

BILL LeMARQUAND (BL)

Interviewer: Margaret Heath (MH)

Date:

- MH Okay Bill, how do you pronounce your name?
- BL Le Mar Kaand, in French
- MH Good. When did you come to Wanham and how long did you stay?
- BL Well, we came in 48 and we came in March. I don't remember exactly the date but we came when the snow was already going. We brought a carload with us, you know, we had two horses and we had all our machinery with us in this carload.
- MH When you say "we" who are you meaning?
- BL Well, I mean my brother, George, because as I say I just came to help him. I was not even a soldier. Actually I had no right to be there, only as a hired man.
- MH Is that so? What prompted you to come? Did you come as a request from him to help you?
- BL Well yes, because at that time George couldn't drive a tractor.
- MH Well. Where did you come from?
- BL We came from Thorhill, Alberta. We had been farming there for twenty-two years.
- MH How did you feel on first viewing your new domain?
- BL Well, I was very thrilled, but George wasn't quite so thrilled, it was too hilly.
- MH Is that so. And what was your land location?
- BL Well, I can't remember the numbers of the half section but as I say we weren't two miles north of Lassiter School.
- MH Then when you got land you settled where?
- BL Me, two miles west of that again. Two miles west of Lassiter School. But as you said there was no buildings there so the first thing I had to do, my brother was too preoccupied with the boys to even worry about building, so I had to build a house for me.
- MH How big was your house?
- BL Oh, it would be about 14x18, but it was a storey and a half.
- MH Lumber?
- BL Lumber, yeah.
- MH Did you have any help with it?
- BL Oh I had, he helped when he felt like it.

MH Was it hard at the time to get the building done on your own then?

BL Oh no, I had been doing carpenter work for years and I was brought up in the carpentry shop.

MH That should help. And who were your closest neighbors over there?

BL Well, our closest neighbor at that time was Wilf Martin and Jennings and Connell, and Johnson, Crocker and Mills and another Jennings and McNamee.

MH Quite a few then.

BL Oh yes, there were quite a few there. There was Krahl and there was, just (*thinking,*) we'll leave that go for now.

MH OK. Just thinking about that land again that you procured, how did you manage to get that or do you want to comment on . . . ?

BL Me? I can. You see, the thing was this that I had my homestead in Thorhill. My brother sold because he got lazy, so naturally what was I gonna do, can't leave him go when I knew that he wasn't a farmer, although he thought he was a wonderful one. And I said, well George, the only thing is you have roots because it was just broken but it had been worked though, it had been floated . . .

MH The whole quarter?

BL The whole of that land was all broke but it had been just floated and naturally there were lots of roots to pick. I figured, well, if I go and help him get him established I'm gonna be better off and so is he, you know, and then I can go back to my place in Thorhill. But then I went to work and we couldn't do it in a year, the first you know. You take Johnson, he made fun of us the first year. Oh wow, they seeded the whole works and they got a beautiful crop. They gave the government a beautiful share, and Marquands, they only had eighty acres and well, they were homesteaders and only two of them at that. So we were out of this world, you know, and they made fun of us. But I said, it's not the first year that counts. You see we only had eighty acres of crop but we had the whole field summer fallowed for the following year. So the following year we got a wonderful crop, but these guys that had got the big crop they disked on stubble with too small of machinery and they got nothing. And they kept selling it for nothing, you see.

MH So you felt that you had pretty good land then that you did the seeding . . .

BL Wonderful. I told George we had wonderful land and I tried to trade with him after I had mine two or three times. Especially on account of the ground, well, it was too hilly you see. I said, holy smoke, George I will trade with you. You'll be closer to town, you'll save me going to get you. Because I had to go get him, you know, from my place, the minute I changed at the end of two years. I had to go back four miles to pick him up and then go back to town, then go back past my place four miles at night and take him back. So I said, I'll trade with you and I'll pick you up on the way to town. But then, he wouldn't trade when I wanted to trade. But still he grumbled about the roly land, you see.

MH Did either of you have any stock?

