

Clyde Roope

Interviewed by Chris Callaghan, Nov. 23, 2000



Q. What is your full name?

A. CLYDE DENSMORE ROOPE

Q. And when were you born?

A. 1920.

Q. And where were you born?

A. I was born right in this area. My home was just down next to the corner. They took away a lot of the land when they put the road through, but right on that side just before you get to the main highway is where my home was. I stayed pretty well in the same place. I had a smaller house across the road at one time.

Q. Did you build this house?

A. Yes.

Q. Your father's name was?

A. Fred Roope.

Q. And your mother's name was?

A. Alberta.

Q. And what was her maiden name?

A. Cossett.

Q. And where was she from?

A. Just less than two miles from here. Up the road and down next to the beach was their little farm there.

Q. Would that be considered Smith's Cove?

A. Well, it was either Smith's Cove or Joggins Bridge. This area is always been Joggins Bridge, but in later years they have moved the Smith's Cove area down this way some.

Q. And do you remember your Grandparents?

A. No, only my Grandmother and I were only about this tall when I remember. She died when I was young.

Q. Do you remember your father's parents' names?

A. I'm not sure of my Father's parents' names, he had some brothers but his parents were gone before I could see them.

Q. You say you grew up here in Joggins Bridge - how large was your family?

A. They was four, there is my brother, the oldest one, William, he died - let me see about 10 years ago, I guess it was. And I had a sister was married to Harry Trimper and you might know of Margaret or Charlotte Trimper. You know where the Imperial Garage is just over the bridge a ways, well, that road that goes up there to Marshalltown - Margaret and her parents lived on that road, I think it was the first house up on the left hand side.

Q. Now Margaret was - what relationship was she to you?

A. She was my sister's daughter.

Q. And what was that Sister's name?

A. Freda.

Q. And Freda was older than you as well?

A. Freda was older than me; I'm the youngest of the family. And Ida died just a short time ago.

Q. How much younger were you than the next older one in the family?

A. About two years or a little better.

Q. Where did you go to School, Clyde?

A. Smith's Cove.

Q. How far away was that?

A. Two miles. We use to walk it all the time.

Q. And what did the school look like?

A. It was a fairly big building, a hallway through the middle and a big room on each side. When you'd go into it from the Smith's Cove Road, on the left hand side was the younger people and on the right hand side was the higher up.

Q. And how old were you when you started school?

A. Eight years old.

Q. That's a little later than people start school now.

A. Yes, it is.

Q. You're not the first person to tell me that, why did people waited until age 8 to start school?

A. Well, I don't know. My mother use to teach me at home.

Q. She just didn't want to see you go off, I guess.

A. I guess. It was quite a ways away, but we use to walk it in the wintertime, and I remember sometimes the snow banks were high enough that you could get on the snow bank and reach up and touch the - they use to be like telephone wires went along the railroad, you know? We use to be able to get on the snow bank and touch those wires.

Q. That's why your mother didn't want you going to school! What would you do at noon hour then?

A. We'd have an hour of lunch at noon hour. I have walked home once or twice, and back again, but they was people that lived up a quarter of a mile or so above the schoolhouse, on the back Smith's Cove Road, now the further end of that is cut off from where it used to be. You probably don't know where the Adams' use to live -

Q. No, I don't know that area all that well.

A. Well, when you're going in - if you go through Smith's Cove and go across the overpass, go towards Bear River, it would be the first house - quite a big house on the left hand side sort of up on the hill, well this road I was speaking of, that use to come out right handy to that house but since they changed the road, it no longer does that. It comes on to the main highway and across the bridge.

Q. So who lived in that house when you were going to school, the Adams?

A. The Adams, yeah.

Q. And you would go there for lunch sometimes?

A. No. But up on the old road that I was speaking of, they was Robbins' lived there. Do you know Chesley Robbins got run over by a tractor just a short while ago, well his father lived just up above. Chesley lived down on the Smith's Cove Road, and his father's place was up on the other road, and I use to go up there different times with Chesley and the family, Glendon, I use to go up there and eat my dinner lots of times with them.

Q. They were your friends?

A. Yes.

Q. How long did you stay in school?

A. I stayed in school until Grade 9.

Q. And you would have been how old when you left, then?

A. I guess I was 13.

Q. And what did you do then?

A. Well, the first work I done, another friend of mine and myself worked in the woods cutting some pulp wood and we use to make about \$15.00 a week.

Q. What did your Dad do for a living?

A. He was a farmer.

Q. What kind of farm did he have?

A. He never had a farm of his own, but he use to work for other people. I know one place he worked was for the Jones' up on the other road here. And then he worked in Granville somewhere, I remember. And they was a Frank Woodman lived right across the way here, the old house just across here. And he use to work with Frank Woodman. I know he use to work in the woods with him in the wintertime.

Q. So was your family, middle class growing up?

A. Yes.

Q. You weren't considered well off but not very badly off either.

A. Right.

Q. And your Mother, what would her workday be like?

A. Well, she did the housework and she was mother to all the children in the area. She loved the children.

Q. So you always had a full house, I guess, eh?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you remember when you got electricity in this area?

