reports.

G.: And you probably did other things too, during that year. Did you do any knitting, quilting. . .

A.B.D.: No, we didn't do any of that.

V.K.: That came later than because I remember working on. . .

A.B.D.: I think the country, they did, the country children. But you see, I'd end up with Grade three and four.

V.K.: Oh, right.

A.B.D.: And in the wartime we had three, four, and five; and I had forty six pupils. Peter Hodgeson was in one of them.

G.: Three, four, and five; that was a large class.

V.K.: But again, I guess the shortage of teachers, eh?

A.B.D.: Right, we couldn't get teachers.

G.: Who was your principal?

A.B.D.: My principal? Oh, at first Mr. Walker, Dr. Walker.

G.: Dr. Walker, eh?

A.B.D.: He was there at first and then we had Mr. Nordan.

G.: Oh yes, now I remember Mr. Nordan.

A.B.D.: And after Mr. Nordan came Mr. Brim^macombe.

G.: Yes, now he taught me in high school all day. Jim Brim^macombe.

V.K.: Discipline, no discipline problems here that you can think of at that time?

A.B.D.: No, I don't remember any teachers having any problems with discipline.

V.K.: Really?

A.B.D.: Really with discipline.

V.K.: Why was that?

A.B.D.: Well, I have no idea.

G.: Do you think things were different at home?

A.B.D.: Oh yes, I imagine that they knew they had to behave.

V.K.: You're right Mrs. Donahue. I remember my father saying, "If you get a whipping at school you'll get twice as much at home." Mind you, I don't know, there was a great deal of respect for teachers in those days.

A.B.D.: Oh a lot.

V.K.: I mean there was a lot.

A.B.D.: They might think a lot and all that but . . . no.

V.K.: You'd never get a sassy student or questioning you?

A.B.D.: No, children wouldn't. Never. Never even a question.

V.K.: So you can't tell us what you did to discipline the bad little guys.

A.B.D.: Well the bad little guys, you know, the ones that were talking too much you put them up close to your desk.

V.K.: Most of them, eh? Right.

A.B.D.: I remember one time, I must have had just Grade three and four at that time. Jamie ~~fit~~^{weight} was in my room, and a mouse ran across the floor - and I am scared to death of mice - and I jumped up on the desk and all the kids jumped up on their desks. Can you imagine? And Jamie's trying to kill this mouse. Well, it ran out and into the other room. So, we got rid of the mouse. But you know, I mean, you do something like that but if you did that with kids today, you know, you'd never get them settled down.

V.K.: No, no.

A.B.D.: They were all so scared and they said, "Were you really scared Mrs. Donahue?" I said, "Sure I was scared."

V.K.: What kinds of things would you have done for special little holidays like Thanksgiving?

A.B.D.: Oh, Thanksgiving. Well, we always made Thanksgiving baskets and turkeys, made menus. Enterprise had come in, Enterprise came in 1935.

V.K.: We have to hear about that Enterprise system because that was quite something, that was a unique way of teaching.

A.B.D.: Combining, integrating all those subjects.

V.K.: Right, right.

A.B.D.: We still had math and reading and spelling but all the others were integrated in Enterprise.

V.K.: In 1935, eh?

A.B.D.: That was the first. I went to summer school and took a special course on Enterprise.

V.K.: Lots of artistic work and a lot of dioramas and all kinds of . . . I just remember doing so many things.

A.B.D.: We studied Japan - we had a Japanese tea and invited the parents in. I remember Mr. Hodgeson saying to me, he said, "You know we're going to take," there was another teacher Miss Fellows, I guess, "I'm going to take you out to a school this Enterprise is just coming out the door." You open the door and he said Enterprise just balls out. It was Mary, Mary Lucas. She was terrific when it came to Enterprise.

V.K.: Well, you really could do a lot with it.

A.B.D.: Oh and she did. And she was a young teacher.

V.K.: Yes, she would have been then, that's right.

A.B.D.: The rest of us were old. We'd been at it for a few years.

V.K.: Hallowe'en, what would you have done for Hallowe'en, for example, at school.

A.B.D.: We had a Hallowe'en party and everybody dressed up.

V.K.: Did you give prizes?

A.B.D.: Came to school, got a prize, we had them ducking for apples. They went out in the afternoon as soon as school was out and they went out around the town and then they were all finished by five or six o'clock.

V.K.: Sure. When you, you put on concerts here in Athabasca too. And of course then it was a combined effort, I suppose, of all the teachers and the classes.

A.B.D.: All the classes, yes.

V.K.: And Valentines Day was an awful special day.

A.B.D.: Valentine and Valentine box. We made Valentines.

V.K.: Right. Students used to exchange Valentines at that time. It was fun, I suppose, because some of them, I remember, wouldn't put names and you had to guess who gave it to you.

A.B.D.: And then they'd stand right there and say, "Did you get mine, did you get mine?" They'd all be so eager.

V.K.: Eager, that's right. Easter, well, of course, that was a great thing.

A.B.D.: Easter, of course, we had the Easter story.

V.K.: Did you? What do you mean by the Easter story?

A.B.D.: We told the whole story.

V.K.: Did you? That reminds me, I was going to ask you . . .

A.B.D.: And the same with Christmas, we did a Christmas book every year. It was the Christmas story. And they brought Christmas cards, you know, and pictures of the baby Jesus.

V.K.: See that reminded me - when you talked about saluting the flag and singing O Canada - did you not read a passage from the Bible everyday?

A.B.D.: No.

V.K.: You didn't?

A.B.D.: At one time we did but then, I don't know why we quit. We put the Bibles in the school. I think it was sort of that we just let it go. But we always said the Lord's Prayer.

V.K.: And nobody ever, like today, of course, people are excused from singing O Canada and they are . . .

A.B.D.: Well, I had a little Jewish girl.

V.K.: Did you?

A.B.D.: They were very close friends of ours - we played Bridge with them all the time. But I didn't say, you know, I tried to be quite careful about what you said about Christmas when she was in my room.

V.K.: Yes, right.

A.B.D.: And you didn't - I told them you know that if they didn't - Jehovah Witnesses wouldn't say the Lord's Prayer and I said, "Well, it doesn't matter whether you say it, I'm not asking you to say it but I am asking you to stand up and bow your head."

V.K.: I see.

A.B.D.: You don't have to say anything, and nobody objected.

V.K.: Everybody was comfortable with that. One thing we missed was report cards going back even to Fairhaven. What type of report card?

A.B.D.: We had a report card sent out by the department.

V.K.: Department of Education.

A.B.D.: And then when I came into town we devised our own with our principal.

V.K.: But then over the years they were modified and changed.

A.B.D.: Yes, and changed so you wouldn't recognize them now.

V.K.: But the gradings, now did you have letter gradings or percentages?

A.B.D.: Letter.

V.K.: Letter gradings.

A.B.D.: Mostly. In the younger grades.

V.K.: What types of things would have been on the report cards? It seems to me there were a lot of satisfactory or unsatisfactory for some certain things.

A.B.D.: Yes. At one time it was satisfactory or unsatisfactory.

V.K.: For, even for subjects?

A.B.D.: For every subject.

V.K.: Really. So that just meant a pass or a fail and that was it.

A.B.D.: Not always. If it was unsatisfactory the first month it improved, usually.

V.K.: Parents knew about it and . . . How often did report cards go out then?

A.B.D.: About every two months.

V.K.: So the parents really kept in touch with what was going on.

A.B.D.: As a matter of fact, they used to go out once a month.

V.K.: Really.

A.B.D.: In my first six years of teaching.

V.K.: Oh my goodness, that was a lot of work for the teacher.

A.B.D.: But it paid off.

V.K.: It paid off that there was communication there. No parent-teacher interviews, of course. Did you ever have to call a parent in?

A.B.D.: No never.

V.K.: Never. Nothing ever serious enough to warrant it?

A.B.D.: We had parent-teacher visitations over here one time. They tried that one year, it was something.

V.K.: Tell us about it.

A.B.D.: Well, the parents could come in . . .

V.K.: During the class day - during the day.

A.B.D.: During the class while you were teaching and, of course, the kids, well you can imagine if your child all she was doing was watching Mom, what success could you have teaching?

V.K.: It wasn't a typical day?

A.B.D.: And then they would move, they were coming and going all the time - it was just a continuous stream of parents going from one room to the other. And the teachers just objected, you know, we said if they'll come in and sit down through a whole lesson. But they didn't want to stay through a lesson.

V.K.: You cut that out then the following year.

A.B.D.: We cut that out, it didn't work too well.

V.K.: I should write this down, I think of something then I forget what I want to ask you. Talking about report cards. I know what I was going to ask you. When it came to deciding whether students passed or failed at the end of the year because there were failures in those days, was that a pretty big decision? Did you ever talk to the parents or you made that decision yourself?

A.B.D.: I think the parent was pretty well aware of it from the report cards. No the child just passed or failed, that's all. If he didn't know his work he failed.

V.K.: How did - I don't know if they made such a big deal of it in those days? Was there, do you think, the trauma for the student if it failed?

A.B.D.: Well, the kid felt badly. I remember I failed Ronny Garten and Allen Fix and, who was the other child? Hebert. I remember they cried and, of course, I cried to because, you know, you felt so badly but you had no choice they didn't know the work and . . .

V.K.: That was the thing, they didn't know the work and they didn't go on.

A.B.D.: I remember we used to love to get Mrs. Ashley's pupils. We knew that they knew their work. They never passed from one grade to another without knowing their work.

V.K.: Interesting.

A.B.D.: Which was good.

V.K.: Right, now we're going to ask you - we were talking about the role of the teacher - what part did you play in the social life of the district.

A.B.D.: Well, in town, in Fairhaven, by entertaining the families on weekends. On a Saturday afternoon. And, of course, when they came into town then, of course, you were in everything.

G.: What were some of the kinds of things you would have taken part in?

A.B.D.: Curling, skiing, dances, lodge, IODE, Bridge . . .

V.K.: Box socials.

A.B.D.: We never had any box socials.

V.K.: You didn't? Isn't that interesting because box socials were a big thing in the countries. You never ever . . .

A.B.D.: And I never ever had a box social when I was teaching at home.

V.K.: Is that right?

A.B.D.: I never had box socials.

V.K.: And that was a real big thing. Isn't that funny?

A.B.D.: When I was growing up box socials were the big thing and so were Oyster suppers to raise money for the church. Can you imagine going and eating oysters?

V.K.: That's the first time I've heard of that - oyster supper.

A.B.D.: I guess they must have had other stuff to eat. I wouldn't be very old.

V.K.: Where would they have . . .

A.B.D.: In the homes.

V.K.: Oh, yes. But they would have had to import them, where would they have been able to get them?

A.B.D.: I have no idea where the oysters came from. I don't suppose I thought. I never thought about it 'till now, Vi.

V.K.: But in these activities I suppose you had to take a leading role in presidency or secretary. Well, you've been secretary for so many things you probably can't remember them all.

A.B.D.: Well, I know I was . . . and you collected. We collected for Red Cross, we collected for Italian, you remember, all those different countries we were collecting for. We collected for the Italians when they were our allies. We collected for the British but I remember that because somebody said, "Well, next thing you'll be collecting for the Germans."

V.K.: Really.

A.B.D.: That was yesterday. So you were expected to take part, you know. When you were asked to do the collecting you just did it.

V.K.: Right. Sports was a big thing too, in those days. Like, mostly track and field, I guess. Ballgames, track and field, I guess in some track and field like you said . . .

A.B.D.: For the track and field meets but that was about all. They just practiced a little bit before that. But everybody curled in Athabasca. That was the only thing that there was to do.

V.K.: You're talking about adults, of course?

A.B.D.: And kids.

V.K.: Did they?

A.B.D.: The young - about Grade seven, eight, nine.

V.K.: Did they?

A.B.D.: Well, a lot of them had to curl to make enough to make up teams.

V.K.: For goodness sakes. Of course, that's right, we had the old rink downtown here. When would that have been built?

A.B.D.: In about 1950?

V.K.: Was it? I thought it might have been earlier.

A.B.D.: No. We had the rink right down here.

V.K.: Where?

A.B.D.: Down where the liquor store; over where Tomboy is. The skating rink and the curling rink was there. I just had to run down the hill.

V.K.: Well, for heaven's sakes.

A.B.D.: And it was like that until '45, it may have been the very late '40s that they built the one over there.

V.K.: And then the new one was finally built in 1960s. 1966 maybe.

A.B.D.: I never curled after they went up the hill.

V.K.: You didn't? How many sheets of ice did they have down here, for example? One, two?

A.B.D.: Two.

V.K.: Because they had what over here? Three?

A.B.D.: We had three sheets of ice over there. Didn't we?

G.: Yes, I think so.

V.K.: Music festivals, did you have any of those in Athabasca?

A.B.D.: Our first music festival was in 1945 I think. When Mr. Hodgeson was here. He organized the first one.

V.K.: Did he?

A.B.D.: But, mind you, it wasn't the same kind of festival that they have now.

V.K.: What, how was that different?

A.B.D.: Well, that was - you brought your Enterprise books - it was kind of a fair and music festival. There was music and choral speaking . . .

V.K.: I remember what it was now. And the books and examples of writing and notebooks, artwork.

A.B.D.: I remember we did a book on Athabasca the Beautiful, and it was all pictures. A picturebook.

V.K.: Oh gosh. And I suppose that you have it today.

A.B.D.: Yes. I tore some of the pictures out for over here for the book that they did.

V.K.: Well, that would have been, was that like a school exhibition? We called them festivals, I remember that.

A.B.D.: School festivals. And they were very popular. Westlock had one, all the larger centres had them. Camrose had them when I was still teaching but Camrose was a festival like the festival is now and we brought them in. Little Norwegian kids.

V.K.: But schools, the outlying schools came in.

A.B.D.: Oh yes.

V.K.: And schools competed with Athabasca, or classes competed with one another as far as choral speaking or the singing or whatever.

A.B.D.: Yes, it was for the county.

V.K.: It was for the whole school division, I guess, at that time.

A.B.D.: Anybody could come in and take part.

