

MP: Meda Paterson – Interviewee

DB: Dixie Black, daughter of Meda

SP: Susan Pridmore - Interviewer

YL: Yvonne Leismeister - Camera

2013 June 20-21

SP: Why don't you start off by telling us your full name?

MP: My full name. Almeda May Paterson. One 't' in Paterson because we're Scottish, you know. We don't waste ink on that extra 't'.

SP: When were you born, Meda?

MP: July 17, 1915. In Maple Creek in the Paterson house that my grandpa, David Paterson, had built and raised his family there. He was with the North West Mounted Police. The house is still there, just south of the school [Jasper School].

SP: Do you have brothers and sisters?

MP: I have 2 brothers.

SP: And what are their names?

MP: Jimmy and Roy. The best brothers in the world. I was the youngest and, of course, everybody always said I had to be spoiled because I was the youngest and the only girl. I could have been but I wasn't.

SP: What were your parents' names?

MP: My dad was William George Paterson and Mom's name was Frances Folsom Gaff Paterson. She was a Gaff; they came from Kansas and Nebraska in the 1800s. They came by covered wagon; it must have been an awful trek with nine kids. It must have been a bad one, but they got here anyway. Actually, they were headed for Pincher Creek and when they got to Battle Creek, I guess Grandpa thought, "This looks good to me," so that is where they stopped. They were the first people that were there after it was surveyed. He was happy right on Battle Creek there.

Oh, I had the most wonderful childhood. When I was three years old my grandpa owned, besides owning what he did on Battle Creek when he first came from Kansas, he bought the Govenlock Hotel. Govenlock was quite a nice little village at that time. He bought the hotel there so my two brothers could go to school. Mom and my two brothers, Jimmy and Roy, and I moved down there to Govenlock. Eva, my mom's younger sister, was looking after the hotel and she needed help because on train nights there were a lot of travellers came in and all the rooms would be full plus giving meals. Mom and Eva were real busy people. I remember I was three years old when we were there. The boys could go to school, but I was too young. Eva was a real tease. She was fun but a real tease, and she would say, "How old are you?" And I'd say, "Three." "Oh, you're a flea, are you? You're a flea." I was so glad when I had a birthday and she could not say it anymore.

Dad would come and pick us up and we would go back to the ranch. My Grandpa Paterson ranched (he was from Scotland) and came over when he was 18 years old with his parents to Toronto. At that time Toronto was York; he started a hardware store there. My grandpa, at 18, was too young to be sitting there; he wanted something a little more exciting so he came west. He joined the North West Mounted Police. There wasn't anything in Maple Creek at that time, just a detachment. Eventually he was

married to a lady who came up from the States and they had five boys and one little girl. When they grew up (Grandpa was with the North West Mounted Police all those years) the oldest one built the first Ford garage. Actually Glascocks, that is still what my Grandpa Paterson built years and years ago. He put his oldest son on that; he was a mechanic. He bought the Ten Mile Police Detachment, and put my dad and his brother, Uncle Charlie, on that to start ranching. The next boy, Uncle Harry, was a telegraph operator in Maple Creek. Uncle Arthur was going to school and my Auntie May was the youngest one. I was named after her. They were still going to school. With all the dances and all the good things going on, and the young people were having a great time, and Mom and Dad got acquainted and got married. First they had my brother, Jimmy, born in 1910. My brother, Roy, was born in '12 and I was born in '15. That was our family.

It seemed like all my friends had sisters and I never had a sister. I asked Mom one time why she didn't have another one [baby] and it might have been a sister for me. Of course if you ever knew the Gaff bunch they were the craziest bunch of fun, fun people and a sense of humor like you wouldn't believe. Mom said, "Well, Babe," (I was always called Babe), "when we saw what a mess we made of you we thought we'd better quit."

We moved to Maple Creek for just one winter, and that was the winter of 1920-21, so the boys could go to school. I wasn't old enough to go then. I didn't care; I had my tricycle and I thought it was great to be able to ride on the planks, the sidewalks, rather than out on the dirt. I had a lot of fun. We lived right next to Dr. Kerr; actually it was Dr. Kerr that brought me into the world at Grandpa's house - the sandstone house just south of the school.

SP: That's a beautiful-looking house.

MP: It's a nice home, a beautiful home, yes.

