

BETTY AND IAN CAMPBELL INTERVIEW

Diane: Hi, this is Diane Parenti. It's January 18, 2013, and today we're going to be speaking with Betty and Ian Campbell, who are long-time residents of the Mount Lorne area. So I'd like to start by asking you, Ian, what year did you move into the area, and where was your first residence?

Ian: 1974, and it was at Mile 10 on the Carcross Road.

Diane: So Mile 10 would be roughly Km 16.

Ian: Yes, it's about one mile before the Annie Lake Road.

Diane: Can you just give us a sense of what the Carcross Road was like then, in those years, as far as the road itself, traffic, wildlife, power line, that sort of thing?

Ian: Well, the power only went to Mile 8. The road was gravel, and it was about 2-1/2 lanes wide, and it was pretty much the same as it is now, following the same roadbed. There was a fair amount of wildlife, especially around us. We had a lot of moose and a lot of caribou that came down from Mt. Lorne, crossed the road and into the .. because they ate the willow. We had a lot of willow there, short willow. And we had a lot of coyotes, and one time Betty went for a walk with the dogs and turned around and had a coyote as well as the dogs.

Diane: (mutual laughter) Added to the pack.

Ian: And we did have wolves around, usually it was just a lone wolf that had been kicked out of the pack or something. But the road, they kept it plowed in the wintertime. There was the next place toward Annie Lake, and it was Veerman's farm, just at the Annie Lake Road there. That was the first place going towards Carcross. And then coming this way, there was where Hans Oettli lives now, and then it went to Bob English's place - that's where Blaine Walden lives, and then it went to Art Taylor's place, and I don't know who's there now. And that was about the distance between the houses.

Diane: O.K., so those were your only neighbors?

Ian: Yes, that's right, they were, and the dump wasn't there then.

Diane: So you said the power line went to where?

Ian: It was about Mile 8. I'm sorry I don't know who lives there now, but Art Taylor used to live there. And it went as far as there, so we didn't have power.

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Diane: So did it ever get taken past your place?

Ian: Well it went along the railway tracks to Carcross, and some people, I think they used to hook into it occasionally. (mutual laughter) But no, we never had it the whole time.

Diane: You never had it. O.K, so what year did you leave there?

Ian: Well we went to Cape Breton in 1981, and we were back here in 1984, and then we were up on the Annie Lake Road.

Diane: Right. So you were at Km 16/Mile 10 from 1974 to 1981.

Ian: Yes.

Diane: So all of your children were with you then. Betty, could you tell us about your children, and what ages they were?

Betty: They were age 6 to 12 at that time, and the oldest was 12 and that was Carolyn. Then there was Don – they were approximately age 6, 8, 10, 12. Don was 10, JoAnne was 8, and Doug was just 6. They all went to school at that time, and Doug was in Grade 1 by then. We had to take them to the corner, the Carcross Rd where it meets the highway, the major highway there, and we had to drive them there. We call it the Cut-Off now.

Diane: Yes, that's was everyone calls it.

Betty: I wasn't sure if they did then. And you got paid to take your kids there, like 5 cents per kid per mile, and it was just ridiculous. And so it wasn't very long after we, because we had four, that they decided it was cheaper to send a bus out (mutual laughter), and so they sent a bus. But the bus only went to Bear Creek.

Diane: O.K., so when did they start sending the bus?

Betty: That would have been ...

Ian: That was probably the winter of 1975. I remember the government truck driving into the driveway into our yard, and I walked out of the house, and he jumped out of the truck and he put his hands up and said, "I'm just here for the bus!" (mutual laughter) I don't know what he thought I was going to do to him. (mutual laughter)

Betty: So then they took the bus. That was probably their best days, really. That's what they remember, and that's what, when we moved back they said, "Oh we want to go back to Mile 10." But we couldn't go back to Mile 10.

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Diane: You mean, that's when they felt like they were the happiest?

Betty: Yes, and that was their special place. Well, it was the longest we lived anywhere, which I think probably had something to do with it. So, when we moved away and then we came back, they said, "Oh aren't you going to go back to Mile 10, because that's what we want to do." But we couldn't go back, and they were all grown up by then, so you hardly would. And we just had the one with us, when we moved out to Annie Lake. So, but they had a lot of fun there, and the kids all had horses, and ...

Diane: There were four horses?

Betty: No, we just had two. And the boys just had to be nice to the girls (mutual laughter) if they wanted to ride somewhere. And that's how they went and visited their friends. So they went to the Taylor's, where there were two boys and a girl, and there was people named Rawlings, who lived at the top of the hill. It would be the top of the hill, which would be about what?

Ian: Km 12, or 11-1/2.

Betty: Km 12, yeah, and there was a boy and a girl there, and that was sort of the ones they did the most with I think.

Diane: And did those other kids have horses too?

Betty: They had horses too. And like the VanVeen kids, they were all younger, like they were all younger than our youngest. And so this would be when they were, well Carolyn got her first horse when she was 13, so and then Joanne got hers pretty quick after that. So they would still be, like Doug would just be little, but the other kids were like a pre-teen kind of age. And that's how they went back and forth.

Diane: And all through the winter?