A. I remember it but I couldn't give you the dates.

Q. Were you still a young person or a child?

A. Oh, yes. Fairly young.

Q. Do you remember what difference that made in your home life?

A. It made quite a difference. The first thing was the radio. Then come to electric stove and like of that.

Q. What do you remember about the radio?

A. Well, it was nice to be able to sit back and listen to it, you know. Something new.

Q. Where would the programs be broadcast from?

A. Well, I think from Saint John and one from Halifax.

Q. And do you remember any favorite programs?

A. No, I can't say as I do. I remember some but I can't give a name to them.

Q. When you were growing up, how important was religion in your family?

A. Oh, my mother went to Church every Sunday, and on Thursday I think they had Prayer Meeting or something.

Q. Where did she go to Church?

A. Smith's Cove.

Q. And what church did she belong to?

A. The Baptist Church.

Q. And how much did she insist that you take part in that?

A. Well, we always took part and went to church with her but I wasn't baptized. I got married and I joined the Catholic Church.

Q. When did you get married?

A. Let me see. I was in my early 20's when I got married.

Q. So that would have been about early '40's. Now, I grew up Catholic in Northern New Brunswick and I remember even - I'm about 30 years younger than you - even in my day it was a big day to change religion or to marry someone from a different religion. Did your community give you a hard time about that?

A. No. No. I got married in Annapolis.

Q. Who did you marry?

A. Stone, my wife's name was Stone.

Q. I'll get back to that in a bit, I'm going to go back to when you left school and started working as a young boy, actually. And you were working in the woods making \$15.00 a week.

A. Yeh, that was the first of it.

Q. That's hard work, I think.

A. Oh yes, quite hard.

Q. What were you actually doing in the woods?

A. Cutting pulp wood.

Q. Whose land were you cutting on, do you remember?

A. I think we were cutting for Leeman Sarty and that was back on the Landsdowne area.

Q. And how would you get the wood out?

A. Well, they got someone to haul it out. Me and my buddy just cut it for this person that owned it.

Q. This would be soft wood?

A. Soft wood, yeh.

Q. And how would you cut the trees, this sounds like a very stupid question but what would you use to cut with?

A. Oh, with a pulp saw. Or a cross cut saw.

Q. Would that be a two man saw?

A. Two man saw, yeh.

Q. And would the two of you choose which trees to cut?

A. Oh yeh. We knew which ones to cut.

Q. Where would you stay when you were in the woods cutting pulp?

A. Well, I stayed at home. But I worked as a Cookie in the camp, they had a camp and I worked as a Cookie in the camp.

Q. Where was that?

A. Oh, that was back on the old Landsdowne Road.

Q. Tell me what that job was like?

A. Oh, it was just a rough camp like. It would be like to get the other fellas dinners ready, you know.

Q. What time of year would this be?

A. It was in the late fall.

Q. And how many men would you have to cook for?

A. Oh, I think there was about 8.

Q. So tell me how your day would go?

A. It went good.

Q. You'd get up at what time of the day?

A. I'd get up around 6 o'clock in the morning.

Q. And then what would you do?

A. Get things ready.

Q. You'd have to light a fire, I suppose?

A. Oh yes.

Q. And what would you cook for breakfast for 8 men?

A. They would usually have eggs and bacon.

Q. And would you be responsible for making bread and all that?

A. Oh no.

Q. And would they come back for lunch?

A. Yeh, some would come back for lunch and some would have lunch with them.

Q. Would you have to make the lunch that they took with them?

A. No. They would get their own lunch at noontime.

Q. Did you find that a demanding job?

A. Oh, it wasn't too bad.

Q. Where did you learn to cook?

A. Just at home. I had a job like that up in Roundhill. I think we had 30 men up there.

Q. Where is Roundhill? I know the name, but is that back of Lequille there?

A. Let me see. It is between Annapolis and Bridgetown.

Q. And how long would you stay in a camp? At a time?

A. I was there for let me see, a couple of months I guess. And I got through there and I went to Halifax and I worked in a camp there for 30 stevedores.

Q. Cooking?

A. Yes, I was cooking. We use to set the table just the same as a hotel. Put everything on their plates and put it on the table and have plates of bread and plates of cake or whatever.

Q. How many cooks would there be ?

A. There was a cook and a helper besides myself. But I also run a canteen.

Q. At the same time?

A. Yeh.

Q. While you were cooking for the stevedores you ran a canteen too?

A. Yeh. I wasn't doing the cooking then. I was looking after setting the table and looking after the dishes and all of that.

Q. And where was this in Halifax, Clyde?

A. It was in Fairview. There was a place there where they use to take stuff off and load the ships, that was in wartime. And sometimes, you would see, in the evening before you went to bed, the harbour would be full of ships like you could almost walk across them. Wake up in the morning and they was all gone.

