

Amy Dauphinée Interview #1 – March 15, 2006

HR – Helen Raptis (interviewer)

AD – Amy Dauphinée (interviewee)

RB – Ralph Burton (interviewee)

HR: So what I just wanted to begin with is maybe you could give me some biographical information about yourself, just a little bit about when you were born, where you were raised, your family life, where you went to school. Some, some information about yourself.

AD: Okay.

HR: And then from there we'll go on to talk a little bit about your normal school experiences then your life as a teacher and some of the challenges and some of the rewards of that life. And then we'll talk a little bit more about teaching in general and some of your philosophies, some of the things you did to cope on a day to day basis.

AD: Right, sure.

HR: Things like that will be really helpful for future teachers, anyone who is going to be reading this and looking back on what life was like to be a beginning teacher in a rural area.

AD: Okay.

HR: And then if you can add whatever I haven't given thought to and add in anything that I haven't mentioned. I'll prompt you with some questions.

AD: Well I wish you would, yeah.

HR: But please feel free to bring in things that I might not think of and that you think are important. Again, I'm hoping to use this with my future teachers so if you can think of anything that would be helpful for them to know about in continuing our legacy of...

AD: Well I did, I did teacher training too, you know, where they asked you to take teachers in for practice teaching.

HR: Oh that's great.

AD: I did that. Actually, I was very, very lucky, Helen, in that, you know, I started out in a rural school but I ended up ended up in—well, I had experience in city schools but then I also experience in inner city schools and then also in quite wealthy, you know, areas. In addition to that I had 2 years at a Hebrew day school.

HR: Oh so that will give yo a wonderful perspective on all the different...

AD: Yeah and then I ended up as a vice-principal.

HR: So that's great. Well maybe we can cover on all of those and you can start a little bit with where you were born and raised.

AD: Okay well I was born in Vancouver, 1920, and I went to several elementary schools there and then I ended up at Magee High school for my 5 years of high school, that is the 4 years of high school and then 1 year senior matric. While I was in my Grade 12th, Grade 12 I ran for president of the school in a students' council and I had been on the students' council as a class representative. But in Grade 12 I ran against two boys and one girl for the presidency of the school and got elected.

HR: Oh that's great.

AD: And I became the first girl president. And I don't think Magee's had a girl since then. And then the next term in senior matric I ran again and I got elected again so I was extremely active in student affairs, being on the students' council just about every year, and then of course I was president again in Grade 13. After Grade 13 I went to normal school, which is what it was called in those days. And you had to have your senior matric in order to get to normal and then you—once you graduated from normal school you could get your temporary teacher's certificate. And you had to teach 2 years with two good inspectors reports and two summers of courses at summer school, which, which I did. I thought maybe you might be interested in, in the philosophy at the teachers college in the year that I was there.

HR: What year was that?

AD: That was '30—normal school would be '38-'39.

HR: Do you remember any of your instructors?

AD: Oh yeah, well I can, yes I can. Well Dr. Lord was the principal.

HR: Alex, Alex Lord?

AD: I don't think it was Alex Lord. Just a minute. Ralph, Ralph? A. R. Lord.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Did you know him?

HR: No I didn't know him. He's very well—had been written about by a number of people, yeah.

AD: Well there you are.

HR: And what—okay, so he was the principal.

AD: Well that's who was there and they had a—it was sort of a strange philosophy that they had there. At that time everybody was divided into extroverts and introverts.

HR: Oh my goodness.

AD: It's hard to believe at this time but anyway. And there was sort of, what I called no— black and white and no grey. And the, the interesting thing was that Dr. Lord had been an inspector, of course, and he had traveled in the Cariboo. And when he was traveling through the Cariboo he had stopped off to inspect one of the schools there just outside of Williams Lake and this girlfriend of mine, well I didn't know her until I got to normal school, but fortunately they had put him up over night and he knew this—what was Edna's last name, just a minute. Anyway, I'll get the name after.

HR: Okay.

AD: Edna's family there. So he knew Edna and Edna was taking high school by correspondence and he really admired her perseverance and wanting to become a teacher so he was very sympathetic and also very encouraging to her. Well this proved to be very effective in—or influential in my career because when Edna and I met the first day at school and we just really hit it off. She was—had come from—she was a really rural school girl and they lived out on a ranch and had not gone to high school but had done everything by correspondence. And then I was from Magee High School, you know a big high school, where I had been really in the midst of everything. You really couldn't pick two more different girls I think. Well from certainly different backgrounds. But what we had in common that we were both very strong characters and, and we just hit it off. And we—it was no doubt at all that both of us fit into this extroverts. And, and we were great pals and always together and so on and so forth. So I mean, it was noticeable by the staff. And so we got called into the office this one day and I guess we were about—it would be in the fall. And Dr. Lord sat us down and told us that we were both extroverts and that we needed—and according to him there were these four little introverts who were like wall flowers. And so he said that our purpose was to—we should be linked up to an introvert, and then if we palled around with an introvert we would bring the introvert out. And the introvert—It's unbelievable but this actually happened. And the introvert—and our rough edges would be smoothed off.

HR: Oh my goodness.

AD: We were too, we were too aggressive, you know, too—I don't think he—he didn't use the word then. But, you know, we were too much out going, too much self-confident and we just overpowered these dear little other gals. He actually—no this is true—and he actually, he actually assigned us to two girls in our classroom. And Edna was told to do this and, and the only thing it really—and actually he told me, “If you don't follow this,” he said, “you will not graduate.”

HR: Oh my goodness.

AD: Isn't that terrible? It didn't matter what kind of a teacher I'd be, I'd be. So anyway...

HR: What kind of rough edges was he intending to smooth? Were you...

AD: Well he just—the thing was, you see, the, the, the introverts had no confidence and the extroverts had too much. So if you put them—isn't that true, you'd think—if you, you put them in the barrel and you mix them around, stir well, they will, they will emerge being average, more average. [laughter] Now I was actually told that and, and...

HR: You, you were told the barrel analogy?

AD: Yeah, no not the barrel one.

HR: Oh okay, okay.

AD: But anyway, and we were given this assignment and the only thing that he gave us a break, you see, is that he didn't care too much about me but he was very fond of my girlfriend. And he knew her mother was a widow and, you know, they really struggled up there on the ranch, so he was giving Edna a break and by giving Edna a break he had to give me a break. So it was the stupidest thing because Edna and I would practically not talk to each other and then we'd get out and we'd get—once we got out of the school we spent all our weekends together. It drove us together rather than apart. You know, it was funny. So that actually happened and I can remember going home to my dad and telling him and he said to me, oh he said, “To hell with them,” he said, “there's a normal school over in Victoria and you can damn well go there.” I remember that. It's unbelievable isn't it. Anyway, I did graduate. So I thought you might enjoy that story.

HR: That's a great story because it, it fits in with the times. When you think of that time period when there was so much usage of IQ tests and wondering whether people are normal, below normal, above normal. You can see how he was trying to pull you both to the middle.

AD: Oh sure, yeah we were too much the wrong way. [laughter]

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: So the rest of my teaching career—well I was 3, I was 3 years in the Peace River area and then I moved to Vancouver and I got a job teaching special education.

HR: Okay.

AD: And I taught special ed. from 1942-'45 in the city school. Well at that time, even though it was war time, there was—I was the only, I was the only person in my 2, I was in my early 20s, and everybody else was older than that. It was the generation ahead of me. I had a bit of rough time in the school in that several of these older women didn't believe in special education.

HR: What school was at that? Where were you...

AD: That was General Wolf in Vancouver, 27th and Main Street.

HR: Is it still there? I've never heard of it.

AD: Yes, it's still there.

HR: And I've never heard of it, my goodness.

AD: General Wolf.

HR: General Wolf.

AD: Well I'm sorry I didn't put it on the map for you. [laughter] That was a bit of a struggle because, you know, I was so young and this was the first special ed. class in that school.

HR: Who, who was in charge of the program at that time? Was it Conway?

AD: No, Edith Unsworth.

HR: Unsworth.

AD: Yeah, yeah and she was terrific. But, you know, she's not there everyday. She used to come around, she gave me a lot of support. They're very—they had a great system. In those days when I got on, it would have be what, '42, you didn't—you couldn't apply for a job for special ed. They had to choose—they chose you. I got called, I got called in for an interview. And so...

HR: From the Peace Region? Were you...

AD: No, no. Actually it—I had—the person in charge in the early 40's was Josephine Dauphinée. I don't know if you know but she started, she started the first class of special ed. in the city of

Vancouver.

HR: Josephine, and what was the last name?

AD: Josephine Daupinée, same as mine.

HR: Oh really, were you related?

AD: Yes, I married her nephew.

HR: Oh, so she...

AD: Actually, it's an interesting, this is a little aside but, an interesting way to—story to know how she started back in about 1912-1313. She was teaching in one of the Vancouver schools and the principal was sitting down on a Friday afternoon and sort of reviewing his week and he realized—it was a really rough week and he realized that every single teacher had been in to see him that week about problems with, with slow learners. And then he suddenly looked down and he thought, he thought—he said, “But Miss Daupinée has not been in. All the other have been in but complaining about not being able to handle Johnnie and Sadie and all the rest of it. But Miss Daupinée hadn't been in.” So on Monday morning he went in and visited her classroom. He evidently didn't do much class visitation, which he should have been doing but—and there at the back of the room she had two or three little tables all set up and she had two children at each table and they were all doing individual work. These were the slow learners. So she had separated them and they had boxes of—of course in those days nearly everybody made their clothes. So she had all these old wooden spools, different size and different colours and she had shoe laces, beads, and jigsaw puzzles made out of wood and that she had made herself. And she had these and she was assigning them all sorts of tasks. And the Eaton's catalogues where they cut out and dressed the girl, you know, the labels and all the rest of it. She had this hands-on concrete material.

HR: And for what grade levels was she working with?

AD: Well, she was—her own class level was about five or six. But she had these other children separated out and working at tasks that they could do.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: Which she had all figured out herself, you know. Which to us now is just all so obvious but this, you've got to remember that this is back in 1913.

HR: So you hadn't covered any of that in your normal school preparation, the individual needs and so on?

AD: No, no way. [laughter] No way. So anyway, what happened with her story is that—he, he said, “What are you doing with these children?” And she said, “Well you can’t—they can’t learn at the Grade 5 level.” You know, she said, “They have to, they have to learn at their own level and they have to have the satisfaction of being able to accomplish something, you know.” So he was so smitten with this he, he, he went back and thought about and then he swayed back to her and he said, “How about next year, if I give you the slow learners, the sort of below average intelligence in a class of its own and take them from the school, you know.” And she said—he said, “Would you take it?” And she said, “Not unless you send me to California. There’s work being done down in California . If the school board will send me and send me to the course and pay for my expenses, yes.”

HR: And where, where in California did she go?

AD: I don’t know. She went to California and there was some courses being put on then and experimental work doing. So she went and spent the summer studying and then she came back the next year and started the first class of special ed.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: And then she trained and then started—she trained all the other teachers. [coughing] Excuse me.

HR: Would you like to get a glass of water or anything?

AD: I’ll get a glass of water, yeah please. Anyway, she—so she just expanded from there. She taught two of her friends in the following year and taught another one to go back, to back to school and university and learn testing and, you know.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: So she got two of them and Ruby Kerr was one of them I remembered.

HR: Right, Ruby—I’ve read about Ruby Kerr. Do you know that I’ve read that Ruby Kerr was the first? So the literature is wrong about that that she was the first teacher of special needs students.

AD: She wasn’t.

HR: We need, we need to correct that.

AD: No. Ruby Kerr was, Ruby Kerr was one of Jodie’s friends and she was the first one that Jodie talked into taking the next class. And then after a few weeks there was—came Cantalon,

was the other person. And Ruby and, and, and she and Cantalon were buddies and Jodie talked them into working. And anyway, by the time 1942 Jodie, as I say my aunt by marriage, is the one that by then she had retired. By the way, she won the first Memorial Award for outstanding teacher in about 1940-41. You know the Teachers' Federation used to honour a, a teacher every year. I think it was called the Ferguson Memorial Award.

HR: Yes, okay.

AD: Okay and she won it. And I'm not exactly—which year. Anyway...

HR: Can, can I ask quickly here when she first began the classes in Vancouver was that then in the late '30s?

AD: Jodie? Oh, no down in, in, in about 1913.

HR: Oh 1913, okay. Oh as early as that, I had no idea. Okay.

AD: Oh yeah, oh yeah. Well, I'm not sure the date, I have to look up some of her records, but it was, oh yeah, it was war, you know, wartime.

HR: So the fist war.

AD: First war, yeah, Way back that far, yeah. So I could—bless her heart she lived to be 102.

HR: Oh my goodness.

AD: Yeah. Anyways but—so by—she selected her—when she went to retire, she went to the school board and said I want—she was so concerned about the whole, you know, the whole set up because that was her baby. So she said, “I would like to, I would like to select and train my successor.”

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: So she chose Edith Unsworth and for a whole year she, Edith, worked under her as her assistant. And then Jodie retired and Edith Unsworth took over. So—but Edith used to—,was a younger women, she would have been about 30 or so when she—at this time. And she used to keep going to Jodie, of course, for advice. And they wanted to set up two or three new classes of special ed. and they wanted to set up a junior—they used to set up junior and senior. Then there was a senior class that they wanted to set up at General Wolf. And Jodie said, “You know, I know I am prejudiced,” but she said, “I think Amy will make an excellent special ed. teacher.” That's what were called in those days, special ed. And so I got this phone call from Edith Unsworth and she said, “Would you like to come down and I'd like to talk to you.” So I went down and I had

three interviews before *they* convinced me to take it. Because, you know, one of the big ob—well I had two obstacles. One was that I was in—I only had 3 years of experience and it was a big undertaking to go into a new field in, you know, in the city. All us rural school teachers were in awe of the city at this point. And the other thing was that, that I said, “Jodie Dauphinée’s name is established special ed. and shes been the first—she was the supervisor of special ed. for years.” And I said, “With the same name, you know, people are going to say I got the job by pull.” And that bothered me., you know Had I been older—cause I was only, when I went, I was only 22, you know. So anyway, Edith persuaded me to try it and it was war time and I thought I was going to go and work in an airplane plant personally. Anyway there I was, so I went into special ed. and I’m not sorry. And then I had the older children which I liked. So I had 12 children.

HR: What were their ages?

AD: Twelve to fifteen, eleven to fifteen. Yeah so that was interesting and it was all set up like a, a bit like a—well not like a rural school, where you had the equipment. But at the back of the room we had two workbenches, you know, for—so that the boys could, and the girls could, work with woodwork and so on.

HR: How many did you have in your, in your group?

AD: Twelve.

HR: Twelve.

AD: Yeah.

HR: And where was this?

AD: This is—is what I told you, General Wolf.

HR: General Wolf. So was that, was that a, a special site or were—did all schools contain special education classes?

AD: Oh no. No not all schools, oh no. I think there was about 25 or 30 classes in Vancouver in my time. I’ll tell you one thing they did which Jodie had started is that twice a month we used to have in service training, which was wonderful. Twice a month we would go down to the school board offices after school and have meetings there, workshops and what not with, with our supervisor. And that was a wonderful help because not only did I have my supervisor, you know, helping me and who would come around especially when you are setting up a new class you might be in two or three times a week. And so you not only had your supervisor—the principal didn’t know a damn thing about it so it was no use going to him, you know. And he’d never been in a special ed. class so I soon learned that he was a, he was a negative factor. He was a wimp

anyway.

HR: [laughter] Who, who was your supervisor and was it someone from the district or...

AD: Oh well honestly I meant my principal.

HR: Oh your principal.

AD: My principal, I'm sorry, my principal was a wimp, anyway.

HR: But, but the supervisor that did the...

AD: Oh the supervisor was—I didn't—the only supervisor I had was Edith Unsworth.

HR: Edith Unsworth. And was she located...

AD: Oh she was, she was fabulous.

HR: Was she located at the district and would circulate?

AD: No her office was in the school board office.

HR: In the school board.

AD: Oh yes, it all came out of the Vancouver School Board there. So we would go twice a month and she would have all these—of course in those days we didn't have—you know, being able to run off copiers and all the rest of it. Like, Thanksgiving and with all the holidays coming up she would have all sorts of things for the kids to colour. And, you know, she would gather all that stuff and get her—I'm sure she had a couple of assistants- that ran off stuff. A lot of our seat work was like—our art work was prepared, you know, and she would give out ideas. And then we'd all just talk about our problems. It was a support group. We didn't know the word in those days but they really were support groups. And it was wonderful, we—you know, she had tea and cookies there for us and mothering. And it was wonderful. Well a lot of the teachers there were, you know, old enough—a generation older than me but it was, it was great. I was the baby always. I was the baby in the school and I was the baby in the special ed. group.

HR: Did, did Edith Unsworth usually have a topic to discuss or did she...

AD: Oh yes.

HR: So she would bring something prepared and then...

AR: Yep, yep.

HR: What was the nature of some of those? Do you remember some of the things that you covered with her?

AD: Oh gosh.

HR: Other than bringing materials.

AD: Well she brought materials but I always remember—the thing I really remember about that—it’s funny how you look back. I always remember her saying, “These children are—you know, have been put down all their lives and they, you know, they have inferiority complexes.” And she said, “You know, you’ve got to build them up.” And I think, I really think that—I think back that teaching special ed., that what it did for me, was the great influence that it had on my teaching when I got in to regular classrooms. And well I also taught, I also taught accelerated kids in the Hebrew Day school. They were gifted children. But, you know, the basic philosophy that kids need to have a strong sense of worth and accomplishment and I can remember Edith saying, “You know, you might get a whole—suddenly this little Mary comes up and she has this page of, of “T’s” that she’s done, practiced.” And she said, she said, “It looks like a hand walked all over it,” but she said, “you look, and you look closely, and you find one good “T” and you say, ‘Oh Mary, that is a beautiful T. You did a marvellous job with that.’” She said, “There’s got to be something in everything they give you that’s good and should be praised.”

HR: Oh that’s lovely.

AD: Isn’t that wonderful?

HR: Yes.

