

## Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project

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### Transcription of 0001-Win Rowe.mp3

Narrator: Win Rowe  
Interviewer: Heather Stocking  
Date of interview(s): April 2 and 24, 2022

[Start of Interview]

**Heather** This is April 24th or 25th, whatever the Sunday is.

**Win** 24.

**Heather** I'm Heather Stocking with Win Rowe.

**Win** My name was Win Howsam. That was where we lived, and it was right on this corner.

**Win** No. I'm wrong. It was on this corner, the farmyard. That was my family. This is me, and this is my older sister, three years older, Mom and Dad, and my little brother. And we were the oldest in that family. Like Betty was three years older. He (my brother) is dead. He died just a few years ago, not long ago.

**Win** Three or four years. This is the old homestead where my Mom grew up. She came from Ontario. She was born in '16, so she came out in '18 with her mother. Her father had bought that house and the living room part was the part that he bought. Then they added on the kitchen part.

**Heather** So this is Ontario, this one?

**Win** No. That's our home in Saskatchewan. The house and the barn, and don't ask me what that building is.

**Heather** When was this taken? This is so clear.

**Win** '20, I think.

**Heather** Like '19 or '20?

**Win** Oh, heavens no, it's '19.

**Heather** '19, okay. Wow, that's a great picture.

**Win** And when Mom and Dad took it over, or maybe before when they got married, they...

**Heather** 1937...

**Win** They turned it a quarter turn, so the veranda is now facing east.

**Heather** So they lifted it, turned it, set it back down on the...

**Win** They built a new basement. They put in a new basement and turned the house a quarter turn. Isn't that cool? So growing up there, we had quite the experience. This was the country school that we used to go to. Mom started school in that, in 1920 I think that is.

**Heather** The one room schoolhouse. Diamond school?

**Win** Millicent was my mom.

**Heather** Howsam. Is that how you say it? H-O-W-S-A-M.

**Win** That one was in '20..

**Win** Where's Diamond School? Was it in Ontario?

**Win** No, that's still south of Saskatchewan. It was a mile across the road, the east across the field.

**Heather** How old was she when they came? You said that she was born in Ontario.

**Win** She was a two-year-old when she came. Okay, so. She wouldn't have been eligible to go to school till '22. And that's the same school, renovated though, that I went to.

**Heather** Twenty-nine years later, too.

**Win** Yes, and that's the school that I started in, and we went there till I was starting grade five, and that's where I met Doug.

**Heather** Okay. How far away was Lewvan away for you to travel? Do you remember?

**Win** Five and a half miles.

**Heather** And how far away was Diamond School?

**Win** A mile across the road or across the field as the crow flies.

**Win** This is where I met. Here was us, and we would go across this two miles and down the mile. It was a mile across here. So it was down to Shaken's home was there. So it's just in there.

**Win** In the early years, I can remember going to school. It was horse and sleigh. No, we did not have the part in the sleigh to keep people warm. No, you froze. But in 1948, Dad bought that. Have you ever seen a snow plane?

**Heather** No, I have not.

**Win** That is a snow plane.

**Heather** So it's like a car kind of body with skis under it.

**Win** Something like that? Yeah, it was a four-seater. Two up front, two in the back.

**Heather** That's quite the belt. That's a propeller.

**Win** That's a propeller. That's an airplane motor on the rear end with a propeller on it.

**Heather** Man, you would not want to get close to the back end of that.

**Win** Oh, it could really blow out the snow. Four skis on it, and we would go scooting across the snowbanks. Boom! Wow. Not very many people know that. Even my friend Laura Paterson from the lake out there. She had heard me talk about the snow plane and, no, she had never seen it. So I showed her this.

**Heather** I never even heard of that. So.

**Win** Well, I wanted to tell you the story about that snow plane.

**Heather** This is your Dad Freeman? Yes.

**Win** Yes. And that is me with my Mom and my Dad. The story goes that this couple from Colfax, she was pregnant, and she was due. She started labor, and he called Dad because that was the only way to get her to the hospital. The closest hospital was Weyburn. Thirty-five miles, so, yeah, he'd take her.

**Win** Well in those days, in 1948, the snow was so high that you could walk over the telephone lines. Of course we had the wind blowing into the yard and you walk right over the telephone line. So that tells you how high the snow is. So there is a railway track. This railway crosses the track here, crosses the highway 35. And, yes, as you could see, it crosses the highway. So, of course, the train comes down with a plow on it to clean it out. And the cut was ten feet deep.

**Heather** Oh, wow. So that is ten feet of snow on each side, as you go down the tracks?

**Win** Correct. So, Dad, in all his wisdom, he stops at the edge. Well, he's got to get this woman to Weyburn. No time to sit around. So he backed it up, and he got up and he went down ten feet across the railway track and back up the other side. The story goes that he was scared to death that the propeller would get smacked with railways. Well, it did not. They just got the skis over the top and it stalled out. And he started again and off he went to Weyburn.

**Heather** That would have been a heart wrenching moment. I am surprised she didn't have the baby right there.

**Win** Gosh, yes. Oh, for sure. Anyhow, everybody was so excited that we stayed up. Mom allowed us to stay up and watch for Dad and it was going on midnight, I think or 11:00 or so, when he got home and Mom could see the lights coming from north of town, so she knew that Dad was coming home.

**Heather** So when your Dad, he just took her, he didn't take the husband?

**Win** Yeah, the husband was in the front seat and she was in the back two seats. Isn't that a story and a half?

**Win** Oh, that poor old thing, he bought that in Wawota, which is east of Indian Head, Saskatchewan on Highway 1, if you've ever been out that route. It's east of Regina. Indian Head is 60 miles out and Wawota is the other side. I'm not sure how far it is away from Indian Head. But that's where he bought it. So we had that.

**Win** In '48 and '49, and in the winter of '50, Dad and a neighbor went together and bought a snowplow, which fits on the front of the tractor. Dad was all over the country with that stupid blower. Farmers needed their roads cleaned out. They needed their granaries cleaned out, so that trucks could get into them, and they'd call Dad up. Yep. I remember Dad leaving early, early in the morning before, you know, like, really early, and he wouldn't get home until 11:00 at night. By the time he warmed up... The snowplow had a fabric shield that hooked on to... It was heavy, like a tarp. You know it came from the snowplow out to the edges of the fenders of the tractor. So that was protection. But he dressed good and warm, let me tell you.

**Heather** Yeah, that would block some wind, but not trap any heat in.

**Heather** Why don't we back up a little bit? Let's start. So there's your parents. What's your parents' names?

**Win** Freeman and Millicent.

**Heather** And then you had an older sister?

**Win** Yes. Her full name is Elizabeth. We called her Betty. And that's me.

**Heather** So you're Winnifred and go by Win?

**Win** Yes. I was 14 there, Betty was 17. And what year was that in? In '56. Manford was my brother and he would have been a 6-year-old in that picture.

**Heather** And you said he passed away a couple of years ago.

**Win** '18, four years ago this August.

**Heather** Your sister is still alive?

**Win** Yes, she is.

**Win** She lives in Belleville, Saskatchewan. She was 45 and a half years married, and her husband wanted a divorce.

**Win** My husband died in '12. They came up for the funeral and she told me that that would be the last time. She told me what he said. He said that'll be the last time we ever go to see... that we will come up here. Then she said, 'Why? She's my sister.' Well she never found out until Christmas time or the first part of December that he wanted a divorce.

**Heather** Oh, wow, from August?

**Win** And it was supposedly a very good friend.

**Heather** How did you meet Doug, your husband?

**Win** We met at school. The high school principal... my sister was going into grade eight, which would have been high school in those days, and the principal that taught the high school was no good in Colfax. Nobody was graduating. Kids were failing, so they were no good. The teacher in Lewvan school was pumping out university graduates, and my sister went through for a teacher and one of her classmates went through for a nurse. Doug was in her class, and he went to work for SaskTel, and there was a set of twins and one of them went in for a teacher. Another fellow went to university, and the other guy got a heck of a good job with Dominion Bridge. So his students were graduating and would go from there.

**Heather** Doug was a little older than you?

**Win** Doug was three years older than I am. Same as my sister.

**Heather** So at what point did you get married? Like, right out of school?

**Win** No. I wanted to be a lab technician. Well, I wanted to be an RN to begin with. And the gal that was in Betty's class that was an RN told the stories about what they do. I thought no way am I doing that. So I still wanted to be in the medical field, so I became a lab tech and I trained and worked in the General Hospital. It was a two-year course, and they hired me, and I stayed another two years until I was pregnant. And we had a son.

**Heather** So it was on the job training?

**Win** Well, yes, more or less, I guess. The first two months were not on the job. We had to go to the wartime barracks, hotter than heck in July and August. Hot, hot, hot. Anyways, we had fun, and then from then on, in September, we went over and worked in the hospital.