Q. Was this Bedford Basin you're talking about, or the harbour itself?

A. Bedford Basin. They was one time there, they had a barge loaded with explosives and in a storm that got loose, and they had an awful time there one night trying to get it anchored again.

Q. Did you know that was happening at that point?

A. Oh yes.

Q. How do you remember feeling about that?

A. Well, I guess there wasn't much I could do about it. Somebody else had charge of that.

Q. My goodness, the Halifax Explosion hadn't been that long before, right?

Q. How did you get that job in Halifax?

A. My brother-in-law's brother was working in Halifax and he knew this Mike Doyle was the man who had charge of the cook house and the bunk house. And he knew that this man wanted somebody to help, so this - Lester Thomas was the guys name that I went to Halifax with - and he got me acquainted with this Mike Doyle and I stayed with Mike Doyle - where I stayed with Mike Doyle was down towards Cow Bay, you know. I was to his place, and when the planes took off from the airport it would make the window rattle in my room.

Q. You'd go all that way every night to go home. That's a long way from Fairview to Cow Bay.

A. No, I stayed right to this Mike Doyle's place until I got ready to go to the cookhouse and once I was to the cookhouse, I stayed right there.

Q. Do you remember what company you were working for? At this Cookhouse?

A. Well, it was for this Mike Doyle.

Q. Did his company have a name at all?

A. The stevedores had a name but I couldn't tell you now what it was.

Q. What would you make a week for that kind of work?

A. I think it was minimum wage I was working for.

Q. Now, you were in your early twenties at this point . Did you try to sign up to go overseas during the war?

A. Yes, I did sign up but I didn't get to go.

Q. How did you feel about that? Were you disappointed?

A. Well, not really because I was having thoughts of getting married at that time.

Q. You weren't married when you got to Halifax. You were still a single man. And how long did you work in Halifax?

A. I worked in Halifax all one winter.

Q. How did you get there? From here to there?

A. I went with this Lester Thomas I was speaking about.

Q. Did he have a car?

A. Oh yes, he had a car.

Q. Had you ever been to Halifax before?

A. No, I hadn't.

Q. Do you remember what your impressions were of Halifax?

A. It was at night when I got there and he drove me around here there and everywhere and I didn't know where I was.

Q. Did it strike you as kind of a big town at that point?

A. Oh yes.

Q. Compared to Digby, really, eh? So you finished working in Halifax. I'm just wondering - Halifax in the war years. What was it like when you had free time. What did you do?

A. Well, I never went around too much. The girl that I married - she was working up in Fairview, about maybe a mile and a half from where I was working.

Q. Was that her home?

A. No, she was working there.

Q. I see, you both went to Halifax to work then.

A. Yeh. But she was from Arichat Cape Breton.

Q. How did you meet her?

A. I met her up there - she was a friend to the woman that was a cook where I was working.

Q. So you wouldn't have met her if you hadn't gone to Halifax to work, then.

A. No, I wouldn't have.

Q. And you told me her name was Stone. And her first name was?

A. Alvina.

Q. So she wasn't an Acadian from Arichat? She wasn't French was she?

A. Well, they spoke French down there and she could understand French, but she never ever bothered talking French with me.

Q. So where did you get married?

A. We got married in Annapolis.

Q. And what do you remember about your wedding?

A. There wasn't too much to it. It was raining like a sea. After we got married we had breakfast in Annapolis and it was raining so hard we had to wait to get out of the car to go to the restaurant.

Q. They say that's lucky! How many people were at your wedding?

A. Jimmy Comeau and a lady friend of his, they stood up with me.

Q. Your parents weren't there?

A. No. No.

Q. How old were you when you were married.

A. I was either 20 or 21.

Q. And how old was Alvina?

A. She was 10 years older than me.

Q. That would have been unusual even in those days,eh?

A. Yeh.

Q. Now when you were married, where did you first live?

A. We lived in my Mother's house for awhile.

Q. Right in Joggins Bridge?

A. Yeh. Then I built the house I was talking about across the way.

Q. And what kind of work were you doing when you were first married?

A. I worked for the Pines Hotel before I was married. I went to the Pines Hotel when I was 17.

Q. What were you doing there?

A. My first job there was night cleaner.

Q. Would you come home everyday after work? Or every night after work?

A. Oh yes.

Q. How would you get from here to the Pines?

A. I travelled back and forth with a car.

Q. You had a car?

A. Oh yes.

Q. You were lucky.

A. Well, now I'm wrong about that. When I was the cleaner, I worked for \$40.00 a month and my room and board.

Q. How long did you do that for?

A. Oh, I guess a couple different seasons. Then I went as truck driver.

Q. For the Pines as well?

A. Oh yes.

Q. Now, was the Pines open all year round?

A. No. But, when it was closed in the winter, that was the CPR you know, when it was closed in the winter I changed from there and went down on the wharf handling the freight.

Q. Still for CPR?

A. Yeh. So I was working the year round. I worked 20 years for the CPR and 25 for the Government.

Q. But at one point you took a break and moved to Halifax for a little while and then you came back worked again for CPR.

