

Nevins & Darrell Wagner

Interviewed by Sue Amero, November 29, 2000



Q. O.K. What is your full name?

A. Nevins Emit Wagner.

Q. And could you spell your middle name please?

A. E-m-I-t.

Q. And who were your parents?

A. Pardon?

Q. Who were your parents?

A. Ah....this is umm....you want both their names?

Q. Yeah.

A. LeRoy and Lizzy.

Q. O.K.

A. And Wagner. She was a Mullen before she married.

Q. O.K. Do you know who your grandparents were?

A. Ah...Peter Wagner and what was here name? Ah.....

Q. It's O.K. If you can't think of it, that's alright.

(At this time Nevins's brother Darrell has entered the house. Nevins is very happy to continue with the help of his brother. Darrell still lives in Riverdale, with his family. Darrell is very happy to be a part of this interview. So, I continue on with the Interview with both brothers. From here on in I will be Q., Nevins will be N. and Darrell will be D.)

Q. O.K.

D. Eliza.

N. Eliza.

Q. O.K. And when were you born?

N. May 8, 1914.

Q. And where were you born?

N. Riverdale.

Q. O.K. How large was your family?

N. Ah.....how many children did she have?

Q. Yes.

N. Eleven living and two dead.

Q. O.K. And where did you fit in, in the family?

N. I come in number three.

Q. Number....from the top or the bottom?

N. Top.

Q. From the top. O.K. So can you just tell me, what it was like, growing up, with eleven brother and sisters?

N. Well.....I'd say we had a good time. We enjoyed each other. Got along very good.

Q. Did ya really? O.K. You can do that. I'll just stop this.

Q. O.K.

N. You should have.....you should have his picture here too.

Q. Yes, he could move over there, couldn't he?

Q. O.K. Tell me some stories about growing up with eleven brothers and sisters.

N. Well.....I think it's best to tell 'im, we all enjoyed ourselves.

Q. Do you know how much age difference is between the oldest and the youngest?

N. Ninety. How old is Carol?

D. Carol is a.....umm....Beatrice is seventy. Carol is sixty-nine.

N. She'd be sixty-nine, the youngest, and the oldest is ninety.

Q. Twenty-one years.

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K. So when....where you all living home at the same time, all eleven of you?

D. No.

Q. No.

N. No.

Q. O.K. And did you live.....can you describe your house to me?

N. Describe it?

Q. Your house. What the house looked like?

N. Well....it was just an ordinary house, I guess. With a.... I don't know how many rooms....bed-rooms in the house. (laughter)

Q. Two story house?

N. Yeah.

D. One, two, three, four....well there was five there.....before the bathroom. They took one bedroom and put the bathroom in.

N. Yup.

Q. So how many of you would have slept in one room?

N. Oh.....

Q. Probably three or four at a time maybe?

N.&D. No. No.

N. Two. I'd say two.

Q. O.K.

D. The girls....the girls one time, I think, there was three girls in double beds....a single bed. I think....I think that was just one time when.....We used to board the teacher too.

Q. Board the teacher?

N. Yeah.

Q. Tell me about that?

D. To board the school teacher.

Q. For a whole school year?

D. Yeah. For every school year....for years.

Q. So she would sleep, rate upstairs, like everybody else did?

D. Well, she always got her own room.

Q. Oh, O.K.

N. Is that pickin' up his voice too?

(Nevins wants to be sure the microphone will pick up his younger brother, Darrell's voice also.)

Q. Yes, it is.

Q. O.K. rate now, I'm going to take the picture over to Mr. Wagner's brother. And his name is.....

N. Darrell.

Q. Darrell.
And Darrell is younger than.....

N. Than me.

Q. Than Nevins.

D. I'm nine years younger that Nevins.

Q. O.K. So the extra voice, that you'll hear in here, will be his. So I'll keep switching back and forth. O.K. What did your father do for a living?

N. He was a....a lumberman and afarmer.

Q. O.K. So, he....lived....he worked....out of the house?

N. He worked at his own property.

Q. O.K. He had his own mill there?

N. No. He had no mill.

Q. O.K. Alright. What do you remember about your mother's work day, looking after all those children?

N. She was a very busy woman. (laughter)

Q. What kinds of things would she have to do?

N. What kind of work?

Q. Yes.

N. Oh.....a normal work of any woman, I suppose. Only she had a lot of children to look after and.....Hired a man. Most of the time hired a man extra.

Q. And what would he do?

N. What a....

Q. What would the hired man do?

N. Oh, he worked with my father.

Q. I see.

N. Yeah.

Q. So what kinds of things did your mother have to do, everyday?

N. Well, cook and wash and clean the house and.....everything like that.

Q. So she was busy from daylight to dark?

N. Oh yeah.

D. She was a trooper. Anyone work like that.

Q. O.K. That's true. Alright, umm.....

N. A lot of cookin' to do.....those days.

Q. I guess. What was a typical school day like?

N. You can answer some of these as well as me. (Nevins is referring to his brother, Darrell)

D. A typical school day? We walked....what.....three quarters of a mile.....

N. Yeah.

D. To school. We walked home at noon. A walk in those days.....

N. Yeah.

D. Was just normal thing. You.....we just had a good time.

Q. So how far away, was the school, from where you lived?

D. 'Bout three quarters of a mile.

Q. O.K.

N. Had to walk that. No bus, in them days. It was all walkin' to school and back.

D. And a....there was about.....what.....about an average of about twenty pupils, wasn't there?

N. Yes.

D. And classes were from primary to ten.

Q. And you were all in one room?

D. A one room school, yes.

Q. And what did the inside....what did room look like inside....in the school?

D. Just a big room with a.....bunch of seats and a library. Our library was in there. And....usually had a nice lookin' teacher. (laughter)

Q. Yeah, you were lucky.

N. Yeah, we were quite lucky. We did have some.....

Q. So, was there a....was it heated by.....how was it heated. How was the school heated?

D. By a wood stove.

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K. And who.....whose job was it to keep the stove going?

