

## Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project Transcription of Annie Wolanuk - 001.mp3

Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project

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Narrator: Anne Wolanuk

Interviewer: Mike MacLean

May 14, 2022

[Start of Interview]

**Mike** It's Saturday, May 14th, 2022.

**Anne** That's right.

**Mike** This is Mike MacLean and I am interviewing...

**Anne** Anne Wolanuk or Annie, whichever you prefer.

**Mike** You spell your name without an 'e'?

**Anne** Well, officially it's 'ie', but I made it shorter.

**Mike** I was corrected by Ann Martin. I'm pretty sure she said no, you don't add an 'e' on the end.

**Anne** Oh, I always like an 'e' on there. Just like, you know, like, what was her name?

**Mike** Was there a royal person?

**Anne** No. Anne of...

**Mike** Green Gables.

**Anne** That's right. Yeah, it had to be Anne with an 'e'.

**Mike** Well, how did we even end up here with an interview today? So we should describe how we have known each other.

**Anne** I just happened to move in next door to the MacLeans. Bought this house and it was good.

**Mike** So we're on 49th Street, and we could describe this street, because over the years, we've got to be good friends with some of the people on the street. You want to describe your neighbors?

**Anne** Well, they moved. Some of my good neighbors have moved away, but I was fortunate to have them for a while. The best.

**Mike** Well, let's try and come up with an idea over time a bit. Your immediate to the south neighbors are Cody and Alyssa Schmelzle and they've got a young family and Cody works with roofing and whatnot. Gee whiz, what's the fellow's name because they actually did our...

**Anne** Ah, Hyde.

**Mike** Hyde, Doug Hyde. They did our house last summer. Margaret's house was reshingled. Alyssa is working with Athabasca University. And the kids, they're just, when I pulled up today, one of their maybe older kids was out with ball hockey on the street, just like the old days.

**Anne** They're always out there playing.

**Mike** So now you go south of them and that's Shirley, right?

**Anne** Sharon Faragani.

**Mike** Yeah. Okay.

**Anne** You better have something. [Laughs] Can you talk and eat?

**Mike** Does she still have a dog?

**Anne** Tippy, yeah she's got Tippy. He comes to greet you every time if you just stop to say hello.

**Mike** And if you go across the street, we've got Lincoln and Sheena Wood, also with a young family.

**Anne** And Jack and Shirley Nixon.

**Mike** Jack and Shirley Nixon. Yeah. And I just want to say Jason Ponto and his spouse, Corinne, and they've got a newborn. Well, now a little older.

**Anne** They are up on the hill, aren't they?

**Mike** Well, they're right in the heritage home.

**Anne** Oh, are they in that one?

**Mike** And is it Anne Bruner who used to live there, the teacher? So it's a really nice older home, but it's been well-maintained and they're there. And in Lincoln and Sheena's house, it used to be Daisy Boven.

**Anne** Boven, yes, she was a very special lady, too. Yeah, but I was hoping when we moved in, we'd be having tea and visiting, but unfortunately she passed away.

**Mike** So now we keep coming along and we have Pat and Morley Breckenridge.

**Anne** And Nick and...

**Mike** Oh, geez. Yeah. Nick and Jean Kucher.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** And on the corner are we can't skip Joanne. Now what's her last name again?

**Anne** Mitchell.

**Mike** Mitchell and her two daughters have families in the area and she moved back here to be closer to the family.

**Anne** Well, one daughter works for the university.

**Mike** Jerrie Smith.

**Anne** Yeah, but I have met them.

**Mike** They're great.

**Anne** Yeah, I know. Like when you were here, you organized, I mean, did you call it a party?

**Mike** We did have a good block party. I would have to give most of the credit to mom at the time, though. She wanted to make sure for the town centennial that we blocked the street off. We had a party and I remember the weather was a little bit iffy.

**Anne** Still was okay. It turned out really good.

**Mike** If you remember, we started up the party. We had, um, the fellow that does the pig roast, that I think he's more or less retired from, but he had a special trailer.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** What was his name?

**Anne** Oh, don't ask me, for sure, Mike, I don't know.

**Mike** I'm thinking he was from Newfoundland originally, and they're still around and they go to the Legion quite a bit. And I should know his name, but he did the pig roast. But then one of the Kiselyk boys was in town, and he just happened to be in the area and he just kind of pulled in and he unloaded all kinds of drumming stuff. Do you remember?

**Anne** Oh, well, I remember, oh, dear, what's her name? She was doing the drums.

**Mike** Oh, Severna Bosik

**Anne** Yes. Right.

**Mike** Yes, she does still drum at some of the United Church services.

**Anne** That's good. And then there's some new people in the corner where Dustin and ...

**Mike** Right at the corner house there, Dustin and Katrina. And what was funny about them was that they were from the same town in Nova Scotia that we came from, which was just kind of weird to find out long after the fact.

**Anne** Yeah, well, they were good people too.

**Mike** Really cool.

**Anne** These people, her name is Lisa, but I don't know her last name. Lisa and I think Dennis.

**Mike** Lisa and Dennis.

**Anne** I think that's what... and anyway, she was walking her dog up here and she says, "Hi, I'm Lisa." I said, well, I've already met you, because they were just moving in and I was in the back alley there and she was loading up. She said, "We're just moving into that house on the corner."