BL No. Well, we did have, but just a couple of cattle, but we didn't keep them because we figured you got to concentrate on one thing or the other. And here we had so many roots, you know what it is, brand new land, and we had so many roots, and we had hilly-like ground, and very big humps that I figured should be torn down so you could farm it. And I said to George, let's forget the cattle, just keep our teams so we have something to go to town, you know, so if it snows in the winter time. But I said, let's forget the cattle and concentrate on getting our land, and if you've got the land then you can get the cattle, because you've got all kinds of feed for them. But if you get the cattle first and you don't fix the land, and then that what lots of the boys did and they went broke on it, aye. So at my place, I don't know who had it before me, but the guy went to work and left it go bad, just on account of that he had started with cattle and he found himself with no feed and he just left and abandoned the thing. So the government figured, well, what are we were going to do with it. The soldiers are making a poor mess of it, which they were. What are we going to do with it? Well, they figured, we will give it to whoever wants it. Well, here was Billy tight johnny-on-the-spot and if I liked my brothers, and I saw another one just as nice but it was heavier soil and I wanted George's for the sake of the alfalfa, you see. He could get 200 pounds of alfalfa to the acre on that land. So anyway, we went, me and one of the boys, Jennings, we went to work and we went down to Grande Prairie here to file on this land, you see, both of us wasn't soldiers, neither one of us was too young.

MH Who was the other one?

BL Young Jennings, one of the young Jennings. I don't remember his name now, but anyway he came down with me and they put just two names in a hat, and he picked up the right one and he dropped it again, oh it's nothing, so I got the other one and he lost it just on account of that. It's unbelievable that it could happen, but it did, so I was lucky. I was four miles closer than my brother to town, you see, two miles south, two miles west, closer to Rycroft and we didn't want to go to Wanham on account of that great big hill. Well, you know what, it is a three mile hill and if you can avoid it, why not, and going to Rycroft we had no hill at all. So I went to work and I took this land and I figured I made darn good on it as far as I am concerned. I never kicked on it because that was again another beautiful place. The only thing, it was just rounded, just like a ball, you see. But that didn't bother me at all. Well, then I went to work and I kept it for ten years and I sold it to this Roy Krahl, you see. And then I didn't have this machinery sold to this Jennings, which he used a little too much whiskey once in a while. He got in the hole to the government so bad that they were going to take his land away. So he hit me up, he said, Bill, you sold your land why don't you buy mine. Well, I said, I just sold not to go buy some more. Oh, he said you can get it awfully cheap. I said what do you call awful cheap? He said, give me a thousand dollars to pay the government, you see. So I went to see it and it was still the most beautiful land again than I had, nicer, more level, and it was the half section just west of where they have the corrals, you see. So I took a thousand dollars, he owed fifteen hundred, twenty five hundred, for land already broke. It has gone back a little but what's the difference? So again I started farming when I thought I would quit, you see. So I went back to farming for four more years there. Then there was an old man, I can't remember his name now, he was the last to pull out of there, so the people in Wanham might know his name. He was the last to sell out. He had summer fallowed some land for two years and he was too sick to put it in that year again. So he said to me, Bill, put it in again and I will give you two thirds and you will give me a

