

# Floyd McNeil

Interviewed by Jennifer Whalen, Nov. 6, 2000



Q. We'll start with, what is your full name?

A. Floyd Ralph McNeil.

Q. And your parents name?

A. Ralph McNeil and Aura Wagner.

Q. When were you born?

A. December eighth, nineteen thirty-five.

Q. And where were you born?

A. Right about in the bathroom which was a bedroom at that time. (Laughter)

Q. How big was your family?

A. Two.

Q. And are you the younger or the older?

A. I'm the younger. I was the accident. (Laughter)

Q. What did you think about being the youngest child?

A. No real thoughts one way or the other to tell you the truth.

Q. What did your father do for a living?

A. Farmed and mixed farming in general. Anything you could get a buck.

Q. Tell me about a typical school day for you?

A. This would be elementary you're more interested in. Well the school was only half a mile away so you went out and came home at noon 'cause I wasn't allowed to take my dinner. I'd get in trouble hanging around with the others and then you went back out in the afternoon and back again which was only a short distance and we usually boarded school teachers so therefor they were travelling the same rout too and that's about it. School, well o.k., the, it was a two room school, grades one to five or primary to five and one and the rest in the larger, the big boys and the little boys and of course, well we had, it wasn't crowded though 'cause we had plenty of seats.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Yeah but what were they like?

A. The ones you see around now as antiques (Laughter) with the double seat. Sitting double. Ink well, which you never had ink in because you got in such a bloody mess. If you used anything with ink, it was with an ink bottle. Watermans that you tipped up on the edge of the black things. Wood heat furnace, there wasn't a stove. We were modern, where the old school before that had the pot bellied stove inside.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Water?

A. We carried it from the spring out on the road which was a good excuse to get out in the air a little while but it wasn't too far to walk so you couldn't kill too much time. You made your own drinking cups from a sheet of paper.

Q. How would you have been disciplined at school?

A. Stand in the corner or get the strap. Of course I never managed the strap at the school. I was always scared of what would happen when I got home because the teachers would be home too. My father was secretary of trustees so he knew everything going on plus he was janitor so I had to keep my nose very clean because that's the thing, what you get at school you get twice the amount home and I believed him but that would be, and the main thing would be standing in the corner or the strap and stay after school to finish things up. I managed to pull that down a few times 'cause I was slower than the class. Any other questions? (Laughter)

Q. What is your best memory of school?

A. School out here, probably recess and when I could get back in the afternoon to play ball. That was the, I would say the main thing. The school itself, looking at a map 'cause that's where they, if I was into anything just send me up and let me look at the world map and I was happy. (Laughter) I could spend a day doing that. So otherwise than that, problems reading, problems spelling, so I hated school in general. Let's face it.

Q. What different subjects were you taught in school?

A. Spelling, Geography, History, English out of the reader; the old Golden Trace Rereaders and I would say that's about it. Oh yeah, Arithmetic.

Q. Which one was your favorite?

A. Well, Arithmetic came like very easy and History and Geography I loved because I was, my mind, I was away somewhere's else. My mind was in one place so the body was elsewhere. (Laughter) I would say that, but English I detested until about high school and suddenly I caught fire on that and spelling, I never did accomplish that as Glenda can attest to.

Q. What kinds of things would you do with your friends at school?

A. Play ball in the summer time and you could do that and the others was blinds man bluff out in the porch and something like, I don't know, going from corner to corner where you had to get somebody when they were shifting from one corner to another and that or the, and National Geographic. (Laughter) You give all of those and I was, I looked forward to that 'cause someone had donated a bunch to the school and I lived in those so that's about it I think. Snowball fights in the winter, sliding on the hill which we did 'cause it wasn't paved. We went out at noon hours and that and took the sleds going down the hill.

Q. Where was your school located?

A. On the corner at North Range. About a half a mile from here. It's the hall now.

Q. How would you get back and forth to school?

A. You walked. I mean, that was the main means of transportation. At ten I got a bicycle but I wasn't allowed to take it to school because I might wreck it. (Laughter) So, I mean walking and then of course the new school in Digby came in when I was in grade seven so that changed the complete outlook on, everything in general changed after that. I wonder what would have happened without the regional schools where I would have went to harden up but that changed the whole complexion of education in general. So that would have been at age what, thirteen, twelve or thirteen. Yep, yeah. All the other different set of peers and.....

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Yeah, and the new school in nineteen forty-eight. Yeah.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Ruralized school at that time.

Q. What would be some differences in those two schools?

A. Size, size of your classes because in grade six out here there'd be two people and you went to Digby with two grade sevens with thirty in the class, so I mean that was an altogether different outlook. You had physical education and a gym. (Laughter)

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Oh no, no. You had from six to eleven presumably 'cause no one would have taken, some took grade eleven. My sister took grade eleven there ten years before but the time I was there, there was one student in grade ten and the rest of that age group were all six, seven, and eight. Even at sixteen or so and my future was to get to sixteen and take off (Laughter) but when the high school came in, that changed everything as I say, outlook and everything in general changed for me anyway. More competition in the other school in Digby too. Here there was no competition. I mean you could be at the top without doing a damn thing, which I did. (Laughter)

Q. So how old were you when you left school?

A. Here in North Range?

Q. Yep.

A. I would be about twelve, almost thirteen. Yep.

Q. And then when you went to the other school.....?

A. That's how old I was when I went to Digby. In grade seven.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Yep. Forty-eight yep. I finished grade twelve.

Q. What did you do after you finished grade twelve?

A. Went to Alberta. (Laughter) Make my fortune in the oil which didn't pan out. (Laughter) Worked farm, worked construction work, wheeled cement so I got cold in the winter and then I joined the services for a short time, about nine months and then I came back and decided to go a little further, survey school and then it's been that plus other things and then on.

Q. Tell me what your daily chores would be like when you were younger?

A. Up at six, go help milk, try and stay clear of the wet tail from the cow. Every time it slashed around your ears you were thinking, "Oh boy, am I gonna smell good when I get to school" (Laughter) and as you pushed your face in against them so the tail wouldn't hit you then where they had laid a bit of their own manure you'd got your face into it. That was, that was morning, then you separated, we sold cream so we separated the milk and probably by that time I was, I might have had some of the young cattle and that but that time I went to school and then at night I came home. In the wintertime you had to go down to open the water hole up for the cattle to let them out to get water and probably by that time my father was home and after supper I milked my share of the cattle.

Other. (Franklin's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Oh, well you pulped the turnips and potatoes and lugged out to them, get 'em. Depending on where my father was working at the time, if he was, he used to work out with the horse a lot hauling wood for other people but they were good. They let me stay in for basketball practice two nights a week providing I worked Saturdays 'cause Saturday's was in the woods with my father but that was generally the main thing I remember was that wet tail wrapping around your, (Laughter) 'cause the old barn, the drainage wasn't that good underneath so you had about that much water on your floor. Some cattle were longer than others so they would get, but the tails always drug in that.

Q. Who would you sell your cream to?

A. During Wartime it went to Yarmouth because it was closer, generally Middleton. McKenzie Dairies I think it was which you got your butter from but because of restrictions on the gas during the War, I think Yarmouth was closer so therefor you had to ship to Yarmouth. So, that's where the cream went which in turn you got your butter back from them plus a little, little bit of cash.

Other. A number of people have mentioned separating milk and cream. Now this is a real town girl's question but how did that, describe how that worked, separating milk from cream?

A. Well, what it was, was centrifugal force. You turn the drum inside, turned at a high speed.

Other. (Floyd's wife) She doesn't know what a separator looks like so that doesn't tell her anything.

A. (Laughter) Oh well, there's a, there's a, you have a big bowl up on top which you put your milk in, .....

Other. A big what?

