

Raymond Thurber

Interviewed by Sue Amero. November 20, 2000



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

A. My name is Raymond Percy Thurber.

Q. And who were your parents?

A. My father was Percy Thurber and my mother was Belle Garron Thurber.

Q. O.K. And what was your mother's maiden name?

A. She was a Garron.

Q. Oh...O.K.

A. Ummm.

Q. Ummm....And when were you born?

A. I was born in April 12, 19 and 22 (1922).

Q. Where were you born?

A. I was born right here in Freeport.

Q. And how large was your family?

A. They was eleven in my family. In my a....in my family.

Q. And where do you fit in, in the family?

A. I was the oldest a....boy. They was a....they was three girls older than I was.

Q. O.K. What did your father do for a living?

A. He was a fisherman.

Q. And what do you remember about your mother's work day?

A. Well....(laughter) her biggest work day was to look after eleven kids. But I can recall what it was like when a...she had to bring up the family. My parents did back in the days of depression. And I can recall, when I was just a young boy, that she used to work in the fish plant, canning lobsters....for five cents an hour.

Q. Amazing.

A. Them the kinds of things you wanna hear?

Q. So what did she do with the children, when she went to work?

A. Well...I think that...I guess they worked it, that some of the oldest ones, was old enough to a...sort of look after things. It was rate here in the community, anyway, you know.

Q. O.K. What was a typical school day like for you?

A. Well, from nine o'clock in the morning, 'til three in the afternoon. You've got no vacation, every other day, like you have today. You went five days a week. (laughter)

Q. O.K. What kinds of things did you have to memorize at school?

A. I don't know. Well...I guess you just had to memorize it. Your parents made you go to school. (laughter)

Q. Right. O.K. So how were you disciplined in school?

A. Very strictly, then, in those days. They were allowed to use a strap, if you was a bad boy.

Q. Did you ever get a strap?

A. Yup.

Q. Did you?

A. (laughter)

Q. O.K. How were you disciplined at home?

A. Well I...I...I was well pleased...with the way our parents were lovin' in the family like that. They...they were able to a...to discipline they way they did.

Q. O.K. O.K. What were your daily chores at home?

A. Well, when I was big enough a...to go on the boat fishin' I spent my summers in the boat. And a...so that was pretty well what I done.

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

A. Well I use to go out with the boys and chase the girls.

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

A. Well I...I just don't know how to answer that. They didn't seem to be that many holidays, in...

Q. O.K. O.K. What favorite pets do you remember?

A. Well I always...I always used to have a...a rabbit hound, 'cause I used to like rabbit hunting.

Q. Oh yeah. Right. O.K. What was it like at your house when the catalogue arrived?

A. Well that was always a big event when the T. Eaton Catalogue came. But I know I can only speak from my mother, that she had to go over it very carefully, a...to a...to make sure she could afford to a...buy the things she would like. And a...if you would like, I can tell you one instance, a...my own personal experience a...as far as the T. Eaton Catalogue is concerned. A...I worked all summer, and I earned enough money to buy a suit of clothes with long pants. And the suit cost nine dollars. And the mail used to come in at night then, late in the evenin'. And a...the parcel and I put this new suit on. I wanted to go out and show the whole wide world that I finally had a suit with long pants. But my mother said "You take that right off. That's for Sunday School and that's all." And during the night, our house caught fire and burned and when daylight came all I had...I was in my bare feet and just the underwear I went to bed in. I'd lost my...And my mother always said I cried more because I lost my suit than I did because we lost our house. (laughter)

A. Amazing.

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

A. Well, just what few pennies that I could get. I told somebody this the other day, it's hard for young people today to accept, because they'll say this is just another one of them yarns. But I used to ummm...they used to be an ice cream parlor here where they made their own ice cream. And another chap and I, he's gone now, a...we used to go nights and crank the ice cream, just so we'd get a chance to lick the...the dashers off when we were done. And they had a theatre over here and...and I know one summer they built a dance hall along side of it and another chap and I we all spent our Saturdays a...workin' on that. And...we was able to get...they give us a free ticket to the movie that night. And that was twenty-five cents. You're not gonna believe a lot of this stuff, are you? (laughter) Oh...well a lot of it I can relate to...as myself.