third. So I said to him, alright, why not? And he told me it was fertilized and summer fallowed two years in a row so I got a wonderful crop of flax and when the time came to sell it, ah ah nothing doing, that was his. Well, I said, it's okay, but, I said, you are going to bring it right back here, you know that, don't you. He said, what do you mean? I said, where's your permit? Your permit is in this guy's name, not in your name. I said, you had it. So when he saw that he couldn't get away with it he said, well, you are going to make sure you give me my share. But I was going to anyway. But anyway, I went to work and I gave him his share but still I was making quite a bit of money. It was over \$3.00 that year for that doggone flax so that was another bonus on top of what was given for my share of crop. And then at the end of four years, I said, oh, what's-his-name, Tom Hargrove came along and he said, Bill I will give you \$9000 for your half. Well, I had been sick at that time and I wasn't feeling none too good, so I said, okay, you got yourself a deal. So I sold again, you see. But my brother, when he found out that I sold out, didn't want to stay as he was losing his joe-boy as I would fix his tractor and things when it went on the blink, so he said I am going to quit too. The funny part of it was I got just as much money out of my second farm as he got out of his and he had stayed on it nearly fifteen years and I had stayed four. So that's the way it goes but the boys were to blame, you know, if they weren't, as I call it, very young and they had no reason to go but they wanted to farm too much land for the size of machinery they had. It wasn't the land to blame. I was told one day that that land was absolutely no good. I hadn't seen more beautiful land. There was not a rock on it. You could do a lot of land that's got no rocks and as I say the land is still there; a person can't lie about land, it is something that you can go there and you can look at and you could say well, there is a healthy liar if you lie about it. If you are lying you are just lying to make yourself a liar because people are going to know that you are a liar. Oh, I was accused of being against that project, you know, it made you laugh, and I was one of the guys who loved it the best. I loved it better than the soldiers.

MH Why?

BL Well, because we had cleared every inch of ours. We started out with our farm. Oh, there was at least six inches of black soil on top, beautiful, beautiful, but with the sand underneath it just sunk out of sight. So we were back to sandy soil. So you can see why we were willing to come to Wanham to a place where it was clay. And George's wasn't clay but mine was. Well, both of mine were fairly good clay, red clay, but George's was a silt sand. So you see?

MH Well, that sounds interesting. Were you actively involved in community affairs when you were out there?

BL Well, not me. My brother was all the time.

MH In what way?

BL He was always after the government for getting a better share. You see they started out by getting a quarter share and then they reduced them a third share and then through George going after them they got down to a quarter share, you see. So he did quite a bit of work there. Oh, George was on the black list, you know. If you don't know that the folks around did as he was always after the government for a better deal for the farmers. Sometimes I used to tell him, you go too far, George, because they are giving you guys a deal and a half in my books. You

know what I mean. They gave them the land already broke, but where they made the mistake, they should have seen it. They went to work and gave them \$2.50 oats, registered oats. They had machinery with six foot disks, eh. And little tractors to work all that land so the oats just rotted on the corner of the field.

But they owed that debt, that debt was against those farmers. Well then, they were already on the wrong side of the scale before they got on their feet. Well then, the next year they had to have more seed again because they hadn't used or saved what they could have saved enough for another year, because they couldn't use what they had. They were greedy because they got it through the government so give, give, give. And that's why I say, I don't know, governments seem to go overboard in a thing like that. If they had went to work and gave them half that land, you know, half the amount and give them a quarter cleared, and said you got another but you clear it yourself, I think everyone would have made a success. But they went to work and they cleared the half and then they put them on there as I say with these six foot tractors and these eight foot tractors. I mean they were old tractors and too small for the amount of land they had. So that's where the biggest thing that I figured where the government made a mistake. Well then, they made that big of a mistake that when they saw, like me as I said, I got one and ___ingworth? got one, you see, and Jennings, we were the three that I remember that got outside of being sold who just had got land. But it got so bad that the government said well alright instead of giving you ten years to pay for the thing, which we had, you know, and it was supposed to be 10 thirds and then it got to be 10 quarters and they said that they were feeling so bad that they cut it down to eight years. And either eight years or you go to work and they gave you so much for your land or you buy them out, you know, and get your title at the end of eight years. Well we, my brother and I, we naturally bought ours as they had to give us money. That's how we bought ours. They had it at such a low price, you see, that we had overpaid. My brother got over \$1500, I think, at the end of eight years. But then lots of them owed the government money, you see, so when they got their little share out of it, some of them went out as low as \$500, you see. There is Bob Morgan right now he's on Mr. Shannon's place there. He went out without practically nothing but he was lucky and found a farm out here but then the farm had stones, so how could he be any better?

MH Do you have any recollection of church activities?

BL Oh, the Anglican Church came to the school, you see, every, I think every second Sunday.

