

Glenbow Archives, Elbow Park Oral History Project, RCT-982-10
Arthur Patterson
April 26, 1999

Former Elbow Park Address:

Date of Birth: February 29, 1924

Place of Birth: Calgary

Schools attended in Calgary: Elbow Park Elementary, Rideau Park Junior High, Western Canada High

Occupations(s): Geological Engineer

Date of Marriage: September 8, 1948

Spouse's Name: Margaret

Spouse's Occupation(s): Nurse, homemaker.

Number of Children: 4

Father's Name: Henry S. Patterson

Mother's Maiden Name: Margaret Chase

Father's Occupation(s): Lawyer.

Mother's Occupation(s): Homemaker.

Paternal Grandfather's Name: W. Patterson

Paternal Grandmother's Maiden Name: na

Maternal Grandfather's Name: George Chase

Maternal Grandmother's Maiden Name: Cogswell

Approximate time period you lived in the neighbourhood(if applicable): 12 years

Approximate time period your parents lived in the neighbourhood(if applicable): 15 years

Approximate time period your grandparents lived in the neighbourhood(if applicable): na

In an articulate and entertaining account, Arthur Patterson relates his early childhood in Elbow Park, with many lively anecdotes. His father, Henry Patterson was a well-known local lawyer. He and his wife Margaret had lived in Elbow Park since 1914. Arthur was born at the family home on 4th Street. After a somewhat idyllic childhood in Elbow Park, he moved with his family to top of Coach Hill into the old Crandell House in 1937, severing his connection to the district. The present neighbourhood of Patterson Heights gets its name from his family. After finishing school at Western Canada High, Arthur went to the University of British Columbia to study geology, his studies interrupted by military service. He attributes his interest in geology in part to the time he spent as a youth in the Rocky Mountains: his father and older brothers were avid outdoorsmen, and one summer Arthur and a friend camped for two months up the Elbow River. After his graduation, Arthur went into the oil industry, where he was very successful. In retirement he runs a small independent oil company. Along with vivid descriptions of neighbouring families in east Elbow Park, Mr. Patterson details his childhood activities, especially horseback riding in the area. He also makes interesting observations about the social economic status to the neighbourhood, especially in the Depression years.

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Three Tapes

Tape One, Side One

- 006 – Introduction.
- 009 – Date of Birth Feb 29, 1924, at the family home at 3913 4th Street.
- 021 – One of only the houses on his block of 4th Street. Much empty space in district.
- 028 – Other families: the Hadens, the Tempests. Mr. Tempest was a painter.
- 040 – The district was still bush south of the Hadens.
- 044 – 4th Street house was a small bungalow: description.
- 056 – Parents moved into district in 1914 or 1915.
- 060 – Father’s first law office in Fernie, B.C. Also tried Didsbury, Alberta..
- 071 – Father’s family background: from Nova Scotia. Grandfather also was a lawyer, parliamentarian.
- 090 – Family of five children; two brothers and sisters. One sister also came west to Calgary.
- 110 – Clash of father and aunt over politics.
- 124 – Parents had met at Dalhousie. Mother’s background: the Chase family from Annapolis valley in Nova Scotia, well-to-do farmers.
- 152 – Mother studied home economics at Guelph University, then arts degree at Dalhousie.
- 160 – Parents married after father moved to Didsbury.
- 168 – Family lived at 4th Street in Elbow Park until approximately 1937. Moved to Crandell House on Coach Hill, area now known as Patterson Heights.
- 200 – Father always an avid gardener.
- 234 – Move to Crandell house great for him. Somewhat remote, sometimes stranded.
- 264 – Father’s gardening continued.
- 275 – Father’s legal career. Very involved in politics, R.B. Bennett’s agent.
- 295 – Effect of the Depression. Story of grandmother and the car.
- 324 – Indigents coming to the door: Salvation Army chits.
- 340 – Effect on Elbow Park generally: comparison with Parkhill district.
- 371 – Rideau Park Junior High – kids from different backgrounds.
- 392 – Elbow Park School teachers: Miss Shepherd, Miss Anderson, etc.
- 418 – Childhood freedom: swimming in the summer.
- 450 – Different swimming areas on the Elbow River.
- 465 – Walking on the frozen river to school: swinging the suspension bridge.
- 499 – End of side.