Q. O.K. What was your religion?

A. Baptist.

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

A. Well, my a...I don't...I have to be very truthful and saying that...they weren't, you know...really...a...how would I best put it?...religious. But they believed in the church and we was...all had to go to Sunday School when Sunday came.

Q. Ummhmm. So what was your favorite hymn?

A. Well my a...my hymn...favorite hymn is still the one today and a...we have a hymn sing every Sunday night up to our cottage, in the summer. And my favorite one, they all know that I'm gonna ask for it and "Let your lower lights be burnin'."

Q. Can you sing me a verse of it?

A. Oh my. (laughter)

Q. Do you wanna try...or not?

A. Nope...I better not. (laughter)

Q. O.K. What influence did religion have, throughout your life?

A. Well, I was to a...we had a...a church service, last evening. It was a fisherman's service, that they have every year. And a.....to be very truthful with it, I was very ashamed with myself. When I heard the preacher talkin' about this thing and that, and what's happenin' on the boats, and everything and.....during my sixty years in the boat I...I could write a book on the incidents I'd been in where in...all intent and purposes I should have been long gone. And a...some of them would be just rate down to the split second, of life and death. And a...last evenin', more than any other time when I was sittin' there listenin' to the minister, and I was thinkin' that I am so ashamed with myself that it took me so many years, to realize it wasn't good...just lucky, because I wouldn't...these things wouldn't have happened in the first place. But I have ta believe now, that I had somebody lookin' over me.

Q. That's very true. O.K. How did you keep up with what was going on in the outside world? How would you get your news?

A. Well, back a...my first days, they had radio to get news. Ah then, I went in the army when I was seventeen years old, so, I got a lot of news then. (laughter) I lied to get in the army and I would lie a dozen times to get back out. (laughter)

Q. O.K. What did you grow and raise yourselves? What did your family grow and raise themselves?

A. Well, they never, ever a...back a.....

Q. Like I'm thinking, vegetables....

A. No, they never had any idea...they never had a...any gardens and or anything like that. Daddy was a fishermen, and....What they use to do then, they use to a...they called it going trading. And they would take dry fish and take 'em....And father always went to Bear River, in his boat, and he would trade 'em for vegetables and apples and everything. They was sort of a barter system, that they used.

Q. Right. You just answered my next question. O.K. How much of what you needed, did you make yourselves? Did your family make themselves? Like your clothes and things like that.

A. My mother...yes....she mo...most generally. She always made my, a lot of my clothes and everything, up until I was able to get that look. (laughter)

Q. How did electricity change things for you?

A. Well it changed it...an awful lot. I mean, I never thought too much of it, at the time because all my young life it was just an old kerosene lamp and a...and you just took it, that was a way of life. But when....when they came in with hydro and I know it had to make it a lot more convenient for my mother than it would ta me because at that time they had electric washin' machines and that thing which he never had before. But it didn't make that much difference to me, I don't believe, personally.

Q. O.K. Do you remember when you got running water?

A. Well.....we had run....running water all of my lifetime because we had gravity fed water. So there was no problem there.

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

A. Dr. A. F. Weir.

Q. O.K. How far away did he live?

A. He lived right here in Freeport, at the time.

Q. O.K. Who delivered the babies in your community?

A. Dr. Weir did. They used ta...I...they used to a...he used to a...look after all the babies on the kitchen table.

Q. Do you have any memories of a brother or sister being born when you were growing up?

A. No.

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

A. Well....Raleigh's Medicated Ointment. (laughter) Sloan's Liniment, I think that was about all the medications and Aspirin tablets. (laughter)

Q. So you would take those for a cold or...?

A. Yeah.

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

A. I never. (laughter)

Q. How often would you see a dentist?

A. I don't think I's ever to a dentist 'til I had my teeth taken out durin' the war.

Q. O.K. So when some one died, what was the wake like? Would there be wakes? You know, where they...they would keep the dead body in the home fer two or three days and then they would bury it or...?

