

Chrystia Chomiak

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Interviewer: Myrna Kostash

Camera: Don Bouzek

CC: My parents are both Ukrainian. They left as the Soviets were coming into what was the Ukrainian part that was under Poland. My father came from Lviv. He was a journalist. He was in the Ukrainian daily called *Delo*.

Q: What was your father's name?

CC: My father was Mykhailo Chomiak, my mother's name was Alexandra Loban. She came from the northwest of Ukraine from an area called Polisia, from a village that was very close to Belarus. It's a very mixed area but she lived in a Ukrainian village. I've visited that village and in fact it is a Ukrainian village in an area that's very mixed. You have Belarussian villages, Ukrainian, there were Russians there, so it's a real mix of people that lived in that area; it's very multicultural.

Q: Your parents met in Poland?

CC: They did. They both separately came to Poland. My father was a journalist. He came and was asked to be the editor of *Krakivs'ki Visti* which is the news from Krakow. My mother worked in, they had a publishing house. It was a Ukrainian government in exile, so they had various institutions. My mother worked in the literary publishing house. They met in Krakow and got married. There are two children that were born there, my sister Oxana and my sister Marusa. As the war was progressing, they left Krakow and moved to Vienna. Then as the Soviets were coming, they moved into the west and went into Germany. My sister Halyna and I were born in Germany.

Q: What year did you four children and your parents move to Canada?

CC: In 1948 in October. The reason that we were able to come, they were trying to come anywhere, they were trying to go wherever they could. His sister, my father's sister and brother had come in the late '20s, so they sponsored our family to Canada. That's why we ended up firstly in Cherhill – that's where my aunt and uncle lived; they had a farm in Cherhill, Alberta. It's not an abandoned village but there was a very nice community there of Ukrainians. So that's where we lived for the first couple of years, then my parents bought a house in Jasper Place and we lived in Jasper Place.

Q: What did your parents bring with them to start their life in Canada?

CC: They had themselves, their family, their clothing. They didn't arrive with very much. Oh they did arrive with one thing. My father kept the archives of Krakivs'ki Visti that he carried with him in trunks as they went to Vienna, when they went into bomb shelters, when they went into Germany. So he had that, and it was a valuable archive in part. So probably a couple of trunks, but not many other personal effects.

Q: What was the linguistic environment of your household when you started living in Jasper Place before the younger children were born?

CC: We spoke Ukrainian, my first language was Ukrainian. It was entirely Ukrainian, we read Ukrainian, that was our first language. My father started learning English in Germany. There were language learning books that he did bring with him, so he started learning English. He wrote in English, as well, so his applications were in English to come to Canada. I'm sure that he first had a knowledge of reading and writing before speaking. My mother learned English here. Since we were a large family, her primary focus was the household and the children. She learned English by reading the Edmonton Journal. We would get the Edmonton Journal and she would read it.

Q: With a dictionary?

CC: I can't answer that question. So she learned to read and write in English by reading the Edmonton Journal.

Q: How did you learn to speak English?

CC: I grew up here, I came when I was six months old. While our language at home was Ukrainian, we played with all the kids and at some point I learned English. By the time I went to school, I knew English.

Q: By 1958, at 21,000 people, Jasper Place was the largest town in Alberta. Did it feel like that?

CC: It did feel big to me. No I'm a child, my memory of Jasper Place is as a child. I really liked Jasper Place. I had a great time growing up as a kid. There were so many kids after the Second World War, so many kids in my neighbourhood, so we had a great time playing. You'd leave in the morning, let's say during summer vacation, you'd leave in the morning. Mothers would come out a lunchtime and yell, and you'd run home and have lunch, then off you were again playing. So I really liked it and I felt a real allegiance to Jasper Place. I was very proud. My parents would always say that they lived in Edmonton. When friends would come and visit my parents they'd say, this is Edmonton. I would interrupt and say, no, we live in Jasper Place. My father would say, yes we live in Jasper Place, but it's right beside Edmonton and this is the area.

Q: Was this before annexation?

CC: Yes.

Q: Why would they say that?

CC: Because their friends that would come and visit from other parts of the world or from other parts of Canada didn't know Jasper Place; they knew Edmonton.

Q: So it wasn't a sense of shame?

CC: No it wasn't a sense of shame, it was a sense of geography. Who knows Jasper Place? I do. My father tried to explain this to me, but I had an allegiance to the town.

Q: Why did your parents choose to live in Jasper Place?

CC: It was the cost, the housing there was inexpensive. They didn't have money. When they came they had four children. My father was working for the City of Edmonton digging ditches. That was his job, so they didn't have money. So that's one thing. But the real reason, they were offered houses within the Ukrainian community that they could buy in different areas. There were Ukrainians that had come much earlier, and my father would've preferred to live in a different area. But my mother wanted to live as far away from what she considered the Ukrainian ghetto, the Ukrainian community, as far as possible. She had a fear of being rounded up, so she wanted to be far away from where the majority of Ukrainians lived so that they would not be given up. So that when it became hard again, when repression came in and Ukrainians were rounded up, then they were farther away and people wouldn't know us.

Q: Did she keep that anxiety throughout?

CC: She kept that anxiety for a period of time. Everybody in the family knew that she had that anxiety. When I say that and I say everybody, certainly the four older children. In conversations with all the children, the two youngest ones were not as aware, so obviously that discussion had passed away. But for us when we moved in there, my mother had a great fear of being rounded up.

Q: Were you afraid that this might happen?

CC: No, I wasn't. Maybe my older sisters were, but I was not afraid of that.

Q: Was the house you lived in one that had been built by an earlier immigration of Ukrainians? You were saying that the Ukrainian community offered the houses.

CC: No, offered houses in Edmonton. The choice that my parents had, as the story goes, is that there was a house in the University area that an older Ukrainian had that she wanted to sell, and she wanted to sell it to a Ukrainian immigrant family. That was the house. The house they bought had nothing to do with Ukrainians. They bought it because the price was right and they found it and it was in Jasper Place, plus it was two lots. My mother and father, we were very poor. My mother understood that they needed to have a garden and to live off a large garden. It was a double lot, and that was a real attraction. My mother was a brilliant gardener and she had wonderful vegetables that we lived off of for the longest time.

Q: Was the double lot unusual for that neighbourhood?

CC: Yes and no. There were other double lots but there were also single lots. It was a very poor part of town, a poor part of Jasper Place. Within our area there were a couple of white collar families. My father went from working for the City of Edmonton, he got a job at Fort Saskatchewan at Sherritt Gordon Mines and he worked in the lab. The reason that he got that job is that the head engineer was also a Ukrainian immigrant, and for the lab they hired the impoverished Ukrainians that had immigrated. He worked in the lab until he retired.

Q: How did he get to work without a car?

CC: He would catch a bus. He probably would walk. There were two buses but there was a bus not far from us run by Diamond Bus Lines. It had a very limited schedule. Where we would normally go is that we would go to 147th Street and Stony Plain Road, and that was where the terminal was where the Edmonton buses stopped. So he would probably walk there, catch a bus, and then he would go to north Edmonton. Then his friends who had a car would pick him up at a certain place. So he would meet them there and then they would go out to Fort Saskatchewan.

Q: This was a long commute.

CC: It was a very long commute. He would be gone, certainly by 6 o'clock in the morning he was already gone, then he'd probably come back – it was probably a 12-hour day for him – he'd come back around 6 o'clock in the evening.

Q: Had he managed to scrape together enough savings for the down payment on the house?

CC: No, because they didn't have money. But my aunt, my mother's sister, and her partner, who was a priest, an Orthodox priest, he got a parish in New Hampshire, U.S.A. She worked as a furrier. She was the older sister, my mother's older sister. My mother's mother, my grandmother, died when my mother was three years old, so my mother lived with different sisters, first with a grandmother and then with sisters. She lived with her for a long time and they had close relationship. She was my aunt but she was also like a grandmother aunt. Anyway, they had salaries and they sent \$3,000 to my mother, and that was the down payment for the house.

Q: Then did they get a mortgage?

CC: Obviously they did; who knows? I don't know.

Q: How old were you when you moved into the house?

CC: Probably about three or four.

Q: Do you remember the house?

CC: Absolutely.

Q: Walk us around that house.

CC: It was a small house. It had one bedroom, a large kitchen. My parents had a round table, so I've always had a fondness for round tables because they had this big round table in the kitchen. Then it had a living room dining room. In the front there was a living room dining room, kitchen,

bedroom. That's it. There was a basement but it wasn't a finished basement and it had a boiler, a big boiler. I hated the boiler because we took turns going down to turn down the boiler and to turn it up. It was all dark, there was no electricity there.

Q: Was it gas?

CC: Yes it was. I can't answer the question was it gas when we moved in, but it must've been because we went down to turn it up and down. There was a flame, so moving it up and down. But the basement was not finished. In the bedroom there were two kids. In the dining room there was these doors that closed and there was a bed in there, and that's where my parents slept. In the living room there was a foldout couch that was a couch during the day, and that's where two others slept. That's how we first slept.

