

George Cuff and Wayne Krys

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Interviewers: Colette Lebeuf and Don Bouzek

Camera: Don Bouzek

WK: My [parents were the] children of farmers. They were married in June of 1950 and moved into [Jasper Place] into a house that my dad had purchased with a \$1,000 loan from my grandmother, who had [recently] sold the farm as my grandfather had passed. [Home] was on 151<sup>st</sup> Street and 99<sup>th</sup> Avenue right on the corner. [My parents] lived in that location [until] my father passed away in 2017; [our family lived there for 67 years] until the very end. [...] They had remodeled and rebuilt and added on and just loved the location and the people around there. I grew up there next to the Cuffs, went to Central School, went one year to Britannia School, because Stratford [...], which was the new school in Jasper Place, wasn't completed at that time. Then the following year Stratford opened but the school still wasn't completed, and I spent a year at Jasper Place Composite High School in a wing that was set aside for Stratford School. In grade 9 I went to Stratford School and was [a part of] the first graduating class there in ['65-'66]. I attended Jasper Place Composite High School and wanted to get into Engineering. I didn't have the Math mark to get into Engineering, so I spent another [semester] in high school trying to upgrade my Math. I decided, "I hate this, I don't wanna do Math my whole life." I went into Education and spent 32 years as a teacher in Edmonton Public Schools. Loved it, and I've been retired for 18 years and love that too. I don't know how I used to be able to fit work into [my day].

GC: My father came from Liverpool, England, to Canada and ended up in the Lloydminster-Paradise Valley area, met my mother, who was part of the Benner family. They had a hand in establishing the Paradise School and [3:06] School Division. My mom and dad moved to Edmonton about 1946 or '47, and I was born in 1948. When I was born, I was originally at a home that was just north of Barrel Taxi on 150<sup>th</sup> Street right across from Safeway. I think within the year we moved to the Jasper Place home at 9909 – 151<sup>st</sup> Street, which was next door to Wayne Krys. I cannot recall a day that I didn't have the Krys's as neighbours. If we

didn't, I didn't know that, but it may well be true. Grew up there, went to Central School Grades 1 through 6 with the exception of Grades 3 and 5 [when] I went to Sherwood School I think I went there because of a re-jigging of boundaries, I'm not entirely sure. Either that or they might've just singled me out and decided to try me in a different school! In any case, most of my time was at Central. I remember the principal, a guy by the name of Mr. Wes Wetter [...]. Our teacher was Mrs. Carlson, who happened to be on the same newspaper route that Wayne and I had; she lived on Summit Drive in West Edmonton. At Sherwood School, the principal was a lady by the name of Mrs. Shram. [Our family] had a longstanding connection to that area and to [those schools]. Ended up grade 9 in Jasper Place Composite High School. I think the reason it was they didn't have proper space for junior high students, but Jasper Place Comp had so much space that they were trying to fill in the blanks in those years. We ended up becoming the largest school in Western Canada, I think 2,500 students at the time. I went there in Grade 9 and stayed through until Grade 12; and, as I said, liked it so much I went back for a follow-up Grade 12 year. I tell people I loved sports and girls, I'm not sure in what order, but in any case, they both proved to be my undoing when it came to Math and Science. Finished there and stayed there I think maybe for an additional year. [After finishing Grade 12], I went to the Royal Bank and applied in Jasper Place and got posted to a branch in the Connors Hill area of Edmonton, and from there to Cranbrook, and then back to Edmonton. I spent a few more years in Edmonton going to university. I finished university and then took on the job as the second-ever director of Parks and Recreation in Spruce Grove. That was May of 1974, and three years later, I was the mayor for the next 12 years while I was working as a consultant. So that's a quick snapshot. I'm still in Spruce Grove – same house, same family, same wife 45 years later.

Q: Growing up in the neighbourhood, what was your house like?

GC: We had a small, as I recall, mostly green and white wooden-frame house. It constantly had water problems, in part because the Krys's had a nicer house next door and they had a yard that was higher than ours, and the water would flow into our back yard. Our back yard

consisted of Jasper Place gumbo, which was dirt and clay from various other housing and street building sites. We could get the dirt for free, which would've appealed to my father. I can remember year after year trying to bale out the basement. Where my brother and I resided for most of our growing up years was in bedrooms downstairs, so you had to keep it fairly dry. It was a very poor area. We were constantly in the back yard weeding the garden, such as it was. Actually, we had a lengthy garden, because we had large lots in those days, at least deep lots. But our garden was nowhere comparable to the neighbours, the Krys's. But in any case, it helped to subsidize my mom and dad's income and feed a family of four. I was the youngest of four children, and that's where I grew up. The house was fine, and I never knew anything different. People came, they visited, my cousins came. How we had Christmas dinner with eight or ten of us in the same place is beyond me, because it was 800 sq. ft. There was a ditch out front [which we used as a] skating rink for part of the winter. One of our friends across the street had a skating rink in the back yard that his dad built along with boards, and we thought that was just something like the National Hockey League. We did not belong to the Jasper Place or Crestwood Community Leagues because that was expensive; you had to pay money to join. So we simply went and hopped over the boards and skated until somebody noticed that we weren't members and would try to kick us out. We ended up delivering newspapers in that same area, which was essentially 149<sup>th</sup> Street to 146<sup>th</sup> Street. That was operated out of a "paper shack", or district office, was the proper title. That was run by *The Edmonton Journal* on the corner of 148<sup>th</sup> Street across from the footbridge on Stony Plain Road.

Q: Did your house have indoor plumbing?

GC: I remember us having an outhouse, so in the early days there would've been an outhouse. When indoor plumbing came, I think we all got onto the same indoor plumbing line. I remember water being delivered. I remember the milkman coming around to the back, the milk chute, and the milk the odd time being frozen in the winter. Services were largely negligible and nonexistent until I think when we amalgamated. Amalgamation [in

1964] brought a whole lot of services that most of us never knew existed, including paved roads, for example.

Q: Describe your house and yard.

WK: We lived in a tiny, probably 800 feet or less, two-bedroom home. I don't remember this, but I was told it was a dugout basement. The home was lower to the ground. After a few years my parents had the house lifted up and a basement poured to it. There was a huge yard, 50 by 150, surrounded front and side by a ditch and mud roads everywhere. People often had walkways, a wooden bridge over the ditch, to get into the yard; there was a driveway into the yard. The ditch was full of water most of the year. Everybody, it seemed, had water problems because the gumbo soil didn't soak up any water; it sat on top. I was very nearly born in Jasper Place in a ditch, as my mother experienced labour in the middle of the night. The family didn't have a car and called Gus Fenske, [...] at that time he was an independent [cab] driver. He was only a few blocks away, but he [slid] off into the ditch, and it's the early hours of the morning. The milkman, who had a horsedrawn wagon, came along and pulled him out of the ditch. So, [we] made it to the Misericordia Hospital, which at that time was downtown [Edmonton], and was born there [in 1952]. I can always remember gumboots, everybody had gumboots. When you got older and cooler you rolled your gumboots down and you had a big cuff around your [...] gumboots. But often you got a boot full because you had to cross places that were full of water. [...] We had a septic tank with indoor plumbing, but the water again was delivered by a truck to a cistern in the basement, and it all went out to a septic tank. The sewer and water were put in about 1953 to 1954. I remember that, because it was my father's cousin's company that did it. We always would look for him, because I'd met him and waved to him, watching the roads be dug up and that kind of thing.

Q: Do you remember the name of the company?

WK: N.S. Pawliuk & Sons Construction. The yard was huge; I remember dandelions like crazy everywhere. You didn't even try to get rid of dandelions; there was no point. It seemed like no one had a fenced yard, very few people had a fenced yard. If they did, it was a wire fence much like you'd have to keep the pigs in, in a pigpen. People just never thought about going into somebody else's yard. We played in Cuff's yard and they played in ours. My parents had a huge garden and were always bringing in manure [...] from the farm to enhance the soil, right up until they stopped gardening in 2015. It was always a big deal to enhance the soil all the time with compost or whatever. We had a winter's worth of potatoes in the basement and all kinds of root vegetables and things like that. I can remember my mother [got] a freezer when I was about five or six years old. We spent the rest of our summer shelling peas and putting them in bags and freezing them and [other vegetables] like that. We could save stuff like that for all winter. My mother canned. We had hundreds of jars lining the basement walls of preserves. Groceries – nobody had a car, so you did a major shop at someplace like Safeway and carried the bags home. But for day-to-day things like milk, there were corner stores; almost every corner, every second block, there were corner stores, and they'd just send the kids down. I remember being sent for [...] milk and bread and other things like that. A loaf of bread then was 10 cents; 10 cents would last me a week when I was a kid. There was a Clock Grocery that later became Clock IGA on Stony Plain Road, but they used to be on 149<sup>th</sup> Street and they were just Clock Grocery because they had a big clock standing out in front of their store on a pole. They had a panel van, and my mom would phone the order in, and they would deliver it. If we weren't home, they'd just bring it in the house. Nobody locked their doors, so they'd put it in the house so it didn't freeze. That was [necessary] because [Mom] had two small kids and couldn't carry groceries and two small kids. That was how we often got our groceries. The yard, my father cut the grass [and weeds] with a scythe. We didn't have a lawnmower until the 1960s sometime when they actually tried to control the dandelions, got rid of the ditches, and poured sidewalks and all those kinds of things. The house [and yard were] continually improved. About 1960 my father decided that he wanted a brand new three-bedroom bungalow, but instead of starting from scratch he had a new basement dug and poured in

adjacent to the old basement. He built onto it and restyled [our house] so it looked like a brand-new home and added a garage onto it so the house seemed to go from the street to the alley. We were by far the largest spread-out house in the neighbourhood, except for one rich guy who lived across the street – [Mr.] Holloway. Holloway was in the [provincial] government – the Treasury. He had three lots, a huge two-storey home, tilted at an angle [tilted to the yards] like a country estate would be, and two or three garages. He collected Packard automobiles. He must've had dozens of Packards in garages and lined up in the yard. We always marveled at how much money he must have.

