

## Athabasca Area Seniors' Memory Project

<http://digiport.athabasca.ca/aasmp/people/win-rowe/>

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

**Win** My name is Win Howsam.

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

**Win** Yes.

**Heather** Let's start. So there's your parents. What are your parents' names?

**Win** Freeman and Millicent.



*Betty, Millicent, Freeman, Winnifred and Manford (front) Howsam*

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

**Win** Yes. Her full name is Elizabeth. We called her Betty.

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

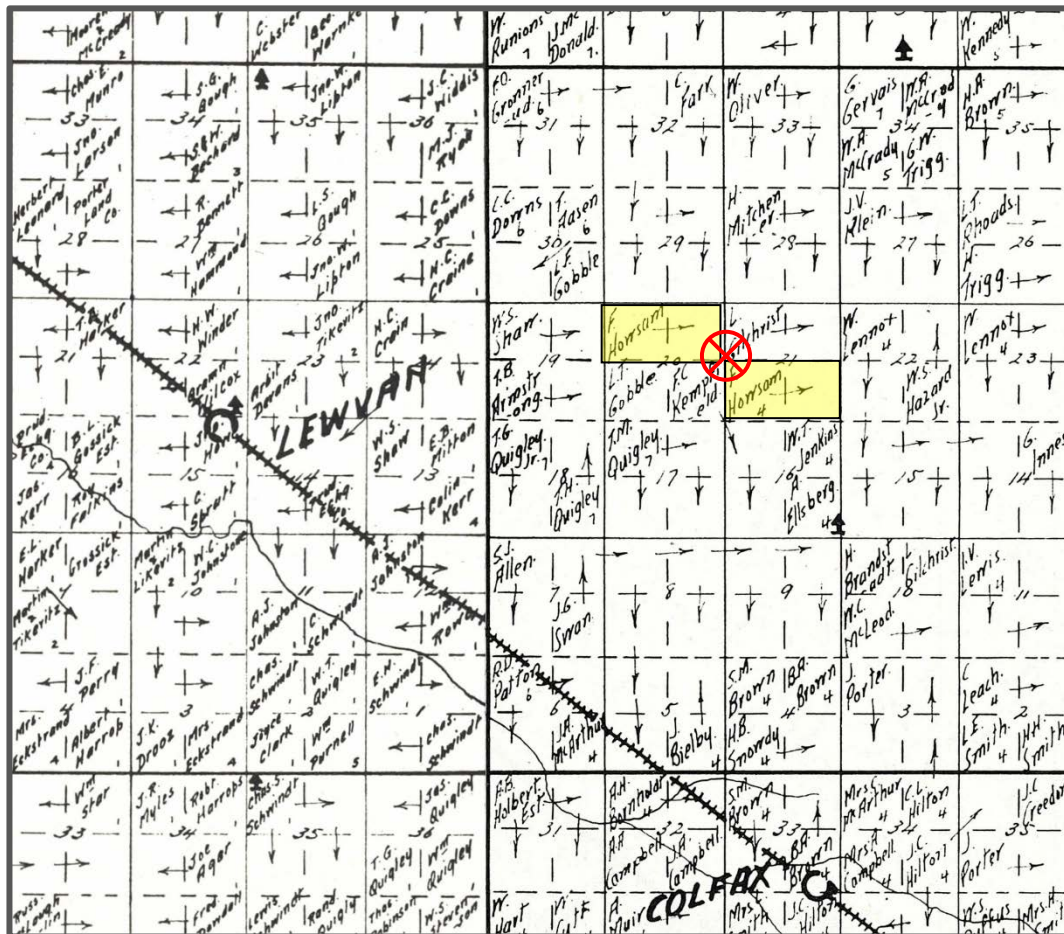
**Win** Yes.

**Heather** Your sister is still alive?

**Win** Yes, she is. She lives in Melville, Saskatchewan. She was 49 and a half years married, and her husband wanted a divorce.

**Win** That was my family. This is me, and this is my older sister Betty, Mom and Dad, and my little brother Manford. I was 14 there, Betty was three years older, so 17. Manford was my brother and he would have been a 6-year-old in that picture. He died in 2018.

