

*Interview of Jack Allen of Lloydminster
With Wendy Collins
Aug 15th 1997
Operated KFC Franchise*

And I'm in the home of Jack and Elaine Allen. Jack is a long time resident of Lloydminster and has a very significant history in the Kentucky Fried Chicken, and following is his story of Kentucky Fried Chicken in Lloydminster, as his own personal story.

I'm Wendy Collins and today is August the 15th of 1997. So Jack I was wondering if first of all we could talk a little bit about who you are, and where you were born because I don't think it was in Lloydminster was it?

No. I was born in Chaplain Saskatchewan, just north of Regina and my father and mother homesteaded a farm just north of Chaplin. I was born in 1929 the year of the stock market crash, I'm told.

You weren't the cause of it.

Hopefully not. But I was born just as the dirty 30's were being ushered in, my dad was well off until about 1934 and by that time he had been through the early part of the dirty thirties and he had to move, so he moved his little family up to a little village called Fielding which is just east of Battleford, I lived through all of my schooling I graduated in 1947, my goal at that time was to become a doctor, and I decided, you could get a short time teaching certificate at that time, and I thought that I would work for a number of years and take a number of courses and qualify for my pre med and then become a doctor, and that's what I did, I was quite a long ways along but I had an evaluation of my courses and I was to be accepted, into the faculty of medicine either in Saskatchewan or Edmonton, but then I met this girl and I got married, Elaine and I were both teaching at Dewberry, and she came there as a student teacher a couple years after I was there, and in due course we were married and in the summer of 1952, we were married in April of 1952, in the summer of 1952, I was just so fed up with studying and books and the regular school routine that I decided that I would do something else and I joined the Mutual life of Canada as what they called a life underwriter, my family always laughed at me and told me that I was ten years in that business before I knew that a life underwriter meant a salesman, life insurance salesman, but that's what I did, and I loved it, I didn't go back to the school teaching program because I loved being in business. We moved from Dewberry to Wainwright that year and then from Wainwright to Lloydminster so in the fall of 1952 we took up residence here and I was the local agent, one of my old clients last summer brought me a calendar that I had given him in 1952, and it had never had a page taken out of it, it was a kind of interesting thing to have, leave to the archives, we had four daughters starting with Betty and then Brenda, than Shelly and Barbara, and I went on in the life insurance business, until I started to share a office downtown in the new border credit union building at that time, with Ilston Plant he was a real-estate and general insurance and I was selling life insurance and one day in late 1967 he came to me

and said I want you to look at a financial statement here it was an exclusive listing to sell Jim Sellers dairy freeze which was Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise.

Oh it belonged to a Jim Sellers?

Yes, it was Sellers Dairy Freeze that was the name of it.

Ok and how old would it have been.

He had started it I think in about 1957 or 1958. Colonel Saunders had come out from Saskatoon with Joe Young who was the president of Kentucky Fried Chicken of Canada of that time and a few franchises at that time it was Barney (?) in Calgary, who I believe was the first one, two Burger King in Edmonton, Bill (?), Joe young in Saskatoon and the next one after that was Jim Sellers and he had bought a kit and the colonel showed him how to make the gravy, and make the Kentucky Fried Chicken.

And was that all across Canada that was it in Canada or in Western...

That was it.

Really?

It moved down into Ontario later and became a national at that time, but that is how young it was, he traveled around in a old Cadillac with some pots and pans in the trunk and when he could talk someone into taking on this franchise he would leave them a kit of stuff and I think the package price of that kit was seven hundred dollars. I understand that the new equipment list that went into the store was fifty thousand dollars, so that's how things change. I didn't want to go into the food business at all, but Ilston talked me into it and said we will just get a good staff and they will run it and you and I will just go on....

So he could see that it was a good deal.

Oh ya and it was a good deal, and he really twisted my arm and got me into it and it wasn't very many weeks that we realized that it was a big business, by the time that we took over it, it was a very big and successful business and this was in the fall of 1967 centennial year.

It was the business at about ten years old.

Yes it would be about 9 years old.

Do you have any idea about what the population might have been?

I think it was around 5000 maybe 7000 I can remember when it was around 4400 in a few years before that before I got into that business, but I cant remember exactly that year.

Anyway we did very well but in the summer of 1970 two and a half years after we had brought in our store was struck with lightening at five o'clock in the morning and burnt down. And we had good insurance coverage, but we were a long time getting settled and during that time we were so over financed and we were short of money that we worked day and night to try and save that building, to try and save that business, we opened a provisional store which is now a resource service center, were Creech funeral home is, and we were there during the summer.

But not the same building?

Oh no. Not the same building that was there now it was an implement agency at that time and it was vacant so we moved in we worked so hard twenty hour days there.

And you set up business?

We set up business there and while we were setting up our store down at its present spot, November the thirtish of 1970 we were ready to move into the new store.

