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Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum Incorporated – Oral History Project

Muriel Trumpour Interview September 22 & 23, 2014

Catalogue No. 3.7 (E,R,W)

1/20

Conducted at Muriel Trumpour's apartment in Maple Creek

MT = Muriel Trumpour: Interviewee

AB = Ann Behrman: Interviewer September 22, 2014

JP = Joan Parsonage: Interviewer September 23, 2014

JJ = Jean Jones [Muriel's daughter]: Advocate

Camera: Joan Parsonage

September 22 & 23, 2014

MT: I was born in Medicine Hat on November 25, 1925. My name is Muriel Frances Wilan Trumpour. Our home where I grew up was on what we call The Bench, about 20 miles north of Maple Creek, oh Eastend, sorry.

JP: That's all right.

MT: What else?

JP: Did you have sisters or brothers?

MT: Pardon?

JP: Did you have sisters or brothers?

MT: I just had one sister that survived. I had two sisters, but one died when she was only two months old. So I had the one sister, Nancy Kay, and she passed away in 2004. So she is gone.

JP: And what were your parents' names?

MT: My father's name was Joseph Mark Wilan and he came from Northern England. My mother's name was Grace Leggott and she came from what is called The Midlands, Lincolnshire in England. They met over here. Actually my father was secretary of the school where I went to school so he was hiring teachers. As it happened he hired my mother because she was a teacher and that is how they met. She boarded with them.

JP: So you grew up on the West Bench and you were pretty isolated there.

MT: It wouldn't be called West Bench, I don't think; West Bench was more toward the park.

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JP: Oh okay. So what was it like growing up?

MT: Well, I grew up in the '30s and people say what a hard time it was and I guess it was, but everybody was the same and, for kids, we didn't worry about those things. People helped each other and exchanged clothes. Sometimes if your cow went dry people would bring you milk. We just got together and visited, played games; the men played horseshoes.

JP: So you went to school where then?

MT: I went to school at Crossfield School; it was south of Kealey Springs. It was a German district; most of the people were German so I think when they organized that they got my father to be the secretary because he was English and could handle work in English. So when they went to name the school he suggested the name of Crossfield which is the highest mountain in the part where he was in England. The highest mountain in England. Feld means mountain. So that's how it got named Crossfield.

JP: So how far was that from your home?

MT: The school? About two and one half miles.

JP: Did you walk to school?

MT: Mostly we rode. We had a horse and we rode to school. Occasionally my father needed the horse to work the land so we had to walk which was a - quite a put out.

JP: Did you take all your schooling there?

MT: To Grade 11. I took 9, 10 and 11 by correspondence. To take Grade 12 there's certain things it's hard to take by correspondence so my parents sent me to Abbey. My mother had a brother living there, a brother and his wife, so I lived with them and went to Abbey School and took my Grade 12. The next year I went to what they called Normal School, a teacher training school.

JP: Where was that?

MT: In Moose Jaw.

JP: Did you board with someone there?

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MT: My friend and I, Ivy Bircham, shared a room and boarded with a couple and went to school there.

JP: And how did that go? Did you like your classes?

MT: Yes. We walked to the school. The building now they call the Technical Institute; it's not for teacher training at all anymore. We walked 7 blocks.

JP: That's not too bad.

MT: No. A good walk.

JP: How did you apply for your first school?

MT: At that time there was a very big teacher shortage; they could not get enough teachers. When I was going to Normal School they would ask if some of us would go out after two or three months and teach and take a school for that year and then come back and finish up our course. Well I did not ever want to come back, but they kept on giving you that option and in Easter they did it again. They posted these schools on the wall; you could choose one. There were several. They said if you took one then you wouldn't have to come back; they would credit you with your year.

So then I applied for a school; I applied for one that was by Richmond and I taught for two months there. It was a nice place; it was a German settlement, too. I really liked it, but it was a teacherage. When I applied I thought I would love a teacherage, all to myself, but I had no transportation or anything; it was a little hard to live in a teacherage, about six miles from Richmond. There was a girl going to high school and she drove by every morning so she would stop in and ask if I wanted something, like groceries so it worked out nice that way. But the following year, of course, she would be out of school and she would not be there so I didn't want to stay because I didn't know just how I would manage; I definitely did not have money to buy a car.

