

Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project
Transcription of Anne Kuzyk recording 2015.mp3
http://digiport.athabascau.ca/aasmp/people/a_kuzyk.htm

Narrator: Anne Kuzyk
Interviewer: Margaret Armfelt
December 10, 2015

[Start of Interview]

Margaret I'm at the dining room table of Anne Kuzyk in the County of Athabasca. It's December the 10th, 2015. I'm Margaret Armfelt. Now we're going to start the interview. It's not really an interview. Anne's going to tell me how she came to be living in Canada, in Athabasca.

Anne Yes. My name is Anne Kuzyk. I was born August 13th, 1933, in Ballerup, Denmark. My dad's name was Axel Wobke Jorgensen and my mother's name was Helene Walborg Knudsen, that's her maiden name and Jorgensen her married name. I married Fred Kuzyk, who lived in Forfar all his life.

Anne My dad had gone when he was a young man, he had gone to Argentina for a couple of years. And mom always said that he got wanderlust. He wanted to go someplace, and for years nothing happened because we just lived and had a small farm in Denmark. And did the daily thing, chickens and cows and horses and ducks and whatever else you have.

Anne Dad did the farming with horses. And you know, I don't remember.

Anne I remember what I did myself, but I don't remember what my sister did. She was four years younger than I am. And I don't remember that she came with me because I know I used to just like to walk around and look at the fields and go in the bush. You know, just enjoy that. Well, we went to school. And that was every day. I went to school all my life on Saturday. And that meant that I finished school earlier. We left Denmark March 4th, 1949.

Anne Mom was kind of upset with dad for not waiting until after I had graduated, which would have happened in April of 1949. See, that's why I was done in nine years like the kids do here in twelve years.

Margaret Oh, because of the Saturdays?

Anne Yeah, because of the extra time. And our summer holiday was shorter. They were just six weeks, not two months. And every different class was 55 minutes long, 5 minutes recess, 20 minutes for lunch. So we had more school time.

Anne Yeah. I remember the school. Um, we rode, I rode, I guess I really should include Inger in this, because she must have been there. I rode to school on a bike in the summertime, and then in the wintertime we had skis. And if it poured rain, we

could take a bus that went every day past our place. But that was not for kids, you know, it was just a commuter bus, I guess, I don't know.

Margaret For adults as well?

Anne Well, yeah, it was for whoever wanted to go on the bus, but only on rainy days. And it was fine. You know, we were used to going every place on a bike.

Margaret What caused your dad to decide to come to Canada?

Anne Well, he applied to South America also, and to Canada. But I think that he maybe got permission to go sooner from Canada than he did from Argentina, from, you know, from South America. He, um.

Margaret And did he bring his possessions from Denmark?

Anne Yeah, we did. Because in 1949 it was just four years after the war. The Danish government would not allow money to leave the country. Only \$50.00 each, so my dad had \$250.00 in his pocket, cash. That was all.

Margaret That's because there were five of you?

Anne Yeah. \$50.00 each, eh. But he bought a lot of things that he thought we would need over here and that kind of, he felt it would make up for not having the money, you know. And it was, it must have been really disappointing for him. I know it must have been, because I think, it wasn't in 1949, it must have been '50, '51. Because we kept on waiting for this stuff to come.

Margaret By ship?

Anne Yeah. It had to come by ship, but dad had prepaid it to Athabasca. And mom and dad got a letter from the company, or from a lawyer, most likely, that they had closed business and they went bankrupt. So mom went home. I think she went home in '51 or '52. Fred and I got married in June of '52.

Margaret But you said your mom went home. She went back to Denmark?

Anne Yes, she went back to Denmark. And she had to do something with this stuff because it was in storage. And we were paying every month for this, all this stuff standing in storage.

Margaret It didn't get shipped at all?

Anne No, not at that time. Mom went home, and she re-packed some things, and she did send some stuff over. But she had to go through everything and there were lots, you know like fairly big shipping crates made out of wood. But I think it was square probably, a cube or something, and she had to re-pack it. But who's going to buy horses' harnesses? I mean, yeah, that's what. I think dad had four sets of harnesses, and axes, and ropes. And you name it, whatever he felt he had on the

farm there, he figured he could use here, eh. Yeah, it must have been terribly disappointing for him. Anyhow.

