

# Christine Denton

Interviewed by Jennifer Whalen, December 6, 2000



Q. O.k, we'll start with what is your full name?

A. My full name is Ryda Christine Denton.

Q. And who were your parents?

A. Arthur Denton and Sadie O'Neil Denton, it that's what you want?

Q. That's it. Who were your grandparents?

A. My grandparents was Chipman and Sarah Jane Denton.

Q. When were you born?

A. October the twenty-ninth, nineteen eighteen.

Q. And where were you born?

A. Here in Little River, at home of course in those days.

Q. How large was your family when you were growing up?

A. Six of us.

Q. And where did you fit in?

A. I was the second from, yeah the second child born. I had a brother first, Roy, and then myself, Christine, so that made me that I was the one to, as I got older, to help out with the other children and my father died, like when I was seventeen and in those days you were still living at home at seventeen. It isn't like it is now, children fourteen and fifteen or whatever have left home but then, seventeen seems old but it wasn't when I was growing up. You were still home, so I was still home and there was just my brother older than I and then the rest were all younger.

Q. What was it like having six people in a family all in one house?

A. Very good. We were, you know, a happy family, we were a close family. We weren't, we had our kidish squabbles and all that and drove our mother crazy I imagine but we always loved each other, you know, we always cared for each other.

Q. What did your father do for a living?

A. My father did, over the years as we were growing up, several things. He was a, I suppose you would call it mechanical engineer, would it be? He worked on cars.

Q. Yep.

A. He could build a car if he had the parts. He was very, that's what his, that's what he studied all the time. He went out to Regina and he went different places, that he went to, to work when he was younger.

Q. Did he ever have his own shop?

A. At one time when I was a small child he had his shop here in the River. A machine shop, and he worked on cars, he taxied, he did everything he could to earn a living. People would call him from everywhere to come when they were having, there was only a few cars then when I was a child growing up but they would call him from everywhere, the car would break down or, you know, and he would go to the place and fix it but he done a lot of that right in his own shop and he even mended shoes, boots. He had a place upstairs, I remember as I child going up and it was so nice to smell the leather and cement where he'd be mending shoes because then you didn't but them everyday, you mended them and put soles on them, heels on them, or whatever, you know, was needed. Now when they get holes you just throw 'em away, those are the changes, you know, the way things have changed.

Q. Is his shop still standing today?

A. No.

Q. Is your home still standing today where you used to live when you were a child?

A. Until I was eight years old, I lived at my grandmothers house up on the hill but that has been torn down and a beautiful home built in it's place but that's where my life started out, was at my grandmothers. We lived in part of her house 'till I was eight years old.

Q. What do you remember about your mother's workday?

A. They worked very hard in those days. I, you know, you got up and you, to begin with, you made all your own bread, you know, you baked your bread but your bread then, back in those days, I was just talking about this to someone yesterday, about how hard they did work, those people. You made your bread overnight, you raised your yeast after supper at night and before you went to bed you mixed your bread, a big pan of bread and in the morning when you awoke, that bread was running everywhere because it had raised. My mother would put it in a pan, she'd have four and five big double loaves of bread out of this and they did that several times a week, like every other day, it wouldn't be everyday but every other day they'd have to, 'cause you didn't go to the store and buy a loaf of bread. Even after I was married, I didn't go to the store and buy a loaf of bread because I made bread three times a week and that's what they did back then, they made the bread. They washed their clothes, they got, like first they'd get their children up and out, if they were old enough to go to school, they got them out to school and then there would be the washing to do and the washing was done on Monday. Everyday it seemed to be that there was something special that had to be done. Monday would be your washing, Tuesday, besides you getting your meals and all the other chores that go on all day, your washing would be Monday, Tuesday you would iron, everything in those days was ironed, it wasn't permanent pressed, it was all ironed. I remember my mother, she used to even iron the facecloths, yeah, they ironed their facecloths, their pillow cases, (continued on next page)

I don't do none of that nowadays, they're lucky if they get washed (Laughter) but in those days they ironed everything and they were ironed with irons from the stove, you heated them on the stove and you had your handle that you'd put in and go to the stove back and forth, back and forth, back and forth. They got plenty of exercise.

Q. I guess.

A. Yes, but, and then it would be mealtime and at mealtime, like at dinnertime, we called then, the middle of the day was dinner not lunch, I think you call it now and my father would come from work, well his dinner had to be ready and that was the main meal, dinner time. Children would walk home from school, I remember going into, we walked down to our school here in the River, Little River School, and come home at dinner time and you'd come in and the table was all set and everything ready to sit down to eat and, oh it smelled so good, even though it could have been wash day and you'd smell the clothes had been on the stove boiling 'cause they boiled their white clothes then on the stoves in big boilers, that's the way you whitened them, you boiled them and kept punching them down. You had a wooden stick that you kept punching your clothes down with while they were boiling, these were the white clothes of course, and you'd smell the soap, surprise soap it was called, you know, in cakes in the surprise soap and I can see my mother slivering it on the wash then. There wasn't soap powder

like today, you would cut the soap and mix it in with your water and clothes and boil and it was such a good smell, clean smell. There's things that you, the worked hard, the people back in those days but yet they would take off their aprons, they wore aprons then, after dinner was over, dishes washed, there wasn't dishwashers and all theses fancy things then and be ready in the afternoon to receive visitors that would always come to their home. Here comes my stranger now..... (Christine's son enters the kitchen)

Q. Hi there.

Other. (Christine's son) Hi.