Betty: Yes, it didn't seem to matter if you wanted to go. Well, because we only had the one vehicle which Ian usually had at work, so you either walk or you take the horse. So what are you going to do if you're a kid? (mutual laughter). But they really, they had a lot of kids come out on the weekend, and we always used to get a kick out of the city kids because they loved it out there. And we had goats at that time, and we had chickens, and we had rabbits, and the kids did a lot of chores – we all had to do a lot of chores, like everybody had to, because you just couldn't make a go of it if everybody didn't work hard. So they always enjoyed, especially

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when we had the little goats, because they had to be bottle fed. And there were six of them, and so it was just like having six babies. Like you literally had to sterilize the bottles and do all those things. So that was part of their – we would feed during the day and they would feed when they came home from school. So when their friends came out from the city, they thought this was really cool, and so our kids said, “Fine, here, why don’t you feed the goats?” So then our kids thought, oh fine, we don’t have to do this then. So any little chores, like they thought cutting wood was kind of cool, so each weekend they would kind of get out of the chores a little bit.

Diane: Yes, and collecting eggs, I’m sure. That’s always fun.

Betty: Yeah, yeah. And so it was a pretty good deal for them. But we played a lot of what Ian was telling you before, before we started, fryball, and we all loved that. We actually started that because the little fellow, he couldn’t hit the ball very hard, because he was just little.

Diane: You can use their names. The little fellow was Doug.

Betty: Doug, yes. And so, it was easier, like even I could hit with the frying pan. Like whump! (mutual laughter)

Diane: Yes, we haven’t explained how you did this game. So you had a frying pan ...

Betty: Yes, we had a frying pan, and we had a tennis ball or sometimes a rubber ball, and you played it just like baseball. We had the bases all set out, just like baseball, and we’d take turns being whatever, the pitcher, the catcher or whatever. And so, that’s what you did, you just hit it and you just played baseball. And Ian was telling me this morning, I had forgotten, that the thing was if you hit it into the pond, they guy who hit it had to go after it, not the back catcher. And so it was a fairly narrow, almost like a little peninsula that went between the house and the tracks, and there was sort of like water on both sides. And so, the boys, if they hit it too hard, they were in there. But they seemed to enjoy it, and everybody who came, even my mother used to play it.

Diane: Oh my gosh! (mutual laughter)

Betty: And she could hit it. That was a big deal. But the kids did a lot of – they were in the water a lot. They build a raft which didn’t float very well, so they used an old horse trough as a boat, and they thought that was kind of cool, although Carolyn didn’t participate. She did a little bit, but then she was sort of like, that’s the little kids stuff.

Diane: She was getting to be a teenager.

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Betty: She was getting a little bit too old for that, when she was getting to be about 14, 15. The other kids all thought it was great. And so you could actually skate on the pond in the winter. JoAnne was telling me that she remembers they had to scrape the grass, because the grass was getting tall in the swamp. They would have to scrape the snow off and then they had to scrape this grass off. But anyways, they skated, and they seemed to really, really enjoy it. They never seemed to have any problem with you know, like finding stuff to do.

Diane: Right, they weren't bored.

Betty: No, there was always, well there was lots of chores.

Diane: (mutual laughter) There wasn't that much time to play.

Betty: But then the little ones, Don and Joanne and Doug – Art Taylor at that time had a CB – you know, where you go “Ten four” and all the truck drivers had them and all that. And so the kids, the little kids, not Carolyn, because that was too childish for her, they used to play this game “Joe, Jack and Jim”. And we had an old truck in the bush there, and this was the truck, and they had the coffee shop that they stopped in, and they kept great logs of all their trips.

Diane: That is so great!

Betty: And these were some of the things that they amused themselves with. And so those were some of the things that they did. And then Joanne found dogs in the woods one day, little puppies, and she brought them home, and Dad said she couldn't keep them. And so we found they belonged to, at that time, Bob English had just moved out with his dogs, and they were his dogs. So then Joanne and Doug ran the dogs for Bob English, and eventually JoAnne raced in the circuit. There was a circuit.

Diane: Oh, so she got her experience from Bob English, her first experience.

Betty: Yes, and they would, in the summers, take the dogs in the ditch down the highway. And that was always a big thing for the tourists – “Oh wow, dog sled”, you know, big deal. And they had a little cart.

Ian: This was just after the (new) road went through, the highway.

Betty: Yes, so Joanne would be, well JoAnne would be 13 by then, and so Carolyn would be 17 by then, 16 or 17.

Diane: And so, at that time there was a lot more traffic on the road?

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Betty: There was, yes. And when they were in high school we used to take them, like if there was any dances or a special show, like at the movie theatre, we would take them in, but we'd kind of gather up like the whole neighborhood. And because I, I was paranoid about allowing the children to hitchhike, and I wouldn't allow them to do that. And so we'd take them in the truck, and there would be kids everywhere, but there was like no seat belt laws, so it didn't matter. And we'd have kids in the back, and we'd deliver them to their houses, and kids would jump out of the back (mutual laughter). One had to climb out the window because they couldn't get out because there was another kid in the way, but we made sure everybody got to their things safely and they all got home safely, so no one was on the highway. And I'm sure it was perfectly safe then compared to now, but anyways, they weren't allowed to do that. We took them. But they didn't miss very much, and often they just didn't even want to go. They'd rather stay home and do whatever they were doing with their friends. So they seemed to have had a good life – they say they did.

Diane: Well it sure sounds like a happy childhood.

Betty: But it was a lot of hard work. And then the girls, we had neighbors named Veerman, and they had been there for many, many years.