**Mike** Well, it's a good block, because it's got a good mix of people. It's really fun to come along, as I come through and I see there's kids' bikes thrown around like kids do.

**Anne** That's right and kids playing.

**Mike** And you also have folks that, like yourself, really have nice properties. You guys like to grow things and you know, you've always been that way about your garden and everything around.

**Anne** I love growing things. Maybe that's in my genes, I don't know.

**Mike** Well, now we should talk about that. So you could describe that your family was based in Richmond Park, right?

**Anne** Well, I was born in Smoky Lake, and I was five years old when we moved.

**Mike** So do you have memory of Smoky Lake?

**Anne** Yeah, a little.

**Mike** For the record, do you mind stating the year that you were born in Smoky Lake?

**Anne** 1935.

**Mike** 1935. A good, clean number, you can remember that.

**Anne** I wonder how my mom had time. A busy time of the year, but anyways.

**Mike** So 1935 and Smoky Lake. Like you wouldn't have known at the time, obviously, but how would a birth happen?

**Anne** Oh, the four of us, my two older brothers and myself and my younger sister, we were all born with the midwife in a little hut.

**Mike** Did you ever know the name of the midwife who delivered you?

**Anne** I think it was Mrs. Sanaferanchan. Can you pronounce it?

**Mike** I'll leave that to you.

**Anne** Okay. So I think, I'm not sure.

**Mike** And did you meet her?

**Anne** Oh, yeah. Later on, but of course, she's long gone.

**Mike** But she would have delivered quite a few babies in her time.

**Anne** Yeah, I think she did.

**Mike** Did she deliver most of your siblings?

**Anne** Just the two older brothers, and myself and my younger sister. Then we moved over to Crust, you want to call it Pleasant View. Then, of course, my mom, seven years later they had another family. And then they were in the hospital, Athabasca Hospital.

**Mike** This is the name of the midwife who delivered you and some of your siblings in Smoky Lake. That's S-A-N-A-F-E-R-A-N-C-H-A-N. And so I wonder, not knowing a lot about naming conventions, but Cherniwchan and...

**Anne** Sanaferanchan.

**Mike** So there's a similar way of saying a name there, right? Okay, cool. And so you would have met her, how old were you? I'm just curious.

**Anne** Well, when we went back for a visit.

**Mike** At what point were you, like, aware that this is the woman who helped my mom give birth? Like, did you have that kind of idea?

**Anne** Not really. Only what mom said, that she was the one that delivered us.

**Mike** Do you remember anything about her in particular?

**Anne** Oh, she was a big lady, I remember that. Anyways, I remember when we moved over to the homestead, I was five years old.

**Mike** So. You were five. Do you remember that kind of feeling of we're moving and this is where we're going to live?

**Anne** I barely remember moving, but yeah, I do remember staying overnight at Boyle somewhere, in this, it wasn't a very nice place. We had, I think, a bunk bed with straw or hay, and I don't remember.

**Mike** So what is your recollection of Boyle at the time? Did it feel like nothing much?

**Anne** I don't remember. Just that place where we stayed overnight, and then we drove over to, close to the river, and we stayed over at Bereziuk's place. And I kind of remember sleeping over there, but then we went to the river. Like, you know, my brother would be able to help you a lot better with that. He's still around, but he's starting to forget.

**Mike** Well, how many in your family, then?

**Anne** Seven of us.

**Mike** Yeah. So let's go from oldest to youngest.

**Anne** John, George passed away, and myself, and Nancy she was married to Steve Krawec, and then Frances Parko at St. Albert, and William he passed away, and then my youngest baby sister Maryanne Barker at Mayerthorpe.

**Mike** Okay. So seven of you. And how many of you were born in Smoky Lake?

**Anne** Four were born in Smoky Lake, and the other three were born here.

**Mike** And the modern sibling?.

**Anne** The modern siblings, yeah. Of course, mom and dad, they were smart. They had babysitters already.

**Mike** Built in.

**Anne** So we helped take care of those little ones.

**Mike** You did your share of minding the younger ones.

**Anne** Oh sure, we did. That was the way things were in big families.

**Mike** So you guys were out in Richmond Park from the age of five, and so you grew up to see that develop.

**Anne** Not Richmond Park, Pleasant View.

**Mike** Pleasant View. Sorry.

**Anne** Across the Deep Creek. And then I moved to Richmond Park when I married Victor.

**Mike** Oh yeah, of course. So Pleasant View .

**Anne** That's where we moved to a homestead.

**Mike** Yes. How old were you then?

**Anne** Well, when we moved, I was five.

**Mike** But, when you guys ended up going to Richmond Park?

**Anne** Oh, how old was I? Yeah, 19, I think.

**Mike** Okay, would you say “I was a newlywed at the time and we moved,” that's how your life started with Victor?

**Anne** That's right.

**Mike** And that was the homestead?

**Anne** Well, no, the homestead was my parents' place. But Victor, they had more developed, a little bit more modern.

**Mike** So at what point were you guys neighbors with the Rygas?

**Anne** Well, they were way north of us, probably about two miles, kilometers, I don't know which one.

**Mike** But close enough.

**Anne** Close enough.

**Mike** And would you say your families were close? Like in terms of growing up with the kids?

**Anne** Not really, no.

**Mike** People were probably busy.

**Anne** Well, actually, George moved, and in those early years he moved away and the old folks moved to B.C. But there was a sister and I'm not sure if she's still around or not.