GC: I think he was a provincial treasurer, either the senior bureaucrat or the minister. I don't think minister, I think senior bureaucrat. His name would appear on documents.

WK: Before retiring to Victoria.

GC: Goodlooking daughter.

Q: What about your other neighbours?

GC: The fellow that lived across the street was a guy named [Horace] Case. We used to joke and think they owned half of Jasper Place. [...] He was a weird kind of guy, but he was fine, he was okay. He had a really goodlooking granddaughter or niece that lived on our paper route. But the Cases were across the street, we had Mandrusiak on the corner. I grew up and went to school with Walter Mandrusiak. The Walters lived three or four houses in, and in between that, we had the Meyers, who were [often] in trouble of one kind or another. Every person up and down our street on both sides were working class people. Across the corner we had a family that was always involved in some degree of violence because the father was violent toward the children, so we knew enough to stay away from them. We played sometimes with them. Then across from Wayne's house was a family named Pootz. I remember my brother had a crush on one of the Pootz's – Virginia, I think. In

any case, one of them ended up in local government in Minburn. We had a real collection. We had an alcoholic individual across our alley, about three houses down, who lived in a little trailer. I don't know what you'd call it today. In those days it was just a small shack, like a mini-Airstream, except that would be a great overstatement in terms of the description. She was noted for being found under the trees lining 151<sup>st</sup> Street going towards Loblaws, and she'd be well into the sauce. There's another story involving me that got me into the glue because she was convinced that I was the one that was on the roof of the neighbour's house shooting arrows toward her place, when in fact it was my brother and Allan Scott across the street.

WK: Almost always, it was only the fathers who worked. The mothers [worked at home], raised the family and did the gardening and everything like that. I think the first lady that I knew to break that was Mrs. Pootz. They became cab drivers for Yellow Cab. They got a second cab, and she started to drive. Mrs. Zelisko was a single mom who lived a couple of doors down and was a hairdresser [...].

GC: Those are the two that would've stood out, I think.

Q: Did most of the fathers work within Jasper Place?

GC: No. My father went to the far east side in those days – the far east side of Edmonton – two buses to get there. He didn't drive because he had had a nail in his eye when he grew up in Liverpool, through an accident, so he never drove. So he was down to the ETS to the bus line at the foot of our street. It would take him about an hour to get to work back and forth each day.

WK: I remember neighbours converging on that footbridge where the ETS turned around to catch the ETS bus to go to work at 148<sup>th</sup> Street. My dad, too, he worked downtown [and rode the bus] until our first family car in about 1956 or '57, then he would drive to work.

GC: When was he at Civic Tire and Battery?

WK: That was about the third tire shop he was at, and that would've been in the late '50s, but he started to drive a company truck home. He'd park it on the street under the streetlight, left the keys in it all the time so he could find them in the morning. It was probably there for [10] years before somebody drove it away [one night].

[...]

Q: Where did you play in the area?

GC: We played obviously in our yards. We played about two or three blocks to the east of us where there was an open field and we converted it into a football field, which was anything but. We played until it was too dark to see who had the ball. So we played there, we played in the schoolgrounds in terms of playing softball or whatever. I don't recall that frequently, but we did play there. And we played in MacKinnon Ravine, because a) it was interesting and b) it was free. We would steal crab apples from Mr. Case's yard at the foot of our street, and the reason I became a good runner is because I always had somebody behind me chasing us down the MacKinnon Ravine, which in those days had a stream going down it. We built little trails and we had a little shack; we built a platform on top of a couple of trees, and holes on the bank that we could hide in. It was an unbelievable playing area. We'd be like C.S. Lewis in Shadowlands where they built the Chronicles of Narnia around. It was similar for us; we had our Narnia story. It was right down in MacKinnon Ravine, which went all the way down to the river. We went swimming in the river. My brother and I, I remember one day we swam across, which was unbelievable and foolish because the current was a lot stronger than one would imagine. But we had a wonderful time playing, and I think it was just absolutely wholesome. We'd go up to the top of Hermit's Hill on about 95<sup>th</sup> Avenue and [Riverside Drive] or something like that. And the riverbank, we'd go up to

the top of the riverbank and across the street to these beautiful homes and get the water hose off the front of the house and we'd be drinking from the water hose. The neighbour would see us and wave at us, and it was all okay. But as Wayne said, it was a much different kind of neighbourhood, a much more trusting neighbourhood.

WK: We knew the children for blocks around and played with them all the time. It wasn't unusual to be playing two blocks over in someone's yard. You played on the streets – we played street hockey all the time.

Q: Not in the mud, though.

WK: Not in the mud, no. One thing I really remember, I was in about Grade 3 or 4. Every \$1.49 day at Woodward's would come along in the spring, and everybody would get new running shoes for the spring and that kind of thing. Darn if it didn't coincide with when the Town of Jasper Place would put oil down on the [gravelled] streets to keep the dust down. You'd have white running shoes for a day or two. Even if they were darker running shoes with the white soles, they were all black and covered with oil before long. You'd have to take off your shoes before you could come into the classroom in one of the rooms I was in, because the teacher didn't want oil marks all over the place. But, yeah, you knew everybody and played with everybody. I'm shocked to see [...] [that] I know when school's in because there's kids out walking to school, playing in the playgrounds, all that kind of thing. As soon as there's holidays, you don't see kids anymore. The kids are all inside watching TV or at a camp somewhere or doing something else. You just simply don't see the kids. When we were kids, everybody was outside. You'd take off down the ravine with a dozen neighbour kids and play war down there and things like that. It was a wonderful time for getting to know people. A lot of those people I still see.

GC: I think our lives – at least my life – changed as we went into the teen years; I think the atmosphere changed. We had more a sense of... you could call it violence in those days,

but it was simply street fighting. That kind of stuff broke out, because we had young guys in our neighbourhood that weren't the best Sunday School class you would imagine. A couple of them ended up in jail regularly. One of course was the leader of that pack, and that was Edward Krobel, who lived on 156<sup>th</sup> Street, and was an unbelievable street fighter and a really good boxer, who I boxed with and became good friends with when he was sober. When he was drunk, which was more frequent, he was a terror. Anyway, the streets became quite a bit different. You didn't come into Jasper Place without expecting to get into a fight. We'd have guys come from Morinville and Stony Plain and wherever to have scraps at 151<sup>st</sup> Street and Stony Plain Road. [Someone opened] a place called The Forum, which was [formerly] a dancehall in downtown Edmonton, [relocated to Stony Plain Road]. It wasn't an eatery; it was more of a come in and have Coke and something else. Guys would come in with their mickey of whatever and pour the mickey into the Coke under the table. I can't remember how long that lasted. I just remember seeing guys stretched out on the floor or on the stairs coming down. They never even made it down without getting into a fight. It was a really difficult area, to put it as an understatement.

WK: No surprise, motorcycle gangs arose in Jasper Place, the first Edmonton motorcycle gangs we'd ever heard of.

GC: Coffin Cheaters.

WK: Exactly, and later [...] the Rebels, [still] later became the Hell's Angels.

GC: Speaking of the Rebels, we also had unbelievable music. We had outdoor music stands.

WK: Yeah, Jasper Place Department Store [was most often a location for outdoor music].

GC: And we would have a lowboy from a truck, and the guys would get up on that and start playing their music – like, Wes Dakus and the Rebels, and other bands. They were actually first-class bands, really good bands. We'd all stand around and enjoy the music, some of which got into playing in bars. What was the one on the corner there? The Klondiker. And in the Edmonton Inn on 111<sup>th</sup> Avenue and about 130<sup>th</sup> Street or wherever it is.

WK: It wasn't until about 1970 that the liquor laws changed and they would allow this. It used to be just strictly a Klondike Days thing where during Klondike Days, Gaby Haas or those kind of country bands would play the bars, and it was a big deal for people to go there at that time.

Q: Where did you go for official entertainment?

WK: My entertainment experience was Saturday mornings at Sherwood School where for five or ten cents you'd see a movie and a serial that would bring you back next week to see what happened to [Tarzan] and all that kind of stuff. As far as going to the movies, we simply didn't. If we went to the movies, it was at the drive-in in the back seat of mom and dad's car at the Starlite.

GC: I remember going to the one on 149<sup>th</sup> Street just north of Stony Plain Road, the Tivoli Theatre. That was my very first theatre, and I saw *101 Dalmatians*. We were raised in a very strict fundamentalist Christian home, so going to the movies was inviting Satan into your back yard. We weren't allowed to do that, so I actually had to sneak in to see *101 Dalmatians*, if you can imagine. The other theatre was on 156<sup>th</sup> Street, and it was the Jasper Place Cinema. We went there the odd time, but more frequently we'd go to the Starlite Drive-in or to [the Golden West Drive In].

[...]

GC: That was our paid-for entertainment but, as Wayne said, you had no money for that. Only when we delivered newspapers, we had a few dollars, but not many, and you spent it sparingly. Your parents made sure you were putting something into the piggy bank and not spending it all on your taste for the Vienna Bakery, which was on the corner of 151<sup>st</sup> and Stony Plain Road.

WK: The paper shack was located right next door to [another] bakery – Pilz Bakery [on 148 Street].

Q: Is there anything else you'd like to say about Central School?