So that took how long?

That took about 5 months to build the store and it was built by Ken Myers construction, the young Forman that built that first business for us was, Sid Emerson who has since moved out of town. We set to work in the new store which has since been knocked down there is no sign of it there, and it was the first image store the first Kentucky Fried Chicken West of the Lake head at that time, it just happened that this fire and the new store and we had to build it to their speculations.

And they were quite particular.

Very particular about it, and did a good job as far as I was concerned.

Just a second, while I think of it Jack do you remember when you first went into the business how much a chicken dinner cost?

Yes a \$1.35.

And what did you get for that?

It was a standers dinner that we sold right up until we sold out and that was a standard 3 pieces of chicken and a order of French fries, and I buttered bun and a cup of gravy, and if they wanted to buy a cup of coleslaw that was an extra 10 cents. A milkshake was 25 cents, a chicken dinner was \$1.35 a chicken barrel which was the biggest order we sold was \$5.40. Which there has been some tremendous.

And what was that.

That was 20 pieces of straight chicken.

Did you do caters then?

Oh yes Jim had been doing caters, I can remember when Jim catering to the rotary club, when I was selling life insurance and Jim had come it was about noon, and it was a wonderful treat having Kentucky Fried chicken.

Really.

We, things were difficult, everything was going so well, business was wonderful but we financed to death. We were going backwards, it had been a long long time, our insurance settlement and by the time we had it we had been operating daily interest operating loan for a year practically. It was just too heavy for us because we both had borrowed personally as heavy as we could when we first went into this business as well as having borrowed corporately as heavy as we could. So we had to draw big wages out of there in order to make our payments, and the credit union were wonderful to us, if they hadn't stood by us we would have been toast.

Who was the manager then?

Peter Goulak was the manager then, and he was a young manager and I had known him in JC a few years before that and we were in the Chamber of Commerce together, and they stood by us, and Ilston and I talked it over and I suggested that he buy out the business and he suggested that I buy it out, and I suppose that it was all a flip of a coin.

What was the advantage to one or the other buying it out?

Well we were paying, two sets of executive's salaries and one could run it, and one was a good staff. You see we were paying off loans that we had taken out personally so we had to draw wages and pay income tax in order to pay off the loans, as well as pay mortgage on the building. We were just over financed.

Do you remember what the interest rates were then?

Yes they were around 6% then.

Were they, that was steep, you now for the time.

It seemed to us at the time.

Yes.

And finally on November the 30, November the 15th in 1972, Ilston decided that I would buy him out. The reason for that was that I think that he had just about run out of all the money that he had borrowed to pay to me, and I had just about done the same, but I was

able to find the \$50,000 dollars, so I handed that over to him and said, here you go do something else, I know you are over forty years old, we parted because it was a real difficult situation, so he did that and I took Elaine in as my partner and she was also the accountant, and we started taken real close account of everything that we did there, and we had a very difficult time, and we use to play a game where we would review everything to see if there was anyway that we could save money or to see if we were leaving to many lights on down in the basement, were we using water at to fast of stage, just dollar and cents just small items but together they finally made our out go smaller than our income, so over a period of time, of months I suppose maybe a year or maybe two years, we were largely out of debt other than the operation on the mortgages, we had at that time, I had my car and I traveled all over Saskatchewan and Alberta talking to creditors who had given us money for meat and boxes and all these things and I told them that we would, pay current invoices right on time, from that time on and once a month we would get them some money from the old debt, and everyone of them agreed that that was fine and they all stood with us, all our creditors stayed with us, and in thirty months, Elaine came out of her office and said, well we still have all of our payments to make but we are caught up on the rest. And from then on it was just a matter of flying just to keep up to it all, the oil boom came into Lloyd at about the same time, and it was busy times and it just went. Unbelievably, up unto the point were in 1977 Kentucky Fried Chicken got a hold of me and said, we want to have another outlet in Lloydminster and if you don't do it we will. So then I built the second store, which is now a Subway, and we put some of our staff in there and it ran successfully for five years and then I sold out to the young lady and her husband that were managing at that time, Barbara (?) and she had been with us for seven years so she knew the operation, and they leased the building from us but they bought the equipment and the business and that's another story, from then on they did very well for a period of time, and then they started doing not so well, and it turned out that they were not getting along, and they broke up, and he turned out to have an alcohol problem, and he couldn't seem to conquer it so that whole thing broke up, and Barbara let the store go and by this time, Kentucky Fried Chicken was not the same Kentucky Fried Chicken that I showed you in the picture with the Colonel it was taken over by Pepsi cola and it was a big America company.

Jack can we just go back now before we get to the next part of this story, can we talk about the colonel for a minute? Because he, well I don't have to tell, you know what he was, tell me who he was and what he did?

