

Jessie Saruk

Interviewer: Winston Gereluk (w/ Judith Basisty)

Audiotape

Today we're interviewing Jessie Saruk, nee Basisty. Jessie was the third eldest in the Basisty family, the third child of Andrew and Tilly Basisty, pre-WWI immigrants who settled in the Andrew area. I'll let Aunt Jessie take it away. I'm Judith Basisty, I'm the daughter of William Basisty. So Jessie is my aunt.

Q: Tell us about your background.

JS: My grandparents arrived in Canada in 1897 and they settled in the Uwin area. They were farmers but grandfather Damian Wichuk, my mother's father, was one of the many that came and he was literate; the others were illiterate. Being staunch Christians, they wanted somebody to help them to read the Bible for them. Since grandfather growing up in Europe had been raised in a monetary, he knew the celeric language and he brought the Bible with him and some more literature. So every Sunday they used to meet at his place in his yard and he read them the Bible, because Sunday was a day of rest, you did not work. Then they built a church and he preached as an Orthodox minister.

Q: Russian Orthodox?

JS: Well we called it Ukrainian; we didn't call them Russian. Regardless of what religion those people were in Europe. Grandmother, on the other hand, this was my mother's parents.

JB: This was Tilly Wichuk?

JS: That was Damian Wichuk. I'll show you a picture of him and everything; you'll get more details. Now grandfather, Frederick Basisty and Eva, that was my father's parents. They were neighbours.

Q: Homesteaders?

JB: Homesteaders, 1897. In 1902 grandfather Basisty was working in the Doppin Mine in Edmonton to supplement his income. There was a collapse which covered him up to his ears. His fellow workers rescued him by digging him out until they reached his armpits and they could pull him out of this, which ruptured all his innards. He was taken to the Royal Alexandra Hospital where he died, and was buried in Edmonton. It was two weeks after he was buried that grandmother was notified that she was a widow. My dad had to take over.

Q: How old was he at that time?

JB: When he came in, he said he was only nine years old. But because of hoping to come in on a cheaper deal, he said he was nine. When it came to getting the old age pension, he wanted to get it verified. One of the ladies said, no you were already, and he was already in grade 2 or 3 in Europe. So, she says, you were not nine, you were older. So, he was corresponding with a cousin in Europe and he sent her \$20 to go to the church and get him a copy of his baptism certificate. Well the woman went in and very conveniently ripped out the page of the record book and sent him the whole page with all the other children that were baptised on this side and that side, and she kept the money for herself. He didn't dare send that back to her for fear that she would be punished, so I think he donated it to the archives or the history whatever it was.

Q: What was his name?

JB: Frederick Basisty, that was grandpa. Dad was Andrew, his son was Andrew. Anyway, dad as he grew older wanted to know where his father was buried, and he was buried in Edmonton. He went in and checked and they looked for Frederick, they looked for Fred, they looked for Theodore, and there was no such person buried in Edmonton. Last year one of the ladies going through genealogy said, I found your grandfather in their records in Edmonton. There is an Alfred Basisty, Alfred Basisty, who was buried. He was the victim of an accident. So in checking further to find out – because when dad was still working with my husband and we tried – they said, well there may be two or three bodies buried on top of him already. This was in 1902, so it's over a hundred years ago.

Q: Which cemetery, St. Michaels?

JS: The one where the soldiers are buried, in there. There was no St. Michaels yet. That was the first cemetery in Edmonton. So somewhere in there in that soil is grandpa Alfred.

Q: And your father?

JS: Andrew Basisty is buried in Uwin. We should drive down to the graveyard, you'll see the whole family is there. My grandparents are there, my parents are there, my husband is there, my sister is there, my brother, my sister-in-law, my godmother – the whole family, everybody is there.

JB: So Auntie, how old would grandpa Andrew be then if he said he was nine when he came?

JS: I don't remember his age but he was getting pretty close to 90. Grandpa Andrew, that's my father, didn't go to school anymore but he enjoyed reading. He subscribed to every Ukrainian publication there was, including the Tocillo. The Tocillo was a Ukrainian Mad magazine. It had the stupidest jokes. Tocillo, the grinder for sharpening the axes and all. He even subscribed to that one, so of course we learned a lot of Ukrainian jokes and everything else because it was a Ukrainian Mad magazine. As a boy from France told me, if you want the true political situation of the country, you subscribe to the Mad magazine and that's where you'll get the truth.

Now this is an aside. We were visiting with Gabriel Fisher, who was a Jewish person, who was married in Russia. He was Jewish, he was married in Russia, and he was a professor at the university. Because of the fact that I was a senior attending university, we had this company. Gabriel's condition was when they were married and the war broke out they named one boy John (Ukrainian ?), political. The second one was George - they had no imagination. Then he said, when the war broke out the Russians chased them out with his imbeciles, as they were called, and they kept the wife back because she worked in a factory. So they were divorced and he married a German girl, and they had a little girl that was as old as my Christina. And she [the wife] died. Gabriel came to the University of Alberta with this little girl of his. They were in Hungary then and they came in. She spoke Jewish or whatever this language was to him. And to the other people, she spoke English. His sons, George and John, were left in Europe. Then when he got a position from Edmonton to, what's the university down east? Not Dalhousie, the other one.

JB: McMaster?

JS: When he got a position there and we went touring in Canada, we stopped to visit with him. His son from France was in and he spoke perfect English. He was the one that told me about the Mad magazine. I said, how come you Frenchmen are speaking English? He says, because I took English. French was the language of the street, why do you have to go to learn it? He says, I took English because French is the language of the street. He was hoping to marry a Polish girl.

JB: When you say Europe that everybody came from, what specific area did the Basistys and Wichuks come from?

JS: Oh boy, I wish I knew.

Q: Was it Galicia or Bukovyna?

JS: Galicia. Oh, another thing - these people came here to Canada. When it came to what are your names - well okay, this, but were they ever nicknamed. The Holowaychuk family came from the same area as those except they lived in the area that was far from them. They were neighbours but there was a Harabla. So that family was called Zaribelniki. Another fellow, his name was Harchuk but they called him Shtredovich. He came from the village of Shtredovich. It was so funny because finally you learn they were given these names. Another lady called her husband Orel, an eagle. She says, oh ya my husband, he's an eagle. From then on all his children were Orelnicki.

Q: Go back to your father. I want to know where you came from.

JS: He came from Galicia, with a younger sister. Then there were two more children born in the family; they were born in Canada.

JB: Andrew was born there, with which younger sister?

JS: Mary Ashmer. Then John was born in Canada, and Annie was born in Canada. So there were four children.

Q: How old do you think he was when he had to take over the farm?

JS: After his father was killed, in order for her to keep the land, he had to work on it. He also supplemented his income by when the high railway was being built down through here, the CN. He worked on the railway track. Two main things about him was they drank their coffee with coconut cream and milk, and when the buffalo were brought in from United States to Elk Island Park, he was one of the cowboys that rode by the side of the fence to get the buffalo into the park. Those were the highlights of his young life.

JB: Grandma Basisty was like a midwife, wasn't she?

JS: That's the mother's side.

Q: Talk about her a little bit. Midwives were important.

JS: Grandma Basisty – alright, you're talking of this. Before I start talking about grandpa and grandma Basisty, you come with me and I'll show you. Basisty went to Victoria and Eva took grandma Basisty's picture. But this is grandpa and grandma Wichuk.

