

**Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project  
Transcription of Anne Vincent-001.mp3**

[http://digiport.athabasca.ca/aasmp/people/a\\_vincent.htm](http://digiport.athabasca.ca/aasmp/people/a_vincent.htm)

Narrator: Anne Vincent  
Interviewer: Agnes Wurfel  
March 22, 2017

[Start of Interview]

**Agnes** My name is Agnes Wurfel. I am interviewing Anne Vincent for the Athabasca Seniors' History Project. We are at Century Villa. It's now in the morning of March 22 of the year 2017. Okay, and what is your full name?

**Anne** Anna Pollmann Vincent.

**Agnes** And your maiden name?

**Anne** Oh, my maiden name is Pollmann.

**Agnes** Your father's full name?

**Anne** Joseph Pollmann.

**Agnes** And your mother's full name?

**Anne** That's her maiden name?

**Agnes** That would be, I think her full name; married name.

**Anne** Anna Pollmann.

**Agnes** And your date of birth?

**Anne** May 13, 1926.

**Agnes** Your place of birth?

**Anne** Mor, Hungary. M-O-R, Hungary.

**Agnes** So Anne, then, you're going to begin by telling me about your childhood a little bit.

**Anne** Well we came to Canada in 1928 and we went to a farm north of Vermillion where my father was employed, because he came a year before we did. And then, eventually, my two brothers were born. And when my youngest brother was born, my mother had postpartum depression, and was in a mental institution and never came home from that.

**Agnes** So then, Anne, you had a very hard beginning in your very early childhood. So what do you remember about your mom? Do you remember anything about your mom at all?

**Anne** I just remember she was a very loving, kind person and she used to come every night and pray with me before I went to bed. And she always looked after other people and she looked after... She was cooking at the place where we were staying, where my dad was employed. And she looked after the boy's father, who was an invalid, and she looked after him as well.

**Agnes/Anne** So, then your dad was left with four children very close together in age. [Yes.] And then, your mother was employed there to look after an invalid. So then, there was no reason for him to stay there anymore. [That's right.] So what happened?

**Anne** He bought his own farm at that time; he had made enough money to buy his own farm. And at that time, you could get a farm fairly cheap, because if you cleared so much land every year, the government helped kind of to pay for the farm. The government gave you a certain amount of land for clearing some of the property.

**Agnes** So then, when did you start school?

**Anne** I was eight years old when I started school. I had about two miles to walk to school and I would have had to go alone, but my neighbors came the first year and they used to come by our place and pick me up then. And I learned to ride horses when I was very young; I was riding horses when I was four. So in winter, I was able to ride to school, which is great. And once the horse got to know the routine, I didn't have to, you know...

**Agnes** To guide him; he knew the way.

**Anne** It knew the way; it just went to the school and back.

**Agnes** He knew it was his job.

**Anne** Yeah. I didn't have to direct it at all.

**Agnes** And you had a good relationship with that horse.

**Anne** Oh, yes. Yeah.

**Agnes** You loved it.

**Anne** I loved the horse, yes. I loved horses.

**Agnes** So, what school was that that you went to?

**Anne** That was named Optimist, the school.

**Agnes** Was it a country school?

**Anne** It was a country school. And I had the best teacher in the world. Her name was Miss Elliott. I will never, never forget her. She spent so much time because I couldn't speak a word of English when I started school.

**Agnes** And you started school kind of late.

**Anne** I started school late and I passed; yeah, like Grade 1 and 2 the first year. That's how good my teacher was.

**Agnes** Well, you were also a good little student.

**Anne** I loved school. I loved going to school. I didn't want to go home.

**Agnes** How many students were there in that school?

**Anne** Oh, gosh, I can't remember. Probably, maybe 10 or 15.

**Agnes** So it was a small country school.

**Anne** It was a country school and it was from Grade 1 to 9.

**Agnes/Anne** So you were privileged, in a sense, to go to school in a small school where the teacher could give you a lot of attention? [Yes.] And she loved giving you attention, [Apparently!] Because you were probably a loveable child.

**Anne** Oh, I don't. Anyway, yes.

**Agnes** All right. So, from there on, what happened then?

**Anne** Well, then, I don't remember how long we were there, but we moved to another farm and went to school there and the name of the school there was Turkey Hill. About the same number of children, maybe a few more. But my teacher was not... sorry, I shouldn't say that, but my teacher was not as good as the one I had.

**Agnes** So, they couldn't help you then.

**Anne** They couldn't. Yeah, so, I got kind of left behind in a sense, because I didn't feel I was getting the schoolwork that I wanted to do because I was way ahead of the other children there. So sometimes I had to do something because the teacher knew that I knew more than they were teaching at that level, grade. Sometimes he would put me into a higher grade, you know, to get things. And that sort of confused me a bit. So, eventually I just stayed as it was. I just went from one grade to the other, I didn't gain any or stay ahead.