Tape One, Side Two

- 006 – Start. Pete the river rat: city employee assigned to watch Wood’s Park and the bridge.
- 033 – Suspension bridge into Riverdale more recent.

- 038 – Other childhood activities: playing in vacant lots, lower than street level.
- 046 – The Dyke family: neighbours, very close friends.
- 065 – Captain Dyke's cricket pitch and amateur theatricals at Christ Church.
- 088 – Mr. Dyke's home made beer and other stories about the Dyke family.
- 160 – Dyke family remained in Elbow Park until retirement in the late forties; went to Vancouver Island.
- 180 – Other Elbow Park families and friends: Sandy MacDonald and MacDonald family, father was a contractor.
- 196 – The Sellar family. Mrs. Sellar ran Christopher Robin Kindergarten in her house after husband's death.
- 223 – Other families: the Cunninghams.
- 244 – Colonel Hanning, former military officer, manual training teacher.
- 252 – Story of letting air out of Colonel Hanning's Studebaker tires.
- 294 – Fireworks on May 24th: father's home made fireworks.
- 334 – Western Canada High: came after three brothers, who left a reputation.
- 355 – Age differences with siblings and relationship with them.
- 365 – Horses kept by the family in Elbow Park. Other horse owners.
- 411 – Families tended to be close at the time.
- 420 – Packhorse trips in the mountains in the summer. Summer up the Elbow Valley.
- 468 – End of tape.

Tape Two, Side One

- 013 – Start. Summer in the mountains continued. Staying with the rangers.
- 036 – Horse riding around Elbow Park: would go as far as Sarcee.
- 052 – Skating on the Elbow River: family would go as far the Weaselhead.
- 072 – Fears created by the Glenbow Dam: some people moved.
- 078 – Flood of 1929.
- 098 – Tennis Club and the community rinks.
- 110 – Flooding vacant lot for a skating rink.
- 118 – The Glencoe Club: father was an early member. Played badminton there.
- 127 – Club did not have the same character as an exclusive club.
- 137 – Members mostly from Elbow Park and Mount Royal.
- 158 – The Blacks and their new Buicks.
- 188 – Auto ownership: many people in Elbow Park did not have cars.
- 213 – Elbow Park mostly a family neighbourhood while he was growing up. Some exceptions.
- 224 – Using the streetcar.
- 238 – 4th Street commercial strip and relation to Elbow Park: neighbourhood shopping district. Some of the businesses.
- 275 – The Tivoli Theatre on 4th Street. Not as important for his childhood.
- 306 – Going to Western from the country: tows by the streetcar.

- 340 – University education and Elbow Park children.
354 – Went to University of British Columbia to take mining engineering.
392 – Program for World War two veterans important for university. Effect of war on his attitude toward education.
454 – Brothers' university and military service.
499 – End of side.

Tape Two, Side Two

- 005 – Start. Brothers' military service continued.
020 – Most Elbow Park families had someone in uniform: could be very distressing.
048 – Sister in law's military service as a researcher.
067 – His switch to geology from mining engineering. Field work for Imperial Oil.
097 – Change to new company Merrill Petroleum. Subsequent career with Decalta.
118 – Went to work for CEDA in Pakistan briefly.
128 – Move to French owned oil company.
166 – His own private company for retirement, Marpat Resources.
182 – Relationship with French vice president of Corazon.
232 – Current operations of Marpat.
248 – His wife Margie: start of their relationship.
286 – Margie's work in Vancouver as a public health nurse after marriage.
302 – His wife stopped working after starting family, became homemaker.
314 – Women generally stopped working after marriage.
346 – First house was purchased in Altadore district. Later bought house on corner of Elbow Drive on edge of city. Never considered Elbow Park.
399 – Subsequent relation with brothers.
424 – His subsequent experience with Elbow Park: area always kept up.
462 – People of the district revisited. The Katchen family.
496 – End of side.

Tape Three, Side One

- 006 – Start. Other area families: the Kings.
024 – Dick Matthews, son of owner of Matthews Music Hall.
048 – Impression of Elbow Park's social-economic status: middle class, not really realised until going to Rideau.
063 – Occupations of neighbourhood people.
112 – His wife's impression of Elbow Park was of a well off neighbourhood.
129 – The flood of 1929.
142 – Christ Church: attended scouts there. Had a community centre function.
171 – End of interview.