**Heather** So when you were in the barracks, that was like just theoretical training, and then you went to the hospital and did the practical part?

**Win** Well, there was theory plus practical in both.

**Heather** And then who ran that, the university or the hospital?

**Win** The hospital did. I've been trying to think of the... what do they call them, the director? The General Hospital was a training program for x-ray, lab tech and nurses. Then they quit all that. But those training programs ran for a long, long time.

**Heather** So then which hospital was it?

**Win** He was a pathologist, a doctor of pathology. But I can't remember what his name is. I have scrounged for his name and can't come up with .

**Heather** It was a couple of years ago.

**Win** Just a few.

**Heather** Then which hospital was it that you worked in?

**Win** Well, I worked right there. He hired me. And after our two-year course, I passed and he hired me. And I worked for another two years there in the same hospital.

**Heather** Which hospital was it?

**Win** The General Hospital in Regina. So the choice became... I was dating Doug at the time. When I got out of high school, we knew we were getting married, it was just a matter of time. I said, 'Oh, I'd really like to take this course,' and he said, 'Go ahead. We can wait.' We were awfully young. He was 23 when we got married, and I had just turned 20. That's pretty young in today's standards.

**Heather** That was old then.

**Win** Oh, yeah, because lots of girls got married, they went from high school, living with dads, then got married to a new husband.

**Heather** 17 or 18 years old.

**Win** Anyways, so I've known Doug forever, seemed like.

**Heather** Was it an instant connection with him or did it grow?

**Win** It grew. I always said we dated when I was a 13-year-old. He said 'No, we didn't.' But there was nothing to do in the wintertime except go to the rink, skating and curling. He played hockey. I took some high school curling there. The skating was the big thing. That was winter entertainment. 'Let's go to the rink.' That's just what, you know, our communities did. There was always one curling sheet of ice and the rest was skating unless they were doing a hockey game. Then they would switch it.

**Win** He loved to play hockey. He played hockey in high school there, and then, after we came to Edmonton, he played hockey in a beer league, as they call it in the city. Of course, he was grandpa. He was the eldest on the team and even our son played with them.

**Heather** When did you come to Edmonton and what brought you there?

**Win** Ohhh, Tupperware.

**Heather** Tupperware brought you to Edmonton?

**Win** Yes. Well, we got married in '62, and after our daughter was born in '69. Vern was born in '64, Leah was born in '69, and try and find a job that would work around kids. Ridiculous.

**Win** So I was invited to a Tupperware party, and I thought I can do that. I can remember going down to Doug's dad's farm, and I rode the combine around with him. His mom was looking after the kids, and I asked him about doing this job of selling Tupperware. And he says, 'Do whatever you want to, as long as you're home before 9:00 in the morning and home by 3:30 in the afternoon.' He said I don't care what you do. So I got into Tupperware.

**Win** Well, one of the couples that used to be at SaskTel, he worked with him. His name was Dave Cavanaugh, and they gave up telephones to do Tupperware. She got started into Tupperware, and they became the distributors in Regina. In those days, you started off as a dealer. When you had recruited six people, you became a manager. You never knew what work was until you got there. Then the next hierarchy was a distributor. And

still again, you didn't know what work was until you became a distributor. You work your butt off. Well, anyway, we had fun. That was fun, fun, fun. So we applied and it took a while, you had to prove yourself, and finally we came to Edmonton and some of the fun things that we did in Edmonton...

**Heather** So you came to Edmonton because that was like more of an open market for Tupperware?

**Win** That's where they had an opening for a distributor. Someone retired.

**Heather** Oh, so you had already gotten that high?

**Win** I was a top manager in Canada, one of the top ten. And they go to that source then to find a new manager to promote to distributorship, when there is a retirement. So you had to wait and wait and wait and prove yourself.

**Win** So, anyway, this opening came in Edmonton, and that's why we're in Edmonton. And some of the crazy things that we used to do. It must have been my birthday, and the managers hired this singing telegram to come in. Well, if he didn't come in and he was going to flash. Golly. Anyways, of course, as you could see in that picture, there's no pants below the coat, and he was hanging on to this coat and he came straight up on stage. Well, he's got a big sign. Too crazy. There have been two episodes of singing telegrams prior to that one, and everybody thought it was so much fun.

**Win** This Dutch couple and I thought that was interesting. They came. They were distributors. They came from Holland to visit Canada.

**Heather** And you dressed up like Klondike Kate there, correct?

**Win** Yeah, It just so happened that they were in Edmonton during Klondike Days. Oh. Yes, I wore my... I made that dress and I made the hat. I still have the hat. With the dress, I sold it because I just don't fit it anymore. The hat I can fit. That was fun. Klondike Days was fun, and we always dressed up for Klondike.

**Heather** When did you come to Edmonton?

**Win** '79. We took over Christmas of '79, and the fellow from head office... golly I'll never forget him. When we signed the papers and whatnot, he says, 'Well, you've just signed the license to make money'. Okay.

**Heather** And was it profitable?

**Win** Oh, yeah, Tupperware was very good to us.

**Win** I have this picture here behind you. This is a picture, right? This is a wall hanging.



**Heather** That's incredible.

**Win** Well, that was when the Modular Mates came into vogue. Yeah, well, my cupboards look like that.

**Heather** Do they to this day?

**Win** Yes. Well, when I lived in Edmonton... oh, we had a big house in Terwilleger. And so when I designed that kitchen, I had the company come in and design, and I said to the guy, 'Well, you're going to design a Tupperware kitchen.' And he knew about Tupperware, his cousin or somebody was in Tupperware. So he knew about it. So we designed the pantry. It was two big doors. It was all of that wide. And from as short as I am, you're at least five feet high, and we designed it for Tupperware. I totaled it up one day as to how much Tupperware I had in there, and there was \$1,000.

**Heather** Just in that one?

**Win** That would have been back in '84. For \$1,000 in '84 was a lot. And then we moved into a condo in the city and Leah was married in '93, so it was '95 when we moved into the condo, and I had to sell a lot of that off. Then we moved out to Island Lake in 2000-01, something like that, so I had to downsize again just to come to here, you know.

**Heather** Yeah, well.

**Win** Fun and games. Well, you work your butt off for everything you get in Tupperware. But they took me, I qualified, to high tea. So we flew to Vancouver. We all went on a bus up to this place and the helicopter took us up to the top of the mountain for high tea.

**Win** They had the green grass carpet out, and they had a putting green and it was a whole lot of fun. Well that was an experience. Let me tell you.

**Heather** This appears to be a glacier?

**Win** You know, in the IMAX, when you go. If you have ever been to the IMAX, you go on a helicopter ride, and all of a sudden you go over the cliff at the bottom. And your stomach just goes whoosh. That was real. That was quite the experience. I've been in a couple of helicopters in my life. That was one. The other one when my daughter graduated from university, I asked her what she wanted. Well, they were advertising this trip to New York City, so that's what she wanted to do. So I took her to New York City. And we had a bird's eye view in a helicopter of New York City. That was totally amazing. Oh, yeah.

**Heather** Like, the Chrysler Building and...

**Win** Yes, and the Empire State and the World Trade.

**Heather** Those iconic buildings.

**Win** Yes, absolutely. It was really a fabulous trip. Those were the days when I was still making money.

**Win** In grade 12, when she graduated, she wanted to go to Vancouver. 'Cats' was on. So I took her out. It was a package deal. I took her out there. Then there was another time. It was for about three, four years or five years, whatever it was. One time we went to Vegas, we went shopping in Vegas.

**Win** Our Tupperware conferences were always out of the country. It was in February. So they always took us to warmer climes. One year they took us to Vegas. And as I said before, you had to work to earn your things. Well, there was two of us women, one, out of Calgary and myself, that didn't make the grade. So we went to a show. It was called Forever Plaid. Okay? It's a singing dancing show. And I'd learned from the time before that if you want to get a really good seat, you greased the usher's palm. So I did do that. Holy cow. He sat us right at a table, right front stage. Oh, wow.

**Heather** You greased him well.

**Win** I greased him well. I don't know whether he had any input in this or not, but first off, they ask who plays piano? So up goes our hands. Okay. And I'm sitting on the edge of the aisle. And the next thing I know here is one of these guys sitting down here on his haunches beside me. Will you come up on stage with us?

**Heather** Well, yeah.

**Win** I wasn't afraid to do that. So I sang and danced in Vegas.

**Heather** Really? Wow.

**Win** And when Leah and I went to New York City, we took in some of the shows. We were out to a show every night, and one of them was called Five Guys Named Moe. They were black fellas. Oh, my gosh. Could they sing. And there were two stairways up onto the stage.