**Agnes** Did you read a lot then?

**Anne** I loved reading. I always loved reading. Yeah. Every chance I got, I would read. I remember reading Lenin.

**Agnes** Oh, the book.

**Anne** Lenin, when I was quite young. Well, when we came to this country, we came from a communist country, I guess, I don't know. But my father was the secretary of this party and war broke out. And then he really worried about that because this is not what he wanted. That was not his intention. He thought what they were doing was okay; he didn't realize that maybe they shouldn't have been doing it. And I remember packing up all these books and burying them. And I still know where he buried them and often wished I could have gone back and got them. You know, I'd like to have seen just what was all in the books.

**Agnes** All right, so after Turkey Hill, what was your last grade there in Turkey Hill?

**Anne** I was in Grade 4 because we weren't there that long. Then, we moved to another place. Gosh, and I can't remember the name of the school, now. Just slipped my mind.

**Agnes** I don't think it matters.

**Anne** Okay. We moved to another school, which was really good; We had some really good teachers there.

**Agnes** And, again, it was a country school?

**Anne** It was a country school and that was the last school that I went to. I got to as far as Grade 9, but never got to write my Grade 9. I shouldn't say. My Grade 8! Sorry. And then, from there, we went to St. Mary's Home.

**Agnes** You were moved to...

**Anne** St. Mary's Boys' Home and I stayed with the sisters in their quarters because they didn't want to separate the three of us. Because my brothers were there. It was actually a boys' home, not for girls. And anyway, from there, I went to a place called Huxley to some foster parents. And my brothers came to Meanook, here.

**Agnes** So what were you doing at Huxley? Why were you taken to Huxley?

**Anne** I don't know; nobody ever told me why I went there, I was just a foster child. But I turned 15. I got there about the first part of May. And because I was 15, the 13th of May, then I didn't have to go to school, and nobody sent me to school from there. And I was very sad about that because I really wanted to go to school. I never got to write my Grade 9 exam because of it.

**Agnes** So, then at Huxley, you were a companion for the wife?

**Anne** I felt like I was the companion. I really don't know what I was supposed to be, but I was there but doing absolutely nothing.

**Agnes** She was a wealthy lady.

**Anne** Yes. She was related to the... in the States, he was...

**Agnes** He was an executive of an oil company.

**Anne** Yes, he was. And his office was in Calgary. So he only came home on weekends and she was alone on the farm with the children.

**Agnes** How many children?

**Anne** Well, when I came there, they only had one, and the in-laws lived across the road from where we were.

**Agnes** So, then at that age you had already, you probably had leaned towards wanting a certain profession or something. What was that you were leaning towards?

**Anne** I wanted to be a nurse all my life. From the very time I was very little, that's what I wanted to be.

**Agnes** Can you tell me some of the things that happened there that you felt while you were being that companion?

**Anne** Well, we didn't do very much, you know. We had teatime across at her in-laws every afternoon which is kind of a social gathering. Everybody came in, including the hired men, everybody. And we spent an hour having tea. But I drank my tea very fast because they had a library in their living room. And so I would sneak away and read a book while they were having tea! And eventually they didn't know I was reading a book. Eventually I got some of the books that I read.

**Agnes** All right. And at one time you told me that there was one exciting time there, while you were living there. Farm Young People's Week? Or something like that?

**Anne** Oh, yes. I got to go to Edmonton to Farm Young People's Week, which was wonderful. And I really enjoyed that. They taught us cooking and just different things, you know, and we had social gatherings, we had a dance and things like that.

**Agnes** So you made friends.

**Anne** That was fun, yes.

**Agnes** You made life-long friends.

**Anne** Yes, I did. Yes. That was lots of fun.

**Agnes** All right. So, from there on, after that. You stayed there until what age?

**Anne** I was 18. I wasn't allowed to leave until I was 18. And while I was there, by the way, I wrote several letters because I wanted to go to school. And I never, never heard from anyone.

**Agnes** So then you found out later that they had not received those letters.

**Anne** That they had not received the letters.

**Agnes** So, you don't know why that was, eh?

**Anne** No, I don't know. I may have had the wrong address, I don't know. I also wrote to the sisters, because I wanted to become a nun at that time, and they told me I was too young.

**Agnes** The nuns told you you were too young?

**Anne** Yes. Yeah, there were lots of nuns in those days.

**Agnes** Yes, that's right. Now, they wouldn't do that.

**Anne** No.

**Agnes** Okay. So, at 18 years of age, then something happened. What did you do? You went for a visit?

**Anne** My brother's foster parents found out where I was. And so they contacted me, and I went to visit them on the farm here.

