



## GROWING UP IN JASPER PLACE

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I have lived in the West End most of my life. Can't image living anyplace else. My Dad bought a house on 156 street and 104 Avenue, north of Stony Plain Road in 1947, and we moved during the Summer down a dirt road to a small house with no services. By that, I mean no electricity, no gas, no water. Our lights were kerosene, our meals were cooked and the house heated by a coal and wood stove, and our water was delivered by the "water man" once a week and kept in covered barrels. Extra water for washing clothes and watering the garden was collected in rain barrels and in the winter we had all that nice clean snow to collect and melt in large wash tubs on the stove, and then carried down to the basement to the washing machine which at first was scrub board and then hung outside to dry. Actually it wasn't too bad as there was only my Mom, Dad and me. I can't imagine having to do laundry for a large family. My future husband who was also raised in West Jasper Place came from a family of 10. Can you image laundry day at his house? The coal was stored in half of our dirt basement and coal delivery day was a very dusty and dirty affair.

We did not have a telephone for a few years, and when we did it was on a party line which we shared with 13 other families. Listening in on each other's calls

was great entertainment in those days and everyone knew each other's business, believe me.

My Dad did not have a car, so we had to take the bus downtown. The bus line stopped at 148 Street and Stony Plain Road, and then it was a good walk home. I think that is what made us hardy. Barrel Taxi had a small office on the corner of 149 Street and Stony Plain Road, and in the winter we would take a taxi home. I remember the taxi ride home was 50 cents and we always gave the driver 25 cents tip. We collected our mail at Case's Store on 149 Street as there was no mail delivery. Weather permitting; I would ride my bike every day after school to get the mail. There were no supermarkets but there was a grocery store on the corner of 156 Street and Stony Plain Road, and he also had a fresh meat counter, and in those days you could charge everything and then pay once a month - kind of like a 1940's Visa system. There was another grocery store, Brown's Grocery, on 152 Street with Christensen's Barber Shop on the other end of the street.

At 9 o'clock at night the town hall siren would blast and all the kids had to be inside. We lived in terror that we would be caught playing outside after curfew. In those days we didn't have to worry about being abducted because no one could afford another mouth to feed.

Life was good until it rained, then the streets were a mess. We

didn't just have mud roads, we had pure gumbo. You could lose your rubber boots in that stuff. Then again, the rain was good because there was lots of clean water to wash laundry in.

Times were tough in those post-war days but, you know, we didn't realize we were having such a tough time because we were all in it together. Also, it was a happier

time than today. We didn't have cell phones (lots of us didn't even have a phone at home). There were no I-pods, TV or any of the things kids these days classify as necessities. We had a good time just playing outside in the fresh air, making lifelong friends, and laughing. I am so proud I grew up in West Jasper Place. It made me a better person.

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