JP: Where did you go next then?

MT: The next school I went to was Carnagh which is, oh, about 25 miles south of Piapot. It is still on The Bench. It was about five or six miles from my parents' home. That sounds close, but it wasn't because there were no roads that way. So it was a long way by the road, but as the crow flies it was about five miles.

JP: Did you stay with a family there?

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MT: I boarded with Frank and Dora Bertram and I lived about three and a half miles from the school. We rode to school; they had two little kids. I rode a horse and they had a horse for them. Eleanor was eight or nine and Doug was just a beginner, so one sat in the saddle and one behind. When we went to school we had to go down through the bush and we had to cross a couple of little creeks, tiny and shallow. We were coming home one time and for some reason just as we crossed one of these little creeks a bee or something must have bitten the back of the kids' horse and it bolted. Well, Eleanor stayed in the saddle, but poor Doug went off. You know he was wearing boots, laced up like that; they both came off. How they came off when he got bumped like that! I was quite worried about them, but as it happened an Indian family came by with a buggy. They had a girl with them that would be 11 or so. She said that she would ride the horse home and the two kids could ride in the buggy, so that's how they got back home. When I got there Dora said, "I think you look worse than the kids." She said, "Your face is white." *[laughing]* But it did scare me.

JP: No doubt. You were there for how long then?

MT: A year. And then the following year I taught at Cypress Lake School which is, I don't know, seven or eight miles north of Vidora, somewhere in that area. I boarded with Ernest and Marj Pettyjohn. I stayed until Christmas time and then I left there and I went home for a while.

Then I took a school at Loomis which was a difficult school; I had a hard time with that school. I taught there until June and decided I was not going to teach anymore. I took a job in the L.I.D. [Land Improvement District] Office in Eastend which was the forerunner of the municipal offices. I worked there for two months, but it was only a temporary job. I could have worked for the Department of Agriculture, the Ag Rep was there, but I decided, oh well, I'll try teaching again. The wages were a lot better. So that's when I got Govenlock School.

JP: What year was that, Muriel?

MT: That was 1947. I came to Govenlock the first part of November. They hadn't had school until then, so I had to get them through their grades in that short of a time. But they were good little workers and they made it.

JP: So did you have many discipline problems?

MT: Not much in Govenlock. Just the ones I had in Loomis. The Superintendent of Schools told me - because they would not behave - that they could be expelled and if they were expelled the parents would not get the family allowance. So between that, and the School Board there, and the parents, we got them sorted

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out and they were pretty good after that. I had to kind of sit on them, but at least they would mind. I remember at first they wouldn't. It was a nice school. They would not take off their boots to come in the classroom and there was a nice entrance, a nice cloakroom. I said, "Well, they have to. They can't walk on that floor with their boots on. They can bring slippers; they can bring socks; I don't care." Well, then I had a mother come down my neck about that. She "couldn't afford anything more". So we had a little conversation for a while. But eventually they decided they had to follow the rules and they did. But it was hard work; I don't like doing that. I just don't.

JP: So at Govenlock then, the school year was different than we have now, I guess?

MT: Was what?

JP: Was the school year different? You started in the ...?

MT: No. No. It was in a town. They had the school year the same. It closed at the end of June and it opened again at the beginning of September. But I came, because they could not find a teacher. [Bumps mic and says, "Oh, sorry."] That's why I came in November. They really should have had a teacher in September, but they just could not find one.

JP: I see. So how long did you teach there then?

MT: I stayed there for three years I think it was.

JP: And then Cupid came along.

MT: That's right. [*laughing*]

JP: Are there any other things that happened at the school? I know Christmas concerts were important. Did you have dances there?

MT: Oh, they had dances and things and I think they did have Christmas concerts, but that particular year I didn't because they needed the time to do their work, so we just had a bit of a party or something at Christmas time. It takes time to do a concert; I know I did a concert at Carnagh and it just about wore me out.

