

*Aud. 233*

**Side A** *Bill Johnson, Minnie Odlund, and Lynn Wilkinson – “Oral History Interview”*

**Side B** *Bill Johnson, Minnie Odlund, and Lynn Wilkinson – “Oral History Interview”*

**[Side A]**

[Side A] – a continuation of Ms. Wilkinson’s interview with Minnie Oldund

**0:00**

L: Your dad, he was a machinist

B: Machine agent, as well as a garage proprietor. (both speaking at once)

Minnie: And then a mover. He moved so many buildings

B: That’s in later years, and when the hard years in the dirty thirties, that’s when he switched to doing other things too such as house moving. Whatever, he had trucks, and so he--

L: And heavy equipment then, I guess.

B: Yes, we built up our equipment for that, we made heavy equipment for house moving.

L: Well John, er, sorry, Bill, I should talk to you a little bit and just find out a bit about your (whispering sound) family background and everything. Like, I would be interested in knowing your mom and dad. Were they Norwegian? (unintelligible)

B: Yes, they moved to that area close to where that river fork was [refers to Minnie Odlund interview]. We lived just up above and we were ranching. My father had come to this country first of all back in 19--oh, let’s see--1907, by himself and then in later years he made some trips back to Norway, southern Norway, and then he brought his brothers and sisters and mother and dad over. And that was in about 1912, and then the next year he went back over there and married my mother and brought her over in 1913.

L: What was his name?

B: My father’s name? Carl Johnson.

L: Carl Johnson, and your mother?

B: Marie

L: Carl and Marie, hmm.

B: Yep--

L: And then he brought his brothers and sisters

B: Yes, first, you know--

L: And then parents (both talking at once)

B: --and then the following year he went over and married my mother and brought her as well, and then they all lived on the same farm. There was a big house and there was a lean-to house where my father and my mother lived

L: That’s quite an exceptional thing to do when you’re just a young man.

B: Yeah, it was very exceptional I think (laughs)--

L: Yeah, I think so too

B: --to bring that whole family. I forget how many there was of them, nine children? I think it was nine children in his family as well as his mom and dad.

L: He must have been fairly persuasive, to get them all--

B: Well, he’s the one that dared to go. He only arrived at age seventeen, you see, and found some work just into B.C. at Bordner, B.C. and then later he went back into southern Alberta, at Granum, Alberta where he worked and did some (banging noise) carpenter work. And then he

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also, then following that he also took out a homestead. One homestead in a place called Bar Hill first. And then later when he brought the family, they took out another homestead area there at Turin. And Turin is the place we lived. There was no town there, but the area was called Turin, and there was a post office. And--

L: And then he farmed or ranched for a while?

B: Well--he--they farmed and ranched together, there, but he also learned the mechanic trade from another farmer by the name of Rogers, that lived about three miles west, who'd built up a garage in those days. And he would find his way over there and work with him and learn some of the mechanic trade.

L: Were there that many cars in the prairies?

B: There was \_\_\_\_\_ (??). My dad brought home two old ones, two of these two cylinder ones, these funny little two cylinder cars, that were not working, and, you know, some of them didn't last long, those old cars. They looked like a buggy with an engine in it. (laughs)

L: He sounds like a real entrepreneur, you know. He seemed to be interested in things that were ahead of his time in a lot of--

B: Yes, well, he did. (both speaking at once)

L: He seemed to have a vision, I guess.

B: Well, I mean, even, he wasn't afraid to try almost anything, and in those difficult years, he went into a business he'd never been--he'd never been a bookkeeper or anything, but he did learn to keep his books and all of that,

**(5:00)**

and having both the garage and selling automobiles, between twenty-seven and twenty-eight, he sold a lot of automobiles to the farmers. And a lot of farm machinery, especially in those years, farmers had such difficult years, they didn't have the binders any longer. I know we had two carloads of binders came in.

Minnie: They started with what they called “hithers.”

B: That came in later years, because binders cut the, needed a--

Minnie: The grain was pooled (both speaking at once)

B: --long bundle, but the header just clipped the heads off and elevated them into a box like a rack, but it was a solid rack, and then it was stacked, and then later threshed. And because it could cut grain that was just a foot high, you know, that was the kind. But my father went into business there right from the very beginning, he was one of the first, even before we left down there back in 1918, '17, he already had a tractor as well, and a tractor was almost unheard of amongst the farmers at that time, that he had a Ford's tractor. And we went up to Enchant, and some of his brothers did the farming a mile or two out of town, and he took over the garage. One of the other brothers took over the meat market in town.

