

Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project
Transcription of Ted Turkawski recording 2016.mp3
http://digiport.athabasca.ca/aasmp/people/t_turkawski.htm

Narrator: Ted Turkawski
Interviewer: Shirley Stashko
March 9, 2016

[Start of Interview]

Shirley My name is Shirley Stashko, and I am here with Ted Turkawski at his beautiful place here in Pleasant Valley Lodge in Athabasca. Today is March the 9th. Ted, could you please give us your father's name?

Ted My father's name is Dmytro Turkawski.

Shirley And your mother's name?

Ted I wonder if should I spell that?

Shirley Sure.

Ted Dmytro spelled D m y t r o. My mother's name is Annie Pawliuk. Last name spelled P a w l i u k.

Shirley OK, and when were you born?

Ted I was born on May 14th, 1936.

Shirley And where?

Ted On the farm in the New Pine Creek district in the Athabasca municipality.

Shirley And what is your spouse's name?

Ted My spouse's maiden name is Dorothy Stotesbury. Stotesbury spelled S t o t e s b u r y.

Shirley Good. Thank you. Now, Ted, you've prepared your story and I'll just let you take over at this point.

Ted OK. My father, Dmytro Turkawski, was born on October 2nd, 1903 in the Yavoriv district of Poland, which is now in the Ukraine. In the English alphabet, you would spell Yavoriv Y a v o r i v. He was born in the village of Gnojniec, Poland. Gnojniec is spelled G n o j n i e c e. It was in Poland. In the peace treaty by the League of Nations in 1921, Poland lost this region to the Ukraine. And that's why we have two different

spellings for Yavoriv. I noticed on my iPad when I googled Gnojnice that the village is not called Gnojnice anymore. It is Hlynets, which is spelled H l y n e t s.

Dad was orphaned in his early teens and grew up in Gnojnice. Father served in the Polish Army for a few years. After discharge from the army, he went to work in the coal mines of southern France. There he learned to speak French. Later, here in the Athabasca area, I remember him joking back and forth with our farm neighbors of French descent, and there was much laughter. I never understood what was being said. Father Dmytro came to Canada and Alberta in 1929 at the age of 26 years and went to work as a farm laborer on farms in the Daysland area southeast of Edmonton. After about a couple of years of this work, he went to work sporadically, doing track maintenance for the railroad company when there was an opening.

Dear listener of this story... to get a clearer picture of the severity of those years, please realize that when Dad arrived in Canada, as did the many others, he entered into the teeth of what is now remembered as the Great Depression. The period of roughly 10 years of economic collapse when large companies down to small farmers were going bankrupt. With scarce gainful employment, in addition to hunger and resultant misery, farm commodity prices dropped to next to nothing.

I remember in my youth when I'd ask older neighbors about who owned certain quarter sections of abandoned land that had fields cleared of forest, the answer was that it was owned by Credit Foncier. I suspect they were a lending institution, a banker or a lending firm. From my perspective, severe drought leading to crop failures and borrowing more money than productivity could make payments on created lean times for large companies and individuals. This is what mainly caused the Great Depression. Through my working years and into my retirement, I, with others, often worried that history will be repeated. Will this or future generations be able to cope as well as they did in 1929 to 1939? The danger lies in violent rebellion instead.

In those years, Dad struggled to learn the English language, with its system of weights and measures. The European metric system he knew was useless here. Though he could speak Ukrainian, Polish, and French and read and write Polish and Ukrainian, (the Ukrainian and Polish alphabet, by the way, are different), he learned English with considerable mutilation. In my youth, when I listened in, I observed that the men of different ethnic backgrounds, with much better English, somehow understood Dad's words in spite of the mutilation.

My mother, Annie Turkawski, was born on a farm 12 miles south of Holden, Alberta. Holden is spelled H o l d e n. She was born in April of 1917 to Katherine, nee Motkoski, and Paul Pawliuk. When mother Annie Turkawski was five and her brother Frank was four, they lost their mother to childbirth. Their father died in an accident while repairing a wagon wheel 11 months later. Orphans Annie and Frank were taken in and raised by their grandparents, Joseph and Mary Motkoski, who lived in the Kopernick district, as did Katherine and Paul Pawliuk. Kopernick is roughly south of Holden. Joseph Motkoski was about 62 years old when his wife Mary and he adopted their granddaughter, my mother, and her brother Frank. In 1932, the Motkoski family moved from the Holden

area to the New Pine Creek district, 20 miles southeast of Athabasca, Alberta. Here, under the Homestead Act, they acquired four quarter sections of forested land, a quarter section each, in the names of Joseph, Mary, and their sons Ed and John. I often heard the story of them sleeping under large spruce trees while building their cabin, which they roofed with cedar shingles. Those shingles served from 1932 till 1957, 25 years. Eventually, they also built a log barn, a long log granary, log outhouse, blacksmith shop with forge, and chicken coop, all from the farm's trees which were aspen and spruce. I expect that when they were making a clearing for the yard, the trees were right there. This work was done on the northeast quarter, section 32, township 63, range 21, west of the fourth meridian. They also cleared and put under cultivation 15 acres of land mandated by the government to gain title to the quarter section. This land was registered in Mary Motkoski's name.

When mother—I like to say Orphan Annie—lived in the Holden area, she was only able to go to school occasionally because she had to help with the chores at home. As a consequence, she completed only Grade 2. In spite of this, her handwriting in English was perfect, and she had no trouble subtracting, multiplying, and dividing numbers. She spoke Ukrainian, Polish and good English.

My father, Dmytro Turkawski, and mother, Annie Pawliuk (pronounced Powellou), were married on December 2nd, 1934 in Edmonton at the Holy Rosary Catholic Church. Dmytro and Annie's introduction and marriage were arranged by Annie's grandmother. After Dmytro and Annie's marriage, Annie's grandmother Mary Motkoski signed the farm over to her granddaughter. This was the farm with its buildings and around 20 acres of cleared land on the quarter section. Dmytro, my father, bought three horses, two cows, one heifer, and the small farming implements of that time from the Motkoskis. There's a copy of the bill of sale dated November 27, 1934 in the New Pine Creek history book. Shortly after this, the Motkoskis sold off or abandoned the remaining lands, which were another three quarters, and moved away from the New Pine Creek district in the Athabasca region.

Now, the rest of this is going to be about myself, Ted Turkawski, baptized Theodore Turkawski. I was born in our little log cabin on the bank of Pine Creek to Annie and Dmytro Turkawski on May 14th, 1936. Our close neighbor, Mrs. Emil Mikaluk, was in attendance as midwife. I was the first born of 10 surviving siblings, almost all born at home in the same original cabin on the northeast quarter of section 32, range 21, township 63, west of the fourth meridian.

