

Thelma Merritt

Interviewed by Cindy Graham, December 1, 2000



Q: What is your full name?

A: Thelma Eunice Theriault Merritt

Q: So your maiden name obviously was Theriault.

A: Yes.

Q: What were both your parents' names?

A: My father's name was Charles Vinald Theriault. And my mother's name was Hilda Sabean Theriault....well Hilda Georgina Sabean Theriault.

Q: So her maiden name was Sabean.

A: Yes.

Q: And just for the record Thelma, how do you spell Vinald?

A: V-i-n-a-l-d.

Q: OK. And do you happen to remember the names of your grandparents?

A: My father's....my father's parents....his father's name was Frank Theriault. I don't know the middle name.

Q: Yeah.

A: And his mother's name was Dorinda, and she was a Titus, and she married my Grandfather Theriault.

Q: And that was on your father's side.

A: Yes. And my mother was ah.... Aaron....Aaron Sabean, and my grandmother's name was Rebecca McQuorrie Sabean.

Q: Where did the Sabeans come from? Where did they live?

A: Well they lived over....well they were living in the United States ah, before they moved to Nova Scotia here, but they had lived over around Havelock, those places back of Weymouth. Yeah. And of course back in those days, when you grew up and you were old enough to work, you went to the States because that was the only place you could earn any money. So he went....my Grandfather Sabeen went to the States to work. And my grandmother came from Cape Breton. And she went to the States to work, and they met there and got married. Well he always wanted to come back to Nova Scotia. He was never happy there.

Q: Everybody does.

A: So he came back. But he didn't live very long after they came back. He ah, had cancer. He died when he was sixty, with cancer. And then my grandmother went back to the....she had a family of children....well they were old enough then to go to work, so she went back to the States where they could get work and earn a living.

Q: I don't know what would be worse, dying of homesickness or cancer.

A: I don't know.

Q: Both would be terrible.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ahm, how large was your family, your brothers, sisters, your immediate family?

A: Ah, my mother had seven children. One....the oldest one died when it was three months old and the last one, the one younger than me was a stillborn baby. So there was only five of us left.

Q: Growing up together.

A: Mm.

Q: And where did you fit in, in that lineup?

A: I was the youngest living.

Q: Yeah, OK, yeah. And what did your father do for a living?

A: Farm.

Q: Farmed. And, OK, what was the community you grew up in? I'm not even a hundred percent sure of that.

A: Rossway.

Q: It was Rossway, all of your life.

A: Yeah. You've seen the...you know where the old house, the house that was there that burned down, that Harriet and Eddie Stevens lived in....

Q: Yeah.

A: Well that was our homestead.

Q: That you grew up in.

A: Mm hmm.

Q: So your father farmed all his life. He was never tempted into the fishery?

A: He had worked in the fish some over in Gulliver's Cove in the summertime, but he mostly farmed.

Q: Was farming a way to raise a family or was it a....was it a lucrative profession, or was it....?

A: Well, it wasn't too lucrative but....

Q: No.

A: We never was hungry or cold, I can tell you that. Yeah, cutting....always burned wood, and he cut his own wood. And he cut wood too, in the winter you know, for.... to sell, for....that was part of his living.

Q: Do you remember the size of the original homestead? How many acres?

A: It was a farm. It was quite....it went to the shore...

Q: Yeah.

A:From....from the main road to the shore, and it was quite big.

Q: Do you know when the house was built, or who built it?

A: I believe they....it was built long before my grandfather.... My grandmother....the house had belonged to my grandmother and grandfather. That was where they moved when they came from the States.

Q: Yeah.

A: Ah, and it wasn't....it was a long way from being new when they bought it. But, ah, someone said it was some man by the name of Cornwell. Now it wasn't Clarence Cornwell....

Q: Yeah.

A: But it was somebody older than that, back farther than that.

Q: There's lots of Cornwells in the Waterford cemetery.

A: Yes....yeah.

Q: So can you describe what your....what the seasons were like, and what the daily work was like for your father as a farmer?

A: Well he....he worked awfully hard. He got up five o'clock in the morning and he was....it was usually close to eight when he got through at night. He always....he had cattle, you know, to take care of, and he always kept cattle and pigs....hens. Of course us girls would tend the hens and feed the pigs and things like that when he was working in the woods. But ah, he worked....he worked awfully hard. We never owned a car....

Q: No.

A: Never owned a vehicle, never owned a tractor. He had a yoke of oxen and a horse that he did his work with, and ah, he....he wasn't a man that ever wanted to go in debt very much. He'd a never bought a car because he couldn't....he didn't want to buy anything he couldn't pay for.

Q: But cars were....there were starting to be cars around?

A: There was....when I was a child, there was two cars in Rossway.

Q: Yeah?

A: Oswell Mullen owned one, and Huey Robbins owned the other.

Q: Yeah?

A: And they were Model T Fords I think, and they had....I can remember them. They had soft....a soft top and sides. They weren't like the cars now.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember thinking your father, ahm, was sensible, or were you like some teenagers who think their father should get the new modern stuff?

A: My father....and I think all us children felt the same way....

Q: The same way.

A: He was....he was perfect! And I still think he was perfect. Now, he was perfect in this way: He never made us kids mind. Mumma had to do that, but she was capable. But he never said anything to us kids. Wouldn't make any difference what we did.

Q: No.

A: But he was so....that's the reason we loved him so much I guess.

Q: You remember him as being very kind and gentle.

A: Oh yes, and quiet. He was so quiet. Charlie reminds me so much of my father.

Q: Yeah.

A: He's so quiet, you know.

Q: What about your mother? What can you remember about her typical workday as a farm wife?

A: Well, she worked hard, but of course she had four girls to help her. And ah, we all had our job. Now my job was the upstairs, the chamber work, and I loved it.

Q: Yeah.

A: I always....when I was....I wasn't a very old kid, I suppose about eleven or twelve. I would feel, pretend that that was my house, and....and I had the takin' care of it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Ah, my sister did....Rita did all the cooking and a lot of the other work. And when she got in her teens, she used to sew for us kids. And ah, well there was the separator to wash, and the dishes, so, we all had our jobs. So she....but she used to ah....we didn't have any fridge. We didn't have any electricity. I was twenty years old when we had the electricity put in.

Q: Yeah.

A: And ah, she used to....he would kill an animal for the winter's food. Well he usually killed two. He killed a pig and a beef. And she would can all that meat. Well he salted some of it but.... She canned a lot in glass jars. And I said to Sharon one time, I said, "I'd like to get a quarter of beef and can it." "Oh my land," she said, "You'd get poisoned!" Well I said.....

Q: Not if you did it right.

A: I said, "Well we never got poisoned. That's what we always had." This home canned stuff. It was good too. And she....but like I say, when Rita got old enough, she did most of the cooking. And Rita brought me up. She was eight years old when I was born.

Q: Yeah.

A: And she says she used to be out in the barn playin' with the other kids. That's where we always loved to play, was in the barn. Mumma'd come to the door and call her. She had to come in, take care of the baby, she was busy. Anyway she used to take me....when I went to school, she would ah....when I come home from school at night, she'd take me in a room by myself, teach me my lessons. Mumma didn't have that much patience 'cause I wasn't all that smart. And she'd ah....well Rita was just saying....well she was the mother to all of us as far as that goes.

Q: So was Rita the oldest?

A: The oldest one living, yeah.

Q: The oldest one living....

A: No, Vinald was the oldest....

Q: Vinald was the oldest.

A: Yes, but Rita was the oldest girl.

Q: So it was Vinald, then Rita....

A: Yeah, and Violet....

Q: Yeah.

A: And Elsie....

Q: Yeah.... and you.

A: And me.

Q: Yeah.

A: yeah.

Q: So, of all those five, you're all still living or....?

A: Vinald's passed away. He died just the same as my father did. My father was seventy seven years old, and he was down in the pasture cutting out alders

and things to give.... He was only keeping one cow then, after he got older....but so she'd have a good place to feed and all....

Q: Yeah.

A: And he was taken with a heart attack. And he got to the house. They took him to the hospital, and he died that night. Well Vinald, my brother, was outdoor....course my brother knew he had something wrong with his heart. He had been here in August or September and he told us that his heart was.... He wouldn't go to a specialist or anything. He didn't want any operation or anything. He probably could've saved him. But anyway, he was building a ramp for his wife. You see, Connie was blind. And she was out with her seeing eye dog, and she didn't walk where her seeing eye dog wanted her to, and she fell and broke her hip. So she was in the hospital, and he was building a ramp for her. Well, no, she had gotten out of the hospital, because he wanted them to let her out. He was....I think he knew that.... And she had a nurse there with her taking care of her. And he was building a ramp so she could have a wheelchair to get up into the house with. And she said to her nurse, she said, "He's been out there a long time." She said, "I wish you'd go call him, see if he's alright." Nurse went out and he was dead.

Q: Ahh. How long ago was this?

A: And he was only seventy seven.

Q: Yeah.

A: That's been about eight or nine years ago.

Q: Yeah. Is Connie still alive?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: And you aren't going to believe this. Her eyesight has come back after fifty years.

Q: I don't believe that.

A: Yep. After Vinald died, she said that he got a letter from a doctor that he was going to, a specialist for his ears. And he was gone. So, she thought, "Well I guess I'll go see that specialist." And she went. And he told her, he said ah, "You have got sight in behind your eye." And he put some drops in her eyes, and they started to get better. Now, she came....she comes every summer here.

Q: Yeah. To the green house. [In Rossway]

A: Yeah. And she's ah.... The first summer, oh, her eyes looked terrible. See, she'd always worn black glasses and you couldn't see them. And she took the black glasses off and they looked terrible. Then the next summer, they looked a little bit better. Next summer, they looked a little bit better, and last summer her eyes were open and she was seeing. And she can't....she had a hard job to believe it herself....

Q: Yeah.

A: After, fity....after fifty years.

Q: That's amazing.

A: She says she'll be drivin' along in the car lookin' at the trees and things, and she said, I said, "Oh Lord, don't.....don't never let me lose my eyesight again." For her to see things, you know, that....

Q: I wonder if she feels like everything's coming at her fast and vividly.

A: No, because it come back....it come back gradual.

Q: Yeah.

A: It didn't come back right quick

Q: Yeah.

A: And....but she can't find that doctor anywheres. He doesn't....see he didn't....he came from Florida, but he came there to Massachusetts to have....as a specialist. He don't come there anymore. And she asked the man that he rented his office from. The man said, "No," he said, "I don't think you'll ever see him again." But he didn't say he was dead or anything. But she said she'd.... gonna call some people there in Florida, see if she can find out. 'Cause he came from Florida.

Q: That's an amazing story.

A: It certainly is. It's one that's hard to believe.

Q: Yeah.

A: A lot of people you know, would think, well you were makin' it up. But, she was awful smart. She could do....well, by the time you're blind for fifty years you learn to do things. And she could sew and make things and all....and people kind of doubted her that she.... Well when she took those black glasses off, you didn't doubt her.