Q: Was there a cold cellar in that unfinished basement?

CC: The cold cellar, there was a cold cellar there where my mother kept root vegetables and canning. Then when the house was renovated [...] they put in concrete walls and a concrete floor for the basement. So they had some kind of foundation, but they made it concrete. Then they had [...] a proper cold cellar that you would walk into.

Q: Let's walk outside the house now.

CC: We didn't have any running water. I don't know where they got their water from. I think there was a water truck that came by. That's what I kind of remember is a water truck, and then we had an outhouse at the end of the property. I hated it, we all hated it. I was just a little kid and I had to go to the outhouse. I was always afraid I was going to fall through the hole, because you climb up and you're holding on.

Q: Did you have toilet paper?

CC: Newspapers, I believe. Newspapers – toilet paper not so much. I hated it. And there was a garage as well, and my parents kept the garage.

Q: Let's talk about the garden. You've said your mother could speak to plants.

CC: Yes. My mother grew up in villages in a very lush part of Ukraine, Polisia; lots of forests, tons of mushrooms. They had lakes and a lot of fish. The gardens there are just lush in comparison to Galicia, the parts that I visited, it's not as lush, much drier. The area where my mother grew up had a lot of moisture, things grew, very nice. So she grew up in this. I don't think she actually tended gardens but she loved plants. [...] The soil that we had was horrible.

Q: What do you mean horrible?

CC: It had a lot of clay. So they brought in, and every year they would bring in, tons of horse manure. A truckload would come up, dump it, and my father would cart it out and they would break it up. So they really enriched the soil. That was a big job that they did every... I think they did it every fall. I could be wrong, maybe they did it twice a year. But they really worked at enriching it. Then my mother planted, and things grew for her. The cucumbers were magnificent, the cabbage, the tomatoes tons. She would can the tomatoes, she made her own ketchup. We were kids and we wanted to have French fries and ketchup. Beets, radishes, everything for borscht. Her other joy was when people would take her into the woods and she could pick mushrooms.

Q: What woods?

CC: Well ideally, because they lived for probably a year and a half in Cherhill, there are lots of woods and farms, so she'd go out there and she knew certain places. These were secret.

Q: Any in Jasper Place.

CC: Nothing. Well possibly, I don't know. They didn't go mushroom picking in Jasper Place. The goal was to hitch a ride with somebody and promise them that they'd take them to a place where there were good mushrooms, and off they would go and collect a variety of mushrooms.

Q: Did your parents ever consider having chickens?

CC: No, my parents did not.

Q: So no eggs or meat in the house?

CC: Yes we would have chickens. My mother would buy chickens from the Mennonites; they'd come by and she would buy x number of chickens.

Q: Live ones or plucked ones?

CC: I can't answer that question. I don't remember live ones. But not plucked, because there would be plucking. They would come headless.

Q: Do you remember that smell?

CC: Yes absolutely, putting them in to the boiling water, pulling them out. My mother would use some of the feathers and she would make comforters. She was very big on us having very lush comforters, and she would sew duvet covers that were rather ornate.

Q: Do you have any of them now?

CC: I have one, but it was probably the last one. They don't last forever.

Q: Did you have milk?

CC: Yes, from the milkman who would come by. There was a little shelf with an outside door and an inside door, and you bought tokens and you had your bottles. Let's say you wanted two – you would put your empty bottles in there with the number of tokens for the number of milk bottles that you wanted. The goal in the wintertime was to get there before it froze, because they came early. Even though you were up at 8 o'clock or whatever, sometimes you'd open it and already it was frozen, so it either cracked or it came out the top. So that's how milk was delivered.

Q: Did your family eat fish?

CC: Yes. Specifically, my mother was a huge lover of fish, and she could prepare all kinds of different ones. Where we got our fish from, it was from the Métis people that would come around, Métis fishermen, and she would buy them from them. We were a household that the Mennonites would come to, either First Nations or Métis people with fish, with white fish particularly. She also liked jackfish.

Q: What did she use for the fish pyrohy at Christmastime?

CC: She didn't make fish pyrohy. But she would make fish and gelatin, she would can her fish, she would marinate fish in different kinds of marinade. She would bake fish in slices with onion, etc. That's where she used the jackfish with the bones, and she'd cook it very slowly. By the time you took it out, the bones had gotten very soft. She was very good with fish.

Q: Would it be fair to say that you're illustrating the economy of a poor household?

CC: Yes, we were very poor.

Q: How did you know you were poor? Were you poor compared to your neighbours?

CC: Absolutely. We knew we were poor financially. We kind of had a mixed view of ourselves. We knew that we had advantages because we came from a family that wrote books, read books,

liked art. We'd go to concerts, we were all expected to play an instrument growing up. We knew that we were different from others and that we had advantages, but we also knew that we were very poor. We had no car. When we bought things that we needed for the house other than what was in the garden or what my mother would buy from people like the Mennonites or the First Nations people or Métis people that came by with fish, we bought on credit. That was also a very difficult thing to negotiate – how much credit do we have, what can we afford to buy? These would be essentials. We collected pop bottles and my father would take them in.

Q: Where would he take them?

CC: To the grocery store. The grocery store would give you a penny or two for a bottle, and that would go against our bill.

Q: Where would you find bottles?

CC: Oh you'd walk the streets, and as you walked. We always walked to 147th Street and Stony Plain Road, so we'd walk and we'd have bottles, and my parents had a bag and we'd put it in there; so we would collect bottles. People would throw them away.

Q: Like they do now.

CC: They do. People are much more conscious, people were not very conscious. For my parents, they saw them and picked them up, and this is something that they would use to help them.

Q: Did you have credit with one particular grocer?

CC: It was a corner grocery store in Canora. I think, if I'm correct, on 154th Street and 105th Avenue is where I believe it was.

Q: Did you go in there yourself?

CC: Oh yes, a lot.

Q: What were you buying?

CC: Well I don't know, maybe we needed sugar, maybe we needed tea, maybe we needed flour. Those are the kind of things that we would buy. My parents could not stand the bread that they called bread, the white bread, cotton batten bread, as we referred to it. But if we didn't have any, then we'd also buy it from the grocery store. That was another thing is there used to be bread trucks that used to drive around. You know the ice cream trucks that have a certain sound? The bread trucks also had a tune that they would play. We would hear it, and if we could possibly afford it, we would love to get cinnamon buns from them. I think it was McGavin's. So there's a little tune and you'd hear it and go, oh gosh, can we get some cinnamon buns? Cinnamon buns were our favourite. So the bread truck would come by, and we would buy from the bread truck if we could, because it was fresh. They'd make it in the morning really early and then he would drive it around and it was fresh, even though it was cotton batten.

Q: Didn't your mother make bread?

CC: My mother I believe had a gluten intolerance. When I got older she asked me, for instance, to do the baking for Easter. She baked but she would get sick when she baked. So she did not want to bake. What my parents wanted to have is they wanted to have good rye bread that was from a good bakery. So when they finally found one, my father would go off and come back with two huge bags of bread.

Q: How far did he have to go to get it?

CC: Northeast Edmonton. It wasn't a Ukrainian bakery, it was a German bakery.

Q: In addition to the vegetable garden, your mother also grew flowers.

CC: Yes. The house was near the front, so you had a big back yard that had a garden. On the second lot there was a garage, which was a big further back, then behind it we had also gardens. So that was all vegetables. But in the front she had flowers and along the side of the fence. Her flowers, she really grew tons of flowers. She loved it. And she would definitely talk to the plants. She'd say to me, they quiver for me, they quiver. I'd try, but they don't quiver for me. I think I'm pretty good with plants but her gardens were lush, absolutely lush.

Q: Did all the plant life make your place distinctive in the neighbourhood?

CC: Absolutely. They really had a pride of ownership. They kept everything very clean. My mother created these geometric circles in which she planted plants in the front. There was a great love of making it beautiful. She loved irises and that would've been in the spring, but later on she had peonies and gladiolas.

Q: Was she good with roses?

CC: No, I don't think my mother had roses.

Q: Saskatoons?

CC: At the back of our lot was had a big saskatoon bush, so we picked tons of saskatoons and we'd live off of them. Raspberry bushes as well.

Q: A caragana hedge?

CC: Yes we did. My parents hated it and at one point they took it out. Why? Because it keeps spreading. My mother preferred flowers to caragana bushes.

Q: What were the neighbouring lots like?

CC: In the area that I grew up in we had some working class people; in other words, people that actually had a job working in the working class. Then we had a lot of impoverished households. Right beside us was an impoverished household. What did that look like? They had a dog that was chained up, sometimes not. They didn't plant anything. We were very poor but my mother sewed. She then discovered rummage sales, great joy, because off she would go and come back with clothing. There was a real attempt to look good and to have the necessary clothing. The neighbours on one side to the south of us were extremely poor, they were just extremely poor.

