

Vincent J. Robicheau

Interviewed by Christine Callaghan



Q. What is your full name?

A. John Vincent Robicheau. They call me Vincent, but I was christened John. I have to sign my cheques that way cause its on the social cards. When I worked on jobs, my cheques come, because they put me down in the office as John Vincent.

Q. Who were your parents?

A. Joseph Robicheau and Mary Amero. They spelt their name AMERO some said they were from an Irish decent. I don't know, cause the AMERIAULT is spelt Ameriault, but they spelt their name AMERO. So I can't tell you, I heard it on T.V. one time that those who spelled their name that way had an Irish decent.

Q. That's interesting. One of our interviewers on this project is Amero and she spells it AMERO as well. Her parents belong in Marshalltown. Your mother's maiden name was Amero, what were her parents names?

A. Her parents were Frank Amero and Liza, his second wife.

Q. And where were they from?

A. Doucetteville. They would have been pretty close to the first settlers there. Evelle is digging that up now where Amero's came from and it looks like they came from down Ameriaults Hill or Sluice Point because the first settler back there came from Sluice Point and he was a Doucette.

Q. And that's closer to Yarmouth, right?

A. Down there, yeh. He came up there and his name was Dan Doucette and in them days they all had a nickname and his was Gros Dobit and that is Big David. I heard them talk about him.

Q. Was he a relative of your Mothers' parents?

A. Yeh, there was a hook up there. His daughter married the first Robicheau that came up here - it was hooked up on my Father's side, not my Mother. He came from Salmon River and he came up here to work on a ship - they were building a ship - they use to build ships along the sea here, and no trains, no buses, no way of traveling home, and weekends they took him back to Doucetteville, some of the men he was working with and he met this, Gros Dobit

and his daughter and he married her and they said he built the first house in Doucetteville out of lumber. All the rest were log houses.

Q. When would that have been, any idea - mid 1800's?

A. I think David had settled in 1833 so it would have been a little after that that he married the daughter, or when he come here his children might have been half grown, I don't know.

Q. So there were both Robicheau's and Ameros back in Doucetteville.

A. Mostly that 's what there was and a few Thibodeau's but its mixed up now, people from outside. I've got the family tree here, the Robicheau's, if you want to look at it or take it and copy it or whatever. There was four brothers came back from Louisiana, two stayed here, two went to New Brunswick. So I am relation to the ones in New Brunswick.

Q. The Robicheau's you're talking about.

A. Yeh. We haven't got it all yet - she's working on it now.

Q. Through your family history, do you know how they got back from Louisiana - back here.

A. No, I don't know. The story is there was a man and his wife from Maine all the way around and walked down here to the French Shore, the first two. And I would imagine the rest come on old sailing ships and stuff.

Q. They just really wanted to get home again, eh?

A. Yeh, They liked it better here. Louisiana, where they took them, were all swamps and poisonous snakes and alligators and everything else. Course today down there, they are pretty well off. They got oil and everything, but in them days, they had it pretty hard.

Q. But they weren't coming back to as good a land as they left either.

A. See, they were in the valley. And I suppose they wanted that farm land, you know, there wasn't really a good excuse to expel them, they were harmless farmers and.... And they had been here for 150 years. See France, never claimed any land for them. And the British didn't take the land, it was given to them and they settled that Utrecht settlement they called it, they fought for 106 years or something, well, when they settled it the British gave them the Maritimes here, Nova Scotia, Rock of Gibraltar and there only thing the French saved was St. Pierre Miquelon. But these farmers was still here and they should have reserved them their land. So you could blame both parties.

Q. What were your Grandparents names on your Father's side?

A. His father was named Joseph too! And his mother was Eliza,

Q. And her last name was?

A. She was a Comeau. But her mother was a Savory, from the park up here. You come by the park up here?

Q. Yes. And you say she was from there, the homestead was up there?

A. Yes, she was Willard Savory's. He was a member of Parliament and a Judge, the old feller, way back. He was in politics quite a bit. That's a long time ago. My grandmother, I can remember her well. That's why we can't talk French! You see, Grandmother couldn't talk French, so Father took care of his Mother and Father - that was custom years ago, and the kids were all with the Grandmother. So English was spoke in the house. So when we went to school, it was English teachers here, you didn't get French teachers till you got below Weymouth, and they was a lot I had learned from general talk when they'd have company come and so on, but I forgot over the years, I didn't practice it. But I would learn it if I had to live again, it was handy.

Q. Now your Grandmother could speak French but she chose not to?

A. No, she was brought up English.

Q. So where would you hear the French when they had company?

A. Well, when my Mother's brothers come to visit or different ones from Doucetteville and so on, they would sit there and talk French. And once in a while, they would forget herself and she'd talk to us in French. And we had picked up a lot of it, and I could understand just about all of it once, but I haven't used it for so long. But it was handy - I remember one time I was on a job for the Kingston Airport - I worked there when they built that during the war, and there was a French feller from up the Northern part of New Brunswick there somewhere's working for another company and he couldn't speak English. They had to tell him to go home that his Mother had died and they dug me up on account of my name, see they couldn't make him understand so they said, Robicheau, he'd be able to talk French. So they came to my bunkhouse, woke me up and told me the problem, well I said I can't talk French, but I believe I can make him understand. And I made him understand. I couldn't make a full sentence, but I knew all the words. You know. He understood me. Took the telegram and went. It was handy, different times I see things like that come up.

Q. But the time to learn it is when you are little, you are right.

A. That's right. Somethings is backwards - that's why when they talk English when they are learning, they will say it backwards. Like if there was a white cat going across the field, you'd look out and say 'Look at that white cat going across the field,' they would say 'look at that cat and it's white.' You know, you have to turn it around.

Q. I lived on the Gaspé Coast when I was in High School and I learned just from talking to all my friends a lot of French, but I'm the same, I've forgotten a lot of it.

A. Yeh, you do forget it. Now, my son-in-law here, he was brought up in Edinburg here, and he could speak French cause he had it in school, and sometimes he'll say something to me in French and its like trying to think of somebody's name if you know them and you can't think of their name.

Q. Its on the tip of your're tongue, as they say.

A. It would be awful handy.

Q. Part of your heritage too.

A. Yeh.

Q. Where were you born, Vincent?

A. In the big house over there.

Q. And what year was that?

A. 1922.

Q. And were you literally born in that house?

A. Yeh.

Q. You were.

A. We were all born in there.

Q. How big was your family?

A. There were nine children. Two died young - one died with whooping cough when she was really small, and the other fella was 8 years old died of appendix .

Q. And where were you then in that family? Towards the end, I guess.

A. Yeh, I'm next to the youngest one. The youngest one lives right over there.

Q. And your father's parents owned that house, is that right?

A. Yeh. He was living down the road here a ways, and when they got old they called him to come up here. He was the only son, the only child. They got

him to come up and stay in part of the house with them because they were getting old, you see. She lived to be 96.

