

Lena King

Interviewed by Chris Callaghan, Nov. 21, 2000



Q. What is your full name?

A. Married name?

Q. Both.

A. Lena Cecelia King now and I was Lena Cecelia Thibideau when I was a child growing up.

Q. And where were you born?

A. Back here, back in the settlement.

Q. What do you mean, the settlement?

A. Its still Doucetteville.

Q. And what year was that?

A. 1930.

Q. How large a family did you come from?

A. Five.

Q. Five kids.

A. Five children, three girls and two boys.

Q. And where were you in that lineup?

A. I was fourth.

Q. And what was your father's name?

A. John Thibideau.

Q. And your Mom's name?

A. Lillian, Amero she was.

Q. And how did she spell Amero?

A. AMERO.

Q. And do you remember what your Grandparents names were on your Father's side?

A. Yes. Ambrose Thibideau and Rose Jeddrey, she had been.

Q. Where was she from?

A. She was from St. Alphonse, outside of Yarmouth.

Q. And on your Mother's side, what were your Grandparents names?

A. Eliza Amero and Frank Amero. They were both Ameros. I just realized that now when I said it.

Q. I run into that a lot -I interviewed Vincent Robicheau in Gilbert's Cove

A. Yeh, he's my first cousin.

Q. Is he! We had a lovely chat. He told me all about the horses and oxen. He loved his animals. What did your father do for a living?

A. He was a woodsman.

Q. Was he. How would that work. Did he cut wood on his own land?

A. He did. Yes. He had his own land but he also worked for others.

Q. And what would happen to the wood he would cut? Who would he sell it to?

A. Oh gosh, I don't know who he'd sell it to.

Q. Would it go as far as the mills in Weymouth?

A. I imagine, it must of went to mills, I can't remember it really. But I remember him cutting wood and it being sold, Remember the name Adelar.....

Q. I don't but we can look it up.

A. Yeh, Adelar, but that's all I know - I think he bought wood but what they did with it I don't know. It must have went to mills eventually.

Q. Did your father have animals to work with?

A. Yes, when we were kids growing up, he had a pair of oxen and a couple of cows and a few hens and a pig. We always raised a pig.

Q. So what do you remember about your Mother's work day?

A. Oh my. She worked hard because there was no convenience when they grew up. There was no electricity so she had to do everything like - she churned the butter, we had our own butter, and everything had to be carried down in the basement, like the butter, the milk, because there was no fridge. And she washed clothes by hand on a scrub board, I can remember that plainly. And she worked in the garden, she worked in the hayfield, they moved their own hay. It was tough, really. But they seemed to enjoy it and they never complained. That's what I find strange today because so many of us complain today and we have everything to work with. But they never did.

Q. How much land did your parents own?

A. Oh, gosh, I wouldn't know for sure. Quite a bit, they had their house and the field then he had different pieces of woodland, like 50 acres here and 100 acres there that I really wouldn't know what he had, but quite a bit.

Q. The house that you grew up in, did your parents buy that house or did they inherit it or?

A. No, it was my grandmother's house. My mother took care of her mother and she got the home. You don't hear too much of that today.

Q. So as a little girl growing up, forth in the family, what were some of your chores?

A. Oh feeding the pig, gathering the eggs, helping in the house like - washing dishes, making beds, sweeping. Everybody helped. We had apple trees and in the fall of the year you'd pick apples and did the vegetables out of the garden ready for winter - put down cell, things like that.

Q. How much of any of that produce, eggs or butter - did you sell?

A. Not too much. It was mostly for the family. They might trade with the neighbours like, if we had no milk at the time but we had eggs, we might trade. Nothing was sold that much at that time. Because they only had enough for the family. They didn't have any large amount of animals or anything like that, it was just for the family.

Q. Do you remember - some people have told me that they would trade their vegetables with the fish.....

A. Yes, they've done that. Like a fisherman from Digby Neck would come and they'd probably want a 50 lb. Bag of potatoes, and they'd give you dry fish or whatever you'd take.

Q. Do you remember if it would be the same guys coming each year?

A. Gosh, I don't know. I don't think it would have been. I don't remember, but I remember fishermen coming and they'd trade vegetables for fish.