**Heather** From the audience?

**Win** Correct. You know, you go down the aisle and the steps up to the stage. So they did a conga line.

**Win** So, yeah, I have danced on Broadway. Yes, I have. All fun stuff. Leah didn't want to go up there. I said, 'Girl, you are in New York City. You will never, ever have another chance like this one. So come on. We're going.'

**Heather** That sounds fun.

**Win** Oh, that was a lot of fun. Oh, gosh, yes, that was fun. It's fun remembering those things.

**Heather** Yes, exactly. So what drew you to come up to this area?

**Win** Well, we used to own a cottage out at Katepwa, east of Regina. There was our cottage.

**Heather** Oh, wow. Right on the water.

**Win** Right on the water. Oh, it looks like a total disaster, doesn't it? That's the boat house, if you can imagine.

**Heather** That's a little askew.

**Win** Looks like it was. There was a set of steps from the top of the hill to the bottom, 77 steps.

**Heather** Oh, wow.

**Win** And the lady who sold it had gone to Red Deer. And it had been two years since she had been back. And when she came back, the raccoons had been on the roof and wrecked the roof and the inside was nothing but a mildew watery mess. Oh, my gosh. Was it a mess? She put it on the market.

**Win** So Doug and I were out there one weekend, and we were messing around, and we had the boat in the water and oh, here was this place for sale, and so we got ahold of the realtor and checked it out. And the price was wonderful. So, anyway, well, we'd have to think about this one. So we went home, and I phoned Doug's dad and asked him, you know, if we rip this all back to the studs, and I wash it down with Javex, do you suppose that would kill the mold as well? 'Of course it will.'

**Win** So instead of going to Vancouver for a two-week holiday, we spent our time out there renovating. Oh, Doug was a farm kid. He knew how to do electrical, plumbing and construction. He knew it all.

**Heather** Who's laying in this?

**Win** That's our son. He's laying in the boat.

**Heather** Is he reading or something?

**Win** He's just out there floating.

**Heather** He's got a captain's hat on.

**Win** Over the years...when did we buy that? Maybe '74. Doesn't say on the back. Well, I started Tupperware in '71, so maybe '74. We sold it in '80. We had to put it up on the market because we were moving to Edmonton in '79. But you don't sell anything in the wintertime, you don't sell stuff, and so we put it up for sale come the spring. And we used the same realtor. We knew the realtor from living up there in the summer months, and we renovated that place inside. Wow. What a job.

**Win** This was Vern's bedroom. Yeah, these windows along here were a closed-in veranda. They had closed it in. We didn't do that. And so Vern's room was off the end of the veranda, which we used as a dining room. The table was out there by the window and the chairs.

**Win** Well, there was a box of newspapers and stuff at the end of his bed, and I went to move it and I took the top papers off. Here was a snake. Oh, my God. I just go willies when there's a snake around and I'm screaming my head off. Doug thought it was the bees were after me, because we'd had bees in the house, in Vern's room again.

**Win** Here is the ceiling tile, the ones with the holes in them. Yeah, the old style, and something was dripping from it. So I knocked on it. Oh, my god, it's bees up there, not a mouse. Mouse and mice I can handle, but bees, unh-uh. Anyhow, that's what it was, more bees. And when we renovated there was bees in there. We were watching and he found the hole where they were coming in, so he plugged it, and then they disappeared. So that was fun.

**Win** Well, and that's why we came to the lake up here, because we missed this, of all the things. Yes, you miss the people, but the thing was [we missed] the cottage. In the first five years of our Tupperware business in Edmonton, we were working morning, noon and night. Oh man, we put in a lot of hours and we were burning out.

**Heather** So he obviously had quit his job with SaskTel. At what point, when your Tupperware business started taking off?

**Win** When they came to us and offered us Edmonton.

**Heather** So he kept working that whole time.

**Win** Yes. So then isn't it funny how the good Lord does things. But his job had been moved and they didn't move him. And the fellow that he was to be working under, he couldn't stand. So it was very stressful and he wasn't sleeping. He was a heart attack waiting to happen. The day that he handed his resignation was the first night he had a marvelous sleep. So he was happy camper again, no more stress.

**Win** And it was about the first part of the end of November. No, it was in October. And when they came and I asked us... well, the guy says to me, to us, 'How soon can you be up there? And I said, give us two weeks. We'll be there.' He said, 'Well I can give you

more than that. I can give you six weeks.' Okay, six weeks it is. So we had to come to Edmonton and find a home and find a place to... you know, where we could be set up, where the office was and schools. So we rented in the Meadowlark area because we didn't know anything in Edmonton. We set up and rented this place in the Meadowlark area because there was a junior high and a public school close by. The kids could walk. It wasn't a problem.

**Win** The government had rent controls on in those days and that was taken it off in June. We came up here in December and the following June the rent cap came off and she upped the price. Well, it was buy something right now. So we bought a condo out in the west end, and it was close to Leah's school, but we had to take Vern to high school. We were going to have to take him to high school anyways, after he finished junior high. So we moved, we gave our notice and moved and bought this place, and then we sold it and moved into Terwilliger, into the big house. That was my mistake. I demanded a big home. It was only 2,600 square feet, but it was a two-story. Well, it was three. We finished the basement, as well, and you did nothing but run up and down the steps, and you didn't know how many steps you were running until you got out of there? Then we sold it, after Leah was married. She got married in 93, and we sold it and moved into another condo in the north end of town, because it was closer to the lake. And then we sold it.

**Win** Let me think now. The cottage. We started Tupperware in '80. In 1985, we rented a place out here at Island Lake, Janet Duddles. I don't know if that name rings a bell. Anyways, she had it up for rent in those days. They have long sold out. But anyway, we looked all around for a lake. Baptiste was green that summer. Ours was clear. We went over toward Smoky Lake at St. Paul to check out lakes in that area. Unh-uh. So it was Island Lake. Yeah.

**Win** One day I was up here doing some Tupperware work. You know Ida Edwards? She was one of my people. She sold Tupperware with me. Anyways, I had some free time, and I stopped at Century 21 there on main street and picked up some of the, you know, the papers that they have for real estate, the listings, and I took them home, and Lorraine Plourde used to be a real estate agent. So she called us and wanted a date. So we made a date, and she showed us what was available out at Island Lake. And there wasn't much. What we were after was a flat piece of land with nothing on it, and we had a trailer so we could put that on it for the time being.

**Win** No, it wasn't such a thing to be had. So she showed us this 165 Lakeshore Drive, where we bought. Some pictures are in here of the before and after somewhere. This was before. It was a 600 square foot cabin. And I mean a cabin.

**Win** Oh. To me, there's a difference between a cottage and a cabin. It had four different colors of wood on the walls. It had four different colors of carpet on the floors. To me, that's a cabin, right? Just kind of thrown together with all the odds and ends.

**Win** This was all full of bush in here. Doug had already started clearing, but it was full of bush like this, and we got rid of that, and so we tore it down, and you know, we built onto it. That was another mistake. Should've torn it down.

**Heather** Wow. Look at those flower beds. And that's gorgeous.

**Win** I had Doug build the first box for me. And then there was a path to the boat, so far in front of it. Right. And I said, 'You know, that worked so dang well.' The guy said, 'Keep going. I need two more in there.' Right. Because we got rid of the garbage that was in front of the cottage.

**Heather** You've got lots of birdhouses and feeders.

**Win** Oh, yes, I work like a Trojan. Well, Doug built me a greenhouse. Here's the bit of it showing the white part at the bottom. Okay. And I used to do about a thousand plants.

**Heather** Really? Wow.

**Win** I always had to be home from Texas around the 4th of April to start seeds. And then, of course, you would transplant all those seeds, very little seedlings. And then you transplant all together the gardens or the boxes or the pots, whatever you do. Oh, my goodness. Tons of work.

**Heather** So you guys would winter in Texas?

**Win** Yes. That's our home in Texas.

**Win** Oh, wow. We started going... we bought that in '08, but we started going down there in 2002. Only one year did we miss. And that was in '03. The dollar was in the tank. \$0.64 on the dollar. And we decided, just stay home. We'll commercial fish out there on the lake in the wintertime.

**Win** Every couple of years or so. I don't know if they still do it or not, but they were taking out 30 or 40,000 pounds of whitefish.

**Heather** Back over the winter?

**Win** No, a day. Wow. They only had one day. And so we watched them do this. Well, they had one weekend. They would put the nets in one day and they'd come back the next day and take them out. And this was taken of the boat with their fish in them, as do these guys.

**Heather** What the heck do you do with all that fish?

**Win** Well, everything. They had to have a commercial license, and it all went through the fish market in Winnipeg. And I saw what happens to it.

**Heather** Where does it go?

**Win** Oh, big delicacy over in Europe. Well, they could have it. I wouldn't pay anybody. I wouldn't waste my time catching a whitefish. When we were kids on the farm, Dad used to buy a crate of whitefish, and they are so oily. Mom would cut them up into steaks and stir fry. Just gross, in my opinion. So that was part of what we did.