Margaret And how did you arrive?

Anne We came on a Swedish liner, it's spelled G-r-i-p-s-h-o-l-m. Gripsholm.

Margaret It's a big liner.

Anne A huge liner. Yeah. Ocean liner.

Margaret How long did it take to come across?

Anne It took 11 days to come, which was I think quite fast, because it was the modern liner in those days, eh. And it was, it was great. You know what, Knud and I were the only ones that didn't have, weren't sick from, the seasickness. My dad even, and we never thought that dad would get seasick, because he's just really a tough guy who was very much like my brother. Yeah.

Margaret So your brother is Knud?

Anne Yeah. He wasn't even four years old when we came. He turned four in May and we came in March, March 15th when we came, arrived in Canada. And, uh, I'm getting.

Margaret Did you take the train from where you landed?

Anne Yeah, we took the train from Halifax. Yeah, it was the 4th of March we left Denmark, 15th we got to Halifax, and then it took, I don't know how many days to come across Canada on a train. It took a long time. I know it took a whole day to come from Edmonton to Athabasca. And it was so slow, and my poor sister got seasick again! Because you know how the train goes back and forth and it's a rocking motion. But yeah, we arrived in Athabasca. And I had an uncle in Dawson Creek, and he was supposed to meet us here, here in Athabasca. And dad wanted to come to Athabasca, because our lawyer in Denmark had another client that had land here by Athabasca.

Anne But dad said, "I'm not buying it until I see it." So that's what happened, that we came to Athabasca. And that's, I mean, I didn't know until later that he had all the crates pre-paid to Athabasca, but that. I didn't think much of anything because I'm just a kid of 15. I turned 16 in August.

Anne Yeah. So, we stayed in a hotel in Athabasca for a few nights. My uncle came down and he took us out to eat every time. It must have been in the hotel that we ate. I can't remember.

Anne And he found a guy in town that would take us out. See Jim Elkjer had some land down here. And my dad had written to him, and he had written back to my dad. So when we got to town, this is the name that dad used. He went and talked, and he got ahold of Nick Philipzyk, and Nick said I'll drive you out there. So we didn't take

anything. You know, we left the suitcases in the hotel. And we just got out there, and Jim and Katie Elkjer had a little house that they had lived in when they were first married.

Anne Oh, my goodness. I don't know how big it was. It was probably, I don't think it was as wide as, see that, I think 17 feet. Ah, let's say 17 by 20 feet. It wasn't very big. But you know what? The roof didn't leak. So, we didn't have a choice. We stayed there, and Jim and Katie were so helpful. And then there were August and Nina Christensen, and Mark and Anna Christensen. They were Danish people who had been here for years and years. And it was very good for my mom and dad. And there again, I don't think I even thought about how serious our situation was. We come here – with nothing. At the time we came here, we hadn't experienced any of these things that we weren't going to get. I mean, we were hoping we were going to get all this stuff and it would be okay. But we had to find a place to live too, aside from this little house.

Margaret You mean different from the house?

Anne Yeah, because it was not for the winter, really. You know, that's what Jim said. And this was in March. So that was quite a few months that you could use. So, yeah, dad made some boxes on the floor, and Jim brought hay.

Anne And we did have some; there was one box that we brought with us with bedding. And that was good that it came with us, you know, because there were feather ticks and blankets. And I don't know if there were any pillows, I can't remember. But there was enough to cover us at night, which was really good. And it was still cool outside. So, oh yeah. And my uncle took us grocery shopping because we had to find out what we could buy. And that was really an experience, too, because everything was just so different, you know, which was understandable.

Margaret But that was good of him to help you.

Anne Oh yeah. Well, see, he was a bachelor, and he, I think, was quite happy to get some family. You know we actually brought a set of sterling silver candlesticks for him from the family. And he was supposed to get them. You know, his parents were still alive when he left for Canada in 1929. And at that time his parents' home was intact and everything was there. But those candlesticks, they were passed on. We must have had those candlesticks. Oh I know why. Because dad was there on the old farm where he was brought up. I was born in that place. I think Inger was born in a little bungalow my dad and mom built close by the farm. They were in my dad's possession because he was the only one living on that old farm at that time.