I don't know if I should even say this, but I will anyway. I find the telling of this story very laborious and time consuming. I will not tell the story of my nine dear siblings. I am obsessed with accuracy of details like dates, place names, distances, and so forth. I check, double check, and sometimes triple check, and sometimes I write things all over again. Also, we have written our stories in the book titled "Colinton and Districts: Yesterday and Today," and the book "Sharing the Past of the New Pine Creek District." In this story, I will review the history of my maternal great-grandparents, because they were the pioneers of the land on which I was born. Also my parents. Next, I will bore the

listener with some details from my life. Not intending to bore, but someday somebody might be interested [laughs].

In my memories of summertime, before I started school, I went barefoot most of the time. I wore a sort of cross between a shirt and a dress that mother made from flour and sugar sacks. Sometimes on my feet, I wore low slip-on rubbers that mother would buy at the New Pine Creek store, which was about two and a half miles away from home. I do remember how proud and happy I was of their new black shine, wearing them walking home from the store. I'd look back whenever we crossed a patch of dusty road and admire the design of the pattern they made in the dust, those little rubbers. These had to do through spring, summer, and part of autumn. I also remember every year they were one size larger. I found it easy to walk barefoot in a wild hay stubble that had been cut by dad with a scythe. Though the skin on the soles of my feet was hardened, walking in grain stubble was painful. In the winter I wore what was called felt socks. These were calf-high, about 3/8-inch thick felt, and slipped on like a rubber boot, over wool socks knitted by mother. The felt socks had the little black rubbers a size or two larger, pulled over them to keep the felt from getting wet in the snow. The rubbers were a nuisance because they'd freeze solid, then slip off the socks when we walked. Sometimes we'd slip the rubber rings used on canning jars over the foot rubbers to help keep them on.

Believe it or not, I still remember the frustration I felt because I couldn't stop my baby brother Mike from crying. Mike was two years younger than me. He was about one year old and I would have been three. I was often left to babysit when mom and dad were away at some field work. I knew if I needed them that I'd never be able to find them. Mike was in the rocking cradle, which I rocked and rocked. Sometimes I would dip his soother in sugar to stop his crying. I became tired and he was still crying. I was worried. So I climbed into the cradle and rocked it from the inside. Mother often said that when she and dad got home, they found both Mike and me asleep in the cradle. I believe that I do remember that. Of course, I also heard the story.

Shirley How old were you?

Ted Three years old. The first years of my life, until seven years of age, were spent learning how to look after my younger brother Mike and sisters Victoria and Evangeline. I looked after them while mother and father worked in the fields or occasionally went for an evening visit to the neighbors. So I'd be left with the kids. I also did other chores: I would wash and dry dishes, gather eggs from the chicken coop and the different places in the bush where the chickens laid, and carry firewood to the wood box in the house. We had a dog named Ginger that I was very fond of. On a couple of occasions that dog picked up a stick of firewood from the woodpile. Without being trained to do so, he carried the stick and laid it by the cabin's entrance door. We'd find the stick there later. The first time we wondered how it got there, and then one time we saw him doing it. Sometimes when mother was busy in the kitchen, she would ask me to bring in water from the well.

Shirley How old were you?

Ted Oh, sometime before school. Five or six—before I went to school. I would draw water up with a pail that was permanently tied to about 16 feet of rope, dump it into the house pails, and carry the pails into the house. In those days mother had her one acre, at least one acre, garden. The garden was on a fertile flat of land next to the creek. I would help her carry water from the creek as she watered the garden. I remember once when brother Mike was about two years of age that he fell into the creek. I would have been four. I can still see the back of his head. He somehow landed on the back of his neck on some willows that had fallen across the creek. His face was out of the water. Wisely, he just laid there without any more struggling. Mother didn't realize at the time that he was struggling as if he was in the bathtub. Afraid that he was drowning and that the water was too deep for me, I shouted for mother (who was in the garden). She came running and fished Mike out. That's one more little memory.

In those early homesteading days a lot of the fencing was done with wooden rails cut from the bush next to the fence. I would help father by holding rails on the ground to keep them from rolling as he notched them with the axe to fit the post. These rails were a minimum of 25 feet long. I would hold up the thin end while he held up and spiked the thick end. Then, after spiking the thick end, I'd still be holding up the far thin end while he'd notch the middle post in the middle of the rail, and then spike that to the post, and so on back to the third post.

When I was six years old there were fences only around the few acres of cultivated land where father grew grain, plus three sides of the home quarter. The south end of the home quarter was open and the cattle had free access to about 375 acres of open, unfenced, undeeded pasture. By open I mean it wasn't fenced, but it certainly was not open. It was not bare of trees. So the cattle had access to about 375 acres of that land that was undeeded pasture. This was forested with burned over patches and a large piece of boggy peat land, overgrown with black spruce, tamarack, and willows. Of course the grass and the herbs were all native. The parents kept about six milk cows, a couple of steers, heifers. When a cow needed to be bred, dad would lead her to one or another of the neighbors who kept the bull.

At an early age, I got acquainted well with the patches of that wild land, first by accompanying mother when she went blueberry or strawberry picking, then later when she went searching for the cows to chase them home for the six o'clock milking. By seven years of age, it was my job to find the cows and chase them home. At least two of the cows always had bells on them. You know, that's another thing. Neighbors had bells on their cattle too, but we learned to recognize the difference between the sound of our bells and the neighbors'. Sometimes I'd cover miles in the bush and couldn't find them. I'd often stop and listen for the sound of their bells, hearing nothing but the neighbor's bells in the distance. When the cows were lying down, their bells wouldn't ring. I'd finally come home all tired out with no cows. Then I'd have to go back with mother until we found them. On those days milking and supper was very late. There were a few times in my search for the cows when they came home alone by a different route while I was looking for them, the wind blowing the sound of their bells away from

me. Though I was tired, I was surprised and happy too when I got home to see the cows there.

I started school at seven years of age. It was Roy Fedorchuk and Gerald Lee who knew the English language. Actually, Gerald did, but Roy didn't. Gerald became my buddy. Roy and I knew only Ukrainian. Our teacher, Miss Laura Scott, at Hallcroft School, started Roy and me off by pointing to various items during classes, and carefully and slowly pronouncing words like rubbers, coat, blackboard, chalk, and so forth, which we had to repeat after her. This was the way we started to learn English. The first and most important sentence we had to learn during class was to hold up our hand until teacher called our name and say, "May I leave the room?" This was for when we urgently need to go to the outhouse. The whole class of boys and girls in grades 1 to grade 9 would hear our request in the quiet study period. This was embarrassing, but better than the alternative of not going to the outhouse [laughs].

We soon got used to it, other than not having the English language. I did not find grade 1 at seven years of age difficult. Mother had taught me the English alphabet, the sound of its letters, and the approximate sounds of its combination of letters at home. The walk to Hallcroft School was a little more than three miles by road, less than that on shortcut paths that I and close neighbor families had tramped out through the bush.

Shirley Can I just interrupt?

Ted Sure.