Q: Yeah.

A: Her eyes was just open a slit, and they were right red and everything.

Q: Yeah.

A: But they just kept gradually getting better. Last summer she could see good. And they looked good. You wouldn't know to look at her.

Q: No? Probably the neatest thing is ah, seeing faces....

A: Yes.

Q: It's amazing to see trees and sky and water and fields, but to see people you always knew but could never see.

A: Yeah.

Q: It's amazing. So Vinald must...they lived....he moved to the United States?

A: Yes. He....you know where Sister Bonnie lives....?

Q: Yes.

A: Sister Bonnie Wright. Well he....when he come home from overseas, he bought that place. And ah, they lived there for a while, but....well he had a lot of expense. Her eyes was starting to bother her then and he was taking her around everywhere to specialists and everything, and he just couldn't make.... Now that was a big farm.

Q: Yeah.

A: And when he had it, the lower....on the other side of the road was all his, and it was all farm. See, Mr. Jim Robbins owned that place, and that's all he ever did was farm. But he....Vinald just couldn't make a livin' at it, so he got a job in the States and moved to Gardiner, Massachusetts. They always come home every summer. Oh he'd love to have come back home to live but....

Q: So he was in the service during....during World War II....?

A: Yes.

Q:Is how he got in originally? And stayed in for how long?

A: Well he didn't go in as soon as the war started. Let me see, he was twenty six I think, when he went in, and he was thirty when he come out, so he'd have been in there four years.

Q: Yeah.

A: The war lasted six years. He wanted to go before that but Mumma kept beggin' him not to go and beggin' him not to go. And after awhile they said, "Well look, if you don't let me go, I'm going to get in the Infantry. I won't be able to...." So, well....When you went in the infantry, you was pretty sure you weren't gonna come back."

Q: Yeah.

A: 'Cause you was right in the firing line.

Q: Yeah.

A: So she let him go.

Q: Did he end up going overseas?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, he was out right....went right straight through to Germany.

Q: Can you remember what that was like, if your mother didn't want him to go in the first place. She must have been on the edge of her seat for four years.

A: She was. Every time the phone would ring....see they had the old fashioned phones that you'd ring with a crank....and every time that would ring, she said she would just go right stiff inside. But he got back.

Q: In those days....he was gone for four years. He, did he....he never came back in the meantime or anything?

A: Ah, well he was home....he was in the training here in Canada for maybe about a year, and he used to get home on leave, but then he had to go overseas.

Q: Do you remember any other boy cousins or boy neighbours that also....from Rossway....that also went overseas?

A: Oh yes, yes. The Bankses. Ah, let me see, there was Thurston....Thurston and Hallett and Lloyd were all over there at once. That mother had three. And Mrs. Lewis, that would be Elmer Lewis's mother....

Q: Yeah.

A: Elmer and Edwin and Victor were all over there. She had three over there. Then there was a Lewis boy, Watt Lewis's son, Joe. He was killed over there. And Max Robbins was killed. That's young Max's father....

Q: Oh yeah?

A: Was killed over there. He was in the airforce. He was just missing. They never found his body or anything. Yeah, there was quite a few.

Q: Did your father ever express how worried he was about your brother overseas or....

A: My father was so quiet. Nobody knew what he was going through. 'Cause it was the only son he had. And I know that he, you know, he worried. But he never said anything. He was so quiet.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So what else can you describe about your childhood growing up on a farm? You loved to play in the barn....

A: Oh yes.

Q: Your father had lots of cows....

A: Oh yes...

Q: When he was younger....or cattle.

A: And he had pigs. He had these little buildings. He kept his pigs....he kept them separate. Each one had a little building of their own. And ah, Andy, when he was a kid....Andy and Charlie used to love to go up there and help him, you know....And Andy said ah, he said, "Those little houses," he said.... He said, "That's what I like is those little houses he keeps his pigs in." And we used to, when I was a kid, we used to tramp hay you know....

Q: Yeah.

A: And work in the hayfield. And tend the hens....and he always tended the animals, the cows and the horse and everything himself but, but like the....we'd feed the pigs and the hens. Well what was funny was when the pig, one of the pigs would get out and get loose. Oh you talk about stubborn! And you....well it would take the whole bunch of us to catch the thing and get it back in the, back in its house. Yeah.

Q: What did your father use the oxen for and what did he use the horse for? What was the....?

A: Well he plowed, you know, with the oxen, and then he would haul wood out of the woods with the oxen.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the horse too. Well you see, when Vinald was home, why he helped him and you know, they could use both but.... Well then Vinald was overseas and then after he come back, well, he worked....they worked the two farms together. Vinald's farm and his, they worked it together. And Vinald bought a horse.

Q: I think there was a story....maybe it was in the actual Merritt family....I thought I heard this from a Merritt maybe, of somebody getting kicked severely by a horse.

A: That was my father.

Q: That was your father!

A: Yeah.

Q: What happened?

A: Well, he took the horse to Digby to have it shod for winter. You know, they used to put sharper shoes on it when there was ice on the ground and that.

Q: OK.

A: And he took him up and got him shod, and it was in February. And he brought him back, and he put a....when the horse was all sweat when he got in the barn....and he put a blanket over him. That was on a Sarturday. So he got up early Sunday morning and he went out to ah, see if he'd dried off you know, see if he was alright. He went out to do his barn work and it wasn't daylight yet. Well the barn was kinda dark anyway. And he walked into the barn and never spoke to the horse, and put his hand on....on the horse's rump. And when he did, he let both feet fly. And he caught him right in the chest and drove him up against the back of the barn. Well how the man got to the house, I don't know. But the next door neighbours had a dog, and that dog used to come over home and run around over home. And my father was creeping on his hands and knees, I guess, to the house. And that dog was....barked, and it barked and it barked, and it run all around the house and barked. And after a while, Mumma got up. She figured there was something wrong. And it went home and barked, and then it came back and ah.....

Q: A regular Lassie.

A: By that time Papa'd got into the house and he was settin' on the floor with his head on the....Mumma had a little....see, we didn't have the built in kitchens back then. She had her pantry, and the kitchen was more like a living room. And ah, she had a little couch in front of the stove. And he was layin', settin' on the floor with his head on the couch. And she went right to the phone to call the doctor. And he said, "No, no," didn't want any doctor. But she called the doctor, and it was young Dr. Dickie. And ah, he came down and it....his back bulged right out. It had ah....it had punctured his lung.

Q: Uh huh.

A: So the doctor....I think the doctor took him in his car or else Vinald. Vinald had a car. Or else he took him....anyway they took him to the hospital. And that night they found....his water had stopped. Couldn't get his water. And Dr. Anderson was a kidney specialist. He had been overseas and just came home. And my father knew him because when he worked in the fish, his father was my father's boss. So, anyway, ah, he took over. (Doug ?) Dickie called him, and he took over. And his kidney was punctured. And they didn't think....had no hopes of him livin'. And they told Mumma, they said, "Stay near your telephone. We may have to call you in the night." He had three blood transfusions, but he made it. He was only in his fifties. That was....that was the year that we were married.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: That was in February and we were married that June. And ah.....but he....he lived.

Q: Did he have any aftereffects from that for the rest of his life, or did he make a complete recovery?

A: He made a complete recovery.

Q: Yeah? Wow.

A: Yeah. There was Vinald, and Irvin Height.....they used to live in Rossway there....they live there where Danny Height lives....

Q: Yeah.

A: And ah, who was the other man? There was another man that gave.....well isn't that something, I can't remember who it was....that gave....

Q: Gave blood?

A: Gave blood.

Q: yeah.

A: Donated blood, yeah. He had three....three blood transfusions. So when.... Oh Mumma was awful nervous. Mumma was always an awful nervous woman. And she went up on the old bus every day to see him, come back on it. We had a....you know we used to have a bus....bus service here. It carried the mail and it carried passengers.

Q: And you could get on it any day of the week?

A: Oh yeah.

Q: You could get to town every day.

A: Except Sunday. They didn't drive on Sunday. So she went up every day and stayed with him while the bus was in Digby. And ah, so he had....he had been there a week. And when they would take him and X-ray him, she was so scared of the report, she'd put her hands over her ears so she couldn't hear it. And ah, so, after he'd been there just one week, Anderson, Dr. Anderson said ah....she....they had taken him down in the old hospital, down in the basement to X-ray him. And when he come back up, she stood by the window with her hands over her ears. And he said, "Mrs. Theriault," he said, "Take your hands off your ears." He said, "I've got something to tell you." He said, "Your husband's kidney is functioning normally." He said, "There's been a miracle performed in your husband's body." 'Cause he had been overseas and he'd seen all that kind of stuff.

Q: Yeah.

A: He said, "I have never seen anybody that had a punctured kidney, that would....it would ah, function this soon." In fact, not very many people died....lived back in those days.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Well then he had to stay in the hospital a while longer 'til he got stronger.

Q: I can just picture your mother with her hands over her ears.

A: Yeah. Oh she was so nervous.

Q: Yeah, I had heard that tale when we had a horse. I didn't know it was your father. [Three inaudible words] you know something about it.

A: Yeah. You don't want to put your hand o a horse and stand behind him....because. 'cause if he had a spoke to the horse....but see, it was dark, and the horse didn't even know he was in the barn.

Q: Yeah.

A: And when he put his hand on the...on him, he let both....both feet fly.

Q: Maybe the horse was asleep and then he woke up.

A: Could have been.

Q: I always wondered when we were kids, did horses ever sleep?

A: They usually sleep standing up.

Q: Yeah.

A: You hardly ever see a horse lay down. If they lay down it's a pretty good sign they're sick, there's something wrong with 'em. They used to let the horse and the cows out in the fall of the year when he'd....he'd have his garden all in and be all done hayin' and everything. But there used to be ah....sometimes there'd be old apples underneath the trees, and they'd get into them and eat 'em, and they'd have colic. The horse'd have colic, and then he'd lay down. But I forget what he used to do for him. Oh, he used to take a....make a dose of epsom salts and put it in a long neck bottle and put it in his mouth and pour it down his throat, and that would relieve him.

Q: Was there ever a vet called for the animals?

A: There was a vet. He has had vets. Ah, what was his name? Mr.....er, Dr....No he didn't call himself doctor, but he was a vet. He lived over in Marshalltown, and he had him....one time he had a cow that had a calf that was so big it wouldn't be born, and he had to have him. But not....that's the only time I ever remember him havin' him.

Q: And to get them shod, or whatever you call it....

A: Yeah, you had to go to Digby.

Q: You had to go all the way to town.

A: Yes.

Q: You had to walk them all the way to town.

A: Yeah, they had to walk.

Q: The oxen also? The oxen too, or did your father do his own oxen?

A: I think Papa used to do his own oxen, I believe.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. But I know he took the horse.

Q: So you talked about trampling down the hay. Was...hay was never baled?