**Agnes** To see your brothers. Because you must have missed your brothers.

**Anne** Oh, I did, because I had no idea where they were, and nobody seemed to worry about trying to find them for me or anything, and I had no way of contacting them. But they wanted to know where I was at and so they contacted me, and I went to visit them and they were wonderful people. They just took me in like family.

**Agnes** So, they took you in.

**Anne** Just like family, yeah. So, I stayed there for about a week and I knew I had to go to work. I mean, I couldn't stay there at 18; I had to do something. So, I went to Edmonton and they took me to a friend's place and I stayed with them and I babysat for a while and they found a job for me. And the lady there was Mrs. Patterson. They owned a funeral home in Edmonton. And she knew the director of nursing at the University Hospital and got me a job at the hospital as a ward aid. And I told the director of nursing that I really wanted to be a nurse, and eventually I went over to the Colonel Mewburn and so I got a job; like hands-on training, you know, like for practical nursing. And that's what I did eventually.

**Agnes** You worked there for how many years?

**Anne** I worked there for about a year and a half. And then there was an opening here at the hospital and I transferred to the hospital here in Athabasca.

**Agnes** You said you were in training more or less at the Colonel Mewburn Veterans Hospital?

**Anne** Yes.

**Agnes** And you learned a lot there.

**Anne** I did.

**Agnes** And how did you learn so much?

**Anne** Well, just like hands-on training. They would explain. They would do things and explain things to us. And we had sessions where they would teach us certain things.

**Agnes** So, did you stay there at the hospital or were you still in that home?

**Anne** No, I was renting a place about a block and a half from the hospital. And while I was there, I met a young girl at the hospital, and she was doing just a little bit of work; she was in training for a nurse. And she needed a place to stay, and she asked if she could stay at my place. Because she worked nights so she could stay at my place during the day and sleep, so we took turns; we had the same bed. But eventually my landlady didn't like that arrangement. And they were very good to me, those people, they stayed lifelong friends with me. And so she had to leave. But she was still taking the training and still going to school. So, she'd bring all these notes and I would read them. So, I learned more than they taught me at the hospital from her notes because she was actually taking nurse's training. So, I got a lot of information from that. So anyway, that's how I kind of educated myself a bit.

**Agnes** Well, that's great. Then you were in Meanook, and you said something about your foster parents there, and so what happened there?

**Anne** At Meanook? They really were not foster parents, they just took me in whenever I wanted to stay there.

**Agnes** Because your brothers were there.

**Anne** Because my brothers were there. I was just a guest.

**Agnes** They were foster children.

**Anne** Yes. When I came to work at the hospital here, they had the nurses' residence and I stayed in the nurses' residence here in Athabasca. So, on days off, I would go out to Meanook to MacDonell's and stay with them to visit. Or on days off when I could get a ride.

**Agnes** So how long did you work at the Athabasca Hospital as a practical nurse?

**Anne** Oh, I guess, well I was there until I was 21. So, that would have been about two and a half years.

**Agnes** So, what did you do for fun and all that, in Athabasca, at that time, and in Meanook? And you were working at the Athabasca Hospital and living at the nurses'

residence. So, can you tell us anything about what was going on, the social life in those days?

**Anne** Well, we used to go to dances once in a while and Father McMann's sister worked at the hospital and we got to be really good friends with Mickey McMann. And she loved the outdoors. And we used to go skiing and doing things like that in winter. We didn't do an awful lot. We were very tired because in those days we worked 12-hour shifts for two weeks, then got four days off. So, we were awfully tired. We didn't do an awful lot.

**Agnes** For the four days you rested.

**Anne** Yes, we rested. We didn't have much time to do other things. So, just occasionally, we would go out and do things. We'd visit friends that we had in town, you know, that we met. And often on days off, I would go to Meanook, you know, and I would help the MacDonells with farm work. I'd go out and break hay for him and stuff like that because I loved working with horses, things like that. Yeah. And he loved it. And you didn't think I could do such a thing. But I learned quite young to do that because we had to do that on the farm when we were quite young. My brother and I had to. We had to do harrowing and stuff like that. Yeah.

**Agnes** So, then something happened though, around that time when you were 21. Who did you meet?

**Anne** Oh, I met my husband, Leo Vincent, at a ballgame. Well, we used to go to ball games. Yes.

**Agnes/Anne** So, he was a retired; he was a veteran. [Yes.] He was a war veteran of the Second World War. [Yes.] In those days, there was glamor attached to having been a soldier, I think? Wasn't there?