AD: And I remember that and, you know, I have applied that in my teaching, you know. You know, some of my—a lot of my former pupils have kept in touch with me and they always say, “What, what I remember is the room was a happy, was a happy secure place.” You know, and they don’t tell me that they’ve, they don’t tell me that they learned tables with me or that they learned all about Columbus and all the rest. They said, “It was a happy secure place.” I’m wandering a bit now but it reminds me that when we have ‘meet the teachers’ we used to—the last, well, quite a while we were teaching around the end of September we used to have a, a ‘meet the teachers’ and have the parents come in and it was a great idea. In the evening and so on. The parents would say to me—well I’d give a little talk first, and I’d say to them, you know, I’ll tell you what I said. “I’ve been studying this month trying to get to know your children.” And I said, “I want you to know that I am brainwashing them. I’ll admit it. I’m a brainwasher.” I said “I’m convincing these kids that they’re in the best class in this school. They’re going to have the best time of their life. They’re going to learn a lot. They’ve got the best teacher.” [laughter]

HR: That's a very motivating thing to do.

AD: Yeah but anyway, and they just—then, you know, I'd end off with laughing with this end. They got, naturally—and naturally you try to make a joke out of it. Naturally they've got the best teacher. And you know, I said, "That's what I do," and I said, "if I can get them by the end of September, you know, really on my side," I said, "the year ahead is a cinch for me." But the parents used to say, "What do you do to my kids cause they all want to come to school now." But you know if you—but you've got to make the kids feel important and loved. And I must say that one of the joys of my teaching has been that I was nicknamed the hugging teacher. I hugged my children when they came in the morning. I met them in the morning and I hugged them and I had a few seconds with each one. Like, "Johnny you've got a new sweater." "Yes my grandma sent it to me." "Well, how bout you write her a letter tonight and tell her how beautiful it looks." And then I would hug them when they went at night. And it's just—and then the kids from—I'm wondering now if it's the kids from the other classes would come in June and say, "Can we go into your class next year?" And I would say, "Well you have to pass the test to go to my class," and they would say, "What's the test?" I said, "The hugging test. If you hug well you can get in." But kids, you know, it's—I think it's easy. Once you get them on your side, you know, they'll learn.

HR: Did you do—what did you do with the older kids? Did you also hug or how did you communicate that?

AD: That's an, that's an interesting story because when I went to one of the other schools, the school where I eventually went back a second time as a vice-principal, the principal moved me up from 6, he moved me up to Grade 8. And one of the staff said to me, "Ah you'll have to stop your hugging now." And I said, "Oh? He said, "Oh yeah, Grade 8," he said, "the boys won't hug. The girls might hug but the boys won't hug." I said, "Okay we'll see." And I went home and told my husband that and he said, "I'll bet you in a month time you'll have boys hugging you." And he was right. I don't force them I just, you know—well it's like one guy said to me, I taught—I introduced sex education when it was a, when it was a no, no in Grade 8. One of the guys, I can still see him now, Stew. Stewart looked up and he said, "Oh Mrs. Dauphinée you're so home spun." [laughter] Ah it's been fun. No I really—I didn't want to be a teacher in the first place, that's what's funny.

HR: How, how did you—well this is not an uncommon story. There are a lot of teachers who become teachers but never have intended to be. How, how did you go from high school to normal school?

AD: Well I wanted to go, I wanted to go to home ec. I really wanted to be a dietician.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And but I couldn't afford it. UBC didn't have home ec.

HR: So where would you have—would you have had to go to...

AD: I would have had to go back to Manitoba or down to Seattle.

HR: Okay.

AD: And my parents couldn't afford to send me to university. So I—that's why I had to go to teachers' college. But everybody told me I should be a teacher because in the neighbourhood where I grew up I happen to—my parents were the only older couple there and all the other people around were all young couples with little kids and I was run off my feet babysitting. And when I, I, used to want to go out and sit on the front porch and get some—in those days a great tanning thing, you know. And I used to sit on the front porch to get a tan and, and try to do my homework and all the little kids on the street would gather around me. And of course the parents kept saying to me, "You know, you're a natural. The kids flock to you. You know, you should be a teacher, you know."

HR: Did you have any siblings?

AD: No not—I had an older brother but I was the baby. So anyway, I just got in that way and that was the economic circumstances, you know. Like my mother was—my mother only had Grade 4 in Newfoundland and my mother was—just would do anything to get her children educated, you know. She really felt at a loss for not being educated. And so she gave me some good advice. She said, "Amy you've got enough money you could go to UBC for one year and then what would you have? You know, you'd just have senior matric and one year of UBC." And she said, "You know, and we can't send you away for home ec." So she said, "Go to take that year." And you had to pay to go to teachers' college that's \$150 I think. I think it's the same cost as going to University. So she said, "Go to become a teacher and then you will have an earning," and she said, "and if you still want to go to go on and do other things at least you've got something to fall back on, to earn your living," which is sound advice. And a lot of people did that. You know, they, they could manage another year and, and get the certificates because in those days, of course, you didn't require your degree. I didn't get my degree until I was 52.

HR: Where did you go to do your degree?

AD: Carlton University.

HR: At Carlton.

AD: Yeah.

HR: And, and what, what work did your father do? Were you...

AD: My father? My father was a sea captain.

HR: So he was away a lot?

AD: Yes.

HR: So your mother...

AD: But she was—my mother was a very strong woman. She raised the two of us most of the time.

HR: Her background, would it be Irish or Scottish by any chance?

AD: She had, she had a real mix. Well, a lot of the Newfoundlanders they were real mixed.

HR: Yeah, yeah.

AD: Yeah I think there was a lot of Irish in her, yeah. My father was a very strong character too.

HR: His last name is French.

AD: Brown, a very simple name. But you know, as my father said, “All the smart Newfoundlanders get out of the—get off the rock.”[laughter]

HR: So they were both born, born in Newfoundland?

AD: Yeah, then he moved out, he moved out. They were engaged and he came out and went on the boats and he was a self made man. He went on the boats out here in Vancouver and was a deck hand. And then he went to night school and studied then wrote his second mate whatever it is, second mate ticket and his first mate ticket and then finally his captains. When he became a mate he saved up enough money and he had to send money back to Newfoundland to bring my mother out.

HR: Oh goodness. That’s a—yeah you hear that story quite often.

AD: Yeah, oh yeah. And besides my mother couldn’t travel on it—you talk about it. That would be about 1912. My mother couldn’t come out on the train not without the—she had her ticket but she couldn’t travel. A young lady didn’t travel unescorted at that time. She’d be about 24 then.

HR: Oh so she had to wait for the...

HR: So there was another lady back visiting with her two children and mother came out as the “nurse maid.”

HR: Oh goodness. So you went to normal school at UBC. What else do you recall from normal school? Was it a—it was a one-year program that you did?

AD: Yes. That’s all it was, yeah.

HR: And Alexander Lord was the principal. Do you remember any of your teachers? Any of your instructors?

AD: Let’s see now. Miss McManus was the music teacher. Who were some of the others? Miss, Miss Ballard, yeah, primary. And who else? Mr. Anstey, history and geography. Anybody else? Oh yeah, of course, Lee. Mr and Mrs. Lee did the phys. ed. That was Ernie Lee, he went on down to the States and got a P—his doctorate. Dr. Ewey the psychologist. Mr. Lawl, right. Principals of teaching they are. I remember, I remember getting in a bit of trouble with Mr. Lawl because he was talking about motivating. You know, we had to get up and motivate these children. Motivate every lesson. [laughter] Not many people had nerve enough to put their hands up in those days. So I put my hand up and I said, “Will you please tell me how you, in a rural school where you have eight grades, how you motivate every child? Every grade?” I just couldn’t see myself doing it.

HR: [laughter] What did he reply?

AD: [laughter] I don’t know I was in the dog house because he didn’t have an answer to that.

HR: In what way did they prepare you? One of the things that our students complain about here is that they don’t feel prepared when they go out into the schools. They don’t feel like this—and this is after 5 years at university. So did you feel prepared when you left normal school?

AD: Oh no.

HR: [laughter] Some things never change even when it’s a five-year program.

AD: Well the thing is, well if I had my way I’d, I’d have, I’d have teachers out, I’d have new teachers or teachers in training—student teachers that’s what I should call them. They should be out in the classroom 50 percent of the time.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: You know, I, I, I think there’s—you know, it—there’s no learning like being there.

HR: Right.

AD: And the, you know, the actual hands-on. And, and, and then another thing too. I always wanted to kind of get into teachers' training because I thought—I don't think, I don't think they helped them enough in that they don't give them enough encouragement. Maybe I should tell you I got into a fair amount of trouble. [laughter] You see, in BC the philosophy was that only the outstanding teachers trained you. I don't know what we called—what did we call those teachers? I should explain to you.

HR: Master? Were they master teachers?

AD: Yeah. I should explain to my own personal background. My husband and I, who was also a rural teacher and went to normal school ahead—a year ahead of me. And I met him up in the Peace River, and this is Miss Dauphinée's nephew.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: Anyway, we were married 61 years and then a gentleman out of my past who I'd met at normal school and went around with all that year at normal school and he also had some rural school teaching and he is sitting here beside me. So he's the one who's got the memory and can rhyme off all those names for you at the school. Yeah and Mr. MacLean, MacLean's Method of Teaching, you've got writing, of course. Anyway, let me see, so the last 5 years I have been living with Ralph Burton up here outside in Princeton, outside of Princeton. And Ralph was in teaching, then with to the army and—the air force, pardon me, he's objecting—the air force and became a teacher pilot and then when he came back with the education he went back to university and became a dentist. So we didn't see each other for 60 years.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: That's another part of this whole story

HR: How, how do you spell Burton?

AD: B-U-R-T-O-N.

HR: T-O-N, okay.

HR: So anyway, I—Ralph has this terrific memory and he can, he can tell you a lot more about normal than I can.

HR: Maybe I should be interviewing him as well.

AD: You should be, you should be interviewing him too, yeah. So yeah, I have this connection, you know.

HR: Okay, perhaps I can arrange a time—another time to do that. If, if he would be inclined I'll send him a letter too.

AD: Yeah, okay. Now, where were we before I got side-tracked?

HR: We were talking, we were talking about normal school and one of the things you—well I asked you if you felt prepared and you said, “Oh no.” So maybe, maybe you can talk a little bit about the kinds of things that you did at normal school and what some of the—who did you study, what did you study, and why is that it that it didn't prepare you?

AD: Well, the only thing that I felt about—oh, I think Ralph can answer that. I can't remember too much about what we studied. You know, we, we did a lot of theory. My memory is that we did a lot of theory.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: You know, school laws, and it was very important to keep that damn register. And it had to be perfect and that was such a waste of time.

HR: What was the register?

AD: Oh you—what's a register? Oh my God, it's the Bible.

HR: The Bible!

AD: Oh my gosh, don't tell me you people are teaching now without the register! Anyway, well you had this register was a list of all the pupils and you kept their attendance.

HR: Okay.

AD: And every morning you had to go through this damn ritual of calling the role and there is Joe Smith, here and absent and all the rest and you put all that down religiously every morning. And then at the end of the month, that was a nightmare, because it all had to balance. You had to add it up and the days of away and all the absentees and list all why they were—all the reasons for why they were away. And that went in every month. That went in to—the rural schools, of course, it went in to the superintendent and the local schools it went in to your principal.

HR: And so the—at the normal school they prepared you?

AD: Oh yes, we each had a register and we registered—the class we registered was the own class we were in. So there we were having our, you know, hands-on experience keeping this register. And, you know, It was an absolute waste of time. You know, when I look back now, you know. So I mean that kind of, that kind of thing, I mean, those tedious rituals which were really unnecessary. I mean, instead of talking about kids, I mean, that's where I think they failed in my—knowing what I learned. I didn't learn enough about how to handle children and about how to handle discipline problems and, and, you know, and how to handle children with different needs. I learned more in special ed. 3 years than I would ever learn at normal school.

HR: And you said that they didn't give you enough information about kids and, and they were too harsh. One of the things that I run into all the time is in my teaching—I teach sociology of education and in that course we look at all of the sociological phenomena such as cultural diversity, linguistic diversity, working with aboriginal children, the impact of poverty. And over and over again it comes back to the human element of the child. There's a child in there coming from all sorts of backgrounds. And then my student teachers go out into the classroom and then they come back to me and they say, Helen you keep telling us we have to know and love that student but when I went out to my teacher last week my teacher said, "Don't you dare show them that you care about them because they'll eat you alive." [laughter]

AD: I don't believe in it.

HR: I don't believe in it either. So we have this major dilemma here of the, the field versus the university. And they, they, they come to us and say, "Well who are we supposed to believe?" So this is interesting that your perspective...

AD: Well, you know, I think it's 38 years there in teaching and as I say in a wide in a, in a wide and diverse, you know, group in schools. I, you know, I guess we get talking like this things come up. I taught, one of the hardest schools I ever taught, in Rockliffe. I was 13 years on the air force base in Ottawa out of, out of, out—in Ottawa there. And Karen...

[continued]

AD: I was very excited about our first school. So anyway, the first school night—first day of school she phoned me and she was in tears. And I said, "Karen what's wrong?" And she said, "Oh I just had a terrible day," she said, "I've got Grade 4." She was teaching in an inner city school and, and, and she started out in the morning and, I guess, she asked them to do something or something and this little boy stood up and looked at her and said, "Fuck off." And she said, "I didn't know," you know, she said, "I didn't know what to do."

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And then at the end of the, the day they were putting their things on, coats on and go and

she said, “And there was a fight in the—two boys were fighting in the cloakroom.” And she said, “You know, I separated them and sent them home.” And she said, “I, I just don’t know what to do, I’m at my wits end,” she said, “I won’t be able to—you know, I can’t handle this.” And she said, “What should I do?” And she said, “What do I, what do I do? These kids are fighting tooth and nail and so on and so forth.” And she said—I didn’t remember this, you know that I told her, but years later she told me. And she said, “You know, it worked what you told me,” I said, “What did I tell you?” She said, “Well when I called you that night,” she said, “you told me is love them.” And she said, “The next morning sure enough, when they went to put their coats on, they were fighting,” and she said, “I walked from my desk down to the back,” and she kept saying, “Mrs. Dauphinée said love them, love them, love them.” And she said, “When I got to them fighting I went down on my knees and I put one arm around one kid and one around the other and I hugged them.” And she said, “They looked at me, hugged me and started crying.” And I’m so glad she told me that story because she just told me a few years ago. And she said, “My God it works.” So it’s kind of a...

HR: And now I have tears. [laughter]

AD: What?

HR: That’s a very moving story.

AD: It is. You know, and I could have not learned that but, as I say, Karen has come back to see me. You know, we kept—we’ve kept in touch. And I said, “Karen, you don’t know what gift you gave me to tell me that.” She said, “It really worked.” It sort of—it gave her, you know. But anyway, I was going to, I was going to tell you another story that—getting back to the master teachers in Vancouver. My—what happened when I was at teachers’ college, when we got out to practice teach, of course, there’s only 150—about 150, Ralph, in the group, I guess, at teachers college, about 150. So we only had to have 150 teachers throughout the city. So they could be pretty choosy. And it was considered a great honour for you to take—well actually they didn’t need 150 teachers because they put two, so they only needed 75 teachers who would take two students. And if you were asked to take students you were considered a master teacher, right? A great honour. And you didn’t get any pay.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: That was it. So anyway, so...

HR: So you, you were paid to take students?

AD: They weren’t paid.

HR: They weren’t.

AD: No, not in my time. They weren't paid to my knowledge.

HR: Okay.

AD: Just that honour was, you know, considered, boy, pretty wonderful. So anyway, when I went to—you can appreciate when I went to Ontario and I was at the air force school the principal came along one day and said, “Amy, there—I've—there—were going to—they've asked the school to take student teachers,” and he said, “I would like you to take student teachers.” Well, my immediate reaction was, “Whoa! I'm considered a master teacher now, you know.”

HR: That's great.

AD: And I must admit, I was pretty, pretty cocky. Until afterwards I went to the staff room I found out that about 12 other teachers were teach—12 other teachers were master teachers. And then I looked around and saw somebody else, Miss Townshend, to hell she was a master teacher. God, if I'm, if I'm in that class, to hell with it. Anyway, then later on I found that the principal was paid to take—per, per master teacher.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Yeah, uh-huh per number of student teachers he took he got paid. So I thought, “Well now that, now that explains why they got about 14 or 15—it was a big staff—it explains why there were so many so-called master teachers.” Anyway, so that—but anyway, that leads to something else because we, we—suddenly these two girls ended up at our doorstep, you know, on Monday morning and so on and so forth. So we started, it was their first time out and they were struggling and I was struggling because I had no instructions at all. So I said—nobody had told me what to do with them or anything I had to just figure out, you know, how much time I was going to give them teaching and, you know, instructions and all the rest of it. What to stress, what not to stress, anything. But by, anyway, by the end of, I guess—and I think they were there 2 weeks or something—we had to evaluate them. And so the teachers were all together and—I mean the so called teachers that had—on my staff, the staff. And they were saying, “Oh well I'm going to give her a C or something.” And I said, “Well I don't know about you people but I'm going to fail my two.” And they said, “What!” And I said, “Well I don't know what else you can do, they're failures.” And, so this was very upsetting. And I said, “After all, it's their first time out and, and they're, you know, they're not responding, they lack confidence, you now.” Anyway, so the next thing we know on a—very shortly after that the principal of the normal school comes on a Friday afternoon to check on things and—pardon? Came, again, came Friday. And my principal—there was salary negotiations going on so my principal was over with the defence headquarters on salary and the vice principal was gone and, I don't know there must have been a couple of others. And there were students teachers in the school and that was it. But anyway, things were pretty hectic. I mean there was some, you know, disruption up in the upper grades it was pretty noisy and so on and so forth. And so he came into my classroom and I had two men.

And these two men when they had come the first week were—well actually they were very apprehensive and they had told me later on that when they drove past the hydro company there they said, “Let’s look they’re hiring let’s get off and apply and to hell with this teaching.” I mean they were that insecure about teaching they had done—you know, considered that. So anyway I had taken this and I could see that what they really needed was just self-confidence, you know. So, anyway, I, I didn’t—they just tried. I said “Ah you can take it easy I’ll let you—I won’t mark you for 2 or 3 days and here’s my program, I don’t mark, and I’d like you to get your feet wet,” so on and so forth and so anyway. By the end of the 2 weeks they were terrific and they just progressed beautifully. And then—and I had two sons of my own at about that age and so I guess, you know, could relate to them. And then—so anyway, this principal came in the room and of course this one guy just froze up with the principal there. He got very nervous and so on and the principal said, “I’ll take over now,” and he went up and took over the class and just made the guy sit down and then he started talking. It was a language lesson I remember, and he said, “I don’t like this textbook,” and he ripped the—literally the textbook apart about, you know, and this was no good what he used and, you know, “What are you teaching the kids anyway?” All this in front of the children.