D. Ah.....different students.

Q. O.K.

D. I don't know who made it. Daley. Didn't Daley Used to make the fire, in the morning?

N. Yeah. Yeah.

Q. And who is Daley?

D. Daley Wagner. He a....lived across the road.

Q. O.K.

D. And he used to build the fire.

N. Yeah. I think.....yeah, I think he did. He did that for a good many years there.

D. Yeah.

Q. O.K. So when you said that you boarded the teacher there, at your house, where was she from?

D. From all over.

Q. So you....did you have the same one for so many years?

D. No, they usually changed practically every year.

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K.

D. My favorite teacher was from Walton.

Q. Walton?

D. Yeah, just outside of Windsor.

Q. Right. Do you know her name?

D. Oh yeah. Ah, Catherine McDonald.

Q. O.K.

D. And there's Myrtle Chute. She's from Bridgetown. She was there two years, wasn't she?

N. Yeah. Yeah.

D. And Melvis Sabeau. She was there for two years. She was from Tiverton. Ah...Lenna MacNeil. She was from Bridgetown.

N. You know, a lot of these teachers.....

D. They're my teachers too.

N. Yes, they're your teachers...

Q. O.K. Nevins. What...do you remember any of your teachers?

N. Well, we had one teacher for years. And that was Jessie Comeau.

Q. And where was she from?

N. She's from Southville.

Q. O.K.

N. She taught most of my life, I guess, there. She was a....they....fer years there, she taught.

Q. Right.

N. She had a Model-T car. She drove back and forth to school.

Q. She had a Model-T car?

N. Yeah. Model-T Ford, yeah.

Q. So what color was the car?

N. Oh, black, as near as I can remember.

D. Well, Henry Ford said "You can have 'em any color you want as long as they're black."
(laughter)

N. Yeah. She was a great teacher. She taught manners as well as everything else in school.

Q. I...I've never done one, like this, back and forth. (laughter) Good. O.K. What was a typical school day like?

N. Well.

Q. Sorry. We just did that. What kinds of things did you have to memorize in school?

N. Oh....what.....

D. What's that? I said the alphabet. That was one of the first things.

N. Yeah. Alphabet. Spellings, another one. Yeah.

Q. O.K. How were you disciplined in school?

N. Very good.

D. When we needed it, in those days.

Q. No.

D. Umhmm. Their parents set some strict rules. And you lived by those rules.

Q. So you even lived by those school...those rules in school?

D. Yes, we did.

Q. So there weren't very many people that would have, I mean....if somebody had to be disciplined at school, how would they have done it?

D. Strap.....or stay after school.

N. Or stand in the corner.

D. Yeah, stand in the corner.

Q. O.K. So how were you disciplined at home?

D. I don't remember being having to be disciplined.....well a.....just.....they would tell us right from wrong.

Q. Right.

D. And we lived by it.

N. Yeah.

Q. And you knew.

N. Yeah.

D. And we knew.

N. Yeah.

D. We were....we never had to be threatened. We were told when we were kids right from wrong.

Q. Right.

D. And we lived by that.

N. Yeah. That's true.

Q. O.K. Can you tell me what your daily chores were, at home?

N. My daily chores?

Q. Yeah.

N. Feeding the sheep.

Q. Sorry, I didn't hear that.

N. Feeding the sheep.

Q. Fitting the sheep?

N. Milkin' and puttin' the cows to pasture. Everything that went with.....

Q. So you had to do this every day?

N. Yeah. Oh Yeah. Yeah. Feed the pigs.....hens.....so on.

Q. So you must.....your house must have been on a big farm.....like a big farm?

N. Yeah Yeah.

Q. O.K.

N. I used to feed the sheep every night when I come home from school, on my way home from school. It was in a separate building on the road, on my way home from school. At night I'd stop and feed those sheep. And a.....that's.....I did that for quite a long time.

Q. O.K. After your chores were done, what would you do with your free time?

N. Well.....probably set rabbit snares and things like that for amusement.

Q. So back at the time, when you were growing up, would there have been any televisions or any radios in your home?

N. Not....not in my younger days, no.

Q. O.K.

N. No.

D. But you had a radio when you were a teenager.

N. Yeah. When we got up to a teenagers I bought an old radio and had to set right up to it to hear it andhalf the time they couldn't hear nothin'. (laughter)

Q. So, was it electric or by battery?

N. No. Battery.

Q. By battery.

D. You could charge the battery. It even had a charger.

N. Yeah.

D. Run by wind.

Q. The battery charger was run by wind?

D. Run by wind. And a....windy nights you could hear it howlin' and.....Don't you remember that?

N. Oh yeah. Yeah.

D. And it used to whistle.

N. Yeah. Yeah. I remember dad and I settin' it up.

Q. So where did you get the radio from?

N. Where'd I get it from?

Q. Yeah.

N. Where I'd buy it from?

Q. Yeah. Did you buy it or was it given to you?

N. No. Bought it from Weymouth. A guy in Weymouth. So I paid fifty dollars for it. (laughter)

Q. That was a lot back then.

D. A lot of money then.

N. Yeah. It was second hand though. (?) at that.

Q. So how big was it?

N. Oh it was a cabinet. Set up that high. Water-camp was the name of it.

D. Atwater Kent. Yeah.

Q. Walter Kent?

D. Atwater Kent.

Q. Atwater Kent. That was the brand name?

D. Yeah.

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

N. Ah....Christmas, I suppose.

Q. And why was that?

N. Well....Santa Clause coming. (laughter)

Q. So, can you describe the things that you did in your house around Christmas time.

N. Well.....decorate it up.....for Christmas.

Q. Now, did you put you tree up before Christmas Eve or after....or a week before or when?

N. Yeah, about a week before I would say.

D. Yeah. A week anyway.

Q. And ...O.K. So that was in a room by itself?

N. Yeah. It was in a room like this.

Q. And what did you decorate it with?

N. Oh.....all kinds of trimmings that they had those days.

Q. Were they home made or were they boughten?

N. Oh...mostly boughten, I guess.

D. Yeah

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K. And what favorite pets do you remember having as a child?