**Anne** Well, I think it was, yes. I never really thought about it, but yes, I guess it was. He was in it for five years.

**Anne** In the Air Force. So, then he had...

**Anne** He was a mechanic in the Air Force.

**Agnes** You were pretty impressed by him.

**Anne** He was just a nice person. I never thought about it as a vet. He was just a very nice person.

**Agnes** A real gentleman.

**Anne** And he treated me, yes, he treated me as a gentleman all the time. He wasn't one to, like some men would want more than just being friends or someone, but he never. Yeah, anyway.

**Agnes** And he was handsome.



**Anne** Oh, yes, he was very handsome, too!

**Agnes** Okay. So, when did you get married then?

**Anne** We got married on February the 6th in 1947. And we moved to the farm, the LaBranche farm, and there was a store and post office there called Lahaieville.

**Agnes** Lahaieville, Alberta.

**Anne** Yes, that's what they had named it.

**Agnes** Okay, and you moved there. That was where Grosmont Hall is located right now is it? Around that area?

**Anne** Yes, about a quarter of a mile south of the farm. In fact, the farmland came right down across from the hall.

**Agnes** And was there a hall there at the time?

**Anne** The hall was there at that time. Oh, yes.

**Agnes** So it was a fairly big community then, a community of farmers.

**Anne** A community of farmers, yes.

**Agnes** So now that land would be pretty well lake property, would it be?

**Anne** The Hutterites own it.

**Agnes** The Hutterites own that land?

**Anne** Yes. They own all that land around there. Oh yes.

**Agnes** So that land, that was your husband's land.

**Anne** Yes, my in-laws are still there, but they just looked after the store and we bought the farm from my in-laws. And so we farmed and eventually they moved away and bought a store here in town, my in-laws did. You know LaBranches? And my brother-in-law bought the store out there, the store.

**Agnes** All right, so then you were there for quite a number of years because your children, that's where your children were born, right?

**Anne** Yes.

**Agnes** They were all born there?

**Anne** Yes, well, one was. Barry was born in Edmonton, the first one. I went to Edmonton because my doctor was in Edmonton.

**Agnes** He was born there, but you were on the farm?

**Anne** Yes, we were still on the farm. Now, we had our land. We got our land through the Veterans' Land Act at that time. And so we had to stay on the land for ten years, we couldn't leave in order to get it through the Veterans' Land Act. We had to be on it for ten years. And so we stayed there even though we lost three crops and couldn't pay for things. In those days we used to charge everything from spring until fall and pay everything off, you know, in the fall. And so when you didn't get a crop, well, you were really in dire straits at the time. So, my husband had to find a job for the winter, and he went to the Northwest Territories working for an oil company to pay the bills. So this happened three years in a row. And finally, after the ten years was up for the farm, we sold it to the Hutterites.

**Agnes** Yes. And you said something about that lady who in Huxley, or whatever, came to visit you?

**Anne** Yes, she came to visit me on the farm one time and my husband happened to be away and she said, "This is awful." She said, "You've got four kids, no running water, nothing." She said, "You can't stay here." She says, "If you don't move to town or get out, get off this place, you're coming back with me, coming home with me."

**Agnes** She was going to take all four children and take them with her?

**Anne** She was going to do something, she wasn't going to leave me there. So the next year, then, we moved to town for the winter. So from then on, we did.

**Agnes** So that woman was a very caring woman.

**Anne** Well, she was, yes. Yes, she was.

**Agnes** Okay. So, then you were back in Athabasca, and what did you do there? Where did you live and all?

**Anne** We lived in Mrs. Woods' house, it's just down the street here, for the winter. Yeah. But I wasn't doing anything. I just looked after the children. And two of the kids went to school here for a short time, for the winter. But Barry, we left him with Nevis, my sister-in-law who was a teacher here. Nevis LaBranche? I don't know if you ever got to meet her, but she was a teacher here and Barry stayed with them until the end of the school year so he wouldn't get interrupted. Because it would be too hard to keep moving back and forth to school, in different schools.

**Agnes** Okay, so, you said you were here in Athabasca; you were at this house and your oldest son was going to school. [Yes.] And he ended up staying with your sister-in-law [Nevis LaBranche, yeah.] in order to be able to finish school.

**Anne** Yes, because we had to move back to the farm in the spring again.

**Agnes** Oh, yes, okay. So you had to go back to the farm?

**Anne** Yes. So, we just moved here for the winter months.

**Agnes** But you sold your livestock and all that because you had animals on the farm, right? For you to leave that farm for the winter, you had to get rid of your animals.