A: No.

Q: Because you wouldn't have had the machinery to do that, but....so the hay for the whole winter was stored loose?

A: Yes, in the barn.

Q: In the barn.

A: Yeah. These big hay mows. He had a big hay mow on one side of the barn. I can't remember if there was one on the other side or not. But I remember the one we played in was on the left hand side. We always played in the barn. And I used to....Mumma used to give me rags, and a needle and thread. I always loved to sew. And I'd go out in the hay mow and make my dolls....she used to call them doll rags....and make my dolls dresses, sittin' out in the hay mow.

Q: How did you learn how to sew? Did Rita teach you, or your mother or....?

A: No, I sort of picked it up on my own.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. Oh, we had a good childhood.

Q: Yeah.

A: Mumma was strict. Boy, we had to mind but.... There was no foolishness.

Q: So, for example, did she ah, how would she discipline you if you were out of line? Or you stayed in line to begin with?

A: Ah, if we got out of line, it was usually her tongue.

Q: Yep.

A: It was worse than....I used to think I wish she'd give me a whippin' and not...and shut up and not say anything more. But we didn't get that. We got growled at. But she was a good mother. She tried to bring us up right.

Q: Oh I think she did. Ahm, what else can you describe about the house? I had been in that house once....

A: You were?

Q: Before it had burned, and I'm sure there'd been many....many changes to it probably.

A: Oh yes, Harriet had it all changed around. Ah, you see Rita took care of Mumma. She didn't take care of Papa, 'cause he wasn't sick. He only lived a day. But she....so when Papa died, why, she moved in with Mumma and stayed with her for....

Q: Yeah.

A: ...I think It was four years. But she had been doin'...helpin' Mumma with the housework you know, and everything before that. So, she got the place.

Q: Yep.

A: So she gave Harriet the house, and she gave the boys the land.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: Ah, she gave Bernard the land, and Vernon's got the land up there 'cause they were both big farms. Ah, but the house, it had an ell on it. It...there was the main house, and then it had a big ell on it. Well that ell was the kitchen and a pantry, and the stair steps that went upstairs. And then the other, then, that it was fastened on to...why, and there was the dining room.... Well this was the way it was when I was a kid. She changed it around some after that but.... There was....you went from the kitchen into the dining room, quite a big dining room, and from there you'd go into a front hall, and in the living room. Then, off of the dining room ah, was another room, that she used to hook mats....she used to hook a lot of mats. She used to hook her mats in there, but if anybody was sick, she'd clean it out, put a bed in there, and use it for a sick room. But, usually that's what she'd use it for, a sewing room. She called it her sewing room. Well she sewed too. She had an old treadle sewing machine. And ah, and then, off of that, off of...well, she always called it the parlour...she had a bedroom off of there. That was a guest room. She had a lot of company come from the States in the summer time....

Q: Yes.

A: 'Cause her relatives were all over there. And then upstairs....then you went upstairs, and there was a great big hall, room for two good size bedrooms in it, that didn't have anything into it. And then there was one....two...there was four bedrooms in it.

Q: I imagine it was a nice house.

A: It had been. Ah, well, Papa always kept it fixed up good. Yeah. It was crooked.

Q: Yeah?

A: Poor man, he tried to fix it up, and whoever built it...I don't think they used a level nor a square or anything else. They just built it. He ah, he kept it fixed up you know. She was a fussy housekeeper. You went around with that dust cloth every day. I said I'm glad that she don't see my house now. And....every day, that had to be dusted. Plus we burned wood, and wood does make a lot of dirt.

Q: Yeah. People on the Digby Neck didn't burn coal, did they?

A: I don't think, no. Everybody mostly burned wood.

Q: So she would have had a wood stove in the kitchen for cooking on....Was there another stove?

A: Yes, and one in the dining room to heat the house. Now she didn't use the parlour in the winter time. That's when we were kids. She took the dining room for a living room in the winter. Because she didn't have any company or anything in the winter. But in the summer, she would use that for a dining room, and then there was a little front hall, and beyond that she called the parlour. Well you just went in there when you had company, 'cause the kitchen was actually the living room. You had couch, and a rocking chair, and the table.... That old table was the table my father's mother had.

Q: Yeah?

A: And I suppose that burned up in the fire.

Q: Ohh, it probably did.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: That was pulled out in the middle of the floor every evening, and we'd get around it to do our lessons....

Q: Yeah?

A: And Papa would sit on one side to read his paper and..... Yeah, that's memory that death can't destroy.

Q: No.

A: You'll always have the memories.

Q: Yeah.

A: yeah.

Q: What was the paper your father would be reading?

A: We took the daily paper. I suppose it was the same one they get nowadays. I don't know, yeah. Back then it didn't cost what it does now.

Q: No.

A: And we had a little radio. We never had any radio until Vinald got old enough to buy one. And he was working, and he bought one. And Cindy, it was about as big as that, just about like that.

Q: Yeah?

A: Well that was just as clear....and you could get every station on it and everything.

Q: Yeah?

A: Well my land, we thought that we were rich when he put that radio....and we had to have an outdoor aerial....

Q: Yeah.

A: And when he brought that radio and set it up there, well that was really something!

Q: So if you were the youngest, and Vinald was the oldest, what was the difference in your ages?

A: Ten years.

Q: Ten years, yeah?

A: Yeah. And the baby that was born dead was twenty years younger than Vinald. I was ten years....

Q: Ohh!

A: I was ten years old when that baby came.

Q: Wow. So can you.... you can remember that?

A: Yeah. We weren't supposed to know anything about anything like that. And, so my aunt lived in Gulliver's, and she was going to come out and stay with Mumma and take care of her while she was.....You stayed in bed ten days back in those days.

Q: Yeah.

A: So she'd call her up at night to tell her how she was you know, if she thought she was goin' to need her in the night or anything. She'd send me upstairs, but I could hear everything she was sayin'. I was wise. I knew she was gonna have a baby.

Q: I was going to say, did you even know she was going to have a baby?

A: Oh yeah. And disappointed!

Q: Oh I bet.

A: It was born in the night sometime. Course I was in bed asleep. I didn't....but I knew that Aunt Bertha had come out to look after her and all. So I got up the next morning, and Rita was crying. So I knew there was something wrong. I was only ten years old, but I knew there was something wrong.

Q: Yeah.

A: So Mumma called me in the bedroom then, and she told me, but.... ah, she kept things very secretive.

Q: Yeah.

A: I think that she really....Mumma really thought I oughta believe in Santa Claus 'til I was married! And she....Elsie said, when I was born.... see Elsie was four years old when I was born. And she didn't know anything of course, about it.

Q: Yeah.

A: So she got up in the morning, and they showed her this little baby. Well she was so pleased and so surprised and.... She said that Aunt Cecil took care of her that time, and Aunt Cecil didn't mind if she told somethin' that wasn't true. She told her that they picked me off of a banana tree down south somewheres. And she said I had this....Elsie's told to me....they had this little ah, bathrobe on me. And she said that I had that on when I came. That came along with me. Elsie's laughed about it so many times. But Mumma was so....she didn't want anybody to know she was pregnant....

Q: Yeah.

A: Because that was a disgrace. It was alright after the baby was born, but you wasn't supposed to be pregnant. So ah, old Mr. Cornwell used to come up every Sunday afternoon to get his hair cut. And ah, so it was just before Christmas. Papa used to cut hair for people on Sunday afternoons.

Q: Yeah.

A: Never charged anything or anything you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: And ah, so he said to Elsie, he said ah, "What do you want for Christmas?" And Mumma had told the kids that the reason that she was so stout, she needed a new pair of corsets. So Elsie said ah, well she said, "All I want for Christmas is a new pair of corsets for Mummy." Mumma felt some embarrassed. But of course Mr. Cornwell, he didn't take very much in. I don't know if he was deaf or what, but he didn't know what you were talking about anyways so.... Oh dear. Elsie and I do a lot of reminiscing.

Q: Yeah.

A: She comes every year for Christmas, spends Christmas with me. See, her husband's passed away, and she never had any children.

Q: And she lives where?

A: In Middleton.

Q: In the Valley, yeah.

A: Mm, yeah.

Q: And Viola lives.....

A: Violet lives....

Q: Violet.

A:In ah, Waterville.

Q: OK.

A: Yeah, but she has children, so she stays home.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well I mean, her children are grown up, but they....she has one daughter that lives close to her. Well both of them do now.

Q: So on Sundays your father cut hair....

A: Yeah.

Q: Because he was....he had a knack for that?

A: Yeah. Sunday afternoon.....

Q: Yeah.

A: He cut....he always had one or two. Mr. Cornwell was one....Course that wasn't every week. They didn't need their hair cut every week. But....and the women used to come and get their hair cut. He said he didn't mind, but he hated to cut anybody with....anybody's hair that had curly hair.

Q: Yeah?

A: He said that was hard to do.

Q: So what else....how else....what else was Sunday like at your house?

A: Well, we always went to church Sunday morning and Sunday school.

Q: Yeah. Which was where? The church was....

A: That little church there....there's a graveyard behind it. It would be just a ways up from Sharon, [Thelma's daughter, Sharon Ross, in Rossway] where Sharon lives, about a half a mile maybe, maybe not that far.

Q: Oh, OK.

A: And ah, but, we had the same minister in Centreville as we had to home. And in Waterford. You see that old church there in Waterford....?

Q: Yeah.

A: There used to be....they'd have church in that. So, if he preached up home in the morning, he would preach in Waterford in the afternoon, and Centreville in the evening. But when it got turn....and then the next week....he always preached in the afternoon in Centreville, but when it....the next week he'd preach in the evening in Rossway. And we always walked to church. And Sunday school...we had Sunday school first. And old Mr. Dimmock was our minister from the time I could remember. And he had a horse and wagon. The little black horse and this wagon. He was a....to me he looked ancient, but maybe he wasn't. I was only a kid, but he looked to me as if he was about a hundred years old.

Q: Did he come from away to be the minister here on the Neck?

A: Yes. I don't know where he came from. You know Philip Walker? [of Lake Midway]

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, well Philip Walker'd be his grandson.

Q: Oh.

A: Yeah. His daughter's son.

Q: What was Mr. Dimmock's first name? The minister's first name?

A: I think it was John, I believe, yeah. You didn't call a minister by his first name back in those days.

Q: But you called them Mr. something....

A: Yeah.

Q: Not some other title.

A: Mr. Dimmock, yeah. Well then after he got too old and he did retire, we had other, younger ministers, but....

Q: So did he live in....at the Lakeside? [Lake Midway]

A: No, he lived in ah, Centreville. They had....the parsonage was in Centreville, and he lived in that. Well then after he retired, he bought that house at Lakeside.

Q: OK. Where Philip lives now?

A: No. I think it's where Audrey lives. [Audrey Walker]

Q: OK.

A: Yeah. Yeah....no, he wouldn't have been.....he isn't Philip's grandfather. He's Philip's great grandfather.