**Mike** Well, you know, Gina Payzant, she did a feature there and took that to Ukraine, and she was still hoping to do a live theatrical adaptation. We were actually working on it before the COVID pandemic kind of disrupted everyone's lives.

**Anne** It sure did.

**Mike** I heard in the last week she's asking around like, do people still want to get going on this. So, I don't have someone in my childhood growing up and whatnot that I would say there's that famous person like you kind of had them as a neighbor though, George Ryga.

**Anne** Well, he was, they were neighbors, more likely neighbors with Victor's parents and, and George's parents. Like I said, he had moved on to his first job. I think he went to work at the bridge. Don't we need a new bridge?

**Mike** Maybe we'll have the next George Ryga lose a bit of a finger on this new bridge that we're going to get.

**Anne** Maybe. It would be nice if we finally get to see it.

**Mike** Oh, we will, I think so.

**Anne** It's a long time coming.

**Mike** So what are your memories of, you know, to come from Richmond Park into town to maybe pick up supplies and things? Was that a big deal or was it just...

**Anne** It was a big deal when we lived at Pleasant View. My dad would take a trip twice a year, with a horse and load up enough flour for the winter.

**Mike** So that was like a really big deal, then?

**Anne** It was.

**Mike** Would you accompany your father?

**Anne** Not too often. The boys got chances to go.

**Mike** So you say not too often. It means you did come in once in a while.

**Anne** Only time I remember coming in was when we came in for our TB shots or tests. I must have been... seems to me we had to ride the cage across the river.

**Mike** Well, let's just say somebody listening to this has no idea what we're talking about.

**Anne** The little cage.

**Mike** Yeah.

**Anne** That's what they had to use for crossing the river in the spring.

**Mike** Before the bridge.

**Anne** Before the bridge and before, you know when the ice melts, as well. They had to use this little cage that would hold about ten people, maybe.

**Mike** So is it fun and exciting or more just kind of scary?

**Anne** A little bit scary.

**Mike** What do you recall about the procedures? Do you remember how you would board the thing?

**Anne** We had to climb up stairs, all the way up. And then he'd ferry the cage over and we'd climb in and take us across and then climb down. I think there were stairs on both sides.

**Mike** You almost think there'd have to be, because it would be elevated.

**Anne** Yeah.

**Mike** And so about 10 people capacity?



**Anne** I remember Victor telling me how his dad had to take some hogs for sale, and they took those hogs in the cage, because he needed to do a payment or something. It would have been interesting to see that.

**Mike** It almost sounds like the little logic puzzle where the person's got to cross a river and they can only take two out of three with a chicken and a wolf or...

**Anne** And then for the summer there was the ferry. And then we'd board the ferry and go back and forth.

**Mike** The ferry, would it have been quite a more relaxed way to cross?

**Anne** Yes, it was.

**Mike** Do you remember anything about, like who was the ferry operator or anything like that?

**Anne** No, I don't remember. It's in the book.

**Mike** Well, what do you recall? Because someone was telling me Ted Matijon was one of the operators.

**Anne** Could have been, but I didn't know. I think it's in our Athabasca history.

**Mike** Oh, yeah.

**Anne** We didn't get to go to town too often. My grandfather had a, I don't remember the make of the car, but anyways, he'd take us in, and I remember getting violently sick. The fumes were so... I'd get sick every time we went.

**Mike** It must've been burning oil or something.

**Anne** Probably. But it was transportation to go to town, to Athabasca.

**Mike** So Athabasca was a pretty well-established town and there was lots to see. And that was an exciting trip to make?

**Anne** Well, it probably was. I remember when I had my first ice cream. Somebody bought me an ice cream cone.

**Mike** Do you remember where it was?

**Anne** I don't know if it was the Royal Cafe. If you remember, the Royal Café, it was over there where that liquor store is now.

**Mike** Was it just like a soft or a hard ice cream?

**Anne** It was a very hard ice cream, but I wasn't that fond of it. Oh, I didn't know what it was anyways. No, we never had ice cream. Maybe we did when we were small children. Maybe at Smoky Lake. But this is what I remember about it, coming to Athabasca and getting my first ice cream cone. This nice person bought me an ice cream cone.

**Mike** You say this nice person.

**Anne** He was a neighbor, my friend's dad.

**Mike** Isn't that something? Like, would he ever think that's going to be a memory you'll carry for...

**Anne** Probably not.

**Mike** Isn't that something, we do that all the time, I bet.

**Anne** Maybe we do. People remember, but we don't.

**Mike** Well, at least somebody remembers, you know.

**Anne** That's right.

**Mike** So I feel like we could talk and it could just shoot off in all these directions. But I guess I do want to, if it's okay, I want to know how did your brother William decide he was going to establish a foundry?

**Anne** He worked for a person that owned a foundry in Edmonton, and I guess he decided that's what he wanted to do. He had one in the city.