Q. And where did you go to school, Lena?

A. It was back in Doucetteville too, but the school is not there now. There is a house there. It was just a little country school.

Q. What did it look like?

A. Just a little building with windows on one side - there was windows on the back and around one side the other side had no windows. They had a potbellied stove in the middle of the floor for heat in the winter. There was Grades primary to about grade 9 or 10. And one school teacher.

Q. Only one room?

A. Yes, just one room.

Q. And how did you get to school?

A. Walking. We always walked.

Q. How far?

A. Oh, must have been a mile, or a little over a mile to walk to school. Morning and night and in the spring of the year when it got warm we'd walk home for lunch. You had an hour off, so you'd walk home get your lunch and go back to school.

Q. Can you remember a special teacher?

A. Yes. There is one - she is still living back here in Doucetteville. She was from Cape St. Mary and she came up here and taught school and she married a guy from Doucetteville and she is living back here. She is in her 80's today, 81 or 82.

Q. What is her name?

A. Doucet, she is a Doucet. She was a Doucet married a Thibault, and she was a beautiful teacher. Very smart. And I think four years she taught me.

Q. So how far did you go in school?

A. Grade 7.

Q. And why did you leave school in Grade 7?

A. Well, I was I think 14 at the time and I had bad nerves, my stomach would bother me and my mother decided I'd better stay home.

Q. How did you feel about that?

A. Oh, it didn't bother me, I was glad. At that time. The kids didn't care. It's not like today - they didn't get an education, especially back in the country like this. By the time they were 13, 14, 15, most of them would quit school anyway. So it was a trend like.

Q. Was it different for boys than girls?

A. No, it was about the same. The boys would quit and go work in the woods with their fathers or whatever.

Q. As a young girl, do you remember what you expected to do when you grew up?

A. I think we just thought we'd go out and do housework and eventually get married and raise our own families. I went as a waitress before I got married.

Q. Where was that?

A. In Digby.

Q. Where in Digby?

A. At the Cornwallis Café, it's not called that now, it's called the House of Wong. Warren Wong had it but they've changed the name and refinished it and changed the name but it was a chinese restaurant. And I had worked at the Scotia Restaurant which was a restaurant and hotel both up by the train station - I don't know if you.....

Q. I don't remember that.

A. I had worked there awhile. Then I got married and raised six children.

Q. How old were you when you started waitressing?

A. About 15.

Q. Would you have come home every night?

A. Oh no. There was, gosh, we didn't get home hardly at all because there was no way of getting home. There wasn't the cars there is today. So, we had a room and we'd get our board at the restaurant, you know. Eat at the restaurant and just get a room.

Q. Can you remember what your wage would have been?

A. Yes. I remember it all to well. \$11.34 cents a week we cleared. Can you imagine? I don't know why the .34 cents, but that was put in there too. Yeh, you didn't get very much, but then things were cheaper too in those days.

Q. How much of what you made would you have brought back to your family? Or sent home?

A. Not too much because we had to pay for our room. Our room was, if I remember right, was either \$2.00 or \$3.00 a week. So that didn't leave us too much for like dressing ourselves. But whenever we could we'd buy a little gift and send home to Mom, like, you know.

Q. When did electricity come to Doucetteville?

A. It was right after I went out to work. So I was born in 1930, so it must have been right after the war. 1945 - 46 something like that. But we didn't have electricity when I went to work. I remember that. I remember coming home and having the lights in the house and how nice it was, you know.

Q. So when you went off to work, it would have been right in the middle of WW1.

A. It was in '45, yeh, it was just getting over really. I went to work in '45 and the war was over and I remember the base, Cornwallis, was so full of Navy and I remember parading down through town to go on the Princess Helene then. They were on their way home. I remember that, because Cornwallis was full of Navy and when they'd come to town on Saturday night, you'd wouldn't notice the civilians because there was so much Navy, that's all you'd see was Navy guys on the streets.

Q. Would they have to wear their uniform?

A. Oh, yeh.

Q. Pretty cute!

A. Yes. There was a lot of Navy.

Q. How many days a week would you have worked as a waitress?

A. Six. Only got one day off a week.

Q. And when you did come home for a visit how would you get here?

A. By train. Take the train from Digby as far as North Range. Then there was a mailman who would travel from Doucetteville to North Range, pick up the mail so you'd get a ride.