N. Pet?

Q. Umm.

N. Oh...that would be my dog, I suppose.

Q. Do you know his name?

N. Buster.

Q. Buster.

N. That was one of them.

Q. What kind of a dog was he?

N. Oh, just a little ordinary plain dog.

Q. O.K.

D. Heinz 57.

N. Huh?

Q. Heinz 57, yup. What was it like at your house, when the Sears or the Eatons's Catalogue would arrive?

N. Well...we'd look all through it.....order it by mail.

Q. So, your mother ordered things from the catalogues?

N. Oh yeah. Eaton's and Simpson's.

Q. Right.

N. Yeah. I just found a....Eat....old Eaton's Catalogue, out here the other day. '75. (1975) We got here.

Q. From 1975?

N. Yeah. Must have been 'bout the last one, I guess.

D. My wife has the last one too.

Q. Yeah.

D. She put it away.

N. I was comparing the prices in it the other day. Yeah. Great big thick one. Just like new.

Q. O.K. If you didn't buy things from the catalogue, where else would you get the things that you needed?

N. Out the stores, in Weymouth.

D. Weymouth was larger then, than it is now.

Q. Yeah.

N. Yeah.

Q. So describe Weymouth to me. What it looked like back when you were children.

N. Well, both sides of the road was filled with stores....buildings. Just like going through a lane. And you go down in there and you can smell the fruit going through, it was so close together. Before the fire.

Q. Right. So can you tell me what kinds of stores they had?

N. Grocery stores....dry.....dry..... and a...

D. Dry goods, hardware,

N. Yeah. All stores.

D. A jewelery shop.

N. It was a nice little town.

D. Hat shop for women.

Q. Oh. Right. So it was quite a bustling place?

D. Oh, it was.

Q. Umm.....Alright.

N. It was a cozy little town.

D. It was.

N. Way back then.

D. They always had shipbuilding there.

N. Yeah.

Q. Do you know the names of any umm.... companies that were there?

D. Oh, companies.....at that time. There was G.D. Campbell.

Q. Which was what kind of a store?

D. General, wasn't it? He had a....they handle just about everything.

N. Yeah.

D. And.....H.G. Wagner, after.....later.

Q. And that was a what kind of store?

D. That was a...mostly.....a...it catered to a lumbering industry. There would be groceries, hardware.....

Q. Would it have been like a "company store"?

D. Yeah.

Q. O.K.

D. And there was a....

N. Ronald Taylor.

D. Yeah Ronald Taylor.

Q. And he was what?

N. He was a lumbering man. He had a store as well.

D. It was a lumbering town.

N. Yeah.

Q. Right.

D. It run on lumber as it does today.

Q. That's true.

D. It still is today.

Q. O.K. How much spending money did you have as a child?

N. (laughter) That's a good one. Didn't have too much, those days.

Q. Oh no, Mr. Wagner, I've got to bring that around, 'cause I've lost your face.

N. You on there?

Q. Yup, you're fine rate there. We're talkin' about how much spending money you had as a child.

N. Well, it's a hard guess. I used to catch a few rabbits. Get a little spending money that way.

Q. So, how much would you sell your rabbits for, do you remember?

N. Oh...ten cents, I guess it was, if I remember.

Q. For one or two.

N. One.

Q. For one rabbit, ten cents?

N. Yeah. Ten cents to get a hair cut. And I had to go get a hair cut, every so often to one of my neighbors. It was ten cents.....on Sunday morning. (laughter)

Q. Amazing. Amazing. O.K. What was your religion?

N. Ah.....Church of Crist.

Q. O.K. And what were Sundays like, in your household, when you were growing up?

N. What was what?

Q. When you were growing up, what were Sundays like, in your house?

N. Oh, Sunday....was a religious day. Went to church and....used it as a religious day.

Q. So after church was over, what would you do in the afternoon? Would you still go....would....would your parents go about their regular chores?

D. No....Sunday...Sunday was the Sabbath.

Q. Umhmm.

D. And a....no one went out and split wood or done any carpenter work, or anything like that on Sundays. Sunday was.....the Lord's day.

Q. O.K.

D. Very strick. Very strick.

Q. O.K. What was your favorite hymn in church, on Sundays?

N. They had a lot of good ones, I liked. "Must be the Tie That Binds", I guess was one of 'em.

Q. Can you sing me a little piece of it?

N. No. (laughter) Can't do that.

Q. O.K. I'm just gonna....

N. Darrell might be able to.

D. (laughter) No, I'm not a singer.

Q. O.K. How did you keep up, with what was going on in the outside world? How did you get your news, of what was happening elsewhere?

D. Newspapers.

N. Newspapers, yeah.

Q. Do you know the name of the newspaper you got?

D. Halifax Herald.

N. And Digby Courier.

Q. Right. O.K.

D. The Yarmouth Flight.

Q. The Yarmouth...

D. The Weymouth Bridge.

Q. Right. O.K. So what kinds of things did you grow and raise yourselves? But I guess we went into that. You talked about the vegetables. Name the vegetables that your father would plant.

N. Potatoes and carrots and beets, beans, peas. "Bout everything there was to go, I guess.

D. Turnips, parsnips.

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K. And what kinds of animals did you raise?

N. Cattle, sheep, lambs...and pigs.

D. Horses.

Q. O.K. And did you barter for anything? Did you trade any of your vegetables for anything or your....

D. We used to trade for fish, didn't we?

N. Yeah, I guess. Yeah.

Q. So a fish peddler would come to your house, or something?

D. Or.....or....my father used to take them down.....I remember to Port Maitland. Used to buy..... trade vegetables for dry fish.

Q. Oh yeah.

D. And then we get packages of dry fish like that.

Q. O.K. Umm. How much of what you needed, did you make yourselves? Like, O.K. I'll give you an example. Did you mother make your clothes or were they boughten?

