

# Bill Sparks

Weymouth Falls

Interviewed by Cindy Graham, October 20, 2000



Q: What is your full name?

A: My full name? My full name is James Herbert Sparks.

Q: And who were your parents?

A: My parents?

Q: Yep.

A: What, ah, my mother's name, you mean?

Q: Yep. Your mother and father's names.

A: Elizabeth Sparks. And then, George....(s)he was my stepfather....George Sparks.

Q: OK. What was your mother's name before she was a Sparks?

A: Elizabeth Smith.

Q: And do you remember your grandparents' names?

A: Ah, my grandfather's name was Jimmy Smith. And my grandmother was, no....that's my great... getting' mixed up now....Ah, my grandmother's name was Alice Stephenson and her husband's name was Jack Stephenson. And my.... you want my great grandmother?

Q: Sure, if you have it.

A: My great grandmother was named Sophronie Smith.

Q: Phronie?

A: Sophronie Smith.

Q: Sophronie.

A: Yeah. And my great grandfather was Jimmy Smith.

Q: And were they all living in the Weymouth Falls area?

A: Well, ever since I knew, they always lived here. Yeah.

Q: OK. Ahm, you were born in Weymouth Falls?

A: Yes.

Q: When?

A: When was I born?

Q: Yes.

A: 1919. The year 1919, twenty-fourth day of September.

Q: Yep. And how large was your family?

A: Pardon?

Q: How large was your family?

A: How large was my family?

Q: How many brothers and sisters?

A: Oh gee. Now you're gettin' somewhere now. You don't, you don't want the names do you?

Q: Not necessarily.

A: There's nine. Nine in my family.

Q: And where did you fit in?

A: Ah, where'd I fit in?

Q: Yeah.

A: Well I was the first....I was the first, you know, born.

Q: Yea. You're the oldest.

A: Yeah, I'm the oldest. Then I have a sister....I have a sister, lives up the road there. She was next. Then I have two brothers in Halifax. And one in Ontario. And then, well, I have, well, you don't want to....There's two of 'em passed away. You don't want to know.....you don't need them.

Q: Well you can tell us whatever you'd like.

A: Well the ones that passed away here, the one was named Vincent and the other one was named Marjorie. I don't know how many....Now did you count, are you keeping count?

Q: No.

A: Is that right is it?

CC: I think we might be missing one, but ah, you're pretty close.

A: And one died overseas.

CC: Oh really? OK.

A: Yeah.

CC: Yeah.

A: That makes it.

CC: That makes ah, nine.

A: Yeah.

CC: OK.

A: Yeah. I said nine.

CC: Yeah.

Q: What was it like being the oldest?

A: Pardon?

Q: What was it like being the oldest?

A: What was it like being....

Q: The oldest child in the family. The first born one. Are you the oldest....you're the oldest?

A: I'm the oldest. I'm the oldest.

Q: Yep. What was that like? Was that a good thing?

A: No. (Laughter) I don't know....

Q: Why not?

A: I don't know if that's good or not. Yeah, I don't know if that's good or not, but, I'm still here anyway!

Q: Did it mean you had a lot more responsibilities?

A: A lot of 'em.

Q: Yes.

A: A lot of 'em. When I was brought up there was a lot of 'em.

Q: Yeah?

A: See I was born out-of-wed, right?

Q: Yes?

A: Yes, and that makes a difference.

Q: Yes.

A: And, see, my grandmother, my great grandmother brought me up. And that's been a long time. That's been eighty-one years ago. I'm eighty-one.

Q: Yes.

A: So, that's been a long.....and I've seen a lots in that time. Hard times and good times, hard times and good times.

Q: Ahm, tell me about some of the hard stuff. Being brought up by your grandmother or great grandmother....what are some of your earliest memories?

A: Well my great grandmother.... I was brought up by her.

Q: Yes.

A: My great grandmother. But, and er ah, after my .... after she died, my great grandmother died, ah my ah first cousin brought me up and she....and ah....Yeah she brought me up after that until I become of age to go to work and so on, like that.

Q: So you were not raised by your mother at all?

A: No.

Q: Where was your mother?

A: Elizabeth, I didn't stay with them at all.

Q: No.

A: No.

Q: But did your other brothers and sisters?

A: Yeah, they stayed. They were....stayed with her, but not me. 'Cause see, I was born like I said, out-of-wed.

Q: You were the first, the only one.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the rest of them was born by the old, by the old....my dad, my step father.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Did you feel like you always wanted to be with the rest of them?

A: Well, it didn't make any difference to me.

Q: No?

A: 'Cause I kept, I was only, say, maybe two or three months old, see, when my grandmother took me right? And ah, seemed like, well, just so so. I didn't....I wasn't with them very much.

Q: Yeah.

A: They always lived by themselves you know, and....sometimes, you know, I'd maybe go stay a day or so, or played with them like that, but far as, as far as livin' right with them, I never. Yeah, I never lived with them.

Q: So, were you the only child in your grandmother's household? Or were there other children that your grandmother, great grandmother took care of?

A: What, ah, you mean my great grandmother?

Q: Yes. It was your great grandmother that raised you?

A: Yeah.

Q: Until she died.

A: Yeah, until she died.

Q: And then you went with your cousin. But your cousin maybe had other children?

A: Yeah, she had two.

Q: Yes.

A: And they were just like my....like my sisters. They were two girls.

Q: Two girls?

A: And they were just like....they were....I was brought up with them,

Q: Yes.

A: So we was brought up like sisters and brother.

Q: OK.

A: Yeah.

Q: So you weren't an only child?

A: Pardon?

Q: Either way, you weren't raised like an only child?

A: No, no, oh no, no, no.

Q: So, do you have any memories of your childhood before you even started school?

A: Um, what are you getting back to now....is how I was....What do you exactly mean now?

Q: Well, what are your first memories? Can you remember anything before school even? I know that's going a long way back.

A: Oh yes, I remember stuff before I went to school.

Q: What do you remember?

A: Well....well, you know what kids were like, you know, what children were like, you know. I remember coasting downhill and....And one time I had some kind of a rheumatism and ah, I couldn't walk, and my cousin next door, she learned me how to walk again...

Q: Yes?

A: ....And so on like that. And ah, then my grandmother and them....them days is way back you know. And I can remember, they put....went to the doctor, doctor give me some stuff, rub me all over, (inaudible, liniment?) put on me ....I don't know, it was some kind of rheumatism or somethin'. So my grandmother and them they gathered up, they had a great big, you know them old time washtubs, them big washtubs?

Q: Yes.

A: And they put all kinds of stuff....There was juniper....

Q: Yeah....

A: ....ground hemlock, spruce boughs, and everything like that. And they put that in there and they put hot water in that, boiling water, and I sit me back in the rockin' chair like that, and I sat up there and they threw the quilt over top of me and I sat in that steam.

Q: Yes. Like a tent.

A: Yeah. They steamed me. And then after that, well, I don't know how many days they done it but, after....but I remember that part. They steamed me like that, and I was sittin' back there, and ah....just so I could breathe, you know. The rest of my body was all covered up. And so, after that, I don't know, my cousin, like I said, my cousin brought....next door....well she come over and she used to take me by the hand and she would walk.....And I was only about six years old then.

Q: Yes?

A: Yeah. About six years old, yeah. That's the way I learned to walk again.

Q: Maybe that was rheumatic fever?

A: I....tell you the truth, I don't know what it was. Them old people you know....it's not like the people nowadays. See, nowadays you have doctors and they tell you what's this and what's that. But them days, I don't know. Seemed like....I don't know if they knew what it was or not, but all their medicine and stuff, they....not like it is nowadays.

CC: Right.

A: No, no. You had a cold or anything, they'd gather up stuff in the woods for a fever and all of that stuff. Then, the doctors, when you went to the doctors, they didn't have no pills in those days. Oh no, they had....you'd go down here to the druggist, I remember the druggist down here....You'd go to the doctor and he'd send you over there. And he'd have a big long shelf full....there was herbs or whatever you call it and he'd have a bottle so long, and he'd put a little bit here and a little bit there and a little bit there. Then he'd shake it up and he'd give it to you. And the bottles you used to have had little ounces marked on the side, and you'd take so much....And my old grandfather, I remember, we used to have....well today they'd call it a flu, but them days, well he'd call it just a heavy cold or somethin' like that. He had a big gallon jug, oh gee, about that high, and they had wild cherry, ( balmgarden?), buds and Lord knows what all was in that. And when we'd get a cold, he'd say, "I'll give you somethin' for your cold." He'd take those crocks and then he'd fill it with that, or drink that. And talk about somethin' bitter! You know, and that would break the cold. They were all herbs. Everything was herbs. Them days, you know, way back in my day, kids, never thought about a pill, no, never thought about a pill.

Q: Yet they were effective. They worked.