Q. What kind of vehicle did he have?

A. Just an ordinary car.

Q. Did you have to pay him?

A. Yeh, I think we paid him a quarter or something for travelling.

Q. What was his name?

A. He was a Doucet -Jim Doucet. They're gone.

Q. Yeh, so is the train!

A. Yes, so is the train.

Q. Where was the church when you were growing up?

A. It's still there. It's back in the settlement. Have you ever been back through Doucetteville? You should just drive through. I'm way back from the settlement, - we went to church, we had a post office but the post office was in a house. We had a school and we had a country store. All we have left is the church. The post office is gone, the store just closed, my son was running the store for awhile, for 8 years, and they just closed.

Q. Well, I have been back because I was in that store this past fall. We did a little tour before we.....

A. They closed it in October.

Q. There was a sign in the window then that it was closing.

A. Yeh, we miss it. If we need a loaf of bread or a quart of milk, we gotta go out to the Quick - Way now, out to Plympton. And gas, we don't have gas. They use to sell gas there too. Now we have to go to Weymouth or Digby if you have a vehicle and you want to fill up your car. So its inconvenient.

Q. For sure, its happening all over.

A. There is progress and there is unprogress, I call it.

Q. What religion were you brought up?

A. Roman Catholic.

Q. Was the whole village pretty much Roman Catholic?

A. Yes. I would say it would have been at the time.

Q. I grew up Roman Catholic and I am wondering how much of an influence was your religion in your life?

A. Oh, quite a bit. Especially from our father, he use to tell us bible stories. There was no TV or radio so we would sit around at night and I think his mother had influenced him a lot with the bible and bible stories as I grew up and went to church and listened to the gospel I could relate to what my father use to tell us as little kids.

Q. So did you study catechism in school?

A. Oh, in school and in church both. We had catechism every morning in school.

Q. But you didn't have Nuns teaching you?

A. No, just our regular teacher would teach us. And then if I remember right, on Sunday afternoon, we'd go to Church and the Priest would ask us questions that we had been studying also. Because we had Mass in the morning, and Vespers in the afternoon.

Q. What was Vespers?

A. Benediction, I think. So the priest would come and then we would have catechism lessons before Benediction.

Q. And he would have given you your First Communion?

A. Yeh, First Communion and Confirmation.

Q. So what do you remember then, about meeting your Husband?

A. He was a fisherman. He was from Digby. There was three brothers, him and two other brothers. And I remember just having my eye on him, seeing him. We finally met and dated, got married. We lived in Digby for awhile, in an apartment in Digby.

Q. How old were you when you got married?

A. I was 17. He was 21. Then we moved back down here because it was expensive to live in Digby as the children came. I think we had 4 children when we moved back down here. So I have been back down here ever since. Eventually we bought this house. That's been 40 years ago, since we bought this home. Then my husband was sick. He was sick not long after we got married he was ailing, he ended up with MS. So he was sick for years. He fished until he couldn't anymore. Then he was sick at home for 17 years. Terrible sickness.

Q. What was your husband's name?

A. Gordon.

Q. I have here 'Mrs. Jack'.

A. That's his brother. His brother lives in Digby - Jack King.

Q. So you met Gordon and got married at 17. Where did you get married?

A. Here. Came home.

Q. What was your wedding like?

A. Very simple, really. I was married in a suit. I was married in February, married in a suit and he had a suit and we just had two attendants. Not like today, a whole line up. And we had breakfast at my mothers. There was a big storm in the afternoon, in February, so we didn't get anywheres. Had the roads all blocked in and everything. And we just had like a little gathering of family and friends at home.

Q. So I suppose you didn't have a honeymoon?

A. No, there was no honeymoon. My husband was a fisherman and he went fishing.

Q. What kind of fishing did he do?

A. All kinds. Scalloping, fish dragging and he had just bought his boat when he had to quit work. He had only had his own boat maybe three or four years. Five years at the most. And then he had to quit it all because he couldn't do anymore.