JP: We have heard that it took a lot of time.

MT: A lot of studying and learning their parts and things.

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JP: Do you have any special memories about your time at any of those schools?

MT: Oh, lots of nice memories. I always liked the kids, some better than others. You do you know. They were kids and they were fun. I do remember one at Carnagh School. They had what they called the Penalty Box. I guess that is what the teacher before me had done so I did it. The Penalty Box was on my desk. If somebody did something wrong, somebody would put a thing in the box to say so and so swore, or so and so didn't bring - you know, little things. So anyway, I think it took three then you gave them a penalty.

We burned wood in the stove there, always burned wood, and you know how burning wood it takes a lot of wood to keep it going. Usually the penalty was to bring in an armful of wood. So this little fellow was in about Grade 2 and he went home one day to his mother and said, "Can I take my sled to school?"

She said, "Well, why? What do you want that for?"

He said, "Because I have to carry all this wood, and can I take the sled so I can carry the wood?"

And she said, "Well, how come you have to carry all the wood?"

"Well, I keep forgetting to bring a pencil." [*laughing*]

That was his penalty. So after that somebody else had to carry the wood.

JP: Down at Govenlock there aren't too many trees so you used something different to burn there.

MT: We burned coal there. I don't think they ever burned wood there. It was always coal.

JP: How did it get to the school?

MT: The coal? Well there was a janitor. I guess the school people brought it. It just came on the track, on the train. All they had to do was unload it off the train and bring it. I think they put it in the porch or something and then used it to heat the stove.

JP: Did you have to start the stove when you got there or did the janitor?

MT: I never had to start it. I was lucky. Some teachers did, but I was lucky. There was always a janitor. In Loomis the janitor did all the work, he did the sweeping,

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but in most of the other schools all the janitor did was light the fire in the morning. We minded it during the day. I'd have to do the sweeping up and dusting.

JP: And the books the kids used—were they ordered by you as a teacher?

MT: I ordered them. I gave each parent a list of what books they would need and told them the prices and they would say whether to buy them or not. Some you really didn't have to get, but they would be helpful and so I would order them after they said that they would pay for them. When they came they paid me for them. I'd give the parents a list of what they cost. They'd pay me. Sometimes they did not send the book. I do remember in Carnagh the one book they did not send, but they said they would send it later. Well, it never came; I completely forgot about it. The mother sent me a note one day to ask about that book. It never came so then I paid her for that book because I had collected for it. It was a mistake, but I felt kind of silly because I completely forgot.

JP: Text books, what about them?

MT: Pardon.

JP: Text books.

MT: This was text books.

JP: Oh, it is.

MT: Oh yes. Their ordinary scribblers and pencils and things they bought themselves. That was why he was always borrowing somebody else's pencil; that was why he got his name in the box.

JP: So if a child could not afford the text book - was there ever a case when that happened?

MT: Nobody ever did that. They all paid me whatever I asked. I tried to buy what I thought they would need because I didn't think they had that much money. I never had any trouble with them that way.

JP: Well, would you have five subjects? Like Social Studies, Literature; did you call it Reading? Your English text book was it Reading? Or what did they call it at that time?

MT: I think the school board provided the reader. As time went on they got to providing more books. When I first started school that is all they provided was a

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reader. As time went on it got so they would provide a speller and the math book. When I went to teach we put the math on the board and did it that way. Gradually they got so they got more - the science books would come and the social books would come.

See when I first started teaching it was right at the time when they were changing over from the little independent schools, I guess you would say, to the school unit. The unit was taking them over. When I first started at Carnagh it was the local people who hired me and told me what my wage would be, but the following year the unit had taken them over so then the unit hired me.

JP: Did your wage go up or down then?

MT: Fortunately pay every year went up, \$100 every year. I think the first year that I taught it was \$1000 a year. That is what the wage was. So when I finished I think it was \$1600 or something like that. I don't remember for sure.