Q: OK.

A: But Philip's father was his grandson.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: And that's where Audrey lives, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: She married him, yeah. There at Lakeside. Yeah.

Q: Did you always just go to your own church, or did you go to Waterford and Centreville?

A: Well sometimes....No, we always went to the one in Rossway. But in the afternoons, they had church in the Anglican church. And lots of times I used to go there. There wasn't anything else to do. It wasn't 'cause I was so good, but I didn't have anything else to do. And I'd go to....but ah, they used to have a Sunday school there, and I always went to that in the afternoon. And Mrs. Robbins.....now let me....how can I tell you who she was? Ah, do you know Virginia Shaw?

Q: Yes.

A: Well, Mrs. Robbins would have been her grandmother.

Q: Yeah.

A: And she used to teach the Sunday school. And we all went. Wouldn't matter whether we were Anglicans or not. We all went to Sunday school, and she was a good teacher.

Q: Yeah.

A: She taught me....taught us a lot of things from the Bible, and taught us the Ten Commandments and things like that. She was good. Yeah. That was....we didn't have to go....I mean.... Now, like, in the morning, we had to go to the Baptist church. But we didn't have to go to the Anglican....we just went because we wanted to.

Q: Did your sisters, everybody go? Or....

A: No, mostly just me.

Q: Yeah.

A: Once in a while Elsie would go with me but....

Q: Yeah.

A: Well my....the older ones had their boyfriends and so....Elsie and I'd go to church for the sake of doin' somethin'.

Q: Were you supposed to not do anything else that day?

A: No....

Q: Like ahm, could you read? Could you....

A: Oh yes, you could read.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Yeah, we've even gone out and coasted downhill.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah. But ah, we didn't play games. There was no games played, and you couldn't sew or knit or anything. But, well Mumma used to let us play. We'd go outdoor and coast downhill. I suppose she was glad to get us out of the house.

Q: What about lessons for school? Would you ever be doing those on Sunday?

A: Yes, sometimes we'd study on Sunday, but we usually tried to get that done on Saturday so we wouldn't have it to do on Sunday.

Q: Yeah.

A: We liked to have our Sundays off.

Q: Did your mother cook on Sundays, or would she have prepared food on Saturday?

A: Ah, she usually cooked a big pot of beans on Saturday. We had them Saturday and Sunday both.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: And there was usually enough over that my father would heat 'em up every morning for his breakfast 'fore he went in the woods to work. He didn't want any cereal. He always wanted something hearty. She always cooked this big pot of beans. He raised them himself.

Q: Yeah.

A: And boy there's nothing tasted like....Allison [Allison Merritt, Thelma's husband] often speaks about it when he used to come up to spend the weekends....your mother's home raised beans.

Q: Yeah. Did your father sometimes sell some of his beef too, or was the idea more that you would farm for a living.....?

A: No, mostly just us....yeah he may have after we all grew up and left home, but when we were all living home, it took it just about all.

Q: Yeah.

A: He'd....he would corn beef, and oh, wouldn't I like to have some of it now. And ah, and then he put down a big barrel of fat pork.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I think that contributed to his death. Mumma put pork fat in everything.

Q: In everything, yeah.

A: And she had heart trouble too. She lived longer than he did but.... And ah, and then ah, he would pickle his hams and in the spring he'd take 'em out and dry 'em and smoke 'em.

Q: Yeah.

A: And we'd have smoked ham. And we ate well, and we were big kids.

Q: Did farming families eat much fish?

A: Well yes, he used to bring....when he would be working in the fish in the ah, summer time....

Q: Yeah.

A: He'd bring fish home and salt it and dry it out and....yeah we had fish.

Q: So you hardly had any need for a store if you lived on a farm.

A: No. Of course you had to buy your sugar and flour and things like that. Well, he used to sell his wood to Tupper Warne.

Q: Yes?

A: You ever hear tell of Tupper Warne?

Q: Yeah, well since I started working on this project, for the first time....

A: Yeah.

Q: I've heard many Tupper Warne stories. I'd love to hear some more.

A: And he would ah, sell his wood to Tupper Warne, and he didn't get any money for pay. You took your produce out of the store.

Q: Right out of the store.

A: And they had shoes and things like that, and children's clothes that you could get. But he had....Tupper Warne had a big truck....I guess they called it a cafeteria....no, they didn't call it that.

Q: Ahm, a grocetine or something?

A: Grocetina, that's what....that was it. Yeah.

Q: Grocetina? What did you say? A groce....

A: I said cafeteria. That's where you go to eat, but.....

Q: Yeah.

A: Anyway, he would....they had everything in that in the line of food you know. And ah, so she.... Mumma would go out and get her groceries and things off of that which she needed.

Q: Came right down the Neck?

A: Yes, all the way....it used to go down by here. I've heard Allison's mother tell about him. She bought off of it.

Q: That Tupper Warne thought of everything.

A: Oh yes. Yeah.

Q: So your father would sell wood, like cordwood or logs or....?

A: Whatever it was that Tupper Warne bought. I don't know. I don't remember what it was but.....logs I suppose.

Q: Yeah I suppose, because he had a box factory. It wouldn't be the firewood.

A: Yeah.

Q: Did you ever remember ever meeting or seeing Tupper Warne yourself?

A: Yes. I seen him after he got old. I never seen him when he was young. But Elsie....I was working in Digby. I was working to Jack Brittain's. And Elsie wanted to get a job up there too so we could chum around together, you know. So I heard that they wanted a girl to work for housework. So I went down to see him, and they hired her. Well his wife was worse than he was. You talk about an old slave driver. See, I was used to working for people that used me nice, used me like one of the family but....

Q: Yeah?

A: Boy they didn't use her like one of the family. She had to be up long before daylight and go through the house and make.....they had all these fireplaces.....make all these fires, and hang out clothes. She said that that woman would make her hang out clothes right in a pouring rainstorm. She'd get soakin' wet hangin' out clothes. Oh, it was wild.

Q: How long did she last there?

A: She only stayed there about a couple of months I guess, and got another job.

Q: What was your job at Brittain's? What was that.....?

A: Housework.

Q: Yep.

A: That's all I ever could do. I only went through grade nine.

Q: Yeah.

A: So....I shouldn't be telling that on....

Q: Oh that's typical. That's a typical tale. So, what was....where did you get your grade....where did you go to school?

A: Well you know where Rossway Hall is?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, well that was our school house.

Q: Yeah. The hall....Oh yeah, the hall that they're working on all the time now.

A: Yeah.

Q: That was the school house.

A: Mm hmm. Yeah, that was our school house.

Q: Is the hall that's there now, some of that the original building?

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah?

A: Oh yes. They've just shingled it new, and I don't know what they've done on the inside but....Yeah, that was our school house. And they....it went from ah, Primer class to grade eleven....

Q: Yeah.

A: And one teacher....

Q: Yeah.

A: To teach the whole bunch of us.

Q: Do you remember who your teacher was?

A: I've had several teachers. When I started school, it was Laura Shortliffe. She was a woman from....well she was a maiden lady from ah, South Range. And then there was Dorothy Porter. She was Dorothy VanTassell, and she was the dearest thing. She didn't make anybody mind or anything, but she was the dearest person. And ah, then there was, ah, let me see....we had George Annis. He was a good teacher. Boy, I'm telling you.... He, he stayed there three years.

Q: He lasted that long, huh?

A: Oh yeah. He would have stayed longer if they could've given him higher wages but....

Q: Yeah.

A: And ah, and then there was....George Annis, and then there was....Laura Shortliffe came back again....

Q: Mm hmm.

A: The next time. She was something else. You talk about somebody ugly. She was an old maid. Talk about ugly. And then we got ah, Gordon Thomas, and he only stayed a year. And then we had Warren Doane. He stayed two years. I didn't like him. I left school while he was there. Then I went back.....

Q: You took a temporary leave of absence?

A: Then I went back when I....after he left. And then there was....the last one that I went to school to was ah, Gladys Brooks. And poor soul, she did the best she could, but she didn't have too good an education.

Q: Yeah.

A: She didn't know anything about geometry, and I could not learn it. And that's the reason I left school.

Q: Yeah.

A: I couldn't learn it and she couldn't teach me because she didn't know about it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Now I would like to have had a good French teacher.

Q: Yep.

A: I....what little that we were given to learn, I picked it up.

Q: You took to it like a duck to water, yeah?

A: Yeah, but the teacher had never taken French. We could only study it out of a book, and that was quite hard. You didn't know how to pronounce it or anything.

Q: You didn't have anybody to model it for you, yeah.

A: But the Inspector came one day, and he stayed, and he had a French.....a French session. Well I learned more from him that day than I'd learned all year.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it made me realize that I would like to have been able to learn French.

Q: Maybe that's where your granddaughter Lori gets it from.

A: Yeah, yeah. Ah, now Rita was awfully smart in school. And she went through grade eleven, but only in that little school house there. And she often has spoke to me about it that she would like to have gone....

Q: Yeah.

A: You know, take....well you'd have had to go to Digby to ah, to get grade twelve....

Q: Yeah.

A: And then you'd have to go on. Well my mother and father didn't have the money to do it with.

Q: Yeah. What did Rita think she maybe would like to have done? Become a teacher herself?

A: She....become a teacher, yes. And she taught her kids....she learned a lot from her kids when they were going through school, 'cause she'd take their books every night and teach 'em.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So during your.... Still to go to grade nine, that's still....you're still in school for a lot of years of your....your young life, when you think of it.

A: Yes. Well I...one year....one year I quit. Well I went....I suppose I went to school about 'til Christmas time or somethin' but I couldn't stand that man.

Q: So what did your parents say about that?

A: Nothin'.

Q: That was OK.

A: Yep. They wouldn't of cared. I don't think they'd a cared if I hadn't gone back at all.

Q: Well if you hadn't ever gone back at all, what would they have expected you to do next?

A: Housework.

Q: Housework at....

A: Yeah.

Q: Stay home though, it would be OK to stay home and....?

A: Yeah. And go out to work. I used to, you know.....there was lots of places to do housework in back when I was....

Q: Yeah

A: When I worked to Brittain's, they had three children, and Jack and his wife, so there was five, and myself made six. And they had a lot of company. And it was a big house. Do you know where Elmer Winchester lives?

Q: Yes, I know that house.

A: Well that was the house.

Q: Yeah.

A: And....but I loved it there. They was just....he always, he still says....I meet him every once in awhile and he'll always come talk to me and if somebody....if he introduced me to anybody, he'll say, "This is the girl that used to help Winnifred." Winnifred is dead now.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he said, "This is the girl that used to help Winnifred." Never....I wasn't the hired girl or anything, I was just one of the....

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Oh, and it was the first place I'd ever worked in, to leave home to go to work. And ah I....at night, I thought, well I wasn't supposed to sit in the living room, you know, with the people I was working for. So I sat out in the kitchen, and I never put any light on in the dark. And they had a long legged stool there. I was settin' on that. And ah, he come out and put the light on. He said, "What are you doin' sittin' out here in the dark?" he said. "Come in the room, sit."

