

And I guess those wartime marriages didn't last, didn't work very good. There's no courtship certainly, not like you would ordinarily. It's a hurry up thing, kind of right now, and overseas they're gone, so you're left. In the meantime I had a couple, 3 years to grow up and 2 to 3 years separation on a short relationship. I thought I was looking at a stranger here. And people do change when they go through that traumatic situation especially haven't been wounded and then being 21 years old, I wasn't ready to settle down anyways. I was Miss Know-It-All now. I had a lot of experience. I just wanted to do my own thing. I've been use to being looked after, so having this monthly income I felt this is the end. Now once you get that income, it's the same as your first job. You get that experience of getting that paycheck and you quit or you don't have a job, and it leaves an emptiness. So I think I was living in a bit of a fear, what am I going to do now. So I stayed in Calgary and I had a job and I worked there. I worked there for about 2 years. 2 years at my first job and then I got another one. But I was coming back to Saskatoon periodically. And my mother and father were here, and my mother was suffering ill health at that time so I came home quite often. At 50 my mom took a turn for the worse, she was diabetic. So I came home and decided to move back to Saskatoon. All my younger sisters were employed. There was no one at home now. I felt I had left them in a lurch too. Everybody had been at home looking after the home front and Dorothy's been away having a good time sort of thing, doing her own thing. I felt being the oldest I was always by my mom's side prior to the war. I was her helper. I was her babysitter and I was her little cook helper or whatever. I felt that I better get back there and give a hand. And from there on, I no sooner got back here and I was introduced to Harold. I had, had a divorce by that time, separating from my first husband a long time before that. In 46 I finally was separated. He was from down east, so he went back down east and I stayed in the west, I'm a westerner. I guess I'll die a westerner, there's no way I'll ever live in the east, and here I still am. I met Harold, and I remember Harold when we went to school. I went to St. Mary's and he went to _____ John's school. I knew him as the guy down the street. I guy that went to the Protestant school when I went to the Catholic school. That's the meaning _____ there. But my sister had married his best friend, his buddy. And that's howcome we started, I got an introduction and that. And we got married in 1952. And here we are. 40 years last September.

After the War

I guess I was introduced to alcohol during the war and after I got married, we never had children for the first 6 years. So Harold and I had a lot of friends, young friends. And it was party time

every weekend. And alcohol was beginning to be quite a problem for me. I guess I call myself a recovering addict. Alcoholic. I went to Alcoholics Anonymous in 1963 got _____ after my twins were born. You cannot do two jobs. You cannot do two things. You got to do one job and do it well. You cannot be involved in two. I was making party time quite a full time job here, and it was making my homelife unmanageable. Certainly I was not happy. Nobody was too happy. No one was too happy for this alcoholism or drug addiction. So I had a choice I guess. Thank goodness I had a choice. There was no treatment centres around at that time, but there was Alcoholics Anonymous which had begun in 1935 and alcoholics were using that program for recovery. And I had never heard of AA before. I sort of ran into it accidentally and never even had anybody. None of our friends that we drank with mentioned AA. Nobody ever, oh I guess when you're young you never look at it as it as a problem or might be a problem. Or if it is a problem, what do you do. Just started nosing around I guess and in my own way kind of looking. I thought one day when I was home I'd phone and see what it's all about. I went to the hospital yesterday to meet the man who visited me after my first phone call. He's an AA sponsor since that time, since 1963. Been supportive. His whole family. His wife got involved and she's my buddy. She's been a buddy over the years. We had to change friends, it helped to change friends. So they were very supportive, he had quite a drinking problem too. He's a veteran too and she's a veterans wife. Left with 3 children while he went overseas, well 2 I guess. So she kind of related to our story. We understood one another I guess. So we've been pals for years and now he's very ill. He's been deteriorating, of course he's in the 70's, he's 72 years old. He's in the hospital, and I was in to visit Valerie in the hospital. He's in palliative care, so Harold and I went through and had a quick visit with him. So there's a lot of good people in AA, and once I got in there again, when I get into something I like to jump in both feet and I really got involved in AA and learned about

the whole program, and I guess when treatment centres started to open, particularly the Native Alcohol Program, again it opened new doors for me. Seeing as my husband was English and I really didn't have full involvement or association with other Métis people or native people, particularly treaties, and non-status, I didn't even know there was non-status or treaty. You're either reserve or you live in the city, that was my understanding of native people at that time. But when my stepbrother, Clarence Trotchie became the director of the first native alcohol treatment centre in Saskatoon, I really got inquisitive. I really wanted to know what it was all about. And I guess he was secretly wishing that I'd come forward because he was really wanting some help. I went there and sat through lectures and stuff, observed the people that were in

treatment and sort of observed and absorbing whatever I could, and I thought hey, this is a piece of cake. I thought I could do this. In the meantime he told me, I know you know this AA program a whole lot better, you know all about the addictions and recovering, because you've been in the program, you've only been sober a year. You've been around here since 1972, you've been here a little. He said if I make mistakes, please don't embarrass me and try to correct me in a lecture, let's discuss this by ourselves. We were learning and teaching one another. So anyways, that's how we got started, after 30 days, I got into part-time. I had the children going to high school at that time, still at home. I still wanted to be the mother here, and get my working husband off to work, be home and have supper ready for him, and the children when they come home from school. So I accepted it part-time from 9:00-1:30 everyday. Home by 2:00 and have lots of time to pick up the kids from school, drive up the _____ and get them home, have supper ready for hubby and back to work the next morning. Oh I was on the ball, and I enjoyed that very much. One of the first ladies I worked with, and one of the first guys that I worked with are still sober, it's fantastic. Speaking about being a people person, I just love that. You get patients in there for 30 days and then they're gone. And then you get a new bunch in there for 30 days.