The Colonel was like a story book character, bigger than life, he was a romantic, he had been bankrupt five times, he had become a lawyer, by studying a correspondence course in the dirty thirties he was the eldest of his family, and he use to bake bread and cook for his family, and his mother went and clean rooms in a hotel in Kentucky, he finally got himself built up into a service station, he was doing well as a Michelin man in the Michelin tire as well. But he was a very fair-minded man; right across the street from him was a competitor service station, this is in Corbin Kentucky, this man had a service station across from him, but the colonel who was very progressive minded new a lot about air pressures from selling Michelin tires he managed to buy himself a air compressor, and started to offer people free air, free air to those who wanted to stop in, it

was such a big deal that it started to break up the business of the service station next to him. Well the colonel got a pick and a shovel and ran a line over to his competitors and then said, now you can offer free air, and he was a really remarkable man and that's how he dealt with us, our franchise was a handshake proposition, they were getting formal franchise contracts about the time that I came in. but largely it was a handshake saying...

Gentleman's agreement.

Yes.

How did he come to do Kentucky Fried Chicken?

He had a natural flair for cooking and he always fooled around with cooking and being the oldest boy that had to look after the family, I think he had too. But he became fascinated with a piece of equipment called a pressure cooker, this was the time that the pressure cookers were just coming in, and they will tenderize a thing because of the pressure that is in the pot. He developed a system of frying chicken in hot oil but in the pressure cooker. So that in eight minutes, you could cook up all the parts in a chicken. And he did that and it became very popular, and it was a very good meal to eat, but he kept, fooling around with a bunch of different herbs and spices, and he finally got about eleven herbs and spices that he added that he flavored the chicken in, he had an egg wash, and the egg wash provided a glue that would hold the flour, the flour contained the eleven herbs and spices, and those eleven spices haven't changed until today and those eleven herbs and spices will remain a secret and I never knew the secret, and know one I new, knew the secret, there was a big company, that it was operating during the seventies, and eighties, six of those herbs and spices were added to the flour in Hamilton Ontario, and the other five in a processing plant in Calgary. Getting back to the Colonel again he dared not try these herbs and spices on his cliental because he had such a chicken business going the way that it was that he thought that maybe that if I fool around with it will spoil it a little bit, you know, and maybe it will be reflected in poor sales, but he got that a big river boat was going down the Mississippi very close to him, with about 500 hundred people on it, and they were wondering if he would produce chicken for them, and he thought that's the time that I am going to try the herbs and spices. He cooked up dinner for them just a regular catered like we do yet, and it was just a storm. He got raves about this wonderful chicken.

So did he actually from his house were he played around with these spices did he actually open up a chicken store or something?

Yes he did, the store is still there in Corbin Kentucky, and yes he, they would have people come in it was one of the first highway restaurants and people would just come in and sit around at a table and then go on in there cars, and I think his recipe really started to take shape in the forties. He had a son in law who was quite the promoter; the colonel had a son who was killed in a car accident, and two daughters who are still alive.

Do you know their names?

Yes, Mildred and Margaret, we know them well, we have had them here, Margaret, her husband, she use to fly around inspecting the Kentucky Fried Chicken stores in a little aircraft, and they have been here a couple times, and have had dinner with us a couple of times in our home, but.

So he served all these people.

And he sent them down the river in the boat.

And they said that was wonderful.

They thought that it was marvelous, and started to contact him about this wonderful chicken, but this one son in law, I'm not sure if it was a son in law, maybe it was a nephew but they talked him into getting some boxes printed and the first original Kentucky fried Chicken colors were kind of a salmon color and they had salmon colored boxes, but those boxes were discontinued when we were in business.

Do you have one at all?

I think I had one, since I moved here I'm not sure, it was interesting. So it just started to boom and finally some wealthy men in the United States got together with him, and bought him out. And I think he took 4 million dollars for it or 3 million dollars, which to him was a hefty amount of money.

He did start this until he was up in age.

He was just before retirement age. It clicked in 1965, and he was born in 1890, so he would be about that time and date would be, I cant do it in my head right now, but I have got letters, one letter that said, it has come to my attention that, this is what he said to all the people that, it has come to my attention that we are going to raise the amount of money that we are going to charge the franchise and he said rest assured that that is not the case, we are doing really well, and you are doing really well, and we can brag, that our chain has produced more successful millionaires than any other chain, and he said I get such pleasure out of that.

Yes he would, so then he started saying that these spices are serious business.

Well yes and he the people that were around him anyway, took part, he was mainly interested in cooking well and doing well, he actually moved up into Canada, he was just in love with Canada, the wide open spaces.

He didn't personally move here.

Yes he did he moved...

Oh did he?

Yes he moved he bought a home in Toronto, and he still kept his home in the states.

His wife was still alive?

Yes, I think she has just dies six months ago.

And what was her name?