A: Oh they worked, they worked. I guess so they worked. And when you had a fever, they'd go out and take er, ah, like blueberry....take that root down there, steep that, drink that, and that was good for your fever....for your fever.

Q: Blueberry roots?

A: Yeah, blueberry, yeah. Blueberry roots. And they had blackberry roots when you had the diarrhea like that. All that, yeah all that stuff. Then they had, they used to have....but I don't see it now.... Ah they used to call it peppermint, yeah pep'mint, and they'd bring that, and they'd steep that, give us that. And then another one was called tansy. They'd steep that and give us that, but I can't tell....man...All that stuff, all herbs, all herbs. No pills.

Q: Was there one person in your community that was the authority, like the medicine woman, someone who had all that knowledge, or was it common knowledge?

A: Well, I would say it was just common, because most everybody around.... Well I don't know about mixin' up all these, like I said, that big jug of stuff. I don't know if everybody knew about that but...

But that was, like, the roots in the ground and stuff like that, and like I say they, everybody used to use that. Yeah. And everything was...I think they used to....to keep your fever down, I think it was what they call tansy, it was a [inaudible] thing grewed up, and oh, nasty! Oh! But it cured you. It cured, you know, it cured you.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh yeah.

Q: If you could smell or taste those things again today, like your steam bath....

A: Oh I can taste....

Q: ....It would take you right back.

A: Oh yeah. I can taste that old jug of stuff they used....and the pep'mint. And then after a while they used to call it catnip. It used to grow on the ground and they'd pick that and steep that.

Q: Yes.

A: They said for your pain, and then they had somethin' for cramps in your stomach. Oh man, I can remember all of that.

Q: If a child was really sick and they were very worried about them, would there be one person in the community that would come?

A: Well, ah, now like my mother. My mother, well she never....she went everywhere. If you was sick, if somebody was sick over there, she always went.

Q: Yes?

A: She didn't back up, you know.

Q: No?

A: She didn't say, "I'm going here to catch this. I'm not going there, I'm goin' to catch that...." Nothin' like that. She went. See, and I know a lot of the.... I know a lot of places she went. And my mother was what you call a midwife.

Q: I was just going to ask you that.

A: Yeah. She was a midwife. A midwoman, whatever they call it, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, that's what she was. My wife here had....I think the first kid was born....wait a minute now, yeah....the first one was born, my mother looked after it. The second one was in the hospital. But nowadays it's a whole lot different. And ah, all my goin' to school days, you know....it was tough. Back in the thirties, thirty-two, thirty-three. And what....I was always tellin' my children here, what was put on the table, you ate it. And if you didn't want that, you'd go without. You didn't go in and ask your parents....your parents didn't come and ask you what you wanted for breakfast. They didn't ask you what you want for dinner, or none of that. They put it down, you know, pork, or whatever it was. You ate that. I've seen a good many times, they take that cornmeal, you know....and at that time they had cows and a lot of animals around....take, and that was good you know, that cornmeal mixed up with a little bit of sugar and that, cow cream over top of that. Yeah, and that stuck to your ribs.

Q: Yeah.

A: That stuck to your ribs. You went to school, we went to school, well you....you know, goin' to school, remember gettin' hungry, we'd come home....Then stormy days well we'd take our lunch pail, you know, put a little lunch in there. But good days we used to come home to lunch, yeah. We just lived ah....we just went to school down the road here just side of Gates' Lane there....

Q: Yes?

A: Was right there. That big white house you see there, that was an old school house. And then they called it....well you know that other one is a community centre now, that big one.

Q: Yes?

A: Yeah. Yeah I can remem....oh I can remember all those days....boys, I'm tellin'.....

Q: Your school house was large?

A: Pardon?

Q: Your school house was a large building?

A: Mmm, not too large, no. Well we had ah, we only used to have the one teacher. I think she had somewhere around thirty-eight or forty-eight, somethin' like that, all in the one building. Sometimes it was crowded. Sometimes you had to put three in a seat.



Q: Yes?

A: Yeah, we had to put three in a seat. Oh it's a lot dif....well of course, I don't know, but accordin' to the way the kids tell it nowadays, it was a lot different in them days. Oh yeah, a lot different. I remember when we used to go, and in the morning, and they'd have the roll call and that, and say the Lord's Prayer and sing Oh Canada and all that stuff. They don't do that nowadays. That's all in the past. Yeah. But we enjoyed it.

Q: Did you like school?

A: Oh yeah. But at that time I could only go to school so long, because times were so hard. I only could stay....I stayed in school 'til I was fourteen years old.

Q: Fourteen?

A: Yeah, fourteen. And then after that I was in the woods, and around....in the woods, outa the woods, in the gardens and out the garden. Oh....I worked all my life, ever since I was a kid you know. We enjoyed that. And there wasn't ah.... the women was out with the men you know, help weed the garden and everything. And at that time, they had to make your own livin'. Make your own parties and everything. Well nowadays....there's drugs....whoa! We never thought it would get like that.... And now kids, nowadays, ah, me thinkin' back....I'm just going back to my days.

Q: Yep.

A: And then, nowadays....and we was only allowed....we wasn't allowed to party like the kids is now. Fifteen years old....we had to be fifteen or sixteen. If we wanted to....I remember to my cousin's there, well, they used to....Saturday afternoons, she used to have company come in. We wasn't allowed in the room with the company. "No, you go on. Go outside. Go on, go on out to your play," like that. But nowadays, kids is right....I seen a lot of changes. Then I've seen a lot of changes up 'til now, a lot of changes, yeah.

Q: What were your favourite things to do for fun when you were in school?

A: Play ball.

Q: Play ball?

A: Yeah.

Q: Baseball?

A: Yeah. Ever'body played softball them days. Oh we enjoyed that....played horseshoes, all that stuff, you know. Then we used to....at school, there was a bunch of woods right in the back of it. When they had recess, we'd go be in the back and climb the trees and....No fights and all that stuff. We didn't think about them. See we didn't have time for that. No, we enjoyed that.

Q: How old were you when your great grandmother died and you had to live with your cousin?

A: Ah, let me see now. I was about, between seven and eight, between seven and eight years old, yeah. Yeah, my great grandmother. My grandmother now, well for me to tell you when....She was in New Brunswick when she died. But now for me to tell you, I can't remember. But I know she was ninety-two or ninety three when she died.

Q: That's your grandmother.

A: That's my grandmother.

Q: Yeah.

A: She had diabetes and she was partly blind. And my great grandmother had diabetes. And ah, let me see now....the old man didn't have no diabetes. But they were in New Brunswick. My grandmother, my grandmother had twenty-one children. She had twenty-one children.



CC: Amazing.

Q: And one of them was your mother?

A: Pardon?

Q: And one of them was your mother.

A: Yeah, one of them, yeah.

Q: OK.

A: And one of them was one of my uncles there. And she raised them all but three. Three died and there was eighteen in the family. So then my grandfather, well when he wanted to go in the woods, when he used to contract...he had horses and so on like that...he had his own crew. He'd take and build camps in the woods like that, and my grandmother'd go cook, and the girls helped him. They didn't get much schoolin'. They didn't get too much schoolin'. Yeah, and the boys chopped. The boys chopped the wood and my grandfather, he drove the horses. Course I wasn't around them too much. They were in New Brunswick and so on like that. Yeah.

Q: When you were living with your great grandmother.....

A: My great grandmother, yeah. I didn't live with my grandmother. My great grandmother.

Q: OK.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did she still have a husband alive?

A: Pardon?

Q: Did she have a husband living?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: OK.

A: Yeah. Like I told you, his name was Jimmy.

Q: Yeah.

A: Jimmy Smith. He come from ah....Oh, I was thinkin' about that this morning. He come from Bermuda is it?

CC: Oh yeah?

A: He came from there, years and years...his father and them.. And when came here, it was all woods. I don't know exactly how they got here. But that road there was not like that. That road was over here. You think now, when you come up from Weymouth, you think you're comin' up that way, but you're comin' up from that way. So, then of course, I can't remember his father bein' here like that, but my grandfather was almost a hundred years old. Six weeks he'd a been a hundred years old.

Q: Yep.

A: Yeah. He had a sister. He had a sister and had a brother. Let's see now, I think he had two brothers, I think, two brothers. Oh, I can remember a little bit back. Yeah

Q: When you moved in with your cousin after your great grandmother died....

A: My cousin always lived there.

Q: She lived there. OK.

A: She always lived there. She lived there and looked after the old people.

Q: OK.

A: See. My aunt, ah, my aunt, she went to the States and my cousin looked after us. Well looked after....er ah, the one that went to the States?

Q: No, your cousin that raised you after your great grandmother died.

A: Her name was Catherine. Catherine Smith.

Q: Catherine Smith.

A: Yeah. I don't know, she died, oh not too long ago. I can't, I just can't remember it at the time. Let me see, that was in what? Well she died in her [the?] seventies....no, no, I'm getting' ahead of myself now. I just forget now when she died, tell you the truth. See I didn't mark it down. I could tell you if I looked in a book somewhere, but I don't know exactly.