A. Yeh, during the war there was a season the Pines didn't open on account they couldn't get the stuff they needed.

Q. I didn't know that! So everybody was out of work that had worked at the Pines.

A. Yes. So I worked at Halifax and when I found out that the Pines was going to open, I came home again.

Q. That must have been a really interesting place to work, I would think.

A. Oh yes.

Q. Tell me about some of the tourists that would come and stay there.

A. Well, at one time I think they use to have a boat that came in - seems to me they called it the New Yorker and they use to bring the people in off the boat into the Pines.

Q. How long would the people stay there?

A. Oh, I can't say for sure how long the boat stayed in. But it probably stayed in for four or five days anyway likely.

Q. Now was your impression that most of the people that stayed at the Pines were rich?

A. Well, most of them I would think was well off.

Q. Where would they mostly come from?

A. Well, they would come from different parts of the States.

Q. Do you remember if some people would come year after year - did you get to know some people pretty well?

A. OH, I didn't really get to know them too much but I know there were some that come year after year.

Q. Did your employer, Canadian Pacific, did they have a policy about their employees mixing with their guests or anything like that?

A. Yes. The employees never mixed too much with the guests except for the bellhops, they called them. Course they was mixed with the guests all the time, and the waitresses and that.

Q. Has the Pines changed much since you first started working there?

A. Oh, quite a bit.

Q. In what way?

A. Well, quite a few different ways. They have changed things around a lot, they've reconditioned the hotel, put an elevator in, a fellow from up Deep Brook put the elevator in. I was partly in charge of the elevator after it was put in. The first that I went to work as maintenance, Gordon Hurtle was the engineer, and Gordon Hurtle was my boss. After a while, Gordon Hurtle died, he got sick and went to the hospital and he died. And then Bob Hemeon, which lives up just this side of the base now, he was engineer there for quite awhile.

Q. Is he still alive?

A. Yes, he is still alive. He and his wife live in a cottage just this side of the base. He was a good man to work with. I never ever had any problems with him at all. He was always good to me.

Q. You started as a night cleaner, and eventually became a truck driver. That would be a promotion I suppose, was it?

A. Yes. And then after that I got to be fireman and maintenance.

Q. What was the fireman?

A. At that time they burned - it was a heavy heavy oil - and it use to come in barrels. There was a fellow in Digby use to truck it up - they had an ice house at that time. And they use to pile these barrels of oil behind the ice house and they'd truck it over to where the boiler room was, about 10 - 15 barrels to a time. And they had a place there - an area about 12 ' x 7 ' wide and with a big cover they used. Take that cover up and dump those barrels of oil in there.

Q. You couldn't do that by hand, could you? Life those big barrels of oil?

A. Oh yes. At first, it had a gravel floor where they put the barrels, well, when the gravel floor was there it was kind of hard to roll the barrels. So they put a cement floor in, it was easy to roll the barrels but it was hard job to upset them. When the gravel floor was there when you'd go to tip them, one part of the barrel would kind of go into the grave, but when the cement was there, there was no going into the gravel!

Q. You couldn't win, eh? So you were in charge of heating the whole hotel, then were you?

A. Well, this Gordon Hurtle, he was the Engineer, he was the head man. I was working under him. Myself and a fella by the name of Rufus Connor was the maintenance - we worked together like looking after the lights looking after the swimming pool. At that time the swimming pool had salt water. And they was a big pipe run off into the basin there, oh it run off there oh, hundred feet anyway or a little better. And use to pick a time when the tide was right and when it wasn't too windy when the water wasn't roiled up too much and fill the swimming pool -

Q. You'd pump water in?

A. Pump it in. There was a pump house right down to the beach - the remains of the pump house is still there. And we'd pump that up into the pool, and about every twelve days - eleven or twelve days, they'd empty it out and refill it. And then it had two great big tanks, oh I guess they'd be 6 ' across and 4 ' high or so, they was full of gravel and stuff, and this water circulated through them all the time. And we had to put chemicals in.

Q. Did it have a specific smell to it then, the salt mixed with the chemicals?

A. Oh, not too much.

Q. And there was no way of heating the water in the pool?

A. Oh yes. They did have a way of heating it.

Q. How did they heat it?

A. It went through pipes in - where these tanks was - there was pipes through there to heat.

Q. Pretty fancy!

A. Oh, that's all changed around now. They use fresh water.

Q. I prefer the salt, myself. So you were very busy at that job then, if you were in charge of lights.

A. Oh yes. When I was driving the truck, I use to get up about between 4 and 5 o'clock in the morning. And they had a big bin, about this wide and this high (5' x 3' or so) and the ice house, I would take the truck and go over in the ice house and get two cakes of ice, and take it over to the kitchen and smash that all up with a ice pick ready for the waitresses.

Q. And what else would you do when you were driving a truck?

A. Well, some of the time I was in the boiler room too.

Q. You had a real variety of jobs, then. Where would they get that ice from?

A. They would put it in - you know Franklins place, you know the road they've got closed off, well on that road there's a pond. That was Bill Franklin's ice pond and they use to cut ice there. And they would put so much ice in this ice house and it was all covered with hay and stuff to keep it from melting.