D. I don't think she made too many, did she?

N. No. I don't think, no.

Q. O.K. And how did electricity change things for you?

D. It didn't change it for a long while.

Q. Do you remember when you got electricity?

N. Yes, umm.....we got....I can't think what year it was.

D. 1950.

N. In the fifties, was it?

D. In 1950.

N. Is that what year it was?

D. We came home, from Toronto, in 1950.

N. 1950, then is when electricity went through there.

Q. O.K. So how did elec.....who put the electricity into your house?

N. Well....I...helped wire my house and then helped the neighbors with....with an electrician.

Q. Right.

N. That's how I....we wired our...my mother's house and my house. I worked for the electrician. Helped do it.

D. And you helped wire the church.

N. And the church, yeah.

Q. And you were a busy man.

N. (laughter) Well...it was somethin' new. When that came through. Workin' with that. Lighting people's house up.

Q. So it must have been some different, from being in a house without electricity, to being in a house with electricity?

N. All the difference in the world.

D. We used to have Aladdin Lamps, though. Though were not just an ordinary oil lamp. You've heard of the Aladdin Lamps?

Q. Yes, I have.

N. Yeah.

D. Yeah.

N. They give....a whiter light. Yeah.

Q. O.K. And when did you get running water?

N. Running water. I don't know what to tell yeah.

D. Not 'til after electricity came.

N. Yeah. We used to have the hand pump. Pump water in our house.

Q. Right.

N. Most of it. Like I say, did....I did too. My....pump it in by pump. Yeah. But a....where I lived down there, they never had the running water. You know.....you had to pump it in.

Q. O.K.

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K. What was bath night like, at your house?

N. They took their turns. (laughter)

Q. So you did....what kind of.....how.....what did you get bathed in?

N. Tub. Big wash tub.

D. Yeah.

N. Big round tub.

Q. And then you took turns, the boys....?

N. Yeah.

Q. One night and the girls the next night, maybe?

N. (laughter) Something like that.

D. It was a Saturday Night thing.

Q. Yeah.

N. Had to take turns. Of course, only had the one....one tub, I guess.

Q. O.K. And who was the doctor when you were growing up?

N. Doctor.....Doctor umm.....Alerkin, was my father and mother's main doctor. And there's Doctor Hallick.

Q. Umhmm.

N. And a....that's the two main ones, I can remember, when I was growin' up.

Q. Right. And how far away did they live?

N. Ah....ten miles.

D. In Weymouth.

Q. And who delivered the babies in your community?

N. Those doctors.

Q. O.K. One thing I forgot to ask you earlier, how far away would you have been from the town of Weymouth, when you were living in Riverdale?

N. How far from Weymouth is Riverdale?

Q. Yeah.

N. Ten miles.

Q. Ten miles. O.K. O.K. What were some home remedies, that would have been common, when you were growing up?

N. Remedies?

Q. Yeah. Like if you had a cold, how did they....how did your mother look after it?

N. Ah...Minard's Liniment was one thing. And....

D. Ginger Tea.

Q. Now what would you do with the Ginger Tea?

D. I don't know how they made it but I know it wasn't too bad.

N. It's a hot drink.

Q. It was a hot drink.

D. It was a hot drink, yeah.

N. Yeah.

D. And a....

N. They were great people for that....for any of that stuff for belly aches and so on.

Q. O.K. So if you had hurt yourselves, like just say you had got a serious cut, how would they have tended that?

N. With Iodine's andI don't know that one.

D. I think we all have scars that were never stitched.

Q. O.K. How did you take care of your teeth?

N. A brush, I guess. I guess we had a brush in them days. Toothbrush, yes.

Q. How often would you see a dentist?

N. Not very often. Me, I haven't yet. I still got my own teeth, yet.

D. I still got all mine.

Q. Amazing.

N. We had a...good run of teeth.

Q. O.K. When some one died in the community, what was the wake like?

D. We never really had a wake. We had.....the body would go to the funeral parlor. The body used to stay in the house, didn't it, as a rule?

N. Yeah.

D. Pretty well. The thing that I remember, is....as I got older, I'm younger than Nev.....Umm..... Karen Nicholls, from Weymouth, whose the a.....undertaker, he used to come get the body. I don't think they were embalmed, in those days.

Q. O.K. O.K. So how often did you get to leave Riverdale?

N. How old?

Q. How often did you get to leave Riverdale?

N. Oh....not too often. I don't know how often it would be.

Q. O.K. If you got the chance, where would you go?

N. As a young....in theas a young person?

Q. Yeah.

N. Oh....just got to birthday parties and different.....things like that. Sing song. They used to have a sing song.

Q. And where would you have sing song?

A. In.....in anybody's house. They had an organ.

D. They had a band.

N. Yeah.

D. Nevins was in the band.

N. Yeah.

Q. You were in a band. What did you play? What instrument?

N. Alto horn.

Q. And what is that?

N. Pardon?

Q. What was that? A horn?

N. Yeah. Alto horn. You....you....you blow it and sing it....(?)

Q. And how many of you would do this?

N. Oh, I suppose eight or ten of us in it, probably. Yeah. Just a little....get together band on....we had in the settlement.

Q. So what kinds of songs would you sing?

N. Oh....all kinds of songs, in them days, whatever they was goin'.

Q. Right.

D. The conductor of that band, at one time, George Burgoyne, he was the....the...conductor of the....the Saint John City Band. He lived and married a girl from Riverdale, and they came there. He....he was like a fish out of water there but a...he...he's the one that got up the little band.

N. Yeah.

Q. So you would go round to people's houses and play?

N. Well...we usually go to his place and practice, yeah. And a....every once and a while we'd go some.....some where and play, some concert or somethin'. But....it lasted a few years. It didn't last that long.

Q. Right.

O.K. What were the roads like when you were growing up?

N. Gravel roads ands....

D. Which time of year?

Q. Yeah.

N. Gravel roads with a patch of grass through the center. (laughter) When.....ox and horses walked it, there trail...and then there would be a grass....a row of grass along the center. Up by your place there, remember? I used to know it was up.....