[BREAK]

MT: Train? There were trains through practically every small town. A small town like Govenlock did not have a passenger train, not like Maple Creek had. They had mostly freight trains going through, but they had one freight train where they would put a passenger car on the back end and so then you could ride in the passenger car. I'd get on the train at Ravenscrag usually and get off at Govenlock.

When I went to Abbey I got on the train at Piapot. That's the first time I had ever rode the train, so I was a little excited about that because I had to change trains at Swift Current to go to Abbey. Abbey had a different train.

The train was quite convenient at Abbey. Abbey is on what they called the Empress Line, Empress to Swift Current; they had a passenger train that would go through every day. It was just a passenger train. It would go in the morning early from Empress to Swift Current and then later in the afternoon it would come back, so a lot of the people in Abbey, especially women who did not drive, got on the train. They'd get on the train in the morning, go to Swift Current, do their shopping, see the doctor, dentist or whatever, and come back in the afternoon. It really worked well for them.

JP: So when it came in to Govenlock did it keep on going west then?

MT: Yes. It went west. The train came from Shaunavon and went to Manyberries that night. The next night it went to Lethbridge. The next day it came back to

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Manyberries and then the next day it went back to Shaunavon. There were two trains. There was a train crew based in Shaunavon; there was a train crew based in Lethbridge. So Monday morning the Lethbridge train would come to Manyberries, but the train from Shaunavon would come to Consul. The next day the one at Consul would go down what we called the Branch—it would go down through Val Marie, by Loomis.

When I went on the train to Loomis I got on the train at Ravenscrag, but I had to spend the night at Consul. The next day I got on the train to get to Loomis. Loomis was about 20 miles south of Eastend. They had a way to work those two trains to do that. It worked.

JP: So when you were teaching at Govenlock you stayed at the hotel?

MT: Yes.

JP: And who was managing the hotel at that time?

MT: Andy McCrae and Jo.

JP: Did you have a special bedroom?

MT: It was just one of the rooms, one of the hotel rooms. I think it was number 9.

JP: And what about eating then?

MT: They provided my meals. I came back from school at noon usually and had dinner.

JP: School was right in town then?

MT: No. It was out about a quarter of a mile or so; it wasn't right in the town.

JP: So you didn't have to cook any of your meals then?

MT: No. I didn't know how so it was a good thing. *[laughing]*

JP: Well, that was pretty nice!

MT: It was. It was nice to stay there and there were a lot of people coming and going because at that time the railroad was the transportation. Everything came—the mail, groceries and people. Mail day or train day was quite the day. Everybody got to the station to watch the train come in.

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JP: Did it fill up with water there?

MT: Yes. There was a big water tower there that pumped up water from the creek. That's what they used to run the locomotive because they were steam engines.

JP: Did you ever have to sleep in a berth on the train?

MT: No, I never did. One time I went from home—I wanted to go to Saskatoon to take a class. That was a long trip; it was kind of overnight, but I just slept on the seat in the train. Even when we went to Detroit—Don and I went to Detroit—the seats were really comfortable so we didn't get berths either. They were this kind of seats [armchair type]. Before, they were lots of the times just wood.

JP: Any other memories about a train ride or anything that happened at Govenlock? I think you told us how you met Don before?

MT: When I first came to Govenlock, Don and Ed were not there. They lived about a mile out of Govenlock, but they were not there. They were in Vancouver; they had gone to Vancouver to look for work for the winter and so they would come back in the spring. [*Muriel coughs and excuses herself.*]

Well, Ed came back and I met Ed. There were other young people there at the time so it was kind of nice. So I got to know him. Don didn't come because Don had trouble with his hands and he had to have an operation, so he stopped in Medicine Hat and had that done and so he came later. When he came later he and Ed came over to the school one day when I was working after school. Ed introduced me to Don; it was the night of the 17th of March dance so Don asked me if I would go to the dance, so that was it.

[BREAK]

AB: When you were teaching was there a dress code, like things that you could and couldn't wear, and were there other rules on things that you could and couldn't do?