Diane: And this is at what we call Veerman's Farm now, the big property ...

Betty: Yes, and they owned that whole thing. They had lived at the roadhouse, Robinson Roadhouse first, and Steve had pigs, didn't he? And that's where he would load them onto the train, at the Robinson place, and then he had cows. He was this little, well not little – he was a tall, stick of a man, and he had these piercing blue eyes. He would follow those cows, and they were allowed to walk from there, all the way to Carcross. And people would sort of – they seemed to have a phone for some reason. They must have.

Ian: I don't know.

Diane: A radio phone?

Betty: Yes, maybe. But they would let Steve know where they were. But you would see these cows going by on the railroad tracks, and Steve would be following them and maybe getting them home because it was time, and it was quite neat to see. And when he died, they slaughtered the cows, and oh, they even gave us some of the meat, and it was just gross! We boiled it so hard, and you couldn't eat it. Even the dogs couldn't eat it.

Diane: Oh no! (mutual laughter)

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Betty: The fat from it was just bright yellow, you know, it was (laughing) ...

Diane: Something was wrong with their feeding program.

Betty: Yes, I think so, and all the walking back and forth. And so the girls then would go and check on Margaret, because she was getting quite blind then.

Ian: She was legally blind.

Diane: And she was in her eighties?

Ian: Seventies at that time.

Betty: Late seventies, yes. And they would go and check almost every day. Either we would or they would. They would ride their horses down and make sure she was all right, because she was just there by herself. And occasionally we'd go - I think by then I think we were actually going to the pump house to get water, and if it was water day we could check then too. And she just lived there with, I think she had one dog or two dogs and a whole mess of cats. Cats everywhere! Yes, and she lived there quite a few years and then her nephew took her to the coast, to Vancouver I think it was, and she lived with him, when she was unable ...

Ian: She lived in a home.

Betty: A home, oh right. Yes, that's right. She had to go in a home for a little while, until he could take her to Vancouver.

Diane: So the girls, Carolyn and Joanne, rode the horses a number of times to go check on her, even during the winter?

Betty: Well yes, you would. Winter was really – you'd have to really check on her.

Ian: She wasn't there in the winter, was she?

Betty: Yes, she was.

Diane: And by the time they got home from school, it would be nearly dark.

Betty: Yes, but it's like what – a mile? It's no big deal.

Diane: Yes, but still, it's quite remarkable, I think.

Betty: But that was part of ... Carolyn said the other day that really, like on the weekends they could stop for tea with her, and they often did. And she said she learned more about the

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Gold Rush and the Klondike from Margaret than she had ever learned from anywhere else, because she had tremendous knowledge about everything that had happened. And she worked, I think, in that field, in the history field, I'm not sure. It's been just so long, because she's probably been dead for 20 years at least, I'm sure. But it's too bad because it was interesting that they (the Veermans) went out there and had that farm, and survived, and managed, and Steve did all the walking ...

Diane: Cattle was quite a business for them I think.

Betty: Yes, yes, it was.

Diane: Because I've seen pictures of their fields back in the 30's I think it was, and it was just full of cattle.

Betty and Ian: Yeah, yeah, oh yeah.

Betty: They had huge numbers. So it was quite interesting.

Ian: One of the most interesting times with Margaret was when we were at Annie Lake, and she and Opal, Opal Greenlaw, that lived in the white house at Bear Creek there, and that house was moved out from where the Royal Bank building is now, and it belonged to Drury's I think. But anyway, she used to bring Margaret out to the cabin for dinner once in a while. So she came out and it was a nice clear night, and she's legally blind, but it was so nice and clear and she saw the stars and everything, and she was just ecstatic and cried. It was really a nice moment to see that she was able to see the stars again.

Betty: Opal was another one we used to visit quite often, and so, and she was just a little bit of a thing. When she rode down the road, when she drove down the road, it looked like no one was in the car. (mutual laughter) And so we used to often visit her too. But our house at Mile 10 was moved out from Whiskey Flats, which was Rotary Park. And I don't think we have the papers, but I think the people's name was Calder or Caldwell, it was something along those lines, because at one point these people came to the door and said, "Oh, we used to live in this house when it was at Whiskey Flats." So, but I can't recall their name ...

Ian: I don't know what the name is, but it was my understanding that she was a trapper from Teslin. It was a lady that came, native lady.

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Betty: Yeah, so it was kind of neat. But it was very, in that house, it was very cold, because the floors weren't insulated. We eventually did insulate them.

Ian: It didn't make much difference.

Betty: It made a little, not much, no. So Carolyn would go – she had – like we had three rooms.

Diane: Yes, it was very small.

Betty: It was very small. And then the bathroom, well, we didn't have anything to have a bathroom with, because we just had the outhouse, and so we made that into a room for Joanne and it was great because she could just sit in her bed and get her stuff. Like it was six feet, so she didn't have to get out of bed to get her clothes, you know what I mean? (mutual laughter) And then Carolyn, we re-did the porch for her, and insulated and everything, and she would take the hot water bottle and put it in the bed, and it would fall out in the night and it would be frozen solid. But the kids all had down, um quilts ...

Diane: Comforters?