MH This was from where?

BL Was from Spirit River.

MH That was pretty well it, aye?

BL Oh yes, oh yes, that's only the Anglican Church that I know. I never heard of the Catholic Church coming out there.

MH What are your recollections of school activities there?

BL Well, as far as I am concerned, as I say I am a bachelor, I know very little, but we used to have some doggone good dances in that school.

MH That's what they used for a hall, in the school, aye?

BL Oh yes, it was given to the district by the government for \$1.00.

MH For heaven's sakes.

BL Oh yes, the school was given, yeah.

MH Do you remember some of the earlier school teachers?

BL As I said, Mrs. Jennings, and there was Shmyr, young Shmyr, we got after her, and there was somebody else but I don't remember who was the name but there was two of them.

MH Your homestead was two miles west of there.

BL West of Lassiter School.

MH You said there was a teacherage at the school?

BL Oh yes, there was a teacherage but it was moved. That wasn't given with the school. Just the school was given, not the teacherage.

MH Who built the school then?

BL The Spirit River District.

MH Oh, I see. And how did the school decide, coming into being, who was the initiators to prompt it?

BL Well, my brother was, although, you see, that was the second time my brother started a school out. In Thorhill when we homesteaded there, that's in 1926, that's a long time away, aye, he went to work and they bawled him out, they said an old bachelor, you stupid old guy, you have given yourself more taxes. Yes, but, he said, I got an education too, when I was young, and why shouldn't these children be entitled to an education. So when he got on the Lassiter project he worked quite hard on it. You see, he was one of the signatures they had. He was keeping the books all the time for the Lassiter project, you see. So him and, I don't know which were the others, but there was Dick James on it, I know that, there were a few more, well McNamee was on it, and I couldn't tell you the others, because as I say, as far as the school was concerned, I wasn't interested in it, but my brother was.

MH Do you recall any serious accidents in the area?

BL No, I sure don't, I sure don't.

MH No mishaps of any kind on those hills or anything?

BL I don't know.

MH Was there much wild game there?

BL Oh yes, there were lots, lots of moose there.

MH Were you or your brother hunters?

BL No, we weren't but you see, again I was the only guy at that time that had a team, you see. So they used to do the hunting and I used to take the meat home and take my quarter home. So you see, that's the way I got my meat. But hunting, I am no good at all as a hunter.

MH Did you have any problems with bears or wolves?

BL Well, as I said, on the east end they claimed they did, but I wasn't there to know, I just heard about it.

MH You didn't see any in your granaries or anything?

BL Well, I did see one place in my granary where one had slept but he wasn't there, you know, just the oats was burnt where he slept. That's the only thing that I know of. And we didn't lose much, maybe four bushels of grain that he ate.

MH Well, that's all the questions I can think of, but if you have anything you would like to talk about just go ahead.

BL Well, when I got this second place, as I said it had been left go back and it had gone back further than the first one that I took, so I was lucky I had an old 15-30 and I had these high compression pistons which made it like a 22-36 tractor still bigger tractor and then I had the steel wheels with extensions which gave me an eighteen inch wheel. So now you are going to hear something about that. I think you know but anyway, they call me a moon man, don't they?

MH *(laughing)*

BL You never heard that?

MH No

BL I believe it makes no difference what you are going to kill, you got to kill it after the full moon.

MH Why?

BL Well, because it works, it definitely works. If you did it before the full moon it is going to grow back, but if you do it after the full moon it's gonna die.

MH Have you ever tried that with wild oats?

BL Well, I haven't tried that with wild oats because I never had any to bother me. But I have tried it with toadflax.

MH Have you?

BL Oh yes, I had toadflax in that east place. The inspector came and he said, Marquand you can't seed that crop next year, he said, you can't seed that crop. I said, you damn right I'm going to seed it. I said, you come and see it and you tell me if you can find any toadflax but he didn't come back. I don't know why he didn't come back maybe he believed me I don't know but he didn't come back, but I had no toadflax. But I went just two days before the new moon and I worked that land and I really worked it and that's when you kill it and especially in September

and October. You see, it hasn't got a time to revive and you can really kill practically anything in that time.