Q: So you, when you worked there, you stayed there overnight?

A: Oh yeah, stayed right there.

Q: And maybe went home on some weekends though?

A: Oh yeah, well I'd have a weekend off now and again.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Ah, and they had a small baby. When I went there she'd just come out of the hospital with a baby. And I had him to take care of. And the two little, the two girls...Jean was three and Ann was four.

Q: Yeah?

A: But I liked it there.

Q: Yeah.

A: That was.... But they didn't keep me the year round, because he was working....he was the manager or something out at the fish plant over in Culloden. And in the winter he didn't work in it, so....and she did his secretary work.

Q: Yeah.

A: So when he wasn't working in it, she didn't need to work, so they didn't keep a girl. But when he was workin' there I used to work there.

Q: So when you were little, did Digby....Digby was a far way off.

A: Oh yes!

Q: Kids wouldn't go very often, if at all?

A: No. To go to Digby...I don't think that I ever went to Digby 'til I was well, maybe ten years old. And Emerson White had a big truck, great big truck with sideboards on it, and he'd take a crowd to Digby if there was something special goin' on. And that's how we traveled to Digby. And ah, I know they had a Shirley Temple movie....

Q: Yeah.

A: And Mumma took us all to see this.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it cost twenty five cents to get in. But she made it somehow or other, and took us all to see Shirley Temple in this big old truck.

Q: What did you think of Shirley Temple?

A: Oh I loved Shirley Temple. I always did. Ah, Lori bought me some videos of her.

Q: Yes.

A: I got here. I'll watch 'em every once in a while.

Q: Yeah.

A: I had a Shirley Temple doll!

Q: Yeah?

A: And it looked exactly like her. And I gave it to Sharon....

Q: Yes.

A:When she was growing up, and then I told her to give it to Lori.

Q: Yeah.

A: But Lori was a great kid..... No....Yeah.....when she gave it to Lori. Lori was a great kid to throw things around.. You'd go in and her dolls would be on the floor, and her toys. And I said, "If I ever come in and see that Shirley Temple doll on the floor, I'll be takin' it back home." But I never did. Sharon made a place and hung it up on the wall, and Lori's still got it.

Q: Ahh. Does she have it at her house now?

A: Yeah, yeah, she took it up there. And I said, "If you ever have a little girl, you give it to them when they're old enough to take care of it, and tell them it belonged to their great grandmother."

Q: Yeah.

A: My aunt was home from the States, my father's sister. And my mother was expecting that baby that was born dead. And Mumma was over forty, and she had high blood pressure awful bad. And....everybody thought she was going to die....and she bought Mumma a set of dishes. And she said she didn't know to give them to her then.... She bought 'em for her for Christmas, but she was afraid she might not live 'til Christmas. The baby was born in November. But anyway, she bought me that Shirley Temple doll.

Q: 'Cause that would have been quite a prize doll to have, wouldn't it have been?

A: You know what she paid for it?

Q: What?

A: One dollar.

Q: Yep. But still that would have been....

A: Yeah. That was something.

Q:A very special gift, toy to have then.

A: Yeah. She took all us kids to Digby with her, and for us to go to Digby....well I was ten years old then....that was really something. And ah, she sent....she told the other kids to take me in another part of the store. And she bought this Shirley Temple doll.

Q: Did she get something for the other kids too?

A: I suppose she did, yeah. She always did.

Q: Was that....were you the envy of all your friends and everything with this doll?

A: Well, I had....I had one friend, that she's still my true friend. We played together before we ever started school.

Q: Yes?

A: Her mother....that was....she was a Banks. That was Claytie (sp?) Banks.

Q: Yeah?

A: And her mother had ten children.

Q: Yes.

A: So I didn't go down there very much. Mumma said, "She's got enough kids now without having you." But Claytie would come up home, before we ever started school. And ah, we're still.... She married an English fellow from England, and they lived over there quite a while. It was during the war.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he was over here training or something. But ah....and then they lived in Massachusetts, and now they've bought a home in Bear River. But they go to Florida every winter.

Q: Yeah.

A: She always comes to see me every time when she comes home. And I meant to go back to see her this summer, but I didn't get there. We've been so taken up in this house that....[Renovations going on] But ah, she was with me that day, and she told me since....she never said anything at the time, but she's told me since, "Oh," she said, "Didn't I envy you that doll."

Q: Yeah, I bet she did.

A: And that was the last doll I ever got. I always got a doll for Christmas. Every Christmas I'd get a doll, but that was the last one that I...that I got.

Q: What would Vinald get for Christmas?

A: Ah, when he was little....it was before I can remember....

Q: Right.

A: Papa carved him out a yoke of oxen.

Q: Yeah.

A: Now he had a great time teamin' those oxen.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, but I don't remember now what he....else he got but....

Q: And did your sisters get dolls also, or something else?

A: Well, 'til they were too old to have 'em. See Elsie was four years older than I was. But she had one doll that she named Esmerelda.

Q: Esmerelda. Esmerelda.

A: And I think it was a doll that my mother had had when she was a child.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was an old fashioned doll, and it was jointed, you know. It...it couldn't walk like the walkin' dolls do, but it was jointed. And Elsie still wonders what ever happened to that doll after she moved away. It was out in the attic, but it would be gone now after the fire. But it was gone before that. She looked and looked for Esmerelda but she couldn't find it. And ah, my father made her....Elsie and I each a doll's crib. And then he made Rita and Violet each a little chair to have in their room. But they got other things too. That was one thing Mumma would.....She always made sure we had a good Christmas.

Q: Yeah.

A: Nothin' like they get nowadays, I mean but.... We didn't have anything through the year, so it was a, you know, a big thing for us to get things for Christmas. And then we always had candy. She always got us candy. That's the only time we ever had candy, was at Christmas. So, it was a big treat.

Q: Yeah. Waiting a whole year to get candy again.

A: Yeah. And they used to....she used to buy it off of the truck I was tellin' you, Tupper Warne's truck. He used to have these big boxes of candy and she....

Q: Was Tupper Warne.....did people feel like they had no choice but to shop at Tupper Warne's, or were they happy to do that?

A: Well, I don't know. I don't suppose.....If they worked for Tupper Warne, or they cut wood and sold to him, they had no choice, because that was the only way they'd get their pay.

Q: Yeah.

A: But I suppose people in Digby had other work that they did, and maybe down around here too. I don't know but.....

Q: Was there another store in Rossway, or.....

A: Yes, Fred Worthylake. You know.....the....I believe it's the VanTassel family that has it now, that they just got it fi....

Q: Going into Gulliver's?

A: No, well it's out on the main road. But I think it's ah, it's just a regular dwelling house. They made it over into a house, but.... Fred Worthylake had a store there. Yeah, we used to buy sometimes from him, after....after my father got working in the fish. And then in the winter he used to cut ice over there in to Gulliver's, so he had, you know, a little cash that....

Q: Yeah.

A:That he could ah.....

Q: How did you father come to get working in the fish?

A: Oh, well they gave him the job. Ern Raymond was a man from Centreville. And he....he was the manager there, and he ah, hired the people.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then ah....and then Anderson....what was his name? Frank Anderson was the boss over him. I suppose maybe he owned the outfit. I don't know. And this Earl Anderson that turned out to be a doctor, was his son. But now, he was killed. He went....he came home from the war, and then he went back overseas for occupation or something, and he was killed on a motorcycle.

Q: Yeah, they had a feature on him in the newspaper a while ago. It was a good story.

A: Yeah. Boy he was some...he was a great doctor.

Q: Yeah. Very handsome too. I saw a picture of him.

A: He knew what he...he knew his business. The only thing about him, if he thought you was going to die, he'd tell you so. And lots of times you didn't die. But he'd tell people they just had so long to live. And of course people didn't always like that.

Q: So you were.... being the youngest, you would have witnessed your sisters grow up and start courting and.... What....what was that like to see them....

A: Well the year that Mumma had the baby that was born dead, ah, Rita was eighteen, and Violet was seven....'bout, well, I suppose sixteen and a half. Well these two ah....Frank Kempton came here and ah, sawed logs. He bought logs. He had a sawmill....

Q: Mm hmm.

A:Up there above where Rita lives.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well I think it was between where Rita lives and ah, Lewis, ah....At Lewis.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he had a, oh, big outfit there. And he came from Caledonia. And he brought a lot of men with him from Caledonia. Well, then he hired some others, but.... And ah, John, Violet's husband, and Bernie, Rita's husband were cousins. And they came with Frank Kempton to work in this mill.

Q: From Caledonia?

A: Yes.

Q: Were they from Caledonia, yeah?

A: Yes, mm hmm. And that's where they met 'em.

Q: Yeah.

A: They were from a little country place in back of Caledonia, called Whiteburn (sp?) There's nobody lives there now. Most everybody moved out of there and went to Ontario at the time that everybody was goin' to Ontario.

Q: Yeah.

A: Everybody moved out of there. But they were here then on the Neck. Yeah, they went....kept company with one another, both of 'em, about seven years....

Q: Wow.

A:Before they was married. Well Mumma was very strict. She wasn't gonna let 'em get married too young.

Q: So when they came to work in this mill, where did they stay? Did they board?

A: They boarded. They boarded up to my aunt's. You know where Ruby Hersey lives?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, well that was my aunt's house.

Q: Yeah.

A: Ruby's mother. And ah, they boarded up there.

Q: Both cousins?

A: Yes.

Q: Both of those two cousins boarded with her?

A: Yeah. And then afterwards, they ah....they were real woodsmen. That's what they were used to doing, was cuttin' wood. And then they built a little cabin. Ah, do you know where, oh you probably do....where Sammy Lewis lives?

Q: Yes, I do.

A: Right across the road from Sammy Lewis's.

Q: Yeah.

A: They built this cabin. They lived there, the two of 'em.

Q: The two boys.

A: Yeah, together. Yeah, and they used to do their own cooking and everything.

Q: And do you suppose they stayed around because they were really interested in....

A: Yes, yeah. They'd come over.....

Q:Rita and this....and Violet,, was it?

A: Yeah, they'd come over home every night, spend the evening with them.

Q: Yeah?

A: Mm hmm.

Q: And what were your mother's rules about that?

A: Ah, well, after a while, after the girls got a little older, they went out with 'em. But for most of the time our boyfriends visited us right in the house.

Q: Yeah. What about....could they go to their cabin, and visit the....

A: Oh no.

Q: Oh no.

A: No no no no no. Didn't do anything like that. Oh my. The old fashioned way of doin' things

Q: Yeah. Sounds charming to me. I like it.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ahm, so then, how did marriage come about for them? Do you remember being really excited about it?

A: Oh yes. Rita was the first one to have a wedding in that little church in Rossway for fifty years.

Q: For fifty?