**Mike** Do you recall where he worked in Edmonton? Because there's an older foundry that was, you know... I actually went to it because I remember when I worked at a place we would take our offcuts from aluminum frame making and I would take it to a foundry and they would melt it down. And I figure we got a little money out of that big barrel of scrap aluminum. And it was an older foundry that shut down.

**Anne** Probably was it. That could have been it, maybe. It was an older person that was operating it, somebody that really knew their business.

**Mike** It would have been in the older part of Edmonton, north of the downtown. So we should mention at this point that you were born a Popowich, so this is William Popowich, your brother we're talking about. And you would say of your siblings, maybe he and you were closer?

**Anne** That's right. He was my baby brother, and we helped look after him. But anyways, we have some good memories.

**Mike** I think I've mentioned that you guys have a similar, unmistakable, you know, resemblance.

**Anne** Popowich features, yes.

**Mike** So he had worked in a foundry, and he thought that's for me.

**Anne** And then he did operate a foundry in the city. But then things got tough, so he moved out all the way, you know where he is, and established north.

**Mike** Well, I just remember it was on the way to the Al-Pac mill.

**Anne** Yeah, that's a long ways from Athabasca.

**Mike** I'm trying to remember what took me out to the foundry, and if I went out twice, because I remember I took my nephew Patrick with me one time

**Anne** I remember that.

**Mike** And who did I go with? Was it Harvey Scott or somebody, for whatever reason, I think I went with somebody.

**Anne** Maybe you were... was he doing a bench for you or something like that? Because he did a lot of those benches around town.

**Mike** Well I know the bench that was put to the east end of the park down by the river was one of the last ones the town had that was his pieces. The ends that he forged and poured.

**Anne** Well, he did a lot of nice work for sure.

**Mike** I have a feeling it had to do with the bench that we went out there, and it might have been with Harvey, to tell you the truth. Harvey Scott, because I think Harvey wanted to make sure there was a bench, it was his idea.

**Anne** It was a good idea. I wish they'd have a bench between, up on the hill, when I go down to Buy-Low and coming back up, I wish there was a bench. There used to be one, but why isn't there a bench there for an older person to sit down and rest?

**Mike** There's a lot of hills in this town, let's just put it that way.

**Anne** Going down is fine, but going back up, it's a little bit of a challenge.

**Mike** So do you remember William moving back and establishing the foundry?

**Anne** Vaguely, I sort of remember that.

**Mike** I'm curious about your impressions of it. Did you get to visit and watch him do some work? Did you have any time for that?

**Anne** I did go a couple of times to see all that heavy work. It looked like very backbreaking work.

**Mike** Yeah. Not easy stuff. And then, was there some training and coursework he took at NAIT at one point?

**Anne** He may have. I can't remember that.

**Mike** For some reason, I don't know if it was one of those times we were up at the park and he was helping the Lions out with all the benches and tables. He's done that, too.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** But I feel like he was talking about almost living out of his truck while he was taking a course for a couple of weeks and just getting food out of the grocery store.

**Anne** Probably, it wasn't easy for him. No.

**Mike** But also someone who just, he had to get the course done and get back and get to work. I just got that impression from him.

**Anne** Well, he had the ambition, that's for sure. But then, you know, it wasn't that profitable of a thing, that foundry. Built that great big shop and it all was expensive. He did some real nice work.

**Mike** What we can see of his work easily is just down by the river, for example. There's the plaques, there's poured ends to the tables and benches. And in fact, did he do the plaque that's over at the Native Friendship Centre? Because that's a pretty big plaque. I don't know.

**Anne** You know, I'm not sure. And I know he did the sign for the Seniors Centre and he did a lot of signs. People wanted their name or, you know, like Mr. and Mrs. Speers are always saying how he made them a beautiful gate sign. So they got that too.

**Mike** Wow, it's not everyone who can say that. I didn't know that. Where are they, still in the Rochester area?

**Anne** I think so.

**Mike** So, Bonnie and Larry?

**Anne** Right. I think they're retired now. Oh, I don't know if Bonnie is, but I think Larry retired from teaching.

**Mike** Yeah, I believe he was principal at some point before I left high school. Or maybe caught him for a year. And Bonnie, too, I think she was teaching around that time. She's always taught phys. ed. and other things. Well, their family has always been really sporty.

**Mike** So I kind of want to talk about your gardening, because that was a big part of your relationship with my mom, anyway. You guys always had things to talk about and share information together.

**Anne** Sure. Because your mom knew all the answers and I had all the questions.

**Mike** Oh, but there's times she'd be saying something about Annie did or said this, and she'd learned from you, too. So it was a two-way street.

**Anne** Well, I learned lots from her. And the way she said she read all gardening books all winter and she put it to use. And, you know, those plant sales, all that work that they did in your backyard. That was really nice. But it was also kind of, I would say, taxing on people. They always used your backyard. Everybody would just come in there.

**Mike** Well, mom didn't make a secret of the fact that it was a relief that you guys moved in to be the neighbors, because if you don't get along with your neighbors, it's hard sometimes.

**Anne** Well, I was happy to have her for a neighbor. Still miss her, for sure. So, but that's life for us, you know?

**Mike** Yeah, I was going to say we could talk a little bit about the family you and Victor had. So you have...

**Anne** Glen and Vic, just two sons.

**Mike** Then from there, Glen, I can say Glen and Monica, and I don't work closely with Monica, but we're both at Athabasca University.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** And Lindsay and Cole.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** And leading up to something here, because this is a big part of your life now, let's describe the situation with Lindsay and what keeps you busy a lot.