My grandpa passed away 2nd of January in 1916. When the boys were born he gave them each a \$5 gold piece, American \$5 gold piece, and I just got under the gun to get mine as I was six months old when he passed away. I still have it.

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

4/28

The boys rode to school at Merryflat. That was seven miles from home. Wilkes Parsonage bought my old home place from my brother, Jimmy. When I was old enough to go to school Dad bought us a horse and a buggy and we went by horse and buggy for a while until Jimmy got old enough to go to Govenlock to go to high school. After that Roy and I rode.

SP: That was your closest school?

MP: Oh yes. There had been one just a few hundred yards from where we were raised there on Battle Creek where Wilkes is now. My mom and all the Gaff girls and Wylies and Gilchrists and McRaes went to that school. When we were ready to go to school it wasn't there. When we were finished school and didn't need it anymore, quite a few years after, they put another school there, so we were in the middle. It would have been so nice to walk a few hundred yards to school.

SP: That seven miles must have seemed....

MP: Oh, that was wicked, especially in the winter. Well, it wasn't in the winter months; it was from October on that it was sometimes quite cold. It was very, very cold and at that time we'd get to the school and the fires were out so it [the school] was cold too.

SP: Did you even have classes in those really cold months?

MP: They finished up just before Christmas. We'd have our Christmas concert, and then we were off for January and pretty well February. We didn't have a holiday in the summer because they had to get so many days in.

SP: Did you enjoy going to school?

MP: I enjoyed baseball and ? and all those fun games. I enjoyed that. But no, I'd sit in the school and look out and envy the birds. The birds were so free and happy out there and I envied those birds. They were a great bunch of school kids. We were all good friends, and my favorite teacher was Dorothy. Well, she was Dorothy Blythman, the Blythman family in Maple Creek that owned the garages in Maple Creek - Grice, Elda, Eva and Mary.

Dorothy came out and taught, and she was the most wonderful teacher. Of course, her daddy having a garage, she always had a car to drive and she would take us kids to baseball games in Consul, Senate and Govenlock, all over the place and to dances. We even went to a dance at Elkwater, and the Oxarat Orchestra went, too, and was playing. We stayed the rest of the night. Dorothy and I slept in her car, and the rest of the girls, like Aggie and Bunty and Maisie Kelly, slept in the ladies' dressing room. The next day we had a great time boating and swimming. They started up a record player in the hall and we all danced again. Guys came in.

SP: That was wonderful of the teacher to take you all around.

MP: Oh, she was a wonderful teacher, she sure was. I'll never forget what she told me one time. I wasn't the best student you know; I didn't have time to be in school. I wasn't a good student. She told me one time, "You know, Meda, if there's two ways to do a thing, then you would do it the third."

After we all grew up, you know, we were always friends after that, and I'd tease her about what she said to me. She'd say, "You weren't really that bad." Yeah, she was a great teacher. Of course, she married George Anderson, moved out to Trail with a lot of the rest of us that moved out to Trail.

SP: You spent some years in Trail did you?

MP: We got married in Maple Creek. My brother, Jimmy, was out at Trail working at the smelter. He was out there and he kept telling us it was a good place for young people. At that time, in the dirty '30s, it was tough for young people. So we went out there.

SP: So now you are married. Who did you get married to, Meda?

MP: Oh, Lyle Wilson. This [the Black Ranch] was his dad's place and where he lived. We got married; we had everything packed, a camping outfit - a tent, camp stove and everything - and we headed for Trail. We camped at Brooks Auto Court - I'll never forget that name - under an apple tree. It was an umbrella tent, 9x9. You just go in there and push it up like an umbrella, you know. Every once in a while when you were in there, there was a 'plunk', and here was an apple that would fall on the tent.

He didn't get a job right away, but we got acquainted with a lawyer and he lent us money to buy a.... [Meda calls to Dixie who is in another room] Dixie, are you there? What kind of a camp was that?

DB: A relief camp.

MP: A relief camp where the government had guys come so they wouldn't starve to death at that time. There were 34 buildings on it. We bought that and had it pulled down and sold all the lumber.

SP: They wanted it torn down, did they?

MP: Yes, they did.

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

7/28

SP: There was no more use for it?