HR: Oh my gosh.

AD: It was just terrible. I mean he did all the wrong things. You know, he, he put down my guy and, and put down the book and so on and so forth. And he (inaudible) kids were good. But anyway, so I, I thought—so then he left. So then at the end I—he went down to the office and I went to the principal and I said, “Look,” when the principal came back I said, “So you realize what this guy did? He, you know, he, he tore my guy apart, he did this and so on and so forth.” I said, “I want,” his name was Kendrick, I said “I want to talk to him.” He said, “Oh no leave him alone.” But they were beer drinking buddies and this guy was the kind of guy that Kendrick the principal—he, he liked these young men, and he used to take young men out on Friday nights to the beer parlour so the young men were all buddy buddy. They always did well and they passed, so and so forth. Anyway, the girls didn’t do so well. But the—so when he came to—the next day Kendrick—the principal got Kendrick and said, “Mrs. Dauphinée is sure upset.” So Kendrick came down and he said, “I hear you’re—you know, you have a bird—bone to pick with me.” I said, “Yes lets go down to the staff room I certainly have a bone to pick with you sir.” So, he said “What’s wrong?” I said, “Well here, we’ll start listing off what I have against you. My complaint,” I said, “I built up this guy, you tore him down, you took over in the classroom which is something you should never do unless it’s an emergency and you tore this book apart. I have to teach with that book—it’s the only textbook I have and how do you think I can build up the confidence with my kids when you people walk away next week.” And anyway, so and I said, “Then you talk about the marking, the student marking,” I said, “we were never given an instruction.” I said, “Is this the way you run your program in Ontario?” I said, “Surely, if you came to me—if I were principal I would call in all the master teachers in ahead of time and I would instruct them in what you would like them to do and give them some guidance as to marking etc.” And I outlined a program that he should be following. He called—I will say for the

guy, I give him full credit—he called a meeting of all the master teachers that day the end of—at the end of school. And he got up and he said, “I have a public apology to make to Mrs. Dauphinée.”

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: “I went into a classroom,” he said, “I did this and I did,” and so on he said, “that was the wrong thing to do,” he said. He said, “I’ll,” he said to me, he said, “I apologize Mrs. Dauphinée,” and he said, “I’ll try not to step out of line.” So I looked up at him, I said, “If you do Mr. Kendrick, I’ll be right there to remind you.” That’s one time I had my hour of glory.

HR: So that’s when you were teaching in Ontario?

AD: Yeah. And then what followed next year was Mr. Kendrick adopted my plan for the intro, the introduction of student teachers—master teachers. That was good.

HR: That’s great, that’s great. When about was this? What...

AD: That would be in the ’50s.

HR: And did you have children by then?

AD: Oh yes, yeah.

HR: So when you, when you got married and had children did you continue to teach? Or did you take...

AD: No, 6 years I didn’t teach.

HR: So you took 6 years off and then returned. When did you return to teaching?

AD: I returned to teaching that’s —when I returned to teaching I returned to teaching at the Hebrew day school where I taught half a day.

HR: In Ontario?

AD: Which was at—no in, in Ottawa.

HR: In Ottawa.

AD: Hebrew day school. It had a Hebrew day school where the children did English half a day and did Hebrew the other half. Of course that way it had to be—only accelerated kids could

handle that program.

HR: Cause they did all their regular courses...

AD: In half a day.

HR: Okay. And what years was, was that?

AD: 1951, '50-'51. Let's see now I did—I, I taught the same—I was lucky I taught the class in—in Ontario in Ottawa they put 3 and 4 together. The 8, 8 years in, in those days, the 8 years of elementary school if you were above average student, a good student, I'd say a good average, a good average you did the 8 years in 7. They combined 3 and 4. If you were a slower student then you did it in 8 years.

HR: Okay.

AD: So I taught this sharp group of 12, I taught them in grade 3 and 4 and then I was off a year and then I taught the same class in Grade 6. Oh God they were lovely. [laughter] It was a picnic. I used to take them down to parliament and all over the place. You know, with 12 kids. And the principal of the school was a Hebrew chap and he didn't know the English program so I had, I had it all over him. I said, "Oh well we do the," I would always tell him, "You have to do these things—all part of the program. He'd go, "Yes, yes, yes, okay." [laughter] So I'd take them out on—I mean, the things—I was able to do things sort of ahead of my time, you know. I mean, it's nothing now to take the kids out on these trips but I was doing it before.

HR: And there was no, there was no suggestion about that when you were at normal school?

AD: Oh good God no.

HR: So it was all pretty much book learning?

AD: Everything's tried, tried, you know.

HR: Right. So in...

AD: Wouldn't you agree Ralph that there wasn't enough practice teaching? They didn't teach—didn't have any there—did you hear him?

HR: No, nope.

AD: Oh okay, just a minute.

HR: Hello Ralph.

RB: I'm sorry I have to tune you in hearing aid is—it beeps and whistles if I don't tune you in on it.

HR: Okay, thank you very much for contributing.

RB: No, nope, not at all. No I was—my impression of normal school was that outside of the physical education instructors, the man and the woman, they were the ones who would—gave you lessons in how to teach physical education. They were, you know, ex high school teachers themselves and very good at it. But the rest of the schooling, as far as I'm concerned—oh outside maybe the primary teacher who taught you to cut out paper dolls and make little paper baskets and one thing and another. She was about the only one that did something. But the rest of them did not teach you how to teach. All they did was present a certain number of principles and, of course, it was the ideal situation. And, you know, you stand up in front of your class of 25 students and you did this, and you were going to be teaching one particular subject. But none of them—well I have to back off one of them a bit. They did have an un-graded classroom in the normal school itself and this one teacher was running this un-graded classroom. I think there was four grades in it. But the majority of us went out and we'd get maybe—Amy handled it a little bit better than I did, she had about 15 kids. Of course they didn't speak English—oh 30 kids sorry, pardon me. But I wound up—in my first school I had ten kids. I had, you know, one in Grade 1, two in Grade 2, one in Grade 3, one in Grade 4, and two in Grade 7, and three in Grade 8. Now for—how are you going to have any competition as far as learning? And you know, “What do you think Johnny? How about you Mary? What do you think?” Because there was nobody else to talk to in that particular classroom so—that particular class or grade. So you—they didn't essentially show you how to do it and, you know, give you demonstration. Outside was, I've said to Amy, this Mr. Anstey who was the one for the geography and history. He would turn around and say, “This is what you should say,” and this is what you did. And he would have discussions about how to present these courses to the students which was great. I mean, he was about the only one. The unfortunate part about it as far as the school was concerned, he was retiring that particular year that we had him, so the rest of the people that came after that didn't have an opportunity. But that was the whole problem with the normal school program as far as I'm concerned. They sent us out—I can recall the second day that I was in the normal school they sent two of us over to the classroom that was in the, the model school as they called it next door which was just a regular elementary school. They assigned us to one woman and she said, “Okay I want you to take over on this particular class or this one particular subject.” I think it was English literature or something and she had some kind of a picture and she wanted me to teach a lesson on this picture that she had. I had absolutely no idea of what I was supposed to do, of what to do. I got up and stood up and after I finished floundering around and, and I finished up and she said, “Well I must say that you sure messed that up for me because I, I was going to use this as a real good lesson,” and so on. I said, “Thank you very much but this is my second day of normal school. What am I supposed to really do now you tell me?” And of course being a really brash 18

year old, I wanted to go to mouth off. But, but this is the sort of the thing, I mean, maybe some of the teachers in the model school did help but the teachers in the normal school who were supposed to be teaching us how to teach didn't. Outside of, let's say, maybe the physical ed. teachers and this one other teacher. The rest of them, I mean, they stood up and lectured and—oh, oh I'll have to back off a bit. Mr. H.B. MacLean, I don't know if you've ever...

HR: Yes, yes.

RB: Well H.B. MacLean was the teacher for writing and also grammar in the, in the normal school and he did present and had us do things and say, "This is what you've got to do and this is how you do it." And he would, you know, judge our penmanship and do everything and grade us, you know, practically every week. And he did actually teach us a few things. Then, of course, there was the one lady that was Miss Mayherd who was the domestic science teacher. I mean, she, she taught us how to boil eggs and make tea and things like that. And made sure we had to wash out our dishcloths and tea towels after we finished washing the dishes. I can remember very distinctly thinking, "Gosh, must do this after every time you do the dishes and hang your"—in those days they used to have a hot water tank with hot water pipes there and you hung them over the hot water pipes to dry them out. And, you know, these were the sort of things. I mean, she did—oh yeah, she tried to teach me how to make a lemon pie one time and I said, I commented, "My lemon pie was strictly athletic." And you can probably guess what happened there because it ran all over. [laughter] So—but basically, I mean, I can be critical as heck as a matter of fact and, and because I don't have to—you know, I have no eggs to grind now and I'm not—anything I say is never going to be taken as the gospel, anyway. In comparison now, I went—left teaching after my second year and joined the air force and I went through and became a pilot and went back to Trenton, Ontario and was—and became an instructor. They gave me the instructor's course. That was something that they did. They took you out. They said, "This is what you must do, this is the way its done, this is how you talk to the students and you do all of this according to the rules and this is the way it is. I will show you, you do it. I will show you, (inaudible) then you do it. And you will repeat back to me what I'd be saying." And it was a good course. You learned by doing. And they showed you what to do. Now in comparison, I mean, that was, you know, things that they, they did in the air force and it was—all the other ground school things and everything else that they had they taught you by showing and taught you by doing. And much different than the normal school.

HR: What, what were some of the things that the other instructors did at the normal school if they weren't showing you what to do? What were they doing?

RB: Well, well I'll tell you this one man in particular—Amy talked about this Mr. Hall that she had an argument with about the, the, motivating the students to learn. And this, you know, this is, this is—now you're going to get the most out of this sort of thing, you know, I mean, this motivation. Well he would stand up and unfortunately for one chap in our class, he was deaf. And he was quite an artists and the only reason that he was going through normal school was that

maybe he'd go ahead and become an art teacher. Now the poor fellow was deaf and this Mr. Hall would stand up and have this text book and he would be lecturing out of this text book, "This is what you've gotta do, this is what you can't do," and so on. But he then would turn and look out the window and have his head turned away from the class and then he would ask a question and then turn back to say, "What do you think about that Mr. Amos?" Well this fellow Amos, who was as I say deaf, he was I think doing more lip reading than he was anything else. And he'd sat there with his eyes blinking and, you know, he hadn't even heard the question let alone what it was all about. And so this fellow Hall he basically was teaching—well was supposed to be teaching the Principles of Teaching. But in reality, I mean, he, he—we were more angry with him than we did anything else. And he was, he was the next superintendent, one thing or another. I, I, I can say—I can criticize him for this because I told him later on. I bumped into him when I was in the air force and I was on leave in Vancouver. Was heading out on the train and I bumped into him in the CNR depot in Vancouver in about 1942-43, and he bumped—"Oh, Burton, yeah, yeah, yeah," he remembered me and but I said, "Oh yes, Mr. Hall." So he wanted to be very friendly and so on and I said, "No, look I can remember your class and this is what you did wrong," and he said, "Why goodness I never realized." Just the same as Amy did with the principal of the normal school in, in Ottawa. She told him off for what he was doing wrong, I told him off, of course by this time, unfortunately, he was retired from the normal school and he couldn't go ahead and say, "Gosh it's too bad that you people didn't tell me when I was doing that—those things wrong." "Well," I said, "You were supposed to know. You were the—an exp—a school inspector. You should have known what the—how to teach and so on." But, you know, these are just little things that we can gripe about now and say well—but we didn't—of course, when we were going through normal school we were so darn afraid that we weren't going to graduate and all the money, the tuition that we had paid in was going to be lost and we wouldn't get a job that, you know, we did—well we were walking around like walking on eggs. We weren't going to crack any shells, you know. So this is why we didn't criticize anything that was going on. But we should have, we should have. It was our own fault.

HR: Hmm. I can assure you that our teacher trainees are very different today. They don't suffer fools. They speak their mind.

RB: Yeah, well it's all university stuff now, I mean, you've got to have—I mean, as Amy was saying, we had first year university and then they turned us loose. And in many cases if you did get into a larger school you got the junior grades, Grade 1, 2, and 3, which were the most important in my estimation. The most important grades in the whole curriculum are Grades 1, 2, and 3. This is where you teach the kids how to read, write, and do arithmetic and one thing and another. And if you don't have excellent teachers there then you're going—you have troubles, the kids have troubles all the rest of the way through school. And they turn around and then when they get up into high school they turn them loos, they let them go in there and they have a B.A. Degree or Bachelor of Education or whatever it is that they have now, and, you know, basically they don't need that. They should have the whole system reversed. Make, make the elementary school, Grades 1, 2, 3, and 4, they should be specialists in that particular area. Now maybe they

are now. Of course, my, my kids have been—my grandchildren are all now finishing high school and I don't have any eggs to grind as far as the system is concerned now. But in those days this is, this is the thing that we had to put up with.

HR: And you went through the normal school in 1937?

RB: '38. Amy and I went—we started in the fall of '38 and we graduated in the spring of '39, in June of '39.

HR: Okay. And when you taught, where did you teach, Ralph?

RB: I, I—Amy was in the far North and I was the far South. I was in the, the—what they called the Boundary area. I was in a school called the Kettle Valley School. As I say, I had 10 students in my, in my school.

HR: And what years was, was...

R.B. That was from 1939, the fall of '39 through until—well I, I could only, I could only put up with it for 3 months and then I managed to get appointed to a school down in Surrey. I was—my home was in White Rock and my mother went to the school board and she raised—she was the type that would be was standing up for the tax payers. And she went to the school board and said, “You know, my son is away out there in the bush.” And well I managed to get in and they, they put me charge of a school where—I, I don't know if you're really interested in this. But what had happened on Halloween night in this one particular school in Surrey, two of the boys had gone back to the school in the evening had taken a shot gun and blown the lock off the door and went into the school and just demolished the whole school.

HR: Oh my gosh.

RB: A one-room school with, with eight grades in it. But anyway, it was a pure rural school right in Surrey. But...

HR: What was the name of the school?

RB: Green Timbers School. And they, they tore up, tore up all the books, they took—made a great big pile in the middle of the room. There had been—there was a big old wood, wood stove right in the middle of the room and the stove pipe went the whole—half the length of the building and out the back. And they dumped—broke down the stove pipes and dumped the soot and ashes all over the books. They poured the ink bottle, a big quart bottle of ink, they poured that all over the books. They broke up the, the gramophone that they had. They tore apart all the library books. They took all the books, the kids books out of their desks and just ripped them up and made a mess. They drew some very explicit pictures and descriptions and wording as far as

the teacher was concerned what she could do about the whole situation. And then they took off and went—oh and broke all the windows on the, on the side of the, of the building. There was no electricity in this school, by the way, either. They just broke all the windows and took off. The unfortunate—they made one mistake. When the police came in the next morning after the teacher had got there and was absolutely aghast, of course, she called the police. The police walked in and of course it didn't take an amount of police men with a seeing-eye dog to figure out what had happened. The one desk was left standing and that was one of these boys. He hadn't wrecked his desk.

HR: [laughter] Oh goodness.

RB: So, of course, when they grabbed him and he quickly volunteered that his buddy had been the other one to do it. They, so they both got—I think they got 6 months a piece in the, in the boys' industrial school that they used to have in those days. Anyway, the teacher that was in the school for the fall of the year was a very small women and very inexperienced. She hadn't been in our class but she had been about 1 year's experience when she got put in here, into the school. And she just couldn't discipline these kids at all because even the girls in Grade 6 and 7 were bigger than she was.

HR: Was she an introvert or an extrovert?

R: I would, I would be inclined to think so. Yeah, she was one of the introverts. Anyway, so the school board appointed me to be a disciplinarian and the—so I went in. Of course, I happen to be about—I'm over 6 feet tall and happened to be rather athletic in those days and I could probably run faster than the parents if they started getting angry with me. But anyway, it worked out quite well. I helped a few of the boys with a few things and Amy was saying about taking her kids down to the—on excursions, one thing and another. I wound up doing the same thing. We saved up our P.E. days and we took them on a—I took them on one day for a hike through the bushes to where they had a swimming pool. And this I think was about the one—the only class or the only school that had ever had a swimming lesson in Surrey, the municipality. Anyway, but the following year, the next fall, I was appointed as a principal of a, of a school and I hung on to that one for about 6-8 months and then I joined the air force and left and went in, as I say, went in for pilot training. So I put in roughly 2 years and 3 months of it was in the Boundary Country of BC, that's where I was. It's east of Osoyoos, east of the Okanagan.

HR: Oh yeah, yeah.

RB: Right on the—when you hear him talking about the, the weather reports of BCTV he's always talking about the Boundary Country. Well it's, it's in between Osoyoos and Grand Forks, this area that I was in. It was about 1 mile from the border, really, that's why they—One of the great smuggling areas of British Columbia.

HR: Oh interesting, that's interesting.

RB: Yeah. Whereas, I say Amy was far north.

HR: Is that how you got separated that you were...

RB: That's how we were separated. She went north, I went east as it were from Vancouver. And we didn't—we met again on the ferry going over to summer school. We had to go to Victoria. She was saying we had to go to summer school for 2 years out of the 3 years that we had this temporary C class certificate that they issued to us when we got out of normal school. And we met on the, on the ferry and, "Oh great." "Oh," she said, "I have bad news for you," I said, "What's that?" She said, "I got married last week." So I was ready to jump off the ferry at that time, but anyway.

HR: Oh goodness.

RB: It was a big shock to me and I've never let her forget it either. So anyway, we got together again as she was telling you, we got together again 60 years later. Now it's a lot of water under the bridge. But unfortunately, right about this time, when you get to be 85 and 86 years old the water is slowing, slowing down, you know.

HR: Okay, would you—is, is Amy feeling up to talking some more or is she too tired? Would she like to take a break and have me phone back or...

RB: Well maybe I better ask her. Right now were just sort of halfway watching some curling on t.v. Well Amy do you want to talk some more? Oh okay, "Maybe," she says, "maybe she'd like to do that." Yeah, just a second please.

