

# Ronald Kinney

Interviewed by Susan Amero. November 27, 2000



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

A. Ronald Delisle Kinney.

Q. Could you spell Delisle please.

A. D capital D-e-l-i-s-l-e.

Q. O.K. And who were your parents?

A. Ellsworth Kinney and Della Kinney.

Q. And your mother's maiden name was?

A. Mullen.

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

A. A.....October 11th , 1913.

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

A. That house up there. (Mr. Kinney is pointing to the house next door. It is located on Kinney Road, in Ashmore. The second house on the left hand side of the road.)

Q. And do you know who your grandparents were?

A. Yes. Charles Kinney, he lived just here in the corner.

Q. Umhmm.

A. His wife's name was Emma. And my mother's parents lived down to Weymouth North. And it was John Mullen and Emma Mullen.

Q. O.K. And how large was your family?

A. There was four of us.

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

A. I'm the oldest.

Q. And what did your father do for a living?

A. He fished most of his life along with other things.

Q. O.K. What do you remember about your mother's work day? Whether that was at home or if she worked out?

A. No, she worked home. They was.....them days they wasn't much outside.

Q. Right.

A. Yeah.

Q. And could you tell me anything about her work day at home? The things that she had to do?

A. Well, she did everything. She....yeah. Around.....what you'd do home with four kids and ....you know.

Q. Right. That's O.K. O.K. What was a typical school day like for you?

A. Well it was.....(laughter) It wasn't like it is now. It was down here to the Ashmore School. I think they was fifty or so in the school. One teacher. And.....

Q. One teacher for fifty students?

A. Well, when I started. But it cut down after.....a little after a while. But I think that's what they was that year....when I started.

Q. So one....was it all in one room?

A. Yes.....oh yeah. One teacher, one room.

Q. Wow. So what kind of things did you have to memorize at school?

A. . Well.....I don't know what you'd say about that. That was a.....We had the ordinary lessons same as, I guess, every school. We had English, and you know. And you had..... ta rea.....yeah.

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

A. With a strap or in the corner. (laughter)

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

A. Oh well.....that was a little different. (laughter) Wasn't like that. Wasn't too bad.

Q. O.K. It wasn't too bad at home?

A. Oh no.....no.

Q. What were your daily chores at home?

A. Oh well. We'd have to look after.....We helped in the barn, with the cattle and one thing or another. Get in wood, kindlins' and all that stuff. You know.

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

A. Well, in the evening it was always lessons. They was no radio or tel...television or anything like that, then.

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

A. Well, I suppose, like most kids, it would be Christmas. But anyway a.....summer was pretty good. Yeah.

Q. O.K. Can you tell me about your.....about Christmases at your house, growing up?

A. Well, we always looked for Santie Clause and all that stuff, fer a while. (laughter)

Q. Right.

A. We always had a good Christmas. Yeah.

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

A. Well....we never had a dog when I was home....'til on the last end. We had some cats, that's all. And we had a barn full of cattle.

Q. O.K. What was it like at your house when the Sears or Eaton's Catalogue would arrive?

A. Well...I suppose everybody tried to get a hold of it first. (laughter) Look it through. Yeah.

Q. So, would your mother have done most of her shopping from the Sears Catalogue?

A. A lot it, yeah. Mostly Eaton's too.

Q. O.K.

A. Yeah.

Q. O.K. Where else did you get the things that you needed?

A. Weymouth. We had no car or anything so we couldn't run to Digby. We'd .....get to Weymouth and like that.

Q. Did you walk to Weymouth?

A. Oh no, we had a horse.

Q. Oh yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. And you went shopping, where?

A. In the different....ah let's see a.....Well, there was Journey's and a....what was the name of .....Mullen's and Taylor's and.....

Q. They were all variety stores?

A. They was different stor.....yeah. Some were clothes and one thing or another. Yeah.

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

A. Not much. Very little. They was no way for a kid to get money, then.

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

A.Baptist.

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

A. Well.....we usu.....we usually went to church down here ta Ashmore. And usually walked. (laughter) Anyway.....but I guess, it wasn't like some. We had a quite a lot of freedom.