Q: Can you remember what a typical day was for your great grandmother and your cousin as the head female of the household? What was their day like? Did they work outside of the home also?

A: Oh yeah. My cousin, she used to work outside.

Q: What did she do?

A: She used to do housework and stuff like that.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. But my grandmother....my great grandmother, now I'm talkin' about my great grandmother....

Q: Yep.

A: ....Well she never....she was always home most of the time. Yeah. And she was a big woman. She weighed over two hundred and her hand was twice as big as my only one hand like that put together. And I want you to know, Mr. Man, we toed the mark. We toed the mark. When she said, "Bill....." Well of course, see now they call me Bill, right? But my right name....She gave me that name. When the First World War was on, Kaiser Bill....

Q: Yes.

A: Well, I was born at that time, and when I was born at that time, she called me Kaiser Bill, and ever since then I've been goin' by that. Oh man, don't I.....I remember that, she used to call me that. Back then, when she told you somethin', you'd go do it. Then, here, we could be playin' on the floor, and she'd say, "Bill, you go do this." Well don't say, "Wait a minute," 'cause if you did that big hand took you side of the head. Yeah. It's a lot different....kids nowadays don't....they don't pay no attention to their parents nowadays. Well, I don't know about you fellas, but they got no respect for your parents. They got no respect for nobody nowadays. They got no respect for no.....And if we went down the road, (we call that down and that up), if we went down there and done somethin', Mr. Man, if they said "I'll tell your grandmother" or somethin' like that, oh man. Well we knowed what we was goin' to get when we got home. Oh!

Q: That's down [pointing towards Weymouth] and that's up?

A: Yeah. We call that down and that up. Some people calls that down and that up.

CC: What direction is down? Weymouth?

A: Yeah.

Q: Did your teacher hand out some pretty tough discipline also?

A: Oh, I guess so. I guess so. We toed the mark. And at that time, when I was comin' up, it's not like it is now. It wasn't taxes, and things wasn't paid by the government. We only could go to school when the community here paid the taxes. We'd go to school, and when that money was gone, we'd come home and stay maybe a month, maybe two months. And they'd build up again and we'd go back. Then, we kept doin' that you know, the whole term like that. 'Cause, you know, they had to go by the money, what they..... it's not like it used to be now. But now after the government took it over well, you can go to school. No buses....now, we, look, I seen days we'd go down here and go to school....Oh we didn't mind that a bit. That was just fun for us to go.

Q: Did you have a best friend in school?

A: Ah, well, like my neighbours had....now, I had two boys livin' next door to me, and another fella that lived there, two doors or three doors away from me. We always played together. And the two boys t lived next door to me were just the same's my brother and sister. Just same as my brothers. I just....sister, but just the same as my brothers, right? And er, my cousin used to go over there and housemake....dresses and clothes and stuff like that, and I used to stay over with them, part of the time, at night time. And after I growed up, well, the lady next door, that was my aunt next door....If she wanted to go somewhere, well she always left me with the young ones. Now they're all gone. I'm the only one left. You know, now all of my friends, you wouldn't think it, but all of my playmates are gone. All of 'em. I used to have.... a couple up there I used to go, you know, go fishin' with.... Then my brother in law, he died not too long ago. And him and I used to work in the woods together. Then, like the two fellas lived up above there.....next door, just the same as a brother to me. And the last fella just died here, oh not....just here this summer down at the park. I don't know if you....you might have heard tell of it. He just died here. He was seventy some odd years old. He just died here this summer. They come down from Ontario, him and his wife, and they had, you know, a camper and everything, and they were down here on a vacation. And he was the last one.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. He was the last one. All....But the rest of them died before that. My brother in law died and I had some other ones that died....some other....all cousins. But the Weymouth Falls here, Weymouth Falls, everybody was relation. Yeah. And now there's nobody here now. No. I remember one time there was over a thousand people lived in here. Over a thousand people lived in this Falls here. Now, count 'em, now, I don't know how many.... I've counted 'em once before. It's only a hundred and some odd....

Q: Really?

A: Yeah, it's gone way down. It's only the old people here lives here now. No new....well it's a few young people just movin' in you know, here.....here and there. But there's no young people.

Q: Was there a Weymouth Falls Reunion here this year?

A: Yeah.

Q: What was that all about?

A: Well, I didn't go because I had to use the wheelchair. But they say I shouldn't a thought about that, I shoul'da come...went just the same.

Q: Yeah.

A: But they had a very nice time. They had a parade. And they had games and they had lunches and stuff like that, yeah. And they had church services. They had church service here and they had Jehovah Witness service. Then the last....the church I belong to, the Baptist church, that big church on the hill....They had, they closed there. That was their closing. They had a good time I guess..

Q: Well if a thousand people used to live here, that must mean that people from Weymouth Falls have moved all over the world maybe.

A: Oh Mr. Man, I'm tellin' you. I don't know where they come from, but the people here had big families, man! Look, I seen the school bus, just a little ways up over the hill here, not too far, the end of the road's right up there....And I seen so many kids that filled that bus from there to that corner, right down to that corner. Then the other bus.....then they had to bring the second bus, used to come from, I don't know, it come from down there, it came up and picked the other ones up. Two busloads on this road.

CC: Wow.

A: See, the lower crossroad there....there used to, there used to be some families lived on that crossroad there. They had big families. Some had twelve. Some had thirteen and all that, you know. Big families. Yeah.

[Bill's wife Estella enters kitchen.]

Q: What did most people do in Weymouth Falls for a living? Those thousand people or so? What were the main occupations?

A: Well, the main....most occupation was mill work, woods work and farming.

Q: Any fishermen?

A: No fishermen.

Q: From Weymouth? No.

A: Not in here. There were fishermen down along the shore but no fishermen up here. They were all farming up here and there all used to be a lot of....used to have a lot of cattle up there, oh. Now the only place you see the cattle is just down the road here. You seen 'em, maybe you seen 'em as you come up it like that. It's not....maybe you didn't notice 'em, maybe you didn't notice. There's nothin' around here, not now. Oh I've had pigs here and here, and had hens here and.... And other people had hens....had to make their livin' Some people had two cows, two, three cows, but nothin' now. Everything's gone.

Q: Where was the house you grew up in compared.... in relation to here? Very close to here?

A: Yeah, just up over the hill here.

Q: Yeah?

A: If you go up that hill, up this hill here, there's a house on top of the hill. Then the one next door, and the next house, that's the one I was tellin' you about, them two boys like my brothers.... them two boys lived there. Then my ah, brother-in-law lives in the next house on the right hand side. Then there's no....the house I was brought up in, there's nobody livin' into it now. The two children I was tellin' you about, my cousin's two children....well they're in Montreal, and the old house is still standin' there yet.. But they come home sometimes. Yeah. But the house is old, Mr. Man, I don't know.... The house is way over a hundred years old or more, oh yeah. Yeah, and then we used to have a lot of apple trees to pick apples around here. And oh, had to make....like I was telling you a while ago, we had to make your own living. If we wanted anything, you know, like something to eat, like dinner, we didn't go downtown to get no roast beef, roast pork and all that stuff. We went down in the basement. Went down there. There's all our meat was down in there. Down there there's pigs, had deer meat, moose meat, and all that stuff down there. You brought that up, put it in the big pot, whatever you wanted....boiled dinners you put in the big pot. You wanted corned beef and cabbage you went down and brought the stuff up. Yeah. You wanted salt cabbage, salt beans, and all that stuff. Then they used....they used to come from ah Digby Neck and we used to trade Digby Neck....they didn't have time to plant....so we used to take the stuff down there and trade it for fish. And they had all kinds of fish down there. Oh listenin' to this....it's a lot different nowadays from what it was then.

Q: Was there a lot of trading and bartering or....What would you have to spend money for?

A: Spend money? Well...

Q: What would you need money to buy?

A: Well, I'll tell you, I'll tell you about buyin' stuff. Everything, most everything we got.....Now like me, like when I was growin' up, everything was made. You know, like if I wanted....my cousin, she used to sew....Now if she wanted to make me a pair of pants, she took like an old.... overcoat, you know, you wash 'em all out, press 'em out, and like that, she'd make me a pair of pants. And all that stuff like that, everything was made. Yeah, see, and far as like buyin' stuff, well now like, there used to be a store down here, we used to buy candy and stuff like that.....I mean I'm talkin' about kids you know.....And we'd go down there and we could buy penny candy. We had, they had small pennies and they had the great big ones so.... But now you don't see them now. You see small pennies but you don't see the big ones.

Q: There were two sizes of pennies?

A: Pardon?

Q: There were two sizes of pennies?

A: Yes. Two sizes.

Q: Yes?

A: Two sizes. One was about that big. Well you see those loonies that you get now?

Q: Yes?