Claudia and she was his second wife, his first wife, died he just loved Canada, and when he... he had interests all over, basically he sold his company out he did leave the estate in Florida for one of his daughters and another estate for another daughter to develop. But he loved Canada, and when, nobody knows this but he legally set up the entity of Kentucky Fried Chicken in Canada it was not a corporation, not a company, it was a charitable organization.

Really.

It was named Colonel Harlem Sanders charitable organization Inc. That's were we send our royalty cheques. And this charitable trust once a year would give away fifty percent of its profits in Canada and fifty percent to the United States. They also encouraged us as franchises to do the same thing, he said I'll tell you what I'll do, if you pick out worthwhile things in your community, equipment for the hospital, or scholarships for the worthy young, or Christian work of any kind, all you need to do is give my foundation a valid receipt and we will and you don't need to make a big fuss because we are not doing this for advertising purposes, it was funny because he never, told anybody about this very much, we got many, through the years that he was alive, we got many hundreds of dollars, thousands of dollars, and gave them away on his behalf, I don't know whether they are still in the new hospital, but there are a lot of hospital beds and special kinds of medicating units and so forth that had, curtsy of Kentucky Fried Chicken on them, and in our local hospital we sent lots of young people away and helped them with scholarships that were never mentioned at high school awards night, we weren't allowed to do that sort of thing, you would just send it away and get a receipt. In the terms of the trust, out of the board of directors, there was a board of directors, some of them from the United States and some of them in Canada, but the terms of his trust was that, all the money would be given away that the cooperation, that the foundation, and that various franchise had brought in and, but if something happened that it started to fail, or that the recipients of the trust fund, that there would be less money then the average amount had been that the others received prior to that time, that it could be

Can you tell me about the first time that you ever met the colonel?

Yes we were, we joined the Kentucky Fried Chicken Family in 1967 and then in the fall of 1968 their national convention was at Banff and the colonel was there, and he new

who we were, and he said, you are the new guys who signed you contract in Saskatoon with Joe Young and he just new all about us, he was an operations and a people person I think he was the despair of the people that were trying to keep the accounting done right and the corporate strategies going. I remember one time the board of directors took an exception to an extra menu item that the burger king boys in Edmonton had put on, because they wanted to push selling their hamburgers, they had been selling hamburgers for years when they took on the Kentucky Fried Chicken franchise so the KFC franchise the company or the charitable organization as it really was, took them to court and they were having a tough time, the company was pressing them pretty hard in this court case, and all of a sudden one of them remembered what about the colonel, lets get the Colonel in here, so it was his company it was Colonel Harlem Sanders inc that was suing these fellas but the colonel didn't know anything about it he had been running around the world starting stores being perfectly happy, so they brought him in and they went for an examination of discovery, and this was really funny, and he went into a little room and they started questioning the burger king boys and the court secretary was running one of these little machines, you know the type short hand, and he was running one of these and with a cigarette out of her mouth, and the colonel leaned over and knocked the cigarette out of her mouth and said you get rid of that dam thing, I hate sitting in this room, smelling that thing, I hate those things. So then she was mad and the secretary was mad and left, so they got another secretary in there and the colonel said well lets get on with this, what's going on with these two boys here in Edmonton, and somebody said, one of his lawyers or one of the lawyers on his side of the court said now colonel just answer the questions that you are asked, don't give a whole bunch of information, and he said, you shut your mouth sonny.

He was of substantial years by then, wasn't he?

Yes and he said these two guys are my franchises, they are selling chicken for us, and I know they are selling some hamburgers but he said if you ever decided that you wanted to buy a hamburger instead of chicken, do you think that somebody can change your mind. Don't you think they have a right to have both, he said I want this stopped, I want to get back to work, we have chicken to sell here. And the whole thing fell all down and around his ears.

He came to Lloyd didn't he?

Oh yes.

Many times?

Not many times he was here twice when Jim Sellers was there and once when we were here.

Tell me about when he came to Lloyd.

Well he announced, by this time he had sold his home in Toronto, and he had come to Canada and he announced that he wanted to call on all the stores and say hello as he was going buy.

So he didn't have a house he didn't live anywhere by then?

Not by then. And so they phoned from Peace River to say that he had landed there and that he was coming through, and we knew what time he was coming through to our store so we were bustling around trying to get everything ready, and he came in two hours early, and the fellows from the cooperation that were with him, they were driving him in a big Cadillac by this time, and they had gone to 11 o'clock the night before and were looking in stores before and the next morning he was up with his cane at 6 o'clock the next morning, knocking on all the doors saying what's the matter don't you know that people die in bed, and here these cars pulled into our lot, about two or three hours earlier than they were suppose to be there and he just came in and I showed you the picture.

Yes it was just priceless. And then he met the staff and looked at what you were doing and...