MT: Not so much when I was teaching. I think just before, but when they got so short of teachers, there was a lot of that let go. When I was going to school—I think I was about seven or eight, not very old—and there was another little girl in my grade. After school one day instead of going home like we were supposed to, there was a culvert on the road just a little ways from the school, and we were playing there. After we were done we went back—we'd forgotten something—

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and we ran back to the school. When we ran into the school the teacher was smoking a pipe and she put it down. Well, she wasn't pleased. [She said,] "Please don't tell anybody." And I didn't and I don't think the other little girl did for years and years. We never told anybody. My dad was the secretary of the school board and I definitely didn't tell him. [Laughter] But you know she was quite worried and we were just kids and we could tell. [Laughter] It's so funny.

AB: You weren't allowed to smoke, period?

MT: No. She wasn't supposed to smoke. No, no. And it was after class. But no, no. And a pipe of all things! A little curly pipe. I can remember. [*laughing*]

AB: Well, what was the dress code then?

MT: Then, they had to wear good dress clothes, like suits and stuff, I suppose. I really don't know.

AB: You could wear slacks?

MT: No. Not me, no. But I had trouble wearing dresses because I was so long in here [*motions, indicating her torso*]. I wore skirts and blouses, sweaters. I wore skirts and sweaters most of the time. That was what I wore.

AB: Can you tell us how you met Don? And what it was like to move to the ranch?

MT: Well, it was kind of funny really. When I came to Govenlock Don and Ed (his brother) because this was in November, were gone to Vancouver to find work. So they were working in Vancouver. So when I first came they weren't there. I went with Francis Carter for a while. Ed came back, but Don didn't get back until a little later. Ed came first. He was there for maybe a couple of weeks and I met him. Don had trouble with his fingers and he had to have them operated on, so he stopped in Medicine Hat and had these tendons pulled down. So then when he came it was the 17th of March dance and Ed came to the school with Don. I had never seen Don before. I had just had a little bit of a tiff with Francis Carter so I wasn't going anywhere. So Don asked me if I would go to the dance with him. And that was that! [*laughing*] Very romantic!

AB: About as romantic as it gets!

MT: Then we went to dances and he liked to play ball so we went to ball games; I suppose that was the most of what we did.

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JP: Do you remember anything about the musicians at the dance?

MT: Oh yes. When we went to Consul it was Charlie and the Wildcats that used to play. Who else was it that used to play? Oh, Mackie. What do they call that band? They played quite a bit. Later, Rick [Jones] and Wilkes [Parsonage] played there quite a lot.

JJ: Paul Kalmring.

MT: Oh yes. They played. Probably as much as any.

AB: Did you or Don play instruments?

MT: No.

AB: And the kids were so musical [*referring to her grandsons*].

MT: They got that from Rick [Muriel's son-in-law]. I didn't even mention Jean.

AB: Can you tell us about your family, your kids?

MT: There are the three. Ivy, Jean and then Pat. Ivy was always more the student type. She was always interested in— Oh gosh, she wrote stories, drew pictures and I don't know what all she used to do. She was in her room half the time doing all this sort of stuff. Jean was the opposite; she was out of the house as much as she could possibly be, especially if dishes were to be done. [*laughing*] Pat was always messing with something. He was the one that always wanted to fix something. I think he took apart I don't know how many alarm clocks; I don't think any of them ever ran again. [*laughing*]

JP: Any particular hardships?

MT: Well, it was hard. When we started we only had, I don't know— Well, the way they had it, Don and Ed had cows and Mrs. Lindner (Mrs. Scarlett at the time, and her husband had died at the time), so they looked after her cows and they got half the calves, so that's sort of how we started into cows. They built the Govenlock Hall about the time I came there, too, because the first one had burnt down so they had a raffle. Howard Buchanan donated a bull calf and I won it. So that was the start of our herd. We just sort of built from that. Don worked on the road and at the Spangler Place and he worked on the railroad, different things until we got enough. Until you build up a herd you can't sell cattle if you are trying to build them up. It wasn't easy, but I guess it worked.