A: Well one penny was that size and the other one was the size of the one that you get....

ES: I've got one now I could show you.

Q: Yes?

A: ....the little ones. And we used to go down....there used to be a store right down this.....there's a church just down over the hill there....used to be a store on that side. And I can see us now runnin' down over there with them there pennies, and go down and buy candy.

Q: Who'd give you the pennies?

A: Who'd give you the pennies? Well we used to ah, well we'd ask this one to give us a penny, ask that one to give....the older people. My grandmother and them would give you....well sometime they'd give us a penny or two to and go down and buy candy like that, when we was small.

Q: You didn't have to do anything to earn it?

A: Oh yeah. Oh you had to earn it. Oh you earned it. If you didn't earn it you didn't get nothin'. Oh I remember, me, I had to make sure my wood was in the corner at night and make sure the water was in.... And if I wanted to play at night, I didn't go play. I done my work, and then I'd go play. And if I didn't, you'd see my grandfather comin' down over the top of the hill. He used to come....we used to coast down that hill there. And if I was down here, had coasted, and my work wasn't done, you'd see him comin' down over the hill. But I made sure....see I was funny now, me, I didn't like to be scolded, right?.... And I made sure my work was done before I went down the hill. Like I said, my great grandmother....Ooh, she was tough. Yeah, they brought us....Not like it is nowadays. Well the kids nowadays tells their parents what to do. We didn't tell our parents what to do. And I see her standin' there and we done somethin'.....and my grandmother, that's my grandmother, my great grandmother I meant to say, and we, if we got away and went to bed and we didn't say anything, hear nothin', by and by you'd hear this squeak....the old steps you know in them days, lift you right in bed. They didn't miss it. You'd think they forgot it....You'd think they'd forget. Oh no, oh they didn't forget. And I think Estella there was brought up just about the same way. Her parents....she

obeyed her parents. And she knowed when.... Estella there, she knowed when her mother told her something, she done it. Not like it is nowadays. But anyway, that's the way it goes.

Q: Can you remember when Weymouth Falls first got electricity?

A: Way back in forty-eight.

ES: Yes.

A: Yeah, way back in forty-eight.

ES: Who was it that started that electricity? Was it (inaudible)?

A: No, he used to just help cut the line here. When they was cuttin', getting' ready to put the electricity through, he helped cut the line. Yeah. Well, we used to burn ah, burn lamps, battery radios, and all that kind of....

ES: You used to take bottles of oil....

A: Oh yeah, oil.

ES: .....They'd be wine bottles at that time....

A: Yeah, what they call kerosene oil.

ES: You'd take and pay seven cents, seven cents to fill that bottle with oil. And that would last all the week to put in your lamps.

CC: My!

A: Didn't have to haul water or nothin' like that in them days like they do now. [referring to recent drought?] It was funny. Nowadays, like I say, times has changed. The brooks and things around here, all kinds of water. Now no water. Times has changed a lot. Now if you wanted a good wood stove, you know how much we paid for a wood stove? How much, just make a guess.

Q: Fifty dollars.

A: Seven dollars.

Q: Oh! I'm way off.

A: Way off. A pound of....ah like if you went to the store to buy a pound of pork....six cents, seven cents, and all that. We had a paper here that told all that stuff, and I, we put it in that er ah....

Q: Weymouth Bridge?

A: ....Yeah, in that museum down there.

Q: Oh.

A: Yeah, down across from the post office.

Q: Yep.

A: Where them books is down there. Oh we enjoyed it.

CC: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: How often would you leave Weymouth Falls as a child? Never?

A: Never. When we was a kid?



Q: Yes.

A: Never.

Q: Can you remember the first time you did leave Weymouth Falls?

ES: Yes....

A: Hmm, now wait a minute Estella, I have to tell....Ah, the first time I left Weymouth Falls to go stay any length of time, I went in the Service. Oh, before....

ES: Well you went to Digby. You lived in Digby.

A: Oh yeah, that's right. Yeah. Well I was in Digby for about two years.

ES: You were nine years old or something like that.

A: I was about ten years old, eleven years old. I stayed there for about two years. Yeah. There was a lady up there. She wanted a boy you know, to help her, and so my cousin, who worked....she worked at the Pines, and I used to go there. And I stayed with her pretty near two years.

Q: Did you go to school then?

A: Yeah. Went to school in Digby.

Q: Yes?

A: Yeah. Went to school in Digby. Yeah.

ES: Where are you from, Digby?

Q: Digby Neck.

A: Ah, Digby Neck? Oh yeah. I worked down Digby Neck. I worked down Sandy Cove.

Q: Yes?

A: I worked down, it was....her name was Helen Anthony. She used to keep a boys' and girls' camp. I worked there one year, one summer.

Q: What did you do?

A: Cooked.

Q: Yes?

A: Yeah. That's all I did, and that's all.....I been a cook for years.

ES: Do you know the Theriaults? Faith Theriault?

A: Yes.

ES: Are they still living?

Q: I think so.

ES: Is that right?

Q: Eddie and Faith.

ES: That's right, yeah. They used to come here often.

Q: Yes?

ES: Hm hmm. Yes.



Q: Can you remember what the roads were like when you were a child?

A: Pardon?

Q: Can you remember what the roads were like?

ES: Dirt road.

A: Dirt road. Dirt road. You hardly, when a yoke of oxen or a pair of horses went.....the wheels almost rubbed together just in our road. Right down here, right just down in the hollow here, we had to go across on poles, poles you know. They had water, water right across the road. That's why I say there's no water now. Yeah, everything has changed.

Q: At age fourteen, you finished school, and your first job was in the woods....

A: Yeah, in the woods, yep.

Q: ....Or your first job out of school was in the woods.

A: Yeah in the woods. I was fourteen years old. I was in the woods driving a yoke of oxen haulin' logs. Fourteen years old.

Q: Was this all on your own, or were you working for somebody else?

A: Well it was on....workin' for somebody else.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah.

Q: That person owned the ox?

A: Yeah. Yeah, they owned the team. I stayed in the camp. Stayed in the camp and drove cattle. In the summer time....I didn't go in the winter time, went in the summer time. I was about fourteen years old. When I start ....my grandfather, my great grandfather, he had gone then and.....yeah.

Q: What else can you tell us about what it was like working in the woods? Where did these logs end up being sold?

A: Ah, the logs.....Now like they used to have ah, a mill down here, right just over in Weymouth. Used to call it Campbell's Mill.

Q: Campbell's?

A: Yeah used to call it Campbell's Mill. Taylor's Mill. Way, way, way back. Yeah. And right down

Gates' Lane here, I didn't know, I don't know nothin' about that one. They used to have a mill down at Gates' Lane, used to be in there, used to call it Campbell's Mill. Then up above here, George Hankinson, Harry Wagner, they had mills up, just above, up the road here. Oh I worked in the woods cuttin' pulpwood. And I worked for the man, like I said, the man next door here, and the man next door, remember I was tellin' you about the two boys.... I worked for them a long, long time. I was seventeen years old. And they had an old cross-cut saw like that. And I want you to know, we seen some tough days. When them trees were froze, frost into 'em, the old saw wasn't cuttin' very much. And then you didn't get no money. Twenty-five cents a day. Two dollars....twenty-five cents a day, and when I got up to three dollars a week I was makin' big money. And I seen me.....now when I was brought up with my cousin, I was brought up.....and nowadays it isn't like it was then..... When I grew up, we used to do on, like on a Saturday morning, we'd go down to Weymouth to get our pay, used to make....you'd take, well we'd call 'em burlap bags, you know, the feed bags, put straps on 'em and string 'em over our shoulders. And we'd go down and get the groceries down, downtown, fill them bags up, put 'em on our back and come home. That's what we....that's what kept us a goin'.

And my cousin, she worked out, and, you know, housework.... Then I helped her and stuff you know, and I'd have fifteen....all I'd have for myself, I'd have about fifteen, twenty cents a week, that's all. And the rest of it, I put it all in the house. I had to....(inaudible). And them days everything was cheap, you know. Everything was cheap. You know, take....well now it's different, They call....I don't know what they call....half the time I don't know what they call it now, but anyway, we used to call it twenty-four pound bag of flour. We used to get them for fifty cents.

Q: When did you leave that house that you grew up in? Which became your cousin's house, I guess....When did you first get your own place to live?

A: Well, ah see....my grandfather....my aunt in the States, that's my great grandmother's, that's my great-grandmother's daughter....and the old man Jimmy.....well the old lady went first, and then Jimmy....So the place, they made it over to me, right? They made it over to me. Then after that, me and my cousin, I give her part, then I....see like she stayed there and took care of them. And I stayed there. So I took my....I took a part and she took a part, there so....the house up there, well she owned the house up there. Then after that....when I was....ah, I got to stop and think now....And after that, after I was....after I was about what....after I become like twenty-one years old, well I was in the Service, called in the Service. See I was in the Service about five years.