HR: Thank you very much, Ralph.

AD: Hi.

HR: Hi Amy, how are you feeling? Are you too tired? Or would you like to...

AD: Yeah, I'm getting tired.

HR: Would you like me to call you back another time because I'm interested in your work in the Peace Region with the students that came from Germany?

AD: Yeah, we didn't even get onto the background of the Peace River.

HR: That's right, so if you're not feeling up to it I can call you back another time and carry on. I,

I, I have so many more questions but I don't want to overload you.

AD: Yeah, okay. But anyway, keep your questions.

HR: And I am so thankful. It's been so enjoyable and I just—I can't tell you how wonderful it's been talking to both you and to Ralph about your experiences because I think it makes me a better instructor. I won't lecture, I promise! I'm so looking forward to this being used for future teachers so that they can get a glimpse into the past and some of the challenges. In particular, when you—in preparation for next week, maybe you can be thinking of some examples of some challenges and successes in your life in the Peace Region with students there.

AD: Yeah, there were, there were challenges.

HR: The other thing I'm interested in is when you were talking at length about Jodie Dauphinée, I was wondering if any material exists from—about her and about her background because I think there's a misconception at the moment that Ruby Kerr was the one that began the...

AD: That's interesting.

HR: Yeah so it would be a, a big help to correct that.

AD: I wonder where the papers are of hers, yeah.

HR: And if, if at a later date perhaps after you've had your operation maybe next year at this time or something, if we could talk a little bit about—more about her.

AD: Well, I mean, that's the story that I was told and I, I know she, I know that she recruited Ruby and, and Jean afterwards, you know, after. And they didn't—yeah, and they were very instrumental in helping her because they did the testing. Actually, it was interesting in they—Tim has an older brother, they're 3 years older and Jean, Ruby Kerr, and Jean Canlong used to use the boys as their guinea pigs.

HR: Oh interesting.

AD: Yeah.

HR: For administering tests and doing the activities?

AD: Yeah, they'd try out all the, try out, they'd try out all these things for them. It was kind of funny in that Tim's brother was older and, and he's an extrovert and Tim is an introvert. So we get back to those terms again and because of that they always assumed that John was smarter than Tim. And then Tim used to always do better in the I.Q. Tests. [laughter] They all had to—

they had to revise their opinions after all the test came. Every single one he could beat his brother which was good because he was younger and, you know, kind of in the—and he was sickly. So it was kind of nice that he could excel at something. Anyway, it revised Jodie's thinking. Jodie was one of the guilty ones that thought John was the...

HR: Oh thats interesting.

AD: Yeah.

HR: So the evidence was different, changed their mind.

AD: Yeah, Well these pre-concepts, you know, these pre-concepts you get.

HR: Yeah.

AD: Yeah.

HR: Well I appreciate this very much and...

AD: Yeah okay, and I'll be in touch.

HR: Thank you very much, Amy.

AD: Bye-bye now.

HR: Bye-bye.

Amy Dauphinée Interview #2 - March 20, 2006

AD: ...applications always got in and then with the mail—so my applications were 2 and 3 days later than all the other replies.

HR: Oh no.

AD: Yeah, so by the end of the summer when I had returned to Vancouver I had taken two double sessions that started in June. I'd taken 3 months of courses so by the time I got to Vancouver back home in the end of August I didn't have a job. So I phoned up the principal of the normal school and told him the situation and he advised me to, to phone Victoria, the Department of Education because he said sometimes some schools didn't put ads in the paper but they just applied through the Department in Education, which is interesting, in Victoria.

HR: And, and what year was that in?

AD: Nineteen thirty-nine, August '39. So that's what I did. I, I phoned and told them, you know, that I didn't have a job and so on and so forth and because I had been going to summer school. Which was I think in my favour, you know, that I was at least taking some more courses. And so then I went back to work at the Elmer Cannery where I had worked for five summers.

HR: And where was that?

AD: In Vancouver.

HR: In Vancouver.

AD: Yeah, yeah. Cutting the ends off of beans for 25 cents an hour. So I was working and remember in the—in one morning somebody came from the upper office and came down onto the, what we called, the floor and said that I was wanted up in the office. Well this was quite unique so all the girls though, "What's she done?" So I went up to the office and they said there was an important phone call from my mother. And so my mother said I just got a telegram offering me a job in, in Tate Creek.

HR: Tate?

AD: Tate Creek.

HR: Tate Creek.

AD: T-A-T-E Creek, It's now called Tom's Lake it doesn't exist anymore. And anyway, my

mother said she'd looked it up on the map and she couldn't find it. [laughter] So she didn't want me to go but anyway she said, "The telegram's there," and so she said, "what do you, you know, what do you want to do about?" And I said, "Well I'll decide tonight when I get home." It just shows you in those days that today I suppose kids would just say thank you very much the Elmer Cannery can take your beans and stuff them. But I went back to my post and I worked the day out. And I went home and I called them the next day and I had decided I'd take it, and much to my mother's chagrin because she wanted me to—she was advising me to stay put and, and do substitute work in Vancouver. And I said, "Oh mother I've put a whole year in at normal school and I, I, I didn't work to, to become a supply teacher." So anyway, I went up to the Peace River. So I was on the train going to the Peace River when war was declared.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Yeah and to get to the Peace River you had to go 24 hours, of course this would all have to be by train, you had to go 24 hours to Edmonton and then the trains weren't well organized. There were only two trains a week up to the far north and they left 2 hours before you arrived. Whatever—you know, there was a daily train across Canada. But whatever day those two trains north—so you had to spend 22 hours in, in Edmonton to get on the northern train. But the real point I'd like to make, which I tell teachers today, is that it cost me my first month's salary to get to my school.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: And we got—was it \$7200 or \$7800? \$7800—\$780 for the year.

HR: For the year, wow.

AD: Yep, that was the, that was the, that was the, the starting salary, 780. Yeah then \$4 a month was taken off for your pension, okay. But a thing—the thing that got me was that, you know, we used, up in the Peace River, we used to say, "September and October we worked for the railway company."

HR: Just to get you to your job.

AD: Just to get there and get home. So that, that was 2 months salary shot. Then we worked out there was another couple of months we worked for summer school, to live over the next summer where we had to take courses. Because in those days you had to—in order to get your permanent certificate you had to teach 2 years with satisfactory inspector's reports plus two summer schools of courses specializing in whatever you wanted to take. There were some compulsory but then you could specialize.

HR: What were you taking when you were at the University of Washington?

AD: Oh I was taking home ec. I wanted to be a home ec. teacher.

HR: Oh right.

AD: That was the nearest place where I could get home ec. courses.

HR: And when, when you said that war was declared did they announce it on the train?

AD: Oh yes, oh yes.

HR: The conductor or who, who announced it?

AD: Oh gosh I don't know, well I don't know. I remember, I mean, the buzz just went all over the train you know, yeah. And actually it was kind of interesting because the train that I was on had one of the Vancouver MPs. They were calling, of course, a session of parliament and I can remember Howard Green from—who was from the Vancouver university area, Vancouver Point Grey. Howard Green was a very well known Conservative. And he was on the train returning to the session of Parliament. Which the session of Parliament met and decided for Canada to declare war.

HR: Goodness, wow.

AD: So, the war being declared was, it must have been Britain declaring war, you know. Then Canada followed, of course, right away. So anyway, I went up to the north where as all my other associates and students that went through with me went in to rural schools. I went in to an entirely different set up. Back in the late '30s Hitler annexed Sudetenland and Neville Chamberlain, who was the Prime Minister of Great Britain, thought that he could stop—believed he could stop Hitler by appeasement policy. He had this appeasement policy that we would give in to him and he'll be satisfied. But as history has proved there was...

HR: No appeasement.

AD: There is no such thing as appeasement. So in this appeasement policy part of the conditions were that the people who were anti-Hitler, very strongly anti-Hitler, were allowed to leave the country freely and come to England.

HR: Okay.

AD: And that was part of...

HR: I didn't know that because I knew of the annexation and I knew that part of Czechoslovakia went back to Germany but I didn't realize that people left at the time which is...

AD: Well, some of them, you know, some of them left on their own. Saw it, saw what was coming and the others were allowed to—particularly their families. Some of the men had left ahead of time and had to leave their families. I heard stories, just hair-raising stories. One of these stories that really stays with me is one of my boys his—I should start to say that the people who were really targeted by Hitler and the Gestapo were the unions, union organizers, and the, and the Social Democratic Party.

HR: So at the time it was...

AD: Well they were very strongly anti-fascist, of course. And these people were known because they were leaders in, in the party. So the union leaders and the, and the political leaders who were well known were targeted. And many of them just left during the night with a suitcase.

HR: Were, were any of them Jewish? What...

AD: We had a few Jewish, very few.

HR: Very few?

AD: There was a few Jewish in the community. But the story I'm thinking of is that a secretary—at the union headquarters they got word that the Gestapo was in town, in their town, and they'd better leave and close up the office. And the two, two brothers, one of them was a father of one of my pupils, and they left the office and went home to get their suitcase and leave, head for the border. And one of the younger brothers said, "My God the membership list."

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: And he went back and, and he said to, to his older brother he said, "You go. I'm younger, I can run faster," and so on and so forth. And he went back and he was caught and he was killed. He was shot, yeah. And so this pupil of mine lost his uncle that way. But he got back and destroyed the list but he was caught, yeah, like, in leaving, yeah. So, I mean, true story, you know, like that. Anyway so what happened was when the Sudeten refugees got to Lon—England they stayed in England approximately a year and of course they spent their time very wisely learning English because they knew they were going to go to an English speaking country. And then they had their choice of going to—I think, I think Australia took one group. But I know that there was two groups that came to Canada. What I didn't know until then was the CPR, the CNR both had a colonization department and this colonization department undertook to colonize 150 families. And so the CNR colonized a group in northern Saskatchewan and the CPR took the Peace River. Now what they did of course is the CPR had unlimited land that had been granted by government for, you know, railway. In addition to that they also had mortgages on farmers' land. So what they did, of course, was—all this mortgaged land and all this colonization was a real break for them financially. So they, they put the 150 families up at what is now near Tom's Lake, south of

Pouce Coupe, and so then they settled the group there on this, very conveniently, land that they owned but that could sell again. And now they set up a little, a little community there and—well they set up an administration—I guess, you'd call it an administration post. And they took over a farmer's house and it was really funny because that place was painted white so all the Sudetens used to call it the White House. Not knowing the significance.

HR: Of the White House.

AD: Not knowing—it was really funny because they didn't know what the White House was in Washington. So they called it the White House and that's where the, where the employees of the Canadian colonization, that's where they lived because they didn't—the Canadians didn't bring their families. And then they also had another little building that they put up which was their office. Now in that administration there was MacConnell who was the head man, the administrator. Then they had a bookkeeper and then they had another man that was in charge of animal husbandry and another one in charge of machinery. And they had to buy up, of course, you know, cattle and machinery and so on and establish a community. And they took these 150 families and divided them into 15, 15 groups and they became, like, the east group, the north group, the river group and so on and so forth. And then they built that summer of '39—they came in May or June of '39 into Canada and they built one-room—I shouldn't say shack because shack is run down. But, you know, it was a one-room cabin and not of, not of logs but lumber and then they put on a little enclosed porch outside of it. But the families lived in one large room and gosh I can't tell you the size of it but, you know, it was everything in the one room. The beds and, and their cooking facilities and so on. And that's where these people lived for several years and that's what I walked into in September. Now, when I got there the school wasn't finished yet. It was only a—it was, it was two-room, big two-room new school. Again lumber not logs cause that's faster. And it wasn't finished, so, it didn't open until the last 3 days of September. So I very wisely went around. I got a list of my pupils, well it was easy I got the older ones. And I got their names and I found out where they were and I went around and I visited all the homes. And so people used to say to me, "Well how is it that you can communicate with parents because they're German speaking?" And I said, "Dussle-English, Dussle-Dutch and, and I could deal with the hands." And it was really, not that I realized, but it was one of the, of course, the best thing I ever did because the principal, who was an older woman who was well in her 50s, did not go around. So I be—you can well imagine this 19 year-old girl that was running around. They used to—they nicknamed me "Zigeuner," which is the gypsy cause I had dark curly hair and a little red hat. And, you know, and I went around and I thought—well something just told me that I should just get to know the children, you know. So that's what I did, it was the best thing I did. And I was lucky I had all September to do this.

HR: How old were the children that you were in charge of?

AD: Well, the principal had her experience, she spoke German, and she was teaching up in the far North and she was a real loner. She lived with her horse and her dog and she had a little

trailer that she traveled around and she lived in her, she lived in her own little trailer.

HR: Do you remember her name?

AD: Yes, her name was Meade, Miss Meade. I can't think of her first name. Miss Meade, M-E-A-D-E. And she had had experience in junior and in fact she taught in Japan and I gather she taught in Victoria but it was always primary grades. So she decided, of course she was the boss, she decided she was going to take the younger children. And it wasn't a matter of—you know, our objective, of course, was just to teach them English and not, not the—cover the grades. So she took—we divided by ages so she took them from 6 to 11 and I had them from 12 to 18 and I was 19.

HR: Oh gosh.

AD: The oldest pupil was 18 and she had been through high school in Germany but her mother was a pretty sharp woman and she said, "You can't do anything much on the farm all winter." So she said, "Spend your time in the classroom and go and ask Miss Brown if you can sit in the back of the classroom and listen." So that's what she did. So it was great. So that was my class and I had 30, from 12 to 18.

HR: Oh goodness me. And the people who came, you said that they lived in these little one, sort of one-roomed shacks. Were they from rural areas in Sudetenland?

AD: Oh no, oh no.

HR: They were city, city dwellers.

AD: This is the really pathetic thing. We had a doctor there, in the the group, we had a doctor we had, we had we had a professional musician, accordion player. We had everything, we had a shoemaker. One of my closest friends worked for the union and he was a sports coach and he had been at the Olympics. And, and so we had everything, you know.

HR: So very, very professional.

AD: We had tin-smiths we had—I tell you what, it was all—they were either professional people—we had a professor too who ended up at the University of Ottawa. We had all professional people or trades people. They all had a—if they weren't professional they had a trade. There was no, you know...

HR: No labourers.

AD: No common labourers. Consequently, the kids were smart, you know, because the, the

parents were not average parents.

HR: Right.

AD: The kids were, were, were well above average, yeah. And they put these urban, you know, urban people out in the country on farms that a Canadian farmer had not succeeded at.

HR: Goodness.

AD: So they, they really had a rough time. And of course after a few years they, they gradually left, you know. They gradually got in—you know, some came back to Winnipeg and, you know, got back into their professions. I know the shoester, who was really the unofficial master of ceremonies, he used to organize all the dances and entertainment, he moved in to Dawson Creek and set up his own business as a shoemaker.

HR: Did they—did anyone ever succeed in making the land—sort of producing agricultural things?

AD: Oh yes. Yes, some stayed.

HR: Some stayed.

AD: Yes, some stayed.

HR: But most left.

AD: Yeah, I don't know what the percentage is. Some went on. Some young fellows, some of the ones I taught, those older boys, joined up in the army.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Got in, got in—well it—and the Canadian army welcomed them because they could be interpreters because they spoke German fluently, so...

HR: Oh wow. So tell me about your days. What, what did you do? At one school you talked...

AD: Well I didn't have any training, any ESL. So—and I didn't have anybody to talk to. So I didn't have anybody so I had to figure out something and one night I was out walking down the road and I, I heard them, I heard them singing. They had a choir group in the little church and there was a choir singing and they were singing "Oh Tannenbaum." And, you know, I recognized the tune and it just struck me there that that's what we had in common. We had music. So my first, my first lesson was the "Oh Tannenbaum" with words in English on the blackboard.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: And I used music. I tried to find—you know, I found some songs that we both sing and I started out that way. And then other way too is that I had these big boys and so on and of course we had no special books and so I just said to them, “You know, we’re going to have to start with Grade 1 English and we’re just going to run through it.” And so I started with Dick—I think it was “Dick and Jane” in those days. And I—you know, those are the books we had and, and these kids, you know, we started them. And, of course,, I had everything all around the classroom labeled. You know, what it was in English and so on and so forth. I think one of the, the cute stories that I have that I remember—in the early days, of course, we had “The Three Bears” in one of the, you know, Grade 1 or 2 books. And after we’d read it I asked them to put it back in Eng—tell the story in English. So this great big guy who was bigger than I am he started telling me—telling the class the story of the three bears, you see. And at one point he was going—he was doing great stumbling along and doing fine and then he said, “And then in came bear father.” [laughter] So of course it didn’t mean anything to him but I thought it was—I used my self control because it was so cute. He did a very dramatic, “And in came bear father.” [laughter] So...

HR: With all those different grades did you, did you begin them all together?

AD: Well I didn’t have—see I didn’t use different grades cause all I had was a group of kids that had to learn English.

HR: Oh had to learn English, okay.

AD: Yeah

HR: So you didn’t follow the curriculum for, sort of, this group doing Grade 5, this group doing Grade 6?

AD: Nope.

HR: No.

AD: Oh no. There was no way I could do that. They, they couldn’t, I mean what—they handle a Grade 5 reader.

HR: Right. So you did no math, no science?

AD: Well now I’ll tell you what, we did math as a break.

HR: Oh, oh okay.

AD: It was really interesting because math again is an international subject and we used to do math as a break because, God, you can't teach them reading all the time. That was—I figured that singing, singing and math were the breaks.

HR: Okay. And how long were they with you?

AD: Oh well that's another story. Miss, Miss Meade, the principal, and I did not get along in that there were a lot of factors in, in, in the, what we call, in the settlement. She was very unpopular and sometimes you can suffer by being too popular, right?

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And the—my boys didn't like her at all. Like, for example she had told me, "I, I don't want to be," of course the door adjoining the two rooms, she said, "I don't want to be interrupted." And that's, that's understandable. She said, "I don't want you running to me every 10 minutes, you know, with 'What's this, what's that?'" I said, "Fine that's fair enough." And—but she didn't practice what she preached. Whenever there was a slight bit of noise in my room, and of course my boy—I had 30 big, you know, bigger kids and so on. And they were noisier and so on. And so she kept interrupting me and this annoyed my boys very much. And she, she very wisely took the younger children because she really couldn't relate to older kids. And my boys became very defensive and they didn't hesitate showing her that they didn't like her. And so anyway, and then in addition to that there were 30 single men on the settlement and they lived off in dormitories. And when they had dances in the settlement, of course, she wasn't—she was never invited. You know, the parents really didn't like her. And so anyway, she had nothing much to do. Ride her horse in to Pouce Coupe which was about 10 miles, I think. On Saturday mornings she used to go in and the inspector was there, Mr. English. And Mr. English was in his first year as an inspector.