Q. O.K. Who would look after the roads?

N. Ah....they had a.....road master, in each settlement to look after theroads.

Q. So you had a road master.....

N. Yeah. My father was for a long time, wasn't he?

D. yeah.

N. Yeah.

Q. So he wasn't the only one that would look after the roads was he?

N. Well just that.....

D. He was hired.

N. Yeah.

D. He would hire people.

Q. I see.

N. That settlement. Each settlement had their own.....their own road master. Yeah.

Q. O.K. Now I'm getting to your teenage years.

N. Oh, I can't tell you about those.(laughter)

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

N. Well....I don't know that I had any thing special in mind, at that time.

Q. Right. O.K. As a teenager, what kinds of things would you do for fun?

N. Oh...have parties and things like that.

Q. And what kinds of parties?

N. Oh...play games and...sing...and things.

Q. O.K. And who were your movie idols?

N. Your what?

Q. Your movie idols? Did you ever go to the picture show?

N. Not back there, we didn't, in them days.

Q. Oh. O.K.

N. Now, we go.

Q. Alright. And what kind of music did you like?

N. Music. I liked cowboy music and hymns and all types of ...all types of music.

Q. O.K.

N. Not the crazy music like they have today. I don't care about that so much.

Q. O.K. Umm.....what kinds of sports did you enjoy?

N. Well....playing ball, hand ball, that's when we were young, in sports. Oh.....I like all types of sports, pretty well.

Q. Right. O.K. What do you remember about dating?

N. Dating?

Q. Yeah. As a teenager?

N. Oh.....I don't know which one to tell you about. (laughter)

D. If you're talkin' about Grace, she lives just down here.

N. Yeah. Yeah. We'll start from it. In school sittin' with some girl. You know, in school, we all sat separate in school.

Q. Right.

N. Well, that's the beginning of it. There'll always be one girl, maybe even in the same grade and the teacher let you study.....and study together. Things like that. We started out that way. (laughter)

Q. And I wanna know who Grace is?

N. Grace...well she was my girl friend. She was teachin' school there. That's her.

Q. She was a teacher, teaching you?

N. Oh no.

Q. Oh no.

N. That was in....my old girlfriend my girlfriend but...she lived right next door here. She was teachin' in Riverdale. And a....'course that was when I was out of school.

Q. Oh. O.K.

D. No. No, she was before my time.

Q. So how far did you go in school?

N. Grade nine, is as far as I went.

Q. O.K. So why did you leave school?

N. Well....that was just a common thing in them days, I guess. You get up there.....

Q. How old were you when you left school?

N. Well....I was probably fourteen, fifteen, something like that, maybe.

Q. O.K. And once you left school, what did you do?

N. Well, I worked with my father, drivin' a truck, haulin' lumber to town and different jobs we had to do at that time.

Q. O.K. So you were working in the woods with your dad?

N. Yeah. I worked in the woods as well.

Q. And what kinds of things would you do? You had to....you chop down trees?

N. Yeah. Cut trees down and haul 'em out to the side of the road where they could be takin' by truck.

Q. Right.

N. Logs, yeah. And...and some went to saw mills and a....We hauled the logs out of the woods by oxen and horses.

Q. O.K. I want to know about chopping down a tree. How did you do that?

N. We sawed....we sawed.....I did never chop down trees. We did....just cut a notch in them and then cut 'em down with what they call a cross-cut saw. A long saw with a handle on each end.

Q. O.K.

N. One man would get on one end of the saw, one on the other. Then they'd pull it back and forth and saw the tree down.

Q. O.K.

N. And a....but I never chopped a tree down, like they did years a head of me. They used to do.... chop all the trees down.

Q. O.K.

N. Then they come along afterwards with a power saw.

Q. Right. So you and your dad worked together in the woods, just the two of you?

N. Oh yeah. Lots ofa lot of the time.

Q. Right.

N. A lot of the time, yeah.

Q. So then the oxen, you would bring the oxen in, and they would haul the trees out that you would cut down?

N. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Q. O.K. Now, I'm getting to your adult life. O.K. How did you meet your wife?

N. How'd I meet her?

Q. Yeah.

N. Oh....I was working in town at the time, H.T. Warne's.

Q. Is that Tupper Warne's?

N. Tupper Warne's, yeah.

Q. O.K.

N. And then....there's an apartment building, where.....I was in the lower part of.....my cousin lived there and I was there. She (Nevins wife-to-be) lived upstairs overhead.

Q. O.K.

N. And a....so that's.....weshe would come down stairs and lug wood up to her apartment. I'd look out the window and see her and help her and that's how we got started.

Q. I see. O.K. Tell me about Tupper Warne's.

N. Tupper Warne's?

Q. Yeah. What did you have to do there?

N. I was a clerk in the store and a....and a....workin' in the warehouse as well.

Q. And what would you do in the warehouse?

N. Warehouse....pile up feed and a....everything that you'd put in the warehouse. Different things.

Q. So was Tupper Warne's a big place?

N. Oh yeah. Yeah. They had a....they had....probably a couple hundred men there, somethin', couple hundred or somethin'. And a.... (continued on next page)

.....I didn't....my job in the....first thing in the morning, was six o'clock. I had to be there to gas...gas up the trucks. There were about twenty-five trucks working....he had working. And a....I had to be the first one there to....to fill those trucks up and charge it out to each truck separately. And a....

Q. Charge it out? What do you mean by that?

N. Bill it out same as I'm billin' it to you.

Q. O.K.

N. Number six or number five truck or number four or whatever it was....how much gas went in or how much oil went in it. And...that's the first thing I did every morning, six o'clock. Starting at six. And then....I'd be out....I boarded out of the cook house they had and..... You go down and breakfast about eight o'clock and back until noon and rate up 'til eight o'clock at night. So that was a long day from six o'clock 'til eight.

Q. So how many days a week did you work?

A. Six days a week. One year....one...one holiday in a year, I guess, Christmas. (laughter) Them.... them was the days. Everybody was in the same boat, they never thought nothin' of it. I was getting' big money, fifteen dollars a month.