Q: And that's Andrew and...

JS: No that's Damian Wichuk and Dennis there, and Anastasia, Jessie or Nancy Wichuk, who was the midwife - his wife. She married him when she was 13 years old. I have her wedding skirt. Her first baby was born when she was 16. She was a midwife and when she died around 300 people said, "She delivered me; she delivered me."

When she was in her 80s and she was a diabetic and in a wheelchair, because one of her feet were amputated. On February 17 in a splitting snowstorm, she had delivered twins. The people were rushing to Lamont to get the babies and they got stuck in the storm. They got stuck in the snow, so they picked grandma up and took her there and she delivered the babies. She was in her 80s and in a wheelchair one-legged. Twin girls. And the little twin boys that she once delivered before that were born in winter and they were premature. So she wrapped them up in blankets and put them in the heating closet of the stove to keep them warm. A fellow from Camrose was writing the book on medicines and all.

Q: Was it Sherbaniuk?

JS: Must be. He wrote a big blue book on the medicines. He was here and I gave him a few recipes and I sent him to a few people to get more. So I had him for an interview years ago. If you want to continue with dad and mom...

Q: So your father worked on the section gang for the railway, and he also was here when the buffalo arrived.

JS: Yes and he had a memory like you wouldn't believe. He could describe to you - well going to Edmonton was just a walk. When you reached the North Saskatchewan River, if you had a dime and somebody was crossing with horses, you could have a ride across. Otherwise, you waded through. There were two men that got there. Each one of these that I know there was an incident with it. There were two men that came on and a fellow came on with a team of horses, and between the two of them they have a dime. Alright, one of you can ride in the wagon box and the other one you can hang on behind. As they're getting on, well because they were hitchhiking naturally they had guns with them. That one say, he hangs onto the box and I aim the gun at you. The minute he lets go of the box as we're crossing the river, you get the bullet. He wouldn't take him into the wagon box because it would be too much of a load for the horses to pull, not thinking that they're still dragging something behind. Those are the kind of incidents, that's how I learned the story that they had to pay to cross the river.

Q: So Andrew was working at a section gang. He was homesteading, and your mom was on the homestead all this time?

JS: Grandma.

Q: We're talking about Andrew now.

JS: Well Andrew. And mother was at home. Well she got married at 16 or 17, and she was at home with her mother-in-law. Between the two of them they did everything except they didn't go plowing or anything like that. Although grandma Basisty, Eva Basisty, grandpa's wife, worked her taxes off by driving what do you call this in English, scripa. What's a scripa in English?

Q: In which they hauled dirt?

JS: Yes. It was grandma's job. She did not handle the horses but she handled that piece of equipment as they cleared the roads making roads. That's how she worked off her taxes. She had four children. This was Eva, and she had these four children. They had a cow and I don't know if they had any horses, she didn't mention that. She lived with us for 32 years after dad got married. Mother was a daughter-in-law for 32 years.

Q: Their homestead was at Uwin. Where is that from Lamont?

JS: Straight east 17 miles.

Q: Towards Mundare?

JS: Yes, it's a half hour drive, and you'll be at the graveyard and see the whole place.

Q: Were you connected to the settlement at Edna?

JS: Yes. When grandpa was working in Edmonton - and Star is right here - and he bought a 50 pound bag of flour. Somebody delivered it to Star. Grandma came walking the 17 miles cross country, creeks and ditches and everything, and carried that flour home for the family. That's another one that we knew all about. They worked so hard. Grandma would think nothing of walking outside barefooted in winter. We had a toilet. There was no running water or anything on the farm. That toilet was way past that thing. In the middle of the night, she'd get up and go to the toilet and come back. In the daytime you'd look and say, "Oh there are grandma's tracks." She did not wear gloves. I was teaching when I bought her a pair of gloves and she was so happy about it. Yet, she knitted mittens and everything else.

Q: At what age did she pass away?

JS: 85.

Q: What kind of social life did you have? Did you have a national hall?

JS: There was a national hall built. That national hall that was built was built by **Crackle** Church, Catholics when they came in later. The hall that we got in Uwin district was the one-room school that I attended, and when they built a two-room school when I was already gone from there, that became the national hall.

JB: Is that hall still there?

JS: No not the Uwin one; the Crackle one still is. The Crackle one is four or five miles away. I went to a one-room school. When mother got married there she was - now there was dad and mom and there was Uncle John. Auntie Mary Ashmore got married and was living at Royal Park. If you know the Ashmore family from Royal Park; the Ashmore kids attended the high school.

JB: How far did you have to walk to that one-room school?

JS: Our buildings were in the middle of the farm. So we'd have to walk a quarter mile to the road, half a mile - no don't write that down, because we didn't do it. Then we'd have to walk half a mile to the corner, and then another half mile. But if you took a shortcut down the fence line, not quite a mile. So who's going to go that way when you could just cut across and get to the school?

Q: What about in the wintertime when there were big drifts?

JS: Oh well you'd just cut the wires. Well we had gates, and drove the sled with the horses straight from there onto grandpa's farm, across grandpa's farm, and there's the school. This was grandpa's farm. The folks' farm was here, the school was here, so we just cut across this land and we were at school. There was a path right through the middle of the field, and that's the one we used.

Q: Few children finished grade 8.

JS: One-room school had grade 7. I attended Uwin school until grade 7. I started in Uwin school grade 7; the one-room school was full. The girls by that age thought, "oh now we're going to go to dances and all this, I'm not going to dance with someone I go to school with." So Maladia school seven miles away is a two-room school. Auntie Annie, father's youngest sister, is living two miles from that school. Alright, Monday morning I walked to Maladia school, I spent the week at Auntie Annie's place and came home on Friday. So every Monday morning and every Friday night, to get my grade 8 and 9, I walked to Maladia school and came home at night. Sometimes I came home on Wednesday. When the weather got too cold and snowy, I would stay. Dad would drive me to Koroluk's and I would walk from their place yet two miles to get to Maladia school. I did that in grade 8 and 9. Then Hilliard was going to have a school and that too was seven miles away. So instead of going to Maladia school there's high school teachers in Hilliard. Dad would bring me to Hilliard town and I took grade 10 at Hilliard. Again, if I wanted to come home, you can walk home. That didn't mean anything.

Q: How many miles was that?

JS: Seven, just like Maladia. You wished someone was there from around your place and you got a couple miles ride. Then the rest of the time you walked. So I was in Hilliard. But Louis Maiko and John Worbus, the teachers, were not qualified to teach some of the high school subjects. In fact, I was taking biology and I was the only one who had the biology text. Louis and John were taking biology and using my text with Louis Maiko and John Worbus, who was my schoolteacher. They were both using my book to teach me biology. Came to write finals, they went to Mundare, and when they went to Mundare to write the finals I supervised Maiko's class. He came back and brought me the paper to write my biology test.

Q: Was Louis Maiko the teacher that went to teach in Vegreville afterwards?

JS: Yes.

Q: He was my teacher.

JS: Then the others went to Hilliard. I went to Andrew. I took grade 11 and 12 in Andrew. This time, there was no more walking. The United Church minister of Andrew preached in Uwin and I

would come home on Friday and go back to Andrew on Sunday with the preacher. And I lived in the preacher's house.

Q: What was the preacher's name?

JS: Perich.