A. Bowl about this size you put your milk in and then that would, it had the little cup in the side didn't it? It went down into a round thing with a float on it and then you had to be up to sixty turns a minute with the handle to get your speed up so the milk by going around inside of this particular bowl affair, I mean the best example, I've got two up in the attic but the cream being heavier stayed low, the milk high came out so your milk would come out one spout, your cream out the other and you caught it in two different pails. So, you had your skim milk and your cream. If you turned too fast, your cream would come out very lumpy and if you turned too slow, you got a poor mixture, so you had to pretty well keep it at the same speed and continually through to get the consistency you wanted for cream. They wanted a certain consistency for butter even though you had no way to keep it cold. It was always sour when they took it but I suppose that made the butter anyway.

Other. How often would they pick it up?

A. Once a week.

Other. And how did you keep it?

A. Just put it in the can. Cream can probably that size. One or two of those so we didn't.....

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Probably, yep. I don't really remember that.

Q. What was your favorite holiday as a young child?

A. I suppose Christmas.

Q. And why was that?

A. We got some candy (Laughter) and an orange which as a young kid was a treat, 'cause you didn't have that, that often and other fruit, figs, things like that, something you never had the rest of the year so I would say that was, what other holiday really was there? July the first you went to Digby to see the parade but that never turned me on that much one way or the other. Easter  
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would be probably more church activities but then again I wasn't that, I think Christmas had to be it because you didn't have that many holidays on a farm. You didn't have, period. The cows had to be milked everyday.

Q. What was your religion?

A. Baptist.

Q. And what would Sunday's be like at your home?

A. When I was young, out to Sunday school at ten and church at eleven. Every second week because Barton and North Range rotated so the next time it would be Sunday school at eleven and church in the evening here so they, morning and evening rotated back and forth so that was pretty well standard. I mean you went regardless. (Laughter)

Q. Now why was it that they rotated?

A. Well because the one church, the minister had two churches. Why would one want it, why would one have the privilege to have it all mornings or all evenings so you rotate back and forth just to even it up because some liked the evenings and some like mornings so if you were each paying your share to the minister therefor you have the right to, back and forth to, whether it be morning or whether it be evenings so that's the way they rotated it and sometimes they had, the ones from, before my time South Range had one which they used to have rotating afternoons but that had nothing to do with us at all.

Q. When you were growing up how would you receive your outside news?

A. We always took a daily paper plus the radio. I think we always had a radio, even a battery operated one before power. We always had a radio and my father was very interested in current affairs and what was going on so, but you had your trains coming in every day with the paper and we always took a paper so we got it from that plus radio. The news was one of the things you listened to on the radio mainly because it was Wartime at that time, when I was small it'd be during the Second World War.

Q. How much spending money did you have when you were growing up?

A. Nil, except if I earned something they may give me a little. My sister was ten years older and I think she was through school when she was sixteen. She went into nurse training but she wasn't old enough so she taught a year back in Sissiboo until she was old enough to go into nursing school. She used to give me a quarter a week to go out and shovel and that was very nice (Laughter) and otherwise than that spending money, only as required. If you needed five cents for Red Cross, they gave you five cents but money to carry around or to go and buy anything, no unless you, I used to pick strawberries for my father and he'd give me five cents a box so I had a little money then. Probably I'd pick up ten, fifteen dollars in the summer. As I got older, more which I saved and saved and you might buy a comic book or you might buy something once a month maybe but you try to make that money stretch the year unless you could pick it up somewhere else but no regular allowance or anything like that. The money just wasn't available, it just wasn't there. Cash was hard to come by period.

Q. Where would you have traveled when you were growing up?

A. When I was three I was over to the States with my mother because Uncles, Aunts, cousins and everything lived over there so that was my first, I went down to my grandparents in Danvers at least probably four or five times a year. My father always kept a car. That was one of the things he prided himself in so we took a lot of Sunday afternoon drives. Take a picnic lunch and go somewhere. Otherwise than that, nothing in particular. I never got to Halifax until I was in Survey school in nineteen fifty-six although we had been to New Glasgow once because my sister trained in New Glasgow Hospital, Aberdeen Hospital so we were up there one time that I can remember but we didn't go into Halifax. Otherwise than that, anything with in an hour or so drive of here but that's, when I was twelve I went to the States again with my sister 'cause she was looking, she was American born so she was over looking for job opportunities and took me along as, I don't know. Anyway, she went to the States after that and has been there ever since so, so those are my major trips I think.

Q. How would you have gotten to the states?

A. Train to Yarmouth and then across on the Yarmouth, the Boston boat. That was when I was three and the other one was across to saint John and bus from Saint John to Boston. Grey Hound.

Q. Who would maintain the roads back then?

A. It would be government. I think, when I can remember, there wasn't too much of everybody going out and doing it as part of your tax system. I don't remember too much about, although the roads were not plowed in the winter. The odd ball thing was you'd, if someone died then they plowed the road as far as the cemetery and come back and would turn in our driveway for cars to turn. You're almost wishing someone would die (Laughter) but otherwise than that probably once a month maybe your roads got plowed and otherwise than that they just stayed that way. If there was any like before when they brought out the, you know the group of people to do it I think it was in case of emergencies and that. At that time in a case of emergency the snowplow would come up 'cause they kept the number one highway opened but back here you wait to spring pretty well. Then gradually, of course when the new school came in then they had to keep the roads open for the buses and they were until the mud got you and there was always a period of mud times and the school buses didn't go but the responsibility for the highway was Department of Highways I believe at that time. The Municipal I don't think had anything to do with it although you still were pointed through the Municipality as viewers offences and highways and all this. It was more or less a formality at that time because newer plows were doing it.

Q. As a teen what kinds of things would you do for fun?

A. Anything to do with sports that I could find and everything as I say around Digby, basketball. Home here, go toss the ball up and hit it. I had two nets set up which I run back and forth with a ball and a hockey stick and also I had a little miniature deal which I played with a little stick and marbles, the baseball thing which I kept statistics on, probably had about eight or ten teams which I kept the statistics. Batting average of all imaginary people, that was, plus just chasing the woods in general. If I wanted to get away with things or just to get away I'd go to the woods and walk.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Crokinole.

A. Crokinole parties were a thing that they had. Yeah. Not too much card parties because we were dealing into the Baptist church at that time although we played a lot of cards at home but crokinole parties were the, around the community and.....

Other. (Floyd's wife) When you were an older teen, going up to Fred Haight's?

A. Ah, not so much up to Fred's but to all the dances once I got to go to chase around for the country music in the dances, I covered the country that way after sixteen when I was, figured I was independent from then on. Yep, dances, Plympton, Digby, sometimes Culloden. (Laughter)

Q. What would those dances be like?

A. Square dancing. Old time fiddle. Round dancing and square, mainly square dancing. Ned Landry was covering this country heavy at that time which I, plus Red Haight's crew and just general chasing around period. Looking for women (Laughter) from sixteen on. A friend of mine had a motorcycle and we were on the road a lot.

Q. What team had you played basketball for?

A. Digby High School.

Q. Who would be some of your screen idols?

A. Not really that much. Humphrey Bogart possibly would be interesting in some of his movies. Other wise than that, Randall Scot possibly but here it was not too much. If they put on a good thing that looked plausible, o.k. I like it. A movie with a lot of scenery in it, good. If it wasn't plausible we all made fun of it but nothing really that I could say really hero worshiped or anything like that.

Q. What do you remember about dating?

A. Dating, dating, dating. Well, what do you call dating? You went to these dances, you danced with, you tried to be a big wheel and dance with all the girls, may possibly walk one or two home. Is that dating?, but you never asked for another date afterwards. Oh no, too shy for that. You'd tear around with the bicycle and you went swimming so you dove off the highest part in the wharf and strutted around a little and then took off but I mean you wouldn't go ask a girl out. That'd kill ya, you were scared to death. So is it dating or is it just posturing? (Laughter) I don't know.