Betty: Yes, comforters, yeah, that we had actually brought from the lake cottage in Alberta, and so they were very warm. They were sort of the old, original kind of ones, and they had new covers but that was about all. And so they were warm. And those kids were never, ever sick, ever. It was just amazing – I don't know whether it was the lifestyle, or if they froze each night or what it was, but ...

Ian: They got sick Betty.

Betty: Not very often – once in a blue moon.

Ian: Yes, not very often.

Betty: Yes, it was very rare that they ever got sick. So it must have been good at once, at one point I guess.

Diane: Yes, for sure. Well, they got lots of exercise, and home cooking, and you raised some of your own food.

Betty: Yes, the garden wasn't great.

Diane: You raised your chickens and your goats.

Betty: Yes, we had our goats. Yeah, because we cut all our own wood, and everybody helped. They had to do that too, because everybody had to help to cut the wood and haul it in. And the kids were required to do a log a day. Two of them together worked, and they sawed the log, and if they got into a fight they had to do another one, and they never caught on. (mutual laughter) They never could catch one, you know, don't fight with your sibling because you're just going to have to do another log! (laughter) And today they even say, "Yes, I remember that!" But we seemed to manage OK, and we seemed to be fine.

Ian: We skied a lot in the winter.

Betty: Yes, we did ski a lot, really a lot.

Diane: Where did you go?

Ian: Just cross country skiing, over toward the golf course mostly, and we went up Mt. Lorne a bit.

Diane: And I'll bet you never saw anyone else on your excursions.

Ian: Nope. An interesting story, at Km 16, was one year we discovered there was a nest just over in the eave, just over the doorway, and there were bluebirds, which is unusual for bluebirds to have a nest, you know, but it was enclosed. And so, one day, lo and behold, one of the birds had fallen out. So we went up, to put him or her back, and there were four of them. And that same day, the kids were out near the tracks, and they discovered that the train had hit the mother, and I guess the father deserted because we never did see him. And so what we did was we brought them in, and we had chickens, and we fed them chick feed and water. And then when Betty went to town on town day to go groceries and stuff, she'd take the nest with her, on the seat of the truck, and then she'd feed them, you see, when she was in town or whatever, water them with a syringe or whatever.

Betty: Because they had to be fed about every three or four hours.

Ian: So anyway that's fine, and then they started to fly so we let them out, but of course they hung around, and they used to sit on the railing, all four of them in a line. Every morning they'd be out there.

Betty: They would cheep away 'til you came.

Ian: They really liked Doug because he had thick curly hair, and they'd sit on his head. (mutual laughter) And so they were there all summer, until fall time, and three of them left and one of

them stayed. And so, about two days later, one of the other ones came back, and there was all kinds of chittering and nattering and squawking, and eventually she took or he took the last one to go south, I guess. But one of the most interesting stories with these birds was, I had an old '69 Chevy truck, and the electrical under the box was all exposed, and with the mud and everything it used to get broken. I was under the truck and it was a rainy day, trying to fix this truck – this wiring for the back lights – and cursing and swearing, and lo and behold, in comes this little bird. This little bluebird hopped in beside me, and I thought, “Well, it can’t be that bad.”

Diane: Oh, how wonderful. Did the return the following ...

Betty and Ian: We don’t know!

Ian: I made a mistake, I should have had them banded. I could have got hold of the game branch and had them banded. And also too, it was a detriment to them, being so used to human beings.

Diane: Right, yes. Well, that’s fun memories – lots of great memories.

Betty: Yes, there are lots. So we had the goats there, and we had the chickens and the horses. Just before we left, Carolyn was given – before we left for Cape Breton - Carolyn was given a little foal, and she named him Bow. Like her horse was named Arrow, so she named the little one Bow. They game him, the people gave him to us because the mother had rejected the little one and wouldn’t feed it, and so they gave him to us to feed goat milk. And so she raised this little one on goat milk, and it seemed to do fine. Then we actually ended up selling the horses when we left, but by then he was pretty ...

Ian: We gave them away.

Betty: We gave them away? OK, we gave them away then. But it was sort of a neat thing to do, to give him the bottle.

Diane: Oh, for sure. And your horses, how did you keep them around? Did they ever wander off?

Betty: We actually had corrals and we kept them there, because we had to have corrals for the goats also. And so we would tether them. The girls would take them and tether them out in the field, just north there where Ruth and Andy (Lera) have built their house. There’s quite good grass there, and they would take them and tether them out there, and they would get fresher, you know, fresh grass in the summer.

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Diane: Good graze.

Betty: And so all along in that area there was a fair bit I guess, eh, of fresh grass there.

Ian: Yes. In the fall I used to cut the swamp grass that was in the bogs there. You know, it was just roughage.

Betty: Yes, and then we did get hay from Joe Chouinard , which is where Steve Holy lives now, and he sold hay at that time. And of course they had their grain that we bought, and of course the goats had to have grain.

Diane: Did you ever hobble the horses and let them roam around out in the field?

Ian: Yes, that's how we did it. Yes, they were just hobbled. They didn't go very far.

Diane: And then you could just call them in at night and they'd come?

Ian: The kids would go get them I think.

Betty: Yes, and the goats were allowed out occasionally too. Like we would tether them out, because they ate the buck brush, which was another chore that had to be done. A big wash bin of buck brush had to be brought in for those every day, at least once or twice a day. And we gave them, oh they had hay, and well the chickens of course just had hay in their nests.