A. This is Brent, my son.

Q. Nice to meet you.

Other. (Christine's son) You too.

A. If it wasn't for him, I couldn't stay here.

Q. Well that's nice that you have him here.

A. Yeah, I can look after myself well but I couldn't stay alone because my health wouldn't allow me to be kickin' around the streets alone. (Laughter)

Q. Could you tell me about a typical school day for you?

A. I can tell you one thing, that I dearly loved school. There was, we didn't start back in my day when I was a little kid, we didn't start 'till we were seven years old. Now, I don't know, I was thinkin' too about that yesterday, whether that was because the parents didn't want to let you go when you were five and six then or whether that was the rule that you started when you were seven, but I started school when I was seven years old and I dearly loved it because when we were kids we weren't allowed to come down off of the hill, I used to call it. We lived up on the hill and to go out to the highway or out to the road, it wasn't paved then or nothing, you know, it was the graveled roads but you weren't allowed to go like the kids are nowadays. They can go hither and skither, you know, but we weren't, we stayed in our yard, so getting out to walk to school was really, you know, a treat. It was really exciting and we'd start out and walk, we had to walk down to the shore and walk home again when it was lunch time, if it was a bad day you'd take your lunch with you and eat at the school but we would try our best to get out so the teacher that came to teach us, she would board at one of the homes that we knew and we'd think it was wonderful if we could walk down the road with the teacher. I don't know, they must have had to be very good teachers to put up with us but it was a treat to take that teachers hand and walk down the road.

Q. Why was it that a lot of the teachers boarded with the other students, were they from out of town?

A. Yes, the teachers were generally from out of the town. We had some that was from the River but mostly they were from away and there was a home down here, that home is gone now too, where they boarded with an elderly lady and she did that for years. They didn't get paid like they do now. I think the teachers only got around two hundred for the whole year.

Q. Really?

A. Yeah.

Q. Two hundred dollars?

A. Yeah, for the whole year and they paid their board out of that two hundred. See, there was a difference, such a difference in money then.

Q. Now, is your school still standing today?

A. Yes.

Q. And what school would that have been?

A. Down here to the river, down towards the shore about halfway. Have you been down that way?

Q. I haven't, no.

A. You haven't. It, yes a man, some man bought it and he's in the fishing business and he stores his nets and, I guess and stuff like that. I really don't know but the school is still, is still in good shape because I go walking quite often and we walk down by the school and you reminisce. Like I told my friend the other day, I said, we were walking and I said to her, I said, "Remember, there used to be a large rock down by the side of the road by the school", and that's where we would congregate, you know, at recess and that, we'd go and sit on that rock, I remember that. I said, "The rocks gone, somebody took it out of there", but it was, it's just so special to walk along and reminisce over what it used to be, I love it.

Q. Could you describe to me what the school would have looked like inside?

A. When I first started school, it was just the one large room. That would be when I would be in grade one. I don't remember ever taking primary, I don't think there was a primary but after that there was a primary but when I started I think you went right into grade one, like that and it was the wooden seats, two of us sit in a seat. They're like the ones, you can buy 'em now, like....

Q. Like a park bench.

A. Yeah, like a park bench without the desk part on it, you know, it's just the bench but then we had the desk and there was the place underneath you could put your scribblers and your books and all that and there was an ink well 'cause then you wrote with pen and, the old-fashioned pen and you dipped it in the ink and a place for, a groove for your pencils to lay in and, like that. It was great.

Q. How would you have been disciplined at school?

A. I remember once getting the ruler on the hands. Another girl and I was talking, you know, and I remember getting the slap with the ruler, you know, a flat ruler, it wasn't a big stick or anything but that was generally the way or you would, I don't remember a whole lot about that but I remember that's once that I got the, which I was terribly embarrassed because I wasn't a kid to be noisy and, like that but we were just caught talking. You didn't talk in school, you didn't do anything in school unless you had to go to the washroom, which was an outside toilet then and you raised your hand. You never spoke in that school unless you raised your hand and asked to speak to the teacher. It was discipline, it was, you knew how far you could go, you didn't chew gum in school, if you did, you would march up to the wood stove that sat up front and you'd put that gum in, if you were caught with a piece of gum in your mouth. There was great discipline in the schools and the teacher was called Mrs. Denton, Mrs. Thurber, Mrs., whoever she was, she was called Mrs., or Miss. Generally they were Miss. Then, they weren't married women. You respected your teacher which I understand nowadays doesn't go on too much in the schools.

Q. It doesn't at all.

A. No, it's sad because the children need that discipline. It's not bad discipline, it's just common sense discipline, that's all it is.

Q. And what about at home, how would you have been disciplined at home?

A. I know I never got spanked a whole lot. If I did, it was by my mother, it was never by my father because she was with us all day where our father would be just coming home from work, like that, but the mother disciplined the children. It wasn't leave it, "I'll tell your father when he comes home and he'll deal with you", or something like this. I never heard that too much and you didn't say a word out of the way. You never swore, you never cursed, you never sassed back, I don't remember it, not in my childhood and I wasn't an angel, (Laughter) I was just a little girl but if I did say anything wrong my brother would go and tell on me anyway. (Laughter) I remember that.