A: Yeah. The last woman that had....the last couple that had been married in that church were Cossabooms.

Q: Yes?

A: And it was long before we could remember. So, believe me, that all the girls in the place was busy trimmin' that church. And it was....she was married the first of October, the fourth day of October. And they had fern, ah, wild fern, and everybody took care....watched out for their dahlias....put sheets over their dahlias at night, so the church was full of flowers. And she had a big arch, and that was all trimmed with flowers. And then they had their pink and white streamers and.... It was quite an event.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the old house up home was big, so that's where the reception was. And, they had the reception there, and....yeah, it was....

Q: What were receptions like then? Was there music?

A: Sometimes. We had an old treadle organ. I just gave....I had it here, and it had belonged to Claytie Peters.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that was Judy's [Judy Peters Carty] grandmother.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: And, oh Allison wanted to get rid of that. Oh, this living room was so full. So Judy took it, 'cause, just because it was her grandmother's organ. And ah, yeah....but at that time, why it played. I can't remember whether they....we had any music that night or not, but.... Well then....

Q: Now that's two Claytie's, right? That's two different Claytie's.

A: Yeah. Claytie Banks and Claytie Peters. Claytie Peters was Claytie Banks's aunt.

Q: Aunt, OK.

A: Yeah. That's how they come to.... But ah, Claytie Peters was in my mother's generation.

Q: So after Rita got married....she was the very first to get married.

A: Yeah.

Q: And then I assume Violet got married next.

A: Violet got married in a year. The next year. Now, it was in Novemeber. And that was the coldest winter that I ever remember in all my life. I'm tellin' you that that.... Well they claimed that people walked across the St. Mary's Bay.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was froze right over. And ah, oh that was a cold night she was married.

Q: Now why did she wait until November?

A: Well, they bought the house right next to the church. If you remember, Paul....Paul Cook has got it now.

Q: Cooks, yeah?

A: And it was pretty well....you know, it had to have a lot of things done to it, so they were waitin' to get the things done and get it cleaned and everything, so that they had it all ready to move into when they were married. And so, that's the reason that they waited 'til November.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well there was no flowers or anything. So ah, it was during the war, and my brother was home on leave, and he stood up with them. So they trimmed the church with red, white and blue.

Q: Ahh.

A: And ah, but I'll never forget that night. Mumma had a rocking chair there in the kitchen, so like I tell ya, the kitchen was as much of a living room. And he had army boots on. And he come in the house, and he had this ice and snow on the bottom of his army boots, and he slipped and hit that chair. And the chair went to the ceiling and he went on the floor. And there was an old man that used to live....a man and woman....that used to live there where Danny Height lives. That was before Irving Height bought it. And he was kind of a funny old fellow, nice old man, but he was funny. He said, "Bye now, did you hurt yourself?" Yeah, they were there that night that....the old couple. Yeah, and then Elsie and I had a double wedding.

Q: Ahh.

A: We were married at once.

Q: So how did you both meet your husbands?

A: Well, they were puttin'....putting the....a new telephone line down through here. And Elsie's husband was workin' on that. And he boarded with Violet. Violet and John lived in the house next to the church. And he boarded with them. That's where Elsie met him. Well, I had some friends down this way. And they introduced me to Allison. I guess that's the best way of putting it and....

Q: 'Cause this is where he was always from?

A: Yes. This was his home. The old house was down oh....you see where the grass is a little bit greener than anywhere else?

Q: At Janet's [across the road], or on this side of the road?

A: No, on this side.

Q: Yeah.

A: That....that was where the old house sat.

Q: OK. Yeah.

A: And ah, he was born and brought up there.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well then after we were married....well we lived there with his mother and father about seven years.

Q: Yeah, now you've told me about this before.

A: And he started this house you know....

Q: Yeah.

A:And he was that long gettin' it built 'cause he was fishing. Just built it in his spare time and....so....

Q: So how old were you when you got married?

A: Twenty one.

Q: Yeah.

A: And Elsie was twenty five, and we really commenced to think that it was too late for Elsie. She was so old we didn't think she was ever going to get married.

Q: Imagine.

A: Well then we came down here, Elsie and I. I had gone out with Allison some, and then we kind of drifted apart. And ah, we came down here and worked in Whale Cove, in the fish plant down there.

Q: You and Elsie?

A: Yes. And we boarded where Stuart Carty lives. You probably don't know where that is.

Q: Yep.

A: You do?

Q: It's where he lived....where he used to live.

A: Yes.

Q: Er, he lives with Emerson now, but....

A: Yeah, yes. But where they....

Q: Across the road from the barn.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: And his wife's mother and father lived there at that time, and we boarded with them.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: Well you see, it was only about a half a mile for Allison to come down, so we got back in together again that time. We kept company.

Q: Ah, but this time the courtship wasn't supervised by your mother though.

A: No, well by that time I was twenty one. But after I....after I left the....I got sick. I got cold in my kidneys and I had to leave the fish plant. But after I went back home, I was still supervised. But she did loosen up some.

Q: Yeah.

A: I was twenty one, and I mean she had to. I was my own boss. Oh I used to come down here once in a while and spend a weekend but....

Q: That sounds pretty scandalous.

A: Yeah. Of course it was....I was with his mother and father. They were livin' there.

Q: I know, but it still sounds pretty ahm, permissive.

A: Yeah.

Q: You know, that sounds quite permissive to me for then.

A: Yeah. Elsie's husband died twenty....twenty one years ago.

Q: That's a long time....

A: Yeah.

Q: For her to not continue to be....have a husband.

A: Yeah. He had terribly high blood pressure and a bad heart too.

Q: Yeah.

A: He was older than she was. But he wasn't that.... I mean he wasn't old enough to die, but he....

Q: No.

A: She went to wake him up one morning to give him his medication, and he was dead.

Q: So Elsie was the one that never had children?

A: No. She never had any children. And she never went to find out why....

Q: Yeah.

A: Well, whether it was him or whether it was her.

Q: Yeah.

A: It seems like it might have been him because our family all had children.

Q: Yeah.

A: I'd like to have had a lot more children, but I didn't have the house room for 'em.

Q: Yeah. So when you first got married, you moved in with Allison's parents?

A: Yeah. And we were married three years before I had Sharon. And I had given up hope.

Q: Yeah.

A: I used to dream.... You know back years ago, when a girl had a baby out of wedlock....

Q: Yeah.

A: She didn't know what she was going to do with it, she'd leave it on somebody's doorstep.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I used to dream that somebody had left a baby on my doorstep. I don't know how many times I dreamed that. I wanted a baby so bad.

Q: Yeah.

A: But after a while I got my baby. I still got her.

Q: So you were still....you were still living with them at that time. And you lived with them, not because you were taking care of them because they were in bad health then?

A: Well, Allison's father got sick when Cindy was....when Sharon was a baby. He got arthritis of the spine and he was in bed for about six months. And she was always sick.

Q: Yeah.

A: She was....always had somethin' wrong with her. She lived to be eighty five and he lived to be eighty eight.

Q: Yeah. What were their names?

A: Ah, Flora and George.

Q: Flora and George Merritt.

A: Yeah. She was a Crowell before she was married.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. And then when we moved up here, they moved up with us.

Q: Right away? Right as soon as you moved into this house? Just vacated that house?

A: Yeah. He didn't want to.

Q: No?

A: Because he was able to walk around and everything then, but she...she didn't plan on lettin' her baby move away from her, not even from there to here.

Q: Did Allison have brothers and sisters himself?

A: Yes. He had three brothers and a sister.

Q: All older than him?

A: Yes. There was....his sister was next to him, and there was fifteen years between 'em.

Q: Ah, so he really was her baby.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah. So how did you feel about that, having....you finally have a house that you could have to yourself, but you didn't really have it to yourself. But you just accepted that?

A: Yeah, had to.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Oh I thought the world of Marguerite. [Allison's sister] She was just like my own sister.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. She's been gone, what, I believe it's ten....nine or ten years at Christmas time she died.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, I miss her. I still miss her.

Q: Yeah. So did Allison's mother help you raise the kids at all? Would she....was she opinionated on child rearing?

A: This is going on tape. I wouldn't dare to tell you.

Q: OK.

A: I was supposed to discipline. Now they were supposed to be perfect. And when I disciplined them, she was going to report me to the Child's Welfare. So....Sharon could tell you a lot if she wanted to.

Q: So altogether you had three kids. You had Sharon....

A: Yeah, I had four.

Q: Charlie, Andy.....and Cindy.

A: And Cindy, yeah.

Q: And yours are fairly far spaced apart from end to end.

A: Yes. Ah, there was six years between Charlie....ah, Sharon and Charlie. I wanted another baby sooner but I was tryin' to get in the house.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I was helpin' him paint and everything, which you can't do when you're pregnant.

Q: Yeah.

A: So there was six years, almost six years between Sharon and Charlie. Then there was only two and a half between Charlie and Andy.

Q: Yeah.

A: I...seeing as I had a boy, then I wanted another boy right close to him, so they could play together and everything.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well then I had a miscarriage between ah, Andy and Cindy, so there's seven years between Andy and Cindy

Q: Yeah.

A: But they had a great time with Cindy. They thought she was a plaything.

Q: I bet.

A: Charlie and Andy especially. They'd get her down on the floor and wrestle with her, and I was scared to death for fear they were going to hurt her, but they never.

Q: Never. So ahm, let me see if I missed anything from back.... So when your mother....you told me about her having the baby that died and stuff like that. But in general, a doctor would come to the house when your mother was having kids.

A: Yes. She never went to them. She never went to a doctor.

Q: No?

A: She...she would write....write to the doctor and tell him she'd need him at a certain time.

Q: Yeah?

A: I told that to Dr. Harding one time and he couldn't believe it. And that's the only time she ever seen a doctor. But the last time....old Dr. Harris, everytime he'd come down the Neck to visit anybody, he'd come in and see her. And he'd take her blood pressure. And he knew she had high blood pressure, but he never gave her anything for it. Well that's one thing that a baby can't take is high blood pressure.

Q: Yeah.

A: So it was born dead. It would be sixty four now. But every time I think of it, I think of it as a little child.

Q: Yeah.

A: I've often thought, you know, what it would be like. And Rita told me, she said, "I never got over losing that baby until I had Harriet"

Q: Yeah. That makes sense.

A: She said, "I always felt disappointed and bad."

Q: Can you remember if your mother went through a long period of feeling really blue?

A: If she did, she didn't let us know it.

Q: She didn't show it, no.

A: No. But she was miserable after that for a long time. She was awful miserable.

Q: Yeah.

A: But Rita did all the....she wouldn't let Rita....Rita wouldn't let her do any work at all. She did all the work, took care of her and everything. Rita's been....Rita's been precious.

Q: Yeah.

A: Now she's back in the hospital.

Q: Oh, I didn't know that.

A: She's got gout in her foot and got infection in it, and her one...her big toe, I guess is split right open.

Q: Yeah. That's really painful.