Q: Tell us some more about that.

A: Ah....Well now, we trained, I trained down in Yarmouth. We trained down in Yarmouth, what, for two months. We went to Aldershot and we trained for two months. So ah, when they get, they wanted you know, like they always draft....what they call draft people....draft the troops, take 'em overseas....well I didn't pass. I didn't pass. My eyesight....see, I didn't pass. So far as I went was to Halifax. I didn't go any farther than Halifax. So ah, up there, was....so one day, one of the Captain, he come across....we was out at McNab's Island.....and he came across. He wanted some volunteers. And we was always wonderin' what we wanted, volunteers, you know. He said, "I want seven." So I said, "Well no good me stayin' here on this island." So I stepped out. And when they come to find out.... what I come to find, after we got there he told what he wanted....he wanted cooks, cooks' helpers. So I went then. That was way back in forty....ah forty-two, forty-one, somewheres around that. So I went, so I went back with the....I went as a cook's helper at that time.....washed pots and pans, peeled potatoes. Then after that, I kept, you know, kept workin' in the kitchen and around, and after that, I went, well I took a little, took a course....about eight weeks, and I was made a, I was a Corporal, you know, what they used to call Lance Corporals then....you only had the one stripe. And I kept workin' and after that I got two stripes. After that I had two stripes. So I, so then after that, CD2 ah, that was in, that was in forty-three. And I stayed in until I guess, forty-five and the war quit, then I....

Q: You spent all that time in Halifax?

A: Ah, well now wait just a minute now. Now where do we go? Ahh, now, well I tell you, I was in Halifax....I spent some time on Citadel Hill, they had an old fort there. I spent my time there. And I spent my time on McNab's Island. Then I done Eastern Passage, you heard tell of Eastern Passage, what they called A23, it was what they called A23, it was just a new camp they built out there. I was out there. I stayed out there until I....'til I was put out. When I put out, when I was turned out, the war was over. I went to ah Number Six Depot in Halifax. Number Six Depot in Halifax, and, just to get discharged.

Q: After you were discharged, did you come back to Weymouth Falls?

A: Yeah. Come back to Weymouth Falls. And after that I....ever since that I've been a cook all along.

Q: So you learned a good trade.

A: Yeah, oh yeah, it was good.... I had two stripes. And when, I used to be in charge of kitchens, you know, and so on, like that. That's when I was in the service.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Then I came back to Weymouth Falls, and I been here ever since.

Q: So did you start working immediately?

A: After I came back? Yeah after I came back here, well, came back here, well I went, well I tell you, it was a Captain that knew me. He knew that I was a cook, right. So I went down in Wedgeport.

Q: Yes?

A: I went down in Sandy Cove. I went up to Dalhousie. I was down in Shelburne, and I was in Digby.

Q: Cooking on ships, or cooking on land?

A: No, no, on land.

Q: Always on land.

A: At restaurants and stuff like that.

Q: Yeah.

A: And Bill Melanson up here, I cooked for Bill Melanson. I cooked in the Hotel Champlain for eight years. And I cooked in Middleton, American House for a year.

Q: Where was that? What was the hotel?

A: The hotel in Middleton? Yeah, American House.

Q: American House.

A: Yeah. The man that used to run that, he's dead now. He's been dead quite awhile. Yeah. He used to run the Hotel Champlain in Digby before they built it over.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's the Marla now isn't it? The one in Digby now, what do they call that? It was the Hotel Champlain, but it's ah....

Q: I'm not sure.

A: ....what do you call it, the Marla is it?

ES: The Lour Lodge, wasn't it?

A: It used to be called Lour Lodge a long time ago.

Q: Right in Digby?

A: Yeah, right in Digby, yeah, well it was right in Digby town.

ES: No, not right in the town....it was....

A: Well, it was just, you know, you come up through town. Like, Digby, you come up through town this way and you go right straight up, right straight up and it's just over on top of the hill. It used to be Lour Lodge up there years and years ago, way back.

CC: Not the Kingfisher?

A: No, no, it wasn't out that way. I think it's the Marla they call it now.

Q: Oh the Marla.

A: Yeah. There's a laundromat.

Q: Yes. The Marla.

A: Yeah. They made it out, like I don't know....I worked there for eight years.

Q: That was the Champlain Hotel?

A: Yeah, the Champlain, and I worked there for eight years. After I come out of the army I was a cook. Oh I worked in the woods a little bit, you know, and then after that, then I didn't work in the woods no more. I worked in New Brunswick. I was all over New Brunswick.

Q: As a cook?

A: Yeah. New Brunswick. Places I'd never seen in my life. You know, I cooked for a construction company, for Modern Enterprises, and look when I was all over New Brunswick, places I would never've seen in my life, or if I hadn't a been with them.

Q: What was the name of the construction company in New Brunswick?

A: Modern Enterprises.

Q: Morgan?

A: Modern.

Q: Oh, Modern!

A: M-o-d-e-r-n

Q: I used to come home on weekends and traveled back and....a lot of travelin', a lot of travelin'. That old Princess of Acadia, I was one of the first passengers went across on that. That was back in seventy-one or seventy-two, I think it was. I was one of the first passengers that went across. Yeah. It used to be cheap then to travel, but ain't cheap no more.

Q: No, not any more.

A: Not any more, no.

Q: What role did the church, was it Mount Beulah, was that the church you went to?

A: Yeah, Mount Beulah. The big large church down there's Mount Beulah.

Q: Yes.

A: On the right, you come up this way [from Weymouth], on the right.

ES: It wasn't the church when you first started out in life.

A: No, no, she didn't ask me that. The first church I started to was the Anglican church. Then I joined Mount Beulah.

Q: Yes? Did your great grandmother make you go to church every Sunday?

A: Every Sunday. Every Sunday we had to go to church. We would go to Sunday School. And to be there, well we didn't really have to stay to church, but we had to go to Sunday school every Sunday.

Q: And that was the Anglican church?

A: Yeah, that's the little one right over here.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, there. So I went there, and then, and after that, I was confirmed there, then after I got married, one thing and another, I joined the Mount Beulah....she belonged to the Baptist church, you see, and I joined the family see, and my family was down there, and I joined the family. Yeah.

Q: When did you....what can you remember about dating? Was Estella the first woman you ever dated?

A: I don't know. (Laughter)

Q: How did you meet Estella?

A: Well, I'll tell you how I met Estella. Her brother used to live over here, over here across the road here. The house is down now, see. Then I used to....and then they used to come down, and then I come over her, over there, and then that's how I met....you know, I met her before that. See I went to school along with, you know, and stuff like that, but, ah, but I, tell you the truth, I can't exactly tell how I met her. How the.... well anyway, I used to come down and see her and like that....Yeah. Then, then her mother, well her mother was a great mother. A good mother. And her mother used to tell me lots of things, you know, and I thought a lot of her mother. And she advised me different things and so on like that. Then after, and, then after I joined the service, then I used to write Estella letters and so on like that. Then after a while,....then got married after that.

Q: How old were you?

A: I think about, through, about, through, as far as....getting' close. I was in the army then, see, I was twenty-five years old. Yeah. Well I was kind of an odd fellow you know. I mean I didn't say much, and Estella was telling me lots of.... Estella and her used to tell me lots of stuff and her mother used to tell me....her mother was a great mother, yeah. She....I loved that old lady, yeah, I loved her.

Q: What was Estella's maiden name?

A: Langford.

Q: Langford, oh.

A: Yeah. Yeah, I loved her mother. Her mother, yeah her mother said, "Now you know," she said, "Dear you know what's right from wrong," and so on, like she used to talk to me, you know, and tell me and give me advice and so on like that. Yeah.

Q: That's nice.

A: Yeah.

Q: Once you were married, where did you live?

A: Hmm. I got to stop and think now. We always lived in Weymouth Falls.

Q: Yes.

A: Never moved away from Weymouth Falls.

Q: Now, what's the first place we lived after we got married?

ES: What do you mean? House?

Q: Yes.

ES: We had...we got married in that church down there, the Baptist church.

Q: The Baptist one.

ES: And then we had the reception here. Right in this house.

Q: This house.

A: I think, yeah, this is the first house.

Q: OK. Did you.... you didn't have to pay for this house?

ES: No.

Q: Because....

A: No matter, we paid for it, ah we had to....we paid for it....

ES: We inherited it, like.

A: Yeah. Cause here mother lived you know....and after, and we bought it from her.... we bought this house from her sister. Her sister had this house here, and we bought it from her. Yeah. We lived in Weymouth Falls all our life. I never been nowhere else. Oh, I went outside and come back, went outside and come back but.....

Q: A famous person from Weymouth Falls is Sam Langford. Can you tell us anything about the boxer, Sam Langford?

