

Interview: Audrey Keely (AK)

Interviewer: Patricia Wejr (PW) and Bailey Garden (BG)

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Location: Audrey's home, North Vancouver

Transcription: Pam Moodie and Jane Player

AK [00:00:04] "Here where all my siblings were born." I don't know whether you want that kind of stuff?

PW [00:00:10] That, probably no. I think, you know, like the story that you just read and things like that. That's really, really nice, I think. And the fact that (I think it was pretty common at the time) but the fact that your mother died only with a nine-week old baby, and you had to really start to—

AK [00:00:28] Yeah.

PW [00:00:29] I mean, I imagine it took a while before you had a housekeeper.

AK [00:00:34] Well, I can't, I know that we did have housekeepers. Anyway, this is what I wrote. "Dwayne was about"—is this on?

BG [00:00:45] Yeah.

PW [00:00:45] Oh, is it?

BG [00:00:46] Yes.

AK [00:00:47] "Dwayne was about two years old when my Dad decided to move to Vancouver from Bellingham. We lived in a big old house in Mount Pleasant, in a Mount Pleasant area. We made friends with the other kids in the neighbourhood and I remember us all staying out till dark having a great time. Our Uncle Chester and Harold came to live at our house because we moved back to Canada." Okay.

PW [00:01:16] Back you up a little bit.

AK [00:01:18] Okay.

PW [00:01:18] Before you moved to Vancouver, I think it would be very interesting for people to hear about your experience in Bellingham when your mother died, leaving you basically to, at a very young age, to do quite a bit of caring for your younger brothers and sisters.

BG [00:01:36] How many younger siblings did you have?

AK [00:01:40] Oh, there was five of us altogether (unclear) there was a horse here.

PW [00:01:47] You were the eldest?

AK [00:01:51] There—there's when we first went up to the Cariboo. I was the one on the horse with the two kids. The two kids was my stepmother's boy, Terry, who's still alive, is ten years younger than me. I was just talking to him this morning, and so he's there. I think

this is Terry and this is my brother Duane, the two of them. Then down here is my brother Orville and my sister Norma and John. John, who was a year younger than me. That's me at the back looking after the kids.

PW [00:02:30] So your family had done a lot of travelling in your very early years?

AK [00:02:33] Yeah, well, my Dad was, I think he was just a—when I was born, he was a blacksmith.

PW [00:02:41] That was in New Brunswick?

AK [00:02:42] He had a shop. But then he took off to Milwaukee where my brother was born, and then he came back to New Brunswick where my sister was born. Actually I've got a big picture of the three of us together, which is a nice picture, but not sure where it is now. Anyway, what was I going to say?

PW [00:03:01] You moved back and forth and then you moved out to Bellingham.

AK [00:03:13] We went on the train from New Brunswick to Bellingham. Remember I had a, I think I had a boil on my bum.

PW [00:03:19] Oh, dear.

AK [00:03:20] I always remember that. Anyway, we got to Bellingham and my Dad bought this house, which he was taking the roof off and redoing this roof and I remember these open stairs that were just built without railings and that, and I remember a rat running down the stairs. Anyway, when my little brother—after my mother died—my Dad had Duane in the bedroom with him and this night Duane started crying and my Dad couldn't see anything wrong with him. The next morning they discovered that a rat had been in to get crumbs in the bed and had bitten his toe. That's why he was crying. Yes. So that was life in Bellingham.

PW [00:04:25] It must have been quite difficult for you when you were nine, when your mother died.

AK [00:04:31] Yeah, and I remember my Dad coming home and just stroking my forehead and telling me my mother died. Of course, I was the oldest one, and he was left there to look after all these kids.

PW [00:04:53] Did you go to the funeral?

AK [00:04:56] Yes. Didn't I read that out?

PW [00:04:59] We didn't get that on tape, so. Oh, would you like to read that?

AK [00:05:02] Yeah. "Duane was about nine weeks old when our mother came down with double pneumonia. I remember an ambulance taking her away as I cried at the window. The other memory is being at the funeral. Our father always discouraged tears." You're not supposed to cry. "A fellow who worked at the funeral home was trying to cheer me up." He was just somebody there. He wasn't dressed up or anything. He was trying to make me laugh or something. I don't know. "And I remember just hating him while suppressing the desire to cry for my mother." So it was really—I've never forgot it—this guy—I can still kind

of see him. He was just like an ordinary worker that was there and he was just trying to cheer me up. Cheer this little girl up.

PW [00:06:08] Well, we were, as we were discussing earlier, maybe that was really a pivotal moment where you thought, I'm never going to let a man tell me what to do in my life.

AK [00:06:20] Yeah. (laughter)

PW [00:06:22] Yeah, so a little while after you moved up to Vancouver then, did you?

AK [00:06:29] Well Duane was about two, so it would be a couple of years that we lived—where my Dad had bought this house was sort of out on the fringes and there was orchards around. It was, of course, I guess it's all grown up now but anyway. Did I read out where my, we had housekeepers? "Usually"—

PW [00:06:55] We talked a little about that.

AK [00:06:56] "Usually with a child of their own, who looked after us and made the meals. The doctor who delivered Duane offered to adopt him as they had no children. But my Dad wouldn't do it."

BG [00:07:11] Did your Dad continue to work as a blacksmith or did he have other jobs too?

AK [00:07:15] No, when he was in Vancouver, he worked for the Ornamental Bronze, it was called.

BG [00:07:24] Right.

AK [00:07:26] There were two Germans that owned it. That was during the war, so they made him the foreman—the face of the place—because they were Germans and people didn't like them.

PW [00:07:39] Right.

AK [00:07:41] He only went to grade five, but he learned to read blueprints and, you know. Then when we were up in the Cariboo he was building these big log houses and barns, and I don't know how he did it. I mean, it was—

PW [00:07:59] I think you also mentioned to me that he had worked on the, was it the Hotel Vancouver?

AK [00:08:05] Well, what they made—at this Ornamental Bronze—were railings like there was steps up. They had these iron railings along the edge of this sort of platform. It was another floor level. They had been in there quite a while, and then eventually they took them out and changed them.

PW [00:08:29] I think I remember that, as a child.

BG [00:08:33] Did you?

PW [00:08:33] Yeah.

BG [00:08:34] Would that have been the—

PW [00:08:34] That was, it was the CP Hotel at the time.

BG [00:08:37] Oh, the old Hotel Vancouver.

PW [00:08:39] Right, yeah.

AK [00:08:42] Anyway, I think like, you know, I'm artistic. Allen, my brothers are artistic, the makers of stained glass, and Heather's artistic. So we've got a—and that wood sign up there that says—

PW [00:09:05] Oh yeah, Family is Forever.

AK [00:09:05] Yeah, I got a cousin from back east on my hundred birthday sent me that.

PW [00:09:11] Oh. That's really nice.

AK [00:09:11] I wrote to them, I said, 'Did you make that? He said, 'Yeah, I've had some prizes with my work,' so, it's sort of in the family.

PW [00:09:22] Yeah, and you think that was from your Dad?

AK [00:09:24] Yeah.

PW [00:09:25] Yeah, that's great. Then, you were in Vancouver for a number of years before you went up to the Cariboo, was it?

AK [00:09:33] I can't remember how many years. I know that—well, I would be nine and then say 10, 11. Then I think I was 13 when my Dad got married to my stepmother. What happened was he, according to Terry, neither of them knew they had kids.

PW [00:09:59] Oh. (laughter) That's very funny.

AK [00:10:00] They got married and when my Dad drove his car up, put the five of us in the backseat, and he and my stepmother and Terry were in the front, so it was us against them. (laughter) I was 13.

PW [00:10:25] You managed, you had a car that you drove up to—

AK [00:10:29] My Dad had got this car. Don't ask me how he got it, but when he got up there, he traded it in at the Indian reservation for a team of horses.