Shirley The name of the school is Hallcroft?

Ted Hallcroft. H a double-l c r o f t.

Shirley Thank you.

Ted Most of the time I would meet with the older kids of the Mikaluk and Wronko families who lived a 1/4 mile away from our place, and we would walk to school together. One winter day, tramping home from school in the deep snow with Annie Wronko, I was feeling unwell and very tired. Annie, about seven years older than me, picked me up and carried me piggyback through the snow for the remaining one and a half miles home. I was then and always will be grateful to Annie, who later became a registered nurse in Edmonton's Misericordia Hospital.

My first year in school there were three neighbor Wronko sisters walking the same path.

Shirley Can you spell that last name?

Ted W r o n k o. Mostly, I walked with Andrew Mikaluk, who was four years older than me and was my best friend for the rest of his life. He passed away in December of 1989 from cancer at the age of 57 years. When we were kids four years of age difference

seemed like a lot and he seemed so wise. So I was happy to follow him. Even though the roads were not very good that he took.

Memories include fishing with Annette in Pine Creek, playing physically strenuous games after chores late into the dark of night, walks to the New Pine Creek store with 15 cents in our pocket on Sundays.

There were days when I would walk to school alone. I would not meet up with the others for one reason or another. In late autumn I remember hearing the gobbling sounds of the prairie chickens at dawn in the stooks of the wheat fields. They used to gather in flocks eating the grain. They themselves were good eating, but difficult to shoot, flying away before we could get close enough for a shot. It was difficult to get close enough with our .22 caliber rifles.

One day going for the cows, in about 1948, I started across a four-acre blueberry patch when a flock of prairie chickens flew up ahead of me. They flew into the muskeg right next to the blueberry patch. The muskeg had swamp spruce on it. I was carrying a single-shot 12-gauge shotgun and I thought my family would appreciate prairie chicken for supper. I thought that the chickens only flew a short distance for cover but once they thought it was safe, they would be coming back for the blueberries. I followed them into the muskeg. There was a trench in the deep moss that the cattle had tramped out as part of their path. I laid down on my stomach. Those trenches were deep! I laid down on my stomach in this trench in the moss with the shotgun in front of me, ready to shoot straight ahead. That was the only direction I could see. I don't think I could be seen from either side. I lay there what seemed like a long time, but was probably about eight minutes. Finally, I heard a whistle, "weeu" sound in the muskeg, some distance away and to one side of me. After about 20 seconds, there was another "weeu" on the other side of me. After a 15-second pause, these whistles came from about five directions from me. After a while I joined in and imitated their whistle. Darned if they didn't answer.

I had never heard of a human interacting with prairie chickens in this way before. We continued this whistling back and forth for some time and the chickens could be heard coming closer to me from at least three directions. After another long while, only one prairie chicken, about 30 feet to my left and in front of me, who had been coming closer and closer, answered my whistles. Lying in my trench, motionless with the shotgun propped in front of me, my finger on the trigger, I could only see straight ahead. Now I was feeling very tense. Suddenly, on the cross path in the muskeg, the bird darted out in front of me and I pulled the trigger. Well, that bird, being only 15 feet in front of me, was so badly mangled by the shot that after examining it, I saw it was no use taking it home for supper.

As I walked on searching for the cows to bring home, I had two very strong feelings. One was a feeling of pride because I had learned to call prairie chickens, and the other feeling was of true remorse for having wasted what was probably the leader of the flock. It was my whistle among the others that never moved much that made the leader think that I was one of her flock in distress, and she came to investigate. I do not remember ever having the occasion to use that call again, and I still remember how to do it 68

years later [makes bird whistle sounds]. I haven't seen such flocks of prairie chickens since about 1952.

Back to my memories of Hallcroft School. In the winter I sometimes had to walk alone on the 2.5-mile path through the bush in the snow. About halfway to school the coyotes would howl in the pitch darkness. The howl came from one side of me, maybe a 1/4 mile away. Then another group would reply on the other side. This would go on for quite some time. I'd keep walking, with a stick. You couldn't see far in the bush in darkness. Those times I was very afraid that I would be attacked. Sometimes I'd think, "Maybe they're wolves." This nearby howling didn't seem to happen when we walked in a group. Now, I find it hard to picture a child in their seventh and eighth year of life in those circumstances. But I suppose it was experienced by a lot of kids in the late 1940s and before.

There were a lot of rabbits then. On both sides of the path and into the bush, there were many sharp spears of frozen young trees that the rabbits had chewed off above the snow.

The sandwiches I brought to school in my recycled lard pail were still half frozen at noon. Seemed like no problem. They were made of bought strawberry jam, peanut butter, and sometimes smeared with home-rendered pig's lard sprinkled with salt and pepper on home-baked bread, always, of course. Then a homemade cookie or two. We drank water from the school's well. Being very shy, though, I understood the English language eventually in my first year, I refused to attempt to speak it to my classmates for fear of being laughed at. In those times, we with Slavic names were jeered and degradingly called bohunks. To me, this was very hurtful. And from hearing conversations among the grown-ups, I knew that being called a bohunk sometimes led to fist fights among them. In view of this, I wanted my first public sentence in English to be perfect. I secretly practiced over and over. At noon we had lunch hour. All the boys would eat in the boys' cloak room and the girls ate in their separate cloak room. Now remember, the English-speaking classmates had never heard me utter a sentence among them, except to repeat something the teacher asked me to. As we all gathered to eat our lunch, I decided this was the day to bring my secretly practiced sentence. In a clear loud voice I announced, "I am so hungry I could eat a rabbit." There was a moment of dead silence, then a chorus of "He talks, he talks!" [laughs]. I had a very proud feeling of "Ha! I had you buggers fooled for a long time!" I still see the scene with the boys perched on a bench and counter and Lawrence Hutton, who was the eldest and in Grade 8, seated at his usual place, the sturdy shelf above the counter. After that, I didn't worry about my imperfect English, as it is to this day. Of course, when I was out of earshot of the others, I could speak a mixture of English and Ukrainian with the older Ukrainian neighbors' kids.

The history of Hallcroft School covered in the "Colinton and District: Yesterday and Today" book printed around 1980 omitted three teachers that taught there. They were Miss Stella Noel, Miss Laura Scott, and the other one taught in 1946. I don't remember her name because I was going to New Pine Creek School that year.

After my one year at Hallcroft School we were transferred to Atlanta School because of a teacher shortage. I had to walk 2.5 miles through the bush from my home to the southwest corner of Albert and Nestor Gunderson's land. That is where George Knutson and his team of horses and democrat wagon met us. George hauled me and all of the Hallcroft pupils straight north for five miles to Atlanta School. George used the democrat wagon in spring and fall. When there was enough snow on the ground, Mr. Knutson used his caboose on runners with a little wood burning heater inside the wooden enclosure. The caboose had a sliding window for the reins to the horses and a little window at the back. It had a sort of shelf on each side for us to sit on. I saw this as the last word in luxury for wintertime travel and it was cozy.