V.K.: Because the county, what do you remember, the county came in in 19 . . .

A.B.D.: I've got all of that written down.

V.K.: You've got it all down, eh?

A.B.D.: I've got it all down somewhere.

V.K.: Was it in the '50s?

A.B.D.: It would be in the '50s.

V.K.: Because . . . Mind you they started centralizing . . . you know, like Colinton was centralized to a point because they had several rooms and, of course, the students around there came in. And then finally when that closed. Of course, Laihiville had three rooms or something and . . .

A.B.D.: Well, Jean was Phyllis's principal and Phyllis taught out there.

V.K.: And then finally when those schools closed, of course, then the really big centres like Athabasca, Boyle, and so had . .

No box socials, isn't that . . . Picnics. Did you have any picnics in connection . . .

A.B.D.: Well, the last day of school we used to go down - take them down to the swimming hole.

V.K.: The famous swimming hole.

A.B.D.: The famous swimming hole. Well, ours, yes. The swimming hole was where we met.

V.K.: And you weren't afraid?

A.B.D.: Oh, we were. We finally realized the danger. But I think it was only because of some parent. You know there were more people coming in but the children that lived here, they knew all about the swimming holes and they never went near the river, never.

V.K.: They didn't, eh?

A.B.D.: Those kids were never down at the river.

V.K.: Is that right?

A.B.D.: You know, they were taught to not go near the river and they knew that that was the swimming hole and we wouldn't have any problem at all. But we finally quit. And then we got cars and took them out to the lake different times. But that didn't work because you can't look after 70 little children.

V.K.: You would have had busses or who took them out? Just families?

A.B.D.: Just families. And the track meets, we used to have to just take the kids. One time would be at Rochester and one time would be at Athabasca, one time would be at Boyle.

V.K.: Colinton?

A.B.D.: I could never remember Colinton. Colinton came up here I think. And then we all; those were the centres where they were held. And when it was held in Rochester we all had to go down there.

V.K.: And in those days for track meets I remember the certificates that they used to give if you . . . Well, you had to earn so many points, of course.

A.B.D.: Of course, you got some certificates.

V.K.: I got lots of them. First was three points. You used to sign a lot of those certificates, Mrs. Donahue. What, you must have been on that . . .

A.B.D.: I was selected secretary. I was secretary of the A.T.A. for a long time too.

V.K.: Right, that's another thing we should talk about - the A.T.A., in a little bit. Yes, because I'm sure you signed some of those certificates, I should look them up. But three points for first, two for second, and one for third. And if you got nine points for the highest you'd get a piece of . . .

A.B.D.: You could only compete in so many things and I think it was forty points the most that you could get. Now that would be, what did I say? Five, was it five, three, and two?

V.K.: Perhaps.

A.B.D.: Five, three, and two I think. A five and four would be eight.

V.K.: It wasn't at first because, I think, it was five, three, and two at the first two.

A.B.D.: Only the total was smaller too then.

V.K.: Right, because I remember that if I got nine points and it was, you know, it wasn't that hard to. If you got three firsts there you were and that was enough for a certificate.

A.B.D.: That's right. Well, you could only enter in three things.

V.K.: But then you could only enter in three things plus the relay.

A.B.D.: That's right. Yes, plus the relay. Isn't that where you got all those rules and regulations?

V.K.: Oh, you had all kinds of rules and regulations. But that track meet, I remember that so well. That was so much fun. I mean, that was one of the highlites of the year.

A.B.D.: Well, it was. It was the highlite for the teacher too.

V.K.: I suppose.

A.B.D.: Oh, yes because you see your kids winning. . .

V.K.: And socialize with others and the kids all came in. Oh heavens, yes. Yes that was something.

A.B.D.: It really was a great day.

V.K.: It was. It was really a great day. And then at what point . . . I don't recall, for example, like Big Coulee, would the schools then total up their, all the ribbons . . .

A.B.D.: Some school could get . . .

V.K.: And one of the schools could get . . .

A.B.D.: The . . .

V.K.: Was it a shield?

A.B.D.: Plaque, no shield.

V.K.: Shield, that was it. And they would put - what did they put on that shield? They would have a little, a little plaque . . .

A.B.D.: That you had won it for the first year.

V.K.: Did they put the number of points?

A.B.D.: I don't think they put the number of points up but they put the name of the school.

V.K.: And the year.

A.B.D.: Yes.

V.K.: Yes, that's probably what it was. Well, that was a big honor. A big honor.

A.B.D.: I wonder where those plaques are now?

V.K.: I wonder.

A.B.D.: I've got a little silver cup that Mary Pelleck and I went to the garbage one day and they were burning this stuff and we each rescued a cup. There's nothing engraved on mine.

V.K. No. It was given to Samantha do you think?

A.B.D.: It was supposed to be. It was Mr. Brimacombe. He was going to clean out the office.

V.K.: What a shame, what a shame. There you are you see.

A.B.D.: There you are.

V.K.: That's what happens.

A.B.D.: I should say.

V.K.: You didn't know all about these track meets did you, Gilda.

G.: No.

V.K.: Oh yes, A.T.A. You were secretary for quite a few years.

A.B.D.: Yes, at the beginning.

V.K.: At the beginning, eh?

A.B.D.: Yes, and then Laura Scott took over for me. Jim Appleby was president and I was secretary.

V.K.: How many years, do you remember?

A.B.D.: Oh, three or four years.

V.K.: Oh, is that right?

A.B.D.: Then Jim and I would have to go to these family negotiating committee meetings. We went down to Colinton and I remember it was held up . . . No, it was held up at the school. And you had to pay your own, well, get your own way down there. And Jim used to drive an old Ford with no . . . Anyway, you could see the snow on the . . . You know, there was no board.

V.K.: No running board.

A.B.D.: No. I mean board inside the car.

V.K.: Okay, lets stop there Gilda.

V.K.: We were talking about your work with the A.T.A. , I guess. And then I was going to ask you about conventions.

A.B.D.: The first convention, it was held in Athabasca.

V.K.: Really?

A.B.D.: That first teacher's convention.

V.K.: Now what area?

A.B.D.: Parker's Hall. All the teachers around here. We used to have our A.T.A. meetings in the different homes, Mrs. Falkner would have it and . . .

AN INTERVIEW WITH ALICE BLANCHE DONAHUE

Continued

VK: And we're continuing....

ABD: Yes, November the 25th, 1987.

VK: Yes. We're continuing in an interview with Mrs. Donahue. All right. You were saying you have the three....

ABD: Programs.

VK: Programs. From the....All right. What were those dates again?

ABD: The first one is...is from the Camrose Ins....No. The first one is from the Stettler Inspectorate in 1929. November of 1929. And the next one is from the Camrose Inspectorate in November 1930 and I have another one now from the Edmonton Convention, the North-Eastern Alberta Convention, 1968.

VK: So you were...that's in Athabasca already. All right. Can you tell us a little bit about the program then that would have...they would have had? The format of...of the convention in those days. Say, maybe we could talk about the first ones before you came here and then maybe the kinds of conventions they had once you were teaching in Athabasca and maybe how they changed over the years.

ABD: Well. The way they were set up before was that they asked...they had speakers come in. And it was just..just a gathering, a two day gathering and you would have the meetings in the morning and the afternoon and then a banquet at night. And then the next day the meetings in the morning and the afternoon.

VK: You said you had guest speakers. Did you have a main guest speaker like we do it today? You don't.

ABD: No. We didn't. We had guest speakers in different areas.

VK: Different areas.

ABD: Now, one would be on Mental and Vocational tests. Another was on Logic: Education and Methods. Creative Education in the Old World. Setting the Stage for Health Education. Were some of the topics. Learning and Its Direction. Educational Philosophy and Sociology. Applied Physical Training. And then in the...on the second day they usually took into the different divisions, sections, you know. You would have the high school section, the senior section and the primary section. And we'd have a meeting and an

election of officers for that. And then in the afternoon the trustees would also have their meeting. So with all these...you're given a choice of all these different speakers that you could go to listen to. So that was all that...and of course it was a...you had to attend.

VK: You had to attend. That's true.

ABD: No skipping out.

VK: No skipping then.

ABD: No. And then they were in small towns so that....

VK: That's true. There was the difference. You used to meet in a small town. You...so how many schools would...the surrounding schools would come into a more centralized area then, eh?

ABD: Yes. The Stettler Inspectorate. It was inspectorates.

VK: Inspectorates...that would be...?

ABD: Whatever...

VK: Like our division then was or something....?

ABD: Yes, but much smaller than our division.

VK: Much smaller.

ABD: Yes. But there were all kinds of country schools.

VK: Yes.

ABD: You see that..they had to have these...

VK: That's true. All these..the one room school

ABD: They had to have these conventions in the larger centres but not too far apart because these teachers had to get in.

VK: That's true, that's true. They were all the one room school teachers. That's right.

ABD: So that....and then, of course, there was the program, a banquet program and there was a guest speaker at the banquet. And Betty....in this one in Stettler, Betty Goddard, The Reverend J. G. Goddard, lived in the community, singing. Which was Betty's father.

VK: Betty?....Falconer?

ABD: Falconer.

VK: Oh, of course, that was her maiden name, wasn't it?

ABD: Yes, that's right. So that....and then the next one we have was in Camrose and of course, it was very much the same. The Camrose Inspectorate. And the topics were almost exactly the same. Although they were divided in Junior and Senior sections a little better than what they were here. This was very, very general.

VK: So how many years later now is this one?

ABD: This would be....well, this is '30. Not very many years later.

VK: Not very many years was it?

ABD: '29. One year later.

VK: Just one year later.

ABD: That's not very good. I've got them all. All my.... And this, this.... we have our registration. And we always had a Red Cross representative.

VK: Why was that?

ABD: Well, she always came and spoke.

VK: Was it part...part of the school....?

ABD: Part of the school program. And we always had a representative from the Teachers' Alliance.

VK: Which was...? Explain that.

ABD: ATA

VK: Oh, that was the ATA then.

ABD: Teachers' Alliance, yes.

VK: Teachers' Alliance.

ABD: And then they, they would have one, we'll say, Picture Study in the Primary Grades. Now this Mrs. Cole would give a demonstration if you were interested in primary picture study, you would take that. Arithmetic in the Junior and Public School Grades; and that was Dr. LaZerte. Of course that was the biggest class. And then, of course, there was the seniors which I wasn't interested, in seniors. And then

the Thursday evening was the social and then on Friday was the demonstration... A Friday Afternoon in a Rural School. And the teacher brought her pupils in and she conducted school as she would in a rural school.

VK: You know, I think when I first started teaching there was one year that I remember that...

ABD: I did. I demonstrated an afternoon here in Athabasca.

VK: Oh here. See that was before my time. When I first started teaching it was in Edmonton and Miss Elliot actually had some students and she was demonstrating the...

ABD: Well mine was....I just demonstrated two lessons.

VK: Two lessons. Well.

ABD: That was Mr. Hodgeson that had that.

VK: Mr. Hodgeson.

ABD: And then in the afternoon there was just reports, you know, from general meetings. And that was the...

VK: Did you have a local...Well now let's see, now....it would have been a...a sort of a local... We used to have a local ATA meeting on the Friday. Usually the convention was held Thursday and Friday, and then Friday maybe an hour or two were...was reserved for sort of a more central, a local, ATA meeting. It seemed to me. I suppose every local had their own. So was that something...?

ABD: Yes, but then you see...

VK: It wouldn't have been quite the same though because...

ABD: Now in New Norway we had a little local. Because Dr., you know, Mr. Barnett came down and formed one but it was hard for those girls to get in and it would usually be a Saturday afternoon. And then where do you hold it? Because you're boarding and it would always have to be in a boarding place.

VK: Right. There was really no....

ABD: So it wasn't...it wasn't always that easy.

VK: Alright. Now this one is...? Oh, go ahead.

ABD: In...No, what were you going to say now?

VK: NO. It's OK. I was going to ask you something before and I should write it down because I'm going to ...I forget them. Oh, I know, when you were talking about getting lessons. That reminded me, it seems to me that somewhere along the line you got, from the County or from the School Division...were you not, what do they call them?...It's a very special teacher...you got a gold watch or something for a....

ABD: Oh yes.

VK: What was the title?

ABD: What was that called? Outstanding Teacher Award.

VK: What year did you get your Outstanding Teacher Award.

ABD: Gee. I'd have to go look at my....

VK: Now what year was that...did you see...Did you find it?

ABD: 1959

VK: 1959

ABD: But when I first came here our conventions were held in Athabasca and they were held in Parker's Hall and at that time we had only, just guest speakers come. It was a two day affair and we'd have representatives from the ATA and a representative from the Red Cross. And we'd have demonstrations. Now, different teachers would...you know, if she's a good art teacher, or anything, she would demonstrate art. So these were demonstrations.

VK: Oh sure.

ABD: And then Mr. Hodgeson was our Superintendent and then he started Music Festivals, besides. So we always had to have a part of the meeting set aside for music festivals.

VK: To give other teachers ideas just how to go about...

ABD: Yes, to give other teachers ideas. And then, as I say, they would demonstrate.

G: How would the demonstration be held?

ABD: They would bring the pupils in.

G: So this is another...?

VK: Just like a typical...like a little classroom.

ABD: See I just brought...my pupils came down to the Hall and I just taught the lesson just as if I were teaching it.

VK: Sure. Did you choose the lesson or...?

ABD: It was a lesson in math.

VK: In math. So you choose the lesson yourself. They didn't...they just said that we would like something in math.

ABD: Math, a demonstration in math, yes.

G: So it was primarily the teacher in Athabasca who would demonstrate?

ABD: What?

G: Was it primarily the teachers in Athabasca who would demonstrate?

ABD: Oh no. No, no. Because....No, we had demonstration....demonstrating teachers from all around.

G: And they would all bring in their own students?

ABD: Well, if they...you know, they wouldn't bring maybe all of them, but they would bring a number anyway. And then some...

G: Were there ever any discipline problems? I should imagine there would be.

VK: Not likely.

ABD: What?