Q: What was it like for you to attend school as a young girl? Did you speak English at that point?

JS: Are you kidding? My mother had a grade 7 education in English, so it was all right. I was number three; I had an older brother and sister. That brother was the best teacher I ever had. He was two years older than me. Life for me was so good – grandma's in the house, mother's in the house, sister Eva's in the house. Bill has the pleasure of being with dad. So who is his attachment? I am. The things we did. We climbed trees – grandma brought the ladder more than once to get me down. It was nothing to walk on a wooden fence. And when nobody was watching, we climbed the roof of the barn. There's a technique. You got up there, put your shoes on and made sure that the heels didn't touch the roof, slide down the trunk on that frozen manure pile that's this high. Then if not that one, there was the chicken coop with a sloping roof and then about so far away a fence. The idea was you get on the chicken coop, you slide down this way. You got to jump over the fence to the other side. We did it. It's a wonder my mother didn't die.

Do you ever think what is the stupidest thing you ever did in your life? I've got mine. Come spring we were out hunting birds' nests. When we found a nest, we would pick one egg. Well where are you going to carry them home? You put them in your pocket. Can you imagine walking around home? We would go doing these things and of course he's older than me – I was about six years old and he's already in school and I'm going to go to school. He came in and he's telling me all about how the Indians are riding bareback and the horses to drink water. There's old Dinah, we used to ride on her. They never used a halter or anything. Indians rode bareback. So he convinced me to get on that horse, and I was about six years old. Poor old Dinah looked at me, and kind of started walking. That wasn't fast enough for him so he sent the dogs after her. Mother walked out of the house just in time to see the horses leave the yard and take off for the pasture with a kid on the back. The first tree we came into I was knocked off. So this was the kind of life I led; rough and tough.

Q: What are some of your early memories of school?

JS: The games we played, the teachers, the subjects that we learned. We were a very smart family.

Q: Were there kids there who couldn't speak English?

JS: I'm going to tell you two incidents that stick in my mind. Marg Denalasko came home from school first day of school. She knows a little bit of English that she learned in school: My father work in Edmonton and I am dying name for you. That was the Lord's prayer. Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. She said, my father works in Edmonton, and I am trying a name for you. I can remember it because Marg lived across the road from us; I babysat her. Another little boy came in, and he could speak English, I know – "the fanny in the manny teacher strap strap." That's all he knew. We never found out what he meant by that. But we were not supposed to speak any Ukrainian, so they tried to speak as much as possible in English. Of course, as I say, I had two older ones that were speaking English. We were smart in spelling. At my uncle's place was a boy, some relative of theirs who was deaf and dumb, and he had gone to school in Winnipeg and learned sign language. When he came back he taught us the alphabet. Now we're in school, we're having a spelling bee all standing up in a row and the bigger ones are sitting there. Spell. We're spelling a word that we don't know. My brother's sitting and my sister, oh that's a C is the next letter. While I'm standing up there spelling, they are sitting at their desk, they're a higher grade, and they're spelling it out with their fingers. I'm smart as ever in spelling.

Q: So school was a positive experience for you?

JS: A positive one right along. I mean there were problems and everything, but I couldn't see anything that was negative. But when I started teaching, now that's jumping way ahead ...

Q: Just go back for one minute. Describe the school. It didn't have electricity. How was it lit, and how was it heated?

JS: It was a long building, with windows on the east, and two windows high up on the west. A stove this size and this shape stood away from the door, the pipe going up from north to south - the stove door opens to the north and the chimney of the school is on the south side. The pipe goes up and along the ceiling until it comes to the chimney, that's the heat thing. Since this stove is one of those camping looking stoves this size, the door is in here; you open that door and stick in logs this big. It's got two plates open on to. So if we brought a frozen dinner to school we could always put it standing in there. We'd bring it in a metal pie plate and heat the frozen food up before we ate it. It stood here and there were desks on this side and desks on this side off it about so far away, then one row of desks between it and the front. That was a short row. Whoever sat by the stove roasted and whoever sat farther away, froze.

Q: And it was grades 1 to 7. How many students?

JS: Around 40.

Q: And one teacher?

JS: One. That was nothing. My first year of teaching, after I graduated from Andrew in 1940 when the war was breaking out, the Alaska Highway is being built, and everybody's joining the war. The salary we were getting was \$190 a month. I went to Edmonton to school. In the records of education, my class is the worst mess in the history of Alberta education.

Q: You were at normal school?

JS: No, I'm in normal school.

Q: It's Corbett Hall now, but it was called something else back then.

JS: It was the Education building, but hold it? The Air Force was taking over the Education building, so we were going to Garneau School by the Garneau Theatre right there. At Garneau School there was no gym until November, so we're going outside. Now you see why it's the worst mess in the history of education. We're in Garneau, Phys Ed being taught outside until November. So we were in school in September, October, November; and in December comes this thing. By then, the Air Force is in the Education building and half of the teachers left teaching and are gone to either join the forces or work on the Alaska Highway, because they're getting more than \$190 a month there. So they left; so what happens? Another thing, the professors would say, "this is my last lecture with you because I've been assigned to go here, this is my last lecture with you because I've been assigned to go there." This little Frenchman comes in, today I got the call to go to Winnipeg, telegram to go to Winnipeg, so goodbye to the class. Now you go to teach. You know how to keep a register, you are going out to teach. I get set to go to Debolt. Debolt is someplace; to get to it I had to go to Slave Lake and from there the mailman was going to bring me to Grande Prairie and from there to Debolt. Just as they got me all set, the teacher in my home school got a ruptured appendix.

Q: And your home school is?

JS: Uwin. The Uwin teacher got a ruptured appendix, and a ruptured appendix means three months on your back. So the poor woman goes to the hospital, and who gets the job? I do. I'm not going to do both. Dad's happy; I'm at home, and I'm going to be teaching. This started in about February or so, and who do you suppose I had to teach? My brother. All the neighbour kids came in too.

Q: This was 1941?

JS: Yes, 1941. Well this was still 1940 and then it becomes '41; this was in the '40s. That's the end of my teaching experience. We got our certificates and we're gone. So anyway, I ended up grade 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 but I've got all the neighbour kids. Peter, I gave him an assignment and he comes with the paper, do it if you want a good job. The class says good morning. I'm not going to say good morning to her. Alexander Coroduck comes home crying, "They sent us a teacher and it's Jessie." I was babysitting him from the day he was born. So I taught there from the

winter until June, then in September I got placed in Zhoda school, that's already official. Grades 1 to 6, 49 pupils, 12 beginners, three of them can't say a word in English and I don't know a word in Romanian, and we're supposed to be going through this. I've got 49 pupils, 12 beginners. It's a two-room school. Pete Huslak has 14 pupils – 7, 8, 9 and 10 – 14 pupils. He's in one room and I'm in the other room, and I've got 49 – 12 beginners and three don't know a word, and I'm supposed to be teaching them.

JB: How old were you at this point?

JS: Now I'm 19, because I was 18 in Uwin. My birthday was in April, so when I started teaching I was 18 and then got 19. As we're teaching there, we're supposed to, there's going to be hot chocolate served for the kids. So you have this great big kettle to heat on top of the big furnace that's in your room, that big round one already. You heat the hot water, and the cocoa has been provided for you, and another child has brought enough milk and cream to make cocoa for all the kids. That's one of the things you have to do extracurricular, and of course here you are teaching them. That was my introduction to education. For two years I had them. And then the war effort - do this for war effort, knit socks, knit mitts, knit afghans – all war effort.