**Win** That was where we lived and it was right on this corner.



Tp 12

Tp 11

Rge 16 Rge 15  
Partial map of Townships 11&12, Ranges 15&16, West of 2<sup>nd</sup> Meridian, SE  
Saskatchewan – Cummins rural directory map [Sask., sheets 67&68, 1922]

**Win** Next 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.



*Home in Colfax – 1925*



*Home in Colfax – Circa 1937-39*

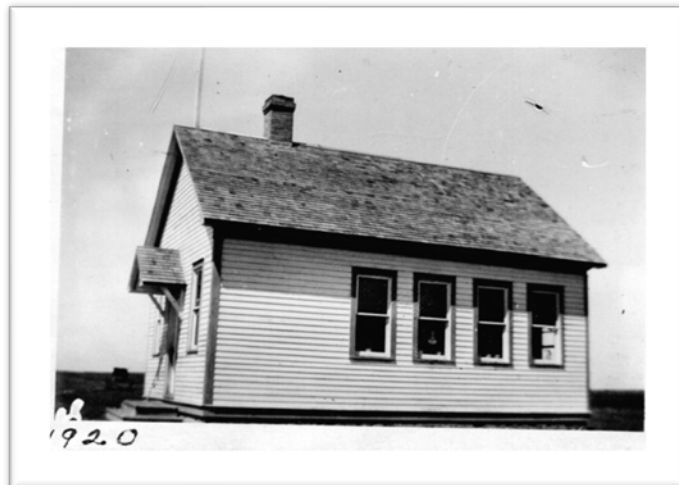
**Heather** Wow, that's a great picture.

**Win** And when Mom and Dad took it over, or maybe before when they got married, they turned it a quarter turn, so the veranda is now facing east.

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

**Win** 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.

**Win** This was the country school that we used to go to. Mom started school in that, in 1920, I think.



*Diamond School – 1920*



*Diamond School - 1949*

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

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

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

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

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

**Win** She was a two-year-old when she came. 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.

**Heather** Okay. How far 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 field as the crow flies. 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 a snow plane. Have you ever seen a snow plane?

**Heather** No, I have not. 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.



*Snow plane – Freeman and Win Howsam, January 1948*



*Snow plane – Win and Millicent Howsam, March 1948*

**Heather** This is your Dad Freeman?

**Win** Yes. And that is me with my Mom and my Dad.

**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. 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.

**Win** Well, I wanted to tell you the story about that snow plane. The story goes that this couple from Colfax, she was pregnant and was due. She started labor, and the husband 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, and the wind was blowing into the yard. So that tells you how high the snow is. The railway crosses the track. 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 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 the railway. 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 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 snow plane, 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 the winter of '50, Dad and a neighbor went together and bought a snowplow, which fit 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. I remember Dad leaving early in the morning before, you know, like, really early, and he wouldn't get home until 11:00 at night. The snowplow had a fabric shield that hooked on. It was heavy, like a tarp. 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.

**Win** There's a picture of the snowplow. It's a snow blower right on the tractor. Now, that driver has a cab on it. My dad and John McIvor bought that appliance in 1950.

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



*Snowblower – March 1969*

**Win** And Dad drove that thing until he got sick with cancer. 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. It would keep the heat of the motor in. He was all over the blessed country 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. 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.

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

**Win** We met at school. 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. The teacher in Lewvan school was pumping out university graduates, and my sister went there, then 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 the Lewvan teacher's 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.



*Doug Rowe  
16 or 17 years old  
Circa 1955 or 1956*

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

**Win** I worked right there. After our two-year course, I passed and 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 their dad, then got married to a new husband.

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



*Lewvan Rink – 1955*

**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 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** Tupperware.

**Heather** Tupperware brought you to Edmonton?

**Win** Yes. Well, we got married in '62. 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, Doug 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, fun, fun. So we applied and it took a while, you had to prove yourself, and finally we came to 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.

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

**Win** 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, yes, Tupperware was very good to us and we had lots of fun.

**Win** This Dutch couple were distributors and came, and I thought that was interesting. 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. 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.