VK: Discipline...there was no discipline problems during that...

ABD: Oh, you didn't have any discipline problems.

VK: No, no.

ABD: That was an unheard of thing.

VK: And especially in a lesson like that with all the adults sitting and watching you, they....I'm sure.

ABD: They were just doing their best, I'm telling you.

VK: That's true. That's true. Did you have to do any coaching beforehand or?

ABD: Well, you know, that's dangerous.

VK: Yes, that's true.

ABD: To coach, you see, if you do too much coaching they'll tell.

VK: Sure. I guess that's true. It wouldn't be a natural type...

ABD: It wouldn't be a natural. I mean they were coached on, on the...

VK: The behaviour part, I suppose, and everything else, but...

ABD: Yes, and... They were supposed to know their tables and their add...you know, they could add and subtract and...

VK: Sure. Alright. This next program was.....?

ABD: This next program was later on, in 1968.

VK: That's quite a period.

ABD: Now, this was the North-Eastern, but this time we had graduated to the city of Edmonton.

VK: That's right.

ABD: And we had many locals taking part. Which was Athabasca, Bonneville, Lac La Biche and all these areas.

VK: Yes.

ABD: And there were representatives from each local took part in putting together the program. They had a Program Committee and a Convention Committee and a hostess....host and hostess. And then we had...now here was the Supervisor of Industrial Arts, The Teacher in the Process of Education. That was one topic. And then we had a speaker from...we brought in, imported speakers.

VK: Oh yes.

ABD: You know, they were....they came in from far away.

VK: The States, and...yes.

ABD: And they always had a theme, you know, the theme. Which we didn't have before.

VK: That's true.

ABD: And it's growing, isn't it?

VK: Yes, yes.

ABD: And it's very...it's not as close and not as personal.

VK: No it isn't.

ABD: You know, now you can skip. You don't need to go at all.

VK: Well, it's....the numbers are larger and I think people tend to maybe, take off and not....and do other things. But....

ABD: Where we don't dare.

VK: No. In those days did you then...well by then I'm sure because I know I was teaching...but do you remember the first conventions in Edmonton? Once you went to Edmonton, did you have a session where you'd get together in small groups with teachers, suppose you were a reading teacher, or language arts, perhaps even math, you'd be with math teachers, and you would discuss problems and how to overcome them and maybe exchange lesson, unit plans and that sort of thing? Do you remember when that...?

ABD: There was some of that.

VK: There was for a while and I know then they got away...

ABD: But then it just sort of....

VK: Right out. I don't know why. I thought that was one of the most helpful things.

ABD: Well I think it was too. I think it was one of the highlights.

VK: And I never knew why they ever discarded it. I thought it was good.

ABD: I guess they thought it was a waste of time. Well they brought all these high-powered speakers in from the States and they have to...you know, had to let them speak.

VK: Yes. But you know, that was so much theory and so much...so many times those people were out of the classroom for so long I think they kind of lost touch. We really wanted something more concrete.

ABD: Concrete. There's no use in talking about something in a book.

VK: No.

ABD: You've got children. When you get forty children in front of you, you're not worried about a book and what they're supposed to do. Ten per cent are supposed to do one thing and ten per cent another. No percentage there.

VK: What other things did you say were there?

ABD: Well, that was...well, they had this...a speaker on Secondary Education and the topic The Role of the Teacher Tomorrow. Mr. MacGregor was chairman of that group.

VK: Our Bob MacGregor?

ABD: Yes. Bob MacGregor and then Industrial Arts was....

VK: A big thing then.

ABD: A big thing then. Then we had the general meeting. Well, there were gr....we had group...they broke in group....

VK: Smaller groups.

ABD: Group discussion. Group One with the elementary and then a recorder Group Two; Junior High and Group Three; Administrators and Supervisors.

VK: Oh, they would have their own.

ABD: So they had that for awhile. But otherwise, that was...that was the meetings. And then, of course, the afternoon was for...one part was for the whole group and then the other part was just for Athabasca. They'd have their own little meeting.

VK: Yes...you used to collect...it seems to me that you....well, you...were you secretary of the Athabasca local?

ABD: Yes. Way back in 19-....Before Laura Scott.

VK: Yes. Because I know Laura Scott was....

ABD: 1938 I guess. Jim Appleby was president and I was secretary.

VK: And it seems to me that when we went to Edmonton for our teachers' convention you used to....that first morning you'd be collecting. We had to pay our fees then. Now, of course, it's different. They take it right out of our paycheques. We never pay. But then we did.

ABD: Oh yes. Right.

VK: So you used to have to collect, you and, well I suppose the executive was at the desk there, weren't you?

ABD: Yes, likely.

VK: Yes, yes, I remember.

ABD: Gee, that's a long time ago.

VK: That's a long time ago. OK. Anything else before we leave education, Gilda?

ABD: Did I say in 1959 I received the Outstanding Teacher Award?

VK: Yes, 1959, Outstanding Teacher Award, that's right. Do you want Mrs. Donahue to tell us a little bit about how that came about or who started that? Was there a Superintendent here that...or was it..?

ABD: Mr. Parr started it.

VK: Oh, Mr. Parr.

ABD: Mr. Parr.

VK: He was a school trus.....

ABD: And he was...and he felt that...Of course, in those days, you know, teachers had been here for a long time, and I think a lot of it had to do with the length of time you were here. It got down to...it was pretty bad.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: They finally abolished it.

VK: I knew they abolished it but I didn't ^{know} why.

ABD: But. Yes, and I think Laura Scott won the first one and I won the second one. And then there was the third and a fourth, and about the fifth one....

VK: I know Jean Golonka got one.

ABD: Yes. It got down then to where...

VK: It was difficult to chose, eh?

ABD: It was difficult to chose. It's wasn't hard because Laura had been here the longest in the County, before when it was just a small, well, it was just a small inspectorate. She was up at Smith.

VK: Oh.

ABD: And then I was the next longest so that wasn't...now that was part of it but mind you...

VK: That wasn't all of it. That's right. You had to be pretty outstanding.

ABD: But then, that gave you.... at least you got one choice. You know, at least...what would, should I say.....you wouldn't say one choice. You picked out the one with the longest.

VK: That was one cri...one of the criteria.

ABD: That was the criteria, that's right. And then you could take two or three of them together which had had maybe a little less, or a little more...a little less. And then go from there.

VK: I wonder if they took into consideration...well, I don't know about extracurricular activities or...but your role in the community.

ABD: In the community. Yes I think that had a lot to do with it.

VK: I think probably so too, yes. That was kind of nice.

ABD: It was part of it.

VK: Alright. So, Gilda, shall we go onto something else then? Is there anything else about teaching that we want to....?

G: I'm trying to think.

VK: You have here down; contrasts between your life, Mrs. Donahue, and those of other teachers. And I suppose there would have been quite a...quite a contrast to you living in town for example and working here. Well you told us a little about Fairhaven. But, if you were a teacher out in the country, say like Laura, or Richmond Park, or whatever, as compared to your life here in Athabasca, what would you say about...?

ABD: I think that those people in the country, they had a good life too. Especially if they we...

VK: They had a bonus. I remember that.

ABD: Yes. That's right. They had a bonus.

VK: What did they call that bonus? That was a...oh, let's see, there was a name for that.

ABD: Not a wilderness bonus.

VK: Something like that. It was...if you lived quite a distance...

G: Isolation bonus?

VK: Isolation! That's what it was. Thank you, Gilda.

ABD: An Isolation Bonus.

VK: Yes and I don't...Do you remember how much that isolation bonus would have been?

ABD: Well, it wasn't that...of course, when you think of salaries ...\$60 a month. The isolation bonus....

VK: Would it have been \$10. It seems to me I have \$10 in mind. Not surely \$10 a month.

ABD: Oh no, no. Oh, a month. That would bring it up to. It would perhaps be \$200-300.

VK: A year?

ABD: A year, yes. And Smith still had an isolation bonus up until just a few years ago.

VK: For quite a long time.

ABD: But I think that they had ...they had a good life. You know, there was a community spirit, in....especially in some of the districts.

VK: Definitely, definitely there was.

ABD: Some of them, they were really busy all of the time.

VK: That's right. The teacher was involved in a great part of that.

ABD: In so many things. And then in town, of course, you get involved in things other than school too.

VK: Other than school too. Maybe...I don't know. Maybe slightly different kind of activities. I guess the country teacher had to put on the concerts and...

ABD: Oh yes.

VK: First of all she'd have to put on a dance in the fall to raise money for the concert.

ABD: That's right. And those were great!

VK: Those were great times, that's right.

ABD: Big deals.

VK: Big deals is right. Yes, they were.

ABD: And then she had to buy all the gifts for the Christmas. She may have had a committee to help her. Buy the gifts for the children and the treats and then put on the Christmas concert.

VK: Put on the Christmas concert for that whole community and usually that was the school...

ABD: And the teachers were usually judged by your Christmas concert.

VK: Yes. It was a big thing. The community looked so forward to that, didn't they?

ABD: Is really was.

VK: Yes, I remember taking part in it. The school was often not big enough. They were just jammed to the very back.

ABD: Oh, I know. Weren't they? Just packed in.

VK: It was a good time, that's for certain. But really, I guess, you can't really point anything...pin down anything different. Say, terms...

ABD: Well, in the earlier days, they had it almost as good as what...well, I mean, we had a few more of the...you know, lights and water, and things like that.

VK: That's right. They would have had to do without those things.

ABD: Yes. They had to do without those things.

VK: Roads were bad. Sometimes impa...you know, you just couldn't...

ABD: Yes, sometimes they were impassable.

VK: But...

G: What was it like when people had to board and didn't really have a place of their own? Did that ever cause problems?

ABD: Board?

VK: Yes, with another family.

ABD: Well, if you boarded...if you boarded with another family you were at least sure of getting into town.

VK: Because they'd make....

ABD: Because they would bring you. But if you were a teacher living in a teacherage and nobody happened to go by the teacherage, you might sit there for two or three weeks.

VK: You certainly didn't have a car.

ABD: And...well, they didn't have cars, no. It was unheard of. This was...I'm talking about prewar.

VK: Oh yes.

ABD: And during the war.

VK: Yes. I was just looking at Clover and Wild Strawberries and I was looking at some of the ...two or three teachers we had at Big Coulee and the times they had and you're right. They would have been....but it seemed...I read a few...accounts I've read, teachers usually seemed to....I think somebody in the community must have suggested a family that they felt would....

ABD: Oh yes. There was always one that they would recommend.

VK: Recommend. That it would work out and....I imagine there were cases where there was some unhappiness and teachers had to leave.

ABD: Oh, I think so too...

VK: But that was rare.

ABD: But you know the teachers were...you were out there. They met you at the station and took you out and you had to make the best of it.

VK: That's true. There was no use complaining, either.

ABD: There was no use in complaining, you know, because...no, you had to make the best of it. I know some of those girls used to come in and stay all night with me and then go, take the bus and go out.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: And I remember us bringing ~~us~~ one man from Richmond Park, some teacher. He'd walked into town.

VK: That wasn't Kostash?

ABD: No. A teacher at Richmond Park.

VK: It wasn't a Kostash....

ABD: You're thinking about superintendents. I'm talking about teachers.

VK: Oh. Kostash was a superintendent. Right, right. Oh sure.

ABD: He was a great, big English or Irish fellow.

VK: Oh. I wonder if your not thinking of....oh, he taught at Laura though, I think....

ABD: Oh, was it?

VK: He might have been at Richmond Park. Oh, what was his name? I can't think of it Mrs. Donahue.

ABD: Well, I remember us bringing him...he went into Edmonton with us because we were going down to visit at my home.

VK: Harrington?

ABD: Harrington! And we found out....you know, he found out that we were going and then we picked him up in Edmonton and brought him back and this would be about 10 o'clock at night and he had to walk from there to Laura. Now, we drove out...would we cross the river?...no, it must have been the summertime. The ferry, and we took him as far as you could...well, without getting stuck.

VK: Get through. Yes.

ABD: Cause I don't just remember what time of year it was. And then this fellow walked the rest of the way.

VK: My goodness.

ABD: I never felt so sorry for anyone.

VK: For sure. He stayed ^{at} for Laura for seven years if I remember right.

ABD: He did.

VK: Because I taught there. He was there seven years and then I think Don Galowich was there for a year or two and then I came and...or did Don teach there...no, I think he did teach a year. But I no one thing, those kids at Laura had never gone to a track meet and I introduced them to a track meets. I remember that was quite something.

ABD: It that right? Now that was another thing we got together on. We got together on track meets.

VK: Oh. Did you?

ABD: But do you know that the teachers, the teachers had to dig the pits and do all the work. We never got one bit of help.

VK: I think you had mentioned that.

ABD: Nor never got a cent to help with that.

VK: What did you know about Mr. Findley? When he taught with you at Fairhaven.

ABD: No, I didn't know anything about him.

VK: You didn't, eh? He taught with you at Fairhaven though.

ABD: No, no. Not with me.

VK: He didn't? Oh, maybe you...Oh, it says in this book...it said that he taught the high school, or the...

ABD: No. Alfred Gorman taught the high school.

VK: Yes, but Alfred Gorman was there as well. It think it was...

ABD: No. Mr. Findley was there in the early days. He just happened to be one teacher that Hjordis Overholt told me about.

VK: Oh. I see. Ok. First...oh yes, it says first teacher, W. Findley. Returned from service overseas, 1914-18, later taught in Athabasca. He taught here?

ABD: Yes. He taught here in Athabasca.

VK: For how long did he teach here?

ABD: A year I think.

VK: And then did he...oh, he went to Calgary.

ABD: Then he went to Calgary to teach.

VK: Oh sure, oh yes. OK. "Became two-room school in 1938 with Alfred Gorman, Principal, and Alice B. Donahue junior room teacher." That was it, yes. Alright. I had that mixed up... OK. Anything else on schools, Gilda?

G: I can't think of anything but I bet if we just kept talking for a little while....

VK: Is there anything you want to....you think we....

ABD: About school.

VK: I'm just trying to think....

