

Laurena Wagner



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

A. Mary Laurena Wagner.

Q. And who were your parents?

A. Archie and **Soveeny** Wagner

Q. And your mother's maiden name was...?

A. Thibeau.

Q. And who were your grandparents?

A. My grandparents was Francis and Charles Robicheau on my fathers side and my mothers side was Roseanne and Charles Thibeau.

Q. When were you born?

A. On June the twentieth, nineteen twenty-nine.

Q. And where were you born?

A. At this home in Sissaboo Falls.

Q. When you were growing up, how large was your family?

A. There was thirteen of us in family.

Q. And where did you fit in the family?

A. I'm was the last girl, there was two boys younger than me.

Q. What did you think about having such a big family like that?

A. Well, there was always someone around and there was always playmates to play with, company.

Q. What did your father do for a living?

- A. He worked mostly in the woods and he worked at **Hankinson's Mill**, that wasn't too far from here and in the later years he had a pair of oxen, he used to work in the woods and haul out timber .
- Q. What do you remember about your mother's workday?
- A. Well, it was always up early and to bed usually around ten 'o clock at night, worked all day, there was a lot of us to work after.
- Q. What would a typical school day be like for you?
- A. Well, our school wasn't too far from here and we went to school nine 'o clock, home at dinner, back at one 'o clock and we got out at four 'o clock.
- Q. Is the school still standing today?
- A. No, no.
- Q. Was it just a one-room schoolhouse?
- A. Yes, just a one room school.
- Q. What kinds of things would you have to memorize in school?
- A. Well, I can't exactly remember but we used to have to do our spellings, memorize them.

*****MEGNETIC INTERFERENCE/ INAUDABLE AUDIO*****

The inaudible questions asked were:

- Q. How would you have been disciplined at school?
- Q. And at home?
- A. We had a strict mother.
- Q. What would your daily chores consist of?
- A. Well, we used to have to weed the garden in the summer, work in the hay field, lug wood in for the night, lug water from the well.
- Q. After you chores were done, what would you like to do with your free time?

A. Inaudible response.

Q. What was your favorite holiday when you were a child?

A. Christmas, I guess.

Q. Why would you say that?

A. Well, we always had time off from school, it wasn't like today, it's Christmas everyday for kids today but it was only Christmas once a year for us. We sometimes got a little toy, a little candy, an orange.

Q. Do you remember having any pets when you were younger?

A. We always had a dog home at our place.

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

A. Well, we'd all try to look at it.

Q. Where else would you get the things that you needed?

A. Pardon?

Q. Where else would you get the things that you needed?

A. At the stores in Weymouth.

Q. Inaudible question.

A. Inaudible response.

Q. Are any of those still there today?

A. Not all of them, there's still maybe a couple of stores standing, none of the big businesses.

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

A. Well, I don't think we had too much of anything to spend except, like in the summertime when they used to have a church picnic in Doucettville, we used to go pick blueberries and we'd get money but we'd have to go to the picnic.

Q. What was your religion?

A. RC, Roman Catholic.

Q. So, what would it be like at your house on Sunday's?

A. We had to get up to go to church and usually walk three miles.

Q. Do you remember any hymns from church?

A. Well, yes. Mostly you used to like the ones at Christmas time. We used to go to Christmas Eve mass, we used to like the hymns they sang at that mass.

Q. Which church did you used to go to?

A. Doucettville.

Q. And is it still standing?

A. Yes.

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

A. Well, the only thing we had was a radio at one time. We listened to the radio to know what was going on.

Q. Do you remember what stations you'd get on the radio?

A. Saint John, Bridgewater.

Q. What different things would you grow and raise yourself, or would your parents have grown and raised?

A. My parents, they growed all kinds of garden stuff. Potatoes, squash, carrots, parsnips, turnip, peas, beans, they grew a garden every year.

Q. Would you have to help out in the garden?

A. Yes. I'd have to weed the garden after school, we used to help get potatoes in the fall, pull carrots and stuff out.

Q. What different things would you barter for, would you trade? If you guys had your vegetables would you maybe trade someone to get fish or something?

A. No, I can't remember them trading anything.

Q. How much of what you needed would you make yourself, like clothing, would your mother make your clothing or did your father make furniture?

A. No, my father was not a handy man for, that way but mother used to make some clothes when we were kids.

Q. Do you remember what she'd make the clothing out of?

A. No, she used to buy wool. She had a spinning wheel, she used to spin her own yarn and knit socks and mittens.

Q. How would you say electricity changed things for you?

A. Not too much except we had a fridge afterwards and electric lights, we could see better. Before we had kerosene lamps.

Q. When did you first get running water?

A. Well, the house where I lived after we moved from across the road, we had a hand pump, we never had running water 'till, well, since I've been here and that's only, oh I stayed here, I've been here nine years, I had running here but when I lived across the road we had a hand pump.

Q. What would bath night be like at your guy's house with all those children?

A. Pardon?

Q. What would bath night be like at your house when you were younger with all those children?

A. We used to have a big wash tub that we used to wash in, we used to bath in that. Mother would bath us in that 'till we got bigger and then we'd have a sponge bath.