Q: There was a lot of emphasis on patriotism, such as flags and pictures of the queen. What sort of evidence was there?

JS: There was a picture of the queen...

Q: Well, no the king at that time...

JS: The emblem of this country, pledge allegiance and repeat the Lord's prayer, sing O Canada, going home, sing God Save the Queen.

Q: Back then it was the king, King George.

JS: Yes, yes. So that was what we had. You kept your plan book, and the superintendent would come, turn pages. And of course you had to clean the schoolyard.

Q: You were the janitor?

JS: No, in Zhoda there was a janitor but one day in spring you had to rake the schoolyard, clean up the winter mess, and everything.

JB: With the kids, right?

JS: Yes. The school inspector would come and pick up your book, what happened this day? Well, we were cleaning the schoolyard, we had no school. He would turn from page to page to see what you did every day.

Q: Was he English or was he Ukrainian?

JS: English.

Q: Do you remember his name?

JS: He was a veteran of the 1918 war; Gibson. He lived in Lamont. He was a good old man. Then we had Purvis. He was great. He was a widower with two little boys, but that was years later. Anyway, so that was Zhoda School had six grades. From there, after two years there, I went to Sweet school outside of Hilliard. They called it Svit.

Q: That means light, right?

JS: Yes. I went to that school. It was a one-room rural school with nine grades.

Q: How many students?

JS: Over 20, there were over 20 of them. Well - Hennig, all those. Mike Rezuniuk, I have a picture of Mike Rezuniuk's 65th wedding anniversary. I taught him in grade 2.

Q: Where is Svit school from Hilliard?

JS: It's four miles away from our place.

Q: To the west from Hilliard. I farmed on the quarter of land that the Padola school was on.

JS: Padola was south of Hilliard and this was north of Hilliard this way. Well Padola had the teachers that were there, she married Nick Lesoway. So I taught at Swit for one year and came back to Uwin. Peter's already in junior high. I taught in Uwin for two years, got married, and went to Ashmont.

Q: Who did you marry?

JS: Alec Saruk.

Q: And what was he doing?

JS: Teaching. He was the principal of Ashmont. I went to Ashmont, and this time I had grade 4, 5 and 6. I taught in what used to be a shop. The lawyer's office was at one end of it, which was the office for this machine shop or whatever it was, and we had one door to come in. Now the escape, in case of fire. Oh for the teacher, there was a sort of a stage three steps up. So I was up high as far as that was concerned. Back of me there was a window and beside that window hung

a long handled axe, so I could've chopped anybody's head off. The reason was in case of fire, because the heat is coming from there, to escape through that window. You can't open it, so there's the axe hanging there to knock the window out. That was in Ashmont. I taught there for a year and we came back to good old Lamont County.

Q: You moved into Lamont?

JS: Yes to Lamont County, and I taught in Zawale school - Hennigs out there, all those.

Q: Your husband came with you?

JS: Oh yes. He got the senior room; I got the juniors, grades 1 to 6. After one year of teaching, because he was a high school teacher and had better qualifications than I did, the principal in Lamont died, conveniently, and they put him into Lamont High School and I got to teach with one lady who was pregnant. She quit at Christmas time. Sadie Baduke. I got Helen Palaniuk. I finished two years in Zawale and I got into Lamont town. Alec is teaching in Lamont already and I got to teach in Creek Fort, nine grades. Seven miles out of Lamont down that way still on the midway highway. I taught school in Creek Fort, Uwin and Zhoda – they were all on the same highway. Midway Road is midway between Chipman and St. Michael, Wostok and Hilliard, Willingdon and Vegreville, midway highway. It's exactly halfway. So I got to teach there.

JB: Is it a secondary highway? Does it have a number?

JS: Highway 29 was two miles north of Midway highway. Pruth was already on the other road. I was teaching in Zhoda so I knew everybody. So I got into there. Then Burt was born and I took a year off from teaching and ended up in Lamont. I taught in Lamont, then Christina was born, I was still teaching. But Alec was involved in very many. He was on the convention planning committee for 18 years for the ATA. He was on the convention planning committee as the representative of Lamont and all. Any days that we attended seminars or anything at all, well naturally I went with him – he's going and I'm going.

Q: So you got involved in the ATA.

JS: Barnett was his name. He used to sing. Anyway, I attended the convention. Then finally when my daughter was seven in grade 2 - the youngest one - the kids decided that by then daddy had already got his Masters degree. Eighteen years we were married, and he'd attend summer sessions and I'd stay home with the kids. He had his teacher's degree, he got his Bachelors, he got his Masters, and he got a certificate in counselling. Now the kids decided mother has the vocabulary of a grade 2, she better go to school. That's when I went back to school - summer sessions.

Q: University of Alberta?

JS: In Edmonton. I went in for summer sessions and evening classes, Tuesday night evening class every week.

Q: What years would that be?

JS: Well Christina was in grade 2, she was born in 1960, so it was the early '70s. I'm going to summer school and what do you suppose? So was everybody else! This time we rented Dr. Gullatson's house, living in Edmonton. We had a taxi driver who had a Masters degree and he can also do all the research in the library for us while we're in class. I graduated with my degree the same day as my son got his degree in Science.

Q: What year was that?

JS: It was in the '70s. From then on I went to Red Deer, where I was offered a different salary schedule.

Q: The pay back then for teachers was a lot less than it is now.

JS: \$190. For \$190 a month I had to teach 49 children, make drink for them, look after them, and pay for the residence. Here today, my little guy (15 years old) comes to mow my lawn, half an hour \$35. In half an hour, I said in an hour he's getting \$70 an hour and I got \$190 for 20 days of teaching. Regardless of what your qualifications were, if you were teaching in elementary grades you got lower than the teacher with less qualifications than yours who was teaching in the high school. John Wobobets was so disqualified or unqualified, I shouldn't say 'dis' - unqualified. He and I were taking the same subject and he was using my textbook. When it came, I don't know if he passed it, but I did not get any credit for that Biology that I took. Before I could go back and work on getting a degree, I took Chemistry by correspondence.

Q: The first year of university?

JS: Before I even started the first year of university, yes I took it already. I was bound that I was going back because "mother has a grade 2 vocabulary." So I took Chemistry by correspondence. Alec was a Science teacher, so I could get experiments all done. We'd go in and get this done. So that's the way I got an education.

Q: Why did they say you had a grade 2 vocabulary?

JS: Because I was teaching grade 2. I never forget this conversation. I'm teaching in Zhoda. Little Fred Alexandriuk - I don't know if you ever met him - he became a schoolteacher. Fred Alexandriuk is one of the three that doesn't know a word in English, and I don't know Romanian. Anyway, it's already the end of the year and Gibson is in, the inspector is in the schoolyard, he's talking to me, I'm supervising the kids in the yard. We were discussing something and Fred comes running up to me saying, "It's not fair. He took my cap and I pleaded

with him and he doesn't want to give it back. I pleaded with him and he doesn't want to give it back."

Gibson looks at me and says, don't worry about your vocabulary, you are teaching little ones. Don't use the vocabulary you used in high school. He came running up to me to tell me, that little boy. It's the end of the year and this is his vocabulary. He learned it. He says, it's not fair, I pleaded with him. Gibson looks at me and says, don't use that vocabulary, he says, that's the one you use in high school.