ABD: I guess we...I told you about the crossing on the river.

VK: Yes, I think you did.

ABD: We've had that--the crossing of the river.

VK: With the ferry and the cage.

ABD: And the Christmas concerts.

VK: Concerts, right. I think we did talk about some of the special days like St. Valentines Day and valentines and so on and so we mentioned that.

ABD: Yes, we always had parties for that.

VK: Yes, yes, right.

ABD: And hallowe'en. We always had big hallowe'en parties. We didn't...it wasn't like here. Here they have them downtown.

VK: Yes. That's right. You had mentioned that. My mind's gone blank now. I can't think of anything about school. Well if we think about something, we can always come back to it, eh? Alright. So now Gilda, you want to?

G: I was kind of interested in the more frivolous aspects of life.

ABD: Frivolous.

G: Things like hairdressers and where you got your...

ABD: The what?

G: Who did your hair for you and where you got your clothes? That kind of thing.

ABD: Oh. Well we... well, now. We got our clothes mostly in Edmonton.

VK: I was thinking so.

ABD: And we got our hair done every...every Friday night. We got our hair done.

VK: For the weekend.

ABD: For the weekend.

VK: For socializing on the weekend.

ABD: For socializing on the weekend. And we had many, you know, different hairdressers. Gee, Kay Shaw was one of the early ones. Jean Taylor was an early one.

VK: Oh yes, yes.

ABD: Those are the earliest.

VK: They would be, eh?

ABD: And the store used to close. The stores all closed on Thursday afternoon and they were really strict. But if you wanted your hair done on a Thursday, something was coming up on Friday that you had to, or Thursday night, you had to sneak in the back door and they would.....You would phone them and tell them that you were coming down and they'd let you in.

VK: So that was a business like any other in town and it had to be closed.

ABD: That's right. It had to be closed.

VK: Alright. What would you pay for a shampoo and set in those days?

ABD: A shampoo and set, it seems to me, was 75 cents. I'm sure it was 75 cents.

VK: Now, we'd better get the year, because David always says "let's get the years." Now lets see. This would be in the early 1940's.

ABD: Oh yes, in the '30s..'40s.

VK: Late '30s, early '40s. It was 75 cents.

ABD: I suppose it would be 50 cents first.

VK: Do you recall when it was 50 cents?

ABD: Well, I don't remember. It wasn't very expensive. I remember the 75.

VK: What would a perm cost?

ABD: Well, I didn't get perms. But perms were about \$15.

VK: They were? Well that's quite a lot in comparison to the set now.

G: But they were also more complicated.

VK: More complicated in those days.

ABD: Oh yes! Yes, they....yes, right. The big machines.

VK: The big machines. Tell us about that. I just vaguely remember.

ABD: Well, I never had a perm, you know, but...

VK: It was like a milking machine almost.

ABD: Yes. Like a milking machine. They shoved these things down on the end and then they'd put heat through it.

VK: How long a session did you have...how long did you have to sit there?

ABD: Well, I think it depended. They took a test curl.

VK: At least an hour?

ABD: Oh, I imagine it would be an hour.

VK: It seems to me it was quite time, quite time consuming. My mother used to...

ABD: So that's where we, you know, did our shopping, mostly in Edmonton.

VK: In Edmonton.

ABD: Because there were no stores here that...

VK: Clothing stores really.

ABD: Not really.

VK: Would you also go in for seasonal shopping like in winter for your winter clothes, boots, and things?

ABD: Well, winter. You could buy winter clothes here better.

VK: Oh, you could.

ABD: You know, they were....yes. They had a better variety, or had a good variety of what you'd need.

VK: But if you wanted a special dress or something you would have to....

ABD: Special dress.

VK: Go into the city?

ABD: Now, Mrs. Semaka had a dress shop.

VK: Yes, tell us about that.

ABD: Now she came in in about 1940. Now, during the time that she was here we didn't have to go to Edmonton. I remember her having to get even...you know, long dresses for us for graduation.

VK: Oh my.

ABD: That was quite the thing. Because they were almost nonexistent.

VK: Nonexistent. Did...she did some sewing too, did she not?

ABD: Yes, she did sewing.

VK: You could give her an order and she would sew for you as well.

ABD: She would sew for you.

VK: What would a dress cost now? A nice dress that you had ordered, a long dress cost?

ABD: Oh. I'm...I should remember that one....

VK: I bet you have a favorite one.

ABD: I bet it would be about \$10, as I remember. No, back when I was in New Norway, you paid a lot more.

VK: Did you?

ABD: You see, this was wartime.

VK: Oh, I see.

ABD: About \$10 because I remember the Goetsch girl, I loaned it to her for graduation the year after.

VK: Oh my goodness. Is that....

ABD: It was white.

VK: Oh it was. That's true. The girls in those days...I remember even I did, all the girls wore white for graduation. The times have certainly changed, haven't they?

ABD: And they all wore gloves.

VK: Gloves. Yes, you had to have gloves.

ABD: And the graduation, the first graduation, was down in thethe Immigration Hall.

VK: The first graduation was there?

ABD: The first graduation was in Immigration Hall.

VK: Year? What year?

ABD: What year? 19...let's see...we should have that date... 1940? No, '42?

VK: You mean that was the first?

ABD: I don't think there were any before.

VK: There weren't? Why would that be? Nobody ever...there were high school classes.

ABD: Well, most of them went away for grade 12.

VK: Oh, I see. Alright. Where would they have gone?

ABD: To Edmonton.

VK: Oh. I didn't know that.

ABD: If they wanted to take grade 12 they had to go to Edmonton. I don't know why there was no graduation. It was just, somebody got the bright idea.

VK: To...Oh, to have it. Oh. For goodness sakes. So there were students graduating prior to that. But just....you just didn't have a graduation.

ABD: Well I guess they just, either they quit or...I don't know. There was no graduation.

VK: No, no class. Do you remember how big a class there would have been at that time?

ABD: Oh, there was only about 10 or 12.

VK: Oh, I would imagine it would be quite small. You wouldn't remember any of the students that graduated by any chance?

ABD: I've got all that stuff...

VK: Isn't that something. I would just be so intrigued to know who graduated.

ABD: Well. Dr. Wright was the guest speaker.

VK: Was he?

ABD: Zona Nelson, I think was one. Would Barry Leahy be another?

VK: It could have been. He was around that age.

ABD: There was a Byrtus. There was a Byrtus.

VK: Byrtus. There might have been a B..one of the Byrtus's. Yes.

ABD: That graduated.

VK: That was in the f...it might have been even a....I can't remember when Amelia or Annie Kavoluk graduated...or anybody else north of...Gorman, maybe...one of the Gormans, I suppose.

ABD: No. I don't remember any of them.

VK: Can't remember a Gorman, eh? Ok. Let's get back to the frivolous stuff. Anything shocking? Hairdos?

G: When did the first mail-order place open?

VK: Oh. We didn't have a place for mail-order here. We had catalogues but they came....you couldn't...we didn't have like a Simpson's Sears here, did we?

ABD: Oh no.

VK: No.

ABD: We had Eaton's and Simpson's catalogues. You could order through the catalogue.

VK: That's true. Tell us a little about that. That was fun.

ABD: Well. That's where a lot of the gifts were bought for the schools I think, was the Eaton's and the Bay...Eaton's and the Bay and Simpson's Sears. That would be called Simpsons. Robert Simpson's.

VK: That's right. It wasn't Sears. It was Simpson's.

ABD: Yes. They gave you a real good discount. I think for schools it was almost 50%.

VK: Oh yes. Now...Eatons, was that based in Winnipeg?

ABD: Yes. Winnipeg.

VK: And Simpsons?

ABD: Was Regina.

VK: Regina. That was it. Regina. Alright.

ABD: Then of course, the Bay was always....they didn't have a catalogue.

VK: That's....no, the Bay didn't, did they?

ABD: But people used to go in and shop in there.

VK: That's right. I think Mrs. Byrtus was talking about going to the Bay shopping. So...how long would...you could order. They always had a form at the back of the catalogue. Fill that in with all....

ABD: Only about a week.

VK: About a week. And it would come in through the post office.

ABD: Came in through the post office.

G: It was considerably more efficient, wasn't it?

ABD: Well yes. More efficient than what it is now. Well no, of course, you go down here and order. But with the mail.

VK: A week. That's good. I didn't realize it was just the week. I thought it was more.

ABD: Well, I don't think it would be much more than a week.

VK: Week, week and a half at the most, I suppose. That was good.

ABD: And of course the mail was sorted every day.

VK: Right.

ABD: So that...

VK: I'm wondering...I know, I remember my parents ordering from the catalogue all the time, almost. Because we just didn't...

ABD: Well it was about the only thing that....the only way you could...

VK: Now. You people in town maybe got into the city a little more often but I know country people didn't and that was one...that was really a main source of shopping. We just didn't...

ABD: And you see they...if it didn't fit, they would take it right back. There was no problem there.

VK: Yes. That was the thing about it, wasn't it. They were very good that way. Well, they're up and coming still, so they must have done well with the...with the pioneers, didn't they?

ABD: Oh, I'm sure they did.

VK: I mean, goodness me.

ABD: And the pioneers did well by them because, you know, they...

VK: That's right. It was a real service, wasn't it?

ABD: And they had everything, you know, hardware, tires for your car, when you had a car.

VK: Right down to the chains. To rubber boots for children.

ABD: Furniture.

VK: Snowsuits, dresses, everything. That's right. They just had everything. I don't know if there was jewellery, I guess even.

ABD: Oh yes, jewellery, oh yes. You bet. Also jewellery. There was everything. Anything that you could name was in...was in the Eaton's catalogue.

G: About how often would you get to Edmonton to do your shopping?

ABD: Well. I don't suppose tha...we didn't go that often. You know, we could go any day. You know, because the roads were, you know, relatively good and then there was the bus. See I think the bus...

VK: Yes, we've always had bus service.

ABD: Five dollars return, you could go down to Edmonton and back. Now you had to get on the bus at 6 o'clock in the morning and you got back out here...

VK: Quite late at night.

ABD: Quite late at night.

VK: Where was the first bus depot? And what year would that first...?

ABD: Down by the hotel.

VK: Oh sure. The hotel, eh?

ABD: And the first bus driver that...were two fellows from Colinton started it.

VK: The names? Do you remember the names?

ABD: Collins.

VK: Collins. Any relation to the Collins that are there now?

ABD: Yes. Those are the Collins.

VK: Those are the Collins. I see.

ABD: Yes. And they started the bus. It was called thewhat was it called? And then Greyhound finally took it over.

VK: Greyhound finally took over and then we had a new...

ABD: We had a bus depot built...

VK: We had a bus depot there, of course, that burnt down. It burnt....who...was it...who ran that?

ABD: Sept Poulton.

VK: Sept Poulton.

ABD: Ran....yes.

VK: That was a shame. When was that new one built? I remember I was going to....high school or university....must have been...

ABD: Were you?

VK: Yes. I'm sure.

ABD: In the '50s.

VK: In the late '50s. It was in the late '40s or early '50s.

ABD: Must have been in the '50s.

VK: '50s?

ABD: Yes.

VK: But it...it did burn down and they never did rebuild that, did they?

ABD: No. No they didn't. They just...

VK: No. That was a shame. Then from there where did we go? Back to the hotel?

ABD: Well didn't....yes, we went back to the hotel and then a garage took it over. Gulf.

VK: Gulf Garage? Is that right...who...

ABD: Johnny Stychin.

VK: Oh yes. Of course.

ABD: And of course, now it's a way up at the...

VK: Yes, at the Inn. That's right. For quite a few years it was at Johnny Stychin's Gulf Service station. That's right.

G: What year would it be that the fare was \$5 to Edmonton? I'm just thinking of teachers getting \$60 a month and then \$5 to Edmonton....

ABD: Well, that would be all through the, through the war years. I don't know when it went up to...

VK: I'm trying to think what it is....

ABD: That was \$5 return.

VK: I'm trying to think what I paid when I went to University in the '50s. It seems to me like about 7, or something.

ABD: It may have been up by that time. But it used to be \$5.

VK: And that was return, as you say.

ABD: We'd go down....we'd usually go down to conventions.

VK: By bus, eh?

ABD: By bus at first, and then, then I started driving. And then I'd take them all down.

VK: That's right. You always had a car load, didn't you?

ABD: Always had a car load, yes. I should say.

G: How often were the conventions held? Was it?

ABD: Once a year.

VK: And of course, you had them in the fall at that time. In October, wasn't it?

ABD: When you...

VK: Then of course, they changed to February not that long ago really.

ABD: Not that long, no.

VK: Maybe in the last...

ABD: But you see, even in September and October, you...we had some pretty bad roads to come back on.

VK: That's right, that's right. Yes

ABD: It wasn't always....it was great going in. Really great.

VK: Well the roads weren't that good...when the new highway finally made things a lot better and that was built in what? 1951?

ABD: The bridge was built in '52.

VK: That would have maybe came before that.

ABD: I remember when they cut the ribbon, Laura Scott and I took our classes down to see them cut the ribbon.

VK: So that must have been.....wasn't that before the bridge opening?

ABD: I think so.

VK: Yes it was. So maybe....how many years before that?

ABD: So it would be in '50, maybe.

VK: 1950. Sounds about right. It would probably be in the Echos.

ABD: See, they'd want dates and we should have these.

VK: Yes. That's something we could find in the Echos. It would be there. Yes. That....and then of course, that was one thing to have the road built, but then it wasn't paved either, was it?

ABD: No. It wasn't paved.

VK: When did...when did it get...when was it paved? See, I should even remember that. But I just don't right now. Anyway.

ABD: I remember when they built the road from the ...the valley road up on top and I still used that valley road for the longest time.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: It always seemed to be so picturesque and so nice.

VK: Yes. That's a beautiful drive. It's...it is....that's for sure.

ABD: Now, what other frivolous?

VK: What other frivolous things are you thinking about, Gilda?

G: I'm not really sure. You said you would have your hair done for parties. What were the parties like?

ABD: Oh. Well, there'd be curling parties, you know, from curling or there would be....well, the teachers had parties.