Q. What year would this have been?

A. It would have been in the sixties.

Q. So you started your family pretty soon after you were married?

A. Yes. I had 6 children, a boy, four girls and a boy. My son is 52 now, my youngest is 36 or 37.

Q. Where were your children born?

A. My first three born at my mothers.

Q. In her home?

A. In her home. And the last three were born in Digby hospital.

Q. Now the ones that were born at your mother's home. Who attended your birth?

A. The Doctor. The Doctor came from Weymouth. And my mother had me convinced if I went to the hospital they would let me suffer, but if I had them at home I'd be o.k. So I listened to her, but for the fourth child, I was living in Digby and she was born in January and I decided I wouldn't - my mother was still waiting for me to come home to have this child so I decided I wasn't going to say anything and when the time came I would just go to the hospital and that's what I did. Went to the hospital. I let my mother know, she had no phone. But I called through to the store - they had a phone - to tell them I had had another baby girl. She was shocked that I had gone to the hospital. So after that I just went to the hospital with the other two.

Q. Tradition was broken.

A. Yeh, tradition was broken.

Q. As a 17 year old married, how much would you have been taught about the birds and bees?

A. Nothing really. I didn't know you had to have labour. That's one thing I did not know. I had an Aunt, she would go with the mothers like - what do you call them? Midwife. So I'd asked her one day what it would be like. Oh, she said. Nothing really. You'll just start your period, and you'll have the baby. So I said, well that's not bad, to myself. So when I did go in labour, I thought I had cold in my kidneys, or some infection or something. Didn't realize. And it was on a Sunday morning and it kept getting worse - well I had been sort of Saturday and Saturday night like twinges of pain but I didn't think nothing of it. But by 10 o'clock Sunday morning it was getting pretty bad. So, I had been up and I went back to bed. And my youngest sister came at noontime and she said to me, you going to come down and have dinner. I said no. Don't want no dinner today. I don't feel good. So she went down and told Mom and Mom came up and said, What's wrong. I said I got terrible pains in my back and its going down my legs.

Oh, she said, you're going to have the baby. No, I said, I'm not having a baby. Cause there was an outside toilet so we use to have to go outside. So I just thought I must have cold in my kidneys, they use to call it years ago. So she said no, that's not what you have. I soon found out that you had to have labour to have a child.

Q. What a way to find out!

A. I know. Today the kids four and five years old know all about the birds and the bees, really.

Q. Too much.

A. I think it's too much, they're little minds are not ready for all they hear today.

Q. When you moved from Digby to Doucetteville, where did you live then?

A. We lived in an empty house. There was an empty house and we rented it.

Q. Do you remember what you would pay for rent?

A. Probably, \$4.00 - \$8.00 a month, something like that. It was very cheap.

Q. Did you have electricity then?

A. Yeh.

Q. Did your husband continue to fish?

A. Yes, he always fished .

Q. How did that work. It's a fair distance from here to the shore.

A. I think he had a car after we moved down here he bought a car. Because we didn't own one in town. But I think he bought a car, he travelled with his own vehicle.

Q. All the way back to Digby?

A. Yes. He fished out of Digby.

Q. When he - do you remember how you realized how he wasn't well?

A. After I had my third child, he'd complain about going numb. His arms and hands going numb. And I was young and he was young and we never thought too much of it. You know, sickness didn't bother anybody in those days when you're young. But he kept complaining and he complained and he'd go to the Doctor and they'd say it's from fishing, its just muscle or something or other. And then as time when on, his eyesight bothered him. He couldn't see very well. He got glasses, he wore those and that didn't help. Then he got so he'd tell me he'd see double. There are times he said, I see two of you. I see two of everything. And he'd go to Doctors but they couldn't tell him anything. Then he got so his legs bothered him. He couldn't walk that well. And the Dr's told him he worked to hard, he needed a vacation. And he'd laugh and say I don't need there is something wrong with me. So he went for years like that, going to the doctors, going fishing. Then he got so bad that I noticed that he'd stagger and fall. I know one time he had the baby - must have been a year old carrying the kid and he fell with the kid. Oh, I said, you can't carry that child anymore, you're going to hurt him. But, when they did find out what he had, he staggered his way into the Doctors office. Had to eventually hold onto the wall. Then they put him in the hospital and did tests and found out he had MS. And I had never heard of it. At that time I had never heard of the disease or anything. I remember asking the Dr. if it was contagious. I didn't know what it was. And he said no, it wasn't contagious but he would gradually get worse. Like, there is no cure. And that's what he did, he went down hill fast once he came home.