PW [00:10:38] Probably a good move!

AK [00:10:38] Yeah, yeah. We were living in different places. I remember one of the neighbours gave us watered down skim milk, but eventually my Dad applied for land. You know, you can apply for land as long as you—and they just give it to you—as long as you put—

PW [00:11:05] You have to improve it, right?.

AK [00:11:07] Improve, improvements on it. The first year we lived in this tent; it was just the floor and there was a stove in there. I remember my stepmother making bread. I remember this bread was covered in blankets, like this (indicates high pile) to try and protect it but my stepmother wasn't really a very good cook. Anyway, we survived. Then one time my Dad went out and killed a moose and he brought back the liver and I had been sick. I was about 13 and skinny, and so she started cooking this liver and saliva just started running out of my mouth. Always remember that because it was such an unusual thing, I mean, for your mouth to start acting like a river, you know. You know, because I was hungry I guess and that was the reaction my body had to the smell of liver cooking.

PW [00:12:15] Did you enjoy that meal?

AK [00:12:18] I don't remember anything about the meal. I always remember is the saliva running out of my mouth.

PW [00:12:27] That was in a place called Miocene?

AK [00:12:31] Yeah, it was just a post office address. It was just, you know, it was a certain area. Before Miocene, coming in off the main road, it was 150 Mile House, and then you came up the Horsefly Road. Then there was Rose Lake, which was another post office. In the winter when we got there, somehow or other, my stepmother's mother sent up a piano. It was a little piano. I had taken one year of music so I could chord. My brother played the mouth organ. My Dad played the fiddle and we took the piano with us. You made your own. You know what we did was—it was just go ahead and do it.

PW [00:13:31] Sounds like it.

AK [00:13:31] Yeah.

PW [00:13:32] And so there was, now was the school actually in the community of Miocene?

AK [00:13:38] Yeah, well, Wiggins was where the teacher stayed and they had the post office, so they were well off.

PW [00:13:47] Right.

AK [00:13:49] The last time I was up there, their house was still there and Heather and her husband and I had a look around there.

PW [00:14:00] That was common where the teacher always just boarded with a family.

AK [00:14:03] Yeah, yeah. She walked to school. It wasn't very far along the road, but it was two miles that we walked every day to go to school.

PW [00:14:15] I think, from the photo there were, well, I don't know if everybody was there, but there were nine children, do you think?

AK [00:14:21] Yeah, well, I think. Yeah, that's it.

PW [00:14:28] Yeah. When you think about it, that was pretty good that they actually had a school for a small number of children.

AK [00:14:34] Where is the one with the school?

BG [00:14:36] It's here somewhere let's see. Oh, this it.

AK [00:14:41] Yeah.

BG [00:14:43] We've taken a photo of it as well. I'll just hold it up for the camera here.

PW [00:14:49] Yeah. That's the one thing you probably have the same teacher for the whole five years, right?

AK [00:14:53] Well. It was kind of funny. Her name was Leckie. Leckie, forget her first name. Anyway, she was a petite woman with red hair. She would go to the dances and we'd all be going, taking a sleigh or whatever—mostly sleigh—and we'd all be in it. There was a guy in the neighbourhood that really had a crush on her. They were sitting in the front and we were sitting in the back and we had blankets around us. It was good, you know, I mean, it was a healthy life, although we didn't have all that much to eat.

PW [00:15:50] You were telling me that school only went up to Grade eight.

AK [00:15:55] Grade eight. Yeah.

PW [00:15:57] Yeah. So basically there was no opportunity for you to go to school after grade eight?

AK [00:16:02] No. My Dad went to grade five and Terry yesterday was telling me that, he said, 'I went to, I started grade eight,' and then he said our Dad 'Met me at the bus and said, we're moving.' So Terry said, 'So there was no point in me going to school. So I quit school. I never did go any further.' He said that my Dad said to him, 'Well, I only went to grade five and I've done all right, so you've gone to grade eight, so you should be able to do really well.' Without an education, you know. So Terry said, 'Well, I didn't go to school, but I did learn all how to work with heavy equipment.' That's what he did, you know, that's how he earned his living.

PW [00:17:08] I was going to ask you about one thing that you told me about. It's interesting, because it really was kind of in the middle of nowhere, but when you were a teenager at a nearby community, Rose Lake, there was actually a meeting where somebody from the CCF did come?

AK [00:17:23] Oh, yeah, yeah, there was a meeting there and all I remember is that my Dad took me to this meeting and I really felt important because, never went anywhere with my Dad. He never showed—he never swore in front of us, he never beat us or anything, but he did pick on Terry, which is too bad. Anyway, Terry survived it, but he was taciturn, is that the word?

PW [00:17:58] Yeah, taciturn.

AK [00:18:07] He didn't express anything, but he was good to us kids. One time my stepmother said to me, 'Your Dad says he's leaving.' No money, no money—and he wouldn't go on relief.

PW [00:18:23] Oh, right!

AK [00:18:24] You know, his Scottish background, very independent. Anyway, he could have gone on relief, that would have given us a little bit of money. Anyway, she says, 'He says he's going to leave.' I said, 'He can't do that,' and he didn't. (laughter)

PW [00:18:47] We were discussing this earlier. We figure there must have been something at that CCF meeting that really spoke to you.

AK [00:18:54] Oh, you're trying to get something out of me. I don't remember.

PW [00:18:57] Just so you know, I mean, you've had an amazing life of being activist and very politically involved and working in unions and things. Sometimes we ask people, 'Well, how do you think that happened?' Yeah, so I think, and also being an early adopter of feminism, I think, so—

AK [00:19:17] Yeah, yeah.

PW [00:19:19] So, something must have—

AK [00:19:20] That was just instinct.

PW [00:19:23] Something must have influenced you. Anyway we—for whatever reason you went and it felt good, and then it was a few years later that you moved, you left the Cariboo, right?

AK [00:19:38] Yeah, yeah. We were up there nine years and when we left, my Dad just left everything. He didn't care. We just, 'Let me out of here! Back to work.'. Then, when we first went up to Cariboo, he knew this family called Websters, and his wife was French-Canadian, and she was showing me how to cook and took an interest in us. They were pretty good at bummin' around and making do with anything that came up. Unbeknownst to me, years later, when we went up there with my nephews, ran into this woman that was there when we were there, and she says these Websters moved down to our place, you know, which was empty—

PW [00:20:41] Right.

AK [00:20:41] And just lived there. (laughter) Which I knew nothing about. I think they ended up in Terrace, the last time I heard of them, but, they had a family of kids. I don't know if any of them are 100 now, but anyway.

PW [00:21:00] When you came down to Vancouver, were you still living with your family or did you strike out on your own?

AK [00:21:08] No, we were, let's see now. I stayed with them, then they moved over to the Island and my sister Norma and I went to live with Grandma Walven, who was my stepmother's mother, and she lived in East Vancouver. During that time, which I just remembered today, I joined the LPP, the Labour Progressive Party, and there was a

building that they rented, a hall. I don't know how—the kids in the neighbourhood didn't have anything to do, so I thought, well maybe I'll get a radio or something and they can dance on the weekends, Saturdays. I don't know how I managed this, and I don't think the people were too enthusiastic about it in the Party, but anyway, they let me go ahead and do my thing. We set up a committee of the kids and—so anyway everything went pretty good. I was paying, the little bit of money I had; I guess I was working then. I would maybe sometimes get some cookies or something. Anyway, the kids flocked in and they came! Then there was a boy there and he started playing cards and betting.

PW [00:22:57] Oh-oh!

AK [00:22:58] Then this finally got back to me, so I said to the kids in the community, 'Well, we've got to, you know, kick him out of here because the parents are starting to talk.' Then they were also saying, 'Oh, you're trying to make kids communists,' so of course, the people in the community, some of the people. Anyway, then that got the LPP alarmed because they didn't want to cause trouble here. We finally gave it up; but, you remember when they had these teen [unclear] day big city? I think that was the start of it.

