

Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project Transcription of Rosie Guay - 0001.mp3

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Narrator: Rosie Guay
Interviewer: Mike MacLean
May 25, 2022

[Start of Interview]

Mike My name is Mike MacLean. This is an interview for the Athabasca Memory Project. The date is May 25th, 2022, and I am at the house of Rosie Guay. Now I'm going to turn it over to Rosie. And actually, you've described that allergies get you a little worse nowadays than maybe you used to experience.

Rosie So, yeah, and it's really bad today for some reason. Yeah, it's hard and it's harder for me to talk.

Rosie You had asked me about some interests I had during my lifetime. I had a lot of interests, but some more so than others. And one is the pottery club, for sure, which I got involved in, in about 1973. And I'm still involved in it. Now, I'm not so much hands-on, but I'm there if they need to know anything.

Mike Well, can I interject and say that the last time we met up was at the Seniors' Centre at the Lions' boardroom, and we got there early specifically for you to look at, through all of our table linens, tablecloths.

Rosie Right.

Mike So as far as you being involved, I know that over some years now it's been gradually shifted to other members in the club. But yeah, it's still interesting to me anyway that you're still involved, like that would be an example. You're going to arrange these tablecloths, you're going to be involved with, I guess it'll be a pottery sale that we missed. Was it two years now because of the pandemic?

Rosie Yeah, but it's going to be this, on the 4th of June, and it used to be a yearly thing. That was our one fundraiser at the time.

Mike Can I ask you, because for the reasons you got involved in pottery over the years. Well, like your ability to create art with pottery, with the clay. Did you look forward to these shows once a year? Was that like where you really wanted to bring out the things that you were really proud of or happy how they worked out?

Rosie Well, yes, that came quite a bit later after I was first involved because we had no place to work and we had to move so many times before we finally got a place in the basement of the Old Brick School. And it took us a while before we could produce enough stuff to have a sale. So it took quite a few years before we were at the point where we had something that was worthwhile selling.

Mike That's hard to appreciate because you go to the annual sales now and there's just an abundance of there's a lot of members, there's so many different pieces. And it's also hard to imagine that, that home of the pottery club isn't in the basement of the Old Brick School. Like is just feels like it's always been there. So what was it like in the earlier years? Like what were, describe what you would do?

Rosie No, we were, we called it a dungeon. We had a place next to a furnace in the, it was still a part of the Brick School, and there was only one tiny window. It was not a good place to work. And eventually we got to go upstairs in the school and we were there for several, quite a few years until they fixed the basement of the Brick School for us, which gave us a place with water. And there was a bathroom that was accessible. And this is something that no one could appreciate unless you don't have that at all, especially if you're working with mud. In other words, clay. Everybody needs to wash their hands and everybody drinks coffee. And so that's something it took a lot of persistence to go through all of that.

Mike How would you get the raw material? There was a whole process about that, too, just getting the clay. And how did that all work?

Rosie Exactly. That clay is part of Athabasca. It's up on the hill, just out towards where the hospital is in that area. I can't remember the people that we got it from and they were so kind to us. And right now I can't think of their name, but yeah, so they used to let us go and dig it, haul it in through the window. And, and there's a big process too, to make that clay. You have to soak it, and stir it, and strain it and then harden it again.

Mike So is this something that will take a period of days or weeks?

Rosie It takes weeks. You have to, just like making bread, in a batter that you have to keep waiting for it to ferment and all that. But, so it's not an easy process. We're very, very few, I think we're one of the few people or clubs that actually make their own clay. And Athabasca clay is right from home.

It's a nice color and it's good. So, over the years, we've learned how to process it better and better, and our club grew very big. Little by little, we thought it could be managed quite well, but eventually we had to go in at night and have clubs working at night, and more days than just the one because it just was popular. It originally started for me, as something I wanted to do for me. After raising my family and working on the farm, and I thought this was going to be a breeze and it wasn't. It was very enjoyable, but it wasn't easy. And I think I was going to say, I don't know how many years I was president simply because no one else would tackle that job, because it took a lot of work.

Mike Who were you working with? In the earlier years of the pottery club. Like who? Who else was involved?

Rosie Originally, Irene Schinkinger and Eleanor Osment, they were there. And of course, Dr. Brown. She was the one that followed clay. But those two ladies, they helped out a lot. They had a lot of knowledge that I didn't have. They were just the greatest people to work with.

Mike Dr. Brown seems to have been involved in just about everything. You know?