**Heather** What made you guys choose Texas over, like, say, Arizona?

**Win** We had been to Florida, or a wee bit of Florida, many, many, many times. Tupperware headquarters is in Florida, just south of Orlando, in Kissimmee. And so we've been there many times. And when we first started going there in the eighties, the price of stuff was ridiculously low. Like \$0.99 for a full breakfast or orange juice, two pieces or two bacon, eggs, \$0.99 coffee. Well, the last time that we were there, it wasn't like that at all anymore. And we had been in California. We had been in Arizona. I couldn't go to Arizona, neither one of us. We'd been there twice. It was a week each time, and it was a week each time of no sleep. We were so stuffed up with the dry air. So we preferred the moist air. So it was Texas or California. Couldn't afford California. Couldn't afford it.

**Heather** Southern Texas?

**Win** Texas, Brownsville, right down on the point. We were 80 miles off the coast, and I've still got my cottage, my trailer there. I had tickets to go down for last winter, but COVID. Yeah. Oh, they had so many hoops to come home. Yeah, it wasn't worth it. People were canceling left, right and center.

**Win** And my son and my son-in-law and daughter came down to visit me for a couple of weeks. They came at Christmas one time, the year after Doug died. He died in August. After they came back at Christmas, they said they would never come again at Christmas time. Don't travel at Christmas time. Just don't. It's a zoo, total zoo. Anyway, I've still got that.

**Heather** It's different to have Christmas in a place where it doesn't snow, though, isn't it?

**Win** Oh, yeah. Oh, yes. It's wonderful to have the kids there. But you know, one time since '13. In the park they do have a Christmas meal. They do two meals, big ones. Turkey time is American Thanksgiving, and Christmas is ham and scalloped potatoes, and a New Year's Eve dance. So I always invited the crew over for New Year's Day to cook a turkey for New Year's Day.

**Win** And it was potluck. Somebody brings the potatoes. Somebody brings a vegetable. Somebody brings a dessert. Somebody brought the rolls, blah, blah. I stuffed the turkey,

with gravy and the dressing. Right. It was easily done. It was an easy meal to put together.

**Heather** All the cranberries, too?

**Win** No, forget them.

**Heather** Don't forget them.

**Heather** When did you guys make this 100-year celebration?

**Win** 2004 Yes, May of '04.

**Heather** Oh, okay. So in 1904 the Methodist mission was established, 1904 Settlement House was built to minister to the needs of the many new people coming at Athabasca Landing. This looks like it might open up here. Ken Knight, Bob Mair, Tom Krawec, Cecil Lewis, Cindy Pearce, Lois Demko, Anne Fraser, Win Rowe, Yvonne Klein, Shirley Johnston, Linda Steppan, Cecile Fausak, Joan Mair and Marion Kadikoff. And it shows the handbell people there, too. And you did handbells?

**Win** I did handbells. Marion was our leader in the handbells. We sang 'Down to the River to Pray' a cappella. Oh, mercy, that just sounded so good. That was so much fun to do that. That Bob Mair, he could whistle and we did the lone bird and he whistled to that. Between him and Tom Krawec, they could both whistle, but I think Bob was the better of the two.

**Heather** Oh, okay. 23 songs. My goodness, how long did it take you guys to get through all that? You guys would have had several sessions.

**Win** Oh practice, ohhhh yeah. Well, we recorded it all in one day.

**Heather** Were you in the studio or did you just record it at the...?

**Win** We did it at the church. The sound technician was Dan West and Joan Mair did the cover photo. That was a hanging in the church, and Marion was part of the group that made that.

**Heather** It's beautiful.

**Win** Yeah, it is beautiful.

**Heather** Oh, beautiful choir robes.

**Win** Yes, those choir rooms were given to us by a church that no longer needed them. And I think that's the ones that we've got in there now. I don't know.



**Win** Okay. I was looking for a snowstorm, pictures of the snowstorm, but I couldn't find them. So they might still be out at the lake. That snowstorm was unbelievable.

**Heather** That was the one when he took the lady?

**Win** No that was another one. We were married. Vern and Leah were kids. Vern was a teenager. Leah must have been about eight years old. So Vern would be 13. There's a fair distance between those two kids. I don't remember just when it was, but there had been this mighty snow blizzard for a few days and the wind came in from the east, going west. All along the east side of Regina. the snow blew into there.

**Win** Well, I know I have a picture of one of the houses. It was after we bought the cottage because we knew the guy's name was Howard. Doug knew him from the lake. Doug worked with him, but this is where he lived over on the east side of the city. And so we went over there to check it out. And on the same block, not his house, but on the same block, the snow had gone straight to the roof. So there was a skidoo sitting on the roof. And so we thought, well, we'll scoot down to the old farm and see what was going on there. And where is that picture of the old farm? Out to the west of the house, there's a dugout. Well, the snow had swirled into that thing and it was the most amazing picture. And the kids are down in the very bottom of it. And here's all this snow that has swirled around them. It's just amazing. I have looked and looked and looked for that picture. Oh, that would have been marvelous picture to have the story of that. So sorry about that.

**Heather** That's all right.

**Win** But I'll tell you, as I talked about the bees and the snakes. One of the fun things that happened with the cottage out here. This is taken from the deck looking down towards the beach. And, of course, that's the beach. Doug made this dock, and there are posts on the end of the dock.

**Win** Well, him being a smart you know what, he decided that he'd like to ski straight off the dock, to not get wet. Well, I was driving the boat. The kids were in the boat with me. You had to have a watcher. I thought he said, 'Go.' I hit it. He said, 'Whoa, whoa.' Well, the cord was wrapped around one of the posts.

**Heather** Oh, no.

**Win** Well, when I looked around, here is Doug and the dock all sliding into the water. I said to the kids, I think we're just going to circle out here for a little 'till he cools off? Well, he was cooled off. He never said a word. He never said a word.

**Heather** He chose a word that rhymes with go.

**Win** Well, I apologized all over for it, but what do you do? Damage was done.

**Win** There's the flowers.

**Heather** And so you still have that place?

**Win** Well, I sold it to my daughter last year, so they have it.

**Heather** So, how many grandchildren do you have now?

**Win** I've always said when I grow up, I'm going to be a grandma, and I guess I haven't grown up yet. Leah and Tom are celebrating... they were married in '93. So you do the math.

**Heather** 29.

**Win** 29, yeah. I used to tease both of them, oh I love to tease consistently and never, never a problem. Finally I said to Leah one day, you know, there is all kinds of help out there. If you're serious about doing this, you know, there's all kinds of help. Not another word. And I never said another word. That's just what it is.

**Heather** So what do we have here?

**Win** That was the house, the back end of it. But this was my aunt's funeral. This is where Mom lived at the apartment in Regina. But on the backside of that was some of the cottage pictures.

**Heather** Okay, so who's in this picture with you?

**Win** This is Leah, my daughter and her husband, Tom, and this is my son, Vernon.

**Win** Leah - I met a woman one night, her name was Leah. She was the nicest person. I didn't know it was an old biblical name, but it is. I was working in a doctor's office at that time, and we had a lab in it. There were no x-rays, but there was the doctor's offices, the waiting room. And so at a coffee room, I was looking for another name to go along with Leah and Doug's initials are D.J., Douglas John, so I was looking for something with a D, and I came up with Dawn, and the nurse said, 'Put an 'E' on the end of that one to make it look more feminine.' So I did. So that's what her name is.

**Win** When I was working in the hospital when Vern was born. It's Douglas Vernon Rowe. Doug wanted to call him Vernon Douglas Rowe. I said no kid of mine is going to have the initials V.D. Good point, good catch, because I lived with my initials W.R. That was short for Wassermann's test. So, only somebody in the medical field would understand that.

**Win** He used to have a manager out at Tomahawk, Marcia M-A-R-C-I-A Marcia. She started Doug on a collection of little John Deere tractors. You know, little kids' toys. One of the fellows that Doug played hockey with was a finishing carpenter. And he had the

lathe or whatever you call it, to make posts and stuff like this. And he just had the tools, and I had him make up a display box for these things. And so it's octagonal. And the front lifts up this glass, and there's the little boxes in there. And on the corners, well, there is an empty box. So I got four different kinds of grains from my brother's farm, and put them into that, and there's a mirror behind it. He's got about 36. These used to be stocking stuffers. That was easily done.