PW [00:23:51] Well that's great. Yeah. No, I remember going to some of those.

AK [00:23:55] Yeah? Cause they didn't have anything up till then and I think because the Communists started doing it, they thought they'd better, you know, step in and do something.

PW [00:24:07] Give something for the kids to do. Yeah.

AK [00:24:09] Yeah.

AK [00:24:10] That got to be quite a thing. That's just my idea. I think that's what happened.

PW [00:24:15] I mean, that was a great—but it was great that you did that. First, yeah. You know, when you think about it. That was very progressive to organize the kids.

AK [00:24:23] Yeah.

PW [00:24:23] Just so people who may not be familiar with it, the Labour Progressive Party had to come into being because the Communist Party was banned during the war.

AK [00:24:36] Yeah.

PW [00:24:37] So they created the Labour Progressive Party, which I guess was very similar, but it wasn't banned.

AK [00:24:45] Yeah.

PW [00:24:46] I was going to ask you, could you tell about your experience at Spratt Shaw?

AK [00:24:54] Oh, yes. Well, my stepmother saw this ad in the paper that was asking for volunteers to polish the brass—which is still there on the front door—and sweep the floors, and they had this kind of a sawdust stuff that you sprinkle on and sweep it up. Betty, her

name was, finally it has come to my mind. Betty Brown, as Mum, told her daughter about it. We both went and applied for this job and we got it. We had to go every day, to go and sweep the floor earlier than—or later or whatever, forget how we did it—but anyway, we did it, and we ended up so I knew something about bookkeeping and typing. It's how I learned to type.

PW [00:25:59] They taught you in exchange for the work you were doing?

AK [00:26:00] Taught the class. Yeah. Yeah. So is that clear enough?

PW [00:26:06] Yeah, yeah. So that's great, so you learned? Yeah, you learned.

AK [00:26:08] That's how we got—because up until then, I hadn't had any education, except going to Grade eight. But at least I got a good imagination and I built this house.

PW [00:26:22] Yeah.

AK [00:26:23] So I've got, you know, things in me that—

PW [00:26:29] They get done.

AK [00:26:30] Yeah. Yeah.

PW [00:26:32] Now, can you—I don't know if you can remember at all, but the story you told me about, you know, I always am interested in why people—

AK [00:26:42] Do things.

PW [00:26:43] Like join trade unions or whatever, and you decided that you wanted to work in a trade union. Work for a trade union, so can you tell us about that?

AK [00:26:51] Yeah. I wrote a letter to Elmore Philpott, and I guess I was reading the newspaper at the time too, and he was quite a progressive guy, and so he wrote back, he said, 'Go and ask them.' (laughs)

PW [00:27:08] So, Elmore Philpott, I did ask, because I asked some of my journalist friends and of course he's a legend. They all remembered him. He wrote for the Vancouver Sun.

AK [00:27:16] Yeah, yeah.

PW [00:27:20] That's very funny.

BG [00:27:21] So you must've maybe read some articles about unions or maybe just had some friends who were in unions?

AK [00:27:26] I don't know. I really don't know how I decided that I wanted to work for a union.

PW [00:27:34] That was very rare. When you think about it.

AK [00:27:35] Yeah. Well, I think when I went up to that office and asked, you know, for a job—'There's some young woman looking for a job in a trade union?' So I got the job!

PW [00:27:47] And, you know where that was, the first union. Again! Like, they probably never ran into any women, because it was the IWA (International Woodworkers of America), right?

AK [00:27:54] Yeah. Well, there was another woman working there. Winnie, her name was. Anyway, when I went to work there, of course I didn't have any experience, but they put me on this Address-o-graph. You know, it's like a plate, and you punch in the addresses on this plate and then you can run it through the machine, because they had The Woodworker—it was the newspaper—which was sent all over the province.

PW [00:28:22] Yeah.

AK [00:28:23] So that was my first job there, working the Address-o-graph.

PW [00:28:28] Was that Harold, Harold—

AK [00:28:29] Harold Pritchett.

PW [00:28:30] Did he interview you?

AK [00:28:33] No, it was Nigel Morgan.

PW [00:28:34] Oh, Nigel.

AK [00:28:35] Yeah. And his wife, Mona, was sort of hovering in the background there, too. Anyway, she lived to be quite an age.

PW [00:28:47] So you had to work the Address-o-graph?

AK [00:28:48] Yeah, so then I moved on to—this one day I had to do a stencil, never heard of a stencil in my life. Anyway, I learned how to type a stencil, and I ended up by doing thousands of stencils, cause when I worked for the Fishermen's Union, we had all kinds of agreements, and pages long, and proofing them and everything. Yeah, big job.

PW [00:29:17] So you went from the IWA, and then, that's when you went to work for the Labour Progressive Party for a while.

AK [00:29:24] Harold Pritchett, when I said, 'Well, I'm quitting here, you know.' He said, 'I don't know whether that's a good idea.' (laughter) Anyway, this friend of mine—her name is gone from my mind. Anyway, she kind of took me under her wing, course she was in the Party and she knew where the jobs were and everything were going around, you know. She suggested I go to work for the LPP office, and I think Nigel Morgan was in there and the old Scottish guy.

PW [00:30:11] Jack Phillips? No, that wasn't him.

AK [00:30:15] No, not Jack Phillips. Anyway, I can't remember.

PW [00:30:16] It was Vi who took you under her wing?

AK [00:30:18] Yeah Vi. Then when I went to work for the Fishermen, it was Mickey Beagle who was the—she was an organizer, and she's the one that was a great fighter for women's rights.

PW [00:30:36] Now, before you went to the Fishermen's Union, you worked for the Vancouver Civic Employees Union too, didn't you?

AK [00:30:41] Yeah, well, I worked there for a while with Jack Phillips and Don Guys.

PW [00:30:46] Right.

AK [00:30:47] At the time I started there, the Vancouver Labour Council was really anti-communist and they had—I don't know, forget how—they had to put their money somewhere where nobody could get at it. It was really quite a bad time.

PW [00:31:05] I seem to recall reading about that.

AK [00:31:10] Anyway, I remember Trade Union Research—

PW [00:31:20] That'd be the Trade Union Research Bureau, Emil.

AK [00:31:23] Emil. He was doing the books for them. So this one day he comes and he says, 'Well, there's some money missing here,' and they're looking at me, and I said, 'Oh, I didn't do anything with any money!' Anyway, he goes away and he comes back and he found out that he'd made a mistake.

PW [00:31:47] I hope he apologized.

AK [00:31:48] Yeah.

PW [00:31:52] Okay. Somewhere along the line, I know that you told me that you had been married at first, though we won't go into that, but you then met Bernie. Now Bernie was a trade unionist.

AK [00:32:04] Yeah.

PW [00:32:06] Bernie was first Lawson and then I guess, Beardsley and then, Kealey.

AK [00:32:12] Yeah.

PW [00:32:13] So Bernie. Bernie was working—

AK [00:32:16] Bernie worked at the shipyard down here. The week or so before we'd been at a dance, which was some hall along Hastings Street, and I needed some money to make a phone call and so I asked him, because I didn't have any money. I asked him if he'd give me a loan of 35 cents or something. Anyway, I didn't see him again, but we were in the Marine Workers Hall and I was coming down the stairs and I saw him there, so I said, 'Oh, I'd better give him the money,' and I thought he was kind of cute too. Anyway, I went and wrote a note, 'Meet me in the pub,' and so I wrapped the money and so I went up to him and just put it in his hand. Anyway, he was at the pub, so that's how we—

PW [00:33:20] And the rest is history as they say.

AK [00:33:22] And the rest is history. Yeah.