GC: When I think about that school I think about a couple of things. I think about the quality of the teachers and the fact that they had a vested interest in you as a kid. I always thought that the teachers were interested in what I was doing, sometimes for the wrong reasons. But in any case, they were interested. I always thought that we had good teachers. The one teacher we had that stood out as being not so good was the one that replaced our Grade 5 teacher who died in a car crash, a fellow by the name of Carl Linbreck, who lived on the curve of the road on Stony Plain Road at about 144<sup>th</sup> or 145<sup>th</sup> Street. He died in a terrible accident, him and two of his kids, on the way to Vermillion. So we had a part-time teacher that came in to fill in for his absence. But other than that, the teachers were excellent. The principal was first-rate; he always had these steel gray eyes that would bore right through you. I, of course, spent a fair bit of time out in the hallway, to the point that at one point he came up and asked me if I was paying rent on the space in the hall. I'd pretend I was having a drink of water from the fountain, but you can only do that for so long before you're waterlogged. But we did have good teachers – both there and at Jasper Place Composite – were first-rate. Any problems I would've had in school had nothing to do with the quality of the teaching and more to do with the quality of the student.

WK: Mrs. Carlson earlier, she was our Grade 1 teacher. I think she was everyone's Grade 1 teacher that you'd speak to who grew up in [our part of] Jasper Place. She was later on our paper route and kept in touch with my sister and I until her death in the 1990s. She retired to B.C. and lived out there, and she would send a Christmas card with a letter in it every year – all those kinds of things – and was just interested in what you did with your life 40 years later.

GC: Just good people, really good people.

WK: An inspiration, that's for sure.

Q: Talk a bit about the paper shack and your paper route. I understand that there were different paper shacks.

WK: They were spread out through the city. Well, not [just] along Stony Plain Road, but each covered a certain area of the city. That one was called Jasper Place and covered from 111<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 95<sup>th</sup> Avenue from about 145<sup>th</sup> Street to 156<sup>th</sup> Street. [Paper boys came there after school to pick up newspapers to deliver on their routes].

GC: Then there was one across 156<sup>th</sup> Street called West Jasper Place.

WK: And it did the same sort of thing, but to 165<sup>th</sup> or 166<sup>th</sup> Street, which at that time was [cow pastures beyond] that.

GC: We were on two paper shacks, but the main one was the Jasper Place paper shack.

WK: You got to know all the kids within a certain age group [during] the '60s and '70s who were delivering newspapers. We certainly knew a lot of people on our paper routes too, that

you'd still see from time to time over the years. They're mostly gone now, but you'd say hello and they'd remember who you were.

Q: Who hired the paper deliverers?

GC: I think it was largely nepotism. If your brother was a paperboy and was getting older, then they'd pass the route on to the next kid in the line, which is what happened to us.

WK: I started as George's helper.

GC: He started as my helper. He took over the route, I took over the paper shack. Then I moved on, and Wayne took over the paper shack. For *The Edmonton Journal* I'm sure that was first rate for them, because they didn't have to go out searching for people, which they do today. In those days they filled in the gap immediately.

WK: There were always kids waiting for a paper route. It was an opportunity to make some money.

GC: The routes were 70 papers to 140 papers probably; ours was about 92 papers or something. The papers were sizable, I'll tell you. You got curves in your shoulders from carrying the newspapers.

WK: I still say my back is bad from when I was 11 years old carrying George's papers as his helper.

GC: Or taking the papers off of the delivery truck that came to the shack on Saturday afternoon to drop off the papers, where all the boys were waiting. The kids were too small; I'd be out there putting them on my back and taking them into the shack.

WK: Hundreds of pounds.

GC: It was no mean feat, I'll tell you, to do that. You'd insert the papers downtown, as I recall; that was another Saturday morning. We'd go down Saturday morning, take in the boys' money, count all the money; it was all change in those days. So you got good at rolling coins; before they had the rollers, you did the rolling by hand. Then when you finished that, you went into another part of *The Edmonton Journal* and you inserted the weekend magazine and comics into The Edmonton Journal.

Q: How much were you paid?

WK: I remember well. [As a delivery boy, about ten cents per customer per week]. When I started [as manager of] the paper shack it was about \$22 a week. I probably did that for ten years right until I finished university, and it had risen to about \$30 by the mid- '70s. But I also got a job working downtown at *The Journal* after doing the paper shack. I'd work evenings answering complaints. Most of the complaints were a wet paper, paper was not delivered, or it comes too late – all that kind of stuff. I was just solving all the problems, and that started out about 75 cents an hour. That was the student minimum wage at the time.

GC: It was big money. I remember starting to do that. The publisher at the time was a guy by the name of Mr. Basil Dean. I recall taking in the complaints and having to send paperboys out to just say, "I'm sorry Mrs. Smith, we'll get your paper to you as soon as we can." Well, I get a call from Mrs. Dean, who said, "We missed the paper, we love to have the paper each day at 4 o'clock or 5 o'clock." Our assistant arrived and I'm saying, "Yes, Mrs. Dean, I'll make a note of that, and we'll get somebody." Well, the paper circulation manager was walking behind me as I'm taking down the notes. He's looking over my shoulder seeing Mrs. Dean and the address. He said, "That's the publisher's wife." Anyway, it was one of those times when I learned about politics in terms of how power maybe got people quicker

service than others. So then I was saying, "We'll have one to you right away, Mrs. Dean." It was a good extra source of funds.

Q: Did you get any extras?

GC: At Christmastime, there was a bonus. The fact that Wayne and I had a route in [Crestwood in] West Edmonton, the amount of money we collected [in Christmas tips] was. . .

WK: Probably a dollar per person on average.

Q: What area included West Edmonton?

GC: At that time, it was the middle of 149<sup>th</sup> Street going east.

WK: Probably from 124<sup>th</sup> Street to 149<sup>th</sup> was considered West Edmonton.

GC: And then Jasper Place started middle of 149<sup>th</sup>. Wayne's memory is better than mine in terms of where Jasper Place started originally, but I always recall Jasper Place being 149<sup>th</sup> Street coming west. The first part of Jasper Place, the first two or three blocks – actually from 149<sup>th</sup> Street to Central School, to right here – was the notorious hub of Jasper Place.

WK: The original settlement.

GC: It was from sort of Stony Plain Road to maybe three blocks south and maybe a couple of blocks north. So, it was a rather narrow strip, and it was notorious in terms of being poor roads and the calibre of the fighting.

WK: I kind of saw this fighting from the outside. I was one of the younger kids; I didn't get out at night like the Cuff boys used to. By the time I was getting out at night, it was the "Summer of Love," [and we had much different interests].

GC: It was changing.

WK: It was absolutely different; I had absolutely different teenage years and formation than George.

Q: Was the paper shack in what is now known as Crestwood?

WK: It was Grosvenor, on 148<sup>th</sup> Street, so one block into Edmonton. Then the paper shack that I worked at for many years afterwards was where Tim Horton's is now on Stony Plain Road; that's where it was located. And there were others: Lynnwood, Hillcrest. None to the north, we covered the whole territory to the north.

[A short break @ 37:18]

GC: Shall I mention the bootlegging part? It's kind of funny. For somebody that's been elevated in people's eyes, in my case, only to find out that the former mayor at one time was a bootlegger, is probably a good story. I always looked older than my age. It's the old joke, you could tell who I was in the school photo because I was the only one with a beard. Well, it wasn't quite true, but I looked older. I used to have my shirt open, because I had a hairy chest. I used to wear those Clint Eastwood cigarillos, and that added I thought a couple more years to my age. In those days you had to go into the [government liquor] vendors, and there was one on the corner of 151<sup>st</sup> Street, conveniently placed by Safeway in those days, or Loblaws. You'd have to go in and fill out the little chit of paper for whatever booze you wanted and take it to the front and pay your money. The guy would stare at you and decide whether or not you looked old enough to be buying it. I think the age limit was

21, if I'm not mistaken. People would phone me from our high school and would say, "George, we need you to go and do a little booze run for us; we're having a party." If I was invited to the party, I wouldn't charge. But if I wasn't invited, I'd charge. So I made some extra cash bootlegging. I had to go around to various liquor vendors – Westmount, Meadowlark – so I had three or four liquor vendors that I would go to. The only time that this fouled up for me was the one down by Meadowlark Shopping Centre. I had just recently gone through the application process to get funding from the school, because I was a low-income student and needed money to finish off high school. I can't remember what the argument was, but I remember getting a couple hundred bucks out of the process, unbeknownst to my parents. And here I am lined up at the Meadowlark Shopping Centre with my chit in hand with all the booze listed on it, and I look over to my left and it's the guidance counselor in the other lineup, and she's the one that approved my application. I turned around and got out of there. Anyway, I never once got stopped for bootlegging. There's another chapter to that story, because I did consulting work up in the Northwest Territories and I asked them what the biggest problem was; I was reviewing their Health and Social Services. Their biggest problem was alcohol abuse. Who was the biggest bootlegger? The guy I just interviewed. [...]. Unbelievable. Anyway, it was not unknown. They would find whoever could find booze and was very popular on Friday and Saturday night, that's all I remember. And I was one of them.

Q: Were you able to go into the bars?

GC: Again, I got into the bars when I was 17 years of age. I went into the Klondiker and into the Saxony, those two bars in particular I'd be in on Friday and Saturday evening. It was good fun, because you could listen to the entertainment. When I got a bit older, that's where all the action was, was in the bars. And the Corona downtown on 107<sup>th</sup> Street and Jasper Avenue. We made our fun, mostly inexpensively.

Q: Can you talk about Crestwood and the other side of 149<sup>th</sup>?