Ian: Excuse me, another really interesting person you might talk to is Marie Chouinard. She's not Chouinard now.

Diane: Yes, I know. I had that idea, that I would like to contact her.

Ian: Yes, because she worked with her dad all the time out there.

Diane: Yes, and we do know her. Yes, we were planning to do that. Thanks. Maybe we should move on to your other residence that you had in the Mt. Lorne area, which was ...

Ian: Ramble on like this – I hope you don't mind.

Diane: Oh no, this is great. This is just the kind of stuff we like. Where was your other place that you lived?

Ian: Well, we lived at exactly Km 20 on the Annie Lake Road, and it was exactly a kilometer up on Idaho Hill. And the place we lived in was built in 1949 by T.C. Richards, and it was used as a bunkhouse for the mine. They had an up at the top, and they also had a tramline coming

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down from there. There's still some of the structure of the tramline there, near the cabin. And the little cabin was built originally by Foley and Schnabel. Schnabel is the creek, and Foley is that mountain that's just next door. And they were there turn of the century, I guess. And the cabin was built, or rebuilt, in 1904 – that little one.

Diane: Rebuilt?

Ian: Evidently, yes. They had a flood or something. Whether they rebuilt the whole thing or just had to ... I don't know.

Diane: So when was the original one built then?

Ian: I don't know, I'm sorry. I would think around the turn of the century, around 1901, something in that neighborhood. And they were originally mostly after silver, and they took some silver out of there. And then Doug Baird had his claims. He had the little cabin – he owned the little cabin. He had dumb donkey claims there, stretched all through that area. He was looking - they were looking mostly for gold. There is an interesting story about the, there was an American prospector, which of course a lot of them were, and he was prospecting up the creek, and he got very sick, and he ended up in the hospital in Juneau. And he was telling the nurses about this find he had. And so anyway, he gave them a map, and he said, "You look for a fire pit and an old coffeepot. And so, he died, but there have been numerous people trying to find the coffeepot, but nobody ever has.

Diane: He told the nurses, so did the nurses come?

Ian: I don't know. I'm not sure of that. Well, you don't know how much truth there is in the story. But that's the story anyway.

Diane: Well, there's quite a history to that place.

Ian: Yes there is, quite a history. And then, they didn't do anything about it, but there's quite a coal showing up there, and numerous people have been interested in that over the years. But yes, we really enjoyed our life there actually.

Diane: And so, at that point you just had one ...

Betty: We just had Doug.

Ian: But he was only there for a very short time, because it's a long way for him to commute into town, and so he went to live in town with his siblings.

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Diane: And he was in high school then.

Ian: Yes, he was grade 11, or 12.

Betty: Twelve. But Ian was on nights, and when I worked at the mine, then I went the opposite direction, and Ian didn't get home in time to get him to school, so we just couldn't get him to school, so we sent him to his siblings, because they had apartments in town. And his marks took a dive! (mutual laughter) But he seemed to do OK there.

Diane: And he did graduate.

Betty: Oh yes, he graduated. And then Brian McDougall lived with us for a while.

Diane: Did he live in the cabin?

Betty: Yes, he actually lived in the loft. He didn't live in the loft, he slept in the loft, and that's where Doug slept too. And then he actually rented the place where the German ladies are ... used to be, across the lake, in the bay. I can't remember their names. She was a doctor.

Ian: They came after.

Betty: Oh did they? Oh, OK.

Ian: It was owned by an RCMP fellow.

Betty: Smith, or something?

Ian: Yes, I think it was – an RCMP fellow. Don't quote us on that.

Diane: OK.

Betty: By then we were actually by ourselves. We had gone to Cape Breton, became broke, came back, and so we both had to work full time. So that's when I went to work. Ian was lucky enough, he got his old job back at Kelly Douglas, and I got the job at the mine (Mt. Skookum Mine).

Diane: And what was your job at the mine?

Betty: I was the mine manager's secretary, and so I ran the office there. I really enjoyed it. I loved it there.

Diane: So there weren't that many employees at that time?

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Betty: No, we had 69 miners. And so it would be, maybe the staff would be, I don't know, 10 to 15, I would think. The cooks and ...

Ian: Mechanics.

Betty: Yes, mechanics. What happened then was, they – I got the job, and the fellows would pick me up at the bottom of the driveway. I would go down the driveway, and either my boss would, or the fellow would pick me up, and they would take me to the mine.

Diane: So you would go down your driveway to the Annie Lake Road ...

Betty: Down the driveway, and they would just pick me up on the way through, and they would bring me back ...

Diane: How convenient!

Betty: At night. And they would also come and clear our road. At that time we didn't have a plow truck. And eventually we got like a car and truck, so I could drive myself, because some of those drivers, those miners were – quick, oh my gosh! You wondered if you were going to get there alive! (mutual laughter)

Diane: I was going to say – maybe you should describe what your driveway was like at this place, because not everybody knows that you were way up there.

Betty: Yes. It was a kilometer, a total kilometer, which ...

Ian: We were at 2800 feet I think, or 29 – 29 or 3000, somewhere in there.

Betty: Yes, and so it was just straight up. Not straight, but I mean it angled.

Diane: It was a steep angle.

Betty: Angle, yes. It didn't seem to be that long of a place to walk down and walk back.

Ian: When, one time, after Betty had an accident and pulled all the ligaments or things in her leg, and I was laid off at the time. It was in the winter.