And he said you know nobody sells gravy they sell wall paper paste, but we made gravy the way he said, and he had a little plastic teaspoon in the corner of his white suit and he would dig into the gravy and taste it and he said that without a doubt our gravy was excellent and he really complemented me on that gravy, the funny thing was six months latter, (?) was over in Australia and he was getting on a plane in Australia and he came the colonel, and Steve had met him here that morning that we had had breakfast, and Steve was the acting Mayor of Lloydminster and welcomed him to Lloydminster and so Steven went over to him and said I bet you don't know me, and he said oh yes I do, you tell that Jack Allen that he is one of the only people in Canada that sells gravy and not wall paper paste.

Wasn't that lovely, he mentioned your name and everything, he had a wonderful mind didn't he?

And he loved kids, if you were at a convention, and he was getting quite old by this time, and he would sit out in the lobby of a hotel and sign autographs for kids far into the night and his handlers were always trying to get him to go someplace and he didn't care, up here or somewhere where it was important, and he would get really really feisty, and he would get that cane around and he would say, shut your mouth I'm going to be here until there is no kids.

So when he was in Lloyd he went to your store and he went to a reception at the city or...

No, well we had breakfast, we had set up a breakfast that, and he had had breakfast about three times before he got here, but we did take him to the Capri and have breakfast, the Colonel had a religious experience, he was a born again Christian, he wasn't baptized until he went over and got baptized in the river Jordan,

Did he?

Yes, he had, he tell the story of a tumor, a huge abdominal tumor, and he was in the hospital, and he was actually prepped ready to have this thing operated on, and the next morning the doctor came in to check him again before they started the pre anesthetic, and he had no tumor, and I tell it you how it was told to me that's all, and so its on a LP record, he was asked to a big church in the States to give this testimony, this LP record was made.

And would you say that as a result of this he became a born again Christian, or...

No he had made his... well I suppose a certain amount yes. But he went to a big religious broadcast, he was a Baptist and he had been a devote attendee of church and this program had been put on by the Mennonite brother I believe and even the (?) and I think one of the fellows led him to a decision about the lord in that program, and he always said afterwards, he had a great sense of humor of course and he always said, I did a great deal of cussing and when the lord got a hold of me he took away half of my vocabulary.

Where you ever afraid of him?

On no, definitely not.

When he was heading your way you thought it was wonderful and couldn't wait to see him?

Just wonderful. I couldn't wait to see him, he was a wonderful friend.

When you had the store you I imagine, I don't know how many people went through the door staff wise but there was a lot, do you have some humorous stories about staff activities during those years?

Yes, I would probably have to think about that a little bit, but we did have a lot of really fun people their, and I guess the hard part about selling that business out Wendy was parting with those staff members.

They were your family.

Yes and many of them were there for a long time, we always had some summer temporary help and they, we found that high school or university people that wanted to work for a few months and go on back to collage we found that they were just wonderful, in fact if one of them wanted to come back after a few years and said I would like to get three or four months work in before I do such and such we would just take them back. We had wonderful young people. We had lots of fun things happen, I know one thing that happened this was kind of an expensive mistake but one thing that happened, was we had a large cater that was suppose to go down to the small village of Bodo down south of

Provost, and somehow we got mixed up and it went down there a week ahead of time, and the girl that had come in to take the van down just couldn't find anybody at the hall, so she gave some of the chicken away to some of the people there, and then came back and admitted to me that it hadn't, we don't really know who's fault it was probably mine. We also, a thing that Ilston and I did before he left was we had several supervisors who wanted to take some extra training in Edmonton so we gathered a bunch of small aircrafts here in town and fly them all up and back in one day. We have pictures of them taking pictures of one other over the clouds.

Do you remember the first staff that you had?

Pretty well.

Who were they?

Irene McGrath, she was there with Jim Sellers, our first manager was the manager that was there when Jim Sellers was there which was Floe Henry, now Floe Brown, we had Anne Reid we had Sharon, oh ya Anne Reid was our manager for years and she still, drops in and we just really laugh about some of the things that happened, we had two twins the Sperling girls, we use to have carhops you see, that catwalk that use to run out from the back door from our store that was the carhop it had carhops out on the lot with radios, two way radios and they would radio their orders in, and take them back out, and these two little Sperling girls...

And you mean people parked outside?

And the lot was all numbered.

Even in the winter?

Yes even in the winter and that was very popular, but the end of that came because of the Labour, you couldn't have eight carhops going so they just closed the back door except for pickups and that's how that happened that way. This one little Sperling girl she was very neat and pretty little girl with blonde hair, just tiny, and the Harlem Gold trotters came in late and these huge black men you know they stood seven feet tall and we had an old ice cream machine at that time that you had to fill the hopper with a pailful it didn't draw the mix out like the new ones do. And this little Isabelle Sperling was going to fill this ice cream machine, it was a big tall thing, so she stepped up on a stool and looked directly into the eyes of one of these big, black basketball players, and she stepped back and when she did the stool slipped and she fell with the pail of ice cream mix, and one of the smart alec guys from the chicken room came and said get out of there you sow. And she was so neat and tidy, and there is nothing worse than ice cream mix you now it is so thick it was just awful, I think Elaine wrapped her up and sent her to get some clean...

