

Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project

Transcription of Doris Rawson audio recording 2022.mp3

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<http://digiport.athabascau.ca/aasmp/>

Narrator: Doris Rawson
Interviewer: Rosemary Neaves
June 22, 2022

[Start of Interview]

Rosemary My name is Rosemary Neaves and the date is June 22nd, 2022. We're in Athabasca and I'd like to introduce Doris Hannah Rawson. Doris is going to tell us some of the stories she remembers through the years. Her maiden name was Boisvert. Her father's name was Leon Boisvert. Her mother's name was Mary McGlaughlin, and her spouse, his name is Ronald Rawson. She was born on July 11th, 1934, and her place of birth was Rosetown, Saskatchewan. Welcome, Doris.

Doris Thank you.

Rosemary Where would you like to start? With your stories?

Doris Maybe I'll just start with when I was born. Or a bit about my parents and about my childhood and so on. My name is Doris Rawson, and, like Rosemary said, I was born on July 11, 1934, in Rosetown, Saskatchewan. My parents were Leon, he was called Leo, Boisvert. He originally came from, and was born in, Sorel, Quebec. His family then moved to Rhode Island, USA. In my dad's early years, he wanted to move west, so he moved to Manitoba, and worked in a lumber mill, and then came to Saskatchewan and worked with farmers. It was there that he met my mom, Mary Charlotte McGlaughlin. They were married in 1934, the beginning of the dirty 30s.

Ron 1930 they were married.

Doris Oh, pardon me, 1930, you're right. Anyways, I started school when I was seven and there was years there was no kindergarten, and we were three and a half miles from school. So my dad got me a saddle horse, and I rode horseback to school. Lots of times there was five or six coyotes following me home. But I had a good horse, so I wasn't worried. My brother was born Melvin Joseph Boisvert in 1933. When he eventually started school, we then took a horse and cart. My dad had a team and sleigh, and quite often I would take the team and sleigh to school if he wasn't using it. There was a school barn there, so there were quite a few kids took their horses. And we each helped look after everybody.

The school that I went to was a one-room school. They taught grades 1 to 10. I went to grade 10 and they couldn't teach grade ten at that time, so I took it by correspondence. Then it would have meant that the folks would have to move me to a small town about ten miles away, and it just wasn't feasible at that time, so I got my grade ten.

At home, they had no power or phone then and we learned to play a lot of cards and sleigh ride in the wintertime. I helped my dad on the farm. I helped him a lot with the horses because he worked with them at one point. Then he went into tractors.

As I got older, I worked at the University Hospital in Saskatoon, which was quite new. I worked in a dietary department until I met up with Ron Rawson, and we ended up getting married in 1956. Since I always loved horses, my father-in-law had a saddle horse and he wasn't using it, so I convinced him to let me keep him for a while and I did quite a bit of riding with some of the ladies around the community. While the guys were watching hockey in the springtime, we'd go for a ride and I did quite a bit of riding. We went to trail rides. My cousin had a horse trailer and I had a truck and camper. So she took my horse, I took the camper and we had a lot of fun.

Our boys were born. Warren was born in 1959, Dwayne in 1961 and Steven in 1963. We had fun with them. They were boys, but they were good kids. In the winter they played hockey, and in the summer they played ball. So we were busy going both places. As they got older, Ron and I started square dancing, which was and still is a big part of our life, though we don't square dance anymore. We've met a lot of friends and keep up with a lot of them. We also did a lot of old-time dancing. There was a couple in our community that taught old-time dancing, so that was a lot of fun.

Later on, Ron got an airplane. It was a lot of people around our community that had airplanes. Quite often on Sunday morning there would be five or six airplanes fly in on our landing strip and come in for coffee, which was really enjoyable. Then, as time went on, we joined the Saskatchewan Flying Farmers, which is a great organization and, again, met a lot of people and they've become good friends. We toured to Alberta to different conventions and took part in quite a few things. We also took part in the Flying Farmers. Ron being President and I was secretary at different times, and then I became queen and which was really enjoyable. I met sister queens from the States being it's an international organization. We went to a flying convention in the States and did actually a lot of things there, did a lot of touring around and met a lot of people. I really did enjoy my time as queen. They had an interview there and I was to give a notification of what flying and farming was like in Saskatchewan. And it was really scary at times, but very enjoyable as well. From there on, it seems we continued with Flying Farmers and joined other organizations. too, but we were really quite busy with farming.

Our boys were then getting older. Warren graduated and he went as an elevator agent for a while. Then he went into farming with us for a while. When we ended up selling our farm, he decided to sell as well. And now he is a power engineer. Dwayne graduated and he became a mechanic for 11 years and then joined the RCMP. He just now has resigned, or retired rather, and is back at home. But he had a lot of enjoyable and scary

times, I guess. Steven, when he first graduated, he worked at a grocery store and then he was a maintenance at high school. And then, after he was married, he then joined the army, and he has done different tours to Bosnia and Kosovo. After a back injury, he was discharged and he now is a peace officer in Lloydminster.