Anne So then mom took care of them, made sure that we brought them here because they were Einar's. And when we came here, Uncle Einar said that we should keep them in our family because he doesn't have any kids. He didn't want those, and they were really, really beautiful candlesticks. I passed them on to Alison because this is what Uncle Einar wanted.

Margaret Alison, is your daughter, right?

Anne Yeah, that's our oldest daughter. I never put them out here. I don't know why, they were just sitting in a box, and I forgot about them, I think because I was so busy. Anyhow, she has them now. But I have things from Denmark that the other kids have gotten already too.

Anne I have a coffee pot over there that was in my dad's family. My dad's, like my grandmother's china. And I have that one. And my, I don't know how my moster Lulu [my mother's sister] got a hold of it. There are so many things I should have asked.

Margaret How about going to school here?

Anne Oh yeah. Well, you know what, there was that little Forfar school right down here.

Anne And dad said, "You girls have to go down there because you've got to learn how to speak proper Canadian." Because I had an English teacher that was very much English. And, you know, that accent is so different. In fact, I didn't really understand the kids when we came here because it was just so different.

Anne Dad said we got to go there, and we have to learn Canadian history and geography. So what do we do? We walk down there every day; we went already in March. Soon after we came here. So there was March, April, May and June, four months. And they didn't know what to do with me. I was finished high school in Denmark, and this was in grade 8 down here, as far as the kids went, right? So we sat and listened. I think it was probably better for Inger because she was younger. It was good for both of us.

Anne Yeah, you listen to the kids and how they talk. And, you know, the accent is, like I said, I couldn't really understand what they were saying to start with, but it didn't take long. You know, we got used to it. So, okay, the end of the school year came, at the end of June, of course, and we had a couple of months, two months holidays. That was really a long time.

Margaret So did that become a working holiday to help with your mom and dad on the farm?

Anne Yeah, well no, we just kind of needed a place to live for the winter. So Kapitaniuks had a place down on 812, where we are now, here's 812. And there was a little old house on there.

Anne And they offered it for us for the winter. We could move in there. And mom and dad, we got busy. Nobody had lived here for quite a while. We got busy cleaning it out. And mom was always very good at painting and fixing stuff. She was very handy. So that little house, there was an upstairs in that house, there was a bedroom upstairs, which was good. Or was there two? Well, I don't know. I think that was only one because Inger and I slept downstairs. Anyhow, that was a good-sized room downstairs, and there was a kitchen, and there was a wood stove. No light, you know, there was no electricity there. I don't know if the people even had electricity.

Margaret Did you have kerosene lamps or candles?

Anne Yeah, no, kerosene lamps. Yeah it was always my job to clean them because mom said I never broke, what you call those?

Margaret The tops?

Anne Yeah, so I could have the job. That was okay. I didn't mind, I don't remember. Anyhow, the summer holidays went and then it was school time again. Mark Christensen had a school bus. It was a panel, where he had made 2-by-8 benches on the side. It wasn't a big panel, though. But that was okay. We sat on those 2-by-8s, they must have been 2-by-8s. And we didn't have to walk to school at least.

Margaret And the benches were along the sides?

Anne Yeah, along the side. And the school year started for the grade eights in town. The Old Brick School. And the little kids kept on going down here. That's why, you know, I don't remember Inger, because she stayed down here going to that school.

Margaret So you went to grade eight in Athabasca?

Anne I went to grade nine. And I got there, and I don't think they even knew that we had just come from Denmark, because nobody asked me anything. What's your name? I knew my name. I actually thought it was kind of funny, because I was just one of the bunch. Not that I needed any special attention, but I don't know what I expected. I don't think I expected anything, really.

Margaret So no one picked on you then?

Anne No. Nobody picked on me.

Margaret You just fit right in?