L: They were really in there, eh? (laughing)

B: Yes, my uncle Amel, he passed away a few years after that. He was down in the Seattle area at the time.

L: Um-hm. And so, what about your Christian life as a young boy?

B: Well, I came into the preacher's Sunday school at the age five, and our home was a home

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where people met every Sunday; some of the people, including the Odlunds, would be at our house, uh, come for the morning service and stay with us in town all through till the evening service.

Minnie: And listen to the-- (both speaking at once)

B: And in the afternoon, listen to William Aberhart, of the--who later brought in the Social Credit Party two years later (laughs).

L: What was the name again? William--?

B: William Aberhart.

L: I've heard of him.

B: He was a Calgary high school principal at the time, and then he was also head of Prophetic Bible Institute in Calgary. And then later he inaugurated the Social Credit Party.

L: Now, did he come and visit and you listened to him, or was he on the radio.

B: No, he was on radio, and we had a radio, and they would all be gathered in the afternoon--

Minnie: Most of them didn't have a radio. (laughs)

B: --hearing Aberhart. He was a very good speaker, you know, and people--a lot of non-Christians--used to listen to him too, because he was so dynamic in his way of preaching. So, I was brought up in that atmosphere, and I came to the Lord early. I don't know how early, because uh--but I know that I had assurance of my salvation in functioning with the church.

L: As a young boy--

B: As a boy. (both speaking at once)

L: --then, did you work in the church?

B: Yes, well, yes I did. In the later years I became-- and learnt, to played the guitar a bit, and so I got into the string band as well. And when we went on a trip to Norway, our whole Carl Johnson family, we went to Norway in--

Minnie (?): '29.

B: --'28, fall of '28. The spring of '29 we came back and then we brought back some other Odlunds from that trip. And one of them was Harry Odlund, who became my close friend.

Minnie: Wasn't Lars with you too?

B: No, he took a different boat. He came back in the--no--let me see--

Minnie: I thought Harry and Lars came together--

B: Yes, I believe that he did. But his wife didn't come yet.

Minnie: No, his wife was still in Norway.

B: That's another Odlund, which we have a missionary now, Sigried Odlund, that is on the mission field, who is the son of that Odlund. But Harry Odlund was his older brother that I chummed with,

**(10:00)**

and he got converted shortly after coming back, and so we worked together in various ways, went to Bible school in the early, in '33, and--

L: Which Bible school was that?

B: Prairie Bible Institute. And there were three of us, Howard Trelin as well, that all went at that time. And later, during those Bible school years, we did Vacation Bible School work in the

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different towns, and had meetings in the schoolhouses while we were still students, in the summer months. And there were different schools uh--schoolhouses both east and west, uh and some of those that were--

Minnie: We went and preached in all the schoolhouses down there. Carl would preach, and him and his dad, and myself--

B: Yeah, he would do it (both speaking at once) well.

Minnie: --and we would go along and sing.

B: The use of the string band, they would go west, quite a ways west, over to--near to a place called Armengetty, and had schoolhouse meetings in an area that was quite a ways away. And different ones in that area all spoke of their music, because it went over well.

L: This is this group that you're talking about.

B: Yes.

L: Carl Fosmark's string--

B: Carl Fosmark (unintelligible)

L: --band? (laughs)

B: And that, see that--

L: Minnie--

B: You played the harp then, didn't you, but you played the auto harp

Minnie: The auto harp, then. Now I have a zither.

B: Yeah, but you played the auto harp and the Fosmarks and my dad was on the violin and I don't just recall--there was a time when Lee was around, and he would play guitar too, and some of those communities, about thirty, forty miles away, they would speak of it long after, you know, the times when--

L: I'm sure they appreciated it (both speaking at once)

B: --when they came over with, and preached, and Carl was one who always, of course, preached a very strong, straightforward, gospel message that was very effective. So I was brought up in that area. In 1928, Carl Fosmark actually lived with us at our home, when he came to be pastor there. He came about in '26 or '27 to be the pastor, I guess you'd have that, (Lynn agrees) and became pastor, and then some of that time he was resident with us. I shared my bedroom with him for quite a bit of time. We didn't have that much space, but we shared that room.