**Heather** So he had like wheat and canola and...

**Win** No canola. Wheat, oats, barley and flax. This was long before the canola thing happened in Saskatchewan. But the whole farm was seeded to canola last year. Since my brother died, she has been renting it out. She is surrounded by canola. Do you want to see something? Gosh, I put those two pictures away, and I shouldn't have done that

**Heather** Oh, nice.

**Win** Look at my brother and his wife.

**Heather** Just as far as the eye can see.

**Win** It's yellow, yellow, yellow.

**Win** Our friends from South Dakota came up to visit Doug the summer before he died. He knew what canola was, and when he turned the nine-mile corner to come north, the canola was out in blossom. But there had been a lot of fields that had a blue flower in them, you know, in Saskatchewan. Not in Alberta. It doesn't happen in Alberta. Flax. Anyway, they came north here, and it was a total picture. You know, the Hutterites are on the one side, and they've got all these fields. And so they were yellow then, the green evergreens and a clear blue sky. She's said a total picture. Total picture.

**Heather** This is interesting. This card, it was a crib tournament for their 40th wedding anniversary? Very neat idea.

**Win** Yes, very neat idea. They loved to play crib.

**Heather** \$10 per person. That's a different way to celebrate. That's a gorgeous picture.

**Win** Isn't that a great picture. The gal that took that picture, one of her friends, she had taken that picture and had it on her computer, and for Manfred's memorial card, she eliminated her out of the picture.

**Heather** Okay, Just take half...

**Win** And put him in there.

**Heather** Beautiful. I wanted to ask you about this picture. This is a brick house. Is that a brick carriage house, I guess it would be at that time?

**Win** Probably. I just had the name. Well my aunt, and her husband was a minister and he started the church at Lewvan. Doug's dad helped build that church, and it was a United Church. Then they got called away, to Prince Albert. This is in Prince Albert. This was a boy's home - Nisbet house. She was the den mom. He was the head guy of it. She had all these little boys to take care of.

**Heather** It's a beautiful house.

**Win** It is a beautiful house. Nesbit House in Prince Albert. And I have no idea when it was built or anything.

**Win** This is my son-in-law's mother. Oh, she's amazing. She's straight from Germany. And in the war, World War II, her husband could speak seven languages. So the Nazis confiscated him to be an interpreter. You hear and you read about the women sewing their jewels into the bottom of the hems of coats or dresses or whatever. That's exactly what she did. And she would never allow her husband, while they were courting, to come anywhere near her house because she was from the elite.

**Win** This picture she painted, and that was a picture of where they were from, Baden-Baden.

**Heather** So that's what her name?

**Win** Her first name is Alfreda. And we all called her Alfie.

**Win** Anyhow, the Nazis took that house. They took mom and dad, her mother and father, out and shot them. And she had a twin over there who would not come to Canada. But she came and she had two little boys under her arm. And they came to Uranium City, I do believe. And he worked in the uranium mines. Their dog was a wolf. Oh, yeah. She has four boys. The other two were born in Canada, in Saskatchewan.

**Heather** Your son-in-law was born here?

**Win** Yeah, he was born in Canada. So the two oldest ones are now dead and so the two younger ones are still on this earth. My son-in-law, and his brother lives in Toronto.

**Win** But she was a marvelous artist. Leah has got some of her paintings. Oh, my gosh. She was an artist and she colored her hair all the time, and right up to the day she died. She was 84.

**Win** We did not come back. She died in the wintertime, January or February or something like that. So we did not come back from Texas for that funeral. But whatever, you know.

**Heather** What's this land thing here?

**Win** This is the old homestead. But look at the printing on that homestead. Isn't the writing incredible? That was Doug's grandfather's writing. No, that would be the homesteading land agent. Isn't that just incredible?

**Heather** Certified and received from William John Rowe of Yellow Grass for SE quarter of section 12, township 12, range 16, west of the 2nd meridian. Writing like that is a lost art, isn't it?

**Win** Pretty soon writing of any kind is going to be a lost art, but that is just an amazing scroll. There is a tax notice.

**Heather** From July 15th, 1971.

So 12, 12, 16

212 acres

Taxable assessment \$9,100

Municipal and Union Hospital Tax – 209.30

School Unit number 12 – 327.60

Telephone Tax – 18 28

CND Area tax – 3.12

Hail taxes – 133.20

Total Current year's taxes – 691.50

Arrears – None

Total dues – 691 50

Municipal and Union Hospitals – 23 mills

School #12 – 36 mills

School #11 – 32 mills

**Win** There are a couple of grain stubs when he sold grain.

**Heather** And so you get a discount of 5% if paid before October 1st, 4% if paid before November 1<sup>st</sup>, and 2% paid before... Those really were a good incentive to pay them.

**Win** That's what they do with my house taxes in the park down there in Brownsville, Texas. You get a percentage off.

**Win** And those are grain stubs. Grain tickets. And one is '38. The others '39. 82 bushels, £30. Grade one, price 63 and a half cents per bushel. Wow. Carefully preserved for surrender to the board when required.

**Heather** If you want your money, 84 bushels or not. One at \$0.54. So a year later, \$0.54.

**Win** My brother was married in '73, and he said he sold a truckload of flax. And the old truck that he was used was a one-ton truck, so it wasn't a very big box. And I don't know how many bushels would have been in that box, but that paid for the wedding, the reception, the honeymoon, and a down payment on the rental apartment that they went into. Sure wouldn't today. He'd be lucky if he got one of those paid. Let alone all of it. It's amazing.

**Heather** There's some really good stuff here. You're sure you're not an archivist?

**Win** No, I'm just a hoarder. Doug's Dad kept these things.

**Win** And here is Lewvan. So that's where we went to school. This is the road that we came across, then a mile down to Lewvan. And let me see – William Rowe, here. That was Doug's dad's farm. He graduated in '57. It was so wet in June, he rode the horse to school. And Mr. McIvor, our neighbor who went halves with the snowplow with my Dad for the tractor, he bought a jeep, because we had to change school units, the school unit in Colfax, we were at the Wellington School District and Lewvan was in the Scott School district. Now we would have had buses available for us to go to school if we'd have stayed in the Wellington school unit. But because the fathers decided to send the kids to Scott, to Lewvan school, we had to provide our own transportation. So this was the reason for the Jeep, to plow the mud. It wasn't graveled roads like it is today. These were all dirt roads. Down where we were, it was gumbo. We were using the Jeep to travel the muddy roads into school.

**Win** Okay. Here's a snowplow. There's a picture of it. It's a snow blower right on the tractor. Now, that guy has a cab on his. Dad and that guy's dad bought that appliance in 1950.

**Heather** Oh, so it was already 19 years old by this picture.

**Win** And Dad drove that thing until he got sick, and of course Dad didn't have a cab on his tractor, so it was like a cloth kind of protection from the tractor out to the fenders of the tractor. So it would keep the heat of the motor. It was probably about up to the bottom of the neck. He was all over the blessed country down there blowing snow. I can remember the municipality of Wellington had him in Tyvan, a little town southeast of Regina, about 20 miles from home. He'd be blowing roads out, and granaries out for the farmers so they could haul grain. He was all over the place.

**Heather** He never got frostbite?

**Win** No, he never did. Wrapped up really well. Scarves and his parka. All with a hood. A big floppy hood. And it came down. Well, he was bald, and I don't remember whether he had a toque on or not, but at least he would have a hat on. Yeah. With the peak you know, the peak on like farmers where men today all wear them. Some women too.

**Win** Anyway, so that's what it was. You're welcome to any of these pictures you might want. I talked about Doug's family. That was the original house. Well, they built that. I don't know when they built that, but it was a homestead shack. Sod shack when they first really came out.

**Heather** And the walls were sod. Not just the roof, like completely sod?

**Win** Yes. I do believe so. And that they built to house them. So this picture says 1946/47, so it was built before that, but not sure when. That's just to show the snow and here's some more pictures of the snow they dug out. Isn't that amazing? Yeah, that's a garage door. They pulled the car out of the garage because they were scared the roof was going to cave in.

**Heather** And that's a snowbank they're standing on? That's not a hill covered in snow?

**Win** That's a snowbank. This is the garage. You've got the other picture there with the shed. Yeah, a 1947 model. Like, as I say, '47, '48, '49 was heavy, heavy snow. And that was why Dad bought the snow plane.

**Heather** So do you know who all is?

**Win** I haven't got a clue who's in the picture. I just found these in Doug's dad's album. And so I don't know who they are.

**Win** And they ripped that house when Doug was 15. He was born in '39. Would be '54 they built. They ripped that house down, kept the wood, and they built that little house, a bungalow.

**Heather** With or without a basement?

**Win** A full basement. Just a bungalow. They put in a water system in there.

**Heather** Well, they had a lot of water on the ground there.

**Win** This is quite the story. The creek came down in '69. I was pregnant seven months and Leah was born at the end of June. The bridge on the road that went by the farm was plugged solid with snow and ice, it backed up right into their yard. This row of granaries that was closest to the creek had six feet of water in it. So six feet of frozen grain. Now the yard was just a disaster. They used big trucks, well, not semis, but two- or three-ton trucks and tractors to pull them out. So the yard was a total disaster. Ruts everywhere. That is the cleaner. One of the fellows had a cleaner or dryer, I should say. And there's the ruts. You could see how deep they were.