HR: Was that J.F.K English?

AD: That's right.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Yeah, that was his first year. And so anyway, she would go in on Saturday mornings and go and see him and tell him all the woes and all the mistakes Miss Brown made and how she was doing so well but Miss Brown wasn't.

AD: Oh gosh.

AD: Oh yes, I had my principal. And I don't know how many times she went in. Well she started—I heard all this afterwards. And it got so that Mr. English used to look for her coming and then

disappear somewhere. [laughter] At first, as a new inspector, he said, he admitted to me later that he said, “I absorbed all this and thought it was, you know, was viable and then, then suddenly he got an over, overkill and he couldn’t stand her anymore.” But anyway, so she convinced him in that time in the fall that an older teacher, a woman in her 40’s, I would think, who was in a nearby country school that had half Sudetens and half Canadians, that they should transfer Miss Hinky out of that school and put me in that school. So that was accomplished at Christmas time. So they transferred me at Christmas time. So in January I went over to what they called North Swan school now.

HR: And which year?

AD: That would be January 1940.

HR: Oh goodness so after several months.

AD: Yeah, I was only at the settlement from September to Christmas. But I want you to know that the second or third year—day after I was in the new school 20 of my boys and girls, older boys and girls, went on strike and walked over to my new school.

HR: Oh goodness me.

AD: That caused a big furor.

HR: What was the distance that they walked?

AD: They must have walked 6, 7 miles.

HR: Wow.

AD: So they came over to my school because they, they didn’t want Miss Hinky and they wanted Miss Brown back and if they couldn’t have Miss Brown back they’d go to Miss Brown’s school. [laughter]

HR: And what was the new school? What was the name of the school that you were at now?

AD: North Swan.

HR: North Swan.

AD: Yeah. So that was kind of, pretty—we had a sit down talk to them, explain this couldn’t happen. They couldn’t come that far to school. But anyway, and that was in January weather so I don’t know what the temperature was but it wasn’t warm. Anyways, that was, that was very, that

was very touching, yeah, complimentary but very touching for me.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Gosh yeah, there were a few tears shed that day. Anyway, and some of those boys, they're not boys anymore, of course, some of those boys I still keep in touch with.

HR: Really?

AD: Oh yeah.

HR: Where, where are they now?

AD: Grand Prairie.

HR: Yep.

AD: Dawson Creek and up in Pouce—and Tate Creek, up in there. But two of them of my three have died, died recently. You know, they—I've survived them. They were only five years younger than me, you see.

HR: What was the breakdown of males to females in the class? Were, were they—was it...

AD: Oh I don't remember. No there were a little more boys than girls. I had about say 60/40.

HR: 60/40.

AD: And one of the girls in my class got married at 16 and I stood up for her.

HR: Oh goodness. Were there any challenges, in addition to the language barrier, but did you find any other challenges, dilemmas or...

AD: Well I think that, that, the challenges were the politics in the camp. There was two groups in the camp. There was a small group that sided with, sided with the administration and, and that's the group that helped Miss Hinky get me moved. And then there was the other group that supported me. So there was, you know, there was a lot of friction that way in the two groups. And...

HR: Were they mainly concerned about your age?

AD: Well, well she had a good a case because I was inexperienced. I couldn't speak German and this Miss Hinky could speak German.

HR: Oh I see.

AD: You know, so, I mean, she was older and, I mean, she had a good argument. I can understand looking back. I mean, you've got a 19 year-old first teaching and she can't speak German and she's struggling along learning—and I was learning German. And Miss Hinky could speak German, she was experienced, and she was in her 40's. So anyway, then I, I taught there—the other from January to June at North Swan. And that, what was nice because they had the what we called the east group because it was across the river. The east group's children went to a school at North Swan and then I had very—I went from terrific accommodation at the administration, which is another story. But I went from terrific boarding facilities and cheap to very unattractive. Just went from one extreme to another. So every night after I had dinner, my boarding place with an elderly single woman I went over to east group and, and then, and spent my evenings there. I used to do all my preparation at school so I didn't bring it home—have to carry it home cause I had to walk about 2 miles so, so I wasn't lugging books so I did everything at school. And then when I came home I had supper and I spent as little time as possible with Miss Wendt. And then I'd walk about a quarter of a mile to east view—east group and there I taught night school.

HR: Oh.

AD: That was just on a volunteer basis and I taught it at the home of Mr. Carl Fitzer, who was, who was the chap who had gone to the Olympics. So he had a fair knowledge of English. SO he and I together, really I didn't do it alone, he and I together taught English to anybody who wanted to drop in.

HR: Wow. So you got a lot of adults as well as children or...

AD: Pardon?

HR: Did you have adults as well as as children?

AD: No, no, no children, just adults. At night it was just the adults. You know, and I think they, they came for—you know, there was so little entertainment in those—well, you know, you've got to realize that you just had radio and not everybody had a radio. Or you had a radio all you used the radio for was news of the war. So the—yeah, and yeah, and only one station. So, you know, listening the radio was just a matter of listening to the news all the time. So you, you know, you had to make your own entertainment.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: So just gathering together and I don't mean—teaching the English wasn't a great formality. Sat—Some nights we just sat around and talked. Like this good friend of mine, Mr. Fitzer's wife

and I became close friends and it was kind of funny because, like, I'd start off a sentence in English and then when I knew the German word I'd put it in.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And then I'd carry on. And she did the same thing. She spoke in German but when she came to a word she knew in English she'd do it. [laughter] So that's where we got that Dussle-English, Dussle-Dutch and a good deal with the hands.

HR: Did you have any materials that you used on—in the evenings with the adults?

AD: No.

HR: No?

AD: No. Well we had a blackboard.

HR: So you, you basically did a, a conversational type or reading or..

AD: Right, right, oh yes.

HR: Conversational.

AD: They didn't write at all. I did use the blackboard.

HR: And when—if we can go back just a minute to the, to the school up at—the first school. I can't remember—Tate Creek, which is now Tom's, Tom's Lake. You said that you used “Dick and Jane” books and labels around the classroom and you got the students to re-tell the stories. Were there any other things that you did to, to help them to learn English? Did you, did you do any drama or any artwork or anything like that?

AD: Oh well they did artwork.

HR: Artwork.

AD: Yeah. Well, you know, it's a matter of filling it in because the—filling in their time to give them a break, you know. Like, I made, made my own timetable. I mean it wasn't a matter. You know, number one was just teaching them English and when they got tired they had have breaks. So they used to go out and place soccer with the boys. They taught me how to play soccer so. See I was, at that time, taking courses to be a phys. ed. teacher.

HR: Oh I see.

AD: And that, of course, that didn't make me very, well I didn't realize it, but that didn't make me very popular with the principal either.

HR: That you played soccer with boys?

AD: Oh sure.

HR: [laughter] Oh that's interesting how times have changed.

AD: Oh I must tell you how I handled the swearing. The—I was taking—there was a Professor Sternsheim, he was Jewish, and he had been a professor and so I asked him to give me German lessons and I'd pay him. And so this was fine, I think one or—this was in the fall. And so one night a week or two nights a week, I'm not sure. Anyway, I used to go to Professor Sternsheim's house and—abode, and learn German. So this one—my kids I could—the boys out in, in the hall and when they were getting their clothes on and coats on and so on and playing around, I knew they were swearing. And so I thought, "Well I've got to stop this, you see." And Miss Meade was always so down on my boys, you know, and I just loved them and, of course, she disliked them. Anyway, I said, "I've got to stop this," to myself. So I went to Sternsheim and I said, "I don't want the regular lesson tonight." He said, "Oh what do you want?" And I said, "I want, I want to learn to swear in German." And he said, "Oh Miss. Brown you can't do that." I had a list of them, I had a list of them, you know. I said, "Here's my list and I want to learn them tonight." And he—oh no he couldn't do that. I said, "Look who's paying you? I'm paying you and this is what I want." And he—I wouldn't tell him. I didn't say why, you know, I don't know whether he asked or not. But I wouldn't tell him anyway because I had a plan. So anyway, I learned my German swear words and I went to school the next day and I, I sat down and we were—sang a few songs and I said, and I said, "Now I want you all to listen very carefully." Of course, I'm always dramatizing with them, my ears and all the rest of it. You kind of automatically do a lot of body language. And, so I rhymed off my 10 or 12 expressions. Well, the look on it—the look on these boys, you know. I said, "Now," you could hear a pin drop, or course, I said, "Now I know what they mean," and I said, "that's the last time I want to hear them in this classroom, out in the cloakroom, and on the playing field." And they all looked at me and they said, "Yes Miss Brown."

HR: Oh goodness. And you said that to them in English?

AD: Pardon?

HR: You said that to them in English?

AD: Oh sure.

HR: Yeah. And they never did?

AD: Nope.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: That's it, that cured it. It was called the shock treatment. But the funny part about it when I went to Ontario later on to teach they had—they were bringing—there was a shortage of teachers in the 50's and they were bringing—well searching for teachers to fill in. And they were bringing teachers back who had only been—hadn't even had their permanent certificate or been out of teaching. Had taught about a year or two and got married and hadn't taught for 20 years and all the rest of it. They were bringing everybody back and anybody back from, anybody from other provinces. And I was had—I was teaching at the air force school and they offered us our Ontario certificates. I was teaching on a BC one, of course. And they offered Ontario certificates if you taught—if you wrote the 10 exams at the end of the year. The 10 provincial exams put out by the normal school there in Ottawa. So the principal of the school was from Manitoba and myself from British Columbia we—the school board gave us the week off and we wrote 10 exams. And one of the questions under school law was “how would you handle swearing in the class, in the classroom and the playground?” So I just wrote up what I did.

HR: Goodness, that's as if you know.

AD: Yeah. Yeah so anyway, I always remember that. It came in handy for my exam.

HR: So discipline was not a problem with these kids?

AD: Yes it was.

HR: It was?

AD: Oh yeah.

HR: How did you...

AD: It, it, it...

HR: How did you manage?

AD: Well, discipline was—I would say they were noisier, trying to look back. They were rambunctious kids. They were, you know, they weren't rude or they weren't defiant but they were—many of them were great soccer players and they were boisterous. That's the word that I would say for them.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And Miss Meade didn't like that, you know. She wanted them quiet as little monks—mice. So, yeah they were—you know they, well they lived under difficult times. For example, we had a big, big pot bellied, sort of, stove and they would bring their lunches and put their lunches on. You know, soup and stuff to heat up on the stove. They would bring them in syrup cans. And somebody put the lid on too tight and, and this one thing blew. Every child, every child went under the desk.

HR: Oh wow.

AD: Well, and I'm standing there and this, you know, lid pops and suddenly you don't see any kids and they're all under the desk. Ah, yeah. And I just, for a moment, thought, "My God, of course. Suddenly their background. Noise to them is bombing."

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: You know.

AD: That's interesting because—well I mean, we do that today in our schools for earthquake prevention. They get under their desks. But did you—so you never told them to do that? They automatically...

AD: Oh no. No I didn't tell them. No, no way. That didn't occur to me. That's not part of my background.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: But, you know, you forget. It made you, I don't know, it made you do a lot of thinking. You know, it was an invaluable experience to meet with those people. But you see I was lucky because I think when I was at teachers' college I can honestly say that I was the most politically conscious student.

HR: What do you mean by that?

AD: Well by that, is when the Spanish Civil war was on I was down at all the meetings in Vancouver and I was for the, the Spanish Civil War, you know, we were—I was very anti-fascist. I was very pro-democratic and I belonged to the Young Socialist League and I was politically active, yeah.

HR: So do you think that gave you a better understanding of the kids that you had?

AD: Well it gave me an understanding of the parents because they were all social democrats. You know, they hated, they hated Hitler with a vengeance. So we had that in common, right.

HR: Did you get much chance to speak with the parents?

AD: Oh yeah, sure.

HR: Yeah?

AD: Oh yeah, especially in those discussion groups, you know.

HR: That was at the...

AD: The east group.

HR: The north—oh at the east group.

AD: Yeah. Well they, they knew I was, you know, I mean, they, they, they knew I was sympathetic. I mean, all you had to do was point to yourself and say social democratic.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: You know, and you were in like Flynn. [laughter]

[continued]

HR: ...topic of discussion would you say with the, with the adults when you were...

AD: Well the war.

HR: The war.

AD: You know, the news of the war. Sure...

HR: So you, you, you—they felt that you were one of—sort of aligned...

AD: Well I did feel that I was one of them, yeah.

HR: Yeah.

AD: Sure.

HR: Oh that's interesting.

AD: So, I mean, of all the people to land up there I think I was the best one to do it, you know.

HR: Yeah.

AD: And I could—I think, I think because I could empathize with them.

HR: Yeah.

AD: And, you know, I had follow current events very closely and—so I was, sort of, more aware of, of the events than, than any other Canadians they ran into, you know.

HR: Right, probably many didn't even know where the Sudetenland was.

AD: Well yeah that's right, yeah that's right. But anyway, to get back to Mr. English, I did live to a few years later Miss Meade got transferred out of that school and, and by the end of the year she was starting to write reports against poor old Miss, Miss Hinky, right.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: So Mr. English started to put two and two together. Miss Brown's no good now Miss Hinky's—then we give her Miss Hinky and now Miss Hinky's no good. So they moved her back up north where she, where she should have been—stayed. My life would have been a lot easier.

HR: Where, where was that? Do you recall where she was?

AD: Beg your pardon.

HR: Where, where did they send her again?

AD: North of the river is what we used to call it. Peace River. And then north of the river—the Peace River in those days was kind of divided and you were either north of the river or south.

HR: Or south of the river.

AD: And she was north of the river in a one-room school, which she needs to be. But anyway, and then Mr. English—cause I was 3 years up in the Peace River and Mr. English came, came one day and apologized to me. And then he told me all the background how she came in every Saturday and all these reports and things weren't going right and so on.

HR: Oh dear.

AD: And Miss Brown actually went to a dance, my goodness.

HR: She did? Oh gosh, that must have tarnished your reputation. But it was okay with—from

Mr. English's point of view or, or was it—we hear all these stories about how stringent people were in those days over the lives of teachers and that many could—that there were occasions where people lost their jobs over what people saw to be inappropriate behaviour.

AD: That's right.

AD: How, how, how did Mr. English deal with this? I know he changed, changed you to another school but it wasn't because you went to dances was it?

AD: Oh no, no. No it was all these reports from...

HR: About your inexperience.

AD: My inexperience and I couldn't speak German. Well she didn't want me there.

HR: Yeah. But it, it had nothing to do with the fact that you socialized with the people in the community?

AD: Well I think that's a factor, sure.

HR: Would you say that it was a factor in, in the inspector's mind?

AD: Oh sure.

HR: Okay.

AD: But then he lived to, to find out that wasn't true.

HR: Right.

AD: Well, I mean, he, he lived—I mean, he got to know her enough to know that—I mean, you see, where her mistake was that she turned on the next teacher.

HR: Right.

AD: Miss...

HR: Hinky.

AD: Miss Hinky. Here is Miss Hinky, German—everything that I wasn't and...

HR: And she still wasn't good enough.

AD: She still wasn't satisfactory. And then you start to say, "Well what's—maybe it isn't, maybe it isn't Miss Brown or Miss Hinky. Maybe we'd better look and see whether it's Miss Meade."

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: You know, and then he realized that she had a problem communicating, that's for sure, yeah. Well even now, like my former pupils when I'd go back to see these boys, you'd just say, "Miss Meade," and they'd just, they'd growl. [laughter] It's so funny, they had no tolerance for her.

HR: So they didn't mind speaking their mind.

AD: Yeah, yeah. [laughter]

HR: At the North Swan school were you a regular classroom teacher there or did you have...

AD: Well that was just a one-room school and there were about, I don't know, 12 or 15 kids there. All grades—well nearly all the grades. That's where I got my taste of rural school teaching, there.

HR: And was that...

AD: That's where I got the grades study thing, yeah.

HR: What grade, what grades did you have? One to...

AD: I can't remember but if there was—there must have been about six or seven. I don't think I had all eight grades.

HR: Okay. But it was the one to eight combination?

AD: Yes one to eight, yeah.

HR: And you had about six or seven of them.

AD: And that school, they couldn't open it until the Sudetens moved there because the school had had to be closed before because the recommended number was eight I think. They wouldn't open—well how much? Ten. And the recommended—they wouldn't open the school unless you had 10 students.

HR: And it was too small a population?

AD: Yes, oh yeah.

HR: So when you moved over there, how many kids were, were now in your class?

AD: Oh I would think about 12 to 15.

HR: Twelve to fifteen.

AD: Yeah.

HR: And do you recall—have memories from this school? Were there some of the Sudeten kids mixed in with Canadian kids?

AD: Yeah, well that's what I said to you. If, if they hadn't had the students, the kids from east group which was close to the school, they couldn't have opened it.

HR: There weren't enough Canadians.

AD: They wouldn't—there wasn't enough Canadians. They'd had to close it several years before. Oh there are a lot of great stories about kids failing Grade 8 year after year, you know, to keep schools open. You used to hear, some hear—and, and 5 year-olds becoming 6 years-olds.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Oh yeah, well you can't blame them. They want a school and they need one or two kids.

HR: So they'd just keep them on the books?

AD: Yeah, oh sure. A lot of that went one. I've heard all those things.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Yeah they—you see, you keep failing the Grade 8 students and the kids had nothing to do anyway in the winter time mostly and, and there wasn't a high school that they could go on to. So (inaudible) sure. This guy, I know one guy, he didn't mind failing because that meant that meant that his brothers and sisters could go to school.

HR: Oh that's great. That's interesting because it's...

AD: And then the little 5 year-olds, suddenly the mother remembers they were born a year earlier. [laughter]

HR: Well what's interesting about that is how much that they wanted to be at school.

AD: Oh yeah sure. Oh no, the parents wanted, you know, they wanted the kids at school, sure. They wanted them educated. But one thing about the Sudeten Germans, they were really supporters of education. But you know, that's because of their background. They new the value of education.

HR: But they were all, all professional and...