Rosie We had quite a few. Well, there were banquets or suppers or whatever. And with her in it and she, well, she always said the pottery club was not hers, but it really originally was Dr. Brown. She was the one that found the clay. She was the one that started the whole thing. And I think they used to work in the, at the hall that they had in the basement, a community centre they called it. Pottery club is still going strong. Yeah. And everybody seems to enjoy it and they've grown almost too big for, for what they can manage, but they seem to enjoy it. So I'm not the one to say slow down.

Mike You know, a person gets interested in the type of clay projects and like, where were your interests? Because if I understand it, you also arranged over the years to have workshops.

Rosie Oh, yes. We'd bring in people that already had the knowledge and, and that knew different ways of building things with pottery, with clay.

Mike Yeah.

Rosie So every, every year we have one person coming, which means you have to arrange for all afternoon. Yeah, we did that a lot. We even brought, one year, there was a fellow came out from Switzerland. He wanted to come and he was the original one that had started doing clay works in Athabasca, and they had a store here and, and, and the clay project.

Mike How did you track him down?

Rosie Well, I think he talked to Marilyn Mol. Somehow through her.

Mike Archives.

Rosie Like the Archives? Yeah. And he wanted to come back and see the place. Oh, so, he did. We had a whole day with him at the Seniors and a banquet at night. We had worked together in the evening. So that was something that was really interesting.

Mike So have you been to the Archives to see what they've got of the pottery holdings?

Rosie I haven't been.

Mike Oh, wow, make a trip of it when you're in on a Tuesday or Thursday. And I think I mentioned there was something sent by mail from a woman who wanted pieces that she's had for a long time, but she wanted them to end up at the Archives, a set of some sort.

Rosie You know, it's the same kind of the original, because I have the original ones here, too.

Mike You were involved with the club when there was, well, right around Centennial there was like a lot of work to get a whole bunch of these commemorative plates and...

Rosie All right, we have them. Yeah, we have them done for the town, I think the town asked for some and we gave them. I'm not sure, but it was like, I don't know if it was two dozen of each size and they wanted that to be able to give to someone that came in to speak or for the town anyway.

Mike Yeah. Because like, you can't give something better to represent a unique little part of our town. Literally made of the stuff of our area. Right.

Rosie Yeah. And Linda Buhlmann is a professional potter. She used to make plates for Banff and Jasper for so many different people that would want to be in restaurants. Who would want, you know, dozens of them. And so she took on the project of doing them. It's just amazing.

Mike So who did the illustration of the Old Brick School that would have ended up as an image on the plate?

Rosie We, we had that stamped.

Mike Yeah.

Rosie Stamped. Made by, she is in the building or she does own.

Mike Oh, in Morningstar. Oh, yeah.

Rosie And she made us the, the print, or the stamp for it.

Mike Okay.

Rosie And that's what we used. And she's been she made several things like that for us. Yeah. So we use that for several things, too, in pottery, but that's for sure.

Mike And then there was a smaller version, like, I think it might have been a fridge magnet or something.

Rosie It could have been maybe for two different occasions. We had stamps. One was for 100 years.

Mike Mm hmm.

Rosie That's about 100 years.

Mike You mentioned Linda Buhlmann's work. Yeah. She was the person you connected me to, to make the case for my mom's ashes. Remind me of who worked with Linda to paint it, sort of the decorative glaze.

Rosie That young lady is not any longer with us. Well, she's not in Athabasca anymore. She moved, and I can't remember her name offhand.

Mike Ukrainian from. Did she move here from Ukraine? Or am I getting her mixed up with somebody?

Rosie I don't remember that.

Mike But you helped arrange that?

Rosie Yeah. She was very good. She's very artistic.

Linda has done urns for quite a few people. And she does some in our own clay. And of course, we don't maybe ask for anything that's as special as what you had. But that's what Hal was buried in, was one of hers. As a matter of fact, there's about three or four people that I know that have used them. I have mine up in the cupboard.

Mike You know, you mentioned Hal, and I kind of never thought about it in terms of our interview, but I wonder. Like, I know he spent his lifetime in forestry, if I'm not mistaken. You know, it would be one heck of a thing to hear his stories. But I can't interview him now, obviously.

Rosie But, he wrote a lot. He wrote his history.

Rosie I've got his whole history that I just sort of ignored it for a while. You know, didn't think too much about it until one night I started to read. And he was an amazing man.

What he did in his lifetime and how he, you know, survived. Because he didn't have a family home like we do now. You know, his mother died early. So he was amazing, he could do so many things. So I think he was such a kind man. And so, you know, so good to everybody.

Mike Yeah. Kind and gentle and just such a civil demeanor. Yeah. And let's not forget, he liked to dance. That was something he learned.