JB: I think he should've said, "Good work, you did amazing work with these kids."

Q: Was Gibson's wife also a schoolteacher?

JS: No, he was a veteran of the war, he was single. A grey-haired man, he was elderly. But he was a fatherly kind of person. He understood us and everything. Whereas Purvis, a widower with two boys. If I told you the story of Purvis, Mac is his name. Mac Purvis, I'm teaching in Zawale, Alec is teaching in Lamont and living in Lamont and Mac is out in the country. He's coming home from wherever he was supervising or checking what school.

He stopped in and says, "Come to Lamont, come to Lamont, we're going to have a party tonight. Alex is going to be there, c'mon, I'll bring you back tomorrow morning. So we come to the party and enjoyed ourselves and everything." Mac says, and the first thing I'm going to do is walk into your room tomorrow morning. I says, you walk in that room and I'm gonna slam the door in your face. He dropped me off and went off to some other school. He would bring me in here. He was very sociable but he also was strict. When I got to teach in Lamont, I happened to get one of his sons one year, another year, another one. Then he was transferred down south. He came from somewhere around Medicine Hat.

Q: Was he a Mormon?

JS: He was from southern Alberta.

Q: He was a Mormon. We had a mayor Purvis in Edmonton, who was a Mormon.

JS: What was his first name? David?

Q: No, his name was Cec Purvis, our mayor.

JS: Well anyway, they moved back and it was one of the boy's birthday. The kids all wrote letters to him. It's a very wonderful reason for why you learn how to write a letter and everything else, and there's a purpose to it. There always had to be a reason for why you were doing something, as far as I was concerned. And we mailed it. That summer I went to summer school and Purvis was one of the instructors of one of the subjects. He met me and he says, do you

know, I was ready to come up and shoot you. He says, the kid got this letter, he was so happy, he's laughing and all, he got a letter. He says, he started to read these letters and he started crying and crying, I want to go back to Lamont. He says, I could shoot you. The little boy was homesick for Lamont.

Q: Are Ukrainians still the majority here in this area?

JS: It's so mixed that they're getting to be a minority. Lamont people, a lot of them were here when the Ukrainians came and settled around them. When the Ukrainians came, Eleniuk took his group and went north of Lamont. Pylipiw took his group and went south of Lamont. So Skolskis and all those are there and these here, Hyrchuks and everybody, Diducks and all are on this side.

Those guys are very wrong in history to say that they were the first people here. When the first Germans came and settled, there was a Holowaychuk with them. When the first people came and settled by Bruderheim up that way, the Germans, the Moravians, a Holowaychuk came with them. What happened is, if you go back to Ukrainian history, when the Moravian religion was formed they were evicted from Ukraine. I know that Olga, Catherine the Great, and this one pleaded with her sister to accept these people that were being thrown out of Germany. They settled in Ukraine. and they learned Ukrainian. Harold Hennig, when his parents came to Canada they spoke better Ukrainian than some Ukrainians did. With them came a Holowaychuk, and he had land in the Scotford area here in Bruderheim with the Moravians. But then these brought their contingent of all these Ukrainians in 1897 and settled. What really happened is that they got as far as Calgary and they decided to go back. Well Eleniuk stayed in Canada but Pylipiw went back and got jailed for two years. He was jailed because he was instigating a revolution.

Q: He was actually encouraging immigration, he was encouraging the peasants to leave. The lords didn't want that.

JS: Yes, they didn't like it, so they put him in jail. But when he got out he still came in. When you see the ship logs, one person is sponsoring a dozen families. So this is how it was. Eleniuk gets the credit more so than the others, because he was literate and a lot of these people that came in were illiterate.

Q: They say this was an original Ukrainian settlement - Star Edna. Did you grow up as a Ukrainian?

JS: Yes. There were the hungry '30s, and there were quite a few people that had come in that had no jobs. Some of them were good carpenters, others were teachers of one kind or another. These people during the summer would be able to get jobs and in winter and say, "Well if you let me live at your place I will work for you for no money." Or if there's an empty building, "We'll put a stove in there and live." One winter in the neighbourhood there were two men living there. My mother sewed; she used to mend their clothes. In exchange, they were sitting there in that house, no job, nothing to do, they were weaving baskets, great big clothes baskets and all, willow. In

exchange for that, they got food – meat, pork, something or other. They'd butcher and they were generous enough to give them, and if they milked a cow and all this they shared. Rather than give the milk to the pigs directly, they got it. So they did that.

Then there was another one, he was a choir director. He was teaching the Canadian born or the young things they didn't have a chance to learn in Europe. e was teaching them choir stuff, Ukrainian choir stuff. They'd form choirs and have concerts and all the music part of it, and they were really good. So quite a few people who became cantors at the church and all, Canadian born and early settler, young. He came in as a youngster, and he's the cantor of the church. Where did you learn it? Well there was this guy who spent the winter in my father's house, and we would meet in the community centre and they'd have these concerts and all. That was one way. They had beautiful choirs and they had drama clubs.

Q: Did you have a national home here in town? Did you have a labour temple here in town?

JS: They have a hall yes. But not a labour temple.

Q: But the national home. Was it started by the church?

JS: No, it's the town's. But I know that Crackle was a church hall. It was sponsored by the church. Uwin was the school, so that one wasn't sponsored by the church. A lot of them were sponsored by the church. Hilliard hall was a product of controversy.

Q: Hilliard or the one by Padola?

JS: Right in Hilliard town. Hilliard town's was the communists, the labour temple. They had that one. Oh boy they argued and argued and argued over it.

Q: Same with the one at Padola?

JS: Yes. You know they had them and they'd argue about it. Then you started taking place names about arguments. Zhoda, alright, they built a school. They built it on one person's farm. Another person donated the lumber and all, a third person was building it. Now they've got a school, good. What are you going to name it? So and so, so and so, so and so. They argued for two years, no name. This old man Hendrick, he's already a grandpa, and he gets up and says to them, "It's time for an agreement." So that's the name of the school, Zhoda, they called it Zhoda. Okay Mir now, and why is it Mir now? Because we were arguing so much with everybody...

Q: When I taught in Innisfree, the Catholics were still not talking much to the Orthodox.

JS: I know.

Q: Did the same thing happen here?

JS: Of course. Finally grandpa became an Orthodox minister. The board of home missions from New York got involved somehow and they used to send him the lectionary and helped him on with his preaching and everything. He still had the robes to wear. Then in 1924 or 1926, in the 1920s the congregation list, the three religions joined.

Q: Presbyterians and Methodists.

JS: Yes, the three of them joined. It was the Methodists that were helping grandpa; they used to send him the lectionary. There's a book he had that had even the directions of what to do as you're giving a marriage, "Now the bride is supposed to put her hand here, and now all this." He had all that information given to him. When they became the United Church he automatically became, that's when Uwin joined in with the Methodists and all and became the Uwin United Church.

JB: You had said that Father Damian was your great grandpa, the first United minister in Canada.

JS: In Canada. The first Ukrainian United Church minister in Canada. This was a Ukrainian church. By then Mundare had built the Catholic church and of course the word was, don't go to that United Church, because there's no cross in there. That's the devil's place. Of course we are United kids, we're in school. These kids come in, those are Catholic, and they're calling us all kinds of names. Finally, "Oh you're Seraphims!" Oh we go crying to grandpa, they're calling us Seraphims. Grandpa says, tell them you're glad because that's the highest order of angels.