**Anne** Not all of them, because Junior Fix used to go out and look after things once in a while. He would go out to the farm because he had some of his cattle on our farm. So he would take care of things in the wintertime. But we did get rid of some things. Yes. We got rid of the milk cows and stuff like that.

**Agnes** So you ended up getting a few good crops from that farm, eventually?

**Anne** No, we sold the farm then after the third. We were there for the three years. The last three years we were there, we didn't get a crop because we were hailed out and a drought also. We did get some crop, but not enough to really, you know, amount to anything. So that's when we decided to sell the farm because the ten years was up, and we were allowed to leave.

**Agnes** So by the time you got rid of that farm and permanently moved in town, your children were of school age were they? [Yes.] They were all of school age. And what school did they go to?

**Anne** No, not quite. No, not quite. Duanne was not going to school yet.

**Agnes** So then you got busy. You did a lot of things, didn't you? You started working in the hotel. The kitchen in the hotel?

**Anne** No, I wasn't in the hotel. I used to go over and get the laundry from the hotel, which is just across the street. Because we lived right downtown where Gina has the... that was Mom and Dad's store.

**Agnes** Gina's place?

**Anne** You know where Gina has the hairdressing shop?

**Agnes** Yes. I go there. She is my hairdresser.

**Anne** Yeah, well, that belonged to my, that was my in-laws' store. They had the general store there. And so we just lived across the street from the hotel, you might say, I used to go there about 4:30 every morning, get the laundry and do that. And I also got a job at the local hospital. I went to work. So at 3 in the afternoon, every afternoon after the laundry was done, I'd go and work at the hospital from 3 to 11.

**Agnes** You also worked at Dr. Wright's and Dr. Brown's Medical Clinic?

**Anne** Yes, I did. Yes. Because, in between, I can't remember the dates, but I quit that job eventually, and then I went to work at Dr. Wright's and Dr. Brown's office, off and on, to help out.

**Agnes** So, Dr. Wright was very kind to you, and he got you a job managing the Salvation Army.

**Anne** Yes, when it came in, that was 1940s. 1964, I think. And so, I was there for two and a half years, three, maybe? I'm not quite sure. And I got rheumatic fever and I couldn't work. So, I was laid up for about a year and a half where I couldn't work. And then I went back to work at the, I'm not sure.

**Agnes** At the Athabasca Hospital?

**Anne** I went to work at the hospital, that's right, yes, and that's when the... At that time they had a school for practical nursing and that's when the CNAs started to work. And so we were demoted to cleaning and I quit my job because that's not what I wanted to do. So then I went back to work for Dr. Wright's office.

**Agnes** I see. Then you started with correspondence courses?

**Anne** While I was working at the hospital, I was taking correspondence courses, yes. And so, I finished all to about 11 and a half. And then we moved to Edmonton, and I had a job I started working on. I had like several jobs working at Christmas time, you know, the Christmas rush. And then I answered an ad in the paper at the Baker Clinic and I managed to get the job there. And it was just too much; the days were too long because I had to drive there or take a bus. And by the time I got back, I couldn't carry on with my correspondence. So, I didn't finish Grade 12.

**Agnes** I saw you also took a bookkeeping course.

**Anne** Oh, yes, at Edwin Parr, I took an evening bookkeeping course, and I got my certificate. I still have it.

**Agnes** And that was very helpful for you.

**Anne** Oh, yes, because I could do my husband's books because my husband was in the water and sewer business here. And that's why I moved to Edmonton because he got a job in water and sewer in Edmonton. And my husband was quite ill most of the time because he was a severe diabetic. And sometimes his memory, because, like, his blood count was out of order, his memory wasn't great all the time. You know, and so he made some mistakes. And one of them was we ended up going bankrupt, we lost everything. We didn't have enough money to really fight the case, so he just walked away from it and walked away from me as well. Because he was so upset that he felt he couldn't provide for me. So I was on my own.

**Agnes** And when did that happen; when did you all of a sudden find yourself on your own?

**Anne** That would be about '73, I think, somewhere in there.

**Agnes** So that's when you started getting, you got a job at the Baker Clinic?

**Anne** Yes, it was 1970. Yes, '72 or '73 that I got a job at the Baker Clinic in pediatrics. And I asked for a job as a receptionist, and I was only there a week and they made me a medical assistant for all six doctors with the help of nurses. What the nurses couldn't do I would do. And that was like taking information before the doctor saw... like just doing a sort of a short bio, medical bio. So the doctors could read it before the patient went in because that gave them time to know what questions to ask. And so that's what I was doing there, and I would like do blood pressure and things like that. The doctors also did it when they saw the patients.