Q. What sort of music did you like?

A. Pretty well everything. Country Western, Montovani used to have a program on Sunday nights which I wouldn't miss which was the very sugary semi-classical stuff. I liked some bits of opera, I always have and the popular music that came along, I was very much into some things. The jazz I never really got into that much. I never could understand it but music I loved but pretty well anything that came along. If it hit the ear the right way. That's about it.

Q. What did you expect to do when you grew up?

A. Get out of here and see the world I guess. Probably. Nothing, any career plan at all or anything like that. My mother was always having, getting the bank white collar job and that I had detested, so I mean it was just a

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matter of getting through school and get out of here and I've been back here most of my like but that, nothing in particular. I did have, something to do with forestry was in the back of my mind and survey but forestry was a college and I knew darn well I couldn't hack college so I went to survey school but when I, that's probably what I put down in, what was that course then?, yep guidance counseling, I probably put down anything to do with math. You had to put something down so I think it was mainly survey, forestry, something like that but I really didn't have any plans. I wanted to get out and see what the world was.

Q. How old were you when you got married?

A. Twenty-two.

Q. And how did you meet your wife?

A. Product of survey school. Product of survey school. (Laughter) Yep, one of the things I picked up along with the surveying certificate. (Laughter)

Other. Do tell?

A. Yes, yes. That was their standard. They lined up along the road waiting for the new crop to come in every year and we were just overwhelmed.

Q. How long had you gone out before you were married?

A. Two years roughly. Married in fifty-eight, met you in fifty-six. Yep, two years give or take.

Q. How many children did you have?

A. Three.

Q. And what was your first home like?

A. Our first home? That would be an apartment in Antigonish. Very small, very cheap, nice to laugh about, no lock on the door, you could just reach your finger in and flip the hook if you wanted to, to get in, very little furniture but it was thirty- five dollars a month and it was only for a short time because we were moving, I was working at the Nova Scotia Power Commission and traveling from job to job so, most of the work was up in the upper end of the country so that was our first apartment.

Q. What do you remember about your wedding day?

A. (Laughter) Interesting. I left my shoes home so I was going to drive back from Lawrencetown to get them but her mother wouldn't let me take off afraid I was going to get cold feet and disappear so I ended up, wise thing, bought a pair in Bridgetown but (Laughter) otherwise than that, let's get this thing over with, I mean I wasn't for, it was a small wedding anyway but I mean I wasn't for the pulp and show of that, lets get this over with and get on with our lives. That was my general attitude.

Q. Where did you go for your honeymoon?

A. We went to the Lord Nelson in Halifax for one night and then to Amherst where all her relatives were and then on up to Cape Breton and back down all in one weekend. She was teaching in Bridgewater at that time so I took her back down to Bridgewater and I think I finally got back Tuesday morning. I drove all night and got back to work in Port Hawkesbury Tuesday morning. We were married I assume Saturday or Friday, I'm not sure but no one really planned a thing like that. It was up for a reception in the Amherst area and Cape Breton, I had a cousin in Glace Bay at that time so I think we called there and spent one night there and came back down and that was it at that time. Lack of money. I didn't want to take time off because, I don't know. I dropped by, they told me later I should have taken a week off but I couldn't do that. I was there for a job and I did it. So it wasn't one of the big memorable occasion weddings, it was just one of the things that happens along the way. The life afterwards and the family was what was the interesting thing. The actual marriage, that's required by law da, da, da, da. My outlook I think is probably altogether different of course but that was my general outlook on it all.

Q. How would you take care of your teeth back then?

A. The same as now I guess. You had to brush them everyday, at least once a day if not more. I mean that was coming up as a kid except you used powder then instead of the squeeze tube gel it was tooth powder. Otherwise than that I, not much different than now really. Although I had a tremendous amount of cavities in high school, why I don't know but and now I don't have any and I don't think I'm taking care any more now but.....

Q. How often would you see a dentist?

A. I didn't see a dentist until I was about fourteen I think. He was the first dentist and he had a ball. I mean I think I spent the winter in old Dr. Outhouse's office (Laughter) but that was the first time I was ever to a dentist. You didn't, it wasn't part of the thing and I wasn't too fussy about going then but my mother, I figure they must have gotten money enough ahead that, 'cause I know it was at least a month they were once or twice a week going down there. That slow drill rrrrrrrrrr (SFX) but I mean that was the first time to a dentist and after that it would only be every four or five years that I went then. Services I got a check-up before I left. I figured I'll get a freebie here before I left the airport and very little, I'd say every four or five years. It's only been the last twenty years that I've really gone you know, regularly. Of course that's because the dentist set it up on that basis. You go once a year period, which is a good thing.

Q. When did you get running water?

A. About, when my parents lived here we lived on the corner out here. They got pumpin' running water about, I'd say probably nineteen sixty-one, sixty-two and I, we didn't have it out there but when we traded houses I had to put it in for them and put a bathroom in for them and so on and so forth. I was part of the deal in trading from this house to whenever we move back here so roughly in this house it would be around nineteen sixty, sixty-one for running water. There was a hand pump in here which we had on the sink and when we were, first lived down here at the corner you lugged it in with a pail which Glenda did while I was away all of the time (Laughter) because you didn't have, supposedly didn't have the money and living very frugally at that time which was good because it set the pattern for life. Later on you could have, as we got older we enjoyed that standard that we set then.

Q. How did electricity change things for you?

A. You didn't have to buy batteries for the radio and just general convenience. We got the power about nineteen forty-eight. There were very few utensils except light to start with and then gradually a fridge and iron came as the money came available but I suppose the reading. They'd be a lot better than the oil lamps. You had a light in your room so you'd go up there and read but generally, I mean just general convenience, improvement, I mean no great big change but it was sure better than, my mother would have enjoyed it much more. You didn't have to clean the lantern at least every day and you didn't have the kerosene around and much more convenient. I'll put it that way.

Q. How far away would the doctor have been?

A. There was a doctor in Barton. At the time I was born he came back and that's when I was delivered here and that lasted up until probably nineteen fifty. I think he retired and left and then after that it was Digby. At that time they still made house calls, even when we were living down here the doctors would still come and, so you didn't have to take a kid when he was sick but everything was Digby or Weymouth so that's, your looking at ten or fifteen miles.

Q. What are some home remedies that you would remember from being younger?

A. Camphorated oil. (Laughter)

Q. What would that be used for?

A. Congestion. You loaded it on your chest and the fumes. I swore by it 'cause I had a lot of colds and so on and so forth as a kid. My mother used mustard which would burn the hide off of anything. I couldn't stand that. Another thing, I always had Scott's emulsion which was a cod liver oil deal which I kind of liked the taste of it, it wasn't bad. Other than that, not a heck of a lot. One time I don't know, I was getting' run down and listless I guess and the doctors made their own mixtures of stuff. Stuff that tastes like creosote out of the stove but it did the job. It pepped me up; put some zip in me so otherwise than that I don't think there was too much. Aspirin if you really needed it but I doubt if they used, maybe one a year.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Rawleigh's medicated ointment for chapped lips, chapped hands and stuff like that but otherwise than that, I didn't use too much. I mean there was all kinds of pate medicines kicking around, Dods kidney pills and things like that but I mean I didn't use them. That was, my father always used that.