Q: Did the father work? How could you tell?

CC: Dirty, not enough food, dirty, weren't being looked after. On the other side to us they had greater pride of ownership but they were also very poor. They looked after things more but the poverty ground them down. Their fathers didn't have jobs where they had an income. Somebody who was a tradesperson, for instance, in the community I grew up in, had economic status and would've had a much better household. But some of the households were really impoverished. They didn't have anything. Why we knew we were different is that we had certain aspirations and we had standards that were different from them. Economically maybe we were on the same level at first, but it ground them down, and for us as an immigrant family we had aspirations. Also considering how my parents saw themselves, that was a huge difference.

Q: None of these were Ukrainian families?

CC: No.

Q: Describe the sewer.

CC: We certainly didn't have indoor plumbing or anything like that, so we had ditches in the front. There was our yard, then we had a wooden sidewalk, a boardwalk; actually, I really liked it. When I saw them again I went, oh I love these things. Then we had a ditch.

Q: What was in the ditch?

CC: I was too young, I can't answer that. But we did not have any running water and we didn't have sewers. I'm assuming that's where, I don't know. We had the outhouse, and I think there was a truck that came by to clean it out on a whatever basis, as often as you could afford to do that, a couple times a year or once a year or something like that. But we had no running water. I think it was 1954 that there was a big improvement. One, running water came into our part of Jasper Place. My aunt and her partner, we called him our grandfather, we went by train from Edmonton – it was a wonderful trip, I remember it very well – to New Hampshire. We actually went to Montreal. My aunt had a car and drove up. She was so exotic. She smoked. She was just gorgeous. She had a car and she drove up, and we all piled into the car. Anyhow, we went from Edmonton to Montreal by train.

Q: Sitting up, I suppose.

CC: Sitting up. I don't know how many suitcases we had, but at night my mother would put the suitcases in the centre and she'd create a bed between them. There were then five of us kids, and we'd sleep. She'd create a bed for us. So we spent the summer in New Hampshire, came back, and my father and his friends. . . My uncle, my father's brother-in-law, who was a very talented carpenter, he built some apartment buildings here, some walk-up apartment buildings. He was very good. Anyhow, I'm sure that he was involved in this renovation. What they did is they built us a another bedroom, they added a bathroom, and they finished off the basement. Finished off meant that it was concrete. So you had concrete walls, concrete floor, and electricity so that when you went down you weren't attacked by the boiler. That boiler, as a kid you'd be attacked by the boiler. . . . I had three older sibs who thought it was funny to do that, so we would terrorize each other. Then my mother would come out screaming. But once there was electricity, you could put on the light so that when you went down to that boiler that eats children you were fine.

Q: In the meantime, had the ditch been filled in with sewer pipes?

CC: I don't know, but it was gone. The ditches were gone, and sometime later they put in concrete sidewalks.

Q: You were mentioning what you called creative vandalism on Devil's Night.

CC: Devil's Night was a big night in Jasper Place. It's the day before Halloween, it's the 30th of October, and that's when the devils come out and create havoc. What would be common? Egging of windows, throwing eggs at windows. Toilet paper, wrapping a house. First you egg it, then you wrap it in toilet paper so you had real grunge. Tipping over of outhouses. You'd get up in the morning and your outhouse has been tipped over. Those were the three common things that would happen out there. Of course there would be discussions. I think we had a newspaper, I'm quite sure there was a newspaper, because there would be discussions that people were outraged and we have to put a stop to this, and others opposing that. There was a lot of discussion about that, and whose houses were egged and whose wasn't. We were rarely, only a couple of times were we egged. Our outhouse was tipped over a couple of times, but that was it. There were some neighbours that got it a lot, so it kind of depended on I guess if you were really mean or if the kids in the household were real bullies or whatever. I'm not sure what it was, but some households really got it all the time.

Q: This was not entertaining.

CC: Certainly not for my parents. You'd look around, who got egged? Oh, they got egged. Who has toilet paper wrapped around?

Q: I never heard of Devil's Night.

CC: Where did you grow up?

Q: Here, the ghetto. I honestly don't know what Devil's Night is.

CC: Devil's Night is great – great and not so great. As kids, we did not go out on Devil's Night. We did not go out, because that was dangerous. Firstly, we were girls.

Q: What could happen to you?

CC: The hoodlums, primarily boys, were out. It was a gender thing. Primarily boys would go out and do these things. It wasn't safe to go out.

Q: Where were their parents?

CC: Well exactly, probably at the neighbour next door, of course.

Q: You mentioned a black family having bricks thrown through their window. Was this part of Devil's Night, or was it just a result of being a black family?

CC: Both. They lived one block down. The black family, I only remember one black family. They were definitely bullied and harassed. Some of our neighbours, specifically the ones to the south of us, were obviously racist. Somehow they had a rifle. There were incidents where they would take their rifle and walk up and down in front of the black people's house. It was horrifying. I remember once we saw them go, so we ran into our house and locked the doors, and we would just sit there terrified and as quiet as we could. The black family – I can't remember how many kids there were in that family – would they come and fight them back. But it was very terrifying. They were definitely bullied and abused. It was very challenging. We also had some either First Nations or Métis families in the area, and they were also discriminated against. How my sisters and I saw it is that it was primarily the very poor families, the kids of very poor families, that would do these kinds of attacks. We may have been completely wrong, but that's how we viewed it. It may have been more than that. But it was very tense. That was the tension. What would these very poor families do? Some families had very brutal lives. There was a lot of abuse, beatings. Sometimes kids would come to our house trying to get away from their parents. There was a fair amount of violence, part of poverty as well.

Q: Was there drunkenness?

CC: I don't remember drunkenness, but probably. I don't remember drunkenness, but violence, certainly beating up of kids. And probably women; I don't remember that, but I do remember of the kids. I remember there was one incident when a child came, and we begged our parents if we could keep the kids. My parents said, we just can't, we can't do that.

Q: Keep the kid?

CC: Keep the child with us so that the child didn't have to go back into that home. Anyhow, it could be very brutal, it could be very brutal in that place, and that was also part of it. When I told you that we had such great fun playing, we did have great fun playing. But we also had that as an element.

Q: How do you imagine your parents put up with this drastic decline from their middle-class life in Poland?

CC: The context is that Ukraine was invaded twice, primarily by the Soviets, but also the Germans – Germans and Soviets. My parents for the longest time had a dream of going back, of being able to return. The context was that they had lost, that what they had was lost. They never lost their social standing, they lost their economic standing. They hung onto their social standing. I would say they were impoverished intellectuals. They never lost their social standing, but they did lose their economic standing and were able to function quite well within it.

Q: Let's talk about telephone technology.

CC: I'm not sure when the phone came in; we didn't have the phone at first. I know the first family that got the phone were the Parks, who lived down the street. It was a couple, they were elderly, but probably much younger than I am right now. But anyhow, they had a beautiful house. They had I'm sure at least two lots and they had beautiful gardens, including flowers. They would take their produce to some market garden, I don't know where. But when there was

an issue, we would run to the Parks, and I'm sure that they had the first phone and we were able to use their phone. But when the phone came it, it was a party line. Party line means that there's x number of people on that line. I don't know how many they would put on, let's say there were four or something like that. Every household had its number of rings. Let's say we had three rings, so when it rang three times we knew that it was us. There was a gang of kids there and we loved to listen in to other people's conversations. Of course, on the party line everybody knows when somebody picks up the phone. We thought we were so clever; you hold down the little thing to listen. We thought it was wonderful listening to other people's conversations. We were just stupid, but had great fun with the phone; we thought it was wonderful. Of course our parents were not amused when they would find out or a neighbour would come over and say, your children are listening to the phone. Then at one point we got our own line, so that was a huge advantage.

Q: What did the telephone look like?

CC: Oh of course it was a rotary phone.

Q: Was it on the wall?

CC: I think that was the upgrade, we got an upgrade on the wall. What it looked like originally, I'm not a hundred percent sure. I remember the one on the wall, and it was a rotary phone absolutely. It was great.

Q: Do you remember the number?

CC: No.

Q: What was the house address?

CC: 10440 – 152 Street.

Q: In what neighbourhood?

CC: That's the question. Canora and Brightview. The areas were divided by the school that you went to and the community league. The community league we belonged to was Canora. There was a Canora school, which was much larger. There was a Brightview school as well, and it was closer, just one block away from us; it was on 151st Street. I went to both schools. I started off at Brightview and then the division changed and we became part of Canora, so then I went to Canora. So the answer is, Brightview was just a school so it was part of Canora but we called it Brightview. One block makes a huge difference when you're a little kid.

Q: Did your family fit in?