AD: Well, as I say, they were, you know, well educated. Well they were above, general speaking, they were well above average intelligence.

HR: And did—with, with your one—in your one-room school at North Swan, you followed the, the provincial curriculum?

AD: Yes.

HR: And did you, did you test the kids and was there, was there the the regular kind of testing that you were introduced to in the normal school? Were you using IQ tests and were you...

AD: No.

HR: No?

AD: No.

HR: Were you using teacher-made tests or...

AD: No.

HR: No?

AD: Well, my own made tests.

HR: Yeah. So nothing issued from the department?

AD: No.

HR: No.

AD: I don't remember the department issuing anything in those days.

HR: But J.F.K English was your inspector at North Swan as well?

AD: Yes.

HR: Yeah. Do you have any memories of the one-room rural school that you can—that sort of stick with you? Challenges, successes?

AD: Well the thing I really like about—that I think that the one-room school has over all these urban, you know, the graded so on. It has this business of the children helped each other.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: I remember I got into trouble at normal school because—was it Mr. Hall I had? He was standing up there talking about, you know, first thing you have to do is, if I can remember this, you have to motivate. You get up there in this rural school, you have to motivate these children. You know, you've got this one to motivate this grade and Grade 4s doing this, you've gotta motivate this. And, everybody—oh God in those days you didn't ask any questions but then I did. And I put my hand up and I said, "Would you please tell me how I motivate eight grades at once because I can't see how I can do that?" And so, I mean, that's how impractical, I remember. He didn't have an answer for me but I wasn't very popular because he didn't—I kind of showed him up a bit, you know. I thought to myself, "Get back into the rural school yourself fellow." I mean, I had—I didn't know what a rural school was, I'm an urban girl. Anyway, but I know that when I went to Highridge School and it was—I mean, what you did is when you went in the rural school in September and you look—you took the Grade 1's and you said, "now the objective for Grade 1 is to teach these kids to read and read quickly." And that was the first objective. And then you got the others organized and then it was wonderful because—and then you also steered the Grade 8's because they needed some guidance. But all the other grades helped each other and the kids just knew it instinctively. If a Grade 3 had trouble in math and I was busy teaching the Grade 1s, she would go to a Grade 5 or 6 or 7 or 8. She'd look around and she'd go to somebody. Somebody she liked or an older brother or somebody, you know, and they would help each other. So they, they helped each other. Yeah, Ralph was just saying, "Three quarters of your time was with the primary." You had to get those kids learning. You know, started off.

HR: Right. So that they could become independent.

AD: And because the others. And so, rural school kids became very independent learners. And they sure knew how to study and they knew how to work on their own. They're wonderful. I have an interesting, I think, story about one school I was, the last school I was at in the Peace River. The teacher before me, and this is something maybe that student teachers should learn, you know, the best teacher in my opinion is not necessarily the most intelligent.

HR: What, what makes the—what's the quality that...

AD: Well the quality is, is, is understanding and, let's see know. I would think—well, being able

to put yourself in their shoes and understand them and, and, and get them really keen on learning. And for example...

HR: Do you mean motivating them?

AD: Yeah, so actually I think you—well I know I motivated them. But I motivated them—you have to motivate the whole school. You can't motivate each lesson.

HR: By each grade level.

AD: Right.

HR: Okay.

AD: If you've got a whole bunch. You've got to somehow get across to kids the love of learning, the fun. You know, it's going to be fun, it's going to be great. Right?

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And, and isn't this a great day and, and, you know, you've got to be upbeat about it. And, and I think that's reflected in your attitude to learning yourself.

HR: Right.

AD: And, and this business of intelligence is that this one particular school I followed a young man who only had taught there the one year. But he had come along and gone to normal school in Vancouver, I think a year or two before me, but he was a math wiz. And today, of course, he wouldn't have considered normal school because he would have, you know, been on scholarship. He was a real genius at math. And, you know, he just skipped through school and got top marks. I mean learning was easy for him. He went in and he did more damage in this particular school because the kids all—he ended up, what he succeeded at doing was teaching the kids that they were dumb.

HR: Oh yeah.

AD: So I went in in September and I started in and so on. And they all kept saying the first day, "I can't learn that I'm dumb. I don't know how to do that. Or I can't do it." And it was this real negative attitude. And I said, "Who says you're dumb?" "Oh Mr. so and so, Mr. Jackson says we're dumb and we can't learn," and here it is and so on and so forth. And it, and it was prevalent, you know, from Grade 1 to Grade 8. So I had to spend—so my job then was to teach those kids that they could learn. Right?

HR: Right.

AD: I had to turn—that was the first job, it doesn't matter whether I was teaching them to read or Columbus or whatever, they had to learn that they could do things. So I had to give them tasks that they succeeded at. And of course I spent my time saying, "Oh it's wonderful." You know, "Look, see how quickly you picked that up," and all that stuff. Anyway, I had to turn them around. Three of those kids went through university.

HR: That's great. Did they do math by any chance?

AD: I never followed that up. But, but I—you know, it, it, it's just that, you know, you get into a situation and I guess you have to study what the problem is because it can vary from what—I curse the normal school because they should never have let that guy in, I mean into teaching.

HR: I—you can—I can see very strongly your philosophy of teaching coming through all, all of what you're saying. And what I'm wondering is did you—is this a reflection of your personality, is it a combination of your experience and personality, your background, your schooling? Did you read? For example, I think, right away, I think of John Dewey when you're talking. Were there any people that influenced you that you read about and arrived at this point of view of, of empathizing with the students and motivating them to think that they can do it?

AD: Well I think that the fortunate thing is I went to Magee High School and after I went through Magee and several years, well about 10 or 15 years later, I went back and visited my—the old principal there. He was retired then, Mr. Bowles. And I said to Mr. Bowles, "You know, looking back"—it's too bad your not smart when you're younger and do some thinking. And I said, "You know Magee High School had a terrific influence on me." I said, "You know, I, I"—my two boys were in high school then and I said, "You know, they haven't"—and I used to go to all the, teacher meetings. And I said, "They haven't got one teacher that touches some of the teachers I had at Magee High School." I said, "I don't know what it is but, you know, it was just fabulous, the teachers." He said, "Amy, I'll let you in on a secret. The school board came to me and they were—when they were setting up Magee High School and they said, 'we want you to be principal.'" He said, "I figure I was in the negoti—I was at an advantage and I said, 'I'll take it if you let me choose my staff.'" And he personally hand-picked his staff from the Vancouver high schools. Can you imagine the kind of teachers we had? Ha ha. And you know, one of them in particular influenced me and that was Victor Austerhau and I can remember after I was teaching thinking, "Now that—he is my ideal teacher." Why is—was he so good? And I think he was the greatest influence I had as far as telling me, you know, of, of changing my attitude. I mean if he was so good then I should copy what was good about him.

HR: What did he teach you?

AD: He taught history.

HR: History?

AD: Yeah, and I had him for several years. I was lucky.

HR: And what was it about him that, that you, that you idolized and, and took from him?

AD: Well he respected the kids, he was prepared and secure enough to go out on a limb to try new things. I really liked that about him. He—We used to discuss how in those days they had these work camps and they used to send these—relief camps. And they used to send these, oh, single men I guess it was or some married, out to these and they, and they were paid \$1.20 a week.

HR: That was during the Depression?

AD: Right. And you see, he would come to school and he'd toss these things out to you, "You know, well what do you think of"—(inaudible). He'd get us through the history all right. But he tossed these things out to you. And so one of the—one day he said (inaudible) this was an example of him. You know, they just announced this—whatever it was, they're getting a \$1.20 a week and he said, "What do you think of that?" And of course I said, "It's disgraceful." And there was one girl there who came from a much more affluent home than I did, that's for sure, and she said, "It was enough—that was enough for them to get. That's all they were worth it." So he challenged us to live on under \$1.20 a week.

HR: Oh interesting.

AD: Huh?

HR: That's interesting.

AD: Yeah, and, and, you know, and then we had to write it, you know, we had to write up what we did and when we ran out of the \$1.20. And yeah, it was just marvellous. And, we know, we listed all we had to do. Of course, they got fed there so we didn't have to—yes, yeah, the (inaudible) you had to buy whatever it was. But anyway, you know, and then at the end of the next week, you see, the discussion we, we got her to eat apple pie, anyway, the other girl. But it just, you know, it was that kind of thing. And...

HR: So he made it real for you?

AD: Oh yeah, you know, he, yeah, you know, he brought in the real world I'll tell you. And, and he respected our opinions, you know. He treated us like young adults. It was wonderful. He was a great man. Well I'll tell you the kind of man he was. He married and had three—two or three children and I kept in touch with him through—knew what he was doing, and so on. He was

teaching at King Edward High School and he developed cancer. And it got quite serious during this one particular summer. But he was very, he was very quiet about it. And he went, in September, he went back to school and taught for that first week which would be, what, 4 days? And Friday night he went from the school to the hospital and he died in the hospital a short time after. And the reason he took—did those 4 days when he was suffering greatly was so that his family could have an extra year of his pension.

HR: Oh my goodness.

AD: That's the kind of man he was. Well, I heard that he was very sick in September through this mutual friend and I am so glad that one of the things I—pleased that I did in my life, I sat down and I poured out my thoughts about him and how he had influenced me and how much I loved him and how much I respected him. And what a great influence he had been for me and I said, "I would never be the teacher I am today without you." And this mutual friend went to visit him and he said, "You know, Marion, you'll never guess who I got a letter from today." And Marion said, "No, I don't know," he said, "Amy Brown." And he said, "Here read it," and she said, "There were tears in his eyes." And so, you know, it's nice that he knew, nice that he know, wonderful that he knew that before he went.

HR: Gosh.

AD: But I, I would say he's the one—I didn't do—we didn't do—I don't remember doing a lot of reading background, you know. Do you remember doing a lot of reading at normal school? I don't. No, we just read what was necessary but we didn't do extra reading in education.

HR: Mm-hmm. So the, the—your main influence was your teacher Mr. Austerhaud?

AD: Yeah, and I tried to, tried to copy or do things that were—seemed to work, you know.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: I'll tell you another thing, I was really lucky is that after, I don't know how many years, but by the time I got to Rockcliff in Ottawa and teaching I got sort of left alone and this is where I was very lucky. The principals left me alone.

HR: In Ontario, that was in Ontario?

AD: Yeah. I mean, well when I got into administration I'd do the same thing. You don't have to spend your time with teachers that are successful right?

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: You have to spend the help—you spend your time with the ones that need help. So I got left alone and because I got left alone I tried a lot of—I, I could experiment and try things. And, and, and that was—I enjoyed that.

HR: What kind of experimenting did you do?

AD: Well one of the things I did which was very successful is I adopted—we adopted a child from India, my class did.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And we adopted a little boy through the Unitarian Service Committee. And I milked that to death because it was kind of cute. Like, the kids they used to write and postcards—send postcards off and write letters and send their art work and did projects on all the provinces so Anandan could know about Canada, you know. And they thought, you know—well it cost, cost a bit of a mint, the postage. But anyway, postage was cheaper in those days. And I, I just did a lot of things and Anandan, you know, became the centre. We, we had our little raising money and we had so many projects based on that. Then Anandan got sick and had to go into a TB hospital and we had money there so we then we took on a girl, Mutu, and then Anandan got better. And, and so I said to the class, “What are you going to do?” This is two or three classes after. And this went on for years. And, “What are we going to do? Anandan’s back, and should we take Anandan and let Mutu go to somebody else?” And they said, “Oh no, we just keep both of them.” I got, I got, I got really balled out because I was suggesting—one day I went to suggest that we had this money and, you know, should we wait and see or, you know, give Anandan back and do—and they said, “Well, would you give away one of your sons when he gets sick?” So they, they told me off. So I said, “Okay, okay.” So anyway, we, we, we adopted—we kept the two of them. So when Anandan came back we adopted the two of them. We just raised more, you know. I said—well it cost, in those days, it only cost \$5 a month, \$60 a year. “Well that’s ok, we’ll just raise another \$60, that’s okay.”

HR: And how did they raise it?

AD: This was Grade 5.

HR: How did they raise it?

AD: Well, they were not aloud to—we made all these rules. They were not allowed to bring money from home. They, they couldn’t go to their parents and say I want 25 cents a week. They had to earn it, they had to earn it by doing dishes or something in that way. So, but the big thing that was—oh we covered—we had little bake sales. We covered hangers and sold them. But the big money thing was IGA, one of the grocery stores, published an offer that they would give 1 percent of all our sales slips. They were going to put sales slips out, on gold paper. And they

would give 1 percent to a charity if you collected these things and turned it in they would give 1 percent. Well I'll never forget the day because I arrived at school, I used to arrive about 8 o'clock, and there in the parking lot was Robert shaking a newspaper and watching for me. And so before I even turned the engine off he was there saying, "Mrs. Dauphinée, Mrs. Dauphinée, we can do it, we can do it. My dad says we are a charity. We'll qualify, we can do it." And I said, "Just a minute calm down." And he said, "Well look," and he had the paper there and the add saying, "Look, we can collect these grocery slips and turn them in and we qualify and we'll get 1%." And so anyway, I said, "Okay." Well, I read the add and said, "It sounds good." And he said, "My dad says—when my dad read it over carefully, and so and so, my dad says we can." So we went into the room at 9 o'clock then I discussed it with the class and they thought it was a great idea. Well we got in early and so we decided we would—we organized, they got shoeboxes. They gave a shoebox to every classroom and they set up their own collection committee, their speakers. We had kids go around and, you know, tell the other grades, this was a big school, tell the other grades what we were going to do and would they take one of these shoeboxes to put the slips in. And then they sat down and they came up with the—I remember one of them coming up and said, "You know, we prepare our little speeches. We don't prepare the same speech for Grade 1 and 2 as you do for 7 and 8." And I said, "Well that's right Tim." "And then we—all the do's and don'ts. We don't, we don't want to antagonize the teachers so we'd wait and make sure that when we approach them they're not teaching a lesson." You know, they learned all—you know, kids can learn so much incidentally. That's what, you know, I, I—I really milked, and I'll be quite honest, I really milked the Indian children because we did all sorts of things. But anyway, they, I'm telling you, they became the, the fastest adders. They talk about a spelling bee, I wish we'd had an adding because they used to—the motivation was to get their work done so the last 15 minutes they could add up sales slips.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: And they'd add, add them up and we'd put the total on the board. Of course, 1% is easy to teach but then I'd steal that opportunity. They were the best kids in percent in the school too. Yeah, "Would it be nice if we got 4%, I wonder how much that would be? Or 4.5%."

HR: So you really integrated all of, all of what they were doing around, around this project.

AD: Oh yes. And the next—where all his mail was. And oh, I was, I was really lucky though, Helen. Like, you'd get your inspector reports and there was, you know, inspections once a year and they were waiting for their first letter from Anandan and it, it—and they were—they had written and they were waiting for his first. And it came one night and so the next morning I had the letter to read to them. And just talk about scripting something, just as I was about to read the letter to them there was a knock on the door and I go to the door and it's the inspector. So he comes in and, you know, he said, "I'll sit in the back of the room," and so then I thought, "Oh, the hell, I'm going to go on the way, I'm not going to start in on my day book, you know." I was going to do this and this was—I was older so I had lots of confidence. I didn't, you know...

HR: Yeah.

AD: So I'm gonna go, go with it. So anyway, I said, "Do you want to guess what's behind my back?" You see, and anyway they said, "Letter from Anandan." So anyway, I read it. And I said to the—well, you know, I read it. So I said, "You know, we're not being very polite." I said—"I think, whatever his name was, you know, would like to know who Anandan is." And I just picked kids in the class and I, I didn't tell them, I didn't tell the inspector anything. And I just said, "Okay Robert, would you like to tell him who Anandan is?" And then Robert said, you know, and then I said, "Thank you Robert and now maybe Susan can tell, you know, about what we do and so on, and what in the corner, and how we decided and so on and so forth." And, and finally he just jumped up and he said that, "May I take over?" And I said, "Yes." So he went over, I always had a map of the world on the board for, you know, for current events. And he said, "Well can you show me where Anandan lives?" Well, you know, they jumped, they all new were Anandan lived, Madras, India. And then one of the kids says, "you know, we, we send—there's two ways we can send our mail. We can send it by airmail or by boat." But he said, "Unfortunately," he said, "the bigger stuff we send by boat because of expense." And so on, you know, they were so natural it was just lovely. "You know, we have, have to watch our money, and we do this," and he said, "this is our corner back here." And the kids and him just took over. And when he had the discussion, oh they were just fabulous. And then another one chirped up she said, "You know, we had to think"—little Debbie, she said, "You know, we had our choice whether we can have a boy or a girl." And she said, "And Mrs. Dauphinée made us think about it." And she said, "You know," she said, "it was really funny when, when she said we said we could have our choice because," she said, "you know, at home," she said, "we have to take what we get." [laughter] Well they just charmed the pants off him, I'm telling you. And he, he came—when I went to have my discussion about the thing he said, "Amy I have never been in a classroom like this before." And I said, "You know, it was, it was just the project, you know."

HR: Right. That was in the '50s, in the '50s?

AD: Ah, the '50s and '60s. Sure, I carried them through. We carried—we even made extra money and we, we, we equipped a playground for, for Anandan, for the orphanage. Because, you know, I said to the kids, "How would you feel if, you know, if, if you were in an or—how do you think you would feel in an orphanage if everything came to you and the other children didn't get everything?" So they always chose things like, when they had money at the end of the year, they chose things like soccer balls and sports equipment. And Mutu's they chose a radio so all the children could, all the girls could...

HR: So they could all listen.

AD: All listen to the radio. And then they had, they—we bought a bicycle on—the orphanage, the boys ,didn't have a bicycle. But the bicycle was called "Anandan's bike" but he was in charge of setting up a schedule so everybody rode it.

HR: Oh wow.

AD: Yeah, the lessons they learned. And I—after I, I left I still got money at Christmas time in my Christmas cards for Anandan and Mutu.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: From one girl, Jeneka Ponsky in Winnipeg used to write till—when she was at university and she was working part-time at Dairy Queen or something. She used to put—first she used to put \$1 in and then she used to put in \$2 and then she used to put \$5.

HR: Did you ever do any projects like that when you were up in the Peace Region or was it a...

AD: No.

HR: No, not, not possible.

AD: You couldn't anyway.

HR: Because of the, the time?