Shirley And what do you call it?

Ted Caboose. I've heard the driver had to be extra careful not to attempt sharp turns with the caboose. Having only two runners, it was easy to tip over. It must have taken us 1.5 hours to get to Atlanta School. With the 3/4-hour walk through 2.5 miles of bush, then another 3/4 hour for the 5-mile ride with the horses at an occasional trot. I would need to leave home no later than 7:30 in the morning. I do remember one winter morning coming out of the bush to the place where I was supposed to meet our ride and finding that the caboose had just left. I could see it receding down the road a 1/4 or less mile away. I was tired from the walk, but decided to run after it in an attempt to catch up, or at least be seen by the other older kids in the caboose. I ran and ran, swinging my noon lunch in my lard pail for a 1/4 mile until I was across from Gunderson's yard. As the horses were at a trot and I out of the breath, I could see the distance between me and the caboose was widening, so I gave up. Apparently, no one looked out the caboose's little back window to see me on the road behind them. Otherwise, they would have waited. I was very deeply discouraged because I enjoyed school and had to come home that morning after a 6-mile round trip of walking and running in the snow. We never did figure out if I was late that morning or if Mr. Knutson left early because everyone else except me was there. I suspect the latter was true. The next day was a Saturday. Dad took our clock and timed the walk to the Gunderson's. He compared clock times at Gunderson's to the previous day and concluded that I had been on time. Anyway, that's as far as that went.

Hallcroft School re-opened in 1945 when I was in Grade 3 following the jubilation that the Second World War had ended. My younger brother Mike started school in 1946. There finally was room in the New Pine Creek log schoolhouse for brother Mike and me. This was the school district we belonged in. I started Grade 4 at 10 years of age. Miss Violet Scott was our teacher and the log building was cozy. In the wintertime it was probably warmer than the new frame building on the full basement that, for its life as a schoolhouse, had water from seepage on its dirt floor. The new building opened for classes in 1947. The log schoolhouse was across the road from the John Workun farm yard, and a 1/4 mile from the New Pine Creek store, operated by Mrs. Annie Nalesnik. Also, the New Pine Creek dance hall on Workun 's quarter was between their yard and the store. In the same area was a neat little log building that served as a teacherage. It also occasionally served as a place for a little romance and courtship between the teachers and the young men and the women who had finished school. For me, my

brother Mike, and later my five sisters, Victoria, Evangeline, Irene, Nelly, and Caroline, the walk to the new school was 2.5 miles across country, over little fields and through bush. This was a 1/2 mile closer than the original New Pink Creek log school. My youngest brother Steve and my youngest two sisters, Joyce and Kathy, rode the school bus when they started school. By the way, there are 10 of us, 3 brothers and 7 sisters. Sorry, 2 brothers, 7 sisters.

Shirley Plus you, so 10 altogether.

Ted That's correct. In the spring of 1952, I finished Grade 10 at New Pine Creek School. The last three years were by correspondence courses. The last year was under the supervision of Miss Olia Kowalchuk who later married Peter Marchuk in the district. I turned 17 years of age that spring and went to work as a grease monkey and errand boy, at Nick Mandrusiak's garage in Boyle, Alberta. I earned \$60 a month for five days per week of work. Out of that \$60, I spent \$40 a month for room and board. I will now go back to my boyhood on the farm with the chores and responsibilities when not in school.

Up to about seven years of age, when mom had to be in the fields working with dad, I would be left in the house to play with and watch over my younger siblings. Early on I learned how to peel potatoes and build a fire in a wood stove. With the right amount of salt, I'd boil the potatoes in preparation for mom and dad when they came in for dinner. Mom would add meat and other stuff from the garden for the meal. I also would sometimes have to change diapers on my baby sisters. That was a job I hated. The diapers were made from used flour and sugar bags that were washed, dried and used over and over. Mother really had mountains of house and garden work to do when she didn't have to help dad. I'd help a little with the smaller jobs such as gathering eggs, bringing in firewood, weeding the garden, and so forth.

This was during the summers and I had lots of time to play outside with my brother and little sisters. Sometimes a neighbor boy would come over to play. After seven years of age, during summer holidays and on weekends and after school, I worked with my father, and sometimes alone, on jobs requiring axe or hammer work. A lot of the work involved clearing the land for cultivation. In the histories of early settlement in the County of Athabasca it is often correctly stated that settlers had to clear the land for cultivation. My objective is to illustrate in detail the work involved that cannot be expressed by one sentence, paragraph, or page. In advance, I wish to apologize to and warn the listener. Unless you are genuinely interested in the detailed method and tools employed by my parents, their children, and other families, you will find my memories extremely boring.

The first year I remember helping clear six acres. Two years later we cleared a strip of eight acres. There were 35 acres already cleared and under cultivation. The reason I will go into detail about land clearing in the early years is it might have some historical value and the work will surely never, never be done that way again. To start with, the tools we used were a two-man powered or two-man muscle-powered crosscut saw, axes, and mattock, which everyone called a grub hoe, a gaff, which was a steel hook bolted to the end of about a 16-foot-long light pole. We also needed files and a

sharpening stone. On trees three inches or more in diameter, we would use the grub hoe to hoe the dirt and rocks away off the roots and between them. We had to be very careful not to dull our axes by striking a rock or stone.

Dad always chopped the tree roots a good distance away from the tree trunk, and then brother Mike and I did the same. The larger the tree, the farther away the roots were chopped. He explained the reason for this was that the breaking plow would turn over the furrow neater, in thinner roots, which are farther from the tree's base. Also, when they came to root picking time, we would have slightly smaller roots to physically pull out of the furrows. To begin with, we children would chop down only the small saplings and the small brush. We would drag and throw them up on the brush piles that were built on top of the large trees that dad felled. We would also pile the limbs and tops of adjoining trees that dad felled. The brush piles were always built in the patch where the thickest and tallest trees were.

The trees were mostly aspen, with the occasional black poplar, willow clump, and white spruce. After all the roots were cut, the tree could usually be pushed over by hand. The larger trees grew to 16 inches across at the base and up to 70 feet high. These aspen would have up to 80 to 85 years of growth rings. The big trees took a lot of grub hoe work to get at all the deep roots. If the tree refused to fall after a few tries at pushing or pulling it, then we would have to dig for more roots to cut. The ones with some natural lean to them were easiest to fell. On large trees with no lean, dad would use the gaff, the steel hook bolted to about a 16-foot-long pole. First, as on all felling of the larger trees, everyone was alerted to get the hell out of the way. Next, the feller looked around for a safe place for himself to run. He'd take the gaff and hook it on an overhead branch, as high as handy, and get the tree swaying by pulling and relaxing on the pole. When the tree started to fall towards him, the feller would simply unhook the gaff, and take it with him and step out of the way.