PW [00:33:27] Around that time I know it was tough because the shipyards of course were going like 24/7 during the war, but then—

AK [00:33:35] Well then after, I got pregnant right away, before I got married, of course, and I was still working for the civic workers. I remember Don Guys and they had the committee—the Executive Committee—and he goes in there and he said, 'Well, Audrey's leaving because she's pregnant.' (laughter) Thanks. (laughter) He was a great big, burly guy. You know, we were good friends, but I thought, 'you're not very tactful.'

BG [00:34:21] Those were the days where they could let you go if you were pregnant or getting married or anything like that, right?

AK [00:34:27] Yeah. Anyway, I left there and we did eventually get married before—well, let's see—I wrote down the dates there. Marriage to Bernie March 18. Where the heck is it?

PW [00:34:52] I thought I saw that too.

AK [00:34:53] Married to Bernie March 18, 1955.

PW [00:34:59] Yeah. There you go.

AK [00:35:00] Yeah, and Joey is born October 2.

PW [00:35:04] I love what you told me that who Joey was named after.

AK [00:35:07] Joe Hill, yeah.

BG [00:35:09] Oh, wow.

AK [00:35:10] Yeah. Joseph Christopher, and I just came across this and this book over there, and this is The Ancient History of the District, the Distinguished Surname Lawson.

PW [00:35:31] Oh, yeah.

AK [00:35:31] And there's a Christopher Lawson here somewhere too.

PW [00:35:40] Now I guess Joey was—how old would Joey have been, when Bernie got laid off from the shipyards?

AK [00:35:49] Oh, he was just a baby.

PW [00:35:51] Right.

AK [00:35:51] Bernie came home and he said, 'I got laid off. You're going to have to go to work.' Anyway, Marine Workers offered me a job for a month, to tide me over I guess. I went to work there and there's nothing outstanding about that.

PW [00:36:19] The most interesting thing was that Bernie then, Bernie was at home looking after—

AK [00:36:23] Yeah, he was looking after Joey, and you know, men can't take the pressure that women can. One day he kind of nearly collapses on the street and so the doctor said that I should put Joey in Woodlands. That was the hardest thing I ever did in my life, everything else is easy.

PW [00:36:50] Yeah.

AK [00:36:54] Anyway, it was near the end of my month and it was winter. It was snowing out, and this particular day, I was trying to go to the Marine Workers but because of the snow, I got on a bus that I never, ever got on. Bruce Yorke was sitting there in the front seat, so I sat down beside him, and he says, 'Well, what are you doing?' and I said, 'Oh, I'm still working at the Marine Workers, but I'm gonna have to look for another job.' He said, 'Oh!' He said, 'Well, we've got two people that are leaving the Fishermen's Union, one's going to the States,' and I forget what the other one was doing. So he said, 'If you want a job, there you are.' So then I stayed there until I was 65, and I ended up with Mickey saying, 'You can be the office manager.' I said, 'What? Me?' She said, 'Yeah,' because she could see that—I am kind of an organized person most of the time. Anyway, so there's a story I can tell you about that. There was this one woman that was in the office who was—nobody liked her. Anyway this particular day I wasn't working, I wasn't the office manager but Sally Iverson—you know her?

PW [00:38:33] Yes.

AK [00:38:35] She was the office manager, and she came to me and she said, 'I'm going out for the afternoon. Could you look after the office?' So I said, 'Okay.' This other gal was there. You know, were you ever in that office, the big office in the Fishermen's Union?

PW [00:38:58] Yes.

AK [00:38:59] There was a desk back here, and there was a big bank of windows and a counter where all the fishermen come to pay their dues and stuff. I was standing in the middle here and looking out the window, trying to think, 'Oh, I got this and this to do, and what am I going to do first now with this?' So, gazing off into the distance, just then this woman comes up to me, she says 'Are you confused?' I said, 'No, I'm just thinking.' Anyway, later on in the day, she's typing stencils and she leaves off about this much of the agreement. So I took it back to her and I said, 'Now who's confused?' Well, she just blew up and walked out. She quit. Homer, he said, 'Oh, thank God, you got rid of her.' I said, 'I didn't, I didn't get rid of her. She got rid of herself.' She couldn't take it when it was—shoe was on the other foot.

PW [00:40:14] But you were first—so your first job before you became the office manager, your first job was—

AK [00:40:20] Just typing, but typing for Homer—

PW [00:40:23] Yeah, which is sort of like a secretary.

AK [00:40:26] Yeah, I was just thrown into the—and there's all the locals and all kinds of stuff, and I didn't feel like I was doing very well, and of course I had Joey at home. And Bruce Yorke was giving me a lift back and forth.

PW [00:40:48] He was actually the office manager at the time.

AK [00:40:49] Yeah, he was the office manager. This one time when I was in the car, I just started crying because I said, 'I don't think I'm doing a very good job, Bruce,' and he said, 'Well, nobody's complaining about what you're doing.' He said, 'If you want a change, I'll put you in the bookkeeping,' and they had a machine there where you keypunch the cards with the dues they paid. I was on that job, and doing that job I learned all about the locals and everything. Then the girl that was doing the typing, she got something wrong with her liver, her kidneys or something, and she died. So I went back into that job, but then it didn't faze me at all.

PW [00:41:47] A little bit more familiar?

AK [00:41:48] Yeah.

PW [00:41:48] It must have been pretty interesting working with Homer, though. It was never a dull moment.

AK [00:41:52] Yeah. Oh God, talk about work. Well, reams and reams of stuff.

BG [00:41:59] Were you working the whole time out of the Fishermen's Hall down in Vancouver?

AK [00:42:04] Yeah and then they moved to Marine Workers down there—

PW [00:42:11] Yeah, on Triumph. It was Triumph I think was the street.

AK [00:42:12] Yeah, when they were going to move there, I drew up a plan for where the offices could be, but they didn't really follow it first time, but the second time they re-organized they did use some of the ideas that I had. So anyway, that's funny.

PW [00:42:42] Is there any particular story that sticks out in your mind about working for Homer?

AK [00:42:54] (laughter) I remember one time he came to me like, you know, I'm pretty stoic. I don't react, break down and cry or anything, most of the time. This one time he came and I wasn't really getting the enormity of where all this stuff went, in all these different places. He came and was explaining it, where all these places were. I think he was expecting me to break down and cry or something because—but I didn't. I remember he went some place in the world and when he came back he brought us all a little gift. It was like a keyring and the stone on it was, you couldn't see through it. He said, 'That's like you, you can't see through you.' (laughs)

PW [00:43:55] Because there it was pretty—were you working for him when he was arrested?

AK [00:44:01] Yeah, when he was in jail. In fact, I went to visit. I went with the lawyer.

PW [00:44:07] Right.

AK [00:44:08] Out to visit him one time. When they were there, every day, I would send them something.

PW [00:44:13] Oh.

AK [00:44:13] You know, because I mean, this is a big thing. We went out to the jail.

BG [00:44:25] Did you send him just notes or little things.

AK [00:44:28] Oh, it all was stuff that was being produced.

BG [00:44:30] Oh, about the—

AK [00:44:33] The union was still going on, so it was what was happening.

PW [00:44:36] Ah right. So you kept him up to date with everything?

AK [00:44:38] Yeah. So, he really appreciated that.

BG [00:44:42] Do you mind if—I might turn this light on here because we're just losing the sun behind us, so to make sure we can still have some light on the situation.

AK [00:44:55] I don't know what else I got here.

PW [00:44:57] I don't know if you can think of other things from your work there, that's fine, but I was going to ask you about the interesting story you told me about, you had good luck with real estate.

AK [00:45:10] Oh, yeah, I don't know whether it was my ancestry or not, but they would say back east, you're land-poor cause your always buying land, but I was always interested in what's for sale and then I'd say, 'Bernie, look at that. Maybe we could buy that.' So anything that was—the last time I was looking was the place down there near the movie theatre.