A: Well, Sam Langford, near as I can tell, ah, he had a brother named Walter, used to live down the road

always here, name is Walter. And Sam Langford, what it was, he ah, I don't know how old he was or anything like that, but they claim he went away on a boat. He went away on a boat, and he went to the States somewhere, and after that he become a boxer. And they used to call him the Boston Tar Baby. And I guess he was a good fighter, I guess. But they didn't fight like they do nowadays. They'd fight bare handed. They'd box bare handed. Yeah. He died in a home over there. He was blind then, blind, he died in a home in the States.

Q: Was he any relation to Estella's family? Were you related to him?

A: Stop and think now.

ES: He'd be some relation on my mother's side.

A: Yeah, I think on your mother's side he'd be some relation, 'cause most everybody in the Falls is a relation, yeah.

Q: What do you remember about the Depression? You started to tell us how tough it was in certain years.

A: What do you....

Q: Thirty, thirty-one, thirty-two.

A: Oh. Well, I tell you, like I said, when we was children....when we was kids, we used to, mostly like ah, I said we didn't ask our parents, our parents didn't come and ask you, "What do you want to eat?"

We ate, like I told you, what was put on the table. And I seen lots of times I come, I've come from school, and there wasn't too much to put on the table. Sometimes, you know, we'd come home and, I've seen we come home, and there's no butter, no molasses, nothin' to put on the bread, I've seen us sprinkle sugar on the bread and went done eat that bread. Yeah. Then I've seen myself like.... sometimes we had....we always had potatoes and stuff like that, and vegetables. Then we had rabbits there, fried rabbits and stuff like that. Lots of deer meat, lots of moose meat, and all that stuff like that. And my grandparents, like my great grand.....they always grew a pig, four or five hundred pounds, and stuff like that. And....



Q: How did the community take care of people that weren't as fortunate as some other ones? If there was someone in the community that....

A: Well I, tell the truth, I don't exactly know how they got by. Well some....it was....some of them, they used to be, they used to call it, ah, what did they used to call it, 'to town' was it?

ES: Yeah, they called it....

A: Yeah, what it is, I'm talkin' about when we was way back kids, some of them used to live 'by the town' and one thing and another, like that. But the majority.....I'm maybe talkin' about one or two families. But the majority of the people, like I say was all farmers, you know, farmers and stuff like that, they made their livings. A lot of them worked in the woods, a lot of them worked in the sawmills and stuff like that. And that's the way they brought up their families, and ah, yeah....

Q: During the Depression, they were probably better off than some others?

A: Oh yes. Oh yeah, some was better....some had better than others.....some of them had a little bit more.

ES: Like the girl that just left here (the Homemaker), her grandfather, that's Elmer Jarvis, he had a farm, and he raised his own meat, vegetables, and all that. Yeah. And my father, he used to.....(interrupted by ringing phone).

Q: Did a lot of people from Weymouth Falls enlist in the army? In the armed forces?

A: Around here?

Q: Around the same time you did. Did a lot of young men enlist?

A: Oh yeah. Most everybody went in the army. I cannot tell you the number, but it was a lot of them.

ES: Like I said, my father used to deal in wood. He used to cut wood, go in the woods and cut it, and cut it up in stove wood and that, and take it downtown to the hotel, Goodwin's Hotel. And sell it there, and he only got two dollars a load.

CC: Mm, mm, mm.

ES: So sometimes in that load, he might have about, how many cords do you think?

A: About two feet.

ES: About two feet?

Q: Sometimes two feet, same as if I bought a half a cord.

ES: Yeah. Half a cord of stove wood.

A: Didn't get much....

ES: But look what you get for it today.

CC: Yeah. Huh.

ES: And he got two dollars for that wood. And that two dollars would bring a lot of food home for two dollars. Two dollars, you can't buy nothin'. You can hardly buy two loaves of bread. And then people back then, they'd never buy bread, they'd make their own bread.

Q: Probably every day if they had [a lot of] children.

ES: Yes. Like they had big families.

A: Yeah.



Q: So if all the men enlisted, that must have left a lot of women behind to run Weymouth Falls....

A: Yeah...

Q: ....during the Second World War.

A: No....Right around Weymouth Falls, I never counted them all, taken the time to count 'em. But all of the men that was able to go in the army, around here, in the Falls, my brother, my brother was the only one never come back.

Q: He died?

A: Yeah, he got killed over there. Southville was the same.

Q: Southville?

A: Southville, back here, was the same. They all....wasn't one got killed over there. They all came back. My brother the only one never came back.

Q: Your brother, or brother in law?

A: No, my brother.

Q: Your brother. What was his name?

A: His name Quinton.

Q: Quinton.

A: Yeah. Quinton Sparks.

ES: So that community centre should be named after him. He was a big hero.

Q: Yes.

ES: Don't you follow that?

Q: Yes.

ES: Yeah.

A: Yeah, but anyway, that's....that's the way it is. He was the only one that never came back. Oh a lot of them got wounded. Some of these fellas around here got wounded, you know, but ah....

ES: He was killed....how did he get killed now? He was on the battlefield or somethin', wasn't he?

A: Oh yeah.

ES: And they told him to keep his head down.

A: They told him....well he was a sniper, right?

ES: Yeah.

A: And ah, the Captain said, "Don't, don't...." He said, "Wait...."

ES: Don't wait to hear....

A: He said, "Wait...." And he came down. And he....well he thought....well he seen the sniper, up in the....yeah, whatever, in the tree somewhere, and he thought maybe he could get him. So he went... anyways, he was hit....they shot him right through the head.

Q: Oh. Do you remember.....was his body returned to Weymouth Falls?

A: No, no.

Q: No.

ES: He was buried over there.

A He died in Italy.

Q: Do you remember anything about the Poor Farm in Marshalltown?

A: Mmm. Well I remember, I remember the..... in our time, they used to call it the Poor House.

Q: The Poor House?

A: They used to call it the Poor House. Well I knowed a couple of families that went up there like that. They were around here.....Them there's the ones that I was tellin you a while ago, that ah, the town.... We always used to call it 'the town.' And they used to look after them families, and after a while, they said the best place for 'em, they put 'em in that Poor Farm. It was only two or three families went there.

Q: Before the Poor Farm, when you say 'the town' that means they....

ES: Weymouth town.

Q: The town took care of them.

ES: Yes.

A: Yeah. They gave 'em so much, you know, they gave 'em so much, you know, like, so much a month there. They gave 'em groceries like that to keep 'em a goin'. And I know, my ah, I had an aunt one time. She wanted a....she wanted a....her stove was bad and she wanted them to buy her a stove....her stove was bad. They wouldn't buy her a stove. They just put her in the Poor Farm.

Q: Instead. Do you think that was a good solution?

A: I don't. No, no. I don't think.

ES: No. They could've.....she could've stayed home and they could give her a stove. If that was today, they'd give her a stove.

A: Well today see, they.... like I say....Today they'd give her help, but them times, I don't know, it was tough. A lot of the men around were working for twenty-five cents a day. Board, and some of them were workin' for their bed in the back there, and all that stuff was there. Hard.....that was way back until,....that's along thirty-two, thirty-three, in there like that. And up to about I think to thirty-nine,

Yeah, thirty-nine, I think it was, yeah, thirty-nine. It started to....that's when the war was declared or somethin' back in thirty-nine. It was thirty-nine, wait a minute now, yeah, nineteen thirty-nine, yeah.

I'll, well I'll tell you what surprised me. Well what surprised me, after I went out of the service, I came home, and my two youngest, my two youngest brothers....I said, "What's with....what are you fellas doing?" He said, "We're on strike." I said, "On strike, yeah?" Well Taylor had a mill down here. Now they wanted four dollars a day and Taylor wouldn't give it to 'em. See, four dollars a day, and said, "We on strike." And when I left here....when I left here I was workin in the woods to get a dollar and a quarter out of cuttin' a whole cord of wood. Had to get a...cut a..... cordwood, you know, [inaudible]....pile it up, that's a dollar and a quarter.

Q: When you left to go to the army.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's what they had to....

Q: Yeah. When you came back they were on strike for more than four dollars.

A: Yeah. When I came back, well the times started getting' better, started getting' better, started getting' better. A lot of the kids around here don't know what hard times was like. They don't know. And we'll get talkin' 'bout all them olden days, "I don't want to hear that.....we don't want to hear nothin' 'bout the olden days." Well I say, "You don't want to hear nothin', I can't tell you nothin'."

Q: Can you remember the first time you ever voted in an election, or what elections were like?

A: Well, I was about....now just a minute now. No, that was, that was after I came outta the army I believe. No, just a minute, I gotta track back. Did I vote before I went in the army? Yes, I did. Yeah, I voted afore I went in the army. I was somewheres around twenty, twenty-one, somethin' like that. In them days....in them days, it's not like when your payin' taxes now. We used to call it what, the poll taxes. And all that stuff, you know, you had....Well the poll tax, I asked somebody one time what the poll tax is. They said, "That's to pay for walkin' in the road." There you go.