*Win in Klondike dress and hat with Dutch couple*

And we used to do some crazy things. 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.



*Singing Telegram and Win – In front of Tupperware wall hanging*

**Win** This is a wall hanging.

**Heather** That's incredible.

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

**Heather** Do they to this day?

**Win** Yes. Well, when I lived in Edmonton... oh, we had a big house in Terwillegger. 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 and 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. 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, so I had to downsize again just to come to here.

**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 at Tupperware High Tea on B.C. Mountain*

**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.

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

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

**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 Leah graduated, she wanted to go to Vancouver. 'Cats' was on. So I took her out there. It was a package deal. Then there was another time. It was for about three, four or five years later, 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. 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. I did do that. Holy cow. He sat us 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. 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 Lake, east of Regina. There was our cottage.



*Katepwa Lake 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 hold of the realtor and checked it out. And the price was wonderful. 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. Doug was a farm kid. He knew how to do electrical, plumbing and construction. He knew it all.



*Vern in dinghy on Katepwa Lake – Circa '74*

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

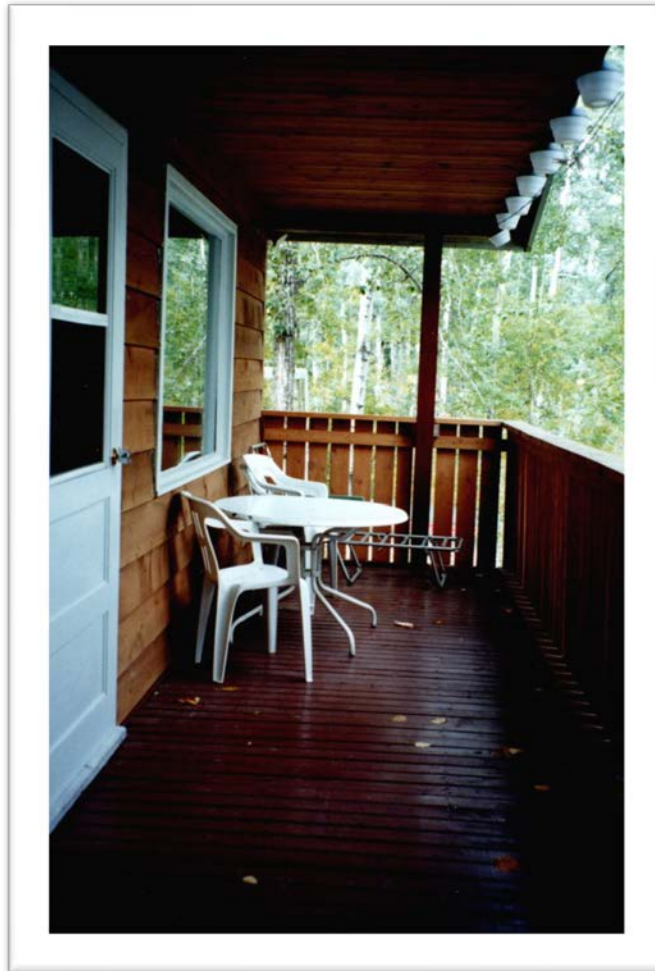
**Win** That's our son. He's laying in the dinghy.

**Heather** Is he reading or something?

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

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

**Win** 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. 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.



*Katepwa Lake cottage veranda*

**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.

**Win** 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 before.

**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. 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.



*Doug and Vern – Katepwa Lake cottage*

**Win** 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 was the cottage. In the first five years of our Tupperware business in Edmonton, we worked morning, noon and night. Oh man, we put in a lot of hours and we were burning out.

**Heather** So Doug obviously had quit his job with SaskTel. At what point did your Tupperware business start taking off?



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

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

**Win** Yes. Isn't it funny how the good Lord does things. But Doug's 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. He was a happy camper again, no more stress.

**Win** And it was about the first part of the end of November. No, it was in October when they came and asked us. 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 live, 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 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 Terwillegger, 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 in '93, 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 Dunhill's. 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.

**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 papers that they have for real estate listings, and I took them home, and Lorraine Plourde used to be a real estate agent. So she called us, 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 165 Lakeshore Drive, which we bought. Some pictures are in here of the before and after. It was a 600 square foot cabin. I mean a cabin.