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AB: Who were your neighbors that you visited with?

MT: Well, there were Stokkes. Peacocks lived on the [PFRA] Pasture at that time. Carters. They moved away when you [*referring to Jean*] were in about Grade 4 or 5. There were the McInerneys. They were a really nice couple. Eddy McInerney and Pat; his wife's name was Pat. They were our age and so were the Carters so they were the closest ones.

So we would visit with them. Carters moved away and McInerneys lived down there by where Peacocks are, and the government bought their place to put into the [PFRA] pasture so they moved away. So then the neighbors were older. But there were Halladays, Beulah and Jim. [Roy] Patersons lived on the place Jean is on. The McCraes in town. Fritz and Florence Kalmring in town.

JJ: They used to have card parties.

MT: Yes. They had card parties and they had dances and things. We always had John Lindner's birthday dance; they had to have a dance for that. That was about the end of April, I think.

AB: When you moved to Govenlock and you stayed at the hotel—tell us about what the hotel was like?

MT: It was quite busy at that time because the train went through. At that time the salesmen for the stores and things—they called them travellers—would stop overnight and stay overnight. There was the store salesmen and there was the head of the Wheat Pool Elevator and different ones would stay overnight. In hunting season it was a zoo because I don't know how many people would come; the hotel would be overflowing. And then there were a lot of other people. In those days they didn't have campers and things much like they do now. They'd sleep in their cars or tents and then they would come and eat at the hotel so it was really quite busy there. And then they had people coming and going. Eventually they opened the store there. Kalmrings [Fritz and Florence] moved away. See, they had the store in the hotel.

The hotel had originally been built that way; one part of the lower floor was a store and then this other part was the lobby and dining and kitchen and then the rooms were above.

AB: Who built the hotel? Do you know?

MT: John Lindner. He built it. This is the story. He built it and he ran it for a while and then Gaffs, Dad Gaff, bought it. That's how Andy [McCrae] got into it

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because Andy's first wife was Alla Gaff. She had the hotel when he married her. She died, unfortunately.

AB: What other businesses were there in Govenlock?

MT: There was the store, post office, service station. There was the—what do you call it, I can't think of it—for the railroad.

AB: The station?

MT: Yes, the station was there. There was the house for the people that worked on the track. The section house they called that. I don't know that there were any other businesses offhand.

JJ: The elevator.

MT: Well, the elevator. Yes.

AB: Mr. Silich and his garden.

MT: Pardon.

AB: Mr. Silich and his garden.

MT: Oh yes. Well, he lived— When I came he lived out of Govenlock. He was always the first man. I don't know how they went. The boss section man had a house in town. In fact, that is the house— After Don and I were married, Alex Silich got to be the head section man and Don worked for him. And so we lived in this section house for six months after we got married. So we lived with Alex.

AB: Oh dear.

MT: He was a really nice man, quite a nice man.

JP: What did you do for a house after that then?

MT: Well, then we moved down to where we live now.

JP: Was the house already there?

MT: That was the Scarlett House. Don and Ed had Mrs. Scarlett's cows. Then Mrs. Scarlett married John Lindner. He was living in town; he was divorced. They were in their 60s. So anyway, they got married so then we lived in her house and

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that's where we lived until we built our own house. We always lived in the same place; we built our house just beside it, later.

JP: So you got a new house!

MT: Yes. [*laughing*]

JJ: Who built that?

MT: Don built that. He did. He pretty well did the whole thing himself. I don't know that he— What was the one thing that he said he had to do that I didn't want him to do? I don't remember what it was—install the furnace, I think. I didn't think that was the best selection. I remember him doing the wiring. He went some place. They had those little week-long things they used to do, coming around, and that's how he learned how to do electricity. And so he wired the house. He was following the code really well, so downstairs he left the slack in the wires like it said in the code and then when the inspector came, "Huh! It looks like a Christmas decoration." [*laughing*]

AB: Did they make him change it then?

MT: I think he just had to shorten up the wires or something. He didn't have to do much, but it was funny. "Christmas decoration." Hanging on the beams of the basement.