Q. What would your daily chores consist of?

A. When I was a child?

Q. Yes.

A. I can't, (Laughter) I can't remember when I wasn't standing on a box washing dishes, standing up, you know, on a stool or something to wash dishes because we like to do that. We didn't have, in those days we didn't have all the toys and all the things that kids have nowadays, so we thought it was wonderful to go, my chore on Friday or Saturday, whenever mom would clean up for the weekend was washing the window sills off, washing the chairs off, I remember doing that just as a small child. I used to love it, I can't say I do, (Laughter) so much now but, you know, it was, you wanted to do those things, you wanted to be helping and one thing I remember about my home life and I'll have to tell you about it, was the meal time and coming in the house at supper time and seeing the table all set. I can see the table now, it had drop leaves and my mother would put those up and she'd have a nice oil cloth, it was called then, table cloth, but it was, you must remember yourself some anyway, do you?

Q. Yes.

A. Like, you can get plastic ones now, they had what they called oil cloth on your table, all pretty. It could be flowers, it could be blocks, it could be, but it was so pretty. The table would be all set up and I can't remember of ever coming to my home, into my home and, at supper time or lunch, you know, meal, dinner time, we called it, we didn't call it lunch, I say then, we called it dinner and supper, breakfast, dinner, and super and the table would be so nice. All set and everything was on the table. The mother wasn't up running helter skelter. Everything would be in bowls, you know, your vegetables and your meat or whatever, fish or whatever you would have, it was all put in bowls on the table. Your dessert was on the table. Everything was there, the teapot was on the table setting on a teapot stand. They didn't get up and run like we run helter skelter nowadays, you know, this, "Oh, I forgot to put this on", and doing this and this and waiting on people. Like, I used to, when I was bringing up my family I called myself a walking delicatessen (Laughter) because it was always, "Get me this, get me that", and you did it because that was the times you were living in but back then everything, that super table was special. The family all sit there and they didn't get up and leave either. They sit there until the super was over. It was a special time 'cause you didn't see each other all day that much with working and all that, so that meal time was special and that's why I like it now. I like to sit at the table because you have a chance to talk, I like meals like that. I don't like grabbing them and running to watch the t.v and all this, I'm different.

Q. After you would finished your chores, what kinds of things would you like to do with your free time?

A. Well, when we weren't doing our lessons we were playing games, reading, I like to read so I was happy to take a book and read or baby-sit, I did a lot of that in my life and.....I've lost concentration.

Q. Your chores, what you would do with your free time after you were finished with your chores?

A. We generally went outside playing with our friends, run next door and play and make sure you were home before dark and listen to your brother growl if chased him somewhere when he wanted to be with his friends but that's mostly what we did, played, I'd go next door because there was girls in those houses too. I say next door but you had to go way over through the field because we lived up on the hill and we'd go next door or down across the road.

Q. What was your favorite holiday when you were growing up?

A. Well I loved them all, I think. Easter, I can remember my mother getting me ready for Easter concerts. I used to love that, I was scared to death but, you know, they'd be in the church (continued on next page)

and, like that and we didn't have a whole lot of the money for buying fancy clothes and things like that, but my mother always had us looking wonderful and if we needed a little white dress, it was always decorated. She'd send to Eaton's or, Eaton's was the, mostly the thing then and you'd send, you'd buy rosebuds and ribbon and, I always wore a ribbon in my hair, a big bow 'cause I had wavy hair and that's what I loved.

Q. What was it like at your house when the catalogue would arrive?

A. Kind of squabbling, I imagine (Laughter) 'cause you'd want to, we didn't, at that time we didn't get the Christmas catalogue like we do now, we just got the one Eaton catalogue and there wasn't all these sales and all this stuff coming out either, like you get, your house is full of catalogues with, that come from Sears mostly now and, but we didn't get all that, we got one, as far as I can remember we got the one main catalogue, the big one. There was more shopping done that way then because to go to Digby, for me as a child, well that would be the biggest trip on earth, to get to Digby because you didn't do it everyday.

Q. How often would you get into Digby when you were younger?

A. I can't remember ever getting there that often. I know my father always promised to take me to the circus. At that time he was, we were living by the church, up in a house by the church here when my father was alive and he worked at a plant down in Tiddville, I don't know whether you've heard about that or not? Diamataceous Earth Plant and he had promised that he would take me to the circus. I never got to a circus until after I was married. I never did. He promised to take me to the circus and he was so excited about it because this day the circus was coming into Digby and we wanted to go watch it come in because it was so much fun watching them unload and taking the animals off, 'cause they come in by train and last minute they called him from the plant. He was an engineer down there, he looked after the boilers and things 'cause they dug the earth out of the ground and dried it, diamataceous earth. They used it for all kinds of things, I think there's still one up the valley somewhere's and he got word that he was needed back down there 'cause the boilers or whatever broke down, something broke down and he had to leave. I was never so disappointed in all my born days. I never did get to the circus. (Laughter)

Q. What a sin.

A. I can look back on it now, and it was funny but then it was heartbreaking, you know, it was. I was gonna go to the circus, especially with my father. I worshiped my father, he was a very kind, he loved his children. He was a good man.

Q. The things that you wouldn't order from the catalogue, where else would you get what you needed?

A. Well, in those days my aunt from the states, that would be my father's sister, she used to send us clothes that her, she had a daughter the same age as me and she would send us big boxes of beautiful clothes because she was a person, she was a nurse in the states and her daughter had everything, so she'd send us beautiful clothes. They were just like new, 'cause as fast as she outgrew them, well she'd send them on to us at home, so we never, we always had plenty to wear.