CC: We fit in because we were kids and we grew up with these kids. My best friend lived just kitty-corner from my house. She was one of the old families. There were three old families there that had formed there originally, and obviously sold off their land. How do I know this? Because they had these old Victorian houses that were two stories high.

Q: Verandas?

CC: I can't remember verandas. But yes one of them had the enclosed glass veranda, not an outside veranda. Across the street from us there was an older family that had obviously a lot of land and then they had much less, and they had a mink farm. Mink farm, and also attractive to the children, is that there were trees all around and we could play in the trees. They also had dogs that patrolled that. When the dogs saw that the kids were there they'd chase us out and we'd have to run out. They would nip at you. Everybody I think had their share of nips from those German Shepherds. So that was one family that lived there. Did we fit in? We fit in because we played with the kids. But we always knew that we were different. So yes and no. Yes we played together, we went to school there, we participated in other things. My older sisters took lessons figure skating at the rink. We would go out and watch ballgames and watch figure skating exhibitions that would come through; they were wonderful.

Q: At the community league?

CC: At the ice rink. The people that would compete in figure skating, one of the ways that they made money or support, they would go around the skating rinks and put on shows. It was fantastic. The community would come out, we'd stand around the rink, and these wonderful figure skaters would come out and do routines. So that was one thing, and also baseball was a huge thing.

Q: Community league teams?

CC: I don't believe it was community leagues. But there was a women's league and there was a men's league. I was particularly enthralled with the women's league, because they had some wonderful players. They were stars in our community. There was either a Métis or First Nations woman who played on the women's league; she was fantastic.

Q: She always hit the ball?

CC: Oh ya, she was just a superior athlete. She'd hit the ball, she ran like lightning, she was just brilliant. I loved sports. They'd always put me out as a shortstop. It turned out to be an important position. But ya, so she was really good. Anyhow, there was a women's league and they would travel. Was it Jasper Place? I don't know. I don't know what the divisions were, but it wasn't community.

Q: So you were involved in activities that brought everybody together.

CC: The sports activities. Everybody in my family, all my sisters, were active in sports. So that was something that unified us and we were then part of the community.

Q: Did your mother become fluent in English?

CC: Yes and no. She always spoke with a heavy accent, but her English was very good. However, she was always discriminated against because she spoke with a heavy accent.

Q: Who did the discriminating?

CC: Everybody. She'd go to a store and she'd start asking, and people would pretend that they couldn't understand her. We would then translate, we would speak for her, because we didn't speak with an accent. Her having an accent meant that she was discriminated against. Then we all went to school she was trying to look for work, and she ended up working in a drycleaning establishment in the back, because nobody would give her anything in the service sector. So she was seriously discriminated against because of her language. Anybody with an accent, others did not understand her. My father also had an accent, but because he worked in an English language environment, his was less, so he was able to function much better.

Q: Did your mother experience the same level of discrimination that the Métis or black families encountered?

CC: With the black and Métis families, there was racism involved. We were white. But absolutely we were discriminated against; we say that with our parents, because of language and because of their custom. But for the other family, it was racism. Nobody was walking in front of our house with a rifle. Nobody was throwing bricks through our windows. We were egged a couple of times, but it was different and we knew that it was different. It was only later that I put the name of racism to that, but yes it was different. But no, my parents were seriously discriminated against because they were not, as we called, the English. We weren't the English.

Q: Did your family try to resist assimilation at the same time as trying to fit in?

CC: Yes. My family had a sense of superiority, my mother certainly. A sense of superiority, of specialness. For instance, one of my mother's goals was to show the richness of Ukrainian culture. At school when we would have our parties – Halloween or Valentine's Day – children were expected to come with some baked goods. My mother would bake a torte.

Q: Explain what a torte is.

CC: It's a cake with very little flour or with breadcrumbs, with ground nuts, many layers with different fillings and different flavours, elegantly decorated. Not bars and not just cookies. She would really put on the ritz. She'd go all out and we would carry our tortes to our teacher.

Q: Did people appreciate it?

CC: Oh yes. It wasn't everyday Canadian, so yes. She wanted us to be special, so she would make special things. We also felt special. I think it was in grade 5 the teacher said, how many children in this class are going to go to university? I immediately stood up, and nobody else did. Maybe there was one other child that also stood up. So there was a difference. Were we accepted? Where we were accepted was within the Ukrainian community in Jasper Place. Even though my mother did everything in her power to move away from as many Ukrainians as possible, they found each other.

Q: Who were they?

CC: There were a few other immigrant families but they lived in the better part of town. They came a little bit later. Then there was also the Ukrainians from the previous immigrations. How we found them is that my parents were both very religious. My father came from a background where his grandfather was a cantor, his father was a cantor, some of his cousins are priests and one of his sisters is a nun. Anyhow, it's a religious family. There was a congregation that was forming, or maybe it was already formed. They had their services in a United or some church or auditorium, then they eventually bought that, and my parents and we would all go to that church.

Q: Do you remember where it was?

CC: Yes. Off of 156th Street and I'm gonna say 103rd Avenue, could be 105th. I think it's 103rd Avenue, because we'd walk over. Then eventually either that church burnt down or they tore it

down and built a larger more permanent church. That was a very interesting church because it was very small.

Q: Which one are you talking about?

CC: The one in Jasper Place.

Q: But the first one that was in a United Church building?

CC: That's right, that one. I'm sure it wasn't a Ukrainian church, that it was from one of the Protestant religions that they bought the church. What was interesting about it, the whole church sang. We would also go to the churches in Edmonton to St. Josaphat's and to St. George's and to St. John's – Ukrainian Catholic and Ukrainian Orthodox. My mother's Orthodox, my father's Catholic. When we first came to Edmonton we all went to St. Jehoshaphat's church. Then there was a big fight in the church, or a disagreement, as to which calendar to celebrate Christmas and Easter at, and there was a split. The new immigrants said ixnay to the Latin calendar, and they formed their own church just down the street, St. George's. So we went there.

Q: These were churches in Edmonton?

CC: That's right, in Edmonton. Down the street from St. Jehoshaphat's they moved and built there, so we attended as a family that church. Then my mother was not very fond of some of the ladies who she considered to be arrogant, and she said, I've had enough of this Catholic stuff; I'm Orthodox, I'm going over to St. John's Ukrainian Orthodox Church, and that's where she went. Those are the three churches that we knew and would go to. However, when the church in Jasper Place was formed, my father was the cantor there and they both sang, my mother and father sang there. My mother taught either Ukrainian school or after school Ukrainian language classes at the church, so we were part of that community. So you ask, did my parents fit in? They fit into the Ukrainian community. The other people that we fit in, across the street from us was a family. They had a large yard, they had a very large house, new. All the houses were old in that area, so new – that was always an attraction to everybody: who are these people that are coming

in and building a new house? He was one of the editors for the Edmonton Journal. His last name was Williams, the Williams family. They were just lovely. Anyhow, my parents got along with them.

Q: Because of the journalism connection?

CC: Yes. Firstly, the kids. They had the first TV in town around the block, so after school we'd beg, can we come and watch TV?

Q: What did you watch?

CC: Who knows? The after school – Howdy Doody, I don't know, things like that. Cartoons. Then Mrs. Williams would come home. She was very active in the community, very active.

Q: What did you love about being there?

CC: Firstly, it was a new beautiful house. The Williams were really nice people. The kids were really nice. There were two kids, David and Jeannie.

Q: Were they around your age?

CC: Jeannie was my friend, mine and Halya's friend. David was in love with my older sister Maruisa.

Q: How did that go?

CC: Well my sister Marusia did attract a number of boys that would come to the house. David, they lived across the back lane from us, so David would come in on the way to school. He'd knock on the door and he'd see whether he could walk with Marusia to school, so they did. That was very sweet. Jeannie would wait until David was gone, and then Jeannie would come, and Halya and me and Jeannie would laugh about those two.

Q: Were you best friends?

CC: Jeannie was actually best friends with Halya, and I was part of that group.

Q: Who was your best friend?

CC: Maureen Moore, who lived kitty corner from me in one of the, she was from a family that had lived there before. There was three generations: there was grandparents, parents. They had three houses. There were two daughters and they each had a house. The grandparents had a lovely house. There were two other houses there as well, large lots. Maureen lived in part with her grandparents and sometimes with her mother. It was very interesting. The mother was divorced; that was also very exotic, 1950s divorce. She had a boyfriend. Maureen and I, they would go out to the drive-in and Maureen would invite me.

Q: What was the name of the drive-in?

CC: I believe Starlight. We would go to the drive-in. It was so exotic and lovely.

Q: They had a car?

CC: They had a car and they went to the drive-in. Not only did they have a car, they went to the drive-in. That's such a Canadian thing to do. It was very nice. Anyhow, so that's another old family that lived in the neighbourhood, then eventually of course they moved out.

Q: These are all Anglo families?

CC: That's right.

Q: Were there other ethnics?