Q: Seraphims here were the separatists.

JS: Yes. So we're the Seraphims, and grandpa told us that was the highest order of angels. Of course in school we have a dictionary this big, that's the only one we have. Flipping through the dictionary to find out the meaning of Seraphim, we came across the meaning. Nick, look at the dictionary, Nick, that's another name for the devil. It's in the dictionary. Comes Monday of course there's the Wichuks and us and Feduns, and then there are the Lasoways, the Boykos, all those. Those are Catholic and we are Seraphims, we're all this. As far as we are concerned, there's not a single one named Nick, and practically there's a Nick in every family of the others. I was in grade 3, I know that much. They said something. Nick, no more – Nick, and with the finger. Kids in school. So you're wondering about how it was handled. It so happened that the Kopokchuks had a fire. Their granary burned and they lost the grain in it. Dad had just come back from the mill with ten bags of flour.

Q: Which mill was that?

JS: That was during this time. The mill was in Mundare. There was a mill, and then there was another mill in Camrose. I don't know which mill he went to, but anyway he came back from the

mill with flour. They heard there was this fire. Well how did they get the message? The church bell rang. There were no telephones. If there was an emergency they rang the closest church bell, and you knew there's a problem someplace, and you go exploring for where the bell rang and find out what it was.

Dad, uncle Wichuk, another devil, and uncle Fedun, another devil, they loaded up. Dad got the flour, uncle Wichuk got I think it was chop or something, and Fedun's another grain. This was in winter, and they went there. The preacher in the Catholic church is preaching to avoid the devils, don't go to church there. This is just before Easter so it's still winter but it's before Easter. I don't know the details of it all, but I can still see Mrs. Prokov, the grandmother. She would go to the Catholic church when it was Catholic and come to the United church when it was United, because they were neighbours. Church is over and she's standing and she's wearing an apron complete, she's dressed up. She's rolling the apron in her hands, I got a story to tell you. She says, you know what he told us that you're devils and we should avoid you? She says, I went to communion and I told him. She says, our granary burned and none of our angels came to help. She says, three devils drove into the yard and brought us food and everything. She says and I told him, you can go where you please but I'm still going out there.

Q: Do you remember the Seventh Day Adventists?

JS: Samograd lived in the Uwin area. Elizabeth Samograd was taking training in Lamont hospital. There's a little Samograd child buried in the Uwin graveyard.

Q: And these were all Seventh Day Adventists?

JS: They were Seventh Day Adventists.

Q: Do you remember when they came through preaching?

JS: Sam Samograd lived about a mile away from the Catholic church and Philip lived in the Uwin area and his kids attended Uwin school. I went to school with Elizabeth Samograd.

Q: Did they ever try to convert you or anyone you know?

JS: No. They were good neighbours but they did not try. Sam's wife was Annie and she knew how to knit and she was teaching a lot of the ladies knitting and all this. They were very good friends. The United Church accepted everybody.

Q: But not the Catholic Church.

JS: Oh no, not the Catholic. The Catholic Church priest told them, buy the land around the church because we need a congregation; don't allow other people to settle here, because we need a congregation; you'd better buy the land.

Q: A lot of women were being chased out of town for practising witchcraft. Did you ever know any of these people?

JS: No, I did not. I was not personally involved with her - but Mrs. Turgeon of Mundare ...

Q: Ukrainian?

JS: Yes. She used to pour wax to cure. One thing you knew about her. If you came in through the front door, you don't walk out the same door. You had to walk out the other door. That was one thing I knew about Mrs. Turgeon.

Q: Did she ever teach people about the plants to gather for healing?

JS: My grandmother taught us that. When this fellow wrote the book on all these herbs and everything, he was here to ask us what were some of the things that we used and all.

Q: He wrote a book on local traditional medicines. Do you remember his name? It wasn't Sherbaniuk?

JS: He was a professor at the university in Camrose.

Q: From Camrose Lutheran College - it became Augustana. I will get his name.

JS: He came here and he asked. I gave him quite a few of the remedies I knew. When he published his book, he wrote and put your initials and address that this was yours. I would give it to him, and somebody else would give it to him. So, if it was a group, he would just put down that it was a group of people for the same thing.

Q: Do you have his book?

JS: No, he didn't give me a copy of the book. There might be a book in the school library. They tore down the seniors building because they're building that new lodge for us, and I don't know where the library went from that building. Did you hear of **peat belock**? It's that leaf, it's a reed that grows by the water and it's got sort of a fuzzy white bottom and looks like a rhubarb leaf. Peat belock is what they usually called it. It was used as a Band-Aid, that was one. Another one was bread soaked in milk on boils or anything - bread soaked in milk to draw this out. That was another one. Did you ever think of taking a bottle and holding it over steam, filling it with steam, and if you had a boil put that hot thing on and as it cooled your boil would crack and pull all the guts out. The best thing for an open cut is pure dust. Pick up an armful of dust, dirt, and put it on.

Q: When we stepped on a nail my dad would put a few drops of creosote in very hot water, and it would kill the infection.

JS: Talking about stepping on nails and everything, that peat belock was like a Band-Aid. I still have a scar that came from falling down a fence and cutting it.

JB: Probably running after Bill.

JS: Well, of course after Bill. At that time Mr. Plawiuk worked for the Red Cross, Zelicia and Glava were health people and Plawiuk was Red Cross. I don't know which one vaccinated us.

Q: This was in Edmonton?

JS: He came out to the country. He drove. He came in and we got vaccinated. Plawiuk's son, when he was in this country, because dad was the one that had the most of all the neighbours, they would come to our place. They'd sit and talk with dad and everything and get all this and then they'd travel around the countryside. His son, one day his parents gave him money and told him to go buy groceries. He bought six cups and hitchhiked and came to our place. We had no phone or anything, so dad went to the neighbour's, uncle Pedun's, and phoned the parents and home and said, your son is at our place. This was summer holidays. His mother sent him for groceries and he ended up at our place. Laza, well that was him, Laza is at our place. He's older than sister Eva, he's older than Bill, a city slicker wearing shorts and all this. You can't do this, you can't do this, Bill is telling him.

So we're walking a wooden fence and the nettles are just this high. We're walking on the fence, Bill is walking and I'm walking, so Laza is older and he's walking and falls into those nettles. The nettles are burning and you put soap on it to stop the itching and everything. He comes into the house and mother's giving Barbara a bath. He grabs the baby soap and he's rubbing himself. Bill and I aren't even coming into the house, because we're to blame for it. So I know that we used soap for mosquito bites and all. He's rubbing his feet and everything and grandma's scolding us. Oh we gave him the works.

Q: When you say grandma, you mean your grandma?

JS: My dad's mother.

Q: Your mother-in-law, who lived with you for all those years.