Q: To be a person.

A: Yeah. They called that what they call poll taxes. They'd hook you. After you'd become a certain age, they'd hook you. Then after that, see, and they.... and after a while they dropped that, you see.

ES: I think you had to be sixteen or somethin' like that?

A: They had to be twenty. I think, it was between eighteen and twenty, somewheres around that.

Q: I think that's how some people ended up at the Poor Farm, if they couldn't pay the poll tax.

A: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, if they couldn't pay their taxes, they couldn't do this, they couldn't do that and oh...., Yep.

Q: Ahm....

A: Yeah, times was tough in those days.

Q: We talked about who took care of people that maybe couldn't take care of themselves. How did the community deal with anybody that broke the law?

A: Put 'em in jail. Put 'em in jail, and ah, if they done anything, you know.....capital punishment was around then. You know, they done anything bad, but it's a religious community, people don't talk about anything like that. They never talk about stabbin' this one, shootin' this one. They don't talk about that.

Q: No.

A: Well, I tell you, it was so bad, they didn't have time, not like that. All they talked about, they talked about the farmer, and havin' somethin' to eat, and then makin' their own parties and yeah, and stuff like that. They didn't have time to think about that.

Q: What was ah....

A: And when they wanted somethin' to drink, they had what they call home brew. Oh yeah. That's, you know, that's when I was, I say when I was around sixteen, seventeen years old, like that.

ES: And they wasn't allowed to carry knives and things.

A: Oh no, they wasn't allowed to.

Q: What if you were found to be carrying a knife?

A: Pardon?

Q: How would they deal with you if you were found to have a knife?

ES: Well, they can take them to court and send 'em to jail....

A: Jail 'em, and stuff like that, I imagine.

Q: OK. What did people do for good times?

A: Mostly dance.

Q: Yes?

A: Mostly dance parties, and they'd have suppers, and churches used to have suppers and you'd go to suppers, and they'd have what they call pantry sales and all that stuff.

Q: What were the dances like?

A: Well good dances, they had good dances. Violin, you know. They used to play the violins and guitars. Of course we.... like I say, a lot of the places we weren't allowed in but we'd go watchin' and they're dancin' and we see the dust flyin' in the.... And most all the dances were in houses and stuff like that. Yeah.

CC: Why weren't you allowed in?

A: Pardon?

CC: Why weren't you allowed in?

A: They said, "No place for children." They said.....oh but after we got say fifteen sixteen years old.....But nowadays they go ten, eleven years old, nowadays they go to parties.

ES: And the dancin' ain't like it used to be. They danced like the two step, the waltz....

A: The one step.

ES: The one step.

A: They do the....I call it puppets, going up and down.

ES: And they don't do that dirty dance. No.

A: No, they didn't.

ES: They danced close together, you know not too close together. And now....

Q: That's making a comeback, believe it or not. That's making a comeback.

ES: And round dances, and called an old fashioned eight, they called the eight, ah, Virginia Reel or somethin' like that....

A: Yeah, the Virginia Reel and all that stuff.... Virginia Reel and all that. Yeah. Polka dancin' and stuff like that.

Q: Those are the good dances.

A: Yeah.

ES: Yeah, that was the good old days.

A: But they don't do them dances now.

ES: Yeah.

A: Well they do....I think they still do waltzes yet. And there's some other kinds of dances I can.....Of course me, I didn't dance anyway.

Q: Ahm, what was the relationship like between blacks and whites in your day? Weymouth Falls was primarily a black community?

A: Yeah.

ES: Well there was no discrimination.

A: There was no discrimination, no.

ES: Maybe one or two, here and there. But everybody was the same.

Q: Mmm hmm.

ES: They used to get the mail on the other side of the river, used to come over here at this post office.

A: We always called old Weymouth Mills, over here, we used to call that the other side of the river. See, if we said somethin' like that to you nowadays....Yeah, we always called that the other side of the river. Now they call that Sissiboo Road and all that stuff. See, back them days, they wasn't named nothin' like that, no.

Q: What were some other place names?

A: Well, they called it the Pulp Mill. Over there used to be an old pulp mill over there, and they used to call it the Pulp Mill Dam, the Pulp Mill Road. And we used to call, up above here, used to be, called it (Goddards?) Bridge. And they used to have a sawmill up there.

Q: What was it called? Gutters Bridge?

A: (Goddards?) Bridge, yeah, up there. Well you know, I don't know whether you know where this, you know where the power house is out there? Used to be a bridge there, and there used to be a sawmill up there. And they used to saw lumber up there and they'd saw the lumber and the horses used to take it from here down there and they'd pile it down there in Weymouth North and then take it from there on the boats, and so on like that, ship it away. Oh, way back. I can see that.....when I was a kid, I can see them old horses and cattle now. Hauling cordwood. The old man down here called, what's his name? What is his name.....Dunbar.

ES: Dunbar.

A: Old man Dunbar. His name was Dunbar. Old, oh way back. You fellas wouldn't know nothin'. His name's Dunbar. They used to cut a lot of....up here, they owned a piece of land up here. There's cordwood, used to come up with the yoke of oxen and they'd cut cordwood and haul it down to his place down there, oh yeah. Down, down in Weymouth there, they had a wharf down there. There was always, was always big pile of cordwood piled up there, and the people used to go in and buy cordwood, so much a cord.

Q: What's the difference between cordwood and pulpwood and....

A: Well pulpwood is ah, softwood. And it....they used to....now here we had the pulp mill. And they used to....that used to go through the pulp mill. But after that, they got so they used to ship it, like down Bridgewater....no, not Bridgewater.....Liverpool, then they ship a lot overseas, and so on like that.

Q: So what's cordwood?

A: Cordwood is hardwood.

Q: Oh.

A: Firewood.

ES: And they saw that long, don't they?

A: Yeah. Four feet long. Used to cut it four feet long. Pile it up. Eight feet long, four feet high was a cord of wood.

Q: Yep.

A: And sometimes when we was cuttin' wood too, a long time, we'd get that pile about eight feet long and four feet high. Imagine, well imagine, you know what I mean, you'd only be making a dollar and a quarter. And some was ninety cents. I didn't cut any of that, but somebody told me when they was small, they cut across over on the other side of the river, they got forty-five cents for a cord of wood. Now you know....some would get a cord of wood....forty-five cents. Man oh man.

ES: And these were people lived on then other side of the river.

A: Yeah, oh yeah.

Q: What size of a family did you and Estella have? You had children?

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: How many?

A: Too many. No, we had, was it seven altogether was it? Had seven altogether, but lost two. So we got, ah wait, I have to....let me see, we got one, two, three girls, and two boys. We've got five now. And we lost two.

Q: Did your children move far away or do they live near here?

ES: Well we have one lives down the street here aways.

A: Then there's one got married, and we've got one stays with us.

Q: Yes?

A: And we had one married in Yarmouth. Another, one of the boys in Halifax, one of the boys in Ontario. They're all spread around. They wouldn't stay home....they're gone.

Q: When do you remember people from this area starting to leave the area.

A: Well, the young people, they said they couldn't find work anymore different places. Some went to Saint John, and some went to Halifax, and some went to Ontario. That's how we got no young people here today. Yeah. No work here for 'em. They wouldn't go in the woods and cut cordwood and pulpwood and logs like we did. Nothin' like that. Nowadays it's mostly like education, nowadays. Mostly all of 'em's fallin' for education. They's quite a bunch of 'em around here goin' to Yarmouth now at that school down there. It's quite a big one.

Q: Yep. Ahm, that's about all of the questions I have right now, Bill and Estella, but feel free to tell us any other stories you might have.

A: Well I don't know too many stories I could tell you. It's no good me tryin' to tell you what happens today 'cause today is not like back in....I can tell you stuff way back a lot better than I can tell you stuff happens nowadays. 'Cause nowadays, see well, I don't go out around much, you know, I don't go out around. I hardly go out from the house, sittin' in the wheel chair and stuff like this here, it makes a lot of difference.

Q: Did we miss any important stories in this interview? Can you think of anything we missed that would be really good to know about?

A: No, I'm....no, near as I can think....



Q: You've told us a lot of good things.

CC: Yes, that was a very good interview.

A: Near as I can think, you know. Course might be somethin' here now I may have forgot about, you know but....

CC: I'm sure that will happen, and we'll think of things we should have asked you.

A: Yeah.

CC: You can't learn everything in an hour and a half.

A: No.

Q: Do you have any questions Chris?

CC: No. I think it's a wonderful interview. I think the young people are going to learn a lot by listening to what you had to say. To think that someone would work....and pile a whole cord of wood, cut and pile a cord of wood for a dollar and a quarter, and you pay that for a chocolate bar now, right? You know?

A: Well, some of 'em cut, like I said, some was cuttin' pulpwood forty-five cents.

CC: Yeah, unbelievable.