CC: There were no other ethnics that I knew of. The ethnics that I knew of in Jasper Place were people who had stores. On Stony Plain Road the first ethnics that came in were Vienna Bakery and Delicatessen. That was a huge advance.

Q: What ethnicity?

CC: Austria. Vienna Bakeries still exist, but I believe it's the grandchildren that have it, and they only have a bakery. When they came in, it was wonderful. My parents were able to go there and talk in German and have the meats that they wanted, the cheeses and baked goods. It was just wonderful to be able to go there. It was a wonderful trip. We would take the trip, walk down to Stony Plain Road and buy whatever it is that they would buy, get a treat from the people, and they would converse. The ethnics that we knew or other people that were not English were people who had stores. Then at the church, around the church there were some.

Q: Did those Ukrainian church people have businesses?

CC: Not that I knew of.

Q: Maybe the drycleaner that your mom worked for?

CC: No, I believe she worked for Page.

Q: Describe Apache Seeds, which is still there on Stony Plain Road.

CC: I think it's my mother who discovered Apache Seeds. That's where she got her seeds. That's where she would get all kinds of things for gardening. It was something that was great. It was also a trip, and I got to accompany her a couple of times. But yes that's where she got her seeds, that's where she would talk with people about gardening. If I remember correctly, besides gardening stuff they had other things as well, more hardware kind of things. It's much smaller than it was earlier. It could be a child's memory that it was big, but Apache Seeds was. . .

Q: Do you still go there?

CC: I do. Once a year I drive over and check them out.

Q: The old hood?

CC: Not only the old hood, but they have really good seeds. They get good products.

Q: Bowling alley.

CC: Yes. Where I would go to the bowling alley is if I got invited to a birthday party and it was at the bowling alley. Boy, that was also very exciting. There was a bowling alley on Stony Plain Road and I believe on 152nd Street, could've been 153rd. But there was one going west on Stony Plain Road from 152nd Street.

Q: You mentioned that you considered it exotic.

CC: That's right, because it was Canadian. Why we participated in "Canadian" things, they were not in the house. In our life and the Ukrainian community, it wasn't. Who went bowling in the Ukrainian community that I knew of? Nobody did, nobody did bowling. It was also a question of having money that you could spend going to a bowling alley for entertainment. You just didn't do that. But if you were invited to a party at the bowling lane, that's pretty good.

Q: You mentioned that the drugstore was an important place.

CC: Of course, because drugstores are; that's where you get your prescriptions.

Q: Was there one in particular?

CC: On the corner of 152nd Street and Stony Plain Road. Maybe it wasn't right on the corner, but it was close. It was important.

Q: Tell me about the Safeway.

CC: Before Safeway came in – let's say it was in the late '50s that it came in – where did we get our groceries? We didn't go to a big grocery store, we went to the little grocery store in Canora. We went to different little stores and then relied on our own produce. Then this big Safeway comes in. It's a challenge. My parents had more money, more income, so my parents were then able to buy more things, as opposed to just relying on the things that were canned and, later on when we got a freezer, what was frozen. You have this big grocery store, so yes it was quite an improvement to the community, and people went shopping there. We would walk there and then we would take a cab back with our groceries.

Q: There was a cab company in Jasper Place?

CC: Diamond Cabs, and they're still around.

Q: Did you go with your shopping list to make sure you were overspending?

CC: I don't remember that. I just remember who got to go.

Q: Was there a parking lot beside the Safeway?

CC: Oh yes, there was a huge parking lot in the front. It was a big store, and it was a huge improvement to the community.

Q: One more thing on Stony Plain Road – the hotel with the bar.

CC: Yes, the hotel with the bar. Why that was interesting for me was because you had different entrances – men only and then women and escorts. Maurine Moore's mother and boyfriend, they would go to the bar on Saturday afternoon. Sometimes Maurine and I would go down, and I think we were allowed in. My memory is that we were allowed in, and we had to go through the

escort, the women and escort, then we'd talk with them and then we'd leave. I remember going into that bar, and it was something quite different.

Q: Was it like those places where people are drinking schooners of beer and the tablecloths are soaked in beer? Or was it more classy?

CC: No, it wasn't classy. It was like the Old Strathcona. When I went into the Old Strathcona I go, okay this is what that bar was like. When you walked in, you walked in through different doors. But once you were in. . . It was ridiculous. I remember as a kid going, this is ridiculous. I walk in through this door, does that mean I have to sit in this corner where all the women and escorts are? No, it wasn't. Even as a kid, I saw how ridiculous this was. People would sit around and they'd have those beer glasses, tons of beer glasses, with jugs I'm quite sure. Jugs with beer glasses, and also drinking tomato juice and beer. There were certain things that they had at that bar: pickled eggs, tomato juice and beer.

Q: What's the name for that?

CC: There is a word, there is a name, it's called something, but I have no idea what it was. Oh, was there sawdust on the floor?

Q: Smoke?

CC: Oh yes, nobody cared. My father used to be a member of the temperance league in Ukraine. He was very active, and he was opposed to smoking and drinking and all of that.

Q: Your parents never went into the bar?

CC: No, they would never go to a bar.

Q: What about school?

CC: From 1 to 3 I was in Brightview, then grade 4 I moved to Canora.

Q: Grade 5 was a special year in terms of four Indigenous boys.

CC: Right. It turns out that I went back to Brightview – grade 4 in Canora, and they sent me back to Brightview the next year.

Q: So with the four boys, you said you thought there was something wrong with the situation. What did you mean?

CC: Firstly, they weren't from the neighbourhood. It was an all-neighbourhood school, all neighbourhood kids. They were definitely not from the neighbourhood, they didn't live there. Secondly, we knew because they were driven in. There was one boy, Ernie Woods, my age. At recess we would talk. I think that we were friends. Then there were three older boys who were teenagers; they would've 15 or 14 or 16 years old, and they were placed in my grade of 5 with these kids. They big, physically big, and it was just humiliating that they were put into our grade. It was really, really hard. It was obviously hardest for them, but it was hard for the whole classroom. You have these kids that are brought in.

Q: In a van?

CC: I don't know. It turns out that with Brightview and maybe Canora, it was part of the residential school system somehow. Some kids were brought in there from wherever and they were sent to school there. The older ones didn't speak, they didn't take part. They were there. It was like a punishment for them. It was humiliating, because of the huge age difference between us kids, running around playing and doing things at recess. We were childish, we were children, and we all played together or not. You had your different groups or whatever, but these kids were not part of it. There was no way that you were going to be playing catch or skipping with these big boys, so it was humiliating.

Q: How did the teachers treat them?

CC: I don't think there was anything specific that the teachers said or did.

Q: To include them in the instruction?

CC: We had a very bad teacher in grade 5. He had a really hard time dealing with us as a class. Could he reach out to them? He just was not capable. Maybe other teachers were, but that particular teacher didn't have that capacity to do that. It was just very humiliating. Did the whole class feel that way? We all knew that it was very strange. Maybe some people were mean, maybe there were some mean kids that did things, but I don't remember that. I just remember the shock when these kids were brought in. The other things is they weren't there from the first day, it was maybe like three weeks in or something like that; it wasn't immediate. Ernie Woods, who was our age, maybe he was a year older or something like that, he fit in the most.

Q: Was he a friend just in school, or did you see outside of school?

CC: No, he was driven in; they were driven in and they were driven out. It was only at school.

Q: Did the teacher say, boys and girls, we have some new students who have joined us?

CC: I'm sure he said that, maybe he gave us the names of the people. Obviously I knew Ernie. But that's because the three big boys sat at the back. I'll show you a photograph. Then Ernie sat closer, so we were able to communicate.

Q: Were they related to each other?

CC: I don't think so, I don't know. I never talked to the three older boys.

Q: They weren't disruptive, they just sat totally silent at the back of the room?

CC: They were just, that's right. They weren't disruptive, no. We were disruptive, they were not disruptive. I think that they were just humiliated to be put in this class.

Q: Did you go back to Canora for grade 6?

CC: No, just the one year in Canora.

Q: Those boys never came back after that year?

CC: No, they didn't bring them back and they didn't bring Ernie back. But in talking to others like my sister Marusia she said yes, they would bring in kids. She was four years older. She said they would bring in kids from a residential school.

Q: Your teachers were all Anglo?

CC: Absolutely.

Q: You loved them all?

CC: Yes, except Miss Beck. I was one of her, she would have pets, so she never picked on me. So I was fine, but she picked on other kids. She liked to pick on boys, but she picked on girls. It would be a class thing with her as well. Well we were all kind of a similar class, but there's a pecking order. I had mixed feelings. I learned from her; there were things I learnt, so I was happy with that.

Q: Did she teach one subject, or the entire curriculum?