MP: No, no more use for it; that's right. We tore that down and sold all the lumber. We kept a machine shed for our house. And in the meantime we met this fellow in real estate; he was quite the big shot in Trail at that time, being a lawyer and everything. D. J. Anderson was his name. (Now, how can I remember that when I can't remember what happened yesterday!) He lent us money and we bought 21 acres, north of Trail, on the Trail-Nelson Highway on both sides of the highway, and subdivided it into lots and sold the lots. We brought that one house from the relief camp. We wanted that one because at that time there were bed bugs, and all these guys from everywhere, and there were bed bugs in most of the cabins. We took the machine shed so there wouldn't be any bed bugs. That's what we put on our lot.

Lyle got a job at the smelter for a year or so.

And then our Larry was born. We were married in '37 and Larry was born in '39, and oh how proud. He was just the best little boy ever.

SP: The sewing machine you are sitting in front of, is that connected to Trail?

MP: We got that at Trail. I wasn't a good sewer, but I could make little shirts for Larry with that and I wanted the sewing machine. Lyle wasn't happy. He wanted us to live on the rent we got from our cabins - we had cabins built on our lots, too, you see. I wanted a \$28 sewing machine. I got the sewing machine.

SP: And used it lots, I bet.

MP: No, not really because I wasn't a sewer. Mom was a good sewer so I never learned how to sew actually. I made little suits for Larry.

SP: How many years would you have been in Trail?

MP: It would have been from '37 to the end of '41. We would have been there for a long time because Lyle was on the police force and he was going to be promoted to... What's the next step down from the chief of police?

SP: A constable?

MP: No, more than that. There I go again. I forget.

SP: But higher up.

MP: Yes, higher up. He was going to be that when Lyle's dad was kicked by a horse here on the ranch and died, so we came back. Of course, I was glad to come back and be near my parents and home again, my brothers. We built a house right here on this very spot. Larry was born at Trail, of course; Wayne was born in Medicine Hat and so were Dixie and Penny. All my kids were born in Medicine Hat.

SP: What year was Wayne born?

MP: Wayne was born 24th of June in '43; Dixie was born the 1st of June in '47; Penny was born December 18 in '48.

SP: They're close together, the girls.

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

9/28

MP: They were just like twins and they have been like twins ever since. They love to be together; they always got along so well. Yeah, all my kids did.

SP: So Lyle grew up right here?

MP: This is where he grew up, yes. His dad bought this right from the time it was surveyed, in 1902 and this is where he was raised, along with two sisters and two brothers.

SP: What were Lyle's parents' names?

MP: W.S. Wilson was his dad; his mother was Amy Pearl George.

DB: [From background] Pearl Amy.

SP: How did you and Lyle meet?

MP: Picnics. You know there used to be a lot of picnics and dances and things like that and I think we always knew each other. Then, of course, at dances. You know how the guys would ask the girl, "Would you be my partner for the dance?" "Sure". And then they'd ask, "Would you be my partner for the next dance that's here?" The young guys didn't have cars so we always went with Mom and Dad [who] were great for going to dances, too.

Dad had a truck, a good-sized truck, and it could go through just about anything and we'd go to all kinds of dances. My mom and dad were the best; they were fun, just the best parents in the world! They'd take us to Havre a lot of the time, stay over. We'd go

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

10/28

to a show and come back to the room, and Dad would say, "Okay, kids, get ready for bed." He'd go downtown someplace and buy us hot tamales. Have you ever had hot tamales?

SP: The candy, sure.

MP: They are something like a taco...

SP: Oh, those kind.

MP: ... in a corn husk and they were hot; he'd bring them up hot and we'd have that. Just the best parents! They made the time go faster on the road. We would have games. They'd take horses; okay, one of us would have horses. Count the horses, count the cows, count the fence posts, count the telephone poles. And then they'd sing us songs, crazy songs to make the time go faster. Oh, they were just the best parents in the world. Fun!

None of us ever got a spanking. I always said the boys needed it, but they were good.

SP: So lots of picnics and lots of dances growing up.

MP: Oh yes. Growing up, especially in my teenage years; we just had wonderful times! I was a very, very lucky person.

SP: And were they generally just at somebody's barn dance or at one of the schools or where would the dances be?