MH That's interesting.

BL Well, that's it. And anyway, I went to work and I had this, well, remember it had all been broke, but this second growth had come back up. Of course it had been done on the increased mustard but anyway there is a nice growth coming back up way higher than the tractor so I just went without a plough, without anything behind the tractor, just the tractor, and I wheeled this timber all down, just flattened the whole doggone works and do you know, the next year I could go to work and I could burn it, everything was as dead as a doornail. And that's how I reclaimed the land. So you see, it cost me very little to reclaim them.

MH Where did you get the idea of this moon phase theory?

BL Well, I'll tell you it was McNamee that told me about it. You see, we went to work and we got down there and my brother was one of these guys that has to be, and I used to tell him, you're not in heaven yet, everything has to be perfect. So I wanted to seed at least twenty acres of this alfalfa you know the first year. Rough but seed it. Oh no no it had to be as smooth as this or else, so we didn't seed any of it the first year. But the second year we seeded and we happened to hit a fruitful sign. We knew nothing about it, you see. But we happened to hit the fruitful sign on the increase of the moon so we had this bumper crop of alfalfa seed – forty-five cents a pound. We got over 200 pounds to the acre. So McNamee come along and he looked at the seed and he looked at the pile and we had two granaries full and he said where did this come from? And he says how in the dickens did you do that? You must have hit the moon. I'm just like you, how did I hit the moon, I didn't know, either on my head or on my feet. Well, I figured it was worth investigating and seeing if there is something in this moon. Well, I said, how do you say this? You must have hit the moon. Oh well, he said, haven't you seen the moon book? No, I've never seen the moon book. Well, he said, you come to my place and we'll see. George is the guy that has records, he must have records of his seedings, which he did have. Well, I said, okay. So I got after George to give me the dates and I went down to McNamee's and right enough we had hit this fruitful sign on the first quarter of the moon. So I figured if it works and McNamee knows about it that it's worked before, I'll bet he's going to try it, you see, and I've never been without using it since. As a matter of fact I have just sent for six more books right now, for next year. Because you gotta buy every year on account the phases are different.

MH Why are you buying six books instead of one?

BL Because I have people who have already asked. I have more guys asking all the time, Bill, when you get yours get mine.

MH And you'd better get me one too.

BL Well, that's it you see. So that's the way . . . You want one? Well, I thought you were just joking.

MH No, I'm not joking.

BL Well I'll let you have this old one anytime you want it because now, you know, it's too late to do anything because the ground is froze. After the ground is froze you have had it. But I'll leave one sent to you, ask Myra for it.

MH Okay

BL So I go to work now and I give one to my neighbors in Thorhill, that's three neighbors in Thorhill and to one in Westlock, you see. But the beauty of these guys it is the Dominion Seed House puts them out. I tried to get them here in Grande Prairie and you know I had to pay more than I had to pay down there and then I had to go and ship them back to my friends. So I was paying more than double for the books. So I figured I am going back to Dominion Seed House. All I tell them is that I want this guy to have one and that guy to have one and I want that guy and I am through with it. But you see these guys here I don't have to do that because they are handy but for them guys down there I would have to ship it back to them, you see. So they say, take care of your own town, buy in your own town. What's the use of buying in your own town when they soak you for buying there?

MH *(acknowledging)*

BL That's how I look at it. That's how, as you say, I came to know about these moon phases. I had heard before that you seed the spuds in the decrease of the moon but I had never took much interest in it you know. But I figured, well, if it's that good it's worth it and we sold a lot of beautiful seeds.

MH I was wondering when you were talking about alfalfa being so good during the years that you were there and it seems there is very little of it now that you can raise, what would be the difference?

BL Oh well, it was the fact that the cutter bee was in the bush then, they had just cut all the timber and they went into the piles, but the minute they burnt the piles they burnt the bees and no more alfalfa.