WK: Well, we often would go to the skating rink over there. When it wasn't being used for hockey, they didn't really mind if you were on there. You might have to clean it sometimes and that kind of thing. But I met some of the Crestwood kids around there and I found out that there was Cubs in the basement of St. Andrews United Church. I thought, "Oh, that sounds like something I'd like to do." So I joined Cubs in Crestwood and met a lot of Crestwood kids. I stuck with it for a number of years and was in Scouts. Then with the paper route I got to know even more people. Crestwood kids were probably my friends as much as the Jasper Place kids, though as I said, with the strict school boundaries, nobody on that side of 149<sup>th</sup> Street could go to Jasper Place schools and nobody from Jasper Place could go to their schools. I learned a little about the history of Crestwood with a friend that I met there and currently lives there. I bought a few of these books when they had their Crestwood Centennial, that *Crestwood Centennial* yearbook or whatever they called it. Crestwood was the original Jasper Place. They were [...] Jasper Place [...] long before they [became Crestwood in 1950]. The original Jasper Place [...] School [...] was an old wood frame building, single storey, on [the east side of] 149<sup>th</sup> Street between 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Summit Drive. [Edmonton's boundaries extended to 149 Street in the late 1940s and only the area west of 149 Street remained]. This community became known as... they were going to call it Dogpatch at first, but it became known as West Jasper Place, a little higher-class name than Dogpatch.

[...]

WK: The actual school, that school, was knocked down when I was a small boy still. I remember seeing that. The high school was at Central School. [...] Then when Britannia School was built, that was a high school until Jasper Place Composite High School was built in '61 or '60. That became the high school.

Q: You said that kids didn't go to school in each other's communities. But did you play across?

WK: Not widely, no. [...] [As stated earlier], I got to know people there, so I eventually got playing in a band with [Crestwood] people. We played dances in Crestwood and Parkview and all the West End community leagues and in the schools. That's about the interaction that we had. I can't remember Crestwood kids coming over and playing in Jasper Place [...].

GC: There really seemed to be a barrier. It was a social class barrier, and you never really talked about it that way, but you knew that those kids in Glenora had money, and we didn't. They had parents that had money, we didn't. They kind of looked down their noses at J.P. kids, because we were the rough and tumble and had that reputation.

WK: Jasper Place had a reputation – lower class, rougher neighbourhood.

GC: Relatively well deserved. I just recall too when the interchange was built on 149<sup>th</sup> Street and they put in the underground [storm] water system which runs right along underneath the MacKinnon Ravine. The MacKinnon Ravine at one point was destined to become a freeway from Jasper Place into the downtown core. I remember it because I was president of the Recreation Students Society at the U. of A. in [the early '70s] and ended up petitioning against the freeway. We attended public hearings which happened between '70 and '73. By that time a lot of this infrastructure had been built. When people go for a walk now down the MacKinnon Ravine, they're actually walking in probably the most expensive parkland in North America because it was all designed and built out so that it would host a four-lane road along with the water and sewage system running underneath.

WK: All along the north shore of the river was a cement dump from demolition projects and stuff, cement that formed the base of a road there. Now there's this wide flat area along the river. But if you actually get to the riverbank, it's made up of [broken] cement. Farther down,

it was actually a garbage dump at one time, and there's every kind of garbage you can see sticking out. It's interesting to get in a canoe on the river, and [see] what you find. All it needed was pavement and it would've been a freeway that came down 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue and crossed [to the ravine to downtown].

GC: It was going to dump out on the Groat Road, and I can't remember how they ever expected that was going to take all the traffic from the West End.

WK: River Road was going to be a major thoroughfare as well, not the two-lane road it still is.

Q: So it would've gone under 149<sup>th</sup> Street?

[...]

Q: And they would've had to take out houses?

WK: Yes. It would've gone 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 149<sup>th</sup> Street, and where the Christian Reform Church [...] is now, was left as an open field after Jasper Place [...] School was knocked down. It was a Christmas tree lot every winter; that was all that was there. It was going to cut through there and there's a walking path that goes into the ravine now that was going to be the entrance into the ravine.

Q: And met Stony Plain Road?

WK: No, never would've met Stony Plain Road. It would've been parallel, [but in the ravine]. It connected only to 100<sup>th</sup> Avenue [west of 149<sup>th</sup>] – the original plan. [It would run in the ravine to the river and then on the north bank of the river to about 105<sup>th</sup> Street. The multi-use path there now would have been the MacKinnon Freeway].

Q: How did that get stopped?

WK: There was a lady who lived on Stony Plain Road and about 147<sup>th</sup> Street [...], Margaret Chapelle. She was wealthy. I don't know how she got wealthy. She owned a huge plot of land there [backing the ravine] that is now a crescent full of very upscale homes. [...] She donated all of her wealth to the SPCA is what I recall. But she led the group of housewives to begin with, who would go down there and stand in front of bulldozers with signs saying, "Not in our back yard."

GC: Then we got involved as university students, and of course they make a lot of noise. We knew nothing about it, we just decided we were going to save the parkland. So we all jumped in. Eventually it just ground to a halt, I'm sure to somebody's chagrin. But it was a well mounted campaign against it. When I look at it now, it actually makes a lot of sense. The congestion would've been unbelievable, so it just was not good planning.

Q: When you moved here in the '50s, was there a lot of farmland around? What was the composition of the land west of you?

WK: West was Jasper Place homes as I recall, up to 163<sup>rd</sup> Street. Beyond that was farmland.

GC: Past Jasper Place Composite High School, I used to run cross-country; you ran out the back door, there was nothing.

WK: Back where West Edmonton Mall is and that whole area was muskeg and spruce forest and that kind of thing. They hauled peatmoss out of there for years and years before they ever developed that land. South to Meadowlark I remember when I was a kid, there was a mink farm there. I believe when the Lynnwood and Elmwood communities developed

it was still all farmland. I remember it was named Meadowlark because you could actually hear meadowlarks singing out there. Every spring we would go out on our bikes and there were gophers [and fields].

GC: The only real development out there that I remember was the Hillcrest Golf and Country Club, but it was the Hillcrest Club. It was a country club, but that became a home eventually, was sold off [for homes].

WK: It's gone now; it's all upscale homes. Edmonton Country Club was a great distance into the country, and that would be a daytrip on your bike to go out there [and back]. We'd go look for golf balls in the bush.

Q: Did you take the Country Club Road?

WK: Yes, that was the only road. It used to go up and down through some of those ravines that are now walking trails through there. Yes, that developed very quickly [...] in the 1970s I would say.

GC: Wayne's dad, Jack Krys, was very much involved in [...] the community, more so the community in that era, along with other notables like Ken Newman, like the Osborne Brothers that had Osborne Brothers Realty. They were prominent wrestlers and people knew the names immediately. They knew Wayne's dad as a wrestler, so the names became pretty prominent in terms of the history of Jasper Place. Ken Newman was probably one of the better known, because he was mayor of Jasper Place and then became an alderman in those days for the City of Edmonton as one of the original joinees.

Q: Your dad was a wrestler?

WK: My dad was a store manager, a merchant who wrestled [...] on the side. He wrestled a few times in Jasper Place. The Osborne brothers themselves ran a promotion team from Jasper Place here that hit small towns within a few hours drive. They would wrestle in Grande Prairie on a Friday night or [places] like that.

GC: Calgary, on a Saturday afternoon.

WK: That was Stu Hart, that was a bigger promotion. Stu Hart was an original, began his promotion in Edmonton. He was an Edmonton Eskimo football player. My dad got to know him by working out at the YMCA when he was a kid and started wrestling first with Stu Hart. The Osborne brothers as well wrestled with Stu Hart, who was basically in Edmonton and Calgary back and forth.

GC: This became big-time. Stampede Wrestling was a big deal.

WK: It was on television every Saturday. The Osborne brothers started up a smaller promotion where they did all the small towns. They used to say if it had three grain elevators, that would be big enough to have wrestling. Fewer grain elevators, there wouldn't be enough farmers to support it.

Q: Was there a venue in Jasper Place?

WK: I have a poster, and my dad never mentioned this. [... This] poster [was found among] his belongings after his death. On 153<sup>rd</sup> Street and Stony Plain Road where there's now an antique mall, that building was a poolhall when we were kids. But it used to be... they called it Jasper Place Recreation Centre at that time. They had a wrestling promotion there in the early 1950s, again featuring all the local wrestlers. But beyond that, the only time I remember wrestling in Jasper Place was the grand opening of the Jasper Place Recreation Centre what's now Bill Hunter Arena. They had all Jasper Place wrestlers. Arnie Holmes,

who was quite athletic and an assistant principal at Jasper Place High School, was one of the wrestlers. Then they had some of the Stampede wrestlers, from Texas actually, who were up here, who were the main event.

GC: At one point I think it would've included Ralph Klein's father, Phil Klein. He was also a wrestler back in the old days. He would've been Jack Kry's counterpart or maybe even ten years older, I'm not sure.

WK: He was older than my dad, for sure. [...] When that [arena] first opened, [...], I believe Roy Orbison was a part of [a] promotion there. They had big shows in there.

GC: And in downtown Edmonton I remember going to the Roy Orbison show in '64 or somewhere around then at the old Edmonton Gardens. I remember singing Pretty Woman all the way down 115<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

[...]

Q: The wrestling aspect of the...

GC: We had a boxing club, I mean we had a sports mindset. It was probably whatever was less expensive was also more popular. Hockey was popular, obviously it was, but the Jasper Place Boxing Club with a guy by the name of Jerry Ramsey who lived down by Storyland Valley Zoo; he devoted hours upon hours of volunteer time for kids that had no money. He obviously probably helped with the outfitting and so on and took us around to various boxing matches. But he was one of the legends in my mind, because he was such a generous hearted individual. Had his own boxing history as a lightweight up and down the west coast of California and was good for kids like my brother and I and a bunch of others from Jasper Place that never would've been involved any more than street fighting if he

hadn't been around to get us channeled into a boxing club. In fact, his adage was that, "If you get caught street fighting don't show up here, I don't want you in my boxing club."

Q: Where did you box?