Q. How old were you when she died, then?

A. I think she died in the late '40 or 50's.

Q. So you knew her very well, then.

A. Oh, yeh.

Q. Was she the type of grandmother that would sit and tell you stories very much?

A. Yeh. Some. Grandfather died in 1933 but I remember him well. I think I was 11 years old. And he was a wonderful old man. He was a saintly man, like. With 9 children, he never raised a hand to them or never spoke in anger. He was one of them. He didn't ask for respect because it was all around him. We was some proud just to walk behind him. He worked in the woods all his life. He cut wood until he was 93 years old. Then he quit, and he died that year. Yes, he was a wonderful man. Good man, helped a lot of people.

Q. How would he help people?

A. Well, he'd give them work even if he didn't need them. He'd give them a job in the winter. Didn't matter what they wanted at the door, he'd do it for them. I remember he use to give them potatoes and stuff in the spring, people in the back roads, and different things, you know.

Q. Did your family farm?

A. Just a small farm for your own use. He'd raise enough for the house and for the camps - looked after a couple of cows. He couldn't make a living on the farm, he use to contract in the woods loggin.

Q. How would that work?

A. Well, they use to pay him, they called it by the thousand board feet. For instance, a log 16 feet long and 12" to the top, probably have 100 board feet. So it was all scaled and they use to bring it out and pile it on brow of the river, or lake, wherever they was loggin, and about every two weeks, the company sent a scaler in and he scaled the logs, mark them and you could dump them down in the water and make room for more. Which is illegal today, to dump trees in the water. Then you could repile them again, and in the spring they'd go settle up. Here's something I'll tell you, you'll never see again. That man that scaled the logs, he was on a percentage basis like, and they was a bunch up the river, here and there, loggin, and one winter Father was the only man up river, the rest was out handier, and old Mr. Hankinson said, I can't send a man way up in there, 15 or 20 miles you know. There's only your camp up there. He says. Wouldn't pay.

He says you'll have to scale your own logs. And I'll pay you for them. Father didn't want to do it, because remember those logs coming down the river mix with everybody else's logs, and there is a percentage of sinkage and so on, and he said, I'm not worried about it. He says you scale them and bring me the slips in the spring, and I'll pay you. He scaled his own logs, took the slips in and the man paid him, no problem. You'd never see that today. If you ain't got two or three lawyers and contracts, you can't operate. It was just word of mouth and trust.

Q. Now, when you say they scaled them, that was, you mean, they estimated the number of board feet?

A. No, they had a rule and it measured the top. It opened up, it was calipers like that, and it opened up and went over the log and it showed you how big the log was and then you'd take the footage, and it would tell you on the rule what was in it.

Q. Now, if the log was smaller at the other end, do you know what I mean?

A. They scaled the small end. Because the saw cut it straight, so they'd be a small slab come off it up here but as it got back there'd be a bigger slab, but then the next cut you'd get a board and it would be even. They scaled the small end. They only cut the big stuff. They left it grow. You could go back, oh, I remember when they logged one piece here five or six times in my time. And then the companies bought it and they logged it once, it would be 60-70 years before you'd cut anything again. See, it didn't pay to haul a bunch of little once, in the first place. So, they just cut the big timber and left the rest. And it saved the land. It grew back up again.

Q. They were using horses, I presume?

A. They used horses and oxen.

Q. Did your father own his own animals.

A. Oh yeh. Sometimes he'd have two or three pairs and sometime he'd hire a team if he needed another team.. We use to go - he'd go after hayin, and he'd check with the company and they'd say yes, we've got a certain piece we want logged this winter. And they'd show it to him on the map. Now, it was virgin land, most of it then. He'd come home and we'd take baskets and load up with food and we'd go and he'd find this piece of land and he'd prepare to log it. He'd look for a good place for water, for the camps and the animals, and he had a cross cut saw and axes and we'd sawed them big hemlock down take the bark off, and we had to go peeling time, and we'd make a little place to get in that night, we use to call it a lean-to. And then we'd cut all the stuff to build the building. And then he'd come out, and when he'd go in again, he'd take a team, and he'd pull all them up where he wanted and build the camps and the barns. I remember the first winter I went, my job was to take the bark and lay it out flat

and let it dry there while they were building the camp so they could shingle. They use to shingle with the bark off the trees. All built out of logs.

Q. Were they intended to be used just for one season?

A. Yeh, sometimes they'd use them maybe three years. I remember there was one place there he was two or three years, but then they'd move and they'd just take the board they had built table with and the bunks and so on if they boarded the roof, they would take them off and take them to another place. A lot of times they just used poles and bark. The bark was about that wide and as long as this table. And they were right low, and they use to heat easy and they were comfortable, warm. They were nice.

Q. How long would it take them to build those house/camps?

A. Oh, it didn't take long. He'd put up a camp - I can't quite remember, but it wasn't long. A lot of times, the barn didn't have any floor where the cattle stayed or anything, and the camp had boards where you walked and the cook's corner and underneath the bunks there was no boards. It was a long ways to tote boards in there. So they took the bare necessities.

Q. How many men would he have working for him?

A. Not too many. Oh, he'd probably have three teams, well there was three teamsters, two men to a team cutting, that'd be six, seven eight nine, one on the brow would be ten.....

Q. What's a brow?

A. Where you pile the logs, they called it a brow. And maybe a dozen is all he'd have. Some camps would have a lot of men, a big outfit.

Q. Now when you say a team, are you referring to oxen or horses?

A. Either one, a team could be either one. He mostly had oxen. See the horse was a luxury like. For instance, every year a horse got older and he was worked less. Every year the ox got bigger and he was worked more for beef. So if anything happened to the horse, you had to dispose of him, shoot him, take him out in the pasture and shoot him. If anything happened to the ox, you sold him for beef. So they made money off of them while they used them. And it was oxen around the farm, you see, when you were gone your wife could go hook them up and go get vegetables or get firewood or anything, no problem. But the horses in them days, it took a good man to handle them. They were ----- horses come in from Saskatchewan and they had never seen a barn and they were wild. Some of them was awful hard to handle. Today they got all big beautiful horses, local breed and they don't use them. I worked a horse one winter - he had killed a man. He was born nasty, you know. And he was that way all his life, and the company kept him although he was old last time I saw him, he looked good and everything, but you couldn't turn your back on him.

Q. How did he kill the man?

A. Jumped on him and smashed him to the ground.

Q. And they kept him after that, eh?

A. Well, that's when the company got him. That's a rule, they'd buy them because they were such tough old things they'd get a lot of work out of them. But a, yeh, seen two like that. If a horse is bad because he has been misused or mishandled, you can win him back by being kind to him and go easy. And you'll win him back after awhile. But if they are born nasty, it don't leave them. You have to really show them whose boss.

Q. I interviewed a fella in Freeport the other day and he talked about having a balky horse, and he talked about conquering that horse and he did it with a big stick.

A. Yeh, some you had to. I never had to beat a balky horse, or if you got one that got lazy, you could take a stick and give him a switching to smarten him out, but there is always a reason, I found. I worked one that they had, the company he had come in from the West, and they unloaded him and he never worked. He would not haul the garbage away from the cook houses. One time he balked on the railroad track and they had to unhook him. The train was coming. He wouldn't start. And they sent and got different men and come there to break him to make him work, but they never could make him work. So I had worked a few that had caused a problem, and I got along with them good, so the super asked me one day if I would take him and try him. He said he is in the barn there, we are feeding him for nothing. Well, I said I'll try. So he brought him in and we worked him all winter, me and another feller, with this bad one, had him along side of him, and the owner of the company wouldn't believe it that he was working. He came in one day to see it, and after he seen it, he said I'll believe it now. That horse works. And he was a beautiful working horse, and his problem was he was stupid, dumb. Low in intelligence. You could tell all that by the horses head once you got use to them. You could go in the barn where there was 50 horses, and if there was one bad one, you could pick it out once you got use to them.