Q. Fifteen dollars a month.

N. Anyway, it kept going up and up. Last end it was fifteen dollars a month.

Q. O.K. So when you were.... you boarded out at this apartment building, or you rented at this apartment building?

N. I boarded....at Addie's Cook House. He had a cookhouse that we boarded. I got the fifteen a month plus my board.

Q. Oh, I see, O.K.

N. Yeah.

Q. So did Tupper Waren own that also? The place where you lived?

N. Yeah. He owned the building, yeah.

Q. O.K.

N. Yeah. That was a....that's the way we started out in them days.

Q. That was amazing.

D. Man lucky to get a job. (laughter)

Q. So how many people would the a...would Tupper Warne's have employed?

N. Oh...would be a couple hundred anyhow. Wood.....woodsman and all.

Q. So what did the others....like you worked at the store part?

N. Yeah.....well....well charged groceries to everybody, no money was floatin' much. Everybody was billed out. You had to write a bill out for everything. And a....

Q. So the people that worked for Tupper...Warne had to buy their groceries from him?

N. That's the way.....they mostly had to do. They got a small percentage of money out of their wages. It was all a trade off that way.

Q. So did most people, back then, work six days a week?

N. Oh yeah. Yeah. Everybody worked six days a week.

D. That was the "norm" then.

Q. And they worked the same hours that you would work?

N. No, I lot of them didn't. They didn't....I had to go early to gas the trucks up.

Q. Right.

N. And a....They started at seven o'clock though. They started at seven o'clock at the mill. And all the other workers started at seven. I went at six thirty to gas all the trucks up. So....that's how I started out on my.....outside employment.

Q. So how old were you, when you were working there?

N. Seventeen. I started at seventeen, I think it was.

Q. And how long did you work there?

N. Oh, I was....all together....I worked three years then at that time then I went. Then I come back. I worked 'bout five years altogether.

Q. For Tupper Waren?

N. Yeah.

Q. Amazing. O.K. How old were you when you got married?

N. Twenty-two.

Q. O.K. And what do you remember about your wedding? Where did you get married?

N. We got married up in her apartment, upstairs, overhead. The minister come up there and married us.

Q. Do you know who the minister was?

N. Pardon?

Q. Do you know the minister's name?

N. Ah...Robertson. Robertson.

Q. And he was from Digby?

N. Ah....no, he wasn't from Digby. He was the Baptist minister there.

Q. O.K. So how many people were at your wedding?

N. Oh....we just had a very quiet....

Q. Right.

N. Wedding. Ah...my mother and my father and some relatives. Around a few. Not too many.

Q. And where was your wife originally from did you say?

N. North Range is where she was born.

Q. O.K.

N. But they had moved. Her father worked for H.T. Warne as well, for years. And they were living in town....where she was.

Q. I see.

N. And a....yeah....He was a....he was aone of his top men, ah.....for woods work. At the a....worked in the woods. Everywhere, yeah.

Q. O.K. What was your wife's name?

N. Pardon?

Q. What was your wife's name?

N. Selda Haight.

Q. O.K. O.K. Once you were married, where did you live?

N. Well, we lived there awhile, in her apartment. Then we moved across the street from there, where the....the museum, or what is it they call it now? The...that old house ah....what's in it there? They have.....

D. Opposite....just opposite the old Canadian Tire building in town.

N. Yeah.

D. Not opposite. The church is opposite, but a....

Q. O.K. So that would be the...the Town Museum.

N. Yeah, that one they have open to the public. What's its called?

Q. The museum.

N. Yeah. Museum. That what....yeah, they moved in there. There's a....her mother moved in the other....one side of the house and we moved in the other. We paid ten dollars a month rent and she paid fifteen. That was in '37, 1937. And we lived there For....quite a long time a.....I was workin' for Tupper at that time.

Q. O.K.

D. So you see, it kind of averaged out, when you paid ten dollars a month rent.

Q. Yeah. So what did your wife do?

N. Well, she worked in the Royal Store in Digby, until we were married.

Q. Right.

N. And then she quit.

Q. And the Royal Store was a department store?

N. Yeah. A department store in down, center of Digby, there.

Q. O.K. What year did you start your first job?

N. What year?

Q. Ummhm.

N. Outside. That was it, when I went to Tupper's.

Q. Yeah. Do you know what year that was? Or how old you'd have been?

N. Ah.....

Q. Seventeen. He said. Sorry.

N. I don't know which year.1933 or '34. Some where around there.

Q. O.K. So how did your work, when you were working at Tupper Warne's, how did your work change with the seasons? Or did your work change with the seasons?

N. With the seasons?

Q. Yeah.

N. No, it didn't change any.

Q. It did....O.K. O.K. what.....did you have to pay any tax out of this money that you made at Tupper's?

N. Tax? No, I don't think that.....I don't remember any tax.

Q. O.K. O.K. What do you remember about the Depression? I'm now getting into the war years. Do you remember anything about the Depression?

N. No.....that was Depression time then.

Q. Oh...O.K.

N. Rate into it. All the thirties was Depression.

Q. So do you find that people, that the Depression affected people around here any?

D. I think it affected anyone that lived through it.

Q. It did?

D. Yeah.

Q. O.K. you tell me something about the Depression.

D. No, but, I tell yeah. It affected everyone. You take anyone that was, brought up in the Depression years, they don't waste money.

Q. I see.

D. They're....they're very conscious of a.....and.....they...they try to save it. Fer a...you know there's no wasting. And you'll find most people, that were brought up in the Depression, have that same attitude, that....they....they save for a rainy day.

Q. Right.

D. Today, I think, they would have, let tomorrow take care, let tomorrow take care of itself. We never thought that way, in those days.

N. Hope. We had ta.....

Q. O.K. What do you remember about the wartime?

N. 1914 to 18. I was four years old.

Q. O.K. Then the Second World War.

N. I don't remember too much about that war.

Q. Were you in the war?

N. No. I was turned down....fer..... ulcers or somethingat that time.

Q. Right.

N. And a....

D. And you had a family too.

N. Hun....?

D. They didn't want.....

N. And I was working at Weymouth ship yard at that time, too. I helped the.....leave me from going to the war I guess, probably.