Q. How much spending money would you have had as a child?

A. None. I used to go to the store for my grandmother Denton, back in those days they would trade. They done a lot of trading, eggs for one thing, but I remember taking eggs out to the store down here, the store's still here and taking eggs out and trading them, a cent a piece for those eggs, a dozen eggs, and she'd put, and she'd put them in a little red shortening pail for me to carry 'em out and go to the store to get something for her. Now, a dozen eggs would be twelve cents but you could buy, you could buy sugar, you could buy anything, a lot of things that you would need but with twelve cents, something she'd want, she'd send a dozen or she'd send two dozen, whatever amount she wanted and she'd always put in one egg for me, a penny and the pennies you got then, when you did get one to handle was one of the big pennies but, like after I got older we'd have five cents on Saturday night or Saturday afternoon 'cause we weren't allowed out at night but Saturday afternoon you'd be given five cents. Now, you could go to the store, you could buy a big bag of candy for five cents if you watched what you were buying 'cause some of those candies you could get four for a penny, yep, little squares, you know, caramels or whatever, whatever we felt we could get the most for and it would last longer, we would go, and we'd have five cents. We didn't have, "Grammy, can I have two dollars", that's what I hear from grandson, you know, certain thing that he'll want to get, look, I can't do it. Two dollars looks like a mountain. As we got older you were allowed a little bit more and we'd go, there was a lady had an ice cream parlor in her home, they made homemade ice cream and we thought it was wonderful if we could go to her house and sit, she'd put us at the dining room table in her home and sell us a dish of ice cream for five cents and we'd go, that was special 'cause you could go and sit to that dining room table and have a dish of ice cream. This was girls, you know, going in, my friend and I or whoever I'd happen to be with.

Q. Where was that parlor?

A. Just a couple of doors from here, that lady. The woman that has the post office now, she lives, they bought that home, she lives in there, Deanna Gidney, but it was Mrs. Cynthia Denton or Howard Denton that had this little ice cream parlor and then this little store down here on the corner, right down here where the Whale Watching thing is, that, my husbands mother, she had run that for an ice cream parlor for years but, now when I was bringing up my kids, they would get fifteen cents on Saturday night. Like, in these days it wasn't like every time you turned around you had a quarter or you had money and you'd run to the store. You didn't do that. You got so much on a Saturday night.

Q. What was your religion when you were growing up?

A. Baptist.

Q. So, what would Sunday's have been like at your home?

A. I was in, I was always involved with church. I can't remember when I haven't been interested in church, from a small child it always meant so much, mom kept us in Sunday school, we always went to Sunday school and I can't remember my parents, my mother did quite a bit but my father, anything special was going on, he was there to see us but not to go every Sunday like that, but Sunday there was no work going on in the home. My father wasn't out working on Sunday, you didn't do that, you didn't even iron clothes on Sunday or nothing. You wouldn't think of getting the iron out and pressing something on Sunday, you just didn't do those things. It was a quite time, quiet day. It wasn't, now you don't know some of the time where you are maybe on Sunday. It's different.

Q. How would you keep up with what was going on in the outside world?



A. Just through telephone and I remember when we first had a radio at home, it was a battery radio run by batteries, three cells they used to, three different batteries and they all used to all be hooked together. I never liked radio because those, when they first came out you had to put ear-phones on and sit down and listen, that's the kind we had at that time, I never, ever liked them, so I wasn't a radio person and didn't, but my father loved hockey, so he would, every Saturday night or whenever hockey games came on, he'd be glued to the radio listening to the hockey and it seems to have gone right down through the family, even with my boys, they're all Toronto Maple Leaf's fans. (Laughter) This boy here, (pointing to her son) he watches Toronto, I said, "It's a wonder he doesn't go right down into the basement because he get so excited over it". (Laughter)

Q. What kinds of things would you have to grow and raise yourself?

A. When we lived at grandmother Denton's, she was on that, it was the big farm but after her husband died, she still run the farm, raised the cattle, sheep, chickens, hens, you know, all this stuff she raised and she always had a big garden planted. She had someone come in, I believe, to help her. She had a big orchard, she had her own apples, so we always had vegetables like, from her, and apples, and all this stuff 'cause they were grown right there and I suppose my father helped harvest them and do too, I don't, it's hard to remember back to all that but, and then as the family got older, we had our own little vegetable garden. Mom always had hens, you had your own eggs, we kept a cow for our own milk and butter and mom even would make butter and sell it to people. You always had things like that, you raised a pig, we always had a pig, we always had hens, we always had a cow. This was just for our own use, so there wasn't a whole lot that you had to, and in the fall you would, you didn't buy so much from the little store, this store here, you would send an order to saint John, New Brunswick. Now, over there, there was, I remember the mercantile was one that dad and mom used to buy from. They'd buy their sugar, flour, shortening, raisons, brown sugar, peanut butter, all stuff you could buy in quantities, they would have orders come and have it come in, there used to be a boat that run from this, from Little River over to New Brunswick and that's the way, back in those days, that's the way it came. So, your shortening was bought in big buckets, twenty pound, that's what, yeah, twenty pound pails, that's what they called them. Your flour was bought in ninety-eight pound bags, your sugar was bought in a bag, your brown sugar, your tea, your coffee, it was all bought in large quantities and you did that every fall. I loved it 'cause there'd be prunes and there'd be, you know, anything like that. You could buy all that stuff in large quantities and then, one of the things I remember as a child, we picked from, strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, everything was picked and as children you helped pick those berries when you were old enough to care about filling your pail up, you know, a small child doesn't care, they'll pick so many, "Oh, I'm tired mom, I can't do no more", but as you got older, and I just loved to do it. To get in the woods was my greatest pleasure and to pick berries. We all had to do it because if you didn't do it, you didn't have your jams and stuff for winter. You preserved everything. The day I was married and moved in this house, this house was new then, it was just small but it was a new home my husband built and his father, I had over a hundred jars of jams, jellies, preserves, strawberries. You preserved everything then 'cause you didn't buy it all in cans and it was fun.