Q. What would you look for?

A. Well, I use to like what they called the Roman nose. They were a little harder to train, but once you got them trained they would never let you down. They were a little bit low in intelligence, but boy, they loved to work. And you get them trained and you had a good team. You take a horse that is very intelligent, sometime it is harder because he knows it much nicer out eating grass than it is working. And then they try to put them together that way, the same disposition. That's why you saw different colors together.

Q. This is very interesting with your horse stories.

A. I use to love horses. And once they understand what you want, they'll do it. You'll always see something, you know if you work with animals day to day, you'll get awful close to them. And you'll understand them as well as they'll understand you.

Q. Who taught you to work with animals?

A. Well, a feller in the old timers, you know. I went in the woods when I was 14 years old. And those people, they were different than they are today. They were people of wisdom, they didn't have any education like, but they were self educated and they had a lot of wisdom. And they could teach you.

Q. How far did you go in school, then?

A. I graded in grade 7, but I didn't go back that year. So I only had grade 6. And the problem was I never used it. I never picked up a pencil afterwards. If I had of used it, I would have self educated myself some. But I didn't. So I've got no education, you might as well say.

Q. No school education!

A. Yeh, I can read. But yet I like tapes, I made a tape for a physiology teacher
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Q. About what?

A. About what we're talking about and the way of life and their expressions and everything that happened. All about them. I didn't want to make it, I said, my dear man, I got no education - I had talked to him oh until half past twelve one night. He was down here on a visit from the States. He had just graduated. He said you got something we can't learn in college. And I want it. So the last time I talked to him I asked him how he made out with his tape, and he said I play it to my students all the time.

Q. Well, that is exactly why we are doing this project, you know, because the young people have no idea what your generation knows. But you know a lot of the people I have interviewed have told me they did leave school at 14 because by law

A. Well, yeh, I went to help Father in the woods. He didn't say I had to, but I thought it was my duty, same as the rest of them. And I said if you want me to go this winter, why I'll go. And he said if you want to come, we can use you. Here's something. I was 14, and we'd be 15-20 miles in the woods, and being the youngest, this job fell to me about taking the note to the company store so they could bet provisions brought. They would bring them as far as they could take them, and when the road ended for their truck, they would unload it and we'd come out the next day with a team and tow it in. And I use to walk that. I'd

leave before daylight in the morning and get back after dark. I don't know if you'd find somebody 14 years old today would do that.

Q. Now you would have to bring it all the way to the company store? The note?

A. The cook would write it out, what he needed. Mostly things for his cupboard, you know. And tobacco and a few different things like that and feed for the animals. That was very important, feed for the animals. They'd bring it up on a truck to where the road ended, and we'd come out the next day, me and another fellow with a team, and we tow it in to the camp. Every couple of weeks or so I'd do that.

Q. What company store was this, now?

A. It was Hankinson in Weymouth. The Weymouth Motors garage? Well it would be their grandfather. He was a wonderful man, nice man to work for.

Q. What was his first name, do you remember?

A. George.

Q. George Hankinson.

A. We logged for him about all the time, and when he got older - well he logged some off his own land but, the war changed everything. It seemed it got mobile, it got machinery, and he didn't go in to that. So he just stayed home and cut wood off his own land, till he retired. And that put us out. We tried working for companies but it wasn't the same. So I went on construction and I done repair and operated machinery and stuff. I had it good too, they used me good. I wish I was still doing it. Because time is long, you know.

Q. Your Dad always would have to set up a camp near a river, I presume.

A. Yeh, there were certain places where they had to be hauled out and you had to build a camp like on the land itself that you was going to log. Because if you built the camp down to the river, you'd be too far that way, so you'd build it right on the land you were logging. When you were done at night, you were in the camp on the land. There was no way to shorten it. If you built the camp to the river, well then at night you had to come to your camp. But if you built it here, the teams hauled it to the river and the men at night come to the camp, they were right there.

Q. You mentioned the brow, was that by the river?

A. Oh yeh. Right on the bank. What they would do, you see there was no roads then and they brought that out by river drivers. So what they'd do, they'd build what they called a boom - it was one log chained to another and it made a circle out in the lake or river or whatever. And that was held right there and

your logs dumped down in there so they couldn't go adrift all over the place. If it was a lake, and you had two over there, and three over there, you'd never get them gathered up. So what would happen, the river drivers would come in the spring when the ice let go and they'd break those booms open, and they'd take all those logs with the rest of them and go.

Q. And how would they travel with the logs? River drivers?

A. They'd have a boat and they had trails along the water for some. I was brought way out pretty near to Weymouth. They had little dams, you know, and they'd back the water up. And when they'd drive, they'd open the gate and let the water go and it would carry the logs.

Q. So that was a whole different job from what you and your father did.

A. Oh yeh. That was a trade by itself. I never ever worked - just a little bit one time. But I never ever worked on a drive. Matter of fact, I was afraid of it. It was awful dangerous.

Q. I was just about to ask you. Even your work -

A. Well, yeh, you see, a lot of them places the logs would stacked crossways and get caught and then they'd pile up. You had to go and get that loose.

Q. And how would they do that?

A. Well, they'd do it by hand. Sometime if it was real bad, they would use dynamite but most generally they would do it by hand with peavey's and axes. There'd be one log maybe, the key they called it, that was holding everything. And when you'd hit that with an ax it would burst, it was such a pressure on it. And they'd all start tumbling down behind you and there you was, out in the river and all that coming at you. But they'd jump the first log they got a hold of and they'd ride it out.

Q. You're kidding!

A. Yeh, they'd ride the river out.

Q. Do you remember any accidents of that kind in your day?

A. Oh, I only heard them talk about them. I don't remember seeing them myself. There is one fellow is buried up the river, a fellow by the name of Black. They never found him until spring. He was in the lake you know. He was decomposed and they buried him along side the river. He was killed. See they would squish you to death, those logs, you know. Biggity bang down through the rocks. Well you know what mad water is like.....

Q. White water.....

A. Yeh. Those rapids. And they'd send the logs down first and they call it a wing. And they'd haul them ashore and make a tunnel like and then all the logs would go down through there if it was a bad place, and when they was done they'd take them down. They called it winging off. And you'd have to go down to the next narrow place and build that again, you see.

Q. How long would that take them, say the camp is 15-20 miles back?

A. It didn't take them long - two or three weeks. And they had mobile cooks, I called it, moved from one place to the other. And they had "cookies" that carried the food because they ate like four times a day. They never stopped until dark. And they use to get wet. Soaking, sopping wet. They'd fall in the river, and makes you wonder today when they say don't go out in the dampness. It is an awful change that way.