Anne Apparently. I must have. Yes. I went to grade eight there, I mean to grade nine. And that's where I met Jane Kapitaniuk, I mean, Jane Wasyjczuk. And so I've known her ever since. So we finished grade nine, and then the same thing again. You have two months holiday, and then you come to grade ten. And in grade ten, well, it was even in grade nine that I noticed. Because they had some of the classes with different aged children. It seemed to me that there was grade 11s.

Margaret But there was a mixed group?

Anne Yeah, there was a mixed group and I know Nora Christensen, she was in the highest grade. And I'm sitting listening to all this. And I think, oh, my gosh, you know. They're taking the algebra and geometry, and what was the other, there was something else. That I took last year in Denmark! Ok, I heard it all again, and it was fine. I just sat most of the time, I just sat listening. Well there was sometimes we had a spelling test in English, but the English part was good because I did learn, well, the pronunciation of words, eh.

Margaret And had you learned spelling in Denmark?

Anne Yes, I took English for five years, but from a very English lady.

Margaret Right, but spelling is spelling.

Anne Spelling is spelling. And you know what? I was actually quite proud of myself because I had 100% and the other kids that lived here, they didn't have that. I'm blowing my own horn, eh?

Margaret Yes.

Anne But that, I think at that time, was the only thing I could brag about. But yeah, it was interesting. And of course, oh, then we also in English took Shakespeare. You know, everybody did that. We had to have one or two choices, I think there was. And that was okay, too, because, we actually had done that, too in Denmark. But then it was in Danish and here it was in English. And then I had to learn to read it. Study it in an English book because, of course, you have to study it, and remember it, and then we had to recite it. Oh my gosh, some of that stuff was kind of useless, wasn't it?

Margaret Trained your mind.

Anne It trained my mind. It did, yeah. So the two years went by, and I had...No, there must be more. I don't know what the heck. Okay, so I turned 16 in August that first year. See, I was older than the other kids in the class. Because like grade eight, they should be, 14. And I turned, when I came I was 15 already turning 16 in August, so I was a year and a half or so older.

Margaret So they probably should have put you ahead, where you hadn't already learned the things.

Anne Yeah. But there was no teacher, or anybody that even asked.

Margaret It was how old you were, and that's what you answered.

Anne No. I don't know if they even asked me that. I think I probably must have answered questions that they asked, otherwise they probably would have failed me. I don't know.

Margaret What did you do for entertainment when you were first here, like a school age person?

Anne Oh, we played ball, played baseball.

Margaret Baseball?

Anne Yeah, I learned how to do that. I was either the pitcher or the first base. And that was nice, I enjoyed it. I always liked sports and we had lots of sports from Denmark, lots of sports.

Margaret And would it be men and women or girls and boys?

Anne Girls and boys, yeah. Because sometimes you don't have enough for a team if you don't mix them up. Yeah, I enjoyed that. I don't really think there was anything else during school time.

Margaret For organized sports?

Anne No. And I don't know how organized it was because we never went to any place to play ball. That didn't come until I met Fred, you see, when I was in grade 10.

Margaret And did he play baseball?

Anne Yeah, he did. After we started going out together, after he started coming to pick me up and take me here and there, he played baseball. We went to Grosmont and Lahaieville, and they played with the Amber Valley teams. There was Bill Kiselyk and there was a whole bunch of guys out here. And that was fun, you know. We'd go, the girlfriends of the other guys, we'd all go, and I got to know them. Yeah, you know, it's really funny. I always wanted to train as a nurse when I was growing up. Really, that was my purpose in life, I think. But we came here and things changed. My mom and dad couldn't afford to send me to... Well, they couldn't even afford to keep me in school until grade 12, you know.

Anne So dad said, "well you did go to school in Denmark, so you probably know enough by now that you could get a job." So I did. I went and got a job at Bill Evans' and Richard Hall's store.

Margaret A grocery store?

Anne Grocery store. And you know what, that was actually good for me because in those days we had these little pads and we had to write everything down. Sugar, butter, flour or whatever, you write it down, you put the price, and then you have to add it up. And I liked that because I always enjoyed math too. Math and social were my [favorite], not so much the history part of it. But where the city is, and where that river is, and whatever.