PW [00:45:40] Oh, yeah.

AK [00:45:42] It was an old house, that was a really nice old house, and there was a bunch of hippies in there. I was trying to get in to see what it was like inside and they wouldn't let us in. I never did get in to see it, but I did go when they made a restaurant out of it. We did go in and have a meal. It would have—and Bernie said, 'Well, there's a gas station near there. I don't think it would be very good'—but that would have been a good buy, that place.

PW [00:46:15] I remember you told me that one time George Hewison came into the office and said, 'Oh, there's land out at Burke Mountain.'

AK [00:46:23] Yeah, well, at the union office they had a coffee room where you went up. This day George is saying that there was 25 acres there that had been owned by the Governor General of B.C. and he was selling the whole thing, but it was being broken up

into five acres. He bought the one with this Pan-Abode house on, and he says, 'There's only one five-acre left.' So, for \$5,000.

BG [00:47:01] Can you imagine?

PW [00:47:07] But you didn't have \$5,000 hanging around, right?

AK [00:47:09] No, so I went to the credit union and, what was his name, Halsey.

PW [00:47:14] This was the Gulf and Fraser.

AK [00:47:19] Gulf and Fraser. When he said, 'Oh yeah, you can have the money,' and I said, 'How come you're loaning me the money, when I couldn't go get this out of the bank?' He says, 'Oh, I know you. I trust you.'

PW [00:47:38] Which was very rare at the time that he lent it to you without requiring Bernie to come in too.

AK [00:47:45] Oh, yeah. Well, Bernie was always on—his income went into my purchases, but that's about all.

PW [00:47:53] That was a good investment, too, you told me.

AK [00:47:55] Oh, yeah. We ended up by able to build this house with it. So this house, I think, ended up by being around \$80,000.

BG [00:48:08] And you designed it yourself, you were saying? Wow!

BG [00:48:11] It's beautiful. As I was walking in, I was admiring it.

AK [00:48:14] Well, I looked, I kept looking at different designs and I'd show Bernie, 'Well, what do you think of this?' Finally he said, 'I don't want to look at any more designs of houses.' I took a piece of paper and I wrote, 'I do not want to be involved in anything here, blah, blah, blah.'. I said, 'Here—sign it.' So he did and I stuck it on the wall. That stayed up there till the house was finished, and then he took it off, I didn't. He took it off the wall. He didn't really have much to do with the house except like upstairs, I've got a—that was in the old house, was a cast iron tub and so he painted the claws on it red. That was about the only thing he really had much to do with.

PW [00:49:17] Now you went on to have three children altogether, too.

AK [00:49:21] Well, my first child, Joey, had cerebral palsy and he lived for 10 years. Well, then we put him out in Woodlands and then Bernie—he wanted to be a teacher—so he quit his job down in the shipyard and he was going to university. I was still working so I put him through university.

BG [00:49:53] Wow, that was progressive.

AK [00:49:54] Yeah. This is an aside. At one time, when I was living in Vancouver, Hal Griffin and Betty just got together and they had the two little kids, you know, Sean, they were just little kids, and so Betty came to me this day. She said, 'I don't know if you're interested or not, but we're going to start up a—we're going to have lessons in and

teaching people how to look after kids at a co-op, you know, like a day-care centre.' I said, 'Sure, I'll do it, I'll go.' I go with her and so there's Maydie Kels, her name was. I think she was Hungarian or something, and she was a psychologist and she was teaching us how to act with the kids. In the end, she said I was the best pupil, but I never had any kids there.

PW [00:50:57] Oh, right? Oh.

AK [00:50:59] Anyway, that was a really interesting thing.

PW [00:51:02] Yeah, that's so like your first kind of daycare where there was actually training going on?

AK [00:51:08] Yeah. So Betty had her two kids there and I didn't have any kids.

PW [00:51:16] I will have to tell Sean that. We see Sean.

AK [00:51:18] Yeah, do you?

BG [00:51:18] Sean works with the Centre.

AK [00:51:24] Oh yeah, say hello to him.

BG [00:51:24] Absolutely.

PW [00:51:24] So then you had, so then you had Heather?

AK [00:51:28] Yeah, Heather. She was a real good kid. Bernie was looking after her, and one of her uncles, he would come down and one time they were, Dick was tossing her up in the air and she nearly—he nearly didn't catch her and she would have hit her head on the buggy or something. Anyway, but when I came home at night, she was still in the same clothes as I left her in in the morning. (laughter) But she survived and she's a real good—she's a—well you met her, she's 60 now, and she's a very good person. You know, she's a nurse.

PW [00:52:13] Yeah, she was. She was active in the union, too. She was a Steward etcetera.

AK [00:52:15] Yeah. She was in COPE (Canadian Office and Professional Employees Union)

PW [00:52:19] And then you had—

AK [00:52:23] Alan. He's just gone off to India for a month and he's 58.

PW [00:52:32] You went to the airport with him?

AK [00:52:33] No, I didn't even know when he was leaving, and he didn't know. When he got out there, he found out the plane had left—like he had a.m. and p.m. mixed up—and they should have been there the following night and he got there at noon the next day and the plane had gone, and he had to buy another ticket.

PW [00:52:53] Oh, dear.

AK [00:52:54] Then his luggage got lost. He ended up in England, and then I guess from there, they connected him to India. So he was in Goa.

PW [00:53:07] That was quite rare too, so you had two children at home and you were working full-time, right?

AK [00:53:13] Right, but we lived on Second Street. When we got married, somehow or other, somebody in the Party came to me and said he could loan me the money and I just paid him fifty dollars a month. (unclear) is either Eastern European, descended anyway. I'm just trying to think of what his name was. Somebody in the Party must have said, you know, 'they need some money to buy this house'. I think it was only, I don't know, somewhere around five-thousand dollars or something. A wartime house.

PW [00:54:07] Right.

AK [00:54:10] Yeah so every month—I've got a picture somewhere me holding the last fifty-dollar cheque.

PW [00:54:19] That's the house you lived in with all your family?

AK [00:54:23] Yeah.

PW [00:54:25] (unclear) and when you had your children and—

AK [00:54:25] Yeah, and Bernie built a golf course in the backyard, and so we had some, we had a lot of people there, and we'd make cabbage rolls. I remember Bernie—there was quite a few people there—so there was only about five left, and he says, 'I'm gonna take these,' and he hides them in his bedroom in a drawer or something. Anybody else that come they weren't getting any. Yeah, we used to have some good times there and—

PW [00:55:05] So there was a lot of social activity with members of the Party. Lots of—

AK [00:55:11] Edna Sheard. I don't know if you remember that name. Ever heard of that?

PW [00:55:21] I don't remember that one.

AK [00:55:22] She and her husband were really active in her—Esther, Johnny's mum, was good friends with him, Esther Radosevic.

PW [00:55:34] Right.

AK [00:55:36] They went back to Yugoslavia and she had Johnny there, in the hospital. Johnny was at my hundredth birthday. 'Well, I've known you ever since I was five.' Well, he was born in Yugoslavia and we were sending gifts through his mother, you know, to help them along because they didn't have anything. So they eventually came back to Canada. So I've known Johnny for a long time.

PW [00:56:07] That's John Radosevic?

AK [00:56:08] Yeah.

PW [00:56:10] Was Bernie in the Party? A member of the Party?

AK [00:56:12] Oh, yeah.

PW [00:56:14] Yeah. So was that a bit difficult, though, at the time? I mean, you mentioned your experience with starting the gatherings for the children. Was it—

AK [00:56:25] Oh, well that was before I met Bernie. That was when I was younger.

PW [00:56:29] Yeah, but in general, did you find it difficult?