Q. O.K. What was your favorite hymn?

A. I like 'em all. (laughter)

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

A. I don't know what to say.

Q. Is it something that you've practiced, since you were a child?

A. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

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

A. Well....we had a few papers. Use to take the old Family Herald. (laughter) And a...yeah, we had the...daily paper, some of the time, like that. I guess we didn't get to much news anyway.

Q. Did anybody else live in your house, with your family, when you were a child?

A. Ah.....my grandfather did. He....he boarded there.

Q. O.K. And why did he live with your family?

A. Well, his wife died and ...he didn't have too good eye sight. He couldn't handle a...you know, he...he just ate there and slept there. But he went down to his own house, down there, during the day and like that.

Q. I see.O.K. What did you grow and raise yourselves?

A. Everything we ate. You know....we had a good garden and..... Yeah....we'd grow all the different vegetables and everything.

Q. And then you just kept those all winter?

A. Oh yes. Yeah.

Q. In a root cellar, or....?

A. Yeah. In the cellar, yeah.

Q. Did yeah?

Q. And what about....what kind of animals did you raise?

A. Well.....we had oxen, and another pair comin' up, and a pair of younger ones comin' up. And....and we always kept a beef and a pig and hens.

Q. O.K. Did you barter for anything?

A. I don't think.

Q. O.K. Umm, how much of what you needed, did you make yourselves?

A. What would that be?

Q. That would be like clothes or .....

A. Well yeah. Her mother...she sewed quite a lot.

Q. Did she?

A. Yeah.

Q. For all of your.....all....of...you....children?

A. Yeah. Work clothes and one thing or another.

Q. Right.

A. And all that. Yeah.

Q. So, how did electricity change things for you?

A. Ah....electricity never came home...I think 1930 or somethin'. It only went through here when I was goin' to school I think in the 20's. (1920's) The last of the 20's is when the line went through.

Q. Right.

A. And they put the lights in after that. I was away when they got electricity.

Q. O.K. When did you get running water?

A. That was quite a while after that. I don't know just what year. I was away then. I wasn't livin' home then.

Q. Right.

A. I....

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

A. Ah....Dr. Howlette and Dr. Eldakin, in Weymouth.

Q. O.K.

A. Oh yeah....and Dr. Pothier.

Q. O.K. And how far away did they live?

A. Five.....five miles.

Q. O.K. And who delivered the babies in your community?

Q. I would say.....well.....up home I imag.....I think it was Dr. Eldakin.

Q. O.K.

A. Yeah.

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

A. Ha. Ha. (laughter) For a cold?

Q. Yeah. Anything.

A. (laughter) Well....we'd mix up Minard's Liniment and molasses. That helped. (laughter)

Q. You had to drink that?

A. Oh yeah. You'd take that. Was good...fer a cold. Stop your coughin', one thing or another. Oh yeah.

Q. Any other home remedies? And it doesn't have to be for a cold. It could be for a cut. It could be for anything.

A. Well, I guess about all we had was iodine, for a cut or somethin' and..... Yeah.

Q. Do you ever remember using bread poultices?

A. Yeah. If you had a boil. (laughter) Yeah. Yeah.

Q. Can't think of any more?

A. Well, I never was sick much. I never had much trouble. I was lucky.

Q. Right. Yeah. You look awesome for your age, Mr. Kinney.

A. (cough)

Q. Really. You look very well. How did you take care of your teeth?

A. Well.....you'd try to keep 'em clean, one thing or another. But they was no goin' to a dentist and have 'em looked over fer.....you know a.....

Q. Now, did you use toothpaste and a toothbrush back then?

A. Yeah.

Q. Or did you use soda?

A. Well...some soda but we use to use some toothpaste, too. Oh yeah.

Q. So how often would you see a dentist?

A. When I needed a tooth pulled.

Q. O.K. When some one died, how was the funeral handled?

A. Well.....the undertaker was from Weymouth, Garrett Nicholls. And a.....well they come to the house and .....got...fixed 'em all up there and....as far as I know....put 'em in a casket. And the funerals was usually from the house. Now, it's..... in the church.