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

11/28

MP: Well, Merryflat. There was always something doing at Merryflat. And Govenlock. They had a wonderful hall at Govenlock and the best hardwood floor in the country. It was always nice to have a dance at Govenlock because my Aunt Alla had taken over the Govenlock Hotel from my Aunt Eva, and Eva came to the ranch. Who has it now? It used to be called the Ponderosa. Who all had it [later]? Ernest Pettyjohn, and...

SP: Agars.

MP: Yes, and [John] McLuhan, and Paul Neitz; the four of them had it. They sold it, I guess.

Oh yes, I was going to tell you how nice it was to have a dance at Govenlock because my Aunt Allie had the hotel at that time, and she'd always ask all of us there for midnight lunch. Of course, I always got to ask whatever partner I had for the night, too. Oh, I had a wonderful, wonderful childhood and teenage [years]. Wonderful!

Then when we came back here, Wayne was born in '43, and we had a wonderful, wonderful life, except losing Larry. When you lose one of your kids you never get over it.

SP: What year did that happen Meda?

MP: That happened in '72.

SP: Was that an accident?

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

12/28

MP: Yeah, right there at Cliff Smith's bridge. Another kid was driving Larry's truck and it was the first snow, in September, actually the dirty old 23rd of September. I've hated 23rd ever since. This kid had been helping them ride and they were going into Consul for something. Larry was a big 6'4", a big guy, never wanted to sit in the center and the hired man was on the outside. This kid, Howard McKenzie, from Maple Creek, he stopped his car on the side of the road and just got in on the driver's side and drove Larry's truck. I guess that was Larry's last words. It was snowing, you see. "Straighten it out". He was going to cross the bridge; instead of the road going straight like that [indicates a straight line]. To save a few bucks, I guess, to save a little money, they put the bridge on an angle and so many people had accidents. They couldn't make the turn. It was Larry's last words, according to the hired man. He said, "Straighten it out, Howard, you can't make it." And he didn't. He hit the side of the bridge and went upside down in the creek. Right at Cliff Smith's.

SP: How old was Larry?

MP: I think he was 29.

DB: [from the background] 33.

MP: Ok, thanks, Dixie. You see, that's how I'm out. He had 2 kids, Davie and Marcie; they were about 7 and 9, something like that. It is something you never get over. Every time I see a truck yet - he liked a truck because he was tall, room for his hat. A car was too...

SP: Confining.

MP: Yes. Every time I see a truck, especially with a cowboy hat in there. It's there all the time. And family jokes, all kinds of things, reminders all the time.

DB: What about the Senate dance hall, upstairs, remember that story?

SP: There was a dance hall at Senate?

MP: Yes, above the store. We danced above the store. Why, Dixie?

DB: They used to do a dance where everyone went one direction. Remember? And then they'd go the other direction.

MP: Oh yes. What dance was that? It was one of those old time dances. Everybody would all go the one way, and the old hall would just sway. Then they'd go back the other way and it would sway.

DB: What about the barn dance?

MP: I think you're right, Dixie. The barn dance. The guy would be behind, you know. They used to dance those old dances all the time.

SP: Square dancing, too?

MP: Oh yes. Oh yes. There's a lot of good old dances. I feel sorry now for the young people; they don't know how to dance. It's no wonder because there's no good music anymore. There's no time and there's no rhythm, no beat; there's nothing to dance to. It is too bad. That is where you met people and had such wonderful times.

SP: So when you came back here after Lyle's dad passed away, did you just move into...?

MP: No. We built a house right on this same spot here. Carl had built a house over across here by the weir. That's where he lived. When everything was settled after Lyle's dad's death, the estate, well, there wasn't anything. You know in the '30s it was bad. Actually when things were settled Lyle and Carl, all they had were seven head of dogies. Edna owned more of them.

To get more cattle, to get started ranching, the Lindner brothers (when I was growing up on Battle Creek where Wilkes is now) were quite big ranchers and lived just to the north of us, where Ross Beierbach lives now. They were quite well-to-do ranchers. They were just like uncles to us. There were four of them. They started us up in cattle when Lyle and I came back from Trail. They started us up on shares. We looked after all the cattle for half the calves. That was a good deal. That was the way we got started in cattle.

SP: That was good that you had that opportunity.

MP: Oh, you bet. They were wonderful guys.