VK: Staff parties.

ABD: Staff parties. Yes.

VK: Would you have parties in connection with Mr. Donahue's work? Would you have a party for his...for the staff?

ABD: Oh for the staff, yes, staff parties.

VK: Where would you hold those?

ABD: Well, mostly here in the house.

VK: They'd be at your house. Is that right?

ABD: Well, you see, our house was...you know, was bigger. Those two....the living room was large and so we'd have the staff party here. And then the town parties.

VK: Oh yes. You must tell us after. Mr. Donahue was mayor for quite a number of years. That's right. You would have the Council, the Town Council.

ABD: Council parties, yes. Oh, and then there was Chamber of Commerce parties and Red Cross parties and....there just seemed to be parties galore.

VK: That's right. It was a very active, busy time.

ABD: And then we had the shows at Parkers Hall, theatre.

VK: Movie theatre, yes.

ABD: But you see, everybody curled in the winter time.

VK: Right. That was a popular....

ABD: That was very, very popular and everybody did it. You know, you just....

VK: We did take part in those things...Go ahead, Gilda.

G: I was just wondering, were you involved in Mr. Donahue's mayoralty campaign. And what kind of extra duties did it impose on you, to be the mayor's wife?

VK: The first year, the first year that Mr. Donahue was the mayor, which was his first term? What year?

ABD: Now, that I...Well, he was on the Council for years and years before that.

VK: Before that.

ABD: You see. Oh, you mean what...well not too much, but then there were the odd people you had to...the odd people. The different people you had to entertain. You know, because they were here to some meeting or something, but you'd just have to have them for a meal.

VK: Oh, you did have to put..

ABD: And that used to be a problem.

VK: Sure.

ABD: But then this was our dining room, you see.

VK: Oh was it? Oh, so you've had it changed considerably.

ABD: Well, the upstairs.....the bedrooms were all upstairs. And the two bedrooms were....the living room was 11 by 24 and then you crossed the hall here into this dining room and then into the kitchen. So, you know, you just....you got your meal ready and on the dining room table. You weren't crowded. That made a lot of difference.

VK: How many terms was Mr. Donahue mayor?

ABD: He was on his third when he had to retire.

VK: Retire right. For ill health. Yes. Third, yes. Well that's...

ABD: So that would be going on about the nine years.

VK: Nine years. Three year terms?

ABD: Three year...so it was...he finished a six year term and then maybe...a year and a half on the next one.

VK: So when did he....when was the....that last year. What was his last year that he was mayor? That would be 19--?

ABD: 64.

VK: 1964.

ABD: Let's see. I think I wrote that all down one time. I'll see if I can find out here. Mayor from '61 to '65. It was '65. That couldn't be. Is it a three year term, or two year?

VK: Well maybe it was a two year term then. I'm not up on politics. I know we came here in '65. I'm just trying to think what....

ABD: Yes. He resigned as mayor. He retired from the Creamery. Before, in '64.

VK: Oh did he? I see.

ABD: That's right.

VK: Have you got some other interesting tidbits there you can give us?

ABD: Well, you know, he came here in '37, to the Creamery and at that time they bought cream and made butter.

VK: Yes, they did.

ABD: And you could buy....just go at the office and buy your butter.

VK: Yes, you could and cheese too, at that time.

ABD: No, not cheese.

VK: Later on they had cheese.

ABD: No.

VK: They never made cheese.

ABD: We never made cheese.

VK: I think they must have brought it in.

ABD: You could bring it in. Yes, right.

VK: And of course, they graded eggs, eh?

ABD: In 1944 the Creamery expanded and it was rebuilt. Pasteurized cream, graded eggs, and bought poultry.

VK: Oh, you bought poultry as well?

ABD: Oh yes. Mr. Kavoluk was one of our chief...heads of our...they used to buy down in the old Lesard building. He was overseer.

VK: You mean the farm people would bring it in to the....?

ABD: And they would go out..and they would go out by trucks and bring...

VK: Oh, they'd go out and get them?

ABD: And bring the poultry in.

VK: Would it be...live poultry?

ABD: No, no. Dressed. Oh, it was all dressed poultry.

VK: So the farm people had that to do first.

ABD: And they would ship out many, many carloads of poultry in a year. In, in...at Christmas time.

VK: How did they....they had no refrigeration?

ABD: We had refrigerating cars...refrigerator cars came in.

VK: They did?

ABD: And they were all graded and put in there and sent to Montreal, I think.

VK: Is that right?

G: Do you remember the year that the refrigerator cars first came in?

ABD: That would be in '44....'43....'44.

VK: Well, I didn't know that. How much were chickens a pound?

ABD: Gee...I ...you'd pay about \$5-6 for a good turkey.

VK: For a turkey.

ABD: A good, big turkey.

VK: So chickens couldn't have been.....?

ABD: They wouldn't have been very much I don't think. Not like they are...they're quite expensive now days.

VK: Now, yes. That's what you pay for a chicken now. But in those days I suppose you could have bought a chicken for 75 cents or a dollar.

ABD: Oh yes, I'm sure. Seventy-five cents or a dollar.

VK: Eggs. How much were eggs a dozen?

ABD: They'd be about 30 cents I think.

VK: And cream?

ABD: A five-gallon can of cream brought them five dollars, and I was talking to Louis Paquette the other day, he had a cream can in his truck, and I said "Oh, do you ship cream?" and he said "Yes, we do." And it was a five-gallon can. They get \$49.50 for a five-gallon can of cream.

G: But we get a lot more than \$60 a month too.

ABD: Yes.

VK: But you know, you know, that money from eggs and cream, that was enough, I remember my mother often saying, that was enough to buy to weekly groceries. Quite often.

ABD: Well, that's what they lived on, wasn't it?

VK: That was what they lived on.

ABD: They didn't have to draw on the grain and the stock that was sold.

VK: That's right. They used that I suppose....the large amounts of money they used for, well, in the early days, to pay the farm loans off and to buy machinery and that sort of thing. Interesting. For goodness sakes. OK. Go ahead.

ABD: I remember Mrs. Crest used to come...bring her cream in...she'd bring a five-gallon cream can in...and then she'd come right around and get a \$5 advance.

VK: Would she?

ABD: Well so she could do her shopping before.....before it was graded and ready. And then she could go back home.

VK: I can still see all those cream cans piled on the south side of the creamery.

ABD: That's right.

VK: You would take your cream and your eggs, whatever, in there, and then you'd go shopping, and then just before you were going home the farm people would stop and pick up their cream cheques.

ABD: That's right, that's the way it was.

VK: OK. Go ahead Mrs. Donahue.

ABD: Well now... was it Cliff you were asking about?

VK: Yes, that's good.

ABD: Well Cliff, he was twenty-five years on the executive of the Chamber of Commerce and fifteen years as secretary-treasurer. He was made a life member of the Curling Club.

VK: Was he?

ABD: And he was a Charter member of the Golf Club. And he was on the executive of the Agricultural Society. And he was 25 years with the Civilian Committee of the Air Cadets. Now, Mr. Bayless, was the man.

VK: Was the man here as far as Air Cadets were concerned, that's right.

ABD: And then....then he sponsored the Dairy Club from 1959 on.

VK: That was specifically for the kids....?

ABD: It was just the Dairy Club, that's right.

VK: Would that be something like the start of 4H today, or what, would there be any connection?

ABD: It was 4H.

VK: It was 4H. Part of 4H.

ABD: I think it was called the 4H Dairy Club.

VK: Oh yes.

ABD: I think it was under...it was under the 4H then because the Ehrer boys were in it.

VK: Yes.

ABD: And then Cliff was on the Council for 17 years and then....I seem to...it wasn't 7 1/2 years. His first year as mayor must have been '61. So it must have been a two-year term.

VK: It must have been two years.

ABD: That's right. So, anyway, that's.....

VK: He was a busy man.

ABD: Yes.

VK: Very active.

ABD: Yes. Well, we were both so active that, you know. Well in curling time you'd just meet one another going out the door. He'd be going out with his broom and I'd be coming in with mine.

VK: You still found time to have this wonderful teaching career and Mr. Donahue ran the business. My goodness.

ABD: Yes.

VK: That's something, isn't it?

ABD: That's something. But there were no dull moments.

VK: I guess not.

ABD: You didn't have to worry about your....about your social life.

VK: Do you remember any funny incidents, or, or unusual incidents that happened as far as your social life is concerned?

ABD: Social life....gee, likely lots of it.

VK: Yes, if you could think back on them.

ABD: If I could just think back on some of these.

VK: Any famous or important people who came to Athabasca, do you remember?

ABD: Important people? In later years.

VK: For example?

ABD: Well, we had lots of Liberals coming.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: I've forgotten who.

VK: This was Liberal country?

ABD: It was Liberal country in those days....Mr. Falconer. And then there was the old-timers....they had card parties every two weeks in the Vets Hall.

VK: The old-timers?

ABD: We belonged to the old-timers. And then the Red Cross, we had a tea every year in the Vets Hall.

VK: For the general public.

ABD: For the general public, and that was the Junior Red Cross.

VK: Oh yes, because I remember you putting on teas at the Elementary School.

ABD: Well once they started selling liquor at the Vets', well, we had to move out.

VK: Oh, I see.

ABD: But that was the.....the Vets' Hall was the social centre.

VK: Now, when you say the Vets' Hall, you mean the old.....

ABD: The old Legion.

VK: That's what I thought you meant.

ABD: Yes.

VK: That was the centre of a lot of social activity.

ABD: That was the centre of...right at the top of the street.

VK: Yes.

ABD: Every tea was held there, everything was.

VK: Was it?

ABD: If you wanted to know what was going on, just walk up there. That's where you'd see it.

G: What's on that site now?

VK: Oh, the SAAN store.

G: The SAAN store.

VK: Unfortunately. I always liked that old building. I hated to see it go.

ABD: Oh yes. That's too bad. A bad mistake that they...

VK: I think so too. I really do. Just such a historic....You wouldn't know when that was built? That must have been built....?

ABD: The Legion? Oh, I did the article on the Legion.

VK: You did? OK. Then we have it some place. That was an old building, I know.

ABD: But it was built in '14, after '14, maybe '20. I can't think of any...any real...

VK: You can't think of anything humorous, eh?

ABD: No...really funny.

G: Was there any connection between the 4H and the school?

ABD: No. No, the 4H was....was separate.

VK: Mr. Godel, George Godel, who was the District Agriculturalist at that time...

ABD: At that time...

VK: Would probably had a lot to do with organizing 4H, eh?

ABD: Oh, yes.

VK: He was quite active in, in helping the farmers.

ABD: That's right. They'd....Cliff just sponsored it, you know.

VK: Yes.

ABD: But he organized it.

VK: He organized it.

ABD: Oh yes.

VK: He was quite good with a lot of.....

ABD: Oh, he was excellent!

VK: Wasn't he though.

ABD: I think he made this country.

VK: He made this country.

ABD: He really did.

VK: Because it was a farming area and I think he did so much to help the farmers. I know Mr. Shalapay talks highly of him.

ABD: Oh, well he did so much.

VK: He really did.

ABD: Well, ask Verna Guay.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: He just made it so pleasant for these young married people that they would stay on the farms.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: Well he tried to educated them, you know. To tell the men that you've got to make it comfortable for your wives....

VK: For your wives, so they'd be happy.

ABD: You know, and it was just.....yes.

VK: And he taught them different farming methods and introduced different things. Yes, he was good.

ABD: Yes. And he was always so good with, you know, there was no home economist, and he sort of did that work too.

VK: Is that right? He was here for quite a number of years, wasn't he?

ABD: Twenty-five years or something?

VK: I suppose we have that somewhere too, haven't we? He was here when you came?

ABD: No, no.

VK: He wasn't.

ABD: He came after.

VK: They came after you people did? Oh, I see.

ABD: Yes, he was a great person all right.

VK: He was. They were a very nice family, that's for sure. OK. Gilda, have you got some more ideas here? No, you've got community disasters. Can you think of anything drastic that happened during your time here.

ABD: Well, we had quite a number of fires.

VK: Fires.

ABD: Which were....you know, were pretty bad. But we had one fire when the Immigration Hall burned and two children were burned to death.

VK: That's right. I think we mentioned that didn't we? The Sales.

ABD: The Sales.

VK: The Sales children, yes. And then the odd, the store that we had.....

ABD: The explosion.

VK: The explosion. Landis's.....

ABD: Landis's Store, and then Silvers' over here. Mrs. Silvers, you remember, she was blown out of the house.

VK: Oh, I don't remember that. Tell us about that.

ABD: That was Easter time. I wasn't here but....that was in 1951.

VK: Oh, I don't remember that. I should, but I don't. Did she survive it?

ABD: She survived, yes.

VK: Did she? The house was demolished?

ABD: It was a leak.....Not completely.

VK: Did they return then? Did they fix it up and return to the house? They did, eh? 1951. Alright, any other things that you can remember?

ABD: Well, I think those are the two big disasters.

VK: Disasters, yes. There was a flood.....well, we've often had floods but nothing really that serious.

ABD: Nothing really disastrous, no.

VK: Nothing serious.

ABD: There was a child burned in a house just behind the Creamery.

VK: Was there?

ABD: That would be back in about 1939.

VK: Is that right? What was the family?

ABD: Well, I don't know the name, but I think they were related to the Overackers.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: Lived back there.

VK: Was there any kind of volunteer amateur fire department?

ABD: Oh yes, we had a fire department. Sure. They ran, pushed the carts ahead of them. Pulled them. We've always had a fire department.

VK: Volunteer fire department.

ABD: Always had a volunteer fire department.

VK: As long as you can remember being in here, eh? Yes.

ABD: For all the years I was here there was a volunteer...

VK: Yes. The ferry....what year did the ferry break away...or was it, did it happen twice? I seem to recall somebody saying something about it, it got away twice on them. But once I know for a fact it did get away and go down the river.

ABD: That's when Art LaPorte was on, wasn't it?

VK: Art Laporte was the ferry.....(end of tape, side A)

VK: Now, Mr. Laporte, Art Laporte Sr., was.....