Rosie Oh, yeah, music and dancing.

Mike Yeah. In fact, one of the things, we could jump to it. But I know you through the Lions Club, and there was always the things that you did as the member. And one of them was the organizing of the annual Seniors Harvest Fest. And that always comes with the memory that there'd be a live band. And you and Hal would dance.

Rosie Yeah. The Harvest Fest was always something special.

Mike Was that your idea?

Rosie Yeah, that's what I. That was what I had done. I can't remember how I'd ever started, but...

Mike Well, that's funny. It's something that, for a while, like, we had to take a break again because of the COVID pandemic. But that was a big event we would organize every year. And it's funny that you can say that. How did it even start? What was the reason? But it went on for years.

Rosie It started when the old community centre was still going.

Mike Oh, you're kidding.

Rosie That's when it started. And Joe Bortnick, I think I remember he was doing it. And he, and one time he said, "I can't do this." He said, "Can you do it?" And I said, well, I can help. And as it turned out, I just ended up taking it.

Mike So you're the one who took it from the old community centre to the Seniors Centre? And was it similar at that time with the band in the old community centre, too?

Rosie Oh yes, always had. He'd have a big band of some sort come from somewhere or whatever.

Mike So as far as where it got to be, uh, Gary Jewell and the Amigos. Is that who he plays with? That was you're doing, to connect with those people?

Rosie Yes.

Mike So let's name the band because that'll be in the interview. But there's Gary Jewell, Ben Burton, Wes Knapp.

Rosie Ken Pickett used to help.

Mike Oh, Ken was?

Rosie Well, yeah, he used to play.

Mike Okay. And then there's the Latimer woman would sing.

Rosie Latimer and Pat Silkie.

Mike Oh yes, Pat Silkie vocals. Yeah. What the heck. Her name, Latimer. Why can't I think of her first name? Honestly. But that's mostly the regulars out of the band, right? So you would have been the one to get them involved?

Rosie Yeah.

Mike Well, let me describe because you would recruit, you would say, here's where we need to have some things ready and you would tell people what their job was. So you'd bring in containers full and you had all this stuff in storage. So describe what you had for each and every Harvest Fest. How it had to be.

Rosie Harvest Fest. Yeah. Well, there was a lot of advertising for that. A lot of advertising. And the other thing was we say, let's put out your posters. But then we went out and solicited some prizes. Something to give away. Yeah. And we also had, I remember organizing a lunch group that would make the sandwiches and, and Marjorie Reneau-Topps and I would grocery shop and she would, we each have a list and she would be done way ahead of me. And I was still pinching the tomatoes or whatever, the fruit to see if it was ripe enough or not ripe. And Marjorie would say "What are you doing?" Anyway, yeah.

Mike So Marjorie comes in there and she shops up a storm. And I've been at those preparation sessions, but it goes so well organized. Like everyone gets in and we make the sandwiches and we're all ready to go. So we have the advertising. You went out and got the soliciting?

Rosie Yeah.

Mike And it's always really nice stuff, like the door prizes, and we got refreshments all set up. You have a band and you know, it's the extra touches, though. You always have to have a certain look in the room, right?

Rosie Yeah. It was always decorated in some way. That was according to whether it was harvest so it. Yeah. So we always did that really well.

Mike It's almost in the Lions Club legends of the day that you and Maxine Williams had your stand off on the tape measures and the spacing of tables.

Rosie (Laughs).

Mike Like that has gone down in history.

Rosie That sure is. She wanted them all a certain distance apart. I couldn't handle that anymore. Hmm.

Mike Well, when you're someone like me, I guess you think you know things, but until you're in the room and you're listening to somebody, plan the event for years and you realize one of them is geometry, you got to figure out how to have tables arranged so that everyone can. And it's not just that. It's, you know, you always had a table set up for people who need wheelchair access, remember, you know, and you had the table reserved for the band. So it was just really something to witness how you had planned it.

Rosie They were, there were things that just had to go to work out to accommodate everybody. And the lunch table had to look nice and yeah, it was, it was really something very enjoyable.

Mike Even it was a good time and getting in there and setting up the room because I appreciate it. You had an idea of what you wanted it to be. And you had it organized, so if someone came to help, they knew what they had to do. And then, when it was done, it was exactly the way you wanted. And it was it was a nice visit because, like, there was certain placemats you needed on each one, you had centerpieces.

Rosie Yes, yes.

Mike And some really good stuff.