Q. So what else did they use that ice for, Clyde, I'm curious.

A. It was just used in the diningroom.

Q. Because they would have had refrigeration at the Pines in those days.

A. Yes, they did. They was a refrigeration room there. It had a great big compressor there and they was two of them, and that was all piped. All of their refrigerators had these coils of pipe in them you know. And that all circulated from the boiler room up into all the refrigerators.

Q. How many rooms did the Pines have in those days?

A. I think it had 125. They cut it down some when they put the elevator in and different things. I think they cut it down to about 100 or less.

Q. What was the season?

A. I think it opened around the first of June.

Q. And it stayed open how long?

A. Stayed open to the last part of September.

Q. So the rest of the year, you'd be working down on the wharf then?

A. Yes.

Q. Did you and Alvina have a family?

A. Yes.

Q. How many children did you have?

A. I had 4 children.

Q. And where were they born?

A. They was all born in Digby.

Q. In the hospital?

A. How soon after you were married did the kids start?

Q. We lost the first one. And after that they were about 2 years apart.

A. So you had a fair bit of pressure on you to earn a living, then.

Q. When you were working on the wharves what kind of work did you do?

A. Handling freight. All kinds of stuff. Like they had the big shed there and the railroad track went down there. This big shed was full of doors, all along the railroad track and they'd open these doors up wherever they was cars, and you'd wheel the stuff on hand trucks and they had boards - steel boards, long enough to reach from the shed into the car, and about this wide, and you'd wheel this stuff. Sometimes there'd be stuff in the cars that had to go in the boats.

Q. What kind of freight?

A. All kinds of stuff. About the worst was Minard's Linament.

Q. Why?

A. It would come in packages about this long - and about this square, and the maybe 2000 of them or more in the car. They was some tedious.

Q. You'd have to load them one by one?

A. You'd have a truck load you know. It would probably take you about at least 30 little packages at once.

Q. When you say a handcart, that's what you referred to it - moving them by handcart. Is that like a wheelbarrow?

A. Sort of like a wheelbarrow. Like if you was standing up it would be about that high, with handles on it and two wheels down to the bottom. And the little place come out, about that wide.

Q. And you push everything around in those. Now the Minard's Liniment would come by train and you'd load it on a boat?

A. No, it come on a boat and loaded it in the cars.

Q. And where would these boats come from?

A. From Saint John.

Q. And then where would that be sent to in the train?

A. I'm not sure just where that was going.

Q. All across Canada, though, mostly within Nova Scotia?

A. Probably going to different places, I'm not sure of that.

Q. Now, where in Digby was this wharf located at and the shed you're talking about?

A. You know where all the fishing boats tie up there, well that was it.

Q. Right down there!

A. Yeh, right down there. There was a big wharf there with a big shed on it, and its all torn down now.

Q. The train was a major thing in those days, then I suppose, for passengers as well as freight.

A. Oh yes.

Q. Would a lot of guests at the Pines come by train?

A. Yeh, they'd be some of them come by train, but a lot of them come by boat.

Q. As an employee of CPR, did you get to travel on the train for a better price than most people would?

A. Yes.

Q. And did you take advantage of that?

A. Some. Never ever went very far. I always had a card that I could travel with.

Q. When did CPR shut down in Digby.

A. Let me see now. Well, the hotel, the government bought the hotel, that would be after I worked there for 20 years.

Q. How did that change things for you?

A. Well, not too much. I had a choice at that time as to whether I would move out to the other wharf or stay with the hotel. So I stayed with the hotel.

Q. Were you still working with Mr. Hemeon as your supervisor at this time?

A. Yes.

Q. So through your entire career with the Pines, you mostly worked maintenance then?

A. Yes.

Q. How did you enjoy that?

A. Oh good.

Q. It must have been a challenging career, though. Because you'd have to be thinking up solutions to all kinds of problems.

A. Oh yes. Sometimes on the last end of it, I was on duty seven days a week, 24 hours a day, I was on call.

Q. Why was that?

A. Well, like if the guest was in a cottage at night, and something happened to their bathroom or whatever, they'd call me to come and fix it. I'd go sometimes just same as if I was going to work in the morning. Sometimes they'd have a problem and they'd call me and tell me what was wrong, but I'd sooner go than to tell them how to try and fix it. Because sometimes it didn't amount to much and maybe I'd have got in more trouble by letting someone else fix it.

Q. What is the funniest thing you can remember happening with a guest that you had to be involved in?

A. I'll tell you one thing that happened about I think it was about 11 o'clock at night. There was 11 people stuck in the elevator. And I had to go get them out.

Q. What happened?

A. The elevator quit working, you know. It had quite a big panel box along side the elevator and that had all kinds of different fuses and everything, so it was stopped pretty near up to the top floor. So I had to go and let it down to a certain level and open the door so they could get out.