Q. Where would your mother have sold her butter?

A. To any friend that might want it and then I did the same thing after I was married too 'cause my husband, for a time he sold meat on the road. He would buy a beef or he would go to Bear River and get quarters or halves or whatever and he sold beef for a long time. So, if we had, we always kept a cow here too, over in his father's barn at that time, and I'd make butter and he'd take it with him on the road. (continued on next page)

That was great fun though, making your own butter but there was a lot of work to it, churning the cream and making your butter, so even I had a hand in that, but it was, you did those things or you didn't eat. Now, back when I was a child, that's the way it was. You preserved all that stuff, you made your own mincemeat, you made your own pickles, everything like that was made. It wasn't run to the store and get it 'cause you couldn't have afforded to do it anyway, so you preserved your own, that's the way they lived and I think it was a good way 'cause now you ask a kid to pick a strawberry, to go pick a wild strawberry and they'd think you were cracking up, they would, "I'm not gonna do that". I can see the ladies when they went after they'd get through with their work in the morning, by ten 'o clock they were ready to go strawberrying or which ever berry would happen to be at that time, cover their hands with stockings, you know, you wore cashmere, was it?, you know, the cotton or whatever stocking thing, they'd cover their hands and arms so they wouldn't get burnt brown and they'd go picking with their hat on their head and everything. They'd leave early in the morning. Three or four of them would go all at the same time and take their children with them and take a little lunch if they thought they were going to be gone long and pick berries. It was hard work but it was a pleasure at the same time, you know, that you were doing something to add to your living 'cause there's nothing better than what you preserve yourself. It's really good.

Q. How far away would the doctor have lived from you?

A. At Sandy Cove, I suppose that's five miles, is it?

Q. About five miles.

A. Yeah, Dr. Rice.

Q. So, how big of an emergency would there have to be in order for him to come to the people?

A. Well, he'd come any time you called him.

Q. Really?

A. Yeah. It wasn't hard to get the doctor to come to your house 'cause he would come whenever he was needed. Back when I was a kid it was with his horse and sleigh or horse and wagon 'cause like I say, there wasn't the cars then, but he traveled all up and down Digby Neck.

Q. Who would have delivered the babies?

A. Him, Dr. Rice.

Q. What were some home remedies that would have been common when you were growing up?

A. For colds, kerosene lard, kerosene, you'd put kerosene in a little dish and put a piece of lard in it, the lard would keep it from burning, greatest stuff for sore throats and colds that you'd ever want, mustard politics they'd put on people for, you know, that had pneumonia and stuff like that, oatmeal politics, anything with heat, you know, to keep, oatmeal was used mostly, I think, on babies and, like that, anything that would keep warmth in there to break up that cold but the kerosene and the lard is the one I, I would still in an emergency rely on kerosene and lard 'cause it did work.

Q. Wow, and you'd heat it up would you?

A. Mmmmm, yep, heat it up and anything you wanted heated, like in the middle of the night and things like that, you'd heat it over a lamp, you wouldn't get up and build your fire, you'd heat it over the lamp 'cause you generally kept the lamp burning in the hall or somewhere, be it there were small children in the house, keep your lamp burning. That was another thing that the mothers did in the morning too, the lamps all had to be cleaned and filled to get ready for another night. They weren't put away and left there half-empty and black chimneys on them, they were clean.

Q. They were busy, the woman.

A. Right. The chamber pails, you know, there was no bathrooms. If you were just somebody rich, I suppose, you know, but not way back, there wasn't bathrooms. Your chamber pails had to be looked after, your, all that. That was all work. Your beds had to be made. The most, I remember my grandmother O'Neill, she'd be my mother's mother, it was straw beds, feather beds, you remember, I guess you can buy feather beds now, or to put over your mattress if you want the warmth and, like that but every spring, every fall, every fall when the men thrashed the wheat, you know, they would plant wheat fields and they'd thrash that, they'd have a machine that would thrash the wheat and the woman would go and fill these ticks. They'd empty them, the old straw that was in them, beautiful white ticking and wash them all up and have them cleaned and go to these places where they were doing the new straw and have them all filled again for winter. I used to love to go to my grandmother O'Neill's and get in the straw bed at night, so warm and it smelled so good or a feather bed, they didn't empty the feather beds so often because they were different but the straw beds, it was, it was exciting.