JS: Yes. Grandma was part of our life. She's a Catholic and we're United. There's church service in the Catholic church but not every Sunday - once a month or twice a month. We had the priest living in Andrew but this here to the Catholic church. We hitched the horses to the democrat - grandma's going to church, we're going to church with grandma. We'd all go to the Catholic church. I know the Catholic service order just as well as anybody else. We went there to church with grandma. We took her every time she wanted to go to church. I knew it. In fact, I was a bridesmaid to Bill and Helen Hamaluk and we went to the Kisly church north of Andrew, and

there's no cantor. It's in Ukrainian, they're having it in Ukrainian because it's their 50th anniversary, they're having it Ukrainian and I'm the bridesmaid. The priest comes up to me and asks me whether I wouldn't be the cantor. He says, I'll be easy, I'll be easy. Nobody else in there knows how to read Ukrainian, so will you take this? Thank God just before the bell rang for church the cantor came.

Q: How did you come to be United?

JS: How come? When grandpa started communication with the Methodist church in New York, and they started helping him. There were French missionaries in Athabasca and all the north that way. He was Orthodox, grandpa was Orthodox. When the Methodist church joined United church to make a United Church, he got included in it. That's how we became United church. He had a lot of literature that was Methodist based. The younger people kind of liked it and we went on. The fact that he was preaching out on his doorstep before the church was built and everything, a lot of the people came.

Q: Was this because the Orthodox were considered to be Protestant?

JS: I have no idea. Politically I couldn't answer that. Dad would probably give you all the details because he knew all about it. They found out it was easier because the United church was not asked to pay extra for a funeral. If there was a funeral, it went with the priest's wages. There was nothing of you pay me \$75 or else. Well what hurt them once was there was an accident and the parents were killed. and they had a collection and collected quite a bit of money for the orphans, for the remaining children. The priest said, "Thank you, we'll pray for you all the year." And he took all that money. It was things like this that irked him, and most of all it would be something that affected them personally.

Q: That picture on the wall of that stern looking fellow, the United church minister – was that when he became a United church minister? Originally he was Orthodox.

JS: Yes. You know that stern looking fellow not only was a minister. He was such a carpenter that would build you anything without using any nails in it or anything. A stupa, do you know what's a stupa? I think practically everybody in the community had one stupa built for them. He built what was called a **bombapy**, it was like a couch except it didn't have springs, like a bench. Beautiful, no nails, carving, joining together. In Elk Island Park there's a zhorna.

Q: The big millstones.

JS: Yes, he made those. The stupa in Shandro was his work, the Shandro people had, that was his work. He hollowed out this tree and got that made that he could get into it and work. All these tools – a flail, one long stick and another long stick joined with a belt – and you'd beat the grain.

Q: I went to the CUC conference in Regina last September, the Canadian Ukrainian Congress. In three days they hardly mentioned Canada. Their attention is very much on Ukraine. When you were living here, a lot of Ukrainians were very attached to the old country, even the second and third generations. Was this true of you?

JS: After coming to Canada my husband's family said, we suffered enough in Ukraine, we were poor enough, there never seemed to be enough money to be traveling back and wanting to go. A few people were curious enough. **Ehore Crook** goes every Christmas but he was born in England. Ehore Crook is the only Ukrainian I know who speaks Ukrainian with an English accent. The thing was, when we were in Elk Island Park and when that lady started singing, I cried my eyes out. My son said, why in the world are you crying? She was singing this song, [she speaks Ukrainian]. She sang that and I said, that's just what happened to these first arrivals. I sat there crying and Bert is looking at me and saying, "What's the matter with you?" I says, "You translate the song and you attach it to the people and you think, the first people that came didn't go, the second generation went."

Mary Yaremko from Boyle came to Canada in the '40s and '50s, after the war, the '40s war and all. She went back to Ukraine and she came back and tells me how conditions were at their place back home. She went on a tour but growing up in Ukraine and all and living there, they went to a **yamarok**, a farmers' market. She went to this yamarok and in very true fashion, because she had left the country about 20 years before and still knew enough of what they were doing, she bought a dozen chickens, put them in her hat, and took the bus and drove with the bus. She checked out the timing and drove with the bus to her home place. When she lived there they had a house – two bedrooms, a kitchen, a living room and a porch. When she came to see it, that house was cut in two and in it now lived her mother. . . . Her father lived but her mother died two weeks before she arrived. So there was her father, her sister, her sister's husband and one child, and they had one bedroom, half of the living room, no kitchen, the porch, and the rest was given to somebody else to live. Those were the conditions she saw when she came. When she came back from that visit her husband said, you know, she went wearing clothes but she came back in her jacket and skirt; she gave everything away. So when she came out there and saw how things were following the war, she said, I'd never want to go back.

Q: She came as a Displaced Person after the Second World War.

JS: Yes. Her husband was working in the sawmill and lost his hand. As compensation, the company gave him that land on which they were working. So he got a farm there, and he raised bees for honey. His contract was for forty 60-gallon barrels of honey a year. He had beehives from St. Paul to Athabasca, all over the countryside and he was given an Alberta award for his honey thirty consecutive years in a row.

Q: What was his name?

JS: Walter Yaremko in Boyle. And there was a Yaremko in Vegreville. But Walter and Mary are gone and their only son is living in Australia. We can't go there anymore but we used to go there at least once a year.

Q: There were so many developments in Ukraine that parents were discussing constantly?

JS: **Ihor Crook**, following the war, his folks were coming to Canada. They got as far as England, and his mother couldn't see the shores of Europe anymore. So she refused to go any farther. So Ihor was born in England and he speaks Ukrainian with an English accent. I don't know if he attended school in Ukraine, but he graduated and he was teaching in some college, and then he came to Canada. He was at the university getting a little bit acquainted with what Canada is like, and he got a job to teach at Myrnam. He was teaching French, English and Ukrainian in Myrnam.

Q: Was that in the '60s and '70s?

JS: No now. Well that's when I met him. McMillan brothers were teaching there and he was with them. He was teaching there, and **Budam Midinski** and him came out and convinced me to teach Ukrainian. So we met Ehore Crook. Already I'm going to be teaching Ukrainian, that was starting here, and all the help I'll get and everything. Ehore got a position in Myrnam. At Christmastime he was coming to Edmonton and rolled his car. That's when he realized he had no next of kin or anybody to notify if anything happened to him. So he stopped at our place and he said, could I use your name as people to be notified in case something happens to me? He says, I'll be your prodigal son. Fine. Alex says, well go ahead, yes. So that is how we adopted Ehore and he became our prodigal son. He fits in very nicely because he's a year older than Burt and Cynthia; he fits right in between them. This one's a year older than him, this one's a year younger.

Q: How many children did you have?

JS: Three. And Ihor came in there, so that's how we got to know him. He told a lot of stories about Ukraine and everything, but his mother never came to Canada. When he was getting married his father came, and his father came following the war. It was very hard for this man. Everybody he met, well how did you exist during the war, how did you exist during the war? Well it didn't bother us any. The fact that we were rationed butter and sugar and stuff, we got it automatically; it was there, we didn't have to worry about it. And liquor.

Q: And they didn't have to spend any time in a displaced persons camp, because they were already in England.

JS: Yes, they were already. So that's the funny part about him.

Q: But he's been back to Ukraine many times?

JS: Oh yes, usually around Christmastime. One time he went to Ukraine and he says, I'm not going to tell you how many pairs of slacks I took, but I came back with one pair.

Q: Why does he go to Ukraine? He wasn't born there.

JS: He has relatives. His father is gone, his mother is gone, he's got a sister living in England but his parents are not there. He goes to see those, so he's gone there a few times. Now he's working for the Alberta Teachers Association.