Rosie And eventually when I got to know where Hal stayed, Extencicare, and I invited them. And I remember the matron one time. I invited her one year and nothing happened. She said, "Oh, we don't have that much help." Anyway, she blew me off, and I was really unhappy about that. So I said to her that another year, well, I came to invite her and she said again the same thing. She couldn't spare help to do that. I said, well, you know, if I could go to all that work of making a beautiful event for people like the staff or the people that you have here that need some entertainment, well, I think you could just take two minutes more and figure out a way that you can send a bus, or a van with a load of them. Especially those that could, that would enjoy it. So you remember we turned out, we started to bring them. They started to send the busload down.

Mike Yeah. The bus would show up and there'd be, we'd try to help them out, getting them from the vehicle into the building and wheelchairs. And that was from around the county, too, wasn't it?

Rosie Yeah. That was the county one. So the people that came, they didn't just come from Athabasca. They were from all around surrounding areas. They weren't just...

Mike Well, do we recall now how many people would usually turn up from one year to the next? Because it was a full, full space, it seemed like we wouldn't want a whole bunch more people showing up, that's for sure.

Rosie There was a limit to how many.

Mike Yeah. Like, was it? It was more than 80.

Rosie Oh, yeah.

Mike Was it over 100 and some?

Rosie It was a good 100 anyway.

Mike Yeah, I'd say so. And it was about what, three hours?

Rosie Yeah. And we'd start shortly after lunch. And then in between all that, we'd have to have the lunch out.

Mike Yeah.

Rosie And I think it would be at least 4:00 before... The band was always so good about it. They were just... and I would try to have some little gifts for them. I remember the last year we had honey.

Mike Hmm. That was Rod's honey.

Rosie Rod donated all the honey to everybody. And so the band each got one.

Mike He has moved into town.

Rosie That's what I heard.

Mike In fact, I think he wants us to come over and have a visit at his property in June, have the Lions and have a meal.

Rosie I'd love to go. I think the world of Rod and his family. I think that they're just...

Mike That's how I met you is the Lions Club. And you also were.

Rosie I can't remember that.

Mike But yeah, you're the reason I associate that there is a Centennial Park, the Lions Centennial Park. So how did that happen?

Rosie Well, that was Cherniwchan. Lionel Cherniwchan was on council then. And one day he said, he called me over and said, "You know, Rosie, we have some property up over the river there." He said, "You think you could ever talk to Lions into doing something with it?"

Mike So this is just north of us on the bluff, over on the north side of the river.

Rosie Across the river, right across from town. And I said, well, I could try. I don't know, but I'd have to have a look and see what I, I'll ask the Lions and see what we can do. And when I got there to look at it, it was not a pleasant sight. There was dead trees and junk all over, and I imagine the teenagers had been using it for drinking parties. And it just was not easy. It's not an easy thing.

Mike So help me out because right now there is a bridge that we know it'll move. So the new bridge will come in a couple of years time, whatever. So the bridge comes across the river and then you take the immediate left. So there's a little road that goes up. Now, was that always there?

Rosie That road was always there because there was a house.

Mike There was always a house up at the top of the hill?

Rosie Yeah.

Mike So when you went up just to get a look at things, is there a person or is there a family living in that house at the time?

Rosie Yes, well, I think so. Or else I can't remember now.

Mike Yeah. So it's kind of a funny spot because there is a private property but then right adjoining right there is the town land.

Rosie Right, the town land.

Mike Okay.

Rosie And, it was something that took a lot of, well I'm not saying, courage or gall for me to think that I could do something with it.

Mike Well, you must have had guys come in and operate equipment, so you must have recruited.

Rosie No. At first it was all hand work. It was just straight hand work. And I think we had someone maybe, you know it might have even been Mark at that time. Someone anyway, that had a wagon and we could throw all this stuff on.

Mike And so this is the dead trees, the heavy stuff that you just had to get out of the way.

Rosie And we had, at that time, the Lions had a crew, or fellows or guys that were used to hard work. They were farmers or whatever. Some from Perryvale.

Mike Was this the period we had the rodeo every year?

Rosie Yes, we did.

Mike We had Lions who could...

Rosie Who could do all that. Anyway, these fellows could really help. Frank and Dorothy Appleby, I'll always remember them because it wasn't something you expected them to go and pick those rocks or the junk that was there. But they were there and we always ended up with a lunch of some kind. I don't even remember that anymore. And after the first clearing off, I made some plans, sketches and plans and brought it to Lionel and showed him. And it took a lot of imagination to think that you could do something there. When I think about it now, because it was just a disaster area.