MH Oh

BL Oh yea, oh gee-whiz it was a pity. They claim now you can buy these cutter bees, you see. So if a man is going to go in for it would pay for him to buy the cutter bees and put them in his field, but we never heard of it when we were there. We heard of that since we were in Thorhill. In Sexsmith, I mean.

MH You lived in Sexsmith too?

BL Oh, we've lived in Sexsmith since 65, we quit in 65.

MH When did you come up here?

BL We were here three years ago.

MH That's after your dad died.

BL That was at Pioneer Lodge?

MH What Pioneer Lodge was it?

BL I am at Pioneer now, but George, you see, died seven years ago already.

MH Oh

BL Oh yes, George died in '72, September 29.

MH When you were in Sexsmith, you were retired then too?

BL Well, I was supposed to be but you know how it is. I bought four houses.

MH Isn't that lucky?

BL Yes, I bought four houses. Well, they were giving them away so I figured I wasn't going anywhere so I might as well take them. I bought a house with eight rooms in it for \$1000 with a lot.

MH Oh my gosh. Just think of that now and how much that would be.

BL The first one we bought George put an ad in the paper and he said, old bachelor wants a place to hang his hat. Anybody got an old house for sale please contact, his name and that. So Peterson, they wrote to us and told us they had an old shanty that they would . . .

MH Which Peterson was that?

BL Ray. So we went to work and we went and seen it and we paid \$2150 for that. But that was still good. There was a garage and a house, you see, and the lot. So we stayed in that one until we had it fixed that is new wiring, lights and that and then this other one came up, this big one, for \$1000 dollars.

MH Who owned that lot, do you know?

BL Well, it was a councillor, you know, and they had to get rid of it and first they said they wanted more money. I said "no", I'll give you a thousand bucks and that's it. So they gave in. I got it for a thousand but I would have given them more but why should I say more? So I got that for a thousand dollars and then two more guys died practically at the same time and I went to Mr. Patterson down here, he was my lawyer at the time, and I said, can I put in a bid on those two? And he said, yes. You would be surprised at the bids I put up. It was \$750 on one and \$850 on the other. Hundreds not thousands, and I got them for \$1600 for the two places. Yes, I got them and so I went to work and I, the one that I got for \$750, I added two rooms to it you know, because it was only, I think it was 20 x 16. It was only, like you know, just a bedroom and front room, so I added two rooms to that myself. But then I added that for practically nothing, because at that time if you remember the plyboard used to give the 2x4s practically away. You could get a truck load for ten bucks. So you can see again what that cost me to put together. Well then, after George died, I lost interest and I said okay I'll sell the big one and that's where I made my mistake, but anyway I did it, I sold it for \$7000 and I was renting it for \$100 a month, so it should have been a lot better than selling it for \$7000. But anyway, I sold it for \$7000 and then I sold the first one that we bought, but we had made another \$5000 anyway by then on the two. But anyway I sold it for five and then I went to work and I sold the one that I added the

two rooms on for five, and I'll be doggoned the worst of them all, the last one, of course you see the other one I had put the water in, and the last one had the water in, but it was old stuff, and the walls were falling down, and when I got it, one wall had a hole outside, that's why I got it you know, just right through, but then I filled it in with 4x4s you see. And that made a nice wall, you couldn't tell it was broke from the outside and I'll be gosh-darned one guy he come and said I'll give you nine thousand five hundred for that place. Oh wow, and I had only paid \$850. So I said, well, you need it worse than I do. And at that time, again I hit it lucky, they were just changing and they were all flocking to Heritage because Heritage had just opened, you see. So Pioneer was practically empty. I went down there and I said, how about a room? Old Mrs. Green said sure, as they were looking to get it filled as soon as possible. And she said, I'll tell you what, she said, Bill, if you stay and don't go to Heritage I will give you this single room right away, so I got my single room right away.

MH It seems like luck's following you all over the place.

BL (*thinking out loud*) All the time, but it's not only that, look at that car out there, \$200. At first I bought a truck when I first come to Sexsmith and I paid \$150 and I used it four years and I sold it for \$300.