Q. Who was the doctor when you were growing up?

A. Dr. Ferguson when I was a kid.

- Q. How far away would he have lived from you about?
- A. Eight miles.
- Q. Would he be the one that would deliver the babies too or was there someone else in the community?
- A. Well, there was a Dr. Melanson, mostly that delivered here and I think there was an old Dr. Hallott before him.
- Q. What were some home remedies that would have been common when you were growing up?
- A. Home remedies, I don't know except stuff you buy. Ginger and peppermint, we always had that for a cold. I can't remember too much about those.
- Q. How would you have taken care of your teeth?
- A. Teeth?
- Q. Yeah.
- A. Well, we could, you could buy toothpaste and a toothbrush.
- Q. And how often would you see a dentist?
- A. When we had a toothache to get a tooth pulled.
- Q. Do you have any memories of getting your teeth pulled out?
- A. Yes, I, my first ones I got, I remember my mother took me to a dentist to get one pulled out. I didn't mind it and then as I got older I had all my upper ones out.
- Q. How often would you leave Sissaboo?
- A. Not too often 'cause we had no vehicles until my brothers got big enough and bought cars but we never left too often.
- Q. If you could go anywhere's, would you ever go into the town of Digby or anything like that when you were younger?
- A. I don't remember going to Digby but I remember going to Weymouth sometimes but I don't remember going to Digby.

- Q. When somebody in the community died, what would their funeral be like, how would it be different than a funeral today?
- A. They mostly were laid out in their homes until the funeral, the day of the funeral.
- Q. What had you expected to do when you grew up?
- A. Well, I never thought of it too much.
- Q. Who were your screen idols when you were younger?
- A. We never had any 'cause we didn't see movies. (Laughter) We had no t.v or nothing so we didn't have any.
- Q. What kinds of music would you like?
- A. Western music.
- Q. How far did you go in school?
- A. I went, started in grade nine and quit when I was fourteen to go home and help my mother.
- Q. When you were working, when you were helping your mother, would you get paid for that or you were just home.
- A. No, I was just home.
- Q. And did you get a job after that?
- A. Well, I never left home 'till I was, well I think I went, around twenty-one I went to work at the base for a bit and then my mother took sick and had her gallbladder out and I had to come home again and I went back for a couple months after that and came back home and I stayed, took care of my mother and did the work home for my mother and father.
- Q. What do you remember about the Depression?
- A. That was around the time I were born, the nineteen thirties, so I was too young to remember anything about that.
- Q. Would your parents have ever talked about it to you, any hard times that they would have had?

A. Yes, I've often heard them talk about, that stuff was so expensive and their wages wasn't too much at that time. I guess my father worked some days for a dollar a day in them days.

Q. It must have been hard, especially with thirteen children.

A. Yeah, he used to work for Hankinson's and they had a store and he used to take groceries and stuff on his work bill.

Q. What do you remember about Wartime?

A. Well, I had a brother went to War. I remember that quite well because he was missing in action and my mother got worried and then we got worried he was in the hospital. He lost a leg and he came home shortly before the War ended.

Q. Do you think the War had an effect on the community at all?

A. Well, I don't think so 'cause there wasn't too many from right here that went out to the War, right around here.

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

A. Plan for hard times or retirement, gosh I don't know what I could answer for that. Just live from day to day is about it.

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

A. Well, people were more helpful in days gone by, if something happened they usually tried to give you a helping hand with everything.

Q. What different things do you remember about the Poor Farm?

A. I don't remember too much about the Poor Farm. I remember going there with my uncle to see a relative that was in there of his, that's about all I can remember about it.

Q. At what point would someone have to go to the Poor Farm?

A. At what point?

Q. At what point. Like, how sick would they have to be to.....

A. Mostly the ones that, I don't know, that wasn't full minded, like, you know, not in their right mind, mostly those that you seen at the Poor Farm except, that's all I can remember about it.

Q. Now would they have to pay, do you know, to stay there or would they.....?

A. No, I think the Municipal supplied that.

Q. How important was Politics in those days?

A. Well, I don't know. My parents was always one sided as far as I know, you voted for one place, one thing but Politics was never talked about too much.

Q. Describe to me what Sissaboo Falls was like when you were growing up?

A. Well, when I was growing up there was a mill down here by, not too far from here, there used to be a road that went across, we used to call it **Goddidge Bridge**, it went across the other part of the river and the damn, I remember when there was a wooden damn down here at the Power Plant, the first Power Plant that was there, there's been, well at least two damns been built since then that I can remember, this last one was built thirty some years ago.

Q. Do you remember what the name of the mill that was there when you were younger?

A. **Hankinson's Mill**, **George Hankinson's**.

Q. Was he a big employer then in the community?

A. Yes, yes.

Q. One of the biggest ones probably?

A. Yes, he used to, they used to, a lot of people worked for him, he used to also have a mill back further, what they called a branch. They used to have a mill back there at one time too and he owned timber and he used to buy people's timber at that time.

Q. How was the law enforced in Sissaboo?

A. Well, there wasn't too much law at that time, there wasn't RCMP's like there are today runnin' around the roads. (Laughter)

Q. What different organizations did you belong to?

A. None that I know of.

Q. What do you remember about tourism in days gone by?

A. Tourism?

Q. Yes.

A. You didn't see too much tourism in those days. There were very few cars, very few vehicles around then.

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

A. Well, the old people were superstitious, the younger people more or less grew out of it.

Q. Do you remember any superstitions that they would have had?

A. Well, they wouldn't walk under ladders and, right now I can't remember too much.

Q. What ghost stories do you remember from your younger years?

A. Well, there was a house down the road they used to say was haunted, they used to hear people in there and different things and then Hankinson's house down here, they used to say they used to hear things down in that house years ago. That's all I ever heard about ghost stories around here.

Q. Do you remember anything about Maud Lewis?

A. No, only what I've heard about her and I've seen her pictures and stuff in the papers.

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

A. Well, life is pretty easy today for people than what it was in my day and it's too fast moving.

Q. That mill that you were talking about, do you know how many employees he would have had?

A. No, I couldn't say.

Q. How long was he in business for?

A. Well, all the time I was growing 'till, I don't know, it was quite a few years that, he employed quite a few people, around here that was the only company that was around.