Q. Were there certain families, or were Blacks or Indians better drivers than most?

A. Yeh, there were some experts at it. I heard my oldest brother say that he seen a feller, Eddie Thibeau, he said what he is doing you'd never believe it unless you seen it. When they'd get ready let it go, they knowed they was going to break it, they called break it down, they'd holler 'green hands ashore', - all the ones out there helping that maybe their first year or something, they called them green hands. Green hands ashore and they'd all go ashore and he'd break the key and let her go.

Q. Sounds like young man's work to me.

A. Oh, it was. They had cork boots. They had to have cork boots in order to stay on them logs. And they had it all figured out, they'd be on the log going down through a rapid, and they'd look and the log was going to hit a rock. Well now, when it would hit a rock and stop, you'd go flying. What they'd do, they'd watch, and just as it hit the rock, they'd jump up in the air, and the log stopped and they came back down on it.

Q. Unbelievable. Like acrobats! But there must have been real skills in cutting wood as well.

A. Yeh. It was very dangerous. I know of people who have got hurt bad in the woods. One feller up here he never walked again. He was in a wheelchair the rest of his life. You had to look out. When you fell those big trees, sometime they would hook one, the limbs would hook a tree, and they'd take it so far and then they'd let it go and when it would come back it would break off and come back at you. So you had to be careful. Sometimes they'd hit a bunch of trees, and it would lift the back end up, the butt, then the trees would swing back and she'd come back. That's what happened to him. It come back and hit him here and slid down off him. Took his legs and everything.

Q. This is going to sound like a very stupid question, but how did they actually cut the trees? Did they use axes,

A. They'd make a notch with an ax, you know, which ever way they wanted the tree to go they'd make a notch. Then they'd saw it with cross cut saws, put wedges in it, to help tip it. It would go three ways - you could fell it the way it was leaning, or it would go a little to the left or it would to the right. And you'd pick out your best place where you'd wanted it to go. You could control it.

Q. Say, how long would it take to cut through a fairly big tree?

A. Oh, some of them big frozen trees, they use to freeze hard then, oh, gosh, it would take 15-20 minutes to saw that down, maybe more some of them. I can't remember. Especially them big hardwoods.

Q. And then you'd have to cut all the limbs off.

A. Cut the limbs all off, cut the top off it. They use to haul them with the teams long length. They didn't block them up. Because you could haul more that way. If you cut them all up in short logs, you couldn't pile them on the sled. And it hauled easier. You could haul more. They'd go in the summer and fall those big hemlocks and take the bark off of them. Cause hemlocks is heavy as lead. And they were dry all summer and come winter they was right light and they was smooth as that table there and they would slip. Once the road was packed they would slip real nice.

Q. So what time of year could you not go in the woods or was it something they did year round?

A. Well, when it come spring when everything broke up, they most generally come out. A lot of the places you had to cross was swamp and lowland, and that would freeze and you could travel on it all winter. Well, when that broke up, you were done.

Q. And that's when the driving began, I suppose.

A. Yeh, when the ice left the river and the lakes, then the drives started. And that was cold water. Them fellers get wet and work all day in it.

Q. What of the men working with your father. How much would he make?

A. For a days' pay?

Q. Yes.

A. Mine was my cigarettes and my board. Course, I had a good appetite, that helped some. But they would get - its' according to what they were doing, a good teamster would get probably \$1.50 a day and somebody just helping, the

choppers would get \$1.00 a day. That went for a long time. Wages never started going up much until the war broke out.

Q. Do you remember the depression at all?

A. Oh, yeh. Grew up in it. And there's the thing. I often thought when you're teaching school, you never seem to explain anything to you the right way. I remember the depression, I came home bare feet in the gravel, there was no paved roads then. Now we use to have a lard pail, and that was bread and molasses. And that molasses would go all through that bread, and at noon you'd have a mess. But you had to eat it, and it was good stuff to eat - molasses you know. Anyway,

Q. That was your lunch you brought to school?

A. Yeh. I came home one day when I was just a small boy, and there was a butcher down here and he only had one arm. He use to peddle on the road and most generally done that in the summer when the tourists was on. And he'd stop and talk with Father. Now Father couldn't buy any meat in the summer, there was no money, but he'd talk with him because sometime they'd trade cattle or something, or sell him a lame horse or something. And I came along one day and he had a caravan like, and he'd have these quarters of beef in the caravan covered over, you know, and he had a meat saw and big knives and whatever you wanted he'd cut.

Q. With his one arm?

A. Oh, yeh. He'd put the stub on the quarter to hold it, and I can see him yet. He was a big man. And he made a living with that one arm. There was no welfare, compensation, no nothing then. And there was a tourist car come along, and the teacher had been telling us about our system. Our politics and so on - it was the greatest in the world. Democratic system and so on. They'd been preaching that for two or three days. Tourist car came along and stopped, they got out and they went and ordered a full size steak off a big quarter. Oh my, it was a big one. Cut that off, and they had a big black dog and they showed it to the dog. And we was looking at the steak, mouth running water, that dog threw it up in the air a couple of times, rolled it around in the gravel and walked away and left it. And I was looking at it, they put it in the trunk of the car and drove off. And I was thinking, we're living in the greatest system in the world, but I can't have what the dog don't want. See how confusing that is to the kid. See, it's never explained the right way. They moreorless control you. Its' like the law. The law doesn't exactly protect you, it controls you. I never forgot that.

Q. Did your Father say anything to you that day about what had just happened there?

A. No. I didn't mention it. When anything happened like that, he would, if anything went against us or something, he would say, don't let it eat on ya,

forget it. He was very religious see, too. That helped. There's something - are you religious?

Q. I was brought up a Catholic, but I don't go to Church often now because there is no church in Freeport for me. I go to the Baptist church once in a while. But I'm religious in my own way.

A. Well, he was very very religious. And he wouldn't like anything like that eat on us. He would let it go. His neighbour over there was English, he was a Cook, his name was Cook. And he was a Baptist, and he and Father was the best of friends for all their lives. They each had a different church, but it didn't make no difference. And that's getting gone now. Maybe it'll come back, I don't know. But for quite awhile it was a problem. They was the best friends you ever seen.

Q. Your Father was Catholic?

A. Yes, he was brought up Catholic.

Q. Now, where was the Catholic Church in Gilberts' Cove:

A. Up here to Plympton, just up a ways.

Q. So what was Sunday like for you when you were growing up?

A. Well, you had to go to Church in the morning, and in the afternoon or evening they'd have vespers or prayer. They had more of it then, today you don't have so much.

Q. Oh, no. They even have services Saturday nights now, and that was unheard of!

Would you pray regularly in the home as a family together?

A. No, not too much. The sister, I remember years ago in the winter, use to read the Bible to Mother. See, Mother couldn't read. Mother use to walk from Doucetteville out here to the church when she was a girl. It's eight or nine miles - and she said when she'd get pretty near to the church, she'd put her shoes on and when she'd go back, when she'd get there she'd take them off to save them, you know. It's what they saved, why they survived. Wasn't what they earned so much. They were always saving something.

Q. Now you mentioned coming home from school on a gravel road in your bare feet, in the depression, was that because you couldn't afford shoes?

A. That's right. You only could afford them in the winter.

Q. In a lot of Catholic families, it was kind of understood that one of the boys would be a priest and one of the girls would be a nun. Did you feel that expectation?