ABD: Was on the ferry. And didn't it go down...it broke loose and went down around the bend.

VK: The bend...where the bridge is.

ABD: Yes.

VK: How did...how did that ever...how did they ever stop it?
Did it just...

ABD: Well, I think....I think it went into the shore.

VK: That's what I thought, yes.

ABD: I don't know how else they would...

VK: You don't remember anything else about that?

ABD: Well that didn't happen...I wasn't here.

VK: So that happened before 1937.

ABD: Yes.

VK: And it didn't get away on them again after...since you were here.

ABD: No, never. Just the cage.

VK: Just the cage.

ABD: That's right.

VK: OK.

G: What happened to the cage?

ABD: Well, you know, one wheel...I don't know, something went wrong and it did...sort of jerked and one wheel came off the cable so we were hanging just by one wheel and the ice coming down just churning.

VK: Chunks and chunks of it, eh?

ABD: You know, just within about that far was the bottom of the ferry...you know, the cage.

VK: How did they rescue you? Did they get a fellow to....

ABD: Yes, they got Bobby Miller. Bobby Miller was coming down the street from home, going to work at the....the livery barn, and he saw us and he ran and got the firemen's ladder

and put it up. Rosie was able to kind of crank so that we could kind of get it back a little bit. See we were afraid to do anything because we thought the other thing would give way.

VK: Yes. So there were a few tense moments, eh?

ABD: Oh yes. I should say.

VK: How many people were on it that time?

ABD: Just Rosie and me.

VK: Just the two of you.

ABD: The two of us.

VK: So Rosie LaPorte was the.....

ABD: Was running the cage.

VK: Running the cage then. And who was before him? Do you remember, was there anyone before him?

ABD: Well, Mr. Garton was there.

VK: Mr. Garton.

ABD: Mr. Garton and Rosie LaPorte.

VK: And after that it seemed to me Mr., not Porteous, but the other fellow out in Fairhaven,...

ABD: Davidson?

VK: No. Forgotten his name, there was another fellow.

ABD: Mr. Garton and Rosie LaPorte were running it when I....and Pitman, Mr. Pitman.

VK: Pitman, which Mr. Pitman would that be? Not from Colinton?

ABD: No, no. Pitman that used to be here at the....worked at the hospital.

VK: Oh, I see. OK. We have something here about immigration. I just found out that there was a Immigration Hall before we had the one down...

ABD: Yes.

VK: I was telling you. Do you remember? Oh, no. That's late '30s. There was some immigration, some people coming in I guess when you were here.

ABD: Yes, there was some. Rosie LaPorte lived over there and he kind of looked after it.

VK: He did.

ABD: He and Jean, and then there were the odd ones coming.

VK: Yes, it was at that point already.

ABD: Most of them were coming to relatives or friends.

VK: That's right. Yes.

ABD: So we didn't see too much.

VK: It wasn't used...it wasn't used that much, was it, as it was in early times.

ABD: No. If anybody came, they came to friends.

VK: Friends, yes.

G: Did you notice when you came, was the Depression still very serious here or was it beginning to ease up a bit?

ABD: Oh, it was pretty serious. Wasn't it? In '37.

VK: It was.

ABD: Yes, in '37.

VK: Well it was about...it was...the Depression was really earlier than that wasn't it?...about '33,

ABD: Well the Depression started in when...

VK: '33, '32-'33.

G: '29.

ABD: '29, but then of course we didn't feel it out west.

VK: Not until later I guess.

ABD: No. And it took longer to get up here too.

VK: Yes, it seems to me the parents were talking about '32, '33 in there. Yes, but by '37...

ABD: Well, by '37 it was really bad.

VK: It was, eh?

ABD: Well, I wouldn't say....nobody suffered because...most of them lived on a farm.

VK: A farm, that's right.

ABD: And they had lots to eat.

VK: That's true.

ABD: And then, you see, war broke out in '39....

VK: And rationing came in...

ABD: And the rationing came in. '37-'38. Those may have been the roughest years and yet I don't think anybody was hungry...they didn't have all the things maybe that they'd like to have, but...

VK: There was, probably the odd family that...that had a hard time of it but....I don't know if the Depression really had that much to do with it. It was just that they were having a hard time all along.

ABD: What happened was that a lot of people moved from Hanna and the dried out areas, and from Saskatchewan, and moved into this area. You know, like the Lisks, you know, that moved in there.

VK: I haven't heard that name, Lisk. Is that right?

ABD: Yes, lived on the bank there just by Fairhaven.

VK: I haven't heard the name.

ABD: And you see, they came in with nothing and so it was hard going.

VK: It was hard. It was hard. More so than the people that came earlier and were more settled.

ABD: Yes, they were settled.

VK: Yes. Although I do remember there are a few names north of the river there that we never....I've never known the people, we've just....the name stuck. They named them after

the early people who lived there I guess. I think. That's for sure. Well I think Tom Gorman was telling ...naming a few of them, and of course we never knew them. They were long gone before....

ABD: Before you came..

VK: They just gave up I guess. He said they just literally gave up and left.

ABD: Well I think that's..... a lot of them just moved in and moved out again and didn't...

VK: Maybe they stayed for a year or two and just found it very tough, that's right.

ABD: Who was the girl that married the McCullough boy?

VK: Don? Which McCullough? Don?

ABD: Don McCullough.

VK: Because....Don...

ABD: They lived down in the valley down...

VK: They did..

ABD: And who were those....

VK: But that was...that was the other way...going to LaPorte's Store, and there were some people called Thornes. Didn't...they weren't related were they? Thornes and McCulloughs, they weren't.

ABD: No, no.

VK: Don McCullough is....It seems to me I've talked to Don McCullough.....

ABD: Rosalie!

VK: Rosalie

ABD: Rosalind!

VK: Rosalind Thorne? Was she a Thorne?

ABD: No, no, she wasn't Thorne. I remember she came in and stayed with me and went....and took the bus that one morning.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: But they were people who.....displaced people from Edmonton came out and I think, tried to make a living. He was working in Edmonton and he got a farm out here or something for her to live on.

VK: Yes. Yes, it was nearer...on the way to the store.

ABD: But they didn't stay too long.

VK: Near Deren's. Near John Deren's. No they didn't stay long.

G: Was there still homesteading going on at that time?

ABD: Pardon?

G: Homesteading? Was it still possible to get a homestead at that time?

ABD: Yes. There were homesteads up on the north side of the ri....on this side of the river but way up in....beyond Grosmont. Those were....and those were typical homesteads I think.

VK: Yes.

ABD: But the homesteads now they were getting, are costly, aren't they?

VK: They are.

ABD: But at that time they weren't.

VK: They were...there was a lot of land north of Athabasca because that became populated la.....in later years, I guess, they're finding. So there were, there were, in fact, I guess there are still homesteads out there if you wanted to...you know, if you wanted to....people are still getting homesteads. But farther and farther, closer to Calling Lake now, that's, we're talking about now so.....Go ahead Gilda, you've got a thought. Garbage collection you have, and another municipal services. When did we get garbage.....did you have garbage pickup?

ABD: Sure.

VK: You did?

ABD: Well, I imagine, yes. I don't remember. And we had milk delivery.

VK: That was true. We had milk delivery. You had milk delivery when you came to Athabasca? In 1937-38?

ABD: Yes, that's right. And it wasn't pasteurized. It was unpasteurized milk brought in by Mr. Hagen.

VK: Walter Hagen?

ABD: Walter Hagen's father.

VK: Was that right? Was he the only supplier of milk to the town.

ABD: He was the only...well the Schultes before that.

VK: Oh.

ABD: Schultes delivered.

VK: Yes. And then....well, when did you say pasteurization came in? You don't remember. OK.

ABD: Didn't I say that?

VK: Maybe you did.

ABD: What did I say about pasteurization? Well, it must have been about somewhere in the '40s. I remember it was quite a....quite a deal.

VK: Quite a deal, eh? Somebody....somebody suddenly decided that...

ABD: Mr. Godel.

VK: Oh, Mr. Godel was instrumental in...

ABD: Yes, he was the one who pushed it. Suzanne got...

VK: TB

ABD: Whatever that was.....

VK: Oh, of course, tuberculosis.

ABD: Was that TB?

VK: Oh yes, she was in the sanitorium.

ABD: Oh, I see. Well, anyway, he blamed it on the milk.

VK: Oh dear.

ABD: And so.....

VK: That's the start of it. I remember she missed quite a lot of school and then when she came back she was, you know, quite tired still. I remember going to see her, in fact. After I went to University she was still...and then she came back and took half days and she was resting. So that was the start of it.

ABD: Yes, that was it.

VK: Isn't that interesting?

ABD: That was the start. Well, I mean the doctors, of course, got...right away they got on this....

VK: On this, eh?

ABD: Getting pasteurization.

VK: But I do remember the milk delivery. We still had milk delivery, or Athabasca did, when we came here in 1965, but soon afterwards - do you recall when exactly? - they...

ABD: They quit? Well no, it was after they...after the Valley Dairy sold out. See, the Valley Dairy sold out in '60-

VK: '65

ABD: '64 or '65

VK: Well, we had milk in '65, the winter we came.

ABD: OK. Well then it was in '65 that they sold to the Alberta Dairy Pool.

VK: I see.

ABD: Don't you remember we had little tokens.

VK: Yes, yes. We had tokens. Every house that was built had a milk chute.

ABD: Yes, right.

VK: So that you could leave your tokens in there and put your little order in. If you wanted cream, they had cream, or whatever, and left your milk there. If it was winter you came home from school it was a little frozen, but not to worry.

ABD: No, not to worry about it. Isn't that something?

VK: That's right. They had tokens to save the money, you'd..where would we buy these tokens? Did we get them from the milk....?

ABD: At the Creamery, or from the milk man.

VK: Yes. You bought maybe a week's supply, or something. That was it.

ABD: And the milk man brought all the news.

VK: Yes, you could stop and visit.

ABD: Between the garbage man and the milk man, Saturday morning I would get all the news of the town. All you had to do was be out there to empty....taking your garbage out and you'd talk to the garbage man.

VK: So you took it out where the garbage man would come by, you have them in the back yard.

ABD: Yes. We had them in the back.

VK: In cans, and then they would....

ABD: But I suppose then I suppose I....likely I got mine out there about the time that he was due to pick it up.

VK: He would collect on Saturdays at that time, eh? Once a week.

ABD: Must have been Saturdays and then the milk man would come.

VK: But milk delivery was daily, wasn't it? Or was it? Yes, it was. Certainly.

ABD: It was daily.

VK: Daily, yes.

ABD: So that was....

G: You said you bought tokens to save money?

VK: No. Just to save the transaction. If you were gone it was easy to.... you know, you paid for so many tokens for the week. Isn't that right? And then you would just put your two tokens....

ABD: The thing was that they had a lot....they had a lot of complaints where the kids were taking the money out of the bottles.

VK: Oh, of course, of course.

ABD: That's what started it really. And then of course the tokens were of no value to them.

VK: Of no value to them. Well, we couldn't mess up. Now you mentioned Valley....what was the name that you....?

ABD: Valley Dairies.

VK: Valley Dairies. Who was involved in that?

ABD: Cliff and Mr. Smith.

VK: Mr. Smith. Now which Mr. Smith?

ABD: Well, he was Harold Smith from Edmonton. Now his son is now head of the Alberta Dairy Pool.

VK: Is that so? I see. So when that happened....

ABD: Wayne Berg sold....when Wayne Berg left here he wanted to sell to Tommy and Cliff, and...

VK: Now when you say Tommy, that's Tommy MacLean?

ABD: Yes. But they weren't....well Tommy was more interested in TV and things. So anyway they....Mr. Smith bought and then Cliff bought in with Mr. Smith.

VK: Oh, I see.

ABD: So that's how we got involved.

VK: So when they quit the milk delivery, did that....did that have any effect on the business? The Creamery?

ABD: Oh I don't....well, it was a dairy pool then, and they were cutting down on a lot of things.

VK: On a lot of things, eh?

ABD: So that....

VK: I suppose onceonce that quit then the store people, the grocery stores got their milk.

ABD: They handled it then from the Creamery.

VK: From then on. And they got their milk from the Creamery, and it was still in bottles, wasn't it?

ABD: Yes, right.

VK: Now I'm just trying to think....

ABD: Oh, did they get the cartons?

VK: I'm just trying to think went the cartons.....when did the cartons come in?

ABD: They came in...Valley Dairies, I think, had them.

VK: For example, now, we get milk from Northern Alberta Dairy Pool. When did that....when was that....when did that come in?

ABD: That's was in....that was when Valley Dairies sold out.

VK: Then Northern Alberta Dairy Pool.

ABD: To Northern Alberta Dairy Pool. Say Gilda, put that light on, she can't see a thing.

VK: We've got Klondike Days. I guess we mentioned that once before. The big, big time we went to Bonaventure there. That was one of the big things. We used to have the...we used to have Klondike Days celebrated here at the Community Centre. I don't know when they started that because Mrs. Appleby was very actively involved in that, wasn't she?

ABD: Yes, she was head of the...of the program and Jord Hess was head of the gambling and then there was the committee that had the Klondike.

VK: Oh, I see. Like I said, we had the dancing girls and all, didn't we?

ABD: Oh, right! Was it ever great, gee.

G: Did it ever cause conflict in the community?

ABD: Pardon?

G: Did it ever cause conflict with the more fundamentalist parts of the community?

VK: The gambling, you mean?

G: Yes.

ABD: No. If you didn't want to gamble, I think, you stayed home. You know, I just don't think that.....

ABD: Well, I know...what I mean is that she was the lady who never mind her teaching, it had nothing to do with it, it was the work she did for 40 years.

VK: That's right.

ABD: And Nadine Kiselyk said "Well never mind Alice. We were lucky to have her for 40 years and there'll never be another one like her." and there never will be.

VK: That's for sure. Oh, that's for sure.

ABD: And here they...they fuss and fuss about naming it.

VK: All right. So. Other services. What other services would we have had?...Well, we had milk delivery, garbage, we said, what other...would we have had other services?