*Island Lake cabin and frontage*



*Island Lake waterfront*



**Win** 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. We built onto it. That was another mistake. Should've torn it down.

**Win** 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.



*Dock at Island Lake Cottage*

**Win** Doug 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.

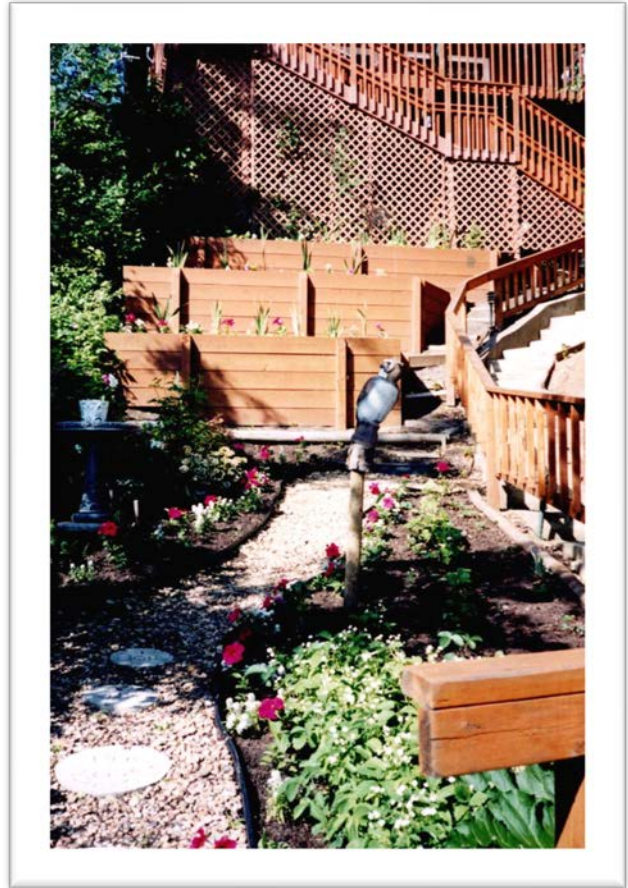
**Win** When I looked around, here is Doug and the dock all sliding into the water. I said to the kids, I think we're just going to circle out here for a little 'till he cools off? When he was cooled off, he never said a word.

**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.



*Doug and Win at Island Lake cottage*



Island Lake cottage flower beds

**Win** There's the flowers.

**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. And I said, 'You know, that worked so dang well.' I said, 'Keep going. I need two more in there.' Right. Because we got rid of the trees that were 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. There's a bit of it showing the white part at the bottom. And I used to do about a thousand plants per year.

**Heather** Really? Wow.

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

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

**Win** I always had to be home from Texas around the 4th of April to start seeds. And then, of course, I would transplant all those seeds, very little seedlings. And then I transplant all to 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.



*Brownsville, Texas park model*

**Win** 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 to just stay home. They'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** They only had one week-end. 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.





*Fishing for whitefish – Island Lake*

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

**Win** They had to have a commercial license, and it all went through the fish market in Winnipeg.

**Heather** Where does it go?

**Win** Oh, it's a big delicacy over in Europe. 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 fry them. Just gross, in my opinion.

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

**Win** We had been to Florida many times. Tupperware headquarters are in Florida, just south of Orlando, in Kissimmee. When we first started going there in the eighties, the price of stuff was ridiculously low. Like \$0.99 for a full breakfast of orange juice, two pieces of bacon, eggs and coffee. 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.

**Heather** Southern Texas?

**Win** Brownsville, right down on the point. We were 18 miles off the coast. I had tickets to go down for last winter, but COVID stopped me. They had so many hoops to come home. It wasn't worth it. People were cancelling left, right and center.

**Win** 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 2012. 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.