A. Yeah...they...they sort of a...it was sort of a community a...thing, in a sense, you know. Everybody a...would pitch in and help with the funeral and a...We used to have an undertaker here and a...and they most generally left a...the body right in the home until burying time.

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

A. I'd have....I don't think I'd been off the island a half dozen times before I went in the army, in 1941. (laughter)

Q. So, if you got the chance to leave Freeport, where would you go?

A. A, what ah ya mean now or...?

Q. No, back then, when you were growing up.

A. Well, I don't know....of any place in particular because I didn't know all of these places, I guess, would be the best way to look at it.

Q. Right. O.K. When you were growing up, what were the roads like?

A. Terrible. (laughter) They was nothin' in the spring of the year. They...you had a job to get through 'em.

Q. They were all dirt roads then?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. So who... who would look after the roads?

A. Well they used to have, what we call a road foreman, in each community, and it was his job ta...see that the ruts when they got too deep would be fixed.

Q. So back in your time, like did your father have to go out and like, and during the winter time would he have to clear a certain section of the road?

A. Yeah. Back in that time, they was a....I think it was through our village commission or the municipal council, either one, that a...everybody was detailed a...had the responsibility of going out and shovelin' snow and they could be penalized if they refused to go. There was no sorry to it or anything like that.

Q. So, do you know what the penalty would have been?

A. No, I don't.

Q. O.K.

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

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

A. Well I...I don't really know. I ah....I say all I ever knew was to go in the boat fishin'. And I loved it. But I

Q. That's good, you liked it.

A. But I just....but I just had....I was just a kid when I left home to go in the army, andand a....The only thing I wanted to do, I was awfully sick during the war. I laid in the military hospital for a year. And then I had to convalesce fer half a year, and then I had to convalesce fer another half year. And a...I only had one thing in mind then. I wanted to go back home.

Q. Yes, I would imagine.

A. And I did come back in....after I got feelin' well. I went back to what I liked to do, fishin'. And I loved it.

Q. There's something about that salt air, isn't there? As a teenager, what kinds of things did you do for fun?

A. Oh...we used to do different things. We used to a...have wiener roasts and we used to go on the beach, down here, and dig clams and have....all get together and have clams and....and then a...ah, there was different things. Then we had card parties and....we used to play a lot of what they called a.....a.....oh, different things.

Q. O.K. Umm. Who were your movie idols? Did you ever go to a movie?

A. Yes, I used to go to the movies and a....Back about those times, I'll have to put it this way, the ones that sound more familiar to me, like Cark....Clark Gable and....and ones like that.

Q. O.K. What kind of music did you like?

A. Well I don't know as I need mus...music with somethin'. It a.....

Q. O.K.

A. Interested me all that much, ta.....

Q. What kinds of sports did you enjoy?

A. Well, I used to play a little bit of a.....baseball, with the teams here and a...skating in the winter time and swimmin' in the summer. (laughter)

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

A. I don't know if Rita wants to hear this or not. (laughter) {Rita is Raymond's wife} Well, I'll put it this way, back in my time, I don't know if you could really call it dating. They used to be a group of us, boys and girls, and we'd go to each other's house and play hide-n-go-seek, you know, that sort of thing but, I can't recall, back in those times, of us sneakin' off in the corner, all by ourselves, or anything like that.

Q. Right.

A. It was more of a group thing and a....

Q. O.K. How far did you go in school?

A. I went to tenth grade.

Q. And why did you leave school?

A. Well, I think maybe there's a....put it to be very truthful about it. I thought I knew it all so I quit. (laughter)

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

A. Well I was a....I don't know....

Q. O.K. Once you left school what did you do?

A. Well, there wasn't all that much....after that, that a....that I went in the army.

Q. O.K. O.K. So how did you meet your wife?

A. Well, she probably wouldn't want me to tell that I told 'em that with our fiftieth anniversary how I met her. I met her a....for the first time, I was in...over to Riverdale and she was just comin' from the lake in her swimmin' suit. And she looked pretty good to me, I'll tell ya. (laughter)