JP: Before you got that electricity you depended on what? Coal?

MT: Yes. In the old house when we were first married it was coal and coal oil lamps.

JP: Not too much in the way of trees down there...

MT: No. Well, I'd grown up with that so—like wood stoves and stuff.

AB: Did the coal come on the train?

MT: Yes. There'd be a whole coal car. It would stop and there was a man to unload it.

AB: Were you rationed? Like you could have so much coal a winter or as much as you needed?

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MT: You could buy whatever you wanted like anything else. As long as it was for sale, and enough on the car. It was a big rail car. I suppose if it was a bad winter and you needed it there would not be much left. I think the coal mostly came from Lethbridge. The mines were out there.

JP: How about your water supply?

MT: That wasn't very good. We had a dugout. When the trains went through—when I first started riding the train—they were the others, not diesel but the others.

AB: Steam.

MT: So they had a great big water tower in Govenlock. And then they had a cistern and when they'd come from Shaunavon they'd fill that cistern with water. It was right in front of the section house where we stayed. So when we wanted drinking water I would go to that cistern and fill cream cans. And then we used the dugout water for washing and that sort of stuff, strain out the little wiggles and other interesting wildlife. *[laughing]*

JP: What about when you moved down to your other house then?

MT: We had electricity. He dug another big dugout not too far from the house. There was a coulee there. Then he put in those—that was the big idea at the time—filter wells. They put two, like two cisterns down beside the dugout and one was full of sand and it [water] was supposed to come through this sand and run through the other one and that would clean it. Then they had it piped into the house.

It worked for a while, but it didn't work very long because it just plugged up. It was a good idea, but it didn't work. One of those. So after that he hauled water and eventually he dug a well. It's 700 feet deep? *[looking at Jean for confirmation]* Was it? It hit the—the one in the lease hit the Milk River. It's about a thousand feet and it hit the Milk River. This one was— I can't remember what it was.

JJ: The Judith Basin?

MT: That's it. The Judith Basin is the one that ours is, and it is really, really soft water.

AB: Was it flowing?

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MT: The one in the lease flows. The one at the house doesn't, but it came up, I think it was, within 200 feet of the top. You didn't have to— It had a submersible pump in it. It came up to 200 feet. That's the level of whatever, the pressure, but the one down in the lease flows. It's not as nice water. It's quite salty, so I was glad we got the one we got. It wasn't the best water for babies because there was a lot of fluoride in it. I remember I asked the doctor one time about the fluoride—would it bother?

"Oh that would just make the bones stronger," he said. [*laughing*]

MT: They [Kalmrings] had that store and then Andy McCrae had it. They stored practically anything you would need—nails, nylon stockings. I remember that.

AB: The only thing was the fresh produce—

MT: Yes. The fresh stuff came on the train. Wednesday was the day the train came in and so everybody came to town on a Wednesday because that's when the fresh stuff was in so you'd get your fresh vegetables and stuff from the train.

AB: You really relied on the train quite a bit.

MT: Oh yes. The train brought everything, the mail and everything. The mail was a lot faster on the train, too, [*faster*] than it is now. Actually when the train was in the station if you wanted to mail a letter there was a slot on the train to mail it if you had the stamps. Maybe you could even get stamps, I don't know that. I know you could mail a letter. They sorted it on the train so if you wanted to send a letter to Vancouver you put it on the train. It would get there practically the same day.

AB: When you shipped calves where did you take them to? Did you take them to Altawan?

MT: Yes.

AB: Was there a scale?

MT: Yes, there was a scale. There were even stockyards in Govenlock when I first came, but they sold them. Walburger bought them. Mick Walburger bought them. Yes, we they took them to Altawan, weighed them there, put them on the train. It was a lot handier, a train.

They had a box car; a mixed train would come in. Other freights would go through, but they had a mixed train. On the mixed train they had one passenger

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car. That's how I got to Govenlock. I got on the train and rode very slow because they stopped everywhere and switched through things, but I didn't mind it.

AB: And then you could take the train and go right through to Lethbridge and out that way?