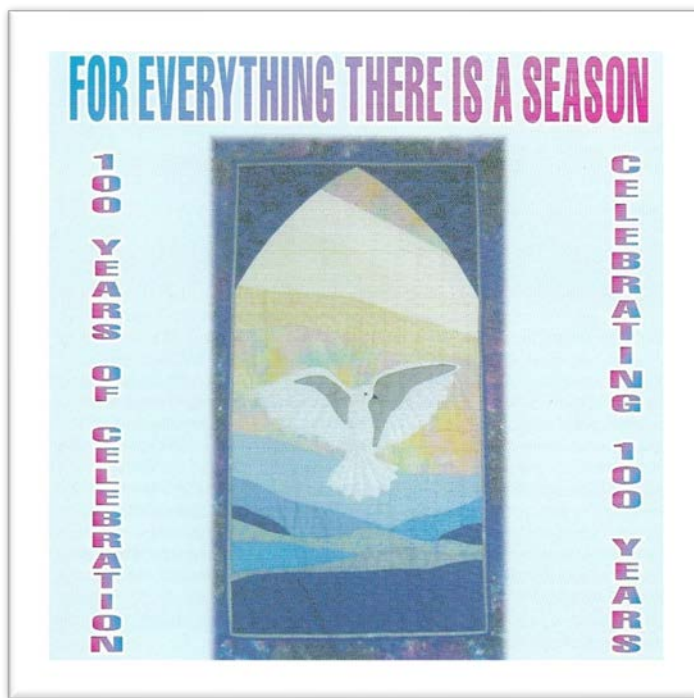
**Heather** It's different to have Christmas in a place where it doesn't snow, though, isn't it?

**Win** Yes. It's wonderful to have the kids there. 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** It was potluck. Somebody brings the potatoes. Somebody brings a vegetable. Somebody brings a dessert. Somebody brought the rolls. I stuffed the turkey, and did gravy and the dressing. It was easily done. It was an easy meal to put together.

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

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



*Athabasca United Church choir  
(on church steps) and  
CD cover – 2004*

**Heather** Oh, okay. So in 1904 the Methodist mission was established. In 1904 Settlement House was built to minister to the needs of the many new people coming at Athabasca Landing. And it shows the handbell people there, too – 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 you did handbells?

**Win** I did handbells. Marion Kadikoff 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. Twenty-three 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. 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 Kadikoff was part of the group that made that.

**Heather** It's beautiful.

**Win** It is beautiful.

**Heather** Oh, beautiful choir robes.

**Win** Yes, those choir robes 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.

**Heather** 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. 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. I never said another word. That's just what it is.

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



**Win** This was after my aunt's funeral. This is where Mom lived at the apartment in Regina.

**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.



*Vernon, Win, Leah and Tom*

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

**Win** This is the old homestead certificate. But look at the printing on that homestead paper. Isn't the writing incredible?

No. 62896

# DOMINION LANDS.

## INTERIM HOMESTEAD RECEIPT.

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The holder of this receipt is required to give six months' notice in writing to the Commissioner of Dominion Lands, Ottawa, before making application for patent.

NOTE—All minerals existing on or under the lands herein described, are reserved to His Majesty.

No. 21808

Agency, \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 190\_\_

I **Certify** that I have received from William John Rowe  
Yellow Grass  
S.E.  
the sum of TEN Dollars, being the office fee for Homestead Entry for  
Quarter of Section 12 Township 12 Range 16  
West of 2 Meridian, and that the said William John Rowe  
is, in consequence of such entry and payment, vested with the rights conferred in such  
cases by the provisions of "The Dominion Lands Act," respecting Homestead Rights.

D. S. E. Cairns  
Local Agent.

NOTE.—This Entry is granted under and subject to the provisions of the Dominion Lands Act and its amendments, governing Homestead Entry for Dominion Lands.