Margaret Geography?

Anne Geography, yeah. I really like that. So, I was pretty happy working for Halls. And I got paid, I don't know how much, but it helped a little bit at home, so we were able to make things go round. And in the meantime, because we moved from this place down here, my mom and dad bought a place closer to town. What is that? How far is it from town? About a mile and a half?

Margaret Oh, where you were before?

Anne Yeah.

Margaret Oh yes, at maximum [distance].

Anne Yeah, it wasn't too far. So.

Margaret And that's where your sister lives today?

Anne No, my brother lives there today. He and his wife live there, and they're so happy. And I know my dad would be happy to know that they are there. He never wanted that place sold. My dad didn't. Yeah, anyhow, I started working at Hall's. That must have been, I don't know, 1950.

Margaret Did you walk to work?

Anne Yeah, I walked to work. It was so bloody cold. Those were the days when we had 50, 60 below Fahrenheit. Oh, my goodness, it was so cold. I walked to work until one day, I was walking in the cold morning, all my eyes were sticking out only I think. And I heard this truck, this vehicle coming down the road. And it stopped, I could hear it stopping. And, you know, in those days, there was nothing to be scared of, you know, I mean, we weren't scared of anything. But a wolf or something I imagine, eh. But here was Mr. Tom Hendy. He lived in south Athabasca at the time. And he was going to work in town. And he says, "Hello, I'm Tom Hendy. I know who you are." Oh, I think, I don't know what I said. I was kind of shy. And he said, "You know what, I will stop for you every morning if you don't mind my old truck." The windows, there was a hole in the floor. The heater wasn't very good. But he said it doesn't take us long to drive in this truck as it does to walk. I was so thankful. Oh, my goodness, you know.

Margaret It would be warmer, too.

Anne Oh, yeah. Well, you know.

Margaret The wind's not blowing on you.

Anne Yeah, I had clothes on, but. Oh, my goodness. I was just so pleased. And he was such a nice man. I can't remember where he was working. Some years later, he started working as a custodian at the high school.

Margaret So he was like in his 40s when he drove you?

Anne I have no idea. But no.

Margaret Would he have been younger than that when he started picking you up?

Anne No, probably not. I think he was in his ...

Margaret That's good, though. That's a generosity that ...

Anne Oh, my goodness. That's what people did, you know. Then after that. Well, we bought that place in there and that was just wonderful. And that was Hans Armfelt got it, because it was some kind of Hodgkins, or Hopkins owned that, some old uncle and aunt of Helen's, I think it was. Some relation to Helen. And they wanted to sell it

because they were getting old, and he wanted to, or they wanted to move some place. And it was great for us because there was a place there to grow a garden.

Margaret There was a fair amount cleared on this land?

Anne Yeah, there were some. Like next to the road is where they planted all the spruce trees, where dad had strawberries. Oh, he used to work those strawberries. But, you know, he worked out for different people for a while. But you know what? He was 60 years old when we came. He was 22 years older than my mother. And he was, it just had to be too hard for him because people didn't want to hire a 60-year-old guy. He was in good shape, like my brother's [shape], 70 now, and he's strong as an ox, yet, that guy. And my dad was very much like that.

Anne But he worked for a guy that sort of built or repaired houses. I think he kind of, well it doesn't matter either, but he got dad got a few jobs. And in the summertime he was able to help farmers, eh, because there's stuff to do. But wintertime there wasn't. So he found a few odd jobs.

Margaret Like a carpenter?

Anne Yeah. And then I worked for, remember where the old Super "A" was, it's where the Husky garage is now. And that's where the Super "A" was, and that's where I went to work for them. Yeah, it was great.

Margaret And did your mom, then, when she got a job, work at the same place?

Anne No. She went and she got a job. I think she worked for Mary Philipzyk for a while. And then she got a job with Mrs. Hall, Richard Hall, and Halls, and there was another family that she worked for you see. She would do light housekeeping and wash clothes, and iron. And then after, I can't remember how long it was, but then Richard Hall built a concession corner into the theater that he owned. And he asked mom if she would want that job, and she was quite happy with that. Yeah, but she had another job in daytime because that was while the movie was on, eh.