AD: Oh well people were very poor.

HR: Right.

AD: I'm telling you your hands were full just teaching.

HR: Right.

AD: Yeah.

AD: And do you think that some of your, your perspective on teaching has to do with having grown up during the Depression? Would you say that influenced you?

AD: Oh I'm sure, oh I'm sure. Yeah.

[continued]

AD: One of the inspectors did say to me, "You"—not the one that I told you about Anandan there, but another one said, "You know, you get too personally involved with your children." And I looked at him and I said, "Yeah?" And I said, "Do you want my resignation now?" "Oh no no no," he said, "I didn't mean that." I said, "look, I teach that way or I don't teach at all."

HR: Right, and that's—I think, I think he's right. I think that you could in those times.

AD: Yeah.

HR: I'm not so sure that happens anymore.

AD: Yeah I'm, Yeah I'm concerned about that.

HR: And I'm not sure what we've lost or how we lost it. But anyway, it's wonderful and I would love to share this with my student teachers and try and move them away from that sense that all that matters is the subject that they're teaching.

AD: Yeah but, like, in special ed.—I must tell you one story that just comes to mind. I taught this boy and—Robert, and he, he had an older brother who was a truck driver up in the Cariboo area and so when he finished special ed at 16 in my class he went up to the Cariboo to work with his brother. And the following year I had, in the middle of the day, I had a knock on the door and went to the door and there was Robert. And he was standing there and I could see he was all choked up and his eyes were filled and I said, “Robert! How wonderful to see you, come on in.” And he said, “I had to come to you.” And I said, “Yes.” He said, “My brother was just killed in a truck accident.”

HR: Oh gosh.

AD: And I said, “Oh Robert.” So he came in and, you know, I said, “Well you stay with me,” and he spent the whole day with me. And, and then I remember I kept in touch with him and so on. But, I mean, he said—you know, he had, he had come down from the Cariboo to see me. And, I mean, that's how tragic it is. I mean, and I was in Vancouver and, I mean, this is what your young teachers have to know, that you can play a tremendous role in their family, you know, in their lives. And here his parents were dead and he was just so alone and the only person he turns to is me. And, you know, he had to cry, of course, and stay with me and so on. But the sequel to it was kind of cute in that he went, he went up to a logging camp and he used to write me and I used to write him. So one letter he wrote and said, “I'm in this logging camp,” he said, “and they're teasing me.” And of course he was the youngest and he said, “And all the fellows in the bunkhouse have pictures of their girlfriends and, and they're up beyond the, you know, above their bunk.” And he said, “They said, 'I bet you haven't got a girlfriend,' and I said, 'Yes I had.'” And he said, “Well you know Mrs. Dauphinee I haven't got a girlfriend but,” he said, “would you send me a picture and, and write something,” I love this, “mushy?” [laughter] So I said, “Sure I will.” So I went through my pictures and I found one so then I put—I don't know what I put on it but, you know, “Dearest Rob, miss you and love you all this.” Anyway, anyway I put something mushy that I was, you know, thinking about him. And the old guy was thrilled to death and he said, “Everybody wants to meet you.” [laughter] So evidently he—I—it made me feel so good the guy had one up. He need that, bless his heart. [laughter] Anyway, it's funny.

HR: Oh that's wonderful.

AD: So it has its funny side too, you know.

HR: Yep. Oh it's just, it's wonderful. I hope that I can do, when I write about it, that I can do justice to some of these heartwarming stories.

AD: Well yeah, a lot of wonderful things did happen like that, yeah, kind of cute things.

Amy Dauphinée Interview #3 - Aril 3, 2006

HR: ...your teaching. So if I can do that first and then ask a few questions just about the last time that we spoke then that will do it for me. And then you are welcome, of course, to add anything more that you want or to clarify whatever you wish.

AD: Okay, fire away.

HR: Okay. So you were born in 1920 and you graduated from Magee.

AD: Yes.

HR: Normal school in 1938 until June 1939.

AD: Yes.

HR: Then you taught at Tate Creek School from September to December of '39. Then you moved to North Swan in 1940.

AD: Right.

HR: And from there you went to General Wolfe School in '42?

AD: No, I, I went from North Swan to, to High Ridge School. Okay?

HR: And where is that?

AD: Well, I, I taught in the Peace River in, in two other country schools.

HR: Oh okay.

AD: What happened is that I got married in 1940 and a lot of teachers can't believe right now is they wouldn't hire married women. So I married at the end of June, which meant I couldn't teach anymore at that time.

HR: So you married in June of 1940?

AD: Yes. So from September 1940 to December 1940 I didn't teach.

HR: Okay.

AD: And as I say because of that rule. And then of course this was war time and what happened

is one of the teachers—I don't know, there was an opening, anyway, at—in January 1941 there was an opening at another country school. And the inspector—in those days you had to have two inspector's reports and two, two years experience. So he very kindly said, "You know, we can't bring anybody up. Nobody wants to come up for 6 months, you know, from the coast." So he hired me for that 6 months in order to enable me to, to get my permanent certificate, which was very kind of him.

HR: Was that J.F.K. English still?

AD: Yes bless his, yes bless heart, yes.

HR: Okay. So you taught...

AD: So then I taught at this—let's see know, that was—god I can't even remember the name of the school. Swan Lake I guess it was. And then the next year Mr. English gave me a school closer to Pouce Coupe. Okay. And he—so the last year I taught at High Ridge which meant I could live in Pouce Coupe and just—and travel out to my High Ridge school which was about 4, 5 miles out.

HR: So that, that was at High Ridge?

AD: Yeah that's High Ridge. So my last year was High Ridge.

HR: And from there you went to...

AD: From there I went to—then I moved out of Peace River. So I was 3 years in Peace River, in '39 to '42.

HR: Okay, and...

AD: And then, then I went to north—in, so in September '42 I, I went to General Wolfe and taught special ed.

HR: Okay. And then your children were born somewhere in there and you took 6 years.

AD: Yes, my first child was born in '45.

HR: '45. So then 6 years off until '51, I guess.

AD: Yes. And then I, I, then I taught in a private Jewish school.

HR: In—that was in Ontario?

AD: In Ottawa.

HR: In Ottawa.

AD: That's where they were just starting this program for gifted children in, in the, in the Jewish school. They had bought a, they had bought an old school from the Ottawa school board and set up the program and I was the second teacher hired. And their program was—their idea was to select gifted children and give them the English, the English program in half a day and Hebrew the other half.

HR: Okay.

AD: And so I taught—and they were looking around for a teacher for half a day which suited me and, and it was just, just, just two blocks away from where I lived. And it just—circumstances. What had happened was that the landlord—our landlord's daughter was on the school board, the Jewish school board and so she—I had met her. And so she came to me and said, “Would I consider putting an ad, you know, an application in.” So I taught 15 Jewish children in Grade, Grade 4 in half—in their English program in half a day. They lapped it up, [laughter] no problem.

HR: Is that where you remained for most of the...

AD: No I taught there a year and then I had—I moved away from there. I couldn't—I didn't have anyone to look after my little boy that's—well one boy was in school and the other boy was not. I didn't have anybody to look after him. So I was out one year and then the next year he was in Kindergarten and they phoned me again and said my, my old class was now Grade 6 and would I come back to my, my class who was now ready to do Grade 6. And with my little boy in kindergarten there was two after—I taught three mornings and two afternoons. And so we put my younger boy in the Jewish kindergarten on the two—they just leaned over backwards to accommodate me. So I taught there Monday, Wednesday, and Friday mornings and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. I took Ches my, my kindergarten boy into, into, into the Jewish Kindergarten. That was a good experience for him.

HR: Oh that's great.

AD: When he got a little older one of his playmates said to him “When are you going to have your bar mitzvah?” And, and, and Ches said, “I'm not Jewish,” so the—his friend said, “But your mother is.” So anyway, the, the Jewish community in Ottawa sort of adopted me.

HRL Oh wow.

AD: I was really (inaudible) but we bought our—I had about 12, 12 pupils the second year. Three

had dropped out and one was a car salesman and one was a furniture salesman and had a furniture store and another one had a clothing store. And all our purchases, I think 90% of our purchases, were through the parents, you know, of my kids.

HR: Oh wow.

AD: Oh, we had a real set up, you know, which was pretty nice, yeah. Anyway, so then after I taught that year in the Jewish school then I got into—then I, then I went to Rockcliffe, the Air Force base, for the 13 years.

HR: Okay.

AD: Yeah. By that time they were—the situation was pretty desperate. What they were doing was encouraging, in Ontario they were encouraging teachers to come back. Teachers who had gone through and had only taught a year or two and then sort of married out in the country and so on and had, had families. They encouraged them to come back and teach on a letter of permission.

HR: Oh okay.

AD: And they, they would teach on a letter of permission and the inspectors would go in and inspect them twice and then if they wanted them to get a permanent certificate they had to go to teachers college and write, in May, and write the ten exams. That was a really good way of weeding them out because if they didn't want you to continue teaching, if you didn't match up or—they just didn't, they just didn't give you another letter of permission.

HR: Oh I see.

AD: And they gave you—kept giving you a letter of permission year after year if you were kind of, you know. But they came to me and they came to my principal who was from Manitoba and said, “We want you to get Ontario certificates and we have talked to the school board and they will give you a week off with pay and they will put in a supply teacher. And we want you to go to the normal school and write the exams.” And that's what I did.

HR: What year was that in?

AD: Okay, must have been about 1953 or '54.

HR: Okay.

AD: Yeah, so I, I now—I have both, you see. But...

HR: So now you have B.C. and Ontario.

AD: Yeah, right.

HR: And when you did your degree at Carlton around—was that around 1970?

AD: Beg your pardon?

HR: You did a—you said you did a B.A. eventually?

AD: Yeah, I got my B.A. in '72 at Carlton.

HR: Seventy-two. And what, what was it in? What did you study?

AD: Sociology and psychology.

HR: And I guess—did you retire around mid '70s? Was it...

AD: No I retired in '85.

HR: '85, oh my goodness!

AD: I taught 36 and a half years.

HR: Wow, that's great.

AD: No I, I—actually, it was kind of interesting because I had a women superintendent at the time and they were fighting this compulsory retirement at 65.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: So she came to me and she said, “Amy we really want to test this out and we've decided that you, you would be our good guinea pig because you're still very active and vital and so on and so forth.” She said, “How would you like to try for an extension on your 65?” But I was ready to retire so...

HR: That's a good, a good long time.

AD: Yeah well, I mean, I—if, if I'd, you know, if i'd been single or something I probably would have fought the good fight but, yeah. No, I had a rough year too because I had a principal with a nervous breakdown.

HR: Oh no.

AD: It was a real—it was the year to quit. My first year, I think, and my last year were my two hardest years I taught.

HR: The first and last, isn't that interesting.

AD: Yeah. Well the last because of the principal situation. And then I was acting principal for six weeks there.

HR: Oh gosh.

AD: You know, but my problem was that he had this nervous breakdown and then they brought him back in January and just filled him with—what do you call—tranquilizers and he sat in his office and stared out the window.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Crazy.

HR: What a waste.

AD: Yeah it was. So I ended up being principal and vice-principal and then they were closing the school and guess who was the chairman of the school closures?

HR: Oh no.

AD: You know, it was just...

HR: Too, too much.

AD: A very, very heavy load, yeah.

HR: Yeah, that's too much.

AD: And the teachers were all, you know, having a problem because they didn't know where they were going to be sent. And the school—then there were teachers who had been there all their teaching career and they were—had another, you know, 10 or—years to go and were upset about, you know, “Where am I gonna be transferred to,” and so on. There was a lot of stress.

HR: A lot of bad feelings too.

AD: Yeah, there was a lot of stress. It was a terrible year. And the parents were upset because they were losing their school. They were turning it into a French school. Where was objections to that too. Just closing the school is bad enough but closing it and taking away their name and turning it into a French school—because that was awful.

HR: That must have been very rough.

AD: Yeah it was rough because you had, you know, unhappy parents, unhappy staff.

HR: Yeah, and then of course the children feel that.

AD: Oh yeah and the children were upset too. They didn't know where they were going and why should they go here? And, you know.

HR: Right.

AD: It was a terrible year, yeah.

HR: Well speak, speaking of feelings, do you remember how you were feeling as you took the train from Edmonton up to the Peace River district in that first year?

AD: Yeah, excited.

HR: Excited?

AD: Yeah.

HR: You didn't have any misgivings or any feelings of fear or...

AD: No, no. I don't think so. I had a very wonderful dad who was extremely adventuresome and yeah. Yeah I'd always, when I was growing up, always wished I had been a boy so that I could have gone out on the water with my dad, you know.

HR: Did he sail or...

AD: Pardon?

HR: What did he do out on the water?

AD: My dad was a sea captain.

HR: Oh that's right, that's right. I remember you saying that. Yeah. So you took your

adventuresome spirit from your father.

AD: Yeah, sure.

HR: Oh that's great.

AD: Mm-hmm.

HR: When you, you—the last time we were talking you said—you talked about there being two groups in the community at Tate Creek: those who sided with Miss Meade and those who supported you against the administration. Can you tell me a little bit more about that?

AD: Well I think it, mostly I think, it was political. You've got to realize that 150 families were all—they were political refugees and the basis of the, the differences as I remember them is—was, was not over the school it was political differences in the community. And there was this smaller group who were—I don't know, I have no idea the size. But there was one group under, I remember the name of the guy was Wonka, and he was all for appeasement. You know let's get along with the CPR and the colonization group and, you know, let's do as they say and we'll adjust to the new country faster if we become “yes” men, you know.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: Whereas this other—the more rebellious group, you know, did not want to—did not respect Wonka. Wonka was a—what do you call it? Well, he was, he was a conformist. And so the other group, the group that I leaned towards, seemed to be the—my friends or the ones that I liked, anyway I was attracted to, were more rebels and, you know, they wanted to—they were more outspoken and they stood up for their rights. Cause the colonization department took advantage of them, you know.

HR: I've, I've done some reading since we have last spoken.

AD: Have you?

HR: And I've seen that Will Wonka has written a few things and others as well. And the gist of the rift that I got was that they wanted some control over the money that had been given to the government...

AD: That's right.

HR: ...so that they could make their own decisions, whereas the government refused to allow them to make their own decisions. And the money, which eventually, of course, they paid back—that's what I found so surprising is that they had to raise enough money to pay back the loans

that they never actually got in their hands.

AD: Yeah, right.

HR: So...

AD: Yeah and they were settled on land that, you know, a Canadian farmer couldn't make a go of.

HR: Yeah they mentioned that.

AD: Yeah. No they got a rotten deal. And these people were—you know, all their life they had been fighting for what they believed in so, I mean, they weren't going to take it lying down. And of course that's the kind of person that appeals to me so I guess I've always been sort of—like the underdog.

HR: So this—your sentiments for the group that wanted more control...

AD: Right sure.

HR: ...ended up being, being used against you, I guess? By the...

AD: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

HR: Okay. That's not so uncommon. From what I've read about rural schoolteachers the community often—there were often rifts like that where they would take sides over some issue.

AD: Oh yeah.

HR: So it's a—what I'm wondering though is in your sense of what happened in you being moved over to North Swan did you ever feel like a victim?

AD: Oh yeah. I was, I was devastated because I loved, you know, I really loved the people. Yeah, I, I—yeah, it was—yeah, it took me, it took me a while to get over that, yeah. I think the thing that saved me was the fact that the east group, that was, as I say, across the river and where the children from east group went to my second—my new school, they befriended me and adopted me. Then I also went—I was just saying to Ralph, I went from the best boarding house in the Peace River, I'm sure, where I only paid \$15 a month because it was the, you know, it was, it was the boarding house that looked after, that looked after after the colonization, you know, the employees.

HR: The employees.

AD: And, you know, the sky was the limit. You could buy whatever you wanted and, you know, I mean, the grocery bills didn't matter what was. So and then I went from that to living with—and a, you know, a room of my own and all the rest of it and, and being spoilt because the cook and I were the only females. And then I went over to the boarding place and the second school near East View was an old lady who was a hermit that I doubt if she exchanged more than 12 words with me a day and never ate with me. Just prepared my meals, she wasn't a bad cook but prepared my meals and just sat it in front of me and she went off. And I had just a little curtained off section of the cabin and as dark as the dark hole of Calcutta. So I just...

HR: How, how much did you pay for that room a month?

AD: Thirty, I had only paid \$15 at the other one.

HR: At the other one, right.

AD: Yeah, and of course the reason I paid \$15 is that when I said to Mr. McConnell, who was the boss there, the manager, I said "How much for my board?" He said "Well," he said, "how much," he said, "how much are the other teachers paying around the neighbourhood?" Well the standard price of that day was \$30 a month for room and board. So I told him. Yeah, it was province-wide I think. And he said, "Oh hell, I can't charge you \$30," he said, "you help around here. You're always helping Eve out in the kitchen and you're serving." You know, I was the kind of person that can't sit and be waited on. I'd jump up and help and so on. So that did me a lot of good because...

HR: He reduced it.

AD: Yeah! He said, "Oh no, I'll charge you \$15." So I didn't argue with him, of course.

HR: No, that's a good deal.

AD: Yeah, and yeah. So it was—but the thing that saved the day was that I used to go over to East View—east group every night. You know, and as I say two of the nights we were teaching and then I would socialize all around and so on. So that's why I did all my work at school so I couldn't—didn't have to, you know, lug it home. It was about 2 miles to walk so I certainly wasn't packing, I wasn't packing books home. So I would stay at school and do all the marking and the preparation for the next day so that when I walked out of the school at maybe 5 or 6 at night everything was ready for the next day.

HR: You'd be done. You mentioned a story about Mr.—Professor Sternsheim teaching you Jewish—teaching you German and then you dealing with the kids that were swearing. I don't remember which school that was at. Was that at...

AD: That was the first school.

HR: That was at Tate.

AD: Tate Creek, yeah.

HR: Okay. And the other thing you mentioned was a number of stories about the—that the kids told you about escaping from Czechoslovakia. Do you have any that you want to add or anymore that you want to comment on?

AD: Well I can't think, you know, well the big one to me was that membership list, I'd say.

HR: The list.

AD: Yeah.

HR: Okay.