Mike Well, that's the part about, I'd say, this Memory Project that you just don't know what happens over time. And just to have a better idea of why did this happen here and how did it happen. And so when you describe a situation that it's just a mess and you're having to clear it before you even get started. So let's pretend we park, and like starting from the east end of the park, like just walking through and describing what is that, you know, like, what do you see there? Because, you know, right now, today, I would think, first of all, someone had to put flagpoles in, there's three flagpoles right there.

Rosie I believe there might have been one, even that said Athabasca, I'm not sure what we had, the flagpoles came a little while later.

Mike Okay. Because they're down at the east end right close to the top of the bank.

Rosie Yeah, well, there was one there, maybe, but. Hmm. But we had to clear it all, make it look like it was a park. And I think the next thing was the trees. I wanted to get trees in there.

Mike Yeah, because you had an idea about the kinds of trees you wanted.

Rosie Yeah.

Mike And that's a deliberate thing, too.

Rosie Yeah, Because I'm trying to think who worked with me then.

Mike And where did you get the trees?

Rosie Now I got to think of his name, too.

Mike Not Wiskel?

Rosie No, no. Just down the highway.

Mike Yeah. Not Peden.

Rosie Nope, Pedens are at the lake.

Mike Right.

Rosie South of town. You know him well, and I do.

Mike I can't think of who it would be.

Rosie I can't. It's just so. I haven't got the book with me, so I can't. But we ordered the trees or some of the trees there. And we went out, Hal was with me. We tagged them, the ones we wanted and I think he, I'm trying to think whether that was his job to dig them up or the county had a digger at the time and could dig them out and plant them.

Mike So Hal was working with you from the very beginning on this one? Okay.

Rosie Yeah. He was there then, when we had that. And I still remember asking Lois to come and give me an idea how we could plant them.

Mike Oh this is Lois Robocon? Birchmeadow? Okay.

Rosie And I hoped that she had ideas, how we could stagger them somehow so they weren't all in a row. I didn't want them all in a row. I wanted them to look like they just grew over there and they were beautiful trees. It took a lot of water, and I think the town watered in the first few times. Yeah. And they were, the thing was that they were healthy trees. They could survive anything.

Mike So what about the like, I don't know if I could count offhand, but the number of benches, tables. Then there's a gazebo. How did that all happen? Because a lot of that work, that's William Popowich.

Rosie Yeah, he somehow, I'm trying to think how I got to meet him, but I did. And he priced what a table would cost and all that. But once I had an idea that that's all we could do is set up tables, the next thing was to get people that would pay for these tables. They were about \$1,200 for the tables, and benches alone were about \$1,000, and we did not have the money to just do that all. And the town wasn't going to do that. So I guess I just got on the phone or whenever I met somebody that I thought would like to put their name on it or to in memory of their family. And I would use a phone number

to talk to them and talk them into spending the money. And whenever I got someone that would, I would phone Willie and he would make one for me and bring it down. And this just went on all the time.

It seemed like I was always. Asking somebody for money, which is not my thing, but I did. And there were a lot of people who lost their family and wanted to remember them or, I can't remember. And we did that with tables and then the benches. Now I had in mind what they would all look like, once I, in my mind, I could write it down on paper. This is how I'd like to see it. But whether it would be possible or not, I don't know. It took a lot of perseverance. It was a good thing. I knew a lot of people.

Mike Yeah. And at some point you decided to have those portables put up there so people had the option if they needed to use the washroom. There was those portables up there.

Rosie We had stuff we realized that had to be done at the first opening or first thing. We had a function that we had there. And I remember Hazel Minns was there. I think it was Hazel. And after the function, she said to me, "Rosie, this is a very good idea, but you better get a toilet up there. 'Cause I got to go home." I'll never forget that. She was the one that said, "Get a bathroom up there." So we did. And I think if I remember correctly, I'm not sure if the Lions paid for that, some of that. Or the town chipped in, or what.

Mike And then Select Rentals would come out and pump them out. And that's something they just donate?

Rosie They donated that, yes. They always came out and donated.

Mike That's always a few times a season. Right. It's not just once.

Rosie It would be two or three times a year, I believe. But we had a lot of visitors there that came from all over the world at that time. There were a lot of folks from Japan and all different countries.

Mike Well, we should tell in the interview, like how we knew that for a fact is you had a way to record it. Remember?

Rosie We had books, yeah. I had some guest books there. And then we had to sort of stop doing that because they were tossed around or disappeared and wrecked. They were good for a few years. And then the last once somebody threw it down the hill, which wasn't very good.

Mike But always a surprise to see all the people from everywhere that would come and enjoy it.

Rosie Actually, I went through them here the other day, looked through all of them. I thought, oh man, that was a really nice, a nice gesture.