GC: The club was somewhere down around Sherwood School, but I don't exactly recall where that was. It was blocks south of Stony Plain Road, so I'm not sure. We went from there... we lasted there for probably three years or whatever it was, then we ended up migrating to the Elks Boxing Club on 92<sup>nd</sup> Street and Jasper Avenue. Then I went to the South Side Legion Boxing Club, and that's where I retired. There, plus the University of Alberta where I was sparring with a guy named Johan Low, who was an unbelievable boxer and Canadian champion, and a guy from South Africa, who was probably the best shape athlete that I'd ever met. It was enough to convince me not to go any further; that plus my failing eyesight. The other thing about it, when I think about it, I was actually a decent athlete. The problem is, if you're good at something you're one of the only ones that was good at something, so there wasn't a whole lot of competition in your area of Jasper Place. We had a pole-vaulting guy that was excellent, but he was the only pole-vaulting guy; we had a high-jumping guy, excellent; we had a hurdling guy. Well, I was the quarter mile, half mile and mile runner, and by and large I cleaned up. But I didn't have [specialized] coaching. I had Arnie Enger, who was a wonderful guy and lifelong friend, but he had every sport in the book to look after, so I was just one of a multitude. The point I was going to make, I remember going from Jasper Place to the Edmonton Olympic Club, which ran out of Ross Sheppard school. I remember going my first couple of times and it was like I was going cap in hand. Here was these high-class guys, they were all better athletes than I was. They all had money, they all had nice tracksuits. The first person I ran into was Marlene Kurt, who was throwing a shotput back and forth like this. I could barely pick it up and she's just bouncing it around. Anyway, there were some good athletes there and people that were better overall than I was. But probably I got better training just by being there than I ever would've simply sticking with my high school. But if you're good at something, I guess my

point was, you could make a name for yourself and be a big frog in a small pool, and that was J.P. Then when you went on to something else, you really would've had to have been a star. I would finish in the top three in a province-wide event, but I would never get to the top one. I can't really recall... Eddie Brown, who was a black guy that grew up around 156<sup>th</sup> Street and was a sprinter; so the 100 and 200 metres, he cleaned up and went some distance. He ended up playing for the Edmonton Huskies. But that was kind of the limit. There was a ceiling, it seemed to me, on the limit of where you could go. The odd time somebody did better than that, but not very often.

WK: You probably don't know Bill Stevenson, but the Stevensons were a [Jasper Place] family [...]. Bill Stevenson was big, he must've been 6'4" or 6'5". In high school he was the top basketball player, the top wrestler. Not a very fast runner, but a great football player. He had a football scholarship and basketball scholarship to Duke University in the U.S. From Jasper Place, that was unheard of. Who ever scouted somebody like that out? He had a football career with Edmonton Eskimos [during the "glory years" and is a CFL Hall of Famer].

[...]

Q: Have you heard of the basketball player Paul Mah at Central School?

GC: No. We had an influx of kids from what probably was the Enoch Reserve.

WK: Oh no, they were from B.C., a lot of them. I don't think [I knew of] any kids from Enoch. The residential schools started sending kids to Jasper Place.

GC: Half of our basketball team was First Nations – "Indians" in those days. I remember going to defend them at Ross Sheppard, the basketball team. Fights would break out

afterwards because they'd be calling all of our kids "Indians" or whatever, so you'd have a scrap about it.

WK: At Central School [...] I used to walk home for lunch. These kids came from St. Albert Indian residential school, and they always had a bag lunch, which I always envied. They didn't have to go home, they could eat their lunch at school. But this one guy was a good friend, and I said, "Oh, come to our house, I think we're having macaroni." I brought him home and had lunch. Then my parents said, "You can't bring Indians over. What will the neighbours say?"

GC: The neighbours were poorer than the Indians, Wayne.

Q: This was at Central School?

WK: At Central School, and then when I went to Britannia and Stratford and Jasper Place, [and residential schools kids were always classmates].

GC: We were a collection point for a whole lot of the "undesirables".

WK: The great majority of them were from northern B.C., from Hazelton, Gitksan, and places like that, all in northern B.C. Then some from what was called Hobbema at the time, [now Maskwacis].

GC: Some good athletes.

WK: You know what, we never heard a bad thing about the residential school. The kids were happy kids [longed for their homes and families, but never complained about mistreatment or abuse. Maybe their residential school was an exception?].

GC: We all played together.

WK: All played together, they were dressed well. They played on the schools' sports teams and had a special bus come in for them later.

GC: In my growing up there was never any sense of discrimination with regard to First Nations or "the half-breeds" or Métis. Eddie Krobel was a Métis, but you didn't think of saying anything negative to him. But in any case, it just wasn't. It's because we were all poor, and poverty kept us all equal.

Q: Were you in the era of the Chieftones?

GC: Yes, they had unbelievable musicians. I remember them playing at a couple of high school things. I remember them becoming infamous or famous, and I don't recall much beyond that.

WK: First time I ever saw them was at Stratford, the year Stratford opened in [...] '64.

GC: What was the lead singer's name?

WK: Oh, gosh I don't know. It wasn't his real name. He became famous using a made-up name of Billy [Thundercloud] or something like that. That wasn't his real name. They played at a school sock hop at lunchtime. We thought, "Oh, my god, this is all the kids from the residential school, don't expect much." They blew the place away. Pretty much original music and using the native beat sometimes – boom, boom, boom – and doing the motions with the guitar. They played at Jasper Place a few times, and then suddenly they had records and were on the radio. [An American manager from] Oklahoma picked them up, and they actually moved, after residential school, to [Wisconsin] and were based out of there. There's quite a lot about them on Wikipedia if you're ever interested. [They played

with Jerry Lee Lewis, the Beach Boys, and played at President Richard Nixon's inauguration].

GC: We had some very good entertainment.

WK: Local groups were famous, recording and they would [often] drive all the way to New Mexico [or California] to make a record.

GC: Bobby Curtola lived in Jasper Place at one time.

Q: What about Black students?

GC: Yes, they were observable. There wasn't a ton of them. They were there but there wasn't a multitude of them. You knew the families – the Lipscombes and the Browns, and I'm not sure who else.

WK: [...] [T]hey were mostly from the [families in] settlements in the north at Amber Valley, and some from what's now Wildwood. There was a settlement of Black settlers [from Oklahoma] who came in in 1912 and they farmed next to my grandparents' farm out there. So my dad grew up knowing most of these people. In Jasper Place he could say, "Oh, yeah, they lived here, blah blah blah." They were all from there, it's not the influx from the Caribbean or Africa that you have now. You knew all the Black kids, and they were no different from you. [...]

GC: It's interesting, though, none of us were taught to be against racism; none of us were taught to be against those that had less than we did, because you couldn't find them. I don't recall any home, like it'd be nice to be able to say to you, "I remember my parents sitting me down and saying, 'Don't be discriminatory.'" You didn't have to have that conversation; we just weren't. We didn't grow up that way. I don't recall looking down my

nose at anybody. I think the guys that were Black were Black. They stood out, obviously, but if they were good athletes particularly, they were well-loved because they were good athletes. Ed Brown had as many friends as the rest of us.

WK: Exactly. For the most part they were very popular, because everybody knew them. They stood out from the crowd, [not for their colour, but for their talents and accomplishments].

GC: And the First Nations kids, you sort of adopted them because you knew they were going to get picked on, so we were defending them.

WK: Like I say, they were good friends, but they went home after school [to St. Albert] and you didn't play with them. That was probably the biggest difference. I didn't realize residential schools were a bad thing until it became news in the '90s [...]. These kids never complained, [...], always had good clothes, good food. The opportunities were there for them if they wanted to partake. As I say, they sent special buses out to get the guys from the basketball team after a Friday night game or something like that. [so that they could participate].

Q: You talked about corner stores. Were many of the corner stores owned by people from the Chinese communities?

GC: And some just individual families. The one closest to us was probably White's Grocery, which was a block away from Wayne's house. I saw Rex White at church on Sunday, and it was his parents or mother that owned the store. We thought he must be really well-off because they had candy, and we didn't.

WK: The Wongs on 149<sup>th</sup> Street and 97<sup>th</sup> Avenue, we went to school with... I think you might've dated Mary Wong once.

GC: Yes.

WK: [...]. [Most were owned and run by Chinese families who lived in an attached house. For the most part, the kids were fully participating with neighbourhood kids].

GC: Then we had [Louie's] Grocery, which both Wayne and I delivered papers to on the corner of 149<sup>th</sup> Street and Stony Plain Road. Another story that comes to my mind is we had Etherington Drugstore on the corner of 152<sup>nd</sup> and Stony Plain Road. It was owned by a guy by the name of Wilf Etherington, who had the two smartest daughters in all of school. They were pretty decent looking, as I recall. My brother liked one and I liked the other one, and we kind of hoped by hanging around with them some of their smarts might wear off. But in any case, Mr. Etherington had had a midlife crisis and decided to go back to university. Instead of doing whatever he was doing in terms of druggist work and pharmacology, he went into Anthropology, I think.

WK: I believe it was Wildlife Biology.

GC: Wildlife Biology. So he ends up in a study outside of Calgary, and it was with regard to neutralizing bears in terms of putting a drug into their system and relocating them from a residential area to further into the mountains. His job this one particular time was, after they'd neutralized or paralyzed the bear temporary, his job was to film the bear coming out of the enclosure that they had taken the bear out to in the wooded area. He was to stand back 50 yards and film the bear's reaction, groggily stepping out of the container and ambling off into the wild. The bear never got the memo, and the bear came charging out of the container and straight at Mr. Etherington and knocked his head off. It's been written up in various wildlife books.

WK: My mother worked at Etherington Drugs. After both [of us] kids were off [to school] and didn't come home for lunch anymore; she started working part time there.

Q: What was your father's role in the municipality of Jasper Place?

WK: Step-grandfather, really. My father was just a [social organizer in the community league] in those days.

Q: Did your family have discussions around civic politics?