L: Were you the boy on the prairie--there was one boy on the prairie that he kept going back, going back, going back to, getting him to come to church with him, and taking him around, and then he said eventually this boy came to really settle in to the Lord and went to Bible school and became a minister, a pastor. I was wondering if that could be you?

B: I wonder who--I don't know.

L: You don't think so. Probably not from your background.

B: No, I don't think so, because I was going along in the Christian way. I was at the meetings, and the prayer meetings, and everything from an early time, and this Harry Odlund, that came back in '29 with us. Well, it was within the year that he went to a prayer meeting; he was not a Christian. But he went to a prayer meeting, that's when he accepted the Lord, out on one of the farms, I think it was Liasons'(??).

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Minnie: What do you mean?

B: Harry, when Harry accepted the Lord. So we became very active together, and we'd sing together too some. The three of us would sing, Howard, Riele(??), and I, we would sing together.

L: When you went to Bible school, three of you went to Bible school--um--did you graduate with any others? Well, you became a pastor, what about the other two?

B: Yes, Harry Odlund became a pastor, he was the pastor of our church in Seattle and in Concord, Massachusetts, and Howard Trelin, of course, he's been a pastor of many of our Alberta churches, and he was here in Coquitlam as well. He was the pastor at Coquitlam, he's the assistant pastor there now. And he was at Trinity College for about two years as a general handyman.

L: Wow, you mean Trinity Western here?

B: Yes. He was filling in at Coquitlam partly as pastor then too, so those were the three. And of course, there were several of us that went from that little town to Bible school in that same year, like other-- Josephine, she became my wife, she went as well but there were other girls too, that went—

**(15:00)**

L: From Enchant?

B: Um-hm. From Enchant, I think there was about eight of us that went to Bible School.

Minnie: We had never heard of Prairie Bible Institute school, you know

L: Is that right? (all three speaking at once)

B: There wasn't(??) much communication, you know, it's a couple of hundred miles away.

Minnie: They travelled around to try to win souls for the Lord. And here he'd run into it. You see that was just north of Enchant.

B: Yeah, a couple hundred miles.

Minnie: And when he came home and told us about it, oh, we were all so thrilled. And so many of the--

B: In the later years, we had a very large circus tent that was up, and we had Maxwell and others preaching in our little town, in a big circus tent (laughs).

L: Oh, that's good. Well, so Prairie Bible Institute played quite a big part, then, for people in Enchant.

B: Yes, for all of our early pastors, most of them went to Prairie first. Some of us went on, I went to Minneapolis, in the later years, and after '37, my wife went to the coast here, to work.

L: What do you think then about Trinity Western College providing a liberal arts degree now, you know, in a Christian atmosphere, is this better for students today, then, to be able to have--

B: I think that it's better today. I think in that day, there wasn't so many that could pick up university training or college training; we had all that we could do to pay our way to go to a Bible school. And in my first year, the full cost for the six months was eighty dollars to go Bible school.

L: Was that including your board?

B: Board, and room and everything, yes. (airplane sound) You had to do a certain amount of

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work. Everyone did what they called gratis work, and I worked in the kitchen area, breakfast gang--and so you did a certain amount of work as well. And in those early years, the three of us started meetings and Vacation Bible School in a town about forty miles west of us, Champion, Alberta, and that resulted in a Free Church being built there in later years. Yes, in Champion, Alberta. We put up a big tent there, the three of us, and carried on this vacation school.

L: Getting back to Prairie Bible Institute, was it quite new then, in those days? Were you sort of at the beginning of that?

B: Well, fairly new. It wasn't that new, though, it started back early in 1926, I think, and this was into the 'thirties, it had been going just a few years. But you know, there wasn't that many students yet at that time.

Minnie: I was going to say, there wasn't very many students. D'you know how many there was to begin with here [at Trinity]? Seventeen? (laughs). Morris, his son, was one of them--

B: My second son was-- he graduated in that first year, he already had his first--

L: Oh, so your second son was one of the first graduates, yes, there was about three of them that graduated in the very first year. Is it Morris? (sound of pencil scratching)

B: Morris, yes, Johnson. And later I had another son, Keith, that graduated there, and then another son, Brian.

L: What are they doing now? As alumni?

B: Morris is a high school counsellor in Quesnel, he's been there for about twelve, thirteen, fourteen years. He's a high school counsellor, and he functions with the church there too.

Minnie: He teaches too.