Betty: From skiing.

Ian: From skiing. I used to take the dog team and take her down in the morning to be picked up, and then I'd take the dog team down at night, and pick her up and bring her back.

Diane: What a great way to get to work.

Betty: I was on crutches for some time, about six weeks, yes. The fellows were really good. I was good to them too. I mean, they were really good to me and to us. They did lots of things for us, like plowing the driveway and things like that. When the children were, at that point we had that interval where the children were not children, they were all adults but not settled down yet, and they would come out on the weekends to stock up on food and get fed. (mutual laughter) Then when they actually started to marry and have children – the driveway is what made me think of it – is we used to have, and by then the older ones, the older grandchildren would be in school, and some of the little ones were pretty little then, like Sarah was pretty little, but we would have a sledding party between Christmas and New Year's. And we would have all these people come, and I would make all kinds of soups.

Diane: Were these people – excuse me – were they people from town?

Betty: Some were from town, some were from here. They were just like friends of ours or friends of the kids.

Ian: Friends of the kids, mostly.

Betty: Friends of the kids and their parents, which would then be friends of ours. So the deal was, you took the sleds, and you sled down the hill, and then a truck would go down and pick you up, so you didn't have to climb back up. So then you could come in the house whenever you got cold and get warmed up, and you could have soup or cocoa or whatever. So I made pots and pots and pots of soup, and we had as many as 29 people in that little tiny cabin at one time. But everybody seemed to have a good time, and as the years went on somebody suggested, "Oh, we should have a bonfire." So we had that outside too, so you could sit around the bonfire or you could come in. The kids always really, really enjoyed it, but the adults! They were like, they had all gone to school together. Like especially the guys, like it's a big competition, who's gonna make it the fastest? It's like a bunch of little kids! (mutual laughter) And they forgot that they were in their late 30's or 40's, so the next day they could hardly move, because they had been acting like kids! (mutual laughter) But they had fun, and that was the whole point of it, to have fun. But we did that quite a few years, until we moved here.

Ian: It must have been at least 8 years, probably.

Betty: I would think, yes.

Diane: Oh that's wonderful. So it was a yearly tradition.

Betty: It became like a yearly tradition, yes, that's for sure, yes.

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Diane: Not to go off the subject, but you talked about the people that came, and some of them were neighbors, and I wanted to ask you, who were your neighbors?

Betty: Out there, wow, we didn't have ...

Ian: Well, Sheila Alexandrovich was the closest one anyway.

Diane: She was already there – was she already there when you moved there?

Betty: She was, yes she was. Just, I think.

Ian: I don't know if Hans, when Hans moved out there.

Betty: He wasn't there. The Toews fellow ...

Ian: He came while we were there.

Diane: Oh, Mike Toews, yes.

Betty: I can't remember his first name.

Diane: Mike.

Betty: Was it Mike? The one that died.

Ian: Yes. All those houses were deserted, you know, the pig farm, and the one Michelle (Harper) is in now.

Diane: Yes, and the one that Mike Toews had is now lived in by Tamara. She has the dog team.

Betty: Yes, but no one was actually there then.

Ian: No, there was nobody there.

Betty: And I'm not sure when he came, but John Hardy, he was actually our closest neighbor, but he was only ...

Ian: Yes, but he was only about four or five year, three or four years.

Diane: Where did he live?

Ian: No, he lives there now.

Betty: Yes, he lives there now.

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Ian: He has the adit on the mountain next door, on Foley. He's been there, and he digs in there and he high grades silver out, and he has a skid shack there. Yes, he's been there for about five years now.

Betty: Oh anyways, yes, because we've been here five, almost, so maybe it's closer to ten.

Ian: Eight. And then where Rob and Lisa live was um ...

Diane: Oh, Margo and Lavalle.

Ian: French fellow, yes, Margo and Lavalle, that's right. And there's a story about them too, because when I worked nights, and we had a loft – this was just after we first moved there, not very long, and into the winter in January – we had a ladder going to the loft, and it wasn't very good. So Betty went up the ladder just after I left, and she fell and broke her arm, so how was she going to get anywhere, you see? So we had an old car, and she crawled into that, and went over to Margo and Lavalle's and leaned on the horn, and he took her in.

Diane: Well, it's scary to be all by yourself.

Betty: It was, yes, and I must have hit my head on the batteries that were there, because things were battery run, and the whole thing went down. And I was just, one of the guys wanted a map, and I thought, "Oh, I'd better get out of bed and get it, because I won't remember in the morning." And so I got the map and was coming down, and what woke me up, or came to, was the dogs were licking my face, because we had two house dogs then. And so, that night, for some reason, it was cold, and Ian had turned the vehicle around so that if I couldn't get it started in the morning I could just run it down the hill and hope that it would start, and so, thank goodness that he did. So he took me in to the hospital, Lavalle did. And then another time, I was hurrying in the rain, to try to get to the airport, because I was going to see my mother, and as I, I had the suitcases beside me, and as I took the corner and I took it too fast and went into the swamp, because the suitcases all fell on top of me. So I went into the swamp. So Lavalle was home, and he came out, got me out (mutual laughter) and then took me into the airport, so they were good neighbors! Good thing he was there! (mutual laughter) And so, our son came out and they pulled the truck out of the swamp, and it was just in not very much, I don't think, was it?

Ian: Oh, quite a ways.