CC: At that time you had only one teacher. I believe Mathematics was what she. . . I love numbers. . . . She treated me well, but when you have a discrepancy, when you have a teacher who picks on others and is mean. She was mean. She was tall, skinny, wore red lipstick and had nails with polish on. She kind of fit the cartoon character of a mean teacher.

Q: Did she make kids cry?

CC: Yes absolutely.

Q: Did she strap kids?

CC: Yes, there was strapping. I don't a hundred percent remember her strapping, but yes there was strapping going on all through elementary.

Q: In 1962 Jasper Place Composite was the largest high school in Western Canada. You started in 1964 when it was amalgamated.

CC: I went to Jasper Place Composite High School in grade 9. I did two years of elementary at Hillcrest Junior High, then Jasper Place Composite High School was built. We had a high school just off of Stony Plain Road and 156th Street where Grant MacEwan eventually built their building, so it was obviously torn down. But they built the school and it was very big, lots of kids there, lots of kids in the area. They said all grade 9s are going to go to that school, because we had the big school.

Q: Was it exciting, or was it intimidating?

CC: Not intimidating, it was very nice. It was great to be in a big school. I liked it, I enjoyed it.

Q: What were the two streams?

CC: Either you were in the academic stream or you were a shop secretary. I think it was in grade 10 that you chose, but it seems to me in grade 9 there was all this discussion about where you're going to go. You had to make a choice. All girls were expected to go to Home Ec; we had a Home Ec class.

Q: That's a class, but not a stream.

CC: That's right. And all boys were expected to do a Shop class. But other than that, you were in a stream. When you graduated you were able either to go on for more education or you were going into the trades or into a job.

Q: What would be the proportion of those streams in the classes?

CC: Because this was a mix of not just my area but from the west, from the south, which was a more well-to-do area. . . West Edmonton, now that is Laurier Heights, Meadowlark. The composite high school is in Meadowlark. So from those areas, which were economically better. I can't answer that question, but it seems to me it was 50-50 or 60-40 or something like that. It seemed to be fairly even.

Q: So there were more intellectually ambitious families there?

CC: Probably like 60-40, but maybe it was 50-50. I was in the academic, so I don't know. But I did have friends who went into the other one.

Q: You said when you were at that school, you knew you lived in a poor part of town.

CC: That's right, we knew we were. But then when we saw how the other side lived, and all those things that happen when you're in high school: your clothing, how you dress, do you get a ride to school or do you walk to school, do you take the bus.

Q: What did you do?

CC: We either walked or took a bus.

[change battery]

Q: Let's just pick up again about high school. Was it in high school that you first became aware of that other side of 149th Street?

CC: The high school was a mix, and we saw a whole mix of people there that you actually went daily to school with, but certainly saw the huge difference when we went into Edmonton. The minute you crossed 149th Street from Jasper Place, the minute you walked in, you saw not just the occasional house and yard that were well looked after, and you'd have five very poor houses. In Jasper Place you often didn't have fences, you had dogs running around in the yard protecting. It was always for me as a kid walking back alone from the bus, I was always afraid of dogs, growing up. The dogs would come out. Lots of people had German Shepherds or a German some kind of mix, and they would be vicious and protecting their turf when you're walking down the sidewalk. It was dangerous. That's Jasper Place – it's a mix with the occasional really nice yard and house. When you walked into Edmonton on the other side of 149th Street, it was different. The yards were looked after much more, the houses were larger. They didn't have those little houses, the kind that we lived in.

Q: What about the clothing?

CC: Everything, it was a much more well-to-do place. It was not just high school. I went to my violin lessons and I'd have to cross. I walked to a bus, not the one on 147th Street but in the other area, and I'd have to walk through that area. One was safer for a child, the other one not as safe. There was a very big economic difference and class difference. In terms of clothing, because my mother paid a lot of attention to that and we also paid a lot of attention to that, we specifically didn't have that difference. My mother, just to give you a story, we would get packages. Every Christmas and every Easter my aunt, who later moved to Edmonton, but when she lived in the United States, they'd send us a huge box of really beautiful clothing that we would have. Shoes, we always had patent leather shoes, either black or white, and little gloves. Just beautiful clothing. Twice a year we would get what we'd call our Sunday clothes or our party clothes, so that was very good. Then later on my mother would take us once a year at least, maximum twice, but once a year. She'd wait until right after when there were really boxing sales, and we'd either go to Holt Renfrew or Johnson Walker. We'd go there and my mother was very clever in bargaining. Let's say she came in with four or five daughters. We'd try different things on and she'd go, okay so you're going to get that. Then she'd call over the manager and say, okay I'm

going to buy this. She would negotiate a discount, not only a discount, and then she'd say, I'm going to pay you on instalments. So we had very nice clothing, but she was able to negotiate a price that was very good. At a certain point, I used to be very embarrassed by that, that we couldn't just go in there and just pay. I'm not as clever as she was, because she was able to negotiate all things. But I negotiate things, because you can do that, you should do that. My mother thought that this was of course only the natural thing you do -- you never pay the asking price, you negotiate a price. So in terms of clothing, the answer for me is no, for us specifically it wasn't. We knew the difference, of course. But in terms of our presentation, it wasn't. For some kids it was, of course, a huge difference in clothing; it was jarring, there were jarring differences. But for my little family within that area, no, because there was an attempt to be well dressed.

Q: In what sense did you feel discriminated against by the families on the other side of 149th Street?

CC: Because they were able to afford a lot more than we could.

Q: Did they treat you differently? How did it affect your social life in high school?

CC: Some of the clubs, if there was a fee, if you had to pay a fee, then that was not. Unless, for instance, I was babysitting, so then I was able to afford a fee. If you were able to pay for something. We never had parties, like birthday parties, because of the expense.

Q: You mean birthday parties in your house?

CC: In my house, ya. We would maybe have one a year, like somebody would get a birthday party. But normally we didn't have those kind of things. We would've never gone to a bowling alley or a restaurant or café. I was already 12 or something when I went to my first café. My father and I were talking and I said, well I've never been. So he took me to a café or restaurant so I could have that experience and know what that was like. Where? In Edmonton, in North Edmonton in the Ukrainian area. After Ukrainian school he said, today we will go to a restaurant. I was really naïve. I had no idea that people served you and that you didn't do the dishes

afterwards. It was embarrassing. My father says, no sit down. So there were clear differences that we had that we knew, so you can pass but you know you can't. We never had a car. Sometimes my father or mother would ask others, are you going this way, can you give us a lift? There were just clear differences. We went to summer camp, for instance, and the way we were able to afford it is my mother would work as a cook. She'd be the cook, so then we were able to go to the camp. Ukrainian Scouts and Girl Guides. But we never called the Girl Guides, we were all Scouts.

Q: When you left the church in Jasper Place and went to Edmonton, how would you describe those parishioners?

CC: Primarily they were not post-World War Two immigrants. There may have been a couple of families there; I didn't know them. Maybe my parents knew them, but I didn't know them. And their spiritual practises were different, in some ways the customs were different than in the churches that we went to in Edmonton. Everybody in the church sang. That was something that I really liked. In that church, we'd come and we'd all sing. In the Edmonton churches you had choirs, each one had a choir. Some parishioners would sing, some others wouldn't. Primarily you didn't sing. On certain special days some of the practises were different. You would know this way better than I do. There's a certain day, and I believe it is before Easter, where you make atonement. Some people walk on their knees. A lot of people would do that, on their knees from the entrance, from the outside, all the way to the front. I've never seen that at St. Josaphat's or at St. John's; I don't see people walking on their knees all the way to the front. So the atonement that you see there is from an older practise. My parents explained what that was. But again, it's an older practise that I didn't see before.

Q: What about language?

CC: Well it was all Church Slavonic and then the Catholics changed to Ukrainian and then the Orthodox did that later on. I really liked Church Slavonic because I understood it. Well I understood the service. Maybe outside of that I wouldn't have understood it, but I understood the

service. I really liked that. It was older but the habits were the spiritual habits, walking on their knees, walking from the outside up those steps and then walking in on your knees all the way.

Q: I've never seen that.

CC: Not even out in East Central Alberta?

Q: I didn't go to church there. As a family, what else were you doing in those parishes?

CC: Within the community, firstly was Ukrainian school. We used to go during the week, I think it was on Wednesdays or whatever, at the elementary. Then Saturday morning was the high school, so we went there until grade 12. We went from 1 to 12 to Ukrainian school. We went to Ukrainian youth organization, which was the scouts. That would be every Saturday for an hour or so. So we attended that, and camps. We would go to church. We all went as a family and then sometimes some of us would go when my mother said, okay I'm going to St. John's, some of us would go with my mother to St. John's and some would go with my father. That was when the first split kind of occurred. There was a schism. It was fine. We just felt as children that we shouldn't let one parent go by themselves, so we just divided it that way. Then my father, who was a cantor at one church, the priest in that church would go and serve at Jasper Place. He went to Calder and a few other places to other churches, and he would take my father with him and he'd be the cantor, and he'd drive around. He'd have say three services, at 8 o'clock and 9 o'clock and 10 o'clock, because those are the basic times; 10 o'clock is the long one in the Catholic church. Then he would come home. So at that point we stopped going to the Jasper Place school, because we would never go for the 8 o'clock; I think that's when they had the service. We kind of liked to sleep in in the morning, so we'd say that we would go to St. George's Ukrainian Catholic church for the 10 o'clock. You could kind of come a bit later. We were very bad. There was a Smitty's on Jasper Avenue and whatever street. We'd take the bus. One of us would go down to the church, get the parish bulletin that we have to produce. So we took turns. My father would then ask questions, and he knew what was up, because he asked us other questions as to what the sermon was about. Anyhow, we'd eat at Smitty's.