**Anne** Lindsay and Josh, and they have three little kids and John's the oldest and he was three. And the two little twins are going to be two at the end of September, and they are very busy little guys.

**Mike** So in a week, would you be over there at least twice a week?

**Anne** I go twice, usually.

**Mike** And like I'm around kids very infrequently, as you know. But I do like to spend lunch hour, let's say, with the mentors. And that is a lot of energy.

**Anne** It is.

**Mike** I'm trying to imagine.

**Anne** It's a lot of energy.

**Mike** A full day, because I know a little bit about the three great-grandkids and they're all active, like I've seen the pictures.

**Anne** Oh, yes, they're busy people, especially the little one-year olds. Well, they're a year and a half now, but the little boys, they climb on everything and they want to keep climbing.

**Mike** So you would say, whether you're 19 or you'd had your family and they were growing up, but you always had this idea, like at some point I'm going to be someone's baba or great baba and I'm going to be this busy. Did you always just assume?

**Anne** No, I didn't. No, but it really is a blessing. Those little kids are so precious.

**Mike** Well, in the pictures that you've shared, especially, there's the one of Glen. I think he's got John in his lap. I mean, million bucks.

**Anne** Oh, for sure, Glen just adores those little children. That's one grandpa that is happy to be a grandpa.

**Mike** So just in the context of you and your history with this area, but the fact that Glen, your son's got the Athabasca Automotive and Boyle Automotive too, right? So we could describe that as a kind of focus on parts and equipment and tools.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** So, I think, a lot of what they do is serve heavier equipment and trucks, with parts and things like that.

**Anne** Parts. And I know they do cut a lot of hoses, whatever that involves.

**Mike** And he employs a few people.

**Anne** Quite a few.

**Mike** And probably he would be someone who could tell us all kinds of things about the supply chain disruptions of the last few years, I imagine.

**Anne** Yes, with this COVID and not being able to sometimes get through.

**Mike** So whatever period, when he was a little guy, is there a time where you thought, okay, this son of mine is going to be a business owner, that's just clear to you? Or is it just a bit of this has happened?

**Anne** It just happened. He didn't want to work for anybody else, so he wanted to be his own boss. I think that was the thing. And he just well, he went in with Gerry Williams, you know, that was supposed to be a partnership. And unfortunately, Gerry passed away and Glen got left doing that on his own, which was a little bit tough. But I think he's done very well.

**Mike** Now, when you think about growing up, to where you're spending time every week in the household with Lindsay and the little ones, that it's hard to even compare the kids today and how you grew up like...

**Anne** Oh, for sure.

**Mike** Off the top of your head, what chores were you doing every single day?

**Anne** Looking after the siblings, the little younger ones. And yeah, we had to do our share.

**Mike** What are some of the chores?

**Anne** Weeding the garden and doing dishes, which we didn't like. Helping mom all the time. I was eight years old when I first milked the cow.

**Mike** Did you get it right, pretty well?

**Anne** I think I did.

**Mike** I don't know these things, but some people just don't know how to do that.

**Anne** Well I did learn then. And once you knew how, you were out there helping.

**Mike** But do you feel like talking about how you met Victor at all?

**Anne** That was at a dance, I think.

**Mike** So. This is Victor Wolanuk, and you met him at a dance.

**Anne** It would have been at Laura School, I think. That's where we went to school. It was Laura in Pleasant View.

**Mike** So was he someone you knew of, or did you meet him?

**Anne** I knew of him, and he was a good dancer.

**Mike** Oh, he was? I didn't know any of that.

**Anne** No, where would you have seen us dancing? That was way, way back then.

**Mike** Well, the way Herman talked, there was always a dance, every weekend.

**Anne** Not every weekend. But, well we didn't get to go until we were older. We didn't get to go to Richmond Park, even. I think I remember the first time I went to Richmond Park, that was something, like 10 miles away.

**Mike** So you knew of them, but you met him at the dance and he was a good dancer.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** I guess he just made it clear he was really interested in you and wanted to see you again.

**Anne** I don't know about that part. Oh, I was interested in him, I guess. Anyways.

**Mike** So how many dates did it take before it was clear that you guys were going to start a family?

**Anne** I don't know if we even dated sort of a thing. You went to the dances, and that's where people used to meet. A lot of romances started with the dances.

**Mike** Was there a point where you felt he has to meet my folks? And do you remember any of that kind of thing?

**Anne** They just came over, him and Steve Krawec. They come visiting to our place, and I guess they met the folks that way. We probably served them tea, whatever. I don't remember that part, Mike.

**Mike** Do you remember the whole wedding?

**Anne** Oh, yeah.

**Mike** Wedding affair and everything? How it worked out? A lot of work?

**Anne** It was a lot of work in those days. The neighbors and mom, they all did the catering. They did it all themselves. And ladies would come and help the couple of days before the wedding, make the cabbage rolls and all that stuff.