**Agnes** So, they liked you a lot there at Baker Clinic, and you liked the job, didn't you?

**Anne** Oh, I loved the job. The best job I ever had. I loved it. Yeah.

**Agnes** You were well paid?

**Anne** Yes. And everybody was so nice. Yeah. But I couldn't make a go of it in Edmonton, I couldn't save any money even though I was paid well at that time. You know, like wages weren't that high then like they are now.

**Agnes** So, what schools were your children going to in Edmonton?

**Anne** Oh, none of them. They were all finished by then. Duanne was the only one and he quit school. He was dyslexic and he had a lot of trouble in school. He just could not. I don't know what we could have done for him, but, you know. Like a B could be a D to him, he wasn't sure which was which. He didn't see the things right, he couldn't make it out. And so eventually they put him in a... I don't know. They had a teacher that made him write things. Instead of like, say, "phone," they made him spell phone with an F. And then he was really confused. So, he just got so confused, he didn't want to go to school anymore and he quit. And so, he was still with us but he found a job. He found a job in the Northwest Territories. And so, he was back and forth with us, he was the only one. But none of them went to school in Edmonton except Leanne went to Alberta College and she took a secretary course there.

**Agnes** Okay, so then, you said that you couldn't really make a go of it at the Baker Clinic because you couldn't put away money. You couldn't really...

**Anne** I mean, I could live okay, but I couldn't save any money. I didn't make enough because rent and transportation and food and just other things, you know, just normal things that you do every day. It was taking most of my money and I just could not save. I could save a little bit, but not enough. And of course, my husband didn't have any money. He couldn't leave any for me either. And being that he was so ill, he couldn't support me anymore, either, because he had trouble supporting himself.

**Agnes** So, where was he living at the time?

**Anne** We had a cabin at Baptiste Lake and he went and lived there. Yes. And we always stayed with friends. But anyway, so my daughter said to me one day, "Mom," she says, "you know, you're a very good cook." She said, "I could get you a job cooking in camps. You know, they pay pretty good wages." So, I thought, well, I'll

give it a try. I'll try that. So this is what I did. Reluctantly, I handed in my resignation and I just about cried when I had to do that. But because they accepted me immediately, they wanted me to come right away. There was a shortage of people in camps at that time. So, I worked for Forestry and Associates for two years. And then an engineer came in one day and he said, "What are you doing in a camp like this?" He said, "I can get you a better job than this." So he did and I started working directly. He got me a job working directly for the oil companies and my wages tripled. And also, I could stay... like when I was with Forestry and Associates, we were traveling back and forth every two weeks, we could work two weeks and get a week home, and fly. And I wasn't enjoying flying back and forth that often. And so with the oil company, I managed to stay all winter. I'd go in the fall and stay until spring. And so, my wages went directly to the bank. And in 10 to 12 years, I had enough money to pay cash for our house.

**Agnes** So, you bought a house in Athabasca?

**Anne** I bought a house, yeah. First of all, I moved back here and rented a place at the apartments down here, and from there, then I found this house just down the street here across from Bulmer's. And so, I had that \$40,000 in the bank and I was getting 18 and a half percent interest on it, and I locked it in for three years. So, I wanted to take it out and the bank manager said, "No." Because in the meantime, the interest rates had gone way down. I was getting \$450 of interest a month on this \$40,000. He said, "We will lend you the money." So, they lent me the \$40,000 to buy the house and I was paying \$240 interest and I was still making money on my money at that time. So it was a pretty good deal.

**Agnes/Anne** It was a good deal. They were smart. They helped you. [Yeah.] Okay. So, then you ended up working at the Burger Bar at Baptiste Lake for a while. You were a good cook. You loved to cook.

**Anne** I loved to cook. So, in the summer, you see, the companies could only stay until March because once roads got bad they couldn't come out. So, they shut down for the summer. And so the Burger Bar was available, and I thought, well, I'd give it a try. So, I did. So in May, I would start on the 24th of May at Baptiste Lake, and I rented that for about three years. From the Zazula family, and they kind of helped me along and what I should do and not do because it was their Burger Bar, their property.

**Agnes** And you enjoyed that.

**Anne** I enjoyed it, yeah. And actually made money!

**Agnes** And there were people meeting there for coffee and for lunch and all that.

**Anne** Yes. And I was also fortunate there was a construction crew there and they ate all their meals at my place, so that was nice.

**Agnes** So you made a good profit there?

**Anne** Yes, I did quite well. But I used to get up at 4:30 in the morning and made perogies.

**Agnes** Well, that helps! Like, you were a worker, a real worker. You struggled for a large part of your life, but you worked hard.