Mike It's rare to be up there and not see somebody and get a little idea. Maybe it's someone from local and they just come up for a quiet lunch. But you also get the ones who know, who might travel through town. And often they're thinking, "What's up there with the welcome sign on the hill?" And that's where I would run into someone like he said, "Oh, yeah, my dad was a Lion all his life in Grande Prairie or something." And you just run into all types of people, you know?

Rosie It is. And then we got Stan Lyle to do the gazebo. That's what it's called, right?

Mike Yeah.

Rosie Because we need a spot where you could cook or if you want to set up a table or something anyway. He did a good job of it and it was really nice to have him. So that was an addition that had to go on real soon.

Mike And there's the actual sign of the park, which I think was a company out of...

Rosie Westlock.

Mike Really?

Rosie Oh, you mean the big one?

Mike The big wood one.

Rosie That was somebody from Westlock.

Mike Okay. Is it like Three Sisters Signs or something? I forget.

Rosie I think so.

Mike Something like that, because that's quite a feature. That sign is kind of unique. It's set up on a, you've got the brick feature and you always have the plants there. And then, so what was the opening of the park, coincides with?

Rosie That sign went up about that time, I think.

Mike It was the celebration of Alberta's 75 years. What's it? Or something?

Rosie We had a celebration, then, I thought it was just. Yeah. And I know our opening of the park at the time.

Mike Okay.

Rosie I think that's what it was.

Mike And it didn't end at some point, like you, so you told our club we should have an area for the kids to play.

Rosie Right. I always had in my mind a dream that there had to be a place for the kids to slide or swing or something so that they would have a place of their own in the park, too. So, if I remember correctly, we had to really squeeze the treasurer at that time to give us some money for something. And I mean, all we kept hearing is there isn't enough money, there isn't any money. But we did get books that showed us stuff. And, and I talked to some man that kind of looked after that and there was prices on it and things that we really wanted, but we weren't able to get the money from the Lions Club at the time. We had a very limited amount.

Mike And I recall that just the space wasn't huge. Like when you think about how you'd have the road on one side and then you'd end up in thin air on the bank if you went, swinging too far.

Rosie So the area was not.

Mike But for what it is, that's a nice little spot, I think.

Rosie I wish we had, I really wish we had a slide there, I still want one, but it's funny, I don't like that one piece that we have there. The yellow...

Mike The spinning thing.

Rosie It makes me sick to watch it. Never mind. But anyhow, I still have this idea that I like to see a swing up there.

Mike Well a swing is there. You mean a slide.

Rosie Yeah, a slide.

Mike You know, it's funny. Is the bunch that put in the work to get it in there. One of those people was the fellow from Japan, if you remember, he was working at Al-Pac. So for the couple of years he lived and worked in Athabasca before returning to Japan, he just happened to be around and we got him helping with a shovel.

Rosie That's right.

Mike Oh, yeah. Kind of neat.

Rosie No, it's been. It's been a real, I don't know, an effort maybe, but it was something that I think I really enjoyed most of all in my lifetime, working for the community. I think working with some of the Lions, I should say, the Lions that helped out in that it was just amazing. They were men that didn't mind spending a whole week coming up every day

to put up that fence. I'll never forget that fence because to put a post in that ground, you saw that these guys, with their butts up in the air, they're digging with their hands to get the rocks out that were there. It's a rock bottom there and how they got posts in there, I'll never, never know what they did.

And the other thing was, and they'd come from Perryvale. Speers and a few others there, is that they'd spend all day digging and putting their posts in, and all of that. They'd enjoy their lunch. Somehow or other I don't remember, but I always managed to have a lunch for them. And the one thing they took the greatest pride in was that fence had to be perfectly straight. There was no deviations either way, no matter how many rocks there were in the bottom, you had to go make sure that those planks lined up straight. And even now, I regret those few places that the fence is down. But I love to look down there and hope those posts don't move any way. But there were some guys, there were about four or five of them that never gave up. And we worked on that fence every day.

Mike Do you know if that'd be the site of where the one end of the cage for transporting people across the river? Because we found what looked like a concrete base and it seems like it must have been up there some time. What do you think?

Rosie That's what somebody asked me about. But it didn't line up for me. And somebody else asked about and. It didn't seem like it lined up.

Rosie But anyway, it was a work of real dedication by a group of men that I'll never forget. It's in that book. You would see pictures of the guys all lined up. Yeah, doing that.

Mike After building it, there was the annual caring of it. There's always something to do. Like Lois has been involved and you have Lois coming up to help with keeping water in the tank and everything for watering the flowers.