Q. How old were you, when you got married?

A. I don't know. You'll have to ask Rita. (laughter) I think I was twenty-eight, to be truthful.

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

Q. Right in this house. We had it already to move in, when we were married.

Q. O.K.

A. Fifty years ago.

Q. So how much did your first home cost?

A. Well....I....when I come home out of the army, I had intentions of building one. And I had the plans all....drawn up. And a....had a....contractor all engaged. And a.....He was already to build and another friend of mine but they was married and had children. Needed a house built. So I said "Look you go ahead and have yours done first because I'm in no hurry." And the contractor got in with this mix-up with contracts over it, that he a... he wouldn't take another one. So I had job to find a....a contractor. But I did find one. And a....I gave 'im the plans. And he told me to come in at a certain time and they would be ready and when I went to get 'em a....he told me how much it was but he said "I'll tell you one thing Raymond." He said "I know you fellers are all stuck so it's gonna cost ya a thousand dollars more, just like that." And I just grabbed everything up in me arms and I walked away. And I went back to Veterans Affairs and told them and they was five or six different homes his was gonna build on the islands here, and they wouldn't let him build one of them. And I had a chance.....this house was practically new. It was my dream house. 'Cause when I was a kid I used to come here all the time and a....the fellow that owed it a....he said "Raymond, why don't you buy my house?" I says..... "I a....you're kidding?" "No," he says "I'm not kidding." He says "I've got two houses. I can't afford to keep 'em up." 'Cause the next one, right next door, that was his father's and a....so he said "I'll sell ya one." "Well," I said "You want too much money fer it." I said "How much you want?" He said "Twenty-five hundred dollars." I said "Sold." (laughter)

Q. Amazing.

A. I never had....had a day that I meant it.

Q. Yeah....I can see. O.K. How old were you when you went in the army?

A. I was seventeen. I was close....not quite seventeen. I was suppose to be eighteen to get in. And a.... but I was just....under...so I.....like I said I just lied a little but they didn't care. (laughter)

Q. O.K. What was your salary when you started that job?

A. A dollar and twenty cents a day.

Q. How much tax did you have to pay on that?

A. What...in the army?

Q. Yeah.

A. Oh no....I don't think. I.....

Q. Oh...O.K. O.K. What do you remember about the Depression?

A. Well a....its...I...I would repeat myself if I went on a...you know a....because it was just...some-thing that a....the young people just couldn't....realize and a...we never thought so much about it because it was ...a Depression it....it was a way of life, with us. We knew no different.

Q. Umhmm.

A. So we a....we didn't worry about it.

Q. O.K. What do you remember about War time?

A. Well, I a....I never got into the....the heavy....into the heavy fighting, myself. Iearly in the war, it was hard....it wasn't so easy to get overseas because they needed to fill a lot of positions, otherwise. So I was on various things. I was.....twice I was on draft, and on my way overseas and they....they put me.....The last time that I was on my way overseas, when the Japs struck at Pearl Harbour. And a....they pulled a hundred of us, right off the draft and sent us to the west coast because they figured the Japanese would be there, within forty-eight hours. And our job was....I was with....I was with the artillery...anti-aircraft. And a....after we got that set-up...I was.....assigned a detail to go under run the Japanese homes, along the water front. And our job was to confiscate all communications, like telephones, radios or anything like that.

Q. Hmm.

A. And then a....it was the hardest assignment I ever had because I was only a kid and I'd go in those houses, they knew I think....they knew we were comin', they had too. But we had no choice. 'Cause the....the Japanese right on the water front, you know, the spies could be.....in there, any wheres. And a.... but a...the part that broke my heart a...I'd go in these houses and a....and these women they would a....oh, they would come...wrap their arms around ya, pertin' near squeeze ya to death. Just pleadin'. Do whatever you gotta do to me, but don't take my kids outta my house. And a...these little kids would be there a....around their mother and see their mother cry. They didn't know what was goin' on. And.....and I was only a kid myself. And...a....but I could sort of quiet 'em down.... You could go in different houses and....and see where they tore the...tel...telephones off the wall and everything like that. And a....then you had to job....job to find 'em. I know the....some of the boys dug under tons of coal before they found 'em. That sort of thing. But a....I could sort of soften the thing up, 'cause I could 'em that a....(continued on next page)