**Anne** Oh, I did. Oh, yes, I really did. Yeah.

**Agnes** And that was therapeutic, to a degree, wasn't it?

**Anne** Well, I think it was because I knew I had to do it in order to be able to survive when I got older, and I wouldn't have to worry about money. And, I knew, I don't know, I just had an instinct. I knew what people liked so I cooked stuff that I knew that people would eat or liked. And so I knew that perogies would go over well. So perogies and sausages?

**Agnes** Yes. In this community, it goes over very well.

**Anne** It did. And I always had a pot of soup on.

**Agnes** Okay. So, one of the things that I noticed is you belonged to the Art Club for a while and you're quite an artist. Where did you learn?

**Anne** I was always good in school. The teacher used to take me when I was very young. I could draw before I went to school. I could draw birds. I was very good at art when I was young. And so, my teacher used to take my artwork to the Vermillion Fair and I would get ribbons. I don't know whatever happened to them, but they gave me ribbons for my artwork. But then, I lost the knack because if you don't keep it up, you somehow forget how to do things for many years. But when they had the art, when Hazel Berrea was teaching art at the school at the Brick School, I decided to join. And so, I started learning all over again. I'm not a good artist but I enjoy doing it.

**Agnes/Anne** And you enjoyed the ladies who were taking part? [Yes.] And some of the men. Some men also were part of the art club.

**Anne** Yes. So, I was there, I think. Well, for quite a few years, actually. Gosh, it must have been three or four years anyway. And then I joined the Bridge Club. I belonged to that for quite a few years.

**Agnes** So, where did you learn to play bridge?

**Anne** At my foster parents', they played bridge.

**Agnes** In Meanook?

**Anne** No, no, at Huxley.

**Agnes/Anne** At Huxley. Okay, so, they played bridge. [Yes.] So, that's something you've got there that you enjoy. You learned to play bridge.

**Anne** Well, when she made lunch, I used to take her hand and that's how I learned to play bridge. They continued playing.

**Agnes** Oh, so, while she was preparing lunch, you would go out there.

**Anne** And it taught me how to play.

**Agnes/Anne** You take over. [Yes.] And bridge is an interesting game.

**Anne** It is an interesting game. I loved it. Yeah.

**Agnes** Yes. And you were a good partner.

**Anne** Yeah. And there were quite a few years. Kay Shaw was one of them, you know. Yeah. And I did Meals on Wheels for oh, for 18 years, at least.

**Agnes** Oh my goodness!

**Anne** Yeah. With the help of Margaret Stiles. Yeah.

**Agnes** So, you were living at Baptiste Lake for quite a while. You had a house there at Baptiste Lake?

**Anne** Just a cabin. Yes.

**Agnes** Then you ended up buying a house in town.

**Anne** Yes. Well, I still had the house in town when I went back out to the lake. But he sold the cabin and then put a trailer on it. We had two lots there and put a trailer on it and I lived in that, in the trailer.

**Agnes** At Baptiste Lake?

**Anne** At Baptiste Lake. And we sold the cabin, the log cabin that my husband built.

**Agnes** Oh, your husband had built that log cabin?

**Anne** Yes, we were the first ones out there at that end. It's this side of Loxam's.

**Agnes** So, your children spent many years, a lot of time, there at the cabin?

**Anne** Yeah. And they were sorry that one of them didn't get it because they'd love to have been out there now.

**Agnes** So, that was good, for the children to be brought up near a lake.

**Anne** Yes. They enjoyed it. Do you know where Loxams lived? [Yes.] Okay, we were just this side of Loxams' gate. Yeah. She used to come over, we used to visit each other quite a bit. Very nice person.



**Agnes** So then, you finally left Baptiste Lake, though, and why was that?

**Anne** Well, there was no point in me keeping both places. And I got asthma while I was there, and the doctor said that I needed to move from there because the dampness and the molds were not good for me. And I really couldn't afford to keep both places. So then I bought another house in town and that's the one I bought across from the Catholic Church there.

**Agnes** So, while you were bringing up your children and all that, do you want to say anything about what your concerns were about children in those days? What your fears were or anything like that?

**Anne** My children were quite resourceful. Like in summer, my children always worked, always had a job. And Leanne was supervising a playground that they had for children in the summer down by the river, there. There was an area there where they had swings and things. And she was supervising for the summer.

**Agnes** So, they were very much like you were. They have learned from you to be resourceful.

**Anne** I don't know, they just did it! We expected them to do it. And even in winter, or summer, they had to help the neighbors, you know, like the kids had to shovel the neighbor's sidewalk, you know, without pay. You know, they had to learn to volunteer to do things. And they still do. And so I didn't have too much trouble except the youngest one, I had some problems with Duanne. He seemed to have more problems. And he got into trouble several times, not realizing that he could do the things that he did.