Q. So the body would remain in the house for a few days?

A. Yeah. Yeah.

Q. Pretty amazing, isn't it? O.K. So how often did you get to leave Ashmore?

A. I never left Ashmore 'til I went away. I....I....I had my sixteenth birthday in Wolfville. I went up there and worked....to Acadia. I worked there.

Q. Right.

A. I didn't go to school there.

Q. Right. O.K. When you got to leave Ashmore, where would you go?

A. Well.....I think we went to Digby a few times. I went up on my bicycle or something and.....and to Weymouth. There.....there was no where much to go. You.....

Q. O.K. What were the roads like?

A. Dirt roads. And they were rough. In the winter they were a mess.

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

A. Well....I suppose the government that was in. They'd have somebody ta.....but a...they were still a mess. They were dirt roads. Like this one out here.

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

A. Well....I....I figured that a....I would go....I would fish, 'cause my father did.

Q. Right.

A. But I worked up there. I worked up there eight years.

Q. O.K. I'm gonna get to that part a little later.

A. Yeah.

Q. O.K. What did you hope to do, when you grew up?

A. Well.....I went to grade ten in school. And....they wasn't much to look ahead to. But I...I...figured that I would fish.

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

A. Well....it was all up there. (Mr. Kinney is pointing to his head.)

Q. O.K.

A. You see.

Q. O.K. Who were your movie idols?

A. I don't remember having any, 'cause you never saw any pictures. (laughter)

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

A. Well, I never was much of a musician. I like to hear singin' and like that, but a....

Q. O.K. What kinds of sports did you enjoy?

A. Well, the only sports we got mixed up in, was goin' to school....went we went to school. Play ball and like that.

Q. Right. What do you remember about dating?

A. Well, that all happened up there.

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

A. Ten.

Q. And why did you leave school?

A. Well....I left in the spring, because....the teacher we had, all she had was grade ten. She was tryin' to teach grade ten with a school full of kids and I wasn't getting' any where. So I quit.

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

A. Fifteen.

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

A. Well a.....that fall I a....I went to Wolfville to work.

Q. O.K. Now you can tell me about Wolfville. So....so why did you go to Wolfville?

A. Well, I had a chance fer a job there, and I went.

Q. And what was the job doing?

A. Well we....I was working in dining hall and a....kitchen up there.

Q. At the university?

A. Pardon me?

Q. At the university?

A. Yup. I started in the vegetables and a...dish room, like that. Yeah.

Q. O.K. So....I'd be really interested in finding out.....how did you know about that job?

A. Well...they was some more here goin'.

Q. Oh, I see.

A. Workin' up there. And then wanted some....fella to come and...asked me and I went.

Q. Did you like that job?

A. Well....I....yeah it was good. The pay wasn't good but they....was no pay any where, then.

Q. Right.

A. But it was inside. It was warm. We had good food. We had good bed....place to sleep and everything. Good rooms.

Q. You boarded out?

A. No....we...they....you stayed right there.

Q. O.K.

A. You had good rooms and they made our beds and everything for us. It was good. Like that. Looked after our rooms and.....yeah.

Q. So how long did you work there for?

A. I stayed there eight work.....eight terms.

Q. That's amazing. O.K. How did you meet your wife?

A. Right there. (laughter)

Q. Oh really.

A. She was workin' there.

Q. Oh, that's amazing. So how old were you when you got married?

A. Twenty-four.

Q. O.K. And what do you remember about your wedding?

A. Well it was in Phinney Cove. That's where she was from.

Q. And where would that be?

A. It's in Annapolis Co.....you know where Hampton is?

Q. Yes I do.

A. Well, it's four miles down.....no....down this way.

Q. O.K.

A. On the shore. Phinney Cove. That was her home.

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

A. Here. Right here.

Q. O.K. And how much did your first home cost?

A. It'd be pretty hard to say that because I....we built it and we had a couple of rooms when we started. And we kept....kept finishin'.

Q. O.K. O.K. When you were at Acadia, just describe to me, briefly, what kinds of things you had to do at your job?

A. Well, I worked with three other fellas getting' the vegetables ready.

Q. Umhmm.

A. And then we worked in the dishes. Get...you know....the dish room to...had a big dish washer and like that. And then we had to work in...out in the kitchen some and....yeah.