After the tree was felled, the clay that stuck to the middle of the stump below the tree's base and its roots had to be scraped and knocked off for a complete burn of the stump. The hole where the tree had been growing was filled and leveled using the grub hoe. Next, the two-man crosscut saw was used to cut off the tree stump and cut the tree up into two or three lengths, depending on the tree's length. The limbs were axed off the tree and dragged to the brush pile, which burned best when built high. The logs of the tree were later dragged by a horse and chain to a brush pile, or if it was time to start a new brush pile, the logs were rolled together for the base of the new brush pile. The horse would also drag the stump to the pile. Sure a lot of detail!

If the felled tree was to be the start of a new brush pile, the stump was not cut off. After felling, cutting off the stumps, limbing and topping a lot of the trees, we loaded the full-length sections into the wagon and hauled it to our four-year's supply pile near the house that we used for stove wood. On those hot summer days, we drank a lot of water which we carried to the bush from our well in two-quart glass canning jars wrapped in small water-soaked burlap sacks and kept in the shade. Oh, how good that fresh cold water was from the hand-dug well that still had winter's ice in it! You know, in spite of the hard work clearing land that way, I kind of enjoyed it. As a kid, I was getting real

handy with an axe and growing stronger. We were always surrounded by the fragrances of the different kinds of cut wood and their crushed leaves.

Shirley Can I ask you how old you were?

Ted No older than seven. I started helping with that kind of work easily when I was six. After starting school, I would help after school and on weekends and during summer holidays when we had all these days off.

Dad, Mike, and I each had our own axes. Dad always used the newest ones, both single- and double-edged. Mike and I both used the older, double-edged axes and sometimes the spare, old single-edged axe. The old axes were worn down to the thicker steel and took more work to file back and sharpen. We wore out many files, chopping roots that are still in the ground. It becomes more difficult to chop deep, which we always strove for with our every swing because of the resistance to penetration of a thick edge. So of course, when I actually got older, the edge had got worn back to where it was thicker. Dad bought a 2-inch thick by about 12-inch diameter whetstone that came with its hardware. Dad built a four-legged water trough stand for the stone, the bottom of which was always in the water. The whetstone had a shaft through it. Each end of the shaft rested on two little wheels which acted as bearings which were bolted to the sides of the stand. Also, on one end of the shaft, there was a crank. It was a man-killer [laughs]. After filing the nicks and so forth out of the axe blades, dad would sit at one end of the whetstone stand and press the cutting edge of the axe against the stone while Mike or I cranked it. I always counted to around 200 when I was cranking the revolutions of the stone. Then Mike would take his turn, also counting. It took a long time to do three double-edged axes to dad's satisfaction. Of course, he was just sitting, he didn't have to crank.

There was a blacksmith in Ellscott during the late 1940s who had a good reputation for building up plowshares and old axes. He did it for much less money than it took to buy a new axe. One winter dad took three of our old axes for him to build up. Another bonus was that the blacksmith had a good supply of moonshine [laughs]. Those built-up axes turned out real good. They were considerably heavier and had a wider edge and a good taper to the edge. For Mike and me it was only one blow to cut off a tree limb where before it took three blows. Dad kept using new axes. Eventually we were out of built-up axes too, while clearing land, and in the wintertime cutting logs for lumber.

When limbing with an axe you must use a lot of force and aim at the base against the log. This leaves a neat job, makes the log easier to roll, and prevents injury from a rolling log or branch stub snagging on clothing. When I look at the axes sold in the hardware stores today compared to 50 years ago, I see that they have lost their style. To me, the axes in hardware stores nowadays look more like mauls. It is obvious people's dependence on the axe for a part of their living ended about 60 years ago. The axes of the 1930s and 40s I remember were really streamlined with wider and more tapered cutting edges. The best axes from good steel and balance were made in Sweden. They were actually beautiful, those axes of long ago. Nowadays, they ... but then people don't need them like we used to.

We would come home for our dinner around 1:00 pm. Mom would have this ready for dad and Mike and me, and our sisters at home. Boy, could we eat lots. After dinner dad would lie down for an hour's nap in the heat of the day. Mike and I would go to the cool log granary, where our beds were through the summer, and do the same. After the naps, we would go back to work till around 8:00 pm and supper. I remember feeling a renewed energy in the evenings when the sun receded. There was days mom would search for the cows, bring them home, and milk them herself.

When I was nine years old, I decided to do a memory experiment. I believe this little story is unique. It was a sunny summer day at around 1:00. I'd just come home from grubbing out trees and building another brush pile by way of land clearing. I don't remember where dad and brother Mike were that afternoon. I just remember that I'd worked alone. Before going in for dinner, I stopped at the well and pulled a pail of cold water out of the well, and sat down on the end of the water trough, taking the occasional drink. I was feeling very satisfied with myself and in a reflective mood. I looked at the sun which was shining through high cloud, and then down at my ragged work overalls. You know I do really see this; I'm not making this up. At the time I was trying to remember some couple of years or more back how happy my family and I were when the relatives came to visit all the way from Edmonton. I remembered the happiness and their dressy clothes and nice car. However, to my great disappointment, I couldn't recall a lot of details. Then I told myself that I'm going to try to remember this day, and what I am thinking. I am nine years old. I wish I tried this when I was younger, and you know I really did feel grown up. Then after another sip of water, I glanced at my ragged overalls and I emphasized, "Remember, this is a nice day and I am nine years old, sitting on the end of this horse trough next to the well. I am old enough now that I can do as much work as my father. Remember this interlude." Through the decades, I've rehearsed that trivial scene, and 71 years later, I do remember.

Around 1946 the first bulldozer appeared in our district, knocking down and piling trees. That was a sight to behold. To cut down on the expense of hiring the machine and the operators, dad had them knock down and pile only the larger trees. The smaller ones were just knocked down and trampled. So we still had axe work to do to clean this up. What an improvement! We could clear so many more acres with less time and effort. I couldn't get enough of watching in amazement as the bulldozer pushed those big trees over, though it did have some trouble with a large spruce. That was the year we retired the gaff hook with its long pole mentioned earlier in this story. In subsequent years I sometimes wondered what became of that hook. Fifty-five years later I had to cut down a big old bam [tree] that was leaning toward the electric wires on the farmyard. As I was cutting the limbs off the bam, I came to a thick one and there was the old gaff hook, mostly overgrown by the wood where it had been hung many years ago. Its bowl had rotted off.

Our land was very stony. After the trees were cleared off, we had to dig out and haul away the exposed rocks. This was even before the initial plowing. For this we used spades, crowbars, chain, farm horse, four-horse team, stone-boat, and lots of human muscle. There were about four boulders on that quarter section that were roughly 6 feet

long by 2.5 feet deep. To remove these, we dug a trench around them to their full depth. Then we filled the trench all around with firewood and piled logs on top. During the burn of all of this wood and its coals, dad would bring a couple of 45-gallon drums full of water on the stone-boat with a team of horses. When the fire was done the boulder was very hot. Dad would throw pails full of water on it. That boulder cracking sounded like rifle shots and there was clouds of steam. The boulder would crack in various directions, leaving us with manageable chunks. The next half-day would be spent hauling the pieces off the clearing on the stone-boat and filling the hole where the boulder was.