**Agnes** So, Anne, I think that unless you have anything else to add, I think that you pretty well have summarized, have given a summary of your history.

**Anne** I don't know of anything else. I volunteered quite a bit. You know, it was 18 years I went helping with Mass at Extencicare and the Lodge, with the Father, and also the Auxiliary. At that time we used to go to the Auxiliary once a week as well, which I really enjoyed doing.

**Agnes** You were a devout Catholic and that was partly because of your mother, eh? Your mother had instilled that in you even at that very early age of four.

**Anne** I think so. But, you know, I was about six years old when my neighbors took me to church for the first time because Dad thought that religion had something to do with mother's illness. And so, he quit the church. But my neighbors took me to church one time. And I walked into the church and it was like going... for me, it was almost like going to heaven. I didn't want to leave. The church was so beautiful. I just wanted to stay there.

**Agnes** That was here in Athabasca?

**Anne** No, that was in Vermillion. I was quite young then. Yeah, I was only six at the time. But I never got to go to church again until I was in the home. Because, in the

boys' home, eh? Because we had mass there every morning, I had to get up every morning at 6 for mass and then off to school. And we had more praying to do when we got to church than like in the home, eh? Because it was a Catholic school we went to.

**Agnes** Yes. So, you enjoyed those sisters, they were kind to you?

**Anne** The sisters were so good to me. The only one that I was afraid of was Mother Superior. But I stayed with a... once in a while, I would stay with one of the cooks that stayed, that roomed at the, that was doing the cooking in the home? And I stayed with her. And it wasn't just foster children that went to that boys' home, but people that went on holidays used to leave their boys there from camps, okay? And there was an older boy there. And for some reason, I think he took a liking to me and apparently used to put notes under my door, which I didn't know. I should say, not my door, but the woman that I'd stay with, and the sister found the note before I did. And so I had to do some dusting. That was my punishment and I have no idea why? But I remember another time, the sister had a room right next door to the cook's room and anyway, I'd stand by the window and look outside because there was a sidewalk going right by. And it was during the war, and there were some soldiers going by and I got my head out the window, looking out, and they were asking me questions and I was answering them. And the sister came, Sister Superior came rushing in "Ladies do not talk through a window!" So, I was punished again.

**Agnes** That was a rule that I'd never heard of in all my many years of living!

**Anne** Now, I think it's funny, but I mean, she wasn't mean about it, she was just punishing me for doing things that weren't acceptable at that time. I don't know. There was so much emphasis on being a lady at one time. Like, my foster parents, every time I went out the door, it was always, "Don't forget to be a lady. Ladies never get into trouble!" Like I could because his brother was chaperoning me. Like, how could I get into trouble? And he was the one who would tell me who I could dance with and who I couldn't.

**Agnes** That was at in the home in Huxley?

**Anne** Yes. Oh, yes. It's funny. And I did go to a ball with a Wilford in June, in Calgary, and we got all dressed up and we were wearing gloves and everything, you know. And there, at that dance, they gave you a kind of a little slip of paper and the names were on there of the guys you could dance with.

**Agnes** Yeah. Didn't they ask for a dance with you and it was written on that little piece of paper, the name, and then it was all arranged? Prearranged. What dances you were...

**Anne** Yes. You knew exactly who you were [to dance with.]

**Agnes/Anne** The order in which you were going to dance. [Yes.] That's incredible, eh?

**Anne** It was different.

**Agnes** Was very different.

**Anne** There was such an emphasis on being a lady. Every Sunday, the tables were set properly with all the different cutlery on there and you had to know which exactly is used for each thing. So, I think it's funny, now. So, you know, I didn't get any schooling, but I learned a lot. I learned to play the piano, which I forgot because I never played it again. Like a lot of things, you know if you don't use it, you forget.

**Agnes** Were you getting lessons?

**Anne** Yes. She was a music teacher. She had clients that would come in and she would teach them.

**Agnes** So, she taught you on the side.

**Anne** So she taught me on the side. Yes. And when I left, she gave me a book and I lent it to someone, and I never got it back and I can't remember who the lady was that borrowed the book from me, so I never got it back. You know that I could practice on my own?

**Agnes** So you're privileged in many ways in having been exposed to all those things and learning so many things in life.

**Anne** I certainly was exposed to the elite, let's put it that way. But anyway, they were good to me, you know. They were good people to me. Like I say, and the sisters were very kind, very good. There was a little sister, Postina, that I really just loved; she was so nice. And a Father Michael, that's who I named Barry after, Barry Michael. He taught me catechism. He was a very nice priest and was very kind. And he taught me the Ten Commandments and different things, yeah.

**Agnes** Well, thank you very much!

[End of Interview]

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