Q. Interesting. How would you have taken care of your teeth?

A. That's one thing I had a problem with? Your teeth were brushed and, like, well just like they do nowadays, as far back as I can remember. I've always had a toothbrush but there was never the money in my family 'cause I had bad teeth. There was never the money to go to the dentist because you paid cash. There was none of this, well I guess even now you can't very well go to a dentist and, if you're lucky to be working, you have Blue Cross and stuff like that, there was nothing like that then. If you needed four dollars to go to the doctor and you didn't have the money, you couldn't go to the doctor 'cause you had to have that four dollars to pay for that visit. Those things, I think are much better, they are much better nowadays for people that are working but that was one of my problems that, and I envy anyone when I see them with beautiful white teeth. I said, "that's the first thing you look at when you see a person, especially young people, beautiful white teeth", and that's when my envy comes in. (Laughter) I don't begrudge them but I think, "Oh, that's so beautiful to have nice white teeth", and you keep after your grandchildren, and "you need to brush more", you know, and, because you want them to be, maybe I'm a fuddy duddy. (Laughter)

Q. When somebody would die, how would the funeral be handled?

A. The body was looked after right in the home back then and the undertaker would come to the home and generally the wife or mother or whatever would see that that person was bathed and dressed and looked after and the casket was brought in. Now that's all different which is good, but it's just my father that I remember being, he was, he was laid out in our home which makes it bad and then they had, what they call wakes, the people would come from the village and sat up all night with that body while it was in the house 'cause they did with dad 'cause mom and I could go to bed 'cause we'd been through a lot. He died, he took, he was on the island, down on the island tubing a boiler in the factory, 'cause this, like I say was all the kind of work he did, he tubed boilers, he did all kinds of stuff like that, he was down there for the whole week and he took sick before he could get home and he left on a Monday, (continued on next page)

I forget when he was brought back but he left on a Monday to go there and work and he died while he was away. He didn't die on the island, he died on the operating table, he had ulcers and they ate through the lining of his stomach and they couldn't save him. Parafinitious, is it?, set in and killed him. He was only fifty-three but we never saw him after that until he brought back. Mom had six children to take care of. He died on Easter Sunday.

Q. Now, would anyone have come to help your mom take care of you or was she on her own?

A. She was mostly, be mostly on her own. I can't remember. She had family but I can't remember of, at that time there was a lot of people around and they came to sat up at night while his body was in the house and, like that, but no, my mother got thirty dollars a month back then, thirty dollars a month and she had six children and they were buying a home. We didn't, she didn't buy that home, we moved back across the river and she bought a home afterwards. She had thirty dollars a month, she wasn't allowed out to work, you know, she could go and help a neighbor or something like that and she would get paid for house cleaning or, you know, something like that if someone wanted anything done but that's what she brought up her family on and bought a home, five dollars a month. She bought a home because, like, the homes sold for taxes. Someone had lost it through not paying taxes so she bought that house through a lawyer in Digby and paid for it and during that time the War was on, Second World War, my brother went in the War, my older brother and he was overseas while the War was going on, he was the petty officer in the Navy. It all started out in Digby. I think he joined up in Digby or something, the Marine, you know, with the Marines. Is that Navy?, and he died, he died the same month that my son died here in the River and he died the first of the month and my son died the last of the month. My son was thirty-three when he died but mom brought up the family on that and, like I say, they bought in large quantities and everything which made it better for bring up your family. In winter you bought your turnip, your carrot, your potato, and you put 'em in your basement, your apples and all that stuff was bought in large quantities and they weren't high, of course, like they are now but yet that money might have did a lot at that time, you know, was worth a lot more but still it was a struggle.

Q. What memories do you have of the depression?

A. That was terrible. My father was alive then, that would be the thirties, would it be the thirties?

Q. Yes.

A. That was bad but everyone was more or less alike then because men that had good jobs, I remember some coming back to the river that had been away but they lost their jobs at that time, what was it? Everything seemed to shut down or something?

Q. Yep, yep. They didn't have the, a lot of people said that you couldn't get metals or anything like that because they'd be sending them overseas, a lot of things couldn't be bought but then they also say that because a lot of people had grown their own things, everyone was prepared and had their food that they had out back.

A. Right. There was people that could afford, when the depression was coming on, they stocked up well which I don't think at that time they were supposed to but they did, if could afford it, you bought ahead, you prepared yourself for the Depression where someone that just lived from day to day, it was a different story because back then you got a dollar a day. When my father died that's what he was getting, when he worked down to the plant. (continued on next page)

You were getting a dollar a day and I suppose that's where they took moms allowance when she got children's allowance after dad died. I think that must have been what it was taken from, a dollar a day. You could live on a dollar a day. You didn't live, you existed, it wasn't living. Now, you can't live on, how much a day?, because people live beyond their means. That's the reason I think it's nice what your doing, you know, if it helps a child, if it makes them think of what it was like back then and how well off I am now, you know, to what it was then because I think nowadays children have too much. I don't begrudge them of anything they have but I know the other side of the coin too, there's not the appreciation. Now, my childhood, it wasn't rich, it was, my parents struggled but we were happy because we didn't have all this, "I want this for my Playstation and that for my Playstation" and, you know, forty-five and fifty dollars, sixty dollars, seventy dollars for parts for those Playstations, it's not to be sneezed at. I want them to have but I would like for them to see the other side.