Mom, dad, myself, my brother, my sisters, and later my wife and our two children have been picking rocks out of 100 acres on that quarter after every cultivation since the first homestead. Never seem to ... well, it's pretty clean now. Cultivation averaged one to five years. The initial plowing of the virgin land, with its shallow two-inch topsoil and tree roots, was always referred to as breaking the land. There was always someone within six miles of our place that had a tractor and breaking plow. For traction those tractors had v-shaped steel lugs bolted around their steel rear wheels. The lugs were about four and a half inches high and to me looked like the shiny teeth of some monster. The tractor would run over a covered rock once in a while and the operator could feel the lugs contact with the rock. The odd time I was allowed to ride with the driver coming home off the field. When the hind wheel ran over a rock, I could feel all the iron in that tractor shudder. Those machines were built heavy and tough.

One time I remember Walter Nalesnik doing the breaking for us. The tractor engine got too hot. Without thinking, he quickly loosened the radiator cap to see if there was enough water in the rad. He scalded his face, hand and arm by the escaping pressurized boiling water. He took only about a day and a half off work, probably using some home remedy on the burns. About six years later, dad hired the Huffs to do some breaking for us. As Norman Huff was cranking to start the engine, it backfired. Through the naturally stiff arm, it pulled his forehead down hard on top of the iron radiator shroud. Did that fracture his skull? Who knows? Nobody bothered with the doctor then. The iron was undamaged, and his father took over the breaking for a couple of days while Norman rested his headache.

The breaking plows cut a furrow through the soil, tree roots, and rocks about 12 inches wide to whatever depth was set. The depth was set by a lever on the plow, usually five inches. It had one plowshare and moldboard. It also had a coulter, which was a thick, about five-inch-wide vertical shear. The bottom end of the coulter had a socket that fit over a long point on the front of the plowshare. The top of the coulter was firmly bolted to the frame of the plow. The coulter's job was to cut a vertical slip through the soil, roots, and so forth for the shear and moldboard to turn the 12-inch slice of furrow over. There was always a spare share and coulter. After getting dull they had to be sharpened, which was often in rocky land. During the breaking, my brother, or my brother's and my job, was to follow the breaking plow with spades and to dig out most exposed and some loosened rocks, then throw them out on top of the plot of land to be gathered later onto the stone-boat. Mike had to look after one side of the field and me the other. Dad would do a short part of Mike's side with a crowbar. Dad always wore leather gloves, but we children were barehanded till we left home. Some stones took

time to dig out, so we had to hurry on every round of the tractor and plow to get them out of the trench before the tractor was back on our side of the field.

It was about 1950. I was 14 years old and my brother Mike was 12 when dad hired Bill McKay to do some breaking. Mr. McKay from the Hallcroft School District had one of his twin boys, Bobby, who was a year older than me, walk behind his breaking plow. This was so that Bobby could help unplug the tangle of tree roots in front of the plow's coulter, which happens every once in a while. Every once in a while this would happen and force the plow out of the ground. Bobby would meet with Mike and me on opposite sides of the field with every round of the tractor. For amusement Bobby, who knew no Ukrainian, would ask me to say something short in Ukrainian that he could tell Mike on the other side of the field. He wanted to impress Mike with his knowledge of Ukrainian. For instance, Bobby would ask me how to say, "You work hard." I'd tell him and he'd repeat the Ukrainian over and over to himself until he walked over to Mike's side and told Mike. Then there was much hilarity between us because what I told Bob and he told Mike was, "You're as dumb as a stump." instead of "You work hard." Mike would return the favor with a message for me. Most of the language we used is not worth repeating here, as all of us boys found indecent words much more interesting and easier to learn in another language. We wouldn't dare let our parents know what we were saying back and forth, and learning. Now as I write these memories, it doesn't seem nearly as entertaining and funny as it did then.

Shirley That's not true.

Ted After the breaking was done ... I should add to this. Telling people who didn't understand Ukrainian how to say something, well ... some of the things we told the guys were terrible. Like if they were to have dinner at a Ukrainian place, and they wanted to thank the mother for the dinner, they'd ask us how to say "Thank you." We would tell them something in Ukrainian that meant, "Well you can kiss my ass." Sometimes we were kind of bad.

Shirley And did they say that to your mom?

Ted No, I don't think we went quite that far. No.

Shirley OK.

Ted Because we cared about mom enough that we wouldn't want to hurt her feelings.

After the breaking was done it was time to pick roots. I do not remember dad picking roots after 1948 once my brother Mike turned 10 and I was 12 years old. It was all up to us. That summer—it wasn't a big piece—we did 21 acres. Picking roots involved more effort than the word picking suggests. The tree roots were not always laying loose on the soil. And often we would need to pull with all our might to get them out of the furrow's soil. Some were short and some were really long with many branches. Mike and I both had our axes. The roots that went down deeper than the plow cut, had to be chopped off. For a proper burn, we always beat the roots against each other to knock

the dirt off. We'd make little piles of roots and once we had an armful, we carried it to the large pile. As always, we worked without gloves. I remember our calloused hands becoming very dry under the dirt. It was a treat to moisten them with our drinking water.

The brush piles were burned during the first autumn. In the next summer the land was broken, the roots were picked and root piles were burned. After about another week of rock picking with dad, brother, sisters, four horses, and stone-boat, the 21 acres were ready to seed for the first time the following spring. One day while burning root piles, I threw a thick root into the hot coals. I didn't know until I smelled cloth burning that a glowing cinder had flown up and burned a hole through the bib of my overalls. I remember being embarrassed at having to wear those overalls with a hole burned through them to school. In the New Pine Creek history book, there's a 1946 photo of New Pine Creek school boys and me wearing those overalls. That photo helped keep memories of the event alive.

One more memory about burning root piles. When the piles are burned right down to just glowing coals, we'd go to the house and get some potatoes, probably fresh from mom's garden. Without washing or wrapping them, we'd bury them in the ashes and coals. We would leave the potatoes until they were cooked right through. The black skin came off easily in our grubby hands. With a sprinkle of salt we ate them, flavored by the coals of those raw tree roots. I know I have never in the last 70 years eaten a potato that tasted better. They were good.

The crops on new broken land has better yields than those on land that had been cultivated a few years. The second year's crop on virgin land that was plowed the second time were the best yielding. This second plowing was called back-setting. I speak of the time before we used any chemical fertilizers or sprays, talking about the crop yields or comparing them.