WK: We always knew the affairs of Jasper Place and that kind of thing. My dad was always a close personal friend of Ken Newman. They were both involved in administration of boxing and wrestling and that kind of stuff, right up until Ken died.

GC: They both served on the Edmonton Boxing and Wrestling Commission.

WK: Yes, they did, and the Canadian Boxing Council and all that kind of stuff. My step-grandfather was the Secretary Treasurer for the Town of Jasper Place and used to socialize with these people as well. I can remember Christmas parties at their house when the Newmans were there and various other [Jasper Place government] people. I always knew Ken as a friend. They built a house on 163<sup>rd</sup> Street and I would ride my bike out to there sometimes and stop by and say hello. I knew some of the funnier stories going on and some of the horror stories about things that happened. There was a police chief named Rod Stevenson at one time, and he came to my grandfather because he wanted to get gloves for the officers. My grandfather went to the Jasper Place Department Store and picked out some gloves. My grandfather said, "What about these?" He says, "Oh, they're no good for the officers," he said, "they've got three [rows of] stitches up the [front], and they'd leave marks if we have to lay a beating on somebody." We always thought that was just hilarious. But the police were always in uniform, which included a tunic and a belt across

the front and a hat. Nowadays, when you see the police, they look like regular street people with tattoos and mohawks and piercings. [Back then] they patrolled all the time, you always saw policemen out in their police cars. There was a 9 o'clock curfew; the fire siren would go over here [at the firehall], and you'd hear it throughout Jasper Place; there wasn't that much street noise, [and Jasper Place wasn't very big]. You knew you'd better be home, because the police would be up and down the streets making sure the kids were off the street by 9 o'clock. Nobody was ever hostile to the police. You always knew them and waved to them. I can't remember anybody ever being in trouble with the police, as kids anyway. Maybe the crowd you hung out with, but not mine.

GC: I just recall the violence. There was always some degree of crime in terms of petty thievery, but I don't recall anything significant. I think the odd car might've been stolen, and I might've been riding in the odd one of those. I remember the fights that would break out. The police would arrive, and everybody would scramble out of there. Typically, the only person's name that popped up was Eddie and maybe one or two others like Silvana [De Colby] and Al St. Germain. The Letendres were fairly famous; Doug Letendre got nailed for manslaughter in Calgary by bashing in the head of a service station attendant. He ended up doing a manslaughter charge. One of his relatives was Linda Letendre, who was in my class. One of the Letendres was an unbelievable fighter who was in a lower weight class than we were. He was again just I think driven by anger toward society, and he ended up being a really good fighter until I think probably booze... booze took a lot of people out of circulation in those days that were pretty good athletes. They got into the sauce and that became a problem. I think the scrapping was more of an issue than anything else. I remember the big fight that went on at the A & W, which is now where Haps is located. Eddie was involved in that and ended up smashing a few people, and I think cars got involved. The police showed up the next day and they ended up posting a policeman at the corner of the A & W. It was the first time ever. Police also got posted at Meadowlark Shopping Centre because of Eddie walking through the mall when he was drunk. I think I'd just picked him up from Fort Saskatchewan jail. Not long after that he was in there with my

brother and ended up taking on some guys going up and down the mall. They ended up posting police in the mall. I remember the police telling us a funny story. They used to have their own police boxing competition, and the best of their boxers would go into the Golden Gloves Championship. They said to a guy named Des Archer to fight at the middleweight category. Unfortunately, I wasn't in that category, but Eddie was, and Eddie ended up cleaning him. They joked about that, because sure enough, later on, when Eddie was getting charged and they were having to put police at the A & W, the guy that was posted to the A & W was Des Archer, and the last guy he wanted to run into was Eddie Krobol. They told us that whenever fights broke out, they would send more than one cop because they feared it would be Krobol or somebody like him that they were running into. They knew they had tough guys to deal with. This sounds like a New York story, but it was our New York story, it wasn't stretching the imagination much.

WK: These were probably City cops already [after 1964].

GC: These were City cops, Des Archer was a City cop. So you had tough guys, there was no question. But it wasn't a terrible place to be in. I'd be more concerned now walking down Stony Plain Road in front of the old J.P. Hotel with all the folks that are there now, the street people. I would be more concerned now than I was then. You could walk home in relative safety, because you knew where the problems were.

Q: And you had to be home by 9.

GC: Some of us managed ways to get in the house without parents knowing if you were a bit later, including me coming through the milk chute. Other than what Wayne described with knife fighting, that would've stood out because it was so highly unusual. But there weren't knives and guns involved in the violence, it was simply fisticuffs. If you were good at that you'd survive, and if you weren't you'd better find a friend that was or stay out of the hotspots.

Q: Can you talk a bit more about the Jasper Place Department Store?

WK: I was in there all the time. Mrs. Mark, who lived across the lane, was a housewife who supplemented her [family] income as a seamstress. She sewed alterations for Jasper Place Department Store. From the time we could ride bicycles, her son, who was a year younger, and myself were back and forth all the time running pants and other things that needed hemming and things that needed to be changed back and forth between the Jasper Place Department Store and her home. It was relatively small square footage, but it had everything there. There was a shoe department and women's wear, and every other thing run by the Silver family. I knew both sons; I was in school with their sons later on in junior high and high school. Chuck was the dad, and he was great to us kids. He knew we were doing this for Mrs. Mark so we could get the pants to the guy while the customer might still be waiting or coming back this afternoon for his pants and that kind of thing. So he always gave us a few cents, and I believe he had candy and chocolate bars there we often got from him too. It became pretty much a gathering place for teens at one time. In the 1960s there became MW, [...] – Merv something – [...] they were a local company that made jeans. They were called TJs or TKs, and they were available I believe only at the Jasper Place Department Store. It was advertised, and people came from all over the city because these were hipster jeans that you wore low down. They were not just your denim [work] jeans; they were different colours. They promoted [Saturday afternoon] dances at the parking lots on either side of the Jasper Place Department Store. Hot rod people came out and had show and shines there, and the parking lot on the other side would be the Lords or one of the big local groups at the time playing there. Of course, you could hear this forever. So we'd hurry and get our papers done as quickly as we could to get there on a Saturday afternoon to take in all of this stuff. I remember hotdogs were a nickel or a dime. We looked forward to those kinds of things. Jasper Place Department Store, everybody did their shopping there before people had cars and things like that. It was a fairly cheap place, and you'd have to take the bus to get downtown, and that would be a hassle. So if you needed

school clothes or things like that, you often stopped at Jasper Place Department Store. Or there was Brown's Stop and Shop, which was just back here between 155<sup>th</sup> and 156<sup>th</sup> Street; that was another place, nothing fancy. The fanciest things were these jeans, the MW jeans, because they were stylish, they were expensive. It was local people supporting local, out of practicality reasons.

GC: We had two poolhalls half a block away from each other, one on the corner of 153<sup>rd</sup> and one halfway into 154<sup>th</sup> Street. I saw the front end of a revolver in my face at the age of about 15 or 16 with Eddie Krobek on the other end of it, in between what was then the Bank of Montreal and the J.P. Poolhall. There was a three-foot corridor that ran between the two buildings – maybe five feet. I was going out with Eddie and his friend from 97<sup>th</sup> Street, Cowboy. Eddie said to Cowboy, "Pass me the big one." The "big one" was always a bottle of Baby Duck or something, and I was thinking of getting a shot of wine. It turned out I was almost shot. But anyway, Eddie pulls out this gun from Cowboy, points it at my head, and in his drunken state says, "Open your mouth cuz I'm gonna blow your f'in head off," and you don't need to do anything but open your mouth. At some point he pointed at my leg and went, click. I said, "Oh, thank god you don't have any bullets." "Oh, yeah," he said, and he reached in his pocket and got all these bullets out of his pocket. About that stage, I'm out the door and down the street home. My dad got a call the next morning by the City police saying, "We understand that your son George was threatened by one Edward Krobek with a .38 revolver." My dad of course comes steaming downstairs, "What's the police doing calling our house?" The policeman asked me, and I said, "No I don't know, you've got the wrong person." I was smart enough in those days to realize that if I fingered Eddie my life was very precariously held. He knew everybody in jail, and if he didn't have somebody paid off to nip me off, he'd have done it himself when he got out. So I just thought, "Uh, no, I wasn't there, thank you very much. Mistaken identity."

WK: Between these two poolhalls was Jasper Cycle, a bicycle store, and the only one in Jasper Place. If you needed anything for your bicycle or needed a bicycle, this is where you

went. In the early 1960s they became the Honda shop as well, when Honda motorcycles first came to Canada. As kids, everybody would go down there to look at the Hondas. I made \$5 a week on my paper route, and in 60 weeks I'd have enough money to buy a Honda if I didn't spend anything. I think they became a bigger and better cycle shop as Hondas grew in popularity.

GC: My envy was buying nice clothes, because I never had anything other than used clothes. My dad worked at Cload's Auction Mart, which was down by where Wayne's dad worked on 101<sup>st</sup> Street and 107<sup>th</sup> Avenue or somewhere in that area. I went to Esquire Men's Wear and gave them \$5 a week and had them hold onto my money until I could afford to buy a nice new pair of pants. I remember going to church camp as a kid, and I finally had a brand-new pair of pants rather than wearing my brother's hand-me-downs. So I did that with my paper route money and building up credit at Esquire Men's Wear. I don't think they were in that same location by the Klondiker, they were further onto Stony Plain Road and down toward 151<sup>st</sup> Street at one time, closer to the bakery. Then they moved there.

Q: Did you take the bus downtown for shopping too?

GC: My mother did that for stuff.

WK: As paperboys we had to go every Saturday morning with all the money we had collected, and hand it in. So the first stop was the Bay, because that's where the Jasper Place buses stopped. Downstairs there was a malt shop, so we could get a malt [for ten cents].

GC: It was unbelievable malt.