MT: To go to Lethbridge you would have to stay over at Manyberries because it stopped there. The same the other way. You could go to Shaunavon; you'd have to stay in Shaunavon and then you could go to Moose Jaw. Once you got to Moose Jaw you would be on the mainline and then you could ride the train. If you got on the express they would go to just the big cities, or they had the locals that would stop at the small places.

AB: I wish they still had them.

MT: Oh I do, too. I kind of like going on the train. Well see, the way the train is now, Havre has a High Line or something they call it, and the trains meet at Havre in the middle of the day so you can get on the train in Havre and go either way in the middle of the day. Don and I went to Detroit one year. Don had a relative in Detroit. We went in, maybe the end of September, beginning of October, and Michigan was beautiful—the colours of the trees. They have tours and things. You know travelling on the train, it's so much more fun than the highway because you don't have billboards and you drive right by places. You go through somebody's backyard and so there was places where there were piles of pumpkins all piled up.

[BREAK]

MT: Nor cooking—I didn't like that either. I did a lot of sewing. I made practically all my own clothes and I made most of the kids' clothes I think. I made clothes for different people. Like Dorothy Halladay was hard to fit so we worked out a pattern for a dress for her. So I did that. I took pictures more than I should have. I liked to garden. But water was kind of a problem. House water wasn't good. Mind you, soft as it was it was not good for plants. When there was water in the dam I would get a garden and we'd pump water off the dam, but usually there wasn't enough rain. So I don't know; that's what I did. I don't remember doing much of—

JJ: You liked to do knitting.

MT: Pardon.

JJ: You liked to do knitting.

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MT: Oh. Knitting. I still do that. Crocheting and that sort of stuff.

JP: Reading. How about that?

MT: Oh yes. I liked to read.

JP: Where did you get your reading material?

MT: We had a travelling library for one thing. I think at one time you could order books from the library and they would come and you could keep them so long and then you had to mail them back. They were postage paid, but the government did that. So you'd get this box of books every once in a while and sometimes they'd get them in the store. I think maybe the hotel would get them and you could go to the hotel and borrow a book. We got quite a few books that way. There were newspapers that were interesting in those days, had stuff in them. *The Free Press* had a whole bunch of different articles, letters and things; it was really interesting. *The [Western] Producer* had the Young Co-operators. I wonder if you would remember? That's too old for you? Ivy wrote and had letters printed in that. What did she call herself? Boston Ivy, I think. Yes, because Boston is where my mother came from in England.

AB: Housework. Yes, housework should be banned. You should never have to do that.

MT: [*laughing*] I don't know. Everybody was the same so you didn't notice. Coal oil lamps were a real— Every morning the chimneys, you had to clean those darn chimneys. Think of that. Now you just touch a switch and complain if a bulb burns out.

JJ: And washing was a lot harder.

MT: Oh wash was a big thing. Washed on a wash board. I remember my mother washing on a wash board and she had to— They had a sheep they sheared, so she wanted the wool and so she was washing that. I remember coming home from school. When I went to school we went to school from the first of March until Christmas, so we went to school all summer. And so we'd be coming home from school on a day it was really hot and she'd have the cookstove on. She'd put a boiler on the stove to boil the clothes. Then she decided to make bread the same day while she had the stove going and she had to iron. I'd come home from school and the sweat would be running down [her face] and she'd be ironing and baking bread and the whole kitchen was just like a sauna. That wasn't unusual. I'm sure the other families were doing the same thing.

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[BREAK]

MT: What would I like them to remember?

AB: What would you like people to remember about you?

MT: I don't know. I never thought about it. I'd hope that they'd remember I was honest and— [*looking at Jean*] What?

JJ: Enjoyed life, I guess.

MT: Well, yes. I did. The life we lived was hard, but I wouldn't have done it differently. I wouldn't want it different. It was the way I liked to be. I liked to be out there [at the ranch] with the wide open spaces and the animals because I liked animals and things.

AB: Just an all-around nice person!

MT: [*laughing*] Well, thank you.