Rosie I felt that it needed something brighter. And so we started with flowers, plants, pots. And Lois has been very good about taking care of that. And Hal had a tank somewhere, and he brought a tank out for water, and dug a trench and foot hoses down there for water. That's Hal's work.

Mike So just what it is, is he got the water tank and gravity feed down a whole length of the park with two spots with a tap to access water to fill the pot and then go ahead and water. Yeah, that's how. Okay.

Rosie So that was his. He did a lot of work. He enjoyed that kind of work. So I'm saying that, and I actually appreciated him being invited to work, even if I didn't always agree with everything he wanted to do.

Mike Well, it kind of is a way to go back to. Yeah, like just, where are you from? I don't know if I ever asked about that. Where were you born?

Rosie Well, I was born at home, in my mother's house. There were nine of us. I was the ninth, the last one born.

Mike And here?

Rosie Oh, just in the Forfar district.

Mike Okay.

Rosie Yeah, I think there's still one of the Bahry boys has that now. Yeah, my whole family lives out in that area. But yeah, I was the last of the ninth, the ninth of that family. And yeah, I'm not very interesting. My young life was not that interesting.

Mike Well, what's your, your maiden name?

Rosie Bahry.

Mike And where I was talking to Anne, and she would have been from Smoky Lake area? I figure she was delivered by a midwife. And that was interesting because at that time there would be a midwife who worked throughout the whole community. And then I think her younger siblings were delivered in the hospital.

Rosie Yeah, well, my mother worked like a midwife in the whole district. So yeah, she didn't, I think, have any trouble figuring out to have nine of her own by that time.

Mike Your full name. Rose?

Rosie Oh, that's all.

Mike Rose Bahry.

Rosie By the time they came to me, they were running out of names. Yeah. So they, uh, they didn't uh. And so right now I am the last one of that whole family. I have no one to ask questions. I used to have one sister at PVL and I could ask her things and she had a good memory, not like mine.

Mike And well, when you described that, just going back to the park and how you always wish there was a slide there, you know, I'll remember that because you made that clear right from the very start. And I feel like if we talk about this 10 years from now, you'll remind me that you wanted a slide. And was that something when you were growing up like you, just how, you knew you had an idea, how you wanted something?

Rosie Yes.

Mike That's the way you've been.

Rosie I had a good imagination of how things should look. I think there is a bit of artist in me that isn't with a pencil and a paper. It's with trees and flowers and stuff like that. And at one time when I lived across the bush here. I had one of the nicest yards you could ever imagine. Just by, with rocks and trees and shrubs and stuff and grass. And I was, I just so enjoyed it. And my husband was very good about, I would find a rock somewhere and I would tag it and I wanted it. And they were always huge. And he would say, "If you just wait till I get the crop in and then I'll get to your rock." And I was always patient enough that I would get my rock. And the last rock I brought was when Kerri was, I can't remember how old she was. Two, three or four or whatever. And I spotted a rock twice the size of this table. Great big thing. And I really wanted that rock. But we had a, Newberry's were doing some brushing for us in the hay meadow, and I told him about that rock. He said "You know, I don't know if I can lift it, but if I can, you show me where you want it."

Mike And he might lift it with some equipment. Yeah, obviously. Yeah. Okay.

Rosie Oh, yes, he had a Cat. And that was Kerri's birthday. I can't remember which one, but she was pretty small then. And he, I showed him where I wanted it. And he dropped this big rock right by her sand pile, close to her sand pile, her birthday present.

Mike And so, when you see a rock, and this sounds like something that went on for a while, like you wanted certain rocks to come home with you.

Rosie Yeah.

Mike Right.

Rosie So I had one that was, like, real sitting good. A good one. And just the height of a good chair. Yeah. And I wanted that one right close to the house. And I wanted that one because we used to have a hired man that would come off the field, Roy Evans, and he would take off his....

Mike Sorry, did you say Roy Evans?

Rosie Yeah. And he would take off his shoes and he wore just like moccasin shoes, you know. And he would, they would be full of dirt from picking rocks or whatever he was doing, and he would shake off his boots out there and he would sit there and come in and have lunch. And he was so kind. He was sure he took all the dust off the shoes. But when he walked across the kitchen floor, you could see his footprints. And we would laugh about that, but we would not laugh at him. But, you know, he would clean it up after. And Kerri at that time was just a baby. And she learned to walk. That's another story. But anyhow, I would always dress her in like little nighties tied in the back because she was always dirty and I'd wash and clean up. And she would see Roy come and she would take off and run and jump up in his arms. And he was always so dusty

and dirty. And so it was kind of cute because after he'd go, I would change her nightie. I would wash her up. But I never, it was just wonderful. He loved her dearly.