Q. Where was he diagnosed?

A. Digby hospital. They did a spinal tap. Took fluid out of his spine and that's how they found out what he had.

Q. So how did you manage to raise 6 children without an income.

A. Well, by the time he took sick, there was some of them out to work. Like there was three of them was out to work. So I had younger ones at home and we had to go on welfare eventually. We had to sell the car, and had to be really down and out before you could get any help. So we lived on welfare all those years. It wasn't easy.

Q. It must have been hard on him as well.

A. Oh yes, it was.

Q. So did you tend to him for those 17 years?

A. Yes. Well the last year of his life he spend in Digby hospital. He got so he couldn't eat, he was fed intravenous. But I took care of him fully for 12 years. With giving him his bath, shave, couldn't do anything. Eventually he was in a wheelchair for quite a few years but couldn't do anything. And then as a bed patient. But the last year of his life he spent in Digby hospital mostly because he couldn't swallow his food anymore. I had made him baby food for two or three years, I had to mush up all his food and everything. And he choked so easy. He was forever choking when I tried to feed him.

Q. Cruel illness it is.

A. Oh, it is terrible. It's worse than cancer. With cancer you will eventually die, but with this it lingers on so long.

Q. You had bought this house before all this had happened.

A. Yeh, we'd lived in this house. We'd just bought it, though.

Q. Do you remember what you paid?

A. Yeh. \$1,200.00. Can you imagine. 30 acres of land. \$1,200.00. Can you imagine it today. You can't build a doorstep today for that.

Q. Strange, isn't it, how things change. Over the years. Makes a big difference. Going back to when you were a little girl. How often would you leave Doucetteville?

A. Never. I remember the first time we drove to Plympton and saw the water out there. I was amazed at all this water, you know. It was a big thing. And I must have been 9 or 10 years old at that time. We never went anywhere. There might have been 1 or 2 cars in all of the settlement. Nobody owned cars or anything. So you never got to go anywhere. You stayed home. Went to school and went to church on Sunday and you were home.

Q. What was Christmas like when you were a child?

A. It was very - it was nice. Because my mother always baked a nice chicken or two chickens and always did Christmas cooking. I remember her putting all her - she had a table upstairs and she'd put all her cakes and cookies and things on the table. So it was nice, Christmas. No gifts. There was no buying gifts like they do today. But we always got our plate of candy and an orange and grapes and nuts for Christmas. That was our Christmas, that was our Santa Claus. But we were happy with that. I think we were happier than the children are today with all they get. They get so much today and look disappointed, I find. Where we were oh, couldn't wait for Christmas morning to come. And I remember my father always said Santa Claus came down the flu and he got up Christmas morning and put ashes on the floor around the wood stove and he'd say look at the mess Santa Claus made when we'd come down. We believed that!

Q. Where would your parents have gone to get oranges and grapes?

A. Well, at the store they would come in at Christmastime. Don't how they'd get them back there. But, probably at Christmas they'd get a few grapes and oranges in for Christmas like, at the store, the country store.

Q. So do you remember having any playthings at all as a little girl?

A. Oh, we had dolls that my mother would make sometimes. I remember I had received a doll from my Godmother one Christmas.

Q. Was that a store bought doll?

A. Yes. My Godmother had given me. Our mothers or our aunts would make us rag dolls and things, but mostly what we played with was like the cinnamon - use to come in boxes - the boxes that we'd gather and keep as Mom would use it up. And then we'd play store. I can remember putting the ironing board up and one of us would be the store keeper and one of the kids would come and buy things. Pay the money we'd make. That was our toys, very simple things. And play with buttons. Mother had big cans of buttons and we'd sit with a piece of twine and lace up the buttons at night. And another thing we'd do, my Mother, I don't know, we'd call it 'pickins'. All the knit socks, she knit all the wool socks for my father and that, and when they'd get worn out, the leg part would be good and we'd cut them in strips and pick the yarn then my mother would card them over again, and spin it - she use to spin her own yarn - and make socks over again with this yarn. So we'd sit at night to see who could get the biggest

pile, you know. Sit at the table and do that. My mother would buy the wool and wash it -

Q. Straight from the sheep?

A. Straight from the sheep, and wash it and put it out on the grass to dry and it would bleach it like if it was white wool. And she had her own, we called it cards, they are square about that long and about that wide and there was a handle and there was two of them. And there was like wire brushes on these cards and so they'd take the wool and we called it 'card it.' She'd card it and card it, and then she'd make a roll, it would be about that long - it would be right fluffy, about that big. Then from that roll she'd spin it on the spinning wheel and make the real yarn and then knit. Oh, they worked hard. And they made their own quilts and quilted their own quilts.