Q. O.K. So what....what did you do at the Weymouth ship yard?

N. Ship yard? Well a....we a....my brother and I, Kenneth, that's....yeah, it was Kenneth. We used to.....I used to rivet all this....all the boats together with rivets. We had ta put those ends in the..... One would get on the inside of the boat, one on the outside. And a....every time you'd change from one nail to the other umm.....

Q. So were they building boats there? Is that what they were doing?

N. Yeah. Weymouth, yeah.

Q. I see. O.K. How did people help each other out, in days gone by, that's different from now?

N. Oh, I don't know.

Q. I mean, do you find that, people back years ago, are more willing to help their neighbors.....

D. Oh, absolutely.

Q. Than what they do today?

D. Absolutely.

N. Yeah. They.....help each other out that way, yeah.

Q. Right.

N. When someone is in trouble. If the house burned down or something they'd all get together and....help rebuild it. No money was exchanged back then.

D. No.

Q. O.K. Do you....what do you remember about the Poor Farm?

N. Well....not too much about it. I don't know too much about it. I remember when it burned a.....

Q. I think we all remember when it burnt.

N. Yeah. I got pictures of it here.

Q. Do you?

N. They....used to keep a lot of people in there. They kept....they had their own farm there. Raised pigs and.....and cattle andHad the men workin' at the farm there.

Q. Right. O.K. How important were politics in days gone by, compared to, today?

N. Well, I can't see much difference. (laughter) Everybody was into it. (laughter)

D. People pretty well speaked in their pockets. They didn't bounce around like they do today.

N. No, they're just the two. Liberals and Tories.

D. Yeah, if you were Conservative, you were Conservative. If your were a....Liberal you were Liberal.

N. You carried that through life.

D. Yeah, you were stamped for life.

Q. O.K.

D. It's not much different today.

N. No. No.

Q. Back then, would people get a job, depending on how he or she voted?

D. I think a lot of it....it all depends on what type of job.

Q. Right.

D. If it was a.....anything.....a government job, it was almost completely political.

Q. Which means, you would get the job depending on how you voted?

D. Yeah.

Q. Right.

D. And everyone knew how....pretty well who....how the other one voted.

Q. Right.

D. You were this....or you....that house..... that house was a Liberal house, that house was a Conservative house.

Q. Did you fellows put signs on the....on the lawns.....

D. No, I didn't do that.

Q. Years ago, like they do today?

D. I don't think they put signs

Q. No.

N. They put posters around and signs in mail boxes. Vote for Liberal or vote for Tory. Same as they do today, I guess.

D. Not...not as pronounced as it is today. They got signs along the road now, that state that.

Q. Right. O.K.

N. I know I had ta put the signs up for the Liberals, one day....I was workin' for a Liberal. And I had to put signs up....Liberal signs up. Being a Conservative, that was hard for me.

Q. Oh yeah.

N. Everybody...everybody teased me about it. (laughter)

Q. But why were you putting the signs up though?

N. Well, this....he was workin' for the Liberals. This man was workin' for the Liberals. And I was workin' for him.

Q. Oh, I see.

N. So I had to do as he said.

Q. All right. Great.

N. Had a lot of fun out of it. (?) Comeau, the barber, didn't he tease me about that. He..he was a strong Liberal. To think a Conservative would do that. (laughter) But that went on all the time.

Q. Right.

N. And I used to drove for the polls. Bring people....you were suppose to pick up the Tories or the Liberals.....nobody knew what they were voting. Lot of them they paid off with a bottle of liquor or a box of chocolates to get their votes. We were talkin' about that last night, somebody was sayin' that.

D. Bring back nylons, after the war.

Q. A pair of nylons?

D. Yeah, nylons were hard to get, after the war. They were new then, anyway.

Q. They were something, that were just out? So why were they hard to get, though?

D. Well.....it was just somethin' that was a....developed during the war, nylon was.

Q. Oh yeah.

D. And a...the nylon stocking....well, I would say in the a....late '40s. I don't remember when the election was.....

Q. Right.

D. But it was in the....nylon, if they had a box of nylon. Well that would buy a vote.

Q. O.K. Can you....uh....just briefly describe what Riverdale looked like, when you were growing up. How big it was or....

N. Well, it was just a....just...just a narrow road through it . Lots of trees. Nice....nice settlement.

Q. Did you have any stores back in Riverdale?

N. Stores?

Q. Yeah.

N. No. Not at that time.

D. Everyone cut their houses up. They all....houses are all nice.

N. Yeah.

D. Painted. A good little community.

Q. Right. O.K. O.K. How was the law enforced, in Riverdale when you were growing up?

N. How was the law....?

Q. How was the law enforced? Like....did you ever have police back there?

N. Any what?

Q. Policemen.

N. I never seen any, when I was growing up, back in there, for anything.

D. I don't remember any reason.

Q. That's what we hear a lot of.

D. Yeah.

Q. You know, they just....there never was any trouble.

D. People never locked their doors.

N. No.

D. I remember when my father, a....run a lumber camp and...he said when they moved out in the spring, we used to move out in....in the break-up in the spring, and move back in the fall. He said when they moved out, they left half a barrel of corn and a barrel of molasses and all this stuff, we had. Camp door wasn't even locked. When they moved back in the fall, it was just the same as they went there.

Q. Right.

D. That doesn't happen today.

Q. No, it doesn't.

D. They would crash the camp if a....

Q. O.K. And who was the largest employer, in the community where you lived? The closest employer?

N. It would be Weymouth, wouldn't it? Harry Wagner.

D. I imagine.

N. Harry Wagner and George Hankinson.

Q. And what did they do?

N. They were in the lumber business. Lumber and grocery business. And (?) Taylor. Biggest employers there, I guess.

D. G.D. Campbell.

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K. When would people get together for a good time when you were growing up?

N. Well, it would be birthdays and things, wouldn't it?

D. I don't know. Things with the families.

Q. But, did you ever have, like a....you know, like, maybe, two times a year, you'd have a big barn dance or something like that? No?