Mike Well, how would that kind of arrangement work where you guys had him hired on? And how did you know of Roy Evans in this example?

Rosie Well, he just lived on the next road back, in that direction. West. Yeah. And we knew him all his life. He was a bachelor and he didn't mind helping out. And he could use the money.

Mike Yeah.

Rosie And so he'd come every spring and help, you know, help with whatever work there was to do on the field. And so that's... oh, yeah, I have wonderful memories of them.

Mike So is it accurate to say that this all developed to become Keith and Justin's work now? The farming?

Rosie Well, Keith, eventually. Yeah. He didn't want to. He tried working for, I don't know, they were putting in gas lines or something at that time all over. And so they wanted him to help out, not to do any digging, but to run the crew.

Mike Hmm.

Rosie And he went for, I don't know, he worked for a month maybe? Because he didn't want to go on to university. He wanted to stay home and farm. And, but we really thought he should try something else. So he worked there for, I don't know, maybe a month. I'm not even sure how long, and he said, nope, not for me. So he came home and he wanted to farm. And he did.

Mike And Justin's your grandson, and he's looking after it now.

Rosie He always will. Yeah. Yeah. And he wanted, he went to, to Vermilion? And took some courses, is it Vermilion?

Mike There's a few I know about, Olds, which is south.

Rosie Maybe it was Olds.

Mike Yeah. A couple of places in the province do have an agricultural kind of focus.

Rosie That's where he went, and he decided that's what he wanted to do. And he had always a different idea of what he wanted, especially when you want, we used to do hogs.

Mike Oh, you guys had a hog operation?

Rosie Yeah, we had a hog operation. Plus farming.

Rosie And that we eventually, that was a lot of work, and our own hogs had a disease one year that that kind of finished us. So we quit that. And Keith wanted to go into cattle. So we went into purebred cattle, we tried that for a long time.

Mike Oh, cool.

Rosie So we did that and eventually got rid of the herd. I can't remember anymore all that. But it's a long ways back, man. I've lived a long time. I've gone through a lot of things.

Mike Well, when we were just sitting down, you had this list prepared, and you were just, you know, a page of things that we could have talked about. And we've touched on, what, three, maybe three things out of the whole list. But then I said too, that, an hour, your voice starts to go, so we could get another visit. I was tempted to say, let's get Marge involved, too. Like, to me, I always think, what can I do that also combines something I want to do. And I always looked at this as an opportunity to visit with you, too.

Rosie You know where I come from, eh?

Mike Well, you realize that there's so much about a person you'll never know because there's not enough time to learn. Right?

Rosie No, it's so true. I don't think about my life in my past that much, because I've got too much now to think about. I've got such a full life right now with my grandkids and my great grandkids. When I have granddaughters I'm just so proud of. I'm so proud of those girls all heading out to get, well, one's going to get her master's pretty soon. And the other two are next year. The one, in the States who just got married.

Mike So when you think of your granddaughters in this case, like the pride you feel, is it that you see them realizing goals that they have made that makes you proud? Like how?

Rosie I'm proud of the people they've become, the women or the girls. They've become, they're kind. If I could say, first, they're kind, gentle. They're adaptable to anything. You know, they can take on anything. And especially Kerri's girls, and they've achieved a lot. They've achieved a lot, you know, and done a lot and then they're such nice people. Yeah. I think that's what I'm most proud of.

Mike Well you were saying like you've done so many things, and you think about that, and that you don't have a lot of time to think about what's happened in the past because you're busy.

Rosie That's right.

Mike Do you feel a sense of pride when you look at your achievements? Do you ever think of it in that way?

Rosie Not pride, but I think I didn't do so bad. I did a lot of things.

Mike Okay.

Rosie I had a great job. I had a great life. Yeah, it was hard. It wasn't an easy life. And, you know, I think about now. And I tried very hard that they all either had an education or that they had something that they can go back to, you know. And Barb became a teacher, Bunny became a nurse. I'm very proud of her as a nurse. She was real. And Kerri, of course, she did an amazing job of being, you know, going away to Ontario and getting, in London, Ontario her degrees in music and teaching.

Mike Can I ask? Sorry. I was going to say that music in the family seems to have always been a big part.

Rosie For me it has, yeah, very much.

Mike Well, the fact that that was important with your Harvest Fest, it seems like it's been a thing for you guys. Yeah.

Rosie Yeah, I guess so. I don't know. Like I said, I'm very proud of my family, that I'm so very proud of my granddaughters.

Mike Mm hmm.

Rosie I have not that many of them, so...

[End of Interview]

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