There was a post office and store just about a half mile from home, right on the creek. The Lindner Brothers had land that Beierbachs have now, and when they'd come back to go home to the upper place, just north of our place, where Ross Beierbach is now, they would always stop at the store and get chocolate bars and gum and stuff like that. If we did not see them coming they'd whistle and throw chocolate bars and gum into

our yard. They were great guys; they were wonderful guys. Just like uncles to us and always were, right up until they passed away.

SP: So you were able to build a herd?

MP: Yes.

SP: Did you have quite a few horses as well?

MP: Lyle's dad had horses before tractors came in, and he couldn't get it out of his head that horses weren't always going to be valuable. This was before we were married. Lyle wanted to get into cattle. Lyle would put up hay, which was sparse at that time, for his cattle (he had a few cattle, trying to get a start, before we were married). Lyle would say his dad would bring in those old bang-tail horses and eat up all the hay he had for his cattle. That is sort of how we left to go to Trail. Lyle got mad at his dad for feeding up his hay. That's kind of how we left this country.

Oh, was it ever nice to come back! Mom and Dad were home there and my brothers. It was nice to come back. It wasn't that far from home you see, just down the creek.

SP: Your parents were at Merryflat when you were here?

MP: At Battle Creek. They sold out to my two brothers, Jimmy and Roy. Jimmy kept the home place, and they bought the Jahn Place, north and west of Govenlock (it was a big ranch, too) and Roy was on that.

That was when Mom bought the house. Well, the house that Dan [Black] is in now. At that time, it was Walter and Clem Holeha's; it used to be George Kennedy's. He

homesteaded it years and years ago. Mom bought it from the Holehas and brought it down here.

MP: She had the best sense of humor; she was so much fun. Actually Mom was more like a fun sister than a mother because she was so much fun. The kids just loved her.

SP: That was Ma Pat.

MP: Yes. The Lindners dubbed her Ma Pat. They had gone to school with her - her and the Wylies and the Gilchrists. They all went to school on Battle Creek. Where the school was was just a few hundred yards from where I was raised. There was no school then when we came along, no school. Well, we were the only kids on Battle Creek and then after we didn't need the school anymore, after we got our schooling, they brought another school down and hooked it on to where the school used to be where Mom went. We were just in the middle of 'no school'. We went to Govenlock School and to Maple Creek a little bit.

SP: Where did your children go to school? Larry and Wayne and Dixie and Penny.

MP: Well, to start with, at West Plains School, just three miles south of here. Then, there was only Larry and Wayne here to go to school and so they went to Oxarat School. They had a tractor with a cab on and they went to Oxarat School. That's where Dixie started, too. She was only five when she started, which she shouldn't have been. She should have been home playing, having fun instead of going to school. But Milly Pridmore wanted her to go because little Betty Mapstone started and she didn't want to go to school. She [Milly] thought if Dixie was there she would have more interest in it. By that time the Horton Family moved in so we got our West Plains School going.

SP: Where would they have gone to high school?

MP: To Consul. We had a bus route and they went to high school there. From there, Dixie took nurse's training; she has her RN. Penny went to Garbutts Business College in Medicine Hat. By that time we had turned the place over to Larry and Wayne, and so we lived at Medicine Hat. That's where Dixie was taking her nurse's training and Penny was going to Garbutts Business College.

SP: What were some of the summertime fun times that you would have?

MP: Oh heavens, there would be picnics and going to the park [Cypress Hills Provincial Park] and going to Havre. We went to Havre quite a lot of the time. The music festival at Havre was always a must. That usually landed on Mother's Day in May. They would block the streets off and there'd be bands from all over, different states. They'd have their bands at all the intersections and in between and it was just wonderful. We always enjoyed that. We usually stayed over a couple of nights. That was always something to look forward to. Oh, we went to Havre a lot. It was sort of our town. We went to the park, Cypress Park, and swim and just have nice days.

SP: You were saying something about a ball tournament and other games at Fort Walsh one year; do you remember what year that was? Can you tell me about that?

MP: Oh, that was the north side of the Cypress Hills challenged the south to put in the cornerstones for the blockade [palisade] that went around the fort. That was a challenge for all the way for baseball. This was for ladies and men; they had their captains; there were six people on each team. My mom was the captain for the ladies .22 rifle shooting. That was all the way from horseshoes to... I can't remember what all there was. The men had their shooting, too, and their baseball. I can't remember just

what all games we had. Anyway, our south won the most points so the north had to put the cornerstones in.