AK [00:56:32] No. Well, I think they had all these union members around them. You know, I used to go down to pick him up and it was really emotional to see the 1,000 people come out of there, all with their lunch buckets. It was quite something, and I remember, when I had Joey, I had to learn to drive cause I had to take him over, it was off Granville. It was G.F. Strong Rehabilitation Centre.

PW [00:57:03] Yes.

PW [00:57:05] Bernie was showing, teaching me to drive. I can remember one time, I was driving the car and he said, 'Get over there.' I was on the curb lane, and I said, 'I'm not going anywhere that I don't feel comfortable about,' because there's all these cars coming, you know? So I was staying where I felt safe. You know, you have to stick up for yourself, you get bullied into anything.

PW [00:57:34] Yeah. It's funny that, I don't think this would be the case with you, but I was reading transcripts with other people who had worked at the shipyards, too. They said that on pay day, many wives came down and they actually took the paycheque because they didn't want them going—

AK [00:57:53] To go to the pub.

PW [00:57:54] To go to the pub.

AK [00:57:55] Yeah.

PW [00:57:56] I assume that wasn't something that you would have to worry about.

AK [00:57:59] Well, no. He always brought his cheque home. Although, he did go to the pub too. He liked his beer.

AK [00:58:08] I think it was the Saint Alice, wasn't it?

AK [00:58:10] Yeah.

PW [00:58:11] Yeah. That people went to.

BG [00:58:14] That was a good place to go?

PW [00:58:15] Yeah during the war, I think there were, I think somebody told me there were 14,000 people working at the shipyards.

AK [00:58:23] Yeah.

BG [00:58:23] Yeah. So was Bernie working there during the war or after the war? I imagine probably after but—

AK [00:58:35] No, no, it would be—they'd be building the ships for the war, I think.

PW [00:58:41] Yeah. So you were married in '55, but he'd been working there for a while.

AK [00:58:45] Yeah.

PW [00:58:46] Yeah. So he might have been there during the war when it was so busy.

AK [00:58:50] Yeah, he was there for—well, they lived—the house they lived in, like his family lived in—here's the shipyard here. Here's the alley, here's their house.

PW [00:59:01] Oh, right.

AK [00:59:02] So Heather's in MAID (Medical Assistance in Dying).

PW [00:59:05] Yes.

AK [00:59:07] This time she went up to this place, and there's this old guy he's gonna do the deed, and she had a friend with her that had tried to get the needle in and she couldn't do it. So she gave the job to Heather. Heather warmed this towel up and wrapped it around his arm. He said, 'I was just sitting there with this,' holding his arm, 'waiting for this to work.' She said, 'Where did you work when you were working?' He said, 'In the shipyard.' Heather said, 'Burrard?' The son said, 'That's the magic word.' It turned out that he knew Bernie, he knew Bernie's brother, he knew Bernie's sisters that lived right across the alley.

BG [01:00:04] What a small world.

AK [01:00:05] Yeah.

PW [01:00:06] That's amazing.

AK [01:00:07] Yeah, she's had some quite interesting experiences with this.

PW [01:00:11] Yeah. People told me, though, that it was really hard to get in to work there if you didn't know some—like it was definitely a place where relatives, like if you had an uncle or into the dry-docks, that it was hard to—

AK [01:00:22] Oh, into the dry-docks?

PW [01:00:24] That it was hard to work there if you didn't know somebody. It was like a giant—

AK [01:00:31] Closed shop? (laughs)

PW [01:00:33] Yeah, a giant big family of people who—so that Bernie and his brother—they probably all worked there. Did his Dad work there, too?

AK [01:00:42] No, I don't think so.

PW [01:00:44] Yeah, it was interesting that they said that, because this young man said that, 'I decided I wanted to work there, but because I didn't have any relatives,' he said, 'I went there every single day for, like six months.'

AK [01:00:55] Wow, they couldn't get in. Wow.

PW [01:00:58] He finally did because they got tired of him showing up.

AK [01:01:00] No, I didn't know that about that place. Anyway, when Bernie finally decided he wanted to be a teacher and he was going out to UBC and it was actually Mary Yorke was out there at the same time, and he really enjoyed it you know, the camaraderie of the—anyway, after he passed, he got a job up in Prince George.

PW [01:01:36] Oh.

AK [01:01:40] We rented the house that was on Second Street and then we moved up there. Joey was still alive then, but he died when we were up there.

PW [01:01:53] Oh dear.

AK [01:01:54] He had, you know, he couldn't breathe properly and he had pneumonia, but, apparently after he died, they did an autopsy on his brain and they found, they were surprised at how developed his brain was.

PW [01:02:09] I know, it was—people really didn't understand the illness at all.

AK [01:02:12] No, they found, even though they couldn't do anything, couldn't talk (unclear)—

PW [01:02:19] Yeah it was all happening.

AK [01:02:21] Yeah, internally.

PW [01:02:25] When you went up to—did you take a leave from the Fishermen when you went up to Prince George or—because that would have been when you were—

AK [01:02:33] Yeah, I left there and, I don't know—I didn't really know what to expect, whether he'd stay there or not, but I got really lonesome up there, although I went up there a couple of times looking for a place to live, and this is to do with the property up there. The first time my Dad went with me and we couldn't find anything. There was this farm right near the school, across the road, and it didn't have any toilet, no running water but that didn't faze me because I lived in the Cariboo, for God's sakes.

PW [01:03:17] In a tent!

PW [01:03:17] Anyway, I decided to buy it, and that's when I got the loan from Leo Halsey. When we were there, well, I went to a meeting of the PTA (Parent Teacher Association) and they had wanted to build, for years, to build a skating rink there for the kids. I don't know how I got the job—I got the job—and if I hadn't worked at the Fishermen's Union, I

wouldn't have been able to do it. We didn't have any money. The only money I spent was on a guy that had a tractor and he cleared—and I got a receipt for it, thank God, because a few years later he said, 'I never charged or anything,' at the committee meeting. So next day I brought the receipt. Thank God I got that.

PW [01:04:26] So, you got the rink built?

AK [01:04:29] We built the rink. Had to beg, when they called the people that were selling boards, plywood, for the fence and had to phone people that had trucks that could pick up stuff to level the ground. I had, you know, I was on the phone a lot with people that were trying to help, but it didn't cost us anything except that \$25. I always figured if I hadn't worked at the Fishermen's Union I couldn't have done that job. Because it took determination and steel to phone people that you had to ask.

PW [01:05:22] Yeah.

PW [01:05:22] To donate their time or whatever.

AK [01:05:24] Yeah.

PW [01:05:26] I wonder if that rink is still there?

AK [01:05:29] Well, fortunate—funnily enough, somebody that lived up there said that they were clearing, they were clearing the ground to put another school in and they found the ice, still there, under, in the ground.

PW [01:05:48] It's like permafrost.

AK [01:05:49] Yeah. Yeah. There was some Indian boys. They were putting the water on, and there's the guy that put in the electricity. He had a little girl, and he came knocking at the door and he said, 'I want to let my little girl skate over there and these guys are just, you know, they're playing hockey and she can't.' I said, 'You know, I can't be responsible for policing that rink. You know, that would be another big job.' I said, 'The kids at the school, I mean, this is for them. They can start taking some responsibility.' So I don't know, he was pissed off, but I thought, I can't take this job on.

PW [01:06:43] No, no, somebody else can manage the schedule.

BG [01:06:45] You got it built, that was a big enough job.

AK [01:06:47] Yeah. So there was a lady that was a mover and shaker there that lived there and then moved away, and a few years later, she was up there and she said, 'How did you do it? How did you do it? To organize them.' But of course I had to teach—Bernie was a teacher and a couple other young people were teachers that would help me, and then there's the principal that I could use.

PW [01:07:20] Yes.