MH Did you have much dealings with the Wanham businessmen?

BL Well, no one . . . well, we did yes for the first while, you see but after we decided we wasn't gonna use the hill then that cut it out and then we . . . I think George used the elevator for three years or four years, but after that we went to Rycroft. But it's not because we had anything against Wanham, but we had that three mile hill and that was something, you see.

MH Do you remember any of the businessmen in Wanham?

BL Well, there was old Jordan, aye, Fimrite, Fimrite not Jordan. Jordan is Thorhill, you see, my mind goes back, and that was Fimrite, and there was Nelson, aye.

MH Nels Jacobson you mean?

BL No, wasn't it Nelson that was the councillor there?

MH The name isn't familiar to me but I don't know.

BL and Sandercock was . . .

MH Was Mac Watt there yet?

BL Mac? You bet, you bet. Yea Mac Watt was there and then there was an old coffee guy that was there but I don't know his name. He was a nice old guy.

MH Oh, Joe Balinsky?

BL Yes, that's it. He was a nice old guy. I liked him.

MH My dad was a good friend of his.

BL Wiles wasn't it that had the cast?

MH I don't remember anyone with that name at that time.

BL Well, Wiles was in at that time I am pretty sure because Imperial was there and we used to buy our gas from him. We didn't seem to get along with that cooperative guy.

MH Well, is there anything else you want to say?

BL Well, it is hard to think of anything else. We had the tough luck of losing old Bailey. Bailey you know he had to go down south that was too bad.

MH How many years ago was that?

BL It was quite a while ago. I went to his funeral, I don't know how many years it is but it must have been five or six years too. I know it was after George but I don't know how much after George. Then we lost Mrs. Green, that was another lady who was a real nice lady and we lost her.

MH How many are actually left there?

BL They all left, yeah. The Greens . . .

MH The Greens? Mrs. Haley is still there, isn't she?

BL Oh yes, I think so. I think she is there part of the time. I think she's got another home now, I'm not sure. But George, we used to call him Bill, I don't know why he would change his name to George but anyway they call him George Haley now. He took the farming part of it. He has a great big trailer now. Yeah, but Tom Fenton, that's another guy of my neighbors I forgot you see. Tom Fenton was there and Mills was a way east. He was one of the farthest east.

MH That was the one who married Susan Watson, wasn't it?

BL Yeah, and there was a Martin further east of that again and you know they come back to you slowly but old Jennings well he had a half and his son had a half and the other son had a half and so . . . Art had the one next to George's place, you see. Art Jennings, I can't remember the other guy's name there were three boys.

MH Do you know Bernice?

BL Oh yes, I remember her. I remember when she got kicked, she got kicked by a horse. Do you know that?

MH No

BL You were talking about accidents and you brought one back to me. Yes she got kicked by the horse and I kidded her and said that she had to call on me as I was the only one with a car at the time. I said by gosh I come and see a girl and by gawd she won't even talk to me. But I kidded her on account of it you know. And after she got better she said to me Bill, I'm glad you took me down, and she was really glad.

MH What happened actually?

BL I don't really know. I think she might have fell off the horse and the horse kicked her when she fell, I don't know how it come, but they come and got me. And you know the funny part of it something told me, Bill, fix your tires, fix your tires, and I fixed my tires and I needed them the same night. Yeah, that's a funny thing

MH A little bit of providence.

BL Oh yes, as far as I'm concerned I have had lots of that. My brother used to tell me, don't you dare tell me your dreams, I don't want to hear them.

MH You believe in dreams then, do you?

BL Oh, but they came true, they came true.

MH Thank goodness mine usually don't.

BL They don't, aye.

MH I'm glad they don't then they would be nightmares.