Dad continued farming with his four horses, mom, and us children until February of 1951. It was then that he bought a brand-new John Deere model AR tractor and a new three-bottom hydraulic lift plow and a new 10-foot disk. He bought the new tractor, new plow, and the new disk for \$2,450. I turned 15 years of age in the spring of 1951. Until then, I'd had no experience or contact with any kind of engine, not even the smallest. Dad, a man we children feared, made me learn to operate the tractor, keep track of the oil changes, and make sure I never missed any grease nipples during the daily greasing. He himself never did try to operate the tractor and couldn't be bothered with any of its maintenance. I have never been able to understand his attitude towards not driving the tractor and his mistreatment of mom and us children.

One thing it did do is made me worry a lot and feel responsible for the welfare of mom and my nine younger siblings until they all left home. That is another long, painful story that I do not wish to repeat. It seemed that dad was very angry every day that spring. Instead of being happy to operate the new equipment, I remember feeling burdened, very depressed that spring, trying to do my school studies and studying the tractor manual over and over with its unfamiliar words. It was up to me to tell him the quantities and viscosities of oils to buy for adding to the engine and the different oil changes.

These things on the tractor and plow operation I had to learn in less than three months, when spring plowing would start.

Through my years in school in the springtime we practiced sports events. The highlight was when pupils from surrounding schools gathered in Colinton for the track meet. At the track meet we competed with the best in each school for first, second, and third prize ribbons. I enjoyed those days because I got to see town and buy a little ice cream and pop. I also did well competing. I remember very well in the spring of '51 looking up from my work on the tractor and seeing the bus with my school mates go by to the track meet without me. I was 15 years old and I had to plow. After that, I did the land cultivation with the tractor. Dad did the seeding, harrowing, hay cutting, and harvesting with the binder, while mom, Mike, and I stooked the grain sheaves. In a couple of years that machinery, except the hay mower, were changed over and pulled by the tractor with brother Mike or me operating. In 1952 dad bought a brand new one-ton Fargo truck which, like the tractor, he never attempted to drive. So I, and a couple of years later brother Mike, became his driver.

We had six miles of dirt road, no gravel, to the baseline, which was graveled, and another seven miles to Colinton. That dirt road was full of deep ruts, often with the water laying in them. The ruts were made by the occasional vehicle from our neighborhood. The grader came by maybe two times through the spring, summer, and fall. That was for all three seasons, two times. We were sort of on the frontier back there in New Pine Creek. That one-ton truck—just like the modern one-ton trucks—had very little traction on the muddy dirt. When we had a load of grain to haul to the Colinton elevator, the extra weight provided good traction. When we had to go in for groceries, mail, or gasoline, it was different. For gasoline I'd load three empty 45-gallon drums and a half-ton of rocks at the back end of the truck box for traction. We put the truck in low and second gear and ground away in the ruts for six miles. This was when it rained. The truck would have to jerk from side to side as the ruts were never straight. With the new truck we could even go to Athabasca on business. This was eight miles farther than Colinton and had more businesses.

I left school in 1953, turning 18 years of age. I left home that summer to find work that paid wages. After all, I needed to buy a car to chase the girls with. I needed to buy cigarettes, dance and movie tickets, and, very importantly, leather gloves to pick rocks in. Brother Mike was left at home to take my place running the farm equipment. Boy, was I glad to be free. Dad's health was getting bad and there were seven, younger than Mike, siblings at home with mom. After two years I came back home to do the farm work so that Mike could be free to go to work for wages for two years. After that, besides both being away working on the drilling rigs through the winters, Mike and I changed off to do the summer farm work.

In the fall of 1968, I bought that old half section, a 12-year-old modern farmhouse, no plumbing, and some farm machinery for \$10,000. Mike, with hired carpenters, provided the labor and my parents and I the funding, to build a nice retirement home in Athabasca for mom and dad. After buying the farm at 32 years of age, I also bought a D6 Caterpillar bulldozer. Then I bought a large Nordheimer (2) 24-inch bottom breaking

plow. With this unit I was able to bury trees up to nine feet tall that we had to axe away as kids. That plow certainly rolled out a lot of rocks. When cleaning up the last half mile of mineral soil of our half-section farm, I had seven large pits dug to bury the rocks that were picked off the fields and hauled into that fence line. The rocks in the north half mile of fence went into the roadbed when New Pine Creek Road was being built. The south quarter mile of fence is still full of rock hauled off the field. There are also two large piles on the pasture off that field, another pile at the southwest end of the home quarter, a quarter-mile row of rock pushed into Kamelchuk's bush when Dave and I were rebuilding that west stretch of fence. There is the equivalent of a large pile of rocks over a creek bank on the west side of the quarter. Finally, there is a solid quarter-mile row running north to south along the fence for cattle access to pasture from the farm yard. This solid row of quarter-mile of rock runs down the center of the home quarter.

As you, dear listener, have probably concluded, I know that the east half-section of section 32, township 63, range 21, west of the fourth, should never, never have been farmed. When I bought it, I certainly knew the place well with its forest, rocks, and over 100 acres of tamarack swamp, with swamp spruce, and willow, the deep peat land. Or as a boy, I remember going to different neighbors, asking them to come to help us pull a cow stuck in the muck out of it.

That 100-plus acres of bog with its trees I cleared after getting stuck with my bulldozer many times. I also had it ditched, cultivated, and seeded. And it was not all in vain. It now produces cattle pasture with no chemical fertilizer and the volume that none of the mineral soil can come close to. When I started the work on the homeplace on my own, at 32 years of age, I was often asked why I would want to do all that work. My honest answer always was, "Well, I can't build an Eiffel Tower, or do anything famous. Instead, I will leave a tiny permanent scratch on this landscape that will benefit me and future generations." I think some of the questioners understood my answer. Also, I did need the challenge, to make something neat and productive out of adversity and disorder. The job would only have been a simple drop in the lake for someone with lots of money, but money I didn't have. Growing up, I heard so many stories of the Great Depression and its foreclosures, that I refused to take on debt and borrow money. I think that those days still got me, my mind poisoned, because I'm awful tight with my money.

In 1972 at the age of 36 I got married. After I left home in 1953 until 1972, I worked at various jobs. I was a bricklayer's helper in Calgary. Then I worked north of Fort St. John on a seismic crew as a Cat skinner, and a grader and snowplow operator out of Mile 101 on the Alaska Highway. Mostly I worked on the deep-hole drilling rigs in north-eastern BC and in many Alberta oil fields. I always chose jobs that involved living in camps, which made it easier to save money. I skidded logs with my own Cat and winch out of a camp in the Mariana Lake country, west of the Fort McMurray highway. The last 10 years I hauled water to the drilling rigs. At one time I owned one brand new single-axle tank truck on which I trained my New Pine Creek neighbor Peter Choney to operate, and a second one that I'd bought new two years earlier and continued to operate myself. A year later I sold the newer unit, along with the job, to Peter.