I'm not taken ya out of your home. We're here to confiscate this. But I knew there was another detail comin' right behind....that was gonna take 'em. But it was one of the hardest assignments I ever had. Well then, after that, I a....I was detailed on different things. One was, I was on assignment to the Americans, the cable boat. And a....went to.... Loose and I, put in communications. And a....we lost our supply vessel. She was torpedoed on the way up. And I was only there a few days and I was taken with appendicitis. And we had no medic, no medication or anything. Before they could get me back to Victoria (British Columbia) my appendix bursted and pneumonia set in. And I laid in the hospital fer pertin' near six months. So that was the end of my career. (laughter)

Q. Awful. How did the first or second World War affect your family?

A. Well a....it affected my mother somethin' terrible. And a....that was hurting me as much as anything, 'cause I was in the....They took me out five different times a....They had what they called a "graveyard ward". A....it was a big auditorium a...the hospital was a....converted... university over into a military hospital.

Q. Umhmm.

A. Oh, they must have been a hundred beds in it. And a....they thought they was gonna lose her. They took out....five...they was....diff....out to this little room. We called it the "graveyard ward". And they took me out five times. And a....I would write to my mother and she was writin' to me. And...all...well I was writin' on hospital stationery, was right on it. And every time it a....I'd get a letter from.....I would tell her I was fine. But....but I didn't fool that woman for a minute. Because I'm.....I couldn't tell her. I couldn't say...

Q. Mamas know.

A. Yeah. I...I...I couldn't tell her. I says "I'm fine, mom. "I'm settin' here waitin' to die." I could just tell her I was fine. And she all wrote back about, "But why are they keepin' ya, if you're so fine?" And it a....I would get these letters with the tear drops in 'em. And that hurt. I suffered fer her more than I did for myself.

Q. Right. O.K. What....what affect did the war have on your....on Freeport?

A. Well I don't know what it had on Freeport. A...don't...I...I...they what...We made a big contribution here in this little village, I can tell ya that. Because a....he's passed on now, a very good friend of mine. He and I decided we would have a....get the names of all the veterans, that served in Freeport, and a...have a bronze plaque made in a...up at the cenotaph.

Q. Umhmm.

A. And there's eighty-three names on that from this little village....was a big contribution.

Q. It was.

A. But if you ask me what my fellins' are now, what did we gain by it? I don't think we gained anything.

Q. O.K. How did you plan for hard times or for your retirement?

A. Well, I didn't make any plans for my retirement. It just "bang-o", rate out of a blue sky, rate in my... had things goin' my way and I was only in my, I think I was only in my fifties and I got sick and that was the end of my career, like that.

Q. Right. O.K. How did people help each other out, in days gone by, that different from today?

A. Well I know of a different cases where a... they would be a lot of sickness or anything and a anything ah...people....had a tendency of clubin' together to help 'em any way they could. Probably, might not be in money, they could be in vegetables or something like that. And if there was anybody got sick they used to take turns, going, what they call....to go sit with 'em. So...so they worked pretty well as a group. 'Cause they was no run you off to the hospital, then.

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

A. Well the part....I don't know too much about it. But a...the only thing that...that I always thought about it, a....that people took the...the...the wrong reaction to it. What I mean by that a....well this good for nothin' fellow wound up in the Poor House, what I'm saying they....People look at it from that point of view. I never did. Just because the person had....wasn't....capable of lookin' out for himself or anything they shouldn't have been penalized with that. I mean that would be my fellins'. Whether it was right or wrong.

Q. O.K. How important was politics, in the early years?

A. Well...I don't know andif it's any different...

Q. Well, I'd like to give you a "for instance." Would a person get a job depending on how he voted?

A. Well I....I don't....I've heard that different times but a....I can only speak for myself.

Q. Umhmm.

A. I belonged to one party, all of my life, my father before me and a....I don't know of anybody that really a...took the politics..

Q. O.K.

A. To get a job. I never did anyway. (laughter)

Q. O.K. Describe Freeport for me, when you were growing up. Like, stores and different things that would be here. Was it a bustling little place?

A. Yes, umm....they was a....one, two, three.....I think they was a.....around about eight stores in Freeport alone, when I first remember.