BL Well, I'll tell you this is another thing that happened to George. It happened before we got here, you know. But in Thorhill one time we were having dinner and he was sitting this way and I was sitting that way and we had a window right at the back and a bird come bang. I said George, we are in for bad luck, and he said oh, you and your lousy bad luck. But funny enough that same afternoon he threw a stook(?) five pieces up his nose and of course he bled like a stuck pig but it stopped and I'll be doggoned if the next morning the stupid guy didn't go back stooking again. But the pressure wasn't strong enough and it didn't have time enough to heal and it burst again. So I had to take him and I had no car then. I had to bum one, you see. I didn't even know how to drive because I had never driven, you know. So I went and asked this guy, no sir, no how was I gonna get his car because this poor old man had just bought a car and he was over 70 when he bought it. The first time he drove it he drove it into the ditch, and the next time he drove it he drove it on top of a willow, so finally he got rid of it, but anyway no sir, he said, I won't lend you my car. So I know of another guy, a Ukrainian man that I used to flirt with his daughters. I went to the man and I said, Nick, where is the boy, we got to go to Westlock.

MH Spirit River, I imagine.

BL aye?

MH Spirit River, I imagine you meant.

BL No, Westlock. This was down there. And he said, I am sorry Bill, they are gone with the car but I said, Nick I got no money and old Bill won't lend me the car. He said look I will give you money so he gave me \$15 and that is as good as giving one hundred fifty today. So I went back to Billie with the fact that I had money to buy gas with anyway. Well, he said, if you've got your money you can have the car. So, like a damn fool I went to work and took my brother there and I figured well, I've got the car I had lots of time to go home and visit my relatives, you know. So I just cut off to the side and visited all afternoon and come home late. The old man had been thinking about this car for that long, he was fit to be tied. He was telling me what he was going to do to me, it was no little pile (laughing). I said okay, Bill I said the first time I get a cheque I

will bring it to you. It took about two weeks before I had money. I went to Bill and I said to Bill look, here's a cheque for forty dollars. It's yours. But in the meantime he had went to this guy that I had visited, you know, and he thought I had gone clean to Legal to visit these French girls, that's what he was mad about. So anyway I presented him with his forty dollars and he said, no I don't want a damn cent. But I said, Bill, you gave me thirty the other day, surely you will take some money for it. I said, you saved my brother's life, I said, that's the only way you can do because they had to take him to Edmonton, aye,

MH uhuh

BL Oh, I didn't finish that part of it, about the birds. So he did this and they said come back and get him on Sunday. So again, no car, so I went to another guy I said will you drive me to Westlock? Well sure, he said, and when he got to the house I said, we're not taking George home today. He said, why not? I said, I am taking his tobacco and stuff because I said it's no use, we are not taking him home today. Oh he said, you're full of corn, I said, alright. Believe it or not, when we got there he wasn't in the hospital.

MH Where was he?

BL That's the truth. I said I brought him here, I know he's here. They said he's not here. Well, I said, how am I gonna find out where he is? Well, we'll have to find out who was the doctor who was taking care of him and they went back in the books and they looked and said you go see that doctor. So I went to see this doctor and I said, what have you done with my brother, you know? I was kind of scared, you know, as another bird had hit my window that Sunday morning. And so, he said, we had to take him to the University. We couldn't stop him here, he said, I rushed him to the University. So that shows you how I could tell these things ahead of time.

MH I guess if that's the way you look at it.

BL I could tell you lots more stories.

MH I wouldn't want to think that every time a bird hit that window, I'd have trouble because they do so often.

BL Is that right?

MH Yeah

BL Oh my god. I'll tell you I was telling that to Donna, you know Donna?

MH Not really.

BL You know, I'm sure.

MH Oh, down here.

BL Yes. Anyway, she is in the south wing and I was just telling them this story that I just got through telling you, and she told me, you know, just the day I found out I had cancer, she said, a bird hit my window and left the feathers on the window but she said, I never, you know, put the two together. Well, I said, that's been my belief about that for years and years.

MH I'm not really superstitious, I just can't afford to think that way.

BL Oh, oh, I've always . . .

MH If that's about it I'll just have to say thank you.

BL That's about it for now.

MH Okay.

Transcribed by Grace Wallace

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