A. Yeh. They was a lot of that. And another thing, the Catholics had big families and they name them after the Apostles or the Saints. Well, there was a dozen John's in the village and a dozen Joseph, Pauls and Peters. And they had to give them a nickname or you couldn't distinguish them one from another. And they was a lot of funny things happen. This was part of that tape I made. I remember there was one feller telling me that he worked for the Wagners here in Weymouth. They was in the mill business too and logging. And he said the boss went back in Concession and he bought a pair of oxen and paid for them, had a bill of sale and whatnot, and he said I will send somebody to walk them home. They didn't truck much then because there was no trucks - very few. So he says, the next day he sent me and another fellow out back and he give me the man's name and he said so many houses the other side of the church and whatnot, and he said you inquire and you'll find him. He said we met a man walking in the road when we got right there walking by the church, and we asked him where this fellow lived. And he said he don't live around here that I know of. Oh, they said, yeh, it's right close here somewhere. No, he says, I don't know anything. Well, the other feller gave him the nickname, oh damn, he says, that's me! Now, that might sound awful stupid, but if you go back into them times, they probably never got a letter nor wrote one. They never used their names. I remember there was no mail for years and years, so we give it up. Now there's mail in the box everyday. But it was funny. In a different cases like that. Father went down to see a feller - he had worked with him years ago - and he was old, he heard he was sick. He said I got to go down and see Moses. Moses Saulnier. And he had told him he lived on the back road there off in Meteghan River so father went and Jessie took him down, my brother. When he got down by a bridge there, he stopped. There was a man walking in the road and they asked him where Moses Saulnier lived. He said I don't know any Moses Saulnier around here. Oh, yes. Father says he lives right here somewhere. He said, I don't know. Well, Jessie said they call him -tounar. Oh, he said, he live right there!

Q. When you said 'tounar', I wonder what that was?

A. Well, the bridge , they claim when cars hit it at night and the horses ran over it, it sounded like thunder, and they use to call it the thunder bridge and tounar is thunder. Lot of the nicknames meant something. You know, down here there was a crowd by the name of Whites but that would be LeBlanc's. And the old feller use to keep sheep. And they use to call him brobees.????

Q. And that was his nickname?

A. Yes. He was a small man. And they use to call him???? I've had people come here from the States and ask me what their people's nickname was - they wanted to tell their grandchildren. And they didn't know what it was. Cause they were people from here that went over there. One fellow come not too many years ago and wanted to know what his people's nickname was and he said it was Frank,du chien, Dave du chien. And I said, well it means little dog. The old fellow wherever he went he had a little dog to his heels. And the kids would say in French, look at the man with the little

dog. And it stuck. Another nickname, there was very few knew what it was, and it still goes yet today, once in a while. It was filiding. What it was, an old neighbour would have his window up and he'd play the fiddle, and when he'd tune the fiddle, you know the strings will ding when they tune them there. And the kids would say he heard a fiddle ding, lets go over and hear the music and it stuck, old filiding.

Q. That's a great name.

A. They was very few, they'd take it as an offence or a slur. Very few. But it meant something. On the back road here, there was Ameros, and their name was 'gauveche', or nickname. And what it was, the old Grandfather go climb up on his gate at night and he'd put his hands like that and he'd holler to his cows to come home. And he'd holler co co co veche, you know, and they got it gauveche, the kids. And it stuck.

Q. Did you have a nickname?

A. No. They'd say Vincent Josey, something like that. On my mother's side their nickname was 'Babin'. The old feller had a big lip. Lower lip. And I remember there was one they called her Mary 'bobeck' - she had a good kiss. She use to say you do this, and you do that, and I'll give you a good kiss,. It's pretty well gone.

Q. What did you call your Father growing up? Did you call him Father?

A. Called him Papa.

Q. And your Mother was?

A. Called her Mum.

Q. And what about your Grandparents?

A. Use to call them Grandmother and Grandfather. He use to talk a little bit crooked.

Q. How do you mean?

A. Well, broken English because he had come from Doucetteville. We use to hear him at night sometime - he'd say 'Liza, it's half past nine. Better wind the cat and throw the clock out.'

Q. I meant to ask you when you were talking about working back in the woods, and that long walk into the company store with that note, you'd be walking all day. What would you see walking by yourself?

A. You'd see deer a lot and them days there was a lot of moose. But you didn't see moose too much along the road. It was always deer and you'd see the

odd fox and I use to try to get it in the moonlight. Cause you walked nicer in the moonlight. If you get back after dark, even an hour after dark it's hard going. Pitch dark. A tree blowed across the road or something. I remember one time a tree blowed across the road, and I hit it, right here, and it upset me this way, and when I got up I had to figure which way I was going in the first place. Because I made a summerset like. That's something you had to learn. You see, there was no mountains or no peaks, or no landmarks and when you travelled in them woods you had to know your way around or you were in trouble.

Q. So how would you know?

A. Well, we learned it from a feller in the old timers. My Father, he could go right straight through to the south shore if he wanted to. He was good in the woods.

Q. Would he have a compass?

A. No, we had none then. I remember the first compass we ever got. There was always something that would tell ya. That's gone now - the young people don't know because they have charge compass' and so on. Well that's wonderful, I've worked with them. But if it blows out the window, you're in trouble. And they should learn the old fashion way, too. We always listen to what the old fellers was saying. That brought me home one time by listening to what they had to say.

Q. What happened?

A. Well, they'd say, we went up to a certain place, we went up to the nutherd, something like that, well, you never forgot that. So if you was up there and got lost, then you had to go south to come home.

Q. And how would you know which way was South?

A. Well I come home that night. I didn't know what happened. He asked me to take his horses in to bring them out. There was a bunch hunting. And this is about 10-15 miles in the woods back here. They was a horse road, and when I got there, they was deer short. You were allowed two deers apiece, and there was 3 Americans, I guess. He said you'll have to blanket the horse, tie him out, and you've got to go hunting tomorrow with us. We've got to try to get another deer. And I thought he knowed what he was doing. I thought he had a compass and whatnot, so he said come with me. We went up over this big high ridge, through a bunch of swales and we say a big buck deer. He never got a shot at it but he'd make me go way around and try to bring him back on him. And we done that, and it was getting late. He saw him a couple of times, you know. And I said Bobby, we've got to go home. It's going to rain and it's getting late. So he started and he didn't go far, and if you're walking behind you can see where they're going. He was going in a circle. He said, look there's somebody else in here, look at the tracks in the moss. I said yeh, that somebody else is right here. It's you and I. Oh, no. he says. I said yes, it is. I said I threw a package of sugar,

the box over there, along side of that tree. He went and looked and it was there. And he hauled off his coat and he was going to go. And I said, hold on a minute, if I have to sleep out I don't want to be sweating. Wait a minute. I'll take you out of here. I had always heard him say when they went up around the bog and them places they always went to the nuthered so I said I gotta go to the southerd to go to the Uniacke Lake. That's where the camp was, Uniacke Lake. So there was a warm wind coming from the southerd. I lit a cigarette and the smoke - I said come on, we've gotta go. It's going to be dark pretty soon. Well, he said it ain't that way. Well, I said it sure ain't that way! I followed the smoke there and kept going, kept that breeze right in my face, and just as it got dark, I come out at the lake. And we no more than got to the camp when it took to raining. And the Americans said, boy you were lucky. We were worried about you. You got in before the storm. Well he said, I don't know what that boy was following, but he saved my soul tonight.