Q. How much of what you needed would you make yourself?

A. Well all your vegetables we grew pretty well. We had hens so we had eggs when we were allowed to eat them because then she took those to the stores and traded off for other things. Mittens of course were knit and things like that but we didn't have sheep so therefor you had to buy the yarn. Otherwise the rest of the clothing pretty well was boughten except for flour bags that were bleached out for pillowcases and things like that. I don't think I ever wore them with clothes. A lot of the jokes said that they wore the Quaker mans face on their arse. (Laughter) That's from some families but we never got to that point. We used to bleach ours out and make pillowcases, mom used to out of them and the odd sheet too I think. They were sewed together with the flour bag, those would be from the hundred pound flour bags.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Hmmmmm? Other.

(Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Pillows, yep. The feathers from the hens we killed because we used to kill probably ten or twelve hens that used to put you through the winter 'cause we got new ones every year, rotated 'em so to keep the young crop coming. We always had pigs so we had one or two pigs we killed, now and then a beef. If we couldn't sell them but salt beef wasn't one of the things that mother and father liked or I didn't like salt and beef period but we did live on salt pork. Trade vegetables sometimes for salt mackerel and hearing which I wasn't too fond of but that was the deal back in the neck. They would trade back and forth. You didn't spend too much outside. It would be your clothing and your footwear that you didn't grow yourself.

Q. What other things would you barter for?

A. Well the eggs you sold would have went for salt, pepper, your glasses, vinegar.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Hmmmm?

Other (Floyd's wife) Peanut butter?

A. That was a big treat. That was almost a Christmas treat, peanut butter. No, I mean, 'cause thaw and things like that you had your own preserves. Pumpkin preserves, strawberry preserves, a fridge of our own and apples and baked apples, again from the apples of our own so it would just be your spices, yeast for bread, you would trade, you'd get at the store. That was one of the things but odds and ends that you couldn't grow on the place you used your eggs to trade for that and of course your feed for the cattle and stuff like that. That had to be paid for by the wood you cut or from selling cattle so what ever you could scrape up out of a buck here and a buck there.

Q. When somebody in the community died, how would the funeral have be handled?

A. Well the first I think I can remember was my great grandmother. The family laid them out. I presume you had a, undertaker would have to come possibly and do whatever they do and the body remained at home and was picked up and taken to the church and then from the church to the funeral through the cemetery because the only one I really remember of would be my great grandmother and I was seven when she died. That the only one I really had any close, any more close when the family died it was the same as now. The body was taken to the funeral home and that but that again was in the mid fifties when my grandparents died and I mean there was stories about laying this one out and that again when I was a kid so I mean that, I don't know when the change came from leaving them at home to funeral homes that, and what viewing there was with viewing in the church after that but you didn't go to the funeral home like you do now 'cause I don't think that they were set up for it so the church, the body was in the church probably an hour or so before where everybody could run up and look at it. Detestable. (Laughter)

Q. When would people in the community get together for a good time?

A. Here not so much a regular deal although sometimes we'd set one up probably once a month but through the church probably activities here and there and have a social somewhere or small gatherings such as like my parents would go to another place to play cards or back and forth. Force 'em or something like that. They'd come back here and, but any larger thing would be probably something to do with choir and we used to as I say have a lot of crokinole parties which probably would have been somebody's birthday. So they'd all gather in one place and the birthday party would be a crokinole party. I don't remember much about presents. I don't think presents were given. There was just the, bring food and so on and so forth but I don't think there was any schedule, regular thing. It had to be a reason for somebody's birthday, somebody's anniversary, or something like that. It would be good to get together at the, when the roads were clear and so on and so forth.

Q. How old were you when you started your very first job?

A. What do you mean, a part time job? My job working on the farm, I started that when I could, when I got up to walk, but o.k. outside nothing much until I left school because there was always plenty of work here. My brother and I used to work out together on things that he would pick up. He always dug all the graves so I helped him, so a got a little money that way. We dug a couple of wells one year, that was the year I was late starting grade twelve because I finished that up because I wanted that cash. I did some dragging Christmas trees around but nothing as far as steady work at all except on the farm here until I left home and then after that it was this, that, and the other but I suppose really my first job was in Alberta except for as I say odds and ends. If somebody wanted a man personal thing, it was help them do this, help them do that. Anything for a buck.

Q. When you started working steady, what was that job like?

A. The first was driving the tractor bailing the straw in Alberta and from that, after that I was wheeling concrete on a bridge in Edmonton and then after I came back home, while I was waiting to go to survey school, Christmas trees, worked the fall into Christmas because there was a family here that shipped a lot of Christmas trees so I worked with them and then in the woods cutting wood to pick up a little extra cash and then after that it was something to do with survey. After Survey school I went to Ottawa, Federal Government for a couple of years and back with Nova Scotia Power.

Q. How dangerous would the work have been that you were doing?

A. Pardon me?

Q. How dangerous would the work have been that you were doing?

A. I don't know, it's hard to say. I mean you could get caught in the power take off and take a leg or arm off very easily but lucky I didn't, to put it this way but I mean, any farm work is dangerous, any woods work is dangerous. You either keep your eyes open or your lucky or you get yourself mangled up. When I was working in Alberta, the fellow in the next field to me, I think he went to sleep, went down and had an arm taken off on the slother. The cutter bar cut him

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into it, luckily I wasn't, happen to be working right, not too far away from him that day but things can happen and with all the powered gear and that, especially when I wasn't used to it because the horse, I, we work with a horse only but how dangerous is it? It seems any mechanized stuff, the possibilities there, you could take a leg off any time.

Q. What would your wages have been like back then?

A. Bailing I got a cent a bail. If I got a good day in I could get fifteen dollars. That'd be fifteen hundred bails if I could push that many through with the tractor. Edmonton, when I went there I thought I was in paradise. I was getting' a dollar thirty an hour. Home, fifty cents an hour is what I worked at around here but it went a long ways. Things were much cheaper then and your wants were very small too.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. I don't know. When I came down with them, two ten a month I think it was and then I got a raise at two thirty-five. For the services I was getting' a hundred and eighty-seven a month.

Q. What memories do you have of the Depression?

A. Actually I have none any more than I was born in it and the results of it; I was brought up under. No money, no money, no money and I mean I can remember, I suppose the results of it we were still getting about two dollars for a quart of wood even after the War started. Things just started picking up for some but the farm, it didn't pick up for quite a few years so I can vaguely remember that. The one thing that really sticks with me is going, I suppose I'd be about three or four, going down to the field here where we dumped our trash at that time, my father digging out a pair of lumberman rubbers which were the old gum shoes about that high, bringing them home, getting the water out of them and drying and patching them up because he didn't have the two dollars to buy a new pair. That is one thing that has always stuck with me because he threw 'em away in the spring figuring he'd have money in the fall for it and then he had to go down that fall because he didn't have the two dollars and patched 'em up with what we used to call cobble soles. You rolled it out like bread and slapped it on the cracks but that I think would be my most vivid memory of Depression except that, why I'm here is Depression because my father was in the States and he lost his job in nineteen twenty-nine and came home. Otherwise than that, if there hadn't been the Depression, I'd have been an American 'cause my mother never wanted to come back here but that's about all because when I got old enough to work, I think my generation has been one of the luckiest ones in the, to come along because we had our feet grounded in the Depression with the outlook of that and never had problems getting a job, never had, If I wanted a job I went and got it, if I didn't like it, I quit and got another one. I mean there was never this, never do unemployment insurance or anything else, I mean, I think I have probably been one of the luckiest, in my idea one of the good generations going, although things are, I think now they should be far better but the attitude is I want, I want, I want immediately, where as our generation you didn't and when you got it you were happy and our expectations weren't that great and anytime we wanted anything we had it, we could get it. It was always the way here but how much is that? Again, back to the Depression with the Depression thinking, don't get anything unless you can afford it. Stay away from payments, stay clear of mortgages, that was drilled in from this high up and it pays off I think.