Q. What would they use for stuffing for a quilt?

A. Cotton. They could buy the batts of cotton like you do today or else sometimes they'd use old flannel sheets that was worn out or something, you know, to put inbetween.

Q. Did they ever save the feathers from a duck or a chicken or anything.

A. No, not too much. But I remember we had all feather pillows in the house, so she could have done it but I can't remember.

Q. Do you remember any home remedies that she would use?

A. Yes. In the spring of the year, we would get sulfur and molasses.

Q. What was that?

A. I don't know. But the sulfur looked something like dry mustard. It was that color. And that was suppose to clean out our kidneys I guess. In the spring of the year we'd get two or three spoonful of that for a few days. And poultices, if you had a boil or something they'd make a bread poultice. I know I had pneumonia when I was maybe 6 or 7, and there was no penicillin or none of that. So the only cure I guess was a mustard poultice. I remember being in bed and the mustard poultice around me.

Q. Some people say they burn.

A. Yes, if you leave them on too long.

Q. But the Dr. wouldn't have come to see you?

A. Oh yeh. The Dr. - I don't know how often he come because I don't remember anything there for a few days because my temperature I guess was so high. And I remember waking up once and the Doctor was by my bed. But that's when I was coming out of it I guess. And we caught the measles, the mumps, the chicken pox and all those things. I was trying to think of some other remedies but I can't right now.

Q. There were no vaccinations in those days either.

A. Got vaccinated in school.

Q. Against Polio?

A. No, there was no polio then.

Q. I think you're right. I think it was later than that.

A. It must have been scarlet fever I think we were vaccinated against. But the Dr. came right to our school and did it. Did the whole class at one time.

Q. Do you remember the first time you ever went to Digby or Weymouth?

A. Not really. I can't visualize that.

Q. Where would you go if you wanted to see a movie?

A. Digby. But I think there was a theatre in Weymouth also. But we never went until we went out to work, as far as that went.

Q. How old was your mother when she died?

A. She was 81 and my father was 84.

Q. When you and your husband were a young couple, of course you couldn't foresee that he was going to be ill, but how did you plan for your retirement?

A. Well, there wasn't too much to plan being a fisherman. There was no pension plans or anything for fishermen. There wasn't even unemployment for fishermen at that time when we were first married. So I guess you must just try to save for your retirement over your life. I remember when we were first married, in the wintertime, that's mostly why we had moved out of Digby because we were paying \$30.00 a month rent, which was a lot then, and there was no unemployment in the winter, so you had to save enough during the summer to cover all these expenses during the winter like your rent, your food and everything. So we decided we'd move down here and we wouldn't have the rent to pay and it would help. But that would have been our only way, would have been saving it on your own for your retirement.

Q. Did your husband ever fish lobster?

A. No. Never went lobster fishing. Mostly scalloping. Because his father owned the boat and he always would fish with his father. But it was mostly scalloping and fish dragging.

Q. In those days when they went scalloping, how long would they go out for at a time?

A. Oh, they'd just go out in the Bay of Fundy, just outside Digby Gut and they were in usually every night. Sometimes it would be late, according to the weather. IF the weather was good they'd stay out later.

Q. How many on the boat?

A. There'd have been four of them with the captain.

Q. And how dangerous was that work?

A. Oh, a lot more dangerous than it is now. Because all they had to work with was a compass, there was no radar, sonar or anything like that in those days. So they only had a compass to go by and if the weather got bad, I know my father in law lost one boat because of the compass. They had put iron too close to the compass and it wasn't reading right. And he went ashore down around

Gullivers Cove somewhere. But there was no lives lost. I remember that - I think that was right when we were just married then.