B: Keith works for the government in ocean sciences at Victoria and he functions as young peoples' leader in the Free Church there. And our youngest fella, he's a pharmacist. He attends in our central Burnaby church, where we help in the morning, and he comes here in the evening. He's a Christian, and the whole family--we have a daughter too, Joy—

**(20:00)**

L: Oh yes, that's right. Did she happen to go to this school as well?

B: No. Yeah, she was just there for one semester, and then she went to UBC and she graduated from UBC. She didn't graduate from Trinity, but she was there.

L: Did your boys end up graduating from UBC, then for their their degree?

B: Yes, not Keith. He went into technical school, and he's in a technical area. He works in the lab, ocean sciences.

Minnie: Joy, she's in Australia.

B: She's in Australia. She was on staff as a librarian at UBC before she left and then she went to--

L: What was her last name?

B: Well, she was Joy Johnson then, now she's married and she's in Australia now, and she's deputy librarian there, at Canberra University.

Minnie: And she also has a pair of twins. (Bill laughs)

B: They came when she was in her thirties.

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Minnie: He has great-grandchildren [sic]

B: They didn't come along until she was in her thirties, though.

L: Isn't that nice. She waited, so she got two at once! (laughs)

B: She married a chap that was here from Australia going to UBC, and he got his Ph.D here at UBC.

L: Um-hm. Is she quite happy in Australia?

B: Oh yeah, she is, although they originally planned to be back here in five years or so. She's going to be here this summer with her twins.

L: Oh will she? Well, she's got an excellent career as well, then.

B: Yes, she's been very active. She did a lot of paper writing here at UBC on certain subjects too, and were recognized, and other universities. She worked in the Calgary University, and headed up a new department that they hadn't had there before as well. And she had to travel around a bit for that, getting information. I met her once when I was in a conference in Chicago, and she happened to be down there too. She was trying to gather more information for building up a particular--

L: Do you remember what department it was? Or--

B: I'm just trying to make it click, but it's Environmental Arts, I think it is called? Environmental Arts, I think that's what it was called.

L: Is she in the Evangelical Free Church now?

B: No, there isn't any Evangelical Free Church there, they function--his background was the Church of England, and at the present time they are attending the Church of England. I had the dedication for the twins here a year ago at our church in Vernon.

Minnie: Two years ago.

B: Two years ago, yeah.

Minnie: Is it today they are two years old?

B: Yes, it's their birthday today. That's right. They were nine months old at that time.

L: Well, that must be a happy time for you and your wife.

B: Yep, I went to Minneapolis for the one winter to our Free Church Bible school in Minneapolis and then when I returned--huh?

Minnie: That was the Trinity one. Same one as--

B: Yeah. It was the one that was originally called Trinity, which was adopted by the whole body down in Chicago, when we moved the whole school down to Chicago, because we joined with the Swedish Free church. But it was the Trinity name from Minneapolis that was used. I just attended one year, and then the following year, that's when I was married, in 1939.

L: So that was the beginning of the Second World War?

B: Yes.

L: Did that affect you at all, or--

B: (laughs) Well, if affected us to the point that we didn't have a church wedding. I mean, it was just so solemn at that time that we didn't have a church wedding; we had it in the Odlund home.

Minnie: They weren't having any weddings at church, because that flu had been going around.

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B: Yes, but that's not our reason. Our reason for not wanting it at the church was because of the, you know, the tension that there was and that's why we didn't choose to. Otherwise we would have, I think. And we had a double wedding, because my wife and her sister both--

L: Two sisters married two brothers, then.

B: Yes, one married a Johnson, and one married a Peterson (laughs). It was a Johnson-Peterson double wedding.

L: Oh I see, it wasn't two sisters and two brothers.

B: No, no. Charlotte married a Swede, and Josephine married a Norwegian (laughs).

L: Okay, I won't ask which one fared the best. (laughs)

B: No, you don't have to. There's a brother of that Peterson that is the deputy Minister of Agriculture for British Columbia here, at the present time, too. He came out here, and has been in there for, I don't know, ten, fifteen, twenty years, I think. He's just going to retire, I think.

Minnie: The Petersons are still in Enchant.