A: I haven't been up to see her but she had told me when I was talkin' with her that she hadn't suffered too much pain. That was before she went to the hospital but....

Q: Is she in the Digby hospital?

A: Yeah.

Q: And at her house, is Harriet living with her?

A: Yes.

Q: Harriet and Eddie and....the three of them.

A: Yeah. Well right at present, she....Harriet is stayin' with Eleanor Mullen's house. Eleanor Mullen's gone to spend a couple of months with her daughter.

Q: Yeah.

A: And ah, Harriet is staying there takin' care of the house, but normally they're living with Rita. Well I was glad that they moved back in with her because she....she shouldn't be there alone. She can't see why she shouldn't be there alone, but I can see why. She's eighty....oh she's eighty one or eighty two.

Q: I would think she'd like the company, but....

A: Yeah, but she's always been so independent.

Q: Yeah. She's pretty special.

A: But Sharon watches over her too.

Q: Yeah.

A: She's told me, she says, "Sharon's just the same as my own daughter."

Q: Yeah. Rossway has....how's it changed since you were little. It doesn't seem to have.... Since there wasn't a fish plant right in it....I know Centreville was really bustling at one time....

A: Yes.

Q:Compared to the way it is now.

A: Well ah, the fish plant....the only fish plant was over in Gulliver's, and I don't think there's any there now, hasn't been there....one for years. But ah, there's new houses built there since I left there. And the people are....you see the people my age and older....

Q: Yeah.

A:Are all gone. Ah, I mean, there's some of 'em my age are moved away. But the people that lived there was around Mumma's age of course are all gone. They'd be over a hundred if they were living.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, some of her best friends....she had ah....Freddy's [Fred Ross, Thelma's son in law, married to Sharon] grandmother and grandfather were Mumma and Papa's good friends. And they lived down Timpany Lane.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they used to....they used to walk down there to visit 'em. They had a car. They were one people that had....got a car before..... But ah, they used to walk down there. And Kathleen was always a chum of Rita's and Violet's.

Q: So Kathleen spent her whole life in Rossway?

A: Yes.

Q: What was her....

A: She was a Banks.

Q: She was a Banks?

A: Yeah.

Q: Oh. Was she a sister to Claytie?

A: No, cousin.

Q: Cousin.

A: Her father and Claytie's father were brothers.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: So where were their homes? Kathleen's home was....

A: Was down Timpany Lane.

Q: Yeah. And....

A: And her mother and father of course.

Q: Yeah. And the other Banks....Claytie Banks?

A: The other....it's on the main road. You come up Timpany Lane....

Q: Yeah.

A: And you go down....down this way, and the first house you come to on the left is the Bankses. That's the old homestead. Keith....they left it to Keith and he's fixed it all up nice.

Q: OK.

A: You'd think....he didn't change it, but he you know, he put siding on it and fixed it all up.

Q: That's nice.

A: I don't know, I wish they'd tear those old houses down that burnt there. They look ridiculous.

Q: Yeah, that's the one sad thing about Rossway.....

A: Yeah. You'd think they'd burn 'em down or tear 'em down or do something with 'em.

Q: We have one like that in Waterford....the fishplant. Don't know why they don't get something done with it.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ahm, so obviously people....everybody looked after everybody else.

A: Yes, oh yes. Now Mrs. Lewis....she lived there where Vaughn Height lives, but her house burned down I think, and he built a house there.

Q: Would that be the mother of Victor and Elmer and.... Or would that be different Mrs. Lewis?

A: No.... ah yeah, yes....he'd be....Victor and Elmer. And she had...her oldest girl's name was Pearl. And Violet, and Elmer and Edwin and Victor. She had five children. And her husband died quite young. He had measles, and he got cold with them or TB or something. TB was rampant back in those days. So she was left a widow.

Q: Yeah.

A: There was no widow's allowance. There was no children's allowance. There wasn't anything. Well she'd go out and work what she could at housework, and she knit mittens for people and did everything she could do. But the people in Rossway....and they weren't any of 'em rich, they were all farmers but.... Every fall they had a party for her, and they took her all her winter's vegetables.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then they'd have a choppin' frolic and cut her winter's wood.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that's how she lived. And then her sister died and left three children, and she took them and brought 'em up.

Q: Wow.

A: Course hers were getting older then and some of 'em had gone away and.... She had it....she had it hard, but the people....

Q: So she stands out as probably somebody who had it hardest in your neighbourhood.

A: yeah. And she was a Sunday school teacher.

Q: Yeah.

A: She taught the teenage class, and I still remember some of the lessons that she taught us.

Q: She understood teenagers did she?

A: Yeah. Now she lived to be way in her late nineties, but she lost her mind on the last....the last few years. But I always thought an awful lot of her. And she worked so hard.

Q: Yeah.

A: But the people in the place.... You see, back then, they had a Poor House. And if you couldn't take care of yourself, that's where you had to go.

Q: Yeah. And that....nobody wanted to go to the Poor House?

A: No, no.

Q: Do you suppose that hung over even her head?

A: I don't know.

Q: Or did she always know she'd be OK if she worked hard and the community helped her?

A: Yes, I think she knew, and then of course her children grew up.

Q: Yeah.

A: But Victor was only....Victor was the youngest one, and he was only a baby when her husband died.

Q: Yeah.

A: So they weren't very old.

Q: So the Poor House wasn't that far from you. What can you remember about that?

A: It was in Marshalltown. All I remember is seeing the outside of it. I never was into it or anything.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well I used to...Violet, my sister, she could think of the foolishest things to say. And her two oldest kids was little devils. And when they'd get actin' up she always threatened to put 'em in the Poor House. I said you can't do it now because there isn't any Poor House. No, there's.....Are you warm enough Cindy?

Q: Yep. I'm good. Do you want me to put a piece of wood in your stove?

A: No, I'll tend to the stove, but I thought maybe you was....

Q: OK. Let me just go through my questions and see what I'm missing here. Ahm, the Poor Farm was actually one of them.

A: Yeah. I don't know much about the Poor Farm. I've just seen the outside of the building, that's all.

Q: What can you remember about politics in the old days?

A: My mother and father....my father never talked politics. He was a strong Liberal.

Q: Yeah.

A: But he never talked about it. My mother would once in a while, but we didn't know much about politics but.... When I moved down here, that was another story.

Q: A different story.

A: Allison's mother and father! And after we got a television in the house....when they'd come on there and start talkin' politics, I was supposed to keep the kids perfectly quiet. Now you got two little boys, maybe three and four years old, how do you keep them that quiet? Sometimes I'd shut 'em up in the bedroom. Ah, oh they were....but I've heard them tell about...oh, people'd get right foolish over politics. And they'd all....they'd all get lit....anybody that drank would get drunk.

Q: Yeah.

A: And then the....well there was one man that...one fellow went to shake hands with him and broke his shoulder after the election. But nowadays, it seems as if the Liberals get in. There's no competition. They're there and that's that.

Q: Did everybody vote....did everybody vote?

A: Yes, I think back then most everybody voted.

Q: Yeah.

A: They came around with a car and picked you up since I can remember.

Q: Yep?

A: 'Til this time. This time you had to find your own way.

Q: Yeah. Well I was just at the polls and I saw Allison there.

A; Yeah, he was....they wanted him to help 'em out 'cause they couldn't get anybody to help them. He wanted to be home workin' on this room but....and today he's working in the store [Little River Trading Co.], and he keeps sayin'

Q: And he's how old?

A; Seventy....seventy seven. No.... Yes. He's seventy seven.

Q: Yeah. And he built this house.

A: Yeah. This is the first house he built.

Q: Yeah.

A: And he's built a good many since.

Q: I know. He's legendary.

A: And made 'em over and....

Q: Straightened 'em.

A: See what happened to this house....he had to make this house all over. He put tin foil insulation in it and it ah....well....

Q: Doesn't breathe maybe?

A: It sweat.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it all mildewed.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well he tore all the shingles off the outside and shingled it over. I told him he should put ah, siding on it but ohh, he didn't want to put siding on it. So he put the shingles and we put all new windows in and...So it's...he made it all over on the outside. Now he's makin' it over on the inside. Well he's....

Q: It's almost done!

A: Yeah, but the kitchen's got to be done yet. That's quite a chore. But, I don't care. If the living room's done for Christmas....I don't worry about the kitchen.

Q: So your whole married life he's been a carpenter?

A: He was....no, he fished for twenty years.

Q: Oh, I didn't know that.

A: Yeah, he was a fisherman. Well, he fished with his brother. And his brother was twenty years older than he was. And he got ah....he wasn't well. His brother had a, got a stomach ulcer and he, he wasn't well. And he got where he wasn't able to fish, so Allison said, "If he gives up, I'm giving up too." They weren't doing....they weren't makin' much money 'cause his brother couldn't set a lot of traps or anything. He wasn't able to. And his brother died with that stomach ulcer.

Q: Yeah.

A: So....but ah, Andy was saying the other day, he's fished twenty two years. It don't seem possible.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yeah, fished twenty two years.

Q: That's ah, well, that's how long I've been here, and I would have been aware of who Andy was right after I moved here I'm sure.

A: Yeah, yeah. I guess when Andy was quite young everybody was aware who he was.

Q: Oh no....I just....

A: He used to run around a lot and....

Q: No, I just would have known, you know, everybody in that generation, 'cause they were not....how old's Andy?

A: He's forty two.

Q: Yeah, they're not much younger than I am. A couple years younger than me. They weren't, you know, little kids when I moved here. Ahm, one thing we didn't touch on is what, what people would do when they got together for a good time, when your relatives would come from the States in the summer time or....

A: Yeah, well, they usually had....they would have a car you see, and we never had a car at home. Sometimes they'd take us to Digby, the city! And sometimes they'd come down here to Sandy Cove to....over to the sand beach and that and....

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, people used to have....the regular people that lived around in these little villages all the time....well they'd have parties to one another's houses. Some people had dances, but my mother didn't believe in dancing.

Q: No.

A: But they would ah, you know, get together, and they'd have sings and things like that. And they used to have things....they used to have a thing in the hall they called a club when I was a kid. I can remember my mother and father goin' to that, 'cause they wouldn't let the young people go without 'em.

Q: Yeah.

A: They didn't trust 'em that far.

Q: Or maybe they were worried about fires....[Interviewer misunderstanding]

A: Yeah they went to walk back and forth with 'em. 'Til after a while they gave it up. Well then they had what they called Division. It was a Sons of Temperance thing.

Q: Yeah?

A: And they would have their business meeting and that, and then they'd have like, programs. You couldn't go to that 'til you was fourteen.

Q: Yeah.

A: But ah, I went for a little while. Somebody had to stay home with me before that. And they....and of course the church. Rossway has always been centered around the church really.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. And they had....they used to have pie sales for the church. They don't do that anymore, but that was a big thing.

Q: Yeah.