Q. As a teen, what kinds of things would you have done for fun?

A. Well, I wasn't like a lot of other kids. I didn't enjoy dancing, I didn't enjoy going to movies, I was funny. No, I like going for drives, I like, mostly what I like was to do with church. BYPU we used to have and anything to do with things like that, I like but as far as going out and going to parties, I like the house parties just around the river and, like that, birthday parties and all that stuff, you know, I liked it but as far as going, like I say, dancing, so that made it hard for me too when I was bringing up my children because even their father didn't believe too much in this dancing business and going to dances 'cause you knew dancing always included liquor. They'd have dances down here in the old hall and you'd always worry about your children and you'd have to go and check and see if they were all right. My oldest daughter, she didn't like it too much when I would go, they would go driving, a group of them, you know, when they should have been studying, like, for school. "I just want to out for a little while mom and I'll be right back", and I'd say, "Well by ten 'o clock you be in the house 'cause you've got to study for this or that", it was in high school and she still holds it against me today. I'd go down and I'd be so worried about her. I've even reached in the car and pulled her out and they'd be just sitting there singing, laughing, talking, boys and girls, she said, "Mom, you don't know how you embarrassed me". (Laughter) Now I see my mistake. She said, "Now, you didn't do that with Jean when Jean was growing up", I said, "No, I learned from you", (Laughter) but it's such a worry when you're bringing up children and I wanted my girls to be happy and everything but I wanted to protect them too because life wasn't always here, life wasn't always a picnic and I felt so responsible. I guess that's why I can't sleep. (Laughter) Even back then I was being so responsible, that's the reason I have trouble, I guess and It's so nice when I go somewhere's, you know, like my sisters and I can go to sleep and I just come to this conclusion the other day. I think that's what it is. When I'm up there, I am protected, I am safe, I don't know, how do you think when you're an old lady. (Laughter)

Q. How did you meet your husband?

A. I worked for his mother in the ice cream parlor down here, I guess that's how I fell in with him and we went together about six years or more before we ever got married.

Q. So, how old would you have been when you got married?

A. About twenty-six. I was an old, I was a late bloomer. I didn't grow up, what can I say, I didn't grow up fast, to tell the truth, I never liked men. That's the truth of the whole thing. I stood in fear. I don't know why, but I always felt, never felt, I don't know why I should, there's no reason why I should but I, so my husband was the only boyfriend I ever had which is not speaking too much for me. I go out around that much to run around because my girlfriend and I, we went to church and we walked home with, guys walked down the road with us, and, like that, but that's as far as it went, the end of the driveway they were gone. (Laughter)

Q. What memories do you have of your wedding?

A. Well, I was just married in Digby. I went to, and they had a reception afterwards at my home, seventy-five people, I have my wedding book and seventy-five people were in my mothers house that night and it wasn't a big house but it was, and I have all their names and everything. Dr. Rice is amongst the ones that was there, the doctor that we had all those years and his wife and it was nice but we didn't have a big wedding. I was just married in my suit and sometimes when I see other people getting married I wonder if I missed out but I don't think I did because it wasn't exactly what I wanted because I was a shy person but now my, as I've got older my mouth opens now and it goes quit a bit. (Laughter) It does, you know, I seem to have come alive. I never made ripples, I was always the meek person, like, I should have done a lot of fighting. My kids didn't see that in the home, they might have seen it on one side but not with me and I'm just as satisfied it was that way because I don't think it's fair to bring up kids where there's so much strife. It's bad enough, they went through enough of it but I was here for them, so that part makes me happy today, I don't have to think, "Well, you neglected your kids", I didn't. I had five children but lost my son, which pretty near killed me.

Q. How would you have planed for hard times or retirement?

A. You just take it a day at a time and that's what you do now. You get, I get old age pension. I'm happy that there is such a thing as old age pension, I think it is wonderful. It gives you, if you had no reserve, you know, that you didn't prepare for old age, it gives you a living but if anything goes wrong, that you have to fix something about your house, you have to replace something in your house, you've had it because no one, like I say, I'm happy that I'm getting the old age.

Q. How would you say that people would have helped each other out in days gone by that would be different from today?

A. Back when I was a kid the people were, like I say, were always, if you didn't have any wood in your yard, like a widow, she didn't have any wood in her yard, back when I was a little kid at my grandmothers Denton's, people would all get together and they'd have chopping frolics for them, they'd call it, they'd go and chop this persons wood. If they needed a barn built they'd have a building thing. People would all get together and do things like that. If someone was sick in the village and people had to go, 'cause you didn't go to the hospital then, you were sick in your own home and people would come in and sit up all night with that child. I know when I was a year old they almost lost me, I was two at the time and I had, I think that's why I have a bad heart today, at that time maybe they didn't know just what was wrong but the doctors think I had rheumatic fever as a child and that's why my heart is damaged but people were always there, they'd sit up all night. My grandmother Denton was one, they'd go out, even though they had worked all day and they was awfully tired and everything, If someone needed them, they were there all night. If a child was born, she would go for one and deliver that child or help, you know, be there with the doctor to deliver the child or if they were alone, they'd deliver it themselves, midwives is what they called them. People were always helping each other that way, even though they had, like I say, worked hard all day, they were always ready no matter what time. If a stranger come down the Neck, which they did a lot in those days selling stuff, selling things and my grandmother Denton, she never knew who she was going to have in her house maybe to stay all night or something because you took people in, you didn't see them left out, you'd bring them in, give them a place to sleep, give them a meal, send them on their way. People always did all those things. They didn't have all the luxuries that they have nowadays of going to hotels and all that kind of stuff, they depended on the other fella helping them which I think was wonderful but can you see letting someone come in your house now, you wouldn't dare to. There was never, when my husband died, we never locked doors, you never went to bed and locked your door. (continued on next page)

My doors are locked now and if I had my way they'd be barred (Laughter) because I'm afraid because if someone sees your light on at night, they could say, "Well, I want to come in and use your phone, can I use your phone?", I'm terrified of things like that because on that idiot box, I call it there, aren't I awful (Laughter), there's good things on that t.v, there's good things I enjoy but there's so much foolishness that it's sickening but there's another thing, kids have so much of that nowadays. You see them set little babies down in front of it 'cause, the babies, the movement and everything, they like to watch it, it will keep them quiet for a while, not good. See, I'm funny.