JB: In earlier times I remember Andrew Basisty, your dad, always had all the newspapers from the Ukraine.

JS: Dad had every printed Ukrainian paper, including the **Vichella**, Holos, Farmar. . . Do you know what father used to do, he read everything.

Q: And he was reading English language papers, too?

JS: Oh yes. And we're buying these romance magazines, True Story Magazine. We buy it, well the story starts here and it's continued on this page. Father is reading and we aren't telling him and he's reading page after page after page. We weren't telling him until he wised up - but we wouldn't tell him.

Q: How many years of formal schooling did your father have?

JS: He learned English by himself. He did not go to school; he was self taught.

JB: But grandma had grade 7, and that was here in Canada?

JS: Grandma was born in Canada, so she had that. I started saying about the religions. There was the French missionaries coming out. So, when uncle John Basisty was getting married there were seven weddings on that day, because that was the week the missionaries showed up in the area. When grandpa Wiwchuk, the way he was give for the Orthodox people, he couldn't even write. The first thing they gave him was permission to baptise a baby because the poor thing died. It'll never go to heaven if it's not baptised. So he handled the baptism of the baby and the burial. Then he got permission, well already the burial, he got funerals in. Then he got permission to marry people. But the first thing that he got was baptism of the baby. It went in such order.

Q: Do you remember taking Education Foundations at university?

JS: No because I told you we were the worst mess in the history of education.

Q: But then later in university, was there still Education Foundations?

JS: No.

Q: Why was it important to teach Ukrainian in the school?

JS: Well because the grandparents, that generation were still alive and you were communicating with them, and they've got relatives and they want you to continue as long as they can have somebody, because they are illiterate and it's through you that they're going to get the information they want and so on.

Q: Do you want to see the Ukrainian culture continue in Canada?

JS: Well it's better to know more than less. We're not losing anything. So yes, I don't mind it. But my children don't know it, and what they knew they've forgotten already.

Q: Do your children consider themselves to be Ukrainian?

JS: No, they are Canadian. We are Canadian Ukrainians, we are not Ukrainian Canadians. We are Canadian Ukrainians; turn it around. I was not born in Ukraine, I was born in Canada, but it's my origin. When we got those forms to fill in for the children, boy was I fighting for it, the fact that I was not going to put that my child is a Ukrainian Canadian. My child is a Canadian Ukrainian. The roots are Ukrainian but he is Canadian, he's born in Canada. That's what we fought on those cumulative record forms. Remember them, those great big things? Oh I got a family moved in. How many of you in the family? Two, Annie and I. Fine, I put that on the record.

He comes in next week, my brother did this and that. Well have you got a brother? Yes, he's in grade 8. Okay, in comes already three in the family. Then something else and I mentioned that this family moved in from someplace in Northern Alberta. Peter, my brother, says, oh so and so is getting married to his sister. So I cornered this little guy, how many of you in the family? Well this big brother and him. I says, what about Micalca? Oh she's a big girl, she's working someplace. That makes four. By the end of the year there was seven children in that family. So there's my cumulative record, I'm changing the number, changing the number.

Q: By the time you went to normal school, Canadian Ukrainian girls were already getting involved in that?

JS: There was this kind of statement made, this is where we separate the sheep from the goats. A lot of people were told, if you change your name you'll get a job. Alec's sister is a Slobenik but nobody heard of the Slobeniks, she was a Slobe. Rogolski was a schoolteacher when he taught in Lamont, he went into Edmonton it's Mr. Rogers.

Q: Did you know Andrew Rogoliski?

JS: Yes.

Q: He was my teacher in grade 6.

JS: You see, all right. While he was local here. He's a Rogolski. He got to Edmonton, and he becomes a Rogers. John Podalanchuk. Good morning, this is John Dolan, I'm your Ukrainian cowboy. His name was John Podalanchuk. He threw the Pod away and he threw the Chuk away and he used John Dolan. His sister teaching here, Phillis Podalanchuk. John, working in Edmonton at a broadcasting station, John Dolan.

Q: They've stopped doing that. Now, people are keeping their names.

JS: Yes, they finally stopped it when they issued one series of readers. Guess who was supposed to use them and see if they're of any use? The person who was working on this had a very queer name, it was long and it wasn't Ukrainian but it certainly wasn't English. They said, if they can pronounce that name they should be able to pronounce any name. One of the professors at the university, I don't know what course he taught because I didn't take it from him...

Q: Lupul?

JS: No not Lupul.

Q: He was my supervisor.

JS: Oh he was? Manoly Lupul. We lived in Dr. Gulutsan's house during the summer and Manoly took over in the winter when Gulutsan was in Russia. Oh there are a lot of people I know there. Anyway, this fellow had an English name and he would say, oh I don't know it's either White or Jones or so. You over there, your name? Sadie Shmeinski is sitting in the front. I want all of you, these in front, just listen. Shmeinski. You over there, what's your name? Is it Smith or is it Jones? Oh you people I don't know. He would pick on all of these. He was English and he would say too much of that, too much of that. He would go ahead and c'mon what's your name? Just listen how it sounds. Dushenski. I got in and he said, you're going to take a course from me. I said, no I'm not.

Q: What was his name?

JS: I don't know his name. He was an English guy and this was summer sessions, and that's what he would do.

Q: I taught a summer course at university.

JS: What course were you teaching?

Q: I was teaching Philosophy of Education.

JS: Did you know Dr. Zayowski?

Q: No. I left in 1972.

JS: Zayowski, he used to teach Literature, Ukrainian. He was a poet. He had the contract with a company in New York to translate Shakespeare into Ukrainian. In summer sessions we lived in one house and Zayowski's house was so far away. Going to this window we could look into their window. I was taking English 200. Well he's a poet and I can't understand this, I'm running over to his house to ask him. His wife, ???, and she's going to the store for groceries. He'd stand and tell me. Another time I was taking speech and oral interpretation, and we had for a final a 15-minute speech. You had to choose a topic.

Q: In English.

JS: Yes. This lady was from England. She was a superintendent in one of the schools in England. Her area as superintendent was three blocks one way and three blocks the other way; there were enough kids in there for her to be a superintendent. So Betty was there. Anyway, this is our assignment. Oh Mrs. Zayowski, what am I going to do? Very easy. Well what topic shall I pick? Bells. He says. Bells and how they affect our life. From the time you're born until you're buried, it's bells, bells, bells that control you. There's the telephone, there's the doorbell, there's the fire bell, all this and everything. Finally the wedding bells and then there's tolling for your funeral and all.

Q: Did you ever attend any functions at the St. Johns Institute on 82nd Avenue?

JS: Oh yes. Did you know Grock boys?

Q: Yes, one of them is the president of the CUC now, Paul Grock.

JS: I knew both of them. They lost their dad and their mother was raising them. They worked for the meat market. What's his name, that had that wonderful sausage? Marchyshyn. They worked for Marchyshyn and they danced with Shumka. They were going on a trip to Europe for dancing. Of course everybody's packing their suitcases, and the Grock boys are going and they can't afford to take as much clothes. Mr. Marchyshyn gave them a full suitcase of sausage. They went to Europe, they came back with the fullest suitcases while the others came empty. They traded this sausage for clothes from their fellow members. One of the Grock boys is married to Pauline Usiuk's daughter. One of them just retired from Alberta Teachers Association.

[END]