So when we decided to sell the farm, it was another hard decision. But another door opened and one closed. And so we moved to Rosetown. There we met new friends and got into a lot of different things. We helped start the Citizens on Patrol in town and worked at that for quite a while. Also, I guarded at the jail in Rosetown. Very interesting at times. I also joined the U.C.W. at the United Church and did different things in the organization.

We had joined Flying Farmers while we were still on the farm. There was quite a few people who had airplanes and they would come into our landing strip and then come in to the house and we'd have coffee. They weren't all Flying Farmers. Some of them belonged, but some were just neighbors. We really enjoyed that a lot.

So then we sold our farm in 1998, which was quite a change for us because we moved into Rosetown. So town life was just a little different, but we found out that we had found a lot of new neighbors and we had a lot of fun. We joined the United Church in Rosetown and I joined the U.C.W. and I held a couple of offices there and enjoyed that very much. I volunteered a lot and we did Meals on Wheels and any election, federal or provincial. I helped with that. I also helped the Lions. At that point in time, they would sell Lotto tickets, so I would sit at the Co-op and help them sell tickets.

I also worked for Wheatland Regional. They had a young girl that moved from another town and I just kind of helped her get associated with different people. Her mother had been quite controlling and so we did quite a bit together, went out for coffee. I had her to the house and we started baking, and any baking that we did, we'd take it over to the center and share it. And I really enjoyed my time with her. Then she got more centralized and she got a job and she really didn't need any additional help.

Both Ron and I helped start Citizens on Patrol in town. I was secretary for quite a few years. I also did quite a bit of guarding at the jail. Then I joined the Red Hat Society. Now, I don't know if that's well known, but we had a lot of fun. Anybody that had a birthday we would meet and of course have birthday cake. Just socialize. We did help if there was anything going on in town, we would help at it as well.

We also had really good neighbors and we had moved into town. This little girl was about five. She'd come over and she always chatted with me. I was working in the yard and we kept up that association, and now she has graduated and now she is a pharmacist. And so we still keep track of each other.

I also babysat for some neighbor kids. I started at the farm. They were only a mile away and the mom worked in town, so I babysat. Then they had another boy and I babysat

him and then a girl. So there were three. And now the oldest one, we just are invited to his wedding. So we really enjoyed that.

I think then, our boys, all our family, were after us to move closer to them. So we made a decision that we would sell the house and move to Alberta, which was hard to do to leave family and friends in Rosetown. But it's been a very wise move for us. It's a big bonus for us because now we have nine great-grandchildren, so we get to see them quite often. So we just can't say how much that means to us. Our family means the world to us, and we love each one of them so very much. And we're proud of each one of our boys, their wives, our grandchildren and our great-grandchildren.

Well, since we moved here, we went to the United Church. And this was before COVID. After the service was over, you were to go downstairs for coffee, which we did. And it was a great thing to do, too, because we were able to meet people and they were all so friendly. And I guess it was hard for us to keep names to faces. But as time went on, we've gotten to know a lot. And one lady approached both of us, and asked if we were singers. And I said, well, we like to sing, but I don't think we're anything too great. So she said, well, why don't you come and join Marion Singers and see what you think, and we're still with them. So we've enjoyed that very much. We find that Athabasca is a very friendly town, and no matter if you don't know the person that you happen to see in the grocery store or on the street, they always say hello. It's so appreciated.

Rosemary You've already started delivering Meals on Wheels this year.

Doris Yeah, we did.

Rosemary Here, you are just carrying it over.

Doris Well, we did a lot of that with U.C.W. in town. The U.C.W. did that as well, so I paired with another lady and I took my car and we did that. Ron and I both did for Lions. And there was another lady that organized anybody that wanted to volunteer, so she'd always call me if they were short. So we did a lot of that, and, I don't know, it just seems like we're busy.

Rosemary That certainly sounds like it. Yes, well, this community is very fortunate to have you come here.

Doris Well, thank you very much.

Rosemary On behalf of the community, I'll say thank you. I'm glad you came.

Doris Oh, thank you. We've enjoyed it all. You know, just at the pancake breakfast today, we met some more people. And this lady, actually, our son had his grandkids, our great grandkids selling eggs last summer because he had about 50 chickens, I think. So they were laying eggs. And this lady, I saw her today at breakfast, I know she

was familiar, but I couldn't think where I had seen her. And my goodness, she just lives a little ways from us at the lake.

Rosemary Oh, is that right

Doris So I hope we can get together for coffee.

Rosemary Okay. Well, thank you very much, Doris.

Doris Well, thank you. God bless you all.

[End of Interview]

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