SP: Well, congratulations! Do you remember when that would have been at all, Meda? Did you have kids then?

MP: Well, it would have been in the early '30s likely. It was before I was married, in the early '30s.

SP: Were there lots of neighbor get-togethers when your kids were growing up, too?

MP: Yes, there was. There were good times. We went to Vidora; it was a little town at that time. Robsart was quite the busy little town, too, for dances and all that kind of thing. We had a lot of good friends around Robsart, Senate and Govenlock.

SP: Some card parties?

MP: Oh yes. There were card parties. Mom used to put on card parties. She did the most fancy baking for her card parties. It was whist, you see, at that time. After we were here for quite a while it started to be poker parties. Bus and Gladys Johnson, Wendall and Zelda Pedersen, Claus and Betty Wenaas, Darry and Louella Pederson, Albert [and Blod] Arneson - they had a store in Vidora. They were our poker gang. We'd take turns. Every two weeks we'd take turns having a party at our place, having the suppers; it was great, we had great times. It got so there were quite a few of us, so there was enough for the men to have a poker table and enough for us ladies to have a poker table.

SP: That was a good arrangement.

SP: What year was it that you left the ranch here?

MP: We bought our home in Medicine Hat in 1965.

SP: Where do you live now, Meda?

MP: I live at South Country Village in Medicine Hat.

SP: Have you been in that location for a while now?

MP: I will have been there forty years in October. It's good. It's good. We have good times there. I have always been able to drive, and go where I wanted when I wanted, until just the last couple of months when my eyes have gone to pot on me. That has made a big change in my life. But what do I expect for my age?

SP: So Meda, you have been quite a traveler over the years.

MP: I have! I've done a lot of travelling the last few years. A lot of different places. But what Dixie is mentioning... Lyle wanted to go to Mexico and I wanted to go to Hawaii; the kids were pretty well grown up by that time. So we went to Mexico, The next year we went to Hawaii; there was four couples of us. We flew back from there.

Then what else did we do? I guess that's when we went to Medicine Hat then, I guess; and like I said we went our separate ways then. I took a hostess dining room course at

the college [Medicine Hat College] that was a whole winter course, and that was a fun thing, too. There were 34 of us that took that course. We had wonderful times. There was a cooks' course, too, chefs' courses. We would serve meals. Anybody that wanted meals would come out there and we would hostess and serve and that's the way we got our training, too. That was fun.

Of course, at that time there was lots of dances; the Elks Club was 'the' place to be at that time. Dances every Wednesday, Friday and Saturday. Wonderful orchestras, good music at that time, real good dance music.

SP: What years are we in now, Meda? Is that in about the '70s?

MP: The latter '70s and '80s. About that time, I started going on casino trips.

SP: You were born back in 1915, Meda, and here we are in 2013. Can you hardly wrap your head around the changes?

MP: Oh my goodness! Such a change! Well, for good and bad. Like I say, we always loved dances. For years the dancing was just wonderful. And going to card parties. I had two poker groups. My one poker group was Wednesday night. We would play every Wednesday night and that was so much fun. I had another group, I called them my all-nighters, because sometimes I didn't get home until four in the morning from that poker game. We loved our poker.

In between time, there was all kinds of somebody phoning up saying, "Come over for coffee. We'll have some cards in the afternoon".

SP: Were you a pretty big card shark?

MP: Well, I could hold my own. I still can, but since my eyes have gone to pot on me I can't see the cards that are up around the table like I used to. My card games are getting a little less.

SP: Do you think people just don't do enough of that now?

MP: Oh, they don't do it. These phones, and this twitter, twitter stuff. I think people are missing out on so much, the younger people. Of course, they don't know any different. No doubt they think we are missing out. You see, I don't have a computer; I don't do all this twiddle, twiddle stuff. I know it's wonderful, too. It's a wonderful, wonderful thing, too, but it's just a different way of life. But I am glad that I was born in the era that I was. We had wonderful, wonderful times. No doubt the young people probably feel sorry for us old pioneers, way back when. (Laughter).

SP: Now, Meda, I'm wondering, do you have a recipe to give us for a good long life?