Q. What memories do you have of the War?

A. I wanted it to last long enough so I could go, that's one of the big things. (Laughter) The ones around here coming home on vacations, uniforms, although most of the time they were pretty well loaded by the time they here because they hit Digby and the liquor store and then out on the train but that would be the main thing seeing them come home, listening to all the reports on the radio, getting a map and finding out where all of this was taking place and a lot of dramatic stories on the radio pertaining to War. I mean, I ate those up like everything, I just enjoyed that. The rationing didn't affect me that much because I wasn't driving a car and we always had enough to get buy on because of the strawberries, peddling strawberries we got an extra gas coupons and as far as, no we didn't have trouble with butter, sugar or anything like that, nothing and the meat rationing we didn't worry about that because we had our own meat so there wasn't too many things that way about the War, just that I wanted to go. (Laughter) Foolishness.

Q. How would people plan for hard times or retirement?

A. Being brought up on a farm you didn't know what your income was. You didn't have a clue so therefor you had to be very, saving with everything because you didn't know what you were going to get for wood, like strawberries was a cash crop we had, you didn't know what kind of a crop you were gonna get, you didn't know your price so there was, if you had extra money you put it in the bank and then if you got desperate, you pulled it back out again. For retirement, I guess that's what you had children for. It was the old outlook there because I can remember when old age pension first came in so they didn't have that to go on so to keep you out of the Poor House in Marshalltown, you had to depend on children I think. You stashed what you could away if you were lucky and if you had any medical problems that sunk everything ahead so I think for old age, mainly you depended on the generosity of your children. That's the way it worked mainly at that time. The extended family but as far as on a farm, you didn't have money to invest for investments for ready for retirements and all this stuff and as far as income per year, you didn't have a clue what you were going to get. It depended on the whether, demand, supply and demand and so on and so forth of mainly wood and everything else. It was hit or miss. (Laughter) You hoped. You lived on hope. You dreamed.

Q. What memories do you have of the Poor Farm?

A. Personally, just seeing it there. Knowing a few people that were there from around, mainly a little infirm mainly but otherwise than that, anymore than it's existence was there I wouldn't, I mean you seen it when you drove by it every, when you went to town once a week or something like that. Any more than that was, like the standard joke, we'll end up in the Poor House or something like that but I mean personally no. Nothing one way or the other. It was there, it was necessary I assumed and so on and so forth. What kind of care and that, that wasn't a thing that entered my mind at that time of life at all.

Q. When would people be sent to the Poor Farm?

A. When there was no one to take care of them, family didn't want them. I know one particular, it was a relative of ours, I think it was my mothers, well he was getting ready to find himself a woman so he wanted to get rid of a sister who was a little retarded so, out her in the Poor House. He never did get the woman (Laughter) but I mean cracks like that and families that were very poor once they couldn't work, the municipality had to look after them or somebody had to look after them so they took them to the Poor Farm.

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I mean, in particular like Hal Lewis and that family, of course they were a bit retarded but it was mainly malnutrition as kids but families like that and when they had no visible means of support and no one to support them, they would be taken there. Well say maybe a farming couple with no children, if he hadn't managed to stash anything away or had partied a little bit along the way and booze, I mean once they got old and couldn't work, then what means is what you went to the Poor Farm. Part of the system.

Q. What do you remember about elections?

A. Your neighbor was suddenly a bad guy. (Laughter) No, my father was into politics and everything we could but when election come the other ones were really bad guys and they were the good ones. A lot more interest in politics. Discussions back and forth and I would say more than now, where now it's, personally, it's so darn cynical over everything. You sit there and listen to be as cynical as you can, where as before you believed everything. It's more or less a chance to meet everyone I suppose. See who the other drivers were bringing in from the other party and so on and so forth and in some cases a little booze got, there was booze handed out for votes and chocolates and things like that so if they went a little overboard there may be the odd fight out back but that was standard. (Laughter) Any dance or anything particular but far more interest because it was a form of entertainment I think, more so than now.

Q. What personal memories do you have of the first time you went and voted?

A. Very little because I think by that time I was cynical. (Laughter) Period. I don't know when I voted the first time. I missed the one in Lawrencetown. We were, I went to Survey School, I was just a few months too young to vote. Of course there the idea was to go around and collect as much rum as you could (Laughter) from everybody so we could have, the rest of us could have a party but, so I must have voted probably in the next election after that and I don't, when Diefenbaker was elected I was coming from Ottawa home on the train during the election so I didn't vote that one 'cause I remember getting off in Digby and seeing that that had changed. So, it must have been home here but I don't really, it wasn't strong enough that I have a recollection period.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Possibly. Was there an election around then? The Provincial election was going up when we lived in Mulgrave and I suppose I voted but it didn't matter that much to me because at that time working with the bar commission, they were a government organization so therefor you had to hire your men through the local rep and if the Conservatives were in you hired through the Liberals and then you hired through them which was a pain in the arse. As far as I was concerned, I liked to pick my own men and when you had to go through a lot of these, and the ones who went to the politicians looking, didn't want work anyway but it made a good excuse. I think I was getting very cynical even in my twenties so elections didn't really sit that heavy.

Q. How would people have helped each out in days gone by that would be different from helping each other out now?

A. I think probably community spirit was a lot more, I'm thinking like the cemetery here, you'd get together once or twice a year, everybody would meet there and mow it, do repairs, all the lot owners which pretty well was the community at that time. If anyone was sick, had an operation or a bad accident, everybody went and cut wood for them which we called a frolic which you went and helped them out as

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much as you could which you don't see as much these days I don't think but fiercely independent and very much by yourself unless need and then you were there but otherwise than that, generally you looked after your own thing and so and so can look after theirs unless there was a genuine, you know as I say fire, everybody pitched in to put it out, do what you could to help them. If there was a house that burned you would help the family with everything you could, otherwise than that, I don't know but there was a closeness which had an independence too. They were not dependent on each other but yet there was an understanding and an underlying closeness in the community. More so now because you work all over the devil. The community isn't a community really, as close as it was then.

Q. What is the worst whether that you can remember?

A. The worst whether I can remember is driving back and forth to Cape Breton every second week to, that was after I lived down here (Laughter) but that has nothing to do with here but that was some rugged drives through the night. From here to Cape Breton which I did every two weeks. As a kid, I liked the snow. I didn't have to shovel it, I wasn't old enough to shovel it out at that time and I liked chasing around through the woods in the snow. Hurricanes I don't, there was one in thirty-nine that blew the tree down where I had my swing in but otherwise than that, my mother was terrified of thunder storms but I loved them, I loved the lightning so I mean, there was nothing there that really mattered too much to me. If I couldn't get into a basketball game or something like that I might be a little cheesed off 'cause I used to walk from here to Digby if I had to (Laughter) but nothing really much storms one way or the other. Not like the fishing community where you would have disaster on loosing pots and things like that. That had very little to do with us. Maybe a few trees would blow up but you could get, salvage those so, and we never lost anything much due to bad whether. It just made more work, shoveling out, you got a really bad storm, snow storm you had to get the water out of the well and water the cattle 'cause they couldn't get down in the woods to get to the water hole until you got that shoveled out so that was a day or so shoveling to do that but you look at it as part of life. You have your good days, you have your bad days and you except it as that or if you don't, you hump along here.

Q. What ghost stories do you remember when you were growing up?

A. Very little really. Anymore than some people didn't like going by the cemetery but I'd go in there just to prove to myself that, and things like that. Haunted houses, no weird stories, we didn't believe any of that. It didn't have any serious effect. We might have told a lot of things, seen things that made the hair stand up on the back of your neck at times but there was always a plausible reason for it but ghost stories wasn't one of the things that stuck one way or the other with me that much. They must have been around, they were probably told 'cause different places I worked, especially up in Cape Breton there was always a lot around and it didn't have any lasting effect as a young person on me one way or the other 'cause mother said there was always a reason for it. Dig into it, you'll find there's a reason for all this. What you think is, if something is haunted there's a reason for it, why noises are here, there's a reason for it, go find out.