Q. I agree with you, I definitely agree with you on that. What memories would you have of the poor farm?

A. Not a whole lot of the poor farm although I guess way back somewhere I never knew for years that there was someone that was related to one of the, my relatives, I guess, was in that poor farm but he wasn't there because he was poor. Did they have a place that they kept people that were retarded?

Q. Yep.

A. They did, didn't they, in that. Well, that's what he was there for but I never knew 'till just, you know, not too many years ago and I can't even remember the name but it was someone that was, 'cause people when they come home from the states would go there and see him 'cause there couldn't have been another place then for people that had a learning disability but we always liked to drive in that way to see that building and that's gone, is it?

Q. Yes.

A. All there is, is pictures because my daughter has a picture of, someone painted it.

Q. What memories do you have of tourism in days gone by?

A. All I, I don't remember too much, people coming to Sandy Cove, tourists and my daughter when she was old enough to, you know, when school closed for the summer she'd go up to Sandy Cove and work for Jean Morehouse, she was, she kept summer people and Anna would go up there and work for her. In fact, she used to walk most days to Sandy Cove, she'd walk up there and if they worked late at night, they would stay and, her and another girl worked up there and there was places here in the River where people kept travelers, you know, that would come to the stores and, for different things, they would keep them. In fact, there were several places when I think of it, a couple down the shore and that house right up, not this first one here, the second one, that used to be a hotel where they kept people.

Q. How superstitious would you say people were when you were growing up?

A. Very superstitious but they loved to tell ghost stories. That's what the young people, when they'd get together, they were having parties or something and they would tell these ghost stories. I guess there is, Anne's Hallow or something they call it, down below here, down between here in Tiddville or somewhere, I don't know what the place is but they always told stories because the road used to go down, the old road that came into Little River used to go down that way, down through the woods but, along the shore it must have went, somewhere back there because there's cellars and different things back there where there were houses. Now, Anne's Hallow could have been on that road, that one, where there was somebody murdered or, something happened anyway, this was one of the stories they used to tell. (continued on next page)

That's about all I would know, you know, hearing about ghost stories but there is books of them, I guess, you know, the, I've read some of them about ghosts in different places but maybe it's angels instead of ghosts. (Laughter)

Q. How would you compare life in general today, to days gone by?

A. Too fast for one thing. I think we're running ourselves right off the face of the earth. In the olden days the people worked awful hard but they accomplished more than they're accomplishing nowadays. In a day, now we have all the luxuries, we have vacuum cleaners, we have mixers, we have all this kind of stuff, I don't have a whole lot of it but I have some, it just makes more work. It's better to put the frying pan on the stove and warm something up than it is to get all there gadgets out and dirty them all up and, everything is too fast and I really think we're living in a very bad time. Where did you ever hear, you say your down from.....?

Q. Lower Sackville.

A. Sackville way, there's hardly a day you pick up the, or you listen to the radio and there's not a murder. It's scary and it's coming down the valley just as fast as it can come. It's sad. Why do people want to do this? It's not always young people that do it but it's, is it the home life?, is it because the mother's aren't home with the children?

Q. I think that has a lot to do with it, I really do.

A. I really think that's where it all stems from. The wife's place was in the home and then the wife got so, what would call it?, they want to be, they want to make the same money the man makes, they want to do this.....

Q. They want to be independent just like the men and do their own thing.

A. Yeah, but why have children then. Why bring children into it, if that's what people want, I haven't anything against anyone wanting to get ahead but not at the expense of your child and that is sad. I've got a daughter, she's out in B.C now, she says, "Mom, I'll never forget the day.....", 'cause I was a home mom, I never went out to work after I was married and before that it was more or less helping mom bring up her children after dad died, I fairly took over, when they'd come I would always be here, they'd come through the door, "Mom, where are you mom?", this is what you would hear, she said, "I came one day and got off of the bus and was walking up the driveway and you were standing in the window, I come to the door, come in, you weren't in the window", I guess that girl went through, I don't know what all. She was so used, her imagination saw me, I think, you know, she was so used to seeing me watch them get off of the bus and come home and I'd be here but I had had to go to Digby or I'd gone out or something had happened, I wasn't here, she said, "You'll never know what I went through", and it still haunts her. So, she's not the only child that calls, "Mom, where are you?", because that's what, that's what we were put here for as near as I can figure it. The man and the wife, if you go by the bible, that's what is. The mother is supposed to be there for the children and I don't care hoe foolish it sounds, that's the way it should be 'cause no little child should be coming into an empty home or a key around his neck to get in and what does he do with no support there for him or her. It's sad and my heart goes out to all kids and I think this is why there's so many murders. It scares you, what you hear, it's a sad, sad affair because I love kids. I've got a little grandson and he was eleven years old yesterday. His father died when he was fifteen months.  
(continued on next page)



That's my son, he died, he was fifteen months old when he died and then he had another boy, he's down in, going to a college down there in Yarmouth, what do they call it?, Computer?, no, not computer college, what is it?, he's taking cooking anyway, (Laughter) the older one and what a change in that boy and I'm just thrilled with the way he's turned out 'cause it could have been so bad. He's twenty-two, he just had a birthday too, twenty-two, but he's taking the cooking 'cause this is what he likes.

Q. That's wonderful, thank you.