Betty: Oh, was it?

Diane: So was that a technique that you had to use fairly often, to get the truck down the hill? Like just point it in the right direction?

Ian: No, well no, actually it was amazing how cold that little Toyota truck would start, that I had. And if it was really, really cold I used to go out at night and start it once, and then I'd put a blanket over it. The best thing, though, was at Mile 10, because working at Kelly Douglas we used to unload these containers, White Pass containers which came over the railway. And in each of these was a alcohol heater, a big heater. So when they quit with the containers, I got hold of one of these little alcohol heaters, and I dug in the ground, dug a hole in the ground, and we used to pull the car over it and put blankets over the hood, and it worked like a charm.

Diane: That is great! (mutual laughter)

Betty: I'm trying to think of anything else that was – oh, the big thing up there, when we were up at Annie Lake, was the animals. To us, we felt this was a very special time, I did anyway, and because we had so many of the animals around. And we always had sheep above us in the spring, and we would see the little ones. And I worked for a sheep biologist at that time, and so I had to do the count, you know, to tell Manfred.

Diane: This was after you started working in town?

Betty: Town, yes. And so, it was really interesting, and people would come out and want to watch the sheep or look at the sheep. Well we just seemed to luck out, and if somebody came, there would be the sheep walking across, so it was really kind of neat. And it was just the ewes and the little ones on our mountain. Our mountain was actually Idaho Hill, it was called. But it was interesting – we had lots of like bears come in, that we didn't need. When we used to have a grizzly walk through, and we had a little bit of snow fence, and up there, there was no soil, and so you had like two inches to put the snow fence to try to block it from the driveway. And this stupid grizzly, he was just a youngster, he would walk through, knock the thing down, the snow fence, go over to the creek, get a drink, come back, not go in that place, go further down and knock the fence down again, and go back. (mutual laughter) So it was interesting to have them there. And we had a lot of birds there. Of course we made sure we fed them lots. And we had water - we hauled our own water from the creek, or from a spring. There was a spring just a little ways over, and we hauled the water from there. And we didn't get smart enough, until we were almost ready to leave, and thinking that we have all – we had 22 sled dogs – why are we hauling the water when we have these dogs? And so eventually we trained the dog that the dog is going to pull the water up the hill for us. We didn't mind going down, but going up ...

Ian: It was quicker that way.

Betty: It was quicker. And in the summer we had a gravity feed system, and so at the edge of the property, it made a small pool, and we just sort of let the water drain there, and it made a little pool and it would just go into the ground, because it was very sandy.

Ian: Rocky.

Betty: Rocky. And so, the birds would just congregate there, and they thought that was their special pool, their own private one. But Ian actually ended up – the gardens there were much better, although we had to bring in all the soil and do everything to make the garden, because you were just on the rocks.

Diane: You had a big greenhouse there, didn't you?

Betty: Yes, we did have a huge greenhouse there.

Diane: Which you built – it wasn't there to start with?

Betty: Yes. No it wasn't there to start with. And it isn't there now – it fell down.

Diane: And I know it was probably filled with flowers.

Betty: No, actually it was filled with vegetables, yes. We had a lot of flowers, and we grew a lot of flowers, and we had several rosebushes. And what Ian did was he set up a system where, at the base of the property, which was sort of downhill, he would have hoses running down to each of the gardens. Like we sort of had the lower garden, and the upper garden, and then you know, just because that's where the water went. And he had all these hoses running down, and so you could just turn on that hose if it was their turn to be watered, and turn on the other hose, and it worked out really, really well.

Ian: We had enough pressure to put sprinklers on, just from going up the creek.

Diane: Oh my goodness! How nice!

Betty: Yes, and so it was really neat. And we tracked eagles there, I did, for nine years. I tracked the arrival of the bald eagles that were just below us at the lake. And I tracked when they came, if they had babies, when the babies were born, when they left, and all about their nesting. And we would actually, they were on a very tall tree, and we would take – we didn't have many mice, but if we caught mice, we would take them down to them. They could get their own food, but we just like to do that. And squirrels. When we had squirrels we would take them down. And Carolyn got some wonderful pictures. She got up on the hill above them, and watched them bringing fish in to the little ones.

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Ian: She got a picture of the eagle coming in.

Betty: Coming in. They didn't have babies very often. It think maybe three, only three or four times when we were there.

Ian: Oh no, no.

Diane: I remember seeing a big eagles nest on the part that's the old road, the old Annie Lake Road.

Ian: Yes, that's right, that's where it was.

Diane: Yes, and there were babies in there.

Betty: And so we had a funny thing happen, and they must have really wondered, the people. But I saw a plane, a small plane circling over, and it started to circle over the eagles' nest, and boy, I was in that car and I found those people, and I tore a strip up one side of them and down the other, and I said, "Get away from my eagles, because they've got a baby and they'll kill the baby!" The parents will kill the baby if they're disturbed. So they said, "No, no, we didn't mean any harm! We were just looking at them." (mutual laughter) They were making, I don't know, some sort of gum advertisement or something?

Ian: They did quite a few commercials, films down there at the lake.

Diane: Maybe you were in some of them.

Betty: He was.

Ian: No ...