MP: Well, to start with, I had good genes. Mom and Dad were so healthy, too, so with it in so many things. They loved to go to dances; we went to all the dances for miles around, and we had such healthy, fun times, too. My two brothers were such good guys. The five of us would go places so much of the time, to Maple Creek and different places and do a lot of things. And we just had a real healthy life. I think that's why, you know, that just carried on all through my life. I am so very fortunate. It was good times, so many good friends, just real, true, honest, sincere, fun friends. For dances and card parties and everything.

SP: In years to come, what do you want people to remember about you?

MP: (laughing) Oh heavens. Well, just that I enjoyed people and my family was my everything. Like most mothers, I think I just had the best kids in the world. They were so thoughtful and had good manners and still are. I just had the best kids. I just can't say enough good about them. Lots of good times and sense of humor. We travelled a lot.

SP: Did you travel a bit with Dixie and Penny to places, too?

MP: Oh yes! Mazatlán!! The first time I was to Mazatlán I went with Win and Shirley Merle Walker and Bunty Jones. That was a fun time. The next time we went, Penny and Dixie and Julie, Penny's second daughter, went to Mazatlán. Dixie and I parasailed. That was a fun thing. You get way up there and feel like the whole world is yours; there is nothing up there but you and the whole world.

Another good trip that I had was to Cuba. That was fun times, too. I swam with the dolphins.

SP: Did you!?

MP: That was strange. The dolphins are so clever. They have the brain closest to a human. They are so clever. We lay out in the ocean on our tummies, and the trainer would send the dolphins on each side of us and pick us up. I don't know how they could balance us, but they would pick us up out of the water and bring us right back to the trainer. Penny should have her picture – of course, they take pictures of you coming in on the dolphin. She's just coming in, just screaming. She should be on the front page of a sports magazine. That was fun. And the trainer asked me, "Do you want to ride one?" "Well sure". He said, "Well get on". There is nothing to hang onto on a dolphin. I just held on like this and he took me out into the ocean.

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

23/28

DB: Mom was 89 then, and 90 when she parasailed.

MP: 90 when I parasailed.

SP: Oh wonderful! You just didn't slow down, did you!?

MP: Like I say, I have had a wonderful life.

SP: Well, you are an inspiration to the rest of us.

END OF VIDEO

Editor's Note: Meda had more to tell us during her interview about her family and other memories. We couldn't keep it all in the video, but we will add some of it to the end of the transcript here for everyone to read about.

MP: Yes. She [Penny] worked for Sinclair Implements. Thanks Dixie. Then she married Art Read, didn't she.

SP: And they have family?

MP: Yes. Three girls.

SP: Grown up now?

MP: Yes. One of them is teaching at New Norway, near Camrose. She went over to Portugal to teach English in Portugal. That was Denise. She fell in love over there. They were married back here at Sedgewick. That was a nice wedding, too. They have one little boy, Sam. How old is he now? Ten?

MP: Bonnie Lyn is the youngest one. She works for West Jet and has done so for about 11 years. Her fiancée was working for West Jet up until... Well, he still works for West Jet, but has signed on with another company, Suncor. It's better money. They have two little kids, a little girl and little boy, just wonderful little kids. Then there is Julie, the middle one. She teaches Phys. Ed. and has taught Phys. Ed. in Calgary for years. Her fiancé is a Phys. Ed. teacher, too. They are getting married in August out at Emerald Lake [British Columbia].

SP: So you've got a wedding to go to?

MP: Yes. That should be nice.

SP: Have you any grandchildren?

MP: I have eleven grandchildren and 17 great-grandchildren. I could have, if Davey's daughter, Heather, had got busy, I could have a great-great. But they're so busy going to university and getting education they don't have time, which is great. It's great. I'm glad that they're all getting educations and going and doing things.

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

25/28

MP: Lyle and I went to Mexico City. We landed in Mexico City and then from there we took a car to Tasco; that was the Silver City. They had cock fights and all that kind of thing. Bull fights, too. The bull fights weren't nice. They were too much for the matador; the poor bulls... On that same trip Lyle and I took a cruise. We went from Acapulco and took a cruise and that was a nice trip. Our next trip was to Hawaii; it was four couples of us, good friends. We took the boat from Vancouver. Of course, we stopped at San Francisco and Los Angeles for a couple of days each and then struck out for Hawaii. That was very nice. We had lots of good times there and then we flew back from there. The next trip would have been later on; we went to China. Willis and Olivia Petersen, along with another group. There were 22 of us who went to China. We stayed longer than most of them did. We toured Shanghai and Hong Kong; we toured a lot of China. Some of them didn't do that. We were there ten days or two weeks, something like that.