A: Well everybody took things that were cooked, and then they'd....I know my mother used to make double mittens, fishermen's mittens and put 'em there and they'd buy 'em and.... And somebody would make ice cream and sell it. And us kids, well that was the greatest fun that ever was. We'd all....'cause that was somethin' we could go to.

Q: Yeah.

A: We'd all go. They didn't have suppers like they do nowadays so much, but, it was these pie sales. They'd have one in the summer and one before Christmas.

Q: Yeah.

A: And we'd all go. Thought we were having a great time.

Q: I'm sure it was pretty exciting. Ahm, what about in your....when you were a young married couple, you and Allison, if you ever got a night to do something together, or you probably never did....what would you call....what would you do that was any different for socializing?

A: Well....

Q: I see a guitar....Who plays? Allison?

A: Oh he's been....he's been playin' a guitar since he was sixteen.

Q: Yeah?

A: He's a great guitar player and he's composed a lot of pieces, sacred pieces you know, but he's so shy, you can't get him to sing 'em in front of anybody or anything. But anyway....

Q: But he sings for you.

A: Yeah. Oh yes! What was I thinkin' the other day of a song he used to sing to me before we were married. Oh, there was two songs that I liked. They were old songs then. One was ah, "You're goin' far away...." Hh..."I'm going far away Nora darling...." Oh, I can't remember the words of it but I used to like to hear him sing it.

Q: Yeah?

A: And the other one was ah, one of Jimmy Rogers. Jimmy Rogers. He, well he still talks about Jimmy Rogers, and he's been dead for I don't know how many years. Long before I ever knew him....knew Allison. But ah.... And we used to go out and visit our friends you know, sometime. They didn't come here too much but once in a while.

Q: Yeah.

A: And....I thought I caught that [a fly].

Q: I thought you did too, because he's gone.

A: He was too smart for me. Ah, we used to go to Eddie and Faith's a lot. [Eddie and Faith Theriault]

Q: Yeah.

A: Then....that was years ago. And ah, they still....they come here quite a bit. We don't go up there very much but....

Q: I interviewed somebody in Weymouth Falls who knew Eddie and Faith....

A: Yes.

Q: And actually asked me to remember them to them.

A: Yeah, they go to....

Q: Bill and Estella Sparks. Did you ever meet a Bill and Estella Sparks from Weymouth Falls?

A: No, I don't know them but....yeah. And we....we didn't....see we were married....we never had vehicle, a car or a truck, until Charlie was six months old.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the truck was six months old. It was the same age of him. Well then we did get to Digby you know, once in a while.

Q: Yeah.

A: We hardly ever went to movies. I never cared for movies.

Q: No?

A: And I don't care for 'em on the television.

Q: No.

A: I get all mixed up. I don't know who's the bad guys and who are the good ones. It's no good for me to listen to it. And I always was like that. But....

Q: Well you'll have to watch different kinds of movies without the good guys and the bad guys. My son tell me the only movies....he goes, "Mom, the movies you watch are things like 'something a walk in the clouds' and something with 'love' in the title." And I go, "Well you watch them too."

A: Oh yeah.

Q: Ahm, do you remember your mother, or aunts and uncles, grandparents, anybody being very superstitious?

A: Yes. My grandmother Sabean was very superstitious.

Q: Yeah.

A: And Mumma used to tell her that was heathenism. She wouldn't...she said....she had an amber bowl. She said amber was bad luck.

Q: Yeah?

A: And after they...after my grandfather died and she took her children and went back to the States, they couldn't seem to get work. They couldn't find any work. So, somebody told her it was that amber bowl. So she took it out and smashed it, and after that they all got work. Oh yeah, she was superstitious.

Q: Can you remember anything else she used to believe and act on?

A: Oh, if you went out.... Now I remember Vinald went to go to work in the woods one day and he forgot something. And he come back after it. She made him sit down and count ten before he started out again 'cause she said that was bad luck.

Q: Maybe it was to make him stop and think if he was forgetting anything else.

A: Oh, but I can't remember. My grandmother's been gone fifty....I think it'd be....she died....we were married in June and she died that December. She had....she had lived in the States with my other aunts and uncles but she wanted to come home to die.

Q: Yeah.

A: She wanted to be buried alongside of her husband. And ah, she wasn't that sick when she came home, you know, she was....she was, what was she, eighty two.

Q: Yeah.

A: She had gall stones, and they operated and she didn't.... She come through the operation but she died. Nowadays she wouldn't have to do that.

Q: Yeah. Did you ever go to the States to visit any of those relatives?

A: I've never been to the States in my life.

Q: Nope.

A: No, no. And now I'm too old. I don't travel around much. I get so tired. I'd get too tired. I'm OK, you know, through the day, but when night comes, I'm tired.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, I don't care to travel. I would like to go to Newfoundland but I don't think I ever expect to get there.

Q: Well, come with me! We'll visit Jennifer. [Thelma's granddaughter]
Because it's....

A: Yes, Jennifer keeps sayin'....

Q: I keep telling this in every interview....which I shouldn't be talking....

A: Yeah.

Q: It's where....it's my number one place I want to go....

A: Yeah. Jennifer says, "Well why don't you come over Gram?" But I wouldn't fly 'cause I won't get in an airplane so....

Q: Well, there's ferries.

A: Yeah.

Q: Ahm, without me having to look at the list, Thelma, you've covered like so many topics. I can't believe it. So, but, I want to give you an opportunity before I run out of tape.....if you have any other stories to tell, 'cause you are the best story teller. You have just such a great way of putting in the most interesting little details. Any like, precious memories you have of growing up, or your parents, or....

A: Well, we had a....Papa had a house.....what was, used to be the orchard. Rita says it's all grown up in spruce trees now, but it used to be the orchard down below that new house that Harriet had, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: And ah, he had a little house he built there that he smoked his hams in. He, he hung 'em up there, and anything.... We didn't have any fridge. Anything he wanted to keep cold..... Well, we had an old well that we used to hang things down into to keep 'em.

Q: Yeah.

A: But anyway, then in the summer time when he was through using it for his hams and things, we had it for a playhouse.

Q: Yeah.

A: And we used to play into it you know, and had a, our ah, old dishes and things that people gave us and.... One Sunday afternoon, Mumma and the girls went to ah, the Anglican church. There was something special goin' on there and they went to it. But Aunt Cecil was there, and Ruby. So Ruby was smaller than me. Ruby was five years younger than I was. And we went out to play in what we always called it, the smokehouse.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the door....the door blew to, and the latch on it that was just a button, you know, thing....

Q: Yeah.

A: That went to, and we were locked in the smokehouse. Ruby still remembers it. And I would run....I'd go to the....wasn't very big....

Q: Wasn't very big.

A: So, but I'd run and slam myself up against the door, but there was no way that I could get out of that smokehouse. So, it had a stone wall underneath of it, and I'd try to, to pull the stones out, knock the stones out and get Ruby out of it....but I couldn't. So when they come home from church, one of the girls had broke the heel off of their shoe. And Papa went out in the old shop to put the heel on this shoe and he heard us hollerin'. So we got out of the smokehouse. There's a lot of things but....I'll think of things afterwards.

Q: Give me a call, I'll gladly come again! Oh, that's a funny story. Well, I'm going to wrap it up unless you....unless you can think of something....

A: The tape isn't through yet?

Q: Oh no, I've got some more tape. You've got....you can talk some more. In fact I've got another tape I can put in there. I try to keep them to the two hours because I've outworn my welcome in many houses.

A: Don't matter. Don't matter here. The mess this house is in, there's nothing I can do anyways, so...

Q: Well how would you say we're headed now, in the year 2000. How would you say we're doing as a society as a whole? Do you think we're heading in some good directions?

A: I don't....No I don't. I don't think we are.

Q: No.

A: There's too many murders.

Q: Yeah.

A: The children murderin' one another is what bothers me.

Q: Yeah.

A: Children goin' to school and murderin' each other.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they can't seem....can't seem to do anything about it to stop it. And of course there's a lot....there always was murders, but not amongst children in school. I said to Cindy the other day, I said, "I'm glad that my children are through school."

Q: Yeah.

A: It's never happened here in Digby, but it could. They see all that on television and, well, they want to try it I suppose. Yeah. But there's a lot of things that are better than it used to be. Now like, there's a story I can tell you about Allison's father's....

Q: Yeah?

A: Allison's father was born and brought up down there where Janet lives.

Q: Yes?

A: And ah, there was a distemper, I guess that's what you'd call it, went around here in, ah, of diptheria.

Q: Mm hmm.

A: And she had four children die with diptheria. All the children she had. She was pregnant, but the children that she already had all died with diptheria.

Q: All died, wow.

A: And right around the same time. They said that she had four children in the house dead at once. But that wasn't true, because the tombstones are in the United burying ground. They didn't all die right at the same time but...

Q: Yeah.

A: They all died, and then she went and had another family. She was expecting....I always called her Aunt Bessie, Allison's Aunt Bessie, and ah..... Anyway, I think she had....and Allison's father, and Gilbert, and Reggie, yeah. Yeah, and there was another one, Fred. She had five more children after she had lost four, and she had five more.

Q: Wow.

A: And ah, and then her husband was only young. Well the children were, most of 'em were grown up. And he got up one morning to make a fire and dropped dead in front of the stove.

Q: Wow.

A: Heart trouble. So the old people, they had it hard.

Q: Yeah.

A: And ah, there was another family, a Gidney family, that all died with diphtheria. There was quite a few families that, at that time..... Well that was a good many years ago, 'cause Allison's father has been dead thirty....thirty two years, and he wasn't born yet. He was born after that, so it was a long time ago. And, like, there was no pensions or anything then. Her children had to look after her.

Q: Yeah.

A: To provide for her.

Q: What did people of your parents' generations do to save for their old age, when they wouldn't be able to tend such a big farm and everything anymore? What did they....how did they think then?

A: Well ah, you see, my parents....well you were getting the pension then. You didn't get a big pension, but you were getting it.

Q: Yeah.

A: And my father, after he got in his seventies, he ah, he started, just kept one cow.

Q: Yeah.

A: And a few hens. But he didn't....he didn't do a lot of farming like he had before, but he used to have a garden, a big garden and everything.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. So ah, they didn't live long enough to....but, you see back then, it didn't cost to live like it does now.

Q: Yeah.

A: So people, though they didn't get a very big pension, they lived on it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. When they first....I've heard Allison's mother tell that she didn't get the pension when it first came out, but her sister did, and they got twelve dollars a month.

Q: Yeah.

A: But they lived on it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. But Allison's father, he got where he couldn't work when he was seventy. He had that....got that arthritis in his spine.

Q: Yeah.

A: But of course we lived here, and, so we got along alright.

Q: Well now we're really going to run out of tape. So we'll wrap it up. We've only got another couple of minutes left on this one. So, ah, this has been a great interview Thelma.

A: I keep forgetting you're taking my picture and I....

Q: I'll turn it off and I'll show it to you. You look great! OK, I'm going to end it.