Q: Did you have a parallel social life because you were spending so much time with these Ukrainians who lived in other parts of Edmonton?

CC: I'd say that my parents' primary community was the Ukrainian community. My father was extremely active in the community. He was a founder with the Plast organization here. He was the founder of the Ukrainian high school, *Kursy Ukraino Znavstva*. He was very active in the cooperative movement in Ukraine, worked here at Ukrainian Credit Union; he was on the board. He was very active in the movement for a patriarch in the Ukrainian Catholic Church, and he was a cantor. He gave 10 percent of his earnings to community, to church and community things. He was very active. My mother was not as active, because six children, etc. But she sang in a choir, she used to teach Ukrainian kindergarten, she taught in Ukrainian school. She did various different things. I'd say that she imparted a love of things Ukrainian, but not in a dogmatic way. She was extremely good. When people didn't go to church she'd say, it doesn't matter, God doesn't want you to go there because it's your duty. You'll go back when it's important for you. She was very good.

Q: Did you establish a social life among Ukrainians your age who did not live in Jasper Place?

CC: Yes, I would say that for me and most of my siblings, we were kind of in between both. We had friends within where we lived but we were not really central there. Some of it was certain ages, like when you're active on the baseball team, then it's everybody. But as you get older, your circles get narrower. In the Ukrainian community as well, we also felt that we were part of the community and we had friends, but they weren't exactly the closest. We always felt like we were kind of an island of our own. We had the Ukrainian community over there that we fit in but we knew we were different, and then where we lived we were part of it but we were different. That's kind of how we always felt about ourselves, is that we were different. We were very happy that there were six of us – five girls and one boy – so that we had each other. We'd often talk about this: how do we fit in, what are we going to do, where's our path, where do we belong?

Q: When you decided to go to the Seven Seas, how did you get there?

CC: We used to walk to the Edmonton transit system on 147th Street and take that. Sometimes we'd take the Diamond bus, sometimes we'd get a ride, and sometimes we'd take a cab. That's how we did it, so that was transport. On Jasper Avenue and I think 108th Street, the Seven Seas, they had this wonderful restaurant. The first time we went there somebody had a wedding; it was very posh for us at that time. Seven Seas, a wedding there, it was very beautiful. If I remember correctly, you wouldn't know this family, Bayracks. He was a geologist but he married a woman from the first immigration, descended from the first immigration. The post-WWII immigration was not always very welcoming, in fact the opposite. They had a lot of prejudice to previous immigrations. I would say that we were lucky that my father had a lot of respect for the previous immigrations. He wrote about them. He wrote about the establishment of the school system in East Central Alberta and the role of Ukrainians in that. His brother, who was a priest, came in the late '20s, his sister came, that's how we came to Canada. So not only personal experience but also knowledge. There wasn't that prejudice that existed among my peers in the Ukrainian community towards the previous immigration. There'd be a lot of making fun of the way they spoke Ukrainian, their habits, and things like that. It wasn't always getting along nice. Meanwhile, Seven Seas. But because this is an older family, it's not at a Ukrainian hall, the wedding; it was at the restaurant. So that's how we went there. It was then considered a mixed marriage: old immigration, new guy. So we went there and it was wonderful. It was I think at one point one of Edmonton's finer restaurants, and it was quite the thing to be there.

Q: It was Chinese food and Western food?

CC: It was what we call Canadian Chinese food, not what you get now in a Chinese restaurant. Lots of sweet and sour things, lots of fried rice dishes. I'm sure they threw in some perogies. There was another Chinese restaurant where they called it Ukrainian Chinese Canadian, or Canadian Chinese Ukrainian. They'd have sweet and sour sauce on pyrohy. Off of 97th or 95th Street this existed. Anyhow, it was that which you call Canadian Chinese food that was developed, way too sweet for our taste today. Lots of deep fried things, probably deep fried shrimp which we would consider seriously exotic, bits of chunky chicken and sauce; chop suey,

which is entirely a thing that was developed here. Its inspiration is Chinese but it's not Chinese food per se.

Q: It was kind of weird food that wasn't what you were used to.

CC: Yes, that even made it more exotic or special. Of course I don't remember the food at all, I remember the place and the way it was decorated. It was darker, but very beautiful and lush – the tablecloths, the lighting there. I think they had an aquarium with fish; I don't know I can't remember, maybe I'm adding it from some other restaurant. But it was very special.

Q: Jasper Place is annexed to Edmonton in 1964 and you've said you love Jasper Place, not Edmonton.

CC: Right. There was a plebiscite. We voted. Yes, there was a whole campaign – do we join or not? There was a lot of debate, and within the family we debated as well. That was the first time I was able to vote. I voted against amalgamation, my parents voted for; I'm not sure what my sisters did, whether they voted for or not. But I voted against, because I really liked the specialness. I felt being part of something that is different from Edmonton. I knew that Jasper Place was different. I also thought, correctly so, the minute you amalgamate... there were a lot of advantages in terms of the utilities, transport, you name it, lots of advantages.

Everybody was going to Edmonton anyhow. But there was an autonomy that Jasper Place had. While I never did, I know that my parents and my oldest sister went to council meetings on certain issues. It was close, like you could go there and you talked. You can do the same thing in Edmonton, but it's not the same. So you had a more immediate relationship to governance. I say that now, but at the time it was just that you felt more of a totality rather than Edmonton. I think that class or economics was also part of it. By that time I had already been in Jasper Place Composite High School, so that was a real mix. My little area, Canora, was no longer there. But I didn't want to lose that, so I voted against amalgamation. I really liked Jasper Place.

Q: All these years later, how do you feel about that vote and about your wish to be identified with Jasper Place?

CC: [...] I think that self government, like being able to influence how things are, is really important, otherwise I wouldn't live in a co-op. But of course the advantages of a larger metropolitan area are clear. I probably wouldn't be torn, but emotionally I really, growing up in that area made a real difference to me and really influenced my outlook, understanding, for instance, impoverished people in my area. When I say impoverished, I don't mean just economically, but culturally as well, what effect that had and has on people. When you don't have expectations or opportunities or hopes, it makes a huge difference. I grew up with people like that. I had a close friend in grade 7 who had to leave school because she got pregnant. Grade 7. To me it was a huge shock. I don't know what happened to her. She came from a family where kids were being abused. Growing up in Jasper Place influenced who I am and my politics, absolutely.

Q: Your parents lived there until they died?

CC: Yep. From that little house they moved to Meadowlark, and they both died in place. My mother always loved it.

Q: None of you or your siblings have settled back in Jasper Place.

CC: No. Well I lived in Toronto. I like an urban life. At Jasper Place the place wasn't so much suburbs, it was kind of small town. But then when we moved into Meadowlark, that was suburbs. I don't want to live in the suburbs.

Q: Let's talk about the electric buses and the terminal for Diamond buses.

CC: The public transport system in Edmonton and Jasper Place were very different. In Edmonton when we would go there, they had trolleys, they had electrical buses. Those were great. [...] In Edmonton it was run by the City of Edmonton. The ones in Jasper Place were run by a private company, Diamond Buses. You couldn't transfer between both. You either paid Diamond, or one or the other. The Diamond bus would go into Edmonton and go down Jasper

Avenue. Its final stop was downtown Edmonton in the old Greyhound station. It also stopped in front of the Hudson's Bay. In Edmonton you had real sidewalks, you had electric trolleys, and you had paved roads with real sidewalks. In Jasper Place you had wooden sidewalks, you had gravel roads, so in the muddy season if we caught the Diamond bus we'd go out in our rubber boots and get on with them, because you couldn't walk in your shoes. We'd go to Edmonton on the Diamond bus. We had bags, and we'd put our boots in the bag and change into our shoes, and that's how we were downtown. So there were two different systems. The Edmonton system was much better. From what I remember as a kid, it was just cleaner. It was cleaner and more often; I don't know what the schedule was. But the Diamond system [...] came twice a day. Maybe it didn't come all days, but whatever the schedule was, you couldn't rely on it to get into Edmonton on a regular basis. So that was the Diamond bus. With the Edmonton system you had a regular schedule; you went every 15 minutes or every half hour, I don't know what it was. But you had a regular schedule, so you could actually catch it and go to wherever you were going.