Betty: Anyway, they said OK, and, and I was just so angry that anybody would hurt MY eagles. These are MY eagles. They're not your eagles, they're MY eagles. And so, anyways, they did pull their plane out and went away. But the time that Ian was in a commercial, you were out dog sledding, and they were making another commercial. And he - unbeknownst to him. So he suddenly comes along the lake with his dogs. And so, well, here they are.

Diane: Oh, how perfect! You should have gotten paid for that.

Betty: I don't think he was in the film

Ian: Well, I don't think they were taking pictures of me. I think I interrupted everything.

(mutual laughter)

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Betty: And then they made one with cars there.

Ian: No it was tires or something.

Betty: Tires. But they had fancy cars, like Porsches.

Ian: No, not Porsches.

Betty: It was like a Porsche. It was a fancy, fancy car. And they did these on the lake, these commercials. And most of the time we didn't even know they were there. You know, we just happened to come into it. But it was different anyways.

Ian: I think the most famous one was when they filmed "Never Cry Wolf". They had a place come over from Carcross, and part of the film was done on Annie Lake. And they had a dog team doing something on Annie Lake.

Diane: Oh, oh great! Well, it's very beautiful down there.

Betty: Yes, it is, yes. So anyways, that was our thing with the birds, and the animals, and ...

Ian: (laughing) I hope Diane hasn't got too many more questions! (laughing)

Diane: No, I don't. You filled it out very nicely!

Betty: We tried!

Diane: If it had just been my questions, it would have been over pretty quick. No, it sounds like you had some wonderful years here.

Ian: Oh yes, just unbelievable. And when we went to Cape Breton, it wasn't two or three months when we thought, ah, we made a mistake. But you do those things.

Diane: Well, everybody missed you here too, because I remember we met you just before you moved to Cape Breton. Then you came back, and it was so exciting to have you back.

Betty: Yes, we had a flood up there one year.

Diane: A flood?

Ian: A flood, yes, at Annie Lake.

Betty: The creek flooded, at it took out a lot of the bank. And it also took out, there was a road, well I guess you'd call it a trail, really.

Ian: It was an old mining road.

Betty: An old mining road, just a little ways over from us. And it took out a whole, huge mass of that. And it was really scary, because all kinds of stuff came down, and rocks crashed, and a boiler came from somewhere, and ...

Diane: Oh, my gosh!

Ian: It was just parts, you know, they had been mining up above.

Diane: An old camp, yes.

Betty: We were really concerned that it was actually going to come right down the driveway, but it settled down, or it found another trail.

Ian: It started on the driveway above the little cabin. But Carolyn gave us a hand, and maybe Don was there too, and we were able to divert it. But it went all the way down to the ... it just showed where the creek used to flow at one time. But the creek is – you know how wide it is – well, the flood plain, it extends for, oh, at least a good 100 metres. Yes, it's unreal. Not 100 metres, 50 metres.

Diane: Fifty metres on either side?

Ian: Well, the creek is this, and then when it floods it can get out to ... It's supposed to be a one in every 50 years or something event.

Betty: Event, yes. So they say.

Diane: And you got to experience it. OK, so before we wrap up, I'd just like to get a little bit more of a sense of the history of your Annie Lake Road place – when you bought it and who you bought it from.

Ian: We bought it in 1984, and we bought it from Bob English.

Diane: OK, and you're not sure who any previous owners were?

Ian: I don't. I'm sorry.

Diane: That's no problem. And then you moved to where you are now. We should have you explain where you are now, because we haven't said that yet.

Ian: We're living at exactly Km 11, almost exactly, on the Carcross Road, from the Cut-Off.

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And we're living on our daughter and son-in-law's property. And they have a alpaca farm, and they also have chickens and horses.

Diane: Yes, and that's Carolyn and ...

Ian: Carolyn and Rick Diment, Rick Diment. And we were very, very fortunate because one time, Rick and Carolyn came to the cabin, and I think it was probably after they had helped us shovel snow a couple of times, and they said, "We're building a guest cabin. Do you want to be the guests?"

Diane: Oh, so she already had in mind ...

Ian: Yes, oh definitely!

Diane: ... that that wasn't ever a guest cabin.

Ian: Yes, so anyway, that's how we got here. We do help with the farm here occasionally, when they need it, and ...

Diane: I know, yes.

Ian: But the best thing in the world has been that we have the two grandchildren come here very often, very, very often, a little less when they're teenagers, but especially a lot when they were younger.

Diane: Yes, that is great. And this is just such an incredible spot.

Ian: Yes, it is.

Diane: We're looking out over Cowley Lake and the mountains, and it's just really ... There's lots of sunshine coming in the windows, and a beautiful little house.

Ian: Yes.

Diane: And the kind of neat thing about it for Carolyn is that it's close to where she grew up as a child, when you lived at Km. 16 (Mile 10)

Ian: Yes, yes it is. It's only about 5 Km. Oh no, she really enjoys it here.

Diane: Yes, I think you mentioned that she rides horses with her kids on trails ...

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Ian: Yes, she does, on the told trails she used to ride. The pipeline road, and along the golf course, and you know, through the woods and stuff, and I'm not sure where all of them go, to be quite honest.

Diane: No, you probably don't know all of it.

Well, this has been a lot of fun talking to you and hearing all your stories. I want to thank you very much. It's just been a pleasure.

Ian: Well, thank you for coming.

Betty: Yes, thank you for coming.

Diane: Oh sure. And I also want to thank Claire Desmarais for her technical assistance.