**Mike** And so then you got to make it and you got to store it for a little bit.

**Anne** And we didn't have freezers or fridges, so you had to put it down the well or whatever they did.

**Mike** Maybe that's why the parties were so good, because you had to work so hard to get it to happen that you made the most of it or something.

**Anne** I don't know, but it was... and I thought we had a big wedding, but there weren't that many people. We had it right in the yard. Course Victor always said dad was really smart because they had to build the garage first, so we could have our dance in the garage.

**Mike** So that was your garage?

**Anne** That was the garage. Just got knocked down not too long ago. It was still standing.

**Mike** So this is the same property that your grandson Cole currently maintains and owns?

**Anne** No, it was my home place.

**Mike** Oh, we're back to Pleasant View?

**Anne** We're back to Pleasant View. That's where the wedding was, at my parents' place.

**Mike** Okay.

**Anne** And then after we got married, then Steve and Nancy used that same garage, and George and Mary used that same garage.

**Mike** And you're saying it just got knocked down?

**Anne** Yeah, just not too long ago, a few years ago. Well, you know, Dennis Popowich owns that property.

**Mike** Okay. And we're talking Dennis, Mary's son.

**Anne** Yes.

**Mike** Okay, and we should say Mary Popowich is not like a block away. And of the people you see on a regular basis, she's probably one of the ones you see a lot of.



**Anne** Oh, for sure. She takes me everywhere since I quit driving, and she hauls me around wherever I need to go.

**Mike** In fact, you are both planning to go out tonight to this Fish and Game banquet.

**Anne** Well, I sort of twisted her arm, but I thought, well, it would be nice to go and support them anyways.

**Mike** So you've got a family you're starting in Richmond Park. How many years did you guys have a farm out there?

**Anne** Well, Victor's parents had, it was only one quarter section, and he talks about how he and his mom used to pull these stumps. She was out there working in the fields, and of course, his dad was a carpenter, so he was working out quite a bit. But yeah, that was how it was. And then when Victor and I got married, there was no running water and there was no power. We lived in the house that his dad built, and in 1967, we built our new home.

**Mike** So with the new home, power and running water.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** So how long did you go without?

**Anne** Well, we got married in 1954, and we didn't build a new home until 1967. But we did have power in the old house. We had power, but no running water. We ran with the pails.

**Mike** So you had a whole period of the boys getting out of diapers without running water?

**Anne** That's right, and there were no Pampers or Huggies, no.

**Mike** So you must have just said you just go run naked in the summer. You're not going to have to wear a diaper.

**Anne** No, I didn't say that. Oh, well, you know, you live through it. I only had the two boys. Think about Victor's sister that had the girl, and then the little boy, and then twins, and then she had two more kids after that. Yeah, diapers hanging all the time.

**Mike** So '67, new house, and at that time, all the stuff you'd expect in a home of that period, must have felt good. Did you have a sort of a celebration when you kind of officially...

**Anne** No, we didn't but we should have, I guess. It was nice. Really was. John built that house. You know, his brother was a carpenter and he built our house for us.

**Mike** So this would be John Wolanuk.

**Anne** That's right.

**Mike** And I've met John, right?

**Anne** You did, I think.

**Mike** Is it John who had all the apples all the time?

**Anne** Yeah. Those apple trees. He had everything. That guy was a gardener.

**Mike** Is he the reason you guys have an apple tree in your yard?

**Anne** No, this was here. There were two of them, but they've both had the bun now. They've got to come down. I sure enjoyed those apples. They were so good. Everybody should have an apple tree.

**Mike** He always told me I'd eat them too soon. I always liked them.

**Anne** You like them like that!

**Mike** So, what's the strong memories you have of living out there, from the new home on? Like what kept your days busy? What sort of things were regular?

**Anne** Well, you know, summer was the garden. I always had a big garden. And in winter, well, we had, we were busy with the home and school, and Victor was always involved with the Farmers' Union and what other organizations there were. Meetings and then occasional dances and socializing with the neighbors. They'd come down, we'd play cards.

**Mike** You know, I got to know Victor for a little while because being neighbors, and he did seem like somebody who was really involved in his community in different ways.

**Anne** He was, yes, and he was always interested in what was going on around him. As a matter of fact, I think he coached the baseball team or softball, whatever you call it. Yeah, for one year. He loved sports. He loved softball and baseball.

**Mike** Well, as you've mentioned, you get a sore back after a while in the sorts of things you want to do it. It's hard to believe we get to a point where the things we love, we have to give them up.

**Anne** Kind of sad. But some of us are too stubborn to admit it. Time to give up, but I'm not going to.

**Mike** Did he also do.. he was like a school inspector or something, wasn't he?

**Anne** He was a trustee.

**Mike** He was a trustee. I see, and he would have to visit schools.

**Anne** I think, and, as a matter of fact, my dad was secretary of the Laura School for years and years.

**Mike** The Laura School?

**Anne** Yes, the Laura School L-A-U-R-A. That school, it was standing. I don't know if it's standing anymore, but it was still standing. William made a sign, and he's got the sign there. So if the school isn't there, the sign is still up, I think. But anyways, that's where we went to school, hoofing it uphill both ways, you know, as the saying goes. Yeah. I was going to get back to dad was secretary and Victor came over to see dad about something,

and dad said, "Oh, she thought you came to see her." I didn't think that at all. But anyways...