And the Harlem Globe Trotters witnessed it all?

Yes that's right he just had a sort of quizzical look on his face. We had Guy Lombardo and his Royals come in and we didn't have any place for them to sit and eat, so they sat on there bus right in front of the front window, and we served them chicken there.

When did you start doing deliveries or did you always do them?

We started doing deliveries Jim Sellers had deliveries for awhile and then he found it was just to much Labour and too hard to control, so we bought a new van in 1968 and started delivering at fifty cents a trip, and we paid that van off, in about a year with its own earnings, but we discontinued deliveries just before we sold out because the cost of operating a vehicle and you couldn't pay people enough that they would like to have it as a job and so I was always doing the deliveries at the time, by default and it was probably one of the most efficient, smooth things that we did that business just went ahead after we got out of deliveries, I told Jim Sellers about it and he said well if you would have cared to ask me twenty five years ago I could have told you.

Well it has been really interesting to hear about Colonel Sanders, and now of course some big changes have taken place, so can you give us a little bit of history about how that came to be.

Well the terms of the charitable trust of the KFC in Canada had a clause in it that said if its net profit went down farther than a formula that they had, that it could be sold, and this was after the Colonels death and that had been there, because he had been smart enough to know that that might not go perpetually, after he was gone, and so they did put it up for sale, and a group of us franchises across Canada raised some money and tried to buy it out, but were unsuccessful and Pepsi cola bought it out, and that started with a number of upheavals because for one thing Coke cola was the product in use all across Canada buy KFC stores. But by contract most of us had Coke Cola contracts and they had to wait patiently until the contracts ran out. Ours never did we sold out, but the new buyers here in Lloyd have now got Pepsi Cola because that is the company that owns them. Pepsi Cola has done a tremendous job of rebuilding the chain physically, they have a lot of new beautiful stores and they offer not only walk in service but walk in and sit down dining service and I think they are thinking about doing delivery again, they are talking about it anyways. They have a drive up window, which we never had.

Of course you had picnic tables outside didn't you?

Yes.

You did some food preparation in the basement didn't you?

Yes we did, our commansary, we made our own salads because we had the Colonels, he had made us how to make the salads, so we always had that coleslaw that was such a favorite, we made it the way he did.

And I remember Elaine's mom, she was the bun...

She was the bun butter yes. We after she died we took a hard look at the bun thing and we found that it was cheaper to give away one of those circular packs of butter than it was to cut buns and put butter on it. So we started to do that, they were higher priced the butter and bun in bulk of course, the crunchy of course who always, who was Elaine's mother of course she always did it because she loved to be down there with the young people and everyone loved her so much and she would never take anything for it. Every once and a while we would send her to Hawaii on holiday and that was satisfying to us.

So now the stores are sorta streamlined and new, and the equipment I suppose is very different?

There is a lot of equipment that is somewhat different, but the basic cooking equipment we never, saved money when it came to buying the new equipment, so the chicken cooking machines that they use down there now were ours, we worked using them about two years before selling out and they were magnificent, you could just watch those big trays go buy especially if you were putting on a cater, every piece of chicken was just the best, you could a piece of chicken from either end and the flavor was just...

Now you use to have people around and do spot checks didn't you?

Yes and we did as well. All the KFC franchises in the region made an agreement to do the QSC which is quality, service and cleanliness once each month, a different franchise picked some people of his out of every store in Saskatchewan and checked for the speed of service, the temperature of the coleslaw the temperature of the gravy the quality and temperature of the chicken, you can tell how long the chicken has been cooked if you know what to look for, and we would check bathrooms and the cleanliness of the windows.

And of course you didn't know you were being checked?

You didn't know you were being checked, except I knew all the guys in Saskatchewan, what they drove and whatever else, so I usually new when they were there, but I usually didn't do anything about that. Because I wanted our staff to have to measure up to those standards as well, and we did not want to destroy that in any way, it was a wonderful thing. It was 3500 miles to make one of those monthly trips Elaine and I or Elaine and Betty or Betty and Marlene use to make those trips.

And then you would send a written report in?