Anne So I finished school and then I'm working for Mr. Hall and Mr. Evans. And I met Fred. I fell in love with Fred. And, then we got married in '52. My mom and dad couldn't afford to send me to the city. So I figured out that I have to stay around here. And then. Yeah, well, you know, you start thinking different when you fall in love with somebody, eh?

Margaret You try to bring your two points of view together.

Anne Yeah, you know. So the time went and... my dad was happy when we bought that place up there because he had some, now he owned something. And, you know, it was hard for him. I know it was especially hard for him because in Denmark, he was the boss. He was the one deciding, you work over there, you work over there, you work here.

Margaret He had the money to pay out?

Anne He had the money to pay you. He could pay these guys for working on a farm with us. I don't know how many acres we had, but it was nowhere near the amount of acres that they have here. But we had a working farm. That's where I learned how to milk cows by hand. Feed pigs. Oh, my gosh, I haven't thought about this for years and years.

Margaret But those skills then that you learned in Denmark did you well, as a young married woman in a rural area?

Anne Oh, yeah. And we got married. And we moved in with Fred's mom and dad. Fred wanted to build just a little house. In those days, you don't build a great big house when you get married. You just build a little thing, but we didn't even do that.

Anne Fred bought the nails. He had three kegs of nails. Remember those wooden crates? And then his mom and dad said, "No, don't build a house. We're going to move to town next spring." But that didn't happen. I think, I know Fred's mom was not feeling all that good. She actually died when she was 62 years old from kidney failure. She told me one time that she had been feeding, pigs, probably. She was carrying two, five-gallon pails of chop. And she stepped on a frozen piece of manure in the barnyard, and she fell down and she hurt her back really badly. And she said it used to hurt so bad, but the doctors couldn't figure out what it was. But then in years to come, they figured it out, and it was because when she passed away, she died from kidney failure. And they found out then, because I think they we're going to operate. They found out then that her one kidney was completely gone and the other one was failing. And in those days of no transplant or anything, you know. So I really felt sad for her because that was too young, 62, even in those days, eh?

Margaret And how old was she when you and Fred got married?

Anne Well, she died in '58. And we were married in '52. And in '58, she was 62. So she must have been, 56.

Margaret Did she, did the four of you live in your in-laws' [house] for those six years?

Anne Yeah.

Margaret And then did your father-in-law continue living with you?

Anne Yeah.

Margaret You must have had children by that time.

Anne Yeah. We did.

Margaret How many kids would you have by the time, before you were alone in a house? Did you have them all before you were alone in your own house?

Anne Uh. Let me see. Jeff was born in '65.

Margaret Oh, so he wasn't born yet?

Anne '65, Brenda was born in '62, Diana in '59, Alison, '56 and Ken in '53.

Margaret So just Alison and Ken, then?

Anne Yeah.

Margaret And after that you got your own place?

Anne No, no, Fred's dad moved out.

Margaret Oh, I see.

Anne Yeah. No, we kept on living in that house for years.

Margaret Did your father-in-law, then, go to town, and live in town?

Anne Yeah, he did. He went to town for a while and then he actually moved to Calgary for a while. Well, he knew people. You know, I don't know. I never did really know what he did. Some people are not, they don't communicate too well, you know. And I think it had a lot to do with the fact that I wasn't Ukrainian. But I don't know, I made out okay, because I could milk cows, and I could clean the barn.

Margaret Well and probably Fred's mother then would teach you Ukrainian cooking?

Anne I helped her, yeah, and I did learn, you know. I just felt sad, you know, because, I mean, the house was ... well, but nobody in those days really had a fancy house anyhow. You know, everything was very plain. And other young people lived with their in-laws too for a while, before they got their own.

Margaret And when you went out to work, I know that you worked for some time in the hospital.

Anne Oh, that was after we were married. I didn't start working in the hospital until '71.

Margaret So all your children were born by then?