**Mike** Did your dad have a sense of humor to tease you a little?

**Anne** Yeah, he did.

**Mike** Oh, yeah. Okay.

**Anne** Yeah, he did. But, yeah, I remember that when Victor came over, we weren't going out yet.

**Mike** Okay, but the idea was there.

**Anne** Oh, for sure. I thought he was pretty handsome.

**Mike** Yeah, well, that helps.

**Anne** That helps. Yes, that's the way it is. That's life. And goes by so quickly you don't even know where it goes.

**Mike** You guys moved into town to this home. Was it in...

**Anne** 2004.

**Mike** So 2004, what was it like to leave Richmond Park? Like, was it time for you or was it kind of...

**Anne** It was because Victor's health was not that good anymore, and it was just too much. We had a huge yard and it was just too much for him. And then when he did move here, he wasn't very happy here, I don't think, because of his health, I think mostly.

**Mike** Well, when I came to visit and over time, you could really see like a person's health decline. It seemed like you were such a caregiver, like, really attentive and lots of things. Just all the little things that you seemed to...

**Anne** Tried to do.

**Mike** Well and want him to be eating and thinking about what will he eat. And you were doing that a lot. And then there was that period where you guys had a little dog that seemed to be a good little buddy.

**Anne** Oh, yeah, he was just... what a little dog he was.

**Mike** Scooter.

**Anne** Scooter. He was loyal to his master. I walked him. I looked after him, but boy, he sure was Victor's buddy. I suppose all seniors should have a little dog, but I didn't want another little dog, which is a good thing.

**Mike** Whereabouts did you decide to go work at Value Drug Mart?

**Anne** I was working at Robinsons, Bubel's. And of course, my friend Pat came to see me, and she said you should come work for us. That boss is so nice. So I did apply and they hired me.

**Mike** Was the boss Neil?

**Anne** No, it was...

**Mike** He had come along later, I guess.

**Anne** Yes. If it had been Neil, maybe I would still have stayed. I don't know.

**Mike** Neil Cameron.

**Anne** Well, Neil Cameron, I'm sure he's a very good boss. But it was Mr. Onrait. Oh, he was very nice, he was good.

**Mike** Yeah, you know, I knew this, but I've forgotten these things because his son is the sportscaster, Jay Onrait, of course

**Anne** Do you still see him sometimes?

**Mike** No, I haven't seen him.

**Anne** I used to see him occasionally.

**Mike** Oh, on the TV, I've seen him. Yeah, pretty recent. But no, I don't know where he's living. I mean, he's got to be close to his industry, right? So I imagine he's in one of the bigger cities.

**Anne** He did come down for Patrick Los's funeral. I saw him then.

**Mike** So you worked when his father ran the Value Drug Mart.

**Anne** Right. And then he built the new store, because it was over here next to the Scotiabank.

**Mike** Just north of Scotiabank.

**Anne** Yes. Then he built that new store. I remember hauling merchandise in buggies across the street. It was quite a job moving all that.

**Mike** So this connects somewhat to Herman Leicht's interview in that he recalls, if I'm not mistaken, when that was the drugstore, there was a coffee counter. Is that right? He just remembers that that's where a lot of the chit chat of people and lots of things happened.

**Anne** I don't remember there being a coffee counter. There was one at Bubel's. They had a coffee shop there and the people used to come in and have coffee and visit. And Mrs. Elkert was a friend for a long time. She worked there at that coffee counter.

**Mike** So you worked at the Value Drug Mart, but you were, we'll say you were, poached from what's now Bubel's. As somebody was like, you should come here now, and how

many years did you work at Value Drug Mart, because you retired from that job when it was in the current location, correct?

**Anne** Right. It seems to me, I think it was 13 years, I'm not sure.

**Mike** You worked there 13 years.

**Anne** Seven at Bubel's and 13 years at Value.

**Mike** Is this the period that Victor was sort of minding the grandkids?

**Anne** That's right. That was the joy in his life.

**Mike** Okay. So he was the one that prepared their little meals.

**Anne** Right.

**Mike** What was he always making?

**Anne** Hot dogs and Kraft dinner. Lindsay still talks about it. As a matter of fact, she does serve her kids hot dogs, too. But, yeah, that was his specialty. And once in a while, he'd take Cole to Mike's when it was down here. Mike's Pizza, was it called?

**Mike** Was it Tastebuds?

**Anne** Was it? Well, anyways, yeah, and he used to always have onion rings. I think Cole still remembers that. They had onion rings.

**Mike** That would be a fun little trip with grandpa there.

**Anne** While they waited for Lindsay, she was already in school.

**Mike** Well, that's something a lot of people don't get, a grandfather to have that time with the grandkids.

**Anne** I think he was only nine months old when Victor was looking after them. I may be mistaken, but he was nine months old when Monica went to work. She was home for a while.

**Mike** You've said the name, and now I'm thinking about Monica as someone I know, but not really well. And I've always thought it's kind of neat the way the odd time I see you guys all together. It's been a while, but I really like the way she drops off some of her beautiful pottery. I think she saved some of the best pieces for you.