Q. And when your husband acquired his boat, what kind of a boat was that?

A. Well, the first boat he had was just a smaller boat, the little Alan G and he fished with that. He only had that about a year and he went to a bigger boat. He went to Murray Harbour P.E.I. for the boat. He bought it from there and it was named the Murray Harbour 11, and that was the scallop boat he had. It was a nice boat, nice big boat but he only fished in it I think 3 years at the most. And he had to give it all up. And our son, our oldest son was fishing with him at the time but he was only 18, I think, and he was really too young to take over the boat, you know. At that time, if you could run a boat you didn't need Captain's papers to go fishing. Today you need Captain's papers, you have to go study. But if he had been a bit older, and could have run the boat he could have taken the boat over. But he was too young for that.

Q. So what are your children's names starting from the oldest?

A. Larry, Judy, Sharon, Gail, Janice and David.

Q. And where do they live?

A. They all live around here, Larry lives back here and Janice lives in Doucetteville, Judy lives in Belliveau's Cove, Judy married Frenchie, Guy's Frenchies. And Sharon is the only one that's away and she lives in Cape Breton. And David lives in Weymouth Mills. So they are all handy. All but Sharon, she lives in Ingonish Beach. Her husband works at Keltic Lodge, he is Chef there at Keltic Lodge.

Q. And how many grandchildren do you have?

A. I have 13 grandchildren and two great grandchildren. Two boys.

Q. You'll live to have great great grandchildren.

A. No, I don't think. I said to my oldest son, I wish but I won't see that. Yes, it's nice to have a big family.

Q. Do you have any memories at all about the poor farm from when you were growing up?

A. Slightly yes. Not too much. I remember them talking about the Poor Farm and I remember seeing it. But to tell you anything about it, I wouldn't be able to.

Q. No families that you knew went?

A. No.

Q. What did most people here do for a living? Same as your father?

A. Yeh, I think, the men mostly were all woodsmen as far as I can see. Besides the storekeeper and the mailman. But outside of that I think they all worked in the woods. In the winter sometimes they'd be gone for a month or so, like they'd stay right in camps. And work in woods.

Q. How does the population now compare to when you were a child growing up here?

A. I don't know if they'd be more people here now. Because back then there were more children, like where today there's probably more houses and less children, so it would probably just even itself out, I think. There is more houses, there's been more new houses built than that.

Q. What were some of the family names that you remember when you were growing up here?

A. Well, French, there was Robicheaus, Ameros, Tibideaus, Thibaults.

Q. Do you know when this community was first settled?

A. I think it was, but I wouldn't say for sure, in the 1700's when David Doucet came here. Must have been after the expulsion of the Acadians, I suppose, because I think they moved up here from Eel Brook, when they were expelled, and he was one of them that escaped and he moved up here and he built the home, we have a river back here they call the Mistake River, or the Mistake Brook, and when he came back here he thought he was building in the right place, but he went way back so this river for some reason they call it the Mistake River because he had went by this one and went to Brench River that they call

way back and he built in back of there, you know. But he should have built by this river. You might remember seeing the bridge when you go back to Doucetteville - there's a bridge there and a river. So he went by that one, and went to the second one and he built. So really I am a descendant from this - what would he be - about 5 generations ago.

Q. 200 years , probably a few more than five.

A. But that's where we are descendants from, from this David Doucet. And he had married an Indian lady, so there is a little bit of Indian there.

Q. Now, I meant to ask you that then, when did you first encounter someone of a different race than yourself, either black or Indian?

A. Well, the Blacks, I know Weymouth Falls down here which isn't too far from here, they use to come up here in the fall of the year begging for vegetables. That's my first encounter with the Black people but there was none living back in our settlement or going to our school or anything. Yes, I remember they would come with a horse and cart and different ones would give them potatoes or carrots, whatever they had like.

Q. And how about MicMacs? Would you ever have seen them?

A. No. There was some in Bear River. Well, I am saying no, but they use to sell baskets once a year, it would be the ladies, would come with the great big bales of baskets on their backs selling baskets. And I remember it one time when I was very very young, way up the other end of the settlement, they'd come and pitch a tent in the summertime - I don't know how many of them, I don't know if it was husband and wife, but they'd pitch a tent and they'd go in the woods and look for this certain wood they made their baskets with . And I don't know how long they stayed there, but it would be in the summer. But that's all I remember because I was just a little kid, like, you know.