Q. How old would you have been at that point?

A. Oh, in my teens like. And another time - see if you knew, you would take notice. Another time the superintendent of the company coming after me on a Sunday. We use to stay over Sunday's a lot. And I thought he wanted me to help him blaze the line. And he said bring an ax and come with me and I'll allow you a day. But he wanted somebody to take him in the woods and bring him out. But he never said. If he'd have told me that, I'd have watched out. So I just followed him all day - behind him and he never found the line. He couldn't. And when it got late in the afternoon, he said can you take me home? Why, you just may as well have hit me in the head with a mall. And I said if I say anything, it's going to make it worse. And every night when we'd come in from down where we browed the logs, the meadow and the river, me and Dennis to cut maples, cut little maples for the deer to eat. So they'd bud. So they had made a trail and they use to go up in that part of the country to hide. It was thick heavy timber. So I said, I'm going to make a big circle, and if I can find that trail, it will take right out to where we were browng our logs. I was lucky, I found it. And we followed it, and we come right out and he stomped his feet, and brushed the snow off him, and boy, he said, you're good in the woods! And I felt like saying, if you knowed how close you come.....cause I had nothing much to go by.

Q. Did you guide much?

A. Yes, me and my brothers use to guide Americans.

Q. Was Dennis your brother?

A. No. He was a friend up the road here. He got drowned with me. Back to my camp.

Q. What year was that?

A. Oh, it was 20 years ago or more. They think he had a heart attack and fell out of the boat. When we found him he was only, he wasn't the width of that room from the shore. He could have walked ashore.

Q. When you guided for the Americans, was that good money?

A. No. What it was. We wanted to go hunting ourselves, so we would take them and they supplied everything and we didn't charge no wages. In return they took us to the States and took us wherever we wanted to go. They took Jessie down to Indiana - he wanted to see the races. Took me to New York - I wanted to visit my sister. Took me up to New York City. They bring us everything we wanted and we didn't charge them anything. One feller had married a girl from down here.

Q. Do you remember any of the names?

A. Their names was Desantas. They were three brothers and once and a while they'd bring a friend. They couldn't get over how we travelled through the woods.

Q. So how old were you when they took you to New York City?

A. Oh, I was way up in my 20's.

Q. Do you remember how you felt about New York City coming from a little place?

A. Yeh. I didn't like it. I liked it to go visit it and see it. And my niece took us somewhere every day, and I enjoyed it that way. But I wouldn't want to stay there. Took us up to the Empire State Building, she took us to Radio City and you name it, she took us. And it was good, because we had a guide, like. And they've wanted me to go back since, I got two nieces still over there and they live on Long Island. But, I don't care for it. You didn't know anybody, you couldn't talk to anybody and there was 11 million people and I was all alone.

Q. It's a funny thing, isn't it?

A. Yeh. And I'll tell you something else. My brother Jessie. He was a good head. He could do anything. He only had Grade 3. No matter what it was they'd ask him, he'd go do it. He'd hire on for everything. He built his own house. Don't matter what he wanted to do, he could do it. He was a real genius like. He went with them, and they was going to Indiana, and they had done a motor job on the car, and they never tightened the head down enough, and they went so far and she started leaking, skipping, and he had watched them in the garage and he was a good mechanic, and he said I know what's wrong. They pulled over to the side of the road and stopped. He said the gaskets leaking - she's not tight enough. They said we just passed a garage right up there. If I had a wrench I could fix it. And it was Sunday. Well John said today's Sunday, and he said oh, I'll go get the wrench and I can fix it. John said you won't get no

wrench there. You're not in Nova Scotia now. Jessie said, I don't believe that. And this was one of his first trips over to the States. He believed all people was the same. It was the environment they lived in that made them different. He went up to the service station and asked for the foreman, and he told the foreman the problem and he said I can fix it. She just wants to be tightened up a little. Well now, he said, we don't do that. Let wrenches go, they were quite expensive. They had a dial on them. He said I'm going to let you have it - the accent, you see. He asked him where he was from. He said I'm going to let you have it. So he went and tightened everything up and fixed it and he came back and he wanted to pay him for it. No, he said. I'm glad to do it. But he said you don't know it, but I could never lend anybody over here that wrench. I'd have never seen it again. And you see, he was the same. Wanted to let him have the wrench, do him a favour. But where he was living, he'd be a fool to do it. So people are born the same. I have always been interested in people and I always take people as I find them and I never had any trouble to get along with people and I have boarded all over the country. And I got interested in it and I read the history of mankind, you know. If you go back far enough, we are the same people, whether we are Jew or Gentile. A different country, a different religion, and a different language and its spread out, you know. We are all the same people.

Q. Indeed. You're right. Get a parent with a child and the expression is the same, isn't it. The love is there. What contact would you have had with Micmac's in those years in the woods?

A. I didn't have too much. They wasn't many here, you know. Very little.

Q. When you had some free time, where would you go? Would you tend to go to Digby or to Weymouth?

A. We use to go to Digby quite a lot.

Q. How would you get there?

A. Well, somebody would have a truck with a box on the back, and he'd take a bunch and we'd go to the movies in them days. Then go to the restaurant and then come home. If you had a couple of dollars you could make it.

Q. So who did you marry, then Vincent?

A. I married a Robicheau. She was from down Weymouth north and moved right up here - her mother lost her husband and she married a feller from down here. And there was no license and we never could find any hook up but there must have been some way back. But this feller got my family tree. He tried to find out and he couldn't. He went back two or three generations and that's far as he could go.

Q. And what was your wife's first name?

A. Margaret. I lost her - it will be three years in December.

Q. Where did you meet Margaret?

A. Right down here there was a big store, three story building, this captain over here had it. And there was another store on the other side, and a woman lived in it and she kept post office. In the big store there on the first floor, they use to have a nickelodeon and they'd play that on Saturday nights and one thing another. And I met her there, and I use to walk her home and so on, and it went from there. She was going to school yet - I was 35 when we got married and she was 20. But it worked good because she appeared to be older than what she was and at that time I seem to be younger, they said. And they never noticed it much. Course my father was older than my mother and my grandfather was 15-20 years older than my grandmother. It run in the family.

Q. So you got married in 1957. So by that time there would have been electricity,

A. Oh yeh. We built this house. I got the logs sawed, I had bought the land and paid for it, logged it and paid for it then I was working out. But I always wanted a house here. And there was a barn on it, but no house. He lived with his sister over here and he never had a house, the old feller. And that was what enticed me to get married.

Q. What's that?

A. I wanted to build a house. Everybody going home Friday night, they were married and going home and I wasn't going anywhere. So that kind of give me the notion to get married. But see, when we grew up all through the depression and everything, we never dreamed of getting married because we couldn't afford it. Working for \$1.00 a day, how would you build a house?