**Anne** I think she's got some of the best pieces she saved for herself, but I have some nice pieces.

**Mike** Yeah, and really nice stuff and it looks great.

**Anne** She's very talented with that pottery.

**Mike** She got into the pottery club and she's been with it for a while.

**Anne** Quite a while, yeah. I guess they are having a sale this year.

**Mike** That's right. And it's coming up.

**Anne** Can't miss it.

**Mike** So the thing is, she also seems to always have kind of a new thing she's trying to do and really interesting that way.

**Anne** Like mushrooms. I think that's why they always like to have her there.

**Mike** What's Monica's maiden name?

**Anne** Ashbey.

**Mike** Ashbey, of course. I know Al.

**Anne** Al and Charlie.

**Mike** Well Al, actually. I know Al from trivia night, of all things.

**Anne** Oh, right.

**Mike** In fact, I think Al might be friends with... I don't remember why he ended up coming, but he'd come out a few times and he's got some good trivia skills, I'll tell you that right now.

**Anne** They're all pretty skillful.

**Mike** I would not say Al was a talkative person, but then he knows things and there you go. Well, I feel like we had a pretty good visit. Well, thank you for your time, and I do hope we get another chance at this.

**Anne** We will, if you feel like you want to come and chat, we'll do that sometimes.

**Mike** I should say that this whole project, you know, I haven't been as involved as some people, but right now Mavis Jacobs is really one of the coordinators, and that's somebody who just seems to have a lot of energy to put into projects and very effective use of time. So I'm aware that we're trying to get some things done before the end of May.

**Anne** Oh my goodness.

**Mike** And if I have many faults, one big one is that I do tend to let things go.

**Anne** I wrote out 'procrastination' 2,000 times in school. And I didn't finish in time, so I had to write it out 2,000 more times. I know how to spell it.

**Mike** I bet you do. Are you kidding me?

**Anne** Oh, we had this teacher, he was great at thinking up punishment.

**Mike** In a good way?

**Anne** In a good way. It was okay, but imagine.

**Mike** So there was a reason, did you fail to hand in some homework on time?

**Mike** Of course, that's what it was.

**Mike** So I don't expect that you had many troubles with teachers over the years.

**Anne** No, no, I didn't. I never got strapped.

**Mike** Just late with the homework.

**Anne** Just homework. Well, that's probably my own fault.

**Mike** Now there is a way, a person's pretty honest when they've had lots of a life, like you've raised families and so on. And I must say, if I had to guess, you were really good in school, like in your subjects, would you say so?

**Anne** I wouldn't say so because math was a downfall with me. I loved English, language, and of course I loved art. But the teacher we had, the last one of my teachers used to love social studies and he'd say "now we're going to have social studies." And he'd go on and on because he was everywhere. He was a sergeant major in the army, and he saw a lot of the world and he liked to talk about it. And when he'd say social studies, we'd all groan. Not what we wanted to listen to for three hours. But it was good. He was all right. Of course, he treated the pupils like a sergeant major, like they were in the army, some of them.

**Mike** Do you feel, with math, cause like this seems to be a weaker subject for lots of people in North America even?

**Anne** For girls.

**Mike** It's not that we're the problem, you know?

**Anne** I don't know, I think I just didn't seem to... I remember studying the times tables over and over, and I used to know quite well, but now I have the calculator, so I don't have to worry.

**Mike** I almost wonder if you were in a different period and you went on to college, university. I can imagine that pretty easily.

**Anne** Oh, yes, for sure. That was one thing that I regretted in my lifetime, that I did not go to high school. We had grade nine by correspondence, and that's as far as I went. There were a few that went. Victor's sister was determined she was going to be a nurse and she used to catch a ride with the truck, you know, cattle truck. I don't know how she got to the city, but she did become a nurse, she was determined. Then there was the lady that became a schoolteacher. She went on to school. But, you know, not many people from there really got to high school. That was how it was. There was no school bus and you had to board in town.

**Mike** In fact, I believe Steve Kamelchuk was one of those students that boarded and finished his schooling.

**Anne** And he was a schoolteacher.

**Mike** Isn't that something, though, just by a difference of a few decades?

**Anne** Oh, for sure.

**Mike** A completely different life. Do you feel like you even have time to think about that?

**Anne** Well, like, I don't really dwell on it, but then my sister Frances and William, they stayed at the hostel, and Maryanne boarded out, and they all got their high school education anyways. But the rest of us, the older ones of us, we didn't. And my brother George was really good in math. He explained algebra to me. I couldn't catch on to algebra. Let 'x' be something, I couldn't understand it, but it made a little sense once he showed me.

**Mike** Do you feel like, I think not many families... I know where your grandson still has your property out in Richmond Park. What do you see happening to that property?

**Anne** Oh well, you know, there's only so much you can hang on to. He's got a place at Lawrence Lake, which he really likes, right by the lake.

**Mike** Well, again, from being around you to hear how Glen and Monica made a real point to get out with the kids and take these longer trips with them. It seems like that really rubbed off. You know, imagine if Lindsay wasn't raising little ones. It's a matter of time that that's something she and Josh will be doing to once they're a bit older, maybe. You know, I don't think of too many people more outdoorsy and hunting and all that than Cole.

**Anne** Oh, he loves his outdoorsy thing, fishing and hunting.

[End of Interview]

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