Q. What about superstitions?

A. A few minor ones. New moon you want to see over your right shoulder for good luck; face to face, open disgrace.

Other. What's that?

A. Face to face, open disgrace. If you walk out and see the new moon, this one came through from my mother and the weird thing is I still carry it to a certain extent. You look up and say, "Oh yeah, where did I see that moon from?" not that it matters a darn but over the shoulder, "Oh, that's good" but one crow sorrow, two crows joy, three crows a letter, four crows a voice and like that. That was one of the teachers that brought that up. I used to watch the crows bit and be darned I still do at times. (Laughter) Not that it has any effect but it has stayed in the mind.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Don't start a new job on Friday.

A. Ah, that was one of my fathers, right. If you were going to work for somebody or you finished working for somebody he wouldn't start on a Friday on another one. He'd do it on a Saturday, why, I don't know but if you'd been working on that job and hadn't done it for a week or so and then you went back you could do it on a Friday but he wouldn't start a new one on Friday. Why, I don't know. I had forgot about that one but that's, yeah. I can't think of any others really.

Q. What colorful characters do you remember from your community?

A. I don't know if colorful would fit in. There were a lot of older people that I used to like to go to and hear their stories but, humor they had and they'd tell about things that happened when they were a kid and all this and three more places I used to chase as a kid for that but colorful, I don't know if you would, I don't think that term fits. There was some that used to make a lot of fun of, always got a new hat for Easter. We went to church once a year for Easter with a new hat. (Laughter) That was colorful feather. (Laughter) I won't mention names on that one but quite a few with the humor bit. Always had some practical joke going and things like that. One woman in particular, I think she was from down the island originally but she was a real comic and her husband was about the same but I always got a kick out of them and I suppose in a way they would be colorful to that extent but always had some joke going, playing tricks on somebody but not really as I would say on a colorful nature, determining it the way I understand it but there always were the humorous ones, the odd ball ones that you made fun of, especially some of the older ones in church (Laughter) who went to sleep during most of the things and everything went on while they slept through it. I suppose in a way they were colorful but nothing really major at all.

Q. How would your community have policed itself?

A. There wasn't really that much need for it, really. If anyone got a little boisterous lets say at a pie sale or something like that or hit the booze a little hard there was always a few around that would usher them out that had the size and maybe not the size. My father was a very small man but I mean he was, as I say, the janitor of the school, anything going on in the school he was in and he had quite a temper and could, and I've seen him wrote a few out without touching them so whether there was respect sort of for your elders then 'cause this would be younger ones, you know hitting the booze for the first time and going. Any major theft or anything like that you'd get the RCMP but I can't even remember of anything like that. Break 'n' entry, very, very, very little but the main thing was, was drunkenness and a little over zealous but there was always someone who says, "It's about time you left and went home", and they usually did and it wasn't always the same ones. It was different ones that would do it and if you had been a friend of theirs, this was like War time, if you were in the Army too and you went a little haywire, you'd just take 'em aside and walk away with them 'cause I have been in this position myself and da, da, da, da. More or less the buddy system or something like that so there wasn't really that much, you know to be disciplined for. A lot of you know, what I'm

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going to do but it never happens. (Laughter) When they make their predictions they had, I'm gonna do this and I'm gonna do that. Like around the Post Office, they always wanted, my Uncle Ray was a Post Master and I liked to get his goat 'cause he could rant and rave on, oh they were gonna do this and he was gonna do that but like my father said, "I haven't seem their cemetery's yet where they bury the ones that were gonna do something." It's only talk but generally not that much to worry about.

Q. Who would the biggest employer have been in your community?

A. Outside of self-employed, H.T Warren in Digby. If you wanted a job go to Tupper's, you got it but a lot were self-employed. That would be during, up until after the War, even after the War Tupper was still going. A lot worked at the base, the vets worked at the base in different capacities. Whether they got their trades there, whether they picked it up in the service like plumbers, electricians and that, there was probably four or five families that depended on the base and a lot of younger ones got a taste of Gander Newfoundland, Goose bay so they went up running snow plows, dozers, winter, worked the winter and that and then come home. That's when unemployment first came in. God they had it made, unemployment during the summer and working Labrador in the winter but that again was cast over from the War with the American Army bases but there would be three or four from North Range that went regularly to Labrador, Goosebay and some to Gander but they were mainly maintenance, snowplow operators keeping the runways clear and so on and so forth so that were your major buyers except as I say like the farmers, what few farmers there were, they made their own way.

Q. What memories do you have of Tupper Warren's store?

A. A heck of a pile of stuff in a dingy dark store for one thing, everything under the sun there. Of course we didn't shop there that much. We sold logs to them some but, and I can remember their trucks coming out with the old Warren trucks that he had bought Defiance and then they didn't work too well so he got his mechanics to make them their own and then the defiance sued him because he called them Warren trucks but they were a square home built cab but I can remember those being around and dreaming I was gonna drive one one day. He usually had a crew back, in back of here and they'd be going in and taking in grub to them. A lot of the ones who worked back here towed in the supplies into the woods so you seen operations and that was another thing as a kid, I wanted to work in the woods. They'd say, "Yeah, you'll find out when you get there, you'll find out", but that was one of my dreams, of course I loved the woods but Tupper was a presence around, we'll put it that way. He did have a groceteria truck that drove around from house to house at one time too. My mother did buy some things from that. Thread, you know odd bits and things but he used to come around with a big green truck, he used to come around once a week.

Other. What did it look like?

A. A big green box. Inside you would have shelves on both sides when you got in. Yep, there'd be an alleyway down the middle with all kinds of shelves sectioned off with thread, pots and pans, just general merchandise and hardware. I don't think he would handle you know, groceries although possibly he did but That's what I can remember. I can remember peeking into it. It had the steps to go up into it but, and the store back in Doucettville used to peddle around the road too some.

Other. Back where?

A. In Doucetteville, Martin Dugas 'cause we used to do a lot of buying back there. You had to run on credit in winter 'cause you cut wood all winter and you didn't sell it 'till spring so you had to run, they had to give you your groceries through that and then you paid off. Hat settled up when you sold your wood. So, we did a lot of dealing with the Doucetteville and he used to have a panel truck that he used to deliver some but we didn't deal that much with Tupper Warne's. In back I suppose, in the nineteen twenties he was logging up in the Nine Mile Woods which was up towards Truro way and my father was going to go but he was going with my mother at the time and Tupper says, "You go", and I think it was on a Thursday and my father said, "I'll go on Monday" and Tupper said, "You don't go Thursday then you don't go at all" and my father said, "Well I won't go at all", so even though he and Tupper, I used to go there and talk, I used to like hearing old Tupper Warren with the long white goatee he had on, they were friends later on but my father would never go work for him again. (Laughter) They crossed each other at that time but there was a pie social or some thing going on down at Danvers and he wanted to go down when he was going with my mother and Tupper wouldn't go for that so "I won't work for you" but he would sell wood to him, of course you'd sell wood to anyone who would buy it.

Other. Harold Cromwell in Weymouth Falls said that Tupper was a Jew. Would he just be using that as an expression?