Then you would send a written report in for each store. You drop in order some food, order some pop, order some coffee and have an order of everything, and then you would eat it in your van or whatever you had and you could record what stood up, and during those years and I think since there were some tremendous operators in Saskatchewan anyway but during those years the way those stores were being operated were just wonderful, just a tremendous the control, we had one draw back and that was that our

store was getting old by this time so we would always get put down because we needed new bathrooms and that sort of thing, but our contract was almost run out and you don't confuse the issue by doing a bunch of renovations when you don't have to because as far as their books are concerned they haven't authorized that and they would want the same thing done in two years, so our old building was a wonderful old building it was a utilitarian old place and it was handy but if you were in there not long before us selling out you would see that the floor was worn out, you know we had a proxy floor and we would have to paint that over every once in awhile, and the door closers and what not you would put new door closers on, but we were getting to need new glass doors and so on, and they were just stomped on and walked on, it was such a tremendous business, one of the highest in Canada and just really enjoyed it because it was such a good product, such a tremendous product.

And that is such a big part in business is that you have to believe in what you are selling don't you? Now Coke o Cola owns the franchise, or Pepsi Cola and what would be your thoughts on the future of the business.

Well I think its already got its establishment done, its on beautiful property, and its got a beautiful store that can offer everything they just cant miss if they are really fussy and I believe they are especially the chicken and there are some new products out now that lean away from fired chicken for those who feel they should, about the time that you keep up with things like that, you get another announcement from the doctors saying that you can have a couple of eggs to eat after all, that happens to. We cooked there with an entirely vegetable oil product, canola oil is what we cooked with, and that was nice for too reasons and that's that is a local product we are a canola country and secondly a canola in parts compliments a very nice flavor to KFC. It makes it even better, but I bet they will be working away at that now, they have a research department now trying things, they aren't going to improve on those eleven herbs and spices I know that.

Do you have any regrets?

Just emotions we were at it 29 years and we were on call there 24 hours a day and seven days a week.

I remember that.

Like the fellow said when he saw his picture on the post office wall its nice to know you are wanted, I don't have any regrets it was a wonderful experience, wonderful to work with the staff and wonderful to work with the colonel. He was like everybody said the romantic stories about him and so forth, really didn't do him justice, he was a wonderful guy.

How has Lloydminster changed?

I suppose, I think its pace is greater, its wealth is greater, sophistication has moved in a little more, I don't think that matters in the fast food business though, the fast food

business is so well received because buying large franchises and franchises are systems that are worked out too eliminate a lot of the things that would be undesirable, and I think there is a wonderful opportunity in that particular franchise anyways, they tell me and I haven't got this first hand, but they tell me that KFC and Esso petroleum business, are the top of mind advertising that they have in the business, you show a picture of the Colonel and a picture of the stripes on the barrel or the picture of Esso and even little kids know it and the Colonel of course it's a bigger operation now and its more money into advertising all the time it's a marvelous franchise and an opportunity, and I don't think anyone needs to worry about how it will do, if the cooperation gets greedy and difficult to deal with and the franchise company have been known to do that here and their and when they do they spoil the franchise usually, and you are mystified when you see it you wonder how something could be so good, and somebody let it fall apart, there is a thing you can say about Pepsi Cola and it is also very true and that is they are a tremendous marketing company, they really like to sell and they have a lot of sales and a good value when they do and they really save people many of dollars and I see nothing but positive on the horizon.

Between the time that you bought in to KFC and during that time when the Colonel was around what would you say was the most difficult thing tat you had to do?

There certainly were some discomforts on certain days, we had a disagreement on the opening of the Alberta store in 77 and they offered me a contract that was nothing like the contract that I had operated on for 10 years in the old store and they offered an terrible contract and I refused to sign it and opened the store anyways, and they took me to court over that and lost, and we won the court case over that and I personally didn't say much about it because when it is over it is over, I guess during that time with exhaustion and operating a busy store, very busy stores I should say, and both of them going like great guns to have to be away and in court for about three years was very hard, if I hadn't been young and resilient in that time I don't think I could have done it now. We did win because we were right, and the move they made was wrong and we went on having social contact with them and so forth it was just one of those things. It taught me a lot.

I was also wondering if you would mind talking about your experience in the political world, I know you have been a person who has keep himself well read and informed of the political issues of the time, and I was wondering if we could record some thoughts that you might have had regarding the political climates that we have been through?

One thing I have learned and that is that the second prize in politics is a long way behind the first prize.

I have often thought of going to local politics.

Nope that's one thing that I don't know whether I'm still tired but I just don't have any aspirations for that at all, they have asked me that I should take my turn as being the chairman at the rotary club I cant think about it, we are entering an age in my opinion that