Q. Do you remember....?

A. Eight or ten and a.....now...there's one.

Q. O.K. So they would have been grocery stores or.... clothing stores?

A. Grocery stories. No, groceries....it would be General Stories.

Q. O.K. Alright. So how was the law enforced in Freeport?

A. Well a.....our laws, we had a.....the only police protection we had was what little we get out of Digby. We never had any.....There used to be, way back, I know I used to get....They had.....they was appointed by the Municipal Government, a.....police constables. And I know I was on there fer years. And you had to act whether you wanted to or not.

Q. So, if there was a problem in the community, then you could be called out?

A. Yes, be called out.....you'd be called out a....better get up or what have yeah. It didn't make it very popular.

Q. O.K. Who was the largest employer in Freeport?

A. Well a.....the largest one, they use.....D.B. Kinney is the largest one now. 'Bout the only one. But when I was a young fellow, that they was.....they was a....four fish plants goin' strong in a....Freeport. Now there's none.

Q. O.K. In those four fish plants, how many people would have worked there, roughly?

A. Well, probably a dozen.....Well, I'd have to think, just on a quick guess, they would be in the vicinity of a hundred.....you take in the four a....plants.

Q. So their job would have been to clean the fish....

A. Oh yeah.

Q. and can it?

A. Umhmm.

Q. O.K. So did you belong to any organizations, example, like the Masons, or The Knights of Columbus or anything like that?

A. Well I'm a....Past Master of the Masonic Lodge. I'm a Past District Deputy Grand Master of the Odd Fellows Lodge. I'm a.....a Life Member of what they call the Annapolis Valley Affiliated Board of Trade.

Q. O.K. So how important were those organizations to the community?

A. Well as far as the....the....the two....fraternal organizations, that they were to me a....they were very effective into your community. In your communityaffairs, like you know, the....well, to me, they was a need for it. It was similar to your church, in a lot of respects.

Q. O.K.

A. But a.....the Affiliated Board of Trade was the one that I really a.....I felt so bad when it closed up, 'cause that was there fer years and years. And I was there, oh I'd say only.....I don't know how many years, I was Chairman of Fisheries Committee fer a lot of years. And the things that we accomplished were like, fer instance, a....I took on the project of the getting' the sea lane changed in the Bay of Fundy. Which seemed a...in the start, looked like something you probably could pick up the phone and tell it would be changed. And that's all there are to it. But it wasn't as simple as that. It took me seven or eight years. You had to fight all the powers to be, in Ottawa and every where's else. (continued on next page)

And then you....find....only to find out it's an international thing and....thirty countries had to vote on it. And a....the shipping magnates, out of New York, had to O.K. it. And that was the....the most tryin' project I ever took on.

Q. O.K.

A. But it was an organization that a....the public doesn't really know that a....just how good a....what a great plant.....part they played because a...we didn't go out around and tell 'em what we were doin' and a....we just worked fer these project politicians. Nine times out of ten got the credit for it. That's all they think about. That's the way it's suppose to be, I guess.

Q. O.K. When would people get together for a good time?

A. Well, it's hard to answer that. It's just accordin' to what time....good time you want. If you're gonna go on a beer party, you had one party and.....if you're married to a teetotaler like I am you don't get to those kinds of parties. (laughter)

Q. O.K. What do you remember about tourism.....tourism in days gone by? Like where wood.....where would the people come from and how would they get here and where would they stay?