AK [01:07:21] Anyway, we got it built and then, at the end, I made a list of everybody that helped. I left off one family that, purely by accident. They lived down the road. I never did meet them. (laughs) Yeah, but all these people came, and so that was sort of a momentous thing.

PW [01:07:52] Then you then you moved back down?

AK [01:07:54] Yeah, I was so lonesome up there. Like, we were five miles out of Prince George.

PW [01:08:00] It wasn't very big at the time, anyway, was it, Prince George?

AK [01:08:03] No, but we did drive in to do the washing once in a while. I had a Volkswagen van that had a hole in the floor, (laughs) and, I remember one time we were driving back—had this friend, she was sitting in the passenger seat and we were coming along—and then I heard this 'toot, toot, tooting' and I looked up and there was a train coming. I thought, I can't put the brakes on now, and I thought, I just put the gas on and got across the tracks. But anyway—

BG [01:08:49] Close call!

PW [01:08:53] Oh dear. You were up there for a number of years?

AK [01:08:58] No. We weren't there that long. As Alan—Heather was—Alan was just about six. So Heather would be eight and she was doing okay and Alan started school. We didn't have any water in our house. So, on the weekends, Bernie organized it that we'd all go across the road with our towels.

PW [01:09:28] To the school?

AK [01:09:30] To the school and have a shower in there. (laughs) I guess everybody in the neighbourhood knew what we were doing, but we thought we were being—

PW [01:09:43] It was lonely for you there?

AK [01:09:44] Yeah, it was, it was lonely and then one time Bernie and I were out shopping in Prince George and he wanted to go and buy some beer. I didn't want to spend any money on beer because, you know, I had got it was fifty dollars or something every month, or every two months for Unemployment Insurance. Anyway, I was driving, so instead of stopping, getting a beer, I drove right home. He was so mad. He took the car, he went and bought, finished. Took all the money—which wasn't that much, might have been one hundred or two hundred dollars—and spent it all on beer, and he brought it home. I was so angry! I was really bawling him out, and I looked down and looked at Alan's face and I just stopped. It was not worth upsetting the kid. Anyway, we finally used up the beer, at least he did.

PW [01:11:03] After he used up the beer you came back down to Vancouver?

AK [01:11:08] Well I guess that probably was one of the reasons.

PW [01:11:13] And now, did you? I'm just trying to— When you came back down, did you then go back to the Fishermen's Hall?

AK [01:11:19] Yes, yeah, but I think Sally was the office manager then, but then her husband was a fisherman, so she said, 'Well, I'm going to be going fishing out, so, you can have this job back if you want.' I said, 'Okay,' so I made all the arrangements and that,

then a few days before she was leaving, she said, 'Oh, well, I'm not going now.' I said, 'Well, I'm sorry, but I've made all the arrangements to work here.' So she—we're still good friends.

PW [01:12:03] Did she take another job at the union then?

AK [01:12:07] Yeah, I think she—

AK [01:12:09] But it was nice, would you say it was a nice place to work, though, working at—

AK [01:12:14] Yeah, it wasn't bad. It was, of course, when you're the boss it makes a difference. (laughter) But I don't think I was too hard on anybody.

PW [01:12:29] Yeah, that was interesting because it—I mean, there was, there were constantly, in the off-season, constantly fishermen coming in.

AK [01:12:36] Yeah. Oh, yeah.

PW [01:12:40] Did you have a steady supply of salmon?

AK [01:12:42] Oh, well, not really, except that during the strike there people would be bringing stuff in.

PW [01:12:50] Yeah. During one of the—like when the shore workers were on strike too? or just the fleet?

AK [01:13:01] Well, if the shore workers were strike, everybody was on strike.

PW [01:13:04] Yeah. That's true.

AK [01:13:05] Oh, yeah. The whole works.

BG [01:13:06] At the same time too right?

AK [01:13:10] But I haven't—there's some things I haven't told you here.

PW [01:13:13] Do you want to take a little? Do you want to pause for a minute and review your notes?

BG [01:13:18] Sure. Yeah. We'll take a little pause and then we'll—

PW [01:13:20] Then you can look and see what, what you— (interview paused) Tell us about what you did after you were telling us about—

AK [01:13:25] "My Dad applied to the government for a section of land which they would give you if you put improvements on it. A hayfield was part of this section and in the summer most of the family would camp at the hayfield to put up the hay for the winter. My stepmother would make up a bunch of meals, load it on our horse, and I would take it to the haymakers. I have no idea what she was cooking for them." (laughter) Well, it was great big cans. I don't know, maybe baked beans or something. I remember once the story was that my brother and Morris—this Morris was my stepmother's young brother who was

the same age as me, but he's dead now. They were out cutting wood for fences and they had a big can of baked beans and they ate the whole damn thing! (laughter) This is what they were saying: "The family said, 'Look at what they ate!' Now, one day my brother Orville was out in the woods riding our horse when he came across a baby moose with no mother around. Orville put the moose across the saddle and brought it home." Now, my Dad—you know, he could have been killed, the mother wasn't there—and that baby moose, my Dad took a glove, he cut the thumb off, put milk in there and fed the baby moose from the glove. That baby moose never became—like you couldn't pet it or anything—but if we were going down to get water or something, if you maybe go about a quarter of a mile or something and this moose would come. Right alongside of us, he'd come running with us. But he wasn't tame in the sense that you could pet him or anything. Then one fall, the moose disappeared and we found his—somebody shot him and he was in behind our house where there was some trees. We found him there. Guess he was trying to get home.

PW [01:16:08] Oh dear.

AK [01:16:09] That was the end of the moose.

BG [01:16:10] Bit of a pet moose.

AK [01:16:14] Yeah. So my brother—you know, he could have been killed, if his mother had been around. Yeah. So this is—"When Terry, my stepbrother, was six, his Uncle Tom, my stepmother's brother, visited us from Vancouver. He was 18 or 19 years old. It was a Friday evening, and the truck that ran between Horsefly and Williams Lake, had dropped off items the family had ordered from Williams Lake. Dwain was looking at the comics laid out on the floor. My Dad had ordered some .22 shells, so he opened the box to show Tom how to insert them in the gun. He put one shell in the gun then flipped it out, then handed the gun to Tom with a shell to do the same. But instead of flipping the shell out, he fired the gun, not knowing what he was doing. The bullet entered Dwain's stomach and hit his spine. He died two days later in Williams Lake and lays in a barren graveyard there." That's what happened to my little brother.

PW [01:17:40] That's a terrible story.

AK [01:17:41] Yeah. Now, this is—I think you've already got this: "My stepmother saw an ad in the paper."

PW [01:17:53] Yes. That's a great story.

AK [01:17:57] I got a job at the income tax office.

PW [01:17:59] Oh, no, we didn't know that.

AK [01:18:01] They gave me a box this long, full of forms, and I was supposed to match any that needed matching anyway. Oh, what the hell? I just finished it in no time. They were quite amazed how fast I did it. Then they gave me a job of going around and finding files that were mislaid.

PW [01:18:26] Oh, right.

AK [01:18:28] That was interesting because it came in handy later. You know, you'd have to think logically about where something might be, and I used to be able to find things in that Fishermen's Union office that no one else could. I don't know whether it was just a miracle or not.

BG [01:18:45] That must have been good practice for the sorting.

AK [01:18:48] Yeah, that was the other little thing. "During a period while in Vancouver and staying at Grandma Walden's, my stepmum's mother, I didn't feel well and went to the doctor. He said I had a bad heart, which I didn't, but when my Dad heard about it, he suggested I move over to Vancouver Island, where he and Doreen, my stepmother, had moved and were raising turkeys. My two brothers were logging with my Dad and on the weekends we would visit the local pub on a regular basis. This was where I met my future husband, Fred Beardsley, who worked in the pub. So we were married on June 30, 1947 and ended up getting divorced on November 12, 1954." (laughs)

PW [01:19:45] There might be a message in there not to get married to someone who works in a pub.