B: Yeah, well, Bob Peterson and Charlotte, that's my wife's sister, are still back in the old territory. After we were married we were asked to participate in the Bible school. At that time my former professor from Minneapolis who went to Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and arranged and took over a four-storey brick school there started a Bible school there in northern Saskatchewan. My wife and I went up there the following year, and I taught that one winter there. Both of us were teaching there at that school, and that's when I received an invitation from the Reverend Olaf(??) Urang to come to the West Coast and start here, 'cause there was just the one Evangelical Free Church here and that was the one he'd started in 1936 in Vancouver. He started it in Vancouver, and then I came and we started in 1940 in New Westminster, the fall of '40. And then we stayed there, and worked and we had a little mission hall there, and then we later in 1943, we built a church, the first church in New Westminster. Tenth Avenue--

L: You make it sound so simple (laughs).

B: Yeah, I know--

L: "We just built a church in 1940." (laughs) There's a lot that goes on--

B: I learned a lot more about carpentry work at that time than before

L: So you literally built it, then,

B: Yeah, we did a lot of our own building. We didn't contract it out or anything. Vancouver had a man, a Mr. Loland, who was a contractor, and he put in a lot of time personally with us, in helping building and advising us. I did a lot of buying, and so on, and so I learned a lot about buying lumber at low rates, because we only had 500 dollars when we started to build the church-

L: Is that right--I was going to ask you how much it cost.

B: That's all we had. We had about 500 dollars-- (both speaking at once)

L: And what would it have cost in those days. A couple thousand?

B: Well, I think that we actually got into the church with an expenditure of just over four thousand dollars. We bought the lot at that time for about three hundred dollars, right on the corner there, at 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Canada Way. (unintelligible)

L: Was that really out in the wilderness in those days?

*Transcribed by Jennifer Wyness*

B: No, it wasn't out in the wilderness, although that area is at the bottom of a hill, and there was brush area all through there. It was sort of a low area, all up on the hill there, but there's a dip there, and there's a low area, and--

L: I guess New Westminster was fairly well settled, because it was once the capital--

B: Yes, it was settled, and of course they didn't have the schools kitty-corner, as they have now from there, but the army set up temporary barracks over in that territory.

**(30:00)**

L: In 1943.

B: Yeah. '43 and '44. A lot of tar paper buildings over there. And I was there for fourteen years at New Westminster, building up the-- (unintelligible)

L: Has this mainly been your career in the church, then, church planting, would you say, and church building?

B: Well, to some degree, yes, although we just didn't have churches, so you had to be a planter. (laughs). There was no other choice. You came and there was only the Vancouver church and that. When we arrived, Urang had begun a Thursday night radio broadcast over at station CKMO at that time, which is now the CFOX station. But he had started a broadcast, but at that time, **(31:00)** he had started a Scandinavian broadcast. But it moved towards the war years and they had to eliminate speaking in another language—

**[End Side A]**

**[Side B]**

[Side B]

**0:00**

B: And so, when I arrived in 1940, well then I participated with him, and I had some from New Westminster that we had gotten in contact with that helped us, and we formed a string band, and we had a string band, and we functioned over a radio station every Thursday night.

L: In English

B: In English, with about half the songs being sung in Scandinavian--

L: Oh, that's how you got around it (laughs)

B: Yes, but all the preaching had to be done in English. And you couldn't speak it, (papers shuffling) but you could sing it. But that way we had an inroad to an awful lot of people and we needed, we had nothing to buy time with except what came in and we were very much--but you see the Evangelical Free Church was unknown in the area and Urang just felt like if we don't get on the air someplace so that people learn to know who we are and what we stand for, well, it'll just take a very long time, and so on a shoestring he started out, and it's surprising it was just the type of a program that was very acceptable. I mean, we were amateurish and all of that but the string band was very acceptable to a lot of people and we had--(Minnie sneezes)--huh?

(unintelligible) Just wait. Uh, well, we extended and sent plates for the transcription plates (knocking sounds) to Saskatchewan later and had an outlet and for Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan as well. We had the church people there, many of the Scandinavian people and many of them in the Lutheran churches and they would turn on our radio. And one little church, a Lutheran church, they had the program right there (laughs).

*Transcribed by Jennifer Wyness*

L: Who is that(??) (unintelligible)

B: --to listen to. We had people out here who moved out later that we found out from and it was--

L: --it was very good (speaking at the same time)

B: --acceptable to the point of where it was well-funded. At a time when I know one of the larger Vancouver churches had a radio broadcast and they had to quit because they found it so difficult and they had very very much better musicians than we had, and had singers, but it's just that it was very acceptable, the type of songs we--

L: Was this an evangelical church, or er--?