A: Then they would come to work in them sawmills all day for twenty-five cents.

CC: Yeah.

A: And some of 'em wasn't getting' that.

ES: Yeah, Bill, what about workin' at Tupper's?

A: Tupper Warne's, I don't know. I don't know if you fellas remember Tupper Warne's.

Q: We've heard about him.

A: You've heard about him. Tupper Warne's, mistah, you were never out of work.

CC: Oh?

A: There was people from way down the shore, way down the shore and all, worked at Tupper Warne's.

I worked at Tupper Warne's up there. That's why....see here (showing scar), I cut myself on a barbed wire fence, and I....barbed wire fence, and I was workin' at Tupper Warne's and that there was healed over, but it wasn't healed on the inside. And I was workin' to Tupper's there, haulin' lumber, and it broke open and left me with them scars there like that. Oh I worked for Tupper Warne's. When we....like we worked in the woods in the winter time, then in the spring of the year, the spring of the year when we couldn't, you know we couldn't work in the woods or nothin' like that, we'd say, "Well, what you going to do now?" "Oh, we'll get ready and go to Tupper's." And Tuper Warne'd never.... Oh, Lord.... well he wouldn't turn you down. No. You'd just take what he'd give you, you know, like fifty cents a day, seventy-five cents a day....

Q: Did he pay a fair wage? Were the wages he paid fair at the time?

A: Oh, yeah, at that time the wages was fair. Some got a dollar a day, but.... Most of the wages was a dollar, you know, a dollar a day, dollar and a quarter a day. That was the fellas, you know, all the big fellas. I call 'em the big fellas. But fellas like us, like young fella like us, seventeen, eighteen years old, and....we only got like fifty cents a day. But of course we didn't stay in them places too long. Didn't stay there too long.



CC: If you were working at Tupper Warne's, would you come back to Weymouth Falls every night, or would you stay there?

A: No, no, we stayed up there. We always had a cook house and all that stuff, yeah. And we spent half our money up there buyin' ice cream and chocolate bars.

CC: Sure.

A: Why we'd go to the store there, and you'd....work all day and go down and buy ice cream, five cents.

Ice cream cone or a cone ice cream at night or somethin' like that.

ES: And then he had the grocetine runnin' around, comin' around.

A: Oh yeah, Tupper Warne had everything.

ES: Used to buy stuff off the grocetine.

Q: So it was buying it from Tupper Warne?

A: Yeah. Tupper Warne used to have big grocery trucks to go around through the country.

Q: Yeah?

A: Oh yeah. Used to enjoy him, yeah.

Q: You can remember Tupper Warne himself, the man?

A: Oh yeah. I can see old Tupper now. He was a Jew, you know.

Q: Yes?

A: Had a big black hat he used to wear on his head, and had on a gray suit....I don't know, a kind of a medium gray suit. He was only a short man. He was always standin' there in the pulp road with his hands behind....his hands behind in back there, folded in the back. I can see old Tupper now standin' in the road. He might have you up there drivin' a yoke of oxen. At that time, it was no tractors. There was tractors, but he never had nothin' but a yoke of oxen. And he used to stand there, and he'd keep watchin' ya. Oh he says, "Step 'em up, step 'em up." He said, "Give me that whip, give me the whip, give me the whip." And he'd take the whip, and he'd say, "Step 'em up, step 'em up." Oh yeah, I can see old Tupper Warne now.

ES: You'd always get a job if you'd go there. He'd never turn you down.

A: Never turn you down. Oh he'd be watchin' you. "Step 'em up, step 'em up." You know, you'd have the cattle runnin' quite fast, you know. He'd say, "Give me the whip." And then he'd whip.....He said, "That's how you want to drive 'em. Step 'em up, step 'em up." And then ah, [inaudible, names of two men - Belvon and Hubert?], they were the ones had the education, but they say Tupper Warne didn't have no education.

Q: How do you suppose he got to Digby?

A: I, tell the truth, I don't know how he ever. They used to make boxes....at that time they made boxes, you know. Everything was in boxes. They'd make boxes, and they'd ship 'em away you know.

ES: They had girls working in the box factory too.

A: Oh yeah, they had girls there. Well, the old mill was hummin' all the time. And after he died the place went right down. Yeah. He told Hubert, he said, "You'll never make a man." Well what he meant, he wouldn't be able to run nothin'. So he said that Hubert....

Q: That wasn't his son?  
A: Yeah, that was his son.

Q: It was his son.  
A: Yeah that was his son. He told him right....and he said, "No," he said, "You'll never be able to run the business." And Hubert....that's the way Hubert....he done this, and he done that, and done this and that, kept goin' down, down, down. Oh, I can remember that. But he had an awful....well he had seven or eight camps in the woods. Well he had to, 'cause that's a big place, a sawmill and a big box factory....everything like that.

ES: You don't know where, what type of country he come from?  
A: No, I don't know, but all I....like they said, he was a Jew. Yeah.

ES: H.T. Warne.  
A: Yep. H.T. Warne.

Q: What made you decide to leave that kind of work, and then go in the armed forces though? You weren't drafted, were you?  
A: No, no, no.

Q: So what made you decide to try that instead of sticking around?  
A: Go in the service?

Q: Yeah.  
A: I didn't want to cut no more wood. (Laughter) Well, now, we wasn't drafted. Ah, they had, at first, they had....you had to go to Yarmouth, take a month's training. Then after a while they raised it up to two months. So when they come to that two months, I went. Then after that, we stayed down there, and we was sent to Aldershot, Kentville. And they told us there was no more two months, one month, none of that. You got to sign up what they call active service. What they call active service. Had to join up.

Q: Yep.  
A: So I joined up. Well I joined up, but I didn't get nowheres, just as far as Halifax.

Q: But you joined because you didn't want to cut any more wood, and you liked the idea of going somewhere?  
A: Oh yeah. I liked the idea of gettin' out of the woods.

ES: Would liked to have went overseas, wouldn't you?  
A: Huh?

ES: Would you like to went overseas?  
A: Yeah, Would like to have went, but I didn't....I didn't make it.

Q: Yeah.  
A: I, look, I seen a lot of fellas go, some of the fellas, you know, I trained with, you know, and they all went.

Q: Must have been a bit of a disappointment.  
A: Yeah, but it, you know, it made a good life for me after that.

CC: Exactly.

A: Because I took that well, cookin' course and then....I didn't mind washin' dishes and the pots and the pans and stuff like that. I was interested in that. Well, they always say, you know, some people's cut out for this, and cut out for that. I must've been cut out for a cook or somethin' like that. I still mostly in the dish pan yet. They tell me I don't wash the dishes very clean, but I'm in the dishpan.

And she tells me all the time, she says, "Oh, you're gettin' too old, you don't wash your hands or nothin." But I can still, I can still, when it come to roast a turkey or anything like that....

ES: [Inaudible]....How do you do this, how do you do that?

A: Oh, yeah, well they're always askin' me how do you do this. So I say, "Now I want you to make this, I want you to make that."

ES: And make the gravy. He's the one to make the gravy.

A: They say, "Why don't you tell us how to do it." And I say, "No, I ain't tellin' you nothin'."

ES: Wasn't brown or nothin'. They say, "How'd you make that gravy like that?" Bill said, I'll show you. You watch me."

CC: Well I think we're keeping you from your dinner here..

A: Oh, no.

CC: It's starting to smell pretty good.

A: Oh, you know, sometimes, I look at it this way....A person, you know, if you tell everything you know, like in an interview, and people like that. You can do that a whole day. Two hours or an hour goes just like that.

CC: You're right.

A: But it takes a long time, you know. Old Sears Roebuck, and every once in a while something will come in your head like you've done, and before you know....a day gone.

ES: We sit here sometime and talk about things happened way back. Now to remember something from last week, can't remember too well. (Laughter)

CC: Lots of people say that.

A: Yeah, I can remember stuff all the way back but.....

ES: We sit here and we talk about old time things, and sometimes the fire goes out.

A: Yeah, well the fire's just about gone out there now.

ES: It's nice to think about things, I don't know, you know, way back.

CC: For sure.

ES: You forget sometimes where you're at.

CC: Well you know, it sounds like it was a harder life, but in many ways it sounds like it was a good life.

ES: It was a good time. We had good times and bad times and....it was good things.

A: Well I tell you, what I like about it, now, looking back, I like, you know, people workin' together.

ES: Yes.

A: But now, now, we don't work together like they used to.

ES: No. There ain't so much love with one another, and no respect. People don't respect.....don't respect old people.

A: Well you go downtown here, if there's the younger ones around and you can't get out the way, it's just too bad, they run right over....they haven't got time.

CC: Hmm.

A: Yeah. Oh well.

ES: But the Homemakers come here. They're very nice.

CC: Yeah.

ES: Oh, very nice. And when I was up in the home there.....I was up in Tideview. They was nice people up there, very nice, Yeah.