**Heather** That's a John Deere tractor with a cab. And it's sunk down to almost the axle of the large wheel. That is deep. Wow.

**Win** It was hip deep on me to walk out there. So there was about 20 men that came in and helped deal with that grain. They had to dry it all, so they had to pick and shovel it out of the granary to take it over to where the dryer was and run it through the dryer to dry it. And the elevator in town was very generous and gave him space to take his grain into there. You know, just as a storage thing. Oh, he was drying grain all week.

**Win** But my mother-in-law and myself, there was so many men around there and we made dinner for them. And you make dinner for 20 hungry men.

**Heather** Well, and it probably wasn't just sandwiches.

**Win** It was a full meal, my dear. It was roast beef, fried chicken, roast chicken. Oh, she made pies for these guys. Peeled potatoes like you never peel potatoes in your life. Oh, my goodness. Could they put it away. She had made bread the day before, so there was fresh bread or buns, pies and all this food. We no sooner got it cleaned up. Well, we had to do two shifts to accommodate, the house wouldn't hold all these people. And we no sooner got the dishes done and sat down for maybe 15 minutes and I looked at the clock and it was time to start again. Because they were there for a full meal deal for supper, too. Oh, my goodness gracious. Did we work?

**Heather** How long was that week? Ten days?

**Win** No, that was just overnight. Oh, that was one day. They got it all out of there in one day. But these guys brought their trucks. There wasn't one woman.

**Heather** Oh, good. They were smart.

**Win** They could have sent food. No, there wasn't anything that came into the house as far as food or women were to be.

**Win** It was Gert and I. Oh, that's Doug's mama. Oh, what a mess. And of course, as it dried, you had to level out the yard again. So that was '69. That was the flood of '69. There's a picture of the old rink. I talked about the skating rink and curling in there.

**Heather** Is that Lewvan?

**Win** Yes.

**Heather** 1955 Lewvan Rink. Quonset style.

**Win** And my father-in-law helped build that building. I mean, that's what the people did in those days. Up here were the changerooms for hockey. It was like a mezzanine level. And the front of it, you walked in the doors and here was the kitchen and the concession booth. Oh they did all kinds of things.



**Heather** So they had to carry their hockey equipment all the way upstairs and then come down?

**Win** Isn't that too bad!

**Heather** It was different. Nice windows on it though. Nothing on the side, but that's nice at the front.

**Win** And there was a walkway on the mezzanine, in front of the dressing rooms and the railing, so you could go up there and watch.

**Heather** Did they have seating inside, down the sides?

**Win** Yes. Down this one side.

**Heather** Just on the one side... with those old overhead heaters that never seemed to keep you warm. Did you have those? Those gas heaters?

**Win** I don't think so. There was one of them out in the foyer where the concession stands were, but not out there on the ice. Oh, you froze.

**Heather** Exactly, I know.

**Win** This was my house way back. I found an extra picture for you and that faced south, the veranda.

**Heather** Colfax. That's a beautiful veranda.

**Win** And that was built in 1925.

**Heather** Beautiful bay window.

**Win** Oh, no. It was built long before that. Well, I'm not sure. They built a new basement. They put a basement underneath it and they did a quarter turn. So that's the old house. My brother was born was raised there all his life, and that's where he died.

**Heather** Yeah, that's a nice closed-in veranda there. All those windows.

**Win** It is what we called the sunroom because of all the windows.

**Heather** So who would be the baby sitting out there?

**Win** Oh, there's a baby?

**Heather** There's a baby right at the base of the stairs. And then there's a dog. Looks like at least two dogs in the front, closer to the fence. But there's a baby.

**Win** 1925 That has to be a cousin that was born in '24.

**Heather** There's someone else there. But there's something blocking, I can't quite see. There is someone with the baby.

**Win** So probably his mother, who is my aunt.

**Heather** It's a beautiful house.

**Win** Four bedrooms upstairs and...

**Heather** This would have been the kitchen or the dining room over here with that bay window.

**Win** No. That bay window is part of the living room now, which faces north after the turn. The kitchen and the dining room is in this part. Big huge old kitchen.

**Win** Anyhow, then it comes to moving up here. After Doug and I got married in '62, I was working in the General Hospital, I was a lab tech and it took two years to train. So '60 to '62, we got married in '62, and our first born was in '64 and I quit the General Hospital. In those days, you didn't have maternity leave. That was just part of the course, you quit?

**Win** We had bought a house in, well, we were renting a house in the northern part, the northwest corner of Regina and I don't have a picture of that house at all.

**Win** So I went back for one year's work, which extended to four years of work before number two is born. This is when she was born was '69, so I was pregnant with her.

**Win** And I got selling Tupperware in '71. Dad had died in '64, so Mom had remarried. Only a mother would do this for you. The night before her wedding, she was out delivering Tupperware. Good grief, but that's a mother's duty. So I sold Tupperware from '71 to '79, and then we came to Edmonton.

**Heather** When you got offered the position. What was it again?

**Win** It's called a distributorship, right? Yeah, so when we moved up here, that was fast and furious. They came to us in October, and the decision was made before they left. They meaning the head office people.

**Win** The next day Doug handed in his resignation from SaskTel—Telephones Saskatchewan—and he was just a mess before that, because his job was no longer there. His job was forecasting for the northern part of the province, forecasting the quantities required to put in telephone systems. So that job went by the by. He was in head office at that time, and he was to work underneath this person who he did not like

at all. And so that night, after he handed in his resignation, he had the best sleep he had had for a long time. He was a heart attack waiting to happen. He had indigestion, was stressed out, blah, blah. You know, so that when we came up here...

**Heather** To Edmonton?

**Win** To Edmonton, that's what I mean. We rented a house for six months. And then the rent control was off, and the price skyrocketed. So we purchased a condo and five years later, we built a big house in the southwest corner. It was called Terwilleger Estates. And I really don't have a picture of that. I have it as it was being built, but I don't have the finished product.

**Heather** You guys were busy?

**Win** We were running. I was all over Northern Alberta, Grande Prairie to Fort McMurray.

**Heather** So what did you do as a distributor? What was your job?

**Win** My job was to train and motivate. Doug's job was to run the office. We packed our own Tupperware. Yes we would put orders in. All the orders came into us and we would have to process those. You know, add up, multiply out and add the tax, blah, blah. So we had. \$1,000,000,000 worth of Tupperware sitting in the warehouse. And we packed that every week.

**Heather** So you would just get a shipment of 50 lettuce containers and 75 of whatever, and then you'd have to sit down with the whatever?

**Win** We ordered every Friday. You got the shipment on Monday. Well, maybe it was sooner in the week. That wouldn't give them enough time to do that. I can't remember when we ordered, but we got a shipment in every Monday morning. I mean, a semi load of product. And we would all know that and disperse it around a belt. It would be all gone by the end of the week. It was gone and shipped and out of there by the end of the week.

**Heather** So when you shipped it out, did it go to the Tupperware consultant or did it go to like me? My order came to me?

**Win** It went to the consultant and the salesperson. And then she would have to sort hers out and bag according to the orders by the hostesses and deliver it to the hostesses. And in 1990, they switched the process, and they, being the head office. There was a manufacturing plant in Morden, Manitoba, and it shipped out of there to a central point, which was Calgary. And there were two offices in Edmonton – ours and another person's and we were the packers. The other girl didn't have a packing unit. So we did it. We would pack \$2 million worth of product out of there every week. Every week! Did we work? Didn't know what work was until we got into that one.

**Heather** Did you have a staff?

**Win** Oh, yeah, big time. We had four people in the front office to process and deal with computers and make reports and blah, blah. And then we had a staff of four in the back plus Doug. And Doug never expected people to do work if he couldn't or didn't do it, so he didn't expect anybody else to. So his job was to organize all of that and run it.

**Win** My daughter was head girl out front of the office and she did all the reports and helped process and prep the invoices prior to the processing. Our son did the processing on the computer. And then there were two other girls in the front office that would help with processing stuff. We were busy, we were very busy. But it was fun.

**Win** I would do some of the silliest things with people. When there was new product to announce, "Tupperwoman" came, one of my managers. Instead of a suit like what Superman wears, she wore one of the Tupperware Fix-N-Mix bowls upside down and put all kinds of little stuff on to it. She was just a hoot and she was a big woman and she would come running into the meeting room, which normally was 100 to 200 people. And I would meet Petey and Doug would help me. You bet he helped too. It was just a hoot. And I had so much fun with those people. It was just a barrel of fun. But anyway, good things, you know, Life goes on.