B: The other one?

L: It was too?

B: Yes, it was a Baptist church.

L: Oh, I see, okay

B: A very good one. But, they had the very proper type of music and that, somehow or other the--I suppose it was novelty--of a string band, they had the various--two violins, a zither harp, four guitars and a mandolin--

L: Maybe also--(both talking at once) that--

B: But two zither harps some of the time and that--Mrs. Urang was an exceptional soloist--the pastor's wife from Vancouver and she would sing with her zither harp in Scandinavian and English. And we had others that came in with us and helped in the singing. That program, "That's Radio," went on for quite a while.

L: I remember Carl Fosmark saying that he thought that unless the Evangelical Free Church got into the major cities, that it just wasn't gonna grow in Canada

B: That's right, that's right. That's one of the things, because we were just in the small, in southern Alberta we went to the smaller places. We didn't dare to go into the big cities at that time (laughs). We were small, you know? And we were just Bible school students, most of us. But we did a lot, there was a large missionary work done all in southern Alberta through Vacation Bible Schools, and that by many of our workers, and again, Lexine(??) and others way going all the way down south to Milk River and down through many of those towns so that we became somewhat known to other people.

**5:00**

L: So how did it spread into the valley and everything?

B: Here, in this area? (both speaking at once)

L: Yes, from New Westminster uh--

B: Well, after New Westminster, we started a Sunday School out in Coquitlam at that time and we also, what was the year, '46, here, that we started a prayer meeting out here in Langley. Pastor Dietrich from White Rock, he was at White Rock, and myself, I was at the first prayer meeting that we held in Langley. We had it in the home of uh--it's the family that still goes to the Free church there. I can't think of their name just now, but if I remember the first prayer meeting, and I know I participated, I was away and I came back just as we were starting and I think that I gave one of the first services. And we rented a hall there, right on the main street in Langley and I was there, and the first service, there were two sisters that came to the Lord in that first service. Wiens, two Wiens girls that were active in the church for many years after that.

L: Hmm. Isn't that nice to see that--

*Transcribed by Jennifer Wyness*

B: So, they both accepted the Lord right in that afternoon service. I was pastor in New West. at that time.

L: So would this been in the 1930s, late thirties, then?

B: No, it would be in the forties.

L: Or forties? (both speaking at once)

B: Actually it would be about 1946, -5.

L: Actually in the forties.

B: Forty-five or six. (unintelligible)

L: And what about when the men came back from war, did that make a difference to your congregations?

B: In some ways, not--

L: You don't know--? (both talking at once)

B: --no, it wasn't noticed so much. We--

L: Do you remember the baby boom that happened after that?

B: Yeah, but going back to--we only taught the one year at Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, and that school, and that school closed down in just another two years because of the war and the men having to go, so that for the lack of personnel and students, some of the ones that were there, the war came in, and so that's when we came to the coast. We were asked to come. We went back to Enchant from Prince Albert and then came out here, at that time. I'm going back in reverse here, to--

L: --that's okay.

B: Um. Yeah.

L: What about the Trinity Western School. You said you were on the Board of Governors for a while. What was yours--

B: Yes, I was on that board for four years.

L: What years were they?

B: It wasn't the first year, but it was the second, third, and fourth year, and fifth years. It was--

L: That would be '63 to sixty, um, nine.

B: Yeah, I was on it four years. See I had just come back from Alberta and I had just gotten back and I was just getting back into things here at the time when they--but I was functioning with them. And I was pastor in North Vancouver at that time and I worked with them in tearing down those buildings up there that we used for down here.

L: Oh were you, so you went up to Cheakamus --

B: Yes, I was on the Cheakamus, I, (both talking at once). I drove up there, it took us a week (laughs) and worked up there with them

L: That's really what got the school going, I understand.

B: Yes.

L: The donation of the dorms

B: Yes, those dorms were torn down, they were taken apart. They were prefab type of panels that could be taken apart and we helped--

L: (speaking at same time) I think I saw pictures of them piled on a truck, just flat. They looked like flat boards--

B: (speaking at same time) Yes, well you could just take the four by eight, they were all insulated. It was like a four by eight piece of wall, and you just set them back in together, and the

roof worked out the same way. Yeah, they functioned very well, those, for a while, and it saved a lot of money. We had two different building movers, that functioned with us there, and that really made it work out. Without them we couldn't have done it. They had the machines and that.