Q. So how many hours a week would you have worked?

A. We worked seven days a week. We had one day off a month. Wasn't like it is now.

Q. No. O.K. What was your salary when you started that job?

A. Twenty-five dollars a month. They was a lot that wasn't gettin'.... They had.....they would come there and.....and want somethin' to eat and everything. There was a lot of people wasn't gettin' any more.

Q. So how much tax did you have to pay out of that?

A. Didn't have to pay any.

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

A. Well that was the Depression. I a.....ten days after I got there the stock market crashed and that's when the Depression started.

Q. So that didn't affect your job, though.

A. Not the job. But...we did get a little cut in pay.

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

A. Well....I don't know what to say about that. I didn't get mixed....I didn't get there any way. Wife's brother was killed in that.

Q. O.K. Umm....how did the first or the second war....World War....affect your family?

A. Well, the first war....my mother had three brothers in it.....two died...one didn't. And this one, last one, my wife's brother was killed over there.

Q. O.K. What affect did the war have on Ashmore?

A. I don't know what you'd sat about that.

Q. A lot of men probably lost their lives.

A. Yeah. Yes, around here and.....yeah. Yeah.

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

A. Well, you tried to work and gather up all you could. But.....it was hard to get too much ahead.

Q. O.K. How did people help each other out, in days gone by, that's different from now? Like, we found that, people in yesterday, or years gone by, that they were so much more willing to help their neighbors.....

A. Yeah.

Q. than what they do?

A. Yeah. I know 'cause a.....lots of times they'd have, what they call frolics, years ago, and help cut their fire wood up, one thing or another. We never did that. But we went. And you'd get your supper or somethin' and....have a good time.

Q. So, what other kinds of frolics can you remember? You say there was a wood cutting one.

A. Yeah. And a....sometimes we'd go and haul wood for people, you know, if they was sick or somethin'. We've done that. Yeah. 'Cause my father always had a team.

Q. Oh yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. So the frolics were a big thing then?

A. Well, they was a some around and ....it all.....pertain near everybody would go.

Q. Right.

A. Yeah.

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

A. I don't remember anything about it. (laughter)

Q. O.K. O.K. How important was politics, in days gone by?

A. Ah.....

Q. Are they as important, or more important, or less important, do you think, than today?

A. Probably they was more important. If you was on the right side you might get a.....little work. But we was always on the wrong side, so we didn't get it. (laughter)

Q. O.K. What do you remember about election campaigns?

A. Well it was only right around, you know, you didn't get anywhere and.....When I was home here but.....no radios and like that. But after a while, after we got back here, why it was a little different.

Q. Right. O.K. Can you tell me what Ashmore was like, when you were growing up? Like, how many stores would have been here, roughly, or something like that?

A. Down here where Willard's father.....They had a store. That's a little buildin' that's still there. They usin' it for a house now. And.....let's see.....up to the cove.....up Gilbert's Cove, they was a couple stores.

Q. And they were grocery stores or.....?

A. Sold everything.

Q. O.K.

A. Everything. Yeah.

Q. O.K. How was the law enforced in Ashmore?

A. Pardon me?

Q. How was the law enforced in Ashmore?

A. I don't know.

Q. O.K.

A. I don't think...(laughter)

Q. There wouldn't have been any police or anything, back then?

A. No.

Q. O.K.

A. No.

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

A. The largest?

Q. Umm.

A. Well, I suppose you'd.....be the road that's all the boss on the road or whatever. I mean they.....Everybody else worked fer themselves, like.

Q. Oh yeah.

A. And a.....they'd probably work in the woods and sell some logs or like that or wood. I know here we fished and.....that was a pretty good job.

Q. O.K. Did you belong to any organizations when you were growing up? Like the Masons or The Knights of Columbus or anything like that?

A. No I.... I belonged to the Masons but I did that in....later in 1951.

Q. O.K. O.K. So how important were the Masons in your community?

A. Well, they only started a couple of years before that. They were way back and....then they closed up and then they started again in 1949, I think.