Anne Yeah. For a while, we actually went to work at the auction mart. Because Lena Dulaska needed somebody to help her. I wrote cheques out for her and then she would sign them. I would figure out, ok, so this guy sold a cow for so much, or 10 cows for so much a pound. I would figure it out and write it down. And so she would sign the cheques. That was good because I like math; again there, you know, I was able to do it. Yeah, and Fred helped with, there was a pig barn down the road, he was able to help there. So, yeah, we worked. But that was only once a week. But there again, we brought a little extra money in, and you didn't have to pay \$150.00 for a pair of running shoes. You would get it for \$5.00 and less. And the kids never said anything. They didn't say "I want that kind of running shoe, or those jeans."

Margaret There wasn't the advertising to cause the desire.

Anne No. The kids. I really tried. I sewed a lot for the girls. I liked them to look nice when they went to school.

Margaret Did you sew dresses or pants?

Anne Dresses.

Margaret Always dresses?

Anne Yeah.

Margaret For school?

Anne Yeah, for school. But they had to take them off when they came home, and put some everyday clothes on. But, you know, one day went after the other. We had enough food to feed the kids. There was one winter. Well, Fred always used to get a moose in those days. And one winter, he got a big cow. And old, it must have been a real old cow because we decided we had to have it all ground. You know, ground meat, and that was even tough, you know. But I don't know how many different ways of moose hamburger I cooked. I've asked the kids if they could remember. And Alison said, "Well, not particularly, because I don't ever remember being hungry." You know, I mean, so as I said we all always had enough to eat and even that winter, and I think they ground it up more than once. They put it through the grinder more than once. But, hey, you know what? There's lots of ways you can cook hamburger. And we used to go picking blueberries and cranberries. Way out west, you know, south of your mom and dad's in those hills. Not your mom and dad's.

Margaret My in-laws?

Anne Yeah, your in-laws. In those hills there.

Margaret Out past Baptiste Lake?

Anne Yeah, and south.

Margaret West and south of Baptiste Lake?

Anne Yeah. And there was Jane, and there was Lucy, and Josephine. And all our kids, we'd go on a weekend out there. Bring a lunch and pails. Pick blueberries and cranberries. So we had blueberry jam and cranberry jam. And then, we had a garden. And I would make pickles, relish, I made a relish that the kids always just about gobbled up. But it was good. So, you know, you have meat and you've got lots of vegetables, potatoes and turnips, and whatever else you plant in the garden, you know. We had enough to eat.

Margaret And what would you have to buy, here? Like you'd have to buy flour?

Anne Flour and sugar.

Margaret Salt, I suppose?

Anne But you know what? In those days. I have something in one of my albums, how much sugar and those things were. It wasn't a heck of a lot. You could buy five pounds of butter for five cents.

Margaret Oh, price wise?

Anne Price wise. But I don't think we bought butter because we milked cows, you know?

Margaret And would you sell the butter then?

Anne I don't think we had enough. I think here we probably milked three or four cows. They had cattle, but not milk cows, eh. So I remember us making butter. That's something I'd never done in Denmark. So I learned from these people too, you bet I did. But I should have been a Ukrainian girl.

Margaret According to your in-laws?

Anne Yeah.

Margaret But your husband was happy with this Danish girl?

Anne Yeah, that's why I guess he. Well, you know, why do people fall in love? I don't know. It just sort of happens, doesn't it?

Margaret It's not always logical, right?

Anne Yeah. So, I mean, that changed my life. It did. But I was quite content. I was, you know, I was.

Margaret Well, between the two of you, you provided for your children.

Anne Yeah, we had enough. We didn't have too much overflowing, but we had just enough. And then Fred had a job. When we got married he had a job grading the roads here. There was no gravel past here. I can't remember when the pavement came here.

Margaret But there was a grader, like a machine called a grader?

Anne Yeah, it was an Allis-Chalmers grader, and it had the wheels to lift the blade up and down. No cab on it. I remember in those days that we had Army and Navy in Edmonton and they had flier's suits. Sheepskin pants and jackets, and a hat. And we had sent to Army and Navy. He might have gone in to buy it. But they were good, nice and warm, really warm. You know, you had the fuzzy part inside. And the smooth part on the outside. So he was warm when he was on [the grader]. Well, you had to be! It was winter and not like now.