WK: It was also the bargain basement, so often as kids we'd buy something there that was sort of fashionable that our parents wouldn't buy for us. I remember the Army & Navy.

Probably ever spring and fall my parents made a trek to the Army & Navy with two kids loading up on shoes and clothing and other things there, because they were the cheapest place in town, on 97<sup>th</sup> Street downtown.

Q: And \$1.49 day.

GC: That was a big deal.

Q: The street fight stuff in Ottawa at the time was mods and rockers. That was a big period. Did that come here at all?

WK: No, I wouldn't say so. We never [really] had the mod scene at all. The street fighters were all rocker, I think, and there was more than enough of them to fight between themselves without getting the peaceful people involved. The peaceful people were influenced by the "Summer of Love" and didn't want anything to do with that whole scene.

GC: We went from fighting to loving. The loving was preferable. I remember it was at Ross Sheppard grounds, I remember there was a big love-in there. I lost one of my girlfriends at the time.

WK: First time I'd ever heard of a love-in, at Coronation Park.

GC: Yes, at Coronation Park. It just seemed to shift overnight. It went from this violent kind of... I mean we didn't really think it was violent, we just knew who was fighting and who wasn't. All of a sudden, there's this love-in, and I lost my girlfriend to somebody with longer hair. I thought this was a weird group, and they wanted me to have a smoke. I remember going down to the underground that we've just talked about where the footbridge was, and there was a bunch of noise, and I heard voices. I looked over and there was one guy that I knew, "George, come on down here." So I came down, as naïve as could be. They were

sniffing glue. They had a little plastic baggies with white Lepage's glue or whatever it was. "Here, have a sniff." I had one sniff in my life, and that was it. I thought, "This is crazy; I can drink booze and not have to worry about blowing my brains out with this terrible stuff." I remember them sending me up to Louie's Grocery to buy some more glue. When I got to Louie's Grocery, he'd obviously been pounced upon by these guys before because he said, "What do you want the glue for?" I had to think on my feet and I said, "Well, I'm building an airplane." So he gives me the wrong kind of glue, so I go down and give them the wrong kind of glue. Anyway, I didn't last long as a bootlegger for the glue people. They were also part of the motorcycle Coffin Cheaters gang who hung out at the City Limit Inn, which was next door to Hamdons Barber Shop on 150<sup>th</sup> Street and Stony Plain Road.

WK: Between 149<sup>th</sup> and 150<sup>th</sup>. Lined the motorcycles up on the street and everybody would drive by and wonder what the hell was going on.

GC: I don't think we had a whole lot of legends in terms of people you could say, "These were the outstanding personalities of the day." If they were, they were probably in our own minds. But Ken Newman certainly would've been one of them; Jack Krys, even though Wayne might not have thought so, but Jack was an outstanding personality because he was so involved in the community and he stayed involved long past his wrestling career. But we didn't have much beyond that. We had the odd scrapper and so on, like Eddie was on the front page of the paper a couple of times. My brother's name and my name got in a couple of times [for boxing], but not very often. You'd have to have done something significant, and we had fairly short-lived careers. The biggest event that I can recall out of all of our growing up years was the shooting on 149<sup>th</sup> Street and 109<sup>th</sup> Avenue or whatever it was.

WK: Yes, 112<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Dick Butler.

GC: With Dick Butler's death. I just told this story to friends of ours from the community. We were driving back to Spruce Grove and drove by Butler Park, and I told them the story of

Butler Park. Butler Park had a second phase to that story, because it also is the resting place for the ashes of Rick Butler, the son of Dick. Rick Butler was killed in a skiing accident going down Mt. Nakiska. He was a council member for Rocky View County, which is just outside of Calgary. He was also one of our paperboys at Jasper Place.

WK: We knew the Butler kids. They were involved with everything, too.

GC: Rick, Rob, and...

WK: Gail was their older sister.

GC: And Gail, yeah. So I met them as a result of this funeral for Rick Butler. I spoke at his funeral down in Cochrane, as I recall; I did the eulogy for Rick.

[...]

Q: Can you tell us the story of the Butler incident?

GC: I'll start it, because Wayne will fill in the blanks. But I just remember being told, in fact I think we saw it or knew about it. There was this guy that had a trailer, a caboose, and in front of it he dug these trenches. We all joked about him thinking he was back in the Second World War, never thinking it was beyond anything than that. It was just these trenches were being dug. Then the next thing we hear about is that the shooting had started. They called in the City police and they called in whatever Jasper Place resources were available in those days. The Jasper Place Fire Department showed up, and Dick Butler was the fire chief. At the wrong point in time, he poked his head up over the hill to see what was going on, and the guy shot right through Dick Butler's head. I think that was the only death, if I'm not mistaken, that occurred as a result of the shooting that went on. But it became a cause celeb for the neighbourhood and for the community. The guy had gone

bonkers, and this was the net result of it. Because he was a fire chief, they built this park right next to the ETS turnaround.

WK: It was actually the fire hall there.

GC: The firehall was right there. Next door to the firehall was Butler Park, which then had two phases to it for both Dick Butler and Rick Butler. Most people in Edmonton don't have a clue that it's there or what its significance would be to Jasper Place.

WK: The story is lost in history. That was probably the late '50s or early '60s.

Q: Do you recall any celebrities who lived in Jasper Place such as Johnny Bright and Don Getty?

GC: Don Getty was in West Edmonton in the Whitemud area.

WK: [Mike Vulcan was a long-term Eskimo during those years. He lived in Lynnwood, I believe, a friend of my dad. Though Rollie Miles didn't live here, he lived in Parkview or one of those places. His kids were cousins of the Lipscombes, so we all knew the Lipscombes and knew some of the Miles kids as well.] ask WK why he wants to omit this

Q: I think there were a couple of others.

GC: Normie Kwong. Was he involved in the school system? I don't think he was here. He was in that same generation...

WK: He was a wealthy guy, for one. He was in Calgary and Edmonton [for football] back and forth a few times. He was a different class of people than us, [a professional who later owned many Calgary businesses including the Calgary Flames].

Q: Were you at J.P. Composite at the time Johnny Bright was there?

GC: Johnny Bright might've been there right after that or right after my generation or right after Wayne's.

WK: When I was [student] teaching, he was the principal at Hillcrest. [...] I know his kids went to Jasper Place.

GC: I don't think he was a teacher there. Art Walker was another Edmonton Eskimo, because I physically ran into him as I was rushing to my paper route. I was the district manager running around the corridor, and I ran right into this chest of Art Walker and bounced back about ten yards, that's what I recall. He was massive.

Q: You mentioned people leaving their keys in their cars.

WK: We never locked our house. Our house doors were never locked until maybe the 1970s. [I] never needed a key, I don't remember anybody needing one; you just didn't do it. You left the door open, and the grocery guys came and put the groceries inside. [...] [Meter readers would walk in, call out "meterman" and proceed downstairs to take monthly consumption readings of gas and water].

GC: Most of us would not have had any "local wealth" that you would've been concerned about losing. There might've been a picture off the wall that you would've missed, but other than that, nothing would've been of any consequence to anybody.

Q: That's different than the stereotype of the neighbourhood having been violent and crime-ridden.

GC: But the violence was limited to a very small swath of the population. It was the age group between 15 and 18 and was centred around Stony Plain Road, and evening activity. Everybody knew if they wanted to watch the festivities you go down to Stony Plain Road and stop in one or two of the places where the fighting was notorious. But the rest of it in terms of violence in the neighbourhood, by and large, didn't happen.

[...]

GC: I honestly can't recall any reason why you would've had any concern for police presence. The police presence would've been absolutely very few and far between.

WK: I can't remember from all the people I knew anybody who had any incidents with crime or violence perpetrated on them that they didn't seek out themselves.

GC: My example would've been an outstanding unusual example – and it was outstanding to me – other than the fact there was a gun in my mouth. But these things didn't happen.

WK: It didn't happen to anybody. George hung out with these people. It was kind of his gang back then.

GC: It was my gang, and it was just exciting to be around them, because you knew things were going to happen. But how I managed to do that and go to church at the same time is beyond me. It was kind of a double life. Most of the guys I hung around with knew that I had church on Sunday and violence on Friday and Saturday.

WK: I used to refer to George as standing with one leg on each side of the fence.

GC: I was also the guy that ran into their fence in my brother's car – my first ever driving experience, I backed into the fence. It was kind of A Tale of Two Cities. It was a very different

kind of world. It was a very... you saw your neighbours as yourselves. The lack of discrimination, when I think about it, really strikes in my mind as symptomatic of the kind of community we were in. We were in a community, and people were in it together. Nobody was looking down their nose at somebody else. The only time you talked about people [...], ironically, was when I went to church in downtown Edmonton, and we hung around with people that grew up in the Glenora area. We knew they had more, and my dad would point that out regularly. They'd come and pick up my parents and take them to church, and they had nice cars, and we had terrible roads. But we didn't think about it terms of J.P. The teachers were about the same, the clientele at the stores was the same, going to the bar was the same.

WK: You didn't think of yourselves as underprivileged.

GC: Yeah. We were who we were, and you're right, you didn't talk about being underprivileged. We were happy to be alive.

Q: What were your impressions of Jasper Place High School? You were both there when it was opening up.

GC: The high school was unbelievable. They had stuff like cooking programs, they had hairstyling programs, they had industrial arts programs. You could go into any number of programs and graduate with a certificate or a diploma. They had a decent Phys Ed program. They were in the process of building the football bowl.

WK: Swimming pool, skating rink, a sports field right next door that you could use as part of your programs.