Q. Even the older people on the Islands remember the Indians coming all the way down there with their baskets, too. It's a long way.

A. Really, to sell their baskets. And they walked too, they had to walk. And they would sell the baskets for 10 cents and a quarter.

Q. In the fall, would your Mom get you to go out berrying and stuff?

A. Oh yeh. We picked wild strawberries wherever there was some handy that we could walk and get them and blueberries for our own use and we picked them to sell also, get 5 cents a quart.

Q. Who would you sell them to?

A. Well, there was a fellow back in Doucetteville, Cliff Thibeau, he use to buy them, and if I remember right he sold them down Digby Neck, could possibly be. And we picked them in his pasture - he had a great big pasture with all kinds of blueberries and we'd get 5 cents a quart for picking them and he'd sell the quart. We'd round them so it was like a quart and a quarter or a quart and a half. And we thought that was great, by gosh, we were making a nickel. Probably get 25 cents in the whole day for picking berries.

Q. The ones you picked for your own use, what would your Mother do with those?

A. Oh, she'd make blueberry pies or fungies.

Q. What is fungi?

A. The fungi, you stew the blueberries and then make like a dumpling and you drop the dumpling and you can either cook it on top of the stove or bake it in the oven as a cobbler. You must have heard tell of cobblers.

Q. Yes - Or blueberry grunt, is another name.

A. Or may be, that would be. But we called it blueberry fungi.

Q. But she wouldn't make jam out of all this fruit.

A. Not too much, no.

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

A. Oh there were some of them I think would have been quite superstitious. They believed in different things. Black cat crossing your path and I can't remember them all now. And I think I probably was too, growing up. But not today, I don't believe in all that. But as a kid, you hear it and you believe in it.

Q. When someone died in the community, what happened to the body?

A. It was brought at the home, your own home or wherever they lived, it was brought into the home for three days, they'd have wakes at night. Then it would be taken to the church and buried.

Q. What happened at a wake?

A. A wake, they stay up all night, apparently. The neighbors and friends would come and stay up all night and say the rosary at midnight and have a lunch and some of them, they wouldn't leave the body alone, like they thought it was going to run away! But they'd stay up all night and there was always someone at the house with the family.

Q. Was there an undertaker in the community?

A. There was an undertaker but he only, as far as I know, he would only come and take the body to the church to be buried. Cause I think, way back when I was a kid, there was a man here in Doucetteville that use to take care of the body and get it ready for - he use to make his own caskets also at that time. He'd make a casket and line it and prepare the bodies for burial.

Q. What was his name, do you remember?

A. Vernon Thibeau.

Q. The undertaker in Freeport use to get his caskets from Yarmouth, he didn't make his own. Just wondering, you've made some observations about comparing life today to days gone by. Maybe we have more today but.....

A. Well I think the children today have so much more that what we had but I can't see them being happier than what we were. Like, I find the children today they get a ride to school, they get a ride home, they come in they watch TV or else they play Nintendo's. They're not getting any exercise. Like when we were children we were outdoors playing tag and hide and go seek, and playing ball, and if there was a hill we'd be rolling down the hill. You know, we were very active as children but I find the children today is not healthy because they are not active enough, and they don't seem to be happy like we were. Maybe I'm

wrong, but I find the more they have, they look for more. They are never happy with what they have.

Q. We didn't get a television until I was 11, and I am glad, we were outdoors so much more.

A. Well, without TV and Nintendo games, I think the kids would be more active because there's nothing else to do. But they might skate a little bit in the wintertime, but they are not very active. I know I have a grandson who lives here with me, he's 16, and his mother lives here with me but she works. And he doesn't do anything. He comes home from school, walks to the house, and he is either watching TV or Nintendo. I tell him sometimes, go for a walk! But no.

Q. Do you have any stories that I haven't asked you that you'd like to tell me?

A. No I think I've covered them all, pretty well.

Q. It's a great interview,

A. Thank you. I hope I've been of some help to you.

Q. You certainly have. A real picture of what things were like.