Interim Homestead Receipt – William John Rowe, 1902

**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  
 C&D Area tax – 3.12  
 Hail taxes – 133.20  
 Total Current year's taxes – 691.50  
 Arrears – None  
 Total taxes due – 691 50

Municipal and Union Hospitals – 23 mills  
 School #12 – 36 mills  
 School #11 – 32 mills

Approved by Department of Municipal Affairs  
**S. H. CARR, Sec.-Treas.,**  
**YELLOW GRASS, Sask.**  
 DISCOUNTS ALLOWED ON CURRENT TAXES  
 5% if paid before October 1st  
 4% if paid before November 1st  
 2% if paid before December 1st  
 NOTE—Above discounts do not apply to  
 RURAL TELEPHONE TAXES  
 Notice Mailed July 15, 1971

TAX RATE  
 Municipal and Union Hospital ... 23 Mills  
 School No. 12 ... 36 Mills  
 School No. 11 ... 32 Mills

**TAX NOTICE**  
 FOR THE YEAR 1971  
 RURAL MUNICIPALITY OF SCOTT No. 98

PRODUCE THIS  
 NOTICE WHEN  
 PAYING TAXES

Name Rowe, W. John  
 Address Yellow Grass, Sask.

READ PRINTED PORTION BELOW CAREFULLY

Fold Here		HAMLET OF				Ward of Municipality	No. of Acres	Taxable Assessment F.S.S. or S.S.S.	If Tax Lien Registered This Shows Hereunder	CURRENT YEAR'S TAXES					TOTAL CURRENT YEAR'S TAXES	ARREARS OF TAXES AND PENALTIES	Fold Here TOTAL TAXES DUE	
Assessment No.	Part of Sec.	Lot Sec.	Blk. Tp.	Sub- Div. Sign.	Municipal and Union Hosp. Tax					School Unit # 12	School Unit # 11	Telephone Tax	C & D Area Tax	Hail Taxes				
541	5 1/2	12	12	16	2	312	9100		209 30	327 60		18 28	3 12	133 20	691 50		691 50	
					2													
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					2													
Tax Receipt No.										A PENALTY of 5% will be added to the above taxes or any portion thereof remaining unpaid after December 31, next.					TOTALS		691 50	691 50

*Property Tax Notice – W. John Rowe, 1971*

**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 December 1<sup>st</sup>. Those really were a good incentive to pay them.

**Win** Here 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.



FORM 1 THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT TRANSFERABLE—SEE SECTION 7 SUB-SECTION (e) THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT, 1935

**THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD** N<sup>o</sup> 146350 B  
**Producer's Certificate—1938 Crop**

DATE Sept 22 1938  
NAME OF PRODUCER W. J. Rowe  
P.O. ADDRESS Leruan PROVINCE Sask  
NET BUSHELS (IN WORDS) eighty two BUSHELS 82 LBS. 30  
GRADE 1 PRICE 63½ CASH TICKET No. OR ACCOUNT SALE No. 127650 CAR No. 82 130  
NET BUSHELS IN FIGURES

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE NAMED PRODUCER HAS DELIVERED TO THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD THE QUANTITY AND GRADE OF WHEAT STATED HEREIN AND THAT THE PRODUCER HAS RECEIVED THEREFOR THE FIXED PRICE ACCORDING TO GRADE AND PLACE OF DELIVERY AS AUTHORIZED BY THE BOARD AND APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL. UPON SURRENDER OF THIS CERTIFICATE THE PRODUCER SHALL BE ENTITLED TO SHARE IN THE SURPLUS, IF ANY, REALIZED FROM THE MARKETING OF THE WHEAT PURCHASED BY THE BOARD OF THE SAME GRADE AFTER DEDUCTING THEREFROM A PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE MONEYS DISBURSED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD FOR EXPENSES.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD  
RELIANCE GRAIN COMPANY LTD. (NAME OF COMPANY) 63 (PERMIT NO.)  
STATION LERUAN PER A. Johnston AGENT

NOTE:—THIS CERTIFICATE SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PRESERVED FOR SURRENDER TO THE BOARD WHEN REQUIRED

FORM 1 THIS CERTIFICATE IS NOT TRANSFERABLE—SEE SECTION 7 SUB-SECTION (e) THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD ACT, 1935

**THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD** N<sup>o</sup> 635256 B  
**Producer's Permit**  
**Producer's Certificate—1939 Crop**

DATE Oct 13 1939  
NAME OF PRODUCER W. J. Rowe  
P.O. ADDRESS Leruan PROVINCE Sask  
NET BUSHELS (IN WORDS) eighty four BUSHELS 84 LBS. 1  
GRADE 1/2 PRICE 54 CASH TICKET No. OR ACCOUNT SALE No. 50082 CAR No. 84 1  
NET BUSHELS IN FIGURES