AK [01:19:49] Yeah, right.

PW [01:19:53] I have to comment on that. I mean, people probably don't know that you're actually a hundred years old. So that doctor definitely got it wrong! (laughter)

AK [01:20:04] Yes.

AK [01:20:06] "So I had a friend named Vi Macrae who took me under her wing and suggested I go to work for the LPP, which I did for a while. Then she suggested I go to work for the Vancouver Civic Workers with Jack Phillips and Don Guys as officers. I was working there when I met Bernie Keely. We got married March 18, 1955, and I had a baby boy, Joseph Christopher, on October 2, 1955. He had cerebral palsy and lived until 1965. In the meantime, I had Heather Jane and later, two years later, I had another son, John, Alan John. After I had Joey, I was home and not working but Bernie got laid off at the shipyard, so I had to go to work and he stayed home with the kids. I worked one month at the Marine Workers. It was in the winter and it had snowed. Traffic was snarled up and I got on a bus I never used. Sitting on the bus was Bruce Yorke." Well, I think we've already done this.

PW [01:21:21] Yeah.

AK [01:21:21] "I sat with him and he asked what I was doing. I told him I was just finishing a job at Marine Workers and would have to find another. Fortunately, at that time, two office workers were planning to leave the Fish Union, so I was offered a job on the spot. I worked there till was 65 and ended up being the office manager along with others over the years and when I retired I joined Silver Harbour."

PW [01:21:52] Yeah. So if you could. I don't think we've got the Silver Harbour bit on tape.

BG [01:21:56] Yeah. So, so tell us a little bit about what you did at Silver Harbour when you retired?

AK [01:22:01] Well, I took up silk-painting. In that bedroom, did you see that tall-

BG [01:22:06] Yes.

AK [01:22:07] That, I made that.

BG [01:22:09] That, and you were showing us the stained-glass you've done, and—

AK [01:22:11] Yeah and pottery. That's pottery there, and I also, those, the seagulls there. See, the second one, this side, was a piece of stone. That's the hardest thing I ever did. I was, pretty hard to do it all at once, working on it. One day when I got home from work, Bernie said, 'I was working on that seagull and I broke the neck off.' So you can see where it's glued, at the head.

BG [01:22:54] I wouldn't have known if you didn't tell me.

AK [01:23:00] He was quite upset because he'd done that. Anyway, that's the story of that seagull. But that was the hardest thing I ever did. It was very hard to do, you know.

PW [01:23:13] You ended up teaching other people?

AK [01:23:16] Yeah, I was. On the silk-painting, there was this lady that did the silk-painting, and she kept nagging me. 'Why don't you come learn how to do this?' This one time I came back from—I guess it must have been at Heather's place in Salmon Arm—and she said, 'Okay, I'm going to take you to my house and you're going, I'm going to show you how to do it.' So within an hour I knew how to do it, and then, about two months later, she died. So I took over teaching it and I didn't know that much about it, but I was able to do it! That was the silk-painting, and on the stained glass, it takes a while to learn how to do that. These guys were teaching how to do it, but I got so I was pretty good at wrapping the glass. You know, you have to take this tape, that's sticky, and put it on the edge of the glass. Then you solder it together. So, anyway, that was good. And then, what else? Oh yeah, the pottery. Pottery is something that you can—this one time, it was just the beginning of a class and there wasn't many people there. These two women came in, they wanted to join. They'd never done anything. They were hopeless! You know, a lot of people have a general feeling of how to do things. They didn't have a clue! So anyway, the gal that was in charge of the crafts, said, 'Audrey, you could show them. Could you show them how to do something?' So anyway, I got out some clay and got out something they could copy, you know, and they did it, and years after, they would say, 'Oh, hi, how are you?' They never did learn anything. They just were not—they weren't artistic at all.

BG [01:25:35] Some people just have a knack for it, and others don't.

AK [01:25:37] Yeah. Most people have a little inclination, especially if they want to take it up.

BG [01:25:50] I'm seeing your cards around for your one hundredth birthday.

AK [01:25:53] Oh, God, yeah.

BG [01:25:54] When was your birthday?

AK [01:25:56] February 8.

BG [01:25:56] Well, happy belated. Very belated.

PW [01:25:59] Actually, yeah, you're almost at 101.

AK [01:26:01] Yeah, well, I was saying to somebody, 'I'm going to tell Heather not to bother about a birthday next year, if I'm still alive.' Which I don't feel like I am going to die any time soon.

PW [01:26:15] That's quite something to have the hundredth. That's a milestone.

BG [01:26:18] It must have been a big party.

AK [01:26:20] Yeah. They had—well, Johnny Radosevic was here and some people from the Island couldn't make it because the weather wasn't good. They came later. You know, a month or so later they came over and there was one couple that used to live across here. They moved to Bowen Island, and then they were there seven years and then just last year, they moved up to Comox and they're loving it there. They said Comox has got lots to do there, and there's farms and fruit and vegetables that are so handy.

PW [01:27:00] I know that you're still in touch with Sally, but are there other people from your time working?

AK [01:27:06] Johnny, Johnny Radosevic. Well, I haven't phoned him about his son yet. That, wasn't that awful?

PW [01:27:14] Yeah, terrible. So tragic!

AK [01:27:16] Dennis Brown. Do you know him?

PW [01:27:19] Yes.

AK [01:27:21] Oh, yeah because you know his wife. You know, they were supposed to come over, but she's always saying, 'Oh, yeah, when we come back, we're going to come over,' but they don't come over very much. But she means well, she's a busy—

PW [01:27:35] Yeah, she's just in Peru right now I believe.

AK [01:27:38] She's what?

PW [01:27:38] In Peru.

AK [01:27:39] Oh, is she? Oh, is this one of her, a medical thing?

PW [01:27:44] No, she will be doing that again, but this was just a holiday.

AK [01:27:49] Oh, okay.

PW [01:27:52] No, this was—you see, Dennis—that's one of Dennis's paintings there. And that one there. Yes. This is Dennis Brown, who also was active in the Fishermen, right?

AK [01:28:03] Yeah. Well, I don't know where she got the idea that I was so, so well-rounded person. But anyway.

PW [01:28:18] Well, this is—I mean, there aren't very many—first of all, there aren't that many women—

AK [01:28:23] That are 100.

PW [01:28:23] That are 100. Secondly, there are very few women who are 100 who actually set out to work in a trade—for a trade union.

AK [01:28:31] Yeah, yeah.

BG [01:28:32] They just happened into it or, their husband worked for, you know. That's usually the story.

PW [01:28:38] I know in B.C. there's quite a few women that ended up being—living in areas like that, but that's still pretty interesting now. I think it's like, obviously, you had a knack to organize things. I mean, your story of about it was the teen social club, really what it was to begin with, but the skating rink and, obviously you never sat around too much.

AK [01:28:59] Yeah, I do. I think I do have a gift. I remember when we were up in Miocene, that they were putting on a play. And I remember having to organize part of it and I thought, 'Hey, I can, I can do this! You know, this is something I like doing.'

BG [01:29:21] From an early age.

AK [01:29:23] Yeah. But then I never really followed up on it, but anyway. Yeah, I can—I don't feel shy about being proud at what I can do, because I never had any education, like in designing things or— the only thing I couldn't do was, I didn't know how to do the, the solar. So this is—out there, there's no heat at all in it and it doesn't freeze and all the plants survive the winter, and it's nice to see it in the spring, all the geraniums are blooming and it's nice to be able to go out there and just putter away, knock off some dead leaves.

PW [01:30:16] Yeah, yeah, that's great.

AK [01:30:18] Yeah, I did. I used to have a big garden at the back. There was lots of flowers, lots of bright poppies and. Yeah, I just love gardening.