Q. How did you let it down?

A. They was a way of letting it down.

Q. What kind of shape were they in those people?

A. They was quite nervous . They wasn't long getting out!

Q. Its everybody's nightmare, isn't it, being trapped in an elevator.

A. They was certainly glad to get out.

Q. What would you do in case of a power failure, with hotel full of guests?

A. Well, they never had a power plant of their own. I guess they just had to wait.

Q. You can't remember any special occasions.

A. I remember one time they ran short of water. They was quite a few guests in, and this was in the evening. Somebody had been working there and I think they was working on the sewer or something and they didn't know that it wasn't town water. They had artesian wells. They had two artesian wells and then they had a big tank. It was like in the woods at that time. Just up from the hotel there was a big tank there about ninety feet high, or something like that. And we use to pump that full of water and that's what supplied the hotel. But this time that they ran short of water, somebody was working there and they used the water to flush out the lines that they was working on, not realizing what was going on. And I had to get that fixed up that night.

Q. How did you do that?

A. I called the Fire Department. Down where one of the well was, down closer to the staff residence, there was a big tank there that would hold about 20,000 gallons, something like that, so I got the Fire Department to fill that.

Q. Where would they get that much water?

A. Oh, they'd get it from the hydrants - town water. So we got that and pumped it from that up into the high tank and then they was all set.

Q. There is nothing worse than being without water, is there?

A. No.

Q. How many people did the Pines employ?

A. Oh, I'm not sure of that.

Q. Could you guess? 100, more than 100?

A. Somewhere near 100, because they had the golf course too.

Q. Did you have anything to do with the golf course?

A. Yes, we use to have to look after the building up there. We had to look after that. We had to get the water turned on in the spring and shut it off in the fall.

Q. How many guys were working in the maintenance department?

A. They was the Engineer and myself and a helper.

Q. That's all?

A. Yeh.

Q. Where was the staff residence?

A. The main staff residence was that brick building that 's there just as you go up the hill on the left hand side. And then just out beyond it, there is offices and stuff there now, that was the ladies staff building.

Q. They would stay there for the whole season, would they?

A. Yes. And then they built the new one that's back in there further.

Q. What year did they put the elevator in?

A. Now I couldn't tell you.

Q. It was just the one elevator they put in was it?

A. Yeh, just the one.

Q. Is it still there?

A. Yes, it's still there.

Q. I suppose that would have been a big deal at that point, eh?

A. Before they put that elevator in, they had a hand elevator and you know where linen cottage use to be, its not the linen cottage now, it just out to the end of the hotel was the linen cottage. Well in that end of the hotel there was an elevator there for taking freight up and down and there was a big wheel with all like fingers on it, and it had a rope about that big around, went around that wheel and come down. And you pulled that by hand.

Q. Your're kidding! One person could raise and lower it?

A. Oh yes. But that was just for freight and the linen and that.

Q. Never heard of such a thing. Where would the Pines buy all the food and stuff they needed?

A. Well, all over the place, I guess. A lot of it came in by truck, I suppose from Kentville and different places.

Q. Not so much local stuff?

A. There was quite a bit of local stuff. A lot of stuff come in by truck.

Q. So they were really a major employer in many ways. To get off the subject of the Pines for just a minute, because we are in the area. Do you have any memories of the Poor Farm at all when you were a young person?

A. The Poor Farm. Yes,my brother-in-law's father run the Poor Farm for awhile.

Q. What was his name?

A. Guy Thomas.

Q. O.k. I've heard of Mr. Thomas.

A. Before that there was a Balsler, Heb Balsler run it before that.

Q. Did you every go to visit Mr. Thomas when he was running it?

A. Oh yes, many times.

Q. What was your impression of the place?

A. Well, Mr. Thomas was a good man for the job because he got so he would take a lot of the guys that had a little something wrong with them, but they was able to do a little bit. Guy always had a big garden down there. He growed most of the vegetables for them and had a big barn. The barn built down. That was the starting of the end of the poor farm.

Q. What would they keep in the barn?

A. Cattle. They had cattle and a lot of the meat they used come from the arm and he'd have the basement of it would be full of vegetables, potatoes, carrots and everything. And he raised a lot of that stuff, and he had a lot of these fellas that would work with him and they liked him.

Q. So it wasn't a sad place, necessarily.

A. No, it was pretty good, I would say. I think there was one or two women there that use to help in the kitchen.

Q. What are your children's names?

A. John, who lives up the road here is the plumber, and Gloria lives right next door, she works at the Pines, she works in the office there. She's a secretary. Gloria Handspiker. And her husband works on the golf course.