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT THE ABOVE NAMED PRODUCER HAS DELIVERED TO THE CANADIAN WHEAT BOARD THE QUANTITY AND GRADE OF WHEAT STATED HEREIN AND THAT THE PRODUCER HAS RECEIVED THEREFOR THE FIXED PRICE ACCORDING TO GRADE AND PLACE OF DELIVERY AS AUTHORIZED BY THE BOARD AND APPROVED BY THE GOVERNOR IN COUNCIL. UPON SURRENDER OF THIS CERTIFICATE THE PRODUCER SHALL BE ENTITLED TO SHARE IN THE SURPLUS, IF ANY, REALIZED FROM THE MARKETING OF THE WHEAT PURCHASED BY THE BOARD OF THE SAME GRADE AFTER DEDUCTING THEREFROM A PROPORTIONATE SHARE OF THE MONEYS DISBURSED BY OR ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD FOR EXPENSES.

SIGNED ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD:  
Reliance Grain Co. Ltd. (NAME OF COMPANY) 63 (AGREEMENT No.)  
STATION Leruan PER A. Johnston AGENT

NOTE:—THIS CERTIFICATE SHOULD BE CAREFULLY PRESERVED FOR SURRENDER TO THE BOARD WHEN REQUIRED

The Canadian Wheat Board wheat producer's certificates – W. J. Rowe, 1938 and 1939

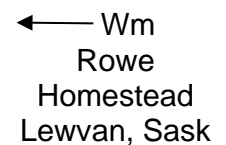
**Win** And those are grain stubs. Grain tickets. And one is '38. The other '39. Net bushels 82 , Lbs 30. Grade one, price 63½ cents per bushel. Wow. Carefully preserved for surrender to the board when required.

**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



**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.



**Win** 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** Here is Doug's parents' farm home. This picture says 1946/47, so it was built before that, but not sure when.



*Doug's parents' original farm home*

**Win** And they ripped that house down when Doug was 15. He was born in '39. Would be '54 when 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.

**Win** Here are some more pictures of the snow they dug out. Isn't that amazing? That's a garage door. They pulled the car out of the garage because they were scared the roof was going to cave in.



*Snowbank covering garage – 1947*

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

**Win** That's a snowbank. This is the garage. 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 these are?

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

**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. 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. He was drying grain all week.



*Creek back-up water-covered farm yard – 1969*



*Granaries, equipment and ruts in creek back-up soaked farm yard – 1969*





*Granaries, equipment and ruts in creek back-up soaked farm yard – 1969*

**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** My mother-in-law and myself made dinner for 20 hungry men.

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

**Win** It was a full meal. It was roast beef, fried chicken, roast chicken. 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. 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 it was time to start again. Because they were there for a full meal deal for supper, too. Did we work.

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

**Win** No, that was just overnight. 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 any food that they brought. Instead, it was Gert and I. Oh, that's Doug's mama. Oh, what a mess. And of course, as the yard dried, you had to level it out again. That was the flood of '69.

**Win** 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, there would be no wind.

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

**Win** 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. It was my job to teach and train, motivate, and so I was forced to buy a microwave. Now 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. 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 cooking myself.

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

**Win** 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** 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 TV watching the hockey, and the woman would go join her friends. That's how the world worked in those days. Come the nineties, life changed.

**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.

**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.

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



*Pottery roses made by Win Rowe*

**Win** One of the girls taught me how to make a rose. 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. I miss the people, but I don't miss Saskatchewan. You know, the yards, there's no trees around it. When I was born, there were oodles of trees. 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. They planted them around their yards. They planted wind rows and wind breakers. Anything to stop the dirt blowing. Every tree that's in southern Saskatchewan has been planted.

**Win** All the trees in Saskatchewan lean to the southeast, because the wind comes from the northwest. 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 on the fence posts, onto the pine trees. Beautiful. 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. Today's weather is different.

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

**Heather** Okay.

[End of Interview]

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