Margaret And it would block the wind as well.

Anne Yeah, it would block the wind. And then he, in the wintertime, he kind of built a little caboose around the steering and those wheels.

Margaret To keep his face too out of wind?

Anne Well, I think it did stop it a little bit. So, yeah, one year goes by after the other, and the kids grow up and see, Jeff is, between Ken and Jeff, there's 11 years. Because Ken was in grade 12 when Jeff started grade one. So I don't know how we were able to space them like we did.

Margaret Probably wasn't intentional, just the way things happened.

Anne Yes, that's the way it happened. Oh, my goodness. Yeah, but we sure did have fun on the weekends here because there were dances in the halls, and we would go down to Baptiste Lake when Doug um ... What's his name? Sharon Kump's dad?

Margaret It's not coming to you right now.

Anne No, it isn't either. Wasn't his name, or was his name, no it was Doug.

Margaret Hazel Harold. Harold?

Anne Harold, Doug Harold. Yeah. So there were dances down there, and we would go there. Across the road where Noelck's had their cabins there. There was another little hall. So, yeah, you know, we went out and it was fun. I loved to dance. So did a lot of other young people, too.

Margaret Right, and there'd be a band of some sort?

Anne Yes, there was a band. And you know, they would play until, as long as people were dancing, they would play. Sometimes until 2:00 or 3:00 in the morning.

Margaret And would there be groups that would be considered a band? Or would people who just knew how to play come?

Anne I think just some of the guys that loved to play, you know. George Philipzyk was one that played the saxophone. Mind you, that was later, you know. Well, when we were first married, we used to go out too. But then it becomes harder when you have kids. I remember one time we wanted to go to a dance some place. And we got Elsie Witiuk, that's Michael's older sister. We got her to babysit Kenny. And of course when you want to go someplace, that kid's not going to sleep, eh? I had fed him, he was fine. And Elsie came, and my mom and dad had bought me a baby carriage. Really nice one. And we said, "Well, if he doesn't want to go to sleep, walk him in the carriage." Well.

Margaret Just in the house?

Anne No, outside. It was, it must have been summertime. And I used to put them out in the sun. I mean, not full sun to sleep in daytime. So yeah, he wouldn't. We came home from the dance and he still wasn't sleeping! I think he knew that his mom and dad weren't home.

Margaret Was he crying?

Anne Well he was crying, off and on. He just wouldn't sleep. Eyes wide open. Those were the days.

Margaret And then did she come back to babysit ever?

Anne Oh yeah.

Margaret It didn't bother her then.

Anne No, no. They were happy. I don't think we paid them very much, but we did pay her. But I don't know how much, it was next to nothing.

Margaret But it was a little bit of money then.

Anne That was hers, yeah. She was a very nice girl. She grew up and got married, and had a couple of kids. And trained as a nurse after she'd had the kids, after the kids grew up, some. She trained as a nurse, she was working at the U of A. And, she was, ER, uh, cardiac, something like that.

Margaret Just for the sake of the record, just tell when your children were born, like what year. Month and day, so that they've kind of, everybody's got a feeling for the people that you've mentioned in this.

Anne Okay. Fred and I got married June 26, 1952. Ken, our oldest was born August 30, 1953. Our second one, Alison was born January 13, on a Friday, 1956. Diana was born August 4, 1959. Brenda was born May 22, 1962, and Jeff was born January 22, 1965. And yeah, they're all grown up now and we have 10 grandchildren. And some of them got partners already.

Margaret No great grandchildren?

Anne Yes, we have two great grandchildren. That's Ken's grandchildren, a little boy and little girl. Kevin married a very delightful little Japanese girl, and they have these two children.

Margaret And they live in Alberta?

Anne They live in Alberta.

Margaret So we'll end with that. Thank you very much, Anne, it was good.

Anne Well, thank you. I think I probably stumbled around a few times.

Margaret Very nice.

[End of Interview]

Machine transcribed by: trint.com
Edited by: Jan Thiessen
Proof-read by: Cecile Fausak

March, 2021