**Win** And then we bought the cottage out here at Island Lake in 1993. I was here doing some work in Athabasca. Ida Edwards sold with me. She was one of the gals that was at that meeting. Anyway, the meeting finished and I had some spare time, so I stopped at Century 21, they were on Main Street heading south at that time. So I popped in there just to see what.. we had rented in about '85. We were so burned out, we rented a place out here at Island Lake

**Win** And having gone all around Athabasca and Edmonton, Island Lake was the place. So when we figured we could afford to buy a place at the lake, that was our retreat. And I think I've given you pictures of that. We had fun out there. It was a lot of fun. And then, of course, Doug passed away, and here I am.

**Win** I got involved with the church here, at the United Church and I was chair of the board. I led service, did all kinds of things. I did the fall suppers for 15 years. I was head of that, and anything to do with food, they called me. So funeral luncheons, I did those, I organized those and sang in the choir. And Doug came along. Oh, Doug worked in the church, too. I shouldn't, you know, leave him out of it. Anything to do with the kitchen, he was involved?

**Heather** And so when you guys retired from doing Tupperware, you just moved up here full time?

**Win** Full time.

**Heather** And when did you retire?

**Win** When did we retire? '98, and we moved up here I think it was 2000.

**Heather** Then you just throw yourself into the community?

**Win** You know, I was a Toastmistress in Edmonton for years, 16 years or so, and then I joined, Doug Kariel was very instrumental in getting me into the Toastmasters out here, so I was with them for about four years. Twenty years is long enough. If you can't talk in 20 years of training, something's wrong. But, you know, if you don't use it, you lose it. True. Absolutely. And everything changes.

**Heather** So when did your husband pass away?

**Win** August of 2012, of cancer.

**Heather** Did you still have the Island Lake house?

**Win** Yes. Okay, I moved into town here two years ago. Two years in June, in 2020, because I could not maneuver the steps any longer. And we were built on a hill, and the house was halfway down the hill, so it was steps up and steps down to the beach. There were a lot of steps.

**Heather** And you had all those flower boxes and stuff.

**Win** Doug built all of those.

**Heather** Beautiful. You probably just hated to give all of that up.

**Win** Oh, yes. But I sold it to my daughter, so I'm back there all the time. But those steps are getting awfully hard to maneuver. The going down isn't as bad as the coming up.

**Win** My son-in-law built a railing out there for me. Before that time, it didn't have any, really, because we put... Doug dug out the bottom part of the dirt basement. And there was just a little hole when we bought it, to hold the furnace. And that was about it. Well, he dug out the whole thing and put a crawlspace in, and we used to have a water tank on one side, a 1,200-gallon water tank. And he dug all that out and. And I said, 'so how do you expect to get this tank out of there?' 'Oh, no, not a problem. Just take a wall down.' So we took a wall down. Amazing what saws all do.

**Win** One of the neighbors bought the tank, and we put in the running water system. So, that was quite the deal. I don't remember when we put that water system in. Maybe around 2000 or 2001.

**Heather** Okay. Was it a good well?

**Win** Very deep, yes, very deep. Then I had it tested, it came back 'Do not drink, it was high in salt.' So we hauled water for drinking water and used this tap water for everything else. It was wonderful to have soft water to wash your hair in and clothes. Oh, yes, it was wonderful. You know, way back here in those days. No running water, like at that house. My goodness. How do you live without running water?

**Heather** You just did.

**Win** You had a cistern. Doug's mom and dad had a cistern. We had a cistern. And that was for your drinking water, and you'd pump it out. And, for dishes and stuff, I don't remember what the heck we used. I remember Dad hauling drinking water from a spring. What did we use for all the other water? Oh, there was another... the drinking water was outside. You had to go outside to pump a pail of water. But all the other water was inside, in a well. That would be filled up every year or two, or six months or whatever.

**Heather** Like an actual, like, bucket. You had to pull the bucket up.

**Win** Yes.

**Heather** Then heat your water, do your dishes, whatever you had to do.

**Win** Yep, farm life without power was amazing. Now we had electrical lights on the old farm, from the time that I was born. But it was a windmill system outside with big batteries inside. And if there was no wind and that happened in the wintertime, we were back to using coal oil lamps. I remember that many, many a time, especially in the wintertime. It would be no wind.

**Heather** Now we use microwave. And you turn on the stove and the element heats up and you have a separate coffee pot.

**Win** Oh yeah. Well, before microwaves came out, of course you did all your cooking on the top of the stove. And I remember when Tupperware brought a microwave-safe product out. Well, it was my job to teach and train, motivate, and so I was forced to buy a microwave. Well, now you can see, I have two of them and I use them all the time.

**Win** I showed the girls I don't know how many microwave cooking training classes, and I would have them for the public as well. You know, Tupperware folks could bring a hostess or whoever? Oh, gosh, yes. I did potatoes. I did meat, I baked cakes. Did the vegetables. Four-course dinner. Oh I did that many, many times. Of course. I had to go to a class and find out how to do the stuff.

**Heather** Yeah, exactly, and then make it look like you've known how to do it your whole life.

**Win** Yeah, but I did like the old kind, the old, old stuff. I have a roaster down here. It was produced in France and it goes in the regular oven, as well as a microwave oven.

**Heather** And it's Tupperware? Oh, really.

**Win** Yes, and I use it quite frequently. Oh, Tupperware is great stuff.

**Heather** I remember there always were Tupperware parties and stuff. There just never seem to be.

**Win** They aren't anymore. Today's woman is a very busy woman. They're not only wives, they're mothers, they're housewives, they hold down a job outside of the house, they haven't got time.

**Heather** Or more than one job.

**Win** Yeah, lots of times. When I first got into it in '71, it was socializing. That was the big draw. Husbands would be home watching hockey. Wednesday night was a favorite night to have a Tupperware party because it was Wednesday night hockey. And the men would be in front of the boob tube watching the hockey, and the woman would go join her friends. That's how the world worked in those days. Well, come the nineties, life changed for more, and much more so today.

**Heather** In the last two years, with the pandemic, I don't know how many online parties I've been invited to, to buy stuff, whether it's candles or epicure or whatever.

**Win** Quite the contingent of salespeople in and around this community. Shirley Backstrom was one. I don't know her last name, but when I would do a meeting up here, I used the Green Spot. Of course, I encouraged them to bring a guest with them and bring as many guests as you want to. One of them was Isabel. She works a Buy-low. And well, I know Shirley lived up in Colinton. Whether this lady lives in Colinton, I haven't got a clue. Small world. Oh, and there were lots of others here in town, too, that were with me for a long time. One was a banker's wife... I don't know where she is now. I can't remember the name either.

**Heather** So when you guys retired and came up here besides the church, what else did you do?

**Win** Flowers, between the Toastmasters, singing in the choir. I didn't join Marion's choir until after Doug passed because you can't read and sit all the time. So I did what I wanted to do? And I took pottery. Rosie Guay got me into pottery at the old schoolhouse, the brick schoolhouse there across from the Legion. I did these.

**Heather** Oh, these roses. I was looking at them earlier. Those are beautiful. Very delicate.

**Win** One of the girls, we always sat next to each other, and she taught me how to make a rose. So there was pottery once a week, and there was singing in the choir, Now that was once a week unless we did special things and handbells. I was busy doing the things I like to do.

**Heather** So you're happy to move here, then? You don't miss Saskatchewan.

**Win** Not really. Miss the people. But I don't miss Saskatchewan. You'll see it in one of these houses. You know, the yards, there's no trees around it. When I was born, there were oodles of trees. Oh, they planted them.

**Win** There was a reforestation farm in Indian Head, that's east of Regina, and farmers could get trees at no cost from this reforestation farm, and they planted them around their yards. They planted wind rows and wind breakers, and all kinds of stuff. Anything to stop the dirt blowing. Every tree that's in southern Saskatchewan has been planted.

**Win** Well, all the trees in Saskatchewan lean to the southeast, because the wind comes from the northwest, a lot of it. And you know right away, as soon as you get out of the car in southern Saskatchewan, you know you're in southern Saskatchewan because of the wind.

**Win** It was unbelievable when we moved into Edmonton. The snow would come straight down and it would just pile right around the fence posts, onto the pine trees. Beautiful. Oh, I'd come to a piece of heaven. I really had, coming out of the prairies.

**Heather** True prairie.

**Win** But we have a lot of wind these days as compared to in '79 when I came. And today's weather is different. Are you glad? You wouldn't want snow like that.

**Heather** I've seen lots of snow in my time, but I haven't seen that.

**Win** That was the reason that Dad bought the snow plane. It was really quite funny. I had guests in here the other day and I asked the fellows yakking with me and I said, 'Do you know what a snow plane is?' He said 'Yep, sure do.' I said, 'Do you know what a snowplow that goes on the front of the tractor is?' He said 'Sure do.' He was from Saskatchewan.