A. Um hmm, oh yeah, sure. Yeah because, no he was born up in Hillgrove and started a small business on the little brook in there and just went to town and couldn't read or write and he had ships, sailing ships but very bright, very, very, very bright. As he said, his first wife was a school teacher and she read the contracts because he used to sell a lot of lumber to New York and buying and selling, the price, and so on and so forth was all dickered as the ship, as the sailing ship went in they would dicker to sell and if, he'd go over and his wife would read the contract and he would pick the holes in it and that but he couldn't read and write himself. Never learned, so he was a self made man. A small town Rockefeller or something like that but there were a lot of people, especially the colored in Acaciaville who couldn't read or write themselves, you never get out of debt. You got all your stuff from the store, your clothes and then they'd settle up the envy or you still owe us that, of course they had no way to check it. I imagine they took 'em, but like a lot of the young fellas around here, you worked for 'em you had to take it in groceries. Then you were out trying to sell groceries to somebody to try to get a few bucks to buy tobacco. Older married men that, you know had a little on the ball knew what they were doing and he needed them, o.k. they got cash but single ones, you didn't get cash; you had to take it in trade. So, he was making double, sure. Call it what you want but that's the way the robber barons made this country and he was a one in a small way but it'd be the same type but if you wanted a job there was always a job. It didn't matter how many, I don't think he ever refused anybody a job. Stick 'em somewhere because, I remember mainly about the mill, so many people ducking around corners and peeking out and working nights, I guess that was the stay clear work but their not getting paid much but he always had work for everybody but paid you out of groceries. Part of the system and I mean, if you worked in the woods you had the camp, you were fed, you were clothed, you didn't have that much cash but....

Other. What finally happened to that business?

A. The younger generation couldn't run it, more competition and maybe I think the, his son didn't have the smarts he had even though he'd been to Acadia and so on and so forth, union got in and pushed it, and competition in general. Modernization probably, newer mills were coming in. After the War there was a bad slump and they made ammunition boxes during the War and did darn good on that but I've heard they

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shipped a lot of stuff that was condemned too but they needed it and that sort of a bad name built up which I don't think Tupper would have gone for. He'd have got around it some way or another, so it just petered out in general. A couple of bad years back in here where they sawed lumber in the woods, this was before they had roads in there and didn't have the equipment to put roads, they were gonna bring it out on the ice and the lakes didn't freeze so you had two years sawing of lumber rotted back in there and still in there and they took dozers to put trucks in there and wrecked the trucks getting 'em in, of course they didn't have the equipment and just bad timing I think in general. It went down in competition because I think if Tupper had have been younger, although whether he could have faced the new labor laws and things like that, it's hard to say but it was part of the times but the one thing I always remember father saying, he never refused a man a job if he was, if he hadn't been there and fired before or something like that but if you wanted work he'd find work for you somewhere but at low wages (Laughter) but they were a lot like that.

Other. So, he was a major force in the community?

A. At one time he was yeah, in the Digby area. I would say the major probably. For anyone to do with wood products, yes. Weymouth of course, had their own. I don't know if they ever arrived with the Campbell's or not because they had really control, this would be back late eighteen hundreds but they were petering out in the same way. The store is still there but it's not Campbell's anymore, it's Weymouth Supplies or something like that but I can remember when the Campbell's were still running the store but they lost, they'd given up all the wood to operation but they were the major, like my grandfather, great grandfather, brothers and that all contracted with Campbell's to log back in the woods and then drove the timber down the thing. That would be before Tupper came in business but mostly they contract through Campbell to cut so many thousand logs and then they'd take a crew in and go in and cut. So, Weymouth was your major thing at that time. That would be again, I say late eighteen hundreds.

Other. And how would they get those logs to the mills?

A. Drive them down the river. River driving, yep. Both my grandfathers' river drove during the spring 'cause it was good money. Wet, cold, and dangerous I suppose but big money. You could make as much in six weeks on the drive as you could cutting all winter. (Laughter) If you were a good man and the good men didn't have to do much 'cause they'd get out, they could ride a log out onto a rock somewhere in the middle and keep poking stuff around, where your poorer ones, your new ones had to go behind and the water rolling back in where as your good river drivers picked a bad spot and stayed there and just kept things flowing so there was good money in that but see, Tupper's wouldn't have come in until the early nineteen hundreds and I think Campbell's were fading out because the dams came in on the river. Powering the twenties and the Campbell's were done then as far as the timber racket.

Other. What river are we talking about here?

A. Sissiboo, Sissiboo was your main river although they drove on the other ones but Campbell's or mainly the Sissiboo 'cause all that back area, forth, fifth lakes all went out that way, Uniack, Cornwallis, everything drove, you can see the evidence of where they drove logs down and blew the rocks out of the main part and from, it slew's way across where they didn't have streams enough that wouldn't, the slew's run the water and logs down through there, the couple places, one between the branch and the big Tom Wallis and between Uniack and Grand Lake. You can still see the evidence of the old slew sways for driving.

Q. What different organizations did you belong to?

A. Well, when I was a kid the Sons of Temperens was a big deal and then they had the Children's Man of Hope, so I was in that. I never went in Sons of Temperens, I think it went out, of course my parents never went Sons of Temperens either, it was against my fathers, but I did go to Man of Hope wearing a little collar around your neck and all of this, not gonna swear, not gonna do anything. Otherwise than that, Sunday school, young peoples when their was such a thing through the church I suppose but I wasn't, where we had student ministers back and forth and, but there wasn't too much of that but I remember going to the odd conference through the church as a young, young people. Otherwise than that, not too much. There wasn't that much here and then after I got to Digby I wasn't one for getting into things like that. I avoided it as much as possible.

Q. What do you remember about tourists coming to the area?

A. Well that would be mainly Digby. Early in the game they used to come for like the Pines or the other resorts for a week, two weeks because I remember there, I forget them, the colored fella that had a wagon that went down from the wheels low so it was only about that far above the road in the middle to take the trunks from the railway station out to the Pines and Mountain Gap, a few of the other places in Digby so you had that. They were the rich people and you just looked back at them. Around here there wasn't that much tourism in general I don't think. You had the odd American who had cabins who showed up with a new car, so you heard, "Oh an American, a new car." (Laughter) My grandmother stayed with us her last few years and of course she'd been in the states and she was like my mother, a big fan of the states and every time a new car would drive by, "They've got to be Americans" (Laughter) Otherwise than that there wasn't, tourists meant Americans, rich uncles who, it ended up they weren't that rich when they got back but it appeared that way but the real tourism for the Pines and that was a, the system was different. They didn't drive as much, they came by train and the tenting or nothing like that at that time so you had to be of a certain class to afford to be a tourist at that time. I think, now this is my opinion so I don't know for sure because I had nothing to do with it. Like, a lot of your hotels, Lour Lodge, the Myrtle House, the Lour Lodge what's that, that's the Marlin now wasn't it. My mother worked there as a young woman because again Americans came down there and stayed two or three weeks. The Myrtle house was in back of the Irving there in town. There was another one and she worked there as a chambermaid I think. Again, the poorer class of tourists but yet they came and stayed a week, two weeks at a lift around Digby so, I mean the richer ones went to the Pines or up at the Mountain Gap in I suppose. It wasn't that name at that time but there'd be, there were one up there all right but how much money it brought in or anything like that, I wouldn't have a clue. They just looked different and dressed different. (Laughter) They weren't in rags.

Q. Compare the look of this place then to now?

A. Community?

Q. Ummm hmmm.

A. I would say generally the houses are in better condition now, the lawns are mowed because you have lawn mowers. At that time you did it with a scythe and you only did it every so often or you'd turn the calf out there and let it clean it off of there before you had the manure from it so you have far more neater, neater in one way because, I'm thinking of the old houses there where my grandparents live. That was very neat in their time but, and the repairs were done well but I would say generally the lawns kept up far better as a general, you always had a few that were really good, I mean....

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. Hmmm?

Other. (Floyd's wife) Inaudible audio

A. (Hesitation)

Other. (Floyd's wife) Store, store. You had a store.

A. Store. Oh yeah, you had one or two stores.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Post office

A. Post office station and a station agent at one time.

Other. What kind of station?