is one of the most wonderful opportunities in the world financially, and medically and transportation wise and in so many ways but we are entering a time I'm afraid that it is acceptable to be to do what is expedient and so if legislation comes out that is completely odious, wrong and it gets through then it will be presented to the rest of the ten provinces because of the pressure they seem to say, we will just knuckle under and do it, yet there are exceptions to that, that are very remarkable as well. We are coming to accept things that are not right because so many people are doing them and I guess it has ever been thus, and you read about the prophet Ezekiel and how he wrung his hands and tried to get Jerusalem to walk the way she new how to walk, and he finally had the horror of watching her come under gods wrath and watching her become destroyed. Canada is such a wonderful place, you know that Wendy coming from a place that is also a wonderful place I understand but we must not worship the expedient we must say while we don't want to be destructive or vicious or anything else there are some absolutes and that heinously in this country right now, they are trying to convince everybody that they are no absolutes that's situation ethics. I talked too a fellow the other day and he was talking about somebody who was a parent of one of the people who had committed murder and you know just everything bad that you could write down, but this friend of mine said, but you know if this guy was in my family I would feel so different about it, and I'm sure he would, but Colonel Sanders wouldn't let that stop him from making a decision, he had some qualities that were just stainless steel as far as the heart is concerned mixed with love, he was a great lover of people, especially children. But we find ourselves, I think, everyday with things that we think are either right or wrong I am not sure that as a province that we are always doing what we know to be right. That spoken from somebody that is not there doing it of course. I have all sympathy for the pressures that are put on people. We had one of the greatest speakers at the mayors prayer breakfast that we have ever had, in Lloyd this year Stockwell Day, if you read right now some of the things that he is up against in legislation right now in Alberta I don't know what he can do because we have the system that says what the premiere and the prime minister says and its going to be a party decision, that's not democracy, all you need to do is elect one person, if one person is going to be able to call it all why have all those people at a great expense ,and I ...

Has that always been the case or has there been a time when you could vote according to your conscience?

Oh yes, that came in with Mr. Treudeau.

So the term following the party line was non-existent?

It wasn't non existent there was probably deals being made behind closed doors but it wasn't as, as I say we have a constitution now that has got everything so mixed up that first of all our elective representatives cant represent us because the decisions are being made by the supreme court judges, and they are not elected, they are appointed. So the prime minister appoints a judge and that's like another fifty members of parliament on his side, that judge will do what is expedient.

You have children you have grandchildren, and your concerns and your burdens for the country are very well, how do you begin to equip. The next generation?

Well I suppose that I am a very majority, but Christianity has always been a small majority, we will be fine if we turn our attention to the lord, his precept his word and do what is implied shown to us in gods word, and that sounds kind of like a religious fanatic, but we have got to be a religious fanatic if that's what we are, and it's the hope of the world and the world has been this way, I have done some reading on the conditions of hells way in Wales before the welsh revival, and it was awful it was awful and very familiar, a complete retreat from justice and the non existent justice system and people treating employees badly, employees treating their bosses badly, men treating, wives and family badly, women living in such a way that it wasn't acceptable, and if you read in those kinds of things, you find that it is kind of familiar to what we are looking in now, and all of a sudden, was it two little old ladies that started to pray in an attic room and after having done that for six months or eight months or eight years or whatever it was they all started to come and pray with them, and then someone else and it blossomed out to the point that we come to the age of Frank Squares tells about, at the end of the day those welsh miners coming out of the mines singing hymns, and he said you never heard anything like it in your life, and welsh led the commonwealth back to the Christian point of view again and of course ushered in some of the most wonderful times, that Canada and the other commonwealth nations ever had. It can happen again, it can happen here I pray that it will happen here, its got to be alright for me to talk about but I also got to do it I don't know whether I am doing it enough.

If you could give someone advice to the future of Lloydminster what would it be?

I don't have a fast answer for that because Lloydminster is a wonderful place, there are some things happening here that are unsavory, but there aren't many places that have the values that are here. I guess keep your head up and don't be afraid to say what you believe in, and I have a tough time doing that, there is lots of times that I don't do that, I believe that it is necessary, you often hear about a situation when they say well they have brought in the doctors and this has been done and that has been done, well I guess there is nothing they can do now but pray, and its funny when you think about that phrase because not any of it amounts to a hill of beans but prayer.

And why choose that last.

Yes.

Is there anything left that we have not talked about that you would like to say, it could be that a hundred years from now somebody could be listening to this tape if it lives that long, if the tapes last that long?

I don't really, although I wouldn't mind if I were known to be like the colonel was known to be, if I could be, you see this says Colonel Harlem Sanders 1890-1980, he was a rare malgum of a man solider, sailor, railroad man a self taught lawyer, a great humanitarian

and religious, at the age of sixty five when many look upon retirement he established one of the most successful businesses ever known, it was based on mutual trust and a handshake, out of it grew the Colonel Harlem Sanders charitable Inc that was the name of that thing, his licensees also became his friends to spread his value of integrity and value across Canada. In recent years as friends and family talked about taking it easy his favorite saying was I would rather wear out than rust out, and that's what he did. If a man was measured by his accomplishments the Colonel Sanders was a giant, he will be missed. If those qualities could come through for me, I would be very content; it has been a real privilege to know him.

It has been a real privilege to talk to you today Jack and I appreciate the time that you have given me and the chance that we have to remember things that have gone on in the past.

Thank you.

Thank you so much.