Sometimes when speaking with my older friends in the drilling rig camps, they would tell me about their children. There were at least two, Bill Simpson and Swede Christensen, who had worked their way up through the ranks to supervisory positions with very high pay. They told me their children had finished school and were leaving home. With sad regret, they would say, the years have flown by and because of so much time living in these camps, they never got to know their own kids. I think those words had a lot to do with my decision to buy the "Rock Hill Farm" and make a small cattle farm out of it so that in making a living for us, I could be at home with our children. I have a list of three reasons for going farming besides wanting the challenge mentioned earlier. My first reason was that I wanted our children to grow up with both their parents always at home, where we could engage in communication and dialogue at any time. I also thought it important that sometimes we could work together and be away from what I considered negative influences on children in a town setting. My second reason was that I wanted my scattered siblings from west to east of Canada and down to Florida to be able to come back home, which they did once in a while. And the third reason was that I didn't want the effort that my parents and brothers and sisters put into that land to be abandoned with its memories.

Now on to a different subject, more or less. I met my wife, Dorothy, through mutual friends when she worked in Vancouver. We were married in May of 1972 in Ottawa where she was raised. I mention her only briefly as she is writing her own story. Also, I'd written our story in both the "Colinton and District: Yesterday and Today" book and the book "Sharing the Past: New Pine Creek District." My sister Irene Della Porta also contributed to the New Pine Creek book. Starting in 1972 Dorothy, my wife, and I farmed, wintering an average of 50 pregnant cows. About the first three years I took on the occasional water hauling job, and besides the home section, I rented an adjoining quarter-section from Eric Doering. I also leased a government quarter-section for grazing. I grew mostly hay and oats and a little barley, even some wheat—oh, one year of canola. I hayed different neighbors' fields on a crop share basis. For extra income, I did various jobs in the neighborhood with my Cat and dozer, also some custom work with my combine and swather, and a little trucking. I did my own repairs on the machinery, including welding, which I learned after buying the farm. With my welding I invented an automatic tractor-to-implement hitch. A farm program on TV about farm inventions called "Prairie Farm Report" featured me with my hitch in the 1990–1991 season. From a neighbor, I understand that segment was played even a few years later. I never watched the show that often.

Dear reader or listener, from the previous long pages of this story, I don't blame you for thinking my life was all work. Not so! Growing up, I did have time to play with my siblings and neighbor kids. After leaving home and going to work in the oil fields, I had many nights and weeks during the rig shutdowns on the town. With the transient nature of work on the drilling rigs, I did have romantic escapades with the fairer sex in the different towns. Sort of like the reputation sailors have, forgive me, my future wife and children! I didn't, couldn't live like a monk for 36 years.

Before my marriage I travelled all over Alberta and through a good part of B.C., and north to Watson Lake in the Yukon. I had many holidays in the mountains, including

once taking my parents who had never seen the mountains. In 1967 at 29 to 30 years of age I went on two separate guided tours by coach to approximately 13 different European countries and their capital cities, including Moscow. I celebrated my 30th birthday at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, France. Prior to the tours, I flew to London and after the tours, I sailed from England to Montreal. As part of the tours, I sailed across the English Channel four times. The same autumn on the way home, I visited the Montreal Exposition. I bought a new car in Toronto and along with brother Mike and Evelyn, whom he met in Europe, drove back to Alberta.

Further to my life not being all work, after my marriage and settling down on the farm, Lara, our daughter, was born in December 1974 and son Roland in May 1976. Looking back, my marriage to Dorothy and the births of Lara and Roland were the most special parts of my life. Before, and as the children were growing up, we made it a point to take trips to the mountains for a week to 10 days before the start of the farm's haying season. We drove to Prince George to visit brother Steve, and Vancouver to see sister Nell, plus visits with friends on the Vancouver Island. We made trips to Calgary to visit sisters Victoria and Evangeline and their husbands. Again, with the children, we flew to Ottawa a few times to visit Dorothy's parents, Jack and Florence Stotesbury, and Shirley and her husband Harley Cummings. I list these things because I've been reading back through the previous notes and it seemed like my life was all work, so I have to put in this point that I did have some time to play.

I tried to focus on the journey as well as the destination. So the trips we took were loosely planned. We'd stop overnight at motels when we felt like it. With that attitude Dorothy and our school-aged Lara and Roland drove to visit sister Caroline in Regina, then down to Minot, North Dakota on to Rapid City, South Dakota, where Dorothy lost the car keys, causing another day and night stay there. We drove around in the Black Hills and of course visited Mount Rushmore, the national monument or memorial, then west through Wyoming, soaking in the Thermopolis hot springs pool, on through the Grand Teton and Yellowstone National Parks, east and north into Montana, visiting the Little Bighorn Battlefield national monument. From there north through Great Falls into Alberta and home.

Shortly after the children left home, Dorothy and I flew to Phoenix, Arizona, for our son Roland's graduation in electronics engineering from a college there in Phoenix. We visited beautiful Sedona while there. A couple of years later we flew to San Francisco to visit Roland again for Christmas. In Tracy, when he lived there, and worked in the Silicon Valley. Prior to this we attended his wedding to Kathy in California. I had sold off our little cattle herd shortly after the children left home. Again, we visited Roland and Kathy in Frisco, Texas after they moved there from Tracy. Frisco was just on the outskirts of Dallas. Dorothy and I flew to Gainesville, Florida, to visit my sister Irene and her husband, Joe Della Porta, when they lived at Silver Springs. Sweet Irene drove us around sightseeing from Daytona Beach on the Atlantic to Cedar Key in the Gulf of Mexico and many places in between during our stay with her and Joe. In November of 2000 daughter Lara arranged a beautiful wedding to Kevin Maheden in Varadero, Cuba. We spent a very enjoyable couple of weeks there. Dorothy and I toured around the island, taking in Havana, then Trinidad on the Caribbean shore.

Dorothy and I sold the last of our cattle off in January of 1992 and the farm machinery by auction in June of 1995. We continued to live on our neat little farm, renting out the cultivated land and pasture. I enjoyed the heated shop for warm vehicles in the winter and for its acoustics for my banjo practice and get-togethers with musical friends. Due to my failing health, Dorothy and I moved off the farm in December of 2012. Both of us were 76 years of age when we moved to Pleasant Valley Lodge in Athabasca. The following spring I sold the farm ... the place of my birth and where our children grew up. We also had a small auction sale for acreage kind of equipment, shop tools, and household odds and ends.

I surprised even myself that the transition from the farm to the Lodge was not at all difficult. Probably that was due to advance planning for a few years to meet head-on with an inevitable part of life. Now, in the fourth year of our lives at the Lodge, both Dorothy and I are very content with our different interests. A big bonus is having Kevin, Lara and our grandchildren Nick and Jasmine living nearby. With thanks to medical science and those who practice it, my cup is overflowing and that's all I have to say.

Shirley Thank you very much.

[End of Interview]

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