Q. How much did this house cost you to build?

A. \$10,000.00. And when we moved in we didn't owe a cent on it. She worked and she could save money.

Q. Where did Margaret work?

A. She worked at the Met there in Digby a long time from the time it started, and the last time she was out to the motel there where the boat comes in. She worked there.

Q. Actually, before I came to talk to you, Sue Amero, this woman that I told you is doing some interviews too, said she had worked with your wife at the Met. It just occurred to me now that you mention it. About 25 years ago. She probably did. She knew everybody in Digby. And she was a good soul. She was a good partner. How many children did you have?

A. We just had the two. One in Massachusetts and the youngest one moved in with me when I came home from the hospital.

Q. Who did you buy your land from?

A. Old Frank Melanson. Use to call him Frank Oliver. And he was an old batch and he lived over here and his sister was an old maid and they lived together there. And when he got old, real old, he made up his mind to sell it. And I use to haul his wood with the horse and do his work and people tried to buy that land, my gosh, but he wouldn't sell it. One spring I was getting ready to go to Cape Breton and I said you better let me haul your wood out right away cause I'm going to be gone for the summer. So, we went and we hauled it and come home and he paid me and he come over afterwards and said don't go to Cape Breton. I said why? He said I want you to buy my land. I'm all done, he said. He was getting kind of blind and he was in his 80's, you know. Well, I said I'd love to have it but what do you want for it? He said, I'll sell it to you for \$8,000.00. It was worth \$20-40,000. A lot of wood on it, and them days that was a lot of money. Well, I said if I can get the money I'll buy it. I'll go see tomorrow. So I went down to Belliveau's Cove where they had that big mill, and my brother here had married his daughter. He told me to go down and I told him. He said I'll go see tomorrow. So he come and he looked at some of the land and he said that's good enough. I'll give you the money. And he give me the money and I bought it and I logged it to pay for it.

Q. That was the agreement, kind of?

A. Oh yes, I had to sell him the logs. But we had no agreement or nothing and every once in a while he'd say, look, we'll go up to that lawyer someday and we'll get that drawed up . I said yeh. And that went on until I paid for it. And no agreement.

Q. How long did it take you to get that money?

A. Just took me about a year. I lived off it besides. And then I logged some to build the house. But we were saving the money, and when we moved in it, she kept track of everything. And when we moved in it, I said what did it cost? It cost \$10,000.00 and we didn't owe a cent.

Q. Did you do the actual construction yourself?

A. No. Her stepfather built it for me. See I didn't want to leave my work. I hired a young feller to a - they closed it in and that winter I worked around the doors and gyproc and she painted and so on , but he built it and closed it in for me.

Q. What kind of work were you going to do in Cape Breton if you had gone?

A. Construction.

Q. So basically, once the war came logging for you and your family declined.

A. It ended. It went. That way of life was gone. They started building roads and bull dozers got popular and everything, truck roads, it wasn't the same working for a company. They didn't have much value over land or a horse.

Q. When did you own your last horse?

A. Oh, it was quite a while ago. I bought a tractor afterwards and I kept that till a few years ago, and the wife didn't want me in the woods anymore, alone, with a power saw, and I said, well, the only way I'll stay home is if I sell that tractor. I couldn't look at it and not go. So I sold it. It must be 7 -8 years. But it wasn't the same as the horse. The horse was company, it was alive.

Q. I am curious - I never heard about them bringing horses from out West to Nova Scotia.

A. Oh yeh. We use to go up to Middleton in June. They'd come in with carloads and they'd be big and fat eating that Prairie grass. They were nice. But some of them were so wild. You'd get the odd one that was good, but they had never - they were range horses.

Q. So they weren't the big draft horses, then?

A. Oh yeh. They were great big horses. A lot of them. And I'll never forget it, I asked the old feller, I said you must get a nasty one once in a while. Because you have so many come in. He said yeh, once in a while I get one. I said, what do you do with it? If you sell that, you'd spoil your business. People didn't want them anyhow. What do you ever do with them? He said, I got a barn down there special for that. I keep putting them in there, and when I get a barn full, he said I ship them to Newfoundland. Struck me to laugh. Them poor Newfoundlanders they never knowed what a nice kind horse was. An awful thing, you know. If it had been half in half, it wouldn't have been so bad! His name was Jack Parr, the dealer.

Q. What would you pay for a decent horse then, in Middleton?

A. Oh, \$200.00 I imagine then. Now it would be in the thousands! And to get the shod, I don't know what it'd cost. I use to shoe them myself. Father had a blacksmith over there and he use to make the shoes, Jessie use to make the shoes and shoe them. And I use to shoe the horses when there was horses around.

Q. Now to shoe an ox is quite a different thing than shoeing a horse.

A. There is two to every foot.

Q. Two shoes to each ox foot?

A. Because it has to be flexible. They would walk stub toed, I don't think they could get along with one shoe right around. But see a horse had a cloven foot, and it only took one shoe.

Q. Did you put your oxen in a sling?

A. You had to. Because there was something about the way they was built , they didn't have that balance a horse has. And you'd but a sling under the belly, and tightened it up and take their weight, take their heft off and then pick their leg up and set it on a beam that come out there, tie it there. And then you'd shoe it, let that leg go and pick up the other leg. Yeh, you had to put them in like manger, you know. I don't know if you started from a calf, picking up their feet and training them you might get them, but you see the double claw would be flopping around when you'd be nailing on it. By putting it on this beam, there was a beam come out each side, by putting the foot on there and tying it there it made it solid to nail it or work at it. So I think you'd of had quite a job trying to shoe them without.

Q. Must have been a reason for it, I guess,eh? How often would you have to do that with oxen?

A. Oh, they'd go a month or so before you had to shift the shoes. After they growed up, unless they tore one off, and a horse the same, as the hoof grewed out and the shoe went with it. And the shoe would get way out and it wouldn't be in the right place, and you'd have to take the shoe off the horse, haul it back where it went, and you'd pared it off. Like cutting your fingernails, you know.

Q. Someone once told me if a horse doesn't have a good foot, you don't have a good horse. Are oxen feet as tricky?

A. They were a difference in them. The white face had a good hoof. Solid, it was cream colored. The Durham, the red Durham, he had a black hoof and it was corky like. It didn't hold shoes good. If he got them caught, tear them right off . But the light colored hoof use to be better. But the ox you had very little margin to drive the nail. Or you'd prick them, they called it. It would be like shoving it under your fingernails and it would make them lame and fester. But the horse you had all kinds of room.

Q. So this team that you have carved, you said is half Hereford and half Durham.?

A. Yeh. When they are grey like that they are part grey Durham.

Q. And what would be the point of mixing the two breeds. Would you get a better animal?

A. The Durham was heavier, it gave them heft. And lot of it was just what chance you had to breed them. If you had a Hereford cow, and he had a Durham bull, well you didn't go anywhere else. That's good enough. The first ox was the

Devonshire, come from Devonshire England. And they were all red with just little horns, and they were slender built but they were awful good oxen. They were tough, strong, but they was nothing for beef. So, the government brought the Hereford in and the Durham to make more beef and it kind of run them out. There's no more now.

Q. When would the government have brought these breeds in, in your Father's day?

A. Oh, yeh. When Father was young he said there was a lot of Devons. They were about all Devons, and they wanted better beef so the Herefords was all beef and the Durham was all beef, so they brought them in and they gradually run the Devon out. They still have them in England.