G: The volunteer fire department.

VK: Our volunteer fire department.

ABD: Yes, volunteer fire drill, and then we had....oh, of course, that was just reading the meters and things....but..

VK: Oh yes, the meter man.

ABD: But that was...but then that would be...it would just come naturally, wouldn't it?

VK: Yes.

G: This was the gas?

ABD: What other service? Pardon?

G: It must be for gas.

ABD: No, we didn't get gas until - '46 was it? - we got gas.

VK: I don't know.

G: It would be water meters?

VK: Water meters.

ABD: Water meters, yes. And electricity.

VK: And electric power.

ABD: Electric power.

VK: That's right.

G: And when the gas came in was it ICG?

ABD: No, no. It was from Estevan, Saskatchewan.

VK: What was the name...was there a name to the company? I guess there was, was there?

ABD: Yes, there was. What was the name of it? The first man that was here was Mr. Kilowatt. We called him Mr. Kilowatt. Oh, what was the name of that company. But they were from Estevan, Saskatchewan. And then the Northern....Northern Electric took it over, or Northern Power took it over.

VK: Yes, that sounds familiar.

ABD: And then they sold out tooh, Dominion was the...the first was Dominion. Dominion from Estevan. And then they...this other took over andthey took over in northern Alberta and the Ehrer boy worked for them. He still works for them in Grande Prairie.

VK: Does he?

ABD: That company is still in existence.

VK: Still existence...well.

ABD: But, now we have, what do you call it now?

VK: Well, we had Calgary Power.

ABD: No, but the gas.

VK: Oh, that's gas, that's right. Transalta. That's right. I don't know what you have here.

G: Horrible handwriting. Bill Wood.

VK: Oh, that was in connection with Klondike Days.

ABD: With the what?

VK: With Klondike Days. He was involved in that.

ABD: Who?

VK: Bill Wood. That would be Freida's husband.

ABD: Oh no. Not then.

VK: Not then, eh?

ABD: Not in those Klondike Days.

VK: Not in the early days?

ABD: His picture's on that....you're thinking of the picture....no, no, Bill Woods wasn't.

VK: OK. But he did take that trek by horse...onby...

ABD: Oh, that was the Klondike. That was the Trail Ride.

VK: Trail ride, yes.

ABD: Trail ride.

VK: Actually, he'd be...was he...no...he's an old-timer from around here isn't he? He'd be a good one to talk to, too.

ABD: Yes, he would be a good one. But I don't remember him at all in the Klondike.

VK: No. All right. Building of...you've got building of high school here. Now, that's going back to school. Do you want to talk about that, Gilda? Well, you've got also what....clubs and societies. Actually, we've got only 90 minutes on the tape so maybe we want to....we've talked a little bit about clubs and societies, haven't we? Quite a lot, eh?

G: The high school and the library?

ABD: Well, the library was established in 1946.

VK: '46.

ABD: And Mr. Hodgeson was the first chairman, and Mrs. Nancekevill was the first librarian, and I was the first secretary.

VK: Were you? And that was down at the old Provincial Building..

ABD: That was in the old Town Hall.

VK: Oh, the old Town Hall.

ABD: And Mrs. Moore's daughter and two or three girls worked and we got donations of books. That's how we started out.

VK: Did you? From where would you get these books?

ABD: Well, from people and then we wrote to the Bay and Woodward's and Eatons, and then to the elevator companies and things and they sent us money.

VK: Well.

ABD: And we bought the books.

VK: Oh my goodness.

ABD: And then of course, we got the grant.

VK: Nice little start, eh?

ABD: And then we had.....until we became a municipal library, we had to depend on the different organizations to give us money.

VK: Oh, did you?

ABD: Like there was a Legion and the Masons, Eastern Star, Elks, Royal Purple, and the churches.

VK: And the churches.

ABD: And some of the bridge clubs.

VK: Is that right? When did you become a municipal library?

ABD: In 1969, I think it was.

VK: And you've been with the library for all these years, Mrs. ~~Appleby~~, and you're still helping out there.
Donahue.

ABD: That's right.

VK: What position do you have with the library now? You're secretary?

ABD: Still.

VK: Well, that must be a few years now that you've been with the library, that's for sure.

ABD: Fifty (46)

VK: My goodness.

G: Was the community served by a bookmobile before the library started?

VK: I don't remember a bookmobile, do you Mrs. Donahue? Do you remember a bookmobile?

ABD: No. We never had one.

VK: You have to have half decent roads for bookmobiles, Gilda, and I don't think we had...

ABD: Yes. No we didn't.

VK: This northern part of Alberta...the country..

ABD: Oh, now we had a book...a book exchange with....among the schools. And we had a grey box that went around from one school to another.

VK: Oh! Isn't that interesting.

ABD: But it didn't work out.

VK: It didn't?

ABD: They took all our books from all the libraries, and Fairhaven had a good one, and I stupidly sent all those books down to Colinton, and then they put them in these boxes and then they told you....you know, your box is here...and then they would ship them to Athabasca...and how could these teachers get them out in the country. You were only supposed to keep them three weeks and sometimes these farmers didn't...you know, they weren't in town and didn't get the boxes. So, that didn't work. Mind you we had it for two years.

VK: Did you, though?

ABD: Yes.

VK: Oh.

G: Two years of unadulterated frustration. Did you ever get your books back at Fairhaven?

ABD: No. Never.

VK: Oh dear.

ABD: Oh no, you wouldn't get them back.

VK: So much for that, eh? So we've had...we've had three sites for a library...for the library then, eh? As far as the history of the library goes, did we?

ABD: Now the only....the county ...only four years ago did the county ever give us a nickle.

VK: Is that right? And yet it serves so many people.

ABD: We served all these people and ran the library.

VK: How did you manage to get them to finally...?

ABD: Well, Frank Falconer. He got on...he was the board chairman.

VK: Oh, yes.

ABD: And he got on.

VK: Well.

ABD: So that's what happened there. So they haven't supported us that long. And then from that of course, they've been good supporters now. We get.....Municipal Library - '67.

VK: And by that time it was down at the ...was that called the County Office, down where the Liquor Store is right now, the Superintendent used to have an office.....

ABD: No, that was the Provincial Building.

VK: The Provincial Building, yes.

ABD: And we moved into the Provincial Building, and then we moved into part of the Community Centre, and then we moved into the new Town Hall....

VK: Oh, I don't remember of all that. Is that right?

ABD: We moved in...no, we moved from ...from the Town Hall there to the new Town Hall, and then we moved to the Community Centre. And from the Community Centre we moved to the Provincial Building, and from there we moved up to where we are now.

VK: When did you move up here, do you recall?

ABD: No, I don't recall just exactly when.

VK: I know when I was....first started teaching you were down at the Provincial Building, the old Provincial Building still...I don't know when...I'm just trying to think...

ABD: When we moved?

VK: You probably didn't move until, of course, when they renovated here.

ABD: Yes. Do you remember when that was?

VK: I was just trying to think when they renovated. I can't....

ABD: I've got all that down. I didn't realize I'd be asked.

VK: Well. I suppose we could look that up too, couldn't we?

ABD: We moved to the new Town Hall in '53. We moved to the Community Centre in '61. We moved to the Provincial Building in '70, and we moved to the new Library in '79.

VK: Good. Thank you.

ABD: Now we've got all that.

VK: All that, great.

G: Did you have volunteer assistance with the packing, or was it.....?

ABD: No, we had a librarian. Mrs. Nancekevill was the librarian. The town furnished us with a librarian. Now she worked in the town office and so when we were over in the old one and over here, Mrs. Nancekevill and Mr. Evans, and whoever was in the town, Mr. McAllum, they all....we didn't get that many books really, there wasn't that much business. And then when Mrs.....when we moved to the lib....to the Community Centre, Mrs. Nancekevill was then retiring, so they kept her on staff and paid her.

VK: Did they? She was a former teacher, wasn't she?

ABD: No. She was a stenographer.

VK: A stenographer.

ABD: A secretary.

VK: Oh, OK.

ABD: Ma...her daughter is a teacher.

VK: Oh.

ABD: Mrs. Rypien.

VK: Oh, OK. That's what I'm thinking of. Where ...where was... I'm still curious, where was that Town Hall that you're talking about. Which building is on the site now.

ABD: It's right in behind. It would be in....you know, right on the corner was the manse, United Church manse....a great big tall two-storey house.

VK: I just...and so.....in relation....

ABD: Berta Martin boarded there.

VK: Oh. Did she? My high school teacher

ABD: And Mrs. Thorne lived there, and then next to...well, right back of the post office is where it would be. It was the first school.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: And became the first Town Hall. And it's the one that's down here....Mr.a United Missionary man....bought it and remodelled it into a house.

VK: Oh. I didn't know that.

ABD: Yes. So it still stands down here.

VK: It still stands. Oh for heavens' sakes.

ABD: Yes.

G: How was the library worked? Did you have to pay a fee to join, or....?

ABD: Yes. A dollar. A dollar to join, and then if your books were overdue, you know, a little fine.

VK: A little fine.

ABD: A little fine is right.

VK: Well it isn't....hasn't increased that much then is it? What is it for adults today? Is it only two dollars, is it, or?...

ABD: I think it is.

VK: Two dollars?

ABD: It's free for anybody over 65.

VK: For senior citizens. That's what I found out today when I went in to pick this up and a couple came in...I don't...I have not seen them before...and Mrs. Knight was telling her that it was if she.....she said "I have to ask a very," she didn't say personal question, but she said it was some kind of a question, touchy question, and she said "Are you a senior citizen?" and she said yes. And so of course, she gave the card....

ABD: Yes, she got the books.

VK: Which is another little perk as far as senior citizens are concerned. OK. So, Gilda, maybe you have something that you would want to tell us that we haven't got down there. Oh, we talked about truancy, but I think we did talk about that at school and which was very, very....

ABD: What that true? We did talk about truancy when....

VK: We did talk about your students and.....

ABD: Where our janitor was the truant officer.

VK: No.

ABD: Oh. Well, I...our janitor was...over here, when I first came, the janitor was the truant officer. And of course, he would be told, you know, so-and-so is not around, and of course, he knew the haunts for all these people.

VK: Of course. Sure.

ABD: They used to take off...first thing they did was take off and go down to Daigneau's Barn.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: And they would go...boys and girls..

VK: Girls!

ABD: I mean, not boys and girls together but the girls....

VK: I didn't imagine the girls would be doing much skipping... .

ABD: Oh Lois Bissell and Audrey Falconer and all these girls....they'd go down and...the way they'd get through, they'd go down to the barn and then they could get through and go out a back door and go down the railroad track.

VK: What was the point of that? Just to be somewhere.

ABD: Well, to get away.

VK: Just to get away. And not be anywhere near the houses.

ABD: And of course, when they went down the railroad track they could come to the swimming pool.

VK: Swimming hole. Yes.

ABD: And then with little kids, of course, the truant officer would round them up.

VK: Yes. Good heavens. What would the principal do? What....I think, I remember Gene saying something once, I think, if kids, at least in high school, they skipped, they....I don't know if they got two or three chances, but I think about the third time or something, they had to....you had to appear before the Superintendent with your parent.

ABD: Yes. And a board of....some kind of a board, right.

VK: And your parent, one of the parents had to be there. Or both maybe, just the father, I think at that time. And you had to be reinstated and you couldn't go back until you were reinstated.

ABD: That's right. And then they had trouble with the busses. Now, little Paul Kavoluk was driving the bus.

VK: That's my cousin she's talking about now.

ABD: And, so, the parents were complaining that they were always late getting home. And so, they went....Mr. Hodgeson got these complaints, and Mr. Hodgeson went to little Paul and, little Paul was supposed to be playing pool.

VK: Yes.

ABD: And little Paul said "Well, I have to wait for the girls. They're all shopping."

VK: I thought he was playing pool?

ABD: And it wasn't the girls at all....it wasn't little Paul at all.

VK: Oh, it wasn't!

ABD: Oh, so Mr. Hodgeson, he really....

VK: Oh, I thought maybe the boys did play a little pool.

ABD: Oh yes, they played pool, but what are you going to do when you're waiting for these girls to.....

VK: And the girls were shopping?

ABD: You know, to primp up and get their hair done and.....

VK: No. It wasn't anything that was.....

ABD: Parade up and down the streets.

VK: There wasn't necessary for the parents. I thought maybe they did some shopping for the parents or something.

ABD: Well, maybe they...they may have done a little but then they should have been down there. But little Paul would tell about how he'd been down there with the bus and ...and nobody there. Oh yes, they used to play pool, but that was in school..

VK: During school hours.

ABD: That wasn't bus driving...and Jim Woods was the principal and he used to.....when school would call....if these kids were missing he'd just walk right down.

VK: Down. He knew exactly where to go.

ABD: To the pool room and march them back.

VK: Oh, my goodness.

ABD: They didn't do that too many times.

VK: Jim Wood was the principal?

ABD: No, no. He was the teacher.

VK: Teacher. Yes, yes. That's right.

ABD: He must have been vice-principal, or....well, anyway, he was always the one who went after them.

VK: Did he? He was very dedicated. Very good teacher. Excellent teacher. I remember him.

G: Were there...? When did the age restriction for schooling come in? I don't suppose they could have been at 16 from the very beginning?

ABD: You mean the age at which they had to attend school?

VK: They could quit, yes.

ABD: Yes. It was 16. I think it was, as far as I remember.

VK: Always at the back of the registers it seemed, for years, they had the little rules there that....

ABD: Yes, I think it was from 6 to 16.

VK: To 16. Right.

G: What would happen if....school gave out? If they were in grade 7 and they couldn't go any further?

VK: Well often times people did quit.

ABD: Well, of course, that happened and they...

VK: Certainly

ABD: But there was nothing they could do.

VK: Nothing. They didn't do anything.

ABD: If the school wasn't there you couldn't attend. And if they couldn't afford to send them away....

VK: Sometimes they couldn't afford or needed them....they were needed at home....you know, children often...

ABD: And of course, they were...they were really needed at homes.