AD: But they, they, they were saying how their—you know, that several of their fathers just—somebody would come to the house and he would just say, “The car's outside. Pack a suitcase.” And they saw their dads—you know, they saw their dad, and mother feverishly packing a suitcase and the dad was—you know, they were in and—they were out of the house in 10 minutes. You know, it was, it was that narrow. And they were heading for the border. They'd get word. So several of the fathers escaped that way, yeah. It was, you know, just a few minutes notice.

HR: Good grief.

AD: Yeah, yeah, we had no idea, you know.

HR: Yeah. The circumstances were just outrageous.

AD: Yeah, the, the, the—I think really one of the things was the terrible atmosphere of fear that those kids lived in. You know, the families lived in. Especially when they knew that they were wanted, you know. And they, they were obvious. It's just like they were—you know, some of them were members of city council and, you know, I mean, so they were well known, yeah.

HR: And were—would you say that they were still fearful in Canada? Or were they...

AD: Oh no, no.

HR: No, so it was—once they arrived then everything...

AD: Yeah, oh yeah. Well they really realized that it was a, you know, a new place. And their problems were adjustment, you know, they had to (inaudible). And the other thing that they had to adjust to was not only their occupations but they also had to adjust to a new language and new climate.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: Cause that—you know, they sent—instead of sending them to the Mainland here, you know, where we would be like Europe they were going to the North.

HR: To the North in the middle or virtually nowhere.

AD: Oh god, well fortunately they went in the summer. But still their first winter was just a—that was a blow for them. They didn't know if anything could be so cold, you know. And their houses weren't well insulated, you know, they were those...

HR: Did they have the clothing that they needed or was it supplied for them, warm clothing?

AD: I don't know. They certainly bundled up that's for sure, yeah.

HR: You, you also mentioned in one of our last conversations a, a math wiz teacher named Mr. Jackson who had basically convinced his students that they were, they were dumb, they were incapable. And you had to motivate them to believe that they were capable and I can't remember which school you said that was in.

AD: That was High Ridge.

HR: At High Ridge.

AD: That was the last year that I spent '41-'42.

HR: Okay.

AD: Yeah. Oh, that was pitiful. "I can't do it I'm dumb."

HR: That must have been a big—well, to, to change that kind of motivation is a big undertaking.

AD: Oh yeah, that was hard. That's, that's what I did all—I just remember vividly doing that all September. I don't know how many times I kept saying, "Oh, isn't that clever, isn't that smart. Oh I wish I could do that!" [laughter] I tried to come up with all these different expressions. Oh God.

HR: Did, did you every consult anyone for advice or for help with your teaching?

AD: There was nobody there!

HR: There was nobody there. What about the inspector? Did the inspector ever have anything to offer?

AD: No, well I can't remember going in and sitting—I can't remember going in to him and—no.

HR: Not really.

AD: You know, when you—in those days you sank or swam on your own.

HR: Yep.

AD: You know, there's no looking up the internet to find this. There's no library, there's no library to go to. There's not even anybody, you know, around. In some areas you could go to former teachers who had married and settled in the area. But I was in an area where there weren't any former teachers around. So, you know, and then I, of course—I mean, most of my contacts, of course, were, you know, the, the Sudeten Germans.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: But there was no, no resources, none. No books, no extra stuff and so on. It, you know, it was, it was sort of a tough—I guess the old saying is, “the tough survive.” You know, they used to fly out about two or three teachers a year up in the Peace River who got bushed.

HR: Bushed?

AD: Well it's what they used to call bushed. They just—they went wacky because it was the—it was just the whole circumstances were overwhelming.

HR: The isolation.

AD: And they, and they had nervous breakdowns, yeah.

HR: And they would fly them out?

AD: Yeah, mm-hmm.

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Yeah, they'd bring them down to, they'd bring them down to Dawson Creek and fly them out. The expression was "bushed."

HR: I never heard that expression before.

AD: Yeah, they got, they got bushed.

HR: But you managed to avoid that.

AD: I managed to survive, yeah.

HR: And that—probably, probably connecting yourself so well to other people, probably.

AD: Well, yeah. I give a lot of credit to the support I got from the kids and the parents, you know. They, they—you know, you see, I still keep in touch with some of them, and that's a marvellous thing, you know.

HR: That is marvellous after all these years.

AD: I, I had this one little—one fellow, Herb, he died last year. He's 5 years younger and he finally—anyway, we got together and I said to Herb, I said, "Oh I thought you'd forgiven me—forgotten me." He said, he said "I've loved you since I was 12." [laughter] I thought that was so cute. "I've loved you since I was 12." [laughter]

HR: Well you mentioned that you played soccer with the, the boys outside of class and I'm wondering outside of the formal English that you were teaching them did you do any other extra curricular type things like a school play or a Christmas concert or anything like that?

AD: No, no. We didn't do a concert, no. Well, they weren't far enough along in English.

HR: English wise.

AD: No, they weren't far enough by the first Christmas, you know.

HR: Right.

AD: No. No and, you know, and all we owned there was a soccer ball. I don't think we even had a ball and a bat. I think a soccer ball was all I had. Of course, soccer's great in Europe. Yeah, that's the only equipment we had. I would have done a lot different if I didn't have that principal. You know, I was thinking the other day if Miss Meade wasn't there and so on I, I'm sure that I would have, you know, done more things.

HR: You would have had more freedom, certainly.

AD: Yeah, I would have had more freedom to try things, you know.

HR: I laughed—going back over the tapes I laughed so hard when you talked about her being sent north of the Peace. [laughter]

AD: Well that was kind of the dividing line, the north. Yeah, the North and South Peace, yeah. When you go and they sent you north of the river that's, that's very meaningful. Get rid of her. I don't know if I told you but I did have Mr. English come and apologize to me.

HR: You did, yeah.

AD: Did I tell you that?

HR: You told me that and I found that very...

AD: Yeah, I thought that was really, was very thoughtful of him.

HR: It was thoughtful because...

AD: It was thoughtful. It certainly restored my—he said, “I finally came to the conclusion, Amy, that everybody is wrong and she's the only one right.” [laughter] He said, “It used to be Saturday morning and I'd go and find places to hide. We saw her horse coming up the road”— [laughter] then he started telling me all the places. He said, “He couldn't go up to the office.” He and his wife used to watch the road on Saturday mornings because she'd come in on her, her gallant steed there and had her (inaudible) she had all these lists of complaints. And then, I guess she just had a form letter and after February and she had to cross out the Miss Brown and put Miss Meade because Miss Meade wasn't perfect either—I mean Miss Hinky, I mean. If my replacement turned out to be less than perfect, oh my goodness. Oh well, we can laugh about it now.

HR: I wonder whatever happened to her after she went north.

AD: Who?

HR: Miss Meade.

AD: Miss Meade, I don't know. She went, she went north.

HR: North.

AD: They sent her north. I know Miss Hinky ended up—Miss Hinky retired in Dawson Creek.

HR: Did she stay on?

AD: I met, I met her years and years later. Yeah, I went back to see her. Anyway, she was really pleased that I had gone.

HR: And did she—did you share good stories about Miss Meade?

AD: No. No she wasn't too much pretty with it. Her hearing was, you know—she was, I don't know, let's see. I was 19, 20 yeah. She would be a good 25 years older than me.

HR: Oh okay.

AD: Mm-hmm. No and she'd be sort of half way between, you know—and then, I guess, Meade was another 10 years older again. Nobody knows what happened to Miss Meade. I mean, my, my former students don't know what happened to her. They still remember her though.

HR: Yeah, oh yeah. They used to growl. [laughter]

AD: This, this one, this one pupil—one teacher I said something. I met a former teacher and I said, "I guess you don't remember me, I'm Amy Brown," and she said, "Oh yes," she said, "we remember the good and the bad." And I said, "I'm not asking, I'm not asking the next question." [laughter] so I guess she's right.

HR: Overall, what would you say about your experiences in the rural schools, up in the Peace, how did they shape you as a teacher?

AD: I think the—I guess, well the first thing that comes to mind is the fact that—I think something I—a policy that I went by all my life is that one of the most valuable things you can do as a teacher is to establish a close relationship with the parents. And I—it's really interesting because when I was teaching at, at the air force school you're on the station there and you've sort of got a little enclosed unit, you know. And you—we used to get lots of invitations from parents to go for lunch.

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: And the teachers used to not want to go. And I used to go all the time and, and I, I found this very valuable because, you know, you got to know the parents and the background. But a lot of teachers wanted to keep a big space between themselves. And the other thing too, like, I've always enjoyed parent interviews and any—and I've also, and also encouraged—parents to come in and help me in the classroom because I had some reading programs that just got out of control

cause I couldn't hear the kids. So, you know, I didn't have enough time to hear them read back to me and so on so I enlisted help, the parents to come in. And I've always involved parents in my classroom long before it was started. And, and I like parent teacher interviews. And I've had to—when I was vice-principal I had to try to—that was the credited—the barrier I tried to break down in teachers and say that, “You know, if you work closely with the, the parents you, you learn more about the children and, you know, you know what kind of support's there in the home and so on.” So I was—I think I learned that because I had that month off while the school was being built and wandered around just because I wanted something to do. You know, it was the right thing to do, nobody told me to do it. And I thought, “Well I'll just make contact with the parents.” And that's been invaluable to me. Like, I always say to my parents, “Don't phone the principal.”

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: I said, “You've got a complaint phone me or come and see me.” I said that, “You know what will happen,” I said, “you phone the parent—the principal and then the principal comes down and says, ‘What the hell is going on here between you and Mrs. Smith.’” You know, and I said, “He doesn't know anything.”

HR: Right.

AD: And I said, “Of course, the other thing too it puts a black mark against me.” My principal used to say to me, “I want you on my staff because you have a reputation for the fact that we don't get any calls, you know, criticism about you. We don't get parent calls.” And, and that's one of the things that—you know, it makes common sense that, you know, if you've got a problem—and then the other—when I had “meet the parents” in September I tell them, “Look if Johnny's dog gets run over last night I want to know that, I want to know that. I want to know when Johnny comes in my classroom that he's lost his dog or his dog's at the vet or, or his grandpa's died.” You know what I mean?

HR: Right.

AD: And I said, “Because he's going to get special attention and I want to know that.” Which is (inaudible) an offshoot. My older son went to teachers' college in Ottawa and in one of the classes the professor said, “You know, of course you treat all kids alike and you do this and so on.” And he said, “Now here's the situation: Johnny had problems and so on and so forth. Now how do you treat, treat him and so on?” They went all around the class, you know, saying what you would do. Well all the answers was, you know, treat this child the same. It got to my son he said, “No I wouldn't.” And the professor said, “Why wouldn't you?” And he said, “That child has different needs that day and I would attempt to meet the needs of that child and the others would be a lower priority.”

HR: Mm-hmm. And how did the professor respond.

AD: So he came home and, came home and he told me this, he told me this. And I said, "I'm very proud of you." He said, "It was an easy answer mom. I just thought 'What would mom do?'" [laughter]

HR: And did he...

AD: I think that was one of the nicest compliments I got.

HR: Did he stay on in teaching?

AD: No he didn't. He's a C.A. today. But he makes house calls. Anyway, I thought that's kind of a nice—no, I think that's one of the biggest things I learned was the fact that have a close link with the parents.

HR: Okay.

AD: And I, I've, I've had terrific support from parents. But if you reach out to parents, you know, they'll reach back. In fact I can't think of an unhappy situation at all, you know, that I, that I've had with parents that...

HR: Mm-hmm.

AD: I mean, any situation we've had we—you know, it's been easily resolved. It doesn't stick out. Well of course, when I, when I tell them—my kids, somewhere along the line, somebody nicknamed me their daytime mother. And so when I meet the parents in September I tell them that I promise I won't do anything to your child that I won't do to my own. They—and I said, "I look at them as my daytime children and I will do for them the very best I can." And, you know, if that sinks in and they believe me then, you know, there's no problem. I guess I'm a bit of a missionary because I think teaching is not just a profession it's a— a little boy said something to me once which is—your new teachers should know. I was putting—he's a little Grade 1 and I was putting a band-aid on his knee and I was cuddling him on my lap and he looked at me and he said—you talk about out of the mouth of babes. He said, "You know, you're more than a teacher. You're a nurse, a mommy, and a teacher." Tell your teachers that.

HR: I will.

AD: And I think if you're going into the profession just to be a teacher, get out! That's what I tell student teachers. I'll come and lecture to yours. [laughter] You know, something I wanted to do at the end of my career is I really wanted to go into teacher training.

HR: I would love for you to speak to my teachers. That's a very heartwarming story. It's so nice of you to have shared this all with me too. I feel really privileged.

AD: Well I don't know, I've never been asked before although several friends of mine keep saying, "You should write a book." But...

HR: Yes you should. I think you should. I think it would be a best seller. It's—that's—well, I've already mentioned this but in my own mind that's the thing I think that's missing from our teacher education programs is that really human element.

AD: That's right.

HR: And I try to—I teach Sociology of Ed. and a History of Ed. Course. I teach both of them and in both of those I try to focus on the human because all of the other courses they get focus very much on the techniques and the technical aspects of things.

AD: And that's not the biggest part of it.

HR: No, I don't think it's, it's the most important. I think the most important is that human relationship.

AD: Well some of the, you know, the—the thing I've learned and I wished I asked, but I always encouraged my students to come back. And a lot of them have come back to visit me, you know, while I was teaching in the classroom. And so the children I'm teaching see that and so that encourages them to come back, you see. And, and one of the interesting questions to ask them is "What do you remember about, you know, Grade 5?" And there's a, a girl, well a woman now, and I said to her, "Denise, what do you remember about Grade 5?" This is something I'd like to tell, you know, your teachers in training. They don't remember I taught them the times table well and it was different ways or whatever, you know. They never remember any subject material and they always—and Denise in particular said, "I remember it was such a happy place." You know, my theory is if you can make it a happy place you can teach them anything.

HR: Right.

AD: You know, and, like, when I have this meet the teachers in, in September I, I just, I sat up in front of the parents and say, "Look, I have been spending this month brainwashing your children." And that shocks them, you know, I mean, because the other teachers are all going over, "Well this year the math is going to be this, and we're going to teach percent, and we're going to teach Columbus, and we're going to teach this," I said, "I've brainwashed your children." And the look and their eyes widen and I said, "Well I just tell them that this year is going to be the best year, and it's going to be their happiest year, and they're just going to have a great time, and they're in the best school in Ottawa and, and this is the best year." And they—and then I end last

with, “You’re going to have the best teacher. So there you are. Aren’t we going to be great?” [laughter] And if you get them on your side you don’t have to worry about motivating. I mean there’s your motivation, you know. Like in the reading, you know, I said, I used to say to them, “I have to go through this reader. We have to go through the reader. Now let’s go through the reader a mile a minute and then I’ll bring in all sorts of interesting stories the rest of the year.” [laughter] So by Christmas time or before we’re through the reader. And then we get into, you know, we used to be collecting and then I’d get these parents who could type off stories for me. I had boxes of stories of, you know, exciting times and rescues and all the rest of them.

HR: Stories that the kids had written?

AD: Pardon? No, no, no. Stories from all over, you know.

HR: Oh, okay.

AD: And then I could get them in above their reading level too, you know. But anyway, but oh I had lots of fun teaching. But I was lucky. I know I was lucky because I had a lot of freedom. Principals left me alone, yeah. No and you can understand why. You know, there’s a lot—you know, I’ll go out on a limb and say 10 percent of the teachers teaching should not be in the schools.

HR: Right. And if, if they see that things are going well they tend to leave you alone. That’s been my experience.

AD: Yeah, well sure. You know, you’re not going to bother with, you know, you’re not going to bother with Mrs. Smith there. God her kids are happy. You know, If there’s no problems there and everything’s fine and everybody wants to go to Mrs. Smith’s class next year and, you know. Yeah of course, on the Air Force—the Air Force really knits well-knit communities. These, these high-ranking officers used to come in and say, “You know, my son’s in Grade 6. Who’s, who’s teaching Grade 6?” And they, you know, oh God of you got—because there would be four or five Grade 6 classes and they’d pull rank. [laughter] I heard about all these stories about...

HR: About them getting their kids into your class?

AD: Pardon?

HR: Would they try to get their kids into your class?

AD: Oh sure.

HR: Yeah?

AD: Sure. I think the greatest compliment, compliment I ever had—patting myself on the back here. Greatest compliment was I was taking a sociology course at Carlton University and this woman was—it was Sociology of the family or something. We got discussing things and so on and philosophy and what not. And afterwards a few of us would sit around and so on. And so she came down to me one day—one night and she said, “I’d like to know what school you’re at.” So I gave her—I said—told her. And she said, well she said, “I’m looking for a new apartment.” And she said, “My daughter’s going into Grade 6 next year.” And she said, “If—I’ll, I’ll look for an apartment near your school so she can be in your class.”

HR: Oh goodness.

AD: Isn’t that an honour?

HR: That is yeah.

AD: She went to the principal and told the principal. There was two Grade 6s but she wouldn’t take the apartment unless she could—her daughter could go into my class. So I think that was my highest honour.

HR: That’s wonderful.

AD: Yeah, it’s—well, parents, you know, you have a lot in common. I mean, these are your kids and as I say, these are my daytime kids. And, and, you know, you, you have to work hand-in-hand.

HR: Yep.

AD: And as I say, for me the more I knew about the parent—I mean if this child’s an only child and it’s—he’s, you know, molly-coddled and so on and so forth and, you know, what he needs is some experience and, you know, and independence.

HR: Independence, right.

AR: So, you know, you start—you can give him tasks that encourage. You just know more about the child when you know more about the home.

HR: Right.

AD: So that’s, that’s very important and I learned that in the—that’s a valuable lesson I learned in Peace River. Yeah, work with the parents. Yeah.

HR: Well, I’ve got all my questions answered, Amy. Do you have anything else you want to add?

AD: Well, I can't think of any.

HR: I also received the pictures and there's only one scanner in our building and the secretary is scanning them for me so as soon as she's done with that then I'll send them back up to you.

AD: Is there any questions you want to ask? I tried to explain on the back.

HR: Yeah, they were very clear. Everything on the back was very clear. So once she's scanned them I will transfer what you've written onto the back of the scanned papers and then I'll send them back. I wish you all the best with your operation and I will give you a good long time to convalesce and perhaps by the end of the summer what I'd like to do...I don't know if you'd like to see the transcripts of the...

AD: Oh yes I would.

HR: Ok, I'll send up the transcripts. I've transcribed the first two tapes and once this one is done I will send you a copy of everything. You can make....