A. Well....when my....my first a....being involved anyway with a....tourists a....they was people here, they're passed on now, that used to have, what they called a "rooming house" here. Most generally, anybody came. And quite often a.....a they would be some body come there a.....would like to a....to go fishing, or you know. So the ones that owed it asked me if they could go out with me. Well, I always told 'em the same thing. I says "Yes sir, you're welcome to go, but, I can't let it interfere with my operation." If they get sea sick, I can't bring 'em in. And a....but they was no....nothin' like it is today, you know, organized. And a.....so a....but people didn't a.....they didn't advertise back at those times for tourists, and there wasn't any. I know one time, that a....they was one chap and his wife, come down here and they were stayin' up at "the Bushy Place" and a...wanted to know if I would take 'em out. And I said "Well, you know what the story is. Tell 'em to be down at seven o'clock in the morning." So they come down and a.... nice couple, and, I think it was the second day, they went out with 'em , fer I even know what their names was. (laughter) And a.....it was Lt. Governor Mitchener. Well then I said to myself, "Holy smokes, how can I entertain a man of that caliber." But they had a time of their lives, all the week. And a.....it was close to the end of the week and I said "Mr. Mitchener, I...would I sound too ignorant if I asked you how you happened to find this place?" He said "Raymond," he says, "I'm ashamed to tell ya." He said "My wife was writin' her thesis for her masters degree and she wanted to write about an ancient fishin' village with all the old tarred-paper shacks and tell fish stories. And we came to the information bureau in Digby, and they said "We've got just the place fer ya down Freeport." And he wasn't very happy 'bout it. He said they're goin' hear about it. And a.....'course I wasn't very happy 'bout it neither but he did bring it up to ourour MLA's later. I told him, he...Baden Powell, his name was. He said "Raymond, I was talkin' to one of your old fishin' buddies in Yar....in Halifax." He happened to be there on speakin'. And he told 'im the whole story there. He wasn't happen with it at all. But I come down here and find the most pleasant people. Houses all painted.

Q. Right. O.K. How superstitious were people when you were growing up?

A. Oh, I don't know. Can't answer that one.

Q. O.K.

A. I've heard that being superstitious. I don't even hardly know what they're talkin' about.

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

A. Well, the worst weather I can be..... a remember is a.....one we had....what they called the “Hog Storm”.

Q. Ground Hog Day.

A. Ground Hog Day. That’s the worst one I ever was involved. Pretin’ near ruined me, that did.

Q. Right.

A. I lost a....two boats. Wharfs, buildins’ and everything. And that one boat, I just brought home. I brought it home on a Saturday, a new one. And I lost it on Monday. And the other one wasn’t very old, that I lost. I lost everything and I’ve been workin’ years for to collect up and.....

Q. O.K. What do you know about shipwrecks, around here?

A. (laughter) Ask Derek.

Q. Yes. Yes, that was bad question.

Q. O.K. What colorful characters can you remember?

A. Beg-pardon?

Q. What colorful characters, in your community, can you remember?

A. Oh, I don’t know.

Q. O.K. What ghost stories can you remember from your younger years?

A. Well, I don’t know. I’ve heard ‘em.....different ones, but.....(laughter)

Q. O.K. Do you remember Maud Lewis?

A. No, I don’t know her. All I know.....I’ve heard tell of her. That’s all.

Q. Right. O.K. How would you compare life, in general today, to days gone by? Do you know.... do you think.....I guess it comes down to.....Do you think that the....the children are better off today, or when you were a child? I mean, was the life a better life back then, or today?

A. Well, to me a....at my age a....I’d say, give me the good old fashion days. Because I don’t a....in my own mind....today....it’s too fast a life today. And a....I...I know right here in this community, I don’t know half the people because....I’ll ask Rita whose this is. Well, it’s so and so, but her father is somebody else and that sort of thing. You never heard tell of that when I was a kid.

Q. Right.

A. And a....so that’s how it looked different to me. I.....but a....No, I.....I think that people were closer together then.....friendlier.

Q. O.K. Just one more question. Going back to when your mother worked in a fish factory and she canned lobsters.

A. Umhmm.

Q. Can you tell me a little bit more about that? Like, what kind of things would she have to do or how would you do.....How would you can lobsters?

A. Well, what they a.....see they had a cannery would can ‘em in the end. But they had to, well you know lobsters. You have to break the shell on. Take all the meat out of ‘em and.....And a....I...I can remember back at a.....when they didn’t use gloves then. But...her comin’ home.....home with her....all of her fingers wrapped in yarn a.....where the shells would cut their fingers, ah, workin’ in ‘em all the time. It was....it was pitiful. I used to feel so bad to see her that way.

Q. O.K. Well, is there anything that you would like to add or to say or.....?

A. No, I guess I said too much now. They always.....Rita always says I never learn to keep my big mouth shut. (laughter)

A. You turn that off.