Q: Did one system feel safer than the other?

CC: As a kid, we would go to the Edmonton system because I think it was safer. You'd get on the bus and off you'd go to where the Ukrainians were.

Q: So you used the trolley system to get around other parts of Edmonton.

CC: Absolutely. The Diamond bus was always very full, that's what my memory of it as a kid was. Because the community had muddy roads and people in their boots, it wasn't as pleasant. The other one was much more pleasant to be in.

Q: You mentioned your mother's concern about being rounded up. Was there an awareness of the internments in the First and Second World Wars?

CC: No, that was not at all part of that, it was the rounding up of Jews. It was the rounding up of Jews. You have to understand that my parents, that Ukraine and Central and Eastern Europe before the Second World War was a very mixed part of the country. You had Ukrainians and

Poles and Jews and Germans, and then where my mother, Russians and other parts, Slovaks and Czechs, Hungarians. My mother knew five languages when she came here, so did my father. They knew languages because they conversed with people; they had all kinds of relations. It was a very multicultural environment that they grew up in. For my mother, the experience for Jews was the harshest in their war stories. Her fear is entirely from the Second World War of people being rounded up. It had nothing to do with the Internment camps and anyone with an Austrian passport being suspect.

Q: Why would she think Ukrainians would be targeted?

CC: That's a whole different discussion, but that was her real fear.

Q: Were you and your family aware of the differences in shopping hours between Jasper Place and Edmonton? Were you familiar with the Jasper Place Department Store?

CC: About shopping, very interesting question about time. For me it made no difference. I say that and it's not exactly true. When Jasper Place amalgamated with Edmonton, and I think this was the case throughout the province, for some reason I was much more aware of Sunday closing. I'm sure that was a provincial regulation, but it was probably because I was older and therefore more aware of it. But I'm sure that it made a difference to my parents, especially my father, who worked such long hours, to be able to do shopping afterwards. I don't think it was a big motivator one way or the other. My mother, as I said, primarily worked at home, though not always; she also had other jobs. We did not rely that much on shopping. Once Safeway came in, that would've made a difference to them. But before then, it wouldn't have made a difference. Some difference, but not much. So I don't think that the hours were of great importance. I don't remember those kinds of discussions in the family, and certainly not in amalgamation. For my father, things like having more direct access to the post office, the main post office downtown was one of his favourite haunts. He was constantly writing and corresponding, so when we would go downtown by the Edmonton trolley he would get off. The bus would always stop in front of MacDonald Hotel. It would stop there and there would either be a change of bus drivers or we'd wait there for ten minutes or something like that. Anyhow, it was a stop along the route.

My father would leave the bus, go to the post office, do whatever he had to do at the post office, and then come back on the bus. He would tell that to the bus driver. We as children were always in a panic mode, would he make it back in time. He did, or the bus driver would wait for him and then he'd give him a lesson that he's so many minutes late and he's the cause of this. But anyhow, the question of timing is not. I vaguely remember the Jasper Place Department Store. But in terms of clothing, buying clothing or anything else, it was primarily in Edmonton. My mother, as I said, would be mainly responsible for that. She would decide which stores it is that she would go to, and that's where she'd go. Purchases were not that, outside of the delis, the Vienna Bakery and Delicatessen that came in and then later on Bon Ton. But that was much later, that's when we had left already the Canora area and moved into Meadowlark, that we went to the Bon Ton. But shopping was primarily Edmonton, for my family.

Q: In the '50s, what was your awareness of TB, hepatitis and polio?

CC: In terms of disease, in terms of the medical system, it was private; there was no public. We were very supportive, the whole family, of public healthcare. We as children saw what my parents had to go through in terms of negotiating paying for medicine, for doctor visits, and for dental care. As in furniture and clothing, my parents were always paying off the doctor on installments. So that was a huge improvement. We as a family experienced polio. When the vaccine came in, everybody went. As well as for measles. Any vaccines that were available were readily taken. My sister Halyna had polio, got polio, and almost died from that. It certainly I think led to her early death, and it compromised her health when she was little. She got over that but I remember very well sitting by her bedside. I was the one, my role was to sit by, and if things improved or got worse I was to call my mother, who then called the doctor. The doctors at that time did house calls. I remember that doctor actually very fondly. He would come by and there would be house calls. But anyhow, yes so she had polio. At one point she was delirious and she asked me to get a measuring tape. I'm running around the house, I think she was probably nine and I was seven. I'm running around the house and mother says, what are you doing? I said, Halyna wants to have a measuring tape. So my mother immediately went to her, and she was burning up. The doctor came and they got the fever down, and she wasn't crippled, and she came out of it. But yes she had polio. That was a huge concern for us. Hepatitis and tuberculosis, I'm

sure it wasn't a concern. None of these things affected anyone in my family specifically, in the immediate family. So maybe others, but no we did not have that. But polio absolutely was a huge, huge problem. When the vaccine came, it was greeted with open arms.

Photographs. This is a photograph of bus shelters from the 1960s. They were what we considered at that time new. When I look at that, 1960s, what is that, 60 or 70 years ago. So ya, and this looks like the buses from the terminal in Jasper Place, because it's longer. That became a hub. But Jasper Place was then part of Edmonton already, and this is part of the Edmonton Transit System. So that's that photograph.

Okay so we have these, and these are lumber companies. We have the Muttart Lumber Company and the Imperial Lumber Company. I don't remember the Muttart Lumber Company at all. I'm not sure when it closed or whether it became the Imperial Lumber Company. I do remember the Imperial Lumber Company. I would probably not have gone into that store, maybe once or twice. But we used to, in order to go to high school, we would go down to Stony Plain Road and catch the bus. We would walk up and down from 152nd all the way down Stony Plain Road. So yes, I remember it but not as something that I really looked at.

Oh this is the drugstore. Okay, we have my favourite drugstore. Why is it my favourite drugstore? It's because of course they had various drugs. It was on the corner of 152nd Street and Stony Plain Road. It's because they also had candy. It was also a place where you could go to and get warmed up in the wintertime if you were waiting for the bus. If I remember correctly, the people that worked there and owned it were nice people; they didn't ask you to move along or something like that. So it was a stopping place on your travels, where you could pick up some things.

Q: Did it have a name?

CC: I'm not a hundred percent sure.

Q: You spoke earlier of Etherington.

CC: Etherington sounds correct, Etherington Drugstore, it could very well be that.

Q: This is a separate school, so you wouldn't have gone there.

CC: No we did not, because my mother said, my children will not go to a Catholic school. No, we did not go there because my mother did not wish us to go to a Catholic school. This was the agreement that my parents had, and my father agreed even though he was extremely active in the Catholics.

Q: That's a children's parade.

CC: Okay, parades. That is something that we as a family took part in watching, and sometimes we were invited to participate in. That was always great. When did we have them? We had, if I remember, in the springtime but also around in the wintertime. They'd have a queen and they'd have princesses. If you were invited to be part of that entourage, that was great. There would be various marching bands. It was great, I loved those parades. It was a real old-fashioned parade, the kind that you don't have now. But you had an awful lot of community involvement. I'm sure schools were involved in it, community groups of various kinds. We would both participate if we could and certainly we watched and thought that they were lovely. I guess that's one of the things about growing up in a town as opposed to the city. Of course I didn't grow up in a city, so I don't know. But in a town, you have these kind of events. I don't know who the women's league was, but they'd come knocking at our door, and I know that my sister Marusa was invited to be a queen. I was invited once to participate in a contest. The ladies would come knocking, so it was very nice to be included in these kinds of events. But ya, parades were great.

Okay so this is the 149th Street MacKinnon Ravine. This is right beside the bus terminal, the Edmonton bus terminal on 147th Street. That's where the bus stopped, but right west of it was the ravine. Usually I would come with a sister, but not always. We'd go down into the ravine and walk through it. We used to call it, in my family, the Number Seven Woods. Why Number Seven? Because the Edmonton #7 bus stopped on 147th Street. That's the bus that we would catch, so we called it the Number Seven Woods. We would go down into the ravine. There was also a bridge across it, but we would also go down. It was beautiful. Of course this was always in the summertime, spring and fall – never in the winter. But it was beautiful. It was a wonderful

place to either wait for the bus or afterwards to walk through. It was a beautiful piece of nature. It was Edmonton but we considered. . .

Q: Were there mushrooms there?

CC: My mother taught me to pick only one kind of mushroom. I was the youngest of the group to go, so I got just *pidpenki*. I don't know what that is in English. They're the ones you get in the store, but this is not. But they are small, whereas she felt that the other ones could make differentiate between mushrooms, so no I would pick no mushrooms. My sister Oksana was brilliant at picking mushrooms, because she was taught a much broader range. But I only know *pidpenki*.

[...]

[...]

[END]