GC: All of this was just unbelievable. For kids coming out of Central School to see that, I mean it was just like you'd died and gone to heaven. I think about it in terms of, that was a

big transition to go from Central to J.P. Comp for people like us. I got into the Phys Ed sports side right away and that allowed me to get accepted right away. Later on when I went from J.P. to University of Alberta, and I'd spent three years out by the time I went to U. of A., I thought going from J.P. to U. of A. was not a big shock. You had big classes and big classrooms and so on. I often thought to myself, if I was a kid from Warburg or Breton or someplace going to U. of A. and landing in my first class of 500 students, I'd have been overwhelmed. But I came out of J.P. Comp where there was a ton of students. We had a whole variety of programs and so on. The other thing that sticks in my mind is the cafeteria where they had good food, and you could buy that. I remember going in there with [a friend who had a garter] snake, and we put it under the dining room table, the cafeteria tables. We sent the snake under the table. That was one incident. We bought Kentucky Fried Chicken one other time and brought it into the school. Everybody else was having their sandwich or their cheap food from the cafeteria, and about five of us were having Kentucky Fried Chicken, just as a joke. I remember we had a pie eating contest, which became a pie throwing contest. I remember playing catch with Lee Jenkins, who grew up close to Wayne and I. I was fancying myself as a starting off pitcher; I wasn't bad at it, but anyway, it was erratic. I fired the ball, and it hit a clump of dirt in front of [Lee], and it goes firing through one of those nice plate glass windows, brand new J.P. Comp. I'm thinking, "I'm in big trouble here, I have no money."

WK: It was a good thing you were a good runner.

GC: I was a good runner. But we went inside, and I set up two desks on either side of the hallway so you had to come through between the desks. I had a hat or cap or something, and everybody coming through was required to put a nickel or a dime or quarter into the hat, because I was doing fundraising. Along comes this lady who would've been probably 30 or 40 at the time, I have no idea, but "elderly". She asked what we were doing, and I explained the window. She puts \$1 or \$2 into the hat. Well, it was a godsend, it was the biggest amount of money we'd seen. At the end of the noon hour, I'm back in my classroom

and the announcement comes over from the vice principal John Bibby who says, “Will George Cuff please report to the main office.” I go to the main office and wait, and soon enough I get called in by Dr. Bernie Keeler, who eventually became the head of the ATA. He was a smart guy, I’ll tell you – ended up with Alzheimer’s I think – but anyway, smart guy. He calls me in, and he always had these steel blue eyes like Wes Wetter. He looks at me and says, “Mr. Cuff,” – and I was on the student union executive by that time – he says, “Mr. Cuff,” he said, “I understand you were doing some entrepreneurial fundraising at lunchtime.” I explained the situation about why we were doing the fundraising. I said to him, “Well, how did you find out what we were doing?” He said, “Do you recall an older lady coming by and putting money into the hat?” I said, “Yeah.” He said, “That was my wife; she was going to get her hair done at the beauty culture class. I recall being “in trouble” but not because I was on the executive of the student’s union and they knew you were kind of somebody who cut up a bit, but I wasn’t really getting into any great mischief. At one time we had major problems with people bringing booze in for the high school dance. A couple of us said, “We’ll police the dance; you leave us alone, we’ll police the dance. We’ll make sure there is no booze in there.” We stopped everybody coming into the main doors when the doors opened, and anybody we suspected was bringing booze we frisked them and put their booze into this brown paper bag. They’d say, “Are we going to get it back at the end?” We’d say, “Well, you come and see us at the end of the dance.” By that time, we’d collected all the booze and we were out having a party with the free booze that we’d collected. I remember Dr. Keeler asking what happened and why we were so effective, “Well, I had a couple big guys beside me that were helping do the collection.” The teachers had a more forgiving and a more graceful attitude toward us. If you were a decent student and still involved in stuff, they would be more forgiving.

WK: I remember the vastness of the place. It stretched for blocks. You’d have three minutes to get three or four blocks if you had the misfortune to have classes at opposite ends. There was 2,500 kids there. Interestingly enough, I just ran into a guy [at a local ski station] who I’d been seeing all year. I recognized his ski jacket on the ski lift, and it was the

first time I'd been on a lift with him. So I introduced myself and we somehow got to talking about growing up in this part of town. He said, "Oh my wife grew up there too on 108<sup>th</sup> Avenue. I said, "Oh?" He said, "Yeah, she was born in 1951." I said, "Oh, I'm 1952. We may have known each other." He said a name, and I've heard the name before, but I couldn't put a face to it. I went home and looked in the yearbook and I realized there's 2,500 kids there. She was all three [high school] years in the same grade as me, but I never once crossed paths with her. That was true of so many people. You had a core group that met at lunchtime and before and after school, but in your classes, there were just so many people. That was something I'd never experienced before. I'd always had the same kids in my classes, day in and day out. It was a real experience. I forget what they called it – open campus I believe, an experiment where they suddenly said, well there's no rules. You come and go as you please, there's no attendance anymore. They allowed smoking in the school and a whole bunch of things for one year. I guess it was bad news, because that principal was never heard from again and a new law-and-order principal was put in there. I don't know what they were thinking when they did this.

GC: That would not have worked in our generation.

WK: They had ashtrays in the hallways. They asked us to not smoke in the bathrooms, because it would get so smoky in there that you couldn't see. Crazy times.

Q: In my experience, university was a big thing, because it was expensive, and it was also seen as your ticket out. Was it that way for you?

GC: It was for me because I'd spent two years with the Royal Bank and one year with Atlantic Richfield Oil Company, all doing small mindless accounting with no designation and getting paid very limited dollars, looking around and seeing guys in the same sweatshop and thinking, "How do I get out of here?" Seriously, I had eight guys in one room. If you started at the far-left corner you'd end up in the far-right corner if you didn't die or you

didn't resign; you'd get way over here and you'd be a dollar an hour more than the guy that started. Anyway, I just thought, "I'm not going to handle this, this stuff is mindless to me." My [boss's office] at the time was on Kingsway Avenue and about 115<sup>th</sup> Street or whatever. He said, "George, you're destined for university; you need to get there and find out what they think you ought to be doing." They asked me, "What did you like doing in high school?" I said, "I loved Phys Ed and I liked Social and History." They said, "We'll welcome you in, you're going to be one of our track guys, and all that kind of stuff." Then they called me a week later and said, "You don't have good enough marks in Math or Chemistry," or whatever it was, "and you've gotta finish this off in Grade 12." I'd still be in Grade 12 if I had to finish Grade 12 Math. They said, "If you go to Concordia College for the first year and you pass there, we'll let you into the second-year university, but you still gotta take all your courses from Concordia." They had no transferability agreement in those days. Two years later they did, but by that time I was taking eight courses per term at U. of A. and getting Honours every year, so I was bearing down on it. I saw university as my ticket out. I would be looking at job ads in the paper every Saturday in the career section, and I'd be circling the ads of the ones that were of any interest to me at all. Every one of them I could not apply for, because they had an entry requirement that I didn't have. I hit the glass ceiling real quick when I had just a high school diploma. So that to me was the incentive to get out. It was a great incentive, and I say this today. It got me started on something that's led me to do... I ended up doing more municipal consulting than anybody in Canada, and I have for the last 45 years. I'd have never got onto the track, never got into politics, none of that, because I would not have had the confidence. Going into university was really a confidence booster for me. Working in the Royal Bank and the oil company, I was flatlined real quick. I just thought, "If this is work life, I'm in trouble." So anyway, at some point the light went on. I wish I could tell you it was my parents or whoever. My parents said nothing; they didn't have that kind of education, they weren't encouraging me to get an education. What inspired me was the guy's door right across from our sweatshop that said, Orest Karbonk, CA, General Manager. I went in to see him, who was our boss, and said, "What's the CA mean and how

do you get to be general manager?” That’s when we had the university discussion. There were a lot of these major markers in life, and that was one of the major markers for me.

WK: I had done manual labour at the *Edmonton Journal* carrying newspapers over the summers, and I knew I didn’t want to have any kind of labour job. I didn’t particularly want to go out and look for other jobs. I thought, “Well, I’ll go to university.” I went into Arts and took some art courses. I’d always been good at art, in high school I was good at art. I took some art courses and said, “Gee, it would be fun to make a living doing this, but pretty hard to make a living as an artist.” How could you make a living as an artist? I thought, “Hmm, art teachers seem to do okay, and they’ve got a job every day of the week when they want one.” So I transferred into Education in my second year. I kept up Art as a minor, but I was a major in the Humanities. I really liked my experiences working with kids all the time. I’d always been working with kids in the paper shack and with Cubs and Scouts and that kind of thing. That’s what I went in for, and I really loved it. I could teach anything, it’s the kids. People say to me, “What did you teach?” I always said, “Kids.” You just didn’t teach them English or something, you taught them to be grown up people.

GC: The other person that comes to mind as being a quasi star from Jasper Place was ironically Eddie Krobel’s brother-in-law. His brother-in-law was a guy named John Larter, who became the best-known cartoonist in western Canada and did the cartoon work for the *Calgary Herald*. He was unbelievable, had a classic style. I know there are classic cartoonists across Canada today, but he was the cartoonist of western Canada for some years.

WK: Another troubled kid who made a life for himself. I can remember in Grade 7 John Larter drew on everybody’s stuff, drew everything. That’s all he did was draw, and he was always in trouble for it. Never did any work, just drew.

Q: Anything else you guys would like to talk about?

WK: I don't know that we haven't covered most of our material, George.

GC: Yes. Lots of memories. Good for you guys to be doing this, good for us to have a chance to tell our story. I think people that are going into city councils in Edmonton should be aware of the West End. Andrew Knack, who's a representative out here, should know this stuff, he should know some of the history that he's representing. I just think it's interesting history. I tell people that about Spruce Grove. Every time I do a eulogy at somebody's funeral, I start them off with "Where did we come from as a community and why was this person really important in that evolution as a community?"

Q: [Jasper Place] played a role in the history of Edmonton.

GC: It really did. It was a significant part of it, when we think about it.

[ END ]