It was different, but it makes you realize how wonderful good old Canada is!

SP: And you have been quite the one to go and do things in your retirement.

MP: Oh Susan, I've had a wonderful time. The latter '70s and '80s. About that time, I started going on casino trips; North Battleford, Prince Albert and out west to Cranbrook, Coeur d'Alene and all down through the States. Every place that there was casinos. At that time I chummed up with Bunt Jones. We had always known each other, we went to school together, we chummed together. There were so many tour buses going places; we'd go on all these tour buses. We had just the best times!

SP: Where did you and Bunt go, on a cruise or something?

MP: We went on a Caribbean cruise, all down through St. Thomas, Nassau, Puerto Rico, Dominican Republic. Our ship was our home. We always had to be back on that ship at a certain time or you were locked out for the night and had to fend for yourself, so we always made sure we got back on that ship before the time was up.

SP: Are there other locations you went to?

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

26/28

MP: Penny and Art and I went to Portugal. Penny and Art's oldest daughter was teaching English in Portugal. We landed in Germany then took another plane to Portugal. That was a nice experience, too. We touched into Spain a little bit and they wanted to know if I wanted to go to Monte Carlo to gamble. We didn't do that but we did gamble at some of the places all right. Gambling wasn't good there either. So that was a nice trip.

Bunty Jones and I took a Caribbean cruise. We were down to Nassau, St. Thomas, Puerto Rico, San Juan; we took in a lot of those islands. There was lots to do on the ship, too. That was a lot of fun on the ship. There was dancing, swimming pools, so much to do aboard the ship.

After that, Bonnie Read, Art and Penny's youngest daughter, and I flew to Las Vegas. Of course, we did a lot of fun things there, gambling.

A couple of years after that Bonnie and I flew to Hawaii. We had a wonderful cruise on the maiden voyage of the new ship, Pride of Hawaii. We stopped at all the islands of Hawaii except one which nobody can be on except Hawaiian people. That was a great trip, too. We got off and toured each island. That ship was the most beautiful ship; it was all flowers. Both sides of it were all flowers.

SP: Do you remember about electricity and indoor plumbing becoming part of your life?

MP: Well, that wasn't such a big deal here either because we had the 32-volt and I had electric irons and Mix Masters; we had everything electric anyway. We had the wind charger. If there wasn't enough wind to keep the batteries up, my brother came down and put twelve batteries in our basement, big batteries, and that kept our electricity up. If there wasn't quite enough wind to keep the batteries charged up we had a standby that would charge it up, so when electricity came in to the whole country it wasn't that big a deal because we already did. It was great.

SP: What kind of memories do you have of struggles for water; did you have enough water to drink?

MP: Oh heavens. Battle Creek was all springs. You only had to dig down just a few feet and there was water. It was hard water, mind you, but it was cold and pure and so good. No, we never ever had water problems. Of course, for the livestock, Battle Creek was there. When I was growing up we had a pump in the house with a sink. We were so lucky we had a good water system. Where a lot of people had water pails and what we used to call slop pails, we didn't have that. We had a sink and the drain was out (the water was) drained out.

MP: I've been coming down here every year [to the ranch] for branding. That's always something to look forward to. Good old Battle Creek! It is always the same. Pretty nice to always be able to come home.

SP: Was branding always a big occasion when you were younger and ranching here?

MP: Yes. The brandings were always 'the thing'. Lots of work for the lady of the house. They are not as big as they used to be. I remember when Bob and Dixie had the upper place. That one year there was 86 people there for the meal.

SP: Did it all get done in one day?

MP: Yes, usually. Unless the weather got bad and they had to quit.

SP: Those were good social occasions.

CONSUL MUSEUM INCORPORATED

Oral History Collection – Section 3

Collected by Consul Museum

Meda Paterson Interview 2013 June 20 & 22

Catalogue No. 3.2
(E,R,WV)

28/28

MP: Oh, yes. That was why there were so many people there. The ladies liked to come and, of course, the kids all loved to be there, too. Good times, but a lot of work.