Q. O.K. O.K. Can you tell me anything more about them? Like, for instance, like their....their rituals or the ceremonies or anything like that? Are.... are the Masons....are they still in, around here today?

A. Yeah.....they're goin' good....right now.

Q. O.K. So what kinds of things do they do?

A. Well, it's usually inside the lodge. But a....they help out in some things. Oh yeah....now they got a program a....the lodge pays two fifty and a....government....and a.....Grand Lodge pays five hundred....to a student.

Q. Oh yeah.

A. We do that.

Q. Oh, that's good.

A. And a....that's help some kids out, you know.

Q. Right.

A. You can help out a couple that way.

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

A. Well.....I suppose in the summer they used to have picnics, or different things. Yeah.

Q. Now, was that done through the community or through the church or.....?

A. Mostly through the church, they'd have their own....yeah.

Q. And maybe once in the summer you'd have a big old picnic?

A. Oh yes.....oh yeah.

Q. And what kinds of things would you do there?

A. Oh, they'd play games, one thing or another. And then a....the families would have....get together too. Some the time, it was down here to the shore. 'Cause we had camp down there same as they are now.

Q. Oh yeah.

A. Yeah.

Q. Play some music?

A. Yeah....some. Yeah.

Q. O.K. What do you remember about tourisms, in days gone by? Like, were there very many tourists that ever came here, in years....years ago?

A. Ah...down to Weymouth North they was a couple of hotels down there.

Q. Oh yeah.

A. "Bay Side" and Sun.... the other one a "Sunset" I guess.

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

A. Well some of them were. (laughter) Never bothered me any but....a lot of them were superstitious, more so than now.

Q. Can you think....do you know any of the superstitions that....things that they would be scared of or....superstitious about?

A. If a bird got in a house. I know one woman that...had curtains with birds in or somethin', she got 'em out of there. They were....that was....yeah.

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

A. Ah....we had an August gale that washed a lot of our beach out down there and everything. Yeah.

Q. Do you know roughly when that would have been?

A. Ah...It's back in the twenties. Yeah. Never had any as bad as that since. Yeah.

Q. So...that was in the summer time too?

A. Oh yeah.

Q. This was.... So the weather was nice and warm?

A. Yeah. But it was a hurricane. We got it, you see.

Q. O.K. Do you know anything about any shipwrecks from around here?

A. Ah....the vessel that went from Weymouth, she was from Weymouth, got on Gull Rock, "The West-way".

Q. Now, where's Gull Rock?

A. Down off of Westport.

Q. You don't know the name of the ship or anything?



A. Westway.

Q. Westway. And when was that?

A. Well....it must have been back in the twenties, I guess because....

Q. O.K. And were there very many people on the boat?

A. I wouldn't know how many. They wouldn't have a very big crew. But they all got off.

Q. Oh they got....they lived.

A. Oh yeah.

Q. So....why did the ship go down?

A. Well....she piled on Gull Rock.

Q. Oh I see. O.K. Can you remember any colorful characters from your community?

A. (laughter) No, I guess I.....

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

A. No, I don't know about ghost stories.

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

A. Yeah. I seen her.....Her husband used to peddle.....peddle fish.

Q. Oh yeah.

A. You'd see her quite often. 'Cause I know a.....he'd stop up home. Mom would buy from him. She'd buy some of her pictures and .....postcards, and one thing or another she'd have, that she had painted.

Q. Did you ever see her?

A. Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Q. So, can you describe her to me?

A. I don't know how you'd describe her. I don't know how she, yeah. I don't know how she ever painted. You know her hands and everything. But she....she done alright. A lot better than I could do.

Q. Hello! Yeah. O.K. How would you compare life in general, today, to days gone by?

A. Well...it.....it's better this way. We have electricity, we have a television, electric organ and all that stuff. Back them days, we didn't have that. But, I can't see as we're livin' a bit better now than we did then. We live good.

Q. O.K. Mr. Kinney, that's about all that I have. If there's anything you want to take about or say about live when you were growing up, fell free.

A. I guess probably them days, we were quite lucky. Home. I...I don't know. Is that gonna be any help to yeah?

Q. That will be lots of help. Trust me. I'll shut everything down. One....