Q. Carrying on the tradition!

A. Yeh. We lost one at birth. And I told you before there were only three living.

Q. And whose the third?

A. The third one is the one that died.

Q. So there is John and Gloria, and is there a third one still alive too?

A. No.

Q. A terrible thing to lose a child. Was it more expected in those days than it is now, or

A. Well, I guess it was a common thing.

Q. Where did your children go to school?

A. They went to the school to the convent in Digby.

Q. I didn't even know there was a convent in Digby. Where was that?

A. Well, its just like on the corner and Queen Street and the one that goes right up over the hill from the Post Office.

Q. O.k. I know where you're talking about. They wouldn't walk that far, would they?

A. Oh no. They went on the bus.

Q. When you were a little fella, a little boy, what would you do for fun? Before the days of television.

A. Well, I'll tell you some fun we had. There was a Hubert Wilson that lived right down between here and the bridge and he had a son named Louis which was my age and I use to play with him quite a lot. They had an old car down in the barn and we use to play in that, and one time we use to take an old jack knife and tear it apart, you know, and it had springs in it, shaped like this. We'd take them and put them together. Pinning them and using them for pliers like. So we thought that was hard on our hands. So we thought we'd make some handles to

go on them so they wouldn't be so hard on our hands. We went looking - his father had a shop just out from the house a little bit. So one day we was in that shop so we thought we'd look around and see what we could find for handles. And we found something that looked like empty 22 shells, you know. So we each took two of them empty shells, and we took a screw and dug all the stuff out of them, we each dug all the stuff out of two of them, that's four of them, and put it in the one that we hadn't dug out, sealed the end of it over, we thought there was a little something in them that would make a noise maybe. So out in this shed where we got them from, there was a piece of a grindstone, and did you ever see one of them things that - its an iron thing with a prong on it that they drive in through a log or something, they use to have them to tie their horse to. We took one of them, laid that thing on the stone, and Louie - I was standing back by the door, and this Louie Wilson, he took that thing and hit that four or five times and by and by that went. It was dynamite caps! We could have got killed digging them out. I don't know what>.....

Q. So what damage did it do?

A. It caused him to wear glasses. Scared his mother half to death and scared us too!

Q. What did your mother have to say about that?

A. Not too much. My father and my older brother was down by the beach sawing up some wood down there and they thought it was a rifle that went off. And that's what it was.

Q. You were lucky!

A. I guess we were lucky.

Q. Would you get up to much mischief at Halloween time?

A. Oh, a little bit. One time we made a dummy and put him along side of the road, put a strong to him and got somebody to hide in off the road, and a car would come along, and of course they would think somebody had got run over and they'd stop and they'd haul on this string and they'd haul this dummy out of the way.

Q. Boys will be boys! How often would you get into Digby when you were growing up?

A. Oh, not too often. That's when I was right young, I never got in too often. My mother had a sister that lived, well she had two sisters that lived in Digby. One of her sisters was a Dakin and they use to run a tin shop making stovepipe and all that kind of stuff. And the other one was a Hayden, and her husband kept the jail for quite awhile.

Q. So you'd get in to see them once in a while.

A. Yeh.

Q. Where would you buy the things you needed? When you were a little fella.

A. Oh, Warren Woodman had a store right down, like just to the end of this road here just across the road. He had quite a big store there.

Q. What was his name again?

A. Warren Woodman. Like one of the relatives run the place in town where they do Income Tax and all that. Woodman and Melanson.

Q. So that would be a big general store, would it?

A. Yes, it was quite a big store. It started out, I understood at the time, the store started with his Mother's henpen. His mother lived up on the old Smith Cove Road, and I don't know how to tell you just where it was, but there was two houses up off the road on the hill, and one of the houses there was a Woodman, Billy Woodman was her name. They use to keep the Post Office up there. And Bill Woodman lived up where Raymond Briton lives now, that was Bill Woodman's house. And when we went to school we use to go up there and wait for the Woodman children to go to school with us.

Q. Is that building still there? The store?

A. The store? No its gone long ago. When they redone the road they took the store.

Q. When did the road go through? The highway.

A. I don't know but when I was 13, I look after one of these places they have to close the road off when they are paving, I looked after that over what use to be Vernon Rice's Corner.

Q. You were an enterprising young fellow, weren't you?

A. I had a bicycle at that time.

Q. When you were growing up, did your parents keep animals and have a garden and any of that?

A. Oh yeh. We always had a cow.

Q. And hens, chickens?

A. Oh yeh.

Q. Did she sell any of that or was it for your own use?

A. Mostly for our own use. I remember one time my Mother had a dozen or more hens, and a couple of roosters and we had them across the road. Right across the road from our house use to be a Dukeshire's place. And we had the looking after of that and we had the hens over there. My mother's sister's son was out home one time and he was looking over there. And he said, my, my what beautiful hens you have there. The next morning we got up there was six of them missing!

Q. What did he do?

A. He got them at night, I think.

Q. What did your Mother do?

A. She didn't do anything. She had an idea where they went.

Q. How old was your Mom when she died?

A. I think she was 70.

Q. Did she outlive your Father? Or did he die first?

A. Yeh, my father died first.

Q. Was your Mom able to live in her own home?

A. Oh yes. On the very last end she stayed with my sister, Ida, they had a house just down below the corner there.

Q. There aren't many Roopes in the phone book. There is only a few of you and one of them at least is your son. One is spelled without the E on the end.

