

# Audio 1 [Erika]

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Doreen Befus was born as the twin sister to Dave and Mary Befus, this was a Russian immigrant family who lived in Central Alberta and who had been farming there. Doreen was born with an extra toe on each foot and, apparently, according to the medical records, she was kind of sickly from birth. And as a result, she immediately was kept longer in the hospital, and was brought in for a lot more observation than her twin sister. The doctor originally cut off her extra toes and but continued to monitor her because she seemed a little bit weaker than her sister. After a short period of time, within, over the course of the next 18 months or two years, her mother found it difficult to take care of the twin girls, she also had another older daughter at home and her husband left her. And the stories about his disappearance are a little bit conflicted depending on who you ask. But the bottom line for Doreen was that she ended up going back and forth into foster care homes and ultimately was declared a ward of the state and by the ages of seven, she ended up at the Michener Center or the Provincial Training School for Mentally Defective Children. And she lived out in that institution, lived out the rest of her life, sorry – she lived for a good chunk of her life in that institution until she was old enough to qualify for an adult institution and she moved there in 1953. So her personal history was very much one of an institutionalized life. She didn't know about her family until she moved out of the institution and I'll talk about that in a moment, and the way she came into the institution was largely as a result of being born to a poor and somewhat dysfunctional family and from being a little bit sick at birth.