I didn't know that there was so many native people in this province. You travel in the circle of your own. You see over

there and that, but today, my God, just the years that I've worked in that treatment centre, the number of native people that have come into the city, it's unbelievable. When I speak of the time when the war broke out, my dad was a drinker. I think he brought home more native soldiers to our house in 1939 before I joined up when I was 15-16 years old, he'd bring these soldiers home and they'd have a few drinks at home, and I thought where the hell did he get all these people from, all these guys in the uniform. He was just trying to be the friendly guy and find out who they were and invite them home for a meal, and I never saw native people like that in the city until the war broke out, and I think that was the beginning. And they too got out of the reserve kind of thing. When they got out like myself, they just want to be in with people and they just sort of started migrating into the city. But speaking of the treatment centre, I never knew anybody anywhere. I think I knew the treaties at the reserve just south of town here, the Sioux reserve, but any other reserve I was unfamiliar with anybody. I knew friends and relatives in Regina, maybe one or two in Battleford, maybe one or two in Prince Albert. But I'm afraid if you told me to go to Meadow Lake, North Battleford, Buffalo Narrows, La Loche, Wollaston, Uranium City, Pinehouse, you name it. I never heard of it. Today I say, I don't know what I acquired

working here for 16 years, but I know that I am rich with friends. I can go anywhere in this province and I would know someone. Because of all the invitations that I get from different people who come from different areas they say, Dorothy if you ever come to La Loche, don't worry about where you're going to stay, come and stay with me for a week. Ile-a-la-Crosse, Meadow Lake or right up to the far north, there's people. I can go anywhere in this province and I know people. So many friends and they're all alcoholics or recovering alcoholics. And so many who are do meaningful jobs today and that gives me such a good feeling. That they were one time drunks and are leading such useful and meaningful lives today. Like all the staff at the treatment centre, those guys, night guys there were all guys that I worked for. Saw them when they come in and saw them when they were going through the treatment centre and observed them for a year or two after and see how

they were doing in recovery. And I ran a meeting in conjunction with the treatment centre, I was involved with that. So I encouraged these guys that were in the city, guys to keep coming to meetings, coming to meetings, because that's how I got my recovery, it wasn't by going to treatment centres, it was through meetings. So I encouraged them and then when I observed how well they were doing, whenever we needed staff I'd say there's somebody that's doing really well. I'll give him that first chance, and that's how they got their jobs. Just observing there recovery.

So life has been pretty good. I've certainly been lucky. I am so lucky, so many people, what a drag it must be. Bored, you live one lifestyle, and you terminate. You live a life. I can tell the alcoholics, so many people, the native people that they're lost in a lifestyle of drinking. That's all they know is drinking and drugs, at an early age, 8,9,10 years old, they've already started drinking. In their early 20's they're dead. It's sad. I said but we can turn that around, each and everyone. Every alcoholic, native or otherwise, but particularly when I address those people, you can turn that around. Wouldn't that be wonderful, and I, when I first came, I heard people say I am a grateful alcoholic, I am so glad that I am an alcoholic. What in the hell have you got to be glad to be an alcoholic for. You're grateful because you're an alcoholic? Now I can understand. I'm grateful. If I hadn't been, if I hadn't had an addiction problem I would have never even opened the big book of alcoholics anonymous and it would have never have been of interest to me. All it is, is introduces you to a new way of life, a drug-alcohol free lifestyle. That you can live abundantly without these dependents on chemicals. I said, you know, isn't it wonderful. I'm glad that I was an alcoholic because I was exposed to this program, and we as recovering alcoholics are unique kind of people. Because I can say

now that I have lived two different lifestyles in one lifetime. I lived the addictions lifestyle, I know what that's all about, I know what the feelings are, I know the problems, I know the physical, mental and emotional trauma that I went through. And then the recovery, the chemical free is so abundant. I wouldn't trade it for the world. All I know is, I don't give a damn how the rest of you want to die, there's stereotypes and people are

stereotyped. Turn on the radio and turn on the TV, there's another drunken Indian. Another one down the drain. It upsets me to the point that I've got so angry. I will not be stereotyped, I don't know about you guys, but I've promised Dorothy that I will die sober, I don't give a damn what happens. That's my promise, not to you or to anyone else, but to me. One native is going to die sober. That's the whole thing about the addictions program. That's my life over there. And you know, the only sad thing about it is I called the native addictions program my baby. There's a lot of inner Métis squabbling over the program itself. I don't know what the idea is, but all I see it's for probably power gain, it's all big politically. Trying to be politically ruled, and anyone that is going to be involved in an addictions program, better damn well have a heart for people and forget about the goddamn paycheck that's going to be involved, because if your heart is not in people and you're not willing to help people it's going to go out the window.

Well there's been a lot of changes since I left. A lot of petty jealousies and stuff, power struggles is what it's all about. Everybody's on the power trip, they want to kick this one out so they can have, kick all our board out, just making decisions. I don't like that, but again my husband tells me stay out of it. You did your bit. What they do with it, it's up to them now. I sure hate to see that program go down the drain because it's sure as hell helped a lot of people if they want to be helped. There's the unfortunate ones that you can't seem to do nothing about. But if you win one, that's a life, and that's what the whole war is all about. It's been a war all the way through. And there's a hell of a battle to be won right now. And it's not with guns and stuff. Like the mechanical warfare. This is a chemical warfare today. And there's more native people dying today then there was in the war. So I've been through a lot of wars.