A. Train station and the, at that time it had an agent here at one time with the telegraph and so on and so forth. I can vaguely remember that 'cause the last one went to Digby, Pat Theriault and he was an agent up in Digby until he retired.

Other. Where do the tracks run? From here on the way to Weymouth?

A. Umm hmm

Other. Really?

A. Oh yep.

Other. Any trace of them left at all?

A. Oh yeah, the right-away is there and you drive up and down it now. Yeah, that was one of your main things of the railroad. A lot of people worked on the railroad, I should have mentioned it before. A lot worked on the construction crews, younger ones on the extra gain in the summer all over the, not all over the province but from Yarmouth to Windsor Junction, outside of Halifax, and through to Truro and the midland was all D.A.R and we had two trains, two?, four trains a day through here. You had a mail express train passenger brought all the mail down from Halifax. All the mail traveled by train and that went up from Yarmouth in the morning and then down from Halifax in the afternoon and then you had a freight which carried passengers and went up around eleven or twelve o'clock to Halifax on a freight that come down very early in the morning with one passenger car on. Christmas trees were all shipped by rail. Load those on for New York, so that was really one of your major things.

Other. (Floyd's wife) So you had one or two stores, you had two churches, and a post office where people used to get mail and talk and sat on the stools in the store.

A. That was the excuse to stay out after school, I'd stay out long enough to get the mail so I could stay away for a while 'cause there wasn't anything sorted. Especially Christmas, then it would be about six o'clock at night before, the train would be a little late coming and then you'd have all that mail to be sorted and then a whole bunch would crowd into the post office. It was a small building with about ten or twelve people in there waiting. The store was also a nice gathering point at nights too. Go out, even as a teenager I used to go there and listen to stories and then we used to play cards. They'd play a little small poker upstairs for nickels and stuff and then t.v came along and the only t.v in the community you were out to watch wrestling (Laughter) at the general store.

Other. What was the name of it?

A. It was just the, at that particular time it was Mildred White's, White's general store and before that Walter Thibault had it and then Lottie Haight down by the track but there was always a general store until now, they just can't compete but it was the gathering point where you'd go out and sit there, two nights a week I used to go there and just see what was going on I guess. Something to do, get away from home I'd say from about thirteen or fourteen on. You were lucky if you could get in playing crib or something like that.

Q. How would you compare family values then to now?

A. Your family unit was far tighter at that time, your extended family, parents, grandparents, kids than now because of our nursing system now with all our, discipline, fear, call it what you want was a lot more than, you had far more, be it respect, be it fear, whatever it is, I think far more than now generally. The families out of wedlock living together, that would not be tolerated at all, be it good or bad, I'm not judging it one way or the other but it wasn't an acceptable thing, you became an outcast. We'll say the generation before, when your registering births for the province, illegitimate, that was a big thing underlined. So I mean it was really pointed out that you had errored where as now you wouldn't do that, you'd be sued. I would say mainly in the extended family because now you still have families that are very close knit and all of that, it's just again normal but maybe not as many, of course there was a lot of in's and out's then that you didn't know about. Well the church held a lot, because what else was going on. You went to church because that was your main meeting place, before my time it was where you'd see the woman, you went out to find girls. My time no 'cause there wasn't that many around anyway. I was in the slack period of kids so I suppose a few of the religious values would rub off, where now the generation hasn't got two clues what your talking about. Lucky they know what Jesus was or isn't or anything else, I mean it's amazing high school kids now, their lack of knowledge that have never gone, so I suppose in a way that was a, community wise I'd say far better than now but your community now takes in a far area of the county, possibly half of the province you could say because of your traveling back and forth where as then you were small so, community wise it was far closer, more values I would say at that time but now you are a legion to a far bigger community so, I don't know, it's a hard one to call. Circumstances and modern things have changed a lot of things as the pendulum swings back and forth.

Other. The Wagner's that your mother came from, are you of the Rita and Nevins branch?

A. Oh, let's see. Nevins in Riverdale, who was his father, I forget who his father would be, Peter, Peter I think was Nevins father, o.k. Peter and then Peter's father would have been John Ed so, therefor old George and Peter would have been cousins, my grandfather, yeah 'cause Peter's one of the younger ones. My grandfather Nevins would have been second cousins so that would put me down about third cousins once removed or something but it came from the same Wagners, Riverdale.

Other. So, both sides of your family have been in this area for many generations?

A. Yep and so I'm going on again, my grandmother, my father's mother is a Franklin who originally were Franks from, he came in to Cornwallis and he was killed building a Fort way back and one was, two kids and the woman left because she had no support I suppose, again this is back early eighteen hundreds. One went to Lawerencetown and stayed as Franks and the other one was brought up by a Winchester in Digby and they call him a Franklin so that family has been here.....

Other. Oh, isn't that interesting. We just interviewed Conrad Franklin.

A. Yeah, and he'd be one of those 'cause Conrad would be part of the Franklin's. His relation, a distant relation of mine.

Other. And how many generations of your family have actually lived on this particular piece of land?

A. This piece of land, great, great grandfather.

Other. Great, great grandfather. He lived on the corner and owned this whole strip through. He lived out on the North Range corner.

Other. That four-way....

A. Yep, yep, yep.

Other. Are there any remnants at all?

A. That old house burnt.

Other. It did?

A. Yep.

Other. No foundation or anything left?

A. No. Well there'd be, the house that's there is built on the old foundation because my cousin built that house in during the fifties, early fifties and he built it on the old foundation but the old house was burnt in forty-three. They originally had a log cabin back in where the church is down there. He moved in from Barton. There were four brothers and one daughter that left Freeport and came up to here, Barton.

Other. And what year would that have been?

A. Eighteen twenty. Eighteen twenty they came up here.

Other. Do you know why they left Freeport?

A. I don't know really why. I suppose lack of opportunities probably. The two younger ones Bernard and George stayed down on the island, see Alton would have been through from Bernard's I think and there was George Reid, Reid was another, but there were two McNeil families down there but the rest moved up here. The girl married a Lambertson who had been in Barton with a loyalist so whether it was through that, that they came up but they had a mill and so on and so forth but I don't know where the fallout came with my great, great grandfather that moved from Barton back here. He came back in about eighteen forty so there's been McNeil's on here ever since 'cause there was a house up there which is, the one you got there was just up here where the big tree is. That was my great grandfather built that and my grandfather built this one.

Other. And what year would this photo have been taken?

A. Nineteen 'o three we figure, two or three 'cause my father was born in eighteen ninety-nine.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Well, Eudora was born in nineteen one and.....

A. Or nineteen hundred?

Other. (Floyd's wife) Two years after your father.

A. Was it? Yeah because they wanted to be in this house before she was born so I was thinking, is this a hundred years old or is it ninety-nine?

Other. (Floyd's wife) Well, they got in here just.....

A. Before she was born. Yep.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Before Christmas.

A. Oh yeah, right.

Other. (Floyd's wife) and she was born in March. So, she was born in nineteen one.

A. O.K yep.

Other. (Floyd's wife) And this is his other Aunt that died but she was born in nineteen three in the spring so this was taken next summer. You've got pretty leaves and, so that was taken in nineteen three but that house was just up there past that spruce tree.

Other. And is Floyd's grandfather one of these gentlemen?

Other. (Floyd's wife) Yep.

A. Grandfather, great grandfather.

Other. (Floyd's wife) Great grandfather but, and ....

Other. His fathers father?

Other. (Floyd's wife) I think.

A. That's Leonard and this would be Charles that went down to Virginia and that's my great grandfather Jim.

Other. (Floyd's wife) And his great grandmother.

A. Sarah Sabean.

Other. Sabean?

A. Oh, we're tied into the Sabean's heavy. No, she was my great grandmother and then George Wagner married her sister so my mother and father were second cousins through the Sabean's. (Laughter)

-End-