Q. How would you select which calf was going to turn to be a good ox?

A. You couldn't tell too much from the calves. They had to be castrated up to six month old.

Q. That soon?

A. Yeh, if you went and waited a year, then they'd have the appearance of a bull and they'd look just like a bull. Horns and ugly face, you know. So they.....

Q. Long horns?

A. Well, they'd have low horns. So up to six months and then they'd get the impression of an ox. A lot of people don't know the difference between an ox and a bull.

Q. And so what is the difference other than being castrated?

A. That's the only difference.

Q. That's the only difference, but they look different, you say.

A. Yeh, it changes the whole animal. Now a horse. They let a horse go sometimes maybe a year, two years old. And that let him develop the stallion neck and appearance you know, and they'd castrate him. It would never change him in any other way. He still looked like a stallion. But the ox, it changed him.

Q. Tell me again how an ox looks different from a bull.

A. Well, his horns comes up high like that,,,,,

Q. That's natural?

A. Yeh, that'll grow natural once he's castrated. And he's got a narrower head, a bull has got a wide ugly head on him, you know.

Q. And what about the body itself?

A. The body don't change itself much. Now there was another type too. If you let the calf go we'll say until he was a year old or more, then he was castrated, he would develop the full appearance of the bull. But he wouldn't be a bull, so they use to call him a stag. They thought it made him more rugged for work and so on, but then he wasn't salable, so they kind of quit that. But they called them a stag. He had the appearance of a bull and everything. But he was castrated.

Q. I went on an interview with a guy on the neck, his name was Stewart Carty.

A. Yes, I remember him well. I bought cattle from him.

Q. You have.

A. From his father.

Q. Talking to him, the appearance of his team was the be and end all it seemed. He wanted his team to look good together, a matched team. How important was that when you were back in the woods here?

A. Not too much. I've seen like a white face and a red one, or a spotted face and a red one, like that. If they had two good ones put together for worksee, all this and all these trimmings and everything ...that's like exhibition . That's just hobbying. But they'd have bells on them just the same, because they use to depend on that a lot. They'd wonder when the team is going to get here,in the winter you'd hear them bells for a long ways. You'd go out and listen and you'd say, ah, he's coming. Here's something I'm going to tell you, that's if you want to take the time.

I took a pair, one time, and we were right along side of a lake but we were hauling the logs quite a ways out to the river. And we had cut some logs on the other side of the river, on the other side of the lake, and it was getting towards spring and Father said them logs have got to come out because if the lake breaks up we can't get over there. He said would you go down and pull them all up together and then I'll cut a road into them and I'll have the teams take them to the river. It's getting late. I said yeh, I'll go tomorrow. So I went and took a pair of oxen and their dinners and mine, and I started pulling the logs all up together and it took to snowing. All the way down the lake, the lake was bare as that, but there was signs of a storm coming. And the animals will tell you when there was a storm coming. And I said, I want to get the job done, I'll go. It wasn't so awful far, just down across the lake. The lake wasn't awful big. But at noon when I came to feed them, boy it had snowed. It was coming down and when you're in the thick woods you don't notice it like when you're out in the open. When I fed them there, mister, there was some snow. When I got done, pretty near dark,

and I come down to the lake, I had to stop. You couldn't see your hand in front of your face. The wind was blowing and it was snowing like a blizzard. And there was no way on the face of the earth I can guide them oxen across that lake.

Q. They wouldn't go?

A. Oh, they would go. That's what happened. And they couldn't smell no tracks, there was a foot of new snow, and they couldn't see anythingthere was nothing. Wind going around and around. I said, I got to chance it. I got in the front sled and hauled the cord up over my head and I told them to go. And they couldn't see nothing, smell nothing, and on the lake we was riding level as this floor. Can't feel movement, and when you hit land you could feel the bumps. But I kind of timed myself about how long it would take me to go across the lake. And I kept that in mind. And they was going, and I didn't know which way they was going, and by and by I felt them hit the ground. Felt the sleds move, you know, bumping. And I waited and after awhile I stopped. And I went up and I put my hand under the nigh one, had a coat up over my head, he was all covered with wet snow and it was sticking to him. And when my hand got up to his horns, they was against the barn door. You never forget that. And that reminds me of talking to an atheist one time and he was a science teacher. I said to him one day, science is his animal control by his instinct. Oh, he says that is right. Without that he couldn't survive. Well, I said, where did he get it? He had to have it the day he come here. And he's just got the right amount today. And you can't instinct, its spiritual like. He scratched his head, he got in his car and put his window down, and scratched his head again, and said I don't know. I felt like saying, I know, but I didn't want to push it.

Q. Let him dwell on it a bit.

A. And its those things like I say, when you work with animals and stuff, you get close to them and they teach you something. Now they told me that day that they was something that brought them to that barn. Something we couldn't see. And when your horses would get restless in the afternoon and didn't want to stand you better get going cause something was coming. They knowed it.

Q. Did you always call your oxen the same names?

A. Pretty well.

Q. What would you call yours?

A. I use to call them Spark and Diamond. If you had one was a like a - maybe he'd be quicker than the other one, you'd call him Sparky. And if you had one there he was real bright, you'd call him Diamond. Some would call him Bright. And different names.

Q. But Spark wouldn't always be the nigh ox.

A. Pretty well. It seemed to come out better that way.

Q. And ones the nigh, what's the other one?

A. The off one. See, you always work from this side or in front of them and whether it is suppose to be the near one, but it changes over the years, and it's the nigh one.

Q. Well, you've really told me some wonderful things. I'm wondering if there's anything I haven't asked you about thatOne thing I do want to ask, and maybe its just putting you on the spot too much, sometimes you need a little thinking time but on the boats the guys had lots of superstitions. Were there superstitions in the woods as well?

A. Not that I know. The boats had a lot of them. Don't say pig and this and that and so on. But if they just stopped to think they had to bring the pigs here in the first place. I told one feller one day, I said don't say pig on the boat, or bacon or pork or whatever. Well, I said how'd they get here? The Europeans had to bring them. There is something I'd like to tell you, but I wouldn't want to put it on a tape.

Q. You're sure? You don't think it would be valuable for the young people to hear at some point?

A. On the right, is my grandfather, his name was Joseph Robicheau. And on to the left, the little girl is my sister Lilly and the bigger girl is my sister Bernice. And Grandmother is holding my little brother Charlie and on top of the load , the one on the right was my brother Eddie and the one on the left was my brother Eugene. The lady there was Mrs. Captain Burnie over here, and the house was Joe Oliver's house - its been gone for years. There were three Oliver brothers in the villager here and that was Joe, the one over here, you can't see it, in back, was John and the one right here over here where Father lived was Dennis Oliver.

Q. She's not a relative though, really?

A. She wasn't. Now she is in Father's dooryard there when we took the picture. And that's the only picture I can find of that house. It has been gone so long, so I kept it. I got it enlarged.

Q. Your father took that picture, he had a camera, do you know?

A. Oh, it might have been somebody with her, I don't know. They were quite well off people.

Q. She looks it.

A. They were great friends of father and mother.