A. That's mine without the E. I always use to put the E on the end, and when I retired, they took it off.

Q. Who took it off?

A. The pension board or whatever. They found out it wasn't on my birth certificate.

Q. Live if full of surprises! So what's the furthest you've travelled.

A. The farthest I've travelled? To Boston, I guess.

Q. You weren't one of those people who went to the States to work?

A. No.

Q. But a lot of people did that in those days, didn't they?

A. Yeh.

Q. During the war, you spent most of the war right here in Digby. What influence did the war have on life in Digby?

A. Well, not too much. I think maybe it made times a little better.

Q. But there was no activity in the harbour, or anything.

A. No, not too much.

Q. Do you remember in 1944, a boat blew up down off Long Island. Do you remember hearing anything about that? It was a Greek boat going to Saint John, and it blew up, but they're still not sure what made it blow up. Whether or was torpedoed or whether the boilers blew up - you don't remember much news about that?

A. No.

Q. What do you remember about Tupper Warrens?

A. I worked there in the box factory.

Q. What was the box factory?

A. I wouldn't dare tell you what I told Tupper Warren!

Q. Oh do tell me please!

A. I worked there in the box factory. I think it was after I worked in the box factory, he had the doings of hiring some men to load a boat. So he told me that I would have a job loading the boat. I forget now just what the pay was. But anyway, when I went in to get the job, he says, see now, you're just a little bit too late. He said, but if you want to go to work, you can go to work for, I don't know, \$2.00 a day or something like that. I better not tell you what I told him.

Q. So I take it you didn't go to work for \$2.00 a day, then!
Was he a hard man to get along with?

A. I was in the office and I told him, what did I call him, an old white whiskered son of aAnd he followed me outside - followed me outside the store, and he said to the men out there, see now, I took more off that little fella today than I took off the whole crowd of men the whole week. And I told him all over again, and kept on agoing.

Q. Was he upset, or did he think it was funny?

A. He had heard things like that before, I think. He had quite a big box factory. They use to make all kinds of boxes.

Q. Out of cardboard?

A. Yeh. And one thing I was doing was - they had what they called a hand bearer, something like wheelbarrow handles only they was handles to each end of it and a deck to it and they would pile so many box boards on that and we'd carry it up to put it in the dryer.

Q. So they would make the boxes wet?

A. Well, yes, they would make them out of lumber that wasn't dried out good as it should be and then they'd put it in the dryer.

Q. Oh, they were wooden boxes then?

A. Yes.

Q. And what were they used for?

A. Oh different things. For packing fish and all kinds of different things.

Q. Would Tupper Warren sell those boxes to different companies?

A. Oh yeh. So one day another fellow and I was carrying some up and we upset some of them. We thought we was going to get quite a going over for doing that. The old fella came along and he was right nice to us. He said, oh, don't worry he said. That happens all the time.

Q. He surprises you!

A. Yeh. That was before I give him a going over.

Q. I guess that ended your career at Tupper Warrens!

A. Yes, pretty well.

Q. When you were in school, did you have any expectations of what your job would be when you grew up?

A. No, I don't think so.

Q. Just whatever work you could get?

A. Yeh.

Q. Are there any other stories I haven't asked you about. When you were a little boy, what was Christmas like?

A. Well, it was good, but it was real different. They had candles, real candles that you light. Clip them on a limbs, they had little clips on them. Take oranges and put strings through them and hang them on the limbs. And then they had string made and put that all over the limbs and a little bit of crepe paper here and there and maybe a star on the top of it.

Q. It would be dangerous with those candles, I would think.

A. Yes, you had to be careful.

Q. And would Santa Claus come?

A. Oh yes.

Q. Do you remember some favorite things he brought you?

A. I remember one time Christmas Eve, I had gone to bed so they thought. And our kitchen ceiling was made with sheathing I guess they call it, so one place there was a knot whole I could see down into the kitchen. And my father had a little jumping jack there of some kind and he was playing with it on the table. I cheated that time.

Q. Yes, you knew what you were getting! Did you have toys growing up? I am sure they didn't have as many as they have now but some people have told me they never got a toy for Christmas. They would get an orange and some grapes and stuff, but never a toy. Can you remember if you had toys?

A. Oh, I had some toys, but nothing real expensive. Not like they have now a days.

Q. Can you remember a favorite toy you had?

A. That jumping jack he was playing with was a pretty good one.

Q. What pets can you remember having as a little boy?

A. Oh, I always had a dog, usually a rabbit hound. I had one I remember had black speckles on it , called it Gigs. And I could sit down along side of it and my Mother didn't dare to touch me.

Q. Really? Would you take him in the woods? Were you a rabbit hunter?

A. Oh yeh. Sometimes. We had one there, I don't know if it was that one or a different one, I use to tease it and get it mad at me and sometimes I'd tease it, and we had a pantry, just one little room for a pantry, I'd have to go in there and shut the door for awhile until he quieted down!

Q. He didn't like that.

A. I'd make faces at him, you know. He'd get right mad at me.