Q. O.K.

D. Dance in those days was....

Q. You danced at home.

D. No one danced. (laughter)

N. We just sat.

Q. O.K.

N. Well, the older people were against dancing too.

Q. Oh, they were?

N. Yeah.

D. Very much so.

Q. But they didn't even dance themselves? I'm thinking, trying to think back to those old movies. And you always see them at a...

D. Well they....yeah.

Q. That must have been just in the movies then, eh?

D. Not in ours...not in our family.

Q. O.K. What was the relationship like, between blacks and whites, when you were growing up?

N. Say what?

Q. The difference.....what was the relationship between black people and white people, when you were growing up?

N. Well, where we lived they got along good together. No trouble between us at all, was there?

D.N. No

D. No.

N. But a....a lot of the blacks, colored a....people worked for my dad as hired men...and...

Q. Right.

N. And they got along just the same as...

Q. So how many people would your father have employed?

N. Well, he had....

Q. At one time....how many would he have employed?

N. He had a....contract out, with some company, for the woods. Well he had the most employed. I suppose he had, eight, ten.

D. I...I suppose.

N. And he worked at the...

D. And he had a woods crew.

N. Yeah, ten or twelve, probably.

Q. Right, and were they all black men, or white?

N. Oh no, they were mixed.

Q. O.K. If a black man and a white man both worked at a job, did they both receive the same wages?

N. Back in those days, I think they did.

Q. O.K. And did the black children also go to school with you people?

D. Ah...more than Nevins. Did you have any....

N. Yeah. One family of blacks is all we had.

D. Yeah. When.....when I come along we hadI think there was three families with a....the Hattfield's, they were almost white anyway.

N. Yeah. They weren't that dark.

Q. Right.

N. (?) What do they call it?

Q. Alright.

How superstitious were people, when you were growing up?

N. How superstitious? Whatever. I never heard too much about it.

Q. See, that's the one comment that I get that I find so strange. Like, I....

D. We we never.....not in our family. Superstitions wasn't great, but I know in some families did.

Q. Right.

D. Some families they a....ah...forerunners and all this thing. But not in our family.

Q. O.K. What is the worst weather you can remember?

N. The worst weather?

Q. Yeah.

N. Well, it would be blizzards, in the wintertime. That would be the worst.

Q. But was there any really bad storm that you can remember?

N. One specific storm? One special storm.

Q. That was really, really bad.

N. No. None that I can remember.

Q. O.K.

N. We used to have a lot of snow in them days. A lot more than they do today.

Q. True.

N. A place like Riverdale, would....well they, in the winter time the roads would fill up and....and the road master would call....all the people in the settlement. The men would go and shovel the roads.

D. You had to shovel. You had to go. It was like at a fire.

N. Yeah.

D. You had no choice. You went, unless you were sick, or something.

N. In them days, they'd put an ox team through or horse team through, first, to break it down. And a.....we had a bad.....a lot of snow in them days.

Q. O.K. So the men would have to go, but would thewould the.....children, like the boys, let's say teenage boys, would they have to go also?

D. Well, if they were workin' age, yeah.

Q. O.K. And what do you.....what do they classify as working age?

D. Out of school.

Q. Oh, O.K.

D. Unless you were ten.

Q. Yeah. Uh.....what ghost stories can you remember, when you were little?

N. Ghost?

Q. Ghost stories.

N. (laughter) I don't remember any.....

Q. O.K.

N. Myself.

Q. Alright. What do you remember about Maud Lewis? Do....do.....did you know Maud Lewis?

N. Yes, I.... I knew her.....some what. I knew her husband more than I knew her.

Q. Right.

N. Everette. But a.....they used to live rate down here. But a.....Everette, he used to come up here once in a while. He used to peddle fish every day. But I never knew her any more than just to speak to her. You know, something like that.

Q. O.K. How would you compare life in general today, to days gone by? Was it a better life back then, than what it is today?

N. Well.....I was just as happy those days, as they are today, I think. Probably, more so.

Q. Right.

N. More so. Money....money don't really make you happy.

Q. No, it doesn't. And that's.....very evident out in today's world.

N. Yeah. That's true.

Q. Yeah.

N. Yeah.

Q. O.K. Mr. Wagner, I do know that you used to have a store.....rate in Marshalltown?

N. Yeah.

Q. And was it rate in the house here? Or.....was it separate from the house?

N. No. A little separate store from the house. Separate. We bought it from a.....lady that run it there. She wanted to sell. A.....I'm just trying to think of her name. Names come slow to yeah, when you get old.

Q. Right.

N. And a....we bought it. My wife said she'd like to have a little store to work in, so....this one come up for sale, down there, so I asked her if she wanted to go. She said she'd love to. So I went and bought it for her, more or less.

Q. Right.

N. Just so my wife didn't work in town, at that time. And a....she worked there, I don't know, a few years. And I...I bought that little store, up in Smith's Cove. She closed that, and we went up there. Worked up there for five years. Then.....then I retired after that.

Q. So, it was just a general store?

N. Yeah, grocery store, yeah. General store.

Q. And you used to sell eggs to the people in the community?

N. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I used to have about five hundred hens and one...one day a week, night a week, I'd go and deliver the eggs at different places. So....

Q. How much were a dozen eggs?

N. Sixty cents, for the large eggs and fifty for medium. That's what I got.

Q. Right.

N. But a.....today, they're a little bit more than that.

Q. Just a little bit more.

N. Couple dollars.

Q. Is there anything that you'd like to add to this, Mr. Wagner?

N. Add what?

Q. I'm done with the interview.

N. Yeah.

Q. Is there anything that you would like to add to the story, that I forgot to ask?

N. No, I guess we covered it, pretty well.

Q. Mr. Darrell Wagner, is there anything that you would like to add to the story?

D. No, I guess not. I think you covered the field.

Q. Well, I certainly enjoyed speaking with both of you.

N. Yeah.

Q. It was very interesting.

Now, I'll just shut us down here.