VK: Certainly

ABD: And of course, one thing about it in those days, when you got to grade 8, you had a pretty good foundation.

VK: Pretty good foundation.

ABD: You know, you didn't have all these frills.

VK: That's right.

ABD: You got down to business all that time.

VK: Yes. That's true.

ABD: Wasn't...wasn't much fun.

VK: No. There was really nothing done. And I don't...at that time we weren't even getting family allowances. After the..

ABD: Oh no.

VK: After the family allowances came in, you see, they always had that hold over you. They said if, if your child was not attending regularly.....

ABD: Oh yes. They could...

VK: Then the family allowance would be cut.

ABD: Yes. That's right. But....

VK: Before that they really...I think the times were such that they understood and...and parents did what they could to send the kids and the kids were anxious to....

ABD: Imagine no family allowance. Now that must have been really tough.

VK: Oh. I guess so.

ABD: And these people that raised these big families with no....

VK: Sure they did, they were big families in those days.

ABD: With no...no help at all.

VK: That's right. Yes. All right. What else do we want to say?

G: You mentioned that the library got assistance from the Masons and the Elks, were there chapters operating in ...in Athabasca? Are they still here?

ABD: The Elks aren't, but all the rest are. They're still here.

G: Masons too?

ABD: The Masons and the Star and the Royal Purple.

VK: And of course, now we've got...

ABD: And the Legion, and the Kinettes, and Kinsmen.

VK: We've got the Kinsmen.

ABD: We never got any donations from them, but then we didn't ask because they were newer coming in.

VK: That's true. We had a note here about the talent show at the park....at Parker's Hall. We had, I think, mentioned it

once on the other tape. That....that was an ongoing thing for many years.

ABD: Oh, a talent show! Well there....the Elks put that on.

VK: Did they?

ABD: It was an Elks Talent Show.

VK: You wouldn't remember the first time that Uncle Hal came to Athabasca by any chance?

ABD: Uncle Hal....no, but those were back in the

VK: Late '30s, early '40s again, I'll bet.

ABD: It would be the '40s.

VK: '40s, eh? And he...what station...which radio station did he have a program on that we....all used to listen to that? Was that CJCA?

ABD: Yes. It would be CJCA.

VK: All right.

ABD: No. It wasn't Rice?.....No. CJCA. Uncle Hal, now he wasn't the one from....no, I know who it is.

VK: He used to come and, every year, and for weeks beforehand....and I'm sure Mrs. Appleby, again, had a hand in all this talent around here....and getting students and people prepared.

ABD: Getting them all ready.

VK: Now what kind of things would...what kind of?

ABD: Everything. It was just a talent show. They could...they could recite, they could sing, they could play a musical instrument, they could dance.

VK: Dance. It wasn't just individual. There were some group..group?

ABD: Yes. Because I can remember Nancy teaching Suzanne Godel and the Armstrong girl....

VK: Yes. Delphine, not Delphine.

ABD: Delphine...

VK: It was the older girl. What was her name?

ABD: And that Fowler girl.

VK: Lorna.

ABD: Lorna Fowler. Teaching them to do this dance.

VK: Oh sure.

ABD: And they came from all over.

VK: Did Mrs. Appleby teach them tap dancing?

ABD: Oh yes.

VK: I was just going to a...where did these girls learn to tap dance, because we did have girls doing tap dancing.

ABD: Well, she...she learned that in Camrose.

VK: Did she?

ABD: Well, she could do...you know, she really was.....she was so talented that....

VK: She was very talented.

ABD: And she couldn't understand anybody that couldn't pick up their feet and do it. I was one. Yes, she was....she was the big...big wheel in that....getting the....

VK: And then they...they...I don't even remember what...what year that was the last performance we ever had here in town. I just....

ABD: Oh, now. I wonder if you're thinking of the CFRN that came.

VK: Oh. It must have been CFRN that sponsored that.

ABD: Yes. CFRN. But then the Elks sponsored a...a talent show. And that was the one...well Nancy had something to do with both of them.

VK: With both of them. Yes. Did we...did they....they used to pick winners - first, second and third, maybe in each...in certain catagories, and then those....

ABD: Went to another...

VK: People would go to another.

ABD: Yes.

VK: They would get....from each community they would have one big one. It was on the air, was it not?

ABD: Wasn't there a girl from Boyle who became.....?

VK: Yes. That was the Glorie Kay that we had mentioned before, I think, that won one year. I guess had done very well...I haven't heard too much about her lately. The good, old days, Gilda.

ABD: Yes, right. The good, old days. She's listening to all this.

VK: And the money did go for crippled children, wasn't it?

ABD: That...that money there went for crippled children, and the other went for work...I think it was for children that were underprivileged, didn't have glasses and things like that.

VK: Is that right? Now, when you talk about this other talent show, now, I'm not sure just what....that was put on by Athabasca people.

ABD: Yes. And people came from Boyle and all around. Now I think it was on before...before those people came.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: Because I can remember the little Loiselle boy receiving an award. Somebody had a picture of him.

VK: So that was nothing like a concert. It was just a talent show. It was nothing to do with school or...

ABD: Just a talent show.

VK: It wasn't really school sponsored or anything?

ABD: Oh, no. Nothing to do with school. Nothing to do with.....

VK: I don't re.....

ABD: You just entered whether you...you know, if you wanted to.

VK: Is that right? OK. Anything else, or anything you can think of Mrs. Donahue? We have a few minutes left on the tape, I think.

G: Do you have any idea when the Elks and the Masons and the Eastern Star first started here?

ABD: Well, the Masons started away back in 1912, I think. And then the Elks didn't start until...in the '40s.

VK: Oh. That was much later then, eh? And Eastern Star. You did have Eastern Star?

ABD: Eastern Star. And the Masons were here away back in 1912. All those years. And there was a group of Oddfellows, I think, at one time, and Rebeccas.

VK: Yes. And Rebeccas? I didn't...I remember reading about Oddfellows in...in the old Echos.

ABD: Oh yes. But they didn't....you know, they weren't too long.

VK: Too long, eh? Yes.

ABD: And then, after them, the Elks came. Well, there was a need for something for community work. Like the Masons and the Eastern Star are just for their own.....

VK: Oh, their own.

ABD: Their own.

VK: Organization.

ABD: And so there was this great need in the community for somebody to get out and do something to help people. And that's when the....

VK: I know what I was going to ask you. I was going to go further in Red Cross and when you first began. That must have started....did you start....were you involved in Red Cross before you ever came here?

ABD: Way back.

VK: You have a long history with Red Cross.

ABD: Way back in New Norway.

VK: Oh. Did you? Did you?

ABD: In Red Willow, too.

VK: How about as a student?

ABD: No. We didn't get....

VK: There was no Red Cross then, eh?

ABD: No. No. We didn't have it. There was no Red Cross. But when Iby the time I started to teach it was just....just a little bit.

VK: How did that start? How did you...how did that all start? What did you first...how did you first get involved in it? Do you remember how?

ABD: Well...first got involved in it was actually....

VK: Somebody came and...?

ABD: Was in New Norway...well yes...Herman....Miss Herman was from Camrose. And she came out and got us started.

VK: Did she?

ABD: But in...in Stettler, I guess it was just through word of mouth and things that we had little Red Cross dos.

VK: Because Miss Herman was one of the ladies that was at Lake Edith in Jasper when....when the town sent me.

ABD: You were the first one to go.

VK: I was.

ABD: To that ...

VK: To that camp.

ABD: Camp.

VK: To learn about Red Cross. I remember coming in and organizing Red Cross here at the high school.

ABD: And Vi was a member of the Red Cross as a little girl.

VK: Yes we were because we had.....

ABD: Mrs. Gorman's

VK: Yes. And June LaPorte had it, I think. Yes she did. So...anyway, you started in New Norway and then you came here and you were very active in Red Cross here.

ABD: Well yes, because here....it became to get....wartime.

VK: Yes. And so a real need for it.

ABD: And then so you had, you know, you had to get out and collect.

VK: Tell us some of the things you did. Knitting....did you do knitting? Collecting...

ABD: Oh no. I didn't do any of that. I did all the foot work.

VK: You got people organized. Foot work. All right. Tell us.

ABD: I did all the collecting.

VK: Organizing.

ABD: And...

VK: You had actually an organization, didn't you?

ABD: Yes.

VK: Were you president?

ABD: No, no. I wasn't president. Mr. Evans was president.

VK: Secretary? Mr. Evans.

ABD: Yes, he was president.

VK: He was our Justice of the Peace for awhile, wasn't he?

ABD: Yes. He and Mr. Evans...he and Mr. Falconer...but then, they always had me to do the....do the leg work for them. And then we had an IODE. Independent Order of the Daughters of the Empire.

VK: Oh yes.

ABD: And they were....they were great workers in that Red Cross...in the work of the Red....not the Red Cross, but in war work.

VK: In war work. But you were....so what kinds of things would you have done? Or students? You got that....now then...you got students involved. Not only.....as well as community.

ABD: Yes. But well, the students....the first that I got the students involved was Milk for Britan.

VK: Milk for Britan

ABD: Milk for Britan and Johnny Will was the chief man there.

VK: What would you do?

ABD: They went around....they put jars around in the town and...and Milk for Brit~~an~~^{ain}.

VK: And people would just drop their coins....

ABD: Drop in the money and we got quite a bit of money.

VK: You'd collect every so often?

ABD: Yes. Pick it up every so often and then from that we went towe went back to teas.

VK: Yes.

ABD: Yes. That's right. Raising money to send to the crippled children's hospital and to do...help with the war work.

VK: I know, later on as a student, we used to make quilts and raffle them. I guess that was for Red Cross. We....

ABD: That was the high school.

VK: Stitched diapers.

ABD: You were in the high school.

VK: We did some of that at Big Coulee.

ABD: Oh, did you?

VK: And we'd send....it was a fund-raising deal...and then we sent the money because we felt that, well, they'd need the money more so, but I guess here...well, we even collected toys. I remember we redid toys. And repainted them and fixed them. The boys would fix them and then we sent them to the crippled children's hospital. We collected money. We hemmed diapers. We....my goodness...what else did we do?

ABD: So you did a lot of that.

VK: We did a lot of that.

ABD: You see, I missed out on all that because I was always on the...

VK: The organizational part of it...

ABD: Yes. Getting the money.

VK: But you were always involved with the....for so many...you must have many years in Red Cross. My goodness.

ABD: Well, it would be...well, ever since I....started to teach.

VK: Started teaching.

ABD: So it's really something and I...I just this year, I've said, well, I'm not going to do any more.

VK: You see, now, Mrs. Donahue, for years, has also been organizing people in the community to again, further collect. Like I've been going...was collecting while I was in Elementary...you've got people in the community.

ABD: But I had good henchmen and that's why. You can't just go on asking them forever, so I just told them that they'd better try to get somebody else.

VK: Is that right? Well, you've certainly done your part...
..... All right, Gilda, this last little idea. Yes, tell us about your role.

ABD: The church? Well, when I was teaching, I really didn't take part because I'd sleep in on Saturday, on Sunday mornings, so I wasn't very active. You know, I would attend all their affairs. But you know, since I've retired I've been attending...

VK: More so?

ABD: Yes, regularly. But prior to that I wasn't too active.

VK: I know what you're talking about.

ABD: You know, you can get so involved in other things that...working five, six days a week and...

VK: So, did you take on any positions as far as the United Church once you retired?

ABD: No, no.

VK: You didn't, eh?

ABD: Never. No, I didn't in the Lodge. I belonged there...the Royal Purple. I'm historian, but that's all. You know, you just...you get...you just get bogged down, that's it.

VK: There's only so much you can do.

ABD: That's right. And of course, teaching was...was my life. I mean, I never...I never remember a day that I wished that I weren't teaching.

VK: Isn't that something?

ABD: And every day was a new beginning. I couldn't wait until I got back to school to find out....all about school.

VK: You know, you should...it would be nice to have a reunion, Mrs. Donahue, you should have had one and had all those students come back.

ABD: Wouldn't that be something.

VK: Wouldn't it ever? I imagine there are some famous ones.

ABD: Well, some of them have ended up all right. Like Jamie Wright is a....a well-known physician in Vancouver.

VK: Did you teach John Godel?

ABD: John Godel. Another...well he's a very brilliant

VK: Is that ever a brilliant boy? Yes.

ABD: No. I didn't teach John Godel, sorry, no, I didn't. But....

VK: Paul Pouhatch.

ABD: Well, those were the two. They called them the professors.

VK: The professors.

ABD: Yes. They were the smart....I taught Dale Leahy, who is a professor now in....Kingston, I think it is.

VK: Is he?

ABD: Is he in Kingston, or Ottawa?

VK: Oh, I'm sure there must be...

ABD: Oh, there must be more famous ones.

VK: I'm sure there are some famous ones.

ABD: Well, one girl went on to be a doctor in New York. That was years ago.

VK: Is that right?

ABD: She died quite young too.

VK: Who was she?

ABD: She was a...a Ukranian girl.

VK: Oh, I'll bet you're thinking of...is it?...

ABD: Doctor Florence Grant.

VK: OK. I was thinking of a Wolanuk girl who was....started to take some medical training. I don't know if she ended up being a nurse. It was Victor Wolanuk's older sister.

ABD: Is that right?

VK: She had some stories to tell, that poor girl. I mean, talk about poor families. I think she talked about....or somebody told me a story about her going to school with one...one of her dad's sock and one other kind...not even a matching pair, and they were so poor and the parents really wanted her to get through and...anyway.

ABD: Isn't that something?

VK: Some of those people could tell stories, I tell you.

ABD: Yes, they're the ones that should be on ~~one~~ tape, and get their stories.

VK: As well, as well. Too bad we didn't get someone like George Ryga. He did a lot of writing but ...it would have been interesting to have..I think his books are still available.

ABD: Over across the river?

VK: Oh no. They've been in BC, but we're getting away... OK, Gilda. Can we tie this up? Has that been....

ABD: Yes. Well, anyway, that's been very, very good and....

VK: The end.

ABD: That's the end of it, is it?