**10:00**

L: That was Peter Friesen, and--

B: Peter Friesen, and then the other two brothers, the Nichols brothers. And they were all Free church people, both of those, um--

L: What did you think of the school at that time. Of course, it was just more or less a Bible school, wasn't it?

B: Here?

L: Yes.

B: No, no it started as a college--

L: Oh, it was first-- (speaking at same time) I'm sorry, that's right--

B: Yeah, no, no, the whole aim was that of college. And a two-year college. That was the objective, because we had Bible schools and so we weren't cutting in on Bible schools at all.

L: No. And, did you have anything to do with going through UBC and talking to people there?

B: No. No, I wasn't a part of that. There were certain ones of the board that did that, and I wasn't--I wasn't--

L: What was your area?

B: Well, I, uh, a little of each (laughs). When Pete Friesen wasn't the secretary I filled in a little bit as secretary, but that was just temporary. But I just served as a board member in general.

L: And you were pastoring in North Vancouver then--

B: Yes.

L: --as well? That would keep you pretty busy.

B: Yes.

L: Is that a large church now?

B: No, no it isn't, although it's a lot smaller now than when we were there.

L: Is that right, huh.

B: Yes, it's had a, it's, uh, we had to-- it was going very well for us at that time. I mean, we had the clubs going and different things, and we had to have three separate nights for girls clubs, because of our needing space for them (laughs). And I had my own boys club with about twenty-five, thirty boys. So--

L: Those are good numbers (speaking at same time)

B: --it worked out very well there, we enjoyed it and that, and there was a bit of a slump in the later years. It was going fairly well when we came, though. We followed Charles McGee, who went back to the States. He had done a good job there for them as well. But there was a little bit of a sag later.

L: You know, it's really been interesting. Are you tired Minnie? We've been kind of letting--

Minnie: No, it's very interesting. A lot of this I've never heard.

B: Yeah.

L: Well, I know that people who might be researching this in later years will really be interested in hearing about the Prairie days too, and how you went around with a string band, and--

B: That's right.

*Transcribed by Jennifer Wyness*

L: That's really how you get things going, isn't it. We really still have to reach out even today-

-

B: That's right.

L: --in that way.

B: Well, that seemed to be a way that we had. I know that even when we opened up work in northern Saskatchewan, Lee Fosmark and that, they did the same thing. They, on the music end, using string band and this is how some of the work was begun. And that became very much of an involvement by various young people, and that made it go.

L: What do you do when you get a church started. Do you just go in there and you have new music and a few people come and listen?

B: Oh yes, yes.

L: And then once you get a couple families. How many families do you look for, maybe a dozen? Or is there any--

B: (laughs) Well, you look for a dozen but you've got about three.

L: Is that right.

B: I know coming to New West, I, you know, there was only about two families or three families that we felt were going to be right with us, and then they weren't all together with us because our Sunday School wasn't big enough; they didn't want to take their children out of another place. They were sending them to the Brethren hall up on 6<sup>th</sup> (sounds of a motor vehicle), and so they continued there for quite a while until our Sunday School built up, and then they switched into our Sunday School, but they didn't want it--

L: (speaking at same time) So did you just go out into the neighbourhood and just let everybody know you were there?

B: Yes, well, you mostly work on contact, various types of contacts. There was a group of people, and Urang worked the language end of it, on having coming over and having a Norwegian service, for Scandinavian people, and this gave a point of contact with people, that, of the older ones, that loved to hear the gospel in their own tongue, you know.

**15:00**

L: Would you advertise that in the newspaper, then? In the local paper?

B: It was advertised mostly on our radio broadcast, you see. And that's another function that it had, you see, and that's what helped. But I don't, oh, I don't, I was nearly scared to death coming out here, a Prairie boy, and then Urang had to take my turn every other Sunday in speaking. (laughing) I'd never spoken on a radio and I'd never sung on a radio program, and I'd never tried, in fact I never did want to ever sing solos, but I sang with various ones.

L: Is that right (laughs)

B: We sang duets, and I did play a guitar enough to accompany myself with--

**[end of recording]**

**[End Side B]**

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Churches:

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*Transcribed by Jennifer Wyness*

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Trinity Western College (TWU): 14:25a, 16:20a, 8:04b, 9:11b, 10:29b, 11:00b,  
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\*Note: the locator is expressed in minutes and seconds, followed by a letter representing the side of the tape (a or b).