**Win** You probably know them, Doris and Ron Rawson from the church. He remembers all that stuff. He used to fly a plane.

**Heather** Is there anything else on your list you wanted to...?

**Win** The only thing I wanted that was on the list here that I felt you might... You know about the gardens. In Tupperware, one of the reasons that I got into it was for the traveling. And we traveled. We earned a trip, worked my butt off, but we earned it to



Europe. And another time we went to San Francisco because we earned our way of getting there, and traveled to Bermuda, Jamaica, Aruba, Los Angeles, Palm Springs, Florida, many times to Florida. The North American headquarters of Tupperware were in Kissimmee, which is just south of Orlando. And we've been there many, many times. Also Toronto, Montreal, Quebec City, Vancouver, Victoria, just to name a few more.

**Heather** When you say Europe, like specific in Europe, or was it like a tour of some countries?

**Win** No, it was specific. We went to the world conference held in Montreux, Switzerland. There were 400 from South America. I can't remember how many Americans were there. And there were 9 distributors and head staff which would be 6 to 10. And then couples, so there were 18 and they flew us all to London, England, first.

**Win** We got into our hotel room about 1:00 in the afternoon and we'd been up all night. I was so excited and I couldn't get to sleep. Finally, at 3:00 in the afternoon, I said 'what the hell are we doing? Go to bed.' So we both got up and walked around the few blocks. We had cucumber sandwiches and high tea, they cut off the crusts, so it isn't much of a sandwich. Seven bucks Canadian, and this was in '83 or '82. So \$7 Canadian was darned expensive. Every evening there was something given to us. That was one of them.

**Heather** 'Montreux 1982 Tupperware International Distributor Conference.' That's a lot of people around that, and then the rose.

**Win** The rose was the Tupperware flower, because it is symbolic of love. Every night there was something in the room for us. In England, it was the Aynsley China salt and pepper, just little guys. Oh, they're in here somewhere. Then, we went to Paris, and this little guy is Stratford 24-carat gold.

**Heather** You've never used this. It's still got the paper.

**Win** Yeah, absolutely. Never used it. They had that made specifically for all the Tupperware people. The is one of 441. So that is definitely a keepsake.

**Win** We were in London, England for three nights, and then we went over to Paris and we were there a couple of nights. One night they took us to the Club Lido. And that is a review show, like you see in Las Vegas. I always tell this story to people. They had metal buckets full of ice and wine on the tables for the other couple and ourselves. There were four of us. We went through a bottle of wine. So, the other distributor, he says his name is Brian, he says we need to order another bottle of wine. So okay. So Doug says to the waiter, 'What's the price on it?' Four hundred bucks Canadian, forget it.

**Win** Then we found out that the Americans don't like wine, not like the Canadians do. And so they never touched their wine. So we finished the whole darn bucket?

**Heather** Well, there you go.

**Win** There we go. We took the train from Paris over to Montreux, Switzerland, and this train had the Americans, the Canadians and people from Brazil, 400 of us all total. And when we went through the Alps into Switzerland, here is snow, and this is March. Oh no, snow again. The Brazilians had a heyday. They had never seen snow, and they were out there playing in the snow. And it was so funny to see this because here we are sitting on the train keeping warm, and these people are outside playing in the snow.

**Win** And then when we got to Montreux, Switzerland, we were in, oh I can't remember the name of the hotel that we were in, but out front they had a humongous fountain which they had drained, put ice in, and there were bottles of champagne around this thing. You could help yourself.

**Win** Did you know Switzerland is one of the countries with the biggest amount of wine production and they consume it all themselves?

**Heather** No, I never knew that.

**Win** They have their livers flushed once a year from age 14 up. There were three glasses for your wine. One was champagne, one was for the white, one for the red, morning, noon and night. Unbelievable. I brushed my teeth with wine. Oh, that was a fabulous trip. Stuff happened this trip.

**Win** They took us down to Lucerne. Well, of course they made chocolate. And the cobbled streets, all that kind of thing. Talking of cobbled streets, the first night that we were in London, England, we were taken to a medieval feast. It was down near the docks of London, this restaurant. It was all cobble flooring. And the story goes that way, way back in the ships, they would have these cobblestones for the ballast in the bottom of the ship, to keep it upright. When they quit doing that, they used cobblestones to make flooring, make streets, make sidewalks, all kinds of stuff. They would bring in the product and then put the cobblestones into the ships to go back, because otherwise it would be top heavy.

**Win** So anyway, that's what they did. And so they had used this building as a prison at one time. And so you had your corridor and all along here were like where the dungeons were.

**Win** And the people that put on the play also were the servers. We were in the King Henry the 8<sup>th</sup> court.

**Heather** So it was an interactive?

**Win** The guy beside me was from Quebec and I was having a French lesson. And it was a seven-course meal. So first off, you had your bun for the two of you. And it was

crisscrossed on the top and liver pâté to spread on it. Well, they didn't bring you any utensils. So it was eat it with your hands. I remember the loaf of bread. And then there was a bowl of soup. And the soup bowl had handles either side, and you drank it. We started the night with honey mead.

**Heather** Oh, really? How was that? I never had it.

**Win** Oh, it was icky sweet. It was just something awful. And you could have beer or wine and the beer stein or a goblet of wine, and try as hard as I could, I never got to the bottom. But that was when I was young and foolish in those days.

**Heather** You have to have fun. You're out. You're in a different country.

**Win** Oh yeah, you really are. In London, England, the next day they took us to a brewery. We had lunch there, and, that night we were taken out to a place for supper of course. And the next day we went to Coventry and caught an airplane. Coventry can't be very far from Heathrow Airport. I don't know where it is. I don't know where I was. You know, I never had to worry about that. There was the bus driver, and in Paris, the drivers are insane. Totally insane. Well, there's lots of circle drives, and they were five and six car lanes going around the circle, and when driver says that where I should be, they cut across. But, George, you have to be careful. And they took us to a fashion show on Champs-Élysées. Oh, golly, they took us all over.

**Heather** It sounds like they gave you guys really the royal treatment.

**Win** Yeah, they really did. A couple from Montreal were in head office, and he said this was a \$1,000,000 trip. He was worth a lot of money, but he realized the value of this trip. It was amazing. Normally, they don't do any of that. But it was a fabulous treat, let me tell you that.

**Heather** Oh, how interesting.

**Win** Really interesting. And from Montreux, they took us to the Hague to fly home. Well, we darn near missed that because everybody was on strike in the airport. The tour guide took all of our passports and went in to deal with it. She came back and she couldn't get anywhere near, and the time was running out. She said, 'It's better that you take your passports.' Well, boy, did we run, and we darn near missed our flight. There were about 25 of us on that flight. You know, 25 empty seats, so they held the plane. I bet for one person, they wouldn't, no. But for 25. Well, the staff that were working there, boy, did they move. One girl I remember, she ran down the, not the ramp, but the belt where the luggage goes. Right. She ran down that. They were moving because there was a fair amount of us people.

**Win** From there, we went to Holland and flew KLM. Is that the Dutch airline? I think so, then back to Montreal. Oh, you know how wicked airplane coffee is. It was such a treat.

I didn't know, but I've been told later to ask for American coffee. Oh, we didn't know. So we just asked for coffee. Well, in Paris, you got espresso. Oh, it's like mud.

**Win** You want a jag of caffeine, have an espresso. Oh, my goodness. We were at the Castle of Versailles. They took us through there. The gardens were so beautiful. The gold. Oh, my gosh. The gold that was in this castle, oh, my goodness. Unbelievable. But it was wonderful to see that. That was quite the trip.

**Heather** Sounds like it. What did Doug think of all this?

**Win** Oh, he was right into it. He knew the value of what was being done for us. Oh, yes, he was right into this. Well, all of us knew from Canada, we knew the value of that trip, and, yeah, we had to really work hard to qualify to go. There were three regions Canada – east, central, west – and three distributors from each got to go.

**Heather** Well, it's hard work, but it sounds like it was worth it in the end.

**Win** Oh, it was, definitely. We had such a marvelous time. There's been an awful lot of good things that happened to us from the Tupperware office. Those days are long gone.

**Heather** You got into it at the right time, though.

**Win** And out at the right time, too. There was an awful lot of stuff coming down. Like they were shifting out of the old into a new kind of Tupperware sales at kiosks, which you see in the malls in the city and very few home parties left. Yeah, we got out of it at the right time, at least I think we did.

**Heather** Oh, it sounds like it. Alright.

**Win** That's about everything then.

**Heather** Okay.

[End of Interview]

Machine transcribed by: trint.com  
Proof-read by: Mavis Jacobs  
May 2024